The Future of Creativity

What role will artists, thinkers, and visionary citizens play in building the communities of the future?

A narrative report on a symposium for opinion leaders, policy makers, and creative thinkers in the arts, sciences, humanities, business, education, and the government

November 1-3, 2001

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

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The Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum
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Thank you to the many people who made this symposium possible. Please see Symposium Presenters on page 2, as well as Biographies on page 48 of this report.

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Symposium Mission Statement

What role will artists, scientists, thinkers, and visionary citizens play in building the communities of the future? “The Future of Creativity” symposium brought together some of the nation’s leading thinkers to address this question, and to present a range of models of innovative, sustainable communities. Expanding on the Alliance of Artists Communities important 1996 symposium (“American Creativity at Risk”), this symposium aimed to encourage collaboration that crosses traditional boundaries of discipline, politics, and race, and to work toward better solutions to society’s complex problems.

It is not only noble, adult, and civilized to pay a tithe toward collective enterprises, it is noble, adult, and civilized to contribute to the future that we will never see.

Lewis Hyde
at the Alliance’s 1996 “American Creativity at Risk” symposium
There are people, even now, who are constantly reimagining not just their future but also their present, and the present and future of the collective. They are the creative minds that one must turn to at times like this, when the world is sent into turmoil and the failure of a coherent vision for our own society’s future is all too apparent. They are the green ants dreaming. They make the “art,” as Zygmunt Bauman writes, “that transforms the improbable into the inevitable.”

Carol Becker
Writer, Art Critic, Dean of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Joel Wachs
President, Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

Carol Becker
Writer, Art Critic, Dean of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Stanley Crouch
Writer, Jazz Critic

Kahl El Zabar
Jazz Performer and Ensemble Leader

Guillermo Gómez-Peña
Writer, Performance Artist

Mediator
Veronica Barrera
Psychologist, Performance Artist

Welcome
Ana Castillo
Poet, Nootulist, Artist, Xicanista

Theorists
Suzan Shown Harjo
Poet, Performance Artist, Native American Activist

Haki Madhubuti
Poet, Chicago State University Professor of English, Founder/Publisher of Third World Press

Don Marinelli
Co-Director, Entertainment and Technology Center, Carnegie Mellon University

Rebecca Solnit
Social Historian, Art Critic, Environmental Journalist

Sandy Stone
Performance Artist, Cyber-Theorist, Writer, Professor, University of Texas in Austin

Edda Meza
Affiliate, Street-Level Youth Media

Michael Naimark
Artist, formerly associated with Interval Research

Achy Obejas
Fiction Writer, Poet, Activist, Staff Writer for Chicago Tribune

Nick Ruben
Executive Director, Chicago Center for Arts Policy, Columbia College, Chicago, IL

SYMPOSIUM PRESENTERS

EXPERIMENTAL TOWN MEETING PARTICIPANTS
Creative Director
Guillermo Gómez-Peña
Writer, Performance Artist
Moderator
Veronica Barrera
Psychologist, Performance Artist
Welcome
Ana Castillo
Poet, Nootulist, Artist, Xicanista
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Rebecca Solnit
Social Historian, Art Critic, Environmental Journalist
Sandy Stone
Performance Artist, Cyber-Theorist, Writer, Professor, University of Texas in Austin
Baldemar Velázquez
Director, Farm Labor Organizing Committee

PRESENTERS OF INNOVATIVE COMMUNITIES CASE STUDIES
T. Allan Comp
Historian, Founder of Acid Mine Drainage and Art, Johnstown, PA
Monica Haskins
Director, Little Black Pearl Workshop, Chicago, IL
Ruby Lerner
Executive Director, Creative Capital, New York, NY
Tony Strez
Co-founder, Street-Level Youth Media, Chicago, IL
Chris Quigg
Theoretical Physicist, Fermilab, Batavia, IL
Alice Woman
Writer, Journalist, Guarani, Colombia, South America, founded by Paulo Lugar

SPECIAL PRESENTERS ON NATIONAL ARTS RESEARCH
Maria-Rosario Jackson
Senior Research Associate, and Director, Arts, Culture, and Communities Program, Metropolitan Housing and Communities Center, The Urban Institute
Holly Saiford
Arts Consultant to The Urban Institute, Ford Foundation, and other major arts funders

RESPONDENTS
Chair
Roger Mandle
President, Rhode Island School of Design

Helene Fried
Director, International Design Conference

Sandy Stone
Performance Artist, Cyber-Theorist, Writer, Professor, University of Texas in Austin

Edda Meza
Affiliate, Street-Level Youth Media

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Carol Becker
We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.

Martin Luther King Jr.
Speech given in St. Louis, 1964

The study of the fundamental particles of nature fascinates, because we see the world in new ways we barely imagined. We learn how matter is put together, how it evolved. We connect the familiar with the exotic, the cosmic with the everyday. Particle physics engages because we never stop asking how and why. This is why science feels such great affinity with the arts.

Chris Quigg

What interests me about the future of creativity in America is the shift that we might make from the hyperindividualism of the nineteenth century into a culture that takes more seriously the part of all of us that is a collective being…How might our culture enable us to feel the collective part of our being?

Lewis Hyde
PROLOGUE

It has been almost six years since the Alliance of Artists Communities’ first symposium, “American Creativity at Risk,” was held at Brown University. Mary Schmidt Campbell (Dean of the Tisch School of the Arts) opened that symposium with a metaphor:

“Years ago someone told me that buried deep in the basements of NYC schools were treasure troves of musical instruments—trumpets, flutes, clarinets, violins, cellos, trombones. French horns—all left over from a golden era, perhaps. As a matter of course, we used to give children in public schools first-rate instruction in music. . . . The image of all of those instruments imprisoned beneath the crumbling ruins of our public schools, forgotten like some yet un concealed dead civilization, seemed . . . a perfect metaphor for the theme of this symposium, “American Creativity at Risk,” and a reminder of what we stand to lose or gain, as the case may be, if as a nation we do not come to grips with this issue.”

Though the metaphor still rings true today, national awareness of the importance and value of cultivating the creativity of our young people seems to be re-emerging. For instance, in 2003, any student accepted into a California public university must have had at least a year of art classes in high school. The federal government’s Elementary and Secondary Education Act this year has listed the arts as an essential academic subject. Congress has repeated its annual $30 million appropriation for arts education, some of which is available through granting to school districts.

While it would be a mistake for the Alliance to take credit for this re-awakening, we have helped move the conversation along. Tangible ripples circled out from “American Creativity at Risk,” so much so that we gave it the impetus and courage to continue the investigation. Our second installment, “The Future of Creativity” in 2001 in Chicago, was another glorious mix of innovative individuals and organizations who came together to examine the amorphous subject of creativity, and how best to unleash its potential.

It seems like a long time ago now that we in the Alliance were focused on what to do to create stronger national support for artists’ communities. Those were the days of the Culture Wars, when everyone in the arts was searching their souls to discover who they were, what they stood for, and how they were going to survive diminishing financial resources. The field of artists’ communities was also under scrutiny by the public, by foundations, and by peer panels who were determining who would get NEA money and who wouldn’t. Some people still called art critics’ communities “colonies” back then, and “colonies” were perceived as elitist, insular, and unresponsive to anything beyond their own gates. Right next to that perception were suspicions of what artists do when given uninterrupted time alone in their studios to work.

It was in the context of these misperceptions that the Alliance developed a strategy for educating the public, the funding community and the art community about the important work this field does. As representatives of the field, we became convinced that the way to advance the field was to work beyond its boundaries rather than looking inward. Through a convoluted but productive conversational process, we decided that a national symposium on a topic that transcended the art world would be a great informational tool. We hoped that this event would position the Alliance to play a productive, national role in raising questions of universal concern and in finding and documenting workable answers. (We have come to realize that these symposia also provide the field of artists’ communities with a productive way to examine its own roles in a larger context.)

Other themes emerged in Alliance conversations that have had a profound influence on the development of our symposia. For instance, while at Tyron Center for Visual Art (now called the McColl Center for Visual Art, and led by former Alliance Chair Suzanne Fetscher), I worked with the Board of Trustee’s Diversity Committee, whose mandate was to ensure that the Center served and represented the diverse peoples of Charlotte. During the first meeting each one of us gave our personal definition of diversity. I was particularly struck by one person who began by talking about the importance of bio-diversity in nature, and how these systems can become vulnerable or weak if their diversification diminishes. She then drew parallels between natural systems and our own social systems. She described how alive she felt when she was around groups of people from a variety of places, cultures, educational backgrounds, and disciplines. It was simple. While she noted the value of including a diverse range of people for their own individual good, more importantly, she was making a case for bringing people to the table for the common good. By getting us to think of diversity in another context, she helped us understand its universal value.

While the “Future of Creativity” symposium yielded many ideas, first and foremost it was a testament to the importance and value of diversity. Reverend Clifford Jones called for an expression of unified diversity that would celebrate the power of collaboration among diverse strengths. Writer Lewis Hyde called for an award system that recognized those that performed as collective beings rather than individuals. Writer and jazz critic Stanley Crouch called on artists to recognize and depict in their art the “interwoven nature of our humanity.” Scientist Bill Joy called on artists to help technology imagine a new “Secular Ethic” paradigm that crossed disciplinary boundaries. Carol Becker, Dean of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, spoke of our collective responsibility to “dream a better future” for our communities.

The most poignant statements came from the young members of Street-Level Youth Media. Eric Hernandez talked about the power of “group strive,” and Lia Garcia talked about their collaborative process at Street-Level, and the difficulty of establishing a consensus on project focus and direction: “A group just makes your piece better because you have more than one view. That’s what our world is. It is not just one view, one norm; it’s actually not a norm at all. It’s our diversity that makes us great.”
INTRODUCTION

The Alliance of Artists Communities’ first symposium, “American Creativity at Risk,” was held in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1996 and focused on defining the historical value of creativity in America. That symposium conceived broad strategies for restoring creativity as a priority in public policy, cultural philanthropy, and education. It identified elements in our society that support or obstruct creativity, innovation, and research in America. The symposium developed a “Blueprint for Action” (see page 9) that has provided guidance to Alliance members as well as many other individuals and organizations. The Blueprint inspired the founding of a national artists funding organization called Creative Capital, and it stimulated an increase in funding to artists’ communities. It played a part in encouraging an emerging societal interest in the concepts of creative research and process, and a thrust for the kind of working environments that the field of artists’ communities provides.

For its second symposium, the Alliance wanted to focus on questions and conversations that examine the specific elements, strategies, and philosophies necessary to building successful creative, sustainable communities. To do so, the Alliance assembled a circle of national and international leaders from the arts, sciences, design, engineering, education, religion, social policy, philanthropy, urban and rural planning, civil rights advocacy, technology, entertainment, and media. These individuals met in Chicago from November 19 to 21, 2001, for a symposium on “The Future of Creativity.” Participants were asked to consider what role could be played by artists, scientists, thinkers, and visionary citizens in building communities of the future, how to enable collaboration among disciplines, and how to encourage the crossing of traditional boundaries so as to produce effective, timely solutions to society’s increasingly complex problems.

During the three days of the symposium these four themes emerged:

• The American educational system is in dire need of reform. It must provide its students with better environments for actualizing their potential.
• Collaboration across discipline, culture, class, race, and gender is essential to building economically and environmentally sustainable communities. We need to build institutions with creative administrative structures that avoid rigid systems of hierarchy, which embrace diversity, honor specific cultural histories, and acknowledge our historic tragedies, while also recognizing the progress that has been made in some areas.
• The dangers of uncontrolled technology must be understood.
• Artists have the responsibility to “dream a better future,” to introduce new conversations, to create new vocabularies, to encourage cross-disciplinary citizen activities in themselves and others.

The following report describes in detail the great variety of presentations and discussion held at “The Future of Creativity.” It concludes with the Alliance’s November 3, 2001 Declaration for Action.

BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION

From the Alliance of Artists Communities’ American Creativity at Risk Symposium, November 1996

The mission and agenda for the 2001 “Future of Creativity” symposium was based on the ideas presented at the Alliance’s 1996 symposium. The following Blueprint for Action was developed at the 1996 event:

1. Recognize that creativity is not discipline-specific but transcends age, gender, race, and culture; its sustenance is a societal issue, one vital to the future of American society. Recognize that creativity is an innate quality in all individuals, and work towards a society that unshackles that creativity for the common good.
2. Identify the ingredients that nurture and expand the creativity of individuals. Widen the debate on the nature of creativity to include educators, policy-makers, and practitioners from all disciplines.
3. Continue to support creative activities, environments, programs, and projects that move society forward. Work vigilantly to keep healthy the infrastructures that nurture the development of creativity in individuals in all sectors of society.
4. Become an advocate and practitioner of bringing the disciplines together to address the issues of our times. Look to the collective skills and wisdom of all individuals in our society to bring about a creative renaissance in the new millennium.
5. Urg parents to take responsibility for the education of their children. Advocate the development and maintenance of informal educational systems, ones that emphasize universal access and that reward innovation, educational excellence, and social responsibility, rather than the “right answers.”
6. Recognize the role that artists play in society. Collaborate with institutions, business, unions, government, and the media, establishing national and international linkages to enhance opportunities for artists to serve society as creative problem-solvers. Extend public understanding and respect for artists’ skills and insights, and their abilities as citizens to work with other problem-solvers to advance humanity.
7. Recognize that with innovation comes the possibility of failure; creativity and risk are strange bedfellows whose progeny cannot be predicted. Advocate for research and development budgets with the understanding that they are the bedrock of innovation, ensuring that the concern for the bottom line does not mortgage our future.

The November ’96 symposium, “American Creativity at Risk,” was held at Brown University and Rhode Island School of Design, and was organized by the Alliance of Artists Communities.

Carol Becker

At this difficult moment in history, when the notion of space has taken on a new cyber dimension and time seems to have accelerated beyond what is healthy for the human organism, can we imagine a public sphere within which we in the U.S. could live and openly discuss the complex evolution of our species-life together? Could we construct a space in which individual desire could interact with societal concerns, and could we debate these issues around which there is disagreement?

Peter Richards

This symposium is designed to not only initiate a conversation about the future of creativity, but to also applaud our members’ interdisciplinary nature, and to recognize the importance of their bringing together creative people of various backgrounds and to celebrate the surprising and wonderful outcomes of their associations and collaborations. We’ve been inspired by Valler Havil’s government, and thus believe that there should be artists involved in all decision-making processes that affect us as a society. We want to highlight the role that artists play, understand it, and better communicate it to others.
TOWARDS A NEW LANGUAGE

Opening Evening Discussion

I find artists to be extremely responsible. I find that the effect the fragile experience has on artists is to bring out the best of what they can possibly be. And I am humbled and really moved by the connections that I see those artists make with each other while they live in community. I think that as members of the Alliance of Artists Communities, we have to do everything we can to support the communities as microcosms of what’s possible for artists living in [larger] communities.

Susan Page Tillett

In the democracy of art, the prejudices of race must disappear.

Violinist Will Marion Cook

Almost every U.S. ethnic group is found in Chicago, the third largest city in the United States. The 2000 census reported a population that is 42 per cent white, 37 per cent black, and 5 per cent Asian and Native American, with 16 per cent not reporting. Latinos residents, who may be of any race, represent 26 per cent. In 1990 more people claimed German ancestry than any other ancestry, followed by Polish and Irish. Spanish and Polish are the two most common languages other than English.

