



***Moving Territories: Culture in a Europe of Regions***

EFAH Conference and General Assembly  
October 28-30, 2004, Lille, France  
Conference Report

## **Moving Territories: Culture in a Europe of Regions**

12<sup>th</sup> EFAH Conference and General Assembly

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### **Introduction**

The context in which the 12<sup>th</sup> EFAH Conference and General Assembly took place was set out by **Francois Matarasso** in his introduction to the special conference reader: He noted that the inescapable background to the meeting was the tension between local, national, European and global power expressed through 'inherited, invented and imposed identities'. The conference focused specifically on the place of the regions within the shifting sands of European integration. He went on to say, 'So, in this time of moving territories, when inside and outside are being redefined and culture is used to justify or refute claims of belonging, the conference is concerned with the role of culture and its institutions in this process.'

In light of this context, members of EFAH and other concerned parties were charged with taking advantage of the space offered by the conference to 'discuss the issues rather than trying to solve them, to raise awareness of their importance and their symbiotic influence on culture itself.'

The conference consisted of plenary sessions with keynote speakers and parallel workshop sessions. This report begins with a summary, which is followed by reports on the keynote speeches and the workshop sessions, on the panel discussion about Turkey and on the observations made at the concluding session.

### **Summary Report**

The 2004 EFAH General Assembly in Lille attracted around 200 people, about half of whom are members of EFAH. The Assembly organisers challenged participants to reflect on the roles and status of culture from the perspective of an increased emphasis on a 'Europe of Regions' by the European Union and its many departments and agencies. Speakers were chosen to give a starting point for discussions around three main questions:

- What is the place of culture in an expanding Europe of regions?
- How can regions provide a stable, open platform for cross-border cultural co-operation?
- What contribution can regional cultural policy make to cultural development and to the overall regional development?

Organised around keynote speeches and three workshop themes (*Regions of the Mind*, *Regions of Policy* and *Regions of the Arts*), the conference made it possible for EFAH members and staff as well as others to explore experiences and ideas from their different perspectives, countries and cultures. This type of meeting structure made it possible for many processes of debate and assimilation of ideas to take place simultaneously. As a result, participants went away enriched with new and deepening notions of the qualities of regions that can be stimulating and helpful to cultural co-operation and cultural policy and those qualities that are more a distraction and do more harm than good. The staff and board of EFAH were able to listen to views from all parts of the European Union and from beyond its current borders. – a range of arguments and concerns that will find their way into EFAH's advocacy positions vis à vis the European institutions.

### **Definitions of Region**

Early speakers made it clear that it was not going to be easy to agree on how to talk about 'regions'. There are as many definitions as people attending the conference. By the end, there was still huge confusion about the term: Does it mean sub-national, transnational ....? Some were clear in wanting to use the occasion to determine whether 'region' was useful or was it artificial.

Were we talking about regions of the mind, regions of affinities, or diasporas? Importantly, in the end, the meeting succeeded in deconstructing the term and its use.

There was a view acknowledging a multitude of cultural identities none of which can claim essential qualities. Identities are imagined, invented, constructed or deconstructed artificially. 'Central Europe' (1970s to the late 80s) for instance, disappeared as a term with the collapse of communism as it was based on a sense of cultural space, which was delineated by the borders it cut across.

People discussed regions of administrative convenience, like the Nord-Pas-de-Calais, created by an official accord signed at the beginning of the conference and regions created for purposes of dealing with 'the other' whatever form that might take (different ethnicities, gender, religion or those marginalised or excluded). Through specific examples of co-operation and collaboration, the assembled participants could easily see that there were also regions of imagination (particularly in arts and culture) where like minds meet. This type of region defies attempts to classify through official policies and budgets.

One delegate defined a region as a territory with a strong sense of cultural belonging; this was countered by someone pointing out that many do not have such a sense. Another cautioned that as regions discover their economic interdependence, they better also develop a cultural dimension for their future. There were many interventions that would indicate, however ill defined, many people are working to create some kind of identity.

A film produced in Bulgaria by **Adela Peeva** called, *Whose is this Song?* was shown. The documentary traced the filmmaker's journey, across the countries near to Bulgaria (Turkey, Greece, Albania, Macedonia and others, in search of the origin of a tune she knew from her youth. She found that every place claimed both origin and ownership of the same song. The film illustrated very clearly that cultural similarities and differences can be shaped by hegemonic centres that change over time. One conference participant observed that it showed how sensitive a region can be about its ethnic origins and how deeply claims of originality of culture can be felt. In the discussion that followed, participants speculated on how this observation might relate to what the EU was doing with its regional re-organisation.

A helpful construct, offered by **Jordi Pascual**, who recommended that talking about the 'centre' and 'periphery' was better in many ways than using 'state' and 'region'. It is, he maintained, a question of where the power is; who distributes the money; and who legitimises discourses about policy and the distribution of resources.

## Problems

Someone cautioned that it could be a mistake for us to be too drawn in by the European trend towards an artificial delineation into 'regions'. This might only serve to blind us to what is the 'real' problem for arts and culture: the complete absence of rights and conditions for free collaboration and production within a so-called 'international space'. The real problem is how to recognise the differences among people and escape the iron logic of them being classified as 'other', opening the door to valorisation and waves of disproportional treatment. There was a fear among some that the concept of regions will eventually force cultural producers to act in a particular way and lessen their creative freedom.

Among the many examples of problems based on regional histories was a reminder that the Balkan states are a black hole and not part of the policy structures of their neighbours. In fact, there are many paradoxes in this transnational region that emerged as a consequence of nationalist fragmentation. Though many cultural initiatives have emerged from the area, they are usually aimed at reminding people of inter-ethnic wars, which plagued the Balkan states. Others observed that Balkan culture has become a type of marketing strategy and some of it has reached a significant place in the cultural market, but this is not the same as cross-border transnational cultural co-operation.

