



State of the Arts

Quality in

Arts Management

Artistic excellence, effective processes, the impact on society or satisfied stakeholders. Is there one right point of view to consider quality in the cultural field?

**Focus starting on page 12**



# Quality in a broader context

Arts institutions have to offer high quality services to their stakeholders – be it visitors, funders, politicians, students or colleagues. But how can arts managers take into account the multitude understandings of quality in the different artistic sectors, arts institutions and countries? And how can quality be measured with objective and evidence-based methods or indicators? We cannot provide you a general framework that can be applied to every possible scenario. But we hope that this issue of *Arts Management Quarterly* can contribute some new ideas to rethink quality beyond artistic excellence and mere visitor numbers. And because we also want to offer the best possible services to our readers, we currently thoroughly overhaul our own services – and are happy to already present you our new design with this issue of our journal. To secure up-to-date quality beyond the arbitrariness of us as individuals, we would like to ask you: Let us know your opinion! Get involved with us! Contribute your experiences and knowledge to a lively debate on the future of arts management!

## State of the Arts

**Dirk Schütz**  
(Publisher)

**Kristin Oswald**  
(Chief Editor)

### Kaleidoscope

- 03** Website Roundup
- 04** Reading Tips: Raphaela Henze
- 06** Combating the crisis with creative forces – Jennifer Tharr
- 30** Imprint

### Focus: Quality in Arts Management

- 12** Redefining notions of Quality in Participatory Arts – Rachel Blanche
- 18** How Can One Measure the Quality and Merits of Cultural Services? – Anastasiya Saprykina and Markus Wyler
- 25** Conceptualizations of Quality in Arts Management Education – Brea Heidelberg

## SERIES ON SOUTH &amp; CENTRAL AMERICA

**Audience Development as a Matter of Course. How are Culture and Management connected in Costa Rica?**

Alejandra Solórzano, a cultural producer working for the Ministry of Culture and Youth in Costa Rica talks about the local arts sector, the unique position of concert bands in this small country and their link to the non-existing army.

**Interview by Lisa Harborth**

[http://bit.ly/Interview\\_ArtsManagement\\_CostaRica](http://bit.ly/Interview_ArtsManagement_CostaRica)

## RESEARCH

**The Culture of Cooperation. Structures, Processes, and Cultural Practices**

In the cultural sector, international cooperation is taken for granted. But to be truly fruitful, cultural exchange must be on an equal footing. But what does that mean? A brief introduction to a very complex subject.

**by Annika Hampel**

[http://bit.ly/Hampel\\_research\\_Cooperation](http://bit.ly/Hampel_research_Cooperation)

## SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS

**Arts Management Net** @amnweimar Mar 15  
The @UniversityLeeds offers a new, free online course on Effective Fundraising & Leadership in #Arts & Culture:  
[futurelearn.com/courses/fundra...](http://futurelearn.com/courses/fundra...)

## BOOK REVIEW

**Art and Gender. On the Importance of Gender for Leadership in the Art Field**

While #metoo dominates the media, there is a growing debate about gender equality in the cultural field as well. But where do the German and international art scene stand when it comes to art and gender? Katrin Hassler's book (currently only available in German) attempts to explore this in a quantitative study and provides figures on the significance of gender for filling leading positions in the art field.

**by Anabel Roque Rodriguez**

[http://bit.ly/book\\_review\\_art\\_gender](http://bit.ly/book_review_art_gender)

## SERIES ON SOUTH &amp; CENTRAL AMERICA

**There are no universal Formulas**

What are the differences between Venezuela and Europe regarding cultural policies, audience development and studying in the field of performing arts? And how can intercontinental experiences enrich the profession of arts management in different regions of the world?

**Interview with Emilio Piñango**

[http://bit.ly/Interview\\_DanceManagement\\_Venezuela](http://bit.ly/Interview_DanceManagement_Venezuela)

## PROJECT REPORT

**From Project to Space. About a needed Change of Perspective in Cultural Management**

In October 2016, the Goethe Institute's „Damasus in Exile“ project was launched in Berlin - a time-limited, symbolic space of political significance that could bring together people of different origins.

**by Gernot Wolfram**

[http://bit.ly/Wolfram\\_project\\_space](http://bit.ly/Wolfram_project_space)

# More than the common denominator

## ***Il n'y a pas d'identité culturelle***

*Francois Jullien,  
Herne 2016*

This book opens up new perspectives on the concepts and terms frequently used in the discussions on the challenges Europe is facing. Jullien questions the European tendency to consider several of what we falsely believe to be European achievements as universal as well as the understanding of dialogue and its inherent but invisible borderlines of power. In short, he wants us to acknowledge our different histories, languages, religions, and traditions as resources. This short essay is not categorizing differences but is instead emphatically and positively arguing for making the most of what is 'in between' and by doing so gives back meaning to interculturalism.

## ***Stamped from the beginning. The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America***

*Ibram X. Kendi,  
Nation Books 2016*

This book should be read by arts managers with an interest in the history and current manifestations of racial inequalities particularly, but not only, in the United States. Kendi presents five important historical figures as well as an in-depth account of the concepts of Racism, Assimilation and Anti-Racism. In accordance with the later, the disparities between white people and people of colour can only be seen as the result of racial discrimination. This book by the eloquent Historian Kendi although highly acclaimed has unsurprisingly also been perceived controversially. It is timely and important.

## ***The Routledge Handbook of Global Cultural Policy***

*Vicoria Durrer, Dave O'Brien, Toby Miller,  
Routledge 2017*

The growing international practice of arts managers means that their work is integral in the emergence, mobility, and translation of cultural policies on a global scale. In accordance with the topic, this huge book (627 pages) brings together more than forty international researchers from different disciplines. Although some of its articles are indeed very specific, the book gives a good overview of how cultural policies intersect with so many different sectors important to arts management, and makes us aware that our field can neither be thought nor taught without cultural policy.

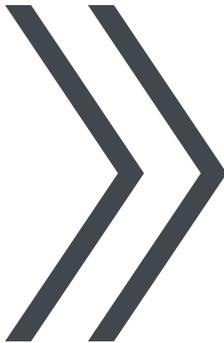


*Raphaela Henze is professor of Arts Management at Heilbronn University, Germany, author of „Introduction to International Arts Management“ and co-founder of the international, interdisciplinary network [Brokering Intercultural Exchange](#).*

If you like to share your reading tips as well, just write us an email to office @artsmanagement.net!



