

# TOME 02

# CULTURE & INNOVATION(S)

## EUROPE SEEN FROM THE SOUTH

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## Notice

*Having gathered seven partners in the Med space, Sostenuto aimed to open reflections on social and economic innovation in the Med zone. It enabled the experimentation, modelling and diffusion of new management and organisation models within the cultural sector.*

*Having placed this project in a spirit of contribution to the on-going mutations, all the partners focused a particular attention on opening the debate, widening the thematic and geographical fields, confronting opinions, taking positions... The recent crises have reinforced this direction.*

*The publications which will close Sostenuto are produced in this perspective and in this awareness of current context. They are based on two complementary volumes. The first, coordinated by the University of Valencia (Spain), proposes an economic analysis on questions of culture and innovation. The second and present volume, coordinated by the Relais Culture Europe, puts these questions into perspective with regards to the choices with which we are faced in terms of development, society and democracy.*

*Titled: Culture & Innovation[s], Europe seen from the South, it regroups articles/comments/experiences of a group of researchers, operators, artists who have participated in the project's moments of collective debates, in particular the "Ready to Change?" Forum or the Summer University "Europe and culture under debate". A choice of quotes from partners – A.M.I., Bunker, CITEMA, Expeditio and Zunino e Partner Progetti srl – puts into relation experiences from the laboratories of the project and debate of ideas. This volume questions the European South[s]. Through its contribution choices, it proposes a vision of the Med zone as a resource in the refoundation of the European project, as much through its capacity for invention as for its status as an area undergoing reconstitution and interaction.*

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“In this breakdown of globalisation, culture is the pool from which to draw the resources we need to give meaning to both our personal lives and our belonging or fate communities.”

Jacques Delors

In. Message for European Meeting “Europe, culture, territories”  
(Avignon, July 2010)

The writing of a publication, such as this one, is a responsibility which has been affirmed throughout the Sostenuto project. From the start of this project, as cultural players in the South of Europe, it seemed necessary to us to question the place of innovation in the cultural sector. Very rapidly, the current crisis/crises led us to widen our scope of analysis and action to the major changes that we must know how to apply, in Europe, to our development and certainly model of society.

The world lives. It is changing profoundly. Globalisation creates breakdowns, it creates tensions and increases others. Economic interactions are linked to cultural and social interrelationships. The local level interacts with the global level through transnational processes. New great powers appear, as seen in the shifting of the world's centre of gravity towards Asia. The Souths evolve, in particular with the powerful political and democratic transformation of the South Mediterranean. Finally, ever stronger tension lines are felt at a global and local level – tensions between consumption patterns and availability of resources (towards a new “culture” of nature?), between interdependence and differentiation (towards a new “culture” of relations?), between cultural proximity and distance (towards a new “culture” of differences?).

Today, Europe is no longer at the centre, but at the heart of this globalised world space. It is in this interacting world that it must redefine its future. Moreover, the intensification of the crisis in Europe increases these tensions. The economic and financial crisis strongly interacts with a social crisis. Inequalities are increasing, social links are suffering, and many individual or collective situations are being undermined. These crises interact with a democratic crisis. Otherness and diversity seem difficult to grasp, societies close themselves.

It is this challenge that European societies face today. Will we know how to adapt/transform ourselves whilst continuing to affirm and defend the values which steer the constitution of all of Europe? Will we know how to find a new way of being in the World and in line with the World? In other words, will we know how to invent a new way of making society whilst remaining open to other World civilisations, receptive to technical, economic and cultural transformations and ready to fight for our democratic choices and justice? This requires us to seriously examine the role of culture at the moment.

Therefore, the congestion with techno-economical vocabulary in public discourse about culture can be considered a symptom of the difficulty in understanding the issue. This is the case with the “concept” of innovation, which has invaded thoughts on the development of public policy, amongst others those dealing with

culture. We know that the present time requires us to have a large inventive capacity, but it is interesting to examine how the use of this term “innovation” – to the detriment of other terms such as creation or invention – indicates important changes in perspective. On the one hand, it seems that our conception of culture is evolving, enlarging (mainly a democratic process), but also risks being diluted or becoming trivial in the constitution of our societies. On the other hand, and at the same time, many public policies, under cover of innovation, seem to assign to culture the task of producing more financial than symbolic wealth.

For all that, the public or private response, in the cultural field, cannot be resumed as the simple support for “innovation”, but must be part of the research and creation of a system of responses, within which are organised in a dynamic way:

- › the necessary reinforcement of our competitiveness, with solid cooperation and solidarity mechanisms, in order to multiply our capacity for collective response;
- › technical innovation with social and economic invention (innovation), so as to reinforce our contributory, sharing and exchange capacities;
- › innovation and creativity, with artistic creation, in order to re-establish invention risk and the discovery of new forms.

Many players are at work, building a powerful network of experience and experimentation. They combine the questions that we evoked in their decision and implementation processes – looking for links, asking questions, triggering intersections, proposing tangible, often local, responses.

It is, moreover, interesting to underline the strong evolution of Southern Europe on this subject. Often considered as out of touch compared to a North-West Europe which concentrates all the creative forces, the South of Europe has largely caught up its “delay”<sup>1</sup>. Many – often isolated – cultural players, develop their activities from urban zones in the South, using social, heritage and artistic wealth as a basis for their cultural or artistic proposals. Being more directly concerned by mutations in the South Mediterranean, some also explore the relevance of a more dynamic Euro-Mediterranean cooperation zone.

The consideration of this network and the players in it is certainly one of the challenges in the transformation of public policies for culture, either at territory level or in the emergence of transnational mechanisms, at the level of the challenges raised

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<sup>1</sup> *Territorial Dynamics in Europe: The Creative Workforce – ESPON – November 2011 & see volume 1 of the present publication.*

by globalisation. In short, will we know how to imagine innovation support mechanisms, which are wide in their approach, ambitious in their social dynamics, levers for development, and which therefore give *“a meaning to both personal lives and our belonging or fate communities”*?

This moment seems to be one of choices. Throughout the last century, we decided to follow a collective path based on negotiation, that of European construction – a long process which seems each day to be certainly complex, but also more urgent and necessary. To question innovation is therefore not innocuous, if it means looking for ways to the eco-socio-ecological transition in our European model. There is, however, a reasonable concern that the dominant questioning is only looking, in the end, to prolong the long process of treating culture as a commodity.

We welcome your reactions and comments, in short, to continue the debate together.

Pascal Brunet  
Paris, January 2012

PART 01

RIGHTS, COMMON GOODS,  
CULTURAL ECOSYSTEMS  
...TO REAFFIRM  
OUR SYSTEM OF VALUES

## Can we introduce new perspectives reaffirming our system of values into the European debate on culture?

We cannot examine the role of culture in European strategies and policies, and more specifically the link between innovation and culture – unless we first examine what should be the foundations of these policies. We are living a moment of transition in Europe and the World. This raises the questions of our choice of public policies, and more largely, what constitutes today the basis for a renewed European project. It is up to us, therefore, to reaffirm our cultural choices in light of our choices “constituting” amongst others, that of building an open European area based on respect for simple, strong principles: state of law, pluralistic democracy, social justice, social market economy.

Since the publication by the European Commission of its “agenda for culture in a globalising world”, the European cultural debate has admittedly been reinforced, but also considerably restricted in its definition of conditions for a better contribution of the cultural and creative sectors to economic development in Europe. Often even, reinforcing this evolution, only the field of cultural and creative industries retains the attention. Culture is thus only considered, even only appears legitimate, as a factor, tool or merchandise that can be privatised or marketed. Is it reasonable to think of a European cultural policy based solely on its contribution to European competitiveness?

Is it possible not to consider the contribution of culture to the European community project? We do not think so. So how can we introduce new perspectives reaffirming our system of values into the European debate on culture?

It is not a matter of analysing culture as a factor for innovation and good health for our economies, but, more fundamentally, to design the aspects which make it a vital resource for our societies. It is a matter of questioning cultural policies at a time of choice, to rearticulate our economic, development and democratic models. It is a question of reintegrating culture and innovation strategies into a wider perspective, that of a society which reaffirms its system of values, which looks to develop the fundamentals that rally it and which commits to these transformations in a strong interaction with the world.

In this part, we have chosen to highlight the nature of the questions asked today, to show and reflect on three fields of work around a redefinition of European cultural policies. The viewpoints are not all reconcilable. We accept that there are deviations and differences in approach. It is, to say the least, one of the democratic principles.

Firstly, to continue the work of the School of Fribourg, Jean-Michel Lucas proposes an important change in perspective with regards to the objective of cultural policy – that of bringing our definitions closer by the person, his dignity and his rights. It is a matter of approaching cultural policy for what it serves – the person as he constructs himself, the person in society – and not for what it supports, i.e. production. We also need to redefine the human as he is – dignity and not capital.

Pursuing this reflection by other ways, Simona Levi and Jaron Rowan reconsider the issue of the nature of cultural resources as common goods, reflecting on the conditions for access to this resource and the responsibility of communities within this framework. The market regulates following private interests. Can the civil society find more sustainable ways of operating? Which regulatory frameworks and protocols are emerging? Which economic models can contribute to the development of these cultural commons?

Pau Rausell Köster proposes to further open this subject, this “argument development” necessary for a better understanding of the articulation between the intrinsic values of culture, the economy and community development. He considers, through this, the question of the necessary redefinition of the rightful place of public intervention, and therefore of cultural policies.

Finally, we have involved artistic and cultural players from the South(s) of Europe – from the Balkans to the South coast of the Mediterranean, as well as the partners of the Sostenuito project – so that they can testify about the way they take into account these debates in transforming their actions.

So is culture a factor for social and economic innovation? You will have understood that our comments are at the same time the foundations and the reasoning for these innovations, enabling us to transform and reaffirm ourselves. Cultural players seem to be at this exact spot.

## CULTURE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: WHAT VALUES FOR THE AGENDA 21 FOR CULTURE?

*This article is the introduction to the publication “Culture and Sustainable Development; it is time to organise the prolonged discussions”, Editor IRMA,<sup>®</sup> evolutic collection, January 2012. In this work, Jean-Michel Lucas describes the dead-end in which the professional, cultural worlds find themselves. They present themselves as cultural providers, contributing to the fourth pillar of sustainable development, but they only have status of “service providers”, exchanging their regular audiences for good customers. The author alerts us to the pitfalls of cultural democratisation and affirms that another political perspective – based on international agreements about cultural diversity and the upholding of people’s cultural rights – is possible and necessary. The article was written following the author’s participation in the Sostenuto “Ready to Change?” Forum [Ljubljana (Slovenia) in December 2010].*

Since the Brundtland report (1987)<sup>1</sup>, sustainable development has become a major political preoccupation. In its name, actions are undertaken at all levels, from local Agenda 21s to World Summits

1. See the report “Our Common Future” by the UN’s World Commission on Environment and Development, chaired by Mrs Gro Harlem Brundtland, available at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our\\_Common\\_Future](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Common_Future)

organised by the UN. Within this momentum dealing with our planet's future, the "cultural" question has long remained marginal, most often reserved for situations where the world's populations are attached to their "indigenous culture". Progressively, through international negotiations about "cultural diversity" issues, the reflection on culture and sustainable development has been enriched by new arguments. As a result, since 2001, the UNESCO conventions have officially recognised that cultural diversity is considered as *"a guarantee of sustainable development"*. In addition, since 2004, the international organisation, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), has detailed the cultural responsibilities of local public authorities in the Agenda 21 of Culture. In 2010, a new level was attained by the UCLG which adopted a resolution making *"culture the fourth pillar of sustainable development"*.

This public recognition for the cultural challenges of our planet's future is evidently a step forward for arts and culture professionals, who, in these periods of crisis, need to be taken into consideration by public policies.

However, let us not be overly hasty, as "culture" is a clever word to divert attention. Like a magician's false-bottomed suitcase, culture hides, with the same appearance, completely different issues and can nurture endless ambiguities. For this reason, if culture is to become a solid "pillar" of sustainable development, it is absolutely necessary to define the conditions to render this conviction credible.

For the UCLG there is no doubt: culture always plays a strategic role. As the organisation points out, *"many voices, including UNESCO, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and researchers, are calling for the inclusion of culture in the Sustainable Development model, since culture ultimately shapes what we mean by "development" and determines how people act in the world"*<sup>2</sup>.

It is on this basis that the Agenda 21 for Culture has become the reference for those who consider culture to be a crucial issue for sustainable development, at least *"for two specific reasons: firstly, the development of the cultural sector itself (i.e. cultural heritage, creativity, cultural industries, crafts, cultural tourism); and secondly, ensuring that culture has its rightful place in all public policies, par-*

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2. See the text approved by the Executive office of United Cities and Local Governments of 17 November 2010, within the framework of the World summit of local and regional managers, 3rd World Congress of the UCLG, held in Mexico on [www.agenda21culture.net](http://www.agenda21culture.net)

particularly those related to education, the economy, science, communication, environment, social cohesion and international cooperation”<sup>3</sup>. This image of cultural challenges is seductive, as we so often reproach “culture” as being solely reserved for an elite withdrawn to its specialist lofty institutions that this message of openness to other public policies easily appears as a liberating breath of fresh air of new cultural energy. The requirement for transversal, territorial policies in the name of a better future for all revitalises public cultural responsibility.

Thus, with the Agenda 21 for Culture, associating culture and sustainable development consists of assuming a heavy public responsibility which goes much further than the simple maintaining of subsidies to the cultural sector. The challenge for elected officials is to work towards “development” whilst at the same time enabling multiple, different cultures to “live together”. Their political priorities become the “intercultural dialogue which is one of humankind’s greatest challenges” as well as “creativity identified as an inexhaustible resource nourishing society and economy”.

However, whilst we can dream of such challenges, the everyday reality of public negotiations doesn’t give us reasons to be optimistic about the chances of turning the Agenda 21 for Culture’s good intentions into reality.

The economic crisis can be felt everywhere in Europe, in a context of tension imposed by trade globalisation. States face pressure from economic emergencies, and public authorities keep a close watch on the evolution of Stock market indicators. For us to hope to do better in the future, ecologically, culturally and socially, the word has spread that we must first manage the indicators of economic rationality: interest rates, euro exchange rates, overruns on budgetary deficit standards, inflation rates, and unemployment rates, not to forget immigration rates. The reduction of public debt controls the world, and like many other issues, sustainable development and culture must be patient and wait for an improvement in the growth situation.

This requirement for economic rationality has not escaped the attention of many negotiators in the cultural sector who have shown that with a little goodwill – i.e. by removing the “ideological blinkers” of autonomy of art for art’s sake – culture and the economy can actually work together. Words with malleable definitions have the advantage of being able to adapt themselves to different circumstances,

“I think what you began doing in this quarter of the city (Tabor quarter, Ljubljana, Slovenia) is really important, because, in a sense, if local authorities allow you, this can become a sort of demonstration quarter, where you can take a series of symbolic actions, which are pointing towards a much more sustainable future for Ljubljana and perhaps even beyond Ljubljana and Slovenia.”

*Franco Bianchini, Director of Research Unit “Cultural planning”, Leeds University, in an interview realised by Samo Selimović, Bunker, November 2011.*

3. CGLU, *ibidem*

and even with the Agenda 21 for Culture, it is possible to boast of the strengths of culture in giving new life to economic growth – all you have to do is use the word culture in its “useful” sense. Cultural players are therefore honoured as manufacturers of richly innovative ideas and forms. Culture is seen as being “creative”, opening the way for a multitude of new products; it is reborn as a supplier of re-launched growth! This has not been missed by the Agenda 21 for Culture in article 12: *“It is necessary to underline the importance of culture as a factor in the creation of wealth and economic development”*.

“

Culture is seen as being “creative”, opening the way for a multitude of new products; it is reborn as a supplier of re-launched growth!

”

The figures in favour of this creative culture are impressive: *“Representing 2.6% of our GDP and 14 million jobs, cultural and creative industries generate more than 600 billion Euros of turnover per year”*<sup>4</sup>. This enthusiasm can be openly read in the deliberations of the European Parliament which, in May 2011, adopted a resolution where culture becomes the magic potion to cure all our ailments. We find asserted *“the major role of cultural and creative industries in developing centres of creativity at local and regional level which make regions more attractive and allow businesses and jobs anchored in the local and regional economic fabric to be created and developed, make the regions more attractive to tourists, promote the setting up of new businesses and enhance the profile of these regions and promote the cultural and artistic sector and the preservation, promotion and enhancement of the European cultural heritage thanks to numerous agencies such as local and regional authorities”*<sup>5</sup>. Hard to beat!

The challenges of creative culture for sustainable development are not only anchored in this economic rationality – they also offer the promise of a society with active, fulfilled and no-doubt happy citizens: *“The digital age has drastically changed our approach to cultural goods. This report calls for a true European strategy to liberate the potential of cultural and creative industries. This strategy must take into consideration the dual nature of these industries, their economic nature, with their contribution to jobs, growth and wealth creation, and in particular their cultural nature, with their activities which contribute to the fulfilment and social and cultural integration of citizens”*.

4. Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid in the presentation of her report “Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries” in the committee on culture and education of the European Parliament, Thursday 17th March 2011, adopted almost unanimously.

5. Resolution by European Parliament of 12 May 2011 on “Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries”.

We should therefore admit that in this period of crisis, the die is cast – culture, filtered by economic rationality, brings growth, jobs and revenues to which we must add all the values of sustainable “good life” – individual fulfilment, citizenship and living together.

This idyllic painting of the cultural industry may raise a smile if you consider the number of useless films, uninteresting books or digital products which are out of date before even being produced, but political conviction does not ask itself the question of cultural or artistic value. It gladly leaves this up to the private sphere, except for serious cases where the moral bases of society are at risk. In short, to each his own taste, as long as it is acceptable.

For the moment, I will only retain from the European Parliament position the astonishing development of the cultural issue – with the creative economy, it is no longer up to the most cunning cultural actors to find a place in economic negotiations; it is now the economic forces who seek the engagement of the cultural creative worlds to get out of the slump. The rise of culture in the legitimacy ladder is remarkable.

This change of position is also visible at a world level – we find an identical position in the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the diversity of “cultural expressions”, or in the position of the UNCTAD<sup>6</sup> which does not hesitate to claim that the creative economy is also essential to raise developing nations out of poverty.

I think I have said enough for us to accept to take seriously the relationship between culture and sustainable development. However, my intention is not to lengthen the list of cultural actions which save economic rationality from its own crisis, as if we have no alternative. Rather, I believe we need to question the sense and range of words used for these beneficial arguments, a bit like being tempted to ask the street vendor if he really believes in the benefits of his products.

Despite this enthusiasm for creative culture, the cultural challenge for humanity should be read elsewhere than in the praise for the production of goods by a sector, even one called “cultural” or “artistic”.

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6. UNCTAD: *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*.

See “*Creative Economy report 2008*”. This report is available at the following internet addresses: [www.unctad.org/creativeeconomy](http://www.unctad.org/creativeeconomy) and [http://ssc.undp.org/creative\\_economy](http://ssc.undp.org/creative_economy)

To echo recent European news, everyone has observed the noisy presence of diehard “protestors” in the public squares of major capitals.

Economic rationality, with its demands for debt reduction, no longer seems as rational as it claims to be, at least at a level of human values. Certainly it leads to loss of income, but, beyond this, it scorns and refuses recognition for the humanity of people, as considered by Axel Honneth<sup>7</sup>. In these protests, we will probably not see traces of this creative culture that we are waiting for so we can return to economic profitability. On the contrary, we should see another sense for the cultural challenges in a world which hopes to be sustainable. This other sense is that brought by UNESCO in the 2001 Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The cultural challenge no longer surrenders to the need to maximise profits, instead it first considers human dignity as a universal value. With this approach, cultural policy concentrates on the way in which people with “*plural, varied and dynamic*” cultural identities can live and make up humanity.

“

The cultural challenge no longer surrenders to the need to maximise profits, instead it first considers human dignity as a universal value.

”

The work of culture is now to move step by step towards the hope of a “sustainable humanity”, ensuring that situations of disregard for people are avoided and bringing people closer by recognising their dignity. The 2007 Fribourg declaration reminds us that culture is not a pedlar’s word, with variable tactical uses according to the negotiations. Culture must be understood as a group of references which enable a person to express his humanity through the cultural identity he uses to define himself and “*expect to be recognised in his dignity*”.

The ethical question first, as noted the 2001 Universal Declaration for Cultural Diversity in article 4: “*The defence of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative, inseparable from the respect for human dignity*”.

This approach breathes new life into the reflection on sustainable development and its relationship with “the” culture. Culture as “humanity” does not reject “creative”, profitable culture, but it requires that the cultural challenge of the creative economy does not contradict the cultural challenge of equal respect for human dignity. The two concepts can obviously intermingle, more or less skilfully depending on the situations, but they cannot be two sides

<sup>7</sup> See Axel Honneth, *Disrespect*, Polity Press, 2007.

of the same coin. They carry different values of the conception of the future. Consequently, they require different application mechanisms to nurture compromises that respect people's humanity.

In any case, it is this demonstration that I wish to consider in the following text – it seems to me urgent in these moments of crisis to avoid mixing everything as in the European Parliament resolution of May 2011, which I quoted previously. I believe that it is time to stop assuming or giving the impression that culture forms a unitary and homogeneous whole which claims to bring solutions to all causes, even the most incompatible. In this perspective, the objective of this work is to question the main differences in the issues of sense and value associated to culture, when we ask ourselves how to build together a more sustainable and human development.

Firstly, I will examine the arguments proposed by cultural players to convince others that they are “good” contributors to sustainable development, as it is defined and implemented according to the Rio Earth Summit in 1992.

I will point out that culture is presented as a sector of activity made up of competent professionals in the arts and culture. As such, the sector produces cultural goods and services which are supposed to positively nourish the three pillars – environmental, economic and social – of Agenda 21.

If read hastily, these arguments on the “contribution” of the cultural sector to sustainable development are convincing. They do not raise any difficulties, and it is through the difficult art of waffle that they manage to avoid critical questions from the reader. But by accepting to enter into the details of these arguments, by questioning the coherence of the reasoning, this unity of sense of the culture as a product becomes artificial. I will note how much this “contributory” conception of the cultural sector is unfortunate as it submits cultural players to valuation systems over which they have no control. They are indeed prisoners of values provided by others and are even accomplices in situations of discrimination, disguised as good actions under the headings “access to culture for all” or “democratisation of culture”. I will demonstrate this in particular for the economic conception of cultural diversity and programmes for artistic intervention aimed at “disadvantaged” populations.

“Thus the number of hands producing artisanal objects has decreased, has contracted the market and in the end reduced the possibility for the craftsman to live decently from his work. All this is concentrated in the challenge that the artisan-artist or artist-artisan must meet, i.e. respond to the need to live from his own work in a different world, with different markets which are at the same time further away and more accessible thanks to new technologies.”

*Jacques Mattei,  
Zunino e Partner  
Progetti srl.*

“

(...) instead it is part of a collective will to determine the best cultural attitudes necessary for building a common sustainable future for humanity.

”

I will then highlight the other possible conception, by referring to Jon Hawkes<sup>8</sup> who, from the Australian experience, considers that culture is the fourth pillar of sustainable development. With this conception, the cultural issue is no longer focused on producers and demanders of artistic or cultural goods and services; instead it is part of a collective will to determine the best cultural attitudes necessary for building a common sustainable future for humanity. Culture as a good vision for this future world is then “the first condition for sustainable human development”.

In light of this reasoning, we must acknowledge that there is a gap separating the “contributory” approach and that which makes culture a “condition” for sustainable human development. So we have to choose sides.

I will then be forced to note that Agenda 21 for Culture has completely avoided this choice. On one side, the UCLG incorporates Hawkes’ idea of a fourth pillar, but without drawing any practical results. The Agenda 21 for Culture will be a “false friend” to us, asserting a global conception of cultural challenges, even referring to cultural rights, but without fully assuming them. I will thus see how the Agenda 21 for Culture sticks to the “contributory” approach and negotiates solely the cultural sector’s contributions to other public policies. Given the difficulties for the survival of this sector, we understand why many are happy with this situation, half makeshift repair, half poaching! However, in my opinion, this approach to cultural issues causes confusion by diverting – to the benefit of professional corporatism – the good idea of culture as the fourth pillar which conditions the success of sustainable human development.

At the end of the day, this finding is too negative as thousands of elected officials and cultural players work on the ground to advance the culture’s cause in sustainable development.

This is why, in the final part, I would like to set out the political perspective which should serve as a reference for a new drafting of the Agenda 21 for Culture.

