



As a regular feature of the Student Association Newsletter, we will be publishing profiles of different members of the Institute community. We hope these profiles will be a means of sharing the rich diversity of experience, skills, personality, and vision that exists among us.

PROFILE OF LANIER GRAHAM

Lanier Graham is a member of the Board of Governors and was recently appointed Development officer for the Institute. Lanier lives and works in the Sutro House, a small 10 gallery museum of art and design that also houses the Institute for Aesthetic Development. Lanier is President and Executive Director of this Institute, which is modeled after the Greek Museion (Place of the Muses), being several things at once: a Graduate Academy, a Library, a Museum, a Research Center, and a place of residence just as in the time of Pythagoras, Zoroaster, Buddha and Lao Tzu (the 6th century B.C.). Each gallery of the Museum contains art and cultural artifacts from one of the great ages of human history. There is also a reference library of 7500 volumes that includes works of philosophical and artistic interest from all the major scientific and spiritual traditions. A pleasant and most unexpected two-acre "secret garden" hides behind the Museum which is located at the foot of Mt. Sutro, where Ishi "the last caveman" once lived.

From this base Lanier pursues a wide variety of interests all connected in one way or another with the practical philosophy of aesthetics, or what Plato called "service to the Muses." As Lanier defines the term, aesthetics refers to the study of the relationship between art and life as a whole. His Institute is a center for the advanced study of aesthetics, cultural planning, development and management. Since its founding in 1974, the Institute has produced master plans and special programs and exhibitions for a variety of educational institutions; special curricula for schools, colleges and universities; and conferences and symposia for private and public organizations. Its publications program generates books, films and television programs that are innovative models for public education.

As author, editor or general editor, Lanier has been responsible for many publications including textbooks and popular books. One of his current projects is edition The Library of Sacred Art - an encyclopedic series of books and educational television programs devoted to the visual languages of all spiritual traditions.

Lanier described the intellectual and experiential roots of his interest in "the architecture of awareness" and metalinguistics - the study of the relationship between the structure of symbols and the structure of society. As part of his formal education, he received a BA from the School of International Service at the American University in Washington, D.C. where he concentrated in comparative cultural analysis. At Columbia University he was allowed to design an individual, interdisciplinary graduate program in philosophy, art history, and archeology that led to an MA in the History of Consciousness.

In addition to his formal intellectual training, Lanier values the important learning he has experienced as part of what he terms his "intuitive education." This is learning that is nourished by art, ritual, symbols, and association with spiritual teachers. He recognizes several important influences in this aspect of his education including his father, a philosopher who raised him in the Socratic tradition, and a Native American Godmother of the Algonquin tribe. A Hawaiian shaman initiated him at puberty into the Polynesian Cult of the Boar where Lanier was given the name Starfish at a ceremony in Diamond Head. Other spiritual teachers have included a Celtic Godfather who introduced him to comparative religion and mythology, and a number of teachers of Eastern spiritual paths. Lanier has studied Taoism with Master Chi of Bangkok; has studied and meditated with Zen Buddhists and Tibetan Buddhists including Lama Govinda and the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. His experience with Hinduism began with his grandparents' interest in Vivekananda and Krishnamurti and has been especially fostered by Sūnyātā and by work with followers of Aurobindo, Meher Baba, Kirpal Singh, and Yogananda.