Cultivating and Safeguarding Inclusive Cultural Havens: Diversify, Embrace, and Heighten Awareness

Breaking away from structures and ideas imposed by colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism is a necessity. Wondering how to use cultural expression as a form of resistance and empowerment for Black people, women, and queer people cannot be ignored. Standing against any type of discrimination is absolutely essential to be able to create safe spaces within independent culture. Recognising privileges and standing as allies to every fight aiming at tearing down systemic injustices must be at the centre of independent cultural activities.

Summary

Europe's cultural landscape has entered a phase of transition, the harbinger of a new era. This break with the past, which took a tangible hold around the time of the global pandemic, reflects not only the difficulty of leaving behind the codes and social fabric of the 'cultural world as we knew it,' but also the yearning to look ahead to a new horizon in a context marked by accelerating climate change, ultra-violent geopolitical upheavals, and the mounting sense of conflict, even within democratic societies.

Editorial

Reset! Network:
An Age of Alliances

A polarised and weakened common perspective

Culture has entered a period of doubt, of uncertainty, of feverish introspection about its meaning, its generational misunderstandings, its many tensions, and about the new forms of mistrust that it had previously overlooked.

The pressure weighing down on culture as a result of the paradigm shifts inherent in its day-to-day deployment is just as crippling: **radical transformation of our relationship with work**, new forms of mobility, reassessment of spaces and territories, the evolving role of mediation, upheavals linked to the rapid pace of technological development and the countless ethical questions it spawns.

Culture is confronted with the many issues that are on a head-on collision course with society, fuelling polarisation and the **growing radicalisation of interactions, leading to a breakdown of dialogue, of the shared perspective, and of the collective adventure**, complicating and eroding culture's primary mission, which is to open minds, nurture dialogue, create conditions conducive to listening and interacting with others.

The threat of authoritarianism, the threat of concentration

Culture is under pressure from its social context and from the sense of "permanent crisis" that pervades our age. But it is also, more than ever, intimidated by its economic and political environment. More than ever, culture and the media are victims of **full frontal attacks from authoritarian regimes that**

deny and sometimes flout their artistic, cultural, and editorial independence. More than ever, independent culture and media are struggling to survive in a hyper-concentrated competitive world, where the growing power of the web, publishing, media, or music industry giants means shrinking margins of manoeuvre for pluralism and diversity.

Independent cultural ecosystems are fragile and under threat in many parts of Europe. Yet they are essential to democratic and social vitality, in particular to equip up-and-coming generations for the transformations our world is screaming out for: capacity for action and transformation, social and environmental responsibility, the fight against discrimination, pluralism and diversity, safeguarding freedom of creation and expression, strengthening media education, inclusion, regeneration, equal access to culture and the media, but also access to their production.

Forging new alliances

Confronted with these challenges, the turmoil of our times, authoritarian regimes and the growing concentration of capital in the culture and media sectors, a strategy of massive cooperation is held up as the only possible response.
It has become not only strategic, but imperative, to connect the players, foster the sharing of resources, knowledge and tools, promote collective intelligence and the forms of governance that encourage it, work in networks and join forces.
The time has come to imagine new ways of forging alliances between cultural players and independent media, but also with all those working in the general interest, particularly in the public sector in the fields of education, youth, the media, and health: the public broadcasting service, universities, local authorities.

This is what the Reset! network is all about. It endeavours to adopt a Europe-wide, non-sectoral approach to bring together cultural structures and independent media, but also to bring on board general interest resource hubs (Consentis, Black Artist Database, Observatoire des politiques culturelles, ACT RIGHT, and others), as well as local authorities willing to support the movement and serve as testing grounds for new practices (City of Lyon, City of Brussels).

The Reset! network brings together cultural structures and independent media to give them a platform to get better acquainted, enter into dialogue, work, and act together.

Common atlas

The Reset! network is doing just that, working from Budapest to Lisbon, from Kyiv to Prishtina, from Amsterdam to Naples, to bring together cultural structures (concert halls, festivals, publishing houses, labels, etc.) and independent media to give them a platform to get better acquainted, enter into dialogue, work, and act together. To build their common approach to transformation, these 85 organisations first focused on their local area and local issues: for just over a year, dozens of workshops were organised across the continent to take the pulse of independent European cultural

ecosystems.
Today, the time has come for an initial pooling of this feedback. This is the purpose of this atlas and its volumes, built collectively around eight themes that emerged during the year's meetings: "Independent culture in times of adversity", "Ecological commitment in the independent sector", "Enlarging communities in culture: the need for common spaces rooting in independence", "Imbalances in territories representation: independent structures to counterbalance a hyper-centralised cultural and media field", "Connecting to the youth: maintaining intergenerational links, enhancing emergence", "Creating and preserving safe spaces: diversify, include and raise awareness", "Decentralising digital power in culture: let's talk about MAGMA alternatives", "The concentration or independence antithesis".
This material, which captures the zeitgeist and the changes taking place in the cultural sector, will serve as the foundations for our advocacy and transformation tools. A few months away from a high-risk European election, and in a context where it is in serious danger of disappearing from the programme priorities, the Reset! network and its members will take it upon themselves to highlight the essential role of culture, the media, their independent ecosystems, and their artistic and editorial integrity, in this period of essential social and democratic reconstruction that has only just begun.

February 2024

Editorial

Vincent Carry has been Managing Director of the Arty Farty association since 2002, supporting the development of the Nuits sonores festival in Lyon, the Sucre club, the Hôtel71 creative hub and the HEAT food court. In 2023, he was appointed chairman of the Gaîté Lyrique cultural institution in Paris, bringing together a consortium comprising ARTE, Singa, makesense and Actes Sud.

Under their opinion

The independent cultural landscape stands as a crucial arena for fostering safer spaces that challenge and dismantle various forms of discrimination. In this column piece, we delve into the imperative of countering discrimination in all its nuanced dimensions, through the necessary notion of safer spaces. The independent cultural sphere plays a pivotal role in driving social change, and as we explore the vibrant tapestry of voices within these spaces, we aim to shed light on the pressing need to create environments that embrace and amplify the richness of cultural experiences while rejecting prejudices that limit our collective environment.

What Do We Mean When We Talk About Safer Spaces?

In the last decade, global movements such as #MeToo, #TimesUp, and #BlackLivesMatter made visible the structural and systemic sexism, racism, classism, ableism that are embedded in western-based public lives and hegemonic social systems. In the 21st century, online political activism increased the public debates about the rights of women, queer people, and racialised communities contributing to democratic and wide discussions of topics that previously were confined to specific academic scholarships (namely, feminist, queer and subaltern studies). The increased public awareness about the weight of oppression systems on the perpetuation of intersectional inequalities is influencing small changes on laws, governmental policies or, at least, political commitment, action plans, and public funding opportunities. However, these changes tend to be slow, and the opportunities limited due to the centralised and hierarchical bureaucratic mechanisms of formal policies and enterprises. Moreover, these processes of societal change find several resistances from political and business actors who represent the privileged white cis-hetero-patriarchal supremacy.

In this social context, grassroots organisations play a central role as social innovators by designing and experimenting, in real time, new practices and organisational models which are responsive to diversity and committed with social justice. Cultural independent organisations tend to be early adopters of emerging libertarian social norms, moralities, equitable attitudes, and behaviours. They act as trendsetters influencing, mobilising, and inspiring change among others, particularly, among young people. For this reason, grassroots contexts as festivals, clubs, music venues, theatres, magazines, bookshops, art galleries, cultural centres can be considered relevant laboratories or spaces of praxis, able to create bottom-up transformative processes and generate social changes. As social and (informal) learning environments that increasingly thrives on diversity, intersectionality, and individuality,

Cristiana Vale Pires is an intersectional feminist, anti-prohibitionist, and ally of queer, anti-racism, and other social justice movements. She is a researcher at the Centre for Human Development Research (CEDH) and a lecturer at the Faculty of Education and Psychology of the Portuguese Catholic University (FEP-UCP). She is a founding member at Kosmicare, an organisation with experience in collaborating with music festivals and nightlife environments in the planning and implementation of harm reduction and safer space policies. She has also designed and coordinated the European Project Sexism Free Night and developed gender-responsive models of care to implement in large-scale festivals.

several organisations and collectives are trying to define and implement "safer space" policies and practices.

The use of "safer" instead of "safe spaces", expresses the impossibility of guaranteeing a complete sense and experience of safety for all the people that will attend a specific context. Instead, "safer" focuses our attention on the threshold organisational practices and measures intentionally implemented to guarantee a social environment which is responsive to diversity, to social discrimination, and inequalities.

In this text, we will explore the importance of creating safer spaces in cultural grassroots organisations and the positive impact they may have in our rapidly evolving global landscape.

Defining safer spaces

Safer spaces can be defined as environments where individuals of all backgrounds, identities, and experiences can participate in cultural, artistic, or social activities, expressing themselves, connecting with others, exchanging ideas, and engaging in open dialogue without fear of discrimination, harassment, or harm. These are usually described as welcoming spaces designed to foster inclusivity, celebrate diversity, promote a sense of belonging for everyone involved and nurture the rich tapestry of human polyculture. But what does it mean in practice? Is implementing anti-harassment policies for their clients/visitors all it takes for a specific venue to be considered a safer space?

It is not enough to guarantee that everyone is safe. We need, indeed, more than welcoming spaces for those who attend them, independently of their identities and social backgrounds. At this point, it's worth to highlight that the hyper-centralisation on safety when planning safer spaces, is simplistic and may contribute to the crystallisation of power relations.

There is a real risk of reproducing the "savior complex", framing specific social individuals and groups uniquely as "victims" and confining them in overprotection dynamics that fail to consider their agency. Safer spaces' policies and practices must me emancipatory and prioritise individual and collective care, self-determination, well-being, and empowerment. Additionally, safer spaces policies must be applied to all the organisational structure and their ecosystem –the work environment, the labour relations, the power dynamics and leadership, the ethics and values, the budgeting, price and payment policies, the relation with service providers and suppliers, the representativeness in the team and cultural products, among others. Safer spaces, are environments where all the people involved feel valued, respected, represented and heard, and where they can express their thoughts and emotions without judgment or discrimination. For this reason, it is reductive to define or imagine safer spaces uniquely as physical locations. On the one hand, the infrastructure depends on the resources that a specific organisation have. On the other hand, we need more than a comfortable environment with anti-harassment policies to feel safe to enjoy and to explore our human

↑ Illustration for the Sexism Free Night project. It was created to express safety, diversity, fluidity, and freedom on the dancefloor. Illustrator: Nicolau

safer

potential. Above all, safer spaces are emotional and relational spaces where care and mutuality are affirmed as key-dimensions in the promotion of inclusive well-being and sustainable cultural activities. They are also political spaces, that intentionally give a stage for affirming, disseminating, and promoting the cultural (re)invention of those historically oppressed by the hegemonic social structure. By not only welcoming but also giving visibility to women, trans, queer, people of color, migrants, among other underrepresented groups, as cultural producers we are, at the same time, creating references for others to stand up, stimulating creativity in culture and promoting literacy for a diverse world. Moreover, the fact that safer spaces are lately on the trend, have some opportunities, but also some threats. A holistic approach to safer spaces is crucial in a social context where pink washing and rainbow washing are used by capitalism as

The use of "safer" instead of "safe spaces", expresses the impossibility of guaranteeing a complete sense and experience of safety for all the people that will attend a specific context.

marketing strategies to promote consumerism and to "clean" the predatory practices, exploitation, and precariousness it (re)creates.

What do we need to label a context as a safer space?

After elaborating around the complexity of the safer space concept(s), this section states that the application and effectiveness of these models of care can vary and work differently in different contexts. In a polycultural context it is relevant to avoid the definition of static, rigid, and universal approaches to safer spaces, because they will probably be simplistic, limited, and exclusionary. Instead, flexible, evolving and tailor-mode models are possibly more suitable and responsive to the organisational, economic, and cultural heterogeneity. After millennia of inequality and oppression, we are still learning how to promote equitable environments, and by experimenting more inclusive approaches, we are leading the process of creating new references to inspire our peers and future generations. This is not a fast linear learning. Instead, it is a slow, ongoing, and evolving process that addresses the root causes of discrimination and inequality before presenting solutions. Since we still communicate with the language of the oppressor, we need time to resignify or create new vocabulary, methods, approaches, and experiment social structures and relations able to promote equity. In this process, we must be available to feel discomfort, to rethink and question our privileges, to affirm our ignorance and to revisit the biased and preconceived ideas we inherited from our hegemonic cultural matrix. We need to clearly define our places of speech to avoid speaking on anyone's turn by creating well-intentioned, but still simplistic solutions, based in our preconceived ideas. It is time for us –those with privilege– to shut up, hear and learn from those who were historically penalised by the structural oppression systems.

