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Modeling Artist Networks at Artpark, 1974-1978

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THE ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

MODELING ARTIST NETWORKS AT ARTPARK, 1974-1978

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE
IN MUSEUM STUDIES

DEPARTMENTS OF PERFORMING ARTS AND VISUAL CULTURE AND HISTORY

BY

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Abstract

Located on the Niagara River Gorge in Lewiston, New York, Artpark—a summer venue for arts and entertainment—traces its origins to 1974 when it was established as a park and art venue that served as home to a visual arts program until 1991. The program annually invited a selection of artists to create experimental, site-specific art within the picturesque landscape north of the Niagara Falls. Providing an experimental alternative to traditional art museums and markets, Artpark has been promoted as a nontraditional institution for the participating artists. However, to what extent was Artpark an alternative institution? This thesis investigates the extent to which Artpark distinguished itself from established museums, galleries, and markets in its artist selection during the first four years of its operation. Specifically, this thesis asks if Artpark was open to a diverse range of national and international talent or if selected artists came to Artpark through already existing art networks. To answer this question, I developed a relational database that charts the networks of connections between artists and the institutions associated with their careers before their residencies at Artpark. Information to populate the database was gathered from a number of sources, most importantly the Burchfield Penney Art Center's Artpark Archival Collection. By discerning the complex network of relationships between chosen artists, staff, and outside institutions over the period under study (1974-1978), I determine the extent to which Artpark fulfilled its role as an experimental alternative to established museums and markets in the 1970s. The extent to which Artpark functioned as an alternative opportunity may provide a model of study for successive institutions that intended to operate outside of existing art hierarchies and markets.

I. Introduction

Located in Lewiston, New York on the site of a former industrial waste dump known as the Spoils Pile, is Earl W. Brydges Artpark State Park which overlooks the Niagara Gorge on the border between the United States and Canada. Since it formally opened during the summer of 1974, Artpark has served as an engaging venue for the arts. What made Artpark highly unusual as an art space, however, was the annual Visual Arts Program that ran from 1974 to 1991. The Visual Arts Program invited a selection of artists each year to participate in developing experimental, site-specific art projects often intimately tied to the Niagara region and the local community. The program also facilitated an unprecedented level of artist-public interaction that diminished the walls between the studio and the public. A catalog for the Visual Arts Program from one of Artpark's earliest seasons introduced the park as "an area for all the arts, a place for artists to perform, develop, and experiment."¹ The 1977 program catalog references the novel experiment in audience engagement, referring to Artpark as an "open-air recreational and cultural attraction" that "challenged a wide public audience in an informal manner that is effectively unorthodox and refreshingly direct."² Although the Visual Arts Program no longer exists, its legacy remains alive in the innovative "Artpark idea" communicated in the park's current mission.³ According to its current website, Artpark aims "to take the finest in performing and visual art and make them accessible to everybody" and to "foster an understanding and awareness of the many and varied forms of art and art makers."⁴ While the degree to which the current venue succeeds at this is debatable, the program nevertheless expresses a commitment to art accessibility and democratization reminiscent of its halcyon days.

¹ Michael J. Jackson., ed. *Sharon Edelman: The Program in Visual Arts*. Buffalo: University Press at Buffalo, 1976.

² Nancy Rosen., ed. *Sharon Edelman: The Program in Visual Arts*. Buffalo: University Press at Buffalo, 1977.

³ "About Artpark," Artpark, accessed November 4, 2017, <http://www.artpark.net/content/pages/about-artpark>

⁴ "About Artpark."

With its emphasis on experimentation and process, Artpark was in many ways considered an alternative to traditional museums and galleries. Artpark was conceptualized to not be a traditional gallery space but rather as an alternative space with opportunities for site-specific installation, interactivity, and participation. As an alternative, Artpark reflected upon how artists in the 1960s and 1970s sought alternatives for creating and exhibiting art, as well as engaging audiences beyond conventional art systems. Principles present in the Artpark idea at times directly coincided with other nontraditional spaces founded as a result of the alternative art movement, which rose out of a period of dissent against traditional art systems, markets, and hierarchies during the 1960s and 1970s. This thesis investigates the role Artpark played as an alternative art institution of the 1970s through the development of a relational database charting the careers of Artpark's artists-in-residence from 1974 to 1978.

The following literature review will assess Artpark's history and its significance as an experimental art space for artists and the public during the 1970s and beyond. Additionally, the incidence of increased federal funding for the arts during the mid-1960s and 1970s will be examined to better understand Artpark's capability to funnel funds and services to young artists at the time. Literature detailing other alternative art spaces present during the aforementioned time period will also be reviewed to situate Artpark within a broader narrative of how traditional hierarchies and methods of display began to be challenged on a greater scale.

II. Literature Review

IIa. Artpark: A Site-Specific Experiment in the Arts

In 2009, the exhibit "Artpark: 1974-1984" opened at the University at Buffalo Art Gallery. Curated by Sandra Q. Firmin, the exhibit provided the first in-depth historical overview

of the Visual Arts Program's early years.⁵ Firmin, a former curator of UB Art Galleries, reflects on the thesis of her exhibition in her essay, "Have You Artparked?." To answer questions about the role of Artpark in contemporary art, ranging from how it began to how it distinguished itself from other art institutions, Firmin investigates in great detail the years leading up to Artpark's opening in 1974 as well as the first ten years of its existence as chronicled by the exhibition.⁶ According to Firmin, the concept of Artpark was rooted in New York State's push for government sponsorship of the arts propagated by Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller beginning in the 1960s. Rockefeller, who believed strongly in the value of art to democracy, greenlit the idea of Artpark upon its presentation in 1973.⁷ Upon this approval, Dale McConathy was hired as Artpark's first executive director and the architectural firm known as Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates was commissioned to develop the 172-acre site bordered by the Niagara Falls, Lewiston, and the Niagara Gorge. McConathy, along with the other visionaries who brought the Artpark idea into fruition, envisioned an artistic laboratory where artists could test new ideas while providing the public with access to art. In theory, Artpark would allow those who had little formal experience with art to gain meaningful exposure through interaction with the artists.

Artpark dedicated its inaugural 1974 season to the memory of land artist Robert Smithson, who died in a plane crash the previous year. Firmin notes how Artpark conceptually was the "quintessential Smithson site," as its industrial history aligned with Smithson's belief in

⁵ Patricia Donovan, "Artpark: 1974-84' -- A Major UB Gallery Exhibition to Open in September," University at Buffalo, accessed November 4, 2017. <http://www.buffalo.edu/news/releases/2010/02/10936.html>.

⁶ Sandra Firmin, "Have You Artparked?," in *Artpark: 1974-1984*, ed. Sandra Firmin (New York: Princeton Architectural Press), 23.

⁷ During the 1960s, Nelson A. Rockefeller believed that the value of democracy was tested by a government's ability to provide not only physical necessities, but also intellectual and recreational stimulation through the arts. This sentiment, influenced by economic and social conditions in the United States at the time as well as the ongoing Cold War, led to the creation of the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), the first state arts council in the country.

art as land reclamation.⁸ Prior to his death, Smithson had been established as one of the leading figures in the Earth Art movement, which emerged during the 1960s in an attempt to reject the commodification of art and to address social (or environmental) issues beyond the confines of the art museum. Artpark's presence upon a former waste dump is emblematic of Smithson's method of selecting sites for his art, for he choose to develop art on "more infernal regions—slag heaps, strip mines, and polluted rivers" as a rejection of the "idealizations of nature" found in sculpture parks and gardens.⁹ Smithson also selected sites scarred by industrial history to symbolically suggest healing and renewal.