© Ian Schneider / Unsplash



*With a new series we want to offer insights into the working world of arts managers around the globe - be it a special office or working environment, a particularly close community connection or a captivating cultural event.*

*Just send us a photo and a short text of your daily cultural work to [office@artsmanagement.net](mailto:office@artsmanagement.net). We will present it in one of the next issues. <<*

# Combating the crisis with creative forces

Young Greek cultural managers activate civil society

By Jennifer Tharr

Translated by Erik Dorset

The country that invented the Olympic Games has been breaking sad records for the past several years. Because of the financial crisis, more than 425,000 people have left Greece since 2008, including among them many excellently trained young academics, skilled workers and creative professionals – precisely those people that the country needs so urgently. It is a brain drain with fatal consequences for the country's future. From the perspective of young emigrants, however, the decision to leave is only understandable. With youth unemployment at 39.5%, Greece – followed by Spain, Italy, and Croatia – leads European statistics.<sup>1</sup> If cultural workers want to stay, they are forced to accept conditions that are unreasonable and merely destroy the capacities of a capable generation. State subsidies are particularly limited in the cultural sector and are usually paid out with a considerable delay, so that much is done in advance or in the uncertainty of whether the service provided will ever be rewarded.

In 2015, the Robert Bosch Foundation, a charitable institution, initiated the “START - Create Cultural Change” program<sup>2</sup> in response to the situation in Greece in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki and Germany's Bundesvereinigung Soziokultureller Zentren (Federal Association of Socio-cultural Centers). The idea behind the initiative was to offer young creative artists a temporary financially stable environment for continuing education, networking and experimentation. The opportunity would allow them to develop cultural initiatives, promote social cohesion in their home countries, enable cultural participation for all and find alternative ways of establishing themselves sustainably in society. The

<sup>1</sup> The youth unemployment rate reflects the number of unemployed 15-24 year-olds as a proportion of the work force of the same age group. The average in the entire EU is 16.2%, in Germany 6.6%. Source: <https://de.statista.com/statistiks/data/study/74795/survey/youth-unemployment-in-europe/>

<sup>2</sup> START is a program of the Robert Bosch Stiftung, conducted in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki, and the German Association of Sociocultural Centers, supported by the John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation and the Bodossaki Foundation..

program partners saw the field of cultural management as a key factor for fulfilling these complex requirements. With the German Association of Sociocultural Centers, a partner was involved in the establishment of the program that represents a particularly suitable concept of cultural work for this purpose. Andreas Kämpf, a member of the board, summarizes the idea: „START is about civil society, about ‚self-empowerment‘. It is all about art and culture, which are developed and implemented together with the local people. In this unique form of cultural work, socio-cultural centers are experienced as autonomous organizations of civil society and thus offer scholarship holders an important opportunity to further develop their skills and projects. It sets up projects that enable local people to deal with their environment, to help shape it and to perceive themselves as a trustworthy component of active civil society.”

## Foundations for participative and sustainable cultural initiatives

The START training and scholarship program for prospective cultural managers consists of three consecutive phases. Phase I is open to young Greek cultural workers with a draft of a project in Greece. 30 scholarship holders selected by an independent jury will then travel to Germany for two months, where they will receive further training in project management, fundraising, audience development and public relations in Berlin and Stuttgart. Within the framework of a six-week internship, they also learn about socio-cultural practice and develop their project idea together with the respective host institution individually, both in theory and hands-on. Not only are the foundations for participatory and sustainable cultural initiatives in Greece laid out during these two labor-intensive months, cooperation agreements are also agreed upon between the two countries, which will bring about remarkable exchange effects on an equal footing as a partnership. An example from Hamburg:

### Roots are Routes

Olga Daskali applied for the program with a project proposal for her hometown Messolonghi, a small town in western Greece that continues to focus on its traditional vocations such as boat building, weaving, and fishing. However, the young people lack the know-how and the interest to keep this tradition alive and to cultivate it with new knowledge. START brought

Olga together with the communication center Honigfabrik in Hamburg. With its numerous workshops, the HoFa is interested, among other things, in preserving old handicraft techniques as an immaterial cultural heritage and - even more so - using this knowledge to stimulate the younger generations to become creative and independent. The HoFa, one of Germany's oldest socio-cultural centers, thus provided practical experience and methods that Olga wanted to learn for her project „Roots are Routes”. How can young people become involved in the project? How can their interests and expectations play a role and how can all this be combined in a project that also works in the reality of Greece?

*It is all about art and culture, which are developed and implemented together with the local people.*

Olga initiated a boat building workshop with the HoFa, in which children themselves could design and build a boat on a small scale and then apply their findings to build a large boat together. The results exceeded all expectations. Olga reported enthusiastically: „All the parents were pleased to see what their children did during the five days. The children were very excited about their participation and the results they achieved. They came every day from 10 am until 4 pm although it was vacation time. The workshop instructor was excited and wants to do it again; he also wants to organize an exchange with my hometown with his students to build a boat.”

Such successes could also be observed elsewhere. From food recycling for Athens to the Instagram project for better networking of the district, from augmented reality in assisting refugees to theater plays as a learning to an



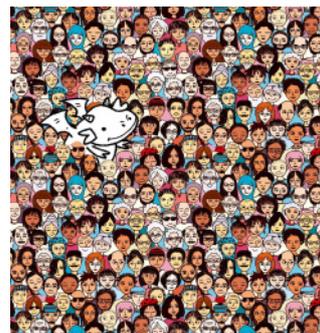
*Transfer of knowledge and methods: Boatbuilding workshop for children in the Honigfabrik Hamburg (left). Like a second home: Olga Daskali leads her fellow scholarship holders through the Honigfabrik (right).*

© Olga Daskali

environmental project to save the bees – the creativity and verve of method for young people, from integrative body percussion workshops Greek cultural managers greatly impressed the German host institutions. Tobias Marten from Waschhaus Potsdam looks back: „Socio-culture is something new for Greece. We had many long discussions about it, and our scholarship holder absorbed this form of cultural work with great interest. At the same time, she gave us a new, fresh perspective on our work with her questions. This exchange of views was very exciting for both parties.”