The definition of safer spaces is, above all, an expression of intentions, values, and priorities, a definition of a dream genuinely aimed at promoting equity and social justice. This publication includes several inspiring examples of diverse and tailor-made safer space's practices or questioning. Each one is specific and have its own approach to safer spaces. However, all have in common the following key-principles aiming to
• Promote multilevel inclusivity (individual, relational, organisational, cultural)
• Create equal opportunities for representation in your organisation
• Foster open and honest dialogue for mutual learning, creativity, and cultural growth
• Empower marginalised voices, validating their lived experiences to broaden the cultural conversation
• Build a stronger community that creates a sense of belonging, mutual support, and creativity
• Engage with people from diverse backgrounds in a respectful and non-confrontational setting to encourage personal growth and the reevaluation of long-held beliefs
• Encourage individual and organisational accountability on your cultural space

It is relevant to highlight that we need to remain vigilant and critical to the more or less subtle capitalistic appropriation of the safer space imagery to perform allyship, to "virtue signalling" and in some cases, cultural appropriation. Similarly to what happened with other on-trend concepts (e.g., sustainability), there is a real risk, of emptying the political meaning of safer spaces, making this a vague and highly subjective concept. Finally, we are still discovering what a safer space looks like in practice and, particularly, what does it look like in our practices. Leaving now, with a take-away message: remember that your safer space policies and its translation to a specific set of practices, represent a vision of society being incubated at your organisation.

3 questions to Girls* to the Front

Warsaw, Poland

01.
Can you introduce your structure to us?

We're an informal initiative, so our structure still evolves. Most of the work – from selling tickets at events to planning the next projects– is done by Agata Wnuk and Ola Kamińska, the co-founders of the initiative. We publish zines together with Magdalena Rzepecka, who is an expert in design, illustrations, and printing. In 2021, we grew into a small press, with Maria Halber as an editor, but she does so much more than that, just working with us on a daily basis. We are also constantly supported by photographer Katarzyna Szenajch.

02.
Why did you join the Reset! network?

We joined Reset! for the exchange of knowledge and experiences, as well as a sense of community. Since we're a grassroots initiative with no guidelines, we have to figure out everything by ourselves, and we often feel somewhat lost. We're committed to bettering independent culture in both Poland and the European Union and working towards equality, diversity, and inclusion, so we feel that our goals align with Reset! perfectly.

03.
Your prerogative for a more diverse and inclusive European cultural field?

Today, independent Our prerogative for a more diverse and inclusive European cultural field is to prioritise the empowerment of underrepresented voices, particularly those of women and queer individuals. We acknowledge the significance of our own experiences as queer women while remaining mindful of our privileges as residents of a major urban area, middle-class, and white. Through our actions and initiatives, we aim to bridge the gaps and ensure that voices marginalised beyond normative categories are included. This way we create a richer, more inclusive community that supports creativity and self-expression.

Under their light

Antiracist Aproach

Raised Fist: The Struggle of African-Portuguese Independent Structures

The following section spotlights exemplary initiatives within the independent cultural landscape, each addressing specific facets of discrimination. These articles strive to paint a non-exhaustive representation of the ongoing battles for safer spaces. Each piece serves as a lens through which we examine the innovative and impactful ways in which communities are fostering environments that reject discrimination in all its forms, illustrating the multifaceted nature of the fight that must be led to ensure a more just and inclusive cultural sphere.

Fábio Silva has a master's degree in Cinema at the Lisbon Theater and Film School. In 2018, he co-directed his first documentary film, Hip to da Hop. He also directed the short films The Death of Isaac and Fruit of Thy Womb, both selected in several national and international film festivals. He is currently working on Your Back Still Burns, his next feature documentary.

It is assumed that Black communities living in Europe are going through a phase of change for the better, given that the UN has declared the years 2015 to 2024 to be the International Decade for People of African Descent. Over the course of these years, the Member States of the European Union should be putting in place concrete measures to combat stereotyping and the different types of violence that target these ethnic minorities.

Portugal is one of the countries that made this pledge. This is a huge commitment, since there have been various events throughout history of the country that should taint the sense of national pride with a feeling of shame: for example, it is estimated that between the 16th and 19th centuries, over 11 million enslaved people were traded between Africa and the Americas. The 20th century was no less bloody. Oliveira Salazar, the Portuguese dictator, pushed to the limit his refusal to give up the colonies of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe, resulting in millions of African people suffering and dying until they were free from the compulsion to be part of the "Overseas Empire".

Today, almost 40 years after the former colonies became independent, the far right is gaining greater electoral currency with the Chega party already the third largest political force in Portugal, having gained more seats in parliament. This only serves to confirm the findings of a European Social Survey study published in 2020: over 62% of Portuguese people express racism, showing that, for example, there are those who believe that certain ethnic or racial groups are more hard-working or even more intelligent than others.

commit-

In recent years, there have been a number of incidents in Portugal that back up these survey findings, such as cases of police officers brutally beating young people of African heritage, the murders of Black people in public spaces perpetrated by ex-soldiers, and those on the front line of the anti-racist fight being continually subjected to death threats and harassment. In view of this historic wound and these racist acts that continue to be committed, what has the Portuguese State done to shift this paradigm? Very little. A significant part of the work has been developed by independent organisations for Africans and people of African descent. Whether the scope is journalistic or cultural, all of these share the common goal of decolonising Eurocentric thought, deconstructing the persisting social categorisations of ethnic and racial minorities, as well as raising awareness of diverse identities of the Portuguese-speaking African countries, or PALOP (países de língua oficial portuguesa). What are these organisations? What work has been done? What funding arrangements have been made to guarantee their continuation?

In view of this historic wound and these racist acts that continue to be committed, what has the Portuguese State done to shift this paradigm?

One of the independent bodies that has been working longest in this field is the cultural association Batoto Yetu Portugal (BYP). Created in 1996, it emerged with the aim of helping African immigrants who had arrived in Portugal in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, and the children of this first generation of African people living in the country. "Our significance can be measured by the original terms of our campaign and that there is no space for them in the formal system, or in mainstream cultural and artistic spaces", says Djuzé Neves, the director of BYP. "We support migrants in finding work, offer schooling support to young people, take tours to spaces where there is African presence, produce books and collect digital material on this topic, and many other projects". However, he points out that in spite of a number of achievements over almost three decades, their financial survival relies mainly on donations, associates, friends and the help of patrons, such as the contemporary artist Vhils.

State funding can only be obtained through public tenders, which makes it impossible to depend on it for survival. There is also crowdfunding, which was used recently in an attempt to find funding to install 20 street name signs produced by BYP that relate the history of African Lisbon spanning from the 15th century to the present day. The signs have been ready since 2020, but the application for support submitted to Lisbon City Council for them to be installed in the public sphere has already been refused twice and, unfortunately, there is no prospective date for the installation. This means that the goal of telling the stories of the Black people living in the Portuguese capital in an accessible form to residents and tourists has stalled.

Another important independent organisation that is engaged in the same arena is Bantumen, a web-based culture magazine that is devoted to the young Black Portuguese-speaking community. It was created in 2015 by Eddie Pipocas and Vanessa Sanches, with the aim of filling the gap that existed at that time in "highlighting the success of African artists".

↑ Eddie Popocas and Vanessa Sanches are the directors of Bantumen. © Bantumen

ment

According to its two founders, there was a lack of a platform that promoted Black artists, since it was rare for us to see, for example, two musicians from PALOP countries together on a mainstream media newspaper cover. And, although seven years have passed since then, it seems that this reality has not changed. "Without Bantumen there are artists that would never even be visible.In the most well-known media there is no space for Kuduro musicians, and articles are rarely written about Black rappers." It doesn't seem to matter how many years in a row they have been the most listened to artists in Portugal on platforms like Spotify, or that they often sell out the Lisbon Coliseum (one of the biggest venues on the country, with a capacity of over 4000). In spite of these factors, articles about Black artists in the mainstream media, when they do appear, always seem to be fragmented and stereotyped. Managing to bring to the surface the vast range of successes this community has had is one of the fundamental goals that drives Bantumen and this is the rationale behind its Power List, an annual initiative that highlights 100 Black people with Portuguese as their native language from a range of fields, such as culture, politics, science, sport, and fashion, among many other projects. In spite of these efforts, it seems that views of Africans and people of African descent tend to be restricted to a

↑ Paula Cardoso is the figure at the head of Afrolink.© Sara Matos

"Afrolink is a personal cry that gained ground to become a collective expression."

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rai-sed fist

feeling of pity. And both realise that this is one of the reasons why it is so difficult to get financial support: "The majority of brands are only interested in working with us if we put ourselves in the role of victims. If we haven't suffered it seems that it doesn't make sense to talk to us".

They recall, moreover, that at first when they were looking for institutions that were already established and could help to promote Bantumen, they were strongly advised to find someone white to front the project, since this would apparently make it easier to get funding. "People aren't used to seeing Black personalities building their own means of representation in Portugal. They want it to always be others talking about us." Yet, they affirm that they would not budge on this point. It will always be them that are the faces of their project, regardless of whether or not they obtain funding. "We have already managed to give life to Bantumen through publicity, consulting, and our web store. We started apply for support more recently, but these tenders are really not always visible. And those that do exist and might consider

3 questions to Nega Filmes

Lisbon, Portugal

01.

Can you introduce your structure to us?

Our collective was created by black immigrant women who make and think about art from the perspective of being racialised people in a world full of colonial heritage. However, because of our reality, despite being an informal group with a fluid and horizontal structure, we maintain an intense and constant production in the area of artistic creation and cultural programming, focused on the media of audiovisual, education, photography, poetry, programming, performance, and education.

02.

Why did you join the Reset! network?

Being part of the Reset! network means accessing new possibilities for organisation and work. Although we are mostly immigrants, we work mainly in Europe and create from the reality we face living in Portugal. For us, sharing tools and strategies used by independent organisations is a way of strengthening the field of non-hegemonic artistic production and collaborating in the consolidation of a new, fairer, more diverse, and inclusive world.

03.

Your prerogative for a more diverse and inclusive European cultural field?

For us, self-representation is an important strategy for erasing stereotyped representations from the media. However, this is not a quick or linear process, given that there is a solidified image of what immigrant communities are in Europe, both in the media and in school textbooks, for example. That's why we work in an integrated way, combining education and creation, understanding that there's no way to grasp new languages and deconstruct old images without first experiencing an intense process of re-education that decolonises views and mentalities.

embracing our community mainly support white organisations that include a few Black people. We're an exception for them, they think that we are based in one of the PALOP countries and that our audience is only Africans."

This is a perspective that is shared by Paula Cardoso, an entrepreneur who very recently appeared on the cover of the North American magazine Success Pitchers, and is the woman behind the online platform Afrolink. She says that the idea "began with the creation of a private Facebook group where the African community and people of African descent could meet." But she quickly realised the importance of creating a place to bring people together that was visible to all, and this is how the site came about three years ago, with the goal of building Black representation in the labour market, and showing that minorities are not just football players if they are men, and cleaners if they are women. "Afrolink is a personal cry that gained ground to become a collective expression. I worked in journalism and I know whose history prevails in the mainstream press where Black people are concerned. My job is to break down these narratives, to pit myself against what is imagined by white Portugal." One of several initiatives that the digital platform promotes is the Afrolink Market, a monthly event that started in 2021 and takes place in Lisbon, for Africans and people of African descent who live in Portugal to get together to share experiences of business and build relationships. "Portuguese people who don't belong to an ethnic minority need to understand that we are not all the same, that we come in different shapes and sizes. They created an Observatory for Racism and Xenophobia where Ana Catarina Martins, the custodian, was saying that there was no problem with structural racism in this country. However, we still don't have data to show where our community is living and in what conditions, there is no salary comparison with other Portuguese people, and a whole array of other

important and objective information that we need is lacking." Drawing on entrepreneurial methods, Paula Cardoso creates events and appears at seminars without fear of responding to opinions that differ from her own, even though she is well aware of living in a society made up of people who would like her to be silenced, because many still believe that "talking about racism is what drives racism".

In spite of various challenges that these independent bodies are faced with, nothing seems to be enough to dampen the sense of the mission that they all share: to build a more equal world, where nobody is disadvantaged because of their origin or ethnicity. These and other independent organisations such as SOS Racism, Afrolis, the Black Arts Union, Afropris, Famafro, The Blacker The Berry, and so many others, are absolutely essential in a society that still refuses to publicly apologise for centuries of slavery, that does not try hard enough to reduce the acts of physical and verbal aggression that are systematically committed against the communities of African people and those of African descent, and that gives second place in its political agenda to actions that could lead to social justice and equity between ethnic minorities and the rest of the population. This is why there is still a long way to go in the fight and resistance for these organisations, although, fortunately, in spite of all the constraints that they face, they are working in partnership and have no intention of lowering their raised fists any day soon.

Ethnic Minorities Inclusion

Kosovo's Ethnic Minorities in the Performing Arts Sector Need Adequate Support

Salomé Duhoo has been a Communications Officer for the French Embassy in Kosovo in 2018. She wrote two Master's thesis about « Great powers' competition upon the Western Balkan » and about « Identity factor in the performing arts in Kosovo ». She is now an administrator in the field of performing arts, being in charge of administration, finances, and budgets for theatres and artistic companies.

