

Re-Generation: The Healthy Arts Leader
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"Managing Metaphors"
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[thanks and acknowledgments came here...you had to be there to enjoy them]

All keynotes are supposed to begin with a joke, so here is mine. Forgive me if you've heard it before, but it has a larger purpose that we'll get to soon:

Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson are out in the woods on a camping trip (as was so common in their time). In the middle of the night, Sherlock Holmes shakes Doctor Watson awake and says to him, "Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you deduce." So Watson rubs his eyes and looks up at the night sky, saying: "I see a billion stars, among which there may be a million planets, among which there may be planets much like our Earth, and upon which there may well be sentient life looking back at *their* night sky at this very moment, wondering if we might exist." After this speech, Sherlock Holmes pauses for a moment and responds, "No Watson, you idiot. Someone has stolen our tent."

I love that particular joke for many reasons – for one, it makes me laugh. For another, it has the rhythm and structure of so many great jokes, lulling us into one perspective of the world and then snapping us into another. It's a miniature version of what pundits call a "paradigm shift," a phrase I happen to hate but feel compelled to use, if perhaps by the common laws of conference keynotes. [Must use phrase: 'paradigm shift'...check.] For this morning, I also think the joke captures a key idea that may help us in the topic we're here to talk about: conceptual re-generation, professional renewal, and the healthy arts leader.

I'm going to suggest today that, like Doctor Watson in that joke, our impulse when faced with these and many similar challenges is to focus our weary eyes on the wrong scale. In our case, however, we focus on the tent – tactical responses and procedural adjustments. We hunger for tips, tricks, best practices, new business models, funding initiatives, and other adjustments. We hope that these tactical responses might make our work lives less stressful, our workday less jumbled, and our organizations healthier. But by indulging this impulse, we may be missing a more productive scale for exploration. Worse, we may be reinforcing and entrenching the very problems we hope to solve. What if, instead of shuffling the symptoms and the cures, we began to discuss and discover the *cause* of what we're struggling with?

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To me, that cause is on a scale at once more massive and more intensely personal. That cause lies deeply embedded in the metaphors we manage by, and in the mental models that drive our interactions with the world.

Arts and cultural managers are in the *business* of metaphor, symbol, narrative, and meaning. Why not engage more of that capacity in exploring the ways we describe and understand what we do?

But first a confession: I'm a huge fan of tips, tricks, tactics, and techniques. To me, visiting an office supply superstore is like a pilgrimage to Mecca...so many gadgets and systems and software solutions designed to streamline my professional life. Surely here, I think every time, are the answers to my cluttered desk, my missed appointments, my relentless deadlines. So, I buy some bundle of things and bring them home. I eagerly unwrap them and place them around my workspace. And then, I almost instantly go back to working as I always have...with just a bit more clutter of unused filing apparatus crowding my personal space. My desk is the place that office products go to die. Worse yet, those icons of efficiency eventually seem to glare at me as I work, a constant judgmental reminder of the ways I *should* be working, but can't bring myself to do.

At most professional training sessions and conferences, the experience for me is much the same. They are so gloriously jam-packed with tips, and tricks, and lists of the six steps you've got to follow to do something or another, and the five trends that you absolutely have to track in your line of work. E-mail marketing. Web development. Relationship building. Grant writing. Planned giving. Wonderful stuff. Thoughtfully presented. Earnestly received. But all too soon, they become little dust-bunnies in my brain or illegible scrawls in the conference notes I never look at again. And as with the office supply gadgets, the wonderful insights and energy of professional training can eventually come back to haunt me...more stuff I could and should be doing if I were smarter, or better, or more organized, or had more time or money. I leave these conferences elated and full of potential, but quickly become exhausted and full of self-doubt.

In my own work, this challenge isn't just a personal issue, but a core concern. As the director of an MBA degree program in Arts Administration, it's my *job* to select the things that future leaders need to know. My graduates are supposed to be ready to manage effective, sustainable, and dynamic organizations or initiatives, not just in the world that was, but in a world that's continually emerging. With the standard tools of academia, I'm supposed to sketch out the path to get them there (fortunately, I have lots of insanely intelligent help, and I'm blessed with brilliant students). But as I assemble my various syllabi every year, there seem to be more and more things that an effective manager *has* to know. Okay, I say, we're covering marketing, human resources, operations, financial accounting, finance, nonprofit industry structure, negotiation, education, outreach, fundraising in all of its forms...but boy, we really need international exchange, cultural policy, copyright, contract law, advocacy, technology, and on and on and on. The impulse is to counter complexity with complexity, adding more and more stuff to the curriculum in an effort to stem the tide. But that complexity comes at a great price. It can lead to students with a full toolkit, but with little contextual understanding of when each tool is most appropriate. It can lead them to burn out before they begin, once they see the sheer scope and scale of the challenges they will face as working managers.