The Greeks, in turn, were fascinated by the professional production conditions and the direct contact with the community. Olga describes this as follows: „I really felt that socio-culture is all this procedure, the process, it is not about the result but the time spent, the smiles on faces, the new ideas that come up, the people who are really engaged to do something they really like. So I guess it is not the destination but the trip there. Because you may know where you want to go, but you actually need to travel in order to go there.”

Phase II takes place after a further selection process, which is preceded by a new application procedure. The selection is a hard, and yet necessary task for the jury because not everyone has what it takes to be a cultural manager. The ability to inspire requires a cool head for planning and calculation. Nevertheless, the perfectly thought-out plan A requires having plans B and C in your pocket - the demands are high. The 15 scholarship holders of the following implementation phase receive 10,000 Euros in project funds to realize their cultural initiative in Greece, in addition to a scholarship to secure their livelihood. From Northern Greece to Thessaloniki and Athens to the islands - the places of action are as diverse as the projects themselves. Like Olga Daskali, the scholarship holders often return to their hometown to bring cultural change to their region or neighborhood.



*Elias Adam brings the small-town community into a creative exchange (left). The little dragon is the mascot of the project „Smallville” (right).*

© Antonios Vallindras and Smallville

## Smallville

Elias Adam's project is another example. He returned to the small town of Xylokastro in the north of the Peloponnese for his participatory theater project „Smallville“. The great response to his project quickly dispelled the initial concerns. The logo with the little dragon, which symbolizes the outsider, non-conformist but lovable, has conquered the city - an ingenious branding idea. „When writing the project application, I could never imagine the vibe of the 150 people joining the opening event. Reality came as a surprise: people became active members of the Smallville network from the very first moment,“ says Elias happily. But now it is a matter of maintaining the initial euphoria and steering it into a project plan. Elias must, therefore, continue to work on his sustainability concept, as the results are to be presented to the public at the „Bazaar of Ideas“ at the end of June.

*Socio-culture is all about the process, the time spent, the smiles on faces, the new ideas that come up, the people who are really engaged to do something they really like.*

After the official completion of the project at the end of May, the 15 scholarship holders in the program can again apply for Phase III, a Scaling Award. To do so, they must prove that their project has become a part of Greek everyday life and society. They also have to describe how it will develop and stand on its own financial feet in the medium term. This scaling phase is being supported by the two new Greek partners in the program, the John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation and the Bodossaki Foundation. The interest and commitment of the two Greek foundations are of great importance for the program, as this is how START has arrived in Greece.

In the meantime, 90 scholarship holders have been supported by the program. 30 more will be added this summer. A network of alumni is currently organizing itself to give support to common interests and goals. A new generation is emerging here which, through its solidarity with one another and its unwavering commitment to an intact civil society, gives serious cause for hope. START is creating a financial and ideal framework here

and, as the name says, the impetus - everything else lies in the hands of strong personalities who have the courage to want to shape society creatively through cultural work.

The „Bazaar of Ideas“ concludes the current program year and will take place this year from June 27th to the 29th in Thessaloniki. All 15 Phase II scholars present their projects to the public. On June 28th, the three Scaling Awards, a follow-up grant of 10.000 Euros, will also be presented in this context.



**Jennifer Tharr** works as project manager of the „START - Create Cultural Change“ program at the Bundesvereinigung Soziokultureller Zentren e.V. (German Federal Association of Socio-cultural Centers). Previously she studied theater and literature and was in charge of the German-Greek youth theater project „My Life - My Theatre“ for three years and tried out participative working methods with young people on stage. She is currently doing her doctorate at the University of Cologne.

# Redefining notions of Quality in Participatory Arts

*A series of research and policy developments in the UK has resulted in radical advances in understanding how quality can best be fostered and managed. This article introduces the main new insights, explains their significance for artists and shows how these new approaches and online tools can be transferred to different countries and contexts, shown by its use in Scotland and Portugal.*

By Rachel Blanche

## Relaying the 'baton' of quality research and policy development

Following a period of unprecedented research across the UK on participatory arts – here relating to work undertaken by artists, where participants are actively engaged in co-creative or inventive processes – and creative learning, we have seen a redefinition of the concept and understanding of quality in these contexts. In a series of developments akin to a relay race, major steps forward have been taken by Arts Council England (Lord et al 2012), Creative Scotland (Bamford 2010, Consilium 2012, Blanche 2014), Arts Council of Wales (2009) and Artworks Cymru (2016) in how we think about and define quality, and how it can best be achieved. Currently, Creative Scotland, Scotland's national arts and creative industries body, holds the 'baton' and has moved the furthest forward with it, exploring optimum approaches for supporting quality participatory arts work based on extensive research undertaken by the author of this article and subsequent trials with Scottish participatory artists and their non-arts partners.

This paper characterises the occurrence of a 'dimensional' shift in how quality can be understood and responsibility properly assigned. The underpinning evidence supports this as a desired direction of travel for quality management in our field, but also raises implications for artists and managers. Insights arise from arts education contexts in the UK and

beyond, and from unprecedented sectoral data generated by Artworks. Some surprising universal ‘truths’ about quality are also revealed from business and industry contexts.

These insights directly challenge the notion that quality is only definable in the form of measured outputs and impacts, and furthermore that quality is the sole responsibility of the delivering artists expected to account for it.

## Five key insights that challenge conventional approaches to quality management

Firstly,

**1. the optimum approach to managing quality is a cycle of Continuous Quality Improvement.** The approach to ‘quality assurance’ has evolved in many UK sectors into the contemporary concept of ‘quality improvement’ as expectations change and what was considered good practice previously is no longer appropriate. Organisations realise that if quality standards and expectations don’t evolve, then notions of quality will quickly become outdated as a sector’s capacity to provide excellent arts experiences increases (Seidel et al 2010, 45). Standards of excellence are also subject to change: “As the arts change and develop, so too does the consensus of what is good or of quality” (Arts Council Wales 2009).

Quality improvement is more than a process; it is a cycle. Such continuity has been missing from past approaches by UK funders. A cycle allows for development in individual artist practices and sector approaches, in “a proactive, cyclical system of planning, doing, reviewing and improving – or enhancing – what is delivered and how it is delivered” (Schwarz 2014). Importantly, continuous improvement depends not just on self-reflection by artists, but necessitates learning by all parties to the work. It’s about constantly considering if the conditions are right for each kind of project, group of participants or context.

