



THE WORLD SUMMIT ON ARTS AND CULTURE: KEYNOTES, PANELS AND ROUNDTABLES

Introduction

The fourth World Summit on Arts and Culture, a project of the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA), will take place in Johannesburg from 22-25 September, hosted by the National Arts Council of South Africa.

The Summit provides a unique opportunity for policy makers, funding agencies, development organisations, artists' networks, think tanks and multilateral cultural bodies to reflect on the state of the world and its implications for the arts over the next 3-5 years.

Such a global gathering allows for key debates to be initiated, for visionary ideas to be launched and for networks to be consolidated so that the Summit is not an end in itself, but a catalyst that will leave a lasting legacy for the arts globally, and for the African arts sector in particular.

South Africa has long been regarded as a microcosm of the world: a wealthy elite on the one hand and a huge underclass burdened by poverty on the other, with the inherent tensions further layered by racial and cultural conflicts. While the 'rainbow nation' is celebrated for having overcome apartheid, the xenophobic violence perpetrated against people from other African countries resonates with the rising nationalism in Europe and elsewhere, fearing the threat of 'other'.

It is an appropriate time and place for a global gathering on the Summit theme, *Meeting of Cultures: Creating Meaning through the Arts*. The programme's topics are intended to be provocative and stimulating in order to lead to fresh insights and to arrive at new possibilities.

By design, many of the speakers are not part of the mainstream conference circuit, but have been selected to give concrete expression to the implicit theme of cultural diversity. Through the meeting of diverse minds at the Summit, it is our intention that new meanings for and through the arts will be created.

This document outlines the topics and their related questions to enable delegates to choose which roundtables to attend.

Theme

The theme of the World Summit - *Meeting of Cultures: Creating Meaning through the Arts* – is deeply relevant in a post-cold war, and more particularly a post-9/11 world, increasingly divided by values, beliefs, religion, traditions and worldviews – in short, by culture.

At the same time, the collapse of communism has seen rapid globalisation through economic integration that threatens diversity and potentially hegemonizes the interests of economically powerful nations. In this context, the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions has emerged as an instrument to affirm diversity.

The arts – music, theatre, dance, literature, film, visual arts, etc – are seen by some as possible bridges between cultures, as safe, non-threatening points of entry into understanding ‘other’ and as facilitators of ‘intercultural dialogue’.

The keynote sessions, panel and roundtable discussions are intended to interrogate the relationship between the arts on the one hand and on the other, the apparent political and social imperative to build intercultural communities at local, national and international levels.

Aims

The aims of the programme are

- a. to stimulate debate and provoke new thinking to inform policy making that seeks to address contemporary global and national challenges, particularly as these relate to intercultural, cross-cultural or multicultural relationships
- b. to help build relationships, networks and partnerships that will advance the themes and ideas initiated at the Summit and
- c. to provide practical examples of the theme in action i.e. facilitating a meeting of cultures through the arts

WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER

09:00-10:30 Keynote session (Plenary)

Sword or ploughshare? Bridge or dynamite?: the arts as vehicles for intercultural dialogue

Implicit in the Summit theme, is the role of the arts as a bridge across cultural divides. Yet, the arts can also play a divisive role, reinforcing cultural faultlines as shown by the literature of Salman Rushdie or movies that spark protests by groups who believe their culture is being undermined or the drawings of a Danish cartoonist that ridicule religious icons. What effect will the political imperative and the need for social cohesion across cultural divides have on the arts if they are burdened with facilitating intercultural dialogue? To make the world a safe place, are public authorities and societies demanding ‘safe’ art?

11:00-13:00 Panel Discussion (Plenary)

Instrumentalisation of the arts in ‘the national interests’: is intercultural dialogue worth conscripting the arts?

Many artists hate being – or feeling - conscripted for any cause, even ones they believe in. If they are to use their creative skills and experience for ‘the public good’, then they want to choose to do this, or not. On the other hand, politicians, government officials, development agencies and public funding bodies often give the impression that when artists or arts projects are supported with public funds, they may be expected – legitimately - to align their creative work with the ‘national interests’, as defined by those who inhabit political power at the time. In an increasingly security-conscious world in which culture is one of the roots of global tensions, is it acceptable for artists to be ‘conscripted’ in the cause of intercultural dialogue?

