

# Artificer FAQA Frequently asked Questions and Answers (FAQA)

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## **FAQ&A's on the Artificer principle**

### **Introduction**

No one, especially me, is saying that the Artificer can save the world.

I am saying however that the Artificer/Bush Mechanic is one part, an important part, of the answer.

Please note: All of these A's have been necessarily kept short - full discussion can be found of each Q&A in the accompanying e-book Zen and the Artificer of Ingenuity.

Readers beware: *The concept you are about to explore is about the most unsexy of all in the Futures field even if it is included therein. Indeed most futurists would disagree that it is a futures methodology and ridicule any efforts in this direction - I have the letters to prove it!! It is unsexy because it means getting your hands dirty, it means respecting doing as much as thinking, it means valuing the practical arts, it means moving beyond politics of the vested interest to enacting projects for our children's children's future. There are no career paths in Artificing, no University chairs, no degrees to teach, no Government Grants, no UN deputies, no shares, no pedagogy. In short little if anything in the status quo speaks to this concept as it can't be captured in the classroom, yet when we look deeper and broader we see shards of it everywhere in the kitchen, in the garden, in the shed; in apprenticeships, doctors and tragically military training and of course it is everywhere in our **lived lives** in civil society - yet it remains basically invisible, like the value of citizenship, and as I say terribly terribly unsexy. Modernity has much to learn from this counterpoint maybe it can yet be the diastolic pulse in it's, in our, heart beat.*

*And as all of us over 50 know it is the lower measurement - the diastolic- blood pressure that best indicates our cardiac health.*

*The artificer concept is about harmonising diversity not centralising conformity.*

*The artificer is not a practitioner neither is he a theoretician neither is he a doer or a thinker neither is he a combination of these rather he is something separate something discrete something anew yet deep in our historical memories. He is a consubstantiation of both. So for the artificer Action Learning cant exist as this requires the moments of action/doing and learning/thinking to be separated. Action Learning however is the closest we come to the artificer principle in modernity.*

What I have found continuously over the 6 years of this research program are the following major critiques of the Artificer.

## ***The Frequently Asked Questions and Answers***

### **[A] Questions about the Artificer - 8 Q&A's**

- **Q1Art:** Who is the Artificer?

**A:** **Bush Mechanic/Artificer in the narrow sense** is ‘someone who uses their ingenuity and technical knowledge to improvise unique solutions to field challenges’.

**Artificer/Bush Mechanic in the broader and deeper sense** as used in this e-book is ‘an adult learner who is broadly and deeply technically skilled both in a participative and reflexively orientated manners with normative (ethically) and instrumental (technical-strategic) capabilities and who seeks to address key dimensions of the global problematique through prototypes by prioritisation, choice, design and implementation all aimed at acting ahead wisely towards a world transformed’.

- **Q2Art:** What are the key principles of the Artificer?

**A:** A study of several artificers using grounded research has shown there are four key principles: (1) the Exemplar Project that is designed to assist (2) the social situation and (3) respond to today’s global challenges thereby generating (4) learning based on the actions required to establish the Exemplar Project.

- **Q3Art:** Where are the Artificers today?

**A:** These jobs have been assessed as being 50% or more artificer in their duties: master tradesman, surgeon, dentists, bush mechanic, builder-architect, special services in the military, chef, gardener, farmer etc. All up these are assessed to be 4% of the labour force down from around 20% some 50 years ago.

- **Q4Art:** How does an Artificer differ from Artisan?

**A:** An artisan is a specialist in a particular trade whereas an Artificer goes one step further and becomes a specialist and integrationalist in, and between, several related trade areas e.g. in the marine arena trade. Trades and tradesmen are used as examples only and the broad principles of an Artificer (see Q1Art) can be used in all walks of life however trades, cooking and gardening as well as hobbies and craft are the only arenas where the intelli-practical broad based skills are still socially acceptable. These only account for 5% or less of the workforce.

- **Q5Art:** How does a Tradesman differ from a Technician?

**A:** An Artificer uses techne which is human skill applied through tools rather than technique which is using tools themselves to obtain the outcomes without the need for human skills. For instance a tradesman understands the operation of a vehicle e.g. of the motor and uses this understanding to diagnose the ‘why’ of the cause of particular problems or breakdowns whereas the technician simply plugs in a computer which tells him ‘what’ not ‘why’ a certain component is doing that needs replacing and that component is simply unplugged and replaced.