This means that...

**2. a holistic approach is needed for quality.** This is exemplified by Matarasso’s Five Phases of Participatory Arts in which each stage of a project – from conception through commissioning, preparing, delivering and completing – affects the ultimate quality, not just the creative/ participatory phase (Matarasso 2013).

A holistic approach also acknowledges different lenses onto what quality represents in a single piece of work, depending on stakeholder perspectives. The artist, the funder, the commissioner, the participant often have varying expectations and experiences of the work, and the ideal quality for them differs. Therefore instead of trying to manage 'quality' as some abstract entity, we recognise multiple qualities inherent in work.

*„Quality results from delivering the right things in the right way.“ (American Society for Quality)*

### 3. The only part of quality that can be 'managed' is the conditions.

It is not possible to manage for guaranteed outcomes. The only part of a quality process that can be actively managed is whether or not key quality features have been incorporated in the design of a project and are in place for delivery (Marino 2007).

For participatory arts, quality features relate to how we desire the work to look and feel for the people engaging with it. The UK has broad consensus on the features of a quality participatory arts experience. These include authenticity, inspiration, purpose, a journey, participant ownership, and safety (Blanche 2014: 12). Ultimately we can't guarantee participant outcomes, but we can ensure that the conditions needed for these things to happen are in place.

The problem is that...

**4. evidence shows that essential conditions needed to enable quality are often lacking.** Artworks research shows that many core aspects of a project lie outside the control of the delivering artists and, disturbingly, that key quality conditions are in place 'only sometimes' or 'rarely' as demonstrated in Figure 1 overleaf (Dean 2012).

This happens because:

**5. decisionmakers, sometimes 'far from the room', influence the quality of what happens 'in the room' with participants** (Seidel et al 2010 – see Figure 2 below). A key observation from the industry is that once quality has been built in, subsequent "deployment, operation, and maintenance processes must not degrade it" (Marino 2007 cited in Blanche 2014: 46). But the reality reported by many artists is that lack of understanding

and provision of essential conditions by employers or host institutions can significantly undermine what they are able to deliver (Dean 2012). Addressing these issues means reframing roles and responsibilities for quality beyond the artist.

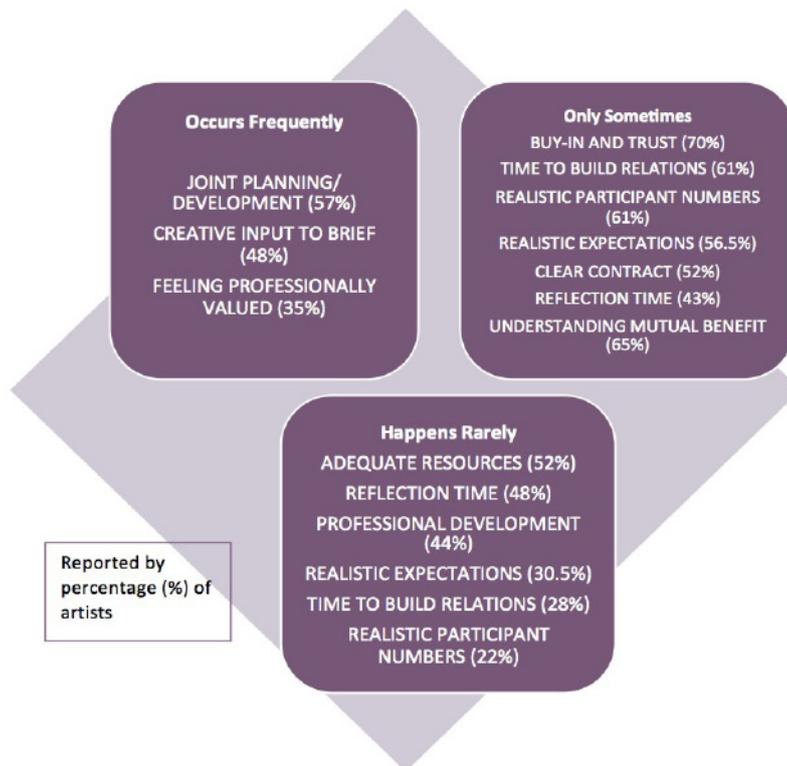


Figure 1: Frequency of essential quality conditions, from artists' viewpoint (Blanche 2014 citing Dean 2012)

### What this means for artists

In industrial sectors, defined principles are considered essential to establish a common understanding of what is desired before being able to judge whether quality has been achieved (Marino 2007). This element has been missing from previous quality frameworks for participatory arts in the UK, and often from commissioning processes (Dean 2012). Historically, artists have been asked to deliver quality participatory arts work without a defined set of principles against which quality is characterised or assessed.

*“Without clear articulation of the quality attributes, it is impossible to develop a product or determine whether the finished product has the needed quality... Contractually, this specification is critical.” (Marino 2007)*

But only if all parties know what they are aiming for, in the look and feel and experience of a project, can the requisite quality conditions be ‘designed’ in. This has obvious implications for commissioning and contracting processes, and how funders/ commissioners recognise their role in enabling quality work. It also has implications for how we might evaluate quality.

