

Thoughts of interface between Creative industry and artistic practice

This document was written as a draft for discussion in the EU Platform “Potential of culture and creative industries”, working group 5: Interface Creation and Industry, Oct 14, 2008.

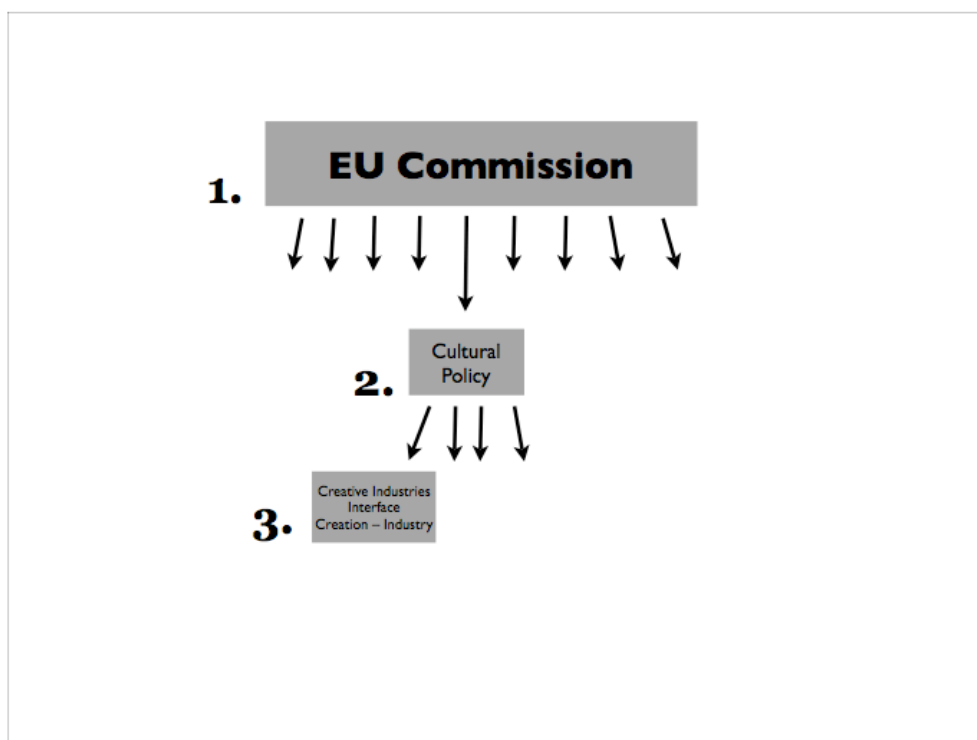
Introduction

The world is undergoing a process of structural transformations in multiple dimensions: technological, economic, cultural, and institutional (Castells 1996-97, 2000). New technology, digitalisation and globalization are changing and have changed economy and the market. Large traditional industries move their production where workforce is cheap, the car manufacturing industries fight with difficulties. The economy of the 21st century is one where creativity, knowledge and access to information are the main drivers (Creative Economy Report 2008, UN, Florida 2005) and figures show that the cultural field is growing, today representing a larger part of the general economy than the car industry. Between 1999 and 2003, the growth within the cultural field was 12,6% larger than the economy in general, corresponding to 2,6% of GDP in Europe (Kern 2006). The same report points out that the conditions within the cultural field, may well be a mirror of the future work market; more flexible, project work, higher mobility and level of knowledge, and an enterprise structure distinguished by many small niche businesses (Kern 2006). The field has always been full of part-time workers, multiple jobbers, small-scale entrepreneurs, freelancers who master the challenge of surviving on niche ideas (Forsman SOU 2003:21, Leadbeater and Oakley 2007; O’Connor 1999). These are often entrepreneurs run by other values than accumulation of profit, which stands in contrast of business ideas within other sectors of society where profit maximisation is the main objective (O’Connor 2006). This doesn’t mean that they are economically less important for the economy in society. In contrast, much points towards an economy of many small-scale businesses, with a few employees and small turnovers, but that together build an economic impact that shows in GDP. The society that best take care of its creators, or what the American Economist Richard Florida call” the creative class”, is, as he puts it, a winning society (Florida 2005). Cultural and creative industries are in many ways an underdeveloped field, where potential of the sector has not been fully scaled. Questions are many. How is individual artistic practice a basic resource for the new economy? How can public policy maximize this potential? How do individual artistic practice and creative industries relate to each other? What is the role of public policy? How are we to view a cultural sector that, in the midst of wide-ranging policy and political changes, it is to be both economically viable and retain its artistic integrity? Where are initiatives taken by policy- and decision-makers most likely to serve as catalysts for artistic and creative work in Europe?

