artist TRUST

SUPPORTING ART AT ITS SOURCE

Creative Vitality Index Report
2013 Pilot Project

Artists make hidden contributions to regional economies because they are often self-employed and not acknowledged in regional job counts or arts impact analysis.

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The Artistic Dividend

1. What were the key goals and/or intended outcomes of your CVI Pilot Project?

The CVI Pilot Project was a unique opportunity for Artist Trust to explore how to obtain current data to describe Washington State artist populations.
Artist Trust partnered with Seattle University to define the numbers, artistic disciplines, and locations of individual artists; investigate how the CVI might inform of artists' impact on arts ecosystems. We wanted to:
- Define occupational categories that indicate individual artists;
- Distinguish "arts workers" from "individual/generative artists" within the data;
- Identify how many individual artists of each discipline are in each county;
- What does the CVI tell us about individual artist business in each county/region?
- Identify further data that could describe individual artists' roles in creative vitality and the creative economy.

2. How did you use the CVI data? Please provide at least one "data story" that can be shared – for example, about a data point that helped you make a case or contributed to an analysis.

We explored occupational categories that might indicate individual artists, and found that none of them could be applied. All occupations were employment-based. This information did not serve our inquiry, as Artist Trust specifically sought to describe our constituency, independent artists. While CVI data did not reveal data about independent artists, we did find useful data on independent artist sales. Within CVI industry data, we found Art Gallery and Individual Artist Sales: Independent artists, writers and performers. This data can describe the economic impact artists have through their sales.

We will combine three data sources to describe numbers of individual artists and their economic impact via their sales activity by county:
- Americans for the Arts' Local Arts Index: Solo artists per 100,000 population, 2009
  - www.artsindexusa.org/local-arts-index
- Google: County Population Data
  - www.google.com :: google (name of county) population to view a chart
- CVI: Art Gallery and Individual Artist Sales: Independent artists, writers and performers
  - Industry Data

3. How successful were you in meeting your goal(s), and what were the actual outcomes? What were the key elements of your success? Key challenges?

We found that CVI data provided only occupational data, so it could not tell us about individual/generative artists. However, we found "solo artists" represented within the Local Arts Index. The data source is NAICS code 7115 which describes "independent artists, writers and

performers." We will combine CVI industry data and Local Arts Index "solo artist" data to describe the number of artists by county next to the aggregate sales that they create. While we had anticipated applying data visualization to our Pilot Project, we reached our final solution of combining Local Arts Index with CVI industry data at the end of the project period.

4. As a result of your efforts this year, do you believe there will be any lasting impact in your community? With project partners? Why or why not?

This information will be useful, and more accessible than the costly customized studies that have been done in the past to determine numbers of artists. This information will be useful for Artist Trust to include in funding proposals to regional funders. Many regional funders do not see individual artists as contributors to the local economy, so by quantifying the numbers of artists and the monetary impact of their commerce, we can better make the case. Also, participating in the Pilot Project provided Artist Trust the opportunity to hear from civic groups with similar interests in understanding how to use the Creative Vitality Index, and to advocate for including data on individual artists in descriptions of regional economies and arts ecosystems.

5. Who were the key partners for your project, and how successful was the partnership?

Artist Trust partnered with Seattle University, specifically an Arts Leadership MFA candidate in the 2013 cohort, Snow Dowd. The partnership was successful, as Snow was very capable in getting up to speed to access the data, using her extensive research to help Artist Trust achieve research goals.

Snow Dowd shares: *Working on the CVI pilot project tied directly to my graduate thesis research on the topic of data in the nonprofit arts sector. It was a huge benefit to be able to get direct experience working with an organization as they explored the data and discussed the challenges they encountered. I learned a great deal from ArtistTrust and also from the other organizations participating in the pilot. The presentation from Lori Pfingst during the first cohort meeting on the topic of data and strategies to improve the relevance and scope of reports or communications using qualitative and quantitative data was also useful perspective.*

6. At this point in time, which of the following best describes your expectations for this partnership: Likely to maintain at about the same level as this year; likely to expand and add more partners; likely to dissolve the partnership.

Artist Trust now has experience recruiting for student assistance using Seattle University's Albers Placement Center and the Project Center. Seattle University resources may be useful for future specialized projects, or continuation of the CVI project. In exploring partnerships, we learned about several academic programs for Data Visualization which could help Artist Trust further the CVI Pilot Project.

7. Please attach one to three photos with captions that best depict your project.

PHOTO:
Beth Cavener Stichter is full-time professional studio artist based in Garfield, WA. Here she works on Breathe, stoneware and antique stool, 74"x15"x28", 2008. Beth is a recipient of the Artist Trust Fellowship (2009) and Grants for Artist Projects (2012).