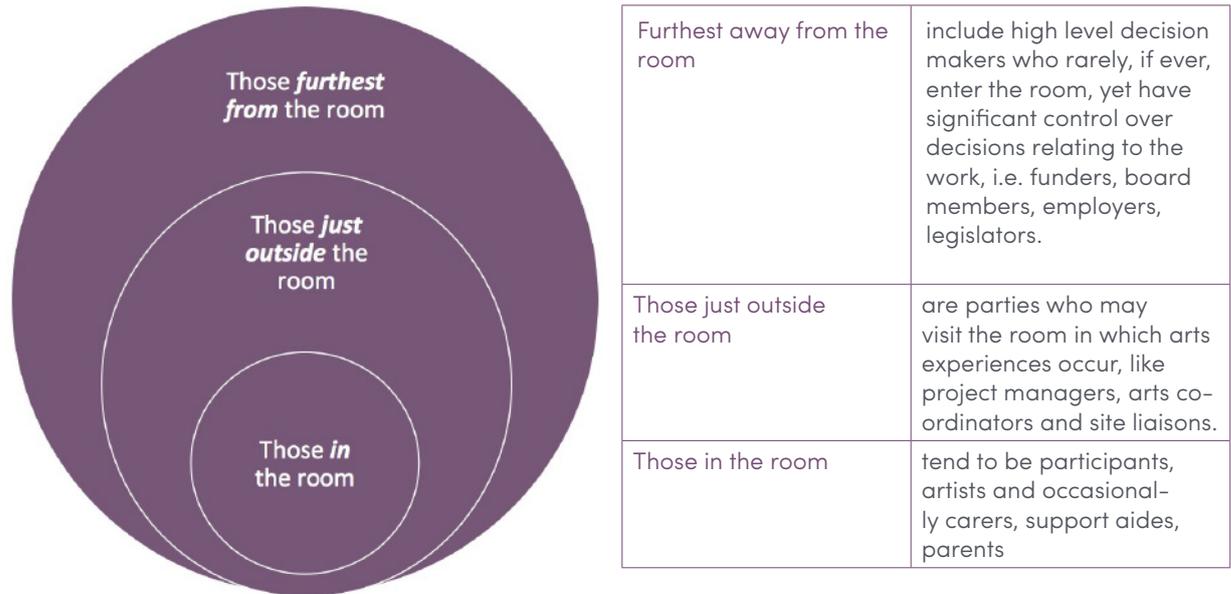


Figure 2: Decisionmakers beyond ‘the room’ have the potential to impact quality (Blanche 2014, adapted from Seidel et al 2010).

The nature of communication within partnerships therefore becomes a crucial factor in enabling quality to occur. This requires an enhanced culture of dialogic partnership.

### Seeing these concepts in action

Two major funders are early adopters of these new quality approaches. Their thinking has shifted towards a shared, reflective responsibility for quality beyond the artist, moving the emphasis away from evaluating just final outputs and outcomes.

#### Creative Scotland

Creative Scotland’s *Is this the Best it can be?* toolkit (2016) comprises a ‘compass’ to help orient towards conditions for ideal quality and then keep project planning and delivery on course to achieve it. It aims to facilitate partner dialogue to determine shared aspirations, expectations and responsibilities for quality outcomes, centred around participant experiences and needs.

Creative Scotland has in 2017 funded pilot activity for artists and their non-arts partners to use the toolkit compass, creating illustrative examples of this approach in action. The pilots have reported benefits from their enhanced quality partnerships (Creative Scotland, forthcoming). Crucially, this funder is embracing a system for continuous quality improvement building from reflective learning. Key questions underpinning this new process include:

- What does quality look and feel like for the recipients, for the artists, for those supporting and funding the project?
- Which factors are in control of the artists, and where does responsibility lie for other elements?
- Does everyone vested in this project share understanding of the aims, expectations and likely impacts?
- Is this work the best it can be?

#### Gulbenkian Portugal

A similar approach is being adopted in Portugal to support quality outcomes for the projects in the [Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's PARTIS \(Praticas Artisticas para Inclusao Social\) programme](#). Over a five-year period this €2 million programme seeks to stimulate inclusion and social change through the “unique power” of the arts”. So far, according to the foundation, PARTIS has brought about 15,000 activities involving 800 artists and reaching 10,000 direct participants.

Since Creative Scotland's quality toolkit ‘Is this the Best it can be?’ is purposely designed to be mined and adapted for every setting or circumstances, Isabel Lucena, an independent arts manager evaluating artistic quality for Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's PARTIS programme, has introduced it to the PARTIS II projects with the aim of integrating key quality considerations through all stages of work and encouraging reflective learning to foster continuous quality improvement. Lucena as PARTIS' evaluator for artistic quality sees her role as “helping [the projects] to achieve the good quality that they all want to have” (Lucena 2017). Facilitating a holistic process to identify and enable quality conditions is perceived as a win-win for both the projects and the funder, all of whom are invested in producing the highest standard of work appropriate to each project's context and setting. Despite the model embodying a number of quality ideas and reflective approaches new to the sector in Portugal, participating projects have reported positively about the process (Lucena 2017).

## What comes next?

This research and early implementation suggests value in creating an environment for holistic quality with engaged and committed partners accepting shared responsibility for quality. However to take root as a new mode of practice, it needs to be supported by funders and policymakers.

Continuous improvement depends on reflection, with potential to enrich the purpose and nature of evaluation. Reflection requires time and long-term thinking, with obvious implications for project funding. Above all it requires a 'safe' and supportive funding environment in which artists and their partners can reflect and report honestly for meaningful learning.

## To conclude

The value of this approach to the sector is that it addresses deficiencies currently experienced by artists in participatory contexts. The insights expose flaws in the assumptions inherent in many existing frameworks. But they provide a way to enhance commissioning and evaluation processes, empowering artists to deliver the quality work possible under the right conditions. In doing so, the understandings profiled here may be transferred to any country, context or setting as long as key quality questions are addressed in dialogic 'partnerships for quality'.

We are seeing a marked shift in the way that some funders understand and support quality in participatory arts and creative learning; this makes it an agenda to watch.

### REFERENCES

- American Society for Quality (undated)**, *The Global Voice of Quality*. <http://asq.org/learn-about-quality/basic-concepts.html> [accessed 7 Feb 2018].
- Arts Council Wales (2009)**, *Strive to Excel: A Quality Framework for the Arts in Wales*, Wales: Arts Council Wales.
- Artworks Cymru (2016)**, *Quality Principles Webpage*. <https://artworks.cymru/quality-principles> [accessed 7 Feb 2018].
- Bamford, A. (2010)**, *Quality Assurance for the Creativity Portal*. Scotland, UK: The Scottish Arts Council.
- Blanche, R. (2014)**, *Developing a foundation for quality guidance for arts organisations and artists in Scotland working in participatory settings*. Edinburgh: Creative Scotland. <http://www.creativescotland.com/resources/professional-resources/research/creative-scotland-research/developing-a-foundation-for-quality-guidance> [accessed 7 Feb 2018].
- Consilium (2012)**, *Skillset Research and Gap Analysis for Artists Working in Participatory Settings: Phase 2 Final Report*, prepared

by Consilium Research & Consultancy, October 2012. Edinburgh: Creative Scotland.

