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The Walking Island by Søren Dahlgard, Colomboscope Sea Change, Arts Festival, 2019 © Sanjaya Mendis

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*Through
culture, we
create trust and
understanding
between the people
of Europe and
the wider
world.*

Editorial

BEFORE THE WORLD SHUT DOWN

In 2019, EUNIC brought together more than 500 colleagues for 17 seminars and conferences in 12 countries worldwide. Week by week, month by month, more than 2,400 colleagues meet in our 120 globally active branches – the clusters, located in 92 countries –, to plan and deliver activities together with local partner organisations.

Our work is international, transcultural, cross-continental. As a network our core business is to meet, share knowledge, strengthen our capacities together with partner organisations, and engage with the people of Europe and people on other continents.

We are producing this brochure during an exceptional situation. Cultural activities are based on people meeting, and the cultural sector is therefore hit hard by the measures taken to beat the coronavirus outbreak. Arts institutions came to a stand-still, moving activities to the internet, where possible. All our meetings and get-togethers have also been cancelled or postponed. How to move forward?

OUR CURRENT FOCUS

Perhaps by re-shifting the focus of our work. European Spaces of Culture, currently our main project, sets out to find new ways of doing European cultural collaboration outside the EU by testing different creative models. Six pilot actions are currently under way. In a conference planned for mid-2021, we will draw together important findings into new policy recommendations.

The questions we are asking ourselves and the EU are: how can we engage meaningfully with the world in culture? How can this be done fairly? And how can cultural relations become one of the key pillars of Europe's engagement with the world, finding a fixed place in foreign policy? We interviewed cultural managers Kateryna Botanova and Yemisi Mokuolu to ask them.

THIS BROCHURE

This brochure gives you a glimpse of the international work we do. We take you on a tour from Tunisia and Ukraine where we work to strengthen the local cultural sector, to Bolivia where culture contributes to the task of tackling gender issues. In the countries of the Balkans we train future cultural leaders and in Russia young curators exchange with institutions in European countries. In Kinshasa we partner with the Fine Arts Academy to nurture Congolese photographers to create diverse pictures of their country. These projects demonstrate the principles of cultural relations: we aim to build fair partnerships by practising mutual listening and learning, engaging in dialogue, co-creation and joint capacity building.

As the virus continues to disregard all boundaries, it also shows us the future is already here. We are now connected on a global scale fighting a global challenge. The need to peacefully work together to find local solutions has never been more urgent. Creativity and cultural relations can be at the heart of these solutions, allowing us to remain connected, resilient and secure.

Because cultural relations create trust and understanding between the people of Europe and the wider world.

Gitte Zschoch
EUNIC Director



FINDING NEW MODELS FOR DOING *cultural exchange*

EUROPEAN SPACES OF CULTURE

What does good cultural relations work look like today? How can cultural relations work be fair? As jury members, Yemisi Mokuolu and Kateryna Botanova were tasked with finding the best pilot projects in the European Spaces of Culture programme. In a conversation with EUNIC Director Gitte Zschoch they discuss the value and role of European cultural relations today.

Kateryna, as jury member for European Spaces of Culture, you recently gave feedback on the 32 submissions that did not make it to the second round. In hindsight, did the jury overlook relevant projects?

KB I think we made a good choice. Going over the projects confirmed or reconfirmed it. I also feel a bit of sadness as I believe that out of the remaining projects there were some really good ideas that maybe required more work, consideration, more development, maybe coaching.

The concept of European Spaces for Culture is about creating shared places where people come together on an equal footing, it is not about exporting European spaces all over the world. What do you think about the word 'European' in the title – would it be better if we called the project Shared Spaces of Culture?

YM Yes, because after all, sharing and being equal is the objective of the programme. Nobody owns the space – we are all in the same space. Everyone should feel included, so in principle, why should it be called European even though Europe is the main promoter of the project?

KB I would also definitely say yes. If what we are trying to find is a common space for mutual learning and exchange, it is about equal access, equal ownership and being open. Europe has quite a history of casting a long shadow over large parts of the world. It is a good time now to find new ways of cooperation and co-creation that would be important to everyone.

So when we refer to European values, is that something we can confidently put forward or should we give space for the values of our partners?

YM There is no single answer to this question – whatever we do has to be appropriate to the context, as each country reacts differently, especially in terms of their relationship with Europe. Specific consultations need to take place and be conducted very responsibly to understand the local context and relationship with Europe. Engaging in this way is important because it encourages the producers to go out and consult with audiences and collaborators and find the appropriate solutions.

KB Very good question. What we actually call European values aren't they actually global values, human values in general? Freedom, freedom of speech and expression, openness, fairness and access to culture. If that's what we're talking about it's not necessarily European. We could perhaps say that maybe Europe is more aware of these values, more concerned about them. This awareness can enable various collaboration models that would create open spaces to share these values in different parts of the world. Isn't it about bringing people, artists from different backgrounds and cultures together to work on something new and challenging for everyone involved? Then it becomes a global process, a global exchange.

What we are trying to do with this project is find new ways of doing culture together with people and communities across the world. Why is the project relevant to you?

YM For once, there is an opportunity to build a shared experience so we can do good together with local cultural actors. The only way we can do this is to create a framework for common understanding and a way to communicate with each other. So often people are divided and are not able to embody each other's cultural responses. Can you imagine communicating in several different countries at the same time and being able to have a common understanding of the same concepts? This is why European Spaces of Culture is interesting to me. Changes emerge when we are in the position to exchange and work within the framework of culture.

