

Almost all crisis situations and traumas harbor great opportunities. But it is urgently necessary to change our way to approach things, to change our perspective in order to find solutions to the many difficult problems we are dealing simultaneously nowadays. It is time to stop and think anew, as if in front of a blank white paper that holds within it all the possibilities – and not reshaping yesterday's answers for today's questions. It is time to see the social crises as an opportunity to promote dialogue between different social groups and activity sectors. It is time to look at the existing resources, because the chances to increase social cohesion are more numerous and much stronger than we think, as shown by the international conflict research. We should communicate this to people and society in order that this important thinking resource benefit collectively to all of us. All these were and are my reasons for proposing the project #newTogether to the Austrian Cultural Forum in Bucharest, a project that we developed and implemented together. We intended to give space to the "art of possibility" within the public discourse, and thus also bring the "possibility of art" into the people's consciousness.

Beate Winkler
Visual artist,
human rights defender

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Book of Visions

for a  newTogether

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Book of Visions for a #newTogether

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Introduction





#newTogether – participatory approaches to the big questions of society

With #newTogether, the Austrian Cultural Forum Bucharest developed a four-year interdisciplinary dialogue project conceived as a contribution to the European Capital of Culture Timisoara 2023, addressing the major challenges of our society through the means of art and science. Based on the inspiring artworks of Beate Winkler, who co-initiated #newTogether, visions were developed in five workshops with the involvement of the population of Timisoara and inputs from international experts, which contribute to social inclusion and serve as food for thought for regenerative models of life. Participation was the fundamental methodological approach of the project: those affected became actors who created ideas from their respective life situations. How art reflects society can be seen very well in the #newTogether documentary, in which 60 Austrian and Romanian artists entered into virtual dialogue about the situation of their art sector during the pandemic. Promoting cultural exchange between Austria and Romania was one of the main objectives of the #newTogether open call, which awarded five projects in which Austrian and Romanian artists searched side by side for a new understanding of the dignity of man and nature and the relationship between the two. That the visions collected in this book become concrete tasks for decision-makers at the local, regional, national and European level is the aim of the project and is to be wished to all those who have worked on this process since 2020!



Ambassador Christoph Thun-Hohenstein
Head of the Section for Cultural Foreign Relations
BMEIA – Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria

#newTogether: positive perspectives and confidence now!

New perspectives are needed

Not only the war in Ukraine with all its horrific consequences and the Corona pandemic show it: we are all confronted with profound change processes and major challenges. Digitization, energy crisis, globalization, climate change, migration - to name just a few examples. All this is happening at the same time and under an enormous time pressure. Many people feel deep insecurities, are looking for easy answers and are afraid of the future. The old world is disappearing and the new one is not yet.

I have been dealing with processes of change and social cohesion for decades. In political, social, organizational and personal contexts: as the former director of the current EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), which deals with issues of social coexistence, but also given the background of my own experience as a refugee child from the former GDR. That is how I know that almost all crisis situations and traumas harbor great opportunities. But it is urgently necessary to change our way to approach things, to change our perspective in order to find solutions to the many difficult problems. It is time to stop and think anew, as if in front of a blank white paper that holds within it all the possibilities – and not reshaping yesterday's answers for today's questions. It is time to see the social crises as an opportunity to promote dialogue between different social groups and activity sectors. It is time to look at the existing resources, because the chances to increase social cohesion are more numerous and much stronger than we think, as shown by the international conflict research. We should communicate this to people and society in order that this important thinking resource benefit collectively to all of us. All these were and are my reasons for proposing the project #newTogether to the Austrian Cultural Forum in Bucharest, a project that we developed and implemented together. We intended to give space



Beate Winkler
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to the “art of possibility” within the public discourse, and thus also bring the “possibility of art” into the people’s consciousness.

The role of art in times of change

Art and culture are always the pioneers and the resources for new developments and essential bridge builders between people with different cultural backgrounds. Both promote dialogue with the “other” and question the “familiar”. Art and culture offer freedom for new thinking, creativity and innovation. Art conveys meaning and responds to deep human needs. Art and culture strengthen identity, open new ways into the “free thinking”, enable a change of perspective - and last but not least, they convey beauty and joie de vivre. Particularly in times of epochal upheaval, as we are experiencing now, art is a central force for shaping new challenges. It enables us to think anew, to question everything, to be open to openness.

New forms of dialogue are required

New forms of cooperation across divisive boundaries are needed - for living together in open, plural societies. In times of profound change, however, we not only need dialogue between different groups, but we also free space and creativity - free space for new thinking for our future. “What kind of society do we want to live in? How can we overcome ever-increasing polarization?” are key questions that stand for the future and renewal and concern us all. The participants in the #newTogether project dealt with these challenges: artists in their interventions or in the documentary film, participants in the workshops, visitors in my exhibition “Transforming” or attendees to the artistic interactions, who were asked about their ideas and images of a future new WE. Art was always present in the individual mosaic stones of the project - with creative impulses and positive feedback. All this is bundled in this documentation - a book of ideas, dreams and visions for a new WE.

An expedition that goes on

The project #newTogether was and is an expedition, which did not start with Timișoara, because two comparable projects - but not in this breadth - were already carried out by me with the Austrian Cultural Forums in Berlin (2017) and Warsaw (2019). Other cities are interested in carrying the project

idea further like Veszprém – one of the three European Capital of Culture 2023 with Timișoara and Elefsina – and also Barcelona. The project idea is flexible and can be adapted according to the respective organizational and financial possibilities. As an example of what is feasible, the following can be mentioned: a map of innovation which presents all the initiatives that are successfully dealing with the complex of coexisting questions; creating a platform from which the most diverse organizations design and carry out their own projects on this topic, taking on their own financial responsibility; artists, but also school classes create visions for their cities; organizing days of utopia within neighborhoods; smartphone apps convey stories for a new WE while strolling through the cities; discussing controversial topics during group meals; designing bus shelters for the future; using benches as communication tools; shooting films/videos by school classes; developing and strengthening idea exchanges are developed. The possibilities seem unlimited - we just have to seize them.

It's time for a departure towards the future...

The #newTogether project was and is a milestone in an entire series of projects. It was an initiative that brought together many ideas and people who had never met before. It has bundled old experiences, developed new perspectives and proposed solutions, and revealed unexpected resources. I myself was richly endowed with: the close, creative and trustful cooperation with the so committed director of the Austrian Cultural Forum Thomas Kloiber, his deputy Andrei Popov and the cultural department of the Austrian Foreign Ministry under the coordination of Teresa Indjein; the open, constant exchange with Ambassador Adelheid Folie; the so supportive Honorary Consul of Austria in Timișoara, Georg Bardeau; the support of the so committed mayor of Timișoara, Dominic Fritz; and last but not least with the so experienced, creative Sorina Jecza, her son Andrei Jecza and their team. We would like to thank you all, sponsors and partners, and all those involved. It is my great hope that our project will not only enrich and inspire all those involved in strengthening social cohesion, making them trust the great opportunities of a new WE, but also that it will be a resource of confidence beyond this framework. It is time for a departure towards the future, which is full of opportunities. We just have to make use of them.

#newTogether Milestones

2019

October

Visual artist and Human Rights defender Beate Winkler suggests to the Austrian Cultural Forum in Bucharest her project "Visions for a new WE – art and dialogue", previously implemented in Warsaw and Berlin, within the framework of the „Creative Austrians“ program of the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.

November/December

Beate Winkler with the team of the Austrian Cultural Forum Bucharest at that time - Thomas Kloiber and Andrei Popov - are developing a new multidisciplinary concept for this project, which is now called "Light up your future". This initiative is specially designed for Timișoara 2021 - European Capital of Culture.

2020

February

Research and documentation trip by the project team to Timișoara; conclusion of partnerships with the National Theater "Mihai Eminescu" of Timișoara, Jecza Gallery, West University.

March

March 11 – The COVID-19 pandemic is officially declared by the World Health Organization.
March 16 – A lockdown period for all inhabitants is instituted in Austria and Romania.

April

April 7 – The Austrian Cultural Forum starts an experimental video project of indirect dialogue between 60 Austrian and Romanian artists, active in different fields of cultural life. This initiative, realized in partnership with Radio România Cultural, takes place on the social networks, in the framework of “Light up your future”.

“Light up your future” becomes #newTogether.

May

May 15 - lifting of the lockdown; end of the online video project.

August

August 24 – start of the production of the documentary “#newTogether - visions for a new Together” by the Romanian director Carmen Lidia Vidu (editor/ animator Cristina Baciu), based on the video project of the Austrian Cultural Forum Bucharest. The production of this documentary movie was supported by Raiffeisen Bank Romania.

October

The CULT Committee of the European Parliament votes in favor of postponing Timișoara - European Capital of Culture to 2023.

December

Launch of the Austrian-Romanian call for artistic projects, curated by the cultural manager Irina Cornișteanu, as part of the #newTogether initiative, in partnership with Fundația/Rezidența BRD Scenag.

2021

April

April 10 – Launch of the websites www.newtogether.at (in German and English) www.newtogether.ro (in Romanian).

Announcement of the winning projects of the Romanian-Austrian call for artistic projects: ART.WALK.IMPRESSION, From Tears to Ideas, Holy Hydra, remixID, Syntopia Bega.

Launch of the podcast series “#newTogether - Future means Dialogue”, produced by the Austrian Cultural Forum Bucharest.

June

June 22 - Exclusive preview of the #newTogether documentary at the ODEON Theatre in Bucharest

September

September 10th - World premiere of the #newTogether documentary at the international documentary film festival ASTRA FILM FEST (Sibiu).

September 18 (until June 2, 2022) - the #newTogether documentary Romanian tour, with screenings followed by Q&A with the participating artists, director, producer and special guests: One World Romania (Brașov), Romanian Film Days (Brașov), Kinedok (Bucharest, Oradea, Galați, Bârlad, Cluj-Napoca), Transylvania Jazz Festival (Cluj-Napoca), Cinema Elvire Popesco (Bucharest), Studio Festival (Târgu Mureș), Classix Festival (Iași), Grădina cu Filme - Cinema & More (Bucharest). #newTogether becomes one of the most discussed local documentary movies of the last years.

Creation of the Austrian-Romanian bilateral dimension of the remixID project in Timișoara (which continues until 2023).

October

October 19 - Austrian premiere of the documentary #newTogether as part of the festival “Europa in Szene” of the performing arts company Wortwiege (Wiener Neustadt).

Creation of the project Syntopia Bega in the framework of the festival SIMULTAN, in Timișoara.

November-December

Creation of the project From Tears to Ideas at “Atelier 35” in Bucharest.

2022

March

March 1-30 - screenings of the #newTogether documentary in the frame of the prestigious Segal Center Film Festival on Theater and Performance, New York (US).

March 10 - special screening in Timișoara of the documentary #newTogether, two years after the start of the pandemic and of the #newTogether initiative.

April

Production of the short documentary "Ich suche nicht, sondern ich finde" (I don't search, I find) by Helmut Schwarz/v.i.c. productions, about Beate Winkler's "art of the possibilities/the possibilities of art" and #newTogether; Silver Medal at the Vienna/Burgenland National Competition of the VÖFA – the Association of Austrian Film Authors.

May

May 14 - screening of the #newTogether documentary in the frame of the Habitat International Film Festival, New Delhi (India). An event organized with the support of the Romanian and Austrian Embassies in India.

#newTogether workshops; first session – in cooperation with the Representation of the European Commission in Romania, EUNIC Global, EUNIC Romania, the Department for Sustainable Development and the Department for Interethnic Relations of the Romanian Government, the West University of Timișoara.

May 16 - Sustainability workshop – "Culture as a driver for sustainability", hosted by Faber/AMBASADA/Plai Cultural Hub.

May 18 - Education workshop – "The situation of ethnic minorities in the educational systems; focus on Timișoara and Banat", hosted by the Central University Library "Eugen Todoran" / West University Timișoara.

May 20 - Business workshop – "Revitalizing abandoned buildings for the benefit of start-ups, creative industries and cultural initiatives", hosted by the Project Center of the Municipality of Timișoara.

September

#newTogether workshops; second session – in cooperation with the Representation of the European Commission in Romania, EUNIC Romania.

September 15 - Art and culture workshop – "Cultural operators in interaction with the community", hosted by the National Theater "Mihai Eminescu" of Timișoara.

September 15 - Opening of the exhibition "Transforming" by Beate Winkler at Jecza Gallery.

October

#newTogether workshops; third session organized by the University of Medicine and Pharmacy „Victor Babes” Timișoara and the Association for Anaesthesia and Intensive Care „Aurel Mogoșeanu”, in the frame of the 20th International Congress of Guidelines and Protocols in Anaesthesia, Intensive Care and Emergency Medicine.

October 1 - Workshop education for public health – "The medical community of Timișoara - post-pandemic necessities".

December

December 1 – Opening of the artistic installation "Voices of Timișoara" by Beate Winkler, at Sala 2 of the National Theater "Mihai Eminescu" of Timișoara.

2023

April - May

Creation of the project synthesis – "Book of Visions for a #newTogether".

August - September - October

Creation of the ART.WALK.IMPRESSION and Holy Hydra projects in Timișoara.

#newTogether – a dialogue with culture and society

When the Austrian based artist and human rights politician Beate Winkler approached the team of the Austrian Cultural Forum (ACF) Bucharest with the first concept of #newTogether in spring 2019, COVID 19 was not known yet and the political and economic situation in Europe was much more stable than nowadays. Nevertheless, we detected a bunch of challenges which our societies had to face already three years ago, and which tremendously questioned the way how we have been living: climate change, migration, social tensions, extremist political tendencies, etc. From the very beginning we had in mind to develop a project, which should become a substantial contribution to the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) Timisoara 2021 and which should foster the intercultural dialogue between Austrian and Romania. Therefore, we intended to grasp the main idea of Timisoara's bid book for the ECoC application to ask the people of Timisoara about their needs and their solutions for better cohabitation in order to create a genuine grassroots project.

Due to the pandemic not only the European Capital of Culture Timisoara was postponed. We were forced as well to reschedule Beate Winkler's exhibition "Transforming" and the #newTogether workshops, which were supposed to be linked to the exhibition. In a way Covid 19 became an accelerator of #newTogether, since the pandemic showed us in dramatic way how vulnerable our societies and especially the cultural sectors are. In spring 2020 the ACF Bucharest invited Austrian and Romanian artists to express their expectations how their own future as well as their art will be influenced by the impacts of the pandemic. The short videos they sent have been published on our social media pages, which have been visited by tens



Thomas Kloiber
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Federal Ministry of the
Republic of Austria for
European and Interna-
tional Affairs (BMEIA),
former director of the
Austrian Cultural Forum
Bucharest (2018-2022)

of thousands of people in both countries. Due to this tremendous positive reaction, we asked the very well-known Romanian film and theater director, Carmen Lidia Vidu, to create a documentary of all these artists videos. Carmen Lidia Vidu's documentary became a historical testimony and was successfully screened in festivals in Romania, Austria, India and the United States.

A call for bilateral art projects, launched by the ACF Bucharest from December 2020 to February 2021, became another important pillar of the multidimensional dialog project #newTogether. A jury of experts in art and culture selected five innovative projects (Syntopia: Bega , ART. WALK. IMPRESSION, Holy Hydra, From Tears to Ideas and remixID), which will be implemented up to the year of the ECoC Timisoara 2023. Starting the discourse on crucial sectors of our society was the purpose of the #newTogether workshops on Sustainability, on Education and on Business in spring 2022. By screening a video clip on Beate Winkler's art we connected each specific topic with the core idea of the project: Transformation as a huge chance! The inputs of experts in the regarding fields started vivid discussions among the Austrian and Romanian participants of the workshops. It was amazing to see how many creative solutions for very concrete problems of the local community, but also valid for the national and European level, were emerging during these highly fruitful encounters. With the exhibition "Transforming" and the workshops on Art and Culture and Public Health, the #newTogether reached its peak in Autumn 2022. All these ideas, proposals, dreams and visions for a #newtogether were collected in this "Book of Visions", which is meant to become the tangible legacy of this already three years lasting project. #newTogether is designed as a project, which triggers transformative processes. Therefore, the impacts of #newTogether should just start with the above-mentioned initiatives but should affect the processes in our societies as well as the intercultural dialog between Austria and Romania in a sustainable way.

This flagship program of the ACF Bucharest was only possible with support of like-minded partners who believed as well as we do in the spirit of transformation such as the Representation of the European Commission in Romania, the Department of Sustainable Development of the Romanian Government, the Department for Interethnic Relations of the Romanian Government, EUNIC Cluster Romania, Raiffeisen Romania, the Austrian Honorary Consulate Timisoara, the Timisoara National Theater, Jecza Gallery, Asociația Plai, the German-Speaking Business Circle of Banat, the Municipality of Timisoara and many others. Many thanks to all our partners and supports who shared our vision for a #newTogether!

The documentary movie



A NEW TOGETHER?



Being together, from a distance – the #newTogether video project

If people isolate themselves or rush past each other, or if they talk to their loved ones only through a screen – then, what does “being with other people” mean to them? After the outburst of the Covid-19 pandemic, in March 2020, very few imagined that smartphones, laptops and tablets would become the centerpiece of our existence. Of course, we knew already that they can help us, human beings, to be creative, that they can make our lives easier and better. Nevertheless, the pandemic arranged things in such a way that one could communicate with the others, almost exclusively, through those devices. We lived, more than ever, with them alone. In fact – and at that time it was for real – almost our entire existence has moved inside those electronic extensions of ours. By the end of March 2020, in the frame of the #newTogether project imagined by the Vienna based artist Beate Winkler, the Austrian Cultural Forum Bucharest invited 60 artists from Austria and Romania to discuss about their future after the pandemic. But most of all, we asked them to discuss about how the relations between human beings could evolve in interaction with this challenge. Artists are professionals for whom person-to-person contact and face-to-face communication are the very reason to be. The main idea of the project was to have a dialogue between an Austrian artist and a Romanian one. We wanted to avoid another video testimonials project about the way we were living the lockdown moment by moment, since such projects were proliferating online, at that time. However, we realized very quickly that it would be almost impossible to arrange such meetings, because, in fact, no one was mentally available for such socializing exercises with strangers. We were all afraid – or at least I think we were – of the sudden change that had shattered our lives. The uncertainty of the future was nerve-racking – everything was a matter of survival. And then we thought we should ask



Andrei Popov
Deputy director of the
Austrian Cultural
Forum Bucharest

people to try to, somehow, reassure themselves. We invited them to project themselves after the pandemic, to talk about the relationships between people and about the changes that might occur in their art. What could be the justification of their art after the pandemic? Whenever this “after” might occur... We turned to actors, visual artists, musicians, writers, directors and so on, and we asked them to send us a short video with their thoughts. We received some of these testimonials and, while listening to them, I realized that these people were answering to each other, without knowing it ... So I started to gather them based on the ideas they were emphasizing, ideas that found their echo in or contradicted someone else’s speech... The project lasted almost two months, although we didn’t think that this experiment would last for more than two weeks. But the enthusiasm of both public and participants was so high that we decided to continue as long as there were the quest and desire to look for similar perspectives, to identify our own experiences in those of fellow humans, which are also great artists from two different cultural environments. About 120.000 people watched the #newTogether dialogues on the social networks, on the pages of the Austrian Cultural Forum and on those of Radio Romania Cultural. For this audience, I would say that there was this need to listen to speeches that analyzed or addressed specific problems, and, above all, that looked towards the future, not into the present moment. The most interesting thing I found in this project was that the artists didn’t express the same ideas. Each one of them stated something different, adding her or his original piece to the puzzle. We were preparing to end of the project when a Romanian locally well-known contemporary artist, Mihai Zgondoiu, suggested us to make a movie out of this video experiment. It seemed to us a rather risky idea. However, with Mr. Thomas Kloiber, director at that time of the Austrian Cultural Forum, we agreed that we didn’t have many chances to succeed, but we could at least try... Who would do such a movie? This was one of the main questions. During a discussion with a good friend, a performing arts critic, the name of Carmen Lidia Vidu, important Romanian theater and film director, imposed itself. Carmen has a very special sense of what she calls “history with a small h”, of the detail, sometimes totally insignificant, that changes our lives. Her series of performances “Romanian Journal” makes the viewer aware of such details, mundane at times, that she approaches with great subtlety, giving them the place and value that they deserve.

