

IETM REPORT

www.ietm.org

THE ART OF VALUING

between evident and evidence-based

Panel discussion

IETM Satellite in Brussels, 17-18 February 2015

Moderator: Diane Dodd

Panelists: Abigail Gilmore, Mercedes Giovinazzo, Péter Inkei



FLANDERS
ARTS INSTITUTE

IETM is supported by:



Co-funded by the
Creative Europe Programme
of the European Union

ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

Panel discussion



Abigail Gilmore is Senior Lecturer in Arts Management and Cultural Policy at the Institute for Cultural Practices, University of Manchester. Current projects include: Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) 'Understanding Everyday Participation' and AHRC Research Network 'Beyond the Campus: Higher Education and the Creative Economy'. She leads the Research team on the NESTA/ Arts Council England/AHRC Digital R&D Fund for the Arts project on measuring quality in arts experiences, 'Culture Metrics'.

Diane Dodd has worked in the field of international cultural co-operation for over 20 years. She is Director of IGCAT (International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism) and European coordinator for IFACCA (International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies). She leads an MA course in Cultural Institutions and Policies for the International University of Catalonia in Barcelona. She has provided expert advice to several cities in their bids to be European Capital of Culture.

Mercedes Giovinazzo is Director of Interarts in Barcelona, a non-governmental organisation specialised in international cultural co-operation. Currently she is Chair of Culture Action Europe. Between 2008 and 2011 she chaired the "Access to culture" Platform set up by the Education and Culture Directorate General of the European Commission in the framework of the structured dialogue process with the non-governmental sector.

Péter Inkei is the Director of the Budapest Observatory: Regional Observatory on Financing Culture in East-Central Europe. He has done consultancy in various fields of cultural policy, among others for the Council of Europe and the European Commission; is author of the Hungarian entry of the Compendium of cultural policies, and has been a speaker at various international conferences. Previously, he held various positions in the civil service, including deputy state secretary for culture.

The art of valuing: between evident and evidence-based

DAY 1

Panel discussion with Abigail Gilmore (Manchester University), Péter Inkei (Budapest Observatory), Mercedes Giovinazzo (Interarts Foundation), moderated by Diane Dodd (IFACCA)

IETM Satellite Meeting in Brussels, 17-18 February 2015, Flemish-Dutch House deBuren

IETM and Flanders Arts Institute gathered representatives of Ministries of Culture and Arts Councils from Europe and beyond for a two days **Satellite Meeting in Brussels on 17 and 18 February 2015**. The meeting focused on the analysis of different **models for measuring and demonstrating the values of culture and its impacts on societies**, as well as the role such measurements play in informing **national cultural policies**.

The first day started off from the very broad perspective of what is the role of arts and culture in society. In his opening speech, Pascal Gielen, Sociology Professor of Arts and Culture at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, presented the main insights of his research report "The Value of Culture". Following to that, Abigail Gilmore (Manchester University), Péter Inkei (Budapest Observatory), Mercedes Giovinazzo (Interarts Foundation) shared their views and opinions on the topic during the panel discussion, moderated by Diane Dodd (IFACCA).

The second day delved into details of how is art being evaluated and by what

indicators it is being measured. Wendy Were (Australia Council for the Arts), Laurien Saraber (FPK - The Netherlands), and Madeline Ritter (Tanzfonds Erbe - Germany) presented models for evaluating and monitoring arts practises from their respective countries, which were later discussed by all participants.

Opening the panel discussion, **Diane Dodd (DD)** sketched out some questions provoked by Pascal Gielen's opening presentation and Mieke Van Hecke's speech:

Is there indeed no evidence for evidence-based research? Does evaluation lead to competition? Does it strip us away from our autonomy? By introducing efficiency, measurement, targets, are we losing control of our sector? It is indeed difficult to represent an inspiring project into a questionnaire, but is there a way we could represent our sector more efficiently though evidence-based research?

Mercedes Giovinazzo: there has to be a European public space where a new political life can take shape and culture plays an essential role to it.

Mercedes Giovinazzo (MG) responded to Pascal Gielen's and his colleagues' idea of the commons and to the argument that culture, not economy is the substructure of society.

First of all, MG agreed with the assumption that if there be no culture, there be no Europe as well and that the crisis in Europe is most of all, a cultural crisis.