KB Right now, the world is closing down, physically and emotionally but we have not been living in a particularly open world before the pandemic. Whenever this is over, we might be separated with even more boundaries, so the need to be sensitive to the knowledge and the worlds of other people will be much greater than just



Kateryna Botanova hails from Ukraine and lives in Switzerland. She is co-curator of CULTURESCAPES festival in Basel, and an art critic, curator and contemporary culture researcher and producer.

Yemisi Mokuolu is an independent producer and creative industries consultant based in the UK. She is the founder of Hatch Ideas and Hatch Africa as well as Asa Baako, a community driven arts festival in Ghana.

For a long time, in international relations culture was associated with soft power. Money was used to set the agendas top-down. Projects like European Spaces of Culture are indispensable in changing this.

Kateryna Botanova

a few months ago. This is where culture comes in as a unique and indispensable tool that can create more sensitive environments, more open and attuned to different forms of knowledge and understanding. The questions about European and universal values, shared spaces and new forms of collaboration, mutual listening and the role of culture that we are asking ourselves in this project, are most timely and challenging. That's what is very important and it resonates with what I do in other projects.

One element we incorporated into this project is a two-stage application process. If projects are successful in the first round, they then receive 10.000 euros to further develop their initial idea into a fully developed proposal. Do you think this approach is working?

YM I think it should be one of the core principles of the EUNIC clusters: the value of engaging with your environment constantly and building solid relationships, so that when you're applying for any project you immediately have a network ready to develop it. I think it's great there was that incentive but I find it folly to be giving money to people to do things they should be doing anyways as a standard good practice. You should not have to count on such a financial incentive to find partners to design or produce projects. Focusing on developing a broad range of local partnerships should already be in place and not be grant-driven.

How can Europe be fair when the Europeans are bringing the funding, the framework and infrastructure to make projects happen? How can genuine shared ownership be achieved in these circumstances?

KB Changing modes of perception and power structures cannot happen overnight. For a long time, in international

relations culture was associated with soft power. Money was used to set the agendas top-down. Projects like European Spaces of Culture are indispensable in making this change possible. We just have to be persistent.

YM Taking inspiration from Ubuntu, "I am because we are", we understand that the project is not possible without the involvement of each of the partners. To create this framework, in my own work, we host an induction where we co-create clear, shared codes of conduct to draft an agreement between all the partners. We aim to recognise that everybody is equal. Someone who has worked in the field for 30 years is valued as much as the funder who is bringing in 150,000 pounds. It also takes leadership to create a culture where everyone feels valued and then stepping back in order to allow the group to come forward. We all have our strengths and we all complement each other.

The ethic of codes of conduct for projects is really interesting ...

YM We now have a fresh code of conduct for each new group. We have learnt that you have to put these in place right at the beginning and then have a moment to review it. It's a manifesto of how we're going to work together.

We want to work at the interface of the public sector and the independent cultural scene. How can EUNIC manage the balancing act between these two different spheres?

KB I believe that keeping a fair balance of public and non-public institutions is very important. In many countries the political situation is quite volatile, the public sector is very fluid in terms of people and the moment people change everything else changes, there is no or

little continuity. However, in non-public sectors there is more specific knowledge and experience which needs to be relied on. So, having this healthy mix is important to keep in mind.

YM It's essential to have the public and private sectors and civil society all working together. They all have different roles and functions, which is why they were invented. In a situation like Ghana, for the Asa Baako festival we produce, we have a very light touch with the government. However, we need to engage with them for validation, while with the local chiefs we engage out of respect to receive permission. We work very well with the local police so we can have safety and security measures. The recycling project is done with the local community and there is no government involved in it at all. So, we are looking for private partnerships to take that forward.

It's about being realistic about the function and capacity of every single partner. We try hard to make sure that when we engage local NGOs and community groups, we're really clear about what their objectives are. We get them around the table and say: you're all part of a puzzle; there's a problem we want to solve; and we all have a part in it with different strengths. EUNIC's role is important in setting that framework of collaboration and creating comfort in it, making sense of everyone's role: it's not that the local politicians are not interested, their role was only necessary for one week, and you as an NGO are important in this journey for three years. EUNIC's role is very important especially when people don't know about policy.

If you looked back at European Spaces of Culture in a couple of years, how would you know the project has been successful?

KB That's a difficult question. How would you know?

To me one aspect would be that we continue to work in such a new way – equally engagement with all our members and partners. It will be a success if European Spaces of Culture becomes the normal framework for cultural relations in the future.

YM How would you know that it has been successful? For me, it is when people stop asking you to do the thing you want to change. Which is to say, when our initiatives become a consolidated reality, that is when you know they have been effective. However, visions are big, and not to be a pessimist, cultural changes do not happen in days, we have to think in the timeframe of a lifetime. You therefore have to make your markers for success measurable. An indicator of success would be having external partners cooperating and seeing collaborations between EUNIC members.

KB For me one very important thing is the models that have been supported and grown through this initiative, that they continue living and developing. The sustainability aspect – the fact that these collaborations and ideas are picked up in the local environments and people sustain themselves. This development would be an important indicator, that the projects are not one-offs, that something supported with European money does not disappear when the money is gone. I would also be very interested to see if the knowledge, the know-how and approaches developed through Spaces of Culture – how to do culture in a different way – comes back to Europe and we say, you know, there is something we did in Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Colombia and it was completely amazing, we have to do it in Germany or Ukraine or the UK. If this knowledge travels back, then it really is a flow of ideas and experiences.

