

Reconstruction and Sustainability of Culture in Times of the Pandemic

How is the cultural sector faring under
the Trio Presidency and in the 30th year
of the Weimar Triangle?



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Introduction

The European series on “Reconstruction and Sustainability of Culture in Times of the Pandemic” organised by the Genshagen Foundation brought together stakeholders from arts and culture to discuss and understand how Europe’s cultural sector is faring under the Trio Presidency and in the 30th year of the Weimar Triangle.

The arts and cultural sector has been hit particularly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. In times of crisis, however, culture plays a central role. In this three-part series of online discussions in September and October 2021, nine stakeholders and practitioners from five European countries shared their experiences, views, and ideas for a sustainable reconstruction of the cultural sector. The first discussion, with speakers from Germany and France, looked at utopian moments in the pandemic and the role of culture for civic society; the second focused on how festivals in Poland, France, and Germany coped during this crisis and how they developed resilient approaches to the future of communal experience and live culture, despite the fragility they endured; the third and final event gathered speakers from Slovenia, Portugal, Poland, and Germany to discuss how European cities connect culture and sustainability, exploring how post-pandemic reconstruction can also be an opportunity for

the cultural sector to redefine itself for sustainable development in line with climate justice.

Through examples from all five European countries, the three discussions showed that arts and culture provided new and powerful views on societal questions. This transformative power of the arts can influence how people reflect upon the world and imagine futures – a utopian power that manifested in examples shared from a movement of theatre occupations in France and the socio-cultural sector in Germany. Culturgest Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos in Lisbon showed how cultural institutions have the power to gather people together and to develop new ideas on sustainable living. A similar participatory approach was shared from the Institute for Spatial Policies in Slovenia, where art projects activated the public realm to raise questions about how we want to live as a society, including local residents in policymaking processes and making such processes public.

The importance of public art and creative making in public space was a recurring theme throughout the three discussions and the examples mentioned by the speakers: whether it was a street opera in Germany addressing the importance of social cohesion and resistance; the public artwork *Cyanometer* in Wrocław raising awareness for air pollution and forming a starting point for discussions on the relations between nature and culture; or the music festival Warsaw Autumn exploring the need for human connection.

Moreover, digitalisation and the use of the digital in artistic practices helped to recreate and reimagine connection in a time of physical distancing. However, there were various approaches to the digital. When translating arts and culture into the digital





realm, new artistic practices emerged, which expanded the possibilities of creative and cultural creation, as Theatertreffen in Germany expressed and showed during the discussion. The French performing arts festival Latitudes Contemporaines instead used the lockdown to allow for vital processes of artistic reflection, responding to the pandemic in a creative way. Nevertheless, all participants agreed that human interaction, embodied experiences, and social gathering are essential to arts and culture – they help unfold the full agency of culture for the development of society. Wide participation in arts and culture as well as the interaction between people of diverse backgrounds were vital for all speakers.

The discussion series, which was funded by the German Minister of State for Culture and the Media, facilitated a crucial cultural exchange between European stakeholders in the arts and cultural sector. Above all, it showed how approaches align and feed off each other, as well as how mutual understanding within the sector strengthens the force that lies within arts and culture to reimagine, develop, and implement strategies for the future in close collaboration with local people.

This publication showcases key findings from the discussion series. First, it will provide an overview of the topics raised in the discussions and summarise central discoveries. Then, five European speakers – one from each of the five participating countries: Germany, France, Poland, Portugal, and Slovenia – share detailed contributions. These articles describe their perspectives and approaches to the theme “Reconstruction and Sustainability of Culture in Times of the Pandemic”. The articles are published in their original language as well as in English.

Mechthild Eickhoff, Head of Fonds Soziokultur e.V., Germany, explains how artistic practice carries a creative agency for society and how this utopian potential plays a role in a post-pandemic society. Maria-Carmela Mini, Director of the performing arts festival Latitudes Contemporaines, France, sees co-creation with the public, engagement with young people, and inclusion of societal questions as key future foci for a sustainable reconstruction of the festival sector.

Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka, Curator & Project Manager, WRO Art Center, Poland, presented the Project *Cyanometer* as a good example for the cooperation between the Municipality and the WRO Centre. Maja Simoneti, Project Manager, Institute for Spatial Policies, Slovenia, emphasised the social dimension of collaboration and stressed the importance of “finding a shared language between various societal groups”. Liliana Coutinho Adviser for Culturgest Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos, Portugal, pointed out that art can help to show the perspective of nature and sensitise people to climate change. All panellists noted that cooperation between several responsible actors and dialogue with civil society and politics is key in bringing about the necessary changes.

Finally, this publication includes two best practice examples for reconstruction, sustainable development, and civic engagement from each of the five countries. These examples point towards solutions and ways to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, sharing how what has been learned from the crisis can be taken forward.

You can listen to the three discussions from the series here:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEhKlpDoBQ_S8axIC8E8dityPmTLsSqA-



Summary of the first Online Discussion

Utopian Moments in the Pandemic: Recalibrating the Role of Culture within Society

28 September 2021

The first conversation in this series of events, “Utopian Moments in the Pandemic: Recalibrating the Role of Culture within Society”, explored how the crisis opened up space for new approaches, fresh thinking, and utopian moments. Bérénice Hamidi-Kim, Professor of Performing Arts at Lumière Lyon 2 University from France and Mechthild Eickhoff, Head of the Fonds Soziokultur from Germany shared their experiences and views on this challenging time.

While the COVID-19 crisis has exposed existing grievances and struggles of the cultural sector in Germany and France, both Mechthild Eickhoff and Bérénice Hamidi-Kim have seen how the arts and the socio-cultural sector have been pioneering the process of reconstructing and re-imagining new roles and uses of culture within society. A key point that both speakers mentioned in the discussion, which was moderated by AC Coppens, is how arts and culture initiated encounters and connections between people, turning this into a public act – either by bringing people together on the streets or by creating accessible on-line formats.

As the Head of Fonds Soziokultur e.V., Mechthild Eickhoff leads and funds projects and initiatives that nurture participation in shaping democracy through arts and culture. She describes the efficacy of participatory arts and culture this way: “Socio-culture means taking societal issues that move society to the streets and letting people play with these issues in public space; this makes people’s thoughts tangible, relatable, and audible. Everyone is creative and can make a competent contribution to this process.” This approach empowers individuals and communities as it makes artistic and cultural activities accessible, relatable, and future-directed – leading the way into the future by working with and towards people’s experiences, needs, and ideas.





In Eickhoff's experience, the arts and cultural sector brought about innovation by developing new digital formats during the pandemic, which created encounters and social proximity despite the physical distance.

Bérénice Hamidi-Kim – whose work combines performance studies, cultural studies, sociology, and critical theory – reflected on her observations in France in 2020 and 2021, where the government did not adequately recognise the important role the cultural sector plays in society. Seen as non-essential, theatres and other cultural spaces were not given a re-opening strategy, and according to Hamidi-Kim, the cultural sector almost “disappeared from the political discourse” in the wake of the crisis. She criticised the government's idea to employ artists who had lost their income due to lockdown by placing them in arts education projects and schools throughout the summer of 2020. Hamidi-Kim analysed that this would not address or alleviate the strain that lockdowns had put on the cultural sector and was not providing artists with an equitable perspective.

In sharing her observations and experiences of working with theatre students, Bérénice Hamidi-Kim identified how essential it is for creatives and artists to feel a sense of collective importance and usefulness – a need that was not being heard by authorities at the start of the pandemic when venues were closed down. She felt the pandemic also showed that “even though the digital space comes with its own benefits, it of course lacks the bodily and in-person experience”. Above all, she argued for the importance of public actions and physical presence to drive change. In her experience, consciousness of the body and feelings of connection increased the impact of artistic performances and their potential to inspire collective action and resistance as well as new cultural influences and ideas. An

example of this is how theatre and film have helped to shift societal narratives around gender dynamics and the role of women in society. Bérénice Hamidi-Kim is convinced that the arts have an inherent transformative power to change people's perceptions – “the arts are a platform and the voice of the people”. For this power to fully flourish again, she felt that a process of reconstruction, reassessment, and healing is needed.

In connection to this, Mechthild Eickhoff also emphasised that “there's a need for visibility in this process of reconstruction. By speaking to this need and inviting vulnerability, arts and culture become efficacious and spearhead meaningful change.” Above all, she hoped that this participatory and open process would stir the development of diversity, visibility, and care for others.

You can listen to the discussion

in German here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TI_fGNNTcYE

and in French here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvLdTZTHZMc>



Summary of the second Online Discussion

Festivals between Fragility and Resilience: The Future of Communal Experience and Live Culture

12 October 2021

The second conversation of the series on “Reconstruction and Sustainability of Culture in Times of the Pandemic” centred around “Festivals between Fragility and Resilience: The Future of Communal Experience and Live Culture” and brought together cultural festivals from the three countries of the Weimar Triangle to shed light on how the festival sector has been faring during the pandemic.

From France, Maria-Carmela Mini, the Director and Founder of Latitudes Contemporaines in Lille – a festival that focuses on contemporary dance that is increasingly hybrid, but also reverts to more choreographed forms – was joined by Yvonne Büdenhölzer from Germany. As the Director of Theatertreffen, Büdenhölzer leads an annual theatre festival that brings remarkable productions from German-speaking countries and

works by up-and-coming artists from all over the world to Berlin. From Poland, Jerzy Kornowicz, the Director of Warsaw Autumn, contributed to the discussion, sharing insights from this international festival of contemporary music that presents new music from Poland and around the world. The discussion was moderated by AC Coppens, Founder of THE CATALYSTS, Berlin.

Looking back at the COVID-19 pandemic, all three speakers described running festivals during this time as an act of adaptation, as a rediscovery, and as a process that also allowed for new thinking and innovation. Maria-Carmela Mini shared how she and her team at Latitudes Contemporaines had to assess the efforts required to realise a festival in 2020. When the decision was made to cancel the festival in the first year of the pandemic, she instead offered all involved artists funding to be able to dedicate their time to reflective work and the development of artistic research. A year later, in 2021, she felt that the festival “had to rediscover its audience and reconnect with it. The festival had to happen in person this year – whatever it takes.” In Poland, Warsaw Autumn was lucky enough to hold its festival despite the pandemic. Director Jerzy Kornowicz felt that the festival proved the human need for social gathering – “the communal gathering at the festival connects and moves people”. However, Warsaw Autumn still underwent a process of technical adaptations to ensure the smooth running of the festival. This resonates with Yvonne Büdenhölzer’s experience at Theatertreffen in Berlin, which at the beginning of the pandemic committed itself to creating a new festival experience that is “dazzling between the digital and the real world”. The festival tailored its performances in





both summers to the digital realm, bringing accessibility and participation to a completely new level.

When reflecting on the challenges that COVID-19 posed to running festivals during this period, all three also shared what they had learned, especially with regards to the sustainability of the sector. At Theatertreffen in Berlin, it was the artists who took on the mission to question what issues had to be investigated and scrutinised, zooming in on the problems at stake in the current time. “It’s the mammoth task of the arts”, as Büdenhölzer put it, emphasising that the pandemic only reinforced existing societal problems (an idea that resonates with the topic of the first discussion in the series). Moreover, digital advancements are now being integrated into in-person theatre productions, creating new experiences and practices. Similar achievements were made in Poland at Warsaw Autumn, where Jerzy Kornowicz and his team developed productions that involved the complete immersion of the audience into the musical ensemble, combined with streaming of the highest quality. By expanding the artistic practices involved in the festival’s programming beyond music and into poetry and art, Warsaw Autumn responded to the need for social and communal experiences and human relationships. In doing so, the festival created an enhanced consciousness about the meaning and efficacy of festivals and human connection – especially after this time of disconnection during the pandemic. Relating to this, Maria-Carmela Mini from the French festival Latitudes Contemporaines made the point that relying on digital tools only to recreate the festival experience was almost inadequate to the power of the arts – “because after all, festivals are about communality and the encounter”. Moreover, she described the power of the aesthetic experience

– if experienced in person and not in the digital realm – as a colliding of worlds and an aesthetic shock, which is indispensable for art to unfold its efficacy and to move audiences.

Looking towards the future and considering sustainability on different levels, Yvonne Büdenhölzer stated that “if not considered systemically relevant, the arts and culture are at least democratically relevant to society”. Speaking to the social sustainability of the sector, Büdenhölzer, who has been advocating for equal opportunities in theatre, argued that equal representation of female directors and producers, which she put in place at Theatertreffen, needs to be pushed even further to implement a truly intersectional representation of voices and experiences. Jerzy Kornowicz added that from his experience the decentralisation of arts and culture has been (and continues to be) key for contemporary music, as it allows a transformation of how cultural systems work.

Moreover, collaboration – especially international collaboration – proved to be an important factor for all three festivals in terms of building resilience and working towards more sustainable models. “A new spirit of collaboration developed during the pandemic”, Jerzy Kornowicz emphasised. At his festival in Warsaw, collaboration drives the creation of new work and productions. As he said, “I advocate for horizontal preparations and connections because the world becomes increasingly complicated by the day.” Maria-Carmela Mini shared her experience of international collaboration when she was active in a fight to evacuate vulnerable female artists from Afghanistan in autumn 2021. “We knew that in case of a successful evacuation, we would have to create a successful arrival in France for them – because they are not just seeking asylum, they are artists. After reaching out, many



cultural institutions directly offered generous support, giving the women professional perspectives in France.” She felt that without the COVID-19 pandemic, this powerful solidarity would not have been as potent. Concluding, she said, “We need this; we need to know why we do things, give things meaning. And international solidarity is key in creating meaning; it’s a weapon against international globalisation.”

When prompted to share their visions of the future of festivals, all speakers predicted an increase in the importance of festivals for social and global challenges. Jerzy Kornowicz saw music becoming a “speaking force” that observes global realities and brings them together; Yvonne Büdenhölzer believed that festivals would increasingly open and facilitate the space for necessary societal discussions and disagreements; and Maria-Carmela Mini envisioned festivals becoming even more contemporary and representative, increasingly highlighting societal diversity while also taking responsibility for ecological sustainability.

You can listen to the discussion

in German here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQE9ej_8PMU

in French here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eL6QY9gTZA>

and in Polish here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gIJS3d9sYUI>



Summary of the third Online Discussion

How European Cities Connect Culture and Sustainability

18 October 2021

The final event of the three-part series of online discussions brought together four European stakeholders from Portugal, Germany, Poland, and Slovenia to discuss “How European Cities Connect Culture and Sustainability”. Focusing on culture as a dimension of sustainable development and sharing best practices and solutions, this event built upon topics that had been considered in the first and second discussions.

The following four speakers joined the discussion: Liliana Coutinho, advisor at Culturgest Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos in Lisbon, Portugal; Annekatrin Gehre-Horváth, representing the Office for Sustainability, Local Agenda 21 in the City of Augsburg, Germany; Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka, a curator and project manager at WRO Art Center in Wrocław, Poland; and Maja Simoneti, project manager at the Institute for Spatial Policies in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

All speakers develop and find new ways of communicating sustainability to wider audiences, building on the creative power

of arts and culture to drive change. However, as discussed in the plenary, the concept of sustainability has different dimensions that include the social, economic, ecological and cultural. Including culture in the discourse on sustainability was identified as crucial for the four speakers. Maja Simoneti from Slovenia shared how the Institute for Spatial Policies is seeking to use the strengths and weaknesses of the cultural sector to bring together people from different backgrounds, inviting them on walks & talks across the city. By locating themselves in the urban setting and engaging in a spatial activity, they have found new ways of sharing ideas on the climate crisis and social sustainability. “We build communication platforms so that different people can come together; it’s about building social cohesion and finding a common language,” she said. Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka mentioned an artwork in Wrocław as a crucial example of “how art can help people become more aware of sustainability issues”. This *Cyanometer*, which shows different shades of blue to reflect the amount of air pollution in the city, has formed a talking point for discussions about sustainability and the nature-culture continuum – that is the fact that technology has entered the everyday world and has an impact on how nature is defined. Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka and her team at WRO Art Center have organised actions and engagement around the artwork to raise awareness among adults and children about the entanglement of the concepts of nature and culture. Moreover, the project has been an exemplary collaboration between the local authority of Wrocław and WRO Art Center. Annekatrin Gehre-Horváth from the Office for Sustainability, Local Agenda 21 in the City of Augsburg, Germany emphasised the crucial role of local authorities in building awareness about sustainability. She advocates for a broad view of sustainability by recognising the social constructivism that influences



understandings of sustainable living. By founding the Office for Sustainability, the local authority co-designed a framework for sustainability together with city residents. Besides a sphere of ecology, they also consider the social sphere, the economy (as a form of social interactions), as well as culture in their concept of sustainability. It is important to note that Augsburg's sustainability framework considers culture to be just as important as the other three dimensions, pioneering a holistic approach. Annekatrin Gehre-Horváth defined culture as "a place where we discover how we want to live together, where we discuss sustainability, deciding how we organise our lives and sustainability. It's an attitude and position that is sustainable and forms part of culture." Finally, Liliana Coutinho from Culturgest Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos in Lisbon shared their artistic explorations of how state institutions deal with sustainability, collaborating with organisations from civil society. Bridging the artistic and the social in their work, the Culturgest Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos sees the "artistic institution as a place for people to come together and think together"; for example, by organising interdisciplinary discussions on the Anthropocene.

