



European
Commission

European

Audiences:

2020 *and* beyond

Culture



More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://europa.eu>).

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2012

ISBN 978-92-79-19907-3
doi:10.2766/32988

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Printed in Belgium

PRINTED ON ELEMENTAL CHLORINE-FREE BLEACHED PAPER (ECF)

Foreword



The best part of my job as European Commissioner for Culture is no doubt to witness the tremendous impact that EU funding for cultural activities can have on the lives of Europeans, for audiences and performers alike. Thanks to funding from the European Union's Culture Programme, many thousands of cultural practitioners from all cultural sectors have, over the years, established professional contacts to help improve their skills, worked on new projects and performed or showed their work for new audiences all across Europe. This exposure has helped them, and other emerging talents, to develop international careers and work across borders, and has likewise given European audiences a chance to experience original work from European artists first-hand.

Engaging the public with European culture is a paramount priority for the European Commission, and it is why we have decided to focus on audience development in the proposal for the Creative Europe Programme. Audience development is a strategic, dynamic and interactive process of making the arts widely accessible. It aims at engaging individuals and communities in experiencing, enjoying, participating in and valuing the arts through various means available today for cultural operators, from digital tools to volunteering, from co-creation to partnerships.

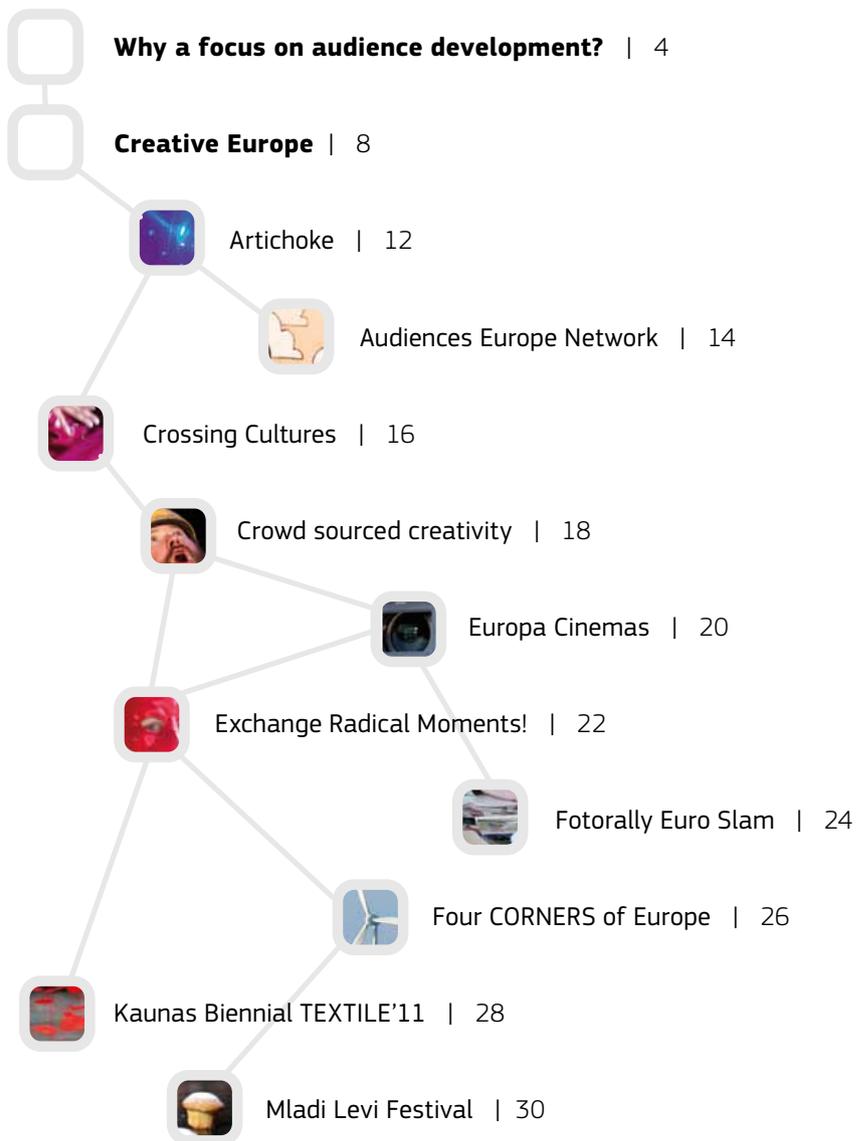
Audience development as a concept may be relatively new, but some cultural organisations have already been engaged in a dialogue with their audiences for a long time. That is why we wanted to present a snapshot of projects supported by the EU's current Culture and MEDIA programmes, other EU programmes or without direct EU-funding, to provide inspiration for our work ahead. In this brochure you will find projects from a range of cultural sectors across Member States that have developed vibrant audience development strategies and techniques.

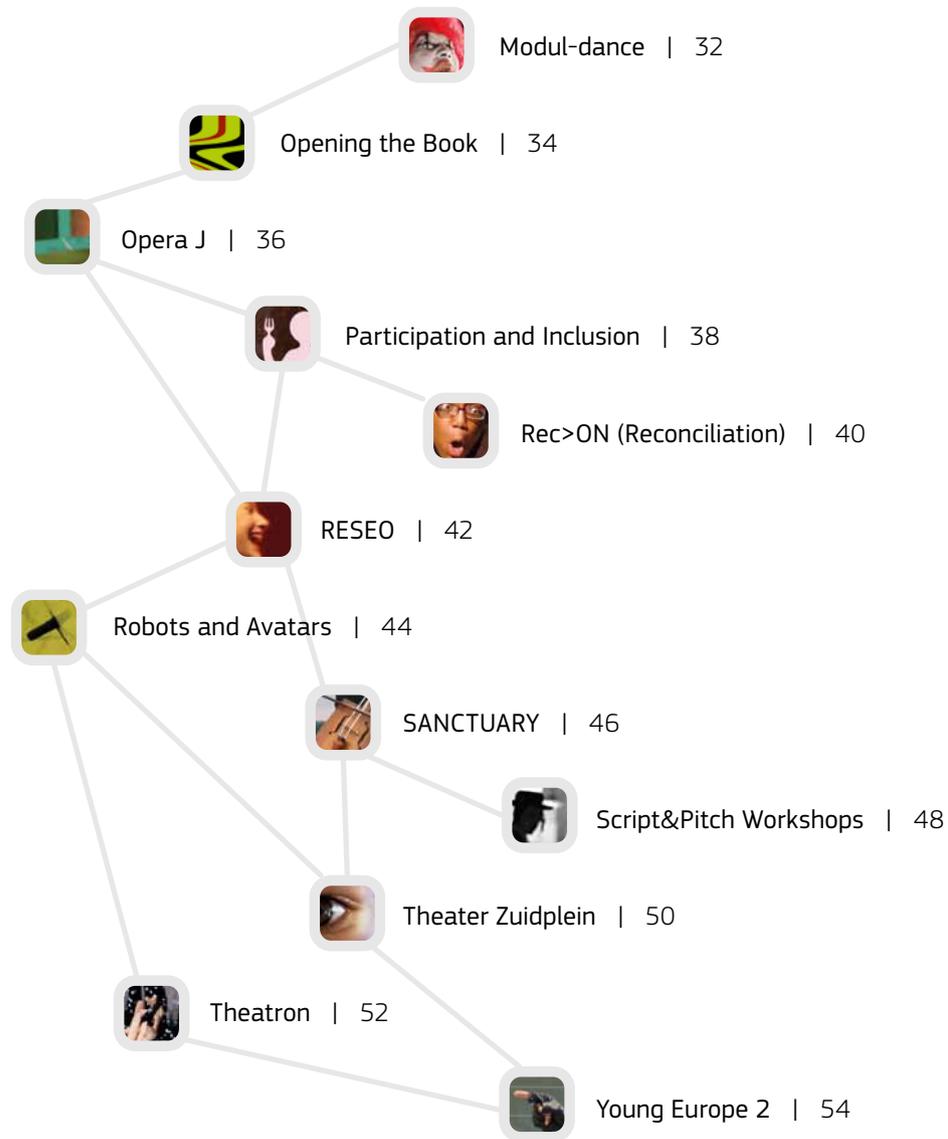
I hope you feel inspired by them as much as I do. Let us learn from each other and work together towards introducing audiences of all ages and backgrounds to culture, deepen relationships with audiences and foster cultural and social inclusion.

Androulla Vassiliou,

European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth

Content





The interviews were conducted and compiled by Peter O'Donnell, a Brussels-based freelance journalist (peteranthonyodonnell@gmail.com)



Why a focus on

audience development?

Some big cultural opportunities are being missed in Europe. As a generalisation, when people read books, see films, go to the theatre and listen to music, they tend to choose either local or national culture or so-called 'mainstream' global – mainly Anglo-American – popular culture. Both are perfectly legitimate, however, it is a pity that people aren't getting to see or experience a wealth of rich art works from other countries as much as they might. As a result, there's a lot of great work that's not reaching a wide audience.

There are other major opportunities too, that are ripe to be exploited by the cultural operators in Europe who are adventurous enough to grasp them. These are the challenges of responding to the huge changes in audience behaviour and expectations.

Part of this arises from technical innovation. The digital revolution has opened up limitless possibilities for cultural operators – everything from museums exhibiting some of their treasures online, to web-streaming concerts and performances that bring a worldwide audience to events that would otherwise only be seen locally, as well as reaching audiences in places with limited cultural infrastructure. At the same time, rising levels of education and the ever-widening choice for leisure and entertainment mean that people are far more demanding and every offering has to be ready to fight for attention. And all this is happening at a time when tighter restrictions on public funding appear more rather than less likely.

INTERVIEW WITH

Ann Branch,

Head of Unit 'Culture Programme and Actions', DG Education and Culture, European Commission

Photo provided by Audiences Europe Network

© Bas Czerwinski



This is why it is a challenge as well as an opportunity. But the tougher competition is matched by every-greater public demand, so the result can be much greater prizes for those who are able to deliver what an increasingly discerning public wants.

Alert cultural operators also recognise that economic opportunities are being missed, if audiences are not maximised at European level: the EU single market is a concept that can have validity across the cultural as well as the political sphere.

But success in these rapidly changing circumstances requires a shift in the mind set of cultural operators. They have to adapt to a new multidimensional world, in which they are no longer the sole gatekeepers of art, nor the only decision-makers about what

the public should or shouldn't see or hear or experience. Audiences have to be treated differently: many people, accustomed to the dialogue of social media, are no longer willing just to be passive; they have become used to commenting, to becoming, as it were, actors themselves. More and more operators are seeing the value in addressing audiences upstream – not to dumb art down, but to link creation and presentation with a clearer idea about audiences, and a clearer identification of what they expect and feel is relevant to their lives. Similar engagement downstream, to meet artists and performers afterwards, is already showing the way ahead in this type of enhanced engagement.

Photo provided by Kaunas Artists' Support Fund, Kaunas

© Remis Scerbauskas



Engagement and participation is central to this new approach. It is no longer a game of 'them and us'. The proscenium arch cannot be the only prism to refract the contact between artists and audience. And institutions – and buildings – dedicated to culture can no longer afford to stand aloof, waiting complacently for an elite audience to seek them out. Just as efforts are now being made to engage audiences in the artistic process, so the design and use of cultural buildings is being adapted, offering multi-functional usage, easier access, longer opening hours, and new facilities for new publics... In this emerging world, culture and the arts become a channel for civic engagement too.