Information summarized from Michael Conzen’s article entitled “Chicago city (illinois)"

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNITY

“The voices you are about to hear”—Carlos Cumpian, Gregorio Gomez, Suzan Shown Harjo, Haki Madhubuti, Donald Marinelli, Rebecca Solnit, Sandy Stone, Silvana Straw, and Baldemar Velasquez—are “known in their fields as pioneers and iconoclasts” said Guillermo Gomez-Peura, the curator of the symposium’s first event, an “Experimental Town Meeting” staged as a multi-tiered, part-performance, part-debate conversation.

This opening evening conversation wove in and around issues of language, community, and identity. Commentary was interspersed with poetry and performance art. The symposium audience was asked to join the conversation periodically. Many themes emerged that would be developed later in the symposium.

Highlights follow:

“…the languages of the United States, is a multi-layered conversation of what’s possible for artists living in [larger] communities.”

Rebecca Solnit pointed out that despite newscaster’s use of the phrase “Attack on America,” people from 64 nations were among the dead at the World Trade Center. “Both villains and victims were profoundly transnational and represented the transnational tribal ideologies of capitalism and fundamentalism.”

“…the death at the World Trade Center changed our notions of Us and Them, West versus East, the Other-Outside and the Other-Inside.”

Haki Madhubuti said. He emphasized the "American culture. “Imagine your family has learning the languages of others. "Perhaps the only problem that we will ever have is the cultural value of retaining one’s own language, to respect the differences that we see.”

Serial Marquis were the kind of artists who were now so necessary to “inventing a new definition, a new mapping of this strange new world.… Perhaps when we reinvent that language,” she said, “we’ll find that we can invest in a larger and more powerful community to address the issues of our time.”

Baldemar Velasquez described his childhood growing up in a community of farm workers, very attached to landscape, using words like repression, poverty, violence, and terrorism. Terrorism, or agroterrorism, was a term his community was familiar with long before 9/11. He said, “We have to understand what words mean in common to all of us.… We have to come to grips with those who are saying about the other. When Carl Jung came to America in the late 1920s, early 1930s, he said that white Americans... seem like Negros, talk like Negros, and gesture like Negros, and that they...capture the images of the black person and the American Indian.”

Stanley Crouch

One of the problems you have in (achieving) a richer rendition of American life is what I call the ethnic sexual franchise. That is to say that if you’re white, you’re supposed to work about the kind of white people you grow up around. Now, you may have gone to college and been around other kinds of white people, you may have traveled abroad... you might have been a math major, you might have become best friends with some Asian kid and some kid from India, you may have worked in New Mexico and come to know a number of people from various backgrounds and aboriginal Americans... but when you go to a publisher and the publisher looks at you, they think when they see you, they know what you know.

William Estrada commented that language was too easily adapted and used as a way to separate people. Beth Adams responded that “it isn’t language that necessarily gets in the way, it’s the mind frame that we have in getting that way.”

US & THEM, OR THE OTHER, INSIDE OR THE OUTSIDE

“…How has globalization affected community, identity, political economy?” Gómez-Peura asked. “How have the terrorist violence of September 11, 2001 [hereafter referred to as 9/11] changed how we perceive ourselves? Has it changed our notions of Us and Them, West versus East, the Other-Outside and the Other-Inside?”

Rebecca Solnit pointed out that despite newscaster’s use of the phrase “Attack on America,” people from 64 nations were among the dead at the World Trade Center. “Both villains and victims were profoundly transnational and represented the transnational tribal ideologies of capitalism and fundamentalism.”

She commented that during the Second Arab-African war, we had spoken of the banality of evil as we watched the war unfold on television. Now, perhaps, she said, we are seeing the evil of banality, as the world is destroyed by large corporations and by people who are not archetypal monsters but who are simply “motivated by the desire to own a second home in Connecticut...and that’s a much more complicated thing to resist.”

“I think that the people talking about globalism are the people who are talking about how they can make more money,” Haki Madhubuti said. He emphasized the value of the local and the historical cultures of all people. He defined culture as the lifestyle of a people, its memory, its families, its spirit, its genius, its wisdom. Supporting the positive
We have to have international trade unions. The goal of science is gradually to reduce prejudice. That’s certainly true if you interpret prejudice as preconceptions. That’s the point of rejecting authority and doing experiments. It is also true when we speak to others about ourselves from the study of the genome and the understanding of genes. What we’ve learned about ourselves from the study of the genome undermines rigid definitions of sex, undermines rigid definitions of species, and maybe some day we’ll learn that the plants are like us, too.

Our society blinds our children to reality and feeds them a commercial fantasy that brings them backwards in life. As a community, we need to educate our young to view life in a global perspective.

Edda Mena

Nails Bohr once said that the goal of science is gradually to reduce prejudice. That’s certainly true if you interpret prejudice as preconceptions. That’s the point of rejecting authority and doing experiments. It is also true when we speak to others about ourselves from the study of the genome and the understanding of genes. What we’ve learned about ourselves from the study of the genome undermines rigid definitions of sex, undermines rigid definitions of species, and maybe some day we’ll learn that the plants are like us, too.

Chris Quigg

expression of that culture as it replicates is, he said, the way to heal ourselves as a society. I think that finally it is important that each community, especially communities that have been forced into a segregated pattern in this country, create indigenous institutions that speak to their needs and their desires and their horrors. And then... the individuals in these institutions begin to speak to others. And hopefully they move toward a oneness. And that oneness does not mean that we’re talking globally, but first we have to start talking within the context of the communities in which we live here in Chicago, in Illinois, and most certainly in this nation.

“Unless we recognize the pluribus,” Don Marinnelli said, “we’re never going to appreciate the unum.” He asked why Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, or the Navajo Nation, for instance, could not be recognized as states. “I find myself wanting,” he said, “to reveal more and more in the pluribus of this country.”

THE PLURIBUS

Gómez-Peña asked the group to go beyond defining the Us and Them, to define ways to form strategic alliances to tackle society’s problems.

“We’re just going to have to make art and inflict it on each other!” Suzan Shown Harjo answered. “Maybe we can get through to each other that way.” Harjo sang a Native American song to show how art celebrates and connects us despite our differences.

Balderm Velaquez recommended strong international civil rights organizations as mechanisms to fight global economic powers. “We have to have an international NAACP. We have to have international trade unions.” He described these organizations nationally as our conscience. “When you accumulate wealth without conscience, people get hurt,” he said. Carlos Cumpián took us for a global walk through our closets, naming the clothes manufactured in Third World countries. After examining all the political freight in the garments, boots, shoes, and socks we wear, he concluded “Ah, hell, I think I’ll go naked today,” and plunged into a recitation of the places where we get our world news, echoing an earlier caution from Paul Correll to examine where we get our news.

Sandy Stone urged everyone to recognize the many invisible Others in our lives, using her own experience as a transsexual as a supreme example of crossing over:

What does it mean when you’re not a member of either community? When you’re not a man, you’re not a woman, but in some way you’re both of those and then something more. It’s the something more that I’m interested in here. Because if we transcend can do it, if we can figure out an identity which dances through the genders... could that be an analogy to our problem as people in our different ethnicities and our different nationalities and our different ways of looking at things?

She said that humans are not only “stuck on the arrow of time” but also “impaled on the sword of subject position,” which diminishes individual potential and therefore us all. Haki Madhubuti, introducing a theme that would echo throughout the whole symposium, declared that “children can lead the way….Children are not born racist nor born greedy.” He urged us to develop institutions that are honest and loving to children. He carried his comments into a poem that defined the profound power of poetry and art in our children’s lives. “A child’s on-fire imagination is the one universal prerequisite for becoming an artist. So magnify your children’s minds with art. Jump-start their questions with art. Introduce your children to the culture of the world.”

Don Marinnelli described his own gradual transformation from his younger existentialist self, to an artist who “does not need to marginalize [himself] and insist on standing outside of the mainstream in order to be heard.” This theme of acting in society as positive, creative, mature citizens was developed in many of the presentations of the symposium’s next days.

The evening opened with comments from the symposium audience. Joey Orr, calling for more thoughtfulness in public planning, described his work with the New Manchester Alliance in Atlanta, Georgia, and their goal of building a new town from the ground up. He said that he had found that many wealthy people in his community were ignorant of the average salary of the average worker and unaware of the average cost of a home. As a result, they lacked understanding of the ramifications of their actions and voting power in the community. In general, “what we lack is vision,” Orr said. “It takes sensitivity to realize what’s going on in your culture, the ability to envision something different, and the courage to bring that about.”

Expanding on Orr’s comments, Haki Madhubuti offered three rules to live by:

• be anti-corrupt, and fight corruption when you see it
• protect our children
• develop better understanding of how the world works and “move toward ownership.”

Gómez-Peña concluded the Town Meeting with a celebratory poem beginning:

I see
I see a whole generation
free-falling towards a borderless future
incredible mixtures beyond sci-fi...

The poem envisions a continent with no name, a future of no borders, an ecstatic polyglot “jumping borders at ease / jumping borders with pleasure.”

In the next two days, speakers and panelists set out to do that.
CLOSEUPS ON CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

Master of Ceremonies Joel Wachs (President, Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts) opened the first full day of the symposium, Friday, November 2, with a description of the Alliance of Artists Communities’ overarching goal to connect creative people from all disciplines, “whether it be the arts, science, business, or education,…and to link their creative activity (so that we can) help solve problems that the world sees today, historically, and certainly in the aftermath of 9/11.” The day began with presentations from two very different but creative and innovative communities.

LITTLE BLACK PEARL WORKSHOP
Monica Haslip
Monica Haslip founded Little Black Pearl Workshop with the objective of teaching children the profitable connections among art, education, and business. At the heart of the organization is a desire to create opportunities for children to participate in community development. Part of the mission statement that Haslip wrote in 1994 was: “Black art, like everything else in the black community, must respond positively to the reality of that community…The battle we are waging is the battle for the minds of our children. Art can play a role in empowerment, education, and survival.”

Little Black Pearl Workshop offers a variety of educational programs that allow children to make and sell their own art, primarily functional art. Mosaics and murals have become the Workshop’s signature. The children sell to both individuals and businesses in their own community, and have gained a great deal of attention for the beauty and quality of their work. The organization is so successful that it is in the midst of a major expansion into a new facility with wood, welding, glass-blowing, painting, and ceramics studios, as well as computer labs, a restaurant, a retail store, and an exhibition space. Haslip emphasized that selling the art is equally valuable to the making of the art, though that has been a controversial issue:

What I discovered is when you talk about art and business, sometimes that can get a little tricky. [However] a lot of my children come from relatively low-income environments. A lot of them have the need to contribute to their families economically. Combining something that makes money, but also…improves their environments at home, that’s a very important thing in terms of their ability to feel better about their lives.

This link between invention and economics and sustainability was a theme that would continue to be explored throughout the symposium. Joel Wachs, commenting on images in a film that Haslip showed of the children’s art, made note of the relationship between art and commerce:

Little Black Pearl Workshop is not all that dissimilar from adult artists. I have, like Jorge Parodi and Jim Levine and all who make art for art’s sake, but still their art does make money and it does enhance the environment. They may look at it differently, perhaps, to start with, but they’re really coming from the same place.

GAVIOTAS, COLOMBIA
Alan Weisman
Journalist Alan Weisman has been fascinated by the South American country of Colombia since 1988, when he first visited on assignment from the New York Times Magazine to study the cultural and natural resources of the country. The result of that trip was an article describing the chronic violence of Colombia’s warring factions and the terrible destruction of Colombia’s beautiful natural resources.

Several years later, Weisman returned to Colombia to cover a more hopeful story. As part of a National Public Radio series called “Searching for Solutions,” he traveled to the remote community of Gaviotas, in the eastern savannas of Colombia. Seventeen hours by jeep from the city of Bogotá and “four times the size of Holland,” the eastern savannahs feature eight months of rain each year as well as nutritionally poor soils. Despite these challenges, Weisman reported, the Gaviotan people had developed ingenious technologies and social systems that supported a peaceful and environmentally sustainable village.

The founder of Gaviotas is Paolo Lugari, described by Weisman as “one of the most creative individuals I’ve ever met, though he’s not an artist. He is what you might call a visionary.” Lugari, Weisman said, saw Colombia’s eastern savannas as “an area that could accept the overflow of population if only we could figure out how to live there.” He challenged a circle of soil engineers and mechanical engineers from Colombia’s universities to figure out how to make the savannahs livable, and to join him in living there.

Gaviotas is now thirty years old, and many more people have joined the experiment. They have survived and even thrived, says Weisman, because of the ingenuity of scientists, professors, students, volunteers, and “dispossessed people who were wandering homeless out in the eastern savannahs, and nomadic Indians whose land was being fenced off from their traditional way of life.” Together, these people applied their creativity to making a community in the middle of inhospitable lands. Weisman says “some energy coalesced around all of this—it didn’t matter whether you had an education or not; if you could come up with a good idea, it was incorporated into the community.”

Illustrating his comments with a series of slides, Weisman described the many, many ingenious engineering feats of the Gaviotans. For instance, a variety of solar collectors and solar-powered devices; hospitals air-conditioned by cool air from underground tunnels; lightweight aluminum windmills that can withstand the prairie fires; and lightweight plastic PVC pumps that reach seven times deeper into the ground than a conventional pump, thus avoiding contaminated water to find fresh water, and all powered by the swings and seesaws of a children’s playground. Gaviotans also built factories to produce their inventions, for sale to others in Colombia and eventually, to many other countries.

Weisman described how Gaviotans turned their nutritionally poor soils into an economically rewarding agriculture. By planting Caribbean pine trees, they harvested pine resin that could be sold for use in products ranging from paints, to medicines, to rosin for stringed-instrument bows. They created a factory to manufacture their own implements for tapping the resin, secured funding for it from the Inter-American Development Bank, and gave new employment to native people desperate for a means of survival, and who love working in the forest. The pine trees have also launched a regeneration of the ancient rain forest species below them, which will eventually choke the pines, but, as Weisman described, “The Gaviotans didn’t care because they keep planting more, they’ve got the savanna they can march across… it’s a wonderful thing to be putting back a rain forest when the rest of the world is destroying them.”

To believe in hope, to want to conceptualize the public good, to value one’s role as a citizen, to believe in public discourse have all been labeled provincial or naïve in this contemporary global debate. Yet without such imaginations, where are we—the human community—headed? We continue to want to talk about community within our new deterritorialized condition and yet we know that the distinctions of inside and outside, private and public, so fundamental to our notion of community, are in flux.

Carol Becker

If we have learned anything from watching the destruction of the World Trade Center, it is that the notion of progress is contested territory. One community’s definition of progress is another’s nightmare and target for destruction. Progress, as we have understood it in the West, can be obliterated. Its dominance is not inevitable.

Carol Becker
Weisman emphasized the “serendipity that happens in the creative process, where you just let anything go and you encourage anyone to try anything.”

Another unexpected bonus of the new growth is that the acidity of the soil changed, and Gaviotans are now growing coffee between the rows of pines. These are creative accidents, hearkening back to Lewis Hyde’s comments at the Alliance’s 1996 “American Creativity at Risk” symposium: “Enlightenment is an accident, but there are ways to make yourself accident-prone.”