Furthermore, the use of public space was discussed as a crucial and potent tool for facilitating a better understanding of sustainability. Maja Simoneti from Ljubljana argued that active mobility in urban areas is key for social cohesion and mutual understanding. Initiating creative events in public space that focus on changing the way we move around the city (whether it's by foot or bike) allowed the Institute for Spatial Policies to activate and reclaim public space as a space for gathering and socialising. In Wrocław, WRO Arts Center advocates for "ephemeral zones" (such as empty shop units) in urban space, turning

the space into a place for public action, gathering, and free expression. By curating urban space with art and culture, the arts centre explores the triangle between technology, art, and culture, while also understanding democracy as a matter of social sustainability: "Social sustainability is key. It's about building a space to engage with democracy differently." Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka emphasised the situation in Poland: "If we don't change how we move, consume, and live, it will cause the end of the planet." Nevertheless, she thinks that cities still profit from sovereignty and freedom, despite politics infringing on this.

The fact that the digital realm was used and expanded to an even greater degree throughout the pandemic also raises a question about technological and environmental awareness, as moderator AC Coppens put it. "What is lost in digital, compared to embodied encounters? What do we want to keep?" This question is especially important considering the extractivist economy that sits behind technology and digitalisation. The need to embed the role of culture in discourses on sustainability as well as enhancing inclusivity, accessibility, open dialogue, and equal opportunities united the views of all speakers. While the digital realm offers new opportunities – such as combining spatial data with communities in Ljubljana or using artistic methods to speak about and explore data, as done by Culturgest Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos in Lisbon – it also increases the social and economic gap in society, as Maja Simoneti put it.

Looking into the future and aiming to develop more sustainably in post-pandemic times, the speakers identified some of the cultural sector's needs and how they could be supported by city governments. All speakers mentioned the efficacy of artistic methods to drive participatory decision-making. As Agnieszka



Kubicka-Dzieduszycka stated, “I believe in little changes evoked by artists who use their language, their special perspective; they are capable of identifying challenges and finding opportunities. I would advocate for artists to be included more directly and actively in policymaking.” Maja Simoneti took this inclusive and participatory approach further by seeking to include all people in policymaking processes, making it part of a public discourse where policymakers and authorities listen to local people. Since the climate crisis is such an “urgent situation”, Liliana Coutinho from Lisbon felt that we need to stay calm to be able to act sustainably. City governments need to listen to their citizens and also “decide in which world they want to live”, as she put it. Adding her view from the city of Augsburg, Annekatrin Gehre-Horváth agreed by emphasising that it is necessary to overcome a divide between the local authority and the city’s citizens. She advocated for an approach that claims “we are the city. It’s our decision.” And she concluded by saying, “I think it’s useful to think it’s me, the city, the town hall – I am the city.”

You can listen to the discussion in English here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWR1yn13O9o>





Liliana Coutinho, Curadora und Consultora para a Culturgest Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos, Lisbon, Portugal

Reconstrução ou reformulação? A propósito de sustentabilidade, cultura, pandemia e cidades.

O debate organizado pela Fundação Genshagen no qual participei propunha-se pensar a forma como as cidades europeias conectam cultura e sustentabilidade, no âmbito de um tema maior: a reconstrução e a sustentabilidade da cultura em tempos de pandemia. Não sendo socióloga nem especialista em cultura e cidades, a minha participação cingiu-se à posição que tomo enquanto curadora, nos últimos anos responsável pela programação de debates e conferências numa instituição cultural na cidade de Lisboa. As questões deste texto partem desse posicionamento, situado e circunscrito, mas ciente de que são comuns a algumas outras pessoas que trabalham nesta área.

Liliana Coutinho, Public Programs Curator, Adviser for Culturgest Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos, Lisbon, Portugal

Reconstruction or Rethinking? On Sustainability, Culture, Pandemics, and Cities

The debate I took part in, organised by the Genshagen Foundation, considered how European cities connect culture and sustainability in a larger context: the reconstruction and sustainability of culture in times of the pandemic.

As I am neither a sociologist nor a specialist in culture and cities but have been responsible in recent years for programming debates and conferences in a cultural institution in the city of Lisbon, my participation was limited to my position as a curator. The questions in this text come from this starting point and are conditioned and restricted by it while recognising that they are also common to others working in this area.



Reconstrução é normalmente um termo que se utiliza quando um ato destrutivo cessa e podemos almejar o conserto, o refazer de algo que foi afetado na sua integridade. No entanto, continuando a pandemia no mundo, as projeções de futuro e de acalmia continuam a ser desafiadas e a exigirem uma atenção aguda ao presente. Juntando a isto a dimensão da sustentabilidade, que é sistémica e que implica dimensões políticas, no que diz respeito à sustentabilidade dos sistemas democráticos, por exemplo; económicas, no que diz respeito à reformulação das redes e sistemas de distribuição e produção e também à avaliação dos termos segundo os quais avaliamos o nosso bem estar; e ecológica em geral, dizendo respeito à possibilidade de se manter um equilíbrio homeostático no planeta -, não podemos deixar de considerar que agora há que saber construir com o estado de instabilidade e incerteza que se gerou ou que esta situação revelou. É preciso saber construir neste movimento tectónico que percebemos como desordem mas que talvez seja também uma exigência de uma atenção renovada ao nosso entorno.

A cultura, e também a arte, existe neste contexto mais amplo e será até a zona onde novos agenciamentos podem surgir, tal como formas de compreender e de criar a partir do que estamos a viver. Não como vanguarda, na forma como foi entendida no período moderno que pediu emprestada a palavra à estratégia militar e que pensou as artes como antecipadoras de futuros. Referimo-nos aqui a cultura como o meio no qual se tecem as relações com as quais se fazem uma sociedade. Não havendo futuros a antecipar, importa pensarmos com o presente, fazendo uso da pergunta que o biólogo chileno Humberto Maturana nos convidava a responder: “como fazemos o que estamos a fazer para conservar o que queremos conservar?” e o que quereremos conservar para o futuro?

A situação social em época pandémica começou por revelar, por um lado, a capacidade em reinventarmos outros modos de fazer, já que

The term “reconstruction” is normally used when a destructive act ceases and we can aspire to repair or remake something that has been affected in its entirety. However, as the pandemic continues around the world, forecasting the future and calming the situation remain a challenge, requiring our utmost attention to the present.

Adding to this is the dimension of sustainability, which is systemic and involves political dimensions pertaining to the sustainability of democratic systems; economic dimensions pertaining to the redesign of distribution and production networks and systems as well as the evaluation of the terms we use to assess our well-being; and ecological dimensions in general, pertaining to the possibility of maintaining a homeostatic balance with the planet. We cannot ignore the fact that we must now learn how to build in an unstable and uncertain state that has been generated or, in this situation, revealed. We need to understand how to build in this tectonic shift, which we perceive as disorder, but which is perhaps also a call for renewed attention to our surroundings.

Culture as well as art exist in this wider context and will even be the stage on which new forms of agency can emerge – forms that include ways of understanding and creating from what we are experiencing. This is not “avant-garde” in the way it was understood in modernity, as a word borrowed from military strategy that thought of the arts as anticipating the future. We refer here to culture as the medium through which the relationships that make a society are woven. As there is no particular future to anticipate, it is important to think of the present and to consider the question that the Chilean biologist Humberto Maturana invites us to answer: “How do we do what we are doing to conserve what we want to conserve?” – and what do we want to conserve for the future?

The social situation at the beginning of the pandemic revealed, on the one hand, the capacity to invent other ways of doing things. Some cultural institutions made use of online resources and rethought the possibilities of acting in this new context. They tried to preserve part of their social functions and continued their work without losing sight of the fact that much was lost without



algumas instituições culturais, fazendo uso dos recursos online e repensando as suas possibilidades de agir neste novo contexto, procuraram conservar parte das suas funções sociais e continuaram o seu trabalho, sem esquecer que muito se perdia sem o encontro concreto dos corpos com os espaços e obras. Por outro, sublinhou ainda mais a extrema fragilidade económica e social de estruturas mais pequenas, de artistas e outros trabalhadores da área artística e cultural, os quais, na sua maioria em situação de grande precariedade laboral, viram a sua subsistência ameaçada. Em Portugal, foram criadas redes de apoio e de cooperação com uma demanda de ordem política, exigindo a governo do país e das cidades, e também às instituições diretamente implicadas que reconhecessem, de facto, a necessidade de criar ferramentas que tornassem esta importante área de trabalho sustentável, não só em períodos críticos como o que vivíamos (a resposta era urgente) mas também para o futuro. O debate nesta área é vasto, com muitos intervenientes e protagonistas, mas é importante pelo menos deixá-lo aqui sinalizado. A palavra “sustentabilidade” não será aqui a mais indicada pois, antes do período pandémico, o equilíbrio já era frágil. Mais do que reconstruir, a necessidade sentida é ainda a de construir, reconhecer, de facto, no tecido económico e social, as práticas artísticas.

Com uma pergunta, extrapolemos esta reflexão para além do ecossistema cultural e artístico mais estrito: a palavra *sustentabilidade* será então a palavra justa para lidar com o que temos em mão? Da mesma forma, será mais justo dizer *Cultura*, ou *Culturas*?

Começemos pela primeira questão, fazendo referência a um evento específico, em jeito de reflexão de como fazemos o que estamos a fazer. Em Março de 2020, o dia em que Portugal confinou antecedia o dia em que acolhia na programação de conferências que realizo na Culturgest o biólogo, investigador e educador alemão Daniel Christian Wahl. Para além de uma conferência destinada ao público em

physical bodies meeting each other within spaces and works. On the other hand, the pandemic further highlighted the extreme economic and social fragility of smaller structures, of artists and other individuals working in the artistic and cultural fields – most of whom, with very little job security, saw their subsistence threatened.

In Portugal, support and cooperation networks were created on the basis of political demand, requesting national and municipal governments, as well as the institutions directly involved, to recognise the need to create tools to make this important area of work sustainable – not only in critical periods like the one we were experiencing (the response was urgent) but also for the future. The debate in this area is vast and includes many actors and protagonists, but it must be emphasised. The word “sustainability” is not appropriate here because the balance was already fragile before the period of the pandemic. More than rebuilding, there is still a felt need to build – and, indeed, to recognise – artistic practices in the economic and social fabric.

Let us extrapolate this reflection beyond the strictly cultural and artistic ecosystem and formulate it as two questions: Is “sustainability” the right word to deal with this? And is it fairer to say “culture” or “cultures”?

Let us start with the first question, which refers to a specific event, by way of reflecting on how we do what we are doing. Portugal went into lockdown in March 2020, one day before I welcomed the German biologist, researcher, and educator Daniel Christian Wahl to the conference programme I organised at Culturgest. In addition to a conference for the general public, seminars with smaller groups were also planned: one dedicated to education, with teachers, and another on the work of cultural institutions. Wahl was forced to go back home before anything could take place.



geral, estavam também planeados seminários com grupos mais res-
tritos, um dedicado à educação, com professores, e outro à ação das
instituições culturais. Wahl foi obrigado a regressar a sua casa antes
de algo acontecer. A responsável pela Bambual, a editora brasileira
responsável pela tradução em português do seu livro, *Design de Cul-
turas Regenerativas*, viajou de propósito para Lisboa para o divulgar,
mas ficou impedida de o fazer com o confinamento. No livro de-
fende-se que o conceito de sustentabilidade já não é suficiente para
lidarmos com a situação em que nos encontramos. O estrago nos
ecossistemas naturais, políticos, sociais, é tal que necessitamos de
pensar, não em termos da habilidade em manter um sistema num
certo estado, mas em termos de *regeneração* – o que implica tam-
bém saber reconhecer onde e quando já estão, por todo o planeta, a
acontecer atos regenerativos, que são também de restauração, seja
nas práticas de re-existência mantidas, muitas vezes a custo, por
certas culturas indígenas, seja através de outras ações que criam
modos regenerativos de habitar e conviver com o planeta.

Este programa aconteceu online. O que inicialmente pareceu ser
só impossibilidade e impedimento revelou-se, com o auxílio de um
trabalho em equipa e dos meios de encontro e transmissão online,
como uma possibilidade de contribuir para fazer chegar este debate
a uma audiência que ultrapassou a cidade, a região e o país, tor-
nando-se muito mais alargada do que a que teria acedido a este en-
contro no auditório desta fundação.

O impacto não terminou nesta contagem de audiência. Focando,
podemos perceber como é que esta partilha pode ter impacto onde,
de facto, habitamos. Continuando a história do exemplo dado: via-
gem da editora brasileira não foi em vão. Um encontro informal
transformou-se numa extensão da editora, o livro foi publicado
em Portugal nos meses seguintes e outros livros continuam a apa-
recer pela sua mão que contribuem para o debate de uma forma

The head of Bambual, the Brazilian publishing house responsible
for the Portuguese translation of Wahl's book, *Designing Regener-
ative Cultures*, (2016) travelled to Lisbon intending to promote it
but was prevented from doing so due to the lockdown. The book
argues that the concept of sustainability is no longer sufficient to
deal with the situation we find ourselves in. The damage to nat-
ural, political, and social ecosystems is so great that we need to
think in terms of regeneration rather than the ability to maintain
a system in a certain state. This requires an understanding of how
to recognise where and when regenerative acts are already tak-
ing place, all over the planet. These are also acts of restoration;
whether in the practices of re-existence that are maintained, of-
ten at a cost, by certain Indigenous cultures or through other ac-
tions that create regenerative ways of inhabiting and living with
the planet.

This programme took place online. What at first seemed like an
impossibility and an impediment turned out – with the help of
teamwork and online meetings and transmission – to be a pos-
sibility for contribution, bringing the debate to an audience that
went beyond the city, the region, and the country. It became much
wider than the audience that would have attended the event in the
foundation's auditorium.

The impact did not end with the audience size. If we look closer,
we can see how sharing this kind of event can impact where we
actually live. Going back to the example in the story: the Brazilian
publisher's trip was not in vain. An informal meeting became an
extension of the publishing house. The book was published in
Portugal in the subsequent months and more books that will con-
tinue to contribute to the debate are in the pipeline.

What was a programme became a place of encounter and gained
life beyond the cultural institutions that had initially proposed the
event. This process also revealed the informal ways in which such
institutions are involved: a rationale of responsibility and shared
imagination with other social actors, of reciprocity, listening, un-
derstanding, and acting with an ethical conscience, placed within



continua. O que era programação tornou-se encontro e ganhou vida para além das instituições culturais¹ que a propuseram inicialmente, o que revela também a forma como estas estão implicadas, num movimento que não se quer de imposição, mas numa lógica de responsabilidade e de imaginação partilhada com outros atores sociais, de reciprocidade, escuta, compreensão e ação com consciência ética, num tecido social maior do aquele que se reconhece no seu campo de ação mais estrito. Da mesma forma, e considerando que esta perspetiva regenerativa nos convida a considerar o que são a ação e o impacto da vida das cidades no planeta, um movimento também de consciência de como estas se articulam com o seu entorno e com outros modos de organização social e económica e de desenho ecológico que não se limitam à forma “cidade”.

Também na regeneração nos referimos a uma pluralidade de modos de fazer, o que nos conduz à segunda questão, se deveremos falar em cultura ou culturas. Nas últimas décadas, e de forma acelerada no momento que estamos a atravessar, diferentes culturas, modos de existência, histórias e narrativas aproximaram-se umas das outras, fazendo emergir por vezes posições antagonistas que nos exigem mais escuta atenta, para não quebrarmos as ligações sociais através de relações extremadas e em conflito que têm emergido por todo o mundo e na Europa. Os debates e produções culturais e artísticas em território europeu em torno de vivências relacionadas com desigualdades sociais, movimentos migratórios (por razões de violência social ou ecológica, as quais se alimentam uma à outra) ou com as implicações contemporâneas da história colonial (em Portugal no que diz respeito à história da nossa relação com África, América Latina e Ásia) são disso expressão.

¹ para além da Culturgest estiveram também implicadas o Goethe Institut e a Ashoka Portugal.

a larger social fabric than is recognised in their strict sphere of activity. Similarly, and considering that this regenerative perspective invites us to consider the role and impact that city life has on the planet, it is also a movement of awareness: how cities interconnect with their surroundings and with other forms of socioeconomic organisation and ecological design that are not limited to the “city” form.

When we speak of regeneration, we also refer to a plurality of approaches, which leads us to the second question: whether we should speak of “culture” or “cultures”. In recent decades, and at an accelerated pace in the current climate, different cultures, ways of life, histories, and narratives have come to be closer together. Sometimes this brings out antagonistic positions that require us to listen attentively so as not to break social bonds through the kind of extreme and conflicting relationships that have emerged all over the world and across Europe. The debates and cultural and artistic productions in Europe that deal with experiences related to social inequalities, migratory movements (for reasons of social and ecological violence, which feed on each other), or the contemporary implications of colonial history (in Portugal, concerning the history of our relationship with Africa, Latin America, and Asia) are an expression of this.

The territory of culture can be the space where these tensions are exercised, expressed, and listened to without seeking to resolve or appease them. Use it, instead, to understand what is at stake in our society, making it possible to think from other points of view, from other sensibilities, from other ways of seeing and existing in the world, detached from those standpoints that were created by European modernity – because this, too, was never uniform – and creating unforeseen paths.

