

IETM China-Europe Performing Arts Meeting 2006 Beijing/Shanghai

CHINA MEETING IN NUMBERS

The China-Europe Performing Arts Meeting counted a total of 308 registered participants coming from 21 countries. From the total delegates 52.9% came from China, 40.3% came from West and North Europe, 3.2% came from Central Eastern and South-East European countries and 4.2% came from countries outside of Europe and outside of China.

Country	Participants	Country	Participants
Austria	5	Italy	3
Australia	3	Netherlands	9
Belgium	24	Portugal	1
Canada	6	Russia	1
China	163	Republic of Korea	3
Denmark	17	Spain	4
Finland	1	Sweden	8
France	2	Switzerland	7
Germany	7	U.S.A	1
Greece	1	UK	32
Ireland	9	TOTAL	308

This report has been composed using feedback from the Non-Chinese participants of the meeting only. Feedback from the Chinese participants will be included in a separate document. The total number of non-Chinese participants registered was **145 participants**.

Registration for the Working Groups and Info Cells: Working groups



Info Cell 9: How to present work in Europe

Working Group	No. of Registered Participants	Capacity
W.G. 1: Management and the Role of Festivals	25	50
W.G. 2: New Media's Influence on Theatre and Dance	20	50
W.G. 3: How to Foster Innovation and Creativity?	20	50
W.G. 4: Connecting Performing Arts and Society	30	50
W.G. 5: The Notion of Body in Contemporary Dance	11	50
W.G. 6: Funding the Performing Arts	12	50
W.G. 7: How to Manage a Theatre, a Venue?	9	50
W.G. 8: How Can We Work Together? Case Studies	41	50
W.G. 9: Policy and Artists: Where Do They Meet?	19	50
W.G. 10: What Do We Need From Each Other?	29	50
W.G. 11: Presentations and Project Brainstorming	21	50

Info Cells



Info Cell	No. of Registered Participants	Capacity
I.C. 1: Chinese Contemporary Culture	47	50
I.C. 2: Europe's relation with Tradition and Contemporary	33	50
I.C. 3: The Context, Development and Structure of Chinese Performing Arts	50	50
I.C. 4: The Context, Development and Structure of Performing Arts in Europe	29	50
I.C. 5: Contemporary Theatre and Theatre Education in Europe	23	50
I.C. 6: History of Chinese Theatre and Theatre Education	45	50
I.C. 7: Contemporary Dance and Dance Education in Europe	28	50
I.C. 8: History of Chinese Dance and Dance Education	39	50

I.C. 9: How to Present Work in Europe	13	50
I.C. 10: How to Present Work in China	50	50

COMPILATION OF FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRES

Feedback questionnaires were sent to all non-Chinese participants.
 Total number of respondents: 31 out of 145 participants (21.4%).



1. *With which expectations did you come to the meeting?*

To learn about the context of Chinese contemporary performing arts: 19 (61.3%)

To network with both Chinese and European artists: 11 (35.5%)

To find potential Chinese partners: 9 (29.0%)

To learn more about artistic collaboration between East and West: 5 (16.1%)

To meet Chinese artists: 4 (12.9%)

To develop their own specific work: 3 (9.7%)



EU reception

Typical answers

- I was interested to develop my understanding and knowledge of the arts and arts infrastructure in China. I was also hoping to meet interesting artists and organisations.

- As it was my first trip to China, I didn't have specific expectations. I was curious to learn about the situation of the performing arts in China, meet people and see a tiny (but relevant) bit of the country for myself.

- Expected to meet a variety of Chinese (Beijing) artists and programmers working in a variety of art forms; expected to start to discover individual interests and to understand state policies on collaboration; expected to find out about how to work in China (issues and practicalities) and to meet artists with whom I may be interested in working

- I expected to meet a lot of interesting people, both from Europe and from China. Furthermore, I hoped to gather a thorough insight in the Chinese cultural field, its size and infrastructure, its relations with the Chinese government, the way in which the Chinese government influences the artists and their cooperation with foreign organisations, and finally of course: I hoped to find out if there would be enough ground for cooperation between Chinese and European artists and organisations.

