

Summary of Proceedings
Jeffrey Rubinoff Sculpture Park Working Group
July 26-27 Meeting

Objectives: 1) to debate and extend the arguments outlined by Karun Koernig in his essay, "The Value of Art at the End of the Age of Agriculture"; and, 2) to devise a plan for organizing and distributing a call for papers for the May 2009 Symposium.

In attendance: Robert Dening, Jessica Demers, Heather Emery, Betty Kennedy, Karun Koernig, Charo Neville, Jenni Pace, Matthew Walker, Jeffrey Rubinoff, and Sara Vipond.

Presenters: The following members of the Company of Ideas presented oral and written analyses of Koernig's essay: Robert Dening, Jessica Demers, Heather Emery, Matthew Walker, and Sara Vipond. Their critiques and the ensuing discussions are summarized below.

Day I (Saturday, July 26)

Introduction: Jeffrey Rubinoff ("How can we progress from insight to idea?")

The following is a summary of Jeffrey's introductory comments and his clarifications of the JRSP mission and goals.

- From Rubinoff's perspective and experience, artists develop historical arguments in their works. Their ideas if fully developed are embodied in the works themselves. A result of developing these ideas can be insights that may be both original and highly valuable to others. Since artists have already developed the ideas in the media of their work, it is up to others to value and develop the insights into arguments that can survive in the larger marketplace of ideas. Given that the members of The Working Group have been asked to respond based on their value of the insights, they need to take the next step to develop ideas from these insights. While many good ideas were explored at the May 2008 symposium, it concluded without clear plans for implementation of those ideas.
- The purpose of the foundational essay is to provide a means by which the insights developed and explored in Rubinoff's works can be passed on. In regard to the reports submitted by Working Group members, Rubinoff clarified that his and Karun's references to Modernism should be understood as "in the spirit of Modernism." He does not argue for Modernism wholesale, but for the better/best parts of Modernism. The JRSP building and the process of erecting it were cited as examples of the best aspects of collaborative Modernism. (Note: This spirit was rarely practiced by Modernists as it was readily fractured by a tendency to partisan and individual proclamations of absolute truth.)
- Postmodernism was instituted on a foundation of extreme cynicism based on marketing in and of itself.
- Modernism and the evolving abstract art was part of the struggle against reactionary forces in Europe, but was especially unwelcome in United States.
- Throughout the first six decades of the 20th century there was essentially no market for American Modernists, and those who did venture into Modernism were a small group of dedicated artists and their audience who kept the struggle alive. These artists were proven

in the trenches over time, influencing a following generation by the quality of their work and the force of their commitment. The museums in New York (MOMA 1929, Guggenheim, 1937, the Whitney 1931) were founded to represent the didactic nature of Modernism.

- Gradually in the post World War Two environment of growing American wealth, a new market for Modernists emerged, influenced by the credibility of those contemporary museums of New York and critics such as Harold Rosenberg, and Clement Greenberg.
- By the early 1960s arguably, the most influential dealers of modern art were: 1) Leo Castelli and Sidney Janis in NYC, 2) Marlborough Fine Art in London.
- Both Leo Castelli and Sidney Janis extensively showed American Abstract Expressionists through the 1950's. Marlborough represented the core of British Modernists. All of these dealers understood the market credibility of assuring that their artists were represented in the major museums. (Marlborough was actively engaged in this process in England, prior to opening the Marlborough Gerson Gallery in New York in 1963.)
- The genius of Castelli (representing Andy Warhol, James Rosenquist and Roy Lichtenstein among others), and Sidney Janis (representing Claes Oldenberg and Jim Dine and Tom Wesselman among others) became evident in a great marketing coup. Within a matter of a few years from the introduction of the work, their artists became ubiquitous throughout North American contemporary art galleries. Art, purposefully without didactic value and that required no knowledge by the viewer, was granted the full didactic credibility of the museums. The market loved it. Fortunes were made. New criticism was created to justify this instantaneous opportunity. An entire body of language was developed to justify it. Dada was resurrected out of context and Postmodernism was born.
- Pop thus implied the didactic value of art, but contained no evidence for it. It lacked the historical struggle and knowledge base that characterized the foundation of Modern art in America.

- The prevailing atmosphere post WWII for the American Modernists is characterized by despairing absurdity. The revolution reached an ignominious end with the Hitler/Stalin pact. World War II brought air war to civilians and the incomprehensible moral disaster of the Holocaust. It ended with the bomb and the cold war. Existentialism was evolved by artist philosophers from this despair, pointing to existence itself embodied in individuals' acts of conscience. The didactic nature of these acts was the realization in their example.
- The concept of art embodying an existential statement in the face of despairing absurdity was barely marketable except to a dedicated audience. Art that appealed to an audience whose majority were artists, students and assorted bohemians was definitely not a big money maker.
- The Dada movement was born in reaction to the desperate, fratricidal absurdity of World War One. The promise of modernism was smashed in the trenches. To its European participants Dada was sincere protest.
- (Rubinoff's note Aug 19 08: I realize that I have always placed Duchamp in context with the European Dada movement. He has also been the icon of Postmodernism. On reviewing his escape to the safety of America during World War One, it is possible to interpret a transformation in context from despairing absurdity to ironic absurdity.)
- By 1960, America, having been leaned in the 1930's, victors with limited sacrifice in World War II, and burgeoning with a modern infrastructure built in the 1950's, was ready for a self-indulgent binge.

