

## VALUES OF FINE ARTISTS IN AN INDEPENDENT PROFESSION

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### INTRODUCTION

Artists, long regarded as unique and creative, have a different life style from those in more conventional walks of life. When 57 students listed characteristics of artists, 86 percent mentioned eccentricity and uniqueness, which we believe matches the view of others generally in the United States who are not involved in the world of artists. We then decided to investigate the values of professional artists.

The fine artist is an independent professional who meets criteria established by Friedson (1970): 1) Their activities are called *work*. 2) They receive compensation. 3) They have legitimate and organized autonomy. 4) they have a recognized right to declare outsider evaluations as illegitimate. In addition to these qualifications, the fine artists in our sample had specialized education in related areas, and 72 percent had both specialized art training and college degrees which further emphasized their independent position. Previous studies on values among artists emphasize the expressiveness in values and the artists' ability to lose themselves in their work (Kavolis 1963; Merrill 1968; Roe 1946). Our study is intended to take the previous investigations of value one step further by ascertaining specific types of artists' values.

### METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

The study was conducted with 100 questionnaire respondents and 35 in-depth interviews (69 females; 66 males). The questionnaire consisted of 47 closed-end items and 8 open-end items. Salient values were determined by content analysis of the responses to open-end questions for the artists' most important values. Responses were coded into 9 categories where applicable, and otherwise into a tenth "other" category. Given the presumption of uniqueness and eccentricity, we were surprised that no more than 22 percent of the women and 27 percent of the men gave responses which could not be coded into our conventional categories. The research was conducted in the Chicago Metropolitan Area from October 1982 to January 1983, and included only persons who identified

themselves as artists. They were fine artists engaging in painting or sculpture or both. Of the group, 63 percent had other employment but assumed the occupational identity of artist. No commercial artists were included.

The sample was white, age range 20 to 60 +, and the majority had received formal art school or college training. Art was the first choice of career for 59 percent. The original sample was obtained through the Fine Arts listing in the business section of the Chicago Telephone Directory. Further contacts were facilitated by the Chicago Art Institute School, the Chicago Coalition of Artists, the Contemporary Arts Workshop, and the Beverly Art Center of Chicago. Two all-female cooperatives, Arc and Artemesia were also involved in the study.

### TYOLOGIES

To establish the direction of values among artists, we will use four typologies which should reveal convergence or differences in value orientations. Meeting the scientific and logical requirement of mutually exclusive and discreet categories is often difficult in the social sciences. Using the Likert or the Thurstone scales overlooks problematics, as it must, and gives the appearance of meeting the requirements. The assignment of the artists' expressed or indicated values into 9 categories was done with minimal ambiguity. In assigning categories developed from content analysis, the guide was our interpretation of the respondent's manifest intent.

The value categories are: 1) truth; 2) family; 3) work; 4) health; 5) security; 6) self; 7) art; 8) God; and 9) universals. According to the typology of W I Thomas, as reflected in Figure 1, the primary values are *new experience*, *recognition*, *mastery*, and *security*. We found that only art belongs in the category, *new experience*, and work is in the *recognition* category, in spite of its subjective dimension which might relate *mastery* to the artist. To the *mastery* category we assigned *truth*, *self*, and *universals*. The rationale for that assignment of *self* was the idea of feeling good about oneself, and feeling confident. This was more appropriate than the *recognition* category.

**FIGURE 1: BASIC TYPOLOGIES FOR SOURCES OF ARTIST VALUE ORIENTATIONS**

<b>W Thomas</b>	<b>New experience</b> Art	<b>Mastery</b> Truth Self Universals	<b>Security</b> Family Health God	<b>Recognition</b> Work	
<b>D Riesman</b>	<b>Autonomous Values</b> Truth Universals	<b>Inner-directed Values</b> God Art Self	<b>Security</b> Health Work	<b>Other-directed Values</b> Family	
<b>A: Parsons</b>	(A)	(A)	(A)	(B)	(B)
<b>B: Parsons, and Bales</b>	Particularistic	<b>Affectivity</b> Family Art Security	<b>Neutrality</b> Self Health	<b>Expressive</b> Art Truth Self Universals	<b>Instrumental</b> Family Security Art
	Universalistic	God	Truth Universals		
<b>A Maslow, Needs:</b>	<b>Physical</b> Heath	<b>Safety</b> Security	<b>Belonging, and love</b> Family	<b>Esteem</b> Work	<b>Self-Actualization</b> Art Truth Self expression

Under the Thomas schema, three categories relate to what the artists mean by security: 1) family, 2) health, 3) God. Redundant artist value types are omitted in Figure 1.

In applying the Thomas typology, the values most pronounced among the artists concern security (men, 39%; women, 38%). Mastery is significant for 21 percent of men, and 25 percent of women. Recognition is less important (men, 6%; women 9%), and new experience was stressed even less (men, 7%; women, 5%).