It's essential to have the public and private sectors and civil society all working together. They all have different roles and functions. Making sense of everyone's role, creating a framework for collaboration, this is EUNIC's role.

Yemisi Mokuolu

EUROPEAN SPACES OF CULTURE

six projects in 2020

URBAN CULT LAB'AFRICA

Benin

The Urban Cult Lab'Africa has brought six fab labs – digital fabrication laboratories – in West Africa together to co-design cultural events including artists' residencies, live events and exhibitions. This project idea is fuelled by strong regional collaborations across the fab labs in the area of digital innovation for education; makers and artists; and goods and services. Urban Cult Lab'Africa promotes social inclusion, encouraging the re-appropriation of urban spaces to make their creative programme visible to the broadest audiences possible.

Partners: BloLab (Benin), OuagaLab (Burkina Faso), BabyLab (Ivory Coast), Donilab (Mali), Sahel FabLab (Mauritania) and Woelab (Togo), Institut français, Embassy of the Netherlands, Délégation Wallonie-Bruxelles, EU Delegation to Benin

TRIÁNGULO TEATRO (CIRCUITO EUROPEO TEATRAL CENTROAMERICANO)

El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras

Triángulo Teatro (Central American European Theatre Circuit) is a programme of theatrical performances which revolve around the contemporary interpretation of European dramatic art. Through a public call to theatre companies in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, the partners are collaborating on plays which vary in style and format. The productions are being staged in all three countries to promote cross-border cooperation. Triángulo Teatro also includes a professional development programme for the theatre sector, encompassing a technical training support programme.

Partners: Laboratorio Teatral de Artes Landívar (Guatemala), Escuela Nacional de Arte Dramático (Honduras), Asociación Azoro (El Salvador), Centro Cultural de España Tegucigalpa, Centro Cultural de España Guatemala, Centro Cultural de España San Salvador, Alliance Française San Salvador, Alliance Française Guatemala, Alliance Française Tegucigalpa, Società Dante Alighieri Comitato di Guatemala, Honduras and Guatemala, Centro Cultural Alemán de Tegucigalpa (Honduras), EU Delegations to El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras

TIBEB BE ADEBABAY – ART IN PUBLIC SPACES

Ethiopia

Tibeb be Adebabay (Amharic for Art in Public Space) is a participatory street festival staged in Meskel Square, the main public square in Addis Ababa. An open call invited artists from Ethiopia and other countries in Africa and Europe to participate in a workshop to develop new, collaborative ideas for public events across the capital. Born out of the conviction that culture is not a luxury but a necessity, Tibeb be Adebabay offers new experiences for Addis Ababa residents in the public domain. Through a publicity campaign entitled 'Our Future Together', the festival is raising awareness of the role the arts play in society.

Partners: Urban Center, Destino Dance Company, Fekat Circus, and Resolution Design Studio, Goethe-Institut, Alliance Ethio-Française, Istituto Italiano di Cultura, British Council, Embassy of Portugal, Embassy of Spain, EU Delegation to Ethiopia

NOGOONBAATAR – INTERNATIONAL ECO ART FESTIVAL

Mongolia

Half of Mongolia's population lives in Ulaanbaatar, one of the most polluted capital cities on earth. Nagoonbaatar (Mongolian for Green Hero), the first eco-art festival in the country, hopes to change this critical situation. The festival is staged in the Ger District, notorious for heavy pollution through coal burning. Local artists, European artists-in-residence and environmental educators are using a people-to-people approach, developing art projects and events in community centres, schools and public spaces. All festival activities highlight the effects of air pollution and to promote best practices for a more sustainable lifestyle.

Partners: Arts Council of Mongolia, Mongolia State University of Arts and Culture, Goethe-Institut, Alliance Française, Embassy of the Czech Republic, EU Delegation to Mongolia

COLOMBOSCOPE: ON LANGUAGE AND MULTITUDINAL BELONGING

Sri Lanka

The theme for the next edition of the Colomboscope festival is 'Language is Migrant'. Organised by Fold Media Collective, a local team of creative producers, designers and curators, initiatives in the lead-up to the festival include professional development workshops, mentoring circles, and in-tandem residencies across four regions in Sri Lanka. Bringing together contemporary cultural practices that investigate local and global phenomena, works being produced during the project range from film, installation, creative publishing and performance poetry. Local audiences can see the developments of the art-works through regional open studios, and they will also feature in Colomboscope 2021.

Partners: Fold Media Collective, EU Delegation to Sri Lanka, Goethe-Institut, Alliance Française, British Council

THE GRID: CONNECTING ARTISTS AND TECH/ NOLOGISTS

USA

The Grid is incorporating art-thinking into the development of new technologies, jump-starting a conversation between artists, technologists, and policy makers from Europe, Silicon Valley and beyond. Initiating a pioneering experiment, placing artists within research and development teams in Silicon Valley, The Grid is investigating if art-thinking can humanise technology, influence design processes, and anticipate destructive impacts. The project team is also organising multiple events in the San Francisco Bay area, Washington D.C. and New York, including workshops, conferences, and media art exhibitions.

Partners: Gray Area Foundation for the Arts, Burning Man Project, Codame, MUTEK.SF, Zero1, The Center for Advancing Technology, Center for Humane Technology, Open Austria San Francisco, Consulat Général de France, Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Goethe-Institut, other EUNIC members based in New York and Washington, D.C., EU Delegation to the USA

European Spaces of Culture is testing innovative collaboration models in cultural relations between European and local partner organisations in countries outside the EU. As a Preparatory Action, it was initiated by the European Parliament. The European Commission attributed the project to EUNIC. While gathering policy recommendations, the project contributes to the EU strategy on international cultural relations.