- And binge they did. Anti-art (without irony) was an American tradition. Duchamp, now in his 70's (he died in 1968) was dusted off to historically vindicate a new advent of ironic absurdity. Americans gorged themselves on this new fast food art of Dada silliness. Nothing was expected of the audience except their money.
 - Because ironic absurdity is not didactic, artists end up with no place to go. When an extraordinary talent like Duchamp reached that point he abandoned art for chess. Self-indulgence is the inevitable result of ironic absurdity. It is the hallmark of entertainment. And it is a deadly trap for artists.
 - In seeking a new synthesis beyond the Modernism/ Post-modernism argument, Rubinoff stresses the need to reject this inherent danger of Postmodernism.
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- The Modernists were well-educated in the European sense. Artists brought to Modernism a general knowledge base. Because only a tiny percent of the population at the time was of the middle-class and had that quality of education, the Modernists were undeniably privileged.
 - Immediately post-WWII, the US was defined by a sense of public confidence. Returning soldiers were given access to higher education by the G.I. Bill. They demanded the creation of new arts curricula in the visual arts, creative writing, music etc. The general knowledge base was made available to a new generation of modern artists and writers.
 - It was perceived that the didactic nature of art required access to and interaction with, the general knowledge base. If the didactic nature of art is challenged, then it follows that the necessity for the general knowledge base is also challenged and the artist's knowledge from that base is no longer measured. It is also true that the audience need not draw from that knowledge. Without mutually shared knowledge, then both the artist's and the audience's critical judgment are limited if not entirely withheld.
 - This allows the audience to relegate art to entertainment.
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- Rubinoff seeks to re-integrate the knowledge base and art, to approach a "new synthesis"—see 1st page of the website for the full description of this idea. This new synthesis is a *post*-postmodern condition, but no new term is necessary at this point.
 - Postmodernism did make one positive contribution: the silliness of artists proclaiming absolute art truths.
 - Rubinoff asserts in his definition of art as an "act of will in accord with a mature conscience" that the artist knows if art entered the work and when s/he has fulfilled the obligation that follows from that event. This is the existential measure of the artist's soul and it is wholly in the hands of the artist.
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- The role of the artist is to navigate and extend the knowledge base by way of her/his works.
 - The artist's ideas are embodied in the works themselves. Because insights grow from the works, they cannot be argued. These insights are inherent to the work. The artist can defend the work, but not the insights.
 - Insights are an "unexpected return" from the artistic process. The work generates insights, which can apply to the artist's following projects.
 - Do these insights have value outside the work? This must be answered by others. If the answer is yes, then those who agree are asked to convey this affirmation of didactic value to other artists.

- Problem: By the late 19th century, the various specialized disciplines had developed arcane languages. Arcane language also dominates Postmodern art and criticism.
- Rubinoff perceives that the role of the artist is to assure that the values of human conscience remain central to the measure of existence. This is particularly vital as information technology continues to evolve, and definitions of intelligence are argued by industry. This is difficult to accomplish using any specialized language, including that of Post-modernism.
- The foundational essay should bridge those gaps, illustrating the most important ideas of the last 150 years, including Darwin, biology, questions of AI and how we define life itself.
- It is important to recognize that the constitution of the JRSP purposely commits and limits the foundation to the education of art students and the public about the collection of work. Extending the relevance of the insights evolved from the work recognizes the inherent didactic value of the work and satisfies that constitutional requirement.
- The symposium should be unique. It should nurture the development of original ideas from the original insights evolved from Rubinoff's work. There is no value in holding the kind of conference that could occur at any university. There is no point in holding a symposium without having a clear set of ideas and a plan for their implementation.
- The goal of the symposium should be developing original ideas from original art. The symposium should not be a forum for conventional academic arguments. (Successful academics are, like other occupations, "masters of convention," and "masters of the conventional").
- Rubinoff consciously chooses not to be concerned with convention. The JRSP is an alternative space for originality that is not/ cannot be readily accepted in the conventional world. It is a refuge where people can take the risk of presenting original ideas in the company of others whom they can trust.
- A symposium in itself contains no impetus to implement ideas. In essence, it is just talking. It is necessary to establish clear goals then proceed to implement them.

Responses:

Karun:

- The ideas we develop from Jeffrey's insights need to refer to an established knowledge base of ideas. It is admittedly difficult to create a symposium to represent/serve the intended audience of the JRSP. Should we maintain the original idea to have a symposium to serve artists/ the art world?

