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An entirely new Arts Management

Content:

Culture and the Arts: What for?, by Maria Vlachou - [Page 3](#)

Designing Inclusion. Cultural Policies empowered by digital and real Audiences, by Petya Koleva - [Page 9](#)

How Globalization effects Cultural Management, by Raphaela Henze - [Page 19](#)

Approaching an Understanding of Arts and Cultural Managers as Intercultural Brokers, by Victoria Durrer, Raphaela Henze and Ina Ross - [Page 25](#)

Opera singer career startup. Welcome to personal entrepreneurship, by Zenaida des Aubris - [Page 31](#)

Book preview: Introduction to International Arts Management, by Raphaela Henze - [Page 36](#)

Editorial

Dear reader,

Societies worldwide are currently facing far-reaching and often challenging developments. And although intensive connections and exchange between cultures and nations are part of world history as long as anyone can remember, globalisation is surely the current development that affects us the most. Digitisation, migration, new up winds for nationalisation and overcome value systems, and the conflicts that arise from these tendencies are all closely connected to it.

Although we see the consequences of these developments in the media everyday, they seem to be pretty abstract and far away for most of us, at least in the western world. But shall we just keep watching until they actually knock at our doors? Shouldn't we already have started to prepare ourselves for the changes they will bring for our daily and our work lives? For us at Arts Management Network, it's the arts that should anticipate such developments at first glance, make clear that their origins are deeply rooted in the behaviour of the western societies and of everyone of us.

For sure, every country's arts sector has its peculiarities. But just like these developments influence most countries of the world, they also influence their arts organisations, artists and arts managers. So how can we react to them? What can we do to make the best of the new circumstances and to help the societies we live in handle them? If artists and art organisations shall use their creative potential to reflect these questions and the possible outcomes of current changes, they first have to reflect themselves. By reacting early to upcoming changes and seeing transformation as a constant companion, they may become able to develop entirely new strategies instead of just trying to improve the old ones. And by becoming more flexible and act proactive instead of reactive, it will get much easier to answer fundamental questions like: what competencies and knowledge will arts managers need in the future? And what new tasks and issues will art organisations have to deal with?

As a platform for international arts management, we always try to take a glance beyond sectorial and national borders. What we see is that arts associations and organisations in the different world regions are discussing exactly these issues. Sometimes they are finding the same and sometimes to-

An entirely new Arts Management

tally different answers. But what strikes most is that the most successful organisations are not the ones with the biggest budget, but the ones that react early to changes, see them as opportunities instead of threats and try to find creative solutions that fit their individual situation, special needs and local characteristics. For us, these examples are ambassadors of the visionary, exemplary and cutting-edge arts sector we dedicate our work to.

Suiting the changing circumstances and our ten-year anniversary, we at Arts Management Network felt that it was time to rethink our understanding of the function of the arts in the different societies and regions of the world. For that reason, we invited you to tell us about your vision of “an entirely new Arts Management”. In this issue of Arts Management Quarterly – that you until now may have known as the Arts Management Newsletter – we are happy to finally present you this selection of approaches on today’s tasks of cultural management in all parts of the world. They are dealing with novel, problem-solving oriented perspectives, organizational performances, or trends like new forms of participation and cooperation. All together, they draw a picture of the palpable role that art and arts leaders can play for the world’s societies and in the future.

We hope that they will inspire you as much as they did us. And if so, we would be happy if you’d share your ideas – or maybe further approaches – with us as well.

Sincerely yours,

Kristin Oswald (editor), Dirk Schütz (CEO) and the team of Arts Management Network



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How Globalization affects Arts Managers

„Are all nations communing? Is there going to be put one heart to the globe?“

Walt Whitman

This research seeks to develop greater understanding of the impacts of globalization, digitalization, and (im)migration on the work of arts managers and arts management researchers. Different from studies that focus specifically on those who work exclusively in international contexts, this paper aims to present current research based on an international empirical study of arts managers who do not necessarily cross borders for their work and who would in most cases not even consider their work international as such. The findings are a brief excerpt of the results of an online survey in October and November 2015 among 352 arts managers in 46 countries.¹ It dealt inter alia with the question how globalization affects the day-to-day work of arts managers and how they deal with the challenges globalization imposes on them.

By Raphaela Henze

Language barriers and culture-dependent dictions

The majority of arts managers stated that language barriers are a huge issue for them. They would like to be proficient in more languages in order to reach out to an increasingly diverse audience as well as to better prepare themselves for communication with (co-production) partners in other countries.

