

**Paper Abstract Proposal for Fourth North American Workshop on
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“A Theory of Art with Instrumental Value to the State, and Applied Case-Studies
from the New Deal Art Production in the USA (1933-1941)”

Abstract

This research starts with the assumption that the cultural economics research program has not adequately addressed a self-interested state using art production to grow the state's discretionary power (e.g., see Weber 2017 forthcoming, *Research in the History of Economic Thought and Methodology*). Although cultural economists have focused on art as a public good deserving state-funding and other values beyond exchange in the research program, instrumental value in use by the state can be better articulated in the literature. This paper contributes towards this research by modeling how a self-interested state might behave (e.g., Wagner 2009, *Fiscal Sociology and the Theory of Public Finance*), and then how the state might use art towards creating preferences for a larger role for the state in society. After presenting this model of “art-statism” we give several examples from the archives illustrating how the Public Art Project under the New Deal in the United States uses art instrumentally. It is hoped that this research might motivate other cultural economists to explore the nexus between the state and art's instrumental value in socially-formed preference creation.