After Smithson's death, his legacy remained alive in Artpark's first season and beyond. Land artist Nancy Holt, who was Smithson's wife, was invited to participate as an artist-in-residence for Artpark's opening season, where she created *Hydra's Head*. Holt also participated in the 1975 season and was one of many prominent female land artists who came to Artpark, along with Mary Miss, Alice Aycock, and Agnes Denes. The legacy of Smithson and the Earth Art movement intersected with Artpark through the efforts of many artists who came to Artpark and who sought to heal the barren land of the industrial dumping ground. For example, Alan Sonfist's clay basin sculpture *Pool of Virgin Earth* restored vegetation to the Spoils Pile by catching seeds blowing in the wind. Regardless of intention, the art projects mostly adhered to principles of site-specificity, taking into account the geographical, historical, and cultural aspects of the landscape.

Firmin emphasizes that Artpark engineered bonds not only between artists and the land but also between artists and the public. Artist-public interaction was inherent to the Artpark idea,

⁸ Firmin, "Have You Artparked?," 35.

⁹ Robert Smithson, "Cultural Confinement." In *The Writings of Robert Smithson: Essays with Illustrations*, ed. Nancy Holt (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 133.

resulting in a symbiotic relationship in which artists communicated their knowledge and ideas while visitors provided feedback and their own interpretations of art. Some artists, such as Allan Kaprow, took this relationship a step further by integrating participatory experiences into their projects. Others, such as art educator Philip Yenawine, forged connections with the public through hands-on workshops. These instances of collaboration and communication allowed Artpark to build a community of diverse people and activities.

Towards the conclusion of her essay, Firmin visits some of the major changes the Visual Arts Program underwent during its history, including the introduction of major project artists, increased restrictions on art, and the lift on the requirement for artists to develop their projects on-site. These changes, along with decreased government funding for the arts in the 1980s, led to the eventual demise of the program. Despite the program's demise, Firmin highlights its success as a transitional experiment of the 1970s that produced a vast body of thought-provoking art.

Rebecca Lee Reynolds also explores how Artpark distinguished itself among alternative art spaces during the 1970s by framing it against the traditional narratives associated with outdoor sculpture parks.¹⁰ During the 1970s, outdoor sculpture parks such as Storm King Art Center in New York State adapted green space to display sculpture in an outdoor museum. The result was a “green cube” that paralleled the traditional “white cube” gallery adapted to display art.¹¹ Emphasizing that Artpark was one among many avant-garde programs in the 1970s countering the “green cube,” Reynolds argues that site specific and ephemeral artworks in particular challenged the object-based focus of other sculpture parks.¹² Embracing the sublime

¹⁰ Rebecca Lee Reynolds, “The Anti-Sculpture Park? Or, How Site-Specific and Ephemeral Art Questioned the Sculpture Park,” in *Artpark: 1974-1984*, ed. Sandra Firmin (New York: Princeton Architectural Press), 190.

¹¹ Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*. (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1999.

¹² Reynolds, “The Anti-Sculpture Park?,” 191.

in both the aesthetic and industrial character of the site, artists developed site specific works that examined the physical and cultural history of Niagara Falls. To contextualize the significance of these works, Reynolds expands on the origins of site-specific artwork and how it rejects not only the outdoor gallery space but also the precedents set by earthworks before it.

Artpark has also distinguished itself among other outdoor sculpture parks by disintegrating the boundaries between both display space and studio space as well as work space and public space. Although space was used for display in a similar vein to sculpture parks, the space was simultaneously used for socialization, creation, and other activities hosted by Artpark. Thus, Artpark significantly changed methods of outdoor display, making it an “anti-sculpture park.”¹³ By the 1980s, Artpark ceased to be an anti-sculpture park, returning to traditional models of display. Although the unique creative processes associated with Artpark are no more, Reynolds concludes that its legacy is alive in public art environments today and contributes to our collective understanding of the history of ephemerality, environmental art, and sculpture parks.¹⁴

The above literature constructs a narrative of Artpark that is, in both its envisioned ideals and execution, alternative and experimental in nature. Built upon principles of public access, artistic freedom, and populism, the Artpark idea shaped the experiences of both the artists involved and the public who interacted with the art. Artists selected the location for their projects and were encouraged to experiment and explore new ideas without being confined to the walls or traditional methods of display constructed by art galleries. On the other hand, the public had agency in choosing which art and activities to integrate into their leisure time. The intersection of

¹³ Reynolds, “The Anti-Sculpture Park?,” 204.

¹⁴ Reynolds, “The Anti-Sculpture Park?,” 204.

art with the public sphere instigated the development of a community of diverse creators, talents, and learners.

IIb. Artpark and Government Sponsorship of the Arts

One of the greatest advantages offered to artists who participated in a residency at Artpark was the financing of their projects. Although many artists sought to challenge the art market during the 1960s and 1970s, they still required sources of income that would provide an alternative to selling art.¹⁵ To have an entire project financed with few restrictions on experimentation was an extremely rare benefit to artists at the time. To better understand how Artpark was able to channel funding into these projects, literature examining the rise of government sponsorship of the arts during the mid-1960s and 1970s will be reviewed.

A seminal work in the field of cultural policy that builds upon the case for government funding for the arts is economist Dick Netzer's *The Subsidized Muse*. Observing that the arts and cultural activities in the United States had significantly proliferated since World War II, Netzer notes that federal funding for the arts did not see significant increases until around 1970, when public support reached an estimated \$85 million.¹⁶ The increase for federal funding stemmed primarily from the creation of federal agencies such as the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). On the state level, Netzer also credits the growth of the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), which was founded in 1961 on Governor Rockefeller's belief that funding the arts with only private philanthropy would limit public access. NYSCA would serve as a model for the NEA, which was founded in 1965 as one of three institutions in the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities. Netzer argues

¹⁵ Sandra Firmin, "Have You Artparked?," in *Artpark: 1974-1984*, ed. Sandra Firmin (New York: Princeton Architectural Press), 52.

¹⁶ Dick Netzer, *The Subsidized Muse: Public Support for the Arts in the United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 4.

that the NEA's success was due to the "changing climate of American opinion" on the arts in the 1960s.¹⁷ At this point, arts and culture were no longer perceived to be reserved exclusively for elitist tastes and were accepted on a greater level by the public. Netzer asserts that "by the mid-1960s, most Americans no longer looked upon the arts with suspicion."¹⁸ Despite the relative success of the NEA, only a small fraction its funding was provided for the avant-garde and experimentation in the arts. This made Artpark rather exceptional in securing federal funding for art built upon experimentation. In this case, Artpark was likely funded more for its mission pertaining to widespread public access rather than for the type of art it produced.

Writing a generation later, economist Shauna Saunders demonstrates how the policies that initiated federal funding for the arts during the 1960s resulted from the perceived benefits of art as a public good.¹⁹ She frames the development of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) as a response to the political and economic conditions of the Cold War era that brought anti-communism to the forefront of governmental policies. These conditions caused policy makers to ascribe "public benefits" to the arts that justified their funding on a federal scale. These collective benefits were articulated as being beyond the needs of an individual and being spiritual in nature. This rhetoric pertaining to the intangible satisfaction experienced through art appeared in government-sponsored literature as well as the platforms of presidents such as Richard Nixon.

During the Cold War, as Saunders argues, the purpose of such rhetoric was to frame the arts as an alternative to materialism and by extension a means to counter communism.²⁰

¹⁷ Netzer, *The Subsidized Muse*, 62.

¹⁸ Netzer, *The Subsidized Muse*, 62.

¹⁹ Shauna Saunders, "The Case for the National Endowment for the Arts: Federal Funding for the Arts in America in the 1960s and 1970s," *History of Political Economy* 37, no.3 (September 2005): 594.

²⁰ Shauna Saunders, "The Case for the National Endowment for the Arts: Federal Funding for the Arts in America in the 1960s and 1970s," *History of Political Economy* 37, no.3 (September 2005): 594.