Underlying all the discussions was the ongoing problem that very few governments, national or regional really see culture as a way forward. The few parties that do say little about cultural innovation or positioning culture in the future of society simply repeat what was said in 60's & 70's

and recite the now empty words 'intercultural dialogue', 'private public partnerships', 'cultural tourism', etc.

**Iлона Kish** informed the gathering that there are some 300 regional offices from all over Europe in Brussels, whose job it is to lobby for advantage for their region. This prompted a discussion that drew attention to the great mismatch between the way the official structures think of culture and the way that many members of EFAH talk about it. When cultural producers talk about the regional mind, we talk about artists and our work, and in this sense we have to say that the regions of politics are almost always empty, non-used, not placed. The regional offices are instead built around an identity that doesn't exist. At the same time as recognising this, we must ask for money from these regional entities in order to develop our work. What we should tell them is that the regions mean nothing to us as artists. We have multiple identities, and should talk about the regions like this.

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## Keynote Speeches

### **Adrienne Goehler, Artistic Director, Hauptstadtkulturfonds, Berlin**

(Ms Goehler's entire speech was circulated to EFAH members along with the short conference report, shortly after the conference). The speech began with a plea to listeners to come to terms with the need for culture (which she defined as including both the arts and the sciences) to infiltrate other agendas in Europe, such as education, and aim towards basing our societies on culture. Creativity and culture are essential to help people develop their abilities fully, but for this to happen the state must make the necessary space for things to happen. She argued that we have to be active in promoting creativity at the centre of society with diversity as fuel for its development.

What is needed is a new orientation for the arts and science that does not reduce them to being an arts and science market, but perceives them as productive cultural and economic forces.

'A society based on culture includes the social issues but pays more comprehensive tribute to the human being than the welfare state does to its contributors and recipients and more than a knowledge society pays to the providers and recipients of information, more than an economic state does to its consumers. It even pays more tribute than a constitutional state does to its citizens.' A society based on culture expands and develops the notion of the social. Ms Goehler hoped to see the conference as a positive step towards making a Europe based on diverse cultural missions and understanding that this is not the opposite of economic growth but it is one of the important steps towards it.

### **Irit Rogoff, Head of Visual Media, Goldsmith's College, London; Raj Isar, Chair**

#### **Hit and Run: Museums and Cultural Difference**

Irit Rogoff discussed the way she has looked at museums of ethnography as they represent a sense of loss. A topic of 'Culture in a Europe of Regions' necessitates a logic of incohesion. One that requires moving away from the logic of nationalism and nation states and the colonial cartographies in relation to the mythic centres of the world.

A culture of regions does not allow us to bypass notions of cultural dominance or cultural marginality and the dynamics by which we live out their everyday realities. Developing discussions between, among and with minority cultures and people is not at all straightforward. We only know how to think 'difference' in relation to an organising centre, some hegemonic centre of power.

Ms Rogoff, in a quest to explore how to promote discourse from 'difference to difference' without going through a hegemonic centre or at least develop some of the vocabulary that might be needed to do so, has visited a number of exhibitions of dominant museums that deal with cultural difference and representation. Through three little ethnographies: the Jewish Museum in Berlin, *The Short Century*, a travelling exhibition in the USA and Europe and the Museum of Apartheid in Johannesburg, she illustrated the need to come to terms with loss in the context of the museum. Museums, she claimed, have always stood for gain rather than loss; for plenty rather than diminishment; and for universal indexing rather than subjective fragmentation. Her plea would be that museums really take on the job of representing loss, diminishment and subjective fragmentation. As shown by her examples this approach often wins over audiences as much as objects, and displays. She showed us that, in fact, there is no space outside cultural difference.

Her catalogue of observations was fascinating and well worth looking at in detail by anyone interested in topics of identity, difference and representation. For further material on these subjects read *Terra Infirma: Geography's Visual Culture*. (Routledge, 2000, ISBN 0415096162).

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## Workshops

### Theme: Regions of the Mind (Theory)

**Workshop 1: (Regions of the Mind) What is a Europe of the Regions? (Jordi Pascual, moderator)** A critical reflection on the cultural role of regions in European development.

Speakers: Boris Buden, philosopher and writer; Adrienne Goehler, Artistic Director, Hauptstadtkulturfonds, Berlin; Olivia Grant, Chair, Culture Northeast, UK; Ghislaine Glasson Deschaumes, Director, Transeuropeennes (Paris).

#### **Boris Buden**

Regions belong both to the past and to the future at the same time – there is a naive dichotomy based on beliefs that we have inherited our regions from the past; they are perceived as geographic provinces. Some would say that in the name of democracy there should be a Europe of the regions instead of a Europe of the nation states and that there is a responsibility to protect our regional culture in the name of democratic development at the same time as protecting our political identity.

The reality is that in regions of the mind we see the multitude of cultural identities none of which can claim essential qualities as we know identities are imagined, invented, constructed or deconstructed artificially. 'Central Europe' (1970s to the late 80s) for instance, disappeared as a term with the collapse of communism as it was based on a sense of cultural space, which was delineated by the borders it cut across. When they disappeared, so did the cultural space. In the same way the Balkans are now recognised as a geographic and cultural region – included into the European map promoted alongside the marketing of western European artists, given a certain identity, which has a market value but no real use value.

Perhaps we should consider regionalisation as something not progressive but rather as destructive and regressive. There is a pathological obsession with the 'other' and we are so keen to expose this diversity that we run the risk of over-riding the real issues of what is better for our future and regional development. The divisive nature of focussing on what is different leads only to blind us to what is a real problem of European development – the complete absence of the rights and conditions for cultural and art production within the so called international space. This space isn't full of different identities but empty of any real cultural production.