14:00-16:00 Roundtable discussions

This session will comprise ten roundtable discussions on particular themes that tease out the conference theme in more detail. Each session will generally have at least two speakers to address the theme before a general discussion takes place.

1. Freedom of Expression versus Cultural Sensitivity

Freedom of expression is a basic tenet of mature democracies. Practice of the arts is premised on the right to freedom of creative expression. Yet, sometimes an artist’s exercising of this right, conflicts with the status quo’s need to draw in new audiences, to integrate immigrant communities into the cultural mainstream. For what may be freedom of expression for some e.g. nudity, mocking religious icons, foul language, may be offensive to others. How is society to manage freedom of expression on the one hand and on the other, the need to integrate communities into the cultural mainstream that may be offended by some artistic expressions of freedom?

2. Can the arts market promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue?

With the rise of the cultural industries over the last twenty-five years, vast amounts of resources, energy and policy are being invested in the continued growth of this sector. In developing countries, the cultural industries are being touted as potentially key drivers of development, sustainable jobs and the reduction of poverty. To counter the culturally homogenising effects of globalisation, the creative industries are being promoted in less resourced countries to project alternative ideas and values into and through the world market of creative goods and services. The creative industries require markets, people with disposable income to purchase the creative goods on offer. But what if the arts market does not want art that facilitates intercultural dialogue? What if there is no market for local goods because of poverty and a lack of disposable income? Can the creative industries and the arts market really protect cultural diversity and promote intercultural dialogue?

3. *Traditional culture versus modernity*

The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions affirms the right of all communities to practise the culture of their choice. But while this appears to be the progressive view, there is an inherent tension between respecting ‘traditional’ cultures that may oppress women, ostracise homosexuals and frown on democracy, and western cultures that emphasise the rights of all, gender equality and non-discrimination no matter one’s sexual orientation. Can traditional and modern cultures co-exist? Who decides when some aspects of traditional cultures need to be jettisoned? Why is it assumed that the cultural values and practices of ‘developed’ societies are better than those of ‘traditional’ societies?

4. *Specialised arts funding for ‘other’: perpetuation of ghetto or necessary for empowerment?*

Many public funding agencies have policies to support artistic practice within marginalised or minority communities – indigenous people, immigrants, women, etc. Some argue that this allows artists from these communities to stand a better chance to access funding, or to allow for a period of ‘development’ till they are able to compete on equal terms with those who have been resourced over a longer period. Others argue that this perpetuates the ghetto, and creates a kind of neo-apartheid with ‘other’ being treated as a separate entity. Given the increasingly heterogeneous composition of societies, what are the best funding models to promote nation-building, social cohesion and intercultural dialogue?

5. *Surviving the global recession and its impact on intercultural dialogue*

When there is an economic crisis, often one of the first sectors to be faced with funding cuts is the arts sector. Yet, while there is an economic crisis, there is also a parallel cultural crisis for which some would appropriate the arts as a facilitator of intercultural dialogue, and a bridge between different cultural communities. What is the real impact of the recent global recession on the arts and on intercultural dialogue, if any? How can the arts and the cultural diversity agenda survive and even grow despite the current economic climate?

6. *The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions: a bold new instrument or just another document?*

At least since the advent of the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations, the world has been full of beautifully written, well-intentioned Conventions, Declarations, Treaties and other documents spelling out how countries and human beings should manage their relationships with each other. Yet, this has not stopped wars, eliminated hunger or conferred human rights and human dignity on even the majority – let alone all – of humanity. Is the UNESCO Convention just another document? Or does it have strategic and real value in a world order that remains structurally inequitable?

7. *Economic and power relations between the north and the south: the meaning for cultural exchange and co-operation*

Structurally, the world economic order is fundamentally unequal. To facilitate intercultural dialogue, cultural exchange, co-operation between the north and the south in the field of the arts, requires resources. Often, these resources are made available by wealthier countries, so that there is an inherent problem with

power relations. Who sets the terms for cultural exchange? How possible is it for recipients to engage in cultural exchange on equal terms with the donor? How possible is it to pursue intercultural dialogue globally within such a fundamentally inequitable situation between partners in this dialogue?

8. *'Culture is integral to development.'* What development? Whose culture?