- **Q6Art:** What are some examples of the Artificer?

**A:** Chartres Cathedral in France also called Bush Mechanics in Australia and is practiced by indigenous Australians and backyard 'tinkerers' called bricoleurs in French. Numbers are falling rapidly and many of these trades are dying.

- **Q7Art:** Where does the Artificer concept come from?

**A:** It comes from systematic qualitative research I undertook from 2000-06 when I came across the 'bush mechanic' in my day to day activities. Since then I have worked with several 'bushy's' and undertaken my own bushy project (over 31/2 yrs) of conceiving, designing, building and fitting out an 8mtr power boat and its stainless steel trailer). After identifying the key common characteristics of the bush mechanic through the application of grounded theory I identified the term 'Artificer' as being relevant - this was separate and parallel to my identification of a historical homologue.

- **Q8Art:** What does the Artificer concept involve?

**A:** Nothing sort of the redesign of today's learning processes inc. school (pedagogy) to seek to redress some of the many gross failures of that system such as the more educated people we have on earth the more suffering, torture, war and poverty we have - education which grew out of the enlightenment has simply failed to produce a more humane society. On a parallel sense Artificer can be seen historically in the Middle Ages and earlier the two concepts are parallel and quite likely are consubstantial but are not to be conflated.

- **Q9Art:** Why isn't Artificer Leaning more widespread?

**A:** Because the Artificer combines thinking and doing; designing and constructing, mind and matter all these dualities are mutually exclusive to today's modern society and all school systems and government organisations are designed on their continuation esp. the thinking (which is something management, policy makers, the Governments executive do; and doing which is something the tradesman, factory operatives, bureaucrats and field officers do. The latter is paid less and held in somewhat of a social disdain.

## **[B] Philosophic questions - 5 Q&A's**

- **Q1Phil:** Isn't it is a strategy not an epistemology not an ontology i.e. at best a concept not a principle i.e. instrumental not substantive/normative that is it is concerned with means not ends?

**A:** One needs to accept that the modern day duality of thinking and doing are actually consubstantial and derive from a background ontology of their integration. This ontology has been bypassed in modern times and at best is seen as primitive. It was strong even to the 1300's and today survives in pockets of indigenous peoples and in a few isolated bush mechanics. Thinking and Doing are then **consummated** (brought to a situation of fulfilment), in the exemplar project i.e. the consubstantial is then consummated in the exemplar project.

- **Q2Phil:** Isn't it is instrumental and operational thus not intellectual or cognitive i.e. it is physiospheric not noospheric?

**A:** It is consubstantial (as in kin) with instrumentality and intellectuality.

- **Q3Phil:** Isn't it is an individual not collective?

**A:** The principles of Artificing identify a process that can equally suit an individual or organisation.

- **Q4Phil:** Isn't it an individual case specific to the operational event and thus not cultural or paradigmic?

**A:** The process of the Artificing can offer a different paradigm of being with emphasis on being not human thinking or human doing but human being which incorporates, among other things, both.

- **Q5Phil:** While it claims to be interested in action and in way's that conventional academics aren't however their rebuttal is 'my writing is my action/exemplar project!' or 'read these extra 10 books' - isn't this artificing or at least action?

**A:** Artificing has the pre-requisite of conjoint (as in collated) involvement in the noosphere and physiosphere thus precluding such an academic from being an activist (although many thus claim to be).

- **Q6Phil:** What are some of the philosophical origins of the concept?

**A:** Androgogy, Ecosophy and Social Anthropology.

## [C] Anthropological questions - 6 Q&A's

- **Q1Anthro: Evolution** finished at the beginning of the Neolithic Era [with the advent of 'Anatomically Modern Humans' (AMH )] and History started. This contrasts with the modernity view that evolution ended with the Palaeolithic and history began with the Egyptians (there can be no history without writing). So where does this leave the Neolithics - the archaic humans - out in the cold?

**A:** Then Neolithic are fully humans and are to be considered thus and their wisdoms and failure become germane to our present global problematique.

- **Q2Anthro:** When did the Artificer start to disappear and is this linked to modernity?

