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State of the Arts

Arts Management

in Times of Crisis

Why the world of arts and culture is far from doomed to failure, even if it feels so in the light of budget cuts, threats to artistic freedom and a shift to right-wing policy.

Focus starting on page 6



The world is better than you think!

Crisis is a term that can be heard everywhere at the moment, on the level of whole societies as well as on the level of the arts sector in special. This concerns the social shift to right-wing politics and its inherent threat to (artistic) freedom, the destruction of cultural heritage because of armed conflicts or climate change, the effects of the world financial crisis which result in budget cuts for the art and cultural sector, or concrete problems within a particular art institution, such as, for example, cases of harassment or discrimination. In this context, a certain helplessness can be felt both on the part of policy and of art institutions and professionals. However, studies have shown one fact that applies to the art sector as well as to many other areas of society and to human perception per se: we overestimate and overemphasize situations of crisis and, at the same time, do not perceive middle- and long-time positive developments enough. Of course, this does not mean that currently there are no problems or hurdles that arts professionals have to deal with. But there are also several ideas and examples of how these can be tackled. On the following pages we present approaches and experiences from arts professionals from different regions of the world on how to deal with the various kinds of crises in and around the field of arts management. With this mixture of academical, practical and also very personal contributions and interviews, we would like to encourage you to not only consider changes negatively, but to face challenges courageously. Use the creativity and power of the arts field and adapt it to problem solving!

State of the Arts

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(Publisher)

Kristin Oswald
(Chief Editor)

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EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

The experience of the Global Cultural Leadership Programme (GLCP)

During the first GCLP in 2016, forty young cultural leaders travelled from across the globe to meet in Valetta, Malta for one week. The experience of the authors of this report proved to be transformative for each of them in unexpected ways.

by Alison Uttley, Beth Ponte, Faye Hobson and Ruhi Jhunjunwala

http://bit.ly/Review_GCLP2016

THE ROLE OF ARTS MANAGERS



@ Jr. Korpa/ Unsplash

It's Time to Say Goodbye

This or a similar formulation can be found in various regulations of arts management study courses: The aim is „to enable graduates to meet current challenges in the cultural sector in a competent, creative and solution-oriented way“. That is good – and yet still too little.

by Raphaela Henze

http://bit.ly/role_artsmanagers

SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS

CONVERSATION AND BOOK REVIEW

Introduction to Arts Management

Most book reviews are written without including feedback or background information by the author. For this review, Constance DeVereaux decided to not only write about Jim Volz' latest book „Introduction to Arts Management“ but to additionally talk to him about why he thought another introduction to the field was needed.

by Constance DeVereaux

http://bit.ly/Review_Introduction_Arts_Management

CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

Exploring leadership like a gardener

What is leadership if not a relationship and role we take within a community? Since arts and culture can give us deep insights into how we form relationships and how we relate to the world and help us envision leadership styles beyond neoliberal approaches, leadership in this sector should also focus on caring and growing.

by Anabel Roque Rodríguez

http://bit.ly/Leadership_Gardener

BOOK REVIEW

Arts and Cultural Management. Sense and Sensibility in the State of the Field

Arts Management is a broad field where a lot of things happen simultaneously. New approaches are constantly appearing on the tableau and most of them disappear very quickly again. Together with experienced researchers, Constance DeVereaux has taken on the difficult task of identifying the most promising ones for her new volume and mapping their status quo between theory and practice.

by Ann Tonks

http://bit.ly/Review_Sense_Sensibility

Success with Music

Never split the difference Negotiating as if your life depended on it

*Chris Voss with Tahl Raz,
Harper Business 2017*

There is the old saying “you don’t get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate”. While this book is not for artists or arts managers specifically, the principles of negotiation are the same for most situations in the arts sector. Although dealing with a topic that is not “sexy” to most arts professionals, the author describes the various tactics with real-life examples, making it a very easy read – almost like a suspense novel!

The Musician’s Profit Path

*Bree Noble,
Amazon Digital Services LLC 2019*

Subtitled “The 5-Stage Blueprint To Create Massive Growth In Your Fan Base and Sustainable Income For Your Music Career” Bree Noble writes about the necessary stages that a musician needs to take in order to earn a living from the art. She is a singer, songwriter and administrator herself and has first-hand experience in implementing what she writes about. Although the book is written for all musicians, her aim is to especially empower female musicians to make their mark in the male-dominated industry.

All you need to know about the Music Business (9th edition)

*Donald S. Passman,
Simon & Schuster 2015*

The author is a music lawyer and he tells it like it is. He writes in an easy to read vernacular, making complicated legal transactions sound, well if not easy, at least understandable. He covers many legal aspects that need to be considered at one point or another in a musician’s or music professional’s career. The topics range from contracts to songwriting, merchandising, touring, royalties, choosing managers, etc. The informations reference the legal system of the United States, but the underlying principles are universal to most business matters relating to the music industry. Note: The 10th edition is due out in October 2019.



Zenaida Desaubris’ goal as an [opera career coach](#) is to convey the basics of the singing business to young music professionals. Having over 30 years of experience as an agent, personal manager and promoter of music events, she knows what it takes to be successful in the highly competitive field of opera and musical theater.

If you like to share your reading tips, just write us an email to office [@artsmanagement.net!](mailto:office@artsmanagement.net)

The best we can

Re-establishing priorities for arts professionals in times of crisis

By Maria Vlachou

Arts professionals tend to think that their work is important for society. Nevertheless, when it comes to formulating this value in concrete terms, most of them fail to do so. Far from being able to demonstrate the relevance of what they do for the people they aim to serve, they often seem to be little informed about contemporary issues that affect their communities. Additionally, budget cuts, a demand for “doing more with less”, and current political and social crises add to arts organisations becoming numb and feeling helpless about their connection to society. The uncritical execution of repetitive tasks, therefore, becomes a comfortable norm, where there seems to be little place for reflection, imagination, creativity and, ultimately, happiness. Can there be a way out from this swamp?

In recent years, my concerns regarding cultural management evolve around three main issues:

- Our incapacity to reflect on the value of our work, linked to a limited or inexistent knowledge of issues affecting the communities we work for;
- The feeling of helplessness when confronted with big political and social challenges;
- Our incapacity or unwillingness to make the necessary adjustments in order to put our resources into better use.

In Portugal, there is no serious and permanent evaluation of what cultural organisation do. We are not used to thinking in terms of mission and of specific objectives. All too often, the mission is a description of ‘what’ we do and not of ‘why we do it’. Most museums and archives will tell us that their mission is to “collect, preserve, research, exhibit and communicate collections” and most theatres and auditoriums will state that their mission is the creation and presentation of artistic works in the fields of dance, music, performance art, etc. Thus, at a managerial level, there doesn’t seem to be an understanding or clear expression of the place cultural organisations wish to have in contemporary society. This failure is replicated

at different other levels within the organisation, with obvious consequences on the performance and well-being of members of staff.

Defining values

Whenever I give professional training for arts professionals, some colleagues look at me in the beginning either with a dose of indifference or mistrust. They have seen everything, they have done what they could, they have given up. They don't feel they are heard or taken into consideration at their workplace. As the conversation moves on and we try to reflect on the role of cultural organisations and the importance of what we do, things get tougher. Although many people use adjectives like "good", "significant" or "important" when discussing what they do, my insistence on understanding "why" it is good, significant or important is met with blank or confused stares. There is no capacity to analyse why they do what they do and how each one contributes towards the organisation's greater mission.

This doesn't come as a surprise. The management of cultural organisations is investing heavily on intense programming without involving itself and the team into a critical evaluation of this activity. People are asked to execute and not to think. Even those who maintain a flame, they soon get tired and eventually declare defeat. Annual reports may present impressive numbers at the end of the year, but teams are not able to answer the question "So what?". How can they keep on working when there doesn't seem to be anything in the horizon?

"There doesn't seem to be a capacity to analyse why they do what they do and how each one contributes towards the organisation's greater mission."

Within this context, one also becomes aware of how little informed many cultural professionals are concerning contemporary issues affecting the communities they are part of and work for. In a meeting that took place a few months ago in Lisbon – involving artistic directors, actors, managers, colleagues working in education and students – most of us were feeling somehow numb at the beginning of the day: it was Monday morning and we had woken up to the result of the 2018 Brazilian election. Many were at a loss and seemed to be feeling helpless. The discussion quickly

picked up and it was soon business as usual. When participants were asked whether they thought Portugal was immune to the Far-Right and whether they were aware of its actions in public spaces (which in the last year involved small demonstrations in front of a private museum in Lisbon, the National Theatre and different schools), there was silence and the usual blank stare. Nobody said they knew about this and perhaps not everyone understood what the connection was, what it had to do with us and our work. In the months that followed, there were intense conversations in Portugal regarding police violence against black people, attacks against LGBT people, the country's colonial past and the narratives in school books and museums. None of this seems to affect formal cultural organisations, what they do and how they do it. How can we actually contribute towards the development of critical thinking and the development of imagination, both so much needed in our contemporary societies, if we ourselves are not curious enough and remain cut off from whatever goes on around us?

Getting out of the state of numbness

In front of big political and social challenges, the feeling of helplessness is, perhaps, natural. Things look enormous to us. Lacking the conditions to perform our work as well as we would like to, not being motivated and challenged to think critically about what we do and why, being asked to merely execute and to question as little as possible, we tend to feel smaller and smaller. Can there be a way out from this swamp?

At this point – not only because of political and social challenges, but also because of financial shortcomings – I believe we should pause, think and scale down our activity: do less, but be more useful and effective; do less, but be more relevant; do less, but be more creative and happy; do less and make other people happy too. I believe this is a moment where each one of us could rediscover his/ her potential and be allowed to use it and do the best he/she can: as an individual, as a professional, as a citizen.

At an individual level, it is necessary that we are more informed and aware of issues which, although they might not affect us directly, they always do, indirectly, because they affect people next to us, people we wish to engage with.

At a professional level, we also need to be more aware of what is going on around us and realise the role we can play in it. There is no point for numerous activities (exhibitions, performances, concerts, talks) if we are not clear as to what we do and why we do it. We might be short of human and financial resources, but, should we be clearer regarding our mission, we could make a better use of the existing ones and become more effective, meaningful and relevant to our communities.

