WOR CULTURE : Culture Post-COVID19

Welcome to this reflection of our first *Wor Culture* event which focused on **Culture Post-Covid19**, using the North East Culture Partnership's Recovery and Resilience Plan as a context for our discussions. Here, we'll give the key points from our presentations, reflect some of the discussions, provide some (hopefully) useful links and resources, and let you know what's happening next.

For those of you who couldn't be with us for our zoom gathering, further information on what *Wor Culture* is about can be found at the end of this document. Please get in touch if you'd like to contribute, have any suggestions, or would like to share any links or resources.

We look forward to welcoming you to one of our events.
The #WorCulture team,

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PRESENTATIONS
Our event was kicked off with two presentations: firstly Matthew Jarratt from the North East Culture Partnership on their recovery plan for the arts and heritage sector in the North East; and then Laura Rothwell from Crystallised who have been carrying out research into how audiences and participants have been feeling about culture during the COVID19 crisis.

Here are links to the presentations on You Tube. You can chose to watch the presentations with or without subtitles by adjusting the settings on You Tube.

Matthew Jarratt - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fl5Ci0YTNPg

Laura Rothwell - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bYvvKThqj0

CHAT
During the event the chat function was used to allow people to share comments and ask questions. We've grouped the comments here under some of the key themes that emerged:

AUDIENCE and PARTICIPANTS:
Anon : I ran an online version last week - with 80+ sign ups and 50+ attendees- some from abroad - so a shift in demographics, and broadening our audience - so I see some positives, but miss the #community aspect for us and the building who host us #goodwill

Anon : Need one entity to join dots and not prioritise the same people/organisations, or be more inclusive?

Share the knowledge #collaborate #create #community

Laura Rothwell : We ran a client event online that had 95 sign ups and 60+ attendees, about 5 times more than any IRL events. But yes, agree that the personal contact is missed - I'd hope to see an amalgamation of the two IRL [*in real life*] and digital – especially as digital can open events to

people who can't travel for example. Our event had most sign-ups from Manchester, had we run it in Newcastle we'd have expected a great deal of time and monetary investment from those attendees.

Andrew Rothwell: Much of what we've heard today has been about venues. Is the post-Covid period an opportunity to move our focus onto skills and relationships? Should publicly funded cultural activity focus on the public, including current non-participants, and the sharing of the skills of cultural professionals, etc. and should the location for that sharing be determined by the public and the activity rather than a traditional cultural building?

Maria Baranowska : Do people want money off/benefits or to hear what their contribution is doing for the community they invest in.

Rachel Jean Birch, Moving Art Management: A quick thought from me…we're having lots of conversations about how audiences feel about returning to venues to see work, but as a dance specialist working with an art form that is inherently tactile I think there's some strategies to build around how the art form will need to adjust over the next few years. Dance making is a different ball game when people can't physically touch, perform duets or group work without risking their health. For freelancers without recordings of previous work it's difficult to have content to monetise online. Best practices of working methods would be useful from those who are treading that path in the near future or internationally.

Lynn Campbell : echoing Rachel at Moving Art Management - my work includes dance and circus with young people with SEND.................lots of sensory and tactile work.................

Yvonne Conchie : I'm interested in the hyper local opportunities - the potential this has in building connections WITHIN and BETWEEN local residential communities and the skills, venues, heritage and spending potential within them. What existing buildings and spaces within those communities can we repurpose into venues? Churches? How much can we enrich people's quality of life by helping them discover and explore their locality in creative ways?

BUSINESS STRUCTURES, SKILLS & THE DIGITAL
Mark Robinson, Thinking Practice : Do models for studio groups and shared workspaces need to change to better/properly reflect/encourage studio holders to see themselves as 'businesses' as well as artists/creatives – eg charging rates individually, to avoid falling outside of government support based on who pays business rates? Have come across this issue via work with Key Fund across social enterprises in the north but others may know more.
Anon : What about all ages, especially career changes/redundancy - skills updates
Nik Alevroyiannis : As well as live music, community music projects are as much about connection as they are about learning technique or repertoire. That is something I've struggled to replicate when moving sessions online. Also, noise issues are likely to prohibit moving those projects outside into safer spaces
Mark Robinson,Thinking Practice: Just a point about online - artist's rights when work is shared online needs to be given more thought, or made more transparent, as well as charging. (ie if I do a gig and you film it, what's my payment when you share it online…

BREAKOUT ROOMS
After the presentations we split into Breakout Rooms (smaller discussion groups) themed on:

- Data and Impact
- Skills and Workforce
- Opportunities

Here's a summary of the key points from those groups

DATA AND IMPACT

- Importance of *training*
- Importance of *data gathering* - how do we measure **audience engagement** in the digital era? How do we gather and use **audience feedback**?
- Need to think about the use of **language** - must be **accessible and inclusive**
- How do you **engage with audience members who are not so digitally engaged**?
- How can we better link up across the region, and use data, to support the sector?
- We need to **manage digital fatigue?**
- Several funders introducing schemes to support **digital transition** - how do we draw on this to support initiatives in the region?

