

Chapter 31

Bridges, Translations and Change:

The Arts as Infrastructure in a Changing World

William Cleveland

At the time I wrote the first version of this essay for the Winter 1992 issue of *High Performance Magazine* we were in the midst of what I described as a world “in flux and out of balance.” In short order, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Persian Gulf War had established the U.S. as the “world’s lone superpower.” In the summer of that year, an urban uprising in California had resulted in 51 deaths and left the community of Watts a charred ruin. A few months later, a young, relatively obscure, southern governor named Bill Clinton thwarted George Herbert Walker Bush’s quest for his second term. It was a time of grave concern and uncertainty, but also, cautious optimism.

The essay was presented as a plea to America’s cultural community to get off the sidelines and join the fray. At that time, I (along with many others) asserted that what some were calling a “new world order” was in fact a new world condition— that the recent spate of tumultuous events was not an unusual spike on the Richter scale of human affairs, but rather, a natural symptom of a globe that was in a perpetual state of accelerating change. This call to action was an attempt to provoke a debate about the assumptions and expectations that had been shaping the contours and trajectory of America’s cultural sector in light of that fact. Many others, more eloquent than I, argued that the time had come to dispel the notion that creativity

was an exotic byproduct of the human condition—that, in truth, challenging that notion had far more to do with the survival of the species than it did the future viability of the symphony orchestra.

Looking back, I would say this was an important period in U.S. community cultural development. The country was entering a sustained period when the vital connection between the arts, community development, and social change would be seriously supported beyond the spasmodic vagaries of the public sphere. During this time, large national funders and thousands local supporters in the public and private sectors made significant investments in both community arts programming and infrastructure development. As a result, the field grew appreciably, the Community Arts Network was born and numerous academic programs devoted to community cultural development were launched.

This was also a time when more and more American artists and arts organizations began to realize that their marginal status had as much to do with their own assumptions and behaviors as it did with an unsupportive or indifferent public. For those most invested in working with communities, moving out of the margins meant that their network of partners broadened to include colleagues from other sectors. These collaborations greatly expanded the diversity and complexity of the work and dramatically re-shaped definitions of success or failure. For some, this growth in perspective and partnerships was also accompanied by an increasing awareness that they were a small part of a much broader current of global cultural transformation—a powerful movement of creative community builders and healers with whom they not only held much in common and from whom they also had a lot to learn.

Today, as they say, is a very different time, particularly with regard to America's position at the head of the class and long held assumptions about the global economy. But the themes unfolding on the world stage are also strikingly similar. The threshold issues touched on in the conversations shared in this book closely parallel those that preoccupied us at the close of the last century. Climate change, the gap between rich and poor, the promise and challenge of technology, the clash of tradition and modernity all dominate the daily headlines. If there is a difference, it appears to be in the increasingly obvious intensity and interconnectedness of the issues. Turmoil and transformation is the order of the day. Everything is moving at the same time. Everything is speeding up. Change is constant.

In 1992, I said that the changing world would need more than a strong will and a strong arm to come to terms with its problems. Now, as the challenges have become even more sharply defined, our successful navigation of the 21st century will demand the power of the imagination and regeneration. This, of course, is a time of great opportunity for world's artists and cultural institutions. They can bring proven capacities as bridge builders, translators and problem solvers to the daunting task at hand. In the process, they can help to illuminate and expand the language and practice of transformation. To rise to this challenge, though, the world's creative community will need to revitalize and reframe that transformative power and the moral integ-

riety of its work. This was the central point my earlier essay, and I strongly believe that this is still the case. I would also assert that the wide-ranging voices represented in this book are of like mind. My earlier version was directed principally at an American audience. While some of these specifically American references remain, it is hoped that what follows will resonate far beyond our shores.

A WORLD ORDER IN TRANSITION

At the cutting edge of the sciences, a new concept of the world is emerging. In this concept all things in the world are recorded and all things inform one another. This gives us the most encompassing vision we have ever had of nature, life, and consciousness. If (this) information and memory-filled universe is the best insight we have ever had into the nature of reality, we should know it not only with our rational faculties: we should apprehend it also with our creative imagination.