Gaviotas has become a model community that is now sharing its ingenuity and technology with other Third World countries. It is an example of sustainable development that can teach so-called First World countries a great deal.

Gaviotas has experienced its failures too, Weisman said, but failures that eventually led to success. Weisman also described the limitations placed on Gaviotas by the country’s state of war:

Gaviotas has found itself surrounded by guerrilla warfare, paramilitary warfare. When I was there [five years ago], the place felt like the eye in a hurricane…. Yet it was still a place where children, by night, could walk without any fear. And one of the reasons is because at Gaviotas, there are no politics, and no rules… except for two: One rule is no dogs, because dogs run off wildlife…. And the other is no guns. At a very, very early point in their career, when the guerrilla war started, and the narcotics war was superimposed on top of that, they determined that they would be completely defenseless if they tried to arm themselves against outside forces. They let the whole world know—through music, through just telling people—that “nobody here can harm you.” And they also have maintained—through diplomatically it’s very, very difficult—neutral, to the extent that their hospital has been opened to all sides.

Gaviotas is, Weisman says, “one of the most sensible places and one of the most peaceful places I’ve ever seen, in one of the worst places on Earth, one of the most painful places on Earth.”

In his concluding remarks, Weisman brought the Gaviotas experience into close comparison to our own lives in the United States:

Here in my own country… I have told people, “If they can do it in Colombia, we can do it here.” But will we? Because we have it so, so easy here. Why come up with alternative energy when all we do is flip light switches? Well, maybe now (after 9/11) we have a sense of how tensions that security is…. Maybe now we feel much more like the rest of the world…. Maybe from the Gaviotas we can learn that… all we have to do is put our vision to work and we can do it here, too.

RESPONDENTS: A MEDITATION ON SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Weisman’s presentation, and Haslil’s before it, initiated a discussion among the Respondents on sustainable community, and what factors were most necessary to that sustainability. The Respondents—a group chaired by Roger Mandle and including Helene Fried, Edda Meza, Michael Naimark, Achy Obejas, Nick Rabkin, and Sandy Stone—had been asked to look for linkages among the ideas presented at the symposium. Mandle commented that Haslil’s and Weisman’s remarks had, for him, resonated with the Art Institute’s Van Gogh & Gaugin exhibition, viewed by symposium attendees that morning. Mandle described the two artists working together in Arles, as a “micromosaic community.” He continued:

I was struck by a statement [at the Art Institute exhibition] that was written on the wall to describe the Studio of the South. Their concept, of Gauguin and particularly Van Gogh, was to view art as a source of hope amid challenges of modern life, of the artist as a missionary prophet, and of a brotherhood of painters joined in the pursuit of shared beliefs. It struck me how similar that is [to Little Black Pearl Workshop and Gaviotas], and the way in which they attempted to make something greater than the sum of their parts.

Michael Naimark commented that the primary concept that bound Haslil’s and Weisman’s presentations was their sustainability. And what I think that means is three things: economic survival, closing the loop with society, and some kind of personal reward in the work that they’re doing. He noted that in the American system, where you have to choose between for-profit and non-profit structures, there is no mechanism in place to encourage this kind of activity.

Helene Fried commented on three factors prominent in both Haslil’s and Weisman’s remarks: innovation, motivation, and “the real belief that the entire community could be involved.” She commented that both presentations were examples of people breaking the conventional rules and looking at the future in a way that had never before been considered.

Nick Rabkin asked three questions in his response to Haslil’s and Weisman’s presentations. The first was “What is creativity?” The second, “Who gets to be creative?” which Rabkin described as “a key question for democracy.” And the third was “how is the capacity to be creative cultivated and developed in individuals and in communities?” As the symposium continued, speakers and presenters provided a range of answers to Rabkin’s questions.
WHERE THE GREEN ANTS DREAM
Aspects of Community In Six Parts

Carol Becker (Dean of Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago) derived the title for her speech from a 1985 Werner Herzog film called “Where the Green Ants Dream.” The film, set in Australia, explores conflicting paradigms of thought:

Australian aborigines, centered around a connection to the land, indigenous communities, ancient wisdom, and dreaming, stand in direct opposition to a mining company, which is run according to capitalist principles that affirm profit and the illusion of “progress” as the motivators of action. . . . The aborigines believe that at this precise location (land the miners wish to dig up) the green ants are dreaming the universe into existence. If the ants are awakened, or the coherence of their dream disturbed, chaos might be unleashed and the planet obliterated.

Becker says that Americans, in the wake of the 9/11 tragedies, are wrestling with similar ideological incompatibilities, such as:

• the conflict between tradition and modernity,
• the tension between individual identity and community,
• the blurring of personal sphere and public sphere, and
• the value and power of place, for a population that is at the same time experiencing unprecedented global travel and virtual community.

Becker suggested that Americans did not and could not have imagined the 9/11 tragedies, given our isolation and lack of awareness of our position in the world. However, Americans now feel a compelling need to understand the events that led to 9/11, she said, to understand their own country and communities, and to understand their relationship with the rest of the world:

Issues such as personal and collective security, the short- and long-term health of the economy, the importance of government, and even the concept of the future have become central, as have words that previously only existed on the periphery of most Americans’ consciousness—globalization, terrorism, Islam, suicide bombers, autocrats. But another word has taken on new and deeper associations—the word community. In the face of great catastrophe and loss, even New York City became a community.

This experience of community in crisis has aroused a yearning for better understanding, of ourselves, others, and of our ability to sustain relationships around the world, Becker said.

Throughout her speech, Becker offered us a variety of models of what community could be, as well as providing metaphors and stories to illustrate the power of “dreaming the future,” or using our creative powers to create a better world. She began with traditional communities such as Eressos, a small village she recently visited on the Greek island of Mysoline, better known as Lesbos, home of the Greek poet Sappho. Traditional communities, Becker said, tend to be on a small, simple scale, and they do not change much over time. Quoting Zygmunt Bauman, Becker said that humans have always needed “certainty, security, and safety.” Traditional communities provide physical and psychic comfort, though they may also be isolated and simple to the point of being boring for urban dwellers:

When we finally do bring our urban, modern, postmodern selves into direct connection with our own pre-modern desires for physical and psychic comfort, then we cannot fail to observe, as did Freud in Civilization and its Discontents, that civilization, as it progresses and becomes increasingly complex, does not necessarily make us happy. Since humans have created this world in which most of us live in the West, why do we not make it more habitable, for everyone? Is it because we are simple—our bodies seeking safety in scale, silence, and simplicity, while our minds race uncontrollably toward constant diversion? … Or are we just trying to leave the body—an unverifiable genetic organ—and are stuck midstream, still daintied by its urgencies?

Some time ago, in my travels to Australia to show a film called “Where the Green Ants Dream,” I met with aboriginal people who were against a mining company, which was run according to capitalist principles that reaffirm profit and the illusion of “progress” as the motivators of action. … The aborigines believe that at this precise location (land the miners wish to dig up) the green ants are dreaming the universe into existence. If the ants are awakened, or the coherence of their dream disturbed, chaos might be unleashed and the planet obliterated.

Becker built on this idea by referring to the Spielberg/Kubrick film AI (an acronym for artificial intelligence), about a cyborg who has been programmed to experience human desire. He specifically yearns for the unconditional love of his mother.

What can we make of this allegory? … When we imagine the evolution of the species, it is often expected that the inevitabilities of the flesh—its degeneration, decay, and ultimate death, its ability to torment us with pain and desire—will be transcended. … And we imagine that, freed from the biological body, we will also be free of the schemata caused by difference of race, class, ethnicity, and so on. We romanticize the technologically derived, liberated future. But Spielberg sees something else: what characterizes the species at all stages of its evolution is an insuperable longing for connection, intimacy, and community, all of which are oftentimes thwarted, while at the same time we are haunted by a profound inappropriateness to the suffering of others.

Becker commented that artists have always speculated about the future. “Science fiction authors have always presented the future to talk about the present,” she said. “And Fairy tales have always looked to a mythical past to talk about how the unconscious clings to this lost world and thus controls the present.” Becker went on to ask:

Can we use this public space (in this case created by film) to help chart the evolution of the species and the progression of ideas about our own existence on this planet?

Our ability to use the public sphere as a place to examine difficult questions about our civilization is becoming more and more difficult, Becker suggested. The public sphere is now “colonized” by the private sphere, and not the other way around as it used to be, she observed. She said that individualism seems to have superseded citizenship, and that “the act of dreaming a future for society has slipped out of fashion.” The public sphere has come to mean smaller and smaller units of place that perhaps no longer serve us well. And that would include looking at academic structures, looking at philan- thropic structures, looking at educational structures, and so on. I think that this moment could provide a tremendous opportunity for us to reinvent and to reimagine these structures.

Carol Becker

A community is a place where you cannot leave.”

Lewis Hyde

I think this particular moment both allows for and perhaps demands brutal honesty about the structures that we have in place that perhaps no longer serve us well. And that would include looking at academic structures, looking at philanthropic structures, looking at educational structures, and so on. I think that this moment could provide a tremendous opportunity for us to reinvent and to reimagine these structures.

Ruby Lerner

It feels at times as if “community” as a concept has come to mean smaller and smaller units of distinguishing characteristics and histories, more exclusive than inclusive, and rarely moving the species out of these groupings to embrace a greater whole. In truth most of us live simultaneously in multiple states of consciousness and often identify with multiple communities.

Choice, finally, is what we’re really talking about on every level. Education is central to it, and that’s just one of the central ideas of the arts.

Stanley Crouch

In truth most of us live simultaneeouslly in multiple states of consciousness and often identify with multiple communities. We are happy to acknowledge these complex identities and to find others whose identities also resist simplification. But in our need to cope with the ubiquitous nature of the global and our sense of impotence to affect it, many of us gravitate to more local, imaginable, and manageable communities. And so inevitably we land somewhere where we can negotiate inside and outside, private and public, self and other, individual and collective, and where we can function as individuals working with other individuals to bring something larger than our circumscribed identities into existence.

Carol Becker

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Carol Becker
Becker emphasized the need for different mechanisms within which humans can contribute to the public sphere:

Finding a base that can serve as a platform for actualizing one’s values is essential. It allows us to work for the present but also to dream for the future and perhaps to create an international community founded on certain agreed-upon principles.

She described her own institution, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, as her community or “location of practice” for the past twenty years. She described art schools as “repositories of tradition” as well as “places of great experimentation and innovation.” She said that art schools “help create the new but also are unsettled by it.” They “reflect the art world” in that they have a local community but are part of a global movement of ideas and aesthetics. In terms of community, art schools not only “educate the next generation of artists and designers,” but they provide a community for many people beyond the school, who attend lectures, galleries, films, etc., and who see them as a creative community. Becker also commented that while art schools must encourage their student artists to experiment, they must also guide them by contextualizing the students’ work in terms of history, local and global community, the art world, and the world in general.

While acknowledging all these benefits of an institution, Becker also said that the structure and governance of art schools tended to be outdated and not as creative as their art-making and teaching practices. Examples she gave included old-style hierarchies among faculty, administration, and staff; privileging one art form over another; rigid curricula; and uninspired environments. She issued a challenge to work toward a more creative approach:

How can we develop creative leadership that encourages new concepts of community? What about those less tangibile communities based on ideas and brought together outside institutions? Unstoppable by the specificity of place and tradition, what type of new terrain can they offer the imagination?

Moving next into an exploration of “ethical communities,” Becker came closer to the kind of community that is “dreamed into existence” by people with shared values and activism. These groups create visions for the future, Becker said, around goals and principles such as peace, environmental health, an end to poverty, an end to racism, anti-globalization, creative leadership. Getting closer to her central idea and the “green ants dreaming,” she said ethical communities worked to unleash human reason and imagination so that we can go beyond “polarizing issues of identity” to achieve our full potential.

Becker ended her presentation by describing the people in our society who are the green ants, those who are dreaming our future into existence:

Such creative people dream their dreams for the future on many fronts and can be found working in health care, education, numerous NGOs (non-governmental organizations), environmental agencies, and in their studios as artists, designers, and intellectuals.

Introducing a role for artists that Bill Joy would later express from a scientific perspective, Becker said that society depended on these creative minds when “the failure of a coherent vision for our own society’s future is all too apparent…. They make the art,” as Bauman writes, “that transforms the improbable into the inevitable.” And they create innovative structures that help humanity. In her final concluding words, Becker outlined a definition of purpose for the human species:

The collective project of our species is to engage in its own conscious evolution beyond individual identity, difference, and nationhood. Its success can best be measured by how well we care for, protect, and value each other’s lives.

RESPONDENTS: DREAMING THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

Roger Mandle opened the Respondents’ remarks by commenting on Becker’s challenge to us to define the word community “from a genealogical, a biological, a spatial, and a temporal perspective.” He commented that our challenge was “to be human” within our communities, despite many factors pulling us away from our own humanity. Edda Meza expanded this notion with the comment that “We should teach our young to unite with one another instead of categorize each other.”

Michael Naimark commented on two “rabbit holes” in Carol’s dense, idea-rich speech, and he defined “rabbit holes” as profoundly deep ideas that “question us to rethink things.” The first was the importance of place, and territory, to our sense of community and home, and the second was the ambiguity of progress, and the question of whether progress was inevitable. Nick Rabkin continued this thread of thought, referring to a third “rabbit hole” being the idea of “traditional communities and dreaming the past.” He commented on the theory that the past and modernity were at odds with each other, the past representing certainty, and modernity the ambiguity of progress, and the question of whether progress was inevitable. He challenged us to “think of community in those terms and ask yourself what community you belong to.”

Helene Fried remarked on Becker’s discussion of dreamers and dreaming the future, and the power of that dreaming to affect the future. Roger Mandle invited symposium audience members to comment, and several asked questions of Carol Becker. Sharon Fernandez commented that artists were “finding it harder and harder to dream and are caught somewhere between confusion and nostalgia.” What, then, she asked, “allows us to have vision?” Becker responded that while it was a very difficult question to answer (“If I could answer that, I would deserve the Nobel Prize”), she felt that the Buddhist belief that wisdom comes in silence, was one place to start. She said that in order for original ideas to have space to grow, it was necessary to retreat, not into isolation, but into an environment that allowed one to examine, think, and form new ideas and images.

“Sounds like,” Mandle commented, “…an artists’ community.”
WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Dr. Clifford Jones

Is There a Will for a Better World?

Art as a community is a visual merging of diversity. It is blending, a colorful blending, mutual diversified blending, where the self can become a part of the community earth.

Dr. Clifford Jones

That capacity to build on hope is what art really brings to all these kinds of projects if they are truly community-based and truly collaborative. It's that capacity to build on hope that we can help create.

T. Allan Camp

On the outside back cover of Reason for Hope: A Spiritual Journey by Jane Goodall with Philip Berman, he said, “The revolutionary studies of Tanzania’s Chimperezes have altered our definition of humanity.” A study of Chimperezes in Tanzania has altered our definition of society, interpersonal dynamics, socialization, caring, forgiveness, companionship, trust and love. Family not only do Chimperezes have ability but also the will for harmony in the midst of harshness and hardships.

