

Demise of the Federal Arts Project

The Renaissance lasted three centuries, the Age of Pericles and the Augustan Age each a half century; for the "cultural birth of a nation" our government allows less than two years. With drastic cuts in the Federal Arts Projects effective July 15, the arts in America are on their way back where they came from, to the status which made necessary the WPA and white-collar projects.

Yet already the Four Arts Projects have been justified. Since its first performance, February 1, 1936, the Federal Theater has played to more than 25,000,000, 87 per cent free and 13 per cent paid admissions. From October, 1935, to May 1, 1937, almost 60,000,000 persons have listened to 81,000 performances of WPA music units, many of them in orphanages, hospitals, community centers, parks, playgrounds, and churches. Besides murals, easel paintings, sculptures, and prints allocated to public buildings, the Federal Art Project has reached the public through its art teaching and through thirty federal art galleries and art centers established in Tennessee, Alabama, the Carolinas, Oklahoma, Florida, Utah, Wyoming, and New Mexico, all in communities where there were none before. More than a million people visited these centers and galleries in one year. The Federal Writers Project, handicapped by lack of publishing outlets, has not yet contacted its widest audience. It is expected, however, that the state guides will have at least 2,000,000 circulation.

Elizabeth McCausland, *The Nation*, July 17, 1937. Vol. 145, No. 3, P. 67-69