

# THE ART OF Creativity

*"Creativity is a combination of making something happen and letting something happen ..."* Adrian Diaz, *Freeing the Creative Spirit*.

**As children, we did not hesitate to pick up a crayon and draw as our imagination guided us; we found inspiration all around us.** Creativity flowed in a steady stream between our inner and outer worlds. Creativity can take on many forms including artistic expression, problem-solving and storytelling. Ask a child to describe life in the sea or to tell you why the sky is blue and their answers are sure to amaze you.

As we get older, we often begin to doubt and self-censor ourselves. Some people, believing they have no innate artistic talent, conclude that they also lack creativity. Yet people discover that everyday life presents opportunities to be creative. Artistic ability is just one of countless expressions. Learning a new dance move, playing games with grandchildren, or even choosing paint colours for a renovation project are creative activities. In business, Internet entrepreneurs invent services and niches that most of us could not have imagined just 15 years ago. Creativity has become a driving force in the economy. Consider the scientist who makes a leap of the imagination to create a new chemical compound or the chef who concocts a wonderful new dish. Creativity benefits all sorts of innovation; it allows us to make better products and devise better ways of doing things.

We need only look around our homes to find examples of items that have been enhanced or improved by creativity. Richard Florida, Professor of Economic Development at Carnegie Mellon University and author of *The Rise of the Creative Class* gave a humorous example in a recent lecture. His father worked for most of his life in a plant that manufactured eyeglasses. Year after year, the plant churned out just one style: inexpensive eyeglasses with thick, black frames. Although they were functional and affordable, many people

would pay 10 times more for designer glasses that provided the same vision correction. The designer glasses often required less plastic and glass to produce, so why were people willing to pay more for them? The answer was in the creative work that had gone into them, such as the appealing style, lightweight construction and slick (i.e. creative) marketing. "I recently bought a pair of designer glasses and opened the case to find the words 'I love you' printed on the inside lid," Florida laughs. "For \$100, it's no wonder!"

Of course, eyeglasses are just the tip of the iceberg. "We now live in an information economy or a knowledge economy," Florida writes in his bestseller. "But what's more fundamentally true is that we now have an economy powered by human creativity. Creativity – 'the ability to create meaningful new forms,' as Webster's dictionary puts it – is now the decisive source of competitive advantage. In virtually every industry, from automobiles to fashion, food products, and information technology itself, the winners in the long run are those who can create and keep creating."

Like iron ore, wheat, or computer software, creativity is a resource, one that has become increasingly important in our global economy. No one can predict where creativity will come from; it cuts across economic, education, gender and race lines. As a result, hiring diversity has become a matter of economic survival for business. The creative class also values quality of life and a good measure of freedom. Companies have had to become more flexible with dress codes, schedules and rules to accommodate the creative process.

As creativity becomes a greater part of our lives and our workplaces, it also forces people to stretch creative muscles that have not had much of a workout since childhood. How does a person tap into their creative potential? The first step is to learn to let go of the fear of failure. Everyone has unique skills and perceptions with unique creative contributions to make. Bob D. McDonald and Don

Hutcheson, founders of the Highlands career-planning program in Atlanta, suggest that people also learn to tolerate ambiguity. "Willingness to try something new, even if you're not sure it's going to work, can be an enormous benefit to creativity," notes McDonald.

Uncertainty is the essential ingredient in producing something new, profound, or uniquely delightful. Accepting the ambiguity however, has been a source of angst for many a creative soul from Amadeus Mozart to Woody Allen to any best man trying to write a wedding toast. Performance anxiety is creativity's dark side.

Be open to the possibilities inherent in problems. When early vintners began corking their wine bottles, the bottles occasionally exploded from a build-up of gas inside. The wine contained too much sugar and living

yeast and as a result, fermentation took place, creating carbon dioxide gas (and tiny bubbles). Rather than discard this phenomenon as a failure, someone in Champagne, France had

## Inviting Creativity into Your Life

- Turn down the volume on modern life. Go for a walk or lie back and daydream without the distractions of radio or television.
- Performance anxiety can stifle creativity. Shift your focus to enjoying the process rather than simply the end result.
- Try one new thing everyday.

the idea to take advantage of this effervescent accident. After much trial and error, a process was perfected to remove sediment in an ice bath and use thicker glass bottles. Nearly 300 million bottles of champagne are sold each year worldwide. Ideas that at first seem flawed, may, in the end, be of great worth, as anyone discovers when they look at the price of real champagne!

**POP PRINTS**

**KELOWNA ART GALLERY**  
**MAY 10 to JULY 27, 2008**

**ANDY WARHOL MICHAEL SNOW**  
**ROY LICHTENSTEIN PETER BLAKE**  
**AND MANY OTHERS**

KELOWNA art GALLERY 1315 Water Street, Kelowna, BC V1Y 9R3  
t: (250) 762.2226 | f: (250) 762.9875  
[www.kelownaartgallery.com](http://www.kelownaartgallery.com)

Pop Prints is organized and circulated by the Vancouver Art Gallery.

City of Kelowna Canada Council for the Arts Conseil des Arts du Canada BRITISH COLUMBIA ARTS COUNCIL media sponsor **ukbc.tv**