Modeling the Chimperezes’ emotional system we can teach us if we have a will. It was Viktor Frankle who quoted Nietzsche who said, “He who has a why to live can bear with almost any how.” Reflectively, Dr. Goodall said, “God is at the beauty around me. I must have slipped into a state of heightened awareness... I felt utterly absent and the Chimperezes, the earth and trees and air seemed to merge—to become one with the spirit power of life itself.”

Clifford Jones

“I say!” murmured Horton. “I’ve never heard the human brain as “an unfathomed possibility,” referring to humankind’s advances in science, technology, medicine, and transport. He urged us to take courage both in the fact of this intelligence, and in that we were now beginning to face up to our community problems.

As an example of the second reason for hope, the resilience of nature, Dr. Jones described the Ardmore community in the Champagne Valley of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, where the community produces art that embodies the patterns and powers of nature, “vibrant ceramics, ranging from functional domestic ware to sculptural art in decorative African tradition.” Dr. Jones quoted Zanele Mbeki:

Ardmore artists draw inspiration from birds, mammals, reptiles, butterflies and flowers, most of which are indigenous to the African subcontinent... These visual sources, combined with traditional Zulu folklore... and Christian narratives... are transformed to constitute subjects that have become associated with Ardmore.

In a comment that foreshadowed the upcoming presentation by Street-Level Youth Media, Dr. Jones continued, “In true South African rural tradition, most of the pieces are a social enterprise where the end product cannot truly be claimed as the work of one individual. One artist throws, another paints, and yet another glazes, each contributing his or her artistic talent to the work.”

Dr. Jones’s third reason for hope, the energy and enthusiasm that can be kindled among young people worldwide, led us back to 1958-1960 when the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was working to change race laws prohibiting black people from sitting at public lunch counters. Seventy thousand students, Dr. Jones said, both black and white, joined together in protests around the country to change the law. Jones quoted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to describe the importance of the youthful energy that pushed the movement:

It was the young veteran who gave the first surge of power to the postwar civil rights movements. It was the high school, college and elementary school young people who were in the front line of the school desegregation struggle. Let it be forgotten, the opening of hundreds of schools to Negroes for the first time in history required that there be young Negroes with the moral and physical courage to face the challenges and, all too frequently, the moral danger presented by mob resistance.

For his fourth reason for hope, the indomitable human spirit, Dr. Jones spoke of our relationship with animals, Chimpanzees specifically. He recalled a recent incident where a zoo visitor rescued an adult male Chimp from drowning in the most surrounding his enclosure, despite warnings against doing so by both the keeper and the other male Chimps. When asked why he risked his life, the rescuer said: “I looked into his eyes. It was like looking into the eyes of a man, and the message was, won’t anybody help me?”

Dr. Jones related the Chimp’s plea to the cry from the speck of dust: “Won’t anybody help me?” and the idea of the most to “an actualized Divine idea” that has been ravaged by war, inhumanity, bigotry, and indifference. He went on to urge us as artists, as humans, as members of communities:

1. Don’t give past failures and disappointments permission to harden the flexible tips of present possibilities.
2. Don’t allow possibly perceived limited resources to limit and dry the fresh laster of challenge.
3. Work with the committed few that in time can effect lasting change.

Dr. Jones stated that “religion and the faith community have not historically, culturally, nor socially demonstrated the masterpiece of community—The Beloved Community.” But he cited a recent project in his home city of Charlotte, North Carolina as one positive example. Led by symposium chair Peter Richards (who was then at the Tyrone (now McColl) Center for Visual Art), the project brought together an exhibition of Christian and Jewish contemporary artists. The exhibition, Jones said, has launched a dialogue in Charlotte and “demonstrated unified diversity.”

Dr. Jones closed with a return to the voice atop the speck. He called for us to affirm reasons for hope, and to practice due diligence in striving for a better “universal canvas.”

He ended with a quote from Revelations (21:21-22 KJV), describing the many hues and colors of the gates of heaven. “All this was garnished,” Jones elucidated, “with precious stones flicked out by a master chief, with the dexterity of an elderly surgeon, and the nimbleness of hand of an internist, and all, he suggested, contained in the small, “smiling, fulfilled” speck of dust.

The act of dreaming a future for society has dipped out of fashion. Postmodernism as a philosophical/theoretical movement in thought and art-making has blunted us from certain hierarchies of value which needed to be displaced, but it has also made the realm of imagining any type of scheme future appear sentimental and nostalgic. To believe in hope, to want to conceptualize the public good, to value one’s role as a citizen, to believe in public discourse have all been labeled provincial or naive in this contemporary global debate. Yet without such imaginings, where are we—the human community—headed?

Carol Becker

Without recognizing how deep and potentially powerful are these desires for an ethos/human response to the needs of others—through activist projects, and acts of compassion, in physical space as well as in ideas—all visions of future communities will not satisfy, because they will deny the community, the one we all share and, like all organic communities, rarely discuss—our humanity.

Carol Becker

It’s a pleasure, given the amount of dark energy there is around right now, to feel the corporeality of positive energy productive positive energy.

Michael Naimark

Finally, with our best collabor-ative efforts, the voice, the real voice atop the speck, is God. Affirming there are reasons for hope and it is ours to strive and secure for all on the universal canvas.

Dr. Clifford Jones

The art of dreaming a future for society has dipped out of fashion. Postmodernism as a philosophical/theoretical movement in thought and art-making has blunted us from certain hierarchies of value which needed to be displaced, but it has also made the realm of imagining any type of scheme future appear sentimental and nostalgic. To believe in hope, to want to conceptualize the public good, to value one’s role as a citizen, to believe in public discourse have all been labeled provincial or naive in this contemporary global debate. Yet without such imaginings, where are we—the human community—headed?

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Carol Becker
CLOSEUPS ON ARTIST SUPPORT SYSTEMS

CREATIVE CAPITAL
Ruby Lerner
Ruby Lerner (Executive Director and President of the innovative funding organization, Creative Capital) began by describing the events leading up to the birth of Creative Capital, which she described as “the first lesson of the story.”

During the past two decades, Lerner said, the culture wars and the National Endowment for the Arts’ decision, along with other funders, to get out of the business of funding individual artists, left a very poor, flat landscape for artists in terms of support. During the 1990s, various ideas sprang up at meetings and symposia around the country on how to remedy the situation.

The Alliance’s 1996 “American Creativity at Risk” symposium proved to be a catalyst in the birth of Creative Capital. At the symposium, Lewis Hyde proposed a tax on art works in the public domain, that would then be invested in a fund for individual artists. The Andy Warhol Foundation’s recent past President Arch Gillies, in attendance at the meeting too, was inspired by this and other ideas presented at the symposium, and went back to his board ready to act.

Lerner explained that the organization, “launched in the midst of the dotcom boom,” set out to provide long-term support to artists, both financial and advisory, and to promote the visibility and financial success of the artists involved. “The idea is,” she said, “that if a project becomes financially successful, something will come back to the fund to help support the next generation of artists’ projects.” Not unlike Hyde’s proposed tax, the idea is of a sustainable community structure that funnels its commercially successful constituents’ profits back into providing support for others, who may go on to do the same.

Creative Capital’s mission is to support innovative artists in the performing arts, visual arts, media, and emerging fields. Lerner described “emerging fields” as their “catchall category for interactive installation and new media and technology work.” They now support 118 artists’ projects, which Ruby mentioned were described on their website, www.creative-capital.org.

Lerner linked Creative Capital’s mission to the ideas that had been presented in the presentations before hers, in a further strong testimony to the power of convening creative people: “We [at Creative Capital] are trying to vision a future and embody that dream in the present moment in a new structure for artist support,” she said.

Focusing on the structure of Creative Capital, as a way to shed light on a model of innovative philanthropy, Lerner explained the organization’s financial situation: With Warhol Foundation’s leadership, 38 funders have since committed close to $7 million to the organization’s first five years of operation.

The Warhol Foundation has also committed an additional $10 million, requiring a match by 2004, to help Creative Capital launch an endowment campaign.

The organization provides four kinds of support:
1. specific support for the art project
2. help with career and business planning for the artist
3. nurturing of an artists’ community or network, through bringing artist grantees together
4. promotion of the artists and engagement of the public in their work

Lerner said that Creative Capital’s broad support of the artist, beyond funding of the project itself, counters the “culture that infantilizes artists.” Each artist develops a three- or five-year plan for themselves. Touching on a theme explored by Dr. Jones earlier, she also commented that Creative Capital had identified the specific goal of “helping the work reach communities beyond the arts world.” She referred to work that related to various other disciplines, such as the environment, technology, globalization, and to issues surrounding immigration, assimilation, youth culture, women, racism, and homophobia.

We think that this work might have a usefulness or a life in communities way beyond the world. So we’re interested in its place in the arts community, and we’re also interested in how it might be useful in the larger society.

INVESTING IN CREATIVITY: A SUPPORT STRUCTURE FOR ARTISTS IN THE UNITED STATES:
A PROJECT OF THE URBAN INSTITUTE
Maria-Rosario Jackson and Holly Sifford
Researcher Maria-Rosario Jackson and Planner Holly Sifford presented their ongoing work for the Urban Institute into the support available to American artists. Joel Wachs introduced them, commenting that such research was vital to “building the case for greater support” of artists, as well as “political and public appreciation of the role of art and artists in our culture and society.”

Sifford began the presentation by commenting that they were about a year into their study, and that the study was partially a reaction (echoing Lerner’s remarks) to the culture wars and the waning of support for individual artists. She said that thirty-eight funders, led by the Ford Foundation, are sponsoring the study. Again reflecting Lerner’s description of Creative Capital, she said that a central goal of the study is to “link the issue of artist support to other large policy sectors—health, education, community development, and a variety of other realms.”

The project involves a two-track effort,” Dr. Jackson continued, of both research and communications/constituency-building to arouse interest in the issues they are studying. Jackson is leading the research, while Sifford leads communications efforts.

Jackson said they are drawing on many sources to create a new, centralized database, the National Information Network for Arts, that will contain information on existing support systems for artists. It will be continually updated in the future, and is intended for use by artists, funders, cultural organizations, researchers, and policy-makers.

The kind of information that we’re gathering…is information about grants and awards: who’s applying for them, who’s getting them, where is the money going, how long do they last, are they annual or five-year grants, are they cash only, are they in-kind, do they include travel?

A large component of the project involves “local study,” whereby nine cities (Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Cleveland, Boston, New York, Washington DC, and Houston) will be examined specifically for the kinds of support they provide to their artists. Touching on themes introduced by Jones and Lerner, Jackson said that they were taking an “ecological approach” to studying each city.
Jackson went on to comment on the many different “manifestations of what an artist is,” and how studying and identifying these identities could lead to better jurying and more appropriate support:

If you have a studio artist that is being judged with criteria that’s applied to an artist who’s working in community, that’s not a good match…On a different dimension, when you talk about racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity within many of our U.S. cities, if you have expressions that are rooted in other histories, are there the adequate validating mechanisms in place to judge that work within that appropriate historical context?

RESPONDENTS: EXAMINING THE ARTISTS’ ROLE

Roger Mandle launched the Respondents’ remarks by commenting on both Dr. Jones’s and Ruby Lerner’s references to how artists connect with organizations outside the art world. Latching onto ideas with Lerner’s comment that society tends to infantilize artists, he continued:

If you play each of those [ideas] back on each other, they reinforce a null set in which artists are not so easily deceived by what our political system would attempt to do to them. And given the right circumstance, they will, in fact, rise up with a very clear vision of what truth means and creativity means. I personally tend to trust that when the moment is at hand for them to do that, they will.

Achy Obejas, in remarks as she joined the Respondents for the first time, commented on Sidford’s observations that media coverage of art and artists had diminished in past years. Obejas suggested that Jackson and Sidford engage media very directly, with a frank appeal to the media’s civic responsibility. She underlined the potential influence of the study’s funders and policy-making partners:

The mainstream media does not respond to artists per se. When artists call up or write in or discuss their projects, it doesn’t respond. But media does respond to policy-makers and it does respond to the MacArthur Foundation and it does respond to the Wholphin Foundation and a variety of other institutions that are set in place to support artists.

Michael Naimark commented that artists themselves have a responsibility for increasing the public’s understanding for their work. He referred to the writer and historian Lawrence W. Levine’s contention that:

America reshaped its cultural superstructure at the turn of the last century and removed the arts from most people… Artists became ‘gatekeepers’, to a particular strata of American society… And what it leaves most people with are experiences in the arts that they don’t find valuable.

Sandy Stone, reflecting on both Obejas’s and Rabkin’s comments, pointed out that many artists themselves work in the media, writing articles, designing web sites, making films and videos. “Where is the point at which they say, ‘it’s time for some of us here to take control of our futures, our lives, and the way that our community is perceived’ and do something about that?”

Helene Fried seemed to capture the general feeling amongst all of the symposium attendees, when she said that the role of “the indomitable human spirit,” (Dr. Jones’s phrase) had struck her profoundly in the presentations that day. “It is about a life force—within individuals and within collective communities—and it is about doing the work and about being responsible and accountable,” she said. “The presentations this afternoon made me think differently than I did this morning. I no longer have reservations about an ambitious agenda and the hope for what artists and art-minded people can do.”

In Houston eight years ago, nine years ago, there was something like six or seven people writing in the local newspapers about arts—critics and commentators. There’s new ones.

Holly Sidford

What do people value in their lives? Do they value art?

I think for most Americans the answer is no. And I think that’s a problem that artists need to deal with more than anybody else. We all know that the arts could have value in people’s lives. We hear stories from innumerable people who have seen the arts have touched about the transformations, the positive transformations that they’ve gone through as a result of the arts. But most people don’t have those experiences. And I would suggest are we going to get scared and do the wrong thing. But how are we going to get scared and do the right thing if no one’s speaking truthfully?

Bill Joy

In November 2001

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Bill Joy
If you create an environment where young people's social and emotional needs are met, then they can achieve academically. But as long as you ignore their social and emotional needs, they can never achieve anything. It's just not right. And so a lot of the work that we've been doing is to kind of create that opportunity first. And that requires dialogue.

Tony Shults

Although we have spoken of creativity in both broad and specific perspectives, I've only heard a few who have actually been in the subject, the reason why this symposium: the future of creativity brought to bear by mainstream media's impossible-to-reach images and stereotypes. When asked what very specific piece of advice would you want this group of people here at the symposium to take back to their communities, several direct suggestions, paraphrased here, were given by the young Street-Level journalists:

• Be very, very open-minded.
• Use music as a way to explore and understand new cultures.
• Simplify your message so that it will become universal.
• Be true to yourself. Don't over-think.
• Change the way children are taught.
• Be true to yourself. Don't over-think.
• Provide better access to the arts, arts that are more than "coloring between the lines."
• Eliminate private schools, and support better public schools.
• Support the founding of many more programs, like Street-Level Youth Media and Little Black Pearl Workshop, that provide young people access to the arts.
• Promote collaborative teams and include people with opposing views on the same teams.

Echoing Dr. Jones's reference to the Ardmore community in South Africa, Streit emphasized the importance of teamwork in the projects Street-Level conducted, and commented that no individual credits were given on their films. Upon being asked if they were "OK with being grouped together as a collective," the youth described why it was "not so much the game to get your name out there."

