

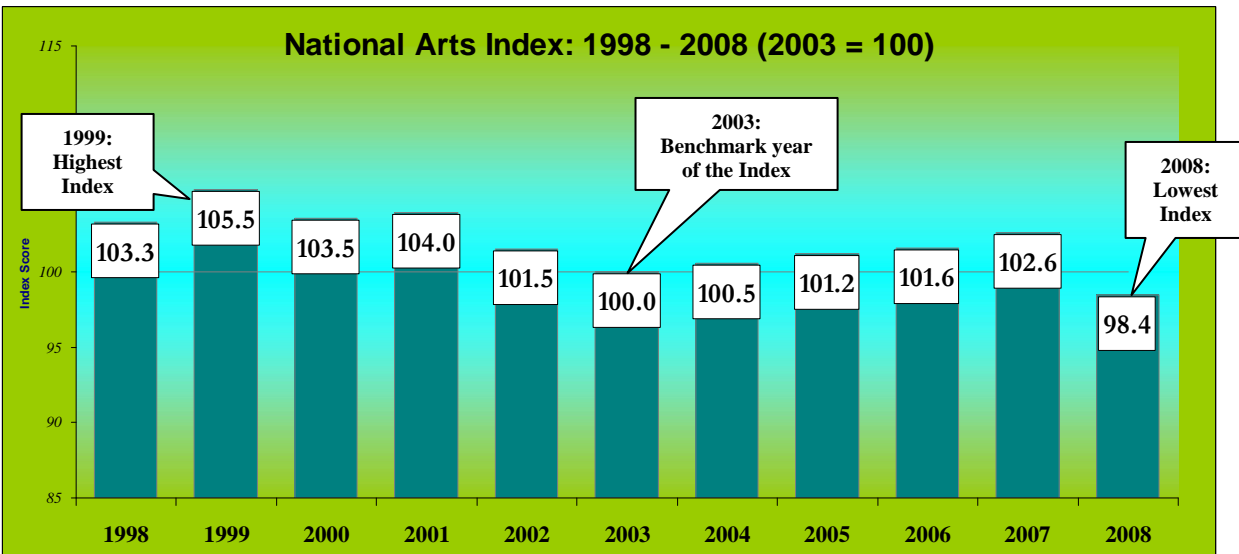


# National Arts Index

A Project of **Americans for the Arts**

## Arts Facts . . . National Arts Index

The Index score for 2008 is 98.4, down 4.2 percentage points from 102.6 in 2007. A score of 105.5 would bring the Index back to its highest point, measured in 1999.



The National Arts Index is a highly-distilled annual measure of the health and vitality of arts in the U.S. using 76 equal-weighted, national-level indicators of arts activity. This report covers an 11-year period, from 1998 to 2008. Similar to reports such as The Conference Board's tracking of consumer confidence, the National Arts Index views the arts as a dynamic system and provides reliable longitudinal information. It is unique when compared to other arts data systems in its scope, amount of data it presents, and annual publication. The Index is set to a base score of 100 in 2003. Every point difference represents one percent change.

- The National Arts Index fell 4.2 percentage points in 2008, reflecting losses in charitable giving and declining attendance at larger cultural institutions—even as the number of arts organizations grew.
- The arts follow the nation's business cycle—not surprising as the arts are composed of 100,000 nonprofit arts organizations, 600,000 arts businesses, and 2.24 million artists in the workforce that depend on billions of dollars in consumer spending. Based on past patterns, we estimate the arts will begin to rebound in 2011.
- Demand for the arts lags capacity. From 1998 to 2008, there was annual growth in capacity of the arts industries—a steady increase in the number of artists, arts businesses and nonprofit arts organizations, and arts-related employment. Nonprofit arts organizations alone grew in number from 73,000 to 104,000 during this span of time. That one out of three failed to achieve a balanced budget even during the strongest economic years of this decade suggests that sustaining this capacity is a growing challenge.
- How the public participates in and consumes the arts is changing. Arts participation is on the increase. Personal arts creation by the public is growing steadily (making art, playing music). Attendance at mainstream nonprofit arts organizations within many sectors, however, is in decline. Technology has also had an impact: 50 percent of CD music stores have disappeared in the past 5 years, while the number of online downloads has grown four-fold in just the past three years.
- Charitable contributions are declining: Arts and culture continue to lose their market share of philanthropy to other charitable areas—a decline that began well before the current economic downturn.
- Demand for arts in education is up, but also reveals a disparity. While there is a growing percentage of “college-bound” high school seniors getting four years of arts and music education, national studies point to an overall decline in arts education for general public school students. Additionally, college arts degrees conferred annually have increased from 75,000 to 120,000 in the past decade.

There is no uppermost Index score, though higher is better. A score of 125 would convey that arts are more highly valued as a fundamental component of society than during the past decade—characterized by strong financial health, ample capacity, innovation, vigorous participation, and a vital competitive position in American society.

Source: National Arts Index 2009, *Americans for the Arts*, 2010.