



55 IDEAS FROM JAMM'ART

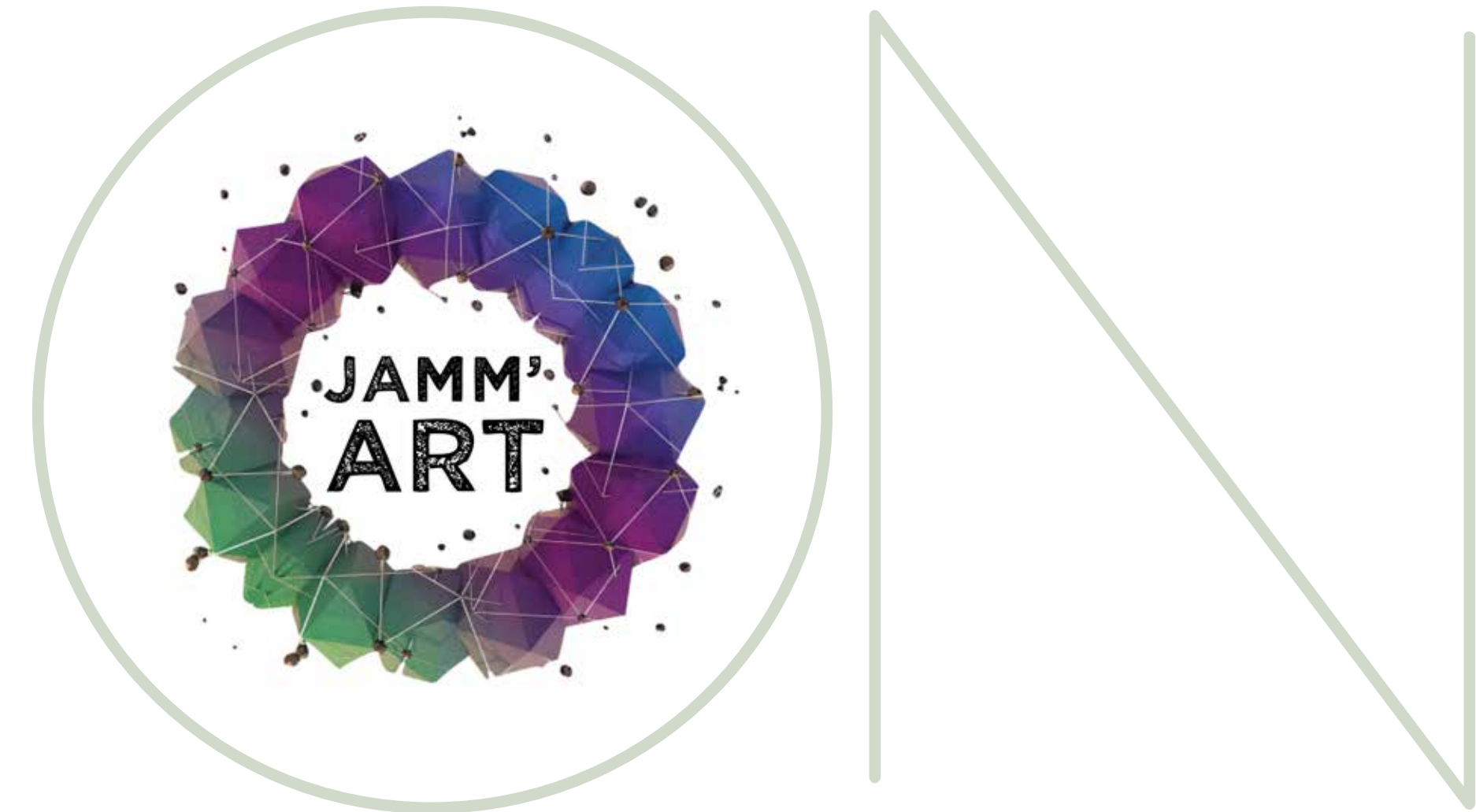
Culture Action Europe
72 hours online jam session

JAZZ

an often impromptu performance
by a group especially of jazz musicians
that is characterized by improvisation

(Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary)

SESSION





“From an ethnomusicological perspective,
the role of jam sessions
as a privileged context for learning
the per- formative styles of jazz,
the development
of the creative process,
the construction
of professional networks
and the establishment
of the status of musicians”

(Pinheiro, 2008)



ARE ARTISTS AND
INTELLECTUALS SUFFICIENTLY
PART OF THE POLITICAL
DISCOURSE TODAY?
SHOULD THEY BE?



