



# Cultural values in the cultural sphere: a European perspective

## 1st UNCHARTED Workshop

Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
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## Emergent values of cultural participation in live arts and culture: plurality and tensions

*Based on WP2 report by CES and CNRS*

Presentation by:

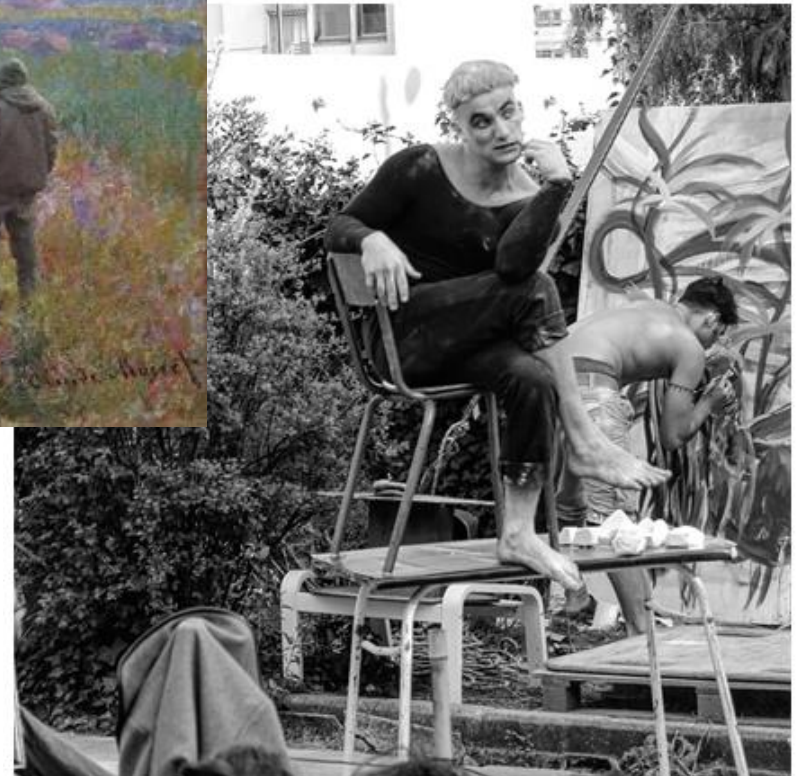
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*Session 6. The conflictual plurality of values in cultural participation*

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Cases	Internal/Personal	External/Social	Contextual/Political
<b>Raves and DJ parties</b>	Trance, meditation, introspection, physical well-being, mental well-being, pleasure, catharsis, purging, outlet, escape from routine, escape from responsibilities, travel, disinhibition, freedom, risk, adventure, pride, individual empowerment	Meeting, 'other' (different) relationships, collective experience (influence of the collective), community, love, sharing, benevolence, mutual aid, attention, care, trust, giving, empathy, gratitude, recognition	Freedom, suspension/reinvention of social norms, refusal of control and authority, transgression, collective responsibility, benevolence, collective safety ecological responsibility, collective empowerment, non-profit 'purity', generosity, autonomy, auto-organization, aesthetic diversity
<b>Clandestine concerts</b>	Fun, pleasure, letting go, vibration, emotion, energy, travel, imagination, individual empowerment (organizers), individual recognition (artists), escape from pandemic anxieties	Meeting, relationship, sharing, collective energy (cf. ritual interaction chains), giving, empathy, gratitude, recognition, collective hope	Freedom, self-determination of values (cf. social life > health risk), disobedience, resistance, autonomy, collective empowerment, auto-organization, collective safety (e.g. with regard to sexism), opening up of possibilities and imaginations, transformation of representations
<b>Circus events</b>	Pleasure, fun, routine breakdown, openness to new ideas, creativity, experimentation, risk taking, learning, being emotionally touched, wonder	Friendship, integration into a group and into a city, solidarity, lightness, collective relinquishment, freedom, autonomy, learning, sharing	Gift, integration (to the city), access/diversity of the audiences and artists, sharing, wonderment, healing, criticism, resistance
<b>Community-engaged arts</b>	Healing (through sharing of life stories), break from routine, fun, leisure, individual and artistic learning process, affectivity and emotional attachment, innovative perspectives, openness to new ideas, memory, well-being, happiness, individual valorization	Direct involvement and active collaboration, knowledge production, identity, sense of belonging to a group, differentiation, pride, recognition, community valorization, informal cultural training, audience development, institutional self-learning, nurturing and ongoing community relations, intergenerational connections, generational continuity	Connection to outdoor urban space, sense of belonging, giving voice, civic mobilization, political intervention through individual consciousness, collective empowerment
<b>Culture-based creative tourism</b>	Understand the process of making, learning, curiosity, aesthetics, technique, creativity, sensorial connection to materials, emotional connection, creating memories that last/ imprint in memory, revitalizing/recovering memories and connection to the past, pride, recognition, empowerment, healing, well-being, being active, joy/ pleasure, slowing down, relaxing, distraction/escape from everyday life, self-development, challenge oneself	Social interaction, relationships, conviviality, creating partnerships, passing on knowledge, influencing others, preserving traditions, revitalize (almost) lost know-how, reinforce collective identity, integration, benevolence/kindness, gratitude	Territorial development - economic and socio-cultural, strengthen territorial identity, help overcome seasonality of tourism economy, city vitality, attract more visitors, contribute to a decrease of local unemployment, provide space to younger artists/artisans to work/develop/network show, promote responsible and sustainable practices using natural materials and handmade products