„We should pause, think and scale down our activity: do less, but be more useful and effective; do less, but be more relevant; do less, but be more creative and happy; do less and make other people happy too. ”

Finally, as citizens, as people being active in the public sphere – both as individuals and professionals – it is urgent that we help create real (non-virtual) public spaces for dialogue. The quality of our democracy depends on the existence of these spaces, not what we sometimes call “safe” spaces, but spaces where there can be a healthy confrontation of ideas and some degree of discomfort. We need to look each other in the eye, we need to listen more and talk less and, through the other, we need to try and get a clearer view of the realities that surround us.

At a recent training, one of the trainees wrote on her evaluation: *“When we started working, we all had a big flame burning, but after many years, with many difficulties and being told that our work is not good enough, the flame is gone. I’m leaving today with a renewed flame. My flame had been extinguished for eight years and now it’s on again. I can’t wait to go back to work tomorrow and call the colleague who solved a problem I had and ask him how he did it.”*

This is one person, this is a small thing. But when the wind is favourable, a flame can grow bigger. It is the energy and enthusiasm that keep us going and allow us to do great small things. As professionals, we have to be able to put this energy into effective use, starting by managers, who are responsible for the positioning and performance of whole organisations. Moments and periods of crises may also be moments and periods of great achievements, if we are also able to see them as opportunities, as another chance to do and be the best we can.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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When Democracy is at Risk

Reflections upon the Role of Arts Institutions and their Leaders in Brazil and Germany*

By Beth Ponte

Cultural institutions are by nature resilient organizations. They have to be because times are always difficult for the cultural sector and its dependence on public support. Cultural institutions therefore are familiar with dealing with the negative impacts of global economic downturns. They are commonly seen as dispensable when it comes to public funding and fight year after year against cuts in private sponsorship.

Another type of crisis is now demanding the attention of arts institutions and they already feel some of its effects: the crisis of democracy – if not as a political system, certainly as a set of values. Indeed, social democracy is at risk with the rise of right-wing and populism in Europe. And in the United States. And now also in Brazil.

It is no wonder that Cambridge Dictionary's word of the year for 2017 was 'populism.' Defined by the Australian political scientist John Keane in an [interview to the Brazilian section of El País](#), the biggest daily newspaper in Spanish, as "an autoimmune disease of democracy, it destroys the organs of control and marginalizes important sectors of society." The cultural sector is not immune to the spread of populism and its effects. Actually, it's quite the opposite: the arts and its institutions, as a sector, and its agents, as individuals, are often populism's first target. Are arts institutions and arts managers prepared for facing this new type of crisis?

Brazil: the tale of "moral panic" and its consequences

In October 2018, the former army captain and far-right politician Jair Bolsonaro was elected the 38th President of Brazil. His institutional "war on culture" has already begun and comprises the extinction of the Minis-

* Special thanks to Prof. Anette Löseke, Manfred Stoffl, Marília Bonas and Prof. Martin Zierold for inspirational interviews and conversations.

try of Culture, attacks on the Federal Law for Cultural Incentive (Rouanet law), and a review of the Brazilian public for-profit state companies', e.g. for oil, banks or post, funding of cultural projects.

But this “war on culture” already began before Bolsonaro’s election. Since 2017 we have seen a series of episodes of censorship and controversies involving cultural projects and arts institutions. For example, in September that year, the Santander Cultural Centre in Porto Alegre canceled the exhibition “Queermuseum: cartographies of diversity in Brazilian Arts” thirty days before its announced ending after becoming the victim of a smear campaign organized by right-wing activists.

All these episodes are deeply related to the rise of populism, its effort to establish an atmosphere of “moral panic,” and to marginalize the arts and artists as “a threat to societal values and interests” (Cohen 2002, xxxv, n. 1). There were reactions by the cultural sector – e.g. through a crowdfunding campaign the Queermuseum exhibition was presented at Parque Lage in Rio de Janeiro. The campaign broke records: it was supported by 1600 people and fundraised more than R \$ 1 million to organize the exhibition and a series of debates – but the damage was already done.

“The episodes of 2017, amid the election’s fervor, had as consequence the delegitimization of our cultural institutions as part of our society that now sees public investment in arts as a waste of money,” Marília Bonas, Coordinator of the Sao Paulo Resistance Memorial in Sao Paulo, told me in an interview for this article. “Organizations’ revenues have also been affected: some private companies stepped back on their sponsorship policies because they don’t want to be related to arts and culture.”



Parque Lage in Rio de Janeiro @ Alan Franco/ Flickr.com - CC BY-SA 2.0 (left).

Advertisement for an event during the Queermuseum exhibition: Family Art aims to disassemble taboos, patterns and structures through play. What does a drag-king do? © Parque Lage (right).

¹ „Unterstützung der Internationalen Zivilgesellschaft“ (Support to International Civil Society). Keynote speech by Johannes Ebert on the occasion of the autumn conference of the Federal Association of German Foundations in Munich. Available at: <https://www.goethe.de/de/uun/prs/int/gen/21398246.html> (last accessed 11 April 2019).

by far-right groups in July 2018 for hosting an exhibition about gender and sexuality. In light of this, in 2019 it is co-producing a dance performance called „Fear“ (Angst).

Decades before, the Goethe Institute in Salvador had already had an important role in supporting artistic groups and movements during the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964–1985). It had hosted movie festivals, dance and theater performances, and even the annual assembly of the Unified Black Movement against Racial Discrimination (MNUCDR) in 1978 after the federal police prevented the event from being held in other spaces of the city (Alberti, Pereira 2007). The same happened more recently in other countries. In 2011, at the time of the „Arab Spring,” the Goethe-Institut Cairo set up the „Tahrir Lounge,” a platform for discussions and exchanges among young Egyptians. As a sign of the current times, in 2018 the Goethe Institute included for the first time in its strategic planning the „Promotion of Civil Society” as one of its main goals.¹

In Germany, the party AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) and other organized right-wing movements have been attacking the German theater scene, with complaints against plays, disturbance of performances, and demands of reduction of subsidies. This was one of the drivers for the organization of the „Die Vielen” (The many) movement to support the freedom and diversity of the arts. Launched in November 2018, the „Declaration of Many“ was already signed by more than 400 arts institutions and 2000 individuals, in 14 regional groups.

There is no way out without a way through

In times of crisis of democracy, cultural institutions have the role of protecting (symbolically and physically) cultural heritage and artists, of listening and giving voice to those who need it, of resisting and criticizing the ones in power through curation and programming and, more importantly, they have the role of fighting for their own existence. Of course, cultural institutions are not obliged to do any of these tasks, but they can. And why chose to stand by when we can do something?

In the Brazilian case, where most cultural organizations are governmentally funded, it may be difficult for cultural leaders to confront the political establishment without threatening their own jobs and even their institutions. This situation *“might require of us to imagine a different model for marrying*

political activism and art-making, a model that is non-institutional,” as put by Pablo Helguera, Director of Adult and Academic programs at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (Petrovich, White 2018, p. 55). For those who cannot act, to exist is already to resist. But for those who can, they have to take advantage of their possibilities and embrace their role, either as main agents or as partners.

“In times of crisis of democracy, cultural institutions have the role of protecting, of listening and giving voice to those who need it, of resisting and criticizing the ones in power.”

In this regard, the role of cultural leaders is central. Organizations are made by people and their choices. There are limitations imposed by the complex network of forces and stakeholders of every arts institution, but the possibilities are also numerous. As in any other period of crisis, cultural leaders can find opportunities to inject new energy in their work and in their own organizational culture, *“abandoning and eschewing a culture of no in favor of a culture of yes,”* as stated by the Portland-based artist, curator, and educator Kristan Kennedy (Petrovich, White 2018, p. 63).

There is no way out of the crisis without a way through it. And to go through, cultural organizations, their leaders and teams have to be bold, but also savvy and strategic. More than never, they have to go back to their mission, vision, and values, to reflect upon themselves, their potentials and limitations and have a clear notion of their best role in these new times.

Questions and reflections: a crisis can always be a chance to change

This current crisis carries a chance for other changes. It can be a unique opportunity for self-criticism and self-improvement among cultural institutions. The external challenges are also a chance to stress the concept of “cultural democracy” and to realize that the defense of democracy must begin inside these institutions. It is time to ask: are our museums, orchestras, and theaters living up to democracy in their work practices, governance models, community engagement policies? If not, it is time to do so.

This self-evaluation sheds light on the importance of audience development and engagement policies. If rebuilding democracy is about rebuilding the capacity to dialogue, cultural institutions will not have much relevance in the future if they don't know their audiences and are not keen to make real efforts to broaden them. Many people vote for populists because they are lost or disoriented. How can arts institutions help to bring these people back and to reaffirm the importance of democratic values?

Maybe democracies all over the world will sooner or later overcome this “mid-life crisis,” as defined by David Runciman, author of the book “How Democracy Ends” (2017). But until then, cultural institutions will navigate through new types of uncertainty and will have to formulate new answers to questions they already took for granted: What is the purpose of our existence? Why should we be funded by governments, companies, and citizens? Why does society need us? And what changes do we have to do to reaffirm the place of culture in society? How do we transform initiatives into organized strategies to face this moment of crisis? There are no easy answers to difficult questions. And the challenges about to be faced by arts institutions worldwide are far more complex than the old and present ones related to revenue sources and sustainability models.

As a Brazilian arts manager and a world citizen myself, I personally do not fear the end of democracy, or of art and its institutions in the near future. What I fear is something even worse and not yet seen. Using the words of the Brazilian sociologist Celso Rocha de Barros articulated in an [interview with the Brazilian magazine Revista Piauí](#): “*There is a whole gray area between democracy and dictatorship within which it is possible to move with*



„The Gospel according to Jesus, Queen of Heaven” by Jo Clifford with transgender actress Renata Carvalho at Goethe-Institut Salvador © Tiago Lima (left).

Mass demonstration „Die Vielen” in Berlin in May 2018. © Die Vielen e. V. (right).

advances and setbacks. And maybe democracy does not end, it only means less than it already meant.” If we do not act now as a sector, it is not only the existence of cultural institutions that is at risk but the very meaning of culture as an endeavor towards a common and better future. This time of crisis shows that it is time to use the resilience, creativity, and passion present in the arts organizations to help color this gray area we find our societies in.

