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Arts, Inc.: How Greed And Neglect Have Destroyed Our Cultural Rights



Synopsis

In this impassioned and persuasive book, Bill Ivey, the former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, assesses the current state of the arts in America and finds cause for alarm. Even as he celebrates our ever-emerging culture and the way it enriches our lives here at home while spreading the dream of democracy around the world, he points to a looming crisis. The expanding footprint of copyright, an unconstrained arts industry marketplace, and a government unwilling to engage culture as a serious arena for public policy have come together to undermine art, artistry, and cultural heritage—the expressive life of America. In eight succinct chapters, Ivey blends personal and professional memoir, policy analysis, and deeply held convictions to explore and define a coordinated vision for art, culture, and expression in American life.

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Customer Reviews

Chairman of the National Endowment of Arts from 1998 to 2001, Ivey brings an informed perspective to a growing chorus of alarm over "big media, abetted by government, running roughshod over public interest." An enthusiast for mainstream American culture and the vernacular performing arts (he directed the Country Music Foundation from 1971 to 1998), Ivey demonstrates how the promise of early 20th century mass media—when film, radio and TV produced an unprecedented mass audience and "enabled America to discover its cultural mainstream"—is being stifled in the era of digital technology. A major mechanism for this is copyright law, which has become less a tool to protect creative enterprise than "to protect certain industries against competition

“Cogent consideration of the stakes for all involved. . . Interesting glimpses behind the scenes at the NEA. . . A comprehensive treatment.” (Pw: Nonfiction (2) 2008-04-07)
 “Provocative.” (USA Today 2008-06-17)
 “Ivey is well equipped to lead a fresh discussion about the role of creativity in a healthy democracy.” (Utne 2008-07-01)
 “Explore(s) and define(s) a co-ordinated vision for art, culture and expression in American life.” (Times Higher Ed Sup (Thes) 2008-05-15)
 “Reads like a manifest on cultural happiness and quality of life through access to the arts. . . . Recommended.” (Choice 2008-10-01)
 “A gift. . . . Timely and important.” (Journal Of Folklore Research 2011-03-02)

(Pre-apologies for typing errors -- I am not so good on a tablet) This is a passionate plea for support for the arts and getting arts from the maw of capitali\$m. I am not certain how his prescription, a greater government role, would fly in today’s political climate. The opening chapters on ownership rights are the strongest and the place where government has long had a role. The extension of copyright, and the uses of copyright to block reinterpretation of a work are chilling. Bill Ivey has six points in his Bill of Rights: our heritage, prominent presence of artists, an artistic life, represented to the world by art that embodies America’s best values, the to know and explore art, the right to healthy arts enterprises. He is a strong advocate, experienced arts administrator, and clear writer. Some of the most interesting passages are where he makes global comparisons.

Bill Ivey is an important voice in the national conversation on arts policy. In ‘Arts, Inc.’ and in his leadership in general, Ivey pursues tough questions that others are trying to ignore, or that powerful lobbyists have been able to silence. His rhetoric is a bit extreme for me, but the issues he discusses and his illustration of the facts far outweigh that in this book. Anyone interested in cultural policy, including those whose lives are affected by it (i.e. everyone) should read this book. It can serve as an introduction into the problems the next generation of Americans will have to face as we determine the course we want our cultural rights to take, but it is also useful for those who already have a firm grounding in issues of arts policy and want a thoughtful look at the current state of affairs. I gave it 4 instead of 5 stars only because at times, I thought his tone was too passionate and polarizing, at least more than something I would write. But honestly, he’s probably got the tone we need to take if we actually want to mobilize people to care about these issues and understand why they affect everyone.

Good coverage & insights into how "business" interests in even artistic production, have made inroads into arts management and presentation(not always for good). There is an art & science to presenting and promoting the Arts, but this takes a critical look at what arts professionals/ nonprofits are facing in our current cultural malaise

I am so grateful my masters programme required this as a reading. It gives a very solid, comprehensive (yet concise and direct) analysis of how the fine arts have split from their community- and craft-based roots to become a commodified symbol of luxury and an economic weathervane. This book is smart and thoughtful, passionate without being preachy, and a great primer for those with an interest in arts policy. I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to know why the arts as an industry functions as it does...and how we can change that reality for the betterment of future generations.

Bill Ivey is a freakin' genius. Nice guy too!

In March I attended the Symposium called "The Importance and Value of Art in Health Care". One of the best speakers was Bill Ivey. Since he was such a good speaker I figured he would be a good writer so I ordered the book he just wrote : Arts, Inc.: How Greed and Neglect Have Destroyed Our Cultural Rights Conclusion: I disagree with his argument that the government needs to do more to protect the Arts. The book is well written and interesting to read, but I just don't agree with the premise. The crux of his argument is that the arts need the advocacy of government to protect us from the greed of big business. I just can't accept that. The digital era is starting to liberate artists from being dependent on big business. Most artists these days have websites to reach the public directly. They don't need the government for that. Artists now have the tools to produce their own finished product without having to rely on a big studio. Musicians can record and distribute their own CDs. Digital tools (cameras, printers, high-speed Internet) have allowed me to run a thriving art business in a remote rural area. I would argue that the Arts in America are stronger now than they have ever been. One reason for that is that our government for the most part stays out of the way. If we want to ensure that the Arts in America continues to thrive we just need to be sure the government does nothing other than assure artistic freedom. Note: when I first wrote this review I gave it two-stars, but that is not fair. The writing is clear, the argument is interesting. Just because I don't agree does not justify such a low rating. I would like to raise this to 4-stars. I tried to revise the

post can couldn't.

Bill Ivey covers an enormous amount of arts terrain in this thought provoking book. Anyone involved with the arts rarely considers all the facets of the arts and the way in which they intertwine. Ivey, from his unique perspective as former NEA Chairman, is in the position to inform and to a slightly lesser degree offer solutions to some of the larger problems to how greed and neglect have destroyed our cultural rights. As a music educator, I found his assessment of the historical hierarchical structure of music valuing on target, but felt he could have acknowledged the more recent progress in multicultural music education. The National Association for Music Education developed national standards in the 1990's that have largely been adopted by the states. As written, these national standards have proven to be a vehicle to promote all types of established cultural traditions in music. The correct argument he makes in Arts, Inc. that music education is about "band and choir", is a practice that is slowly changing.

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