

CULTURAL PROPERTY IN THE UNITED STATES

PART I: CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL PROPERTY

MODERATOR:

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BLAKE: The discussion yesterday morning in the Socratic panel was a fascinating discussion, but it was a discussion I found somewhat frustrating. For me, the issue was that often the discussion seemed to conflate aesthetic and civic conceptions of culture, or at least blur any distinction between them. Although the two are often related, it is important to make a distinction between aesthetic and civic conceptions of culture and think about the different claims that an aesthetic culture makes on the public, as opposed to those that a civic culture makes on the public.

We ought to think about the different expectations that the public has of those different forms of culture. In many cases, it might make sense to give priority to the claims of civic culture over the claims of aesthetic culture, defined in terms of “high art” or “fine art.”

John Callaway, yesterday morning, came up with the hypothetical situation in which the Museum of Modern Art, facing imminent financial collapse, is approached by an evil but sensitive collector who offers to buy up all of the museum’s Pollocks in exchange for rescuing the museum. The other case that John Callaway brought up: the United States has voted into office a xenophobic and nativistic administration, and the government of France decides to pack up the Statue of Liberty and take it back across the Atlantic to Europe.

It would pain me no end to see those Pollocks go; it would be a matter of tremendous personal pain and loss for me to see MOMA somehow relinquish those Pollocks to a collector who would keep them in his living room.

On the other hand, I can understand the reaction of most Americans: that it would be a greater loss to see the Statue of Liberty go. The Statue of Liberty is, I think, a civic icon. It’s an important work in our civic culture. It’s an emblem of what sociologists like to call our “civil religion,” and it speaks to some of the most generous principles in our civil religion. And in this time when there’s a lot of talk about globalization and the transcendence of national borders, it’s important to remember that there are certain elements of our civil religion that probably are worth defending. In fact, many Americans might well argue that the Statue of Liberty needs to be there in New York Harbor to remind us of our principles, especially when we are violating them.

As to the sale of the Pollocks from the MOMA collection: if you place the needs of our civic culture into the discussion, you might end up with a different resolution of the problem than the ones suggested yesterday. What if you said to this evil but sensitive collector that not only are you demanding umpteen billions of dollars to rescue MOMA in exchange for those Pollocks, but that you also are demanding that this man fund all

educational programs for New York City's public schools? That you demand this person make it possible for New York City's public schools to have the finest art education program in the United States? You would make that argument on the grounds that you're laying the groundwork for another generation or two of Pollocks and De Koonings, and that this would be a contribution to the public culture. Introducing the claims of public culture and civic culture into the discussion in some ways leads to different conclusions.

I've titled my remarks "Public Art vs. Cultural Property." It was 10 years ago that the General Services Administration cut Richard Serra's enormous steel sculpture, "Tilted Arc," into pieces, and then moved those pieces from Foley Square in lower Manhattan to a warehouse in Brooklyn.

The GSA installation of Serra's sculpture in 1981 touched off eight years of public hearings, lawsuits, petition drives, media commentary and protests. Judges and office workers in the area complained that the work obstructed their access to Federal Plaza and deepened the inhumanity of what was already an unfriendly space. Conservative pundits and politicians joined the chorus, condemning what they called the "Berlin Wall of Foley Square."

Meanwhile, Serra and his allies staged a vigorous defense of the work that took the form of an openly anti-democratic polemic. Conservative officials were happy to return the favor, adopting the very populist language that Serra had discarded. After the removal of "Tilted Arc" in March of 1989, the GSA's regional administrator announced the triumph of the public over what he called "a group of elitists in Washington. This is a day for the people to rejoice, because now the plaza returns rightfully to the people."

The battle over Serra's work in the 1980s was only the most visible of a whole series of fierce

controversies surrounding public art installations that began in the mid- to late 1970s and which have continued to rage right up until our own time. Within the last few weeks alone, Andrea Bloom's "Split Pavilion" in Carlsbad, California just north of San Diego and the Heidelberg project in Detroit have been demolished by local authorities, despite the strenuous objections of their creators.

