



Marian Godfrey's Manifesto: "Only Connect the Prose & the Passion"

Mar 31, 2013

Thoughtful reflections on art & how it gets supported in the U.S. these days:

Marian Godfrey, longtime director of Cultural Initiatives for the Pew Charitable Trusts in Philadelphia, and now cultural advisor to the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, has written a fascinating [manifesto](#), taking on the too frequent gap between the thrill of art and the existing mechanisms of support for that work. She assesses the current realities and proposes a hopeful vision. Well worth consideration!

[?Only Connect the Prose and the Passion? A Manifesto](#)

by Marian Godfrey

Originally a keynote at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts? Cultural Summit 2012

Adapted into an article published in the Grantmakers in the Arts Reader, , Vol. 24, No. 1 Winter 2013

Read it here: http://www.giarts.org/sites/default/files/24-1_Godfrey.pdf

Excerpts:

"Over the years I have struggled with the contradiction between my work as an arts administrator, which is mostly deeply prosaic, and my experiences of passionate encounters with art ? of being literally exalted ? in the theater, in music, in museums, even in the presence of great buildings."

"So why do we need a manifesto? A manifesto is a claim that something in the world needs changing, and that particular beliefs and actions are required to make the world better. The institutional structures that underpin the arts community have deep problems today. But the arts themselves are

thriving, or at the very least as well off as they ever have been."

"I sometimes think funders are like the proverbial drunk looking for his keys under the lamppost on a dark night

because that is where he can see: by and large, we look to fund ?excellence? and ?innovation? only in particular kinds of arts organizations with which we are already familiar. These are organizations that our charters permit us to fund ? usually restricted to 501(c)(3) nonprofits ? and that our governing boards know and sometimes love. Major institutions such as symphonies and museums fit the bill, as do some smaller museums and performing arts, visual arts, and/or heritage organizations. But these kinds of organizations are not necessarily ? certainly not always ? where the action really is, whether you are talking about truly adventurous new work that excites audiences, or artists and organizations that work closely and in a sustained way with their communities and address the deep-seated cultural and social inequities that are too often ignored by the ?mainstream? institutions."

"a reason for hope is that artists and arts organizations have been coming into focus, recently, as having something desirable to offer to others who are trying to figure out how to navigate the twenty-first century."

© Grantmakers in the Arts Reader

http://www.giarts.org/sites/default/files/24-1_Godfrey.pdf