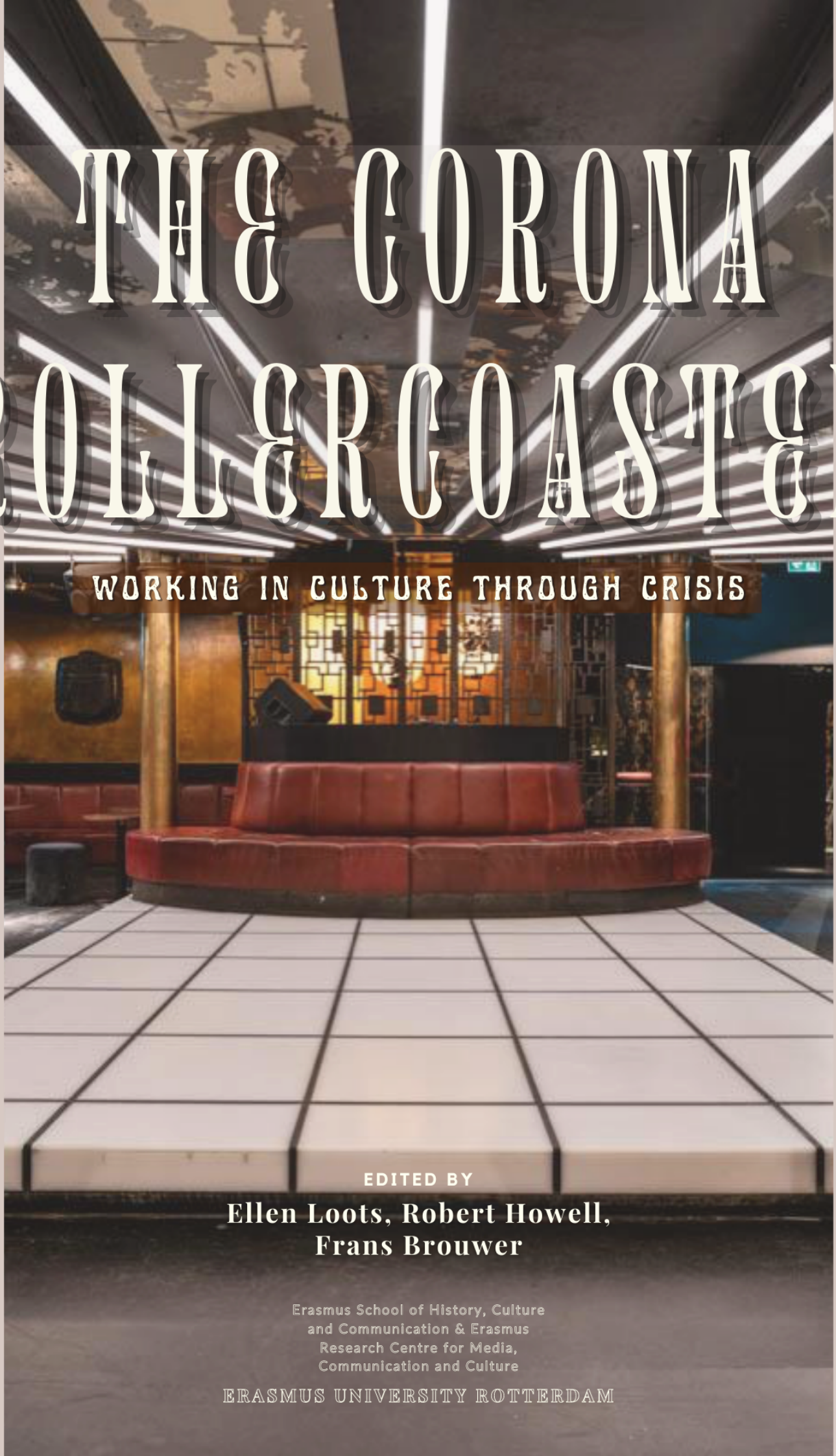

THE CORONA ROLLERCOASTER

WORKING IN CULTURE THROUGH CRISIS

EDITED BY

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Erasmus School of History, Culture
and Communication & Erasmus
Research Centre for Media,
Communication and Culture

ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM

The Corona Rollercoaster

Working in Culture Through Crisis

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Cover Image	Jitske Nap (see article on page 124)
Publisher	ERMeCC - Erasmus Research Centre for Media, Communication and Culture, Erasmus University Rotterdam

ISBN/EAN: 978-90-76665-45-0

Keywords: Corona crisis, pandemic, cultural industries, arts, culture, cultural entrepreneurship, innovation

This publication is made possible by voluntary contributions from the authors and editors as well as a financial contribution from the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication.

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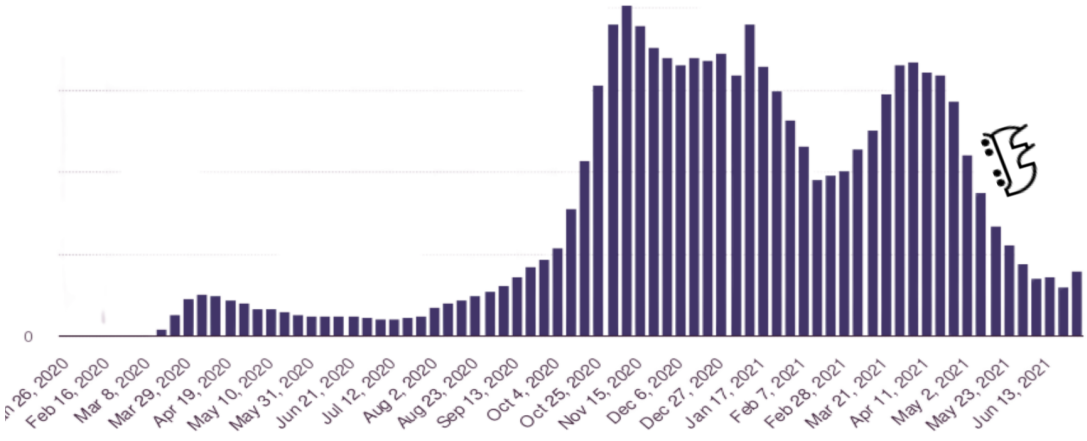
Frans Brouwer and Robert Howell

July 2021



In March 2020, we all climbed aboard the COVID-19 rollercoaster, not knowing how long the ride would last. A group of cultural economists from Erasmus University Rotterdam did foresee ups and downs, winners and losers and … a lot of creative problem-solving! They saw an opportunity to collect and share stories that chronicle the experiences of professionals working in the field of Arts and Culture. In the years to come, there will be plenty written, in hindsight, on how the pandemic changed the way that we do things or accelerated changes that were already underway. The chronicles offer an immediate record of entrepreneurial responses, issues, challenges and ideas as they were happening. Our pool of authors came from Arts and Culture Studies students, alumni and staff members from the Erasmus University School of History, Culture and Communication (ESHCC). Its international courses mean that we received responses from across the world offering an insight into very different government responses and personal challenges.

Halfway round, two online symposia were held, bringing together staff, students and alumni from all four corners for presentations and discussion.

We have collected a wide range of responses including interviews with artists and creative entrepreneurs; oversight articles observing a specific sector or government policy; notes from the field that demonstrate the act of creative problem-solving in real-time; plus opinion pieces. This is not a peer-reviewed journal. It is a series of edited articles from diverse players across a hard-hit sector. Collectively they reflect the ups, downs and sheer momentum that we've all experienced on the Corona Rollercoaster.

Ellen Loots has been the initiator and driving force behind this project. Together with the other editors, Robert Howell and Frans Brouwer, they identified topics and invited contributions. Pleun Meijer, Janna Michael and Sue Robinson provided valuable assistance. The editors offered a 'friendly third eye' to the submitted blogs and Robert Howell, as a native speaker in our team, moderated the English.

In the summer of 2021, we're still not sure when this ride will end but the most serious damage to the cultural sector seems to have been left behind the last bend. Theatres and museums are gradually reopening; festivals are even beginning to welcome back large crowds. A good moment to publish the collection of hopeful, creative and enterprising ideas and experiences as an ebook. We have intended to help chronicle the journey, as it happened. We hope readers will find this interesting and be inspired by the ideas within. We also intend to inform historians of the crisis and those seeking to identify how the creative sector responds to turbulent times.

For the benefit of the reader, this book has been divided into chapters although overlap between sections is inevitable: creativity and culture are not easily pigeonholed. We have also arranged the pieces chronologically within each chapter so that you know the point on the rollercoaster ride where it was written.

All authors have made their contributions free of charge. We thank them for that. We are also grateful to the ESHCC for the financial contribution to realise this e-publication and for the layout and design, provided by Ayesha Aziz.

Not all of us will have survived this rollercoaster intact. Our health may have been severely affected, our work-life disrupted or destroyed, our confidence knocked. However, we remain confident that, though dented, the arts and cultural industries have, on the whole, withstood this pandemic through creativity and passion.

About the Authors

Robert Howell is a Director at Culturapedia, an arts project management company from the North West of England. Their digital response to Covid-19 was Spot On Stories. Robert holds a Master diploma Arts and Culture Studies (Cultural Economics & Entrepreneurship) from Erasmus University.

Frans Brouwer is a Lecturer Cultural Economics at Erasmus University Rotterdam, Radboud University Nijmegen and Latvian Academy of Culture (Riga).

Introduction

Ellen Loots and Sue Robinson

July 2021

Photo by john Applese on Unsplash

We each know the Corona story. The narratives of denial, action, creativity; lockdown, curfew and social distancing. The social measures and impacts we experienced varied in degrees of enforcement depending on the wealth, geography and ideology of the country the virus landed in. National responses and human reactions affected the arts, culture and creative sectors, as it has affected many other sectors of society. In our case of education, research and cultural production. In Rotterdam, the Netherlands, everything changed on Friday the 13th of March 2020. An unlucky day in western superstition fulfilling its vow.

One virus, many worlds of impact. The chronicles have been our modest remedy to cope with the uncertainty and early feelings of loneliness and discomfort. We united alumni, staff members, and importantly, the master students of the academic year 2019-2020. Some of whom ran off to their homes and home countries suddenly before borders would close; whilst others were left to their own devices in their student rooms in Rotterdam. Expecting to graduate soon as a master of Arts and Culture Studies (with specialisms of 'Cultural Economics & Entrepreneurship', 'Arts, Culture & Society, and 'Tourism, Culture & Society'),the prospects of entering a labour market of 'sealed' organisations were not the

most encouraging. What has united us from Spring 2020 onward, were our shared concern with arts and culture production and our interest in how organisations and individuals in cultural and creative sectors would fare. Through videoconferencing, we facilitated intimate evenings together, online class discussions and the opportunity to write down observations and thoughts. We have been able to harness arts, culture and our creativity for this volume, supporting our sense of wellbeing.

We all have our perspectives and experiences. We know how the story unfolded for ourselves and our communities and we see how it is still unfolding. The observations contained with these chronicles chart a world in flux and reveal moments in time. During the first months, there were two main reactions: paralysis and experimental innovation. The shock of immediate major change combined with adrenaline led to a range of responses influencing artistic offers, cultural expression, organisational financing and policy support. Who the losers and winners will be, is yet to be determined. Organisations under the umbrella of public support are the ones most likely to continue their operations, probably with a range of digital activities accompanying their regular products and services. In particular, freelance and self-employed workers in the cultural and creative industries may find it hard to re-enter the labour market; they will need to persuade potential commissioners of their much-needed skills and competencies.

Five chapters of chronicles

The American investor Warren Buffett said: “Only when the tide goes out do you discover who's been swimming naked.” The chronicles bundled in the present volume are revealing, not only in the range of national response and impact but also in the differences in how the arts and cultural sectors responded, thrived and tried their best to survive. Who was left stranded? Who adapted? Why and how? What have been the temporary tactics to alleviate the consequences of the restrictions, and which new ways of organising production, distribution and participation will be there to stay? How will we know it is over? Throughout five chapters, these and other questions are addressed.

In the chapter on audiences and distribution, we see the rise and influence of digitalisation, providing opportunities for organisational resilience and building relationships with new and existing audiences as the sector re-emerges. Online events became for many a growth area, for others a survival strategy. Seen at first as a temporary solution to restrictions, they are no longer a poor quality substitute for the live experience but a new way of engaging with the live offer.

Event management has had its challenges with social restrictions impacting income, staffing, and audience confidence, putting the best of managers and plans through variously changing scenarios. Cultural managers have collaborated with artists to provide alternative safe spaces for conversation and consumption. Where they have excelled entrepreneurially is by creating events as hubs for experimentation and risk-taking.

A third chapter describes how organisations of all scales and funding structures have had their challenges and struggles, some adapting better than others as a result of the change forced upon them. National policy differences exacerbated or relieved some of the pain. The pace of change and response is shown in some of the chronicles. Subsidised organisations fared well in many countries but many self-employed creatives had a precipitous loss of income only partially covered by government support schemes. Previous income risk differences have become more exposed and it is not yet fully known how much of any country's state support reached individual artists, freelancers, or small companies. Organisations will face the 'congestion' of a cultural offering that had been developed during the pandemic but had not found a staging opportunity. The choices they will make will likely affect the viability of many artists as well as small (theatre) production companies and music bands.

In a fourth chapter, the ways artists and entrepreneurs have used their imagination, commitment and problem-solving skills to overcome some of the timely and more pertinent challenges that have long characterised the labour market, are exposed by the pandemic. On one hand, the flexibility and adaptability of artists and other creative workers are praisable and foreshadow what artistic production and the organisation of creative work could look like in the future. On the other hand, the pandemic may lead to a scarcity of resources and even more fierce competition, forcing artists and creative professionals to fight for attention. During the pandemic, some artists in some contexts gained a meaningful safety net whilst others had to survive unsupported. For some, the collapse of an artistic career taking years of effort to develop could be lurking around the corner. The pandemic has already led some artists and creative professionals to rethink their values and their roles in society or to re-skill. Others have created a body of work that they would want to share with an audience, which could require inventive ways of being able to do so. While many public support measures were/are intended to have a trickle-down effect from organisations to makers, time will tell if and in how far they will do so.

Finally, in terms of national cultural policy, aside from variances in government support, there is evidence of an increased emphasis on attracting audiences, involving communities

and supporting wellbeing. Culture and creativity can be engines for economic development but they are also fundamental to social and cultural development.

Digitalisation, localisation, humanisation

Three major themes running through the chapter contributions in this volume can be recognised as likely to take centre stage in cultural production and policy in the next years: digitalisation, localisation, and humanisation,

The first theme of digitalisation is for many of us probably the one that became most tangibly present in our private lives. In just a few months, we became accustomed to speaking, discussing, teaching and learning; organising, arguing and loving all mediated by a screen. In our new lifestyles, we encounter ease and complexity, proximity and alienation, and the acceleration of many work activities. In arts and culture, digital experiments have been numerous, but not always successful; due to the challenge of reaching the expected quality standards of the live experience. Virtual realities and artificial intelligence are becoming entrenched in the rapidly evolving landscape of creative production and consumption; creativity can become a key ingredient for some developments and could lead organisations and individuals to push their limits on digital change. However, even if it appears as if technology has become cheap and widely available, we must be cautious in assuming that all have equal access to the digital realm and not excluding groups. The arts and cultural institutions could take up a role in safeguarding the social and democratic aspects of content production and diffusion by ensuring that their audiences are aware that technology and algorithms are neither neutral nor harmless.

As a second theme, localisation finds its origin in the fact that we needed to stay in the same places for many months. People started to re-appreciate the qualities of the built and natural environment of their immediate surroundings and became aware of what was missed: traditions, food, heritage, the social side of a cultural offering. The number of window exhibitions and pop-up exhibitions in unused spaces, in rural and metropolitan environments, has been high, the barriers to communication among artists and visitors have never been so low. Many museums, in the absence of tourists, radically turned to their local communities. At the same time, many people now are glad to expand their horizons; travel and tourism are not just rights, nor privileges, but have become easy outings. A tension to be expected is that between people's need to freely move to other places, and global health and social challenges. Even if the news media makes us believe that (young) people want to break out during a summer of freedom and love, new variants

of the coronavirus may enforce future local lockdowns. It takes a good plan to deal with the microbe of festivalitis and local economies could play key roles in the execution of the European Green Deal and the United Nations' Sustainable Developments Goals.

Thirdly, it cannot be denied that over the past months, we were all humans and made more aware of our bodies and minds. All of us have felt vulnerable and emotional at times, several of us experienced deep grief. The systems that we believed to be so efficient, were questioned, with the notion of 'care' trying to find its place in them. That has been most obvious for the healthcare system, but also the arts have opened up to incorporate aspects that address deep human, humane, needs. Balcony, porch and front door concerts as well as videos of orchestra members playing from their living rooms have been unseen phenomena affirming the consoling power of music. Visual artworks that address trauma or mental health issues were made in large numbers. Inclusive leadership and new sources of donations to the arts have both been signs of the time and manifestations of the solidarity that was sought after in and through the arts. In search of the experience of collectivity, never before have entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative industries found a space for connecting and supporting each other in the digital environment and platforms. The pandemic has certainly led to the humanisation of aspects of artistic and cultural production and consumption. At times a temporary solution, at times expected to leave a permanent imprint on the way forward.

Arts and culture in post-Covid times

The famous quote by Winston Churchill of 'never let a good crisis go to waste' has been part of business jargon for almost three-quarters of a century, but recently it has gained a renewed meaningfulness. All the reflections, experiences and new forms that happened in the past months, many of which were, if not highlighted then forecast in the chronicles, provide opportunities for the arts and culture. In doing so, they could challenge future students, recent graduates and other alumni of education programmes like ours at Erasmus University to take up meaningful roles. While some wish to go 'back to normal', others (including thinkers, educators, organisers, policymakers and entrepreneurs) express the wish to develop a 'new normal'. Early in the pandemic, Justin O'Connor, professor of Creative Economy at the University of South Australia, wrote a pamphlet expressing his hope for a 'reset', seeing the crisis as an opportunity to reframe how we think of funding, producing, and enjoying culture together, outside of the ideology of market efficiencies. One of his claims was that we "must think how we organise the economy of culture – how public funding is given (the conditions of acceptance, reporting and judgement), but also how commercial and state agencies produce cultural goods and

services." Yet also, he suggests that we "reset our relationship to the 'audience', to establish a different language, a new way of talking, that can re-centralise culture's role in our public life, and articulate how these relate to our collective conception of 'the good life'" (O'Connor, 2020). According to O'Connor (2020), arts and culture can help show us how another world is possible, and new forms of organising in cooperatives and community-based enterprises can serve us in doing so. There are some bad habits that we all, as consumers, workers, educators and researchers in arts and cultural practices could leave behind, while adjusting to new systems: such as the laudation of creative entrepreneurship while being ignorant of the precariousness of cultural labour markets and inequalities in cultural production and consumption (Comunian & England, 2020; Eikhof, 2020). The inclination toward increasingly more of the same and pretending everything is novel, urgent and different whilst turning a blind eye to the impact of arts and culture on the environment and people's levels of comfort, especially those living in urban contexts. A wide range of social, health and environmental needs, locally as well as globally, require a slowing down. At the same time there is an acceleration of certain practices, effectuating a 'transition' towards more just, sustainable and resilient societies already begging for change in pre-Covid times; made more urgent due to the current global health and economic crisis.

Although foremost a health crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have a great economic impact as well. Many of us have sufficient years of age to remember the aftermath of the global economic crisis of 2008/2009. While just a decade ago cultural organisations were not significantly impacted by a reduction of visitors (Lindqvist, 2012), in many countries public financial support decreased considerably in the years after the crisis. This time, public authorities of many countries have been rapid in their interventions to prevent closures and lay-offs of staff members in organisations, as well as in issuing unemployment benefits (Betzler et al., 2020). Still, the impact of the pandemic on public budgets has been large, and only time will tell what will be prioritised. As an alternative to public support, private support to the arts and culture by corporations, foundations and individuals could either be withdrawn, fuel those parts of the arts and culture sector that will appear to be in need, or be diverted toward causes that experience an even more urgent need.

How will this Covid story end? "not with a bang but a whimper"? We know it bubbles on and as some countries begin to open up, with their creative sector, slowly, carefully emerging, blinking; others are still deep in the struggle. The full effects will not be known for some years. The contributions to this volume by no means represent all sectors and types of change equally; but are a convenient sample generated by enthusiastic colleagues,

alumni and students who wished to write about something that struck them. They chart journeys of innovation and thought. Some show urgency of language, and emotional and personal perspectives. The passage of time may mean some require an update or story development. They exist in their Covid moment. We hope that the chronicles resonate, now or in the future.

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About the Authors

Ellen Loots is an assistant professor of Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship at Erasmus University Rotterdam. As an educator during the pandemic, she has been concerned with how the arts and cultural sectors responded to such a challenge, as well as with new teaching methods and students' wellbeing during challenging times.

Sue Robinson is an alumnus of the MA Arts and Culture studies (2018). She was a mature student and is a co-director of Culturapedia, a creative business based in North West England working creatively with communities to enable them to enjoy a cultural life. During the pandemic the company first panicked and then innovated, responding to its impact on the performing arts sector and themselves.

Arts and Culture Studies in times of Covid-19: ponderings over the resilience of academic education

Pauwke Berkers

May 2021

Somewhere in February 2020, I had a talk with our student advisor. One of those unplanned corridor chats we often have when running into each other. She expected the university to close its doors in the light of the emerging pandemic. “Closing the university”, I said, “naaaah, no way”. A couple of weeks later Erasmus University Rotterdam closed its buildings. I taught the last three meetings of my course Sociology, Culture, and Modernity, in a completely empty classroom, livestreaming my lecture in a rather 28 Days Later-like atmosphere.

The pandemic caused many short-term dilemmas, often in relation to risk and uncertainty. For example, how to cater for the needs of students in isolation, while at the same time making sure our overburdened staff members did not risk burning out? How to maintain the quality of our programs, while teaching fully online? Why do all these online teaching tools have quirky names? Whereas FeedbackFruits sounds more like a shareware-version of Candy Crush, Panopto seems an apt name for a security company run by a philosophy student. In short: both staff and students have been occupied with short-term crisis management. Making things up as we go along, to paraphrase the Talking Heads. As the university is slowly allowing students onto the campus again, it might be a good time to reflect on the resilience of academic education in light of current events.

Resilience can be defined as the capacity of systems to respond to and flourish under external stressors (here: the pandemic, obviously). Recent work has proposed principles for building resilience in ecosystems in the face of change (Biggs et al., 2012). My own – admittedly, preliminary – observations suggest academic education is resilient in some ways, but not in others [no shit, Sherlock]. Our department has shown to be resilient in terms of encouraging learning and experimentation. We were at the forefront of innovative academic education before the outbreak of the pandemic, resulting in a flexible mindset, helping our staff to adapt impressively quickly to the “new normal” of online teaching. Yet, the underfunding of university education has made it difficult to maintain. We have had little to no backup possibilities in case lecturers are ill or need additional help. Luckily,

extra funding was made available by the university and the government to alleviate urgent strains. While we have been – and still are – proud to have such a diverse portfolio of international programs, it also provides many challenges in terms of hybrid teaching and time zone differences. Moreover, as a department, we have been investing heavily to better connect our programs to the professional field of arts and culture. Yet, the extent to which this sector has been hit by the pandemic – and the subsequent measures to control it – raises the question: how tight should our programs be coupled with the field of arts and culture? For example, providing suitable internships proved to be an enormous challenge. In a sense, university education is a slow variable as it responds slowly to external shocks. Therefore our student influx remained high. However, the current pandemic made us aware of how international university education is a complex system of which we – as a department – are merely a small part. Hence, we often had to tell students (and staff) "we do not know", "it depends", or even "maybe yes, maybe no". Not very satisfactory, but quite academic actually, as science is by nature an endeavour of uncertainty.

Thus, academic education is rather similar to many publicly-funded arts organisations – structurally underfunded, yet remarkably resilient due to the individual efforts of its staff and students. This Shit Corona publication exemplifies this perfectly. However, as scientists expect pandemics to occur more often in the future, we need to start a conversation about the resilience of academic education as an institution – right now.

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Pauwke Berkers is an Associate Professor Sociology of Art & Culture and Head of the Department Arts & Culture at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Chapter 1: Audiences and Prosumers

Introduction

Can digitalisation be(come) a keeper?

Ella Kuijpers

May 2021

In the chronicles of 'Audiences and Distribution' the authors shed light on the pros and cons of digital supply for the arts. During the pandemic, the cultural sector was forced to make use of digital technologies in order to stay in touch with its audience. Although audiences found their way to the online world, not many cultural organisations or artists were able to build a profitable funding structure around it. Yet, according to the chronicles, there might be opportunities and chances for successfully implementing digital content and strategies.

When Covid-19 hit the world, the cultural sector was unprepared. From one moment to the next, performances, concerts, exhibitions, events and festivals were cancelled. Cultural venues had to close their doors, which made the digital environment the only one left to escape to. Some shows and events that were already developed and planned were adapted in such a way that they could be broadcasted online, in order to still gain some revenue from them or just to be able to show them to the public.

Organisations and artists soon started making new digital content. Fan Wu visited the theatre performance *Memento Mori* by Nineties Productions online, which was specially made to show online during the pandemic. However, Wu noticed that "it still lacked the smell and sense of a crowded theatre auditorium" (Wu, F. 2021. p. 4). It reminded her of what being in a theatre normally feels like (see Chapter 3). Femke Vandenberg live streamed some electronic music concerts in order to investigate their collective effervescence, a feeling people get from being part of a crowd in which everyone is focused on the same thing, such as a concert. She found that small bodily cues, often experienced in a physical crowd, play a big role in creating collective effervescence. Online concerts therefore weren't able to create the same social effect.

Both examples show that digital content is different in that it lacks something that can only be experienced live. This raises the question: are online events and shows second best, or can digital content provide a full-fledged addition to live events, with its own uniqueness and benefits? According to Anne-Sophie Radermecker, digital content will never replace the 'tactical value' that live events still have, but it might be an interesting addition to

them. The chronicles show a couple examples of how digitisation can create new opportunities, which I believe are quite promising.

Audience development

As Jacques Kayser demonstrates, online concerts can be effective in creating the audience of the future. For his master's thesis, he investigated how the online consumption of music affects the future attendance of various audiences. His conclusions reveal two opportunities: firstly, streaming concerts can be an effective way to increase the future participation of existing audiences, and secondly, it can be a promising tool for reaching new audiences. Streaming is not only a way to stay in touch with existing audiences during this pandemic but it also creates opportunities for audience development, because viewing concerts online has a lower price barrier. This makes it easier to motivate certain subgroups for future participation, as cheaper tickets can be an introduction to the arts for new audiences. Therefore, creating digital content can be a tool for the diversification and extension of audiences, possibly even internationally.

New funding structures

Robert Howell shows that the cultural sector can learn from the newspaper industry. He investigated the pros and cons of monetising digital content. Howell demonstrates that the willingness to pay for print newspapers is higher than it is for online news. However, print is more costly and digital content can have an endless number of consumers. This creates an opportunity to increase reach, as Howell explains in his chronicle. Newspapers that provided online content without a paywall, increased their reach immensely (in one case it showed an increase up to 20 times) in less than ten years. It shows that 'going digital' and providing free content in the first instance, can increase future income from consumers of paid content or through generating revenue from ads. All in all, digital presence can drive post-covid live ticket sales and create opportunities for revenues from advertising.

Creating exclusive content

In her research on collective effervescence, Vandenberg argues that the pandemic accelerated the implementation of online trends, such as live streaming. She states that the virtual space has always been seen secondary to the physical space, but since the pandemic that has changed. Probably, audiences will shift to live events as soon as they can, particularly if digital content is only seen as only a temporary solution. If live-streamed concerts and performances are second best because they mimic a live concert or theatre setting, digital content will die a silent death, according to Wu and Vandenberg. However,

digital content can be seen as additional to live content, if it is being treated as something self-contained or autonomous. According to Wu, it can be “a new way of presenting narrative, set design and audience engagement, tailored specifically to online spaces”. This space is a world on its own with its unique characteristics. Therefore, it can be additional to live events, making it exclusive.

In their chronicle about Salar Shahna, an entrepreneur in the global VR market, Huipeng Xu and Chingyi Sit state that the lines between people’s physical surroundings and virtual lives have been blurred because of the pandemic, which can be seen in a growing demand for VR at home. It suggests that virtual technologies might be here to stay. By offering something that cannot be experienced live, it can increase the demand for online content. Examples of pioneers that experimented with digital content and new technologies have proven that there is a future in product differentiation. In 2016, British trip-hop band Massive Attack pioneered an app that functioned as a sensory music player of their new album. More recently, apps have been used to offer exclusive content in order to increase audience engagement, and to generate income from price barriers like tickets or a paywall.

Conclusion

The opportunities set out in this chapter of the chronicles teach us that online events and shows should not be considered a temporary solution to the problem of not being able to go to a cinema, theatre, music venue, festival or museum. Digitisation can be a strategy for audience development and diversification, creating new funding structures or product differentiation. They should not only be perceived as a substitute for live events, but a complement to them. A genuine digitisation of content can provide ways to better survive this pandemic with its restrictions to live events and performances, but it also offers opportunities to become more resilient in the post-pandemic period.

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About the author

Ella Kuijpers studied Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship at Erasmus University Rotterdam. She works at Kunstloc Brabant as coordinator of the subsidy program and advisor in financing in the cultural sector and crowdfunding.

The true cost of going digital? Lessons from the press

Robert Howell

September 2020

The current crisis has seen the arts and cultural world throwing content online like there is no tomorrow. Big providers such as NTLive and little guys, like us, acted fast with pre-recorded and newly commissioned content. It was like a race to the digital platforms but now we need to slow down and be more strategic. How do we sustain the demand we've created in a post-covid world? The newspaper industry has already been through this. What can the arts and cultural sector learn about the pros and cons of trying to monetise digital content from another industry who are perhaps 20 years ahead? A while back I looked at the experiences of three UK newspapers.

Digitisation has impacted on consumers' willingness to pay for news. US consumers surveyed in 2010 were 'willing to pay more for the print newspaper ($7.7), followed by the Web edition ($3.1), and then by apps ($1.5)' [1]. We need to note that print subscribers are also paying for paper, print, distribution and newsagents. There is also concern that something less tangible than printed paper on your smartphone or laptop is perceived to have less value and becomes an 'inferior good'. It would be easy to conclude that now the news is available online, printed papers will disappear but consumers still like print and their willingness to pay for it is higher than digital.

The newspaper industry has always been financed with a balance of sales and advertising. Some news publishers have given away their online content for free. Others have introduced a paywall or subscription system. There has been little online consensus on paywalls. Some have allowed members or subscribers access to a narrow range of club goods by introducing full or partial paywalls. Managing subscriptions comes with a cost and a need for vigilance to prevent every resourceful consumer attempts to bypass them. Paywalls inevitably reduce traffic which also has an impact on advertising revenues. Immediately after The Times, in the UK, put up a paywall, online readership dropped by 62% to 2.4 million and page views dropped 90% from 41 million to 4 million [2] (Myllylahti, 2014, p.187).

I looked at the experience of three UK national newspapers. 'The Mail Online' (http://www.dailymail.co.uk) is a mid-market newspaper with staff in the UK and the United States.The Mail Online has never had a paywall. The Sun (http://www.thesun.co.uk) is a 'red top' tabloid owned by News UK, Part of Rupert Murdoch's media empire. It is the biggest selling print newspaper in the UK. In 2015, it removed a paywall on its online content that had been in place since 2013 . The Guardian is a quality left leaning newspaper which was the first UK title to develop an online presence in 1995 (http://www.theguardian.com). At the end of 2016 it had the lowest print circulation of the twelve mainstream national daily newspapers The Guardian web presence has never had a paywall.

I used data on circulation from the Audit Bureau of Circulation which provides trusted independent data on media penetration for the advertising industry.

All UK daily newspapers have seen a circulation drop since 1997. In percentage terms, the Guardian has experienced a 65% drop in daily print circulation, the Daily Mail has a 35% drop in daily print circulation and the Sun has seen a 56% drop in daily print circulation.

In September 2016 98% of people accessing the Guardian were online. 91% of Mail readers were online but only 63% of Sun readers. These figures were ten months on from the removal of the paywall from The Sun Online.

Despite a 65% drop in print circulation the Guardian's reach in 1997 was just 5% of what it was in 2016. For the Mail this figure is 14% and the Sun's reach in 1997 was 84% of what it was in 2016. The Sun's experiment with a paywall would appear to have had a significant impact on reach. The Guardian and the Mail Online, who chose the freely available content option, have built a substantial base of online users. The Sun, which started with a paywall and then abandoned it in 2016, has maintained its position as the top selling print newspaper but has failed to build a substantial online customer base compared to the other

two titles. News UK abandoned its paywall on the Sun's website, it has a lot to do to catch up with The Mail Online and The Guardian in terms of digital reach and the potential corresponding advertising revenue.

The newspaper industry is still in a period of 'creative destruction'. Free news is now more readily available online yet there remains a demand for the analogue version. Arts and Culture's rush to online content will have potentially increased reach, though those who have traditionally relied on ticket sales to cover, at least a percentage of costs are unlikely to make this up through advertising revenue. They have little tradition of advertising sales and there are limits to what can be achieved through digital platforms. Online distribution is cheaper than live distribution - no front of house staff, paying artists for one rather than multiple performances. Will an increased digital presence drive post-covid live ticket sales or are we on a slippery slope to oblivion?

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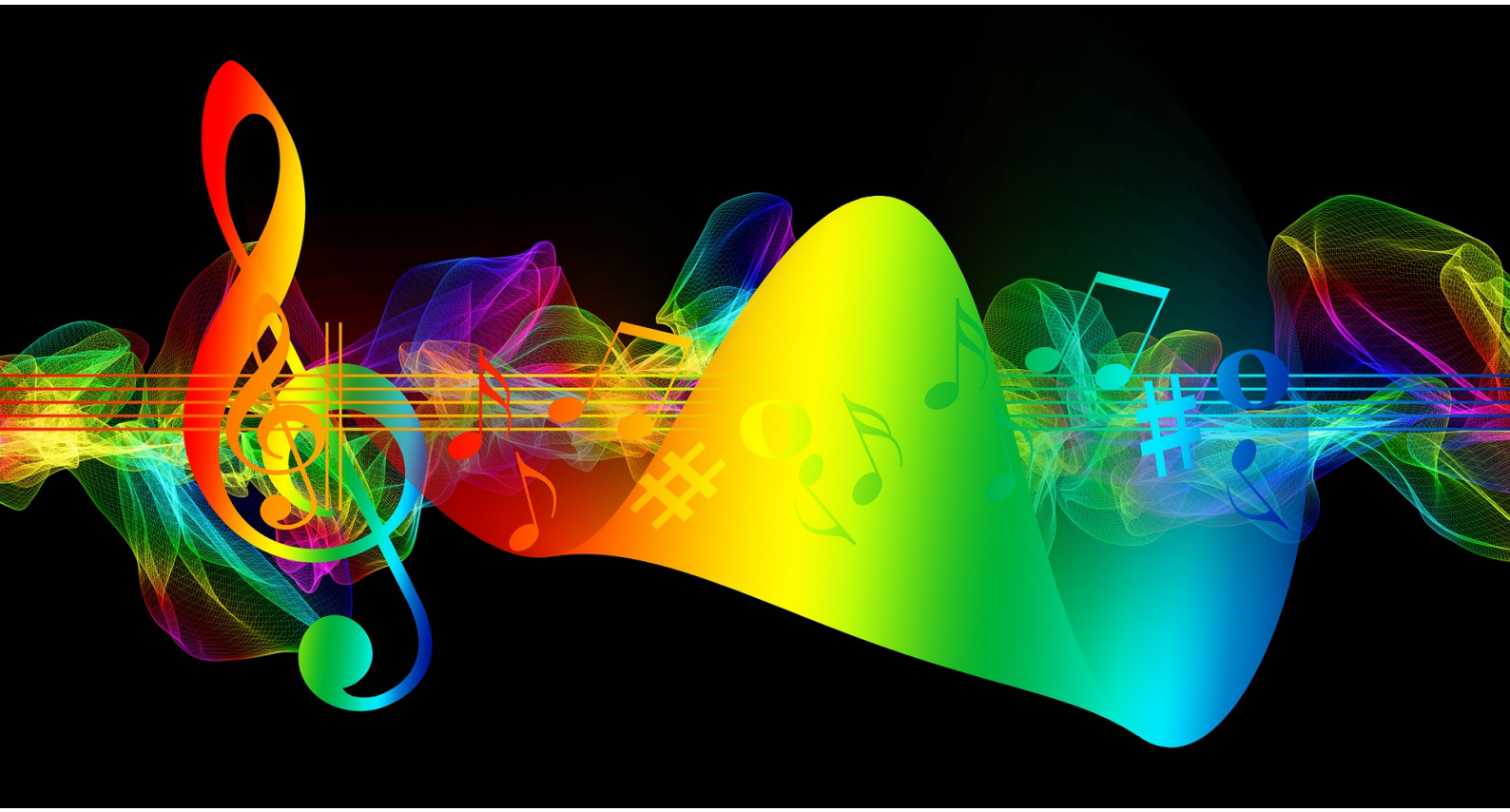
Online music performance consumption in times of crisis

Jacques Kayser

September 2020



The Covid-19 period is an unprecedented moment in history where the physical cultural sector has been paused. After the WHO officially declared the Covid-19 virus outbreak as a pandemic, globally nations implemented lock-down and social distance measures in efforts to get the virus under control. For the live music sector, this meant complete halt of all events for an indefinite period. As the cultural sector is known for its swift innovative actions and dynamic adaptation to external changes, increasingly artists and cultural organisations turned to online provision of concerts and musical performances.

Cultural operators rapidly provided live music content online, through social media, streaming platforms or their own websites. Indeed, Facebook reports for March 2020, an increase of almost 50% in the number of people who engage in live videos (Wong, 2020). The increased online consumption of music concerts, and the restrictions on physical

attendance leaves a lot of uncertainties. It is uncertain how Covid-19 will affect the demand for live music or it's supply.

For my thesis, I undertook an audience study to inform audience development strategies. I wanted to know how the online consumption of music impacts on the future physical attendance of various audience segments?

An online survey was taken by a sample of 302 participants during the lockdown in May. I tested the effect of eight different drivers and barriers to attendance on the expected physical concert attendance (post Covid-19), and how these effects are mediated through various online music consumption characteristics. For doing so, I applied a statistical mediation model (Hayes, 2012) that revealed that only two drivers and barriers matter: social and economic.

Social drivers relate well to the Covid-19 crisis, because during the lockdown, people were deprived of social contacts. My analysis shows that online music consumption impacted the highest on people who are socially motivated to attend concerts and their expected future consumption of live music.

The economic drivers and barriers bring forward an interesting point of discussion. My findings suggest that audiences reevaluated their willingness-to-pay for concerts during Covid-19. On the one hand, as most concerts were provided free, audiences can get used to not paying. On the other hand, an audience group that would usually not attend concerts, because of a price barrier, actually got to experience online concerts, potentially cultivating their taste and that could increase their willingness to pay in the future.

I wanted to understand the impact of various types of online consumption on both expected post-Covid-19 attendance and what audiences anticipated consuming. The results of a statistical analysis were then used to inform audience development strategies, specifically, those developed by Kawashima, (2000).

First, Kawashima recognizes an 'Extended marketing' strategy, which encompasses marketing efforts to get audiences to actually physically attend. One way of doing so is by means of digitally transmitted performances. In the literature on this technique of promotion, the question is asked: are these a substitute for or a complement to physical attendance and consumption (eg. Bakshi & Throsby, 2014; Mueser & Vlachos, 2018; Handke et al., 2013). Our results indicate that the frequency of watching online concerts, firstly, has a positive effect on how audiences are planning to increase their future attendance, and secondly, that it increases the anticipation towards physical concerts. We

show that the consumption of online concerts is effective in increasing future participation and the importance of providing online music performances for promotional reasons.