At the same time, I'm writing this fairly-daily weblog on the business of arts and culture on ArtsJournal.com. To be honest, I do this almost entirely for my own benefit...my morning mental calisthenics. Plus, the deadline and the public posting force me to actually do what I encourage in others: to find at least one interesting article, issue, or conversation going on in the world each day and try to give it some context or connection. It's a happy accident that anyone actually reads the thing. But I'm pleased and humbled that they do.

Through the course of the 18 months I've been writing this weblog – some 299 entries by my last count – I've seen an eerie mirror out in the wider world of my own struggle. More and more stuff to know, more trends, more tips, more tricks, more challenges. More articles about "shifting landscapes" and "paradigm shifts" (there, I've said it twice now, two points for me), and the tactical responses they require. More events and symposia on "change management" and "capacity building" – without anyone defining either "change" or "capacity." And somewhere in there is the feeling that despite our best efforts, the problems are getting larger and more complex, running away from us just as quickly as we can chase them.

There's a pattern here that might be obvious and familiar to many of you. When faced with a complex problem, we counter with a well-meaning and reasoned response, only to find the problem made worse by our interventions. The response to office clutter can lead to *more* office clutter. The process of professional training and renewal can leave us *less* responsive and confident. The policies intended to force a new connection between arts organization and community just leave them *more* disconnected, but in different ways.

This pattern, and the fact that it shows up in so many places, suggests that error in scale that I talked about at the beginning. Perhaps as we've been straining toward the night sky for an answer, the real opportunity has been right in front of us.

Which, forgive me, brings me to another joke²:

Two villagers decide to go bird hunting. They pack their guns and set out, with their dog, into the fields. Near evening, with no success at all, one says to the other, "We must be doing something wrong." His friend nods his head, and says, "You're right. Perhaps we're not throwing the dog high enough."

Let's put down the dog, and take a breath.

To get to where I'm going, we need one more slight detour. And that's to suggest that we all interact with the world not directly, but through mental models, or through metaphor. It seems too obvious to say, but we can't hold the world in our head. We can only interact with the world, and slowly build a sense of how it reacts to our actions. If you've ever watched an infant or toddler play with a new toy or confront a new challenge, you know what I mean: a burst of experimentation, of play, of trial and error, that slowly becomes a nuanced engagement with the thing...not just then, but at every future interaction.

² This one swiped from Minsky, Marvin, "Jokes and the Logic of the Cognitive Unconscious," which isn't particularly hilarious otherwise. It's available on-line at <http://web.media.mit.edu/~minsky/papers/jokes.cognitive.txt>

We never stop building, refining, and rebuilding such models. We just become so exceptional at it that the process becomes invisible to us. We don't have fire in our head, but we know that if we touch it, it will burn. We don't have the mechanics of a doorknob in our head, but we have a fairly nuanced model of how to engage a doorknob to make something useful happen. In fact, we have multiple door-opening-device models in our head ready to engage the knob, or the push bar, or the handle, or the motion sensor.

These mental models are invariably shorthand. They don't require all the details, just a selection of essential elements. We usually adjust them as we confront unexpected responses or new configurations – think of your first experience with one of those touchless sinks in the restroom. But they are shorthand. They are abstractions. They are incomplete. They have to be, or else we'd get nothing done.

While we use these models and metaphors quite successfully for simple systems with immediate feedback, we use the same techniques for modeling complex interactions with the world. For example, the human brain turns out to be exceptionally powerful at reading other people's expressions and modeling other people's minds. There are fascinating studies that show that our efforts to model what *other* people might be thinking also starts very early on in life...somewhere between three and four years old for most of us.³

This, too, we forget that we're doing until we're horribly wrong – when we misinterpret someone's feelings and get smacked in the face, when we are surprised by a specific response, when we tell a joke that's wrong for the room, or when we meet people who grew up in other cultures.

