



State of the Arts

Dealing with

the Divisive

We are faced with a world that seems to get farther and farther away from utopian visions of a unified humanity. Thus, arts and cultural professionals need experiences and strategies to bridge the gaps between communities and individuals. And they need to know when they can and should accept the divisive.

Focus starting on page 14



Dividing lines

The role of an arts and cultural manager always has an element of dealing with what divides us. It might be bringing together different individuals with varied backgrounds, interests, and styles as staff, partners or visitors, or facilitating agreements between institutions. Professionals in arts and culture act as producers of content that deals with societal issues like race, religion or economic disparity. And they are tasked not only with making art, but also try to foster an inclusive, open and diverse society. Therefore, when it comes to dealing with the divisive it is not enough to look at the products. We also have to examine the working conditions, relationships and power dynamics inherent in making that content. On the following pages you will find articles shedding light on these issues from a variety of viewpoints and with very different approaches. This issue of Arts Management Quarterly is meant to provide you with insights and to inspire you to think about the inclusiveness and exclusiveness of your own everyday practices and how you can – or if you even should, because in some cases keeping your distance might be the best choice – try to reach those that are separated from you and your institution by being different in one way or another.

Lastly, one thing must be addressed: We take great care to showcase our authors. But we are unable to do so for one article in this issue because the author has requested to remain anonymous for very understandable reasons. Having to protect the identity of one of our authors has shown us vividly that sometimes the lines that divide us are intentionally drawn to limit what can be said. We thank our anonymous author for the courage to speak up anyway.

State of the Arts

Dirk Schütz
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THEATRE AND EDUCATION IN CHINA

A Dual-Perspective Review

Arts and cultural education at school can not only turn students into adult visitors, but also inspire them to become arts managers. The example of China shows why theatres should invest in such offerings to increase the attractiveness of arts management careers and prepare future arts managers.

by **Scott Yanshun Cai and Liu Zelin**

https://bit.ly/theatre_edu_China

CULTURE IN AND FROM UKRAINE



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“It must go on...”

First thoughts on European culture in and from Ukraine after everything changed with Russia’s invasion on 24 February 2022. Although culture is not the first thing we may think of when considering this war, it is a central element in its preliminary understanding. The question of culture is probably one of the triggers of this aggression.

by **Patrick S. Föhl and Gernot Wolfram**

https://bit.ly/Culture_Ukraine

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Challenges and Unconventional Strategies

Museums in the Arab World can become virtual platforms and “places for change”. Why museums have so far been prevented from assuming this role is not (only) due to technologies and funding.

by **Carsten Siebert**

https://bit.ly/DigitalTransformation_ArabMuseums

BOOK REVIEW

Free Music Theater in Europe

With the book “Free Music Theater in Europe” director and researcher Matthias Rebstock is going on a journey between the worlds of music and theater. Together with four expedition leaders with local knowledge, the book examines the connections between historical and cultural conditions for and within the genre as well as the specific artistic practice based on four case studies.

by **Chris Grammel**

https://bit.ly/rev_freemusictheater_eu

BOOK REVIEW

Cultural management and policy in Latin America

A growing awareness of the cultural effects of imperialism prompts a revision of the approach to cultural management from a decolonial perspective. The need for perspectives from the global South on these issues is evident. This book presents the state of the art of South American cultural management by practitioners and researchers whose work is generally limited to the Spanish-speaking world.

by **Hector Schargoradsky**

https://bit.ly/Review_CulturalManagementPolicy

BOOK REVIEW

Global Trends in Museum Diplomacy

During the last two decades, art institutions have developed as centers of soft power. The book “Global Trends in Museum Diplomacy: Post Guggenheim Developments,” uses three internationally known museums as case studies to explore the complex relations held between these and how governments have evolved to promote museum-based corporate enterprises and global franchises.

by **Tennae Maki**

https://bit.ly/rev_museumdiplomacy

The Banksyation of the Arts

Cultural Networks as Third Spaces and their Potential for Community Engagement

by *Raphaela Henze*

The origins of cultural networks and their variety

Not only have networks as a hybrid form of organization gained importance over the last 30 years, the activity of networking itself has also become increasingly relevant. Stirred inter alia by digitization and the success of social media, numerous international, national, and regional networks have been established since the 1990s in the cultural sector (Staines, 1996; Cvjetičanin, 2011; Laaksonen, 2016; Steinkamp, 2013; Henze, 2018).

This does not mean, however, that cultural networks did not exist much earlier. One of the first official networks in Europe was probably the European Festival Association, founded in Switzerland in 1952. Even before the 'Network Society' made networking an imperative, UNESCO, for example, had recognized the potential of international networks as early as the 1950s and promoted them. As a result, many international organizations representing the interests of specific cultural sectors, such as ITI (International Theater Institute), OISTAT (Organization Internationale des Scenogafes, Techniciens et Architectes de Theatre) or ICOM (International Council of Museums), can be traced back to the initiative of the UNESCO.

These international associations, which have grown and been successful over the years, thus became in part models for national or even regional networks, which were, however, organized more informally and less bureaucratically and which can be characterized in many cases as bottom-up organizations. Some of these networks arose rather spontaneously, while others were set-up for the longer term in order to bring together interest groups, bundle synergies and exchange experiences (for example ENCATC/AAAE/TAPS/EricArts/ACMC/Brokering Intercultural Exchange primarily for academics doing research in the field of cultural management and policy).

Some networks, especially but not exclusively informal ones and those that act as „social” media, primarily want to keep the stirrup for members in their professional and social advancement. Others are more concerned with visibility and with attracting as much attention as possible to their issues, plans, projects and members. Many are interested in (political) influence (e.g. the German Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft), some – and these will be the ones this text primarily focuses on – are more interested in shaping their immediate surrounding and neighbourhood. They therefore belong to the realm of socio-cultural organisations that are by far no new institutions but still to a certain extent under-researched ones although they play a central role when it comes to community engagement and participation – two of the huge buzz words of the last years in our discipline.

“Hierarchical forms of leadership are not necessarily suited to react adequately and, above all, promptly to social changes.”

Dragojević and Dragicevic-Sesic (2005) see the origin of many cultural networks in the increasing questioning of cultural policy objectives and the role of public cultural institutions already back in the 1970s. By this time at the latest, many actors in the cultural sector must have realised that hierarchical forms of leadership are not necessarily suited to react adequately and, above all, promptly to social changes and that they can quickly reach their limits when working with creative people. However, the financing of culture in many countries of the world reflects this paradigm shift only to a limited extent, which is proved, among other things, by the still marginal funding of the so-called „independent scene”.

Research on networks

The inflation of networks in all parts of society makes the discussion of the topic exciting and diverse but also correspondingly difficult. The literature is confusing and ranges from historical studies to social science network theory to network organization in business administration. Khanna in his book *Connectography* (2017) even proposes a discipline of its own. Even the range of networks only in the cultural field is huge and deserves a specification and more research in order to make networks more sustainable and allow them

to reach their full potential that is particularly high when it comes to engaging people from many different walks of life.

This text presents some preliminary findings from empirical research that was conducted in order to gather information about the functioning of cultural networks. 70 cultural networks were chosen randomly in summer 2020 among organisations that a) called themselves networks either in their title or in the explanations they gave about their work and b) featured a presence on the internet, which made sure that they do have at least a certain degree of professionalism and wish to interact and communicate with a broader community and different stakeholders. The networks chosen present a broad variety according to their organisational structure, size, aims, and goals as well as members. This quantitative study, to which 33 networks within Germany responded, offers insights inter alia into the networks' financial as well as organisational structure and how the networks enhance their members involvement.

The relevance of local cultural networks

Apart from that, what stuck out immediately and directly at the beginning was how especially those networks with a relatively narrow regional scope responded to the call for participation. They tended to comment that they are highly interested in receiving the results of this research in order to help them advance their activities and become more sustainable in the long-run. It became also apparent that in many cases it was the initiative of one or two persons that kick-started the network striving for the strength of week ties as Granovetter (1973) has describes this phenomenon already in the 1970ties, in many cases not even with the aim of starting something that would survive longer than a particular project or even changes of members and participants. It is mainly the founders who bring in their personal but also professional networks.

Even after a couple of years of existence many networkers explained that the way they seek new members is by word of mouth and through their projects because the personal interaction and knowing each other is important particularly when it comes to building long-term relationships and trust that inspires even more participation.

These first reactions and responses are exceptional because in cultural management the link between cultural networks and participatory cultural pro-

jects seems to be neglected. Articles on cultural networks - especially those in more rural areas - as third spaces (Bhabha, 1984) or on particular funding programmes for them are still relatively rare.

Cultural networks as role models

Several networks are hidden champions in their respective regions with a vast group of highly engaged and motivated people who know their neighbourhood and region well and have access to places that allow for a variety of formats and that do not have the entry barriers of established cultural institutions. It seems time they bring the buzz around networks, community engagement and third spaces as well as third places (Oldenburg, 1989) together.

"We have unfortunately marginalized those who are already out there reaching out to diverse communities successfully."

We have focused for long on what cultural institutions - particularly the established and in many countries heavily publicly funded ones - can do when it comes to audience development and, more currently, when it comes to community engagement and empowerment. However, we have unfortunately marginalized those who are already out there reaching out to diverse communities successfully, providing safe spaces to think, experiment and to be creative as well as in many cases physical places where this can take place in interaction with others.