Ervin Laszlo, from "Science and the Akashic Field", 2004

Art can be a shaking, but a very constructive, inspirational experience about many things: the river or the stars or the cosmos or our fellow human beings and community.

Wilson Yates, President Emeritus of United Theological Seminary,
Minnesota,

With each passing month, the chaotic dance of world events seems to be intensifying, building momentum. The globe is shifting beneath our feet in ways that would have seemed inconceivable three decades ago. Each morning's headlines leave us shaking our heads. "What's next?" we ask. "World order! What order?"

Early explorers imagined America as an island, a geographic impediment on the way to the Orient. Although they were mistaken in a literal sense, throughout its history the U.S. has maintained an "island-like" attitude about its place in the world. America's evolving power and geography have allowed it the luxury of choosing its connections.

This island status belonged to a world order that no longer exists. Over the course of the past three decades the planet has witnessed change on an unprecedented scale. The collapse of communism, the globalised economy, China's rise, the technology revolution, and the emergence of Moslem fundamentalism have overturned the old global chessboard. In its place is a new world game, or games, that are being designed and played simultaneously in Shanghai, Tokyo, Mexico City, Washington D. C., Moscow, Teheran, Tora Bora, Lagos, and cyberspace.

As its role as "the lone superpower" enters its final season, America must learn to operate in an environment of shifting, toppling, and even flattening hierarchies—a world where information technology, multinational finance, world famine, ethnic conflict and ozone depletion are but a few of the inter-connecting threads in the emerging global fabric. In 1776, America declared its independence from the old world. For the second American Revolution

to succeed, it must re-imagine itself not as a separate island, but as one of many components in a complex and fragile ecosystem.

A PERPETUAL REVOLUTION

“Change will happen, whether we want it or not. The choice is between being a constructive and willing participant in the change process or being a victim. Can we adjust, learning and adapting with grace, or do we wait until 2 x 4s start falling on our heads, allowing fear to spur us into action. Fear is like a black hole sucking energy, reducing the large field of possibilities to a singular point of view. Human beings have the capacity to be very creative and imaginative under the right conditions

Milenko Matanovic, Artist, Founder Pomegranate Center

While we were watching the transformation of the world on CNN, the U.S. has undergone a metamorphosis as well. The dramatic migration of population from the north and east to the south and west, the move from an industrial to a service- and information-based economy, the ongoing deterioration of human services, education and public works infrastructures, the country's deep political polarization, its emergence as a truly multicultural society, are but a few indications of the monumental changes taking place. The real revolution in America, though, is rooted in our struggle over changing values. Very little of what was considered the cultural norm during the first half of the 20th Century remains the same. As the U.S. steps gingerly across the border of the new millennium, the debate intensifies over such core issues as: the loss of the nuclear family, the changing roles of men and women, the definition of right and wrong, our relationship to the earth, the distribution of wealth, freedom of expression, the importance of cultural identity, the necessity of war and peace, and much more.

Some see the changes taking place as a disintegration of the basic tenets of the American cultural fabric. Others contend that the U.S. is finally grappling with the gap between our stated ideals and the entrenched self-interest of the established power structure. In some quarters, this questioning of values has precipitated a rekindling of the American spirit of creativity and innovation. In others, the response has been defensive and reactionary.

Regardless of point of view, the movement, the change, the transformation, is inexorable. At home and on the world stage, America is ending its adolescence. As the grip of hierarchy, patrimony, and monoculture slowly fades, there is both jubilation and fear. Conflict is inevitable. But, amidst the chaos of transformation, great opportunity awaits for those who wield the power of the creative process.

A NEW COMMUNITY AESTHETIC

"In our modern world the artist is tempted simply to do stunts in order to attract attention. But the true task of the artist is to discover her or his relationship to a community, a community often in desperate need of the artist's power to see the world anew."

