

WORLD CITIES CULTURE FORUM

**Creating the future:
Culture taking the lead in world cities**
Policy Briefing 5: *Moscow Summit 2016*



Moscow Government
Department of Culture

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Key lessons from the summit

- Cities are facing ever more urgent challenges, with rising populations, increased inequality, soaring property prices and environmental issues threatening their sustainability and liveability. These challenges make developing and nurturing culture both more complex and more necessary.
- A diversity of funding sources for culture, drawn from across the urban policy landscape, enables experimentation and increases the money available for culture. Cities like Brussels and Montréal, which institutionalise linguistic and cultural diversity, lead the way – ensuring a coherent cultural policy will require learning from their challenges.
- Cities can respond to major international issues, such as the refugee crisis, in ways that national governments are unable or unwilling to do. The cultural sector can lead these responses, as with New York's IDNYC card or the post-Brexit 'London is Open' campaign.
- Three million people move to cities every week. Social cohesion and inclusion are cultural issues which culture departments are addressing, as in Buenos Aires where they are involved in providing services to new migrants.
- Rethinking tradition, and prioritising social impact, is necessary if public funding for culture is to remain relevant.
- With 4 years remaining to meet the 1.5C target set by the Paris Agreement, cities must act on climate change. By creating a policy framework within which the cultural movement can thrive, a small effort to force the pace can lead to an exponential return.
- Culture is under threat from rapid development that makes cities – and their residents – the victims of success. Making space for culture requires making the case for its role in driving change and creating value. But the affordability crisis hits far beyond artists, and effective solutions must address the whole problem.
- Artists-in-residence are playing innovative roles. New York City has had an artist at their Department of Sanitation for nearly 40 years. Los Angeles is now using the term 'creative strategist' to highlight the insights that creativity can bring.
- Participation and co-creation are now important parts of public engagement with culture. Participatory budgeting – drawing votes from nearly 50% of the population in Warsaw – is just one way cities can give power to their residents.
- In a time of international tension, dialogue is more important than ever. City-to-city collaboration opens up channels that remain stubbornly closed at the national government level.

What is the future for culture?

In the twenty-first century, cities are facing ever more urgent challenges, with rising populations, increased inequality, soaring property prices and environmental issues threatening their sustainability and liveability. The need to imagine and shape the future has become more acute than ever. We must create shared visions for new ways of life, wider and more ambitious than the next five-year strategy.

Most cities face these challenges, but for world cities they are especially acute. It has been said that we live in a second age of the city-state, with world cities holding a global importance exceeding that of many countries. Yet their dominance is a double-edged sword. The sheer pace and scale of growth that they have experienced poses massive problems for cohesion, liveability and governability. This makes developing and nurturing culture so much more complex – and more necessary.

The seeming intractability of these issues is the reason for the existence of the World Cities Culture Forum. We are a network of cities, working together to put culture at the heart of city life. The issues we discussed at our Moscow summit are at the heart of any urban policy agenda:

- Social inclusion
- Housing, planning and development
- Economic growth
- Climate change

As policymakers, we are responding to these challenges in different ways. What we share is a common belief that culture is an essential part of the governance of cities, not an optional add-on.

As the Mayor of Moscow has observed, cities used to fight for resources – now they fight for creative, imaginative, talented people. We used to hear about a future where digital access meant that there would be no need for cities, but exactly the opposite has happened. The future of the world is unthinkable without cities, and the future of cities is unthinkable without culture.

Weaving the golden thread: exercising cultural leadership across urban policy

Cultural leadership in cities requires collaboration, cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary work. For those of us who work in cultural policy, addressing issues beyond the narrow definition of ‘culture’ is a way of life. In order to work effectively, they must make alliances across the urban landscape.

One of our tenets is that ‘culture is the golden thread of urban policy.’ Being part of the wider urban agenda can pay major dividends. In London, the city’s cultural strategy is important, but it is far more powerful– and important to the city’s quality of life – to have one page devoted to culture in the overall ‘London Plan.’

At the forefront of integrated urban policy are cities that institutionalise linguistic and cultural diversity, such as Brussels and Montréal. For example, Brussels has twenty-five political entities with a competency for culture, and ten other government departments that also fund culture in order to achieve their own goals.

This has obvious advantages. It increases the amount of public funding available for sector while diversifying its sources. Of the over 2m EUR of public funding that has gone into the soon-to-open MAD (Mode and Design Center) Brussels, only about 50,000 EUR came from culture budgets. Similarly, in the wake of recent terrorist attacks, the City created a 2m EUR fund for cultural projects that encourage intercultural dialogue – none of which has been funded from culture budgets.

