

THE VISUAL ART CRITIC

A SURVEY OF ART CRITICS AT GENERAL-INTEREST NEWS PUBLICATIONS IN AMERICA

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Honoré Daumier, "The Critics (Visitors in a Painter's Studio)" c.1862, 36 x 45.1 cm.
The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Bequest of Mrs. William R. Miller.
Photo: The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Christine Guest.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

THE VISUAL ARTS have experienced a period of dynamic growth and professionalization over the past two decades in the United States. In the wake of these changes, a timely question to ask is whether the popular news media provide sufficient exposure for artists, arts institutions and the ideas that govern their work. To find an answer to this question, in early 2002, the National Arts Journalism Program invited visual art critics at general-interest news publications to fill out an online questionnaire about their backgrounds, work habits, tastes and opinions on issues of concern to the visual arts in America today.

The findings of this unprecedented survey suggest that although art critics have carved out an important role at many news publications, on the whole criticism has been struggling to keep up with the swift evolution of the art world.

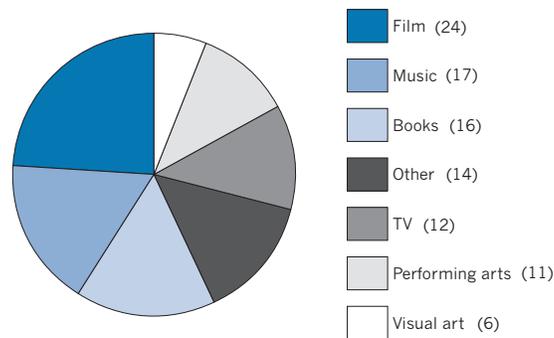
Criticism has been struggling to keep up with the swift evolution of the art world.

Generally speaking, visual art enjoys a higher priority in most newsrooms than architecture or dance, but it lags behind several other cultural fields, not to mention beats like sports or business, in both staffing and prestige. A certain commitment to visual art coverage is considered a must, especially at large papers. Nonetheless, a look below the surface reveals a profession cop-

ing with marginalization and job insecurity, oft accompanied by low morale and ambiguity about standards and journalistic mission.

But first, the good news: A solid majority of general-interest news publications with circulations over 50,000 have at least one visual art critic. For this survey, we queried art critics from the top 200 daily newspapers (those with circulations 55,000 or higher), the top 60 alternative weekly newspapers (those with circulations 50,000 or higher) and nine nationally circulating news-magazines. Among those publications, we identified a total of 230 qualifying art critics—those who have written at least 12 or more evaluative articles about visual art for their publications over the prior one-year period.¹

fig. 1.1 ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES



Proportion of arts newshole dedicated to various arts beats at 15 American newspapers (1998).

¹Of the 230 qualifying critics, 160 were at dailies, 62 at alternative weeklies and 8 at newsmagazines. Our aim was to query the writers whom the general public would view as “critics”: shapers of opinion on matters of visual art. By “evaluative article,” we mean “articles that incorporate as a primary element the writer’s opinion.” Examples of qualifying articles include: reviews, “think” pieces and subjective overviews of a particular time period or geographic area. We included visual art writers who write both subjective and objective articles, if their subjective articles total 12 or more for the prior one-year period. We permitted exceptions to some critics who did not meet our 12-reviews-in-previous-year benchmark, because they would likely have qualified if not for one of the following circumstances: 1) sabbatical; 2) extended illness; 3) critically informed writing that, due to that publication’s focus, was not presented in a subjective format; and 4) tenure at the publication of less than a year, but a frequency of publication that would otherwise have merited inclusion. We reconsidered the eligibility of any critics who answered “no” to Question 1 on the survey (“In the past year, have you filed at least 12 evaluative pieces on visual art for your publication?”) on a case-by-case basis. Of the 16 critics who responded “no,” four were found ineligible and their responses were eliminated from the survey.

We estimate that, for daily newspapers, our survey universe represents about 80 percent of art critics and about 95 percent of reader impact. In alternative weeklies, we estimate that our survey universe represents 75–80 percent of all critics and 90–95 percent of audience impact. Based on the observed frequency of critics among smaller publications, we estimate that there may be about 20 newspaper critics and about 15 alternative weekly art critics in addition to those contacted for this study, all of whom write for significantly smaller audiences than those served by the average respondent in the survey.

By contrast, the NAJP's inaugural critics survey (*The Architecture Critic*, 2001) found that the number of accredited daily newspaper architecture critics in America hovers slightly below 50. It is highly unlikely that a paper with a circulation under 100,000 would have an architecture critic.

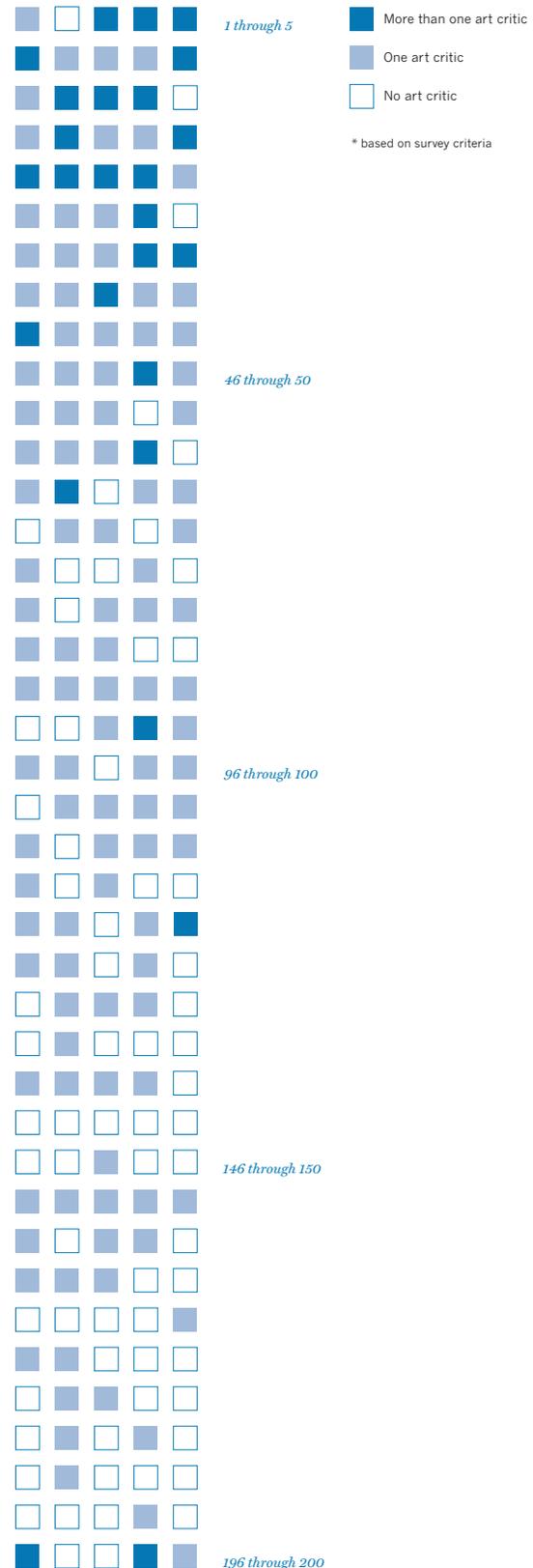
The 230 visual art critics identified by the current study represent the preponderance of critics who shape the public's awareness and opinion of art today. The responses of 169 (73 percent) of them (123 daily critics, 43 alternative weekly critics and 3 newsmagazine critics) inform the conclusions of this report. Together, they write for a combined audience of approximately 60 million readers.

But these numbers tell only part of the story. As our 1999 study, *Reporting the Arts: News Coverage of Arts and Culture in America*, concluded, the visual arts (including architecture) receive a scant 6 percent on average of the editorial space assigned to arts and culture stories in newspapers. That's just half the space taken up by television stories and one-fourth of the space given over to movies.

Comprehensive coverage of all that is happening in visual art today is simply not an option.

Moreover, relatively ample staffing at larger publications hides a noticeable thinning-out at the low end of the ranks. While a handful of prestigious papers enjoy the luxury of having multiple art critics on their staff (e.g. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*), the likelihood of a newspaper having a critic falls sharply as circulation size diminishes: 117 of the top 160 papers (73 percent) have art critics, contrasted with only 15 of the next 40 (38 percent) (see *fig. 1.2*).

*fig. 1.2 ART CRITICS AT THE TOP 200 DAILY NEWSPAPERS**
(RANKED BY CIRCULATION)



Put another way, if your daily newspaper has a circulation of less than 80,000, more likely than not, you will never hear from a local critic who writes about art from week to week. (The *El Paso Times*, the *San Bernardino County Sun*, the *Youngstown Vindicator* and the *Atlantic City Press* are examples of such papers—all of them lack regular art critics.) Though alternative weeklies do tend to employ art critics, small towns and cities typically don't have access to such a secondary source of cultural news.

The robust number of art critics also obscures the fact that *the majority of critics in America today pursue their jobs on a freelance basis, part-time, squeezed in between other responsibilities*. Split beats and outsourcing is the norm throughout the profession. And with the exponential increase in visual-arts activity in recent years, even full-time art critics are likely to feel overwhelmed and distracted. Comprehensive coverage of all that is happening in visual art today is simply not an option.

Meanwhile, there are notable cases of major dailies with no full-time art critic at all; the most visible example is *USA Today*, circulation 2.3 million, America's largest newspaper. Citizens of significant urban agglomerations, including Indianapolis and Las Vegas (the latter one of America's hot new art cities), do not have the benefit of hearing from an art critic who might qualify for inclusion in this survey.

Worse still, in the wake of the news-industry downturn that began in the late 1990s, there is ample anecdotal evidence to suggest that publications of all stripes have been shifting further toward part-time staffing and trimming back their column inches. A small beat like visual art, shrinking from a low base, suffers all the more. In today's austere newsroom environment, art critics must routinely do more with less.

Many of these issues came to the fore in the responses we received to our March 2002 online questionnaire. The key findings of the survey include:

- Although art critics are typically well prepared for their work and operate with considerable autonomy, in a telling sign of job insecurity, *two of five are skeptical that their news organizations would replace them if they left their jobs*.
- Owing in part to the frequency of part-time and split-beat staffing, *the majority of survey respondents—nearly three out of five—receive less than half of their income from their activity as critics*. Critics routinely combine their criticism with reporting on visual art as well as other subjects.
- *Critics report a deep involvement in the art world that frequently extends significantly beyond their journalistic role*: Four out of five art critics collect art, two out of five make art, and half of those who make art actively exhibit their works.
- At a time when diversity and multiculturalism are major concerns in both the art world and the news industry, *nine out of ten visual art critics are white*.
- The survey found an even split between male and female art critics, but *in almost every measure of professional standing, women critics (in part because they are generally younger and more likely to work part time) rank behind men*.
- Although the art world is among the most international of cultural industries, *well over half of American art critics never write about visual art events in other countries. Almost a third do not write about art in other parts of the United States*.
- *A pattern of mainstream taste is discernible among art critics, especially ones at daily newspapers*. Painting remains the most popular art form, while many critics are lukewarm about performance

art, postmodern art, digital art and art heavily informed by theory. The preference for mainstream genres does not necessarily extend, however, to the most crowd-pleasing living artists.

- *On the whole, art critics are only moderately excited about the current moment in visual art.* They are evenly split on whether, “America is the center of the art world,” and the majority feel that if there ever was “a golden age of American art,” it isn’t now.
- *Art critics generally feel they write for a lukewarm audience that is not too well steeped in the arts.* They see their role as educating, not just informing, readers.
- *Almost two-thirds of critics prefer to write in a positive vein about art; many deliberately eschew negative criticism, preferring to be a proponent and champion of artists, especially local ones.*
- *Rendering a personal judgment is considered by art critics to be the least important factor in reviewing art.* Critics prioritize accurate description and contextualization, and many place a premium on the literary qualities of their writing.
- *Critics are reluctant to advise artists about what art they should make.* Almost two-thirds of art critics are opposed to the practice, suggesting a more responsive, less prescriptive role for critics today.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

MAXWELL L. ANDERSON, DIRECTOR, WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART; AND PRESIDENT, ASSOCIATION OF ART MUSEUM DIRECTORS

Art criticism is an increasingly challenging enterprise. The first problem is the diminishing number of outlets for the review of exhibitions and museum activities, as newspapers and magazines cut back on space previously allocated to the arts in favor of more lightweight entertainment features. The second is that the writers who survive editorial belt-tightening are often those who oversimplify the story or who lose the larger picture in their haste to make a deadline. Analysis and objective opinion are less in favor today than tirades that make attention-grabbing headlines and good copy. Neither of these problems can be laid at the feet of responsible critics.

For those of us about whom criticism is written, the poison pen has less influence today. Museums have become more sophisticated about bringing their messages directly to a potential audience through promotions, listings, advertising, direct mail, targeted e-mail and other vehicles. These alternative information sources are an aid in making decisions about whether to visit a particular museum or exhibition or in assessing a particular exhibition.

The best reportage involves meeting the protagonists in the piece. Encountering the object of one’s opinions seems like a modest enough obligation, and it is conventional in other realms of journalism. But fewer journalists, let alone critics, are making the effort to meet with the people whose decisions they question. When they do, it is often *pro forma*, coming after their minds are made up.

The situation would improve if arts coverage were expanded, if readers would speak out to editors about their preferences, and if responsible critics could take the place of writers who have forgotten that the highest objective of criticism is to bring a passion for the subject to the reader.

- *Vagueness and inconsistency prevail when it comes to standards of professional conduct.* Views on the acceptability of engaging in certain practices, such as curating museum exhibitions, receiving payment for writing catalogs, judging prizes, fraternizing with artists or exhibiting one's own art, fall far short of unanimity.

These signs of vulnerability and hesitation contrast with the art world's exuberance during the last two decades. With America enjoying a dominant position in the global art world, the level of public interest and participation in visual art has never been higher. There are over a quarter million people in the United States today who consider themselves painters, sculptors or craft artists, according to 2001 Current Population Survey estimates—about three times as many as in 1970. The swelling of their ranks has outpaced the rate of increase of the labor force at large. They're joined by record numbers

of M.F.A. graduates, as thousands of young men and women leave school each year with aspirations to pursue art as both a calling and a career.

At the same time, museums and galleries are undergoing a profound transformation. Art has democratized. Trophy museums built by brand-name architects stand at the center of countless ambitious urban renewal programs; they are magnets for tax dollars, private contributions—and the controversies that attend them.

Prior to September 2001, museum attendance was scaling all-time highs, and while the numbers have sagged somewhat since then, museum-goers are still drawn from a wide range of age groups and social backgrounds, unlike audiences for classical music and theater. Traditionalists may balk at “blockbusteritis” and the oft-lamented proliferation of museum gift shops, but there is no doubt that visual art enjoys unprecedented public popularity in the United States today.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

SVETLANA ALPERS, PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF THE HISTORY OF ART, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

I read newspaper art criticism for essentially two reasons: 1) to find out what there is to go and look at; and 2) to get a considered take on what that art is like, what its nature and concerns are, and how good, or even bad, it is. The first reason is practical, the second is critical.

Taken collectively, newspapers do pretty well as far as coverage is concerned.

On critical questions, I am less satisfied. Appreciation seems to be the name of the game. All too often, we are given an account of what it is like to like an artist, instead of an analysis of what has been made and put before our attentive eyes. This is purely a matter of intelligence, but I suspect it is also a matter of newspaper policy and the demands of the art market.

What I generally miss are critical criteria and what might be called a critical voice. What is the critic's sense of the constraints of making art in our time? Does anything go? Why is one artist preferred to another? Perhaps it would help if they were encouraged to write about a number of artists at once under an appropriate rubric. Would critical distinctions and attitudes played out in such writing be sustained in addressing the individual talent?

Art is also big business. During the boom years of the 1980s and 1990s, the gallery and auction market for visual art exploded beyond all expectation. Art collecting at all levels is flourishing, despite the war on terror and the recent souring of the economy. Price inflation has given rise to entirely new professions, like art law and art investment consulting. As a result, the “art world”—a cultural realm singularly lacking in precise boundaries and definition—has evolved from a small and insular cottage industry into a powerful, global, multibillion-dollar institutional system.

Art, in short, is a big news story. And the issues that spark debate within the visual arts are becoming increasingly complicated. The art stories that make it to the front page these days—from provenance disputes to looted-art controversies to “Sensation”-style dust-ups about museum sponsorship—demand more of art critics than the traditional rotation of previews and reviews ever did. To attend fully to their task, critics must now complement their insight and sensitivity with sharp reporting acumen.

The job is made all the more demanding by the continuing proliferation of art of all kinds. The once seemingly linear course of art history has splintered off into a kaleidoscopic array of interdisciplinary experimentation. Dozens of trends, old and new, now compete for critical attention, with no widely followed movement claiming superiority among them. No wonder that a third of the critics in this survey feel that “there is too much art being produced, made and shown.” Gone are the days when a hierarchy of styles or genres could focus an art critic’s attention.

There are those who would argue that visual art properly belongs in an ivory tower, not a newspaper. And yet, for all its alleged elitism, art attracts more live spectators than professional sports. In major cities, the art world and its sustaining professions command a healthy share of the overall economy.

Lackluster staffing and space, existential insecurity, vagueness about professional standards and mission are just some of the signs that art criticism may not be able to keep up with the current efflorescence of the art scene. The findings of this survey call attention to the need within newsrooms to provide continued investment and support for the enterprise of art criticism, especially in smaller communities, where some of the most noteworthy artistic developments are taking root with little or no critical support. In order to flourish, these endeavors need the scrutiny, validation and exposure the popular news media can provide. ■

2. MEET THE CRITICS

WHO IS THE TYPICAL visual art critic? The 169 writers in this survey operate in markedly different environments, but when viewed together, they form a composite image of the American art critic.

BACKGROUNDS

The statistically average art critic is a highly educated, Caucasian city-dweller in his or her late 40s (the median age is 48). Those who work at alternative weeklies are slightly younger: 66 percent of them are under 45 years of age, while only 35 percent of daily critics fall in the younger age group. There is an even split between male and female art critics—a far healthier ratio than in the field of architecture criticism, where men outnumber women almost three to one.

When it comes to racial diversity, on the other hand, the picture is bleak. Even now, when 30 percent of Americans are non-Caucasian and when multiculturalism has broadened the parameters of visual art—96 percent of critics agreed that “multiculturalism has a strong influence in today’s art world” (see Chapter 6)—exactly nine out of ten art critics at general-interest news publications are white. Just two critics in the survey identified themselves as Asian; we heard from one black and one Hispanic art critic.

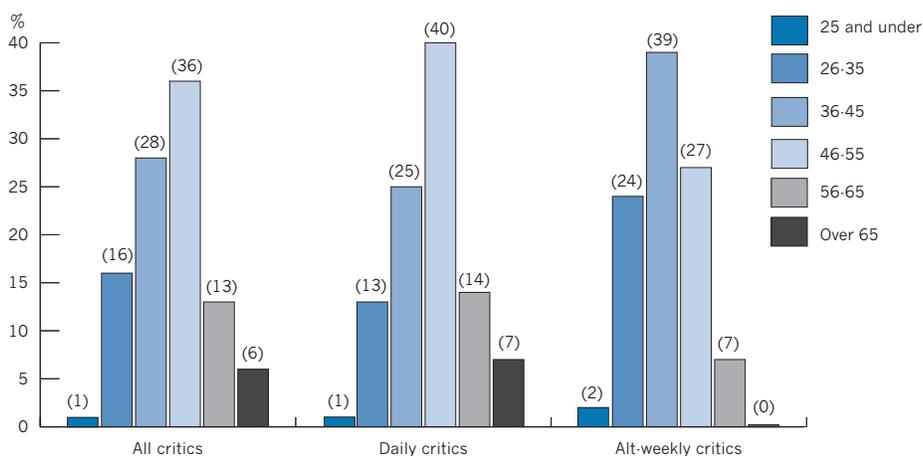
METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The conclusions of this report draw on the combined responses of the full sample of survey respondents, including critics at newspapers, alternative weeklies and newsmagazines. This pooling of answers obscures important differences in backgrounds, professional status and opinions among various categories of respondents. Statistically significant contrasts between daily and alternative weekly art critics are highlighted throughout in the main text, with the exception of Chapter 5, where they appear in a separate section. Noteworthy differences between male and female critics, younger and older critics (under and over 45), and critics at different-sized newspapers (divided into three tiers of circulation size) are presented in sidebars. The small number of minority and magazine art critics in the survey regrettably does not permit systematic comparisons along those variables. As a general rule, we report only variances of 10 percent or more. In addition to the key survey findings presented in the main chapters, a comprehensive summary of results appears in the Appendix. Respondents submitted more than 100 pages of written comments to the open-ended questions in the survey; these are cited selectively throughout the report.

ABOUT THE CHARTS

On some figures, percentages may not total 100 percent because of rounding.

fig. 2.1 AGE



EXPERIENCE

On the whole, art critics are thoroughly prepared for their jobs. Three of four have pursued academic studies beyond college, almost two out of three have earned at least one graduate degree, and more than a third (37 percent) have at least one college degree or advanced degree in art or art history. No fewer than 29 percent of the critics have taught art or art-related classes at a college or a university. Not surprisingly, almost all of them (96 percent) believe that their education and experience have adequately prepared them for the work they do.

Art critics generally have considerable work experience. The typical critic has spent a median of 14 years in journalism and 12 years writing about art, with seven of those years spent as an art critic at their current publication. Long tenures are especially common at daily newspapers, where critics tend to be older. The daily critics in the survey have logged twice as many years in journalism as their counterparts at alternative weeklies.

INVOLVEMENT IN ART

Art critics are intimately connected to the art world, and this involvement goes well beyond their journalistic functions. Many of them have worked in museums (24 percent), commercial art galleries (18 percent) and as artists' studio assistants (10 percent). A noteworthy 14 percent

The statistically average art critic is a highly educated, Caucasian city-dweller in his or her late 40s.

(and as many as one in five alternative weekly critics) are currently employed in such art-industry related capacities. In addition, four out of five newspaper critics and almost three out of four alternative weekly critics say they collect art. "I collect art because I love art," one survey respondent from a midsize daily said.

fig. 2.2 ETHNIC HOMOGENEITY

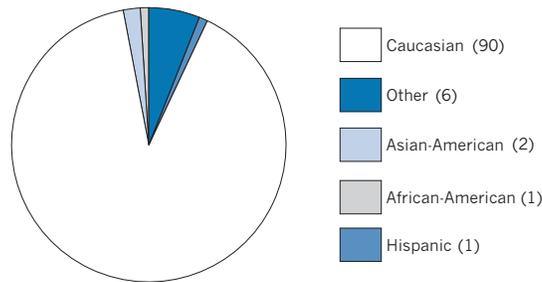


fig. 2.3 EDUCATION

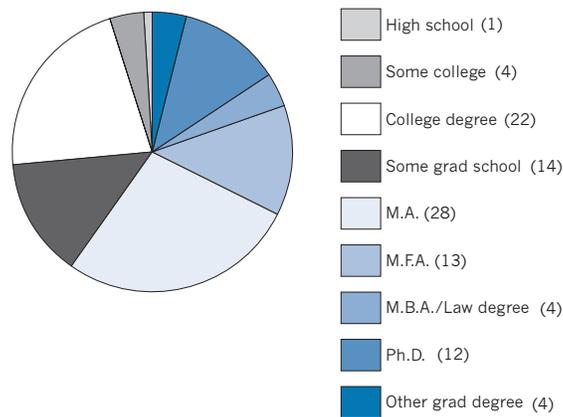


fig. 2.4 TRAINING IN ART OR ART HISTORY

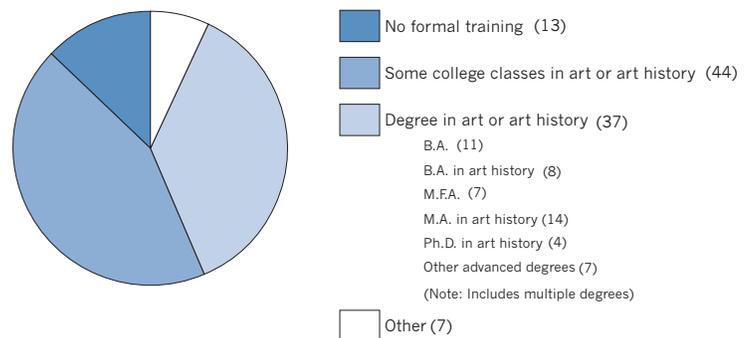
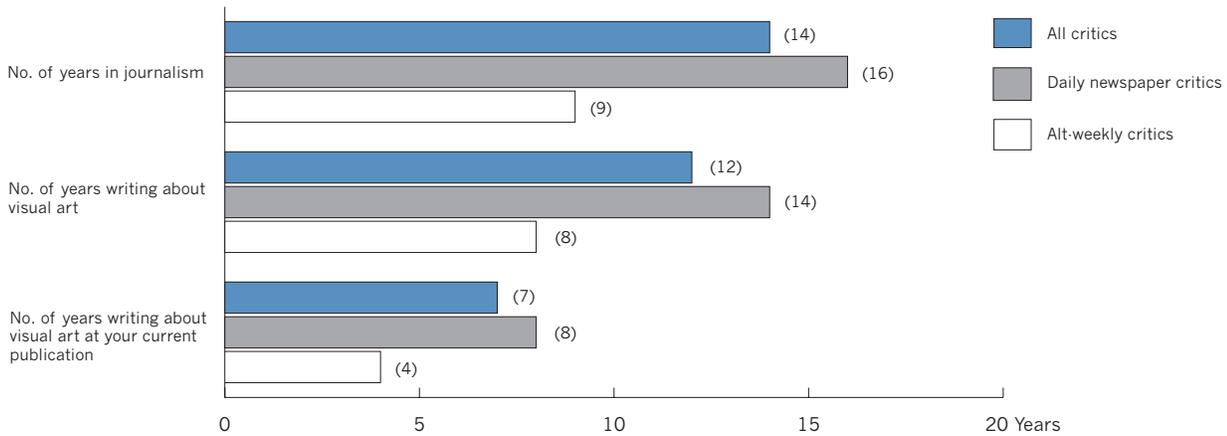


fig. 2.5 EXPERIENCE



Furthermore, a remarkable number of critics are practicing artists. Close to half of all critics say they make art, and more than 70 percent of those who do—close to a third of all art critics—have exhibited their works at some point in their lives. Indeed, half of those who have exhibited their art—about one out of seven survey respondents—have exhibited their work within the past five years. Perhaps surprisingly (age may be a factor here), critics at daily newspapers are more likely to exhibit their work than their counterparts at alternative weeklies: 74 percent of daily critics who make art have presented their work to the public, while 65 percent of the corresponding alternative weekly writers have done so.

MEN AND WOMEN

The female critics in the survey are generally younger (51 percent are under 45 years of age vs. 39 percent of male critics) and have less professional experience than men. On the whole, women have spent less time in journalism (median 12 years vs. 14 years for men), less time writing about art (median 10 years vs. 14 for men) and less time as art critics at their current publications (median 5 years vs. 9 years for men). On the other hand, women report higher levels of educational attainment (65 percent have a graduate degree vs. 56 percent for men).

