

WOR CULTURE: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE INTERNATIONAL NOW?

Welcome to this reflection of our eight *Wor Culture* event which focused on **What does it mean to be international now?** Here, we'll share the 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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Our event included presentations from **Dr Charlotte Faucher** - [Manchester University](#), **Clymene Christoforou** - [D6 Culture in Transit](#) and **Alison Walton-Robson** - [Headway Arts](#)
[If you click on the Presentation menu there is an option to view with subtitles]

<https://youtu.be/SIX8FXrU1Q4>

BREAKOUT ROOMS

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

- What does it mean for me?
- How do we change the perceptions and find our voices?
- How can we ensure NewcastleGateshead is and stays an international city?

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

1. What does it mean for me?

- I have spent the last 4 years getting angry, upset, fighting against it, pointing out the detriments etc... and did not relish having to attend this and go through it all again. However, I know we need a way forward
- We need to share information
- Everything is being left to us to find out what it means and work a way around it all
- What does it mean to the 27 states?
- Different working face to face and international rules?
- Certain countries have certain dispensations that are hard to identify and fathom for small organisations with part-time staff
- We need to understand things for budgets/funding etc and need answers
- It's harder for new people coming into the 'market' not having existing international connections
- The British council may be a helpful route

2. How do we change perceptions and find our voices?

Importance of personal agency, keeping going and not being discouraged

- Disseminate the value of what we do through internationalism
- How we can lobby and who we can lobby, making efforts to get the word out there, but also to not let people off the hook.
- We talked about opportunities for people who are neurodiverse and people who are disabled, who need the right kind of support
- We looked at skills gaps and what's going to happen with the European Social Fund training programmes
- We also talked about audiences - who wants to listen and who are we talking to? Trying to identify who can actually make change happen and how we approach that
- How as artists can we use our creativity to get that across

3. How can we ensure NewcastleGateshead is and stays an international city?

- The importance of networking and information sharing within the region and with everyone - at all stages in their career
- The need to lobby for the sector in the appropriate places, we need to decide for what and to whom and by whom?
- Define the city/region. Who are we and where are we?
- Our region has a deep, multi-cultural history. We need to keep reminding ourselves of that
- Build an international element into every project however small
- Evidence provided by the group of the importance of working with, meeting and interacting with people from other countries. This interaction broadens horizons and perspectives
- We need to collect /note what is international about our region now? • Universities bring students and staff from all over the globe. Many stay - if they can. • Airport • Port of Tyne - trade connections • Toursim - people visit the region. Why?

- Digital iterations of GIFT, Berwick Film & Media Festival etc... have taught us new skills and brought new international audiences to our work
- Newcastle can feel very 'local' - but it also feels international and outward looking (in terms of how it is experienced as a city)
- It is not known as being a very diverse place, but there is a rich, diverse/international history here, - Example offered of how Newcastle positions itself in terms of international identity - example offered of NU giving Martin Luther King an honorary degree
- There is a sense that people in Newcastle are outward looking - we don't look to London, but beyond.
- The role that the bigger institutions have played (e.g. BALTIC, Sage) in welcoming international artists and platforms has been really important, but also good to recognise the smaller organisations in the North East and how they are also doing this work.
- Opportunity for more of us with international networks in the North East to stay in dialogue across our distinct disciplines and networks, to amplify opportunities and reach, we can be working ourselves more effectively in a more networked way.
- Harder for those North East institutions to welcome international artists (e.g. salary threshold as a real issue) - Significant numbers of Europeans (artists/culture sector workers) have left the UK - feeling unwelcome – hostile environment - but this is difficult to track/quantify, and there is no real knowledge (e.g. gathered by ACE) around how many people have left the sector due to this.

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.

- The Arts After Brexit: the Impact of the UK's Departure From the European Union on Its Cultural Relations With European Union Member States <https://presspage-production-content.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/1369/theartsafterbrexitfinal.pdf>
- The future of Britain's cultural relations with European Union member states <https://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/researcher-development/knowledge-exchange/case-studies/tom-fleming/>
- Culture organisations face potential 'artistic hiatus' in EU partnerships due to Brexit <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/culture-organisations-face-potential-artistic-hiatus/>
- EU-UK cultural relations after Brexit questionnaire https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1HSL7cAvH2BQd10GtQse28AOb2xzcCbIYnCA5q7RT6Oc/viewform?edit_requested=true
- The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement <https://www.pec.ac.uk/blog/the-uk-eu-trade-and-cooperation-agreement-whats-in-it-for-the-creative-industries-and-the-steps-ahead-1>
- UK E artsinfo - Bringing you clear information pre and post-Brexit for everyone in the creative arts industry <https://www.ukeartswork.info/>
- About the Arts Infopoint UK initiative <http://www.artsinfopointuk.com/>
- UK government considering export office to boost British music <https://www.musicweek.com/live/read/uk-government-considering-export-office-to-boost-british-music/082672>
- Arts Council Brexit information <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/guidance-and-resources/brexit-information>

- Brexit Guidance for Musicians <https://musiciansunion.org.uk/brexit>
- D6: Culture in Transit <http://www.d6culture.org/>
- Headway Arts REAL projects <http://headwayarts.co.uk/project/real/>

If you have any other resources you would like to add to this list please email bob.allan@ncl.ac.uk

Finishing Notes - in case you are wondering...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.

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.

What is expected of me?

We warmly welcome everyone who would like to come along to the event. How you participate is entirely up to you.

At the beginning of the event we ask everyone to mute their microphones and turn off their video to try to avoid any problems with background noise and videos crashing. You can listen, keeping your video and microphone off; you can contribute to the discussion via the chat function; you can contribute by turning on your video and asking a question; you can have your video on in the breakout rooms or not; and you can decide whether you want to come along to the coffee social. **We would love to hear your voice and have your thoughts** but there is absolutely no pressure to contribute.

What if I can't join in or come along to the Zoom gatherings?

We are very aware that digital gatherings are not accessible for everyone for many reasons. We are working to make our sessions as accessible as possible (if you have any ideas or suggestions let us know) but we are still conscious that they still will not be accessible to everyone. If you would like to contribute to any of the sessions but cannot attend the zoom gathering, we'd be happy to talk to you beforehand by whatever means is best for you, you could contribute in writing or by submitting a short video, and we can feedback to you after the event. Or, if you have any other ideas, do let us know.

What happens after the event?

After each event we will produce a reflection of the event including information from the presentations, insights and questions drawn from the conversation on 'chat', information from the breakout room discussions, and any useful resources participants might have shared or we've discovered that are relevant to discussions. This might take a little time as we're a small team but bear with us! We will then circulate this to participants, regional networks, colleagues in local authorities etc. so they can see what your thinking is. We will also look at the information and issues raised and, where possible, feed these into future sessions.

Want to be kept in the loop?

For information on future sessions you can sign up [here](#) and view our blog at <https://blogs.ncl.ac.uk/culturencl/>