It is important to return to a question that was asked at the beginning of this text, which also affects the day-to-day tasks of those who work in cultural and artistic institutions: In these encounters,



O terreno da cultura pode ser o terreno onde estas tensões se exercitam, se exprimem e escutam, não na perspectiva de se resolverem, se aquietarem, mas de entendermos o que está em jogo na nossa sociedade, de podermos pensar a partir de outros pontos de vista, outras sensibilidades, outros modos de ver e de existir no mundo, descentrados até daqueles que foram sendo criados por uma certa modernidade europeia – porque esta também nunca foi uniforme – e também de criar caminhos inesperados. Importa aí voltar a uma pergunta que se fez no início deste texto e que está também implicado no fazer de todos os dias de quem trabalha em instituições de âmbito cultural e artístico: nestes encontros, o que queremos conservar, o que é útil levar para o futuro, reconstruindo ou construindo de outra forma, e com que capacidade para acolher outros que não nós mesmos? Com o vírus que nos trouxe a este debate esta tornou-se também uma questão eminentemente biológica, filosófica e social: como viver, nas nossas cidades, campos e países, com o que nos é inicialmente estranho? E seremos capazes de o reconhecer em nós? Poder-nos-emos ampliar, como sociedade e a cada um de nós, ou estaremos condenados a perpetuar relações de conflito e negação mútua?

what do we want to preserve, what is useful to take into the future, reconstruct, or build in another way, and with what capacity to welcome others apart from ourselves?

With the virus that brought us to this debate, this has also become an increasingly biological, philosophical, and social question: How can we live, in our cities, countryside, and countries, with what is initially alien to us? And will we be able to recognise it in ourselves? Can we grow as a society and as individuals, or are we condemned to perpetuate conflicts and mutual denial?



A Perspective from Germany

Mechthild Eickhoff, Geschäftsführerin,
Fonds Soziokultur, Bonn

Utopische Momente in der Pandemie und die Rolle der Soziokultur

Überarbeitetes Transkript des Gesprächs vom 28. September 2021 „Utopische Momente in der Pandemie. Neujustierung der Rolle der Kultur in der Gesellschaft“ mit Bérénice Hamidi-Kim, moderiert von AC Coppins.

Welche Rolle spielt die Soziokultur in post-pandemischen Zeiten?

Die Grundannahme der Soziokultur ist, dass jeder Mensch kompetent ist und – unabhängig davon, ob er oder sie Künstler*in ist – mit künstlerischen Mitteln einen gesellschaftlichen Gestaltungsbeitrag leisten kann. Wenn Bürger*innen selbst Kultur produzieren und mit künstlerischen Mitteln ihre Ideen sichtbar und hörbar machen, ist das Soziokultur. Es geht um partizipative Demokratiegestaltung durch Kunst und Kultur: Soziokulturelle Projekte funktionieren über Beziehung, über Austausch und Ausdruck von Perspektiven und eine gemeinsame künstlerische Praxis. Diese Praxis wurde durch die Pandemie und die Abstandsgebote ins Mark getroffen.

Mechthild Eickhoff, Director,
Fonds Soziokultur, Bonn, Germany

Utopian Moments in the Pandemic and the Role of Socio-Culture

Revised transcript of the conversation that took place on 28 September 2021: “Utopian Moments in the Pandemic. Recalibrating the Role of Culture within Society” with Bérénice Hamidi-Kim, moderated by AC Coppins.

What is the role of socio-culture in these post-pandemic times?

The basic assumption underpinning socio-culture is that all people are competent and – irrespective of whether or not they are artists – can contribute to shaping society through artistic means. Whenever citizens generate culture themselves and use artistic means to render their ideas visible and audible, that is socio-culture. It is about participatory democracy-building through art and culture: sociocultural projects function thanks to relationships, through exchanges and expressing perspectives, as well as a shared artistic practice. The pandemic and social distancing restrictions have fundamentally impacted this practice.

Initially, numerous cultural institutions shifted whatever they had to offer online on a one-to-one basis – a digital equivalent in the form of tutorials or streaming. Over time, this has become more interactive and many projects have been taking place online, hybrid and interactive. Collective online exhibitions or co-productive clips have thus emerged as a kind of chain letter, corona orchestras formed and rehearsed on the web, online storytelling evenings with unknown people from one's own city have opened up new





Zunächst haben viele Kultureinrichtungen ihre Angebote eins-zu-eins ins Netz verlegt, ein digitales Äquivalent in Form von Tutorials oder Streaming. Mit der Zeit wurde es interaktiver und zahlreiche Projekte haben online, hybrid und interaktiv stattgefunden. So sind kollektive Online-Ausstellungen oder auch koproduktive Clips als eine Art Kettenbrief entstanden, Corona-Orchester fanden sich und probten online, Storytelling-Abende im Netz mit unbekannten Menschen aus der eigenen Stadt eröffneten neue Räume. Das alles sind Beispiele für fantasievolle und leidenschaftliche Projekte. Durch die Kontaktbeschränkungen entstanden neue Praxen, Kulturarbeit wurde variantenreich übersetzt oder auch neu erfunden.

Beim Blick auf die Rolle von Soziokultur im Kontext der Pandemie und in post-pandemischen Zeiten wird deutlich, welche Kraft Soziokultur hat, Themen von Menschen öffentlich zu machen und sie in ihrem Bedürfnis und ihrer Fähigkeit, Nähe und Sinn herzustellen, ernst zu nehmen. Soziokulturelle Projekte stärken Menschen und zeigen ihnen: „Ihr habt eine Wirkung!“. Durch die Ausdrucksformen von Kunst und künstlerischen Mitteln entfaltet sich zudem eine utopische Macht.

————— *Wurden die Menschen durch die Pandemie darauf aufmerksam, dass diese Macht da ist, und ein Potenzial darstellt?*

Ja, denn unter dem Druck, dass der Kontakt sonst abbrechen würde, sind Utopien entstanden. In der Soziokultur, wie auch im gesamten Kulturbetrieb, ist der Kontakt zum Menschen und zum Publikum, oder zu Mitmachenden, elementar. Kulturakteur*innen haben sich auf den Weg gemacht, um diesen Kontakt wieder herzustellen. Es gab Projekte, bei denen die Teilnehmer*innen gesagt haben, wir brauchen diese beiden Künstlerinnen, um in Kontakt zu bleiben und gemeinsam etwas auf die Beine zu stellen. Ich war beeindruckt davon, welche Kraft einzelne Personen für eine Gruppe haben können.

spaces. These are all examples of imaginative and passionate projects. Against a backdrop of restricted social contacts, new practices have emerged; cultural work was translated in a variety of ways or even reinvented. Looking at the role of socio-culture in the context of the pandemic and in post-pandemic times, it has become clear just how effectively it can render citizens' issues public, taking them seriously in their need and ability to create closeness and meaning. Sociocultural projects empower people and show them: "You have an impact!" Through the expressions of art and artistic means, a utopian power can unfold.

————— *Has the pandemic made us aware that this power is present and constitutes a potential?*

Yes, because under the pressure that our contact to others would otherwise be broken off, utopias have emerged. In socio-culture, as in the entire cultural sector, contact with people and audiences, or with participants, is indispensable. Cultural practitioners have been setting out to re-establish these links. Projects were organised in which participants stated, "We need these two artists in order to stay in contact with each other and to get something going." I was impressed by the power that individuals can have for a group. Such actions nurtured this notion of a utopia because they demonstrated that we are not cut off. Contact continues – contact in contactless time.

————— *Was there a specific point when people finally realised that culture is something more than entertainment, that there is a need for live culture and cultural institutions?*

Many people did indeed come to realise that cultural experiences cannot simply be transferred into digital space. Any piece of theatre, music, or dance is just not the same online – especially if it has not been adapted to that medium or if it has not explored the best way to achieve what needs to be expressed or happen. Streaming, as described at the outset, was meant to serve as a



Solche Aktionen haben einfach die Utopie aufrechterhalten, weil sie zeigten: „Wir sind nicht abgeschnitten. Der Kontakt ist da – Kontakt in kontaktloser Zeit.“

————— *Gab es einen Punkt, an dem die Menschen erkannt haben, dass Kultur mehr ist als Unterhaltung, gibt es das Bedürfnis nach Live-Kultur und Kulturinstitutionen?*

Tatsächlich wurde vielen Menschen klar, dass ein Kulturerlebnis nicht einfach in den digitalen Raum zu übertragen ist. Ein Theaterstück, Tanz oder Musik sind online nicht dasselbe – zumal, wenn sie nicht an das Medium angepasst wurden oder der beste Weg für das gesucht wurde, was ausgedrückt werden oder passieren soll. Dieses Streaming, wie eingangs beschrieben, war ein Trost: „Wir sind noch da.“ Das digitale Äquivalent des analogen künstlerischen Tuns kann nicht mehr als ein Trost sein, Streaming kann die körperliche Erfahrung nicht ersetzen. (Allerdings soll hier auch erwähnt werden, dass dadurch für viele Menschen die Zugänglichkeit zu Kulturereignissen erleichtert oder erst ermöglicht wurde.)

Sowohl die Akteur*innen, die Kulturschaffenden selbst, als auch das Publikum kamen irgendwann an den Punkt: „Ich kann nicht mehr. Die ganze Zeit sitzen wir vor dieser Mattscheibe.“ Auch, weil wir dort andere Dinge jetzt viel häufiger tun: Essen und Kleidung bestellen, unsere Arbeitskolleg*innen und Freunde treffen. Es war eine Erschöpfung spürbar und der Wunsch, sich wieder zu begegnen, wurde immer deutlicher. Eine ganze Kultur ist an einen Theaterbesuch geknüpft – man geht vorher etwas essen oder trinken oder trifft sich nachher, kleidet sich besonders oder auch nicht – und diese Kultur hat natürlich gefehlt. Wenn ein Kulturabend für mich als Publikum gut läuft, dann komme ich von einer anderen Welt überwältigt wieder heraus. Dasselbe gilt für das selbst Erfinden, für das künstlerisch tätig sein. Dieses Bedürfnis nach Gemeinschaft,

consolation: “We’re still here.” The digital equivalent of an analogue artistic practice can be little more than a consolation; streaming cannot replace the physical experience. It should also be noted, however, that streaming made it easier or even possible for many people to access cultural events.

All stakeholders, those working in the cultural sphere and audiences, eventually reached a point: “I can’t take it anymore. We’re constantly sitting in front of a screen.” This is also because we’re now increasingly doing other things there: ordering take-out and clothes, meeting our work colleagues and friends. One could sense a palpable exhaustion and a growing desire to meet again in person. There is a whole culture attached to attending the theatre – you go out for a meal or a drink beforehand or meet up afterwards, wear something special (or not) – and this culture was, of course, missing. If a cultural evening goes well for me as an audience member, I come out overwhelmed by another world. The same applies to inventing things myself, to being artistically active. This need for community, for a shared physical experience of culture, is vital for the emergence of utopias. An evening at the theatre is a collective experience.

We knew that being able to see or invent utopias represents great freedom, a freedom that we cannot allow ourselves to lose due to the fact we are separated from one another. Thanks to the engagement of so many different cultural actors, countless great projects and activities have come into being – invariably with the objective of not allowing social contact to go dormant, and with the belief that we are all creatively and sensorially driven in this world.

This need to be seen and to be visible – whether as an audience member or a participant, as a potential participant, as an active person – is highly significant. In addition, it clearly acknowledges that there is vulnerability and fragility. It is precisely this aspect that has been successfully addressed in the digital sphere. It was not a matter of reaching the masses – in other words, there weren’t millions of followers. Instead of one-sided events, there were and continue to be genuine encounters. I’m deeply convinced that





nach gemeinsamem physischem Erleben von Kultur ist wichtig für das Entstehen von Utopien. Einen Theaterabend erlebt man gemeinsam.

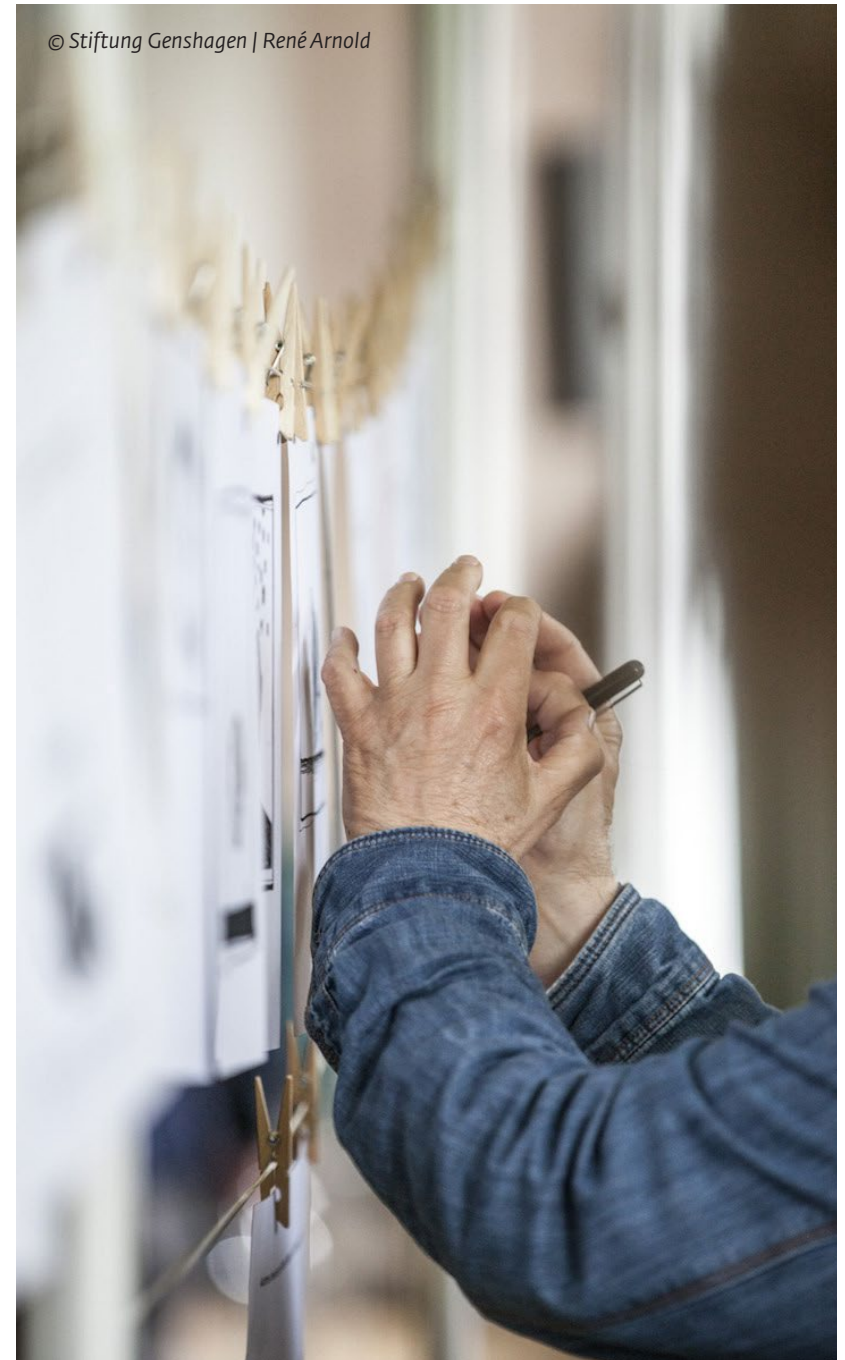
Wir wussten, dass Utopien sehen oder erfinden zu können, eine große Freiheit ist, die wir uns nicht nehmen lassen dürfen, nur weil wir voneinander getrennt sind. Durch das Engagement so vieler unterschiedlicher Akteur*innen sind viele großartige Projekte und Aktivitäten entstanden – immer mit dem Ziel, den Kontakt nicht einschlafen zu lassen, und in dem Glauben daran, dass jede*r kreativ und sinnlich in der Welt ist.

Dieses Bedürfnis nach Gesehen-werden und Sichtbarkeit – auch als Publikum oder Mitmachende, als potenziell Mitmachende, als Wirksame – ist extrem wichtig. Außerdem wird damit ein Bekenntnis deutlich, das zeigt, dass es eine Verletzlichkeit und eine Verletzbarkeit gibt. Genau dieses im digitalen Raum zu thematisieren, ist sehr gut gelungen. Es ging nicht um die Reichweite, das heißt, da waren nicht Millionen Follower. Es gab und gibt echte Begegnungen statt einseitiger Ereignisse. Ich bin zutiefst davon überzeugt, dass darüber Bedeutsamkeit hergestellt wurde, dass über Kultur Bedeutsamkeit entsteht. Und dabei können Kunstschaßende eine ganz besondere Rolle einnehmen.