- Nous souhaitions avoir un premier contact avec des opérateurs chinois et cerner d'une manière plus fine le marché des arts de la scène en Chine. Nous souhaitions également voir de quelle manière il nous serait possible de collaborer avec des opérateurs chinois.

- To look if it is possible to have an exchange with China. And to get an image of the kind of culture and climate there is around the theatre.

- Meet representatives from the Chinese performing arts scenes; Learn about their way of working in China on different levels (official and/vs independent); Understand what "contemporary performing art" means in China and how it is related to e.g. "performance art"; Learn about the experiences European colleagues made with their China activities; especially in the field of co-productions and AiR; Understand the needs and expectations of the Chinese performing arts scenes when working with European organisers / artists: Where can - in the case of Switzerland - we add value to projects?



2. Have your expectations been met and how?

Yes: 21 (67.7%)

No: 1 (3.2%)

Partly: 8 (25.8%)

Can't say: 1 (3.2%)



- Artistically: I know from people that I met that there are a lot more things going on than what we could accomplish to see during our stay in Beijing. Maybe even more things than were allowed from official side.

- All of my expectations have been met. But I am surprised that the difficulties were that big and I am surprised that there is such a large and interesting art milieu in Beijing. To bad they were not represented in the conference.

- To some extent. I was hoping for more open dialogue and debate.

- I have a better understanding of the conditions in China, and the difficulties in collaborating.

- I was on a mission to find out whether it would be cheaper to source the instruments in China. I found the factory shops, bought a few samples - Pippa, Sheng, Gongs and Cymbals - and also a sense of the pricing. It will definitely be worth returning to Beijing to put together an order.

- Yes indeed! the symposium was really well organised - and it had a good spirit - we were all curious and had the feeling of that this meeting was the right meeting at the right time at the right place.

- It was more than I could expect in a total, well almost total way! So many people sharing their knowledge instead of harboring it and so freely! Less so on the Chinese formal side, but there were those who did intervene in a positive way.

- Definitely. far more than I expected. made many many new friends and contacts, expanded my networks. developed understanding of chinese arts environment.

- Yes, the expectations have been met; it became especially clear that there is a huge gap in China between the "official" and the independent organisations. Each project we embark on in the future will have to deal with these two different approaches to art and culture. It will be the task of the project team to choose the appropriate partners and working methods.



- My expectations have been well met, although for this I had to do a lot of 'reading between the lines'. With this I mean that the official programme from the Chinese presenters was very one sided; they certainly did not try to present a complete picture. But, with 'listening' to what the official government presenters did not say, or to what you heard from independent artists during coffee breaks, lunches, etc., it was very well possible to get a clear picture of the situation in China.

- En grande partie oui. Toutefois, il faut bien signaler que je n'ai rencontré que relativement peu d'opérateurs chinois; type: directeurs de théâtre ou d'institutions.

- I felt I was given a very useful introduction to the Chinese context in the plenary presentations but I learned most from attending performances around the Meeting and from making an effort to discuss their work with the participating artists.

- They have on one hand, but on the other I've seen that it is very difficult to understand this culture in such a short period. You get a feeling about it and that is interesting.



3. Were there unexpected outcomes?

Yes- Regarding Chinese contemporary performing arts: 11 (35.5%)