#### **Ghislaine Glasson-Deschaumes**

Regions of the mind are also regions of the imagination. Are they going to develop thanks to cross-border co-operation and redefine the way these regions are delineated? Will funding programmes be based on the similarities of languages and cultures? Could they also be based on basis commonality such as rural/regional/cultural/urban development, the movement of cultural goods etc. Ghislaine also cautioned us to remember that the Balkan states are a black hole and not part of the policy structures of their neighbours. There are many paradoxes in this trans-national region – they emerged as a consequence of nationalist fragmentation and are aimed at reminding people of inter-ethnic wars, which plagued the Balkan states. It is impossible for a region to be strictly local, it only exists in relation to its surrounding territories.

#### **Olivia Grant**

The UK's northeast region is bounded by rivers, so physically it has a sense of place and belonging. It is physically, emotionally and politically recognised as a region, which is not the case elsewhere in the UK. On 4 November 2004, it will get the opportunity to vote for its own regional assembly and culture has been a major driver in getting them to this place.

What would be the impact of regionalisation on the cultural sector? Would it separate the Northeast even further, or make it more powerful? What powers would the government allow the Assembly? At the same time, the arts are now centrally driven from London, like sport and heritage. The whole exercise has brought new investment and culture is being used as a new indicator for businesses looking to move into the region, though history shows how vulnerable culture can be. One thing is certain: if there is a NO vote, culture will have the most important part to play in dealing with issues of lack of confidence. Regardless of the outcome, there will be a

need to promote the region as bound by a collective identity that embraces past and present. (Editor's note, the November 4<sup>th</sup> referendum resulted in a NO vote).

### **Adrienne Goehler**

In Germany regions have had an important role since World War II when power was devolved to create 16 little 'kingdoms'. This process was not perceived to have been a good experience. The Europe of Regions is meant to be a form of overcoming national borders and the regional idea is in fact small minded, a waste of energy and money, an over-structured body to administrate the 'regions'.

Regardless of whether the region is the ideal category, Berlin needs to look outwards to other capitals since it faces more pressing topics than the regional issue. For instance understanding our expectations both for Europe and culture; a culture, which isn't just European but also international. regionalisation offers the danger of ignoring the international perspective and its relationship with issues such as the import and export of artistic production, not particularly regionally based and heavily reliant on the global market.

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After the presentations participants in this session were reminded to look at the regional issue from a Brussels perspective. There are over 300 offices of regional representation in Brussels. Bavaria, for example, has just opened the biggest office building next to EU parliament, at vast expense, bigger than the national Belgian parliament. What rights do these regional representatives have in Europe? Who in their regions are they representing? Can these regional entities be of any help to cultural operators?

Another point raised was that of the radicality and banality of the different discourses about regions. The intellectual discourse should be between pragmatic concepts, finding a space where we can identify whether we like it or not, where we can deconstruct artificial concepts of parochialism. The German and English experiences in the process of globalisation are fantastic experiments. As someone said, it is about inclusive oppositions – a game of playing with cosmopolitanism and individualism, intimacy and hospitality, contemplation and research. The really radical approach is to try to find an answer in the shape of an institution. Can cultural operators and policymakers agree on the fact that Europe is in the throes of a radical experiment, never before tried in history?

This last point was complemented by the view that there seems to be a conceptual weakness when we talk about the EU as one single thing. Instead it is important to understand a Europe of the *regions* with the emphasis on the plural. Some are growing, some are shrinking, some emerging out of a claim of political and cultural legitimacy and others whose legitimacy is being questioned. Treating the resulting complex set of interactions as one thing may lead to a fundamental conceptual mistake.

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### **Workshop 2: (Regions of the Mind) Europe and the Wider Region (Jean Pierre Saez, Moderator) Cultural policies in Northern Europe**

Speakers: Per Mangset, Researcher, Telemark, Norway; Mireille Pongy, Researcher, CNRS, PACTE-IEP, Grenoble, France

#### **Jean Pierre Saez**

Europe is a huge territory with several phenomena of centralisation, decentralisation, regionalisation, etc. On the one hand the big member states give part of their power either to Europe or to local authorities. On the other there is a need to deal with the entire rebuilding of some nations. So certain things must be considered:

1. What is the process of decentralisation and regionalisation in Europe today?
2. How can the regional policies be in line with those of other authorities at national or district level?
3. What are the purposes of cultural policies and their political backgrounds?
4. What kind of recognition is being given to artistic work developed by independent operators?
5. How can policies assist the operators, bearing in mind the EU context?

6. Is culture considered a major or an ancillary stakeholder?
7. How can the stakeholders find their place within these strategies?
8. How can we make artistic and cultural development in Europe match regional development better?

Art is an important territory to develop at local level including its social and economic dimensions, but how can art take part in the symbolic reconstruction of these regions. Most European projects develop also a kind of international side, so the implementation of projects is needed match the ethics of art and culture.

### **Per Mangset**

It is necessary to recognise that the cultural field in general and the arts field in particular is conditioned by strong political/economic forces and is often concentrated in urban hegemony, which he called 'the iron law of cultural centres'.

The different regions of Norway had gained importance since World War II. This decentralisation period was highly dependent on strong financial incentives from central government. This was true for the social, health and other services and as it turned out the cultural sector was a freeloader in this process. A genuine cultural climate change has also taken place, moving from romantic artists existing for their art towards activists wishing to promote their work across urban and other arenas. Most artists are becoming freelancers dependent on informal networks and having to adjust quickly and flexibly to market forces. It is now possible for some of these cultural entrepreneurs to live in the less urbanised regions and many companies are now supported by regional industrial policies. This shift could lead to a revitalisation of cultural life in the regions.