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From Collectivism to Connectivism

The Romanian Arts Sector since the Fall of Communism

By Corina Şuteu

For former communist countries like Romania a ‘crisis’ of the cultural system can be claimed. It is demonstrated by a lack of long-term cultural policies and of answers to questions about the benefit of public support for the arts in order to transfer the country to a new system after the upheaval of 1989. This crisis stems from the diminished role of cultural and education policies as compared to other fields of public policy as well as from an outdated administration apparatus dealing with the cultural dynamics. Therefore, cultural management and its tools are often used here in a purely functional way, with no philosophy of mission behind.

Romania since World War II in a rush

In 1945, Romania changed from a parliamentary monarchy to a socialistic state. Under Nicolae Ceauşescu during the late 1970s the country became gradually a totalitarian state. In the 1980s, poverty and corruption reached an unsustainable level and resistance began to form. The communist power reacted to these strikes with merciless oppression. As a result, when the 1989 Revolution wave swashed into Romania, it did so with incomparable energy. The fall of the Romanian regime was almost one of the last and of the most brutal in Eastern Europe, ending with the execution of Ceauşescu and his wife. After the first presidential and parliamentary elections held in 1990 and a new democratic constitution was adopted by a referendum in December 1991, first slow, cautious economic and social reforms were started. Since then, Romania has made progress in institutionalising democratic principles, civil and human rights. However, the legacy of a 44-year communist rule cannot be removed rapidly. Corruption and the absence of the rule of law are still commonplace today.

A synthetic analysis of the “Romanian creative phenomenon” becomes a tedious endeavour if one wants to get a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of the arts and cultural sector since 1989. A rapid comparative glance shows the following changes:

- from a rigid *modus operandi* to a flexible one;
- from being centralized to being atomized;
- from stiff to fluid;
- from an institution-based artistic production to a project-based one;
- from collective to connective;
- and from a pre-determined legitimacy to a volatile emergence.

The “special needs” of the Romanian arts sector regarding cultural administration

A radical break from the traditional socialistic pattern of the cultural administration took place between 1989 and 2019. This entailed that the financial and institutional support given to cultural output and its distribution for educational and political outcomes before 1989 was replaced by the needs and dynamics of a contemporary art system. The technological evolution, the transformation of the mere consumer into an active participant in the artistic production, the radical repositioning of the specificities of the artistic fields and their evolution into “artistic industries”, the export-oriented performing arts, and a more flexible artistic sector in general happened all at once. This liberating dynamic made cultural production less rigid and more ephemeral in its functioning while being freed from the former institutional and ideological constraints.

“The financial and institutional support given to cultural output before 1989 was replaced by the needs and dynamics of a contemporary art system.”

However, it is to be observed that in order to supply this new artistic paradigm, the inherited model of cultural administration did not fit. Also, because of the prolonged financial crisis that lasted 2008–2011, the business and non-profit sectors in Romania both suffered equally, but the humanities and artistic fields were the first to pay the price for this economic imbalance. In the case of the cultural administration, the economic meltdown

only emphasized the lack of a coherent vision in the government's cultural policies. It also revealed that what caused the administration to come to such a low point was more a problem of the system in general rather than merely a contextual one.

Arguing that the functional components of culture are “intrinsic, institutional, and instrumental,” the British scholar John Holden (2005, p. 120) includes creativity, inspiration, the intellectual component, the administrative category type, management and organisation – or what could be called “the fabric of culture” – as well as categories for which the arts and culture are a support, a mediator, a catalyst into his definition. In Anglo-Saxon countries, these categories include social cohesion, reconciliation, the fight against social injustice, and identity affirmation (instrumental). In France, culture continues to be one of the central responsibilities of the State, taking symbolically the role the Church used to have and thus functioning as a fundamental instrument of social cohesion and as a means of expressing the nation-state's identity in Europe.

Between this Anglo-Saxon system – influenced by Protestant thought, profoundly liberal in the sense that those with means and capacities have equal chances, competitive and open to opportunities arising from hard work – and the Latin one which is still dominant in Romania – influenced by a culture of hierarchical decision-making of small circle of experts and represented by the force of the intellectual elite – there are radical differences in terms of administrative politics and power structure. Yet both believe in culture as a social must. Both approaches point at the profound interdependence of the triad “creativity – instruments of governance that channel it – outcome for society.”



Cinema professionals on the red carpet, asking for a better cinema law, Romania © TIFF (Transilvania International Film Festival) 2016

In Communist Romania, Holden's triad of intrinsic, institutional, and instrumental components had a complementary functional correlation because the arts were a central instrument for propaganda through massive-scale cultural manifestations. Culture at the same time represented an apparent space of freedom, as the Communist regime understood too well that leaving room for some artistic gestures would mimic a form of freedom of expression in order to maintain the impression that the legislator had the absolute power. Culture was totally controlled by the Communist State in order to be used as the main broadcaster for the emotional and ideological values necessary to ensure the population in what they believed was a secure frame of thinking.

"The institutional and legislative history of the last thirty years failed to answer a fundamental question: Why should arts and culture be financially supported in democratic Romania and how could we best do it?"

Unfortunately, from this perspective, the period following the 1989 did not trigger a reflection on the role of the arts in a post-totalitarian society. And it did not re-establish the fundamental notions and governance principles that a new understanding of freedom requires in order to flourish. This missed opportunity has had paramount consequences and is at the very origin of the constant stumbling and inertia of the Romanian cultural administration to this day. Consequently, the lack of long-term cultural policies can be explained through the institutional and legislative history of the last thirty years, which failed to answer a fundamental question: Why should arts and culture be financially supported in democratic Romania and how could we best do it?

The aggressive takeover by the non-regulated free market and entertainment industries, the lowering of the educational level of the population and the preponderant conservatism of taste fuelled by Communism were just a few of the endemic obstacles for sustainable and democratic cultural policy to be developed. Because of its pyramidal governance, Romania did not take note of a consistent and conscious debate concerning the models of cultural policy that would best revive an emotional binder that a post-totalitarian and post-communist society demands. Culture's "special needs" have been neglected.

The legislative and administrative changes implemented in the Romanian arts sector during the last three decades show on the one hand the absence of an understanding complementarity to the three elements discussed by Holden, and on the other that no new vision for the administration of cultural institutions, matching the present dynamics of the artistic field, was proposed. Such a vision is not only necessary for artists, intellectuals, and the cultural community at large, but also for the Romanian society as a whole as modern cultural policies can be decisive for the freedom of thought and a free existence in a post-communist context.

Public cultural policies, between strategic needs and artistic practice

Romanian public policies were not traditionally based on democratic values. Historically and geographically, Romania is situated at the crossroads of several cultural traditions – Byzantine, Balkan, Central European, and Slavic – and had only accidentally and in some of its historical regions (like Transylvania under Austro-Hungarian ruling) a functioning, efficient, unitary, and articulate administration. Investing in long-term policies and understanding time as an ally cannot be easily reconciled with the local national spirit.

In the aftermath of 1989, Romania inherited the legacy of an arid and complicated cultural legislation, conditioned exclusively by the need to ideologically control the arts and to transform the cultural institutions into a propagandistic instrument. Meanwhile in Western Europe, the glorious era of generous public funding for the arts was declining. The European states started to rethink their cultural policies on a regional, federal, and national



The street festival Street Delivery in Bucharest in 2012 © Mihai Petre - Wikimedia Commons - CC BY-SA 3.0 (left)

„East of Bucharest”, iconic film by Corneliu Porumboiu (2006) about the Romanian revolution, the title, in Romanian, being-“ was it or was it not... ” (right)

level, redefining the function and priorities of the funding for their art institutions. Like other countries influenced by foreign modes of governance, Romania bears the imprint of pyramidal thinking in administration that functions unidirectionally from above to below.

The contrast between a parochial national system and a flexible, open, international one explains at least partially the impact of a new generation of Romanian artists on the contemporary world market thirty years after the fall of Communism. This generation had to fight and overcome not only the institutional borders at home, but also the nationalistic frame of mind in search for a different world where individual and collective artistic projects can move beyond a home country that rejects all reform.

This kind of “independent and international” artists who are legitimated outside their country emerged despite, not because of the current cultural administration. The artistic community as an independent organism with individual initiatives and singular talents, assisted by small civil society organizations or their own production companies and at times financed by foreign cultural institutions like the Soros Foundation – especially in the first decade after 1989 –, engenders indirect cultural policies that are more efficient than the direct ones. These policies are born out of individual cultural practices and uncoordinated action. They oppose central and local governance which is incapable to come up with a correlated strategy, adapting the progressive and asymmetrical dynamics of the shifting creative space.

The underlying forces of the Romanian cultural sector in the last thirty years are not those of public cultural policies. Instead, cultural practices are to determine the evolution of the context and to give birth to real and



The street festival Street Delivery in Bucharest 2018.

Left © Street Delivery Bucharest

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powerful alternatives to the not yet adapted administrative system. Unfortunately, the pressure on local, regional and state governments coming with these cultural practices – produced especially with foreign support or genuine individual resources – was not backed by administrative reform. Through their mere existence and the power of their example, these practices will compensate gradually, even if at a modest pace, the lack of a coherent vision and an integrated master-planning for the cultural sphere.

The solution for invasive provisory systems

The structural ‘defect’ of the socialist and post-socialist era can still be turned into an advantage. The fluidity, adaptability, connectivity, and the immense creativity residing in this type of social construction that can be found in Romania don’t produce rigorous and sustainable master plans; the sector therefore is very open to alternatives, it adapts easily to change, it manages crises with efficiency, and it survives institutional collapses. Is there any way to channel such potential into a valid cultural policy?

Cultural hubs emerged in Romania during the last decade together with the interest in independent journalism and the creative industries, including, among others, projects like the street festival [Street delivery](#), [CreativeMornings](#) – a free monthly breakfast series for creative communities, [Funky Citizens](#) – an NGO that strives to improve the civic literacy of Romania’s citizens, Recorder, The Institute, Modulab, Point, NOD Maker Space, Mater, Replika – the first community theater in Bucharest – or Reactor – the first experimental theater in Cluj – are founded. Banks redesigned their corporate sponsorship regarding social involvement to be able to include independent art projects: BRD created Fundatia9 and supported the cultural space Apollo 111, Raiffeisen offers support to [Sonoro](#) – a classical music multi-venue



*The NOD Maker Space in Bucharest
© NOD Maker Space (left)*

Concerts in Bragadiru Palace in Bucharest during the Sonoro Classical Music Festival 2018 © Sonoro (right)

festival – and ING Bank to Urbanoteca. Each month new community-based projects emerge, intersecting the arts, the community, entrepreneurs and professionals. This ongoing emergence replaces a public cultural strategy and an integrated system of cultural policies which still fails to emerge.

