

Speaking

I have developed presentations and key note speeches on creativity and civic engagement that inspire, educate, spark dialogue and raise questions around the value of creativity in America. Here are some of the topics I can speak to:

- The Creativity Imperative – Why Creativity is Job One for America (and your organization)
- The Politics of Creativity
- Threats to Creativity
- The Leadership Responsibilities and Opportunities for Artists and Creative Professionals
- How Do the Arts Build Communities?

I combine elements of performance, lecture, audience interaction, story telling and small group work in most of my presentations. These presentations typically are one hour to 90 minutes in length. These presentations are perfect for:

- arts service organizations
- professional associations that serve the creative industries
- college and university programs in the arts, civics, political science, social work and community change
- conferences that deal with social change, community development, progressive politics, environmental action, community media or leadership development
- professional associations that serve the education and scientific fields

Outline for "The Politics of Creativity - A Call to Service"

This is a 90-minute presentation that blends lecture with elements of performance, audience participation and leadership development. This presentation lays out the argument for creativity as a national value and the basis of a positive, winning politics. It also makes the case that artists and cultural workers have values and skills that make them "leaders-in-waiting" who are most urgently needed in public life.

- Opening performance of jazz/and or spoken word
- Shared reading of Declaration of Independence
- Role of creativity in the life of America - its heritage, economy and future
- The numbers behind the political case for creativity as a winning issue
- Why creative professionals make excellent public leaders
- "Are You a Leader?" – I conduct an exercise, The Leadership Asset Inventory, with member of audience
- Call to service
- Creativity fight song

Past Programs

National Performing Arts Convention

"I attended Tom's seminar "Creatives as Leaders" at the National Performing Arts



Tom makes a point during a presentation.



Tom uses Ben Franklin as a role model for the ideal creative leader. He even has a Franklin action figure!



Convention in Denver. He perfectly articulated what I have suspected for years now -- that artists and creatives have a unique ability to influence public policy if only we would stand up to be counted! I have seen this in action and it was a breath of fresh air to hear Tom say it publicly. The next day I attended another meeting of the 50+ people from our group that attended the conference together. At least one person stood up and said that as a direct result of Tom's seminar, she planned to run for local office in the next five years. One can think of no higher praise for Tom's work than that!"

- Laura Murphy , Adjunct Instructor, Adams State College Art Department , VP, Monte Arts Council, Monte Vista, Colorado

College for Creative Studies in Detroit.

"I would like to commend Mr. Tresser for his work with the Creative America Project. Mr. Tresser shows an uncommon dedication to civil service, public policy and political leadership. His presentation was well thought out and extremely educational. He was able to not only engage the student body at the College for Creative Studies but provided new and meaningful information on civic responsibility and engagement. On a very practical basis, Mr. Tresser shows students how politics affects them as citizens and as artists and he demonstrates an immense amount of knowledge regarding U.S. history and contemporary politics and public policy...I encourage any organization that wishes to become more civically engaged in their community or would like to learn more about the realm of contemporary politics and civic engagement to host the Creative America Project and Tom Tresser."

- Daniel Long, Student Programming Coordinator

ArtPride New Jersey

"Thank you for motivating this group of arts advocates who need to move to the next level of civic involvement. Your presentation is a 'wake up call' for those who believe they are already doing all they can to make a difference, and helped them realize that with not too much additional effort they can assume leadership positions in the public sector and be even more effective agents for change!"

- Ann Marie Miller, Executive Director, ArtPride New Jersey

Art Midwest's annual conference

"Tom's presentation, 'The Politics of Creativity,' blew me away! If you're tired of arts and culture taking a back seat in your community, here's how to get behind the wheel and turn your creative experience into leadership for your community. I think artists and cultural managers need to hear this message. If you want fundamental change for supporting the arts in your community, your school or your government check out the Creative America Project and this presentation."

- Steve Duchrow, Executive Director, Raue Center For The Arts, Crystal Lake, IL.

"Thank you, Thomas, for that very inspiring experience. We were still talking about it today. You should do this at art schools around the country. I walked into your session because I have very real ambitions to run for public office in the near future. I've been throwing the idea out to people just to see what they think and I have gotten some very serious "Yes, you should. You'd win" comments. Keep up the great work. You are on to something fantastic!!"

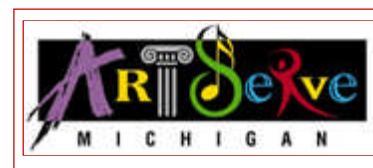
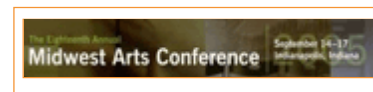
- Shelly-Marie Rios, Assistant Director, Community Arts Partnerships, College for Creative Studies, Detroit.

ArtServe Michigan

"Great presentation. Can he bottle himself so we can all take him home to inspire??"

- Attendee at ArtServe Michigan presentation.

Arts Wisconsin



Ann and Tom at Arts Wisconsin.

"I attended Creative America's workshop at Arts Day in Madison, Wisconsin. I found Mr. Tresser's ideas interesting. He advocates that creative people should run for office to make political change. It's his contention that artists and other creative people would use their creativity in politics and learn how to organize to influence change. His workshop was informative and got me thinking about more involvement in politics. I would recommend his workshop for anyone who is thinking about being a political organizer and who wants to know how political climates are built."

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