——— *Was für eine Rolle hat die Nachhaltigkeit für den Sektor gespielt? Hat sich im Zuge des Lockdowns etwas Grundsätzliches geändert?*

Viele Projekte setzen sich mit Nachhaltigkeit und Klimawandel auseinander. Zum Beispiel gab es in Hamburg ein „Klimaparlament“, das analog stattfinden sollte und dann digital durchgeführt werden musste. Die Elbe erhielt eine Stimme und eine Stellvertreterin aus der Bürgerschaft sagte: „Ich bin die Elbe, ich brauche dringend mehr Platz“. Andere antworteten dann: „Ich bin das Straßenpflaster,

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ich bin der Vogelschwarm, ich bin der Maulwurf und wir sprechen miteinander.“¹

Ich nehme ein Bewusstsein für die Notwendigkeit wahr, Plattformen zu kreieren, um über Nachhaltigkeit zu sprechen. Und Nachhaltigkeit bedeutet den 17 UN-Nachhaltigkeitszielen zufolge auch: „Sustainable communities and cities“, also nachhaltige Gemeinschaften und Städte, Zugang zu Bildung, Gleichberechtigung. Das sind substanzielle Themen der Kultur – und der Soziokultur ohnehin. Die Pandemie hat das Bedürfnis, vielleicht auch die Möglichkeit, Ungehörten und Ungesehenen eine Stimme zu geben, verstärkt.

Wir haben als Fonds Soziokultur in unseren Online-Seminaren Gruppen von Menschen zu den Themen Inklusion, Diversität und Vielfalt eine Austauschplattform gegeben – ich weiß, dass sind lediglich Schlagworte – doch es waren Seminare, in denen ich persönlich eine sehr positive Zukunft für Kultur und Soziokultur gesehen habe. Es gibt viele sehr bewusste, gesellschaftlich sensible Künstler*innen, die von sich nicht sagen würden, dass sie Soziokultur machen, die jedoch mit einem sehr hohen Bewusstsein für Kunst als gesellschaftlichem Medium arbeiten. Sie sehen den Zusammenhang zwischen Kunst und Gesellschaft und werden aktiv. Und das ist auch ein Teil, der Nachhaltigkeit ausmacht.

Wo besteht Potenzial für Utopien?

Die Freiheit, etwas zu gestalten, nicht nur im Privaten, sondern im Gesellschaftlichen, ist durch die Pandemie sehr eingeschränkt worden. Die Gefahr dabei ist, zu vergessen, die eigene Kraft der Utopie, die eigene Kraft des Gestaltens anzuwenden und sich herauszufordern, über das Private hinauszudenken und für die Gesellschaft

¹ Siehe Projektbeispiel „Gründungsversammlung eines Klimaparlaments sämtlicher Wesen und Unwesen“, S. 50

meaning was generated through this approach, that significance is forged through culture. And artists can play a truly unique role in this process.

What role has sustainability played in the cultural sector? Has anything fundamental changed in the wake of the lockdown?

Many projects are dealing with issues of sustainability and climate change. One example is the “climate parliament” in Hamburg, which was originally supposed to be held as an analogue event but ultimately had to take place in digital form. The Elbe River was granted a voice and a citizen-deputy from the parliament proclaimed: “I am the Elbe, I urgently need more space.” Others then replied: “I am the pavement, I am a flock of birds, I am a mole and we can talk to each other.”¹

I have discerned a growing awareness of the need to create platforms to discuss sustainability. And according to the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, sustainability also means sustainable communities and cities, access to education, and equality. These constitute substantive issues of culture – and of socio-culture for that matter. The pandemic has increased the need, perhaps even the possibility, to offer the unheard and unseen a voice.

We at Fonds Soziokultur have been providing an exchange platform for groups of people in our online seminars on inclusion, diversity, and plurality. I realise these are just buzzwords, but these were seminars in which I personally saw a truly positive future for culture and socio-culture. There are many highly conscious, socially sensitive artists that might not describe their practice as socio-culture, yet work with a deep awareness of art as a social medium. They grasp how art and society interlink and have thus become active. And that is also a part of sustainability.

¹ Refer to the project example *Founding Assembly for a Climate Parliament of all Beings and Non-Beings*, p. 50.



mitzudenken. Wir haben wunderbare Kulturorte, Plätze, Menschen, die eine Plattform sein könnten – und mit Plattform meine ich wirklich: anderen Stimmen als der eigenen eine Position zu geben, die sichtbar ist. Meine Utopie ist: „reclaim the city, reclaim the space“, wir schreiben das Skript noch einmal neu. Das heißt, die Art und Weise, wie wir mit Kunst in der Gesellschaft eine demokratische Kultur verhandeln und schaffen können, ist wichtig. Wir benötigen Beispiele und Erzählungen, damit wir nicht einfach „normal“ weiter machen. Kunst- und Kulturprojekte, soziokulturelle Projekte, bieten Raum und Möglichkeit, diese auszuprobieren und zu diskutieren.

Außerdem hoffe ich, dass wir Räume der Kultur, der Bildung, der Stadt, vielfältiger mit gesellschaftlichen Themen bespielen. Wenn Soziokultur das Thematisieren von persönlichen Situationen mit künstlerischen Mitteln ist, dann braucht das mehr Sichtbarkeit. Ich hoffe auf mehr Sichtbarkeit – darauf, dass wir weiterhin den öffentlichen und digitalen Raum bespielen. Das ist jetzt passiert, pandemisch bedingt. Ich hoffe auf Sichtbarkeiten von Menschen, die Gesellschaft aktiv mitgestalten, in den Straßen, in den Orten, in der Landschaft: Das ist meine Utopie.

Where is there potential for utopias?

The pandemic has extremely limited our freedom to shape anything – not just in the private sphere but also in the social arena. Here, the risk is to forget to apply one's own power of utopia, one's own power to shape things and to challenge oneself to think beyond the private and to reflect on society as a whole. We have outstanding cultural spaces, venues, individuals that could act as a platform – and by a platform, I truly mean: giving voices other than one's own a visible position. My idea of utopia is: "Reclaim the city, reclaim the space," we are rewriting the script. In other words, the way we negotiate and create a democratic culture through art in society is paramount. We need models and narratives so that we don't just carry on "as normal." Artistic and cultural projects, socio-cultural projects, offer the space and opportunity to try them out and discuss them.

Furthermore, I hope that we will use cultural spaces, educational and urban spaces for a broader diversity of social themes. If socio-culture is the thematisation of personal circumstances through artistic means, then it needs more visibility. I hope for more visibility so that we can continue to engage public and digital space alike. That is what is currently happening due to the pandemic. I hope that those who actively shape society gain greater visibility – in the streets, in cities, and across the land. That would be my utopia.



Kitchen affairs - Kubra Khademi
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Jak europejskie miasta łączą kulturę z ideą zrównoważonego rozwoju? Nie chcę odpowiadać na to pytanie.

Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka,

Kurorka & Manager Projektów, Centrum Sztuki WRO/
Międzynarodowe Biennale Sztuki Mediów WRO

Tak się składa, że moja nieco buńczuczna, odpowiedź na pytanie, które było tematem dyskusji o kształtowaniu sfery zrównoważonej kultury w europejskich miastach, jest jednocześnie tytułem aktualnej, ostatniej wystawy w ramach 19 Biennale Sztuki Mediów WRO 2021 (Centrum Sztuki WRO, 19.11-17.12.2021).

Niech więc to, organizowane we Wrocławiu od 1989 roku, wydarzenie artystyczne posłuży jako wyjściowy kontekst dla omówienia przykładów włączania w pole miejskich polityk kulturalnych idei sprawiedliwości klimatycznej.

Biennale WRO, mające ambicję diagnozowania wyzwań współczesności na przecięciu sztuki, technologii i społeczeństwa oraz wychwytywania w polu aktualnej twórczości pozwalających im się przyjrzeć, intuicji i tropów, w 2021 roku odbywa się pod hasłem *REVERSO*. To wezwanie do zmiany perspektywy obserwacji mutującej na naszych oczach rzeczywistości, jej coraz wyraźniej przeświatającej funkcjonalnej struktury, ujawniającej swoją niezdarność i domagającej się pilnej aktualizacji.

How do European Cities combine Culture with the Idea of Sustainability? I prefer not to answer.

Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka,

Curator & Project Manager, WRO Art Center/
WRO Media Art Biennale, Wrocław, Poland

It just so happens that my somewhat cocky answer to the question, which was the subject of a discussion on shaping sustainable culture in European cities, is also the title of the latest exhibition at the 19th Media Art Biennale WRO 2021 (WRO Art Center, 19 November – 17 December 2021). So let this artistic event, which has been organised in Wrocław since 1989, serve as a starting context to discuss examples of incorporating the idea of climate justice into municipal cultural policies.



Hasło *REVERSO* wynika z doświadczeń pandemii, lecz przede wszystkim z refleksji nad stanem świata wstrząsanego kryzysami (klimatycznym, społecznym, politycznym, ideowym), jak i z nadziei pokładanej w transformacyjnej sile sztuki, jej umiejętności testowania nowych modeli, narzędzi, aliansów, procedur i jakości opartych na innych wartościach, niż napędzane cyfryzacją nieograniczony wzrost, zachłanność i konsumpcja.

Konsekwencją tak nakreślonego pola znaczeń jest zmieniona struktura Biennale WRO, zwykle polegającego na mocnym uderzeniu, kumulacji dzieł i zdarzeń w kilkunastu miejskich lokalizacjach. WRO 2021 nie epatuje koncentracją prac, ilością miejsc i artystycznych projektów. Zamiast jednoczesnej wielości (nadmiaru?) konkurujących o uwagę głosów artystek i artystów, zaproponowaliśmy pogłębioną, rozciągniętą w czasie refleksję dzieł, wystaw, warsztatów, i performansów toczących się w powolnym tempie od maja do grudnia.

Koncepcję kuratorską WRO 2021 ujęto w hasła-tagi (#sztucznaintelligence, #wspólnota, #klimat, #miasto, #terenysztuki, #skala, #artystkiiartyści, #śladcyfrowy), które wskazują na grupy zagadnień wynikające z 84 prac tworzących program. Pandemiczne ograniczenia stały się inspiracją do przekonstruowania praktycznych założeń produkcyjnych (kumulacja i cyrkulacja zasobów, podróże, ślad węglowy), jak i przyczynkiem do przemyślenia strategii tworzenia przepływów idei i znaczeń (mediacja sztuki), czasowych wspólnot między artyst(k)ami, organizator(k)ami, widz(k)ami, wolontariusz(k)ami, mediator(k)ami sztuki – zarówno w przestrzeniach realnych we Wrocławiu i na świecie, jak i za pomocą łączy, transmisji i dokumentacji.

Kończąca ten niespieszny przebieg wystawa *Nie chcę odpowiadać na to pytanie* zestawia prace wideo, instalacje i obiekty z dokumentacją

The WRO Biennale, with its ambition to diagnose contemporary challenges at the nexus of art, technology, and society and to capture intuitions and trends in current art, takes place in 2021 under the motto *REVERSO*. It is a call to change the perspective from which we see the reality that is mutating before our eyes and whose functional structure is becoming increasingly visible, revealing its incapacity and demanding urgent updates.

REVERSO stems from the experience of the pandemic. Above all, however, it originates from a reflection on the state of the world shaken by crises (climatic, social, political, ideological) as well as from hope in the transformative power of art; its ability to test new models, tools, alliances, procedures, and qualities based on values other than unlimited growth, greed, and consumption driven by digitalisation.

The consequence of all this is a change in the structure of the WRO Biennale, which usually consists of a large accumulation of works and events in several city locations. Hence, WRO 2021 did not feature an overwhelming number of works, locations, and art projects. Instead of a simultaneous multiplicity (overabundance?) of artists' voices competing for attention, we proposed an in-depth, extended reflection of works, exhibitions, workshops, and performances that take place gradually between May and December.

The concept of WRO 2021 is encapsulated by keyword hashtags (#artificialintelligence, #community, #climate, #city, #groundsofart, #scale, #artists, #digitaltrace) that group together issues arising from the 84 works that make up the programme. The constraints of the pandemic have been turned into an inspiration to reconstruct practical production issues (accumulation and circulation of resources, travel, carbon footprint) as well as to rethink strategies for creating flows of ideas and meanings (art mediation) and temporal communities between artists, organisers, viewers, volunteers, and art mediators – both in real spaces in Wrocław and around the world, and through connections, transmissions, and documentation.



kumulujących się od maja wydarzeń. „Nie jest ona jednak podsumowaniem, lecz z założenia kontynuacją badania idei *REVERSO*, tropieniem #śladówcyfrowych, które zostawiają #artystkiartyści. Wystawa konfrontuje z niełatwą koniecznością zajęcia stanowiska wobec ciągłego nawarstwiania się dylematów. Jedną z możliwych form odpowiedzi na natarczywe pytania współczesności jest buntownicze „nie chcę odpowiadać na to pytanie””

DYLEMAT: ZRÓWNOWAŻONY ROZWÓJ CZY ZDOLNOŚĆ RÓWNOWAGI

Zgodnie z raportem Brundtland, zrównoważony rozwój, definiowany jako „zaspokajanie potrzeb obecnego pokolenia bez uszczerbku dla możliwości zaspokajania potrzeb przyszłych pokoleń”, opiera się na idei zrównoważonej interakcji wzajemnie powiązanych dziedzin środowiska, gospodarki i społeczeństwa.

Idea zrównoważonego rozwoju została opracowana u progu pierwszej rewolucji przemysłowej w odniesieniu do gospodarki leśnej w celu optymalizacji dostaw drewna dla przemysłu górniczego. Jej autor, Hans Carl von Carlowitz, księgowy i administrator kopalń srebra w górach Erzgebirge, zauważył bezpośredni związek między rabunkową wycinką lasów a nadciągającym upadkiem przemysłu będącego istotnym źródłem dochodów elektora saskiego i podstawą egzystencji tysięcy górników i ich rodzin.

Konieczność regeneracji środowiska, dobrostan pracowników i interesy ekonomiczne zostały ujęte w logiczną formułę mówiącą o tym, że tylko tyle drzew można wyciąć, ile się ich posadzi. Ponad trzysta lat później ta zasada przykładana jest do licznych gałęzi rozbuchanej globalnej gospodarki, zaspokajającej rosnące potrzeby/ zachcianki 7,8 mld ludzi. W tym kontekście niestosowne staje się słowo 'rozwój', obecnie zastępowane przez określenie 'postwzrost' i łączone



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Ending this unhurried pace, the exhibition *I Prefer Not to Answer* juxtaposes videos, installations, and objects with documentation of the events that have taken place since May.

It is “not a summary, but a continuation of discovering the idea of *REVERSO*, tracking down the #digitaltraces left by #artists. [...] The exhibition confronts viewers with the necessity of self-definition in the face of a constant accumulation of dilemmas. One of the possible forms of answering the insistent questions of modernity is a rebellious ‘I prefer not to answer’”

DILEMMA: SUSTAINABILITY OR THE ABILITY TO BALANCE

According to the Brundtland Report (1987), sustainable development, defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”, is based on the idea of balanced interaction between the interrelated environmental, economic, and social domains.



z koniecznością gruntownej renegotjacji jego składowych kodowanych w sferze społecznej, w tym w obszarze kultury.

KULTURA I RÓWNOWAGA: DYLEMAT SKALI

Pytanie o kulturę, postawione w związku z postulowaną (post) pandemiczną regeneracją, słusznie zakłada, że jest ona jedną z dziedzin życia, kluczowych dla kształtowania sprawiedliwego współistnienia ludzkiej cywilizacji i ziemskiej biosfery. Na takim m.in. przeświadczeniu buduję sens moich zawodowych aktywności, jednocześnie jestem świadoma minimalnej sprawczości kultury w odniesieniu do globalnej (nie)równowagi. Mimo wszystko jednak mam nadzieję na sumowanie się pozytywnych mikro-efektów – w dobie totalnej konektywności wszystkie, zapośredniczone technologicznie, aspekty naszego istnienia są przecież zarazem lokalne i globalne.

Kontenerowiec Ever Given (wypełniony m.in. zabawkami erotycznymi i meblami IKEA), który na początku pandemii utknął w Kanale Sueskim, powodując kilkudniowy paraliż (trombozę?) nielicznych otwartych wówczas arterii komunikacyjnych świata, był jaskrawym symbolem tej globalności, oraz symptomów choroby wywołanej powszechnym ignorowaniem zasad zrównoważonego rozwoju.

Kiedy więc zastanawiam się czy i jak lokalne działania w polu kultury – w Centrum Sztuki WRO, we Wrocławiu, na Dolnym Śląsku, w Polsce – mogą przyczynić się do odwrócenia wektorów potężnych sił działających w planetarnej skali, widzę śmiesznie małe koparki, próbujące uwolnić z mielizny jeden z największych statków towarowych świata. Działania te, mimo, że początkowo sprawiały raczej żałosne wrażenie, okazały się skuteczne. Porzucam więc wielką skalę, aby poprzez wybrane praktyki i projekty artystyczne

The idea of sustainable development grew at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution in relation to forest management in order to optimise the supply of wood for the mining industry. The father of sustainable yield forestry, Hans Carl von Carlowitz, an accountant and administrator of the silver mines in the Erzgebirge Mountains, saw a direct correlation between the rapacious felling of forests and the impending collapse of an industry that was an important source of income for the Elector of Saxony, and the livelihood of thousands of miners and their families.

The need to regenerate the environment, the wellbeing of workers, and economic interests were all condensed into a logical formula stating that only as many trees can be cut down as are planted. More than three hundred years later, this principle is applied to numerous branches of the bloated global economy, which caters to the growing needs/wants of 7.8 billion people. In this context, the word “development” is becoming inappropriate. It is now replaced by “post-growth” and associated with the need for a thorough renegotiation of its components coded in the social sphere, including culture.

