



Smithsonian
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Oral history interview with Dale Goss, 1965
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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Dale Goss on June 2, 1965. The interview took place in Seattle, WA, and was conducted by Dorothy Bestor as part of the New Deal and the Arts project for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

DALE GOSS: I was trying to recall Bruce Inverarity's name yesterday, and for the life of me, I couldn't. I knew him quite well. He brought together a rather diverse group-

DOROTHY BESTOR: I gather it was awfully difficult.

MR. GOSS: -but they did a good job, and I think made it possible for a lot of the contemporary artists to stay in business, otherwise they would have had to do something else to stay alive.

MS. BESTOR: Yes, and perhaps they would never have gotten back to painting.

MR. GOSS: This is one of the great, valuable lessons of the Project-

MS. BESTOR: Now, you were talking about Mr. Inverarity and his staff-

MR. GOSS: Well, Bruce Inverarity is, I think to say the least, an unusual person, he's a good organizer-

MS. BESTOR: Good! I'm very glad to hear that!

MR. GOSS: He, himself, at least to the best of my recollection, was not a producing artist to the extent that the people were who were working with him. But he proved to be a good administrator, and was quite dedicated to the Project, and as I mentioned earlier he got together many people with different skills and different experiences and background, and he provided the incentive and motivation for them. As I said, I think it was a Godsend to them, and kept them going, and kept them interested, and in some respects made them partly responsible for the rather extensive development of the arts, the visual arts in this area through the years.

MS. BESTOR: Oh, that's very good to hear.

MR. GOSS: Look at the men that are now at the top and these people were all apart of the project; Kenneth Callahan, [Jacob Elshin], Jim Fitzgerald, Margaret [Tompkins], Morris Graves, Guy Anderson-I'm going down your list here-and Fay Chong, the other I don't recall. This is an exhibition list and I'm sure there are a good many others-and Mark Tobey was another one-who was active in the project. Another important aspect, in the long run, the most important, was that the Washington State Art Project and the other projects around the country indicated to people that the artist was important, and I think for the first time, our government actually supported the creative arts in a direct sense. And after that, I think it was a lot easier for people to accept the role of the artist and give some credence to the things that artists do. Another important contribution the project made, at least, again, in this area, I'm not very familiar with it elsewhere, was that it made it possible for public institutions to actually have original works of art. And it made it possible for us here in Seattle and in Seattle schools to present to children in high school, and many for the first times in their lives, I'm sure, original works of art by living artists. Something that made them feel a part of the art community-this was one of the unique contributions that was started in Seattle and it was started while I was director of art education in the Seattle schools with the cooperation with Mr. Inverarity.

MS. BESTOR: Excuse me. Incidentally, for how long were you Director of Art Education? I don't have the dates of that. Did you succeed Miss Clara Reynolds?

MR. GOSS: Yes, I did, I think it was from about 1943 to 1956.

MS. BESTOR: I see.

MR. GOSS: A long, long time.

MS. BESTOR: And before that, before you took over as director, were you connected with art in the public schools in Seattle?

MR. GOSS: I was teaching. I taught at West Seattle High School and for a short while at Lincoln-

MS. BESTOR: I see.

MR. GOSS: -and then I was away for a year on leave at Yale University, then came back to Seattle. At that time I was painting quite a bit and had a one-man show at the Museum and was entering various exhibitions, so my interest in art was very deep and very genuine, as it remains. But I was more active in it at that time.

MS. BESTOR: And excuse me, one other thing, to go back to what we said before we turned this tape recorder on, your connection with the regional committee for region 16 for Idaho, was that before you came to Seattle?

MR. GOSS: That was while I was teaching in the Kellogg, Idaho, High school and I don't know how I got-I suppose I got involved with it because there were probably no more than a handful of people in that state that were interested in art and Mr. Bruce wrote to me, asking me to serve on the state committee, but as I told you earlier, at that time, very little had filtered out to our part of the country.

MS. BESTOR: So there weren't any art centers starting while you were there.

MR. GOSS: No, and I left there shortly after this came about and came to Seattle and then became involved in the project so my participation while I was in Idaho was very thin. But I wanted to get back to the circulating art exhibition, the art project in Seattle, which the Washington art project made possible. The school district established exhibition spaces in several of the high schools, I think about 6 or 8 if I recall properly. And the WPA packaged the exhibitions and we trucked them around and circulated them for one or two weeks' stand at each of the high schools. We took the paintings out of circulation for a long time, and then later, this same plan was extended throughout the state as a result of this experience in Seattle. It was possible then, on some occasions, to circulate packaged exhibitions throughout the state because by the time this came about there were several projects started in other parts of the state, Spokane, for example and Yakima, and I think others.