Secondly, Kawashmia writes about 'Audience engagement' - the involvement and participation of audiences, especially in the artistic exchange. Through various strategies, organisations and artists can interact with audiences and make them feel more part of their practice. Our analysis shows that online audience engagement strategies are an effective way of increasing the anticipation of and future attendance of post Covid-19, physical, concerts. Through engaging in live chats, commenting sections and participatory actions between artists and audience, cultural organisations can enhance their future demand.

Thirdly, in 'Taste cultivation' strategies, audiences are introduced to new art forms, genres and artists (Kawashima, 2000). Our analysis provides evidence that the more audiences informed themselves about new artists, genres and art forms, the more they were anticipating attending physical concerts again. Accordingly, this also holds true for when audiences discovered new artists and genres during the lockdown period. Thus, statistical evidence holds that taste cultivation actions and facilitating new discoveries, help increase future physical demand for cultural organisations. Consequently, cultural venues should provide educational content around the music genres or artists they program. In practice, that could take the form of providing informational video material on their future program. Through interviews, documentaries, online Q&A's and general information, the more they cultivate their audiences, the better the chances for high demand in the future.

Fourthly, we see that the more audiences are able to access concerts online that they were not able to physically access, the higher their anticipation. This relates well to Kawashima's (2000) 'Cultural inclusion' strategy where venues can reach audience segments that they were not able to reach before. Most organizations have data on the socio-demographics of their audiences. These times provide an opportunity to direct online strategies towards new audience segments. The online environment allows better reach with the potential to stimulate future attendance.

This research informed various audience development strategies around online concert and performance provision. Cultural organisations should not only focus on promoting videos, but also facilitate new discoveries, taste cultivation, audience education and cultural inclusion. This way, cultural organisations can develop online audience development strategies that enhance the future demand for physical concerts and become more resilient for the post Covid-19 period.

Note: This is a summary of part of Jacques Kayser's Master Thesis 2020

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How the Pandemic Shed Light on the "Tactile Value" of Art and Culture

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January 2021

Photo © Bee Balogun on Unsplash

Introduction

An important lesson to be drawn from the sanitary crisis is that COVID-19 has contributed to accentuating and revealing inequalities within the cultural sector, preventing researchers from considering it as an undifferentiated whole (e.g., Comunian & England 2020). Recent studies have, for example, shown how greatly central and local governments' roles in valuing and supporting the arts differ from one country to another (e.g., Loots et al. 2021; Jeannotte 2021), as does the ability of cultural organizations to efficiently embrace digital technologies (e.g., Nobre 2020; Sgourev 2020; Feinstein 2020). A year after the pandemic outbreak in Europe, it has become clear that the endogenous characteristics of each cultural industry have led to differential treatments and revealed uneven abilities to adapt to the new operating constraints imposed by governments. The short lull experienced by most European countries between June and October 2020 – allowing art galleries, museums, theatres, opera, philharmonics, and cinema to progressively reopen under strict social distancing measures – undoubtedly gave some

vital short-term respite to the sector.[1] But this modest reopening prompted some government officials to claim that culture had been made a priority, ignoring that many cultural organizations have simply not reopened. Despite a proactive use of social media and digital technologies to maintain minimum ties with their publics, the ever-changing restrictions implemented since March 2020 have prevented them from resuming regular activities, with no foreseeable radical improvement in the short and mid-run. A crucial common feature of these hard-hit cultural organizations is, what I propose to call, their "tactile value."

"Tactile Value" as an Intrinsic Feature of Live and Mass-Events Cultural Industries

The main hurdle public authorities currently face with live and mass-events cultural industries (including concerts, live performances, festivals, and nightclubs) is their "tactile value."[2] This value has stood out within this pandemic for it is an inherent part of the performing arts that encompass organizations offering either a "standing experience" or a "seated experience" (or hybrid ones). The nature of the experience strongly relates to the very nature of the cultural products or services offered (and music genres in particular), with direct repercusions on venues' overall infrastructure (e.g., out-door vs indoor, limited or no seating capacity). While venues offering a seated experience have been able to cope with restricted attendance capacity (200 to 400 attendees with a "1 seat out of 2" scheme), other cultural organizations, less robust financially or specialized in mass-public events, resigned themselves to keeping their doors closed due to their inability to comply with such measures or to avoid worsening an already precarious financial situation. While the live music and festival industry has experimented with alternative solutions to welcome their audiences again in safe conditions (e.g., a 1,000-person music festival using quick salivary tests in Barcelona or corona-proof small-sized concerts), these organizations are still facing great uncertainty, especially regarding the 2021 festival season and long-lasting travel bans for international artists. In fact, only strict and timely political decisions, supported by financial aids, could help mitigate this uncertainty and reduce loss in workload and cash management. At this point, however, what prevents governments from making a firm economic decision is none other than the tactile value.[3]

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[1] Since the second lockdown, the situation has become particularly heterogeneous in Europe. For example, museums in Belgium have reopened since December 2020, whereas they are still closed in France and the Netherlands.

[2] Because of their (ambivalent) status and purpose, nightclubs have been the great forgotten of this pandemic. Some of them, however, offer cultural line ups by programming DJ sets and live concerts. In Brussels, the sector now benefits from financial aids ranging from 60,000 to 100,000 euros. See https://www.lalibre.be/economie/conjoncture/le-gouvernement-bruxellois-debloque-74-millions-d-euros-supplementaires-avec-des-aides-allant-jusqu-a-100-000-euros-pour-certains-independants-60097a6fd8ad5844d19f7f0e

[3] The recent cancellation of the leading music festival Glastonbury has shaken the faith of a normal festival season. See https://www.glastonburyfestivals.co.uk/a-statement-from-%C2%A7/

The notion of value, applied to the arts and culture, has extensively been discussed in cultural economics, with David Throsby's typology remaining the most widely accepted reference despite several scholarly attempts to enhance it (e.g., Klamer 1996; Throsby 2001; Hutter & Shusterman 2006; Angelini & Castellani 2018). To the best of our knowledge, the "tactile value" of art has not been proposed as such in academic literature,[4] although already used by Italian art expert Bernard Berenson in his Florentine Painters of the Renaissance (1896) to qualify "the illusion of tangibility in a painting" that stimulates the sense of touch. Applied to the performing arts, the tactile value would express the physical enjoyment of experiencing proximity with other attendees' bodies and different levels of body-to-body/skin-to-skin experience. The arts and culture are highly concerned with sensorial experience, but live music and festivals seem to be the place where the visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, and somatosensory systems come together and contribute to the overall quality of the artistic consumption experience. One can easily picture a group of music lovers waiting for hours in frontstage to see their favourite band perform while being immersed in a crowd of other festival-goers and enjoying a drink under hot or rainy weather. The satisfaction that results from connecting physically with a community sharing common interests is somewhat reminiscent of the "social value" of art, as defined by Throsby (i.e., the sense of connection with other people that emanates from an artwork), although the latter does not automatically entail physical proximity. Similarly, many art forms can be appreciated individually or collectively, without the experience being determined by the need of coming into physical contact with other fellow visitors or attendees. In fact, in cultural settings where congestion occurs, this feeling can be detrimental to the consumption experience, just as unpleasant as the experience of being in a crowded bus or store. The enjoyment deriving from the tactile value is therefore typical of some art consumption experiences and unique in many respects for it has completely vanished during the pandemic but virtually grown in importance. This makes it all the more interesting for cultural economics.[5]

Why Does Tactile Value Matter?

Tactile value can be viewed as a common denominator that explains the differential recovery process within the cultural field, revealing still underestimated types of disparity. The social density induced by tactile value conflicts with social distancing measures that have been implemented for over a year. Its specificities do not only affect cultural

[4] The notion of "Contagion effect" (Newman & Bloom, 2012), used to explain the need for art consumers to connect with an artwork touched by the artist in person, differs somewhat from tactile value, as does the notion of "feelings" (i.e., audiences' perceptions) in the valuation process of intangible cultural heritage (Heredia-Carrozia et al. 2020).

[5] In this respect, music events share some similarities with sporting events, carnivals, cultural traditions entailing dance, etc.

organizations' operating modes but also their audiences arguably made up of young people. The same audience who is the most inclined to enjoy body-to-body experiences when consuming the arts is now viewed as the generation most hard-hit by the long-lasting pandemic restrictions. In the current context, the priority given to cultural organizations less concerned with tactile value is perfectly understandable from a sanitary perspective. Nevertheless, this should not obscure the fact that young people – whose art education is a leitmotiv of most cultural policies – are somewhat left aside in the process of re-accessing culture and socializing through arts consumption, unlike older generations less inclined to attend mass-events. The main problem is that digital technologies cannot pretend to be satisfactory substitutes for tactile value (nor would VR should this technology had already gained sufficient critical mass).[6] Undoubtedly, digital technologies offer alternative ways of experiencing live events – as evidenced by Tomorrowland's Around the World online summer festival in 2020 or Travis Scott's virtual concert on Fortnite[7] – but successful virtual events often remain exceptions that only a minority within the industry can afford (e.g., De la Vega et al. 2020; Vandenberg et al. 2020). The current suspension of tactile value in cultural consumption is also likely to have undesirable effects on creative output when one thinks about the negative externalities for a band to perform in front of an empty room. Evidence of a correlation between social interactions and individual creativity has been pointed out by prior research (e.g., Perry-Smith 2006) while most artists agree that art becomes significant when experienced by an audience.

Since tactile value is the core business of many cultural organizations, its importance in the consumption of arts and culture can be viewed as an additional argument for government support. In a prior commentary paper (Radermecker 2020), I argued for a consumer-oriented approach by highlighting the urgent need for data to understand consumers' expectations and consumption patterns in times of crisis. Because these expectations and behaviors depend on cultural organizations' distinctive characteristics, collecting data on the perception of tactile value would allow researchers and practitioners to better gauge its importance among consumers. Empirical evidence is needed to understand i) the extent to which the tactile value influences demand, ii) if the experience of cultural life- and mass-events can actually happen without experiencing other attendees' physical presence, and iii) if there are substitutes to tactile value. Interestingly, a quick poll with a group of students in their early twenties suggests that they estimate the importance of the tactile value at about 75-80%, although this quite substantial ratio is certainly inflated by the

[6] Similarly, virtual contacts and social media are not proven to be perfect substitutes for real-life social contacts, with a large number of studies showing a correlation with depression symptoms.

[7] See respectively https://www.tomorrowland.com/en/around-the-world/welcome and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-gpVqMd7wE

current ban on public gatherings. More broadly, the importance attached to this value in the cultural sector may echo some empirical studies in psychology that highlight the human need of being physically in contact with other people, and how this need affects mental health (e.g., Morgan 2021; Elbrecht & Antcliff 2014). In this regard, tactile value is an additional argument for public authorities to pay greater attention to cultural organizations whose activities strongly depend on this unique value.

Conclusion

While the "tactile value" of art and culture requires further theoretical development and empirical evidence to enter prior typologies, it helps us better understand the complex and damaging situation experienced by cultural organizations specialized in live and mass events. Emphasizing the role of tactile value does not provide ready-made solutions to assist in the cultural sector's resurgence, but it explains why this industry is so badly affected by the pandemic and why a lack of tailored financial aid could be critical for many national and local organizations (both profit and non-profit). Since digital technologies are unlikely to replace and compete with this value, and because tactile experiences will certainly be the last to be enjoyed again, governments and investors should be confident in survivors' ability to recover quickly and massively once the sanitary situation permits. Moreover, significant support in this industry would indirectly benefit the younger – and future – generation of art consumers whose social and cultural life has been reduced to a minimum for twelve consecutive months. Reciprocally, cultural organizations should emphasize and promote tactile value as an essential component of the product they offer. By focusing their marketing strategies on the tangible experience attendees will be able to experiment again in a foreseeable future, they may reinforce consumers' sense of community and loyalty that have proven to be key assets in times of crisis.

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Livestreams and the virtual concert experience

Femke Vandenberg

February 2021

The Weekend Produced an Interactive Concert on TikTok

Research from the beginning

After the COVID-19 lockdown measures were put in place in March 2020, it was clear that the cultural sector would be hit hard. One of the industries that was placed in a particularly precarious position is the live music industry. Music venues, concert halls, and festivals – like all other outlets with large gatherings of people – saw their doors shut for the foreseen future. It was during these first weeks that the music industry really showed its resilience,

as artists remained playing live shows, but moved the stage from a physical to the virtual space. While this shift undoubtedly affected the music industry and its professionals, this paper focused on the highly mediated cultural participation that resulted from it.

For this research, we chose to look at live streamed electronic music concerts analyzing how audiences interact on the synchronous chat feed that accompanies them. We wanted to know, to what extent it was possible to obtain a collective "we" feeling through online participation when the audience and the artists are mediated through one's screen.

Place-based live music concerts – played in a venue or festival ground – have the potential to generate something that sociologists call collective effervescence. This is an intense positive feeling obtained from standing in a focused crowd. When a group of people are in the same space and are concentrated on the same thing, whether it be a speech by a politician, a march, or a musician, the audience becomes attuned to one another, infused with a new excitement. This can result in not only individual confidence but also feelings of solidarity among the participants. This is of course, very important during times of crisis when people are not only feeling isolated and downbeat but also need a collective effort to fight a global pandemic.

When it comes to the possibility of generating this collective emotion online, live streams have an advantage over traditional recorded music, as they happen in real-time, meaning that through chat features participants have the opportunity to forge social bonds. However, the space that people are interacting in is very different as they only have text-based language to communicate. For this paper, we analyzed the comments (n=1501) of participants of livestreamed electronic music concerts that took place in March and early April 2020, looking for signs of heightened emotional energy and new forms of solidarity.

The findings of this research reveal that while participating in a live streamed concert can enable a shared experience, the establishment of collective effervescence was less successful. One of the strongest features of livestreams is that they are happening in real-time, connecting people on a temporal dimension. Sharing a moment together can leave participants feeling like they are part of something bigger. However, the concert setting and the audience is moved to a virtual plane, meaning that the interacting individuals are to a large extent invisible to each other. Missing the small bodily cues of a physical audience makes it very hard to build up a mutual focus of attention needed for collective effervescence to occur. Live music will always act as a social conductor, whether in a virtual or physical form; it brings people together and creates a break from the mundane happenings of everyday life. Unfortunately, however, online this seems to be more of a cognitive awareness between participants rather than a renewed sense of social solidarity.

Thoughts about the future

Interestingly I am writing this nearly a year after the initial European lockdown and the time of data collection for this paper. While we are still in a cycle of lockdowns, we have seen plenty of developments in the production, distribution and consumption of music. Physical concerts made a few appearances with limited socially distanced audiences, through drive-through concerts and concerts with attendees in bubbles. However, the most popular way of experiencing live music in 2020 remained live streaming. Virtual concerts became more spectacular, requesting an entry fee. Big names such as Dua Lipa, Billie Eilish, BTS, Gorillaz, Liam Gallagher and Justin Bieber took to the stage to perform to a virtual audience. These were large productions, drawing in millions of viewers worldwide and proving very financially lucrative for the artists. Innovations saw artists such as The Weekend produce an interactive concert on TikTok, while video games (Minecraft and Fortnite) hosted concerts and festivals on their servers. In many ways, the pandemic just accelerated trends that were already occurring, as artists have been livestreaming since the dawn of web 2.0. However, the virtual sphere has always been seen as secondary to the physical one. Since March 2020 this has shifted (what happens after the pandemic remains to be seen).

The live music industry showed its creativity, learning as it went, and so did its audiences. The more media-savvy people get, the more equipped they are to use the tools of the internet to communicate. While the industry produces the virtual space for people to meet, the audience constructs the social setting. If the condition that prohibits the establishment of collective effervescence online is that viewers do not have the language tools to create a mutual focus of attention, then this is surely something that can and is being learnt. Of course, these platforms may not be as effective for everyone, however, there is no doubt that these new innovations will change the scope of the audience experience, also after the pandemic has finally run its course.

Read the full article here.

Based on research:

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14616696.2020.1818271
https://sociologie.scholasticahq.com/article/14163-balkonconcerten-lockdownsessies-en-quarantunes-muziek-als-sociale-geleider-tijdens-de-covid-19-pandemie

About the author

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Business as usual, or not quite? Some reflections from the publishing industry

Kristien Werck

April 2021

A few weeks ago, I was cleaning up a pile of paper that had been lying on my desk in our office. This may seem rather trivial, but looking at my paperwork, mostly notes about economic and sanitary government measures, I felt catapulted back into time, to the Spring of 2020. I suddenly remembered what these first few weeks of the March 2020 lockdown had felt like. They were intense and worrying, but they also provided focus and energy. There was a sudden disruption of our normal way of working, combined with a drive to keep the business going.

I am co-owner and co-director of Clavis Publishing, a privately owned publishing house specialised in children's books for children aged 0-16 years. We are based in Flanders, Belgium, and in the Netherlands, and we also distribute our books in the US. In usual times, we publish between 250 and 300 new titles a year and since we are very export-driven, we pride ourselves on being present at many international book fairs – usually one

every month. We work with 40 employees and a large pool of around 200 freelance authors and illustrators.

These past 14 months have been extremely busy, for me personally and in our publishing house, and there has not always been a lot of time to reflect on the impact of the pandemic on the publishing industry in general and our publishing house in particular. But let's try to look back anyway.

To sum up 2020, you could say it was challenging, uncertain, and educational. The Federation of European Publishers (https://fep-fee.eu/) summarised the consequences of the Covid-19 crisis for the book market in Europe in a report that resonates (One Year After: Consequences of the COVID-19 crisis on the book market - An overview of 2020). All in all, the book sector showed a lot of resilience and 2020 was difficult but not as bad as once feared or predicted. This may not be the case for all the segments of publishing, but certainly educational and children's book publishers seem to have done relatively well.

Zooming in on our own publishing house, there was an outpouring of creativity once the initial shock of the first lockdown was digested. Manuscripts poured in, resulting in a 25 to 30% increase compared with the period prior to Covid-19. Some manuscripts were about the Coronavirus, mostly trying to explain the concept of a virus or a lockdown to children, but most were not and revealed a wide variety of subjects and themes. My feeling is that stories about (emotional and physical) distance and resilience in fiction for older children and young adults might appear with some delay

Barriers were lifted when it came to working together across different countries or even continents (for example, a picture book project with an American author and a French illustrator living in the Netherlands). This trend already announced itself before the Covid-19 crisis and accelerated as a result of it.

The international book fairs were cancelled, one after the other, shifting the international rights business to digital meetings. At first a bit reluctantly - I remember some improvised digital meetings in March 2020 – but later on with more confidence, showing a willingness to not only keep the business going, but reflecting a shared humanity as well, as in *children will still need good stories and therefore, good children's books – and we intend to keep making them*.

Although it was very encouraging to see how much creativity authors, illustrators and co-workers were capable of, some more sobering observations have to be made as well. Book retailers were hit hard due to shop closures. We saw notable differences between bookstore sales in Flanders and the Netherlands – in the first lockdown the Dutch bookstores fared

better because they remained open, whereas it was the other way around in late 2020, when bookstores in Belgium were designated as ‘essential stores’. Independent booksellers fared better because of local community support, and bookstore chains suffered more. The shopping behaviour of many consumers will likely have changed permanently, shifting to digital shopping through the large online retailers. The long-term effects of the Covid-19 crisis are not yet sufficiently clear to be able to state that all parties in the book market will emerge from the crisis intact. This is the case all over the world, as some of my international publishing friends have shared their experiences.

There is also a tendency towards a ‘winner takes all’ phenomenon: consumers (but also editors, when buying rights) tend to favour the known over the unknown in times of crisis. This benefits well-known authors and popular book series. Some publishers decided to postpone debut titles and titles by lesser-known authors. Online sales tend to concentrate on bestsellers. We decided to keep our original publishing schedule intact, but it is clear that additional marketing initiatives have to be taken to support upcoming authors and illustrators.

To end on a more personal note: these past 14 months were challenging and all in all, not business as usual. Even if 2020 was, in the end (strangely enough), quite satisfactory businesswise, it is confronting to see sadness and uncertainty (sometimes bordering on fear) among the people you work with. People juggle with their emotions, and do their best to balance work and personal issues. They worry about their children and spouses. Some of them were confronted with loss. It has been a humbling experience to see how this crisis brought out the best in many people I work with. As author Jodi Picoult noted: *The human capacity for burden is like bamboo - far more flexible than you'd ever believe at first glance*.

About the author

Kristien Werck is co-owner and co-director of Clavis Publishing (Belgium and the Netherlands). She has been Assistant Professor Cultural Economics at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Live-streaming theatre for toddlers: learning in practice

Jorinde van der Velde

April 2021

Livestream EGG-Tion HERO on Set at Maaspodium. Photo: Guido Bosua.

March 27 is World Theatre Day. Each year, on that date the importance of the art form is celebrated. Let's give that a moment's thought. Theatres have been closed for most of time since March 2020 in The Netherlands and many other countries worldwide. Even at the time of writing, their doors are shut tight. Although not entirely. In some theatres the lights are switched on, the coffee machine runs and performers, technicians, directors and production crew are buzzing around. They are trying to reach their audiences through livestreams. Some of them, like Maas Theater and Dance, are even trying to stream for toddlers. But does it work for small kids too? This is what we learned so far.

Interactive theatre in Zoom

I have seen quite a few people raise an eyebrow when I tell them that we're doing theatre live streams for toddlers and preschoolers at Maas Theater and Dance. The concerns they raise make sense: "don't kids have an even smaller attention span than modern adults?", "isn't the home full of distractions?" and most importantly "would the kids even notice that it's live?". If you ask me, the answers are yes, yes and... YES! It certainly creates some challenges but with live streaming we can offer an experience that exceeds regular TV and pre-recorded streaming. How? By making it interactive. We play the performances in Zoom.

Before you raise those eyebrows even higher, I reassure you that we mute the microphones so that the call won't be hijacked by the three- and four-year-olds but it makes such a difference when they are visible. Seeing other families in a call may not be the same as sitting beside them in a theatre but it mimics the experience as closely as possible. Seeing others laugh, point and jump up in excitement is generally contagious and it enhances your own experience. Plus, the actors can react to the audience live. The screen in front of the actors alternates between showing the live stage recording and showing all the families in the call. One of the shows that uses this set-up in a clever way is 'EGG-tion HERO' (original title: 'Eitje').

Moderating Live Audience Response in Zoom. Photo: Guido Bosua.

'EGG-tion HERO' revolves around two museum attendants, guarding one particular art piece - an egg. So, of course, the egg disappears. The guards (Lisa Groothof and Dwayne Toemere) look for it everywhere they can, including the homes of the families watching. They ask all the kids to help them with their search: "Look behind you, check under the pillow, perhaps beside the couch..." And what do you know? One of the kids finds the egg in their own home and they hand it back through the camera. Afterwards, they all practice re-enacting one of the scenes together. In the audience feedback, we read that people appreciate this interactive way of live streaming: "My daughter was immersed as if she was right there with the actors. She talked back to them and almost crawled into the screen." "My daughter was definitely more involved because of the interaction. Afterwards, she kept mimicking the guards all day long".

Testing phase

For now, Maas is in a testing phase. We allow ourselves trial and error with different forms of live streaming for different ages. As a youth theatre company, we have built experience over the years in all departments from directing to marketing. As a company that live-streams theatre, we are newbies. Consequently, we have to figure out what parts of our expertise are still relevant and what parts we need to find a new approach for. We've tried Zoom with a visible audience versus a one-way broadcast with a chat; a themed take-away dinner or breakfast as an additional option; an interview versus a dance tutorial for an introduction; Zoom versus Vimeo; starting out with a Zoom session with a maximum of 50 participants, then upgrading to 100; trying out different starting times and so on. We let our creativity flow, tracking what works for us and what works for our audiences and trying to build a reputation in live streaming.

We send out a survey after each stream and check for repeated visitors in our ticketing system. Statistically speaking the response to that survey may not give us a perfectly representative sample, but in practice it gives us valuable insights into our audience nonetheless.

Attracting audiences

As for tracking what works... The number of viewers is one obvious way to measure success in live streaming. But it is not as straightforward as in the theatre, since livestream tickets are sold per view, not per viewer. So how do we measure? It helps that our toddler screenings are in Zoom, and people had their cameras on. Through a headcount, we concluded that a rough estimate of 2.5 viewers per ticket is appropriate for the toddler

shows, so for the first three shows we live streamed, we sold 200 tickets which equates to 500 viewers.

Initially we thought live streaming could be our opportunity to reach new audiences. Live streams are a very cheap way to give theatre a try; instead of buying theatre tickets for every single family member, you buy one livestream ticket in total (€5,00). However, our audience survey showed us that 96% of the families had visited a theatre at least once before the pandemic. Clearly, people with a pre-existing interest in theatre are more likely to try out a live stream like this.

Despite attracting the same audiences, ticket sales for toddler streams come with a new dynamic compared to toddler shows in the theatre building. For the first three toddler shows, 45% of the tickets were sold in the last two days. Before the pandemic, we saw this last-minute dynamic a lot more amongst the young adult audiences than the young families. It makes marketing and communication a lot more risky. It is never guaranteed that ticket sales will double again in the last two days next time. You don't want to waste any budget but you also don't want to underspend at the expense of ticket sales.

Theatre Technicians Crew or Broadcasting Crew...? Photo: Guido Bosua.

A digital future?

So what about the future? We are still finding our way, but for now it looks like live streaming theatre is here to stay, even for little kids. The toddler streams averaged an 8.2 out of 10 as a general grade of appreciation in the survey. 100% of the survey's respondents said they would recommend these live streams to others. 36% said they would like to alternate between visiting a theatre and watching live streamed theatre from home when theatres open again. Just like many employers are planning to alternate the actual office with the home office, for theatres it might be the dynamic of the future to alternate between hosting shows in the theatre and hosting shows online. Because people crave the realness of company and sharing experiences, but also appreciate the comfort of our own homes. As a theatre, we will always value the shared live experience highly. But we also value creativity and connecting to our audience in innovative ways.

Maas Theater and Dance makes theatre- and dance experiences for children, teenagers, young adults and their family and friends. The company performs throughout The Netherlands and internationally. Their theatre building, Maaspodium, programs a variety of performing arts in addition to their own productions. For more information about Maas, please visit www.maastd.nl.

About the author

Jorinde van der Velde holds a Master diploma Arts and Culture Studies (Cultural Economics & Entrepreneurship) from Erasmus University (2017-2018) and works in marketing and communication for the Rotterdam-based theatre Maaspodium. Feel free to get in touch! Send a response or a question through email (jorindevandervelde@gmail.com) or through LinkedIn (linkedin.com/in/jorindevandervelde).

Chapter 2: Event Management

Introduction: Event management and the challenge of giving new meaning to spaces

Carolina Dalla Chiesa

June 2021

We first think of events as happenings or gatherings where people connect in timely restrictions. But before events are filled with people and agendas, they are typically the representation of a moment in space and time designed to convey a specific message. As such, events require management and organisation in order to lay the grounds for happenings to take place in meaningful ways. In pandemic times, this is a particularly difficult endeavor as not only do event managers have to convey safety measures, they also have to overcome the challenges of re-establishing the ways we connect with people in such spaces. After this year, we have become more conscious of what was once relatively normal: greeting, talking closer to someone else, hugging, and overall interacting with others in confined spaces. Event management, therefore, is now different from before as we became aware of basic infrastructural problems: how to make people connect in the absence of physical presence? It unfolds the challenges of rediscovering artistic and human connections where, in principle, the pandemic has made it absent.

This series of corona chronicles demonstrates the challenges of managing events during the pandemic and how each experience has been adapted to this new situation. This sudden change also brings notable opportunities for new artistic languages to emerge, new forms of event management, new festivals, and other online or offline opportunities unexplored to date. In a way, the challenge of event management in the current climate is that, more than ever, uncertainty is at the core of artistic production making the “event” a more diffused, multi-temporal experience.

Events in spaces

Spaces are receptacles - as in Plato’s definition of Khora whereby an interval with no particular form represents the state of non-being (Theodorum, 1997). It is hard to think of spaces as non-being, but the pandemic interestingly made this clear to us. Without people, some spaces became a non-being, an interval with no particular meaning. After all, what is the meaning of spaces when no one is around?

This is precisely the point of departure in the text and video created by Erik Vermunt, Yannick van Wijk and Cinzia Kaufmann whereby Erasmus' spaces are subject to a re-interpretation. The authors propose a re-discovery of meaning in spaces emptied by the pandemic. Just as in Khora, "everything passes but nothing remains" - the rediscovery of spaces proposed by the authors is also about a transitory zone as, ultimately, the pandemic will pass and meanings will change with the arrival of new inhabitants.

In Martijn Mulder's text, we also observe that, even when the pandemic ceases, it might leave marks of depression, loneliness, and nostalgia. The bottom line, the more vibrant the urban environment is, the more affected citizens will be when cultural supply decreases. A particular aspect of being a Rotterdammer (even more, a clubber) is the profusion of Rotterdam's nightlife. But, what is the meaning of nightlife without people? This meaning is now constructed in the absence of social connection. As such, it is extremely considerate of event managers to find alternatives in the restrictions of the pandemic.

The making of an alternative space

In the article written by Kathryn Moy, we get access to a thoughtful interview with Joost Maaskant, the creator of Pleinbioscoop in Rotterdam who has proposed a series of dispersed visual interventions in the city. As a replacement to the restrictions of an open-air cinema, Joost saw the opportunity of bringing art to billboards. Interestingly, it is the pandemic that has inspired, through the need to adapt quickly in a time of uncertainty, the emergence of new art installations. As much as event managers typically deal with uncertainty, the shift to a diffused form of event brings about new creative artistic languages. This article invites us to view festivals in the city of Rotterdam through the eyes of one of the most renowned event managers in the city.

Finding connections in a ruled space

The portrait of pandemic events discussed by Nina te Velde, on the other hand, shows a more practical outlook on how to manage a small dance festival under covid measures. What the author offers us is a rich description of how simple acts, that we once saw as normal, are now somewhat unusual. More than that, it demonstrates how it is to inhabit a space temporarily, under several constraints, and yet conveying emotions to both performers and the audience. Ultimately, we are all longing to inhabit collective spaces once more.

Hoei Lien describes the making of the Grachtenfestival from the perspective of a violinist and an artistic programmer. In this case, a similar context applies whereby, despite the

existence of measures, musicians manage to provide a fruitful experience to the audience and themselves. In both cases, the intangible benefits of these events strongly impact performers as a way to rediscover the act of playing in front of an audience after a gap. Creating events is also about conveying connections under a ruled space, even when these spaces are over-regulated with sanitary measurements.

Learning event management

Lastly, it is vital to recognise how we transfer these experiences in the form of teaching and educational tools. It is with this outlook that Frans Brouwer discusses the creation of a Summer Academy in Cultural Entrepreneurship and Leadership in which participants apply cultural entrepreneurship tools to concrete cases and examples. By bringing the experiences of different countries (specifically placed within the east-west transition), students and lecturers will share knowledge on the various ways to manage events and, ultimately, about being entrepreneurs. Whether this is about the context of the pandemic or "normality", sharing knowledge seems to be the best way to create new meanings about our experiences.

Conclusions

More than ever, cultural management is not given. With so much change, it's important not to take event management and cultural organisations for granted. We might always remember the current moment, in which gatherings are suspended and our dearest forms of social connection diminished. Under these circumstances, one can attempt to create spaces for meaningful exchange where creators and the public meet with alternative methods. It is also possible to rediscover meaning in empty environments where we are confronted with absence instead. I intend to end this introduction with a positive tone about how these uncertain times bring us closer to building events as hubs for experimentation, instead of certitude: a reasoning very close to an entrepreneurial spirit.

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About the author

Carolina Dalla Chiesa is a Lecturer at the Arts and Culture Department (Erasmus University Rotterdam) where she teaches Economics of Cultural Industries and develops her research on funding models for the arts. More information on the author's profile: www.carolinadallachiesa.com

Measuring temperatures and keeping your distance, the future of corona-proof events?

Nina te Velde

September 2020

Nina te Velde Recounts her Experience of Event Managing a Mini Dance Festival in a Covid Restricted Netherlands

A few weeks ago, I had my first work-related appointment in months. That is, the work I used to do as an event manager before Corona knocked over all the large-scale events and festivals of 2020 and wiped out the cultural scene as we know it. A lot of employed and freelance workers lost their jobs and were forced to do other work. Instead of working my ass off all summer, I am casually working as a hostess and as a bartender. I feel blessed to be one of the lucky few who found a job.

But this is not what I want to tell you about. I want to tell you about one of the few electronic dance music (mini-)festivals this summer that was granted a permit. The safety

plan for this small-scale festival, that I co-wrote, was in order. The daytime festival was allowed to go ahead. My role during the day was to support the Head of Production with everything she did not have the time for. For example, welcoming and briefing the First Aid workers, assigning the walkie-talkies, assisting the entertainers and keeping an eye on the artist, guest and crew lists as they arrived. In fact, in this position, you are the point of contact for everyone with questions. Which you have to solve.

A maximum of 250 people was admitted, otherwise, people had to sit down according to the current national regulations. The whole area was plastered with big arrows telling people where to walk and, especially, where not to walk. Disinfectant dispensers were all around. Big squares indicated where you could dance and after scanning the corresponding QR-code, one of the bartenders came running towards you with drinks. Getting your drinks at the bar was not permitted as this could form queues.

Everyone's temperature was being measured at the entrance. If your body temperature was higher than normal, the First Aid workers put a mask on you and you were not allowed to enter. Visitor, artist, crew or guest - everyone was measured. One of the stage managers had a small increase in temperature, with a little panic attack as a result. Fortunately, it turned out to be a false alarm. Everyone else (this means 250 others!) were ready to have a good old-fashioned festival day.

So, here we go. One of the areas was particularly popular, which resulted in a small crowd, with more and more people coming in. So now what? Asking people to keep their distance works a few times, but we had to make a more profound decision. With cameras and phones taking photos and videos all the time, the organisation has to be careful. No one wants to be featured in the newspapers with a headline like "New corona outbreak during festival". We separated the area from the rest of the festival, by closing off its entrance. Luckily, our team consisted of thirteen security hosts which made this easy. Normally for a crowd this small, a minimum of two security hosts is mandatory. You can imagine the costs of all of this.

The day continued. The sun broke through, the alcohol flowed freely, people were smiling, jumping, dancing. As if the locked down energy from the past few months was finally released. I felt relieved to see people this happy again. One police officer, standing on the sidelines, oversaw the party. I saw one of the security hosts asking a kissing couple politely and with a smile: "Please, do this at home". The couple laughed and let go of each other.

The last hour is always the most exciting, but also the most dangerous. Alcohol has done its job, slowly but certainly, people forget about the rules and regulations. A relief for them,

but a nightmare for us. I asked the DJ to remind the crowd, one more time, to keep their distance from each other. He did this with some flair: “Guys, if you want to continue partying, spread your arms! Are you touching your neighbour? Take a step back! Spin around!”. I can guarantee, seeing eighty cheerful people with their arms spread wide, spinning around to take up more space. It was the highlight of my day.

At six pm, the last song ended. The visitors left, probably off to afterparties we were not responsible for. We received multiple big thank yous from the festival crowd. They were so happy that they got the chance to have a good day. One of the artists cried because he was so happy to perform for a dancing crowd again.

Will this be the future of events? Measuring temperatures? Following arrows and standing in big squares waving at each other? I do not know. Did everyone have a good time? Definitely.

About the author

Nina te Velde holds a Master diploma Arts and Culture Studies (Cultural Economics & Entrepreneurship) from Erasmus University (2017-2018).

Making Space, Checking in With the Cultural Locale of Rotterdam:

Kathryn Moy

October 2020

**Photos Courtesy of Joost Maaskant & Pleinbioscoop*

The past year's events stripped us from direct access to many of the things we sought for comfort. To gather insights into the pandemic's impact on arts and culture, I chatted with Joost Maaskant, a cultural entrepreneur based in Rotterdam via Zoom. After many years of working in festival organisation in Rotterdam, Maaskant used the connections he accumulated within the field to branch out. He established his own organisation, wanting to try something new. Years of working in the same organisation left him in a routine with little room to try new things. Festival organisations tend to get bogged down due to scheduling and seasonal timing. Starting new events is difficult due to time constraints, limited resources and gaining the trust of the municipality for funding. Maaskant told me, "If you're doing a festival for five years, the first two years are the best because it's new and you're creative. And then you find yourself with the problem that you are saying to yourself again, 'I tried that before', and then you have to leave. You have to start something new. So,

the Corona period for me was... a good thing, because I started a lot of new things. I worked with new people."

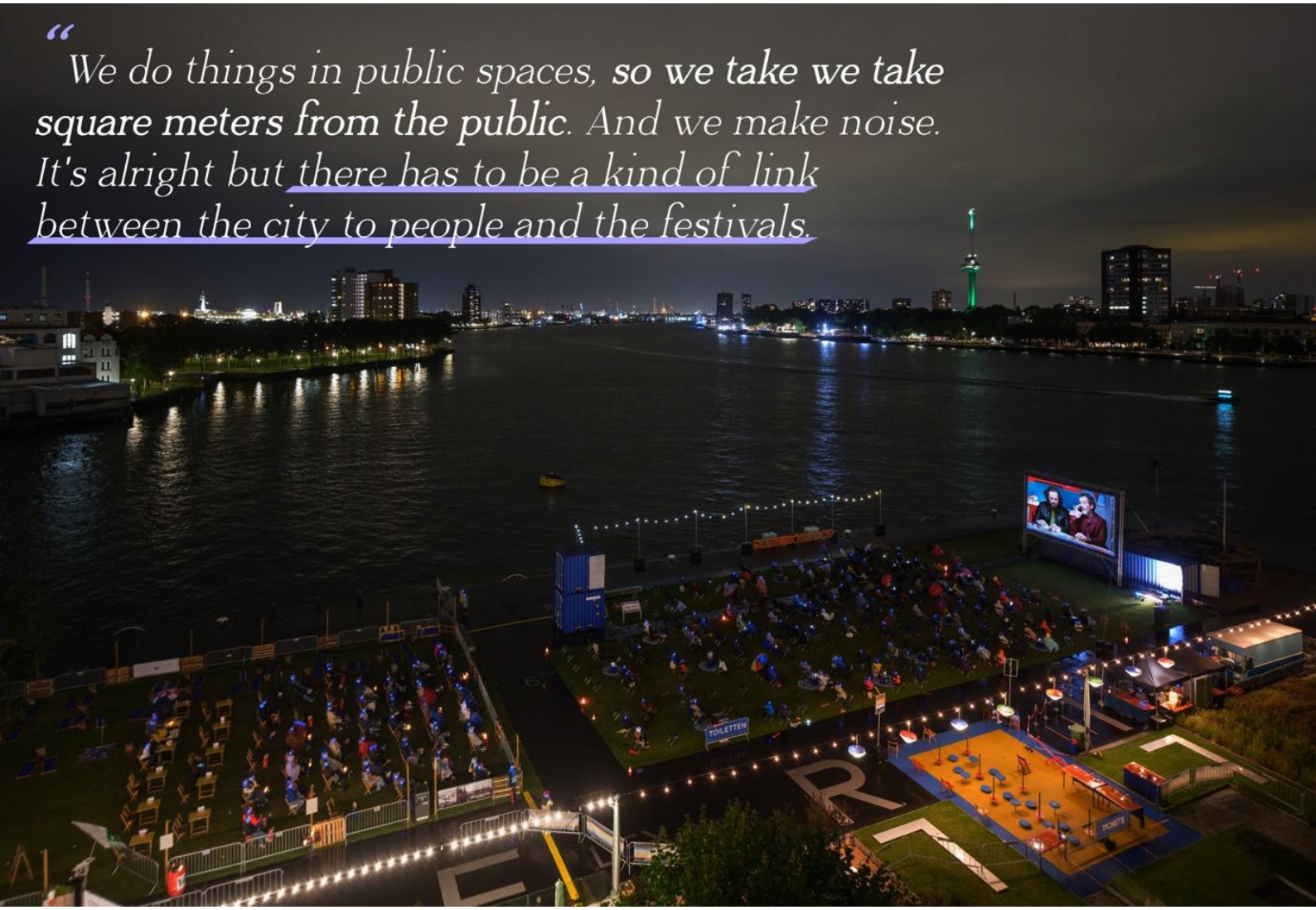
Maaskant is now the Project Manager for Rotterdam's Pleinbioscoop, an open-air cinema that used to accommodate over 3000 attendants every night. Operating for 33 years, the cinema has made its way around Rotterdam from Schouwburgplein to Museumpark, finding the best location in the heart of the city. Due to social distancing and space limitations, the cinema has had to cut its seats down to 300, stifling profitability and demanding more government support.

With covid-19 restrictions in place, Maaskrant took the opportunity to explore other projects. As the city was in lockdown he organised an initiative to revitalize abandoned billboards and fill them with over 400 pieces of art. Billboards throughout the west of Rotterdam added a splash of colour to the quieter streets. Commissioned artists were able to show off their work when galleries and exhibitions were no longer at their disposal.

Source: Publieke Werken Making Space In Rotterdam

Following the success of the installations, Maaskant decided to turn the project into a publication to continue bringing art to the people.

Maaskrant went on to reflect on the current situation where new regulations can drop at a moment's notice, forcing cultural entrepreneurs to be more reactive. Being quick to move has forced cultural organisations, including Pleinbioscoop, to take advantage of public space. He discovered an opening in Prins Alexander's Pavillon and moved quickly to develop an art installation for the space. Despite his familiarity with and eagerness to work in local spaces, Maaskrant is aware of his position in imposing things on local people that may detract from their needs.



*Photos Courtesy of Joost Maaskant & Pleinbioscoop

"We do things in public spaces, so we take square meters from the public. And we make noise. It's alright, but there has to be a kind of link between the city to people and the festivals."

Maaskrant was keen to point out the push-and-pull struggles of events in Rotterdam, a city that has an, almost, oversaturation of festivals. While Rotterdam positions itself as a part of the Netherlands with ample space and creative freedom, the city also has to consider the impact on local people when it takes over public spaces and creates too much noise. Opportunities for new ideas from those who embody Rotterdam are limited. Enabling more opportunities comes with a cost. Maaskant calls for a balance of maintaining previous events while allowing room for new ones without overwhelming and overtaking Rotterdam's integrity.

From Maaskrant's perspective, as festivals continue to grow and develop, they become more commercial and neglect the local context. The pandemic forces the city to reflect upon its local inhabitants' values and needs and a reevaluation of what the space of Rotterdam means. Lockdowns and reduced foot traffic shift the focus back to the locals, making them confront their surroundings. Despite acknowledging the profitability of larger events, Maaskrant admits his preference for smaller ones and how a cosier feeling helps local people reconnect without attracting ‘visitors’. Rotterdam now has the opportunity to let the locals interact with each other in intimate settings while reconnecting with their city and practice social distancing.

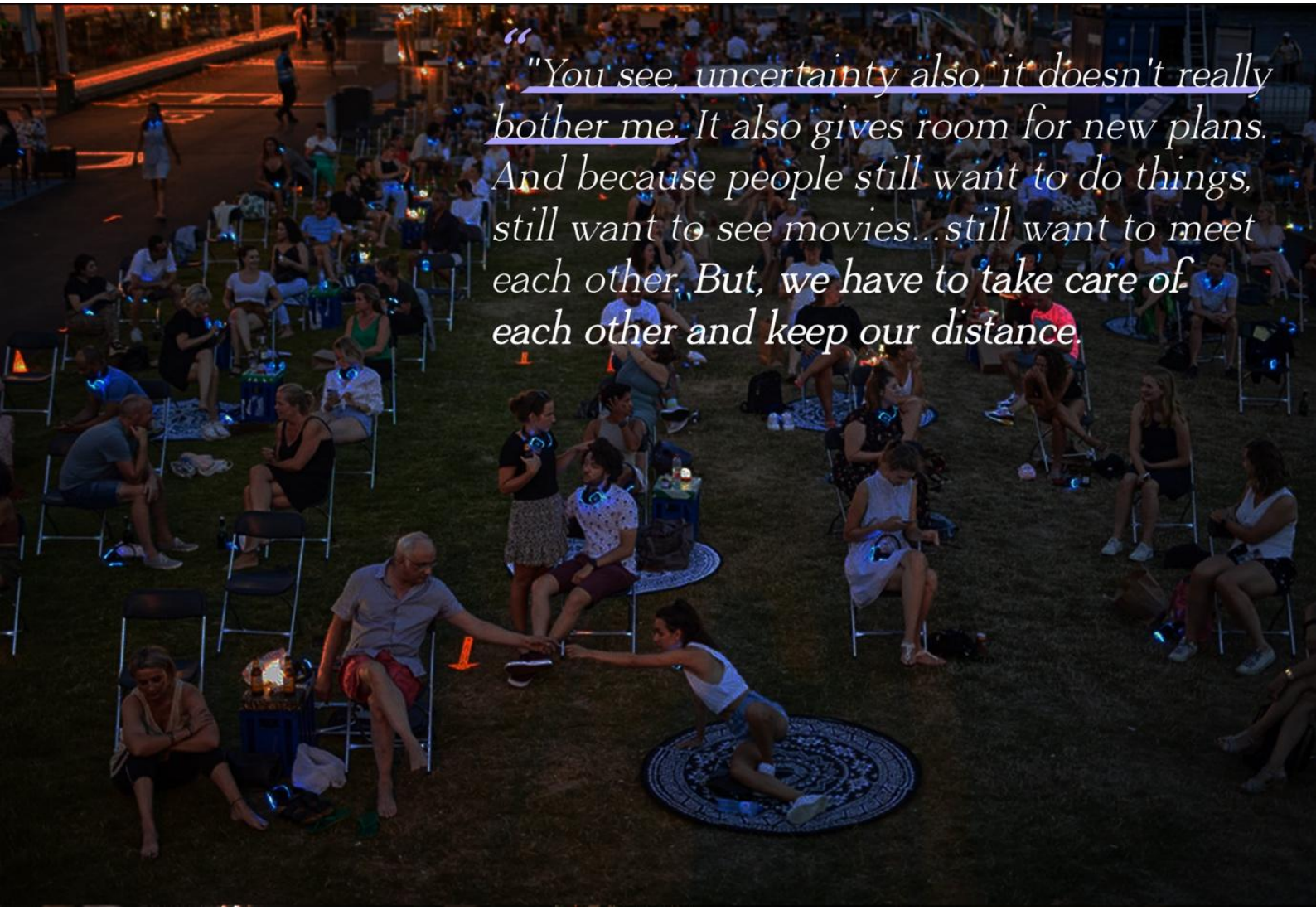
Despite the reduced number of festivals and cultural events in Rotterdam, Maaskrant is optimistic. Rather than mourning the things he misses about larger festivals, he believes that the pandemic provides new opportunities and allows inhabitants to check in with themselves, their surroundings and others in their surroundings.

"You see, uncertainty also, it doesn't really bother me. It also gives room for new plans. And because people still want to do things, still want to see movies…still want to meet each other. But, we have to take care of each other and keep our distance.”

From Maaskrant's perspective, we have lost the idea of looking at our location and what it means to the people who inhabit it. Our surroundings, in these unusual circumstances, force us to reassess our outlets for comfort when all else is stripped away. Space activated through arts and culture creates new meaning, yet these activities should reflect the local context. Connecting the dots through arts and culture within a city is how we can make new meaningful connections. Through art, people find comfort in understanding themselves, each other and the space they occupy.

Wrapping up our conversation, Maaskrant lit up a cigarette, almost forgetting we were recording over Zoom. In a way, it was comforting, doing something so familiar under unusual circumstances through the façade of the internet. He turned the conversation on

us, asking how we were doing during this time, as we are both international students away from our homes and in a foreign country during the entirety of lockdown. I explained how it's been almost cruel that, just as I was just finding my place in Rotterdam, we were forced into lockdown. He encouraged us to each find a connection to Rotterdam, even with limited interactions. Maaskant's spirit is needed in pandemics--remaining optimistic, embracing uncertainty whilst still checking in with each other.



*Photos Courtesy of Joost Maaskant & Pleinbioscoop

As we signed off, he mentioned his next project—creating stickers for Rotterdam's locals to put in the windows. The stickers will give passers by a little clue about the person inside.

He smiled and asked, "Want to join in?"

We'd love to, Joost.

About the author

Kathryn Moy is a designer and a Master student in Arts and Culture Studies (Cultural Economics & Entrepreneurship) from Erasmus University (2020-2021).

Keep talking to keep events happening

Hoei Lien The

November 2020

On March 13, 2020, the prime minister of the Netherlands held a press conference which changed everything. He urged that everyone who could work from home, should not go to their office until further notice. Right after this press conference, my phone was constantly lighting up with messages and emails. These were cancellations of all the concerts and gigs that were planned for March and April. At the Grachtenfestival office, we said goodbye, not knowing when we would see each other in person again. The time that followed was a rollercoaster of uncertainty, constant changes and a great effort to be as creative as possible.

One thing that I have learned from these last few months is that flexibility is the most important ingredient to survive in these current times.

I was lucky enough to take part in the very first official concert with an audience since the lockdown in the Netherlands. This concert was with Sinfonia Rotterdam and took place on

5 June 2020. A maximum of thirty people on stage and a maximum of thirty audience members were allowed in so that the one point five-meter rule could be adhered to. In the planning, the musical pieces on the programme changed five times. This concert was initially scheduled for May with musicians from abroad, including some wind instrument players. At that time, the borders were officially closed to all foreigners and due to the heightened risk of spreading more aerosols via wind instruments, wind players were not allowed to perform. We ended up playing a programme that consisted of: a string orchestra piece by Dvořak; a Mozart piano concerto with string orchestra accompaniment and an iconic string orchestra transcription of a piece by Schubert. What was new was that each musician had their own music stand and that we had to keep 1.5 meters apart. At every entrance, there was a pump of disinfectant hand gel. One remarkable thing that I noticed during the rehearsals is that simple things, like borrowing a colleague's pencil, was not allowed. Most musicians were afraid of spreading the virus. In the end, the result was a beautiful concert with a live stream that I will not easily forget. It was such a joy to be on stage with other musicians again!

Fast forward a few weeks to mid-July to the other side of the curtain, namely the organisational side at the Grachtenfestival. We were about to kick off the 23rd edition of the summer music festival. Through making the necessary changes, I am proud that we still managed to present an exciting line-up of artists in interesting concert locations.

The festival took place in mid-August when we were lucky to have a little window during the summer when coronavirus restrictions eased. Even though our whole team prepared for a corona proof festival, we were still nervous about what it would be like. We knew that the press would be closely watching us. Halfway through the festival, we could finally breathe a little bit because we got positive reviews about how we managed with all the corona measurements considered. Both artists and audiences expressed that they felt safe during the festival. For many musicians, this festival was the first opportunity to play live since the lockdown in March.

One important thing that both Sinfonia Rotterdam and the Grachtenfestival have in common, is the fact that they communicate well with their staff, artists and their audience. As long as an organisation keeps everyone well informed, the willingness to participate will not be affected negatively. In uncertain times, it is a priority to keep the trust of all stakeholders, as we are all dependent on each other. In general, people feel safer when they are better informed.

An important part of information sharing is a clear protocol for performances. That way, staff, artists and audiences are prepared.

At the Grachtenfestival, we have learned a great deal from observing others, especially in the restaurant and airline industries. With the current safety measurements, efficiency is challenging. A few examples: placing disinfectant alcohol hand gel at the entrance of every venue, asking people not to use the toilet unless it is an emergency, planning walking directions for each venue, having more staff to direct audiences to their seats and the usage of time slots. My colleagues even tested which disinfecting gel dissolved the fastest because sticky disinfectant hand gel might slow down audience movement. We needed a lot more volunteers to direct people to their places, answer questions and make sure that audience members felt confident. We also needed double the amount of time to prepare and clean everything. Consequently, this year, we could only realise half our usual number of concerts.

The positive side of this situation was that tickets sold fast. People were longing for live concerts and were aware that tickets were scarce. These times were challenging, that is for sure, but it was still possible to organise concerts. We had to get used to the new normal with more safety measurements. This costs more time and manpower, which means that the cultural sector needs more financial resources.

In these difficult times, we need lots of creativity, flexibility and more money. The most important thing is to avoid information asymmetry as much as possible because trust is very important. You can only gain and/or keep trust when you keep people informed.

About the author

Hoei Lien The is a violinist and has been an artistic programmer at the Grachtenfestival. She holds a Master diploma Arts and Culture Studies (Cultural Economics & Entrepreneurship) from Erasmus University (2019-2020) and currently prepares to become a professional radio presenter.

Missing the Masses: responses to the lack of nightlife activities during the pandemic

Martijn Mulder

February 2021

Cafe Bonaparte, Rotterdam (Photo by Vera Bos)

Due to the Covid-pandemic, all Dutch nightlife activities have been closed since March 2020. The lack of nightclubbing, dancing, drinking and other forms of uninhibited behaviour has had a huge impact on both the social and mental lives of nightlife visitors. This research, on the effects of this lockdown, affirms the social and mental relevance of the nightlife economy. Going out is not just fun, it's a basic need in the lives of many.

The city of Rotterdam is a vibrant Dutch city with a characteristic identity. It has, for a long time, been Europe's most important port city, resulting in a very international, working-class and straightforward atmosphere. After the destruction of the second world war, the city was resurrected as a modern, innovative and open-minded place. It also has a remarkable nightlife history: from a vibrant jazz scene in the 1920s and 1930s to the world-famous gabber house scene in the 1990s and its current underground scenes in hip-hop, indie and metal music. However, the city's nightlife has been subject to debate in recentyears. Nightclubs have had to close their doors and new initiatives have struggled to get established. This led to a nightlife demonstration in March 2019 and the subsequent foundation of N8W8 Rotterdam (Nightwatch Rotterdam) in January 2020. And then came the pandemic. The Dutch night-time economy was shut down in mid-March 2020 and has remained closed to this date. Together with festivals and live entertainment, the nightlife economy is among the worst affected sectors during the current crisis. Regular bars, restaurants and cultural venues in The Netherlands were allowed to reopen (under strict regulations and with lower capacity) between June and October 2020, but this didn't include nightclubs. Both the pre-pandemic discontent about Rotterdam nightlife and the lockdown, support the need for insights into the needs and experiences of nightlife visitors. In 2021 the municipality of Rotterdam plans to develop a new policy vision for the hospitality and nightlife industry. This research project was initiated, in support of this vision, to better understand the effects of the lack of nightlife activities on its visitors.

In cooperation with several stakeholders (e.g. Municipality of Rotterdam, N8W8) the research team – consisting of Martijn Mulder (senior lecturer in leisure, events and attractive cities) and a group of students from the minor City-branding, Rotterdam University – designed a survey to measure (1) the night visitor's opinion about the nightlife in Rotterdam before the pandemic, (2) the effects of the lockdown of the nightlife during the pandemic and (3) their ideas and dreams about 'the night' in the near future. The online survey opened on 23 November and was closed on 7 December, achieving a net number of 524 respondents. The sample was relatively evenly distributed across gender, economic position (employed vs. studying) and residency (inhabitant vs. visitor). The sample shows a slight overrepresentation of younger (18-24) and higher educated (university) respondents. During the period of the survey, there was a partial lockdown in The Netherlands: bars and restaurants were closed and selling alcohol after 8 pm was prohibited. Shops were open and there was no curfew. This contribution will focus on the results concerning the second part of the survey: the effects of the lockdown.

Fig. 1 - To what extent do you miss different elements of the nightlife in Rotterdam during the lockdown?

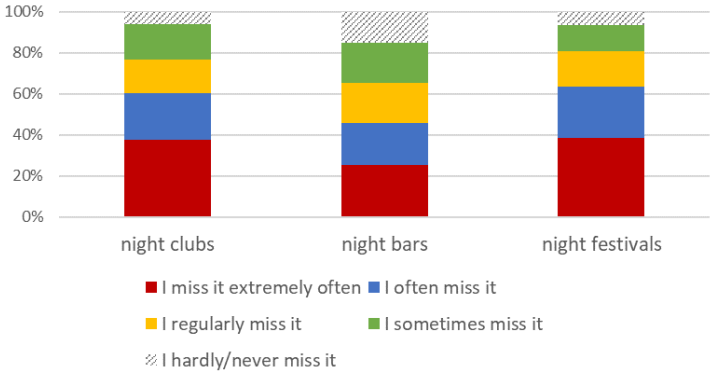
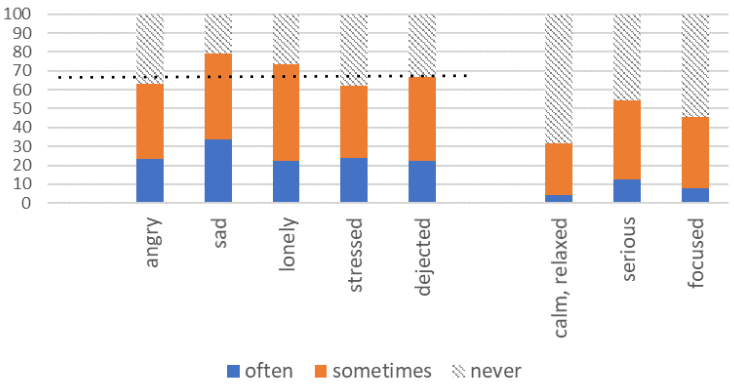


Fig. 2 - To what extent do you experience these emotions or moods as a direct result of the lack of nightlife activities?



The vast majority of the participants were regular nightlife visitors. Therefore, it's not a surprise that visiting nightclubs and events have been missed to a large extent (see fig. 1). Over 90% miss going out to a greater or smaller extent. 60% of all respondents state that they miss going to a club or nighttime event often or even extremely often. We also asked respondents to formulate what they miss most about the lack of nightlife. The input has been coded and divided into themes. The themes could be categorised into three main groups, corresponding to the existing literature on cultural behaviour: personal factors, social factors and factors related to the cultural supply itself. It's the social element that people miss most rather than the supply of night culture itself or the individual sensation of escapism. This is not so much about missing one's friends ("I still see my friends, even during lockdown", as stated by several respondents) but the chance to meet other people and/or people from different backgrounds. This is also about missing the immersive element of blending in with the crowd. Social bonding and serendipity were mentioned the most by far, followed by elements such as dancing; having a good time with friends; personal aspects such as relaxation and escapism and the cultural aspect of enjoying the (loud) music ("feel the bass").

We also asked the participants about their mental responses to the closure of nighttime activities, based on eight different feelings, five with negative and three with positive connotations. Figure 2 shows that sadness and loneliness have been experienced with the lack of nightlife by about three out of four participants. Two out of three have feelings of dejection or even depression. We argue that it is likely that this share has increased as a result of stricter regulations (full lockdown, curfew) that were implemented after the survey was conducted. To find out if these feelings of missing out and these negative mental effects have led to more subversive behaviour, we asked participants whether they have visited illegal parties/raves during the nightlife lockdown. Almost 30% of all participants have visited illegal gatherings, but more than half of these had already

attended them before the pandemic. Another 20% of participants, who haven't been to an illegal party, state that they are considering doing so if the lockdown continues.

We argue that the current pandemic and the resulting lockdown has proved the importance of nightlife activities for a city that wants to be mentally and socially healthy. Nightclubs, late-night bars and dance events should not just be regarded as sources of nuisance and subversive behaviour but as an essential sanctuary in (young) people's lives. Nightlife is for many, especially young people, the place where social interaction, discovery and interaction takes place. It is the place where individuals can be themselves, where they can experiment and escape the pressures of everyday life. Any city should cherish that

About the author

Martijn Mulder Senior is a Lecturer in leisure, events and attractive cities at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences. He wrote this contribution in cooperation with students from the course City Branding at this university.

This Must Be The Place

Cinzia Kaufmann, Erik Vermunt, and Yannick van Wijk

April 2021

Still From Short Film: This Must Be the Place

In times where coming together seems out of place - how must all those abandoned places feel?

Concerned with the concept of placemaking and the active inclusion of artists from diverse artistic disciplines, This Must Be The Place is a short film about the rediscovery of a place's meaning.

When people come to places, they give and cultivate meaning. The process of placemaking describes this transformation from a space to a place. If a place becomes void of people, it enters an existential crisis. What does it still mean?

With the now-empty state of many places, This Must Be The Place addresses this lost meaning and embarks on a discovery tour - re-interpreting and sharing impressions by means of artistic intervention. It aims to both acknowledge the importance of place as well as empowering us towards realising our capacity to (re-)define what places can mean. Within our course of Applied Cultural Entrepreneurship, we were challenged to transform

theory into practice. Despite the restrictive circumstances and with an entrepreneurial mindset, we decided to make a short film set at Erasmus University. In close exchange with a broad variety of contributors and stakeholders, a rich and multi-faceted artistic experimentation was staged and filmed on the campus.

Conventional purposes are challenged, original functions questioned and new atmospheres created.

A redefinition of meaning through artistic creations and interpretation is brought to viewers regardless of their location.

Enjoy the discovery,

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWoKlJcwDCY

Film Shooting Day: 23rd of March 2021

About the authors

Cinzia Kaufmann, Erik Vermunt and Yannick van Wijk are Master students in Arts and Culture Studies (Cultural Economics & Entrepreneurship) from Erasmus University (2020-2021).

Entrepreneurship and leadership in COVID time: a kick in the butt

Frans Brouwer

June 2021

Entrepreneurship is fuelled by creativity, innovation, alertness and risk-taking; realising dreams which you assumed to be impossible;-through convincing communication and creating sustainability. Joseph Schumpeter characterised entrepreneurship with the term 'creative destruction' and Pippi Langström expressed it by saying: "I have never done this before, so I think I can do it."

To our surprise, many things we assumed to be impossible or difficult to realise before the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020 suddenly proved feasible. How come? I think entrepreneurship needs a kick in the butt.-This small and nasty virus, the cause of so much suffering and sorrow worldwide, has pushed us to rethink. Reflection results in new plans and the mobilisation of innovation to conquer the virus' consequences. This has been the case in the hard-hit cultural sector. With the enormous risks already present (the virus), we now apply creativity, alertness, conviction, and many other entrepreneurial features in one bundle at a rapid pace. So many entrepreneurial initiatives have emerged: online education and performances, live-streams, placemaking, inspiration to visual arts, development of different mindsets… You name it and you'll find plenty of examples of rapid innovation performed by artists, IT technicians and cultural managers. These Chronicles are full of it. Cultural economists feel closer to practice than ever and come up

with practical ideas based on (new) theories to diminish suffering from the virus and increase new incentives to culture, bringing meaning to life. In this way we have suddenly landed in a super active research world, where simple and clever ideas are transformed into realistic forms and solutions, leading to slow-moving improvement.

Such slow-moving developments are taking place in the 22 European countries (from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to Ukraine, Russia and the Baltic countries) that were governed by communist ideologies for decades in the 20th century. Since independence in the 1990's, they have called themselves 'countries in transition'. Transitioning from a strong centralized governmental system to democratic and capitalistic economies; from strongly politicised bureaucracies with a top-down approach to culture; state control and hardly any or no space for the private sector. Moving away from the principle that culture serves politics. Recently, many of these countries celebrated 30 years of independence. They still call themselves 'in transition' because they find the process of change has not yet been 'completed'. Here and there, a paradox development occurs: whilst intending to create an apolitical cultural policy, striving for a paradigm shift from 'official culture' to 'public culture', a politicised cultural policy is sometimes realised (Vojtíšková & Lorencová, 2015).

I myself come from the Netherlands and live in a transition country, Slovenia, for a substantial part of the year. I am regularly confronted with remnants of the former socialistic bureaucracy, such as fatalism, passivism, fear of, and at the same time, belief in public authorities. These combine with the considered opinion that the fight against corruption is in vain. Through my lectures in Rotterdam and Riga I meet a rich representation of students from transition countries who are – consciously or unconsciously – interested in possibilities of implementing West European cultural policy tools, helped by their vision of globalization and digitization. In this process of transition, it is important not to forget that they can not only 'import' from the Western part of Europe, but that they can also bring their rich cultural heritage from their homeland with them, This is evidenced in high quality literature, performing and visual arts and also their deeply-rooted tradition of reading and of going to the theatre. Such phenomena could benefit West European countries. Moreover, many transition countries spend a higher GDP percentage on culture.

With this regular confrontation between West and East, especially in corona time, I wondered whether the entrepreneurial features of COVID-19 could also have a catalysing effect on the transition process in that part of Europe that we 'from the West' have so many traditions in common with. I am triggered by the question "what could the West learn from

the East?" Transition does not flow from one side only and an understanding attitude towards each other's ways of doing could grow.

This question prompted me to start an online Summer Academy in Cultural Entrepreneurship & Leadership designed for professionals and advanced students in the cultural sector from European transition countries. The first edition will take place as a collaboration between the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication (ESHCC) in Rotterdam and the School of Economics and Business at Ljubljana University (SEB LU). The format, developed and to be presented by lecturers mainly from ESHCC and SEB LU, could translate to collaborations with other universities later on. The goal is to empower people, studying or working in the cultural sector in European countries of transition, with cultural leadership and entrepreneurial tools. Artists, staff members of cultural organisations, independent workers, master students of arts & culture, economics and business administration will be selected to fill the 28 available slots. With supervision from the lecturers, participants will develop their own project, based on challenges from their country. Through interactive communication, lecturers and participants will share each other's knowledge, experiences and skills. The lecturers will help participants develop their leadership and entrepreneurial tools and apply them to the participants' own country's cultural context, using economic concepts to solve real world problems. The main domains to be covered are performing arts, museums, cultural heritage, cultural tourism, fashion and European subsidies.The planned date for the summer academy was June 21 but it was then society started to open up again. A number of academy attendees had clearly had enough of sitting in front of screens all day and were being called back to reopening their organisations. For this reason we were obliged to postpone. The Schools in Rotterdam and Ljubljana are working with the participants to find ideal new dates later this year. We have learned that corona is a capricious virus: it still has the power to disrupt the best laid plans.

The world of entrepreneurship is a world of transition, accelerating a period of reflection and development. Things that were not possible before, now appear to be so. Entrepreneurship and leadership at its best. With this perspective we hope cultural influencers from East and West can learn from each other during this academy, and rapidly develop new formats. In which case, the tragic COVID-19 pandemic can have a positive catalytic effect on the rapprochement of different governmental and societal approaches to culture. Transition on both sides evidencing the efficacy of cultural entrepreneurship.

https://www.cpoef.si/en/open-programs/autumn-academy-cultural-entrepreneurship-leadership/

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About the author

Frans Brouwer is currently lecturing in cultural economics and entrepreneurship at the Erasmus School of History, Culture & Communication in Rotterdam and the Latvian Academy of Culture / Technical University in Riga.

Chapter 3: Organisations

Introduction
Time will tell

Marianne van de Velde

May 2021

As I write this, the Dutch cultural sector is about to reopen after months of lockdown. A sigh of relief went through the sector when the scaling down of restrictions was announced. Organisations and entrepreneurs are preparing for a new start. It is estimated that, by July, about seventy-five percent of the Dutch population will have received a Covid-19 vaccine. It feels like we got through it. We are slowly making up for the damage and making the transition to a post-Covid-19 reality.

The essays in this chapter address the challenges and struggles organisations in the cultural sector have had to deal with. Without doubt, the covid-crisis has confronted the cultural sector with a huge loss of income. The restrictions enforced on the cultural sector by governments were - at best - accompanied by supporting schemes. The difference between countries is striking. As Omar Baqueiro describes, the Mexican government does not have a strong tradition of government funding for the arts. As a result, many organisations and entrepreneurs had to find their own way in surviving this crisis. The Dutch government did reach out to the cultural sector with supporting schemes. Several authors address the way the government supported the arts. Depending on the time the essays were written, the authors are more or less positive about the effects of temporary government subsidies. Was it enough to 'save' everyone? Probably not. Have subsidised organisations profited from their pre-covid relationship with governments? It is fair to say that they have. Workers who are self-employed have had to deal with a huge decrease in income which has only been partially covered by government support schemes. Their vulnerable position in the labour market is not an effect of the covid-19 crisis alone. This crisis has made painfully visible the unequal division of risk and income that was already there.

But it is clear that the covid-19 crisis has had positive effects as well. Organisations, large and small, subsidised and non-subsidised, have adapted. Artists have used the empty space and time to reinvent themselves. Organisations have found new ways of engaging with their audiences online. Many artists and organisations have reached out to the public outdoors. The covid-19 crisis has accelerated the transition to a more differentiated artistic

practice. A practice that, in theory, reaches out to a larger and more diverse audience as Sam Mirck justly points out. Some of the authors in this chapter also express the wish that new ways of engagement lead to more private gifts for the arts. This crisis ironically might have contributed to a greater sense of value of the cultural sector with the public. Time will tell.

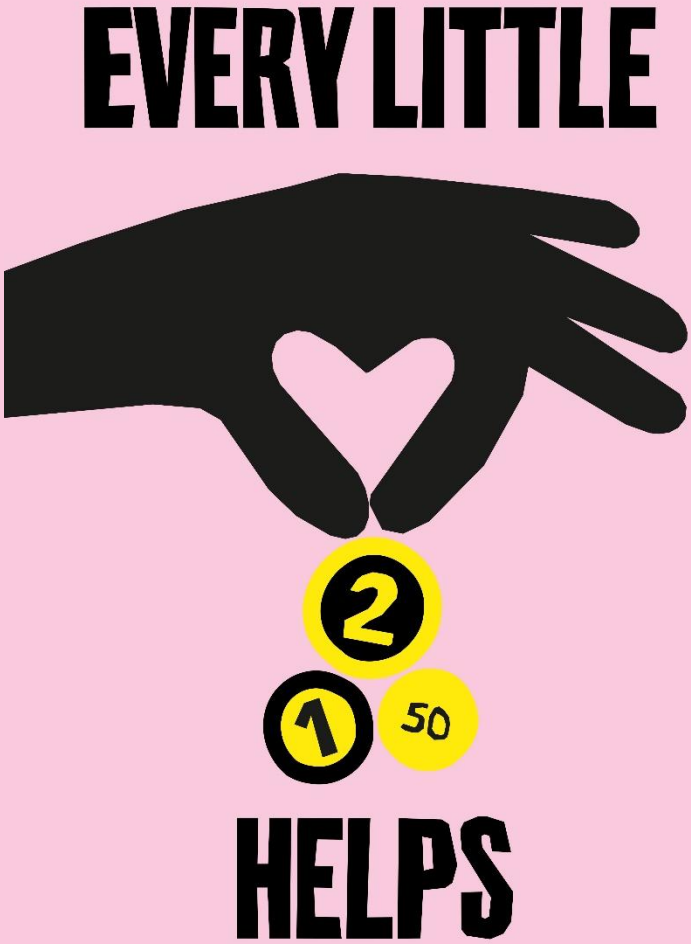
About the author

Marianne van de Velde is an Alumnus of the Master Arts & Culture Studies (Cultural Economics & Entrepreneurship) at Erasmus University (2006-2007) who currently works as a senior policy advisor for Fonds Podiumkunsten.

Private donations and COVID-19: Will Dutch private donors save the cultural sector?

Carla Mo Pluymen

July 2020



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Do people give to give, or do they give to gain?An abundance of research suggests that private donors are driven by gain-motivations. My thesis suggests otherwise. The cultural sector can benefit if it finds ways to better appeal to individuals' philanthropic motivations. The Dutch cultural industries have been subject to dramatic changes in terms of financial sourcing. Cultural non-profit organisations are facing increasing pressure regarding

theirfinancial support systems, especially after the major crises of the last decades and the consequent cutbacks in government funding. The vulnerability of cultural organisations with regard to their funding has become even more visible due to the global outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. It has been calculated that the Dutch cultural industries miss out on 88 million euros of revenue each week due to their forced closure (NRC, 17 April 2020). This is expected to eventually accumulate to a loss of nearly a billion euros by June 2020. Although the Dutch government did make a support plan available of 300 million euros (mainly geared towards large, subsidised organisations), some argue that it might support but will not save the cultural sector (NRC, 17 April 2020). Unfortunately, the economic downturn due to the COVID-19 crisis also leads to a decrease in the disposable income of households. This may have negative consequences for the current number and size of private donations. It is therefore even more important to understand the giving behaviour of private donors so that this important source of income can be tapped, both now and in the future.

Researchers have studied private giving in many ways with a particular emphasis on understanding giving behaviours. A key determinant of charitable giving by individuals, is found to be the 'awareness of a need' (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011, p.929). According to some, the historical reliance on government support of the cultural sector in the Netherlands, causes the Dutch public to think that the government remains responsible for the funding of this sector (Wiepking & Bekkers, 2015). Consequently, "people in the Netherlands typically donate to non-profit organizations active in fields that are not considered core state responsibilities, such as education, public health, and public and social benefits" (Wiepking & Bekkers, 2015, p.20). Moreover, this tendency is assumed to be stronger in times of economic uncertainty when private donors tend to specifically contribute to basic needs and social services (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Besel, Williams & Klak, 2011). Therefore, the current COVID-19 crisis might also have a negative impact on private donations to cultural organisations, with donors more likely to support other social causes.

My master thesis is aimed at understanding the motivations and expectations in terms of acknowledgments of private donors in the Netherlands: do people give to give, or do they give to gain? The majority of previous research proposes that private donors are driven by gain-motivations (an expectation of a personal or economic incentive) instead of philanthropic motivations (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Buijze, 2017; Klamer, 2003; Kotler, Kotler & Kotler, 2008; Massi et al., 2019). In my research, based on online questionnaires, many if not most Dutch private donors were found to be driven by philanthropic motivations. Donations are made because the donors want to help a cultural institution

and are therefore engaging in a philanthropic act (Massi et al., 2019). This idea of pure altruism is typically questioned in charitable giving research (Andreoni, 2006; Bekers & Wiepking, 2011). Especially, as Buijze (2017, p.26) points out: “overall, philanthropy is only partially altruistic, as donors care about the private benefits derived from their donations as well as the public benefits generated.” This aligns with the law of reciprocity: “the giver expects something in return for the gift given” (Klamer, 2003, p. 243). Even if they may have been tainted by an exaggeration tendency or a positive response bias, the outcomes of my research are hopeful. Furthermore, philanthropic motivations were also shown to be associated with a higher willingness to contribute during COVID-19, both in terms of more willingness to donate in general, and a willingness to increase the contributed amounts. On the other hand, private donors who displayed gain-motivations, were not found to possess a higher willingness to contribute during COVID-19.

In summary, individuals seem to be more driven by philanthropic motives than is often assumed. Further, the number of private donations and its financial value can be augmented in times of economic down-turn when individuals predominantly have philanthropic motivations. Next to our government’s efforts in saving the cultural industries in light of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, private donors could have impactful roles if we focus our efforts on their underlying motivations, finding ways in which we can appeal to these motivations and thereby increase their willingness to contribute.

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Culture needs our support

Arjo Klamer

2020-2021

Imagine that we are a country without culture. A country without choirs, without musicians, without theatre, without concerts, without festivals, without artists. What would we be? In this Corona age, that's actually already the situation. And? How bad is that?

Culture is what people do to give meaning and purpose to their lives. This could be playing Bach, practicing a religion, becoming involved in a sport, engaging in Dutch history, reading books and newspapers, immersing yourself in the world of theater, making and watching films, or singing in a choir. Cultural activities put daily life in a broader, larger perspective. In that light, isn't it surprising that so few people are currently concerned about the loss of so much culture? Why do people in this country seem to give so little to the arts?

It is understandable that the fight against a virus takes precedence. That is a matter of survival. That the economic downturn is receiving a lot of attention is also because we need resources to be able to live. But are KLM and the farmers really so important that they need to receive so much more attention and support than activities that add meaning and

significance to life? In the cultural economy we say that culture and economy are inextricably linked. A strong economy has a strong culture. That explains why American culture has been so dominant in much of the world since the beginning of the last century, with its movies, its music, its painting, and its literature. This was once the case in the Netherlands when Dutch merchants gave a lot for the arts. What is the wealthy Netherlands doing for the arts now?

It is clear that the arts are experiencing a difficult time. Musicians and actors are unemployed at home. Tim Kliphuis, jazz violinist, who in normal times gives concerts worldwide, has had to watch how his diary is cleared until next year. Siemen Verbruggen, who annually organises the MadNes festival on Ameland with maximum effort and minimum income, has to wait and see whether it will still be possible next year. How to survive in the meantime? Enterprising art makers in particular ask themselves this question. They depend on their own income, which is now lost. This also applies to Marc van Kaam, director of the Luxor Theater in Rotterdam, for example. His business plan assumes substantial ticket sales that are not available for the time being. A one and a half meter rule is financially unfeasible. You do not hear about subsidised art makers, such as orchestras and theater companies, because their (subsidised) income continues as usual.

There are only sporadic facts about the current situation in the cultural sector. Interest groups are coming up with alarming numbers. One in four museums could close permanently if the virus continues for a long time, according to the museum association; this mainly concerns smaller museums that depend on their own income. The Creative Coalition, set up to promote the interests of professionals in the arts, sent an urgent letter to the minister at the beginning of July 2020. Podum artists would lose an average of 20,000 euros that year. The Coalition is based on a study by Kunsten ’92, which shows that the government regulations (TOZO temporary bridging scheme for self-employed persons - with a maximum of 1500 euros, TOGS allowance for entrepreneurs affected sectors with a maximum of 4000 euros and Fixed Cost Allowance with a maximum of 50,000 euros per four months) only reached a limited group. The 300 million euros that the government has released specifically for the cultural sector almost exclusively supports subsidised art institutions. Almost half of the self-employed in the performing arts lack any kind of support; these art makers are very concerned about their financial situation, according to the research by Kunsten ’92. Six percent are already desperate. But we do not know how bad the sector as a whole is doing. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science does not have the figures either.

We know even less about how much people miss the theater, the festivals and the concerts. We economists speak of option value: how do people value the option of going to a performance, or how bad is it if they don't have that option? A willingness not to ask for money back from purchased tickets - to donate, indicates some of the option value. Inquiries in the sector indicate that people who had booked are, to a certain extent, willing to settle for a voucher. A few donate an extra amount. There was a sympathetic action taken by social security recipients to donate their holiday allowance to the arts. That yielded more than a million (which the minister matched from the pot of 300 million). But what does that say about the lack of all those canceled performances and festivals?

The only research I know of is about Rotterdam festivals. This shows that three quarters of the people miss the togetherness of performances, cinemas and festivals. That on-line cultural offerings offer compensation but are not an alternative. It also appears that people are poorly informed about what is happening and that the feeling of being involved is limited.

After years of research into this world, I have concluded that culture, and in particular the arts, flourish when involvement and togetherness are strong. That in itself goes without saying: meaning and significant increase when people experience them together and when they are involved. Could it be that this time, in particular, will emphasize the importance of togetherness and involvement? And might it be that the arts and culture are going to benefit and that awareness of their meaning and significance will increase?

"Courageous and energetic." “Inventive” These are some of the characteristics of makers and producers in the culture sector that I hear. In this time of great uncertainty, makers and producers are busy making the best of it. Could this be the time of a reset? For a different approach? This is what I observe:

- The realisation that government support is not everything, that income from the market (ticket sales, CD sales) remains insufficient for most artists (and can disappear completely as it has now) and, therefore, that organised support from society is more and more needed
- That endless planning ahead, with fixed programming for a year, can be more flexible with programming for the moment
- That performances can be shorter and can take place at different times during the day

- That a theatre like Luxor should not only be a stage, but also a place to meet and work for Rotterdammers
- But above all, that the form and content of the arts must respond more to what people need, that art makers must be more emphatically concerned with giving meaning and significance, so that the arts become increasingly indispensable where people care more consciously about the arts and are therefore willing to be generous.

The urgency of this crisis generates, I sense, a lot of creative energy in the cultural sector. It is about realising the unity and commitment that is necessary for a high-quality culture. That is why it is so important that the art-loving Netherlands is alert to everything that is happening now and is generous. The world of the arts needs that. Right now.

About the author

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Financing the Arts during a Pandemic

Erwin Dekker

December 2020

At the Shit! Corona Symposium in December we held four facilitated break-out discussion groups. The facilitators were asked to reflect on the discussion. Here Erwin Dekker considers how we finance the arts during a pandemic.

One of the central questions facing cultural organizations at this stage of the pandemic is whether this situation will mean a permanent change in practices, or whether we should pull through for another six months after which the vaccine will have ensured that we can return to the 'old normal'. This will, to a large extent, determine how you look at current strategic choices. Does one look for temporary one-off income streams through online events, crowdfunding campaigns or other types of fundraisers to make it through the crisis, or does one invest in new types of services, products and most importantly online infrastructures which will endure.

The group gathered was unsure about this. On the one hand it is clear that people are more used to online delivery of content and also online interaction which will likely have lasting effects, including in the cultural sector. Besides, the pandemic will probably have lasted for about eighteen months which is more than enough time to develop new habits. In that sense it has also reinforced existing trends where an increasing amount of culture is consumed online. On the other hand, there was a strong feeling that in the past certain parts of the sector have remained virtually immune to non-live and non-collective alternatives, one can think of live music performances and theatre, but perhaps most of all of the great and growing popularity of festivals. It seems unlikely that this will change, in fact the desire to share such events again might be greater than ever. So, for certain parts of the sector, it certainly is a matter of pulling through.

This also has direct implications for the way in which potential donors are approached. As one of the participants observed, the language that works best is constructive and positive and highlights the fact that payments in the present ensures that others can enjoy this type of art in the future. That is of course in direct contrast with those parts of the sector who are transitioning to a different way in which to deliver existing products. They cannot speak to their audience in this way but instead must develop ways in which the audience becomes accustomed to paying for online-content, in the way that streaming platforms have enabled. But as of yet, it appears that developing such models has proven very

difficult, and it might be dependent on big platform players to come in, in a way similar to what has happened to online streaming of TV and films.

Part of the difficulty of developing such online products also lies in the most traditional economic question of them all - pricing. This requires both fencing off the product: to what does one get access and is that access limited in time, and how large can the audience grow? Do you offer some kind of exclusivity? As well as figuring out a relevant price for this new product or service: how does it compare to offline products, and are the units smaller (clips) or larger (as on streaming platforms)? All of this will entail important learning for both the consumer and the producer. Many major bands were experimenting with large online concerts, but they too were still figuring out the appropriate size and scope of the product. After all, one can perform in different places week after week, but that seems harder to do online. The learning is also about the way that such a live show is filmed and even performed, so that it translates into a good online experience.

But the most interesting long-term question that has been raised by the pandemic is whether cultural organizations should be searching for alternative modes of organisation. In particular we discussed the extent to which they could turn themselves in types of cooperatives or community-based organisations. These would make the audience or friends of the organisation an integral part of the organisation. This would make arts organisations more resilient both to shocks in attendance, as now caused by the pandemic, but also to political shocks. But despite a general appreciation for these new modes of governance, the group could not think of many examples of this change in the current cultural sector.

The one exception seemed to be independent artists and in particular musicians who drew on online platforms to build communities of supporters. This was done through online platforms such as Patreon which allow for a kind of subscription or recurring crowdfunding model and was initially used a lot by podcasters and other online content creators. Another participant noted that some musicians moved to the platform Twitch, designed for the broadcasting of live streams of games, with an integrated option to donate. This again demonstrates the importance of infrastructures and platforms to facilitate the transition to a more digital cultural sector that is able to finance itself.

1. Contact with the audience, should we charge them
2. Philanthropy – individually or collectively
3. Alternative modes of funding, crowd-funding initiatives
4. To different business-models, more of a membership model, or cooperatives.

About the author

Erwin Dekker has been Assistant Professor Cultural Economics at Erasmus University Rotterdam. In 2021 he will start as a researcher at Mason University.

Business is not as usual: Cultivating notes from the fields of rural England

Sue Robinson

January 2021

“When you’re in the shit, you might as well pull on your boots and have a damn good rummage around whilst you’re in there”. Anon.

I recall this comment vividly, made by a female entrepreneur talking at a leadership in enterprise seminar, sharing her own business crisis. Being 10 years ago, I'm ashamed that I forget her name but the image clearly stuck, as shit often does. Many of us in cultural businesses frequently write risk assessments and scenario plans. What's the worst case? Public funding cuts? Recession? Brexit? I don’t think anyone in our cultural sector could have possibly imagined this last year; with Covid being the final shovel full landing on top of already challenging times for culture in England. And yet, having landed full tilt in that shit and rummaged around; we have learned, adapted, changed and grown as a business.

I am, alongside my husband Rob Howell, the co-director and owner of Culturapedia, a small, private sector enterprise producing and delivering arts project management services. We are based in Blackburn, an unassuming post-industrial town in north west England. We have a profit-making model, no board of trustees and in usual times there are four of us in our office. However, since mid-March 2020 we have been in three different home bases, across two countries, communicating, planning and delivering activity virtually. Business, usually, is the delivery of a co-curated programme of small scale professional touring shows (such as the Dutch children's theatre company BonteHond, American Blues duo Truckstop Honeymoon or British theatre company Little Earthquake) into rural village halls and local libraries in our county. We collaborate with volunteers and librarians to enable them to host and promote professional touring products. This offer is made affordable to these small, non-traditional venues with the support of local government funds and Arts Council England (ACE) investment via their national portfolio organisation programme. This financial support brought us our safety net.

In usual times, we would now have been coming to the end of a 25 gig autumn season but all of that ground to a halt in the mid-March mire. In mid-November, we celebrated our service's 25th birthday. No big bash, dancing, cake or party time. The day passed with a social media campaign thanking everyone for their support and an intention in the new year to reflect on 25 years of survival.

Listen to that. 25 years. Programming two seasons of touring a year becomes a routine which is hard to break. We became secure in our mode of operation, funders were happy and communities reassured. It worked well but was creativity being stifled? Is it possible to change direction and try new ideas without breaking that which works, or falling off the tracks completely? Land in the shit of Corona, of course. Joost Maaskant observed that it is hard to make change when you are caught in the cycle of delivery (Moy 2020). Forced to stop his festival planning, he took the time to think of new ideas and embrace uncertainty. I see this in our work.

Slumped in the mud, necessity becomes the mother of invention. We are a bottomfield company but supported by public subsidy (Abbing 2020). With no building, or large overheads, we were free to innovate; supported by a safety net from a national cultural funder who were content to leave us alone whilst they propped up institutions who were sliding over the precipice. We were relatively safe and given a rare opportunity: room to think without pressure of delivering outputs. Combined with the government's furlough scheme, this brought us the luxury of time.

We worked in partnership with Lancashire Library Service and over the course of 3 months, developed Spot On Stories, 26 ten-minute online micro shows filmed by some of the artists that have, or should have been , touring with Spot On. These bite-sized video moments were made for the people of Lancashire, designed to offer respite from the news or the stress of lockdown. We went on to develop a new season of 12 Spot On Shorts premiered in October 2020 and free to watch on facebook and YouTube. What started as a mini project to occupy the team and entertain audiences resulted in 25 artists employed. Season Two comes with commissioning support by digital arts agency, The Space and builds on our audience and artists' needs, focusing much more now on mental wellbeing. We have built from scratch a youtube channel attracting 22,000 thousand views by 31 December 2020. As one funder said: "(a) great example of how arts partnerships with libraries have managed to embrace the potential of digital" @librarychampion

ACE prefers business models oriented around non-profit status and management boards of trustees. Our business does not fit this model. ACE is also keen to support creative industries and innovation. In October 2020 ACE awarded £427 million in cultural recovery grants to organisations at risk of financial collapse as a result of Covid. Mostly, but not all, venues and touring companies. There is potential here for research to be done into a correlation between business model and resilience. Did we manage to change our direction due to not having a building? Or being owner-managers who could move fast without recourse to a board of trustees? The data is there to explore. We are also a micro-business. Unencumbered by sudden urgent needs to resolve large scale staffing and building issues, we could work quickly and swiftly in a small team. Perhaps this too also helped us. The tanker in a storm is slow to turn, but a yacht can find safe harbour faster. Abbing (2020) proposed support for that which is small and weak, rather than large and strong but perhaps small is also strong? Only time and further analysis of the impacts on the sector will tell. We are still all mired in the shit, and so it is too soon for answers but we do know we are not the same business we were in early March, and are all the better for it.

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A new territory for theatre creativity and the audience journey

Fan Wu

January 2021

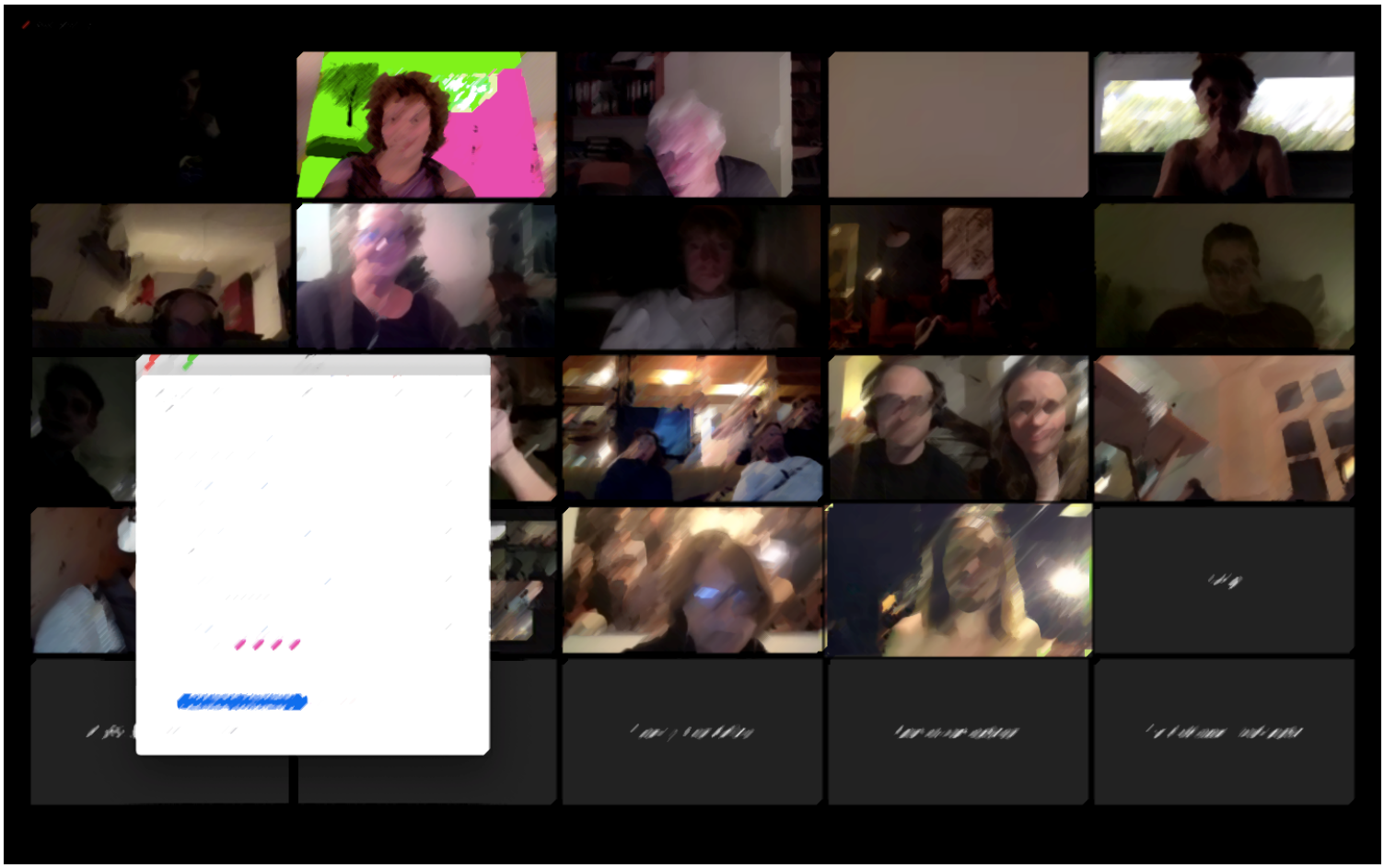

Image 1. Online Live Performance of Memento Mori's Audience Engagement (Blur Effect by Fan Wu)

Mount Average by Julian Hetzel, programmed by the Spring Festival, has been cancelled, again, due to the latest lockdown (till 19th January 2021) - my luck was out. In 2020, as a regular theatre goer and audience researcher, I only attended about 15 theatre productions on site, two theatre festivals in the Netherlands (one of which, the Spring Festival, was cancelled on the third day), zero international festivals, and 10 online productions. Apparently I was lucky. Since March 2020, the pandemic has pulled people out of regular social spaces and moved everything to the internet, including the performing arts. For ten months, the industry has been changing, and, whether you like it or not, it might not return to the way it used to be. The territory of theatre creativity has been extended to cyberspace, as has theatre-going.This new territory is not recorded theatre productions

streaming online, or even live streaming, it is a new way of presenting narrative, set design and audience engagement, tailored specifically to online spaces. The industry has been adjusting to this new norm, and after a few months, took the initiative for creativity, rather than passively adapting to the lockdown. Alternative theatre experiences started to emerge.

One of the most common new forms is Zoom theatre. On this online meeting platform, theatre creators have found ways to create new versions of liveness and collective experiences between the performers and the audience and between audience members. I would like to share my experience as an audience, both online and off-line, of Memento Mori by Nineties Productions.

Memento Mori in Latin means “remember that you [have to] die”, and in English is an artistic or symbolic reminder of the inevitability of death. The performance was designed to be an outdoor ritual, a performance about mourning and transience. The performers of Nineties Productions surrendered to the new, digital reality and took the audience to a journey in and out of eternity. There is no clear storytelling in the performance. It is a stimulating, ambiguous and contemplative experience.

Image 2. Before the Performance (Photo, Fan Wu)

Originally, the production was designed as a site-specific play to be premiered at the Oerol Festival 2020. But Covid-19 happened. Instead of waiting for the world to come back to normal, the company re-designed the project, extended the space to the digital world and created a cross-over work between performance, dance, music, poetry and web-art; “an immersive ritual, a digital memento mori, in which the passing of things will be celebrated”. The performance was live, in English, based on Zoom for online engagement, with limited onsite audience members. During lockdown when the theatre was not open, they performed in an empty space, live, for the online audience. It is worth highlighting that the experience of the same production at home and in the theatre were completely different.

Image 3. During the Live Performance With Audience Members Present (Photo, Fan Wu)

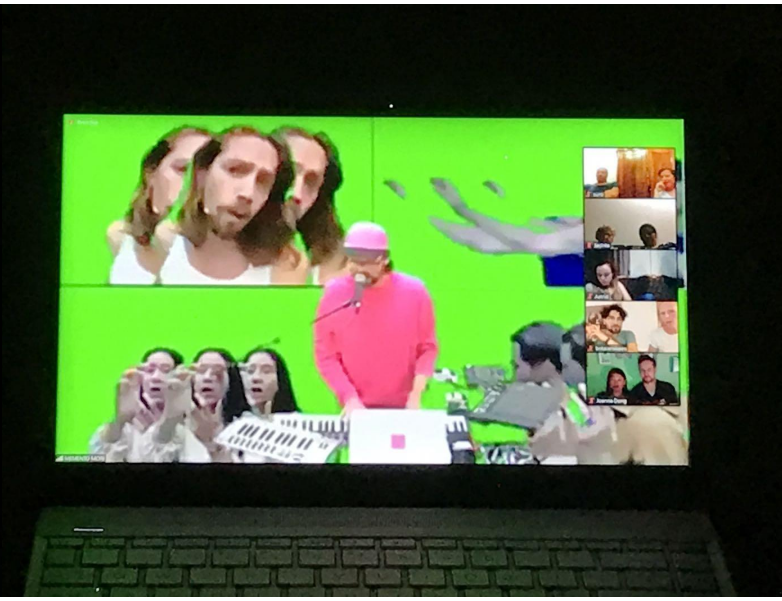

Image 4. During the Live Performance With Audience Members Present (Photo, Fan Wu)

When the audience joined the Zoom, the housekeeping rules were shown on screen and most of the audience were mute and off-camera (Image 2), much like attending any other Zoom meeting. When the performers came to say “hi” to the online audience, they asked audience members to turn on their cameras, put on headphones and grab a glass of wine if they wished. From the beginning, the company tried to create a theatre atmosphere, including an awareness of the presence of other audience members, a collective experience of attendance and, of course, the joy of having drinks while enjoying the performance.

This may seem like an easy measure, but it effectively created a vibe different from regular online performance streaming, where the audience is hidden and remain faceless. The collective sharing experience in the virtual space was valuable, making the theatre-going experience at home closer to physical theatre-going. However, it still lacked the smell and

Image 5. On-Site Performance, the Online Audience Presented With the on-Site Audience (Photo, Fan Wu)

sense of a crowded theatre auditorium which, I believe, completes the theatrical experience.

To be on site for this production was also an interesting journey. As an audience member in the same space as the performers, one became the third viewer; the outsider. The stage was in conversation with the audience on the other side of the screen, while the on-site audience observed how the performers used the green screen to create the special effects and, at the same time, were able to see the outcome on monitors (Image 5). However, with physical presence and sharing space with the other audience members and performers, as the house light went off, the audience interaction with the stage was quite unique. It seemed specially designed to mimic reality with people caring more about the online interaction while neglecting the physical contact in reality. In an uncertain world, where people are dying, does one seek resonance from those at a distance or those surrounding you? The pandemic forces each individual to create a social bubble, but I could not help thinking, do we have to strengthen it?

Theatre-going used to be an individual as well as a collective journey, taken among strangers (audience and performers). It entailed experiencing something new, with all the human senses: seeing (the performance, the stage design and the other attendees), hearing (the sound from the stage, from the auditorium and even sometimes from backstage),

smelling (the air becoming dense as the audience comes in), touching (the chairs of the auditorium, other people by accident and sometimes tears from your eyes) and tasting (the drinks from the bar, and the special feeling in your mouth after not speaking a word for the whole performance). Now the theatre space has extended to a new territory, cyberspace. The theatre-going experience is somehow missing some of the sensory input that would complete the journey. In the virtual space, artists work on extending the boundaries of theatre and exploring unknown spaces. The virtual theatre-going experience is getting better for audiences thanks to more artists incorporating it into their design. However, the old territory, the physical space which has existed for so long, is still somewhere audiences will want to come back to whenever there is a chance.

About the author

Dr. Fan Wu is a theatre audience researcher based at Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication, Erasmus University Rotterdam. Her post-doc research project is on “theatre-going” behaviour and experience during the Covid-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, she is also working as a researcher for “Dutch-Focus China”, a Dutch performing arts promoting project in China and funded by Dutch Performing Arts and Performing Arts Fund NL. She has been working in cross-cultural theatre producing, marketing and audience understanding for years in Europe.

Digitisation in the performing arts sector in times of Covid-19

Sam Mirck

April 2020

Going to a play, a dance performance or an evening filled with music has always been about experiencing the moment and having an evening filled with pleasure. However, due to the Covid-19 virus this experience has been altered. There are theatres and producers that will not survive this period and there are those that are still shut down because a maximum of thirty people in one hall is not profitable.

All the more reason to look at the future and the steps that can be taken after this crisis. One direction the sector is heading in is that of digitisation. I am currently working for DIP also known as Stichting Digitaal Informatieplatform Podiumkunsten, which is a platform for the performing arts that was born out of a collective need of the three biggest performing arts trade associations in the Netherlands. DIP is still in its starting phase and focusing on building a digital infrastructure for the sector. We offer three services to our customers. The first is a sales monitor in which makers and theatres can look at their sales. Secondly, we offer a contractual module where theaters and makers can easily set up contracts. Thirdly, we offer an audience monitor where you can find (anonymised) information on your customers for marketing purposes. These three modules are set up in order to increase efficiency and to help in attracting a new and diverse audience. The need for digitisation has been present for a while already in the sector, but during this particular time the need to share data has increased. Being part of DIP offers a unique view on the performing arts sector. Whereas theatres are currently closed, running on a lower capacity or looking into alternative ways to perform, we are still working hard on the future of the performing arts sector.

Digitisation has been an important concept for many years in the cultural sector, but why is it, at this point, so important in the performing arts? Well, performers and theatres are working together to create an experience from home in the form of live streams. Live streams are not new, they have been around since early 2010 starting with music performances (King, 2018). However, due to Corona, more online performances have been set up in the Netherlands. Many shows that originally were meant to be performed only in theatres are now live streamed or are a combination live and on-demand viewing. Live streaming offers broader access to art, it has a cheaper ticket price, it grants access to more people than could fit in a theatre, and if it is viewable on a streaming service people can look at it whenever they want. It would be interesting to see how these changes will affect the future of theatre in the long run and what this does to the overall idea of performing arts consumption.

We are all wondering what the cultural sector will look like after Covid-19. For the performing arts sector getting their audiences back is important, since they needed to cancel performances and give refunds to those that had tickets. But it is not only important to get the audiences back, it is also important, in this current time, that

they think more about diversification and even take this opportunity as a way to increase audience participation. Therefore, we are working hard on our audience monitor, so that theatres and producers can pick up and improve their marketing strategy based on their audiences to once again fill the stages.

At the same time, we are working on creating a standardised set of definitions that can be used in the sector together with experts from the field. Now that theatres and producers are running on a lower capacity, we see that they want to work on their corporate processes. This set of definitions is useful for making uniform decisions in the market and it makes the contractual process between companies easier. It will be interesting to see how this trend moves forward after Covid-19.

Hopefully by working together as trade associations, DIP and viewers, we can overcome this crisis and make sure that the cultural organisations that have survived up till now will also manage to remain so in the new era. Personally, I would like to think even larger, as a huge performing arts fan I would love to see the sector grow even more and expand itself further in audience segmentation but also digitally. Together we can help the sector gain its full potential back. For now I am incredibly grateful to be part of the process DIP is working on and curious to see what the performing arts sector will look like once Covid-19 is under control.

[1] *An interesting new platform that was only released recently is Sismo (n.d.). Here you can rent international performances (UK) on a Dutch channel. It is interesting to see that the digital change is not only focused on Dutch performances but also international performances.*

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About the Author

Sam Mirck is an alumnus of the Master Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship (2019-2020), who is currently working as a project assistant at Stichting Digitaal Informatieplatform Podiumkunsten.

Rothko and my mouth mask

Aart Grutters, Bianca Westhuis, and Valentina Snidaro

May 2021

What has been the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the museum sector and its art educators? We were given the chance to have a digital chat with Jules van der Vuurst-de Vries, an art educator at the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, a mid-sized museum in a small but vibrant city close to Rotterdam. We discovered the ways in which the museum avoided going into hibernation to await the passing of coronavirus. On the contrary, the museum reacted positively to its new circumstances and actually gave birth to innovative ideas to keep in touch with its audiences during these socially strange times.

From the early age of 15 years, Jules van der Vuurst-de Vries was already exploring the worlds of arts and crafts. Creativity flowed from his hands into paintings and drawings. As a graduate of the Royal Academy of Arts in The Hague, being involved in the creation and conversation of art is very important to him. “I try to make art a tool for education. Connecting people with art through education is not a waste of time, it is so much fun!”

At the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, Jules is responsible for developing workshops and classes on arts and culture. It is a small but dynamic museum that is in constant collaboration with other art institutions, nationally and internationally. Last year, they had an exhibition called ‘Rothko and Me’, focused on a Rothko painting from the collection of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. The idea was to spend time alone with the painting. Without the distraction of your phone, other visitors or other paintings. Just you and Rothko. The museum sold special tickets that allowed visitors to be in the room with the painting for one straight hour to establish a true, deep emotional and spiritual connection.

Despite being a small museum, their exhibitions are filled with surprising and ever-changing new ideas!

Jules delivers workshops in and outside the museum, for example at primary and secondary schools. Depending on the age and occupation of his students, Jules tries to personalise his art education. “The imagination of the younger students is so big, bigger than that of most adults! They react really well to learning through art.” Throughout his daily work, Jules is seen as an inter-player between lots of different people. When, at the beginning of March, all Dutch museums had to temporarily close his work as an art teacher also came to an unexpected halt. “We really missed the interaction with the students the most and people who always came to learn about art”, Jules remarks.

Jules and his team started to think about ways to keep in contact with his students and still be able to teach in a safe way. His team came up with art classes via WhatsApp. “We added each group that subscribed to a group chat and then we could talk together about art like we normally would do in the museum or in schools”, Jules explains. From this WhatsApp workshop, a lot of new ideas popped up around the topic of art in times of the coronavirus lockdown. “One of our students even began to paint Rothko’s on mouth masks”, Jules excitedly brings up.

Although the post-lockdown situation is still far from ideal, Jules and his team began to explore new ways of interacting and connecting people with art through education. Besides the successful WhatsApp chats, his museum initiated ‘troostkunst’ (comfort art) and a greenhouse plant swap for the city of Schiedam. “Everyone could enjoy each other’s art works”, Jules tells us. “It was nice to keep interacting with the people and the community like this.” By building a strong sense of community, the people in the city felt involved and less alone during the first lockdown. It is beautiful to see how a museum can still comply with its mission, being an inclusive and welcoming place for all, in physically constraining times.

Regrettably, almost 5 months after the end of the first coronavirus lockdown in the Netherlands, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam is temporarily closed once more. Although this time, the museum has closed its physical doors for a one-year renovation project. Jules is very optimistic about the future and the post-renovation state of his museum. “We have now found new ways to keep in touch with people and we can continue to build on that”, Jules highlights. He adds in whispers: “And, I might get more room to do the art classes and workshops when it is finished!”

Although the impact of the coronavirus on Stedelijk Museum Schiedam and its staff members may not be very visible, it certainly has played a key role in their continuing search in staying connected to their art community. After all, it is notable how the cultural sector has effectively adapted to the new circumstances and gained new tools to create and innovate. One could say that the coronavirus has pushed them to develop their online presence and digital interaction with audiences, which otherwise might have taken many more years to establish. And remember, if you cannot stand the idea of a whole year of no Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, do not hesitate to send them a WhatsApp message!

https://www.stedelijkmuseumschiedam.nl/tentoonstelling/kunstklassen-in-lockdown/

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“The show must go on” Mexico’s cultural industries during Covid-19

Omar Baqueiro

May 2021

At various moments during the pandemic, it instantly brightened my day to hear the musicians who had begun wandering through the residential neighborhoods of Mexico City, playing outside the windows of homes and apartment buildings in exchange for spare change. Since many of us were stuck inside, the musicians had to come looking for us, in an effort to continue making ends meet. On different occasions, I saw full bands playing traditional and regional Mexican music, duos playing the marimba, saxophonists, violinists, clarinetists, and even opera singers. Although these spontaneous street concerts could bring anyone a much-needed moment of joy during such a difficult time, they were also a reminder of the significant challenges faced by the cultural and artistic sector during the very long months of quarantine. Unlike high-income countries that provided various forms of economic stimulus to breathe some life into businesses and thus be able to temporarily weather the financial ravages caused by the lockdowns, Mexico—like other middle- and low-income countries—only provided modest loans that were not enough to avoid the painful closure of many businesses, including those within the cultural

sector.Mexico is a country that traditionally does not allocate a generous budget to cultural policies nor does it provide subsidies to arts and culture, despite the fact that cultural and artistic production generates a considerable income. For example, between 2009 and 2019 the sector's contribution to Mexico's GDP ranged from 3.1%-4%, of which 35% is associated with the media. The private sector is responsible for 75% of Mexico's artistic production, whereas only 6% of this production can be attributed to the government. Moreover, in 2021 only 0.1% of the federal budget was allocated to these activities, which represented a slight increase from previous years. In comparison, the Netherlands allocates up to 1.2% of its government budget to the sector (2019), while the contribution of culture and media to the GDP is 3.7% (2015). This lack of appreciation and underinvestment in the arts and culture sector on the part of the Mexican government has continued for decades, and currently prevails, even though culture represents an important factor for attracting foreign tourism to the country.

When the current federal administration took office, there were high expectations among those who work in the arts as well as cultural management and promotion (myself included), a group that would normally align with the political left, as this government defines itself. However, as the months went by, policies and measures were carried out that instead signaled a government that does not favor creative production from public resources, contrary to the common belief that leftist governments promote arts and culture. Today, experts and intellectuals commonly critique the lack of incentives and the disappearance of grants to promote creative production, in addition to the lackluster performance by the entity in charge of the dissemination of national culture.

With the arrival of Covid-19, as in many countries and cities around the world, the Mexican government called for lockdowns and the closure of a large segment of commercial establishments in the formal sector, but this was not enforced for those working in the informal sector. This exclusion of informal workers from national lockdowns was due to the fact that a large number of people with limited resources depend on the informal economy. When it comes to cultural industries, although it is uncertain what percentage of this sector works informally (such as independent artists), it seems that much of this population was able to more easily adapt to the pandemic when compared to their peers in the formal sector.

Many independent artists took advantage of the quarantine to exploit their creativity and began to update their accounts on Instagram to show off their creations. The lockdown moved them to concentrate on their creative expression. TikTok, for example, had a boom on this side of the world and many artists also used it to gain fame. The formal sector also

took advantage of the context to renew and rethink itself. Before 2020, there were still very few museums and cultural centers that offered virtual tours of their exhibits, but the Covid-19 pandemic pushed them to embrace this shift. Even in matters of cultural diplomacy—a subject that I am passionate about—the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mexico managed to create a platform for the promotion of Mexican culture abroad, in coordination with various diplomatic representations of the country.

These are just some examples of those who managed to take advantage of the virtual mode in which many people in the world are currently living our lives. However, let's not forget that we are talking about a large country with significant inequalities. Thousands of people who make a living from cultural companies lost their jobs once they had to close their doors, including both creative and administrative personnel: musicians, actors, puppeteers, dancers, choreographers, stagehands, ticket takers, and so on. Only entrepreneurs were able to request government loans equivalent to €1,030, with the possibility of requesting the same amount up to four times until reaching a maximum of €6,200. But let's make it clear: these were loans and not subsidies, and for those businesses with a large staff team, this was not good enough. Those of us who work in government offices, both at the national and local level, fared much better. The government did not fire anyone and instead sent almost everyone to work from home, including those in the cultural sector. It is common to hear colleagues say: we were lucky. Unfortunately, beyond a privileged few, the cultural industries in Mexico are in crisis.

The pandemic has revealed the precariousness of Mexico's cultural industries and the need for greater public investment in arts and culture to rescue and rebuild the sector. Cultural industries should receive more financial support from the government based on their contribution to the GDP and to the wellbeing of the nation. After all, so many of us turned to artists to lift our spirits during this time of great sorrow and uncertainty—we owe them a debt of gratitude and it's time to pay up.

About the author

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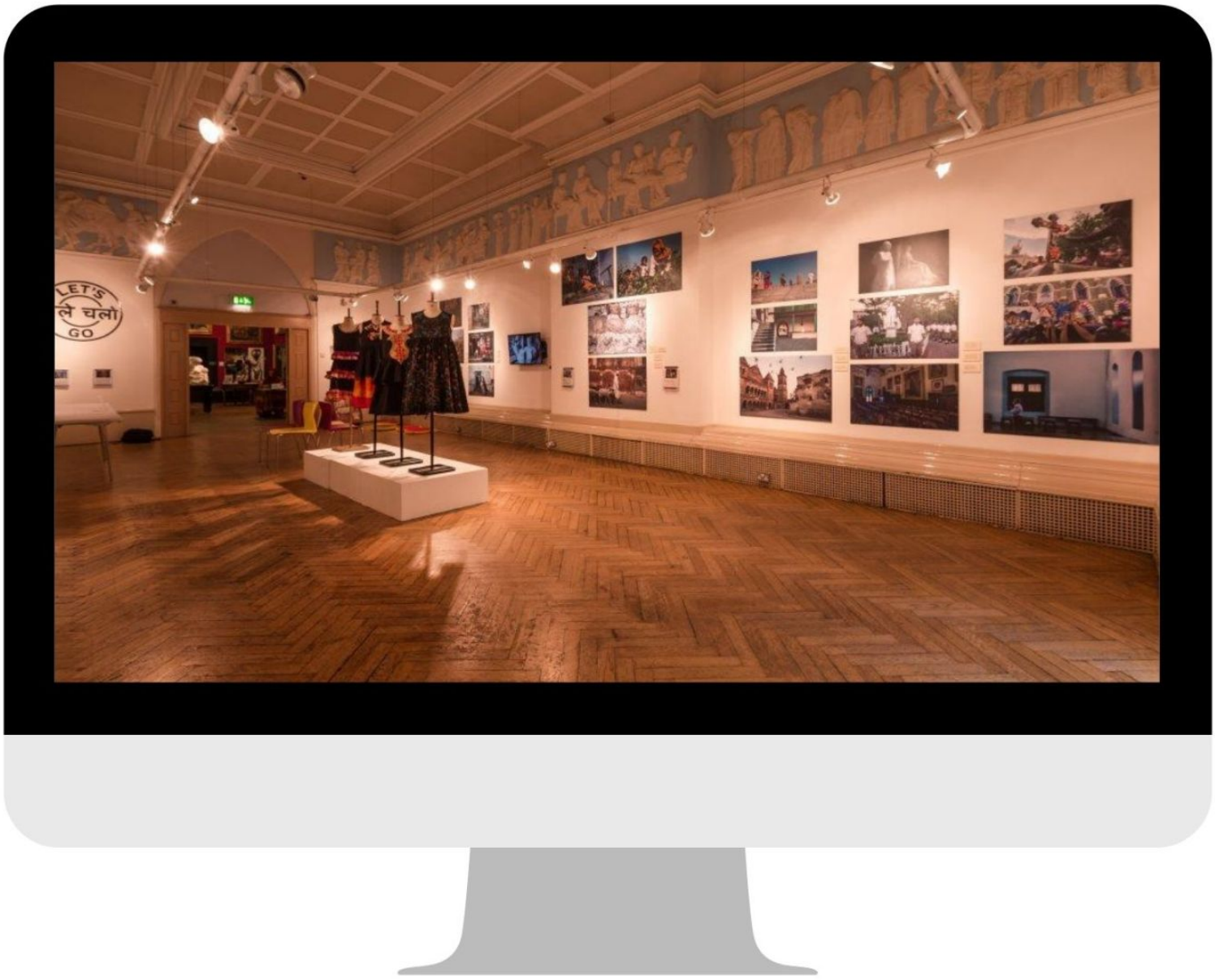
Digitalisation and art galleries

Pawan Bhansing and Beatrix Habelsberger

June 2021



During the COVID-19 pandemic organisations in the cultural sector, especially the smaller ones, had a difficult time adapting to digital environments, since the physical experience of music, theatre and art is an essential part of their value proposition.

In conversations with art galleries (of different types in size and internationalisation) based in Vienna and Salzburg we found that doing online business is challenging and that it asks for new skills, attitudes and strategies. What do you do when personal contact,

social interaction, and physical locations play a crucial role in your sales strategies? And when your market is characterised as being relatively conservative, exclusive and opaque, with prices and the entire sales process usually being treated as private and confidential?

In the past years, the art market has entered the digital space where sales can be made and information acquired, but this has not been embraced widely. Several online platforms emerged. For example, Artfacts or Artnet have introduced greater online transparency of prices. Artsy and Saatchi Art, allow art galleries and artists to offer their artworks for sale and facilitate purchase with a click-to-buy function. In addition, auction houses are offering online auctions, where people can bid from home. Galleries have also recently launched online viewing rooms where they present and sell art, similar to an actual exhibition (Sidorova, 2019). Although these digital possibilities are available, many art galleries have used the Internet only for basic promotion and visibility purposes (Arora & Vermeylen, 2013; Kohle, 2014; Samdanis, 2016; Sidorova, 2019).

The pandemic has sped up a transformation that was bound to happen. In our conversations we found that digital technology became significantly more relevant and we registered/observed a more positive attitude towards this. We found that it initiated several developments. A gallery founder mentions that he started a podcasts series with artists, curators and market experts; others started offering 3D exhibition views, guided video tours or video recordings of current exhibitions. Several interviewees report that they made improvements to their online presence and provide detailed information about their artists, exhibitions and artworks. Also, a gallery director, for example, mentions that during the first weeks of lockdown, she changed the entire appearance of her gallery website and even started filming guided exhibition tours. Another gallery director reports that his gallery has undergone a complete makeover: previously, their website was designed as a digital business card, only providing basic contact and exhibition information. Now, he notices a change of habits and new market requirements and even considers the website to be a vitally important extension of the gallery space.

By using digital channels, galleries are to a certain extent forced to become more transparent with information and prices, lowering the barriers for everyone involved in the market. However, This threatens the traditional business model and established rules. For example, the role of galleries could lose importance and alternative forms, such as digital platforms that diminish the intermediary function of galleries, could become more popular. Some interviewees state that it has become easier for artists to self-market on the Internet and many have taken on the role of managers themselves and coordinate their own representation without professional assistance. However, others believe that it is

exactly the overflow of information that comes with these developments which makes art galleries indispensable once more, as they serve as quality filters, are easily able to develop reputation, allow trust attribution and help with the artist positioning on the market.

As has become clear, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the previously slow process of digitisation in the gallery business model. What remains to be discovered is the extent to which these new developments will actually persist. Even if the gallery business will continue to follow its traditional ways, the pandemic has led to the acceleration of processes in digitisation and brought a variety of new opportunities for presenting and selling art. We believe that a balanced and synchronised combination of online and offline sales-channels will most likely succeed in transferring the strengths of the traditional model to a new digital reality.

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Fast evolving Bollywood: Reflections on Covid-19, its multifaceted impact on the popular Hindi cinema industry

Apoorva Nanjangud

June 2021

The Indian film industry produces over 1800 films a year across its regional sub-industries in various languages. Bollywood cinema is run from Bombay, in the state of Maharashtra. Predominantly utilizing the Hindi language, it generates a sizable part of the films coming out of India each year. These are widely exported (sometimes illegally due to piracy) across many countries worldwide, underscoring the importance of popular Hindi cinema, not only for the revenue it generates (including foreign currency) or the scale of it but the soft power it provides for India (Thussu, 2016).

The effects of the pandemic in restructuring many entrenched systems needs reflection. With changing systems, the lens through which we view these creative and cultural industries, and their impact, also deserves scrutiny, and therefore, in this reflection piece, I attempt a deeper perspective on: 'how has the covid-19 pandemic impacted the workings and reception of the Bollywood film industry in India and what does the future hold?' With this, I will look at the changes in production, circulation, and consumption of Popular Hindi cinema and look forward to what to expect from these changes.