This process of audience development is not just a one-way street. If artists and organisations listen and share more closely,

they too can find themselves transformed. They can create new interactions with their actual or potential audiences, and can at the same time discover new directions and new approaches in their own art.

But realising these opportunities needs a change among cultural agents. They require new skills for new ways of relating to audiences, which means retraining, different recruitment, building novel strategic partnerships – with for example, the retail, publishing and media sectors. There are no simple answers, no 'one-size-fits-all' approach. The need for adaptability will be a permanent feature, but there are great possibilities for those operators that are ready to embrace this reality.

Photo provided by RESEO, Brussels

© Pierre-Philippe Hofmann



Creative Europe will encourage networking among some of the best examples from across Europe and those wishing to learn from others. It has made a priority of audience development and its links to how people create, produce and distribute their work.

In trans-national projects, it will accelerate learning through cooperation and mutual exchange. It will offer a chance to explore and compare experiences and ideas, to take risks, and to evaluate results.

The opportunities for culture are there. Not to seize them would mean missing out on a cultural feast – for artists, operators, funders, and audiences. It would be to miss out on a huge social opportunity too: the insights and empathy that culture offers are crucial in enhancing the intercultural understanding that Europe is built on.

Photo provided by Kaunas Artists' Support Fund, Kaunas

© Remis Scerbauskas

Creative Europe

The European Commission's proposal for a new funding programme for 2014-2020 to support the cultural and creative sectors

Creative Europe aims to create the best possible conditions to help artists, cultural professionals, and cultural organisations to work across borders and help their works reach as many people in Europe as possible. It will help the sector adapt to the challenges posed by the fragmented markets within Europe, and the need to adapt to the digital shift, which is having a profound impact on how art is made, disseminated, consumed and monetised. It will also seek to improve data collection to help design the most effective policies at national and European levels, as well as improve access to finance for small- and medium-sized enterprises and organisations through the creation of a new financial (guarantee) facility.

The Commission is convinced of the contribution the cultural and creative sectors make to jobs and growth, as they have witnessed higher than average growth rates in

many countries over the past ten years. That is why it is proposing a 37% increase in the budget for the period 2014-2020 compared to current spending levels, bringing it to a total of EUR 1.8 billion, as these are sectors of the future and a sound investment for our well-being.

Creative Europe is innovative. It brings together three separate programmes- Culture, MEDIA and MEDIA Mundus- as there are many similarities between the sectors. They are facing identical challenges, and with the impact of technology boundaries are blurring, so there are many benefits to be gained from working more closely together in order to optimise synergies, such as easier knowledge transfer and partnerships. However, Creative Europe is also tailored to the specific needs of the various sectors, recognising the differences in their value chains. This is why it is a 'framework' programme,

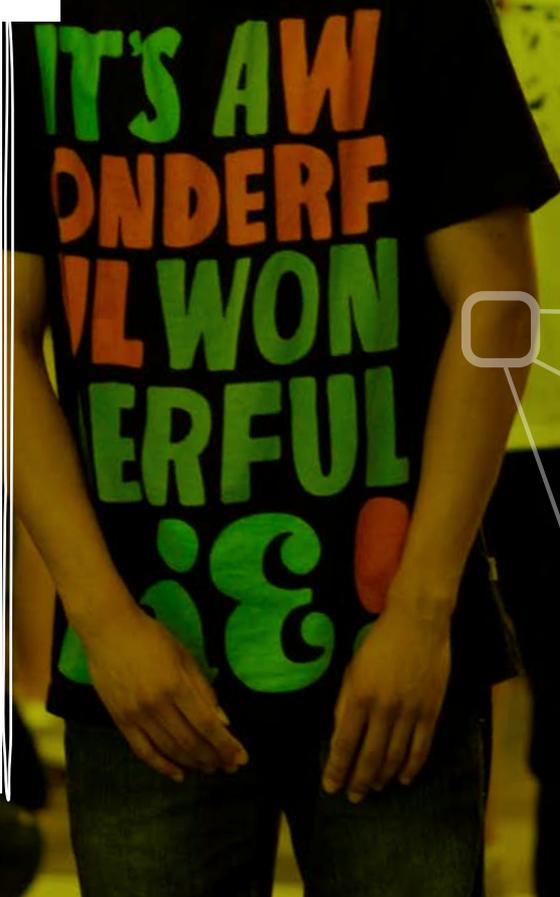




Photo provided by
Kaunas Artists' Support Fund, Kaunas
© Remis Scerbauskas



with clear and separate strands for Culture, MEDIA, and another cross-sectoral one. This means that they will each have their own instruments and budget allocation and the cross-sectoral strand will allow joint approaches where appropriate.

Creative Europe's objectives take account of the dual nature of culture – its intrinsic as well as its socio-economic value – which is reflected in its aims: on the one hand, to foster the safeguarding and promotion of European cultural and linguistic diversity and, on the other hand, to strengthen the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors with a view to promoting smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. More specifically, it will strengthen the capacity of the sectors to operate transnationally and promote the circulation and mobility of artists and their works, helping them to reach new and larger audiences both within Europe and beyond.

Audience development is an important new focus in this context. It is crucial for putting art, creativity and culture at the centre of our societies and maximising the cultural, economic and social benefits of the arts. The Programme will seek to foster the long-term interest of audiences in European cultural works, but also help cultural institutions adapt to the need to engage in new ways with the audiences of today and of tomorrow. It will therefore support the sector in developing the new skills it needs through informal peer learning, networking and transnational cooperation which will contribute to accelerated learning, the development of new working methods and new revenue streams.





22 projects to inspire you

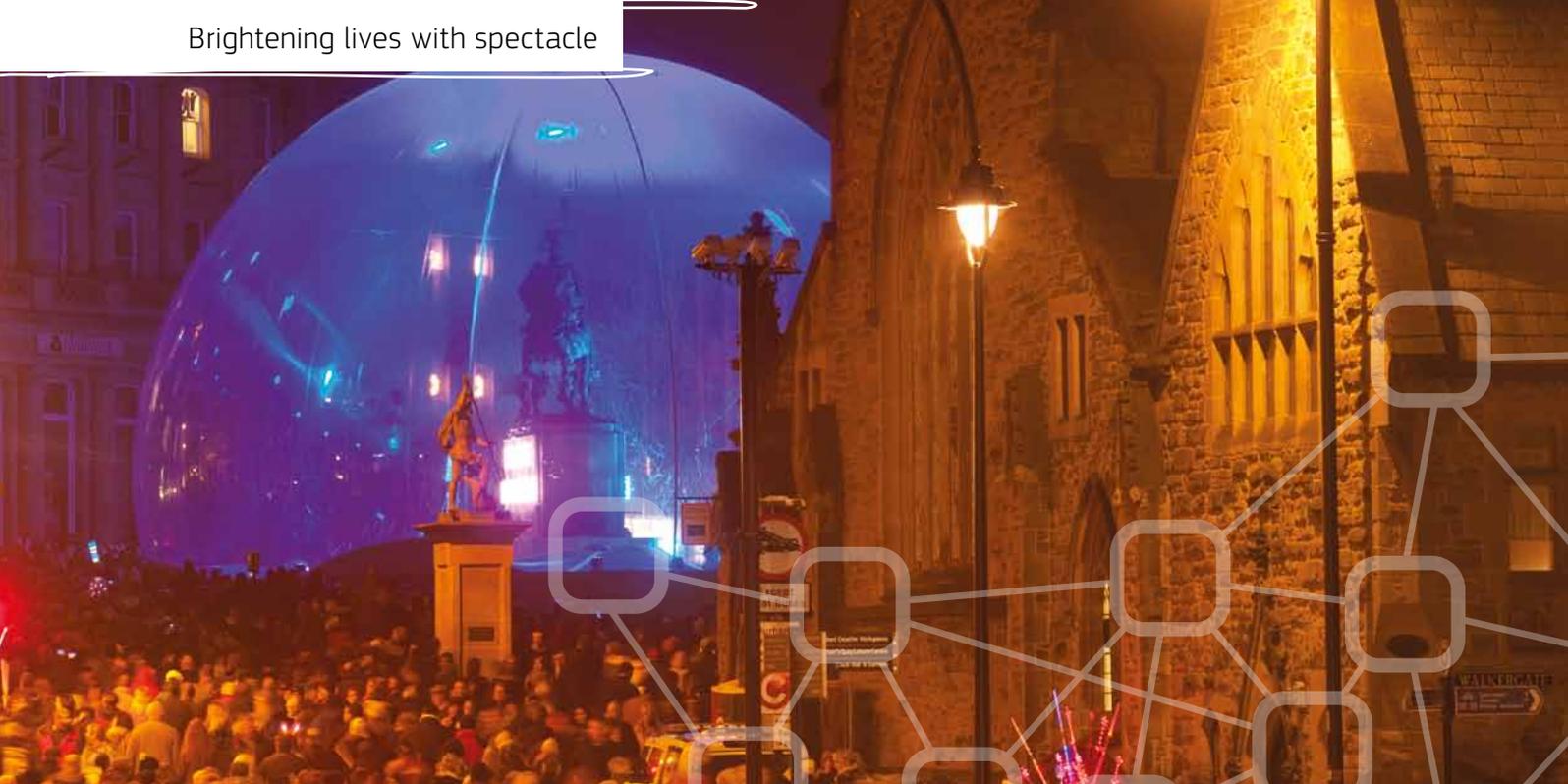
Photo provided by artscenico e.V., Dortmund

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Artichoke

Brightening lives with spectacle



🗨️ **Nicky Webb**,
Director, Artichoke, London,
United Kingdom

*Giant projects – mechanical elephants
and spiders, transatlantic tunnels,
and city-wide light shows –
jolt the public into new perceptions.*

Artichoke Trust – Creative Producers |
*Based in London, but working all over
the UK and beyond | Founded in 2005 |*
www.artichoke.uk.com

*Photo provided by Artichoke Trust, London
© Sophie Laslett*

*Photo provided by Artichoke Trust, London
© Matthew Andrews*

‘The arts don’t have to take place behind closed doors’, says Nicky. Artichoke’s projects typically take place in public spaces and in the open air – ‘and this brings huge benefits in terms of audiences’, she adds. ‘You capture the attention of people who find it daunting to go into a gallery or a theatre’. There’s no compromise in quality, she insists: ‘Because it’s in the streets doesn’t mean it has to be second rate. It should be as good as anything in the best theatre or gallery. It should just be more available – making great art accessible for everyone’.

Artichoke events place the audience at the centre of the experience. ‘The audience isn’t always part of the show as such, but they are essential to it, and the spectators in turn become part of the spectacle.’ The nature of Artichoke’s events draws big crowds, who become immersed in the experience, and amplify its resonance.

The audience is occasionally directly involved: 35,000 applied to take part in Antony Gormley’s **One & Other**, the Trafalgar Square Fourth Plinth commission, and 2,400 people selected at random took their turn to stand there for an hour doing whatever they chose. Over the 100 days of the project, a community grew up among the participants themselves (they recently held a reunion), and another wider community was created among the hundreds of thousands worldwide who watched the 24/7 live streaming, and contributed 65,000 comments. ‘This demonstrated to us the potential of broadening the audience through the internet, and we want to develop this further’, says Nicky.

‘We don’t go back to the same place again and again, and we rarely repeat an event, so there is not a process of developing a specific audience’, says Nicky. Nonetheless, there is, she says, a perceptible cumulative effect. ‘Of course our events are fun, but there’s more to them than that’, she says. One aspect is that audiences witness a reclaiming of the streets, a demonstration that art has a right to take place anywhere. ‘They are changed in terms of their attitude to arts and toward public space’, she says.

