



Civic Square

[aka The Whole]

A Sacred Civic Space to Live Aloha

CIVIC SQUARE MANIFESTO

By Les Ihara, Jr. • August 9, 2018

Civic Square is a sacred civic space in the public square. Civic Square is a safe space for people to share their civic aspirations, values, and practices with each other. Civic Square is a network of civic-minded people who practice a community ethic of living Aloha, as defined in Hawai'i law, HRS §5-7.5. We are a learning community interested in civic acts of courage, community collaboration, and networked markets.

Civic Square is powered by aspirations of the heart, such as civic aspirations of people who care for the whole. Civic aspirations are honored and sacred in Civic Square, including the high civic values of love and justice, freedom and equality, honor and respect, kindness and humility. These values are radiant energies that make us whole and guide whole selves. Our civic formula in Hawai'i is 99% + Aloha = The Whole.

Civic Square is a platform for the engagement of those who respect all people and the whole civic space. Platform phases are, in Internet-type lingo: pop-ups, plug-ins, meet-ups, and mass-ups (mass movements). People can join Civic Square through CivicSquare808 social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Vimeo, etc., and ultimately our CivicSquare808.org website.

Civic Square invites people of all ages to share stories of kindness, and acts of caring. The Civic Square platform serves as a registry of small actions taken on the sacred civic landscape. Its display resembles a planetarium, with tiny points of light denoting civic acts. Our narrative connects the civic acts, including those online, in a story woven of heroic themes. Stories of our ancestors. Stories of lone acts of bravery. Stories of people coming together to make a difference in small ways. Stories of humanity that call us to act.

Civic Square is a non-partisan, private nonprofit organization. Its mission is to create and share global narratives in the community and on CivicSquare808 social media platforms. Civic Square will share its narrative and platform at meet-ups and events initiated by participants, including at group meetings and school classes. Civic Square supports the aspiration of a citizen-centered democracy, and proposes the civic leader as an archetype for humanity.

The Civic Square narrative speaks of the large numbers of Americans who have experienced injustice over the past forty years, culminating in the last presidential election. There's now a disquieting feeling in virtually all aspects of public life. There are perceptible, and at times palpable, collective feelings of disrespect, exclusion, and abuse in the public square. Civic norms no longer prevail in the public square, their values no longer honored as before.

Most people have retreated from the political arena, but are inspired watching pop-up movements that stand up for love. Actions that love would take for the whole. Movements inspired to end the culture of harassment and discrimination against women. Inspired to stop gun violence and political abuse by the gun lobby. Inspired to stand up for justice and respect

for all minorities and immigrants. Inspired to reverse economic inequality in our lifetime. Inspired for collective action to reduce global warming, sea rise, and coral bleaching.

These bottom-up movements express peoples' aspirations to make our community whole. To see ourselves as global citizens. To have whole experiences, and experiences of the whole. They are movements that honor the courage of those who suffer injustice. That connect us to universal values, such as justice for all and caring for the whole Earth. Civic Square is an evolving global narrative and a mythical story of our common humanity.

The Hawai'i Civic Square narrative starts in 1893 with a sovereign world leader who honored the indigenous relationship of oneness with the land and universe; who practiced Aloha when her kingdom was threatened with bloodshed backed by an illegal U.S. Navy force; who transferred her kingdom to the United States for safekeeping until U.S. justice could prevail; but who was denied justice because of U.S. politics and the 1896 presidential election. Civic Square dedicates its platform to Queen Lili'uokalani and the Hawaiians whose aspirations for justice glow brightly.

In 1970, after decades of Hawaiian language and cultural suppression, Hawaiian elder Pilahi Paki emerged to publicly share the teachings of her kupuna. That Aloha is nothing if not lived. That Aloha is attributed to the god of the universe. Aloha is the universe. She said at a governor's millennial conference that year, "In the next millennium, the world will turn to Hawai'i in its search for world peace because Hawai'i has the key, and that key is Aloha."