Male critics take the lead in making art (54 percent pursue the activity vs. 34 percent of women), and, possibly because they are older, they are more likely to have exhibited their work (57 percent of male critics who make art have exhibited their work in the past five years vs. 39 percent of the corresponding group of female critics).

fig. 2.6 CRITICS AS ARTISTS

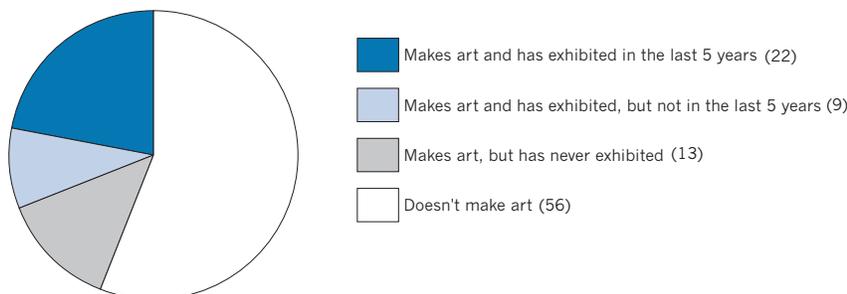
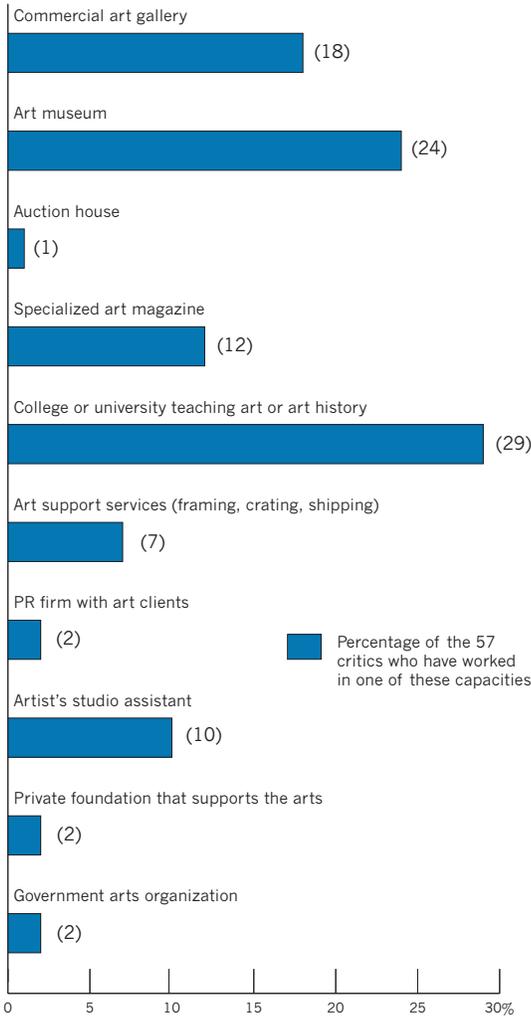


fig. 2.7 ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES

HAVE YOU EVER WORKED IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?



Note: Cumulative percentage exceeds 100% because some critics have held several jobs.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

JAMES ELKINS, PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, AND AUTHOR, "WHY ART CANNOT BE TAUGHT: A HANDBOOK FOR ART STUDENTS" (2001)

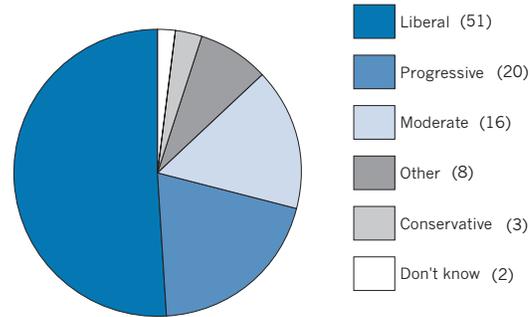
Newspaper art criticism in America today is entirely disconnected from serious discourse on art. It constitutes a separate genre of writing, which draws partly on conservative ideas about modernism, skill and the artist's position in society; and partly on commercial art writing that is done for exhibition brochures. It has no impact at art schools; it is not read, except by people who subscribe to *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker*. Their target audiences are people who know almost nothing about art and occasionally need to be placated by being told that contemporary art is not worth everything it's said to be.

Alternative papers sometimes employ more serious critics. In Chicago, the *Reader* is such a paper. But coverage is uneven: Many of the writers are students in art history, art education, arts administration and studio practice.

In Western Europe, criticism is generally at a far, far higher level: so much higher that it should be called a different kind of writing altogether. In South America, Asia and Eastern Europe, coverage is more uneven and tends to be addressed to a mixed audience.

Such multiple involvement in the art world—as reporter, as opinion-maker and as active participant—would be considered unusual, even taboo for journalists working on other beats, especially at daily papers. But art critics are often attracted to their job precisely because it allows them to function as a stakeholder and champion of the art world, not simply as a dispassionate observer of the scene. More on these concerns in Chapter 7, which examines dilemmas of professional ethics.

fig. 2.8 POLITICAL LEANINGS



POLITICAL ORIENTATION

Politically speaking, art critics generally fall near the left end of the ideological spectrum. Just over two-thirds of daily newspaper critics and 85 percent of alternative weekly critics describe themselves as liberal or progressive (only three daily critics and not a single alternative critic claim to be politically conservative). In fact, art critics were more likely to vote for

the Green Party in the 2000 presidential election than to vote Republican. Progressive political dispositions underlie art critics' positions on several issues in the visual arts today, including government arts funding and freedom of speech (see Chapter 6). ■

AGE GROUPS

Age accounts for significant disparities in taste, influence and opinion. Comparisons are made throughout this report between critics 46 years of age or older and critics 45 and under. These two groups differ in many obvious respects: median age, naturally (54 vs. 38 years), years spent in journalism (18 vs. 8), years writing about art (18 vs. 7) and years spent at their current publications (11 vs. 4). Members of the two age groups are, however, very similar in their level of educational attainment, their propensity to make art and work in arts-related fields, and even in their political leanings.

The new generation of art critics does represent one significant shift, however: The profession is becoming increasingly female. Over half (57 percent) of the younger group is female, while only a minority (44 percent) of the older group is made up of women.

No reassurance of this kind is to be found in the statistics on race. Older critics are 91 percent white and younger critics are 90 percent white. The new generation of writers does not promise to diversify the remarkably homogeneous ranks of art critics at general-interest news publications.

SMALL, MEDIUM, LARGE

Size matters when it comes to art criticism. We divided the daily newspaper critics in the survey into three groups, depending on the size of the publication they write for. Bearing in mind that all the papers in the survey were drawn from the top 200 U. S. news markets, significant variances in backgrounds and opinions exist between critics at smaller and larger publications. For example, art critics at the smallest (Tier 3) newspapers are younger and file fewer stories per month on average (median 4 vs. 8) than critics at the largest (Tier 1) papers. Tier 3 critics are also more likely to make art (45 percent vs. 34 percent), exhibit art (40 percent vs. 20 percent) and collect art (89 percent vs. 66 percent) than their counterparts at Tier 1 dailies.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

MATTHEW DRUTT, CHIEF CURATOR, THE MENIL COLLECTION, HOUSTON

Too many critics writing about exhibitions have never themselves organized a show. As a result, the numerous compromises imposed on projects—often by forces beyond an institution’s control—are typically ignored. Instead, the critic pounces upon a show and decides whether or not it is successful or not, as measured against his or her own ideal of what the project might have looked like.

Justifiable, perhaps, except that exhibitions live in the real world, one in which private collectors are becoming less inclined to part with their works, even temporarily. The post-9/11 realities of fine-arts insurance have radically transformed the economics of exhibitions, placing severe limits on the scope and depth of what one can reasonably afford to borrow and travel. Indeed, the world of loans is a labyrinth of political maneuvering that few curators, and certainly fewer critics, are trained to understand.

What critics do best is expand the audience for otherwise obscure modes of cultural activity. Criticism at both newspapers and specialized art magazines can, in some sense, be seen as a form of marketing. In the end, one wants a critical review, even if it is negative, if only to receive the attention. Even a bad review brings people in the door. The most gratifying aspect of a review is that it proves that what you did was important enough for someone to draft a public response.

Improvement in the relations between critics and arts institutions can only occur if there is less confrontation between the two domains. Aspirations to fair criticism are often compromised by lean research and truncated deadlines (not to mention copy editors, who reshape the original intentions of a piece of writing to make it conform to “house style”). When it comes to museums, we need more straightforward presentations about exhibitions, instead of trumped-up puffery contrived by marketing departments. Hype leads to expectations that are, more often than not, deflated by the actual product.

3. WORK AND REWARD

ART CRITICS BRING a generally high level of training and experience to the job, earning them a measure of autonomy in some newsrooms and a perception of esteem within their papers' arts departments. Four out of five daily critics and two out of three alternative weekly critics agreed that "the visual art beat is as well respected in my publication as other culture beats." Sports and business, of course, invariably receive more coverage than culture in daily newspapers.

Most art critics feel they receive useful editing, and they usually write about what they want. Three-fourths of the articles that art critics file are on subjects of their own choosing, based largely on suggestions from their personal network of sources. Only rarely do critics feel pressured by their superiors to write positive reviews to boost civic pride or please advertisers, nor do they feel particularly pressured to

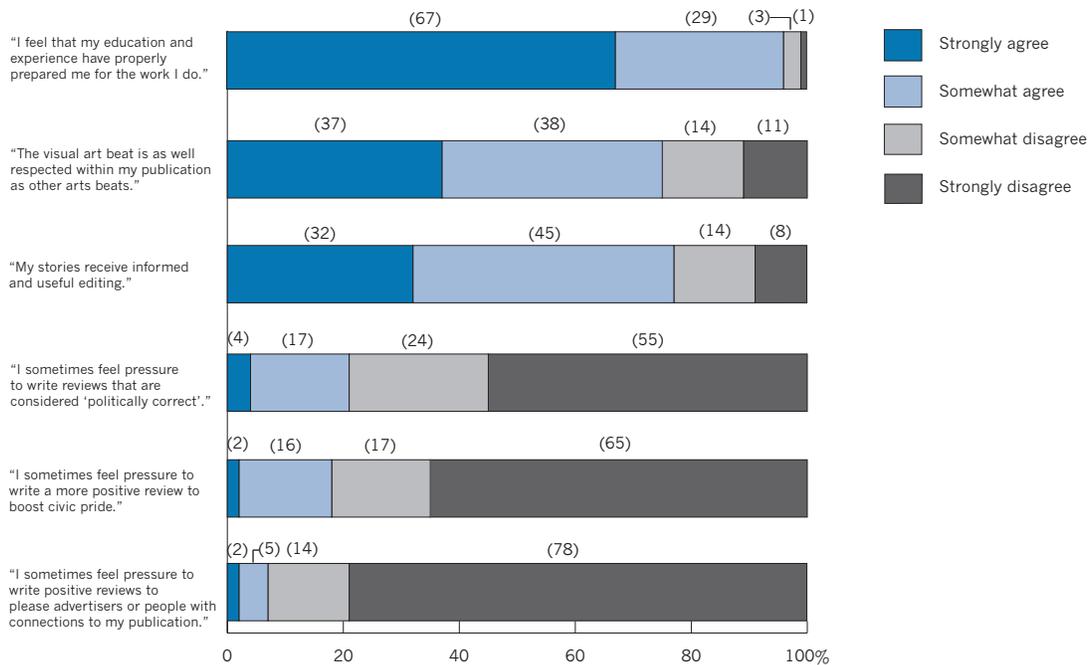
be "politically correct." Alternative weekly critics are especially free to pursue their work on such terms.

NEWSROOM STATUS

But the picture isn't uniformly bright. Some critics complain about "editorial conditions such as hostility, ignorance and indifference," as one writer at a big-city daily put it. "Scarcely any time during my 30 years has been free from it," this critic noted, "and an increasing editorial emphasis on popular culture has, in my experience, served only to disguise it."

The truth is that art (in general) isn't a key priority at many news publications. One-third of the surveyed critics said that their paper hasn't run a single visual art story on its front page in the previous six months (another fourth said their publication ran one). Part of the problem is that art critics don't fit neatly

fig. 3.1 CALLING THEIR OWN SHOTS



into the newsroom culture. They populate the fringes of the journalistic enterprise. They have a habit of filing from home, on loose deadlines, and they tend to deliver opinions instead of reporting facts—in much of criticism, there are no hard facts.

Art critics don't fit neatly into the newsroom culture.

One daily newspaper writer defined the critic's role as falling "somewhere between an active participant in a larger dialogue and a provocateur; mine has been mostly that of a pedagogical enthusiast." Another respondent cited Matthew Arnold to define the critic as "one who makes a disinterested effort to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." A writer at a small alternative weekly said, "I serve as a public sounding board for artists themselves, who have a difficult time gaining reasoned, dispassionate feedback in a small art market." These are hardly conventional images of a journalist in a modern American newsroom, and they help to explain why art critics are frequently misunderstood and marginalized there.

In fact, rare is the art critic nowadays who doesn't do some regular reporting. Only 16 percent of the survey respondents described their job as pure criticism (that is, all their stories are evaluative reviews). More than four out of five

Rare is the art critic nowadays who doesn't do some regular reporting.

critics, and even more at daily newspapers, regularly combine their criticism with some kind of reporting. More than a third of the critics in this survey predominantly file reported pieces on visual art and other subjects.

Nevertheless, the stigma of being "soft" is hard to shake. And feelings of mistrust can cut both ways. Many critics are skeptical about art's place in the newsroom. A writer at a large daily newspaper waxed despondent about "the plight of the critic-intellectual in the philistine world of journalists, who care nothing for ideas but glory in tales of forgery, theft and institutional peccadilloes."

MEN AND WOMEN

Younger and less experienced as both journalists and art writers (see Chapter 2), female critics are more likely to be freelancers (61 percent vs. 47 percent of male critics). Women file fewer stories, make less money and derive a smaller share of their overall income from criticism than men. Men, owing to their seniority and more frequent full-time employment, are more likely to hold the title of chief art critic, choose their own stories to cover and undertake work-related travel.

Female critics question the value of the editing they receive and feel more pressure to "write positive reviews to boost civic pride" (27 percent of women agree vs. 10 percent of men) or to file "politically correct reviews" (27 percent agree vs. 15 percent of men). Not surprisingly, female critics are less likely to feel that their beat is as well respected at the paper as other culture beats, and they are much less sanguine about the prospect that their publication would replace them if they left their job.

Female critics' median income from criticism is \$15,000 per year, while median income for male critics is more than double that amount, \$34,000. Because women are more likely to pursue criticism part time, only 30 percent of them earn more than three-fourths of their income from criticism; the corresponding number among men is 43 percent.

JOB SECURITY

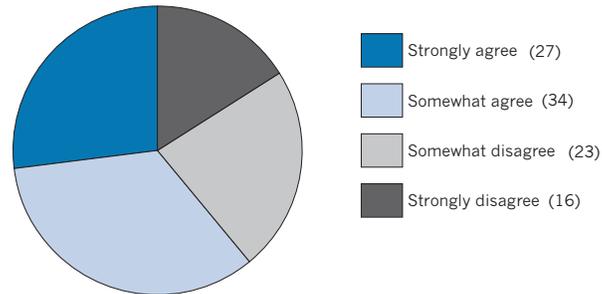
Daily newspaper critics—who are typically older and produce more—earn more, travel more and are more likely to hold full-time jobs. But considering art critics’ generally high level of educational attainment, the overall trend is one of tepid compensation and dim career outlook.

The lengthy tenures of daily art critics indicate a certain degree of job stability—but they can also be taken as a sign of a meager chance of upward mobility in the newsroom. Many art critics feel that the future of their beat is uncertain at best. Almost half of them said that their publications would not make it a priority to replace them if they left their jobs. Almost one out of five newspaper critics “strongly” felt that they would not be replaced.

In what appear to be isolated instances, concerns about job security can intersect with the content of a critic’s work. A few critics in the survey complained about being “stifled” by their corporate parent, mainly when it came to criticizing their papers’ advertisers. One newspaper writer put it this way: “I am never allowed to criticize any art or architecture belonging to institutions or individuals that

fig. 3.2 AN EXPENDABLE BEAT?

“IF I LEFT MY JOB, MY PUBLICATION WOULD MAKE FILLING MY JOB A PRIORITY.”



The majority of art critics work as part timers.

could hurt the paper’s advertising revenue—no controversy allowed in this corporately owned newspaper!” Another daily critic amplified this view: “There are extraordinary conflict-of-interest issues involving lots of dollars in this town that the paper refuses to cover because it may negatively impact their advertising revenues.”

fig. 3.3 FULL-TIME JOBS: A LUXURY

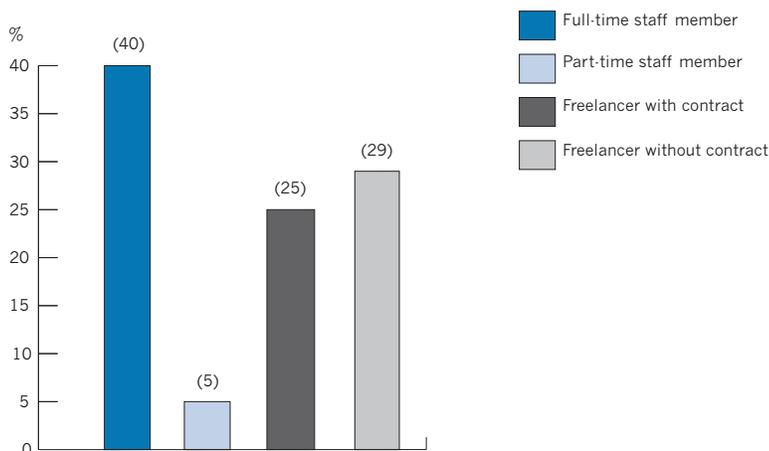
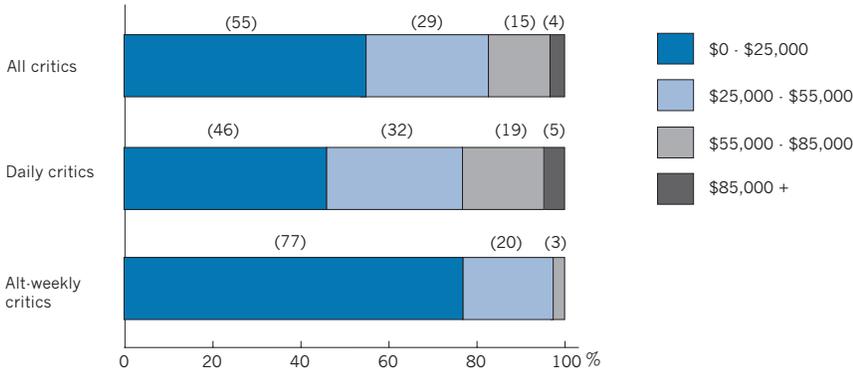
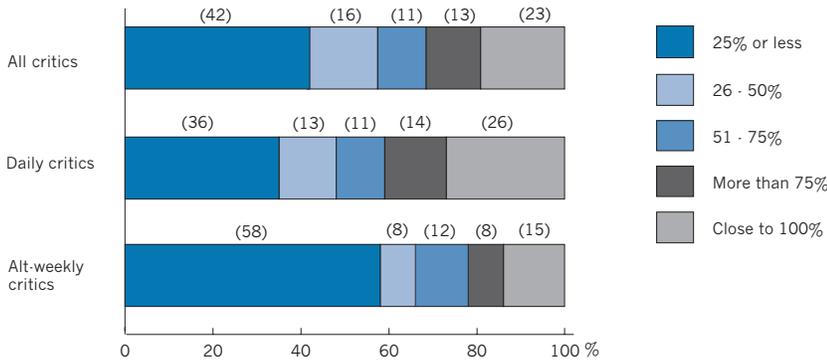


fig. 3.4 SALARIES

INCOME EARNED FROM ART CRITICISM



SHARE OF INCOME EARNED FROM ART CRITICISM



Such direct pressures undeniably exist sporadically, but there is no evidence to suggest that critics' job security is routinely jeopardized because of what they write. Instead of direct interference, an alternative weekly writer described a more plausible scenario: "Our editorial policy is, more or less, to ignore what advertisers think... although (as a result?) the lack of advertising means that my articles get pulled more frequently than film or music."

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

Full-time staffing is the strongest indicator of the importance of a given journalistic beat. Here the facts speak for themselves. The majority of art critic work as part-timers.

Only one out of two newspaper critics and less than one out of ten alternative weekly critics is a full-time member of their publication's staff—and many of those full-timers cover a second or even third beat in addition to visual art. Most alternative weekly art critics (56 percent) don't even have a freelance contract (the same is true for one-fifth of daily newspaper art critics).

As a result, more often than not, critics squeeze in their coverage of visual art amid other responsibilities. Being pulled in several directions has an inevitable downside. "The splitting of my beat between art and theater puts too much pressure on my time to allow

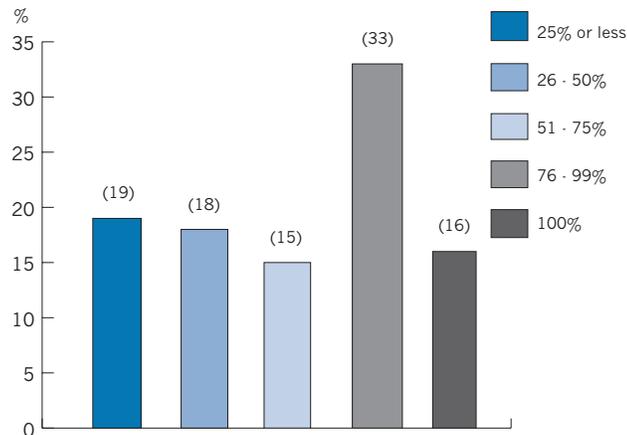
me to do a thorough job as a critic,” a writer for a midsize daily observed. “It also rules out many larger, non-review stories about art.”

COMPENSATION

Income patterns reflect employment patterns. While art critics’ household incomes exceed the national average, the majority (58 percent) make only half or less of their total earnings from art writing. The situation is worse for alternative weekly critics, who make less than a quarter of their income from their criticism. Only about a dozen art critics in mainstream news publications in America earn over \$75,000 from their criticism. Over one-third of newspaper art critics (38 percent) and nearly two-thirds of alternative weekly critics (64 percent) earn less than \$15,000 a year from art criticism.

fig. 3.5 NOT JUST REVIEWS

PERCENTAGE OF ALL STORIES THAT ARE EVALUATIVE REVIEWS OF VISUAL ART



SMALL, MEDIUM, LARGE

In the majority of publications, small and large, the visual arts generally receive less coverage than classical music or books. Critics at the smallest (Tier 3) papers, however, are more likely to report that their publications devote more coverage to visual arts than to classical music (40 percent of Tier 3 critics said visual arts receive more coverage vs. 28 percent of Tier 1 critics) or books (28 percent vs. 8 percent). Critics at smaller papers are also less likely to say they receive useful editing (67 percent agree vs. 88 percent agreement at Tier 1 papers).

Pressure to conform reviews to external influences is felt most acutely at Tier 2 newspapers and least acutely by critics at the largest papers. Critics at midsize papers are:

- Considerably more likely than either Tier 1 or Tier 3 papers to feel pressure to write positive reviews to boost civic pride (34 percent at Tier 2 papers vs. 10 percent at Tier 1 papers and 18 percent at Tier 3 papers)
- Somewhat more likely than either Tier 1 or Tier 3 papers to feel pressure to write politically correct reviews (29 percent at Tier 2 papers vs. 22 percent at Tier 1 papers and 18 percent at Tier 3 papers)
- Nearly as likely as Tier 3 papers, but far more likely than Tier 1 papers, to feel pressure to write positive reviews to please advertisers (12 percent at Tier 2 vs. 2 percent at Tier 1 vs. 15 percent at Tier 3 papers)

OUTPUT

How much do art critics produce? To qualify for this survey, critics had to file at least a dozen evaluative pieces for their publication in the previous year. Of course, the actual number of stories filed is typically much higher, especially among newspaper critics, who are more likely to work full-time (28 percent of newspaper critics file upward of 10 articles a month, compared with 4 percent of alternative weekly critics). In the final analysis, art critics generate, on average, about five visual art stories per month. These are more or less evenly split between critical and reported pieces—the standard weekly load of one article or column. In the next chapter we take a look at what is contained in these articles. ■

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

KENNETH HALE, ARTIST AND CHAIR,
ART AND ART HISTORY DEPARTMENT,
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS/AUSTIN

Our local publications, the *Austin Chronicle* and the *Austin American-Statesman*, do a mixed job with art criticism. Many exhibitions go unrecognized or appear in print after the fact. When the critic successfully describes the art and contextualizes the artist's work in terms of contemporary and historical references, the writing is more pertinent to the reading audience that's interested in art. However, too often the writing is about the critic's opinion and does little to engage the reader to make them want to see for themselves.

National-level publications like *The New York Times* have an impact on the teaching of art. Contemporary criticism classes and seminars are directly influenced when articles are used as resources for discussions. Studio faculty and students often use the criticism in *The New York Times* for theoretical discussions. But criticism about art has less impact in the community than criticism about art politics.

In newspapers, critics for music, theater and dance seem to have a greater passion for their subject. The descriptions are more in-depth and contextualized. But, in a very general sense, I believe that today's art criticism is more diverse and all-encompassing than that of the past. In the past, newspaper art criticism was mostly written like a gossip and opinion forum.

4. THE MISSION

ART CRITICS' OPINIONS about what their work ought to accomplish are as varied as their backgrounds and work situations. They set the following goals for their enterprise²: educating readers; describing art works; forming a "bridge" or opening a "dialogue" between artists and readers; evaluating art; placing art in an historical, cultural or political context; writing well; motivating readers to see and buy art; motivating artists to produce work; introducing readers to different cultures and alternative viewpoints; and finally, entertaining readers.

THE PURPOSES OF CRITICISM

Here is a sampling of characteristic (edited and abbreviated) comments on the purposes of art criticism and the role of the art critic in the community:

- "Art criticism for a general readership of a newspaper is a kind of translation. It must be written in a way that will engage the casual or curious reader and yet not insult the informed." (Critic at midsize daily newspaper)
- "It should be personal, daring, idiosyncratic, and sometimes wrong. It shouldn't be afraid to be entertaining. It should assert the possibility of direct, informed experience of art by the general viewer, taking it back from the priesthood of academics, theorists and curators who attempt to mediate it." (Critic at alternative weekly)
- "Art today is becoming increasingly complex and referential; aspects of culture and identity are constantly being brought to the fore, by either implication or association, and need clarification if none is provided." (Critic at small daily newspaper)
- "Ideally, a piece of art criticism should place a work in a larger context, give readers reasons for possible interest in the work, and evaluate the relative success or failure of segments of the work in question. In practice, evaluation is frequently a slippery thing, historical context (much less intellectual context) is almost impossible in the word count permitted, and only strongly worded injunctions to the reader regarding why they should give a damn about this particular body of work can be accomplished in the given amount of space." (Critic at large daily newspaper)
- "I try to play down the expectation some readers may have that the visual arts are highbrow and elitist by writing clearly and without willful obfuscation or specialist jargon." (Critic at midsize daily newspaper)
- "Fundamentally, we are paid to inform the reader of what's in town, if it's worth tearing himself away from the TV to see it, and why it's important." (Critic at midsize daily newspaper)
- "The art critic's role is one of setting standards against which the citizens can evaluate the genuine and the fraudulent." (Critic at midsize daily newspaper)
- "The critic is the audience member with the loudest voice, and has the greatest responsibility to tell the truth about what he sees and why he sees it that way." (Critic at midsize daily newspaper)

²Based on responses to open-ended questions, "What do you think a piece of art criticism should accomplish?" and "What is the role of the visual art critic in the community?"