Another aspect is that the evident success of the projects has driven a shift in the view of local authorities, eroding the initial resistance to the inevitable administrative disruption these events generate. ‘We depend heavily on local authorities – we can’t work without their involvement in everything from permits for installations to changes in bus routes. But now they are seeing the value of cooperation – and that is developing another new and important audience’, says Nicky.



Audiences Europe Network

Taking responsibility for reaching out

↳) **Richard Hadley**,
Director, Audiences Europe Network

*The ruling philosophy of AEN is that it is the job of artists and producers to help bridge the divide between art and audiences. The project **Extending the margins** aims at sharing know-how among audience development professionals across Europe.*

'Audience development is not just about people who come to the arts. It's also about people who don't come', says Richard. And, he goes on, it's also about existing audiences encountering new and maybe challenging experiences – 'the sort of challenge that Stravinsky and Diaghilev presented their audiences with'.

At AEN, he explains, 'we prefer to talk of audience engagement, through dialogue, sharing, joint celebration'. He considers 'development' sounds too acquisitive – evoking market share, revenue, spheres of influence. Instead, AEN focuses on 'the illumination that attends artistic discovery, and the pledging and good faith and trust that underpins the link between artists and audiences'.

For AEN, it's not a matter of lifting barriers between the arts and audiences. 'It's more like bridging empty space, by enticing those who are indifferent, making friends, being alert to their responses, aiming to ensure they enjoy your company'. And while audiences inevitably influence the way artists work, 'we believe that what drives artists in their creative quest is the same impulse that drives audiences, and that attention to audiences does not imply any dumbing down or commercial vulgarisation'.

'We know that current audiences for the arts are predominantly educated, affluent, older, and rather conservative', observes Richard. Only a handful attend a wide range of events, and mostly only in response to encouragement to break with their routine. 'Overall attendance figures haven't changed in years, despite massive public investment. And we know that many of the ones who don't come (or encounter art only by chance at a festival or a street performance) are either unaware of what's on offer, or don't think it's suitable for them.'

So, he goes on, 'if we are serious about what we are doing, it's our job, as artists and producers, to remedy that'. What AEN is aiming at is to stimulate fresh thinking, and to share, across Europe, many of the original ideas emerging from its cultural and social diversity. It explores everything from the use of digital technology to maximising links between major sporting events and the arts. Priorities are to gear promotions to a wider potential audience, to make it clearer that what is on offer is user-friendly rather than exclusive, and then to deliver an audience-friendly experience, that extends to the physical space, transport, timing, pricing, opportunities for involvement... 'We can back up our efforts by education and community outreach, particularly to the young, because a long-term perspective is vital. But the essence is for arts organisations to carve out a distinctive personality that appeals powerfully to its target audiences. Then the audiences will follow', argues Richard.

Extending the Margins |

Supported by the EU Lifelong Learning

Programme: 2010-2012 |

Grant awarded: EUR 146,000 | Lead organiser:

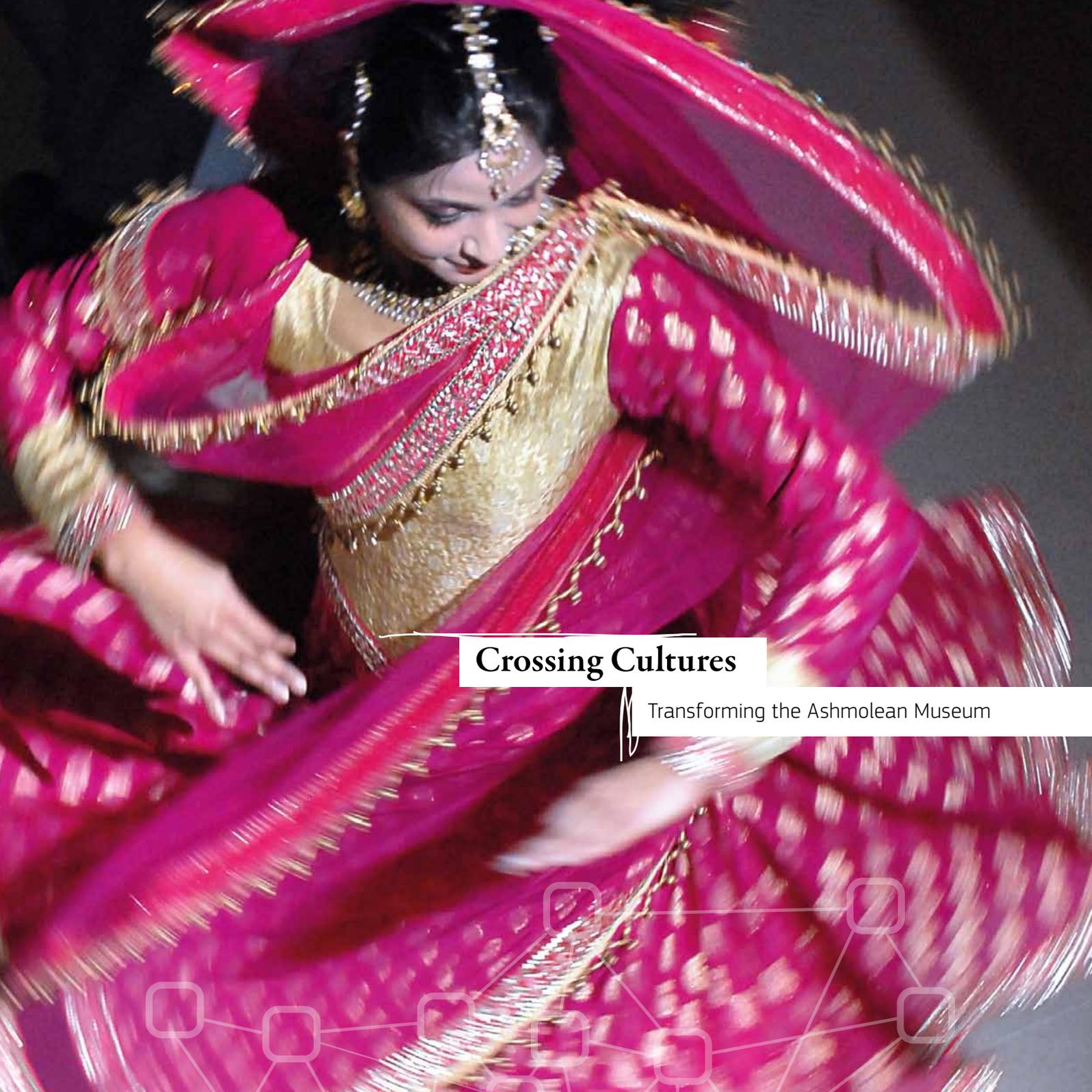
Audiences Europe Network |

5 co-organisers from Belgium, Denmark,

the Netherlands, Norway,

Spain, United Kingdom |

www.audienceeurope.net



Crossing Cultures

Transforming the Ashmolean Museum

🗣️) **Prof Nick Mayhew**,
Deputy Director (Collections), Ashmolean
Museum, Oxford, United Kingdom

*A major redevelopment allowed
this museum to shake off the dust
of perceived elitism and
attract new crowds.*

Nick is candid about the importance that sponsors and donors – public or private – give to visitor numbers, so his museum, like all others, values increased attendance as a lever to win financial support. Crude numbers also boost the museum’s trading income.

The major redevelopment that the Ashmolean has recently completed has certainly delivered that, with new audiences flocking to see its radical new architecture and attractive new displays. But it isn’t just about numbers. The museum now offers a richer experience for visitors, after an overhaul of its entire operation. ‘We’ve made the museum more welcoming’, he says. ‘The new design skilfully lures people from gallery to gallery. We’ve retrained our front-of-house staff so that their role is to stimulate and entertain visitors as well as to ensure their security and that of the collections; we’ve created a new shop and better catering facilities, and we offer special activities for kids. All these changes support the work of our education department which focuses on key audience groups, including children, and adults with learning difficulties.’

‘Better display has improved the profile of items that the public had previously overlooked. And because the galleries look so good it’s easier for our education staff to interest people, which promotes return visits’, he says. ‘The new museum has also drawn in secondary schools and art and design students who were previously unenthusiastic’, he adds.

Another consequence is that higher attendance and the wider range of attractions have brought new visitors from across the entire social range. ‘We didn’t do a very detailed analysis of numbers’, says Nick, who admits to some scepticism about surveys. ‘But we knew our traditional customers were predominantly middle-aged and middle-class, and we wanted to modify the perception of the museum – which, like Oxford itself, seemed rather elitist.’ Assiduous follow-up of visitors – new and old – with mailshots and invitations is also helping to make them feel more a part of the museum community.

There are still improvements underway: ‘We are continually refining the displays in light of visitor feedback’, he says, ‘and limited resources require a balance between scholarly lectures from academic historians and customised visits for people with special needs’. On a more prosaic level, the lifts are inadequate, which doesn’t help the visitor experience, Nick admits.

But his great satisfaction is that the redevelopment has transformed the way the entire museum is focused on the needs of the visitors, and brought a new coherence to its operations. ‘The dramatic improvement in the overall appearance of the museum, feeds into and supports all its individual activities’, he says.

Ashmolean Museum | Winner of the European
Union Prize for Cultural Heritage –
Europa Nostra Awards | 2012 | Category:
Education, Training and Awareness-Raising |
www.ashmolean.org

Photo provided by Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford
© Greg Smolonski 2009



Crowd sourced creativity

Creating links with big audiences



↳) **Haidee Bell**,
Innovation Programmes Manager,
Creative Economy, Nesta, London,
United Kingdom

Commons4EU aims to explore how citizens and cities can communicate more effectively – including in providing responses to cultural needs and aspirations.

After some 15 years advising cultural organisations on how to develop audiences, Haidee takes a robustly pragmatic view of the mission. ‘It’s a delusion to imagine that you’re going to get everyone to come to your show or exhibition or event. The true challenge is to decide clearly what role your particular artistic activity plays, to assess its merits realistically – and then to aim at selected audiences accordingly’, she says.

