

# Mobility and cultural co-operation in the age of digital spaces

## Training of trainer's seminar

Co-ordinated by  
**on-the-move.org aisbl**  
(on-the-move is a project of IETM)

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## Programme presentation

Bucharest, OTM/ECUMEST, 27 October 2006  
Helsinki, OTM/IETM, 9 November 2006

This initiative forms part of the G2CC (Gateway to Cultural Collaboration) project, supported by the European Union - Directorate General for Education and Culture (Dec2004-Dec2006) and is run in an active partnership with the four G2CC co-organisers: ERICarts Institute [www.ericarts.org](http://www.ericarts.org), European Cultural Foundation/Laboratory of European Cultural Cooperation [www.eurocult.org](http://www.eurocult.org), Fitzcarraldo Foundation [www.fitzcarraldo.it/en](http://www.fitzcarraldo.it/en), and [www.on-the-move.org](http://www.on-the-move.org) aisbl



Finnish Theatre Information Centre



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## Not afraid to be an Alien

Key note speech, 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, TEH Cambridge, September 2005

Corina Şuteu

Having been involved in networking activities for 15 years now, I heard much about the post networking 'era' and about the imminent collapse of European networks. Well, that proves to be today a wrong hypothesis and even more so if we consider that European cultural networking succeeded in changing, in a radical way since the 80's, the stiff diplomatic vocabulary and the sometimes too conservatory cooperation practices of cultural and artistic interaction. Of course, this optimism concerning the networking process might be due to the fact that I myself am a committed networker and even what can be called a 'network groupie'.

Trying to provide the right definition to mobility, this might be: 'not being afraid to be an Alien'. One knows that the first effect mobility has is to render oneself aware how much one is a stranger for the others, whatever the positive and negative connotations this might have. Of course, an artist is, by definition, an Alien, a stranger, this meaning that mobility should not change much for him, in principle. Moreover, the notion of 'emerging artist' can sound pleonastic; because artists that are not constantly emerging can no longer be called artists; artists should feel *everlastingly emergent!*

Why, then, is mobility so important today and artistic mobility even more than other? And why should it be encouraged and supported?

Assessing the need for artistic mobility was one of the hard challenges for European networks and arguments in favour of it are not missing. But they are mostly, as lately advanced, expressed via the fundamentally administrative kind of vocabulary officials can read and, thus, remain external to some of the important outcomes of the mobility process itself. I would advance here a number of different reasons in support of mobility that might deserve consideration:

First, mobility is necessary because we live in a world that gives us the illusion that we know and sets up for us in a subtle way a battery of stereotypes that are very hard to break. Mobility is the only dynamics capable to render us back the conscience that we don't know and that certitudes can be dangerous and imprisoning. Artistic mobility is capable to deliver us from the ongoing pressure of the rationally pre-constructed, sliced, realities of the present world and helps us rediscover our emotional common ground. It is much more humanly enriching to 'go global' through emotional sharing, than through the free marked outcomes.

Second, mobility is necessary to help us continue to feel insecure. As much of a paradox as this might seem, feeling insecure is a pre-condition of feeling fragile, open, sensitive and attentive. We are too much today under the belief that total security really exists, that we can be safe! Or, from time to time, one needs to render oneself humbly to the world and to encounter new audiences, take new challenges and feel, whatever his age and recognition level, as an emergent, fragile, emotionally alive, 'unsafe' artist. Thinking oneself too secure might mean also becoming creatively dead.

Thirdly, mobility helps us understand not only what we are as compared to others (by that, I mean our identity as 'Alien'), but mostly helps us discover where we belong. In his last book, 'The curtain' (le Rideau), Milan Kundera is making a strong and touching plea on behalf of the fact that the European novel is a territory in itself, bringing together Kafka, Swift, Joyce and Thomas Mann. For Kundera, it is out of the ideas circulation between different generations of different nationalities of European novelists that the modern literature took life (and in it, reflected the social and philosophical mark of the European spiritual values). Hence, an artist's identity is not French, Irish or German, but belongs to the spiritual territory of the

novel in Europe. This perspective can help us support the approach to mobility of emergent artists, who have to get the right idea where they belong to with their minds, not with their passports and ID's. Re-empowering the artists voice in cultural policy can also start from this kind of understanding.

Last, but not least, mobility helps us discover how to be in our element. In his book, 'Out of our Minds', Ken Robinson points out: 'many people are displaced from their own, true, capacities. They do not realise their potential because they do not know what it is. They function 'out of their minds'. Mobility could, in this sense, provide ground for bringing us back to ourselves, through encountering the others, like in the Alice in wonderland 'through the mirror' effect.

All this being said, one has to observe, however the facts: physical mobility is difficult and often impossible for young European artists today; obstacles, most of them, are of material nature. This is why, in 2000, the IETM network launched on-the-move.org: the performing arts traveller kit ([www.on-the-move.org](http://www.on-the-move.org)). The idea was to create an on-line instrument and help facilitate movement of artists in Europe, by providing information, partner search and cultural cooperation search services. Immediately after the launch, I was given the difficult task to present the site and its possibilities to four groups of cultural operators in different European regions.

The first group was French. For the French it proved a problem to read English; they also, despite a will to engage in cultural cooperation projects, seemed in a way over informed and their thinking was along the structural functioning of the heavy institutions they know about in France. Also, most of the cultural operators in the group spoke about mobility as a means to reinforce a sense of national superiority and satisfaction as to the privileges the French cultural system allows, as compared to others.

The second group was broadly from Eastern European countries. People were multi-skilled and multilingual, they complained about the total lack of resources for mobility in each of their countries and were convinced that they could not unfortunately produce any changes. For them, mobility was also the means to strengthen a sense of 'other countries being better off'; inferiority was their key word.

In the end, on-the-move.org was generally appreciated as a good and necessary tool in both cases, because it was neutral and information rich, because it offered the specialised type of hints (from travel practical info to Council of Europe list of conventions info. and potentially represented a virtual territory where all young and old European cultural operators and artists can belong to. No sense of inferiority or superiority involved.

This experiences shows on one hand the difference between physical and virtual mobility; the former can engender alienating effects (which have nothing to do with being an alien), like the sense of being better and stronger, dominating and capable of teaching lessons or vice versa, weak and ill equipped...etc; the latter can tame and smoothen differences, but also needs specific ability and 'technological trust' from a traditionally educated cultural mediator or artist. Also, the former examples show that there are important cultural barriers in appropriating a virtual tool written in one language only and conceptually constructed as such (in between 2002 and now, OTM already addressed these issues successfully, by diversifying as much as possible, having a regular bulletin issue, exchanging on a regular basis with users...).

Today, a tool like 'on the move' should mostly be looked at as a real laboratory for mobility practices in the artistic (cultural) field, as a background spring for our own definitions and appropriations of the notion. And of course, also as a very practical instrument to help us see how and where we can find resources and possibility to keep on moving.

To wrap all this up and come back to the networking experience and the mobility of emergent artists issue, we, each of us, have a personal reason to 'go mobile'. My personal reason is much rooted in my totalitarian past. I am happy to have lived through totalitarian Romania because now I can enjoy every minute of being allowed to become a free traveller and thus,

go on learning to become a free individual. But most of all, what I enjoy about mobility is what I also enjoy about networking: the inspiration it brings!

And arts need inspiration and young artists are inspiration. They have to be given the opportunity to move (physically and virtually) around, as much as possible. I end here, wishing all of you to keep on networking and be mobile, so that you can keep being inspired! This would be my definition of what politicians love to call '**a better world**'!

## Introducing the training sessions and the trainers

Following successful training sessions on mobility, intercultural competence, cultural co-operation in the age of digital spaces led by Corina Şuteu in 2005, three of the trainees of the programme are now given a space to develop new thoughts and insights into these issues by developing their own training format. Sanna Kangasluoma (FI), Cristina Farinha (PT) and Aleksandra Uzelac (HR) will deliver a series of free training sessions focusing on issues related to digital cultural content and virtual mobility, drivers and barriers for mobility, and cultural networks as real or virtual pathways to cultural co-operation.

The training of trainers will address a reduced group of cultural operators and/or trainers that are interested and enabled to further perform and disseminate the results of the training within their organisation, their region, their artistic or cultural sector.

An evaluation of the training will be designed as an instrument in service of further formalisation of professional users feed back.

Training will be imagined as a mutualisation of practices of different users from the cultural sector and engagement in partnership about the identification of adapted mobility instruments.

### ➤ **Session 1: Organising digital cultural content and virtual mobility**

This session debates the consequences that the digitizing of cultural content may have on the perception of cultural space in general and on the cultural mobility particularly. Through case studies of web material, it is possible to see how the whole concept of producing and consuming culture is affected. The interactive nature of virtual cultural content creates a shift in the notion of mobility: moving from traditional cultural exchange of creative work towards a mobility that is about processes and mutual working, making things and meaning, producing new cultural spaces rather than just putting another product on the cultural market.



#### **Trainer: Sanna Kangasluoma**

*Performing arts producer, currently researching online communications. Her thesis is about how theatres and arts organisations use the internet in their marketing and communication. Her current work is about the meaning making and semiotic processes on the web. She has a decade long working experience in Finnish and European cultural field. She is also translator and editor.*

### ➤ **Session 2: Mobility in the (performing) arts in Europe: drivers and barriers**

Despite the EU freedom of circulation, many barriers remain hindering the achievement of the single market in what the movement of persons is concerned. How is the case for performing artists? As a highly educated workforce, artists are generally considered the least visible group of migrants and those who are neither unwelcome nor seen as a problem by the host society. However their movement is hard to get hold of: there is a lack of reliable European-wide datasets that would shed some evidence on the myths of nowadays European mobility.