MG carried further elaboration of the notion that culture has retreated at the

background of the European project. Although it is true, culture is always underlining the European idea. If there has been something that, from the second half of the last century, the European project has been built on, it is culture: the European Cultural Convention from 1954 is one of the core documents of the Council of Europe¹. But that framing of the issue has come to an end. The profound crisis we are living in is not only of individual and collective values; it is a crisis of the whole political system. The political system of the Nation-State, as we know it for the past 150 years, has come to an end. Therefore instruments like the European Cultural convention that are treaties between independent national States that rely on the sovereignty of the Nation-State are no longer working. By now, we are united by Europe, which is a union of diversities - but this narrative does not make sense anymore. One cannot defend being united while being so diverse and fragmented, and so much lacking of shared values.

'If there has been something, that from the second half of the last century the European project has been built on, it is culture.'

¹ The convention is set up to promote co-operation in culture, education, and sport. Its signature is one of the conditions for becoming a participating state in the Bologna Process and its European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It has been ratified by all 47-member states of the Council of Europe; it has also been ratified by Belarus, the Holy See, and Kazakhstan.

Another lack is **the lack of common space**, or in Latin: *res publica*.² It is a common shared public place where the art of government is made; policies are being formed and executed – like “the commons” in Pascal Gielen’s terms.

There has to be a different relationship from the existing one and there has to be a European public space where new political life can take shape. Culture plays an essential role in this process.

Culture has to be able to provoke a certain imbalance, or *dismeasure*, in Pascal Gielen’s terms, in what already exists. Part of the responsibility of the culture professionals is to fulfil their duty and obligations as citizens. **It is not only a question of accessing culture; there is also a duty of participating in culture, but also participating in political life in the public space and in the possibility of shaping a different political system.**

Péter Inkei: we need evidence-based research to get knowledge and better understanding of what culture is and to put the public focus on it.

Péter Inkei (PI) elaborated on Pascal Gielen’s provocative statement that there is no evidence for evidence-based research. Although being an advocate for evidence-based research and evidence-based policymaking, PI agreed that in spite of all the recent talk about the evidence-based **there are quite few facts of evidence-based decisions**. Mostly, the evidence is used for post-legitimation and justification of decisions rather than as a ground for policymaking. This is especially true for Eastern European countries where decisions in the cultural domain are still driven by tradition, inertia, or interests of a party or even partial and personal interests.

Nevertheless, evidence-based research should be done and should be used, at least because such data drives the media attention and the policy-makers attention

² *Res publica* (Lat.) – ‘the public thing’ 1. public property, usually a place in the city; 2. the state; commonwealth; 3. public affairs or institutions; 4. the Roman republic (509 BC–27 BC).

to the culture sector, especially when there is a deficit in public discussions and pressure from the civil society advocating for culture. Moreover, to measure is to know.

Impact research could provide meaningful arguments for the impact, the effect that culture has on society but very often, the evidence research is looking not for impacts but for facts. **Often, the objective is to identify what is there, for example, what happens to the money when they are invested;** a simple thing like a spreadsheet of previous years’ spending would suffice but even this basic evidence is rarely being kept. **Eurobarometer** issues now regular surveys on culture, showing quantitative parameters concerning cultural access and participation. **It is important to exploit this information.**

‘It is very much needed to draw attention to culture, and evidence-based research drives the attention to it.’

For example, Romania has become famous and successful with its **New wave in cinema**. Romanian movies have been winning prizes at prestigious festivals in the last few years, but when one examines the Eurobarometer data, Romanians are at the bottom rank for going to the cinema³. Another example is Poland, with its outstanding theatre and yet the smallest theatre audience in Europe.

Although it might be thought provoking to examine such evidence in depth, it is rather audacious to drive conclusions with

³ *Romania is at the bottom of another cinema-related rating too: it has the fewest cinemas per capita in the EU (source: UNESCO on cinema infrastructures of 2011). We can elaborate even more on Romanians non-going to the cinema if we refer to Eurobarometer question QB2.2/ been to the cinema and take into account that “Limited choice or poor quality of this activity in the place where you live” scores the highest (29%) in Romania (source: Eurobarometer 2013 on cultural access and participation 2013, p. 30)*

firm figures like “6.2: that is the contribution of x to y” as the Anglo-Saxon advocacy usually does. Besides, the politicians at the top often hear arguments of this kind and when they are exposed to culture sector’s arguments, they are neutral, even indifferent, because they hear similar arguments from the agriculture, the tourism, the foreign affairs, etc. All of them claim they have scientific proof that putting more money into the respective sector will add value to the economy.

