

Dear ACS members

I have been contacted by Erling Hope, the president of the Society for the Arts, Religion and Contemporary Culture (SARCC), asking if our ACS members would be interested in submitting questions regarding this topic (see below). He told me that the deadline for submissions is "right up to the few days before the event, on October 30th." After reading their website and the note below, I believe this may be a very interesting opportunity for ACS in general and for you members in particular.

Cheers

Julio

[Consultation on the Influence of Technology on the Arts and Religion](#)

How do technologies shape the human soul?

Human inventiveness allows us to change the world around us. But we are also changed by our inventions. Throughout our history, our technologies have shaped the very substance of who we are. Socially, psychologically, even anatomically, we have evolved to conform to the new worlds we create. These changes can be so deep and pervasive as to go essentially unnoticed. Even now, we struggle to understand the full impact of the cultivation of fire and the invention of language.

The midst of the digital revolution may not be the best vantage point from which to gauge its effects. But it may be the most important. The feast of possibilities and the pace of this change challenge our capacity to choose well or effectively. The choices we make now, though, as individuals and as societies, will determine what kind of people we will become.

The Society for the Arts, Religion and Contemporary Culture (ARC) announces its first Consultation on the Influence of Technology on Religion and the Arts. As the name of the project suggests, as our own name affirms, we will be focusing on the influences which bear upon both art and religion. The impacts of technology are immeasurable. But experience tells us that taking a perspective which is at once so vast and so narrow as the interaction between art and religion generates conversations and experiences of unique value and depth.

I anticipate that we will be exploring the evolving relationships between community, anonymity, and narcissism; between depth of experience and breadth; between dispersed attention and focus. We will be asking questions about the dream of omniscience; about the engineering of emotional, cognitive, and creative states; and about the future of silence and the inner life. We will explore the tension between illusion and the real, between embodiment and disembodiment...and between MySpace and Twitter.

In short, we will use an in depth and multi-dimensional conversation about technologies to inform our path within them. This consultation will serve as a benchmark as we plan our upcoming programming, projects, and overall approach. And, mostly, we will be looking for

the questions which we have not yet thought to ask.

It is regarding this last point that I write to invite your participation.

What question would you ask the consultation to consider? The topic is large enough, and new enough, that we consider it important to solicit as wide a range of perspectives as possible. I invite you to submit a question for our panel to consider in its consultation. In turn, we offer to share with you the results of our efforts, and to include you in a growing community of thinkers and doers working in this area.

Columbia University's Barnard College will be hosting the event, and collaborating with us as well. The conversation will be recorded, podcast and / or published.

ARC was founded in 1961 by Alfred Barr, curator of the Museum of Modern Art, Marvin Halverson, Professor of Theology at Harvard University, Paul Tillich, Protestant Existentialist theologian, Ad Reinhardt, Rollo May, W.H Auden, Amos Wilder, Philip Johnson, et al. The purpose was essentially to explore the increasingly complex relationship between religious and artistic sensibilities. For nearly fifty years ARC has sponsored events and projects which explore this treacherous territory. Its distinguished Fellows have included Leonard Bernstein, George Segal, Louis I. Kahn, Edward Albee, Robert Penn Warren, Clare Booth Luce, Yehudi Menuhin, Louise Nevelson, Robert Motherwell, Ann Foster, Erich Fromm, Marguerite Yourcenar, Merce Cunningham, among many others. Today it is populated by an interesting and diverse community of artists, psychologists, academics, clergy, etc..

On behalf of ARC, I thank you considering your participation in this project. Please feel free to call or e-mail with any questions.

Peace,

Erling Hope
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"yield and overcome, bend and be straight"

