

Overview of the pressures and promises

The table below serves as a recap of all the pressures (unsustainable practices) and promises (interesting experiments) that we identified for each of the value frameworks we distinguished when mapping out the results of our survey. Please read the pressures and promises related to your working group before joining the brainstorm on Tuesday 19 May. For more information, you can read our blog posts about [The Pressures Radar](#) and [The Promises Radar](#).

Group	Pressures / unsustainable	Promises / experiments
Artistic values	<p>We see a number of current practices that put a lot of pressure on the intrinsic and artistic value of working in the performing arts. Not surprisingly, these pressures mostly come from the outside. We see several types of answers: some have to do with the instrumentalisation of the arts, with <i>economic instrumentalisation as an often heard response</i>. 'The notion of value attached to art has a connection with the price it costs, in the general understanding of the audience', someone wrote, or: 'Artists are seen as civil workers'. There are some testimonies of countries or situations where arts are under increasing <i>political pressure</i>.</p> <p>Not always do these pressures on artistic value come from the outside. A respondent mentioned the issue of programming being based on 'trends'. Another respondent mentioned that we in the arts exclude ourselves from the political domain, by 'not acknowledging the ideologies that stand behind different decisions'. A lot of people raised the issue that the conditions in which we create and produce have a negative effect on the artistic value of the work, for instance because of the sharp competition in the sector, leading to a blame game between the different parties involved in the creation, production and presentation.</p>	<p>How to respond to these pressures and enhance the artistic quality - and the recognition of this value in society? Strikingly, we did not receive a lot of good practice examples of lobbying initiatives. Rather, there were a lot of suggestions on how we should and can put the artistic value of our work back in its central position. Basically, the answer is this: in all our collaborations, we should start from our shared ethics and value framework. We should stay true to that and practice what we preach. The result: sincere and valuable collaborations, long-term collaborations, with partners from within and outside of the arts field. These ethics can be made explicit, in good and transparent arrangements between partners and in frameworks such as a Fair Practice Code.</p>

<p>Social values</p>	<p>There were not that many responses dealing with unsustainable practices hindering the social value of working in the performing arts. In the sector itself, the main issue seems to be a <i>lack of inclusiveness</i>: ‘Staggering lack of diversity in the arts that hampers the sector altogether. Many people are still excluded for the multitude of intersectional reasons to do with class, poverty, race and ethnicity, gender, ability, sexuality and all the forms of ‘othering’ that treats the white, able-bodied, middle-class man - and the work he makes - as the norm.’</p> <p>This is of course a ‘wicked problem’, because the (performing) arts are part of broader society, where there is a lot of inequality and inequity, and a lack of social participation.</p>	<p>Concerning the social promises, we see a number of examples and experimental practices that aim at fostering community engagement. Some of these are about co-creation projects or inclusive audience development initiatives, for instance, aiming at young and new audiences. Others develop a more structural and long-term approach to cultural democracy. Basically, the idea here is not only to start from your own ideas and conceptions, but to listen to the ideas and values living in broader communities.</p> <p>There are some examples of policy frameworks promoting the social value of the arts, without instrumentalising them. Someone mentioned the Create Inclusion Fund by Creative Scotland, as an example. There are also some examples of artist initiatives raising awareness about the social value of the arts, for instance via activism, ecosystems mapping or by actively contributing as artists in city development programmes.</p>
<p>Economic values</p>	<p>On our Pressures Radar, there is a lot of discussion concerning economic pressures. Once more, these pressures are imposed on us from the outside. There are a lot of issues with unsustainable funding models, with a.o. a lack of support for the independent scene and small-scale initiatives, lack of support for touring, issues with funding applications and - an overarching issue -- a focus on ad hoc projects and a lack of long term perspectives.</p> <p>But, also the economic practices within the arts field itself -- in a way, our response to these outside pressures related to funding and other sources of income, are unsustainable as well... There are a lot of concerns about unfair remuneration. This is not felt by all people in the same way: in an economic system where short term perspectives are dominant, most of the economic risks are put with the artists.</p> <p>The socio-economic position of independent artists and workers is clearly one of the main issues on our Pressures Radar. This is not only an effect of external pressures (funding systems), but</p>	<p>On our Pressures Radar, there was a lot of input concerning economic pressures from the outside: issues with unsustainable funding models, with a.o. a lack of support for the independent scene and small-scale initiatives, lack of support for touring, issues with funding applications and - an overarching issue - a focus on ad hoc projects and a lack of long term perspectives. On the Promises Radar, we see a number of policy frameworks that address these issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● funding mechanisms that give a lot of autonomy to artists to strengthen them in their position with venues, ● systems that support with a long term perspective rather than one-offs, ● a situation where the local, regional and national government level actually work together in a concerted way to support artists. <p>It’s all out there. Concerning the economic relationships within the</p>

