



Perspectives on *The Answer of Art*

NEWSLETTER #8

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Introduction

Throughout history, creative essence breaks through the old to the new, offering new answers to societal problems. The Rex Foundation, itself founded by artists, seeks to shine light on the arts and the creative process, and the positive forces that result from their vitality.

During the Bush era a bumper sticker appeared: "War Is Not the Answer." Many will agree. Yet war has been the answer for most of history. In the 1960s, the Vietnam era, youth took up the challenge of facing down such death-bound thinking. Three activisms sustained that movement: political, environmental, and cultural. The

last of these included the *Answer of Art*, of which music was one wing, locally the "San Francisco Sound." The Bay Area remains a vibrant center for many fields of artistic endeavor and art education to this day.

This newsletter looks at the role of art in movements of change and the health of communities. We explore some features of this with the Grateful Dead's Mickey Hart and Sarah Crowell of Destiny Arts, practitioners of music and art education as they are moving into new expressions today and guiding youth to help carry forward the answer of art.



New Line Theater



Destiny Arts Center

Life Without Art: It's Not Possible *an interview with Mickey Hart*

As Grateful Dead percussionist and a founding member of the Rex Foundation's board of directors, Mickey Hart has been spreading good vibes and experiencing the transformative power of art for most of his life. "I played the drum pad when I was about 3, but I started playing the drum at about 10," he recalls. "I would just sit there and play, then I couldn't remember playing. I didn't know what this new feeling was, I didn't know that I was going into altered states of awareness, I was getting high."

A little later, he laughs, "I was very small, a short guy, a little guy, very shy, so when I played my little bongo on the beach, and the young ladies liked to come around and dance around the fire, I go yeah, this is perfect! Because that's what drums are about. It brings people together. Making community, whether it be finding a mate, or a group to make music with. My life is reflected in sound, in the groove and the rhythm of things; that's where I get my strength to do everything. It's not just playing music, it's everything. Art connects you to you, and it connects you to everybody else. It makes me whole."

These days he continues to make these connections on many fronts, currently touring with the Mickey Hart Band. He's also been drumming with Alzheimer's and dementia patients, finding many ripple effects to the healing process. "I've just spent 2 1/2 years sonifying the epic events of the universe, from the big bang to Saturn to the moon, the sun, the Earth," he reports. "Now I'm sonifying my brain waves and stem cells and DNA to hear and understand the sound, the vibrations of the vast soundscapes unheard."

Recently we had a chance to talk with him about why art in general, and music in particular, are so vital.

Article 27.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits."

To Mickey's mind, this simply makes explicit something that's as old as humanity itself. "This is not a very new concept," he says, pointing out that in ancient Greece, for example, cities were always designed to include a

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**The Rex Foundation is
named after Rex Jackson,
a Grateful Dead roadie
and later road manager until
his untimely death in 1976**

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"If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him." – John F. Kennedy

From the Executive Director

Many of us share the love of the Grateful Dead and their music. Perhaps you can relate to my experience, where whether at their past shows or in current concert settings, I enjoy an emotional tie to the words, music and rhythm. When I hear the phrase "Strangers stopping strangers just to shake their hand," I can picture such a scene and take heart from the positive energy the concept evokes. To me, this is what art is all about: The force of paintings, writings, dance, theater performances, spoken word, poetry, animated images, sculpture and all other creative expressions to touch our hearts so that we grasp a deeper meaning of the concept being conveyed, and that we're prompted to consider an idea we might not have otherwise imagined. Picasso, with *Guernica*, helped us grasp the horrors of war. Shards of painted ceramics and graphics on relic walls relate stories of ancient communities. You get the "picture!"