Government-sponsored cultural publications also connected the arts to political and social freedom. In contrast to the common perception of communist society, where individual expression was feared to be stifled, the arts represented a bastion of American democracy and ideals. Therefore, to proliferate American democracy and deter communism, the arts were to be made widely accessible to the public. This demand for access in turn required increased federal assistance for the arts. According to Saunders, Nancy Hanks, the chair of the NEA from 1969 to 1977, significantly expanded the NEA's capability for support by orienting its mission towards the public service aspect of the arts.²¹ Art was to be integrated into daily life along with other service-centric areas of life, such as health and welfare.²²

Theatre professor John Urice examines the development of the NEA from a political perspective but focuses on how three seminal reports at the time influenced its creation. Urice argues that these reports were essential in supporting the idea that a government agency dedicated to funding the arts was necessary for the survival of culture and its institutions.²³ All three of these reports — August Heckscher's commissioned report to John F. Kennedy called *Report to the President on the Arts and the National Government* (1963), Rockefeller Brothers Fund's *The Performing Arts: Problems and Prospects* (1965), and Baumol and Bowen's independent study funded by the Twentieth Century Fund called *The Economics of the Performing Arts* (1966) — were united under their general claims that art institutions were facing significant financial difficulties that threatened their continued existence. This rhetoric of crisis

²¹ Shauna Saunders, "The Case for the National Endowment for the Arts: Federal Funding for the Arts in America in the 1960s and 1970s," *History of Political Economy* 37, no.3 (September 2005): 610.

²² Shauna Saunders, "The Case for the National Endowment for the Arts: Federal Funding for the Arts in America in the 1960s and 1970s," *History of Political Economy* 37, no.3 (September 2005): 610.

²³ John K. Urice, "Three Contemporary Reports That Influenced the Creation of the National Endowment for the Arts: A Retrospective," *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 33, no. 1 (2003): 5.

not only justified the creation of the NEA but also shaped the NEA's approach to art funding during its early years.

The above literature reveals that increased federal funding for the arts starting in the 1960s and lasting through the 1970s was largely due to the establishment of federal agencies such as the NEA. The ideologies underlying this incidence of federal support were geo-political but also reflected changing attitudes towards the role of arts in relation to the public. Artpark's mission and execution most clearly aligned itself with the push for public access to the arts propagated by the NEA, Rockefeller, and President Lyndon B. Johnson's series of domestic reforms known as the Great Society. The funding benefitted not only public access but also the artists who were given money to experiment on a phenomenal landscape. It should be noted, however, that Artpark is somewhat of an exceptional case, as federal support for the avant-garde was rather limited compared to other areas of art at the time.

IIc. Not a "Lone Cry": Alternative Art Institutions of the 1970s

Although Artpark was unusual in receiving federal funds for avant-garde art, Reynolds states that Artpark was "not a lone cry in the wilderness of upper New York State" in challenging the outdoor sculpture park.²⁴ This statement can be broadened to refer to a multitude of experimental art spaces emerging in the 1970s. These avant-garde institutions, some of which were artist-led, often challenged traditional gallery spaces, allowed experimentation, and built communities of artists. To situate Artpark within this counternarrative, alternative art institutions that developed during the 1970s will be examined.

During the 1970s, the art scene in the Western New York region was highly experimental, harboring many alternative art spaces. One of these institutions, Hallwalls, was

²⁴ Rebecca Lee Reynolds, "The Anti-Sculpture Park? Or, How Site-Specific and Ephemeral Art Questioned the Sculpture Park," in *Artpark: 1974-1984*, ed. Sandra Firmin (New York: Princeton Architectural Press), 191.

founded in 1974 in Buffalo by a group of young artists, including Charles Clough and Robert Longo.²⁵ Art historian Sarah Evans contextualizes Hallwalls as an “exquisitely site-sensitive, medium-indifferent, socially dynamic, inadvertent experiment” that was home to a uniquely site-specific art installation practice with an intimacy unable to be replicated elsewhere.²⁶ The purpose of Hallwalls was to exhibit local artists and to bring contemporary artists, curators, and critics to Buffalo. The program facilitated meaningful exchanges between established professionals in the field and local talent. Members of Hallwalls campaigned to form a close-knit community of artists across all mediums. Installations at Hallwalls notably extended beyond the established gallery space into the artists’ own studios, emphasizing immersion over installation. Although focused more on artist-to-artist interaction rather than artist-public interaction, Hallwalls nevertheless parallels Artpark in its site-specificity and deconstruction of the walls between work and display. Hallwalls and Artpark did not operate independently of each other during the 1970s. Several Western New York Artists associated with Hallwalls, including Joe Panone, completed a residency at Artpark. Additionally, the 1977 Artpark season was documented in a traveling exhibition that originated at Hallwalls.

The Center for Exploratory and Perceptual Art (CEPA) Gallery was another Buffalonian product of the Alternative Art Space movement. Founded in 1974 by University at Buffalo graduates, CEPA originally served as both an exhibition space and darkroom.²⁷ Since its inception, CEPA has developed to be “an important center in photography and film-related arts supporting emerging artists, research and education.”²⁸ An artist-led institution, the CEPA

²⁵ “History,” Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center, accessed November 13, 2017, <http://www.hallwalls.org/history.php>

²⁶ Sarah Evans, “There’s No Place Like Hallwalls: Alternative-space Installations in an Artists’ Community,” *Oxford Art Journal* 32, no. 1 (2009): 98.

²⁷ “About CEPA,” CEPA Gallery, accessed November 13, 2017, <http://www.cepagallery.org/about-cepa/>.

²⁸ James Rajotte, “CEPA Gallery at 30,” *Afterimage* 33, no. 1 (2005): 13.

Gallery has held a rather unique status as a gallery whose directors have all been working artists.²⁹ Holding a strong relationship with the University of Buffalo, CEPA's focus on education and public art projects have strengthened its relationship with the local community.

Although Hallwalls and CEPA Gallery did not hold artist programs that were of on a comparable scale to the Visual Arts Program of Artpark, they still paralleled Artpark as Western New York art institutions that embodied the exploratory spirit of the 1970s. For all three of these institutions, experimentation in the arts across a wide range of media was encouraged to nurture an artist's career. They likewise fostered the development of close-knit communities, forging connections between artist and public, artist and artist, and artist and professional. When investigating the career trajectories of the artists who completed a residency at Artpark, it is worth noting whether these artists have established connections with the aforementioned or similar artist-led institutions.

IId. Conclusion

The literature reviewed suggests that Artpark was, in its founding ideals and execution, an experiment alternative in nature. Artpark's vision extended to both the artists who were encouraged to freely experiment with the land and the members of the public who freely selected which art and artists to interact with. Situated in its historical context, Artpark functioned as part of a nationwide effort to nurture democracy through an expansion of the public sector. It is of importance to note that varying notions of what constituted a "democratic" institution for the arts were integrated into the overall "Artpark idea," which branded Artpark as a unique space for the arts quite unlike any other in the United States at the time. Artpark was not a gallery, and its principles and processes reflect this assertion of being a nontraditional space. The aspects of

²⁹ James Rajotte, "CEPA Gallery at 30," 13.

Artpark that were considered “alternative” or “democratic” in nature intersect with several movements, ideas, and changing values in the art world at both a national and international level. In this sense, Artpark represents a microcosm of the growing dissatisfaction with the practices of art markets and traditional art galleries and museums that became prevalent during the 1960s and the 1970s.

Given Artpark’s openness to hosting art in a variety of mediums, it comes as no surprise that the institution connects directly to several artistic movements. As mentioned earlier in the text, Artpark developed from the spirit of the land art movement and could “be seen as a descendent of Smithson’s own life and energy.”³⁰ However, Artpark’s intersection with the movement extended beyond Artpark’s location on the Spoils Pile, its inclusion of prominent land artists in its programs, or its willingness to let artists experiment with the land. In addition to ecological motivations, the land art movement strived to liberate artwork from the gallery space. Creating art outside of the gallery not only challenged the nature of what constituted art itself but also served as a rejection of the increasing commodification bestowed onto artworks by art markets and galleries. Land art, in being anchored to a particular site, it was hoped, could be neither bought nor sold and could not be exhibited in a museum. By attempting to escape the confines of a museum, land art sought to avoid what Smithson referred to as a “cultural prison” that transformed art into a “portable object or surface disengaged from the outside world.”³¹ To an extent, Artpark embraced the rejection of traditional gallery ideals brought about by the land art movement. During its early years, Artpark demonstrated a “detachment from the concept of permanent monuments” by deconstructing the art created each year.³² This process is democratic

³⁰Nancy Rosen., ed. *Sharon Edelman: The Program in Visual Arts*. Buffalo: University Press at Buffalo, 1977.