MS. BESTOR: There was one at Pullman, I believe for a while.

MR. GOSS: This gave a kind of regional identification to the state of Washington and to the artists, and I think had a lot to do with the later development of the Washington Art Association which came about, oh, a little after the Works Progress Administration was started here.

MS. BESTOR: Well, now, these exhibits that you circulated - from where were the artists drawn whose work you circulated?

MR. GOSS: It all came out of the project here in Seattle.

MS. BESTOR: I see.

MR. GOSS: And as you may know, the project in Seattle drew to Seattle artists from around the state, those that could in anyway find some identification with it, or participate in it. The ones that I saw listed in the material that you handed me, not all were from Seattle.

MS. BESTOR: True.

MR. GOSS: -Some came from other parts of the state, but mostly, they were within the Puget Sound area. And, this of course, helped some of the other regional art centers get under way. I recall that at the close of the project, there was a distribution of a lot of the paintings and other increments of the project, and these were made available to public institutions, and the school district acquired quite a number of paintings.

MS. BESTOR: Yes, there's a list in one of the folders of allocations made, permanent allocations made of the various paintings, that was one that was in the files in the Seattle Public Library. Miss Reynolds turned over some material with a list of what happened to various works of art. I have seen that there are quite a few around the University and quite a few around various elementary school and high schools. Incidentally, there is the picture of project works that I was mentioning a few minutes ago-you probably knew most of those people.

MR. GOSS: I see some that I recognize, one young man here; I had him as a high school student.

MS. BESTOR: Oh? Who was that?

MR. GOSS: Lubin Petric.

MS. BESTOR: Oh you did? I've talked to him-

MR. GOSS: He's around here?

MS. BESTOR: Yes, he is. I've talked to him and hope to interview him.

MR. GOSS: He was a young fellow with tremendous talent, but lacking the discipline that it took to make something out of it, and so far as I know he did not continue seriously in painting.

MS. BESTOR: Well, apparently he's had a new lease on life.

MR. GOSS: Maybe he has, I hope so.

MS. BESTOR: And he and Bill Cumming hope to have a joint show next fall.

MR. GOSS: If that's true, I think this will be a real contribution, because he was very talented and didn't have a very easy time of it getting along. But Bill Cumming is another one who had a difficult time. I know that the project kept these people going and encouraged them, kept them interested and gave them, in some cases, materials and supplies to work with which they otherwise would not have had, and helped them exhibit, and helped them find worthwhile projects to work on in conjunction with the project. I recall, for example, the Annett Island Air Base asked the Washington Art Project to do topographical maps for the development of the base, and a lot of these very fine artists took this job because they felt it was a contribution that they could make in return to the government. I thought the attitude that they expressed toward it was very good. I'm looking at some of these; I don't remember their faces anymore.

MS. BESTOR: Well, it's been a long time, it's too bad that the Ford Foundation didn't start inquiries earlier-

MR. GOSS: Most of these people are not in this area now. But Bill Cumming after being out of painting at least publicly for oh, I think probably 15 years-

MS. BESTOR: Yes, well, he said it was at least 10 but he's come back-

MR. GOSS: And he's come back very strong.

MS. BESTOR: -very strong.

MR. GOSS: He was a young man who was influenced, as were many others there, by Mark Tobey. You know, as you look through the national art magazines, current ones, and if you were familiar with the people who were involved or participated in the art projects throughout the country, you'll find that many, if not most of the current leaders in the arts, were one time or another, participants of the art project.

MS. BESTOR: I think so too. It's astonishing.

MR. GOSS: Not only in painting, but I'm sure it was equally true in music, in dramatic arts and in writing, and one of the fine contributions that was made by the writer's project was the recording of art history. The local history and the state guides that were developed are a valuable resource even now.

MS. BESTOR: Yes, they still are surprisingly informative. Do you think that the writer's project and the drama project had as much influence around here as the art project, did they make themselves felt as much?

MR. GOSS: Well, it's a little hard to measure, but the Puget Sound area, centered in Seattle, has contributed vastly to the arts in the last 20, 30 years.

MS. BESTOR: Yes, I see it has.

