

*Foreword of the Issue Editors:
Reinstalling Culture as Common Good
and Public Service*

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In more and more countries globally, the common good and public services in social areas such as education and research, health and culture are being targeted by major reforms that seek to impose a different operating system for them, namely that of efficiency in areas that do not have the same metrics as economic sectors. The latest European cultural policy documents, influenced by the paradigm of creativity, emphasize the economic potential of the cultural sector, which appears under the name of cultural industries and is always present in public discourse alongside the creative industries. Culture is seen as a source of creativity, which in turn is a necessary ingredient of innovation, and innovation is seen as a vector of the competitive advantage needed by the European Union in the context of competition in the global creative economy.

The paradigm of creativity operates a series of changes with direct effects on the cultural field in general, but perhaps the most important of them is the change in the mission of art and culture: going from a function of common good and public service dedicated to its citizens, to one in which the stake of its existence is mostly circumscribed by the economic value it has or can have. The capacity of cultural and creative industries to generate

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jobs and contribute to GDP becomes the main value, to the detriment of symbolic and social values. The arts and cultural sector is under economic pressure which may lead to profound changes that may affect its very ethos. Although the economic argument is the one that most appeals to policy-makers when it comes to funding culture, based on the principle of investment that can generate future income (profit), it does not apply to all areas of the cultural sectors that have a public mission: such as independent cultural organisations, public institutions like theatres, museums, libraries, etc.

Building the argument for supporting the artistic and cultural fields in the logic of investments with direct results and moving away from the logic of subsidizing their public mission, deprives them from the value of their ability to anticipate and participate in understanding the transformations of today's society. Digital acceleration, climate and health crisis have complex global social effects that require first and foremost understanding in order to come up with appropriate responses. Art and culture, through their critical capacity, have contributed to the creation of values and alternative models of social production, always accompanying the process of knowledge and understanding of the world.

Since time can no longer be turned back and the separation of culture from the creative industries in public policy making does not seem a viable long-term solution, how can we re-initialize the public service dimension of culture in a society undergoing such profound transformation? How can we rethink the public mission of culture in a context where the trend in European/Western countries is towards the reduction and privatization of the sector through various austerity measures? These questions lead us back towards others such as why do we fund culture and who does/should it serve?

The articles published in this issue can constitute a broad argument for the re-renewal of cultural policies in their own language and spirit, connected to social changes as effects of the current multiple crises, putting an emphasis on culture as a common good and public service.

FOREWORD OF THE ISSUE EDITORS

MIKI BRANIȘTE is assistant professor at the Faculty of Theatre and Film at Babeș-Bolyai University and has completed a PhD thesis in the field of cultural management and policies. She is cultural manager and curator for performing arts and interdisciplinary projects, president of the Colectiv A Association. She was director of the TEMPS D'IMAGES Festival in Cluj (RO) for 10 editions. Between 2009 and 2019, she was a member of the board of directors of the cultural space Fabrica de Pensule. Since 2017, she created, as curator, the Cultural Management Academy program at the initiative of the Goethe Institut Bucharest.

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