Collaboration is wonderful, especially when you have people with opposing views. It's our hard times and our bickering that makes the good times great. And that's the truth. And when you see the end product, you're like, "Wow, we got this far!" And you were constantly fighting or whatever, bickering over ideas, conflicts of interest. And it just makes your piece better because you have more than one view. That's what our world is. It's not just one view; one norm; it's actually not a norm at all. It's our diversity that makes so great.

In a prediction for the future, a symposium audience member referred to the growing access to information around the world, through the internet:

All [Street-Level's work on this symposium] is going up on the Web, and it's easy for anybody in the world to see what they've been doing as it is for us or somebody next door. [But] we know there are countries where owning a modem is illegal right now. This is really a very bad joke... because it's impossible to control something like this. It's not going to happen for much longer. Sometime quite soon almost everybody—I hope everybody—will have this sort of Internet access... and then I think the whole game changes. That's what I think is in store for the future here.
REPORT ON FUTURE OF CREATIVITY
NOVEMBER 1-3, 2001

Nick Rabkin

This morning’s presentations have stressed the role of artists as community organizers, problem-solvers, hope- and vision-builders, and citizens. That’s a very different thing than what artists are trained for in art school...The place of art is in communities schools, churches, youth centers, parks, and not just in galleries. The lesson of Street-Level Youth Media to Untotndale is that our paradigm for what art is, is too small and constrained...Art can have value to more people. It can give it credit for. It has been strained...Art can have value to more people. It can give it credit for. It has been strained.

Alan Comp has pioneered a project to replace poisoned landscapes with sustainable wetlands, and to transform depressed communities into hopeful, creative, collaborative ones. To launch his presentation, he began with some visual history of the kind most of us never learn at school: slide images of grim, forlorn coal country in the eastern United States. Stretching across Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Oklahoma, Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana, coal country, Comp said, is a “vast kind of eastern mountain ecosystem.” He continued.

It is a place where the headwaters of most of the major rivers of the mid-Atlantic and the southeast originate...It provided the energy that virtually, almost quite literally, created this nation. This coal built the railroad, fueled railways and steel mills, and drove the early Industrial Revolution through World War II in this nation.

Comp said that although coal is still “a huge part of our energy picture,” mechanization and globalization trends since World War II have led to the abandonment—by business, government, and social support systems—of coal mining communities. However, the coal mining families themselves have not abandoned their towns and camps, exhibiting a deep loyalty to place despite extreme economic depression. “We have turned our backs and walked away, and we have kept our backs turned for half a century. There is a sense of...failure in these people who have become part of a culture...of limited expectations.”

Along with this culture of failure, these communities are also plagued by a serious environmental problem called “acid mine drainage,” water laden with metals that drain out of abandoned coal mines and contaminate streams and soils, and therefore flora and fauna. “It is the orange, silent signature of dying communities all over Appalachia,” Comp said, referring to the bright orange of the iron sediment that acid mine drainage leaves along the bottom of streams.

Comp gave a quick background on the natural benefits of wetlands. He said that wetland areas filter the water that passes through them, and as scientists learned this over recent decades, they began to use the concept of wetlands to create passive treatment systems. Comp showed a slide of such a system, “a series of little rectangular ponds.” As scientists began watching and developing these systems, they noticed that in the ponds toward the end of the system, plants and small animal life began to grow and become abundant.

Realizing that perhaps he could help coal communities purify their water and at the same time “start to destabilize negative expectations in the culture, fix something much bigger than the water,” Comp began dreaming the possibilities. During residencies he examined precedents, such as Buster Simpson’s River Roloids Project, Mel Chin’s Revival Fields Project, Herbert Bayer’s park in a flood area, and Bexy Park built in a Palo Alto land-fill and designed by Peter Richards, Michael Oppenheimer, and George Hargreaves. The common attributes of these projects included:

• a gestation period for the creators to imagine and develop the project
• collaboration not only of artists and scientists, but of the entire community
• cooperation with government bureaucracy
• a sense of transformation, from environmental degradation to a renewed sense of hope and the beauty of nature
• a strong public face and often a sense of whiny—in the case of Buster Simpson’s project, for instance, he carved large lime-stone disks to look like Roloids tablets, put them in a stream suffering from acid rain, and had three television stations film him.

As Comp developed his thinking, he struck him: “Instead of building it like a sewage treatment plant and putting it behind a fence, couldn’t we sort of flaut it, get-in-your-face, with something really exciting, something that people might want to do?”

Comp launched his project in Vintondale, Pennsylvania, where the Vinton Colliery Company had thrived during the first half of the twentieth century. Today, however, “seven percent of the families with children live in poverty, and for every dollar earned by the average Pennsylvania, the average Vintondale resident earns forty-eight cents.”

Comp described how the Vinton Colliery had been innovative in its time, having been the first to use a longwall mining technique. But by the 1980s, the mine site had become the town dump, a sad metaphor for the negative culture of the community. “The real challenge was, could we turn this into a place that honored the work of preceding generations, literally the grandfathers and great grandfathers of people who still lived there?”

Despite the doubts of the townpeople, Comp and his team began meetings with the community. About ten percent of the population attended. This group was asked to write down their ideas for the town, and “the challenge to us as artists and designers and scientists was to give form to those aspirations.”

With a focus on cross-generational collaboration, the community slowly began engaging in transforming their town: they built habitat for animal life (such as bat boxes and birdhouses); they built a park dedicated to hot-rodming bike kids; they created art exhibits. At the same time, Comp’s team designed and built a thirty-five-acre site that includes a wetland treatment system gardens of native trees and bushes (called a “littmus garden” because its changing colors over the seasons reflect the growing health of the water); a “History Wetlands” (the site of an old colliery transformed into an educational wetland area); and an active recreation area (including a volleyball, horseshoe, picnic area, baseball and soccer fields).

Alongside the site is a public “Grail Trail” used each year by about seventy-five thousand people. This placement was intentional, to allow as many people as possible to see the project and learn about the environmental issues that plaque not just Vintondale but all of coal country.

Over the course of the seven-year project, more and more members of the community joined in. Fifty percent of the population attended the groundbreaking ceremonies.
And during a three-week drought, the volunteer fire department, made up of community members who had once scouted at the project, hand-watered each of the 900 trees and shrubs that had been planted in the “limus garden.” Clearing the site of the old cowery to install the History Wetlands involved a long drawn out bureaucratic process with state authorities, but eventually resulted in positive collaborations with the Army Corps of Engineers, the Wildlife Habitat Council, and the Department of Transportation.

The Vintondale project was led mostly on a volunteer basis by Comp and volunteer artists, scientists, and designers. It was staffed by young Americanoecis and VISTA student workers—“the real future of creativity,” Comp commented.

Comp summarized the major lessons of his experience at Vintondale so far:

1. Time for creative thinking,—the kind of support that residencies and artists’ communities provide,—are key to launching innovative projects.

2. Artists must think of themselves as citizens, “part of the planet. We cannot divorce ourselves from the ecology, from the ecosystem in which we exist.”

3. Artists must manage: “My theme for managing this project has been that no discipline will ever be allowed to compromise, never. But every one of them must accommodate. That sense…has been what made this project truly possible.”

4. Collaboration among disciplines is essential. “Every one of the disciplines was absolutely necessary and none were sufficient. That measure of our need for collaboration is critical.”

Comp said that there were countless more communities that need similar projects, and he asked symposium attendees to contact him if they knew of other projects with a similar “collaborative base and measurable outcomes.”

He concluded his remarks by urging new funding programs and studies to look beyond urban areas and to consider rural and collaborative projects, because “there’s a future there, too, for creativity.”

**Fermilab**

*Chris Quigg*

Theoretical Physicist Chris Quigg is part of a large science laboratory, called the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, located just west of Chicago. Fermilab is run by 82 universities, located primarily in the United States and Canada, on behalf of the U.S. Department of Energy.

Quigg described Fermilab’s accelerator as “the most powerful microscope that human beings have ever made, that enables us to study the attributes of matter and energy and space and time.” Fermilab is a world leader in particle physics research (that is, the study of tiny, subatomic particles that have a definite mass and charge). Showing an aerial slide of Fermilab, Quigg pointed out the world-famous accelerator, describing it as a “ring…exactly 2 pi kilometers around, a little less than four miles around.”

Fermilab was founded by physicist Robert Wilson, who was also an accomplished sculptor. Wilson named Fermilab after the Italian-American physicist Enrico Fermi, who among many other scientific contributions, illuminated the nature of neutrinos as well as the theory of weak interactions.

Quigg showed a number of slides of the buildings, structures, and sculptures at Fermilab. Robert Wilson was “responsible for the look and feel of our laboratory and a lot of the attributes that you see around it,” Quigg said. “One of Wilson’s ideas was that it was important to create an environment in which we would find pleasure in working, but also that others would know that something important was being done here.”

Quigg drew further parallels between Fermilab and artists’ communities, commenting that Fermilab provides its residents with:

- The shelter of a typical artists’ colony and…a meeting place on a grand scale, as residency programs often are. It has aspects of a large city, where you find a concentration of talent and the most amazing people in the field that you can come and meet.

Echoing Allan Comp and Alan Weisman’s earlier presentations, Quigg spoke of the integration of the architectural and technological structures with the landscape. For instance, functional cooling water reservoirs were made into attractive ponds and brooks. A berm was built above the accelerator tunnel in order to give texture to the land as well as a visible presence, when viewing the accelerator from the air. The remains of the battleship USS New Jersey were used to provide shielding for the accelerator, and Wilson also used some of the same materials to create a sculptural arch (called “Broken Symmetry”) over the laboratory entrance. Many more of Wilson’s sculptures are distributed around the site, too. What might be considered Wilson’s crowning glory, or crowning whimsey, however, is a herd of buffalo that roam one area of Fermilab as “reminders of the pioneer spirit and of the American West in which Wilson grew up.”

Fermilab has two thousand employees, among which about 350 have advanced degrees in physics, computer science, or engineering, as well as others who “make things work.” Quigg expanded on this, almost as a definition of Allan Comp’s earlier comment that “every one of the disciplines was absolutely necessary and none were sufficient.”

One of the grand pleasures for me as a theoretical physicist, someone who deals in ideas and abstracts and synthesis, is to be around people who can actually build things and make those work, the experimental physicists, the technicians, the amazing artists who can weld joints that will remain perfect joints at a temperature of a few degrees above absolute zero and so on. So this is kind of an artists’ colony, but on quite a grand scale.

In addition to employees, Quigg said that at any one time, Fermilab has in residence between 600 and 1,000 “people from outside—professors, students, post-doctoral fellows, and so on—who are working on the accelerator and doing experiments.” Fermilab has made a serious commitment to further generations of scientists, too. As well as a hands-on museum, they run extensive programs for students in middle school, high school, college, and post-graduate study.

Quigg offered symposium audience members a brief overview of the major scientific revolutions over the past five hundred years. He described the “rejection of authority” revolution of “not taking anybody’s word for anything, but learning instead to interrogate the nature, to read nature by doing experiments.” As a result, all good scientific ideas, Quigg said, must be tested through experimentation.

A second great change over the centuries, Quigg said, was in the way people contemplated the great questions (“Where did the world come from? Where will it go? Who am I?”). Galileo and his contemporaries discovered that in order to expand contemplation of these questions, it was necessary to “focus on little questions, on observations you can make, and to proceed from the minute particular out to larger truths. That’s the essence of science today.”

As a scientist at Fermilab, Quigg said, he has realized that human senses are limited, and that new instruments are needed to allow us to see the world in new ways. For instance, our eyes cannot detect microwaves, but new instruments now allow us to see these so that we can study temperature and its effects in our world. He said that scientific progress, throughout history, has been tied to the development of new instruments.

Inside Fermilab’s accelerator ring, Quigg said, protons swirl just 2.45 miles short of the speed of light. Colleagues in Geneva are currently building an accelerator seven times more powerful, in a 2,500-member laboratory that also plays an important role in encouraging European unity. Quigg commented that scientific collaboration with colleagues in Geneva and in other parts of the world could play an important role in political leadership and collaboration worldwide.
That aspect of our science, of getting to know people from abroad, of course competing, but at the same time collaborating and learning that they’re actually scientists with the same ideals you have, is uplifting for us, and a great example, I think, for the rest of the world.

Expanding on this theme of collaboration, Quigg described Fermilab’s project to build the Collider Detector that discovered the “top quark.” About three stories high and weighing five thousand tons, the Collider Detector involved 600 to 700 physicists, technicians, engineers, etc.: It’s like singing a Verdi requiem. There are things that you can’t do by two or three people, for which you need an ensemble of three hundred people or so. You give up some autonomy, but at the same time you can do things that you couldn’t possibly contemplate otherwise.

Again referring to the limitations of human senses, Quigg said that “the human scale is not privileged for understanding nature.” In a description that could be a metaphor for our need for humility in approaching other cultures and peoples around the world, Quigg described the minute world of the atomic:

The rules of the atomic world occur, and have been discovered, at a scale a billion times smaller than the human scale. We’re now looking at experiments at Fermilab a billion times smaller than that! A billionth of a billionth of human scale!... Those [atomic] laws don’t have to explain themselves to us in our terms, but their obligation is to explain our world upon their terms. And that, they do extraordinarily well. I think this is a great lesson. It’s to me, as important as the discovery by Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton and contemporaries that we’re not at the center of the universe.... It is a very important lesson in humility for us and helps us understand, in a way that we didn’t before, our place in the universe.

Still, Quigg said, it is important that science be done by people who continue to interrogate nature. He said that a great deal of what scientists do at Fermilab is by statistical analysis of events. He also said that science does not always have to go smaller, “sometimes it’s stepping back and getting the big picture.” He related this to artistic research:

This is something which is clearly true in all sorts of artistic endeavors, to try to get some strangeness from your everyday experience, back off or zoom in so you can understand things better.

Quigg went on to summarize some of the themes he and his Fermilab colleagues are now studying. The following could be a list of artists’ themes, too:

1. **Elementarity**—The basic particles we now know about (quarks and leptons) appear to be elementary, to have no internal structure. Is this true, or is it just a limitation of our current instruments?

2. **Symmetry, diversity, change**—What are their roles and relationships in science and particle physics?

3. **Unity**—How can we work toward a network of information and explanations that fit together, or break out of that network and define a new one?

4. **Identity**—Can we define the character of different particles, what makes them different, why they are different?

5. **Space and time**—Are there in fact other dimensions that make up our world, up to six or seven perhaps, that we cannot yet see?

Quigg described this last idea, the idea of six or seven dimensions, as “completely preposterous, which is why it’s so delicious that it might be true.” He described a group of young, radical theorists who were working on this notion of other space and time dimensions, and commented that science’s job was to “challenge assumptions…and give us new ways of thinking.”

Quigg ended his presentation with a quote from Tony Lewis, writing in a millenarian essay that was published at the end of 1999 in *The New York Times*. The quote added a fifth reason for hope—openness to reason—to the list given by Clifford Jones the day before. It also echoes the Street-Level youth’s advice to “be very, very open-minded.”

“If there’s been one transforming change over this thousand years, it is the adoption of the scientific method, the commitment to experiment, to test every hypothesis. But it is broader than science, it is the open mind, the willingness in all aspects of life to consider possibilities other than the received truth. It is openness to reason.”
Bill Joy (Co-Founder and Senior Scientist, Sun Microsystems) opened his remarks by referring to a talk he once gave on how to use technology to reduce poverty. He said he began preparing for the talk by trying to define poverty, and alternately, the absence of poverty, which could be described simply as happiness.