FOCUS ON CONTEMPORARY AND LOCAL ART

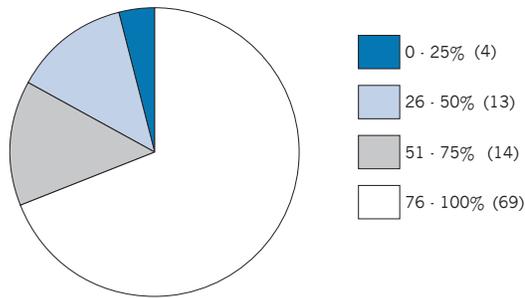
While individual approaches to criticism may vary, art critics at mainstream news publications generally focus their attention on the contemporary art scene. Seven out of ten critics deal almost exclusively with living artists in their reviews. Only a dozen critics in the study (all of whom work for daily newspapers) write predominantly about artists who are no longer living.

The wide range of interests contradicts the cliché of the critic as aesthete, walled off in an ivory tower, impervious to the real-life dimensions of art.

Close to a third (29 percent) of American art critics never write about artists and exhibitions beyond the immediate circulation area of their publication (more than one out of five art critics never travel on assignment). A sound majority of art critics (58 percent) never write about art, artists and exhibitions abroad. The characteristic localism of American art criticism

fig. 4.1 FOCUS: CONTEMPORARY ART

PERCENTAGE OF REVIEWS THAT FOCUS ON THE WORK OF LIVING ARTISTS

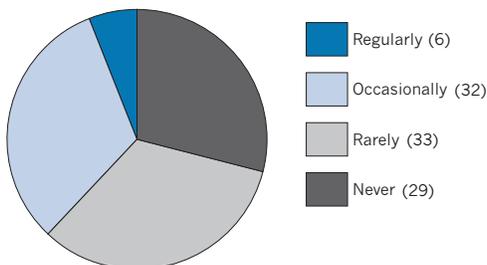


is especially noticeable at smaller and mid-size papers. There is a striking lack of writing—or opportunity to write—in those papers about art in other parts of the United States. Geographic myopia most afflicts alternative weekly newspapers, at which over half of critics do not cover art in other parts of the country and more than two out of three critics forgo writing about art around the world.

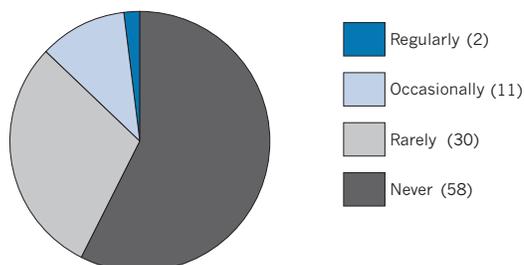
fig. 4.2 A LOCAL BEAT

HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU FILE THE FOLLOWING KINDS OF STORIES?

Art, artists and exhibitions in other parts of the country



Art, artists and exhibitions in another country



In this respect, art criticism is unquestionably out of step with the visual art world, which long ago became national and international in scope. But in fairness to critics, this localism is not unique to the visual art beat—it is symptomatic of the editorial policies that govern cultural coverage in general-interest news publications. Newspapers and alternative weeklies tend to restrict their cultural coverage to local artists and events for cost reasons and as a way of competitively differentiating themselves from national media. Nevertheless, as the gulf widens between the internationalism of the art world and the localism of the news media, readers must look to specialized publications for information and insight about current trends in visual art.

RANGE OF SUBJECTS

The range of stories covered by art critics defies easy generalization. About three-quarters of the critics in the survey regularly or occasionally file artists' profiles and articles on folk art and outsider art. Public art, craft and design also make a strong showing among the critics' frequently covered subjects. Two-thirds of the critics write think pieces on arts and culture on a regular or occasional basis, and close to half regularly or occasionally write on political issues (such as arts funding and censorship) and controversies involving museums and the art market (e.g. disputed provenance, acquisitions and budgetary and management issues). Stories about collectors, arts education and the ethical conduct of arts officials, although less frequent, are covered by a robust number of critics from time to time.

This wide range of interests contradicts the cliché of the critic as aesthete, walled off in an ivory tower, impervious to the real-life dimensions of art. Art critics, frequently doubling as reporters or editorial writers, are in fact deeply concerned about the commercial, ethical, political and institutional dynamics of the art world.

MOST FREQUENTLY COVERED TOPICS

fig. 4.3

Percentage of critics who cover these topics regularly or occasionally			
	ALL CRITICS	DAILY CRITICS	ALT-WEEKLY CRITICS
Profiles of artists	75	81	61
Folk art/outsider art	72	71	72
Public art	69	67	74
Craft and design	65	69	58
Think pieces on art and culture	63	66	54
Art acquisitions	49	56	32
Overview articles about a city, country, visual art scene or genre	47	49	45
Arts funding	42	47	28

LEAST FREQUENTLY COVERED TOPICS

Percentage of critics who cover these topics never or rarely			
	ALL CRITICS	DAILY CRITICS	ALT-WEEKLY CRITICS
Disputed ownership or provenance of artworks	91	88	100
Controversies over unethical conduct or conflict of interest concerning art exhibitions	81	82	80
Auctions, collectors and the art market	74	69	85
Obituaries	71	66	86
Lectures, talks and seminars	70	67	78
Arts education	69	66	74
Budgetary and management issues surrounding arts institutions	66	59	86
Books and ideas	59	59	59

DIMENSIONS OF REVIEWING

In the popular imagination, the critic is first and foremost someone who judges: “one who forms and expresses judgments of the merits, faults, value or truth of the matter,” to quote the *American Heritage Dictionary* definition. But for art critics themselves, judging works does not appear to be the pressing concern. Only 27 percent of the critics in the study said that they place a great deal of emphasis on “rendering a personal judgment or opinion about the works being reviewed,” making it the least important of five dimensions of reviewing queried in the survey.

Instead of emphasizing judgment, critics gave top ranking to “providing an accurate descriptive account,” followed by “providing historical and other background information” about the work

being reviewed. Creating a piece of writing with literary value was likewise a significant concern, outranking “theorizing about the meaning, associations and implications” of the work.

In overwhelming numbers, art critics see themselves as educators.

These priorities were fairly consistent among the various kinds of critics. Those at alternative weeklies were somewhat more likely to emphasize the literary dimension of their work. Critics at daily newspapers put more stress on creating accurate descriptive accounts. But no matter

fig. 4.4 CRITICISM: WHAT MATTERS

HOW MUCH EMPHASIS DO YOU PLACE ON THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF CRITICISM?

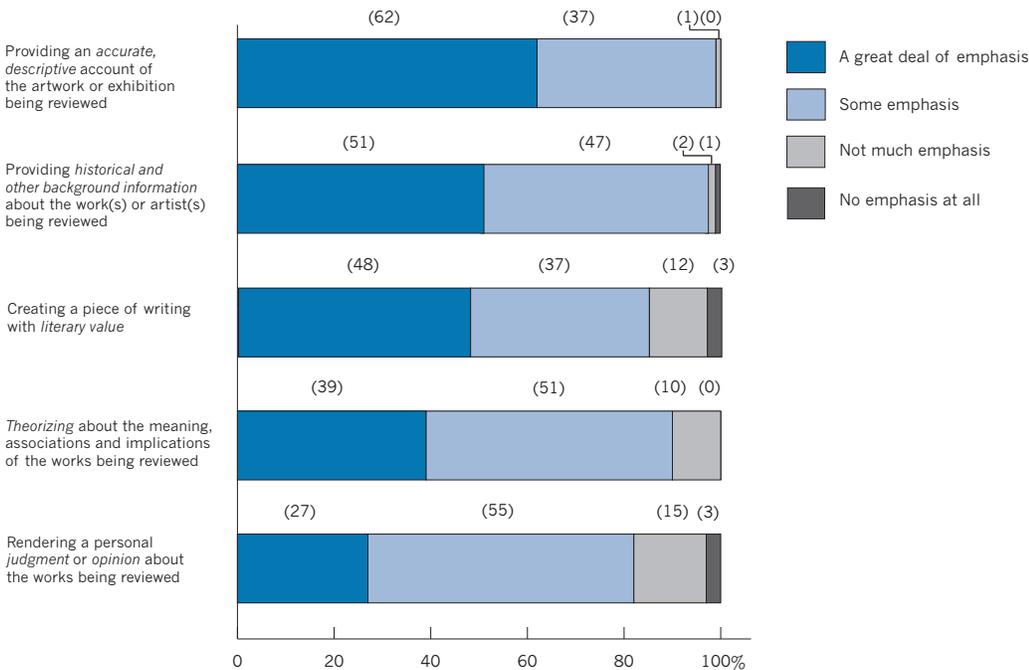
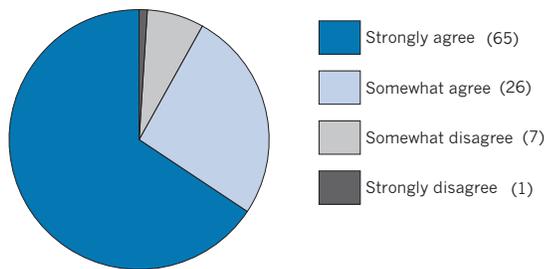
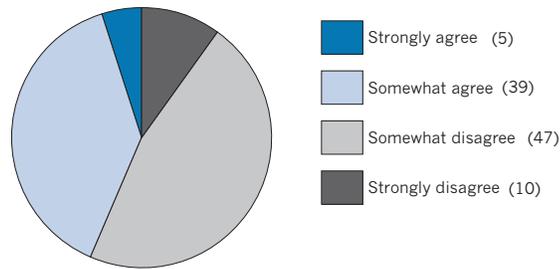


fig. 4.5 THE CRITIC AS EDUCATOR

“MY JOB IS TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC”



“READERS HAVE A BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF ART AND ART HISTORY”



what their preferred approach, critics usually see their job as one of attracting an audience to art and offering context and background to help readers understand the meaning and appreciate the relevance of the artist or art works being discussed.

TEACHING AND ADVOCACY

This emphasis on description and contextualization brings us to a seminal characteristic of art critics, one that clearly sets them apart from their colleagues in other news departments. In overwhelming numbers, art critics see themselves as educators. No fewer than 91 percent of the critics in the survey agreed with the statement, “I feel it is my job to educate the public about visual art and why it matters.”³

It is not unusual for critics to feel disconnected and out of touch with their readers’ tastes.

As a writer at a large metropolitan daily observed, “My job is to get the general public to realize they can enjoy much more art than they know.” There is a proselytizing, missionary aspect to the enterprise. A critic who works in Northern California put it this way: “Although the general population here is said to be one of the best educated in the United States, it is

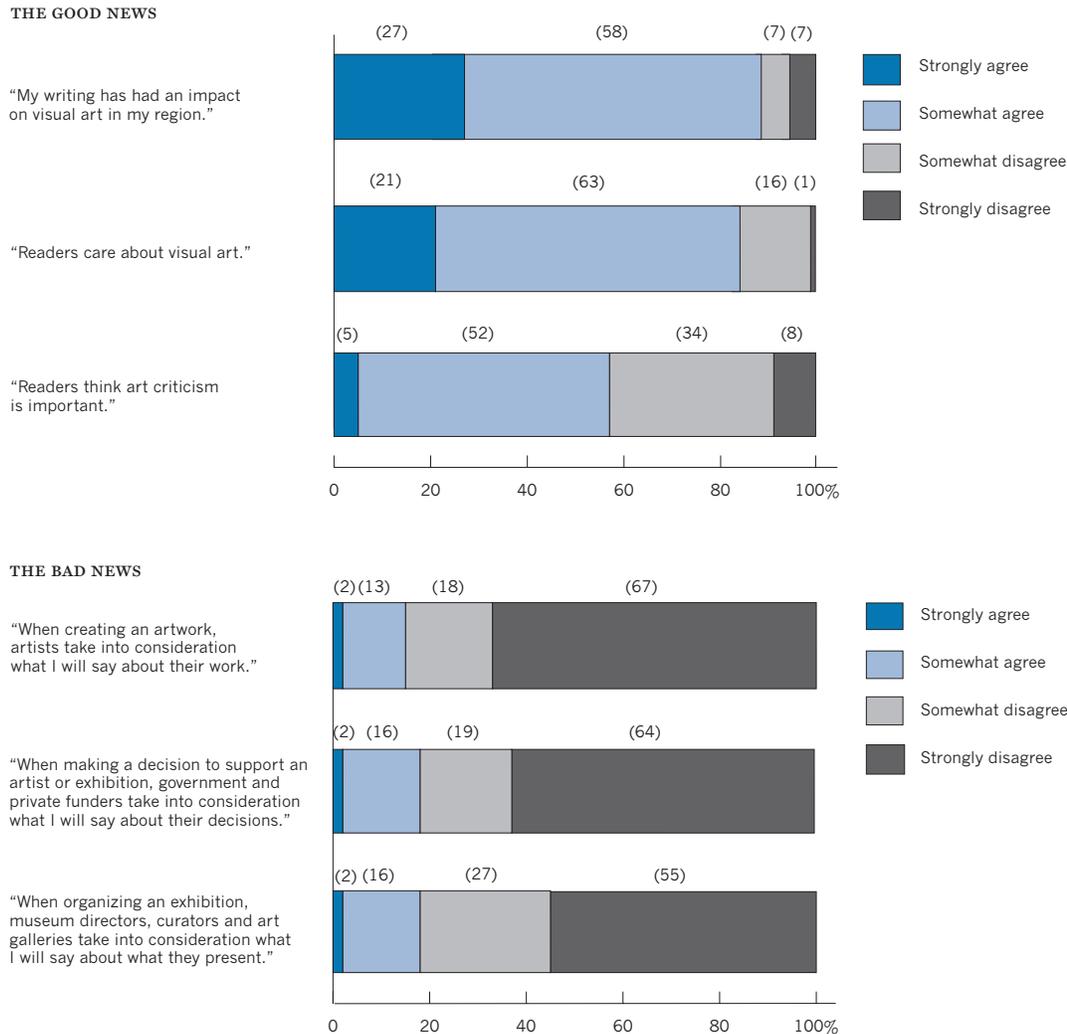
MEN AND WOMEN

Perhaps because they hold senior newsroom positions in greater numbers, and because they write more stories in general, male critics weigh in more frequently with think pieces and book reviews, and they write more often than women on controversial topics like censorship, disputed ownership, budgetary issues and arts funding. Female critics only cover one subject significantly more often than their male counterparts: craft and design.

Male critics are more likely than female critics to feel that they have influence in the art world: They are slightly more likely to feel their work has influenced art in their region and are somewhat more likely to feel they have an influence on artists and museum directors. In addition, male art critics are more than twice as likely to feel that government and private patrons consider what they have to say when making funding decisions (25 percent of male critics agreed with the proposition vs. 11 percent of female critics).

Female critics identify more closely with the role of the critic as educator—75 percent strongly agreed that their job is to “educate the public” as compared to 57 percent among male art critics.

fig. 4.6 THE CRITIC IN THE COMMUNITY



often unsophisticated in matters of visual art. I see my job as an educator-critic as a result. I don't complain, but it is a challenge."

The main problem for critics is not a lack of interest on the part of their readers (no fewer than 84 percent of the surveyed critics agreed that "readers care about visual art"). The real

challenge is that the public is not properly informed or educated about art to respond enthusiastically to art criticism (57 percent of the critics do not feel that "readers have a basic understanding of visual art and art history"). For this reason, it is not unusual for critics to feel disconnected and out of touch with their readers' tastes.

⁹In this respect, the missions of daily and weekly critics diverge somewhat: 74 percent of the daily critics "strongly agreed" that their job has an educational function, compared with only 42 percent of weekly critics.

“Despite writing what I hope is intelligent and generally supportive criticism of local artists for more than 15 years,” observed a writer for a mid-size daily, “most readers would still rather look at yet another Impressionist exhibition than a well-curated exhibit of contemporary art. Is that my fault? I know some artists who think it is.”

Art critics appreciate that they have some degree of influence, but that doesn't mean they have great confidence in their power to shape the discourse of the art world.

A clear majority (70 percent) of American art critics believe that their taste in art is different from that of their average reader. Critics at smaller papers, it should be noted, are less likely to feel this way: 43 percent of critics at the smaller papers in the study agreed that “my tastes in visual art are similar to those of the average reader of my publication”; only 23 percent of critics in larger newspapers believe this to be the case.

WHO IS LISTENING?

Conflicting signals from the audience and a sense of alienation from mainstream tastes help to explain why so many critics feel ambivalent about their role in their community. Critics feel their audience cares about art, but they are nevertheless estranged from average readers—“writing in a void” was how one put it. Critics want to educate the public, but they also understand that, ultimately, only a narrow slice of the readership will appreciate their effort. A writer at a midsize paper complained, “My work is read by a small, specialized, educated audience that takes my opinion quite seriously. The majority of the readership couldn't care less.”

AGE GROUPS

Older critics (46 and over) are more likely to write about craft and design, auctions and art acquisitions. They also write more frequently about arts abroad and in other parts of the United States. The two subjects that younger critics cover more frequently are budgetary and management issues and arts education (this may reflect the fact that younger critics are more likely to double as art reporters, and many are female).

Both age groups focus to a roughly similar extent on contemporary art. Older critics actually write slightly more on the art of the moment (85 percent of their reviews are about living artists vs. 80 percent of younger critics' reviews).

Older critics (many of whom are at dailies) are more likely than younger ones to emphasize accurate descriptions of artworks and contextual information in their reviews. Younger critics, on the other hand, place the greatest emphasis upon writing reviews with literary value. This may mean that an emerging generation of critics has a stronger literary bent—or that literary ambitions fall by the wayside as more years are spent on the job.

More so than their older counterparts, younger critics tend to theorize and offer judgments about artworks in their reviews. They are also more cantankerous than older critics (the alternative weeklies, where many young critics work, tend to be more accepting of sharp opinions). Slightly over half (54 percent) of art critics under 45 said they write predominantly positive reviews, in contrast with two-thirds (66 percent) of older critics. The three critics in the survey who said that their reviews are predominantly negative are all under 46 years of age. It would seem, therefore, that art critics mellow slightly with age.

Art critics have similarly mixed feelings about their influence inside the art world. Although the majority believe that “my writing has had an impact on visual art in my region,” most critics nonetheless disagree with the proposition that “when creating an artwork, artists will take into consideration what I will say.” Likewise, most critics disagree with the idea that “when making a decision to support an artist or exhibition, government and private funders take into consideration what I will say.”

In short, art critics appreciate that they have some degree of influence, but that doesn’t mean they have great confidence in their power to shape the discourse of the art world. They are insiders, but only to a point. Art critics, in their own perception, ultimately stay on the sidelines, responding to events.

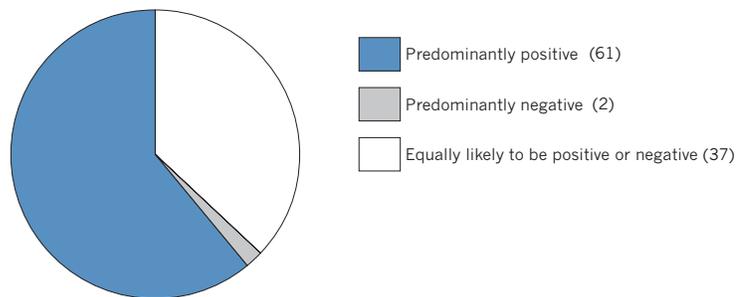
Almost two-thirds of the critics in our survey claimed that their reviews were predominantly positive.

Getting pulled in too deep, in any case, would have its drawbacks. A critic at a midsize daily newspaper summarized the trade-off as follows: “Contemporary art critics face a dilemma.

Unlike movie critics or drama critics, they regularly deal with esoteric and obscure art forms that the average newspaper reader might find completely baffling. The critic speaks the language, understands the motives behind the art. His job then is partly one of the translator, to explain ‘difficult’ art to the reader. Being able to interpret the mysteries bestows a certain importance on the critic, making him essential to the whole enterprise, an insider. It can be a seductive role. It can be very, very difficult, then, for a critic to step back and make a clear-headed, unbiased appraisal, especially if doing so means pronouncing something artistically worthless or nonsensical. He’s too heavily invested.”

fig. 4.7 RAVE REVIEWS

DOES YOUR CRITICISM TEND TO BE PREDOMINANTLY NEGATIVE OR PREDOMINANTLY POSITIVE?



An alternative weekly writer put his feelings about the liminal position of the art critic more succinctly: “It’s not an occupation for scenesters, wannabes and hangers-on. It’s a chancy job, and it makes a man watchful—and a little lonely.”

POSITIVE LEANINGS

Consistent with critics’ self-image as educators and proselytizers is their predilection for writing positive reviews. In a finding that may surprise some readers of art criticism, almost two-thirds of the critics in our survey claimed that their reviews were predominantly positive. Fewer than one out of 50 critics (a total of three critics out of 169 who completed the survey) said that they filed mostly negative reviews. Critics in smaller publications (see sidebar on p. 32) in particular tend to deliver positive judgments.

Practical considerations partly explain these positive leanings. Most critics cited space constraints—limited space only leaves room for artists of merit, who typically generate positive judgments. More complex reasons were also suggested: “By the time an artist makes it from studio, to gallery, to exhibition—and we decide to spend the time gathering news on it—the entire process has already weeded out the less worthy efforts,” wrote one survey respondent.

There are some who believe that reviewing bad art simply isn't worth the effort: "I think it's my job to cover good work," noted a big-city-paper critic. "The absence of a review speaks for itself." And then there is the fear factor: "I wish I could write using a pseudonym," complained a writer at a larger-than-average daily. "If I write anything negative in this Midwestern town where I now live, either I or my husband are punished in all sorts of interesting ways."

Ultimately, the distaste for negative judgments follows from critics' sense of obligation to their chosen field. Insofar as critics have any power, they prefer to use it to promote the best work that artists in their communities have to offer. One daily critic from the Midwest described the mission this way: "We live in Iowa—anyone doing anything here has to be encouraged." ■

SMALL, MEDIUM, LARGE

The priorities of art critics at larger papers are markedly different from those of their peers in Tier 2 and Tier 3 publications. Above all, they place more than twice as much emphasis on rendering judgments about art works (43 percent of critics at Tier 1 papers place a great deal of emphasis on this, vs. 20 percent at Tier 2 and 18 percent at Tier 3 papers).

Critics at larger papers are also more interested in theorizing about the implications of artworks (50 percent place a great deal of emphasis on this aspect of criticism vs. 34 percent and 33 percent, respectively, of Tier 2 and Tier 3 critics). On the other hand, critics at larger papers are less likely to emphasize historical or background information (43 percent at Tier 1 vs. 59 percent at Tier 2 and 60 percent at Tier 3 papers). One area where critics at midsize papers diverge from the average is their relative lack of emphasis on writing articles with literary value (only 32 percent of Tier 2 critics place a great deal of emphasis on literary accomplishment, compared to 50 percent and 48 percent, respectively, among Tier 1 and Tier 3 critics).

There are significant differences in the range of stories covered by critics at different-size papers. Critics at smaller papers are more likely to write about lectures and talks, arts education and overviews of a city or an art scene. Critics at smaller papers are less likely to write about freedom of expression and censorship, the art market, art in other parts of the country, or obituaries. Critics at midsize papers generally fall between larger and smaller papers, except when it comes to articles on arts funding and budgetary/management issues.

Finally, critics at smaller papers are much more likely to write positive reviews. A clear majority of Tier 3 critics (71 percent) writes in a positive vein, compared to 54 percent and 57 percent, respectively, for critics at Tier 1 and Tier 2 papers.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD
WILLIAM POPE.L, ARTIST, MAINE

Art criticism in newspapers today is propelled by: 1) topicality; 2) entertainment value; and 3) newsworthiness (the notion of “newsworthiness” is in part subsumed by Nos. 1 and 2). Some writers, such as C. Carr or Barbara Pollack (both at the *Village Voice*) and Holland Cotter (*The New York Times*), try to get behind what’s going on in an artwork, though this may be difficult to articulate. Their ability to excavate with some power indicates a goal that moves beyond people-pleasing and the bottom line.

Even so, I believe the art critic’s real function is to create an aura around an artwork by writing smart, gem-like, brisk and entertaining commercials for galleries, museums, collectors, corporations and artists. Many art institutions require artists to submit articles or clippings about their work to substantiate their reputation. An article or clipping from *The New York Times* is very important. However, to only be represented in newspapers can suggest one has not “arrived.”

Reviews of visual art seldom, and usually only disparagingly, mention money or popularity. Yet movie reviews tend to revel in attendance figures and box-office numbers. For many movie reviewers, these signs are proof positive of a successful film. Some might feel this is a crude means of evaluating a film. Perhaps it is. But others might say that movie reviews come off as more direct, maybe even more honest, than visual art reviews. In the end, all writing is about struggle. Words are the stones in the alley. Disagreement is the blood in the courtyard.

5. TASTE AND INFLUENCE

WHAT DO ART critics like to write about? The critics in the survey made clear distinctions between the kinds of art they enjoy writing about and those they prefer not to write about. Their preferences mirror the conventional hierarchy of art forms, but only to a point.

ART FORMS

Critics most prefer to write about painting. It earned most-favored status among three out of four critics, making it more than twice as popular as photography, which edged out sculpture as the second most preferred art form. The latter finding confirms photography’s recent ascent in prestige and popularity in the art world and art market. Installations and conceptual art are also popular subjects for American art critics.

The art form critics least like to write about—online art—may owe its lackluster appeal to its newcomer status relative to other genres (half of the critics designated it as one of their three least preferred topics). In addition, art critics are not particularly interested in writing about crafts, posters and prints. Established avant-garde genres such as performance art and video works also met with a halfhearted response.

Art critics at general-interest news publications are visibly turned off by academically influenced strains of art, notably, “art openly indebted to theory” and “artworks exploring issues of identity.” This disdain for theory—both as a component of art and as an approach to critical writing—surfaces frequently in their comments. As a writer at a midsize newspaper warned, the goal of art criticism “is not to simply proffer theory first and then attach art to it.”

MAPPING DISTINCTIONS

Criticism is ultimately a manifestation of taste, which informs the fine distinctions critics make in their evaluations of artists and artworks. Taste, in turn, is influenced by the writers and theorists who shape a given reviewer’s approach to art and criticism. But any exercise in mapping the subtle gradations of taste and influence with the empirical tools of survey research has its limitations.

We prepared a list of 58 potentially influential authors for critics to rate in the survey. On the list were historic role models (Giorgio Vasari, Matthew Arnold, Oscar Wilde), widely read art historians (T.J. Clark, E.H. Gombrich), philoso-

THE CRITIC’S CHOICE *fig. 5.1*

CRITICS MOST LIKE TO WRITE ABOUT		CRITICS LEAST LIKE TO WRITE ABOUT	
Percentage of critics who listed this as one of their <i>most favorite</i> areas to write about		Percentage of critics who listed this as one of their <i>least favorite</i> areas to write about	
Painting	77	Online art	51
Photography	35	Art indebted to theory	47
Sculpture	32	Crafts	32
Conceptual art	27	Posters and prints	27
Drawing	20	Performance	23
Outsider art	20	Video	22
		Art exploring issues of identity	22

Note: Critics chose, from among 19 categories, their three favorite and three least favorite areas to write about. As a result, percentages add up to more than 100%.

phers and sociologists (John Dewey, Pierre Bourdieu), classical figures in American art writing (Clement Greenberg, Meyer Schapiro), leading voices in contemporary art criticism (Arthur Danto, Dave Hickey), critics who mainly write for a popular newspaper audience (Michael Kimmelman, Jerry Saltz), public intellectuals (Susan Sontag, bell hooks), specialists of particular art disciplines (the outsider art expert Roger Cardinal, the photography writer John Szarkowski, the new-media curator Barbara London), proponents of contemporary academic theoretical writing (Julia Kristeva, Homi Bhabha) and popularizers (Sister Wendy).