Since Pilahi's spiritual emergence 48 years ago, living Aloha has found expression in the Hawaiian Renaissance, and rich line of music, hula, and art. In family and extended ohana gatherings in Hawai'i. As a Living Aloha creed in many professional, civic, and individual lives. The Aloha Spirit is invoked during conversations in relationships we have with others, presenting the shaka sign of affinity for emphasis. Hawaii's greeting of Aloha offers affinity, humility, and reverence – to people of all nations. We find our common humanity living Aloha.

Civic Square is a safe space in the public square. A space where the presence of Aloha is sacred. Civic Square is a self-guided web community learning civic strategies of community collaboratives, pop-up demonstrations, meet-up movements. Our community self-organizes using the principles of Open Space Technology, and its one law. The Law of Two Feet. Standing up for what you care about and using your own two feet to move to wherever you can best contribute and/or learn. To solve social problems and align on preferred futures.

Civic Square seeks to establish collaboration as a regular and usual cultural norm in civil society. Walk-the-talk collaboration, not just talk. We join others in this effort, and support cross-sector collaboration among government, philanthropy, and NGO/civic sectors. Though from different social tribes, they've derived the same civic values and norms as other sectors. The political arena, however, stands separate, employing political practices that would be improper in other civic sectors, e.g. deceit, corruption.

Since last January, the U.S. President has challenged traditional civic values and norms. He has promoted himself as a corporate titan who would do whatever was necessary for the good he seeks. Civic Square believes the President has illuminated the difference between civic and political values. Between politicians guided by personal or narrow interests, and civic leaders loyal to the whole community.

Civic Square believes a global competition has started between two narratives, represented by political strongman and civic leader archetypes. Between a narrative that comes from the corporate board room, and a narrative from civic square. The archetypal warrior leader risks himself and does unsavory acts, when necessary, for good of the whole. The archetypal civic leader is a universal role model who practices civic norms in politics and walks-the-talk in all sectors.

The competition of narratives is for share of personal, cultural, and political markets as determined by the choices people make. In the political market, a large majority believes the election system is broken, worse when U.S. corporations and their Super PACs exercise political free speech rights.

Civic Square seeks to establish online networking as a regular and normal practice among people who collaborate for civic purposes. Civic values live in relationship, so people in CivicSquare808 are encouraged to participate in pairs or groups. Joint civic efforts express values that appear on Civic Square's radar as the civic acts of those relationships. Our self-organizing principles mean that participants collaborate to decide the interests and projects they want to pursue.

Civic Square believes that smartphones in the hands of people with a common civic mission can enable them to communicate and act collectively as a market. Already, 90% of American adults have smartphones, 68% use Facebook, and 73% view YouTube. As conversations get faster and smarter with Internet technology, they act as markets that give citizen voices, consumers, and voters more political and economic power than traditional markets. Generation Z and some Millennials are Internet natives, and our first networked humans – who live in networked communities and markets. Where values of the heart guide better than information overload. Young hearts and minds in proper coordination. With hearts to guide, and minds to navigate. Young hearts have stories to tell of the world they see.

Civic Square imagines how a collaborative network of 10,000 story tellers, or 1% of 1 million, might contribute to the competition of narratives between the honorable warrior archetype and proposed universal civic leader. What might it look like if civic narratives became America's story? Women as equals in every context. Safe public spaces free of physical violence and political abuse. All those excluded are included as equals, and honored. Economic justice for all generations. Global actions to reverse climate change, sea rise, and coral bleaching. Creative forms of collective restitution, healing, and economic lift for the previously excluded.

Civic Square is a sacred civic space in the public square. We invite people to honor civic values in their life, and share stories of living Aloha. Learn more about us and how to participate at www.facebook.com/civicsquare808, and on Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Vimeo. We can also be contacted by email at civicsquare808@gmail.com.

Civic Square was created in May 2018 by Les Ihara, Jr., in partnership with Russell Ruderman. Civic Square's nonprofit corporation is registered with the Hawaii State Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs.