



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT - EPISODE TWO - LATIN AMERICA

IETM - International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts

Climate Justice - Through the Creative Lense of the Performing Arts

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Podcast Episode Two - January 2024

The following episode is the second in a three part podcast series commissioned and produced by IETM. Across the course of 2023, a number of Focus group discussions took place in three continents where the vital role of the performing arts in the face of climate justice and climate change was discussed at great lengths. The aim of the podcasts are to reflect on the conversations that took place during these Focus group meetings and to explore the meaning and implications of climate justice on the performing arts sector, as well as to highlight actions taken by the sector to respond to the climate emergency in different socio economic contexts.

This episode of the podcast series is in Spanish and Portuguese. The Focus group's facilitator, Pedro, will provide context throughout the podcast in English by introducing the topic and giving a brief overview of the discussions that were had. An English transcript is also available on IETM's website.

This podcast contains contributions of five Latin American performing arts professionals who came together for a focus group discussion, commissioned by IETM and facilitated by Pedro Affonso Ivo Franco, to gain a better understanding of how the Latin American performing arts sector approaches climate justice by directly involving professionals from the region.

The discussion began by asking the participants. How can performing arts works address issues related to climate justice in their specific context? The following contributions are from Victoria, representing the Argentinian collective *Artistas por la Tierra*, Tiago Gamboni, Urpi Castro and Ericky Nakanome from the Amazon region of Brazil

Victoria	<p>Artistas por la tierra is a collective of artists worried about the climate change and environmental crises which started its activities responding to extractivism in Argentina, for instance the threat of the lithium exploitation to develop car batteries to the global north companies that is exploited here. So, there is a internalised battle from and to the territories</p> <p>The collective Artista por la tierra tries to connect itself with, for instance, indigenous women who invited us to make an activity addressing this issue and activates and sensibilize the community through arts.</p>
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Tiago	<p>During the past 12 years I have been connecting my environmental activism to dance and a very important aspect for me are the protests at the street and for this reason I was arrested, and now I am a bit afraid of how doing actions on the street without being arrested by the police.</p>
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Ericky	<p>I also work and involve myself with The "Boi" from Parintins. For us to have an understanding, I will make a brief historical cut. The Boi is a folklore manifestation, simple from the people but that throughout its 100 years, it has changed its identity, format and appropriating itself from contemporary questions.</p> <p>In this process things started changing towards a perspective that is much more representative of what people live locally rather them a romanticised and stereotyped about the amazon, but it included the struggles of the own people who produce the Boi, It walks towards a contemporary art and as we are in the Amazon this mainly include important themes and one of the main the climate crises. Through the real representation of people, of real indigenous people like Alessanda Munduruku who fights for the waters against the mining here in the Alter do Chao region in Santarém, it's Davi Kopenawa who come to the "Boi" and to the "Boi festival" as a way to transfer their knowledge and talk about their struggles.</p> <p>Making the information about it accessible to all the people, making the information that is on many occasions available only for the elite, for the theatres, and in the academy in the community parties, in the "Bois" headquarters, it's contradictory and strange but it's like we are an educational tool to teach about questions related to the amazon people.</p>
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How can performing arts works address issues related to climate justice in their specific context? Which examples of this exist?

What is the distinctive contribution that performing arts can make to addressing climate change and climate justice (e.g. providing hope, presenting critical perspectives, helping to expose the complex connections existing between social, environmental and political issues, etc.)?

Victoria	<p>Beyond the information that one manages, the capacity that artists have and the art in general, is to generate another sensibilization.</p> <p>Last friday we developed a small exercise, power of sensitization, asking people to simply close their eyes and reflect on what is happening, and the relationship of arts with what is happening. For me this was very interesting because these are very particular approaches to other sciences.</p> <p>The dispute is about common sense, it is about what happens today and we will ask if that is normal, art has this power to make us pause and make us imagine something else beyond the information about what works.</p>
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How can performing arts organisations and artists take part in awareness-raising and advocacy activities around climate change or climate justice? Which examples of this exist (including, among others, partnerships with other organisations active in climate justice and social justice in non-arts fields)?