So, we model our environment. We model other peoples' minds. And we also model larger systems like social groups, organizations, ethnic groups, demographic groups, environmental systems, and everything else. Just listen closely to any political debate and you will here two versions of the world slamming against each other, or more often breezing by each other.

So why, on earth, am I telling a room full of arts and cultural managers that humans interact with the world through metaphor? Metaphor is what we do. We're constantly telling the world about art's ability to change lives, shift perspectives, build empathy, voice alternative views, and question our collective assumptions about the world. And for many in the room, right now, this may be really old news. Duh.

I'm walking us through this idea because it's clear in many situations that we *don't* as managers, as funders, as artists, apply the same creative eye to the metaphors that drive our management practice, and our search for leadership responses.

³ One particularly interesting experiment involved showing a child a candy box, but then also showing them that inside was a pencil, and not candy. The child was then told that someone was going to be coming into the room, and asked what *that person* would say was in the box. Children under four usually believed the new person would expect a pencil. Children four and over had the capacity to separate the other perspective from their own, and say that the new person would expect the box to contain candy. To join in the fun, read Perner, J., Leekam, S. R., & Wimmer, H. (1987). "Three-year-olds' difficulty with false belief." *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 5, 125-137.

As examples, let's pull out just a few of our collective metaphors about arts and cultural management and take them for a spin. If I'm right, then the change of scale might inform our other conversations, and break a few logjams in our thoughts about what to do next.

Let's begin with a big one:

Production and Consumption

When arts managers talk about what we do, our language is infused with the metaphors of production and consumption. We produce theater, present performing arts, mount an exhibition, or launch a program. We do outreach and education. We collect and preserve – much like warehousing. And when we're done, we expose our work to an audience.

On the consuming side is the audience or the community. They come in to see our completed work and react to it. They consume it, not by *actually* consuming it (unless it's food art), but by receiving it or observing it. We have marketing departments and marketing plans. We have a marketing budget, so we must be selling something.

I'm being a bit crass here, but I hope you see the point.

As another example, in the United States, there's a bubbling conversation among arts funders about supply and demand. Many of them believe that they've focused for the past decades on supporting the supply of the arts in America. Perhaps now it is time to shift focus to the demand. There's an imbalance, they have determined, and it needs to be adjusted. Supply and demand is another form of production and consumption. And it's a metaphor we seem to take as reality.

So, what's wrong with that? It seems a useful metaphor in many ways to talk about supply and demand, production and consumption, giving and receiving. All of you know the energy and stamina it takes to arrive at opening night. It *feels* like production. And you *are* producing something. Where's the danger in it?

The danger is that this is a metaphor, a model. It's not reality, it's a convenient abstraction that helps us make decisions and do our work. Our metaphors also define the worldview in which we search for solutions, responses, and reactions. And if we're stuck in a particular metaphor, we are also often blinded to the full range of options in front of us.

There's an old consultant's saying (said by old consultants everywhere) that:

If you only have a hammer, every problem looks like a nail.

So, if you only have production and consumption, every problem looks like a market imbalance, or a marketing problem, or a disconnect.

Further, consider the funders who are turning their efforts from demand to supply. If the accepted metaphor is fundamentally flawed, might they just be reinforcing the problem they're trying to solve? Or at the least, might they get no results, or results that surprise them in unpleasant ways?

The true test of a metaphor is to find another option that works equally well or better. Let's unbundle this a bit to see where it takes us: Think for a moment about a meaningful experience you've had as an audience member or observer of a creative work – a theater work, musical

performance, sculpture, painting, whatever. By "meaningful" I mean all the usual stuff – transfixing, transformative, a sense of losing time and space perhaps, of being "in the moment." Stick with an audience moment for now, a consumer moment. Do you have something in your head? I'll give you a minute to find it.

Now, a question: who produced that moment? There was certainly a production involved; you were sharing space with it in a theater, a museum, a gallery, a city street, or someplace else. But who produced the moment? Your reaction to the creative expression was likely fueled by something inside you – a memory, an emotion that was waiting to be expressed, a resonance that perhaps you can't even define or don't care to, a love or knowledge of the art form or the art work. You *brought* something to that moment. The art brought something too.

Now, if you can, recall a moment when you created something, or expressed something to someone else or to an audience. There is likely a moment or two where you felt a similar sense of connection in time and space, when you were "in the zone." We talk about this more often in the performing arts, but there is a tangible quality to an audience and how it reacts during a performance. There's an invisible give and take that draws something exceptional out of the artist, and leads them to a similarly powerful place.