SKILLS
- Rethinking the way we see (venue-based) arts organisations - the venue as part of a business model, not *the* business model - so what can we learn from this crisis and **what new business models might emerge**? In this we need to think about **freelancers and their pay** (and broader concepts like Universal Basic Income and different ways of supporting society as a whole)
- **Need to recognise those who fall between the gaps** in government relief when we're thinking about the ecology of the sector
- **Skills gaps** - we need to think about the needs of those at different stages of their careers and how to offer viable opportunities for them to train/retrain including **graduates who will emerge into the workforce without the normal access to support networks**
- Covid19 has highlighted the **need to develop a more digitally literate workforce** but this raises **key questions around accessibility**

OPPORTUNITY

- **Local Communities/Global Communities:** an opportunity to find new ways to engage with what is already a core audience locally and to understand local audiences better (**crucially thinking around inclusion and diversity**) but also to increase global reach and attract bigger audiences
- Cultural organisations need to be aware of **digital disenfranchisement** and perhaps, as trusted organisations, could offer training
- An opportunity to rethink how funding is being used and potentially introduce a 'social contract' to **find new ways to support the freelance workforce**
- **We can rethink how we use our public spaces** (streets/parks) to bring together communities and offer new contexts for practitioners
- Potential to **learn from other countries** in their practices
- An opportunity as we rethink how we work, to **rethink the environmental aspect of what we do**
- **Prioritise equality, diversity and inclusion**
- Opportunity to **find new ways of doing things** and **new ways of making work** (e.g. as GIFT demonstrated) - time to take some 'time out' for R&D - **need for funding to enable experimentation**
- Potential for organisations to commission work for future years and support artists that way
- Need to think about how we establish benchmarks/standards for charging online - **opportunity to establish industry parameters**

RESOURCES/READS/SECTOR NEWS

This is not a comprehensive list (and many sources will have been updated or have become outdated by the time you read this). It is what we've come across, what people have been reading recently, and resources suggested by yourselves.

ONLINE RESOURCES (with links to more resources) on CULTURE AND COVID19
AgendaCulture21 looks at the cultural mobilization of cities and governments during COVID19.

SECTOR NEWS: UK
Information on the **DCMS** *Cultural Renewal Taskforce* can be found here.
The Creative Industries Federation announce the Creative Coalition - a major consultation project to look at what the future of the economy and society might look like.
Peter Bazalgette writes for *The Stage* on how the arts sector can get going again.

CRAFTS
The Crafts Council launches a new report *Market for Craft,* on the craft sector pre-Covid19.

THEATRE
Society of London Theatres and UK theatre write to DCMS about the impact on the sector and how venues might reopen.
Director Sam Mendes calls on streaming services to support the theatre sector.
Ed Vaizey on the need for a plan and cash injection to save theatres.
More on the need to save theatres from London theatre directors.
The Stage reports on the popularity of streaming theatre productions.
A look at the impact of COVID19 on the performing arts and argument for Universal Basic Income.

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES
Maria Balshaw, Director of the Tate, tells the Art Newspaper about how they plan to reopen in August.
Magda Sawon on how small galleries will survive the Covid19 crisis.

SECTOR NEWS: Global
The Art Newspaper reports the German Government's support for the arts sector.
New Zealand's government supports an arts and music recovery package.
Opinion piece on how the pandemic is impacting the arts sector in the US.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESS
Important blog from Lisette Auton on issues with zoom/digital platforms and accessibility.
The Creative Industries Federation reports insights from the APPG for Creative Diversity

PODCASTS/ZOOMS/DIGITAL
CLIMATE CHANGE: Julie's bicycle has launched a series of Climate Change Conversations, every Wednesday.
PARLIAMENT OF DREAMS: writing by François Matarasso including links to several other writers/bloggers on culture from across the globe

Finishing Notes - What is Wor Culture?

What is Wor Culture?

Wor Culture is a forum for discussing issues relating to the culture and creative sectors in the North East, and contribute to shaping its future. The gathering is facilitated by Newcastle University but we strongly encourage you to propose topics for discussion, join in the debate, or offer to lead a session.

At the moment, due to COVID19, this is an online gathering using Zoom. We will be looking at alternative formats in due course.

How is the programme put together?

The sessions focus on topics suggested by you. You can also suggest speakers (or offer to do a presentation or provocation) and/or host a session (we'll support you!). All suggestions to: bob.allan@ncl.ac.uk

What is the format of the event?

Normally the event follows a format where we have a series of short presentations (c. 10 minutes) to help establish the context for the discussion. This is followed by a Q&A. We then have a series of breakout groups each focused on a different theme or topic. You choose which one you want to join beforehand. Breakout groups are smaller, focused discussion groups. After this each group feeds back into a general discussion. When we have closed the event, we have a coffee social – unfortunately you have to provide your own coffee!

There is a function in Zoom called the 'Chat' function which is like texting or messaging. We use this to gather questions and comments. Participants can also use it to contribute or send a private message to the host if they do not want to speak using their video.

Future programme:

- July – The Future of work
- August - Distinctiveness: North or North East?
- September – Rewriting the Rural Narrative
- October – Being International
  If you are interested in putting forward a topic or getting involved in an existing session please contact bob.allan@ncl.ac.uk