

NEA survey shows bright cultural picture

ART NEWS

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For 19 years, the National Endowment for the Arts has been doling out cash for cultural and art activities with only a general idea of the public's participation. No more. In 1982, the NEA's research department conducted a survey of representative group of 18,000 American adults. On the basis of a 91 percent return of the questionnaires, the NEA estimates that 22.1 percent of the nation's adult population visited an art gallery or museum in the previous year. Extrapolated to include the entire populas, that would mean approximately 36,358,000 Americans. The number of attendances at galleries and museums is estimated to be 63,263,000, which would mean that the average person went twice. That sounds like a lot of people, but how does it compare to other activities attended at least once during a year?

On the cultural side of things — all figures being approximate — the survey showed that 13 percent, which would translate to 21,398,000 people, attended a performance of classical music, and 9.5 percent, or 15,815,000 people, went to hear jazz. Movies were attended by 63 percent of the population. Art or craft fairs were attended by 39 percent. (In the non-cultural area, spectator sports attracted 49 percent of the adult population.)

Novels, plays or short stories were read by 56 percent, while 20 percent had read poetry or attended readings. This was a surprisingly high figure to the NEA, given the meager sales of poetry books, so they followed up with additional questionnaires. Shakespeare turned out to be the preferred poet.

Folks at the NEA were also surprised to find that 37 percent of the population had visited an historic park or monument, or toured buildings or neighborhoods for their "historic or design value."



Garamendi proposes arts legislation.

And the public does more than watch and listen. Weaving, crocheting, quilting, needlepoint, or sewing are practiced by 32 percent; pottery, ceramics, jewelry, and metalwork by 13 percent; and photography, movies or video as an "artistic activity" by 11 percent of the population. Classes on literature, creative writing, art, craft, ballet, music or the like are being taken by 11 percent, another surprise.

Television, however, remains the biggest draw: 91 percent of adult Americans watch at least one hour a day.

Once again, the Democrats are trying to establish a statewide program of percent-for-art in public buildings. State Sen. John Garamendi, D-Walnut Grove, held a press conference last week to propose legislation, SB 1326, which would require the state to spend one percent of the capital construction costs

of public buildings on art to be commissioned at the time of the construction. Sixteen other states have such a percent-for-art law.

Artists would be selected to work with the architects rather than having their work purchased after the fact. Garamendi announced the new bill in downtown Los Angeles, in front of the State Office Building on Broadway, by a sculpture entitled "Angelic Duet." The senator said, "The facade has little aesthetic value and the impact of the sculpture is diminished because it was an afterthought, not part of the original design. My bill requires art to be built in, not added on."

Last year, Gov. Deukmejian vetoed a similar bill, but Garamendi is hoping for a signature this year, since the state's economy is healthier. If the bill becomes law, it would effect any state-supported construction after July 1, 1986.

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Friends of the Museum of African-American Art will honor poet Maya Angelou and art supporter Joan Palevsky with a dinner Sunday at 6 p.m. at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel. Tickets are \$125 per person and proceeds go to the museum. For reservations, call Lucille Polachek at 658-5765.

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"Designing the Future: Today's Practice, Tomorrow's World" is the title of Saturday's conference on design issues relevant to future urban life. Sponsored by the Association for Women in Architecture, the conference at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena features architects, planners, developers, government officials and community service representatives.

Among the many speakers will be Dolores Hayden, professor of architecture and urban planning at UCLA; M. Rosaria Piomelli, professor of architecture and former dean at the City College of New York; Alice Callaghan, director of Las Familias del Pueblo; Ruthann Lehrer, executive director of L.A. Conservancy; Ari Sikora, senior city planner with the L.A. Community Redevelopment Agency; L.A. City Council President Pat Russell; architects Daniel Dworsky and Carolyn Dry; and Maureen Kindell, president of the L.A.'s board of public works.

Fee for the all-day conference, to be held from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., is \$75, or \$65 for AWA members. Call 625-1734 for information.