THE Arts, Education, and Social Change

Little Signs of Hope

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Teaching Art as a Subversive Activity

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Introducing an Old Strategy

The concept of art for social change has been around for many centuries. In my mind, it begins in the fifteenth century with the invention of the printing press. At that time, powerfully illustrated broadsheets were created and circulated to speak about the injustices experienced by the peasants at the hands of the feudal lords and the Church establishment. The history of socially engaged art has taken many forms over the centuries; sometimes it has existed as the well-crafted lines of a song that eventually seared off the façade of a corrupt regime or as the wickedly funny satire that could break the public's trance.

This particular history of art was hard for me to find when I first began looking for it in graduate school back in the mid-1970s. Nor was it easy to locate strategies for developing a personal and political voice as an artist. This sort of training was not commonplace in art schools or colleges where the dominant methods of educating artists were based in the world of form and technique.

By sharing what I have learned in the past couple of decades working as an artist, activist, and educator, it is my hope that some of my readers will be inspired to move beyond the role of artist as an entertainer or decorator. Maybe by reading this essay, some artist-educators will be inspired to expand the ways in which they teach and offer their students strategies for sustaining their practices with a new vision of how art can function in this world.

Finding Voice

It was the fall of 1976. I was a teaching assistant in a beginning painting class. The small art college sat on the edge of Halifax harbor in Nova Scotia. Cool gray light filtered through the many windows of the studio on the top floor of a renovated warehouse. More than 20 students were spread out at easels and walls, each working quietly and intensely on paintings of different sizes, shapes, and materials. I watched the instructor slowly move around the room, engaging in private conversations with each student. When I listened in, I heard her ask them questions about their work: What were they struggling with in this painting? Which artists inspired them? When did they know when a painting was finished? and so on. In a few cases, the questions became quite personal, and there was a strange intimacy about the dialogue, as if the instructor was facilitating a therapy session.

I wondered if this was the standard way to teach a studio art class. Whether in private conversation or in group critiques, the discussions revolved around the individual, his or her search for meaning in form, and the odd obsessions that defined their visions. Art seemed to be made by these students without any social context other than the art world. It was assumed that all the students felt alienated from society; after all, wasn't that why they were in an art school in the first place? With that fate, came no social responsibility.

Although I was only beginning my research on this topic, I saw this attitude as the legacy of the McCarthyism of the 1950s and the "art for art's sake" ideology of modernism. I had grown up in a family where doing work of social value was both implicit and explicit. My parents, the children of immigrants, were deeply engaged in the idealistic social movements of the 1930s. Despite suffering economically during the blacklists of the 1950s, my parents raised me to be a socially concerned person and to contribute my skills to make a difference in the world. This upbringing made me quite uncomfortable with an art practice that seemed to manifest totally as an upwardly mobile lifestyle or as a black-clad, bohemian pose.

The questions that went unasked by that instructor became a wellspring for me: Why were the students making art? Who did they feel was their audience? What were their intentions? Did they want to decorate the walls of the well-off? Did they aspire to have their names in the trendy art magazines or in art history books, or did they want to speak their truth with no goal of fortune or fame? During that first year in graduate school, I was blessed with a brilliant studio-

mate with whom I could have long conversations about these questions and the purpose of art. Soon I was reading John Berger, Walter Benjamin, Ernest Fischer, Arnold Hauser, Paul Von Blum, Lucy Lippard and many of the early feminist art writers who could be found in the brilliant but now defunct *Heresies* magazine. As a result of asking myself why was I making art and for whom, my art-making process began to change. Paper squares painted a Mediterranean blue and cryptically inscribed with graphite were abandoned and left in piles on a table. Typewritten text began to appear on translucent slips of paper. They dangled like price tags from hangers. The tags exclaimed "Buy One Now!" and "You Need This!" A pair of white pants was lightly cartooned on paper; a small red dot of paint placed politely on the crotch. Scrawled across the top was "the wrong day to wear white pants." My angst-ridden search for a private iconography was being replaced with a quirky sense of humor about the contradictions in everyday life.

Slowly I found images and words that could communicate my increasing sense of urgency about the state of the world and my place within it. I learned how to use art as a tool for consciousness raising and as a way to invite others to share their stories. I began to make site-specific, audio installations about my nightmares about nuclear war, my frustration with consumerism, and my questions about standard notions of success and propriety. When my pieces were effective they provoked an unexpected response and reward: audience members would offer me stories about their own lives, including their nightmares and dreams for the future.