What is the distinctive contribution that the performing arts can make in this field?

Urpi	<p>I think the most important thing is associativity. To the extent that artists are also represented by organisations or independent artists have the ability to get organised. The work is much more visible and it is much more likely that other organisations can link or associate your work with something bigger.</p> <p>Not like the work of just an artist, of a person, but of the work that makes such a group, such an organisation. I think that gives a lot of strength. We have been summoned by some organisations such as "Occupy your street", which is part of the largest division that is called 'Lima, as we go' or another organisation called "Cooperation", that when they sometimes consider that a work of another type of impact is required that is usually linked to a performance or some workshops, they have summoned us. Obviously because of how they are usually handled in our countries, because this is seen a little by contact, right? It is also not always fair, but sometimes they are networks that also are products of our own work.</p> <p>Sometimes it has happened in Lima, and I also open the conversation to know that other experiences you have, that things happen a lot only due to the context.</p> <p>There have been several situations here in Peru in recent years, one of them being the oil spill in the sea, which was here on the Peruvian coast, very close to</p>
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	<p>the beaches. Always when things happen near Lima they have more impact; near the capital, let's say, this also happens. And another theme is that groups of artists are only activated when there is a conjuncture and then dissolves.</p>
<p>Tiago</p>	<p>I'm going to focus on dance and theatre. It's the arts of the body and what the world is currently doing. This thing on the cell phone screen, of us getting out of our bodies, so we are "disembodied", right? So the performing arts bring us to our body, and our body needs to be connected with the environment.</p> <p>So actions that produce this awareness are already a big step to environmental awareness, to a citizen who is connected with the natural environment and sees us as equal to the environment, animals, plants.</p>
<p>Victoria</p>	<p>Thanks to the networks we are having connections to other spaces like the XR. I say that was one of the questions that emerged inside of the collective. A collective which does not have owner, there is not an artist who wants to make its work over the collective, it is a lot of people without a proper name who have understood the problem and assimilate how arts can intervene, and there is no artist on an individual level</p> <p>there was this question, this question was opened</p> <p>We also generate connections through individual connections, for instance, someone had a contact of a community radio and through this person we connected ourselves to them, so the spaces of assemblies, these small alliances that multiply themselves later. This happens because these other organisations also invite us because they see us as a relevant collective and I think this is also seen as a way to act as a way to network.</p>
<p>Tiago</p>	<p>The role of the performing arts is crucial because it is the relationship with reality, the indication of what is close. No, we are not making a show about what is far away, we are not here so, this is the great strength, in which performative art is in fact reality.</p>
<p>Ericky</p>	<p>So the festival itself, bringing this support, although spectacular within the issue of performing arts, it makes people have this time, because people will stop to play, because they will stop to dialogue and somehow, within this dialogue, we can get to and bring these issues related to important issues like gender, like climate justice, even class division.</p> <p>So, and I believe that the greater function of this, of all this discussion, is related precisely to specific contexts, because they will react to a performance when it is incorporated in other territories, it will impact in different ways. So here one thinks also within one of this perspective of bringing these issues related to climate justice to this path. For me, the greatest and foremost is the benefit of it.</p>

	<p>And this is popularisation. It is the creation of this awareness that the environment we are living in, even if we have to get food, water, pay the bills and the environment that is running out, is ending up with people that we can not even talk to.</p>
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To what extent do issues like climate change and social justice inform how performing arts organisations and artists relate to communities (by paying particular attention to vulnerable communities, co-creation processes, new partnerships or programmes, as well as collaborative skills, etc.)?

How do performing arts organisations contribute to empowering and building the skills and capacities of communities in their surroundings?

What are the illustrative examples of it?