Heather:

- The JSRP should be used to foster an innovative event/experience. What kind of symposium would be appropriate? Possibilities include: 1) recruiting a group of artists to respond to one idea; or, 2) assembling a group of professionals in varied fields to address the end of agriculture.

Matthew:

- In regard to Jeffrey's statements on convention, we must also question the convention of interest. General statements on convention can create a fear in the willingness to participate.

Heather:

- We must consider the fact that when original ideas become successful, they often become conventional.

Jesse:

- Must acknowledge possible tensions that accompany a public forum. Scholars/ critics will tend to intellectualize the artistic process. Groups must find common language, and to do so, they often reference other thinkers. A symposium could go in many directions.

Initial Proposals for Symposium:

- Proposal #1 (Heather) Begin with a phrase/sentence from JRSP website and have each member of working group respond to it to develop the call for symposium papers;
- #2(Heather) have a symposium for arts educations with the goal of arming them with new ideas on teaching art history to artists;
- #3 (Robert) Perhaps the "symposium" could be framed instead as a "dialogue". The group should consider the principles implemented in SFU's downtown Vancouver Centre for Dialogue, which allows anyone in attendance to participate;
- and, #4 (Sara) A symposium open only to artists/art historians is insular. It should include scholars/ practitioners in other fields.

Presentation #1 (Sara Vipond):

The following is a summary of Sara Vipond's response, entitled, "The Value of Art at the End of the Age of Agriculture Critique". First, Sara focused on how to disseminate the call for symposium papers and urged Karun to reconsider the title of his essay, "The Value of Art at the End of the Age of Agriculture". She also provided thoughtful critique of several of the terms and definitions used, and made a number of suggestions for clarifying the essay in general.

On the call for papers and symposium:

- First, it is necessary to determine the intended audience.
- Suggested interdisciplinary group to include anthropologists, artists, scientists who can promote well-rounded debate to help/feed off one another.
- Create an abstract that relates the essential concerns of the JRSP. Use it as a both a call for papers and as a preface to the essay.
- Ask speakers to submit a paper and do a presentation of their research.
- Synthesize papers for publication.

Essay items that need to be clarified/emphasized:

- How do artists influence the development of human consciousness? Clarify ideas contained in Ch. 6, on page. 12. Relocate this section to beginning of essay.

- Reconsider the title of the essay. The phrase “the end of the age of agriculture” could deter from the aim of the symposium. The word agriculture itself might prompt unintended meditation on the present agricultural system.
 - Use subtitles within chapters.
 - Focus on highlighting value of art at this particular time.
 - Build on issues of entropy and disorder. Entropy can have interdisciplinary applications (see Rosalind Krauss, for one example).
 - Emphasize focus on human evolution earlier.
 - The discussion and glossary definition of *collaborative groups*. Should consider ethical bonds in collaborative groups. Bring discussion of collaborative groups into the essay’s conclusion, which focuses on group consciousness.
 - Situate *group consciousness* in the contemporary context. The current draft of the essay places *group consciousness* in the *tribe*, a term that has clear historical/anthropological connotations.
 - Does shifting *group consciousness* depend on how it effects individuals?
 - Statement on pg. 12, “through art a highly ordered pattern of information is created in such as way as to produce in the perceiver its direct embodied experience.” While a small percentage of people may experience some shift in consciousness upon viewing an artwork, each viewer’s response will be different. This should be acknowledged.
- Troubled by: idea of “adequate” perceptive ability.
- Likes: 1) suggestion that the potential to change human *consciousness* suggests responsibility; 2) suggestion that tension between *order* and *disorder* is constant and dynamic; and, 3) the conception of *embodiment* in the viewing process.
- Should acknowledge that to many artists/ art historians, the term *embodiment* suggests an experience of cognitive physicality, that the experience of art actually occurs in the body. (See Ponti’s theories of phenomenology, in which he describes how humans perceive their environment through the body.)

Responses:

Jeffrey:

- Agrees it is just a working title, but it is provocative. He wants to prompt people to think about the ramifications of 10,000 years of agriculture, in which approx. 90% of the population was enslaved to the benefit of 10%.

Karun:

- Acknowledges Sara’s argument on problems with essay title, “The Value of Art at the End of the Age of Agriculture”. Chose the title to suggest the locus of potential for the evolution of consciousness has shifted to humans. Will reconsider the title to add the word intrinsic value of art.
- Reaffirms the necessity of an abstract.
- Will relocate the argument outlined in Ch. 6 to the beginning of the essay.
- Will add footnotes.
- Is still debating the placement of glossary.