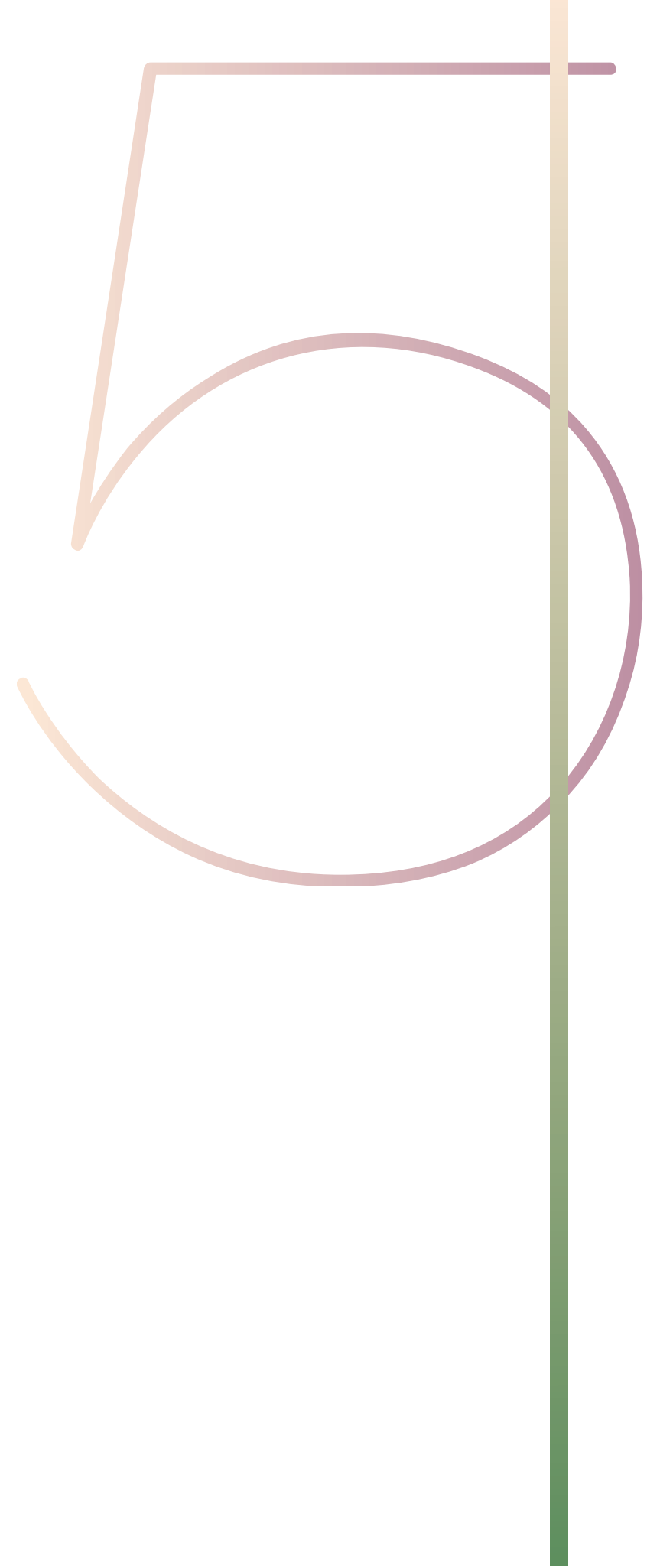
DO ARTS THRIVE IN
DEMOCRACY?
AND VICE VERSA DO
DEMOCRACIES THRIVE
VIA THE ARTS?



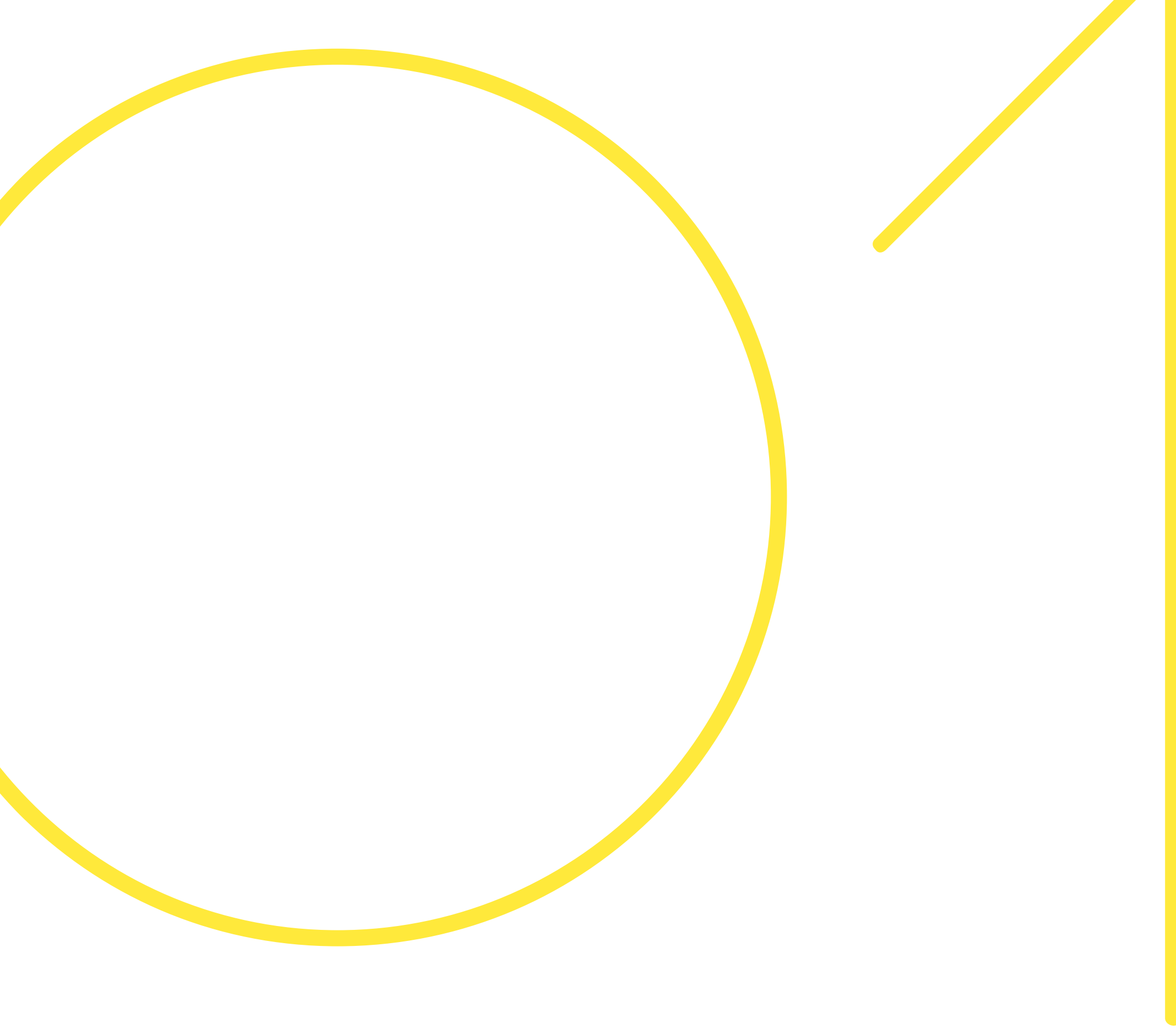
DO ARTISTS
AND INTELLECTUALS
NECESSARILY NEED
TO CONSIDER THEIR IMPACT
ON SOCIETY?