The Western Balkans are one of the European Union's key neighbourhood policy objectives. As part of its development and stabilisation policy, the EU and several of its members States fund initiatives encouraging national cohesion stemming from Kosovo's civil society. Since the collapse of Yugoslavia and the simultaneous rise of ethnonationalism in the region, inter-ethnic comprehension remains a key factor of said stabilisation.
Kosovo's cultural organisations have a role to play in this process, and particularly performing arts structures.

Kosovo: its ethnic communities and its Constitution

When it comes to Kosovo's civil society, it is crucial to understand how the country's ethnic groups interact with each other. Several ethnic groups coexist in Kosovo. Kosovo's constitution explicitly recognises the country's multi-ethnic character, and grants special rights to ethnic minorities, particularly with regard to languages and cultural

preservation. Of particular interest to independent cultural organisations is the fact that the Constitution explicitly states that the Government has the duty to provide material support to cultural initiatives stemming from members of all communities through 'financial assistance'. Having institutional financial support is essential for independent actors in the performing arts, notably in order to take risks in creative processes. It is even more important for minority ethnic groups, as their communities and audiences are smaller per se. Kosovo's constitution legally obliges the government to provide equal funding to ethnic groups in quantitative terms, but is this funding also qualitative? In other

words, does it address all the limitations faced by independent ethnic minority actors in the field of performing arts? Also, to what extent do other institutional actors support independent structures in this regard?

Nexhip Menekshe Rrom Theatre uses theatre as a means of preserving and promoting Tsigan cultures.

↑ Kosovo's National Theatre during a snow storm. © Salomé Duhoo

The Nexhip Menekshe Theatre: a home for Kosovo's Roma cultures

When it comes to preserving the cultural heritage of a minority through the performing arts, the case of the Nexhip Menekshe Rrom Theatre is enlightening. Located in Prizren, southern Kosovo, it uses theatre as a means of preserving and promoting Tsigan cultures. Tsigan populations have historically suffered acute discrimination and have been particularly vulnerable to war displacement.
Edis Galushi, involved in writing and performing for the Nexhip Meneshke Theatre back in 2020, and Fatmir Menekshe, today's executive director of the theatre, actor, translator, and writer, tell us more about the challenges of Roma activism in the field of performing arts.

When asked about the difficulties in the theatre's work, Edis Galushi pointed out that it was difficult for members of the Roma Theatre to take the step towards professionalisation. Indeed, the only university curriculum for performing arts is in Prishtina, whose Roma population is one of the lowest in the country. The uncertainty surrounding an artistic career also makes it less accessible to financially vulnerable populations, such as the Roma in Kosovo. On the other hand, Fatmir Meneshke describes the Roma Theatre's recent collaboration with a professional director as a positive experience that will help the theatre to progress.

Both testimonies underline a key issue when it comes to supporting minorities in the performing arts: professionalisation. Indeed, despite the quality of their work, volunteers can only go so far without adequate support. Being a professional writer, actor, and/or director allows one to earn one's main income from the artistic practice, which means being able to devote more time to creating and developing projects. This is particularly true in the case of Roma cultures, which are mostly oral: Roma scholars must first create their corpus and plays before performing them, which implies more involvement and work in pre-production. It is also important to enable members of minority groups to efficiently produce their own artworks that mobilise their history and culture in all its aspects, as this is a way for them to reappropriate the narrative.

Another challenge regarding professionalisation is at stake when it comes to Kosovo. Until recently, Kosovar citizens could not travel to the Schengen area without a visa. Obtaining a visa can be a long and difficult process, and only professional artists can benefit from a work visa. Now that Kosovo has been granted visa liberalisation, to take effect in early 2024, this will no longer be a problem for the EU, but it will still be for other countries that require Kosovar citizens to obtain a visa (e.g. the USA).

Last but not least, professionalisation is an essential step towards structuring performing arts associations, whether in terms of peer recognition or institutional support, because quality alone does not guarantee this kind of support.

Big players and ethnic minorities

Director of ODA Theatre Florent Mehmeti also tells us about these issues. ODA is an independent, professional theatre based in Prishtina, the capital of Kosovo. It is also an influential cultural structure at the national and regional level: not only does its core mission state that it is "committed to professional development of the theatrical art", but it also stages foreign plays, coordinates cultural activities, and is part of several professional networks in the Balkans and in Europe. It is then crucial to understand the framework within which larger independent actors can work with minority players. Regarding ODA's programming, most plays are performed in Albanian. This seems logical, as the vast majority of Prishtina's population is Albanian-speaking. Any independent, professional structure must develop its programming with financial balance, which means taking into account the rentability of a play and its accessibility to a potential audience. Indeed, there is a massive discrepancy between the funding

↑ Musician in Albanian traditional outfit in the streets of Pec/Peja. © Salomé Duhoo

bond

of independent structures and that of State-owned theatres: while Kosovo's National Theatre receives approximately €1 million per year from Kosovo's Ministry of Culture, ODA receives only €15,000. The government prefers to fund many different associations, professional or not, which significantly reduces the amount of grants to each structure. It seems logical even if unfortunate, then, that ODA would prefer plays in either Albanian or English, to be easily understood by its target audience and to generate income from ticket fees. Any play in a minority language requires subtitles in order to be understood by a large audience, which adds to the cost of production.

Another structural factor that limits the ability of independent organisation such as ODA to fully involve minority artists in the performing arts is, again, territorial segregation. In fact, ODA often works with younger artists who have just graduated from Prishtina's Faculty of Arts to support Kosovar performing arts scene. As mentioned above, most members of minority groups live outside of Prishtina and it is a financial burden for already poor families to send children to study in Prishtina. The lack of profesionnalisation further penalises minorities in the performing arts, as it deprives them of the networking and links with larger organisations that are necessary to mobilise further resources for creation and touring: residency, stage programming, logistical support, etc. This type of partnership could also help them to step outside the inner circle of their community and strengthen their economic model by widening their potential audience. In the performing arts, geographical remoteness is a massive obstacle to overcome.

↑ View on Prizren, Southern Kosovo. © Salomé Duhoo

support

How to support ethnic minorities efficiently on Kosovo's cultural scene: a diagnosis

Once this structural analysis is laid out, a diagnosis can be offered as to how institutions can better support independent cultural players in order to give ethnic minorities a better seat at the table of the performing arts –an important medium for preserving cultural heritage and promoting inter-ethnic understanding, which is key to Kosovo's long-term stability.
It is important that the EU continues and even increases its support for civil society organisations in its stabilisation and integration policies. The performing arts can play a significant role in creating cohesion and mutual understanding between all kinds of communities, including ethnic groups. However, while financial support is at the core of supporting civil society initiatives, indiscriminate funding is doomed to failure.
It is about continuing –and even increasing– financial support to the performing arts, both to larger independent structures as well as to ethnic minority groups. Nevertheless, it is necessary to coordinate this financial support with the aim of empowering and emancipating this whole umbrella of independent players to be as self-sufficient as possible in the long term. Indeed, the performing arts are a unique economic sector whose creative process paradoxically requires institutional support in order to maintain its independence. However, it is crucial that this institutional support does not create

dependency: such a situation would create vulnerability to any political or economic change that could lead to the withdrawal of institutional funding. Instead, funding should aim at developing and structuring independent actors, focusing on ethnic minorities not only as isolated actors, but as a component of the whole cultural ecosystem. Structuring then helps independent organisations to develop their own networks and audience, and to generate their own income.

In Kosovo, this strategy can be achieved by working with both larger and ethnic minority independent structures. Should the European Union and its Member States be willing to pursue these objectives, the following types of funding can be made available:
• Stipends for emerging artists from ethnic minorities to study at the Faculty of Arts in Prishtina; residency grants for artists from ethnic minorities to earn a living while producing intellectual, intangible works (creation and pre-production phases).
• Adaptability funds to cover extra costs of making ethnic minority performances accessible to a wider audience (translation, subtitling fees).
• Support for national touring costs to help both larger and ethnic minority players to overcome the geographical barrier that exists within Kosovo, and support for international, regional touring in the Balkans to help independent structures to build networks and fund their activities through the sale of their productions.

It is of the utmost importance that the EU and its Member States continue to fund Kosovo's independent performing arts players as part of their civil society strategy. However, they must also plan this financial support as a long-term strategy, taking into account the structural particularities of the country. This applies to ethnic minorities, but the advice also stands for all aspects of civil society activity.

3 questions to Lazy Women

01.

Can you introduce your structure to us?

Lazy Women is an independent media and community that provides a platform for those whose voices are rarely heard in mainstream media, as well as a safe space where community members can feel protected and valued rather than silenced or directly harassed while sharing their views and perspectives on the world. We also serve as a creative hub where emerging artists can publish their work, whether it's a podcast episode, an article, or a visual artwork. Lazy Women was born in the context of Covid-19, where many of us were forced to stay at home, and the way we made use of the 'domestic' sphere was reevaluated. For many, this time, where the lines between domesticity, leisure, and work were blurred, offered a chance to, if not embrace, then reflect on what it means to be lazy. This disruption to the public-private dichotomy influenced us to create Lazy Women. Presently, Lazy Women's core mission is to uplift and amplify the voices of those usually excluded from the mainstream Western feminist dialogue. This isn't limited to discussions on feminism or gender-related matters, but extends to encompass the entirety of our members' experiences. Our aim is to offer guidance in contextualising personal encounters within a systemic framework, forging connections between the personal and the political.

02.

Why did you join the Reset! network?

Prior to becoming part of the Reset! network, Lazy Women participated in an event centered around the Eastern European media landscape. The discussion showcased media organisations actively challenging the prevailing political norms, which heavily resonated with Lazy Women's mission. Subsequently, we applied to the network and hosted a workshop amplifying Hungarian feminist voices in Hungary. These experiences provided invaluable insights into the essence of the Reset! network, helping us understand its role in uniting independent cultural structures, advocating for our collective interests, and coming up with solutions to today's challenges in the cultural sector. Reset! aims to build a more extensive and robust support system for organisations like ours, and this aligns with Lazy Women's needs as an independent, bottom-up, and dynamic organisation.

03.

Your prerogative for a more diverse and inclusive European cultural field?

Lazy Women boasts a multinational network spanning from Western to Central and Eastern Europe, as well as Central Asia, the United States, and South America. However, our commitment to inclusivity extends beyond merely featuring individuals from diverse backgrounds in terms of class, ethnicity, gender, or nationality. Inclusion, for us, means that you can contribute to Lazy Women without a certain kind of professional background. Whether graphic design is a hobby or a profession for you, we welcome your illustrations for our article covers. While we acknowledge that we are a work in progress, we actively seek to explore new dimensions of inclusivity and value feedback from every member of our community. For instance, we plan to introduce bilingual articles in the future, enabling non-native speakers to engage more seamlessly with our content.

Intersections

Between England and Italy: A Reflection on Independent Culture, Safer Spaces, and Decentralisation

Matilde Mirotti

is a music industry professional, currently specialising in events, partnerships, and media. Over the last couple of years, she has been working as the Event Manager and Partnership Lead at Come Play With Me, a UK-based organisation part of the Reset! network, focusing on supporting people from marginalised communities to further their careers in music.

A few months ago, I attended a panel at Fabric in London, which discussed the nightlife economy, the challenges of working within it, and how to build a safer and more sustainable future for it. At the end of the session, during the questions, the Creative Director of Fabric, Jorge Nieto, highlighted how from his perspective, you can only ever build safer spaces, as opposed to safe spaces. That comment stayed with me for a while, and somehow made even more of an impact, because it was said by a man who started his career in Bogotà, and travelled all across the globe to live and work in London.

Like Jorge, I moved across Europe, relocating from Italy to the UK seven years ago. Like many people who live away from their home country, I navigate the world grateful for the advantages that living in a different place gives me and facing the challenges that come with it. Over the years, I've registered countless nuances, and imperceptible differences between these two places that have shaped my life equally and saved them in the hard drive part of my brain —they have become my filter, my lens, my dictionary to describe the world around me.

3 questions to Consentis

Paris, France

01.
Can you introduce your structure to us?

Consentis was co-founded in 2018 in Paris to make clubbing safer in France. The NGO strives to implement a culture of consent in a festive environment by:
- Offering training to music collectives, nightclubs, festival staffs, and booking agencies to equip them to organise safer parties and work environment,
- Organising awareness campaigns, talks, and workshops to fight against sexual violence, discrimination, and, implement harm reduction methods among party-goers,
- Curating playlists to give visibility to underrepresented artists and promote inclusivity in festival and nightclub lineups.

02.
Why did you join the Reset! network?

Consentis wants to network and collaborate with independent cultural actors to promote a diverse and forward-thinking cultural landscape in Europe. We were delighted to join the Reset! network as a founding member.

03.
Your prerogative for a more diverse and inclusive European cultural field?

Our focus is to enhance diversity and inclusivity in the music and nightlife industries by providing educational tools to industry professionals and beneficiaries, amplifying underrepresented voices, fostering cross-cultural dialogue, and challenging existing norms to create a vibrant, equitable, and truly representative cultural landscape.

inter-

Discovering safer spaces and their challenges

It wasn't until I moved to the UK, and to Leeds more specifically, that I came across the notion of safer spaces. Through being part of the DIY scene and working at Come Play With Me, a non-for-profit music organisation championing inclusivity in music, I started learning about how to make cultural spaces more accessible and safer for women, people from marginalised communities, and disabled people. Especially now that I live in London, I realise how fortunate I was to have lived in a decentralised city in England, filled with young people that are challenging societal norms and innovating culture, using cultural spaces and grassroots organisations as catalysts of change and social justice.