To move in this direction, the cultural circles first need to make amends. They need to remove the mask they wear in negotiations by

8. See the article by Jon Hawkes, *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture’s Essential Role in Public Planning*, published by The Cultural Development Network of Victoria in association with Common Ground Publishing. Available at: [www.thehumanities.com](http://www.thehumanities.com)

asserting that culture has “intrinsic value”, to use the UCLG’s expression. Everyone knows that no cultural project holds value by itself, by its very existence! Cultural goods only hold value for society from the public debates – often contradictory – which they generate. The first requirement for an Agenda 21 for Culture is therefore to provide mechanisms for “free, open and documented” debates, as Amartya Sen (Nobel Prize for Economics for his work on human development) put it so well. The Agenda 21 for Culture should affirm the obligation for collective ethical debate, and not exclude it right away by affirming that culture has intrinsic, almost natural, and therefore unquestionable virtues. Cultural politics would do better, in some ways, to take on the “palaver” on what it does and what it is worth.

“The encouragement of participation of citizens in the planning and decision-making processes is of great importance for the development of a community.”  
*Tatjana Rajić, Expediio*

The second requirement is – for me – decisive: it is not sufficient to choose the good cultural values. It is also important that these values be translated on the ground. For this, beyond local power struggles, stakeholders in Agendas 21 for Culture must respect the legal mechanisms which serve as a framework for public action in the territories. With this framework, it seems to me to be relevant to examine if today the perspective of considering culture as a condition for sustainable human development is compatible with the legal mechanisms on which the European Union is founded.

The answer is evidently positive, but with a certain number of conditions which render ineffective the “good” intentions of the European Union. To show this, I examined the European mechanisms – that concern us all as they are contained in the European Union treaty, the Services directive and the texts on Services of general economic interest.

Here are the conclusions that I reached, and which in my opinion, require a new political commitment by activists, elected officials, citizens and the cultural actors of Agenda 21.

Firstly, the European Union in its treaty refers as often to values of human dignity and recognition as to values of economic rationality in the free market. As a result, the defenders of culture as the fourth pillar do not need to chase after the sole legitimacy of cultural profitability and the creative economy. They can just as easily assert the principle of respect for human dignity, affirmed in the Union treaty from article 2, even if a long political road remains before the Union fully recognises the value of equal dignity for all human beings, as defined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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The trap is wide open for cultural players who appear in society saying that they are specialised suppliers of art and culture.

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“In a European free-market context, Human Rights and human cultural dignity must be reaffirmed if we wish to oppose the consumerist vision imposed by cultural industries. The registering of projects on their territory implies the development of transversal cooperation and increased participation by populations and artists. Is this opening of cultural projects in the territories the guarantee of sustainable artistic development?”

*Extract from the programme POTLATCH 2011, A.M.I.*

On the other hand, when we take the time to make the link between the principles and application mechanisms, there is no longer the choice – only the values of economic rationality count every time.

An instant example: a cultural player with a passion for sustainable development can easily assert the values of human dignity and recognition; he can also affirm his will to be not-for-profit; he can even militate in favour of “another economy for art and culture”, made of solidarity, mutual support and democratic relationships with the other stakeholders. I would also add the possibility of selling cultural goods for profit, whilst ensuring that the relationships between artists and the public reflect respect, trust and care. The player with a passion for culture has the ethical possibility to be a social or solidarity entrepreneur, as he pleases! There are no objections in the Union principles. Except that, in the implementation, he would be faced with the supreme sovereignty of economic rationality for all of his activities. The Services directive of the Union and the Services of General Economic Interest (SGEI) fix the limits of his actions – he can say anything, believe in anything, do anything according to his personal ethics, as long as his activities do not overshadow the economic rationality of the competitive market. “To overshadow” signifies that no one is obliged to produce profitable cultural goods, as numerous exceptions to the profitability rule are set out in the European mechanisms; these are however only accepted for the reason that they are and remain exceptions!

The trap is wide open for cultural players who appear in society saying that they are specialised suppliers of art and culture. The European mechanisms then reply, “You belong to the cultural activity sector and have two possible stances: either you enter into the creative economy norm and you will have to learn to swim in the ocean of the 600 billion Euros of turnover in the sector, or you have another personal ethic, but your project will only be legitimate if your activities do not weigh on exchanges between States and do not exceed several million...cents! Above all, you should never distort “good” competition”!

I will take the time to demonstrate this, leading us to observe that in practice cultural players become, often unwillingly, simply product suppliers / sellers, dressed as “cultural grocers” of outstanding products for some, popular products for others, which are either profitable or helped by public authorities.

But another linkage between principles and practices is possible to reconcile culture and sustainable human development. I will thus submit to the reader the perspective of considering that the cultural issue is from “making humanity”, above the usual “making society” that we hear here or there as the aim of public cultural action. In this case, cultural policy must manage multiple interactions between the cultural liberties of all people who meet in public spaces. It must accept the “palaver” to reach more reciprocal recognition, more self respect and respect for others. It is less a matter of proposing a product that submits to the sovereignty of economic rationality, than of placing professionals from artistic disciplines in “person to person relationships”. The inevitable reference would then be that of Edouard Glissant<sup>9</sup> whose thoughts – as much political as poetic – will be central in the construction of a cultural policy that cares more for humanity than profitability.

With this perspective, the cultural project is based on respect for human rights and aims for the emancipation of the person considered as stakeholder in his own development and the development of life together.

What then is stopping the Agenda 21 for Culture from taking up this approach for dignity, recognition and therefore cultural rights so as to finally renounce the sectoral approach to culture?

It is not a problem of principles, in Europe in any case, as the system of reference of dignity and human rights is proclaimed in the European Union treaty. It is not even a problem of application mechanisms, as I recall that through “services of general interest” the Union recognises the necessity of respecting human dignity by developing services for person to person relationships.

The difficulty is elsewhere – it is in the fact that, in public compromise negotiations, application mechanisms for dignity ethics are always in second place compared to collective rules based on profitability ethics.

My conclusion will be in the form of a hope: that the European Union readjusts the support mechanisms for dignity ethics to avoid that sustainable humanity is only thought of as a business of well-made and well-sold products. It comes back to the Agenda 21 for Culture

“In the implementation and development of the citema cluster, the main challenge for us has been to reassert the value of the place and role of the artisan in his interrelationship with other social, economic, political, educational players in the territory; and thus to contribute to a recognition of local knowhow as a source of wealth.”

*Maité Mazel, CITEMA.*

9. See in particular for proposal, Edouard Glissant, Philosophie de la relation [Philosophy of relations], Gallimard, Coll. “NRF”, 2009.

to mobilise political decision makers and players so that the cultural challenge of the fourth pillar can give the power to arbitrate for the recognition of humans with their full cultural rights. In Europe, all the cards are on the table and other actors of common life, in health care or social care, share the same preoccupation in building public systems which favour person to person relationships. The players of the Agenda 21 for Culture would do well to move closer to them to better negotiate the mechanisms for a State of rights which answer the needs of “a human community with confidence in its destiny<sup>10</sup>”, “sustainable humanity” which can resist the constraints imposed by markets.

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*10. According to Mireille Delmas-Marty, Vers une communauté de valeurs ? [Towards a community of values?], Editions du Seuil, 2011.*

# CITIZEN CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN RENNES (FRANCE), CLUJ (ROUMANIA) AND TARRAGONA (SPAIN)...

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## PILED UP TOWN

 proposed by **Xavier Trobat Escanellas**

The artist and architect, Xavier Trobat<sup>1</sup>, worked on sensitive and metaphorical visions of a cosmopolitan town. To move from details, collected words, images and feelings in order to decode this “shared town”. To take from his Correspondents the discreet emotions that the town gives them, in order to build with them Imaginary cities. At Cluj, he was deeply marked by his meeting with a Roma family which had been evicted from their house by local authorities and “parked” in an isolated village with neither electricity nor hot water. With the poet, Ignasi Papell, he imagined a Piled up Town representing the inhumane packing together of these ten people in one 15 m<sup>2</sup> unhealthy room.

*Nicolas Combes,  
coordinator of L'âge de la tortue.*

My first experience at Cluj, a short time after landing at the airport, was to visit the gypsy camp at Pata Rat with the Citizen correspondence in Europe team. It was very cold, it was snowing, and a family invited us into their “house”.

The contrast between the cold and warmth made my glasses steam up, I couldn't see anything. But little by little the condensation disappeared and I saw that there were several people at the back of the room, at the sides, sitting, standing, on the ground... I was overwhel-

med when I suddenly realised that there were three families living in this 15 m<sup>2</sup> room! What anger, what shame to be a human being, what helplessness! We listened to their stories, absorbed their emotions. The injustice of their situation engulfed me... My Piled up town was born from this experience.

*Xavier Trobat Escanellas,  
artist and architect, Ariadna group.*

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## IDEAL PASSPORT

 proposed by **Paloma Fernández Sobrino**

My ideal Passport contains life stories of people living in the three territories of our project: Rennes, Tarragona and Cluj. This passport is ideal as it has no legal value, only human.

A value that is as forgotten as it is urgent. I wanted to make a passport which is full of life, which imitates as much as possible this type of perverse document. I looked for people who wished to participate, I talked to them. I talked about the importance of their words. I listened to them. They listened to me. The sociologist, Pascal Nicolas-Le Strat, rapidly accepted my proposal and accompanied me in my research. We shared the meetings and drafted these moments of life that the people accepted to offer us. Finally, the graphic designer, Romain Louvel, a bit like a clandestine forger, ensured that the final document looked like a real passport.

1. The personal website of Xavier Trobat:  
[www.intencions-i-sensacions.blogspot.com](http://www.intencions-i-sensacions.blogspot.com)

The ideal Passport is a “Correspondence” which reunites the voices of Hassan, Rocío, Julio, Yester, Mari, Aymen, Nicolas, Rita and me. By respecting the differences of each one in order to construct a “common language”, “the language that dares to talk and in particular, listen”.

*Paloma Fernández Sobrino,  
artist associated with L'âge de la tortue.*

In the ideal Passport, Paloma Fernández Sobrino uses a laconic style to evoke the stories that we foresee as being complex, sensitive, and even dramatic. The passport is the expression par excellence of the existence of national frontiers, allowing the possibly of going through. The generalisation of the passport as a document for travel, but also the existence of an unequal system in the effective use of it places Paloma's work at the heart of the issues about the migratory phenomena.

*Anne Morillon, sociologist, collectif Topik.*

The extracts are from the booklet “Citizen Correspondence in Europe”, L'âge de la tortue, April 2011, available on line. ([www.correspondancescitoyennes.eu](http://www.correspondancescitoyennes.eu)).

*Citizen Correspondence in Europe – Migrations at the heart of European construction is a project carried out by the L'âge de la tortue association, the Rennes Association of Social Centres and the Topik research group (Rennes, France), the AltArt Foundation and the Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania (Cluj, Roumania) as well as Ariadna and the Fundacio Casal l'Amic (Tarragona, Spain).*

## PRESERVING CULTURAL COMMONS TO ENABLE SUSTAINABLE AND INNOVATIVE BUSINESS MODELS

### » Our Cultural and Digital Commons and their Main Threats

#### **What are our Cultural and Digital Commons?**

The commons are resources that are collectively owned or shared among populations or given communities. These resources are said to be “held in common” and can include tangible or intangible elements ranging from natural resources and land to software.

“Commoners”, or the communities that actively engage with the commons, have certain rights over these resources. The commons elude the categories of ‘public’ or ‘private’ and lie somewhere between these two poles, constituting an interesting alternative based on collective ownership.

In order for a commons to exist, the following elements must be in place: there must be a resource to exploit, manage and enjoy in common, a community to manage this resource, and, finally, a model of governance of the commons must be put into place. Commons have been, and continue to be, constantly under threat of privatisation:

the process by which common property is transformed into private property is termed “enclosure”. The importance of the commons as a sustainable production model has been stressed by the economic sciences Nobel Prize winner Elinor Ostrom<sup>1</sup>, who has proven wrong all those who claimed that this model could never be sustainable.

The commons were traditionally elements of the environment – forests, the atmosphere, rivers, fisheries or grazing land – that were shared, used and enjoyed by all<sup>2</sup>. In recent years, a number of scholars, economists, activists and members of civil society have argued that a new kind of commons has started to emerge in the current age, influenced by the growth of digital technologies and by the primacy of knowledge and information as a productive resource<sup>3</sup>. The notion of a cultural or digital commons has slowly started to take shape as an important issue that needs to be addressed.

The former director of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Bill Ivey<sup>4</sup>, talks about our cultural commons as the cultural heritage that can shape our identity and understanding of the world, and that needs to be properly archived and released into the public domain. Significantly, James Boyle, Professor at Duke Law School and co-founder of the Center for the Study of the Public Domain<sup>5</sup>, uses the notion of a cultural commons to describe all the songs, books, images, sounds or colors that belong to the social imaginary and that are now threatened by corporate interests. Both stress the damage caused by the privatization of this common knowledge in production, education and cultural terms.

The growth of digital technologies and the unprecedented expansion of the world wide web has led to the development of a number of protocols, algorithms, software packages and resources. These need to remain free from corporate constraints in order to continue to allow the ongoing existence of the functions that they have already enabled: the connection between computers and human beings, regardless of their origin, creed, gender, social status or ethnic background. The basic protocols that allow computers to talk to each other (TCP/IP, DNS, etc.) are a form of digital commons

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Both stress the damage caused by the privatization of this common knowledge in production, education and cultural terms.

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1. See Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

2. Peter Linebaugh, *The Magna Carta Manifesto*, University of California Press, 2009.

3. Lewis Hyde, *Common as Air*, FSG Books, 2010.

4. Bill Ivey, Arts Inc., University of California Press, 2003.

5. James Boyle, *The Public Domain: enclosing the commons of the mind*, Yale University Press, 2010.

that need to be remain free from public or private interests<sup>6</sup>, and serve solely the interests of all human beings whose lives have been improved and empowered by their ability to access and interact through digital technologies and means of communication.

In order to try to preserve these cultural commons, Harvard Law School Professor Lawrence Lessig and his team have devised a set of licenses known as “creative commons”<sup>7</sup>, which allow content producers to license their works in such a way that other content producers can re-use, re-mix and re-distribute their contents. The aim of these licenses is to contribute to building a strong public domain and to preserve these creative commons from appropriation strategies deployed by private interests. These licenses are strongly influenced by the model used by Richard Stallman<sup>8</sup>, who coined the term “free software” to define software that is licensed in such a way as to ensure that users and programmers will always be able to access, transform, distribute and implement it. This software currently runs 60% of the servers that host the contents that now constitute the internet<sup>9</sup>.

The recognition and preservation of these cultural and digital commons is essential in order to enable new generations of creators to produce new books, scores, designs, melodies, paintings and films. Our ability to save, preserve and ensure that these commons are respected will determine the potential of future generations to continue to produce creative content. This task is by no means easy, given that the digital commons, like the traditional commons, is facing many threats and menaces that need to be challenged and overcome.

We are worried about the systematic destruction of the commons that may come about if measures are not put into place to ensure that common assets are safe from looting by commercial interests and corporate dynamics. This is why we believe that commoners should be able to benefit from free culture, and that we need mechanisms to ensure that private corporations cannot extract goods and knowledge from the commons without compensating or redistributing part of the profits they generate.

“In order to sustain Boka Kotorska Bay, as a common good, a governance model is needed, implying active participation of different stakeholders, private, non-profit and public.”

Tatjana Rajić,  
Expedito

“Within the framework of our production of content), we work with international networks to try to cross knowledge and knowhow.”

Julio Gómez –  
Sinsaludio,  
Final Conference,  
CITEMA; Florence,  
October 2011.

6. Alexander Galloway, Protocol, MIT Press, 2004.

7. Lawrence Lessig, Free Culture: the nature and future of creativity, Penguin Books, 2005.

8. Richard Stallman, Free Software Free Society, Createspace, 2009.

9. See <http://www.uoc.edu/activitats/docbcn/esp/docbcn.html>

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Our cultural commons and shared creative heritage are facing several threats that need to be properly addressed and understood in order to devise solutions and mechanisms to protect them.

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In any case, ongoing access to the public domain and our cultural commons should be guaranteed as a basic right of all members of society. As Nagarjuna G. from the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education<sup>10</sup> has strongly argued, we must now devise systems to ensure that knowledge is not being privatized, and that access to free knowledge is always guaranteed. The public domain and the systems of social production that it enables are central to the creative industries, given that it is essentially a repository of ideas, sounds, inventions and images that are the raw material for any kind of contemporary cultural production. In this sense, we must build business models that can contribute to the development and growth of the public domain. We must find ways to ensure that businesses which feed from the knowledge commons implement systems to favor the survival of the commons. In this sense, mixed economic models should be put into place in order to promote a commons-based economy. This implies re-thinking old legal categories and redefining the notions of public/private, and also opens up interesting opportunities for generating business.

At this time in history, when our cultural commons are under threat, there is a need to build collective public archives (such as [archive.org](http://archive.org)<sup>11</sup>, [Project Gutenberg](http://Project Gutenberg)<sup>12</sup>, etc.) which allow access to cultural content and help to preserve the dispersal and loss of collectively-produced knowledge. Artists must participate in this task consciously, because unless they open up their production there will be no point in having frameworks oriented towards the public domain. There is a very strong need to preserve and manage our cultural collective memory. We need to develop mechanisms that ensure that we manage our cultural commons effectively. Some interesting technological systems have already been devised, such as P2P networks, which are the best technological distribution systems designed to date for the distribution of cultural goods. As such, they shouldn't be criminalized or attacked, because they are essential to commons-based economies. Sharing is a crucial element in commons-based economies, so the right to share should be guaranteed and people should in no case be prosecuted for sharing cultural goods.

10. [www.hbcse.tifr.res.in/people/academic/nagarjuna-g](http://www.hbcse.tifr.res.in/people/academic/nagarjuna-g)

11. [www.archive.org/index.php](http://www.archive.org/index.php)

12. [www.gutenberg.org/](http://www.gutenberg.org/)

The following document contains part of the discussions contained in the “How To Manual<sup>13</sup>” drafted during the 2010 FCForum<sup>14</sup>. It diagnoses some problems and identifies some solutions concerning the relationship between the cultural commons and new business models.

## Principal Threats to the Cultural and Digital Commons

Our cultural commons and shared creative heritage are facing several threats that need to be properly addressed and understood in order to devise solutions and mechanisms to protect them. These dangers come from several fronts and function at different levels that will be explored in the following pages.

### Privatization

The growth of the market-based economy under a neoliberal prism has expanded the spectrum of the things that can be commodified and traded with. Many aspects of life and culture that were protected from economic interests until recently have now been transformed into commodities that can easily be introduced into the market. This has happened with traditional remedies, forms of folklore, recipes, songs and stories. In many cases communities or social groups have been deprived of using the cultural knowledge they have inherited from their ancestors. With the predominance of knowledge and information as core productive resources this process has grown at an unprecedented rate. Brands have patented specific shades of colours or shapes (notoriously, telecom company Orange has patented the colour that they use for their corporate brand), record labels hold the rights to melodies or songs that until recently belong to all of us (see the case of the Happy Birthday song, whose rights are held by the Warner Music Group<sup>15</sup>), and traditional herbal remedies have been patented by pharmaceutical corporations and removed from the communities and people who have preserved these ancient remedies<sup>16</sup>.

All these cases are examples of the enclosure of our cultural commons. Each of these appropriations implies that generations to follow will not be able to use, build on and think through these different elements. This is a clear menace to our creative capabilities.

“Today, in an environment that enables endless multiplications of objects – an effect amplified by globalisation that brings both new production capacities and new markets – the space for handmade creation is reduced to a minimum.”

*Jacques Mattei,  
Zunino e Partner  
Progetti srl.*

13. <http://fcforum.net/sustainable-models-for-creativity>

14. <http://2010.fcforum.net/en>

15. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happy\\_Birthday\\_to\\_You](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happy_Birthday_to_You)

16. See Vandana Shiva, *Manifestos on the Future of Food and Seed*, South East Press, 2007.

## Restrictive copyright

The trend towards the extension of copyright terms over creative goods has devastating consequences on our cultural commons. The number of books, songs, images or designs that should be in the public domain but are instead locked under corporate interests is now greater than ever before. Record label archives hold recordings that are not economically relevant but are a key to helping us understand our cultural history. The number of “orphan” books and works that haven’t entered the public domain and remain inaccessible to scholars, researchers and to readers in general keeps growing relentlessly. The extension of copyright terms means that for the first time, generations of creative individuals are deprived from working with and basing their projects on works that have been in circulation for more than 100 hundred years.

## Net neutrality

Internet access is essential for learning and for the practical and meaningful exercise of freedom of expression, communication and creation. Therefore, Net Neutrality must be guaranteed. Citizens and consumers are entitled to an Internet connection that enables them to send and receive content of their choice, use services and run applications of their choice, and connect hardware and use software of their choice as long as they do not harm the network. ISPs must fully document the protocols they use to communicate with their customer so that the software with which customers choose to use the Internet services is not limited by secrecy.

Citizens and consumers are entitled to an Internet connection that is free from any form of discrimination – whether through blocking, limiting or prioritizing – with regard to application, service or content, or based on sender or receiver address. IP addresses of citizens and consumers are potentially identifiable data, and the individual that the data pertains to has the right to access it in order to correct, delete, or prevent the transfer of his or her personal information. The filtering of Internet content is a threat to fundamental rights, and is an invalid, ineffective and disproportionate solution for enforcement. No limitation or filtering should be carried out.

Citizens are entitled to access to a Free/Libre, unlicensed band of the spectrum for digital communications (similarly to the analogue TV range) and, in general terms, to at least a 25% of any new range of the spectrum that may be released. The attacks on net neutrality jeopardize the basic digital infrastructures that can help us to deve-

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We must ensure this neutrality in order to guarantee the growth of the commons (...).

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lop and expand our cultural and digital commons. We must ensure this neutrality in order to guarantee the growth of the commons but also the different business models that can be created in order to preserve, manage and distribute culture without destroying the commons<sup>17</sup>.

## » What are the FCForum and the “How-to Manual For Sustainable Models for Creativity in the Digital Age”?

A commons based economy opens up the conception of what wealth means, given that money is just one measure of the wealth of the commons. The value of the individual resources that shape the commons is not as important as the ability to maintain the commons as a productive and collective resource. Notions of value and wealth need to be re-examined to take into account an awareness of these new spheres value. The social, cultural and economic value of our cultural commons need to be acknowledged in order to design business models capable of benefiting the commons without depleting it. The people working to create these new models need to design a set of different bottom-lines and find sustainable ways of dealing with the commons whilst keeping in touch and working closely with the communities that have formed around the commons.

The FCForum<sup>18</sup> brings together key organisations and active voices in the spheres of free/libre culture and knowledge. It responds to the need for an international arena in which to put together and coordinate a global framework for action. Standing up to the powerful lobbies of the copyright industries, the FCForum is a space for creating tools and strengthening civil society in regards to the creation and distribution of art, culture and knowledge in the digital age. The FCForum works towards finding sustainable business models that are able to operate within our cultural commons, and promoting the research and activism needed to protect these commons.

After an initial phase in which free/libre culture emerged, grew and expanded, there is now an urgent need to re-think the existing economic structures for the production, financing and funding of culture. Many of the old models no longer work. They have become unsustainable and detrimental to civil society. We need to define and pro-

17. For a further discussion see *The Charter for Innovation, Creativity and Access to Knowledge*: <http://fcforum.net/en/charter>

18. <http://fcforum.net/en>

mote innovative strategies that make cultural practices sustainable and empower the wealth of society in general.

This “How To Manual” aims to contribute to this task by focusing on the economic aspects of culture and knowledge production, exploring the way in which benefits – in the sense of economic profit, but also social and cognitive benefits – can be generated in such a way that they lead to a sustainable culture. It is specifically intended to be useful for the following purposes:

- › To provide arguments for policy reformers: as a tool with which to lobby policy makers, institutions and governmental agencies, in order to influence the legislative changes that are currently in process.
- › To offer individuals, as active subjects, tools for dealing with the paradigm changes that are taking place in the fields of knowledge and creative and cultural production.
- › To create a network of affinity and global collaboration, based on a common interest in defending free/libre culture.

We believe that these three aspects, which the conservative copyright industry lobbies choose to present as inextricably linked, can and need to be dealt with separately as well. The production of culture should not be simply seen as synonymous with the generation of profits, and the new sustainable economic models should not be detrimental to the free circulation of knowledge. The real challenge lies in grasping that there is such a thing as culture without money, even though it is possible to make money from culture. The safeguarding of the productive force that makes culture possible should not be used as an argument for economic blackmail, it should be recognised as the fundamental linchpin of our rights.

As civil society, it is our responsibility to oppose practices that plunder this common heritage and to stop them from going further. We need to defend and expand the sphere in which human creativity and knowledge can prosper freely and sustainably. We must also be able to provide solutions on how to protect, use and benefit from our commons without harming them.

