

Creativity and the City

Culture policy seeks to provide conditions by which creativity occurs. But the first and best move may be to "get out of the way". Our agendas may even intimidate it. Creativity has its own intelligence, and doesn't take well to uninspired help. "Interventions" can become "interferences". Good intervention, finally, is an art.

The first intervention is to understand that creativity hunts its own game. It is not shy. It advertises its joy, by its nature. It asks only for a climate of trust and allowance. Governance concerns the elimination of what enfeebles trust in a city; circumspection, the unethical, proceduralism and market prejudice. These things permit no one to relax into his or her creative skills.

A city welcomes the creative, not just by "fostering" or "funding" but by inviting the intelligence of the creative, removing what discourages it and leaving intact elements of play and aspects of the random. It does not make a conspicuous project of creativity. The notion of "welcoming" is about making a place where people feel "free" to create. The rallying of creativity produces mere invention. The allowance of creativity produces radical thinking.

Radical thinking occurs where protocol doesn't replace a spirit of allowance, where the market does not barge in to meddle with insight, where the psychology is freely disposed to what is possible. Human psychology, left to itself, seeks to re-originate and share. It finds its way to innovation, if not badgered by procedure and expedience.

To permit the "psychology" of the creative, governance must participate in the psychology of the creative; its first duty is to see that agendas don't render that psychology self-conscious. Creativity moves by the casual endorsement of its own enthusiasm. With this subtlety and this enthusiasm creativity permeates industry and all sectors. It becomes the zeitgeist of a city and a way of life.

In this way creativity shapes the city, while the city formalizes a climate conducive to it.

Pier Giorgio Di Cicco
City of Toronto Poet Laureate