³¹ Robert Smithson, “Cultural Confinement.” In *The Writings of Robert Smithson: Essays with Illustrations*, ed. Nancy Holt (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 133.

³² Lucy Lippard, “A is for Artpark.” *Art in America* 62 (1974): 39.

in how it allowed artists to share the space over time, allowing for continued creation of art. The lack of permanence also aimed to prevent the commodification of the resulting projects in the gallery space. The principles of site-specificity associated with Artpark works extended its reach to transforming the relationship between art and the public as well. Art critic Lucy Lippard saw this potential for Artpark to make site-specificity accessible to the public back in 1974: “This could be the birthplace of a genuinely public art—neither equestrian statues nor their abstract counterparts but an art that belongs where it is and to the people there, illuminating the history and development of the area and becoming a heightened part of the experience of the place.”³³ The art at Artpark did not exclusively belong to an artist nor a gallery, but to a collective public who experienced and interacted with it. Artpark’s ability to align itself with the spirit of the land art movement could only go so far, however. Even during the park’s early seasons, Artpark still documented the works. This documentation resulted in traveling exhibitions that took place after the season ended. Additionally, several Artpark projects were later reassembled in other locations. Therefore, Artpark could not completely curtail the commodification of art resisted by the land art movement, nor could it prevent projects from becoming the “portable object” that Smithson condemned.³⁴ This shortcoming is far from being exclusive to Artpark and also occurred within the evolving land art movement, for land art gradually became documented and eventually the subject of many museum exhibitions. Nevertheless, Artpark’s identity as a democratic space distinct from galleries is reflective of ideas born from the land art movement.

In addition to the land art movement, the alternative vision of the Artpark idea intersected with the process and conceptual art movements of the 1960s. Process art, which evolved from a

³³ Lucy Lippard, “A is for Artpark.” *Art in America* 62 (1974): 39.

³⁴ Robert Smithson, “Cultural Confinement.” In *The Writings of Robert Smithson: Essays with Illustrations*, ed. Nancy Holt (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 133.

movement into a creative philosophy, emphasized the process of creating art over the finished work. Materials used for process art were often ephemeral and nontraditional in nature, resulting in art that took irregular forms. Likewise, the conceptual art movement of the 1960s rejected the value placed on a finished work—rather, the concept, or idea behind the art itself was of more importance than the actual product. In a similar vein to the land art movement, the process and conceptual art movements aimed to avoid the commercialization of the art world by creating works that resisted commodification. Artpark brought artists associated with both movements into its Visual Arts program—Lynda Benglis, a leading figure of the process art movement, completed a residency in 1976 and Dennis Oppenheim of the 1975 season was one of several conceptual artists who participated.

Of greater significance, however, is that Artpark's vision during its early years constantly emphasized process and idea over product. Artists arrived at Artpark to “realize an idea” rather than solely focus on finishing a work of art.³⁵ The accessibility of Artpark to the general public brought a unique dimension to the artistic process Artpark emphasized. An artistic process at Artpark could range from artists communicating their ideas to the public to visitors partaking in workshops as a leisure activity. The intersection of the arts and leisure as an artistic process contrasted the traditional relationship between arts and the public and also redefined what is considered art. Separated from the confines of the gallery, art itself was allowed to take many forms at Artpark and could function as an ongoing process and dialogue. However, sometimes ideas can only go so far when the public eye is involved. Lynda Benglis and Stanton Kaye's Artpark performance piece *The Amazing Bow-Wow* had to be restricted during daytime park hours due to the inappropriate nature of the costume involved. Despite these occasional

³⁵ Nancy Rosen., ed. *Sharon Edelman: The Program in Visual Arts*. Buffalo: University Press at Buffalo, 1977.

complications, Artpark's emphasis on process over product and redefinitions of what constituted the artistic process mirrored the ideas of the process and conceptual art movements.

Framed alongside other avant-garde art institutions of the 1970s, Artpark reveals itself as a player in a greater movement to develop a more democratic experience for artists. This experience offered a viable alternative to traditional art museums and markets. The alternative opportunities were strongest from 1974 to 1978, the first four years of Artpark's operation. Therefore, these years most warrant further investigation to determine the extent to which Artpark operated as an alternative to traditional art museums and galleries.

III. Methodology

IIIa. Artpark, 1974-1978

This project aims to chart and subsequently visualize the relationships between artists and institutions associated with their artistic careers prior to their residencies at Artpark. More specifically, the project focuses on the personal and institutional connections of all of the artists who completed an artist residency at Artpark during the first four years of its operation, from 1974 to 1978. These four years constitute five distinct summer seasons at Artpark, with over 20 artists-in-residence participating each season. To discern the underlying artistic networks, a relational database was developed. However, it should be noted that the database will only include visual artists who completed a residency at Artpark. Although the performance artists played just as vital of a role in Artpark's operation, it is significantly more difficult to discern them individually. Additionally, the categories that are defined in the database, such as exhibition history, would not be applicable to performance artists in the same manner as visual artists.

The artist residency program for Artpark lasted from 1974 to 1991. With over 200 artists participating in a program that ran for almost two decades, a more complete image of the networks would result from including artists from every year in the database. However, incorporating artists from all eighteen seasons proved impossible within the given time frame. Future iterations of this project may expand on the years included, but the database currently includes artists from 1974 to 1978. However, the selection of the first five years of Artpark's operation was not an arbitrary decision. As the years with the highest concentration of selected artists-in-residence, 1974 to 1978 was Artpark's most experimental period in its history. During the first five years, Artpark best distinguished itself from traditional galleries and museum spaces by its openness to avant-garde art across many mediums. Reflecting the "permissiveness of the era," Artpark during the 1970s encouraged artists to experiment extensively with their work.³⁶

As the sense of mutual trust between the institution and the participating artists deteriorated, the Artpark program underwent major changes. These changes were in part influenced by the 1978 arrest of artist-in-residence Story Mann for refusing to stop occupying his sculpture named *Pop's Pavillion of Death*. Due to a broken rope ladder and the dome's position on the edge of the gorge, Artpark deemed the structure to be dangerous and consequently shut it down. The controversy surrounding Story Mann and other incidents of conflict between artists, staff, and the public caused Artpark to impose mandates on what artists could create and where they could create it, effectively curtailing the experimentation artists had enjoyed in previous years.³⁷

³⁶ Sandra Firmin, "Have You Artparked?," in *Artpark: 1974-1984*, ed. Sandra Firmin (Princeton Architectural Press), 53.

³⁷ Sandra Firmin, "Have You Artparked?," in *Artpark: 1974-1984*, ed. Sandra Firmin (Princeton Architectural Press), 53.

The increase in regulations was not the only change Artpark underwent from 1978 to 1979. In fact, the artist-in-residency program was almost entirely revamped for Artpark's 1979 season. In 1979, Artpark implemented the Major Project category into the program, which meant inviting fewer artists to work on larger-scale projects. Some of the resulting larger-scale projects were semi-permanent and allowed the artists to work on pre-selected sites. These changes were contradictory to the ideals upon which Artpark founded itself, rendering Artpark more similar to other sculpture parks in the United States after 1979.³⁸ Therefore, to best understand the extent to which Artpark provided an alternative to traditional art institutions, it is most effective to focus on the years in which Artpark proved most experimental.