There are downsides to a complex urban funding landscape. Collaboration can make projects complex. Multiple funding sources are difficult to navigate for artists and cultural institutions, requiring multiple funding applications and involving varied reporting requirements. Multiple decision-makers can mean that it’s difficult for organisations to work together. For

instance, the new museum of modern art in Brussels is being driven entirely by the regional government acting unilaterally as they felt that it would be too complicated and slow to work with other funders.

Making the ‘golden thread’ work effectively across the urban policy agenda requires developing leadership, and specifically locating where leadership lies for each project. Requiring public funding to be matched by other funding, including other public funding, can help to aggregate funders’ investments, bringing more coherence to what gets funded and therefore helping projects to achieve greater scale.

As culture becomes part of the wider urban agenda in world cities, it is ever more important for us to exercise effective cultural leadership to ensure coherent, joined-up policy across a diverse landscape. Collaboration brings both challenges and rewards – making it work will be essential for the twenty-first century city.

Taking the lead on social issues

Our city governments now recognise that cultural actions can effectively and innovatively achieve social impact. Far from being just for the educated, wealthy and successful, culture can uplift the marginalised and improve social cohesion. Cultural policymakers are increasingly taking the lead on urgent social issues. Migration and inclusion have a particular urgency, as 3 million people move to cities every week.

Buenos Aires, whose culture has been shaped by Spanish and Italian immigration, is now working to welcome and integrate new immigrants from the rest of Latin America. These immigrants, often working class, have different cultural backgrounds and expectations. Buenos Aires believes that citizenship and culture are linked. Therefore the Ministry of Culture is working with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Affairs to provide services to these new residents to help them become part of their new city.

Shenzhen is using cultural volunteers for frontline service delivery in one of its largest districts. Bao'an contains 5 million inhabitants, of whom 95% are migrants, and the government lacked the staff resources to deliver cultural programmes to this burgeoning population. The solution was 'Culture Spring Action', a large-scale volunteer programme. Over 4,500 volunteers worked at libraries and cultural centres, while around 500 people with artistic expertise were trained to become part-time workers alongside 21 professional 'culture counsellors.' This delivered services at a scale that would have been impossible for government alone, and involved thousands of people more closely in the life of their city.

The use of culture for social impact is hardly new. In the 1930s, the ZIL Cultural Centre was built in Moscow to serve the thousands of workers at a local car factory, many of whom were peasants recently arrived from the countryside. As with other Soviet 'Palaces of Culture,' it was intended to educate these new residents, to turn them into ideologically informed citizens of the future. Today, while its ideology has changed, the ZIL Centre is still aiming to

educate and develop the people it serves.

Our cities are at the forefront of major international issues, able to respond in ways that national governments are unable, or unwilling, to do. And the cultural sector is often leading the way. In Amsterdam the cultural sector has been at the forefront of welcoming refugees to the city. In London, in the wake of the Brexit vote, the Mayor initiated a culture-led 'London is Open' campaign to send the message that the city remained a welcoming and internationalist home for visitors, business and its residents.

In New York City, the IDNYC identification card was launched to expand access to public services for all residents, including the city's estimated 500,000 undocumented residents. Yet city policymakers were concerned that, without wide take-up of the card, it would become stigmatised as a marker of undocumented status. So they asked city cultural institutions to offer free membership to cardholders. As a result, take-up is past 10% where similar schemes in other cities are usually at around 1%. Over 430,000 free cultural memberships have been redeemed through the programme.

Culture can be equally successful in addressing hyperlocal social issues. In Los Angeles, the concession and restroom building at Dockweiler State Beach was being hit by graffiti so regularly that it cost 10,000 USD per year to cover it up every day. The LA County Arts Commission worked with the Department of Beaches and Harbors and local graffiti artists to create a mural. Since then the building has never been tagged, and the Arts Commission is working to expand this programme to 're-value' other properties that attract graffiti.

Culture must meet people where they are: whether in the factory or on the beach. Hyper-diverse cities mean that there now can be no preconceptions about the value of culture or the shape that it takes. Rethinking tradition, and prioritising social impact, is necessary in our cities if public funding for culture is to remain relevant.

Cities and artists: creative tension?

