
Jeffrey Rubinoff

Introduction to the 2013 Company of Ideas Forum on Art as a Source of Knowledge

The Jeffrey Rubinoff Sculpture Park — May 18-19th 2013

Welcome to the second Forum regarding Art as a Source of Knowledge.

Knowledge is information that changes our perception.

Art can provide changes in perspective that change perception itself.

This transformation of perspective to perception is how art creates knowledge.

This year we have combined the ambitions for the book earlier described by James Fox and a shorter Forum.

The Forum contains two excellent essays, one by Arther Ferrill, professor emeritus and the other by David Lawless, graduate student. Together they span not only the joy of these forums to be addressed by a spectrum of scholars but also a vast spectrum of history from the inextricability of proto war and agriculture to the pressing issues of post-agriculture.

In my Introduction to the 2010 Company of Ideas Forum, I stated "...that artists map the human soul. I consider the human soul to be the sum of all human knowledge. The artist works at the limits perceived to be the extent of that knowledge in a given time."

"War has so permeated the ten thousand years history of agriculture and dominated the five thousand years history of civilization that it is impossible to map the human soul without navigating it..."

In my 2010 essay titled *Art Beyond War: A Discussion about Prehistoric War and History of Art by Artists*, I conclude, "Though the [Paleolithic] caves have yielded evidence of great art, they yield no evidence of war...the history of art predates the history of war and agriculture by some 25,000 years."

This perception of the human soul is one of art's great gifts as a source of knowledge.

The great paintings and drawings of the Paleolithic caves give way to gestural graphics—highly excited first drawings of man hunting man. It is artist as graphic story teller that will transform art's purpose. From these violent graphics they will evolve the purposefully calm drawings and sculpture for the new patrons of the age of agriculture.

Arther Ferrill's expertise fills in the transitional period of the inception of war and agriculture.

This period of interaction between war and agriculture will be followed by the 10,000 years Age of Agriculture and ascent of the warrior class.

David Lawless joined the Company of Ideas in 2012 as an undergraduate. It soon became clear in conversation that he was the rare combination of a scientist with strong art perception. He was asked to do a short student paper bringing a scientist's analysis to the art of the Paleolithic caves.

This year we asked him to expand his essay by examining Darwin's evolutionary statement of "moral sense". In keeping with my view of evolution as history, with the genome completing the text in 2003, David addresses the question from my 2012 Forum essay titled "Existential Realities of Post Agriculture": "Can art become the fulcrum for the reconciliation of science and history to lever conscience beyond the plasticity of morality?"

Jeffrey Rubinoff,
May 18, 2013.