At this moment for the artist, who's producing? Who's consuming? Who supplied? Who demanded? I'm suggesting here that both experiences are co-constructions, not produced and consumed but generated as two or more sides spinning seamlessly together. It seems a minor point but it makes a major difference in how we manage, lead, and spend our energies.

And here I'm not just talking about what we call the "lively arts," or the art forms that bring artist and audience together in time and space. There's a similar feeling to visual and plastic arts in many cases, with a synergy between the construction of the work in the studio and the deconstruction/reconstruction of the individual experiencing the work. Despite the separation of place and time, the blurring of production and consumption is still just as relevant.

I'm sure I'm belaboring the point, but it's worth belaboring. Production and consumption of creative experience is a useful metaphor in many cases. But it's an abstraction, like everything else. When we ignore the other metaphors we might bring to bear, or accept our current metaphors as fact, we limit our vision, our insight, our options, and our choices as managers of the process.

But before we move on to another metaphor worth challenging, I'd like to extend this one a bit further. We have already talked about the intense creative experience as a co-production of sender and receiver, or artist and audience. They both have to be there, be engaged, and be ready for it in some personal way. But this artist/audience connection is only one of the many moments we have the privilege to broker or enable. And we can be thoughtful as managers as we consider where the weight of the moment might live.

For a professional performance, for example, we might focus our energy on the audience, and consider how they might find connection to what's on stage, how we can play a small role in supporting them, encouraging them, or giving them space to find their connection on their terms. In a community or amateur performance, our role as managers might be more focused on the performers, ensuring *their* experience has the greatest potential and space for meaning. For craft circles or heritage organizations, the experience might come in the learning of a handicraft or cultural ritual by many individuals.

There are management and leadership choices embedded deeply in how we define what we do, and what we hope to accomplish. We can choose the metaphor that suits us, rather than letting it choose us.

For example, a colleague of mine took a leadership position at a youth choir with a strong reputation for excellence, and a highly regarded quality in their public performances. The board of this organization expressed great pride in the group's public performances, and judged their success by the quality of the venue in which the children performed, and the level of artistic excellence they achieved in that environment.

But as they slowly noticed a decline in enrollments and a drop in interest, they were bold enough to question the metaphors that drove both their measures of success and their strategic plans. Through a long process, they slowly came to discover that what was truly important to them was engaging young people in the experience of intense discovery of musical performance, and a social exploration of the craft of singing. In this metaphor, a performance of the highest quality possible was still essential, but rather than a goal, it was a *tool* to reinforce their true purpose. A professional-quality performance was an important capstone and incentive, adding intensity and purpose to the rehearsal process. But it was no longer the center of the story.

When you challenge and inform your metaphors, you manage differently, you lead differently, and you measure differently. And that seems useful to me.

Okay, now a few variations on the theme:

Consider a donor at the announcement of a major gift (and here I mean "major" to *them*). These moments are often filled with emotion, with stories of their family history, their community bond, their life experience. They are expressing a vision of who they are, who they hope to be, what they want for their families and communities, and how they long to be remembered. Who's giving at that moment, and who's receiving? Who's thanking whom?

Or, consider the complex relationship between mentor and protégé. We are quick to believe that one teaches and one receives wisdom, but from exploring our own experiences we can quickly see how the learning is a co-construction or a co-production, as well.

In short, the production and consumption metaphor is everywhere we look, or rather, everywhere we *don't* look. And it's worth a moment of our time.

Now let's take on another metaphor, though nothing quite so grandiose:

The Fiscal Year

We all know the rhythm of our fiscal year, or our season. It's a necessary time-frame for so many things – from financial reporting to grant cycles to tax documentation. But it too can become for us a gold standard for how we manage and measure our work. If we're not careful, we can begin to think it's the appropriate frame for everything we do.

Think back to any of those meaningful moments you considered before: You in the audience; you on the stage or in the gallery or in some other creative space. What sort of time frame was required for that moment? Was it a calendar year? Was it an hour and a half? Or perhaps, was it a lifetime, or even two lifetimes: Your life to that point and the artist's, or yours and at least one audience member.

Of course, there are multiple rhythms and cycles to what we do. As managers and leaders, we must always work to recognize them and guide our organizations accordingly.