**Creative Scotland (2016)**, *Is this the Best it can be?* Digital Toolkit. <http://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/major-projects/creative-learning-and-young-people/artworks-scotland/is-this-the-best-it-can-be> [accessed 7 Feb 2018].

**Creative Scotland (2017)**, *Using the Toolkit – Case Studies*. <http://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/major-projects/creative-learning-and-young-people/artworks-scotland/is-this-the-best-it-can-be/using-the-toolkit-case-studies> [accessed 21 Jan 2018].

**Dean, F (2012)**, *Research report: Learning from Artworks Scotland Peer to Peer networks*, prepared by Dr Fiona Dean, Freelance researcher ArtWorks Scotland, October 2012. Edinburgh: Creative Scotland.

**Lord, P; Sharp, C; Lee, B; Cooper, L; Grayson, H (2012)**, *Raising the Standard of Work by, with and for Children and Young People: Research and Consultation to Understand the Principles of Quality*. Report for Arts Council England, National Foundation for Educational Research & Shared Intelligence. Slough: NFER

**Lucena, I. (2017)**, *Interview with Isabel Lucena, Independent Arts Manager for Gulbenkian Portugal's PARTIS II programme*, conducted with Rachel Blanche on 8 December 2017 in Lisbon.

**Marino, L, ed. (2007)**, *Basic principles and concepts for achieving quality*, Lisa Marino, Editor, December 2007, TECHNICAL NOTE CMU/SEI-2007-TN-002, Software Engineering Institute.

**Matarasso, F. (2013)**, 'Creative Progression: Reflections on quality in participatory arts', *UNESCO Observatory Multi-Disciplinary Journal in the Arts*, Vol 3, 3, 1–15.

**Schwarz, M (2014)**, *Artworks: Quality, Because We All Want to Do Better (Working Paper 8)*, January 2014, London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

**Seidel, S., Tishman, S., Winner, E., Hetland, L. and Palmer, P. (2010)**, *The Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education*. Massachusetts: Harvard Graduate School of Education.

#### FURTHER MATERIAL

[Artworks Cymru's Partners Toolkit](#) provides parallel thinking and discussion points for artists and non-arts partners.

[Insights for Employers, Commissioners and Funders in facilitating quality impacts through participatory arts](#), Rachel Blanche (November 2014).

The [full evidence-base and report for Creative Scotland](#) is available online. See the Executive Summary and/or chapters 2-5 for complete findings on the insights profiled in this article.



**Rachel Blanche** is an international cultural policy specialist and lecturer at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh. A former diplomat turned cultural policy analyst, Rachel has made many contributions to the formation of cultural policy in Scotland and developed policy instruments adopted by UNESCO. Her research in quality 'management' in participatory arts and creative learning has directly influenced major arts management processes in Wales and Portugal.

# How Can One Measure the Quality and Merits of Cultural Services?

*Current characteristics of arts services and formats and the increase of competitors require that market players in the arts sector look out for new methods that might ensure a growing economic stability. This article broaches issues of today's art market and its consumption particularities, and presents an attempt to measure the effectiveness of arts and culture projects as well as the merits of cultural services for society.*

*By Anastasiya Saprykina and Markus Wylser*

## Specificity of consumption in the arts

The growth of digital technology, customization and individual approaches, the clustering of cultural institutions for specific projects, the popularity of “edutainment” formats or the influence of brands on consumer decisions are tendencies that strongly impact the development of contemporary cultural economics. Thanks to the internet, people all over the globe have access to the world's most successful cultural products and therefore start to expect something similar at their local venue. The increased influence of emotional factors or questions of meaningfulness during the process of consumption and the requirement to include services that “improve” the consumer (e.g. educative, enlightening) also appear specifically in the field of arts marketing.

Surveys conducted to identify consumer preferences in creative industries have shown that people often can't formulate exactly what they want (Dolgin 2007), which makes it difficult for marketing professionals to create appropriate formats. Visitors want to come to the venue, experience the same good feeling as last time but nevertheless in a different way, where-

as, in order to prove successful, the arts manager has to hit the mark in all categories. At the same time, claims for higher quality in the sphere of arts and culture are constantly growing. This, however, also proves a genuine challenge for the arts manager, who is constrained by budgets, the status and geographical position of his organization, and so forth.

### Problems of assessing quality in arts

From the point-of-view of institutional economists, services in the arts sector are public assets and thus “market failures” not only in relation to the emergence of positive externalities, but also as a result of the asymmetrical availability of information (Frey 2009; Trosby 2001). “Sellers” have an advantage over buyers, who in their turn cannot evaluate the product according to formal criteria. Moreover, cultural services are usually assessed in an experimental way. This and other particularities of cultural services (perishability, singleness, local dependence, inseparability etc.) impede the prognostication of quality. Whereas it is simple for the customer to form an opinion about the amenities of the venue (front-of-house area, washrooms, bar etc.), it is far more difficult to develop and institutionalize a qualitative system of indicators that effectively assesses the socio-cultural significance, artistic value and public benefit of the actual event.

*the success of a cultural service does not automatically presuppose its quality*

One attempt that has been applied to this goal for the past twenty years is collaborative filtering – a way to evaluate behavioural patterns of groups to infer the interests of individuals – based on the reactions of consumers and experts. It does, however, still not resolve the problem satisfactorily: consumers are often not willing to waste their time and write constructive reviews of an event or if they make the effort to write a detailed letter, the intention is to submit a complaint. After all, once consumers decide to spend their time and money on an event, they assume they will be happy with it. Thus, it would appear that usually visitors make use of cultural services because they like them and therefore do not find it necessary to reaffirm them afterwards. Marketing technologies such as special offers,

a discount system and loyalty programs might be helpful to motivate consumers to give positive feedback and thus achieve results that are better balanced in this respect.

A basic problem is that the success of a cultural service does not automatically presuppose its quality. Furthermore, it remains unclear who determines whether something is a valuable work of art or not. Although it is generally considered to be the market or a body of experts, assessments by either of them are seriously flawed: the former might reflect customer satisfaction, but not necessarily its quality, whereas the latter might express their opinion about the quality of a product, but cannot guarantee customer satisfaction with the consumed cultural service. In modern art, for instance, it is often quite the contrary.