We asked critics to rate 84 living artists who similarly range across the board in the contemporary art world, from blue-chip names that have been in the spotlight for decades to younger artists who achieved public recognition more recently. The critics were invited to express their like or dislike of conceptual artists, video artists, photographers, political artists, painters, performance artists, sculptors, installation makers, artists from throughout the United States and from other countries, and so on.

In asking art critics to evaluate influential writers and living artists, we were not primarily interested in generating horserace rankings and top-10 lists; our goal was to arrive at illustrative groups of names. The predetermined lists are not comprehensive and therefore cannot provide a definitive, exhaustive rank ordering of critics' favorite artists and authors. They do, however, indicate the *types of thinkers* who exert an influence on today's art critics and the *types of artists* who tend to be liked or disliked by them (see Methodological Note, right).

WRITERS AND THEORISTS

For a theorist or writer to have an influence upon a visual art critic, the critic must first be aware that the theorist exists. Second, the works of the theorist must have an impact, in some way, upon the critic's work. Statistically speaking, the most influential theorists and writers are those who

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE: THE RANKINGS

Critics were asked to rate 58 theorists and 84 living artists. The lists were based on suggestions from working art critics and were designed to elicit responses on a broad range of theoretical influences and working artists. We tried to avoid listing more than one or two names associated with a particular publication, aesthetic orientation or historical period. It would have been difficult to elicit responses on a longer list, and not too useful. The goal was to evaluate clusters of indicative names, which point to larger patterns of influence and preference. Many important artists and writers are by design missing from the evaluation.

The rating scales used for evaluating authors and artists consisted of five possible responses. For authors/theorists, the responses were "very influential," "somewhat influential," "not very influential," "not influential at all" and "no opinion." For artists, the options were "like a great deal," "like somewhat," "dislike somewhat," "dislike a great deal" and "no opinion."

Three kinds of rank orderings emerge from the ratings. The most straightforward is *general evaluation*: the percentage of critics who assigned a favorable rating—i.e., "very influential" or "somewhat influential" for authors, "like a great deal" or "like somewhat" for artists. For example, 61 percent of critics found Susan Sontag "very or somewhat influential." Likewise, 85 percent of critics like the work of Maya Lin "a great deal" or "somewhat."

The general evaluation of a theorist measures how widespread (if not necessarily how deep) that theorist's influence has become among art critics. Put another way, it answers the question, "What percentage of art critics has been influenced by this particular theorist?" For artists, general evaluation measures how widely (if not how deeply) the artist is liked by critics. In other words, "What percentage of art critics likes this particular artist?"

The second ranking, *recognition*, derives from the percentage of critics who entered a rating other than "no opinion" for a particular author or artist. Our assumption was that entering a positive or negative rating was a reasonable indication of familiarity with the work of a given author or artist. For example, 87 percent of critics appear to be familiar enough with Susan Sontag's work to submit a rating next to her name. Similarly, 90 percent of the critics were familiar enough with Maya Lin's work to be able to say that they liked or disliked her work.

The third level of analysis we called *informed evaluation*: It is based only on the opinions of critics who entered a rating other than "no opinion" for a given author or artist. The ranking is a weighted average that assigns different values to each response category, adding extra weight to "very influential" (for authors) and "like a great deal" (for artists).

For example, Susan Sontag's rating among critics familiar enough with her writing to rate it was 1.81 on a scale where "very influential" was assigned a weight of 3, "somewhat influential" a weight of 2, "not very influential" a weight of 1, and "not influential at all" a weight of zero. The 1.81 rating means that, among critics who know Sontag's work, her average evaluation is close to "somewhat influential" (which corresponds to the value of 2). On the artists' side, Maya Lin's rating was 1.98, where "like a great deal" was assigned a weight of 3, "like somewhat" a weight of 1, "dislike somewhat" a weight of -1, and "dislike a great deal" a weight of -3. The 1.98 rating means that, among critics who know her work, Lin's average rating is almost exactly halfway between "like a great deal" (which corresponds to 3) and "like somewhat" (which corresponds to 1).

Each of the three rankings says something different, and placement on them can vary. Sontag, for example, ranked first in recognition, second in general evaluation, and third in informed evaluation—impressive ratings, all. By contrast, Julian Schnabel, who was the 13th most familiar artist, is 60th in the general evaluation, and in the rankings of critics who actually rated his work, he came in 82nd—third from last.

INFLUENTIAL WRITERS AND THEORISTS

fig. 5.2

RECOGNITION % of critics who rated the author		GENERAL EVALUATION % of critics who rated as “very” or “somewhat” influential		INFORMED EVALUATION On scale of 3 (“very influential”) to 0 (“not influential at all”)	
Susan Sontag	87	Clement Greenberg	63	Peter Schjeldahl	1.88
Clement Greenberg	86	Susan Sontag	61	Clement Greenberg	1.84
Robert Hughes	86	Robert Hughes	58	Susan Sontag	1.81
Oscar Wilde	86	Peter Schjeldahl	54	Robert Hughes	1.79
Hilton Kramer	80	Walter Benjamin	48	Dave Hickey	1.79
John Ruskin	80	Oscar Wilde	47	Walter Benjamin	1.66
Sister Wendy	79	Dave Hickey	46	Meyer Schapiro	1.61
Immanuel Kant	79	Harold Rosenberg	45	Harold Rosenberg	1.59
Lucy Lippard	78	Lucy Lippard	45	Calvin Tomkins	1.56
Jacques Derrida	78	Meyer Schapiro	43	E.H. Gombrich	1.51
Roland Barthes	77	Calvin Tomkins	43	John Berger	1.51
Charles Baudelaire	77	Charles Baudelaire	43	Charles Baudelaire	1.51
Walter Benjamin	76	John Ruskin	43	Oscar Wilde	1.49
John Berger	76	John Berger	42	Michael Kimmelman	1.49
Donald Judd	76	Roland Barthes	42	Roland Barthes	1.48
Harold Rosenberg	75	E.H. Gombrich	41	Lucy Lippard	1.47
Arthur Danto	73	Michael Kimmelman	41	Robert Rosenblum	1.47
Peter Schjeldahl	73	Immanuel Kant	39	John Szarkowski	1.45
Rosalind Krauss	72	Arthur Danto	38	John Ruskin	1.45
E.H. Gombrich	72	Robert Rosenblum	37	Leo Steinberg	1.44
Calvin Tomkins	72				

have exerted at least “some” influence over the greatest number of visual art critics (see middle column of *fig. 5.2*).

Clement Greenberg, Susan Sontag, Robert Hughes and Peter Schjeldahl head the list—all four were considered at least “somewhat influential” by more than half of the critics in the survey. Three of the four (Sontag, Hughes and Schjeldahl) were cited as “very influential” by more than 20 percent of visual art critics. (Dave Hickey was rated as “very influential” by 22 per-

cent of the critics, but not enough critics rated him “somewhat influential,” preventing him from appearing among the top four.)

Each of these influential figures represents a different facet of today’s art criticism: Greenberg, the role model who set the terms for criticism in post-war America; Sontag, the public intellectual, though not an art critic herself, who exemplifies analytical rigor and political engagement; Hughes, of *Time* magazine, the charismatic and authoritative explainer of art to

popular audiences; and Schjeldahl, the poet-critic of *The New Yorker*, who can be counted on to deliver insightful empathy, especially for challenging new art.

The preponderance of historical names among the most influential writers is striking. Oscar Wilde's high ranking is especially noteworthy: More than a hundred years after his death, he rated sixth in the general evaluation. High scores were given to a number of other classical thinkers whose influence on today's art criticism can only be described as indirect: Immanuel Kant, John Ruskin and Charles Baudelaire, among others.

Writers associated with a highly theoretical approach to art did not fare well in the rankings.

Of the 58 writers on the list in the survey, the work of 49 has drawn sufficient attention to be known by more than half of the art critics. Among the theorists whose work hasn't yet caught the attention of at least half of America's art critics are A.D. Coleman, Thomas Crow, Robert Farris Thompson, Homi Bhabha, David Sylvester, Pierre Bourdieu, Roger Cardinal, Barbara London and Edward Sullivan. Many of them are specialists who write for niche audiences.

As a general rule, writers associated with a highly theoretical approach to art did not fare well in the rankings. Rosalind Krauss, Jacques Derrida and Hal Foster ended up in the lower half of the general evaluation. Frederic Jameson, Terry Eagleton, Julia Kristeva and Homi Bhabha were in the bottom quartile. (For writers like Kristeva, Eagleton and Bhabha, the low ratings are primarily a reflection of low levels of recognition, not indifference toward their work among those familiar with their writings.)

The main conclusion to be drawn from the authors' rankings, however, is that American art critics base their work on an impressively

wide range of influences, from fellow critics at general-interest publications (along with Hughes and Schjeldahl, *The New York Times'* Michael Kimmelman ranked prominently on the list) to major post-war American art writers (e.g., Harold Rosenberg, Meyer Schapiro) to internationally recognized art historians and theorists (e.g., E.H. Gombrich, Roland Barthes) to some of the leading specialized critics and art historians of our time (e.g., Dave Hickey, Lucy Lippard, Arthur Danto).

We also asked the critics to nominate writers and theorists of their own choosing to the list. These names underscore the eclecticism of their sensibilities. Jed Perl of *The New Republic* received the most write-ins (6), followed by Pauline Kael (5), a critic from an entirely different discipline, film, although one who made frequent references to art in her writings. Christopher Knight, Marshall McLuhan, Frank O'Hara, Irwin Panofsky, Walter Pater, Roberta Smith and Tom Wolfe each received four write-ins; Theodore Adorno, John Ashbery, Michael Baxandall, James Elkins, Michel Foucault, Adam Gopnik, Carl Jung, Thomas McEvilley, Octavio Paz and Richard Rorty each received three.

Readers of this report will doubtless draw additional conclusions about the rankings of particular authors. As a further guide to assessing the findings (which appear in full in the Appendix) it is useful to note that some writers and theorists who are widely known do not enjoy a correspondingly high level of influence. Jacques Derrida, for example, was rated by 78 percent of the critics, but only 28 percent described him as influential. Four out of five critics rated Sister Wendy, but only 13 percent claimed her as an influence.

Conversely, there are writers who, although not necessarily widely known, strongly influence critics who are familiar with their work. Critics who know Dave Hickey's work, for example, are especially likely to be inspired by him, and a similar pattern holds for Meyer Schapiro and John Szarkowski. To read these authors is to be influenced by them.

LIVING ARTISTS

Eclectic tastes and respect for marquee names emanate from the art critics' rankings of living artists. The 25 highest-rated artists (who were chosen from a list of 84 names in the survey) compose a pantheon of the contemporary art world. At least two out of three American art critics say they like the work of these artists.

Leading the group are 10 figures—Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Claes Oldenburg, Maya Lin, Louise Bourgeois, Chuck Close, Ed Ruscha, Gerhard Richter, Cindy Sherman and Frank Stella—who are at least “somewhat” liked by three out of four art critics. Rauschenberg and Johns stand in a class of their own: the only artists who are liked by more than nine out of

THE MOST LIKED ARTISTS

fig. 5.3

RECOGNITION		GENERAL EVALUATION		INFORMED EVALUATION	
% of critics who rated the artist		% of critics who like “great deal” or “somewhat”		On scale of 3 (“like a great deal”) to -3 (“dislike a great deal”)	
Robert Rauschenberg	96	Jasper Johns	91	James Turrell	2.03
Jasper Johns	95	Robert Rauschenberg	91	Jasper Johns	2.02
Claes Oldenburg	93	Claes Oldenburg	87	Martin Puryear	2.02
Frank Stella	93	Maya Lin	85	Robert Rauschenberg	2.01
William Wegman	92	Louise Bourgeois	78	Gerhard Richter	1.99
Christo & Jeanne-Claude	91	Chuck Close	78	Louise Bourgeois	1.99
Andres Serrano	91	Ed Ruscha	77	Maya Lin	1.98
Jeff Koons	91	Gerhard Richter	76	Bill Viola	1.93
Maya Lin	90	Cindy Sherman	75	Wayne Thiebaud	1.86
Yoko Ono	90	Frank Stella	75	Shirin Neshat	1.83
Dale Chihuly	90	Ellsworth Kelly	73	Robert Irwin	1.83
Chuck Close	89	Cy Twombly	73	Claes Oldenburg	1.82
Julian Schnabel	88	Richard Serra	73	Andreas Gursky	1.79
Cindy Sherman	86	Bruce Nauman	72	Anselm Kiefer	1.79
Ellsworth Kelly	86	Nam June Paik	72	Ed Ruscha	1.71
Richard Serra	86	Christo & Jeanne-Claude	72	Bruce Nauman	1.64
Cy Twombly	85	Wayne Thiebaud	71	Brice Marden	1.62
Nam June Paik	84	Anselm Kiefer	71	Ann Hamilton	1.62
LeRoy Neiman	84	Sol LeWitt	70	Cindy Sherman	1.60
Gerhard Richter	83	Brice Marden	69	Chuck Close	1.59
Ed Ruscha	83	Kiki Smith	66	Kara Walker	1.58
Sol LeWitt	83	Bill Viola	65	Sol LeWitt	1.56
Jenny Holzer	83	Jenny Holzer	65	Mary Ellen Mark	1.56
Louise Bourgeois	82	John Baldessari	63	Ellsworth Kelly	1.53
Anselm Kiefer	81	Andres Serrano	63	Nam June Paik	1.53

AGE GROUPS

As could be expected, older critics have more traditional tastes. Critics 46 and over are much more likely to prefer to write about painting (81 percent vs. 59 percent), sculpture (36 percent vs. 19 percent) and drawing (26 percent vs. 11 percent) than are critics 45 or younger. Older critics are also much more likely to dislike “art indebted to theory.” Younger critics more readily embrace contemporary art forms, such as installation art and conceptual art, and they look more favorably upon theoretically influenced art.

The writers and theorists who exert a strong influence on all art critics, regardless of age, are Clement Greenberg, Robert Hughes, Susan Sontag, Peter Schjeldahl, Lucy Lippard and Oscar Wilde. These writers rank among the 10 most influential theorists for both younger and older critics.

Particularly strong influences on younger critics include Walter Benjamin (younger critics rated him as most influential, while older critics ranked him 20th), Roland Barthes, Dave Hickey and Michael Kimmelman. Harold Rosenberg, John Ruskin, Meyer Schapiro and Robert Rosenblum exert a particularly strong influence on older critics. Older critics’ 15 best-liked artists significantly overlap with the younger critics’ favorites. The two age cohorts’ opinions diverge on Wayne Thiebaud and Sol LeWitt: These artists are favorites of older critics, but they hold considerably less appeal for younger ones.

In general, older critics tend to be more favorably disposed toward both writers and artists. There are no fewer than 19 writers who exert a significantly greater influence over older critics than over younger ones, and 23 artists who are significantly better liked by older critics than by younger ones. The artists who are much better-liked by older critics do not appear to have much in common: The list is headed by Karen Finley, Dale Chihuly and David Salle.

At right we list authors and artists about whom there is the greatest difference of opinion between older and younger critics. (Note: These are not necessarily the highest-rated authors and artists for either age group.) Only two writers—bell hooks and Walter Benjamin—are significantly more influential (by 10 percentage points or more) on younger critics. Just a single artist—Takashi Murakami—enjoys a significantly greater appeal among younger critics.

WRITERS AND THEORISTS

fig. 5.4

GREATER INFLUENCE ON CRITICS 46 AND OVER		GREATER INFLUENCE ON CRITICS 45 AND UNDER	
Name	Difference: Older-Younger (% pts.)	Name	Difference: Younger-Older (% pts.)
Harold Rosenberg	24	Walter Benjamin	16
John Ruskin	21	bell hooks	14
Leo Steinberg	21		
John Szarkowski	18		
Meyer Schapiro	18		
Giorgio Vasari	18		
Peter Plagens	17		
Robert Hughes	17		
Irving Sandler	16		
Robert Rosenblum	16		
Hilton Kramer	16		
Roger Fry	15		
Calvin Tomkins	14		
Barbara Rose	13		
Suzi Gablik	13		
Linda Nochlin	12		
Clement Greenberg	12		
Matthew Arnold	10		
Susan Sontag	10		

ARTISTS

fig. 5.5

BETTER LIKED BY CRITICS 46 AND OVER		BETTER LIKED BY CRITICS 45 AND UNDER	
Name	Difference: Older-Younger (% pts.)	Name	Difference: Younger-Older (% pts.)
Karen Finley	25	Takashi Murakami	10
Dale Chihuly	22		
David Salle	22		
Chuck Close	20		
Sol LeWitt	20		
Pepon Osorio	20		
Wayne Thiebaud	20		
William Wegman	19		
Elizabeth Murray	18		
Martin Puryear	17		
Robert Mangold	15		
Brice Marden	14		
Ed Paschke	14		
Claes Oldenburg	13		
Hans Haacke	12		
Anselm Kiefer	12		
Ellsworth Kelly	12		
Cy Twombly	12		
Frank Stella	11		
Ed Ruscha	11		
Christo & Jeanne-Claude	10		
Jasper Johns	10		
Richard Serra	10		

ten critics in the survey, as well as the only ones who are liked “a great deal” by more than 50 percent of the critics.

A snapshot of the favorite 10: Their average age is 66 years. Three of ten, including the oldest and two youngest artists in the group, are women. Pop artists are by far the most popular (they include the three most-liked artists) and paradigms of the '60s and '70s dominate. Six of the ten artists are painters; three are known for their sculpture and architectural work; one is a photographer. With the exception of a West Coast painter, all of the Americans live in and around New York City. Just one of the artists lives and works abroad.

The 25 most-liked artists hail from a great variety of aesthetic orientations and demographic backgrounds. But by no means do they represent a cross-section of artists working today. They are almost exclusively established artists who made their reputations before or during

the 1980s. None of the younger artists included in the survey (Matthew Barney, Rachel Whiteread, John Currin, etc.) appear on the list of critics' favorites.

Additional comparisons and conclusions can be drawn from the full ranking of the artists (see Appendix). Furthermore, as with authors, the art critics nominated additional artists whom they liked a great deal. Four of them nominated Vito Acconi, Christian Boltanski, Lucien Freud and William Kentridge; three critics mentioned Bruce Conner, Komar & Melamid, Vik Muniz, Sigmar Polke, Charles Ray and Hiroshi Sugimoto. These artists may have achieved respectable rankings had they been included on the survey list.

Variations in recognition, here too, add a further dimension to the findings. The “general evaluation” cited thus far is the percentage of all critics who say they like a given artist.

continued on page 44

THE LEAST LIKED ARTISTS *fig. 5.6*

RECOGNITION		GENERAL EVALUATION		INFORMED EVALUATION	
% of critics who rated the artist		% of critics who dislike “great deal” or “somewhat”		On scale of 3 (“like a great deal”) to -3 (“dislike a great deal”)	
Trenton Doyle Hancock	15	LeRoy Neiman	72	Thomas Kinkade	-2.32
Collier Schorr	21	Thomas Kinkade	68	LeRoy Neiman	-2.01
William Pope.L	23	Julian Schnabel	48	Julian Schnabel	-0.27
Dan Graham	26	Jeff Koons	47	Collier Schorr	-0.24
Tom Friedman	30	Dale Chihuly	43	Jeff Koons	-0.10
Gregory Crewdson	32	Yoko Ono	39	David Salle	-0.03
Rirkrit Tiravanija	32	David Salle	37	Do-Ho Suh	0.00
Diana Thater	33	William Wegman	35	Dale Chihuly	0.02
Maurizio Cattelan	34	Damien Hirst	33	Tracey Emin	0.09
Lawrence Wiener	35	Tracey Emin	31	Yoko Ono	0.13
Pepon Osorio	36	Andres Serrano	28	Vanessa Beecroft	0.21
Do-Ho Suh	38	Alex Katz	20	William Wegman	0.22

MEN AND WOMEN

There are undeniable differences in taste between men and women (it should be borne in mind that female critics are generally younger, so the differences may be attributable, in part, to age). Women are more interested in writing about painting, sculpture and photography than men, and they are less interested in writing about performance art and theoretically influenced art.

The writers and theorists who exert a strong influence on all critics, regardless of gender, are Clement Greenberg, Robert Hughes, Susan Sontag, Peter Schjeldahl and Walter Benjamin. These figures are among the 10 greatest influences on both men and women. Lucy Lippard, Linda Nochlin and E.H. Gombrich wield a particularly strong influence on women. Male critics find Oscar Wilde, Harold Rosenberg and Arthur Danto especially influential.

Female and male critics' favorite artists significantly overlap. Major disagreement was found in the case of two artists: Nam June Paik (7th on the list for women, 20th for men) and Richard Serra (8th among men, 21st among women). Below are the names of the writers and artists who make a particularly strong impression on one or the other gender group (these are not necessarily among the highest-rated writers and artists for either group). As a general rule, women are more likely to draw their influences from female theorists and writers, and somewhat more likely to like female artists.

WRITERS AND THEORISTS

fig. 5.7

GREATER INFLUENCE ON FEMALE CRITICS		GREATER INFLUENCE ON MALE CRITICS	
Name	Difference: Women-Men (% pts.)	Name	Difference: Men-Women (% pts.)
Linda Nochlin	22	John Dewey	20
Suzi Gablik	14	Oscar Wilde	18
Rosalind Krauss	14	Robert Hughes	18
Lucy Lippard	12	Arthur Danto	12
Adrien Piper	11	Donald Judd	12
E.H. Gombrich	10	Harold Rosenberg	10
		Jacques Derrida	10

ARTISTS

fig. 5.8

BETTER LIKED BY FEMALE CRITICS		BETTER LIKED BY MALE CRITICS	
Name	Difference: Women-Men (% pts.)	Name	Difference: Men-Women (% pts.)
Dan Graham	10	Mike Kelley	13
Shirin Neshat	10	Richard Prince	12
Barbara Kruger	10	Richard Serra	12
Robert Gober	10	William Wegman	12
		Sally Mann	12
		Jeff Koons	12

DAILIES AND WEEKLIES

The tastes and influences of critics at dailies and alternative weeklies differ in striking ways. Those at alternative weeklies, who are generally younger, are far more likely to be influenced by post-Marxist and postmodernist authors, while daily writers look to journalistic critics for their role models. Weekly writers are much more open to artists who emerged in recent decades and far more likely to be drawn to otherwise-not-too-popular authors and artists.

The writers and theorists who exert a strong influence over critics at both dailies and weeklies are Clement Greenberg, Susan Sontag, Peter Schjeldahl and Dave Hickey. These authors are among the ten most influential theorists for both daily and weekly critics. Walter Benjamin, John Berger, Roland Barthes, and Charles Baudelaire impress weekly critics in particular; for daily critics, Robert Hughes, Calvin Tomkins, John Ruskin, Michael Kimmelman and E.H. Gombrich are especially influential.

When it comes to the 15 best-liked artists, a fair degree of overlap exists between the two groups of critics. But four artists who are on the top-15 list for daily critics fall far short in the rankings of weekly critics: Cy Twombly (22nd for weekly critics), Frank Stella (26th), Wayne Thiebaud (30th) and Christo & Jeanne-Claude (42nd).

At right are the names of authors and artists who generate the most intense disagreement among daily and weekly newspaper critics (these are not necessarily the highest-rated authors and artists for either group.) It should be borne in mind that alternative weekly writers are more likely to be younger and female; their aesthetic preferences are at least partly accountable to their demographic profile.

WRITERS AND THEORISTS

fig. 5.9

GREATER INFLUENCE ON DAILY CRITICS		GREATER INFLUENCE ON ALT-WEEKLY CRITICS	
Name	Difference: Dailies-Weeklies (% pts.)	Name	Difference: Weeklies-Dailies (% pts.)
John Szarkowski	17	Lucy Lippard	23
Michael Kimmelman	16	John Berger	22
John Ruskin	14	Walter Benjamin	21
Calvin Tomkins	13	Roland Barthes	20
Hilton Kramer	12	Susan Sontag	16
Robert Hughes	12	Charles Baudelaire	16
Robert Rosenblum	11	Julia Kristeva	15
Clement Greenberg	11	T.J. Clark	12
E.H. Gombrich	10	Jean Baudrillard	11
Matthew Arnold	10	Oscar Wilde	11
		Linda Nochlin	10
		Terry Eagleton	10

ARTISTS

fig. 5.10

BETTER LIKED BY DAILY CRITICS		BETTER LIKED BY ALT-WEEKLY CRITICS	
Name	Difference: Dailies-Weeklies (% pts.)	Name	Difference: Weeklies-Dailies (% pts.)
Christo & Jeanne-Claude	34	Maurizio Catellan	18
Robert Mangold	28	Lisa Yuskavage	15
Frank Stella	25	Rirkrit Tiravanija	13
David Salle	23	Eric Fischl	12
Wayne Thiebaud	23	Cindy Sherman	11
Mary Ellen Mark	21	Jorge Pardo	10
William Wegman	19		
Elizabeth Murray	18		
Tracey Emin	17		
Claes Oldenburg	15		
Ed Paschke	15		
Georg Baselitz	14		
Cy Twombly	14		
Karen Finley	13		
Dale Chihuly	13		
Bill Viola	13		
Maya Lin	12		
Diana Thater	11		
Mike Kelley	11		
Anselm Kiefer	11		
Robert Rauschenberg	10		
Sally Mann	10		
Martin Puryear	10		

CURATORS AND EXHIBITIONS

Critics were invited to indicate whom they considered to be figures in the art world who have been influential on their thinking about art. The most frequently cited figures—all curators who are widely published art writers—are Robert Storr (8 mentions), Kirk Varnedoe (7), Trevor Fairbrother and Thelma Golden (3). Storr and Varnedoe have had a long association with the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Fairbrother, a Sargent scholar, is deputy director and curator at the Seattle Art Museum. Golden is currently deputy director of exhibitions and programs at the Studio Museum in New York City.

The critics in the survey were also asked to list some of the most influential art exhibitions of the past decade. The 10 most frequently cited shows are listed at right.

INFLUENTIAL EXHIBITIONS

fig. 5.11

TITLE	MUSEUM	YEARS	MENTIONS
Jackson Pollock	MoMA, New York	1998-99	9
"Sensation"	BMA, New York	1999-2000	8
Vermeer	NGA, Washington, D.C.	1995-96	8
Cezanne	PMA, Philadelphia	1996	7
Van Gogh	NGA, Washington, D.C.	1998-99	7
Sol LeWitt	MCA, Chicago	2000	6
Bill Viola	Whitney, SFMOMA	1997-2000	5
Anselm Kiefer	Met, New York	1998-99	4
Biennial	Whitney, New York	1998	4
Biennial	Whitney, New York	2000	4

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE, ARTIST, SOUTH AFRICA

How does an artist survive a review? There are a lot of interesting things one can learn, but reviews are often contradictory. Two long reviews ran of my recent exhibition in the United States: one in *The Washington Post*, which hated my exhibition from A to Z, and one in *The New York Times*, which, to my relief, really liked it. Whatever their slant, those reviews are a luxury for an artist from South Africa, where a newspaper would only give a single paragraph to an exhibition.