The great philosopher John Dewey explored these rhythms of creative experience more than seventy years ago in the speeches that became the classic book, *Art as Experience*. He had a glorious and brain-bending way of exploring the nature of the creative moment, and of questioning what still today are our fairly rigid metaphors for artistic expression and experience.

In one passage, he describes a flash of lightening illuminating a dark landscape. In that moment, we have a sudden view of the objects and we recognize them. But, he says:

...the recognition is not itself a mere point in time. It is the focal culmination of long, slow processes of maturation....It is as meaningless in isolation as would be the drama of Hamlet were it confined to a single line or word with no context.

If I didn't know the objects illuminated in the landscape, that lightening flash would carry little meaning for me. File *that* somewhere in your fiscal year.

Of course, I'm preaching to the choir here. We all know that the creative moment is not a moment at all, but a flashpoint in the full experiences of the audience, the artist, the donor, the volunteer, the staff member, the board member. We can all stretch our metaphors to make room for multiple cycles in our work, multiple rhythms in our days.

But some metaphors are so persistent, so insistent, that they crowd out the other possibilities. The fiscal year is a particularly brutal abstraction. It requires continual energy to hold it only where it's useful to you and to your organization. By what time scale do you choose what to do, how to do it, and how to measure your success?

Partnership

Do we dare? I think we do. Partnership is a wonderful word. It is the stuff of conferences and constant conversation. We need more of them. They must be built. They must be fed. They must be extended and enhanced.

The dictionary tells us that partnership is "a relationship between individuals or groups that is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility, as for the achievement of a specified goal."

As I said, it's a glorious metaphor, but it's a metaphor nonetheless. When we approach it without question, we can simply reinforce the problems we are seeking to solve through its use.

How so? The metaphor of "partnership" carries with it the assumption of separation. The word, itself, is from a Middle English root meaning "portion, part, or division." So, by seeking a partnership, you are accepting and reinforcing the idea that you and your partner are separate, that the lines between you can be reasonably drawn. And because you actively "form" such a thing, you also bundle the assumption that without your agreement, the organizations or individuals involved wouldn't be influencing each other's choices or options or lives.

Of course, that's nuts.

For one thing, we are all inextricably interconnected in startlingly practical ways...by our markets, our geography, our leadership, sometimes even our board members, by the common communities we serve, and by the various revenue streams we draw upon.

For another thing, consider that meaningful moment once more. How many other arts organizations or public or private institutions or individuals played a part in that connection between artist and audience? My transfixed moment in a symphony hall may carry with it the church music I heard as a child, the muscle memory of my high school French Horn lessons, the connection I feel for a family member through our mutual love for the piece, the power of sharing that sound with my wife beside me. The symphony may have been the lightning in the field, but I was prepared for that flash by a thousand connections that came before.

The term and the metaphor of partnership can often blind us to the connections that already exist, that bind all of our choices and options to our peer institutions in the arts, our schools, our communities, our governments, and our disciplines. So often, instead of "forming" something, we are really just recognizing a connection that already exists between organizations, and informing it with conversation and thought. We are making the implicit connection explicit, and adding intention to the mix.

But in many places, we're starting to come around. Just last week, there was a report released by the United Kingdom's Department for Culture, Media, and Sport on the future of museums.⁴ In part, it discussed the challenge of access for all the great art and artifacts scattered around the country, with so many in storage by London's major museums. The report framed the question in a rather extraordinary way:

"...museums' collections and acquisitions, while remaining in the direct ownership of individual institutions, could also be viewed as contributing to the nation's 'public collection' as a single resource under the custodianship of many individual museums."

So, although the museums are separate institutions, their collections can be considered part of a single public trust. They are separated in space and governance, but stewarding a common pool. We could also say the same of the creative moments of connection we keep talking about. "Partnership" isn't a particularly useful metaphor here, and perhaps even clouds a different truth.

Before I move on to the home stretch (and trust me, it's coming), let me just fling out a few more metaphors to watch for as our conversations continue today and beyond:

"Like a Business"

Okay, it's a simile, not a metaphor. But it's silly, nonetheless. In fact, it's silly *because* it's a simile. Arts organizations *are* businesses...collections of people and contracts and capacities and assets. Anything they do is "like a business." And even if they weren't businesses, what *other* business are we supposed to be like? Enron? Halliburton? Usually, this phrase is a placeholder for more specific behaviors like accountability, responsibility, and sustainability.