MR. GOSS: Now, whether or not, or to what extent the Art Project was responsible for this, I don't know. But I am certain that at least in relationship to graphic art that it kept active many of the people who would have drifted away. I'm just repeating what I've said now in 2 or 3 different ways but I'm sure that if I was equally familiar with the other aspects of the project, that I might say the same thing about the dramatic arts, the Writer's Project and so on, because it would have had, I'm sure, it would have had the same impact on people interested in the other aspects, of the arts.

MS. BESTOR: Yes. Those pamphlets you're looking at now as you can see are from the Spokane Art Project.

MR. GOSS: Yes, I recognize them.

MS. BESTOR: Some people wish that there had been an official art center as such, in Seattle. Do you think that would have been a good thing?

MR. GOSS: Well, there was not the same need in Seattle as there was in Spokane. It might have been a good thing at the time, I don't know, but Seattle did have many more resources. There was a very direct need in

Spokane for some kind of art center which did not exist at that time. The only thing that Spokane had was a small historic museum which was not very ideal, not very much alive. There was one period when there was no center for the active artists in Spokane. The Spokane art center was the first to have an impact on the community and it was very effective. I worked some with it in exchanging exhibits and with the people there.

MS. BESTOR: Was that when Kenneth Downer was in charge, or when Carl Morris was there?

MR. GOSS: I knew Carl Morris, I didn't know Kenneth Downer. Carl was and is, I assume, a very fine painter and his wife, Hilda Deutsch, was an excellent sculptor. They exhibited very actively during and after the art project here, and participated in it to some extent, although I don't think they were as closely or directly involved as some of the others. They were not so dependent, they were producing and selling and able to exist enough to keep on working. Most of these people, if you know them, don't ask for much more than an opportunity to keep on working.

MS. BESTOR: Right.

MR. GOSS: And so their needs are usually simple and if they could buy a little paint and some canvas, why they're pretty happy. I remember Morris Graves, as an example, would take a job in whatever occupation he could fill, or could find. He might work in the woods in the lumber mills or he might pick beans in the valley and work just long enough to get enough money to stop working so he could paint. And so he went along for several years like this, he's work a spell, and he'd stop and he'd paint, and he'd paint very intensively while he worked, and finally he was able to sell a little bit of his work. Just enough so that he'd continue painting, and at that point he began to flourish to a great extent because he then could put full-time on his painting. And Guy Anderson was another who did the same thing, they were buddies, they were together a lot. Bill Cumming was part of that crowd, Kenneth Callahan also, although Kenneth had a continuing job at the Art Museum and so he was again not so dependent on the Art Project, but most of the people found this their first full-time employment in an art activity.

MS. BESTOR: Naturally there is some criticism expressed by certain people I interview as to the fact that some people's talents weren't used as fully as the painters could wish, or that great plans for murals and cartoons form murals were drawn and then nothing ever came of the murals. Did you see much of that, or do you think this is just natural griping?

MR. GOSS: Well, my reaction to this is that during this period when the Federal Government was recognizing the value of the decorative arts, in its capital outlay apportionment, when it was allocating part of the construction funds for decorating buildings, I think it again said to the public, "Art is important," and this to me was one of the important contributions.

MS. BESTOR: Yes, definitely.

MR. GOSS: Now the murals, I don't know if there's anything-there's lots of ways to decorate a building and a mural is one way, perhaps no better and no worse than anything else. One value in the mural project was that it did encourage exploration of a mural technique; most of the artists up to that time had no chance to even try a mural. They had no idea what it was about, furthermore they didn't have the space to work, the materials to produce a mural, nor the space to exhibit it after having it done, and a mural is nothing when its left in a studio, and so it has to be applied to a particular building, particular site and location. You just don't do a mural to be doing a mural-

MS. BESTOR: Exactly.

MR. GOSS: It's not mobile-I'm going a long way to say what I tried to say, started to say earlier. The mural project did develop some pretty good mural painters in this area, Jacob Elshin was one of the more successful ones, and a couple of his murals are still, I recall, in the University District Post Office and they were very well done. Jacob has continued to paint, and he paints actively and full-time as far as I know, and has continued to grow. He's not a person who's ever stopped growing. His paintings show he gets better all the time. Jacob was very much a part of this project and he was more interested perhaps in the murals than anything else because this seemed to suit a vigorous person, who would like a big project or a big challenge. He realized it through this project. The application of murals to post office buildings in particular was widespread, and I recall that in Idaho as the post office buildings began to develop, as the appropriation became available for them, a portion was set aside for a mural. In some cases, the mural competitions were nationwide; they were not always local competitions, although I think the local painters probably had some advantage in knowing the community, the environment and in being able to adapt the painting to the environment. But it had the other advantage in bringing into some of these small communities the work of some of the best living painters. I recall this did happen in Idaho, I don't recall the name of the painter at the moment, but I remember that later this man became quite a well-known artist and this small community in Idaho where I was teaching at one time, had its first piece of living art.