As reported, "The resulting clash between creativity and caution has poised India's almost $34 billion entertainment industry at an inflexion point that some say could change it forever" (Shrivastava and Patwardhan, 2020). Popular Hindi cinema, often hallmarked by its dramatic storylines, music sequences, and opulent, theatrical depictions, had to bear the brunt of the pandemic and had to shift its workings to accommodate the lack of opportunities to congregate. This has led to many expedited changes that have reshaped the structure and workings of the industry- not only in terms of scale and storylines but also in terms of locations and the actual shooting process.

As with many creative industries, popular Hindi cinema has multiple players who execute its work. The producers, the actors, and the working personnel's livelihoods were affected by the sudden stalling of shoots, as were the storylines, scales of production and shift of narratives. Lavish sets and backdrops with large numbers of background dancers, a common sight in many popular Hindi films, indicate the magnitude and budget of

productions. However, many productions in the pipeline had to tweak their scale to deliver the same magnanimity with fewer creative personnel, manoeuvring their workings around state rules. For instance, in May, the government of Maharashtra put forward a list of rules under which the film industry had to do away with any kind of extravagant scenes and follow safety protocols with limited crew. This has had a lasting impact on filmmakers' creative processes, many of whom have tried to combat these problems with innovative solutions.

Changes have not only been felt on the production side. Distribution and consumption have also seen disruption. For example, the multiplex theatre system has always been an important contributor to Popular Hindi cinema's monetary success and mass consumption, considering its penetration and the ritualistic social nature of cinema. The current circumstances have led to the closure of over 1800 cinema screens across India, leaving the industry in a financial crisis. There has also been a shift in production values. Pre-pandemic, sequences were shot to take advantage of the cinematic environment with its surround sound and 70mm projection to serve the social experience. Some films were meant to be consumed in a group, adding to cinema's collective/community nature.

The long-standing way of viewing cinema is changing. Many films have been indefinitely rescheduled for theatrical release. Many took alternative routes such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hotstar etc. This significant shift in distribution and consumption may be applicable worldwide but deserves a particular focus on shifting cinema/community viewing values in a cinephile country like India. While it is true that the transition to digital consumption was already ongoing, it could be said that Covid-19 has expedited this change.

This may lead to a rise in storytelling and films that will serve the individual or perhaps nuclear family viewing. This raises several questions about cinema audiences and their structure, encouraging more research on independent viewing via Video-on-Demand. Some Indian cities have now introduced Drive-in cinema, which is relatively new in the dominant theatre viewing landscape of Indian audiences. A question that remains is, how will these changes in screen affordances feedback into the storytelling of Hindi cinema, and how far will that also lead to more shooting locally, within India?

Since the 1960s, popular Hindi films have actively shot abroad in foreign locations. With time, the commercially driven Indian film industry is becoming more entrepreneurial in its various creative pursuits. For example, partnerships between film producers and locations have led to symbiotic ventures. The success of a film meant high revenues for the producers and served as destination marketing for locations. This has led to a rise in the

Indian middle-class engaging in Bollywood Tourism (Nanjangud, 2019) to the destinations popularised in Bollywood cinema. What repercussions will shooting more locally have on these transnational flows of people and creative industries? Ayaz (2020) remarks that "travel restrictions will ensure Bollywood filmmakers who loved to shoot a song or two in exotic European locales will be compelled to 'make in India'. Think Himachal Pradesh, Seven Sisters or good ol' Ooty, perhaps?". Will this hamper the film tourism business, or will it simply shift inwards, boosting domestic travel? This presents some exciting opportunities to promote the diversity of the Indian landscape.

Change to stories, production values, audiences, viewing experiences, and locations have impacted on popular Hindi cinema. Questions include: will there be a rise in the use of VFX to replace the grandiose cinematic effects, or will things take the other route- good old storytelling, with simple stories and more straightforward sets; how will the role of celebrities shift in these processes, as they enter our homes at the click of a remote and how will that alter the dynamics of power between stars and audiences?

In India, mass vaccination is in sight. This pandemic has brought about systemic seismic shifts and reconfigured the workings of the Bollywood cinema industry. It is yet to be seen how the industry will develop and leaves us with many questions to uncover about the creative industries in general.

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Chapter 4: Artists and Entrepreneurs

Introduction: Artists & Entrepreneurs

Kaja Piecyk

June 2021

"A cultural entrepreneur is an innovator, usually but not necessarily an individual, who generates revenue from a novel cultural activity. Cultural entrepreneurs do much more than manage the activity; typically they discover it and exploit its revenue potentialities. They have the one quality that cannot be bought or hired, namely alertness to revenue-generating arbitrage, involving either new products, new materials, new processes or all of these in some combination" (Blaug & Towse, 2011, p. 157).

In their chapter on cultural entrepreneurship in *A Handbook of Cultural Economics*, cultural economists Mark Blaug and Ruth Towse (2011) define cultural entrepreneurship as risk-taking, innovation and alertness to opportunities. Due to their imagination, commitment and problem-solving capabilities, cultural entrepreneurs can be characterised as leaders; they are ahead of the pack. But what makes a *cultural* entrepreneur different from other types of entrepreneurs? According to Arjo Klamer (2011), their focus is on realising cultural values above economic or social values. Although these three are interconnected in various ways, cultural entrepreneurs tend to put symbolic meaning and aesthetics central. They are passionate and committed to contributing to the production and distribution of artistic content, and the market serves as an instrument for the realisation of these values. Could these traits and abilities affect the responses of cultural entrepreneurs to the Covid-19 pandemic? After all, a series of lockdowns and the introduction of the 'new normal' – a society in which physical and social distancing has become the norm – forced many cultural entrepreneurs to break away from existing practices and methods of doing things and delve into the unpredictable.

This section of the Corona Rollercoaster presents the stories of cultural entrepreneurs and artists from - amongst others - The Netherlands, Austria, United Kingdom, Spain and Peru. They cover various cultural professions: their work activities vary from visual arts to DJ'ing and fashion design to theatre-making. Their stories provide an insight into their thoughts, feelings and practices at the time of the Covid-19 crisis. Despite various challenges and uncertainties, the chronicles show that entrepreneurs responded with

passion and resilience by adapting to the circumstances and fulfilling their roles as 'creators of cultural value'.

Largest share of the labour force, smallest share of financial support

Considering the harsh (financial) circumstances that many cultural entrepreneurs faced during the last sixteen months, this resilience and perseverance deserve a standing ovation. Long before the pandemic outbreak, the cultural and creative industries were already characterised by low earnings, atypical employment, a weak bargaining position and high levels of self-employment (Menger, 2006; Oakley, 2013). While the European average of self-employment in the cultural sector is 30 per cent, in The Netherlands, it is as high as 80% (Van der Kooij, 2021). In 2016, the *Sociaal-Economische Raad* (Social and Economic Council) called for attention to the precarious situation in the cultural labour market and the increasing share of self-employment in their well-known report *Verkenning arbeidsmarkt culturele sector* (Exploration labour market cultural sector). According to the Dutch Minister of Culture, government cuts and the flexibilisation of the labour market have led to these conditions (Kruijt, 2021). However, the fragmented nature of the cultural sector did not hold back the growth of a collective conscious and united action. In recent years, a high number of advocacy and lobbying organisations have shot up like mushrooms. For example, Platform ACCT started on January 1st 2020, to improve the cultural labour market in the long term.

Only a couple of months later, the world of arts and culture (and the world in general) changed dramatically. As a consequence of the postponements, cancellations and closures that were needed to help stop the spread of the disease, opportunities to produce and sell work – and therefore earn an income - diminished for many self-employed cultural workers. Additionally, many of the public support measures failed to reach them. With the recent launch of the hashtag *#waarishetgeld* (#whereisthemoney), the Boekmanstichting aims to draw attention to their recent study entitled *'Ongelijk getroffen, ongelijk gesteund'* (Unevenly affected, unevenly supported). The study reveals how cultural organisations cut back on self-employed staff by 55% on average and only 3% on salaried staff. Additionally, it shows how dance, music and music theatre performing companies hoard two-thirds of the money received from the state rather than sharing it with their freelancers. The idea of supporting artists and other self-employed workers through the major institutions, favoured by the Dutch Government, has not worked, hitting the self-employed the hardest. Similarly, in their most recent report, *'Sterker uit corona: een*

agenda voor transitie' (Stronger from corona: an agenda for transition), the *Raad voor Cultuur* (Council for Culture) concludes that the support did not reach, proportionally, the places that most needed it: the self-employed, free producers and local cultural institutions.

Turning challenges into opportunities

Unsurprisingly, these devastating conditions have - in one way or another - affected the wellbeing and practice of artists and cultural entrepreneurs during the pandemic. When reading the stories of the makers in this section of the Corona Rollercoaster, some sentiments keep re-occurring. The shift to the digital environment, along with its opportunities and challenges, cannot be ignored. Although for many artists and audiences, an online stream will never be able to replace the experience of a live performance and its accompanying feelings of togetherness (Vandenberg et al., 2020). This quick shift shows the adaptability, flexibility and openness of the sector to new opportunities.

Additionally, the digital environment proved to be an online space for cultural entrepreneurs to connect and support, reflecting the feelings mentioned above of collectivity and 'standing stronger together'. However, with fewer opportunities to produce, exhibit and perform work, already fierce competition has only increased, and the fear of the end of one's career - a career that required years of education, hard work and sacrifices - is present. For some, the crisis pushed them to take a step towards a non-arts career, for example, as a primary school teacher or a Greek restaurant owner. For others, the slow-down of the world around us meant increasing time to develop one's cultural practice further and rethink one's values, position, and role in society. And how about the recipients of culture? Did they experience a re-appreciation and re-valuation of arts and culture? Many cultural entrepreneurs agree this might be one of the most positive aspects of the current crisis.
However, a summary of the critical re-occurring elements does not reflect the variety, complexity, and depth of the interviewees' experiences in this section. To see the Covid-19 crisis for a moment through the eyes of artists and cultural entrepreneurs, we warmly welcome you to delve into their personal stories by further reading.

What's next?

With an increasing vaccination rate and declining infection rate in The Netherlands, the hope of a summer full of culture and creativity has returned. However, according to the scholars Roberta Comunian and Lauren England (2020), Covid-19 exposed the precarity of

the cultural and creative industries. They argue that the current conditions in which cultural workers are forced to operate can be better understood through structural issues rather than a moment of crisis. Instead of calling for resilience, we look for structural and sustainable solutions. Today is the right time to do this. The most immediate fires have been extinguished, and cultural institutions and infrastructures have been saved from drowning. A sector that is slowly getting back on its feet and an oversupply of unseen works and productions created during the crisis further threatens the income of artists and creatives. It also hinders the ability of new ideas and recent graduates to get a foothold. I suggest that when looking for sustainable and structural solutions, we focus on the position of the self-employed, the freelancers, the cultural workers, the artists, the performers, the designers, *the people* who have been overlooked and neglected for the last year and a half but who create all that is beautiful, strange or intriguing that audiences can experience in the auditorium, on the dance floor or in the exhibition space. Only then will cultural entrepreneurs and artists be able to fulfil their full potential and let us experience all the skills, abilities and expertise they have?

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Kaja Piecyk holds a BA degree in Arts and Culture Studies from the Erasmus University Rotterdam. In her thesis, she addressed the question of the role of creative entrepreneurship in sustainable urban development, for which she was nominated for the Ton Bevers Award for Best Bachelor Thesis 2021. During her studies, she worked as a student-assistant for Ellen Loots and Walter van Andel on a research project supported by Instituut Gak around the income and earning capacity of Dutch professionals in the cultural and creative industries. Additionally, she is active as a floor manager at Theater Rotterdam, junior board member at Dansateliers and researcher at N8W8 R'dam.

The Rise and Fall of DJ Katopodis

Trials and tribulations of a Lima based DJ in lockdown

Edouard Hemsted

October 2020

Jobs and livelihoods have been crushed by the pandemic. As Europe slowly awoke from its two-month long slumber. Lima was still in lock down. People are still heavily restricted to this day. In fact, Peru tops the table for the amount of deaths per million people as I am writing.

Nikolas Katopodis is a Peruvian/Greek DJ and the main protagonist of this article. Hoping that he could give me some interesting insights into his profession, country and its cultural scene in these treacherous times, I organized a video conference with him.

DJ Katopodis started off as an events promoter. For a whole two years before he got his first gig, he was solely selling tickets. A combination of swift communication and networking skills is what set him apart from the competition, notably through his name: “Katopodis sounds special here, it got my name growing like a rolling snowball”. Pioneering new styles set him further apart from the others: “I had these fresh sounds nobody else played: deep tech with a darkish vibe”. He respected the unwritten rules of the

club in his first warm-up gigs, using acquired knowledge to impress promoters and build his persona.

Prior to the shutdown, he had played in front of thousands of people and shared the stage with world class acts. When asked about the keys to securing these big dates, he firmly replied: “Constant dedication man, always listening to music, downloading music, buying music. I was checking other people out on social media, I was seeing what the new trends were”. He was at a turning point in his career and clearly able to sustain himself through his activities, but the monetary aspects were not the most important: “It feels like I can connect with people, not just talking, but through music; through my emotions; through what I'm feeling that day”. Spreading social value was what he loved the most about his job. He had successfully turned a passion into a profession, it was beautiful to hear such a dreams-to-reality story. I asked about the biggest challenge to being part of such an industry. He answered gravely: “If you stop, you get forgotten.” He’s had no holidays in this fierce environment.

He successfully transitioned to becoming a nationally renowned DJ, playing “from the Jungle to the Beach”, as he put it. The weekend that Peru was forced to a standstill, he had a staggering four shows planned at some of Lima's most renowned venues. On top of that, he was already seeking to reach the international stage, establishing links and getting his first bookings abroad. It was truly heartbreaking to hear how it all came crashing down for him in a matter of days. The money he had saved up hemorrhaged in order to sustain himself: “100% of my profits was through playing at parties, when you make money every month, it’s a cycle” he insisted. “I left my advertising job, like my actual nine to five”. As the crisis hit, he was seeking an alternative occupation in online advertising, but an oversupply of job seekers from the crisis rendered this impossible. He was very pessimistic about managing to continue his profession online. When asked about live streams or music sales, he answered with a twinge of sadness: “There is very little money to be made in music sales and people barely watch your live streams. It’s kind of demotivating, kind of depressing. I try and show the freshest music, you know. Something they have not heard before. But there's no replies from the people”. I understood, clubbing is a social activity and people enter the club for an all-encompassing experience, it just cannot be replicated through online streams. Katopodis agreed: “it's not comparable to playing in front of a crowd”. “I think people have lost the value of social media”, claiming DJs were so desperate for attention that they use third party websites to purchase ‘likes’ in the hope that this can boost their visibility: “I'm not going to call anyone out but there's many artists right now that are paying for bots”. Despite this, he still mentioned certain project

aspirations, notably creating a sort of community platform on YouTube in which he shares his musical passion, hoping to grow the scene by shooting content about local DJ's and promoters, sharing insights about the different genres surrounding dance music in the process. But the crisis forced him to leave Lima to move in with his mother. With mobility so severely restrained, that project has been put on hold.

As the interview moved onward, I was interested to know if there were any forms of solidarity happening within Lima's electronic music scene. Again, Niko took a pessimistic stance saying: “There's an issue with competition, you feel the people being jealous, passively hating you. It's not helping us grow as a community. People are just trying to help themselves”, it was put forth as some kind of free for all. When a scene or subculture is brought to a screeching halt, there is not much that can be done to save its actors. When asked about what the Peruvian government has done, a similar response was put forth: “The government has not done anything for the cultural sector”, it's only form of assistance was through loans. “You just want to survive right now, everyone engages in clandestine activities to get by”. He was alluding to the tragic event in which an illegal club was raided by police and 13 people died in a stampede, “This type of event is going on every weekend.” he confirmed. However, when asked if the government could have done things differently, he was surprisingly uncritical: “You know, 85% of people here are employed by the informal sector. They struggle for their income every day, they have no choice but to leave their homes and work. It is clear that the policies in containing the virus could not work in the same way as they did in Europe.”

As the interview drew to a close, Nikolas asserted he still had hope that the scene would rebuild itself someday and that he will be able to resume doing what he holds so dearly: sharing his music with a live audience. However, in the meantime, he is looking into other occupations, considering the launch of a Greek food venture in his hometown. As he put it: “you adapt, or you die”. On a final note, he also professed wishes that the scene would grow and that the unsavory competition between artists be swept aside, “creating something beautiful in the process”. Sadly, there is no happy ending in sight. One can only hope that DJ Katopodis can rebuild his career to the promising levels it had once attained. But in this new world order where nothing is guaranteed, with the amount of money that culture has bled and institutions closing their doors, it is difficult to imagine how things will start where they left off. His fears and struggles paint a clear picture of how up and coming artists worldwide lost their livelihoods and this article is intended to pay homage to them.

Links to DJ KATOPODIS:
Soundcloud: https://soundcloud.com/katopodismusic
YouTube:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DhL8AaYX7M&ab_channel=BumDigitalFest
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/katopodismusic/

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Studio Slip: How Not To Lose One's Footing in the Middle of a Crisis

Shambhavi Bhat and Rosalie van Oorschot

October 2020

Kamini Rao is a young designer and the founder and creative director of Slip, an independent interior and set design studio that works at the intersection of art and architecture. Slip is located in Bangalore, a metropolitan city in the state of Karnataka, South India. Kamini launched Slip in 2017 with the aim of bringing an experimental approach to interior design, leveraging her interior and spatial design education at Chelsea College of Art & Design, University of London, and her experience working with established architecture and design firms in India. During the 45 minutes she found in her busy schedule, we had a lovely video call, with her grandmother occasionally peeping through the window in the background.

Slip, in Kamini's words, is "to lose one's footing and find yourself in a new and unexpected place." During her time in the UK she focused mainly on public design, but after her return

to India she realised that there were only a few companies who could take on big public projects. The idea for Slip came to her after leaving her job at an interior design studio that catered mainly to affluent Indians looking for high end luxury interiors. Kamini felt she needed to shift focus and broaden her scope as a designer whose interests extend beyond private homes, “You can do malls and the public space around the mall, but that is not really public in the way that I thought of it.”

Slip embodies the notion ‘public’ with its experimental approach to transdisciplinary projects, as well as in the way the team is managed. Working out of her grandmother’s home, the team consists of five young designers taking up design activities into three main domains: commercial, residential and Set/Exhibition. All designers do every task in the business and Kamini says, “I am the accountant and logistics and whatever.” She regrets having had to let go of design herself but believes that she is doing what she has to do, to grow. Before lockdown, Studio Slip balanced its activities between cultural unpaid or public projects and bigger money-making schemes, as Kamini recalls, “Last year we were doing projects all over India which was very cool for such a small studio and we even had a project in Tanzania for a company that had just received funding from the Bill Gates Foundation.” The opportunity signaled to Kamini that what she was doing was finally paying off. Incorporating aspects of spatial design, architecture and art, Slip’s activities before the pandemic involved project management, construction and coordinating human resources.

In March 2020, India experienced one of the world’s toughest lockdowns. Construction in cities came to a grinding halt as nation-wide measures were announced, leaving millions without work. For design studios like Slip, the lockdown had a direct impact on their work owing to the physical nature of their practice. Six months into the crisis, work is slowly starting up again. However, the push to localize has not been easy and does not come without complications. Prices of raw materials have gone up and hiring labour has become more expensive due to the exodus of migrant laborers going back to their villages in other states. Kamini explains, “Now everything is becoming much more localized. Two of my employees went home and one is not able to return. So now I am hiring local employees. I am taking on more local projects since it is so tough to do this work when you are not physically there. The trajectory of Slip has changed quite a bit.”

The market for design has become a lot smaller. Kamini would like to keep her portfolio as diverse as possible, but at the moment it is not possible to take on projects that simply do not generate enough revenue. She has a constant fear of not being able to make ends meet and takes on projects that she had not envisioned herself doing. The physicality of the work

also underscores the concern around health and safety for everyone involved. Working on construction sites, the team are in close contact with vendors, clients and laborers and even though they take all precautions, she has had to formulate weekly back-up plans for each member in case someone falls ill. It is a terrible situation when you have to tell people that they need to take this risk or else they may be let go, but there simply is no other way for Kamini at this point in time. Working from her grandmother's house does not make things easier.

Becoming more localised has also caused a shift in the culture of the studio, Kamini testifies: "I think before, we had quite a diverse group of people, they were from different states and of different religions. One was Christian, there was a Sikh.. it was more of a diverse studio." It was this diversity that allowed each member to work independently on a large scale saree exhibition. During this event the team were able to leverage their diverse backgrounds to drape the sarees in a way that was authentic to their heritage. With the localisation of hires, the range of languages spoken within the team has also been reduced, something Kamini is wary of, given requirements for Indian cultural projects. Implications are both cultural and social. She is concerned about cultural appropriation and worries that she may be guilty of it if she is designing for something outside of her own context.

There is a lot of competition in the design world and Studio Slip is small. Opportunities for networking and social cohesion are very slim. Right now it feels like survival of the fittest and everyone works very hard. Her projects taken on post lockdown are far more residential and far less cultural than she would like, because there are no markets for retail or exhibitions, and public funds have been cut.

However, a passion project that germinated during lockdown has started to take shape with an artist friend, Ruchika Nambiar. "It's a proper interior architecture project" she says excitedly, "except on a much smaller scale." With 'The Roombox Project', the two are creating an arts activity kit for adults, drawing inspiration from doll houses and different types of Indian interior design.

Despite the complications she is facing, it is clear Kamini knows how to get back up on her feet after losing her footing. She takes the definition of the word 'slip' and runs with it, ingraining it into her mindset and ethos as a cultural entrepreneur. Thinking about nano-tourism, local cultures, contemporary and traditional Indian design, she keeps on working and motivating the people around her. Talking to her was an enormous pleasure and very relatable, even from miles away.

https://studioslip.com/

Nina Gospodin completed a degree in process engineering in Germany, the US and Austria. At the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, she studied a combination of graphic and product design, painting, social design, and multimedia art. She has been awarded several prizes and grants for her art. In addition to painting and photography, she runs the “Salon Gospodin” and the podcast “Kanal Fatal”. In her podcast, Nina opens the doors to the studios of other artists. Together, they explore the deeper meanings behind their oeuvres and lives.

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Podcast: http://www.dusagst.es
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How to engineer an artistic career in times of COVID-19: Nina Gospodin on the art of being an artist

Sheila Bsteh

November 2020

Image Used With Kind Permission of Nina Gospodin. Source: Nina Gospodin.

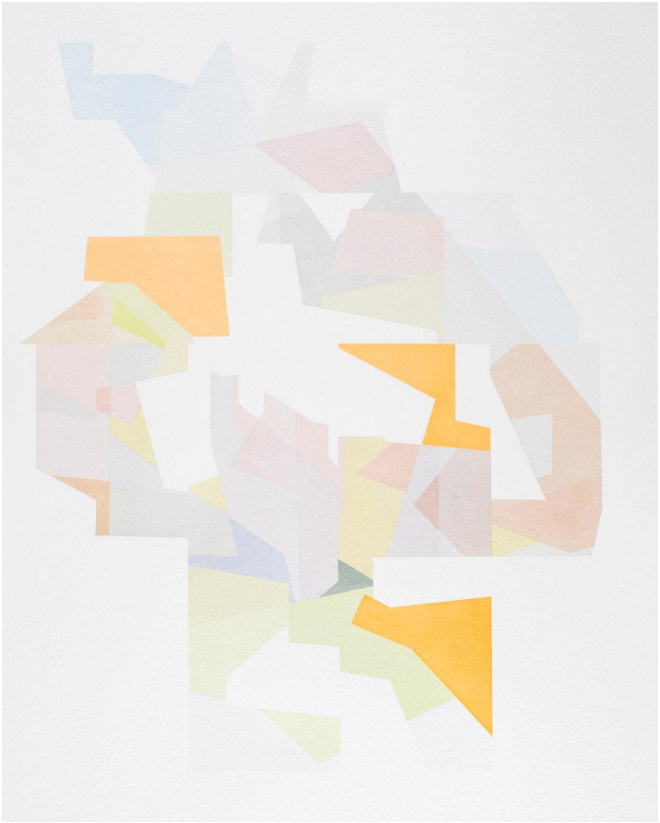
Nina Gospodin, a contemporary painter and creative from Vienna, joined us for an interview. The present text summarizes her most important findings in the current crisis and wraps up with five tips.

Nina Gospodin is a busy woman and as it turned out, she likes to laugh. After studying process engineering, Nina completed a degree in Fine Arts in Vienna. Her art has won several prestigious awards. For Nina, industrial and economic processes are closely related to artistic production. This approach is clearly visible in her oeuvre. Geometric shapes dominate, along with sensitive, precise choices of colour. Next to painting, she produces photo series, regular networking events and a podcast. “I’m a problem expert.”

So, frankly asked, how does one make a living as a contemporary painter? Nina explains to us that she already had various sources of income before the pandemic. According to her, there is art and there is “something you can get money with easily”, a job outside of the studio. The latter alleviates the pressure of having to create something strictly for sales.

Between waves of pandemic outbreaks, not much has changed for Nina in financial terms. The marketing agency where Nina works receives support from the governmental COVID-19 fund in Austria, so her regular income has stayed intact. But one thing has shifted positively: There is more time for art. And additional energy to enjoy it. Due to the luck of having this financial security and her new timely resources, Nina was able to channel her creativity and increased her artistic production. As she describes it, “I call this artist in residency by the universe and knowing that I was very, very fortunate.”

Since the start of the pandemic, Nina has created more than ever. In fact, the interest in her art has also increased. As the first lockdown in Austria ended, Nina had more studio visits and inquiries than in pre-pandemic times. Asking her for the causes of this, Nina told me she believes that people have rearranged their priorities due to the crisis and that value systems are changing. As a result, people take more time to experience art.



Painting By Nina Gospodin: Nuovi Angoli Nuove Forme g#10 | Watercolor on paper, 56 x 76 Cm, 2019. Source: Nina Gospodin.

However, the pandemic can also have significantly negative consequences for artists, as shown by the fate of one of Nina's colleagues. As Nina explained, this artist lost his job and received only little state support. He even had to move back in with his mother. However, he managed to turn such high financial pressure into a success story. After having been forced to focus on the monetising of his art, he saw his sales increase exponentially. In the end, that artist considered the overall impact of COVID-19 positive for his artistic career.

COVID-19 brings huge financial challenges and risks for artists, especially for those who depend on performances or offline events. In the case of Nina, she has been fortunate to be a cultural entrepreneur in Austria, a

country with one of the best social systems in the world. It is uncertain how governmental support, grants and jobs will be affected if the pandemic lasts much longer. Regardless, some positive aspects of this crisis should not be neglected. A variety of valuable opportunities for artists is being created, not in the least as a result of an increased appreciation of art. As Nina puts it, the "…artistic process is a process of transformation." This may apply more now than it ever did before.

As promised…

Here are five tips for those rookies who (want to) pursue an artistic career in times of COVID-19:

1. **You have to love what you are doing.**
   Art is not about titles, it's about passion. If you don't burn for what you are doing, don't start it in the first place.

2. **Stay Flexible.**
   Not every idea is meant to be monetised. Make sure you have other streams of income to finance them, and other ideas to pursue.

3. **Keep Going.**
   You will face a lot of criticism. The keyword is resilience. Artists need to believe in themselves and their work.

4. **Humor.**
   A good laugh can work like medicine in hard times. In Nina's words, "Don't take everything too seriously".

5. **Listen to your guts.**
   As a creative entrepreneur, there is no well-set path to follow. Despite the well-intentioned advice of others and after obtaining various available information, your personal judgment is the best basis for decision-making in difficult situations.

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Balancing act: Making it as a Fashion Designer during Corona

Sunniva Ottestad

November 2020

The impact of COVID-19 on the music industry is well-known, but how does this compare, for example, to visual artists? Or fashion designers? This article, based on an interview Wendy Rombouts, an up-and-coming fashion designer and founder of Alpha Female, seeks more insight into how creative entrepreneurs are operating behind the curtains, at a time where the general outlook on the creative industries is grim. We interviewed Wendy because we found her work especially intriguing, and unlike that a lot of the other independent designers. We were curious about how an emerging fashion designer is enduring the crisis, as social isolation makes physical events and branding in real life virtually impossible.

Alpha Female is mostly an accessories brand, specialising in multifunctional bags. “33 years young”, Wendy begins the conversation, laughing over the Zoom call. Her voice is friendly, yet she feels more comfortable speaking Dutch than English. Thank God we had Daphne on our team, being able to translate most of a conversation that went smoothly and led to fruitful insights. We talked about motivation, beginning a brand, and the impact of COVID. Wendy, in her own words, describes Alpha Female as “clean, edgy and timeless.”

Having graduated from Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam, the designer now lives in Brabant with her boyfriend and runs Alpha Female from her living room. When asked about how her entrepreneurial venture began, she explains that it started with meeting a friend at her job at H&M who wanted to start a band, and that this was a turning point in regaining her passion for creativity: “I did that for two years and then I actually got the vibe back... I decided to start for myself and that's how Alpha Female was born.”

She describes the convenience of working from home: “What it means is that my dining room table is at the same time, my work table on which I cut my patterns... I have a large industrial machine, I have cabinets with stock fabrics, different prints, photos, leather and hardware. Everything is there, and I actually quite like that, because I can always get started.” While she elaborates on how she does not necessarily want a studio somewhere else, it becomes clear to see that she enjoys her space and working from home. Working alone has its advantages. Wendy values having her privacy and not having people disturbing her creative process. The convenience of being able to work whenever she feels like it, also pushes her creatively: she gives an example of laying on the couch watching Netflix, getting a new idea, and being able to immediately work on it.

The creative industries, typified by self-employment, face a complex challenge of management and particularly the distribution of creative products to a clientele. The need to balance creative work and commerce further challenges creative entrepreneurs in seeking distinction. Townley et al. (2009) propose Bourdieu’s framework of ‘capitals’ for better understanding the processes of creativity, pointing at the challenges of integrating intellectual capital, social capital and cultural capital into the process of product creation. When applying the framework of capitals to Wendy’s business, one can assume that the education at WDKA has had an impact on her acquisition of intellectual capital in terms of developing ideas. Her social capital entails having a network of friends, family and old colleagues supportive of her brand. Her cultural capital led to her recognition as a multi-functional designer. Given all this, the importance of a specific workplace for Wendy’s creative venture appears quite insignificant. The online communication of her brand

through social media has been a determining factor in keeping the brand alive. In Wendy's case, working alone is ideal for Alpha Female. It is still a relatively small-scale business that relies on social networks, creative skills and ideas.

When we started talking about COVID, the conversation took an unexpected turn. As Wendy explains: "To be honest, this situation has worked out quite well for my label. This is, of course, because I sell online. People sit at home, but eventually want to shop. So I saw a very upward trend in that. And then of course you also have your socials, you have some hashtags that were trending at the time #supportsmallbusinesses #supportyourlocal... So it actually worked out very well for me... it seems like people somehow got more respect too, since COVID, for smaller entrepreneurs and the products they make and the fair price for them... They are willing to pay a little more for them. So despite COVID being very bad, and I hope it will be over very soon, it worked out really well for my label." For Wendy, the lockdown created a business opportunity because people were more frequently online. This is fascinating considering how COVID has mostly been thought to be having a negative effect on the creative industries and it's workforce.

We asked Wendy about her hopes for the future. "What I really hope that will happen... is that people become more aware of what they currently have. That they...stick with that because they have now tasted it, that quality takes precedence over quantity and that slow fashion becomes more important than fast fashion." Having an eye for the positive side of COVID, Wendy notices that people spend more time researching the quality of products, looking for more locally sourced slow fashion. We hope this trend will endure. Thank you, Wendy!

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Covid, a Different Mindset and Innovation in the Virtual Reality Industry

Huipeng Xu and Chingyi Sit

November 2020

Salar Shahna, Geneva-Based VR Entrepreneur

In contrast with the world buzz over augmented reality (AR) technology, 2019 was a cooling-down year for the players in the virtual reality (VR) industry. This trend was expected to continue, but no one could foresee that "pandemic" would become the word of 2020. The XR industries (both VR and AR) have been hit hard. Still, the pandemic created creative challenges and opportunities for nascent markets like VR, benefiting creative entrepreneurs that were able to reap the fruits, as Salar Shahna did.

In the autumn of 2020, we interviewed Salar Shahna, a Geneva-based entrepreneur active in the global VR market. After the pandemic, all the hard work, time, and energy spent on his projects seemed to be lost. Being curious as to how the quarantine has affected Salar's career, the interview taught us more of how the unstable Extended Reality (XR) industries have been transforming in the midst of a pandemic. Salar explains that it "...was a catastrophe, because our work... was really about gathering people from around the globe, from the US, China, everywhere, to come to a conference in Switzerland."

Salar has been considered a VR tech ambassador, operating between Europe and China. He used to travel frequently to China, the United States and several European countries, where he organised events and exchanged ideas and expertise. The complete 'destruction' of his work in VR and XR has been devastating. Without Covid-19, he would have organized the 5th World XR Forum (previously referred to as the World VR Forum) in Crans-Montana in Switzerland in June 2020. From 2019 onward, he had been busy collaborating with a private museum in Shanghai in order to present a VR dancing experience created by a Swiss artist.

Location-based entertainment (LBE) VR was quite a fad among investors in 2019. A huge number of VR arcades were emerging in America, Asia and Europe. Still, not many consumers knew of VR-based products back then [or visited the arcades]. Few regular consumers were willing to go virtual into an immersive VR. However, industry insiders considered LBE to be a promising way of commercialising VR technology outside of games. Even Disney invested into a studio to produce immersive LBE VR content for experimental purposes. Salar explains that, "All of us in the industry were, in a way, fooled, believing that LBE would be working so well. I'm part of it."

The pandemic disrupted the developments in the industry. In July 2020, Disney had terminated the lease of VOID, a VR start-up in Downtown Disney's location following months of Covid-19-related closures. One month later, Sandbox VR, one of the VOID's major competitors, endorsed by a series of glittery names (Katy Perry, Justin Timberlake and Will Smith), was reported to have filed for bankruptcy.

In the context of the pandemic, social distancing measures in many countries prevent audiences engaging in all kinds of creative and digital experiences. Equally, people are afraid to go and experience LBE, because of the worries of putting on headsets that aren't properly sanitised. In addition, the pandemic exposed other complications of LBE. Salar realised how costly operating VR is: it needs more human resources compared to a cinema or an Internet cafe, so it is hard to survive financially. Based on those insights, he withdrew from setting up LBE. As a keen entrepreneur, he points out that the space for experiencing VR started changing: "There has been new demand for VR headsets. During the pandemic, they were sold out on most platforms, because people work from home and want to have home entertainment. LBE is dead for the moment. But VR at home is a good model that I would experiment with!" CNBC, the world leader in business news and real-time financial market coverage, similarly made the point that Covid-19 has driven many individuals to work remotely, and could finally usher in their regular use of VR at home. The lines

between people's physical surroundings and virtual lives have been blurred due to quarantine. Such a trend may even push VR on the path to mainstream.

While incubating a new business model for VR at home, Salar also tried to reduce his personal risks by diversifying his income. The pandemic has forced him to adapt, but at the same time it created opportunities for the development of his film content production. All of a sudden, an abundance of time and room became available to write for two big projects: a film and a TV series.

Covid has put some emerging business models in the VR industry through an unprecedented test. Yet such a test can also bring about a turnaround. As we learn from the experiences of Salar, times of crisis create challenges and opportunities for nascent markets like VR, benefiting creative entrepreneurs. His case proves that the new normal of virtual working has accelerated the transformation of industries and further stimulated human creativity to counterbalance whatever negative is there. We came away from this conversation feeling excited about going virtual!

Tech-savvy's Glossary

VR: Virtual reality is a simulated experience that can be similar to or completely different from the real world. Applications of virtual reality can include entertainment and educational purposes. (source: Wikipedia)

AR: Augmented reality overlays digital content and information onto the physical world — as if they're actually there with you, in your own space. (source: Google AR & VR)

XR: Extended reality — an umbrella term encompassing augmented, virtual, and mixed reality technologies. (source: WIRED)

LBE: Location-based entertainment (LBE) VR is essentially a place of business that hosts VR experiences, allowing users to physically interact with the environment in a way they can't in their own home. (source: Forbes)

About the author

Salar Shahna is the president of the World XR Forum / CEO of Dirty Bacon, active in the film industry since 2008. Salar shifted to VR in 2014, joining the studio Apelab on the series Sequenced after developing transmedia strategies for the animation hit, My Life as A Zucchini. Since 2016, he has initiated a global hub for XR in Crans-Montana and extended his expertise in China notably curating for Shanghai's top contemporary art museums. Salar's production company Dirty Bacon develops original content with Swiss and global talent. Its latest co-production, Terrain, premieres at Venice VR Expanded in 2020. He is producing Daniel Schweizer's and Céline Tricart's Cosmic Birds to be released in 2021.

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Hedda Archbold: sole agent, producer... entrepreneur.

Kate Archbold

November 2020

Photo: © Julie Edwards Photography

There's no sugarcoating it: COVID-19 is damaging the cultural industries and is asking the utmost of cultural entrepreneurs. I had the pleasure of interviewing Hedda Archbold, an agent, producer and entrepreneur from London. Over the years she's represented 12 people in the entertainment industry. A big believer of synergy, she started producing some of her clients' endeavours - as a producer, she's currently involved with 3 film review podcasts, 2 film-centred magazines, a film review show on the BBC, and live events... or rather she was? Hedda talks of the current changes her teams had to undergo since COVID-19 struck, and on the changes that still need to occur...

When asked about how lockdown has affected her work, Archbold exclaims:"There was a moment where I thought: gosh, all my work is going to completely disappear!"

Not only did regulations forbid live events, but distributors decided to withhold releases. As most of the people she represents, and the work she produces have a close focus on film, Archbold and her teams had to get creative. Having a close relationship with the British Film Institute (BFI), which hosted the live events for both podcasts; Kermode On Film and Girls On Film, facilitated both endeavours being included in the BFI's online programming (#BFIAtHome). However, if no new movies were released what would the podcasts discuss?

Suddenly distributors decided to release online, however, the big blockbusters keep getting postponed until there is the off-chance that they earn their money back. Thus, independent films, which would normally be crushed by the blockbusters, were thriving. Kermode On Film and Girls On Film started to lay a heavier emphasis on films to stream, and classics to revisit.

Kermode On Film is Mark Kermode's podcast in which he talks about the thing he loves most - film.
Mark Kermode Live in 3D is a monthly live show where Mark talks to some of the industries finest at the British Film Institute. Can't be there? No problem, the recording of the show will be released on the Kermode On Film podcast!
Girls On Film is a female film review audio podcast hosted by Anna Smith. Girls On Film is either filmed in a studio, at a film festival or in front of a live audience in venues across the UK.
Current clients include Mark Kermode, Anna Smith, Simon Brew, Sir Christopher Frayling, William Ayot, Naomi Clifford and Geoff Mead.

Does this switch to online events have a financial impact? Archbold mentions that the revenue produced by the live events is missed, but not solely by her or her clients. The former financial model for the live events consisted of Archbold's team and the BFI splitting the box office revenue. Currently, the BFI looks on the shows as an opportunity to fundraise. It is paying HLA, Archbold's agency, a fee to produce shows for their YouTube channel, with a request to make a donation to the BFI at the end. However, it is not certain that the revenue that the shows produce will continue to be sufficient. The BFI is, "doing it because they want to keep film culture alive and lively and thriving until this is all over."

Archbold admits that this may be a short-term solution. If this lasts another year, then something has to change. She believes that the financial models in the industry are under pressure. The podcasts, for now, are financially viable. They can cheaply be recorded from home, and are still receiving sponsorships and partnership.