Challenging societal norms and innovating culture, using cultural spaces and grassroots organisations as catalysts of change and social justice.

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↑ Sheaf Street has become a point of reference for marginalised communities, creatives and young people in Leeds. In November 2023 they announced their closure after their business was severely affected by a property development plan in the area.

It's no surprise that one of the main reasons why these spaces are being shut is property development. Leeds currently has a massive issue with the lack of housing, and consequently, a lot of new buildings are quickly appearing on the map.

thriving student community, and a strong DIY scene. Safer spaces are central in the cultural ecosystem of this city, contributing to creating diversity in the region and opportunities for international, marginalised communities. However, over the last decade, the city has become one of the fastest-growing centres in the UK, and not enough has been done to redistribute these investments equally and preserve many of the independent businesses that catalysed that growth in the first place.

sectionnality

Sadly, as more and more investments are injected into Leeds as a rapidly developing city, independent venues, and safer spaces, are being shut down. Just over the past couple of months, two household-names of the independent scene in the city are being closed: The Tetley, a contemporary art gallery and event space, and Sheaf Street, a cafe, event space, and multi-use space —both located around Leeds' South Bank.

In the five years I've lived in Leeds, I've attended countless events in these venues —some of my friends DJed there for their first ever time, a few of them worked as hospitality staff and I have accessed high-quality music, culture, and theatre at these venues over and over again. These spaces were vital for the LGBTQIA+ community, for women, and people from marginalised communities who wanted to put on their first event as promoters, and for all the culture-driven people in Leeds that were looking for a safer, cheap, and independent space to come together in.

One development in particular, called 'Aire Park', surrounds both these venues, and while it's being built it has negatively impacted the independent businesses around it. With seemingly no compensation being offered to these businesses by the property development or by the council, the situation has quickly led to their closure.

Leeds is historically known for its post-industrial, working class, and fiercely independent spirit. For these reasons in the past few decades it has become a stronghold for independent arts and culture, with creatives being attracted by affordable rent, a young and

Two countries in decadence

While my life in Leeds progressed, first at university and then through lockdown, I always kept one eye on Italy, trying to preserve my ability to understand the changes of this beautiful and decadent country through a particularly challenging time in history. In October 2022 the Giorgia Meloni government was voted into power –the name of her party, which translates to 'Brothers

Regarding safer spaces, there is a clear antidote to reverse the decline of independent culture and spaces in both Italy and the UK, and that is a combination of creating stronger communities and decentralising investments.

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of Italy', perfectly summarises their views on feminism, intersectionality, and integration. Just a few months after being sworn into power, the government approved what's been defined as an 'anti-rave' law, which punishes both the organisers and attenders of non-authorised parties with a fine up to 10k euros and 6 years in jail.

For a country known around the world for its art and culture, modern Italy doesn't live up to its own reputation. Growing up in a relatively wealthy area of Piedmont, only one hour away from Milan, we didn't have access to any notable cultural spaces, music venues, or galleries. Overall, not a lot of investment was put towards activities for young people and marginalised communities and the few spaces that managed to emerge at different points in time were usually shut down or limited in their work after the residents complained about noise and/or alleged vandalism.

Existing between the UK and Italy is

an interesting experience, because while they may appear as wildly different countries, they have much more in common than you might expect: they're both conservative countries and fallen empires, where nationalism is ripe and where people, especially powerful and wealthy ones, are reluctant to let go of a past that they see as golden. It's no coincidence that both Italy and the UK have a massive problem with rapidly ageing populations and are reluctant to implement realistic immigration policies into their political agendas. Empowering the LGBTQIA+ community, women, the global majority and young people more broadly would result in a much more diversified population and a greater risk for people in power to lose their control and affluence.

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Maintaining spaces

↑ For over a decade, the Tetley was a reference point for the cultural scene in West Yorkshire. The gallery and multi-use space will close this year after the end of their building lease.

3 questions to Sounds Queer

Vienna, Austria

01. _____

Can you introduce your structure to us?

We are currently 5 people working in the SoundsQueer? collective. Two of us have been with the collective since its inception six years ago and three of us are newcomers who only started working with SoundsQueer? this year (2023). We have a strong community that was built before the pandemic, which is reactivated during the workshops and residencies we organised all year. Decisions are made by all of us together in meetings. A non-hierarchical working environment takes more time, but is crucial for us. Since everyone in the collective is queer, we also approach working together in a clear way with as much communication as possible.

02. _____

Why did you join the Reset! network?

We have joined the Reset! network to stand up for the important work that independent cultural producers and collectives are doing in Europe. We work on a much smaller scale than large institutions, which allows us to use local community buildings and strong networks with other independent workers. Although we are an established collective, invited to festivals and recognised by the queer community that visits our workshops, we are still not regularly funded. This precarious situation needs to change. European funding would make the SoundsQueer? collective more sustainable and make connections with organisations outside of Austria more accessible.

03. _____

Your prerogative for a more diverse and inclusive European cultural field?

One prerogative could be to make European funding more accessible, less bureaucratic, and easier to access in general for small independent initiatives without their own venue, not only for big players!

↑ 'Il Tempio Del Futuro Perduto' and its community, celebrating after the venue being legally recognised by the Milan city council.

The Evolution of LGBTQIA+ Prides in Serbia and its Cultural Scene's Battle for Visibility

Prides in Serbia have been a sensitive argument since their beginning in 2001. Marked by violence, far-right and religious opposition, as well as political restraint, national prides have known difficult times in the country. Organized only twice, in 2001 and in 2010, in nine years, they finally took place normally since 2014, still largely marginalized by the political power and media.

In 2019, Belgrade was chosen for hosting the EuroPride 2022, becoming the first city of the Balkans to organize such an event. With the catchy slogan "*It's time*", the Serbian LGBTQIA+ community saw this event as an opportunity to show their fights and the difficulties that they are facing in a country that doesn't allow nor same-sex marriage or same-sex civil union, that doesn't penalize hateful speeches against LGBTQIA+ people or give any right to trans people.

Branislav highlights that "*Pride was happening without any mention in the media for years. They marginalized it to the point where it was not visible at all. And now it suited them to make it visible to crush it better.*" Vučić announced few days before the EuroPride march and parade, organized on September 17th, that it had to be cancelled, threatened by violence. These two decisions came as a proof of the lack of political will to tackle LGBTQIA+ discriminations in Serbia. The parade was maintained, even if the route has to be changed and largely shortened (only a few hundred meters), but controlled by a significant police operation (around 5 200 policemen).

In the wake of this situation, independent cultural actors tend to address these arguments and integrate the LGBTQIA+ community by organizing queer events, by giving a space of freedom and safeness. Drugstore organizes pop queer parties, and Branislav to underline "*Since the political power isn't doing anything for the LGBTQIA+ community, we, cultural actors, are absolutely the ones doing this educational work to challenge people's norms, without any back-up.*"

As a drag queen, Vladimir aka Markiza de Sada is part of numerous performances with his collective Ephemeral confession, that take place in safe places, such as Dim, and challenge social and political norms. To conclude, they both agree on the necessity of "*making a front and standing out, not only stepping out as a community but embracing the notion of togetherness.*"

championing inclusivity

Regarding safer spaces, there is a clear antidote to reverse the decline of independent culture and spaces in both Italy and the UK, and that is a combination of creating stronger communities and decentralising investments.

What I have observed over and over again in both countries is that true innovation often happens at the outskirts of a system and it's almost always paired with strong community bonds and diversity.

Over the past few years, I have observed two examples of incredible work that exemplify this approach, both in the UK and Italy:

In 2019 MAP Charity, a Leeds-based organisation offering qualifications and first-hand experience to young people at risk of exclusion in the arts, ran a community fundraiser and successfully purchased 'Hope House', a grade II-listed building. The building had been their home for ten years and it was at risk of being purchased by a developer as part of a regeneration project in the area. Through the support of their community and the council, the charity was able to retain the building and preserve the community and business of the organisation.

In 2023, the council of Milan has officially recognised 'Il Tempio del Futuro Perduto' (The Lost Future Temple), a multidisciplinary art space in the heart of the developing city. The space was occupied after being abandoned in 2018, and later on its coordinator Tommaso Dapri was sued for illegal occupation. His acquittal and the recognition of 'Il Tempio' as a legitimate cultural space is a signal of hope for the young, diverse, and bound-breaking community it represents, especially in the current political climate in the country.

It's no coincidence that both these organisations' work is rooted in the concept of safer spaces and share the ultimate goal of providing alternative solutions and resources to intersectional and discriminated communities. Particularly in conservative and declining societies, like the Italian and the British, these spaces are vital to creating more integrated and diversified communities, developing projects around inclusion and sustainability, and educating the wider society. For these reasons, these safer spaces are a precious resource that we need to preserve and defend.

Under their words

As a psychologist and doctor of philosophy specialising in the "crip" movement, Charlotte Puiseux explores topics such as ableism, disability, and feminism as well as disability and parenthood, and has been active for many years in anti-capitalist, feminist, and queer/crip circles. Disabled as a result of a rare genetic disease, Charlotte Puiseux has published an autobiographical essay, De chair et de fer, vivre et lutter dans une société validiste (Of flesh and iron, living and fighting in an ableist society). In October 2022 during the In.out.sider festival in Brussels, she shares her own personal journey, scarred by the legacy of a long history of violence and discrimination, and also deciphers the underlying ideological system with its social, economic, and political constructs: ableism.

Step into the minds and motivations of independent cultural voices with this collection of interviews within this dedicated section. These conversations aim to illuminate the diverse perspectives and strategies employed by individuals and organisations committed to carving out safer spaces within the cultural landscape. Through insightful discussions, our featured voices will not only shed light on their personal journeys, but also contribute to a nuanced understanding of the very notion of safer spaces. From the challenges they've encountered to the triumphs that fuel their commitment, these interviews offer a unique and intimate glimpse into the minds of those working towards fostering inclusivity, dismantling discrimination, and shaping cultural environments where everyone can thrive.

The reference to iron in the title of your book is borrowed from the artist Frida Kahlo, one of your great inspirations. To what extent has the brush with art and culture been a determining factor on your path towards "politicising disability"?

Art has played an important role for a long time. Writing, initially, and then the encounter with art helped me to externalise some of the difficulties I had as a teenager. Having a disability made that period even more complicated. I needed to express my struggles, and art was a good means of doing so. I stumbled across Frida Kalho in an art class, and she has remained a real source of inspiration for me: I found echoes with my own life, which was very rare. Unfortunately, you rarely see positive cultural representations of people with disabilities that can be considered as anti-ableist representations. Frida Kalho is an exception: she was someone who inspired me, through her career, her political convictions, and her love life. She dared to show herself as she was and unapologetically owned up to her identity. Camille Claudel was another strong influence because of the struggle she faced in this patriarchal society. She was labelled as crazy for confronting a great artist like Auguste Rodin, whom she accused of stealing her ideas. But at the end of the day, wasn't it because she was a woman that she was considered as having mental problems? The strong impact of patriarchy on Camille Claudel's life resonated with my own experience.

What were the main milestones in your growing awareness of what you call the need to "politicise our bodies and our stories, including our love affairs and sex lives"?

The ableist system tends to isolate us within our own experiences and stories, so that we feel we are responsible for what happens to us. When you are different, this is particularly true during the fragile period of adolescence. Like most people with disabilities, when I was a teenager I would say to myself: it's my body that's wrong, I'm ugly, my body is deformed. You internalise this idea, totally depoliticising disability in one fell swoop. I managed to reverse this process during my student years when I met the person who became my best friend. I was already politically active, but battling for causes other than disability and ableism. She wasn't at all concerned by these issues. Yet a mutual understanding grew and we found common denominators in our experiences. She was concerned with issues such as anti-racism

and Islamophobia. That helped me to understand that we were in a system of oppression, and that one of the keys is to join forces, to pool our stories, and fight alongside each other. Ableism is a system that affects everyone with a disability to varying degrees. To overcome it, we need to pull together, give a collective scope to our stories and create cultural productions, books, and films that give us a voice and wage an anti-ableism battle.

Can you explain the term "ableism", which is built along the same lines as "racism" or "sexism"? What system does it support?

Ableism is the system of oppression experienced by people with disabilities because they do not correspond to the medical and social norms used do define you as able-bodied. Ableism is an ideology which holds that bodies that do not tick certain boxes, and are therefore deemed to be disabled, have less value and are naturally considered inferior. This is used to justify the discrimination experienced by people with disabilities, who cannot go to school, get a job, find accommodation or carry out their

sub-

I believe that what makes us happy is to vaunt our deformed bodies, our twisted bodies, our feeble minds, to assert that we exist, that we are here, that we have lives that are worth living and that are very enriching.