In conclusion, PI once again stressed the importance of evidence-based research for getting knowledge and better understanding of what culture is and what is going on and what are the effects on the society, but remained rather sceptical about the impact these findings might have on political decisions.

Abigail Gilmore: Love, Measurement and the Everyday – observations from the UK perspective

Abigail Gilmore (AG) presented the UK perspective on impact research of culture through some working examples from her practice as a researcher in several ongoing projects. AG has been involved in discussions about finding evidence in relation to public funding of the arts and culture for the last 15 years, both as a research manager working with the sector and as an academic researcher critically exploring the subject, often in collaboration with art organisations.

First of all, there is the issue of finding the right instrument for measurement. It is the institutional framework which shapes the way value is measured and it has profound effects in terms of reproducing social orders. There has been a large number of academic research projects on the value of culture that have been published recently, for example the recent **Warwick report**.

Secondly AG spoke about the role of the artist and the value of art. This topic ties into a present debate in UK about the value of artists and how we reward artists for their work: **#payingartists** campaign.

The third theme is about how arts institutions and organisations can contribute to the social economy. This is obviously crucial in times of continuous funding cuts to the arts. AG argued that this contribution to social economy is best represented through research on the everyday participation and investing in common cultures and using their venues for providing common places.

Measurement of the value of arts: towards the intrinsic

In the first place, some distinctions should be made when speaking of measuring the value of culture: we should distinguish between the arts and culture; between cultural policy and culture; between evidence and knowledge.

For at least the last 10 years there was a continuous debate on what metrics should be applied to the domain of culture. The extrinsic values, the economic impact, seemed to be most important to policy-makers and treasury but now we can observe an increasing interest in how the quality of experience in relation to the transformative value of arts can be measured.

AG showcased a recent research commissioned by the Arts Council of England, which presents a model of evaluating individual and intrinsic impact of art:

From **Carnwath and Brown, 2014:**
Understanding the value and impacts of cultural experience

Stages of individual impact, p. 91

Concurrent impacts: those that occur during the experience	Experienced impacts: observed post-event - hours or days later	Extended and cumulative impacts: lifelong engagement/memory (weeks or years later)
<p>Unconscious psychophysical responses and states, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physiological response (heart rate, skin conductance) • Pre-cognitive response (arousal) • Captivation (flow, awe, absorption, concentration) • Energy and tension 	<p>Short-term experienced impacts, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional affect and meaning • Spiritual uplift • Learning and critical reflection • Social connectedness • Aesthetic enrichment & creative activation <p><i>These impacts can occur before, during and after experiences, but are typically measured afterwards.</i></p>	<p>Delayed impacts of individual events, that accrue through repeated engagement in cultural activities over time, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memory of event • Sense of social belonging • Increased cultural capacity • Increased capacity for empathy • Expanded worldview • Health benefits • Subjective well-being

The indicators are developed in a way to capture immediate and extended impacts of an artistic event (the research is event-centered, because there has to be a certain exposure to trigger potential impacts). AG argued that particular indicator sets would have different meaning for the different stakeholders. While the second column of impacts might be interesting to arts organisations in terms of how they understand the quality and the experience of art, the third column, which concerns the extended and cumulative impacts, would be of interest to art funders.

This sort of indicators has been developed for capturing quite individual, qualitative, subjective or even subjectifying, in Pascal Gielen's terms, experiences.

AG shared her working experience with [Culture Metrics](#) - a project aiming to test the value of a co-produced metric set and system of opinion-based data collection, including triangulation of large-scale data on how cultural organisations, their peers, funders and policy makers, and the public assess the quality of work. A digital platform makes it easier for the users to rate and rank and respond to the survey questions.

The initial observations on the work of the platform so far: **People like to talk about quality** and prefer this way of sharing their experiences to giving answers to strict survey questions; **Quality means different things to different stakeholders** - for funders it usually means impact; There are **difficulties in establishing critical trust** (Wall et al, 2004); Co-producing a shared framework across arts organizations that compete for funding and audiences is a tough task; In addition, **metrics like these do not deal with innovation** very well because the quality standards for that haven't been agreed yet.

The value of art: love, art, and change

It is hard to measure intrinsic value through hard indicators and sharing data; and that's the point where "love comes in".