The one thing about daily newspapers is that they must devote a lot of space to describing the work, to give readers a picture of what the critic is talking about. This comes at the expense of talking about ideas.

People of opposing temperaments respond differently to criticism. There are artists who believe that good reviews are much more likely to be true, and they dismiss the bad ones. Others respond only to negative criticism, especially if it corresponds with moments of doubt. For them, negative criticism is the most true and relevant.

One should try to be mature about it and read the review point-by-point. Does it make any sense? Is it the fault of the reviewer that he or she doesn't understand the work? In practice, that kind of dispassionate reading of criticism is elusive.

It is impossible to change the mind of a critic who fundamentally doesn't like your work. And one shouldn't spend one's life trying to tell critics how to think. However, no critic's review of an exhibition has ever been harsher than what that artist has dreamt up at 3 a.m. on his own.

This puts artists who are not widely known at a disadvantage, since the “no opinion” ratings dilute their average scores. When “informed evaluation” is taken into account—based on the ratings by critics who appear to know an artist’s work (giving a rating other than “no opinion”)—some artists who are much liked but not well known can suddenly pull ahead in the rankings.

The ultimate example is earthwork artist James Turrell, creator of the Roden Crater in Arizona: He ranked 28th in the general evaluation, but first in the informed evaluation. Martin Puryear, Bill Viola and Robert Irwin are in a similar position—those who know these artists tend to like their work. Younger artists, like Kara Walker, or artists whose work has only recently caught the wider art world’s attention, like Andreas Gursky and Shirin Neshat, similarly climb in the rankings once the critics who did not enter an opinion are excluded from the analysis.

For other artists, the opposite holds: High levels of recognition and decent general evaluations can be coupled with low levels of informed evaluation. Andres Serrano, Yoko Ono, Jeff Koons, Julian Schnabel, the glass artist Dale Chihuly and William Wegman, best known for his photo portraits of dogs, are all in this category—well known, but not too well liked.

Levels of familiarity also come into play when it comes to the least favorite artists. Some end up on the low end of the general evaluation because their work has not gained widespread recognition. Others are simply disliked. The two names that stand out in this respect are LeRoy Neiman and Thomas Kinkade. They are extremely well known—the best-selling visual artists in America—but they are almost universally derided by art writers. Neiman and Kinkade are the only artists in the survey who are actively disliked by more than half of the critics: Neiman is disliked by 72 percent and

Kinkade by 68 percent. (They enjoy nominally greater acceptance among critics at smaller newspapers, but fans of both artists are decidedly in the minority even at Tier 3 papers.) Kinkade, however, is the artist who really gets under critics’ skins—two-thirds of American art critics (62 percent) said they disliked his work a “great deal.” ■

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

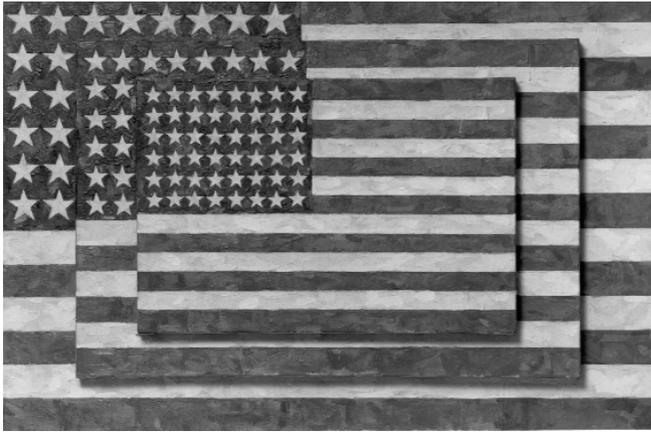
SIDNEY LAWRENCE, HEAD OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, HIRSHHORN MUSEUM AND SCULPTURE GARDEN,
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

I had always thought that art museums were different from theater and movies, which can be killed by a bad review. But if a show is panned, fewer people come, television and radio remain uninterested, and it takes longer for word-of-mouth to get around.

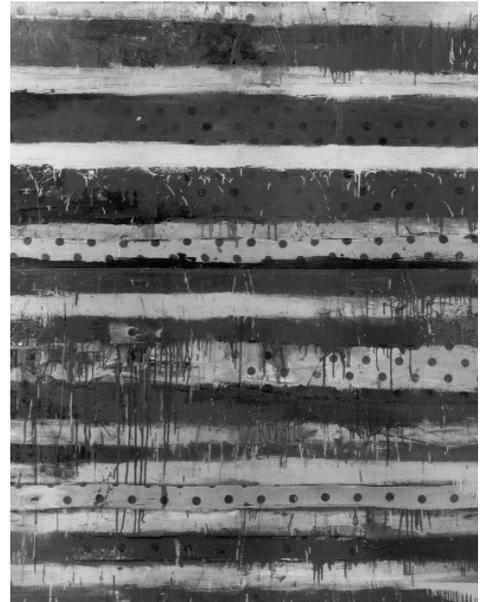
What newspaper art critics do best is summarize and demystify art, and boil down to simple language, a complex thing going on in an artwork. Not everyone would agree, and they might denigrate this simple language as “simplistic,” but so what? If it works, there’s nothing more effective.

Alternative weekly criticism is better, more thoughtful and creative, and the main reasons for this are: space and time allotted; a hipper, less general, younger audience; and writers whose style may not be influenced by specific journalistic training.

But there is always the danger that draggy, awful writers with too much art history can write for such papers. The reviews in specialized art magazines should be the highest form, since the writers have looser deadlines and frequently more space. But often, they are the most droning, poorly written, hermetic of all. I don’t get it.



Jasper Johns b. 1930, "Three Flags", 1958, Encaustic on canvas, 30 7/8 x 45 1/2 x 5 in.,
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 50th Anniversary Gift of the Gilman Foundation, Inc., The Lauder Foundation,
A. Alfred Taubman, an anonymous 80.32 donor, and purchase, © Jasper Johns/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY



Robert Rauschenberg b. 1925, "Yoricks", 1953, Oil, fabric, paper and newspaper on two separately stretched canvases
36 x 72 in.,
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Gift of the artist 71.210
© Robert Rauschenberg/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY



Louise Bourgeois b. 1911, "Quarantania", 1941, Seven wooden pine elements on a wooden base, 84 3/4 x 31 1/4 x 29 1/4 in.,
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Gift of an anonymous donor 77.80, © Louise Bourgeois/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY



Chuck Close b. 1940, "Phi", 1969, Acrylic on canvas, 108 x 84 in.,
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Purchase, with funds from Mrs. Robert M. Benjamin 69.102
© Chuck Close

IMAGES
BY THE
HIGHEST-
RANKED
LIVING
ARTISTS



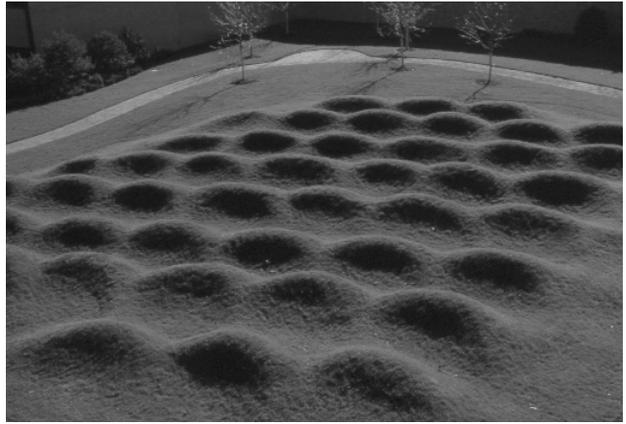
Cindy Sherman b. 1954, "Untitled #4", 1979, 8 x 10 in.
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures



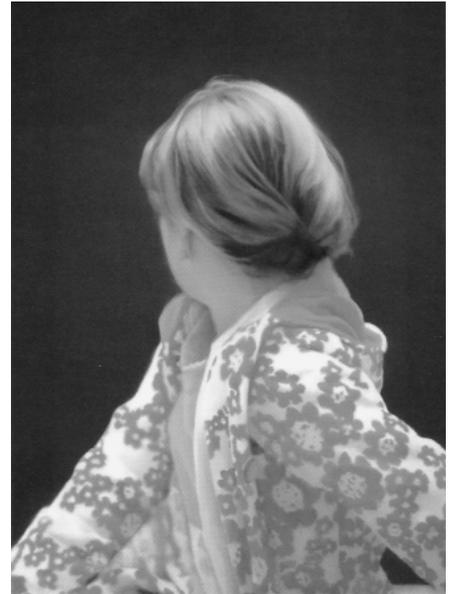
Frank Stella b. 1936, "Gran Cairo", 1962, Synthetic polymer on canvas, 85 1/2 x 85 1/2 in.,
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
Purchase, with funds from the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art, 63.34
© 2002 Frank Stella/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Claes Oldenburg b. 1929, "Soft Toilet", 1966, Vinyl, plexiglass and kapok on painted wood base
Overall: 57 1/16 x 27 5/8 x 28 1/6 in.
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 50th Anniversary Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Victor W. Ganz 79.83a-b, Courtesy the artist



Maya Lin, b. 1959, "Wave Field", 1995
Photograph by Tim Thayer, Courtesy of Maya Lin Studio and Gagosian Gallery



Gerhard Richter b.1932, "Betty", 1988, Oil on canvas,
40-3/16 x 28-3/8 in., St. Louis Art Museum
Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York



Edward Ruscha b. 1937, "Large Trademark with Eight Spots", 1962, Oil on canvas, 66 3/4 x 133 1/4 in.
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York Purchase, with funds from Mrs. Percy Uris Purchase Fund 85.41, Courtesy the artist and Gagosian Gallery



Ellsworth Kelly b. 1923, "Blue Tablet (EK 295)", 1962, Oil on canvas, two joined panels
92 x 92 x 4 1/2 in., Courtesy the artist and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York



Cy Twombly, b. 1928, "Untitled", 2000
Acrylic and graphite on canvas, 108-1/2 x 61 in.
Courtesy the artist and Gagosian Gallery

6. ASSESSING THE ART SCENE

ART CRITICS, AS we have seen, do much more than pass judgment on artists and exhibitions. They report on the institutional dynamics of the art world and serve as a barometer of the cultural mood in and around visual art.

We evaluated critics' positions on various issues by inviting them to agree or disagree with statements about the vitality of American art, the effectiveness of arts institutions, the contributions of art criticism and the role of government in the arts. We also invited critics to rate America's art schools and art magazines and to suggest which newspapers provided the best visual art coverage.

TEMPERED CONFIDENCE

The overall picture emerging from art critics' opinions is one of confidence about America's visual-art achievements, but also concern about the biases and long-term prospects of the art scene.

First, the good news: Critics are generally "proud of the new art created in this country over the past 25 years"—more than four out of five art critics agree with that statement, and over a third "strongly agree." A minority of critics (17 percent) even believes that we are presently enjoying a "golden age of American art."

Those who believe that the glory days have faded outnumber those who feel that this is the most exciting time in the history of American art.

But the other side of the coin is impossible to ignore. Those who believe that the glory days have faded outnumber those who feel that this is the most exciting time in the history of American art. More than one out of four art critics (27 percent) believe that "there was a golden age of American art, and it has passed." Moreover, the overwhelming majority rejects the

CITIES AND NEWSPAPERS

We asked critics, "Which American city has the most vital visual art scene at the present time?" Predictably, New York is perceived to dominate—107 critics voted for it. Los Angeles came second, with 14 mentions. Chicago, with three mentions, was the only other city to receive multiple votes. Answers to the question, "Which newspaper do you think contains the best visual art criticism today?" form a similar pattern. *The New York Times* has no true rival—106 critics voted for it. The runner-up *Los Angeles Times* received nine mentions; the *Village Voice* got two.

THE ART MAGAZINES

Art critics were invited to rate 23 art publications. Only one, *Art in America*, was rated "excellent" or "good" by more than 75 percent of the critics. *Artforum* and *ARTnews* received favorable ratings by more than half of the critics. These three publications are by far the most widely known (all three were rated by more than six out of seven critics). *Parkett* deserves a special mention: It ranked highest when only "informed evaluations" (ratings other than "no opinion") are taken into account. Below are the dozen art publications that received a favorable rating from more than a quarter of the critics in the survey:

TITLE	% OF CRITICS WHO RATED "EXCELLENT" OR "GOOD"
Art in America	76
Artforum	69
ARTnews	60
Aperture	45
New Art Examiner	38
Art Papers	37
Flash Art	34
Sculpture	34
The Art Newspaper	30
Art Week	27
Parkett	27
New Criterion	26

fig. 6.2 CRITICS ASSESS THE ART SCENE

notion that we're currently living in a golden age—83 percent dispute the view, and 29 percent “strongly disagree.”

There are further symptoms of tempered confidence. For example, critics were evenly split on the propositions that “the United States is the center of the art world” and that “visual artists are breaking new ground these days.” While the former of these findings can be seen in a positive light, it is difficult to find reassurance in the fact that half of American art critics do not think that visual artists are producing original work.

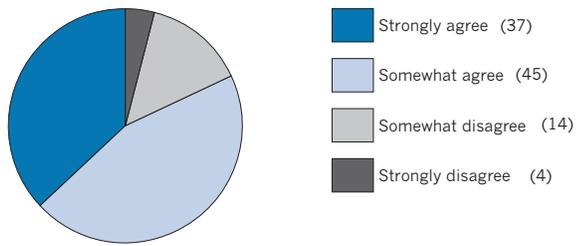
Critics at both dailies and weeklies are generally in agreement about the health of the art scene, although daily critics tend to be more confident about the vitality and international clout of American art. Daily newspaper writers are more prone to believe that “now is the golden age of American art” (19 percent agree vs. only 8 percent of alternative weekly critics), and a majority of daily critics (53 percent) believe that “the United States is the center of the art world” (only 37 percent of alternative weekly critics agree with this view).

CRITICISM IN A CHANGING ART WORLD

What could explain art critics' ambivalent feelings about the art of our time? One answer may involve critics' disdain for theoretically influenced art. As reported in the previous chapter, “art openly indebted to theory” and “artworks exploring issues of identity” are among critics' least preferred subjects when it comes to writing reviews. Meanwhile, 84 percent of the critics agree that “postmodernist theory has a strong influence on the art being made today,” and 96 percent believe “multiculturalism has a strong influence in today's art world.” It may be that art critics are being asked to report on an art world that is saturated with precisely the kind of work that some would rather not write about.

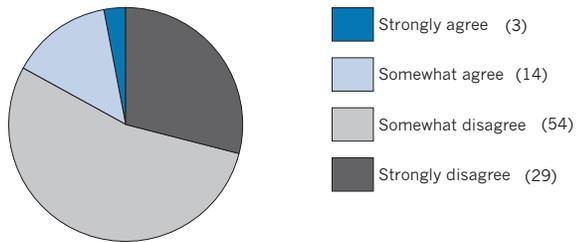
Furthermore, a striking number of critics seem troubled by the quantity of art being produced today. Almost a third of the critics (32 percent) agreed with the statement that “there is too

WHILE CRITICS APPROVE OF THE ART OF THE LAST 25 YEARS...

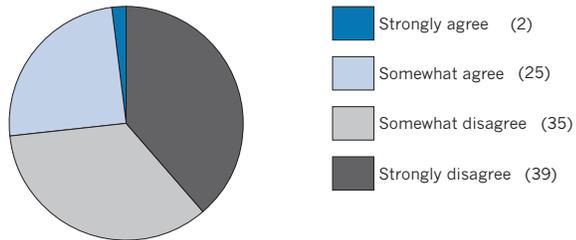


“We can be proud of the new art created in this country over the past 25 years.”

...THEY FEEL THIS IS NO GOLDEN AGE OF AMERICAN ART.

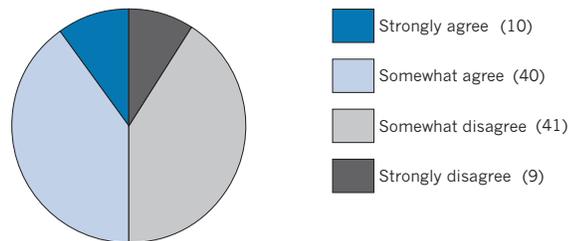


“Now is the golden age of American art.”



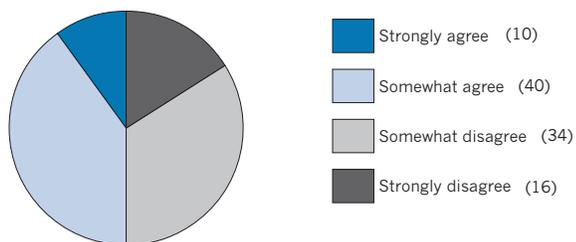
“There was a golden age of American art and it has passed.”

THEY ARE EQUIVOCAL ABOUT THE VALUE OF NEW ART...



“Visual artists are genuinely breaking new ground these days.”

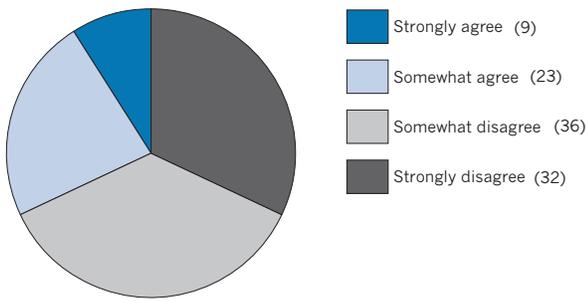
...AND THE ROLE OF THE U.S. IN THE INTERNATIONAL ART WORLD.



“The United States is the center of the art world.”

fig. 6.3 OVERLOAD?

“THERE IS TOO MUCH ART BEING PRODUCED, MADE AND SHOWN.”



much art being produced, made and shown.” Male critics, who are generally older, are especially likely to hold this view. It may be difficult for some critics to discover value and direction in what they perceive to be an overpopulated, overheated art world.

There is no question that visual art writers face a much larger and more complicated environment than what confronted their colleagues only a couple of decades ago. We asked critics if they believe “today’s art criticism offers reliable guidance and evaluation for working artists, curators and galleries” in order to navigate this enlarged, pluralistic landscape of art. The critics’ assessment of their own profession’s performance was mixed. Two out of five critics (41 percent) disagreed with the claim that art criticism offers reliable guidance to today’s art. The majority (58 percent) of alternative weekly writers (as against 35 percent of daily critics) believes that today’s art criticism fails to bring clarity to the activities of the art world.

COMMERCE AND GOVERNMENT

Part of the problem, a majority of the respondents (72 percent) believe, is that “art critics tend to concentrate on high-profile artists and exhibitions at the expense of other deserving artists and issues.” And 48 percent of critics doubt that “generally speaking, art galleries and museums do a good job of identifying and promoting the artists who will be seen as important in the future.” Thus, in the eyes of a substantial

THE ART SCHOOLS

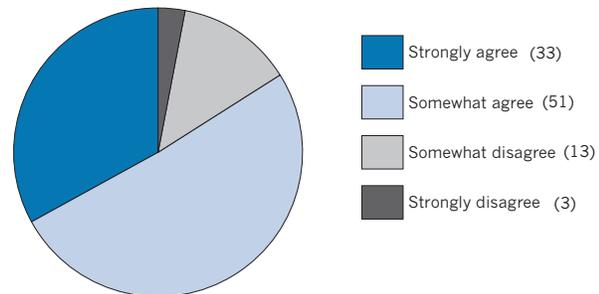
Critics selected the “most influential art school” from a list of colleges and universities. The School of the Art Institute of Chicago was the only school rated most influential by at least 20 critics in the survey, with four other schools vying for runner-up position:

fig. 6.4

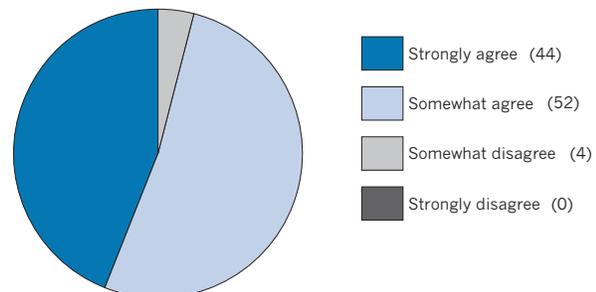
SCHOOL	MENTIONS
School of the Art Institute of Chicago (Chicago)	20
CalArts (Valencia, Calif.)	16
Yale (New Haven)	12
Rhode Island School of Design (Providence)	11
UCLA (Los Angeles)	10
School of Visual Arts (New York)	5
Art Center College of Design (Pasadena)	3
California College of Arts and Crafts (San Francisco/Oakland)	3
Cranbrook Academy of Art (Bloomfield Hills, Mich.)	2
San Francisco Art Institute (San Francisco)	1

fig. 6.5 POSTMODERNISM AND MULTICULTURALISM

“POSTMODERNIST THEORY HAS A STRONG INFLUENCE ON THE ART BEING MADE TODAY.”



“MULTICULTURALISM HAS A STRONG INFLUENCE IN TODAY’S ART WORLD.”



number of working art critics, the key institutions charged with managing the discourse about visual art—criticism, galleries, museums—have a poor record of making intelligible the affairs of the art world.

With arts institutions and art critics failing, in the eyes of many art writers, to provide a useful compass for visual art, commercial prerogatives easily begin to dominate. There is little disagreement on this score among art critics: Almost three out of four (70 percent) believe “that the visual art world is overly dependent on commercial institutions and the art market.”

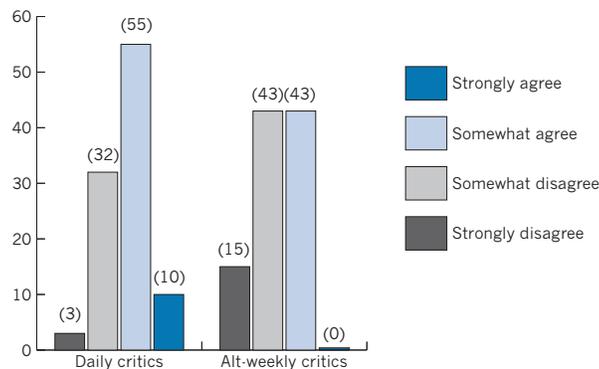
Concerns about commercialism, coupled with left-leaning political beliefs (see Chapter 2), help to explain art critics’ strong positions on the matter of public art funding. More than three out of five (61 percent) American art critics believe that “the federal government should make the support of individual artists a policy priority.” Even those who have their doubts about public funding are clear about how such

Almost three out of four critics believe that “the visual art world is overly dependent on commercial institutions and the art market.”

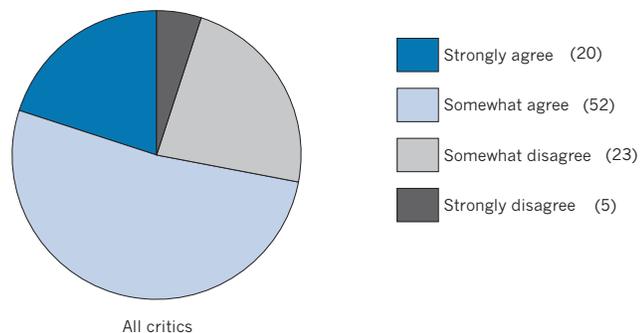
funding should be administered. The overwhelming majority of art critics (93 percent) disagree with the suggestion that “public funding of artists and exhibitions should be tied to guidelines on potentially offensive content”—75 percent of art critics “strongly disagreed” with any constraint on publicly funded art.

fig. 6.6 CRISIS OF CRITICISM

“TODAY’S ART CRITICISM OFFERS RELIABLE GUIDANCE AND EVALUATION FOR WORKING ARTISTS, CURATORS AND GALLERIES.”



“ART CRITICS TEND TO CONCENTRATE ON HIGH-PROFILE ARTISTS AND EXHIBITIONS AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHER DESERVING ARTISTS AND ISSUES.”



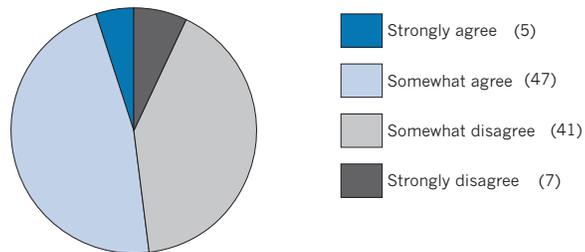
AGE GROUPS

Both older and younger critics generally agree about the current state of the art scene. They differ significantly in only two respects—older critics are unanimous in their assessment that “multiculturalism has a strong influence in today’s art world,” while one in six younger critics (16 percent) disagrees with this. Younger critics are also less likely than older critics to view the United States as the center of the art world (41 percent vs. 59 percent).

Such passionately held views take us back to the tendency of art critics (discussed in Chapter 4) to view themselves as advocates, rather than dispassionate observers, of the scene. This, in turn, raises questions about journalistic ethics, which are discussed in the next, concluding chapter. ■

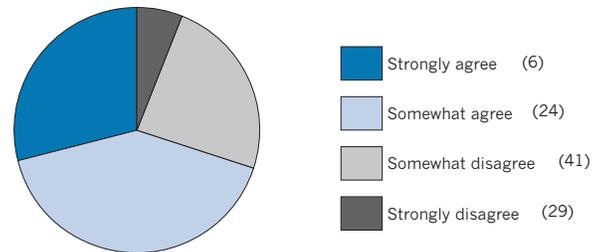
fig. 6.7 ART INSTITUTIONS: WHOM DO THEY SERVE?

THE RECORD OF MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES IS MIXED...



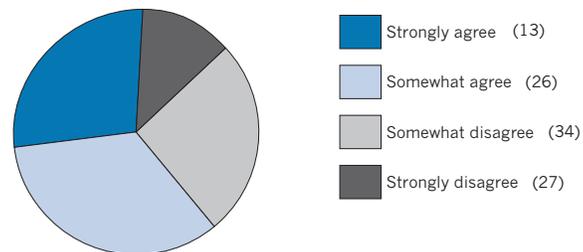
"Art galleries and museums do a good job of identifying and promoting the artists who will be seen as important in the future."

...AND COMMERCIAL PRESSURES MOUNT...



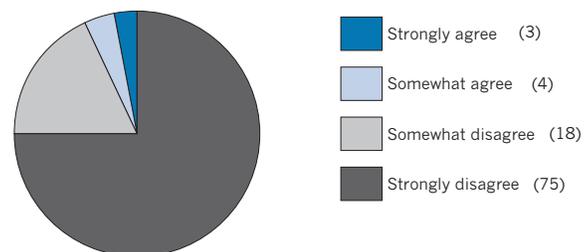
"The visual art world is overly dependent on commercial institutions and the art market."

...PROMPTING SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC ARTS FUNDING...



"The federal government should make the support of individual artists a policy priority."

...BUT ONLY IF IT COMES WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED.



"Public funding of artists and exhibitions should be tied to guidelines on potentially offensive content."

MEN AND WOMEN

Female critics offer more generous assessments of the current state of American art. They are slightly more likely than male critics to believe that we are living in a golden age for American art and to agree that visual artists are breaking new ground these days (55 percent vs. 45 percent). Female critics, in addition, find postmodernist theory holding a slightly stronger sway over today's art (89 percent vs. 82 percent). Women, finally, are more likely than men to argue that the federal government should make arts funding a policy priority (67 percent for women vs. 56 percent for men).

Male critics tend to have a darker view of the institutional system. They are more than twice as likely to feel that there is too much art being made and shown today (45 percent vs. 20 percent), and they are less likely to accept that “art galleries and museums do a good job of identifying and promoting the artists who will be seen as important in the future” (47 percent of men agree vs. 59 percent of women).