**A:** The **modernity project** begins with the Modern period from the end of the Neolithic period (in Europe about 8000 years ago) about this time in fact around 6000 years ago (some 2000-4000 years after the end of the last ice age and with the advent of substantial climate change inc. desertification) the roots of our present dualistic competitive system were established. This has been speeded up by the Renaissance and then the Enlightenment. Dualisms have become essential to our way of thinking. Aren't they inseparable somewhat from human existence? [The **Enlightenment**, a philosophical movement of the 18th century, characterized by belief in the power of human reason and by innovations in political, religious, and educational doctrine. **The Renaissance** the activity, spirit, or time of the great revival of art, literature, and learning in Europe beginning in the 14th century and extending to the 17th century, marking the transition from the medieval to the modern world.]. So our human ancestors for several millennia at least lived peacefully, deeply understood nature and the world around us without writing.

- **Q3Anthro:** Can be no **scholarly tradition without text?** For example no academic world, yet the (European) Neolithic people had maths, built massive structures, understood astronomy, culture, agriculture, religion, education, towns, villages, high levels of equality of the sexes, trade over thousands of miles, spirituality, and most importantly almost a complete lack of war based on a quite different ontology where our modern dualities didn't

exist, for instance thinking and doing were consubstantial (kin) and thus not separated [consubstantial means difference in presentation yet of the same parent substance e.g. male and female both humans.

**A:** So the Neolithic's didn't have scholars in the modern sense, judging on the failures of the scholarly tradition today this may well have been an advantage.

- **Q4Anthro: Nature/evolution is red and raw in tooth and claw** so isn't the concept of the co-operative archaic human is balderdash?

**A:** Yet the Lamarckian and Artificer principles say otherwise. Lamarck who published on evolution immediately after Darwin had a totally different view of evolution on that was later reflected in Kropotkin's mutual-aid and co-operation, even to interspecies levels was by far the force majeure in evolution.

- **Q5Anthro:** Neolithic groups/communities may well have practiced a relational ontology and their Groups got to be up to 1000 in small towns - that won't work today will it?

**A:** Modernity has an individualist ontology which results in the 'lonely crowd' phenomena.

- **Q6Anthro:** The Neolithic or Archaic Ontological conception: an object or an act becomes real only insofar as it imitates or repeats an archetype e.g. in the dreamtime (which is fully a time of archetypes). Thus, reality is acquired solely through repetition or participation; everything which lacks an extant exemplary model is 'meaningless', i.e., it lacks reality. Men would thus have a tendency to become **myth/theospheric, retroactive, archetypal and paradigmatic, cosmographically relational**. This tendency may well appear paradoxical, in the sense that the human of a traditional culture sees herself as real only to the extent that she ceases to be herself (for a modern observer) and is satisfied with imitating and repeating the gestures of an ancestor e.g. through Dreamtime stories/myth. In other words, she sees herself as a human 'being' i.e. real, i.e., as 'truly herself', only, and precisely insofar as she ceases to be so. Hence it could be said that in this 'primitive' ontology we can see forerunner of the Platonic structure of forms. A structure that still influences us today. How does an Artificers Exemplar differ to a Neolithic Exemplar?

**A:** An artificer's exemplar project draws from and respects this archaic concept of exemplar however it is transformational of this concept yet must live in a Cartesian world of dualities in that it is **physiospheric, proactive, unique, pragmatic and experientially relational**.

## [D] Some questions as the future relevance of the Artificer - 1 Q&A

- **Q1Fut:** What is the possible future relevance of the artificer?

**A:** Also called Futuring (and Anticipatory Action Learning and Critical Futures Praxis have some significant overlaps) - the accompanying e-book argues that Artificing can readily be applied to organisations and NGO's as well as providing some serious critiques and ideas for better governance, and we all know how much we need this!! As we look around us today at the so called 'Global Problematique' we see the need not for more knowledge but for action - all we need to know is before us what needs to be done is before us yet little but politicking occurs. From my research it takes about 30 times the effort to do something as it did to have the idea in the first place and about 10 times the effort to design a solution and yet we denigrate action we continue to entrench the separation of thinking and doing. Put simply this can't continue if humanity is to have a future.

## [E] Some questions as the present relevance of the Artificer - 1 Q&A

- **Q1Present:** What is the present relevance of the Artificer?