Historian Page Smith, from the forward to *Art in Other Places: Artists at Work in America's Community and Social Institutions*

As we seek to reestablish the vitality of our communities, we must turn our attention to more than bricks and mortar and job programs. We must acknowledge that there is more to a community than geography. Each community has a character, a spirit that rises from its citizens and determines the quality of its life. This essential element does not emerge from the structure of laws or codes or buildings. It comes from humankind's most powerful capacity—the ability to synthesize and innovate and make new—the power of creation. Our creativity mediates the tension between the need both to assert our uniqueness and to link to others. Its power allows each of us to make our own one-of-a-kind mark in the sand, using aspects of past marks, adding new elements, linking ourselves to those who have come before and those who will follow. It is a simple thing, easily called up in the right conditions, easily stifled.

During his presidential campaign Barak Obama put it this way. The “arts teach people to see through each other’s eyes, to respect and understand people who are not like us. That makes us better citizens, and makes our democracy work better... imaginations sparked by the arts are more engaged.”

Meeting the challenges of this century will require a citizenry with enormous energy and a well-developed capacity for imaginative discipline. Each community will need creative pioneers, adept at risk taking, who will challenge assumptions and question conventional wisdom. This is the domain of the citizen artist — listening, translating, borrowing and synthesizing; taking the old and new and linking them; celebrating the common threads and the dissonance; reflecting our triumphs, our pain, our folly; creating fresh images and giving new vision.

In the first interview in this book, David Korten makes an impassioned plea for a new set of stories to counter the crises of ecological devastation, unsustainable materialism, growing inequity, and the corruption of democratic institutions. He calls on people to work together to create a new social structure based on cooperative, bottom up, cultural, economic, and political ideals. He also asserts that the only path to this kind of a shift in worldview is to insinuate these new stories into community consciousness.

The point made in many of the interviews that follow is that neither Korten’s or Obama’s visions can be fulfilled without the active participation of the world’s cultural community. This notion is something that numerous communities have already (or have always) embraced. Over the past few dec-

ades, artists, arts organizations, governments and funders around the globe have come to see the fundamental necessity of re-integrating of the arts into all aspects of community life. Along the way, many artists and arts organizations have acquired new skills, learned new languages and established creative partnerships in town squares, factories, prisons, shopping centers, in hospitals, on the internet, at universities, in war zones—you get the picture.

The need for this is palpable. Every day, in communities across the world, we hear from people in search of a new kind of story—a story that navigates the narrow path between the safe and the challenging, opportunity and responsibility. Most of these people also understand that the essential difference between an authentic story and a false narrative is in the making. Another way of saying this is that authentic stories are hand built, by and for the communities that will bear the consequences of their materialization. This, of course, is the cornerstone of effective community building. The inherent and embedded creative wisdom that it represents could also be characterized as “slow culture.”

There are many in the global arts community who know and respect the slowness necessary for sustainable community cultural development. They have been working to build caring and capable communities for multiple decades. Now, more than ever, they are ready to gather again with their fellow citizens in the town commons to help weave the fabric of stories that we will need to honor our histories, share our hopes, and manifest our dreams.

THREE ASSERTIONS AND SIX ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE ARTS AS INFRASTRUCTURE IN A CHANGING WORLD

Bringing human creativity and the arts back to the community commons will require a dramatic shift in the prevailing view of how the world works. It will require a new paradigm that views the arts and human creativity as central the development of a healthy world in all aspects. I would offer the following three assertions as a foundation for this audacious task.

- Arts-centered learning is necessary for the healthy development and growth of every child.
- Robust and pervasive cultural development is necessary for the creation of healthy, productive and sustainable communities.
- The development of a worldview that supports a sustainable future is not possible without the active participation of society’s creators and story makers.

Simple and straightforward as they are, transforming these assertions into widely held assumptions and an unquestioned support for our creative capacities and resources will continue to be a challenge. Many otherwise sensitive and clear thinking people maintain that creativity is a rare and mysterious gift, and that its beneficiary’s are exotic and unpredictable outliers. I think it would be safe to say that the thoughtful and committed leadership represented in this book hold a very different view. They see our cultural

development and the attainment of a healthy, just, and sustainable future as intrinsically linked.