The traditional modes of support for the arts are becoming outdated in Europe as well as society becomes both a consumer and a producer of culture. The causes for this are as diverse and mixed as the effects of globalization, the spreading of new technologies, the neoliberal consensus, the effect of the “third wave” theorized by Toffler in 1980, or “the medium turned into the message” as McLuhan maintained. As in other peripheral countries, in Romania these effects are chaotic and distorted. The recent years saw a fall back into a traditionalist and nationalist form of art as a refuge from globalizing tendencies. It’s symbolised by the fact that the Ministry of Culture in Romania changed its denomination into “Ministry of Culture and National Identity” in 2017.

The year 2019 finds contemporary and traditionalist arts living on different islands again, like in the 1990’s. As Baricco wrote in “The Barbarians” (2014), “provisory systems” seem to be the only systems that have the innovative energy necessary for moving forward. Artists, managers, and leading intellectuals who run cultural projects and tacitly accept this volatile convention will probably be the ones who strive.

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In 2015, Poland's national conservative Law and Justice party (PiS) won the national elections. The laws and decisions of this governing party have evoked international criticism, for example with the so-called "Holocaust law," which criminalizes the mention of Polish complicity in the Holocaust. One case that has gained sad notoriety is the takeover of the Museum of the Second World War in Gdansk. We talked with its former founding director, Prof. Paweł Machcewicz, who was dismissed by PiS, about the connection of the current political and cultural crises.

A question of to be or not to be

An interview by Kristin Oswald

Dear Mr. Machcewicz, as an introduction please tell us something about your career and what you do today.

For many years I worked as an academic historian. At a particular stage I also entered the field of Public History as director for research and education of the Institute of National Remembrance. It was a high-risk job because issues such as the Communist dictatorship and the Second World War evoked a great deal of attention and emotions in Poland. The contentious topic that I dealt with at this time was the discovery that Polish people had killed Jews in Jedwabne and other places in 1941. I quit when PiS took over power for the first time in Poland and over the Institute. I went back to academia and worked as a professor at Polish universities. In 2007 I published an article with the idea to create a Polish Museum of the Second World War. A short time later the Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk asked me to create this museum from scratch as its director. This considerable task took many years and was criticized and attacked from the very beginning by PiS. They accused me of creating a cosmopolitan museum that didn't represent Polish values enough. When PiS became the ruling party in Poland again, they tried to prevent its opening. The end of the story is that I managed to open

the museum against the will of my own country's government but was fired just two weeks afterward. I am now a professor at the Polish Academy of Sciences but spend most of the time abroad.

Poland became independent of the USSR in 1989. How did the country's cultural sector develop since then?

First I have to say that for many years during that period I only followed the developments of the arts sector as an interested outsider. My impression was that it was very vibrant and free, with no attempts by any government party to control it or to impose ideological patterns. Since the 1990s the sector has been supported by two primary sources: the national institutions are funded and supervised by the Ministry of Culture. However, this only makes up a small portion. The vast majority, I would say about 90 percent, are municipal institutions. Nowadays this turns out to be crucial and beneficial because it creates a safety margin against a regime that is intervening heavily in art and culture.

"The arts sector was very vibrant and free, with no attempts by any government party to control it or to impose ideological patterns."

Additionally, since the turn of the millennium, Poland has built more new museums than any other country in Europe. However, this is less a statement about the arts sector than about public history and the politics of history, which have become very important in Poland. A lot of this has to do with Poland's turbulent history and the struggles to obtain independence, first in the 19th century, then during the Second World War, and finally during the years of the communist dictatorship. Our identity is based not so much upon citizenship but patriotism, conflict, and sacrifice. That is the reason why, when we gained a democratic state in 1989, there was a broad expectation that we would properly commemorate our history. The museum boom started with the opening of the Warsaw Rising Museum in 2004, followed e.g. by the European Solidarity Center in Gdansk, which is devoted to the anti-communist opposition and the "Solidarity" movement in Poland; the Museum of Kraków, which is devoted to the period of the Nazi occupation and located in the former factory of Oskar Schindler; the Silesian Museum in Katowice; or the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. On the one hand, this era in Poland is part of mass culture. People

don't read historical books anymore, especially those written by academics. Instead, they tend to go to museums. On the other hand, it is a result of the use and misuse of history and museums by politicians for reasons of politics and prestige. PiS initiated this to influence the feelings of the population. It is a paradox that PiS accused its predecessors of neglecting history when in fact these former governments created most of the new museums. At any rate, when I published this article in 2007, it was not unexpected that the prime minister was interested in a new museum – something that probably wouldn't have been possible in any other European country. Nevertheless, – and I wish to stress this – these museums are not biased but are beneficial and objective from a scientific point of view. The POLIN even won the European Museum of the Year Award 2016. When considering all these issues, the clash between the Museum of the Second World War and PiS was not unexpected at all but inevitable.

How has Poland's government under PiS influenced and changed the arts sector?

The sector is still vibrant, but it has also suffered from political and ideological interferences. Piotr Glinski, the current Minister of Culture, behaves in a very hostile way towards arts initiatives regarded as leftist and immoral. For example, during his first weeks in office, he immediately attacked the Teatr Polski in Wrocław for staging a pop drama with allegedly pornographic scenes. Since then, Glinski withdrew funding that was already promised or even legally guaranteed from several festivals because he didn't like the program or people involved. He also accused a play by the Croatian director Oliver Frljić, performed in the Teatr Powszechny in Warsaw, of being anti-Catholic, he replaced the directors of two major theaters, Teatr Polski in Wrocław and Teatr Narodowy in Kraków, by directors who are not renowned artists. Right-wing groups have organized demonstrations



The European Solidarity Center in Gdansk (Europejskie Centrum Solidarności) © Artur Andrzej/Wikimedia Commons - CC BY SA 4.0

against art institutions, and the Ministry of Culture has appealed to local politicians to discontinue programs. So there are many ways of influencing the arts sector. Luckily, the majority of the sector is municipally funded and therefore out of the reach of PiS. But for the cities that support these institutions, the situation is complicated. They find themselves subject to the ideals of free art and the pressure of the national government at the same time. Many mayors are concerned about the political impact of controversial shows and try to avoid decisions. But I think that now this is changing. Many local politicians understand that they should support artists and freedom of expression. Unfortunately, most municipal organizations still have to apply for additional funds from the Ministry of Culture.

You yourself were in the center of a political scandal when PiS dismissed you as director of the Museum of the Second World War right after the opening. How did this happen?

The accusations by PiS against me were very far-reaching. Already in 2008, they claimed that the museum was an attempt to replace the Polish national identity by a diverse supranational European identity. Right after PiS created a new government in Poland in 2015 things came to a head. At that time, the museum had not yet opened. We were in the final stages of construction; the production of the permanent exhibition was even not initiated. At that point, the government started a struggle against the museum and conjured up a legal trick. For them it was ingenious, I think. They founded a new fictive museum in Gdansk, the so-called Westerplatte museum in December 2015, just a month after PiS came in power. But this museum didn't start any activities or hire a single employee; it did not have a website, an office or a telephone number. Then, all of a sudden, one night



Teatr Polski in Wrocław, whose director has been replaced by the Polish Ministry of Culture © Michał460/Wikimedia Commons - CC 0 - Public Domain (left)

Scene from „The Curse” by director Oliver Frlić © Teatr Powszechny in Warsaw (right)

in mid-April 2016, the Ministry of Culture put an announcement on its website stating that it would be redundant to have two museums in one city dealing with the same topic. So, for the sake of alleged financial savings, the two museums would be merged. The plan was total annihilation of the Museum of the Second World War. They planned to take over the building and hoped that there would be enough time to install a completely different exhibition.

But what the government did not foresee was the resistance I would present: The Polish law demands a three-month delay before the announcement of a merger or liquidation of an institution. I used this time to mobilize public opinion and file a complaint against this decision to the Administrative Court, which then suspended this merger. In doing this, we gained an additional year during which the legal battle continued and during which we managed to finish the museum. In this time, I still was responsible for massive huge public investment and had to make dozens of decisions regarding finances, construction, and exhibition. It was the biggest and the most expensive museum in Poland. PiS couldn't stop the entire investment because I already had signed all of the contracts, but they cut the finances for our daily work. And the government media organized a campaign against the museum and me. We were accused of being traitors acting on orders of Berlin and Brussels, and I personally was accused of financial irregularities and of violating the law. Just two weeks after the museum opened, the Supreme Administrative Court in Warsaw issued a ruling stating that the legal controversy was beyond its purview. They evaded deciding because this issue was so politically sensitive. The next day the minister formally liquidated the museum and founded a new institution with the same



Museum of the Second World War (Muzeum IIWS) in Gdansk.

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© middle and right: Bartosz Markowski

name. I wasn't even fired; the museum, of which I was director, just simply disappeared. It was a legal trick intended to circumvent the obstacle that I had a multi-year tenure until the end of 2019 – I would still be the director of the museum today. That point is quite important because the previous government specifically introduced these long-term contracts to guarantee by law the autonomy of the directors of arts institutions. It is an important lesson that nothing is certain, even with such a guarantee. Today I am proud because somehow, I won this battle and managed to open the museum to the public. That was all I wanted.

Such a decision, the replacement of a director and liquidation of an institution, is very difficult on an administrative level. Did you have the chance to prepare your departure? And how did the museum deal with it?

In the year before the opening, I had 70 employees but needed 120. Therefore, we opened this museum without enough staff even to sell tickets. It was crazy, like a partisan operation. The day after the museum was liquidated, the new director appeared in my office with an official from the Ministry of Culture saying that he would change the exhibition according to the criticism expressed by PiS. Shortly thereafter, most people who created the exhibition either were fired or left on their own accord, so the majority of the original team is gone. PiS came into power after seven years of our hard work. If I had just given up, it would have been perhaps easier for me personally, but it would have meant that the work hundreds of people and I have done would have been wasted.

"It is an important lesson that nothing is certain, even with a guarantee."