## » Generating culture in the digital age: Who? How?

### Who is generating culture in the digital age?

In order to develop, the human capacity for creativity requires access to existing culture, knowledge and information. In other words, creators need to be able to freely access our cultural and digital commons. We believe and defend that creativity is and has always been a networked activity. The democratization of the means of production defines our contemporary social reality, and in this sense there is no going back.

The idea of the individual artist or creator has become increasingly porous, and creativity has opened up to the whole of society. Everyone can contribute on different scales to the production of culture, values and wealth.

The scale ranges from very basic (for instance listening, being an agent for the reproduction of knowledge) to very complex creative contributions. The resources and time required for creative acts also vary in scale: some require only a few minutes of attention, others a life time of dedication; some need basic infrastructures, others require complex machinery; some can be achieved alone, others only in large groups.

We want to promote ways of liberating this time and these resources in the current context of knowledge based capitalism so that this distributed potential can be deployed in a sustainable way. Culture producers and consumers should have the time to explore their creative potential and deploy their capacities. Sustainability implies finding the resources to produce these works but also liberating time to be able to enjoy them, comment, transform and share them.

This doesn't imply that traditional producers such as record labels, publishers, film studios or fashion designers have become redundant, but in many cases their traditional business models have collapsed and they need to reshape and rethink their strategies, goals and models in order to remain productive. With the emergence of new forms of collaborative and networked creativity the traditional creative industries need to find their place. It is a great moment for them to listen to all the businesses that are emerging around the cultural commons and which are providing more sustainable and ethical ways of producing, distributing and consuming culture.

"People don't engage in the community garden just for utilitarian reasons, because they want to get some vegetables and eat them. They do it for reasons which have to do with beauty, to maintain a contact with nature and witness the changing of seasons. These are artistic things as well."

*Franco Bianchini, Director of Research Unit "Cultural planning", Leeds University, in an interview realised by Samo Selimović, Bunker, November 2011.*

## Basic Principles and New Business Models

We are now seeing a radical shift towards new ways of supporting culture, fuelled by the growth of free/libre culture. Copyright is clearly not the ideal model, at least not any more. There has never been only “one” model.

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We are now seeing a radical shift towards new ways of supporting culture, fuelled by the growth of free/libre culture.

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In a context in which the boundary between the producers and consumers of culture is increasingly blurred and the two roles are often interchangeable or highly complementary, processes of collective production and collaborative creativity entail profound changes to the systems that have “produced” culture so far. Meanwhile, public and private institutions and philanthropic agencies have tended to shy away from funding non-hierarchically produced culture, because they are unfamiliar and different to traditional standardised forms of production. The lobbies of traditional cultural industries try to slow down their decline by lobbying in favour of the criminalisation of new forms of production and distribution of culture, thus hindering their development. At the same time, public investment in culture is suffering severe cuts, jeopardizing the continuity of many cultural initiatives and projects.

Here are some ideas towards making culture sustainable, and, where necessary, professionalize its practice.

### Principles

- 1) The restructure of the creative industries is not only necessary but inevitable. It needs to be done right now, as a way of moving away from the obstacles that stand in the way of the development of entrepreneurial and cultural potential in the digital age.
- 2) In today’s social and economic environment, the diffusion of culture as such, or as a commercial product, is based on sharing. We are in a period when culture is flourishing. More culture is produced and shared now than ever before, and more benefits are generated by culture than ever before.
- 3) The profit margins that production companies and distributors defend are based on the artificial production of scarcity and on the inflation of their brand image. The public is prepared to pay for cultural products or goods as long as they deem the price to be reasonable and only if paying does not restrict their freedom.

4) Culture needs to recognise the skills and contributions of all of its agents, but it shouldn't depend on extensive copyright in order to be 'productive', to find sustainable models and investors. In this sense, many sectors have proven that copyright ownership is not crucial to ensure that creators receive returns.

5) The digital context benefits creators as well as entrepreneurs and civil society. The role of middle-men has to be revised in light of the idea of collaboration. Appropriate models make it easier for users, consumers and producers to access each other. Fame and audiences can be attained without the need to be 'discovered' by a middleman.

6) New models must promote innovation and show ways to build a non-monopoly based economy of culture whilst allowing it to grow.

7) The Internet is an essential tool for favouring contact between creators and their audiences, which is one of the reasons why it is necessary to safeguard it, and ensure everyone has non-discriminatory access to it.

8) Governments that don't promote the new forms of creation and diffusion of culture and instead politically or economically favour the interests of large corporations, are generating lost profits for society and destroying its cultural diversity. This leads to an increase in global costs for small enterprises and for public administrations. The former because many techniques and cultural resources will be beyond their reach at a time of intense competition. The latter because the price of public services will be needlessly expensive.

9) In the digital age, the number of people who consider themselves artists has risen dramatically. In the digital era, the barriers to entering media production and the costs of media production have often decreased dramatically. The investment required is often lower, so the risks are lower.

10) These economic models for culture resonate with the Free Software movement in which peer production and distribution are not incompatible with market strategies and commercial distribution. This movement does not impose limits on who should exploit, distribute or benefit from free-cultural objects.

"Facing centralisation and the hyperconcentration of cultural industries, how to reintroduce economic models that may be "viable" and "fair" in order to guarantee the autonomy of the artists, and thus, cultural diversity?"

*Extract from POTLATCH report 2010, A.M.I.*

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This movement does not impose limits on who should exploit, distribute or benefit from free-cultural objects.

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## Redefining Business Models

In order to create sustainable models for creativity we must acknowledge that there aren't any defined models that can fit all the needs or obstacles that different cultural producers might face.

Besides more traditional ways of making a living out of your creative practice, such as getting paid fees for performing live, selling physical copies or receiving wages for your work, we should explore other models such as providing improved physical copies of your work (such as specially designed books, added merchandise, CDs with booklets, etc.). We should also consider the Freemium model, which works by offering basic services, or a basic downloadable digital product, for free, while charging a premium for advanced or special features. Voluntary contributions can also make a difference, and it is now not unusual for projects to enable users to contribute or donate sums of money in order to help sustain a given project or enterprise. This model cannot fund all cultural activities or commodities, but it can help to establish a close bond between communities of producers and all those agents who benefit from them.

Crowdfunding is also an interesting practice that has developed into an important source of funding for culture. By enabling individual citizens and public or private business to contribute to a cultural enterprise with whatever amount of money they choose, these platforms have allowed society to become an important player and to have a voice in the production of specific cultural projects. There are currently several models of crowdfunding that should be explored and taken into account in order to understand the potential of these models.

We also believe that commoners should be able to benefit from free culture, whilst measures should be put into place in order to ensure that private corporations cannot remove goods and knowledge from the commons without compensating or redistributing part of the profits they generate.

Licenses such as Copyfarleft, proposed by Dmytri Kleiner<sup>19</sup>, offer a kind of equilibrium in this struggle. Copyfarleft has been designed to allow commoners (all those who actively participate in the production, reproduction and management of the commons) to share and exploit the commons, but it conditions the ways in which corpo-

19. See the *Telekommunist Manifesto*: [www.networkcultures.org/uploads/%233notebook\\_telekommunist.pdf](http://www.networkcultures.org/uploads/%233notebook_telekommunist.pdf)

rations or for-profit entities can and should relate to the commons. In cases where profit is generated, the author or the artist/creator must receive regular and fair payments which should be calculated in proportion to the access to his or her work.

In the share economy as defined by Michel Bauwens<sup>20</sup> – the Web 2.0 business model – people form part of participatory platforms in which they share the products of their creative expression. While their participation is largely unremunerated, the owners of the platforms sell the accumulated attention of their user communities to advertisers. This is the case with YouTube and similar platforms, and also some download sites. In these cases, various voices are proposing that the community which contributes to the content should recover part of the surplus value through a kind of levy on all transactions that would nurture cross-pollination and ensure the ongoing existence of the content.

15% is the rate that several artists' unions are proposing as the share allocated for remunerating content creators in the visual arts field. This parameter has inspired –X.net (ex-EXGAE)<sup>21</sup> to propose that 15% of the profits obtained through content distribution platforms should be redistributed to those who contribute content to said platforms. This would be calculated in an indirectly proportionate cube root calculation based on a scale of 1 to 1000 – from the work with the greatest number of 'hits' to an agreed minimum (see Richard Stallman: the producer of content that is 1000 times more successful receives 10 times as much, rather 1000 times) –, if and when the authors have made their identity public and choose to receive this amount. This would apply to platforms like YouTube, Flickr, Google, streaming and paid downloads, etc., or any platform with a business activity that is directly related to content distribution.

Public funding must also continue to play an important role. In cases where big projects such as feature films, large technological innovations, archives or other lengthy and expensive projects have to be financed, most of these initiatives need to be matched by public funding that will ensure their successful completion. We believe that in the context of a society of tax payers, culture must receive a share of public investment due to its undeniable social value. Social funding must be matched by public funding and should in no case be consi-

20. [http://p2pfoundation.net/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://p2pfoundation.net/index.php/Main_Page)

21. <http://whois-x.net/>

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We believe that in the context of a society of tax payers, culture must receive a share of public investment due to its undeniable social value.

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dered as a replacement for public responsibility in regards to the funding of culture. Furthermore, in order to enhance our commons, we believe that all funding recipients should make their works available on terms outside of conventional copyright. A minimum requirement would be that they be released, after a reasonable time, for circulation on digital networks so that those who paid for them have the right to watch and redistribute them on decentralized networks.

Another way in which the State can contribute to financing creativity is by redeploying some of the benefits generated by online platforms to the creators of contents. This model, best known as a flat-rate on Internet connection, can be considered only if it implies an equitable and democratic resource pooling system and recognizes citizens' rights to share and re-use works freely. We believe this is only a viable option if it puts an end on the war on sharing.

In any case, there is not just one possible flat-rate model, but many, and they have very different implications and effects. The proposals differ in many respects, and they are not all acceptable to us.

When we connect the issue of free culture to visions of large-scale social change in capitalist economies of tax-payers, then the idea of a basic income – that is, a minimum living wage for all citizens – becomes an important proposal worth considering. Under a broader based system of revenue applicable to all – since we all engage in forms of participation in cross-pollination and peer-to-peer activity and we are all authors in a contribution economy –, a basic wage would lessen the risk of not being able to meet their basic needs for survival for all creators.

This basic income model is based on the idea that value is created collectively and that every citizen produces value in his or her interactions with others. This model would replace the current situation in the cognitive capitalism regime, where collectively produced value is accrued in the hands of a few in the form of private profit. Basic income is not an indirect revenue arising from redistribution, but the direct reward for the contribution of each member of society to the cross-pollination and interaction in production, consumption and investment that goes towards the building of the new commons. Society, as a productive body, must be sustained and a guaranteed basic income is a way to redistribute economic wealth among all members of society. It helps to create the conditions that allow citizens to contribute to value-creation outside the economy.

## » Conclusions

As we can clearly see, there is an urgent need to preserve and develop our cultural and digital commons. This implies a radical change in the ways in which culture is currently produced, given that the business models that have prevailed in recent decades are proving ineffective to terms of looking after these commons or finding sustainable ways of generating revenues. The creative industries and the intellectual property system that they support have become obsolete with the introduction of digital technologies and the changes it has enabled.

The traditional idea of the individual content creator has also changed dramatically in recent years. Almost every member of our societies has access to computers with which they can compose, edit, write, remix, upload, distribute or sell creative contents. This democratization of production implies the need to completely rethink the models through which authors were granted certain prerogatives, given that now, everybody can become an author.

New business models have emerged in the recent years that share a concern for the commons from which they pool their ideas, sounds and images. These models which license their works with Copyleft or Creative Commons licenses have all built their business based on the idea of a multiple bottom line in which cultural, social and economic values are respected. Many of these are still budding enterprises that need time to reach complete sustainability, but they remain inspirational in regards to rethinking the economies of culture and creativity.

The time for “one model fits all” has long passed, and we are now seeing initiatives that thrive on multiple funding systems. Some of these sell enhanced physical copies of their works, others combine micro-funding schemes with public funding, others have found a sustainable model that involves giving contents away for free but charging for additional services. The more we research, the more hybrid business models start to appear.

Far from being under threat, our creative and cultural systems are alive and well, and more and more content is being produced. We need to ensure basic digital infrastructures to keep this content available and ensure that it remains in the public domain. Digital archives, online libraries and other infrastructures need to be promo-

ted in order to keep adding more content to our commons. We have shifted from an economy based on scarcity to an economy of abundance. Now we need to readapt our policies and schemes in order to promote this growth and enable citizens to freely access these new forms of cultural and digital wealth.

*Original text in English*

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*This document was written by Jaron Rowan and Simona Levi members of -X.net and FCForum. Parts of its contents are based on the 'How-to Manual For Sustainable Models for Creativity in the Digital Age'.*

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# LAAROUSSA

## MEETING WOMEN'S COMMUNITIES IN TUNISIA...

[LAAROUSSA] is a producer of popular spaces for cultural creation which took place from February to June 2011 between two cities, Tunis and Sejnane (Tunisia), in partnership with France, the La Luna group, Tunisian women from Sejnane and women from Nantes. These are spaces for exchange around methods of artistic intervention and formative experiences through processes of creation and transmission of the craft and artistic knowhow of migrant and local women's communities.

Three women's communities were supported by these spaces for meeting, contact and socio-cultural production: potters from Sejnane, knitters-seamstresses-storytellers from Arlène (France) and the population of migrant women from sub-Saharan Africa from Tunis.

Laaroussa weaves links between the craft skills and contemporary art around a universal common object – the doll. A proposal that invites the La Luna group and a group of Tunisian artists to make possible the meeting of these women's communities, and enable them to work together, something that is an integral part of the work – a new collective intelligence is made here; now to "make society with".

*This article is extracted from the site [www.dreamcitytunisie.com/index.php/laaroussa/](http://www.dreamcitytunisie.com/index.php/laaroussa/)*

*Laaroussa is a project which enables the interrelationship between craft skills, common goods and a sustainable economic model. It is directed by the association Dream City - Tunis. (<http://dreamcitytunisie.com>).*

## CREATIVE-BASED AND SUSTAINABLE WAYS OF LIVING TOGETHER. WHAT DOES ECONOMICS HAVE TO SAY?

### » The apocalyptic and the paradisiacal view of culture

Since the beginning of cultural analysis and just as Umberto Eco<sup>1</sup> suggested, we have always lived with schools of thought which predict the end of the essence of humanity. We sold our soul (the culture) to the devil (the market) and this, as literature tells us, ends badly. As Jeremy Rifkin<sup>2</sup> *tells us a great transformation is occurring in the nature of capitalism. After hundreds of years of turning physical resources into commodities as the primary source for generating wealth, it now involves transforming cultural resources into personal experiences and paid entertainment. (...) The capitalist journey is ending in the commodification of human culture itself (...).* The apocalyptic vision of the end of culture, which combines with the sacralization of literacy and technophobia, is the opposite of the illustrated ideal that trusted in the fact that culture would definitively lead us away from barbarism. It is the “classic intellectuals” who point to this deviation of culture.

1. Umberto Eco, *Apocalípticos e Integrados ante la cultura de masas*, Ed. Lumen, 1968.

2. Jeremy Rifkin, *The Age Of Access: The New Culture of Hypercapitalism, Where All of Life is a Paid-For Experience*, Putnam Publishing Group, 2000.

On the other hand a “cooler” reading that, although it starts with Mac Luhan<sup>3</sup>, takes us from British labourism to the icy Nordic currents and emerging Asian spaces, glorifies innovation and sanctifies a supposed creative class that haunts old Europe like a specter, and announces that creativity and innovation are the new Ithaca we should head towards and where we will be protected in this new, globalized world where countries like China and Brazil challenge the economic and moral superiority of a decadent Europe that only survives by telling old stories.

How do we resolve this issue? What role does culture play? Are we headed towards paradise or the ferryman that transports us to the shores of the dead? And what can economics tell us about these trips? There is no doubt that we have been drawn an attractive scenario. Will it be possible to live in a world where we not only have the abilities and time to get excited, feel, and share through artistic and cultural expressions but also have mechanisms that encourage and reward creativity and talent, and encourage memory and produce innovation?

We do not believe in extreme determinisms and therefore the formation of the new model of relationships between culture and economy will not only be derived from mechanical relationships between each dimension, but in this framework, plays the will of men and women who act not only due to biological drives which is the result of evolution, but are framed by attitudes and values formed in the area of thought, social debate, and intellectual reflection.

What we are sure of is that if we do not articulate interpretive frameworks from knowledge, to position ourselves and set up the possible scenarios, and detect what the possibilities are of social and democratic control of these processes, the relationship between culture and economics will be arranged according to the interests of other powers, perhaps less democratic and less ethical.

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3. Marshall McLuhan, *The Global Village*, Oxford University Press, 1989.

## » Economics. Is it more than just a trend in cultural studies?

From our experience in the field of research, we have seen a real revolution in the last two decades regarding the role that economics should play in the analysis of culture. In the mid 90's the view from the field of economics was that the economists of the culture spent their time with marginal and even curious amusements, but ultimately they were not relevant to explain the true dynamics of reality. Currently, all of the discussions on the development and growth models that should save Europe focus on issues that cultural economists had already dealt with such as human and social capital, symbolic goods, creativity, and innovation. We went from being an exotic part of the invisible school of thought in economics to the guests who could not miss any party that was organized under the guise of economics.

From the viewpoint of the field of culture, we also began back in the 80's with suspicions about the intent of these economists who, with their greasy hands, assess, count, and dirty the sublime and immeasurable words that require capitalization such as Art, Creativity, and Culture. As Bruno Frey<sup>4</sup> pointed out, many politicians, journalists and artists and a good part of the general public see art as something that is beyond the calculation and reasoning of economics and had many reservations about the economic analysis of artistic and cultural phenomenon.

However, in recent times the world of culture and art has come to regard us as allies needed to convince the public and politicians of the relevance and importance of cultural and creative activities not only in the interests of art in itself (and artists as a derivative), but the economy as a whole, tourism, urban planning, and many other fields. That is why there is no symposium, seminar, or conference that talks about culture without having an economist among its speakers. This phenomenon is partly a trend and I imagine it will pass and then it will be the anthropologists', social psychologists', or specialists' in semiotics turn, but it also reflects other "structural components" that will persist over time and that are derived from the usefulness of the economic approach to culture.

"It is through the economic approach that we must not only address the issue of survival of art crafts as a means of social development for the craft worker but also – because one does not go without the other – we must experiment with the possibility of restoring a recognized socio-economic function for this type of craft."

Jacques Mattei,  
Zunino e Partner  
Progetti srl.

4. Bruno Frey, Economics as a science of human behaviour: towards a new social science paradigm, Kluwer Academic Publisher, 1999.

## » The advantages of economics in the analysis of cultural phenomena

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Currently, all of the discussions on the development and growth models that should save Europe focus on issues that cultural economists had already dealt with such as human and social capital, symbolic goods, creativity, and innovation.

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We must overcome an initial confusion arising from the polysemic nature of the word “economics”. Economics is a social science devoted, from a particular epistemological approach, to the analysis of the behavior of individuals and by “economy” we also refer to colloquially as the institutionalized whole of market exchanges occurring around the world. So when we ask about the position of culture in the economy, we are referring to the second meaning, showing our interest in the market exchanges that occur in cultural goods and services.

But let’s first reflect on the first meaning. The advantage economics offers as a social science for the analysis of culture is its simplicity and its ability to support quantitative falsifications of some of its proposals. As Ruth Towse<sup>5</sup> noted in the introduction of the latest edition of the *Handbook of Cultural Economics*, one of the major contributions that economics can make to the analysis of culture is providing empirical evidence. The excuse about the lack of information on the sectors and cultural activities is increasingly weak given the overwhelming growth of information, statistics, and databases of phenomena related to culture.

But the main importance of economics in this sense is its conception as the “science of choice”. The approach of mainstream economics to culture is based on a few simple methodological assumptions such as: a) the decision makers are individuals (methodological individualism), but this does not mean that the individual is not complex, permeable to social facts, and sensitive to what is going on around him; b) our decisions are consistently rational in the sense that we systematically try to maximize our level of happiness, well-being, usefulness – whatever jargon we use; c) our happiness improves when, based on our preferences, the costs of actions in our decisions are below the benefits of the actions; d) these maximization processes are constrained by the limits of the constraints (budgetary, social, psychological, legal, uses of time, etc.).

Isn’t this too simple to analyze the relationship of individuals with culture? Yes, but that’s exactly why it is especially useful for analyzing culture. Before the advent of economics, we explained culture, which is perhaps the most complex human phenomenon and that just shows that we are human, using complicated and holistic approaches from philosophy, anthropology, sociology, or more hermeneutical

5. Ruth Towse, *Handbook of Cultural Economics*, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2011.

approaches such as critical theory and semiotics. They are complex interpretations for complex realities, but that, given their own totalizing intentions, serve more as a means of understanding everything rather than uncovering the causal relationships between specific variables.

The simplicity of economics sometimes takes us back to the trunk of platitudes but it reveals relationships that were not only obvious but also suggest ways to try to change reality. This is the true power of economics which provides us with tools that enable measures which, through empirical verifications, can change reality. If we provide empirical evidence that the price elasticity of demand (the effects that a change in demand has on a change in price) is relatively low for museums, it gives us clues and points us to the idea that if we want to democratize access to them, low prices will have little effect on expanding the audience (even though many politicians and most museum officials firmly believe the contrary).

Economics, therefore, helps us understand why people read, buy movie tickets, participate in amateur choirs, write poems or take guitar lessons and why museum directors schedule certain exhibitions or why interior design companies are located in urban areas that were previously industrial land. It always tries to figure out what the preferences are, what benefits cause such decisions, and what the costs are, taking into account all of the constraints imposed by the environment. Economics is the social science that attempts to explain the choices we make based on very simple assumptions.

## » What do we maximize?

### The intrinsic value of culture and cultural policies

If elections consist of processes where we try to maximize our usefulness based on cost-benefit assessments, what are the benefits of our actions related to culture? Are the perceived benefits of our relationship with culture merely a cultural construction? We think not. It is this very set of skills and abilities that have to do with culture and the world of emotions, senses, and feelings that result from the expression of these abilities which is the human trait that sets us most apart. And here we can speak of the sense of identity, the need to express oneself, to be moved, to communicate and interact through the arts, a sense of belonging and participating in the very process of defining common values. The perception of these dimensions definitely has a cultural component, but also responds to atavistic elements that are the fruit of evolution such as intelligent species. The truth is that they noticeably affect our happiness, our welfare, and

*"Expeditio is an organization concerned primarily with spatial development, sustainable architecture, cultural heritage and other aspects of development of urban and rural areas. For a long time we did not identify ourselves as an association closely connected with culture in broader sense. It was only through the Sostenuto project that we have begun to recognize the connection between culture and the fields of our activity."*  
*Tatjana Rajić, Expeditio.*

our usefulness. These are the true intrinsic values of culture underlying the so-called “cultural rights” (see the *Fribourg Declaration*) and give instrumental logic and consistency to both individual and collective decisions.

In the developed, Western world, the relationship with culture is fundamentally linked, more than any other dimension, to the ability to improve our well-being, usefulness, or happiness and therefore if the logic of collective action is to implement initiatives that will enable us to move the frontier of possibilities of our well-being, the interventions they intend are fully justified. This is development in the sense of Amartya Sen’s<sup>6</sup> direction, that is to say, it is the steps taken in the process where we improve individual and social control of our symbolic universe – the culture – increasing our ability to choose alternative actions.

This is the true ethical origin of the need to organize, facilitate, and provide for the relationship between individuals and culture through public policies. Stated another way, the cultural policies implemented in the sense that they expand the capabilities of individuals to chart potential future alternatives, are development policies. They mean the recognition of rights that, little by little, are considered to be a constituent and essential part of human rights.

The primordial justification of cultural policies is based on the intrinsic value of culture in order to maximize our well-being. This value is not derived from the maxim “art for art’s sake” or the artistic value of the work created but from the capacity for creativity, art, and culture to affect us cognitively, aesthetically, or spiritually and transform our social, civic, financial, or political dimension, influencing our sense of belonging and identity, building social capital, feeding the knowledge that gives us freedom, forming our sensitivity and the ability to get usefulness out of aesthetic enjoyment and expanding our expressive and communicative skills. Aren’t these arguments enough?

I assure you that economics as the science of choice simply and obviously confirms, in multiple studies and research, the high degree of correlations between usefulness and the activities of individuals in the field of creation, production, distribution, consumption, and conservation of art and culture.