SHOULD ARTISTS
LIVE OFF
THEIR ARTS?
HOW?




WE, THE PEOPLE OF CULTURE,
LET OUR FRAGMENTATION REDUCE
OUR IMPACT ON SOCIETY.
WHAT IS THE FIRST THING
WE NEED TO DO
TO BECOME A “WE”?



We have to get out of the niches we also sometimes enjoy (culture as otium, as leisure, as something 'after work'), and revolutionise the «space» we live, breaking down the walls we have in our mind - time and physically, in our museums, schools, universities, labs, etc.



THE REVOLUTION OF THE “SPACES” WE LIVE IN




Until we don't realize that we are facing a deep transformation - and we have to put culture at the centre of a new imagined space, also within work - we cannot be part of a political discourse. Let's regenerate the concept of new agora, public squares, as paradigm of a centrality of culture.

IMAGINING NEW SPACES TO DEVELOP NEW PARADIGMA



Why are artists obliged to take part in the political discourse? Because what is the point of making work if it has no resonance with what is going on in society, in present life?

THE CONTINUOUS QUESTION OF THE REASON WHY



I think one of the problems lays behind this answer: artists are a synonym for being individual. The Star System of the (art) market singled us out even more. We've been trained from the beginning at our art schools competition by hard and we live in a sharks' pond.




DEALING WITH THE “STAR SYSTEM” MODEL



In my opinion, artists have been excluded in great degree from societal discussions and also from societal responsibility, and many have accepted this happily - with an 'art-for-arts-sake' attitude. I don't think "art-for-arts-sake" really exists. Most artists are human, and humans have ideological stands that will "leak" into their work, no matter how hard they try to void their work from "ideological content". There's no art without communication, there's no communication without discourse, there's no discourse without ideology.


WHAT ABOUT THE ART-FOR-ARTS-SAKE ATTITUDE?



And where funding comes from has to be an important part of this discussion. I know that some grants from UK government come with stipulations about how they are used which surely curbs the freedom of the artist to say what they want.



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGAGEMENT AND FUNDING



I think we need to start developing alternatives to the current system of global capitalism. In that way, we might be able to erode that system. One interesting idea is Basic Minimum Income.