In retrospect, the turning point in the politics of American public art came in a period from roughly 1975 to 1985, which witnessed a widespread populist revolt against modernist art for urban public spaces that conservatives appropriated as support for their own campaign against public financing for the arts. The decade after the fall of Saigon was not kind to liberalism in the United States, and it was not kind to the public-art programs that liberals had created in the 1960s. During those years, in dozens of cities and towns, federally funded art installations provoked bitter protests that challenged virtually every assumption that had inspired the founding in the early 1960s of the NEA's Public Art Program and the GSA's Art and Architecture Program.

Ten years after the destruction of "Tilted Arc," practitioners in the field remain in a state of profound demoralization, as the political crisis of the liberal-modernist project in public art that opened up at the end of the 1970s shows little sign of resolution. It's too tempting, and ultimately too easy, to assume that the opposition to art installations in public spaces has come only from reactionaries, fundamentalists, or advocates of authoritarian populism. Critics of the liberal-modernist project in public art have forced artists and art administrators to confront vitally important questions that the early planners of the federal programs had ignored. What was really "public" about the monument's commission for public spaces? What was "public" about the decision-making process that led to their installation? Who exactly was the "public" for public art?

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ed today to thinking about culture as a contested site, where different groups struggle over meaning, rights and recognition.”

Above all, these critics asked, what was public art good for?

These are questions that artists and art administrators have ignored at their peril. The collapse of the liberal-modernist project of the 1960s has sharply divided the public art movement into left and right wings, whose increasingly polarized positions have dominated debate within the field in recent years. Centrist liberals appear to be the people most concerned about the legal status of public art objects. As in other instances in American political culture in the end of the 20th century, contemporary liberals in public-art circles have moved from the streets to the courts to resolve political disputes, investing their hopes in the passage of laws securing the moral rights of artists like Serra or Bloom against attacks from politicians. We now have laws at the state and federal levels that set limits on the display, alteration or mutilation of a work of art without the consent of its creator.

These laws don’t protect just any work of art. The California law, for example, requires that a work protected in this way be “of recognized quality,” while the New York legislation offers such guarantees only if the modification of an artwork threatens to damage an artist’s reputation. As such language suggests, a preoccupation with aesthetic autonomy and artistic prestige seems to go hand-in-hand with the legal effort to protect public art installations. After two decades of protests and attacks, the confident liberal modernism of the 1960s thrives today as a largely defensive strategy to ensure the legal rights and professional status of artists.

There are at least two broad reasons why I believe it would be a mistake to give public art installations the same legal standing accorded to archaeological sites or to paintings stolen from Holocaust victims by the Nazis. To begin with, artists and art administrators should not assume that legal precedents will magically resolve—on their own—the political debates

over public art in the United States. Those debates resonate with some of the deepest and most contentious disagreements in this society—disagreements over the authority of professional and artistic standards in a democracy, disagreements over the fate of urban public space in the age of privatization and surveillance, over the allocation of scarce resources in the shrinking public sector, and over the dwindling opportunity for public deliberation about matters of public concern.

I don’t see what cultural property and moral rights legislation has to contribute to such debates, which will not go away simply because artists and art objects are granted legal rights. The plea for a public forum to discuss and debate the design and use of urban space is, at bottom, a political demand that cannot be answered solely by reference to impersonal legal standards.

My second objection has to do with the very notion of considering work for public space as a species of cultural property. It’s unclear whose property such cultural work would be. Is it the artist’s property? The public’s property? The property of the state? The property of a particular cultural funding agency? And what of the cultural values and practices held dear by the users of any given public space before the arrival of a particular artwork? Are these also in some ways deserving of legal protection, even when they collide with the agendas of artists and art administrators?

Behind these questions lies a more fundamental issue of whether public art as a “public” genre is compatible with the idea of cultural property. The term “cultural property” is a somewhat unstable intellectual compound. For the English word “culture,” as Raymond Williams reminded us long ago, has long had distinctively anti-market associations that date back to the 18th century and beyond. Whether in its Burkean or Noltean or romantic-radical formulations, culture talk in the age

of industrialization inevitably defended collective values, mutualistic ideals and communal practices against the demands of the marketplace. Such associations were even more evident in the first half of this century with the sociological and anthropological identification of culture with a whole way of life.

Thanks to the so-called “culture wars” and the ascendancy of the cultural studies movement in the academy, we’ve become more accustomed today to thinking about culture as a contested site, where different groups struggle over meaning, rights and recognition. Although the cultural studies movement has a left political provenance, its definition of culture in fact resembles the logic of the marketplace more closely than did previous understandings in the English-speaking world.