This conceptual justification of cultural policy as a central part in the further development of communities does not mean that the current, specific cultural policies of European countries are legitimized but rather the contrary, precisely from this perspective, analysis based

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(...) the cultural policies implemented in the sense that they expand the capabilities of individuals to chart potential future alternatives, are development policies. They mean the recognition of rights that, little by little, are considered to be a constituent and essential part of human rights.

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6. Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press, 1999.

on economics quite accurately reveals that the real cultural policies are in most cases not very effective (i.e. they do not achieve the purpose they say they seek), extremely inefficient (i.e., when they attain their goals, they could have made better use of the productive resources to reach them), and extremely unfair (it is the citizens with lower incomes and education who bear the costs and those who benefit are the citizens with higher incomes and education). In the best cases, the current cultural policies that have the merit of existing sparsely affect the expansion of the degree of freedom of individuals and, in some cases, actually reduce it.

## » Economic system and culture

But it is also evident that culture is a broad-spectrum vaccine and therefore makes it possible to obtain other dimensions of development and here we have to reconsider the term economy, not as a social science but as the system (economic system) that defines the ways in which a community provides ways to access resources, arranges the methods of production and transformation, regulates its exchange and distribution models, and legitimizes its overall performance through its institutions. The relationship between economy and culture must be understood as a set of display and exchange processes of individuals with regard to cultural experiences. And once again this goes far beyond the simple market space in Western societies, exposure to cultural experiences takes place in different areas, from that which is individual – such as writing poetry for oneself – to that which is social – such as participating in a choir for a cultural association – to the market – buying a book. In this sense, overcoming some discussions, our way of seeing things is quite futile, the relevant concept is that of cultural and creative activities pointing out that we are not only interested in those that are conducted in the spaces regulated by the market but we are talking about all activities which, from an intentionality that goes beyond the mere occupation of leisure time, are where human beings – as a result of their expressive, communicative, and emotional needs – interact in a more creative or more passive manner, with symbolic flows of information, pursuing a certain impact that is aesthetic, expressive, cognitive, emotional, or spiritual about themselves or others. These interactions can come to fruition in isolated acts or spaces for social interaction and can be coordinated through both formal, regulated exchange systems such as the market, education, or cultural organizations (businesses, organizations, and institutions) or informal and unstructured systems as a natural result of social interaction.

"Producing and consuming differently – creating, selling and distributing differently are proposals that we would like to share with the idea of conviviality, discovery and meeting in order to... think differently our exchanges, put into value our wealth, think on our environmental impact..."

*Extract from the presentation of the event "Volta La Carta", organized by CITEMA, Cetona (Italy), June 2011.*

“We were aware of our position in the local environment as interconnected and hence wanted to build and develop the local relations.”

*Samo Selimović,  
Bunker.*

“The strategic problem is that culture is not treated as the main engine of growth. Instead, it is treated as a “side” and incidental activity, or an activity in service of tourism.”

*Antonije Pušić –  
Rambo Amadeus,  
musician and  
multimedia artist,  
Herceg Novi  
(Montenegro).*

“Inclusion was the buzzword of our local activities.”

*Samo Selimović,  
Bunker.*

What we can definitely see in recent decades is that the dimensions of the spaces in which we conduct cultural exchanges of experiences have expanded. Exchanges of cultural experiences have grown as well as those conducted within the market space. This fact is due to several reasons, both from the point of view of demand and growth in income levels and education of the European population and supply factors such as the disruptive technology revolution of digitalization and the Internet or the needs of the European production system to find specialized productive niches that are not threatened by the superiority of U.S. technology or the greater manufacturing productivity of emerging countries.

From a design point of view of the economic system or an economy of cultural standards, it would be desirable for us to be able to find a system:

- › that allows for the existence of opportunities to meet the expressive and creative needs and cultural rights of all individuals in a community, improving their emotional, aesthetic, spiritual, cognitive, or communicative quality of life;
- › whose concrete manifestation of these expressive needs shall improve social cohesion and facilitate inclusion, reducing the differences of class, gender, or racial origin, expanding the degrees of freedom of its members;
- › that will expand the propensity to change and innovation;
- › that will provide mechanisms for the creation of jobs/quality activities and processes that generate economic value and sufficient surpluses to fund the previous dimensions.

## » The pillars of a society based on culture and creativity

A sustainable system based on creativity and culture must be sustained by some essential pillars.

- a) A general education structure that deepens the knowledge of the arts and strengthens the creative skills and abilities in every field of knowledge and a higher education that reaches as many individuals as possible. Both factors have the objective of creating a social system that contains a critical mass of individuals with creative skills and attitudes and that show elevated levels of tolerance and a propensity for innovation and are socially and politically active.

- b) A system for providing conveniences and cultural resources either through the market, social space, or public promotion that allows continued, comfortable access to cultural and creative activities, meeting the preferences formed by individuals and overcoming inequalities that may be manifested due to gender, class, economic status, or race.
- c) A funding model for cultural activities, which, with a proper tax treatment, means the right mix of public funding, contributions from private organizations as a result of their social responsibility, and private investment and financing systems that combine traditional financial systems, micro-finance models, or venture capital mechanisms, that are able to adapt both to the size of cultural initiatives and their levels of risk and uncertainty.
- d) A stable system of recognition of economic value ownership rights of cultural creation, production, and distribution that goes far beyond the traditional models of intellectual property, recognizes that the generation of value in symbolic production is a process of social construction which also requires the use of community property, the activity of the opinion leaders, and the role of consumers. Therefore the system must contain incentive systems for all those who contribute to the generation of value and must be technically applicable to the dynamic digital environment and the Internet.
- e) An acceptable system of labor regulation of professional creative work, even in highly flexible areas, that is able to maintain acceptable levels of safety and vital stability.
- f) A dense and diverse organizational ecosystem that contains business structures but also many cultural associations and public bodies and institutions aimed at developing cultural policies that together are able to absorb and channel individual and collective initiatives while facilitating the flow between organizations.
- g) A territorial framework that enables and endows meanings to the establishment of creative and cultural activities and, due to its virtual or physical density, is able to create situations of serendipity, cross-fertilization, circulation, and connectivity between various disciplines and activities.
- h) A social productive political system with the ability and curiosity to hear and absorb those values or things that are useful or have collective, social, and economic value that move about in the field of creativity and culture.

"I find short distribution circuits in agriculture very interesting in terms of the economic model [that they promote and] which I consider truly revolutionary. Consumers are not in a passive type of consumption, but become "consumers" who get practically involved. The model [also aims] to reduce intermediaries, enabling the value of work to be placed at the heart of pricing for the proposed products. The next step in the project is to try to develop a system where the financing of these events will be done autonomously via the [expected to become] public producer of agri-cultural events."  
*Pierre Dodet – Court cir'Ol, Montvendre – Drôme, participant in POTLATCH 2010, A.M.I.*

“The CADO incubator is a development and improvement tool made available to young people with projects for creating cultural businesses in the Marseille region, principally in the areas of music and visual arts. The aim is to give this region an active, autonomous and united population of young cultural entrepreneurs, who are able to support and develop their creative forces.”

*Ferdinand Richard, A.M.I.*

“The Citema cluster was initially based on a group of artisans in art from the territory. Progressively, it included other players in its approach: players in employment, training, agriculture, local commerce... thus highlighting all the players making resources (economic, social and environmental) on a micro-territory.”

*Maité Mazel, CITEMA.*

All collective actions that tend to substantially change the shape of the previous pillars can unequivocally be called “cultural policies”. And, in this context, cultural policy, as a framework for managing the relationship between culture and development, becomes a strategic element, since, as the economic analyses presented elsewhere in this text show, the manifestation of cultural and creative activities is the most crucial variable in explaining their levels of wealth in the European regions.

## » By way of conclusion

Thanks to the contributions of social sciences, and among them, economics, what we now know with reasonable certainty is that the concentration of cultural and creative activities in a given area changes the logic and functioning of the economic dynamics in a more profound and complex way than we had expected until now. We know that the area is no longer neutral and becomes another resource that contains values and meanings. We also know that the centrality of creativity and innovation is changing the role of economic organizations and the models of human resource management and we know that around this fact forms a fluid labor market that combines liberating trends for human work and enables enriching experiences for personal development as well as realities that tend toward extreme insecurity and self-exploitation. And we also know that the “cultural field” exports a set of values to the rest of the socio-economic fields that entail an ethical re-thinking and that fit better with the concept of sustainable development. What is clear is that the symbolic and creative content of a community, especially in Europe, no longer only represents its cosmetic dimension but somehow contains the central pillars of the frontier of possibilities of competitiveness and determines the degree of development.

We agree with other authors that, given the importance and significance of creative and cultural activities, it is essential to intensify efforts in research on the relationship between culture and development. Opportunities for European competitiveness in this time of global change are articulated, with few plausible alternatives, around the positioning of the activities related to creativity, innovation, and talent. However, the direct path to increasing the usefulness of the citizens of Europe is to expand access to the areas of creation, production, and distribution of cultural and creative activities.

In this context, the knowledge system is called to unravel, in a more active manner than it has done so far, the complex relationships that

are articulated below the visible line of these connections between culture and development. Since it is a very complex phenomenon, it is clear that we require multi-disciplinary approaches, but we are confident that economics, as a social science, still has much to say in the search for a harmonious model of coexistence in a society that relies on the scaffolding of creativity and culture and that seeks to be fair and inclusive.

*Translated from Spanish.*

# CITIZEN RESPONSIBILITY...

INTERVIEW OF EMINA VIŠNIĆ, DIRECTOR OF POGON, ZAGREB  
DECEMBER 2010

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## WHAT FOR YOU IS THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN SOCIETY?

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I see culture as one way of enabling the public sphere to happen. Cultural actions are platforms for communication, and for gathering people to enjoy art, to share the experience, to have at the same time an individual and communal experience which you don't have in many other places. And to provoke critical thinking about where we are now and where we are heading to.

Politicians today do not talk about visions for the future – but about the “end of history”. This is the best that we get. As one philosopher said, “it is easier for us to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism”. I think this has a lot to do with the decline of the public sphere, with the connection between those in power and citizens and the constant debate about our visions for the future. Culture can really give us directions and space. Cultural and artistic actions could provide the space for citizens to get together and to start at least to imagine and then to act towards this different vision of a better society.

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## COULD YOU PLEASE GIVE US EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS DEALING WITH THESE ISSUES?

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Independent cultural organizations in Zagreb started to ask questions such as: how does a city develop? Who decides about the city? In whose interest is the city moving? What about our public spaces? Some developers are taking them from us, why? For what reasons? ... For example, there is the “Right to the City” initiative of different cultural, youth and environmental associations that held campaigns and citizens' meetings, and protested for years in one place in the city of Zagreb. In this particular case, the developer won in a way. But the initiative opened up a new perspective for citizens to get involved, to discuss, to be there at that location, to protect what they think is theirs. We feel that this community and our city belong to us, and not just to those who invest and build or all those who rule because they were elected. Politicians often don't act like civil servants but as if they were the owners of these public resources... I am not saying that theatre shows or exhibitions should have an immediate or direct political mission. But I think that people in the art sector should not think that it is enough just to show themselves and their views about their work to the audience, that they just have consumers with them (...).

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## **[...] IN CONCLUSION...**

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I am optimistic for culture in the future with one condition: that the cultural operators and artists also become more and more active citizens, and not just to take care for their own interests. It is in their interest to keep culture alive but also to be more socially and even politically committed. It doesn't mean that you have to produce "art for social change" – you can produce whatever art you want to produce – but you also have responsibilities, because this is power. Because you can attract people, it is social power. You should use it as a platform to be critical and open and to imagine a better future, not just for arts and culture on their own, but also for arts and culture in society in general.

*Extracts from the filmed interview carried out by Réseau Culture 21 during the Forum "Ready to change?", December 2010, in Ljubljana (Slovenia).*

*The interview is available on line, see:*

*Réseau Culture 21 blog.*

*(<http://reseauculture21.fr/blog/category/entretiens/>).*

## FROM ELSEWHERE...

**PERCEIVING CULTURAL RIGHTS / SOCIAL SPACES  
AND LIVING SPACES DEEPAK SRINIVASAN**

The Cultural Rights discourse is a new and emerging one, intrinsically tied to processes of the political. Studies on non-European communities (as postcolonial subjects or to understand post-industrial modernity) have identified and explored culture's influence on socio-economic and political factors. Nancy Duxbury (senior researcher, Center for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal) points out that the role of culture to activate socio-political process is being most seriously considered by New Zealand and Australian regions. There is a certain deficit worldwide, in understanding and inquiring into influential cultural processes – whether in addressing ecological, financial or conflict centric crises; or in local, regional development. This could probably be because of the fact that culture is most often assumed to be an ancillary process to 'more important' economic and governance aspects. Culture is also considered operational only in the realms of the apparent aesthetic, visual realms of human societies and 'classical' forms of expression (music, rituals, performance, etc). This lack of consideration of cultural processes is thus being discussed in smaller critical pockets, the world over, as contravention of cultural rights within societies. Simona Levi, a multidisciplinary artist (& Director of Conservas, Spain) points out that cultural lobbyists over the century influenced social operation of culture in certain ways leading to infringement of cultural rights. Levi implicates artists themselves, as main agents of affecting three processes in the past half century of modern urban development:

- › gentrification of arts and culture and of the urban public sphere; this being the result of direct intervention of artists staking claim in urban spaces;
- › systematic privatization of knowledge in the electronic and digital age (Being predecessor to digital age, the printing press invention rose out of the need for revolutionary dissemination and communication of knowledge for all. The digital era pretends to do the same and also provide space for 'cultural democracy' but has given rise to expropriation of economic power);
- › limited access to entrepreneurship and production due to rise of cultural corporations.

## Changing cultures of art practice

Simona Levi's observations broaden the notion of culture by offering insights into the culture of communication and production (apart from areas of media, art and cultural practice). When one engages with Levi's argument and looks for signs of change in the current scene, processes that are trying to facilitate a shift in understanding culture maybe noticed.

Processes of gentrification in art are slowly being critiqued from within and outside. A role for the artist in social spheres has also risen out of needs of artists themselves who choose to critically redefine their practice. Additionally, multidisciplinary practitioners within art and cultural fields have brought in new sets of skills & inquiries. Media practitioners, activists, ecologists, biologists, social scientists, architects and many others have chosen to engage using participative means to inventively question changing urban spaces. Concerns are also being raised on public/urban spheres/commons in processes of democratization. The FOSS (free and open source) and other such movements are trying to move digital ideation and production towards more access, inclusion and sharing.

The space for innovative culture and art entrepreneurship (particularly in developing countries) has undergone slower transformation. More often than not, the State has supported classical and dominant regional cultures and nationalist art. Yet, in the recent past, there has been an emergence of smaller collectives, hybrid cultural and social spaces, and State support for such proposals.

India has not seen many entrepreneurial cultural movements that have resulted in establishing alternative and independent local cultural centers that intersect with the socio-political space. More often than not, the State has set up centralized art and cultural units, and pedagogical spaces. More recently however, rapidly changing urban spaces have thrown up needs for communication and reconnection. In the city of Bangalore, one has seen the emergence of independent art spaces like 1Shanthiroad gallery ([www.1shanthiroad.com/](http://www.1shanthiroad.com/)), Samuha open gallery (<http://samuha.wikidot.com/>) and Bengaluru Art Residency ([www.bar1.org/](http://www.bar1.org/)) that work as art residencies promoting relatively unexplored but cutting edge visual art. Maraa ([www.maraa.in](http://www.maraa.in)), a media and arts collective, is the only collective of its kind in the city of Bangalore, comprising individuals from diverse backgrounds such as technology, media, theatre, social and natural sciences. Choosing to respond to the changes in spaces of urban living, Maraa has been working with urban art practitioners to address changes in the diversity and utility

of urban spaces and its public. Such non-state funded independent collectives have formed in response to stagnant media practices, changing urban spaces and ecological concerns. Maraa has also been concerned about the many urban publics that get labeled minorities & migrants, categorized as non-citizens, sidelined and rendered invisible in a shiny, new urban cultural map.

(...) So what then are cultural rights and how to fully grasp them to be able to then frame policy, discourse and practice? How do we transcend class divisions constantly rendering certain publics non-participative and certain cultures more visible and others opaque? The answer lies in looking more closely at divisions between nature and dwelling, ecological and developmental/infrastructural and urban and rural; such paradigms that set up an irresolvable dichotomy of space and culture. (...)

*This article was written by Deepak Srinivasan following his participation in the Forum "Ready to Change?", Ljubljana (Slovenia), December 2010. It is issued from the website [culture360.org](http://culture360.org), an online platform that connects the people of Asia and Europe through Arts and Culture.*

*(<http://culture360.org/magazine/perceiving-cultural-rights-social-spaces-and-living-spaces-part-1/>).*

*Original text in English*

PART 02

IN SOUTH EUROPE,

NEW MODELS FOR

DEVELOPMENT IN ACTION

## What avenues can we explore to make our development model evolve?

Today, Europe must implement the conditions to exit from the crisis and know how to modify its growth model over the long term. Whilst the short term orders rapid and efficient responses, the long term requires judicious and radical choices. The tension is palpable. Innovation strategies appear to be guided solely by the increase in our global competitive advantages, forgetting about the other motivations of European society. The democratic and social imbalances seem to be strengthening. The increase in ethnic, even authoritarian, intransigence, underlines the urgency to find strategies that combine economic effectiveness and democratic imperatives. The different “outrage” movements indicate, for their part, a reaction by European societies, certainly worried about the future but in particular concerned about the widening social distances.

The European Union seems to us to be the area which can enable the success of these transformations with two conditions. On the one hand, we should know how to reunite the conditions enabling the mutation towards a model – systemic, as the specialists put it – which can articulate a response to climate change and its consequences, search for a new social balance combining social justice and market economy, and enable the emergence of an economic model turned towards well-being. On the other hand, we need to succeed our economic and social cohesion, our political cohesion and our citizen cohesion. It is admittedly a matter of reducing internal disparities in the Union, but even more of developing a common approach, succeeding in making a community and developing a democratic society. In these two cases, we must carry out these transformations at a time where the difficult European consensus seems to show the extent to which the Community voice is no longer reliable and desirable for European citizens.

It is with regards to these challenges that we must redefine what we understand by innovation – today and in the renewed perspective of development. It is true, and even more since the financial crisis, that economic innovation is perhaps not only the invention of improbable financial products or tools, but the capacity to invent new regulations and combinations adapted to competition and cooperation. Social innovation, more than just a simple reflection on our organisational methods, names rather our capacity to rethink our objectives and social links. It is thus interesting to observe how many players rethink, through their projects, the relationship to work and its transformation, the contributory capacities of our societies, the evolution of our organisations around claimed common goods.

The challenge is no longer to imagine new, more efficient organisations, but to imagine new ways to produce knowledge, with its exchange and enrichment, or more ambitiously, to help one another to formulate our future (role of the accounts) and renew its forms (one of the functions of art?).

These challenges portray a completely different role for culture than that of being assigned to an economic sector which is poorly understood but which produces profits and jobs. The moment requires that we go past this sectoral approach and think about the cultural dimension as the competence of our societies, the pool of our inventions, the source of our inspiration. Such innovation strategies are certainly more cultural than technological.

In this second part, we solicited two authors to better define certain elements, on the one hand in this European transition and on the other hand of the place of culture.

Thus, H  l  ne Combe proposes initially an analysis of the possible evolution of the link between culture and development, in particular the consideration of the human question and a good life. She draws out new perspectives for public policies and governance, widening to a definition of social innovation turned towards the reinforcing of solidarities and cooperation.

Milena Dragi  ević   e  i   shows next how artists, evidently at the periphery of cultural industries, open subjects, create conditions for development, push societies towards mutations. This analysis, specifically in the Balkans, underlines how the process of European enlargement, but also the Euro-Mediterranean dimension of the European project, could not continue without the keen forces of creation and imagination.

With the same principle as our first part, we solicited cultural players from the European South(s), as well as partners of the Sostenuuto project to highlight how solidarity, cooperation, participation, commitment are principles that are already at work, giving a meaning to the notion of innovation and devising a development model based on making communities.

## HUMAN AND CULTURAL QUESTIONS AT THE HEART OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

*“GDP measures just about everything, except that which makes life worthwhile”. Already in the 1960s, whistleblowers such as Robert Kennedy painted an irrevocable picture of the inconsistency of our system of wealth measurement. We know today, more than ever, that the choice of an indicator centred on financial flows as our development beacon has actually made our heads spin. For all that, it is not fair to say that GDP has blinded us<sup>1</sup>. To consider that a tool manipulates those that use it is, in truth, a strategy to avoid the fundamental questions. It is not the indicator in itself, but the use that we made of it that has made us come off the rails.*

*So let us not evade our responsibility.*

*We know that it is urgent to re-examine our representation of wealth, or more precisely to return to the basics of what makes value (“forces of life”).*

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1. Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel prize for economics, in 2009 while presenting the report of the “Commission for measuring wealth and social progress”, which he chairs, to the French President.

The seriousness and multiplication of the systemic crises which we have to face can no longer be neglected.

The interdependencies between the world's peoples have never been so important. This situation is, in itself, a chance, as it allows the possibility of developing the interaction between our cultures, and promoting numerous types of solidarity. Unfortunately, in the current state of affairs, these interdependencies, endured by the greatest number, more easily generate fear and resentment than the wish to do together.

We are faced with a choice: we can adopt a fatalistic position in the face of economic globalisation and its logic of accumulation of material goods and monetary speculation. Or we can decide to resist by opting for a chosen globalisation based on intercultural dynamics and complementarities between territories.

That being the case, a question merits our attention: "what is really important?". Our reply to this question will either lead to increasingly darker days, or brighter ones.

The concept of sustainable development, by carrying a vision of the world aiming for "harmony between humans and harmony between humans and nature"<sup>2</sup>, opens up new horizons and traces new ways to "make society" differently.

Often reduced to a technical approach to the environment or set against the idea of decline, the idea of "sustainability" invites us to reclaim ownership of the literal sense of the term development<sup>3</sup>. To differentiate between that which creates wealth and that which destroys it<sup>4</sup>, first determine what should increase and what should decrease. To succeed in moving from a "society with many assets for the few" to a society "where all can live together in a preserved and shared environment".

However, choosing this open way imposes the consciousness that the change in paradigm will not happen without putting human and cultural questions at the heart of our concerns and behaviour.

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It is our cultures which influence our values and our vision of wealth, our approach to social or economic questions, and our relationship to nature and governance.

”

2. See World Commission for Sustainable Development, 1988.

3. To develop, increase... or to grow up.

4. See the approach of the Kichwa people of Sarayaku in Ecuador, whose cultural references do not include the possession of material goods. For them, abundance comes from social links, biodiversity... and poverty from pollution, deforestation...

## » Human questions and cultures at the heart of sustainable development

The two basic definitions of sustainable development translate the common position of the whistleblowers of the 1970s and the concept inventors who considered the relationships of humanity to itself as being one of the major aspects of our relationship to development. By considering the solidarity “between current generations and the emerging and future generations”, the 1987 report “Notre avenir à tous<sup>5</sup>” (The future of us all) situated human links and the cohesion between all as one of the basics of a new project for society. This definition, however, is ambiguous, where it calls for a reply to the needs of today’s and future populations, via a better use<sup>6</sup> and better sharing of resources. If this is read with a capitalist approach to the world, it could seem an implicit support for a consumerist relationship to cultural diversity and nature.

By aiming for “harmony between humans, and harmony between man and nature”, the World Commission for Sustainable Development proposes a clearer course. It is not the reply to needs which is central, but rather the search for a relationship to others based on social cohesion and interaction between cultures (as opposed to the logics of assimilation, insertion, integration or enclosure<sup>7</sup>). In a more harmonious view of the relationship with nature, it is considered to be not only a provider of resources, but an entity whose balance and preservation conditions the future.

The World Commission reminds us that humans show two distinct characteristics:

- › a separate heritage, that of cultural diversity, up to now maltreated but which it is possible to learn to respect;
- › a never-equalled aptitude for destroying the planet. This enables us, however, to collectively hold the keys for stopping the massacre and taking another way.