While "enjoyment of the arts" was set forth as a universal right (Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), over at least the last decade, public support of the arts has sharply declined. For example, faced with overall budget cuts, public schools often reduce or practically eliminate creative arts programs, and those agencies and foundations impacted by recession-based constrictions, reduce their support of community-based arts organizations. As a result, many youth miss the opportunity to enjoy the arts as part of their education and life experience, as well as to appreciate the value of the arts to the vibrancy and strength of the community at large. This lack of access to the arts ripples further, as many of these students become teachers, politicians, community leaders and policy makers who lack a frame of reference for and direct experience with the value of the arts as part of a healthy community.

We are hopeful that the inspiring words of Mickey Hart and Sarah Crowell, and the examples of Rex grantees using the arts in such beneficial ways, will help generate renewed appreciation for the importance of supporting the arts at every level possible. Consider your vital role to fully enjoy *art as the answer* when you take part as patrons, contributors to organizations that fund the arts, community members urging school district and public officials to provide such support, and as artists actively expressing your own creativity.

Life Without Art: It's Not Possible (continued from page one)

park-like setting for public art and gatherings. "Art makes you more human and it creates community. When you shut those rights down it's felonious and draconian. There's no place for all those feelings and emotions to go and be turned into something you can share with someone else.

"It serves a purpose in the community, and inspires. It brings out the good, or exposes the good to more people so they can be inspired. I see it as a necessity—and that's one reason why there's music in every culture. There's no culture that does not have its sound and its rhythm. It's not a luxury, it's a necessity for a good life. Good music, good art, good life. They're totally linked, like the music and the dance. Music is controlled vibrations which connect us all to the larger and smaller rhythms that are all around us. We are embedded in a universe of vibrations/rhythms and music is our tuning system, connection to the vibrations that exist. Carl Sagan would say, 'We are made of star stuff,' even the carbon in our cheesecake was created from the cosmic soup we call the universe.

"We know from the work in Alzheimer's and dementia that rhythm and music reconnect the broken pathways and stimulate speech, cognitive powers and so

forth. So we know in vibration, in rhythm, in movement, we have a healing power."

Mickey notes that art not only contributes to the richness of a community's culture, art can also influence the direction of culture. This political dimension of art has been significant through history, and Mickey sees this power of art as the third rail, mixing the sacred with the secular. For example, opera has been a vehicle to present controversial concepts that could not otherwise be openly discussed, such as sex and religion, opening the way to stir new thinking about these issues. Furthermore, Mickey notes, "What one person sees as art could be seen by another as blasphemy." Mickey sees this tension as a vital dynamic, where art helps tell and shape the story of humanity. While one can question if this type of force is helpful or destructive, Mickey warns against any action to censor, hold back or legislate art.

He finds the trend to cut arts funding in education catastrophically foolish and short-sighted. "Without the arts you become bankrupt as a culture," he says flatly. "If you're not teaching art to the next generation, don't expect great scientists, don't expect great math, don't expect great technology, because many of the ideas for all of those things, and the things that hold everything together, are found in the place where art takes you. Deep in our subconscious lies the thirst to be human. We read these signals in a spiritual way and try to understand who we are and why we are. From these experiences one discovers what the mind keeps hidden. The arts are what gives us insight to all that's important.

"Art stimulates creativity, imagination, inventiveness. It's one of the major forces of humanity and creation and moving forward and evolving as a species, besides it being a catalyst for entry into the spiritual domains, where it's not about work, it's about who you are and why you are and how you go through life. And don't forget big fun, play. We go to pleasure, what feels good. Music feels better than good when you get it right.

"Einstein's greatest love was the violin; he would play the violin and go back to his office and jot down some numbers, it would allow him to be able to conjure and probe very difficult ideas. Whenever you create art, you heighten those sensibilities.

"I don't think you can call yourself educated without art. That's not possible. Without art, you can't make the connections to the spirit of things. Math is music, music is math. It's all about numbers, all about music, all about vibrations. It's about all the things that everything is made of."

During the '60s, Mickey immersed himself in all manner of creative collaboration, including the Grateful Dead, and found himself and his life transformed in the process. Nearly a half century later, he's still on the same path.