In the post-colonial period, models of development created in western democracies that provided aid, more often than not, failed as they did not take account of the culture – the values, traditions, social relations, religious beliefs – of the intended beneficiaries of development. In this context, the mantra that 'culture is integral to development' has gained momentum over the last few decades, giving hope to artists in developing countries that this would provide a rationale for support for the arts which are generally regarded as luxuries in the face of other developmental priorities. But is 'culture' being conflated with 'the arts' in this approach? Where is the concrete evidence of development rooted in culture? Are democracy and the free market ends, or the means of development? Then why is Libya, not a democracy and not a free market economy, rated the highest African country on the Human Development Index? And is the emphasis on 'creative industries' as drivers of development – ironically – detrimental to the arts generally which are then viewed only for their utilitarian, economic value?

9. *Developing culturally diverse audiences: unsustainable political imperative or crucial to the survival of the arts?*

Many countries dealing with the growth of 'multicultural' societies or that fear the potential threat posed by immigrant communities who remain on the margins of society, are embarking on programmes to integrate minority or marginalised cultural communities into the mainstream. One such strategy is to make mainstream cultural institutions – museums, theatres, galleries, etc – more accessible to such communities through cheaper tickets, free transport, relevant programming. Some argue that this is not just about building 'safer' societies, but also to ensure the sustainability of the arts by developing new audiences. But how sustainable is this approach? How long can such strategies be funded before dividends are evident? Is this even the right approach? Is this what minority, marginalised cultural communities want?

10. *So what can the 'Rainbow Nation' teach the world about intercultural dialogue?*

South Africa has been hailed as the miracle nation after the victory over apartheid and the peaceful transition towards a non-racial democracy. Archbishop Desmond Tutu coined the 'rainbow nation' phrase to refer to a country with formerly divided communities, now seeking to build a common future across racial and cultural barriers. Yet, in the last 15 years, the racial and cultural faultlines hover just below the rainbow nation's skin, and sometimes explode e.g. in the form of xenophobic violence against fellow Africans from Somalia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe...What can this microcosm of the world teach the world about race and cultural relations? Anything?

THURSDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

09:00-10:30 Keynote session (Plenary)

Cultural Diversity: Essential for World Peace or the Root of all Conflict?

The prevailing assumption is that cultural diversity is a good thing, that it needs to be nurtured, that in a globalised world, it is imperative to counter homogenisation and protect difference. And yet, differences in culture – values, religious beliefs, histories, traditions, social relations, etc – appear to be at the root of many of the major crises (or at least compound these when the roots are economic or social inequality). Is cultural diversity really the end we should be striving for, or is it potentially the end of us all?

11:00-13:00 Panel Discussion (Plenary)

Intercultural dialogue through the arts: models of good practice

Intercultural dialogue is the new buzz phrase, at least in the creative sector of western democracies. But what does it mean? What is its intended purpose? And how do the arts fit in? IFACCA, in association with Ericarts, has been conducting global research in this area. This panel will outline some of the major findings of the research and present case studies of good practice from different continents.

14:00 Roundtable discussions

While the previous day's roundtable sessions dealt with theoretical issues related to the primary Summit themes, these roundtable discussions are about 'big' ideas; ideas that can be interrogated at the World Summit with the range of experience and expertise present, and which can potentially be launched into practice after the Summit.

1. *Regional/Continental Funds for the Arts*

Europe has a Culture Fund that traverses national boundaries. The Arab Fund for Arts and Culture provides funding for projects in the Arab World. The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions calls for an international fund to support the creative industries in the developing world. The Arterial Network has undertaken research into the establishment of an African Fund for Arts and Culture to promote the arts of the continent where public support for the arts in many countries is absent. What is the desirability and viability of such transnational funds? Could an African Fund for Arts and Culture gain further impetus at the Summit, and one day be counted as one of its legacy projects?

2. *Cultural capitals as a means of cultural development*

The European Cultural Capital project has had many positive impacts for the cities that have won this status (inner city regeneration, cultural tourism, image-building, etc). It has also left great legacies for the arts in building or consolidating infrastructure, developing expertise, growing a resource base, extending audiences and markets, and facilitating cultural exchange and cooperation. Could this model be extended to other continents? Asia? South America? Africa? Might there be a case for an 'international cultural capital'?