Language is indeed an issue: Many of the terms frequently used in the context of globalization such as ‚cultural identity‘, ‚nationality‘ and ‚diversity‘ – to name only a few – have complex meanings and are subject to differing interpretations. There is hardly any discussion in the cultural sector these days without frequent use of these buzzwords. And matters become even more complex when trying to translate these terms into different languages.

A remark from Canada concerning one of the survey questions is interesting for various reasons: „You use the word migrant to talk about newly arrived people in your country who might be interesting for your work. That sounds too much like refugees and the crisis that you are having in Europe at the moment. In Canada and the US we talk about immigrants, or better, New Arrivals or New Canadians. As a country that receives huge numbers of immigrants each year, we have evolved our ways of speaking that is less evocative and hence, more politically correct.“

¹ The entire study is published in R. Henze, Einführung in das Internationales Kulturmanagement‘ (2016). You can find a detailed introduction into this publication in this issue of Arts Management Quarterly.

... How Globalization affects Arts Managers

First, the largest displacement of refugees and migrants since World War II seems to be seen as an entirely European crisis and not as a challenge or even a chance that also involves countries on the other side of the Atlantic. Second, and this is something to be taken very seriously, even the well-intended use of words can be demeaning when not used properly and in the appropriate context. Would “New Germans” work in the German context? Well, it might sound better (and is actually a term that people of various ethnicities in Germany came to use for themselves), but a problem that occurs in context with refugees is that many of the addressed people will unfortunately only be “Short-term Germans” at best because they will have to leave the country, e.g. if their application for asylum is turned down. Some of them might not even want to be German when it comes to the strict and limited notion of citizenship.

Political correctness² in terminology is certainly important but does not necessarily ensure that the way people are treated is equally correct (Ahmed, 2012). Further, it differs from country to country what can be called “politically correct”. But apart from this, it is time for self-reflection. There seems to be a certain lack of critical consciousness regarding terminology and even a certain kind of “eurocentrism” that is proven by several answers of arts managers from Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Need for critical discourse

For the majority of the arts managers in German-speaking countries (im)migration is a huge challenge they are currently facing. They try to overcome e.g. language barriers by providing subtitles usually known from opera productions, or offer tours in different languages in their museums. Many of them also offer insights into ‘participatory projects’ with which they try to involve refugees into production and content generation.³ There is a huge momentum at the moment, especially in German theatres, to not only gain a more diverse audience, but also to bring the creative potential of a hybrid society to the forefront. Whether this is possible with the still relatively homogenous workforce we find in European arts institutions is a topic for further discussion (Terkessidis, 2015; Carty, 2014; Hesmondhalgh/Saha, 2013; Sharifi, 2015 on the racial discrimination of artists of colour in contemporary European theatre).

Many of the arts managers explained that the reason for their efforts is to foster ‘integration’. The term ‘integration’ is, like the ones mentioned at the beginning, highly complex and disputed in Germany at least since the 1970’s. The term has the paternalistic notion of allowing those that are not familiar with the rules to play the game in case they learn and then stick to the rules laid out by those that are already playing. Sure, there are rules as well as values (a difficult term again) that are of utmost importance and by no means

² E. Shohat/ R. Stam, (2014), p. 11 write about the ‘bad odor’ with which ‘political correctness’ comes.

³ Highly critical on this kind of involvement Chakravorty Spivak (1988) and Bishop (2012).

... How Globalization affects Arts Managers

subject to relativism. It is an important task of arts managers to ensure that human rights, freedom of expression and of religion are protected or enforced because without them art would become mere propaganda (Sandmann, 2014). There is no doubt that this task is highly difficult in international contexts and that significant intercultural sensitivity is required, but this would be a topic for a different article.

The necessary transformation from a country that considers itself still relatively homogeneous⁴ to one that is hybrid and diverse is not an idyllic one (Terkessidis, 2015), but one that inevitably will be undertaken and should be seen as an opportunity. Having a more precise idea of the difficult concept of diversity, often used in the same context, and additionally thinking both more deeply and theoretically about e.g. how 'nation' and 'identity' can be defined according to the realities of the 21st century might help to make the well-intended ad hoc efforts of arts managers more sustainable in the long run. At the moment, there are legitimate concerns that the necessary strategies are actually missing (Wolfram, 2015) – for community engagement, but even more for self-empowerment and self-representation, and an involvement and partnership that will in the best of all cases generate new forms of art and culture. The American author Vu Tran (2015) states: "Nothing creates more compelling art than the ambiguity of liminal existence, of uncertain and indecisive identity".

It will have to be academia in constant exchange with the sector that has to provide the theoretical framework from where to start. We urgently need the critical discourse with and about practice that DeVereaux argues for (DeVereaux, 2009) and that Durrer/ Henze/ Ross will explain in their text in this issue of Arts Management Quarterly in more detail.