Therefore one should question the social-demographic profile of these migrant workers along with their motivations and outcomes, but also to map directions, patterns of flows and to list

obstacles. This session introduces the background and initial dilemmas of this ongoing research on how mobility may represent an asset for the working conditions of performing artists in Europe.



**Trainer: Cristina Farinha**

A consultant in the field of educational, cultural and social policies from local to European level. She also lectures and develops research on artistic labour markets: employment issues and social status. Her current work concentrates on the conditions of mobility for performing artists in Europe.

➤ **Session 3: Cultural networks – real and virtual pathways to co-operation**

In the cultural field there is a lot of discussion about cultural networks that have been facilitating international cultural co-operation in the past two decades. This session will take a closer look at different kinds of networks and their structural characteristics to ascertain what we can realistically expect from networks in terms of trans-national co-operation.



**Trainer: Aleksandra Uzelac**

*A research fellow at the Culture and Communication Department of the Institute for International Relations in Zagreb. Her interests include impact of ICT on cultural issues, virtual networks, organisation of knowledge in the cultural field and issues of public domain and cultural heritage. A member of the Culturelink Network team and the Culturelink review editorial board.*

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**Training director: Corina Şuteu**

*Corina Suteu is an independent expert and consultant in the fields of cultural management and European cultural policies, trainer. Currently she is president of the ECUMEST Association in Bucharest and director of the Romanian Cultural Institute in New York.*

*Formerly, she was head of the Cultural Management Unit of the Institut de l'homme et de la technologie (Nantes), president of the European Forum of Cultural Networks and for 9 years, director of the European Master's degree in Cultural management of the Business School in Dijon, where she also set up and coordinated the ECUMEST cultural management training programme for Eastern European professionals, and director of UNITER - the Theatre Union of Romania and of Theatrum Mundi in Bucharest at the beginning of the '90s.*

*Since 1998, initiator and leader of the ECUMEST Association, and initiator of the Policies for Culture ECF/ ECUMEST program. She has worked extensively as independent trainer, consultant and researcher in the fields of cultural cooperation and cultural management and policies in Europe. She has been involved in many international activities as a cultural mediator, networker, trainer and external expert (for instance for the Council of Europe, Unesco, EU, European Cultural Foundation, Boekman Foundation, SOROS). She has also worked closely with the British Council, AFAA and the Goethe Institut.*

She is author of numerous studies and articles and she held lectures and courses in the fields of cultural management, cultural policies, international cultural cooperation, cultural networking at the: University of Bucharest (Faculty of Letters, International Relations department), University of Arts in Belgrade (MA in Cultural Management and Cultural Policies in the Balkans), College de Bruges, Institute of Political Studies (IEP) Lyon, (MA SECI), Paris VIII, Institute of Political Studies (IEP) Grenoble, Cultural policies Observatory in Grenoble, American University of Paris, ARSEC & Lyon 2, Girona University, etc.

## Mobile Culture: culture in the virtual space

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Sanna Kangasluoma 2006

### 1. About Mobility and Locations

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#### Where are you?

"Where are you?" is the archetypal question addressed to a person on a mobile phone. A funny question because the key idea of the mobile phone is that in order to communicate – to connect – you are not tied to any one location. Somehow we still seem to give great importance to the place, time and culture we – or the other person – find ourselves in.

Actually, to that question one should answer "On the mobile". That means 'anywhere', the physical space being irrelevant.

"Generation Here", Motorola commissioned report about the impact of 3G mobile phone technology on global communities, contests the irrelevance of one's location<sup>1</sup>. In the time of 3G phones when 24 satellites positioned around the earth are capable of tracking the location of a handset (and any attached human) to within a few metres the idea of being free from geographical benchmarks needs re-examining. According to the report, there is a new mobile space that can be defined as connections between the geography of the world and of ideas, the body and the mind, and that creates a middle ground. It means that with new technology you allow others into your location whether via video, tracking, or online communities. The location reappears as meaningful, giving co-ordinates to the communication and to the way we interpret the message. (Of course the new technology also allows you to conquer physical distance but that is not always all we want of mobility.)

With 3G, people are not merely "on the mobile", or "surfing the web", or even "on the train". They are in a hallway between worlds: the physical locations, virtual sites, online communities. They are in the middle of these worlds and in the middle they can also meet others. Being "on the mobile" means being here, there and everywhere.<sup>2</sup>

#### Come here!

Estonia is a fast developing economy in Europe. They have also fast ferries that take you from Tallinn to Helsinki in only 1,5 hours. When the country finally entered the EU many Estonians became very "mobile" and are now "connecting" farther and farther to the West (beyond Finland) and to the South.

Today, it is almost impossible to get skilled workmen to house constructing and renovation work not only in Estonia but also in Finland. Plumbers and builders have all gone to Sweden and to Britain where they get much better pay to take back home. This is of course a typical transnational migrant practice. It is also a very typical form of "mobility of labour" promoted in EU.

These "mobile" people are certainly "on the move", being in a hallway between worlds, being here and there. But unlike the Motorola 3G people, they are not everywhere – they are rather nowhere. The new mobile space in this case is more like the *non-lieu*, non-place, by Marc

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<sup>1</sup> Benson, Richard – Radcliff, Mark – Armstrong, Stephen – Levine, Rob 2005. *Generation Here*. Exploring the Impact of 3G Mobile Phone Technology on Global Communities. [http://direct.motorola.com/hellomoto/whatisrazrspeed/downloads/3G\\_GenerationHere\\_Report.pdf](http://direct.motorola.com/hellomoto/whatisrazrspeed/downloads/3G_GenerationHere_Report.pdf) (download 150906).

<sup>2</sup> Benson et al. 2005, 31.

Augé. The cultural reference points can still stay "behind", in the national cultural spaces even when people are moving. If the mobility is above all motivated by supply and demand, by the promise for financial gain, then the cultural experience is that of an economical transaction and not that of a real cultural exchange. You can actually be moving between geographical and cultural spaces just physically, without your imagination, without investing your cultural or social capital.

## 2. About Intercultural Competence

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### Cultural exchange and transactions

In the arts and cultural field the supply and demand principle doesn't work as smoothly as in the construction business. There is no immediate need for the whirling Tsheremiss's dance in Finland even if there are gaps in our culture on that part.

Nevertheless, the traditional Tsheremiss dance group, as well as any French or Spanish contemporary dance group come to Finland and make their show. We pay happily for the tickets, go and see the show. Then we can say that we have seen it. Next time we choose something else because the Tsheremisses or the French company we have already seen.

Is this kind of mobility of touring "national shows" different from the mobility of Polish plumbers in Europe? No, because it also enters the logic of selling and buying, the logic of exchange of cultural products – outcome of national imagery and the practice of consumption of (nationally produced) cultural experiences. It's not even very sustainable in ecological terms: in the same way as the Polish plumber, you tell the Tsheremisses to go away once they have done what was ordered – you treat them as disposable products.

### Creative industries

In the cultural field, the mobility we need is more at the level of ideas and meanings. We are in general more aware of the *a priori* motive for mobility – that is to cultivate and to develop ways of understanding and interpreting the world we all live in. Instead of mobility of labour, work, and objects, we emphasize the mobility of ideas.

While this philosophically estimable idea steadily works its way, it is continuously chased by more utilitarian thoughts of developing the creative production sector. Transcultural experiences and intercultural competences are supposed to lead to communication, to new ways of seeing and understanding things, and to fertile networking. In other words, the mobility in the artistic field, the mobility of arts and artists, are thought to accelerate the mobility of ideas, leading to the mobility of innovation and finally to the stimulation of productivity.

Mobility is no more only moving from one physical location to another but it is happening somewhere in between, in the middle ground, here, there, and everywhere, like with the 3G phones... When you are "mobile", you are in the middle of worlds and cultures.

As Kevin Robins in his EU report about cultural diversity<sup>3</sup> points, there is a productive interrelation between the logics of pluralism and innovation. Diversity, which is showing the way to the transcultural experience, can be a stimulus to creative and knowledge economies.

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<sup>3</sup> Robins, Kevin (2006). *The challenge of transcultural diversities - Cultural policy and cultural diversity*. Report prepared for the Council of Europe. Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing.

### 3. About Culture in the Virtual Space

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#### Communication

What is culture? It is the practice of making and communicating meanings. Culture is not in the object but in the experience of the object: how we make it meaningful, what we do with it, how we value it, etc.<sup>4</sup>

More and more of this practice of making and communicating meanings is happening on the Web – or in the new mobile spaces connecting physical and/or virtual and/or mental worlds. Culture is more and more situated in this kind of virtual and mobile spaces – and less and less in the fixed and defined institutions, organizations, or products.

The new communication technologies make possible the enlargement of the cultural space (and of the life-space in general) and allow for instant synchronising with cultures and life-worlds situated elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> There we see the 3G idea again - being here, there, and everywhere; being in the corridor leading from one world (physical or virtual) to another and another, and inviting others there.<sup>6</sup>

Mobility is a form of communication. There should be no doubt about this in Finland where the Ministry of Communications shelters also the Office of Transports. Mobility means getting together and constructing a common world, creating shared meanings – and hopefully, understanding. The reason for our “mobility” is that we want to unite.