What follows from this for cultural managers is

- that they need to identify networks as digital third spaces as well as analogue third places because the one often leads to the other. This seems like the most natural thing to do. Whenever you move into a new city or run for a public office you are well advised to join clubs and communities if you want to get to know people. This is not different from what successful cultural managers do. Back in 2017, I had the opportunity to collaborate with a community project called 'Wie? Jetzt!' in a rural area of Germany (Henze, 2018a, 403). It was the idea of a courageous and motivated cultural administrator who wanted more engagement in the arts. Together with an artist she developed

a very vague idea that defined a process more than a project with the aim of realising one year of events being proposed and designed by members of the community. The first thing the artist did was to settle in the region and approach every single club, network, association, and neighbourhood committee and invite them to come to a kick-off meeting. Like this, she identified communicators with vast networks. Later on in the process, events took place in public libraries but also in a sewing shop for instance.

- the need to take projects and processes out of established institution that many people for a variety of reasons still associate with exclusion more than inclusion. Why do you have to go somewhere in order to appreciate or get involved with arts and culture in the first place? Arts and culture can and should be where the people are. Many networks have access to venues that serve as third places able to enact theories of third spaces (Tam, 2020). They are therefore well suited for new forms of cultural collaboration and can help to support the inclusion of marginalized populations. Cultural networks in many cases do collaborative art without even calling it that way. They are therefore a still underestimated vehicle for community development and social cohesion.
- the need to be networkers on and off line (Henze, 2020). To the best of my knowledge many cultural management programmes try to provide their students with extensive networks, particularly with alumni networks that have seen a real hype in the last two decades in Europe. However, how many of these programmes provide their students with networking skills?

What is needed is the ability to identify communicators, to literally speak in a variety of languages (Henze, 2020), to be trustworthy in the sense that you will not disappear the moment it gets difficult (Henze, 2018a, 405), to function as a mentor and moderator, to allow and foster creative ideas that seem unpopular, to accept and enhance the fusion of styles, art forms but also traditions. Or as Timm-Bottos and Reilly (2015, 5) call it: “cultivate skills that promote collaborative engagement and participatory stances that are grounded in an experience of working in solidarity with community.” Service Learning, relatively popular in North America and unfortunately less so in Europe, can enhance the necessary skills of cultural management students (Cuyler, 2018; Timm-Bottos & Reilly, 2015).

¹ The German Secretary of Culture just declared that a huge amount of the budget to support and restructure the cultural sector because of COVID 19 will be go to smaller, volunteer organizations. This sounds like a reasonable thing to do.

All these skills are somehow interpersonal. Skills that have to do with digitization need to be added. The internet obviously provides an amazing space for collaboration, even one that is able to overcome borders, at least to a certain extent, provided that people have or are allowed by their respective governments to access the internet and to acquire trustworthy information (Henze, 2020 a). Despite some obvious downsides, the internet is a third space, and it does not come as a surprise that this space is inhabited by innovative artists and creatives already. For example, the inspiring '[Third Space Network](#)' set up by media artist Randall Packer in the USA is an artist channel that is for years operating, doing inter alia live broadcastings and events, and inspires imaginative action and creative dialogue in the third space. When third places for different reasons like, for instance, the Corona pandemic are not or no longer available, third spaces became even more attractive.

What follows from this for cultural policy is:

- straight forward: money. That particularly socio-cultural organisations are heavily underfunded is known for decades and it is a pity that it needs to be repeated here. However, it is in these organisations and networks where enthusiastic people willing to enhance the situation in their respective communities can be found. Many of them work as volunteers and are as such particularly trustworthy and authentic which is a requirement necessary when you want to involve others (Henze, 2018a).¹ The TRAFÖ Project founded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation in 2015 understood the importance of arts and culture in rural areas and the importance of networks as well as networkers. Amongst other things, the foundation funds positions for people who are supposed to network with a diverse range of stakeholders in the respective regions. 26,6 Mio. Euros are well invested here.

"If you really want to involve more and diverse people you need to be where they are instead of cultural organisations paternalistically coming up with 'low-threshold' offerings."

- the awareness that if you really want to involve more and diverse people you need to be where they are instead of cultural organisations paternalistically coming up with 'low-threshold' offerings. Offer-

ings, ideas, projects and at best processes need to be taken to places that communities own, where people feel at home, comfortable and welcome, where they stop by frequently and naturally. Such spaces cannot successfully be created top-down and from scratch that would counteract their very nature. Many are already there and need to be found. The state of North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany has funded 17 of these third places in rural areas with a funding scheme of 750.000 € in 2019. The scheme allows these places to develop their ideas and concepts further. The fact that 150 networks have applied for funding under this scheme shows the demand but also the involvement of the people engaged.

What follows from this for cultural management research is the need for more research on how networks function because networks are transforming the public sphere and with it democracy itself (Friedland, 1996). We need to find ways to support networks to run art and culture more sustainably because they are enormous resources not only of enthusiastic people but also of knowledge and expertise. Furthermore, we need to make good use of digitization in the sense that it helps theory as well as practice to internationalize the field and thus overcome borders and academic silos as well as the ethnocentrism in our teaching.

The positive sides of the Banksyation of the Arts

The idea of overcoming paternalism in the cultural sector and giving more responsibility to those who cultural policy for decades strives to reach is one that I have elaborated on frequently. Let me sharpen this up: As much as I value professionalism and think that we must invest for example in the education of future artists, I am equally a fierce believer that amazing art can and should come from the streets and amateurs (Peromingo, 2016). I would love to see a Banksyiation of the arts. Networks provide amongst many other things a promising approach to find more people like the British artist, to name only one prominent example, who started as and to a certain extent until today is a street artist whose art is open to everyone and who ended up being a global phenomenon. From Street to Tate and – if need be even to Sotheby's – that is what I would be interested in seeing more and to be precise I want to see it again because this was how the arts as well as artists developed before the state decided to interfere and function as a kind of gatekeeper. Not to be mistaken, I am not advocating for liberalization but for democratization (Henze, 2020a). I argue that the funding as well as the support of net-

works, particularly those smaller, regional ones and those providing third spaces as well as places and are active in community engagement, will help to not only reach out to more and diverse people but to spot and foster creative talent that would otherwise not have a chance to flourish. I also argue for a non-utilitarian culture development planning and funding. One that focuses less on specific (in the end almost always economic) outcomes but is courageous enough to believe in people and their inherent creativity as well as in their ability for co-creation and social innovation, and to trust those that enthusiastically network and engage in community work even without professional backgrounds. Only if cultural policy dares to do this, we will not risk imposing our own vision, sense of aesthetics, or social agenda on participants, downplaying community interests and needs and thus undermine authentic community cultural development (Timm-Bottos & Rielly, 2015; Goldbard, 2006).

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Trauma Entrapment

The Divide Between Black Artists, Black Arts Administrators, and those in power who claim to want to help

By Brea Heidelberg

In the United States, organized and documented calls for racial equity within the nonprofit arts and cultural sector have existed since discussions around the formation of the National Endowment for the Arts in the early 1960s. Black artists and arts managers expressed concern that they would be left out of public funding initiatives and consideration in favor of white-led, Eurocentric institutions. From donor giving to public funding, they were proven correct by decades of marginalization and erasure up to and including much of what is currently occurring in diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA) conversations. This article discusses the division between those who have the luxury of engaging in cultural equity work if they wanted to and Black artists and arts administrators whose economic, psychological, and physical well-being depend on this kind of work getting done.

Protests and promises

The inequities facing Black artists and arts administrators are compounded over time across educational possibilities, career development, and organizational structures (Heidelberg, 2022). While 2020 saw a brief period of sector-wide reckoning made possible by the policy window opened by George Floyd's and Breonna Taylor's murders, it has proven difficult and—for many organizations—seemingly impossible to move beyond often surface level changes that included the development of cultural equity statements, new DEIA-focused positions, and various invitations for traumatized workers to share their experiences suffering inequities within the cultural sector. In the immediate aftermath of nationwide protests focusing on racial injustice, organizations scrambled to discuss and craft cultural equity statements and alter language on their websites. Some organizations dedicated resources to cultural equity planning and initiatives. However, many organizations en-

¹ *Fakequity.com* is a blog dedicated to matters focused on racial equity and what happens when people engage in inauthentic equity (aka fakequity).

gaged in a form of fakequity – “fake equity [that] shows up as all talk and no action” (fakequity.com)¹. Organizations loudly declared proposed changes to their hiring practices, namely to recruit and retain Black arts administrators and the formation of new partnerships with Black artists. Funding institutions discussed listening circles and initiatives designed to provide funding to Black-led and -serving institutions. But the material difference to Black artists and administrators did not match the outpouring of statements and initiative announcements. By now, many organizations have quietly returned their focus to strategic planning structured for resource maximization, prioritizing perceived efficiency over equity. While many of these organizations promise that equity-focused change will be central to their strategic planning, Black artists and administrators are rightly dubious of such claims, which have always rung hollow in the past.

“The material difference to Black artists and administrators did not match the outpouring of statements and initiative announcements.”