VOICES FROM THE FIELD DEB KOMITOR, ARTIST, COLORADO

When an exhibit is reviewed in the newspaper, it acts as extra publicity. More people become aware of the exhibit and go to see it. I don't think it matters if the review is positive or negative—people just see your name so many times, they think you must be somebody. A bad review almost makes you curious to see the show and decide for yourself.

The alternative papers seem to be more about telling the story of the artist, rather than about reviewing critically. I think this is a better way to educate the public about fine arts. Let people know where the artist is coming from, what the artist is trying to say, how they deal with the medium and who influences them. I'd like to see more exhibit reviews in which the artist is interviewed, rather than merely one person's opinion of the work. I want to hear the artist's story, not the critic's story.

7. THE ETHICS OF ART CRITICISM

THERE IS, OF COURSE, no standard, ideal way of writing art criticism. The profession is made up of a remarkably diverse array of individuals. Each critic brings to the work a unique mix of skills and viewpoints, all deployed in the context of a specific publication and its readership.

Criticism serves one purpose in a major urban center such as Los Angeles or New York, where it responds to powerful museums and a multitude of artists and galleries. It serves another purpose in smaller communities, where artists might not enjoy the patronage of local arts organizations, dealers or collectors, and where critics may not be able to draw on the resources of a big-budget news operation. The priorities of full-time art critics differ from those of part-timers who, as is often the case, pursue criticism as a sideline to their work as artists or educators. Critics at daily newspapers and those at weekly publications likewise approach their assignments with a different agenda and outlook.

Correspondingly, there are few hard-and-fast rules that art critics uniformly observe as they go about their business. “Occasionally acceptable” was the answer many survey respondents gave when asked to rate some potentially problematic practices. And the vague ground rules leave behind many gray areas.

DEBATED PRACTICES

There is no consensus about the acceptability of many activities. Curating museum exhibitions, for example, is “generally acceptable” according to 32 percent of the critics, but 27 percent find it “never acceptable.” A similar pattern holds for sitting on boards of visual art organizations—37 percent of critics believe it’s “never acceptable” while 33 percent think it is “always acceptable.”

In only two cases did more than three of four critics agree that a behavior was “never acceptable.” Just one of those practices—accepting gifts from art dealers or collectors in return for writing—crosses a widely observed ethical threshold, with 89 percent of critics

deeming the receipt of such gifts unacceptable. Yet, even this exchange is considered “sometimes acceptable” or “always acceptable” by one out of ten critics.

There are few hard-and-fast rules that art critics uniformly observe as they go about their business.

While it is safe to say that art critics do not share a universal code of ethics, their responses do suggest a hierarchy of tolerance levels. The seven categories include, in decreasing order of permissibility (see also *fig. 7.1*):

- A. Activities that more than three out of four critics find acceptable (there were no such activities rated in the survey);
- B. Activities that at least half of all critics find generally acceptable (e.g., judging in competitions);
- C. Activities that are more likely to be looked upon favorably than unfavorably (e.g., fraternizing with an artist that a critic writes about);
- D. Activities on which critics are about evenly divided (e.g., writing about an artist whose work a critic collects);
- E. Activities that are more likely to be found unacceptable than acceptable (e.g., serving as a curator in a private gallery);
- F. Activities that a majority of art critics find never acceptable (e.g., accepting expenses on a press junket for a subject a critic will write about);
- G. Activities that over 75 percent of art critics find unacceptable (e.g. making money as an art dealer).

INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS

The underlying question about professional conduct has polarized critics for generations: What kind of involvement in the art world is advisable for an art writer? The answer hinges on concerns about corruption as well as a certain kind of epistemological strategy.

One school of thought, espoused by proponents of traditional newspaper ethics, holds that art critics, like all journalists, should stay at an arm’s length from their field, eschewing close friendships and commercial entanglements so as to avoid any conflicts of interest. According to this view, being an outsider is a prerequisite of fair, disinterested judgment—“objectivity.”

The contrary opinion holds that close contact with art-world members and active participation in the scene are indispensable for a critic

who wishes to develop a profound understanding of art. In this view, commitment and engagement—becoming an insider—is the precondition for insightful criticism.

Art critics are extremely wary about advising artists on what art they should make.

On the whole, the least acceptable forms of participation in the art world are the ones that threaten to compromise a critic’s independence of judgment. A compounding factor is money—in the form of payments or gifts—especially if it is received as direct compensation for writing: Five of the six least-tolerated activities fall into this category.

fig. 7.1

ETHICS				
LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE	ACTIVITY	% WHO FIND GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE	% WHO FIND OCCASIONALLY ACCEPTABLE	% WHO FIND NEVER ACCEPTABLE
A. 75% OR MORE FIND GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE	(No activities listed in the survey achieved this ranking.)	–	–	–
B. 50% OR MORE FIND GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE	Be an advocate for the public funding of artists	55	33	12
	Participate in judging artists for prizes and competitions	50	42	8
C. MORE FIND GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE THAN NEVER ACCEPTABLE	Accept payment for writing in catalogs published by museums or galleries	45	35	20
	Fraternize with artists whom you write about	39	54	7
	Serve as a curator for museums or public collections	32	41	27
D. ABOUT THE SAME FIND GENERALLY OR NEVER ACCEPTABLE	Write about artists whose works you own or collect	20	60	20
	Act as a consultant to public collections on decisions about acquisitions and programming	28	43	29
E. MORE FIND NEVER ACCEPTABLE THAN GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE	Sit on boards of visual art organizations	33	30	37
	Exhibit your own works in galleries or museums	20	46	35
	Serve as a curator for private galleries	20	32	48
F. 50% OR MORE FIND NEVER ACCEPTABLE	Accept expenses on a press junket on something you intend to write about	23	27	51
	Accept gifts of work from artists you have written about	10	36	54
	Advise artists on what art they should make	6	33	61
	Act as a consultant to private galleries on sales, purchases and programming	13	23	64
G. 75% OR MORE FIND NEVER ACCEPTABLE	Make money as an art dealer or art consultant	7	19	75
	Accept gifts from art dealers or collectors in return for writing	2	9	89

Collaborations with nonprofit institutions are seen as generally acceptable for most critics, but similar relationships with commercial galleries or private collectors arouse suspicion. All three of the most widely scorned activities entail taking a position in a commercial enterprise of some kind.

RECASTING THE CRITIC'S ROLE

It turns out that art critics are extremely wary about advising artists on what art they should make—61 percent disapprove with the practice entirely. The general consensus appears to be that art critics should not set a path for artists to follow. Advising artists about their work is one of only three activities that less than 10 percent of art critics find “generally acceptable.” Among the activities that more than half of all critics find unacceptable, this is the only one that doesn’t involve an exchange of money.

Abstaining from advising artists on their work is a far cry indeed from the role of the contemporary art critic as personified by Clement Greenberg, the most influential critic of the

post-war era (see Chapter 5). As a writer at a small daily newspaper put it: “The days of the art critic as chest-thumping oracle are, for the most part, over.... Today’s art is quirky, intuitive, pluralistic and democratic, and so are the best critics writing today.”

Coupled with an earlier finding that critics do not rate exercising judgment about artworks as a high priority (see Chapter 3), the distaste for offering prescriptive advice to artists suggests a more empathic and reflexive, less opinionated role for today’s art critic. Critics at large metropolitan newspapers tend to be somewhat of an exception to this rule.

TENSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS

Despite concerns about conflicts of interest, on the whole critics are, as noted earlier, deeply enmeshed in their field: as collectors, as exhibiting artists, and in a multitude of roles connected to galleries, museums, schools and other visual art institutions. Particularly intense participation characterizes art critics at alternative weeklies, where part-time staffing of the critic

AGE GROUPS

Older visual art critics (who are more likely to work in newspapers) almost invariably take a more strict ethical stance than younger critics do. Some of the strongest differences are seen in the following areas (the size of the difference is stated in percentage points, followed by the percentage of younger and older critics in each age group saying “never acceptable”):

- Make money as an art dealer/consultant: 14 (67 percent vs. 81 percent)
- Exhibit own works: 13 (27 percent vs. 40 percent)
- Accept gifts from artists you’ve written about: 13 (47 percent vs. 60 percent)
- Serve as curator for a private gallery: 12 (41 percent vs. 53 percent)
- Accept expenses for press junket: 12 (44 percent vs. 56 percent)

The only issue on which younger critics are slightly more conservative is accepting payment for writing in catalogs: 5 (23 percent vs. 18 percent).

DIVERGING STANDARDS: DAILY AND ALTERNATIVE WEEKLY CRITICS

fig. 7.2

ACTIVITY	PERCENT WHO FIND "NEVER ACCEPTABLE"	
	NEWSPAPER CRITICS	ALT-WEEKLY CRITICS
Make money as an art dealer or art consultant	79	61
Act as a consultant to private galleries on sales, purchases and programming	67	51
Accept gifts of work from artists you have written about	59	41
Accept expenses on a press junket on something you intend to write about	56	35
Serve as a curator for private galleries	54	32
Sit on boards of visual art organizations	43	22
Act as a consultant to public collections on decisions about acquisitions and programming	32	22
Serve as a curator for museums or public collections	31	15

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

BRUCE FERGUSON, DEAN, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

When it comes to arts criticism, I have different expectations from different media, and my expectations relate directly to my perception of their editorial autonomy. For instance, I expect public radio arts criticism to be the strongest because its affiliations with arts and political institutions are weakest. Though I realize that not-for-profit institutions are often as deferential to their funding sources as for-profit institutions, not-for-profits seem more able to maintain editorial autonomy. I have been more likely to find critical complicity at major newspapers, national magazines or on commercial television networks, because they are basically advertising vehicles whose nod to criticality is *pro forma* at best.

I regret holding this position, because I also believe that the fear of critical content that guides mass-market media highly underestimates the intelligence, needs and desires of audiences. James Agee's film criticism for *Time* magazine was no less lucid or critical for being published there, and Nathan Cohen's theater columns in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* shaped an entire generation's critical acumen about the performing arts. Neither critic was responsible for subscription declines. But, given that a certain deficit of criticality now seems to endure (echoing the tepid political journalism it accompanies), my expectations for a revival of intellectually demanding and honest criticism in mainstream news publications are very low.

beat is common. Alternative weeklies routinely attract artists and arts practitioners who pursue reviewing as a part-time job. Critics at alternative weeklies are twice as likely, compared to newspaper critics, to hold Master of Fine Arts degrees, and they are more likely to have pursued formal studies in art history and other visual art disciplines. Such critics work in other arts-related fields in double the numbers as their counterparts at daily newspapers.

Critics at alternative weeklies are, not surprisingly, much more liberal when it comes to relationships with artists and art institutions. Nowhere else do the opinions of daily and weekly writers diverge so sharply. Some activities endorsed by most alternative-weekly crit-

ics are labeled “never acceptable” by the majority of newspaper writers. Across the board, newspaper critics are more conservative in their critical endeavors.

Across the board, newspaper critics are more conservative in their critical endeavors.

As a general rule, the smaller a critic’s circulation area (which usually translates to freelance employment), the more likely the conventional rules of newsgathering will fall by the wayside. In a sense, adhering to strict professional guidelines is a luxury only well-paid, full-time

SMALL, MEDIUM, LARGE

Critics at smaller dailies are more liberal with respect to ethics, but not always. They are more likely—and in some cases, significantly more likely—than critics at the largest (Tier 1) papers to say that it is generally or occasionally acceptable to:

- Accept expenses for press junkets (55 percent in Tier 3 vs. 27 percent in Tier 1)
- Write about artists they collect (83 percent vs. 70 percent)
- Accept gifts from artists they’ve written about (53 percent vs. 41 percent)
- Act as a consultant to public collections (80 percent vs. 50 percent)
- Act as a consultant to private galleries (48 percent vs. 21 percent)

Critics at smaller papers are less likely than critics at larger papers to say that it is generally acceptable to:

- Accept gifts from art dealers (5 percent in Tier 3 vs. 22 percent in Tier 1)
- Sit on boards of visual art organizations (50 percent vs. 59 percent)

In almost all cases, critics at midsize, Tier 2 papers fall in the middle—sometimes closer to the stance of critics at larger papers, sometimes closer to the stance of critics at smaller papers.

There were two exceptions:

- Critics at Tier 2 papers are the most strict with respect to “accepting gifts from artists they’ve written about” (only 28 percent of Tier 2 critics said this was either generally or occasionally acceptable, vs. 41 percent of Tier 1 critics and 53 percent of Tier 3 critics).
- Critics at Tier 2 papers are the most permissive when it comes to “accepting payment for writing in catalogs” (88 percent say the practice is generally or occasionally acceptable, vs. only 73 percent among Tier 1 and 68 percent of Tier 3 critics).

journalists at large daily newspapers can afford; but the differences are observable between critics at smaller and larger newspapers as well (see sidebar on previous page).

Inconsistent positions on professional ethics yield interesting tensions between various groups of critics. The most noteworthy disagreement arises from the proclivity of some critics to exhibit their artworks at museums and galleries. As seen in Chapter 2, almost half of all art critics are practicing artists. About a third of all critics have exhibited at some point in their lives, and half of those who have exhibited—about one out of every five—have exhibited their work within the past five years. Nevertheless, more than a third of all critics (35 percent) believe that “exhibiting your own work in galleries or museums” is never acceptable. A substantial number of critics, therefore, are categorically opposed to an activity that is actively pursued by a sizable number of their peers.

For critics, such contradictions may be unavoidable. When it comes to writing art criticism, a writer at a North Carolina newspaper observed, “without conflict of interest there may be no interest at all.” ■

MEN AND WOMEN

Female and male critics were much less likely to disagree about the ethics of criticism than daily and weekly critics. Men are stricter (hardly a coincidence, since male critics are more likely to work at daily newspapers). Men disapprove more vocally about being a consultant to public art collections, sitting on boards of arts organizations and advocating for public art funding. The largest opinion gap between the genders, however, cast women in the more conservative role: 74 percent of female critics believe that “advising artists on the art they should make” is “never acceptable” (only 50 percent of male critics denounce the practice).

APPENDIX

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Following is the questionnaire for the visual art critic survey. Each possible answer is accompanied by the percentage of the 169 critics in the total survey sample who gave that response; for selected questions that solicited responses from only a subset of the 169-critic sample, the appropriate N is noted.

Combined tabulations for questions may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding or because multiple responses were solicited for certain questions.

All participating critics responded to either an online or a hard-copy version of this questionnaire in March 2002.

A more comprehensive data set, with responses broken down by gender and publication type, is available at <http://www.najp.org/publications/research/index.htm>.

For details on the methodology we used to obtain and define our critic pool, see Chapter 1.

1. In the past year, have you filed at least twelve evaluative pieces (e.g. reviews or other critical pieces) on visual art for your publication?

Yes (93)
No (7)

2. Which of the following best describes your job at the paper? (daily critics only: percentages based on N=123)

Art critic (62)
Arts reporter (15)
General assignment critic (1)
Entertainment writer (or equivalent) (1)
Lifestyle writer (or equivalent) (1)
Staff writer who splits a part-time art critic position with another beat (8)
Other (11)

3. What is your employment status?

Full-time member of publication staff (40)
Part-time member of publication staff (5)
Freelancer with a contract (25)
Freelancer without a contract (29)

4. How many years have you worked in journalism?

Less than 2 (3)
2 - 5 (18)
6 - 10 (20)
11 - 15 (12)
16 - 20 (20)
21 - 25 (11)
More than 25 (16)

5. How many years have you been writing about visual art at your publication?

0 - 1 (7)
2 - 5 (38)
6 - 10 (19)
11 - 15 (15)
16 - 20 (14)
21 - 25 (3)
More than 25 (4)

6. How many years total have you been writing about visual art?

0 - 1 (3)
2 - 5 (21)
6 - 10 (21)
11 - 15 (14)
16 - 20 (19)
21 - 25 (8)
More than 25 (13)

7. Are you the chief art critic at your publication?

Yes (75)
No (25)

8. In what other areas of the paper have you worked? Check all that apply. (daily critics only: percentages based on N=123)

Features (55)
City desk (11)
National or international desk (5)
Op-ed page (3)
Business (3)
Sports (3)
Production (1)
General reporter (16)
Intern (1)
Copy desk (1)
Other critic (33: 7 architecture, 1 television, 15 books, 1 dining, 8 film, 12 theater, 12 popular music, 5 classical music, 1 jazz, 3 dance)
Other arts/entertainment beat (33)
Other (15)

9. Approximately how many visual art stories (including reviews, profiles, reportage, etc.) in total do you file each month?

Less than one (2)
1-2 (18)
3-4 (28)
5-9 (31)
10-14 (14)
15 or more (8)

10. Approximately what percentage of all the stories you write for your publication are evaluative reviews of visual art?

0-25% (19)
26-50% (18)
51-75% (15)
76-99% (33)
100% (16)

11. Please indicate whether the visual arts receive more, less, or about the same amount of coverage as each of the following areas.

A. Architecture and design:

More (86)
Less (4)
About the same (10)

B. Books:

More (26)
Less (41)
About the same (33)

C. Classical Music:

More (42)
Less (20)
About the same (38)

D. Dance:

More (67)
Less (10)
About the same (24)

E. Film:

More (4)
Less (92)
About the same (5)

F. Popular Music:

More (7)
Less (80)
About the same (13)

G. Theater:

More (10)
Less (45)
About the same (16)

H. Television:

More (27)
Less (58)
About the same (15)

12. In what section of the paper do your stories usually appear? (daily critics only: Percentages based on N=123)

Arts section, or equivalent (79)
Features section, or equivalent (10)
Other (11)

13. How many visual art stories have appeared on your publication's front page within the past six months?

0 (36)
1 (24)
2 (19)
3-4 (7)
5-12 (6)
13+ (2)
DK/NA (5)

14. Thinking about the visual art stories that you have filed in the past 12 months, about what proportion of the stories were assigned, and what proportion were your own ideas?

Most were assigned (6)
About half and half (18)
Most were my ideas (76)

15. Which one of the following sources do you tend to rely on the MOST in finding artists to write about?

Press releases (34)
Other reviews and articles (4)
Word of mouth (7)
My network of sources (44)
Attending exhibitions (9)
Other (1)

16. Please indicate how frequently you file the following kinds of stories.

A. Profiles of artists

Never (11)
Rarely (14)
Occasionally (47)
Regularly (28)

B. Lectures, talks and seminars

Never (33)
Rarely (37)
Occasionally (26)
Regularly (4)

C. Think-pieces on art/culture

Never (13)
Rarely (24)
Occasionally (40)
Regularly (23)

D. Overview articles

Never (15)
Rarely (38)
Occasionally (37)
Regularly (11)

E. Disputed ownership

Never (64)
Rarely (27)
Occasionally (9)
Regularly (0)

F. Budgetary/management issues

Never (36)
Rarely (30)
Occasionally (24)
Regularly (10)

G. Public art

Never (9)
Rarely (23)
Occasionally (56)
Regularly (13)

H. Freedom of expression/censorship

Never (22)
Rarely (42)
Occasionally (33)
Regularly (4)

I. Unethical conduct

Never (41)
Rarely (40)
Occasionally (18)
Regularly (1)

J. Arts funding

Never (32)
Rarely (26)
Occasionally (32)
Regularly (10)

K. Art acquisitions

Never (23)
Rarely (28)
Occasionally (36)
Regularly (13)

L. Folk art/outsider art

Never (7)
Rarely (22)
Occasionally (60)
Regularly (11)

M. Craft and design

Never (8)
Rarely (26)
Occasionally (50)
Regularly (15)

N. Auctions, collectors, art market

Never (36)
Rarely (37)
Occasionally (24)
Regularly (2)

O. Other parts of the country

Never (29)
Rarely (33)
Occasionally (32)
Regularly (6)

P. Other countries

Never (58)
Rarely (30)
Occasionally (11)
Regularly (2)

Q. Books/ideas

Never (28)
Rarely (31)
Occasionally (33)
Regularly (8)

R. Arts education

Never (40)
Rarely (29)
Occasionally (25)
Regularly (7)

S. Obituaries

Never (42)
Rarely (29)
Occasionally (21)
Regularly (7)

17. How many times in the past 12 months did you travel out of town for an assignment?

0 (22)
1-5 (56)
6-10 (10)
More than 10 (12)

18. Do you feel you were able to travel as much as you needed to?

Yes (36)
No (64)

19. Has your travel been reduced as a result of the current recession?

Yes (43)
No (57)

20. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.**A. The visual art beat is as respected within my publication as other culture beats.**

Strongly agree (37)
Somewhat agree (38)
Somewhat disagree (14)
Strongly disagree (11)

B. I feel that my education and experience have properly prepared me for the work I do.

Strongly agree (67)
Somewhat agree (29)
Somewhat disagree (3)
Strongly disagree (1)

C. If I left my job, my publication would make filling my job a priority.

Strongly agree (27)
Somewhat agree (34)
Somewhat disagree (23)
Strongly disagree (16)

D. My stories receive informed and useful editing.

Strongly agree (32)
Somewhat agree (45)
Somewhat disagree (14)
Strongly disagree (8)

E. I sometimes feel pressure to write a more positive review to boost civic pride.

Strongly agree (2)
Somewhat agree (16)
Somewhat disagree (17)
Strongly disagree (65)

F. I sometimes feel pressure to write positive reviews to please advertisers or people with connections to my publication.

Strongly agree (2)
Somewhat agree (5)
Somewhat disagree (14)
Strongly disagree (78)

G. I sometimes feel pressure to write reviews that are considered "politically correct."

Strongly agree (4)
Somewhat agree (17)
Somewhat disagree (24)
Strongly disagree (55)

21. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about your relationship with various constituencies in your community.**A. Readers care about visual art.**

Strongly agree (21)
Somewhat agree (63)
Somewhat disagree (16)
Strongly disagree (1)

B. Readers have a basic understanding of visual art and art history.

Strongly agree (5)
Somewhat agree (39)
Somewhat disagree (47)
Strongly disagree (10)

C. I feel it is my job to educate the public about visual art and why it matters.

Strongly agree (65)
Somewhat agree (26)
Somewhat disagree (7)
Strongly disagree (1)

D. My tastes in visual art are similar to those of the average reader of my publication.

Strongly agree (2)
Somewhat agree (28)
Somewhat disagree (46)
Strongly disagree (24)

E. Readers think art criticism is important.

Strongly agree (5)
Somewhat agree (52)
Somewhat disagree (34)
Strongly disagree (8)

F. When creating an artwork, artists take into consideration what I will say about their work.

Strongly agree (2)
Somewhat agree (13)
Somewhat disagree (18)
Strongly disagree (67)

G. When organizing an exhibition, museum directors, curators and art galleries take into consideration what I will say about what they present.

Strongly agree (2)
Somewhat agree (16)
Somewhat disagree (27)
Strongly disagree (55)

H. When making a decision to support an artist or exhibition, government and private funders take into consideration what I will say about their decisions.

Strongly agree (2)
Somewhat agree (16)
Somewhat disagree (19)
Strongly disagree (64)

I. My writing has had an impact on visual art in my region.

Strongly agree (27)
Somewhat agree (58)
Somewhat disagree (7)
Strongly disagree (7)

You may add a statement of your own that addresses the impact of your art criticism (open-ended question).

22. Please indicate how influential the following selected writers and theorists have been on your thinking as a visual art critic.**A. Matthew Arnold**

Very influential (4)
Somewhat influential (18)
Not very influential (14)
Not influential at all (28)
No opinion (36)

B. Homi K. Bhabha

Very influential (1)
Somewhat influential (7)
Not very influential (8)
Not influential at all (31)
No opinion (53)

C. Jean Baudrillard

Very influential (6)
Somewhat influential (26)
Not very influential (20)
Not influential at all (19)
No opinion (29)

D. Walter Benjamin

Very influential (16)
Somewhat influential (32)
Not very influential (14)
Not influential at all (14)
No opinion (24)

E. John Berger

Very influential (14)
Somewhat influential (28)
Not very influential (15)
Not influential at all (18)
No opinion (24)

F. Charles Baudelaire

Very influential (13)
Somewhat influential (30)
Not very influential (17)
Not influential at all (17)
No opinion (23)

G. Pierre Bourdieu

Very influential (1)
Somewhat influential (8)
Not very influential (11)
Not influential at all (25)
No opinion (55)

H. Michael Brenson

Very influential (2)
Somewhat influential (16)
Not very influential (16)
Not influential at all (24)
No opinion (42)

I. Roger Cardinal

Very influential (0)
Somewhat influential (6)
Not very influential (10)
Not influential at all (26)
No opinion (58)

J. T.J. Clark

Very influential (4)
Somewhat influential (17)
Not very influential (15)
Not influential at all (23)
No opinion (41)

K. A.D. Coleman

Very influential (4)
Somewhat influential (9)
Not very influential (11)
Not influential at all (25)
No opinion (51)

L. Thomas Crow

Very influential (1)
Somewhat influential (9)
Not very influential (13)
Not influential at all (24)
No opinion (52)

M. Arthur C. Danto

Very influential (10)
Somewhat influential (28)
Not very influential (19)
Not influential at all (17)
No opinion (27)

N. John Dewey

Very influential (6)
Somewhat influential (16)
Not very influential (20)
Not influential at all (25)
No opinion (34)

O. Jacques Derrida

Very influential (4)
Somewhat influential (24)
Not very influential (22)
Not influential at all (28)
No opinion (22)

P. Terry Eagleton

Very influential (2)
Somewhat influential (13)
Not very influential (14)
Not influential at all (24)
No opinion (47)

Q. Hal Foster

Very influential (3)
Somewhat influential (16)
Not very influential (12)
Not influential at all (27)
No opinion (42)

R. Michael Fried

Very influential (4)
Somewhat influential (19)
Not very influential (12)
Not influential at all (23)
No opinion (42)

S. Roger Fry

Very influential (6)
Somewhat influential (22)
Not very influential (21)
Not influential at all (19)
No opinion (32)

T. Suzi Gablik

Very influential (6)
Somewhat influential (23)
Not very influential (15)
Not influential at all (22)
No opinion (35)

U. E. H. Gombrich

Very influential (11)
Somewhat influential (30)
Not very influential (14)
Not influential at all (16)
No opinion (28)

V. Clement Greenberg

Very influential (16)
Somewhat influential (47)
Not very influential (16)
Not influential at all (7)
No opinion (14)

W. Dave Hickey

Very influential (22)
Somewhat influential (24)
Not very influential (11)
Not influential at all (13)
No opinion (30)

X. bell hooks

Very influential (3)
Somewhat influential (19)
Not very influential (17)
Not influential at all (24)
No opinion (37)

Y. Robert Hughes

Very influential (23)
Somewhat influential (35)
Not very influential (13)
Not influential at all (14)
No opinion (14)

Z. Frederic Jameson

Very influential (4)
Somewhat influential (11)
Not very influential (18)
Not influential at all (24)
No opinion (43)

AA. Donald Judd

Very influential (12)
Somewhat influential (22)
Not very influential (18)
Not influential at all (24)
No opinion (24)

BB. Immanuel Kant

Very influential (8)
Somewhat influential (31)
Not very influential (18)
Not influential at all (22)
No opinion (21)

CC. Michael Kimmelman

Very influential (14)
Somewhat influential (26)
Not very influential (12)
Not influential at all (19)
No opinion (29)

DD. Max Kozloff

Very influential (1)
Somewhat influential (12)
Not very influential (13)
Not influential at all (27)
No opinion (46)

EE. Hilton Kramer

Very influential (6)
Somewhat influential (30)
Not very influential (17)
Not influential at all (27)
No opinion (20)

FF. Rosalind Krauss

Very influential (6)
Somewhat influential (22)
Not very influential (19)
Not influential at all (24)
No opinion (28)

GG. Julia Kristeva

Very influential (2)
Somewhat influential (13)
Not very influential (12)
Not influential at all (28)
No opinion (44)

HH. Donald Kuspit

Very influential (5)
Somewhat influential (25)
Not very influential (12)
Not influential at all (26)
No opinion (32)

II. Lucy R. Lippard

Very influential (11)
Somewhat influential (34)
Not very influential (14)
Not influential at all (19)
No opinion (22)

JJ. Barbara London

Very influential (0)
Somewhat influential (3)
Not very influential (9)
Not influential at all (28)
No opinion (60)

KK. Linda Nochlin

Very influential (9)
Somewhat influential (26)
Not very influential (12)
Not influential at all (20)
No opinion (33)

LL. Adrien Piper

Very influential (4)
Somewhat influential (13)
Not very influential (23)
Not influential at all (22)
No opinion (38)

MM. Peter Plagens

Very influential (6)
Somewhat influential (26)
Not very influential (13)
Not influential at all (24)
No opinion (31)

NN. Barbara Rose

Very influential (4)
Somewhat influential (25)
Not very influential (17)
Not influential at all (22)
No opinion (32)

OO. Harold Rosenberg

Very influential (13)
Somewhat influential (32)
Not very influential (18)
Not influential at all (13)
No opinion (25)

PP. Robert Rosenblum

Very influential (10)
Somewhat influential (27)
Not very influential (13)
Not influential at all (16)
No opinion (34)

QQ. John Ruskin

Very influential (11)
Somewhat influential (32)
Not very influential (19)
Not influential at all (18)
No opinion (20)

RR. Jerry Saltz

Very influential (4)
Somewhat influential (16)
Not very influential (11)
Not influential at all (22)
No opinion (46)

SS. Irving Sandler

Very influential (8)
Somewhat influential (12)
Not very influential (13)
Not influential at all (21)
No opinion (46)

TT. Meyer Schapiro

Very influential (21)
Somewhat influential (33)
Not very influential (8)
Not influential at all (11)
No opinion (27)

UU. Peter Schjeldahl

Very influential (21)
Somewhat influential (33)
Not very influential (8)
Not influential at all (11)
No opinion (27)

VV. Susan Sontag

Very influential (21)
Somewhat influential (40)
Not very influential (16)
Not influential at all (11)
No opinion (13)

WW. Leo Steinberg

Very influential (11)
Somewhat influential (21)
Not very influential (16)
Not influential at all (15)
No opinion (38)

XX. Edward Sullivan

Very influential (1)
Somewhat influential (4)
Not very influential (9)
Not influential at all (22)
No opinion (65)

YY. John Szarkowski

Very influential (11)
Somewhat influential (24)
Not very influential (9)
Not influential at all (18)
No opinion (38)

ZZ. David Sylvester

Very influential (3)
Somewhat influential (11)
Not very influential (15)
Not influential at all (18)
No opinion (53)

AAA. Robert Farris Thompson

Very influential (6)
Somewhat influential (10)
Not very influential (9)
Not influential at all (24)
No opinion (52)

BBB. Calvin Tomkins

Very influential (13)
Somewhat influential (30)
Not very influential (12)
Not influential at all (16)
No opinion (28)

CCC. Giorgio Vasari

Very influential (9)
Somewhat influential (23)
Not very influential (19)
Not influential at all (21)
No opinion (28)

DDD. Sister Wendy

Very influential (3)
Somewhat influential (10)
Not very influential (20)
Not influential at all (46)
No opinion (21)

EEE. Oscar Wilde

Very influential (16)
Somewhat influential (31)
Not very influential (17)
Not influential at all (21)
No opinion (16)

Feel free to add the names of any other writers or theorists who have had a strong influence on your work as an art critic (open-ended question).