For now, the economic situation is stable for Hedda's teams, but what about the social value? Hedda is optimistic! Their listening figures have risen, something she says has to do with a bigger social media presence. She also takes on a political perspective; people feel out of touch with Trump and Johnson. Two of the world's most influential political leaders

Source: @GirlsOnFilm_Pod (Twitter)

are making callous statements, making people turn toward their communities and realising that they need each other. In her hometown of London, she feels that people are realising the need for shared experiences. "...it's also making people more aware they need each other and that they need art and culture and beauty and consolation in their lives." Archbold cites grassroots initiatives, such as film clubs, with an emphasis on human connection.

Archbold admits that even though the podcasts have community-building efforts in place, they haven't found the best way to achieve it yet. When Mark Kermode Live in 3D and Girls On Film launch a video on the BFI's YouTube page, the team live-tweets and the audience will engage. Furthermore, she mentions that both podcasts have a patreon for people who want to support the podcasts financially and view unseen content. Archbold quickly mentions that she does not really love the format of patreon, as she feels that everyone should be able to be a part of a community: not just those who can afford it. Suddenly, a lightbulb appears above Archbold's head, she says: "Now that I'm talking to you about this, I'm thinking maybe there's a way we can have something like this, an Ask-Me-Anything session, or maybe a public Zoom meeting?"

What about long-term positive effects on the changes in her work? Archbold states that the UK is extremely focused on itself and the US, and that is reflected in the cinemas. Now that independent European movies are released, it makes for a more varied diet, “It’s great to see so many more subtitled films from different cultures being reviewed in the newspapers and on television. I think that’s a fantastic outcome!”

Archbold reflects on availability; not only are live events now accessible for a larger audience, streaming services are expanding availability by growing their inventory. But currently, movies that were made prior to the virus are being released. Archbold makes a point of mentioning how difficult it is to make a socially-distanced film. She takes Cameron’s Avatar as an example; the crew has been shipped to an island to create a ‘bubble’ while shooting. However, not everyone has the budget to rent an entire island. Zeitchick (2020) predicts that until we have a vaccine, fewer locations, extras and romance scenes will be used. That only covers the content, to actually make a movie, many more accommodations have to be made (i.e. endless doctors and tests).

When asked if she is positive about the future, Archbold chuckles, “…depends on what time of the day you ask!” For now, her strategy is just to keep going, as she feels a social obligation as a producer of a medium that can entertain and put people in touch with art socially distanced.

Check out Kermode On Film and Girls On Film on all your usual podcast platforms.

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The Aesthetics of Emptiness

Jitske Nap

November 2020

The concept for this series of photographs arose during the first weeks of the Covid-19 lockdown 2020 in Amsterdam. I wanted to show the effect of the pandemic on a topic that is close to my heart: the nightclubs and event spaces in Amsterdam. There I started with photography and I taught myself to operate the camera.

Every building has its own atmosphere. Some venues even have a certain status. Artists dream of performing there one day. They stand for quality and creativity.

What fascinates me about nightlife is the dreamworld created by the interplay of light, sound and human energy. That dreamworld can be compared with the story of Alice in Wonderland. You fall down the rabbit hole and transfer into a magic world, where

everything is possible. This fantasyland is controlled by the dj's, who rise above the crowd like gods on their throne and control them with their wheels of steel.

When the night ends and the lights go up, this magical world disappears like waking up from a dream. From one moment to the next it is gone and it is hard to believe it ever existed.

This effect recurred when shooting the empty nightclubs. Some of them are even hard to recognize. The buildings changed into strange structures of metal and steel. They seemed to have shrunken, like they had been injected with Alice in Wonderland's shrinking agent. Years of partying had left their traces like wrinkles on the walls. The stage that looked like a throne had been degraded to a mere piece of wood.

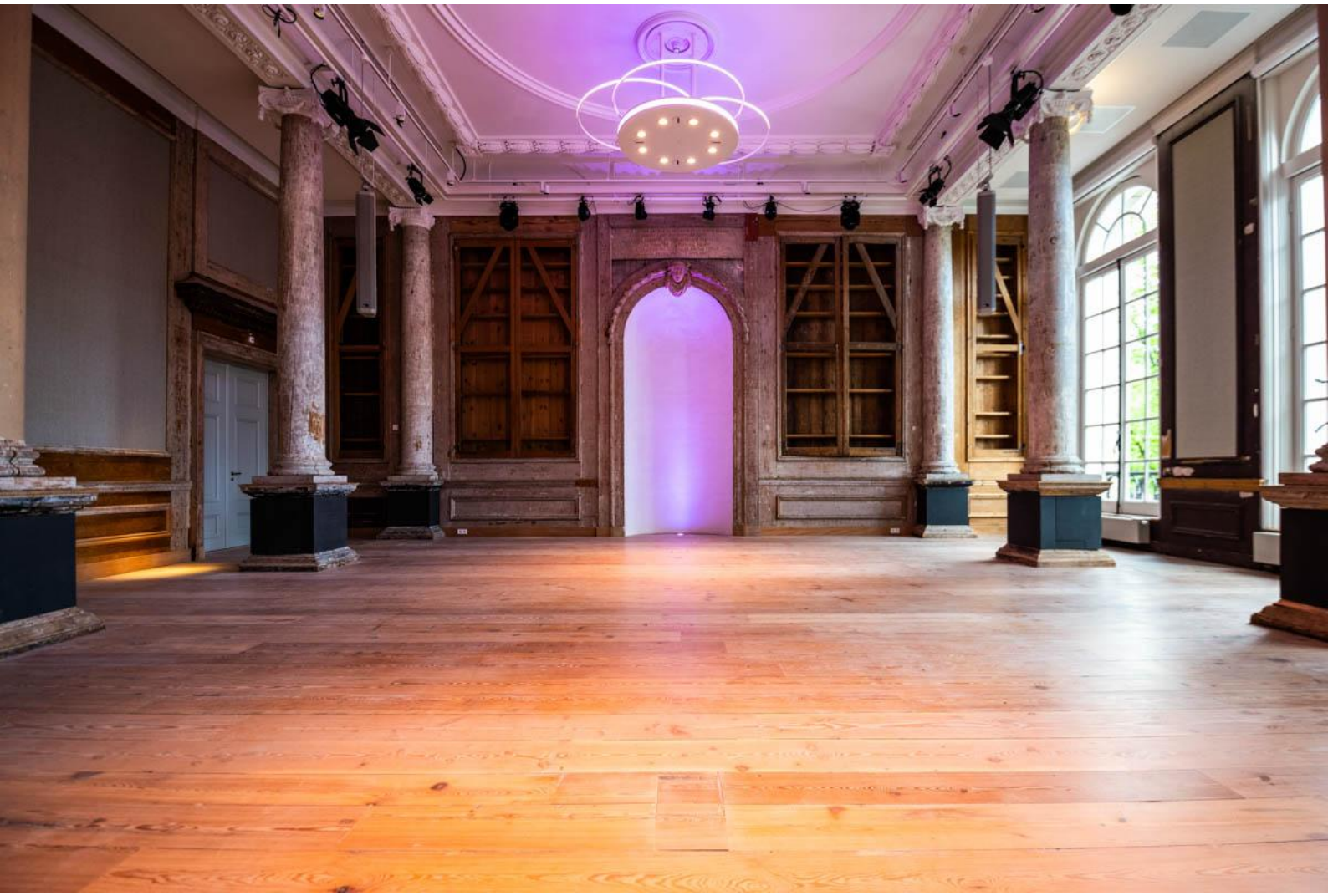
1. **Marktkantine** - Main Hall. In 1936 the Marktkantine was built as a canteen for market vendors. In the 1950s it became a theater and in the early 90s a club, when the dance scene started to evolve in the Netherlands.

2. **Westerunie** - Main Hall.
The Westerunie is a nightclub/ event space located at the Westergas cultural park. The Westergas used to be a coal factory, which was built in 1883 by British Imperial Continental Gas Association.

3. **Thuishaven** - Circus Tent.
Thuishaven is not a club, but a permanent festival experience. It consists of several stages and bars. The circus tent can be considered their main stage.

4. **Jimmy Woo** - Downstairs Area.
The concept of Jimmy Woo was created by nightlife entrepreneur Casper Reinders in 2003. As a Chinese antique collector he wanted to create a club where he could put his collection on display.

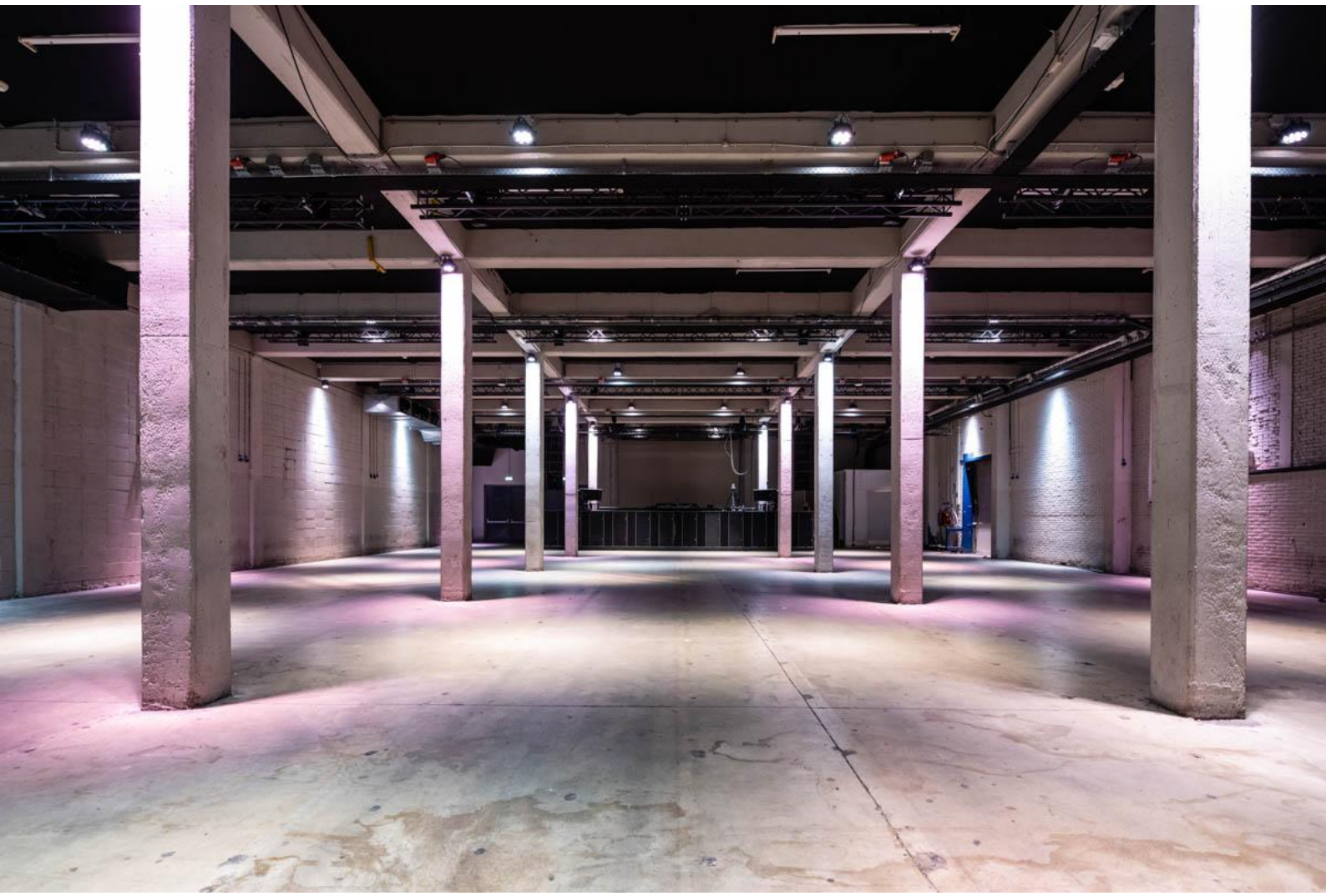
5. **Het Concertgebouw** - Main Hall.
The Concertgebouw, is a classical music venue that was built in 1886 and has one of the best acoustics in the world. On special occasions such as Amsterdam Dance Event, an annual electronic music festival, the Concertgebouw hosts house and techno parties.



6. **Felix Meritus**

Felix Meritus is a cultural centre at the Keizersgracht in Amsterdam. It was built in 1788 in the Louis XVIth style. The building has just undergone 3 years of renovation. It was supposed to be reopened at the beginning of 2020 but it got delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

7. **Warehouse** - Main Hall.
Warehouse was originally a peanut factory, located in the industrial West of Amsterdam. The location became famous in the early 90s for its large scale rave parties called Multigroove. After being closed for 20 years they reopened in 2012.



8. **Bret** - Main Hall.

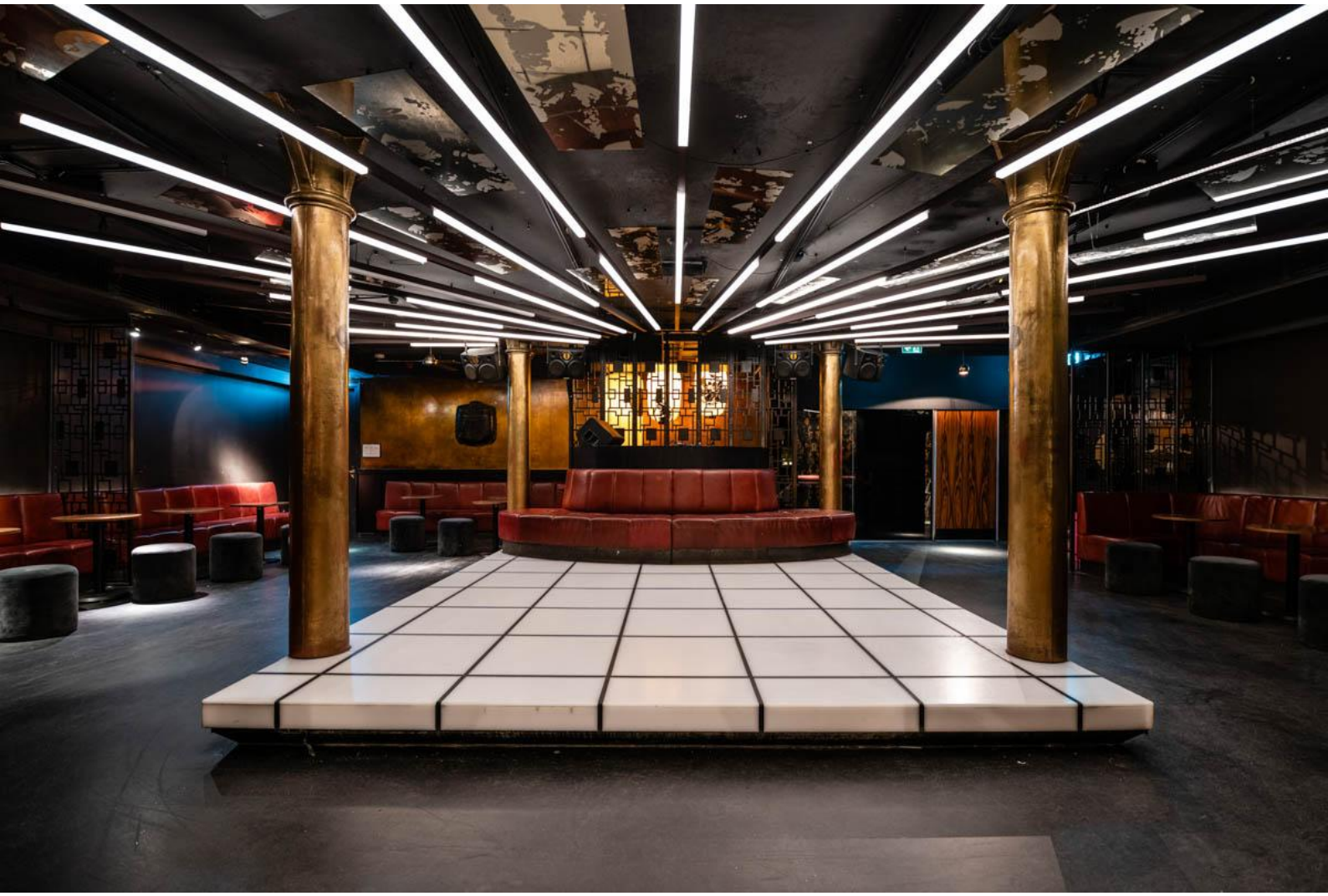
Bret is a bar, restaurant and nightclub made of fire red, metal sea containers. The surrounding square was transformed into a lush park. It is an oasis between the grey office buildings it is surrounded by.

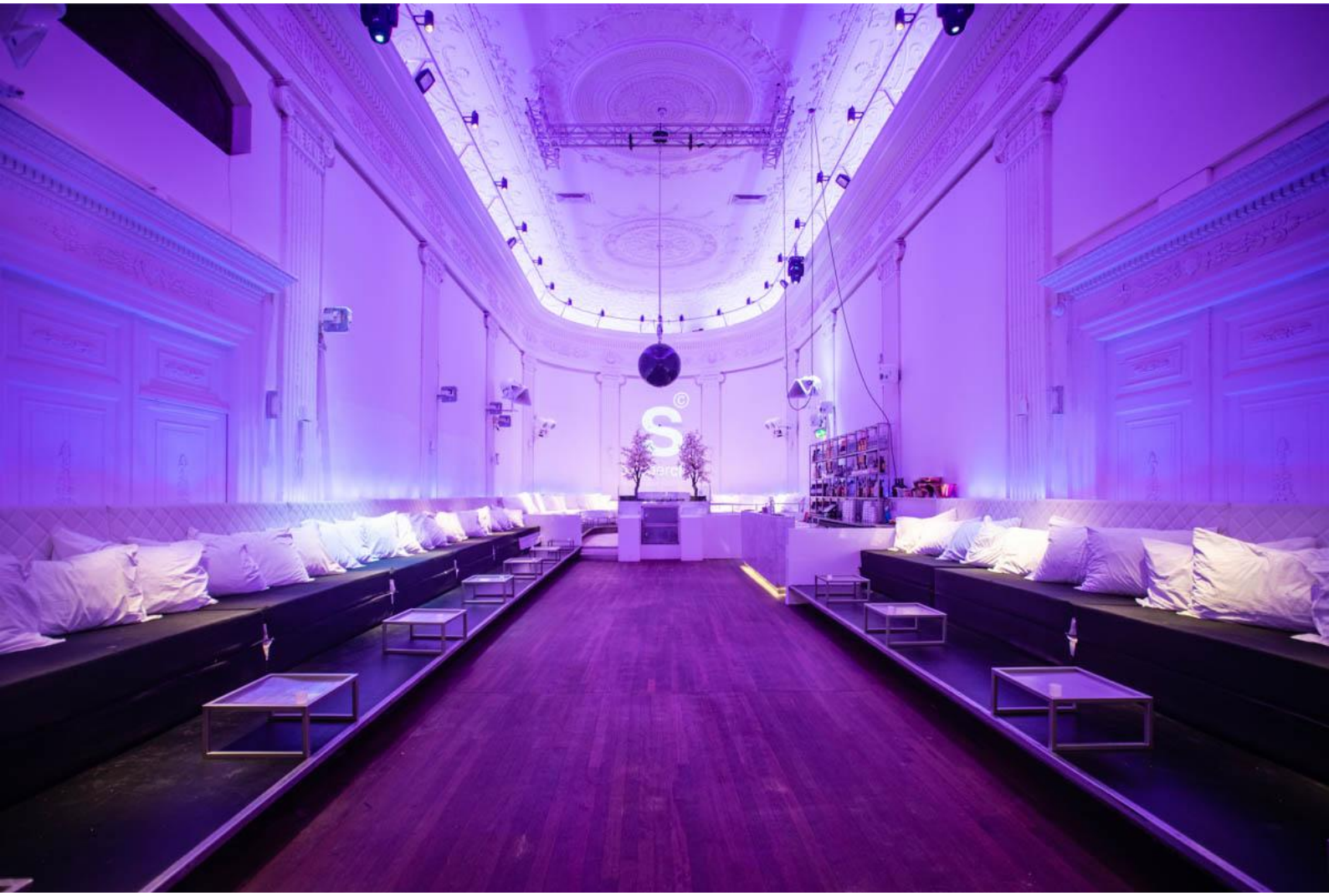
9. **Thuishaven** - Hangar.
Thuishaven is located in the Western outskirts of Amsterdam, surrounded by scrap yards. The materials of these scrap yards were incorporated into the design of the site.

10. **Melkweg** - Small Hall.
The melkweg is located in an old sugar and milk factory. It's a multi-disciplinary venue that hosts hundreds of concerts, club nights, movie and theater performances, with a total of 540.000 visitors on a yearly basis.

11. **Paradiso** - Main Hall.
Paradiso has been a cultural institute for almost 50 years. It is one of the most famous nightclubs/ concert halls in Amsterdam. All the great stars have performed here, from The Beatles, to Snoop Dogg to Adele.

12. **Jimmy Woo** - Upstairs Area.
As a publicity stunt Casper Reinders convinced the public that the club was owned by a wealthy chinese businessman named Jimmy Woo. When newspapers tried to set up an interview with this mystery man, Reinders showed up.

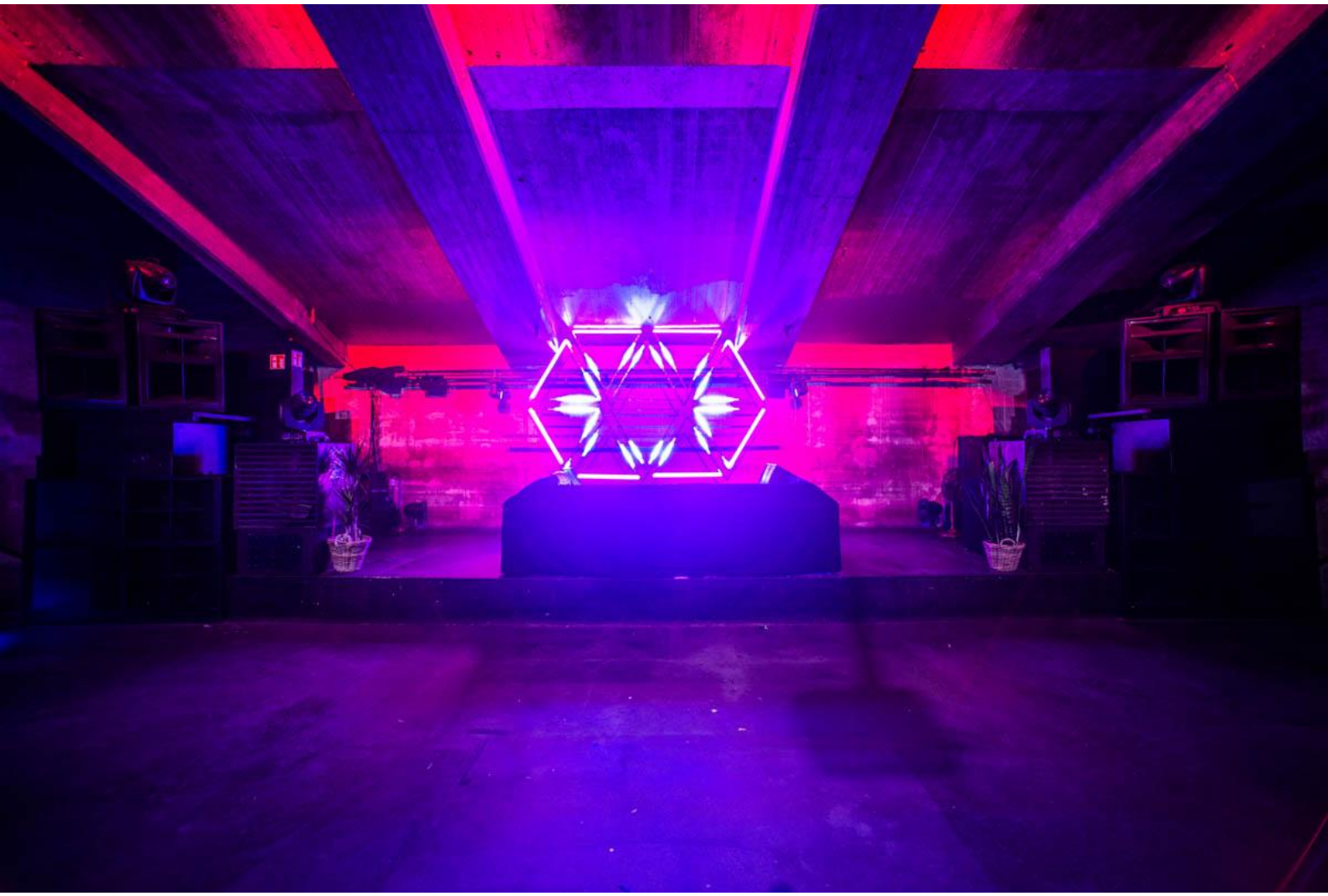




13. **Supperclub**

The supperclub is a restaurant and a nightclub in one. They are most famous for their dinner shows.

14. **Warehouse** - Salon.
Warehouse consists of 5 areas, of which this is the salon. The venue can host up to 2500 people.



15. **Radion** - Main Hall.
Radion is a bar, restaurant and nightclub, which is located in the former dentistry centre ACTA that is now a cultural breeding ground for artists.

About the author

Jitske Nap is a visual designer and photographer (www.jitskenap.com), and an Alumnus of the Master Arts & Culture Studies (Cultural Economics & Entrepreneurship) at Erasmus University (2016-2017).

Meeting Juanito Jones

Adrien Delescaille and Pablo Pérez le Maignan

April 2020

“The lockdown was like an introspective moment. I grew up intellectually”

“I am a curious person”

Architect, professor, DJ, stage designer, consultant, festival organiser or even podcaster, it is impossible to categorise Juanito Jones, as he shakes up the barriers between disciplines. He is what we could call a “polymath”, a “dabbler artist”, or even a “jack of all trades”. His thirst for discovery and exploration has led him to develop a diversified set of skills that

allow him to add value to whatever he does, as he himself explains, “people can pretty much call me and ask me for anything.” This specificity was built during his architectural studies, which instead of lasting 5 years, took 10, because “the first semester of each year, I didn’t go to university and I only worked” Most of the time this work was in different sectors.

With great humility he nevertheless confides to us that he “feel[s] like a failure,” because he finds himself “not very good at anything.” But his career speaks for itself: exhibited at the MoMA; DJ at the Venice Biennale of Architecture; speaker for TEDXMadrid 2017 or founder of Mecedorama, a design chair start-up. He is a young artist with a portfolio that is already well furnished. As a serial-innovator we asked him if he would find it insulting to be called a cultural entrepreneur, given the business connotation of the latter term. On the contrary, for him “an entrepreneur is someone who gets shit together [...] it’s someone that has a dream and wants the dream to become real. And in that sense, there’s business dreams and there are other different dreams.” In conclusion, “entrepreneur is not necessarily a bad word.”

Resourcing during lockdown

An essential part of Juanito’s artistic life was put on hold at the start of the pandemic. “There is of course one area of activity that has been completely cancelled, it is the one that involves getting people together. This includes my job as designer for different music festivals, the parties I used to throw in clubs here or my DJ gigs. Everything that involves getting in touch or organising events with more than six people.” Juanito nevertheless preferred to highlight the positive aspects of these months spent at home. “I was able to use that time in different things that normally I wouldn’t do. For instance, I read a lot... I used that time to read and to do research, to read all the books I had at home that I had not had the chance to read. It was like an introspective moment. I grew up intellectually.” He insisted on the importance for a creator to have moments of respite: “you can’t always be doing stuff like creating stuff. You also have to consume cultural products.”

What about streaming? It has not yet succeeded in tempting this lover of human contact. “It’s true there’s a lot of things going onto streaming platforms, but I haven’t dived into the possibilities of streaming yet. I was a bit reluctant, at the beginning they called me to DJ during different streaming lives. I really did not want to DJ through a laptop, I can’t control the environment so much.” The atmosphere of the pandemic did not inspire him: “I was in another mood, you know, so COVID got everyone in a different mood. I really wasn’t in the mood to share music at that point.”

Juanito is actually more disorientated by the gradual resumption of activities rather than the lockdown: “It’s a bit crazy, you know, because one week you can do something and next week it’s illegal. One week, they say they’re going to close the parks, and the week after, they say something else. This means it’s really tough to focus on things like jobs related to getting a lot of people together.” He does indeed raise an interesting question: is it better to do nothing at all or to make plans and schemes for projects that may fall through overnight? It is said that the journey is more important than the destination, but what happens when the destination suddenly changes or disappears? Is it better for the performing arts to reinvent themselves digitally for the current period? Or should performances be programmed in a hurry when the number of cases is declining? Many programmers must be asking themselves such questions during this unprecedented time.

On the other hand, a crisis can sometimes present opportunities. As he explains, “situations did appear because of COVID.” Juanito refers here to his current work for a museum in the area of Madrid. “These people wouldn’t have called me because they would have allocated the money to someone else. But because of the situation they thought I would be a good person for the job.” While he prefers to keep the details of this new project under wraps, he did tell us that it questions the disruption of rituals in the current health crisis. “Very important rituals in Spain were cancelled, like going to church. Many people were feeling empty because they needed that as a part of themselves. Rituals are what makes sense in life, what creates identity. We are who we are because we do what we do, those kinds of rituals. Each year we have holidays in August, we have Christmas and we get together with our family and so on. If you start cancelling those things, your environment is getting fragile and people do not understand anymore who they are…”

It’s not the first time that Juanito has investigated rituals. For his master’s thesis he studied the link between religious rituals and rave culture, particularly at the Burning Man Festival. More information is available on his Instagram profile jjjjuanitojjjones, which we strongly advise you visit while waiting for updates on his new project!

Who is Juanito Jones?

Juanito Jones is a Spanish polymath situated in Madrid whose work has been exhibited at MoMA and MAK. He is currently working for a "Spanish museum" on the impact of the current crisis on our rituals (without allowing us to know more).

About the authors

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From producing theatre to teaching children... how Covid-19 pushed creative minds to bend their path

Carmen Garcia Audi

December 2020

Image Used With Kind Permission of Charlotte Sickler. Source: Charlotte Sickler.

In pre-Covid times, employment in the Cultural & Creative sector was often precarious and seasonal. Here, I explore how art and culture mirror society. What is the initial reaction to a blast, when uncertainty does not equal hesitation? How long does temporality last? When are doubts eventually resolved, and confidence and optimism lead to determination?

As a consequence of the pandemic, the future of artists, creators, and cultural operators has been severely threatened. First, the confinement provoked postponements, cancellations, closures of events, live performances, exhibitions, and more. Then, social distancing measures enforcement and the resulting change in audience behaviour followed. By now, some interruptions have become irreversible. Companies are closing down and venues are being permanently shut. The only question left is - what's next?

Public institutions like UNESCO, OECD, the Council of Europe and the European Union are continuously publishing reports on the impact of the pandemic and roadmaps for the

sector's recovery. Urgent support packages have been released and more long-term ones are in the pipeline. The sector itself has vigorously collected masses of data and published many surveys and mappings. They identified outstanding difficulties and spotted relevant needs. The sector actively advocated for a sound public response to the challenge, whilst it kept on creating.

To better understand the immense, we scrutinise the small. Our zoom focus is on Charlotte Sickler, a young cultural worker and freelance entrepreneurial theatre producer living in Rotterdam. We talked with her about her profession, the sector, the present, the future… and Covid-19. She confirms the precarity of the sector in the pre-Covid era: "I was trying to get a steady contract but it was very difficult to get away from the freelancing world, absolutely overcrowded and generally underpaid."

At the moment of the outbreak, Charlotte was immersed in three projects: she was a producer for the Walhalla theatre in Rotterdam, manager support to the Circus Treurdier in Amsterdam and business leader for a very small theatre group in the village of Diever in Drenthe in the northern Netherlands. Like many people at the beginning of the outbreak, she didn't take it too seriously. Some delays and rescheduling occurred, but she did not imagine that uncertainty and (re-)planning were going to last this long. Initially, the Diever theatre group continued rehearsing, with self-imposed distancing, for as long as they were allowed. Nervousness started to build up among some colleagues, while others remained relaxed. Finding the balance within teams was challenging and increasingly destabilising.

As the pandemic progressed, the initial surprise and indecision were overtaken by realism and adaptability. Covid changed the very core of Charlotte's theatre productions. As the theatre sector adapted, productions were increasingly live streamed. Some even showed a notable increase in audience. Productions under construction "will be fully Covid-proof" she says: the venue will be much larger (an ancient wine factory) and the amphitheatre format will be changed. Parallel to the performance, the audience will play a game through an app specifically developed for the piece. If the live performance cannot take place, people will watch it online and play the game, anyway (The interview took place October 20,2020. Eventually, the performance was indeed streamed).The pandemic has forced creatives to juggle with different scenarios, to go with the flow and to adapt on the go. As a thinking process, this is certainly more sophisticated and, in the end, also more creative than in normal times, whatever normal was.

Charlotte has mixed feelings about the public measures undertaken to support the cultural sector in the light of Covid. On the one hand, she is pleased that pre-Covid funding schemes reacted flexibly to the required postponements and cancellations. Funding rules got eased and procedures were loosened. Personally, she went through a chaotic attempt with TOZO, the temporary self-employment income support and loan scheme approved by the Dutch Government. Several months later, when she had almost forgotten about it, she was notified that she had qualified for funding. These grants, together with some savings, allowed her to survive through the turbulent times. On the other hand, Charlotte feels that governmental measures benefited the major players. Not only has the Dutch Basic Infrastructure continued to benefit from tailored schemes, but schemes normally targeting minor actors, like the Fonds Podiumkunsten, have been partially diverted. Almost 9 million euros from the Fonds Podiumkunsten were reallocated to larger institutions defined as Dutch Basic Infrastructure. As a consequence only 78 out of 146 applications that had been recognised as excellent and potential recipients from the special measures released by the Government, received funding. The Dutch government argues that Basic Infrastructure support will eventually trickle down to small entrepreneurs. Charlotte, supported by evidence in her sector. disagrees. She was already concerned about the Government's attitude towards culture, prior to Covid-19. "Whereas Dutch politicians poorly defend the social or economic role of arts & culture, Angela Merkel improvises a passionate call for preserving culture and understanding its critical value" laments Charlotte. She thinks the Netherlands and its political representatives do not take culture seriously like other countries do, but, "it is the way it is!".

Charlotte's opinion about the sector and its role in society has also changed since Covid. Previously, she believed culture had an educational, political and intellectual role. Thinking about what surrounds us and passing messages through the art and cultural forms were part of the sector's mission. Now she argues that arts & culture should first and foremost aim at entertaining people, releasing them from the harsh reality. But listening to her ongoing projects, she has difficulties in deserting the core values of arts. Charlotte is working on a piece about faith and the dilemma between acceptance and debate. The interactive game that will accompany the performance requires the audience to make constant choices; like Covid and its related measures force us to do constantly. "Art & cultural forms are mirrors of society", she says.

Charlotte has started studying to become a primary school teacher. She says that she always liked the idea, but that the consequences of the pandemic have pressed her to make the move. In doing so, Charlotte feels like she is cheating her call and her milieu.

Abandoning it in the middle of the storm. She says, however, that by getting away, maybe she can help a sector that is traditionally overcrowded with professionals competing for precarious jobs. She hopes to combine this new job with her passion, at least part-time. But as Charlotte prepares for the worst, she maintains that a passion for the arts, motivation for socially responsible practice and creative adaptability will guide her. Charlotte concedes, “I am optimistic by nature”. Indeed, she is.

About the author

Carmen Garcia Audi is a Master student in Arts and Culture Studies (Cultural Economics & Entrepreneurship) from Erasmus University (2020-2021).

Wynanda Zeevaarder: Being an artist in the Corona-era

Damisa Lakkanapinit and Tristan Drost

December 2020

Growing up in a musical family and 32 years of experience in the performing arts industry have made Wynanda Zeevaarder what she is today: a talented multi-genre singer, producer, performer and a vocal coach. Wynanda was enjoying a varied musical career, until the pandemic hit. This is a chronicle based on an interview with a passionate musician who was confronted with the limitations of online music classes, but who also saw an online community standing up and who was energized to make new plans.

Wynanda's interest in music started back in her childhood by playing musical instruments and taking singing classes. It was her teacher who persuaded her to attend the music conservatory and Wynanda's career kick-started right after she graduated. She believes that music allows people to express and experience a lot of feelings; music can improve children's growth, mentally, emotionally as well as academically and that music is relaxing for people of all ages too. As a vocal coach, Wynanda always feels gratified to pass on the happiness of singing to all generations. When she is giving lessons, she is often delighted and touched by her students' exhilaration of the sound that came from their mouths. As a

singer she enjoys sharing her happiness with her audience, next to becoming happy herself. One of Wynanda's favourite projects in her career is Hildegard, a contemporary opera written by a jazz composer. The opera tells the story of Hildegard of Bingen, a German saint and Benedictine abbess, driven by the power and intelligence of women. Wynanda describes it as a new classical style with hints of improvisation and the use of contemporary singing techniques like belting and screaming. She got to 'belt', occasionally whisper and scream her heart out, which is quite unusual for a classical-singing show like opera. It was also the first project she did after having physical problems that she feared would harm her exquisite voice. Having a comeback in such an innovative project whilst applying new singing techniques was euphoric.

Then the pandemic hit, and everything changed. Wynanda had to move her vocal lessons online. It was awkward, she said, noting that the sound would be delayed by a second. It is not pleasant at all not being able to sing together in a synchronised tempo and accompanying students on the piano is harder than usual. When the strict lockdown had been temporarily lifted, Wynanda could reopen her studio in Utrecht for a while. Singing lessons took place with a big plastic shield between participants. It gave her a window of opportunity, even if she lost some clients because many of her students are choral singers who need to be able to practice together.

The pandemic made it hard for any singer to get singing jobs. It also diminished the opportunities to produce new performances. It was already difficult before the pandemic hit, as it requires big budgets, great PR, and thousands of emails. The pandemic has led numerous freelancers in the performing arts to lose income and/or funding to create new performances. Wynanda has been worried for her career because of the extreme competition in singing. Lots of younger singers are waiting to take over and replace the more established and older ones. However, it makes her proud to see her students stepping up, realising that she has been able to pass on skills and proficiency to others.

Despite the difficulties that many singers and musicians are experiencing, there is positivity in the industry. Wynanda refers to the development of a group on social media, through which music freelancers are reaching out to each other. Sometimes, they will offer short-term jobs and hire someone through that group. Wynanda noted that many people survived through the lockdown because of the arts and culture: movies, books, and music have given a lot of meaning and solace to people's lives. Wynanda believes that people will return to experiencing the performing arts after the lockdown. In spite of the setbacks she experienced, Wynanda has instigated some new initiatives. She decided that she wanted to

produce a music album with a mixture of classical music and ethnic folk. This has made her extremely busy, alongside her vocal coaching job.

As a musical/animated film aficionado, I had been particularly struck by some of the things that Wynanda brought up during the interview. She had mentioned that she did animation synchronisations for the Dutch versions of animated movies. After the interview ended, we had a casual chat, and I asked her about it. She sat back, thought a bit, and said she did the ladies' soprano ensemble voices for Beauty and the Beast and suddenly started to sing a snippet from the opening song 'Belle'. As if it were not enough, she added Pocahontas and Anastasia, which she claimed to be her favourite animation film. That was the moment I was astounded, because I had watched the Dutch version of Anastasia just a week before. I found myself grinning like an idiot for a day. My hope for a light at the end of a tunnel for the performing arts increased immensely. It is my belief, just like Wynanda's, that this industry will, at some point, be back stronger than ever.