### **Mireille Pongy**

Region could be defined as the intermediate place between state/federal level and local authority level. There is a huge diversity among regions, but also some common characteristics. What are the commonalities between the German Lander and French regions, between Spanish autonomous communities and Wales or Scotland for example? We need to be careful in using region as a word that covers wide meanings.

There are recurring frictions around the decentralisation trends in Western Europe, particularly at the level of cultural policy. It is not likely that the situation will ever stabilise. There is a strong political will at Council of Europe and European Union level to involve regional authorities in different programmes. In addition, there is strong political will for Central & Eastern EU countries to go down the avenue of decentralisation (one of the criteria for joining EU), especially those countries released from Soviet Union control. The closer political authorities are to what is taking place at grass roots level, the more effective and efficient action can be.

Participants in this workshop voiced their hope that this process of decentralisation would provide a window of opportunity to make regions central to future cultural policies. Cultural policies that should be truly innovative avoiding old discourses which have been proven ineffective and even detrimental to the cultural development of regions. The need for effective lobbying was identified as an important part in this process.

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### **Workshop 3: (Regions of the Mind) Taking the Region to Europe (Jordi Pascual, Moderator)** Experiences of developing a regional platform for international cultural co-operation

Speakers: Sandor Koles, Carpathian Foundation and Jean Marc Liverato, Director, Danse Bassin Mediterranee

#### **Jordi Pascual**

There are different understandings of 'regions' geographically. There are supranational ones developing; others that are now defunct. There are dynamic changes happening through centralisation/decentralisation. In this climate, what are the hegemonic centres today. What is the position of the arts and cultural agents? How do they interact with imperial discourses?

#### **Sander Koles**

The Carpathian Foundation is a grant-giving organisation for local initiatives engaged in the preservation of cultural heritage across modern Hungary, Ukraine, Slovakia, Romania, and Poland. Founded by a US think tank organisation, it distributes eu800–900K each year. The

foundation's vision talks about '5 nations, one community', an ambitious one considering the difficulties in creating a sense of community among citizens of five countries. However, people in the region are certain about their shared Carpathian identity.

How to deal with a high percentage of minorities is an important issue to address within an enlarged Europe. EU authorities tend to bury their heads as it is such a large issue, and there seems to be a feeling that perhaps the Union was not prepared for such an influx of minority cultures.

### **Jean Marc Liverato**

Dance Bassin Mediterranee develops dance events in the Mediterranean region, encouraging professional opportunities for actors and dancers. But what precisely is the Mediterranean region? It's an ocean, but is also a fantasy space for Europeans. It is more of a border than a cultural space. It is a region characterised by a history of conflict, colonialism, co-operation projects and, most importantly, by the conflict between Israel and Palestine; the Lebanon, a state in civil war for over 10 years; and the Balkans next door. Mobility within the region is very difficult with visas nearly impossible to obtain. It is harder to move between Morocco and Algeria or for Palestinian artists to go to Lebanon or Syria or Egypt than it is for any of them to go to Paris.

European-Mediterranean co-operation is institutionally based and it has been having problems in recognising their own cultural diversity. In France for instance, the south is referred to as 'the Arabs', without recognising the huge range of minorities there, not just cultural but also religious. In Spain, the Moros (Arabs) are talked about in a negative, pejorative way. Italy is rejecting boats coming from Tunisia and sending them back. The migratory streams are difficult to manage, so European institutions have great difficulty defining their policy in this area.

In the area of culture, audio-visual, architecture and heritage programmes have been launched, but there are no programmes of support for the living arts. Dance Bassin Mediterranee took Culture 2000 and adapted it to its needs. However, there are no other programme tools for co-operation in the cultural field among Mediterranean countries. Additionally, there are problems in that the institutions of southern countries don't have the resources to organise themselves nor can they legally operate on their own since they need the support of the state. Copyright doesn't exist and it is against the law to create an association of artists or individuals.

The above scenario raised very specific questions as to the role of culture and of European regions in breaching the issues exposed. One suggestion from the audience involved making changes to the Culture 2007 programme since the proposal for the new phase would make any co-operation with countries outside the participating countries much more difficult. It was pointed out that under Culture 2000 and previous programmes, the participation of regions or countries outside the union was possible and their costs were paid. However, under the new Culture 2007 programme all application partners must be from EU member countries making it impossible therefore for non-EU countries to participate.

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## **Theme: Regions of Policy**

**Workshop 1: (Regions of Policy) Current approaches to regional cultural policy (Chris Torch, Moderator)** Reporting and Reflecting on the EFAH research into regional structures.

Speakers: Christopher Gordon, cultural consultant; Dr Peter Ungar, EC DG Regional; Mireille Pongy, researcher, CNSR in political science, PACTE-IEP, Paris

### **Peter Ungar**

Peter Ungar gave an overview of the European Structural Funds and their role, together with regional policy, as partners in cultural projects. The presentation was timely in light of the Commission's proposal of new regulations for 2007-2013 due for approval by the European Parliament in December 2005. The Structural Funds are the main tool of community action in terms of economic and social cohesion in the EU and one of its main objectives is to redress the main regional imbalances. Apart from a considerable amount of figures relating to the programme's distribution of funds, the presentation briefly described the different programmes within the Structural Funds, past and present, which mention culture in one way or another (for

further information on these please go to [www.europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy). This was followed by an introduction to some of the changes, which will take place in the next round of structural funds and the accompanying legal framework. Among the future developments, the objective of 'convergence' takes centre stage. This objective is understood by the new proposals as 'the promotion of natural and cultural assets as potential for the development of sustainable tourism, the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage in support of development.'