Visitors to my audio installation, *This Is Not a Test,* which depicted the dwelling and inner voices of the last survivor of a nuclear war, were provoked to tell me stories about their terror during the Cuban missile crisis and their cynical responses to the official phrase "duck and cover." They talked about being numb and wondered how many missiles were targeted in our direction at that moment. I was amazed that my art had triggered such a generous outpouring of stories and began to see how art had the potential to turn what I thought were my personal anxieties into collective concerns. I was developing my artistic voice at the same time that feminist art was becoming visible as a movement. Within the context of that movement, personal story was profoundly important, especially as it referred to the politics of oppression. Along with the experience of gender politics, I began to see how economic class, cultural identity, geography, sexual orientation, and age could influence or frame an artist's point of view. As a teacher, I wanted to share these discoveries with others.

I assumed that there might be a few other students who had been affected deeply by the liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s (civil rights, anti war, feminism, gay rights, self-realization, etc.) and who might be searching for a different path as an artist and looking for support.

During my last semester in graduate school (1978) I had the opportunity to create my own course and to find some of those students who wanted to explore different approaches to art making. The course focused on the assumptions we have about the world by looking at the meanings and connotations of "loaded" words. I had just finished reading *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* by Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner (1969). These two educators questioned an outmoded educational system that was not keeping up with the rate of change in our world. They offered new strategies for critical thinking that might give our society tools for confronting the problems that were and are threatening its survival. Their approach to making the classroom relevant by addressing political and social issues included a discussion of the shifting meanings of language. By focusing on the connotations and denotations of words, they exposed a method for examining the underlying values and assumptions of a culture. I wanted to expand their approach to critical thinking and relevance by adding images into the equation.

We started with the word "exotic." A loaded word to be sure. It was a particular favorite of mine because I had often been given that label (because of my dark skin, eyes, and hair) by well-meaning acquaintances. The students jumped into interpreting this word visually, producing a wide variety of artistic forms—from photocollage to painting to found object sculptures—to illustrate their meanings. We had a wonderful debate about the "right" or "correct" meaning of the word, what it means to be considered an outsider or an "other," and what it means to make art to communicate meaning. As the course progressed, students chose their own provocative words, and we brainstormed ways to share what we had learned with a larger audience. During the final week of the course, we had a public exhibition and dialogue about what it means to make art with a particular intention—in this case, to communicate meanings and look at the implications of those meanings in the broader society.

Whose Culture Has Value?

After leaving graduate school, I returned to New York City and found work teaching art in several museums. Every three months, we would focus on one section of the museum—for example, the American Wing, the African Collection, or the Twentieth Century painting galleries. I knew from the moment I was hired that I was not going to follow the "party line," offering the "disadvantaged" and "culturally deprived" an experience of "high" culture. I was looking for a new strategy to make art in the museum relevant to my students, a strategy that would help the students develop critical thinking about the world, and give them more awareness of their values. My supervisor gave me a great opportunity: I could address the content of the collections in any way I saw fit, and I could develop whatever kinds of art projects that I felt were relevant to my focus.

The students came from public high schools all over the five boroughs and were mostly the children of the working poor and the lower middle class. I worked with the students at their schools for several sessions and at the museum twice. During one of my school visits, we looked at advertising as a visual and social message and discussed the values that ads promote. We wrote lists of what we were being sold aside from the product. From that list we were able to explore how the students' values contrasted with what Madison Avenue was promoting. In all cases, the contrast between the slick and manicured glossy magazine ads and the students' personal lives and communities was extreme. They could see quite clearly how the ads made them feel unhappy with their lives and how ads intended to make them buy products in order to feel better. Developing this kind of critical thinking was key to my process with them.

We also had long discussions about what they valued in their communities and cultures and whether they saw those values displayed on the walls of museums or in advertising. Our talks generated images and ideas about genuine needs and concerns, rather than ones the students felt they were supposed to have—based on what they saw in popular or "high" culture. We also looked at slides of art that raised questions about the world, which spoke to the truth of what it means to suffer and struggle, and that provided visions of better life.

The student art that emerged from all of this talk was multifaceted. They created papièr-machè masks that expressed each individual student's power. The masks were used to make plays about the community's stories and local hidden history. They designed ads to promote each individual student's strengths and talents. They made paintings of their dreams and nightmares. Some looked at the ways the crises in the economy and the environment were affecting their local communities. At the end of each semester, the schools were invited to display the student work at the museum for one evening and were given a special reception for this event.