To organize a profusion of expressed values emerging from the five cases regarding participation in live arts and cultural activities, we used three frames:

- **internal/personal** (for oneself),
- **external/social** (by/for the group involved), and
- **contextual/political** (for the society, at a larger scale).

This enabled an articulation of the cases without losing their specificity, and highlighted how the frames are often dynamically articulated and interconnected.

Internal/Personal	External/Social	Contextual/Political
Pleasure, fun, escape, break	Collective experience, collective memory, sociability, collaboration, belonging	Collective empowerment, agency, autonomy, mobilization, resistance
Individual empowerment, self-confidence	Doing things or making things together, collective hope	
New ideas/perspectives, learning, introspection, individual consciousness and awareness of local and societal issues Risk-taking, challenging oneself	Continuity - knowledge, know-how, stories, histories; preservation of traditions; pass-on to younger generations	<i>Space of...</i> freedom, integration, vitality, wonderment, showcase Giving voice, imagination, criticism transformation of social representations
Giving, sharing, caring, empathy	Sharing, care, giving, exchange Gift/counter-gift, collective generosity, security	Non-market society, peaceful and safe society, more sustainable community
Creative self-expression, self-identity	Invention and imagination (creating the new) Reinforce distinctiveness, collective identity, integration	Reinforce distinctiveness of place, transformation of representation (group, territory, society)
Recognition, empowerment, pride Healing Emotional connections	Recognition by the community, the outside	<i>Space in ...</i> integrate in the city, external recognition, enhancing attractiveness of specific locales/neighbourhoods

Across the five cases, cross-cutting themes of what was valued in live cultural participation included:

- emotions, imagination, and social representations;
- the gift/counter-gift;
- the “practice” of values and social/political change;
- sharing knowledge and know-how; and
- empowerment.

# Variations in valuation

Valuation was viewed as a plural, multilayered, and continuous negotiating process

**Differences in valuation processes** were aligned with:

- **individuals' different roles or types of participation,**
- **personal characteristics and social trajectories, and**
- **the degrees of institutionalization of the activity itself.**





## Individuals' different roles or types of participation

The specific role assumed by a participant and the responsibilities of that role shapes what types of value are attributed to the cultural activity.

*For example: "De Portas Abertas" community-engaged artistic project*

- **Neighbourhood residents** tend to articulate values at an **individual level** (e.g., emotion, sensation, pleasure, pride...) based on their **subjective experience of the activities within the project** and (in some cases) the inclusion of their life stories in the narratives of the play created.
- **Organizers** tend to articulate values in the form of **impact objectives on individuals, on the collective, and on society as a whole.**

## Personal characteristics and social trajectories

Personal perspectives are shaped by one's life circumstances, experiences, demographics, and other personal characteristics.

*For example:*

## Generational perspectives

*For example:* creative tourism (Loulé Criativo)

- With **“eyes on the future,”** younger practitioners with no connection with the ancient arts and crafts are focusing on local **balance/equilibrium** and **sustainability using natural materials**
- With **“eyes on the past,”** older generations, recovering memories and connections to the past, as a **healing process**, are **recovering their identity and gaining pride**



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*For example:*

### Individuals' social trajectories

- Theatre students participating in “De Portas Abertas” expressed values connected to **artistic learning and professional integration**
- Individuals who have **incorporated the vocabulary of cultural institutions** tend to formulate values such as **social objectives**
- Variation in individuals' ability to detail **political values** and in the **originality** with which they present the values they cherish





## The degrees of institutionalization of the activity itself

The degree of institutionalization of projects may influence the values among organizers.

- Partnership relationships with institutions, or the need for public subsidies, may lead them to formulate values according to the **values advocated by the sponsoring institutions.**
- This analogy of values may also be the result of a **professional or social incorporation of the values** as defined by cultural institutions (i.e., the use of vocabulary such as “social inclusion,” “social links”).
- **“We are Loulé Criativo.”** Artists/artisans (volunteers or professionals) express a sense of **social responsibility**, using expressions such as **“local development”, “preservation of the local identity”, “giving the city renewed vitality”, and “creating employment”** when characterizing the importance of these arts and crafts experiences.