- Will consider expanding essay/symposium to serve interdisciplinary audience.
- Questions whether it would be useful to pay for professionally researched articles.
- Will clarify intended meaning of *embodied experience* as it was applied in the essay. It was used in regards to describe the existential state of the information within art and to juxtapose analogy and metaphor. It was argued that art uses Metaphor as self-contained information unlike analogy, which refers to something outside itself. In the essay Art as metaphor was argued to be an *embodied experience* that could not be disassociated from individual consciousness. With Art is, the information is literally, embodied within an individual whereas analogical information can be more easily externalized, stored and transmitted.
- Art is a special kind of information that is embodied in the individual. He posited that an *embodied experience* cannot be manipulated within consciousness.
- One can more easily share *analogy* with another person, but it is not as straightforward to share an *embodied experience*.
- Art generates a fundamentally different kind of knowing, which is transmitted in a wholly distinct way. It cannot be exchanged. This element is essential to the concepts of *conscience* and *individual consciousness* that form the central argument of "The Value of Art at the End of the Age of Agriculture".

Heather:

- Must also be aware that this description of art approaches the concept of *gestalt*, which is a larger experience.

Sara:

- Remember that most trained artists/ critics value the idea that the image has associative qualities from the real world. Art triggers/alters/connects aspects of *embodied experience*.

Heather:

- Post-structuralist critiques of experience produced many terms that develop a new language to conceptualize/ describe art. Many of those terms are still in use.

Karun:

- There is a difference between *embodied experience* and *analogical information*. It is important to note that, when an individual views an artwork s/he can have both experiences at the same time.

Heather:

- The argument should be contextualized with references to art. Examples could be general, such as, "in painting."

Charo:

- The essay should contain more references to visual art because the experience of *embodiment* is varied among works in visual media.
- The *transcendent quality of art* seems fundamental to this essay, and should be acknowledged.

Sara:

- Transcendental experience expands *consciousness*.

Jesse:

- Perhaps this discussion (and the essay) are focused on Abstract Expressionism, and should not be applied generally to all art.

Charo:

- Or, perhaps the discussion and the theories contained in the essay could be applied more generally to Formalism.

Karun:

- The essay is concerned with *information* that is experienced by the individual. *Embodied information* cannot be easily exchanged or manipulated consciously. Growth in consciousness through such experiences is possible however.
- Also, each individual perceives *embodiment* differently.
- The essay is built upon the understanding of the *tribe* as a *collaborative group* that became an *institution*. BUT, as Sara suggests, there could be other types of *collaborative groups* such as *communities* that do not fit the definition of *tribe*.
- We should consider the formation/influence of *ethical bonds*.
- Clarification: Members of *collaborative groups* exhibit complementary behaviour, but the members may not realize it. *Tribes*, though, are aware of collaboration.
- The term *adequate perceptual ability*, is derived from Kandinsky. The term *adequate* will be eliminated. Will also consider addressing the difficulty of using the word *ability*, since it is also a value judgment.
- Acknowledges the concept of *entropy* is difficult, but it is necessary to discuss it.
- *Order* is organization/arrangement, forward impulse; *order* becomes its own *disorder*.

Jeffrey:

- *Entropy* is NOT the opposite of *order*. *Entropy* occurs when energy is no longer available for use in a closed system. *Entropy* implies a measurable loss of potential; energy is in a form unavailable forever and can never be regained for use.
- “Disorder” as a state in describing entropy is the unlikely possibility of putting Humpty Dumpty back together again. In other words there are statistically many more possible molecular states of broken Humpty parts after Humpty falls than the original state.
- What appears to be disorder may be a significant reordering.
- In this context, *entropy* is the lack of ability to do anything by a system in equilibrium.
- Because entropy is irreversible, it imparts direction to time.
- Direction of time and irreversibility are crucial concepts for evolution.

Matt:

- Do we lose *consciousness* through knowledge because it creates *systems, group consciousness, institutions*?
- Can knowledge be lost as a result of *entropy*?
- Can't *order* also prevent the further evolution of *consciousness*?
- *Order* can develop from chaos, resulting in potential for new *consciousness*.

Karun:

- *Consciousness* can evolve information to create *entropic* situations.

Jeffrey:

- In the aftermath of the atomic bomb, many institutions must be seen as entropic and no longer have the ability to *evolve consciousness*.
- Note: artists are capable of evolving without institutions (in particular, without tribal gods).
- The issue of the ***evolution of consciousness*** may be of great value at present.

Presentation #2 (Robert Denning):

In "A Look at History and Art—A Critique," Robert provided a literal consideration of art history, including non-Western traditions, upon which he superimposed statistics that suggest the earth's population has reached a critical mass. He addressed a more general (less art world-specific) audience.

- The world's population has multiplied rapidly in the last century. Many major historical events can be read through Art History.
- As art evolved through time, it retained a connection to the past. Artists recorded the unfolding of the universe, and thus art evolved along with people.
- Much Islamic art, for example, is the product of collaborations between artists and scientists. The art captures important historical and religious events.
- Around 1960, the idea of art became more commercialized. Few examples of art from the 1960-present are concerned with human evolution/continuation.
- How can we challenge people now? Where is the sense of generosity? Creativity?
- Need for new ways of living. In developing countries where people are in survival mode, we see the most incredible examples of resilience, creativity, humanity.