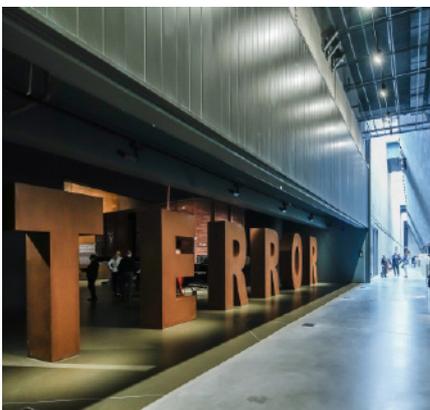
Today, the museum is still open and very popular, with more than 600,000 visitors each year. From the first day on, there were long lines of people in front of the museum coming from distant places to visit the exhibition. And paradoxically only a small portion of the exhibition – one or two percent – was changed. Together with three other historians, the chief curators of this exhibition, I tried to defend the integrity of the exhibition by a copyright trial. I assume that since we started this case, the government is concerned about introducing substantial changes and violating our copyright. Instead, they tried to change it symbolically to be able to say that they made the museum "more Polish." They removed the parts that the government regarded

as too international and added some new elements, for example about Poles saving Jews, or about Catholics priests who suffered during the war. The most significant change was the removal of the final film. We had video footage consisting of archival films and photographs showing conflicts and violence since the end of the Second World War until nowadays, for example from the wars in Syria, Ukraine or of refugees today. PiS heavily criticized this as being pacifistic and cosmopolitan. They replaced this film by a cartoon on Polish history. But all together I am proud that the exhibition still works.

Later, things became even more absurd because the government started two criminal investigations against me. It turned out that my colleagues and I were under surveillance by the secret security police. Meetings of the museum's former deputy director with colleagues who still work there were secretly photographed and one of these people fired because of them. Our telephones are tapped. Security agents came to my house in Warsaw, looking for me – petty harassment typical of authoritarian regimes. In a way this is Kafkaesque. It doesn't make any sense. Sometimes I have myself difficulties in taking it as a reality.

I imagine it to be very difficult and horrific to be harassed for only doing your job. How did you deal with that?

On the one hand I try to stay independent, never allowing politicians to interfere with my job. On the other hand, I am aware that my story and the story of the museum was extreme. I became and still am a public enemy of the current government. Of course, this affected me as a private person; it has affected my family and my everyday life. It meant living in extreme du-



Parts of the Exhibition of the Museum of the Second World War (Muzeum IIWS) in Gdansk

© left: Bartosz Makowski

Right: Reconstructed street of a Polish town in the 1930s © Adam Kumiszczka/ Wikimedia Commons - CC BY SA 4.0

ress, being insulted and smeared by politicians, and being accused of being a traitor just because I wanted to do my job and to open the biggest historical museum in Poland to the public. This tension around me is still so strong in Poland that I find that it's better to work abroad. It is the price that you pay.

All of this creates quite a unique situation in the European Union. It became one of the crucial public issues in Poland in a way that was unexpected, also for me. Our defiance became symbolic of the defense of the autonomy of culture and public history with people taking to the streets in support of the museum. Personally, I was very moved by these things. There was a mobilization of the whole government apparatus against the museum but also a defense of it by public opinion. People came to me in the streets of Gdansk and encouraged me to resist. I received letters of support from people I did not know. Fortunately, the courts and private media are still independent in Poland, so I am not isolated. Whenever the government harasses me, I can make it public.

"In a way this is Kafkaesque. It doesn't make any sense. Sometimes I have myself difficulties in taking it as a reality"

In a way I have been quite fortunate. I had not believed that I could succeed in opening the exhibition and regard it as the most significant victory I have achieved in my life. It was never planned that this takeover should become such a public issue and in the end, it was a defeat for the government. In some ways, this is perhaps universal because it tells a lot about the role of cultural institutions, what it means to defend the autonomy of culture and history and that these things matter a lot in times of crisis. It's a lesson about the relationship between culture, art, history and political power. And it's also universal for me in another sense: four years ago, I believed that I live in a country which is stable and democratic. Not a perfect country, but one in which the future seemed to be quite optimistic and predictable. That changed overnight. This is a lesson that nothing can be taken for granted forever – not a democracy, the respect for the law or the autonomy of culture. I didn't think that something like this could happen in my life and my country. The case of the museum turned out to be the most crucial controversy regarding public history in Poland.

PiS also tried to gain influence over other cultural organizations with allegedly anti-Polish programs. What can such a political situation teach arts managers? How should they react? Can they do anything at all?

Directors of cultural institutions are very often tempted to lie down and try to negotiate with the Ministry of Culture. Many directors were scared that they might be treated like me, so they tried to avoid public statements. But soon it turned out that the Ministry of Culture and PiS wanted to control other institutions and purge other directors as well. For example, in the case of the POLIN, the Ministry didn't like the previous director Dariusz Stola and criticized him for an exhibition about the anti-Semitic purge in Poland in 1968. A job announcement has now been made for his post, and it will be interesting to see whether the Ministry will accept the decision of the jury, especially since there is a lot of public support for Stola.

"I believed that I live in a country which is stable and democratic, in which the future seemed to be quite optimistic and predictable. That changed overnight. This is a lesson that nothing can be taken for granted forever – not a democracy, the respect for the law or the autonomy of culture"

The case of the municipal European Solidarity Center in Gdańsk has shown that directors should be responsive to public opinion and engage in dialogue. Shortly thereafter the Ministry of Culture withdrew money from the center, and a public donation campaign was initiated. The result of this was both uplifting and encouraging because in just a few days people



POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw © Moreio/ Wikimedia Commons - CC BY-SA 4.0 (left)

Gwoździec Synagogue Room in the POLIN © Magdalena Starowiejska, Dariusz Golik of Museum of the History of Polish Jews/ Wikimedia Commons_ CC BY-SA 3.0 PL (right).

all across Poland contributed almost 2 million euros, twice as much as the Ministry had withdrawn. It is a wonderful example of how a civil society can safeguard an institution. It shows that the guarantee for autonomy and survival lies not in backstage diplomacy but in being open and transparent, in trying to explain the situation publicly, and in seeking the support of the public opinion. Of course, there are such mundane things as keeping your job. I was in a way always independent as a professor of history, and when I was fired I knew that it wouldn't be the end of my career. But I know that for many people this would be an existential question: "To be or not to be." However, I think that it's better to leave your position, knowing that you have done everything to defend your institution. In a way, my story is uplifting, showing that you can fight for something important even after you have been ousted and harassed. If you are stubborn and determined enough, you can achieve a lot.



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Paweł Machcewicz is a Polish museum professional and history professor. He was the co-founder of the Institute of National Remembrance on the Communist dictatorship and the Second World War. In 2008, he became founding director of the first Polish Museum of the Second World War until 2017, when the ruling national conservative party PiS discharged him for being too liberal and independent. Since then he is a professor at the Polish Academy of Sciences and a fellow at different international research institutions, currently at the Imre Kertész Kolleg in Jena, Germany, where he works on translations of his book about the Museum of the Second World War to English and French.

Crises as actors of change

Highlights from the Greek cultural sector

By Olga Kolokytha

Coming from a country suffering by the profound implications of an on-going structural and financial crisis for nine years already, writing about it comes as a natural need. But it does not come only as a means of self-expression of a citizen who has experienced the impact of the crisis, or indeed of the multiple crises, on many fronts. This text is also a way to bring forward some of the positive implications such an extreme situation of turbulence can have, using the Greek case as an example.

What crisis?

Crisis causes changes to the cultural landscape, communicative spaces and institutions (Falkner 2016; Kouri 2014). The contradictory nature of a crisis is highlighted by Falkner, who argues it can lead to both pressures for reform, but also for maintaining the status quo (2016). The crisis paradox is also described by Tobelem (2013) who argues that there has been a decline in public spending for culture with the crises – financial, economic and social – spreading from the US to Europe, at the same time when politicians and public officials claim that arts, culture and the creative industries are one of the best means to cope with and overcome these crises. Using this paradox as a starting point, Tobelem aims to provide an understanding for the contradiction between the theory and practice of public policies and identifies two possible explanations: On one hand, the instrumentalization of culture has led to arts and cultural activities being used for purposes that are not solely cultural – such as financial, educational or social ones – which leads to a decline of the art-for-art's-sake notion. And on the other hand, there is an orientation of public policies towards cultural purposes that contributes to the changing definition of culture, which now includes fashion, the games industry and haute cuisine, among others (ibid.).

At the time of writing this text, the Budapest Observatory released its report on public funding for culture in the European Union which covers the period from 2004 to 2017, including the period of the financial crisis in Europe starting in 2008. With reference to culture, the report shows a steady decline in culture budgets in the 17 western EU members since 2008, but also reveals that the eleven eastern members have been keeping or increasing their culture budgets in the last years (Inkei 2019). The reason is not only that because of their lower GDP they need to spend more to reach the level of the western countries, but also because culture for them has been historically associated with the notion of nation (ibid.). The 2014-2017 average shows four countries spending 1% or more of their GDP on culture, whereas Greece comes last, with just 0,1% of its GDP devoted to culture (ibid.).

The crisis in Greece

In the case of Greece, what we call the financial crisis actually are multiple crises on many fronts, all interconnected: financial, social, institutional and refugee. Within the Greek cultural landscape, these crises in the short-term are visible explicitly in the lack of funding and the structural problems they have created in cultural organisations. Not all of their effects are visible yet though, and it is inevitable that they will have implications in the long-term – such as for example the brain drain and the thousands of qualified professionals that have migrated abroad – which create not only financial, but education and social issues as well.

“There has been a decline in public spending for culture with the crises (...) at the same time when politicians and public officials claim that arts, culture and the creative industries are one of the best means to cope with and overcome these crises.” – based on Tobelem

The implications of this crisis in different cultural sectors are discussed in the edited volume by Dimitris Tziouvas (2017). Cultural production and consumption have turned to performing arts and street art, and the publishing and book sector appear to be the sectors suffering the most (ibid.). In a recent article in one of the biggest national newspapers discussing the

effects of the crisis, the artistic directors of major Greek cultural organisations such as the Athens Concert Hall, the Greek National Opera, the Greek National Theatre and the Athens Festival argue that it is a challenging time, but not only with negative impacts. The audience has become more conscious and selective in their choices of artistic events, the artistic programming has changed, and the cultural organisations have turned to increasing collaborations, synergies and sponsorships in order to overcome the financial hardships and maintain a high level in their programming. At the same time, cultural organisations are reaching out to emerging social groups as well as to the additional spaces in which culture is expressed, such as the cities themselves (To Vima 2018). The changes and chances the crisis brought in the domain of cinema are highlighted by Papadimitriou (2017), who identifies them as focused on three axes: solidarity, crowdfunding and extroversion in the form of international co-productions.