IIIb. Primary Research

To collect the data for the resulting database, it was necessary to conduct research on the backgrounds of the artists, as well as relevant information about their residencies. Many artists who completed a residency at Artpark do not possess a full corpus of literature, therefore making them difficult to research fully. The information was obtained by referencing documents from the Artpark Archival Collection located in the archives of the Burchfield Penney Art Center in Buffalo, New York. As one of Western New York's leading art institutions, the Burchfield Penney is "a museum dedicated to the art and vision of Charles E. Burchfield and distinguished artists of Buffalo, Niagara and Western New York."³⁹ The Burchfield Penney preserves the Artpark Archival Collection as documentation of a significant aspect of Western New York's art history.

³⁸ Firmin, "Have You Artparked?," 53.

³⁹ "Our Mission and Vision," Burchfield Penney Art Center, accessed January 30, 2018, <https://www.burchfieldpenney.org/the-museum/our-mission-and-vision/>.

The documents primarily referenced for this project were the *Program for Visual Arts* catalogues released annually by Artpark. These brochures included photos of each artist's finished work for its respective season, as well as the artist's personal reflections on the artistic process and the Artpark experience. This documentation provides valuable insight into artists' perception of Artpark as well as the nature of the works created during the time period of study. The resulting data most directly references the biographical information included for each artist at the back of the catalogue. The information provided in these concise biographies, including educational and exhibition history, is present within the database. In contrast to other available resources, the biographies reveal where each artist's career was situated prior to Artpark. These catalogues were invaluable for discovering biographical information for artists who have since maintained little to no presence in resources accessed online, such as the 1974 artists-in-residence Ching Yu-Chang and Ray Kelly. The Visual Arts Program brochures also effectively filtered out information about the artists' careers after Artpark, which is often more emphasized on online resources regarding the artists. In addition to the program catalogues, Artpark's only magazine, called *Current*, was used for research regarding the artists for this project.

Additional documents revealed other information relevant to potential underlying networks and connections surrounding Artpark. In addition to uncovering connections between artists and the institutions in their careers, it is imperative to also consider the relationships between artists and the Artpark staff that played a role in selecting who would be allowed a residency. Memos involving the project proposals of upcoming artists-in-residence reveal that the staff who most significantly played a role in selecting artists from 1974 to 1978 were David Katzive, the Artpark Visual Arts Director from 1974 to 1977, and Rae Tyson, the Artpark Visual Arts Coordinator from 1974 to 1978. These staff members not only selected who would

participate in the Visual Arts Program but also received recommendations from artists-in-residence for whom should be selected for the program in the future. In a letter to Tyson, artist Paul Sharits (who participated in Artpark's 1975 season) proposed that Roger Welch be selected in the future, even including Welch's project idea. Although Welch was not selected for a residency in the future, this information is valuable for understanding the artist selection process. Katzive and Tyson have institutional connections of their own careers that warrant investigation as well. For example, prior to and during his involvement with Artpark, Katzive was the Chief of the Division of Education at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

A series of interviews conducted with the artists-in-residence in 1974 suggest similar methods of discerning connections. The interviews reveal which artists arrived at Artpark together, as well as artists they would recommend for future residencies. Of the four artists recommended by Richard Nonas, three were selected for a residency in future years. Although it is unlikely that Nonas's endorsement is what singlehandedly caused these artists to be chosen, these recommendations still indicate connections between artists, as well as the possibility that artists themselves did play a role in shaping the artist composition at Artpark.

In 1979, Artpark hired consulting firm Arts Development Associates to conduct their second series of surveys evaluating Artpark, the first series having been conducted in 1976. While the 1976 series of surveys focused on researching the audience and how the public perceived Artpark, the 1979 study included the opinions of artists in addition to those of the public. Around 500 questionnaires were sent to artists craftspeople, and performers who participated in a residency at Artpark since 1974. These surveys asked artists questions regarding their experiences, such as how they perceived the length of their residencies, whether their budget was sufficient for their projects, and how they interacted with staff. Of particular interest

to this project, however, are the questions regarding how the artists were granted the opportunity to complete a residency at Artpark.

According to the results of the Arts Development Associates artist survey, Artpark often made the initial connection for granting a residency, with Artpark contacting artists first for 63.3% of the respondents.⁴⁰ Of those who were contacted by Artpark staff, they were most often contacted by the aforementioned Rae Tyson, and Becky Hannum, a staff member who handled public relations at the time. For the artists who reached out to Artpark of their own accord (33.7%), a majority either submitted a proposal or were advised to apply by a friend.⁴¹ Other artists, however, did become involved due to personal or professional relationships. Overall, the artists perceived several benefits of working at Artpark, which included working in a productive environment, sharing opinions and forming relations with other artists, and sharing art with the public. After Artpark, artists apparently received minimal short-term economic benefit, only 38.8% of respondents noticed an impact on their career as a result of the residency.⁴² However, the artists perceived the benefits at the time as psychological. Although the study reveals some of the methods by which artists came to Artpark, it remains unclear to what extent Artpark directly impacted artists' careers after their residencies.

Arts Development Associates drew its own conclusions concerning Artpark's progress as an arts venue from the data collected. According to the study, the fact that 1/3 of the artists contacted Artpark about participating was "impressive" because it indicated that "Artpark is not

⁴⁰ Bradley G. Morison and Joseph J. Zeigler, *Artpark and its Constituencies—1979* (Arts Development Associates, 1979).

⁴¹ Bradley G. Morison and Joseph J. Zeigler, *Artpark and its Constituencies—1979* (Arts Development Associates, 1979).

⁴² Bradley G. Morison and Joseph J. Zeigler, *Artpark and its Constituencies—1979* (Arts Development Associates, 1979).

a ‘closed shop’.⁴³ Although this figure does not constitute a majority of the respondents, it was still perceived as significant by those who conducted the study and was possibly more than was expected at the time. The data suggests that although the final decision of who is involved rests in the hands of staff, artists can exert control over which artists Artpark is made aware of to some degree. Concluding that Artpark was an “open opportunity” that was “constantly being infused with fresh talents,” Arts Development Associates suggested that Artpark was indeed, at the time, open to a diverse range of talent. The extent to which this conclusion holds truth is investigated in the relational database.

IV. Database and Visualization

IVa. Database Design

The relational database resulting from this project was developed using Airtable, a cloud collaboration software that functions as a hybrid between a spreadsheet and a database.⁴⁴ Airtable was selected as the preferred software for this project for several of the benefits it offers. The software is highly accessible and is flexible across several platforms, making it ideal for creating a functional relational database within the relatively short time frame. Additionally, Airtable allows for a variety of unique fields to be implemented into the database, many of which complement the categories of interest for this project. Airtable simplifies the process of linking related records between multiple tables, therefore making it easier to locate commonalities among the artists’ data. However, a weakness of Airtable is its inability to allow for complex visualization of data. Therefore, the visualization component of the project will have to remain

⁴³ Bradley G. Morison and Joseph J. Zeigler, *Artpark and its Constituencies—1979* (Arts Development Associates, 1979).

⁴⁴ “Product,” Airtable, accessed February 15, 2018, <https://airtable.com/product>.

distinct from the database itself. Although the ease of public access is a benefit of Airtable, this database is intended to be used primarily by the Burchfield Penney Arts Center.

The relational database is currently designed to have three tables. The primary table, titled “Artists,” contains a comprehensive list of the artists who completed a residency at Artpark from 1974 to 1978. The artist name is the table’s primary field, with each artist having secondary fields that currently include the following: year(s) of residency at Artpark, type, geographic identity, educational history, exhibition history, and biographies. Class categorizes an artist based on the medium of art he or she created at Artpark but is not a detailed classification of their artistic trajectory. The possible artist classes are as follows: visual, performance, auditory, film, and education. These classes are of significance because they represent the diversity of mediums at Artpark and also influence the availability of data for other fields. For example, an artist-in-residence who is classified as a performance artist is less likely to have a detailed exhibition history than one who is classified as a visual artist. The geographic identity field refers to where an artist’s career was situated prior to his or her residency. This data is based on press releases on the artist prior to their residency and does not reflect the direction of his or her career after Artpark. The biographies, included as a long text field, were pulled from previous research I conducted at the Burchfield Penney in an effort to profile the artists.