Much of this swift movement and equally swift abandonment of equity work can be explained by the politics of attention (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005). Jones and Baumgartner focused on the many ways players in and around the US government attract and repel attention towards and away from policy issues. Their theories about how emotions and information can be crafted to gain policy advantage are helpful in understanding organizational settings as well. The large-scale galvanization of empathy and energy resulting from the murder of George Floyd – bolstered by the focus on that event caused by the Covid-19 pandemic – gave way to the more common concerns of revenue generation and fiscal sustainability when people began to return to a version of their pre-pandemic lives. The explanation of how attention was focused on, and then subsequently drawn away from, the plight of Black people in America is well-researched. Nonetheless the lived experience of these theories is brutal for the Black artists and arts administrators who are suffering from oppressive contexts from kindergarten through the entirety of their careers (Heidelberg, 2022) and experiencing mortal fear in a heavily policed society. For Black creators and administrators, purposeful movement towards more equitable systems and institutions is more than a passing fad; it is a matter of psychological and physical survival. It is therefore crucial for organizations to engage in

a radical reimagining of their internal practices to create the space for the changes many organizations claim to want.

Incomplete equity work and fakeequity

Arts and cultural organizations engaged in fakeequity work generally fall into one of two categories: equity talk without equity action or equity planning without equity action. The former, talking about equity in rushed statements but not implementing any discernable change, has been a larger part of the discussion. The latter has taken longer to manifest. Organizations in this category developed an equity or values statement and began work to change organizational policies and culture. For many of them, changing surface-level practices that did not require critical self-reflection felt worthwhile but, once faced with the more difficult task of accountability, they stalled, leaving their equity work incomplete. Other organizations espousing ideals for how they will be more equitable in the future have struggled with having their new equity work undermined by their inequitable past.

For example, organizational attempts to diversify staff saw new job postings highlighting the organization's commitment to equity and encouraging "diverse candidates" that still resulted in the hiring of another white arts administrator. In most cases, the organization either did not receive many responses from Black applicants (presumably because the organization's inequitable history was widely known) or defaulted to inequitable hiring practices that were ingrained enough to override the publicly stated desire to diversify. For organizations that focused their initial equity efforts on increasing partnerships with "more diverse" communities, being faced with the individuals and communities they have harmed in the past was often the end of their purposeful equity journey.

"Being faced with the individuals and communities they have harmed in the past was often the end of their purposeful equity journey."

In either case, blame is conveniently laid at the feet of those initially deemed worthy of empathy and support: they didn't apply, they weren't a good fit, they didn't take advantage of our proposed partnership. In these

² *Predominantly white spaces assume whiteness is normal and invisible, which makes Black people hypervisible and abnormal. Navigating that duality is highlighted in Ijeoma Oluo's Confronting Racism is Not About the Needs and Feelings of White People.*

cases, othering language betrays othering practices, showing how those they wanted to reach were still seen as outsiders, as organizations slip back into their old practices while patting themselves on the back for the bit of work they did along the way.

Fakequity has permeated the entirety of the cultural ecosystem. Funding streams to support organizations in equity planning have been created but funders have yet to determine how to effectively evaluate such efforts. Despite these new funding streams, pre-existing inequities in funding for Black-led and -serving institutions continue.

The one trend working against fakequity throughout the cultural ecosystem is local arts agencies taking the initiative to reimagine general operating support policies and procedures in order to increase equitable access. It is important to note that these sorts of local initiatives are often met with resistance from large, white-led institutions. In many instances, the same institutions creating equity statements and engaging in equity planning are the ones raising dog-whistle objections (e.g. stating that the main concern is quality, without acknowledging the often racist presumptions associated with the presumed definition of what quality is) to more equitable funding proposals that would begin work to dismantle the ways inequities manifest in public arts funding.

Trauma entrapment

The longstanding inequities in the U.S. cultural sector are harmful enough. However, fakequity compounds that harm with a particularly pernicious consequence: trauma entrapment. Trauma entrapment is the practice of inviting people into a space that you assure them is either psychologically safe or in the process of becoming so – only to trap them in a stagnant space where they are consistently exposed to the traumas they were actively seeking to avoid, e.g. regarding workplaces. Many Black artists and arts administrators are well-versed in navigating white spaces². There is a longstanding history of learning which spaces and institutional contexts are safe and which ones should be avoided. This is what makes trauma entrapment so dangerous. It can prey upon even the savviest of Black artists and arts administrators. If everyday inequities are a familiar song with a steady beat, trauma entrapment is an unexpected bridge leading into a syncopated tempo in double time. By signaling safety and equity-focused effort, it lulls Black artists and arts administrators into a false sense of belonging and care

³ *Double-consciousness is a concept first introduced by W.E.B. Du Bois in *The Soul of Black Folk* (1903). Double-consciousness highlights the struggle of Black people to simultaneously grapple with the desire to remain authentic to one's cultural identity while understanding the need to fully immerse oneself in the dominant white culture. In 2018 Nahum Welang expanded this theory to include the intersection of race and gender that Black women face (triple consciousness) in her article *Triple Consciousness: The Reimagination of Black Female Identities in Contemporary American Culture*.*

that invites them to engage in and with the organization. Then, once the organization's change in language or efforts irritates the fragility of those in power, the same individuals are alienated, gaslit, and frequently forced out of the organization. This practice often compounds workplace trauma many Black artists and arts administrators have already endured.

The glass cliff

One instructive example of how organizational fakequity culminates in trauma entrapment is the "glass cliff." The term was introduced by Ryan and Haslam in 2005 in their discussion of the trend for women leaders to be hired into precarious positions with a higher potential for failure. Women who are qualified to take on leadership roles in times of prosperity and stability are overlooked until an organization is in decline or crisis.

This phenomenon has also been present in cultural organizations who were hiring their first leaders of color amid a pandemic, economic downturn, and significant social unrest. These leaders have been expected to perfectly execute the double- or triple-consciousness³ required of Black individuals operating in predominantly white spaces, namely undergoing the scrutiny and hypervisibility of being the first and/or only Black leader and navigating the specific organizational circumstances or crisis that created the glass cliff conditions in the first place. Many Black leaders are also presented with a board that includes a smattering of the following types: true accomplice who will soon burn out, well-meaning but problematic squeaky wheel, self-serving performative ally, quietly undermining saboteur, and openly antagonistic blusterer. These types operate alongside silent passengers who are either unwilling or unsure of how to engage in equity work. This mixture of people accelerates Black leaders' careening toward the glass cliff. After the Black leader self-selects out or is removed from the organization, the organization will use the same othering language to craft a collective institutional memory about how the organization tried but was unable to effectively operate under a leader of color. This will be used to justify returning to, or maintaining, systems of inequity that pre-dated and outlived the organization's first Black leader.

Conclusion

The matters discussed here are complex. Race, particularly in the United States, is complex. Navigating the interplay between race and capitalism,

compounded by the structure of the nonprofit sector, is complex. Workplace trauma and its long-term impacts are complex. However, the proposed solution to the divide discussed here is simple: either follow through on the promises for change outlined in the equity statements that permeated the field in 2020 or stop promising care and change that you cannot commit to actualizing. Dabbling in dealing with the divisive but quitting when the equity work gets hard will ultimately worsen conditions for the Black artists and arts administrators they come into contact with.

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Pro-Social Conflict

The Impossibility of “Safe, Nice and Good For Everyone”

by Anthony Schrag

Socially Engaged Art is often employed to repair social divisions. Over the past four decades in the UK this kind of work – particularly those works funded by local governments – has been implemented to address issues such as community cohesion, well-being or social exclusion. For example, Bristol-based ACTA theatre project works collaboratively with refugees and host communities to engender positive integration; or The Stove in Dumfries utilises participatory art to engage local communities in explorations of well-being or creative placemaking.

Indeed, public museums and galleries are often tasked to address civic remits such as educational development, well-being, or cultural outreach. Additionally, due to their role as public institutions whose remit is to represent the entirety of a locale, this work is often required to be – as one curator recently requested of my own work – “safe, nice and good for everyone.” Thus, as Hewitt (2011, p 21) suggests, publicly funded art projects are at risk of becoming “service providers” for state mandates. Vickery (2007) also suggests instrumentalising art projects in this manner is a way for governments to “construct civic identities” that are amenable to the dominant hierarchies, and this is antithetical to supporting a public, democratic domain.

The public sphere, however, is an inherently conflictual zone, constructed of debate, discourse and difference. As Deutsche (1996) states: “Conflict, division, and instability, then, do not ruin the democratic public sphere; they are conditions of its existence.” Similarly, theorists like Mouffe (2013), Bishop (2012) or Ranciere (2006) insist art’s value lies in promoting ‘agonism’ over an oppressive conviviality if it is to retain its ethical and political dimension. There is therefore a tension between this urge to ‘make everyone get along’, and the complicated, ‘natural’ dissensual public domain. Arts managers are situated in the centre of this tension, on one hand pulled

in one direction by policy directives and the need to serve citizens in an amenable, hospitable way, but on the other hand pulled in another direction with the need to speak to the multiplicities of their stakeholders, partners and visitors. This is further complicated by local government public museums and galleries who wish to support the ‘good work’ of Socially Engaged Art but also aim to ensure pro-social conflict and dissensual discourse. In short, is it possible to be a publicly-funded, Socially Engaged Art project and to value the conflictual, dissensual public realm?

“Is it possible to be a publicly-funded, Socially Engaged Art project and to value the conflictual, dissensual public realm?”