23. Please list any curators, museum directors and other practitioners in the art world who have been particularly influential to your thinking (open-ended question).

24. Please indicate how well you like the following selected living artists' work.

A. John Baldessari

Like a great deal (14)
Like somewhat (49)
Dislike somewhat (8)
Dislike a great deal (2)
No opinion (28)

B. Matthew Barney

Like a great deal (13)
Like somewhat (30)
Dislike somewhat (12)
Dislike a great deal (6)
No opinion (39)

C. Georg Baselitz

Like a great deal (11)
Like somewhat (43)
Dislike somewhat (17)
Dislike a great deal (2)
No opinion (28)

D. Vanessa Beecroft

Like a great deal (4)
Like somewhat (22)
Dislike somewhat (13)
Dislike a great deal (4)
No opinion (56)

E. Louise Bourgeois

Like a great deal (44)
Like somewhat (34)
Dislike somewhat (2)
Dislike a great deal (1)
No opinion (18)

F. Maurizio Cattelan

Like a great deal (12)
Like somewhat (17)
Dislike somewhat (3)
Dislike a great deal (2)
No opinion (66)

G. Christo & Jeanne-Claude

Like a great deal (32)
Like somewhat (40)
Dislike somewhat (15)
Dislike a great deal (4)
No opinion (9)

H. Dale Chihuly

Like a great deal (20)
Like somewhat (27)
Dislike somewhat (22)
Dislike a great deal (22)
No opinion (10)

I. Chuck Close

Like a great deal (38)
Like somewhat (40)
Dislike somewhat (8)
Dislike a great deal (2)
No opinion (11)

J. Gregory Crewdson

Like a great deal (8)
Like somewhat (16)
Dislike somewhat (6)
Dislike a great deal (3)
No opinion (68)

K. John Currin

Like a great deal (7)
Like somewhat (30)
Dislike somewhat (8)
Dislike a great deal (5)
No opinion (50)

L. Dan Graham

Like a great deal (8)
Like somewhat (15)
Dislike somewhat (2)
Dislike a great deal (1)
No opinion (74)

M. Do-Ho Suh

Like a great deal (4)
Like somewhat (16)
Dislike somewhat (13)
Dislike a great deal (5)
No opinion (62)

N. Tracey Emin

Like a great deal (10)
Like somewhat (36)
Dislike somewhat (17)
Dislike a great deal (14)
No opinion (22)

O. Karen Finley

Like a great deal (19)
Like somewhat (40)
Dislike somewhat (12)
Dislike a great deal (6)
No opinion (23)

P. Eric Fischl

Like a great deal (15)
Like somewhat (21)
Dislike somewhat (3)
Dislike a great deal (1)
No opinion (60)

Q. Tom Friedman

Like a great deal (10)
Like somewhat (18)
Dislike somewhat (2)
Dislike a great deal (1)
No opinion (70)

R. Ellen Gallagher

Like a great deal (19)
Like somewhat (27)
Dislike somewhat (10)
Dislike a great deal (2)
No opinion (43)

S. Robert Gober

Like a great deal (18)
Like somewhat (42)
Dislike somewhat (12)
Dislike a great deal (3)
No opinion (26)

T. Nan Goldin

Like a great deal (7)
Like somewhat (24)
Dislike somewhat (9)
Dislike a great deal (2)
No opinion (59)

U. Andreas Gursky

Like a great deal (29)
Like somewhat (24)
Dislike somewhat (4)
Dislike a great deal (1)
No opinion (44)

V. Hans Haacke

Like a great deal (22)
Like somewhat (29)
Dislike somewhat (7)
Dislike a great deal (4)
No opinion (38)

W. Peter Halley

Like a great deal (7)
Like somewhat (30)
Dislike somewhat (14)
Dislike a great deal (4)
No opinion (45)

X. Ann Hamilton

Like a great deal (23)
Like somewhat (30)
Dislike somewhat (5)
Dislike a great deal (0)
No opinion (42)

Y. Trenton Doyle Hancock

Like a great deal (3)
Like somewhat (7)
Dislike somewhat (3)
Dislike a great deal (1)
No opinion (85)

Z. Damien Hirst

Like a great deal (12)
Like somewhat (36)
Dislike somewhat (24)
Dislike a great deal (9)
No opinion (20)

AA. Jenny Holzer

Like a great deal (25)
 Like somewhat (40)
 Dislike somewhat (12)
 Dislike a great deal (6)
 No opinion (17)

BB. Roni Horn

Like a great deal (14)
 Like somewhat (28)
 Dislike somewhat (4)
 Dislike a great deal (0)
 No opinion (54)

CC. Robert Irwin

Like a great deal (26)
 Like somewhat (30)
 Dislike somewhat (2)
 Dislike a great deal (0)
 No opinion (42)

DD. Jasper Johns

Like a great deal (26)
 Like somewhat (30)
 Dislike somewhat (2)
 Dislike a great deal (0)
 No opinion (42)

EE. Alex Katz

Like a great deal (25)
 Like somewhat (37)
 Dislike somewhat (16)
 Dislike a great deal (4)
 No opinion (19)

FF. Ellsworth Kelly

Like a great deal (38)
 Like somewhat (35)
 Dislike somewhat (11)
 Dislike a great deal (2)
 No opinion (14)

GG. Mike Kelley

Like a great deal (12)
 Like somewhat (27)
 Dislike somewhat (13)
 Dislike a great deal (5)
 No opinion (44)

HH. Anselm Kiefer

Like a great deal (43)
 Like somewhat (28)
 Dislike somewhat (9)
 Dislike a great deal (1)
 No opinion (19)

II. Thomas Kinkade

Like a great deal (2)
 Like somewhat (7)
 Dislike somewhat (6)
 Dislike a great deal (62)
 No opinion (23)

JJ. Jeff Koons

Like a great deal (16)
 Like somewhat (28)
 Dislike somewhat (28)
 Dislike a great deal (19)
 No opinion (9)

KK. Barbara Kruger

Like a great deal (22)
 Like somewhat (36)
 Dislike somewhat (14)
 Dislike a great deal (5)
 No opinion (23)

LL. Sol LeWitt

Like a great deal (36)
 Like somewhat (34)
 Dislike somewhat (11)
 Dislike a great deal (1)
 No opinion (17)

MM. Maya Lin

Like a great deal (49)
 Like somewhat (36)
 Dislike somewhat (5)
 Dislike a great deal (0)
 No opinion (10)

NN. Robert Mangold

Like a great deal (18)
 Like somewhat (34)
 Dislike somewhat (8)
 Dislike a great deal (1)
 No opinion (38)

OO. Brice Marden

Like a great deal (31)
 Like somewhat (38)
 Dislike somewhat (2)
 Dislike a great deal (3)
 No opinion (27)

PP. Mary Ellen Mark

Like a great deal (22)
 Like somewhat (26)
 Dislike somewhat (5)
 Dislike a great deal (1)
 No opinion (46)

QQ. Paul McCarthy

Like a great deal (9)
 Like somewhat (29)
 Dislike somewhat (12)
 Dislike a great deal (7)
 No opinion (43)

RR. Sally Mann

Like a great deal (30)
 Like somewhat (31)
 Dislike somewhat (5)
 Dislike a great deal (4)
 No opinion (30)

SS. Takashi Murakami

Like a great deal (17)
 Like somewhat (26)
 Dislike somewhat (5)
 Dislike a great deal (1)
 No opinion (51)

TT. Elizabeth Murray

Like a great deal (21)
 Like somewhat (37)
 Dislike somewhat (6)
 Dislike a great deal (1)
 No opinion (35)

UU. Bruce Nauman

Like a great deal (38)
 Like somewhat (34)
 Dislike somewhat (6)
 Dislike a great deal (3)
 No opinion (20)

VV. Shirin Neshat

Like a great deal (24)
 Like somewhat (21)
 Dislike somewhat (2)
 Dislike a great deal (1)
 No opinion (52)

WW. LeRoy Neiman

Like a great deal (2)
 Like somewhat (9)
 Dislike somewhat (17)
 Dislike a great deal (55)
 No opinion (16)

XX. Claes Oldenburg

Like a great deal (44)
 Like somewhat (43)
 Dislike somewhat (6)
 Dislike a great deal (0)
 No opinion (7)

YY. Yoko Ono

Like a great deal (14)
 Like somewhat (37)
 Dislike somewhat (25)
 Dislike a great deal (14)
 No opinion (10)

ZZ. Pepon Osorio

Like a great deal (8)
 Like somewhat (22)
 Dislike somewhat (4)
 Dislike a great deal (2)
 No opinion (64)

AAA. Tony Oursler

Like a great deal (23)
 Like somewhat (29)
 Dislike somewhat (5)
 Dislike a great deal (2)
 No opinion (41)

BBB. Nam June Paik

Like a great deal (35)
 Like somewhat (37)
 Dislike somewhat (9)
 Dislike a great deal (2)
 No opinion (16)

CCC. Jorge Pardo

Like a great deal (4)
 Like somewhat (30)
 Dislike somewhat (4)
 Dislike a great deal (2)
 No opinion (60)

DDD. Ed Paschke

Like a great deal (11)
 Like somewhat (31)
 Dislike somewhat (12)
 Dislike a great deal (3)
 No opinion (42)

EEE. William Pope.L

Like a great deal (4)
 Like somewhat (11)
 Dislike somewhat (5)
 Dislike a great deal (3)
 No opinion (77)

FFF. Richard Prince

Like a great deal (8)
 Like somewhat (23)
 Dislike somewhat (10)
 Dislike a great deal (3)
 No opinion (55)

GGG. Martin Puryear

Like a great deal (36)
 Like somewhat (23)
 Dislike somewhat (4)
 Dislike a great deal (0)
 No opinion (37)

HHH. Robert Rauschenberg

Like a great deal (57)
 Like somewhat (34)
 Dislike somewhat (4)
 Dislike a great deal (2)
 No opinion (4)

III. Gerhard Richter

Like a great deal (48)
 Like somewhat (28)
 Dislike somewhat (7)
 Dislike a great deal (0)
 No opinion (17)

JJJ. Ed Ruscha

Like a great deal (38)
 Like somewhat (39)
 Dislike somewhat (6)
 Dislike a great deal (1)
 No opinion (17)

KKK. Robert Ryman

Like a great deal (23)
 Like somewhat (35)
 Dislike somewhat (4)
 Dislike a great deal (2)
 No opinion (36)

LLL. Sebastiao Salgado

Like a great deal (21)
 Like somewhat (24)
 Dislike somewhat (6)
 Dislike a great deal (1)
 No opinion (48)

MMM. David Salle

Like a great deal (8)
 Like somewhat (33)
 Dislike somewhat (26)
 Dislike a great deal (11)
 No opinion (22)

NNN. Collier Schorr

Like a great deal (1)
 Like somewhat (8)
 Dislike somewhat (10)
 Dislike a great deal (2)
 No opinion (79)

OOO. Richard Serra

Like a great deal (36)
 Like somewhat (37)
 Dislike somewhat (10)
 Dislike a great deal (3)
 No opinion (14)

PPP. Andres Serrano

Like a great deal (20)
 Like somewhat (43)
 Dislike somewhat (19)
 Dislike a great deal (9)
 No opinion (9)

QQQ. Cindy Sherman

Like a great deal (39)
 Like somewhat (36)
 Dislike somewhat (9)
 Dislike a great deal (2)
 No opinion (14)

RRR. Julian Schnabel

Like a great deal (6)
 Like somewhat (34)
 Dislike somewhat (34)
 Dislike a great deal (14)
 No opinion (12)

SSS. Kiki Smith

Like a great deal (23)
 Like somewhat (43)
 Dislike somewhat (12)
 Dislike a great deal (2)
 No opinion (20)

TTT. Frank Stella

Like a great deal (27)
 Like somewhat (48)
 Dislike somewhat (15)
 Dislike a great deal (4)
 No opinion (7)

UUU. Diana Thater

Like a great deal (4)
 Like somewhat (19)
 Dislike somewhat (8)
 Dislike a great deal (2)
 No opinion (67)

VVV. Wayne Thiebaud

Like a great deal (41)
 Like somewhat (30)
 Dislike somewhat (4)
 Dislike a great deal (2)
 No opinion (22)

WWW. James Turrell

Like a great deal (38)
 Like somewhat (22)
 Dislike somewhat (3)
 Dislike a great deal (1)
 No opinion (36)

XXX. Rirkrit Tiravanija

Like a great deal (5)
 Like somewhat (20)
 Dislike somewhat (4)
 Dislike a great deal (3)
 No opinion (68)

YYY. Cy Twombly

Like a great deal (37)
 Like somewhat (36)
 Dislike somewhat (8)
 Dislike a great deal (4)
 No opinion (15)

ZZZ. Bill Viola

Like a great deal (41)
 Like somewhat (24)
 Dislike somewhat (4)
 Dislike a great deal (2)
 No opinion (29)

AAAA. Kara Walker

Like a great deal (25)
 Like somewhat (27)
 Dislike somewhat (6)
 Dislike a great deal (1)
 No opinion (42)

BBBB. William Wegman

Like a great deal (15)
 Like somewhat (42)
 Dislike somewhat (19)
 Dislike a great deal (16)
 No opinion (8)

CCCC. Lawrence Wiener

Like a great deal (4)
 Like somewhat (21)
 Dislike somewhat (8)
 Dislike a great deal (3)
 No opinion (65)

DDDD. Terry Winters

Like a great deal (9)
 Like somewhat (33)
 Dislike somewhat (3)
 Dislike a great deal (2)
 No opinion (53)

EEEE. Rachel Whiteread

Like a great deal (21)
 Like somewhat (25)
 Dislike somewhat (8)
 Dislike a great deal (1)
 No opinion (46)

FFFF. Lisa Yuskavage

Like a great deal (9)
 Like somewhat (20)
 Dislike somewhat (11)
 Dislike a great deal (6)
 No opinion (54)

Feel free to add the names of other living artists whose work you like a great deal (open-ended question).

Feel free to add the names of other living artists whose work you dislike a great deal (open-ended question).

25.1 The three areas I MOST enjoy writing about are: (Note: for 25.1 and 25.2, total percentages may be as high as 300%).

A. Painting (77)
 B. Sculpture (32)
 C. Drawing (20)
 D. Installations (30)
 E. Outsider Art (20)
 F. Photography (35)
 G. Video (6)
 H. Public Art (11)
 I. Online Art (1)
 J. Performance (4)
 K. Conceptual Art (27)
 L. Crafts (7)
 M. Political Art (6)
 N. Art indebted to theory (2)
 O. Representational art (6)
 P. Art exploring identity (13)
 Q. Big outdoor projects (6)
 R. Artist collaborations (4)
 S. Posters and Prints (1)

25.2 The three areas I LEAST enjoy writing about are:

A. Painting (0)
 B. Sculpture (1)
 C. Drawing (2)
 D. Installations (3)
 E. Outsider Art (8)
 F. Photography (3)
 G. Video (22)
 H. Public Art (7)
 I. Online Art (51)
 J. Performance (23)
 K. Conceptual Art (13)
 L. Crafts (32)
 M. Political Art (17)
 N. Art indebted to theory (47)
 O. Representational art (9)
 P. Art exploring identity (22)
 Q. Big outdoor projects (6)
 R. Artist collaborations (2)
 S. Posters and Prints (27)

Please add other forms of art you LIKE to write about. (open-ended question).

Please add any other forms of art you DO NOT LIKE to write about (open-ended question).

26. About what percentage of your reviews focus on the work of living artists?

0-25% (4)
 26-50% (13)
 51-75% (14)
 76-100% (69)

27. In the last decade, in your region or elsewhere, which exhibitions have most influenced your thinking about art (please indicate the title and location of the show, and feel free to comment on its importance)? (open-ended question)

28. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

A. Generally speaking, we can be proud of the new art created in this country over the past 25 years.

Strongly agree (37)
 Somewhat agree (45)
 Somewhat disagree (14)
 Strongly disagree (4)

B. There was a golden age of American art, and it has passed.

Strongly agree (2)
 Somewhat agree (25)
 Somewhat disagree (35)
 Strongly disagree (39)

C. Now is the golden age of American art.

Strongly agree (3)
 Somewhat agree (14)
 Somewhat disagree (54)
 Strongly disagree (29)

D. The federal government should make the support of individual artists a policy priority.

Strongly agree (27)
 Somewhat agree (34)
 Somewhat disagree (26)
 Strongly disagree (13)

E. Postmodernist theory has a strong influence on the art being made today.

Strongly agree (33)
 Somewhat agree (51)
 Somewhat disagree (13)
 Strongly disagree (3)

F. Public funding of artists and exhibitions should be tied to guidelines on potentially offensive content.

Strongly agree (3)
 Somewhat agree (4)
 Somewhat disagree (18)
 Strongly disagree (75)

G. Art critics tend to concentrate on high-profile artists and exhibitions at the expense of other deserving artists and issues.

Strongly agree (20)
 Somewhat agree (52)
 Somewhat disagree (23)
 Strongly disagree (5)

H. Visual artists are breaking genuinely new ground these days.

Strongly agree (10)
 Somewhat agree (40)
 Somewhat disagree (41)
 Strongly disagree (9)

I. Multiculturalism has a strong influence in today's art world.

Strongly agree (44)
 Somewhat agree (52)
 Somewhat disagree (4)
 Strongly disagree (0)

J. The United States is the center of the art world.

Strongly agree (10)
 Somewhat agree (40)
 Somewhat disagree (34)
 Strongly disagree (16)

K. Generally speaking, art galleries and museums do a good job of identifying and promoting the artists who will be seen as important in the future.

Strongly agree (5)
Somewhat agree (47)
Somewhat disagree (41)
Strongly disagree (7)

L. Today's art criticism offers reliable guidance and evaluation for working artists, curators and galleries.

Strongly agree (7)
Somewhat agree (52)
Somewhat disagree (35)
Strongly disagree (6)

M. There is too much art being produced, made and shown.

Strongly agree (9)
Somewhat agree (23)
Somewhat disagree (36)
Strongly disagree (32)

N. The visual art world is overly dependent on commercial institutions and the art market.

Strongly agree (29)
Somewhat agree (41)
Somewhat disagree (24)
Strongly disagree (6)

29. In your writings, how much emphasis do you place on the following aspects of criticism?

A. Providing an accurate descriptive account of the artwork or exhibition being reviewed.

A great deal of emphasis (62)
Some emphasis (37)
Not much emphasis (1)
No emphasis at all (0)

B. Providing historical and other background information about the work(s) or artist(s) being reviewed.

A great deal of emphasis (51)
Some emphasis (47)
Not much emphasis (2)
No emphasis at all (1)

C. Theorizing about the meaning, associations and implications of the works being reviewed.

A great deal of emphasis (39)
Some emphasis (51)
Not much emphasis (10)
No emphasis at all (0)

D. Rendering a personal judgment or opinion about the works being reviewed.

A great deal of emphasis (27)
Some emphasis (55)
Not much emphasis (15)
No emphasis at all (3)

E. Creating a piece of writing with literary value.

A great deal of emphasis (48)
Some emphasis (37)
Not much emphasis (12)
No emphasis at all (3)

30. When reviewing artists or shows, does your criticism tend to be predominantly negative or predominantly positive?

Predominantly positive (61)
Predominantly negative (2)
Equally likely to be positive or negative (37)

If you answered predominantly negative or predominantly positive, please say why (open-ended question).

31. Which American city has the most vital visual art scene at the present time (open-ended question)?

32. Which newspaper do you think contains the best visual art criticism today (open-ended question)?

33. Which art school is the most influential today?

Art Center College of Design (3)
Art Institute of Chicago (20)
CalArts (16)
California College of Arts and Crafts (3)
Cranbrook Academy of Art (2)
Rhode Island School of Design (11)
San Francisco Art Institute (1)
School of Visual Arts (5)
UCLA (10)

Virginia Commonwealth University (0)
Yale (12)
Other (16)

34. In your opinion, how acceptable is it for an art critic to engage in each of the following activities?

A. Accept payment for writing in catalogs published by museums or galleries

Generally acceptable (45)
Occasionally acceptable (35)
Never acceptable (20)

B. Accept expenses for a press junket on something you intend to write about

Generally acceptable (23)
Occasionally acceptable (27)
Never acceptable (51)

C. Write about artists whose works you own or collect

Generally acceptable (20)
Occasionally acceptable (60)
Never acceptable (20)

D. Accept gifts of works from artists you have written about

Generally acceptable (10)
Occasionally acceptable (36)
Never acceptable (54)

E. Accept gifts from art dealers or private collectors in return for writing

Generally acceptable (2)
Occasionally acceptable (9)
Never acceptable (89)

F. Advise artists on what sort of art they should make

Generally acceptable (6)
Occasionally acceptable (33)
Never acceptable (61)

G. Fraternize with artists whom you write about

Generally acceptable (39)
Occasionally acceptable (54)
Never acceptable (7)

H. Exhibit your own works in galleries or museums

Generally acceptable (20)
Occasionally acceptable (46)
Never acceptable (35)

I. Act as a consultant to public collections on decisions about acquisitions and programming

Generally acceptable (28)
Occasionally acceptable (43)
Never acceptable (29)

J. Act as a consultant to private galleries on sales, purchases and programming

Generally acceptable (13)
Occasionally acceptable (23)
Never acceptable (64)

K. Serve as a curator for museums or public collections

Generally acceptable (32)
Occasionally acceptable (41)
Never acceptable (27)

L. Serve as a curator for private galleries

Generally acceptable (20)
Occasionally acceptable (32)
Never acceptable (48)

M. Make money as an art dealer or art consultant

Generally acceptable (7)
Occasionally acceptable (19)
Never acceptable (75)

N. Sit on boards of visual art organizations

Generally acceptable (33)
Occasionally acceptable (30)
Never acceptable (37)

O. Be an advocate for the public funding of artists

Generally acceptable (55)
Occasionally acceptable (33)
Never acceptable (12)

P. Participate in judging artists for prizes and competitions

Generally acceptable (50)

Occasionally acceptable (42)
Never acceptable (8)

Feel free to clarify your answers or comment on the ethics of art criticism (open-ended question).

35. Please rate the art coverage in the following art publications:

A. American Artist

Excellent (1)
Good (12)
Fair (20)
Poor (18)
Not familiar enough to rate (49)

B. Aperture

Excellent (10)
Good (35)
Fair (8)
Poor (1)
Not familiar enough to rate (46)

C. Art and Antiques

Excellent (3)
Good (21)
Fair (25)
Poor (11)
Not familiar enough to rate (40)

D. Art and Auction

Excellent (4)
Good (18)
Fair (22)
Poor (6)
Not familiar enough to rate (50)

E. Art in America

Excellent (33)
Good (43)
Fair (14)
Poor (1)
Not familiar enough to rate (9)

F. Art Papers

Excellent (10)
Good (27)
Fair (12)
Poor (1)
Not familiar enough to rate (50)

G. Art Week

Excellent (3)
Good (24)
Fair (12)
Poor (2)
Not familiar enough to rate (59)

H. Artforum

Excellent (31)
Good (38)
Fair (16)
Poor (3)
Not familiar enough to rate (13)

I. ArtNews

Excellent (23)
Good (37)
Fair (28)
Poor (3)
Not familiar enough to rate (9)

J. Blind Spot

Excellent (1)
Good (11)
Fair (5)
Poor (0)
Not familiar enough to rate (84)

K. DoubleTake

Excellent (8)
Good (14)
Fair (11)
Poor (1)
Not familiar enough to rate (67)

L. Flash Art

Excellent (8)
Good (27)
Fair (20)
Poor (2)
Not familiar enough to rate (44)

M. Folk Art

Excellent (1)
 Good (12)
 Fair (10)
 Poor (0)
 Not familiar enough to rate (78)

N. Frieze

Excellent (5)
 Good (17)
 Fair (6)
 Poor (1)
 Not familiar enough to rate (72)

O. Modern Painters

Excellent (6)
 Good (18)
 Fair (12)
 Poor (2)
 Not familiar enough to rate (62)

P. New Art Examiner

Excellent (6)
 Good (32)
 Fair (15)
 Poor (4)
 Not familiar enough to rate (43)

Q. New Criterion

Excellent (6)
 Good (20)
 Fair (17)
 Poor (9)
 Not familiar enough to rate (48)

R. October

Excellent (5)
 Good (12)
 Fair (13)
 Poor (3)
 Not familiar enough to rate (67)

S. Parkett

Excellent (11)
 Good (17)
 Fair (4)
 Poor (0)
 Not familiar enough to rate (68)

T. Raw Vision

Excellent (6)
 Good (11)
 Fair (5)
 Poor (2)
 Not familiar enough to rate (76)

U. Sculpture

Excellent (10)
 Good (25)
 Fair (15)
 Poor (2)
 Not familiar enough to rate (49)

V. Tema Celeste

Excellent (3)
 Good (9)
 Fair (3)
 Poor (0)
 Not familiar enough to rate (84)

W. The Art Newspaper

Excellent (12)
 Good (18)
 Fair (5)
 Poor (3)
 Not familiar enough to rate (61)

Please list other publications whose art writing you consider excellent (open-ended question).