An artist’s educational and exhibition history both function as fields that directly link to the two other existing tables in the database. These two tables, titled “Education” and “Museums and Galleries,” contain a list of all of the institutions associated with every artist’s educational and exhibition history. However, the database design is currently unable to provide the exact years for an artist’s association with a specific institution. For each institution, one can view all the artists who were associated with this institution prior to their residencies at Artpark. Other

relevant information about each institution is included, such as the institution's location.

Crossover between the two tables listing institutions is expected, as universities often function as gallery spaces as well. Figure 1 provides a basic data model for the overall design of the relational database. Figure 2 shows a screenshot of the actual database in Airtable. Determining the frequency by which artists' careers intersect with these institutions allows for the uncovering of potential artist networks.

IVb. Visualization

The resulting visualization is depicted was developed as a mind map, which is a hierarchal diagram used to organize information (see Figure 3). Mindmeister, an online mind mapping software that allows users to collaboratively develop mind maps online, was used to create the mind map.⁴⁵ Artpark Artists' Exhibition History is the central idea portrayed in the visualization. Several institutions the Artpark artists-in-residence exhibited with prior to their artist residencies are represented as the children of the central idea. The museums, galleries, and artist spaces represented in the visualization were selected based on the number of Artpark artists associated with them and by the nature of the institution itself. The visualization represents both established museums and galleries as well as alternative or artist-run spaces, so an equal amount of both types of institutions are visualized. In order to preserve equal representation for each type of institution, the selection was not based solely on the greatest number of connections in the database but rather on the greatest number of artist connections for both established and alternative art institutions. Selected Artpark artists who exhibited at these selected institutions are mapped as the children of each institution. If possible, artists from differing Artpark seasons

⁴⁵ "Features," Mindmeister, accessed March 30, 2018, <https://www.mindmeister.com/content/features>.

from 1974 to 1978 were selected. Artists who exhibited at multiple institutions represented in the visualization are connected by arrows, with the arrow beginning at the institution he or she exhibited at first in order to better demonstrate the trajectory of his or her career before Artpark. Several museums and artist spaces present in the visualization will be analyzed at greater length to understand how Artpark existed in relation to art institutions and markets.

IV. Results

IVa. Initial Findings

The resulting relational database contains data providing profiles of 121 artists who completed one or more residencies at Artpark from 1974 to 1978. Due to the nature of certain artists' work or the unavailability of data, not every artist has complete data for every field. These empty fields are classified as unavailable and will not be taken into account for data analysis.

Initial observations of the data reveal interesting trends, which are visualized in Figure 4. Of all 121 artists, almost a third had their geographic identity tied to New York City, with 38 artists associated with the city. These numbers, however, are skewed toward the earlier years of the study, especially for 1974, the first season. This finding is consistent with art critic Lucy Lippard's initial observations of Artpark, in which she provides critique of the artist selection for the 1974 season: "There is really no reason why the artists at Artpark have to be well known or come from SoHo as long as they work on the site and work well with people."⁴⁶ The cities associated with the identity of the second highest numbers of artists were Buffalo, New York, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with seven artists each. The slight prevalence of Buffalo or

⁴⁶ Lucy Lippard, "A is for Artpark." *Art in America* 62 (1974): 39.

Western New York-based artists likely reflects upon Artpark's local identity and its association with the Niagara Falls.

With regards to exhibition history, the institution that appeared with the greatest frequency was the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City, which had connections with 21 artists in total. The Museum of Modern Art appeared the second most frequently in the exhibition history field, appearing in a total of 14 artists' histories. Other established institutions that had several Artpark artists exhibited were the Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo, New York, the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, Ontario, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Several alternative or artist-run spaces, mostly originating in New York City, revealed connections to multiple avant-garde artists as well. 112 Greene Street, which was one of New York's first artist-run spaces, was connected to at least 7 artists in the database. The Clocktower Gallery, another alternative art space from New York, was connected to the exhibition histories of at least 5 artists. Although these numbers do not quite compare to the higher amounts of connections present with the established institutions, the presence of alternative institutions in the database still represents a vital complexity in the careers of many of the Artpark artists-in-residence. Overall, artists selected for residencies mostly came through both traditional museums and galleries as well as alternative spaces in their artistic careers prior to Artpark. This coexistence of paths suggests a more symbiotic relationship between traditional and alternative institutions, rather than an oppositional one.

The database field profiling each artists' educational history did not yield significant results, other than revealing that a majority of the artists had some degree of college education. However, the variety of educational institutions at least suggests that artists were not coming

through a select few institutions to secure a residency at Artpark. Many artists also held teaching positions at colleges and universities, and these positions were accounted for in the database. Such educational positions likely did influence certain artist's participation at Artpark, for the residencies of several artists consisted of educational workshops. However, significant trends cannot be extrapolated from the employment data, and therefore will not be the subject of further analysis. The following analysis of the database observations will focus on the trends in artists' exhibition history to frame Artpark within the associated institutions, spaces, and galleries during the 1970s.

IVb. Analysis and Interpretation

The database results regarding exhibition history will be analyzed by first briefly profiling 7 of the institutions that exhibited multiple artists prior to their Artpark residencies. 4 of the institutions profiled will represent established and traditional art museums and galleries, while 3 will represent alternative and artist-run spaces. This is not to imply that an artist exhibiting at one of these institutions directly led to a residency at Artpark, but rather provides greater context for understanding Artpark's role as an alternative art institution of the 1970s when framed alongside other institutions relevant at the time. The museums and spaces examined will be the following: the Whitney Museum of American Art, Museum of Modern Art, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, 112 Greene Street, Clocktower Gallery, and P.S.1.

The Whitney Museum of American Art, also known as the "Whitney" is the museum with the most known connections to Artpark artists-in-residence from 1974 to 1978. Founded in 1931 by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney in Manhattan, the Whitney is dedicated to collecting and

exhibiting art of the United States, specifically those of living artists.⁴⁷ Throughout its history, the Whitney rose to prominence as a well established art museum by accumulating one of the vastest collections in the world of twentieth century American art across all mediums, including painting, photography, video, and more. Since its founding, the Whitney has held exhibitions dedicated to showcasing work of lesser-known artists, with its annual exhibitions becoming the Whitney Biennial in 1973. Several artists who would participate at Artpark that same decade, including Alice Adams, Richard Nonas, and Forrest Myers, were included in the 1973 Whitney Biennial. Although the annual exhibitions and Biennial were more modest in the 1970s compared to its later iterations, the Whitney was not immune to criticism drawn from its role as a prominent institution claiming to represent American art. In 1970, the Ad Hoc Women Artists' Committee formed as a subgroup of the Art Workers' Coalition to protest the minimal representation of female artists in the Whitney's Annual.⁴⁸ The Whitney had also represented very few African American artists in its exhibitions, which led to organized demonstrations during the 1960s and 1970s.⁴⁹ Although the Whitney Museum of American Art collected and exhibited living contemporary and sometimes lesser-known artists, it still operated within the hierarchies present in the art system as an established institution throughout its history.

The Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) was founded in 1929 in New York City and contains one of the most significant collections of modern art in the world. Gaining prominence as an art institution by exhibiting noted artists such as Vincent Van Gogh and Pablo Picasso, the MOMA has played a significant role in shaping the narrative of modern art movements of the

⁴⁷ "About the Whitney," Whitney Museum of American Art, accessed April 1, 2018, <https://whitney.org/About>.

⁴⁸ Julie Ault, *Alternative Art, New York, 1965-1985: A Cultural Politics Book for the Social Text Collective*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002): 27.