ART AT THE SERVICE OF HEALTH

Tfanen – strengthening the cultural sector, Tunisia



According to the World Health Organisation, 1.7 million Tunisians are currently diagnosed with diabetes and ten percent of them are children. Degenerative diabetes complications due to unbalanced diet, depression and low self-esteem cost approximately 19 million Tunisian dinar (6 million euro) to public health authorities every year.

Unfortunately, healthcare provided to children with diabetes in Tunisia focuses only on the medical treatment. During my professional experience at the Massachusetts Hospital, I was amazed at the ways art therapy can foster healing and mental well-being of diabetics, and I dreamt about implementing a similar project in Tunisia. When I heard of the Local Cultural Engagement Fund, I jumped at the chance and applied for funding for my project: Art at the Service of Health. My aim was to promote art therapy in the healthcare system in Tunisia.

Two local public institutions helped us implement the project, the Regional Delegations of School Health assisted us in identifying school children with diabetes, and the Higher Institute of Nursing offered us their premises. 136 children diagnosed with diabetes from two governorates, Tunis and Le Kef, have benefited from a multidisciplinary approach. We ran visual art and theatre workshops, encouraging children to explore their emotions and boost their self-esteem and social skills. We carried out regular

medical consultations to monitor children's blood sugar levels. We hosted educational workshops for school-teachers and medical practitioners to raise awareness about diabetes. We ran nutrition workshops for parents to support the adoption of healthy family eating as a way to reduce costs related to health complications. And we held psychological and counselling sessions to help improve mental health and well-being.

The children particularly liked the modelling and pottery workshops. These workshops helped them understand that a human being is like soil – we can move from one state to another without being damaged or losing our identity. They also had a positive impact on the children's behaviour and cognitive functions: "I used to feel lonely and isolated. The workshops helped me build friendships and feel normal," says Lamjed, 15.

In order to highlight the amazing art works the children made and give them a sense of pride in their achievements, we organised an art exhibition and a theatre play at the end of the project. Families and guests were in tears at both closing events.

Design school at "Culture is my right", Sidi Thabet, Tunisia (2017). © Zeineb Zghonda
Inauguration of a new playground in Kasserine, Tunisia (2018). © Omar Sfayhi
Carnival of colours, an event for children in Zaghouan, Tunisia (2018).



"I used to feel lonely and isolated. The workshops helped me build friendships and feel normal."

Lamjed, aged 15



*"I used to see pity in the eyes of my friends at school.
Now they are impressed with the artist I became."*

Afif, aged 17

The impact of the project has been rewarding. Blood tests proved that the sugar levels were stabilised among most of the children, and the final psychiatric assessments showed visible improvement of their mental health. The number of children with depressive symptoms dropped from 17 to 2. We believe that we helped them overcome their fears and gain confidence. We have also helped entrepreneur Chaker, aged 20, who abandoned school and created his breeding project. We enrolled him in certified breeding training provided by the Kef National School of Agriculture. Thanks to this professional certification, Chaker managed to get a loan from the bank and launch his start-up. "The theatre workshops helped me enhance my communication skills; I feel more confident and at ease when I interact with my co-workers, suppliers and bank managers."

The success of the project is a strategic tool in my advocacy plan with the government health authorities. Art therapy should be democratised in public health facilities. It can reduce expenditure related to diabetes complications such as blindness, neuropathy and kidney failure. I am currently working on raising funds from the private and public health sectors so I can expand the project. My dream is to create a diabetes multidisciplinary treatment facility in every governorate in Tunisia. I want to help children suffering from this illness express their creativity and discover their talents so they can join the artistic community in Tunisia. I do not think I will ever forget overhearing one of the children – Afif, aged 17 – in a workshop say: "I used to see pity in the eyes of my friends at school. Now they are impressed with the artist I became."



A child's painting made at workshop "Art at the service of health" in Le Kef, Tunisia (2019). © Ahmed Bradai



Nejib Raboudi founded the Tunisian Association for Diabetic Youth and Children. He is a graduate from the American Board of Pediatrics and a fellow of the Massachusetts Hospital in Boston and the Houston Baylor College of Medicine in Texas.

© Private



ALTA VOZ CHRONICLE

Gender Equality Through Art, Bolivia

To travel from Buenos Aires, Argentina, to the city of La Paz, Bolivia, is always an adventure. The immense Andes chain seems close. Mount Illimani hypnotizes. For the indigenous Aymara (the majority of people in La Paz) the Illimani is the protector of the city. The neighborhoods descend (or rise) along the hills in an explosion of colours. The clean air 4,095 metres up makes my heart beat a little faster. The aroma of fruits and spices surround me, along with the conversations of the gentle people from La Paz. Everything and everyone welcomes me.

Stories, fables, legends and poetry connect me with an ancient exercise that we have carried out since the beginning of our human species; transmitting the words, and in them, our culture and way of life. To capture experiences and to share them on my return home is part of my profession as a storyteller. Telling and hearing stories allows me to connect and talk about love, respect, equality and diversity, which is why I was in Bolivia, to find out about gender equality promotion in Bolivia through culture and the arts.

Raising the flag of sexual diversity and gender equality is a revolutionary act. Doing this through artistic projects is a creative, firm, beautiful, and loving approach.