	<p>also of a lack of fair collaboration within the arts field itself.</p> <p>On our Pressures Map, there is not a lot of talk or discussion about the effect the economic conditions have on the people working in the field. Also here, we see internal issues: the issue of fairness is of course not limited to remunerations, but also broader working conditions. Also, there are issues with a lack of opportunities for training and personal development.</p>	<p>arts field, there was a lot of input on the Pressures Radar concerning the socio-economic position of artists and arts workers. We see some experiments with fair remuneration schemes and interesting cooperative models. But there should be more... What examples do you know of? Add them on the Promises Radar, using one of the empty sticky notes.”</p>
<p>Ecological values</p>	<p>There is a lot of worry and concern about unsustainable practices in the arts, which have a negative impact on the ecological value and natural resources. First, there are concerns about the <i>limited ecological awareness</i> in the sector, and the toughness of our habits. It seems we are addicted to flying (or: from the current perspective - we used to be).</p> <p>These habits, of course, are linked to the way we have organised our (international) practice. First, there are a lot of concerns about <i>travelling for short trips</i> to meetings and conferences. Second, there are a lot of issues with the materials we use (and the lack of a circular approach). The major catch-22 for the performing arts, not surprisingly, is the issue of international touring. How can you be ecologically responsible in a system that relies so heavily on international touring and mobility?</p> <p>One of the survey respondents wrote: ‘Environmentally unsustainable: international touring of large companies - the environmental impact of this is huge. However, so many companies rely on international touring to make ends meet, and because there is a demand for international work and a hunger to experience culture from other spaces (which is great!). The impact not only of flights, but of hotels, one-off items, conception, and energy usage... is significant over time.’</p>	<p>There are quite a lot of experiments to deal with this: setting up tours in a different and more sustainable way, a more circular approach to materials and energy when producing and presenting... More fundamentally, there is the insight that unsustainable practices are personal and have to do with ingrained habits. It is important to raise awareness and make a click, in order to change these habits, and fly less and consider other options.</p> <p>Sometimes, a little pressure or some constraints from the outside can help to break down our unsustainable behaviour. We also see that there already are quite a number of experimental policy approaches to promote ecological sustainability within the arts field: for instance, Pro Helvetia stopped supporting short tours outside of Europe and the Dutch Performing Arts Fund gives additional support for those touring by train.</p> <p>And, yes, someone already voiced the hope that the positive side-effect of the disastrous new coronavirus might be that it breaks down unsustainable international mobility...</p>

<p>Human values</p>	<p>Many of the participants highlight how, when it comes to human values, current practices revolve around 2 focuses: (a) <i>Unequal access to training programmes</i> (b) <i>Bad working conditions</i>. The current system of access to training courses seems to be still prerogative of an élite in many countries. The almost total lack of diversity in terms of socio-cultural backgrounds among students jeopardizes the entire sector also at the levels of artistic content and type of audience. What is the reason behind that: lack of programmes to facilitate minorities' access to training courses, small number of applications by minorities or recruitment of the "same folks"?</p> <p>Many participants underline how many performing arts workers still have access only to precarious and non-permanent contractual schemes. This is indeed an issue that afflicts the whole society, but, besides often going against labor rights, the long-term consequences of job insecurity are even more unsustainable than precariousness itself: <i>"The constant (or at least annual) feeling of 'I might have to apply another job soon' makes my life unsustainable. I know I'm not the only one in this situation and I see how this affects on the plans we make and our ability to work/or set long time goals - we simply don't know who's there to execute them"</i>.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, we received not that many examples of alternative models strengthening wellbeing and the human fundament within the arts. There were quite some examples of inclusive (training) programmes, an initiative aimed at creating a better work-life balance or examples of shared decision making. Still, there should be more and you might know some of these examples. Add them to the Rewiring Board by using some of the empty sticky notes.</p>
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