CULTURE AND BALANCE: THE DILEMMA OF SCALE

The question about culture, posed in connection with the idea of (post-)pandemic regeneration, rightly assumes that it is a sphere of life that is crucial for shaping the just coexistence of human civilisation with the Earth's biosphere. It is on this conviction, among others, that I build the sense of my professional activity; at the same time, I am aware of the minimal effectiveness of culture in relation to the global (im)balance. Still, I hope that positive micro-effects accumulate. After all, in the era of total connectivity, all technologically mediated aspects of our existence are both local and global.



realizowane w lokalnym układzie współrzędnych przyjrzeć się skuteczności wprowadzanych do niego impulsów.

UKŁAD WSPÓŁRZĘDNYCH: SYSTEMOWE ZABURZENIE

Niezbędne dla zachowania równowagi w sferze społecznej (a zatem także gospodarczej i klimatycznej) relacje między władzą ustawodawczą, wykonawczą a społeczeństwem obywatelskim, mechanizmy demokratycznego państwa prawa, podstawowe prawa człowieka i obywatela są w Polsce od 2015 roku kwestionowane i demontowane. Postępująca erozja umowy społecznej, wprowadzanie mechanizmów systemowej przemocy i wykluczeń, zawężanie sfery społecznego dialogu, ograniczanie swobody wypowiedzi, polaryzacja społeczeństwa, upartyjnienie i zawłaszczanie instytucji służących dobru powszechnemu, czy odwrót od racjonalności i empatii, to niektóre cechy lokalnego układu współrzędnych.

W takiej przestrzeni instytucje kultury i sztuki oraz osoby działające w tym polu włączają w podejmowane przez siebie aktywności problematykę oscylującą wokół pilnych wyzwań współczesności, takich jak m.in. spowolnienie tempa katastrofy klimatycznej, (post)pandemiczna regeneracja, problemy migracji, nadkonsumpcji, nadprodukcji, niekontrolowanej cyfryzacji i automatyzacji, rozwarstwienia społecznego.

Jednostki i instytucje posługują się jednak odmiennymi strategiami, w ramach swoich misji i mandatów, dysponują innymi narzędziami i mocą sprawczą, kierując swoje działania do indywidualnych odbiorców i odbiorczyń. Wysnuwają cienkie nitki, które tu i ówdzie łączą się z (miejscami bardzo słabą) podstawą, w ten sposób tworząc raczej efemeryczne, prujące się co rusz sploty, niż wytrzymałą tkaninę. Ich sprawczość, w sensie transmisji impulsów w przestrzeń

The container ship Ever Given (filled with, among other things, erotic toys and IKEA furniture), which got stuck in the Suez Canal at the beginning of the pandemic, causing a paralysis (thrombosis?) of the few open thoroughfares in the world at that time, was a clear symbol of this “glocality” and the symptoms of the disease caused by the widespread disregard of sustainable development’s principles.

So when I wonder if and how local initiatives in culture – at WRO Art Center, in Wrocław, in Lower Silesia, in Poland – can contribute to reversing the vectors of powerful forces acting on a planetary scale, I see ridiculously small excavators trying to free one of the world’s largest cargo ships. These efforts, though initially rather pathetic, have proven to be successful. So I abandon the grand scale to observe the effectiveness of the impulses introduced into the local coordinate system through selected practices and art projects realised locally.

COORDINATE SYSTEM: SYSTEMIC DISTURBANCE

The relations between the legislative and executive powers and civil society, the mechanisms of a democratic state of law, and the fundamental human and civil rights that are indispensable for maintaining balance in the social sphere (and thus also in the economic and climate spheres) have been questioned and dismantled in Poland since 2015. Some features of the local coordinate system include the progressive erosion of the social contract, the introduction of mechanisms of systemic violence and exclusions, the narrowing of the sphere of social dialogue, the restriction of freedom of expression, the polarisation of society, the partisanship and appropriation of institutions serving the common good, and a retreat from rationality and empathy.

In such a space, culture and art institutions, as well as professionals in this field, include in their activities issues revolving around such urgent challenges of the present as, among others, slowing



formułowania lokalnych polityk i systemowych strategii dla zrównoważonego postwzrostu, jest tym samym raczej niewielka. Na poziomie gmin i miast kultura jest w Polsce zwykle nadal traktowana instrumentalnie, jako narzędzie promocji i zwiększania ich chwilowej atrakcyjności.

DZIAŁANIA I ICH SKUTKI

Z perspektywy pozarządowej organizacji pożytku publicznego, jaką jest Fundacja WRO Centrum Sztuki Mediów, oraz mojej/naszej praktyki kuratorskiej, większość projektów poruszających relacje pomiędzy sztuką, naturą i technologią, jakie zrealizowaliśmy od otwarcia Centrum Sztuki WRO (2008), nie miała praktycznego wpływu na zieloną politykę miejską Wrocławia.

Mam tu przede wszystkim na myśli takie kompleksowe działania, jak np. Zielony Labirynt, czy Eco Expanded City, ale także umieszczone w przestrzeni publicznej instalacje *Cyjanometr* Martina Bricejla Baragi, czy *Megafony* Hannesa Praksa i Birgit Öigus. Zgodnie z umową Wydział Promocji Gminy Wrocław do 2023 roku pokrywa nasze koszty bieżącego utrzymania i konserwacji *Cyjanometru*. Jest to dobry przykład dbałości o instalację artystyczną monitorującą jeden z objawów katastrofy klimatycznej w miejscu zajmującym wysoką pozycję na liście najbardziej zanieczyszczonych miast świata. Jednocześnie potencjał *Cyjanometru* jako rodzaju międzynarodowej platformy lokalnych działań dla klimatu, czy po prostu ich promocji jest przez miasto zupełnie niewykorzystany. Dlaczego dobre gospodarowanie innymi zasobami nie dotyczy dzieła sztuki w miejskiej przestrzeni? Dlaczego wspieranie takich działań, jak wymiana pieców węglowych, zbieranie deszczówki, czy zakładanie ogrodów społecznych przez miejską inicjatywę Zielony Wrocław kładąc nacisk na edukację, jednocześnie pomija kulturę i sztukę?

down the pace of climate catastrophe, topics of (post-)pandemic regeneration, migration, overconsumption, overproduction, uncontrolled digitalisation and automation, and social stratification.

However, individuals and institutions use different strategies. Within the framework of their missions and mandates, they have different tools and powers, directing their actions to individual recipients. They weave thin threads that join together here and there (very weakly at some spots), thus creating ephemeral weaves that ripple every now and then, rather than a durable fabric. Their effectiveness, in the sense of transmitting impulses into spaces where local policies and systemic strategies for sustainable post-growth are developed is rather low. At the level of municipalities and cities in Poland, culture is still usually treated instrumentally as a tool to temporarily promote and increase local attractiveness.

ACTIONS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

From the perspective of the WRO Center for Media Art Foundation – a non-governmental, non-profit organisation – and my/our curatorial practice, most of the projects addressing the relationship between art, nature, and technology that we have carried out since the foundation was established in 2008 have had no practical impact on Wrocław's green urban policy.

I am thinking here of complex activities such as The Green Labyrinth or Eco Expanded City, but also the installations *Cyanometer* by Martin Bricejl Baraga and *Megaphones* by Hannes Praks and Birgit Öigus, which are situated in public space. Wrocław's Promotion Department has agreed to cover the ongoing maintenance costs of *Cyanometer* until 2023. This is a good example of how to look after an art installation monitoring one of the symptoms of climate catastrophe in a place that ranks high on the list of the world's most polluted cities. At the same time, the potential of *Cyanometer* as a kind of international platform for local climate actions, or simply for their promotion, is completely untapped by the city. Why shouldn't the good management of other resources also apply



Wysnuta z pola sztuki cienka nitka nie jest wplatana w silniejszą systemową ośnowę. Kultura i sztuka mogą być bardzo skuteczne w uwrażliwianiu indywidualnych odbiorców, ale to na lokalnej polityce spoczywa odpowiedzialność za przekucie eksperymentów artystycznych w realną zmianę. Czy jednak w warunkach zaburzonej równowagi lokalne samorządy potrafią się skutecznie zająć stworzeniem wytrzymalej, zrównoważonej ośnowy?

to an artwork in urban space? Why are activities like replacing coal stoves, collecting rainwater, setting up community gardens through the Green Wrocław initiative, and emphasising education supported, while culture and art are neglected?

The thin thread that emerges from art is not being woven into a solid systemic fabric. Culture and art can be very effective in raising the awareness of individual audiences, but it is the responsibility of local politics to turn artistic experimentation into real change. Yet, in the midst of imbalance, can local governments effectively create a resilient, sustainable warp?







Le secteur culturel entre fragilité et résilience

Maria-Carmela Mini, Directrice,
Festival Latitudes Contemporaines, Lille, France

——— *Quel est l'état de la culture en Europe dans la période post-pandémique ? Comment la période de pandémie a-t-elle affecté les festivals ?*

Ce virus a été d'une très grande violence, en particulier pour les équipes organisatrices et les équipes artistiques. C'est aujourd'hui que les effets se font ressentir. Lorsque nous étions au cœur de la crise, il nous fallait agir et assumer les décisions de nos gouvernants face à la situation pandémique et nous savions parfaitement que le boomerang serait douloureux. En France, nous n'avons pas eu d'autres choix que de mettre les festivals à l'arrêt. Tous les festivals ont été annulés, puis reportés, certains à plusieurs reprises. Cela a eu une incidence considérable sur le psychisme des équipes, et les conséquences psychologiques seront sans doute durables. Les équipes ont dû réagir à des situations « extra-ordinaires », elles ont dû gérer les publics, la billetterie, le report des spectacles, l'impact économique sur les créations et les artistes ; tout cela a ouvert des inquiétudes et des interrogations quant à leur propre avenir et à celui de leur structure. Au-delà de ces questionnements

The Cultural Sector between Fragility and Resilience

Maria-Carmela Mini, Director,
Latitudes Contemporaines Festival, Lille, France

——— *How is culture surviving across Europe in the post-pandemic period? How has the pandemic impacted festivals?*

This virus has been extremely violent, especially for all the organisational and artistic teams, and its impact is still felt to this day. At the peak of the crisis, we had to act on decisions made by our governments in the face of the pandemic, and we knew perfectly well that the boomerang effect would be painful. In France, we had no choice but to put a stop to festivals. All festivals were initially cancelled and later postponed, some even several times. This had a considerable impact on the psyche of the teams, and the psychological consequences will undoubtedly last for a long time. Festival teams have had to react to "extra-ordinary" circumstances; they have had to deal with audiences, ticketing, postponing shows, the economic impact on productions and artists. All of this has raised concerns and questions about their future survival and the survival of the structures underpinning them. Beyond such professional issues, however, the pandemic has also raised profound questions, not just about the world in which we live but also about the future



professionnels, la pandémie a interrogé en profondeur le monde dans lequel nous vivons et celui dans lequel nous souhaiterons vivre à l'avenir. Il y a eu une perte de sens et il faut reconstruire le désir de travailler dans un métier pour lequel l'engagement personnel est important.

D'un point de vue économique, en France le gouvernement a soutenu le monde du spectacle de manière très importante et il nous faut ici s'en féliciter. Hélas, ce n'est pas le cas de nombreux pays et certaines structures européennes auront sans doute beaucoup de mal à se relever. Les festivals jouent un rôle important en termes d'attractivité et de tourisme et donc de soutien à l'économie locale (restauration, hôtel, transport, etc.) et dans certains pays les conséquences financières sont majeures, impliquant de nombreuses destructions d'emplois. La crise a révélé des problématiques plus anciennes et profondes, qu'il faudra à terme aborder ; la priorité au-delà de l'annulation et des reports de spectacles a été de sauvegarder les emplois de l'ensemble des salariés dont l'activité est liée à la nôtre et pour laquelle nous sommes subventionnés. C'est en préservant au maximum les équipes artistiques, que nous pourrions garantir au public dans le futur, la diversité d'une offre culturelle.

————— *Si la crise agit effectivement comme un catalyseur, comment cela se manifeste-t-il ? Qu'est-ce qui devient visible, quelles tendances s'accroissent, qu'est-ce que cela signifie pour l'avenir ?*

Cette crise ne devrait pas nous laisser d'autres choix que de questionner le scénario dans lequel nous vivons toutes et tous. Elle devrait nous imposer une intense réflexion sur l'issue inéluctable que cette histoire nous propose. Nous avons un gros travail collectif d'écriture à produire, à l'échelle mondiale, pour prendre en considération d'autres options. Cette crise sanitaire ne doit pas être le

world in which we aspire to live. We have experienced a loss of meaning, and we need to rebuild that desire to work in a profession where personal commitment is vital.

From an economic standpoint, the government in France has supported the cultural sector in a truly meaningful way and we should congratulate ourselves for this. Unfortunately, this has not been the case in many other countries, and some European cultural structures will undoubtedly encounter great difficulty in recovering. Festivals play a crucial role in terms of attractiveness and tourism and thus in supporting local economies (gastronomy, hotels, transport, etc.). In some countries, the financial ramifications have been severe, involving widespread job losses. The crisis has also revealed older and more engrained problems that will have to be addressed over the long term. The priority, beyond the cancellation and postponement of events, has been to safeguard the jobs of all the workers whose activities are linked to ours and for which we receive subsidies. By safeguarding artistic teams as much as possible, we will be able to guarantee diverse cultural offerings for the public in the future.

————— *If the crisis has indeed acted as a catalyst, how has this manifested? What is becoming visible, what trends are accelerating, and what does this mean for the future?*

This crisis should leave us with no other choice but to question the future scenarios in which we will live. It should force us to reflect intensely on the inevitable outcome that this historic episode presents us with. We have a lot of thinking to do, on a global scale, in order to take into account other options. This health crisis should not act as a mask that hides the true face of the disease. Above all, we are experiencing a crisis of meaning and of society.

What is now at stake goes way beyond the question of coping with the pandemic. We are all collectively seeing ourselves in a mirror: we have been forced to look at ourselves as we are and to look at a world of our own making. It is no longer time to ask ourselves



masque qui dissimule le véritable visage de la maladie. Nous vivons avant tout une crise de sens et sociétale.

Ce qui se joue actuellement dépasse la question de la gestion de la pandémie. Nous vivons collectivement l'expérience du miroir. Nous sommes obligés de nous voir tels que nous sommes et de regarder le monde tel que nous l'avons fait. Le temps n'est plus à se demander quelles sont nos responsabilités passées, qui avait tort ou raison, qui l'avait prédit ou non. Il s'agit essentiellement de ne plus nous mentir à nous-mêmes sur nos perspectives d'avenir et de ne pas laisser nos imaginaires se tétaniser sous l'effet de la peur. Nous savons bel et bien quel monde nous attend et si cette vision ne nous convient pas, il faut en imaginer quelques autres. Et l'avenir ne se fera pas sans un élan de solidarité car les écarts entre les populations vont s'aggraver avec le risque central que nous connaissons : il prendra sa forme la plus terrible, celle d'une décroissance démographique sélective, après avoir creusé les inégalités sociales et fait exploser les conflits géopolitiques.

——— *Quelles idées, stratégies et propositions de solutions sont développées ? Réflexion sur les offres numériques : peut-on tirer une impulsion pour une reconstruction durable de la culture à partir de la crise ?*

Depuis de nombreuses années, les œuvres que nous produisons jouent avec les outils technologiques qui sont inscrits dans notre quotidien. Les évolutions techniques ont depuis toujours été intégrées à l'évolution des arts et ont contribué à la transformation des esthétiques scéniques. Mais ces outils sont d'abord des vecteurs puissants de transformation sociétale et ont un effet sur la relation qu'entretiennent les individus entre eux et avec leur environnement. Selon la manière dont nous choisissons de nous en emparer dans l'organisation de la vie sociale, ils peuvent devenir les artisans de progrès ou au contraire les agents d'une mutation très agressive

what our past responsibilities were, who was right or wrong, who predicted what, or otherwise. Essentially, the crisis means no longer lying to ourselves about our prospects and not allowing our imaginations to become paralysed through fear. We are undeniably aware of what kind of world awaits us, and if this vision does not suit us, we must imagine alternatives. And the future will not come about without an outpouring of solidarity, because the disparities between populations will only get worse with the core risk that we know: it will assume its most shocking form – that of a selective demographic decline – after having deepened social inequalities and detonated geopolitical conflicts.

——— *What ideas, strategies, and proposals for solutions have been developed? Reflecting on digital contributions: Can we draw an impulse for the sustainable reconstruction of culture from this crisis?*

For many years, the works we produce have played with the technological tools that shape our daily lives. Technical developments have always played a role in the evolution of the arts and have contributed to transforming scenic aesthetics. However, these tools are also powerful vectors of societal transformation, affecting people's relationships with each other and with their environment.

Depending on how we choose to employ them in organising our social lives, these tools can become artisans of progress or, conversely, agents for a highly aggressive mutation of liberal productivity. The problem lies not in the tools per se, but rather in their actual use and the intentions of those who use them.

——— *What role can civil society play in the cultural sector? How can we build a stable, sustainable, and resilient culture?*

This presupposes, above all, that we all individually rethink our relationship with others and with the world; that each of us re-examines the balance between generating the common good



du productivisme libéral. Le problème ce ne sont pas les outils, mais leurs usages et les intentions des humains qui les emploient.