Responses:

Karun:

- The development of knowledge causes humans to examine their own culpability.

Charo:

- It's important to remember we're discussing the Western idea/value of *consciousness*. In other traditions, there is no interest in individual styles.

Jeffrey:

- We have postulated that in Western culture, art can evolve *consciousness*. When considering other cultures, we should question whether it serves the same function.

Robert:

- We should also consider the possibility that non-Western art traditions never experienced a rupture as significant as post-modernism.

Response #3 (Jesse Demers):

Jesse questioned the seeming priority placed on biological evolution in the foundational essay and the use of biological/evolutionary models and terminology. She suggested the concepts be more carefully separated into the two areas of 1) biological evolution, and 2) the evolution of culture and society. Creating these obvious distinctions could simplify the terms/ phrases used.

- Remember: People use language, words, materials to make sense of the world. Clearer language and terminology should be used in the essay.
- Should note that this study of *consciousness* is concerned only with what we know in humans.
- Address the question of *group consciousness* vs all *human consciousness*.

- *Order* is used in two contexts: 1) survival of the fittest-organisms competing for survival; and, 2) *patterns of information*.
- Clarify the concept and definition—*patterns of information*.
- Clarify *order of consciousness*. Current definition implies progression. Perhaps replace with the phrase *level of complexity* to avoid implying a specific order. *Level of complexity* is the level of adaptive success.

- Page 3, should delete first paragraph. *Complexity* doesn't necessarily guarantee survival in any situation. In some organisms, and in some situations, a greater degree of *simplicity* makes the likelihood of survival greater.
- Also need to clarify/ justify the following:
Compute and *computation operations* are unclear.
Computation of group consciousness could possibly be reworded as *compounding of group consciousness*.
Why technique instead of *technology*?
- Are we in agreement that *evolution of consciousness* is inherently good? What is the role of the artist at various points in this process?
- Should note the reflective aspect of *group consciousness*. It can promote either *order* or *entropy*.
- Should note that *institutions* are specific to culture, and are adaptable. The essay seems to suggest that in *tribes*, rules are encoded in the brain/ DNA. Is this intended?
- Can the term *tribe* really be applied to contemporary cultures? It is an anthropological term for an aboriginal group. Also, there seems to be a discrepancy between the glossary definition of *tribe* and the way it is used in the essay itself.
- In describing the growth/change of *consciousness*, should place more emphasis on role of *institutions* and *technology*.
- Description of military at the end of the age of agriculture should also acknowledge other *systems of order*. The military and advanced systems of capitalism were set up to do much more than control the food system. This argument should include current examples as a means of engaging the audience.
- Should acknowledge that within the range of *institutions* that grew out of the end of the age of agriculture, some were progressive, while others were not.

- Use of the phrase *modernist nations* should be clarified. Perhaps substitute modern, industrial, developed instead of modernist.
- Need to add example to discussion of how cultivators' *consciousness* evolves and how the controlled organism is changed. (Ex: Domestic plants evolved in certain ways as humans' consciousness/world view changed in the age of agriculture.)
- How is *synthesis* created in *metaphor* and *analogy*? Examples?

Jeffrey:

- Could use the word *resonate* instead of *synthesize*.

Jesse:

- There seems to be some contradiction in the definitions of *experienced vs. modeled reality*. *Metaphor* is described as individual, not shared, consciousness. Perhaps *modeled reality* should be described as *analogy*.
- Should note that *artistic consciousness* is different from the art object itself, which may/may not communicate.
- Does "truth" mean experience?
- On page 10 of the essay, if one accepts that art and science share the goal of *evolution of consciousness*, need to further develop the assertion that art/science must specialize in different aspects of its development.
- Suggests using diagrams throughout for greater clarity.

Responses:

Jeffery:

- Truth is truth of existence, and that's what the artist experiences with each piece.
- *Group consciousness* requires us to rationalize away direct acts of existence. The concept of mature consciousness is independent of that rationalization.
- The Pacific slug, for example, is a so-called "simple" organism, but it survived through many evolutionary stages.
- Artists can gauge their own degree of *consciousness*, but they cannot rank the *consciousness* of other people or groups.

Karun:

- In *group consciousness*, *technique* can be *entropic*.
- Delete the phrase *higher/lower quantum of consciousness*.
- *Complexity* is only a definition of *order*.

Matthew:

- Using an evolutionary model to rank *group consciousness* is problematic. *Consciousness* is a tool of survival, but it can also lead to our destruction.

Karun:

- Disagrees with Matthew's statement. Humans have worth because of developed *cognition*.