There are many, including myself, who believe that knowledge must be annealed by experience to become accepted, embedded wisdom. Nonetheless, making change inevitably involves making a coherent case. To that end, the following are very brief summaries of six arguments and associated strategies in support of the reintroduction of the arts into community infrastructures. For the most part, they are neither new nor groundbreaking. Their newness has more to do with their perspective than with actual content. Rather than advocating from a position of self-interest, this approach speaks to the perspective of community members as they inevitably ask the question: "How will the arts contribute to our meeting the social, political and economic challenges facing our community: How can the arts contribute to the development of a caring, capable and sustainable community?"

1. The Arts Are an Essential Resource for Community Development

"Without creative personalities able to think and judge independently, the upward development of society is unthinkable..."

Albert Einstein

Art is fundamental to our common search for meaning. Art is an artifact of that search ...that cuts across all... tribal lines.

Erik Takeshita, community leader, change agent

ECONOMIC IMPACT: Arts-powered economies are slow and green and resilient. They are driven by sole proprietors (artists) and locally engaged small businesses (arts organizations) with small ecological footprints and deep community connections. The many economic impact studies conducted over the past two decades confirm the vital economic spark provided by the cultural sector.¹ More recent research shows a direct connection between cultural engagement, social diversity and community capacity building. In short, arts-rich communities are healthier and more resilient. Most importantly, the data indicates a robust correlation in low-income communities between cultural abundance, population growth and poverty decline.² Other studies demonstrate that the arts can be a magnet for both urban and suburban reinvestment and economic regeneration. Rural arts providers, as well, make the case for the arts as a useful stimulus for both economic and social development, particularly in depressed areas.

1. *The Arts and Economic Prosperity, The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organizations and Their Audiences*, Americans for the Arts, 2009, http://www.americansforthearts.org/information_services/research/services/economic_impact/default.asp

2. Mark J. Stern, Susan C. Seifert From *Creative Economy to Society*, Social Impact of the Arts Project, University of Pennsylvania, 2007

Cultural tourism, urban and rural, has become a core marketing strategy in the travel industry. Beyond tourism and community renewal, the arts are big business. In the U.S., the nonprofit cultural sector alone generates \$166 billion in economic activity, produces over \$30 billion in tax revenues and creates 5.7 million jobs.³

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP: In recent years, public and private leaders have expressed concern about the lack of creativity and problem-solving capacity exhibited by entry-level workers, managers, engineers, and scientists. In response, government and business sectors alike have invested millions of dollars in training programs designed to increase the creativity and teamwork of their work forces.

Given this, it seems ironic that the perpetually poverty stricken community cultural sector has quietly become a hothouse for the development of effective community leadership. For artists and arts organizations, survival in a commodified culture has always meant simultaneously marshaling resources, advocating effectively and producing results. This has produced leadership that is resilient, adaptive and improvisational and that understands that change is a natural feature of the community landscape. It has also created dynamic organizational cultures that recognize that both form and freedom are necessary for integrating creative inquiry and community development.

To be effective, new leaders will need to know how to improvise on a theme while keeping a beat. Lifelong learning, in and through the arts, offers access to the kinds of skills our next generation of workers and leaders will need. These skills include: harnessing and synthesizing the qualities of logic, organization, flexibility and insight; creative teamwork; learning that problems are opportunities not obstacles; learning to discipline the imagination to solve difficult problems; and learning that “failure” is a functional aspect of discovery.

2. The Arts Are a Basic Educational Reform

Of course, the arts are very revolutionary... because the arts expand awareness... (They) give you what you really need to know without clouding over the issues that need to be addressed.

R. Carlos Nakai, musician, composer

The arts have always had systems thinkers, because the artists are always thinking about the whole, the big picture. The whole point of the arts is to give you a context, to understand the significance of something.