While this series of workshops did little to subvert the museum environment, it certainly raised many questions for the students about how culture is transmitted and whose culture is given more visibility and why. During the five years I taught in NYC museums, I not only asked students to notice how little of the work on the walls was made by women and artists of color, but I encouraged them to find new venues for their self and community expressions.

At that time, New York City was filled with all kinds of alternative art spaces and collectives of artists doing socially engaged art. I participated in several activist artist groups whose collaborative projects on gentrification, reproductive rights for women, and nuclear issues entered the public realm in new ways—as site-specific installations, performance art, interactive carnivals, billboard correction, and other forms of street art. This was an exciting time and a desperate time. Reagan was the president; the Cold War appeared to be on the verge of hot, the economy had shifted dramatically, with housing costs becoming exorbitant; the environment was rapidly falling apart, and there was no shortage of subject matter for an activist artist. Still the huge shadow cast by the New York art world and the financial stresses we were encountering forced many of us to make choices. Some chose to promote their ideas through the mainstream gallery context; some found grants to work with communities as cultural animators, and others found educational contexts in which to promote their vision for social change.

Shifting the Discourse within the Ivory Tower

I was among the latter group and left NYC in the mid-1980s to teach art at a small liberal arts college in the Midwest. It was a time of ivory tower insulation with little visible student activism. Many students were focused on securing glamorous and lucrative careers and didn't want to be bothered with uncomfortable social issues. I remember being asked by a sarcastic student, "What are you gonna paint out here in the middle of the cornfields?" With local farmers losing their farms and committing suicide left and right and with nuclear missiles sleeping in underground bunkers down the road, ready and waiting for red alert phone calls, there truly was no shortage of subject matter for an activist artist.

Despite the dominant feelings of apathy on campus, there were many young students who had strong social consciences, and some of them found their way into my classes. Some were working to end apartheid in South Africa, some were trying to heal from dysfunctional family life, and some were looking to understand the epidemic of eating disorders among their peers. While it was important to share with these strongly motivated students how art could be part of their vision for social change, I also felt a sense of mission to awaken the students who were asleep at the wheel, so to speak. Most of my assignments offered opportunities for students to find their personal voice, a voice that was informed by the place where they grew up, the economic class of their family, their cultural heritage, their age, and many other factors. So while strengthening their sense of artistic voice, the students could also broaden their understanding of their place in the world.

Using a social frame, the simple choice of placing objects in a still life had larger implications. Where did the objects come from? What natural resources were used to make them? Who labored to fabricate them and how much were they paid? Who purchased these objects, and how were they used in their new home? What meaning did the students derive from each object in their new context and how was the meaning expanded by this social lens? And how could we reveal these meanings in the actual art piece and communicate them to a less-aware audience?

When painting a landscape, could we observe the effects of development, farming practices, and ecological stresses on that landscape? How could we find an appropriate art form to share those revelations or concerns with an uninformed public?

And so on. Every formal tradition of teaching art could be analyzed and reconstructed using this lens, from assumptions made about the study of the figure and its objectification of the body, to the cultural imperialism often implicit in art history classes.

Engaging students in this kind of questioning was the only way I found it comfortable to sit in academia. During my two-year appointment at this college and my subsequent nine years teaching New Genres and Intermedia at a state university in southern California, I kept challenging the standard curriculum, trying to find ways to make my art classes reveal more about the world. Ironically, this questioning made my some of my colleagues quite uncomfortable. I saw this discomfort as healthy, giving us all the opportunity to grow. I was thrilled to see some of my more adventurous colleagues shift their practice and research to include a more socially conscious perspective. This was quite heartening.

Action/Research as a Strategy for Social Change

As time passed, I felt I needed more tools and role models to offer my students. After attending several national meetings of the Alliance for Cultural Democracy, an organization of artists who made their socially engaged art specif-

cally within community (rather than in the studio), I was inspired to offer my students new strategies for making art. Many ACD members saw themselves as cultural or community animators, artists who facilitate a creative process within the community rather than as artists making pieces for communities or directing the communities to make work based on the artist's vision. With this new insight, I encouraged my students to work collaboratively and to find new public contexts for their art.

When my students were designing a public art project, we would discuss the various strategies available to us. Would we create "plop art" that had no relationship to the community but had everything to do with our individual vision? Would we attend public meetings that gave us some notion of community concerns and then shape those ideas into an art piece of our own design? Would we invite specific communities to paint or perform in pieces of our design? Or would we bring our skills into the community and offer them up, encouraging the community members to collaborate with us and make the art about their lives?