- If an artist sacrifices her/his life/livelihood for the dictates of conscience, s/he may be considered to be of a higher level of *consciousness*.
- *Conscience* is the way an individual decides what is ordered for her/himself. One individual cannot make a judgment of another.
- Humans code *innate information* like DNA. Unlike *flexible information systems*, *innate information* cannot be manipulated.

Jeffrey

- “Art is an act of will in accord with a mature conscience,” evolved from a distinct and distant memory (43 years ago) of an essay containing a discussion by Simone de Beauvoir about France and the Holocaust: Existence itself is measured by the individual’s acts of conscience.
- Concept of art as “witness to existence”---the great universal experience, from micro to macro.
- The biological references are necessary to the essay because genes are the collective memory of life on our planet. Dawkins, by describing the possibility of the possible evolution of replicating molecules took us to the beginning of memory, discussing the process through 3.5 billion years.
- When the artist searches for own existence, s/he contains the entire organic memory of life, including all the flaws, mistakes, etc. Human probably share 60-70% of the fruit fly’s DNA.
- Cosmology is the collective memory of the universe. *Entropy* gives direction to time, which gives rise to that *collective memory*.

Heather:

- Art can contain the tools for its own understanding.
- Artists are particularly skilled at studying *patterns*. This ability allows them to change/evolve *conscience*. Is empathy the key?
- Perhaps begin essay by stating that the author is taking an amoral view. And, that the concept of *order* is problematic.

Matthew:

- “The writer reads and the reader writes.” Also, “good” art communicates the act of discovery and creation to the audience.
- Minimalism originally confused the object/subject. This tactic was devised to oppose the market, to make the art unmarketable.
- Concerned by suggestions of a stable system because the concept fails to account for all actions. The outcomes of actions vary from good/bad/neutral.
- Art can progress various models and processes of *cognition*.
- Hierarchical language is confusing, particularly if the essay does not address morality.

Jenni:

- At what point does the artist stand apart?
- Are we to assume that *order* and *consciousness* are innately good?
- Should clarify glossary definitions of *innate information system* and *evolvable conscience*.

Karun:

- One characteristic that makes artists unique is the willingness/necessity of sacrificing their existence for a higher order. There is no way to judge this process except on an individual basis.
- *Order* is not innately good; it is just what happens. Remember, individuals drive *group consciousness*.

Jeffrey:

- In regard to the essay, each person could be assigned to write a portion that interests him/her, including examples.

Karun:

- Specific interests could be explored in the anthology model, extending the premises put forward in the essay.
- Or, examples of the dialogue could be made available on the website, to show what is involved in the symposium, and the established dialogue.

Day 2 (Sunday, June 27)

Presentation #4 (Matthew Walker): Matthew considered how the ideas contained in Karun's essay influence humans' *cognition* of the world and their *consciousness* of it. He considered the issue of free will to be the biggest "stumbling block" on this topic, but he also emphasized that he wants to believe in the possibility of free will. Mathew also expressed his personal difficulty in responding to essay because he must have faith in something to do so.

Matthew drew from his own practice to consider the necessity of artists' questioning/negotiating with the current environment and encouraged the group to consider how the principles contained in the essay are manifested in real life. Are they abstract, or are they applicable?

- The terminology should not be so singular (ex: "the aspects of pattern and order either increase in *complexity or simplicity*" when, in reality, neither is accurate).
- The definition of *system organizations* should include randomness and functions of expansion/ contraction.
- Should suggest how individuals can influence this situation. Address varying quantities of influence including small, incidental thoughts that can have profound impact.
- Must address *patterns* in multi-disciplinary areas of inquiry. Consider ability to choose/determine *patterns*.
- Clarifying that a certain degree of separation *between pattern/ordering* is essential to who we are.
- If events occur on a linear projection, can there be interruptions?
- If artmaking is an *innate* response, how does one address/avoid the problem of making art that isn't propaganda?

- *Evolution* itself is not layered; it is globular, floating, reflexive. Thus, the challenge of creating an accurate/ useful model.
- Need to rephrase section on value of humans.
- Terms related to *evolution*: whether *change/order* or *value/ability*, its aspect is change. The term *evolutionary age* is incorrect. Have *evolution* and *periods of evolution*, but not *evolutionary age*.
- Suggests introducing the essay and/or significant ideas with "I don't claim to know what this is.....I'm making an observation that cannot be more than an extraneous complex".

Responses:

Heather:

- Consider discussing the *conscience* of the essay itself, and addressing the possibility that certain artistic material will be used by certain people as propaganda (Ex: Social Darwinians' use of Darwin's ideas).
- Suggests using original terms for concepts discussed in the essay.
- Consider the concept *autopoiesis*, which has the established definition, "self-organizing systems".
- Suggests adding note that these concepts should not be conceived in linear order.
- In some cases, it might be more appropriate to use questions instead of statements.