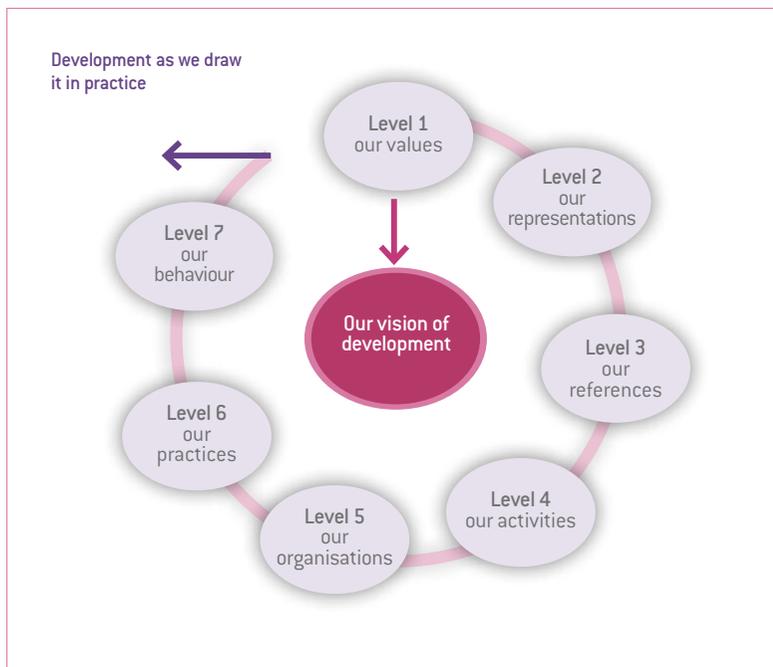
In this context, the question is not so much to know if culture should become the fourth pillar of the sustainable development paradigm, but to ensure that it is taken into consideration as a main theme to be integrated by each dimension, in order to consider the way to

5. The so-called “Brundtland report”, from the name of the President of the International commission in charge of its drafting.

6. Reminder: if the verb to consume literally means “to use”, the term is associated today with buying. From this, the idea of need no longer concerns vital commodities, but is often confused with the accumulation of material goods.

7. A dangerous term used today in European politics (enclose in a literal sense means to shut away).

## Itinerary towards sustainable development - the human question at the heart



**“Common goods”** or goods without which there is:

- no human life: air, water, earth, biodiversity;
- no society: cultural and educational diversity (founded on the ideas of difference and equity).

To be distinguished from “public goods”, useful but not vital for life in society (such as energy, transports, public spaces...) and potential levers to accompany a new development model.

We cannot just say “we didn’t know”. I note, therefore, that we know that our common goods are in danger, and I start from the premise that it is unacceptable and unfair to continue to entrust the preservation and/or management of these common goods to profit organisations, which are more often than not also speculative.

We must all place ourselves as look-outs and guarantors for these common goods<sup>8</sup>, and ensure their protection and management in a transparent, fair and democratic way.

We must learn that we live in a “finished” world, and in a demographic context which requires a better sharing of wealth.

8. For example, we have the responsibility to be water citizens, before being water users.

sustainability. It is our cultures which influence our values and our vision of wealth, our approach to social or economic questions, and our relationship to nature and governance. Our cultures again which underpin the different forms of our creativity, our capacity or not to let go to invent a pacified collective future and a new project for society.

## » Seven levels of transformation to advance in the direction of sustainable human development

To construct a new development model, short-cuts are often presented as holding immediate solutions. It would be sufficient to rethink our management tools, our wealth indicators, to define another paradigm and resolve the problems facing us.

If the revision of our guidance systems is indeed an essential phase, it would be wrong to consider it a preliminary condition. In a transformational stance, this question constitutes only one of the steps in a much more complex process at the heart of which cultural references will most often set the tone.

The first level to consider when entering into sustainability is that of our values, or what for us brings sense, “life forces”, wealth. The basis for our vision of development and the main theme of our societal contribution are defined by our choices.

The way the world is going, a return to humanistic values is not obvious whilst the financial world has the lead. It constitutes however the only access route to a project for the world’s populations, in their diversity, as well as a pacified relationship with nature.

This development approach has a major impact, as it challenges certainties which have become established over the years, such as, for example, the absolute legitimacy of commoditisation.

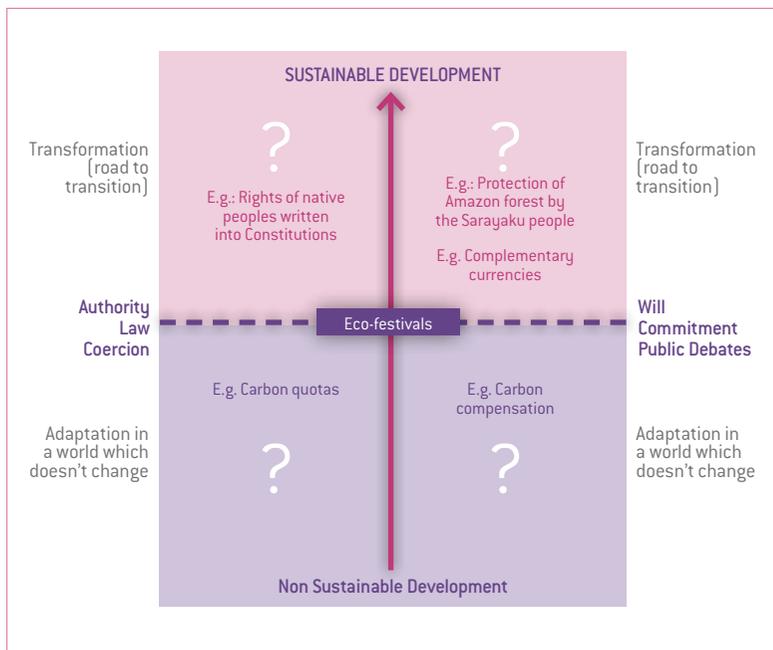
Within this framework, it requires the rethinking of basic concepts, such as that of common goods (of humanity).

Our values also condition our stance towards the evolution of the world. Do we want to simply adjust the productivist model used by Western countries over several decades, or are we ready to commit ourselves to radical transformation (or “metamorphosis<sup>9</sup>”? Do we opt for responsibility and commitment, or should we simply count on technology and Law to give us the keys for the future?

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9. See Édgar Morin, *Éloge de la métamorphose*, *Le Monde* from 10.01.2011.

## To what project for society do we want to contribute?



Hélène Combe 2008

### The project “new wealth indicators for the Pays de la Loire (France)”

*“[...]We have lost the era of conviviality. It is time to stop thinking that the essential part of our life is to go ever faster to a workplace situated ever farther, concentrated in urban poles. It is imperative to rediscover the logic of proximity between the home and work...”* Among the two thousand people who organised or participated in the debates within the framework of the “new wealth indicators in the Pays de la Loire” project, many cited conviviality time as a lost asset which needs to be rediscovered. The culture of “all urban” and internet social networks as the central area for convivial exchanges seems to have reached the limit of acceptability.

*When will we have “time regained” territories? When will we find a lifestyle in which we no longer only accept collective times and spaces (where we pass each other without really meeting – for example in public transport, cinemas, gyms, shopping centres...), but where we favour shared time (moments where we are connected to others, through negotiation and working together – for example choirs, associative commitments...?!).*

*The six questions asked... In the Pays de la Loire and in links with the world:*

- › What riches did we have yesterday that we no longer have today?
- › What riches did we not have yesterday but that we have today?
- › What riches have we preserved?
- › What counts the most?
- › What would be the most serious to lose?
- › What riches do we want to transmit?

*At the top of the forty-eight main riches appeared: social links, education, respect and humanity, environment, employment, liberty...*

*To find out more: [www.boiteaoutils-richeessedl.fr](http://www.boiteaoutils-richeessedl.fr)*

The second level in the construction of a new development model is that of our representations, or the images, a priori, or even fantasies that we project on our contribution to the world, on others and on our relationship with nature.

On these different aspects, the influence of our social, geographical, political, religious, professional cultures is considerable.

To illustrate, let us look at our relationship to money. Inexistent in the register of wealth for native peoples such as the Kichwa, it is the object of impious desire for the Catholic religion. It was the latter that introduced indulgence money<sup>10</sup>, the undeclared (or sub-conscious) origin of carbon quotas and other systems to compensate ecological or social damage.

Another dimension which strongly depends on our cultural foundations is our relationship to time. The perspective of a “finished” life or, on the contrary, immortality underpinned by a belief in reincarnation, conditions without a doubt our behaviour and way of acting. In the same way, the disease of stress-generating time saturation only affects the part of the world we call industrialised.

The third level in our human construction of a new relationship to development is that of our reference points and our management instruments. As previously evoked, the tools we use to manage our society and our lives are determined by our vision of the world. They strongly influence the course we fix, and how we use the said instruments.

Thus, the choice of Gross Domestic Product or Gross National Happiness as a reference for action shows a completely different concept of life. The first one considers the monetary question to be at the centre of the analysis. Whereas the second gives equal space to the economy, culture, protection of natural resources and governance.

In the same way, accepting that financial or extra-financial rating agencies – with their bias and questionable behaviour in public affairs – can manage country strategies, comes under a capitalist and speculative approach<sup>11</sup>. It underpins a logic of competition<sup>12</sup> (via ratings, benchmarking<sup>13</sup>) between actors and territories, at a time

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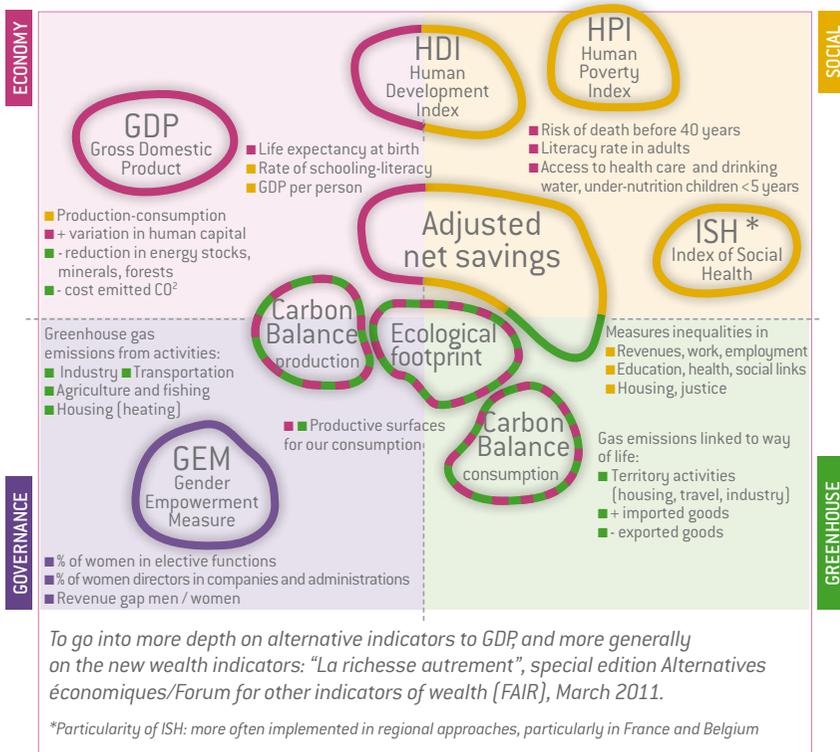
10. Such is the monetary compensation system put into place in favour of financiers (implied by their occupation) so they can go to Heaven.

11. See the demonstration of lack of legitimacy of extra-financial rating agencies to evaluate sustainable development approaches by communities, carried out in 2007 by the Observatory for Public Decisions with the association of Urban communities of France, via research-action in Greater Lyon and the metropolis of Marseille Provence.

12. “A logic of gladiators”, Jean Fabre, former assistant director for the United Nations Programme in Geneva.

13. Word used firstly in large companies, then largely diffused to communities.

## The main synthetic indicators being studied at an international level in 2011



Invented in 1934 by the American economist Simon Kuznets, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a synthetic monetary indicator (index) whose main aim is to follow the evolution of the financial flows of production and consumption. Considered to be "objective", the GDP is nevertheless subjective as it shows a biased vision of society: for example, domestic activities are not included in the calculation of the GDP, with the exception of do-it-yourself and gardening. Child care, cooking, particularly by women (in 1934 and still true today) are therefore considered to be "without value". This led to the French economist Jean Gadrey to consider the GDP to be "a sexist index". Used for a purpose for which it was not destined, i.e. to become the "beacon" of development in the industrialised countries (followed by all the countries in the world), GDP has shown us the wrong way. But, contrary to statements by Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel prize for Economics 2011<sup>14</sup>, our focus on financial questions and the way we put aside cultural, social, environmental and democratic issues is not the tool's responsibility, but ours.

Proposed by the King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck in 1972, Gross National Happiness (GNH) has the aim of integrating Buddhist references into the running of the State's economic strategy. In the GNH, four dimensions have equal value:

- > growth and economic development;
- > conservation and promotion of culture;
- > environment protection and durable use of resources;
- > good responsible governance.

14. See footnote n°1.

## **Citizens as co-inventors of new wealth indicators: what scale and what methods?**

*The project for new wealth indicators raises questions deeply linked to democratic issues for actors in the territories: how to take into account, on the one hand the territorial specificities, and on the other hand their interdependence within larger areas? Can we reconcile territorial differences and a shared vision of the world? Should the change in paradigm linked to the questioning of GDP be built on the same reasoning, i.e. that of results and comparisons between territories? Or should it favour for each one a logic of evolution monitoring over time?*

**In summary:** *what scale should be used to invent new management references? Do we need indicators for all, or should we all join forces to define our own indicators?*

*The replies we bring will influence society management, and by indirect effect the everyday life of the populations. The subject, technical in appearance, contains therefore a true democratic dimension. We need to envisage the drafting of new wealth conventions, as a basis for renewed society pacts.*

*In this context, a compromise exists: to opt for a geometrically variable approach depending on geographical level. For example, elaborate common international indices and leave a possibility for territories to devise their own.*

*At an international level, there is a need for new shared references, thus enabling choices and strategies to be adjusted. This is because social, demographic and ecological realities generate new vulnerabilities, because the emergency imposes major rethinking, because the repositioning of people and the invention of new solidarities are not obvious.*

**In terms of content,** *the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights seems to constitute a unifying basis to construct world indicators from common goods to which it refers (cultural diversity, water, education, peace...). It would be necessary to complete the vision proposed by more explicit references to the environment and a better sharing of wealth, to resituate individual and collective rights in an intergenerational perspective for future generations.*

**In terms of use,** *we need to ask the question of the universality of these new milestones. Does the fact of adopting international indicators – useful for strategy, monitoring and alert at a world level – necessarily imply that it is relevant to implement them in all countries? The risk is to gradually slide from a universal idea to a uniform vision of the world, in theory unfavourable to cultural diversity and the differences in populations and territories.*

**In terms of methods,** *the question of new world references is regularly raised in international organisations (UNDP, OECD...) and Social Forums. Numerous advances have been made, and we do not start from scratch. But these approaches, whilst being rich and legitimate, are too often internal to the organisation or alternative.*

*And the danger exists, under cover of the current crisis, that the IMF<sup>15</sup>, the WTO<sup>16</sup> or the World Bank use the current fragmentation to dictate from the top the alternative reference(s) to GDP.*

*It is therefore essential to collectively take the lead.*

*The third Earth Summit at Rio in 2012 could provide a favourable place for debate*

15. International Monetary Fund.

16. World Trade Organization.

between public authorities, Non Governmental Organisations in their diversity, economic representatives and non organised citizens on the theme of a “**new convention for wealth**”. The question of new management instruments – tools for renewed world governance – should, in this perspective, be formerly added to the Summit agenda.

But this will only happen if “Rio + 20” groups which are being put into place everywhere put pressure on actors with tangible proposals.

Other geographical levels must be considered in the project for new wealth indicators: the territories with their diversity.

Countries such as Bhutan or groups such as “Quebec without poverty” have not waited for GDP to be challenged to innovate at a State or Province level<sup>17</sup>. Following the work by the Stiglitz Commission – whose audience has gone beyond the French context – the British, Slovene and other governments are now looking at the invention of new measurement tools.

### **Let us dare to question ourselves, so that we can act consciously**

› Does the activity that we have undertaken contribute to greater welfare for all, in a preserved and shared environment, or on the contrary does it undermine the differences in certain populations, or nature? Does our activity generate non-essentials, virtual goods and unnecessary overconsumption? If yes, is it possible to envisage a strategic plan to transform the activity over several years?

› In the cultural domain, are all artistic activities legitimate and a plus for society? What rules do we need to support creation? How do we integrate the societal effects (positive or negative) of artistic activities?

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<sup>17</sup> Creation of the Gross National Happiness index from 1972; invention of the Soft Domestic Product in 1999 within the framework of the Carrefour des savoirs (Development gateway).

when the exit from the crisis should lie in complementarities and collaboration with all. In addition, it legitimises the monetarization of all exchanges. And this, even up to the relationship with nature, as shown by the “learned” calculations currently around the “payment of environmental services”<sup>18</sup>. Finally, it legitimises the vision of a ruthlessly commodifiable culture, which confuses the question of economic viability with speculation on works of art...

The fourth level of questioning is that of our human activities. Depending on the cultures, the question of activities has several facets. In our western societies, activities are assimilated to work, and more precisely to employment (salaried), i.e. our capacity to receive remuneration.

In other communities, in particular traditional ones, the daily activity consists of “doing your part” to meet the group’s needs (fetching water, cultivating fields, healing using plants...). In this case, the main issue is not the monetary question, but the usefulness of the activity carried out.

In the current crisis context, and in the perspective of a world with limited natural resources (some of which are almost exhausted), we have the responsibility, at our level, to return to basics. Following the example of the pioneers of social economics in the 19th century, we must question ourselves on the societal utility of our activities, their objectives, aims and impacts. And make conscious choices.

In the same way, we have the possibility to surpass situations of stigmatisation for example against out-of-work people who should not be characterised by their lack of work, but on the contrary be fully considered as resource bearers (in time, skills) and potentially active in other domains than the employee world (associative activities, implication in their neighbourhood...). From this, the question of revenue can be expanded to a notion of societal utility and payment envisaged with other rules.

This change in stance would lead, in addition, to a revalorisation of a number of professions, no longer according to the level of qualifications of the people doing them, but by considering their contribution to society.

The fifth level to consider in moving in the direction of sustainable development corresponds to our organisations.

This includes, on the one hand the statutes and rules which we opt

“[The CADO incubator] has a territorial approach, with the will to accompany operators who settle, stay, develop and work together, here, in our region. With the aim, over the long term, to be able to work with other economic fields, other regions (...).”

*Joseph Richard-Cochet, in the frame of the POTLATCH 2010, A.M.I.*

18. Approach consisting of costing “services to nature”. For example carbon absorption by forests, contribution of natural resources...

for, and on the other hand (but often linked to the first point), the stance that we choose in our relationship to others and in terms of territorial anchoring.

Entrepreneurial cultures are diverse and induce the form of organisation that we adopt. An informal structure and oral commitment for the African tontines<sup>19</sup>, choice of collective entrepreneurship via Cooperative Production Companies, preference for Limited Companies and for their principle of remuneration of capital...: "tell me what statute you prefer, I'll tell you your vision of society!".

The fundamentals of organisation types invented by the pioneers of the social economy ring today as carriers of a surprising modernity. To take the gamble of collective intelligence and the redistribution of dividends to benefit the community, to give priority to human over financial capital, to recognise the place of each party (one person = one vote),...these are all dimensions which entirely match the principles of sustainable development (pooling, equality, solidarity, plural economy via cross-over intervention in the market economy, public economy and reciprocal economy...).

However, the statutes do not guarantee the operating ethics, and the management of each entity is already a challenge. In addition, we must be conscious that some have ambiguities. For example, whilst foundations are popular with donors interested in the fiscal exemptions generated, and by donation receivers...they represent a loss of income for public finances. And reduce by as much the resources enabling public services and solidarity mechanisms to be undertaken...

The final two levels of transformation are intimately linked, and even often confused. We often hear "change your behaviour: sort your rubbish!" But there is, in this case, an error of language, as the sorting of rubbish is not behaviour but practice (our habits and customs). In this domain, the share of cultural references is considerable. Our way of cooking, our relationship with our housing, our sporting practices, our relationships to books or information and communication technologies... all these are intrinsically linked to our origins. Not integrating this fact to advance in the direction of sustainable development, is like putting messages into lead-filled bottles and thus a recipe for failure.

"Within the scope of our company, we belong to a network – moda etica – our fabrics are manufactured in Italy, we reuse the remnants, we try to charge prices that are the closest possible to the reality of the society in which we live, to respect ethics."

*Michela Cittadino, Craftworker, Laboratorio Lavgon; Extract from the video by Teleidea Chianciano Terme, within the framework of the final conference, CITEMA, Florence, October 2011.*

19. Initiated by African women, tontines have existed for a long time. They correspond to a system of money mutualisation. Some women associated to put their savings into a common pot. They lend the money collected to one amongst them so she can start or develop an economic activity. As the loan is repaid, another woman can benefit from the financial support to develop her activity. African women are therefore the true inventors of micro-credit.

Finally, we must analyse our behaviour level (our stances, our attitudes) to consider our capacity to meet goals in the direction of sustainability. However our culture, environment and life path considerably influence the stances that we adopt and our reactions to events.

For example:

- › when faced with malaise or stress, some populations opt for music or meditation and others for antidepressants as a transitional tool;
- › depending on our origins, we have the reaction of touching (Brazil) or on the contrary keeping a distance (Great Britain) to make known our respect to an interlocutor;
- › some cultures encourage initiatives (Quebec, Brazil...), while others maintain an inhibitive culture of doubt faced with a project (France...)<sup>20</sup> ;
- › in a situation of resistance, populations proclaim their pacifism (for example the stance of the Kichwa people of Sarayaku to resist the Ecuadorean army and the petroleum companies) or resort to violence and terrorism;
- › our relationship to nature differs strongly according to whether we come from a rural or urban culture, a Christian or animist community...;
- › our vision of governance (system of regulation of choices in society) and the relationship to government varies according to cultural references.

Taking into account these seven levels of transformation based on human and cultural questions can enable us to distinguish what comes from the individual or the group, from private life or public, from personal or institutional life... and help us as a consequence to invent mobilisation areas and solutions to the problems we must face together.

## » (Re) appropriate four key ideas to change course and path

Finally, our progression towards sustainable development requires that we (re) appropriate four key ideas sometimes alluded to in the previous section.

Firstly, the idea of responsibility, in the literal sense of the term, i.e. to be aware of our acts and the impact that they have, to make infor-

“Too often, and increasingly, we confuse citizen participation and governance. Behind this misunderstanding lies not only a difference of opinions on the value of the consideration of the public and citizen point of view but also a difference of opinion on the degree of institutional recognition for this same point of view. In reality, no system of governance, until now, has ever positioned itself, a priori, as a trigger for societal revolution or institutional reform. The role and function of governance are to be found elsewhere, for governance is not only administrating or governing a territory but finding a dynamic for the territory, be it local or national.”

*Jacques Mattei,  
Zunino e Partner  
Progetti srl.*

20. In one case, we say idea, with movement and adaptation of the project during its implementation. In the other, we spend a great deal of time listing all the reasons why it should not work...

med choices. Including by assuming the uncertainties in a context where the questioning of our knowledge is essential.

Responsibility assumes self esteem and respect for others and the understanding of a double register of individual responsibility – giving the keys for action – and collective responsibility – to be lived not as a dilution between tasks to be accomplished, but as the negotiation of the sharing of roles in a logic of subsidiarity<sup>21</sup>.

The second idea: solidarity. This is not to have “good conscience” but because we are all members of a whole<sup>22</sup>, and interdependent. For everything to work, it is essential that all entities are well. It is therefore our responsibility, not moral but democratic, to take part in the exercise of solidarity for all, by recognising people’s differences and promoting fairness<sup>23</sup>.

The third idea is the urgency of collaborative democracy which sends us to the question of commitment.

Because, contrary to the participative democracy which is carried out today in a logic of “citizens’ viewpoint of public affairs”, collaborative democracy works on the principle that the implementation of a new development model implies the adhesion and action of all. From this, the issue is to ensure that actors from different places, with different – even divergent – interests are mobilised with everyone doing his/her part.

This vision underpins, for example, the international text of Barcelona Agenda 21 for culture<sup>24</sup>.

It imposes several changes in stance, such as:

- › the recognition of the equal value of different types of expertise (academic, political, technical...but also that from experience), to find new keys to our “controversial” world<sup>25</sup>;
- › adhesion to the idea of shared intelligence and the principle of open source<sup>26</sup>;

21. In the primary sense: share out the roles according to aptitudes and skills of each one to be the most efficient possible and close to the terrain.

22. Solidarity: *en solido* in Latin [in entirety].

23. Equity comes from difference, as it assumes the implementation of solutions adapted to the situations and characteristics of each person. In contrast with equality that considers the uniformity of solutions for all individuals.

24. See principle n°5.

25. Meaning a world where science is not sufficient to understand, indeed where academic knowledge – up to now stable – can be challenged.

26. Which aims to defend the idea that there is no intellectual property in sustainable development, as the challenge is to diffuse knowledge and experience to the greatest number, to freely exchange on difficulties and failures.