### **Chris Gordon**

Artists have generally always been internationalists in outlook. In today's complicated post-colonial and post-industrial Europe there is increasing recognition that we all have multiple personal and cultural identities. There is nothing to distrust more than politicians seeking to take refuge in national identity as a conclusive defining characteristic. In some ways it is a tragedy that an initial 'staging post' in the revival of the 'new democracies' – where the ethnic concentrations don't always correspond with the land borders – is the reassertion of an almost 19<sup>th</sup> century cultural notion of nationalism at a time when Western Europe finally is increasingly aware of a pragmatic need to move beyond it. The rhetoric around a Europe of the regions is now well established.

Cross-border cultural programmes, which are a by-product of networking primarily driven by politics are rarely dynamic in any recognisable artistic sense. For one thing the creative mind is rarely static and artists will always be more interested in the next challenge than in keeping pace with what they are likely to see as a slow and bureaucratically driven process. The real challenge is for the programmes devised between regions where there is some genuine shared cultural identity to allow for creative space on a dynamic timetable. Furthermore, there certainly is a real function for artists at the regional and local levels as commentators and critics in relation to the surrounding socio-economic development, even if they may not confine themselves to the local setting.

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There was a generalised sentiment after the end of Peter Ungar's presentation that the new round of Structural Funds will be a missed opportunity to address some of the most important aspects of inter-regional cultural co-operation treading as it does old ground. Chris Gordon's comments went some way to making explicit the schism between artists and politicians pointing out the gap between policy and practice in Europe today.

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### **Workshop 2: (Regions of Policy) Regional cultural policy in practice (Chris Torch, Moderator)** Contrasting experiences of regional cultural policy development.

Speakers: Greg Richards, Interarts, Barcelona; Christine Hamilton, Glasgow University

### **Greg Richards**

Cultural tourism has been one of the major growth areas in global tourism in recent years. However, the amount of research on cultural tourism has not kept pace with the growth of the market. One of the reasons for the lack of research is the diversity of culture consumed by tourists, which makes being precise about the definition of 'cultural tourism' difficult. All tourism activities involve some element of culture, whether it be a visit to a specific cultural site or event, or simply soaking up the 'atmosphere' of a destination from a pavement café. On one level there is a temptation to see all tourism as cultural tourism. This was essentially the approach taken by WTO and UNESCO in developing their 'broad' definition of cultural tourism in 1985, which includes *'all movements of persons because they satisfy the human need for diversity, tending to raise the cultural level of the individual and giving rise to new knowledge, experience and encounters'*.

WTO also proposed a 'narrow' definition, which covered *'movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art, and pilgrimages'*. The key phrase in this definition is that cultural tourism involves 'essentially cultural motivations'. Not all cultural consumption by tourists is stimulated by cultural motivations – many trips to cultural events and attractions have culture as a secondary objective. If it rains, sun and sand tourists may forsake the beach for the museum. Tourists on a city break may stumble across a local festival during an exploratory walk. These 'accidental' cultural tourists may be very different in terms of motivation and behaviour from those 'culture vultures' that set out from home with the intention of consuming specific cultural manifestations.

These ambiguities about the form and content of cultural tourism go a long way towards explaining the widely differing estimates of the scope of the cultural tourism market. Research statistics vary enormously depending on what is being measured and when people are interviewed.

### **Christine Hamilton**

Christine presented research about regional cultural policy in a rural context conducted in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland by the Centre for Cultural Policy Research, University of Glasgow. Looking first at the economic strategy framework for the Highlands and Islands she showed how cultural and social measures have been included from the beginning.

A strong link between culture and enterprise has been developed with the stress on strengthening communities, building confidence and encouraging enterprise rather than on the culture/urban regeneration link, which is often measured in terms of number of jobs created or the amount of impact on cultural tourism. There is an official acknowledgement by Scottish Enterprise that people who take pride in their background are likely to be more self confident and therefore more enterprising.

She then focussed on the effects of this policy on delivery. The research looked at ways of creating greater access, developing the infrastructure and supporting the work. As a result, Hi-Arts, an arts development company, has been established, which works with artists and arts organisations on the distribution of cultural products.

There are lessons to be learnt for cultural planning in urban areas from these studies, which could be applied to the development in of other rural areas of the European Community with similarly low population levels.

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Mr Richards' speech tried to describe the current trend to narrow the discussions about cultural policies to aspects of cultural tourism and their contribution to economic development. Although, clearly a topic of interest to cultural producers, there was disappointment among participants who felt the European Union tends to mainly think of the arts and culture in terms of their economic outputs, rather than their contribution to personal and community development.

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**Workshop 3: (Regions of the Policy) Regional festivals and Capitals of Culture (Chris Torch, Moderator)** Approaches to region-wide cultural development. (*This workshop concentrated on discussing the Capitals of Culture programme and its relevance in the current political climate within the EU. Despite the name of the workshop there was no discussion on regional festivals.*)

Speakers: Robert Palmer, cultural consultant; Anne-Marie Autissier, University of Paris.

### **Robert Palmer**

Robert spoke about Capitals of Culture and Cultural Festivals. In his recently completed report on the subject for the European Commission he has collected general trends (volume 1) and case studies from the last 15 years (volume 2). There is, he maintained, an epidemic of capitals of culture. In his highly amusing and characteristically insightful, slightly tongue in cheek presentation, he made many very serious points.