Examples

The period since the beginning of the crisis has led to a development of outreach programmes, particularly from organisations that have traditionally been considered to be high-culture and elitist, such as the Greek National Opera (GNO). The GNO was very active in outreach since the beginning of the crisis, e.g. organizing free concerts for the public, as the [newspaper Ekathimerini reports](#), and introducing „The Suitcase Opera” program, which aimed to bring the public in contact with famous opera works by performing them in non-mainstream venues and traveling outside Athens and in the periphery of Greece. The importance of outreach for the National Opera is also visible in the recent donation of €20 million from the Stavros Niarchos



The Greek National Opera is situated inside the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center in Athens © Ava Babili/ Flickr.com - CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 (left).

Inside the Greek National Opera © Charis Akriviadis/ National Opera of Greece (right).

chos Foundation – one of the world’s leading international philanthropic organizations – for a four-year programme to promote the work of the National Opera abroad (GNO press 2019).

One of the positive aspects of the crisis is that it shifted the attention to the community. On the micro-level, this has led to (mostly small-scale) cultural events organized in villages and in the periphery, emerging as a reaction of the citizens to the negative atmosphere developed in the society as a result of the crisis (Tzogopoulos 2013) and acting as vehicles of culture-making, self-expression and social cohesion. The festivals and cultural events in touristic areas also serve as cultural ambassadors of the country, promoting its image abroad. Interesting examples are the [Jazz in July festival](#) in the town Vamos, the [Dance Days Chania Festival](#), and the [Giortes Rokkas Festivities](#), all on the island of Crete. They evolve around cultural genres such as contemporary dance and classical music which are neither traditional nor popular in the area, but have achieved to attract regional, national and even international audiences. These events are organized by local people with a love and respect for culture, whose aim is to contribute to the cultural life of the area and to offer a high-quality cultural experience to the citizens. Both the Dance Days Chania Festival and the Giortes Rokkas Festivities are sponsored by local businesses and include a great deal of volunteer work that contributes to their success.

Arts management and the crisis

Crisis creates an environment of fluidity and uncertainty that need acts of stabilization. In such times, how can arts management provide a common ground and a connecting tissue for society? One of the most important



The town Vamos on the island of Crete, location of the Jazz in July festival © Jazz in July (left).

The Giortes Rokkas Festival in the villages of Rokka and Kera in the region of Chania © Yannis Perathorakis (right).

responsibilities of arts managers is that they play a major role in shaping meanings and frameworks of arts and culture; and it is this function that is most useful in creating new visions for society and contributing to social cohesion.

It is in the nature of arts management to see crises as challenges and create positive outcomes from negative situations. To that end, thinking strategically and creatively is important. Finding ways to overcome obstacles such as budget cuts and lack of funding, developing programmes based on and aimed at inclusion, taking into account the new social and financial circumstances and making good use of limited structural, financial and human resources can lead to the development of projects that serve both artists and citizens, and offer a space for cultural expression, inclusion and development of and strengthening social relations.

Crisis is synonym to instability and as such, it can also be a vehicle for change. It provides a perfect opportunity for re-evaluation on a policy and structural level, which seems to be the biggest challenge for the cultural sector. It is also a chance to replace existing problematic policies and an opportunity to restructure organisations and make them up-to-date with, and responsive to, the new social conditions. As in Greece the crisis is still ongoing, the extent to which these will take place still remains to be seen.

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Embracing Crises As Normal

A New Approach For Arts Managers

By Leah Hamilton

Sunday, April 13, 2014, started out as a normal day for my dear friend and former fellow arts manager, Krista Blackwood. She and her staff at the White Theatre inside of the Jewish Community Center in Kansas City (U.S.) were preparing for a matinee performance of “To Kill a Mockingbird” and children and their parents were arriving for the annual “KC Superstar” auditions – a youth talent contest. A man, [now identified as Klu Klux Klan leader Frazier Glenn Cross](#), pulled in to the theater’s parking lot and opened fire, killing a young 14-year-old boy on his way to the audition and his grandfather. During the next hour, Krista and her staff acted not only as first responders to the victims in the parking lot, but also became responsible for protecting patrons, children, volunteers, and artists from the active shooter, whose whereabouts on the theater campus were unknown. As she herded patrons into secure areas, she did not know if one of those was the active shooter, or if he was just around the corner.

There were many dynamic aspects of the crisis that affected Krista and her team’s response that day. While her theater had an emergency plan, it was part of the larger community center’s plan and no one on the theater’s staff knew who the facility supervisor on duty was that weekend. The theater doors locked only from the outside, leaving patrons and staff vulnerable. Also, this crisis was not one that gave any prior warning, unlike a severe weather event that allows for a more orderly evacuation to a designated shelter-in-place.

Research on crisis situations

During the many hours of talking with Krista, wanting to offer support and comfort, I couldn’t help but think that it could have just as easily been me during my eight years working in and managing an arts center that had hundreds of children, patrons, and artists moving in and out of the facil-

ity on a daily basis. Inspired by her story, I began dedicating my academic work and research to readiness in the arts. I conducted a study in 2016 in my home state of Missouri, U.S. Not surprisingly, a majority of the involved arts organizations didn't have, or weren't aware of having, an emergency plan. This reflected national findings by the [National Coalition for Arts Preparedness and Emergency Response](#): 68 percent of arts and culture organizations "had experienced a crisis situation and did not have a plan in place before the event, and still did not have one in place afterward."

Despite my initial assumption that organizations' lack of preparedness for a crisis was due to a small budget and subsequently few full-time staff, there weren't significant trends to prove that was true. Lack of time, money, skilled labor, and resources were all symptoms of an even deeper issue: crisis management was not a leadership priority.

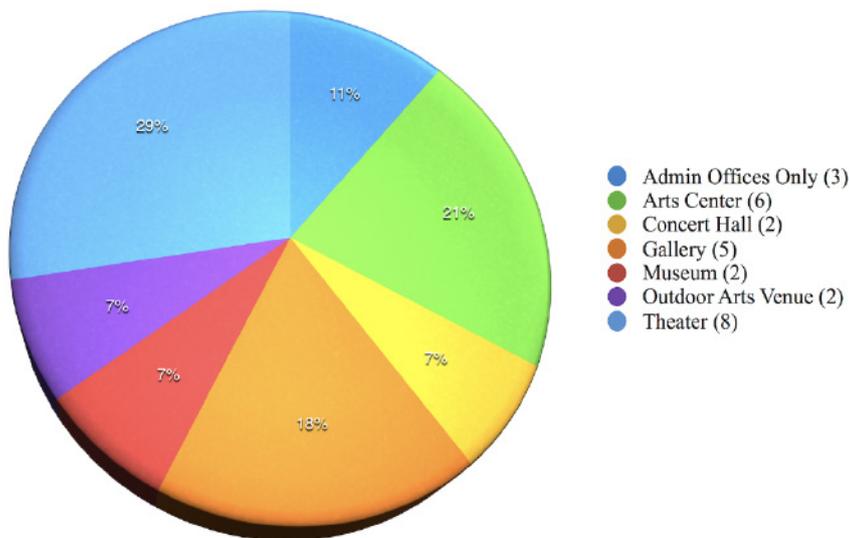


Figure: Proportion of Responding Arts Facility Types: Arts Facility Emergency Preparedness in the State of Missouri Study. © Leah Hamilton

Need and responsibility for crisis management

I now believe that at the heart of the issue of crisis management for our sector is a type of apathy. There is just no enthusiasm or interest in emergency management, so it doesn't take priority. There seems to be conventional wisdom in Western cultural sectors that technology, highly trained emergency officials, and other governmental authorities will handle our acute crises for us.

However, these conventions are being disrupted by the effects of global climate change and the mass migration of populations as well as political and economic uncertainty. The increased frequency of natural disasters, their costs, and a societal shift in liability for disasters should force every arts manager to take pause. Consider the current lawsuit against the Royal Opera House wherein a former stage manager is suing the company for £200,000 for physical and psychological injuries – including post-traumatic stress disorder – for *almost* being hit by a heavy stage curtain (Kirk 2019). Or the heartbreaking story of Max Harris, the soft-spoken and misunderstood artist turned “facility manager” of the Ghost Ship Warehouse artist collective in Oakland, CA. He took on the facility manager position untrained because he wanted to trade his labor for rent and studio space. He is now awaiting trial for the deaths of 36 people who died in a tragic fire during a concert at the warehouse in 2016 (Weil 2018).

If emotional narratives aren't enough to encourage arts managers to prioritize preparedness for a crisis, then the rising costs of crises should. The [2018 World Disasters Report](#), produced by National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, highlighted that while there were fewer disasters globally, the cost of damages has risen. Even if governmental funds exist to aid in recovery efforts in many countries, heritage sites and cultural venues can wait for ages for that money to be utilized. Even entire towns, like earthquake-ravaged Visso, Italy, can be wrapped in a bureaucratic tangle of recovery grants, distributions, regulations, and political infighting (Gostoli 2018). This forces cultural organizations to consider cash reserves and internal policies for handling a crisis while waiting for governmental assistance.

Crisis as usual

I argue that the best method of addressing the lack of preparedness is for arts leaders to manage as if crises were a normal, valued, and decentralized part of cultural management activity. From a broader, philosophical perspective, we can use the trailblazing ideas of Elizabeth Anderson, a Professor of Philosophy and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan. She is dramatically changing how we think about a free and equitable society (Heller 2018). Her collaborative approach to building societies is one where history, equality, and freedom don't work in opposition to each other, but are instead mutually dependent on each other. She believes that by expanding the range of valued fields within a society, we become more free and fair

people. If we apply this paradigm to arts management, we can expand our framework of the valued fields of management activity to include preparedness in order to achieve a microcosm of the democratic ideal: Artistic programming is a valued activity as it leads to our desired outcome of a more enlightened and engaged people. Budgeting, fundraising, and marketing are also valued fields of arts management activity that ultimately lead to the desired outcome of a more enlightened and engaged people. It is now time to include crisis readiness to that list of valued fields – a readiness that is a collective initiative, one where all stakeholders feel a sense of responsibility and duty, where emergency trained personnel, executive leadership, private and public funders, and all levels of staff are mutually dependent on each other to prepare and respond accordingly.

