

ARTIST NOTE

These are the times that try our souls. Each of us needs to undergo a tremendous philosophical and spiritual transformation. Each of us needs to be awakened to a personal and compassionate recognition of the inseparable interconnection between our minds, hearts, and bodies; between our physical and psychical well-being; and between our selves and all the other selves in our country and in the world. Each of us needs to stop being a passive observer of the suffering that we know is going on in the world and start identifying with the sufferers. Each of us needs to make a leap that is both practical and philosophical, beyond determinism to self-determination.

This kind of organizing takes a lot of patience because changing people and people changing themselves requires time. Because it usually involves only small groups of people, it lacks the drama and visibility of angry masses making demands on the power structure. So it doesn't seem practical to those who think of change only in terms of quick fixes, huge masses, and charismatic leaders.

But as Margaret Wheatley puts it in *Leadership and the New Science*, we need a paradigm shift in our understanding of how change happens. "From a Newtonian perspective," Wheatley argues, "our efforts often seem too small, and we doubt that our actions will make a difference. Or perhaps we hope that our small efforts will contribute incrementally to large-scale change. Step by step, system by system, we aspire to develop enough mass or force to alter the larger system."

What the most advanced researchers and theoreticians in all of science now comprehend is that the Newtonian concept of a universe driven by mass force is out of touch with reality, for it fails to account for both observable phenomena and theoretical conundrums that can be explained only by quantum physics:

A quantum view explains the success of small efforts quite differently. Acting locally allows us to be inside the movement and flow of the system, participating in all those complex events occurring simultaneously. We are more likely to be sensitive to the dynamics of this system, and thus more effective. However, changes in small places also affect the global system, not through incrementalism, but because every small system participates in an unbroken wholeness. Activities in one part of the whole create effects that appear in distant places. Because of these unseen connections, there is potential value in working anywhere in the system. We never know how our small activities will affect others through the invisible fabric of our connectedness.

In what Wheatley calls "this exquisitely connected world," the real engine of change

is never “critical mass”; dramatic and systemic change always begins with “critical connections.”

- **Grace Lee Boggs**

from *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century*
(co-authored with Scott Kurashige)

NOTE FROM OtB

At OtB we believe our contemporary civic and global dialogues are enriched and informed by the insights and creative work of innovative artists like Complex Movements. We are committed to bringing new voices to our programming to explore a broader range of culture and innovative approaches, opening our doors further to those who have been traditionally marginalized from organizations like OtB and better understanding our role in the city.

Our work is about our long term place in our community and its role and impact over time. We strive to contribute relevant perspectives to the civic and global dialogue and to broaden the number of people in these conversations. We want to help create a community that is able to tackle and have dialogue around complex issues. We see each opportunity as part of the larger approach. This comes, in part, from building new and honest cross-community relationships and modeling how to use art as a means for these conversations.

We also believe arts organizations have to walk their talk and not just operate from the belief that we are all well intentioned and that art is inherently progressive and relevant. That means raising our competency on issues of social and cultural inequality and the language that goes along with it. This cannot live just in the art we produce, but is also required in us as producers. And the work must include broad representation by the community it is working to serve.

We look forward to continuing these conversations that Complex Movements and our community partners initiated with *Beware of the Dandelions*.

On the Boards