

See the Change

Leonardo is not published in a vacuum. Every time I have tried to finish this editorial, it seemed that all hell would break loose in the world, leaving me reeling and rendering all words inadequate, feeble, if not futile. Like many, I struggle to see clearly through and past the barrage of excruciating images, overwhelming disasters, and seemingly intractable crises that saturate newsfeeds. Amid escalating wars and unspeakable atrocities, acts of human kindness are those that most sustain humanity. Whether such actions are small or large, reflexive or unexpected, they are all courageous, all vital. These are the actions to embrace today. We aspire to embody such integrity throughout *Leonardo*, as we echo the call that “in a place where there is no humanity, strive to be human” [1]. *Leonardo* affirms the essential humanity of humankind across, within, and despite all borders, through creativity. According to Albert Einstein, “Imagination is more important than knowledge” [2]. *Leonardo* invites imaginative, creative inquiry and practice as a corridor of hope, offering safe passage and sanctuary for a species imperiled by fear. Hope is the ultimate antidote and inoculation against fear.

The unbearable weight of this moment is the undeniable truth that change is paramount for the human species to live with peace, dignity, and well-being. To “be the change we want to see in the world,” we must first *see the change* we want to be. Never has the ability to “see the change” been more important nor more elusive. This is the task of these times: Call on our highest selves to envision a better future, supplanting horror stories of chaos and despair with the irrepressible possibility of hope. The audacity to imagine, to see the change, is at the heart of *Leonardo*’s work revealing patterns, portals, and provocations posed by creative visionaries across the Leosphere. This issue of *Leonardo* provokes new thinking, illuminating new ways to see the change we want to be in the world.

One of the new ways to see change today is through the paradigm shift from extractive systems to regenerative ones.

For centuries, *extractive* systems and mindsets dominated worldviews by three imperatives: contain, control, conquer. By contrast, *regenerative* systems and mindsets center interdependence and the imperatives to engage, empathize, and cocreate. Regenerative systems are inherently fluid collaborations serving the collective, while extractive systems are essentially binary competitions serving individual actors. Think of the intricate vibrancy of a forest ecosystem in contrast to the quarterly profits of a private lumber company. The need for a movement toward regeneration is intensified and accelerated by what UN Secretary-General António Guterres now recognizes as *Climate Breakdown* [3], the contextual threat of the collapse of civil society, and the exponential rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and the associated transformative technology innovations. *Leonardo*’s community of interdisciplinary, creative practitioners—including ecoartists, bioartists, CripTech innovators, data science philosophers, experimental musicians, indigenous astronomers, and digital humanities scholars—all play critical roles to see the change and chart the course steering humankind to a regenerative future. These efforts to see the change visualize the ultrasonic heartbeat of an unborn world, incubating what is yet to come.

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References

- 1 Teachings of Rav Hillel, *Pirkei Avot*, 2:5.
- 2 Albert Einstein, “On Science,” in *Einstein on Cosmic Religion and Other Opinions & Aphorisms* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2009).
- 3 UN Secretary-General Press Release, (5 September 2023): <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm21926.doc.htm>.