While it would be impossible to answer this question satisfactorily within this short text, this paper will present two short case studies of participatory arts projects that have occurred within publicly-funded local museums/galleries in Scotland and which were specifically set out to explore this ‘productive’ conflict, and the complications of this in regards to (arts) management. The first project – Kill Your Darlings at the Perth Museum and Art Gallery (2022) – and the second – Atelier Public #2 – took place in Glasgow’s Gallery of Modern Art (2014).

Kill Your Darlings: erasing dissent

Kill Your Darlings was a participatory artwork developed for Perth Museum and Art Gallery (PMAG) in 2022. PMAG is operated by Culture Perth and Kinross (CPK) who are the charitable trust operating on behalf of the City and Regional authority, and their remit is to care for and develop the Museum Collection on behalf of the public.

My project aimed to explore how a Museum Collection could be considered ‘public’ if it was both inaccessible to the public (i.e., kept in the locked Museum stores), as well as being shielded by the Collection Managers (who decide and select which items are worthy of public display). Might a collection curated via a small group of gatekeepers not be a very narrow framing of ‘public’? I therefore proposed a work that aimed to draw attention to the selective nature of such framing and to highlight missing voices within such

framing. I wanted to explore how to support a more nuanced understanding of a democratic realm by providing a more comprehensive representation of ‘the public’.

The project was to be called *Kill Your Darlings*, after the William Faulkner quote that challenges authors to pay attention to characters the writer may adore, but that are not helpful to the storytelling, and – if necessary – to kill those darlings. Similarly, the work invited the public to negotiate which item in the collection is worth ‘forgetting’ in a way that drew attention to identity, history and place. To do this, I proposed that the public of Perth and Kinross democratically vote for a single item from the Collection to symbolically destroy. This single item would be selected from 11 objects that were representative of their collection, ranging from ancient Egypt to early modern local handicrafts, from 18th century Persia to contemporary commemoratives, from papyrus to wood, glass or bronze. Alongside, I would work with different sorts of citizens in the area that perhaps did not engage regularly with the Museum in discussions about how represented (or not) they felt by the Museum Collection - i.e., their collection.

A weekly tally of the voting tokens would be displayed in the gallery to highlight which items were being selected for destruction. This tally also functioned to show differences and diversity of value systems at play within the community, as well as the plurality of perspectives and voices. For example, many young people rejected the Persian tile or the snow-goggles as an example of colonial activities that should be expunged from the Collection; other, older demographics became very passionate that the Communion Cup, as a religious item, should not be destroyed; others still argued that the football shirt was the most useful thing to keep as it was profoundly



Kill Your Darlings: installation view with public.
© Anthony Schrag (left)

Kill Your Darlings: member of public debating which item should be symbolically destroyed.
© Anthony Schrag (right)

local, yet there was also significant resistance to its inclusion as it was not considered significant enough to be in a museum.

Perhaps not surprisingly, PMAG found the proposition that something would be destroyed challenging and planning sessions became raucous, with one collection manager angrily pointing at me and declaring loudly: “you’re not getting your hands on any of my collection!”. Despite being clear that the work did not *actually* aim to destroy a priceless historic artefact, but instead proposed a symbolic destruction, the museum felt that the public would see such a provocation as a tacit agreement of destruction, rather than an invitation to participate in a democratic reflective process. It was, I emphasised, an exercise in “disruptive imagination” (Hyde, 2015) that could usefully promote a more public engagement with the Museum Collection. However, the Museum decided that in a time of Twitter and popularism, such nuance would be lost, and that they would be exposed to a stormy onslaught of public opinion that would be difficult to weather and requested that I change the proposal significantly, or cancel the exhibition.

“In requesting me to change my project, there was a tacit acceptance about the ways in which the public was allowed to engage.”

While the project eventually did go forward in a different format that invited the public’s response to their collection and which did provide a reflection on diversity and difference, I’m keen to highlight the irony that my project about enhancing public engagement with a museum collection was rejected because PMAG was concerned that the public might significantly engage with their museum collection. In other words, in requesting me to change my project, there was a tacit acceptance about the ways in which the public was allowed to engage. Despite the Collection belonging to the public, the museum was deciding the ways in which the public were allowed to engage with their own collection, and these excluded disagreement or critique with the narrative put forward by the museum itself. It was a disavowal of conflict against a dominant hegemony, and a denial of any potential dissent against the museum’s presentation of their definition of ‘public’ and thus, it silenced any potentially different voices. Exploring such silenced and/or alternative voices was central to the second project: Atelier Public#2

Atelier Public#2: Make Destruction

Katie Bruce is curator/producer at Gallery of Modern Art, a public art gallery supported by Glasgow Life, the trust that operates cultural and leisure activities on behalf of the Glasgow City Council. In 2014, she presented a reimagining of a previous project from 2011 by artist Rachel Mimec which explored public participation within the contexts of the gallery. Called *Atelier Public#2* (<https://atelierpublic.wordpress.com/blog/>), this exhibition began as an empty room, populated only with art materials and an invitation to anyone entering to make and display their own creations. In its re-presentation in 2014, Katie Bruce took as its starting point some of the critical insights on its previous inception, including concerns about how the selected materials guided the form and content of the created artworks; how truly ‘public’ a gallery-based exhibition could be; as well as her role as ‘curator’ for an exhibit that began with no artworks. As a way to explore some of these concerns, she asked “particular artists, thinkers and makers who have a special interest in play, creativity and the imagination to engage with the space throughout the duration of the exhibition.”

As a Socially Engaged Artist, I was invited to this re-presentation and proposed an event that explored the problems of what I felt was the reproduction of a ‘state aesthetic’ where “the ‘social’ [was] understood as conviviality” (Bishop, 2012, p 211). This aesthetic was apparent in the selection of materials made of bright, genial and cheerful colours, but also from the wording of



Anonymous artworks as part of Atelier-Public#2, © Anthony Schrag

the explanatory text, which invited people to “a space for looking, thinking, exploring and making.”

Both the aesthetics and the emphasis on ‘creation’ and ‘making’ consciously limited the participants’ expressive options to only those sanctioned by the gallery. In other words, creativity was being framed in a very narrow, limited manner and to challenge this, I proposed that interested parties were allowed to destroy any or all of the artworks in the exhibition. Both creation and destruction are productive and creative acts, since one cannot ‘create’ anything without ‘destroying’ something else. The only differences are based in value systems which gives preference to one outcome over the other. The destruction event would therefore draw attention to the value systems around Atelier Public#2 project and highlight those actions that praised one way of expression but disavowed others.

Katie Bruce did agree to my proposed events (although there were significant caveats about what consists as ‘destruction’ as well as health and safety requirements), and on April 11th, approximately 90 people entered the gallery over the space of 1.5 hours, engaging in various destructive acts or merely observing the actions of ripping cardboard, tearing down string contraptions, or peeling off tape and vinyl constructions.

The destructive acts allowed different perspectives to emerge. While my intention was merely to create a representatively democratic sphere of ‘creative acts’, the ‘destructive’ process actually revealed the extent to which the state aesthetic had silenced alternative acts of self-expression: During the event, it became apparent that gallery staff had been creating new works to be placed over top of works that they considered could be offensive to other



Anonymous artworks as part of AtelierPublic#2, © Anthony Schrag

social groups, such as artworks that contained swearing or abusive/insulting language. As such, this event showed how the public gallery had actively silenced certain voices so as to present a seamless, 'convivial' space.

Afterwards, Katie Bruce admitted that much of this editing occurred because the gallery is a public space and has to consider the 'appropriateness' of the works displayed. In other words: a publicly funded participatory art project thought to require conceptual and aesthetic boundaries because of its role of as public body. This role delineated the edges of self-expression, and 'unacceptable' voices were not considered appropriately public. This state aesthetic demands that participatory art works can only exist in a 'child-friendly', convivial format. In doing so, the democratic sphere is limited as it denies difference, alterity and alternative hegemonies. It was only through conflict with this aesthetic – in this instance, a proposed destruction – that it became apparent the dominant hegemony was being replicated.

Conclusions: state aesthetics and dominant hegemonies

The two projects have invited reflection on ways in which arts managers within publicly funded museums and galleries can problematically frame 'the public' when commissioning Socially Engaged Art projects, assuming that the civic domain is convivial and conflict-free. In doing so, such organisations silence voices of difference and alterity, which are also part of the public domain.

It is a fine line that museums have to balance, but problematically, this balance is often collapsed to be a binary and museums present a 'correct' or 'singular' view of the world. Instead of asking who decides about who should be part of the public domain, they themselves decide who is deemed to be "participating in the wrong way" (Hope, 2012).

I am aware that cultural organisations are precarious, and exist constantly on the edge of a loss of funding, which means a loss of jobs and in the worst case closure. As such, I recognise the fear of many arts managers when I propose risky projects such as those discussed above. However, art is supposed to ask difficult questions about who we are, and our cultural values. When publicly funded spaces continue to define the public via simplistic homogeneous notions – in which Socially Engaged Art is "safe, nice and good for everyone" – they create a 'state aesthetic' that merely reinforce

dominant power structures instead of questioning existing inequalities and discrimination. Instead, such organisations need to remember that the public domain is inherently dissensual. Perhaps a way forward is to create productive mechanisms to enhance productive conflict; to explore division; and to be confidently critical of the world around us. My experience should suggest that centering conflict can lead to a more engaged public ownership of public museums and gallery spaces, and this can lead to a much more accurate representation of society.