In applying Riesman's typology (1961) the respondents showed a strong inner-directed orientation (men, 31%; women 36%). These findings agree closely with Riemer and Brooks (1982) who found 37 percent of the Kansas artists inner-directed. These values are indicated in Figure 1. The *autonomous values* category contains truth and universals, which were chosen by 39 percent of the men and 39 percent of the women, which happens to agree exactly (39%) with Riemer and Brooks. Meeting the other-directed criteria is

connected with communication with others, and its values deal with the family. Categorized as other-directed were: men, 27 percent; women, 21 percent, which is in close agreement with the Riemer and Brooks finding of 24 percent. Given the smaller proportion of Chicago artists sampled, relative to the Riemer and Brooks Kansas City study, the similarity of our data suggest that there are commonalities of values among artists.

We have argued that artists have an internal locus of control (Birg, Peterson 1983). An amplification of inner-directed values comes from the Parsons and Bales dichotomy (1955) of *expressive* and *instrumental* values. Instrumental concerns are reflected in a proportion of the sample expressing concern about material security and also by a fraction of the artists who have an instrumental orientation to art. Less than 10 percent of the sample express instrumental concerns, and the vast majority of artists stress the expressive dimension of life values, which affirms the orientation of Kavolis (1963).

The Parsons typology (Parsons 1951; Parsons, Bales 1955) applies three of the five pairs of pattern variables. Included are: 1) universal-particular, 2) affective-neutral, and 3) instrumental-expressive. Not included are 4) diffuse-specific, and 5) quality-performance. Affectivity and particularistic concern prevails with *family*, *health*, and *security* (men, 42%; women 38%). One could argue that *art* is a universalistic value but for this sample, the emphasis is specifically on one's *own* art. The artist's attitude toward God and faith is best characterized as universalistic affectivity (men 4%; women, 5%).

Work was coded in the dimension, *particularistic neutrality* (men, 6%; women 9%). *Universalistic neutrality*, including our categories of *universals* and *truth* was relatively larger (men, 18%; women, 16%). We conclude from this typology that artists' values stress affectivity with universalistic considerations as a strong component of the artists' world view.

The final typology is Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs. Here, low concerns were indicated for physical and security needs, which we categorized as *health* and *security*. Belonging and love needs were expressed by 27 percent of the men and 21 percent of the women. The Maslow need for esteem was expressed by some in the *work* category, and for others in the for the Maslow need, *self-actualization* in the *art* and *self-expression* categories. There was some arbitrariness in coding *work* to the esteem need. We justify this as follows: Even assigning the total category to the *esteem* need did not significantly distort the data (men, 6%; women, 9%). Considering the large difference between category loadings, there was no effect on the conclusions.

Respondents who expressed concerns about art were classified as being oriented toward self-actualization (men, 7%; women, 5%). Another category of values associated with Maslow's self-actualization need were *self-expressive* orientations (men, 7%; women, 6%). For a relatively large part of the sample, truth was a significant self-actualizing value (men, 11%; women, 8%). Although *truth* would fit our *universals* category, we thought it more important to segregate it from other universals such as *beauty*, *humanity*, *honor*,

*peace for mankind*, *sharing*, and *betterment of the world*. Artists indicating universal values included 8 percent of the men and 8 percent of the women. The same rationale was used for separating *God* and *faith* from the *universal* category, which were values stressed as having primary significance by 4 percent of the men and 5 percent of the women. Using Maslow's schema, we conclude that artists' most significant values are generally in the area of self-actualization. As is evident from the data which we have presented, the difference in values between men and women artists is small and statistically within the limits of chance due to sampling variation. Overall, 35 percent of the men and 32 percent of the women emphasize some form of self-actualizing values.

### SEX DIFFERENCE AND VALUES

There is a vast literature surrounding sex roles and associated values. Parsons and Bales (1955) discuss stereotypic sex role characteristics, and they conclude that, relative to men, women are perceived as lacking in instrumental characteristics, and men are seen as lacking in expressive characteristics (David, Brannon 1976).

From the data given, and the fact that no significant Chi square or correlational differences were found comparing the responses by sex of respondent, it appears that there is no strong difference in value orientations between male and female fine artists. On the contrary, the values expressed by respondents in our sample come close to those in the Tavis (1978) study of 28,000 men and women, where the ideals expressed by the two sexes were very similar. The primary values were: ability to love, standing up for beliefs, warmth, and self-confidence.