The Alta Voz Project promotes gender equality and respect for sexual diversity as a human right, managing and financing artistic activist projects. I was invited to its National Meeting in February 2019 as a guest specialist and presented a lecture alongside Lillith Border, cultural manager and artist from Colombia, and Andr  e-Anne Cot  , Canadian journalist and recreologist. This allowed me to share my experience as a storyteller and activist for gender equality and the right to identity. The National Meeting brought together 45 representatives from the nine capital cities of Bolivia for two days of intense exchange of ideas, experiences and knowledge. It was an environment of commitment and seriousness, valued by the attendees as an opportunity to bind projects, make contacts, hear new perspectives, make their causes visible and obtain financial support.

Some of the important issues raised were the need to create social and legal frameworks that guarantee members of the LGBTQ+ community attention and recognition, as well as decent jobs. The possibility of carrying out commercial operations; the right to get married; and receiving respectful treatment in the media and in society in general. In a country where indigenous roots nourished by the Andean worldview coexist with western evangelization, cultural expressions are kept in a careful and sustained balance by conservative beliefs. Raising the flag of sexual diversity and gender equality is a revolutionary act. Doing this through artistic projects is a creative, firm, beautiful, and loving approach. The arts is a strong vehicle for making the issues of the LGBTQ+ population visible through cinema, staging plays, radio programmes, painting murals, poetic actions and the recovery of historical files linked to the birth and development of the LGBTQ+ movement in Bolivia.

Next steps in the design of regional artistic and cultural actions are new evaluations and more specific work to articulate and specify their planning.

This visit was a trip within a trip for me. It reinforced my view on the relevance of art as a vehicle for cultural transformation, social change and support for the LGBTQ+ equal rights agenda. It took me on a regional tour of a multicultural and plurinational land, enriched by the conjunction of nations in a single country, nurtured by history, traditions and customs that I took back to home to tell.



Mily Ponce is a storyteller and university professor specialising in therapeutic storytelling, based in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

   Ricardo Scotti and Carla Coria, Kinok Producciones

How Ukrainians are establishing cultural and professional links with the European Union

HOUSE OF EUROPE, UKRAINE



Study tour for social entrepreneurs to Riga, Latvia, February 2020 © Mārtiņš Goldbergs

House of Europe was launched in Ukraine to support professional and creative exchanges between Ukrainians and their counterparts in EU countries. By now, House of Europe has processed more than 2,500 applications in the last six months. Ukrainians are applying for support for programmes in media, health, social work, education and culture.

How does House of Europe work from within, what are the challenges for the team and how did the first set of programmes go? And most importantly, is there really a benefit?

Tetyana Shulga, sector manager of the EU Delegation, says that plans to create a project similar to House of Europe have been around for a long time – at least since 2016. Back then the development of cultural cooperation between Ukraine and the EU countries was not progressing. When the idea of House of Europe first surfaced it was meant to be a platform to encourage both professional and cultural exchange between Ukrainians and their EU colleagues.

It's about creating an environment to exchange ideas and knowledge between individuals and organisations all around the world.

However, with time its essence has changed. Now one of the main goals is to establish meaningful contact between people. It's not only about culture anymore but also about connecting teachers, scientists, media, doctors, social enterprises. The accent now is on creating an environment to exchange ideas and knowledge between individuals and organisations all around the world rather than sticking exclusively to the cultural exchange.

As it turned out it was the right call. For instance, the initiators were really impressed by the response to the offer of infrastructure support. "The amount of money we were able to grant was about 1,000 euros, and yet the



Museum managers from Ukraine in Porikus Museum, Frankfurt during a study tour. February 2020 © Markus Kirchgessner

"In an optimistic scenario, projects like House of Europe would no longer be necessary."

Tetyana Shulga, sector manager of the EU Delegation to Ukraine

demand was great. If I'm not mistaken, there were 900 applications to 6 available slots. They were mostly people looking for financial support for their regional library or a small museum."

Before the pandemic started and when the borders were still open, Roman Mykhailiushyn, a PhD candidate at Department of Automation of Technological Professions and Manufacturing at Ternopil National Technical University, became one of the participants in the programme and interned at the National Centre of Robotics, Slovakia. Not only did it let Roman do necessary research, it also helped him to establish a collaboration with the Institute of Robotics and Cybernetics in the same city. "After the programme two things were clear to me. First, international companies are extremely interested in Ukrainian scientific products. Second, sadly, Ukraine has much fewer capabilities for conducting scientific research." He is now initiating talks with different companies to equip a robotics laboratory at his university. When asked about difficulties in any of the stages of the cooperation with House of Europe, Roman smiles. "Probably the biggest problem with the project for me is that I can only participate once. It really expanded the boundaries – not only physical but also psychological".

For Tetyana Shulga, the House of Europe team is now facing a complicated question: who is to manage the exchange? "You see, the thing is, there's no such thing as the culture of the European Union. We have Austrian, Czech, French – well, national cultures. If we invite all the 27 countries of the EU to participate, it'll be incredibly hard to organise. But if we don't, we won't be able to say that House of Europe is a comprehensive and omnidirectional project – as we dreamt". For now, the most active international organisations presented in Ukraine are Goethe-Institut, British Council, Institut français and Czech Centre.

For Tetyana, the signal that House of Europe is fulfilling its role would be a reduction in the demand for grants. She says that in an optimistic scenario, this would mean that everything had gone so well domestically that projects like House of Europe would no longer be necessary.