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versive

day-to-day activities. The anti-ableism movement, however, sets out to explain that this situation is the result of socio-political choices. Society is designed by and for able-bodied people, to meet the needs of able-bodied people, not people with disabilities. Inevitably, people with disabilities find themselves in a situation of disability largely because of socio-political choices.

It is important to understand that ableism affects all people with disabilities and all spheres of daily life. We can see this in the medical sphere, where the overarching objective is to "correct" disabled bodies and not necessarily to treat them in a caring way with due consideration for their difficulties.

You've been active in anti-capitalist, feminist, queer, and crip (short for crippled) circles. How has intersectionality, which is the superimposition of different oppressions, helped you to understand your situation?

Intersectionality is a concept developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a black American feminist, to explain the intersections of racist and sexist oppressions that specifically affect black women. This concept has helped many people, including me, to understand that when different oppressions intersect, it changes the experience of the person who suffers both oppressions compared to the person who suffers only one. In feminist circles, I didn't really fit in because they did not touch on anti-ableist issues at all. On the other hand, in anti-ableist circles, the question of feminism was quite often ignored. So where did I come into the equation as a disabled woman? How could I express my experience of the intersection of these two oppressions? That's why I joined the Dévalideuses, a French feminist anti-ableism collective that really puts disability and feminism at the heart of these two struggles: anti-sexism and anti-ableism.

In your book, you write that you are "proud to be who I was, to be this non-normal person questioning the system, harbouring by my mere existence a subversive potential and a capacity to disrupt the public order". In what way does disability have the potential to subvert the system?

We are raised to believe that being able-bodied is the only guarantee of happiness. Every human being born into our Western societies must be able-bodied or is expected to be able-bodied. This is their only path to happiness. It is an instrument of conformism, which guarantees social peace. Except that, in reality, we realise that this is not at all the case. For a start, I don't think anyone is totally able-bodied. There is something terrifying about the idea that our happiness depends on being able-bodied. I believe that what makes us happy is to vaunt our deformed bodies, our twisted bodies, our feeble minds, to assert that we exist, that we are here, that we have lives that are worth living and that are very enriching. This gives us the opportunity to break free from the able-bodied dictatorship, which is very destructive. It allows us to accept a form of vulnerability that is inherent in the human condition. But in our capitalist societies, people are led to believe that this is wrong, that this is a bad thing, that when you're vulnerable, weak, you should be discarded. But no! That's not what it's about. I think that people with disabilities, if they have the inclination, can show that there are other ways of claiming their place in the world, other opportunities to be who or what they want to be.

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Unfortunately, you rarely see positive cultural representations of people with disabilities that can be considered as anti-ableist representations.

Figures by Consentis

Sexual violence in festive venues in France

More than one in two women (57%) feel unsafe if they are alone in a party venue, and 62% explain this by the risk of being sexually assaulted.

More than one in two women (60% of respondents) say they have already been the victim of sexual violence in a party establishment. This was the case for 10% of men. Taking all genders together, 78% of people know at least one person they know who has been the victim of sexual violence in party venues.

Source:
Consentis, *Les violences sexuelles dans les lieux festifs en France : résultats et préconisations* [Sexual violence in festive venues in France: results and recommendations], report 2018

In your book, you mention the performances of Sins Invalid and the activist No Anger. What can culture do to help deconstruct systems of oppression, to inspire other cultural conceptions and to help ensure that "the wounded, stigmatised individual can drive a new social impetus that will transform the prospects for the future"?

I think that culture is an essential element of what in philosophy we call regulating ideals. In short, we are all born into a given society in which certain images and prejudices circulate, and as a result we integrate them completely. People with disabilities also integrate these ideas, feeling inferior, ugly, undesirable, because that's what's circulated about people with disabilities in our Western societies.

Culture can change these regulating ideals and propose other images and other ideas about people with disabilities. But to do that, we need to give more space to the people concerned and stop producing a culture by and for the able-bodied. Film scriptwriters are able-bodied, as are the actors, and in fact we perpetuate all the ableist prejudices that make the rounds in society. The few actors with disabilities we know are often used by the ableist system to portray them as superheroes, but this only serves to reinforce the ableist systems. This trend towards "inspiration porn", i.e. presenting people with disabilities as superheroes, is in actual fact a weapon wielded by the ableist system. This phenomenon is used to explain to 99% of people with disabilities who are not superheroes that if they can't get out of the house, find a job, make friends or fall in love, it's because they don't really want to. It's because they lack the will. This allows society to absolve itself of all responsibility. In cultural productions this is a real problem because it dehumanises the person with a disability. They can't just be themselves, there's a real problem of ableism in culture.

Are you working on the question of vocabulary? Are new words being coined to refer to disability?

In the course of my research I've worked intensively on the reappropriation of stigma, particularly through vocabulary. We see this a lot in the Anglo-Saxon world, through the words queer/crip, which are basically insults that have been reappropriated by the people at whom they were hurled. As a result, they use them to refer to themselves and have made them a necessary source of pride.

Under their reports

This section compiles insightful reports from workshops held across various corners of the European cultural landscape, where passionate organisations come together to confront, discuss, and strategise around the intricacies of fostering true diversity and inclusivity. These reports serve as windows into the dynamic conversations taking place at the community level, capturing the collective wisdom emerging from the challenges faced and the innovative solutions being forged.

How to Promote on Our Stages, Venues, and Editorial Productions More Artists and Players Representative of the Diversity of Genders, Races, and Origins?

– by COSMOS / Le Guess Who?

Utrecht, The Netherlands
March 2023

Historical and political context

A track from the United Identities podcast plays in the background, broken beats progressively merging to the next jungle tune when the Dj's voice emerges to welcome us to the radio. "I am happy to be part of this project. I can freely share the music that represents me and my journey," she says, fading back to the song. Lulled by the dynamic tempo, thoughts and questions about representation and freedom of expression begin to arise. What does it mean to feel fully represented? It seems that, in Western society, the presence of music that comes from different parts of the globe is being promoted more than ever before.

Isn't it enough? For example, in the music scene, the category of World Music is increasingly widespread in mainstream and independent streaming platforms, festivals' programs, and DJs' track lists. Besides the promotion of music itself, it seems that many initiatives are aiming to raise awareness about minorities' discrimination and providing means of support, such as the Keychain initiative (2017) and the Black Music Action Coalition (2020).
However, it takes just a bit of research and the right questions to reveal that oftentimes inclusion is stuck on the surface, and the road to representation is still long. For

example, in independent companies and live music and concert promotion companies, the presence of black, underrepresented artists, particularly women, in executive positions is below 20%, reveals a study by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative from 2021. Similarly, a recent report from UK Music shows that Black people in the music industry of the country fall from 12.6% at the entry level to 6.4% at the senior level. So, yes, minorities' voices might be more present, but they still lack a spot where the decisions are made.

One could argue that promoting diverse music is enough to deliver a message of change. But, even in this case, if we scratch at the surface of the gigantic label of World Music, it drips ignorance and uncovers a shallow approach to representation and inclusion. World Music seems to describe every extra-European sound, and most times, the cultural references, the history, and the meaning that songs have for their creators seem to be overlooked in favour of their aesthetic, fit with current social issues, and exotic flavour. How can one feel represented when sitting in the back, hearing its message being marketed and clustered with many others?

It seems that many Diversity campaigns are struggling to accomplish the inclusion and equality they preach for in many sectors. Jeff Cheng writes about the lack of real action from educational institutions when it comes to finding resources and promoting initiatives that stimulate contact

> Highlighting the relevance of one's frame of perspective when the diverse is defined, observed, and especially narrated.

with and knowledge about diversity. Bonnie Urciuoli, in her study on Universities' promotional discourses, reveals how diversity has become a marketised quality: an added value that brings to the institution more prestige and, therefore, funds. These examples suggest that the declarations behind the current approach to diversity & inclusivity seem right, but as they fail in practice, the honesty of their intentions might be the one to question.

Among these shallow discourses and discouraging percentages, how can a more successful approach to representation and inclusion be found and implemented? Ironically, the answer comes from asking questions, and Reset!'s project is a very good example of this. How can a system be changed if its blind spots and sustainable alternatives are unclear? Taking this awareness as a starting point, this Reset! workshop is focused on questioning the current status and exploring new perspectives on the current and possible status of representations and new ways to support diverse voices.

▬

Context of the workshop

The host of this workshop is Le Guess Who? (LGW), a festival based in Utrecht (NL). Renowned for its aim to give voice to underrepresented artists, LGW has been discovering and supporting artists from all over the world for the past 16 years. Approximately 2/3 of the festival's artists come from outside the Netherlands, and more than 30 are the countries represented at the festival. During the pandemic, the hybrid platform COSMOS was born from the festival's desire to keep its goal active despite the limitations. Since then, it has established close collaborations with artists and creatives from 8 different countries every year. These partners become Embassies of COSMOS, and they are asked to produce a short film that narrates stories of their choice from their artistic and cultural scene.

As highlighted above, numbers and visibility don't tell the whole story; changes in the approach are necessary to make a difference. We are gathering to explore the alternatives and understand how to transform them into practices.

▬

Workshop's discussions

What Is Diversity?

After a short discussion, filled with examples around the failure of Diversity & Inclusion practices in many European initiatives, we begin the workshop from the ground question: what do we mean by diversity? Drawing the line from the widespread definition of diversity, the first statement defines that diversity is not about one's country of origin. Diversity is a voice that does stand out from the usual, from what is recognised as standard and common knowledge. A voice that brings in a new perspective. Writer Julian Brimmers leads us through his thoughts, highlighting the relevance of one's frame of perspective when the diverse is defined, observed, and especially narrated. There is an inevitable lens in front of each of us, bleared by layers of experiences and contexts in which we live in. This lens defines how we identify what is other than us and what we associate it with. Being aware of the presence of this filter and its influence on our judgment is the first step to shifting the approach to diversity. When we let the lens narrow our view, the understanding of diversity is likely to rest on the surface, focusing on diversity as a label and merely signalling it. Instead, questioning ourselves, and being open and humble to new ways of seeing the world will allow diverse voices to emerge in their richness and complexity.

Are We Supporting or Promoting Diversity?

What is there to do then if the current and widespread approach towards diversity is drawn from behind the blurry lens of Europe? Is there a way to shift the perspective, or is it too intrinsic in Europe's auto-referential rhetoric? These questions lead our next discussion, which is interested in understanding what it means to support diversity.

• The Platform's Role

Instead of jumping to conclusions from our critical standpoint, stimulated by the wave of self-reflection and its shifting nature, we begin the discussion by focusing on the role and responsibility of the current platforms that deal with diverse voices. The main way for diverse voices to emerge in Europe is through the standardised discourses already set up by the mainstream promotion platforms. These platforms are filled with tokenism, marketisation, and shallow consideration of the content. This situation also suggests two core points of reflection:
— The platforms still have the responsibility and ownership of what and how is being shared about diversity
— It is hardly possible for a frame of narration that does not standardise to fit in

As Hardi, founder of Studio21, tells us, Europe has plenty of structures, funds, and platforms aimed at supporting cultures, but the common issues are:
— Lack of interested listening
— A full monopoly of the choices
— Quantifying diversity

• How to give space for new voices to be acknowledged and understood without filters?

Hardi reminds us that the answer can seem fairly simple: it starts from actual listening. Choosing musicians because of the stories they try to tell with their work, rather than because of the label that marks them as diverse, already makes the difference. Hassan Kamil, a visual artist based in Sudan, part

of the Cosmos' embassies in 2022, remarks that another crucial step to gain awareness of the complexity and the richness that each story brings with it, is to research their context, and reflect critically on the perspectives at stake. When applied, this will set an attitude, a statement of intentions that is hard to quantify as it is more of a feeling, says Hardi. Certainly, the ownership of the choice is still in the hands of the curator. But, if those hands can scratch beyond the label on the surface, and open a space for the content, its complexity, and authenticity to emerge, then more voices will be attracted by the opportunity to be heard. The journey to support starts from the interest behind the choices. However, to truly change the power relation, the curator needs to have the sensitivity to stay behind the choice and solely be the gate opener. Otherwise, using the guests as mere echoes to expand the curator's big name will lead to shallow promotion. The key lies in creating an environment where unheard voices feel welcomed, offering interest and allowing the conversation to be led by them without placing the signature under every statement.

• What are the actual practices to support?

Once we look behind the labels of tokenism with the eyes of interest, many are the opportunities to create support. For example, Hassan suggests that the artists involved only online, as part of Cosmos, could be invited to play live at the festival. Their current and future work can also be showcased on the festival's current and future online platforms in a more continuous form. Moreover, a reward or a sign of recognition for their participation in the festival can also be helpful for their musical journey. Hassan, bringing the example of the Sudanese community in the Netherlands, suggests that a way to show concrete support to the musicians' context and community is to offer facilitations to expatriated compatriots of the musicians who come to the festival.

How Can We Dismantle the Dynamics of Appropriation?

Even when the lenses begin to shift, and the space is set to allow the voices to narrate their story, there are still some steps to cover to reach support. Indeed, despite the massive visibility that extra-European artists are getting in the European platform of cultural promotion, Europe is still the main stage. If the variety and richness of these new voices are mainly enjoyed locally, then isn't the auto referentiality marked EU still standing? How could we shift away from the European perspective and support diversity in a broader sense?