Recommendations

The following recommendations are a result of the work of organisations representing a wide variety of artistic fields; composers, publishers, authors, scriptwriters, media, entertainment and arts, training programmes, architecture, theatre and music, all areas included in the description of cultural and creative industries. The recommendations concern the interface on creation and industry with the aim to contribute to the development of a political Agenda for Culture in Europe.

The recommendations proposed by the working group are on three different levels 1) the overall policy framework of EU Commission, 2) Cultural Policy, and 3) Creative Industries: Interface Creation – Industry.



1. Framework of EU Commission

To use the full potential of culture as a key contributor to the Lisbon Agenda, several initiatives are needed on different levels. Cultural and creative industries are one factor, but can never be the only solution to all societies challenges. This might be obvious, but still important to stress. Too high expectations of what is possible to achieve, might be an obstacle for development and realisation of realistic initiatives (Creative Economy Report 2008). Unrealistic prognoses of industries has before posed problems and been the base for many misjudgements in investments. In the framework of EU

Commission a few steps towards a larger understanding of the creators working situation and building of culture as a high-status profession would be useful.

Recommendations concern:

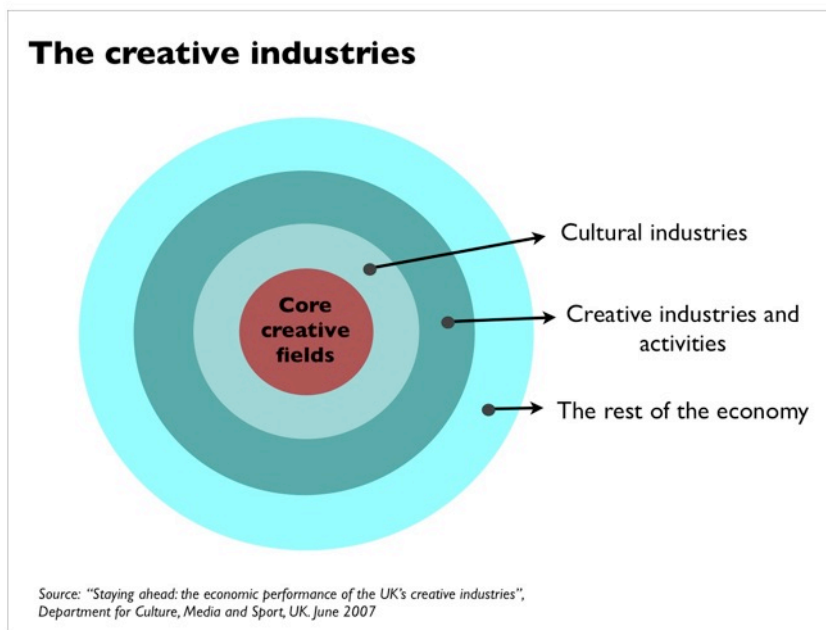
Mainstreaming of culture in other policies. One difficulty in taking care of the full potential of culture and creative industries is that the field is usually isolated from other political areas. Therefore the EU Commission could be the first to let culture and art be mainstreamed in all political areas.

Implement the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity on all levels within EU. Cultural activities include all inhabitants in society, no matter religion, nationality, ethnic background, gender, and sexual preferences. Diversity and intercultural dialogue is a necessary standing-point.

Understand the market of cultural and creative industries as small and large niche markets, where pluralism, not unity, is the major strength.