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Collaboration

A possibility or a barrier for cultural organisations?

by Katherine Román

Introduction

Western managerial practice side-lines collaborative participation. Here, individualism has allowed the progressive seclusion of community participation and instead focuses on competitiveness and productivity. Under this unequal relationship of power, do cultural organisations have the possibility to achieve cultural policies' demands to be economically successful and societal healers at the same time?

Based on a neoliberal model that promotes “a cultural shift toward individualism, marketization, and competition” (Cortina, 2017, p. 39), quality acquires more value when it comes from a single effort or person (Smith & Newman, 2014). In a way, embracing the “garage belief” to which isolated (artistic) work is perceived as essential (Audia & Rider, 2005), diminishes the importance of collaborative practices (Loncaric, 2014, pp. 2–3).

In many ways, collaboration with niche communities has been reduced to a contractual relationship to lower expenditures and maximize profit (Scheff & Kotler, 1996). Both collaborations between cultural organisations and between organisations and communities are affected by this trend.

Collaboration between cultural organisations and artists

By using their prestige, cultural organisations attract artists. Thus, power disparity is created by taking advantage of the precariousness of work produced by legal pitfalls that do not safeguard the development of artists' work (Duarte, 2020; Serafini & Banks, 2019). This results in unpaid artistic work, unethical alliances for financial support (Love, 2012), or directly or indirectly fostering gentrification (see Dammert, 2020) by using artworks that help increase the value of an urban area through a beautification strategy (Bublitz et al., 2019).

These problems are theorized by Richard Sennett (2012) through a critical view of modern society. Modernity, he posits, aims to destroy social interactions seeking homogenization to favour consumption. Modernity, framed in a capitalist system using a neoliberal model, thus focuses on personal needs related with money spending capacity rather than community and social needs. Hence, cooperation is disqualified because by giving the possibility to embrace diversity between people, the market, focused on the masses, fails to supply minorities.

In that light, organisations encourage secrecy and individualism while working with others, which weakens their relationships. This behaviour, also known as the “silo effect” (Sennett, 2012, p. 21), provides insight in why Western collaboration is transformed into an individualistic goal by looking at the benefit for the individual actors and not the benefits for everyone involved. This focus on individual benefits prevents collaboration from succeeding in the long run. In other words, even though collaboration is regarded positively by cultural organisations, it fails because their own structure prevents it.

“In a capitalist system, there is a tendency to transform culture into another type of currency.”

In a capitalist system, there is a tendency to transform culture into another type of currency. On that, at least there are three assumptions that cultural policies use to exert great pressure on cultural organisations. First, the belief that selected types of cultural manifestations produce quality citizens (Stevenson, 2013); second, the focus on culture as a commodity (Kopytoff, 1988) in which creativity acquires a tangible value to create more value, thus more profit, and third, as a healing force in society (Belfiore, 2016). Thus, cultural policies expect that cultural organisations focus on social topics to sustain their transformative role in society and in return they provide them with funds which leads to greater competition for funding between cultural institutions (Throsby, 2010). Therefore, cultural organisations are compelled to mimic a business-like social-entrepreneurship model to receive funding.

In that context, cultural organisations have been pushed by policy makers (Mariani, 2007, p. 117) to apply cooperation (cooperate whilst competing)

strategies. This term distances itself from collaboration because it is authorship oriented (Hord, 1981). This means that in coopetition, organisations need to prioritize prestige to find partners and thus collaboratively create new value chains. Later, when the value chain has been successfully created, the organisations need to separate and appropriate the value into their own processes (Brandenburger & Nalebuff, 1995).

To clarify the idea of coopetition, Poisson-de Haro and Myard (2018) use the Cirque du Soleil case during the Montreal Circus Festival. The circus world is a very fragile ecosystem because it needs to constantly output new cultural products to stay relevant to their audience and economic supporters. Therefore, circus companies experience constant distress. Cirque du Soleil, an internationally renowned circus company, uses its prestige to attract other companies and undertake tasks that are difficult for them. In exchange these companies provide performances for the Cirque. This ensures a long-lasting relevancy of the Cirque in people's minds and at the same time allows minor companies to position themselves in the cultural spotlight.

“The coopetitive strategy perpetuates a progressively stressful alliance, because after all, everyone is competing for resources.”

So far, coopetition seems to be a good practice. However, this example reveals how the system pushes companies to reinvent themselves to keep producing their art. The necessity to gain visibility by working with a prestigious partner coerces cultural organisations to take part in coopetitive strategies, creating a tangible conflict of interest. In Cirque du Soleil's case, the coopetitive strategy perpetuates a progressively stressful alliance by trying to maintain balance and transparency of information between partners while still protecting everyone's individual expertise because, after all, everyone is competing for resources. Not to mention the authority Cirque du Soleil has over performers that work in other companies because of the role it played in the development of their careers (Poisson-de Haro & Myard, 2018, p. 397). Therefore, it would be naïve to think that this strategy results in an equal relationship. On the contrary, it fuels unequal power dynamics as it is fed by one party having more prestige than the other and not sharing it.

So far, it is unlikely to find awareness about these tense partnerships between cultural organisations to survive. Instead, in coopetition individual efforts (Audia & Rider, 2005) are being normalized. This gives the illusion that it is possible to succeed by working in a competitive environment.

Collaboration between institutions and communities

Collaborative practices between cultural organisations and communities, as opposed to corporations and companies in the cultural sector, face similar issues. To start with, cultural organisations are increasingly considering placing communities at the centre of their work. However, this has to contend with biases regarding the level of participation of people that are not related to the so-called “cultural sector”. As Matarasso (1998) elaborates, these “outsiders” tend to be seen as a group that lowers the quality of artistic production. Nonetheless, as more cultural policies are demanding this type of collaboration, it is fundamental to determine if cultural organisations are instrumentalizing this action to be economically sustainable, while not really believing in this strategy. It is imperative to avoid applying model-like one size fits all strategies to reach a diverse audience. Undertaking cultural activities that do not have a long-term value for the participants, but only become an anecdotal experience (Flood & Vogel, 2009) increases a sense of “pernicious inclusion” (Larson, 2018), an only apparent, superficial inclusion that does not change the actual structures. To combat this phenomenon, cultural organisations and communities should turn towards co-creation whilst strengthening their relationships instead of focusing on isolated activities.

However, co-creation is unlikely to succeed if professionals and cultural organisations still argue that “[t]he current challenge is to simultaneously maintain [their] artistic and cultural integrity while being of service to individuals and communities in tangible and meaningful ways.” (Flood & Vogel, 2009, p. 351). This statement shows that a collaboration done with communities is deemed less worthy in artistic terms and that the relationship between communities and cultural organisations should be vertical and not horizontal. By using social inclusion as a collaborative practice to justify public spending, the concept of collaboration is made out to by cultural policy be an investment for the less privileged by cultural policy (Belfiore, 2002). Making cultural organisations engage with communities as some sort of transformative, healing assets thus is a neo-liberal practice. Consequently, the arts are instrumentalized and the public “is offered ‘the

chimera of ‘solidarity’, or at least a loose sense of ‘togetherness’” (Schaefer, 2019, p. 98) which perpetuates the idea of otherness, outsiders and niche communities as unable to decide and really participate, only able to receive the products of culture as provided by experts.

Another view

Regardless of Western influence, indigenous people worldwide have maintained their community organisation. In the Andes, different cultural manifestations, such as dances, are linked to the development of the people’s annual activities. Sáciga (2019) explores the relationship between Andean folk dances and different collaborative practices that have survived the Hispanic invasion. She concludes that those dances are only the tip of a tremendous form of community organisation. Most of these efforts are invisible to people who only appreciate the dance itself. However, these dances are only made possible with, for example, the gathering of the raw material for their attire, the organisation related to security, people in charge of providing food for the festivities, and so on. The community collaborates in the whole process, as it is considered key to ensure benefits to the community itself.

Although there is not much literature about how indigenous collaboration is applied to cultural matters, it represents an asset that cultural managers should start to acknowledge. Not with the intention to extract the knowledge but to think in its local applicability.

Conclusion

This essay calls attention to the tensions generated by applying Western collaboration practices to cultural policy demands, the guidelines governing cultural organisations and the communities’ participation or their lack thereof. It is not intended to discredit the goodwill of the people involved but to acknowledge the intrinsic forces that are rooted in a vertical, hierarchical system that prioritizes economic growth.

On one hand, cultural policy often is a pragmatic reformist project that gives more power to the market-driven agenda than to aesthetics itself. On the other, cultural organisations tend to follow a conservative hierarchical management structure that damages internal and external collaborations by impeding experience diversity (Bennett, 2001, p. 49).

Cooperation is conceived to be instrumentalized as a medium to achieve the goals both of policy makers and of cultural organisation. Practicing arts and cultural managers should be asking if cultural organisations can achieve what cultural policies demand from them under individualist values. If collaboration does not allow to appreciate and practice diversity (Mandel, 2019, p. 132), it is key to reformulate policies and to question the unsustainability of this practice.

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Peer-to-peer sharing is key

Managing a global post-graduate arts management course

by Andrew Marsh

The challenges of creating and managing a global post-graduate arts management course in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA) world are manifold. Connecting people beyond borders, enabling communication and adapting to global events is key to educating future cultural leaders.