"For now, our main goal is just to facilitate more contacts and bonds between people. Not even on the institutional or organizational level, just on the human level." This will benefit all the participants in this process, and lead to cultural exchange and important connections.

At the rise of the coronavirus crisis, House of Europe added four additional grant schemes: a hackathon dedicated to carrying culture and cultural organisations through the crisis, infrastructure and digital cooperation grant schemes and an online university.

[more on houseofeurope.org.ua](https://moreon.houseofeurope.org.ua)



Tomya Mironenko is a journalist and editor based in Kyiv, Ukraine.

© Valeria Levanova



THE IMPORTANCE OF CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGES

Russia Exchange Programme for Young Curators

Curatorial cultural exchanges across different countries provide a meaningful way for curators to think outside the box and gain expertise from a context that differs from their places of origin. Since 2012 EUNIC has facilitated an annual exchange programme for young Russian curators with participation by, amongst others, the Austrian Cultural Forum, the embassies of Finland, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Sweden, and Institut français. A group of young curators from Russia get the opportunity to spend a month at a visual arts institution in other countries.

Each EUNIC member finds a host institution in Europe. The curators then apply through an open call and after a rigorous selection process they are matched with host institutions according to their expertise and the institutions' needs. At the end of the programme, everyone convenes in Moscow for the *Battle of the Curators*. This brings the curatorial cohort, arts professionals and the public together for debate and conversation; and the opportunity for the curators to pitch their curatorial project and win a EUNIC funded scholarship of 4,000 euros. The winner is selected by a jury of experienced Russian curators.

I spoke to three curators who were based at Le Château d'Oiron in France; Drents Museums in the Netherlands; and Rupert in Lithuania to find out how their residencies went.

Last year's *Battle of the Curators* winner, Sergey Balandin, worked at Le Château d'Oiron, a Renaissance castle and the custodian of a modern art collection. He talked about the ways he is now implementing her winning project. For him this victory was an important endorsement of her curatorial work. It also contributed to the expansion of networks for curators like himself working in regional cities, in his case, Samara in southwestern Russia.

Barbara Busova, a trained archaeologist, was placed at the Drents Museum where she was able to advise as an expert in the field of early Iron Age leather, support planning for future exhibitions, and influence discussions around possible future collaborations between the Netherlands and Russia.

Irina Aksenova is co-founder and curator at FFTN, an independent art space in St Petersburg. She valued the fact that her residency was at the artist-run space Rupert rather than a large-scale museum. Her experience was influenced by the similarities between

Lithuanian and Russian cultures, and the potential for developing small-scale and non-hierarchical institutions in Russia using Rupert as a model.

The exchange between the curators and the host institutions is evidently an endorsement of the value of cultural professionals operating beyond the boundaries of national representation to create new translations, connections, and the opening up of intellectual borders. The programme fosters deeper understanding across cultures, builds working relationships between Russia and art communities in Europe and contributes to building careers back home that will be influential both artistically and economically in the global society.

These exchanges are not only integral to early career development, they are also translating ideas, ideologies and forms of knowledge in new contexts.

*The programme builds working
relationships between art communities
in Russia and Europe and contributes to
building careers that will be influential
both artistically and economically
in the global society.*



*Jareh Das is a researcher, writer
and visual arts curator based in
Lagos and London.*

© Sen Yang

Perpetual Disconnection

Perpetual Disconnection is a research project looking at personal identity and the practices of traditional African societies. It is about the abstract links that connect, imply and infer concrete facts in relation to potential spiritual causes, or to powers that are difficult to explain. Since my childhood, I have noticed these links in my family.

This subject has become a personal and artistic problematic that I scrutinise, and at the same time it creates a way of dealing with my family. *Perpetual Disconnection* offers a field of exploration and questioning around the weight and the duality of the traditional African society and its standards, and what is known as a modern society with its corollaries. Working with the medium of photography already has implications within this cultural and social history.

My story started to take shape in 2015. One day when I was playing in my father's dugout (canoe) I did a backflip in the N'djili river. I was used to it but this time I dived so deep in the water that panic flooded me. I felt I had reached the end when suddenly a hand pressed and pulled me up. Once at home my father told me that our family had a special connection to the water and with crocodiles. The crocodile is the totem of our family.

My work explores the history and myths of my family fuelled by a lack of connection with my origins. I try not only to write my story but also to relive those moments before my time. I use archival photographs as a way to explore this. Through this perspective, where photography crosses time and space, the reverse sides of my images and the inscriptions which appear there: dates, places, memories, legends are also included to express this journey.

Arsène Mpiana Monkwe is a visual artist. He attended a series of masterclasses of photography, a project of the Académie des Beaux-Arts and EUNIC in partnership with the EU Delegation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The works presented here are part of his graduating project.

BUILDING COMMON GROUND FOR CULTURE MANAGERS IN THE BALKANS

A conversation with Miki Braniște of the Cultural Management Academy



Miki Braniște recently opened ZIZ – art & social area, a community and contemporary arts centre in Cluj, Romania. © Roland Vaczi

The Balkans are pretty much like a Dubioza Kolektiv song, an uncanny blend of hip hop, dub, ska, reggae, rock, punk, electronic, and Balkan music. If you listen very carefully, you may hear some other genres as well. The region is a rich, complex cultural mix just like the best local food you have ever tasted ... dipped in any western sauce.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the former communist thick bordered region (Greece being the exception) developed a case of what some call 'cultural hypermetropia': 'everything in the West is better than here'. Preserving local pride and local identity was difficult in economically precarious circumstances. However, things changed quite a bit in the past decade and the southeastern neighbouring countries started turning to each other for help and collaboration.