In the summer of 1993 I had the opportunity to study cultural animation with founding members of the exciting and well-established community arts organization, Jubilee Arts, based in West Bromwich, England, since 1974. Jubilee is one of several groups that really defined cultural/community animation through their work. As the brilliant cultural activist and poet, Charles Frederick, theorizes:

> Cultural/community animation means to revitalize the soul, the subjective and objective, collective and personally experienced identity of a community in historical or immediate crisis. Using a plethora of art and performance forms, the community gathers in all of its internal diversity with autonomous democratic authority to explore critically its social and historical existence. The product of this cultural work is for the community to create new consciousness of itself and a renovated narrative of its imagination of itself in history expressed in a multitude of forms. This new narrative is created beyond the boundaries (while in dialectical recognition) of the previous, external and internalized narrative of oppression. Identifying itself within this new narrative of subjective and objective history, the community is empowered, while publicly expressing its presence in history, to make new history and a new destiny for itself, in an organized program of social and political action, thus adding new chapters to its historical narrative. While in the aesthetic project of composing its narrative, and while at the same time in the political project of acting from its new story, the community is re-composing itself, both symbolically and actually in freedom and with justice.

Jubilee had been invited to northern California to do art projects in the very polarized community of Mendocino County. The major tensions in the community existed between the people who relied on the logging industry for their daily bread and the environmentalists who were putting their bodies on the line to save the remaining old-growth forests.

Into this fray came a group of 30 or so activist artists and cultural workers from all over the United States and the Jubilee team. Our goal was to learn how to use art to create dialogue between communities in conflict and to make the narrative of invisible groups visible. We had a laboratory to learn about the process. Every day we participated in a series of exercises that are standard fare for Jubilee cultural workers. Action Research, a term to describe a way of gathering information and making art from it, was the most the important lesson we gained from our time together.

We broke into small groups and were asked to share a social issue that concerned each of us at that moment. We each discussed our individual issue for several minutes and shared a story with the group that illustrated our concern. We created a list of issues and discussed how our issues were interrelated.

After that, we were invited to make a skills inventory. The skills that we listed were very broad from "writes poetry" to "makes good soup" to "talks well on the phone." With this list and the list of social concerns, we began to brainstorm a form, an intention, and a context. In other words, we developed an art piece that connected many of the our social concerns and that could be made in the space of 24 hours using the skills that we had brought to the table. We thought carefully about who our audience was, what the limitations of our skills, materials, and exhibiting space were, and what we hoped to accomplish.

While the product of our efforts was not memorable, the process was. Within two days, we had developed new ways to communicate and create consensus with a group of strangers. We were ready to go out into the world and practice with these new skills.

Our group was assigned to the local senior center, where our intention was to collect stories about the elders' perceptions of both the tensions and the benefits of living in the area. We found different ways to start conversations, and once a little trust was established, we asked people if they wanted to photograph each other. The portraits and the stories became the substance of an exhibition at the local mall. Since the stories were gathered in the cafeteria, we decided to exhibit the portraits and the stories as place settings.

While not altogether successful, either visually or conceptually, this taste of ıction/research was a beginning. If they are to be effective cultural animators, all ›articipants must make a commitment of time and resources. Trust must be built ;lowly. When one is not a member of the group, a bridge person must be found. \n artist-facilitator who dips into a group for a short stay and exploits the group's :alents for the artist's own benefit can create bad feelings all around.

The inspiration I brought home from my work with Jubilee was obvious. I was asked by my department chair to renovate and re-energize a course on "Artist Survival Skills" that had previously focused on resume and portfolio development and networking skills. My new course looked at social concerns that affected artists' lives and was a required course for all art majors. Students looked at how artists are educated; how the mainstream art world functions; how artists who work in communities facilitate their work; how sexism, censorship, homophobia, and racism affect artists; and how to survive in a society that is trained to be art-unfriendly. We had guest artists and art professionals come and give relevant lectures every other week. I put together a collection of readings to supplement the issues raised by the speakers and my lectures. Aside from an open-book essay exam at the end of the course, the only other assignment was for students to work collaboratively on a community art project of their own design.