Dorothy Lagerroos, writer, musician, activist and teacher

Since the 1983 publication of *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform*, educators, parents, and civic leaders have sought reforms in

3.Americans for the Arts, op. cit.

education. In response, school systems nationwide have placed a greater emphasis on the generally accepted “building blocks” of basic education: reading, writing and math, and instituted a multitude of tests to hold schools and teachers “accountable.” Despite efforts to stem the tide, this has resulted in a dramatic reduction in learning opportunities in the arts for students.

The landmark 2001 report from the Arts Education Partnership called *Champions of Change* offers a very different view of the relationship between the arts and learning. The study’s researchers found that “learners can attain higher levels of achievement through their engagement with the arts.” Moreover, it concludes “learning in and through the arts can help level the playing field for youngsters from disadvantaged circumstances.”

The report, which is actually a compendium of five separate studies goes on to conclude that the arts offer a powerful cost-effective alternative for educational success for students who struggle academically. Indications are that the discipline and self-esteem that these students acquire often carries over to their study of academic subjects and provides motivation to stay in school.

The fact of the matter is that education in the arts is a curricular necessity. The creative process is the means we employ to put our basic skills to use. The problem solvers of the future—the explorers, scientists, or engineers who will confront tomorrow’s challenges—require more than the basics of math, science and language. They need hands-on experience, manipulating the tools of change-taking chances, challenging convention, taking on the impossible.

Educators are only just beginning to acknowledge the complex mix of human intelligences and learning styles. In this context, arts education is educational reform. The pedagogy of the future should not be just arts inclusive, it should be arts-based. Teachers should know and employ the creative process in everything they do. Arts-based education is the laboratory for harnessing the power of the intellect through the discipline and vision of the creative process. Arts-based education will support the growth of the imagination and creativity as tools students must employ to succeed in a complex society.

3. The Arts Provide a Common Language in a Complex Global Culture

When people make beauty and move to creative action, other things come to life. It's like striking the pilot light. I feel that's what it is to believe in democracy--- the equality of all of us--- we all have that light within us.

Lily Yeh, artist, community organizer

...the iconography of the Great Goddess arose in reflection and veneration of the laws of nature.... The message here is of an age of harmony and peace in accord with the creative energies of nature which, for four thousand prehistoric years, anteceded the (next) five thousand-a period James Joyce has termed the “nightmare” (of con-

tending tribal and national interests) from which it is now certainly time for this planet to wake.

Joseph Campbell, from the Forward to *The Language of the Goddess* by Marija Gimbutas

The iconography to which Joseph Campbell refers is the symbolic vocabulary embodied in European and African Neolithic art. Although the written language we use daily evolved from these symbols, we no longer recognize these shared roots. The marginalization of the arts in this country has separated the American “tribes” from a powerful common language. As change gives rise to protective and reactive responses, we must rediscover the power of the arts to translate cultural difference as a common bond. We must also acknowledge and learn from those artists now working as agents of community change and as builders of bridges.

As these bridges are built, we should focus on the strength inherent in our growing diversity. In her book, *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America*, writer/critic Lucy Lippard describes the changed face of America as an “ajjaco”—the flavorful mix of a Latin American soup in which the ingredients retain their own forms and flavors. She describes this new model as “fresher and healthier; the colors varied; the taste often unfamiliar” that “calls for an undetermined simmering period of social acclimation.”

Many artists are beginning to manifest this new global community aesthetic. Their work is the product of a media age, in which, for the first time, cultural interaction, influence and change have not been tied to human-kind’s ability to move physically from place to place. These artistic dialogues and collaborations are models for the new ways we will have to interact as global citizens.

4. The Arts Help Us Make Sense and Meaning in a Technological Age

Culture ...is at the heart of the information society. Why? --- Because it creates meaning. ... The key is that it does it in such a way that I when create something that is meaningful---it is for me and for somebody else. This is a very, very basic requirement for living in the information society.”

Bert Mulder, Associate Professor, Information, Technology and Society, The Hague University, Former Chief Technology Consultant to the Dutch Parliament

We have the means to gather and manage and act on information in ways we never had before. Artists are poised to become significant actors in these kinds of situations. If we can join with activists in critical ways, it’s going to be powerful.

