

salon

Barry Lord – the consummate curator



Tom Smart
the curator

The news that appeared in my inbox the other day that Barry Lord had passed away was unexpected, leaving me thinking about the profound legacy of this remarkable man. He had a deep impact on how art galleries and museums do their work and think about their roles in society.

Barry was born in Hamilton, Ont., in 1939, a city that was known for its heavy industries and tough spirit. Its civic pride, formed on the backbone of self-reliance and a suspicion of class-consciousness, I imagine, were etched onto Barry's essential genetic code. They were also crucial propellants that launched him into a career as an art curator and thinker about museum planning that transformed art galleries and museums by forcing them to redefine the ways they functioned in their communities.

Barry was the consummate curator. In 1981, along with his wife Gail, he formed Lord Cultural Resources, which – over the decades – became the most important consulting firm about museum planning in the world. What began as a modest enterprise quickly evolved into a global powerhouse and thought incubator providing valuable advice on museum management, exhibition design and even on how a museum or art gallery should be designed and built in relationship to their communities.

It is impossible to separate the company from its founders. Barry's (and Gail's) agile mind embraced the requirement that growth involves creative risk-taking. That it is now a professional heresy to think that a cultural organization can regard itself as simply an object-based warehouse aloof from the neighbourhood, community, country in which it is situated and operates is one of the Lords' significant accomplishments.

So too, Barry's approach to museology and curatorship was stimulated by his audacious and acute intelligence. His groundbreaking studies on the relationship of energy and culture re-framed an argument about why and how art and material culture were shaped by energy consumption over the millennia.

As an art curator at the beginning of his career in the mid 1960s, Barry held bold positions that dashed the standard orthodoxies which straight jacketed thinking on art history, particularly in the Canadian canon. He championed artists whom he felt were being ignored, marginalized or unfairly judged by critics who applied incorrect measures to assess the esthetic value of their art.

For example, as a curator at the New Brunswick Museum in the late 1960s, Miller Brittain's mural cartoons that were held in its collection astounded Barry. He regarded Brittain as a creative genius who could communicate directly with people about inequality's cruel realities. Where few before him had taken a dispassionate look at Brittain's mural cycle, Barry pointed to its powerfully liberating message that was uniquely expressed through the language of figurative art. By pointing at the murals, Barry highlighted Brittain's message that the root causes of disease and many other social ills lay in poverty and an imbalance in social relationships.

It may well be true that the moral centre of Brittain's work helped to inform Barry's professional character,

providing him with an index of principles that was the engine of his own creativity as a museum consultant. His purpose was to explode myths and received wisdom about art and culture. He took aim at injustice – what he called “imperialism”. He found the struggles of artists to express themselves creatively to be meaningful examples of positive push-back against domination.

When I first came to know Barry's work in the mid-1970s he was viewed as an outsider whose well-argued, socially based thesis was supported by a sweeping survey of artistic products and movements. His was an audacious re-writing of art history from the point of view of the producers of art – the artists – rather than from the consumers of it who considered culture merely as a collectable commodity.

Barry was suspicious of the view that culture was a commodity or an asset class. To a large extent, his life and career were dedicated to re-establishing the mechanisms and organizations of equitable exchange between creative producers and consumers in ways that did not invoke a power dynamic based on control and subjugation.

To survive in the modern world and into the new millennium Barry envisioned the museum as a fair broker in the exchange between communities and their cultural and intellectual patri-



Owing to Barry's passion and energy, museums and art galleries are today increasingly seen as more than repositories of objects. They are places of inclusion, safe zones of the expression, active agents in building cohesive, tolerant societies.

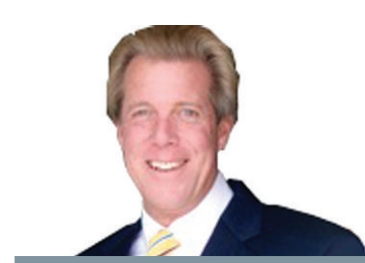
mony. He believed deeply that the museum and art gallery needed to change radically and fundamentally in order to become this fair broker. This vision drove Barry Lord throughout his life to make his profession and country better. The measure of his success is evident not just in the vast portfolio of Lord Cultural Resources' clients across the globe, but in the fundamental redefinition of museums during his professional life as powerful agents of change and equity in increasingly diverse societies.

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Barry Lord endowed his profession with a powerful, urgent legacy in these disruptive, turbulent times.

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Priorities and responsibilities



Jay Remer
the etiquette guy

Today, I want to look at two different situations we all encounter in our daily lives. The first one is about the importance of being on time. How important is it to be on time? How important is it to teach children to be on time? In some cultures, the Dutch for example, value punctuality above almost everything else. In other cultures, such as our own, more flexibility seems to be acceptable.

The question arises after one decides that being on time really does matter. Why does it even matter? For one thing, being on time shows we have respect for other people's time. For another, it enables us to accomplish goals that are attached to deadlines. However, becoming obsessed with watching the clock can lead to unnecessary stress, sometimes even panic. One reader was grappling with punctuality versus civility. He wonders whether ‘rushing the kids out the door’ to get to an activity is more important than actually enjoying the process more holistically.