If that's what we mean, let's just say it.

Emerging Leaders

Sorry, I couldn't resist given our conversations yesterday. It's a wonderful and nurturing sentiment, but a complicated metaphor when we start to spin it out. The implied evolution for

⁴ www.culture.gov.uk/global/consultations/2005+current+consultations/museums_21st_century.htm

people in this group would be "leaders who have emerged," and that's just odd. The best leaders I know at any level of an organization are *constantly* emerging. As someone said yesterday: you're done when you're dead.

I haven't yet come up with an alternative metaphor, so for now let me suggest a slight simplification:

Leaders

We could honestly extend this exercise for days at a time, but I think you get the gist. And some of you are likely sick of it. Consider this a party game at your next staff meeting: pick a commonly held metaphor for what you do, and deconstruct it. It's particularly useful for problems or challenges that continue to return or get worse despite your tactical efforts and best intentions. When you flex the metaphors a bit, another option is likely to drop into your head.

So, you may well be asking, apart from tearing down long-held and even comforting beliefs, leading us to question everything we do, and making us nauseous or anxious or just plain mad, is there any *positive* outcome of this different scale of thinking?

Thank goodness, yes. And let me end with it.

What we're beginning to do in our MBA degree program in Arts Administration, and elsewhere, is to consider how we can call forward these metaphors to our advantage. How can we add metaphor, itself, to our toolkit as managers and leaders in the arts? As we do so, can we respond to the complexity of our work and our world by teaching *less* rather than more? Could there be patterns of knowledge or awareness that reunite the many disconnected things we do with our days?

I'll admit that our first steps are horribly clumsy, and inevitably wrong, but I believe there's something there. Consider, for example, these two questions. How might you model these in your mind?

How do individuals and groups attach value to a lived experience? And how to they express that value in money or time or attention?

In those two questions lie marketing, development, outreach, education, architecture or environment, volunteerism, and even experience design. If we can learn to more effectively observe, infer, inquire, and model these processes, we can translate them in a thousand different ways in service to the creative moment and to the particular form of expression we hope to support.

There's finally emerging research in the arts that's cutting to this particular core. The Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism just released a report in July, exploring how and why people value arts experiences – in their own words, on their own time.⁵

And beyond specific research in the arts, a more broadly framed question can lead to direct connections with other disciplines of study – from psychology to social science to urban studies to neuroscience. There are people already studying how people use the built environment, how

⁵ Available at <http://www.ctarts.org/Public.htm>

cities form and evolve, how individuals construct meaning and purpose. We can learn from them if we frame our questions well.

And I'll admit that even the tearing down of persistent metaphors can lead to positive results. Consider the production/consumption metaphor, and the alternative of a co-production. The latter suggests that the entire organization has a meaningful role to play in the core purpose of the organization. It's not a production and creative team creating something to be sold and supported by marketing and development. It's a co-production that requires all of them, as well as front-of-house or audience services, facility management, custodial staff, ushers and volunteers, and the audience themselves.

And to me, at least, the idea of a co-constructed experience offers a healthy shift in defining what we do. In all of our efforts, we can only ever provide half of that moment. It's not a gesture of force, or of completion, or delivery, but an invitation, an open hand. It's a posture that's much more compelling and attractive, I believe, to the future leaders we're aching to attract. And it might make our lives a touch more sane.

I'll close with a quote from Jacques Lusseyran, the French resistance leader from World War II who so vividly describes his discovery of the world despite his blindness. To me it captures both the glorious world that's available to us if we are willing to expand and explore the metaphors we live by. And it speaks to the nature of the creative moment of connection, and the part we play as arts managers within it. He says:

If I put my hand on the table without pressing it, I knew the table was there but knew nothing about it. To find out, my fingers had to bear down, and the amazing thing is that the pressure was answered by the table at once. Being blind I thought I should have to go out to meet things, but I found that they came to meet me instead. I have never had to go more than halfway, and the universe became the accomplice of all my wishes.⁶

May we all discover our world in this way. And may the universe be the accomplice of all of your work. Thank you for your attention and your time.

This line of thinking is a constant work in progress.

Feedback and comments are gratefully received:

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⁶ Lusseyran, Jacques, *And There Was Light: Autobiography of Jacques Lusseyran, Blind Hero of the French Resistance*