"Music made me feel good. When I hit a drum or I hit a drum pad with a stick, I got an amazing feeling that makes my hair stand up, makes me tingle with joy. It makes me want to coo. I'm a groupist, I like to share my art and music; I like to work in a group. That's when the Grateful Dead was the most powerful, as a group mind, a complex organism hell bent on pulsing and throbbing our way to the other side.

"It was the era of discovery; we certainly were traversing a new topography musically, and we loved it. And so we put all the spirit you could possibly put into it, 24/7. I was a part of it in the day, and when I went to sleep it stayed on. I was dreaming it; so was everybody else. Once these things become part of your dreams you're able to go to a higher ground. It's what [religious historian Mircea] Eliade would call a hierophany. That's a rock 'n' roll band, but what really is it doing? It's doing something he calls the wholly other. I always thought of Grateful Dead as an hierophany.

"I still embody that notion. [Since Garcia's death] we're not playing together as a group, but there are other combinations that are still available. I try to move into that on a daily basis and try to find that place, that spirit. Nothing lasts forever, but art is forever. You never reach the end of art. There is no end. There's only the road.

And that's where art lives, not at the end.

"The life-changing power of art is for everyone. Art plays an incredible role in the socialization of people now, because you don't have to be a virtuoso to make really great art," Mickey says. "Art used to be thought of as professional, but art can be a person with dementia who takes a drum and draws on a drum, creates some image that's really a replication of his or her spirit world. That's what it's about, turning a spirit into a form."

When asked how to find one's own creative spirit, Mickey emphasizes that art is for everyone, not limited to professionals, and that there is room for the creative spirit in everything. "You've got to go out and find your creative spirit. You can find other people who are like-minded on the community boards, you can find out when people are getting together and drumming for community building. You have to look; sometimes it won't come to you, because art is like that; you have to go to it. And then once you have the skills and the desire to make more of it, it happens."

As Scoop Nisker would say, "if you don't like the news, go out and make some of your own."

"The Arts and Sciences, essential to the prosperity of the State and to the ornament of human life, have a primary claim to the encouragement of every lover of his country and mankind." – George Washington

We Are In an Era of Creativity an interview with Sarah Crowell

As a child growing up in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, Sarah Crowell fell in love with the beauty and the discipline of ballet at an early age. "I knew from the time I was 6 that I wanted to dance. It doesn't necessarily translate to career at that age; I just knew I wanted to dance forever." But one day at age 8, she went with her mother to a performance of *Giselle*, which she loved, and realized clearly what it took to be as good as the dancers on the stage – and she didn't want to do it to the exclusion of the rest of her life.

"I wanted to be an activist as well," she recalls, "because both my parents are activists. Right then at age 8 I began the foundation of how I would combine my passion for justice and my passion for the arts, right at that moment, watching *Giselle*. And for me, if it's too much struggle it's unsustainable. For me, my activism comes from gratitude and from joy."

Born in 1965, Crowell missed the artistic and social ferment of the '60s, but thrived in the radical black feminist scene of Boston in the '80s, combining her artistic and social passions. She came to the Bay Area in 1989 to dance with the Dance Brigade, a politically provocative feminist dance/theater company.

Today, as artistic director of Rex grantee Destiny Arts Center, Crowell, who has won multiple awards in the Bay Area for her work, uses performing arts in her work with Oakland youth, and has collaborated on Rex's *The World As It Could Be* Human Rights Education Program since 2006.

Why do you think art is so powerful and effective in creating positive change?

"It's been statistically proven that no other forms of therapy are nearly as effective as theater and movement in healing trauma in young people. To me that's a great starting point. As an artist who works with young people who are dealing with trauma on various levels, it provides enormous hope for me as I continue to put it out in the world that it's important that young people and adults are moving intentionally and doing theater and working through their issues collaboratively. It makes me feel like we can do this. We have this key, this map, to healing not only individuals but communities and societies.