Among men and women artists, the quantitatively largest value expression relates to concern about family. As reflected in Table 1, this is the only value where there is a marked percentage difference which was found in an unexpected direction, where 27 percent of the men, compared to 21 percent of the women emphasize family as a value. Among the artists, the second and third proportionally largest categories were truth and universals, which accords with Tavis' (1978) findings. This sample of artists is significantly more

**TABLE 1: ARTISTS' PRIME VALUES BY AGE & SEX (3 choices per respondent)**

Value	Men's Responses by Age:						%	Women's Responses by Age:						%
	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Sum		20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Sum	
Truth	7	11	0	2	2	22	11.2	8	5	2	1	0	16	7.8
Family	18	14	10	4	8	54	27.4	10	13	13	4	3	43	20.9
Work	4	4	1	2	1	12	6.1	1	5	6	1	5	18	8.7
Health	2	1	0	3	2	8	4.1	4	7	1	1	1	14	6.8
Security	2	3	1	2	1	9	4.6	2	4	3	0	1	10	4.9
Self	3	4	3	2	1	13	6.6	5	6	1	1	0	13	6.3
Art	6	4	0	1	2	13	6.6	3	1	5	2	0	11	5.3
God/Faith	3	2	2	0	0	7	3.6	1	3	3	2	1	10	4.9
Universals	6	3	4	1	1	15	7.6	5	5	4	2	0	16	7.8
Other	17	14	3	5	5	44	22.2	15	10	16	9	5	55	26.6
<b>Sum</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>197</b>		<b>54</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>206</b>	
<b>Percent</b>	<b>34.5</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>11.7</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>7.8</b>		<b>100</b>

homogeneous in expressed value orientation than would be anticipated from the literature on socialization, sex roles, or the feminist perspective. We conclude that sex role discrimination is not of primary importance in values expressed by artists.

**VALUES AND AGE**

According to Troll (1979), most Americans value family, but for most, achievement overrides the importance of familism. For our sample, the most frequently mentioned single value is the family. Values related to family tended to decrease with women's age. For men there is a relatively more even distribution of significance of family in all age groups. However, for both men and women the family is more important before age 50.

The value of work occurs earlier for men than for women, with two thirds of the men valuing work before age 40 while the modal age for women valuing work is 45. This is consistent with the fact that women enter the art world at a later stage in life.

Contrary to Axelrod (1960) who claimed health concerns come to the fore in the middle years. concern with health in this sample is expressed by younger women. For men concern with health is low and relatively unvarying by age.

There is an inverse relation between holding universal values and age, and the same is true for *faith*, *art*, and *truth* for both men and women. Precisely the values which are unique

for artists, namely the intrinsic value orientation, declines with age. Further study could be directed to exploring the values of older artists.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, there were no statistically significant differences related to sex, age, and values for fine artists. Probably the best-known studies of values were those of anthropologists and social psychologists, such as Kluckhohn (1958), Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Gillespie and Allport (1955), and Morris (1956). Sociologists have more typically dealt with more specific areas or have discussed values under sex role socialization, in conjunction with work in the management literature. The area is fraught with methodological difficulty, and those who insist on quantification are highly critical of the blend of impressionist analysis and data-based conclusions.

Our study confirms the opinion of Riemer and Brooks that it is mythical to view the artist as a struggling, romantic figure who creates masterpieces in poverty-stricken seclusion. We found that the majority of artists were deeply involved in relations with family and friends. We claim that the unique value orientation of these fine artists is the degree to which they hold universal values such as concerns for mankind, beauty, and peace. The demonstrated values of unique inner direction are apparent when we compare artists to freelance writers, who are also regarded as regarded as artistic, and independent in

orientation (Birg 1983). In an impressionist sense, they also hold values far more inner-directed than most occupational groups in postindustrial society.

It may be that the internal dialogue, frequently a part of preparatory activity for execution of art work, supports speculations on universal considerations. Another finding is the lack of statistical differences between men and women and their values in their model of the world view. Finally, those values which are unique to artists decline with age.

It appears that a new role is imminent for artists in the United States, and this role organizes the occupation more, and increases pressures which emphasize participation, in contrast to seclusion (Sanders 1976; Becker 1982). This may preclude viewing the artist in the future from an independent occupational perspective.

The fact that Riemer and Brooks measured artists' value orientation against the Riesman typology because of his claim that the concepts are appropriate for delineating occupational values provides the backdrop for discussion (Riesman 1961 111). A discussion of the quantitatively high categories across the typologies yield the following results. From the Thomas perspective, artists value security first and mastery second, while recognition and new experience would be substantially less valued. Applying the Riesman approach, artists are substantially more inner-directed and other-directed, and not very autonomous. From the Parsons (1951) and Parsons and Bales (1955) approach with pattern variables, the artists' values stress particularism in the affective domain, and universal values which are neutral. Of less importance are universalist values in the affective domain and particularist values which are neutral. Expressive values far outweigh values concerned with instrumentalism. For the Maslow schema, the major needs are self-actualization, belonging, and love. Physical, safety, and esteem needs are of secondary importance.

Artists value security and mastery. They are inner-directed, but influenced by others. Their values stress affective and particularist concerns with a strong component of neutral universalist values. They value self-actualization with strong belonging and love needs. The dominant modality is expressive

rather than instrumental.

Qualitative analysis tends to oversimplify the value structure by its inherent reductionism. The distortion mainly concerns values of other-directedness and universalist neutrality, while the belonging and love needs are easily intuited and do not contradict particularist affectivity and expressiveness. Our analysis suggests that Riemer and Brooks (1982) have underestimated the degree to which artists are other-directed and to which they hold universalist and affectively neutral values.

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