

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## On the Occasion of a First Anniversary

Adam Leipzig · Thursday, July 28th, 2011

It's traditional to give paper on a first anniversary, but what do you give a website – a website that, by its very nature, replaces paper as a medium for the written exchange of thought? Do you give an iPad 2? A tutorial in HTML5? Here at Cultural Weekly, we'll be quite pleased with your good wishes and continuing readership.

What becomes a culture most? People talking about it and engaging with it. That's what we try to do here. Most of us have more words to describe how a glass of wine smells than we have to reveal why a song makes us dance or a painting makes the hair on the back of our neck stand up. Cultural Weekly seeks to shift that balance, and become the national forum for a conversation about culture and creativity.

You, dear reader, may wonder who you are. I know a few of you personally, but most of you I know anonymously, through the statistics available online. There are about 6,500 of you who have come here over the past year, and many of you return regularly. Each week there are more of you – half of our readers each week are new to the site.

I find these numbers flattering and astounding, even though I know they are small in absolute Internet terms. Yet what we lack, perhaps, in quantity, we make up in quality. Among our readers, I do know we include editors of major newspapers and magazines, prominent writers, visual artists and theatre makers, and a Pulitzer Prize winner or two.

You have come from 133 countries, partially by happenstance. Apparently some people from Nepal and Angola stumbled upon Cultural Weekly, decided it was not what they were looking for and left quickly. If you come here often, you probably live in the US. Or you may live in the UK, Canada, Australia, India, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, the UAE, Hong Kong or Brazil, the other countries where we have the most regular readers.

Some of our stories have evergreen popularity. [How Theatre Invented Democracy](#) is in our Top 10, and recently got a surge of readers in Egypt and Greece. Remember, readers, when they start coming after your theatres, the rest of your civil rights are not far behind. (On that note: [Email your Congressperson](#), because House just cut the National Endowment for the Arts budget by another \$20 million. A few votes will make the difference.) John Stepling's manifesto [Evolving an Authentic Theatre](#) has gone viral and, since theatre is like good bacteria in that it keeps us healthy, I hope many get infected. Also apparently contagious are my history and analysis [Indie Films: State of the Union](#), and my suggestion, in [Creativity Economics](#), that we adopt a creativity theory of value. Yet our most popular post, by a mile? Jack Grapes' poem [My Rodeo](#), which has

garnered nearly 100 comments! A great tribute to you, literate and wise readers, who, despite the business of our world, will take the time to read a poem and comment on it scores of times. I salute you!

A few months ago, I expanded the site, and now we have been enriched by the perspectives of established and emerging writers, such as gifted thinkers [Ulli K. Ryder](#) and [Marcia Alesan Dawkins](#). While some of our content is original, some originates elsewhere; we only re-post with permission of the original publisher or site – and we thank these friends, whose work we syndicate: [Chloe Veltman](#), [John Bailey](#) (who posts for the American Society of Cinematographers), Debra Levine (who posts at [artsmeme](#)), Edward Goldman (who's heard on KCRW's [ArtTalk](#)), William Zinsser and Bill Deresiewicz (who post at [The American Scholar](#)), the thoughtful editors and writers at [Times Quotidian](#), the publishers of [Our Weekly](#), and the edgy artists at [Argot and Ochre](#). All have recognized we can stand on each others' shoulders and support each other.

We would love to hear from you. Who are you? Why do you come here? What would you like to see? Please respond in the comments section below. We also welcome guest columns, and if you're interesting to adding your voice, contact us and we'll send the guidelines.

Thanks for a great first year. Here's to the next!

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