Transcultural dialogue and cultural-economic imbalances

It does not come as a surprise that arts managers in German-speaking countries rank the issue of migration and immigration so high when asked about the challenges that globalization brings to their daily work. In fall and winter of 2015, when the survey was online, the influx of refugees was at its peak. But for arts managers outside these countries, migration seems not, or maybe no longer, of such pertinent importance, although many of them face it as well and at even higher rates. For them, different topics are key and make aware that globalization has not overcome the huge differences and imbalances between countries but might even perpetuate them.

An arts manager from South Africa states: *„The main challenge is trying to strike the balance between the powerful cultural hegemonies and the previously colonised. Many of the exchanges and intercultural experiments still have imbalances between source and receiving cultures.“*

⁴ Although Germany is with way more than 20% of the population having a migration background by far a homogeneous country.

... How Globalization affects Arts Managers

A Nigerian arts manager remarks: „Countries with bigger resources for promotion of their culture and methodology control the global discourse on culture.“

Another South African arts manager states as main challenges: „Global north dominance in theory, policy and agenda-setting; dependence on global north resources and the inherent power relations; language and general communication, the costs of travel, particularly on the African continent; it is easier (security, resources, visas, etc.) for global north voices to gather than global south ones; different cultural values and expectations and a lack of respect for these (despite commitments to cultural diversity), policy and strategic emphasis appropriate to global north conditions that have little relevance or resonance with global south circumstances“.

An Afghan arts manager explains: „As Afghan artists and arts managers we think that minorities are sometimes not in the focus of globalisation.“

An arts manager from Romania offers insights at the limits of what art and culture can actually achieve: „Unfair competition for resources and opportunities between rich and developing countries; the pervasive business-like assessment of cultural projects aims and achievements imposed by capitalist funding policies; the instrumentalisation of culture for political and economic purposes; the artificial stress on providing programs for disadvantaged communities whose problems should be addressed by politics instead to truly enable them to benefit from cultural and participative projects; the cultural colonization of developing countries by rich ones.“

These are only a few quotes of many that hint in similar directions and clarify some highly important issues:

1. The “level playing field”, the Goethe-Institut is so often talking about in glossy brochures, is still far from being achieved.
2. If we talk about how we can prepare arts managers for professions in international as well as transcultural contexts, we should include post-colonial theories and discourses to the curricula which are admittedly to a certain extent hermeneutic for arts managers whose background lies in another field,. Cultural hegemony, modelled on the basis of Western ideals, destroying local identities and culture, is still a reasonable fear for many arts managers in Europe as well.
3. We can no longer ignore competencies that are offered globally because these competencies might fit better than German arts management tools in contexts where we might not even mean the same thing when we talk about art and culture (Schindhelm, 2009, 2014) and where we might have totally different ideas of how arts institutions operate or what they are for (MacKenzie, 2009). Sometimes such “misunderstandings” are blurred by the fact that management terminology is relatively widespread. However, sooner or later the differences based on history, tradition, religion or spirituality will appear. It will be on us to learn because otherwise we will not only face huge difficulties in international

... How Globalization affects Arts Managers

contexts, but also in contexts that seem to be at first glance national.⁵ How can we live diversity if we do not have an idea about the essence of its concept or maybe better of hybridity (Nederveen Pieterse, 2004)?

Arts managers in the German-speaking countries tend not to get out of their comfort zone as much as they should. The survey has proven that even if they travel, cooperate with partners abroad or spend time working in another country they prefer places that do not force them to rethink their notion and understanding of culture. Being fostered by diverse programmes financed mainly by the EU, it seems quite comfortable to stay within the well-known context of Western Europe.

And last but not least, we will have to understand that issues that seem of urgent importance in the European arena may be of less importance in other parts of the world. This might help to take the heat out of some discussions. Also, it might open the horizon for other topics and for solutions. Several countries have experienced or are still experiencing waves of (im)migration.⁶ For many of those, dealing with an ethnically diverse audience is daily business. Again, globalization can be a chance to learn if one is prepared for and willing to do so. There is an enormous amount of knowledge that digitalization will help to distribute (Khanna, 2016). It will be an important task of interdisciplinary as well as international networks of academics and practitioners to generate this knowledge and to distribute it as widely as possible (Durrer/Henze/ Ross, 2016).[¶]

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⁵ Knowing that ‚nation‘ and ‚nationality‘ are in itself – again – complex topics of books already written and still to be written.

⁶ T. Fakhoury, 2016, 27 describes how e.g. the Lebanon, that receives high numbers of refugees, can teach lessons on local initiatives, grass root movements and hospitality.

... How Globalization affects Arts Managers

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