• Connecting colours

In her intervention, Seeryz offers a very insightful perspective. As the nature of colours, the features that we identify as diverse become such because of the contrast with the surrounding background. For example, certain aspects and nuances of another culture, such as languages, traditions, and habits, will stand out as diverse compared to European backgrounds. Whereas other characteristics with a closer tone will pass unnoticed because they are recognised as familiar. But what happens if we remove the European surrounding colours and put in contact actors from diverse backgrounds with each other? Then, more new and unnoticed nuances

will arise. Within this broader range of exchange, we will discover more richness of differences and similarities, and the options are unlimited. In this way, diversity is no more dictated by European parameters, and, most of all, more actors can discover and enjoy the multitude of colours that these connections will bring up.

• Network for change

To place this fascinating metaphor in practical terms: creating a network where extra European musicians and their scenes are in contact with each other will allow a mutual and equal exchange and enrichment of perspectives. Hardi brings an example of one of the projects of Studio21 that perfectly exemplifies the impact of mutual

exchange. The project brought music from China to a few schools in Kurdistan and music from Kurdistan to Le Guess Who?. According to the feedback collected, the impact was great: the people in Kurdistan who were involved felt valued as an equal part of a greater network, of something they could both receive and gladly share. Inviting musicians to Europe is certainly an effective way to contribute to their individual paths and the chance to explore more perspectives. However, bringing new colours to their own cultural environment can stimulate the local audiences to think differently and make change rooting even more.

Curatorial Risks and Possibilities

The direction to support is getting clearer; keywords are perspectives, interested choices, and network, but translating these into actual curatorial choices still opens some questions. Barry Spooren, Head of Marketing & Communication of LGW, directs the discussion toward the curatorial choices of the festival. How can LGW keep growing and expanding its reach in a supportive way while nurturing previous connections?

• The power of asking

When the number of artists involved is so numerous, the risk is to establish with them only an ephemeral contact and end up promoting their mere presence. But at the same time, limiting access to only a few artists and building a closer relationship of mutual exchange with them will mean being exclusive and jeopardising the impact that the festival could have. According to Matilde Bignotti, a collaborator of Luis for these workshops, these two options would exclude each other only if evaluated through the current format of the festival (which sees the Cosmos program delving into the stories of a few artists per year through videos, stories and more, and the festival days welcoming hundreds of voices on the stages of Utrecht for four days of music, seminars, and talks). These formats have probably been developed in response to the curators' vision of diversity and its support. But

perspectives

are those the best format to express the musicians' stories? Are there more ideas and formats that can serve and accomplish the purpose which has not been explored yet? For example, more frequent interviews with musicians, platforms to share their work, and channels that allow musicians to communicate with each other can be interesting resources. But how can we know what works, one might ask? Well, who better than the musicians themselves would know what is useful for them to emerge and tell their stories? Involving the participants in these questions will also prove their sincere interest in their opinion and strengthen the sense of belonging to the network. Also in this case, what is needed is the curator's standpoint to sit humbly and listen to the musicians' voices to speak out for their needs.

What Can Be Done to Make an Impact?

Participating in the Reset! workshop, aimed at questioning one's beliefs and collaborating in finding solutions, can already show the openness and interest of its attendees in shifting their perspective and support underrepresented voices. As we mentioned at the beginning, awareness is key. Therefore, for these practices to have a real impact, this awareness must be shared by everybody involved, above all, the artists who are part of LGW and COSMOS. It is important that they share and understand how their participation in the festival, its network, and its platform makes them part of something deeper than an event. Is it easy to feel disconnected, especially when the conversation is made remotely, but in order for the support to be felt, it is really important that what the festival gives gets really understood.

Reaching the end of this conversation, Julian wisely argues that keeping an archive of all the content collected is also a precious way to value both the narratives and to have an impact.
Every story, recording, video, and quote collected from the partners' experiences and stories is a resource. It can be of extreme importance for contexts where nurturing an archive is more challenging, and it can be exchanged with further contexts to stimulate new colours to arise. Through the archive, the voices that emerge from each exchange will last longer than their presence on stage or video and will create a base for an inclusive and decentralised channel that can grow organically.

References

→ The Music Industry Has a Long Way to Go on Diversity, USC Annenberg Report Concludes

→ Annenberg Inclusion Initiative

→ A year since Blackout Tuesday, has equality in music improved?

→ Jeff Chang on inequality and culture

→ The problem of 'world music'

Key points

Lisbon, Portugal
September 2023

Exploring Lisbon's Independent Cultural Scene
– by Nega Filmes

• The discrimination of racialised migrants in the European Union is observed in many aspects of the public policies, including the approach design for the funding proposals. In order to deal with the challenge observed of over-bureaucratic and complex applications to financial resources, training is proposed as a possible solution through mentoring and workshops at a national and European level.

• The importance of space for independent cultural organisations is highlighted, both for regular use of their activities and for socialising with each other. This type of space is very important for independent organisations as it offers space, security, as well as a base point for political pressure

• There is a strong need of diversifying the cultural content and its actors in power. Promoting different types of cultural events needs to come hand in hand with an inclusion of diversity profiles in programmers, curators, and evaluators of public tenders and festivals.

"It's very important to have spaces for collaborative governance, so that people who are on the frontline as cultural producers can have a voice and change laws."

The Role of Independent Creative Actors in Post-Colonial Cultural Environments

– by Canal180

Lisbon, Portugal October 2022

Do we need to create a new discourse/terminology for the Portuguese post-colonial context?

A new discourse will only serve to make the Portuguese people comfortable. The idea that this generation of artists propose/ put forward, taking a specific viewpoint, is that it is important to confront the Portuguese context/society with this post-colonial reality – for who, on what basis?

If the colonial context had been taught "correctly", would this discomfort exist?

If the education system was well-structured, there would be no need for discourse, there would be acceptance and progress. The need for a different discourse should not have to be "our" battle. The idea of a post-colonial angle is new. When we envisage Portugal, for example, at the very start of the first interim government, or our April captains in the 1974 revolution, these were for the most part people who had been in the Guinea-Bissau war of independence – they brought the idea of a democratic Portugal to fruition in the wilds of Guinea. Looking at it this way, we were never excluded from the dialogue. Everything started from the idea that this Portugal had to be built in a certain place – they don't count the "blacks" who died in the colonial war, nothing slowed down back in the "Ruas do Carmo", the conflicts happened in other territories, and they led as a result to the legacy of democracy.

The term "post-colonial" doesn't have to be thought as something external, "of the other". This discourse, mainly in academia, is positioned as if the speaker were not part of it or as if it didn't belong to them. The concept of "tyrant and victim", the dynamic of coloniser and colonised, transposes and passes beyond the "post" element; we can assume that there are two worlds, that which we live in and the result of an encounter with bloody and violent cultures that led to democracy. Instead of post-colonialism we have to talk about democracy, democratic legacy, the place we find ourselves in.

It isn't post-colonialism, it's democracy that puts us on an equal footing. Speaking of the post-colonial implies that we're speaking about "ex-colonies" and we're not "ex-colony", we belong to those nations and people that were cut out and redrawn. It is a really difficult concept to apply as colonialism is not over – white structures and white leadership exist and perpetuate themselves within the same model as the colonial system. The problem still remains of the time issue: for some democracy is "looking ahead" in terms of rights but it is difficult to talk about democracy in a country that doesn't talk about its past.

There is minimal attention and dialogue on the past or it is from an unspecific viewpoint, that did not include all figures, other nomenclatures, other terms. We need to talk about Portugal as a whole, to incorporate "white" and Portuguese people in this dialogue and, together, resolve and rethink all the systemic problems.

conf-

Examining this from a visual and/ or image-based perspective, taking into account this historical context and the ethnic composition of Portugal, coloniality does not allow you to make art in this democracy. It is hard to define who we speak for or who guarantees access. The problem of privilege persists. Democracy is not a finished article, we need to talk about the future, be on a forward-looking path, a path that includes flow from the peripheries (people that are nearly all racialised). In conclusion, the discourse of pre- or post-colonialism does not exist!

If the education system was well-structured, there would be no need for discourse, there would be acceptance and progress.

ront

path

"Opportunity" and "space" as an issue in culture.
Opportunity is happening right here (in this discussion suggested by Canal 180) and what is lacking is the space for people like "us" to decide what we want to do, without anyone else curating. When the people that are in structures leave and we enter, historical reparation can begin. We have to leave the place that colonialism has put us in, be independent and curate ourselves, without anyone scrutinising us.
There is a tendency for an attitude of observing and not getting our hands dirty, of still being unable to talk about some things in Brazil, or only up to a certain point. There is a constant need for affirmation and identity. The relentless advocacy for this place, the approach in relation to privileges, the need to open spaces, to recognise this place – what is it all for? Skin colour?
Respect for the body, the place for those without privilege – what is privilege? It's about being in a place where the voice has access, and mine doesn't.
This will be an issue to resolve in the long term, a generational issue. We need to unpack the term "whiteness", to create an observatory to study whiteness and be able to combat the ideas that led to its emergence, as has been done in Brazil.
Having experienced racism in society since childhood, when we're exchanging memories any chance to speak good. Family background, roots, music, all from "Mother Africa". When it comes to family background, speaking and acting as you are means being true to the skin you are in. Once again there is the issue of Portuguese education, which does not project the reality. We recognise that there has been progress, these days there is a different awareness, but we know that there is still much work to do (e.g. the Batoto Yetu association of African culture)
It's crucial to talk about the history/ies in Lisbon that address slavery in Portugal, to avoid the risk of history becoming forgotten, or being effaced into the background of the Portuguese diaspora.
Another example is a district on the outskirts of Lisbon, Barronhos, having its name removed and changed (neutralised) to Carnide. It is important to keep the memory of origins alive, to research the practices of the institutions and society and to maintain the ancestral oral tradition.
Looking at the media, specifically at television, it's possible to see change, in advertising for example. Now we do see Black people, as a result of an international movement, not one originating in Portugal. This recognition is fundamental, in spite of its slow pace. In Brazil they are at a different stage, and these people arrive in Portugal with a totally different attitude, more combative, more fearless.
As for effectiveness and clarity, this discussion opens a possibility. When any of us has a project, the possibility may turn into an opportunity. This is how we understand the spaces that we can inhabit and how we can inhabit them. Inhabit them with all that this implies, with the will to not prioritise whatever drives each individual, but to understand that the reality is constructed through these different priorities. The clarity of "for what" and "for whom" is important for us, to find out what it is that drives us.

It's crucial to talk about the history/ies in Lisbon that address slavery in Portugal, to avoid the risk of history becoming forgotten, or being effaced into the background of the Portuguese diaspora.

There isn't a direct connection with the challenges of everyone present, but the potential is there to combine our interests without being diminished, with a need to create an operational plan to maximise that which drives us.
The means of production aren't dominated by us. There is always someone else with this control/power. When are we going to be able to produce using our own means if we don't have the ability to change structures? For example, in the structures of Portuguese culture, there aren't Black people in management, there aren't people creating spaces or money, which is the result of the opportunistic approach of white people with regard to the history of Black people.

voices

We have to use tools of standard vocabulary, and gain clarity, because democracy is not an abstract idea. Grounded in a statistical basis, democracy offers mechanisms to study these issues. White people have to be silent and Black people have to take up their voice. This applies to the media, and to public television, such as in the case of the RTP Africa, a station funded by public money and taxes where there is a lack of presence of people of African descent, in the very communication channel that is supposedly focused on this population.
Then there is literature, and out of four of the most-translated African writers (José Eduardo Agualusa, Mia Couto, Pepetela and Ondjaki) only one of these, Ondjaki, is Black. The Africanness of people of African descent like Mia Couto is a space that we Black people allow white people to inhabit. Why is it that these writers are in the top positions? Because the majority of the population used to be illiterate. When literacy was coming, in the primary concern was always bread on the table.

It is important to think about who our peers are on an international scale; we have the example of the English-speaking world where the fight is different and further advanced. Why don't we stand side by side with the greatest Black thinkers of our times? Portugal is wasting so much time on what white people think of us; there is a desire for us to continue to keep things as they are. Eyes are on the new generation and on its results. The previous generation (the parents of this generation) had a terrible path to tread. For example: fleeing from compulsory military service, insecure jobs in Portugal – this leaves no time for subjective discourse.

It is a problem of the majority, the education issue is wrongly being passed over. Canal 180 wants to change the discourse, it's not a problem of the minority, but rather of the majority and passing on this information. There are more tools, interactions like this become opportunities.

Intermission: Why Canal 180? Why this curator/this choice? What are the objectives?

[How will the Canal 180 coordination work? Are there quotas? Where will the report go? What is the political strategy of Canal 180 – understanding that something has to be changed, when inviting these people; things only change when "the people are owners" of the budget; wherever these responses (of the participants) end up];

There were gaping narratives missing from the channel. It was necessary to start from zero, being an independent channel with no State support. Bringing together art, music and creativity also aims to put social topics/narratives in the spotlight, through the enormous potential of the audiovisual. The challenge rests in deciding what issues are important in our country. This was our starting point, with seeking out some of these participants, speaking and hearing them, in a spirit of partnership/dialogue. We need to start somewhere through conversation, bringing people to this dialogue.

