

CRAFT Editorial perspective, hopefully to encourage folks to engage/read our eZine:

- (1) *CRAFT's scope*
- (2) *CRAFT's Praxis of Art*
- (3) *CRAFT and the Web*
- (4) *CRAFT and re-memembering and re-connecting our skills and narratives for tomorrow*

Firstly: CRAFT's scope – CRAFT – Community Resilience through Action for Futures Transitions. This is a broadening of the meaning of Craft – we absolutely still include handicrafts and the arts and crafts and fine art etc. however CRAFT contextualised (cultural and social) and situates (historically and politically) such Craft. We believe that if Craft is to re-turn and be re-discovered and re-instated in its proper and highly esteemed place in our society then it is important that we pay attention to Crafts context and situation and thus we have CRAFT! We believe sustainability has to include Craft writ large i.e. CRAFT.

In CRAFT we wish to apply Critical Theory towards Critical Futures Praxis as well as practical conventional skills such as handiwork and handworkers. All around in this decade Australia in particular, and indeed the West in general, Humanities Faculties are closing in our Universities e.g. Queensland University of Technology. Such that Universities, schools and indeed Pedagogy in general, have become annexes of the market. So in tertiary education: Where are the sites of resistance? Where are the sources of alternatives? Where are the projects from Critical Futures Praxis?

Our response is: if not us who? If not now when? If not CRAFT where?

Secondly: CRAFT's Praxis of Art: Conventionally the end of art and fine arts (craft as art) has been seen as contemplation and not function or finding out i.e. not use or education. So this means 'CRAFT aint art'. These latter two mean that art does not have truck with such utilitarian values. But yet CRAFT in its utilitarian sense has been taken to be functional full stop as in a quilt, hobby farm, chest of draws spinning wheel and so forth. So 'CRAFT aint craft'. So what the heck is CRAFT?

We believe that CRAFT can incorporate critical theory AND facilitate aesthetic experience. Furthermore we maintain that functionality has in its essence a discovery and recovery of experience that involve form, function and finding out i.e. design embedded in: structure, use and power, and learning of the piece, can combine in a CRAFTy aesthetic. Such an aesthetic has, we submit, verifiable evidence in its three principal areas of form, function and finding out. For instance these have already been well developed for adjudging the Exemplar Project of the Artificer viz. the 10000hr project so to speak. See <http://kalgrove.com/adultlearning/>.

What then is the aesthetic experience of such art as craft? Is this only the pretensions of two ageing founders of the eZine/genera? We see CRAFT as non-statist indigene heuretic praxis. CRAFT for these reasons does not seek a status within the power elite, rather it is like a witch's cauldron bubbling away with creactions from the field stew of lived life. CRAFT then in that it is inherently an eco-social act brings efficaciousness art to the point where it ceases to be 'art qua art' and nor does it become 'function qua function' rather it is 'efficacious praxis qua heuretics'. This then, if anything, is CRAFTS claim to gravitas.

Furthermore we posit that the aesthetic urge (urge to beauty) is basic to the human species and that discernment within such can reveal such sub-urges as form, function and finding-out. At base, however these are one and the same like with the mission today to find out the linking of the forces of nature such as gravity and mass and energy at base they are all one. In this regard CRAFT is more underground, indigene and local than extrovert, modern and universal.*

For us this question has to be answered heuretically in that we argue that there is as space between science and art and this we call CRAFT. It is a form of literacy i.e. electracry for a web age, so that the locus of authenticity is shifted from a purely art basis to incorporate praxis, functionality and learning.

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** Possibly an interface of Eros and Prometheus an interface of Eros and Thantos.*

Thirdly: CRAFT's approach to the Web and its appendages. *We take the web seriously and without it there would, in effect be no CRAFT, however these days it seems precious few folks in the techie generation people are interested in anything other their own 'personalistic' stuff [often misplaced emotional tempests in teapots], generally speaking, so let's not feel put out that it's a challenge to find readers for CRAFT. If one can think beyond a primary school and have a vocab of 800 if that, we have a chance, however it is too deep for most readers these days [no offense to primary schoolers].*

A colleague in the US has said the same thing to me about her extensive work in creativity and art crit, and others have echoed it in their fields. Yet less original, more derivative theories and stories involving celebs (even in unrelated fields) get more attention because they originate with publicity seekers.

CRAFT though has a strong belief in practical wisdom that bridges inside and outside ourselves – so to speak – our heuretic, and sometimes heretic, vision through critical futures praxis. We strongly believe that in the coming hard times practical skills will be crucial yet these will need to be applied with wisdom, learning and with whole systems methods to be effective we call this Critical Futures Praxis. All three are needed and that's what CRAFT stands for. Unfortunately our society has NOT learnt how to integrate them. Our social evolution is way behind our technological evolution and the gap is widening. We believe CRAFT can do some-small-thing to bridge this gap.

There is so much data glut to contend with - first though we have to see it. You only have seconds to catch potential reader's attention. Sites get obsolesced and link-rot sets in. Maybe a short video is the best presentation, because much of weblife now is on hand-helds, too small to read. Folks don't come back to stuff because something else comes up. Serious issues like apprenticeship or the Jesuits or any serious CRAFT engagement all of which take around 10,000hrs to master just can't get a look in.

And mostly we want fantasies and delusions, anyway, and then the disaffected chime in with their all too frequent anti-intellectualism, because, well they feel threatened. So, it just keeps going round in circles. We need to keep coming back to our own focus, and doing CRAFT first for ourselves, [because we can] and the world can pick up on it or not, but it is not for lack of trying – we are NOT trying to threaten anyone – challenge yes threaten no!

Indeed several people have commented to me on it, thinking it a Facebook phenomenon - it is worse there. The 'Inverse Law of Facebook' is that the more significant or important a story is in any way, the less sure you can be of getting beyond an occasional 'wow' or 'cool' it will be met with derision, juvenile jokes, snide asides, flames and general inappropriate

responses...as well as random unrelated riffs and links, OR "crickets" (Zzzzzzz), i.e. no response.

Finally, Many writers have announced the death of the linear narrative that is today with texting and micro-blogging consistently following a narrative a story even a storyline from 'go to wo' has become passé.¹ The now generation face a fractured narrative whose overall theme they are unable to pick up. Whether it's a story of a cultures beginning's or its expectations of its members, of filial piety or ingenuity we submit that our youth only experience the narratives shards as that's all that's left. These fractured narratives are just like CRAFT skills that are now shards scattered in unconnected pockets of expertise so too is the narrative that would bind these shards in a meaningful whole – possibly never to arise again in a way we would recognise. **Exhibits that seek to re-collect and re-member** these fractured narratives and skills and thereby help explain ourselves to ourselves yet again but in a manner that engages the realities of our time such as Biochar, Local History, Transhumanism and so forth.

Such narratives and skills may matter yet they no longer exist in any meaningful holistic sense. So to balance the Robot Rights of South Korea we need the Ecosystem Rights of Ecuador and both woven together in a 'joined up' narrative that helps explain ourselves to ourselves and our children in a way that 'means' there can be a better tomorrow for us and Gaia. At the moment the reverse is the case.

In conclusion: please take a moment to hear what our contributors are saying and I think they are good ideas, and I'm happy to revisit them with you by asking the author for dialogue and contributing an article or theme yourself after all CRAFT is (y)our P2P heuritic publishing platform.

Paul Wildman V5: 05-2013.

1 Just as Ruskhoff (2013) *Present Shock: When Everything Happens Now*. New York: Current. 300 pgs.