But even in this latest genre of culture-talk in the university, the assumption is that combatants in the culture wars are social groups, held together by some thick paste of race, ethnicity, class, gender or sexual preference, not isolated individuals driven by self-interest. To think of public art simply as a form of cultural property threatens to deprive us of this last vestigial association of culture with the idea of a common life. And beyond that is the notion of a public culture available to citizens of different backgrounds. And it is precisely this public or civic definition of culture that, I fear, is put at risk by the campaign to uphold the moral rights of artists over all other considerations, and to grant public art installations the status of cultural property. For as much as I appreciate the anguish, envy, anger of artists like Serra or Bloom, who watch their work assaulted by calculated, unscrupulous politicians, I also believe that more is at stake in the debates about public art than the question of “who owns it?” What those debates demand of artists and other participants, I think, is not a proprietary ethic, but a public ethic, an ethic that places a higher premium on fostering democratic and shared public culture than it

does on protecting artists’ moral and property rights. These debates demand, in other words, a belief in the priority of cultural democracy over cultural property.

PLAGENS: A few things to think about. I’d like to encourage people to think of *de facto* “public art” that isn’t labeled: billboards, the whole of Times Square, everything. I think a good working definition of public art is art that is unavoidable. You see it without going to the 7th floor in an art gallery. There’s a lot of stuff out there that isn’t designated public art or commissioned by a public agency that we might consider.

The second thing is, one of Serra’s claims was that the sculpture, “Tilted Arc,” belonged only in a certain context, and if it was taken down, it couldn’t be put up anywhere else—the work was destroyed. Somebody said, “That building down there is an awful building, and it’s one of those kinds of generic government architecture that could be destroyed in 20 years.” What happens, then, to “Tilted Arc” if the architectural context changes?

The last thing to think about is what the French call *droit moral*—an artist has the right to have his or her work protected from defacement. We have a public art issue and we also have a private art issue. What if somebody buys a painting and then decides to tear it up and throw it in a dumpster—is this allowed because the physical object is owned? Or what about rights to derivations of the images, such as what Larry Aldrich of the Larry Aldrich Museum of Art used to do back in the ’60s? He’s a fashion guy and he collected a lot of contemporary art, and he used some of it to make images or patterns to put on the clothes he manufactured. So you have the physical object, and then you have the image and the rights adherent there, too.

JEROME: I’m here to talk to you today about two case studies. One, Fallingwater, is

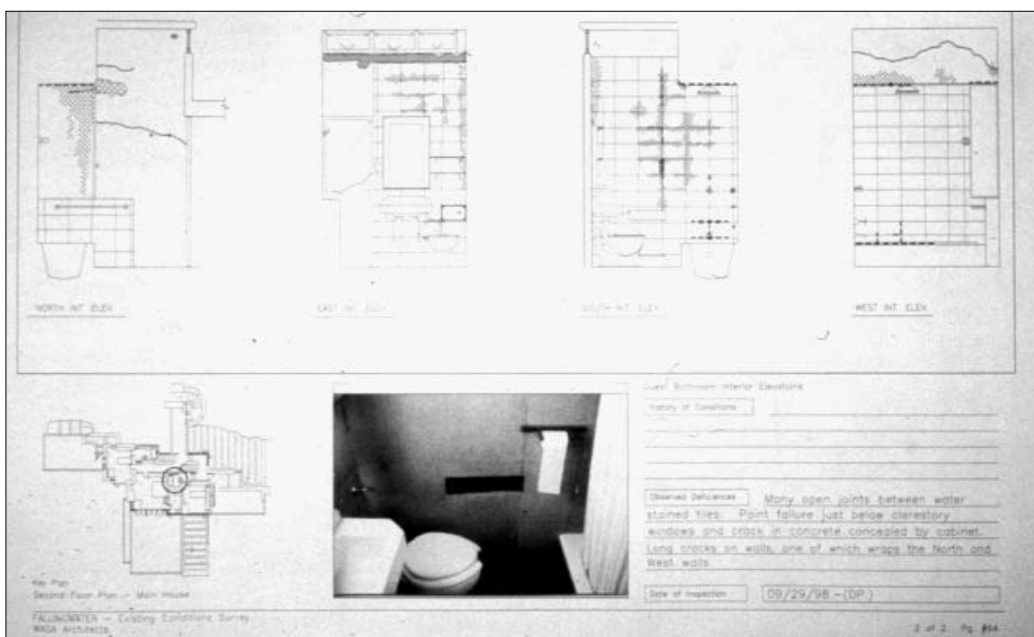
one my office has been working on for over 10 years now. The other property is a little controversial.