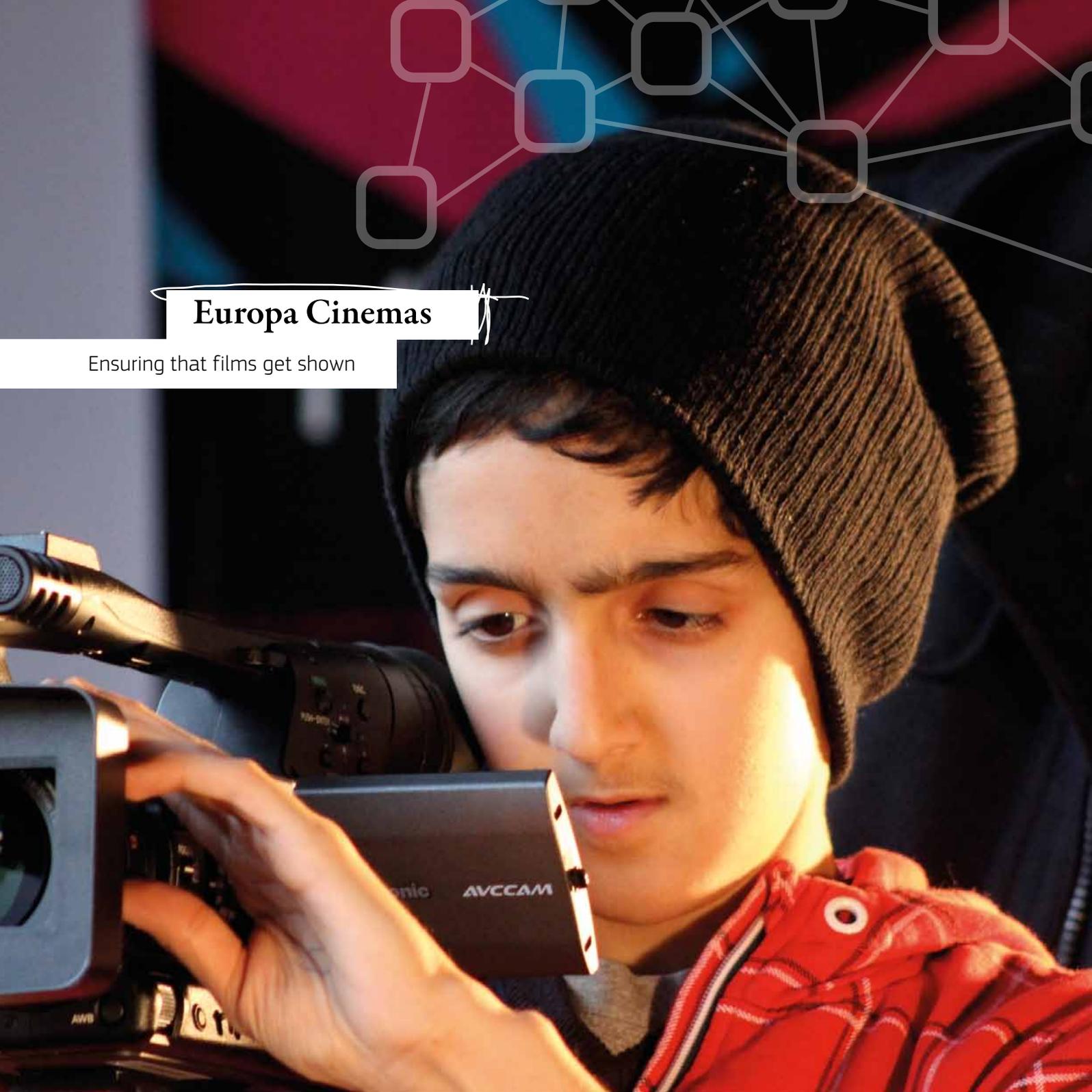
‘This doesn’t conflict with the goal of targeting specific audiences – young people, community-linked, cultural groups, or to aim for more active engagement’, she says. Nor does it minimise the importance of choosing content, programme, location or promotion. But she advocates a healthy dose of common sense. ‘Don’t feel you have to change everything’, she urges. ‘Once you’re confident about what you’re offering, then target the audiences that will find it relevant – and review your own performance periodically to see how far you’re doing what you set out to do, and whether you’re doing it as well as you can.’

Haidee’s insistence on defining objectives is in no way an indication of limited ambition. In her work with the London Bubble Theatre Company, which works with a wide range of Londoners to connect people through theatre, she has put the accent on co-creating productions with local communities, where audiences vote on the choice of show and can get involved in the show’s development including lending costumes and props. ‘In this context, audience development is not about delivering a production to people sitting in the auditorium, but in working with the audience in creating the show.’ Her work at Nesta is largely focused on promoting a two-way flow of ideas and conversation too. She sees the potential of crowd-funding of projects as a way of generating engagement and an active and sympathetically predisposed audience. And she is currently working with a network of seven ‘smart cities’ across Europe in exploring how internet services can give the public a role in transforming cities – including in promoting two-way dialogue with a community on cultural provision.

She is committed to audience development – but she sees organisations failing to keep up momentum. ‘It’s easy during a big campaign or a successful show, but it’s harder after all the excitement has subsided’, she says. Much depends, in Haidee’s view, on the culture of individual institutions, on how far audience involvement is a real policy choice. ‘Sometimes people have to let go of their artistic ego to make this happen’, she says. But ultimately she advocates thinking about the arts as businesses that need to bring in consumers – and not just now, but in the future too.

Commons4Europe |

Supported by the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP): 2011-2014 | Grant awarded: EUR 200,000 | Lead organiser: Esade Business School, Spain | Co-organisers: 6 cities across Europe and technology/innovation/research partners | <http://commonsforeurope.net>



Europa Cinemas

Ensuring that films get shown

↳) **Ian Christie**,
President, Europa Cinemas

Cinemas and exhibitors can do a lot to link what they are showing to the interests of the public. This network supports cinemas that commit themselves to screen a large number of European non-domestic films and to build up new audiences, particularly young audiences.

'If it never gets in front of an audience, the best film ever made loses its value', says Ian, explaining the attention now devoted to helping cinemas – 'bringing the renewal of audiences out of the dark', as he puts it.

Europa Cinemas runs audience development schemes with an emphasis on young people. 'The audience for European cinemas is holding up well in volume', according to Ian, 'but it is getting older'. In response, the subsidies that Europa Cinemas gives to cinemas are conditioned partly on whether they do some youth development work. 'We take no view on what form the work should take', he says. 'Education through schools or universities, youth events, or family workshops... The main thing is getting young people into the cinema'.

But Europa Cinemas does much more than youth development. It awards prizes, runs training exercises for exhibitors, and stimulates constant reflection on how to keep cinema lively. 'Cinema as an institution has never stood still, and the successful cinemas are the ones that have evolved', says Ian. In June 2012, for instance, dozens of young cinema professionals from across Europe convened in Bologna to discuss topics such as how to improve the cinema-going experience. 'Just like other types of consumer retailing, everything is important: the cinema facade, the enthusiasm of the front-of-house staff, the refreshments available...', he underlines, 'so we tour local cinemas to compile examples of good and bad practice'.

It isn't a matter just of programming films, believes Ian. It's about presentation, and seeking connections with the audience. 'Every screening should be a special screening. If your thinking is routine, you're not doing your job', he says. The growing range of film festivals offers valuable examples of how to bring additional elements to filmgoing, with focuses on specific genres, or directors, or periods. Imaginative cinemas involve their public both before and after: 'Cinemas can do a lot more to create a buzz around films by exploiting social media', he points out: 'It's no longer enough just to put something up on the web'. Audiences can be invited to leave their views on a particular screening, to contribute to blogs, or to take part in compilations of rankings, such as creating a personal top ten list of favourite films, or voting in opinion polls. 'It's a question of engaging audience in what they think, rather than simply handing something down to them to take or leave.'

There are no prejudices with Europa Cinemas – about the type or film or type of cinema, says Ian. 'We are interested only in intensifying the experience of European films.'

Europa Cinemas | *International network for a better circulation of films around the world* |
Supported by the EU MEDIA Programme
since 1992 | 68 countries,
629 cities, 1,111 cinemas, 2,943 screens
www.europa-cinemas.org



Exchange Radical Moments!

Breaking down frontiers between artist and audience



🗣️) **Gerald Harringer**,
Project Manager of Die Fabrikanten,
Linz, Austria

This 'Live Art Festival' promoted 'radical moments' across Europe as interventions in public spaces made time stand still for audiences suddenly confronted with the unexpected.

'The "audience" was different for each event. In fact, they often didn't even know that they were part of an art project, because many of the events were spontaneous interruptions into people's ordinary lives', explains Gerald.

'With the Live Art Festival, we were not only crossing borders between countries. We were also breaking down the traditional frontiers that exist between the roles of the artist and the audience', he says. 'The aim was to open up minds and change attitudes by getting people involved and getting them sharing. We wanted to transform audiences into partners, to turn spectators into participants – and not just for art, but so that they might also become more active themselves, as citizens.'

Surprise was a crucial aspect. 'We challenged the public's perceptions by confronting them with things that were unexpected or just didn't normally fit together', he recounts. 'We diverted a tourist train from its customary route, we burst into official buildings to give tango performances, and we staged the appearance of a transgendered woman playwright in a hotel room.'

Although activities took place on the one designated day, the festival also had – and has – an existence before and afterwards. 'We used plenty of traditional publicity methods – postcards, magazines, flyers and posters', says Gerald. 'We also created media partnerships and made PR contacts with journalists – although the print media were not very receptive.' In fact this was the worst experience of the festival. 'Journalists from the traditional print media are just not compatible with this new festival format', he remarks.

Less conventional preparatory events included the chance for the public to hold face-to-face meetings over tea and cakes with artists and organisers. And online presence extended from live streaming on the festival's website to full use of blogs, chatrooms and social media. Unsurprisingly, most are young, with just one in five over 44. 'Nearly two thirds of our Google and Facebook traffic is female, and most are from Germany, Austria and the UK – although there's a wide spread reaching from the USA to Moldova', says Gerald. 'We are still looking at how best to develop this online presence to build the Live Art Festival for the future', he admits.

But for him the emphasis remains on closer engagement rather than on increasing audience size. The one-to-one encounter between artist and audience is central to the concept, with the intention of deepening a cultural experience in the most intense way. 'It is a mistake to give too much attention to quantity as a measure of success: quality is the real benchmark', insists Gerald.

Exchange Radical Moments! Live Art Festival

| Supported by the EU Culture Programme:
2010-2011 | Grant awarded: EUR 200,000 |

Lead organiser: Die Fabrikanten, Austria |
5 co-organisers from Austria, FYROM, Italy,
the Czech Republic and Germany |

www.11moments.org



Fotorally Euro Slam

Weaving people's stories around photos

🗣️) **Raisa Niemi**,
 Producer, Lasipalatsi Media Centre,
 Helsinki, Finland

*A photo exhibition based
 on submissions from the public
 created new bonds across countries
 and generations.*

'Our show attracted audiences who came to see the photographs. But in many ways our participants were also an important part of our audience, since what we were doing was aimed at displaying the memories and history of European citizens, and engaging them in the process', says Raisa.

The project gave an opportunity for people to showcase the photographs they valued – that they had taken themselves, or older photos that were important to them. It stimulated reflection and creativity among the people submitting the photos, and because the photos from all four participating cities could be seen on the project website, it allowed them to make comparisons and connections with images submitted by people of other generations, or living elsewhere. 'And by presenting amateur photographs in a professional-level on-line gallery, or properly mounted and hung, we added value for the people who had submitted the photographs, as well as for the visitors', she adds.

'Working in regeneration, we have always tried to engage with particular population groups – the young, usually through schools; older people, through community and faith groups or care homes; and people who are unemployed or economically inactive. We had direct contact with our "audience" in this project, through collecting photos – in libraries, retirement homes, or local cultural centres.' For instance, secondary school students went to retirement homes and interviewed residents about their family life, selecting pictures together for the project, and helping scan them and upload them to the web site. Both groups learned new things – the senior citizens acquired new computer skills and the students heard tales from the past.

'But we extended this project to wider audiences – particularly to photographers, professional as well as amateur – through using the web. We wanted to involve good photographers, as this raises the professionalism of the project. But passing the idea on to bigger audiences and prompting people to take part sending in entries from their own computers wasn't as easy as we had hoped.'