Then, why not an unusual pandemic diary? Although everything seemed like a foolish game, I called Carmen Lidia Vidu. And this is how, thanks to her, one of the most seen and discussed Austrian-Romanian documentary movies was to be created...

Healing trauma

This #newTogether project is always transforming, I find it different, changed. With each year passing by, the #newTogether project seems to change its meaning and reading in depth. History makes it spectacularly complex.

#newTogether seems to be about a generation that has gone through the trauma of the pandemic. It is a project about those marked by virus.

I will start with December 2019. I was in transit for a few hours at Shanghai airport. Life seemed normal. In January I returned to Shanghai. It was night, very quiet, peaceful, calm. A few months later, I found out that all the places I had traveled to in China were hit by SARS-CoV-2

In Bucharest, 2020 had brought a winter of hard work and a spring of sunshine. But in March 2020, life stood still. Fear changed us all. We began to listen to each other, to look to others, to seek support, meaning, courage. In 2020, for a while, we lost our bearings. It was a powerful feeling. Like a fall into emptiness experienced in slow motion. It is in this context that the #newTogether project was born for me. At the Zero Moment, when all of us were isolated in our homes, 60 artists from Romania and Austria filmed our confessions about virus, death, introspection, society, culture, meaning. I quickly accepted Andrei Popov’s proposal to tie all these video-confessions into a non-fiction film. Working on this film was a kind of therapy for me, a form of dialogue in isolation. It’s a testimonial from the Zero Moment.

#newTogether is about our fragility and vulnerability, about our fear that has become a universal language that we all spoke in 2020 during the covid-19 pandemic.

People became isolated, time stood still and “a new together” began.

When we were lonelier, we thought of others. Of others in other buildings, on other streets, in other cities, in other countries, of other ages, with other needs. We wondered how the other felt, where they were, whether they had access to vital resources, how they were managing the situation financially. When we were apart we needed each other. This documentary is



Carmen Lidia Vidu
Theater- and filmmaker

exactly about that.

The film #newTogether is set to the sound of alarms, sirens, spring, silent cities, kitchen routine, computer keyboards, lungs, scared hearts.

As a filmmaker, I tried to feel the tempo of the pandemic year and integrate it into the film so that years from now, this product will become an anthropological landmark that speaks about man in the pandemic year 2020.

The New Together is multi-voiced, it's made up of specific realities, but it's largely about the ability of those who want to upgrade their personal experience and understand where the world is going.

Cultural people in Romania are insecure, they are fragile, they seek to be articulate and consistent in an inconsistent cultural plant and in a country that doesn't really know what it wants from culture. The pandemic and our discourse at that time showed us that we are not really culturally mature and especially that we are not integrated in the labor market. The cultural bubble is interesting but it is rather an appendage of society.

Artists in Austria don't seem to be thinking about tomorrow but about the future. I think this is the major difference between Romania and Austria: the artist in Romania thinks about tomorrow, the artist in Austria thinks about the future. Austrians try to make their social thinking cover the 360 degrees of reality, they try to be functional when it comes to building society.

For me, the great gain of this film with an "international cast" is that I was able to examine my voice in relation to artists from Austria, a country that has a cultural history and an assumed and elaborated philosophy about art and society.

The new togetherness was born out of isolation, illness, virus, death, fear. New togetherness is trauma. No one taught us how to deal with such a collective trauma. Perhaps it is precisely this word "together" that is part of the long-lasting remedy to the collective trauma. #newTogether is a meaning, a dialogue, a healing, a possibility.

#newTogether documentary – voices of film experts

„In a poignant radiography of the reclusiveness of the first months of the pandemic, we see in the #newTogether movie how 60 independent artists attempt to articulate a discourse, which is distinct from political or medical ones, about their confrontation with uncertainty, isolation, and fear, proposing ways to resist and overcome the global health crisis. Their testimonies compete with the official discourse, and talk about a new way of being together, about overcoming barriers and the wooden language. This is a meditation on the limits of art in confrontation with life's violence"

Prof. Vlad Alexandrescu, historian of ideas and expert of the Romanian independent art sector, former ambassador and minister of culture; ASTRA Film Festival 2021

„A remarkable documentary film"

Dumitru Budrala, director Astra Film Festival Sibiu, Astra Film Festival 2021 - a mix of experiences, Capital Cultural

„You should discover #newTogether because it's fascinating! The kind of puzzle Orson Wells would have been proud of, a Dadaist picture puzzle with animations so well matched... A sensational experience!"

Irina Margareta Nistor, The Voice of the Movies

„The video-experiment (designed by the Austrian Cultural Forum) and the #newTogether documentary directed by Carmen Lidia Vidu, based on that video material, is not only an ideational exercise, but also a substitute for mobility between two cultural spaces"

Oana Cristea Grigorescu, #newTogether - dialogue in isolation of people and cultures, Capital Cultural

„#newTogether is a boundary-crossing snapshot of thoughts from the arts community that could only be created in the unique time period of the very first Corona lockdown. In retrospect, the documentary offers special insights into the great challenge that the cultural scene in particular had to face.“

Irina Wolf, theatrescu.com

„The documentary film #newTogether (...) is fascinating. The interventions (of the 60 artists), inspiredly processed and accompanied by excellent graphics by the director Carmen Lidia Vidu, brought us back, almost two years ago, into the confused world of the first lockdown. We emotionally recalled the worries, the fears, the thoughts, the creativity, the solidarity, the empathy of the artistic scene... The fifty minutes of this production passed in an instant. I recommend!“

Dan Lungu, writer

„Beyond its authenticity – which is essential for a documentary film –, #newTogether has at least two other assets to captivate the audience - a properly edited image, so as to minimize the artists' videos quality differences (...); the second asset is the direction - Carmen Lidia Vidu has given the optimal dynamics to the information to reach and be retained by the viewer. We don't watch excerpts of people's lives, but a single great reflection about what happened, in the way that it happened. There are differences in nuances, shades of grey that make some testimonies more dramatic than others, but overall, the viewer is left with the idea of ,togetherness' - the suffering was the same for all of us and together we suffered through it all.“

Nona Rapotan, #newTogether - a well-documented documentary, Bookhub.ro

“The #newTogether documentary shows the differences in mentality between Austrian and Romanian artists. The former are more concerned with the changes in society brought about by the pandemic, the latter come with more personal testimonies. The pandemic has made the artists more aware of their fragility and their role in society and has made us, the audience, more aware of how precious their art has been to us in order to get through the isolation period imposed by the health crisis“.

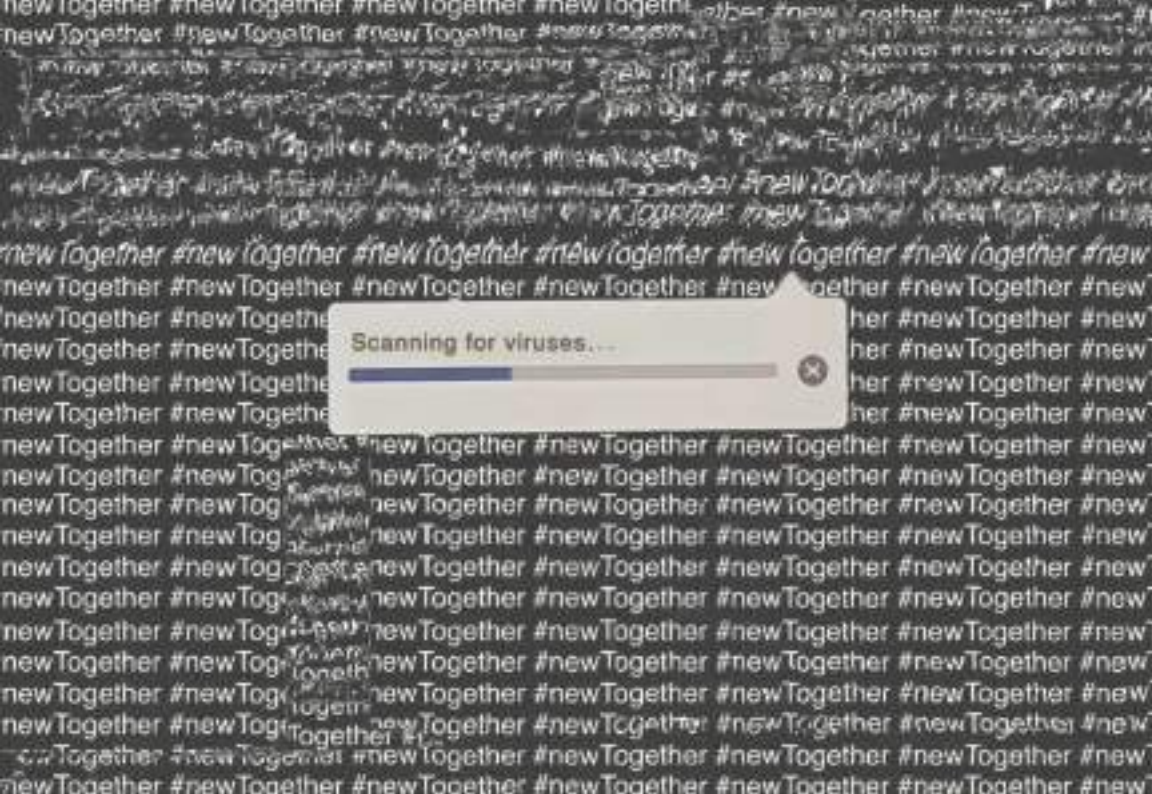
Mirela Nagăț, Cooltura, TVR1

“A puzzle of uncertain states, genuine emotions and feelings on display. #newTogether addresses the social and the political, the emotion and the empathy, the everyday life and the artistic expression, all in a seamless, flowing and thrilling entirety, with a minimum of means but a stunning result.“

Oana Lazăr, Prim-plan obiectiv, TVR Iași

“The vulnerabilities revealed by the film make it clear that anyone can be affected, at any time, by such borderline situations. Last but not least, solutions are suggested for the cultural field and beyond to adapt to the continuous changes of an uncertain future. The #newTogether documentary is, of course, a look into the past, but at the same time a breath of fresh air for the present and the future“.

Irina Radu, Einsam, isoliert, gemeinsam... , Allgemeine Deutsche Zeitung für Rumänien



how does a crisis change you?

scanning for viruses...



#newTogether - visions for a new together

A documentary project produced by the Austrian Cultural Forum Bucharest

WITH:

Valentin Alfery
Gabriel Bebeselea
Emőke Boldizsár
Cătălina Butcaru
Andreea Chira
Suzana Dan
Ruxandra Donose
Mercedes Echerer
Franzobel
Tudor Giurgiu
Ada Hausvater
Radu Iacoban
Claudia Ieremia
Matei Ioachimescu
Andreas Jungwirth
Anna Khodorkovskaya
Florian Kmet
Thomas Köck
Josef Maria Krasanovsky
Anna-Maria Krassnigg
Christoph Krutzler
Adela Liculescu
Dan Lungu
Andrei Măjeri
Cosmin Manolescu
Ciprian Marinescu
Irina Marinescu
Mihaela Michailov
Marius Olteanu
Tudor Păduraru
Frieda Paris
Alexandra Pâzgu

Dan Perjovschi
Thomas Perle
Micha Elias Pichlkastner
Dan Pleșa
Leta Popescu
Elena Porea
Lea Rasovsky
Andreea Răsuceanu
Ioan Rizea
Drew Sarich
Sorin Scurtulescu
Alina Șerban
Peter Sommerer
Verena Stauffer
Vava Ștefănescu
István Teglás
Răzvan Cosmin Țupa
Sabina Ulubeanu
Carmen Lidia Vidu
Elena Vlădareanu
Peter Wagner
Gottlieb Wallisch
Anna Weidenholzer
Alexandru Weinberger-Bara
Elise Wilk
Beate Winkler
Mihai Zgondoiu

Concept: Thomas Kloiber
Andrei Popov
Director: Carmen-Lidia Vidu
Editor/Animation/Sound: Cristina Baciu



The realization of the documentary film #newTogether was possible thanks to the support of Raiffeisen Bank Romania

The Open Call – 5 artistic projects





Searching for innovative dialogue projects between Austria and Romania

newTogether is call for action and a platform on which those who feel they can make a positive change are able to find like-minded persons to work with. Clever ideas need more than expression: they need to be put into practice.



Irina Cornișteanu
Cultural manager, curator of the #newTogether open call for art and society projects

Perhaps there is a silver lining to current global challenges threatening to the core our social well-being. Perhaps the level of disruptiveness we are experiencing today is also a key to unlocking future possibilities, not only for ourselves as individuals seeking companionship, but for entire sectors that have been weakened or that have suspended their routines entirely. Instead of succumbing to fear and uncertainty, we need to imagine and enact new ways of being and working together to safeguard not only the goal of cohesive societies, the basis our European identity, but also the promise of arts and culture to nurture and enact this common goal. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also as a form of an empowering exercise in social responsibility, we need new territories for arts and culture just as much as we need to imagine and implement new ways of working and of ensuring our livelihoods.

Bilateral partnership for culture and society

The Austrian Cultural Forum in Bucharest invited submissions from established and emerging artists, researchers and artist groups from Austria from a wide range of sectors and connecting fields, including but not limited to: visual, audio, performative, and digital arts, multi- and trans-media projects, social and community art projects, literature, etc.

The call created a pool of innovative and daring bilateral collaborative

projects in the framework of the cultural programme of Timișoara European Capital of Culture 2023 cultural programme. The selected project proposals take place in different venues across Romania between 2021-2023. They are part of the #newTogether project documentation, targeting political representatives at national and European levels.

We expect to foster lasting collaborations and connections between Austrian and Romanian cultural partners, which can further prove their resilience beyond the 2023 milestone.

The implementation of the projects selected in the #newTogether call was possible thanks to the support of Rezența BDR Scenag



Syntopia: Bega

Sound Art & Video Documentary
Timișoara. Public space along the Bega river. September - October 2021

A sound art project in public space, finding a part of the city's sonic identity and its residents' relationship with nature and sound, and vice versa - the role nature plays in site-specific culture and art scenes, resulting a sound-walk / guided tours presented at the end of the residency as well as an audiovisual work with the artist and videographer Andreea Săsăran.



Fabian Holzinger
(Abby Lee Tee)
www.abbyleeteetee.com

Andreea Săsăran
Artist and videographer

The segregation of nature and culture – as well as noise and music - in its human perception and its impact on our approach to sound is a recurring topic of my work the last years. While the Industrial Revolution made it possible for us to record the sounds of nature in the first place, it destroys or at least redefines them on a big scale at the same time. And that in turn makes the disappearing so interesting compared to the innumerable new sounds of the last 100 years. On the other hand again, we are also now able not only to reproduce, work with and get musically inspired by all these sonic (re-) discoveries, but in the interplay between nature and human-made sounds, unparalleled synergies are formed even without further action. While there are many new possibilities for exploring sound events nowadays, the relation to hearing that prevails in modern western societies is stunted, and above all evident in the dogmatic treatment of the distinction between music and noise, culture and nature. Drawing the attention of the listeners at least a little bit to these constantly shifting sonic realities, previously unperceived sounds and combinations as well as similarities between the two worlds and exploring (or let's say: deconstructing) their intersections (also regarding imagination and documentation) is what I'm aiming for in my work with installations, sound-walks, sound design for theatre, audiovisual projects and releases.

Fabian Holzinger (Abby Lee Tee)

Alongside his work in numerous collaborations and bands, Austrian sound artist Abby Lee Tee has been releasing a steady stream of constantly-evolving solo material since 2009; merging various influences from instrumental hip hop to electronica, and now finding himself in the cutting-edge world of experimental. Therein, he follows a natural instinct for playful narrative and continues to nurture a passion for field recordings and unusual instruments. His fascination for the divisions and crossovers between noise and music, as well as nature and culture, can be seen in his work with installations, sound-walks, sound design for theatre and audiovisual projects, as well as records on labels such as Shash, Czaszka, Dinzu Artefacts and Accidental Records. Recently he was responsible for the sound design of the vienna edition of the sound-walk "über.morgen" – a 100-minute-long utopian image of Vienna in the year 2050 (with theaternyx) – or a series of guided walks through his neighborhood as a part of "Klangwolke 2020" (with Frances Cat), as well as being part of the riversssounds.org residency program, exploring the river Danube (and it's beaver population). His work has been supported by numerous project funding programs or grants like the BKA Startstipendium.

Andreea Săsăran works at the intersection between creation and cultural organization. As a visual artist, she works with photography and video, her roads have always been accompanied by curiosity and her camera. As a freelancer, she contributes to visual arts, performative arts, art in public spaces and eco-art projects. Her professional journey is a mere reflection of enthusiasm and devotion for arts, nature and social tales.

Partners:

Asociația Simultan <https://www.simultan.org/>

Asociația Culturală pentru Intervenție Artistică <https://www.facebook.com/asociatiaculturalapentruinterventieartistica>

Inițiativa Timișoara verde-albastră <https://www.facebook.com/timisoaraverdealbastra>

Semisilent <https://semisilent.ro/>

Audio: <https://soundcloud.com/riversssounds/abby-lee-tee-donau-sssoundwalk>

Video: <https://abbyleetee.com/Astern-und-Esel>



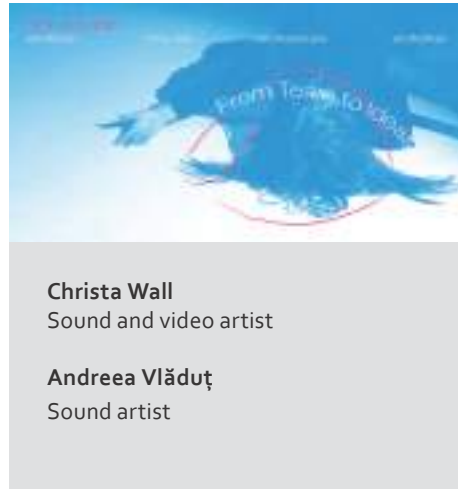
"This project has unanimously convinced the jury due to the unequivocal qualities of the proposed concept, as well as of the structure of the activities, the sensitive adequacy to the competition's subject and the value and relevance adding partnerships.

This proposal with an inspired name - Syntopia: Bega - is shaped by the creative tension between apparently dichotomous pairs nature-culture or sound-noise, exploring the city's identity by means of a defining element – the Bega channel – and the bonding potential it can have between communities, landscapes, and identities. The field research becomes the core which generates audio and visual works, maps, debates, and walking tours, meant to shape a sound landscape of the city."

Diana Marincu, Curator, art critic, artistic director of the Art Encounters Foundation Timișoara, #newTogether jury member

From Tears to Ideas

Exhibition, workshop, lectures and artist talk at Centrul Artelor Vizuale Multimedia, Bucharest. November-December 2021
Curator: Daria Nedelcu



Christa Wall
Sound and video artist

Andreea Vlăduț
Sound artist

Can mourning be a central part of the urgently needed deepening of our ethical and political relationship towards the current period of anthropogenic mass extinctions and the ongoing pandemic?

A group research project which brings together Christa Wall, sound and video artist, and Andreea Vlăduț, sound artist. Their research focuses on professional mourners in Romania while bringing to the fore the role of women as moirologists in different social and political contexts throughout history. The research has at its core the biography of Andreea Vlăduț's grandmother, Evoneta Bărbăreleu, as a professional mourner. The work *Pneuma Lamentare* unveils the patriarchal social codes encompassing the mourning practice and proposes an empowering feminist appropriation of the mourning ritual.

Nowadays with the current situation, understanding the meaning and the therapeutic power of grief, mourning is essential to cope with loss. A ritual of mourning is what we need to reflect and accept the produced emotions of the current situation and to leave behind a sanitized view on death.

Christa Wall is an Austrian artist based in Vienna. She studied Experimental Art at Kunstuniversität, Linz and at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts de Lyon in the course of the Erasmus Scholarship Exchange Program. With her feelers, Christa Wall touches the spaces between performance and singing, between ritual and activism, between folk culture and queerness. Her works are formed of performative research by using her voice, sound, embodied knowledge, poetry and video for aquatic storytelling. In her artistic research she creates narratives through

soundscapes, sound, video, and choreography that open up sites of collective fabulation practices. Christa relates folk customs to queerness and infuses them with a pleasurable process of transformation until new performative rituals emerge.