Fallingwater is recognized as an icon of modern architecture. It is considered to be Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece. In fact, it has been said that it is the most famous residence in the world. In 1991, it was voted America's most significant building of the last 125 years by the American Institute of Architects. Frank Lloyd Wright is arguably America's most important architect. The house was designed in 1935 as a weekend home for Edgar Kaufmann, a Pittsburgh department-store owner. Since 1963, when the house was deed-

waterfall. The main cantilevers were designed without enough reinforcement: this is the basic problem. There is also evidence throughout the house of moisture deterioration. Frank Lloyd Wright was not terribly interested in the mundane technical details. His aesthetic expression was paramount. In one example, we see the concrete roof-roll interpenetrate a stone wall, making it virtually impossible to flash the roof surface and make it water-tight.

Our office is developing a Preservation Master Plan for the future of Fallingwater. This entailed measuring every single surface of the house and then producing to-scale drawings on CADD. Here is a typical page from that

Fallingwater bathroom from the Master Plan. (Copyright Wank Adams Slavin Associates.)



ed by his son to the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, it has acted as a house/museum, with over 130,000 visitors per year.

However, there is trouble at Fallingwater, and it is about to undergo a major structural intervention. We're looking at the shoring, which was installed temporarily in 1997 to prop up the failing cantilevers. The main cantilevers of the building are 100 percent overstressed, and a major intervention is required to return Fallingwater to its aesthetic significance, which is that of a cantilevered building over a

survey, volume one of the Master Plan, showing a bathroom with the elevations and symbols that were selected to depict the deficiencies graphically shown on these drawings. In this example, we're looking at cracks in the plaster, moisture staining, and paint failures, as well as cork tile adhesion failure. However, the major structural intervention requires, essentially, that the living room be disassembled. Most of the built-in living room furniture must be removed, and three-quarters of the flagstones on the living room floor and all of the flagstones on the adjacent terraces will

also be removed. Each stone is numbered so that as it's removed, it can be labeled and reassembled in its exact location.

There has never been an issue of Fallingwater's significance and recognition as a cultural property. However, Frank Lloyd Wright was essentially a domestic architect, and 70 percent of his buildings are not listed on the National Register, and therefore subject to the whims of their owners.

Other buildings that are not recognized as cultural properties at the moment are not quite as fortunate. Such a building is the Cyclorama Center at the Gettysburg Battlefield. Designed by Richard Neutra in 1958, the National Park Service intends to demolish this building as part of a restoration plan for the Gettysburg Battlefield. It's not the first structure in this particular location. An 1896 observation tower was torn down so that this building could be built. The state historic preservation office deemed that it was ineligible for listing, while the Secretary for the Interior found it eligible. The National Park Service is going to demolish it because it affects the interpretation of the battlefield and it disrupts the landscape, and because it has "technical shortcomings and poor display decisions."

If technical shortcomings were used to judge Fallingwater, then it too should be torn down. And if we think about Gettysburg, the monuments disrupt the landscape too, if the plan is to restore the battlefield to its original condition. DOCOMOMO, the European organization founded to identify and preserve significant modern architecture, has stepped forward to voice their disagreement with this decision. Thirty years from now, will we turn around and look at the demolition of this structure, as we do today at Penn Station? What is preservation of cultural property about? Are we not preserving monuments for the future, whether or not we consider them significant now? Granted, this is not Neutra's

most important building. However, how many Neutra public buildings do we have?

ROTHSTEIN: I'd like to return to some of the questions that were raised in Casey Blake's paper: namely, what is a piece of public art? The question of ownership I'll put to the side



Cyclorama Building, Gettysburg. Designed by Richard Neutra. (Copyright Nathan Riddle.)

for a moment, because I think it becomes clear when we try to analyze what public art in a public space is meant to do.