AG cited [Jeanette Winterson's speech](#) at the opening of the newly developed Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester (on February 14th, 2015): "Creativity in all its forms is a passionate engagement with making something happen. **Like falling in love, art is a disturbance of what is a reordering of existing material, an encounter with otherness, and a baffled certainty that what is happening** - long or short, brief or lasting - has to happen (the urgency of love and making). The happening of art renews, replaces or renames the tired old clichés of the obvious. **Love changes us. Art changes us.**"

This disturbance and bafflement might be considered corresponding to the *dismeasure* which culture brings in our lives.

'Institutions can excel at "realising" the aesthetic third and they do this best in the realm of the everyday.'

The notion of **the aesthetic third**, presented in a work by the social psychologist Lyn Froggett, seems to be coherent with the idea of dismeasure, disruption or dissembling:

"Artistic outcome and aesthetic (whether conceived as aesthetic of process, product or both) is not subordinate to other social agendas. The artwork remains as an essential third object or point of dialogue between the arts organisation and members of the public who are not arts professionals.

However, it **may also act as a third between the provisional community involved in its production and appreciation** (artists, curators, participating publics) and the social domain that it aspires in some measure to change" (Froggett, 2011: 93)

Art triggers a process of *subjectification* and helps the person to question their place in the social order. Paradoxically, culture is also a form of positioning and framing and contains individuals within social orders; hence, art can both place and unplace us.

AG presented [ACE's audience segmentation model](#) as an example of institutional value framework, dividing audiences into active and passive, participating and non-participating; which although considered pragmatic by arts organisations in their audience development efforts, carries the risk of misunderstanding how value is subscribed to by those who are actually participating.

Arts Council England: audience insight segmentation

Highly engaged	Urban arts eclectic 3%	Traditional culture cultures 4%
	Fun, fashion and friend 16%	Bedroom DJs 2%
Some engagement	Mature explorers 11%	Mid-life hobbylists 4%
	Dinner and a show 20%	Retired arts and crafts 4%
	Family and community Focused 9%	
Not Currently engaged	Time-poor dreamers 4%	Older and home-bound 11%
	A quiet pint with the match 9%	Limited means, nothing fancy 3%

Attend and may also participate

Participate Only

How to avoid such institutional value frameworks and try to understand the actual value participating in culture brings in people's lives?

Everyday participation and common culture

An AHRC funded project, Understanding Everyday Participation, aims to paint a broader picture of how people make their lives through culture and in particular how communities are formed and connected through participation.

Taxonomies of 'non-engaged' privileges particular forms of participation and reproduces social orders and practices. This **new research aims to understand what people value and how their places, lives and social infrastructures are made** through participation from mixed methods research on everyday situated cultural practices. It is assets-based - avoiding deficit model of culture (Miles and Sullivan 2012; Stevenson 2013), i.e. "if you are not participating, you are not really here".

Findings: People who are considered by the traditional 'audience development' paradigm as 'non-engaged' are actually quite active and enjoy their lives with different kinds of activities they value highly. Not so many of the respondents recognize formal arts institutions, museums, galleries, concert halls, in their everyday lives. The arts may be transformative but only 8% of minority representatives (the Warwick report) are engaged. There also appears to be some misunderstanding of the wider public valuation of culture, which motivates continuing cuts in funding. How to possibly resolve these issues?

Public space and the social good

A dichotomy? between institutions and public-based paradigm on 'audience development' (Lindelof, 2015) might be devised.

Cultural venues are to be regarded as public spaces, not commodities; as assets, not liabilities.

A common ground between institutional intensions and local cultural resources should be established.

Are there measures for critical trust, creative disruption (and love)? Is it possible to have metrics on the intrinsic values of the art?

Institutions can excel at 'realising' the aesthetic third, and many do this best in the realm of the everyday.

Questions and answers:

Q: When did the urge for evaluation of arts and culture occur within the art institutions?

A (PG): The whole idea of evaluation started with the purpose to deal with healthcare in the Thatcher's era in UK. There is a certain ideology involved and therefore I am always a bit critical with evidence-based policy. It tries to do something, to prove something and there is not always certain proof of the intrinsic.

