

Bruce's Studio News

Process • Concept • Evolution • Solution Vol. VII No. 1 Winter / 2017

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Why Support the Arts?

The essence of art is forward thinking. It is also inward thinking. Although art relies on the past for guidance and insight, it looks to the future for innovation and new ideas.. Art is not static and artists always strive for their personal vision of the truth as they attempt to express some meaningful version of what is universally known or intuitively recognized through the senses.. In doing so, artists in all genres are inspired by the natural world around them and also try to make sense of the existential impulses of human nature.

The beauty of fine art is in it's honesty (truth), not in it's mode of expression or subject matter. Because all forms of art are housed in the collective imaginations of its citizens it is hard to reject the value of art to society because it carries with it the soul of the people and the aspirations of their culture. It is necessary to human survival and is man's greatest gift to himself, as it is his legacy upon which the future is built.

All the arts; music, poetry, the visual arts, literature, film, performance, architectural design and many other design forms speak to our most basic human needs to understand our humanity rather than destroy it. Art communicates across boundaries of place and culture unimpeded by spoken language or borders. It is a most sacred of human endeavors and is the sister of the sciences; sharing the same goals of finding answers to questions big and little, seeking truth, and expanding all there is to be known or imagined.

Unlike science which may search for answers to the workings of the mind, and the universe around us, art can translate emotions and communicate them to touch the feelings of others sensually. The arts thereby help us to negotiate our personal connection to the world around us. Expressions of joy, sadness, misery or fear through art, music, or literature exposes us to empathy and understanding of our collective human condition, opening us to individual enlightenment regardless of the emotional depth of the spirit exposed.

The arts allow us to consider the many meanings of life, expressed in a trillion different ways. The arts are not a throw away budget item in a great democratic experiment, but an essential ingredient of our future. If our new government administration considers increasing support of the mechanisms of war¹ as a top priority, but simultaneously eliminates the National Endowment for the Arts and The National Endowment of Humanities as mechanisms of peace that support our most creative people and innovative ideas for artistic and intellectual expression in America... what makes our lives worth anything?

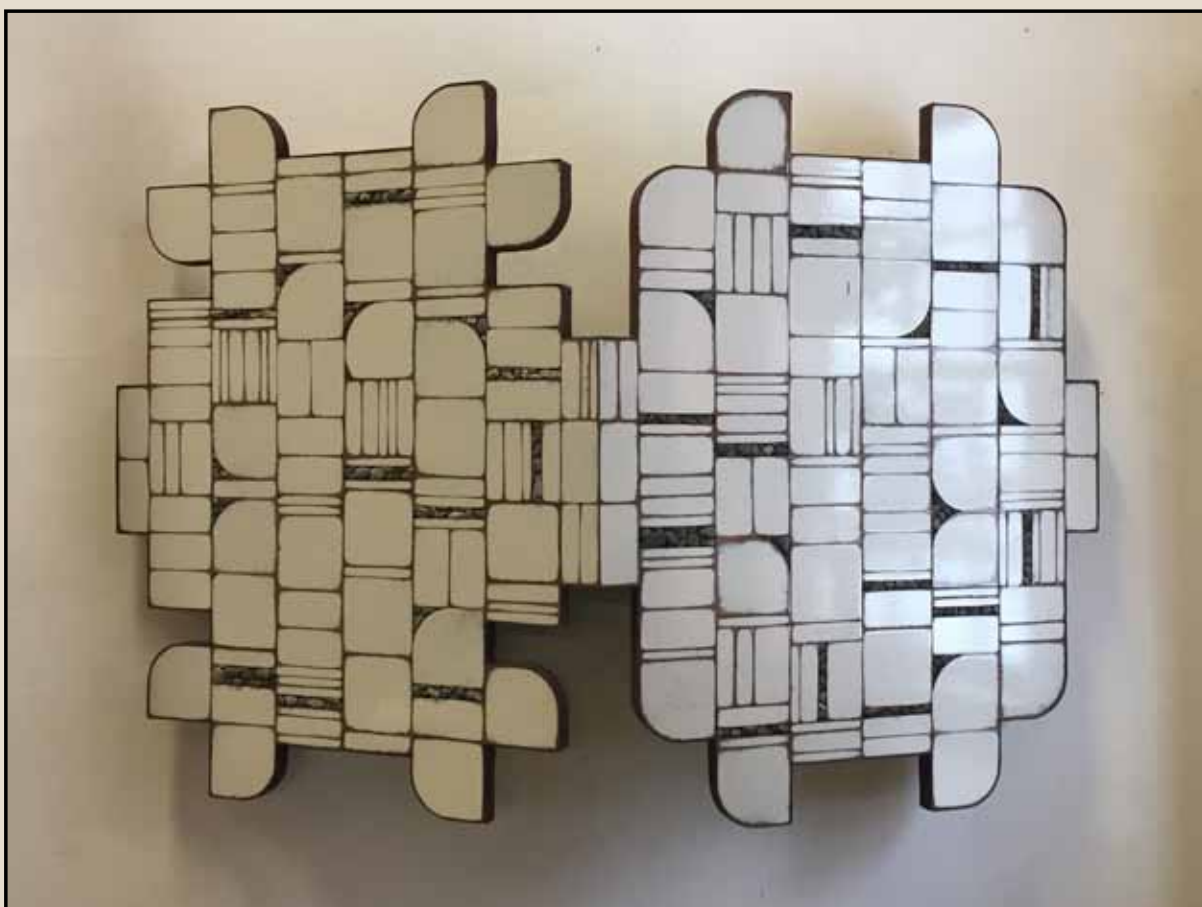
These agencies are under attack by misguided politicians for all the wrong reasons. Defunding programs that support the arts and humanities seems clearly on the chopping block of our new administration, but we can't afford to not fund the NEA or the NEH which are the among the most lasting reflections of our greatest aspirations, accomplishments and "culture". It is the job of our politics to create the future, not to fear it... to imagine what the world's future could be, rather than trying to return to the past like George Webber in Thomas Wolfe's novel "You Can't Go Home Again".²

