From Ecosystem to Echo System

THE EVOLVING ECOSYSTEM OF LEONARDO has grown from a standalone journal to a standout organization whose flagship publication suite shapes and shares bold ideas blending art, science and technology serving an ever-expanding Leosphere of practitioners and partner organizations.

Leonardo’s ecosystem also serves as an echo system, revealing challenges, opportunities and new ideas. Approaching our ecosystem as an echo system calls for deep listening to hear the reverberation of our growing community. It calls for listening to the silence of those who are missing and those from whom we have much yet to learn.

We are learning that creativity is a superpower—though not one of weaponized dominance nor one exclusively reserved for the preternaturally talented or gifted few. Creativity is a birthright for all to cultivate, one that critically factors toward success in academia, private industry and public fora. Natalie Nixon defines creativity as the ability to “toggle between wonder and rigor” [1], the hallmarks of Leonardo’s community.

We are learning that to unleash and amplify the creative superpowers exemplified by Leonardo, we need to value three essential elements: the power of love, the power of imagination and the power of invitation.

Invoking the power of love infuses experimental creative work with compassion and humanity. Love enables Leonardo to undertake an honest reckoning with the achievements and shortcomings of our past; to overcome the implicit biases of our present; and to unlock the possibilities of a more vibrant, just, regenerative future.

The power of imagination fuels the engine of growth, experimentation and innovation: to not only be inventive but impactful. Leonardo’s legacy and evolving ecosystem imagine courageous visions to transform, heal and regenerate the world.

The power of invitation requires activation. It is not enough to “build it and they’ll come.” Invitation requires showing up, reaching out, giving agency, sharing space and crossing barriers to new experiences and perspectives. The questions of when and how to accept or extend invitation reflect challenges of interdependence, inclusivity and integrity.

If ever there were a time to value interdependence, our experience of global syndemic has made this clear: We need each other and we are all in this together. Leonardo commits to invitations of intentional and explicit interdependence, recognizing the value and fluidity of creative collaboration, overcoming boundaries to cross disciplines, geographies, demographics.

Leonardo commits to intentional and explicit inclusivity, recognizing that we have much more work to do to advance intersectional diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) with actual representation and participation at all levels within our sphere of influence. This means not only speaking up but stepping up to redress systemic racism, social injustice and inequity embedded in our institutional history, contemporary society and professional field. We invite your partnership in transforming and enriching the Leosphere with inclusivity.

Leonardo commits to intentional and explicit integrity, recognizing that the health and wellness of our people, organization and field is integrated and integral to our work. This means respecting the safety, sustainability and authenticity of our colleagues, contributors, community and partners.

As the echo system of Leonardo calls for transdisciplinary creativity to be unleashed with love, invitation and imagination, two questions arise: Will we be brave enough to answer the call? Will creativity as a superpower cast enough light to lead humankind to become more humane, more vibrant?

For there is always light,
if only we’re brave enough to see it
if only we’re brave enough to be it. [2]

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References