Being mobile today is not travelling between fixed locations or entities. Being mobile is finding oneself connected to several locations at the same time – communicating in a non-stop changing virtual cultural space. Mobility thus becomes an accelerator for creation, production, and innovation.

#### Meaning making

We are communicating in between several cultures and communities and none of them is fixed at any moment. When we are communicating with others, we are creating shared meanings, trying to establish a common shared world. But meaning is not something fixed and guaranteed in nature – it is always the result of particular ways of representing something. Meaning of something will only ever be contextual and contingent and changing<sup>7</sup>.

“Mobility” further intensifies this idea of changing “mobile meanings”. When we are mobile our connections, cultures, communities and social networks have to be continuously deconstructed and reconstructed. In the same way the meaning of something can never be fixed, final, or true.

Computer or web site interfaces also are particular ways of representing something – particular discourses – and carry implicit or explicit ideologies in themselves. By organizing data in particular ways, they privilege particular models of the world and the human subject<sup>8</sup>. The way the “data” is organized on a web page has an important effect on how art is seen, experienced and understood – on the notion of art – which in turn affects on the artistic creation and on the quality of arts produced and distributed by these institutions.

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<sup>4</sup> See a.o. Storey, John (2003). *Inventing Popular Culture*. Oxford, Blackwell.

<sup>5</sup> Robins (2006).

<sup>6</sup> Benson et al. (2005), 31.

<sup>7</sup> Storey (2003), x-xi.

<sup>8</sup> Manovich, Lev (2001). *The Language of New Media*. Cambridge, MIT.

### **Networking the representations**

In virtual space, and especially on the Internet, representations that we find meaningful are mercurial. They are constantly circulating. The borderline between what belongs to this or that entity, to this or that site, to this culture or to that one is wavering. The wall is porous. Any web site as a discourse filters in and out both implicit meanings and seemingly strange elements that don't originally belong to this particular discourse. When the "strange" representations are adopted, they turn meaningful. In the process of meaning making one cultural entity (e.g. a web page) uses elements that are outside or around, it borrows and quotes external meanings in order to configure and redefine its own interpretation potential. On the Net this happens concretely by hyperlinking different things, but more generally this refers also to "networking" in a more metaphorical way.

This seems to mean that "mobility" leads to a situation where we have no more defined culture or delimited community to refer to. It is no more relevant to create tight and consistent cultural discourses because culture in the virtual space doesn't stay still. It moves in the middle ground between here and there, this and that.

Artist and curator John Ippolito argues that the Web is not about containment:

*It is easier and faster to jump from a server in Paris to one in Tokyo than it is to download a digitized Poussin at one's present location. For this reason, a typical user is unlikely to spend an afternoon on-line browsing links confined to the Louvre's website, an experience better suited to cd-rom. Instead, that user will follow a link from the Louvre's lists of other art sites to the Dia Foundation, from Dia to Ping Chong's Web page, from there to La Mama and the Robots Bar and Lounge, then on to the NYC Marathon homepage.<sup>9</sup>*

Even if you have managed to corral into one patch of cyberspace – your web site – all that is great, fine and valuable, this is irrelevant and inconsistent with a user's experience. The user will follow the paths that make sense to him/her.

Nicolas Bourriaud in his essay about "relational art" urges us to understand art, pictures in art, as invitations rather than representations.<sup>10</sup> Invitations to continue with oneself, the work which has been initiated by the art-work. (Invitations are directed towards the future, representations towards the past.) Maybe we should enlarge this idea to all kinds of discourses, especially on the Web, in the era of mobile culture.

### **Virtualizing – not digitizing**

The first condition for a web page to work like an invitation is that it emphasizes the communication aspect and is user centred. On the Net, we are not supposed to build walls that keep us apart from others, other cultures and other views. If we are mobile, or "on the mobile" we are not isolating and detaching ourselves either. On the contrary, I repeat, we are in a hallway that opens to different worlds and cultures. The border between what is ours and what is others' is cracking, and we don't mind.

The user centred web communication encourages users to construct their own corridors to places and meanings important and special for them. To be able to do this, the cultural content is presented in the web not like a "product" – the final result of manufacturing – but showing openly all the "manufacturing process" behind this product.

The French philosopher Pierre Lévy calls this kind of approach "virtualization". "The virtualization [of a cultural product, f.ex. a show, an exhibition] consists in determining the general question to which it responds", he writes.<sup>11</sup> The virtual is an inexhaustible resource. Using it does not lead to its depletion.

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<sup>9</sup> Ippolito, John (1997). Trusting aesthetics to prosthetics. In Art Journal; Fall97, Vol. 56 Issue 3, p. 68.

<sup>10</sup> Bourriaud, Nicolas (2001). *Esthétique relationnelle*. Dijon: Les Presses du Réel.

<sup>11</sup> Lévy, Pierre (1998). *Qu'est-ce que le virtuel?* Paris: La Découverte.

In Lévy's theory opposite of virtualization is "actualization". The "virtual" is not anchored in space and time. "Actualization" is the passage from a state of timelessness and deterritorialization to an existence rooted here and now. It is an event of contextualization. There is no limit on the number of possible actualizations of a virtual entity, but once actualized, it puts a stop on the mobility of meaning. It fixes it into some context.

But when we are holding on to our permanent positions and locations, when we simply transfer our temples of art, national fortresses and cultural or corporate brands to digital form and continue keeping the guard of the borders, we are displaying results, selling product and not respecting the meaning making process of a user. This is what I call "digitizing" of culture. The "virtual" object is almost boundless but "actualizing" confines it to a certain context, certain horizon of meanings. A "digitized" object is an actualization while a "virtualized" object is mobile.

When you experience "virtualizations" of cultural content, it is an active, engaging, participating, creative, and productive event that supports mobility of all kinds. When you use "digitized" content, you can take it or leave it, you buy the product or turn away, you agree with the ready-made meanings or remain indifferent. This is a consuming transaction for it supports exchange of currency rather than mobility of ideas and meanings.

At the end, it all comes back to connection, communication, and making meaning. The culture in the virtual space is by definition a "mobile culture". And if we want to promote mobility (in the cultural field) we must not only digitize art and culture, we must think about its "virtualization", about the hallway and the numerous corridors that lead to creative meaning making and to a myriad of potential innovations.

## Performing in Europe: Conditions for artists in the scope of mobility. Research drivers and barriers<sup>12</sup>

by **Cristina Farinha** 2006

### 1. Movement updates

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#### Is there a New Social Order?

Developments in transport and communications have diminished distances and allowed for immediacy in the circulation of people, goods, ideas and information. Over the years social sciences<sup>13</sup> have been discussing how nowadays *mobilities* have been reconstituting social life in uneven and complex ways and which might be the social and spatial consequences of time-space compression.

In order to avoid determinisms, one should distinguish technologies from its use. Are we witnessing a structural social change driven by a higher and freer mobility? Does it correspond to emancipation and broadening of life choices?

In pre-modern times the whole of society was structured around limited spaces such as social classes or states and mobility was just the movement from one category to another. Therefore social life was predictable and manageable since these categories, as frames, encapsulated the quasi totality of existence conditions and prospects and determined the range of realistic life projects. Throughout history nomads have represented de-territorialisation and refusal to integrate. As citizenship goes hand in hand with settlement, being stateless means exclusion. The image of the nomad is that of someone vulnerable, who is constantly on the watch since travelling through unknown roads and paths without walls to protect himself. Is there any change in this picture?

Though the arrival of modernity can be traced in different aspects, many of them condensed into the idea of globalization, one of its essential features is the separation of space and time from living practice and from each other, becoming distinct and mutually independent categories of strategy and action. This likely new social order has been qualified as ambivalent and "liquid" (Bauman 2000) and described as being constituted by increasingly cultural diverse elements that connect and interact in transnational networks.

But does the decreasing importance of social institutions as family, class and neighbourhood, correspond to a growth of individual freedom? Is the rapidity procured by technological transport and communication systems significant enough to allow an increase in the margins of the individual manoeuvre in constructing its own social meanings and networks?

Global enthusiasts envisage these processes as producing a new epoch, a golden age of cosmopolitan *borderlessness* that would offer huge new opportunities, especially to overcome the limitations and restrictions that societies and especially nation states have exercised on the freedom of corporations and individuals to treat the world as their home.

Nowadays daily cosmopolitanism, as a result of globalization and international migrations, has been praised as the enlargement of personal, social and cultural agendas (Cohen 2005). As a

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<sup>12</sup> This paper is published by the Proceedings of the International Conference on Cultural Policies Research (ICCP06), 2006, 12-16 July, Vienna.

<sup>13</sup> See works of Bauman, Beck, Castells, Deleuze and Guattari, Giddens, Urry.

management process of cultural and political multiplicities, it overcomes the nation-state by connecting the local to the global and creating an environment where citizens are able to share and combine diverse filiations and interests.

Another feature of the liquids is their constant need for vigilance towards the keeping of their shape. Bauman's metaphor illustrates well the reflective character of this new social order constituted by reflexive individuals (Giddens 1992) who are free to choose and to question themselves, their life project and the world at every moment. This individuality, paradoxically, goes along as well with connectivity and networks brought too by the new means of communication.

But again, empirical research up until now can not confirm or deny such statements. Nevertheless one has got to take into consideration how and by whom speed potentials get to be appropriated. Because the way individuals lead their lives depends as well on the opportunities and multiple influences that emerge from ones social context. Therefore the broadening of possibilities of life choices comes along with a system of constraints and its access and appropriation is in many situations also imposed and conditioned.