"If we are moving and creating collaborative theater together, we are addressing challenges in creative ways. I have a quote in my head, "If you're dancing, there's no strife. There's no conflict." There's just joy that is released in moving the body, and the ramifications of that, post the actual act of dance, is that you're more attentive. Kids are more attentive in class once they've moved their bodies

and danced around, and they're more able to receive information that will be useful to them; they're more joyful, they're more able to really see each other in a positive way."

How is the answer of art different from the answer of politics and economics?

"In the Theater of the Oppressed model (www.theatre-of-the-oppressed.org), there's a problem in the community, and the community comes together and does theatrical exercises to solve that problem. It's really created a lot of solutions that everybody can feel responsible for.

"It's not like I have a problem, I'm going to complain to my local or my national government, and they're going to do something and I'm going to rate them on how they did. No, I'm actually involved with naming the problem, working on solutions in my community, and then creating the actual solutions in my community.

"To me it's this whole unleashing of the power of community that I think tends to get lost in politics and economics, because we feel so powerless on a political level to do anything. And if people are given the kinesthetic experience of being able to create change in their own communities, then that translates slowly but surely to the global community.

"Just looking at the pattern of my bedspread or the color of my walls or the way we decide to plant our garden is art. I see art in the way children run and play and leap and move, and the way that if we maintain that connection to our bodies in that playful way that is the dance of life, then we have access to joy.

"If we have access to joy, we are less likely to be oppressive, to create oppressive laws, to agree with oppressive laws in the way that governments express our own tightness and depression. That becomes a part of politics, a reflection of our own tightness, our own lack of movement. If we continue to meaningfully move in our bodies, then we have access to joy in all of those realms and in health.

"There's a view that artists who purely do art for art's sake, that's not a political act, a revolutionary act, but I say it is. Beauty is a revolutionary act, and their lives are devoted into forming their bodies into something that's just so beautiful. When I see something beautiful, it inspires me to keep doing the work that I'm doing. Hopefully media continue to inspire all those activists to keep on doing what they do to make change in the world.

"There's something brilliant about being out of our comfort zone and noticing what happens. (laughs) and shaping change from that.



"If I can give you the experience of something, then there's no way to refute the power of theater and movement to make change. I go into a place where I can create an experience for people and they go, Ohhh...I had no idea. For me it's not about preaching, it's about producing experiences and witnessing and holding space for the revelations to occur. It's about how do we have this experience and share a real connection with each other? We may disagree about something, we may disagree about politics, around gun control or ways to deal with the environment, but if we are really connecting with each other on a kinesthetic level, connecting mind-body-spirit with each other, having an experience with each other, we can't refute the power of that.

"If we're moving and if we're making art and if we're standing in joy and gratitude and love, that's where policy comes from, and that's where neighbors relate to each other. If a shooting happens on your block, you don't just hide, or move, or call the police. You may call the police, you may hide while the shooting is happening, but do you get to know your neighbor? And do you start a group that acknowledges that we're all in this together? For me, a lot of the time, if people are being expressive in their bodies, they have more courage to connect with other people, and thus make the changes that need to happen."

What's the role of art in education? Mickey Hart says that without art we're undermining our culture, making it impossible to have scientific advancement and innovation.

"Sir Ken Robinson says that without the arts there's no creativity in education.

"Right now we're post industrial revolution, so we're not educating kids to be in factories any more, to line up, to be on time in this particular way, to conform, to sit in desks in rows. In a certain sense, without judgment of that era, you could say that was useful at the time, when we were building huge factories that employ thousands of people to sort of sit at desk or stand in assembly lines and just do rote activities.

"Well, we're not in that era any more. We're really in an era of creativity, but we're still educating kids in the same way. In general our frame of reference is the same as it was when we were educating kids for the industrial revolution. Modern education was formed during that era. So, we're at this amazing juncture now with lots of opportunities, because people understand the educational system is not working.