Andreea Vlăduț Andreea Vlăduț is a multimedia artist from Romania, living and working in Bucharest and Linz, Austria. Andreea tries to highlight raw, unaltered sounds from the environment by overlaying them with video images or filtering them through the materiality of objects. She is currently studying Time Based Media at Kunstuniversität Linz, where she continues her artistic practice with a focus on electronic music, audio-video installations and performance.

Partners:
Atelier 35
Centrul Artelor Vizuale Multimedia
Kunstuniversität Linz, Austria (Förderung Stipendium)



"In the context of the pandemic that humanity is facing, the return to the rituals of passage offers us not only the opportunity to recover traditions, but also a rereading of our relationship with death and the finitude of existence. Traditional societies capitalize on this philosophy of life, and documenting funeral mourning as a form of discharge of extreme emotions becomes a collective support in dealing with these times of uncertainty and threat."

Oana Cristea-Grigorescu, Performing arts critic, cultural manager, journalist with Radio Romania, #newTogether jury member

remixID

The cultural identities
of Timișoara
Roots - Traditions -
Urbanization - Remix
A bilateral art
and cultural project
2021-2023



Ulrich P. Schleicher,
Olga Török, Mirela Vlăduți

META Spatiu Association

U.KUSTIK

Timișoara, also called „Klein-Wien“ (small Vienna), the biggest city in western Romania, is known for its colorful multiculturalism, created by 12 minorities in a tolerant, respectful togetherness. But what defines those minorities? Where do the particularities of their songs and dances lie, their craftsmanship and ways of life that enriched today's Timișoara? With remixID we provide an interdisciplinary artistic platform, that illuminates the cultural heritage of the minorities in the region of Banat, in which the cultural identity is remixed through the dialogue with folklorists, personalities and craftsmen of those minorities. This dialogue is initiated by artists with a clear focus on ethnological and sociological research and will be documented for contemporary artists such as composers, graphic designers and actors who remix the documented with new technologies that resonate with a broad public interest. This way remixID enables us to take a deeper insight into the authentic and original life of the minorities in western Romania and deliberately mixes this insight with contemporary approaches in art and culture.

With the project remixID the META Spațiu Association and the Viennese sound artist U.KUSTIK set a frame to establish a new frequency of dialogue between cultural minorities in the Romanian region Banat. The dialogue frequency will be created between the feverish city and the calm village life. This frequency is created by established artists and cultural workers, who document the urban and rural sounds and songs and U.KUSTIK in collaboration with photo- and video artists who create a multimedial collage made possible by the overlap of those two cosmoeses. The result is a remix of sounds, music, voices and the immaterial picture of the ancient

ways of life with the vibrating sounds and flashlights of the city, the insane hunt of everything new. This creates a bridge to the immaterial cultural heritage, with a deeper going resonance to where we are – here and now.

The sound artist Ulrich P. Schleicher was invited by the META Spațiu Association for a bilateral collaboration within the project remixID. Since his voluntary activities in Sibiu (2010-11) he takes good care of his contacts made back then in the Romanian cultural life. Concerts in Romania till today have been, for example, the opening concert of WeltKulturCafe in Sibiu (2013) or as a frequently requested musician in the pub Bohemian Flow (2010-11). On his album „Saitnkinisessions“ (2015) the original song „Pofta“ brings in the Romanian language besides Spanish, English and Austrian dialect. As a cultural anthropologically interested producer Ulrich P. Schleicher plans to compose, record and produce four pieces of contemporary music. These pieces will be part in a public concert in Timișoara to make the products and the process of the project visible in public.

www.remixid.ro

www.metaspatiu.art

www.ukustik.com



“The history of the peaceful cohabitation of twelve ethnic groups in the largest city in Western Romania nicknamed “Little Vienna” is the basis of a cultural project that, beyond the differences between these cultural heritages, aims to restore new links between the various generational landmarks and their reconnection through exchange of information and experience. “remixID” has the significance of a cultural project that identifies the image of a city in the particularities of small histories, traditions and everyday life and this is extremely important especially in the construction of a future European cultural capital whose main beneficiaries should be, first and foremost, its inhabitants.”

Suzana Dan, Visual artist, cultural manager, manager Reziđența BRD Scenag, #newTogether jury member

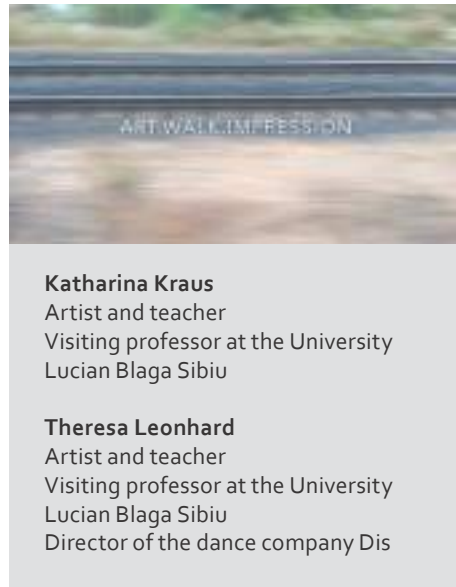
ART.WALK. IMPRESSION

**Multicultural art project –
walking tour, art intervention
& forum theatre
August – September 2023
Villages in Banat & Transylvania**

Inspired by the Viennese actress Gertrud Bodenburger and her company, who traveled in the 18th century to Sibiu and have been influencing its cultural life, this multicultural art project is based on the related idea of “temporary artistic walkabout”. An Austrian-Romanian art group based on students will be on its way through Romanian villages and will experience artistic interventions directed by the artists and teachers Katharina Kraus from Vienna and Theresa Leonhard, who lives in between Sibiu and Austria. Impressions - artefacts of every site - will be documented and transferred in art work by using different media, being part of an interacting exhibition, shown in Romania and Austria.

To be on the way, to travel through and to arrive – is part of human history. Creative people have always left their mark. We have a deep interest in the question, how to create lasting effects by means of art and how to leave trace and to support development within a society.
Katharina Kraus, Bed

Katharina Kraus, born and educated in Vienna, graduated in education, studied acting at the Prayner Conservatory and is a trained theater pedagogue and multimedia art therapist. Since 2004 she has been a lecturer at the University of Agricultural and Environmental Studies in Vienna. She works also as a trainer. Main focuses are: communication, voice training/speech technique, creative writing, theater pedagogy, conflict management, holistic nature experience, mindfulness, play and creativity. As an art and culture



officer at the university, she initiates/leads artistic projects with students. For several years, she is a visiting professor at the University Lucian Blaga Sibiu.

Teresa Leonhard, born in Linz (Austria), is a performer who studied music and movement at the Universities of Music in Vienna and Salzburg. Since 2015 she lives in Sibiu, where she has initiated and organized many artistic and educational projects. Since 2016, she is also a visiting professor at the University Lucian Blaga Sibiu and director of the dance company Dis.Place. In her projects she has worked with people of age categories as well as with people with disabilities.

Partner:
Universitatea Lucian Blaga Sibiu – Facultatea de Științe Socio-Umane,
DPPD Teacher Training Department (in German)



“The project connects two regions (Banat Highlands and Transylvania) with a rich multicultural past and it addresses some of the relevant contemporary themes (migration, sustainability, women’s rights) by means of participatory arts interventions in villages, which are not so often in nowadays Romania, and which provide a deeper understanding of what has always brought us together.”

Ovidiu Dajbog-Miron, Cultural manager, director of the Romanian Cultural Institute in Warsaw, former program director for Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture, #newTogether jury member

Holy Hydra

Interdisciplinary event in a sacral space
where religion, arts, club culture
and society meet
Timișoara 2023

The role of the sacred in the present times is investigated. This project illustrates the factual social importance of religious buildings and highlights new opportunities for intercultural exchange. Content-wise, the event focuses on an expanded use, a possible redefinition of sacred spaces, with the aim to bring the discourse between religion, society and art to a broader and new level. At the heart of this endeavor lies the "Holy Hydra" team intention to open these architecturally unique and valuable cultural and historical spaces so that they can be experienced as a place of encounter in addition to their religious significance for people, regardless of their beliefs. In an interaction between theory and practice, a sacred space is going to be redefined and contrasted by on-topic presentations amongst other outstanding activities like contemporary dance performances, electronic sound art, interactive light installations and live-video projections during a two-day program.

It is our strong belief and hope that the post-pandemic era will be one of tolerance and sharing. Regardless how our lives will be shaped in 2023 it is our mission to develop creative strategies to make art and culture happen.

www.holyhdra.at

Hydra is a collective and culture club from Linz, developing space-specific strategies for cultural events since 2016. The collective consists of six creative heads (Amanda Augustin, Lorena Höllrigl, Anna Friedinger, Björn Büchner, Klaus Reznicek & Bernd Himsl) and is known for their site-specificity and space-related works at new or unused locations. Holy Hydra is an event by the culture club Hydra, the first edition was initiated by Amanda Augustin & Lorena Höllrigl as their



Master Project at the Art University Linz / space&design strategies.

Trailer Documentation Holy Hydra 2020 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrqgddWJT4Q>

Partners:
4youreeye – ProjectionArt <https://www.4youreeye-projection.design/>
Raumteiler <http://www.raumteiler-linz.at/>
Grüner Anker <https://www.dioezese-linz.at/gruener-anker-jugend-kirche-linz>
Moszkva Café
Dinsubsol www.dinsubsol.com



"Holy Hydra can be considered as a pilot project for the discourse between religion, society and art, since the artist collective chose an interdisciplinary approach, which allows different reflections on the importance of religious buildings nowadays. In this sense the project bears the potential to trigger an intercultural and interreligious dialogue on a very specific local level. I am convinced that "Holy Hydra" reflects as well the main intention of #newTogether: to develop new visions for an integrative society."

Thomas Kloiber, Head of Unit Exhibition and Digital Media of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BMEIA), former director of the Austrian Cultural Forum Bucharest (2018-2022), #newTogether jury member



The workshops

”

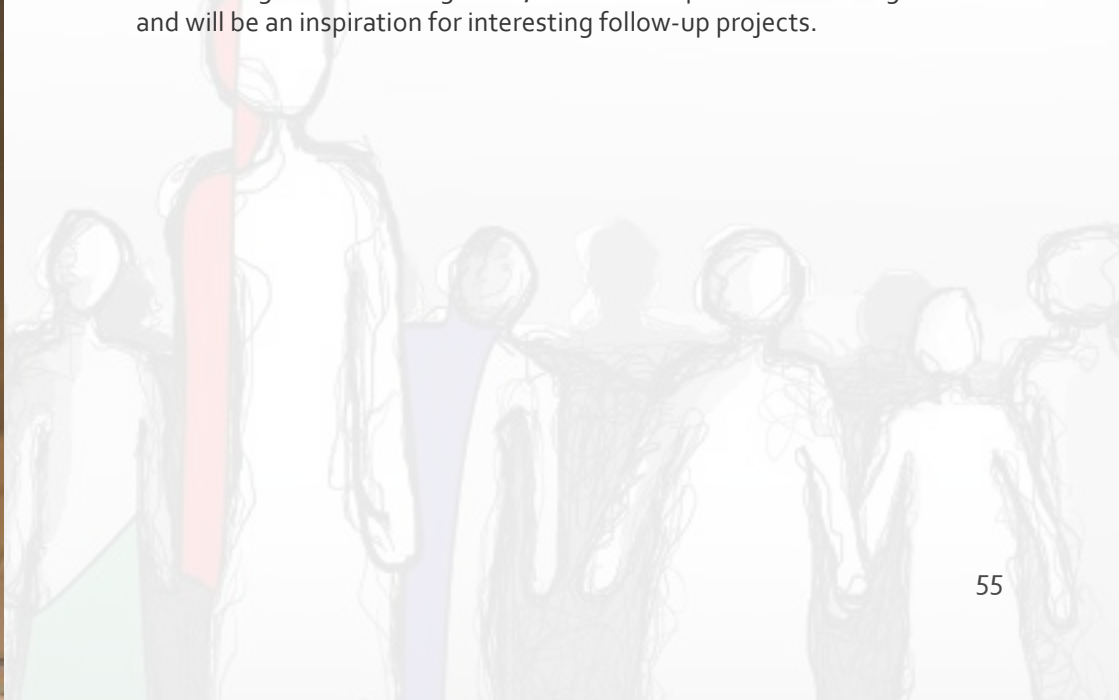


A dialogue interface

I am very glad that after similar projects at the Austrian Cultural Forums in Berlin and Warsaw, the #newTogether project of the Austrian Cultural Forum Bucharest was able to set another essential accent at the interface between art, culture, science and society. The breadth and richness of the project is expressed in the exhibition “Transforming”, a cinematic documentary, no less than five workshops on the topics of sustainability, education, business, art&culture, social affairs, five innovative dialogue projects between Romania and Austria as well as a book of visions for a “new Together”. The fact that #newTogether is furthermore part of the official program of “Timișoara 2023 – European Capital of Culture” shows the potential that such projects can unfold, especially in a European context. Against this background, it is to be hoped that #newTogether can and will be an inspiration for interesting follow-up projects.



**Ambassador
Teresa Indjein**
Head of the Section for
Cultural Foreign Relations
(2016-2022)
BMEIA – The Federal
Ministry for European and
International Affairs of the
Republic of Austria



Listening to the community voices

The #newTogether project has had the privilege of entering directly into dialogue with its time. It has not just witnessed an overlay of crises (including the Covid-19 pandemic or the Russian Federation's war of aggression in Ukraine). Its development, implementation and results have been both influenced by, had to adapt to and deal with the fallout of the major events that have marked the period 2020-2023, with profound repercussions on European and global societies. In this sense, the #newTogether workshops – an essential component of the project – facilitated exchanges and reflection, often on the spot, on the medium- and long-term future of certain sectors of activity, their professionals, institutions, and ways of working under the immediate action of external phenomena over which the participants in these meetings could not control either the course or the impact.

The four workshops and the associated roundtable held as part of the #newTogether project attempted to outline ways in which five fields of activity – culture, education, environment and sustainability, business, public health - can adapt to this new context, through the intervention of the people who make them exist. Because of this, the discussions included best practice examples, successful models and concrete case studies in Timișoara and Romania, as well as in Austria and, more generally, in Europe. The examination of the present reality and what can be built in the future in these areas was lucid, without flights of fancy but also devoid of fatalism or even cynicism, in an approach that is both critical but also allows itself to consider the glass half full.

This dialectical process is what made the difference compared to other meetings and seminars that might have seemed similar, resulting rather in a collection of speeches than in ideas ready to be implemented. If the #newTogether project succeeded in focusing exclusively on communication and assimilation of know-how, on social creativity, this is due to three



Andrei Popov
Deputy director of the
Austrian Cultural
Forum Bucharest

closely related factors. The first concerns the specificities of the Timișoara community. Far from intellectual self-sufficiency, this one has always tried to rethink itself, to reconfigure and to put itself in perspective. The preparations for the European Capital of Culture, seen as an opportunity for renewal and modernization, have only energized the reflection within this community regarding its own future. This exercise has further enriched the social space, but has also generated an exponential increase in public debate, which some participants in the #newTogether workshops have described as “overabundant” but without tangible consequences.


This is where the second factor comes in, the human component of these events, namely the participants themselves. Recognized specialists in the sectors targeted by the debates, all from Timișoara, they interacted with each other, with international experts in these same fields of activity invited by the Austrian Cultural Forum and the cultural institutes and embassies that are members of the EUNIC Romania cluster, as well as with other Romanian guests, still from Timișoara but having other professional backgrounds. This professional mix energized and enriched the exchanges with diverse and sometimes unexpected experiences and perspectives, while avoiding any pedagogical temptation. Invited experts, participants, moderators, all found themselves on a common ground, at the same level, where know-how was communicated and analyzed and not dispensed or taught. Thus, the potential boundaries between the different actors of the #newTogether workshops were blurred, facilitating mutual trust, creativity (to find solutions and positive outcomes to the present challenges) and especially knowledge of the other.

Finally, the third element that defines the specificity of the #newTogether meetings was precisely the very form of the debates, linking the dialogue's content with art. Each of us has, at least once in our lives, been thrilled by some type of artistic expression. While there are many ways in which arts can express themselves, the essence of the fulfillment we experience when we encounter art is common to all of us and provides an excellent meeting ground for our different sensibilities and perspectives. Dialogue is an instrument that allows us to explore the mechanisms of our own identity and to forge or strengthen our sense of belonging to a group or community. To help it start and structure itself, we, the organizers and moderators, connected it with works designed by Beate Winkler on manufactured paper. Distributed to all participants without distinction (attendees, experts, moderators), these small paintings, all unique, complete and incomplete creations at the same time, had the purpose of inciting reflection, of making them assert a personal

position in relation to what was said during the meeting, to their individual experiences and, not lastly, in relation to the short-, medium- and long-term future. At the end of meetings, all these people were invited to write a word, a sentence or a small text on the work they had received, to draw something on it or to leave the paper rectangle untouched, if they judged that it should not undergo any modification. The number of such cards returned with minimal modifications or fully unchanged is neglectable. The “art of the possible” as imagined by Beate Winkler, the art of letting one’s imagination run freely in order to arrive at concrete elements starting from a minimal visual stimulus, has once again proven its effectiveness.

Thanks to this exercise, this dialogue with oneself, with the group or the community continued beyond the temporally defined framework of the workshops, to extend precisely into that future that the participants had questioned. And this, in particular, on the occasion of the installation “Voices of Timișoara” that displayed all these thought cards on one of the walls of “Sala 2” of the National Theater “Mihai Eminescu”, in the context of the opening of Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture. Many of the professionals who took part in the meetings told the organizers – both publicly, as well as informally – that it was for the first time in their career that they had such an experience, giving them the opportunity to really exchange substantially with colleagues or experts or to make their professional experience and opinions heard, discussed and mirrored with other opinions.

It was not the intention of the #newTogether workshops in Timișoara to determine or orient any change in the social life of this city, but to invite professionals and average citizens to open up more towards each other. In the following pages, you will be able to discover the avenues of reflection opened up by both the invited experts and the professionals from Timișoara who took part in these workshops. The project did not claim to innovate in the field of dialogue techniques, but to take up, review and improve some of these processes. On the other hand, its main goal was to give more weight, contour and shape to the voice of at least a part of the Timișoara community. To offer it an additional space to express itself, to affirm its diversity, to exercise its inspiration and imagination and to strengthen its cohesion. To rediscover the taste of meeting around an idea, a project, an ideal. For as the participants emphasized, “we are all called to evolve together!”



Sustainability

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The soft power of culture as an enabler to accelerate sustainable development



László Borbély
State Counselor
Coordinator of the
Department for
Sustainable Development
Government of Romania

The 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a holistic commitment for tomorrow made every day. Although culture does not have a dedicated Sustainable Development Goal, it is reflected explicitly and implicitly across many of the goals and targets, driving social development, economic growth, and environmental action.

It is our responsibility, the policy-makers', to mainstream across the public policy spectrum the power of culture to reduce inequalities, foster health and well-being, strengthen food security, feed disaster risk reduction efforts, protect biodiversity, deliver excellence in education, create job opportunities, empower youth, build peaceful communities. Cultural and creative industries foster employment, entrepreneurship and attract investments. Cultural tourism surrounding heritage, in both its tangible and intangible forms, supports livelihoods and reduces vulnerabilities.

We collectively must be mindful of the fundamental role of culture in society - nationally, regionally and internationally - balancing cultural policy trends, creative innovations and emerging debates on culture with the safeguard and transmission of traditions.