As a result, talking about social *fluidification* thus might refer, at best, to a small section of the population and to varied degrees of freedom. This glorified cosmopolitanism might be restricted to elites that have the resources to travel, to learn languages and to be available to absorb other cultures. So changes may not (yet?) be so radical. On one side, individuals are not necessarily more mobile because they have possibilities of travelling faster and cheaper. Communication and technological systems also don't automatically free people from social constraints. And mobility might be a value and a source of wealth that brings along new behaviours but also reveals and reflects old contradictions and social and spatial differences along with its own inherent ones. Regardless of all changes, social inequalities are still to be found in societies.

### **Reshaping Moves: from migration to mobility**

Social and spatial discrepancies, along with economical and political ones, are precisely in the core of the root causes of migration. But although sedentary life and immobility might characterise the larger part of the world's population, migration is as well a common element for most, if not all societies.

It is argued that population movements are happening at an unprecedented scale despite the increasingly tough measures and restrictions and amount of literature focusing on movements of people as a result of crisis – environmental, political, economic or demographic. However even before industrialisation and colonialism, migration has been an essential element in the livelihood strategies of poor as well as better-off people.

Living in harsh environments and finding a place where conditions were good must have been essential to survival in the beginning of human history. Though people have kept on moving: forcefully or voluntarily; for necessity; out of curiosity and desire; and in search for knowledge, resources and power.

Spatial mobility is the result of individuals who move around the territory to satisfy their needs to be tied to work or survival and nowadays as well to free time, leisure and consumption.

Migration has been often defined as a permanent and long distance change of the place of residence, whether it is within or across national boundaries. Compared to other forms of spatial mobility, the concept of migration is usually used when it results in a more immediate and fundamental change, a relocation of the base of everyday activities when the access to places, environments, resources and people is completely altered.

But nowadays mobility besides relying on the graft and extension of traditional local social networks and transnational diasporas it is simultaneously the outcome of people who obtain

information from modern networks organised at a global scale and are ready to move and adapt easier to any place where the opportunities they are looking for exist.

The internationalisation of political institutions, the emergence of global markets, the new means of communication and transportation have all been facilitating mobility. At the same time, chain conflicts (whether caused by war or natural disasters) have been increasing refugees' fluxes as well. But nowadays human movements are overcoming previous colonial relations and a bi-lateral character and are assuming new faces. The distinction of emigration and immigration countries is fading away and territories are becoming places of transit where people come and go, for shorter-terms on a temporary basis.

Concurrently some states, gradually, through transnational cooperation and international measures and procedures have been increasing their control and restrictions towards newcomers due to security and protection reasons. There are some views on migration that emphasise its negative aspects considering it a threat to social and political stability and development.

Migration is therefore a rising issue on political and media agendas. Policy makers and the general public are confronted with a substantial degree of confusion due to the deficient knowledge and information available. Concepts are vague and unclear. Statistics are partial and sometimes contradictory: the record of the diverse forms of mobility is often random, occasional and based on estimates. The pictures presented of population movements are incomplete and misrepresent the complexity of the phenomena. And arguments for and against migration are based either on fear and prejudice against foreigners or naïve ideas of an easy path towards a multicultural society.

Most of the world population, nevertheless, still choose to remain for the most of their lives in their place of origin. There some interesting arguments (Hammar and others 1997; Klammer 2001) on the value of immobility and the fact that borders do still matter. And a mobility rate in itself may not tell much. It is important to explore if it enhances the innovative capabilities and conditions of the ones that have chosen to move and then, as a consequence, the rest of the society as a whole (and not only the host). If mobility keeps on being a part of human character, policies should be supportive and possibilities should be explored to enhance the positive effects of migration.

### **Mobility as a two-folded concept**

Mobility is an exceedingly general and transversal term. Although usually just linked to movement in space and time, the intent behind the movement is also a full part of its content. So, it comes up as a two-folded notion (Kaufmann 2000; Montanari 2002) that includes not only the idea of aspiration, *the wish to move*, but also the expression of ability, *the realization of the wish*.

Many people might develop a wish to move and therefore become potential migrants through comparing expected futures as migrant and as *stayer*. But even if they conclude that it is worth the effort, this is just the beginning of the process since they might find themselves unable to overcome the obstacles. Their ability to actually move depends on specific requirements, risks and costs associated to the particular case. These conceptual proposals essentially elucidate that every individual has its own potential for mobility which can be transformed into movement according to aspirations and circumstances. So mobility is seen as the way each individual appropriates the field of possible action in the sphere of mobility and uses it to develop personal projects.

On a societal perspective, then again, freedom of movement has become essential to access not only goods and services but also social relations, education and work opportunities. So mobility developed into a basic right for citizens: whether inside a city, throughout a country or internationally. The freedom of movement brings along, therefore, the right to have access to effective means to actually move: material as well as legal and educational. This right/freedom is in fact a pre-condition to be able to go forward with personal choices. Thus it corresponds simultaneously to a second derived right/entitlement that enforces governments

to provide frameworks and remove obstacles that would allow mobility in the first place. Currently mobility is being rephrased in terms of equity and social justice and architects along with sociologists are discussing what a minimum guarantee level of mobility would be like.

### **EU: Are We Free to Move?<sup>14</sup>**

Despite the EU freedom of circulation many barriers remain hindering the achievement of the single market in where the movement of persons is concerned. Historically geared towards economy and trade, this fundamental right was initially aimed at economically active persons and their families. However, today, it concerns all EU citizens.

Although there is currently little consistent data on mobility flows in the EU and on the motives underlying them, current average mobility within the EU several decades after the Treaty of Rome (1958) is considered low. Intra-European migrants constitute a kind of hidden population: they are not registered as foreigners in any systematic way, therefore hard to reach for survey purposes.

In terms of geographical mobility whose flows are very hard to assess given the heterogeneous nature of statistical data, the percentage of intra-EU workers who live in a different member-state from their country of origin is around 1.5%, a proportion that has hardly changed in more than 30 years.

The usual point of comparison is the USA and certainly the difference is significant. This comparison is not a fair deal for Europe where there is clearly a weaker culture of mobility. In the US there are no language barriers whilst identity and sense of belonging to a place don't play such an important role.

Nevertheless figures show that approximately 32% of the US population do not live in a state in which they were born against 21% of EU population that has ever lived in a different region or country. In regards to occupational mobility, the average duration of employment in the same job is 10.6 years in the EU, against 6.7 years in the USA.

Yet mobility in the EU has been slowly increasing – especially between regions and across borders – and, in fact, its citizens strongly believe in (and are proud of) their right to free movement. Are we witnessing a cultural change?

Even though Europeans recognize that mobility can improve their adaptability skills and their job prospects, they also strongly value employment stability and are not willing to put their sense of security at risk by losing provisions such as child and elderly care, support from family and friends and having to face the costs of a complete change of environment. Despite fears, some groups of workers are more mobile than others. EU intra-movers as heavy users of EU frameworks are said to be carriers of a new European identity feeling.

Men are quantitatively more within general migration flows. But there are some trends towards feminization of migration within Europe. The increase of qualifications but also some discharge of family affairs on the women side might help to understand this tendency.

Age is repeatedly pointed out as central. Obviously there is a young adventurer generation that moves to study and work but surprisingly retired workers are also looking for sunshine. Are they moving in opposite directions? Unfortunately there are no empiric studies yet that might shed some light on these issues.

There are other features usually associated to higher mobility as temporary work contracts and single family status. If family reunion is a common migration push factor in what comes to intra-European movers some first studies show that the emotional dimension keeps on

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<sup>14</sup> Data sources of 1.4: Eurobarometer. 2006. "Europeans and Mobility: first results of an EU-wide survey on geographic and labour market mobility", 64.1/2005, Brussels, European Commission Publication Office; Karppinen, Fernandez and Krieger. 2006 "Geographical Mobility: Challenges and Opportunities", Discussion paper, European Year of Workers' Mobility 2006 Launch Conference, Brussels, 20-1 February; PIONEUR. 2006. "Pioneers of European Integration from Bellow: Mobility and the Emergence of European identity among National and Foreign Citizens in the EU", Conference Executive Summary, 10 March, Università di Firenze.

playing an important role and cross-national marriages and personal relationships stand out as important sources of free movement.

Even finding low educational attainments for a greater part of the migrant general population, during the 90's and within the EU, there was a dramatic increase of highly qualified individuals moving in different sectors and to a myriad of directions.

There are simultaneously groups of countries more mobile than others. In general, Nordic countries show the highest overall levels of mobility (about 40% of the population has lived in another region or country), followed by Ireland and the UK. On the other side, southern European countries have an average mobility of less than 15% and the new member-states of approximately 10%. Thus there might be a close relationship between mobility levels and strong economic and labour market performances. Yet this general scenario may also show that a policy that support mobility and reduce the risks for individuals could have an important part to play where the mobility of Europeans is concerned.

Yet this EU inner-liberty is not universal. There are ongoing transitional restrictions set up by most of the former EU countries towards workers coming from the ten new member-states until 2007. And third countries nationals get to see their mobility hindered by the need for visas and work permits. So nationality still shapes the degree of freedom towards and inside certain EU countries and consequently it influences direction of flows too.

And even within the EU there is still much to do in order to guarantee the effectiveness of the right to practice a profession in another member-state. Besides lack of administrative flexibility, the level of cooperation between member-states is insufficient and there are information shortcomings on rights and opportunities for workers moving from one country to another.