Joy cited Edith Hamilton, the author of The Greek Way, who said the ancient Greeks defined happiness as the “exercise of vital forces along lines of excellence in a life affording them scope.” Parsing this quote, he went on to suggest the three main ingredients of happiness:

- Basic material needs are met (vital forces)
- Education is accessible (lines of excellence)
- There is opportunity to pursue interests and passions (scope)

Joy had been expected to focus that talk on how future technologies could lift third world countries out of poverty. But he felt pessimistic about this idea, and realized that rather than major new technologies, “very, very simple things would make an enormous difference,” such as access to oil cans, irrigation pipes, solar panels, cell phones, TV bulbs, effective microfilters, for instance. What would not help, he said, was high technology such as genetically engineered crops.

Joy spoke from the point of view of the lab is one thing. Science in the much science. Science in the prevent error by doing so to believe that we’re going to imagine engaging others, and imagine engaging society, enjoy the company of such space, whether actual or ideas as well as goods are public/market space, where humans can meet as such as genetically engineered crops. We’ll become robots, we’ll download our brains onto silicon and become immortal. There’s a few problems with some of these things! There’s a problem with utopianism in general. You know, it tends to have a lot of negative consequences, at least the striving for it.

Another myth that is now dying, Joy said, is that “power and liberty aren’t related in some way, that we can keep our liberties while we create things that are so difficult to control. We’re seeing that if these dangerous things exist in the world we’re going to need intrusive monitoring to manage them.”

Joy said that the “notion that we can defend ourselves with technology” is yet another myth that is now drying. He said that “seeking perfect knowledge of nature” was “not going to protect … against unintended consequences.” He continued:

“We’re not going to protect ourselves against error and terror by trying to know everything in the world. We’ve come, very, very close to having very simple accidents do an unbounded amount of damage. I’ll give you an example. This is a quote … from a recent issue of New Scientist Magazine: “We’re lucky to be alive. If industry had used bromine instead of its close relative chlorine in aerosols and refrigerants we’d have some-thing far worse than the ozone hole. The entire upper atmosphere would have lost its ozone by the mid 1970s.”

Joy suggested that our worldview, which came out of the Enlightenment, still focused on the promise of science to end suffering. He said that science and “all the amazing things it can do” had in great part replaced religion to become “our new myths…our new gods.” Scientific exploration in the lab saw an endless frontier, he said, but that within the world of humans, human nature, accident, error, terror, it’s not an endless frontier. To emphasize the need for limits, Joy discussed a scientist’s recent discovery of, and plans to manufacture, an explosive seven times as powerful per weight as TNT.

No doubt a great deal of money could be made in such a company, Joy said, but “is it going to make the world a better place?”

Returning to his earlier mention of Hamilton’s The Greek Way, Joy said that one element that made their civilization great was something that doesn’t show up in its equation as a cost.

Bill Joy

The ecological problems we suffer are largely the conse-quences of the fact that the cost equations for companies didn’t include the environment as an asset. … The market can’t solve something that doesn’t show up in its equation as a cost.

Bill Joy
through even one or two steps. We’re not speaking honestly about the world.”

Joy cautioned that rational scientific process is not always the best way to make decisions. He referred to Bertrand Russell’s organized, rational study of the danger of nuclear technology, and his ultimate realization that human motives such as fear of death, self-preservation, and protectiveness toward family and community, could be overridden by the human motive for revenge. Joy pointed to America’s fixation on getting bin Laden as a prime, current example: “We’re not sitting and saying, ‘What is the thing that is the most important to restore safety?’ We’re thinking, ‘How do we get revenge?’”

Joy said that complicating our situation now, in 2001, is the fact that we are no longer dealing with nations against nations. “Individuals are getting access to this technology…. The old paradigm is dying. These myths of utopianism and so on are dying.”

Returning to his initial thesis that the “techno-atopian view is dying,” Joy said that we urgently need a new model to replace the old paradigm. Despite his recitation of the dangers in our technological future, he said he held hope for our future. He said it was our fate and task to live in the human condition without perfect knowledge, and he cited Wendell Berry’s idea that we must make our decisions with imperfect information. He said that just as artists helped define individuality during the past century, they could help now to show us our choices, to create a new conversation, and to envision a new definition for how to live together in a world community:

“We need a new relationship to the world. What we tried to do with science and technology and the Enlightenment was to banish fate, to get control of nature, to end all suffering, to make all those problems go away. But we’ve discovered we can’t get rid of fate, that the science and technology that we create is, to no, what the uncontrollable natural forces were to the Greeks.”

Joy said that we needed a “Secular Ethic,” as called for by the Dalai Lama, that crosses religious boundaries, and that avoids the competitive tyranny of the marketplace. He recalled the early Greeks’ focus on art, philosophy, ethics, and public conversation as a route to better understanding among different peoples. He said that we can still learn from the Greek ideas, such as “All things in moderation,” “Know thyself,” acknowledgement of tragedy, and acceptance of limits.

Joy ended his presentation with a new interpretation of the Greek myth of Pandora:

“I think what we need to do is reposition the box. Hope was in there, too, right? We let the hope out and stuck some of the demons back. That can be our Pandora’s myth.”

**RESPONDENTS: FACING THE TRUTH**

The Respondents included the symposium audience members in the question and answer period that followed Chris Quigg’s and Bill Joy’s presentations. The first question was based on the idea that the 9/11 tragedy was based on the collision between a closed, or revealed-truth system of thought (religion) and an open, or natural-world truth system of thought (science). “What is the antidote, what is the way to avoid this or find our way out of this problem?”

Bill Joy’s answer was essentially “We need a new answer,” repeating his earlier appeal to artists to envision new options and start new conversations. He said that attempts to reconcile the truths from the two worlds of religion and science had been unsuccessful and unsatisfactory. He suggested that an answer could only come from a mutual respect between the two worlds, which he felt was a long way off at present. Joy did refer to Ken Wilber, however, as one intellectual who had “come closest to resolving science and religion.”

Chris Quigg, in response to a question about the U.S. Congress’ responsibility to monitor technology, responded by emphasizing that science itself cannot make moral decisions, only individuals can. He said that all individuals, including scientists, had a responsibility to “calculate a few steps ahead” in order to envision the consequences of applying a new technology. He said that this was a complex process, since one community may have a very different experience of the safety or non-safety of nuclear energy, for instance, than another. Using a metaphor of open-face climbers on a mountain on Chamonix, he said that often the best move is not the easiest move. “I think as a society, we have to at every moment try not simply to take the easy path, the quick answer, but to try to calculate several steps ahead and see what the consequences are going to be.”

Quigg also commented on unintended consequences as they apply to U.S. Congress. He said that when the Congress was opened up and its seniority system broken by the six-year term limit, one unintended consequence was that people in Congress now have less of a sense of ownership of their role, and not as good a grasp of the facts. For science, this presents a problem, since the science world must now constantly educate and re-educate Congress on complex technology issues, so that decisions on policy and bills, etc., can be made. “A question about how far away we might be from being able to control nuclear power in a positive way. He said that we do not need radioactivity to provide renewable energy, but should focus our energy on windmills to make hydrogen, and convert to a hydrogen economy. He said this was “within striking distance now…. The technology of the twenty-first century is wind and hydrogen.”

In terms of the political and economic viability of hydrogen energy, Joy said that the Clinton administration completed a survey to identify potential locations for wind generators and that a plan was developed, and that now the major challenges were to manufacture the fuel cells, and more dauntingly, convert from a fossil fuel economy.

Lews Hyde, a symposium audience member who had been a keynote speaker at the Alliances “American Creativity at Risk” symposium in 1996, commented that the recent terrorism was characterized by a “distributed intelligence” that did not have any one place or person as a center. “If distributed intelligence is coming toward you as your enemy,” he asked, “how do you respond?” Bill Joy answered:

“You can kill bin Laden, but you’re not going to get to the idea. As the Dalai Lama is saying, is it not possible to figure out how we are going to respond to what is the way to avoid this or find our way out and stick some of the demons back. That can be our Pandora’s myth.”

The discussion ended with a provocative question from Sandy Stone, who asked how we could find a new paradigm “that is not regressive back to the church having all the answers,” and that also asks “people [i.e., scientists] who may just be creative minds trying to be creative…to stop being curious.”

Commenting that the current options looked bleak, Joy said it was “a classic paradigm shift problem” similar to the time when humans believed the planets moved in circles.

**We started doing circles on the circles and epicycles. Until there was a conception of true planetary motion worked out, the theories got crazier and crazier. So we can take our current conception and keep putting little circles on it and making it crazier and crazier.”**

Joy said he did not know what that new paradigm was, and again, to resounding applause from the audience, he appealed to artists to “represent this to us in some way.”

**Traditionally, artists have led the understanding of the world in new ways, and in representing that understanding to the rest of us in a way that we respond to. So the artists have a real opportunity, art need large, you know? Poetry, according to the classical conception. Architecture. All those disciplines can represent to us a new way of thinking about ourselves and our world, and a new way of thinking about the world. They can lead us out of this impasse.”**
The audience loves the bad guy because the bad guy is capable of a surprise. Now, what … [as] meant by a surprise, is this: that the good guy has a very limited set of reactions to phenomena. The bad guy, the truly bad guy, has no limitations whatsoever.

Echoing Joy’s comment that “we can’t pretend anymore that there are no people who will do anything,” writer and jazz critic Stanley Crouch opened his remarks by citing the actor Gregory Peck’s view on the bad guy in film (above). Crouch gave examples of the escalating violence shown by bad guys in film since the 1930s, and commented that “that kind of unpredictability on the part of the bad guy, it seems to me, is indicative of a problem that has developed in American culture.” He continued:

“I think that now what is before us is the question of whether or not one can sustain aesthetic adventure, not sell out to empty-headed nationalism, not bow to various forms of bigotry, not slip back into the most old-fashioned visions of reducing others unlike ourselves, and at the same time affirm the things that we think are important.

Crouch said that young people today “are sold an identity based upon rebellion that is often extraordinarily insubstantial.” He said that we have a responsibility to provide our children with art, media, images, and ideas that reflect the complex world we live in, that truthfully describe the problems facing us, and that provide models for working toward positive change.

He described a post-9/11 conversation he had with his 24-year-old daughter as an example. In response to her contention that “America was the greatest terrorist nation on the face of the earth,” he countered with information about the Taliban’s oppression of women, and Osama bin Laden’s ruthlessness.

Crouch said that even so, he does not pretend that we as Americans have not had to address over and over and over, and will continue to address over and over, racism, sexism, hysterical reactions to “erotic styles of life,” as they call them, that are different than that of the mainstream, that we will become impotent, sometimes arrogant, toward people coming into our country who are not like us, that we will not maintain the running battle between American life and the worst form of capitalism. That is to say that the history of American capitalism really is an ongoing battle in which the point is bringing together morality, ethics, and the profit motive. That is the nature of our capitalism.

Crouch went on to illustrate his point on the blend of morality, ethics, and the profit motive, by describing the Civil War. He said that the goal in freeing the slaves was not to prohibit profit in the cotton trade, but to prohibit the buying of people in order to make that profit. He countered the theory that the South would have freed its slaves eventually anyway, by remarking that 1860 was the most profitable year in the history of slavery in the United States. “Something tells me,” Crouch said, “that by 1862 or 1865 ‘they weren’t going to jump up in the South and say, ‘I think it’s time to let these slaves go.’”

Crouch said that the Civil War has played a much larger role in American writing than American film “because it was a war that justified enormous amounts of bloodshed.” He continued:

“No one is going to tell us … that they believe in peace, that they should avoid war at all cost, that under no circumstances should human beings be killed and that once war starts, innocent people invariably are killed. That’s very true. But I think, again, in the arts, we also have to recognize that there are some wars that do have to be fought. That there are some people, who are just as human as you, who have got to do. Do they have to go because they’re inferior to you? No. Do they have to go because God decided to tell you that it’s time for you to take him out? No. Why do they have to go? Well, oftentimes because they’ve part of an order that threatens something that you believe should sustain itself, and that will not be able to sustain itself as long as that order remains in place.

Crouch said that more than peace songs were needed to counter terror. “Singing, playing guitars, and being peaceful was not going to change Adolf Hitler’s mind about much at all… This was a guy who really was most effectively spoken to in one language. That was the language of fire and steel.”

Crouch asked us what would happen if terrorism on the scale of the 9/11 tragedy occurred again, and again and again, across the United States. He asked us to imagine “that all good evidence points to the same group of people” as the perpetrators. As President of the United States, he asked, what would you do?

At some point along the way, you, as President, are going to make a decision about that specific community and what has to be done. Now, I think that we have to be prepared for something of that sort to happen. Does it mean that the United States, if that does happen, is becoming a different country? I don’t think so.

Crouch cited the 1965 riots in Watts, Los Angeles, as an example of a period of violence that was met with a military reaction from the government, with a return to civil rights afterwards:

“I think we have to understand that if emergency measures do take place in the United States, that the odds are about ninety-nine to one in the favor of civil liberties returning to the same position that they were before these emergency measures were taken.

Crouch also cautioned against “simple-minded comparisons” of current violent events to the Third Reich, Mao Tse-tung, the Ku Klux Klan, etc. But he urged the art world to reassess the information we were receiving about the 9/11 terrorism. He advised that we “find out where our strengths are, how they have exhibited themselves in some sort of a repeating order.”

Even while acknowledging our failures and ongoing problems, Crouch went on to draw examples of Americans’ progress in dealing with the many varied ethnicities that make up the United States’ population. He referred, for instance, to the presence of Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell in the top echelons of government today. He also commented on the mixture of racial backgrounds embedded in our popular culture:

“The pedagogues…of Americans are so complex and are so often left outside of the discussion, so often left outside of the decision making…served by the arts in America, that it is the interwoven nature of our humanity right now, it seems to me, that is the thing we need to think about most… But there’s very little talk of that in most of what we read about Americans…. It is the American is part Indian, part Yankee, part Negro, part Mexican, part Jewish, part Asian. With the rising Islamic position, we may someday be able to say that Americans are part Arab, too. That’s who we are.

This positive multi-cultural aspect of America is an opportunity for great exploration in the arts, Crouch said. “This is what our arts have to embrace.” But we are not doing so, he said. Advertisements and many aspects of popular culture have embraced diversity of culture “(If you’re an American we want you to know through these images that you can feel free to … owe us money!” Crouch said). But in terms of the arts world, and taking as an example Chicago’s mid-1960s mayor Harold Washington, who built an unprecedented interracial coalition (that unfortunately did not outlast his tragic death), Crouch asked:

“Is there a motive which is stronger than self-preservation? Is there the desire to get to the better of the other fellow? I discovered an important political fact that is often overlooked, as it had been by people: ‘People don’t care as much for their own survival as for the extermination of their enemies.’

Bertrand Russell
as quoted by Bill Joy

This is what the American artist can do: We can look at the low and the high, the achievements. We can look at all of them…

Stanley Crouch

Art can help to talk about the world in an honest way. We need to have an artistic and creative conversation about what it means to live in a world where we don’t control everything.

Bill Joy
Has there been a major novelia written about that? Not to my knowledge. Has there been a great play about the real Harold Washington or somebody based on Harold Washington? No. Has there been a television movie about a Washington-like figure? No. No, is that because someone is sitting in a room saying, “We don’t want stories about Harold Washington?” I don’t think so.