- I was particularly surprised in the sessions in Shanghai by the quality and extent of projects exploring traditional Chinese arts practices in the context of contemporary notions of individual artistic intention and expression.
- The whole project - the art district- factory 798 was quite exciting, since it gave great inspirations to our local cultural policy plans in Århus, where there are plans of similar productions centers . So I have already been given a report to our politicians about my inspirations from Beijing, including presentation of factory 798.
- Our total opposite point of view concerning culture / public support / market. from our side, public support means freedom, from their side, people support means control
- All of it was unexpected in a way. But I was staggered at the censorship that many artists take for granted there and found myself wondering how I could work in such an environment.
- An unexpected outcome was that we learnt how irrelevant it is to take the productions and work we produce and impose them on a Chinese audience. We learnt that we have to take a more creative attitude to presenting our work in China and to viewing Chinese work in Ireland, and to try and find a common ground to work on "projects" rather than "tours"
- It is now perfectly clear that whatever you do in China, even when working with independent artists, you are still very likely encounter the government in any shape or form, and you will possibly even need them for permits etc, if you like it or not. I think this fact is rather hard to believe for most Europeans; and because of this conference they will certainly take it into account.
- I especially liked to see the way in which artists easily and readily cross the boundaries between sectors as they exist in for instance Europe. If artists feel connected to other artists they will make work together; theatre people working also on film, visual arts, etc. This is a refreshing view when you come from the sometimes too strict divides between cultural sectors in countries like the Netherlands.
- Realised that the partnership between Europe and China is complicated but understood more about the way that Chinese think big and work to find the best at everything – rather than the UK version of access and inclusion!

Yes- Regarding meeting European contacts: 8 (25.8%)

- The unexpected outcomes were some useful European contacts who I hope will be a source of information and partnership in the future.
- I got to know more about Europe than I knew before and found that there is a great number of people all sharing a common desire to connect and promote in the same way, which was very beautiful and also comforting!

Yes- Regarding meeting Chinese contacts: 4 (12.9%)

- We also met up with people who attended the performance but who were not part of the symposium. We met someone who was running a scheme to train blind and partially sighted people as radio reporters. They invited us to their programme launch.
- Yes - I met Karen Cheung from Guangdong Modern Dance Company with whom we are discussing possible collaboration in the future. Very inspiring performances in Shanghai.

Yes- Unexpected negative aspects: 2 (6.5%)

- I thought it would be easier to get in contact with the Chinese partners at the meetings.
- Possibly the translation barrier, which turned out to be a linguistic performance series in its own right.

No: 4 (12.9%)



4. What struck you most in the event?

The Chinese contemporary performing arts: 17 (54.8%)

- The extreme differences between the official position and the reality in the field.
- How much an old order still prevails and permeates everything in the culture.
- Ce qui m'a le plus frappé a été le dynamisme des opérateurs chinois qui ont à travailler et à exercer leurs fonctions dans des conditions précaires et dans un contexte encore marqué par la censure et par le dictant de la rentabilité économique.
- The wide gap that exists between the European and Chinese Arts worlds.
- The courage of most artists to work and show their work given the considerable difficulties they face in terms of finance and ability to show work.

The relationship between China and Europe, with regards to cultural collaboration: 5 (16.1%)

- The level of curiosity between European and Chinese participants. Surprisingly, also a slight lack of trust
- ...I was also struck by a tendency on the part of the Europeans to present their system as the healthier and more desirable and I would have preferred a little more humility or openness in relation to the Chinese system.

The nature of information sharing: 3 (9.7%)

- How well the ietm network operates in terms of cooperation and sharing amongst the members
- The amount of information, contacts and literature made available and the mutual level of interest to make links with each other - both from the European and Chinese delegates.

The quantity/type of participants: 3 (9.7%)

- What an extraordinary mix of people had been brought together...
- That there appeared to be more europeans than chinese in the conference.
- I was struck by the apparent mismatch between the official Chinese delegates and their European counterparts, the former more interested in commercial touring and the latter more stimulated by innovative or experimental collaborative opportunities.

Matters regarding networking: 3 (9.7%)

- I think that cultural exchange is about developing relationships and I found the late night meeting points and meals with other participants equally if not more valuable than the main stage events.
- The way people change cards every where and at every moment. Networking as an art and its ethics.



Danny Yung

5. What did you like the least in this meeting?

Structure of the sessions: 12 (38.7%)

- Wanted more informal communication and contact.

- Smaller groups and more flexible roundtable formats would have been helpful.
- A presentation followed by small group discussion and then a feedback gives everyone a chance to express themselves and feel included. Putting the chairs in a semicircle rather than lecture format means that you can see each other... In the end I wrote a poem that I read in a session (see attached), I offered to do a warm up in another (didn't really work cos there wasn't enough time and the room was so badly set out and I played my trumpet for my short presentation.
- In Beijing there was much talk about how things are but little contact and few opportunities to really see- like more visits to academies, schools, conservatories, galleries would have been a good integration to see with our own eyes, apart from a daily performance.
- (In Beijing) It could have been better integrated as in Shanghai- with alternating talks, debates and showings. It's also too difficult to just sit for 8 hours.

