

*Editorial by Michele Emmer with Roger F. Malina*

## **Artists and Scientists in Times of War: A Renewed Call for Papers**

A few years ago, I sent out a call for papers on the subject “The Role of Artists and Scientists in Times of War.” I received several replies from around the world. This proposal is not time-bound. There seems to be no end to war. We are living in an age of conflict, tension, wars and terrorism. Some people feel that a new type of world war has begun, involving a clash between civilizations. Every day we see the slaughter of innocents, kidnapping and murder; we hear of conflicts whose causes have never been resolved and that continue to generate more conflicts and misery. I refer not only to countries that we Westerners consider “different” from our own. Think of the atrocious example set by highly civilized Europe during the 20th century.

Therefore, I am not sure whether the question I posed years ago makes any sense—whether there is a role for artists and scientists, for intellectuals, in the attempt not so much to help in resolving conflicts and tension, but at least in understanding the causes. I begin to feel the only possible answer is that, in all truth, there is no role for them at all. However, I believe there is a word that has been forgotten by the media, by opinion makers and by governments: the word “ethical.” And I believe that this word is of vital importance. Viewed in terms of ethics, the role of scientists, artists and intellectuals is irreplaceable. It is clear that in a world that quickly forgets millions of victims who are dying of scourges like hunger or AIDS, the commitment is never-ending. Despite the difficulty of imagining any possibility of changing the world, I continue to believe that the role of art in the widest sense is essential. This is why I renew my request to send proposals to *Leonardo* on the subject “Artists and Scientists in Times of War.”

MICHELE EMMER  
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### **The Role of the Leonardo Networks**

Michele Emmer’s renewed call for papers prompts us to examine the role of the Leonardo organizations and networks in this turbulent, networked world. The following statement is excerpted from the Leonardo/ISAST Governing Board vision statement drafted by board member Penelope Finnie:

Science and technology dominate our current landscape, emerging with an intensity and velocity never before experienced. This intense intellectual creativity needs to be integrated with the humanizing activity of creating art, to bring balance to how we experience our current existence and imagine our futures. . . . Leonardo/ISAST serves as the organization that nurtures and fosters this alliance between the arts and sciences, proactively bridging these social networks together, leading to greater creativity and social change in both areas.

Four years ago we launched the “Re-Thinking Leonardo” process, concluding among other things that, even though we exist in a world that provides ever more networks of contact and communication, the social impediments to proactive collaboration and creativity remain as strong as ever. This analysis led the Leonardo Governing Board to focus on two ways forward: First, we will continue working through collaboration and alliances with other organizations in the art, science and technology field. Second, we are advancing initiatives to open up and restructure the social networks to which Leonardo is connected. Two near-term projects, under the umbrella of the Leonardo Global Crossings project, are our collaboration with ISEA 2006 and the associated Pacific Rim New Media Summit, and the JASMIN network around the Middle East, North Africa and southern Europe.

Through these initiatives we hope to aid in creating new and open structures and approaches. These will contribute to “how we experience our current existence and imagine our futures” so that artists and scientists in times of war, within their systems of values and ethics, can contribute to the creation of a saner and more just world.

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