One may wonder whether it is the case for artists as well. Though artists have been travelling for education, inspiration and touring purposes, long before the EU was established.

## 2. Mobility in the performing arts in Europe

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### **Performing Arts as a Laboratory?**

The term *performing arts* acquired a new prominence during the 20th century and a much wider association of meanings, particularly in the last quarter. It covers a crowd of disciplines, genres and sub-genres that mix between each other. Further on performing artists also implicate other arts in their own work along with the use of digital technologies that raise new questions to its live character. These forms of art are not anymore restricted to a set of techniques and even the boundaries of the stage are constantly being redrawn through various practices and influences. This diversity heads to extra differences in, for instance, the production methods, size of groups, political and aesthetical intentions and social status of performers.

Nowadays this field is composed in a large part by independent groups and creators working on their own on a project basis. Many artists are implicated, simultaneously, in several different activities when not working as well outside the arts field. Also they may work (and often do) for other media such as cinema, radio and television, as well as musicians for the record industry.

In this open and supple labour market (Paredeise, 1998) it is difficult to establish precise criteria since profession, passion, vocation, art and life get mixed. Its fragile and precarious forms of work contrast with very demanding levels of motivation and dedication. The exercise of these art forms is characterised by a high occupational mobility and a large flexibility in the

organisation of productions, built in terms of temporary projects, where *intermittence* is the main form of employment. Multiple job holding is one of the strategies that reduce unpredictability of incomes. The ambiguity of the concepts of qualification and certification - in an activity many times self-declared, where diplomas don't set the line of access -, the difficulty of collective organisation and bargaining and consequent absence of a defined professional status, the risks of labour accidents and the short life of careers, design an activity where the probabilities of low income are high and are inadequate to the intellectual and physical effort demanded and where success is highly improbable.

Fortunately these days creativity is becoming not only a desirable form of capital but also an important skill, due to transformations occurred in the labour market requirements. The demand for innovation and new contents to feed cultural industries, have transformed creativity into an important resource. Global markets demand as well flexibility, mobility, life long learning and entrepreneurship emphasising individual responsibility and competences (along with the withdrawal of the welfare state).

In this switch, the arts and culture, characterised before as an atypical labour market, comes out nowadays as a kind of laboratory to study and provide guidelines for general changes in other professions and fields of employment. And in fact, traditionally, this field has always been considered the nest for innovation, where the development of new practices and forms of expression take place.

Even though this professional profile seems ideal for developing and setting forward experimental productions it also sets the scenery for an uncertain social status. Although this flexibility might be seen as an opportunity, it can represent also a risk: to artists as workers but also for the sake of the diversity of artistic creation. If at the national level there is already, in many of the member-states, a lack of regulation and of specific protecting system, turned to the European stage this issue intensifies its complexity.

### **Mobility as a Chance**

If we recall<sup>15</sup> the aristocratic courts of Florence, and then Paris and Vienna, well known for inviting foreigners for entertainment and remember composers like Mozart, we might conclude that performing artists (at least some of them) are used to travel in order to make a living. After the impulse of industrialisation that brought railways and faster connections, as well to the other side of the Atlantic, it seems that travelling in Europe just came to a halt with the great wars and soon after its division into two opponent blocks.

But currently performing artists still face many difficulties in moving around Europe despite the cosmopolitanism of many of its orchestras, for instance. Besides visa and work permits troubles for those not entitled to free movement, there is a lack of coordination at the Community level between the various regulations, social protection systems, tax policies, intellectual property and related rights applicable to performers and creators. Artists have to face linguistic barriers, a complex recognition of diplomas and qualifications, information shortcomings and lack of labour market transparency that increase their vulnerability and considerably hinder their mobility.

At the EU level there are some *acquis* that have set the way to some harmonisation: VAT legislation on reduced rates of tax to supplies of cultural goods and services; directives on copyright and neighbouring rights in the information society and the set up of the *Social Dialogue Committee for the Performing Arts*. But culture, as an area of complementary Community action, plays a very marginal part in the Union integration process and its voice and prerogatives are hardly taken into account. The recent Directive on Services, for instance, might be damaging for artists working conditions if not accompanied by minimum specific social guarantees since they can not be simply taken as general service providers.

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<sup>15</sup> For an historical perspective see works of Palmer, Barbara; Rosseli, J; Schonberg, Harold C.; Wagner, Manfred; Weber, William.

In many cases, artists are not only willing to circulate, but also depending often on the possibility of working at different places as a vital part of their professional activities. The common market enables persons working in the cultural sector to reach wider audiences and provides them with access to a labour market which is substantially larger and more diverse than the national one.

From the perspective of audiences, if we realize the few opportunities, especially outside the capitals and big cities that the public may have to enjoy the works of artists from other countries, than it becomes clearer that mobility in the cultural field is little.

Geographical mobility can be valuable to artists, especially in certain moments of their artistic development, since confrontation and exchange of ideas are important to the creative process. The cultural sector has indeed a special need for networking, coordination and dissemination of knowledge, experiences and information, since it is constituted by a large number of small and medium sized organisations as well as various forms of employment and self-employment.

But artistic mobility is not only interesting for artists, but also for Europe and its citizens and on behalf of the flourishing of its cultural diversity: when artists from different countries collaborate and work out common projects; if audiences have the opportunity to be confronted with art works from other places.

Mobility in the arts might represent an ideal opportunity for EU action as part of the achievement of the internal market and the free movement of workers, goods and services and as well for artists, since it might mean more work available and more freedom to take and develop this work. But are artists nowadays truly more mobile?

### **Questioning Mobility in the Arts**

Artists, as a highly educated workforce, are generally considered the least visible group of migrants and those who are neither unwelcome nor seen as a problem by the host society. They are quantitatively few, though often important as gatekeepers for other migrants, and usually engage in gradual transitions: from intermittent stays at various intervals to permanent settlement.

Cultural NGOs and the EU are claiming that mobility is low in Europe due to many administrative, political and economical impediments and are advocating for its promotion. But would the removal of all these hindrances be enough to increase and promote a freer mobility in Europe?

Also for the whole cultural sector there are very few and incomplete statistics. There is an absence of instruments of measure that would make possible a more informed evaluation and analysis of mobility in the arts in Europe and its long term consequences. The goal of this ongoing research is thus to shed some light on the movement of artists individually and institutionally aiming to provide new insights and ways of facilitating and promoting mobility in a democratic way in the arts.

On the individual side it is important to consider the manner each artist conceives and lives mobility. This micro-level of analysis intends to concentrate on individual artists mobility experiences: social-demographic profile; driving forces; motivations; skills and competences; conditions and outcomes. While on a macro stage this study proposes to examine the conditions that favour and hinder mobility and artists' awareness and relationship towards institutions.

This idea of mobility as a two-folded concept translated into this research refers to the movement of artists in Europe across national borders in the context of the development of their career. It concentrates on aspirations and plans of those involved and their possible realm of action. How may mobility represent an asset for the working conditions of performing artists in Europe?

The demographic and social characteristics play an important role in what the decision to move and the competencies to be able to act on this wish are concerned since migration is a selective process. Does the artistic workforce convey the general attributes of the so-called pioneers of intra-European mobility?

Despite the fact that the end of the career is being postponed, the performing arts are still a very young crowd. On the other hand in what comes to gender differences the existing data does not elucidate much.

As mobility is not cost free we can expect that the financial resources one might have access to also matters. Transportation and visa costs but also cash enough to live on until the investment starts to pay off is absolutely necessary. Studies on social conditions of artists (Farinha 2003) have showed that many professionals of the arts come from social classes' holder of resources: financial but also educational ones. The family can offer a stable base of support and material relief before unstable situations and many times, itself, claims as the initial space of socialisation in the arts. Also analyses<sup>16</sup> of high student international mobility have highlighted that participants are coming mostly from privileged social and educational groups and so the lack of funding may constitute a barrier. The existing programmes that support mobility within the arts try to solve this gap by awarding artists grants that permit to start a working experience in another country other than their own.

Social capital transformed into a wide range of contacts, tips and know-how, informal and formal help on employment but also conditions of living issues can play an extremely valuable role. Although internet and institutions devoted to post job adverts and other related records concerning mobility, it is still difficult to find sufficient information about high qualified and very specific job vacancies on the European level.

Even though *diasporas* keep on as a welcoming anchor, skilled workers and young professionals, where artists might be included, do not rely so often on the same networks as the traditional ones. In the cultural field active networks and NGOs advocate and intervene in the promotion of artistic mobility. These transnational organisations, among with other national and bi-lateral bodies and as well governmental institutes, run cultural cooperation schemes and databases that prepare and support mobility: grants for artists to travel abroad to work, train, undertake research, make contacts or gain experiences; programmes to help artists and art groups tour to other countries; guides and websites to help artists find partners, opportunities and contacts; international artists residencies, fellowships and studio programmes.

Albeit it might be still little there are already some resources available for artists interested in using mobility in a certain moment of their careers. But how do artists prepare and support their moves?

The driving forces and purposes that lay behind mobility can be diversified and they are certainly connected with the direction of the movements. Can we talk about circulation of artists through Europe or is it mainly a one-way south-north and east-west traffic migration in search of better working conditions? The traditional wage differentials between places can not explain and justify artistic mobility *tout court*. The attraction of certain territories and the image build on places might be an important key. Big cities are still places of attraction and nests to artists where networks are created and developed, where most structures and people are and where opportunities are created.