MS. BESTOR: What was the name of the community by the way?

MR. GOSS: Kellogg. A mining town, there is no museum there; there was no identification with any of the arts other than through something of this kind. I would like to see something of this nature continue; at least continue through some kind of Federal support and encouragement in the way that the Federal Government is now beginning to support education.

MS. BESTOR: Yes; well of course there are a number of plans, or at least there's talk in the air about what the president's commission on the arts may do.

MR. GOSS: We don't need the same thing again.

MS. BESTOR: No, that's true; what do you think we do need?

MR. GOSS: Well, I think there are many projects that would be useful. I think one service that could be provided would be a service which would bring into the smaller communities some living art. This did at one time touch a few communities.

MS. BESTOR: Yes.

MR. GOSS: You may know or recognize that most of the community projects that were started on the Federal Art Project Administration and the art program in the state did not continue. Finally, with the change of administration and the change in the economy and so on, they faded out. In some cases, they were absorbed into the community and made important to the community, but this was not always the case. And most smaller communities nowadays have some leadership in the arts, which did not exist 30 years ago. This is partly because the public schools and the colleges and universities, are doing a better job of reaching these people in their formative years and are giving them some background, some appreciation, some interest in the arts. There are also a lot more people who are actually producing art than there were before and these people do exist in these communities, and it would be helpful if there were leadership provided to bring these communities some of the living art. I think there are people locally who can pick up the load in their own community, and again, we can bring this before the people, and perhaps out of this there could become some active art centers again.

MS. BESTOR: That's a very good idea. You see living art as being brought, first of all in the form of exhibitions or demonstrations-?

MR. GOSS: Another part of this, as I recall, and a very worthwhile part of the project, was the traveling dramatic program and also the traveling puppet shows that were sent around the state. And this did the same thing for dramatic arts as the painters did for the visual arts. It brought before the people something that was a little finer, better, than they'd normally been accustomed to seeing, and something that was alive. People were actually creating. One of the values in the arts is the participation in it.

MS. BESTOR: Yes, it certainly is. Now with television to compete with, do you think that the living arts have a pretty big challenge? Do you see television's influence as something that can reinforce or that will just compete with the kind of thing you're talking about?

MR. GOSS: If we're thinking about the non-participant, then of course, television is not always a challenge. It's a very easy thing to sit before it and go to sleep. It certainly is deluding; but inspiration comes from participation, something that you do. The urge to create is in everyone in some degree or another, in many people it's latent, it's undeveloped; as I said, the colleges, the schools, are doing a better job in reaching people and giving them opportunity and encouragement to in some way participate in one or more of the creative arts. It's a natural form of expression, and people need it to really stay alive-

MS. BESTOR: Yes, they do.

MR. GOSS: -and there's got to be something-there been a tremendous upsurge of interest in the arts in the past few years, throughout the country. I don't know why and I suppose there are people who would rationalize this nicely, but it's happening, and I think an even greater power is lying dormant, waiting for leadership to make it a real living thing. What happened in isolated parts of the country, what happened in the WPA art project could happen again on a broader and wider scale. Leadership from the right direction can have a tremendous impact. Not only because of the funds that might be available from federal resources, sometimes the funds are not very available; but the fact the Federal Government thinks that something is important, gives it status and encourages others who think likewise, to do something about it. This is the way you get leadership and I think that the present activities of our government indicate clearly the things that it considers important; and this then, starts a cycle of action which culminates, we hope, into a better society, a better community.

MS. BESTOR: What kind of directorship do you think something like this should have? Should it be national

directorship, by artist or by-?

