

Managing change and intimacy in the present

Heraclitus is often cited as the source of the quote, “The only constant in life is change.” This seems to ring true now, more than ever, as advances in technology rapidly change our cultures: the ways we communicate and express ourselves, the availability of information and resources, and even how we spend our time each day.

Of course, change is not new and we are not the first to experience it. As Michele Trimarchi illustrates in “Staging the Change?” our ancestors’ lives were radically altered with technological advances in farming, machinery and communications systems. How people react to and manage these changes can define their identity, both in the present and their place in history, over time. Artists and arts consumers run the gamut in their response to change: many chase the avant-garde while others, like J.S. Bach, pursue perfection of one form long after their contemporaries have moved on to newer modes.

Looking back through history, changes of the past can seem obvious or inevitable. Managing change in the present, however, is not always so clear. Without the luxury of hindsight, it’s difficult to know what changes are temporary and which are permanent. Because our identity and success can revolve around our decisions to adapt or stay consistent, it’s important to navigate wisely. But how?

Fortunately, the arts can serve as a guide. Across all periods, genres, and mediums, the arts tell countless stories of adaptation, transformation, loyalty, and persistence. Rosangela Valenzano’s article, “Literature and Art: Narrative Paths for Social-Emotional Education” explores how the narrative of art fits naturally into the changing education landscape and new pedagogical approaches. She writes, “literature and art are symbolic activities in which we can find our own emotional space and experience and express possibilities and new frontiers.”

Powerful technological and social changes throughout history also seem to bring forth changes in intimacy. When nomadic tribes settled into villages, residents gained new familiarity with their neighbors. With the recent proliferation of handheld devices and social media, it has become acceptable to share details of one’s everyday life with hundreds of people and even the public.

In the article “.MOV” Angelica Basso reflects on how intimacy and interaction have been influenced by modern technology. She describes how new audio-visual staging increased the connection between dancers and audience in one performance, while another fostered a “warmth and involvement, without any interference by technology.”

Artists and arts managers must carefully consider how they can foster intimacy with their audience or viewers, and to what degree. If an audience or viewer doesn’t feel connected to the art, the artist and producer run the risk of being critiqued as aloof, out of touch, or self-concerned. Too much intimacy, though, is sometimes perceived as vulgar, indecent, or indulgent. Anticipating and guiding audience expectations are critical to fostering a positive experience and communicating the true intention of the works.

In our constantly-changing era, successful arts managers stay informed of new technologies, understand and manage audience expectations, and observe social norms for intimacy. They also find balance between being “lost in the moment” and pursuing long-term goals. Thankfully, the arts are an excellent

Tafter Journal

Esperienze e strumenti per cultura e territorio

Tafter Journal

scritto da Tara Aesquivel il 9 Dicembre 2014

resource for examining change and behaviors through history and can help guide decisions toward the future.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)