Besides material aspects, artists might move as well in search of freer political environments but also to broaden horizons, be confronted with the new and to get to work with other professionals from different cultures and backgrounds. Furthermore, contemporary art seems to be assuming an intervention and temporary character. Some of these days' artists claim the need to experience the world and its many environments and cultures, to realize *in situ*

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<sup>16</sup> See evaluation reports of the Socrates-Erasmus Programme of the European Commission.

research and projects, to be temporarily part of creative communities and to profit from the opportunity they offer for exchanging ideas and know-how.

Social networks and cultural affinities have a share on the decision of where to go. The direction of flows is still reflecting post-colonial economic, political and cultural and linguistic links and exchanges. In addition each artistic discipline may lead towards different destinations. Theatre, due to its core use of language, is certainly more sensitive towards these categories.

Mobility may cover many different types of activity – tours; co-productions; meetings and seminars; workshops; exploratory travels; exchange programmes; residencies; temporary work contracts; permanent migration – accordingly to the purposes pursued by each artist, be it education and training, creation, production, diffusion and networking.

Several lists of obstacles and possible ways to trim them down have been acknowledged (Audéoud and MKW, 2002). Besides the difficulties of settlers to get through and integrate into the different frameworks when it comes to simple visits, the status of non-resident is still not incorporated into the different systems and touring artists have an unequal position towards residents: dual taxation, non-deduction of expenses, non VAT exemption, and loss of entitlement to several social rights are many times the consequences.

However the lack of intercultural competencies seems to be the most challenging of obstacles. In this subject the different European national educational and training systems have evidently a key role to play. To live and work within different cultures requires flexibility and adaptability to other values and behaviours and therefore respect for diversity and pluralism. Surely mind-sets and mentalities are the most difficult (and slow) territory of change. And in what comes to the concrete world of international work other personal, communicational and relational skills are in demand. What are these specific skills in what comes to the performing arts world? Are artists keener on relating to the other?

Though only long term research can analyse whether mobility is able to sustain and improve innovation and quality of living, in what comes to the individual case, it is important to question in what ways do mobility experiences interfere in career future options and what changes does it bring to artists creative processes and their works of art. And also what are the rewards and challenges that mobility may bring.

But then again, mobility for the simple sake and praise of movement is not valuable in itself. Artists may stay at their original home place, taking or not advantage of the new communications and be creative, productive and happy. But for those who wish to try to make a move, mobility may represent a great way to achieve not only challenging and more fruitful working conditions for themselves, but as well a more open and collaborative Europe (and world).

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## **Cultural Networks in Virtual Sphere Between Infrastructure and Communities<sup>17</sup>**

by Aleksandra Uzelac 2006

### **1. Cultural networks – real and virtual**

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In recent years networks have become a focus of attention in different fields. According to research in various disciplines - from mathematics to biology and social sciences - the network seems to be the broad organization structure. In the extensive literature on the so-called network society or information society, networks are described to be its basic organizational form. Many existing social, technical or biological phenomena are recognized to have a network structure but definitions vary from field to field. It is especially recognized in ICT applications, where network structure seems to be the element that has changed the logic of our everyday work, so that ICT networks have become one of the most prominent social phenomena of our times. The ICT networking environment has enabled the development of many online resources and the cultural sector went virtual a decade ago. But before that happened, cultural networks were already recognized phenomena that have been facilitating international cultural cooperation over the past two decades.

In the 1990s cultural networks became a popular organizational infrastructure in the cultural sector in Europe. In the discussion paper on "Evaluation Criteria for Cultural Networks in Europe" networks have been referred to as a "communication infrastructure for European cultural cooperation" (DeVlieg, 2001). In their evaluation of existing European cultural networks, Minichbauer and Mitterdorfer define the term "cultural network" as "a structure and work method characterized by non-hierarchical, horizontal cooperation, a transnational orientation, establishment by the grass roots, a non-representational character, diversity and the absence of the powerful central forces" (Minichbauer and Mitterdorfer, 2000). They consider that minimum requirements for cultural networks are that they are designed for long-term cooperation, the existence of a common goal, the existence of members, and their physical meetings. Different authors also add to these minimum requirements: loosely defined network borders, voluntary participation of members and a structure that can continue functioning if a particular member decides to leave network (see studies done by Simon Mundy, Judith Staines, Gudrun Pehn).

The reason for the popularity of networks as a cultural cooperation infrastructure can be found in the fact that they try to enable flexible ways of cooperation, they try to solve concrete problems that members are facing, they bring together people in common pursuit of an interest, that through them existing institutions can be bonded together around common projects, and they provide efficient communication channels for their members.

Communication is an important aspect of a network's success. The reliability of information received through the network channels and the possibility to communicate with fellow members are crucial for the efficient functioning of networks. In the situation of information overflow it is not necessarily easy to communicate one's information through existing public channels, and networks and their focus towards particular themes or types of members enable efficient filtering mechanisms that enable members to access relevant and reliable information. Quick and simple online communication can enhance communication and exchange of information among network members. The new information technology paradigm, as an underpinning material base of information/networked society that Castells

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<sup>17</sup> This paper will be published in the book *Dynamics of Communication: New Ways and New Actors*, Culturelink, 2006.

describes, has enabled the spread of network models and virtual networks in particular. Its main elements - information as its basic element or raw material, networking logic, flexibility - are also basic characteristics of cultural networks, and many existing cultural networks have gone virtual in order to increase the effectiveness of their functioning.

As the Internet has become a basic information infrastructure in all developed countries, so different virtual networks and portals have become a part of the virtual landscape in the cultural sector. There is a difference between the two terms. Looking at some existing virtual networks in the cultural field we can see that they have started from an existing members' base (existing community) of real cultural networks and have then extended their activities in the virtual domain, while cultural portals started with objectives of providing infrastructure to cultural organizations and end users that first must be motivated to cooperate. But, in most cases, these virtual structures are trying to balance a technological base with communication and information elements, trying to provide to their members, and/or potential users the services that they need.

Cultural networks, as well as communication networks, enable access to their members/users, and combining them into virtual networks is an attempt to provide structure for professional virtual communities in the cultural sector. When existing cultural networks create their virtual versions it could be somewhat easier to build virtual communities, but if an attempt is made to build from scratch, the process is a bit more difficult, as the motivation and trust that exists among network members has to be built from scratch as well. Numerous discussion forums, mailing lists, and specialized portals are created with such aims. Their effectiveness depends on members' interest and motivation as well as on their goals and its underlying networking structure. Today we are witnessing a proliferation of numerous cultural portals and one question is - can we consider them to be virtual networks, in the sense described above, i.e. as a structure supporting cultural cooperation?

In other words, we could ask ourselves the same question that Eugene Tacher posed: are we connected because we are collective, or are we collective because we are connected (Tacher, 2004)?

Despite the given definitions for cultural networks it seems that the term "network" has different meanings and when we switch from cultural network (community) to ICT network (infrastructure) we are talking about different kinds of networks. Their characteristics are not the same, but their differences are sometimes blurred with different uses of the term "network" in terminology related to the network society.

## 2. Back to network's basics

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What is a network? - from the social science field here come some definitions and observations:

"Networks embody a set of fundamental principles for the ordering, distribution and coordination of different components, whether chemical, natural, social or digital" (Network Logic, 2004: 12).

"...networks provide a 'platform' for coordinating highly diverse activities, many of which are not predicted in advance" (Network Logic, 2004: 17).

Or as Fritjof Capra observes, social networks are networks of communications (Network Logic, 2004: 29).

A different, more basic and structural definition of network phenomena comes from a graph theory.

“A network is a set of interconnected nodes. A node is the point at which a curve intersects itself” (Castells, 1996: 470).

This basic definition of network that Castells uses comes from a graph theory that views a network as a graph structure consisting of nodes (vertices) and ties (edges) - nodes being individual actors within networks and ties being relationships or links between actors.<sup>18</sup> What a node is depends on a concrete case of a network. Ties or links in particular networks can be directed or undirected, meaning the particular relation can go one way or two ways. Physicists and mathematicians have studied network structures as an abstract system (random graphs) but they have also studied different real world networks and their characteristics and structures. Newman distinguishes between four loose categories of real world networks: social networks, information networks, technological networks and biological networks (Newman, 2003).

- A social network is a set of people or groups of people with some pattern of contact or interrelations between them (e.g. the patterns of friendships between individuals, business relationships between companies, sexual contacts, or different kinds of collaboration networks). A particular type of social network is an affiliation network in which participants collaborate in groups of one kind or another, and links between pairs of individuals are established by common group membership.
- Information networks - in this category Newman places networks of citations between academic papers (the node here being a particular paper and the ties being citations of other authors in the mentioned paper) and the WWW - a network of web pages containing information, linked together by hyperlinks from one page to another.
- Technological networks are man-made networks designed for distribution of some commodity or resource (e.g. an electricity power grid, a network of roads, or the Internet, which is a physical network of computers linked together by optic fibre and other data connections for distribution of information).
- A number of biological systems can be represented as networks, e.g., a network of metabolic pathways, genetic regulatory networks, neural networks, food web, etc.

These four categories describe different real world networks that, according to Newman, unlike random graphs, “...suggest both possible mechanisms that could be guiding network formation, and possible ways in which we could exploit network structure to achieve certain aims” (Newman, 2003: 9). From Newman’s detailed article on the structure and function of complex networks, where he reviews extensive empirical studies of networks, I have summarized some basic characteristics that network researchers have observed in real world networks through research - mapping, and measuring of concrete network examples:

**A small-world effect** has been discovered in a famous experiment done in the 1960s by Stanly Milgram in which letters passed from person to person were able to reach the designated target individual in only a small number of steps (six steps). This effect has been observed in a large number of different networks. The small world effect has implications for the dynamic processes taking place in real world networks, e.g. the speed of spreading information across the network, etc. It is the shortest path through the network (or network diameter).