- Many of the Capitals of Culture have been more about managing mythologies. Realities are often transformed by the myths that grow up around them. Some directors suffer from delusions of grandeur. And despite millions of euros most host cities have been left unchanged.
- Culture has not been the primary motive of many of the capitals. Instead, motives such as re-imaging the city, the re-election of the mayor and improving the local airport have topped the list of some. They found little evidence of a creative, inventive promise.
- The concept of European Cultural Capital itself is slippery, with each of the words - *European; Cultural; & Capital* - being fraught with problems.
- There is always a contest for ownership and conflicts of interest (boards of management, staff & teams, cultural institutions, artists) leading to the setting of multiple agendas that are never reconciled.
- Capitals of Culture suffer from having too many competing priorities. Everybody has to be happy: communities, migrants, embassies.
- There are too many projects and an insistence that high, middle and low culture be represented.

Robert went on to point out several other problems revealed by the case studies. There is often a problem with inflated rhetoric such as that used by Lille, which stated that their cultural year would 'change the fabric of time'. The long-term sustainability of any changes that happen in a community is doubtful. The need is for sufficient finance to follow through. Instead there is seldom money to follow up on the international contacts made.

Some critical success factors could be identified: There is a necessity to be selective and be clear about what the cultural programme will contain. Instead, a sort of cultural isomorphism is developing and all of the programmes are beginning to look exactly alike.

€2 billion have been spent on the cultural capitals (Lille, euro 74 Million) and no proper evaluation has been undertaken. Most of this expenditure has come from local or national government, 13% from private sources and 1.1% from the EU. Every city that takes up the challenges believes it will be different, but the study shows that the same mistakes are made over and over. The programme can offer an unprecedented catalyst for change though very few have taken up that challenge. Most people think that the capitals ought to continue. Robert Palmer counselled that there should be some changes, if they are to continue. He reminded us that the Chinese character for risk means both opportunity and danger.

### **Anne-Marie Autissier**

Anne Marie had been invited to criticise Robert's points so she focussed on three things: First, on the participation of the EU in the cultural cities programme. If they are so bad about the whole process, why ask them to take the lead? Second, the regional cities that have taken up the role of cultural capital have had an effect on the whole region. Wouldn't it be good to make a proposal to the effect that the main priority should be to produce a good cultural programme? The festivities need not always be in national capitals but instead they could be in regional centres that have the best idea for a cultural programme. Third, there was an issue raised that too many artists are being invited from outside of Europe. Why not? All cities want to be global players. European Capitals of Culture should not be the spearheads of European propaganda; and they should be celebrations of cities rather than of European 'capitals'.

### **Theme: Regions of the Arts (Practice) (moderated by Mary Ann De Vlieg)**

**Workshop 1: (Regions of the Arts) EU support for Regional Cultural Co-operation (Mary Ann De Vlieg, Moderator)** The region and arts practice. Successes and failures.

Speakers: Victor Curcurull, Fusic, Barcelona; Yvonne Rock, independent producer, Sweden; Aneta Szylak, director, Wyspa Foundation, Gdansk.

### **Victor Cucurull**

Fusic is the organisation in Catalonia that 'manages its cultural resources'. Catalonia has the status of an autonomous community within Spain. More importantly, it is a 'nation without a state' and hence an entity without external political representation. Fusic works to ensure the 'cultural health of Catalonia's social fabric' by facilitating projects where the training of young artists and cultural operators is a priority, particularly in the use of new technologies.

Fusic was used in this session as an example to argue that the regional level is, and will become increasingly important in Europe, as it is this level, which can be 'grasped' by citizens, rather than the distant 'state'.

### **Aneta Szylak**

The Wyspa Progress Foundation in Gdansk, Poland, is an independent organisation running projects of contemporary visual culture in the shipyard of the city. Due to the situation of the public system of support for public arts in the country, the Wyspa Foundation lacks sufficient funding. Despite this lack of public support its programme independence is still hard to maintain.

The project addresses local people and the international arts community and it is housed in the former shipbuilders' apprenticeship hall, a symbolic place given that Solidarity launched the famous 1980 strike there. Wyspa presents a wide range of artists that engage with the history of the place and offer alternatives to the official representation of memory. A recent arts project was a workshop on whistling at work, which explored alternative economies and societies.

The concept of the region did not figure in Aneta's presentation, emphasising instead the international scope of the project run by Wyspa, even though its audience and subject matter is mainly made up of local people,

### **Yvonne Rock**

The production of a folk music version of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* was the subject of an artistic and academic collaboration between Sweden and Norway.

Described as 'collaboration with an art product in the middle' the project, with musicians from Sweden and singers from Norway, was intended to provide opportunities for the organisations to collaborate and reinforce the attraction of the region as well as creating a cultural brand of 'inner-Scandinavia'. The natural environment on both sides of the Norwegian-Swedish border in this region is very similar. In addition, there are established business links, the languages are similar, and there are similar themes in music.

The project created a lot of excitement in the community and a high level of involvement. Several factors were identified as having contributed to the success of the project such as quality, continuity, a firm knowledge base of the region, a good level of communication between the different parties involved as well as the ability to meet regularly. A question was raised as to whether this success and the ensuing product were due to the nature of the region or rather the shape of the collaborations.

### **Workshop 2: (Regions of the Arts) Regional Cultural Support (Mary Ann De Vleig, Moderator)** Exploring the mutual influence of art and region.

Speakers: Paul Collard, Visual Arts Consultant, UK; Lidia Makowska, Artistic Director, Baltic Seas Cultural Centre, Gdansk

### **Paul Collard**

Paul gave a passionate presentation about the role of culture in society. Having had to defend art, which was supposedly offensive given its sexually explicit nature, in the courts during his days at London's ICA (Institute of Contemporary Arts), Paul concluded that, there is a need to define the role of cultural spaces in expressing and defending diversity.