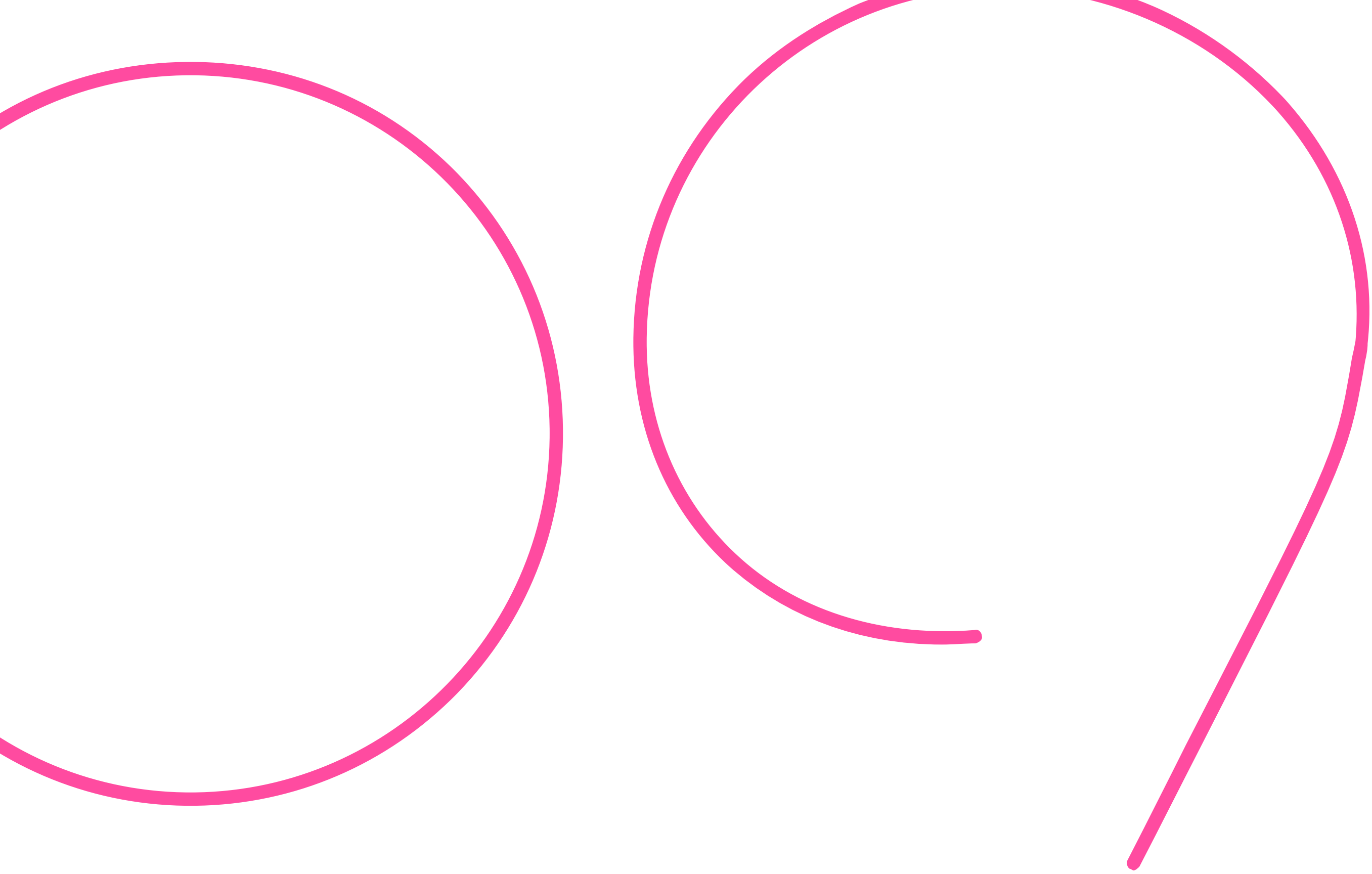


THE ORIGIN
IS IN ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS




I think art should redefine itself and go beyond of its temporary nature and sole representation and try to find aesthetics and expression from practices that actually causes something in material and social reality – more than just usage of typical artists tools, devices and relationships.

LOOKING FOR A NEW AESTHETIC



The problem of art is that it is not really about creativity, rather it is an institutionalized form of creativity, just as religion is institutionalized form of spirituality. But this can be changed. Therefore, I think there is still a bone to pick with institutional relation of arts, even though this conflict was seemed to be sorted already in 80's. We just have to think creativity outside of the context of arts and stubbornly claim it is art.