At the time of writing this article in November 2022 in the UK, Collins English Dictionary has declared 'Permacrisis' its 'word of the year'. Defined as "an extended period of instability and insecurity" (Sherwood, 2022) it does indeed typify recent and current times, not just in the UK but globally. There are echoes in this term of what Warren Bennis and Bert Nanus defined in 1985 as times of 'Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity' (VUCA). Both terms accurately capture the feeling of critical times we are currently experiencing.

The following article will reflect on a few of the challenges faced in delivering a post graduate course in Arts and Cultural Enterprise together with members of the global arts and cultural community under a rapidly changing global landscapes. It will specifically examine the impact of global climate-related events and geo-politics on aspects of the course delivery and the student experience. It will also discuss how the course team has responded to incorporate and utilise such challenges in a way that fosters a global community of arts and cultural practitioners despite increasing nationalism and therefore hopefully empowers its students to address these VUCA times through their own cultural practices.

MA Arts and Cultural Enterprise: some context

Created in 2015, the MA Arts and Cultural Enterprise is a 2-year part-time, low residency, blended learning, postgraduate programme delivered by

Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts, London. It is delivered in collaboration with Hong Kong University Space. Through theory and practice-based units the course engages participants in developing new knowledge and skills in order to manage cultural projects in the UK and around the world. It was developed specifically in response to an increasing need for multi-skilled individuals who can both generate the ideas for original arts and cultural events, as well as provide leadership for the teams that realise them. Teaching takes place at both institutions separately with moments where the students of each institution are brought together for discussion and collaboration. The Course is taught through online workshops and lectures combined with intensive and in-person teaching on specific weekends at both locations. As a course it acknowledges that we are living in a fast-changing, globalised world, which presents a great number of opportunities and challenges for cultural innovation. It takes these changing conditions as a starting point to engage students in developing new knowledge and skills to manage cultural projects around the world.

“The world and its global outlook in 2013-15 was very different to the world as it stands toward the end of 2022.”

However, the world and its global outlook in 2013-15, when the course was designed, was very different to the world as it stands toward the end of 2022. There was a recognition in early development of some of the challenges that the cultural and creative industries might be facing, like globalisation, sustainability, shifting models of funding and governance, etc. Little did we anticipate how much these challenges would rapidly grow and include many we hadn't yet considered.

Challenges in the world and the course

What has become increasingly challenging over the seven years of delivering and managing the course is that internet access is not equitable globally (UN, 2020). While we felt initially that a mainly online course would allow more participants across the world to access it and share experiences, it has become apparent that geographic and political locations have a huge impact in how a participant might engage with the course. Restrictions to access in specific countries where the internet is heavily policed or controlled have risen. These do not only encompass issues of access to classes on certain platforms

but also of possible surveillance of material being searched for in relation to course assignments. Add to this restrictions in some countries on certain social media platforms and there is the potential that student bonding can also be curtailed. For example, China, Tibet, and the United Arab Emirates, amongst others, ban or restrict platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram, which hinders our students bonding across the globe. Some of these countries furthermore monitor and restrict specific content. Some student searches might be monitored and that might impact on student safety.

“How might we, as a course, address a disparity of experience when internet experience is not equitable globally?”

Additionally, there is the major challenge of access to online classes and content being restricted due to catastrophic weather events because of climate change, for example, typhoons in Manila and Hong Kong, or wildfires in California. We should also not forget the major impact on physical and mental health when faced with the lived experience of dangerous large-scale global events. Both examples have raised some difficult questions for me as course leader that I would argue are not faced in the same way when students are residing in the country of the university in which they study. Questions such as: What is the courses’ duty of care to students in parts of the world impacted by such issues? If students were located in the UK, then a single but university wide, and therefore equal, decision over safety and wellbeing can be made to minimise collective impact. This is not possible in a course delivered mainly online to students all over the world. How might we, as a course, address a disparity of experience when internet experience is not equitable globally? Again, on a residential course the student experience of teaching spaces and materials is comparable, but this is not the case in this type of delivery.

In a wider political context, it must also be acknowledged how regional politics can impact how students engage with each other and tutors and that political events in countries inhabited by students must be addressed sensitively. For example, Hong Kong’s protests and political unrest prior to the introduction of the National Security Law, civil unrest due to ethnic tensions in Ethiopia resulting in the internet being switched off, or human rights issues in the UAE are events that have directly impacted some of our former students (some issues continue and new ones most certainly will

arise). Being open in the learning environment about that there will be debate in this sector is essential as is addressing world events in class in real time. To not acknowledge, or to shy away from the rapidly shifting political landscapes in our students' home countries would be remiss and disrespectful. I feel there is a responsibility on the part of the course to recognise the hugely uncertain political landscapes' impact on our cohort, their families, and the communities in which they work and practice.

Developing and enabling peer to peer networks

Given the above, my own role as course leader and of the tutors leading units on the course becomes one of increased pastoral care. We aim to ensure that students can share these experiences but also assist them in finding solutions or tools to tackle those. We encourage them to question how their lived experiences might shape their own practices as creative, cultural leaders and managers. Alongside these in-class approaches, a peer-to-peer network fostered and created by the course becomes an essential tool of support. Sharing can help students become reflective practitioners by being responsible for their own professional development, which allows them to be able to contextualise their own experiences and those of their peers to truly innovate in the sector (Tan, 2021).

"We encourage them to question how their lived experiences might shape their own practices as creative, cultural leaders and managers."

This is managed through our own platforms as well as through spaces in which the students can support each other outside of the more formal 'classroom/tutor' context. Having early discussions with new cohorts about what platforms and channels of communication they might use as a student body ensures that no student becomes excluded because their country of residence does not allow specific types of software. Here the balance is about giving the students agency in selecting their own channels of communication with each other but being sure that a clear conversation is being had about what platforms can be accessed and by whom in the group. If a cohort wishes to use WhatsApp socially or Google Drive in group work, for example, are they certain that everyone can use it in their country of residence in order to ensure no one is excluded? To then encourage students to explore

alternative online communication tools and methods increases awareness of different contexts and collaborative skills. It is important that students feel that group forums set up in the official online platforms the course uses are safe spaces, in which all can participate.

Alongside this, in the more formal classroom environment encouraging the sharing of these experienced events and political shifts and attitudes by the student body in the context of the course is empowering for those students living through unfolding events. Moreover, it also acts as an important tool for awareness of future global cultural leaders about the need for empathy and sensitivity when working with collaborators and stakeholders in local and global contexts different to their own.

Knowledge Exchange

An emphasis on engagement with external guests and their organisations allows us to address issues such as the climate crisis incorporated into the curriculum. A recent knowledge exchange collaboration with The Gallery Climate Coalition (GCC) asked students to research and present case studies of successful practices of decarbonisation and sustainability in exhibition making. By being in small mixed groups students had to decide on the case study of choice, meaning that a conversation about different countries' positions and attitudes to climate change took place. The resulting effect is both micro from the perspective of arts and culture in relation to cultural sustainability in different geo-political contexts as well as macro from the perspective that these organisations and case studies can only be understood in the context of the wider political agenda surrounding climate change in different locations. A case study on "eco-finance" was particularly innovative in looking at this topic from a fresh angle.

The outcome was an event titled 'Towards Environmentally Responsible Exhibition Making' in which these case studies were presented alongside a panel discussion of industry professionals on current and future practices in the sector. The next phase will be to write up the case studies for public dissemination. The course thereby operates as a porous membrane between both practitioners (students and staff in a peer-to-peer network), external organisations in the sector, and the university.

Students and staff being able to explore real world scenarios in arts and culture from their own experiences and geographic locations in order to

analyse and reflect on these in an educational context allows space for innovation, enterprise and responsible leadership in the cultural and creative industries. This is where real change can be implemented in participants practices.

Some conclusions

The above reflections are still emergent. In many ways they are being worked through in an iterative process on both a course and student level. We are learning and developing together a step at a time (Rojas, 2021). Given the fast-changing landscape both in arts and culture on one hand, as well as geo-political shifts more generally, an iterative methodology must be employed. Over the past seven years we have addressed political tensions on numerous continents. In the case of Hong Kong, we debated conflicting political views directly in the class-room by creating a space that was discursive and respectful. We have discussed the possibilities of students being surveilled while searching online for materials dealt with on the course. There also have been multiple challenges because of climate change and access to the course from different global scenarios. While each is a very different challenge to address, the ability to iterate and improve the course as a result has been key to the success of our students and therefore the course. This is done by embedding rapid ways in which feedback and communication can be given to the course from students and vice-versa as well as creating a culture of empathy and active listening. Formally, this can be achieved through university course committees but most importantly through informal channels developed and nurtured by the students themselves. Due to all students feeling they have a direct and immediate channel to me as course leader and the team of tutors, any concerns, tensions or issues can be raised and addressed immediately through conversation and discourse.

Lastly, creating a clear space in and throughout the course for equitable peer-to-peer sharing and reflection by all participants and staff is absolutely key to the course's ability to adapt so that it nurtures responsible and aware cultural leaders and reflects the VUCA of our current time and the future.

