Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Adam Huttler answers Culture: So What?!?

Adam Huttler · Wednesday, January 22nd, 2014

Culture: So What?!? Each week, we ask thought leaders from all walks of life to answer the question: What is Culture and Why Does it Matter?

This Week's Thought Leader: Adam Huttler is the founder and Executive Director of Fractured Atlas, a non-profit that helps independent artists and small arts groups build sustainable careers and organizations.

"Through culture we experience meaning, purpose, and identity…"

What makes humans special? How are we different from every other species that has evolved on this planet over the past 3.5 billion years?

Adam Huttler, Founder and Executive Director, Fractured Atlas

Two factors set us apart and form the foundation of humanity's ascendance:

(1) We create technology to fulfill our utilitarian needs.

(2) We propagate culture to nourish our souls and bind us together.

Without these twin pillars, we'd still be hunting and gathering, no one would own an umbrella much less an iPhone, and Ringo Starr would just be Richard Starkey. But culture is greater than technology, because it is a prerequisite for everything else we've accomplished.

Shared culture helps us establish trust with strangers, pass knowledge and ideas to future generations, and ultimately transcend our biological imperatives. Through culture we experience meaning, purpose, and identity beyond our own physical selves.

Telling and reinterpreting stories, creating beauty for the sake of beauty – these are quintessentially human activities. Indeed, the arts are culture's greatest expression and most powerful engine, and as humans we are drawn to them instinctively.

We write fan fiction and we listen to opera. We go clubbing and we teach our children Shakespeare. We do these things because our highest yearning is to define, to express, to reinforce our own humanity, and the arts empower us to do that like nothing else.

Photo at top: Synthetic Unlimited – An alternative theatre company and member of Fractured Atlas

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