“The reason for taking an active role in reshaping the local community is the Bunker’s staff strong sense that the responsibilities of an art organisation extend further (or closer in spatial terms) than nearly implementing the goals that we have as professionals.”  
Samo Selimović,  
Bunker

›the taking into account of the idea of capabilities<sup>27</sup>, enabling dimensions other than only aptitudes and skills to be valorised, for example the capacity of adapting to complex situations, interculturality... This imposes that we leave the unique culture of norms and ratings.

Finally, we have the idea of “territorial community” representing an alternative to economic globalisation, to invent a constructive, united and peaceful globalisation. It offers the keys to constitute groups of actors in each territory, with a common project, who mobilise together and who link up and collaborate with other territories in the world.

In summary, we must be conscious that the future of humanity depends on our ability to create a “caring”, “learning” society, open to others and to transformation. To achieve it, we must bet on the confidence between generations for today and the futures (move past teaching through fear by Hans Jonas and prefer the stance of Ulrich Beck who chooses to believe that the renewal of our ways of acting is attainable<sup>28</sup>).

Let us be resilient<sup>29</sup>, clear-headed and visionary. Give us the right to utopia and optimism for tomorrow. Let us dare to be audacious and creative. Let us leave frameworks and shift the lines to become each and all together what Norberto Bobbio described as “the fore-runners of a better world<sup>30</sup>”.

“Through our activities, by either coordinating participatory processes or taking part in policy-making processes, we have tried to encourage the practice of active citizen participation. One of the positive aspects of participation is that it encourages the networking of different stakeholders.”

Tatjana Rajić,  
*Expediito*

*“We are all actors. Being a citizen, it is not about living in a society. It is about changing it!”*  
Augusto Boal

27. Term created by Amartya Sen, Nobel prize for Economics 1998.

28. See “The risk society”, 1986.

29. Resilience according to Boris Cyrulnick, French doctor is “the art of navigating torrents”, knowing how to succeed in surmounting life’s tests and rebound.

30. See “The wise man and politics”.

# MANIFESTO

## RETHINKING HAPPINESS NEW REALITIES FOR CHANGING LIFESTYLES

*Aldo Cibic, designer*

The historical period in which we live faces us with conditions and challenges that could generate substantial changes in our way of thinking and a different, more contemporary approach to design activity. The economic crisis has revealed the limitations of a development model and, at the same time, the environmental emergency is forcing us to radically rethink our way of confronting the future. On their own, these two problematic areas suffice to make us understand that many things will no longer be as they were before; but if we decide to try to do something, to get a glimpse of hope, we realize we are faced with an incredible opportunity to redesign life, to trigger a process of mutation.

We have to prepare ourselves to see with new eyes, to think about a *tabula rasa* situation in which to redefine needs, habits, activities, dreams in relation to new conditions of existence, to think about a more up-to-date idea of contemporary life.

The challenge arises on different levels: if we think about how we can produce meaning, we have to understand which references and which modes can be used to try to construct a path.

Where the references are concerned, even though the future may seem dark, because we cannot glimpse positive certainties, we do know about many things we can take into consideration, and we have access to great quantities of infor-

mation; the constraints within which we can operate are known to us, and outline a reality that does not permit waste, that can no longer be based only on strictly individualistic, utilitarian logic, but has to take form through a model in which multiple parties work together.

This is because the individual disciplines, in the lack of general a priori visions, are no longer capable of providing responses on their own that can make us understand how, and under what conditions, we can implement transformations.

In this moment, the major perceived difficulty has to do with the courage to look toward ideal projects and the capacity to overcome obstacles often caused by unsuitable legislation, by political and economic vested interests, by the inertia of habit and cynicism that see change as a futile effort or even a threat.

By ideal projects, I mean a project approach that attempts to generate an improvement in the quality of life of people on the social, economic and environmental levels. The great frustration that can be sensed on many sides comes from the difficulty in understanding which actions we can be involved in to reactivate the sensation of being part of a process, in which we are doing what is best for the future of our communities.

Many of the themes, problematic issues and critical points on which we need to work are there before our eyes, every day. (...) Creative action in a multidisciplinary

perspective consists in producing, with respect to the reality we can observe, ideas, reflections, proposals capable of outlining specific design processes to address multiple themes, to develop in-depth, detailed project briefs.

This way of working is more like the production of a film than the traditional professional approach of the world of architecture, urban planning and design, in the sense that there is not necessarily a client who commissions a project. Instead, there may be, for example, a group composed of economists, sociologists, architects, designers, urban planners, landscape desi-

gners and interested citizens, capable of proposing specific projects that address one or more theme areas at the same time, to produce the entire project cycle by considering both the more conventional aspects of the project, and the activation of social and economic dynamics.

*The manifesto "Rethinking happiness" has been presented during the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2010. ([www.rethinkinghappiness.info](http://www.rethinkinghappiness.info)).*

*Original text in English*

## CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY, ART AND PUBLIC SPACE: TOWARDS THE CREATION OF NEW RELATIONAL AND ESTHETICAL TERRITORIES

In this essay we will try to show how heterogeneity of public policies and art practices in last decade contributed to the new realities in Europe, focusing especially on contradictory dynamics in the region of Southeast Europe – the Balkans. We will explore hypothesis that in counterpoint, civil society activism fighting against different vectors of social actions and global social dynamics has created new spaces of expression, both in digital and real world. Activism reappeared out of necessity to fight pressures of the market, governmental directive policies, and indolence and incapacities of public institutional system in culture.

### » Introduction

Institutionalization of culture during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, its regulation and “normativization” due to a high level of influences of public policies, provoked already in the 1960s the counter-cultural reaction. The “establishment” was seen as the cause of all the evils in the society, and cultural institutions as the arm’s length instrument of alienated impersonalized bureaucratic power.

In this situation the re-conquest of urban public space as a space

for critical expression had started. Theater of animation, community art projects, murals and many different forms of “fêtes” – community celebrations developed as an expression of dissent and contestation of ossified cultural institutions and their programs.

The exploration and conquering of the public space has begun. However it was mostly parks, schools, small squares in the neighborhoods. Factories have still been working, but strikes brought many artists within factory spaces (Aquarium theater group, Paris), in prisons or at least in front of them (Théâtre du Soleil), in hospitals (Werktheater, Amsterdam), etc. They researched and often acted there, but “real” performances mostly had been done “back home” – in their own theatrical space. They had to have both, so that audiences and critics (art field) can refer to their work.

During the eighties postindustrial era began – Thatcherism, not only in UK but throughout Europe had closed non-rentable mines and factories; city “branding” wanting to beautify cities and new hygiene norms closed green markets. Abandoned factories and market “invited” artists. The use of non-theatrical spaces became main strategy – in the beginning it appeared as necessity of artists and as their wish to be closer to community... but twenty years later those non-conventional spaces became new pride and glory of the “branded” cities. Musealisation of working class neighborhoods, of life practices of different social groups, and culture as a way of social inclusion became official cultural policy demands.

In the same time, globalized world with its large perspective, on one side, and communities in difficulties on the other side, created new dynamics in art world. Intensified processes of European integrations brought new ideas in the public sphere. Different social identities produced different cultural practices, which brought different relations to space and different esthetic concepts.

End of century brought new dimensions in public space – more control (Closed-circuit television, CCTV), and more “organization” (marketing actions, beautifications, public arts, monuments building, etc.). City social life which had burst in pedestrian areas, slowly moved toward shopping malls offering different kind of entertainments, from multiplex cinemas to bowling clubs. As those spaces are “private”, artistic actions there had a meaning of intrusion, blockade – raising awareness on celebrations of consumerism as the main form of everyday life.

“

Different social identities produced different cultural practices, which brought different relations to space and different esthetic concepts.

”

## » Transition in Southeast Europe

In the majority of the countries of Southeast Europe, the cultural policy focus during the phase of transition was based on two opposite processes: process of “nationalization” and process of “Europeanization”.

However, till the year 2000 the new independent states had been stabilized. National cultural policies started to deal with “issues of general relevance”, adapting their discourses and strategies to a new neoliberal demand for public policies – diminishing importance of culture as public good, and putting in question consensus around culture as the key national identity “identification parameter”. To find adequate response, cultural elites replaced the issue of national identity with new theme of national “branding” (as it was seen as a global way of making the country economically more competitive). Culture as a soft power found itself in both separation and reconciliation processes.

Time of transition in Southeast Europe could be regarded as a moment of a great social experiment – where everything and everybody was subjected to measures brought ad hoc, under different sorts of inside and outside pressures. It was also a postwar period, meaning that war profiteers became new financial elites, that mass of population was displaced and could not return, that many cities (including both apartment buildings and factories) had been ruined, public discourse polluted with hatred speech, etc.

However, the new social dynamics brought so-called “entrepreneurial” ideas in urban space, which meant domination of:

- › “political” building investments (shopping malls, aqua parks, swimming pools, etc. opened by politicians);
- › new types of companies (although created by local people, registered on Cayman Islands);
- › new types of cultural production seen as leisure production – creative industries endorsing entertainment, evasion – music, film and television producers;
- › kiosk culture and flea market as a principal space of encounters and socializing (replaced partially recently by shopping malls);
- › grey economy based on import smuggling, selling second-hands products, etc.;
- › city occupation practices – creating slums in the center of the cities in order to provoke authorities to come up with solutions (Roma migrants from Kosovo and South Serbia)...

In this social situation the whole cultural sector became active agent of change. Artists and artistic groups launched numerous projects to

fight social injustice and social exclusion...

This was done mostly outside of the public institutional system which had other priorities linked to its own reform. Public cultural system, defined by public policies (cultural, educational, and even economic) struggled to contribute to the construction of new (Europeanized) national identities in the Balkans, to reposition itself within new organizational culture (re-creating missions and aims, developing strategies, fundraising skills, evaluation techniques, etc.), but also, to keep its place (value) within new social and political circumstances.

## » The role of independent artist scene in social changes

At the beginning of the period of transition, the voice of artists and independent cultural workers was a voice of dissent, voice against politics of hatred, nationalistic and corrupted privatization policies. Many performative artistic actions were invented to raise awareness of silenced neighborhoods. Regrouped around few independent media in the region (mostly local radio stations in municipalities governed by opposition), artists tried to enter different communities, to establish the only possible way of direct communication with citizens – communication through art projects. The culture was the strongest agent of change – agent who advocated larger social and political issues – issues of transitional, distributive justice, peace culture and democracy. Numerous were the actions and the processes initiated throughout the region in this respect. Dah Theater, Ice art movement, FIA project (fotografija), group Absolutely (Novi Sad), Konkordija (Vršac) – all those artists and cultural workers brought new, different ideas in public sphere, using mostly public spaces and specific festivals (*Alter Image; Airplane without engine; FIAT, Infant*) for communicating them and interacting with audiences.

Performative actions of art group Škart – Sadness, every weekend in 1993 brought them on the markets, railway stations with printed poems<sup>1</sup> (*The sadness of potential rifles, The sadness of potential vegetables, The sadness of potential landscapes, The sadness of potential travelers*<sup>2</sup>). The poems witnessed predominant feelings of the time, never before expressed in poetry lines... In these twenty years of activism Škart group traversed a long road from specific

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The culture was the strongest agent of change – agent who advocated larger social and political issues (...).

”

1. The group continues till today with art activism outside of "project logic" and without a budget. "KITCHEN WISDOMS, New Embroideries-approved utopia" is a self-initiated project, financed from personal pocket-money and independent from any cultural/social frames.

2. Translated in English by David Albahari.

small political actions toward projects involving large community groups in a permanent artistic process – from choral singing to the forgotten art of kitchen embroideries.

In this first phase of transition the importance of individual artists and artistic production showing their disobedience, protest to the governmental policies and practices was obvious. Those were the strongest voices of dissent, which, linking with researchers, scientists and civil activists succeeded in finding new spaces for expression. Thus became visible a need to create a space outside polarized political and public scene.

In this atmosphere a new “generation” of independent cultural spaces was created – Metelkova in Ljubljana, Center for Cultural Decontamination and Rex in Belgrade, Apostrof in Novi Sad, Lamparna in Labin, Mama and Močvara in Zagreb... Using different, mostly abandoned premises (caserns, factories, storage houses), those centres became important platforms for artistic explorations, debates, inter-sectorial relations, finally they became places where citizens-activists could develop different forms of activities. That encouraged a new generation of NGOs to be created who, as a difference from a first generation of activists, was more oriented to theory and policy debates, linking art with theoretical and research scene. Remont, Walking Theory (Center for Performing Arts Theory and Practice), Kuda.org, Shadow casters, Kulturni front, Kulturanova... numerous artists' groupings had led research and debate projects about crucial socio-political issues from local and global scene, aiming to further develop potentials of independent cultural and artistic scenes in the region.

Internet culture, digital culture, led many artists toward virtual sphere – which in the mid 1990s has been seen as a space without boundaries, space of freedom of expression and enjoyment. Everything that was not possible in real world, seemed open in a virtual space, so projects such as Yugomuseum of Mrdjan Bajić developed to communicate a message to dispersed former Yugoslavians who fled from war and nationalistic hysteria to different corners of the world. By the end of this decade, world economic crisis had shown also its impact in the region of Southeast Europe, while democratization processes had not yet been successfully implemented. Thus culture in an age of apathy<sup>3</sup> brought new demands to activists-artists – to become producers – but not of art works as such, but of awareness of deep social crisis. They themselves are raising question: how far

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3. *Russell Jacoby* – *Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age*, Columbia University Press, 2005 ; *The End of Utopia: Politics and Culture in the Age of Apathy*, Basic Books, 1999.

it is from being producers of utopia<sup>4</sup>, as they act mostly to provoke changes, but concrete, small changes in a globalized society. Thus independent scene in arts and culture have developed its own world of action linking with new emerging, still weak social forces, citizens initiatives, students movements, even rare self-governing management practices, developed to “save” factories (case of artist Milica Ružičić and factory in battle Yugoremedija in Zrenjanin). The whole independent scene has shown a great sense of responsibility... The organizations developed mutual sense of solidarity, best expressed during different actions to support colleagues losing space for production and dissemination of their work – such was the case of Gallery Context, for whom numerous letters and lobbying actions had been raised<sup>5</sup>.

“

Trying to prevent the separation of art scene from other domains of life and living practices, artistic initiatives entered different social territories, establishing new ethical relations and bringing new esthetical challenges in contemporary world.

”

## » New areas of activism of independent art scene

Trying to prevent the separation of art scene from other domains of life and living practices, artistic initiatives entered different social territories, establishing new ethical relations and bringing new esthetical challenges in contemporary world.

### Public arts in public spaces – challenges of urbanization

Aggressive investment policies, with corrupted urban planning departments quickly changed city faces in Southeast Europe. This process started under the slogan “free entrepreneurial initiative” – so, kiosks and parking lots had conquered sidewalks and every single free space in the city. Later, under the slogan “creative city” – restaurants, café-bars, clubs, luxury design shops – expelled from city centers bookshops, old style restaurants and everything which was not for profit.

To fight those processes within different cities artists and civil organizations have developed new intraurban dynamics, connecting neighborhoods under investment pressures, organizing active communities, using arts as a tool in this battle. Numerous movements, such as Fifth Park (Belgrade), We do not give Varšavska Street, Right to the city (Zagreb), are confirming the thesis that public space in each community was the first area of battle.

Thus artists’ new initiatives like Expedition Inex film (self-governing

4. The new season title of Atelier 212 is Utopia (after Revolution in 2009-10, Yugoslavia 2010-11).

5. Significant is the letter signed together by artist Milica Tomić, Dah theater, Škart group, Monument group, Four faces of Omarska, Women in black, etc. See: [www.seecult.org/files/Skart-Dah-Spomenik-CLO-Zene\\_Pismo-podrske-Kontekstu\\_0.pdf](http://www.seecult.org/files/Skart-Dah-Spomenik-CLO-Zene_Pismo-podrske-Kontekstu_0.pdf)

organized action of many NGOs and artists, aiming to “conquer” and to use the space of old public film enterprise), projects Who is building the city, City dictionary, Public Arts Public Space, etc. want to be more than citizen control of urban development. They want to see citizen as the initiator of rethinking of the city growth and planning. New step in all those movements is created with the platform for “City enthusiasts and city masters” in independent Cultural Center Rex, who is discovering individual and group initiatives throughout the region, inviting them to connect mutually in order to have strength to influence public policies. Citizens community initiatives are happening throughout the region: besides the most famous Right to the City (Zagreb), there is also For Muzil (Pula), numerous Novi Sad groups: Initiative for Social Center (new use of the casern Archibald Reiss), Almas citizens (lobby group for Almas neighbourhood), Subotica’s Center for regional research, Photo Expo in Zrenjanin (citizen green action), Cobra from Donja Toponica (ex-karaté club, today builders of playgrounds on the spaces of wild landfills) and many others. But, there are many other aspects of urban developments that artists recently wanted to explore and to raise awareness on transformations which are happening due to different kind of nationalistic identity policies (Skopje) or foreign donations (Belgrade).

In Skopje, where new Government re-created not only the national identity but also city of Skopje identity, destroying post-earthquake urban plan from the 1960s with ad hoc elaborations of antiquization through monuments, architects and cultural activists united in protest actions. They formed First Macedonians Archi-brigade, but numerous forms of protest, happenings, debates, analysis in whom a large number of population had participated, had not prevented project of Antiquization Skopje 2014.

In Belgrade, many reactions on city memory and oblivion policies had been developed. Ana Vilenica, Bureau for Culture and Communication, Kultur Klamer, Rex, Who is building the city and other groups and individuals, pointed out the non-transparent way of decision-making.

However, artistic reconquest of the public space has a long “tradition” in the region. Most of the time, performances on public space has a more important significance than just being a site-specific events, relating to this concrete space and its symbolical meaning. Ecological protests in Pančevo from the end of 1980s, anti-war performances within peace movement throughout the 1990s, recent anti-globalization performances and happenings, all of them use public space as a platform to link with incidental audiences, with common citizens. Present artistic movements try in many cases to find links

“Tabor quarter in Ljubljana was a small indistinct city district like many others in contemporary Mediterranean and European cities. It was facing problems that are inherent to a lot of quickly changing urban environments; lack of social cohesion, alienation, exclusion from social processes, degradation of public space (...). There have been sporadic attempts of tackling these issues with new approaches in the past and in other cities before, but for the Mediterranean area and particularly for Ljubljana, inclusion of citizens into decision-making, cross-sector networking, problem-oriented networks, regeneration through cultural project, etc. present a relatively new practice with less than enough concrete examples from the Med territory which makes efforts from organisations such as Bunker that much more interesting and worth observing.”

*Samo Selimović,  
Bunker*

with “the tradition of the avant-garde<sup>6</sup>” and to create new relational art projects to all those initiatives in the region which since the 1920s (zenitist movement), and especially in the 1960s had questioned socio-political context and its aspirations.

Thus in 1998, Croatian artist Ivan Grubić created performance “Black Peristil”, as an homage to the project “Red Peristil”, the first site-specific intervention in former Yugoslavia (1968, Split) which was more reflected in state security than in art history books.

Further developing his own actions in public space, Ivan Grubić realized a project “366 rituals of liberation”, 2008–2009, in a form of a serial of photographs which documented author’s guerrilla interventions in public spaces. He explored frontiers of artist creative engagement around crucial social issues, especially those reflecting use and misuse of public spaces. The ephemeral character of the art in public space, in spite of its relative high visibility, demands documenting and archiving as artistic methods, which would enable later “repetition” in gallery exhibiting practices. Similar events organized by performing arts groups, in spite of “documenting” performances, usually do not “exhibit” them later (thus many performances stay only in an individual memory of the viewer, not having chance to become part of a collective memory).

### **Culture of memory – need for a civil collective memory development**

Second big operational platform of activist organizations was created around politics of memory – necessity to recreate a new public discourse and raise awareness about present policies of oblivion and remembrance. Artists<sup>7</sup> are facing several crucial issues: how to remember recent wars, victims and criminals; how to memorize the crimes “committed in our name”; how to confront official politics of memory as policies of victimization and “glorious past” and how to fight against deliberate oblivion of socialist and antifascist past.

Since the dissolution of the country and re-creation of multiple independent states wanting to erase traces of the common past, artist and artistic collectives started to act. In this area numerous are the projects to revitalize antifascist past, such as works of Siniša Labrović (monument to partisan in Sinj), or project *Gen XX* (1997–

6. *Nebojša Milenković: Vujica Rešin-Tucić – The tradition of the avant-garde, is a book representing the efforts of Vujica Rešin Tucić throughout 1990’s to re-establish through his “school” the tradition of a vanguard, the artistic movement linking contemporary arts with the most relevant ex-Yugoslavian artistic practices. From this school raised Magnet art group, which used radical political street performances, but practices of “the tradition of the avant-gard” are widespread throughout independent cultural scene.*

7. *Group Monument [Belgrade], Dah theater, Bureau for Culture and Communication [Old fair virtual museum project], Centar “Grad” [City] from Tuzla, Bogujevci family project [City gallery Priština], Center for Contemporary Arts in Sarajevo [with project De/Construction of Monument], and many others...*

“

(...) performances on public space has a more important significance than just being a site-specific events, relating to this concrete space and its symbolical meaning.

”

2001) of Sanja Iveković (photographies of models signed with names and dates of birth and death of national heroes from World War Two). Hence artistic scene developed a new discourse based on anti-fascist memories, memories of “forgotten actors” such as women and ethnic minorities, socialism (already deleted from the collective memory). Numerous projects aiming to raise responsibility of community for keeping its memories alive and contributing to intercultural mediation and reconciliation in the region followed: exhibitions *The Gypsies, Our Neighbors; Jewish, forgotten neighbors (REX), Die Deutschen unserer Stadt (City Museum Novi Sad)*, and the most recent *Multicultural heritage of Belgrade in City Institute for the Protection of Heritage and Naci terror upon homosexuals (ARTEQ, Belgrade & Queer Zagreb)*, *City museum Belgrade*. The first exhibitions had been solely the products of civil society scene, while last ones are co-productions with civil society or done by public institution.

The performances of Dah Theatre are typical of these “bottom-up memory politics”. Using public space theatre performance methods (interactive communication, engaging audiences), this company, since its first street-art theatre based on the work of Berthold Brecht (1992), has tried to reach out not only to an incidental audience, but also to groups of politically active citizens, who are willing to address critical questions for wider social debate (permanent cooperation with Women in black movement).

Using collective memories and national myths, urban legends and present media practices, the company has created works which are a major contribution towards a different, bottom-up politics of memory, a politics that is equally one of social responsibility and the building of trust. Using different ‘cultural documentary materials’, Dah Theatre is exploring the past of the city through the lenses of its contemporary traumas. These are the traumas which public policies deliberately ignore or neglect (Official politic of memory is based upon “not-knowing”, and upon denial of any kind of participation in the war<sup>8</sup>).

Taking collective traumas, deconstructing them through individual approaches and testimonies, Dah Theatre is recreating public space as the locus of aspirations and of opening of future horizons, by exploring painful memories of the past. The performers question their own feelings and statements: how long does the sorrow imposed by historical violence last? Where are the borders of my personal res-

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8. Milica Tomić, visual artist created the art work with precise demand: we have to name IT – as WAR! (In official discourse the War in ex-Yugoslavia was always named as “those happenings”, “it”, etc.). Her latest work *Container – Photography by other means / Index of the permanent war* relates all the crimes committed in wars in ex-Yugoslavia by official and unofficial arms units. The project *Four faces of Omarska*, explores Omarska – mine, concentration camp, site for film shooting and finally, again a mine – this time owned by global corporation.

possibilities for crimes committed in my name? Their answers have been highly personalized and emotional, confronting the audiences with the memories and the guilt associated with ethnic violence. Performances are based on the narratives of ordinary citizens, such as the testimonies of women (“Women’s Side of the War”). Each performance is followed by an open dialogue (the audience share their stories and memories). Feelings of solidarity and togetherness emerge. The project is contributing towards an effective politics of peace-building and reconciliation.

Another performance of Dah theater: *The Invisible City* (December 2005) in a city bus n.26, aimed to raise awareness of multicultural Belgrade – which is slowly disappearing behind globalization billboards – new signs of the postmodern city of consumption. The main challenge was to preserve the heritage of others, of ethnic groups who have disappeared or cannot keep their culture alive: the Jewish community, Gypsies, Buddhist Kalmiks, White Russians, Macedonian bakers, Gorani pastry shop owners and Kosovo Albanians (who used to come as seasonal workers).

By constantly introducing new elements and new dimensions in their work, Dah Theatre’s projects underline the absence of consistent public policy of remembrance. In the beginning the city authorities ignored artistic civil society but then had to consider its proposals and finally found themselves obliged to support and integrate them in their own policies and programs. Consequently, on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2011 (on the Day of remembrance for the victims of fascism), Women in black and Art clinic have performed in the Street of Srebrenica (Srebrenička) in Belgrade the positioning of the threshold, with the banner: Responsibility. With this symbolic statement “threshold”, the artists want to remind that the right to life and dignity of victims depend on our memories and respect, and can easily be lost if we do not cross the threshold and penetrate beyond our own existence and assumed closed attitudes that hinder us.