A: As a friend said before the crash not much relevance after the coming economic crash heaps of relevance. Artificers survive depressions. This is only a small part of the issue today however the real question is more one of applying the principles of artificing to organisational design esp. NGO's humanising or even 'ecoising' technology. Our mindset or world view insists that the Artificer is 'individual' and an anachronism and has nothing to do with today except for a few hobbyists and native tribes - now lets play some computer games but hey if one looks at these computer games we see artificing reborn. We see some application of the artificer at least as a category heading in 'high tech high touch' business applications such as call centres and (Volvo's) production lines however this is more by way of providing a handle for 'human resource management' than any deep learning experience or liberation.

## [F] Some Questions as the historical relevance of the Artificer - 1 Q&A

- **Q1Hist:** What are the Anglo-historical origins of the Artificer?

A: The most direct ancestor can be found in the Statute of Artificers in England 1563 at the very end the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Renaissance. The most direct example would be the role of the master mason in rebuilding of Chartres Cathedral in France 1194-1230. Another broadly related system is that of the naver and journeyman in Europe in the Middle Ages. The associations of these 'free-tradesmen' 'free masons' were called guilds and they originated the mutual-aid welfare organisations of which only the fascist remanents remain with us to day in the shape of the ubiquitous so called 'nanny state'. This was a broad tradition preceding the Industrial Revolution but has now become lost and is totally fractured and demeaned. With remanents scattered like an ancient broken vase in an archaeological dig that people now poke fun at because it is no long whole or can have a USB cable plugged in, these shards represent the writing on the wall if only some of us w/could read!!!

## [G] Social Innovation and Sustainability issues and questions - 5 Q&A's

- **Q1SocInnov:** What's so important about the Artificer that means they can be looked to for Social Innovation?

A: Today we have everywhere so much talk in fact what is needed to be done is really already known yet who will do it. Where we see large scale systems implemented they often fail for lack of on the ground expertise. Grounded research suggests that it takes at least 30 times as long to do something as to think about it. In fact in Artificers parlance we have the I | D | I rule which is Idea | Design | Implement and the effort ratio is often 1 | 3 | 30. So any serious system of social innovation has to link Thinking (I&D) and doing (I). This is where the Artificer comes in has (s)he specialises in this IDI cycle.

- **Q2SocInnov:** What has the Artificer got to do with Sustainability

A: Many folk see sustainability as essentially a social and not a scientific question. Further these social changes and innovations require joint ways of governance and implementation that again link thinking and doing within the I | D | I cycle. Sustainability is foundationally based on making physiospheric changes in, and to protect, the biosphere. These changes include for instance governance systems, exemplar projects for the maintenance of

ecological diversity, innovations in conserving energy and so forth.

- **Q3SocInnov:** Why not leave Social Innovation to Governments and think tanks?

**A:** No one today really expects Governments to do anything proactive in fact they are designed to react to change via. the electorate as expressed by the majority. Generally almost without exception majorities are strongly conservative. Further Think Tanks are not Action tanks or Doing tanks that is they have no way of directly outworking their recommendations they simply remain in the noosphere where 95% of other good ideas live. What is needed are some exemplar projects that combine thinking and doing as a way forward as a light on the hill so to speak. (not quite the mountain top but at least one road sign on the way).

- **Q4Soc Innovation:** What about global warming and peak oil?

**A:** The real question is how we see ecology. Do we see it as a huge diversity of self regulating organisms (which include us) and processes in holons or do we see it as something external over which we have dominion. If so our environmental modality will be one of management and control of something we are external to - here the Artificer has little role and is replaced by the Commander in Chief..... Whereas if we have the former modality we see the Artificer as an important and practical part of the social ecological diversity we call civil society. Here can let 1000 poppies bloom and then harness the results of all the innovations, all the exemplar Artificer projects. Solutions to peak oil wont come from the design studios of GM or the planning offices of NASA - these organisations are always years even decades behind the small artificer working often alone and unsung. What these large organisations do is to find these innovations and either buy them up and put them in the freezer or use them on their own product/profit lines which they then patent - what else?

- **Q5SocInnov:** What about the coming economic dark age?