**Clustering** (transitivity) - a clustering coefficient is the probability that two nearest neighbours of a particular node are also nearest neighbours of one another, e.g. a friend of your friend is likely also to be your friend.

**Connectivity** (degree) is a total number of ties of a particular node (number of nearest neighbours). Again, studies of different real world networks showed that in real world networks connectivity of particular nodes differs in scale as it often follows power law that leads sometimes to the so-called **scale-free networks** (many communication and social networks have power-law link distributions, containing a few nodes that have a very high

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<sup>18</sup> “A network is a set of items, which we will call vertices or sometimes nodes, with connections between them called edges” (Newman, 2003).

degree and many with a low degree of connectivity). An example of power law, i.e. a scale-free network, was recorded in citation networks, the WWW, the Internet, metabolic networks, telephone call graphs, human sexual contacts, collaboration networks, etc.

Mixing patterns - **assortative mixing** seems to be a common phenomenon in social networks where it was observed that people tend to associate themselves preferentially with people who are similar to themselves in some way. This can lead to a "**community structure**" in social networks meaning groups of nodes having a high density of ties within them and with a lower density of ties between groups (Newman, 2003). Such networks are also called stratified networks.

**Network navigation** - in social networks people can find the shortest path through the network (a small world effects) - Newman finds this fact surprising and observes that this would not have happened in random graphs. He concludes that "if it were possible to construct artificial networks that were easy to navigate in the same way social networks appear to be, it has been suggested they could be used to build efficient database structures or better peer-to-peer computer networks", and this is exactly what I find interesting when looking into the phenomena of virtual cultural networks.

Networks are not unchangeable structures, and observations of examples of real world networks showed that different *dynamic processes* are taking place in the networks. Networks grow by the gradual addition of nodes and ties and the growth process in fact leads to the specific structural features of particular networks, e.g. scale-free networks that follow power-law distributions (when the amount you get goes up with the amount you already have - the rich get richer rule), a rule also known as cumulative advantage or preferential attachment. An example of a scale-free network can be observed in a network of citation where e.g. "the probability that one comes across a particular paper whilst reading the literature will presumably increase with the number of other papers that cite it, and hence the probability that you cite it yourself in a paper that you write will increase similarly" (Newman, 2003: 30). Newman reports that the same principle is noticed in the WWW or different collaboration networks.

Another related process observed to be taking place in networks was network resilience to the deletion of some nodes or links. Networks having power-law distribution were observed to be robust to the random removal of nodes, but if in such a network a node with high connectivity was removed this would greatly impact the functioning of such a network. The WWW network and the Internet, for example, are robust decentralized networks but if a node with a high connectivity ceased functioning it would affect its functioning much more than any randomly chosen node with a low connectivity degree. This fact makes scale-free networks vulnerable to targeted attacks.

Network search is another process taking place in networks which has an impact on many practical applications. This issue becomes relevant in very large networks such as the WWW, as it affects how effectively we can communicate or get the relevant information. It has been observed that relevant information is contained in the web pages (nodes) as well as in the corresponding hyperlinks (ties), since both have been created by people that wanted to highlight the content of related pages. When searching a large network such as the WWW one can opt for exhaustive search techniques (used by big search engines) or guided searches that search for specialized content by searching only a small part of a network, but doing it intelligently in a way that deliberately seeks the nodes that are most likely to contain relevant information and presuming that pages containing information on a particular topic will be clustered together. Research on searches in social networks also suggests that people navigate social networks by looking for common features between their acquaintances and the target (e.g. those belonging to a certain group - location, occupation, etc.). As such groups can be part of larger groups this can be pictured as a tree structure that defines a social distance between two people (i.e. how many steps up the tree structure one must go to find a common ancestor).

This short excursion into network theory research shows us that real world networks are in fact not random structures and that concrete models of different networks should be identified that could be used to analyse cultural networks and portals as well.

### 3. Networking and communicational meta-structure models

When looking into structures of different kinds of networks, we can see how they differ from each other. Many observed real-world networks are, in fact, informal structures that can be recognized as networks and not a registered entity called network (Figure 1). An example given below is a structure of a collaboration network and is taken from Dorogovtsev's and Mendes' article on "Evolution of Networks" (2001).

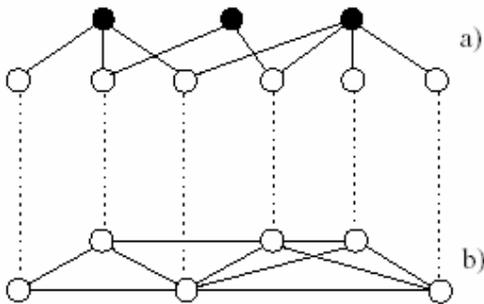


Figure 1 (Source: Dorogovtsev & Mendes, 2001)

The structure in Figure 1 marked as a) shows two different kinds of nodes - black nodes representing collaboration actors and white nodes collaboration acts. This means that actors collaborating are doing this through common collaboration acts e.g., common projects that they are undertaking. But most commonly the collaboration network would be represented in a more simple but less informative way where collaborators would be directly connected by links without indicating acts of collaboration (as in example b).

As a special case of social networks Newman mentions affiliation networks and in that category we can place the cultural networks that we have described at the beginning of this paper. They usually seem to have two structural forms. The model below (Figure 2) presents the networking model of affiliation networks where the network secretariat just facilitates members' joint activities and cooperation projects (as is the case with previously described cultural networks). The secretariat facilitates information exchange but also provides infrastructure support for the realization of joint projects. The secretariat can be viewed as a node with a high connectivity degree in the network and thus a common point that can in fact produce a small world effect as all other nodes are connected to this one.

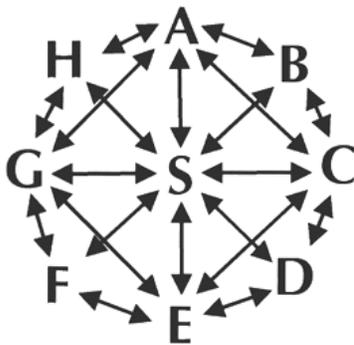


Figure 2 (Source: Starkey, 1999)

Cultural networks and their virtual versions are networks, whose members are communicating through Internet infrastructure, but they have common aims and activities

and they collaborate on particular joint projects. They may be networking in real life (meetings, conferences) and the Internet may be just a means of communication for them. For them, the aim is to achieve more than information exchange. In fact a cultural network advantage is that the information exchange is already present, as members are motivated to communicate among themselves (or with a network secretariat), and this facilitates networking, resulting in joint projects (research, conferences, exhibitions, etc.). In order to be a community and not just an infrastructure, a virtual network should be about communicating and common aims, and not just about access to information. Here the starting base is an existing community (a group of people networking) that is collaborating and sharing knowledge and for them a secretariat or a virtual resource point of that network serves as an artificial shortest path to necessary information (a high connectivity node). But information exchanged through the network serves as a starting point for new joint projects that really connect the members.

The second model (Figure 3), a decentralized networking model, can be recognized in some existing cultural networks, where, for example, different national networks interact with each other and in which secretariat responsibilities can be delegated and rotated after a period of time. It is a model that can be recognized in networks such as ITI, ASSITEJ, etc.

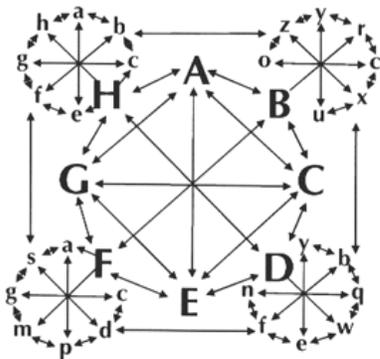


Figure 3 (Source: Starkey, 1999)

What we should keep in mind when looking at these networking structures is that in fact they all fit into version b) of Figure 1, i.e. even though the collaboration acts are not explicitly shown in these schematic models, they are implicit.

Previously, Newman has differentiated between social networks (such as the examples given above of collaboration networks and affiliation networks), information networks (such as the WWW) and technical networks in which he also included the Internet. The Internet as a network of interconnected computers is an extremely useful infrastructure for a communication network. It is in fact a network of wires and hardware that gives us access to another related network of information (i.e. the WWW) and it enables us to network via emails or other peer-to-peer services, etc. Its connections are undirected and traffic that goes through it changes all the time. The Internet is a physical network with geographical coordinates. It interconnects all of its nodes and it grows constantly in both aspects - nodes and links. We could represent its schematic structure (Figure 4) with a network model in which all nodes in it are interconnected - directly or indirectly.