About the author

Damisa Lakkanapinit is a student of the master Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship (2020-2021). This text came into being with the enormous help of Tristan Drost, who made contact with Wynanda Zeevaarder and assisted in proofreading.

Wellbeing and inspiration through arts and culture in corona time

At the Shit! Corona Symposium in November 2020 we held facilitated break-out discussion groups focussing on wellbeing. Janna Michael and Sue Robinson reflect separately on the conversations they chaired

Introspection and baking

Janna Michael

What happens in our leisure time when we are 'stuck' in our own homes? The pandemic has hit people's everyday routines and professional existences quite hard, not even to mention the countless ill and dead. The participants in our breakout room come from different places in Europe with different professions within the cultural sector and various stories about how the pandemic is affecting their lives. They share being unable to follow their daily routines of socializing, engaging with culture outside of their homes..

For many this has brought, among other things, boredom. Boredom has often been linked to creativity (Mann & Cadman, 2014; Thorp 2020) and not for nothing we have been observing countless initiatives helping people to get creative during the lockdowns. Free online courses on creative writing, journaling, and painting have emerged. The digitalisation of culture accelerated, more and more cultural institutions started to move their output online, leading to a great influx of streamed concerts, dance events, guided museum tours and so forth. Our discussion showed a range of different ways of engaging with culture during the crises. A theatre business manager reflected on how her company worked even harder to set up new, corona-proof theatre productions which were performed to small audiences, adapting all their plans constantly to be in line with current policy measures. Cultural policy, not usually a field to quickly adapt to new situations, started to act quickly and attempted to adjust to the new cultural world in 2020. One of the participants had started a new initiative to support local artists and a felting-artist in the conversations shared how she tried to move her workshops online which turned out rather difficult. Her customers used to come for the physical experience and the online format appealed less to them. Her story highlights how having a social experience is a driver for engaging in creative practices.

The online-ballet classes of one participant didn't feel entirely right and from the conversation it became clear that there was a strong need for detachment from the screen.

The empty shelves for flour, yeast and other baking ingredients in supermarkets during the lockdowns supports the theory that this holds for the wider population. People went wild in their kitchen detaching from their screens. In our group, two people shared that they picked up playing an instrument and finally found time to properly practice and develop their skill. One of them also attempted jamming with a friend via Skype which worked relatively well. Yet, as another participant reflected: “you can create lots of work as an artist but you cannot share it, you cannot give it the dimensions and extensions you would like to in other circumstances”. With the absence of workshops during lockdowns the felting-artist reported how she engaged more with her own artistic creations which she intends to keep up in the future. Self-care and well-being resound in these accounts of attending one’s own creative expressions and also making use of the lockdown for quality time with children and searching ways to connect with physically distant friends.

Reflecting on whether cultural policy should support the changing cultural world the quick answer was yes, but one cultural policy maker reflected that they can only support initiatives that are being proposed. Her office struggled with ‘we had a lot of the same ideas’ involving many podcasts for instance. Stimulate the development of ‘normal’ production with guarantees so that existing initiatives can develop their practice further as well as new initiatives that go beyond simply moving established content online and instead develop something new.

From the discussion in a limited amount of time, the following themes emerged, worthy of further research and exploration:

- Cultural forms that not only ‘move online’ but develop beyond a mere translation from analog to digital. Here the aspect of sociality appears crucial.
- How meaningful is social interaction online, beyond the comment section and how can it be sustained through time?
- How does cultural life develop following a pandemic that may have changed our habits in the long term?

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Try not to force creativity

Sue Robinson

During the first UK lockdown, social media and column inches of news articles resounded with creative things to do: take up a new language, learn an instrument, bake banana bread (Guardian 2021 weblink). It is equally true that many people have suffered from poor mental health, brought about changes in employment, family stresses, poor physical health or isolation. (The Health Foundation, June 2020) The creative cultural sector's means of earning a living has been hamstrung by pandemic lockdowns and social distancing rules. In the UK, the Creative Industries Federation research (June 17 2020) shows over 400,000 people in the creative sector lost their living last year.

Alumni from the UK, Netherlands, Belgium and Poland spent some symposium time musing on how creatives have used creativity to support their own wellbeing during the pandemic.

First observations were the direct economic impact on creative businesses. Whilst it is easy to assume an artist can work alone and sell online, the visual arts sector relies on in-person social connections to support art sales. The experience of a live event/show can push buyers to compete and buy work and the feeling is not the same with online activity because that feeling of competition or buzz was not there. Whilst at some times, rules permitted smaller indoor gatherings, the core art market of some galleries are a more vulnerable older age group. Customers to galleries were making other consumer spending choices (shopping/DIY) and not prioritising art.

In contrast, digital media has evolved and thrived. Those alumni in this sector have been able to be productive. One attendee had focussed on digital innovation and had organised streaming platforms for musicians. However, the performing arts were struggling - reliant as they are on audiences for feedback and income, and close contact with other creatives to produce work. Dancers, one attendee noted, were struggling to keep working effectively, much more so than her musician colleagues who had adapted to online gigs. She had been involved in live dance workshops led by retired ballet dancers working with people with restricted mobility. This had been a supportive community but had not succeeded so well online. It had proved difficult for the group to replicate their creative work digitally.

Two attendees had been involved in developing festivals which have also been seriously impacted upon. One worked as a freelance festival producer but she was now in a non-creative job hopeful of starting with the production of a location theatre project in the

spring. Another attendee, was involved in a student festival which was originally going to be live and online, and was now online only.

Government support for the arts varies from country to country, and sector by sector. Without a safety net it is challenging for the non-subsidised cultural providers to survive. Making a case for the value of the cultural sector when other factors (healthcare, housing) are taking precedent is a perennial argument made more urgent by the pandemic. Recommendations for policy makers from the group were to consider the whole cultural sector, not just the subsidised elements. Planning projects is challenging when there is an insecurity of resources or long term strategy: " ...the subsidised cultural institutes have a little bit of funding, but commercial companies don't have anything, they have to make a profit, which is not possible in any way now". There was little financial support for private galleries in the Netherlands, but money would flow if visitors were allowed. It was commented that half of the galleries will not survive until September without support.

Creatives who have lost work or struggle without a structure find creative activities challenging (even in the form of hobbies). The primary focus of finding an income and everyday survival interfered with the ability to be personally creative. One had found their energies taken up with learning a new (non creative) job and had felt low due to her creative work drying up. Another was drawing but as she commented: "It's a long haul-really up and down (I was) really motivated in April, but now not in that place." A third was more creative in the first lockdown "watching a lot of movies, cooking a lot, experimenting...". Another attendee who did not work in the creative sector observed that "when you are passionate about your work or creative it's tough to see it all going away"

The struggles of creatives to sustain their own creativity is reflective of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Meeting basic needs of housing, or generating income take up mental space, leaving little room for other pursuits. Maslow (1943) observed that lower level deficit needs (safety, warmth, food) have to be met before someone can progress to higher level needs such as self actualisation. If creativity is your route to an income and that becomes impossible, then income earning has to be a priority. One attendee had felt low due to her creative work drying up; learning a new job "had left her with little headspace for much else".

The group discussed what advice they would give a fellow creative should they find themselves in a similar position in the future. Mindset is important: finding simple pleasures and focussing on the everyday, whether it was a nice meal, or making a drawing

rather than trying to plan ahead or make bigger steps. Try not to force creativity: “It will come eventually but forcing it doesn't help the process”; “You have to feel it”.

Although this was a small sample group discussion, it reflected wider issues worthy of further research. The need to meet basic needs overrides the ability to be creative; supportive government intervention enables longer term planning; some art forms had adapted better and shown more resilience than others; social interaction fuels the cultural economy (sales/audiences and creating collaborative work) and digital platforms are key to not only accessing audiences, but enabling creatives to diversify.

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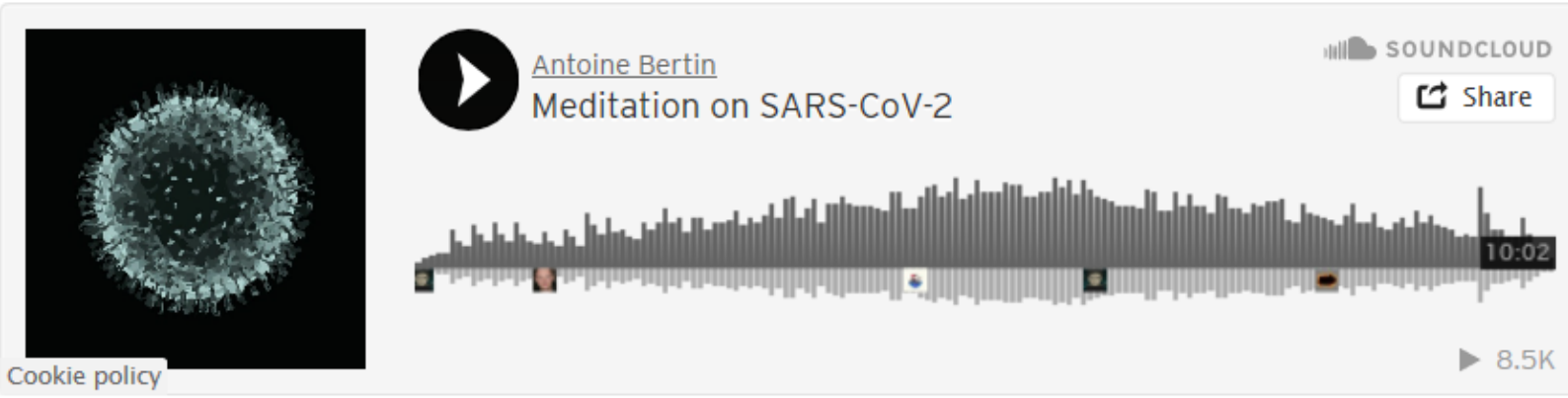
Artists reflecting on Covid-19: from limitation to inspiration

Sietske d'Arnaud van Boeckholtz

February 2021



Screenshot Taken From the Website www.antoinebertin.org

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the arts and culture sector has been challenged in many ways. The sector has, however, also proven to be resilient. For instance, museums as well as other cultural institutions have started to cultivate virtual connections with isolated audiences by using the technological resources of the internet. They have initiated new opportunities to experience art such as online exhibitions, podcasts, workshops and live tours by curators and experts. These are amongst various creative attempts to stay connected to audiences and attract new ones. After all, people have started to look for new ways to entertain themselves or break up the eat-sleep-zoom-repeat routine. Cultural institutions and audiences, however, have not been the only ones to seek new opportunities. Artists too have used their creativityl to reflect on the situation at hand and have used it to inspire something new. Here I bring you a selection of examples from the Netherlands and beyond.

In March 2020, the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam joined forces with Mister Motley, an online magazine that links the visual arts to life. Together they set up the project, The World After, for which they invited 16 artists to respond to questions raised by the Covid-19 crisis. Yair Callender is one of the artists that took part. He answered the question: 'is the image of physical isolation that many are experiencing now something we should take into account in the future, and how can art connect in this?' Callender sees beauty in isolation because we have time to think and reflect on the past. He illustrates this by means of a video in which he folds an origami bird step by step to symbolise the feeling of boredom

that comes with sitting at home all the time. Yet, finishing the bird reveals a feeling of hope. The song in the background is 'Minha Galera' from the band Manu Chao, and praises different facets of life, such as friends, love, football, capoeira and food. Callender's video is a reflection on the insights that he has gained as an individual, namely that there are activities that he can still undertake, which give him hope and a realisation that there are things he is grateful for. Click the link to watch the video! https://oudekerk.nl/programma/the-world-after-3-yair-callender/

Another artist who embraced the situation and used it to create something new is Danielle van Ark, a Dutch artist whose works often relate to the transience of time. Since her first solo exhibition in 2006, at FOAM in Amsterdam, her work has been shown worldwide. She questioned how artists pay their bills in times of (the corona) crisis and found an answer by launching a series on Instagram, called Bills. It resonates with Jonathan Monk's account (@monkpictures), who posts random receipts with drawings of contemporary artworks made by him. In a similar vein, van Ark uses the bills that she receives as the 'canvas' for an artwork. The amount mentioned on the bill is at the same time the title and the price. With this, she provides insight into the fragility of the life of an artist nowadays: not selling anything, but receiving invoices. If anything has become clear from the past year, it is the collective ability to adapt to drastic measures and new situations. In an unconventional way, Danielle illustrates just that. She captures today's contexts making it relatable to others in the arts while making it accessible and affordable for audiences. Curious about her project? Check out her Instagram account: https://www.instagram.com/danielle_van_ark/ or take a look at her website: http://www.daniellevanark.com/2020/12/1634/

Audio artist Antoine Bertin saw an opportunity to create something new out of the situation. Bertin uses the hidden musicality of the coronavirus as a means to create a soothing meditation that can be used to return some tranquillity into people's lives, during a crisis that everyone experiences differently. The first meditation, Meditation on SARS-CoV-2 is based on a snippet of the Coronavirus genetic material which he translated into sound by associating each letter of the sequence (A,U,G,C) to a musical note. He then arranged these in a way that correlates with the spreading of the pandemic. As one can hear, the tempo of the musical piece increases to reflect the rate that the virus was spreading. In this way, Bertin was able to create a melody out of the coronavirus. For his second Covid-19 sound meditation, he collected the sounds of empty Paris within a radius of 1km from his home. Although in the midst of a pandemic, the streets are hardly ever completely silent. Indeed, our freedom of movement has been reduced, but what Bertin

emphasises is that the opportunities to listen (to our ecosystem, to each other) have expanded. You can listen to his fascinating work by following this link: http://www.antoinebertin.org/sars-cov-2

Face masks have become a visual part of public life. There has nevertheless been a lot of argument around their use, which inspired world renown artist Ai WeiWei. According to the artist, the face mask is a strong symbol: “An individual with a face mask makes a gesture, but a community with face masks is fighting a deadly virus. A community that wears these masks by choice and not because the authorities say so, opposes any force. No will is too small and no action is hopeless". Developing his tradition of merging art with activism, Ai WeiWei had the well-known light blue face masks printed with the characteristic symbols of his work: sunflower seeds, mythological animals and his famous middle finger. About 10,000 masks were printed in the artist's studio in Berlin and sold through eBay. The 1.4 million dollars in proceeds went to charity organisations: Human Rights Watch, Refugees International and Doctors without Borders. Follow this link if you want to get an impression of how the masks are created: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBkXWQl7Qt0&feature=emb_title

What can be drawn from these cases? Covid-19 has allowed artists to experiment and create artworks that reflect upon the unique context we have lived and are still living in. Artists who embraced Covid-19 as a source of inspiration seem to emphasise the importance of reflection on previous, as well as current times and the transitions we experience. Reflection through the arts can bring about new insights and a more conscious (personal) understanding of the world around us. Artworks, such as the ones described, relate to values such as gratitude, collective action and resourcefulness - values that most of us can identify with, having shared this experience together.

Sietske is a third year bachelor student of Arts & Culture. From May to September 2020 she found herself doing a corona-proof internship at AimAtArt (www.aimatart.nl), where she looked into the role that art and artists can play in generating creativity and change in a corporate context. This text is partly based on research she did during her internship, acquiring information about artists that used Covid-19 as a source of inspiration to create new works.

About the author

Sietske d’Arnaud van Boeckholtz holds a Bachelor degree in Arts & Culture Studies (2020) from Erasmus University Rotterdam. As part of her program, from May to August 2020 she did an internship at AimAtArt, in lockdown.

‘Let them eat cake’

Niek Verschoor

March 2021

The preliminary story

While the Covid-19 pandemic was sweeping the country, almost all municipalities in the Netherlands started doing their utmost to preserve art and culture in their area and support their local artists. Neither opportunities nor resources were spared to preserve the cultural climate, to rescue the creative breeding ground of art and artists from disaster and devastation.

I said ‘almost all’ municipalities. Some backward places missed these good vibes.

Let me take you to such a place in the east of Holland; Nijmegen. This medium-sized town on the banks of the Waal is the place where I live and work as an artist. Nijmegen likes to

see itself as a culturally dynamic city, but from experience I know that the people in power here have little to do with visual art. The city of Nijmegen stumbles like a dummy at the end of the queue, a clear thirty percent below the national average when it comes to the budget for art (Blue Yard report, see link below).

So yes, this is embarrassing. Even before the Covid-19 thing started it was clear, to anyone involved, that the poor conditions for artists and artist studios in the city of Nijmegen had to be addressed and firm measures needed to be taken. Unfortunately, the art and culture sector is in the hands of an alderman with a portfolio focussing on urban development, city planning and supporting strong connections with project developers and real estate agencies. Somewhere at the bottom of a drawer in his desk, is a thin folder with the title 'Art and Artists'.

The real story

No support for artists is one thing but to kick out over fifty artists from their studios in the midst of the Covid-19 crisis with no consideration was a foul move. It represents a quest for profit maximization and fast money by a greedy alderman. The next player in this story is an organisation that 'helps artists to find a studio space'. This sounds great but it is not. Like with the city of Nijmegen the virus of fast money making has provoked a strong turn to the right in this organisation. This means that artists get no relief whatsoever but are forced into highly overpriced old buildings.

Within a few weeks I am being forced to move my studio to a smaller, double priced space. With me fifteen fellow artists are also having to leave and find a new place to work. When we protested that we had no time to move all our equipment and works, the organisation (the one that 'helps' artists) just said: 'you could always rent both places so you have plenty of time to organise yourself.' That remark reminded me of the famous quote from Marie-Antoinette, queen of France during the French Revolution: 'Let them eat cake'. It hits me as the untimed arrogance of power.

The solution

To get rid of the unpleasant taste in my mouth caused by these two dominant and presumptuous managers and the whole situation, I started to look around on a different scale than the tainted air in my provincial town. So I embraced space. 'Space' as in 'outside this planet'.

I already have a work in space, the first and only Dutch artist to achieve that. The KISS-Mission, launched in April 2008, is an artwork on board of the Delfi-C3 satellite from Technical University Delft. The artwork consists of a unique print of a human kiss. The print is applied to foil with a special coating and integrated into the design of the insulation layer on the outside of the satellite.

Thinking about this work I was challenged to create a work for the Moon Gallery. The Moon Gallery is an organization, which will bring a collection of ideas to the moon in 2022 as the seeds of a new culture. They believe that culture makes a distinction between mere survival and life. Moon Gallery is a symbolic gesture that has a real influence – a way to reboot culture, rethink our values for better living on planet Earth.

For this. I created a work called (Last) Bullet. (Last) Bullet is a small yet essential monument, founded in commemoration of all the known and unknown victims of violence all over our globe. In placing the last fired bullet on the face of the moon as a token of faith and hope, we, inhabitants of the small blue planet, strongly emphasise the intention not to export our acts of violence to other planets. Unfortunately, human kind cannot be trusted blindly, so the (Last) Bullet is accompanied by the Artist's Watchful Eye to keep checking the fragile balance between good and evil.

The (Last) Bullet is a 7,62 mm Mil-Spec bullet. The jacket is torn; the core is removed and replaced by the Artist's Watchful Eye. Engraved at the end cap is the text: Last Bullet.

Free at last

By resetting my focus outbound and ignoring the narrow-minded managers in my pathetic hometown, I took control of my situation and right now I feel relieved and free to enter the post Covid-19 era, hoping new elections will bring better leaders to serve and protect art and the artists in good times as well as in bad times.

Links

https://niekverschoor.nl/
https://www.tudelft.nl/lr/delfi-space/delfi-c3
http://www.moongallery.eu/artist/niek-verschoor
http://www.moongallery.eu/
https://www.blueyard.nl/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Staat-van-Cultuur-in-Nijmegen-Blueyard-160519a.pdf

About the author

Niek Verschoor is an artist living and working in the city of Nijmegen and a tutor at the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam.

Cultural creatives' experiences during the Corona pandemic (lockdown #1)

Rosanna Bervoets

May 2021

A second year internship is part of the curriculum of the International Bachelor of Arts and Culture Studies (IBACS) at Erasmus University. Last year in April, I did mine at the Boekman Stichting: a research and information center for the arts, culture and policy. Initially, I hoped to do my internship physically at the organisation. Due to the corona pandemic, I experienced it from my tiny student room; I only had contact with colleagues via online video-calls. For this reason, my supervisor decided to give me the opportunity to conduct my own (small-scale) research, contributing to their corona-platform on which articles were published related to the pandemic.

During our weekly online "coffee-moment" on Monday mornings, two colleagues brought up the precarious situation of self-employed persons in the creative and cultural sector, now relying on unemployment benefits from the government. They proposed a series of interviews with creatives from the arts and culture sector, to be published on Boekman's website and social media. I conducted five different interviews over a period of two months. I posed the questions: "How are creatives maintaining their livelihood during the pandemic?", "Has their work drastically changed?" and "How do they see the future?"

This article highlights several experiences of self-employed creatives following discussions on the long term influence of the pandemic on the arts and culture sector. For many working in the arts and culture sector, COVID-19 meant an immediate discontinuation of their work and a direct loss of income. This has caused major challenges for cultural and creative organisations, but impacted significantly on self-employed persons, who constitute more than 50 per cent of all workers within this sector. Although the government provided financial aid in the form of temporary social security provision and extra financial support for subsidised institutions, the economic damage is predicted to be enormous. Prior to the interviews, I read extensive news articles about how the arts and culture sector is struggling financially, but it was still not clear how creative makers, particularly the self-employed, had experienced and coped with the first lockdown.

Initially, creatives sympathised with the whole situation; the precautionary measures were needed to safeguard the public health and restrain pressure on hospitals and their staff. However, as time went by and the measures were still in place, creatives did not know when they would be allowed to go to work. One of the interviewees told us that besides having sympathy for the situation, many of them became quite listless - nothing mattered other than coronavirus. It was a time of uncertainty. Everyone ventured out of their depth; no one knew when things would be back to “normal”. Their powerless position was, and still is a year later, affecting lives and moods due to an inability to work. They are not unemployed, they are prohibited from working. An interviewee pointed out that while many Dutch employees were able to pursue their working activities at home, for many creative and cultural workers this was not possible because their work is mainly dependent on performances and events which are visited by large groups of people.

The creatives did, however, highlight the interim activities they were doing instead of throwing in the towel. One duo began a bakery at home. Even though it was not going to make them rich, they were at least busy. For some, sidelines took them out of themselves a bit, others gave a slight twist to their normal jobs, creatively improvising to do their work differently. It was not about what they were no longer able to do, but new opportunities under the current circumstances. Although the respondents were looking at the future quite positively, they felt a lack of sympathy from Dutch society and the government towards the arts and cultural sector. One of the interviewees argued that society does not comprehend what the value of culture really is; the hard work and time that people are putting into a performance, for instance, is not always recognised by the public. Even during the lockdown, while there are no future performances being developed or planned, many performing artists needed to practice constantly in order to keep up their professional standard. The corona-crisis painfully uncovered the precarious position of arts and culture compared to other industries. The respondents hinted at the government’s lack of attention, and stressed that the usual attitude towards the arts and culture is that it is the first to be cut during economic crises and no one seems to shed a tear.

Each respondent shared their own story about how they experienced the first lockdown. They prepared themselves for a financial situation that was going to be quite hard, but creative alternatives kept them going and distracted. The interviewees were concerned about what the impact would be in the long term. They expect high cuts to the subsidies, because that is what the government tends to do. These interviews showed us how resilient and motivated creatives remain, even though they were, and are still, not able to do the

work that they love. One year later, and the arts and culture sector is still not open. Test events are held, but only time will tell when we can again enjoy our culture.

Below the link to my article (in Dutch) that I wrote with the help of my colleagues Claartje Rasterhoff, Maartje Goedhart and Janina Pigaht:

- https://www.boekman.nl/actualiteit/ervaringen-van-culturele-makers-tijdens-de-coronacrisis/

The interviews:

- https://www.boekman.nl/actualiteit/we-kunnen-niet-verder-waar-we-geeindigd-zijn/
- https://www.boekman.nl/actualiteit/ik-ben-niet-werkeloos-maar-heb-een-werkverbod/
- https://www.boekman.nl/actualiteit/strijdbaarheid-solidariteit-en-moed/
- https://www.boekman.nl/actualiteit/ik-ben-niet-werkeloos-maar-heb-een-werkverbod/
- https://www.boekman.nl/actualiteit/om-als-overbodig-gezien-te-worden-doet-pijn/

About the author

Rosanna Bervoets has graduated from the International Bachelor of Arts and Culture Studies (IBACS) at Erasmus University. An internship during the second year formed part of her studies.

Chapter 5: Cultural Policy

Introduction: Policies for a resilient cultural sector

Anna Mignosa

May 2021

The analysis of cultural policy originally focused on the degree of public intervention and schematised the models along a line. This saw the US and Continental Europe at the two extremes and the UK somewhere in between. This model has been the basis and the main framework for analysis since the 1950s. It may still be a clear reference when it comes to describing the possible institutional models in place for cultural policy definition and implementation, even more so when crises force us to revise and/or adapt our models.

Certainly, studies on cultural policy have developed with the increasingly wide availability of data about:

- public and private financing of the sector
- audiences and visitor numbers
- laws and rules in place for cultural heritage protection and enhancement
- creativity and intellectual property protection
- tax incentives to stimulate private sector support for the cultural sector, private consumption of cultural products, or to facilitate private cultural organisations.

The 2008 financial crisis was a turning point for cultural policy and for studies of the topic. As a consequence, due to a reduction in both public and private funding, the models in place to support the cultural sector had to be revised. Thus, the analysis revealed a tendency to move towards a hybrid model (similar to the UK model) where the private sector played a more active role. Not only in financing the cultural sector but also directly participating in its management. New funding schemes have been developed and tested. For instance, crowdfunding was widely adopted both by individual artists to finance their projects and big museums to acquire pieces for their collections and, additionally, test their relationships with the public and their stakeholders. A 'new' model, Public-Private-Partnership, has increasingly attracted attention by both national policy makers and international organisations such as UNESCO. They both acknowledge its potential to overcome the limitations related to the reduction of funds for the cultural sector as well as the rigidity of some of the institutional models in place.

It is superfluous to say that COVID-19 represents another turning point for the sector and thus, cultural policy. The unprecedented closing of museums, theatres, cinemas, libraries, and the stop to all cultural initiatives (festivals, community programs, ….) has had a tremendous impact both on supply and demand. Organisations lost, more or less (depending on the proportion of public funds they get), a fundamental source of income. As a consequence, in many cases they stopped most of the contracts they had with consultants or freelancers. As the OECD (2020) underlines a lot of professionals in this sector are organised as self-employed or micro-companies. In some cases, established cultural organisations had to let their staff go and some risk ceasing their activity indefinitely.

The cultural ecosystem brings together public cultural institutions, big private organisations, and a network of freelancers and micro-enterprises, but it risks bankruptcy because of the huge loss of revenues caused by the pandemic. The crisis has shown the vulnerability of the system in place, especially for cultural and creative workers. Being artists, freelance or part of small companies, they often did not 'belong' to any of the categories that benefited from public remedies and represent one of the categories to have been hit badly by the pandemic (OECD, 2020; European Parliament, 2021; KEA, 2020, NEMO, 2020, UNESCO, 2020). It has to be noted, however, that there are some cultural and creative sectors like digital art, video gaming, radio and television that have 'benefitted' from the lockdown increasing both their income and audiences (OECD, 2020).

The analysis done at national and international levels and the cases illustrated in this chapter, have, however, also shown the amazing resilience of the sector. Its flexibility and small scale is one of its main weaknesses and, at the same time, its strength. For instance, some music venues organised concerts in the courtyards of buildings. Museums or other cultural organisations, in countries that have traditionally lagged behind in the use of digitisation, have speeded up the adoption of these tools to be present for their public throughout the crisis. Some organisations were so active that they involved people in the creation of new collections through the pandemic.

Policy measures put in place at the local, national and international level have mainly focussed on the injection of funds to try to make up for the loss of self-generated income by cultural organisations. The numbers are rather impressive, but it is still too early to state whether they were sufficient. There is concern that most of these funds have been allocated to the 'usual suspects' i.e. big cultural organisations leaving aside the smaller (and often more dynamic) ones. Similarly, it is still not clear whether these funds reached individual artists, freelancers, or small companies. What has become evident, however, is that some

of the rules in place for the distribution of public funds have been relaxed. Looking at the policy recommendation included in many of the studies mentioned above, it is also manifest that there has been an increased focus on audience participation: the importance of bottom up initiatives capable of attracting visitors and audiences, involving communities and boosting public wellbeing. What will happen now? There is a widespread call to include the cultural and creative sector in the wider policy making. Culture and creativity can be an engine of economic development (most of the analysis focuses on this aspect) but they are also fundamental for social and cultural development. It takes 'creative' cultural policies to ensure a sustainable future for the cultural and creative sector and all the actors involved.

About the author

Anna Mignosa is Assistant Professor Cultural Economics at Erasmus University Rotterdam and Catania University.

Never waste a crisis: Are we smart enough to reevaluate how we subsidise arts and culture?

Hans Abbing

August 2020

Hans Abbing1 argues that this corona crisis is likely to make the large and rich in the arts stronger at the cost of the small and poor but is this not an opportunity to change the way we define and subsidise the arts?

This corona crisis is likely to make large art companies and rich artists stronger and the small and poor weaker, that is, if the latter survive. This is bad for art and culture. Also, those who are currently subsidised, have better chances to survive than those who are not.

Talent gets lost and innovation is threatened. But knowing that this may happen, we may still be able to mitigate the effects. Even better, we could use the crisis to bring about fundamental and necessary changes in the arts. “Never waste a good crisis” as Churchill once said.

The arts are not that special. That the largest companies have the best chances is no different from elsewhere in the economy. If, with time and with support, Het Concertgebouw Orkest does relatively well, this is in line with what happens outside the arts’ sector. In the present stage of capitalism, a strong winner-take-all mechanism exists and the corona circumstances intensify this. It applies to the much supported shipbuilder IHC Merwede just as much as to Het Concertgebouw Orkest, De Nationale Opera and Het Nationale Ballet. It also applies to rich CEOs as much as it does to rich artists.

The above art institutions already receive a disproportionate part of the total art budget, and are now receiving a disproportionate part of the corona-support for the arts. Looking at visitor-hours, this is indeed disproportionate: the support per visitor-hour is much larger than for companies lower in the assumed quality hierarchy. (The cost per visiting hour in the larger organisations is higher, but that does not imply that high subsidies are justified.) Support is also disproportional when looking at the contributions made to artistic innovation. For instance, Het Metropool Orkest is clearly more adventurous than Het Concertgebouw Orkest and Het Muziek Theater Hollands Diep more innovative than De Nationale Opera. But, if they survive, their competitiveness with respect to the largest companies will have worsened.

Artistic innovation is almost exclusively bottom up. For this to happen healthy and lively “midfield” and “bottom-field” organisations are indispensable. This is also essential for the maintenance of a lively intangible cultural heritage (like performances of Bach’s and Mahler’s music). For this and to prevent fossilisation —as has already happened in classical music— innovation and the parallel offering of related contemporary art for a large and enthusiastic audience is necessary.

Corona is also likely to increase the winner-takes-all mechanism and thus the existing unequal distribution of income among workers in the arts sector. Successful visual artists, soloists, conductors, directors of the top-museums and so forth, will not earn less but many workers in lower positions, of whom many have short term contracts, lose their jobs or cannot continue their art practice. Inner-artworld exploitation only increases.

Moreover, the chances of receiving temporary support for the arts from the governmental budget are much better for already subsidised companies and workers. As the editor of a

well-known pop-platform 3 voor 12 writes: “The 300 million (from) the central government is largely for the subsidy-elite.” Similar behavior at the level of local governments is understandable. They feel more responsible for the art companies that they already subsidise. But forgetting about others is not wise.

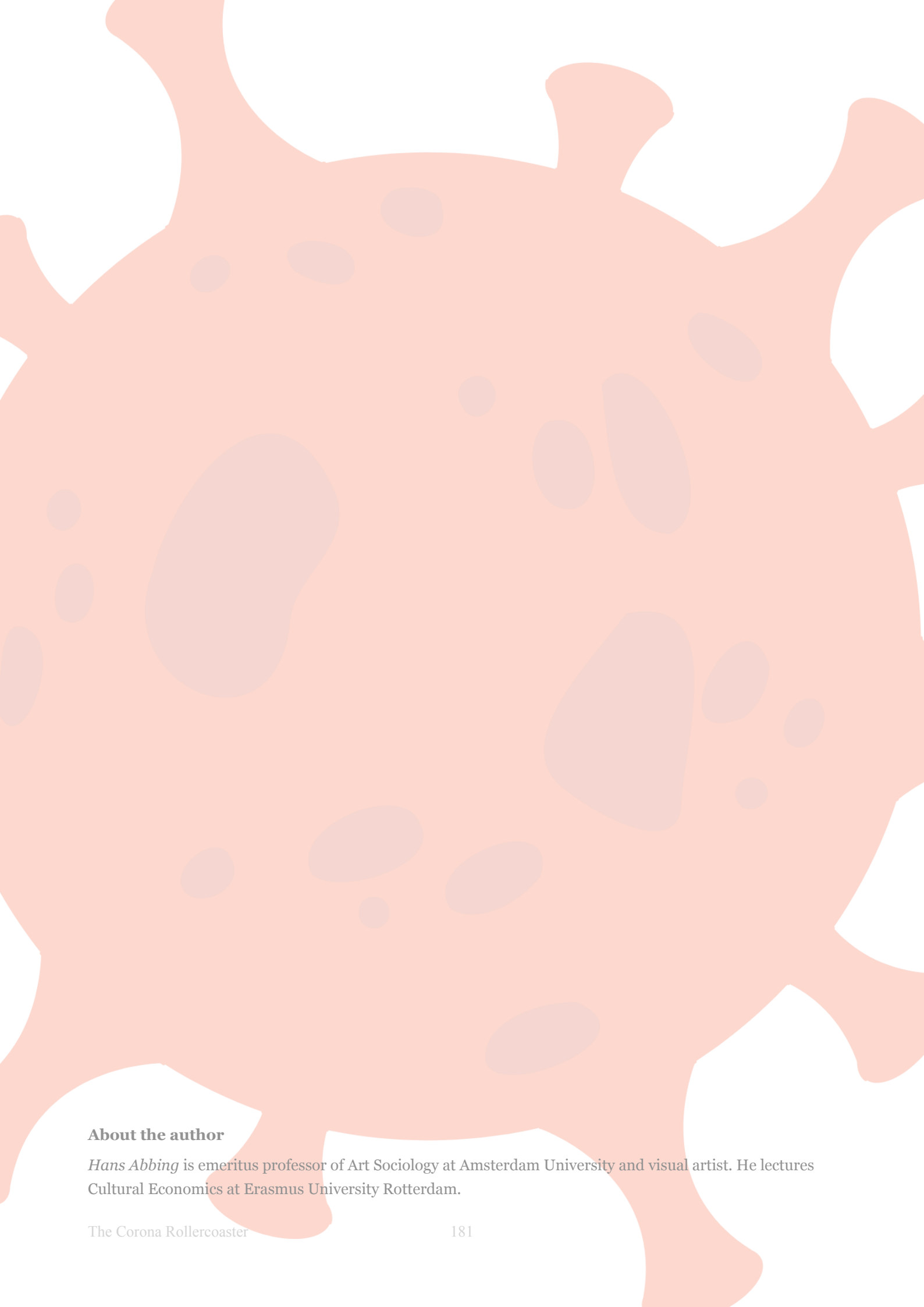
It is true that unsubsidised small art companies and artists are often more ingenious and better in so-called self-organization than the subsidised ones, but under the present circumstances, this is often insufficient to survive. Given excess supply —an acute situation in pop music— reducing the over-supply of artists may not be a terrible thing, but discouragement is always better than a “ruthless remediation” due to corona, causing much human suffering.

It is likely that, among the unsubsidised losers, there are many innovative artists, who make alternative music, for example, certain Hip-hop and Electronic Dance Music genres. These are innovative composers and composing performers. Bottom-up innovation will be absent. Moreover, in the case of Hip-hop, for already disadvantaged groups, the benefits of creating music and the possibility of self-expression will be reduced.

In the unsubsidised art sector, many small art companies will go out of business or will be weakened making it harder to compete with the larger companies. This applies especially to those who run and program small venues, including dance clubs. Buildings do not collapse, but they may now stop being arts venues. Here as well, the winner-takes-all mechanism is present. An example is that of large music festivals compared to small venues. The latter have already suffered from large festivals taking away audiences and artists by offering higher fees and the use of exclusivity contracts. Sooner or later, with a diminished competitive position, more small institutions will go out of business. Without more support there will be less art for people and essential bottom-up movements will be far more limited.

Presently much is unpredictable and I may be too pessimistic. This crisis could be the very moment to become aware that there is far more art and there are far more art institutions than people in the established arts and in governments realise. The crisis could indirectly lead to a broadened definition of art.

Moreover, a widely experienced shock sometimes does good. People at all levels become more creative. Presently the shock could, indeed, lead to more creativity, a broader definition of art and a fairer distribution of subsidies. But this requires wise decisions. Support what is small and weak in the arts rather than what is large and strong. Never waste a crisis.



About the author

Hans Abbing is emeritus professor of Art Sociology at Amsterdam University and visual artist. He lectures Cultural Economics at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Female leadership in museums during Covid-19: a Balanced Scorecard

Giulia Rozzi

November 2020

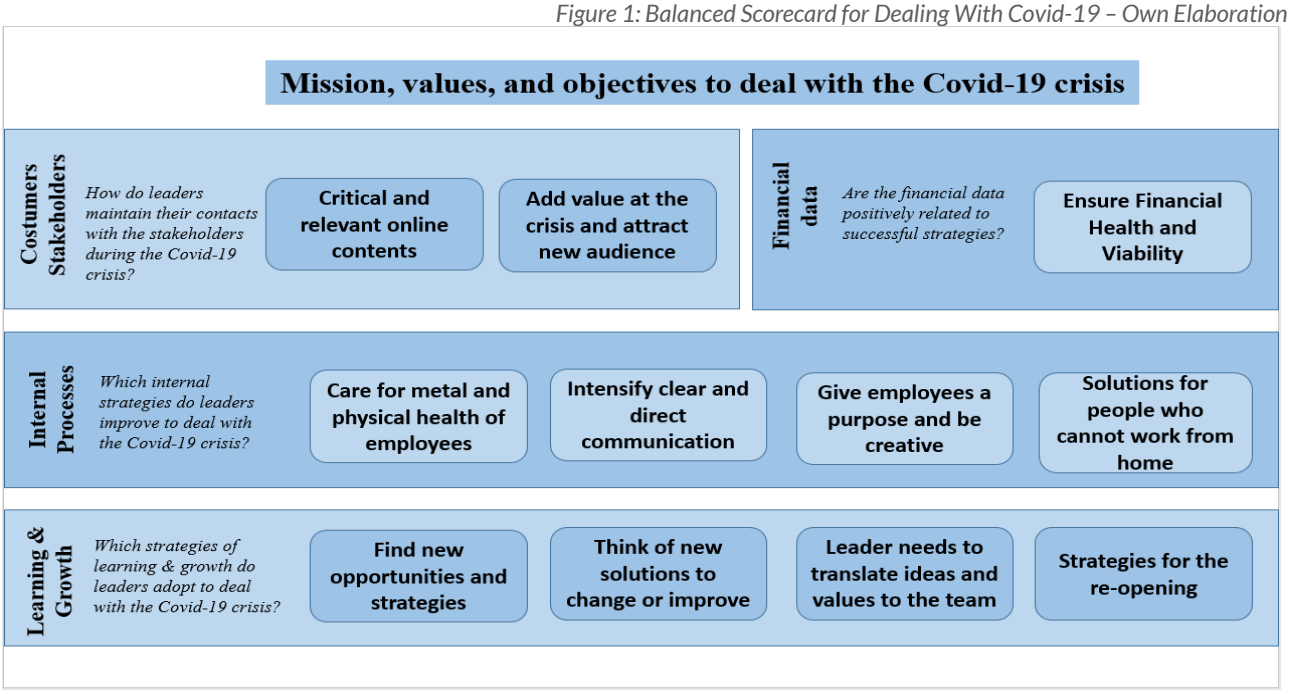
© *Unsplash*

Even though women are strongly represented in the cultural and creative field, the sector is far from offering equal opportunities to women and men. Similarly to other sectors, the limited presence of women in decision-making positions, the segregation into certain roles, and less favourable employment conditions and payment are common (European Commision, 2019). However, some leading women are doing marvellous work, for example in museums. What can we expect from female leadership in and after Covid-19 times?