Many world cities are now working closely with artists in creative and innovative ways. New York City place has four artists in residence as part of its new Public Artists in Residence (PAIR) program, inspired by Mierle Laderman Ukeles' pioneering 40-year residency with the Department of Sanitation. In Los Angeles they now use the term 'creative strategists' in order to communicate with those who might otherwise be sceptical about the relevance of art to their work.

But there are issues to be negotiated on both sides when we work with artists. The ways that artists and city workers communicate are often very different. Artists are inherently independent and push boundaries of their own work by actively taking risks, while city officials are used to mitigating risk and following firm processes. Artists can function as connector to the public and partner and critic of city agency– or, perhaps more likely, all of these simultaneously. Tania Bruguera, a Cuban artist who is a PAIR with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs in New York City and participated in the 'London is Open' campaign, has been detained three times by the Cuban government – demonstrating the complexity of the relationship between governments and the arts.

Moscow has made a high profile artist, Fyodor Pavlov-Andreevich, the Director of the Solyanka State Gallery. Despite being an employee of the state, Fyodor continues to provoke and question through his controversial performance art. While it has brought him into conflict with the authorities, his fame and celebrity are also used to help fundraise for the gallery and raise the profile of contemporary art in the city.

Despite the inherent difficulties and cultural conflicts involved in collaboration between artists and city governments, it is clear that these collaborations will continue. Many artists are intensely interested in social issues, and will work in these areas whether facilitated by government or not.

Most importantly, artists want to work with government because they recognise the advantages it can bring them: access, funding, and a scope and scale to projects which they could never achieve on their own.

The arts focus on process rather than outcome – sometimes an awkward fit in a target-oriented city policy environment. Yet process and practice are a powerful method for problem-solving, increasingly important in a world where traditional approaches are not adequate to the challenge. It is important to help partners find ways to trust these new approaches. For instance, agreeing strategic outcomes rather than specific project outcomes allows for the freedom to explore along the way.

The methodology of culture and the arts will bring new insights, opportunities and solutions to the urban policy landscape. Therefore artistic collaborations are here to stay.

Culture and creativity: the missing link in the climate change conversation

The world stands at a historic crossroads, with four years left to act on the 1.5C target set by the Paris Agreement. The science is clear. It is nearly too late.

Cities are on the front line of climate change, most vulnerable to the adverse affects of extreme weather events and sea level rise. They are home to half the world's population – rising to 75% by 2050 – and produce around 75% of the world's GDP and greenhouse gas emissions. Of the remainder of the carbon budget left to the world over the next four years, over one third will be controlled by Mayors.

Our cities are an important part of the problem, but they will also be a key part of the response, unrivalled centres of the creative economy which possess the flexibility to explore new policies and approaches. They offer the potential for resilient, scaled solutions: rethinking energy, infrastructure, transport, waste/circularity and social/cultural innovation. In the words of C40, 'Cities are where the future happens first.'

Yet the cultural transformation in cities necessary to achieve action on climate change cannot be driven by science alone. So far the environmental sector has failed to win 'hearts and minds,' and this is because the challenge is fundamentally a cultural and creative one. The cultural sector, and the creative industries generally, have an immense degree of global influence, creating and shaping values and identities. They also excel at communications, simplifying and amplifying complex messages.

In order to facilitate the fight against climate change, we need to create a framework and policies which can bring together the grassroots cultural movement. This movement is currently messy, diverse and creative, full of solutions, but often based around very small projects. What it needs is scale and coherence – and this is exactly what city and cultural policymakers can provide.

In London, the London Theatre Consortium have been collaborating on climate change with Julie's Bicycle since 2010, and together they are meeting the Mayor's ambitious target of a 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2025. In 2012, Arts Council England made environmental reporting a requirement for its funded organisations. Over three years this meant a savings of nearly £10 million in energy bills, and nearly 50,000 tonnes of CO2. The benefits were not only financial and environmental – this work catalysed new partnerships and new artistic ideas.

But this is not just about individual cultural institutions reducing their carbon emissions – this action, although important, would be a drop in the bucket. Instead they have a larger role to play, which includes educating the public and working with cities on sustainability projects that span multiple agendas.

In Montréal, the circus centre TOHU is working with the city to revitalise the deprived neighbourhood in which it is located, and a former landfill which is being turned into Montréal's second-largest park. TOHU's building is LEED GOLD certified, with geothermal power, biogas heating, and a green roof – plus a vegetable garden onsite. Without TOHU needing to push a green message, visitors are educated about the environment every time they come for a show.