### **Distributive transitional (in)justice – the new phenomenon of social division**

Third area of independent culture activism – social justice, developed as a reaction on an unjust privatization process which closed factories, department stores, banks, thus opening spaces for new regional capital to be “justified” (normalized), and to big multinational companies to enter the market. Numerous artistic projects tried to question this transition toward capitalistic society, and the way how social capital was re-distributed, creating new “precariat” among middle class workers and employees. Significant are projects

of Andrea Kulundžić Distributive justice and Nama, Milica Ružičić, Igor Grubić, Nebojša Milekić, Želimir Žilnik, Bureau for Culture and Communication, etc.

Milica Ružičić's Night watch dealt with state (governmental) violence throughout the world: Athens, Lhasa, Kathmandu, Copenhagen, London, Zrenjanin... Andrea Kulundžić's project: Nama - 1908 employees, 15 department stores, put on billboards the real faces of saleswomen, now without work. Igor Grubić with his project Angels With Dirty Faces, made a serial photographs of workers of Kolubara mines, those who helped "revolution" of 2000 to be implemented in Serbia. It was not enough just to show social injustice but to lead such processes which might bring real changes in a social structure. So, actions toward social inclusion started to be developed more through activist projects and only recently, as an outcome of those actions (advocacy and raising awareness actions) as part of systemic public policies.

With raise of antiromaism, numerous artists wanted to confront marginalization and ghettoization of Roma population, but also the policies which want to move Roma far away from city centers – to make them invisible citizens. The first Kosovo Roma settlements in Belgrade (after emigrating in 1999) were created under the bridges of Belgrade. The attempts of official dislocation of Roma in container settlements in the periphery of Belgrade (and further) were filmed and documented, publicly debated by numerous involved artists.

In the same time, project, such as Hamlet – Medea, involving both Roma amateur community and professional Roma actors from Germany (originally from Macedonia) was a real attempt of collaborative creation where life experiences of Belgrade Roma community were used. Ivana Momčilović, as activist-artist living in Belgium created similar project in National Theater in Belgrade, and since, slowly, Roma issue became cultural (not only social) issue in a public sphere. In 2010, the first Roma Museum was created, while in 2011 municipality of Čukarica gave space for a first Roma Cultural Center in Belgrade (160 square meters).

But Roma are one among many social groups excluded from cultural scene. Policies of access and inclusivity are new words in a vocabulary. Thus, many artists and NGOs developed special projects of interactive work with communities in need. Like "Integration workshop" of Miki Manojlović, film and theater actor, who is now devoting his activities to theater projects for blind community. Involving best composers, choreographers, professional actors and performers with special needs, creating space where audience with special needs can also come and enjoy, those projects are not only opening the doors of the arts world to excluded, but gave chance to traditional art audiences

to look at the world with another eyes. Ivana Vujić in her *Betonhala* theater developed inclusive projects for children with special needs, while Aleksandra Jelić developed APSART, Theater for prisoners, etc. All those artistic and civic initiatives for inclusive theater are presented during Bitef polyphony festival which acts as a privileged regional platform for knowledge and practice exchange in this domain. Independent art scene is also sensitive towards artists excluded from the scene – mostly because of aging, but also due to gender inequality. Ivana Vujić's intergenerational & feminist projects focusing on aging actors and on women, are bringing new strength to the artistic community, self-respect of already "rejected", retired actors.

### **Exploring limits of the freedom - religion, media, new forms of censorship**

Although all new democracies claim freedom of the association, speech, and of expression, recent happenings in the region, linked to high level of intolerance toward different other (Roma community, gay and lesbian community, other ethnic groups) had raised alarm among artistic initiatives, especially as words of hatred are often supported by statements of Church officials, politicians, and especially transmitted through media, using different rhetoric strategies to send powerful message to population.

In 2007 an exhibition of young Kosovo Albanian artists was prevented to be open in Belgrade in Context gallery. This was first exhibition of this kind after Kosovo declared itself independent country. Right wing nationalist regrouped in front of the Gallery and police officially declared its incapacity to "defend the Gallery". Exhibition was closed. The artists and cultural activists tried for two years for re-opening of the Gallery with that exhibition, showing that street censorship is the most perverse form of state censorship. Same is happening with Pride Parades throughout the region – in Sarajevo, Zagreb, Podgorica, Belgrade. The high level of homophobia in the region, intolerance and violence were "postponing" two Pride parades (2009 and 2011). The one held in a protected closed space in 2010 in Belgrade had shown the incapacities of State to guarantee freedom of association and expression.

The Orthodox Church, accusing and cursing homosexual community had shown through those events that they see their social role as "gatekeepers for moral values". Although all the Balkan countries are officially laic states, all of them keep church as a pillar of national identity. With many different projects staging powerful church figures, artist Živko Grozdanić had shown relations: Church-Politics, using media texts and information about happenings in Orthodox church.

The other institution extensively “questioned” by artists is a Public media – Radio Television Serbia, and the whole media system. Numerous are artists who explored the links society-media, from Uroš Durić, Svetislav Basara to the collective Media archeology, who explores different periods of media manipulation in Serbian society. All this engagement contributed to the creation of polyphony of art and social practices which leads to new regional flows and inter-connections in the whole area of Southeast Europe. Civil society art organizations developed platforms for mutual support and development. Networking became a mantra which introduced new models and forms of activism, new topics – opened different horizons...

Curatorial collective WHW (What, How and for Whom) from Zagreb, Remont and Prelom collective from Belgrade, artist initiatives such as Mil.art, Dez.org, Art clinic from Novi Sad – all of them are active on the whole regional territory, collaborating and questioning... Big manifestations, such as Subversive film festival in Zagreb, or Performance night within Limit festival in Belgrade, Infant festival in Novi Sad, Mostar intercultural festival... are platforms for presenting collaborative practices which experiment and innovate in forms, in content, in methods of mediation and intercultural dialogue.

Artists have developed projects which overcame the disciplinary borders, projects hybrid in their form and contents. Collaborative projects of amateur and professionals, policy of inclusivity through participative actions – developed research based art practices, new concept of process oriented art productions, not centering its expectations on results. The collaboration with researchers and philosophers became extremely close. Groups such as Walking Theory, Metaklinika (Belgrade), SCCA (Sarajevo), Monument (Belgrade-Tuzla), Multimedia (Priština), Center for Contemporary Arts (Skopje), etc., incorporated artists and sociologists, comparativists, cultural analysts, philosophers, publishers... and developed more sophisticated, complex and ambitious cultural programs – like projects Containers of freedom (“reading Krleža”), Yugoslav studies, or Modernism in Center for Cultural Decontamination...

The artists, self-organized in different groupings and networks entered together in policy domain organizing direct actions but also lobby and advocacy actions. They created their own debate platforms to generate new knowledge and to find solutions for their artistic and social ideas... Nomad dance platform and Kondenz festival are the best examples of bottom-up cultural policies, where regional dance network has successfully introduced the whole new genre in the region.

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(...) new relational territories of art appeared in cultural sphere.

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## » Conclusions – from professionalism to citizenship

“Experiences of planning practice in Montenegro show that citizen participation is regarded rather as a formal obligation (usually in later stages of the planning process) than a truly recognized need. However, this situation is changing and now we can witness some new, positive trends. Active participation of different stakeholders makes the process equally important as the final result that can lead to a new, amended policy. Policies developed and implemented at local level concern the immediate personal living environments of citizens. Because of that, the involvement of citizens in policy-formation processes is very important.”

*Tatjana Rajić,  
Expeditio*

Although artists during socialist time imagined that life in democracy would give them privilege to become “real professionals” who can live out of their work on art market, the dissolution of Yugoslavia, war, transition and social anomia which followed put a challenge in front of all those artists who saw themselves as responsible, active citizens in a society ...

During transition multiple options appeared: to continue their life of artists in an isolated public institutional cultural sphere (with small but loyal cultural audience, with small but regular income), to enter the seductive commercial world of so-called creative industries (producing mostly turbofolk culture) or to create their own space for acting within independent cultural sphere. This choice divided the artistic community which was used on one and a same cultural space – space of public culture, where the place for a dissident art expression was also in a certain way institutionalized (student cultural centers, film clubs, working collectives of artists, cultural reviews, etc.).

However, a great number of artists had chosen to be in the same time artist-social entrepreneur, to create now his own space – platform for creativity and interaction. Thus, new relational territories of art appeared in cultural sphere. First, city, as a space to fight for, as a space with dynamic identity to be re-thought, protected, and developed. City with all its neighborhoods, differences, social class and generational divisions, habits and traditions, represented in itself a huge canvas which demanded complex interdisciplinary approach in keeping its memories, in developing its qualities, keeping multiple aesthetical traditions visible in its architecture alive in permanent dialogue with contemporary artistic practices.

Relating to diverse communities, with diverse needs and habits regarding participation in cultural life, artists tried to create inclusive, open, participative art projects which might be relevant for different communities.

Media as a territory for exploration of social uses and abuses, but also as a territory for representation of art works, provoked many artists to start contributing (Biljana Srbijanović blogs should be treated as specific art works, as well as Raša Todosijević stories sent via e-mail to a large group of audiences), or to fight against certain media (mostly against public TVs, but also against powerful commercial televisions such as Pink). Thus virtual space became a new territory of art and political expressions. Internet is offering not

only a gallery space, but interactive, communicative exhibiting or co-creating space, where many young artists developed their privileged platforms<sup>9</sup> of creation and sharing.

New artistic scene in the region of Southeast Europe, developed with help of alternative artistic and cultural real and virtual platforms (such as Center for Cultural Decontamination, Rex, Mama, Pekarna, Metelkova, Centers for Contemporary Arts, etc.) created new territories for the art practices in spaces without public institutions or cultural infrastructure – in suburbs, among deprived communities, among excluded or still underground social groups (LGBT population). But, what is even more important, it created a way for collaborative practice where individual human experience could be source for active artistic material, act... From individual memories to collective ones, from individual initiatives to advocacy actions and public policies, those groups had shown how energy and initiative can contribute to different social processes, such as peace and reconciliation processes, but also to new demands for revitalizing concepts of public good and public interest. Clubture Zagreb and Association Belgrade are in this very moment (December 2011) working together on creating wide regional platform for independent artistic initiatives including Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, reinforcing peer-to-peer exchange and self-governing non-hierarchical approach in forming a new model of artistic non-formal but effective organization.

*Original text in English*

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9. From Vuk Ćosić efforts since early 1990s, through work of Mama or Cyberkitchen of Žana Poliakov, till virtual Yugomuseum of Mrđjan Bajić, Internet is creating and presenting such a wide variety of artistic practices, as it enables transcultural and transborder, but also transsectorial collaboration.

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# ACTING THE CITY... FROM EUROPE TO SOUTH MEDITERRANEAN

## ICI-MÊME: BE AN ACTOR IN THE CITY

We have been walking through the city in order to become foreigners there. We went on train platforms, took boats and followed random passengers.

We walked eyes closed in order to listen to the city. We paced up and down streets, parking lots, supermarkets, guided by radio instructions. We walked a whole night, tracking the flows of the city, in group, between us and with strangers. We moved on a straight line that was to be left on no account, crossing intimate or public spaces. We ventured on borders, in search of abandoned and reprieved places. And then we walked... In Marseille, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Zilina... In Paris, Istanbul, Budapest, Casablanca... In Vilnius, Ljubljana or in Lisbon... We walked. To be also able to stop, review, record, recover, tell, detail, witness...

As praise for slowness and attention to detail, our proposals are as many forms of transformation of our perception of the environment. They are challenges to the tactical questions of our uses.

As experiences to be lived, in situ and open to the unexpected, they fleetingly mark the contours of the city like a political, problematical space-time, giving consistency to its limits, its hollows and its folds. A sensitive territory to be constantly redefined.

*Contribution Text for the "Forum Ready to Change?", Ljubljana, December 2010.*

*Ici-Même is a geometrically variable group founded in 1993 in Grenoble. Its artistic work combines approaches and blurs boundaries between disciplines, depending on encounters and collaborations ([www.icimeme.org](http://www.icimeme.org)).*

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## REVIVAL OF CITY SQUARES IN BALKAN CITIES

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The project “Revival of City Squares in Balkan Cities” began in January 2011. The project aims to contribute to the revival of city squares as viable public places that foster cultural identity and promote diversity through enforcement of public policies and active community participation.

The lead partner of the project is Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development from Tirana, Albania; while other partners are: the Coalition for Sustainable Development (CSD) from Skopje, Macedonia; EXPEDITIO from Kotor, Montenegro and Polis University (International School of Architecture and Urban Development Policies) from Tirana, Albania.

The action intends to achieve two major specific objectives: to promote national

and regional policy discourse on how city squares can be transformed into pulsating community places and develop a platform for transforming open public spaces into vibrant places that serve community needs.

As the final result, the project should provide policy makers and local officials with tools on how to carry out city square transformation process collaborating with the community.

*Original text in English*

*Revival of City Squares in Balkan Cities is a project of cooperation between urban operators from the Balkans. It is funded by the Swiss Cultural Programme in the Western Balkans (CSP) under the Regional Cooperation Projects programme.*

*(<http://rcsbc.blogspot.com/2011/03/city-squares-as-places-for-democratic.html>).*

## FROM ELSEWHERE...

### AFRICA: THE WEALTH OF POVERTY

Europe is changing. The world as well. Intentions are being formulated. Approaches conflict – implementation forecasts rub against concerted optimism which seek, in this process, to also understand others' intentions. This "elsewhere" in the presence of whom all must be decided in order that together, everyone lives in the world such as it has the inconvenience of existing.

In this renegotiation of our being-together, Africa is victim of the representation that others make of it.

I would like to enable – through my participation in this redefinition of us – that once again something should be evoked by Africa.

But by the Africa that I experience every day. The one that we claim has been in the media and the fora enough now. I am talking about this poor Africa. Why is it enough? Is poverty less serious today? Has something fundamental changed? It is not clear. We only hear that Africa is not just poor and that we must now show a more positive image of it. To what aim? That is not said.

Africa is not just poverty. It seems difficult at first sight to oppose such a premise. However, I see that it is just that. Or rather it is firstly that – it is poor – before being anything else. That it is nothing else, that everything it could be otherwise it is since and from poverty.

Is Africa a productive force? A decision-making force? Even only an influential one? We all know that this is not the case. Would Africa be made of its History? But who can ignore that African History was almost entirely destroyed by colonisers and who cannot see that the new Western Empire has undertaken, in a few years, to erase the little that colonists weren't able to completely wipe out in several centuries?

And now that there is nothing left to destroy, nothing left to take, to steal, now that there is nothing, all that can be done to make things worse is this – censure the assertion of poverty in Africa and ban Africa's claim to its poverty. For Africa to sink down even further, we can only stop it from owning even its poverty. It would then be reduced to less than nothing, dispossessed of its final identity, of the final form of life that it has left: its poverty.

We should talk of something else, conceive our expressions leaving aside the poverty which shrouds everything around us and impregnates

FROM ELSEWHERE

even our smallest actions. We must behave as if the poverty of poor countries is only brief, transient, incidental. Better still, we should hope that by not saying anything, pretending to forget it, we could contribute to seeing it disappear faster! But what!?! Are we still expected to believe in development? Are we expected to swallow this absurd new label of “emerging” countries or continents? Any vaguely serious economist now recognises that the Western model and economic level cannot be shared; the Earth’s resources simply do not allow it. Wealth, abundance, Western prosperity are not, and will not, be extendable to the entire planet, far from it. The poverty of poor countries will not disappear, and globally, will not improve. Those in the poor world will stay poor, whatever happens. The future of poor countries lies in their poverty. And this future has begun.

Those amongst us who live or work there can see this every day; what, for want of a better word, is called the informal economy, but which is much more than that – a way of relating, a culture, a philosophy – is the livelihood of the vast majority of our fellow citizens. It is a model which has integrated poverty as its basis, a model built with the absolute disrespect for Western economic rules, and which is perfectly opposable to it as it shares only one feature – its effectiveness.

Yes, let us finally accept that our work really is wrapped in poverty. Yes, it shows us something about it. But never to complain about it and even less to be pitied about it. You would need to be blind not to see the beauty, softness, tranquillity, peace that run through all these forms and expressions that we reveal, that we implement, and for which poverty is the very essence, the opportunity and the future.

I like it, in Dakar, in that Africa. It is here that I am. It is from here that I am together with the others in the world. My thoughts, my work is well and truly African. Poverty is its salt, its context and its only perspective. Poverty is its entire vocabulary. I must speak it well or keep quiet. But, why on earth would I keep quiet, when with these words, there are so many marvellous things to say!?

For the world, which cannot be the world without everyone’s presence, to remain the best place where our humanity can affirm itself, we must, having already dispossessed the African being of political initiative, of his place and his identity, stop wanting to take away his poverty.

BIOGRAPHIES

# OF LAWWRITERS

### **Hélène Combe**

Hélène Combe, sociologist and political expert, is General Delegate for the Observatory for Public Decision, and holds the new Chair “Sustainable Human Development & Territories” at the Ecole des Mines of Nantes (France). Since the 1980s, she has been committed to the implementation of sustainable human development in territories and organisations, by developing participative methods and tools.

### **Milena Dragičević Šešić**

Milena Dragičević Šešić is a former President of University of Arts, Belgrade, now Head of UNESCO Chair in Interculturalism, Art Management and Mediation, professor of Cultural Policy & Cultural Management. Member of the Board of the European Diploma in Cultural Project Management (Foundation Marcel Hicter, Brussels). Member of Art & Culture Sub-board of OSI (Soros network). She has written 15 books and 100 essays, translated in 16 languages.

### **Simona Levi**

Simona Levi is a multidisciplinary artist born in Italy and established in Barcelona since 1990. She is the Director of Conservas, a cultural activity centre. She is an actress and theatre director. Since 2000, she has directed as curator the scenic and visual arts festival Innmotion which takes place at the CCCB (Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona) during the Grec festival. She is an outstanding activist in European social movements in the area of free circulation of knowledge, the right to housing and the use of public areas. She is also involved in several artistic and activist platforms.

### **Jean-Michel Lucas**

Jean-Michel Lucas, academic, has a long-standing commitment to cultural action, through the responsibilities that he held at the Ministry of Culture in France (advisor for Jack Lang – former culture minister, regional director for Cultural affairs). His research work deals with the critique of cultural policies, and under the pseudonym Doc Kasimir Bisou, he pleads in favour of the integration of ethic issues in the conducting of cultural policies.

### **Pau Rausell Köster**

Pau Rausell is an economist, doctor, and professor at the Department of Applied Economics of the University of Valencia. Since 1993, he has been Director of Research in the Applied Economics of Culture at the same department. He is also a member of the Tourism and Cultural Economics Interuniversity Institute for Local Development of the Universities of Valencia and Jaume I de Castellon. He participates in European research projects (Sostenuto) and in Latin American research projects (Latin American Cultural Centre, Project SIEDECC).

### **Jaron Rowan**

Jaron Rowan is researcher, lecturer, founding member of YProductions – [www.yps.site.net](http://www.yps.site.net) – and member of the Free Culture Forum. He works from a critical perspective on the analysis of the economy of culture, specializing on cultural policy, the creative industries and cultural work. He currently lectures at Goldsmiths, University of London and UOC, Open University of Catalonia. He has contributed to many publications and in 2010 he has published the book *Emprendizajes en cultura: discursos, instituciones y contradicciones de la empresarialidad cultural*, published by Traficantes de Sueños.

### **Oumar Sall**

Oumar Sall is a Senegalese cultural activist living and working in Dakar. He is a founding member of several initiatives and networks in Senegal, Africa, and the rest of the world. He is also an art critic and documentary filmmaker (*Words of Children*, Mangui Film Productions). Since 1990 Oumar Sall has coordinated the Africa Group 30 cultural information network (<http://g30.nelamservices.com>), whose primary mission is to gather and disseminate cultural information on the African continent thanks to the support of UNESCO (IFCD, International Fund for Cultural Diversity).

### **Deepak Srinivasan**

Deepak Srinivasan is a performance artist, media practitioner, and researcher, working as faculty at Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology, Bangalore ([www.srishti.ac.in](http://www.srishti.ac.in)). He is also a member of Maraa ([www.maraa.in](http://www.maraa.in)), a media & arts collective based in Bangalore. His explorations with media content and participative media rise out of his days as content developer with Worldspace Satellite Radio and his work with urban communities' centric media programmes at Maraa. Media, art and design practice have become his current focus.

# SOSTENUTO, THE PROJECT, THE PARTNERS

Experimenting, modelling and spreading new management and organisation methods in the cultural sector within the Med zone and beyond.

Having gathered seven partners in the Med space, the Sostenuto project aimed – from May 2009 to April 2012 – to experiment, model and spread new management and organisation methods in the cultural sector within the Med zone and beyond.

**It was articulated around three components:**

A **Laboratory component** which proposed to experiment four innovative organisation and management models:

- › **an incubator for cultural activities and companies** (Leadpartner A.M.I.; Marseille – France): the CADO incubator aims to propose to cultural entrepreneurs to develop their projects by sharing services and benefiting from an accompaniment in the structuring and perpetuation of their structures;
- › **a cluster** grouping companies in the artcraft field (CITEMA; Chiusi – Italy) to stimulate the development of their skills and economic activities;
- › **a local non monetary system of exchange** (Bunker; Ljubljana – Slovenia) to enable the exchange of knowhow, services and skills between inhabitants, associations and institutions in the Tabor quarter;
- › the implementation of **new governance methods** (Expediatio; Kotor – Montenegro and Zunino e Partner Progetti srl; Liguria – Italy) to support a better integration of the cultural sector by public authorities in their development strategies.

A **Modelling component** (coordinated by the University of Valencia, Spain) which proposed to capitalise on laboratory experiments, to model them and to evaluate their transferability.

A **Dissemination component** (coordinated by the Relais Culture Europe; Paris – France) which proposed to continue the debates around the key themes of the project: Europe, Culture, Innovation(s) and the Med area.

**The Sostenuto project brings together the following partners:**

**A.M.I., Centre de développement pour les musiques actuelles**  
LEAD PARTNER

Founded in 1985, A.M.I. is a Marseille association dedicated to artistic innovation, cultural development and decentralised cooperation. It develops an incubator for cultural businesses and activities, produces the MIMI festival and accompanies artists on its territory and internationally (workshops, artist residences, networks and cultural actions).

A.M.I. is also one of the founding structures of the emblematic “La Friche La Belle de Mai” cultural centre.

[www.amicentre.biz](http://www.amicentre.biz)

## **BUNKER**

Bunker is a non-profit organization for the realization and organization of cultural events. Bunker produces and presents contemporary theatre and dance performances, organizes different workshops and other educational programs, carries out various research methods in the field of culture and brings together one of the most noted international festivals, the Mladi Levi festival. The aim of Bunker is to refresh and invigorate the Slovene cultural space with innovative approaches; to encourage the mobility of artists and their works both in Slovenia and abroad; and to promote the intertwining of different art disciplines.

[www.bunker.si/eng/](http://www.bunker.si/eng/)

## **CITEMA**

Founded in 2006, the Cité Européenne des Métiers d’Art (CITEMA) [European city for crafts] is a non-profit cultural association based in the Tuscany region. It aims through its activities – professional accompaniment, resource centre, exhibitions – to: develop and promote art crafts; favour the transmission and sharing of knowhow; encourage networks of professionals, structures and public and private organisations in the sectors of art crafts and design; encourage the mobility of craft workers.

[www.associtema.eu](http://www.associtema.eu)

## **ECONCULT**

Econcult is a research unit on Cultural Economics, which is part of the University of Valencia and the Interuniversity Institute for Local Development ([www.iidl.es](http://www.iidl.es)), working since 1995. Its areas of expertise include: culture and local development; cultural policies; cultural tourism; cultural industries (theatre, music, audiovisual, etc.); economic impact and cultural indicators; museum economy and heritage; and musical societies. From this wide range of possibilities, one of the main research priorities is linked to the field of sustainability, culture, and local development.

[www.uv.es/econcult/](http://www.uv.es/econcult/)

## **EXPEDITIO**

The non-governmental organization Expeditio, Centre for Sustainable Spatial Development, founded in 1997, has the mission to encourage sustainable spatial development and to enhance urban and rural areas in Montenegro and the South East European region through activities in the fields of sustainable architecture, cultural heritage, urban planning and overall civil society development.

*[www.expeditio.org](http://www.expeditio.org)*

## **RELAIS CULTURE EUROPE**

The Relais Culture Europe has the mission to accompany French artistic and cultural players in the evolution and development of their practices and European insertion.