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Overcoming Digital and Cultural Divides

The Case of South Africa's Cultural and Creative Industries

by Raymond Dreyers

In South Africa one of the biggest challenges within the arts, culture and heritage sector is to overcome the race, class, gender, provincial, and other divides and bring together those who have - or who have access to - skills, resources, networks, experience, infrastructure, and markets and those who do not, in order to collectively work for the greater good for all (Van Graan 2020). It is also important to note the cultural and heritage diversity of a nation with twelve Official languages, Sign language being the twelfth Official language. Then there are the various cultural groups like, Khoisan, Xhosa, Zulu, English, Venda, Pedi, Tsonga, Afrikaans, Ndebele, North and South Sotho, Tswana, Indian, Cape Malay, or the colored people¹, to name only a few. It is therefore highly complex to gain an understanding and to systemize the Cultural and Creative Industries in South Africa. The Cultural Growth Industry Strategy Report outlines the country's CCIs, mainly music, film, visual arts, publication, and crafts. According to South African Cultural Observer (SACO 2020) even though there had been no recognized definition for CCIs, recent policies and white papers are moving towards adopting the UNESCO system.

The situation in South Africa

In 1994/95 the Department of Arts, Culture and Technology had an estimated budget of R535 million, with 50 percent allocated to Arts and Culture. After the adoption of the White paper for Arts, Culture and Heritage (1996), the budget for the renamed Department of Sports, Arts and Culture today is R5,720 billion, with R3,808 billion of the 2020/21 budget allocated to Arts and Culture. Though there is arts funding avail-

¹ A person of mixed European (white), African (black) or Asian ancestry defined by the South African government 1950–1991 (Britannica 2016).

able, the poor synchronization between various agencies and inadequate funding guidelines causes agencies to compete rather than complement each other (Van Graan 2020). The lack of employee capacity and skills in the public sector leads to the poorest of the poor in extremely remote rural areas not being served. Pre-Covid, cultural managers attempted to bridge the cultural divide and promote inclusivity and social cohesion through workshops, tours, and outreach programs. However, these happened often with little effect, as these projects took place over too short periods of time and sustaining these arts and culture activities was almost impossible due to poor infrastructure and lack of resources in these communities. A shrinking state, a more private and international funding pool and state corruption caused further strain on arts and culture creation. Thus, art managers became reliant on collaborating with other art organisations, government institutions and municipalities.

“A shrinking state, a more private and international funding pool and state corruption caused further strain on arts and culture creation.”

Subsequently in 2020, the pandemic hit and conditions became less than favorable. Best explained by renowned contemporary South African dance artist Louise Coetzer as a time “when more than ever we are seeking connections within the ongoing chaos and uncertainty.” Beginning in early 2020, there had been no performances, festivals were cancelled, and the future of live performances looked bleak. This is a huge problem for a society whose culture and cohesion are to a large extent based on common events and celebrations and to a sector for which festivals are the lifeblood. As one solution, on 4 May 2020 the National Minister of Sports Arts and Culture, Nathi Mthethwa issued directions in terms of live streaming of the CCI in support of COVID-19. It stated: “During the national state of disaster, an authorized person or company in the creative sector may create or produce local content for broadcast and live stream any service or performance at any relevant infrastructure or facility under the control of a public entity upon written approval by the accounting officer or other delegated official of such public entity, on condition that there must be no audience at such infrastructure or facility at any given time: Provided that any person or company may utilize its own or other appropriate infrastructure or facility.” In December 2020, South Africa was heading into the fourth wave of the

² Riel or Rieldans is a Khoisan word for an ancient celebratory dance performed by the San, Nama and Khoi people. It is one of the oldest styles in South Africa and it is performed at an energetic pace, requiring fancy footwork that can be challenging, even for the best of dancers. (Felix: 2022).

pandemic. This was the time when the markets were slowly starting to open for some CCI domains as the government adjusted the restriction level. At that stage, all practitioners from the various cultural domains were still trying to digest the turbulent shock caused by the change in an already volatile sector. According to SACO (2020) the performance and celebration sector's activity dropped a significant 55.6 percent in 2020. At the same time, COVID-19 necessitated the ultimate shift from analogue to digital, whilst government, art organisations, non-profit-organisations, artists and arts managers had to navigate the in largely uncharted digital landscape to stay ahead in the fourth Industrial Revolution of digitalization.

“COVID-19 necessitated the ultimate shift from analogue to digital.”

Ultimately, arts organisations were compelled to create innovative opportunities through collaborations in a widely foreign digital environment, which no one could have imagined would occur so instantaneously. The shift to digital was easier for some art organisations like Unmute dance company, which was able to produce the Arts ability festival, aimed at paying tribute to International Month of Persons living with Disabilities. The arts environment was changing due to the pandemic and the company took advantage to innovate online, which allowed the normal six-day event to run online for a whole month. “Kaapse dans Kaleideskoop” a dance project that initially through workshops aimed at utilizing Contemporary, African and Hip-hop dance as its vehicle to popularize Riel dance², then suddenly had to be shifted to a digital platform as, Kaapse dans Kaleideskoop #Riel.



*Kibbutz Elshammah Rieldans group, performing on the piazza at the DCAS Dance Festival at Artscape Theatre Centre in February 2022.
© Raymond Dreyers*

The digital divide

But while arts organisations moved to digital platforms, the impact of the digital divide was enormous. There are three facets pertinent to the digital divide in South Africa, namely access to hardware, comprehending the digital means of communication and the affordability of internet services. This affects access to education and employment, two of the factors which could stimulate development and overcome inequality (Mlaba: 2021). Thus, without a mobile or electronic device, infrastructure, and ability to afford a connection to the internet you simply remain uninformed and further impoverished digitally, increasing the education inequality gap. The adjustment of government budgets for the prioritization of health services post Covid-19 had a monumental impact on the creative and cultural industries as well as on its GDP contribution to the South African economy. The Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport reprioritized R56.2 million towards the provincial COVID-19 response which was sought from reductions in cost of employment, goods and services, transfers and subsidies and capital assets. Furthermore, it had set aside R4.7 million as aid to arts practitioners, who suffered a joint loss in revenue of R 58.6 million (McLean: 2020). The fact that according to SACO 2020 the GDP contribution of CCIs is almost as much as agriculture and yet the sector is still not able to sustain itself without public funding is mind-boggling.

“It was good that everyone had migrated to digital during the pandemic, but the question remained: Who would have access to these online platforms?”

It was good that everyone had migrated to digital during the pandemic, but the question remained: Who would have access to these online platforms? At the beginning of 2022 19.2 million South Africans did not use the internet, 38 percent of the population (Digital South Africa 2022).

Responses to the digital divide

Arts managers individually had to step in to find ways to overcome the digital divide and make arts and culture possible further on. Thus, in May 2020, in the true spirit of ubuntu (humanity), Dr. Marlene Le Roux (CEO at Artscape Theatre Centre in Cape Town) – a person living with disability

– made it possible for both abled and disabled artists and creatives in the Western Cape to work by allowing them to use the theatre center to record online content at no cost.

Making use of technologies for seamless implementation of arts development projects, particularly in instances of collaboration (with several organisations) eased the burden of work for arts managers, allowing swift correspondence, managing, and centralizing information and tasks to keep track of progress. Through swiftly responding and making use of the digital domain, the librarians at Melton Rose Library were still able to present their story hours digitally, so that children could watch the videos and not miss out on their favourite stories. Darkroom Contemporary Dance Company leapt at the opportunity to harvest technology, collaborated effectively and produced the pioneering online dance film, Deux:: Ex:: Machina. The digital divide also led to governmental policies having to be reviewed and amended. In South Africa's government, for every required action there are guidelines, regulations and stringent processes which need to be adhered to, as well as a rigid hierarchical reporting and communication system. Often these "processes" are the reason for delays in seeking approval for the actual action. Similarly, there seems to be a disconnect between policy rationale and practical implementation when it comes to policy development as not all stakeholders are involved from the inception of such undertakings.

One example of this is the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA). POPIA had arts managers and organisations provide detailed information about data processing practices, electronic storage security measures and reasons for the collection and processing of personal information,



Darkroom Contemporary Dance Company's DEUX:: EX:: MACHINA- "extended reality"
© Oscar O'Ryan

³ A state-owned enterprise (SOE) is a legal entity that is created by a government in order to partake in commercial activities on the government's behalf. It can be either wholly or partially owned by a government and is typically earmarked to participate in specific commercial activities (Kenton:2020).

comparable to the EU's GDPR. For small organisations and individual arts professionals, it took enormous effort to be able to make basic information available online, not to mention extensive digital cultural formats. Besides adding to the workload of arts managers, these processes would have been better developed had all stakeholders been involved since its inception.

But there are government initiatives that could help bridge the digital divide: "Data has become a new utility like water and electricity that our home needs. At some point, a South African household, despite whether they are rich or poor, will be given access to 10GB per month, because that is what the government will deliver." This is according to Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies. Furthermore, arrangements will be made to enable private participation in public interest digital delivery projects from 2022/23 with 80% of public buildings expected to be digitally enabled by 2024/5 (Business tech: 2022).

Outlook

South Africa with its continuous inequality, socio-economic and digital divide could never had been prepared for the Covid-19 pandemic, which worsened the situation of the already struggling CCIs. New regulatory processes, sluggish amendments of laws and bills and new digital business operations caused a whirlwind of havoc, uncertainty, and panic. What do you do when life gives you a pandemic? You look at your available resources, innovate and adapt, and do so quickly. The industry remained steadfast and resilient, through collaboration, research, advocacy and the spirit of ubuntu (humanity), whilst dealing with many divisive factors under extremely tempestuous conditions.