Fotorally Euro Slam | Supported by the EU
 Culture Programme: 2009-2011 |
 Grant awarded: EUR 106,000 | Lead organiser:
 Lasipalatsi Media Centre Ltd., Finland |
 3 co-organisers from the United Kingdom,
 Spain and the Netherlands |
www.fotorally.eu

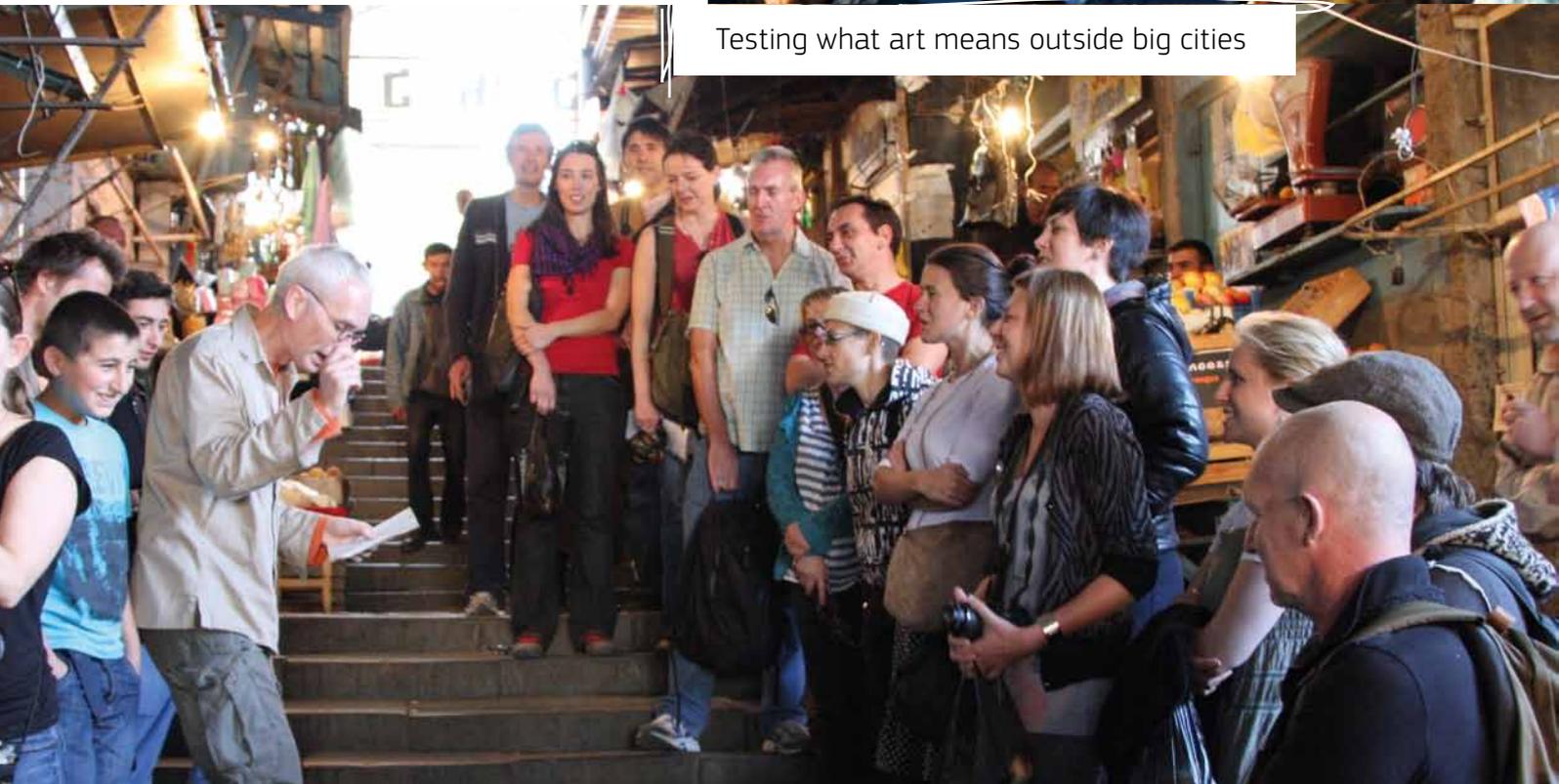
The project didn't collect detailed data on the audience. 'For the participants, our focus was not on their background or age, but on where they were from and on the stories behind the photos. And for the exhibition, we had good word-of-mouth feedback, but we were using the occasion to encourage engagement principally with the website, so we made no systematic attempt to classify the feedback or the audience', says Raisa.

The project concept is to start from local small-scale activity – and the formula is easily transferable, Raisa points out, and could be used to look at other themes, such as home movies, diaries, or portraits.



Four CORNERS of Europe

Testing what art means outside big cities



☞) **Emina Višnić**,
Director of POGON – Zagreb Center for
Independent Culture and Youth, Croatia

☞) **Chris Torch**,
Senior Associate, Intercult, Sweden/
Artistic Director for SEAS and CORNERS

*Expeditions through the Baltics and
eastern and northern Europe
researched how audiences can be
found in smaller towns and
the countryside.*

‘We are exploring the relation between transnational artistic productions and audiences’, explains Emina. In the recently-completed preparatory phase, ‘we spent a day or two in a series of towns, making some interventions, and talking with local people about how art, community interests and politics could be combined’, she says. ‘It’s not enough to have a great theatre show. You need something around it. People – and particularly younger people – no longer just want to sit and be passively entertained.’

The expeditions deliberately focused on smaller towns. ‘We are looking at the potential for interaction between artists and audiences in corners of Europe, at really getting in touch with audiences in smaller places’, says Emina. The approach also avoids fancy galleries and smart theatres: ‘We are assessing how we can reach audiences in places where art is not usually produced, such as town squares or beaches’.

She admits that some of the formats used were not easily understandable. ‘A conceptual artist or a dancer’s esoteric street performance may not be instantly accessible to the casual audience. But if this is combined with the work of others, who communicate with the audience and ask them about their reactions and offer insights into the artwork, then you can engage with anyone.’ The preparatory phase also demonstrated the need for different approaches in different places. ‘The ‘corners’ are not all the same, so the same delivery won’t work in all of them’, says Emina. Another key finding is the value of early involvement in each place of people who engaged in the local community – art organisers, activists, teachers. ‘These are great contacts, as they are the most interested audience – and they are the ones who can bring an audience along with them’, says Emina.

The methods were developed from another transnational European project, SEAS, initiated by one of the CORNERS partners, Intercult in Sweden. ‘This highlighted the tension between artworks that are international and audiences that are local’, says CORNERS and SEAS artistic director Chris Torch. ‘With CORNERS we want to look again at the potential connection between ‘inter’ and ‘local’, between what is universal and what is specific.’

So the next phase of CORNERS will look more at direct communication with the audience within a series of finished productions and artworks. ‘The areas we will be examining are the widening of audiences and more general access to culture’, envisages Emina. ‘But not just wider audiences.’ Emina is insistent on targeting audiences more specifically. She sees ‘young’ as too wide as a category: “‘Young people singing in a choir in town X’ is more useful’, she says.

Four CORNERS of Europe | Supported by
the EU Culture Programme: 2011-2012 |
Grant awarded: EUR 200,000 | Lead organiser:
Intercult, Sweden | 5 co-organisers from Poland,
Sweden, Croatia and Slovenia |
www.cornersofoeurope.org

*Photo provided by INTERCULT/Sweden
© Arturs Perkons*

*Photo provided by POGON – Zagreb Center
for Independent Culture and Youth, Zagreb*



Kaunas Biennial TEXTILE'11

Taking art to the public, wherever they are

☞) **Virginija Vitkiene,**
Kaunas Artists' Support Fund,
Kaunas, Lithuania

***Kaunas Biennial is a platform
for linking visual and performing arts
with science and industry,
in exhibitions, performances,
workshops, and outdoor activities.***

'After eight editions of the festival, we've generated a strong regular audience', says Virginija. 'But we're always reaching out to win new audiences with new mechanisms.' Innovations during the 2011 festival included exhibited artists' works in a new sports arena, while one of the town's trolleybuses invited people to come aboard and make their own art pieces, which were then exhibited on the vehicle as it travelled around. 'About 7,000 shoppers in one of the largest malls in Kaunas saw two exhibitions and four dance performances over the course of two months – and that alerted them to other festival activities too.'

Another innovation in 2011 was a collaboration between contemporary art and dance – a challenge for an audience that had previously shown more traditional tastes. 'We created five unique collaborative dance performances which were shown 43 times – and here too we made deliberate use of unusual locations, including museums and shops.'

Workshops were offered – without charge – encouraging active participation in exploring smart textiles, exploiting textile techniques in architectural structures, and in analysis of sampler systems in sound and in textiles.

Other events were aimed at stimulating social awareness and active citizenship, Virginia says, citing a 'Daily Bread' street action in Kaunas old town, which involved baking the bread of different countries, then sharing it with passers-by. In another project, social workers, artists, philosophers and writers lived in the suburbs for several days, taking part in the day-to-day life of the local community and creating profiles of people living there.

'More traditional approaches led to wider audiences too, such as free entry days at the national museum – when visitor numbers are doubled, and elderly people in particular take advantage of the opportunity', Virginija adds.

Kaunas Biennial TEXTILE'11:

REWIND – PLAY – FORWARD |

Supported by the EU Culture Programme:

2011-2012 | Grant awarded:

EUR 200,000 | Lead organiser: Kauno dailininkų paramos fondas (Kaunas Artists' Support Fund),

Lithuania | 4 co-organisers from Estonia, Germany, Portugal and Lithuania |

www.bienale.lt

'A major experiment at this edition of the festival was a collaboration with industry, turning the workers in a factory into the audience during six months. The experience encouraged them to think about their daily work in a different way. Some of them, with a particular interest in novel technologies got involved in using them in other techniques – mirroring what was being done with the "Rewind History" exhibition commissioned for the festival, which post-produced works that are part of Lithuanian art history into computerised views', she says.

The festival has built up attendance steadily, partly through classical publicity in the media, press releases, and advertising on the internet, on TV and in public spaces. But the main strategy is to make every edition new and surprising. 'We've accustomed our audience to expect something they've never experienced before', says Virginija with pride.



Mladi Levi Festival

Mixing local and global in Slovenia



🗣️) **Alma R. Selimović**,
Development Manager, Bunker,
Ljubljana, Slovenia

Mladi levi is a contemporary performing arts festival focused on cutting-edge contemporary dance and theatre.

Mladi levi started out by giving new prominence to international contemporary performing arts in Slovenia: 'A huge achievement, and at just the right time', says Alma. And since then, the festival has evolved. 'Nowadays, local approaches are becoming increasingly important', she says, 'so we combine local and global in our programming'. This can mean simply including local artists and even local people in productions featuring imported stars, she explains. 'But it also means stepping out of the theatre into different venues – becoming a part of the city rather than remaining limited to the stage.'

The artistic programme remains a central aspect of the festival, Alma makes clear. 'But even if audience development is secondary, there is a clear strategy to the way we go about it. We exploit the festival atmosphere as a space for taking time out to enjoy new and more daring things, to meet artists after the show, and even, for some shows, to participate. We also involve lots of volunteers, of all ages, and run workshops on things like cooking in parallel to the events.' Relaxed engagement is the keynote of the approach: 'At the end of the summer, when we stage the festival, people feel most at ease and are ready to dive into everything we have to offer, with a sympathy for new and emerging artists and experiences'.

But nothing happens by accident, underlines Alma. 'We have to be very active in addressing our audiences, building up interest all year in advance of the festival with a range of projects and programmes.' Events are organised in neighbourhoods, or in public spaces, or schools, or in collaboration with social science academics, with the accent on participation. 'During the festival, the results of those efforts are visible in the audience engagement', says Alma. She sees it as a duty to make the link with the public. 'Art is there to be shared, and as producers we have to bring art to the audience', she says. 'This doesn't mean that every work of art has to reach a wide audience, but we believe we have to make an effort to reach the right target groups for each art work we present.'