⁴⁹ Julie Ault, *Alternative Art, New York, 1965-1985: A Cultural Politics Book for the Social Text Collective*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002): 89.

20th century with its collections and exhibitions. Similar to the Whitney, the MOMA was protested by many artists and artists groups during the 1960s and 1970s as a demonstration against its authority and establishment. However, the MOMA undoubtedly remained significant in shaping many artists' careers into the future, which included many artists who exhibited at Artpark.

Located in Buffalo, New York, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery was founded in 1862 and is one of the oldest art institutions in the United States. Throughout its history, the Albright-Knox has collected modern and contemporary art, developing a collection spanning several centuries.⁵⁰ During the 1970s, the Albright-Knox continued to collect postwar modernist art while also exhibiting emerging avant-garde artists such as Woody Vasulka and Paul Sharits.⁵¹ Although in many ways a traditional and established art institution, the Albright-Knox supported the flourishing of the avant-garde scene in Buffalo during the 1970s along with alternative spaces such as Hallwalls and Artpark.

112 Greene Street, later renamed as White Columns, was one of New York's first and most definitive alternative art spaces. Founded in 1970 by Jeffrey Lew and Gordon Matta-Clark, 112 Greene Street functioned as an experimental space where up and coming artists could exhibit their work. The attitude generated in the space, emphasized by its unlocked doors and openness to experimentation, was emblematic of the alternative art scene in New York during the 1970s.⁵² Matta-Clark, one of the space's founders, completed a residency at Artpark in 1974 along with

⁵⁰ "Fine Art Collection," Albright-Knox Art Gallery, accessed April 1, 2018, <https://www.albrightknox.org/art/collection/fine-art-collection>.

⁵¹ "Wish You Were Here: The Buffalo Avant-garde in the 1970s," Albright-Knox Art Gallery, accessed April 2, 2018, <https://www.albrightknox.org/art/exhibitions/wish-you-were-here-buffalo-avant-garde-1970s>.

⁵² Lauren Rosati and Mary Anne Staniszewski, *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces 1960 to 2010*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012): 128.

several other artists who exhibited at the space, including Richard Nonas and Jene Highstein. The artists' emphasis on "interactivity, performance, and site specificity" closely parallel the principles of the art created at Artpark.⁵³

The Clocktower Gallery and P.S.1 were two other significant alternative art spaces in New York during the 1970s that exhibited artists who would later complete a residency at Artpark. Founded by Andrew Heiss as projects of the nonprofit Institute for Art and Urban Resources, the Clocktower and P.S.1 were located in neglected and abandoned buildings in New York.⁵⁴ The revival of abandoned buildings as alternative art spaces became prominent during the 1970s and mirrors Artpark's use of land damaged by industry. Since its founding in 1972, the Clocktower has exhibited emerging artists and, like Artpark, has also supported artist residencies.⁵⁵ In 1976, Heiss opened the P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, an institution that emphasized site-specific installations and experimental approaches.⁵⁶ The Clocktower and P.S.1 provided alternative opportunities for site-specific art and experimentation that were perceived as unavailable in more traditional institutions.

From the institutions outlined above, it becomes evident that the artists who were represented at Artpark were connected to a variety of institutions, both traditional and alternative in nature. This suggests to some degree a presence of pluralism in Artpark's execution, where a diversity of art and artforms is represented. However, it can be concluded that despite Artpark

⁵³ Lauren Rosati and Mary Anne Staniszewski, *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces 1960 to 2010*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012): 128.

⁵⁴ Lauren Rosati and Mary Anne Staniszewski, *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces 1960 to 2010*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012): 144.

⁵⁵ Lauren Rosati and Mary Anne Staniszewski, *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces 1960 to 2010*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012): 174.

⁵⁶ Lauren Rosati and Mary Anne Staniszewski, *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces 1960 to 2010*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012): 174.

functioning as an alternative institution of the 1970s, it did not exist in isolation from established art institutions and networks. Rather, Artpark maintained a symbiotic relationship with both traditional and alternative institutions, balancing the interests of both types of spaces and the artists they represented. Artpark operating in dialogue with established institutions is evidenced not only by the exhibition histories of its artists but also by its application process in its early years. In 1976, Artpark was described as a “tough program for an artist to get into,” with only 2 applications out of 140 being accepted for a residency.⁵⁷ The necessity for selected artists to have an established career prior to Artpark is evident: “Although some balance of regions, styles, and sexes is attempted, few of the artists are outside the gallery/magazine/school-instructor matrix.”⁵⁸ Artpark operated within established art systems by requiring a certain level of artistic skill, quality, and experience from its artists. This requirement balanced out with the interests of participating artists by functioning as an asset to an artist’s emerging career. Flaws inherent in the established art world also translated to Artpark as well, such as the underrepresentation of nonwhite artists. Overall, Artpark was still, by its very nature, a state-sponsored art institution operating within a relatively open, but still authoritative framework.

Although Artpark functioned within the system of traditional museums and galleries, Artpark still very well served alternative interests. This is indicated by the representation of many avant-garde artists who came through not only traditional institutions, but also artist-run spaces. Many of the artistic principles emphasized in these alternative institutions, such as site-specificity, experimentation, and interactivity, were all considered vital components of the art

⁵⁷ Barbara Baracks, “Artpark: The New Esthetic Playground,” *Current*, 1976, 30.

⁵⁸ Barbara Baracks, “Artpark: The New Esthetic Playground,” *Current*, 1976, 30.

created at Artpark. Artpark was therefore still receptive to the interests of artists who pursued non-traditional media and techniques and sought an alternative to traditional methods of display.

Overall, the results suggest that although Artpark was seen and developed as an alternative to established art venues, it still operated in dialogue with them. By supporting many artists who came through or even founded nontraditional spaces, Artpark also was in dialogue with alternative institutions as well. This symbiotic relationship between Artpark and both traditional and nontraditional institutions suggests that a more fluid relationship between the two types of institutions. Established art museums and alternative spaces were often considered inherently antithetical to each other, but Artpark's almost hybrid approach to displaying and promoting art suggests that such strict opposition between both spaces may not be as strong as it is generally perceived. Rather, a hybrid approach applied at Artpark coincided with interests relevant to traditional institutions and artists seeking engagement beyond the gallery.

V. Conclusion

This study of Artpark suggests that it fulfilled a highly unusual role in the art world during the 1970s. Rather than functioning completely outside the existing networks perpetuated by art museums, galleries, and markets, Artpark was able to operate in dialogue with them while still maintaining alternative approaches through its emphasis on process and experimentation. In doing so, Artpark managed to fulfill the interests of many parties, including artists seeking both career advancement and alternative opportunities, the national government in its support for the arts at the time, and the general public seeking to access art as a means of entertainment and education.

Potential future iterations of the database and its resulting visualization would go beyond the limited years presented in this study. The research can also study more than the institutional connections present at Artpark and examine the extent to which it was an alternative institution from an administrative perspective. Although Artpark's Visual Arts Program no longer exists today, its legacy continues to shape our understanding of the 1970s as a period of artistic experimentation and alternative expression. Principles that fashioned the original Artpark idea, such as process over product, accessibility to the arts, and openness to experimentation can be observed and studied in public art environments existing beyond the 1970s until today.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Jennifer Cook for her constant support throughout the entirety of this project. I am also grateful to her and the Burchfield Penney Art Center for providing access to the archival resources necessary for the research to complete this project.