In the light of the COVID pandemic and recent geopolitical tensions in the European region, it is worth raising the profile of culture, in all its manifestations, as a driver for resilience and recovery, as well as consolidate cooperation on protecting cultural heritage. Culture's potential to mitigate tensions, heal collective trauma, act as a tool to strengthen societies cohesion, and drive progress needs to be further explored, in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

There are diverse approaches in collecting data and supporting evidence on culture's positive impact on sustainable development. One example is UNESCO's Culture|2030 Indicators initiative, designed to measure and monitor progress on the transversal contribution of culture to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at national and local urban levels, further feeding into coherent policies. The project has also been piloted in Romania, and the Department for Sustainable Development has supported it. A number of 22 indicators testify to the importance of culture for a healthy society, covering 7 key policy dimensions of development: economy, education, governance, social participation, gender equality, communication and heritage.

The "#newTogether" and „Sustainability Labels for Culture" projects organized successfully by the Austrian Cultural Forum, in cooperation with EUNIC Romania, EUNIC Global and the European Commission's Representation in Romania, are good case practices which underline the potential of culture in building bridges between diverse stakeholders - Romanian and foreign, public and private, national and local – and leave no one behind.

The transversal dimension of culture, interacting with all 17 SDGs at various policy levels, is increasingly being reflected in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) submitted by states, which are reports monitoring country progresses in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. From 205 VNRs analysed by UNESCO (the UN specialized agency with a global mandate on culture), 95 directly linked initiatives with a cultural component to SDGs, and 22 countries mentioned the transversal role of culture in implementing the 17 SDGs. Romania prepares its second VNR for 2023, an opportunity to demonstrate culture's cross-cutting impact and transformative dimension across several policy areas and to reflect, as we move forward, on whether we should place culture at the heart of the 2030 Agenda.

17 Museums 17 SDGs

An Austrian-wide Pilot project initiated by ICOM Austria in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport



Doris Rothauer
Project leader, „17 Museums x 17 SDGs – Goals for sustainable development" (Austria)

How can museums contribute to a sustainable social transformation? How can they foster a sense of belonging, of shared values, for their communities?

The SDGs ("Sustainable Development Goals") adopted by the United Nations in 2015 provide an ideal framework. The 17 goals are an agenda for the sustainable transformation of our society by 2030 on an economic, social and ecological level. They are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere.

In 2021, ICOM Austria has therefore nominated 17 museums to develop concrete measures and activities for each of the 17 SDGs as a contribution to the achievement of the goals, and thus to act as a best practice example and role model. In the selection process, care was taken to ensure a broad range of museums: from small to medium-sized to large museums, across all federal states.

For the first time ever, internationally, a broad range of cultural institutions worked together to contribute to a sustainable social transformation. The activities ranged from a recipe collection on waste cooking (SDG2) to a swap market & repair café (SDG11); from a biodiversity day (SDG15) to educational programs held by local farmers and crafters (SDG4); from kids-workshops on solar bugs and picturing commons (SDG12) to a podcast on how to bring peace into the world (SDG16). Interventions in permanent exhibitions, temporary installations, guided tours, discourse events and workshops in each of the participating museums were accompanied by topic-specific blogs, booklets and many other communication tools.

Common to all museums was the cross-departmental and cross-

disciplinary approach, a re-reading of their collections and programs, and the reflection of their own values and behaviors. Despite their different sizes, structures and resources, exciting cross-connections and synergies among the participants resulted, supported by a solidary thinking and acting. Cooperation with research institutions, social enterprises, non-profits and schools complemented the joint efforts.

Addressing and including the staff as well as visitors and stakeholders, the supporting role of museums in strengthening their communities, in giving them orientation and hold in insecure times, in creating a sense of belonging through shared values, became particularly evident in this unique and exemplary project.

The results and impact of the project are broad and diverse: awareness, information, knowledge transfer, critical discourse and reflection, impulses, encouragement, empowerment and inspiration, all on how we can come to a new way of thinking and acting TOGETHER. Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and its massive impact on the cultural sector, the supporting role of museums in shaping and developing our society becomes particularly evident. The project clearly presents and communicates their contribution to a sustainable social transformation in a broadly effective way – something that has not been recognized enough so far. On the contrary, museums are often criticized by not being inclusive, by acting elite, by not fulfilling their social responsibility and advocacy.

Regaining a sense of belonging – among the staff, among the museums, among the visitors and stakeholders – was evident throughout the whole project. The positive feedback of the participating museum staff, the posts of visitors on Facebook, the invitations to ICOM to present and speak about the project internationally are all signs of impact.

For more sustainable electronic programming, let's develop artistic short circuits together!



Rudy Guilhem-Ducleón
Sustainable Development
Officer
„Le Collectif des festivals”
Association (France)

In France, Technopol and the Collectif des festivals joined forces to offer a think tank on the programming of electronic music artists. The goal? Create a tool to facilitate communication between cultural actors in order to pool the programming of international artists and facilitate the emergence of local talent.

While the events sector is at a standstill, many cultural actors are taking the time to question themselves on the operating methods of their activities. Among these reflections, the subject of the environmental impact of festivals and concerts regularly comes up on the table with the same conclusion: the methods of producing events are not always sustainable.

Indeed, if the very existence of events should never be called into question as they are essential to social life and the development of human beings, the room for improvement in terms of environmental impact is still enormous. Many efforts have been made in recent years in terms of reducing waste, improving recycling, local sourcing and raising public awareness.

But these advances should not be the tree that hides the forest: if these subjects are essential, because they make it possible to change behavior and to move society forward towards a more sober model, they concern only a too small part of the carbon footprint of an event to be decisive. However, to respect the Paris Agreements aimed at containing global warming below the 1.5°C mark and thus avoid an unleashing of natural and social disasters, we must go faster and attack the most emissive items. In an event, transport is by far the most impactful: it represents at least 80% of the carbon footprint¹. On this point, actions in favor of a decarbonization of public travel are numerous, but the room for improvement regarding the travel of artists

remains enormous. Indeed, we can legitimately ask ourselves if it is still relevant to bring an artist traveling thousands of km by plane for a 90-minute performance. For example, the average carbon footprint of a professional DJ is 35 T CO₂ eq, or the annual carbon footprint of 3 average French people¹!

However, we are fully aware of the importance of cultural diversity in our programming which “contributes to a more satisfying intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence for all” as rightly mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Unesco on cultural diversity (2001). This is why we propose to instill a dynamic of short artistic circuit aimed at promoting collaborations by benefiting from the spatial and/or relational proximity between cultural actors at the service of a first circle of local public.

Concretely, it would be:

- For the organizers: to program international artists while controlling the economic costs (group fee, pooling of travel expenses) and ecological costs.

- For foreign artists: to increase their length of stay in France by allowing them to meet local artists, benefit from local media relays (interviews, livestreams, etc.), make other dates in different regions by traveling by train;

- For local artists: to meet foreign artists via dedicated times, take advantage of the network formed to make dates at regional level, favoring travel by train.

- For the venues: to host times for meetings, creation, workshops and dissemination with the various stakeholders (artists, media, public, etc.).

To make this project a reality, we want to promote and facilitate dialogue between tour operators, venues, festivals, artists and collectives through the creation of a shared tool for greater control of the mobility of electronic artists. We choose this aesthetic for practical reasons, with the idea of extending to all artistic currents once the project has been launched and the first lessons learned.

To begin with, we want to create a pioneering working group to develop such a tool. We are therefore appealing to all people or structures motivated to move forward on this subject.

¹“The Show Must Go On”, Vision: 2025, 2020

² “Last Night A DJ Took A Flight”, Eilidh McLaughlin, Eva Fineberg and Fallon MacWilliams, 2021

LA PAS / SLOWING DOWN

LA PAS/SlowingDown program promotes the long-term development of a process that allows the discovery, understanding and capitalization of the relationship between culture and food.

We assess the need to develop local knowledge, skills, and practices that facilitate the sustainable development of gastronomic heritage. Gastronomy is equally linked to food production practices and consumption patterns. The complex debate on food, the urban-rural relationship, and the issue of consumption patterns must become participatory cultural themes.

The main changes we are aiming in the medium and long term:

- an extended educational program in Timișoara and Timiș County for the development of responsible consumption skills among young people;
- sustainable practices for organizing cultural and artistic events, at least among the projects included in the European Capital of Culture program;
- capitalizing on the gastronomic heritage, by respecting the specific principles of the slow-food movement, possibly by developing a participatory certification label;
- increasing the interest among citizens for practicing sustainable tourism / slow-travel and developing sustainable tourism offers;
- public policies that foster sustainable development models and a culture of sustainability among citizens.

Main components of the LA PAS/Slowing Down program:

- responsible cultural events;
- education for responsible consumption;
- responsible tourism and gastronomic heritage.

“We consider << LA PAS Festival. artisanal gastronomy festival >> a cultural tool through which we develop the community: we support small producers and artisans, we promote the development of responsible production and consumption practices, we respect values such as inclusive



Mihaela Vețan
President at CRIES
Association (Resources
Center for Ethical
and solidarity-based
initiatives)

communities, tolerant communities, food as intangible heritage. Hence our positioning, not as a “food festival”, but as a community project. “ (Mihaela Vețan, initiator of the La Pas program, president of the CRIES Association).

The LA PAS festival is part of the responsible cultural events component, which we have developed within the association, starting with 2018. As event organizers, it is important to understand the impact we have from an environmental, social, cultural and economic point of view and take measures to reduce the negative impact. Event organizers often express themselves through the most creative artistic means, innovation playing an important role in their work. Therefore, we believe that this sector has significant potential to inspire and motivate their stakeholders: from suppliers, sponsors, media to the public to which an event is addressed.

We suggest that event organizers use the event to demonstrate how a sustainable community could function, to show sustainability in action. Every liter of fuel used, every degree on a thermostat, every liter of waste water, every plastic bottle or aluminum can thrown away are directly responsible for the use of natural resources, the creation of waste and the inevitable production of greenhouse gases.

In order to support cultural actors, in 2018 we created the Guide for responsible cultural events, in which we analyzed various criteria that we can use in organizing events: <https://cries.ro/resources/guide-to-sustainable-events-2/>

We are in line with the definition proposed by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) for understanding sustainable events. According to this definition, a sustainable event should leave “a positive legacy to the host community and all those involved”.

Characteristics of a sustainable event...

- ensures an accessible and inclusive framework for all;
- ensures a safe atmosphere for participants;
- has minimal negative impact on the environment;
- encourages a healthy life;
- promotes responsible sources;
- leaves a positive legacy;
- encourages more sustainable behavior.

The LA PAS / Slowing Down project is part of the Timișoara-European Capital of Culture program and is funded by the Timișoara City Hall, through the Project Center.

Cultural sustainability in the context of Timisoara – European Capital of Culture 2023

The theme of cultural infrastructure in the context of sustainability is closely related to the efficiency with which one can create, produce and distribute cultural products in an existing cultural infrastructure compared to the efforts involved in their creation, production and dissemination in its absence. We are talking about time, human and financial resources, energy and environmental impact.

Without recapitulating the existing cultural infrastructure in Timișoara, I can say that, following discussions with cultural operators, I have identified the issue of insufficient cultural infrastructure in the city. In this respect, the local authorities are taking steps to rehabilitate and make new cultural spaces available. As examples we have the former cinemas, the Mărășești multicultural center, MultipleXity, but also initiatives such as the MV Sci-Art space for whose rehabilitation and conversion the Polytechnic University of Timișoara and META Spatiu have joined forces.

An important component of the existing cultural infrastructure is public spaces. The Timisoara Project Centre together with Timisoara City Hall aim to make the procedures for occupying public space for cultural events more flexible and efficient. To this end, a guide document will guide cultural operators in the necessary steps to occupy the public domain and to obtain the necessary approvals for the events held there.

In addition, we are in the process of mapping the existing cultural infrastructure and in a continuous process of identifying spaces that could be converted and used for cultural purposes. We have a list in which we have centralized more than 200 spaces that could be used for this purpose. We



Silviu Scrob
Former technical director of Sibiu – European Capital of Culture 2007 and member of the curatorial team of Timișoara - European Capital of Culture 2023 as Cultural Production Management Expert.

have also listed the related services (material and human) needed for the cultural industry to function, as well as ways of improving public transport to facilitate public access to cultural events in more remote areas of the city.

At the same time, Timisoara is doing well in terms of electricity distribution points in public spaces both in terms of number and supply capacity. We encourage cultural operators to require in the electricity contracting procedure that the energy supplied in the event's power supply flange during the event is from renewable sources. The environmental footprint is smaller when using power from the grid and not from a diesel generator.

It should be stressed that the program stipulated in the Bid Book with which Timisoara won the title of European Capital of Culture is 70% oriented and developed by and with local cultural operators. Priority use of local resources is generally a more sustainable practice than the use of external means. It is enough to compare a local cultural organization with local employees, who know the local ecosystem, infrastructure, services, practices and local particularities with an external entity which for each action means a higher expenditure of time, resources, energy and environmental footprint. Zooming out to see the bigger picture in making and strengthening the program I think that the 70-30% is a fairly balanced percentage to allow the program to acquire new dimensions, become more diverse, open up new opportunities for collaboration and therefore become even stronger and more sustainable in the long term. We aim for a more efficient distribution of the events in the calendar over periods and venues (here it is very much up to the organizers, artists and the margins of flexibility they have to make changes), we encourage collaboration between cultural institutions, independent cultural operators, artists and local service providers to improve local capacities and streamline resources.

I believe it is the duty of our generation to focus on a new principle to be considered in the making and the implementation of cultural projects - responsibility.

Responsibility in the context of cultural production management refers both to the protection of the environment and to responsibility towards participants (providing inclusive access, not damaging their hearing with too high sound pressure levels, not blinding them by sticking lasers in their eyes, etc.), towards the staff involved in making and disseminating cultural products (artists, producers, technicians, service teams, volunteers, etc. who benefit from decent, inclusive and equitable working conditions, schedules and organizational climate), towards neighbors (people, animals, nature). I am convinced that the issue of responsibility is just beginning. I

refer in particular to awareness and mitigation of the impact of materials, equipment, machinery, working methods, emissions, the use of selective collection and recycling of materials involved in the process of making and disseminating cultural products.

In Timisoara, a selective waste collection system has been implemented. Together with transport and energy consumption, waste is one of the main sources of pollution during the elaboration, production and dissemination of cultural products. In this respect we aim to support and improve the practices of cultural operators so that they reduce their environmental footprint. In this respect, an adapted version of the guide by Mihaela Veșan and Bogdan Gioară (La Pas) will be recommended to all cultural operators in the program. This guide advises on measures and methods to approach events in a way that contributes to the consolidation of responsible practices.

I am confident that such sustainable initiatives will develop and run throughout the implementation of the Cultural Capital program and will become a valuable legacy afterwards. The awareness-raising phase is very important, as it is the first step towards education and consistent sustainable practices.

Nurturing a deep interest in the cultural and creative industries Silviu Scrob holds a PhD in the field of Performing Arts with the thesis "Technical Production Management in Performing Arts" introducing responsibility as a fundamental principle in the realization of cultural productions along with functionality, efficiency, safety and aesthetics.

Sustainability in culture is about sustainability everywhere

Sustainability in culture is about sustainability in the way we live. A tricky topic and a challenging subject if we are to treat it with the seriousness it deserves and not as a trend.

A buzzword now, sustainability is attached to almost any domain. We know we must reach it and that so many actions are long overdue, but still we are not so desperate to put in the entire effort for it. We keep our actions merely at a declarative level, though we build our budgets the same as always. It is true that we have first used the term talking about financial sustainability, which had nothing to do with equity, nature, and the future, and all to do with the old economics – profitability, growth trends and money over resources.

Now we know all our resources are not only limited, but we have used up most of them. Now we know that profits should not only be about numbers but also about the regenerative resources we have used. Now we know that constant and continuous growth is the opposite of sustainable. We should know by now that we can no longer afford to act and think about sustainability as before, but we must see how we reach sustainability on every topic, starting from the intent of the action to the logistics of implementation, to the future of the mechanism of running it, the impact it creates and the cost of the results it anticipates.

We apply this line of thought on culture as well. We need culture to be, again, the ambassador of change and carrier of the values we all must embed in our ways of living.

How does that affect the artistic actions? How does it affect the way to deliver art to the public? These questions have quite straight forward answers, but we don't seem to be ready to hear it. Entertainment has taken a toll on the way we consume art, and it weights too much in the way we



Andrea Iager Tako
Manager AMBASADA/
Centrul Cultural PLAI
(Timișoara, Romania)

live. We cannot have (hopefully, only not yet) entertainment without over-consumerism and both the producers and the public need to rethink their values. We need to do that together. What do we appreciate more? What does it mean to artists and culture led organizations?

With PLAI we have always aimed to be a boutique festival and never supported this fight in big numbers of people as we believe impact and quality should be a priority when building a community event. Masses of people do not mean quality experience and usually they become the opposite. Serving only vegetarian food, promoting mobility by bike and public transport, waste management and aiming for carbon neutral events is the least we can wish for. Or better stop for good if we care about our communities.

With AMBASADA we do control our suppliers in both our daily work and the social bistro we run, we aim for plastic-free, zero food waste, we support impact driven community and grass root actions, and we always support events that spread these same values. But even though we have this ethical muscle we have used even from the beginning of our work in 2006, we feel far from being truly sustainable. #NewTogether has started this kind of valuable conversations, started the spark of asking the many questions we need to address. But we need to keep them coming and to work on their answers from all angles. Therefore, talking about sustainability is about education, business, governance and administration, about civic and social involvement as much as it is about culture.

Again, as in every turning point for mankind, they need to start the real conversation, ask the uncomfortable questions, provoke, and challenge the status quo. They need to take the unpaved roads and rewrite the way of doing and being. Is there, again, too much to ask from culture? To my opinion it is and has always been the case. Culture has always been there, underfunded and seen as a privilege at the same time. There to be used by the power holders, as well as to glue communities and people from different worlds, joining through beliefs. Yet good art is the one bearing all these tasks and bridging between different realities alike. What will a sustainable future look like for culture? I don't know anyone embarking in that exercise of serious play. Would that mean that some artistic expressions should not happen anymore? That we will start to stop? Most probably yes. To do that we need a culture of the future that no longer promotes fast response, instant gratification, and guaranteed endorphins.

We should start defining what we aim in sustainability, start to measure, and define what success is when it comes to sustainable culture. We haven't finished the social impact measurement 'game' to begin with, let alone

define new metrics for carbon neutrality, green mission, and SDGs. We need to start talking about circular, waste-free cultural and artistic expressions. We need to really think about the ethics behind every intention and never forget the public. Can we do audience development while being sustainable in our events? Can we make sure quality art reaches all our social structures, regardless of income? Is sustainability going to add an extra price tag to the already elitist ones? Can festivals ever reach carbon neutrality or are we ready to admit that some actions we need to stop happening? Can art exhibitions be thought of in a circular manner? Who is supposed to pay the price of not making a change faster? A wide range of questions that seem too much to handle at this point, but we need to start asking and addressing them with possible answers as soon as possible, as we were already supposed to implement the solutions. In the end, it is about everyone and all of us; it is about how we work, what we eat, how we dress and how we travel as much as how we create and enjoy art. Are we ready to really live in a sustainable way? Probably not. But can we really afford not to?

On the deck of the Titanic: how to stop burning the culture oil

I think that a lot of people have received information letters from gas suppliers these days, with the revolutionary news about the new prices: about three times higher, but currently compensated by the Government. Therefore, in winter we will pay “only” twice as much. Let’s add this announcement to the news coming from Azomures and Alro Slatina, from all fertilizer and chemical producers. And let’s remember that, in the depths of the tragedies we can anticipate and the changes that are to come, there is another area of human activity generating a major energy consumption and a significant impact on the environment, albeit invisible: culture.

You can’t even afford to cross the street (or drink a glass of water), money-wise, in the Romanian cultural sector, and yet it’s time now to think about what to do about this impact.

Let’s remember that, in the winter of 2021, Romanian state theatres were already struggling to cover the cost of gas for heating, when they still didn’t have performances often enough to feel also the real burden of the cost of electricity—you know those stage projectors that keep it bright as day while we in the auditorium sit in the dark? well, they use up an awful lot of energy.

And I’m not even bringing up the issue of the outdoor concerts’ lighting, the issue of diesel generators or the climate conditions needed to preserve artifacts in museums. But I would bring (into discussion) other things: the outdoor cultural events which very, very often don’t have any strategy about where the thousands of participants go to the toilet, where they buy their water (in thousands of plastic bottles???) from or where they dispose the bottles and other packaging after using them, and about what happens to these items afterwards.