And over time, the audience has become much wider. 'It was originally very professional, with nearly all participants being performers or presenters. But we have reached out to different groups in the community, the under-served teenagers, the ignored senior citizens, excluded minorities... and we network internationally. Now we have a completely new audience.' But, adds Alma, 'We don't consider audiences as 'targets', but rather as people who we want to become our followers or partners'.

Mladi levi festival | Supported by the EU
Culture Programme: 2011-2014 |
Grant awarded: EUR 100,000 (2011) |
Lead organiser: Bunker, Slovenia |
www.bunker.si/eng/festivals/mladi-levi



Modul-dance

Identifying what a dance-house
can do for artists and audiences



☞) **Francesc Casadesus**,
Director Mercat Flors, Barcelona, Spain

Mercat Flors is deploying new techniques in its search for new audiences for dance in likely and unlikely places.

'YouTube is a great tool for dance' according to Francesc. He is acutely aware of the challenges of developing audiences for dance: 'It's a desert here', he says of his native Spain, where his is the only dance-house in the country. But he is adventurous in his approach to finding solutions. Francesc's principal preoccupation remains the live performance of dance, but he cheerfully embraces new methods that will win wider attention for his company and its work.

'We make short clips of performances', he explains, 'and we are adding "the making of"-style video clips too, and we run reportage, interviews and information about our performances on digital channels'.

Finding and developing an audience is one aspect of the task he has focused on for years in finding and developing a model for a dance-house, together with colleagues in European Dancehouses Network. 'We have had to define our identity as well as to find our audience', he says. He wanted his dance-house to be more than just a stage for presentations. 'I wanted space for my artists to develop, too, and I wanted studios for research into new approaches.'

Those new approaches include closer links with the audience, letting the audience come closer to the creative process. 'It is important to build relations in a form of co-participation between artist and spectator', says Francesc. The approaches also feature work with education, in schools and colleges, he says. 'We do talks before or after the shows, we do conferences, and promotions with the theme "Don't be afraid of dance". We go outside and invite people in, and we use new media alongside conventional media, with blogs on subjects like the history of dance, or videos with commentaries and specially we have developed for schools a pedagogical suitcase...', Francesc recounts. Francesc also likes to help develop audiences for promising young European artists – 'it is often harder for them to establish themselves abroad than at home', he says. One of his innovations is to arrange dinners to introduce them to local people.

Modul-dance | Supported by the EU Culture Programme: 2010-2014 |
Grant awarded: EUR 2,173,000 |
Lead organiser: Consorci Mercat de les Flors /
Centre de les Arts de Moviment, Spain |
17 co-organisers from 13 different countries |
www.modul-dance.eu

His team runs dance programmes in the community, led by professional choreographers, and ranging from family sessions where parents can bring their children, to customised work with particular groups – older people, communities at risk of exclusion, people with disabilities. 'There's a strong return. These people become engaged, and there's an emotional involvement that helps convert them into active audiences.' Outreach projects provide information geared to people unfamiliar with the dance-house, and a joint pricing scheme with Barcelona's principal theatre and opera houses offers free or subsidised seats to groups at risk of exclusion.

> take a risk

Opening the Book

Rediscovering adventure in reading

on a book

☞) **Rachel Van Riel**,
Director, Opening the Book, Pontefract,
United Kingdom

*Imagination and a little inspiration
drawn from the retail sector can
entice people to read books they
might never have looked at.*

'There's nothing passive about reading', says Rachel Van Riel. 'It's a creative activity – and that's the key that makes it possible to develop an audience', she insists. 'If you support the creativity of readers, you can get more people to enjoy reading – and reading more widely, trying things they might not otherwise have looked at.'

And it isn't just about the effect on the readers: 'If more people read more widely, that delivers a positive knock-on effect all the way up the chain, to writers and publishers. It can be particularly good news to less well-known authors and smaller publishing houses'.

Her focus is on stimulating a sense of adventure and excitement about reading. As the title of her project – Opening the Book – suggests, the big win is to induce people just to take a look inside. 'It's all about getting readers to take a risk on a book.' To overcome the barriers that readers' comfortable preferences may erect, she aims to shift attention away from conventional criteria such as authors or genres, and towards the reading experience.

She has taken inspiration from the world of retailing: 'Promotion and imaginative display are vital', she insists. 'We just want to entice people to pick something up and glance at it. They don't need to finish it – a glance can be enough to open up new curiosity, to give confidence in taking a different path.' And while commercial bookstores give prominence to a limited selection, public libraries can make a virtue out of the wider range they typically carry, offering choices around particular themes – such as travel, or relaxation, or bite-sized quick reads, or what to read when you can't sleep.

Libraries are increasingly reaching out to leisure readers in this way, or through informal reading groups – often supported by social media, or by ideas borrowed from marketing such as 'wine and book tastings'. Staff are learning new skills to serve clients with expectations that differ from previous generations. '10,000 people have taken our course for frontline library staff', she says.

The latest tool is Whichbook, a website delivering suggested books in response to visitors' own stipulations of mood, emotion, plot shape, type of main character, or location, rather than by title, author, or genre. Each suggestion offers a brief and thought-provoking commentary on the book, and a link to where to borrow or buy it.

'It's proving very popular – current average use runs at 100,000 individual visitors per month', says Rachel. 'It isn't Amazon, but it's doing something that Amazon can't do – it's offering informed choices based on personal preferences.'

Opening the Book |

*Training for library staff in audience
development for literature since 1998 |
Workshops in Belgium, the Czech Republic,
Denmark, Greece, Netherlands, Portugal,
Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden plus
programmes in the UK and Ireland |
www.openingthebook.com*



ZIMA

Opera J

Putting children at the heart of opera

☞) **Barbara Minghetti**,
President of Teatro Sociale di Como
– AsLiCo (Associazione Lirica
e Concertistica Italiana), Como, Italy

*An opera commissioned specifically
for children is giving families
across Europe a taste
of engagement in music.*

**Opera J (Opéra Jeune, Opera Junior,
Opera Joven)** | Supported by the EU Culture
Programme: 2009-2011 |
Grant awarded: EUR 200,000 | Lead organiser:
AsLiCo (Associazione Lirica e Concertistica
Italiana), Italy | 2 co-organisers
from Belgium and Spain |
www.aslico.org

Photo provided by Teatro Sociale di Como – AsLiCo, Como
© Elisabetta Molteni

‘Years ago, Italians used to sing opera at home. They don’t any more, and a rich tradition is at risk’, says Barbara. Music has almost dropped out of the school timetable, too: ‘In Italy most children get no music lessons between the ages of 6 to 14’, she points out. A response is necessary, to help children become familiar with the language of opera – because otherwise it will be lost for ever, explains Barbara.

The specially-composed opera that tours through theatres in the participating countries is the central element in the project. The plot and treatment are designed to capture the attention of a young audience, and the work provides specifically for their involvement. At each performance, the children join in the singing. And long in advance, the project prepares children – and teachers – through work in local schools, and often with a strong community flavour. ‘We want the children to be able to approach opera actively’, says Barbara.

This way the children have the chance to learn about the background to the opera they will see, to play with the music and the plot, even to put on their own mini-productions in school. And they make masks and props that they can bring with them when they attend the performance. ‘This has made a difference in schools, too, since few teachers nowadays are qualified in music’, adds Barbara. ‘So we run workshops and provide on-line training to make sure that they are comfortable in doing this preparatory work with their pupils, and are encouraged to work with music more widely.’

On the day of the show, the children – and their parents or grandparents – are invited to come early, for additional preparation, practising the singing, learning more about the story and the production. ‘This also brings the older generation to the opera too – and some of them never had the chance to come before’, points out Barbara.

This complementary work also extends to a website for children, allowing them contact with the director and conductor, and games, competitions and activities linked to the opera’s themes, such as cookery, growing herbs, or creating street art. There is also a link to a popular magazine running a competition for schools to complete a new aria. ‘It’s all about making a connection’, says Barbara.

‘Few of the big opera houses are doing much for education’, she says, ‘but they are increasingly recognising the need, and we are able to help them fill the gap. And we are also developing a new European understanding of opera and performance’.



Participation and Inclusion

Celebrating people's own creativity



☞) **Airan Berg**,
CEO Project Management,
Mannheim 2020, Germany

Creative workshops in schools, parades of puppets constructed by the public, and access passes to shows are among the ways that audiences have been developed in Vienna, Linz and Istanbul.

Airan Berg's background includes Broadway and the Schauspielhaus in Vienna, but he has taken the search for audiences out of the theatre and into the street. He favours working in shopping malls, city centre parks, schools, cultural centres, orphanages, young offenders institutions and disadvantaged areas across Europe. 'Nowadays', as he puts it, 'if you don't come to us, we'll come to you'.

'My strategy for audience development starts by discarding the label of "audience", which suggests that people just sit down and watch and then clap at the end and go. I want to invite the wider public to participate, and to explore their own talents so they gain a sense of connection with the arts and culture', he says.

More than 1,000 Austrian children were exposed to what Berg calls 'the joy of getting active' in connection with the Linz Capital of Culture festivities in 2009, when teams of performance artists 'aimed to promote creativity' in partnership with schools and teachers in his *I Like to Move it Move it* project.

But he doesn't speak about developing audiences as such: 'The aim is to give people an understanding of what creativity can bring to their lives'. The effect is indirect. 'Media coverage of this project, and the relationships formed with the artists, stimulated interest among many young people who'd had little previous contact with arts and culture. And a sense of ownership of the cultural capital year made the kids – and teachers – keen to see shows and events that they might otherwise not have been interested in', says Berg.

He has made imaginative use of puppets in his bid to spark that creativity, pioneering massive public engagement in building and manipulating them. The *Flut* project at the Klangwolke festival in Linz, 'was about encouraging the public to understand that they are the "cultural capital" of their city', says Berg. Similarly, the *iKEDI* project gave a new and highly visible profile to the iDANS festival in Istanbul, and the exercise was repeated with equal success in festivals in Burgos and Helsinki. This created, says Berg, 'a sense of pride and engagement in the population'.

'It is time to rethink our dialogue with the public', he says, pointing to the twin perils of exclusion and of simple indifference, even among those who could afford to come. He has tackled exclusion through the *Hunger for Arts and Culture* project he started at the Schauspielhaus. Now his work is focused on combatting lack of interest. And involvement is at the heart of his approach. 'Audience building happens when people get excited because they are involved', he says.

www.hungeraufkunstundkultur.at

produced by Schauspielhaus Vienna, Austria

www.linz09.at/en/projekt-2106328/klangwolke.html

Linz09, Austria

www.linz09.at/en/projekt-2183382/i_like_to_move_it_move_it.html

Linz09 (EU Grant), Austria

<http://ikedi.info>

Istanbul Idans Festival, Turkey



Rec>ON (Reconciliation)

Exploring ways out of conflicts

🗣️) **Bruno Freyssinet**,
Artistic Director of La Transplanisphère,
Paris, France

Rec>ON (Reconciliation) culminated in 30 performances of 'The Descendants' in Yerevan in October 2011 and in Paris and Berlin in May 2012.

'It's hard to make generalisations about audience development across different countries', says Bruno, fresh from his explorations during the Rec>ON (Reconciliation) project. 'In France and Germany we are used to running workshops and debates to attract and maintain audiences. But in Armenia, where they have a lot of theatre and the theatres are full, they think less about developing an audience. And in Turkey, where traditional theatre is well developed, alternative approaches are quite recent and mainly in Istanbul'.