<p>Jorge</p>	<p>I have seen it at the time when I have been contacting different agents to help disseminate this specific project that seeks to impact society through the performing arts, with a theme of environmental crisis and what was happening, At least not all you are seeing is that people today are still amazed at how the arts can come together or how they can find new spaces for dialogue.</p> <p>The truth is that I feel that what I have found is that they did not think or could not visualise how such important issues could be discussed through the performing arts or that they could consciously leave a message in the audience and to them. I feel that at least in a local way the performing arts were visualised, specifically the dance, only, as a merely artistic language, merely aesthetic and in the last months or, in recent years, which have been part of the research for the project that I am developing at the moment, is therefore to give space to disseminate information that resonates or must resonate with such importance in the locality, given all the problems that we have been, inclusive here in Nuevo León, happening because of the climate crisis, we thought it was or would be an issue that we might see in the future, then it comes the pandemic and impacts us directly and literally As I mentioned a moment ago we are left without water. We're still struggling with this problem.</p> <p>The government has made different efforts, campaigns to be able to raise awareness, so to speak, of society about the care or use of water. They have even resorted to the bombardment of clouds to be able to have rains and to get it to the dams and in this way to be able to pull it to the people, because definitely as also mentioned in the question, The communities that suffer most are the communities that we call it because of a little lower resources, they are not the ones that suffer from this type of problem. Because what was interesting was that in the town, despite not having water, the munis colonies</p>
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	<p>of a specific municipality, that is recognized internationally as one of the richest municipalities in Latin America, continued to count with the service of potable water, but we are not, then within this event that we were living here, local way I believe that besides my person, of his servant, we are looking for as also mentioned that moment of listening to the comrades, sensitise society through stage speeches and raise awareness, and I would even say that it is already looking for more, simply an awareness, like a stroke of conscience.</p> <p>We are already being maybe a little more abrupt because of the importance, which we are going to give and I think that the performing arts have that very good touch, they are very good spaces and in one way or another is being achieved.</p>
<p>Victoria</p>	<p>I was thinking a little bit about how we posed the question, because sometimes it's kind of dangerous to think about empowering in the sense that we have to empower them is weird, because people already have power, they know what happens, as Eric said and they live it, we don't have to give anything. I sometimes feel that my responsibility is like maybe building bridges.</p> <p>I mean, in the cities we have resources that sometimes don't reach the territories. In the city there is, like, more information, more resources, money. Maybe our role it's more about building bridges than empowering, giving power. Power, I say, empowering can be very misleading because we have a hierarchy difference. I give you the power, it seems to me that it can be deceitful, rather it is perhaps to make silence, it is to make space, going away from the most central places, to run, to generate space, but to run so that they manifest what already happens in the territories, let's say.</p>

To what extent are there considerations of climate change and climate justice informed internal planning and practice in performing arts organisations (e.g., forms of mobility, choice of energy choices, etc.)?

What needs do you identify to be more urgent in the field of climate change and climate justice, if any (e.g., skill development, access to specialised programmes, funding support, networks, etc.)?

<p>Jorge</p>	<p>For I believe that such considerations, such as mobility or energy choice, sometimes involve a very high monetary issue. This question of mobility, this question of energy choice. And while I think the communities most impacted by this type of process, I think they are one way or another, even sometimes they have the best considerations because it is what they have or even just a little</p>
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	greener mobility, so to speak, on a bicycle or for example on public transport, instead of taking a car to move only one person, instead of moving four people, not this from public transport, the choice of energy not, that is, to be able to have appliances thus, then have a run on our homes that could help make the energy choice a little greener. But the reality is that for example, these most vulnerable groups do not have access to this, so why should performing arts organisations have these with these first-of-first-approach considerations?
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These discussions highlighted multiple ways the performing arts approach climate justice, ranging from embodying experiences and awareness raising to community empowerment. They have also underlined that the concept of climate justice is little known and sometimes perceived as an imported concept. What clearly emerged is the need for an enabling environment allowing performing arts organisations and artists to access funding, training and professional development opportunities.

The outcomes of the regional discussion also nourished IETM's research report '*Climate Justice - Through the Creative Lense of the Performing Arts*' - which is now available to download, read or listen to via IETM's website under our resources. We hope you enjoyed this second episode of this podcast series - stay tuned for the final episode, which takes us to Asia.