I co-curated (a bizarre word for what is a kind of ideas’ accompaniment)



Iulia Popovici
Performing arts critic,
journalist and co-curator
of the “Sustainability
Labels for Culture”
project (Austrian Cultural
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Romania, EUNIC Global)

a series of discussions on the culture of the future (in terms of sustainability - i.e. a resource-friendly production model) in a program of the Austrian Cultural Forum (supported by EUNIC, the European network of organizations engaging in cultural relations from all EU member states), the last such workshop being held in Timișoara. I came to the conclusion - obvious from a distance - that there are many examples of organizers in culture thinking about what and how they consume, but their care, much like education in our country, it's rather a matter of individual approach. And that if a more environmentally conscious cultural production costs now a significant amount of money, with what is happening with gas, fuel and electricity prices, it will soon cost a lot more to preserve our current practices. Not individually, but societally. The green label that Austria have for cultural institutions - you can swoon with delight at the way the Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna works, for example - is not a personal initiative, it is the fruit of a thinking whereby the public institution is at the service of the people, and therefore also of their future. This includes making the museum's space - and the courtyard - accessible to children or elderly and disabled individuals.

The high cost to be payed in the future will be calculated, among other things, exactly as in the case of Azomures or Alro, in lives and professions of people. Just as the first victims of the post-1990 "streamlining" of set production - outsourcing or buying second-hand/ Ikea - in public theaters were the carpenters and tailors in their workshops, it will be money (or lack of it, to be precise) that will bring the circular economy, for example, to theatre, opera and music. And we may find out once again that sets are more important than people...

This thing with 1. awareness that we have production models that leave traces in the world, 2. finding solutions that do not increase in any way the costs for the operator has a very good ground in the future European Capital of Culture 2023. We came up with one idea during our discussion in Timișoara - to include a section on sustainability information in the applications for cultural projects funding, and to give those with a higher degree of environmental integration access to a higher amount of money. A carrot without a stick, as they say. Which could introduce the topic of "let's think about HOW we do what we do" without making it seem like the green transition is a punishment coming from someone with no other concerns.

No, a crown's no cure for a headache. The Neanderthal man also felt the need for culture, for that's why he drew in caves - but he didn't consume his vital resources for that, he didn't burn his fire just for painting...

Sustainability should not be just a „label“ for cultural operators

I believe in the changemaking power of art and creativity. With my work, I want to create and foster cultural impact and promote art & culture as the essential pillars of human development. In times like today, this is evident and crucial more than ever. The 17 SDGs are an ideal framework for art institutions to show their relevance as change makers and act as role models and activists for social change and sustainability". These words of Doris Rothauer, an Austrian expert in the implementation of SDGs in the museum field, made a lasting impression at the workshop dedicated to sustainable development and cultural professionals, organized in Timisoara as part of the #newTogether project.

But what is the reality that the participants of this workshop face on a daily basis? They discussed at length several major challenges: the availability of funds, the main differences between the events organized in the rural and the urban areas or the need to find a balance between communicating hard/scientific facts on climate change and sustainability in a friendly way (storytelling was one option). They tackled the pros and cons of the experimental approach, a process that takes time, therefore requires patience but also of the short- versus long-term approaches, emphasizing the lack of a systems thinking.

The representatives of local NGOs, media, cultural institutions and a Government representative participating in the discussion were keen to learn and understand how tangible measures can be implemented in order to improve sustainability performance (such as reducing water/energy consumption), how to measure concretely and correctly the impact of various initiatives, and how to set KPIs (key performance indicators). And,



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most of all, they wanted to find out how the employees of a cultural structure can be fully engaged in the transition to a greener way of doing.

Several main opportunities have been identified by attendees: the holistic approach (staff in different departments of the same organization working together and identifying common solutions to the same problem), the alignment of (core) values with emotions (whether resistance or engagement), the benefit of the systemic change or setting milestones in case of a long-term approach. But the most important conclusion they have reached was the need to work together, learn and co-create opportunities.

“Sustainability should not be a <label>”. It is defined by values and attitudes and - in the case of an event or a project – should reflect the values and attitudes of everyone in the staff”, said also Doris Rothauer. An invitation that should be taken very seriously in all areas of social life today.

Voices of Timișoara

at the workshop “Culture as a driver for sustainability” (May 16, 2022)

Participants – cultural managers, independent artists, representatives of cultural public institutions, NGO workers, city of Timișoara and Timiș county employees and representatives, journalists

- Although the transition to a sustainable and environmentally friendly action in the field of culture is one of the priorities of the EU Member States, the participants say that this issue is either absent or relegated to the background in the discourse and approaches of the various components of the Timișoara community (professionals, average citizens).

- For them, the reasons for this situation are: the insufficient education at all levels (from elementary school to university and professional internships); the limited communication of the issues of sustainable development, which is, moreover, surrounded by myths and stereotypes (radical change in the means of production, massive investments, huge budgets to improve an institution/organization from an environmental point of view, etc.); the reluctance of the actors of the cultural sector, who are objectively facing with other priorities, such as the reduced budgets, the lack of financial resources, the increase in the prices of utilities or the precarious situation of cultural workers.

- The workshop participants agree that education is the most important element able to raise awareness of sustainability issues among the youngest generations.

- They are calling for a rapprochement between public authorities, cultural operators and the public in order to strengthen mutual trust, exchange of information and experience in the education field.

- In addition, tourism and local gastronomy can contribute to raising awareness of the specificities of local cultures, but also of the challenges of sustainable development, by showing the benefits of a way of life that considers the needs of the environment, but also by highlighting the alterations suffered by it as a result of human action, according to the

participants. They also emphasize the financial dimension - more resources should be allocated to support this process of raising awareness of sustainable development.

- The participants ask that more attention be paid to raising awareness of people living in rural areas on issues related to sustainable development, as this topic is not very present in this kind of regions, being considered superfluous. For them, however, the strengthening of social inclusion and the improvement of the economic condition of these populations would improve their future, therefore also stimulate their interest in a different and more sustainable way of life. In this process of awareness, culture and art can be privileged instruments, they say.

- Changing the way of thinking, no longer taking things for granted when it comes to improving sustainable development - these are the main challenges identified by the participants in terms of professional practices in their respective sectors of activity.

- According to the participants, museums could be the space of choice for encounter and mediation, involving the main parts of the local community in a process of reflection and participatory design of the transition of the cultural sector to a sustainable activity.

- The cultural professionals who participated in the workshop have a concrete proposal to make the actors of the sector more interested in the sustainable development of their activity. They advocate the granting of a bonus subsidy for the cultural operators who implement a set of sustainable criteria. Nevertheless, these criteria would be recommended but not mandatory, in order not to increase the pressure on cultural institutions and organizations, especially the independent ones.



Education

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Cultural baggage, identity, mother tongue

newTogether hits the nerve of the time, as this project touches on one of the most central questions of our present. Namely: can we succeed in times of upheaval to reinvent ourselves in a way that we can take our cultural baggage, our identity, our mother tongue with us? I am convinced that this will succeed because it will happen in community, in a community united by its diversity, by being based on the appreciation of the culture of the neighbor, the fellow citizen, the fellow human being.

When we talk about the teaching that is characteristic of an ethnic community in Romania, we must first of all be aware that teaching in the mother tongue is not merely a legally regulated optionality, but part of basic human rights. Starting from this, we can observe in ourselves how the perspective on the issue changes. If we recognize that it is a natural and individual basic need, we look at the legal and practical possibilities and all desiderata in a completely different way!

The conditions under which the two forms of education for persons belonging to an ethnic minority take place are laid down by the Law on Education (No.1/2011, including all amendments and additions). The first form is mother tongue education (11 of Romania's 20 minority languages enjoy this structure), and the second is the possibility of learning only the mother tongue as a school subject within the framework of Romanian-language education (this is the case for 15 of the 20 minority languages). In both forms of teaching, there are very different ways of implementation; they range from language teaching only in kindergarten or primary school to full-scale minority language teaching up to the bacculaureate.

We are all aware that education in the mother tongue is essential for the preservation and development of identity, both for the individual and



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Government of Romania

for the ethnic community to which he or she belongs. Consequently, the availability of adequate education is synonymous with the future prospects of a minority and of the individual as a member of that minority. In this respect, therefore, there is an essential difference to education with regard to the majority population, where this mutual conditionality does not exist in such a direct way.

The problems of teaching German as a mother tongue in all subjects are largely the same as those of the other minority groups. However, they go beyond this at some essential points. With regard to the further training of teachers, it should be noted that despite considerable efforts, there is a shortage of teachers. The chairman of the Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania, Prof. Dr. Paul-Jürgen Porr himself has provided a realistic and at the same time gloomy explanation for this: the income opportunities available in public education are unattractive compared to those in the free economy, where knowledge of German is worth a lot. The German community quickly loses a dedicated teacher who also has to think about her financial security - according to Porr.

But what about the student chapter? The influence of the parents, which often overrides the ethnic origin of the children, leads to a large influx of pupils from the majority population at these schools in the cities, which leads to the risk that German is only taught as a modern foreign language and no longer as a mother tongue, as it should be for the children. The problem continues in that even the children from German families adapt to the environment, even assimilate, or prefer to speak Romanian among themselves. Of course, these are not new problems - I remember only too well a Securitate document that tried to combat this trend in Braşov as early as the 1960s. This means that we are already dealing with children who are streaming into German schools in the second or third generation! This raises the exciting question of what these people tick in the census with regard to their ethnicity. In any case, it is a pity and somehow un-European that one cannot tick off more than one identity! It is obvious that there is a lot of untapped potential in these mother-tongue schools as far as the quality of language and cultural teaching in the classroom is concerned, which, as Dr Porr points out, could certainly be solved financially.

With my heartfelt thanks to the initiators, I wish us all a good, fruitful conference in the sense of a new togetherness, #new together!

Stand back please!

A few weeks ago, I was in Berlin and took the city train. There, the loudspeakers call out: "Stand back, please!". That's good and right in this context because it's about people's safety. "Stand back, please!" means not to get too close to the arriving train.

It is quite different in the field of education. Here the motto is: please join us, please participate! Everyone from the most diverse areas should be allowed to participate, should be enabled to participate. This is particularly important now and is addressed in an exemplary way in the #newTogether project.

After a long period of isolation and fear of contagion, in which a kind of society of suspicion has established itself, a new art of encounter must be invented. All places of social exchange require a new style of presence and action. How can one get out of the state of alienation and mistrust to find a new way of living together? How can one have resonant life experiences, good, successful encounters and full words even in a time of crisis? Schools are a privileged location where new forms of encountering the world can be expressed if they have the courage to become schools of seeing and encountering despite everything.

Very specifically meant here are experiences in the education sector of a multi-ethnic federal state. In pedagogy it is crucial to either be able to deal with differences or to learn to do so in education. Seeing equality



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and equal value in diversity as an opportunity is to be seen as a priority here. Teachers are called upon to consciously perceive children and young people in their differences. At the same time, it is important not to turn differences into opposites, on the contrary. We should focus on the social aspect, on what we have in common. It is important to shape togetherness so that everyone can participate, especially with regard to linguistic, cultural and religious differences. Participation is to be promoted, good interaction with each other must be considered. Striving for homogeneity in the context of education and development is fundamentally suspect. There is no such thing as "NORMAL".

Every day that I go to an elementary educational institution, to school, to university, I should ask myself, "What can I contribute today so that the culture in which we interact with each other is specifically addressed and improved?" The following basic idea is paramount: Together with all differences - there are only heterogeneous groups. In this way, it can be possible to promote a culture of recognition in which dignity, justice and participation are central.

The Minority School System in Burgenland

Burgenland is a good example of lived integration in the field of ethnic groups. Burgenland Croats, Hungarians, Roma and Sinti are legally recognised as autochthonous language groups. The minority school system is part of the Austrian school system with specific school law provisions for Burgenland and Carinthia. Teaching and language education in the respective language of the ethnic group is an essential element in Burgenland and has a decades-long tradition.

Today, the Minority Schools Act for Burgenland makes it possible for every pupil to learn from scratch or further develop already existing skills in the ethnic group languages Croatian, Hungarian and Romany at school. This offer is very well accepted in Burgenland: the languages of the ethnic groups are also taught in many non-bilingual towns. The possibilities of the offer range from bilingual teaching in all subjects to bilingual compulsory subjects, elective subjects and non-binding exercises. The implementation in practice enjoys broad acceptance among parents and teachers as well as among the general public. More and more parents attach importance to their children receiving bilingual elementary education because they see greater opportunities for their further educational path. School authorities and teachers strive for optimal conditions to meet the expectations of parents and society through consistent, high-quality work and the creation

of positive framework conditions.

With globalisation and the opening of the East, the consciousness of most people has changed enormously. The importance of language learning has a new, higher significance - for each individual and for the entire region. After all, those who master two or more languages have not only personal enrichment but also very good career prospects. EU citizens should speak at least three languages: their mother tongue, English and a neighbouring or regional language. Language training in the regional languages is intended to motivate people to learn another language, to deepen their existing knowledge and to generally develop their ability to communicate. However, it is also a matter of promoting awareness and the existence of other languages and cultures within the framework of the general educational goals and of supporting the child's cognitive development in a playful approach to the second language. In order to achieve these goals, special importance is attached to the way lessons are organised.

The Private University College for Teacher Education Burgenland - an important partner institution of the Burgenland Education Directorate - offers targeted initial, in-service and further training for teachers. The implementation of projects under scientific supervision, the development of modern textbooks and analogue/digital teaching materials in a special language workshop, competence descriptions as well as language portfolios for languages of the ethnic groups support the daily teaching work of bilingual educators. Competence-oriented curricula and competence grids in the field of minority education are currently being developed.

In Burgenland there are: 23 bilingual primary schools Croatian and two bilingual primary schools Hungarian (autochthonous); one bilingual secondary school (Croatian); several secondary schools with bilingual departments (Croatian and Hungarian); one bilingual federal grammar school (in Oberwart, Croatian and Hungarian).

Language change and language use in the Banat area

High Proficiency Second Language Acquisition (HPSLA) as a Means to Reach Balanced Bilingualism

The High Proficiency Second Language Acquisition (HPSLA) status is a discrete and progressive (pseudo-) native integrative competence and performance of an L1 native speaker in an L2. HPSLA is the result of a steady long-term exposure of an L1 native speaker either to the monolingual environment of the L2 or to a plurilingual environment where the use of the L2 is predominant in one or more domains of language.

The starting point of HPSLA is the end of classical foreign language acquisition. HPSLA starts with good second language command and ends in balanced bilingualism. HPSLA is in sociolinguistic terms as the linguistic and social accommodation and integration of the L1 native speaker to the L2 in a non-dominant environment of the L2. Employing social network analysis and linguistic data analysis within the L2 social and linguistic microenvironments of the L1 native speakers helps describing their meta-stable linguistic status of HPSLA and the circumstances promoting its progression towards balanced bilingualism.

In Western Romania, a German minority area of South-Eastern Europe, this upper-end type of language acquisition takes place with Romanian and Hungarian native speakers completing their education in the social and linguistic microenvironments of German minority schools. Their language policies, their educational programmes and the language background of their students allow for the description of the CONTACT PROGRAMME that leads to the development of HPSLA with Romanian or Hungarian L1 students learning German as an L2.

The ADAM MÜLLER GUTTENBRUNN School in Arad, Romania boards



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a Department of German as a Foreign Language Classes (GFL Classes) and a Department of German as a Native Language Classes (GNL Classes). Teaching in the GNL classes is conducted in German only in all subject-matters but four classes of Romanian language a week. Teaching in GFL classes takes place in Romanian only except for six classes of German as a foreign language a week.

The development of HPSLA in the multilingual environment of this school was verified through the statistical data delivered by a survey conducted with 274 students. The contrastive analysis of the students' linguistic accommodation and linguistic socialization in the GFL Classes and the GNL Classes are based on the statistical data on their language choice in the active access to the linguistic domains of the family and the school. Their passive access was verified via their language choice in reading.

As the majority of the students in the GNL Classes are native speakers of Romanian or Hungarian, the interpretation of the statistical data focusses on the HPSLA status of their L2 German, i.e. on the analysis of their progression towards balanced bilingualism in four stages:

foreign language – second language – high proficiency second language – balanced bilingualism

The dialogue as a tool for good education

Education is a theme and even a problem which concerns all of us, as without a good education there can be no developed society in the present or future. A good education means not only transmitting knowledge from the teacher to the student, no matter how fundamental this is. It does not mean only creating the necessary competences for the work market, no matter how useful these are. A good education means the complex effort of forming people, of forming nuanced and critical minds, receptive and empathic, but also moral characters. This remains valid for university studies as well, whose aim should not be just the formation of good specialists in a certain domain, but also of responsible, upright and empathic people. Therefore, besides experience, education should be a way towards a complex maturity of the students for the benefit of the entire society.

Of course, through education we transmit knowledge, models and patterns verified in time, which gives it a certain conservative feature. Still, in a world more and more dynamic, in accentuated transformation, the formation of minds and characters, the formation of specialists cannot be fixed within a project, but it must open and stimulate the receptivity for new, be flexible and encourage flexibility, curiosity and the inclination for dialogue and experiment.

Dialogue lies at the basis of the educational, philosophical and scientific process since Antiquity, when rhetoric, the art of speech and debate in diverse forms and on different subjects, was as important as the science and practice of communication today. Renaissance humanism and then the Enlightenment have oriented this dialogue towards the encyclopaedic, towards tolerance and creative diversity. In today's globalised world, education cannot avoid multiculturalism and multilingualism, interdisciplinarity and ethics. And one



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of the important conclusions in today's science and education refers to the significance of the team, of the professional and social community.

Individual contributions certainly were and are essential, but today's projects suppose most of the time common efforts based on constructive dialogue. They suppose the valorisation of the collective creative intelligence, a new manner of being together in order to create or change something. A way of being together in order to generate new visions about a field of activity, sometimes stimulating even transdisciplinary transformations.

That is why a project based on dialogue which aims to emphasize the interactions between culture and society and which aims to propose reflection pathways and solutions which will encourage change and consolidate social cohesion in the most diverse domains, such as the project #newTogether, is welcome. It is the type of project which, in a world marked by torment and conflict, proposes a concentration of energies around art, of the enlightened messages and in favour of "a new together".

Education in Timiș county – a quick view of the present and the future

Despite all the societal, economical, and political changes all around the world, education should remain a high priority always. Like many other important systems, education need to continuously adapt to be effective and efficient in forming the young generations as responsible, involved and well-integrated citizens. In the first trimester of 2022, within the project #newTogheter, a short questionnaire was created and applied on teachers and students from both pre-university and university level. The sample was composed by 100 subjects, from which 29 teachers and 29 students from pre-university level, and 15 university teachers and 27 university students. The questionnaire explored the perspective of the subjects on the present and the future of education in Timiș county.

The opinion of the subjects on their general satisfaction on the educational system from Timiș county was split in two, with around half of the subjects being satisfied and half unsatisfied, from both pre-university and university educational systems, with a weak difference in favor of the university teachers and students. This means that even if most of the participants to the short questionnaire have a positive opinion, there are still important percentages of stakeholders that consider that there is need from consistent improvements in the system.

Regarding the perspective on the positive development of the educational system in the next 10 years, teachers and students from the university system are consistently more optimistic than those from the pre-university system. Asked what are the main aspects that can determine consistent improvements on the education system until 2032, the main aspects mentioned where: strong partnerships between schools, local



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authorities, parents, and other stakeholders from the community; better financing of education; better prepared teachers with emphasis on the young generations of educators; strong digitalization.

Also, the role of schools in creating inclusive spaces for the students was explored and the measures for achieving this goal were identified as: more friendly physical environments; support services for students like psychological and social counseling; extra-involvement from the teachers' part in regard with the inclusive aspects of the educational process; more extracurricular activities (like cultural, sports or social) organized in school and community.

Another topic in the questionnaire was about learning foreign languages and learning in mother tongue. In regard with the importance of learning an internationally spoken language, more than 80% of the teachers consider it very important and around 50% of the students. As for the importance of being able to learn in the mother tongue, other than Romanian was considered important by the majority of the students and teachers that activate in a school that has this facility.