Intense schedule: 9 (29.0%)

- I think there was an over-occupation of the time with conference meetings. On the one hand, I felt I couldn't be absent of these meetings and on the other I felt I should be out on the street, visiting alternative spaces, meeting artists, seeing rehearsals,
- Maybe the tight conference schedule in a situation where the exchange between representatives from very different cultural scenes meet.

Choice of session topics: 5 (16.1%)

- Some of the sessions were not relevant to China. For example, under Sponsorship, the talk on the Soros Foundation did not even apply to China.
- I found some of the presentations least useful, especially those that were about selling tradition to the West.

The need for interpreting: 4 (12.9%)

- I enjoyed the translation process least of all, particularly the time lost when translation was consecutive.

Sessions too long: 4 (12.9%)

- The long meetings in the stuffy rooms without daylight
- Discussion topics were for too long- 3 hours and too much lecture format rather than panel discussion and dialogue. many speakers spoke for too long. I recommend signs telling the speakers their time is up.

Practicalities of staying in the city: 3 (9.7%)

- Beijing itself was a difficult city to negotiate - we were of course aware of its size - but the pollution, the lack of a 'centre' or anywhere to walk made the 'environment' unpleasant - not a criticism of the meeting, just an observation about the city.

Lack of opportunity to meet people: 3 (9.7%)

- Besides, in Beijing we lack the occasion of meeting artists. If I had not known already some people and artists (with whom I wanted to rebuilt links), Beijing would have been a quite frustrating occasion for me ...



6. What do you think you want to do with the information, contacts, inspiration etc you acquired? Any concrete actions?

Developing long-term relations with Chinese with a view to future collaboration: 16 (51.6%)

- Hope to create a network of China alumni
- I did meet people that I am interested to collaborate with and in particular I think it will be possible to set up youth dance and emerging dancer / choreographer exchange. I also would be interested to facilitate exchange with Beijing Modern Dance Academy if I could find the appropriate partner in Birmingham (and am working on it!)
- Pro Helvetia is in the research phase for a country programme China. The information and contacts will certainly be very important for the further elaboration of the concept.

Exchange/Residencies: 14 (45.2%)

- I am interested to follow up with a couple of dance/opera artists from Shanghai and Guangdong Dance Company towards collaborative /exchange programmes of artists from the UK and China.
- Collaborate with K.I.T / Trevor to make the residency for Chinese cultural-administrators/managers in Denmark possible and our politicians really like this idea.... especially if we could take one person also from Harbin - twin city to Århus
- Invite Chinese directors to Europe to direct plays with their sight of the world

- Furthermore, our organisation will probably invite some of the Chinese artists I have met for a foreign visitor's programme in which they will be able to meet Dutch cultural organisations and explore possible partnerships.
- I will be returning to Shanghai in the Spring to undertake a period of choreographic research with the Zu He Niao dance artists and if that goes well I am keen to develop a project which connects China and Ireland. I am also hoping to spend a period in residency in Xiamen with Lu Ming.
- Yes, it looks like Holland House will be back for possibly a residency in 07, followed by a collaboration project in 08.

Future Meetings/Visits: 5 (16.1%)

- We arranged a meeting with the British Consulate which was productive
- Numerous casual meetings which I look forward to strengthening at our next encounter.

Sharing knowledge with organisations in their own countries: 3 (9.7%)

- Because I work for an information and coordination centre, I will not directly be involved in concrete actions. But, I will definitely use all the information in advising Dutch artists who want to undertake projects with Chinese partners.
- The conference has provided me with a lot of background material for the Cultural Foundation China -the Netherlands which will be set up shortly and which is to invest in interesting cultural Dutch projects in China and Chinese projects in the Netherlands.
- En tant que structure du Ministère de la Communauté Wallonie-Bruxelles et du Commissariat général aux Relations Internationales, il relève de notre mission, d'informer les opérateurs qui oeuvrent dans notre Communauté des spécificités des marchés que nous découvrons dans le cadre de nos fonctions. Nous souhaitons réaliser un petit "carnet de route" du marché chinois qui serait distribué aux protagonistes des arts de la scène en CWB.