As much as I wish I could stay apolitical in my newsletter, and have expressed some "progressive" views that have turned some of my past readers away, *this is not an issue that I can passively ignore*. In my opinion, our newly inaugurated president is not just a political threat, but a societal threat to reasoned governance and anyone who loves this country. Regardless of status or personal bias, Americans need to oppose his so-called budget reductions that are, in fact, the first steps toward silencing dissent, intellectual discourse, and creativity.

Followed by propoganda in the form of the "big lie", anti-press attacks, a presidential cabinet of billionaires and alt. right advisors, his moves to limit established human rights practices, LGBTQ rights, along with his verbal attacks on immigrants are founded on exclusion rather than inclusion and pave a dangerous policy road that will not make America "Great Again", but rather, destroy what makes America Great already! Along with Trump's desire to reinstate torture as a means of military interrogation and to threaten a nuclear solution to fight terrorism, he also seems fine with voter suppression practices, and pushes "alternative facts" to support his narcissistic view of the world. His campaign rhetoric continues to play only to his populist support despite the fact that there is a larger percentage of Americans that voted against him.

Personally, I have no interest in taking our country back in time... if you feel the same, I hope you'll keep informed and active in this era of political uncertainty. We must all continue to Pursue the Truth.

MEANWHILE -- Between the depressing flow of the morning and evening news... I work. Below is a new finished piece:



Diptych Folded - "From the Prairie to the Ocean" • 2017 • 38.5" H X 50.0" W X 10.0" D • Mixed Media

¹According to the Department of Defense website their 2016 base budget of \$534.3 billion includes an increase of \$38.2 billion over the FY 2015 enacted budget. (That total is over one half a Trillion dollars for the year for military spending) By comparison, the NEA budget last year was slightly less than \$148 Million which is less than 0.03% of the money that Americans taxes spend annually for Defence and Military Operations. (The cost to Americans for the accidental crash in 2008 of one B2 Stealth bomber could have funded the NEA for a dozen years!)

²In her Introduction ©1990 for it's Scribner Publication Gail Godwin wrote; "The title is reinforced in the denouement of the novel in which Webber realises: "You can't go back home to your family, back home to your childhood ... back home to a young man's dreams of glory and of fame ... back home to places in the country, back home to the old forms and systems of things which once seemed everlasting but which are changing all the time – back home to the escapes of Time and Memory." (Ellipses in original.)"