MR. GOSS: I don't think by an artist or somebody else, I don't think that's the important criterion, I should think that first of all it will take leadership at the national level. It will take a strong, vigorous personality to give it the strength and the impact, and it would take someone who is recognized as a leader in this area, otherwise he won't get any followers. He's got to be a person who'll be accepted as a leader. But I think the direction of the leadership is important in something like this, and the real impact of any major project depends to a great extent upon the involvement and support that it gets at the local level in the local community. And it should encourage, stimulate local interest and support. It shouldn't be a Federal handout, it shouldn't be a Federal dole, but it should result in federal leadership, and with the load being carried by the people that should and must participate. Without this, why you wouldn't have anything but a Pork Barrel, really.

MS. BESTOR: True, then of course critics were hard on the WPA Art Project, critics who didn't understand it.

MR. GOSS: Those circumstances were quite different from today's time; the economy was in a slump. People were hungry, and as I said - the WPA project had an economic impact on the artist which is very basic, it could not come from any other source. There wasn't the recognition locally, nor would there have been support had there been recognition. Other people were in the same kind of a boat. It was a different problem to be solved then, but there is a parallel in the extent to which Federal leadership could stimulate and make active the dormant interest that I think does exist in many of our smaller communities throughout the country. The largest centers where they have resources, have developed an art environment, an art community that is active, but look at what has happened to our population. It is no longer all living within the larger environments of the city; many have moved outward and are continuing to do so. Here locally, there is evidence of the interest in communities like Edmonds-

MS. BESTOR: Yes, Kirkland, Bellevue-

MR. GOSS: A lot of dormant interest there, and some of it is not so dormant, some people are trying, but underneath all this there is-are some people who have the courage to want to do something in the creative arts, make it available to other people and give them a part of the arts, that are worth receiving and worth participating in. Something was lost when the WPA project stopped.

MS. BESTOR: -Yes, it certainly was.

MR. GOSS: During that period of time in Seattle, there was a potentially richer climate for the creative arts than has existed since. Now I don't know if it was because the participants, the artists were younger and more vigorous and were driving at that time and thinking that perhaps now they have achieved something of a success, the vigor no longer exists-

MS. BESTOR: You don't think the younger ones who are coming up have this vigor?

MR. GOSS: I don't see that in them, I don't see the same rugged independence that I thought I saw then that I can look back and see in some of the others. I don't see any Mark Tobey's in this group, or any Morris Graves in this group. They seem to be stamped out of a mold, and these other were not. Believe me, they were independent, they were willing to devote their lives to things they wanted to in painting. They gave it full time; they made tremendous sacrifices to stay with their art. I don't find the same commitment in so many of the younger people. Maybe I've lost touch with them, maybe I don't know them so well; or maybe they do have to be a little hungry.

MS. BESTOR: That could be, maybe they do. Now of course, places like the Scott Gallery try to encourage individualism; or perhaps you would say they just encouraged eccentricity.

MR. GOSS: Well, I think there always will be that. Whether it's eccentric or whether it's individualistic, I suppose is a matter of degree in judgment, but perhaps I've again lost touch with what has happened in the arts, particularly in painting with which I was most familiar. But I thought I saw in the 30's, the individualism that I think is necessary was in any kind of a creative climate. It requires this, it seems to me, to create a climate for the true creative expression. It existed not just in painting, it existed in the dramatic artist, in a writer, in a sculptor and among the architects, all that were associated with the arts. I think they at that time were willing and able and daring enough to reach out.

MS. BESTOR: What do you think they're reaching out for?

MR. GOSS: For-I think for self-identification, for identification as an artist, for some, well, for self-fulfillment is really what it amounts to. Now it may be that today, the painters and particularly the painters, I don't know if this exists so much among the other artists or not, it may be that something has happened in course of our instruction to stamp these people out of the mold. I get this feeling very strongly about the colleges, and from

some of the art schools. I see in the museums so often what appears to me as painters painting for exhibition. Painting not because they want to paint primarily, but because they to be seen in a museum. Well what is the result? In order to be seen in a museum, they must go where it's crowded, where they compete side by side with their neighbor, they must paint larger, more violently, be more eccentric, and must paint in some fashion that will make them stand apart from the one next to them. This ultimately leads them to a dead end; there is finally no place to go.

MS. BESTOR: Now about your instruction, you were saying possibly the instruction in schools led a bit toward this. Do you think it was because maybe the level of competence is superficially higher? There are more competent young painters of 18, 19, 20 who are well-trained, and maybe they don't have to work so hard to become accepted.