Crouch suggested that Americans needed to redefine themselves “not in terms of some sentimental flag waving way” but to acknowledge the things we have achieved and those we have not. Recalling Bill Joy’s appeal for more honesty in public discourse, he advocated honest examination of our preconceptions, not from party lines, not from left or right, but from a clear-eyed look at our failures and accomplishments as a society.

In a hopeful conclusion to his presentation, he commented on the world’s reaction to the 9/11 tragedy, that the terrorism threatened “a light in the world” that represented opportunity and hope. He continued:

I think that our fundamental form of rebellion, and our fundamental form of affirmation is based on the fact that we are always arguing against any kind of tribalism that precludes our recognition of our collective humanity. And that we struggled perhaps more than any other modern society to achieve a vision of human life that’s inclusive, and that works hardest when it works best at excluding the demonization of others.

RESPONDENTS: SPEAKING OUR REAL EXPERIENCE

After Stanley Crouch’s presentation, Roger Mandle invited symposium audience members to make remarks. To launch the conversation, Mandle commented on Crouch’s central thesis:

I took it that you were really speaking about inside America and how we had begun to learn to live with ourselves as a much more diverse society, and that the arts needed to recognize that. But I wanted to ask you about how America therefore is viewed, or ought to

view itself and its behavior, outside the boundaries of the artistry of the United States toward the rest of the world?

Crouch referred to the “law of unintended consequences,” echoing Bill Joy’s and Chris Quigg’s earlier remarks, in his answer. He said that “we can’t pretend that blunders both small and large are outside the realm of decisions made by those people who consider themselves working in our interests.” Referring to America’s faulty and inconsistent policies in the Middle East, he continued:

But owning up to bad policy and accepting what can only be described as murderous responses (by whom, different things) I think … we have to say, okay, “this is what we did in Africa that’s bad, or here are thirty examples of it and we have to shift our foreign policy to attempt to right those wrongs over whatever period of time it takes.” Does it mean forgiving loans? Does it mean aid? Does it mean attempting to help better the health situations? Whatever it is, you have to have a long-range, … foreign policy plan.

In response to a question about why the depiction of American society’s diversity has not been fully expressed in the art world, Crouch responded that each of us tend to be restricted by our own race or gender and taught that we can only express singular points of view in art. Someone called appropriation (whether rightly or wrongly), Crouch called this the “ethnic sexual franchise.” Regardless of our experience of other cultures, we are taught that we should not go outside the boundaries of our own gender and ethnicity. He continued:

It’s our job now to just step up on what our real experience is. I mean, we need to start saying what we actually know. Of course you’re not always going to get it right. You’re not always going to get it right if you only write about the people you grew up with in your building, if you lived in an apartment house.

Achy Obejas described her thoughts about “the role of artists today and a personal dilemma that I can’t resolve…. I feel like I’m stuck in one of two roles… either being a child or being a soldier. I’m looking for a third alternative.” She said that some of the work in her field, the electronic arts community, had a “childlike charm,” and she referred in particular to Allan Lomax’s Global Jukebox (“a multimedia product that codifies sixty years’ worth of folk and dance samples from around the world”), as an example. However, Obejas said, “Once I hit, or he [Lomax] hits, the membrane of the business, it feels like war.” She referred to Crouch’s and Joy’s reference to fighting for what we believe in, as the other “soldier” alternative for an artist.

Obejas’s definition of the Greek’s view of happiness, Crouch responded that to be a person in society who has the freedom to be creative and childlike—“people who invent puzzles, clothing designers, people who invent other kinds of technological innovations”—is a result of living in a society where one can pursue one’s interests and passions. He agreed that our society also encourages us to turn our inventions into money-making products, but “that’s not something that the best of us, I think that’s challenging within their society. A lot of eastern European artists are making choices about returning or staying. You said we have to know what we’re fighting for. I would say, yeah!

Crouch responded that he “was not arguing for Americans in heaven…. I’m arguing for what has happened in the United States as a result of people putting pressure on the limitations that have been imposed on other people.”

Guillermo Gómez-Peña next addressed the religious fundamentalist aspects of the 9/11 tragedy with these rhetorical questions:

What do we do with the millions of people who believe that we’re in fact witnessing the fight between two forms of fundamentalism?… What do you say to most people caught in this crossfire who believe that this war does not represent them…our vision of nation, or our vision of future? What do you say to those of us who don’t wish to defend any national state?

A young artist from the symposium audience commented:

Our human race fears the truth, and we sometimes ignore it…. What happened on September 11 is a great tragedy…. The type of terrorism also exists in the ghettos area communities here in the United States. And why haven’t we made a difference? Why haven’t we done something about it?

Crouch agreed wholeheartedly that the United States needed to address the real terror within its own borders. He also posited that some ghetto terrorism would have been stamped out if it had been carried out by white skinheads. “I don’t think that any racist white organization would have been allowed to murder that many people year in, year out, as those two street gangs [the Crips and the Bloods] did.”

Still, Crouch reminded us, “There are certain people sitting on this panel who would not be sitting on any panel under Osama bin Laden.”

How do you build an equitable society based on a culture of consumerism where governments are wedded to pleasing international investors and not immediately concerned with the well-being of their citizens?

Ana Castillo

In this period of great struggle we have to know what is we’re fighting for. We have to maintain great moral critical attention to BS on both sides of the line. And we have to know that all of the people who suffered whatever they suffered, who dreamed whatever they dreamed, who said whatever they said and who did whatever they did in order to make it possible for us to gather here in this room in Chicago, and for any other groups of people like us to gather in this country in rooms like this or not in rooms like this, was not in vain, and that we intend, as they say today to continue to represent them.

Stanley Crouch

Chicago race riots during the summer of 1919 resulted in 38 dead, 373 injured, and 1,000 black families left homeless. In the last nine months of the same year, seventy black citizens (ten of them returning WWI soldiers still in uniform) were lynched in southern regions of the country. These and other violent and tragic events around the nation that year, inspired new efforts to reform legislation and develop volunteer organizations dedicated to achieving racial equality in the United States. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) launched a national campaign against lynching. Violent WWI martyr Cook declared it his mission to “place the musical art of the Negro—truly the art of the Negro—against lynching. Violinist Willie "Uncle Willie" Parker launched a national campaign for the Advancement of the Negro in America’s music. Crouch’s article entitled the same name, and Ken Burns’s documentary of America’s music aptly humorless, Crouch said that we needed to pursue one’s interests and passions. He agreed that our society also encourages us to turn our inventions into money-making products, but “that’s not something that the best of us, I think that’s challenging within their society. A lot of eastern European artists are making choices about returning or staying. You said we have to know what we’re fighting for. I would say, yeah!”

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Stanley Crouch
Roger Mandle opened up a “Town Square Meeting” that included many of the symposium’s speakers and panelists, as well as Lewis Hyde, a keynote speaker from the Alliance’s 1996 “American Creativity at Risk” symposium. Mandle specifically asked the group at large to help the Respondents synthesize the ideas of the entire symposium, as support for the Respondents’ later development of a Declaration:

“We have a difficult matter…today, and that is to close out this two-and-a-half-day session with something that may be meaningful to the future. As you remember, the Warhol Foundation created Creative Capital as one of the really tangible benefits of the last symposium held five years ago….Now we hope to come up with something that will be a meaningful reprise of what we’ve been talking about at this symposium….Help us get to the goal of defining what the future of creativity may be in this country or in the world at large, and what role we can all play in making that a positive possibility.”

Susan Page Tillett drew out a major theme of the symposium: “Diversity is our strength, but the job now is to look for the connectedness between us. The time to whine about one difference over another is really past.” She suggested that as an outcome of the symposium, we use artists’ communities as models for broader community, that we look closer at the workings of artists’ communities, like Ragdale, the community she is part of, for ideas on the role of artists in broader communities.

Sara Ransford commented that the case studies in the symposium had held the most powerful message for her. The case studies brought home the point that “we need to work in collaboration and we need to work as a collective.” She continued:

“I hope that these case studies could be brought to the attention of deans of art schools [so that we can] try to get the deans of the schools and the university system to rethink how they introduce art….So that our thinking starts to change at a really important level. If I propose that students be required to do a public project as part of graduating from college.”

Kirk Walsh suggested that examination and support of families should be part of the symposium’s Declaration. She commented on the importance of supporting families and our children as the way to a better future: “Is the breakdown of community really rooted in the breakdown of families, and how can we make the bridge from programs that are being created at schools to include the parents?”

She referred to programs like the Suzuki music program that included significant parent-child participation as an example. “I think of parents as being a child’s first advocate,” she said. Lewis Hyde developed Tillett’s, Ransford’s, and Walsh’s comments by calling for a move away from “hyperfeminism” and toward acknowledgement that we are “collective beings” made up of all the many influences, books, people, and conversations we have experienced. Using a literary metaphor, he quoted Goethe’s remark: “What am I? What is my work? I am a collective being that goes by the name of Goethe.”

Hyde commented that our society is good at rewarding individual achievement. Naming several of the larger individual grants such as the Guggenheim, the MacArthur “genius” award, Pew fellowships, etc., he said that “what happens when you do that is you get people to perform themselves as individuals. So part of the puzzle for me is, can we begin to design reward systems that ask us to perform ourselves as collective beings?” He referred to the case study presentations as excellent examples of the power of the collective being.

Carol Becker commented that the symposium Declaration should call for grants for youth to attend college:

“I would like to see...as an outcome of this symposium, a call for supporting these young people, helping them get the education they need. Because leadership is something we do not train people for. Mandela’s father was the advisor to the king. And that’s the role that Nelson Mandela was to inherit, the advisor to the king. In African societies they have ways to teach people to have wisdom. We don’t do that in America.”

Erika Mather advised that education reform be included as a central part of the symposium’s Declaration. She advocated that the value of creativity be taught early in life.

She commented that the public project suggested by Sara Ransford be required earlier in education, during childhood. To do this, she said, elementary school teachers needed to be valued more in our society, and to have access to better education themselves. She said that we needed to look at the entire structure of our education system: “I would urge everybody to take a look at who’s sitting on their school board and make sure that they like what that person believes in. And if you don’t like it, perhaps run for school board yourself.”

A symposium audience member who described herself as “from overseas” suggested that the symposium Declaration call for funding for cultural exchange that will open opportunities for artists as cultural ambassadors. She said that “there is a lot of cultural exchange funding for Europeans to go to other countries—to Russia, to Asia [but not much to come to America]…I have a feeling most American young artists are also happy to have the opportunity [to travel abroad], to be cultural ambassadors.”

An unidentified young person challenged the group to foster more cross-generational collaboration, and to invite more young people to symposiums such as this one. She said that the symposium had “made an amazing impression” on her. “It’s a cliché, but it’s the children, it’s the younger generation” that is crucial to the future of creativity, she said.

Guillermo Gómez-Peña, ending the afternoon’s conversation on a soul-searching note, called for more public discussion and better negotiation between groups of extreme difference:

“My impression is that with a few exceptions we seem to be caught between a language of euphemism and a language of anger. And I ask myself rhetorically how to go beyond this…” That’s where I feel that artists can perform a very useful role in the immediate future. For the right or the wrong reasons, artists are good negotiators of extreme differences. Other artists and intellectuals throughout the world have performed incomparable extremely important roles as moral voices, as ambassadors, as critical thinkers, as community builders, as chronicles of their times, et cetera, et cetera. But now my question is, have our roles shifted? Is global society really listening to us? Or are we confined to hyper-specialized milieux? And if so, …what are our new challenges? Which are going to be these new roles that we can play in building more visionary communities and reshaping public conscience?”

Carol Becker
The idea of creativity is risk, of having relationships that you can trust in, and a level of study and expertise that allows us to be free. We’re in a time when…we need to understand our personal relationships and resources, and what they mean to one another, so that we can empower the possibilities of the creativity of this next century and beyond.

The idea is dreaming the future—not dreaming of the future. The idea is dreaming the possibilities of the symposium into a Declaration for Action. On Saturday evening, the Respondents worked as a team to synthesize the ideas of the symposium into a Declaration for Action. Afterwards, Roger Mandle opened the evening’s events with the results of their work.

Mandle began with a State-of-the-Union style description of our progress since the Alliance’s first symposium, in 1996. Creative courage is necessary if we want our dreams to be powerful enough in order to bring those things into hard physical reality, so that the things that we’re imagining can become possible for flesh and bone.

Mandle said that the good news in the five years since the Alliance’s “American Creativity at Risk” symposium, was that artists and scientists are now more visible in the public arena. He said that access to new technologies has grown, and appreciation for the value of creativity has risen. And new research has proven that arts education is vital to children’s academic and social development. In the same time period, however, governments have reduced their support of arts and design. The economy has sunk, and the acts of 9/11/2001 have forever altered our psyches.

Mandle said that as a society, we are still willing, for the most part, to sacrifice our natural resources for short-term comfort and economic gain. Furthermore, too many citizens still do not have the opportunity to utilize their creativity or to access meaningful art experiences.

To build a future where collaboration and creativity are valued and used for the common good, Mandle presented the following Declaration:

The future in the Australian sense of the symposium signifies the future in which we sing up the land. The idea is dreaming the future in the Australian sense of the symposium. The idea of creativity is risk, of having relationships that you can trust in, and a level of study and expertise that allows us to be free. We’re in a time when…we need to understand our personal relationships and resources, and what they mean to one another, so that we can empower the possibilities of the creativity of this next century and beyond.

Khalil El’Zahar, whose Experimental Jazz Ensemble performed on the final night of the symposium, said, more valuable to us now than ever as we struggle with global discord and the September 11th terrorist tragedies. Creative courageous risk-taking is necessary if we want our dreams to be powerful enough in order to bring those things into hard physical reality, so that the things that we’re imagining can become possible for flesh and bone.

Sandy Stone

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Mandle said that the good news in the five years since the Alliance’s “American Creativity at Risk” symposium, was that artists and scientists are now more visible in the public arena. He said that access to new technologies has grown, and appreciation for the value of creativity has risen. And new research has proven that arts education is vital to children’s academic and social development. In the same time period, however, governments have reduced their support of arts and design. The economy has sunk, and the acts of 9/11/2001 have forever altered our psyches.

Mandle said that as a society, we are still willing, for the most part, to sacrifice our natural resources for short-term comfort and economic gain. Furthermore, too many citizens still do not have the opportunity to utilize their creativity or to access meaningful art experiences.

To build a future where collaboration and creativity are valued and used for the common good, Mandle presented the following Declaration:

**THE DECLARATION FOR ACTION**

**November 3, 2001**

We must unleash creativity across the disciplines and across traditional boundaries of race, gender, and age. We must work together towards world peace, a better quality of life, and environmental sustainability. To encourage these transformations, we must:

1. **Recognize that our youth are our future, and nurture young people’s creative capacities in school and society:**
   - Ensure the integration of arts, design, and sciences in formal school curricula.
   - Expand youths’ access to cultural resources in informal educational environments.
   - Provide open but secure environments that encourage youth to express their ideas.

2. **Illuminate creativity as a central societal value and catalyst for change:**
   - Cultivate yourself and others as citizen activists, community organizers, social leaders, problem solvers, and hope vision builders.
   - Engage mainstream media publishers, editors, and writers as informed allies who can deliver ideas, shape public values, and stimulate community investment in creativity.