"The system itself is in crisis because the focus is not on creativity yet. It's starting to move that way, but systems change slowly. We're in the massive changeover of the way that we see education, and the innovators are saying, come on, let's really make creativity the center.

"Why do you think our kids are angry and fighting and not doing well in school? They're bored stiff! Who would want to sit still doing math and science and reading all day? Nobody!

*"Art is a nation's most precious heritage. For it is in our works of art that we reveal to ourselves and to others the inner vision which guides us as a nation."
– John Q. Adams*

"If we create the standard robotic repeat-after-me-test kind of reality, do we really feel responsible for what exists around us? All of us have to feel responsible and feel like we have impact on our world, and if we don't feel that we have impact on our world, then we lean back and let other people make decisions for us, and we feel disgruntled and angry, and we do violence. If kids aren't getting the mind, body, and spirit day-to-day connection of the information they're getting, then they're not going to feel that responsibility."

Why do you think the arts are and ought to be included as a universal right?

"If the expression of beauty is a basic need, something we need to survive and thrive, then it needs to be right where it is in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the center, right between the cultural community and scientific advancement. So that it informs and enhances and goes right to the heart of the matter of where the community is moving. Could any of us really imagine a day without art? I believe that art and beauty should be one of the lower orders of need on Maslow's hierarchy [toward self-actualization], recognizing art as a basic need to live and thrive."

How would you encourage people to find creative direction?

"Maybe the first step, if you don't already have a creative outlet in your life, is to notice ways that you do actually have creative outlets that you haven't identified as such. Maybe you really love to cook, or you love to make things beautiful in your home--start by acknowledging what already exists. People are scared off by the idea of the arts, like oh, I'm not good at drawing, or I can't dance, and they sort of rule themselves out of the arts. That's the first step to me, to acknowledge that you're enjoying it, that you're moving to music even though you might not call yourself a dancer, that you're making things beautiful around you in ways that are artistic.

"For every person there's an 'I've always wanted to do...'"What about exploring that longing, and then just go for it! Take that ballet class. Take that painting class, even though you don't think that you're a good painter. Just let yourself have what you've longed for.

"And the next thing for me is, notice what it does to you. The way I've always described social change is, it's a change in the way we relate to each other. How do things change in the way we relate to each other? If we're in deep self-care and choosing activities in our life that really bring us joy, then that translates into the way we do our work, and the way that we choose to stand up for things."

Examples of Rex Foundation Beneficiaries Demonstrating Art as the Answer

Voices Together

Voices Together is an innovative and evidence-based education model that uses music as a tool to jump start language and social connections in students with autistic challenges. Their mission is to give individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities the tools to say what they think, what they feel, what they need and ultimately who they are. The program literally gives voice to each student in the program and provides a full hour-long interactive experience where students sometimes speak for the first time or reach out to a peer for the first time. Founded in 2006, Voices Together annually serves over 400 children and adults with autism and intellectual and developmental disabilities through an innovative educational model that is music-based. These unique group sessions are facilitated in the community and the six school districts in North Carolina. The program uses the structure of a chorus, the power and engagement of music combined with the evidence-based techniques of therapy and education, thereby creating a safe, motivational space for transformational learning.

www.voicestogether.net

Arts for Humanity!

Arts for Humanity! empowers low-income at-risk youth and youth with disabilities through participatory performing and visual arts programs. In partnership with local artists, student interns and community organizations, the program crosses generational, socio-economic, physical and developmental divides to make the arts accessible to all. Participation cultivates creativity and gives voice to the underserved while inspiring the younger generation to become future leaders. Arts for Humanity! believes in a world where the arts are integral to our lives, a world where we celebrate our diversity and our commonality through the power and beauty of the arts. Programs are at no charge to participants and support existing non-profit services and their clients by going into their centers and shelters and providing an expressive outlet for those who are most in need. Arts for Humanity! also provides invaluable hands on experience to student interns, expanding their world view and preparing them for careers in social service and the arts. These interns enrich themselves while changing the lives of others.