“We can expand our framework of the valued fields of management activity to include preparedness in order to achieve a microcosm of the democratic ideal.”

At the intersection of artistic, financial, and administrative success for our cultural institutions is the willingness and ability to protect them. This cannot be left to only trained emergency personnel. Such officials typically don't understand the inner workings of an arts environment that functions on rather informal and organic systems, and sub-systems, to operate. Additionally, the actual first responder to an incident before emergency officials arrive is often the arts manager on duty – like my friend Krista – or a stage manager, a docent, a student or a janitor.

Therefore, the crisis planning process should include input and feedback from all levels of operational, administrative, and artistic staff in the following areas of a comprehensive plan:

- A policy statement that outlines the purpose and goals of the crisis plan as well as its scope;
- An organizational chart that designates responsibility and authority in crisis planning and during a crisis;
- A situational analysis, otherwise known as a risk assessment, to determine the vulnerabilities of the organization and its readiness for a crisis;
- Checklists for preparedness, response, and recovery;

- A communications directory that is to be considered by the operational staff on-hand at any given time; and
- A training and drilling program with varied educational formats (simulation, video presentation, tabletop discussion, etc.) to prepare staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders when and how to respond when a crisis occurs.

The crisis planning process must be predicated on the idea that the systems we put in place to protect ourselves and our valued institutions will, at times, fail. We can't rely on those systems to protect us without also taking some personal (and leadership) initiative to help prevent and respond.

Only hours after Krista and the rest of the theater's staff responded and safeguarded patrons, including children, did they learn that the shooter had never left his car. He drove to another facility up the street and shot another victim before driving to a nearby school where he was found by police and arrested. This was seemingly an unimaginable event, but the reality is that most crises are.

Lee Ben Clarke, Rutgers University professor of sociology and author of "Worst Cases: Terror and Catastrophe in the Popular Imagination" (2006), explores socio-political influences in disasters and encourages a "disasters are normal" approach. He believes they are "as normal as love, joy, triumph, and misery." As the purveyors of art and culture, we explore all of these emotions and consider them a part of the normal human experience. However, it is going to take more localized efforts, greater collaboration, and a sense of urgency to make crisis preparedness a "normal" aspect of arts management. Up until now, there have been relatively few resources in the



*The White Theatre
inside of the Jewish
Community Center
in Kansas City
(U.S.)*

English language that specifically aid arts leaders in crisis management for their organization. (A tried and true practical guide is *Building an Emergency Plan*, published by the Getty Conservation Institute (Dorge, Jones 1999).) I am honored to be teaching the first professional development course on arts emergency management of its kind – offered by the University of Kentucky College of Fine Arts – and am hopeful that courses like these, integrated into arts administration curriculum, will aid in the crisis preparedness movement.

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When creative becomes coercive

The crisis of bullying in the cultural sector

By Anne-Marie Quigg

Crises come in all shapes and sizes: they mean different things to different people. The #MeToo debate publicly demonstrates how destructive behaviours such as bullying and harassment can cause personal crises for individuals and group crises both within an organisation and at institutional level. Further, an entire sector can become contaminated by abuse, while persecution at national and international levels often leads to conflict and war.

It's not uncommon for destructive behaviours such as bullying and sexual harassment to manifest themselves at times of crisis. For instance, organisational changes such as restructuring are known to cause heightened stress and strain within a workforce and to actively promote negative internal relations. In any case sexual harassment and bullying damages people, most particularly it negatively affects self-esteem and confidence, and has been known to cause a range of health problems.

At a time of crisis ordinary proceedings may become difficult and often 'normal' responses to problems are no longer sufficient. Instead it becomes necessary to think differently and sometimes to experiment with alternative routes to solutions.

Harassment in the cultural sectors

Power and control are at the centre of both psychological and physical oppression. Rape, domestic abuse, bullying and sexual harassment all have the same root, it's merely the way this is acted out that differs. Sometimes people who hold power abuse it and sometimes those who are, or feel they are, in some way inadequate seek ways to gain more control. Targets of bullying are often competent people who are good at what they do, and it can take some time before they recognise what is happening.

In recent years several prominent people from the world of entertainment and broadcasting have been sanctioned, tried or imprisoned for sexual harassment, assault or rape. In 2013 the BBC was found to have high levels of bullying, and sexual harassment was described as ‘not uncommon’ in the *Respect at Work Review*.

Recently, academic researchers have been looking at museums, which have a growing number of female staff. One American study (Trivedi & Wittman 2018) identified a range of factors that undermine female museum workers and the areas in which their labour is often undervalued, including educational work. The study reports that undervaluing women can lead to “*a spectrum of treatment that can be considered violent.*” The researchers consider “*pay and benefit disparities, disempowerment, and marginalisation through sexist, homophobic, and transphobic comments and objectification, harassment, threats, verbal, physical, emotional, and financial abuse, and at the far end of the spectrum sexual assault and murder.*” The report discusses survey data collected concerning incidences of sexual abuse and harassment experienced by museum workers, in the context of this undervaluing spectrum, to gauge “*how much power women and gender non-conforming people have in their daily work lives in museums.*”

Further research has identified both historic and recent reports of bullying and sexual harassment in cultural organisations in Ireland, France, Germany, Australia, the UK, Asia and North America, to name just a few. The similarity between the nature of these occurrences and the kinds of behaviour identified is not unique to the arts – it follows a familiar pattern that can be seen in almost every employment sector worldwide, as the following examples will show.

France

Individuals and organisations in France have been campaigning against sexual harassment for some time. For many years the culture in France has been deemed to encompass a universal understanding and tolerance of behaviour that is regarded as (acceptable) ‘sédution’ rather than sexual harassment. The implication is that it’s entirely natural that men want to seduce women. This ‘cultural tradition’ has been cited as a major factor in why – despite having laws to deal with sexual harassment that comply with those of other European countries – the implementation of anti-bullying actions and sanctions in France is generally considered to be sluggish at best.

Interestingly, in the wake of the international scandal surrounding sexual harassment allegations against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, reports of sexual harassment, assault and rape have increased by almost a third in France. The #MeToo campaign was supplemented by the very eloquent #BalanceTonPorc, or “squeal on your pig” movement. Its [website](#) allows posts from victims of sexual harassment, aggression and rape, who can anonymously contribute details of their experiences (see Rubin 2017). However there is also some strong opposition to a stricter persecution of sexual harassment, supported by some famous females in the cultural sector such as actresses Brigitte Bardot and Catherine Deneuve. They have argued that everybody interprets “flirting” differently and that many women who had turned “little favours” for their male supervisors to good account would be acting hypocritically to then accuse them of sexual harassment (Pulver 2018).

“The similarity between the nature of these occurrences and the kinds of behaviour identified is not unique to the arts.”

Asia

The issue that the everyday culture of a particular country or geographical region might affect perceptions of sexual harassment or bullying behaviour is not confined to France. In 2013 Professor Nikos Bozionelos of the Audencia Nantes School of Management co-authored a study to look at whether the country in which a company is operating has an impact on what is deemed to be acceptable workplace behaviour. In a survey of 1,484 white collar workers from 14 different countries the study concluded that “Behaviour that would be seen as acceptable in... New York or London would be seen as bullying in Latin America or Africa” (Amble 2013). Especially respondents in the Confucian Asia region (Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan) were found to have “the highest acceptance rate” of workplace bullying.

Germany

Berlin has a reputation as a place that values art and artists. However, a recent survey of creative professionals (Brown 2018) revealed not only that artists, especially female artists, earn low levels of pay on average but also that they experience high levels of sexual harassment. The Institute for Strategy Development (IFSE) cooperated with the Professional Association of Visual Artists Berlin (bbk berlin) and released the findings of their study

in April 2018. It revealed that one in three female respondents had experienced abuses of power, *“and despite the #MeToo movement, few abusers are likely to be named and shamed.”*

Ireland

In February 2017 media reports emerged of the prevalence of bullying and harassment at the National Museum of Ireland. Accounts from members of staff detailed a host of negative experiences including intimidation by “bullies and perverts.” During assessments, mental health professionals recorded that more than 40 per cent of the Museum’s staff team were at risk from developing anxiety and depression. In November 2018 fresh reports revealed that the case, which had been brought to the High Court, was embroiled in legal issues concerning the Museum’s disciplinary codes of conduct, the terms of the alleged perpetrator’s suspension and counter claims that the allegations were false. Ms Justice Reynolds agreed to an adjournment and the case is due to be heard this year (O’Loughlin 2018).

“The everyday culture of a particular country or geographical region can affect perceptions of sexual harassment or bullying behaviour.”

UK

London’s Tate Gallery has been embroiled in controversy in two separate incidents, one concerning a prominent donor accused of sexual harassment and the other concerning the gallery chief executive:

Three women came forward, following the launch of the [#MeToo movement website](#), to denounce art dealer Anthony d’Offay for sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour. The incidents reported were alleged to have taken place between 1997 and 2004. Mr d’Offay denies the claims however Tate has suspended its relationship with him until the issue is resolved (Knott 2018).

Artist Liv Wynter resigned from the education team at Tate, citing remarks by gallery director Maria Balshaw, which she believed undermined women who are victims of sexual violence. In an interview with *The Times*, Balshaw commented on sexual harassment saying *“I personally have never suffered any such issues. Then, I wouldn’t. I was raised to be a confident woman*

who, when I encountered harassment, would say, 'Please don't'... or something rather more direct" (Rafferty 2018). Wynter creates work that explicitly reflects the impact of surviving a violent relationship and Balshaw's comments have been criticised as tantamount to victim-blaming (Kendall Adams 2018).

Fighting back

Generally, since the initial years of research into workplace bullying there has been something of a sea-change in perceptions of and reactions to bullying, sexual harassment and other 'inappropriate behaviours'. The #MeToo movement highlights the frequency and ubiquitous nature of sexual harassment in the workplace across every employment sector. The [Workplace Bullying Institute](#) provides professional advice and assistance to targets of workplace bullying in the USA, and many countries around the world have similar organisations providing help and resources. The international [Everyday Sexism Project](#) reports personal experiences of sexist remarks and behaviours in everyday life across the globe. A quick search online reveals the names of organisations working to combat bullying and sexual harassment within and across national borders.