Bruno's view of audience development starts from a very personal need: 'The geopolitical topics I want to explore require strong dialogue with audiences', he says. And in Rec>ON, this was a more crucial requirement than ever before. 'I started this project familiar with only the French and German views of conflict that I grew up with – and post-war reconciliation is no longer a problem in our generation. So I was looking for an audience with closer experience of conflict, to obtain different perspectives', he explains.

He met his need by adding Armenian and Turkish dimensions, with all the tensions over the fate of the Armenian minority under the Ottoman empire, and with the additional contemporary controversy over the French parliamentary discussion of those events. Workshops, improvisations and debates on the theme of reconciliation and on dialogues across generations of family secrets provided plenty of provocation and perspectives from audiences and participants in all four countries, to guide the artistic process and lead to full performances in three countries (an opportunity to perform in Turkey is still awaited).

In Armenia were the first steps towards making deeper connections included a two-week meeting of youth groups from all four countries. In Turkey, official reticence about engagement in a contentious subject was sidestepped by recruiting young people to workshops via word of mouth.

Bruno admits that the artistic, geopolitical, historic and linguistic mix made it a challenging experience for audiences – particularly the use of different languages on stage for the final professional production – which some found hard to understand, even with projected subtitles, he concedes. 'But most were fascinated by the experience, and the "Tower of Babel" effect operated as a symbol of dialogue', he says. 'It stimulated a common capacity to reach out and understand, as people discovered each other. It was a shared exercise in redefining reconciliation, in readiness to admit the views of others.' And, he says, the successful run of this innovative show has helped open up new readiness among French audiences – and even artists – to new ways of doing things.

Rec>ON (Reconciliation) | Supported by
the EU Culture Programme: 2010-2012 |
Grant awarded: EUR 200,000 | Lead organiser:
La Transplanisphère, France | 3 co-organisers
from Turkey, Germany and Armenia |
www.recon-project.com

Photo provided by La Transplanisphère, Paris
© Navellou / Freyssinet



RESEO

Building a critical audience



🗣️) **Katherine Heid**,
Network Manager, RESEO,
Brussels, Belgium

*RESEO promotes exchange on
opera education among the seventy
European opera and dance companies
in its membership.*

RESEO has some very detailed knowledge about the audience for opera and dance, broken down by age. It has also mapped and reviewed the scope and effectiveness of its members' operations. It is characteristic of the focus of this organisation, which has brought a sharp eye to boosting audiences. Katherine prefers to speak of 'outreach and education'. Amid the clatter and chatter of the staff canteen in Brussels' opera house, she outlines the balance central to the network's activities.

'Many opera houses do have an audience', she says, 'but the question is: do they want a critical audience?'. The work of RESEO is geared towards sustainability, not just of audiences, but of the art forms themselves. 'We are not just aiming to increase business at the box office', Katherine makes clear. And for that reason, the network supports, encourages, promotes and provokes activities that can build an audience for the future with an appetite for the essence of opera and dance experiences.

It helps create training programmes to help teachers to work with children and adolescents in and out of school, and to help artists bring their art to audiences. It explores how opera and dance might be integrated into university courses on everything from physiology to history, and it runs a database of works for and by young people. Last year's Europe Opera Days – which RESEO co-ordinates – took as its theme 'Young Ears', and was aimed at guiding children and young people in their discovery. 'Not all the outreach work is aimed at younger people: the ability to listen and watch without prejudices, and to remain open to music and movement is of value at every age', says Katherine. She cites the popularity with older people of dance workshops – which can offer them a space for self-expression free from inhibitions of language.

Different conditions across Europe make it impossible to arrogate on what are the best routes to pursue. 'These are constantly evolving programmes, and we prize diversity: social integration is not seen the same way in the UK or Portugal or Russia', Katherine points out. But she flatly rejects any suggestion that the purity of sophisticated art forms is at risk of contamination or dumbing down as result of the search for wider audiences through outreach and education. 'The productions for young audiences that nearly all of our members offer are of the highest artistic quality. They are examples of an art form in itself, comparable to and with the same justification as children's literature', she says.

**RESEO – European Network for Opera
and Dance Education** | Supported by
the EU Culture Programme since 2008 |
Grant awarded: EUR 51,000 (2012) |
79 members from 21 countries |
www.reseo.org

Photo provided by RESEO, Brussels
© Casa da Musica



Robots and Avatars

Bringing the future into the present

🗣️) **Marie Proffit**,
Marketing & Development Co-ordinator
at body>data>space,
London, United Kingdom

This exploration of wearable and interactive technologies gives people a chance now to play with the immersive experiences that will become commonplace life in the next 10-15 years.

Robots and Avatars – Collaborative and Intergenerational Futures (RACIF) |

*Supported by the EU Culture Programme:
2011-2013 | Grant awarded: EUR 199,000 |
Lead organiser: body>data>space,
United Kingdom | 2 co-organisers
from Romania and Slovenia |
www.bodydataspace.net*

*Photo provided by body>data>space, London
© Brian Slater*

body>data>space considers the whole new world of cooperation that digital technology has opened up: 'The physical blends with the virtual, work overlaps with play, the young and the old are on an equal footing, and artists and audience can work together in combinations that were previously unimaginable', Marie says, her voice conveying her excitement at the potential that innovation is increasingly offering.

Against a background in which new technology is giving everyone a chance to extend themselves beyond their own bodies – through robots, avatars, virtual worlds, and telepresence – RACIF is exploring that imminent future with a group of artists, cultural players, and technology experts. The group crosses not only the frontiers of geography – coming from the UK, Romania and Slovenia – but also the boundaries of age, with close involvement of young people too.

'This community will widen our understanding of working and creating in a 21st century world of virtual/physical co-operation', according to Marie. 'It will expand our senses as we see how a new generation works and plays with new versions of themselves.'

The aim of body>data>space is to reach the largest and most diverse audience possible. This is why the project emphasises working across generations, so young people can share something that they often master quickly with their parents. It also has a strong community base, working with local needs and answering local expectations. And because virtual worlds offer a different environment, even shy people may lose their inhibitions about expressing themselves, she believes. The project is also carefully differentiated in its conception and promotion – featuring both high-level material designed for and by artificial intelligence experts, and activities that can be enjoyed by people with no technical knowledge.

This is not a training programme. 'At body>data>space we don't separate the educational and artistic sides', she says. 'We don't accept boundaries between innovation and reflection and science.' Instead, the aim is to obtain 'a wider vision – an artists' view on this new reality of social media and robotics'.

Through using a social media campaign, body>data>space has been able to reach a wider audience interactively. 'The results are demonstrating how new technologies can increase engagement, both physically and online, and with the constant feedback we obtain, we are continually adapting the programme and the methodology used by the trainers in our workshops', says Marie. 'Public engagement is central to the concept from the very beginning. The emphasis is on co-designing a new world with the engagement of people not just as audience, as consumers of content, but as active co-creators.'



SANCTUARY

Turning people's downtime into art



☞) **Rolf Dennemann**,
Artistic Director and Manager
of artszenico, Dortmund, Germany

Art as a partner to farms, gardens or industrial waste-lands is how this project brings artworks closer to people's real lives and concerns.

'We attract new audiences from a wide range of backgrounds by going to places where the arts are under-represented', says Rolf. The public differs according to the project and the location, he says, 'but mostly they are not the typical audience for the arts, because we use non-typical spaces, such as former industrial sites, parks, or waste land, and local people come to see out of simple curiosity'. Audiences are engaged more deeply, he is convinced, by the juxtaposition of art and striking architecture, or the open spaces of nature.

'We are not usually aiming to increase audience-size, but rather to demonstrate to people that art is accessible and can be relevant for them, and to win them over so that they want to come back again, see more shows, and deepen their experience of the arts', he says. In his view, attracting people to the arts is a real challenge, because the ever-widening choices offered by the expanding leisure industry represent real competition.

His work is based on the view that the arts have to get closer to the real lives and problems of society – and he believes that live events in the performing arts have an obvious advantage in this respect, because by their nature they are closer to life. 'It's a chance to share a unique moment with the public, to come close to them as audience, as customers, to include them in a shared experience', he says.

Rolf finds that the best cooperation comes from working with partners who are not conventional supporters of the arts: 'We've had great success in collaborations with farmers, gardeners, trade unions... It's a delight to get mixtures of people coming to performances at places like farms, parks or a cemetery, and to see experts and theatre-goers rubbing shoulders with local residents and the farmer's customers'. But Rolf also cooperates with schools and with industry: 'They have a great multiplier effect'.

Audience feedback is important, he says. 'Audiences generally stay after our shows, and have a drink with the cast and crew – or have breakfast together after an early-morning performance. And we often include local groups in the performances, which helps to promote real exchange and understanding.' The opportunities for doing this are all the greater if artists and their organizations go into the countryside, to remote villages and smaller towns, according to Rolf. 'This is, we believe, where art and audience can really combine constructively – rather than through the egotistical ambitions of many artists for fame and glory and good reviews in the culture sections of the big newspapers.'

SANCTUARY | Supported by the EU Culture
Programme: 2010-2011 |
Grant awarded: EUR 114,000 | Lead organiser:
artszenico e.V., Germany |
4 co-organisers from Malta, Turkey,
Lithuania and Poland |
www.artszenico.de

Photo provided by artszenico e.V., Dortmund
© Rolf Dennemann

Photo provided by artszenico e.V., Dortmund
© Guntram Walter



Script&Pitch Workshops

Integrating promotion into movie-making



☞) **Savina Neirotti**,
Director TorinoFilmLab,
Torino, Italy

The TorinoFilmLab supports emerging filmmakers with Script&Pitch workshops, providing hands-on guidance to filmmakers, writers and story editors.

'It's incredibly frustrating that some wonderful independent films in Europe remain completely unseen, despite all the energy and money that went into making them', says Savina Neirotti. But she has responded with characteristic energy. Alongside the workshops that Script&Pitch offers to emerging filmmakers, she has added a new element: mentoring for what she calls 'audience designers'.

'We want to help ensure that each film reaches an audience, and the right audience for it. And the key is to start building from the early days of a project, rather than leaving it to the conventional sales and market approaches that kick in only once the film is virtually completed', she says. She leaves no doubt about her distaste for standard promotional approaches that are based on broad categories such as genre or audience age.

'We are faced with constant rapid changes in media, in audience demands, and in emerging production and financing processes. So it's time to change the way we think about promoting films too', she insists. 'We are looking for a sensitive approach that can avoid clichés, and that matches the niche nature of independent films.'

The result is that trainee audience designers now spend time living and working closely with the filmmakers on Script&Pitch projects. 'We've selected young people with a marketing or distribution background who are really engaged with social media, and have a passion for independent film', explains Savina. 'We bring them in at the script development stage, so they can get an early understanding of the project – even ideas that may not make it into the final script, but that are part of the backstory. Then they work with professional mentors over several months to come up with proposals for designing an audience, and – if the production team agrees – they can start building a community of support even while the film is still being completed.'

There is no one right way of identifying and attracting audiences, Savina accepts. 'Depending on the individual film, it might be a "making-of" documentary, or a diary, or a book... But we are exploring innovative ways of using the media – and particularly new media – to involve the public, to entice them into diving into the storyworld of a film in development.'

The approach has already won 15,000 Facebook followers for a short film that is still in the pre-shooting phase, according to Savina. 'We have given the public a steady stream of background about the film's progress and plot, and they have become engaged in the process – which offers a good chance of the film winning wide attention as soon as it is released.'