VI. Figures

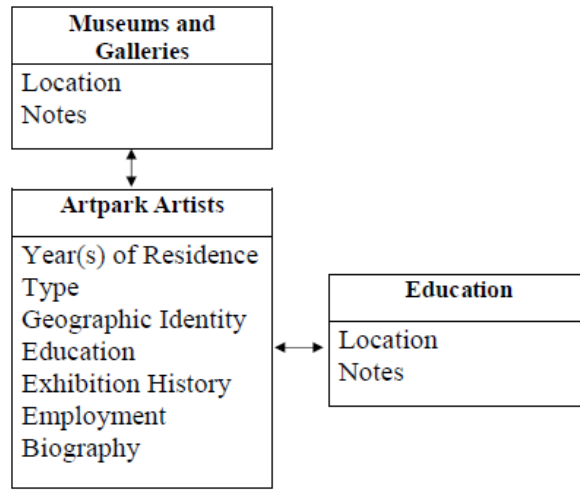


Figure 1: A data model for the Airtable relational database.

	Name	Year of Residence	Type	Geographic Identity	Education	Exhibitions
1	Peter Campus	1974	Visual	New York City, NY	City College Film Institute	Everson Museum of Art Byke
2	Ching Yu-Chang	1974	Visual	Unavailable	University of Los Angeles	Unavailable
3	Steve Gianokos	1974	Visual	New York City, NY	Pratt Institute	Fischbach Gallery
4	Suzanne Harris	1974 1978	Visual	Unavailable	Pratt Institute	Cooper Union 10 Bleecker St
5	Jene Highstein	1974	Visual	Unavailable	Royal Academy Schools of Lo	Actionsraum Lisson Gallery
6	Nancy Holt	1974 1975	Visual	New York City, NY	Tuft University	LoGuidice Gallery Clocktowe
7	William Dunas	1974	Performance	New York City, NY	Brooklyn College C. W Post t	Unavailable
8	Gordon Matta-Clark	1974	Visual	New York City, NY	Cornell University	Moore College of Art Bykert
9	Richard Nonas	1974	Visual	Unavailable	Queens College University o	Daniel Weinberg Gallery 10 f
10	Ray Kelly	1974	Visual	New York City, NY	Art Students League	Unavailable
11	Liz Phillips	1974	Visual	Unavailable	Bennington College	Everson Museum of Art Rees

Figure 2: A screen capture of the relational database in the Airtable software.

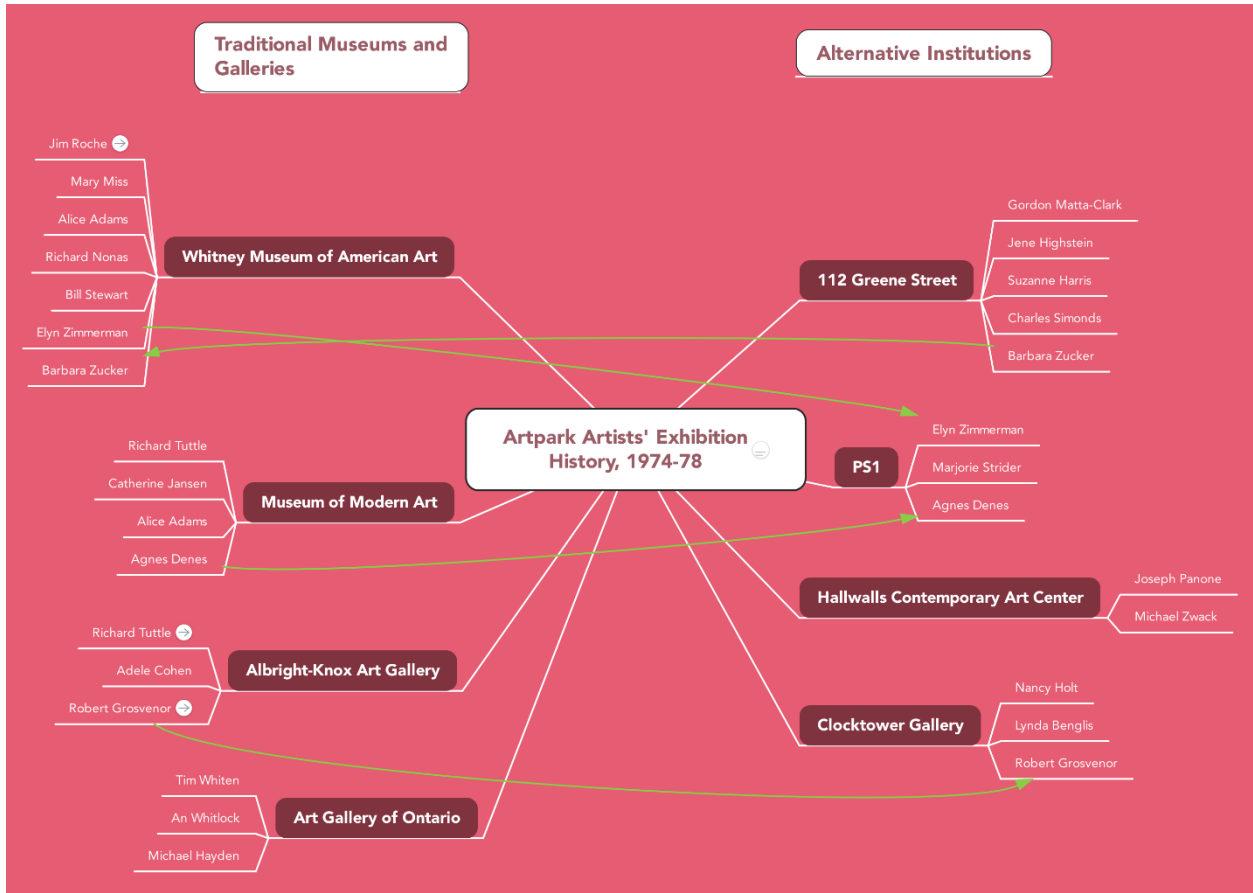


Figure 3: The visualization of the institutions with the most connections to Artpark artists developed in Mindmeister.

Artpark, 1974-1978

Artist and Geographic Identity



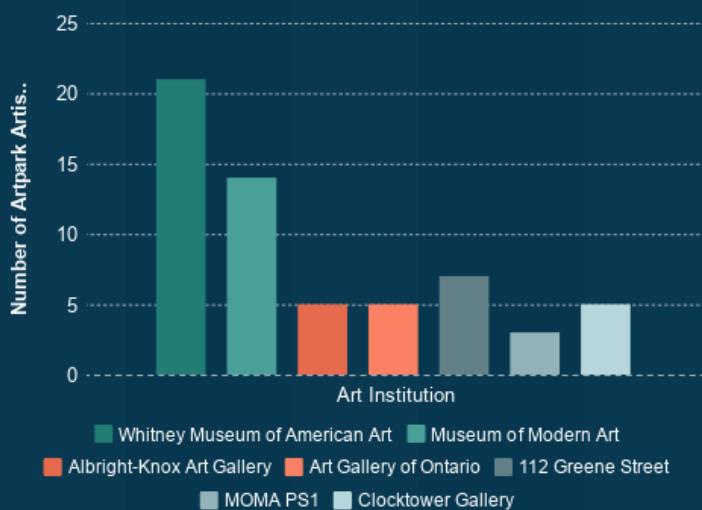
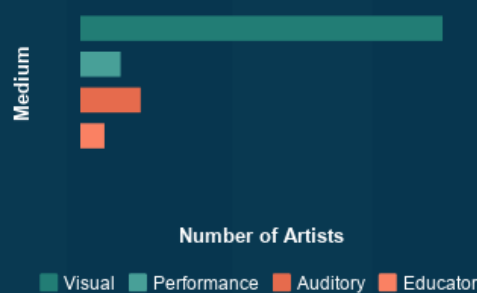
■ New York City (31%) ■ Buffalo (6%)
■ Philadelphia (6%) ■ Other/Unavailable (57%)

Almost one third of the Artpark artists-in-residence were associated with New York.

Artist Mediums

Most of the Artpark artists were visual artists.

Artistic Media



Exhibition History

The institution that appeared with the greatest frequency was the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City, which had connections with 21 artists in total.

Figure 4: An infographic charting the initial observable trends in the Airtable database.

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