——— *Quel rôle la société civile peut-elle assumer et jouer dans le secteur culturel ? Comment construire une culture stable, durable et résiliente ?*

Cela suppose avant tout, qu'individuellement nous repensions notre rapport à l'autre et au monde ; que chacun d'entre nous réinterroge l'équilibre entre la production du bien commun et la recherche de profit personnel. C'est d'ailleurs un rôle fondamental des artistes, des auteurs, des penseurs dans la société, de stimuler l'imaginaire individuel et collectif. Je pense que les artistes ont compris avant même la crise qu'ils et elles devaient être au cœur de la cité et en être le miroir. Il y a de plus en plus de projets immersifs et qui traitent de sujets de société importants et graves, comme les questions de développement durable, de l'égalité de genre ou de l'égalité sociale. Le public aujourd'hui veut être concerné et nous avons le devoir de l'écouter. Nous avons un pouvoir d'action et nous n'avons pas à vivre dans la résignation fataliste face à ce qui semble inexorable. Nous avons, a minima, à trouver les manières de nous comporter dignement dans ce contexte. A maxima, à nous mettre au travail pour inventer des bifurcations sur cette route qui, nous le savons, mène à une impasse. C'est donc en co-construisant avec le public et je dirais même avec les citoyens et les citoyennes que nous construirons une culture durable, il faut les inclure dans le processus de travail. Cela ne veut pas dire en les mettant directement sur le plateau, mais en faisant par exemple un travail de médiation et de sensibilisation plus important.

Le sujet de la pandémie nous oblige à réfléchir à la jeunesse. Celle-ci a vécu le plus fortement l'épreuve de la Covid et des restrictions de liberté qui en ont été la conséquence. Dans plusieurs études de sociologie, il est démontré que les jeunes ont malgré tout réussi

and the quest for personal profit. A fundamental task of artists, authors, and thinkers in society is to stimulate our individual and collective imaginations. I think that even before the crisis erupted, artists already understood that they had to be at the heart of a community and mirror it. Immersive projects are increasingly dealing with urgent societal issues such as sustainable development, gender, and social equality. The public now wants to be involved, and we have a duty to listen to them. We have the power to act and we don't have to live in fatalistic resignation to what seems inexorable. We have to, at the very least, discover ways to behave with dignity in this context. At most, we have to get to work on inventing forks in a road that, as we know, leads to a dead end. So it is by co-constructing with the public – and I would even say, with our fellow citizens – that we will build a sustainable culture, and we must involve them in the work process. This does not mean putting them directly on the stage, but engaging in activities such as mediation and raising awareness.

This pandemic has compelled us to think about young people. They have been experiencing the Covid ordeal and its ensuing restrictions on their freedoms most strongly. Several sociological studies have indicated that young people have nevertheless managed to adapt, but that their priorities have changed. These studies have shown how social networking and debate have evolved. Young people, and especially women, are prioritising their commitment to ecological and humanitarian causes, to societal issues such as equal rights, equal opportunities, gender, etc.

Against this backdrop, it strikes me that we, as professionals working in the cultural sector, need to take these changes into account. We need to create spaces for debate and respond to the gravity of the hour. We are living through a period of great questioning in society, about our relationships with each other, with the world of work, with our families. We are undergoing a great and long-lasting change akin to the change society went through in the 1960s. The future is full of uncertainties and we, as cultural actors, need to be at the centre of societal debates. If we are not, these debates will



à s'adapter mais que leurs priorités ont changé. Les études démontrent que les échanges via les réseaux sociaux et les débats ont évolué. Les jeunes, et majoritairement les femmes, priorisent leurs engagements dans des causes écologiques, humanitaires, sur des questions sociétales, telles que la parité, l'égalité des chances, les questions de genres, etc.

Dans ce contexte, il me paraît nécessaire que nous, professionnels de la culture, tenions compte de cela. Il faut créer des espaces de débats et répondre à la gravité du moment. Nous sommes dans une période de grand questionnement de la société, sur notre rapport aux autres, au monde du travail, à la famille. Nous sommes dans une grande mutation durable semblable à celle que la société a traversée dans les années 1960. L'avenir est empli d'incertitudes et il faut que nous, acteurs de la culture, soyons au cœur des débats de société. Si nous ne le faisons pas, les débats se feront via les réseaux sociaux créant ainsi des fractures générationnelles. Il faut remettre les sujets qui intéressent la jeunesse dans nos théâtres afin que ce lieu redevienne une agora de discussions et d'échanges.

take place via social networks, thus creating generational divides. We need to bring those themes that interest young people back into our theatres so that this place can once again become an agora for discussion and exchange.



Kultura in mesto v dialogu za prihodnost

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Kultura in mesto sta tesno povezana, soustvarjata življenje mesta in se skupaj soočata z izzivi vsakdana in prihodnosti. Tako kot trajnostni razvoj, tudi podnebne spremembe in epidemija naslavlajo mesta skupaj z njihovo kulturo in kulturo enako druge dejavnosti ter odpirajo številne možnosti, da kulturna produkcija pomaga mestom kritično premišljati stanje in razvoj, razvijati nove, bolj pravične, okolju prijazne in dolgoročno vzdržne načine življenja. Kulturna skupnost, infrastruktura in ponudba živijo v simbiozi z mestnim prostorom, skupnostjo in izzivi, čutijo in doživljajo vse kar se dogaja mestom in se skupaj z njimi spreminjajo in preobražajo. Prežemanje s kulturo mestom pomaga doživljati, čutiti, predelovati in premišljati probleme ter se z njimi soočati, graditi vizije prihodnosti in se aktivirati.

Culture and City in a Dialogue for Future

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The bond between culture and the city is strong. Together, they weave the life of the city and together, they face the challenges of today and tomorrow. Similar to the challenges of sustainable development, the changing climate and the pandemic are affecting cities along with their culture and other areas of activity. They open up numerous possibilities for cultural production to help cities rethink their situation and future development, and to develop new and more environmentally friendly, sustainable lifestyles.

The cultural community, its infrastructure and offerings, exists in a symbiotic relationship with the space, community, and challenges of urban life; they sense and experience all that goes on in the city and they change and transform with it. Being permeated by culture, cities find it easier to experience, feel, process, re-evaluate, and address problems; to build visions of the future and become more proactive.

During the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020, the residents of Ljubljana were forced to remain at home and it was barely a week before musicians took to the balconies and roofs to share hope with their neighbours and fellow citizens, enabling us to experience a sense of social cohesion despite obligatory social distancing.





V Ljubljani smo v prvem valu epidemije koronavirusne bolezni marca 2020 bili primorani ostati doma in komaj dober teden je trajalo, ko so glasbeniki tako kot marsikje drugod stopili na balkone in strehe svojih hiš in delili med someščane in sosede upanje in nam tako kljub zaukazani distanci omogočili doživetje družbene povezanosti. Medtem ko pišem ta tekst, v Mladinskem gledališču v Ljubljani igrajo predstavo *Vročina* (režija Žiga Divjak), ki radikalno vznemirja gledalce s sporočilom o tem, kako hitro in nezadržno se zaradi našega ravnanja spreminja naše okolje in poziva k ukrepanju. Na Slovenski ulici v centru mesta že pet let stoji *Cyanometer* s katerim multimedijски umetnik Martin Bricelj Baraga mimoidoče opozarja na različne stopnje modrin neba in na onesnaženost zraka ter zabeležene podatke spravlja v arhiv stanja. Sočasno pa podnebne spremembe v Sloveniji, kljub vse pogostejšim urbanim poplavam, vse močnejšim nalivom in vedno večji poletni vročini ter poročilom znanstvenikov o specifični podnebni ogroženosti države, še niso zbudile nikakršnega pomembnejšega političnega odziva. In tudi v urejanju naših mest še vedno prevladuje betoniranje trgov in ulic, načrtovalci in odločevalci pa so še zelo previdni pri preizkušanju novih bolj dolgoročno vzdržnih ureditev javnega prostora. Sredi poletja še vedno zalivamo mestne zelenice in kljub veliki onesnaženosti mestnega zraka še vedno dodajamo cestam nove vozne pasove. Medtem pa nam kulturna skupnost skozi prireditve, razstave, predstave, raziskovanja, slike, ubesedovanja, glasbo, svetlobo, ples, igro nezadržno odstira pogled na razmere in nam pomaga videti, brati, slišati, čutiti obete možne prihodnosti drugače kot zmoremo sami ujeti v stvarnost vsakdanjega življenja. Pod okriljem poletnega kulturnega festivala Mladi Levi (Bunker) je pred desetimi leti v Ljubljani pognal korenine edini skupnostni vrt v mestu *Onkraj gradbišča* (KUD Obrat), ki že deset let bogati življenje uporabnikov in drugih prebivalcev mesta, ozavešča o pomenu zelenih površin in dreves v mestu ter nam vsem pomaga prevajati izzive prihodnosti v vsakodnevne okvire življenja v mestu.

While I am writing these lines, the Slovenian Youth Theatre is staging a performance called *Fever* (directed by Žiga Divjak), which radically unsettles the viewer and calls them to action with its message about the speed and irreversibility with which our environment is changing as a result of our conduct. The *Cyanometer* has been standing in the city centre, on Slovenska Ulica, for five years now. Its creator, multimedia artist Martin Bricelj Baraga, is calling the attention of passers-by to the varying shades of blue in the sky and to air pollution levels, while recording and storing the data.

However, in spite of the ever-more-frequent urban flooding, increasingly heavy rainfall, and rising summer temperatures, and for all the scientific reports on country-specific climate vulnerability, the changing climate in Slovenia has yet to elicit a political response worth noting.

Concrete-covered squares and streets still dominate our urban planning. Our planners and decision-makers remain very cautious in testing new, more sustainable ways of long-term planning of our public spaces. We are still watering our urban green spaces in the middle of summer and we keep widening our roads by adding new lanes despite high levels of urban air pollution. All the while, the cultural community is relentlessly holding up the mirror to the nature of our circumstances through events, exhibitions, performances, explorations, images, words, music, dance, and games, and it is helping us see, read, hear, and experience the prospects of a possible future in ways we would not be able to on our own, while trapped in the reality of our day-to-day lives.

The sole community garden in Ljubljana, called *Onkraj gradbišča* (meaning "beyond the construction site"), took root ten years ago as part of the summer culture festival Mladi Levi (organised by the Bunker Institute). It has been enriching the lives of its users and other denizens ever since, raising awareness of the importance of urban green spaces and trees as well as helping us all translate the challenges of the future into the daily context of city life.



Delam v interdisciplinarni delovni skupini na IPoP - Inštitutu za politike prostora na zelo širokem področju trajnostnega urejanja prostora in prizadevamo si za krepitev lokalnih in drugih akterjev pri prevzemanju aktivne vloge v procesih spreminjanja, preobrazbe in prilagajanja naših navad, rabe prostora in vzorcev vsakdanjega življenja za to, da skupaj dosežemo cilje trajnostnega razvoja. Pri tem širimo znanje za sodelovanje in zagovarjamo javne interese in interese otrok in drugih v odločanje slabše vključenih skupin v načrtovanju in upravljanju prostora. Večino časa delamo z ljudmi, lokalnimi skupnostmi in različnimi skupinami akterjev s področja trajnostnega razvoja, mobilnosti, urbane regeneracije, upravljanja javnega prostora in prilagajanja mest na podnebne spremembe. Na različne načine (delavnice, urbani sprehodi, javne razprave, ulični festivali, majhne lokalne akcije, sodelovalno načrtovanje, tematski priročniki in berila ...) se trudimo pritegniti ljudi k skupnemu premišljevanju in sodelovanju in jim pomagati razvijati skupne vizije, ideje in jezik sodelovanja ter razvijati bolj povezane in odporne skupnosti. Sodelujemo s skupinami prebivalcev, šolami, občinami, fokusnimi skupinami, nevladnimi organizacijami in civilnimi iniciativami ter skušamo prispevati k temu, da bi se zmogli skupaj in povezano, čim bolj učinkovito in v duhu skupnih potreb, enakosti in vključevanja, soočati z izzivi prihodnosti.

Družbene razsežnosti razumemo kot največji izziv trajnostnega razvoja in urejanja prostora. Zdi se, da so v primerjavi z varstvom okolja in ohranjanjem narave potrebe človeka in skupnosti zelo zapostavljene in sistemsko slabše zastopane v odločanju o razvoju in rabi prostora, da o primerjavi z gospodarstvom in njegovi odtujitvi od človeka in družbe sploh ne govorimo. Urejanje prostora lahko razumemo tudi kot kulturo odnosov med človekom in okoljem in hkrati kulturo uveljavljanja človekovih pravic, družbene enakosti in povezanosti. Kultura in umetnost nam te odnose pomagata razumeti

I work in an interdisciplinary group at IPoP (Institute for Spatial Politics), in the very broad field of sustainable spatial management. We work to empower the local public and other interested parties to take an active role in the process of changing, transforming, and adapting our habits, use of space, and the patterns of everyday life so that, together, we can achieve the goals of sustainable development. While doing so, we are strengthening collaborative know-how and advocating for the public interest and the interests of children and other groups who are less involved in decisions on spatial planning and management.

We dedicate most of our time to working with individuals, local communities, and various interest groups in the fields of sustainable development, mobility, urban regeneration, management of public spaces, and adaptation of cities to climate change. Through various means (workshops, urban walks, public discourse, street festivals, small-scale local actions, collaborative planning, thematic manuals and reference books, etc.) we are trying to motivate people to deliberate and work together. We help them to develop shared visions, ideas, and cooperative language, and to build more cohesive and resilient communities. We collaborate with citizen groups, schools, municipalities, focus groups, NGOs, and citizen initiatives, trying to help us all face the challenges of the future together and in cohesion, as efficiently as possible, in the spirit of collective needs, equality, and inclusion.

We perceive societal dimensions to be the greatest challenge to sustainable development and spatial management. It seems that in relation to environmental protection and the preservation of nature, the needs of individuals and communities are severely neglected and systemically underrepresented in decision-making on spatial development and use – not to mention how that compares to the needs of the economy, with its alienation from people and society.

Spatial planning can be interpreted as the culture of relationships between people and the environment, which is, at the same time, also a culture of promoting human rights, social equality, and



in naslavljati v vsej njihovi pestrosti in prinašata v naše procese dela in sodelovanja nove poglede in razmisleke, ki včasih pomagajo, da se lažje razumemo, prebijemo kakšen predsodek in zaženemo nove zgodbe. Kultura in umetnost se ves čas aktivno odzivata na življenje in v okviru spopadanja z epidemijo nam, enako kot pri podnebnih spremembah, hkrati pomagata zdržati in opogumljata ter ozaveščata in odpirata najtežja vprašanja o naši skupni prihodnosti.

Razmerje med urejanjem prostora, kulturo in umetnostjo še posebej, je kompleksno. Kot krajinska arhitektka in urbanistka ga razumem kot naravno zavezništvo, načrtovanje in upravljanje prostora sta odraz kulture, naše skupne sposobnosti, da v nepredvidljivost življenjskega okolja vnašamo red, predvidljivost in varnost, zagotavljamo pogoje za življenje človeka in rabo prostora na način, ki je pravičen do vseh, varuje naravo in okolje ter ustvarja podobo in kulturno vrednost prostora. Gre za delitev skupnih ciljev in vrednot, sposobnost sporazumevanja in uresničevanja ciljev z dodano vrednostjo. Ko smo pred petnajstimi leti pripravljali kandidaturo Ljubljane za Evropsko prestolnico kulture, sem prvič po dvajsetih letih prakse v prostorskem načrtovanju in urbanizmu dobila priložnost, da sem vse svoje vedenje o prostoru in naravi svojega mesta, prostorskih potencialih in izzivih predstavila kolegom, ki so snovali kulturni program. Povsem naravno se je zdelo, da smo idejo o kulturni prestolnici in mreženju programa po celi državi oprli na izjemno naravno in strateško lego mesta, opozorili na krajinsko pestrost Slovenije in z njo povezano pestrost kulture vsakdanjega življenja, lokalne hrane, kulturne dediščine, kulturnih prizorišč in kulturnega potenciala. Ko smo lansko leto med epidemijo koronavirusa ponovno dobili priložnost razmišljati o kandidaturi našega mesta za Evropsko kulturno prestolnico, je bilo spet edino logično, da so nas pri tem vodile in vznemirjale aktualne družbene razmere in podnebne spremembe. Epidemija nas je zelo neposredno opozorila na pomen javnih zelenih

cohesion. Culture and art help us understand and address these relationships in all their diversity and bring new perspectives and insights into our work and cooperation processes that can help us foster mutual understanding, shake off prejudices, and write new stories. Always active in their response to life, culture and art help us persevere while, at the same time, also empowering us and raising our awareness – both within the context of the pandemic and climate change – by addressing the toughest questions of our shared future.

The nature of the relationship between spatial management, culture, and art is complex. As a landscape architect and urban planner, I understand it to be a natural alliance. Spatial planning and management are a reflection of our culture, of our joint ability to infuse order, predictability, and safety into the unpredictable. We help provide the conditions for human life and spatial use in a manner that is fair to us all, protecting nature and the environment, nurturing an image of a space, and building its cultural value. It is about sharing common goals and values, the ability to communicate and achieve added-value objectives.