3. **Ensure the integration of arts, design, and sciences in formal school curricula:**
   - Use our cultural histories to inform and educate students.
   - Provide greater access to the venues, materials, and technologies, needed for students to express their inherent creativity.
   - Create new funding mechanisms to support creative risk-taking and collaborative problem-solving.

4. **Support freedom of expression:**
   a. Respect and listen to diverse perspectives.
   b. Help overcome the fear inherent in creative risk-taking.
   c. Recognize that collaboration requires accommodation, though not compromise.

5. **Recognize the value of diverse cultures:**
   a. Use our cultural histories to inform and prepare us for the future.
   b. Encourage cross-cultural exchange at conferences, in residencies, among networks, in funding programs, across professional disciplines, etc.

6. **Eradicate social and economic barriers to creativity:**
   a. Provide greater access to the venues, materials, and technologies, needed for students to express their inherent creativity.
   b. Create new funding mechanisms to support creative risk-taking and collaborative problem-solving.

This Declaration is a general summary of the ideas expressed in the November 1-3, 2001 symposium, “The Future of Creativity,” held in Chicago and organized by the Alliance of Artists Communities, a national consortium of organizations that support artists and other thinkers in the creation of their work.

Created by a group of “Respondents” at the symposium, and revised by the Alliance and its associates, it is intended as a set of broad directives to guide programming across the disciplines.

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**REPORT ON FUTURE OF CREATIVITY SYMPOSIUM NOVEMBER 1-3, 2001**

**SYMPOSIUM NOVEMBER 1-3, 2001**

**FUTURE CREATIVITY REPORT**

**CREATIVITY**

**SYMPOSIUM NOVEMBER 1-3, 2001**

**REPORT**

**CREATIVITY**

**SYMPOSIUM NOVEMBER 1-3, 2001**

**REPORT**
REPORT ON FUTURE OF CREATIVITY SYMPOSIUM

NOVEMBER 2001

WELCOME SPEECH/REVIEW OF ISSUES

Ana Castillo
Postcolonial/ethnic/racial/sexist/sexist/nativist Ana Castillo lives in her hometown of Chicago with her son. Her novels include Carmen la Coja, Paint My Love Like an Onion, So Far From God, and The Magueyabuela. Books of poetry include I Ask the Impossible and My Father Was a Toltec; and Selected Poems.

POETS/PERFORMERS

Carlos Cumbian
Carlos Cumbí is the author of Coyote Sun, Latino Rainbow, and Armadillo Charm. The editor-in-chief of MARCH/Abrazo Press, he has founded numerous reading series such as the La Palabra Poetry Series. He coordinated the Netzahualcoyotl Poetry Festival at the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum and curated “Introducing Latino Literature” through the Chicago Public Library.

Gregorio Gómez
Gregorio Gómez is the MC of Chicago’s infamous and longest running underground poetry venue at Winds Magazine. “Why the Future Doesn’t Need Us,” ignited a worldwide discussion of the potential dangers and ethical issues surrounding development of these technologies.

Silvana Straw
Silvana Straw is a solo performer, poet, and cultural organizer from Washington, D.C. A recent solo performance was Scared of Myself: The Return of Uncle Sambo, commissioned by The Washington Performing Arts Society, which premiered in D.C. in 2000. As Washington’s first Poetry Slam Champion, she represented D.C. at the National Slam in 1997–1999. She has published in a variety of journals.

THEORISTS

Suzan Shane Harjo
Suzan Shane Harjo (Cheyenne & Hodulgee Muscogee) has reshaped federal Indian policy since 1975 and has helped Native Peoples to recover over one million acres of land. She has developed the most important Native cultural laws in the modern era. President of The Morning Star Institute in Washington, D.C. since 1984, she is a columnist for Indian Country Today. She is a widely-published poet and curator of art shows.

Haki Madhubuti
Haki Madhubuti is a poet, educator, essayist, editor, and founder and publisher of Third World Press (1967). He is Professor of English and the founder and Director Emeritus of the Gordon Douglas Brooks Center at Chicago State University (CSU). He has published over twenty-two books including Tongue Notes, A Healing Call: Affirmations, Meditations, Readings and Developmental Strategies for Creating Exceptional Young Black Men.

Donald Marinelli
Donald Marinelli is a professor of Drama and Arts Management at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is also the Co-Director of the Entertainment Technology Center, a joint initiative between the Schools of Computer Science and the College of Fine Arts, specializing in all manner of digital arts and entertainment.

Rebecca Solnit
Rebecca Solnit is an essayist, critic and activist whose work focuses on issues of environment, landscape and place. Among her books are Sugar Dream: A Journey into the Landscape Wars of the American West, Wanderlust: A History of Walking; and Hollow; City: Gentrification and the Existence of Culture.

Sandy Stone
Sandy Stone is a professor of Dramatic Arts and Ethnic Studies at Seattle Central Community College. She is also a filmmaker, rock ’n’ roll music engineer, neurologist, social scientist, cultural theorist, and sporadic poet. She is the author of Native American Conflict Resolution, co-author of numerous books including: American Indian Women Writers, Native American Women’s Literature, Native American Women of the Southwest, and co-editor of Native American Women’s Literature: A Critical Reader.


The following will speak, perform, and organize at the October 2001 Symposium:

PANELISTS, AND ORGANIZERS

BIOGRAPHIES OF SYMPOSIUM SPEAKERS, PANELISTS, AND ORGANIZERS

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Joel Wachs
Joel Wachs, long-time member of the Los Angeles City Council, its past President, and recent candidate for Mayor, joined The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts as its president in October 2001. During his tenure on the City Council, Joel Wachs was widely recognized as Los Angeles’ strongest advocate for the arts, and authored most of the city’s significant arts legislation, including the landmark Los Angeles Endowment for the Arts.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS AND PRESENTERS

Carol Becker
Carol Becker is Dean of Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is the author of numerous articles and books, most recently Surpassing the Spectacle: Global Transformation and the Changing Politics of Art.

Stanley Crouch
Stanley Crouch has been a contributing editor to The New Republic, an editorial columnist for the New York Daily News, and a frequent panelist on television and radio talk shows. He is the author of many books, including The All-American Skin Game (nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award).

Kahil El’Zabar
A versatile percussionist, a leading figure in the Chicago avant-garde, and a master of the sounds of Africa and the Near East, Kahil El’Zabar (nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award). His April 2000 article in Wind Magazine, “Why the Future Doesn’t Need Us,” ignited a worldwide discussion of the potential dangers and ethical issues surrounding development of these technologies.

Guillermo Gómez-Peña
Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s work includes performance art, video, audio, installations, poetry, journalism, critical writings and cultural theory, explores cross-cultural issues and North/South relations in the era of globalization. His performance and installation work has been presented at over fifty venues around the world. Among other books, his award-winning book Dangerous Border Crossers (2000) is published by Routledge.

Clifford A. Jones
Senior Minister of Friendship Missionary Reptont Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, Clifford Jones has preached on five continents as well as galvanized the citizenry of his region into a thriving religious community. In addition to his role as a religious leader, he is the author of several books, including From Proclamation to Practice: A Unique African American Approach to Stewardship.

Bill Joy
Called by Fortune Magazine “The Edison of the Internet,” Bill Joy is co-founder and Chief Scientist of Sun Microsystems. He has led their technical strategy since 1984. Currently, he is researching public policy in science and information technology.

Haki Madhubuti
Haki Madhubuti is a poet, educator, essayist, editor, and founder and publisher of Third World Press (1967). He is Professor of English and the founder and Director Emeritus of the Gordon Douglas Brooks Center at Chicago State University (CSU). He has published over twenty-two books including Tongue Notes, A Healing Call: Affirmations, Meditations, Readings and Developmental Strategies for Creating Exceptional Young Black Men.

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Chris Quigg
Ferumit! Theoretical Physicist Chris Quigg is internationally known for his studies of heavy quarks and his insights into particle interactions at ultrahigh energies. He has been Visiting Professor at many universities, and he is the author of a calculus textbook on particle physics. He is Chair of the Division of Particle and Fields of the American Physical Society and Editor of the Annual Review of Nuclear and Particle Science.

Alan Weisman
Journalist Alan Weisman is the author of _A Village to Reinvest the World_, among several other books and many articles that have appeared in a wide variety of periodicals. He is currently a senior producer for Homelands Productions, and is working on a book on the future of energy, funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Special Presenters on National Arts Research
María-Rosario Jackson
Dr. María-Rosario Jackson is a senior research associate and director of the Urban Institute’s Arts, Culture, and Communities Program. She is currently serving as principal investigator of the Urban Institute’s Arts and Culture Indicators Community Building Project and Investigating Creativity: A Study of the Support Structure for U.S. Artists. Dr. Jackson’s past research has been focused on urban policy, urban poverty, community planning, the role of arts and culture in community building processes and the politics of race, ethnicity and gender in urban settings.

Holly Siddall
Holly Siddall is a strategic planner and organizational developer. She is currently Senior Associate at The Urban Institute, working on a major national study on support structures for creative artists, and an Interim Program Director with the Howard Gilman Foundation. She has held senior posts at the Ford Foundation, Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund and New England Foundation for the Arts.

Chris Quigg
Ferumit! Theoretical Physicist Chris Quigg is internationally known for his studies of heavy quarks and his insights into particle interactions at ultrahigh energies. He has been Visiting Professor at many universities, and he is the author of a calculus textbook on particle physics. He is Chair of the Division of Particle and Fields of the American Physical Society and Editor of the Annual Review of Nuclear and Particle Science.

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Rafiq Huda
Rafiq Huda is an artist and a sophomore at the International Baccalaureate program at Senn High School. A native of Pakistan, he is interested in cultural issues.

Remedios Pina
Remedios Pina is an artist and a sophomore at Wells High School. His favorite subjects are languages, reading and writing fiction, and theatrical art.

Respondents
Chair
Roger Mandel
Roger Mandel is President of the Rhode Island School of Design. As an educator, art historian, and leader of major cultural institutions, he has been a nationally known figure in the field of education in the arts and humanities for the past twenty-five years. He is a published scholar and teacher on the subjects of aesthetics and Dutch art. Previously, he was Deputy Director of the National Gallery of Art and Director of the Toledo Museum of Art.

Helene Fried
Helene Fried is principal of Helene Fried Associates, a cultural planning consultancy. She serves as executive director for IDCA, the International Design Conference in Aspen. Fried has worked in a cultural planner on a wide variety of projects, including Yerba Buena Gardens, and authored the Arts Plan for the Poconos, both located in San Francisco.

Edda Meza
Edda Meza is a student at Columbia College Chicago, a poet, artist, and long-time youth participant of Street-Level Youth Media programs. She received the 2002 Street-Level Youth Media/Columbia College Scholarship to attend the college for four years. She co-instructs Street-Level’s pre-teen and teen Girl’s Group in Chicago’s West Town community. Meza screened her video production _What’s Ghetto_, made in collaboration with Street-Level, at the Women in the Director’s Chair 2000 Video Festival and the LA Freewaves Video Festival in 2000.
Michael Naimark
Michael Naimark has been a professional media artist and researcher for over two decades, as an independent from 1980 to 1994 and at Interval Research Corporation from 1995-2001. He is an expert in place representation and its consequences, and has worked extensively with field cinematography, interactive systems, and immersive projection. He was in residence at the Institute of Advanced Media Arts and Sciences in Japan through March 2002.

Achy Obejas
Achy Obejas is a cultural writer for the Chicago Tribune. She has been a contributing writer to the Tribune since 1992 and on staff since 1996. Her essays and articles have appeared in a wide variety of other magazines and journals. She is the author of Memory Mambo, a novel, among other fiction works.

Nick Rabkin
Nick Rabkin recently became the Executive Director of the Chicago Center for Arts Policy at Columbia College Chicago. For the last decade he was a Senior Program Officer at the program on Human and Community Development at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in Chicago where he had primary responsibility for the Foundation’s cultural grantmaking. Before joining the Foundation, he was the deputy commissioner of cultural affairs for the City of Chicago.

Sandy Stone
Please see bio under Experimental Town Meeting Theorists.

SYMPOSIUM ORGANIZERS

Peter Richards
Peter Richards is a sculptor, lecturer, and arts program director. He was the Chair of this symposium. Currently Senior Artist at the Exploratorium in San Francisco, he was previously Creative Director at the Tyrrell Center for Visual Art, Charlotte, NC, and before that, Director of Arts Programs at the Exploratorium in San Francisco for twenty-seven years. During his long association with the Exploratorium, he created artworks in public places that explore the relationship between people, places, and the environment. A recent work, Wind Riders, in collaboration with Sue Richards, was installed at Washington State University-Richland, in 2001.

Tricia Snell
Tricia Snell is a writer and musician. She was the Director of this symposium and the first Executive Director of the Alliance of Artists Communities (Feb. 1994-Dec. 2001). Previously she worked as a writer for environmental organizations, including the Center for Marine Conservation. She is the author of this report, of American Creativity at Risk, and the book, Artists Communities, among other arts and environmental publications. Tricia is a flautist, music educator, and fiction writer whose work, A Glass of Vodka, was included in NPR’s Sound of Writing program.

Katherine Deumling
Katherine Deumling is an artist and gourmet cook. She was the Assistant Director of the Alliance of Artists Communities from 1998-2002. She has served on local and regional grant panels in the Northwest, and was the recipient of a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship in 1996.

Brook Gauthier
Brook Gauthier is an artist and researcher. She was the Communications & Systems Manager of the Alliance of Artists Communities from 1999-2002. Inside Out, her multi-media video installation exploring interactive art and concepts of organic space, was shown in the Hallic Ford Museum of Art in the spring of 1999.

Melissa Alexander
Melissa Alexander is the Project Director of Live@ Exploratorium: Origins Center for Media and Communication at the Exploratorium in San Francisco. She organizes webcasts and web-based resources that take people behind the scenes at observatories and laboratories to look over the shoulders of scientists. She comes from a rich history of Exploratorium staff who are dedicated to supporting creativity across the disciplines.

WORKS CITED

Quotations included in the outer margins of this report were taken from the proceedings of the “Future of Creativity” symposium, as well as several from the “American Creativity at Risk” symposium, and are all contained in the symposia written transcripts, except in the occasional instance where:

• both an author and a publication are listed as source, or
• only the name of an organization is listed as source.

The following works were cited:

Alliance of Artists Communities. 2002. Transcripts from the “Future of Creativity” Symposium, November 1-3, 2001, held at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Providence, RI: Alliance of Artists Communities.


THE ALLIANCE OF ARTISTS COMMUNITIES

The Alliance of Artists Communities, an international, nonprofit consortium and professional organization for the field, advances the role artist communities play in the evolution of new ideas and art.

Through communication and service to its members, national advocacy for creative environments, and a belief in the power of the creative process, the Alliance operates on the premise that the future of American culture depends on supporting creativity and a broad diversity of artists.

Membership includes professionally run artists’ communities, other nonprofit organizations that support artists in the development of their work, and individuals. The Alliance now includes 100 organizational members and 860 individuals. For more information on membership and services see the Alliance’s web site at www.artistcommunities.org or contact the Alliance offices at the address shown on the inside cover of this report.