Jeffrey:

- Evolutionary time is lumpy much like cosmological space/time rather than linear (there are variations in gravity and other forces, for example). However the direction of time is not reversible (discussion of entropy).
- It is perhaps easier to imagine variations in time on earth rather like the variations in thickness of onion layers. Different variations in environment over the face of the sphere could accelerate or restrict variations in the continuum of evolution.
- Darwinism assumes that a very long time passed from A---B in the evolution of species for which fossil records are sometimes missing.
- Stephen Jay Gould added the concept of contingency (accident) e.g. say an asteroid strike which could accelerate change by mass extinctions.
- Prefers *construction/destruction* with *entropy* as end state to *order/ disorder*. In period of destruction (earthquake, for example) could have other actions taking place.
- But, *entropy* is a different concept as previously discussed. It is a concept used in information theory and may suggest complete losses of information.
- Entropy can also be applied to social structure. The Cold War system was truly *entropic*. Trillions of dollars were dedicated to development of weapons that whether used or not, inevitably increased *entropy*.
- In response to suggestions of using original terms or established terms, prefers to use terms that are currently in circulation because they force the reader to think in new ways.
- Wants to avoid lingo as Darwin, Gould do to assure accessibility.

Karun:

- Reaffirms he is interested only in acknowledging that *pattern* is extremely *highly ordered*; the concept is not mathematical, but is extremely complex, distinct. (Not referring to a simple Fibonacci series).
- Forces in the universe create *patterned matter*. We evolved *flexible information systems* that allowed *cognition, conscience*. Primary interest is the “golden core” of information.
- The idea of *simplicity/complexity* is envisioned as a-morphic. It defines *pattern* as the product or effect of its adaptive “goal” and *complexity* or *simplicity* as the byproduct of *order*.
- *Order* and disorder are two sides of the same coin, perhaps it should be termed *order/disorder*. Order is defined as adaptively and existentially useful from the perspective of a living organism. The problem emerges when we think of examples because it is hard to know the ultimate consequences of a particular level of order. At a small scale aggressive behaviour may be ordered, while using a larger geographic and time scale is may actually be disordered or maladaptive.
- So order must be considered to exist at various scales, patterns can be ordered locally in time and space, but disordered when one considers a larger system boundary.
- At the largest scale of existence (i.e. taking the universe as a whole), order and disorder are undifferentiated, the universes just unfolds as it intrinsically does. But no organism we know of lives at the scale of the universe.
- At scale of existence smaller than ours, order and disorder becomes an obvious result of the success or failure of the pattern to exist at all. It is only at our own scale of existence that we have a difficult time measuring order/disorder.

Presentation #5 (Heather Emery):

In “The Value of Art at the End of the Age of Agriculture: A Critical Response,” Heather considered the ideological model of Art History and its influence on the artist’s process, the audience, and collective memory--particularly the dialogue between artists. She asserted that the artist’s conscience is activated by contact with an audience/ knowledge of the audience.

- Suggests Karun add anecdotes from his experience in Kenya.
- Idea of artists as engines of *human consciousness*--artist must understand different audiences and eventually must speak in some way. The conversations around art and the processes of historicizing art creates model/ideology.
- From its beginning, art becomes paradigmatic (ex: Emily Carr’s totem poles. Perhaps she had a particular agenda/ narrative of colonialism. In any case, representations of her originals are circulated, discussed as the real thing.
- Artists must realize their work will be transformed in public view. Maybe the work is transformed by knowledge that it will be transformed.
- Only the non-artist has an immediate relationship with art. Only the non-artist can only be concerned with meaning on a personal level.
- The needs of various factions conflict in the general art audience.
- The artist’s *conscience* comes into play when thinking about audience.
- Jeffrey is interested in facilitating dialogue between artists, but that dialogue doesn't necessarily have to take place in real time.

- Need to reconsider social context of Modernism and the reasons why it was abandoned. How do we identify and take up its beneficial components?
- We need to get past the Modernist impasse. How can we take responsibility and learn from these ideas?
- “Consciousness has become bureaucratic.”
- Artists attempt to find a metaphorical solution to an analogical problem.

Responses:

Karun:

- How can we merge analogic language with metaphoric language of the artist, rather than furthering the polarity?
- In the absence of analogical reasoning, one finds a deficit in *consciousness* (ex: in Africa, Western tools are often criticized while they are being used).

Jesse:

- What is relevance?
- The art of today is drowning in representation.

Jeffrey:

- For the artist, judging one’s work in dialog with the ancestors’ (dead artists) work is more important in relation to art history, than judgment by contemporary peers.
- *Analogy* (math, language) is a tool that is repeatable and predictable. *Metaphor*, on the other hand, is a singular application that is valued for its singularity. It is a unique juxtaposition of independent concepts and the point of originality in art.
- *Metaphor* is specific to Western art, while most other traditions (e.g.: Chinese and Northwest Coast art) maintain art practices as cultural analogical tools.
- *Entropy* gives specific direction in that it is irreversible. One hypothesis holds that *entropy* has only existed since the Big Bang.
- While it is impossible to create new energy, *entropy* can be countered by evolving a new level of *consciousness*.