The responsibility lies with the parents. Children do not yet understand how much time it takes to tie shoes, comb hair and pack school lunches. That is a fact. Even if you think they should know, it takes time for children to practise putting all of these moving parts together into a homogeneous action before ‘second nature’ eventually takes over. The process of practising these skills takes time. Be sure to allow as much time as necessary to accomplish all of these small tasks without the stress imposed by the thought of being late. Potential tardiness is not an appropriate excuse for incivility. It is indeed during these times of everyday small actions that we learn to be kind and to integrate patience and compassion into our lives.

In some cases, being on time is very important. Business meetings, professional appointments and cultural and sporting events usually begin on time. In business, if you want to succeed, being prompt helps. Most professional offices operate on a schedule of appointments; therefore, keeping on track is vital. Likewise, when going to a theatre performance, be sure you are comfortably and quietly seated prior to the curtain rising.

The second question concerns who takes responsibility for customer dissatisfaction. This situation can happen at a restaurant, a beauty salon, or even at a doctor's office. Quite by surprise, we don't like the way the chef has prepared our food; we are shocked and unhappy with the new look facing us in the mirror; or, we suffer further discomfort or develop new symptoms after a doctor's surgery or treatment for an illness. The question is how do we handle these situations appropriately.

Depending on the seriousness of the situation, reactions can range from a mild reprimand to a tirade. Or, we could play the martyr and feel sorry for ourselves. As the customer, we are well within our rights to express our displeasure, but doing so with civility. We

are all human beings and face challenges every day. It's important to consider the intention to displease you or harm you in any way. In most cases, these situations were accidental. But, poor skills at work can also create bad results. What each of us must do is differentiate between what was done badly out of malice and what is done because of a lack of ability.

Anytime we are confronted with an angry attitude, our natural tendency is to go on the defensive. When this happens, we can lose our cool if we become too upset with the situation. There is a shared responsi-



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ility, that when accepted can greatly aid in resolving the issue. The injured person is absolutely owed an apology and suitable restitution. In the case of a poor meal, the charge should be removed from the bill; in the case of a bad dye job or hair cut, there should be no charge. Once an apology is made, it is up to the customer to accept it and acknowledge it with an understanding, accepting reply.

As I write this column, today it is International Kindness Day. I ask each of you sit quietly and remember a time when you were upset by a bad experience as a customer. Think about how you reacted, if you held any grudge, if you left any scars. Replay the scene, substituting a kinder response. Hopefully you can sense a difference in how you feel, perhaps wishing you had handled it that way in the first place. Maybe the next time this happens to you, you will pause a moment before responding and consider the intention behind the situation. If we all approached stressful situations with more compassion, we would react less harshly. This form of kindness is very contagious. Try it; you'll like it.

Jay Remer
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New Brunswick's reading

- Hardcover, fiction :**
1. Plus folles que ça by Denise Bonbardier (Édito)
 2. Assassin avait toujours faim by Christiane St-Pierre (Perce-Neige)
 3. Musique by Danielle Steel (Presse Cité)
 4. Sous le même toit by Jojo Moyes (Milady)
 5. Si tu me voyais comme je te vois by Nicholas Sparks (Michel Laffon)
- Paperback, fiction:**
1. Lettres de mon phare by Antonine Maillet (Léméac)
 2. Amie prodigieuse by Elena Ferrante (Andara)
 3. Chasse à l'oeuf de Pâques by Sean Wang (Scholastic)
 4. Chat volant non identifié by Marilou Addison (Andara)
 5. BFF t.4 by Geneviève Guilbault (Andara)
- Hardcover, non-fiction:**
1. Nouvelle Grammaire en tableaux by Marie-Eva de Villiers (Québec Amérique)
 2. Grand dictionnaire des mots croisés by Lise Beaudry (Québec Livres)
 3. Famille futée t.2 by eneviève O'gleman (La

- semaine)
4. 3 fois par jour t.2 by Marilou (Cardinal)
 5. Grand livre marabout de la cuisine green by Collectif (Marabout)
- Paperback, non-fiction:**
1. À la découverte de l'Île de Caraquet by Clarence Lebreton (Grande Marée)
 2. Anne-France Goldwater : plus grande que nature by Martine Turenne (Libre Expression)
 3. Humeurs d'une femme mûre et divertissante by Lise Dion (Libre expression)
 4. Là où le soleil disparaît by Corneille (Xo)
 5. Tout est toujours parfait by François Lemay (Dauphin Blanc)
- Bestselling books this week at Librairie Pélagie:**
- Shippigan, 221 Boul. J.-D. Gauthier, E8S 1N2, 506-336-9777, pelagie@nbnet.nb.ca
 Caraquet, 171 Boul. St-Pierre O, E1W 1B7, 5-6-726-9777, pelagie2@nb.aibn.com
 Bathurst, 14 Rue Douglas, E2A 7S5, 506-547-9777, pelagie3@bellaliant.com

Sheppard Chiropractic & Laser Healing

Need To STOP SMOKING?
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 Flexible hours, call today to book your appointment!. *No referral necessary / direct billing available.*

