



Patronizing the Arts

Marjorie Garber

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What is the role of the arts in American culture? Is art an essential element? If so, how should we support it? Today, as in the past, artists need the funding, approval, and friendship of patrons whether they are individuals, corporations, governments, or nonprofit foundations. But as *Patronizing the Arts* shows, these relationships can be problematic, leaving artists "patronized"--both supported with funds and personal interest, while being condescended to for vocations misperceived as play rather than serious work. In this provocative book, Marjorie Garber looks at the history of patronage, explains how patronage has elevated and damaged the arts in modern culture, and argues for the university as a serious patron of the arts.

With clarity and wit, Garber supports rethinking prejudices that oppose art's role in higher education, rejects assumptions of inequality between the sciences and humanities, and points to similarities between the making of fine art and the making of good science. She examines issues of artistic and monetary value, and transactions between high and popular culture. She even asks how college sports could provide a new way of thinking about arts funding. Using vivid anecdotes and telling details, Garber calls passionately for an increased attention to the arts, not just through government and private support, but as a core aspect of higher education.

Compulsively readable, *Patronizing the Arts* challenges all who value the survival of artistic creation both in the present and future.

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