Numerous well-known examples of works that totally failed at their premiere and became hugely popular as time passed seem to provide some justification for this approach: the operas *La Traviata* and *Carmen* for instance, *The Rite of Spring*, or Picasso's paintings. Much of Beethoven's music was long considered difficult, Bach or Mozart even forgotten. Whereas in the 18th century Samuel Richardson's books were far more popular than Jane Austen's, the situation has since been reversed. Nonetheless, it must be mentioned that in any category of cultural undertaking the quality of the actual work of art might play no role whatsoever. Moreover, it must be assumed that the arts manager has proven himself to be more effective when the influence of the work's quality on the result of the service is quite small.

## Objectives and methods of assessing the quality of arts services

World trends in cultural services indicate that the state authorities of many countries set their goals in the development of the territory through culture, the supervision of ensuring accessibility and quality of cultural goods. However, the evaluation of the quality of cultural projects is important not only to the state, but also to other stakeholders – the interaction of those market subjects (government institutions, organs of power, commercial companies, public organisations and individuals) who influence the conception, strategy and realisation of a cultural event. As the significance of an event rises, the art manager's responsibility for carrying out a project successfully while keeping in balance government, business and

public interests increases. It requires a system for assessing the quality of projects and, in general, the impact of cultural goods on the development of the territory.

In short, we think that the assessment of quality and, generally speaking, of the influence of cultural services on society is effectuated in a complex way that comprises the evaluation of experts, the appraisal of consumers and statistical evidence. During the project-planning phase at the latest the manager will realise which indicators will become the crucial criteria to perform successfully.

#### Quantitative indicators:

- financial capacity, budget of the project (attracted state and/or private funds);
- gross revenue from the sale of products and services (including souvenirs and additional services);
- number of partners and activities in the project;
- attendance (viewers, participants, partners);
- total costs for the production of goods and services (basic, additional and servicing);
- time spent by the consumer (a multiplication of the number of people and the time spent at the event).

#### Qualitative indicators:

- polls among all interested stakeholders (consumers, art critics, state representatives, commercial partners, sponsors, public figures and social leaders, mass media outlets, participants in the event - organizers and artists)
- using different platforms: online on the website of events or institutions, social networks, in-depth interviews, focus groups, etc.

At the same time, one might establish a series of special relative indicators regarding an event's economic stability, the most prevailing of which are the ratio between state and other funding, expenditure and audience figures (i.e. the rentability of a project), the amount of generated private, state and non-commercial investment, and the correlation among the market subjects' evaluation (officials, critics, consumers, other stakeholders).

For an arts manager this indicator evaluation system is an excellent illustration of the effectiveness and scale of its work. It will help to formulate

a constructive and substantiated conversation with partners, government authorities, the media and other stakeholders. This system can also be used by state authorities to assess the effectiveness of cultural policy and public investment in major events (festivals). In addition to the above indicators, it will probably be useful to search for answers to the following questions separately:

- Would the investment have been made even without the carrying out of an event?
- Will the generated funds remain within the territory in question or might they be redirected elsewhere?

The systematic use of such research might give answers to questions about the commercialisation of culture, its socio-economic effects and its impact on society in general.

#### REFERENCES

**Dolgin A.B. (2007).** *The Economics of Symbolic Exchange*. Berlin – Heidelberg: Springer.

**Frey B.S. (2009).** *Cultural economics*. In: CESifo DICE Report. 2009, 20–25. [http://www.bsfrey.ch/articles/D\\_206\\_2009.pdf](http://www.bsfrey.ch/articles/D_206_2009.pdf) [accessed 16 Feb 2018].

**Trosby D. (2001).** *Economics and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



**Anastasiya Saprykina** studied at Novosibirsk State Technical University. She currently finishes her Ph.D. in the field of cultural economics and lectures on art management at two universities in Novosibirsk. As head of the marketing department of the Novosibirsk Philharmonic she is part of the organizing committee of some of the largest festivals in Russia and Siberia.



**Markus Wyler** studied at the universities of Zurich and Aberdeen. He conceived, organized and promoted comprehensive projects in the field of classical music as a free-lance dramaturge, author, artistic advisor and organizer of international concerts. He also teaches various at different international universities.

# Conceptualizations of Quality in Arts Management Education

*When it comes to arts management education, there are differences in how quality is perceived, assessed, discussed, and pursued, often considered analogous to considering the field's theory and practice. How do we know what a good arts administrator is? And how do we know if a particular arts management program is good at preparing those arts administrators? This article gives an overview of how these questions are currently discussed in the US and shows what is needed to answer them.*

*By Brea Heidelberg*

Quality is a very subjective measure. Implicitly, quality of arts management as a practice is important because it is often a part of the assessment criteria for granting institutions. Even when there is no explicit statement about what is important in the field, funding criteria and evaluation processes are a good indicator (Patton et al 2015). However, the implicit nature of conversations about quality is further complicated by the fact that quality is a complex collection of considerations that has inextricable ties to other longstanding issues in the field. Innate perceptions of quality are often filtered through personal biases. Additionally, mainstream methods of quality assessment have traditionally included problematic practices that undermine efforts to be equitable and inclusive. Culture, for example, is part of the creation and articulation of values and also permeates the evaluation practice. Therefore, unless specifically trained, evaluators bring their own cultural values and personal biases to this practice. Organizations like the Art x Culture x Social Justice Network highlight and work to change bias in evaluation practice because they acknowledge that it routinely negatively impacts arts and cultural organizations of color, grassroots organizations, and those that do not identify with mainstream, European art forms or management practices.

## The beginnings: Learning arts management on the job

When DiMaggio (1987) first looked at this issue, there was a noted period of professionalization occurring in the field as the work of arts managers in the US was becoming more specialized. DiMaggio then noted that “boards have become increasingly concerned with the quality of administration” (vii). Based on the development of internships, training programs, and the National Endowment for the Arts’ infusion of funding into “Services to the Field” categories designed to improve the administrative functions in arts organizations, it is clear that increasing organizational and administrative capacity was a priority for the field. However, these conversations happened absent an explicit conversation about quality. In a field that is widely touted as beginning with the founders ‘learning by the seat of their pants,’ it is not surprising that any field-based training was taken as a means to increase quality. Occurring alongside field-based responses to the need for better-trained arts administrators to address the changing needs of the sector was a boom in the creation of formal arts management education programs in colleges and universities at the graduate level (Laughlin 2017).