There is the possibility that we may be able to create our own structures; in spite of the countless holes in the systems, there are also possibilities. There's no point waiting for an invitation, it's about creating a direct confrontation – the legitimacy of confronting the invisible and visible barriers.

What is lacking in Portugal in terms of support, cooperation or tools?

We do not have a notion of the value of our money, time, etc. Money does not just equal the ability to act, it's knowing how to act. It is also about meeting whoever we can work with, about building a network. We need a mentality of exchange and equity, instead of one of buying and selling (e.g., books by Angolan authors based on personal history exchanged with publishers).

It's about building the path for us to produce outside the Portuguese cultural system. Is it the country that doesn't have opportunities or is it us? Legitimisation can also arise through internationalisation.

The Portuguese cultural system defines itself, feeds the entire cultural agenda from public money. All these panels and people who evaluate bids, who inhabit these places of power are not aware of the history and the viewpoint of racialised people. Access to these opportunities/support/funding being out of sight, spaces not being held, not knowing how to prepare a cultural bid, not having mastered the requirements, all of this precludes us from direct access, which results in some person or institution obtaining this funding and making it "come to us," because the funds are channelled by "white people." For example, DGArtes offers an extra 10% support for projects that include people of African descent, which raises the question of who is of African descent? Who defines it? Black people are back to being a raw material or product. This effect is the opposite of what was hope for, as the projects that have obtained funding have started to become racist. This support was introduced with consultation of Black people. However, this consultation didn't continue during the monitoring of the projects which were granted this support.

Key points

Berlin, Germany
October 2022

Diversity & Awareness
– by Consentis
and Clubcommission

• Awareness work current main challenges are linked to the lack of sufficient funding to meet the demand for awareness structures of the scene.

• In order to maintain their independence, sometimes awareness structures may need to reject funding or opportunities in order to not compromise their values.

• Another barrier for funding acquisition, is the fact that awareness was born out of an activist scene, chashing with governmental structures and adding to difficulties in finding common ground and communicating the high demand for awareness work.

"The words "awareness" or "safer spaces" are in danger of being overused and made overly academic, which may stand in contrast to the practical work it entails."

"The resources are lacking to offer the level of support they (awareness structures) would like to provide."

Change: Towards Accessible and Inclusive Independent Culture

– by Girls* To the Front

Historical and political context

In recent years, Polish independent culture has been growing steadily, especially in Warsaw. The Warsaw scene is characterised by a diverse range of events and initiatives that celebrate artistic expression and community engagement (particularly within the LGBTQ+ community). However, despite the undeniable vitality of the independent cultural scene in Poland, it remains largely inaccessible to most people. A significant proportion of these cultural events inadvertently ignore the needs of an important demographic –people with disabilities.

One of the most pressing issues is the widespread lack of accessible spaces and venues for wheelchair users. The majority of events organised by independent cultural initiatives take place in locations that present difficulties for people with mobility impairments. As a result, people with mobility impairments are denied the opportunity to participate in and enjoy Warsaw's dynamic independent cultural life.

Another major obstacle for people with disabilities, especially deaf or hard of hearing people, is the lack of Polish sign language translation at almost all independent cultural events. Such disregard for accommodating different needs further marginalises this group, making independent culture in Poland an exclusive rather than an inclusive experience.

It is important to recognise the challenges faced by organisers, curators, producers, and publishers within the independent cultural scene. They are often faced with limited options when it comes to choosing venues without architectural barriers, as many buildings in Warsaw are not adapted for people with disabilities. This is exacerbated by the lack of funding available to independent cultural initiatives, leaving organisers struggling to meet the financial demands of ensuring full accessibility.

In conclusion, as the independent cultural sector in Warsaw continues to develop and evolve, it is crucial to address the issue of accessibility for people with disabilities. A truly diverse cultural scene must ensure that everyone, regardless of their physical or sensory impairments, has the opportunity to participate in and contribute to independent culture in Warsaw. Solutions must be sought to overcome the barriers of inadequate funding, inaccessible spaces and events in order to create a truly inclusive cultural experience for all.

State of the situation

Despite the European Accessibility Act, Poland still lacks systemic solutions that would encourage and enable increasing accessibility and inclusivity of culture –especially independent culture. As curators of independent events, for example, we constantly struggle to find venues without architectural barriers, while lack of funding seems to limit our options even more. However, as Girls* to the Front we believe that change is possible, and especially as members of the queer community we want to commit to improving accessibility. During this workshop we focused primarily on accessibility for people with disabilities, but also asked more broadly what makes independent culture accessible and inclusive.

Thinking about accessibility requires a multi-dimensional approach.

For the workshop we invited other members of independent culture initiatives (magazines, organisers, and collectives) and self-advocating disabled people who also work as activists, educators, and are closely connected to queer/feminist initiatives in Poland. For example, Renata Orłowska and Katarzyna Bierzanowska, who are wheelchair users, shared their disappointment that this year's Warsaw LGBT Film Festival is not being held in an accessible venue, after being held in an accessible venue last year. Renata described how she took part in a photo shoot for DUMA magazine (whose editors were present at the meeting), but was then unable to access the exhibition where her photo was displayed. Monika Dubiel, who is visually impaired, shared that despite Instagram's new option to add alt text on Instagram and other social media, people still rarely use it, which makes it much more difficult for her to follow the independent initiatives and their work on social media. Members of our initiative, as well as DUMA magazine, KEM School, and others, highlighted the lack of knowledge and training on how to improve the accessibility of their work, the lack of venues to hold events in and, of course, the lack of funds to pay for things like translation into Polish sign language. We rarely get a chance to meet and discuss the challenges we face –the Reset! workshop was a perfect opportunity to identify the most common problems, list good practices we can implement in organising events and other independent cultural initiatives, and exchange tips and suggestions.

barriers

Workshop's discussions

• What does accessibility mean?

The general question was about the importance of accessibility. All participants openly signal their feminist values and are aware of the importance of inclusivity, especially in the context of the LGBTQ+ community. And while all groups would undoubtedly say that being accessible is important, defining and sharing what accessibility means was the first step of our discussion. We talked about the inaccessibility of culture due to architectural barriers, not meeting the needs of people with autism, limitations due to lack of funding and more. Ola Knychalska noted that the cultural/choreographic programme she co-organises— called Kem School—would not be accessible to her because it is a two-month programme with regular meetings, so anyone with a stable job (or a precarious enough job to work every day) would not be able to attend. We also found that accessibility cannot be achieved in one step –and thinking about accessibility requires a multi-dimensional approach. It is even possible that some solutions are mutually exclusive. After creating a broad definition, we focused on the issue of accessibility for people with disabilities. Renata Orłowska told participants how the Warsaw LGBT Film Festival last year did a great job with accessibility –the festival was held in a venue without architectural barriers, the organisers made sure she could easily access the bar and provided personal assistance.

• What limits our options?

Despite the willingness of all participants to make their work accessible, there was a lack of knowledge about how to achieve this, and many of us immediately assumed that improvement would be too difficult, given the constant underfunding. Undoubtedly, lack of funding was highlighted as the main obstacle. Almost all of the participants have no external funding, which means that they have to rely on volunteer work, with a high risk of burnout and lack of sustainability of their initiative. Given these difficulties, taking extra (and often expensive) steps to ensure accessibility seemed out of reach.

• ...and what can be done?

However, the workshop –especially the expertise of Renata Orłowska, Katarzyna Bierzanowska and Monika Dubiel– showed us the small steps we can already take to improve the accessibility of our work, and highlighted the importance of planning our next events and other actions (more on this below). By prioritising accessibility, we will be able to look for solutions more effectively and plan our work differently. It is also much easier to start with accessibility in mind than to go back to what we have already put out into the world and then work on its accessibility. She gave the example of a website – starting with a template that allows easy navigation for people with disabilities and building the website with this in mind requires much less effort than rebuilding an already created website.

• Beyond normativity: disability pride and queer pride

As all participants –to a different extent– focus on co-creating queer culture (and culture for the queer community), another topic discussed during the event was the expected solidarity between the queer community and people with disabilities. Drawing on crip theory and disability studies, we discussed how both queers and disabled people function outside of normativity. For us, this was another argument for making our events more accessible. Additionally, we acknowledged that with an intersectional approach we want to ensure that queer people with disabilities are not excluded.

• Having improved accessibility – what's next?

Katarzyna Bierzanowska and Renata Orłowska stressed that even if we put the effort (and money) into making our events more accessible, we should not be discouraged if people with disabilities do not come. Firstly, they may simply not be interested in what we have to offer. Secondly, as Katarzyna Bierzanowska has noticed, many queer people with disabilities are not out yet. Finally, because independent culture in Warsaw is so inaccessible, people with disabilities often do not expect a small initiative to be able to meet their needs.

Workshop's challenges

• How to educate oneself?

A lack of knowledge and training on how to make events and media/communication more accessible was one of the issues that kept coming up during the workshop. This lack of knowledge (and judgements based on assumptions) can be seen on the part of both venues and, for example, event organisers. In this respect, the workshop was very informative –several participants (especially Renata, Katarzyna and Monika) mentioned different aspects of what to think about when organising an event

or planning communication in, for example, social media. For example, Renata and Katarzyna stressed that if we're organising a book launch party in the form of a picnic, we should make sure that there are several tables and not just blankets on the ground, so that wheelchair users can comfortably participate in the event. Monika explained the importance of alt text/alternative descriptions, and shared with us the pros and cons of different solutions on Instagram. While these specific examples are a step forward, we lack guidance and solutions for different events. At the same time, we can't expect people with disabilities to share their expertise and time for free and consult every event or project.

• Architectural barriers; lack of accessible venues for events, concerts, and raves

Renata Orłowska and Katarzyna Bierzanowska, both wheelchair users, highlighted the lack of accessible venues in Warsaw. Organisers –including us, Girls* to the Front– admitted that we often have little knowledge of architectural barriers. There is also no database of accessible venues. As already mentioned, there are few accessible venues in Warsaw, and at the moment only one or two are known for supporting alternative culture, club culture, punk events, and have a reliable audience. A regular audience is particularly important when organising gigs by artists at the beginning of their careers and when the organisers are small initiatives as opposed to large agencies. All participants with experience in organising events shared their frustration with the underfunding of culture in Warsaw (and more broadly in Poland), which leads directly to discrimination against people with disabilities.

• Lack of communication about accessibility

Usually there's just no information about how the place, event, etc. is/isn't accessible. During the workshop it was mentioned how often there is no description of the accessibility of places: for example, there are no steps to

enter the venue, so the place is described as accessible, but when you get there, it turns out that, for example, the toilet is not accessible for wheelchair users. Katarzyna noticed that depending on the place (and the information about accessibility) she could plan to go to an event/go to a particular place for an hour or a whole evening. Both Renata and Katarzyna pointed out that there are different types of wheelchairs, so not all of them might fit, even in buildings with fewer architectural barriers. As was pointed out in the discussions, a place might be accessible for a person with low vision, for example, but not for a wheelchair user. Most organisers do not indicate whether their event is accessible –and while many improvements require funding, adding information about accessibility is free and easy to relate.

• Lack of funds

One of the biggest issues in our discussions was the lack of funding to improve the accessibility of independent culture. Although we now have more knowledge about accessibility, as organisers and media we still lack funding. From big projects like renovating selected venues to build ramps or even renting new accessible spaces, to smaller projects like hiring Polish sign language translators, supporting events, or organising more educational workshops, having funding is key.

Needs of the participants

• Education

Unless they are actively seeking knowledge, event organisers, and independent media are not trained in accessibility and inclusivity. Those who are trained have had to spend their own time researching, paying for a possible workshop/consultancy, etc. Learning about the importance of accessibility would be the first step, the next would be to learn about how to improve accessibility and inclusivity,

pro-

and then create an individual plan depending on the needs and the way the chosen initiative/venue/media operates. Regular, free workshops, and guidelines would improve this situation.

• Funding

As the points above make clear, the lack of funding for accessibility in independent culture is one of the main barriers. With a budget specifically earmarked for this purpose (preferably from an external source), venues or organisers could hire Polish sign language translators, assistants, consultants, and educators. A larger budget would also mean new venues or renovations.

• New legislation and enforcement of existing legislation

Despite the European Accessibility Act, on a practical level independent cultural producers do not face any consequences if they create inaccessible events and media. While it may be more difficult for creators of independent culture (especially as some of them are unregistered collectives and grassroots initiatives), venues should be required to be accessible and should have access to additional funding if needed to improve the accessibility of events, performances, etc.

Workshop's proposals

The following proposals were formed primarily in a smaller group at the end (and after) the workshop, as, due to very lively discussions, we had limited time to prepare specific proposals/strategies.