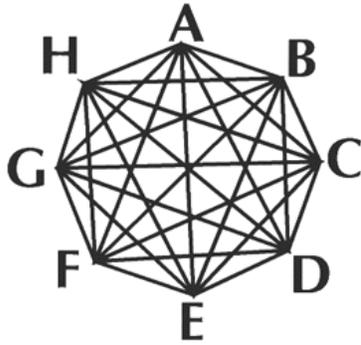
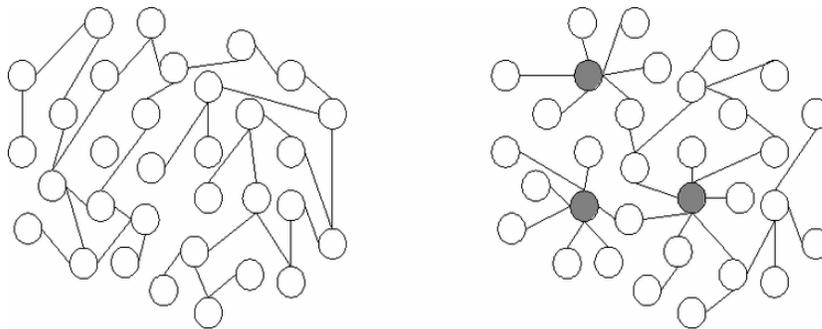


Figure 4 (Source: Starkey, 1999)

As an underlying infrastructure of the WWW network (information network) and other peer-to-peer services, we see that through the Internet everything is potentially accessible. It is often said that because of the network structure of the Internet and the WWW we are only a click away from a desired information or a document. Still this does not mean that information or web pages can be easily found by targeted users. As Eszter Hargittai informs us "information abundance still leaves the problem of attention scarcity" and the fact that something is available online does not mean that it is really accessible, i.e. easily reachable (Hargittai, 2000: 2). As previously mentioned, the WWW is a scale-free network, meaning that a few nodes are highly connected and many nodes have a much lower degree of connectivity (Figure 5). What this means in fact is that if one finds such a highly connected node it will allow one to find many other relevant nodes (information) much more efficiently, as often such relevant nodes in a certain thematic area are clustered around portals that serve as users' "shortcuts" to relevant web pages in the particular thematic area as well as a billboard for syndicated news in the field. The pictures below illustrate this.



(a) Random network

(b) Scale-free network

Figure 5 (Source: Wikipedia, scale-free networks)

So, to get the information, one can search for it through search engines, browse through web pages using hyperlinks, or access some relevant portals in a particular area of interest. Strategies for attention getting and filtering are important elements in developing any e-culture service. Online search engines, e-newsletters, specialized portals and virtual networks are existing mechanisms through which users are receiving information that are of their interest. They are considered important due to their attempt to introduce a "quality control" of available information, i.e. to channel relevant information only. Today, in addition to search engines, different cultural portals are the main gateways between creators and consumers of cultural products available on the Internet/WWW network. When looking at the level of nodes in the WWW network, we see that most web pages could be described as having a communication/networking structure like this (Figure 6).

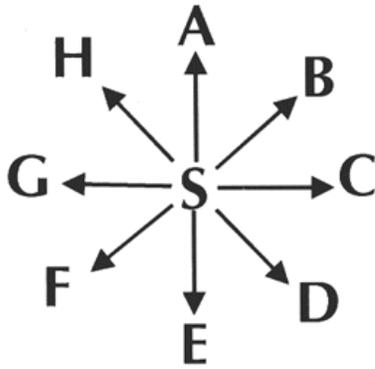


Figure 6 (Source: Paul Starkey, 1999)

This picture illustrates the underlying logic of the numerous websites and portals aimed at general audience. They provide information on the webpage and give links to some additional web pages, but their communication logic towards users is that of an information dissemination service. According to Paul Starkey (1999) this model does not seem to be a real network, but, as we already said, a service for information dissemination, since it does not provide for reciprocity of communication - from end users to the "network" secretariat/centre or in this case website (content is being produced by the portal team and not by users). Such a communication model we could describe as a broadcasting model. This networking model does not prompt users for participation in sharing content, but just in using it.

Another communicational model that is often found in portals targeted at professional communities is the one where members/users are all communicating with the portal's secretariat, but they do not network with other users/members through the portal (Figure 7). This is not a real cooperation but information exchange that is channelled through a portal's web services and newsletter. Such portals aim to get relevant information from users and then publish it online.

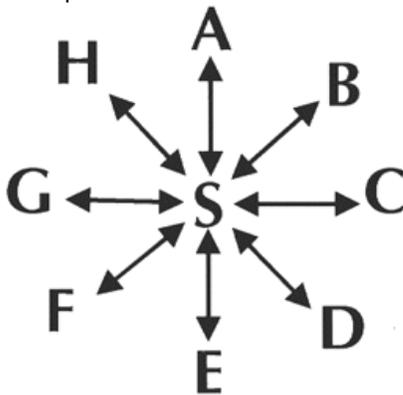


Figure 7 (Source: Starkey, 1999)

The described models represent a communicational meta-structure and not some physical structure, which means that a portal can get information from its users by simple emails but it has to have specific services or channels through which it will disseminate it. Both website models have provided users of a portal with the possibility for connecting, but, still, these models do not really provide structural possibilities for forming virtual communities, i.e. transforming users into a community or "a collective", since its main purpose is informing users of relevant news through established information services.

A portal being a node in the WWW network (and at the same time a specialized subnetwork) fits into the category of information network that people are trying to navigate through in search of a particular content. The definition tells us that cultural portals or gateways are defined as centrally coordinated web-based gateways, which offer access to accredited

websites, with limited original content or other resources available at the gateway site (Digicult Report, 2002: 56). By facilitating access to the existing sites of interest and providing some additional structural resources or other services that do not exist elsewhere, portals contribute to the organizational enhancement of a particular field. In addition to numerous links leading to other sites, a portal also informs on news and announcements happening in the field and it must take into account where it gets the information from that it presents through the portal and for whom it is intended. Sometimes portals describe themselves as a network, but it would be more correct to think of a portal as a node in a network with a high connectivity degree, thus enabling users to find short-cuts to a resource or a type of resource he/she is looking for. So, in addition to structural pointing to other sites (a signpost or a map function), in order to be effective, a professional portal must be an information digest (a resource), bringing to users' attention relevant news. However, in all its aspects it is an information infrastructure and it is hard to see it as a community.

## 4. Concluding remarks

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The described networking structures showed us that there is a big difference between infrastructure and community. The Internet and the WWW are giving us a necessary information and communication infrastructure for our work but if we would like to achieve building collaboration networks in the virtual sphere, such as previously described cultural networks, we must understand what makes them a community. In order to transform a portal's networking model towards the model of the previously described cultural networks (a platform for cultural cooperation), a portal should be able to generate genuine cooperation among some of its members as a result of its own activities. It seems that acts of collaboration are the real glue of a collaboration network.

It is clear that the cultural networks that were described above rely on more than just the networked information infrastructure; they have a common goal, common projects and members that are participating voluntarily. They are not only a structure, but as the definition stresses, a work-method as well.<sup>19</sup> It is important to keep in mind that different networking structures that were described in this paper have an important effect on what kind of network will be built - the one that is simply connecting users to a certain resource, or the one that is building a kind of "collective" or community. It is clear that by providing services that would correspond to the information dissemination model, one cannot hope to achieve building a model that corresponds to cooperative cultural networks.

Today the discussion is going on in Europe on how to ensure better coordination and cooperation among the existing cultural networks and portals in the virtual sphere. Internet seems to be a good media for sharing but we still have not learned how to achieve an efficient networked collaboration on the Internet. So far online joint collaborations are not very evident. There is much talk about joint collaboration while everybody is busy doing their own virtual projects. This question of how to efficiently cooperate among different virtual projects still remains without a definite answer, but being aware of the underlying networking structures of different existing virtual structures that are attempting to cooperate might help in building some sustainable cooperative networking structures in the future.

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<sup>19</sup> See Minichbauer and Mitterdorfer definition of cultural network at the beginning of this article.

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## Resources

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### **COMPENDIUM, Cultural policies in Europe**

[www.culturalpolicies.net](http://www.culturalpolicies.net)

### **CONTENERS**

[www.conteners.org](http://www.conteners.org)

### **CULTURELINK**

[www.culturelink.org](http://www.culturelink.org)

### **ECUMEST**

[www.ecumest.ro](http://www.ecumest.ro)

### **EFAH, European Forum for the Arts and Heritage**

[www.efah.org](http://www.efah.org)

### **ENCATC, European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres**

[www.encatc.org](http://www.encatc.org)

### **ERBAN, Ecole Régionale de Beaux Arts de Nantes**

[www.erba-nantes.fr](http://www.erba-nantes.fr)

### **ERICarts, European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research**

[www.ericarts.org](http://www.ericarts.org)

### **EUr-Lex, The Portal to the EU Law**

<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex>

### **FIBERCULTURE**

<http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue6/index.html>

### **EUROPA, Gateway to the European Union**

<http://europa.eu>

### **IETM, Informal European Theatre Meeting**

[www.ietm.org](http://www.ietm.org)

### **IFACCA, International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies**

[www.ifacca.org](http://www.ifacca.org)

### **MAMA, Multimedia Institute Zagreb**

[www.mi2.hr](http://www.mi2.hr)

### **MARCEL, Multimedia Art Research Centres and Electronic Laboratories**

[www.mmmarcel.org](http://www.mmmarcel.org)

### **MOBILE ACADEMY**

[www.buero-kopernikus.org/en/project/2/23/](http://www.buero-kopernikus.org/en/project/2/23/)

**ON-THE-MOVE, the toolkit for performing artists**

[www.on-the-move.org](http://www.on-the-move.org)

**POLICIES FOR CULTURE**

[www.policiesforculture.org](http://www.policiesforculture.org)

**RELAIS CULTURE EUROPE**

[www.relais-culture-europe.org/](http://www.relais-culture-europe.org/)

**THE LAB, Laboratory Of European Cultural Cooperation**

[www.labforculture.org](http://www.labforculture.org)

**WIKIPEDIA**

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)