"The industry remained steadfast and resilient, through collaboration, research, advocacy and the spirit of ubuntu."

If the government enforces a law which compels all SOEs³ (state-owned enterprises), schools, libraries, and municipal buildings to offer free access to the internet to its citizens, it would be an ideal opportunity to catch up with more developed countries. Additionally, as access to financial services is part of the digital divide, this would bring electronic financial services to communities who currently do not make use of traditional banking services.

Regarding the CCI, museums, libraries and cultural facilities need to accelerate their transformation processes to assist communities with the services they offer. The government should consider providing compulsory training in information technologies and online communication for both its staff and citizens. By enforcing these, they would be working towards bridging the inequality gap. Digitalization provides endless opportunities for organizations to increase their reach in various target markets, entertainment, marketing, advertising, and e-governance in the vast digital domain. It could drastically increase the reach and impact of arts development projects.

The benefits notwithstanding and as it should be, the government must be held accountable, its expected reliance on guidelines, regulation, and policy (arts and telecommunication) are essential to ensure sound governance. Henceforth, room for flexibility must be considered, in terms of policy and rationale juxtaposed to feasibility and practicality, to effectively function in tandem. Until the government can freely provide or subsidize wi-fi internet connectivity services to its citizens, we might find ourselves underneath the bulldozer of the 4th Industrial Revolution or worse left behind, like its tracks.

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Russian art scene during the war

As seen from Russia

published anonymously by request of the author

In February of 2022 the Russian Federation attacked Ukraine and is continuing to wage war there. The attack has put pressure on Russian artists and arts and cultural managers to position themselves in an environment of increasing state censorship and moral quandaries.

My impressions of what is happening in the Russian art community are based primarily on the artists' posts on social media. I spoke with several artists about how they feel about the war and what their plans for the future are. I rely on their opinions in this article, but still the main source of information for me are Facebook and Instagram.

Moral Catastrophe

To my mind, 99 percent of Russian artists condemn the war. They feel ashamed of their country, helpless and depressed. Their thoughts are with Ukrainians.

Many artists (I say "artists" for short, but mean also curators, art managers, workers of galleries, foundations, and museums) express their position openly on social media risking being fined or even arrested for 'spreading fake news about the war' and 'discrediting the armed forces'.

Others use Aesopian language to refer to the war by using phrases like "in these terrible conditions", "after February", "in a situation of catastrophe", "in this continuing nightmare". Some even close their social media profiles. Still others are afraid to pronounce such words, and personally that really annoys me, I want to hear at least an allegorical condemnation of the war.

Many artists have left the country. Some because they now lack professional prospects, some out of fear for their lives, some as a form of protest. It's

impossible to know the real figures, but I and my personal contacts believe that a third to half of artists, mainly men out of fear of being mobilized into the army, left Russia. Those who already had ties with European institutions moved to Europe, those who did not or had to leave urgently after the announcement of mobilization moved to visa-free countries in Central Asia. At the same time, artistic life in Russia continues with exhibitions, fairs, artist-talks and reading groups. But new aspects have appeared – some exhibitions are closed due to censorship, some are held in private apartments only for those who are known personally, some artists began to make their art neutral avoiding acute social questions.

Russian art community torn apart by disagreements

The most striking characteristic of the art community today is constant quarrels and public discussions in raised tones, sometimes even accompanied by rude mutual insults. In general, the theme of these verbal conflicts is ethics: what is moral today and what is unacceptable? There are several major fault lines dividing the community:

- Does an artist have the right to create artworks when his or her country is bombing another country's cities?
- Is it right to attend exhibitions? If both artists and spectators suffer without art, is it ethical to serve champagne at the opening night?
- What is more ethical – to leave Russia in direction of the free world (into utter uncertainty) or to remain under a hostile regime (but close to your parents and in a familiar environment)?
- Is it ethical to make art unrelated to the war during the war?

“Is it ethical to make art unrelated to the war during the war?”

There is no correct answer to these questions, as they are personal. Some artists never were involved in political issues, some artists are afraid to express their opinions of the war. In addition to that, attending exhibitions can be a healing experience for people suffering because of the war.

I believe that all these conflicts on social media – even though they are extremely unpleasant – are productive, they must be lived through. A moral and civic position can be formed in these discussions.

Is it ethical to cooperate with the state?

Another big fault line is the question: Is it ethical to cooperate with SUCH a state, its art foundations and its museums? Are the state and the current regime one and the same or not? And if you cooperate with the state (because there is practically no one else to cooperate with), then to what extent? Recently, a heated several-day discussion flared up on Facebook, under a post announcing a lecture by a staff member of the State Pushkin Museum on the history of media art. Two questions were discussed: When your country invades another country, is it ethical to be interested in media art and give a lecture on it? And in general, is it ethical to work in a state museum? The counter-argument being that the state finances the war, so you cannot touch anything that is paid for by the state, even museums.

In spring, the art community demanded that directors of museums and other institutions express their position on the war. The directors mostly remained silent.

By autumn, officials of the Ministry of Culture, when deciding on the participation of an artist in an exhibition in a state or municipal museum, began to check his or her position on the war, which could be easily found on social media. If an artist made anti-war statements or signed anti-war petitions, his or her work was not displayed in the exhibition. Artists do the same screening, with a different angle, they ask the organizers: “Who will my painting be next to?”. And if the answer is that their work will be displayed next to a jingoistic author, they don’t submit their work.



Rapper Oxxxymiron at an anti-war concert in Berlin
A. Savin / WikiCommons (left)

Artist Alexandra Skolichenko behind bars at a courtroom, after being arrested for distributing information about the war
Aleksej Belozjorov / WikiCommons (right)

Aesopian language and myths

Anyway, the artists continue to work. However, since one cannot call a spade a spade, and since the horror of what is happening is too great, myths and legends became popular. Aesopian language, metaphors, hints, and understatements are in use.

“Since one cannot call a spade a spade, and since the horror of what is happening is too great, myths and legends became popular.”

You enter an exhibition space and see black walls and ceiling, red flashes, white skulls, and fantastic scary animals. Titles of current exhibitions reflect this: “chthonic”, “myths”, “ghosts”, “escape”, “dead end”, “end of the world”. Another example of this trend is an artist making a collection of jewelry – necklaces, earrings, rings – of barbed wire, bullets, pearl tears and handcuffs. Or a series of photographic still lifes – nothing special: flowers, fabric, fruit, glass, bus seats and handrails. Just that all the depicted objects are yellow and blue. A third artist wrote three words on a big canvas: blood, shit, war, painted respectively by blood, excrement and mix of both.

So, anti-war works are being created, but they are encrypted.

Unity and support

In addition to the conflicts mentioned above, I also observe examples of support and unity. There are artists volunteering to help Ukrainian refugees, collecting the essentials, selling their artworks to give them money. Artist-run initiatives are becoming centers of moral support and artistic life. They are independent, no one controls them, and members of the communities trust each other. They arrange exhibitions, meetings and conversations about art.

Relations with Ukrainian artists

Previously, Russian and Ukrainian artists often participated in common projects, many of them were personal friends. Now contacts are weakened

or interrupted, because Ukrainian artists do not want to communicate with Russian ones. They do not even want to participate in international projects in Europe if Russian artists were invited there.

Personal relationships

Despite the obvious issues of cooperating with state institutions in times of war, there are other factors at play. Historically, under conditions of oppression in Russia, people tried to make what was important to them, not necessarily as a form of protest, but hoping to be ignored by the state. The Russian writer Saltykov-Shchedrin wrote in the middle of the 19th century: „The severity of Russian laws is mitigated by the optionality of their implementation.” This phrase is still relevant today, depicting the situation in the Russian art-community.

“Not all state institutions have become abodes of evil. Real people work there, and not all of them support the regime.”

Not all state institutions have become abodes of evil. Real people work there, and not all of them support the regime. For example, I attended an unambiguously anti-war exhibition at the municipal museum in Moscow in summer. The exhibition, having direct references to the tragedy in Bucha, was open to the public for three months, while at the same time a much more neutral exhibition in another building of the same museum was closed by censors. State foundations finance not only jingoistic events, but also, for example, street art festivals, or local initiatives in small towns. We could hardly name these festivals as anti-war initiatives, but they are definitely not pro-Putin.

What should an art manager working in the field of international relations do?

I think that cultural exchange between Russia and the rest of the world should be supported.

Maria Huhmarniemi & Ekaterina Sharova wrote in an article published this autumn in the almanac Arctic Yearbook: “Brain-drain from Russia is significant, but there are still some young and critical artists left; there are potentially emerging independent artists, researchers and cultural producers who

are still in Russia. These active and vital forces require support and solidarity. Online activities, radio, discussion platforms for young artists and cultural workers are necessary and important. Hopefully, these relations can grow into projects after the regime change in Russia one day”.

The authors say, and I’m with them on it, that cooperation between Russia and Western countries at the state level is impossible. But it is possible and desirable at the level of non-governmental art associations, artist-run initiatives or at the level of interpersonal relations.

“Human-to-human contact without interference from the state seems fruitful in providing new dialogue and new knowledge,” say the authors of the article. It is important to support artists’ voices as an opposition force in Russia.

***The author** has an educational background in cultural studies, arts management and traditional management. He/she also has extensive experience as an arts management researcher and consultant for Russian artists looking for international opportunities.*

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