At a national level

• More accessible venues

Because we simply lack spaces without architectural barriers, opening accessible venues that promote independent culture (which is often underfunded or directly focused on non-profit work) would be a fantastic change. Moreover, most venues that host independent, punk, and queer events are usually located in basements, squats, etc. As Girls* to the Front, we usually hold our events in one of three venues in Warsaw. The first one is Klubojadalnia Młodsza Siostra, which is a small bar near a car park, with lots of stairs, narrow corridors, etc. It's a "cult" place, but completely inaccessible for people with reduced mobility. The second, Komuna/Warszawa, is a rather spacious alternative theatre located in a building that used to be a high school. Komuna/Warszawa is on the ground floor and, with some much-needed renovation, could probably be made accessible to people with mobility impairments. It has wide corridors, only a few steps into the building (and then a few next to the main room), and a large bathroom that could be renovated. But as far as we know, Komuna/Warszawa is always underfunded, so it's hard to imagine renovations. The last place where we often organised our events –Pogłos– was demolished last year. The people who created Pogłos are still looking for a new venue, but the city (and the country) does not prioritise independent culture, and for many months no one from the City Hall was even willing to meet with the creators of Pogłos. This leaves little hope for improvement in this area.

• More knowledge: (free) workshops

Many organisers and people involved in independent culture in Poland lack knowledge about how to improve the accessibility of their work. Some of the problems can't be solved without additional funding or major changes (such as having a Polish sign language translator or opening more accessible venues, for which the government would have to recognise the role of independent culture). However, some steps can be taken without additional costs (adding alt text on social media, having one of the organisers ready to help a visually impaired person get from the bus stop to the venue, etc.). In addition, planning your events or work to be accessible now would make future challenges much easier. In May, one of the events we're organising as Girls* to the Front will be a launch party for the new book we're publishing –and we're planning it as a queer picnic with performances by local musicians. Because we're planning it as a day event, we have a much wider choice of venues, and we've already secured an accessible venue. Katarzyna Bierzanowska suggested that to make our event accessible we should start in the early afternoon rather than in the morning –she stressed that it often takes much more time to prepare for a person with a disability. Renata Orłowska added that in order to be on time for our 11am meeting, she had to get up at 5am. So, we'll start our kick-off party at 2pm. Katarzyna pointed out that if we're going to have a picnic, we should consider having some tables instead of just blankets –so that wheelchair users

posals

can easily sit with others. These are all simple solutions that we can implement. But the first thing we need is knowledge. Accessibility workshops –ideally free– could make a huge difference.

• Funding

Both of the above require additional funding from the government (and/or local institutions). As stated several times, Polish culture is underfunded, especially in cases of independent and queer initiatives. We have little hope for change in the coming years, but it must be stressed that the necessary step for improvement is to recognise the role of independent culture in Poland and then to take steps to fund independent culture.

At a European level

• Funding/financial support

The solution at European level that most directly corresponds to the solutions proposed at national level is to provide budget/funding specifically for improving the accessibility of independent culture: from sign language translation of events, to audio versions of magazines, to necessary renovations of venues. Providing additional funding, for example through a system of grants (with easy applications), could make a significant improvement, especially if both venues and organisers/media could apply.

• Awareness campaign

Again, similar to the proposed solution at national level, simply raising awareness of the problem could be a good first step. During our workshop, Katarzyna Bierzanowska asked us if we would organise a film screening if the sound (or image) in the cinema did not work –phrasing it in this way made participants rethink our approach to organising events and our work in the media, and taught us to prioritise accessibility. An awareness-raising social media campaign highlighting the importance of accessibility in independent culture could be a successful first step.

• Workshops

Deepening the role of education, the next step would be a series of workshops for event organisers, venue managers, and people working in independent media, with tips and guidelines on, for example, organising events, showing how to make independent culture more accessible and inclusive. Combined with workshops, the awareness campaign could make a real difference, provided there is a budget for both the education and the changes needed.

Resources to go further (readings & people)

Two members of our workshop have come up with suggestions for improving the accessibility of culture for people with disabilities, but their work is only available in Polish. However, we list them below to acknowledge their work.

→ Dostępność wydarzeń kulturalnych dla osób z niepełnosprawnościami [The accessibility of cultural events for people with disabilities] (Polish only) https://zaniczka.pl/rozne/dostepnosc-wydarzen-kulturalnych/ -the list of good practices for improving the accessibility of cultural events prepared by Renata Orłowska (Zaniczka)

→ Pełnoprawna https://www.facebook.com/pelnoprawna -educational Facebook page by Katarzyna Bierzanowska whom was one of our guests at the workshop

→ Katarzyna Bierzanowska

Key points

Prishtina Nightlife Behind the Scenes
– by Bijat collective

• Despite the efforts of different collectives to avoid violent and harmful discrimination in the Prishtina nightlife, still these behaviours, especially based on race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, are still present.

• The low levels confidence in the public institutions (ex. the police), the lack of training for staff and security members on these issues, and the stereotyped ownership of the venues are factors that contribute to the maintenance of this situation.

• Solutions proposed include the introduction of women and queer persons in curatorial within the venues staff, creating exchanges of information and experiences in a local and international level, and developing a compilation of basic safety measures and good examples.

"One of the main problems is that the nightlife industry and independent scene is built upon patriarchy and heteronormativity with spaces mostly owned and operated by cis, straight men."

"There should be more people from various backgrounds included in the organisation of these events and not only as underpaid performers"

The notion of safer spaces

In the labyrinth of cultural discourse, the quest for safer spaces is not just a pursuit; it is a profound acknowledgment of the complex tapestry that weaves together the narratives of diverse identities. As we traverse the pages of this volume, we find ourselves at the crossroads of a transformative journey, one that demands a departure from the shackles imposed by colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism. The stakes are high, for the notion of safer spaces extends beyond the physical realm to the very essence of cultural expression —a realm where independent cultural and media organisations emerge as torchbearers of change, navigating the turbulent waters of discrimination and injustice.

To comprehend the gravity of what is at stake, one must recognise that the battle for safer spaces is a multifaceted struggle against the insidious forces of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, ageism, and more. It is a battle waged on the frontlines of cultural evolution, where the narratives that shape our collective consciousness are dissected, redefined, and liberated from the chains of historical oppression. Independent cultural and media organisations in this struggle challenge the status quo and try and dismantle the foundations of discriminatory ideologies.

Breaking away from the structures and ideas imposed by colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism is not a mere intellectual exercise, but a dire necessity. It is a rallying cry against a legacy of systemic injustices that have permeated every facet of our cultural landscape. The volume propels us into a realm where questioning the prevailing norms is not only encouraged, but imperative. It prompts us to wonder how cultural expression can serve as a potent form of resistance and empowerment for POC people, women, and queer individuals.

To ignore these questions is to perpetuate a cultural landscape tainted by inequality and prejudice. Independent cultural players, however, are looking to become the architects of a new cultural paradigm —one that acknowledges and celebrates the richness of diversity while dismantling the barriers that have historically marginalised voices.
At the heart of this transformative journey is the imperative to stand against discrimination in all its forms. The quest for safer spaces, be they physical or digital, concrete or conceptual, is an unwavering commitment to fostering inclusivity, understanding, and empathy. It requires us to confront our biases, question our privileges, and actively engage in the dismantling of systemic injustices.

Independent cultural activities emerge as a platform where the voices of the marginalised can resonate, and where the battle against discrimination can be waged on multiple fronts.
Recognising privileges is not a passive act; it is a conscious effort to deconstruct the scaffolding that upholds inequality. The conclusion drawn by this volume resonates with the conviction that independent cultural and media organisations must stand as actors or allies in the fight against systemic injustices. It is a call to action, urging those within these spheres to champion the cause of diversity and inclusivity. The creation of global safer spaces demands a collective effort, where every individual —regardless of identity— plays a pivotal role in dismantling the barriers that perpetuate discrimination.

Manon Moulin is the editorial coordinator of all European projects for the non-profit organisation Arty Farty. She specifically works on the European network of independent cultural and media organisations Reset!, as well as media cross border collaboration project The Circle, and aggregation media *We are Europe*.

Reset! work-shops

↘ **Leipzig, Germany**
Sphere Radio – Decentralised Resources

↘ **Skopje, North Macedonia**
Skala – Audiences & New Generations

2023, January

↘ **Istanbul, Turkiye**
Garp Sessions – Intergenerational Cooperations: How to Share and Collaborate Between Independent Cultural Venues

↘ **Malmö, Sweden**
Inkonst / Intonal – Spaces for Emerging Culture

↘ **Kirkenes, Norway**
Insomnia – Cultural Collaborations in times of war and conflict

↘ **Leeds, UK**
Come Play With Me – Parents and Carers in the Music Industry

↘ **Prishtina, Kosovo**
Bijat – Prishtina Nightlife Behind the Scene

2023, February

↘ **Brussels, Belgium**
Arty Farty Brussels – Concentration in the Live Music Sector

↘ **Helsinki, Finland**
Pixelache – The Structures We Build: On Models and Practices Towards Sustainability of Independent Artistic Associations

↘ **Vienna, Austria**
Sounds Queer – Trouble in Paradise: The Current Struggles of Vienna's Independent Cultural Scene to Reach New Audiences and the Need for International Collaborations

↘ **Krakow, Poland**
Oramics – New audiences and next generation: How to Draw Them in?

↘ **Podgorica, Montenegro**
Nikola Delibasic – Building Relations between the Independent Scene in Montenegro and European Cooperations

↘ **Krakow, Poland**
Unsound – Sustainability in Organisation of Cultural Events

↘ **Tbilisi, Georgia**
Mutant Radio – The Decentralisation of the Independent Local Cultural Scene

↘ **Kirkenes, Norway**
Insomnia – International Cultural Cooperation in the Barents Region

2023, March

↘ **Tbilisi, Georgia**
Mutant Radio – Northern Propaganda, Hybrid War, and a Role of the Independent Platforms in Georgia

↘ **Brussels, Belgium**
Bandswith – Music Streaming: What Are the Prospects in Terms of Revenues and Transparency?

↘ **Rome, Italy**
Terraforma – Current Italian Clubbing Scene

↘ **Turin, Italy**
Terraforma – Independent Media

↘ **Belgrade, Serbia**
Drugstore – Belgrade Scene: Independent Cultural Players on the EU Periphery

↘ **Vilnius, Lithuania**
Palanga Street Radio – Solidarity Action and Support for Ukraine

↘ **Lisbon, Portugal**
Radio Quantica – Portuguese Independent Venues Challenges

↘ **Tallinn, Estonia**
De Structura – How Can Emerging Talents and Artists Be Supported and Nurtured?

↘ **Leipzig, Germany**
Seanaps – Interfaces: About Sustainability

↘ **Prague, Czech Republic**
Ankali – Reaching across the Velvet Rope: The Disparities between Electronic Music Scenes of Eastern and Western Europe

↘ **London, UK**
Sister midnight – Future Proofing London's Grassroots Music Culture: Ideas Towards a Blueprint for Sustainable Music Futures

↘ **Sofia, Bulgaria**
Hip Hip Library – The Culture Scene and the Next Generation

↘ **Prishtina, Kosovo**
Kosovo 2.0 – Tired Tropes and Reductionist Narratives: Kosovo, the Balkans, and the International Media

↘ **Utrecht, Netherlands**
COSMOS/The Guess Who? – How Can We Create a System to Directly Support Local Artists, Local Scenes, and Underrepresented Artists?

↘ **Brussels, Belgium**
Are We Europe – Transmedia Storytelling

2022, February

↘ **Budapest, Hungary**
Aurora – Resistant and Resilient: Perspectives for Independent Culture in Hungary

2022, September

↘ **Tallin, Estonia**
Palanga Street Radio – Sustainable Future(s) for Community Radio

2022, October

↘ **Budapest, Hungary**
Lahmacun Radio – Independent Music Journalism in Hungary

↘ **Batumi, Georgia**
Mutant Radio – Urban Cultural Physical Spaces in Batumi

↘ **Barcelona, Spain**
Whisper Not Agency – The Management of Artistic Independence

↘ **Brussels, Belgium Arty Farty**
Brussels – How to Support Artists with Disabilities

↘ **Tromsø, Norway**
Insomnia – New Audiences and Next Generation: How to Stay Connected to the Youth, Be Relevant, Become a Platform for New Generations and Support Emerging Talents and Artists

↘ **Lisbon, Portugal**
Canal 180 – History and Diversity: The Role of Independent Creative Actors in Post-Colonial Cultural Environments

↘ **Tbilisi, Georgia**
Mutant Radio – Independent Creative Platforms and Urban Changes in Tbilisi

↘ **Porto, Portugal**
Canal 180 – New Audiences and Next Generation: How to Stay Connected to the Youth, Be Relevant, Become a Platform for New Generations and Support Emerging Talents and Artists

↘ **Berlin, Germany**
Consentis – Diversity & Awareness

↘ **Munich, Germany**
Safe The Dance – Diversity & Inclusion

↘ **Budapest, Hungary**
Lazy Women – New Audiences and Next Generation: How to Stay Connected to the Youth, Be Relevant, Become a Platform for New Generations and Support Emerging Talents and Artists

2022, November

↘ **Milan, Italy**
Terraforma – The Relationship Between Independent Music Scene and Cultural Institutions

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