This course became controversial for quite an interesting reason. One colleague was afraid that I was not preparing students properly for the outside world. He said, "These are working-class students who need to find jobs in the art world and in the industry. Your questions will make it difficult for them to fit in and accept the positions that are available." Perhaps this colleague did not understand the goal of social change. Realizing that most art students stop making art and looking for work in art-related fields after receiving endless rejections from employers, galleries, and granting agencies, my greatest desire was that these students would develop the confidence, resources, and smarts to create new opportunities, paths, and alternative institutions. Or, if they chose to work within the mainstream, that they could offer up their critical thinking skills to subvert the discourse and open up the minds of their colleagues.

Art for Imagining the Future and Envisioning Utopias

In 1991, I was invited to lecture on my work and activist art at the Institute for Social Ecology (ISE) (www.social-ecology.org). At the time, ISE was located on the Goddard College campus in the lush, green mountains of central Vermont (ISE has since bought its own gorgeous property in the same town and is now

accredited with Burlington College). During the month-long residency, I facilitated several art projects with the students, including a collaborative bookwork filled with photo collages, drawings, and text of visions for the future. I call that first summer at ISE my "introduction to utopian thinking." There I encountered some of the most idealistic and visionary community activists that I had ever met. The students came from all over the world, some working in communities where their work in literacy campaigns or planning housing projects was life threatening (because of the inhumane governments in power). Many of these students had never thought of themselves as artists, but they had the imaginations to fuel movements and to create bridges into all kinds of communities.

After that first summer, my husband Bob Spivey (who had received his master's in social ecology with a focus on activist art) and I co-facilitated a summer course called "Activist Art in Community" for many years. The course has changed shape, size, and facilitators, but it has remained an essential part of the ISE summer diet and has also been offered at other colleges as a week-long workshop.

We start the ISE course with an introduction to various strategies for making activist art and community cultural work. I share a slide show about activist art that has many threads: pre-McCarthy era socially engaged art; the first stirrings of protest art during the Vietnam War era; early feminist art and contemporary work that embraces women's issues; ecological art that ranges from projects that "reclaim" damaged pieces of the environment to work that addresses the infiltration of genetically modified foods in our diet; art about racism and cultural identity; art created as part of the antinuclear movement; art about the AIDS crisis, homelessness, poverty, unemployment, and gentrification; community-based art projects; and antiglobalization art.

After viewing the slides, we begin a discussion that continues in different forms throughout our time together. We look at satire as it manifests in the form of "culture jamming," also known as "subvertising," and debate the effects that it has on viewers. We look at the advantages of showing work in all kinds of public spaces: college galleries, museums, shopping malls, city walls, subway cars, billboards, magazine racks, storefronts, the Internet, beauty salons, laundromats—basically anywhere that people gather.

We talk about the many purposes of socially engaged art. Here is a partial listing: to provoke thought, to wake up those who are in denial, to create dialogue between groups in conflict, to make invisible groups more visible, to empower, to heal, to educate, to reveal hidden histories, to celebrate a community's strengths, to document, to speak when everyone is scared, to enlighten, to

transform, and to speak to truth. We debate the necessity for strong aesthetics; in other words, does it need to be beautiful or visually seductive in order to attract the viewer?

Next, the students are introduced to a version of an action, research process that we learned from members of the Jubilee Arts group. I suggest that the students work with gut issues, things they have directly experienced. During the brainstorming process, we encourage students to focus on how their issues are interconnected (using some of the theories of social ecology), what their goals are for their piece, who they are trying to reach, and in what context they wish to reach this particular audience.

We also encourage students to continue a version of action/research in their home communities with a team of collaborators. Every community can benefit from this process—whether it is celebrating the creativity of invisible residents; working with the alienation between teens and adults; healing splits among newcomers, transplants, and old-timers; or sharing antidotes to consumer culture. After the students share their action, research work and give each other helpful feedback, they spend the rest of their time at ISE developing new projects (both individual and collaborative ones). In our many conversations, we try to distinguish the difference between many forms of activist art and make no judgments about which form is more important or valuable. Socially engaged art that is produced by individuals working alone can have a powerful impact on audiences. Cultural work that is a by-product of a movement can make a significant impression, especially when the media lens is focused on it. Projects that emerge out of a community/cultural animation process can also have an enormous effect on the public, but perhaps the most crucial aspect of this particular work is what it does for the community itself. The key point here is that one form might be more appropriate for a particular intention and context, and each artist needs to evaluate those choices based on her or his abilities.