Today there are many active anti-bullying organisations and campaigns around the world. Many of these were cited in my book "Bullying in the Arts" (2011) and their work continues to this day. Likewise, there is now more advice and information available than ever before about handling bullying behaviour from the point of view of the person being targeted by a bully, of individuals accused of bullying and of those with a duty of care for employees (Quigg 2015).

The latter includes trades unions and employers, and, particularly in the UK, unions operating in the arts and entertainment sectors have embraced the challenge of providing a voice for beleaguered creative individuals in a number of positive ways. This includes publishing guidelines, providing telephone helplines and even appointing staff to help raise awareness among their members and to facilitate procedures to take effective action against perpetrators of bullying and sexual harassment.

USA

In response to the accusations of bullying, sexual harassment and assault coming from all parts of the arts and entertainment world, the National

Museum of Women in the Arts (Washington DC) staged an unusual exhibition in 2017/18 of works that focus on some of the causes of and potential solutions to the widespread occurrences of violence, specifically against women: “El Tendedero/ The Clothesline Project” was designed by feminist artist Monica Mayer. The installation posed a series of questions about harassment and violence, and participants were invited to respond in their own words, relating personal experiences. The pink papers bearing the answers were pinned on a clothesline for all to view and became the substance of the work (McGlone 2017).

Australia

In 1996 Michael J. Sheehan edited the first book about bullying in Australia, “Bullying from Backyard to Boardroom”, and has gone on to make more contributions to research dealing with, among other topics, professionalism in leadership. In my “Handbook of Dealing with Workplace Bullying” Sheehan’s chapter shows positive approaches for leadership intervention in workplace bullying. Essentially, he calls for a shift in thinking about the issue, as after almost thirty years of research and analysis, bullying behaviour has not disappeared from workplaces and there is still a tendency to deny and ignore it among some leaders.

In “How arts organisations are combating sexual harassment in the workplace” (2018), published online in ArtsHub, Brooke Boland draws attention to the approaches being taken by arts organisations to stamp out destructive behaviours. She cites Melbourne Arts Centre and Theatre Network Australia, as two of the organisations that are part of the *Respectful Workplace* collective. The collective was launched by Creative Victoria and was designed to create safer workplaces for artists by tackling bullying, misconduct and



“El Tendedero/ The Clothesline Project” by artist Monica Mayer in 2017 © Kevin Allen/ National Museum of Women in the Arts Washington D.C.

sexual harassment. The strategy focuses on how cultural difference, gender and disability intersect, to ensure that artists with disabilities have their access needs met, that First Nation artists find their cultural safety, that diversity is acknowledged and that there is protection for all genders and sexual orientations.

In 2017 Melbourne Arts Centre launched its *Wellbeing Collective* to encourage safer workplaces. This pilot project was designed to improve mental health support services for arts workers. A feedback loop between both initiatives reflects the importance of collaboration across the sector and emphasises the profound impact of these kinds of negative behaviours on mental wellbeing.

Finale

There are other cultural sector projects in various parts of the world working to combat workplace bullying and harassment. Although there is a greater level of awareness these days, arts managers and governing bodies still have a long way to go before these destructive and inappropriate behaviours are eradicated from all arts workplaces.

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Relocated, but not displaced

Bats in the Brooks Center for the Performing Arts

By Eric J. Lapin, Ashley Cooper, Bryce Payne, and Reagan Thompson

In the Spring of both 2018 and 2019 bats moved into the main theater space of the Brooks Center for the Performing Arts at Clemson University. Clemson University is located in the northwest of South Carolina in the southern United States. Being in a rural area, wildlife is not uncommon to our campus. Deer, opossum, skunks, rabbits, and even black bears share the campus and surrounding areas. The Brooks Center functions as the primary performing arts venue on campus and in the community, and the 968 seat proscenium theater hosts professional touring roadshows, student ensembles and productions, and campus events like doctoral hoodings and guest speakers. All of these activities were disrupted by the arrival of an estimated 1000 Mexican free-tailed bats in 2018. With food resources readily available outside the theater and seclusion in the upper reaches of the balcony and fly loft, the Brooks Center made for a perfect habitat for the bats. The removal of these protected mammals brought significant challenges and disruptions, but also offered many opportunities to test and refine safety procedures, enhance patron communication, and engage with the local community.

Getting rid of bats as tiny as a mouse

After the initial shock, teams moved into action to handle the situation. As a performing arts center that is part of a major university's campus, there were additional responsibilities to consider, like the need to look out for the students that attend classes in the Brooks Center and may be otherwise unaware of the new hazard. With no prior experience in wildlife or pest management, the first step the Brooks Center leadership team took was to seal off the areas where bats had been spotted, in hopes of containing the issue and minimizing restructuring of classes, rehearsals, and performances. At the same time, immediate contacts were made to the office of University Facilities which manages pest control for the university. The hallway behind the theatre, the dressing rooms below the stage, and the lobby of the main theatre were all

locked and required building keys to access. When a bat was spotted in a new area, as some were later seen in the adjacent Blackbox Theatre, the new zone was also shut down. All room closures were paired with updates regarding the handling of the bat situation by university employees. To remove the bats, an excluder device was used to allow the bats to exit the space and not be able to return. As Mexican free-tailed bats can enter through any space larger than a $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (about one centimeter), the excluder device was only marginally effective. Facilities and pest control then worked to trap and relocate the animals. Mexican free-tailed bats are a protected species and vital to our area's ecosystem. Therefore, gassing, killing, or otherwise harming the bats was never an option. At no point was anyone other than facilities and pest control to remove, harm, or even touch the bats. This was for their safety, and for the safety of the bats. This information was constantly shared with students, faculty, and staff through building signage and email communication. As always, the wellbeing of students, faculty, and staff came before any other concern.

In order to keep the people in our building safe, the containment and removal of the bats was a first priority. As a small part in a much larger organization, we function within the organizational structure of the University. Because the bats affected the entire building, Brooks leadership did not have autonomy over the situation and was responsible for notifying University Facilities Management.

Holding on to the core mission

While this lack of agency was oftentimes frustrating, it allowed Brooks Center staff to focus on other responsibilities. We understood throughout the process that even in moments of crisis, we still have a mission to present



Brooks Center for the Performing Arts at Clemson University, South Carolina © Clemson University.

outstanding artists and performances. In order to fulfil this mission, the challenge became determining if and where we could relocate the performances to other venues in the area. Once the problem was identified and the decision was made to relocate as many shows as possible the entire team mobilized. While it was an incredibly difficult challenge to find performance spaces in the community for student ensemble concerts, children's educational shows, and touring productions all with a wide variety of production and technical requirements, it was important to continue to serve the theater, arts, and educational needs of our community.

With the return of the bats in 2019, the Brooks Center was better prepared for another round of intrusion. Once again, most of the battle was finding a space that fits the specifications of each relocated production. Thankfully, only one performance had to be cancelled because there was no other venue in the area that matched the Brooks Center's capacity. All other shows were able to be relocated to other venues. Clear plans were developed during the initial infestation to quickly and smoothly transition from one space to another. These plans included vehicle rental procedures, appropriate carrying systems, and insurance coverage on our equipment and student workers. Items like a mobile hotspot and equipment to set up a productive mobile box office were also purchased to ensure box office and patron services procedures at the new venues would not be further disrupted.

Focusing on the chances

One positive outcome of these relocations was the increased community and patron engagement. Having the bats forced us outside of ourselves and caused us to engage with organizations that have venues we could possibly



*Bat Excluder Device
© Brooks Center for
the Performing Arts
(left).*

*Facilities Sealing ©
Brooks Center for
the Performing Arts
(right).*

use. This was an important reminder that intentional relationships with other organizations within our community benefit everyone. As a performing arts center on a university campus we are lucky to be able to build upon the relationships fostered by the Performing Arts faculty. Along with the added credential of the University's name on our badges, a month's worth of canceled shows were able to be smoothly relocated with limited cancellations. Today, we know that for students and inexperienced theater-goers, attending a performance at the Brooks Center can be scary and intimidating to new patrons. However, with these relocated performances being held in more familiar community venues, it gave us the opportunity to begin new patron relationships that will potentially lead to their attendance at shows in our main theater space.

"This was an important reminder that intentional relationships with other organizations within our community benefit everyone."

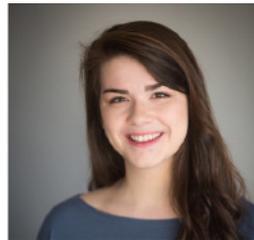
While we are always trying to grow our audience base, we also want to make sure that we are nurturing the relationships we already have. In a digital age where much of our communication is conducted via email and social media, we know that for some patrons this is a barrier. In order to combat this issue, when performances had to be moved, Brooks Center staff and students personally phoned each ticket holder for that event to ensure they knew of the relocation and to answer any questions. Some phone calls were short, and some went right to voicemail, but there were many patrons who were thrilled about the call and wanted to chat. This provided us a unique and unexpected opportunity to connect with the patrons and see how they were doing while providing essential show information and answering questions.

The Brooks Center, like all arts organizations, prepares thoroughly for the artistic, educational, and technical aspects of our performances. Any wildlife or pest infestation dramatically disrupts these carefully constructed plans. The arrival of the bats in the theater space reminded us of the importance of our emergency management procedures and communication plan. By practicing and refining these procedures, we are better equipped to fulfill our artistic and educational mission while ensuring the safety of patrons, students, and staff. Perhaps most importantly, by treating the crisis as an opportunity, we were able to develop stronger relationships with our surrounding commu-

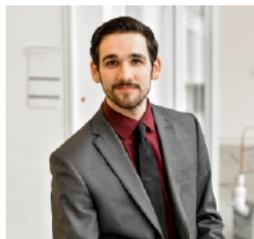
nity and existing patron base. While the personal touch of patron communication and the relocation of shows was difficult, our relationships with our audience and community partners is stronger than ever. We do not wish to welcome the bats back into our theater spaces in the future, but the Brooks Center for the Performing Arts is a stronger organization because of them.



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