*...it is not surprising that any field-based training was taken as a means to increase quality*

The field of arts management is now experiencing another period of professionalization where quality is at the center of the conversation. Current gaps and future stalls projected in the arts leadership pipeline, brought to the forefront by leadership transitions throughout the field, have caused the question of quality to be raised once again (Ono 2016). Since the last time we were engaged in this conversation arts management education has experienced a period of significant growth in the number of graduate programs and the emergence and growth of programs at the undergraduate level (Varela 2013).

## Combining formal and practical training approaches

While it may seem as though the field is experiencing déjà vu, there have been some significant changes – arguably for the better – in the field. When DiMaggio noted in 1987 that many arts managers were not

convinced of the quality of formal arts management training, these assessments were based on the assumptive need for hands-on training at the expense, if not the exclusion of, theory-based training. Anecdotally, there is much more collaboration between arts management educators and arts managers. Many education programs require some sort of experiential learning, ranging from class projects to internships, that puts students into direct contact with field practitioners. Additionally, many practitioners teach as adjunct faculty. This demonstrates an understanding on the part of many academics and practitioners that theory and practice play an important role in preparing future arts administrators. But the question of quality still remains.

*Quality in the academy can, and often is, different from quality in the field.*

Quality in the academy can, and often is, different from quality in the field for a variety of academic programs and their associated professions. In the academy discussions and assessment of quality can focus on faculty credentials, program perception among other academic programs, program perception in the field, and alumni job placement and field engagement. In the field of arts management quality can focus on hard skills, soft skills, overall conceptions of leadership, or previous experiences of arts managers – whether those experiences come from arts management or some tangentially related field.

Where there is no data, there is no evaluation

The place where these different ways of articulating and assessing quality come together in arts management is the universal lack of data to make any serious quality assessments. To date there are no published empirical studies about faculty qualifications, no up to date information about practitioner perceptions of formal arts training, and no empirical studies about the relative impact on an arts management degree on alumni ability to obtain a job or advance their careers. There are certainly programs that track their alumni and have data on employment rates, but the field would be best served by data that speaks across educational institutions. Furthermore, data that does not privilege traditional academic programs over other training paths is necessary as a matter of equity. This is espe-

cially important as the democratization of training paths increases with a growing number of programs that operate alongside or independent of traditional academic institutions, further blurring the lines between the classroom and the field.

*In arts management (there) is a universal lack of data to make any serious quality assessments.*

Ideally, arts management (the field) and arts management educators (the tower) need to develop, empirically test, and use quality measures that pass muster in both realms. This must be a field-wide effort. Many academics have furthered efforts to conduct evaluation research that directly impacts and can inform practice, moving further away from past critiques of research existing in a vacuum (Chiaravalloti & Piber 2011). Practitioners have found spaces where they can collaborate with and be informed by researchers. Although these spaces, and the work done within them, have not yet permeated the field's collective consciousness there is progress being made in spaces like the Topical Interest Groups (TIG) at the American Evaluation Association ([www.aea.org](http://www.aea.org)), and through partnership initiatives that exist in many academic institutions. Finally, funders who are interested in the fruit of this labor, which is (ideally) a trained and equipped arts leadership base, should consider funding the research necessary to answer some of the basic research questions about articulating and assessing quality in both arts management education and arts management as a practice. Research that speaks to the field across artistic discipline and organizational context is often expensive to conduct, especially if it strives to meet the needs of both researchers and practitioners. By financially supporting this work, funders could provide a vital service that is reminiscent of the administrative support offered by the Twentieth Century Fund and the Ford Foundation in the 1960s, another time of significant advancement in the field. Both foundations were instrumental in providing support for arts managers and researchers during the creation and infancy of the National Endowment for the Arts.

*Ideally, arts management and arts management educators need to develop, empirically test, and use quality measures that pass muster in both realms.*

All actors working in concert is necessary if the field as a whole is to progress. Fortunately, all have a vested interest: arts management educators want to ensure that students are welcomed and respected upon graduation when they enter the field, and practitioners want to have successful leadership transitions and the ability to entrust the field to those who will successfully sustain and grow it.

#### REFERENCES

**Chiaravalloti, F.; Piber, M.. (2011)**, *Ethical Implications of Methodological Settings in Arts Management Research: The Case of Performance Evaluation*. *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 41(4).

**DiMaggio, P. (1987)**, *Mangers of the Arts*. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts.

**Laughlin, S. (2017)**, *Defining and Transforming Education: Association of Arts Administration Educators*. *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 47(1).

**Ono, E. (2016)**, *Moving Arts Leadership Forward*. San Francisco, CA: William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

**Patton, M.Q.; Foote, N.; and Radner, J. (2015)**, *A Foundation's Theory of Philanthropy: What It Is, What It Provides, How to Do It*. *The Foundation Review*: Vol. 7: Issue 4.

**Varela, X. (2013)**, *Core Consensus, Strategic Variations: Mapping Arts Management Graduate Education in the United States*. *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 43(2).



**Brea M. Heidelberg** is an arts management educator, consultant, and researcher. She is a board member of the *American Journal of Arts Management* and Association of Arts Administration Educators, and serves on Americans for the Arts' Emerging Leaders Council. She earned her PhD in Arts Administration, Education and Policy from Ohio State University. Her research interests include professional development issues facing arts administrators, arts advocacy rhetoric, and (inter)national cultural diplomacy.

### **Arts Management Network**

A service by

**KM Kulturmanagement Network GmbH**

Postbox 1198, D-99409 Weimar

Address: Bauhausstr 7 c, D-99423 Weimar

Phone: +49 (0) 3643 / 7402 612

E-Mail: [office@artsmanagement.net](mailto:office@artsmanagement.net)

CEO: Dirk Schütz

Chief Editor: Kristin Oswald

Mediadata: <http://advertising.artsmanagement.net>

**Layout:** Maja Krzanowski

**Typesetting:** Kristin Oswald

**Cover picture:** Antonio Stradivari, The "Francesca" Violin, 1694, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Public Domain

### **Further informationen**

[www.artsmanagement.net](http://www.artsmanagement.net)

[www.twitter.com/amnweimar](https://www.twitter.com/amnweimar)

[www.facebook.com/ArtsManagementNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/ArtsManagementNetwork)