In Los Angeles, as well as integrating environmental sustainability into their cultural work, they integrate culture into environmental projects. The Department of Public Works has a zero waste strategy, and a 'creative strategist' embedded in the communications team is helping to spread the message. In creating spreading grounds to capture and conserve stormwater runoff, LA has embraced a double or triple benefit model, turning these into recreation, education and culture spaces.

What sort of cultural transformation is necessary to catalyse lifestyle change? For Moscow residents, anxiety over the environment was not a primary factor in getting them to go green. More important was the availability of the facilities and service that enabled them to do so – and their level of involvement in their local communities. Environmental action must become an invisible part of daily life, as culturally inevitable and unremarkable as listening to music during your commute or watching a video on YouTube.

Climate change is the premier global challenge of the twenty-first century – and it can often seem overwhelming in scale. Yet the evidence is that creating a policy framework, underpinned by the case for action, really does help to transform the response of the cultural sector. And the case for action is not just about ‘saving the planet’ – financial and social benefits are equally relevant.

Cultural action on climate change follows the ‘agent of change’ principle – a small effort to force the pace leads to an exponential return. At this pivotal moment for the future of the planet, we must create a framework within which the cultural movement against climate change can thrive. Only this will enable the necessary global cultural transformation.

Our upcoming policy handbook on ‘Culture and sustainability’ will illustrate what we are doing – and what we can do – to enable this transformation by drawing upon the talents and creativity of the cultural community.

Making space for culture

Our world cities are the victims of their own success. Unprecedented affluence and movement of global capital is transforming city skylines at record pace. The scale and scope of this dramatic transformation makes it seem unmanageable – even city governments may not have the money or political clout necessary to rein in the excesses of development. Yet this is necessary if we are to retain the culture and the communities that make our cities unique.

Artists are often portrayed as the victims of gentrification and urban regeneration. But are they? Widening and reframing the narrative makes space for new possibilities.

Seeing artists as agents for change allows us to make the case for the value they create for neighbourhoods, residents, cities as a whole – and even for developers. Art can be a catalyst for urban change and revitalisation. It has been described as a kind of ‘urban acupuncture.’

At the same time, artists can be perpetrators of ‘place taking’ and ‘artwashing,’ especially in communities of colour in majority-white countries. It is important to recognise that neighbourhoods gentrified by the arrival of a recognised ‘artistic’ class had their own cultures and their own artists before gentrification.

Seeing artists as holders of power and privilege, not only as victims of rising property values, helps to highlight the fact that ‘culture under threat’ is part of the much wider issue of affordable housing for all, which must be tackled holistically. Such an approach is being taken by New York City, which is building hundreds of thousands of new units of affordable housing – some of which will be reserved for artists, veterans and the elderly.

Can city governments tackle the issues of rising property values and increasingly unaffordable housing on our own? The cost and scale of the problem make it difficult. Housing may take its place alongside other twenty-first century regulatory problems that are too big even for government to tackle. With limited cultural funding available, the idea of pouring it into real estate is one which many artists might find difficult to stomach.

For many cities, the best solution is to collaborate with developers in an attempt to create win-win outcomes. Understanding the development business can help cities turn developers into partners. It is necessary to help developers put culture in their business models by making the case for the impact of artistically vibrant neighbourhoods on property values.

‘Social purpose real estate’ is a growing field of practice led primarily by government agencies and non-governmental organisations engaging in real estate development to achieve social outcomes. In Vancouver, churches and charities that own excess property are pursuing development that gives them a return on investment while achieving social good consistent with their missions.

When managed carefully, the development process can provide an opportunity to empower local groups and give them a voice. It can also involve developers in providing new cultural facilities and funding to otherwise deprived communities. (Yet there is a risk that private developers may become overly involved in providing core services usually provided by the government.)

For other cities, strong governmental action must be a priority if they are to avoid becoming reliant on concessions from developers. Into this category falls New York City's ambitious programme to build public housing. Meanwhile Vienna takes a strong approach to social housing and rent control, aided by the fact that the city has retained ownership of much privately developed land. San Francisco uses zoning laws to create 'special-use districts' which can prevent businesses from opening if they are deemed to be out of keeping with the character of the district. In democratically controlled cities, the ballot box gives citizens a control that they lack when it comes to private developers.

Whatever the approach, it is clear that a good knowledge base is essential for effective action on affordability. This includes data, mapping, an understanding of the appropriate tools, and the ability to act as a broker with the private sector and with local communities.