I think this is an extremely problematic issue, because we have such a difficult time defining just what a public is right now, or what the American public is, or how, we should represent ourselves to ourselves. And those are some of the controversies that occur over all sorts of public self-representation, which is actually a very complex act. We're choosing as a public to put up some sort of an object which is for the public, but is also about the public, and it is full of self-reference and self-representation. How does one create such an object in such a place in a society where there's very little agreement about any of the terms involved here, and where the idea of democracy has become so contentious in itself? In a sense, it's a segmented public debating over its rights to a piece of a public representation.

So I don't think these are trivial examples. They would involve, even, the design of postal stamps, the design of currency, any sort of representation that we as a public create for ourselves. The problem here is that when we look at public art in a public place, there is a cer-

tain way in which, at least traditionally, such a place and a work is meant to function. Public art is, almost by definition, ideological. It is meant to have some sort of an impact on those who view it or those who walk near it that is not purely aesthetic. This is partly a civic activity, a civic representation, so that the aesthetic issue has to partly be put to the side when addressing the nature of public art and its discontents.

Historically, in old European cities and small towns, the nature of public art was something historical that represented the mythic past of the place or its people. The soldiers on horseback that were so common a century ago were probably no different in their leaning for a public place, than the statue outside Copenhagen, or the representation of Romulus and Remus would be in Rome. So I think it makes sense to put aside for a moment questions of aesthetic value, though the aesthetic value comes in because one of the ways in which a piece of art functions in a civic manner is to actually have an aesthetic impact, making the civic impact more important.

This notion that I'm outlining of public art and public space is really antithetical to the notion of cultural property, because the notion of cultural property implies a division in the sense of a claim of particular ownership by a particular culture. The whole notion of a public is the sense that it is indivisible, or the sense that it is representational as a whole. One of the problems that we have as a culture is that it is so difficult for us to conceive of such a notion right now.

I don't believe that public art in a public space has to end up being self-glorifying, or xenophobic, or monochromatic in the way in which it approaches one's notion of one's country or one's place. I think one of the most successful examples in the last generation of public art in a public space could be the

Vietnam Memorial in Washington, which is almost by definition a divisive work, an expression of a wound. And yet it is astounding, if one visits this memorial, to see to what extent a public coalesces around this work. It wouldn't have seemed, from the description, to be an effective piece of public art. It actually turned out to be an extraordinary aesthetic and social phenomenon.

What we represent to ourselves as "public self" is to what extent we sacrifice our private lives. That is, we are willing to say, "For this representation, for this idea of public, we are willing to put aside certain other concerns we have about ourselves, our ethnic group, our race, our religion, whatever," that there's an act of sacrifice involved in the creation of an idea of public, or of representing a public. I think the genius of the Vietnam Memorial is that it manages to display that notion of private sacrifice for the sake of a public, a sort of tragic statement that is extremely telling for the sensibility of our time.

One other aspect of the debate over public art and its ownership touches a little bit on notions of multiculturalism. I think that in older American cities, one often has, in old ethnic neighborhoods, figures in public places, who represented their post. One might find in an old Italian neighborhood in Boston a statue of an Italian who contributed to Boston's cultural life. We have highways and roads named after Adam Clayton Powell, or LaGuardia airport. To a certain extent, what's interesting about these ethnic celebrations in the act of naming is that the figures that are chosen to represent an ethnic presence in public life tend to be figures (in successful representations) who have in some way conveyed their own identification into the center of public life, but then acted on behalf of this larger public. That is, there are representations of ethnicity in public life that would be inappropriate if they represented not a public idea but a celebration of the private.

The other aspect of this is the difficulty of the art that we choose for such functions. I'm not sure I would agree with Casey Blake's term "liberal modernism," because I'm not sure that "liberal" applies in the cases of some of these works, and "modernism" actually may end up pointing out one of the problems: the creation of public representation has not been one of modernism's great preoccupations. In fact, the representation of the self partly in opposition to the public has been one of the defining characteristics of modernist art.

So the reason for these kinds of difficulties is that the kinds of ideas that are appropriate in the definition I'm giving for public art and a public space may be incompatible with aesthetic ideas as they've developed in the last 50 years and with the artistic tradition that's currently thriving. I'm tossing out this broad, sweeping generality partly as provocation, but partly to raise a point.