MR. GOSS: I don't know, it seems to me that the arts express in one way or another the discipline of the people, and I think the discipline in many ways, expresses certain kinds of strength that exist in any society. The disciplines can become imposed from the outside so that they become rigid and fixed, or there can be inner disciplines which give a strength; now I think it's that inner discipline that I fear we could lose. And without that I think we will lose everything else that we have. I'm sure this was one of the greatest fears that the military service had, or has. I think sometimes they don't always express it as such, but this is really what they are concerned with, because without that, the inner expression is weak. With a strong inner self-discipline, combined with perception and a physical and mental vigor, I'm sure that we would have the elements of a creative climate. I think this all is bringing me back to the WPA project, because it was not easy for people in those days to stay in the arts. It required some inner discipline. I keep thinking of Morris Graves, who I see as one of the better examples of this. This man made real personal sacrifices to paint. He was dedicated to it. The fact that he became a good painter was inevitable, now it took more than just this self-dedication. It took sensitivity and perception, intelligence, a physical vigor and a drive and a persistence. It took all of these qualities, but without the discipline to stay with it, he couldn't have survived as a painter. He would have been something else. And so I think the environment, the experiences that we have in many ways shape our personalities, our desires-

MS. BESTOR: Indeed they do.

MR. GOSS: - and I suppose this is why I keep looking back-well, the Depression was a horrid experience for many, many people, and there was lots of suffering. But it was, in some respects, a worthwhile experience because it had a lot of educational value for those that went through it. I would not want to have it again, I'd like to avoid it, and I hope we have the good judgment to avoid it, but I felt the head-on way that the Roosevelt administration met that problem was good. And I think it was a real problem, it did exist. The purpose of the WPA art project helped the artist survive; this was the primary motivation for it, it did that and had a lot of fringe benefits which I've tried to mention as we've talked.

MS. BESTOR: Yes, you have, very comprehensively.

MR. GOSS: And if something can be- some kind of leadership can again be provided, I don't think anybody would want it to be the same thing, because the same need does not exist, we have different problems now, but a Federal leadership in the arts at any time, I think is important. Just as it's important to have Federal leadership in the sciences and education, or in any other field of endeavor or interest to society. Why have the arts been so neglected? I suppose it is a reflection on our general community interest. I think this interest is changing and what I was trying to say earlier, I think now we're reaching a point where a strong Federal leadership in this area would be accepted and be given support at the local level.

MS. BESTOR: Very good.

MR. GOSS: One illustration, a few years ago, oh I guess it's been maybe 10 years, the artists in Seattle formed the Allied Arts Council, and this, I might add, was partly the result of some of these earlier experience with the PWAP project, when the artists got together for the first time. You see this had a side effect of bringing the artists together who heretofore were separate and apart. They didn't relate to each other, or understand or perhaps have the interest in what the other was doing. But the Allied Arts Council was a group which formed to represent the artists, all of the artists in all of the area of art. One outcome was the formation of the Seattle City Allied Arts Council. Members were appointed by the mayor. It still exists and is very active. Subsequently, a Washington Allied Artists Council was formed by Governor Rossellini. The extent to which these organizations have been effective in their work is something that it is too early to determine; but probably the fact that they were recognized, the fact that they were organized, indicates that there is a recognition at all levels of government all levels of society of the importance of the arts. And I'm pointing this out to illustrate what I think is one indication of the readiness, at least in this state, for some kind of stronger leadership. Now this could come at the state level too, just as well as the Federal level, but I think the Federal government nowadays is in a much better position to set the expectation level for a nation, because we're no longer isolated as we were. The entire field is unlimited, in terms of opportunities for service in the arts. There is always a grave danger that we as a nation

can lose our ability, our effectiveness in the arts simply by lack of participation.

MS. BESTOR: Yes.

MR. GOSS: - and if we do there will be none of the arts in Broadway, none of the arts in television because the capacity to produce them will be gone. You'll have only a group of lookers, and very few doers.

MS. BESTOR: And pretty soon they'll have nothing to look at.

MR. GOSS: The level of appreciation is much higher among the people who have actually participated in some way, in one or more of the arts. It does not always matter whether it is in music or in some other creative art, but it does make a difference if you learn to paint, it make a difference to you when you visit an art museum, or if you have participated in your high school dramatic programs, it makes a difference when you watch a dramatic show on television or in a movie, and when you hear a symphony then your appreciation is much deeper if you've played a violin in the school orchestra, or in some other way become active in the arts.

MS. BESTOR: Absolutely.