The ability to work with planners – to help them see beyond their own roles and educate them about the value of culture – will also be key to effective action on affordability. In Stockholm the arts are now a part of city planning, as heritage has long been. In Toronto, the arts and culture are also becoming a part of land use planning, and they have worked with the Urban Land Institute to make it a part of the curriculum as well.

A body of collective knowledge is now being created which can help us respond to the pace and scale of development in our cities. Yet this knowledge is still poorly disseminated and applied. Our upcoming policy handbook will address this issue, sharing best practice from around the world.

Collaborating to build the future

Collaboration, co-creation and meaningful participation are necessary to build the cultural future that cities deserve. This is true at all scales, whether within individual cities between residents, artists, cultural institutions, and city departments – or internationally, between world cities.

City governments can play a central role in catalysing and facilitating collaboration in the cultural sector. The creation of Festivals Edinburgh, an umbrella body owned by twelve of the city's festivals, was driven in part by a Festival Strategy devised by the city. A key strength of the collaboration is its diversity: it includes the large, internationally well-known festivals as well as the smaller locally rooted ones. More recently Edinburgh has formed a Culture Task Group with leaders from the public, private, voluntary and independent sectors. The partnership is working together to keep culture at the heart of the city's success.

The digital age has enabled major shifts in participation, with new platforms both putting cultural treasures at the world's fingertips and enabling new modes of cultural creation and curation. This has in turn created new expectations, to which cultural institutions are still struggling to respond. 'Opening up' will not simply be a matter of increasing access and participation – it will involve co-production. This shift affects city governments too: participatory budgeting can be seen as co-production of policy. In Warsaw, 1% of the total budget of the City is now given over to participatory budgeting. This has proved very popular, with 1 million votes cast out of a population of around 2 million. Cultural projects have been the biggest group of projects funded by this scheme.

Meanwhile, in many world cities, public funding of culture is increasingly under threat, meaning that policymakers and culture professionals are looking for new models and ways of working. In Moscow, where the tradition of state funding is still strong, many newly founded cultural institutions are completely private, supported by individual philanthropists. Other cities are exploring more mixed funding models, including a more significant role for earned revenue.

In Moscow, the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 created reverberations that are still being felt. Shaped by a tradition of state investment in culture, the Moscow Department of Culture manages an extraordinary network of over 500 institutions at over 1000 sites across the city. Now Moscow is now reinventing itself for the post-Soviet era – modernising museums and galleries to respond to the needs of residents and developing new models of public-private partnership. Similarly, Warsaw has gradually been democratising cultural policy since the end of the Communist regime, a process which has included working with NGO activists over many years.

At an international level, the World Cities Culture Forum is a living example of one of the new ways that cities are harnessing collaboration to improve their governance and quality of life. We are a network of world cities sharing the knowledge, experience and best practice necessary to make culture a leading force in our cities. Our research programme brings together this expertise in a series of publications. This year we will produce the first comparative statistical study on how culture is financed in world cities, demonstrating the diversity of models for cultural funding and highlighting the full 'toolkit' of options for supporting culture. Carrying on from the themes of the summit, we will also produce policy handbooks focusing on two issues of urgent importance to world cities: 'Culture and sustainability' and 'Making space for culture.'

In a time of international tension, dialogue between people is more important than ever. Here, too, both culture and cities have a role to play. Art enables understanding across linguistic and national boundaries. City-to-city collaboration opens up channels that remain stubbornly closed at the national government level. The Moscow summit was an excellent example of the ability of culture to build bridges. The ideas and inspiration shared at the summit will catalyse further action and collaboration in the future.

Where next from here?

We are journeying together into the future of cities, and no one yet knows where we will end up. Many questions remain unanswered. But the creativity unleashed by culture will play a key role in finding the answers.

- Are there dangers in taking too instrumental an approach to culture? Can we expect artists and cultural managers to take on instrumental positions in city governments?
- Is the role of culture in the fight against climate change primarily a communicative one, or is it much broader?
- Is collaboration with developers the only option for cities to address the affordability crisis? Are more radical approaches – such as rent control or building public housing – necessary?
- Is participatory budgeting, and other forms of direct democracy, the wave of the future when it comes to public engagement in culture? Do residents have the time and knowledge to participate, and are policymakers happy to live with the results?
- Should public funding remain at the heart of the cultural ecosystem, or is the role of government evolving to one of facilitating partnerships and creating policy frameworks?
- What is the future of informal, grassroots and ‘fringe’ cultural life? Is underground and folk culture under threat?
- What ideas are the new world cities and megacities bringing to the cultural conversation?
- What can collaboration between cities accomplish on a global scale?