The themes I'm coming back to are the contradiction between public and private life, the demands for sacrifices of the private on behalf of the public, and finally, the incompatibility of this with the notion of cultural property of any kind, except if conceived of as, let's say, the Declaration of Independence is considered national property. Incidentally, I think the protection of the Statue of Liberty may be a less telling or controversial example than if one imagined somehow the Founding Fathers' documents in Washington as being subject to removal or destruction.

JONES: I'm very happy to be here not as an art historian, but as an artist who has visited and returned from the public art ghetto 10 or 15 times to do 10 or 15 public art projects, both in this country and abroad.

I agree with Casey Blake's notion that marriage without divorce where public art is concerned is very short-sighted. On the other hand, I'm a post-Richard Serra public artist,

and I have a boilerplate legal agreement every time I enter into these sorts of associations. In two weeks, I go to Chicago because Skidmore, Owings and Merrill want to alter a project of mine and I want to go take a look at it and see. The agreements I create before I enter into these things are such that no one can touch a hair on the head without first coming and talking to me.

In any event, I think the marriage-without-divorce issue is an important one, but I think the issues go deeper and in a slightly different direction, and they address, "Who is the public?" Arthur Danto tells us that after Duchamp and Warhol, it's very difficult to tell that you stand on artistic terrain without a theory that precedes the experience to tell you so.

And even if we take the public-art standard as "something that is big and orange and metal," I think we have to recognize that Danto's observation is still in place. That is, "How does one sustain public culture after Duchamp?" I'm not entirely sure that that's possible in a period of specialization, where it becomes highly problematic to continue the association of culture with the idea of a common public life. Because it seems very clear, both in the university and also in the media, specialization is the texture by which we understand and represent ourselves. I could even go more specifically to this panel, where we've had to bring in experts to speak to experts on this particular subject because either no one else is qualified or perhaps no one else is interested.

So I think that we may be asking the wrong questions about the existence of public culture. It may be that we're beyond the point where public culture makes any sense. There was a period of time when easel painting didn't exist, and we got along just fine without it. It may be time to rethink the usefulness of public culture, of works of art that represent a common life at this particular period of time.

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“If we lose something called ‘public culture,’ won’t something else take its place? And won’t that be the culture of Rupert Murdoch, Disney, et al.?”

BLAKE: I think Ron Jones has expressed very succinctly and eloquently the objection to the point of view that I and, I think, Ed Rothstein have tried to advance here. The question I have is: If we lose something called “public culture,” won’t something else take its place? And won’t that be the culture of Rupert Murdoch, Disney, et al? And is that a situation that we want to acquiesce in? Is that the public landscape we want to have created for us? If it is, then let’s acknowledge that it is, but that may be what we are contemplating.

As regards to Ed Rothstein’s very eloquent and very helpful comments, you wrote a review of the new \$20 bill for the *New York Times*. That new currency is a very good example of the impoverishment of our collective understanding of civic culture. Just compare it to the dignity and gravity of the old \$20 bill. Or for that matter, compare the post offices that have been built in the last quarter century in American towns and cities to their predecessors built earlier in the century.

The example of the Maya Lin memorial is worth contemplating for a variety of reasons. It seems to me that what’s remarkable about that piece is that it does acknowledge disagreement. So it does not hold up for us a kind of fictitious consensus. Rather, it makes visible intense and painful disagreement, with an aspiration to cultural healing. There is a kind of public or civic imagination or desire that informs that piece. And it’s the waning of that desire, of that imagination, that concerns me.

ROTHSTEIN: I think there’s actually all kinds of replacements for a public culture. One of them could be fascistic kind of reaction. Another could be a radical multiculturalism, where there’s a consistent denial of any common interest or any shared interest. And the other thing that’s probably worth spending more time on is the place commerce has in all this. You mentioned Disney. I went to Disney World a few months ago. And this is

really quite extraordinary. Because in a sense, in this state where there are so few public spaces, or civic spaces in towns, Disney World created a fake public space that actually has been unusually successful. And they did it by imitating old public spaces, and they created a sort of private village square. It’s very strange.

SUSANA LEVAL (Director of El Museo del Barrio): One of the things we have learned about public art in the last decade is that there is no consensus on the civic values that public art in this country are supposed to stand for. In a sense, the history of public art in this country, from the time they sought consensus on what kind of monument should honor George Washington, has always been problematic. It’s a very complex, multi-layered issue.