www.artsforhumanity.com

New Line Theatre

Now in its 22nd season, New Line Theatre is the only professional alternative musical theatre company in the country involving the people of the region in the exploration and creation of socially and politically relevant works of musical theatre – daring, muscular, adult theatre

about politics, sex, race, the media, violence, obscenity, art, religion and other contemporary issues. The artists of New Line believe live theatre is one of the most powerful tools in the world for social and political change, and believe they have an obligation to use that tool to make the world a better place and engage the people of the region in discussions about the issues of our times. The musical theatre is one of the few indigenous American art forms, one of America's greatest artistic gifts to the world, and New Line treats it with the seriousness, respect, humor and joy that it deserves.

www.newlinetheatre.com

Litquake

Litquake seeks to foster interest in literature for people of all ages, perpetuate a sense of literary community and provide a vibrant forum for Bay Area writing as a complement to the city's music, film and cultural festivals. Litquake is an annual San Francisco literary festival that brings a diverse and eclectic range of Bay Area authors before audiences of all ages for a week plus of readings, performances, cross-media literary happenings, panel discussions and more. Whether it's poets reciting in a cathedral, authors discussing science versus religion in a library, or novelists reading in a beekeeping supply store, the goal remains the same: whet a broad range of literary appetites, present the literary fare in a variety of traditional and unlikely venues, and make it vivid, real, and entertaining. All events are open to the public and most are free or low cost so that all fans of the written word are able to attend.

www.litquake.org

Albany Park Theater Project

Founded in 1996, the Albany Park Theater Project (AFTP) is a multi-ethnic ensemble of teenagers creating original performance works out of real-life stories from Chicago's immigrant, working class Albany Park neighborhood. The program emphasizes three goals: 1) Create dynamic original theater that represents the real stories of teens and other Albany Park community members in a manner that culturally, economically and age-diverse audiences find compelling, challenging and inspiring; 2) Help teenagers recognize and achieve their potential, with a particular emphasis on encouraging and nurturing their educational ambitions; 3) Contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of the Albany Park neighborhood, an arts-poor community where AFTP is the only performing arts organization. Today, it performs for more than 4,000 people each year, and has built a repertoire of more than 50 performance works integrating theater, dance and music.

www.aftpchicago.org

"Music is a more potent instrument than any other for education, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul." – Plato

"Nations are destroyed, or flourish, in proportion as their poetry, painting, and music are destroyed or flourish!"
– William Blake



Albany Park Theater Project



Arts For Humanity



Voices Together



Litquake

Destiny Arts Center

Destiny Arts Center exists to end isolation, prejudice and violence in the lives of young people. The mission is accomplished by providing financially accessible dance, theater, martial arts, violence prevention and youth leadership classes to diverse groups of youth ages 3-18. Classes are taught year-round by professional instructors at the main site as well as in outreach programs at local schools and community centers. Programs aim to help young people value themselves and others. Success is measured by the way they become mindful of the ways their words, actions and attitudes affect their communities and the world. They respond rather than react to situations; teach and practice love rather than violence; honor people from different backgrounds and experiences equally; and are active participants in their communities. www.destinyarts.org

Willie Mae Rock Camp for Girls

Willie Mae Rock Camp for Girls is a music and mentoring program dedicated to the empowerment of girls and women. The Camp offers girls aged 8-18 the chance to learn how to play musical instruments, write songs, perform and learn about different types of music in a supportive environment that fosters self-confidence, creativity, tolerance and collaboration. Rock Camp is dedicated to the proposition that music belongs to everyone. Girls are made to feel they can just jump in and play guitar, work the soundboard, direct music videos, and write songs about what matters to them. They are encouraged to explore the openness and freedom of homemade music, to make it their own and to carry that feeling with them in whatever they do.