Script&Pitch Workshops | Supported by the
EU MEDIA Programme: framework partnership
agreement, 2009-2013 |
Grant awarded: EUR 72,000 (2010) |
Museo Nazionale del Cinema – Fondazione
Maria Adriana Prolo, Italy |
www.torinofilmclub.it/



Theater Zuidplein

Making a 'people's theatre'



↳) **Doro Siepel**,
Director, Theater Zuidplein,
Rotterdam, the Netherlands

*Theater Zuidplein has reinvented
itself as a place where
non-traditional theatre-goers can
feel comfortable too.*

*Theater Zuidplein, Rotterdam,
the Netherlands | Created in 1953 |
Developing new multicultural
audiences since 2006 |
www.theaterzuidplein.nl*

*Photo provided by Theater Zuidplein, Rotterdam
© Hans Hordijk*

'To be honest, we are slightly nervous', admits Doro Siepel. Her theatre has stepped out on a bold new road of engagement in its multicultural neighbourhood. But while audience numbers and are up and strong local loyalties have been forged, the harsh demands of economics are a growing concern.

Theater Zuidplein, which is in a deprived area of Rotterdam, has committed itself to serving the city's large population of people with low incomes and little education – Dutch, and immigrants. This is a pioneering venture in matching the increasing diversity of the population. 'Theatres were aiming at meeting the quality standards set by people with higher education and a traditional western background', Doro explains.

The change of direction means radical change, posing questions about what quality means – for theatres and for audiences – and demanding a review of everything from programming, marketing, finances, staff, and building new networks and partnerships. 'We have not yet found all the answers', Doro recognises. 'Early attempts at international programming did not really attract immigrants. This was not going to achieve our ambition of becoming "the bustling people's theatre of Rotterdam".'

So the theatre segmented its target audience more sensitively. It distinguished between the tastes of people from Morocco or Surinam, the Cape Verde Islands or China, and between the preferences of different religious backgrounds, as well as on factors like education, age and income. 'And because most Dutch directors think about their autonomous creation rather than their target audience, we brought in guest productions from other cultures, and we partnered up with Rotterdams Wijktheater to share its experience in community theatre and in staging shows that local audiences can identify with. We also replaced our traditional approach to young people with new programmes that struck a chord with immigrant youth.'

There was a strong social dimension to the shift, too. The theatre involved itself in municipal activity – training and creating job opportunities for low-skilled people in the area, talent development in schools, empowerment of minorities, improving street-safety. It cut the rental rate, to allow immigrant theatre makers to stage popular events for their communities; it cut ticket prices, modified its catering assortment, and geared its distribution policies to accessibility. 'We also deliberately employed interns with a dual cultural background, who can open up possibilities of contact with new networks. And we cut our costs by using volunteers for many front-of-house and backstage tasks', adds Doro.

The big challenge is finding funding to continue. But Doro is optimistic: 'We have been successful the last six years, and established ourselves as "the people's theatre". We hope to be as successful the next six years'.



Theatron

Giving young audiences a taste of theatre magic



☞) **Michael Mansdotter**,
Director, Odense Theatre,
Odense, Denmark

*Seven multilingual productions
are at the centre of this cross-border
project seeking to lure young
Europeans into understanding what
theatre really means.*

A dozen theatres across Europe are working together to explore the magical phenomenon that a random assembly of individuals coalesces into a unique and unprecedented community within a microsecond of the house-lights going down. 'In a live performance, there is much more than just what is happening on stage. The audience's reactions, moods and rituals are a central part of the experience', says Michael.

But with traditional performing arts meeting ever tougher competition from film, television and new media, he is sharply aware that theatres can no longer take their public for granted. 'We need to know more about our current and potential audiences, and engage with them, so that we can attract and retain them', he says. This is why he is leading a European project looking at how to create lasting relationships with audiences. It is promoting co-productions of new works (seven are planned across seven countries) in which community engagement is a central element. 'If theatre is to fulfil its role as a space for reflecting life through an artistic prism, removed from everyday reality, then it has to do more than marketing, and engage audiences in the entire creative process, in programming, artistic creation, and communication', says Michael.

The strategy also embraces audience research, customer relationship management, marketing, and education, and publications on subjects such as creative engagement of communities and of audiences. A five-year study on audience research is being undertaken at the participating theatres. Plans also include conferences and workshops with European experts and trainees in audience development, staff exchanges, production visits, and 'creative camps' to discuss collaborative creation and audience development.

And in addition to contacts in the real, physical world, it is developing wide-ranging on-line links, between professionals, and with audiences. 'New technology allows us to engage with audiences in new and exciting ways. So we are creating an online platform and social network as the virtual home of Theatron, to accommodate virtual meetings, chats, blogs – with some of the content available to the general public', Michael explains. The internet makes it possible to run novel online help clinics and mentoring programmes, he points out.

Quality assurance is built into the project with monitoring, reporting, evaluation, feedback and adjustment integrated into the design. The organisations involved are located in Denmark, France, the UK, Germany, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Italy. And Theatron also aims to share its findings with other organisations, and to engage the widest range of theatre practitioners. A TV documentary of the project's evolution will be offered to European channels and made available on DVD and online.

Theatron – Engaging New Audiences |
Supported by the EU Culture Programme:
2012-2017 | Grant awarded: EUR 2,500,000 |
Lead organiser: Odense Teater, Denmark |
11 co-organisers from 7 different countries |
<http://theatron.ning.com>

*Photo provided by Odense Theater, Odense
© Claes Bech-Poulsen*



Young Europe 2

Offering young people a key to the theatre

☞ Heidi Wiley,
General Secretary, European Theatre
Convention

Four new plays and six new performances staged in eight languages in European schools and theatres are exposing some 20,000 young people to a theatre experience.

'Theatre is live – and that's something that needs preserving', says Heidi, keenly aware that modern entertainment is increasingly technology-driven and virtual, rather than physical and actual. 'That interaction between artists and audiences can happen only in live performance. So the future of theatre depends on the young generation – the very people who spend much of their time online – becoming the theatre-goers of tomorrow.'

This challenge has led to new strategies to engage the new, more culturally diverse and more internet-savvy generation. Young people are exposed to theatre not only as potential consumers, but also as creators and critics of contemporary culture, promoting their own creative talent in workshops and online.

A drama repertoire is being specifically designed for young people and largely co-written by them, tackling head-on the issues that appeal to teenagers – the people who question things most. Four new plays and six new performances staged in eight languages are to be performed in European schools and theatres. This exposes some 20,000 young people from very diverse backgrounds to a theatre experience, and gives them the opportunity to engage with the artists in workshops and debates. They can also connect with young people from other countries through the project's online platform, and even meet them at the Young Europe Talent Campus as part of the project's festival in 2013.

ETC's member theatres continuously invest in the development of outreach programmes to new audiences, of which the Young Europe project is one example. But many other instruments and methods are applied, often involving innovative forms of experimentation. One idea that has worked well for many theatres is to form groups of 'friends of the theatre' across all age groups and bring them to rehearsals, or get them engaged as volunteers in the theatre, and even in shows to raise the voice of the public, the citizens on stage. Workshops or special programmes during school holidays have also proved appealing. Many theatres have launched new departments specialising in theatre for young people, or collaborate with independent artists to work in schools or youth groups – all of which help to develop an audience for existing theatres. But methods need adapting according to the location. As Heidi says, 'Winning theatre audiences presents different challenges in Berlin, where there is competition among some 500 live performances a day, or in a provincial town which has only one theatre'.

One of the innovations Young Europe introduces is the Finnish open-source software Noodi, inviting young people across Europe to write together a theatre play. 'You have to evolve to survive – particularly in a world where consumer habits have such a huge impact', says Heidi.

Young Europe 2: Multilingual Creation and Education in Theatre | Supported by the EU Culture Programme: 2011-2013 | Grant awarded: EUR 200,000 | Lead organiser: European Theatre Convention, France | 8 co-organisers from 7 different countries | www.etc-cte.org/young_europe

Photo provided by European Theatre Convention,
Saint Etienne
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More information

European Commission's Culture homepage:

<http://ec.europa.eu/culture>

European Commission's proposals for a future Creative Europe programme:

<http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe>

European Capitals of Culture:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/capitals/european-capitals-of-culture_en.htm

Policy development in the field of culture:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/european-agenda_en.htm

MEDIA programme of the EU

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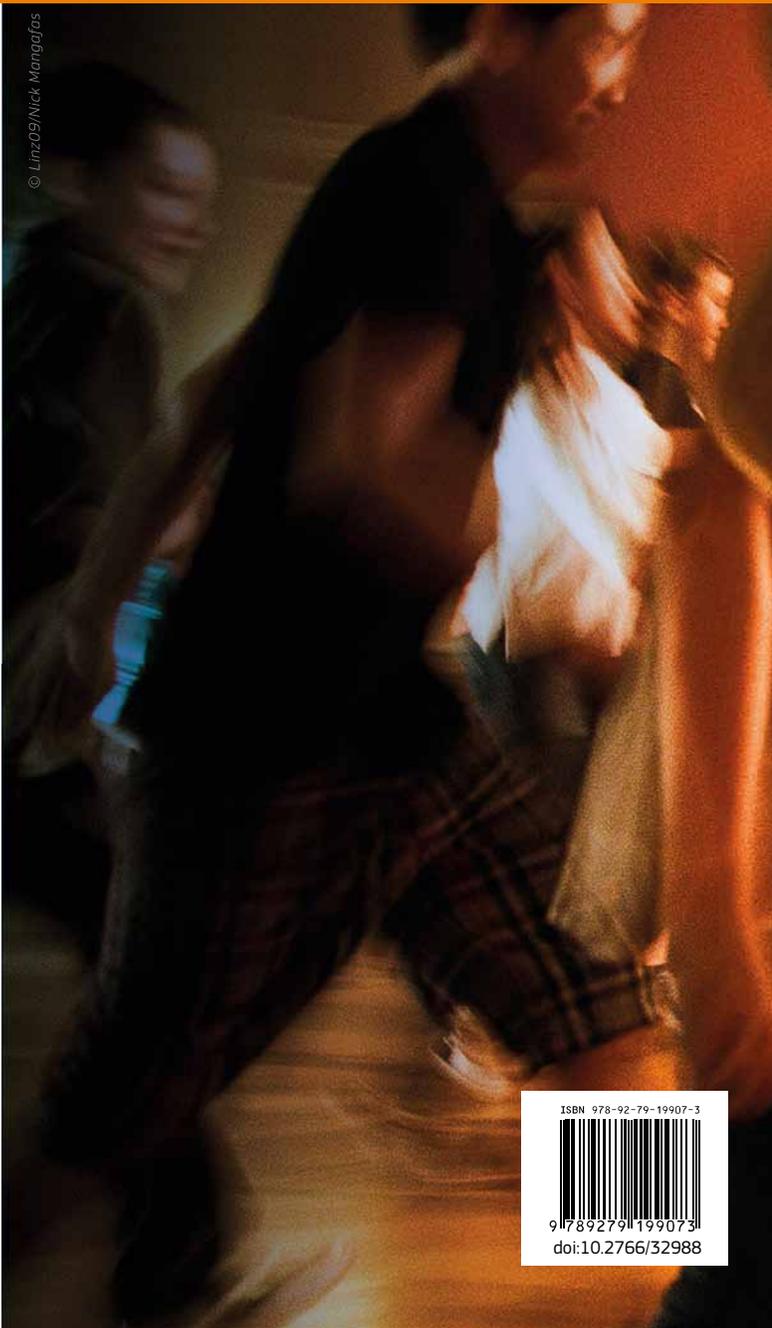
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Publications Office



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ISBN 978-92-79-19907-3



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doi:10.2766/32988