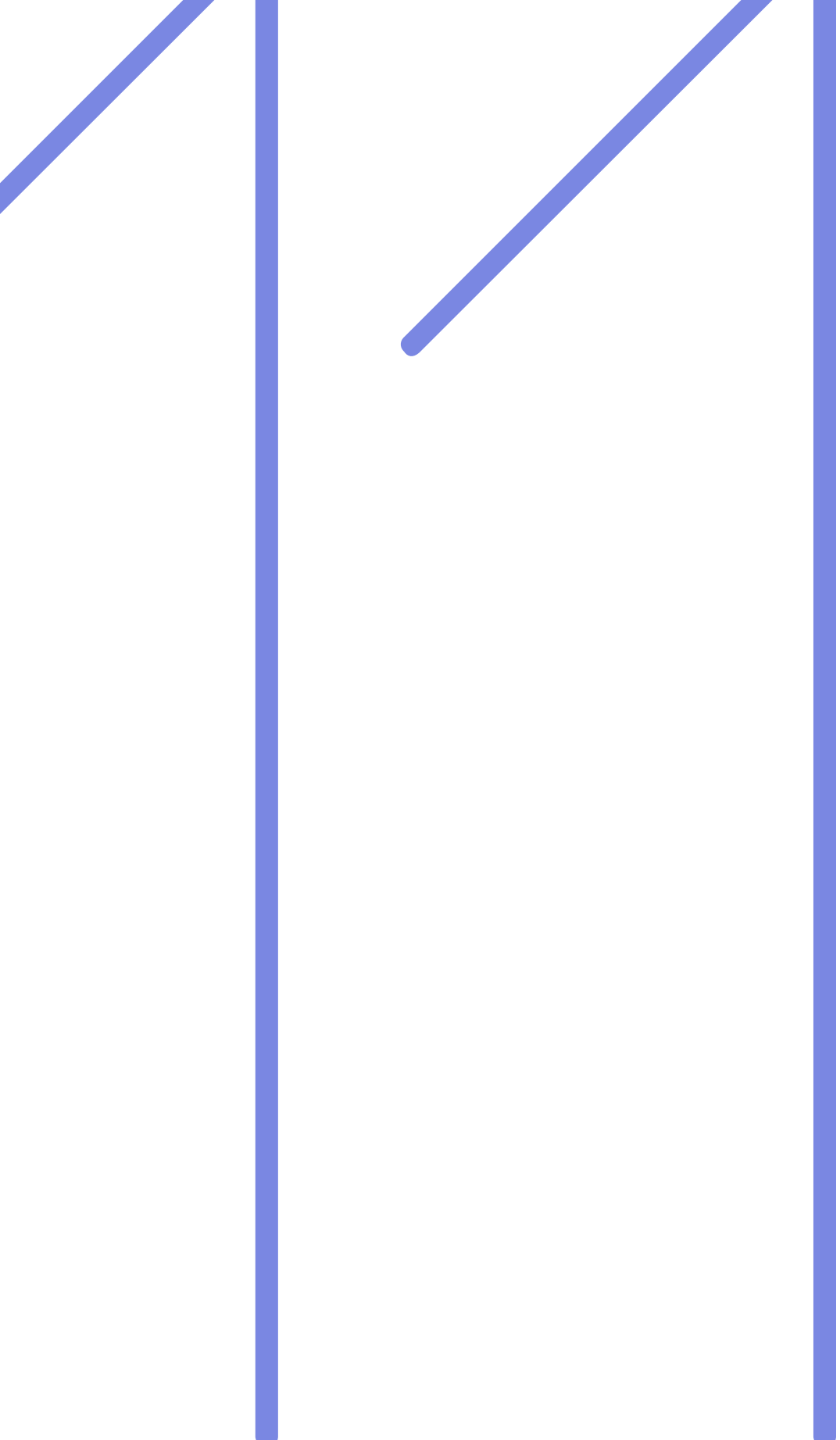
THE CRAVE FOR CREATIVITY



If we want to see Art to change Society, then we have to turn to the Social Arts and have them shape a form of citizen empowerment. Citizens' empowerment and communalism can do for society a lot more than politics, that has become a corrupted ritual of inhabiting power.




ARTS AND SOCIAL ARTS



In the UK, the structures of state support for the arts - the Arts Councils - form a systemic barrier between artists and politicians/policymakers. This means that policy is not attuned to the reality of grassroots arts practice. It's at the grassroots level that artistic impact upon communities is most profound and where its civic potential is most manifest. Artists need to be in direct contact with politicians and policymakers so as to set the agenda in ways which are productive and sustainable. There was a time when state funding of the arts existed in order to protect artistic freedom from the worst effects of the market. Now, artists who cherish their artistic freedom, do everything possible to avoid seeking state funding. The public's money gets siphoned into a rarefied ecology of arts patronage, recipients being those who have mastered the game that is set for them. It's infrastructure, not patronage, that will release cultural energy into the heart of public life.




NEW MECHANISMS FOR RELATING WITH POLICY MAKING

An abstract green line drawing on the left side of the slide. It consists of a vertical line on the left, a horizontal line at the bottom, and a large, open, curved shape on the right that resembles a stylized 'D' or a partial circle. The lines are thick and green.

We should remember that art is this exceptional space of freedom where artists can say more than it is allowed to “ordinary citizens”. This is why we should make use of it.

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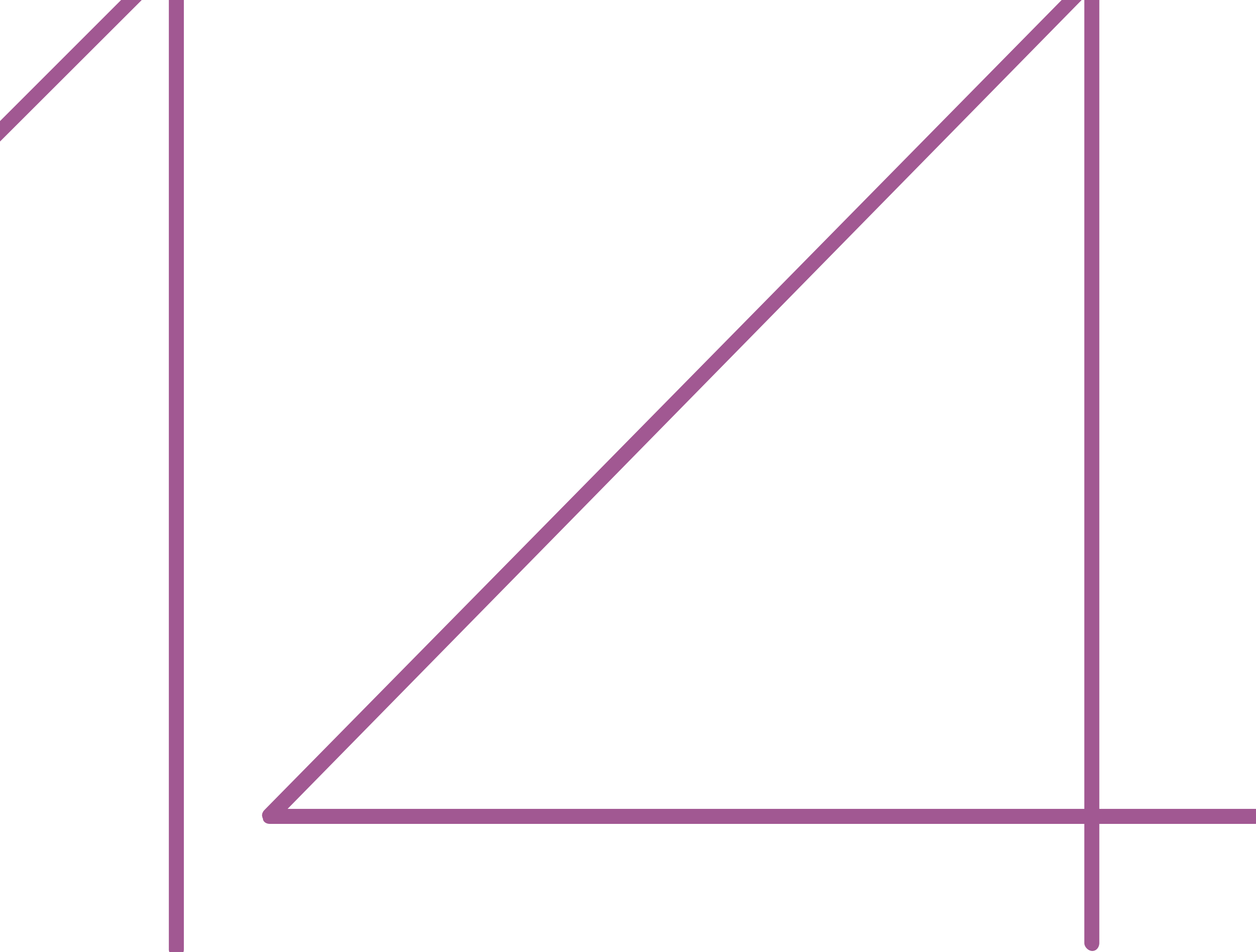
ART TO SAY MORE