Fifteen years ago, following twenty years of practice in spatial and urban planning, I got my first chance to present all my knowledge of the space and nature of my city – its spatial potential and challenges – to my colleagues who were developing the cultural programme for Ljubljana's candidacy for the European Capital of Culture. It seemed perfectly natural to base our idea of a culture capital and country-wide programme network on the exceptional nature and strategic location of the city and to highlight the diversity of Slovenia's landscape mirrored in the cultural diversity of its daily life, local cuisine, cultural heritage, venues, and potential.

Last year, during the coronavirus pandemic, as we were again presented with the opportunity to think about the candidacy of our city for the European Capital of Culture, it seemed only logical to let ourselves be guided and motivated by both the current societal circumstances and by climate change. The pandemic itself gave us a very direct warning of the importance of public green spaces and



površin in moč skupnosti v času zdravstvene krize, razkrila nam je prednosti življenja brez avta in lokalne ponudbe hrane in storitev, sprožila je razvoj ideje o mestu kratkih razdalj in stekle so misli o pomenu približevanja kulture ljudem, zniževanju ogljičnega od-tisa predstav in prireditev in podnebni nevtralnosti naših mest. In tako smo v program skušali vtakati idejo o gradnji zdrave, povezane in odporne skupnosti skozi urejanje lokalnih kulturnih centrov kot nekakšne infrastrukture za izboljšanje kakovosti bivanja, zdravja, preskrbe in krepitev podnebne odpornosti. Nekateri od predlogov, ki smo jih snovali za program kulturne prestolnice pred petnajstimi leti, so danes v prostoru realizirani kljub temu, da Ljubljana ni bila uspešna pri nominaciji. Slutiti je mogoče, da počasi že oživljajo tudi nekatere od idej, ki smo jih razvijali lani, čeprav Ljubljana ponovno ni uspela prepričati komisije s svojo prijavo. V urejanju prostora so pomembni procesi v katerih se oblikujejo skupne vizije razvoja in dolgoročna zaveznitva za njihovo realizacijo.

Urejanje prostora se v okviru koncepta trajnostnega razvoja počuti dobro, samo po sebi je zavezano zagotavljanju dolgoročno skladne rabe prostora in varstva okolja pri čemer so pomembni tako zdravje človeka in okolja kot kakovost bivanja kot ohranjanje narave, podoba in uporabna vrednost prostora. Koncept trajnostnega razvoja poudarja pomen prostorskega načrtovanja in skupaj s podnebnimi spremembami daje dodatno težo celovitemu in vključujočemu procesu usklajevanju interesov v prostoru. Nobena skrivnost ni, da se koncept trajnostnega razvoja uveljavlja počasneje kot bi bilo dobro za naše okolje in za nas in da pri prehodu še posebej oklevamo v razvitejšem delu sveta. Spremembe, ki jih koncept trajnosti zahteva od nas niso preproste, od prebivalcev, gospodarstva in politike zahtevajo odrekanje dobro utečenim vzorcem proizvodnje, potrošnje in navad, kar nikakor ni lahko.

Na IPoP skušamo na različne načine podpreti lokalne skupnosti pri uresničevanju ciljev trajnostnega razvoja, delamo na različnih

the power of community in times of a health crisis. It showed us the benefits of living without a car and the importance of the local provision of food and services. It triggered the development of an idea of a city where the distances are short, and it bolstered further consideration of the importance of making culture accessible to people, lowering the carbon footprint of shows and events, as well as providing for climate neutrality in our cities.

This is why we worked to weave into the programme the idea of a healthy, interconnected, and resilient community built through the development of local cultural centres to function as a sort of infrastructure for improving the quality of life, public health, and supply, and strengthening climate resilience.

Although Ljubljana may not have won the nomination, some of the recommendations that we developed for the programme fifteen years ago have meanwhile been implemented within its urban space. There are hints that some of the ideas that we developed last year are already beginning to take shape, even though Ljubljana again failed to convince the commission with its application. Spatial management involves important processes through which shared visions for development and long-term alliances to reach them are formed.

Spatial management feels right at home within the concept of sustainable development, as it is committed to providing for the long-term sustainable use of space and the protection of the environment while placing significance on human and environmental health as well as quality of life, preservation of nature, visual appeal, and the usable value of space. The concept of sustainable development underlines the importance of spatial planning and, together with climate change, lends additional weight to a comprehensive and inclusive process of the alignment of spatial interests.

It is no secret that sustainable development is not being implemented as fast as we and our environment need it to be and that the more developed parts of the world are particularly hesitant



področjih, predvsem pa na prometu in urejanju javnih in zelenih površin ter na krepitvi veščin in prakse sodelovanja. Sodelovanje razumemo kot ključno veščino za uresničevanje ciljev trajnostnega razvoja in urejanja prostora. V tem duhu lokalnim skupnostim pomagamo na različne načine pri strateškem načrtovanju sprememb in pri praktičnem vključevanju prebivalcev in drugih akterjev v načrtovanje in ustvarjanje prostora. Lokalne skupnosti podpiramo pri pripravi parkirnih politik, lokalnih načrtov hodljivosti in načrtov šolskih poti jim pomagamo pri vključujočem urejanju pešcem in kolesarjem prijaznega mestnega okolja. Z vključevanjem novih akterjev v procese načrtovanja in ustvarjanja prostora razvijamo lokalna strateška partnerstva za trajnostni razvoj. V Kočevju že drugo leto zapored skupaj z občino in predstavniki javnih institucij podpiramo proces oživljanja mestnega središča, namesto načrtovanja novega trga smo se skupaj najprej lotili povezovanja programov in ljudi ter sprožili zanimanje za dogajanje v mestu in razmišljanje o prihodnosti mesta tudi s poslikavo glavne ceste in ureditvijo parkleta med knjižnico in srednjo šolo pri kateri so sodelovali mladi. V Lucijo smo skupaj s šolarji in njihovo mentorico pravkar izdelali nov načrt šolskih poti in spodbudili zanimanje za hojo in kolesarjenje po vsakdanjih opravkih še pri drugih akterjih v občini. Skupaj s skupino uličnih gledališnikov Ana Monro smo letos pomladi v Postojni pomagali ustvarjati vzdušje na ulici zaprti za promet, poleti pa smo med njihovim nastopom v eni od novih stanovanjskih sosesk v Ljubljani na unikaten način merili razporeženje med novo naseljenimi prebivalci. Zanimanje za sodelovanje v prizadevanjih lokalnih skupnosti za trajnostno urejanje prostora in razvoj skušamo pri udeležencih zbuditi z zanimivimi in prepričljivimi izkušnjami sodelovanja.

Epidemija koronavirusa je v urejanju prostora med prvim valom pozimi 2020 ustvarila izjemno velika pričakovanja. Ko smo bili zaradi

with this transition. The changes required of us by sustainable development are not simple; populations, economies, and politics are expected to abandon well-established patterns of production, consumption, and habits, which is by no means easy.

At IPoP, we endeavour to support local communities in various ways to achieve the goals of sustainable development. We are active in several fields, predominantly traffic, management of public and green spaces, and strengthening collaborative skills and practices. We see collaboration as the key skill to achieving the goals of sustainable development and spatial management. Keeping this at the forefront of our actions, we assist local communities in the strategic planning of change and the practical inclusion of citizens and other stakeholders in the planning and creation of space. We support local communities in the preparation of parking policies, local walkability, and school route plans. We assist them with the inclusive organisation of a city environment that is friendly to pedestrians and cyclists. By including new, interested parties in the processes of spatial planning and creation, we are building local strategic partnerships for sustainable development. For the second year in a row, we are supporting inner city revival in Kočevje, in collaboration with the municipality and public body representatives. Instead of planning a new square, we first began by integrating programmes and people, sparking interest in what goes on in the city and encouraging discourse about the future of the city. Our activities included painting the main street and setting up a parklet between a library and a secondary school, with the help of our youngest participants.

In Lucija, we have just finished a new plan of school routes with the help of pupils and their mentors, and we encouraged other stakeholders in the municipality to do everyday chores around town on foot and by cycling. Together with Ana Monro Street Theatre, we helped create a special atmosphere in a street closed to traffic in Postojna this spring, and one of their summer performances in a newly built residential community in Ljubljana allowed us to measure, in a unique way, the mood among the members of the new



nalezljivega virusa življenje kot ga poznamo primorani zelo upočasniti, se nam je ponudila enkratna priložnost, da nas je veliko sočasno na lastni koži, v svojih domovih in naseljih, lahko preizkusilo življenje brez vsakodnevnih voženj z avtom, hoje na delo in v šolo in množičnega nakupovanja. Med delom in šolanjem od doma smo se začeli zavedati vrednosti in pomanjkljivosti naših stanovanj in stanovanjskega okolja. Veselili smo se lahko majhne lokalne trgovine in kmeta za zadnjo hišo v naselju, med iskanjem sprostitve in rekreacije v bližini doma smo postali pozorni na javne zelene površine, balkon in vrt sta se pokazala v vsej prestižnosti in sta dodatno poglobila razlike med nami. Ko se je ustavil promet, smo lahko množično preizkušali možnosti svobodnega kolesarjenja po mestu, se čudili tišini in čistemu zraku in sanjali o prihodnosti iz čtiva o trajnostnem razvoju. Nenadoma je postalo možno zapreti še večji del mestnega središča za avtomobilski promet in dati prednost kolesarjem in to je seveda zelo hitro privedlo do tega, da smo lahko začeli mnogo bolj ambiciozno razmišljati o počutju pešca in kolesarja v prostoru, o kakovosti javnega odprtega prostora, ozelenitvi in senci, vodi in klopih in celovito tudi o kakovosti življenja brez avta, peš hoji v trgovino in na delo, kolesarjenju v šolo in zdravstveni dom. Trajnostno mesto in življenje v njem si je bilo kar naenkrat zelo lahko predstavljati. Oprijemljive predstave o prihodnosti so lahko močno orodje za dosego sprememb in nekateri so jih znali izkoristiti. Zdaj, dobro leto in pol kasneje, smo globoko v tretjem valu epidemije koronavirusa. V Parizu lahko od daleč preko precej nazornimi predstavitvami spremljamo podjetno spreminjanje središča mesta v povsem novo urbano okolje, francoska metropola stremi za tem, da se v vseh ozi-rih preobrazi v mesto kratkih razdalj, ozelenjuje svoje večpasovne bulvarje. Medtem v Ljubljani v gledališču igrajo predstavo *Vročina*, *Mladi za podnebno pravičnost* so posadili drevo, ki je na kolesu krožilo po mestu in opozarjalo na vroče točke, naši prijatelji v Kulturnem društvu Prostorož so za projekt vroče točke Ljubljane prejeli nagrado

community. We try to encourage participation in local community efforts towards sustainable spatial management and development by making sure the experience of participation is interesting and compelling.

The first wave of the pandemic in the winter of 2020 gave rise to extremely high expectations from spatial management. As we were forced to significantly slow down our life as we knew it, we were given a unique opportunity to experience in person – both in our homes and our neighbourhoods – a life devoid of everyday driving, work and school commutes, and frequent shopping trips.

While working and studying from home, we started to realise both the value and the shortcomings of our homes and the residential environment. We considered ourselves lucky to have a small local shop or farm in the neighbourhood. In our search for relaxation and exercise close to home, we grew more alert to the public green areas. The balcony and the garden shone in all their glory. And they further deepened the divide between us.

After the traffic stopped, we could try freely cycling around the city in great numbers; we marvelled at the tranquillity and the clean air and found ourselves dreaming of a future exactly as described in the literature on sustainable development. Suddenly, it stopped being impossible to close off a larger part of the city centre to cars in favour of cycling. This quickly led us to start thinking a lot more ambitiously about the experiences of pedestrians and cyclists in a given space, about the quality of public open spaces, of greenery and shade, of water and benches, as well as more broadly about the quality of life without a car, about going to the store and to work on foot, about cycling to school and to the healthcare centre.

All of a sudden, it became so easy to imagine a sustainable city and life within it. Tangible ideas about the future can be a potent tool to bring about change, and some of these ideas have been applied well. Now, more than a year and a half later, we find ourselves in the middle of the third wave of the coronavirus pandemic.



Evropskega ekonomsko-socialnega odbora za odličnost v pobudah civilne družbe na področju podnebnih ukrepov za leto 2021, *Cyanometer* v poznojesenski megli beleži visoko onesnaženost zraka v središču mesta, mi pa se dogovarjamo za novo festivalsko sodelovanje z uličnim gledališčem Ana Monroe, da popestrimo prihod pomladi prihodnje leto v Kočevju.

In Paris, we are able to witness from afar, through rather illustrative presentations, the ambitious transformation of the city centre into a completely new urban environment. The French metropolis is working to transform itself, in all respects, into a city of short distances, turning its multi-lane boulevards into green spaces. Meanwhile, in Ljubljana, the stage play *Fever* is being performed. The Youth for Climate Justice initiative (*Mladi za podnebno pravičnost*) planted a tree and moved it around the city on a bicycle to warn about hot spots. For their *Hot Spots* project in Ljubljana, our friends at the Prostoroz Cultural Society received the 2021 Civil Society Prize awarded by the European Economic and Social Committee for excellence in civil society initiatives on climate change. And while the *Cyanometer* is busy registering high levels of air pollution in the late autumn urban fog, we are already making next year's arrangements with the Ana Monroe Street Theatre for our new collaboration in a spring-welcoming festival in Kočevje.





Best Practice Projects

France

Afghan artists hosted in more than 30 French cultural institutions during 2021

During August 2021, support networks were set up across the French cultural world to enable Afghan artists, primarily women, threatened by the Taliban, to go into exile. Maria-Carmela Mini, Director of the Latitudes Contemporaines festival, was one of the links in this chain of solidarity. She was instrumental in organising a group of about 30 cultural institutions willing to welcome and accompany these artists whose lives were in danger. With the support of the French Embassy in Kabul and an emergency unit of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this group coordinated the acquisition of French visas, communication with the artists in hiding, getting them safely to Kabul Airport, and ultimately exfiltrating them from Afghanistan. After a month of tireless teamwork, 72 Afghan artists were evacuated and subsequently welcomed by cultural institutions in France.

Maria-Carmela Mini is convinced that without this quest for meaning by directors of cultural venues during the Covid crisis, such a network of international solidarity and hospitality could not have been built so quickly.





Best Practice Project

France

Macho Man, Heartbreak Hotel performing arts company;
an immersive happening programmed
by Latitudes Contemporaines

With the theatrical installation *Macho Man*, the Heartbreak Hotel company invites us on a sensitive journey through the testimonies of women and young girls who have been victims of misogynist violence. Wearing headphones, spectators stroll from room to room, from narrative to narrative, and are invited to partake in this experience, thus becoming more than just viewers. This artistic offering at the crossroads of several art forms compels us to look at the issue of violence against women in society from multiple standpoints. The project's strength lies not just in its sensitive and empathetic approach but also in its original, ingenious, and highly effective scenographic presentation, which manages to tackle this difficult subject as accurately as possible. "The reactions and debates ensuing from this project between generations and between audiences in general have reinforced my belief that one possible way to get through this crisis is to assume our share of responsibility by putting the debates, as difficult as they may be, back at the heart of our cultural institutions." Maria-Carmela Mini.



Macho Man © Marti Artalejo | Temporada Alta



Best Practice Project

Germany

Founding Assembly for a Climate Parliament of All Beings and Non-Beings, participatory theatre project

In 2020, the artist collective *metagarten & helpersyndrom* launched the participatory theatre project *Climate Parliament of All Beings and Non-Beings* in Hamburg. Based upon the observation that “beings” other than humans, such as a coronavirus, can equally determine and impact life on planet Earth, they wanted to give the shared world a political voice in matters of climate. At the publicly streamed “founding assembly” in November 2020, 36 ambassadors representing “beings” (microbes, fungi, plants, and animals) as well as “non-beings” from the natural environment (such as the wind or forests) or from a human context (such as public transport or balloons) gathered to represent their respective interests. The volunteers who had been called upon to participate discussed the Earth’s future as the Elbe River, glow-worms, mosses, electricity, or ice and subsequently presented ten parliamentary resolutions to the Second Mayor of Hamburg. The Climate Parliament was nominated for the Innovation Award for Socioculture “Sustainability” and awarded the title “Sustainability Project 2021.”

<https://www.klimaparlament.org/>



Das Klimaparlament sämtlicher Wesen und Unwesen
© Amelie Hensel



Best Practice Project

Germany

City Space for Us, youth art project

With the project *Stadtraum für uns* (City Space for Us), the Jugendkunstschule Siegen-Wittgenstein (North Rhine-Westphalia) connects physical space with virtual storytelling. The project includes seating furniture made of concrete blocks that are permanently installed in urban settings and QR codes through which artworks derived from a wide variety of workshops with young people can be accessed via mobile devices. This innovative idea arose in times of contact restrictions. Its motivation was to transfer principles of cultural education – working with people through direct encounters – into the digital world and to create visibility and publicity for digital working methods and art forms in connection with the analogue world. Sponsored by Fonds Soziokultur, the summer and autumn of 2021 saw the creation of narratives from a youth perspective about visions of coexistence and ways of identifying with urban space.

www.stadtraumfueruns.de





Best Practice Project

Poland

Cyanometer

Cyanometer appeared in Wrocław in 2017, commissioned by the WRO 2017 Biennale and funded by the Wrocław municipality. A year earlier in Ljubljana, when the city was the European Green Capital, the first *Cyanometer* was installed as a new kind of monument in real and online space. It is a contemporary continuation of the 18th-century experiments of Horace Bénédict de Saussure, a Swiss physicist and natural scientist who first linked industrial air pollution to the colour of the sky. The colour sampler created by de Saussure with different shades of blue is the installation's centrepiece. Every 20 minutes, the networked *Cyanometers* in Ljubljana and Wrocław document and archive the state of the sky on the project website, displaying information about air pollution in both cities. WRO regularly activates *Cyanometer* by carrying out an art mediation programme, workshops, and Cyanowalks, which have been very popular. These activities are part of our mission to bring art into the centre of everyday life.