Judy Baca, artist, educator, activist

During the last decade, the arts have been dramatically transformed through the introduction of new technologies. In areas such as film, video, music, design and holography, new technologies adapted by artists for their art have produced innovative applications and opened new markets.

As inventors, art makers are a breed apart. They are unencumbered by the practical constraints experienced by their more product-minded counterparts. Hardware and software in the artist's hands can be merely a technical means to an aesthetic goal. The commercial feasibility of a given solution is often not relevant. But, as has been the case with the artistic exploration of special effects technology and computer graphics, new and unexpected applications emerge. In some ways, the interface of the arts and technology has created an unintended research and development arm for commercial high tech concerns.

The roles of the artist and the technological innovator are often interchangeable. In his book *The Paradox of the Silicon Savior*, Grant Venerable points out "that the very best engineers and technical designers are, nearly without exception, practicing musicians."

We live in a world that will be increasingly influenced, even dominated by modern technology. As with most paradigm shifting innovations this has had its downsides. Social alienation, the loss of community cohesion, the dumbing-down of language, even the epidemic of obesity have been identified as negative effects of the digital revolution. Some warn that the real long-term threat posed by the growth of our technological capacity is having too much of it. Bert Mulder, the Dutch technology futurist thinks the exponential growth and availability of data is one of the great challenges of the century. He also sees artists as uniquely suited to help us deal with this challenge. Mulder feels that the discernment, reflection, synthesizing that are inherent to the creative process will be essential tools for making sense and meaning in the change constant, information saturated environment we are becoming.

5. The Arts are a Proven Strategy for Healing, Prevention and Empowerment

There is a larger music that we have no control over. As humans, we only get snatches of music from this more cosmic level. So, music is beyond us. But it has the power to change us. You can go through all history; music and the other arts have always been there, transforming.

Steve Heitzeg, composer

I was out on the Tonle Sap with a guide one day... and he recounted this harrowing story of watching the Khmer Rouge kill his father... He turned to me after the story and he said, "Do you know anything about the Cambodian dance?" I said, "Are you an artist?" He said, "No, no but everybody in Cambodia loves the arts. The dance is what tells us our myths, our stories of creation, our Gods. They keep us going; that is why we can go on, because of the dance. The dance is the spirit of Cambodia."

Lynn Szwaja, Philanthropist

Art making-the study and practice of the creative process-is inherently empowering. Each day the artist engages the muse, he/she does battle with

the new and unexplored. All artists, student or master, young, old or infirm—are creative pioneers and adventurers. The challenge is to work honestly, with self-discipline, owning the success or failure of one's endeavors.

During the last quarter of the twentieth century, a time when traditional arts education was beginning its decline, many professional artists began to look to society's neglected corners for a new constituency. The results of their work with youth at risk, people with physical and mental disabilities, prisoners, patients, seniors and others have shown that the arts make a significant positive impact in the lives of these largely forgotten citizens. The establishment of comprehensive arts programming in prisons, hospitals, mental health institutions and in numerous youth development programs is testimony to the effectiveness of these efforts.

The variety of problems being addressed by the increasing numbers of artists engaged in this work, has valuable implications for educators, social service providers, and community leaders. Artists working and succeeding in these "other places" have generated a new technology for problem solving, communicating, building self-esteem and much more. A significant body of research in the field shows the practice of the arts is, in itself, a healing, transformational, therapeutic activity that, in some cases, may be more effective than traditional approaches. Documentation further shows the arts to be an effective and cost-beneficial resource for reducing violence, recidivism, and psychopathology.

6. The Arts Help Us Communicate about Transcendent Values and Issues

"The artist as shaman becomes a conductor of forces that go far beyond those of his own person, and is able to bring art back in touch with its sacred sources; (The shaman) develops not only new forms of art, but new forms of living."

Suzi Gablick, *Has Modernism Failed?*

"If something's being born, then, I think artists have a midwife role... We know how to sit with people in a circle and get their stories... This thing that all these other fields are looking for----we know how to do it."