Promoting gender equality and generating greater dynamism in the cultural and creative sector is a fundamental goal. As assessed by UNESCO in 2015, one of the solutions to solve gender inequality is to raise awareness. My master thesis aimed to contribute to this goal, through the identification of successful leadership strategies for female leaders in museums. Identifying successful strategies in non-profit institutions is challenging: first, these institutions have numerous goals and stakeholders; secondly, many of the main purposes expressed in the mission and vision are non-financial. Only during the 1990s did researchers start to question the use of solely financial indicators. Kaplan and Norton developed the so-called Balanced Scorecard (BSC), a framework to link multidimensional performance measures to the organisation's strategies and daily activities. Given its great flexibility and adaptability to different sectors and situations, I decided to adapt the BSC to non-profit organisations in order to analyse and define successful leadership strategies of female leaders in museums. Indeed, the BSC allows consideration of different aspects of strategies: not only financial strategies but also strategies related to the learning and growth of the organisation, to the internal processes and to various customers and stakeholders.

I conducted eleven interviews with female directors and heads of departments of five museums in Leiden and Rotterdam. The main aggregated results, obtained from their responses and a content analysis of the museums' annual reports, were summarised in a newly developed BSC. Additionally, given that the interviews were conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, the strategies to deal with this crisis were analysed and summarized in another BSC (figure 1).

Figure 1: Balanced Scorecard for Dealing With Covid-19 – Own Elaboration



A main finding emerged, that numerous strategies and approaches were common between the female leaders. These strategies are generally creative, innovative, and in line with the female leaders' ideas of success, even if not always related to positive financial outputs. Therefore, in line with other research, I argue that for defining successful leadership strategies a multi-dimensional approach is essential, because it allows an exhaustive representation of the museums' functioning, which includes financial aspects as well as the cultural and social values related to the museums' ideas of success.

What are the strategies that female leaders adopted to deal with the current pandemic? Cultural venues have had a hard time pursuing their primary purposes of dissemination and interaction. The necessary closure has challenged the sector to redefine its methods of contact and communication to keep the relationship with citizens and audiences alive. Therefore, as stated by the UNESCO report on the subject, museums need to develop creative and innovative solutions to keep inspiring people in uncertain times. A situation like this exposes how museum leaders react and which strategies they adopt to deal with an emergency. The situation is particularly critical for leaders, who need to directly intervene in the strategic process of the organisation under crisis. It is their role to instil a sense of urgency and formulate drastic reconstructing strategies. They must also inspire confidence in the recovery of performance and effectiveness of the organisation through new initiatives and the communication of innovative values and purposes, both for external and internal stakeholders.

From what has emerged in the interviews, each museum and leader were thinking of new strategies for the future, accepting this crisis as an opportunity and seeking to be extremely critical and relevant in the short and in the long-term. In order to succeed, museum leaders encouraged employees to embrace a new museum vision and to reinvent their roles. Leaders adopted strategic communication techniques to disseminate new values and to give purpose to employees, aware of the most fragile ones and those having a hard time working from home. While online and digital content was already part of the museums' offering, they needed to be re-defined to add value to the crisis or attract a new audience.

In conclusion, even if museums and the roles of leaders are different, many strategies to deal with the Covid-19 crisis were found to be common across female leaders (figure 1). Our findings indicate that during emergencies, female leaders succeed in implementing creative strategies to deal with the situation in a critical and innovative way, with many similarities across them. Previous research has articulated the linkages between women's empowerment and non-profit sector development. Future research could evaluate which

museum strategies have been successful in a time of crisis, and in how far those can be related to female leadership.

* Note: This is a summary of part of Giulia Rozzi's Master's Thesis (2020)

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Heritage and Policy: A discussion digested

Vicki Triantafylloudi

December 2020

At the Shit! Corona Symposium in December we held four facilitated break-out discussion groups. The facilitators were asked to reflect on the discussion. Here Vicki Triantafylloudi considers heritage and policy during a pandemic.

In the context of the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, the need for a reactive, flexible, and effective cultural policy is essential to contribute to the sustainability of heritage and the creative sector in a post-pandemic era. Using the example of Greece, the aim of the breakout session was to discuss heritage and policy and to reflect on the feasible solutions that are currently needed.

To begin with, the Greek cultural policy received mixed reactions, with issues of financial support, incentives and long-term solutions being the center of debate. A “support art workers” movement was initiated during lockdown to demand rights and funding from the state. Heritage protection was also put into question, especially with one of the latest initiatives of the government, to make the Acropolis more accessible through paving the way up to the hill with cement to attract more post-pandemic visitors.

Nonetheless, among the Covid-19 related measures, a governmental e-ticketing platform was established to offer citizens the opportunity to book tickets for any cultural site, including archaeological spaces, museums and theatres that operate under state governance. In addition, the government created a digital cultural platform to provide information about upcoming cultural events, exhibitions, concerts, and more. Moreover, during the first lockdown in April 2020, the Greek government invited a call for proposals to fund projects related to intangible heritage and digital culture. To participate in the call, cultural organisations needed to be registered in the national “Registry of Cultural Bodies”. Accordingly, individual artists and cultural workers could only receive subsidy during lockdown through the national “Cultural Professionals Registry”, a platform requiring a number of criteria for eligible registration.

Based on the above, the lockdown policy measures in Greece addressed heritage both directly and indirectly. Whether this was successful or not is controversial, nonetheless, interesting points for discussion came out of those examples. Specifically, the group was

asked “What kind of visiting incentives, both on the demand and the supply side, would add economic value to cultural assets that were inactive during the Covid-19 lockdown?”. The question indicated both incentives for visitors themselves, but also for cultural workers to participate actively and physically in cultural heritage after the restrictions end. In addition to that and taking into consideration the digital registries that were mentioned, the creation of a digital “Cultural Map” was addressed as a potential policy tool to record the cultural sector and bridge heritage with small or medium-sized cultural organisations. The question was, “How could the government use this tool to boost the cultural sector during and post the Covid-19 lockdown?”.

The discussion provided useful insights to the issues in question. Concerning incentives, the group focused on the idea of a voucher to encourage cultural demand and supply. It was argued that such an initiative took place in Slovenia, where a tourist voucher system was instigated as a response to the coronavirus pandemic, worth 200 euros to adult beneficiaries for accommodation nationally (GOV.SI Portal, 2020). In a similar way when it comes to cultural events, a voucher could be distributed by the Ministry of Culture, via the governmental e-ticketing platform for use by citizens to pay for admission to theatres, museums, galleries, or other cultural spaces. Not only would this encourage potential physical visits but also the Ministry would reimburse the voucher value to the institutions where they were used, adding economic value on the supply side. At the same time, it would provide a flexibility that is essential in the case of new measures or other external factors affecting the operation of cultural institutions.

We all agreed that for cultural organisations to operate successfully after the lockdown and to enhance the supply side, a more rigorous plan is needed, especially to support heritage in an already fragmented cultural sector. This fragmentation is due to the very high number of SMEs and micro-companies, freelancers and atypical non-standard workers (Montalto et al., 2020). For this, we argued that the “Cultural Map" may add incentives on the supply side, as it would be a direct link between organisations and heritage via governmental funding. Of course, the eligibility criteria to become a member of the registry should be inclusive and representative. However, combining the registries with Calls for Proposals, would benefit “non-superstar” organisations that could collectively implement projects related to heritage.

Overall, it was clear in our discussion that, taking into consideration the immediate need for funds and the protection of the cultural and creative sector, it is important to apply policy measures that focus on strong motivations for long-term engagement with cultural activities and activate both demand and supply within the sector. We concluded that it is

crucial to overcome the limitations of bureaucracy and encourage public funding, as well as collaborations among institutions. The use of a “Cultural Map” may facilitate those initiatives, as it could be the tool to unify the sector towards heritage protection through state financing. What is certain, is that for cultural policy to respond to the current circumstances, unconventional and effective measures should be put into place with a focus on flexibility, collaboration, and coordination (European Cultural Foundation, 2020).

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Vicki Triantafylloudi is an Alumnus of the Master Arts & Culture Studies (Cultural Economics & Entrepreneurship) at Erasmus University (2018-2019).

New direction for cultural policy and for future policy makers

Tommaso Fanin

February 2021

I was about to start the implementation phase of my master thesis research titled 'Heritage makes me feel…European!', when corona struck. It focuses on the cultural-social impact of European cultural heritage policy on its citizens. I intended to discover, if visiting cultural sites which were part of a European cultural program (more specifically, the European Heritage Label (EHL)) influences Europeans' sense of belonging to the European Union? I planned to carry out a quantitative analysis based on primary data to be collected from visitors to EHL sites. I had a solid theoretical framework that combined theory on cultural heritage, cultural policy, and cultural identity, and what one might describe as an entrepreneurial method design inspired from the hedonic price model. Against me was the

fact that all cultural sites in Europe, EHL-labelled or not, have been forcibly closed to limit the spread of the virus.

To overcome this, I had to exploit all my entrepreneurial skills. The topic of my thesis was too precious for me to drop. I had to change my strategy. The solution I came up with involved three main adjustments. First, I decided to focus on both on-line and off-line visits to the sites. This allowed me to carry out the whole research online. Such a covid-proof strategy, however, entailed important limitations in terms of validity and reliability of the results. Second, to compensate for these pitfalls, I carried out a series of interviews with relevant stakeholders (e.g. museum directors and national coordinators of the project). Ironically, the lockdown probably increased the responses I received from the experts. Third, I theoretically defended the whole methodology shift with concepts from digital museum theory.

The strategy succeeded. I am glad to present, what I consider, the two main outcomes of my master thesis. Firstly, the research has shown that the European cultural project 'European Heritage Label' positively influences citizens' sense of belonging to Europe. Secondly, I consider the method with which I have operationalised and analysed data to be a valuable asset. My studies in cultural and public policies suggest there is, indeed, still a need to find strategies to operationalise and quantitatively measure the impact of culture.

Covid-19 not only managed to subvert my whole research strategy, it also (partially) shaped my future direction. It tipped the balance in favour of doing a second master, which I am currently attending at the Erasmus University, in International Public Management and Policy. This choice softened the impact that covid-19 would have otherwise had on my situation and has, paradoxically, given me freedom and time to be more productive. In a way, I believe I have been able to survive in these strange times.

This is true at least for the moment. Indeed, the impact corona will have is likely to be long-lasting, and it is widely recognised that the cultural sector has been badly hit. All EU states forcibly closed cultural sites. A consequence of this was that they collaterally assumed more responsibility over the cultural market. For this reason, and perhaps because of my optimism, I believe governments will progressively put more attention on the cultural sector. Perhaps, cultural policy may witness a new wave of reforms in favour of this sector. I would like to make a positive contribution to this.

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Finding Resilience: The Impact of Covid-19 on International Culture

Erin Chang

May 2021

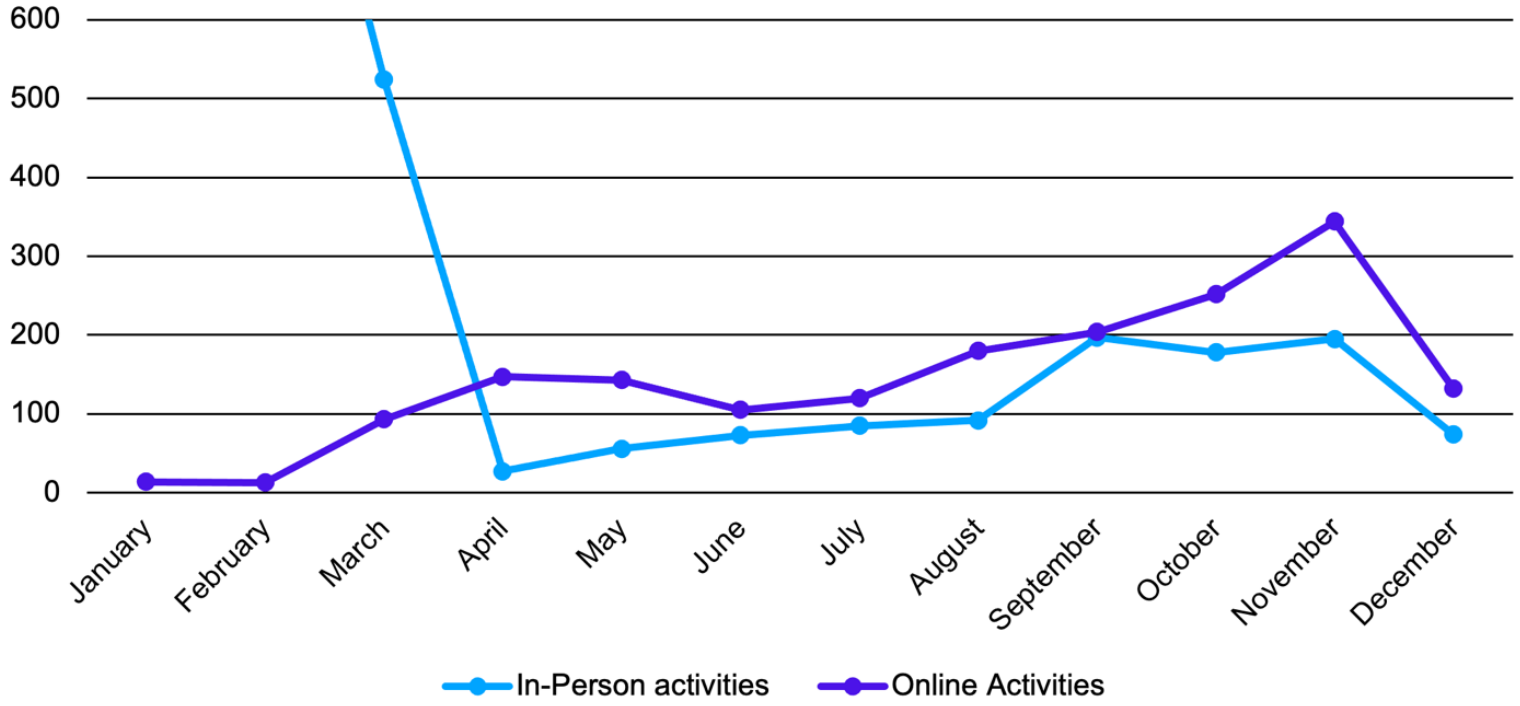
Tin Man and the Telephone Perform a Virtual Interactive Concert. Photo Credit: Tin Man and the Telephone

Covid-19 has massively reshaped international cultural exchange. Faced with travel bans and gathering size restrictions, artists have had to rethink what is possible in order to share their work internationally. We explore some of the changes in international cultural participation, assess barriers to cultural exchange in this new environment and identify solutions that artists have found to overcome these barriers.

Clearly, the Covid-19 pandemic hugely reduced the capacity for international cultural exchange. We tracked a 72% reduction in international cultural activities by Dutch artists and cultural organizations in 2020, compared to 2019. This is likely an underestimation since this calculation includes both activities that took place and activities that were

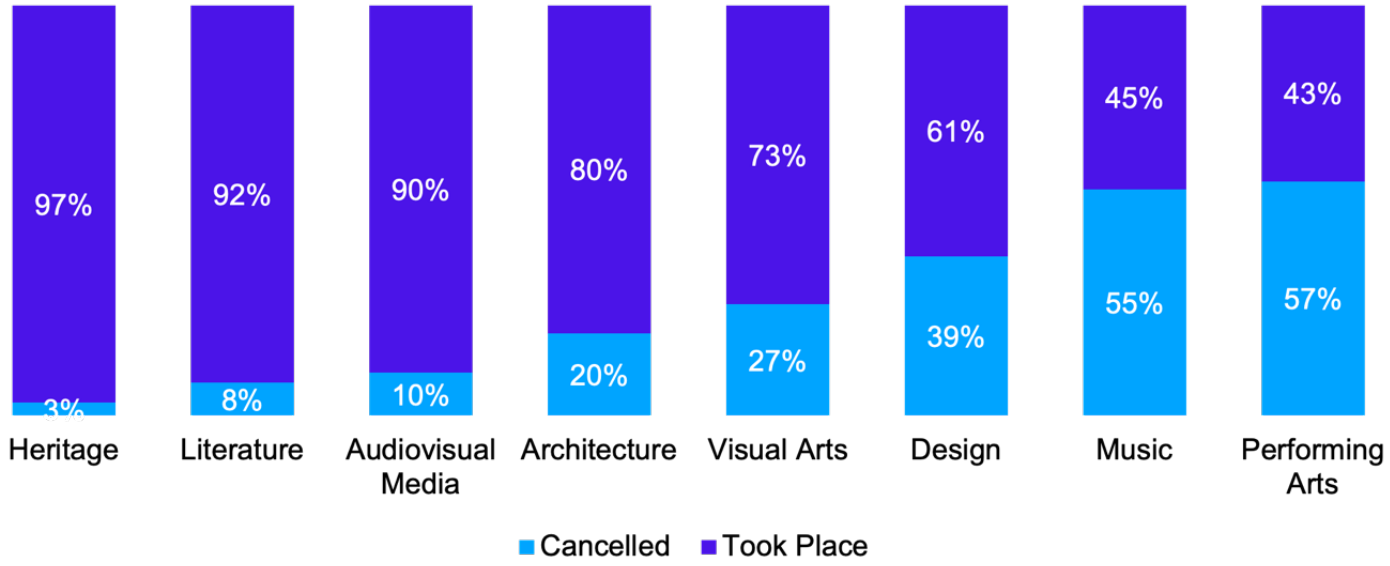
cancelled but does not include activities that were never planned in the first place due to the crisis. This is a stark reminder that artists need structural support in order to bridge the gap between the pre- and post-pandemic art worlds.

As a response to this inability to create traditional international cultural events, artists moved their activities online. Roughly 20% of cultural activities in 2020 were online. The timeline below shows that immediately after the pandemic hit, artists and cultural organizations adapted by moving activities online. By April 2020, online activities surpassed in-person activities and continue to rise steadily. Both online and in-person activities drop sharply in December 2020, likely due to a combination of the second wave of the pandemic as well as the slow-down for the winter holidays.



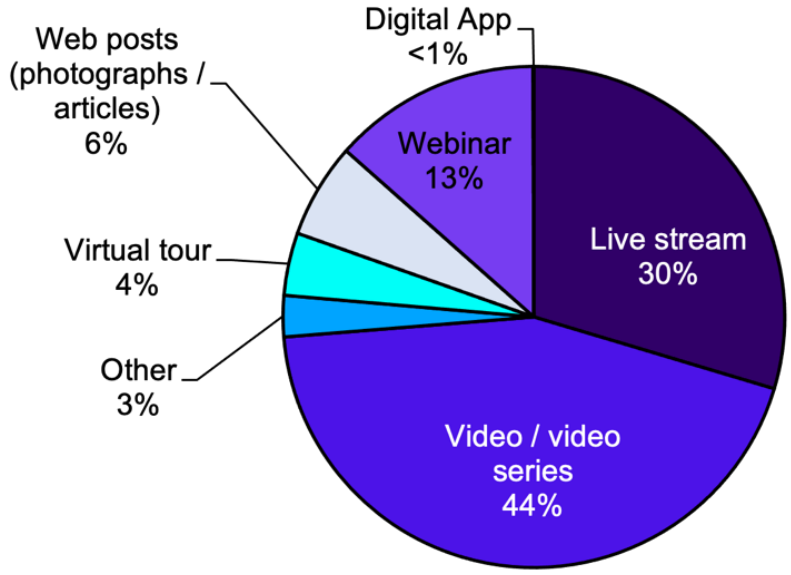
Online and in-Person International Cultural Activities in 2020

Not all artistic disciplines were equally able to adapt. Disciplines such as heritage and architecture, which were able to shift their symposiums, talks, and fairs online saw fewer cancellations. Likewise, disciplines that are more easily suited to socially distanced activities, such as literature (book publishings, translations) and visual arts (reduced-number exhibitions) saw fewer cancellations. The majority of film festivals were able to shift to online platforms and, as a result, 68% of film activities were online in 2020. At the other end, disciplines that do not easily translate to online formats and are harder to socially-distance with, such as concerts and theatre, struggled to bring activities online (only 15% of music activities were online, and only 16% of performing arts activities) and saw far more cancellations.



Percentage of Cancelled Activities by Artistic Discipline

In the online world, artists created new forms of activities that embrace, combine and re-invent virtual formats. Artists created interactive online performances and developed virtual platforms that provided audiences rounded experiences even from home. Videos and live streams were two hugely important formats for online cultural activities, accounting for 76% of online activities. The websites of partner organisations are a key platform for artists in the online world, along with more general platforms such as Facebook and Zoom. The websites of Dutch cultural organisations themselves are also key platforms. This highlights the importance of access to good digital infrastructure for artists' livelihoods and ability to communicate to audiences internationally.



International Cultural Activity Online Formats 2020

One of the main benefits of bringing activities online is that Dutch artists were able to reach international audiences that would otherwise be unable to attend. The majority of film festivals, for example, were moved online and are now available to audiences around the world, rather than the limited number of physical visitors who normally attend. Another benefit of bringing activities online is that Dutch organisations are able to bring international audiences into their own venues. Approximately 30% of online activities took place on the websites of the Dutch artists and organisations themselves. In this way, international audiences are brought into the realm of the Dutch artist and organisation 'at home'.

René Gulikers Conducts Musicians Virtually at the Music Academy in Bremen. Photo Credit: René Gulikers

Perhaps most importantly, Dutch artists and cultural organisations create concerts, performances, exhibitions, publications, lectures and a myriad of other activities that offer mental and emotional sustenance to audiences around the world at a time when physical gatherings cannot take place. It is important to remember that even in cases where the full experience cannot be captured, these covid-proof activities provide a substitute that offers audiences a chance to enjoy arts and culture when it would otherwise not be possible.

There are nevertheless a number of barriers that need to be overcome in order for artists to create new and resilient initiatives. First and foremost, for a majority of artists, neither

online activities nor physically distanced activities are financially viable. Financial support and support for methods that allow monetisation of online activities must therefore be available for artists and cultural organisations if this model is to continue. Second, digital infrastructure plays a key role in the production of content for online audiences, particularly for larger cultural organisations. While there is an external infrastructure (such as Facebook or Zoom) in place that is being used, the quality of a cultural organisation's website, the ability to record quality audio and video, and access to the expertise needed to create virtual formats is crucial to making the online model viable. Finally, collaboration between Dutch and international artists and arts organisations requires extensive coordination and planning and artists need structural support in order to undertake this work. Dutch artists have been at the forefront of the shift towards new forms of activities and providing support for artists to overcome these barriers. This will, most certainly, result in a continued increase in these new forms of resilient art.

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Help that trickles down

Pleun Meijer

May 2021

A full year has passed. Fear, though still present, has subsided a bit and has made way for doubt and discontentment. Especially with those who the Dutch cultural sector have deemed 'The Cultural Makers'. It is unsure where this umbrella-term for artists, designers, actors and every other creative occupation finds its origin, but it is quite feasible that it's a term created by policy makers. One might argue that years of neoliberal politics might be to blame for the negative connotations attached to the label 'artist' making it more difficult for policy makers to lobby their case, so by using the term 'cultural makers' one can sidestep the negative stereotypes. Others argue the fact that - since the Dutch language has a multitude of really craft specific words that in English would all mean artists - one has a need for an all-encompassing word: 'Cultural Makers'. Whatever the reasoning behind the term, it seems to have caught on with policymakers and those working in the cultural sector...to the great discontentment of some artists. They are disillusioned with the way the Dutch government is handling the cultural Covid-19 relief funds. They feel left out, forgotten and marginalised.

In this last year alone the Dutch national government and the Ministry of Culture allocated over 800 million euros to be used for Covid-19 relief funding (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2021). The newspaper headlines printed the amounts in bold lettering. It was presented as much needed victory for the cultural sector: it too was deemed important enough to receive the much needed governmental help. The primary goal of this money

was to support the cultural infrastructure but how did they plan to do so? And why do the artists feel left out?

First things first, it seems as though the national government does not have a direct influence on how the money is spent. She can only determine where and by whom it is spent. This has led to a system where the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) divides the cultural budget into four different streams: a few selected national cultural organisations (theatres and museums), the national cultural foundations, provinces and municipalities. The Covid-19 relief funds are streamlined into this system. A big portion went to the national cultural foundations. These foundations are normally tasked with allocating the money they receive from the OCW Ministry to cultural organisations and/or projects that they deem important. Now they were tasked to use the extra money to help organisations and projects in these hard times. The twelve provinces received extra money to aid struggling cultural organisations within their province and protect their now wounded cultural infrastructure.

The municipalities received extra funding as well, to support their local cultural infrastructure, yet here OCW decided to leave the money earmark-less. Meaning that the money, once received, could be used for anything the municipality deemed fitting. Although the OCW explicitly asked the municipalities to use the money for the cultural sector (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2021), not all municipalities wanted/were able to adhere to those wishes.

What stands out in the two last paragraphs is the emphasis on supporting the cultural infrastructure, which seems to imply that cultural organisations are seen as essential to the health of the cultural sector as an entity. Cultural organisations, such as theatres and museums, are deemed essential because it is thought they generate jobs for other organisations and the 'Makers'. Direct support for the 'Makers' is not the goal of these specific Covid-19 relief funds. Yet more and more voices are believing that this might have been a mistake as it did not have the desired effect. While the organisations were kept alive by these extra funds, all the programmes, shows and exhibitions were unable to take place. Most organisations chose to postpone their engagements, believing the crisis would only last a few weeks. Unfortunately postponing had the (unintentional?) consequence that they didn't have to pay damages to the Makers (Schaap, 2021). This could mean a big loss for artists, especially during the first two months that covid-19 hit the Netherlands. This left artists in an even more unstable position than ever before.

The government's reasoning behind prioritising the cultural organisations over direct support for the 'Makers' is twofold. First, governmental institutions have strict rules which

do not allow them to use this money to compensate for private income loss. The second reason has to do with the tax law status of those 'Makers'. The majority of the 'Makers' are self-employed and, when needed, should file for financial support just like any other self-employed person via the TOZO (temporary bridging measure for self-employed professionals).

But neither of these points were made clear in the new articles with the headlines in bold lettering proclaiming those huge amounts of extra money for the cultural sector. This created the wrong or unrealistic expectations for the Makers and the cultural sector as a whole. On top of that, not every artist sees him or herself as self-employed in the same way a grocer or entrepreneur would see themselves as self-employed. Here, the term 'The Makers' can add to the feeling that the artist is being marginalised. When they did file for TOZO1 their partners had to pay more income tax and those that filed for TOZO2 and TOZO3 were often declined due to the fact that they had partners with an income. This loss of income and a lack of opportunities have left some artists feeling left out and forgotten (Enquête Creatieve Coalitie Beeldende kunst, 2021).

As nobody anticipated this crisis to fester for this long, the government's (at the national, regional and municipal level) first response was to seek to preserve the existing cultural infrastructure. Although they honestly tried to get the funding where it was needed, one could argue that in their haste they chose to rely on an uncertain method: trickle-down economics. The argument that money infested at the top would generate revenue that would also benefit the bottom. Theoretically a win-win, yet the theory doesn't have a good track record in real life.

The money did trickle-down to a multitude of cultural organisations, mostly safeguarding the cultural infrastructure, but it seems to have missed the people who create the actual content on which that infrastructure is built. The cultural infrastructure with all its organisations is still standing, but the base of that infrastructure has become very brittle. The covid-19 relief funding system, as was set up by the government, has served its purpose, but did it strive to obtain the right objective? Right now one cannot deny the feeling that the government is suffering from an administrative detachment from the base of the cultural sector.

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Disrupted settings: what does Covid-19 teach us about entrepreneurial learning?

Léonie Ridderstap

April 2021

A little over a year since the coronavirus pandemic outbreak, the creative and cultural industries in the Netherlands are still facing significant disruption. It is essentially impossible for cultural entrepreneurs to adequately prepare for an unknowable situation like a disease's global outbreak. The disrupted setting caused by the pandemic, nonetheless, does underline the importance of entrepreneurial qualities. Educators in entrepreneurship are entrusted with educating students to acquire the skills to negotiate inherently uncertain and fundamentally unpredictable futures. This article portrays how entrepreneurial education has shifted towards learning through entrepreneurial education. This pedagogical approach is illustrated with three courses on cultural entrepreneurship within the Erasmus School for History, Culture and Communication (ESHCC).

In rapidly changing environments, entrepreneurship education remains a relevant topic, aiming to provide students with the competencies to act in an entrepreneurial way. An enormous growth in entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education programmes (EEPs) has been observed (Penaluna et al., 2012). Nonetheless, there is little consensus about the design and delivery of entrepreneurial education. This lack of consensus is

partially due to the lack of a clear understanding of the learning process (Markowska & Wiklund, 2020) and an absence of agreed-upon frameworks (Fayolle, Gailly, and Lassas-Clerc 2006). However, prior research emphasised the importance of experience and the process of transforming experience into useful knowledge when developing entrepreneurial opportunities (Corbett 2005; Pittaway and Thorpe 2012; Politis 2005). A common characteristic among pedagogical methods for entrepreneurship education since the 2010s is a focus on learning. This form of entrepreneurship education reflects the process that entrepreneurs go through by focusing on action, experiences from the real world, and reflection (Kassean et al. 2015).

A well-known typology of EEPs is learning "about", learning "for", or learning "through" entrepreneurship. Many approaches to teaching entrepreneurship are still more "about" and "for" entrepreneurship than "through" entrepreneurship (Nielsen & Stovang, 2015; Pittaway and Edwards 2012). The "About" type uses more traditional pedagogic forms driven by a desire to raise awareness and are often content or subject led (Pittaway and Hannon, 2008). "For" approaches include experiential, inquiry-based and project based-learning and tend to engage students in tasks that enable them to acquire vital entrepreneurial skills and competencies in preparation for future entrepreneurial endeavours (Solomon et al., 2002; Gibb, 2002). "Through" approaches allow for the actual practice of entrepreneurship in "safe" conditions, focussing on learning through doing (Pittaway and Cope, 2007b).

Entrepreneurs cannot merely rely on their knowledge and skills to reach their entrepreneurial goals, as risk and uncertainty are characteristic entrepreneurship conditions. Equally important is their belief in their ability to achieve these goals (Newman et al., 2018). Self-efficacy (Bandura 1977a, 1997) is a key construct associated with entrepreneurs (Henry, Hill, and Leitch 2003). It can be defined as the individual's beliefs about their capabilities to organise and execute a course of action to reach designated goals and competencies (Biemans et al., 2009). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) indicates the strengths of one's confidence in the ability to perform entrepreneurial tasks and is best demonstrated under the uncertainty and complexity inherent in entrepreneurship (Chen et al., 1998). Entrepreneurial learning can be designed to foster and encourage entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Pihie & Bagheri, 2010). Activities that encourage 'learning by doing' and allow mastery experiences increase confidence in one's ability to perform specific tasks (Biemans et al. 2009) successfully. Consequently, the design of entrepreneurship education should contain activities designed to increase students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

Within ESHCC's department of Arts and Culture Studies several entrepreneurship educators explicitly focus on action and real world-experiences in their courses. I am highlighting three courses that achieve the key objective of providing participating students with an academically rigorous learning experience that translates into real-world value (Kickul & Fayolle, 2007). These 8-week courses are designed for learning through entrepreneurship, adopting pedagogical approaches that facilitate the learning process through student engagement in (1) field-or 'live' case studies and (2) in consultancy within an entrepreneurial context.

(1) A field- or 'live' case study: Case-based learning provides students with an opportunity to see theory in practice. It allows for the development of analytic, communicative, and collaborative skills along with the content knowledge they acquire. The Heritage & Fashion course piloted a case-based learning approach with a focus on fashion. Fashion is particularly interesting for students, on a personal level, on an academic level as an industry merging creativity and commerce, and as an industry facing rapid change and high levels of market volatility and uncertainty. Instead of solving an existing case study, students learned through the case-study methodology by developing and writing their own case-study material. The European Fashion Heritage Association provided small teams of students with real-life cases on digital fashion archives.

(2) Consultancy within an entrepreneurial context: The newly developed elective course 'Assessing the impact of Culture and Creativity in Society' entails a scientifically grounded approach to impact assessment. The not-for-profit arts and culture sectors started to experience the need for justification when funders needed to know about their value in financial and other terms. In small groups, students conducted an impact assessment for Eye-Moviezone, Amsterdam Fashion College, Cultuur + Ondernemen, Allez, Chantez!, Van Gogh Museum and Women Connected. The course provides students with the knowledge, skills, tools for conducting a social impact assessment in the cultural sector. The course's core is a real-life exercise where small teams of students conducted an impact assessment as consultants to one of the cultural and creative organisations partaking.

(3) A combination of 'live' case study and consultancy: During the seminar Applied Cultural Entrepreneurship, students realize an artistic production, a consultancy report, or a case study with entrepreneurial aspects. They act as junior agents, perform as programmers, economists, planners, managers, marketers, auditors, fundraisers, etc. in an entrepreneurial way, with innovative elements and with a

holistic approach. During the last run of the course, students elaborated on projects designed by themselves or commissioned by external partners, such as Van Gogh Museum, Mauritshuis, Green Events and UNESCO Netherlands. And in some cases, they collaborated with Codarts and Willem de Kooning students. This seminar fosters students' competencies like creative and critical thinking, collaborative skills, coordinating, self-reflection, critical controlling, independent decision making, and performing under stress. Students engage in their professional career by facing the environment this seminar intends to simulate.

All three courses facilitated our students' entrepreneurial learning processes and assisted cultural organisations with key strategic issues that they experience. After conducting extensive research, using diagnostic, evaluative, and problem-solving skills, the student teams presented their ideas and recommendations to the organisation. For these courses, this was done in a seminar format, including the students, their lecturers, and the stakeholders: cultural organisations involved and several experts in the field. As consultants to cultural organisations and institutions, students learn about the complexities and uncertainties of entrepreneurship. The fieldwork component of both courses provided a source of rich and diverse experiences in an authentic learning environment. The courses thus foster our students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy and contribute to their propensity to deal with the uncertainty and ambiguity inherent to entrepreneurship.

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Conclusion: Home is where the art is

Koen van Eijck

June 2021

I have repeatedly defended plans for research projects in which we wished to assess people's visual arts appreciation by showing them paintings or photographs on computer screens. There would always be at least this one art history professor in the jury, eager to explain to us how seeing art on a screen is absolutely incomparable to seeing the actual physical work, where you have the added sensation of smell, where you can much better discern the brush strokes, or where you can appreciate its actual size. Bottom line: screens cannot replace 'the real thing', and this is probably even more true if we consider dance, theatre, or concerts than if we look at visual art. This suggests that the arts are pretty much doomed if they need to move largely online to reach their audiences. In the performing arts, the co-presence of other audience members is a very important part of the experience. The bigger the role of sociability in people's concert experience (and this role seems bigger for popular or folk arts than for classical music concerts as ongoing research by Femke Vandenberg and Michaël Berghman shows), the less online distribution modes seem to offer a satisfactory alternative. Thus, the severe restrictions on co-presence have done serious harm to the cultural sector and continue to do so. Much of the social interaction got lost, and arguably much of our sense of being in the presence of 'the real thing'.

It is true at many levels that art cannot exist without an audience. When the pandemic struck in March 2020, lots of artists and arts organizations were quick to move online to stay in touch with their audiences through alternative modes of presentation. Due to the initial expectation that this pandemic would only last a few months, this reflex to move things online did not change the products or productions themselves much, as artists were primarily in search of alternative distribution channels. A lot was offered for free, which has long been both a strength and a weakness of the cultural sector. It clearly demonstrates the strong inner drive that makes artists want to create their art even in the absence of noteworthy financial compensation. It also shows how flexible and resilient creativity can make the sector in troubled times. Artists have been offering comfort, distraction, beauty or food for thought under difficult circumstances when people needed it most, often free of charge. This is most admirable, but also displays a potential weakness as the drive to keep creating even without a paying audience or commissioner also implies a certain risk that might enhance the financially precarious situation many artists find themselves in. With all these unstoppable creatives struggling for attention outside the traditional physical venues,

competition may increase, earnings may drop even further and audiences may get used to free art stuff online. Given that COVID-19 relief support from the state disproportionately goes to the larger arts institutions, artists in precarious situations will suffer most. Many are holding their breath in fear of what the future will bring.

Being in the midst of a crisis is never the best moment to evaluate its ultimate impact. There is a lot to worry about and many jobs and productions are on the line. Much personal drama is going on and I suspect the bulk of that is still hidden from our view. Nevertheless, the blogs and interviews in these Corona Chronicles as well as the ideas put forward during the Shit! Corona symposiums offer reasons for optimism as well, albeit of the every-cloud-has-a-silver-lining-type or the never-waste-a-good-crisis-category.

For one thing, the cultural sector has shown enormous creative strength and innovative potential. While the initial response to COVID-19 was a shift to other ways of presenting essentially the same thing, we are increasingly seeing productions that are actively incorporating the limitations and opportunities of these new (online) distribution channels. Actors do solo performances in people's homes. Live streaming services increasingly provide opportunities for people to chat and comment during performances, creating a sense of togetherness and allowing for interaction. Also, musical live streams have very quickly developed from musicians streaming songs from their homes to high quality and high-tech concerts designed especially for ticketed online live events. In the process, those involved in live streaming music are trying to learn from the gaming industries and find innovative cooperation there. I'm sure some of these sped-up innovations will be lasting.

Using accessible digital distribution channels also offers great possibilities for attracting new audiences. While I do not believe that sheer availability makes people leave their cultural comfort zone under normal circumstances, the fact that many people have lots of time on their hands during the pandemic (while others work harder than ever!), does make them more likely to explore new artistic avenues. This may well open them up to unknown artists that are now more readily available, and at a lower cost, than ever before. This optimistic view on people expanding their cultural horizons is perhaps confirmed by the fact that many have picked up learning a musical instrument and that literary publishers are now asking people not to send in their manuscripts as they are simply overwhelmed by the countless products of aspiring authors, only a negligible proportion of whom will ever get published.

The lockdown forces people to entertain themselves in the confines of their own home. While many people believe that the arts are something 'out there', in a museum, a theatre

or a concert hall, being quarantined may have fostered the notion that the arts are all around us, including in our own home. Much of the entertainment at home only exists because of the creative sector, ranging from everything on Netflix, to all the music we listen to or any books or magazines we read. There is justified concern about the blurring of boundaries between, e.g., work and leisure due to our working at home and spending so much time on our laptops. But art is also part of that mix and it would be great if people started to realize that the boundaries between what they call art, leisure, or entertainment also start to blur in the sense that they understand that much of what they enjoy on a daily basis is art, or inspired by art, or indebted to art. Bringing art into people's homes in creative and innovative ways, making it a relevant part of their confined daily lives, could be a much-needed silver lining to the COVID-19 cloud that severely limits formal art attendance. It is what the wonderfully resilient art sector would deserve, just as much as the enriched audiences, who will be all the more eager to witness 'the real thing' once they're allowed to again.

About the author

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Photo By Jitske Nap