
Grassroots Leadership and the Arts for Social Change by S.J. Erenrich and J.F. Wergin (Eds.). Bingley, U.K.: Emerald Publishing, 2017.

Erenrich and Wergin's edited book, *Grassroots Leadership and the Arts for Social Change*, explores the tandem roles of the arts in facilitating grassroots movements and the leaders who have inspired them. Founded in Erenrich's expertise as a scholar and practitioner of leadership, social change, and the arts, and in Wergin's distinguished academic background as a professor and author in the fields of higher education and leadership, this book presents sixteen unique narratives clearly articulating the importance of the arts as a vehicle for creating change from the ground-up.

Introduced by Erenrich's reflective account of her journey with the Peoples' Voice Café, a voluntary collective in New York City that creates space for musicians to express humanitarian concerns, each chapter shifts between geographic landscapes and social contexts to reveal how the vast discipline of the arts can democratically provoke dialogue, collaboration, and reconciliation within and between individuals and communities who have faced injustices. From dance, music, theatre, photography, graffiti, museums, film, literature, digital media, illustration, to textiles, this timely publication demonstrates the power of creative endeavours in building a more just future—a theme that is bound to resonate across academic and applied fields.

Contextualized through the lenses of horizontal leadership, transformative learning, and popular education, a key theme found throughout this collection is an examination of the types of leaders, or leadership styles, that have assisted to bring about arts-based social change over the past century. Positioned as collaborative, grassroots, adaptive, values-based, transformational, authentic, subversive, or cultural, each chapter offers insights into how non-hierarchical approaches to leadership can open space for those directly affected by social injustices to share their voices or experiences in effecting change.

Chapter 1, authored by Randal Joy Thompson and Edin Ibrahimfendic, outlines the ripple effect that Vedran Smailović's spontaneous 1992 cello performance in the rubble of a grenade site in Sarajevo had in facilitating a global resistance to war. Chapter 11, by David Edelman, accounts the struggle and success of the arts, including theatre and literature, in galvanizing public support and funds for AIDS research and education in New York City during the 1980s. Chapter 12, by Mecca Antoina Burns, Bonface Njeresu Beti, and Maxwell Eliakim Okuto, describes how three branches of Theatre of the Oppressed—including Image Theatre, Forum Theatre, and Rainbow of Desire—were employed in East Africa to start processes of conflict transformation amongst youth and trauma survivors. Chapter 17, by Nicholas Rowe, Noora Baker, and Ata Khatab, challenges the notion that art is apolitical through a personal account of the authors' intercultural choreographic exchanges in Palestine. Individually, each chapter speaks to a leadership style that is distinctive to the social circumstances, artistic medium, and leader(s) under review. Yet, collectively, they consider the significance of inclusive, collaborative, and empowering leadership methods that, whether unintentional or by design, inspire the co-creation of stronger, more open, and equitable societies.

To this, perhaps one of the most notable aspects of this book is the attention paid to the challenges leaders have faced in mobilizing arts-based social movements. From their individual failings that stand to counter the success or legitimacy of a movement, to the personal impacts that leaders bear in creating change, a number of chapters within this book appropriately address the responsibility leaders have to their art, their cause, their community, and to themselves as change-makers. Chapter 2, by Greg Chidi Obi, examines how the live performances of Fela Anikulapo Ransome-Kuti, the Nigerian founder of Afrobeat and of a 1970s pro-democratic movement, objectified women and thus stood in conflict with the emancipatory messaging of his music. Chapter 5, by Nita Hungu and Marta D. Bennett, details how Boniface Mwangi was left with depression and post-traumatic stress after photo-documenting the post-election violence that had erupted in Kenya between 2007 and 2008. Chapter 15, a personal account written by Garth A. Ross, details his own apprehension and self-doubt in bringing *Finding a Line*, a multidisciplinary skateboard culture initiative, to the John F. Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. Although, not all chapters engage overtly with this tension—a topic which could have added more depth to the discussion of leadership in relation to the theoretical lenses through which this book was crafted—the decisions of several authors to speak to these challenges adds to an important conversation about power and accountability, amongst all stakeholders, in evoking social change.

Overall, Erenrich and Wergin have drawn together an inspirational collection of accounts and personal testimonies affirming the diverse means in which social change, through horizontal leadership, can take shape. By highlighting how singular performances to grand exhibits can speak to the broader human needs to have a voice, to belong, and to find peace, each chapter documents how artists democratically mobilize those needs into actionable goals. These pursuits, although framed by the authors within the contexts of art and leadership, offer insights that are accessible and, arguably, relatable to an interdisciplinary audience. Just as social movements in contemporary history, as in the past, stand to transcend academic disciplines, geographic boundaries, and social landscapes, so to do the lessons offered in this text for current and future leaders, whether arts-based or otherwise.

Vanessa Daether
Doctoral Candidate, Royal Roads University
Email: vanessa.daether@royalroads.ca