Each society - democratic or not - produces art and culture: Lorenzo's Florence did, Hitler's Reich did, communist Eastern Europe did, our neo liberal societies do. We have to know what kind of society we want and we have to act to build it. I also believe that in this period of global dangers, challenges, transitions everyone's responsibility is engaged.



STARTING FROM THE SOCIETY
WE WANT



I was thinking of democracy as a process of making a consensus which should use conflict as a creative energy. Markus Miessen was writing about collisional consensus as a tool for creative debate. I find it meaningful in terms of shaping our everyday life space, way of thinking and constructing dialogue.


- Art can/should be a way of creating conflict in a democratic society. I'm thinking of Chantal Mouffe's critique of consensus and urge toward "agonism," or the understanding that conflict is a critical part of democratic process.

CONFLICT AS CREATIVE ENERGY



In time of xenophobia, the most important issue is to create a platform, where people can come out and express their opinions, even if they are very different or difficult. The most dangerous case is when they stay behind closed doors being afraid to say out openly. Artists with their imagination can really help to advice how these platforms can look like.


CREATING PLATFORMS WITH ARTISTS



Un artiste professionnel ne doit pas être soutenu par l'état, il doit être intégré dans l'espace sociétal de façon juste et correcte par l'ensemble des éléments de cette société.



ARTISTS IN THE SOCIAL SPACE

Abstract geometric lines in olive green, including a vertical line, a horizontal line, and a diagonal line forming a triangle.

I do think that arts can contribute to maintaining and sometimes fostering liberty of spirit and democracy. However arts can also of course be used to support and enforce ideologies and policies of exclusion and repression. How to tackle the tension?


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A BASIC TENSION



Isn't correlation of
art and democracy art
itself?