The two-week schedule of our current version of Art, Media, Activism, and Social Change includes many different components: social ecology theory, media theory, hands-on technical workshops, a practicum on media literacy, and lecture/demonstrations by visiting artists like the Beehive Collective (whose anti-globalization projects take many forms) (www.beehivecollective.org), Graciela Monteagudo (member of Bread and Puppet Theater and creator of her own street theatre projects concerning the Mothers of the Disappeared from Argentina) and Seth Tobocman (founder of World War III comics—a publication whose artists have focused on many social issues, including homelessness and the squatter movement of the Lower East Side).

We are continuing to learn how to teach this material. Our students are always giving us new ideas about ways to make the material more accessible. My great hope is that all of them will continue to find ways to make socially engaged art in a society that does not always welcome their work, and they will become educators in different capacities.

We have had many success stories, but I will only list a few here. A student from our weeklong course at Hampshire College recently co-founded the Cycle Circus, also known as Puppets on Bikes. This diverse group of cyclist performers and cultural activists based in Austin, Texas, focuses on border issues and looks at how the Free Trade Agreement affects the people who live there. Using puppet shows, comic books, and "cantahistorias" (they sing or chant a story with pictorial banners), their collaborative work looks at the life of sweatshop workers along the Texas-Mexican border (www.cyclecircus.org). A recent ISE student went home from our workshop to continue a series of video and audio projects that look at how patriotism is manifesting in the public sphere in Urbana-Champaign, Illinois. Two students from my southern Californian days are collaborating on political art projects in Seattle. They also teach in Art Corps, an after-school arts program. One of them serves as the Seattle Public Arts Commissioner, bringing his social consciousness into the public art sphere.

Widening Circles

After 20-plus years of lecturing on activist art, I am sometimes discouraged when audience members come up to me and say, "I had no idea that there was art like this. It is so inspiring." This feedback suggests to me that what little art education most people receive is not giving them a broad range of models. At a time when the most innovative frontiers of education are exploring the interdisciplinary, it would make sense that more art educators would be attracted to socially engaged art. Of course, as I mentioned previously, there are many institutions that are quite frightened by the idea of critical thinking. These art departments will continue to happily graduate students who stop making art within a few years of graduation because they can't find a way to survive in the art world as it is currently constructed. Sadly, many of these graduates think that it is their fault. What a benefit it would be to society as a whole to have more artists who feel a sense of social responsibility and who have the passion to continue making their work despite the obstacles.

Five years ago, I was invited to join the faculty of the new and innovative program, the MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts at Goddard College (www.god-

dard.edu). In many ways, this program manifests a part of my dream for a socially engaged art education. Students in this low-residency, long-distance program are asked to develop or strengthen their artistic voice and to look at their work in terms of personal story, social engagement, healing, and spiritual growth. Like other Goddard programs that are based on John Dewey's philosophy of learner-based education, students must develop their own study plan with an advisor each semester. Critical thinking is an explicit part of the program's goals. As part of the five semesters, students must spend at least one semester working on a community-based art practicum.

This program has attracted some of the most remarkable students and faculty I have ever encountered. One graduate is doing audience participatory installations and workshops in the local high schools about body image and eating disorders. Another former student is doing performance art and videos about newly revealed stories about the U.S. involvement in Korea. The graduates from this program are teaching, exhibiting, raising money, and facilitating projects all over the world. My excitement about the work Goddard graduates are doing could fill another chapter.

Just as this final draft is going to press, I am about to move across the country, again, to join the faculty of the Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences Program at the University of Washington, Tacoma. I will be developing new curriculum in the arts to be part of an Arts, Media, and Culture concentration. With the collaboration of the progressive educators who will be my new colleagues, I hope to be able to shape a program that will be a model of how to teach the arts for personal and social transformation. And like the work coming out of the Goddard program, I would like to see our new program provoke resonating and exciting ripples to spread all over the place.

At this particularly challenging time in our nation's history, when civil rights are being curtailed and public dissent regarding the dominant political will is either being ignored or suppressed, the arts can play a key role in generating more democratic discussion of social policy. The arts can also give us a sense of hope and possibility in a time when many are losing their will to believe in a just and thriving future for the people of the world. I try to remain optimistic that more of us will use the arts to provoke dialogue, empower the invisible and alienated, educate the uninformed, to heal raise questions about things we take for granted, educate the uninformed, to heal rifts in polarized communities and within individuals who have been wounded by society's ills, and provide a vision for a future where people can live in greater harmony with each other and the natural world. Perhaps the work I have been doing will inspire others and keep the passion for social change burning.

Endnote

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Reference

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