Also, within the project #newTogether, a workshop dedicated to the subject of education was organized in May 2022, during which the report of the study was presented and within a workgroup created, the participants debated and underlined some of the weak points and the proper strategies that can improve the current educational system in Romania. Among the most important negative aspects were: the lack of flexibility of the education systems facing today's societal and economic changes; the lack of professional orientation in schools that can guide the students towards the better careers; not teaching students how to take responsibilities and auto determination; the insufficient funding of the Romanian educational system.

And here are some of the main strategies that can improve the local educational system highlighted by the attendees: strengthening school and university partnerships at national and international level; collaboration with the socio-economic community; encouraging the teacher-student interactions within courses and seminars; creating participatory teacher-parent-student communities; more in-depth dialogue on fundamental moral values in school.

These are the main aspects investigated and debated within the #newTogether workshop dedicated to education, concrete steps needing to be taken in order to find the best strategies to keep the educational system competitive and effective for the current and future generations of pupils and students.

Voices of Timișoara

at the workshop “The situation of ethnic minorities within the educational systems; focus – Timișoara and Banat” (May 18, 2022)

Participants – high school and university students and teachers, cultural managers, independent artists, NGO workers, government officials, city of Timișoara and Timiș county employees and representatives, journalists

- Participants emphasize that cultural and ethnic identity is a personal asset for all members of a community. It is essential that members of ethnic minorities are encouraged to rediscover and further develop their respective identities in order to enrich the community with new experiences and to give more coherence and new perspectives to the common future. It is necessary to affirm the multiple identities that the inhabitants of the Timișoara region may have and above all not to doubt this personal wealth - multiculturalism is a rare and exceptional advantage.

- The students participating in the workshop felt that learning in a minority language at school is both an opportunity and a challenge. The advantage is that it strengthens community ties, perpetuates specific skills and can facilitate international collaborations. The challenge concerns the use of the mother tongue and the conditions of access to the job market, coexistence in a multicultural professional environment, as well as outings to socialize outside one’s own cultural group.

- For the workshop’s attendees, teaching in minority languages should not be perceived as a means of segregation from the majority, but of strengthening cultural richness. On the contrary, the financial support for teaching in minority languages should be improved (more subsidies for teachers and for the acquisition of materials, books, etc.), they say.

- Students and teachers taking part in the workshop believe that it is necessary to fight in a more determined way against prejudices targeting minorities of all kinds (ethnic, cultural, sexual, etc.). According to them, there should be more direct encounters with representatives of these minorities in educational institutions, but also an institutional approach that makes young people aware of the need to live together and to fight intolerance.

- The youth participants all emphasize their concern for climate change. They are worried about what the future holds and want to see more efforts made to inform people and to act in order to preserve the

environment.

- Contributors want to see concrete improvements in the way their daily lives at school or university – better working conditions for teachers to attract more young professionals to the sector; a focus on student development, not assimilation; fewer students in study groups, to encourage listening and attention.

- The workshop audience note that there is a digital gap between the different generations of Romanians. The young people would like to see continuous training in the use of computer equipment and new technologies in order to reduce this gap and facilitate the technological transition.

- Participants point to several systemic challenges - insufficient funding; lack of flexibility, both at the pre-university and university level, which prevents the education system from adapting more easily to rapid societal and economic changes; lack of professional guidance in schools, especially in the pre-university system, to orient students towards more appropriate careers; student empowerment is not encouraged: the Romanian education system is not geared towards taking responsibility, independent learning, motivation and self-determination regarding the educational path.

Several directions for future action were identified by workshop contributors as critical:

- Strengthen school and university partnerships at the national and international level - important steps have been taken in this direction through the European mobility programs, and there is a clear trend towards internationalization; further steps should be taken towards strong national, regional and continental collaborations within the EU.

- Collaboration with the business community - universities today are clearly oriented towards increased collaboration with business partners, but such initiatives in pre-university education are sporadic and need to be encouraged and developed.

- Encourage teacher-student interaction in courses and seminars - student-centered pedagogies must be implemented at both the pre-university and university levels.

- Creating participatory teacher-parent-student communities - building strong connections between teachers, students, and parents can benefit the educational process; such communities can foster more transparent and responsive actions.

- More dialogue on core moral values in schools and universities - to develop responsible citizens for the future, schools should place greater emphasis on cross-cutting skills and core moral values, in addition to teaching specific disciplines.



Business





Empowering a closely-knit community

The Representation of the European Commission in Romania is delighted to have been part of the #newTogether project of the Austrian Cultural Forum, especially in these dire times, when we realized that more than ever we needed to coalesce, to let our ideas and actions come together for the benefit of our societies. Even when faced with hardship, creativity never wanes. It flourishes, it nourishes hope, and it translates into concrete actions that tighten our social bond.

All the project's initiatives deserve to be on the public agenda and should benefit from the necessary platforms to empower a closely-knit community. Through the "Business" and "Sustainability" workshops that the Representation has had the pleasure of supporting, the New European Bauhaus was put in the limelight. A flagship project of the European Commission, the "soul" of the Green Deal, as President von der Leyen mentioned recently, it acts as a nodal point of creativity, sustainable development and community. Its main aim is to build a creative network of like-minded people who are willing to imagine and generate new scenarios and ways to live and thrive together.

I take the opportunity to once again praise this noteworthy initiative, with the hope that the free-flowing ideas from all the workshops will make our communities more resilient, more resourceful and more united.



Ramona Chiriac
Head of the European Commission's Representation in Bucharest

The New European Bauhaus and the impact of community-driven transformations

In September 2020, during the State of the Union Address by President Ursula von der Leyen, she announced the need to match the environmental and economic ambitions of the Renovation Wave and the Green Deal with a new cultural project for Europe. Thus, the New European Bauhaus set out to be a transdisciplinary, creative and inclusive initiative that will bring the Green Deal close to our daily experiences and living spaces.

The core “philosophy” of the New European Bauhaus is bringing citizens at the centre of the transformation processes which an inclusive, beautiful and sustainable society needs. That is why the initiative started with a co-design phase- to ask people what the three values mean to them, what are exemplary projects which already follow a similar mindset and how the New European Bauhaus can address their most urgent challenges and needs.

Since then, the initiative has built a community of more than 500 non-profit partners from all over Europe and beyond, entities representing a multitude of industries and sectors and operating from the local scale to the transnational one. The initiative also welcomes for-profit organisations and public authorities as friends of the New European Bauhaus, with a view to promote tight collaborations across scales and sectors. Partners and friends can join forces to support local or regional initiatives and build communities around common goals. Being part of the New European Bauhaus community gives them the opportunity to team up with other organisations and networks working in different countries, to receive and share lessons and support each other while tackling similar challenges. And there are various examples of this type of actions within the NEB community, for example the NEB of the



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New European Bauhaus
(2022)

mountains, NEB goes South, Nordic carbon neutral Bauhaus projects.

The New European Bauhaus Prizes are also very inspiring examples on how to contextualise the ambition of the initiative in imaginative and diverse ways and how to valorise the unique local color and the spirit of a place. The second edition of the Prizes rewarded once again creative and innovative projects and ideas which reflect the richness of different places and interpretations. These proposals reflect at the same time the potential of following a “New European Bauhaus” way of thinking and working in a local context, all while placing the participation and vision of the local community at the core of the process. This is well reflected in the fact that so many projects are centred on local knowledge and participation, and start from the real needs and the voices of citizens.

The New European Bauhaus Festival, which took place between 9-12th of June 2022, reached people not only in Brussels but all over Europe and beyond through more than 200 side events. The Festival was an incredible way to bring the spirit of the initiative closer to citizens and to bridge their visions with the inspiring projects and actions undertaken by the EU institutions, partner organisations, or communities. These various events, exhibitions, talks and workshops have brought the concept and ambition of the initiative closer to citizens who could learn about NEB-related or inspired initiatives in their proximity. At the same time, this moment was a great opportunity to start conversations and to make people come together to envision how to make “beautiful, sustainable, together” a reality in their own context.

To reach the objectives of the New European Bauhaus on a wider scale and to reach as many people as possible, the role of Partners and Friends will remain central. Therefore, it is important to get local authorities, businesses, not-for-profit organisations on board as they can connect widespread ambitions and challenges to local realities. Out of these objectives we should see many examples of beautiful, sustainable and together coming to life thanks to communities working together.

An inspiring example from Romania



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„Dăm Click pe România“, a project which won a Runner-Up Prize in the second edition of the New European Bauhaus Prizes, aims at reducing the educational gap which puts children from vulnerable backgrounds at a disadvantage, by equipping a number of schools with computers, building communities based on knowledge-sharing and stronger urban-rural relations. The project also involves the communities from vulnerable areas in the process and works tightly with the participants and beneficiaries to encourage reusing practices and to stress the links between environmental and social objectives. Furthermore, working with private and public institutions, NGOs, and individuals from urban places on one side, and with the communities from vulnerable areas on the other, enables the rural and urban realms to work indirectly towards diminishing the inequities between them.

FABER – a project for Timișoara

The FABER project started in 2017, when a group of people, important actors in Timișoara’s cultural, civic and business community for more than a decade, decided to bring all their resources together for an ambitious goal: to build something that will favour the positive development of their community and city on the long run.

The FABER building is part of a former important industrial site, in the Fabric district of Timișoara, on the banks of the Bega river. A paint factory was founded here in the 19th century, and after the communist regime returned to the family that initiated it, the Farber family. Currently, the former industrial platform houses a long list of small entrepreneurs and artists, since there was no industrial activity here for more than half a century. The FABER building is the first to be rehabilitated from the site. The building has a built area of approximately 840 square meters, situated on a plot of almost 2500sqm, and distributed almost equally on two levels. The ground floor accommodates a large event room, a foyer, bathrooms, a bistro area and a passage way that provides direct access into the courtyard. The first floor accommodates the cowork and makerspace area, along with 2 medium sized meeting rooms and another 2, smaller meeting rooms. The vertical circulation is speculated in the form of a complex device, composed of stairs and generous platforms that ensure both access to the upstairs spaces and the possibility for various outdoor activities, overlooking the generous, multifunctional courtyard.

FABER opened its gates in July 2020, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, and for the past 2 years focused on supporting the activities of the cultural, civic and bussiness local communities. Starting with 2022 it has hired two curators: one with a background in music (local legend, Florin Unguraș) and one in design (international designer Martina Muzi) with the purpose of developing its own program and discourse about culture and how



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FABER,
Invited Teacher
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it can impact the development of the local environment. In parallel with the development of FABER's program, a strategy of short term interventions was developed for the rest of the industrial platform, together with its owner, the AZUR company.

In the following two years the project will expand both spatially and content wise, with the hope that it will be able to have a consistent contribution in consolidating creative business practices and improving the quality of the overall consumption of cultural products within this region (together with its partners).

After a 1,6 million euro private investment in the refurbishment of a historic building, housing and supporting more than 300 events with a public of over 20000 people, its brand new team of curators and partnership with AZUR, FABER is quite an unique project in Romania.

Despite its widespread recognition and its still enthusiastic team, since it is stubborn in its focus on culture, FABER is also a very difficult business - one that is still fighting with finding enough resources (capital and human) to reach its goals. The main difficulty is generated by the historical lack of public policy on culture in Romania which has generated consumption patterns that are not too much in tune with contemporary cultural values. To name a few of the drawbacks:

- A continuous drop in the quality of education and lack of focus on humanistic education in the K12
- The decay of buildings dedicated to culture and of the quality of state driven cultural operators&programs
- Lack of long term funding programs for cultural endeavours, funding mainly small, short term programs
- No support systems for private initiatives and endeavours in culture

Since culture is one of the main drivers for healthy value systems in society, its importance for our overall well-being is crucial. Even more so in a city located at the periphery of Europe.

The #newTogether is all about the future

The #newTogether is all about our Global Future. What only a decade ago seemed like far away, has become reality. We live in an age of scarcity. The wealth we have, the growth we experienced, the plenitude of artefacts and services we have created have pushed us beyond the ability of efficient resource and energy consumption. Still, measured by any standard, humanity has an amazing Future ahead. We have dominion over the smallest particles and can look back to the beginning of the Universe. But right now, we experience the limit of growth already predicted in the 60s. The scarcity is not only in lack of material and resources. There is also a scarcity of political thought and will. There seem to be no models left to test and believe in at a time when nations and global players showed the limit of their ability to coagulate humanity in a meaningful, resilient, sustainable way.

Our scarcity is driven by social antagonism and polarization, that hinders us to pursue the big challenges we face as humanity and more so as a Global Ecosystem. But were to go from here? There are plenty of ideas on the other hand, beyond the fallback onto conservative positions gaining foothold the last decade. Most of them though, involve a vision of Planet Earth where human needs are solely in the center of all decision making. We yet must learn to empathically understand this planet and our place in it, not only on it. A human centric future alone will not be enough to preserve and expand a human friendly (and that is all you need) habitat because we cannot survive alone on an empty rock in Space. Or if we can, it would be pitiful.

Many visions of the common Future are shaped around our need to reform democracy and fulfill its final goal. That is to ensure an equal part in the decision-making process for every single one of us. And new technologies, the ability to transfer gargantuan amounts of data worldwide, all the infrastructure we now use for posting daily photos and weaponizing information streams, the blockchain frenzy, they all could be put into service



Rudolf Gräf
Architect, Urban
Development Expert,
Advisor to the Mayor of
Timișoara

to create a deeply democratic and secure decision-making system that is expandable on a global scale. But we know it won't happen so soon because we still live in a world of profound cultural and social differences, with a globalized economy and a globalized culture just thinly veiling a deep going layering system of local values, customs, cultures, and economies.

Therefor the New Together will be Local before it is Global. This seems to be a self-evident affirmation, but it is important to understand what this means and the burden it encompasses. We still must bear in mind that any Local conjunction of forces must rely on a common belief in a Future whose challenges are hundred percent Global in cause and effect. Any locally formed belief must withstand an apparently disproportionate and unsurmountable string of questions and tests: Can we, here, now solve the problems of our Globe? Can we relief Earth from climate crisis, can we stop the incredible ecocide we perpetrate? Can we stop nuclear war? Can we be the hosts for foreigners left without any home because of Global Warming and Climate Change? Are we the ones to do all of this and put an end to scarcity?

If the answers to the questions above are negative, we will not be together in our Common Future. Fortunately for us, there are many communities who answered for themselves and the world with a Yes. If it is the famous Yes, we can! I do not know, but for all I know it is an answer that allows all those left without a momentary togetherness to believe in a Common Future on this Globe and not on Mars (while that is worthy a discussion too).

#newTogether – interrelations of business and culture

The Austrian Cultural Forum invited me as a moderator of the #newTogether workshop about the “Revitalization of abandoned buildings for start-ups, creative industries and cultural initiatives”. I am happy having been able to rethink those interrelations as business and culture are neither contradictory nor just side by side, but interwoven!

It was great moderating resp. speaking and reflecting about culture to be integrated into the daily work processes and discussing correct and successful approaches to it. Culture and business are both integral part of our lives and should work more together for our #newTogether!

It was interesting hearing that businesses would be ready to pay direct fees to cultural initiatives in order to have more direct influence and accountability than via the state, the city or other public bodies. Especially the proposal to provide vacant buildings for cultural initiatives against tax reliefs is an interesting approach to free up unused resources.

Challenges of daily life are counterproductive in order to facilitate the cooperation, but proposals reached from more cultural and creative education in schools via creating a functioning and functional events calendar for the city of Timisoara to using existing cultural facilities and infrastructure more efficiently.

The group in the workshop emphasized that culture has a pioneer role and is subject to constant change, but also that artists and creative people have to prove on a daily basis, why their work is needed and necessary! We appreciated the idea of using hallways of public buildings from schools to administrative buildings for cultural exhibitions, thus bringing culture and art closer to the people and give artists a greater chance of selling their creative art pieces. Artists and the creative stakeholders also have to engage stronger into the daily processes and cultural centers should become areas



Gerd Bommer
Commercial Counsellor
Austrian Embassy
Bucharest – Commercial
Section

of social encounter.

One wish in the workshop was, that artists and the creative crowd should move out of their scene and interact much more with all parts of society and also participate much more in the implementation of cultural projects. And one proposed measure I liked very much and is really easy to implement, is the idea that business administration students create business plans for artists and cultural projects as well as cultural facilities as part of their university studies and lectures.

It was a great pleasure for me to act as the moderator of the #newTogether workshop business and thank the Austrian Cultural Forum and especially Thomas Kloiber and Andrei Popov for their hard work and wonderful events and results!

Culture and art are the way we live!

Voices of Timișoara

at the workshop “Revitalizing abandoned buildings for startups, for the creative industries and for cultural initiatives” (May 20, 2022)

Participants – business people, architects, cultural managers, independent artists, representatives of cultural public institutions, NGO workers, city of Timișoara and Timiș county employees and representatives, journalists

- A better communication for a more effective approach between cultural operators, the business community and public authorities is also envisaged by the participants of the business workshop of the #newTogether project. Starting from the idea that “art and culture are how we live”, the invited professionals called on cultural operators and public authorities to better identify and focus on the needs of the community to which they belong, in order to adapt their actions to these requirements.

- They note that the interest in the restoration and revitalization of the architectural heritage is greater than in the past, that the quality of restoration and conversion projects of buildings (e.g. brownfield sites) has improved; the awareness of the public in Timișoara has also increased, the people demanding more concrete and faster solutions to their problems.

- The workshop participants believe that, in general, a greater awareness of the arts in schools, but also in adult education, could improve creativity and well-being in the workplace and thus the daily performance of employees. As a result, they recommend more flexibility in school curricula, as well as stronger connections between businesses and the arts and culture world.

- Artists should become more involved in the community life of the city and reach out more to children and younger generations, they say. Similarly, they believe businesses and cultural professionals could involve students and young creatives more in creating their business plans and in cultural, marketing and media strategies to better address community needs.

- At the level of concrete actions, the solutions envisaged by the workshop participants go from artistic programming to the management of funds and grants. There is a call for more predictability in local cultural life, with the establishment of a more precise calendar of events, but also a more rational use of structures that can host artistic projects.

- In this sense, the situation of the city's architectural heritage, both historical and recent, remains problematic. Representatives of the business community suggest that the public sector encourage companies to take over these facilities, either free of charge but with a clearly defined and agreed investment commitment, or in exchange for a tax break under certain conditions.

- In addition, the workshop participants call on public officials at the local and national level to be more sensitive towards the importance of culture as a resource for creativity and know-how, but also as a long-term economic resource. In this sense, they call for public policies that better define the relationship between cultural operators, public authorities that provide grants, and the local community. This should strengthen mutual trust between the state and the subsidy recipients (a trust which, according to the participants, is currently very poor) and lead to a national legal framework that is better adapted to needs.

- The cultural operators, representatives of local authorities and entrepreneurs participating in the workshop also formulated recommendations that should be implemented at the European level. On the one hand, it is a matter of making the European subsidy framework more flexible, so that national funding authorities can act more easily without neglecting Community policies.

- On the other hand, the Romanian experts call on the EU to provide for or allow state aid for projects aimed at transforming or revitalizing the architectural heritage, especially within the framework of the New European Bauhaus initiative.

- The participants reflected also on the future of the Timișoara and Banat regions. Apart from predictable tax legislation and reduced employer and employee charges, the participants call for "more cohesion" and "coherence" on the part of the authorities, who should design a concrete development strategy for the region. This strategy should, as a first step,

develop the local road infrastructure connecting the region of Banat to several important cities in the country - Bucharest, Cluj, Oradea - but also to Sofia and Belgrade. Therefore, Timișoara-Arad-Reșița triangle might become a growth pole that meets European criteria and is in line with EU strategies.

- The workshop participants call on massive investments in key sustainable areas - production and distribution of regenerative energies, ecological transport, health (creation of a regional hospital with highly qualified personnel and state-of-the-art equipment) and education (which has to take more into account and adapt to the needs of entrepreneurs). For the respondents, this would increase the interest of "talents from abroad" to come and work in this region and encourage entrepreneurship with a focus on innovation.