Arlene Goldbard, Writer and cultural theorist

Today, although the artists have been cast out from the center of community life, there are many who continue to sustain a vital link to the transcendent—to provide the imaginative sustenance and vision for the quest for truth and meaning, beyond the material. The artist, says psychologist James Hillman, "bears sensate witness to what is fundamentally beyond human comprehension."

The trivialization of the arts in contemporary society has produced many negatives. But none has been so damaging as the undermining of this connection between man and the artistic illumination he needs to explore the transcendent. Losing it, Hillman continues, "diminishes our ability to love the world." Our alienation from and abuse of what artist Isamu Noguchi

called “our temple,” the earth, is but one symptom of this condition. The artist at work in these realms mediates the moral, the rational and the spiritual; the artist sensitizes us to the presence of social and material toxicity.

There is no doubt that a new artistic process has started asserting itself in response to what many feel is a spiritual vacuum. Critic Suzi Gablick sees great hope in the work of artists such as Anselm Kiefer and Joseph Beuys, who have “placed primary value on (the artist’s) function as a bridge builder between the material and the spiritual worlds. Beuys and Kiefer are part of the long but largely ignored history of “artist shamans” working in a time that has been dominated by science and material progress.

As we tire of our fascination with material flash and velocity, the need intensifies for the aesthetic bridge to what Alexis de Tocqueville termed “the mystical forces that govern ordinary events.” A connection, he declared, which is “functionally necessary to society.” In the Greek cosmology the gods could not appear in the material world without the presence of Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, love, and fertility. She made manifest the divine mind. In the 21st Century, that presence will be needed as never before, as we continue to lift the veil on the mystery of creation and struggle to stop ourselves from destroying our temple.

STRATEGIES: BRIDGES. TRANSLATIONS AND CHANGE

The following is by no means a definitive list. These strategies are offered rather as a stimulus to further brainstorming, debate and, hopefully, action.

Bridges

1. **EXPAND THE ROLE PLAYED BY CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN OUR COMMUNITIES.** Begin exploring new working relationships with the non-arts service providers in the community. Help funders leverage their investment in the community by enlisting their support for partnerships between the arts and other community sectors. Make the case for the arts as both an essential human resource and a critical human need.

2. **LEARN FROM THE INNOVATORS IN OTHER FIELDS.** Look beyond the non-profit world for new and efficient models for managing, marketing, communicating, and networking. Pay particular attention to innovative strategies used by entrepreneurs, new media networks and small businesses that have grown despite the recession.

3. **FIND THOSE IN OUR COMMUNITIES OUTSIDE OF THE ARTS WORLD WITH WHOM WE HAVE NATURAL AFFINITIES.** The arts community should be exploring our common ground with those working in support of ethical business, sustainable community development, environmental justice, and freedom of expression.

4. **EXPAND THE CONCEPT OF THE “ARTIST IN RESIDENCE” BEYOND SCHOOLS, AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS.** Establish true residencies as long-term laboratories for exploring new ways for artists to

interact with their communities and institutions. Recognize that artists are both art makers *and* creative problem solvers. Consider new venues such as factories, condominiums, unemployment offices, neighborhoods, individual homes, cyberspace and the halls of government. Document and publish the results.

5. CONFOUND THE “SPECIAL INTEREST” STEREOTYPE of the arts by building organizing and advocacy alliances across community sectors. Explore the creation of mutually beneficial working relationships with like-minded activists at the local and state level. Join with respected community leaders in other sectors as campaign co-designers. Adopt strategies used by other highly successful political movements to advocate for the arts.

6. IDENTIFY THOSE NATIONAL ISSUES that have a direct bearing on the immediate and long-term health of the field. Join with those who are advocating positions that have an impact on the cultural sector. Take on issues with significant impact on artists and arts organizations. These include: health security, civil rights, immigration rights, education reform, AIDS prevention and many others.

7. CREATE FORUMS FOR DISCOURSE, learning, and problem solving between and among artists and scientists, engineers, politicians, economists, philosophers, etc. Support interdisciplinary collaboration among practitioners working across sectors to advance creative inquiry, expand vision and renew knowledge.