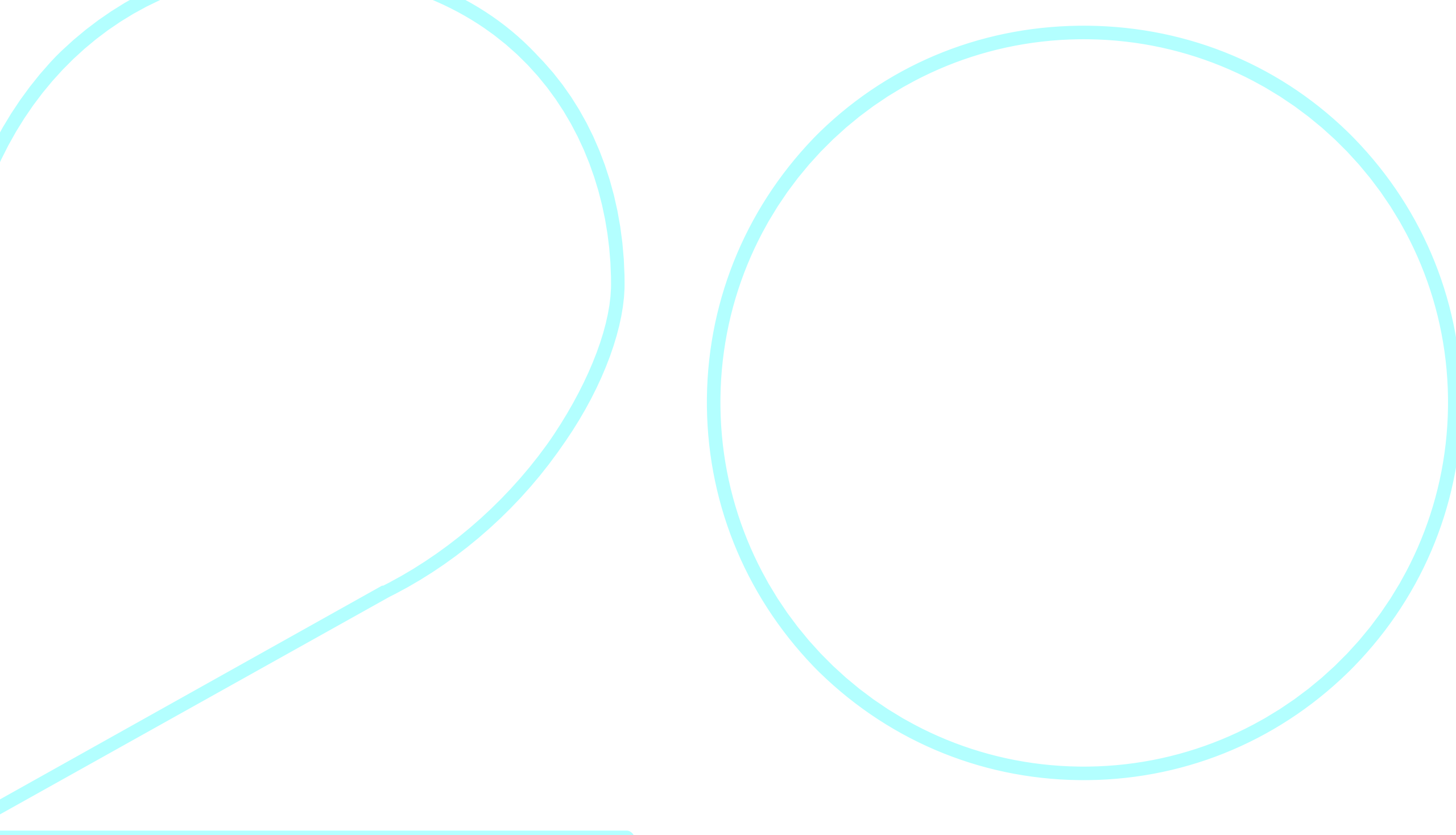
— QUESTION



Every meaningful life starts when we consider the consequences of our actions on our smaller or larger environment. In a sense, being an artist or intellectual for that matter means that we are conscious of the impact of our life on others.




IMPACTING LIVES



Considering that artists “play” with people’s emotion and imagination in a hyperconnected world where things propagate at warp speed, I would expect a kind of “advanced” awareness. Not as the detriment of their freedom but to challenge their freedom. Great and innovative artworks have been done considering their impact (think to cinema in modern times). Art academies don’t teach this awareness, don’t have courses on politics, social studies etc. They still operate along with the modernistic paradigm of the “artist=genius”. And this is the awareness with which students graduate from the academies...



THE NEED OF AN ADVANCED AWARENESS



A piece of art must be fair (in french: "juste"). An artist cannot create a piece of art if he/she has in mind the impact it could make on others. Otherwise, it is not art. A piece of art must come out from the inner need to express something from the artist. In my opinion, a piece of art can't be art if during the process of creation the creator had in mind either the impact neither the target populations of the impact.



THE CREATION PROCESS AND THE IMPACT(S)



Who is it who determines who is an artist or intellectual? If it is part of a transaction between the individual and the wider society then we need to examine the terms of that transaction. I would argue that it is Ok for impact to be considered, and also for it not to be considered - it depends upon the contract and how this is negotiated. Having said that, it does not diminish the role of every citizen to be considering the role they have upon society - the question is more should the impact form part of the intention?


- In my view, that contract is part of a wider social contract that needs desperately to be renegotiated as we are living a new phase in history.

THE SOCIAL CONTRACT OF ARTISTS



I'm worried about the often culturally forced dichotomy between "the arts" and "the sciences" label - and indeed "artists" and "scientists" as distinct entities - when everything in my experience is that both science and art are different expressions of culture that everyone should feel like they can engage in both. Going beyond the dichotomy between science and arts, how can we stimulate the development of a new aesthetic that build upon or most recent scientific and technical discoveries and awareness?

ARTS AND SCIENCE



Art does not aim to profit, and is thus free from the worry of 'will to live'. The artist is a prophet and a priest that lends us to understand his intuition.

In Schopenhauer's aesthetics art does not equal to education. Artist should not be committed to any cause. Actually, the committed artist is the negation of art because it remains anchored to the mere 'everyday life', practical life.

I think it's a fascinating discourse around art.




ARTISTS AS PRIESTS



Aren't we maybe
'overcharging' art
with multi-purposes
in our society?


QUESTION

Abstract green line art consisting of several curved and straight lines of varying lengths, some forming partial circles or loops, set against a white background.

There is no natural right of someone who declares themselves an artist to be supported by the community. They must - if they wish to be publicly supported - show their value and commitment to the society. That does NOT mean they should be “employees” of the state structures that support them, only committed to contributing with the art to a common good.

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SHOW THE VALUE



I believe that an artist is always a political being, and cannot really avoid being one. In my opinion, an artist is a person who uses creatively one or more forms of possible languages to interpret and/or reinterpret the meaning and the perception of something (s)he feels relevant, interesting and important.




ARTS AND INTERPRETATION



Artists are not more responsible than anyone else. But if they are subsidized by public (=tax) money then they have a responsibility to serve the people/ society that is paying them and their work conditions. An independent artist who lives from the sale to private users/ buyers/commissioners has no concrete responsibility but then falls naturally in the role of “citizen” and therefore responsible for the world (The OTHERS) around them, as each of us must be.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RESPONSIBILITIES

Abstract green line art consisting of several overlapping circles and a horizontal line, creating a sense of movement and flow.