- In such a context, local small and medium-sized enterprises that have entered international markets could be encouraged to further develop their business in the region, according to the participants, who also wish to see increased collaboration between large corporations, small and medium-sized enterprises and start-ups.

- This last element would be a component of an important movement to "change the mentality" of the business community and to chase away the "indifference" of the economic actors and citizens in general, according to them.



Arts & Culture





Audience development and the city's cultural landscape

In 55 years, Schauspielhaus Salzburg evolved from a basement theatre to Austria's largest independent theatre. Why are offers for children so important to us? How do we constantly acquire new audiences? The Schauspielhaus Salzburg stands for high-quality spoken theater and takes the line of wanting to offer the theater audience the widest possible spectrum. Thus, in addition to the classic theater repertoire, selected pieces of contemporary drama, as well as high-quality comedy titles and an age-appropriate and theater-pedagogically accompanied offer for children and young people are on the program.

In our artistic curiosity and flexibility, the highly professional production background and, last but not least, our location in Salzburg, we see great potential for internationalization, innovation and opening up to various forms of artistic expression.

A defining idea of our way of working can best be described as manufacture. This means the development of a production from the idea to the performance. This turns our theater into a large operation that combines the various manual, technical, artistic and administrative professional groups.



Robert Pienz
Director of
Schauspielhaus Salzburg



Marietheres Mader
Advisor to the director

Our current goals are at the core:

Innovation

The Schauspielhaus Salzburg is currently trying to appeal to a younger audience and thus build up the theater audience of tomorrow. Our customers not only appreciate the quality of the productions, but also the proximity to the theatre: personal customer service, optimal size and acoustics of the theater halls with pleasant seats and excellent gastronomic support make up the charm of the Schauspielhaus Salzburg.

Internationalization

Cooperation between theaters not only has financial advantages, but also offers the opportunity to discover and exchange new artistic impulses. In recent seasons, there have been collaborations with the Théâtre National du Luxembourg, the Festival of Regions in Upper Austria and the Theater Kosmos in Bregenz. The very successful cooperations have confirmed the actions of the theater and aroused the desire to enter into further cooperations, especially on a foreign-language level. There is hardly any cooperation with foreign-language theater companies in the free Austrian theater scene, the implementation of intercultural and bilingual theater projects is long overdue and can open up completely new worlds for the theater audience.

With our upcoming project "Union Place", the Schauspielhaus Salzburg would like to lay the foundation for future cooperation throughout Europe, beyond national and linguistic borders. We get new theatrical impulses and approaches from other traditions, confront them with our own experiences and search for a new common ground on stage and beyond. "Union Place" is co-produced with the Timișoara National Theater and the Escher Theater in Luxemburg.

Participation

In addition to contemporary drama, the cultivation of the literary canon is an essential part of the artistic profile of the playhouse. The desire for so-called great titles of the classical canon is not only brought to us by viewers, but also and especially schools have urgent needs in this field. The Schauspielhaus not only offers cheap admission prices, a competent service

for teachers and an event size that is easy to manage from a pedagogical point of view: with an extensive and largely free theater educational offer, the Schauspielhaus also supports class visits with high quality content. This offer includes material folders, introductions, Preparation and follow-up in the class as well as workshops, mentor classes, rehearsal visits, house tours and much more. In addition, we maintain regular exchanges with the contact teachers of all schools in order to be able to make a needs-based artistic offer.

Through art we learn about ourselves, the other and each other

Connection, conversation and collaboration with my audiences are essential for my work. Being a performance artist, the singular moment of the stage from itself brings already an urgency and necessity for an audience; however, I would even like to go a step further. For me, art is defined by the interaction of what I call a 'Work of Art' (Art form/Artistic expression) and the dialogue with the audience that comes throughout. I always like to refer to the perspective that Liam Gillick gives in *Renovation Filter: Recent Past and Near Future*: "My work is like the light in the fridge, it only works when there are people there to open the fridge door. Without people, it's not art—it's something else—stuff in a room."

Art needs audience, and since I'm a young and ambitious maker, I would say art needs a broad engaged audience in order to achieve its full potential. The more diverse perspectives and views we have within our audience, the more dialogue and sharing we can achieve, the more we can learn about ourselves, the other and each other. This is why I see it as my duty as an artist to try to engage as many different individuals within my work as possible; representation matters.

I believe that there is still a lot of gains to discover as an Artist, institutionally and independent alike, in finding and involving (social) communities into our art and creation process.

Community Artists and Artist working with community

First of all, I suggest to take a little moment for the distinction of two types of artists working with communities. In my work as a freelancer it became painfully clear that it is important to make this distinction between a 'Community Artist' and an 'Artist working with the community.'



Jort Faber
independent dancer,
choreographer,
performer, teacher
(The Netherlands)

- Community artist: the main priority is the experience of the process for the participants. This is often with non-professionals and the aim is to build on the community. More energy is focused on the process than on the final presentation.

- Artists working with the community: the main priority is the art and expression. Within this artistic process, the artist chooses to reach out to certain communities to enrich himself, the individuals joining and the art.

Too often in my working experience, especially working with institution or subsidies, it is automatically assumed that working with communities entails that you are a community artist and the quality of your work is lower.

I am an artist working with community and I would encourage every artist to engage the community in one way or another. Within this I want to state that one thing is essential: Do not lower the quality of your own work. Bring the individuals to your level; if needed, offer them ways or a supportive guideline on how to look at your art.

I would like to focus on two specific themes where I think bigger steps can be taken: 1) integrating individuals within your art work and 2) making individuals experience your artistic creation process. Note that I specifically say individuals and not groups or target groups. Of course, people can be connected through groups, however in my practice I experienced that it is highly advantageous to keep their individuality in mind. I will work through both points with examples of my own practice.

Integrating individuals within your art work

The first and biggest step is integrating individuals within your work. Individuals with different backgrounds, thoughts or abilities then you can give you a totally new understanding of you and your work. The first important thing is to think about what kind of people you want to integrate within your work. What is your theme? Which groups can relate to your work? Is there a group you are interested in? How can you bring them to you and your work?

Within my project "Cardiac output", I was interested in how different bodies find ways to dance so I wanted to work with different abled bodies. I came to a group of dancers with a physical and/or mental disability and started to work on performances with them. Here I learned the power and the strength of an open and honest body on stage. The individuals where so pure and honest in their performance presence, something me as a professional performer need to work so hard for. From them I learned **that**

just being present as a performer can be enough. Be in the moment and follow the feeling that guides you.

Important to note is that we as a group never lowered our artistic and performative qualities. Of course you need to find ways with the capacity of the other bodies; a duet between a dancer and a dancer in a wheelchair will look very different than a duet on other bodies. Although different, the possibilities that come out can change your view on your way of making art.

Making individuals experience your artistic creation process

The second way is a less committed perspective which I think we as artists and organizations can take the big steps within. This is about finding ways on how to bring specific individuals to your own practice as an Artist. As example, I will use my latest production 'Please Answer When It Rings.' This was an immersive interdisciplinary production (painting and dance) based on the theme: 'How far do you let something go before you take action,' where the audience is actively experiencing a created world they can walk through and interact with. Within a historic building designed with set and paintings, an artistic world was created for 6 weeks, four weeks with an exhibition, and two weeks with performances. In order to achieve this, I oriented my action towards two main goals: 1) the audience should be able to see and influence all processes of creation and 2) individuals from different generations should be involved in the project. For the first point I made sure that there were open rehearsals on the location for visiting audiences to see and share their thoughts. There were also workshops in painting and dance I order that the audience can experience these art forms. Finally, there was a broad social media following of the entire process.

For the different generations the process went a bit deeper. My goal was to have individuals from the age of 10 and 99 being part of this work. For the younger group, I worked with students from a local theatre class as well as with a talent group for performing arts. With their teachers we assisted the students in the making of a performance, similar to mine, on location and interactive, for children from the age of 8-14. The students got a performance experience and could see how I work with professionals. For the seniors' group I had a different approach. I worked with three senior houses in the city, giving a workshop on the location of the performance and another one at the senior housing itself. In both I showed parts of my work, talked about my individual experience and danced with the seniors. It was important for me to realize that these individuals don't often move freely.

Sometimes, it was challenging to get some transportation means that would bring them to my location, to drive them back to the houses, or to get the most able people for the performance. For those who were unable to travel I came to the location with my dancers and showed part of the performance and again danced with the seniors. The love, gratitude and dialogue are indescribable.

To finish

I would like to encourage all of the artists and institutions to think about the artistic process and think about where, who and how you can integrate the community within their work. This can take form in many shapes, be creative! Put time in your process aside to think how to reach out. It can be an intensive collaboration or simply an outreach to a specific group of individuals which you think relates to your work I keep the 80-20 rule for myself- 80% of the priority is the art itself, 20% is the community aspect. You can decide your own percentage on how you would like to shape your connection with the community. You will be amazed about the feedback you will receive.

Maximum chances for the community

It was very interesting to relate to the Timișoara National Theatre as a case study. Indeed, the exercise that I and the entire National Theatre team have been doing for over 17 years is to put permanently this institution in the middle of the community living in and around Timișoara.

Timișoara is one of the most beautiful cities in Romania, with a diverse, interesting and, I would say, stimulating, very complex community. As a National Theatre, along with the other five national theatres in Romania, TNTm is the voice of the national culture in the western part of the country. Nevertheless, what I wished was for this theatre to represent, first of all, the Timișoara community.

From the very beginning, we set out to open the doors of the National Theatre in every possible way – to open them literally, in the truest sense of the word. Before 1875, when this splendid building, originally called the “Franz Jozef Theatre”, was built, the entire construction work was made possible by the will and financial resources of the community, by public subscription; the community was directly involved in the process. The National Theatre is therefore a place belonging to this city, an institution, a space that helps the city to develop. It is a place that demonstrates and reflects the evolution of the Timișoara community and that contains a cultural benchmark set by the community itself. Based on these premises, the most important way in which the National Theatre engages with the community is to explore the question of “who we are today”. That is why the core of our action that we started from the very beginning, many years ago, was to redefine the theater of today. People come to the theatre to see a performance that speaks to them, through their eyes and their experiences of today. History is essential, of course, but we read it through the eyes of our reality. Shakespeare, Molière wrote for their generation, they were what we now call contemporary authors.

People need to feel getting involved. Our own involvement in the



Ada Hausvater
General director
of the Timișoara
National Theatre
“Mihai Eminescu”

community also comes from the fact that we attract, that we interest in our performances a very diverse audience: whether we talk about age or education; we also explore more difficult areas – people with special needs or people rejected by the society. What the National Theatre aims to do is to break down the walls between human beings and to welcome them all in his performance room, a space that we define as a place where we learn, where we improve ourselves, and from where we build our path further.

Theatre is the art of the possible. We grow through it. That is why, with the projects we have included in the cultural program of the European Capital of Culture, we have started from the idea that everyone can be a genius. Stephen Hawking, for example, could have been one of the children taking part in our Children’s Future workshop. Perhaps none of his discoveries would have been possible if he had not been listened to, if no means had been found to communicate with this fantastic mind, confined in a sick body. We must learn to give maximum chances to those in front of us, to open our society, to make it consider more carefully all those around us and not to hurry to put labels on each and every one of us. We are present in different areas of the society, but what is very important to us is to strengthen in those we get in contact with – of course, the public of a theater performance is made up of spectators who obviously want to be there – the capacity for change through assumption, through their own choice. Therefore, we try to reinforce this civic spirit.

From here on, at another level, being together today also means for us working with freelance artists, with whom the National Theater has been collaborating since 2009, and, of course, with independent companies. Collaboration means reaching a new public: the more the public sees, the more it learns and the more it asks for. When you chose to enter a theatre, you chose to grow. And the more we communicate, the more open we are, the more this inner process becomes more complex. This is the essence of our work and I was happy to take another step on this road with the Austrian Cultural Forum.

I wish that the European Capital of Culture year brings the long-awaited mind-shift related to the huge benefits of investing in culture. Does culture not generate money immediately? Maybe not, but in five years, in ten years, its financial benefit might be greater than we can imagine now, as those people who have benefited from theatre performances, exhibitions and books will, in the long term, form a truly educated generation, a generation which, whatever the field, will produce all the positive elements – including the financial, material ones – that quality and professionalism imply. This is

undoubtedly a long-term social benefit.

I truly hope that entrepreneurship will more and more develop in Romania, with a powerful and long-term vision, investing in culture – in theatres, private performance companies, private theatres, private schools, galleries, publishing houses – investing, therefore, in the evolution of the society, in all the cultural tools that can develop these forms of community gathering that means Art. Because that's what Art is, after all: being together, #newTogether.

Convergences

I had the privilege to take part in the organization and the development of the #newTogether workshop “Cultural operators in interaction with the local community”, part of the art and dialogue project initiated by artist and human rights specialist Beate Winkler and implemented by the Austrian Cultural Forum (ACF) on a September day in 2022. Although, as I said, I was involved from the very beginning in the organization of the event on behalf of the National Theatre of Timișoara and, as such, I was aware in detail about the approach of the ACF, the concrete reality of that day fully rewarded the generosity of this project's concept, designed in the unique perspective that offers to our city, Timișoara, the title of European Capital of Culture in 2023 which had been awarded to it.

Indeed, starting from the different models of cultural management presented by the independent artist Jort Faber, Robert Pienz - director of Schauspielhaus Salzburg, and Ada Hausvater - general director of the National Theatre of Timisoara, the foyer of “Sala 2” of the National Theatre became for half a day a real forum where representatives of public performing arts institutions in Timisoara and of numerous independent organizations with artistic, cultural tourism, social, youth, etc. met, joined by professors from the vocational faculties of Timisoara, journalists and, last but not least, representatives of local and county authorities.

The workshop seemed to go by in a flash: after more than six hours, the more than 30 professionals participating found it hard to tear themselves away from the dialogue. Perspectives – some seeming to arise from diametrically opposed points of view – met, sometimes clashed, and finally found points of convergence. In fact, the first two convergences that the attendees discovered – the elements that triggered the dialogue – were a symbolic one and a very evident one. In the first place, they agreed on the common ground of the existence itself and on the mission of the institutions they were representing, in other words, on the relation of all cultural operators to the community. Then, they also rediscovered and focused



Codruța Popov
Artistic consultant
at the Timisoara
National Theatre “Mihai
Eminescu”

on the space where the workshop was taking place – “Sala 2/Hall 2” of the National Theatre, with its indisputable place, status and value in the recent cultural history of the city.

But perhaps the most interesting exercise of this workshop – and, in any case, the most exciting, even flamboyant, at times – remains, in my eyes at least, the debate that took place within what Andrei Popov – the mind, heart and, equally, the hand that led the whole #newTogether project for more than two years, together with Thomas Kloiber, former director of the Austrian Cultural Forum –, called the “discussion area”, meaning the working groups. We realized how rarely we – cultural operators of Timișoara and not only – meet and have real and deep intellectual contact with each other, how much self-sacrifice it takes to make these transmission belts work, a process which, on the other hand, is precisely holding together the social and civic fabric of the community. Together, public institutions and NGOs are society’s response to the needs of its immediate present and, of course, its long-term projections. Different, but with the same vector of direction. This shared vision and shared listening was therefore a stimulating and necessary exercise, which led all those present to become connected to a common reality and a common goal, under the banner of the European Capital of Culture.

Voices of Timișoara

at the workshop “Cultural operators in interaction with the local community” (September 15, 2022)

Participants – cultural managers, independent artists, representatives of independent associations and organizations as well as public cultural institutions, NGO workers, city of Timișoara and Timiș county employees and representatives, journalists

- In the view of the participants, the Timisoara community has a number of specific assets: multi-ethnicity, cultural richness, a sense of identity and local belonging, curiosity, dynamism, openness to the outside world, the existence of a developed local university education system, an intellectually solid social stratum, *Historia loci*.

- Cultural organizations can individually contribute to strengthening the relationship between the local community and the cultural sector as a whole, say workshop participants. This can be done through better interaction with people, by identifying their cultural and social needs, by providing coherent coverage of cultural events across the geographical area of the city, by raising media awareness about communicating constructive community development projects.

- Participants in the discussions underlined the need for cultural decentralization and called on cultural institutions and organizations to open up to and work more in communities (neighborhoods, communes, villages) that do not represent their direct audience.

- Participants identified several ways in which organizations and institutions in the cultural sector can support community development: resources (human, technical, space, know-how, image, dissemination, experience); mediation and balance; stimulating the need for quality in all areas and activities of community life.

- Currently, the relationship between the Timisoara community and the local cultural sector is complex: communication between the two is permanent, but not without its flaws, hence the need for a permanent rapprochement, say the participants. For the younger generation, the cultural sector plays the role of a beacon, being both a trainer and an ambassador of new trends. Cultural organizations already offer to the young people – but they still need to be encouraged to do so – opportunities to

build on their experiences at the events they attend and to turn them into further initiatives of their own (the snowball effect).

- The attendees call on opening as many spaces as possible dedicated to live performances, one of the artistic genres that unite the most the community.

- The local cultural sector has a key role to play in rediscovering, recovering, reshaping and valuing identity in the community as a source of increasing interpersonal trust, participants explain.

- It is expected that Timisoara's cultural organizations and institutions take advantage of the opportunity of the European Capital of Culture and work together on several objectives that the participants consider essential for the relationship with the local community: revitalization of neighborhoods through and for culture; stronger involvement of volunteers, especially young people, in current activities; development of the relationship between education and culture for young people; support for the development of young people in high school and university through cultural and educational events (effective cultural management).

- The participants encourage the collaboration between cultural institutions with different profiles and objects of activity in order to generate an original cultural offer for the city, to attract new audiences, to diversify working tools, but also to provide the community with an example of good practice in communication and coherence.

- The participants also wish that Timisoara's cultural organizations and institutions open up even more to the community by multiplying and promoting "open door" events and collaborative projects (open space). Therefore, effectively training specialized cultural mediators for different age groups is for them another key priority.

- They believe that a better interconnection of cultural institutions would lead to their greater openness to the outside world, to breaking down regional barriers and provincialism, to generating an original cultural offer for the city, to developing an appetite for experimentation and the avant-garde, to diversifying working tools, to bringing vulnerable groups back into the civic and cultural space, but also to providing the community with an example of good practice in communication and coherence.



Social Affairs



Communication – keyword for future in medicine

I considered this workshop very interesting from the moment Ramona Băluțescu and the #newTogether project organizers proposed it to me, and I could list several aspects here. There is an absolute need, first of all, to draw conclusions, to learn the lessons after the dramatic experience we went through, of Covid, of the pandemic. It would be terrible to let it pass and not try to draw some conclusions. It is for us, the medical world especially, an opportunity, however, this drama we went through. We manage more easily than before the pandemic to convince the authorities - because we are talking about them here - of the strategic importance of this sector and of what we called, in some presentations, a sanitary system like Noah's ark - that's how it was during this period. In special situations people cling desperately to their salvation, and the authorities must concretize this concept in some clear measures, in some measures of major importance.

This would be a first argument. The second - I think that the most likely way to produce ideas, proposals, suggestions comes from meetings that are not organized by officials, with all due respect. I don't think that the government authorities, the political world, unfortunately, can do it - I think that the most effective way to create programs is to discuss them among professionals and then propose them to the authorities. We believe this because in this period of great drama, of great challenge, we managed to modernize our areas, at least our Intensive Care sector which we doubled as endowments from the zero moment, April 2020, until the end of 2020,



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Head of the Anaesthesia
and Intensive Care
Clinic of the "Pius
Brînzeu" Emergency
County Clinical Hospital
Timișoara

purely and simply putting some ready-made programs on the table.

And this form of discussion should occur outside the political world but with a stimulating external presence - external in the sense that people from outside our medical world join us in our reflection. These created the right environment to discuss – that could be seen from the way these discussions proceeded. Not officially, rigidly, as it usually happens at official meetings, but as a real dialogue in which we did not have fixed time intervals to speak, in which we were able to intervene - not necessarily over each other, to block each other, but to intervene when a colleague suggested an idea to us, and this we appreciated very much.

Then I think it was good, again, that the discussions did not take place in a too large a group. We were a limited number of people and thus we could really discuss and, I hope, crystallize some proposals that will remain.

