

## **“Welcome and Response”—The Creative Ethic**

The arts in a city do not begin with the "arts". They begin with a kind of grace that isn't just theological. They begin in the grace of daily transaction, in the welcoming of an idea, and the public excursion of thanks for an idea; art germinates in the premise of welcome and response, in the countless moments of encounter in the day of a city. This atmosphere makes formal art possible because art is inspired by the atmosphere around it-- the city itself. People in all walks of life are responsible for the formal arts; because the formal arts do not happen unless the citizen sees his/her life as art. A creative economy will not happen unless the art of life inspires the imagination. To accomplish the art of life the citizen must adopt an ethic of "welcome and response", a behavioural ethic that enables the formal arts and sparks creativity. Welcome and response is the dynamic of civic grace. And grace is not manufactured by funding agencies, arts coalitions; neither is it generated in the sanctum of artistic solitude, independent of a hospitable society. Grace is the expectation of welcome and response, inspired by a civic family that surrounds the act of creating. When the merchant knows this, when the working person knows this, when the citizens know this-- they will know they are accountable for the existence of the arts, or the "drabness" of the arts in their city, or the drabness of the city itself. For the citizen who is not an artist deprives community and family of the very thing that he or she strives for—namely, joy.

The ethic of "welcome and response" must be the tacit ethic of any metropolis that would see its economy prosper by "creativity"; and the strategies for disseminating such a creative ethic do not begin with the "arts".

They begin with campaigns of encouragement among citizens themselves, aided by the marketing, communications and example of the municipality that implicitly assumes and explicitly proclaims the "ethic of welcome and response".

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