## The degrees of institutionalization of the activity itself

- **Autonomy and informality** enables the deployment of values that are less common in more institutionalized events (e.g., experimentation).
- In **totally autonomous projects** (e.g., “garden cabarets,” raves and clandestine concerts) we find values that would be risky to assert for organizations financially dependent on public institutions and policies (e.g., “**having fun,**” “**party,**” “**trance,**” “**friendship,**” “**risk-taking,**” “**experimentation**”).
- **When autonomous projects seek institutional partnerships,** financial support, or public recognition, the values advocated are transformed.
- **Institutionalization provides the opportunity to address other values** (e.g., democratization) but in doing so, the **organizers lose some freedom and autonomy** (e.g., the need not to offer the public only unfinished acts; the choice of venue).



**The degrees of institutionalization of the activity itself**

Differences in valuation are also the result of **field dynamics** (professional or artistic).

Values held by organizers are partly in reference to **legitimate values in the field in which they operate**, either to conform to them or to claim alternative values.



<b>Autonomous musical events</b> (rave parties, DJ parties, underground and illegal concerts...)	<b>Commercial musical events</b> (profit-making festivals and concert halls, nightclubs...)	<b>Institutional musical events</b> (public or subsidized festivals and concert halls)
Freedom, suspension of social norms, self-regulation, no-limit	Discipline, control, surveillance, limits	
Free, non-discriminatory	Paying, discriminatory	
Selflessness, generosity, volunteering	Commercial interest, professional interest	Professional interest
Do it yourself, empowerment	Professionalization	
Responsible actor	Disempowered consumer	
Independence, freedom of programming, diversity	Profitability, market-oriented programming	Political or institutional influence

**Rave party organizers, for example, see themselves as acting in a totally autonomous field, in total opposition to external norms:**

- independence vs. institution;
- free vs. market;
- freedom vs. discipline, surveillance, control;
- individual responsibility vs. consumer

Criteria	Traditional circus	Contemporary circus	Underlying values (hypothesis)
Privileged location	Big Top	Out of Big Top	Tradition vs. Autonomy, freedom
Animals	Yes	No	Relationship with animals, tradition vs. (animals) wellness and respect
Training	By family	By specific schools	Family vs. Merit, openness, community
Scheduling of numbers	Succession of disjoint numbers Crescendo	Narrative and dramatic basis	Intensity vs. Narrative
Emphasis on...	Performance Achievement Mastery Passive participation of the audience	Expression of emotions Vulnerability Experimentation Active participation of the audience	Performance, mastery vs. Expressiveness, emotion, self-knowledge, experimentation
Origin of the artists	Family pool	Defectors from other art worlds Individuals	Family, identity, transmission vs. Connection, openness, diversity, community

In the case of the circus, professionalized members of the group claimed **“experimentation”** as a value, to **counterbalance a professional world** where circus performers have to spend most of their time on **formalized production, touring and educational activities.**

**Main differences between traditional and contemporary circus**



## Tensions between values

We noticed several “internal” tensions between values within the same case study; and “external” tensions between values promoted in the case studies and values promoted by external fields of cultural activity.

Three sets of tensions stood out:

- **Aesthetic values in question;**
- **Hedonism and entertainment vs. politicization and emancipation; and**
- **Independence, freedom, and autonomy vs. political and market influences.**

## Aesthetic values in question

- The **place of aesthetics as a value** in participating in live arts and culture emerged as a subject of controversy among participants, with **other principles used to judge the artistic contents**.
- In many cases, it seems that **collective cultural activity could be seen as a “social pretext.”**
- The **non-centrality of aesthetics** does not detract from the specificity of the values of cultural experience and the artistic content, but invites us to **re-evaluate the place of artistic aesthetics in the hierarchy or plurality of experienced values**.



## Hedonism, entertainment vs. politicization, emancipation

A contradiction or tension between an art that must be “useful” and emancipating and an art that is viewed as a non-legitimate leisure activity also exists within our case studies.





# Independence, freedom and autonomy vs. political and market influences

In the case of autonomous events, many values are claimed in opposition to the values of the institutional and market fields.

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- In more institutionalized and market-oriented activities, such as the culture-based creative tourism case, values such as **freedom and creativity exist in the same space as market demands** and sometimes in conflict.
- The **urge to feel inspired, be innovative and creative** versus **traditional views defining craftwork** leads to a constant dialogue between artisans who prefer “making creations rather than obligations” and others who don’t acknowledge this creativity.
- As well, the development of “**meaningful work**” doesn’t always align with the **economic value** attributed from the outside.
- The need for **economic sustainability** enhances the feeling of a **lack of recognition** for the importance of these arts/crafts, as it **puts in conflict aesthetics, creativity, innovation and economy**.



**Thank you!**



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