



IETM international network for contemporary performing arts

IETM Autumn Plenary Meeting Athens 2013

Manifesto

Greece is the cradle of European culture and democracy.

It is a European obligation and interest to secure that Greece continues to contribute to European culture and democracy by generating new ideas, voices, images, and sounds, as well as making its extraordinary heritage accessible to all.

We demand of the European governments and of the EU to guarantee that the condition imposed on Greece does not further impact the investments necessary to foster the cultural development of the country as well as the fulfillment of the universal human right to freely participate in cultural life, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancements and its benefits.

We demand of all Greek authorities, from national to local levels, to increase the public resources dedicated to cultural development, to guarantee absolute transparency with citizens the use and facilitation of public funds, to restore arts education in the class rooms, to invest in the independent arts scene, and to establish participatory protocols of exchange with all relevant actors.

We commit to making our voice heard all across Europe and we call on women and men, on institutions-organizations-enterprises, on all those who live for and through culture, to act, to unite, to organize and jointly strive to fulfill the human right to access to culture and science for each and all, everywhere in Europe and in the world.

Recommendations addressed to politicians, funders and other decision makers:

Arts is an essential part of our culture. The ancient Greek dramatists have shown us that art can support a transition into a democratic, resilient society. With this in mind, we urge you to:

- ° Reinstall the music and theatre lessons in the Greek schools - they are needed to recreate public awareness of the arts, as public demand is a prerogative for live art.
- ° Recognize artists are active citizens and accept them as your dialogue partners in decision making processes, firstly in decisions on arts and culture.
- ° Finance the organization of courses and workshops on arts management, advocacy, etc. for your arts professionals.
- ° Support the social function of places like Embros, and other artists driven actions that are reactivating democracy.
- ° Stop building new structures for the arts - Europe has enough buildings for the arts, but it desperately lacks support for the artists who fill them.
- ° Subsidize the arts, as it is essential to their continuation, especially live arts. There should additionally be tax incentives for those who support the arts as well as access to loans for artists.

Recommendations addressed to professionals in the performing arts, both in Greece and abroad:

- ° Continue repeating your arguments for why your art is important for society, while also being self-reflective and critical in your position.
- ° Rethink the relation to your funders - get out of the one-way and one-issue-power relation based on who's holding the money. Move away from complaining and towards smart partnerships with your funders.
- ° Research how the arts policy in Medellin, Colombia has transformed the city and utilize it as an argument.
- ° Find new allies outside of the cultural field in order to expand your scope, to gain important feedback, and to gain more advocates for the arts - in the corporate world, real estate developers/urban planners, human rights agencies and advocates, other NGO's, etc.
- ° Build cross-sector coalitions focused on defending improved quality of life as a common frame of discourse.
- ° Critically rethink your audience development strategies with the honest state of mind that none of them has worked so far and the arts is still falling short of actually reaching beyond a select group in society.
- ° Discuss what 'collective' means to you and organise workshops around collective thinking and working as ways to cooperate outside of top-down working structures.
- ° Working collectively can mean you either
 1. Equally share the responsibility for the work as well as credit for the results
 2. Accept that the one who invests the most time/energy will make the most decisions
 3. Or you collectively hire someone to support the work processes
- ° Create sustainable common spaces with a multidisciplinary approach – combining for example craftsmanship, small commercial enterprises, legal firms and so forth, while also making them central and accessible to local communities.
- ° Exploit the sense of guilt within the corporate world for how they have manipulated circumstances while also helping them to reconnect to culture.

° Crowd funding works only if it creates a crowd/a community – which is in fact the most valuable aspect of this tool. Try to shift your frame to what you have on offer or exchange as apposed to what you need.

° Research community-supported enterprises in agriculture as a possible model and inspiration for the cultural sector.

° Focus more on your local context: that is the future. In most countries the level of local funding for the arts is bigger than the national budget, as well as the fact that the local government is more accessible than national authorities. Above all this helps bringing you in closer contact with your local context.

° Develop *sharegiver* values instead of *shareholder* values - create p2p (peer to peer) exchange platforms for mutual exchange of time, products, creativity, craftsmanship and other types of (skill) sharing.

Technopolis, Athens - 19 October 2013