3. *Alternative arts financing: micro-finance lending models*

Traditionally, the arts have relied on funding from public sector agencies like arts councils or sponsorship from the private sector. With the increasing emphasis on the creative industries and with the arts sector characterised by micro- and small-enterprises, are there other models of financing that could grow the resource pool and build greater sustainability? For example, is micro-finance lending an option in the arts sector? What skills or partnerships might need to be developed to access such resources? Is this just a national concern or can international connections be made between resource providers of the north and cultural industries in the south?

4. *Art in Conflict and Post-Conflict Zones*

The arts and artists can't change situations necessarily, but artists can highlight issues creatively, and high profile artists can draw worldwide attention to particular situations. What role can the arts play in conflict zones like the Middle East? Pakistan and India? Zimbabwe? What possibilities exist for an international Artists' Task Force that responds to cultural conflicts and helps – at least - to raise international awareness?

5. *Networking and information sharing in a globalised, yet divided world*

As a sector with notoriously limited resources, the arts increasingly need to work together, to network, to share resources, skills and information in order to be effective at national, regional and international levels. What regional and transnational networks exist? How are they supported? What are the best sources of information at the moment about the arts globally and on each continent? What further networks need to be established? How can the leadership of networks be strengthened? Can networks survive without funding? What are the ways in which information can be further collected and disseminated to catalyse informed action? What are the challenges? What are the possibilities?

6. *Mobility of artists: towards global market access*

Integral to cultural exchange, intercultural dialogue and accessing international markets for cultural goods and services, is the need for artists to travel with relative ease. However, there are numerous obstacles to artists' mobility including the high costs of travel, the difficulties in obtaining visas, the rising nationalism that simply makes it uncomfortable for artists from the south to travel to the north. How can the mobility of artists be enhanced, pragmatically, in a recessionary, security-conscious, xenophobic world?

7. *Arts education, intercultural relations and social cohesion*

The popular wisdom is that building multicultural, integrated societies starts with the younger generation, with school-going age groups who, by being educated and playing together, will organically grow to be a mature multicultural society that works and plays together. The older generation is considered too conservative, too set in its ways to change, although the idealists continue to strive to effect such change. And yet, various studies have shown that conflict in the school playground often reflects the cultural tensions of society at large. What successful models of arts education exist that facilitate greater intercultural awareness and build social cohesion?

8. Intercultural dialogue through the arts: exchanging ideas for strategies

This session will continue the themes and ideas initiated during the earlier panel discussion, allowing for a more intimate and in-depth discussion and exchange of strategies that could result in greater post-Summit co-operation in this area.

9. Managing and monitoring global arts and culture policies

Various collections of arts and culture policies have come into existence over the last number of years, providing important resources for governments and researchers to learn from the cultural policies of other countries, for artists' lobbies to use to advocate in their interests, and simply to provide databases of reports and ideas about the development of cultural policy in various regions. Yet, given the varied levels of resources and expertise in different regions, the collection, management, comparative analysis and development of cultural policies – not least in support of multilateral instruments to which many countries have signed up – is inconsistent. This session will explore the structures and methodologies that currently exist, identify future needs and seek to find ways to link up the various initiatives for continued co-operation after the Summit.

10. Arts advocacy: methods, means and measures

Campaigns to promote the arts have been tried in many countries as IFACCA's recent research reveals. Who should be the target of such campaigns and what should they hope to achieve? What can policymakers and artists learn from each other to have greater impact? Do we need a new approach? What are the key issues for artists outside of the Summit's themes? What are the perspectives of artists – as opposed to policy-makers and funders – on these issues? What are the challenges and the possibilities for artists across the globe and regionally to work together to lobby in their collective interests? How can artists networks link up with each other and work together?

FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER

09:00-10:30: Keynote session

Saving the Arts...so the Arts can save the World

High profile figures in the entertainment industry – Bono, Bob Geldof, Susan Sarandon, etc – play important roles in using their celebrity to advance particular causes from raising funds for victims of natural disasters or to focus attention on conflicts such as the one in Darfur.

But the arts themselves are under pressure in various countries, particularly in the developing world. Should artists spend at least as much time 'Saving the Arts' so that the arts – and artists – can help to save the world (or some parts of it!)?