One such initiative is the Cultural Management Academy (CMA), a programme which started with Sofia's bid for European Capital of Culture as early as 2014. The Goethe-Institut and other EUNIC members got on board soon thereafter. The academy is designed to connect professionals from four countries in the region: Bosnia

and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece and Romania, and has included participants from Albania, Moldova and Poland. The CMA is one of the few opportunities cultural managers in the Balkans have to work together and exchange ideas.

COMMUNITIES KEEP HERITAGE ALIVE

The 2018 edition of CMA was called 'Engaging with Heritage', a topic linked to the European Year of Cultural Heritage. The agenda focused on the region's particularities such as socialist modernist dissonant/dark heritage; connecting heritage to communities and vice versa; depopulation of rural areas; city developments threatening heritage; and heritage supporting or prohibiting economic development. Piet Jaspaert, Europa Nostra Vice-President, held the opening talk at CMA Romania in 2018. His speech focused on the role communities have in keeping heritage alive. "The type of restoration which starts from a dialogue between decision makers and citizens is a successful one, one that generates the most beneficial impact on the life of that community."



I got involved in the Cultural Management Academy because of its regional approach. We know so little about our neighbouring countries.

Miki Braniște, curator of the academy



Jaspaert's idea was present in several other seminars throughout the programme. As was Caroline Fernolend's intervention, the person who managed to revive the medieval saxon settlement of Viscri, her birthplace in central Transylvania. Viscri became a UNESCO heritage site in 1999, and Caroline has helped restore over 1,200 other heritage sites in the region since then. "I believe that community spirit is born out of a feeling of belonging and responsibility towards your culture and identity. We don't want museum towns, we want places that are alive", she pointed out.

Yet heritage is not limited to ancient ruins, medieval fortresses, wooden churches or baroque palaces. Dissonant heritage is also a major issue in the region. Southeastern Europe has its share of concrete communist architecture, which radically transformed its urban landscape. Involving communities may be regarded as best practice when fostering conservation, but because this heritage is seldom linked to pleasant memories it is interpreted and dealt with differently by various communities.

The way countries in the region cope with dissonant heritage was the topic of discussion for probably the most powerful workshop at the 2018 CMA network meeting in Sofia, where Lukasz Galusek from the International Cultural Center in Krakow gave his presentation: Why are we afraid of socialist modernism.

The 2019 meeting took place in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, European Capital of Culture. Dozens of cultural managers from the countries involved in the programme interacted and created collaborative projects. The most important development compared to previous editions was mentoring of the project teams by staff from EUNIC member organisations. These network meetings are in fact places of common ground, where cultural managers from different places and cultures learn from each other and work together.

WE KNOW SO LITTLE ABOUT OUR NEIGHBOURS

"I was amazed to see the amount of valuable resources that exist. They were inaccessible because we lacked opportunities to meet and work together. I feel we are just starting to discover how much we have been missing out on. I got involved in the CMA programme because of its regional approach. We know so little about our neighbouring countries," says Miki Braniște, curator of CMA.

Miki studied in Paris and Lyon and teaches cultural management university classes in Cluj, Romania. Ten years ago she helped build one of the strongest culture and arts communities in Romania – the Paintbrush Factory. She is well respected in her field. "Many challenges we face in the cultural sector are similar." One of the toughest challenges she mentions is a lack of funding alternatives, creating tough competition when trying to secure resources. The crazy rhythm of funding cycles causes fatigue among cultural workers. "Self-exploitation is unfortunately a common thing in our field of work. Our rhythm is imposed by grant funding cycles. We get on that spinning wheel and we can't get off. I know a lot of people who burnt out."

Aggressive business development is another challenge, which generates high rent costs, which in turn forces out many independent cultural organisations. Proof of this: the fact that the old communist Paintbrush Factory is no longer a contemporary arts centre as the owner decided to revamp the place and convert it into a modern business centre. Miki admits that they all got attached to the place and its vibe. "There were still employees from back then, the doorkeepers, we got very attached to them. We used to joke, telling them they have not got artists, but new factory workers on their hands, as we were often working three shifts, like they did in the 80s." In her vision, the CMA is a place where cultural operators get



A practice session at ZIZ. © Roland Vaczi

a chance to "stop, take a breath and reflect". As well as this, during the past few years, the programme played its part in building connections between cultural managers in the Balkans. It also offered funding up to 5,000 euros through a seed grant dedicated to collaboration between participants from different countries.

Miki is currently working on a grant application for this year's CMA in Bucharest. It is the afternoon and already she spent most of her day on the phone and in online meetings. "We are writing the project, trying to access alternative funding from AFCN, Romania's National Cultural Fund. This year we will target the challenges in the cultural sector due to the current situation ... This pandemic that keeps us indoors as we speak."

Each year of the programme CMA addressed different topics related to priorities or challenges in the cultural sector: innovation in culture (2017), cultural heritage (2018), and culture and arts in the digital age (2019). Workshops took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece and Romania. The programme has counted 150 participants so far. In 2020 the scope is: 'The role of performing arts in time of crisis'. "Performing arts, especially independent theatre and contemporary dance got a major blow due to the pandemic", she explains, adding that financial support is already limited.