Since its creation in 1998, the Relais Culture Europe has been assigned the function of National Contact Point for the European Union Culture programme (2007-2013). It is principally financed by the French Ministry for Culture and Communication and by the European Commission.

*[www.relais-culture-europe.org](http://www.relais-culture-europe.org)*

## **ZUNINO E PARTNER PROGETTI srl**

An engineering and architecture company founded by the Italian architect Enrico Zunino, by Jacques Mattei, French expert in territorial and local development, and by Marie-Paule Mancini-Neri, jurist in French and European law of the environment and sustainable development. ZEP PROGETTI srl is specialised in the refurbishing of historical centres and in the elaboration of management and governance tools for territories. ZEP PROGETTI srl works in many European and North African countries within the framework of decentralised French cooperation.

*[www.zepprogetti.eu](http://www.zepprogetti.eu)*

FORUM OF LJUBLJANA

“READY TO CHANGE?”

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*Ready to Change? – Experimental Forum on Culture and Social Innovation in Europe and in the Med Area* – was held in December 2010, in Ljubljana (Slovenia). It has gathered more than 190 participants from around 20 countries from Europe and beyond; players that have noticed the important changes in our societies and the difficulties resulting from these changes. As experimenters and explorers, they are putting their efforts into proposing new ways of operating in the cultural sector and beyond. Bunker was the host partner of this event..

In a context of multiple and confusing crises, it has seemed important to us, Sostenuto partners, to highlight how cultural actors are coping with social transformations, with transformations of public policies, or with transformations of cultural and artistic practices (new collaborative practices, the integration of communication technologies, etc.).

We have thus hazarded in Ljubljana to:

- › combine our knowledge, our experiences, and our desires in order to take a collective position;
- › demonstrate the determinant role that we are assuming in this moment of our history, one which is illuminating the meanings and reconstructing models of solidarity, and proposing new ways of thinking and new forms of organization and relationships.

And thus, to make the point about our abilities to:

- › initiate and monitor economic and social transformations;
- › think about new ways of more solidarity-oriented social relationships;
- › create new ways of distributing knowledge and wealth in our societies.

Three dynamics have given the rhythm of our working days:

- › the sharing of knowledge through an Open University on themes related to the evolution of our systems of thoughts, values and actions;
- › the exchange of experience and examples of practices to transfer and pollinate other ideas, to open new forms of relations and interrelations between people, to exchange on new processes of construction/deconstruction in artistic projects;
- › the co-writing of a common declaration, the “Manifesto Ljubljana 1.0” affirming our wishes regarding the redefinition of artistic and cultural action in the social sphere. This common declaration brings our engagements and our analyses, but also our hopes into a European society making the citizenship, the sharing and the solidarity one of the foundations of its construction.

*To find out more:*

*The Sostenuto blog:* <http://sostenutoblog.wordpress.com/>

*Videos on Bunker website:* [www.bunker.si/eng/sostenuto-lectures-and-presentations](http://www.bunker.si/eng/sostenuto-lectures-and-presentations)

FORUM

# MANIFESTO LJUBLJANA 1.0

Towards Transformational Cultures

*Taking into consideration the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000), the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001), and in view of the Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights (2007) and the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue “Living together as equals in dignity” (2008);*

*We, participants, present in Ljubljana for the “Ready to Change?” Forum of December 2010, the following Manifesto.*

### **We see the current context as an opportunity.**

The change is already happening. We are part of a process of transformation which depends on interdependence, on a model of sustainable resources based on interaction and fairness. The separation between professionals, experts, intermediaries and “everyone” has vanished.

We need to re-evaluate our own realities; indeed, regarding contemporary collective issues, culture is at the core of the ongoing transformations. The conditions of such re-evaluations include: time, relations, processes, etc.

There are numerous, diverse, expanding fields of actions in which we can act (working spaces, void spaces, interstitial spaces, margins, etc.).

### **We believe in the intelligence of individuals and in the positive effects of a connected world.**

We see the future as a world based on values such as human rights, equal dignity, humanism.

In the process of the emancipation of the person, identity is the capacity to position oneself within the world. This is a precondition to interacting with one another.

Identity building is a critical and open process of self actualisation, fulfilment, empowerment, and the capacity to trespass borders and take risks.

### **We think culture is the condition of such society and such transformations, and we will contribute to making this possible by opening four processes of debate:**

- › the ethical debate<sup>1</sup> as a necessary condition for transformation and regeneration;
- › art as a critical process of recognition, transformation, and the production of meaning and symbols;
- › freedom of artistic creation (expression) as a fundamental condition of emancipation and transcendence;
- › new models of intellectual or artistic property (Copyleft, the Creative Commons instead the dominant model of Copyright and intellectual property) as a new way of thinking about common goods.

*Original text in English*

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1. Creating the conditions of confrontation and interaction between different morals or values.

# FINAL CONFERENCE OF VALENCIA

*On 19 and 20 January 2012, within the Sostenuto project framework, the University of Valencia – the project's scientific partner in charge of economic modelling – organised the conference which closed three years of work: "Revealing the keys to social and economic innovation in the Med area: Culture in the front line".*

To find out more: [www.uv.es/soste/](http://www.uv.es/soste/)

The main contribution of the Sostenuto project is the positioning of culture as one of the key factors of social and economic change in a moment where the economic crisis has obliged Europe to redefine the traditional elements of competitiveness and reformulate its sustainable development model.

Culture is acquiring a growing function in the demands for transformation of our political, social and economic system, not only because it has the capacity to catalyse innovation, but also because it incorporates a network of values which bring a new ethical interpretation to social and economic exchanges.

The initiatives carried out within the Sostenuto framework by A.M.I. (project leader), Bunker, CITEMA, Expeditio and Zunino e Partner Progetti srl provided evidence of the potential of creative and cultural activities in social stimulation and territorial development processes, and in the consolidation of areas inclined to change and innovate.

From the interlinking of laboratory experiments and supported by the expansion of academic literature, Sostenuto identified several elements which explain the emergence of new types of economic organisation and reinforce the innovative capacity of the cultural sector.

The research carried out during the project aimed to provide replies to three main questions: does culture have specific capacities to generate or trigger innovation? Are there channels through which innovation can be transmitted from the cultural sphere to the social or economic sphere? Do the MED regions function differently from the other European regions?

The final conference wanted to be a platform for presenting the most important conclusions in terms of modelling and theoretical concepts. It also acted as a discussion forum around the political interpretation of the implications of these conclusions in formulating a collective contribution for the implementation of the social aspects of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Within this framework, the opening round table "Transforming society, renewing the European project: Culture, a basis?" aimed particularly to:

- › think about the redefinition of the European political project in a moment of crisis and of major world transformations;
- › debate a development model which re-examines the economy, society and democracy;
- › position culture as a key resource for this change.

This round table gathered: Catherine Lalumière, president of Relais Culture Europe; Alin Nica, chair of the EDUC Commission (Commission for Education, Youth, Culture and Research) of the Committee of the Regions; Pavel Gantar, sociologist, former president and former deputy of the National Assembly of Slovenia.

The presentations of these three speakers are assembled here. They complete and close this volume.

 Catherine Lalumière,  
president of Relais Culture Europe

For this round table, our objective is to think about the role of culture as a factor for the renewal of the European project.

It is true that discussing the renewal of the European project is particularly necessary today. Europe is in crisis. A serious crisis which was first a banking, budgetary, financial, monetary then social and political crisis. We can be concerned, as aren't they the system itself and the basis of European construction which are in crisis and not only, temporarily, public finances? In this situation, what can culture do? Apparently this is a preposterous question. The crisis which has hit Europe today is a crisis which is primarily economic and very materialistic. To turn towards culture to help escape the crisis and to renew the European project, is to impose a too heavy responsibility on its shoulders. But finally, culture can do many things.

I am not going to dwell on the first thing which comes to mind. Cultural activities can create jobs, arouse or reinforce the economic dynamism at all levels, in towns, regions, countries. The result is valued in financial wealth as culture produces financial wealth. But we need to be attentive to the content of the cultural message which earns money. This message can clash with principles. Financial gain – if it results in the diffusion of dangerous ideas – risks ending up with a negative result.

The second area in which culture can bring innovation and renewal – and consequently progress – is the area of social relationships. Today in Europe, this is extremely important. Within our continent, we are confronted by tensions between social groups who do not necessarily

belong to the same culture and who do not live well together. These are the problems of minorities, particularly in central Europe; the problems of immigrants; social differences between the rich and the poor, the suburbs and the town centres; the tensions between young and old, between men and women, etc. In this framework, culture, inter-cultural relationships, knowledge of the other person's culture can help improve the situation. There again, like the economic dimension, when we talk about culture helping improve social relationships, we must be attentive to the content of the cultural message. If the cultural message consists of boasting about your own culture whilst "crushing" that of the other person, it is certainly not the best message. The content of the cultural message must, therefore, be of a certain type, as culture can also be an explosive factor if the cultural message is aggressive and proud, imperialistic and arrogant.

I would like to develop a bit more a third area in which culture can contribute to innovation. It is neither the economic domain nor the social one. It is a more political and more global domain. I am touching on a sector which is talked about much less than the two previous ones. We have said that we are in a crisis. We need deep reforms in the major policies which structure European society. Currently in Europe, we advocate reforms in economics, the social domain, environmental protection, etc.

But when we look at the texts, we see that the imagination remains modest. Why? Because the European ruling class has not really been educated in making major innovations. Whether we want it or not, we have lived for years with a dominant thought, or in any case a dominant approach which makes it extremely difficult and very rare that we call into question the fundamental basis of the system. It is particularly true in the area of economic thought, which tends to become the work of pure expert technicians, often Anglo-Saxon and in favour of liberalism or a capitalism which has become financial, that no one – at least in the ruling class – really contests. In these conditions, it is very difficult to imagine truly innovative formulae. We dream up reforms, but inside the system. The actual framework is not questioned; intellectually, we are unable to really question it. In fact, if we want to go past "minor" reforms, the economy must be analysed not only by economists, but also by historians, sociologists, psychologists, specialists of social questions, environmental specialists, jurists and finally, the economy must be examined and reformed according to a global political project. As we are unable to judge the economy compared to a global political project, we too often implement reforms which are narrow or rapidly surpassed as they were not conceived with a sufficiently wide and forward vision.

In summary, we can say that we have today, in Europe, excellent specialists, but that these specialists are not sufficiently cultivated, i.e. with a more global vision that only culture can really give. In these conditions, it is obviously difficult, if not impossible to derive a true European project which has a meaning. The experts and technicians are rarely visionaries capable of truly innovating.

But Europe, today, needs a truly innovative project.

In the past, European construction was based on a project. The founding fathers had a true culture, which is why their project had a real value and achieved the success it did. The founding fathers in 1945-1950 had greatly observed and thought. Culture, in the broadest sense of the word, guided them when they launched the construction of Europe. Firstly, culture guided them by indicating the base on which they should build this gathering of European peoples so that they could seek reconciliation and build a durable peace. This cultural base – and it was a cultural base – became the humanistic and democratic values affirmed from 1950 in the European convention of human rights of the Council of Europe. Since then, these values have become the cement which unites Europeans and protects them from a return to the barbarity that Europe knew in the 1930s and which is a permanent threat. It is this cultural affirmation of these values which is the shield that has protected European construction from a return to barbarity for the past fifty years up to today.

If we want a project for society which respects democracy, respects freedoms, respects others, we need a cultural base. Culture is our shield. I believe today that Europe should reaffirm it with the utmost clarity. Obviously, today we are in 2012 and times have changed from 1945 or 1950. However, the necessity for the European Union to have a global project – a political project – remains. In the same way, it is necessary for this project to include a very important cultural dimension, as it is this which gives meaning to everything. However, and we can strongly regret it today, this cultural dimension seems to have moved to the background. Over the past fifty years, the economy has invaded the scene and made the markets and money the main objectives of the European Union. The way of thinking of Europe has become almost exclusively materialistic.

To give life again to the European project, it is evidently essential to re-launch the economy. But we must also give an essential place to culture. This includes the culture of the past – as Europe has accumulated a considerable material and spiritual heritage which must feed today's and tomorrow's actions at all levels – but it also includes the creativity, innovation and imagination necessary to construct the future Europe.

However, we note that official documents are below the level to truly

innovate. We talk all the time about the economy of knowledge. But what is behind the word “knowledge”? We have the impression that it is mainly technical, tangible, precise, immediately useful knowledge. But deeper historical and philosophical knowledge is not considered in the economy of knowledge. In a world which is rapidly and profoundly changing, it is not sufficient to change a machine by a higher performance one; we must be capable of stepping back and positively and negatively criticising what exists. We must be capable of imagining other systems, other fundamental concepts, other mechanisms different from the previous ones. We live in a world where science and technology change enormously, but a world where society and individuals follow – in the majority – the slope of conformism, of a lack of imagination and finally, a fairly lazy creativity, so that in the end, changes remain superficial. It is by culture, a living, demanding and deep culture that we could truly make society progress. This is truly my conviction.

More than ever, Europe needs a global and political project for society – in the noblest sense of the word “political”. And this global and political project for society needs to rest on a broad, deep cultural base, rich in analysis and proposals – in short, a cultural base of great quality. Europe needs it for itself. Other peoples feel the same need, and I am thinking particularly – we are on the shores of the Mediterranean – of the South Mediterranean, which as we know has recently undergone revolutions.

 Alin Nica,  
chair of the EDUC Commission  
(Commission for Education, Youth, Culture  
and Research), Committee of the Regions

Firstly, I would like to use this opportunity to give you some insight into the functioning of the Committee of the Regions and into its positions on cultural policies.

Secondly, I would look into some defining features of culture, seen as a key component to social and economic innovation and the role for local and regional authorities.

And thirdly, I would conclude with some thoughts about the future challenges but also the new opportunities that lie ahead.

### » A few words about the Committee of the Regions

As many of you might already know, the Committee of the Regions was established by the Maastricht Treaty in 1994 as a consultative body to provide representatives of local and regional government with a voice at the heart of the European Union. The European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament are obliged to consult the Committee of the Regions on proposed EU laws across a wide range of policy areas, including education, culture, and information society.

In fact, about 70% of the EU legislation is implemented on the local and regional level depending on the governance structure in each Member State. So it is the Committee of the Regions that gives this level a say over the drafting of the legislation. It also helps bringing Europe closer to its citizens and encourages a culture of subsidiarity in order to ensure that decisions are taken at the closest practical level to the citizen.

Many of the aspects linked to the role of culture for social and economic development made the object of Committee of the Regions opinions in the recent past. I will illustrate them with some examples.

### » Culture to foster social and economic innovation in coping with the economic crisis: a role for local and regional authorities

It was rightly pointed out before that the current crisis is “forcing Europe to redefine the traditional elements of competitiveness and reformulate its sustainable development model”. This was very well

understood at the Committee of the Regions and just fairly recent our President stated that “it is high time for us to show political responsibility and to rethink our European model in both political and economic terms – and also in cultural terms”<sup>1</sup>.

## **1/ Creative industry as an engine for innovation and economic growth, especially at the regional level**

We should not be afraid of responding to the challenges in a specifically “European way”, rather than trying to copy other parts of the world. In our view, this “European way” is based on the richness of our geographical and cultural diversity, on multilevel partnerships born out of our long history of democracy, on a better balance between the market and public goods, and on a dynamic between competition and cooperation.

At a time when the available resources are limited, policy makers feel the need to find new solutions and develop innovative public service models. Choosing for innovation, including social innovation through culture, may sound obvious, but it does require a serious European mentality shift.

For fifteen years we have been told that the wellbeing of European citizens was dependant on their being turned into customers, thanks to public-sector privatisation and liberalisation. The crisis has at least succeeded in opening our eyes to the emptiness of such reasoning. Results of recent Eurobarometers on consumption behaviours shed light on it. Moreover, for too long, innovation was associated to high-tech projects and costly investments in research centres.

At the Committee of the Regions, we recognise the importance of balancing technological, social and public sector innovation; it is particularly important to promote societal innovations by combining different subsectors of innovation activity, e.g. linking the development of technology, art and design, culture and heritage, and services.

In the post-crisis economy, culture can play a role in creatively meeting social policy objectives by fostering innovation as a way to achieve social outcomes. Culture and art can trigger behavioural changes and have the power to create new social relationships to motivate people to use their abilities to be creative.

In fact, culture is a European growing industry. The European Competitiveness Report 2010 states that the cultural and creative industries account for 3% of total employment (2008) and 3,3% of GDP (2006) and that between 2000 and 2007 employment in the sector

1. Speech by President Bresso at the Conference on “An integrated approach to development – the key to a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe”, Poznań, 24 November 2011.

grew on average much more rapidly than in the EU economy as a whole<sup>2</sup>.

Local and regional authorities play a key role in developing and fostering culture in their respective areas, not least in protecting the cultural heritage and promoting artistic innovation. At the same time, they support and assist not only cultural institutions and initiatives but they also ensure education and training, as well as organise festivals and cultural events.

For their part, local and regional authorities have successfully integrated cultural and creative industries into their development strategies and this has contributed to boosting local economies. Our local authorities are at the forefront of social innovation, not at least because we finance public infrastructure and services. It is our role to promote an effective access to social, economic, educational and cultural services for people living in poverty or social exclusion.

In highlighting the essential contribution of culture, especially the cultural and creative industries, in implementing the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Committee of the Regions insisted on a bold innovative approach. In this period of economic crisis it is a place for cultural and creative industries to generate multidisciplinary and multicultural solutions. And for this to happen, Europe needs open-minded, pioneering players at local and regional level to create social innovations and the global business activity they help to engender.

In fact, creativity is locally rooted and therefore, in order to develop, cultural and creative industries need local networking, clustering, business incubators and partnerships between art and science/ industrial institutes and universities and businesses. At the same time, these industries strongly contribute to local and regional development by making European regions more attractive, developing sustainable tourism and creating new employment opportunities. They play a key role in fostering a competitive and innovative market economy in Europe.

In particular, it is possible at the level of local and regional authorities to set up networks and databases of young artists, promote the training of young people in artistic and cultural disciplines, and help young artists to become professional. They could stimulate multimedia and multicultural experimentation, make public spaces available for the work of young artists, encourage the artistic and cultural appreciation of the young audience, support young people in forming associations in the artistic and cultural domain, and foster innovation in local traditions and vocations.

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*2. European Competitiveness Report 2010, COM staff working document SEC(2010) 1276.*

## **2/ Cultural diversity, heritage and intercultural dialogue**

At the same time, cultural activities can help to foster social cohesion and inclusion by developing intercultural understanding and building strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace and in schools and therefore boost the potential of the cultural and creative sectors. Because culture is not only about economic development, but it also contributes to social development, as well as heritage and identity.

Therefore, we at the Committee of the Regions believe that Europe's strength lies in its diversity. Respect for cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity is one of the basic principles underlying the process of European integration. The Committee of the Regions is also actively involved in an important programme at EU level, the European Capital of Culture, as well as in the launching of the European Heritage Label.

We need appropriate tools to promote to the full Europe's cultural richness and diversity and achieve the "strategic objectives of prosperity, solidarity and security" both inside and outside the EU.

## **3/ Culture as a vital element in international relations**

Culture has an important role to play in the relations between the Member States and their regions but also for their relations with non-EU countries.

Intercultural exchange should become the cornerstone of dialogue with candidate countries and part of the Union's neighbourhood policy. In cross-border regions in particular, the quality and scale of cultural cooperation is a crucial element in the European integration process as it faces global challenges.

The EU should support and encourage the mobility of young artists in Europe, the creation of international networks and groupings of artists, and exchanges and creative residencies for young artists at EU and third-country level. The Committee of the Regions also shares the need to foster dialogue between religious communities and associations.

## **» Closing remarks**

The strategic and inclusive approach proposed by the Commission in the next post-2013 programme "Creative Europe" to support cultural and creative industries deserves to be welcome. But in order to be successful, integrated development strategies should be defined at relevant territorial levels, in partnership between the authorities in charge of the different public policies (such as economic develop-

ment, employment, education and culture) and the representatives from civil society, namely business, workers and citizens associations.

This requires increased cooperation among all cultural policy players at all levels, taking due account of local and regional authorities and their networks.

*Original text in English*

 Pavel Gantar,  
sociologist, former president and former deputy  
of the National Assembly of Slovenia.

Thank you for the opportunity to take part at this opening round table. The title suggests very openly, that culture – taken in its broader sense, as a production of new aesthetic values and contents, and in its anthropological sense as a “way of life” – could and should contribute to the transformation of society and to renew the European project.

I want to be honest. I’m simply not confident, how exactly – facing the severity of European crisis – culture can do this. Is it culture, which cannot be viewed as a “singularity” but as an expression of pluralities of cultural forms, really such a powerful force that can resolve the conflicts and bridge conceptual disagreements and powerful financial interests, as we see them today in a face of financial crisis, that has so deeply struck some countries and European banking and monetary system?

In my view, no one can really control the consequences of its own actions. And this, believe me, particularly applies for governments. We observe how the discussion on possible solutions to “debt crisis” has not only divided political leaders, but also the Europeans on the issue who is to blame for what is happening. It is not so seldom to observe in media or in discourses of the political leaders, that let’s say, more “lazy” and irresponsible Mediterranean people and their leaders are prone for spending more than earning... The current crisis is too often interpreted in cultural terms where some attributes

such as “laziness”, “irresponsibility”, “dependence”, “redistributive mentality” are ascribed to the nations at large and serve as an explanation to the crisis. Therefore in the context of the crisis, cultural differences have been too easily transformed into prejudices, thus delivering a “sensible explanation” that “the others” are to blame. If such “culturally based” explanations provide a platform for political mobilisation and political action we face the rise of nationalistic movements. To conclude, the economic and financial crisis is translated into “cultural categories” and turns into the cultural conflict. If such trend prevails, it is obviously that there is an end of European project. Therefore in my view it is extremely important to reject such “cultural interpretations” of the crisis.

There is another – in my view important dimension of the present crisis of the European project. As we all know, after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the years of democratic transformation that followed, new member states have joined EU. This was indeed a glorious moment of Europe – even though some countries are still in waiting room – this was reunification of Europe and a ground for optimism. Additionally Schengen agreement and introduction of euro, although not for all member states, gave rise for the belief that we are very close to the vision of Europe that we would like to have. We could label these projects as a sort of the fulfilment of the European political project: every citizen of the continent should have equal rights and opportunities to shape and live his/her life on his/her own way. The borders and different circumstances and particularities should not prevent them in doing so.

Based on my experiences in Slovenian politics, I would dare to say, that even though formal and institutional processes of the enlargement have been completed for new member states, Europeans and even European institutions have not internally adopted and made themselves comfortable with these changes.

Somehow enlargement remains an incomplete project – a project on a halfway, and to some extent additionally threatened by present economic and financial crisis. The European project has accomplished full normative and institutional integration; with still segmented labour markets integration, and incomplete societal and cultural integration.

Here I see the opportunity for cultural practices and forms – to go on renewing and revitalizing the European project at the levels of still incomplete integration – that is on societal and cultural level. This

can be done through the webs and networks, through the exchange of the experiences and practices – to form a solid web of societal and cultural bonds that cannot be easily broken by economic and political turbulences. In my view so called “state level” can do very little for that. The best thing is not to interfere in such processes.

As urban sociologist, I see that the cities and urban territories can play a pivotal role in building societal and cultural integration. Simply because, they always have played such a role, if they were only allowed to, and not prevented by high national-state walls of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The productive role of the cities in building societal and cultural integration is even more important, if we realize that today urban politics after decades of so called neo-liberal urbanism faces new challenges. From the prospective of current economic crisis, cities and urban regions cannot be regarded only as a growth machine and convenient opportunity for all sorts of land speculations and appropriation of public space.

As an example I can take the city of Ljubljana and its region. Financial crisis has forced the developers to stop or even abandon some building projects and new constructions. Also many projects organized by public hand have been put aside. Therefore many building sites, and areas designed for construction stay empty and idle. Here is the opportunity to reclaim the idle land and buildings for alternative users and to reclaim public space even for a limited period of time in some cases. I am convinced that some projects will never be completed and the crisis will have long term impact on urban development. Here indeed is unique opportunity to act quickly and deliver an alternative image of the city, which would reemphasise the public dimension of the built environment and specific needs of the urban dwellers and involve them into participation process.

As it may look paradoxical financial crisis has slowed down if not stopped certain established commercial and building practices in our cities. I really do hate popular talking on “crisis as an opportunity”, nevertheless it opens new considerations on the urban development and offers the opportunities for alternative and innovative urban policies. Old recipes in urban politics and planning hardly work, not only because they are not sustainable, but also because they lost their financial ground. Cities have been regarded as places of innovation. It is time now.

*Original text in English*

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