2. Cultural Policy

Cultural Policy concern many aspects of the artistic and cultural field, cultural and creative industries are only one angle. Policy needs to point out different initiatives on different levels, mirroring the complexity in the field. Several aspects need to be taken into account and the understanding of the field to be one of a scale of balance. On one side the artistic work that need public funding to exist, on the other incentives for a growing field where private funding and self-employment are important. Cultural policy may well be understood through the circle-model put forward by Philip Kern (The Economy of Culture in Europe, 2006) and The Department of Culture, Media and Sports in UK (Work Foundation, 2007).



The model explains the economic relation between art, cultural and creative industries and the rest of the economy. The core creative field is the artistic practice that needs public support to exist. This field include questions like artistic quality, artistic integrity, the social security situation for artists, and art as a factor in a democratic society. Cultural and creative industries include discussions on infrastructure and incentives needed by the public field to support a development and growth of independent economies. The rest of the economy is dependent on the creative core, without high quality artist there will not be creative industries, tourism, or impact on economy. This model suggests that commitments taken on cultural and creative industries level must be followed by commitments on the artistic field. Each circle needs a set of different initiatives, both at the core and the other areas.

Recommendations on Cultural Policy could include:

Cultural products have a double character. There are economic reasons to support a cultural product, as well as cultural ones. Incentives to use the potential on cultural products as put forward in the report Creative Economy Report (UN, 2008) need to understand this double character of cultural products.

Commit to both cultural and creative industries, and artistic production. These go hand-in-hand. Commitments to cultural and creative industries must be preceded by commitments to artists and their specific working conditions.

Incentives need to be several and on different levels. Each artistic form has its own specific conditions. The situation for poets differs from the situation for musicians, the situation for dancers

from visual artists. Incentives and efforts need to take into account the specific conditions under which an art form exists.

Build competence of the cultural field at policy level. To best support the field, deep knowledge is needed. The competence is found within the sector itself.

Empirical studies and mapping of the field is necessary to be able to scale the impact of the field and to have up-to-date information to be able to analyse the sector. The cultural field is complex and in constant change.

Put forward methods and models designed specifically for the sector and with the specific conditions in mind. The competence is found within the field itself.

3. Creative Industries: Interface Creation – Industry

A challenge for Cultural Policy is to find the interface between the artist and the industries. A built in tension in the creative industries is the one between values of culture and values of profit (O'Connor, 2006). Another tension is on one hand the artist and the other business. Artists do already to a large extent run small-scale businesses, but still identify themselves as artists. How can infrastructure be built to support these entrepreneurs? Yet another large question of today is the one of Intellectual Property Rights. Technical development and digitalisation cannot be stopped. Legislation is outdated and can no longer protect the rights of the artist. It's a two-sided coin. On one hand the possibilities of digitalisation, where global, very fast distribution opens new markets, on the other the illegal downloading of music and film. Knowledge needs to be built on many of these issues. Digitalisation is still only in the beginning of development.

Recommendations on Interface Creation – Industry could be:

Build competence on the underlying tension in the cultural industries. Cultural businesses deal with the conflicts of making meaning and making money. It's a balancing act, that needs to be understood in policy and incentives put forward.

Create meeting places to build mutual understanding and knowledge between cultural field and other industries. To learn from each other, exchange ideas and knowledge. Meeting places should be seen as think tanks or laboratories with aim of a crossway of artistic forms, business field, research and other areas.

Start a series of mappings of the possibilities and the threats of digitalisation and technological development. This should be done from the artist point of view. Let the conclusions guide the incentives and changes in regulation that is necessary. Perhaps the example of Creative Commons can be used to find solutions.

Harmonisation of legislation of Intellectual Property Rights. Overlook legislation in Europe with the ambition to harmonise these to one overall legislation.

The need of intermediaries between culture and business. There is a need for translators between artistic practice and cultural industries, between culture and business to overcome prejudices from both sides and to learn from each other. This should be intermediaries who easily move between sectors and have credibility on both sides.

Use artists as a source of knowledge. Many artists struggle in this interface and have knowledge of obstacles, difficulties, possibilities and needs. They are a resource.

Understand the importance of artistic quality and artistic integrity. To create jobs and growth and use the cultural and creative industries potential, an understanding of the artist and artistic quality is necessary. A successful National Orchestra, important for city tourism and development, would never reach popularity without very high quality musicians.