www.williemarockcamp.org

Resources – Publications, Organizations, and Websites

Art as Experience

by John Dewey (*Perigee Trade, 2005*)

John Dewey (1859-1952), philosopher, psychologist, and educator, is widely credited as the most influential thinker on education in the twentieth century, best known for his espousal of a “pragmatic” philosophy and progressive political ideas. *Art as Experience* is a book about art in its broadest sense, and experience in the sense of an individual’s primary way of engaging the world. The book treats art as a means of recapturing the experience of life and passing it on to the observer. It purports that there can be no art without an audience- that the two are intertwined because humans are social creatures and none of us exist in isolation.

Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts
<http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG218.html>

Free ebook. The report documents the most comprehensive study of its kind in which the authors evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these instrumental arguments and make the case that a new approach to understanding the benefits of the arts is needed. Critical of what they view as an overemphasis on instrumental benefits, the authors call for a greater recognition of the intrinsic benefits of the arts experience, provide a more comprehensive framework for assessing the private and public value of both intrinsic and instrumental benefits, and link the realization of those benefits to the nature of arts involvement. In particular, they underscore the importance of sustained involvement in the arts to the achievement of both instrumental and intrinsic benefits.

The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything
by Sir Ken Robinson with Lou Aronica (*Viking, 2009*)

The Element is the point at which natural talent meets personal passion. When people arrive at the Element, they feel most themselves, most inspired and achieve at their highest levels. With a wry sense of humor, and drawing on the stories of a wide range of artists, scientists, athletes, business leaders, academics, and many others, Ken Robinson shows why finding your Element is essential for all of us and explores the conditions that lead us to live lives that are filled with passion, confidence, and personal achievement.

Ted Talk: “Do Schools Kill Creativity?”

by Sir Ken Robinson • http://sirkenrobinson.com/?page_id=11

“People and organizations everywhere can see that current systems of education are failing to meet the challenges we now all face and they’re working furiously to create alternatives.”

There are two main themes in the talk. First, we’re all born with deep natural capacities for creativity and systems of mass education tend to suppress them. Second, it is increasingly urgent to cultivate these capacities – for personal, economic and cultural reasons – and to rethink the dominant approaches to education to make sure that we do.

The dominant systems of education are based on three principles, or assumptions at least, that are exactly opposite to how human lives are actually lived. First, they promote standardization and a narrow view of intelligence when human talents are diverse and personal. Second, they promote compliance when cultural progress and achievement depend on the cultivation of imagination and creativity. Third, they are linear and rigid when the course of each human life, including yours, is organic and largely unpredictable. As the rate of change continues to accelerate, building new forms of education on these alternative principles is not a romantic whimsy: it’s essential to personal fulfillment and to the sustainability of the world we are now creating.

Notable Quotes for Arts Advocacy from the National Performing Arts Convention

<http://www.performingartsconvention.org/advocacy/id=28>

The National Performing Arts Convention (NPAC), a collaboration among national service organizations for all of the performing arts, has provided a downloadable compilation of quotes from notable leaders as a resource for advocates of the arts. An example from the above link that pertains to our cultural heritage and the arts is the following quote:

“In the third year of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln ordered work to go ahead on the completion of the dome of the Capitol. When critics protested the diversion of labor and money from the prosecution of the war, Lincoln said, ‘If people see the capitol going on, it is a sign that we intend this Union shall go on.’ Franklin Roosevelt recalled this story in 1941 when, with the world in the blaze of war, he dedicated the National Gallery in Washington. And John Kennedy recalled both these stories when he asked for public support for the arts in 1962. Lincoln and Roosevelt, Kennedy said, ‘understood that the life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction, in the life of the nation, is very close to the center of a nation’s purpose- and is a test of the quality of a nation’s civilization.’” – Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.

“Poets are the unacknowledged
legislators of the world.”
– Percy Bysshe Shelley



Destiny Arts Center