Definite Project: 2 (6.5%)

- Go on tour in China with in the next 16 months in at least 3 cities, performing at least 6 performances.
- There are many and I will progress onwards from this... see attached project plans.



**7. Would you prefer IETM to continue to co-organize further shared encounters in Asia?
Do you think IETM should organise some deeper experiences in China?**

Yes: 25 (80.6%)

Not Sure: 5 (16.1%)

- I must admit I don't know enough of the situation in the rest of Asia to have an opinion on this

No: 1 (3.2%)

HOW?

Future meetings: 15 (60%)

- I think it could be relevant to use the knowledge and experience that IETM holds now in order to be able to dig another two spits deeper and bring the underground and the innovative artists and managers to surface. Maybe by a more narrowed thematic meeting with defined target groups among both Chinese and European participants – according to declared actual action interests and concluded key questions.

Unspecified: 4 (16%)

Networking/ sharing knowledge: 12 (8%)

- Yes, I think it would be nice to invest in helping to create an Asiatic network that could unite culturally the wealthy countries like China, Japan and South Korea with the ones that are upcoming like Filipinas, Mongolia or Malaysia.
- It would be fantastic if organisations shared their contacts, maximized the presence of curators, programmers etc doing research in China, maybe making a financially contribution, to enable that person, network to communicate with a larger network.

Facilitating exchange/residencies: 2 (8%)

- Follow up contacts and set up some exchange programme

Video Conference: 1 (4%)

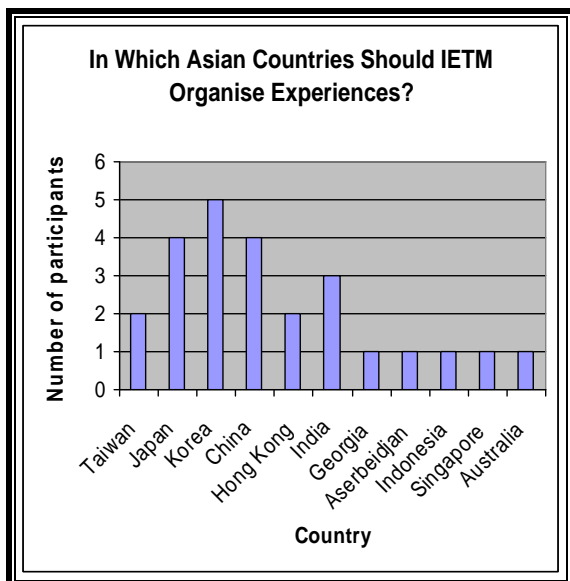
- I think it would be great to support further exchange through facilitated video conferencing as the carbon emissions involved in flights to an international conference are very high, and I think we should think about ways we can maximize the contact we have

already made. IETM and British Council could establish video conferencing facilities that enabled partners to speak to each other across the world.



Reception under the warm October sun in Beijing

Do you think IETM should organise experiences in other Asian countries? If so in which way and where?



Comments

- I hope to meet IETM satellite meetings in Seoul and Tokyo with good agenda on the focus of IETM-KOREA(JAPAN). Thanks and keep in touch with you.
- Yes definitely. Australia would be a good "gateway to Asia", to invite many speakers from Asia here. Asialink works across 20 countries in Asia and would be happy to partner this if there were interest in the future.

“Organising deeper experiences” - General comments:

- ...I have a strong feeling of the necessity of making these important cultural bridges that forces us all to reflect on how we develop our societies.
- Yes, we must – for better understanding so we can cooperate
- I definitely think that IETM ought to follow-up on its prior engagement, both to facilitate parallel and more extensive exchange platforms than the usual official ones and to influence further/alternative developments in those official exchange formats.



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