Translations

1. REWRITE THE “DICTIONARIES OF CULTURE.” Examine and question the vocabulary and prevailing standards used to represent art and culture. Consider how language reflects and supports the marginal status of artists and the notion of creativity. Use language that reflects the dynamic and interconnected nature of our communities and the world. Recognize that the ongoing process of defining culture is taking place in community conversations that are taking place outside institutionally delimited silos.

2. CONDUCT RESEARCH ABOUT THE STATE OF THE ARTS and artists and the impact they are having on our communities. Use the results to create a regularly published Cultural Almanac.

3. TAKE THE POSITION THAT CREATIVITY IS A BASIC AND POWERFUL HUMAN CAPACITY, that the exercise and expression of our creativity is crucial for the health of individuals and communities, and that the arts are the laboratory for the development and understanding of the creative processes.

4. LEARN FROM OUR ELDERS. Those we consider newcomers to our communities actually bring older, far more inclusive cultural traditions with them. The same is true of those who were here before us. As these traditions take root or are maintained here, they form a new-old aesthetic. Work to protect them from domination, co-option and expropriation.

5. PROVIDE TRAINING FOR ARTISTS AND ARTS EDUCATORS ON THE WIDE RANGE OF ROLES ART CAN ASSUME IN COMMUNITY LIFE. Quash the notion that true artists are alienated and aloof and uninvolved.

6. MAP THE CULTURAL ECO-SYSTEM. Acknowledge that our cultural ecosystem is out of balance and that we know very little about its structure and dynamics. Recognize that a cultural ecosystem in which the finest artists cannot sustain themselves on their creative work, and few children have regular access to learning in and through the arts, is in serious decline.

Change

1. MAKE THE CASE FOR THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF THE CREATIVE PROCESSES AS A CORNERSTONE OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM. Collect and disseminate information about the success of arts-based education as it is successfully practiced in thousands of schools across the globe. Establish local initiatives for arts-based reform. Pass legislation to provide incentive and support for such local projects.

2. DEMOCRATIZE CULTURE. Decentralize the controlling forces of cultural power. Institute policies and investment practices that emphasize local and regional cultural ownership and accountability (slow culture). Recognize that public attitudes towards the arts are in large part determined by cultural arbiters who have a self-interest in the market-defined notions of artistic quality and success. Acknowledge that the status of artists in society profoundly affects the quality and content of art.

3. IDENTIFY THE ARTS COMMUNITY AS PART OF THE PROBLEM. Arts communities must resist the tendency to self-define according to the marginal condition in which they find themselves. Arts advocates should refrain from intramural fights over scarce funding and understand that the real problem is the community's unwillingness to invest in its cultural resources.

4. TOPPLE THE HIERARCHIES. Replace the notion of cultural hierarchies with the idea of a cultural continuum. Challenge the market-driven practice of creating categorical pecking orders. Recognize that distinguishing difference (fine and folk, classical and traditional, monocultural and multicultural) is not the same as discerning quality. Broaden and enrich the definition of artistic excellence through inclusion and education.

5. CHALLENGE OUR MISSIONS. Reexamine the missions of artists and arts organizations in a complex and changing world. Consider how "the work" contributes to the common good. Consider the arts as an essential human need as missions are reframed,

6. EXPAND THE DEFINITION OF "PUBLIC ART" beyond the realm of the public artifact. Adopt the position that citizen/artist collaboration, integration, and activism are necessary components for true community ownership of artistic endeavors. Include areas such as urban planning,

ecology, science, and mass communication as new contexts for public cultural expression. Establish artistic strategies and resources as primary assets for re-animating and revitalizing democratic ideals, practices, and institutions.

7. PROMOTE AND SUPPORT THE WELL BEING OF THE INDIVIDUAL ARTIST as a cornerstone of arts policy. Over the last three decades, artists have developed new approaches that deepen learning, cultivate creativity, and build community. This growing constituency of arts workers is an unrecognized asset for community development. It is time to recognize that there is a synergy between artists and creative communities where one fosters and sustains the other.