It was definitely useful – people clarified some ideas from this interaction, from this dialogue, and we were able to somehow make arguments.

I think that this meeting has taken place at a time when the Timișoara medical community has made an important leap in terms of internal collaboration, cohesion and solidarity. Because inevitably, and obviously for everyone, this community made the first, spontaneously, on its own initiative, through total volunteering, a social phenomenon of extraordinary magnitude, and which had a major national impact – the Covid Vaccination Marathon. There, among the volunteers, there were students, nurses, residents, specialist doctors, university professors, hospital directors, who worked day shift or night shift - the enthusiasm with which they had worked didn't die. I think it created this team spirit and – I know, I have the list of these volunteers – the groups formed in those days are ready to react whenever a new project is needed. Since then we are organizing medical caravans, for example – another project that benefits from the great involvement of our professionals. It became even difficult, in a way, to select the staff wishing to take part, so that we would not have a too large number of people when we leave. I literally get called by university professors – “I know you're organizing it, I would like to come too; a young specialist from my team is going but I want to join you too”. So this is the spirit and we must not ignore it. And let's always remember who we are, where we got to.

How to get to the things we still need

I think the time of Covid brought the capacity for changes that could be done at a different speed and involving less bureaucracy. Or measures were sought to overcome the inherent bureaucracy. Thus, getting involved in the #newTogether project, I thought that the first social field in which we can see changes, anticipate new things and demand that the pace of these changes remain constant is medicine.

I have 30 years of experience working as a journalist and over 20 of those years I spent in hospitals and with doctors. I believe that Medicine and Education are the two most important areas of a society that has not yet reached a constant balance, such as the Romanian one. But, as we are talking about major changes brought by a pandemic, i.e. a medical problem, it was natural to approach the doctors, to see how they see this NEW TOGETHER.

I live in Timișoara, a large city in the Western part of Romania, which has the advantage of having a University of Medicine and Pharmacy, therefore of training doctors, in addition to the existence, here, of some large clinics. Hence it was natural to turn to one of my collaborators, who is also a doctor in a red zone of his hospital, and in the fight against Covid, Intensive Care, but also a university professor and one of the most prominent figures of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy from Timișoara, professor Dorel Săndesc.

Thus, we decided to invite to the discussion the directors of the hospitals in Timișoara or their representatives, but, in particular, also the heads of the departments who had the toughest work during the pandemic – the ones from the Emergency Department and from the Intensive Care Unit of the two largest hospitals in the city – the Municipality Hospital and the County Hospital.

Why did I think such a meeting was useful? Because I realized that, often, ideas about what can be done in the near future flow better when



Ramona Băluțescu
Journalist specialized in
public health and medical
sectors

people meet and discuss, even if the concept was close to an interview, a collective one, people answering to a journalist's invitation and accepting their moderation at this event.

It was interesting to see what our doctors consider they still need at this moment, and what they would like to have, as endowments, or to happen, as abstract things. And this especially when comparing similar structures, such as the Emergency and Intensive Care departments of the two big hospitals.

I believe that sometimes people, due to their psychological structure, don't even realize that they should ask for or make changes towards something they want or need. And then, a meeting as the one in the frame of the #newTogether project proved to be useful in helping some of these doctors to verbalize their needs and dreams, so that together we can look for solutions for this tomorrow that awaits us.

For some of the problems that have already been discussed, we have worked out solutions, since my journalistic background helps me connect people who can help each other. Others may find their solution with funds coming from the Ministry of Health or from the local authorities. As for a deep social change, we must work together to make it happen. But I think that's exactly what we've done: start bringing them closer by thinking together of solutions for tomorrow.

Voices of Timișoara

at the Public health education roundtable – “Timișoara's medical community – post-pandemic needs” (October 1, 2022)

Participants – professors of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Timișoara, directors of hospitals and heads of hospital departments (the Timiș County Hospital, the City Hospital, the Romanian Railroads Company Hospital, the Blood Transfusion Center, the Infectious Diseases Hospital, the Institute of Cardiology - all from Timișoara).

- Working in the medical sector during the pandemic shows that better collaboration between hospitals leads to greater efficiency in treating patients, participants say.

- Optimizing circuits and the use of spaces – all of which lead to shortening the time patients spend in the wards.

- Participants said that overcrowding of the emergency room can be solved by organizing first aid courses for the general public, provided by interconnected teams with the help of the local school inspectorate, and classes on the medical system in Romania, that educate participants about the correlation between the form of aid to be given and the severity of an applicant's medical problems.

- For them, another solution to the overcrowding of the emergency room would be the opening of permanent medical centres that could help with the patient triage.

- They think also that in the future these permanent medical centres should be reinforced and equipped for carrying out minimal health tests (blood, ultrasound, etc.).

- It is expected that the need for human resources will increase in the coming years: a hospital with teaching clinics would need to expand its activities in several existing buildings in the neighbourhood, which can be exchanged with other premises owned by local authorities. For participants, better management of public buildings could help hospitals open new sections.

- The pandemic has shown that the intensive care units need to be larger; part of the management of problems that may arise in the future is to extend the space dedicated to that kind of department, both for patients and materials.

- One of the hospitals could ease the work of intensive care doctors by buying a new portable radiology machine, while the management of the materials used in the Emergency Room can be improved by using smart shelving systems, believe the participants.

- Polytrauma patients could benefit from the separation of a transfusion medicine ward from the intensive care unit, say the doctors, for whom legislation on the transfer of blood bags from stocks could be improved according to patients' needs.

- In the near future, emergency rooms could reach patients faster and easier by using drones.

- A distinct need of the city would be the creation of a vascular pathology centre, for which a building would also be needed.

- Participants call for faster decisions within their institutions by changing regulations that would strengthen the decision-making process, at the level of hospital directors, to more easily create new internal structures.

- Hospital representatives hope that the future will bring physical improvements to their institutions. They identified needs that are specific to some hospitals, but which are mentioned here as a general example: a new PCR (through a national project); a new cold room, which would eliminate unforeseen situations in the management of stored blood; renovation of their facades; adding a new floor to one of the hospitals, in order to expand their activities in the same building within the next 10 - 15 years.

- Doctors hope to spend more time in their interaction with patients; reducing bureaucratic procedures during the medical act would help them pay more attention to the specificities and needs of each patient.

- A better collaboration with the Ambulance Service is also desired by the participants. For them, patient flow and individual management would be more efficient if there were better and clearer protocols between hospitals and the ambulance or emergency departments (e.g., for heart attacks) to avoid some hospitals refusing to receive incoming patients.

- Looking ahead, participants hope that hospitals will do an even better job of preventing fires by investing in new and better electrical and medical gas systems.

- Doctors believe that if the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Timișoara gets the administration of a hospital that currently belongs to a central authority in Bucharest, this would boost the decision-making process and the activity of this medical institution.

- Participants called for the creation of more art therapy programs for patients.



The image is a promotional graphic for an art exhibition. The background is a photograph of an art gallery. In the foreground on the left, a large, vertical abstract painting is partially visible, featuring warm tones of orange, red, and yellow. The background shows a gallery space with white walls, track lighting, and other artworks on display. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Exhibition Transforming

at Jecza Gallery

”





#newTogether – overcoming pandemic through culture

newTogether was a project of the Austrian Cultural Forum Bucharest that was already ongoing when I came to Romania as new Austrian Ambassador in September 2021. At that time, the post-COVID period seemed to be very close, but the pandemic was far from over.

The implementation of the #newTogether project was deeply influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. The scope of it was even further enhanced in the course of the pandemic: at the beginning, a film was produced, then several workshops were organized in Timișoara. In September 2022, the exhibition “Transforming” by Beate Winkler was shown at the Jecza Gallery, as a highlight of the project, in the same city. #newTogether proved to be a suitable format for dealing with the effects which the pandemic had on cultural activities. It was also a way of responding to the challenges of such a difficult period. For this project, the interaction between artists and representatives of other walks of life was of paramount importance.

Let me thank all participants that were involved in making #newTogether such a successful project. It has been one of the most comprehensive and dynamic projects the Austrian Cultural Forum Bucharest has ever realized. Due to the participation of members of the EUNIC network, it has a European dimension. At the same time, #newTogether is a rich contribution to the European Capital of Culture – Timișoara 2023.



Adelheid Folie
Ambassador of Austria
to Romania

Transforming

Notes about my exhibition

1. What motivates me

Change and transformation

Transformation. Change. Transition. They are a constant part of nature, of our society – of ourselves. We are constantly reminded of them, but almost no one wants to experience them, because they contradict our deepest need, the desire for security. To convey possibilities and magic of change, which are often suppressed, to promote them – these are some of my motivations to pursue my artistic path and to create this exhibition “Transforming” together with wonderful companions. I would like to share my experiences with transformations, to share their often not directly tangible, but nevertheless experienceable chances. This includes the permanent dialogue that underlies my artistic process from the beginning to the end.

The power of white paper

I am fascinated by the white paper, which for me is a symbol of the abundance of possibilities we have – of the openness of art. I never have a fixed idea of what I will concretely paint or design. White, blank paper, which I use consciously, is for me a source of inspiration to constantly rethink and create. And last but not least, it creates a mysterious relationship with something that connects what I do to the origins of painting: the handmade paper. What will this relationship lead to?

Unlimited possibilities

The next stop on my artistic journey is the colors. Colors are a source of inspiration for me, an expression of the unconscious – they are in a permanent dialogue with each other. They also show me what I am avoiding



Beate Winkler
Visual artist,
human rights defender

in the process. Overcoming resistance, reaching for unfamiliar color tones - spaces of possibility open up. My environment is available to me for creating: ink, brushes, sponges, water, pencils, combs, hands – almost everything that surrounds me. What will it be that I reach for?

Crossing borders

I am fascinated above all – this is the 3rd aspect – by my own reaction, my intuition, the limits I experience, the constraints I impose on myself or overcome. How will I react to the processes that I have limited control over? Will I be faster than my mind? How will I succeed in deepening myself even further, in letting the incomprehensible be imagined, in letting the contradictions become visible?

2. What fascinates me in the mediation process of my art

Open artworks - symbols of mutability

I also go on an expedition when shaping my papers: I roll them in and out, hang them from the ceiling so that they become flying sculptures, place them on the floor, nail them to the wall. By hanging them in open space, I make my paper rolls float - taking up the vision and longing for flight. There are always more possibilities than I presume. I also experience these unimagined possibilities when I transform smaller paper formats into sculptures. Many of my paintings have a reverse side, but the viewer cannot see it. Or painted elements that cannot be seen because their support is rolled up. More possibilities are given than I am aware of.

Dialogue is the essence

I enter into a dialogue with the others, the viewers of my art – I try to find out how he or she perceives, experiences and lives my art. I want to know what he or she thinks and feels. What fascinates or irritates her or him. Perhaps they don't feel nothing at all. I am amazed at the different reactions - even perceptions that are foreign to me. And enrich me. Or annoy me. That's what I expect from a conversation with others about my art – and about art in general.

Dialogue with the space

The dialogue gains another dimension when involving the space in it and, most of all, the confrontation with the works in the space. There is dialogue also in the hanging of my paintings and those who stage the hanging. Empathizing with the space, dealing with what the space and the works need separately, reconciling the all these voices - this is a fascinating phase of the process. Including the perhaps different perception of those who help create the exhibition. Alone I only see 180°, with others 360°. Easier said than done. But it is an essential step to let go of my works, which with the exhibition stage slip away more and more from me and enter into other different spaces of possibilities – they become completely independent of me. I experienced this process as particularly enriching in the Jecza Gallery with Sorina Jecza and her team, with whom I hung the exhibition together. It is a gift for which I am very grateful to them and to Thomas Kloiber, who brought us together and supported us.

3. Art and culture belong at the center of society

Creativity and art are required

Last but not least, I would like art in itself, and of course my art, to convey a social impulse. We are in a profound process of social change, because change is taking place in almost all areas of life at the same time. We are challenged to “rethink” our society – to seek new answers for fundamental questions of our time and not to download the old answers for the questions of today. For this we need openness, creativity, imagination and the free space of art.

Perceiving the power of future images

Images of the future are essential for this process of change: images that are more attractive than the resistance that accompany any change. This is where art, which carries the power of utopia, can have a socio-political impact. Therefore, the visitors of the exhibition “Transforming” were invited to interact with the works. Each and every one was asked to write or paint his or her dreams or hopes for a new WE on a small painting on handmade paper - which is an original work. It could have been a sentence, a symbol or a small drawing. All these dreams and wishes were then thrown into a “Box of

Future” and installed afterwards on a wall at “Sala 2” of the National Theater in Timișoara: a wall of dreams for a new WE. This is also how new images of the future are created - diverse, contradictory and lively.

We need “Art and...”

Last but not least, we need new forms of interaction across individual professional boundaries and areas of life: art and dialog, art and education for the future, art and digitization. We need “Art and...”. Based on this conviction, I develop my exhibitions and projects in which art and dialogue are combined and in which very different aspects interact and inspire each other: everything is bundled in this book of dreams for a new WE. A book that I wish will contribute to a positively changed reality.

Vienna, October 2022









Periscope – Transforming

What happens at the intersection of civic spirit, feminism and art? At a time when this equation is dynamically redefining itself and when the reactions for and against are increasingly radical, an answer came to me from Beate Winkler, a European artist living in Vienna. She brought the painting exhibition and interactive installation “Transforming” in the Jecza Gallery space, part of a broad art and social dialogue project organized and promoted by the Austrian Cultural Forum with the support of the Austrian Ministry of European and International Affairs.

Beate Winkler is a recognized European figure who speaks out on socio-political, cultural and civic issues, an opinion leader, a fundamental rights defender and a powerful voice that has pushed for a new status for women in Europe. She was the first woman to build and lead a European agency - now the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights - for a long time, a strong, voluntary representative of feminism.

Paradoxically, however, she remains, functionally, the artist who uses her feminine sensibility to express herself through it and to generate emotion. Her works transcribe in multiple media a state dominated by reverie, meditation and poetry.

How do these two seemingly opposing attitudes interact? Beate Winkler reconciles them, building a conceptual framework that she supports through her own art. The discourse which Beate Winkler engages with in public life is clearly set out and starts from a simple liminal question: “What kind of society do we want to live in?”

This kind of question is neither unique nor new. It defines the entire contemporary political discourse, which starts from the recognition of the civilizational paradigm shifts that humanity is undergoing. What gives Beate Winkler’s position its personal characteristic, however, is the affirmation of the privileged place that art must occupy in these times of profound



Sorina Jecza
President of the TRIADE
Foundation, Timișoara
(Text first published in
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upheaval, crisis, anguish and changes of perspective. Art, through its power of expression, can encourage positive attitudes. It can stimulate dialogue, move the emotions, induce dreaming or energize positive thinking. To the rhetoric of activism, the artist responds with “soft” forms that tend towards the recovery of humanist values. Starting from the analogy between creative and social dilemmas (“I am fascinated by my own reaction, by my intuition, by the limits I experience, by the constraints I impose on myself or overcome. How will I react to processes that I can control only to a limited extent? How can I manage to go even further, to imagine what is incomprehensible, to make contradictions visible?”), Beate Winkler considers art as an elementary resource for dialogue and as a bond for the reconstruction of a new collective identity. She believes that art can act as a catalyst for rebuilding trust and increasing social cohesion through its openness and freedom. The slogan adopted by the artist’s project, #newTogether, is constructed in terms of positivity. The watchword is WE, this we that can encompass us all, reflecting everyone’s aspirations in equal measure.

However, by approaching this rhetoric, but using art as a means of persuasion, the concept of feminism is no longer understood as a critical instrument, but is remodeled, contaminated by the constructive values of femininity, and becomes a vector of regenerative optimism. In this way, Beate Winkler’s works, a mixture of fragility and rigor, transcribe in the language of art the aspirations towards which the civic activist strives.

What is the result of this dual form of action? The firmness of sociopolitical discourse melts into the vague fluidity of watercolor transparencies, rational judgement is joined by empathetic feeling, and combative feminism is tempered, tinged with hints of soft femininity.

In the exhibition space, the presence of the expert is invisible, and the works express, with subtlety and refinement, their own discourse. Beate Winkler’s practice draws on traditional art materials and techniques and constantly probes our creative resources. The staging of the works relies on the intrinsic qualities of the material used - handmade paper, directly exposed and capable of initiating a frustrated dialogue with the viewer, untouched by the frame or glass that conceals its presence. The paper is exposed either two-dimensionally, directly on the wall, caught in pins that leave the irregular edges free, or, made into a scroll, it is modelled, becoming a flying sculpture that floats, hanging from the ceiling, or a quiet object that sits on the floor. The screen is not subject to the canonical rules either, leaving the spirited play of works on the wall. A white paper roll, uncolored, catches the eye from the start. It is the symbol-object of creation, the white

sheet of paper, the quintessence of all possibilities, towards which the artist feels the fascination of the beginning. Starting from its proteanism, the artist defines her creation as “art of the possible”. She exploits the multiple values that derive from these vast possibilities of change in various forms, to which she gives positive connotations. Lying delicately on the white sheet, the fluidity of color transcribes stories of flight, visions of aspiration. At times, the artist uses both sides of the paper, leaving an unseen side, barely suspected, and enhancing the poetic charm of a flowing discourse, under the sign of openness and transformation.

In dialogue with the “artist”, “expert” Beate Winkler works on the symbolic transfer of this creative model as an impetus for social action to react openly to changing situations. Art as a model of utopia, as a stimulus for transformation. Art as a form of renewal.







Voices of Timișoara

Installation at the
Timișoara
National Theater



Voices of Timișoara – visions for a new WE

(December 2022-May 2023)

Bridges between people, but also bridges to ourselves in the future. Strongly involved in the community through all its programs, the “Mihai Eminescu” National Theatre of Timișoara strongly believes in the need to create and encourage opportunities for dialogue between all the people of this city, those who, through their actions, even the most insignificant, build the evolution and the future of Timișoara. This is just one of the reasons why Timișoara National Theatre joined the #newTogether art and dialogue project, initiated by European visual artist and fundamental rights defender Beate Winkler. Between May and October 2022, she invited the participants in various events (workshops, conferences, exhibitions), organized as part of the #newTogether program, to write their ideas, wishes and hopes for the years to come on small-scale works of art, designed especially for this purpose on manufactured paper. Collected in a “Box of the Future”, their thoughts could be seen and read within the interactive installation “Voices of Timișoara - visions for a new WE”, in the foyer of Sala 2 of the National Theatre, in the frame of the opening events of Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture. The visitors could add, in turn, their own messages to the existing ones.

“I have a great request for you: let’s set off together on the journey towards a new WE. And let us imagine how we want to live together in the future. We all feel that our societies are undergoing a profound transformation. Everything is happening simultaneously: war, Covid 19, digitalization, climate change, social conflict, migration, to name but a few examples. More and more people feel this and want to do something about it, so as not to be helplessly exposed to all the changes. But where is this journey taking us? How do we want to live together in the future? Can we have a common dream that we can also put into practice together? Please think, imagine what the new WE could look like. What things should be kept as they are in the community you live in? What should be changed? What are the characteristics, the human qualities that you want to take with you on this journey? Or, in other words: imagine that we meet in three years time and you tell me: “Here in Timișoara and in Romania, we have come to create a new WE, a new sense of solidarity!” What would have to happen to be able to say that? I invite you too to contribute to the dream of a new WE. A dream that, I hope, can come true”, says Beate Winkler in her letter to the people of Timișoara.

This will be a
Good year!
2023

ESTI CEEA
CE
GANDESTI!

OPEN TO
BORDER

CREANȚĂ

- PACE
- TOLERANȚĂ

Draw
something
pretty

ART

BETTER

Zukunft braucht
Bürger nicht
User!

die Welt
die wir
leben

VERNUNFT!

THE WORLD GIVES
YOU SO MUCH
PAIN
AND HERE YOU
ARE... MAKING
GOLD
OUT OF IT

empatie
&
Solidaritate
♡









Partners

The Austrian Cultural Forum Bucharest warmly thanks all its partners without whose enthusiastic and dedicated contribution the implementation of the #newTogether project would not have been possible.