Q (Luca Bergamo, Culture Action Europe):

Luca Bergamo expressed his agreement that evidence is more often used to justify policies than to inform and shape them. Political decisions are not evidence-based; they are a result of the struggle of constituencies and powers. Even though evidence does not shape policies it has an enormous capacity to build constituency. Evidence is supportive to the narratives of society. The environmental movement, for example, has been building a constituency for environmental issues by producing evidence from the corresponding domain. We need evidence and theory that would form a constituency in society that is demanding for culture. Here comes the question of what should be measured. We as a society have found ourselves at the end of one long-lasting model (economy and production, and competition centred one) and at the beginning of a new, still unknown one which we would wish to build on cultural values and assets as education for all, human rights and so on. What we do not have yet are the means for building a different attitude of people and to make it instrumental for realising the new model based on well being instead of economic growth. Most probably, the research in the quality of experiences of people from their participation in arts might give insight of how to foster this new attitude. Luca Bergamo argued that such intrinsic qualities proved to be traceable in the education domain so it might be feasible to take the effort in the arts and culture domain as well.

A (PG): Of course, one might do serious research and find evidence but then the research findings are immediately taken as a background of a policy and that is the primary reason so much money is given for research projects. There is already a problem when the research is part of a chain of finding out what culture is and forming the policy for culture. This is a trap: it is directing what your questions are, what you measure and what you do not, not according to the subject but according to the policy that funds the research. Thus, culture is being instrumentalised. In a performative way, the researcher is making other culture and other beliefs and we all are involved in this process.

A (AG): It is not evidence per se or policy per se or even it being instrumental, because after all we want cultural policy to achieve its goals. There is an interesting research project by The Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC) at Manchester, *Social Life of Methods*, latest publication: *The Double Social Life of Methods*, 2011. According to their findings, how we measure helps to constitute the subject of what we are measuring and to rearrange the social order around it. The ways that we develop knowledge, data, the ways we say things, it all has its economic proxy helps to constitute or reproduce the order in which we understand that data.

Q: We are not brave enough; we as researchers tend to stick to the methods we are used to. We defend our field. May be we have to work more with artists and instead of only with academics or with cultural management. May be we should be more subjective, more chaotic?

A (PG): Indeed, when looking at the majority of research, we hardly find the questions that artists are interested in; it is predominantly about what policies and policy-makers are interested in. I agree that a need of shift is present but research funds are not interested. Even more, funds are not

interested in what artists are interested in, and that's the problem with evidence-based research.

MG: We have to respond to the conundrum of argue versus proof. There is nothing bad to prove something, there is nothing bad in evidence-based. The problem is what end is this evidence used towards. We can make the following analogy: the lawyer argues a case on a proof basis. So, the lawyer needs a framework, which is the law, the norms, and the facts, but what is added is the capacity to argue. In the case of culture, we lack this capacity to argue because we are trying to justify ourselves, in conditions of constantly changing frameworks and metrics, and new indicators. We may be very good in methodology but still we lack the capacity to transform the facts, the findings into evidence. Recently I was appalled by the fact that the UN Member States want to streamline culture in all its policies and UNESCO is demanding in very short terms for indicators that will feed into policies and agendas prepared in the last three years at least. On the other end of the spectrum is the private sector where many big corporations already work on evidence-based cultural indicators to sell their products and services to a targeted group of consumers.

PI: I personally and professionally enjoy and read, and produce statistics therefore my attention was drawn to the audience segmentation Abigail showed. It states that about 20% are not engaged in cultural activities. In my country or in the East European region in general that percentage is above 40. On the other end, the highest 7% of the 'culture consumers' are a sort of omnivores: they go to galleries and museums, read books, go to the opera, to concerts, play an instrument by themselves, etc. There is a huge divide between engaged and non-engaged in participation in the arts. This huge imbalance is unmatched in no other field: neither income nor education. Somehow culture is distributed in society in the most imbalanced way.

It is important to achieve knowledge on the causing factors and this is where evidence is necessary. As for the research: there are at least two levels of doing research. One level is the research that informs or justifies policies and the other is a lower technical level of accountancy on money spent on culture. This second level has to be further developed and it is important that it be shared amongst countries.

A question to Pascal Gielen: From the three functions of culture (socialization, qualification, subjectification), isn't it subjectification a feature that is specific to our Eurocentric, Western culture? Maybe in other cultures emphasising dissent and the divergent thinking these three levels are not distributed in a similar way. Which may be an asset.

A (PG): Subjectification is not only on individual level, it affects also groups. It may be a typical Western culture feature. As for the contradiction between proof and argument, there is actually none but it has to be well defined which proof might be considered as such and how to use it. There is a kind of reduction like in reason to rationality; the latter being something completely different from reason, in the old European tradition.

To end up with, new ways of finding proof should be elaborated and new types of proof have to be accepted and agreed upon.