<https://wrocenter.pl/en/cyjanometr/>



Cyanometer © Zbyszek Kupisz



Best Practice Project

Poland

Megaphones

In 2016, we built three huge wooden *Megaphones* in Wschodni Park, Wrocław to enhance people's awareness of nature. We entrusted the work to Urban Greenery Management as part of the programme we prepared for the European Capital of Culture. The *Megaphones* are popular with visitors to the park and we have organised picnics, walks, and guided tours around them. As we have no funds of our own to maintain the installation, we monitored its slow decay, treating it as a part of its natural life cycle. We dismantled one object that was completely destroyed. The other two almost completely collapsed. Unexpectedly, after five years of managing the *Megaphones* in this way, the Urban Greenery Management has recently propped up the two remaining *Megaphones*. Was this an ad-hoc action leading towards the sustainable management of symbolic resources? Let's hope so!

<https://wrocenter.pl/en/megafony/>



Megafony © Woroniak





Best Practice Project

Slowenia

Open Street campaign in Škofja Loka

The *Open Street* campaign was a street lab for car-free measures. For five Saturdays in September 2020, Šolska Street (the Šolska Ulica) in Škofja Loka belonged to the people. Cars were not permitted, making space for pedestrians and cyclists. You could take a pleasant walk between the area of the former barracks, a new, developing town centre (where a food market, youth centre, pump track and skate park, and kindergarten have found their place), and the old town. During European Mobility Week, the street was also open for pedestrians and cyclists in the morning rush hour. Children were able to walk to school feeling safe and comfortable. For five Saturdays, Šolska Street was closed for transit traffic and open for people. For half a day, a lively programme took place on the street, inviting the residents of Škofja Loka to participate. Organisers of car-free measures were especially happy to see people walking down the middle of the street with vegetables in their baskets, returning from shopping at the market in the former barracks. People were able to stop and chat with neighbours they otherwise would not have met, had they used their cars.

<https://ipop.si/en/2021/07/07/an-open-street-campaign-as-a-street-lab-for-car-free-measures/>



Škofja Loka © Reisevogel



Best Practice Projects

Portugal

Anthropocene Campus Lisboa: *Parallax*

The Anthropocene Campus Lisboa: *Parallax* took place at Culturgest in Lisbon between 6 and 11 January 2020. The event was organised by the Portuguese research centre CIUHCT (Inter-university Centre for the History of Science and Technology) and its project *Anthropolands* and was part of the Anthropocene Campus, which was initiated by the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin and the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin. In line with the term “parallax” – the phenomenon by which the position of an object seems to shift when observed from a different position – the event aimed to “engage with issues of environmental and social transformation and collapse highlighted by the term Anthropocene”. Discussions were organised around two frameworks, which although intertwined, are often looked at separately: systems of social and technological organisation, and perception and narrative. The project was funded by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia.

<https://parallax.ciuhct.org/>

To be a Lichen

Within the scope of the *Cinema and Ecological Reasoning* conference, which took place in May 2021, and in tune with the launch of the microsite *Secrets and Nature* (and the four-part video series, which takes a closer look at the small life-forms we typically ignore), we presented a brief conversation with the historian and researcher in the field of cinematographic studies,

Teresa Castro. We delved into the ways cinema may trigger and widen our understanding of the world, and we talked about the importance of “smaller lives” and of knowing how to open up to turbulence, to uncertainty, and to what is perceived as a “blurred” experience. We looked at what emerges in the paths of ruin. We observed the traces of new ways of life and realised how symbiotic relations, built on cooperation and affiliation, drive away the old paradigms of competition and struggle for survival. Furthermore, we asked: How can we fathom an achievable life outside the scene of catastrophe we face every day?

<https://www.culturgest.pt/en/whats-on/to-be-liquen/>

Outdoors 2 (Zunaj 2)

The *Outdoors 2 (Zunaj 2)* project supported local communities in their placemaking activities and was a continuation of the *Outdoors* project that ran in 2019. *Outdoors 2* operated with a few upgrades in 2020. The programme provided each project with a grant of €800 for materials to implement ideas and seek consultation, while the community contributed voluntary labour and managed their projects. In 2020, 15 small, local actions received support. Although the projects were diverse, they shared a common thread of building strong community bonds and improving the open spaces in various neighbourhoods. *Zunaj 2* was organised by the City Municipality of Ljubljana. It was created at the initiative of *prostoRož* and *IPoP – Institut for Spatial Policy*, which co-financed 25% of the project in 2020. All initiators and implementers of the campaign were residents of Ljubljana.

<https://ipop.si/en/2020/07/23/outdoors-2/>



Speakers' Biographies

AC Coppins // Moderator

AC is a strategist, curator, speaker, and founder of THE CATALYSTS, a boutique agency boosting the development of innovative and creative players in digital technology, media, science, film, music, design, and the arts. Blending critical thinking, creative strategy, and future-oriented research as well as a solid background in the performing arts, AC is frequently invited to major international events to host, present keynotes, and moderate thought-provoking discussions.

www.catalysts.agency

Liliana Coutinho

Liliana Coutinho curates the programme of debates and talks at Culturgest Foundation. She holds a PhD in Aesthetics and Sciences of Art from the Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and is a researcher at the Institute of Contemporary History (IHC) at NOVA University of Lisbon – School of Social Sciences and Humanities (FCSH), where she teaches in the postgraduate programme in Curatorial Studies. Most recently, she is the guest curator for the discourse programme of INDEX 2022, Biennial of Art and Technology in Braga. As a researcher and curator she has collaborated with Teatro Municipal Maria Matos (Lisbon), where she was Assistant Director and Curator of Public Programmes; Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation; Serralves Contemporary Art Museum (Porto), where she serves as Head of Education; Le Plateau (Paris); and Artistas Unidos (Lisbon), among others.

<https://www.culturgest.pt/en/>

Yvonne Büdenhölzer

Yvonne Büdenhölzer has been the Director of Theatertreffen since 2012, an annual two-week long theatre festival bringing remarkable productions from German-speaking countries and works by up-and-coming artists from all over the world to Berlin. The festival takes a look at the status quo and the future. Beginning this year, Yvonne Büdenhölzer is also the Director of the German section of the International Theatre Institute. Having worked as a dramaturge for various municipal theatres and independent companies, she advocates for equal opportunities in theatre. She has also lectured at Freie Universität Berlin and was a member of the Berlin Council for the Arts. In 2020 she received the Berlin Women's Prize for her commitment to equal opportunities in the theatre.

www.berlinerfestspiele.de/de/theatertreffen/start.html

Mechthild Eickhoff

Mechthild Eickhoff has been the Head of Fonds Soziokultur e.V. since 2020, which aims to nurture participation in shaping democracy through arts and culture. Previously, she ran nationwide projects about innovation in cultural mediation as Head of the Bundesverband der Jugendkunstschulen und kulturpädagogischen Einrichtungen (bjke) e.V. (a federal association) and was the leader of the thematic cluster for cultural education at Stiftung Mercator. In addition, she developed UZWEI_Kulturelle Bildung, a space at Dortmunder U for innovative participatory programmes and exhibitions for young people and cultural practitioners.

www.fonds-soziokultur.de

Annekatriin Gehre-Horváth

Annekatriin Gehre-Horváth works for the Office for Sustainability, Local Agenda 21 in the city of Augsburg. Her job is to manage the city's future guidelines — i.e., its entire sustainability concept. She is also involved in the sustainability processes of civil stakeholders connected with the city. In the recent past, she was the director of a cultural network that transforms vacant properties in Augsburg into spaces for exhibitions, concerts, and other kinds of cultural events. She studied at the University of Augsburg and has always taken part in groups working towards anti-racism and solidarity in the realm of city politics.

www.nachhaltigkeit.augsburg.de

Bérénice Hamidi-Kim

Bérénice Hamidi-Kim is a theatre sociologist and Professor in Performing Arts at Lumière University Lyon 2. She is also a member of the Institut Universitaire de France. Her work combines performance studies, cultural studies, sociology, and critical theory. Publications include *Les Cités du théâtre politique en France depuis 1989* (Cities of Political Theatre in France Since 1989) (L'Entretemps, 2013) and *Troupes, compagnies, collectifs dans les arts vivants* (Groups, Companies, and Collectives in the Performing Arts) (co-authored with Séverine Ruset and Max Milo; L'Entretemps, 2018).





Speakers' Biographies

Jerzy Kornowicz

Jerzy Kornowicz has been the Director of the Warsaw Autumn International Festival of Contemporary Music since 2017. Operating since 1956 as the largest international Polish festival of contemporary music, its main goal is to present new music from Poland and around the world. As a composer and piano improviser, Kornowicz is also one of the founders of the intuitive music group Mud Cavaliers, which brings together improvisers and creators of alternative music and jazz. Since 2013, he has been President of the Creative Poland Association, uniting Polish artists and creative industries. Previously, Kornowicz was President of the Polish Composers' Union and Vice-President of the Council of NGOs at the Ministry of Culture. Dealing with culture and art as a sphere of social cognition, his interests include sociology and anthropology of culture. He is a great enthusiast of horizontal cooperation between various transnational social groups.

www.warszawska-jesien.art.pl

Maria-Carmela Mini

Maria-Carmela Mini is the Director and Founder of the international contemporary performing arts festival Latitudes Contemporaines, which has taken place in Lille since 2003. The festival focuses on contemporary dance that is increasingly hybrid but can also revert to more choreographed forms, combining new choreographic trends from France and abroad. Maria-Carmela Mini seeks to create encounters with the contemporary arts that invite the audience to think differently and to question modes of living in our society. She is also Delegate President for European Relations of France Festivals, the most important association of music and performing arts festivals in France.

<https://latitudescontemporaines.com/>

Maja Simoneti

Maja Simoneti is a landscape architect and urban planner. She works as a project manager and researcher at IPoP – Institute for Spatial Policies, which is an NGO, research group, and consultancy. Her main fields of interest are urban green and public space, public participation, and community-led sustainable urban development. She advocates for collaborative management of urban green and open space, universal design, child-friendly cities, walkability, and healthy cities. She is persistently researching playgrounds, urban gardening, riversides, and public green spaces of Ljubljana.

<https://ipop.si/en/>

Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka

Agnieszka Kubicka-Dzieduszycka, WRO Art Center (Wrocław, Poland), works as a media art curator, project manager, and lecturer. Since launching WRO Art Center in 2008, she's been co-shaping its programme, running international collaborations, and is actively involved in art mediation. She has curated and managed several EU-funded projects and was in charge of coordinating official cultural events like the Polish Year in Austria (2002–2003). She has also worked as a TV author and producer. Her latest curatorial contributions include exhibitions, workshops, and screenings in Finland, Ukraine, Israel, Sweden, Japan, and Germany, where she is currently curating the POCHEN Biennale 2022 in Chemnitz.

wrocenter.pl





Stiftung Genshagen

Deutschland, Frankreich und Polen für Europa

DIE STIFTUNG GENSHAGEN

Die Stiftung Genshagen ging aus dem Berlin-Brandenburgischen Institut (BBi) für deutsch-französische Zusammenarbeit in Europa e.V. hervor, das im Jahr 1993 vom Historiker Prof. Dr. Rudolf von Thadden und der späteren Beraterin des Kanzleramts Brigitte Sauzay gegründet wurde. 2005 wurde das BBi in eine rechtsfähige Stiftung bürgerlichen Rechts umgewandelt. Stifter sind die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien (BKM) und das Land Brandenburg.

PROFIL

Als Schnittstelle zwischen Staat und Zivilgesellschaft und mit dem Ziel, Europa in seiner politischen Handlungsfähigkeit, sozialen Kohärenz, wirtschaftlichen Dynamik und kulturellen Vielfalt zu stärken, agiert die Stiftung in den Arbeitsbereichen „Europäischer Dialog – Europa politisch denken“ und „Kunst- und Kulturvermittlung in Europa“. Im Schloss Genshagen, abseits und doch in erreichbarer Nähe der Hauptstadt Berlin gelegen, ist die Stiftung ein Ort der Begegnung und des Dialogs, zwischen Akteur*innen aus Kunst, Kultur, Politik, Wirtschaft, Wissenschaft und Medien. Hier entstehen neue Denkansätze und Lösungswege für aktuelle und künftige Herausforderungen in Gesellschaft und Politik – unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland, Frankreich und Polen im Sinne des „Weimarer Dreiecks“. So werden in Genshagen Netzwerke verschiedener gesellschaftlicher Gruppen über Ländergrenzen hinweg etabliert und gefördert, unterschiedliche

Genshagen Foundation

Germany, France, and Poland for Europe

THE GENSHAGEN FOUNDATION

The Genshagen Foundation evolved from the Berlin-Brandenburg Institute for Franco-German Collaboration in Europe, which was founded in 1993 by historian Rudolf von Thadden and Brigitte Sauzay, who was later to become an advisor to the Chancellery. Since 2005, the Foundation has been run as a non-profit foundation under German civil law. The German Government, represented by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, and Land Brandenburg are its founders.

PROFILE

The Genshagen Foundation, as an interface between the State and civil society and whose aim is to bolster Europe's political capacity, social cohesion, economic dynamism, and cultural diversity, plays an active role in two working sections: "European Dialogue – Political Thinking on Europe" and "Art and Cultural Mediation in Europe." Located in Genshagen Castle, at some distance and yet within easy reach of the capital Berlin, the Foundation is a meeting place for encounters and dialogue, between actors from the worlds of art, culture, politics, business, science, and the media.

The Foundation has been instrumental in identifying fresh ways of thinking and solutions to current and future challenges across society and in politics – with a specific focus on relations between France, Germany, and Poland in the sense of the "Weimar Triangle." In Genshagen, networks involving various social groups have been established and nurtured across national borders, alternative perspectives brought together, and fresh approaches for Europe's future outlined.



Perspektiven zusammengeführt und neue Entwicklungspfade für die Zukunft Europas skizziert.

KUNST- UND KULTURVERMITTLUNG IN EUROPA

Kunst, Kultur und ihre Vermittlung gehören zu den Grundlagen für das Projekt Europa. Der Bereich „Kunst- und Kulturvermittlung in Europa“ will mit seinen Projekten Begegnung und Austausch ermöglichen, grundlegende Fragen von Forschung und Praxis Kultureller Bildung diskutieren sowie die Rolle und die Möglichkeiten von Kunst und Kultur in europäische Debatten einbringen.

Sowohl in Begegnungsformaten, Residenzen und Tagungen als auch in Praxisprojekten v.a. mit Jugendlichen werden die großen Fragen unserer Zeit behandelt. Dazu zählen neben der Digitalisierung u.a. die Themen Nachhaltigkeit und Klimawandel sowie die möglichen Einflüsse von Kultur und Kunst darauf, ebenso wie ihre gesellschaftliche Verantwortung dafür. Fragen von kultureller Teilhabe und dem Zugang zu Kunst und Kultur stehen dabei genauso im Zentrum wie der europäische Austausch, insbesondere zwischen Deutschland, Frankreich und Polen. Das Weimarer Dreieck mit Leben zu füllen, beispielsweise durch literarische Begegnungen, gehört neben der Interdisziplinarität und dem Austausch zwischen Forschung und Praxis zu den Grundlagen unserer Arbeit. Diskurse an der Schnittstelle zwischen Kultur und Politik öffnen den Blick für neue Perspektiven und zeigen ungewöhnliche Wege auf. Fragen der Künste und Fragen der Gesellschaft werden gemeinsam verhandelt. Dabei erleben wir Vielfalt als Bereicherung, fördern Diversität und grenzüberschreitendes Denken und Handeln.

ART AND CULTURAL MEDIATION IN EUROPE

Art, culture, and how they are mediated belong to basics of the European project. The “Art and Cultural Mediation in Europe” section aims to facilitate encounters and exchanges, to discuss fundamental questions of research and practice in cultural education, and to introduce the role and potential of art and culture into European debates.

The major questions of our time are addressed, not just in meeting formats, residencies, and conferences but also in practical projects, particularly with young people. In addition to digitisation, these include themes such as sustainability and climate change, and the potential impact of culture and art on them, as well as their social responsibility for them. Questions concerning cultural participation and access to art and culture take centre-stage, as do inter-European exchanges, especially between France, Germany, and Poland. Alongside interdisciplinarity and exchanges between researchers and practitioners, vitalizing the Weimar Triangle, for instance, through literary encounters, is one of the foundations of our work. Discourse at the interface between culture and politics can open up new perspectives and reveal unusual paths forward. Questions on the arts and on society are thrashed out together, thereby enabling us to experience plurality as a source of enrichment, promote diversity, and develop cross-border thinking and action.



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