**A:** One of the keys to surviving the coming global economic collapse, which many are anticipating, is through Artificer - DIY skills. In the late 1970's, as part of my Micro Economics basic degree, I surveyed some dozen of my parents friends and my parents about how they survived the Great Depression of the 1930's. All are dead now however the results all confirmed the practical value of the Artificer/Bush Mechanic in these dark days.

## [H] Androgogical questions - 2 Q&A's

- **Q1Androg:** What is the link if any between Adult and Kids leaning? And what does this have to do with the artificer?

**A:** The link is intelligent narrative play for kids = the exemplar project for Adults. Artificer learning is a theory of Adult Learning which can also be seen as relevant to Kids Learning.

- **Q2Androg:** Is an Artificer a practitioner?

**A:** The artificer is not a practitioner neither is he a theoretician neither is he a doer or a thinker neither is he a combination of these rather he is something separate something discrete something anew yet deep in our historical memories. He is a consubstantiation of both. So for the artificer Action Learning can't exist as this requires the moments of action/doing and learning/thinking to be separated. Action Learning however is the closest we come to the artificer principle in modernity.



## [I] Some working observations/questions - 3 Q&A's

- **Q1Obs:** Modernity as a paradigm is a lacunae behind all our lacunae's - we know it is not working but continue to look for answers within it. If we don't where can we look?

**A:** So an ontology where thinking and doing are not separated such as Artificing is not even let onto the table

- **Q2Obs:** The key issue of our times is how to make the collective consubstantial with the individual - how to reinvent the Neolithic?

**A:** The Universal declaration of Human Rights (Dec 1948) and the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities (Sept 97) plays a great part in addressing the failures of modernity. Human rights and human responsibilities can be retroductively artificed come together in exemplar projects.

- **Q3Obs:** Isn't Artificer just a new name for practitioner?

**A:** Practitioners only exist if their counterpoint i.e. theoretician or academic exist i.e. the concept of practitioner reifies the duality and thereby denies the possibility of the consubstantiation of both. Artificer comes from this latter perspective.

## [J] Some Artificer related critiques of, and questions on, Modernity - 7 Q& A's

- **Q1Crit:** I abhor the way such western reason displaces and dismisses all other indigenous reasons as primitive - quaint but primitive even though they co-exist today. So why bother with them?

**A:** Such indigenous reasons and ontologies have great significance today as for millennia the Neolithic's achieved what we can't - to live sustainably with the planet. It is remarkable that Artificing fits so smoothly with indigenous folk e.g. bush mechanics in Australia

- **Q2Crit:** I Reject the Habermasian and Kantian totalisation of western reason that trumps all.

**A:** There are human reasons and the different cultures and associated languages represent a different and sometimes profoundly so, glimpse of the mysterium and practicum

- **Q3Crit:** I see H, K, Mochelle, Wilber, Beck et al as part of the Western meta narrative whereby text denominated cognitive rationality – the cognoscenti - trumps all - based on the Eurocentric view of civilisation – I reject this view (while like you acknowledging its power). What is a one alternative?

**A:** A consubstantial world view of the physiosphere and noosphere is needed to address this. Artificer is one such view.

- **Q4Crit:** I reject the moral imperative from Kant that says do everything as if it were a universal rule. Is there an alternative?

**A:** I can accept love thy neighbour (local) but will not accept it is universal – this is messy and I accept this. I don't have to solve all the worlds problems before I do anything - this is a recipe for freeze framing change

- **Q5Crit:** I reject the idea that options are either relativism or absolutism (I charge RM and H and K with the latter). Is there an alternative?

**A:** I consider there are overlaps and third positions - the Artificer's exemplar project is one such third position

- **Q6Crit:** I believe there is one human species inc. a large number of consubstantial yet not homogeneous components inc. us and the bushmen, Penan etc these are cosmographically, ontologically, epistemologically discrete yet linked.

**A:** The above philosophers do not explicate their fundamentally ignoring these distinctions

- **Q7Crit:** I resist the dualisms and have for decades yet not been clear until now about why and where they came from. Is there an efficacious alternative to dualisms?

**A:** They arose out of the climate change induced transition from matriarchal to patriarchal (expressed themselves in dualistic modern day terms) around 6,000yrs ago following the end of the last ice age 10000yrs ago. Artificing can present one such alternative that can handle complex technological challenges such as Chartres cathedral, avionics and computing today.