MOVING EVERYTHING ONLINE

Until now the Academy has brought the cultural managers together in a single place. It has provided common ground for exchanging knowledge and sharing solutions to their problems. Miki worked closely with her colleagues Argyro Barata (Greece) and Stefka Tsaneva (Bulgaria) in coordinating the workshops in each country. All of them are professionals strongly connected to the realities of the cultural sector.

In fact, Miki just opened a new community and contemporary arts centre, in a Jewish heritage space, a former synagogue. During the developments they discovered a hidden fresco representing the Ziz griffin, the Hebrew mythological creature similar to the Greek mythological phoenix. "It was an uplifting discovery for a group of artists looking for a new place," she explains. This discovery is how the new art centre got its name. Yet Ziz got closed a few days after the opening event as the virus started its rampage.

Before the pandemic, CMA editions in Bucharest were organised in a former 19th century inn, located in the historic centre of the city. Converted into a cultural centre, the buildings' modern amphitheatre was full of people. Participants travelled to Sofia for joint workshops and skills matching sessions with colleagues from other countries. It is obvious now for the organisers that the CMA opening gala will no longer take place in a full amphitheatre, but more likely on laptops.

"This year we will meet online."



Adrian M. Popa was a participant in the Cultural Management Academy programme and is a freelance writer and media specialist from Cluj, Romania.

© Chris Nemes

How do we perceive the world? The map we use here renders distances and areas of continents and oceans more accurately to reality than other map models. It was designed by Japanese architect Hajime Narukawa in 1999 and is being used in schools in Japan today.

More info: narukawa-lab.jp

THESSALONIKI, GREECE

Hesitant pupils with low self-esteem came forward and revealed a much different picture of themselves. It was a magical journey.
– Teacher in #Odysseia theatre project

Learn more about this project



ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA

We found new friends for life on this trip. And I'll take home new ideas for my hometown, to improve the experience for young people there. – Tala, Estonian student on the Baltic Roadtrip

Learn more about this project



WASHINGTON, D.C., USA

What a radical idea to get us all together to share our thoughts. In times of separation, sharing is radical.
– Artist at CrossCurrents performing arts festival

Learn more about this project



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Chile
Colombia
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Peru
Uruguay
Venezuela

BRASÍLIA, BRAZIL

I have learnt a lot more than making a sound on an instrument: to cooperate, to express myself better, to focus. What is most important: I found a place to develop as a citizen. – Samira Prado Novais, 15, member of Brasília's Youth Orchestra

Learn more about this project



HANOI, VIETNAM

I increased my knowledge and met experts in philosophy, sociology and psychology. And publishers who offered me job opportunities. – Phi Quốc Chân, participant at Translation Academy

Learn more about this project



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EUNIC AT A GLANCE

in 2019

HOW WE STRENGTHEN *European cultural relations worldwide*

2,500 full and associate members' branches in
120 clusters in **92** countries engage in cultural relations worldwide.

36 clusters are located inside the EU. **8** new clusters were formed in Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Kolkata, Marseille, Panama, Paraguay, Singapore and Silicon Valley – San Francisco Bay Area.

1 Siena Cultural Relations Forum was organised with **51** academics, policy makers and practitioners.

1 Expert Group on Cultural Heritage of the European Commission was joined.

15 projects were supported through the central grant scheme, the Cluster Fund. **204,000** euros were contributed to the Cluster Fund by

14 members, up from ten members in 2018.

There was an **8%** growth in the Cluster Fund since 2018 and a **60%** growth since its inception in 2012.

HOW WE REACH OUT *to our community*

100,000⁺ times eunicglobal.eu was viewed, with **27,000⁺** unique visitors. **85,000⁺** people follow us on social media on **55** channels worldwide. The Jordan, Romania and London channels are especially popular.

HOW WE IMPLEMENT *European Spaces of Culture*

1 jury of **5** international experts evaluated **42** applications, selecting **6** pilot projects in which **27** key local partners, **12** EUNIC members, and **8** EU Delegations are involved and **14** countries are covered.

HOW WE PARTNER UP *with the EU in cultural relations*

9 joint projects in partnership with EU Delegations are implemented. **5** joint sessions were held with the European Commission and the European External Action Service in Eritrea, Ghana, Guinea, the Philippines and the Dominican Republic. **1** Joint Guidelines with the European Commission and the European External Action Service were published on how to strengthen partnerships between EU Delegations and EUNIC clusters.

HOW WE LEARN *from each other in our professional mobility scheme*

63 colleagues from **33** countries were selected to participate in the professional mobility scheme, visiting **18** hosts in **15** countries; **16** colleagues chose the EUNIC office in Brussels for their job shadowing.

HOW WE ENHANCE *our network's capacity*

35,000⁺ colleagues from **36** members – **24** associations and agencies and **12** ministries – based in **28** countries work together in EUNIC. **500⁺** colleagues met and exchanged in **17** meetings in **12** countries, including three regional seminars in Ghana, Thailand and Belgium. **300⁺** colleagues participated in **23** webinars, and **1,300⁺** colleagues subscribe to the network's newsletter.

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EUNIC – European Union National Institutes for Culture – is the European network of organisations engaging in cultural relations. Together with our partners, we bring to life European cultural collaboration in more than 90 countries worldwide with a network of over 120 clusters, drawing on the broad experience of our members from all EU Member States and associate countries.

EUNIC advocates a prominent role of culture in international relations and is a strategic partner of the EU, actively involved in the further definition of European cultural policy. EUNIC is a platform for knowledge sharing and for capacity building amongst its members and partners.