Finally, Paul talked about his work in Newcastle from 1993 for the 'Year of Visual Arts' (1996), and the 'Angel of the North Project' (a landmark steel sculpture by Anthony Gormley, located in Gateshead). Paul recounted how 'the Angel' had caused widespread public debate in the North East of England and became a crucial component in transforming the identity of the region. For three years, the Conservatives had campaigned on a 'stop the angel' platform, the key line of attack being that there were many more worthwhile ways of spending the money (schools, hospitals, etc). The true question underlying this debate, however, according to Paul, was whether the region had the capacity to change from a declining coal and steel producing region to a modern, dynamic, forward looking one. The virtues of 'the Angel' project were discussed everywhere, from the media to the pubs. Paul referred to the totality of these locations as the 'cultural space, which defines the region'. 'The Angel' had become a symbol of regional identity even recognised outside of the UK. In response to a question, Paul explained that he had some anticipation of the questions 'the Angel' might throw up, but that he hadn't known that it could play the full role it came to play. He said 'cultural change is painful and controversial. Art, which is lively, is controversial too'.

A number of speakers compared Paul Collard's account of the role of culture in the North East of England to the situation in Northern Ireland and wondered how the arts could be employed there as a force for healing. One Northern Irish participant, however, lamented that community arts had been 'taking risks for years in Northern Ireland', but that the seeds that had been planted couldn't germinate without the right political leadership. Paul Collard replied that the 'Angel of the North' had only been built after 20 years of preparatory work and that Northern Ireland similarly needed about 15 years of investment before the arts could have a perceivable effect on the political situation. Mik Flood commented that community arts in Northern Ireland needed to overcome their preoccupation with 'equalising the inequalities of cultural facilities'.

While Paul Collard told these 'stories' compellingly, he was more concerned with culture's societal role in general than the relationship between culture and regions. What seems to happen is that

big, visible, publicly funded arts projects, in an optimal scenario, become focal points of hope, and inspire the belief and the confidence for redefinition in the people of a place/region. This sets creativity free and instils courage for change, which is channelled into economic productivity.

### **Lidia Makowska**

The 'Ars Baltica' project for cultural cooperation in the 'Baltic Sea Region' was established 15 years ago, covering all fields of the arts; it sponsors artistic projects and is funded by 10 national ministries of culture. However, the 'Baltic Sea Region' is an artificial political concept. The idea to create a Baltic region and a Baltic identity emerged in 1989 as a means to overcome the isolation that the Soviet occupation had imposed. Culture was to play a huge role in this project, but ultimately Lidia concluded that the concept of the region, although it can help in formulating and implementing arts projects, couldn't be used to create a common identity.

The discussion that followed this presentation highlighted how diverse the notions of 'the region' are and how difficult it is to define them territorially. Some felt that regions are about the creation of new borders, which do not need to exist, whereas to others regional identities were mainly significant in touristic terms that do not take into account a whole array of factors that shape the identity of the region among the people who inhabit it.

**Workshop 3: (Regions of the Arts) Benefits of Regional Cultural Networking (Mary Ann De Vlieg, Moderator)** The relationship between the arts and the region: meaning, practice and vision.

Speakers: Martin Fritz, Festival der Regionen (Austria); Anne-Sophie Becker, Kulturbro (Malmo, Denmark); Annick de Ville, Director Les Halles de Schaerbeek, Brussels, Belgium

### **Annick de Ville**

Les Halles de Schaerbeek formed part of the network Trans EuropHalles, set up in 1983, and had European cooperation as its priority. Les Halles, focusing entirely on contemporary culture, aimed to 'participate in European artistic cooperation' rather than merely hosting/ staging art from elsewhere. Les Halles aimed to create cultural cooperation across the political boundaries in Brussels, itself a 'region' in the Belgian federal system. In particular, they offered tools to engage the francophone and the Flemish-speaking communities in dialogue. Through projects like Bruxelles Bravo, taking place in February 2005, local actors would be brought together for the first time since Brussels 2000, to create a united cultural dynamic in the Brussels region.

### **Anne-Sofie Becker**

Kulturbro (culture bridge) is a Swedish-Danish initiative for a bi-annual cultural event. It goes back to the idea of Lars Nietve to create a cultural bridge in addition to the physical bridge linking Denmark and Sweden. The focus of the initiative was a biennale of fine arts, music and dance, providing a regional event such as the Venice or Kassel Biennales. But the project would also provide a mapping of the area and a cultural topography. One result was that the Kulturbro office became a regional information centre on cultural events. The project folded, not because of a lack of success of the events but due mainly to political factors that undermined the integrity of the project.

### **Martin Fritz**

The *Festival of the Regions*, based in Upper Austria, is entirely about contemporary art and culture. The festival owes its existence to decentralised cultural funding, involving possible co-operations with Germany and the Czech Republic besides Austria in 2005, as well as liberal arts operators. Martin was keen to underline that he didn't accept the limitations of cross-border models of artistic cooperation considering them a step back from the international approach to which the arts have become accustomed. Accordingly, he emphasised that the regional/inter-regional work of the *Festival of the Regions* was based on existing collaborations, themselves based on shared needs or obsessions, voluntary in their nature, and organised around themes. Martin expressed his view that politics should follow the arts, not prescribe their forms of cooperation (e.g. the number of countries participating in a project as the EU does with its Culture programme).

There was a common feeling in the room after the presentation that EU programmes for cultural cooperation were too rigid, whereas the focus of cooperation projects should be on artistic content rather than formal requirements.

This last workshop resulted in a discussion not so much about the relationship between culture and regions, but between the arts and politics. Politics and policies that 'frame' the arts and set the conditions for their existence under public support systems; versus the arts' challenging of entrenched political situations, crossing political divides and defying the prescriptions of politics.

Speakers and participants spoke against the EU creating yet another format in which everyone would have to conform to prescribed formulae in order to be supported.