Please list other publications whose art writing you consider poor (open-ended question).

36. What is your age?

Under 25 (1)
 26 - 35 (16)
 36 - 45 (28)
 46 - 55 (36)
 56 - 65 (13)
 Over 65 (6)

37. What is your gender?

Female (50)
 Male (50)

38. What is your ethnicity?

African-American (1)
 Asian-American (2)
 Caucasian (90)
 Hispanic (1)
 Native American (0)
 Other (6)

39. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

High school (1)
 Some college (4)
 College degree (22)
 Some graduate school (14)
 Master of Arts (28)
 Master of Fine Arts (13)
 MBA or law degree (4)
 Ph.D. (12)
 Other graduate degree (4)

40. Did you receive any formal training in art or art history? (check all that apply) (percentages add up to more than 100%)

No formal art or art history training (13)
 Some college classes in art or art history (44)
 B.A. in art (11)
 B.A. in art history (8)
 M.F.A. (7)
 M.A. in art history (14)
 Ph.D. in art history (4)
 Other (7)

41. Have you ever worked in any of the following? (check all that apply) (96 respondents answered "yes" to one of the following. Percentages based on N=96)

Commercial art gallery (18)
 Art museum (24)
 Auction house (1)
 Specialized art magazine (12)
 College or university teaching art, art history, theory or art education (29)
 Art support services (framing, crating, shipping) (7)
 Public relations firm with arts clients (2)
 Artist's studio assistant (10)
 Private foundation that support the arts (2)
 Government arts organization (2)

41A. (If "yes" to any of the above): Are you currently working in any of these capacities? (percentages based on N=96)

Yes (14)
 No (86)

42. Do you make art?

Yes (44)
 No (56)

If "yes":**42A. Has your art ever been exhibited? (percentages based on N=74)**

Yes (70)
 No (30)

42B. Have you exhibited your art in the last 5 years? (percentages based on N=74)

Yes (50)
 No (50)

43. Please indicate your salary range as an art critic (if freelance, please indicate the income you receive as an art critic).

\$0 - \$5,000 (23)
 \$5 - \$15,000 (21)
 \$15 - \$25,000 (9)
 \$25 - \$35,000 (9)
 \$35 - \$45,000 (10)
 \$45 - \$55,000 (10)
 \$55 - \$65,000 (8)
 \$65 - \$75,000 (4)
 \$75 - \$85,000 (3)
 \$85 - \$95,000 (1)
 \$95,000 and above (3)

44. Approximately what percentage of your total personal income last year would you say derived from your art criticism?

25% or less (42)
 26-50% (16)
 51-75% (11)
 More than 75% (13)
 Close to 100% (23)

45. Please indicate your total household income.

\$0 - \$15,000 (1)
 \$15 - \$25,000 (9)
 \$25 - \$50,000 (23)
 \$50 - \$75,000 (26)
 \$75 - \$100,000 (16)
 \$100 - \$125,000 (13)
 \$125 - \$150,000 (6)
 \$150,000 and above (5)

46. Do you collect art?

Yes (79)
 No (21)

47. What kind of a residential community do you live in?

Urban downtown (32)
 Urban other (41)
 Suburb (19)
 Small town (under 50,000) (8)
 Rural/farm (1)

48. How did you vote in the 2000 presidential election?

Republican (5)
 Democrat (79)
 Green (9)
 Reform (1)
 Did not vote (6)
 Not eligible to vote (1)

49. In politics, do you consider yourself progressive, liberal, moderate or conservative?

Progressive (20)
 Liberal (51)
 Moderate (16)
 Conservative (3)
 Don't know (2)
 Other (8)

50. What do you think a piece of art criticism should accomplish (open-ended question)?**51. What is the role of the visual art critic in the community (open-ended question)?****52. Please add any further remarks in connection with this survey (open-ended question).**

ARTIST AND THEORIST RANKINGS

ARTIST RANKINGS: RECOGNITION

Percentage of critics who expressed an opinion about the artist

		Rank
Rauschenberg, Robert	96	1
Johns, Jasper	95	2
Oldenburg, Claes	93	3
Stella, Frank	93	4
Wegman, William	92	5
Christo and J-C	91	6
Serrano, Andres	91	7
Koons, Jeff	91	8
Lin, Maya	90	9
Ono, Yoko	90	10
Chihuly, Dale	90	11
Close, Chuck	89	12
Schnabel, Julian	88	13
Sherman, Cindy	86	14
Kelly, Ellsworth	86	15
Serra, Richard	86	16
Twombly, Cy	85	17
Paik, Nam June	84	18
Neiman, LeRoy	84	19
Richter, Gerhard	83	20
Ruscha, Ed	83	21
LeWitt, Sol	83	22
Holzer, Jenny	83	23
Bourgeois, Louise	82	24
Kiefer, Anselm	81	25
Katz, Alex	81	26
Nauman, Bruce	80	27
Smith, Kiki	80	28
Hirst, Damien	80	29
Thiebaud, Wayne	78	30
Emin, Tracey	78	31
Salle, David	78	32
Kruger, Barbara	77	33
Finley, Karen	77	34
Kinkade, Thomas	77	35
Gober, Robert	74	36
Marden, Brice	73	37
Baldessari, John	72	38
Baselitz, Georg	72	39
Viola, Bill	71	40
Mann, Sally	70	41
Murray, Elizabeth	65	42
Turrell, James	64	43
Ryman, Robert	64	44
Puryear, Martin	63	45
Mangold, Robert	62	46
Haacke, Hans	62	47
Barney, Matthew	61	48
Oursler, Tony	59	49
Irwin, Robert	58	50
Hamilton, Ann	58	51
Walker, Kara	58	52
Paschke, Ed	58	53
Gallagher, Ellen	57	54
McCarthy, Paul	57	55
Gursky, Andreas	56	56
Kelley, Mike	56	57
Halley, Peter	55	58
Mark, Mary Ellen	54	59
Whiteread, Rachel	54	60
Salgado, Sebastian	52	61
Currin, John	50	62
Murakami, Takashi	49	63
Neshat, Shirin	48	64
Winters, Terry	47	65
Horn, Roni	46	66
Yuskavage, Lisa	46	67
Prince, Richard	45	68
Beecroft, Vanessa	44	69
Goldin, Nan	41	70
Fischl, Eric	40	71
Pardo, Jorge	40	72
Suh, Do-Ho	38	73

Osorio, Pepon	36	74
Wiener, Lawrence	35	75
Cattelan, Maurizio	34	76
Thater, Diana	33	77
Tiravanija, Rirkrit	32	78
Crewdson, Gregory	32	79
Friedman, Tom	30	80
Graham, Dan	26	81
Pope.L, William	23	82
Schorr, Colier	21	83
Hancock, Trenton Doyle	15	84

ARTIST RANKINGS: GENERAL EVALUATION

Totals indicate percent of critics who responded "Like a Great Deal" or "Like Somewhat"

		Rank
Johns, Jasper	91	1
Rauschenberg, Robert	91	2
Oldenburg, Claes	87	3
Lin, Maya	85	4
Bourgeois, Louise	78	5
Close, Chuck	78	6
Ruscha, Ed	77	7
Richter, Gerhard	76	8
Sherman, Cindy	75	9
Stella, Frank	75	10
Kelly, Ellsworth	73	11
Twombly, Cy	73	12
Serra, Richard	73	13
Nauman, Bruce	72	14
Paik, Nam June	72	15
Christo and J-C	72	16
Thiebaud, Wayne	71	17
Kiefer, Anselm	71	18
LeWitt, Sol	70	19
Marden, Brice	69	20
Smith, Kiki	66	21
Viola, Bill	65	22
Holzer, Jenny	65	23
Baldessari, John	63	24
Serrano, Andres	63	25
Katz, Alex	62	26
Mann, Sally	61	27
Turrell, James	60	28
Gober, Robert	60	29
Puryear, Martin	59	30
Finley, Karen	59	31
Ryman, Robert	58	32
Murray, Elizabeth	58	33
Kruger, Barbara	58	34
Wegman, William	57	35
Irwin, Robert	56	36
Baselitz, Georg	54	37
Gursky, Andreas	53	38
Hamilton, Ann	53	39
Walker, Kara	52	40
Oursler, Tony	52	41
Mangold, Robert	52	42
Haacke, Hans	51	43
Ono, Yoko	51	44
Mark, Mary Ellen	48	45
Hirst, Damien	48	46
Chihuly, Dale	47	47
Whiteread, Rachel	46	48
Gallagher, Ellen	46	49
Emin, Tracey	46	50
Neshat, Shirin	45	51
Salgado, Sebastian	45	52
Koons, Jeff	44	53
Murakami, Takashi	43	54
Barney, Matthew	43	55
Horn, Roni	42	56
Winters, Terry	42	57
Paschke, Ed	42	58
Salle, David	41	59
Schnabel, Julian	40	60

Kelley, Mike	39	61
McCarthy, Paul	38	62
Currin, John	37	63
Halley, Peter	37	64
Fischl, Eric	36	65
Pardo, Jorge	34	66
Goldin, Nan	31	67
Prince, Richard	31	68
Osorio, Pepon	30	69
Cattelan, Maurizio	29	70
Yuskavage, Lisa	29	71
Friedman, Tom	28	72
Beecroft, Vanessa	26	73
Tiravanija, Rirkrit	25	74
Wiener, Lawrence	25	75
Crewdson, Gregory	24	76
Graham, Dan	23	77
Thater, Diana	23	78
Suh, Do-Ho	20	79
Pope.L, William	15	80
Neiman, LeRoy	11	81
Hancock, Trenton Doyle	10	82
Schorr, Colier	9	83
Kinkade, Thomas	9	84

ARTIST RANKINGS: INFORMED EVALUATION

Weighted rankings based on the following point scale:

"Like A Great Deal" (+3); "Like Somewhat" (+1);

"Dislike Somewhat" (-1); "Dislike A Great Deal" (-3)

		Rank
Turrell, James	2.03	1
Johns, Jasper	2.02	2
Puryear, Martin	2.02	3
Rauschenberg, Robert	2.01	4
Richter, Gerhard	1.99	5
Bourgeois, Louise	1.99	6
Lin, Maya	1.98	7
Viola, Bill	1.93	8
Thiebaud, Wayne	1.86	9
Neshat, Shirin	1.83	10
Irwin, Robert	1.83	11
Oldenburg, Claes	1.82	12
Gursky, Andreas	1.79	13
Kiefer, Anselm	1.79	14
Ruscha, Ed	1.71	15
Nauman, Bruce	1.64	16
Marden, Brice	1.62	17
Hamilton, Ann	1.62	18
Sherman, Cindy	1.6	19
Close, Chuck	1.59	20
Walker, Kara	1.58	21
LeWitt, Sol	1.56	22
Mark, Mary Ellen	1.56	23
Kelly, Ellsworth	1.53	24
Paik, Nam June	1.53	25
Salgado, Sebastian	1.5	26
Fischl, Eric	1.5	27
Twombly, Cy	1.49	28
Mann, Sally	1.49	29
Oursler, Tony	1.47	30
Ryman, Robert	1.47	31
Serra, Richard	1.47	32
Horn, Roni	1.43	33
Murakami, Takashi	1.41	34
Murray, Elizabeth	1.4	35
Whiteread, Rachel	1.4	36
Friedman, Tom	1.39	37
Graham, Dan	1.31	38
Cattelan, Maurizio	1.29	39
Mangold, Robert	1.26	40
Haacke, Hans	1.23	41
Christo and J-C	1.2	42
Smith, Kiki	1.18	43
Gallagher, Ellen	1.17	44
Stella, Frank	1.09	45
Winters, Terry	1.09	46

Baldessari, John	1.05	47	Wiener, Lawrence	11	37	Plagens, Peter	69	27
Katz, Alex	1.02	48	Goldin, Nan	11	38	Fry, Roger	68	28
Holzer, Jenny	1.02	49	Haacke, Hans	11	39	Kuspit, Donald	68	29
Gober, Robert	1	50	Paik, Nam June	11	40	Rose, Barbara	68	30
Osorio, Pepon	1	51	Sherman, Cindy	11	41	Nochlin, Linda	67	31
Kruger, Barbara	0.95	52	Thater, Diana	10	42	Dewey, John	66	32
Finley, Karen	0.87	53	Baldessari, John	10	43	Rosenblum, Robert	66	33
Pardo, Jorge	0.8	54	Close, Chuck	10	44	Gablik, Suzi	65	34
Crewdson, Gregory	0.76	55	Kiefer, Anselm	10	45	Arnold, Matthew	64	35
Paschke, Ed	0.75	56	Crewdson, Gregory	9	46	hooks, bell	63	36
Baselitz, Georg	0.73	57	Mangold, Robert	9	47	Szarkowski, John	62	37
Goldin, Nan	0.71	58	Whiteread, Rachel	9	48	Piper, Adrien	62	38
Hancock, Trenton Doyle	0.71	59	Mann, Sally	9	49	Steinberg, Leo	62	39
Tiravanija, Rirkrit	0.69	60	Nauman, Bruce	9	50	Clark, T.J.	59	40
Barney, Matthew	0.64	61	Pope.L, William	8	51	Brenson, Michael	58	41
Prince, Richard	0.64	62	Tiravanija, Rirkrit	7	52	Foster, Hal	58	42
Serrano, Andres	0.63	63	Murray, Elizabeth	7	53	Fried, Michael	58	43
Kelley, Mike	0.61	64	Oursler, Tony	7	54	Jameson, Frederic	57	44
Currin, John	0.56	65	Salgado, Sebastian	7	55	Kristeva, Julia	56	45
Thater, Diana	0.52	66	Walker, Kara	7	56	Kozloff, Max	54	46
Halley, Peter	0.45	67	Ruscha, Ed	7	57	Saltz, Jerry	54	47
Wiener, Lawrence	0.44	68	Richter, Gerhard	7	58	Sandler, Irving	54	48
McCarthy, Paul	0.4	69	Pardo, Jorge	6	59	Eagleton, Terry	53	49
Yuskavage, Lisa	0.39	70	Osorio, Pepon	6	60	Coleman, A.D.	49	50
Pope.L, William	0.39	71	Murakami, Takashi	6	61	Crow, Thomas	48	51
Hirst, Damien	0.26	72	Ryman, Robert	6	62	Thompson, Robert Farris	48	52
Wegman, William	0.22	73	Mark, Mary Ellen	6	63	Bhabha, Homi	47	53
Beecroft, Vanessa	0.21	74	Oldenburg, Claes	6	64	Sylvester, David	47	54
Ono, Yoko	0.13	75	Thiebaud, Wayne	6	65	Bourdieu, Pierre	45	55
Emin, Tracey	0.09	76	Viola, Bill	6	66	Cardinal, Roger	42	56
Chihuly, Dale	0.01	77	Rauschenberg, Robert	6	67	London, Barbara	40	57
Suh, Do-Ho	0	78	Winters, Terry	5	68	Sullivan, Edward	35	58
Salle, David	-0.03	79	Cattelan, Maurizio	5	69			
Koons, Jeff	-0.1	80	Hamilton, Ann	5	70			
Schorr, Collier	-0.24	81	Marden, Brice	5	71			
Schnabel, Julian	-0.27	82	Gursky, Andreas	5	72			
Neiman, LeRoy	-2.01	83	Lin, Maya	5	73			
Kinkade, Thomas	-2.32	84	Johns, Jasper	5	74			
			Hancock, Trenton Doyle	4	75			
			Horn, Roni	4	76			
			Fischl, Eric	4	77			
			Puryear, Martin	4	78			
			Turrell, James	4	79			
			Graham, Dan	3	80			
			Friedman, Tom	3	81			
			Neshat, Shirin	3	82			
			Bourgeois, Louise	3	83			
			Irwin, Robert	2	84			

ARTIST RANKINGS: LEAST LIKED

Percentage of critics who responded "Dislike a Great Deal" or "Dislike Somewhat"

		Rank
Neiman, LeRoy	72	1
Kinkade, Thomas	68	2
Schnabel, Julian	48	3
Koons, Jeff	47	4
Chihuly, Dale	43	5
Ono, Yoko	39	6
Salle, David	37	7
Wegman, William	35	8
Hirst, Damien	33	9
Emin, Tracey	31	10
Serrano, Andres	28	11
Katz, Alex	20	12
McCarthy, Paul	19	13
Baselitz, Georg	19	14
Kruger, Barbara	19	15
Stella, Frank	19	16
Christo and J-C	19	17
Suh, Do-Ho	18	18
Halley, Peter	18	19
Kelley, Mike	18	20
Barney, Matthew	18	21
Finley, Karen	18	22
Holzer, Jenny	18	23
Beecroft, Vanessa	17	24
Yuskavage, Lisa	17	25
Paschke, Ed	15	26
Gober, Robert	15	27
Smith, Kiki	14	28
Currin, John	13	29
Prince, Richard	13	30
Serra, Richard	13	31
Kelly, Ellsworth	13	32
Schorr, Collier	12	33
Gallagher, Ellen	12	34
Twombly, Cy	12	35
LeWitt, Sol	12	36

THEORIST RANKINGS: RECOGNITION

Percentage of critics who expressed an opinion about the theorist

		Rank
Sontag, Susan	87	1
Greenberg, Clement	86	2
Hughes, Robert	86	3
Wilde, Oscar	84	4
Kramer, Hilton	80	5
Ruskin, John	80	6
Wendy, Sister	79	7
Kant, Immanuel	79	8
Lippard, Lucy	78	9
Derrida, Jacques	78	10
Barthes, Roland	77	11
Baudelaire, Charles	77	12
Benjamin, Walter	76	13
Berger, John	76	14
Judd, Donald	76	15
Rosenberg, Harold	75	16
Danto, Arthur	73	17
Schjeldahl, Peter	73	18
Krauss, Rosalind	72	19
Gombrich, E.H.	72	20
Tomkins, Calvin	72	21
Vasari, Giorgio	72	22
Kimmelman, Michael	71	23
Baudrillard, Jean	71	24
Schapiro, Meyer	71	25
Hickey, Dave	70	26

THEORIST RANKINGS: GENERAL EVALUATION

Percentage of critics who responded "Like a Great Deal" or "Like Somewhat"

		Rank
Greenberg, Clement	63	1
Sontag, Susan	61	2
Hughes, Robert	58	3
Schjeldahl, Peter	54	4
Benjamin, Walter	48	5
Wilde, Oscar	47	6
Hickey, Dave	46	7
Rosenberg, Harold	45	8
Lippard, Lucy	45	9
Schapiro, Meyer	43	10
Tomkins, Calvin	43	11
Baudelaire, Charles	43	12
Ruskin, John	43	13
Berger, John	42	14
Barthes, Roland	42	15
Gombrich, E.H.	41	16
Kimmelman, Michael	40	17
Kant, Immanuel	39	18
Danto, Arthur	38	19
Rosenblum, Robert	37	20
Kramer, Hilton	36	21
Szarkowski, John	35	22
Nochlin, Linda	35	23
Judd, Donald	34	24
Steinberg, Leo	32	25
Vasari, Giorgio	32	26
Baudrillard, Jean	32	27
Plagens, Peter	32	28
Kuspit, Donald	30	29
Goblik, Suzi	29	30
Rose, Barbara	29	31
Fry, Roger	28	32
Krauss, Rosalind	28	33
Derrida, Jacques	28	34
Fried, Michael	23	35
Dewey, John	22	36
hooks, bell	22	37
Arnold, Matthew	22	38
Clark, T.J.	21	39
Sandler, Irving	20	40
Saltz, Jerry	20	41
Foster, Hal	19	42

Brenson, Michael	18	43	Hickey, Dave	1.79	5	Krauss, Rosalind	1.14	32
Piper, Adrien	17	44	Benjamin, Walter	1.66	6	Kuspit, Donald	1.13	33
Thompson, Robert Farris	16	45	Schapiro, Meyer	1.61	7	Sandler, Irving	1.13	34
Jameson, Frederic	15	46	Rosenberg, Harold	1.59	8	Fried, Michael	1.07	35
Eagleton, Terry	15	47	Tomkins, Calvin	1.56	9	Derrida, Jacques	1.05	36
Kristeva, Julia	15	48	Gombrich, E.H.	1.51	10	Dewey, John	1.04	37
Sylvester, David	14	49	Berger, John	1.51	11	Saltz, Jerry	1.04	38
Coleman, A.D.	13	50	Baudelaire, Charles	1.51	12	Clark, T.J.	1.03	39
Kozloff, Max	13	51	Wilde, Oscar	1.49	13	hooks, bell	1.02	40
Wendy, Sister	13	52	Kimmelman, Michael	1.49	14	Piper, Adrien	0.98	41
Crow, Thomas	10	53	Barthes, Roland	1.48	15	Sylvester, David	0.98	42
Bourdieu, Pierre	9	54	Lippard, Lucy	1.47	16	Arnold, Matthew	0.97	43
Bhabha, Homi	8	55	Rosenblum, Robert	1.47	17	Thompson, Robert Farris	0.96	44
Cardinal, Roger	6	56	Szarkowski, John	1.45	18	Brenson, Michael	0.93	45
Sullivan, Edward	5	57	Ruskin, John	1.45	19	Foster, Hal	0.91	46
London, Barbara	3	58	Steinberg, Leo	1.44	20	Jameson, Frederic	0.91	47
			Danto, Arthur	1.42	21	Eagleton, Terry	0.87	48
			Nochlin, Linda	1.36	22	Coleman, A.D.	0.84	49
			Kant, Immanuel	1.32	23	Kristeva, Julia	0.8	50
			Judd, Donald	1.29	24	Kozloff, Max	0.75	51
			Vasari, Giorgio	1.28	25	Crow, Thomas	0.72	52
			Baudrillard, Jean	1.27	26	Bourdieu, Pierre	0.67	53
			Fry, Roger	1.22	27	Wendy, Sister	0.62	54
			Plagens, Peter	1.2	28	Sullivan, Edward	0.56	55
			Gablik, Suzi	1.2	29	Bhabha, Homi	0.53	56
			Kramer, Hilton	1.19	30	Cardinal, Roger	0.52	57
			Rose, Barbara	1.16	31	London, Barbara	0.38	58

THEORIST RANKINGS: INFORMED EVALUATION
 Weighted rankings based on the following point scale:
 "Very Influential" (+3); "Somewhat Influential" (+2);
 "Not Very Influential" (+1); "Not Influential At All" (0)

	Rank	
Schjeldahl, Peter	1.88	1
Greenberg, Clement	1.84	2
Sontag, Susan	1.81	3
Hughes, Robert	1.79	4

PUBLICATIONS IN THE SURVEY

DAILY NEWSPAPERS

NUMBER IN PARENTHESES INDICATES MULTIPLE CRITICS AT THAT PUBLICATION. (see fig. 1.2, p.7)

Akron Beacon Journal	Des Moines Register	Portland Oregonian (2)
Albany Times Union	Deseret News	Providence Journal
Albuquerque Journal (3)	Detroit Free Press (2)	(Quincy, Mass.) Patriot-Ledger
Allentown Morning Call	El Nuevo Herald	Raleigh News & Observer
Ann Arbor News	Erie Times-News (2)	Reading Times
Arizona Republic (2)	Escondido North County Times	Rockford Register Star
Asheville Citizen-Times (2)	Eugene Register-Guard	Rocky Mountain News
Atlanta Journal-Constitution (3)	Evansville Courier & Press	San Antonio Express-News
Augusta Chronicle	Fayetteville Observer	San Diego Union-Tribune (2)
Austin American-Statesman	Fort Worth Star-Telegram	San Francisco Chronicle
Bakersfield Californian	Grand Rapids Press	San Jose Mercury News
Bangor Daily News	Honolulu Advertiser	Sarasota Herald-Tribune
Baton Rouge Advocate	Houston Chronicle	Savannah Morning News
Bergen Record	Jackson Clarion-Ledger	Seattle Post-Intelligencer
Birmingham News	Jacksonville Times-Union	Seattle Times
Boston Globe	Kansas City Star (3)	South Bend Tribune
Boston Herald	Lexington Herald-Leader	South Florida Sun-Sentinel
Buffalo News	Lincoln Journal-Star	Spokane Spokesman-Review
Charlotte Observer	Los Angeles Times (3)	Springfield (Mo.) News-Leader
Chicago Sun-Times	Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel	St. Louis Post-Dispatch
Chicago Tribune	Minneapolis Star Tribune	St. Paul Pioneer Press
Christian Science Monitor	New Haven Register	Syracuse Post-Standard
Cincinnati Enquirer	New Orleans Times-Picayune	Tacoma News Tribune
Cleveland Plain Dealer	New York Times (4)	Tampa Tribune
Colorado Springs Gazette	Newport News Daily Press	Toledo Blade
Columbia State	Newsday (Long Island)	Tulsa World
Columbus Dispatch (3)	Norfolk Virginian-Pilot	Washington Post (5)
Daily News	Omaha World-Herald	Washington Times
Daily Oklahoman	Orange County Register	Waterbury Republican-American
Dallas Morning News (2)	Orlando Sentinel	Wichita Eagle
Daytona Beach News-Journal	Philadelphia Daily News	Winston Salem Journal
Denver Post	Pittsburgh Tribune-Review	Wisconsin State Journal

ALTERNATIVE WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

Artvoice (Buffalo)	Metro Silicon Valley	Pittsburgh City Paper
Baltimore City Paper	Metro Times (Detroit)	Riverfront Times (St. Louis)
Boston Phoenix	Miami New Times	San Francisco Bay Guardian (2)
Cleveland Scene	Nashville Scene	SF Weekly
Creative Loafing (Atlanta)	Newcity (Chicago)	Shepherd Express (Milwaukee)
Creative Loafing (Charlotte) (2)	New Haven Advocate	The Stranger (Seattle)
Dallas Observer	New Times Broward/Palm Beach	Tuscon Weekly
Hartford Advocate	NUVO (Indianapolis)	Village Voice (4)
Isthmus (Madison, Wis.)	Oklahoma Gazette	Washington City Paper
L.A. Weekly (3)	Philadelphia Weekly	Weekly Planet (Tampa)
Memphis Flyer	Pitch (Kansas City)	Westword (Denver)

NEWSMAGAZINES

Newsweek	The Nation	The New Yorker
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