BLAKE: The greatest works of public art also have this aesthetic component. But I think there is an ideological aspect of public art—maybe a less contentious word is appropriate—where it really has a function.

Let me take an example from music. There are works of music that are written for large public spaces, large halls, that are public statements of a kind. Even when they’re made by a single composer and deal with very private and urgent matters, there is inscribed in this composition a sense that this is a statement that has some broader meaning to a large group. And that large group is, in some sense, representative of something that is occurring in the music. I think it’s very different from, let’s say, Bach’s “Goldberg Variations,” which was essentially a piece written for solitary performance—not even with an audience. One could argue Beethoven’s “Ninth Symphony” at one extreme, and Bach’s “Goldberg Variations” at the other.

I wouldn’t dare make aesthetic distinctions about them. But certainly there is some aspect of Beethoven’s “Ninth Symphony” as a sort of civic piece, where there was no sacrifice of the

aesthetic, but it had a civic function. And that can be sensed in the ways in which Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony" has been used over the last 200 years as a civic piece, particularly in Europe about 10 years ago. It is the symphony that became the marker of a certain kind of liberation. But there are distinctions worth making about the extent to which an aesthetic aspect of a work is added on to or altered by its public function.

PLAGENS: If Fallingwater weren't in some kind of registry, if it weren't a historical question of Wright probably being America's most important architect, could you make a purely aesthetic case for the preservation of Fallingwater? Is this object so universally or consensually beautiful that you have to preserve it? And would there be any possible class/race/ethnic objections in the sense that somebody could say, "Well, that's not my heritage, the Kaufmann house, let it fall"?

JEROME: I would say that yes, this is an aesthetic property that is easily recognizable as such. In fact, the intervention that's being proposed could be considered controversial because it does not follow the Venice Charter, which requires reversible interventions as much as possible in cultural property. But in this case, the aesthetic value of the building is considered paramount.

The expression Frank Lloyd Wright was trying to make of a building cantilevered over a waterfall precludes the idea of leaving the shoring in place. However, the significant droop in the cantilevers, which is as much as seven inches—an enormous amount for reinforced concrete—will remain. So there will be a historic documentation visible in the building that the cantilevers actually failed. And it's very noticeable from the bridge, when you look at the side view of Fallingwater.

Now, could an argument be made that some cultural group decides that this is not their

cultural property (in other words, "This is a weekend home of a very wealthy person, it was never a home meant for the lower classes")? I think that argument is negated because it is now a house museum. And the family knew, right from the start, that the building they had was a unique building that needed to be public. And the 130,000 people that go through it every year obviously agree, because they wait long periods of time, and they are basically taken through the house—which is incredibly intimate in scale, even though it is 5,300 square feet in size.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: What kind of criteria can we imagine now that would validate, in the future, any of the contemporary works to which you refer?

JEROME: We are in the business of deciding those exact questions, as preservationists. We have to come up with an outlook for buildings. And we have to consider that buildings which are not the best works of a particular architect or that are flawed in their design and technical details may still be worthy of preservation because future generations will look back in remorse if we take them down. We have to use our best judgment. And of course it's a subjective judgment—how can it not be?—but we have to be objective about these things and try to project what the public will expect to see and cherish in the future.

I am not advocating one way or another the Neutra building. I am just suggesting that it is a complicated issue that should not be written off for the reasons that are being stated by the National Park Service. I think there should be public consensus before those types of decisions are made about what could eventually be considered a significant building.

BLAKE: I would never argue that the civic and the aesthetic should be completely disentangled. I think sometimes, for analytical pur-

poses, it's useful to think of the two as separate categories. But take the Neutra building as an example. It seems to me that in matters of public dispute, it's not right to assume that the aesthetic automatically trumps all other considerations. So perhaps in the case of the Neutra building, the better argument would be not that Neutra is what he obviously is—a canonical American modern architect of significance for understanding 20th-century

American architecture. One would also want to defend that building in that site, which has a certain kind of civic and public importance for Americans, and how it works in that site. My point is not to exclude the aesthetic or say it's irrelevant. It's to say that civic considerations have to be entered into the equation—not with the dream of creating some uniform consensus, but with the hope of sparking some useful public discussion about these matters.