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## **Special Session on Turkey**

### **Turkey – The Challenge for Artists (Mik Flood, Moderator)**

Speakers: Vasif Kortun, Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Centre; Hulya Tannriover, academic and filmmaker; Emre Koyuncuoglu, choreographer; Mine Kaylan, performance artist living in the UK

Several Turkish arts practitioners talked about what it means to be an artist or an arts animator in their country today.

#### **Vasif Kortun**

Vasif gave an overview of the situation in Turkey. The coup of 1980 created a breach between the government and the cultural producers. Before that time there was an expectation that the state or government would support culture but, from 1980 onwards, private financial institutions took on support of the arts and culture. This long history of private support of the arts has meant that the Turkish state plays a very small role now in cultural support except through tourism and the reconstruction of historical sites.

#### **Hulya Tannriover**

Hulya works with a women's filmmaking co-operative. Turkey was one of the first countries to give women the vote, before France and Sweden. However, just like the rest of Europe there is still a great deal to do. She described the women's film festival and suggested that art has a huge role to play in helping the country combat the high rate of illiteracy still present in the country. The film co-operative works to improve the visibility of women in cinema through activities such as a festival and a chronicle of activities. The festival travels throughout the country and there are more women producers now, but she emphasised that there are deep issues that face women that must be solved before a real improvement will take place. Women do have bank accounts in Turkey, but many girls are not attending school. Despite the need to find sponsors for the projects, there is reluctance towards a total reliance on corporate support.

#### **Emre Koyuncuoglu**

Emre gave her picture of the theatre scene at the moment. There are still many state theatres but independent theatre practitioners have to participate in conventional theatre in order to survive. The spell of prosperity, which took place for a few years following the introduction of the system of municipal theatres, ended with the earthquake in 1994. This event changed everything and Emre and her colleagues began to work in the ruined towns taking puppet shows to those towns most affected by the disaster to great acclaim.

#### **Mine Kaylan**

Mine left Turkey in the late 60s. Her work is in education through experimental and live arts. The fact that many people have now travelled to Turkey has changed attitudes quite a lot. Mine reflected on some of the things that she thought might prejudice people regarding the accession of Turkey to the European Union and advocated the role of artists in clarifying things through their knowledge of collaboration and knowledge of energy exchange.

Questions were raised as to whether some sort of reverse migration might happen. Will the residents become the 'undesirables' given the influx of western cultural workers? There was a general feeling among the panellists that communication with the municipal authorities is improving. However, the authorities are still channelling any support or development in the service of tourism, particularly heritage tourism given the closed link established traditionally between the two. All agreed that there must be a change in this perception by accepting that contemporary culture can be as valuable as heritage in 21<sup>st</sup> century Turkey.

## Closing Session Observations

The high level of participation in this event served first and foremost to illustrate the confusion around the concept and meaning of 'region'. Do we mean sub-national, trans-national, trans-lingual? A critique of the use of the word 'region' was made. Is the very term useful or artificial?

We talked about regions of the mind, diasporas, regions of affinities. This can be helpful as a political concept, but perhaps less so as a cultural concept. The conference succeeded in problematising the notion, so no one can take it for granted any longer.

A region can be a territory with a strong sense of cultural belonging. Equally there can be regions sharing practically no sense of a common culture. As in the case of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais, which is an administrative, arbitrary border. However, as territories discover their economic interdependence, it was felt that they will also find it necessary to develop a cultural dimension.

We certainly questioned many of the regional ideas being put forward (cross-border, trans-lingual, etc) but people all seem to want something in terms of identity. Some people also pointed to the divisiveness of some regional formations, some of them take generations to heal. There was a fear that this concept of regions will format us. There will be another EU concept that shapes us rather than it being shaped by the realities of communities.

Regions still work in the sense that most people relate to a region-sized place. At a human level they remain one of the building blocks of how we function both in terms of identity and in terms of operation. EFAH should pick up on the concept some put forward about variable geometry. It should stand for variable geometry. We have in the membership and at the meeting a group of people with different perspectives and expectations that cannot be mapped or neatly tidied up by a bureaucratic solution from Brussels. What EFAH has to say is that needs and situations of cultural operators vary from place to place and that change is constant, but uneven.

EFAH should always be the voice for divergence and difference in the cultural mapping of Europe against governance systems, which tend to be inflexible and orderly.

Everything is more complicated than it might seem. No one size fits all. The attitude is not that it is 'a mess'. On the contrary, it is how we find different solutions. Different things work in different places. It doesn't mean that you don't have to have structures and systems. Of course you must, but it does mean that the structures that you do put in place should be time limited (after awhile systems distort things, so they must be overhauled every 5 years or so). We must therefore build structures with a degree of flexibility in them.

This is a pragmatic argument for diversity, which is not an ethical argument. Taking account of difference and divergence will offer more chances of finding solutions for our own pains and problems. These are also the messages for the networks to share with their members.

There was very little discourse about the problems of post-communist countries. These countries have very centralised governments and are therefore slow at inventing regions. This situation in turn makes it difficult for them to access European structural funds.

In the ultimate analysis, *Moving Territories: Culture in Europe of the Regions* proved to be a good topic. It invoked emotional responses and presented new perspectives. It was difficult to get into at first but in the end opened up some key understandings that were just below the surface. Speakers and participants alike agreed on the need to continue the debate at this crucial time for Europe and Europeans.

This report was prepared by a team of rapporteurs: General rapporteur: Jennifer Williams, Centre for Creative Communities, London; Workshop rapporteurs: Ruth Churchill Dower, Isaacs UK (workshop 1); Lore Schultz-Wild, European Writers' Congress, Munich (workshop 2); and Sabine Frank, EFAH (workshop 3). Editors, Antonio Molina Vazquez, Centre for Creative Communities (submitted February 2005), Mik Flood and Raj Isar for EFAH board (March 2005).