MR. GOSS: Pick up the piece of pottery and recall your high school or college days when you had an opportunity to turn a piece of clay on a wheel, and I think you have a much greater feel for it.

MS. BESTOR: Very true.

MR. GOSS: And there are many, many more people who've had no experience whatsoever in any of the arts.

MS. BESTOR: Do you think there tends to be more or fewer than there used to be?

MR. GOSS: I'm sure that there are many more than there used to be. I think this would be inevitable because I know something about the history and development of art education at both the public school and college level, and there is no doubt that art education has had a tremendous impact, but it's a drop in the bucket compared to the potential, to the thing that you can see and feel in a real creative environment, where I think a lot of the nervous tensions can be creatively redirected through participation in the creative arts.

MS. BESTOR: Yes, it certainly could.

MR. GOSS: And less participation in some of the less productive activities.

MS. BESTOR: Right; you were speaking a few minutes ago about how Seattle may have been slower, or at least the Northwest might have been slower, than some areas in developing this creative climate.

MR. GOSS: No, I didn't mean it to be accepted that way. As a matter of fact I think that the Pacific Northwest has been a leader in the arts.

MS. BESTOR: Yes, that's what I felt was true.

MR. GOSS: And in many respects I think this has been true, I think you can point to the outstanding sculptors and painters and actors and writers and architects and so on that have come from this area. What I meant to say is that whenever a Federal project is undertaken, the impact is in direct proportion to the readiness to receive it simply because of a communication problem, and also because of the readiness of people to accept it. We here get the impact of things that happen in other parts of the country sometimes long after the first impulse. It's a little bit like an earthquake. The center of impact is in Washington D.C. and then it spirals outward and finally reaches out to the lands end, and we get the impact. I think so far as our readiness to receive some of these things is concerned, we probably are as ready as any place, but the communication, with Washington, is less direct. We are more isolated in many respects. Less, though, than it used to be.

MS. BESTOR: Yes, a lot less.

MR. GOSS: But we're still at the end of the line. If you don't think that's true, try to take a railroad train from New York City to the state of Washington.

MS. BESTOR: Yes, that is absurd, really.

MR. GOSS: Or take a look at our newspapers and see how in some ways they express the isolation and show how far away they are from the center of so many of the things that happen.

MS. BESTOR: Yes, our papers do seem to lack perspective sometimes.

MR. GOSS: When you are in or around the Washington D.C. area, somehow you get a sense of things happening, it's sort of like instant news, you feel the impact immediately because it's happening right before you, right in front of your eyes, whereas here we are remote, and you don't accept news with quite the same impact.

MS. BESTOR: Well, thank you very much.

MR. GOSS: I've probably said more than I should have. I couldn't tell you as much as I'd like to tell you-

MS. BESTOR: Well, it's awfully interesting, you've had a more comprehensive point of view.

MR. GOSS: Oh, I've thought about it very much, and I had in my own way, tried to evaluate the project, and I think I evaluated it in terms of the people that I knew, and what it did for them, and I did know most of the artists who were active then, and many of whom are still active, and I appreciated the fact that these people were kept active in the arts, they were encouraged, and I also appreciated the fact that the community was encouraged to accept art as a way of life for a lot of people and to accept the arts as a normal expression of our total environment, associated with architecture and construction and so on. I would like to see something done that is as vigorous as that.

MS. BESTOR: Well, I certainly hope it will be. Now, one last thing, in your present position as Director of Planning and Research for the Seattle Public Schools, does art come indirectly under your aegis or not?

MR. GOSS: No, I've not been active in art education since 1956 or 7, and probably will not again get back into that field. But we do have an active art program.

MS. BESTOR: Yes, very.

MR. GOSS: And my own view is that it is running better than ever, and it has good leadership, and I think the youngsters nowadays are much more fortunate than the ones in prior generations, especially those who need the same kind of encouragement that the Federal government was giving the local artist. Our schools in their own way here are doing the same thing. They are encouraging those who have the ability, the talent, the interest to continue with it, they are giving art a status and respect, and this in a sense is what I think, the Federal government is doing.

MS. BESTOR: Yes, it is.

MR. GOSS: And the school district supports it financially, modestly, but nevertheless there is a financial outlay for art education, for music education, I think the Federal government could well justify similar expenditures.

MS. BESTOR: Well, that's a very interesting point. Thank you very much, Mr. Goss.

[END OF TAPE]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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