Matthew:

- It’s important to recognize that *metaphor* is used in other cultures, though we may not understand it.

Symposium Brainstorming Session: In the final portion of the two-day meeting, the Working Group broke into two, and each section was charged with addressing particular components of planning for the upcoming (May 2009) symposium. The full group then reconvened, where the ideas of each sub-group were discussed and modified. The session concluded with the decision to implement the following:

Develop a Call for Papers (see examples) in which the theme of the symposium is described in one paragraph. The JRSP contact info, along with location and logistics can be briefly described in the second paragraph.

Possible questions to shape the forthcoming Call for Papers (CFP):

- How is one able to act morally (or with conscience) without knowing the ultimate result of one's actions?
- Is there a useful way to discuss "conscience"?
- How might one model "consciousness"?
- Is self-reflexivity a condition of consciousness?

- Does "free will" exist?
- Does a material explanation of the world necessitate deterministic lack of free will?
- Is human consciousness inherently entropic?
- Is "utopia" a useful concept in the discussion of human consciousness?
- Must we de-center the ego in the evolution of human consciousness?
- What is the current state of human consciousness of patterns of information?
- To what extent does consciousness exist outside of our notice?
- Can Artificial Intelligence have conscience? What effect does AI have on human consciousness?
- Is there room for a concept of God in Modernism?
- Is science a system of faith?
- What can art and science learn from each other?
- How relevant are artists in this age?
- Historically, what role have artists played in periods of disorder?
- How do artists effect the order of human consciousness?
- What is the potential of art in the evolution of human consciousness? (Or, in Sara's words, "What is the capacity of art to effect human consciousness?")

Solicit contributors from the following fields: Philosophy, Anthropology, Geography, Architecture, Urban Planning, Science (Bio-science, Physics), Theatre, Music, Film, Creative Writing, Sociology.

Some suggested venues for distributing the CFP (all have online listings of upcoming symposia):

- AKIMBO
- CAA Website (US-based)
- Grad Student and professional organizations in the selected disciplines
- Instant Coffee (Canada-wide, listings by city/province)
- Vancouver Arts Alliance
- Artist Run Centres (PAARC—national organization)
- Grad secretaries and grad advisors at universities in selected departments

Selection Process: Out of the abstracts, 6 selected to be presenters based on their interrelationships, relevance to selected themes.

LOGISTICS:

Timeline for Planning

August-September, 2008:

- Establish email account to be used for submissions, questions about symposium.
- Draft and finalize CFP.

Note: Robert volunteered to monitor the email account, to answer questions and collect the abstracts.

October 1, 2008:

- Release the CFP. Ask potential presenters to submit a 500 word abstract and CV.

December 15, 2008:

- Deadline for submissions.

Note: Robert, Sara, Jenni and possibly Matt have volunteered to review the abstracts and meet to decide whom to invite to participate.

March 15, 2008:

- Extend invitations.
- Assist attendees with travel plans.

May 15, 16, 17 (?), 2008

- Symposium

In attendance:

- 3 rapporteurs (duties include logistics, taking notes, organizing info)
- 6 presenters
- participants (4 people from this group confirmed—see list of availability below)

Availability of Working Group Members:

Jessie: Unknown

Heather: Unknown, but can do editing and work in meantime

Jenni: Yes, and help in meantime

Charo: Unknown

Karun: Yes

Sara: Yes, and help in meantime from distance

Matt: Unknown (will know in September); could probably help locate participants

Robert: Yes, and will help in finding participants

Proposed Symposium Agenda:

2 – 3 Days

Day 1:

- Karun and Jeff--Introductions
- Breakfast
- Sculpture Park Tour

- 3 Presentations centered on one of the chosen subtopics (to be crafted from the questions listed above): three speakers from different disciplines presenting papers in response to the topic– 30 minutes each, followed by 30 minutes for questions/ dialogue

- 1 hour lunch to break the three-hour span.

- Possibly have music/dance performance in the evening.

Day 2:

- 3 Presentations centered on one of the chose subtopics (to be crafted from the questions listed above): three speakers from different disciplines presenting papers in response to the topic– 30 minutes each, followed by 30 minutes for questions/ dialogue.

- Dialogue at end of the day to synthesize symposium proceedings. Will be transcribed for possible future publication.

Compensation:

- \$250 - \$500.00 room, board, transportation, food for those without funding from home institution.
- Perhaps create grant for which presenters can apply.
- Honorarium of \$250.00 paid for publishable paper for – to be handed in week after symposium.

Other ideas for making the JRSP resources available: Invite professionals to meet for retreats between symposia. Spend time with Jeff to view work, engage in discussion. (Robert knows of interested parties.)