I find it interesting to explore the role of arts and artists past criticism: from what it is now (the truth-telling function of critical art and activism) to imagining of what might be (visionary art). Such acts of utopian imagination might be unrealistic, dream-like, impossible. But they create, open up spaces to imagine new possibilities. And once these seemingly improbable alternatives are visualized, the audience is disrupted with the question: “what if...?” Can that be the way intellectuals and artists impact society?


THE VISIONARY ROLE



Artists, as all other citizens, have to pay their bills, too. But they are probably the only group of professionals that are asked all the time whether they can make a living. Do you ask your butcher, baker or hairdresser whether he/she can make a living with what he/she does? At the same time, some (many) artists also believe the state should support their making of art. I have never met a baker or butcher or hairdresser who thinks their work **SHOULD** be state-supported. (Nb, like the concept of state-supported art, I just don't trust that the state are the right people to judge which art is 'worthy' of support and which not ...).

The thing is you can't get free food, but you can get free art everywhere. So, there's the feeling art is something you don't have to pay for. So, if art is important enough for us as a community to make it available for everyone, shouldn't it be important enough for us to make sure artists can make a living out of their work?

ARTISTS, BUTCHERS, BAKERS



Who is to say
who is the artist
and who is not?
Most artists
are self-defining.



SELF-DEFINING ARTISTS ?




CONTRADDICTIONS

- 1) How do we combine the right to be remunerated with the one of having equal access if is the market solely to regulating both (that is the logic of the copyright as we know it)?
 - 2) Shouldn't we consider the artistic creation (part of it) a contribution to the human knowledge development equally to the scientific advancement (that in our countries is substantially and rightfully supported by public funding)?
- Basic income could be a solution.



Artists should be able to live off their arts. I do not agree that everyone is an Artist. Everyone should have time and space for creative work, cultivate perhaps artistic skills if they feel the need, but since everyone is unique and different, not everyone has the ability, sensitivity and commitment to what Art is. There is a lot of sh*#!y Art around and we know why. Committed Artists should have no problems to prove that they are serious and driven to create quality works. But since the majority of people are not educated enough to recognize the quality of Art, there cannot be sufficient support from society to Artists. Most artists have different jobs, which take most of their energy and time. The art suffers due to that. Therefore we need to constantly write grants, fundraise and sometimes we are lucky to get something. Basic salary could be a solution. A support from state could be a solution as well.


THE VICIOUS CIRCLE



There are indeed some who have a natural talent for selling, even among artists. But for the many that don't, receiving these tools early on and working towards shifting this perception that making money off your art is somehow inappropriate, may lead to changing the paradigm someday.



SHIFTING PERCEPTIONS



We identified criteria to agree on what is scientific progress and what not, including the ranking by the scientific community. On this basis, we protect the public funding for the basic scientific research in Europe. But we become immediately evasive if we try to understand if a similar (or totally different) system could apply to evaluating if a creation represents an advancement of the human knowledge. I understand this is challenging and can be controversial but doing so we also deny to the arts the opportunity to be considered as equal part of human progress and we limit the role to those thing we label as heritage (so after death...). I think that we need an expanded cultural "common" supported by public funding, and that we need to rethink its very nature.



ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE




Without an economic system that places financial value on artists to ensure they get fairly paid for their work then diversity suffers and only those artists that can afford to work for free and support themselves through other (private) means will continue to be able to practise.

— ENSURING DIVERSITY



We should go beyond the concept of intellectuals and think more in terms of catalysts: people whose actions change the level of awareness of the people around them.

CATALYSTS

A large, abstract graphic composed of several red lines. On the left, a vertical line curves into a semi-circle. To its right, a horizontal line extends to the right, then a diagonal line descends to the bottom left. Another horizontal line is positioned above this diagonal line, extending from the left edge of the frame to the diagonal line.

Intellectuals and artists, creating discourse that pushes the boundaries of what is “acceptable”, make room for marginalized groups to breath.

A horizontal bar with a color gradient from light orange to dark purple.

BOUNDARIES



I am seeing a tension between the tendency of artists/intellectuals/scientists not to get organised (in any new ways) and the necessity to get organised in order to bring more to the needed change. My question is: what should we look at when we structure our way of “being together”? What kind of forms, relations, challenges should we consider? What should we all lose to get to a higher order of things (as Prologine says)?

KIND OF FORMS



I have seen artists who became active political participants being accused by politicians of “lack of knowledge and experience” because they are “just artists” and simultaneously accused by other artists of compromising and probably just wanting power and self-promotion.

ARTISTS AND POLITICS



Artist needs spaces, physical contexts where they can run their own experiment individually and collectively with the lowest possible risk, lowest possible cost, and with the highest probability of learning. In an environment/ecosystem like that are more likely to happen much more shared experiments, which will increase dramatically the chance to bring to life some work that really matters.

ENVIRONMENTS AND ECOSYSTEMS



Now, for the first time in history, artists could promote themselves effectively without the direct support of the institutional, artistic or political world. Of course, not all the forms of art can really be financed or supported entirely by this more open system, but most of them can really receive an enormous boost. In this case the support will arrive directly from the people who will finance you because what you are doing is interesting and relevant for them. Crowdfunding, or internet purchasing can be two examples of possible on-line economic support. And then, what better place to show your work in term of potential influence? Everybody can see your work without paying anything, and if they want they can share it with other people that could probably like it, and whenever we want there is the possibility to talk about it.

ARTISTS AND INTERNET



We should consider

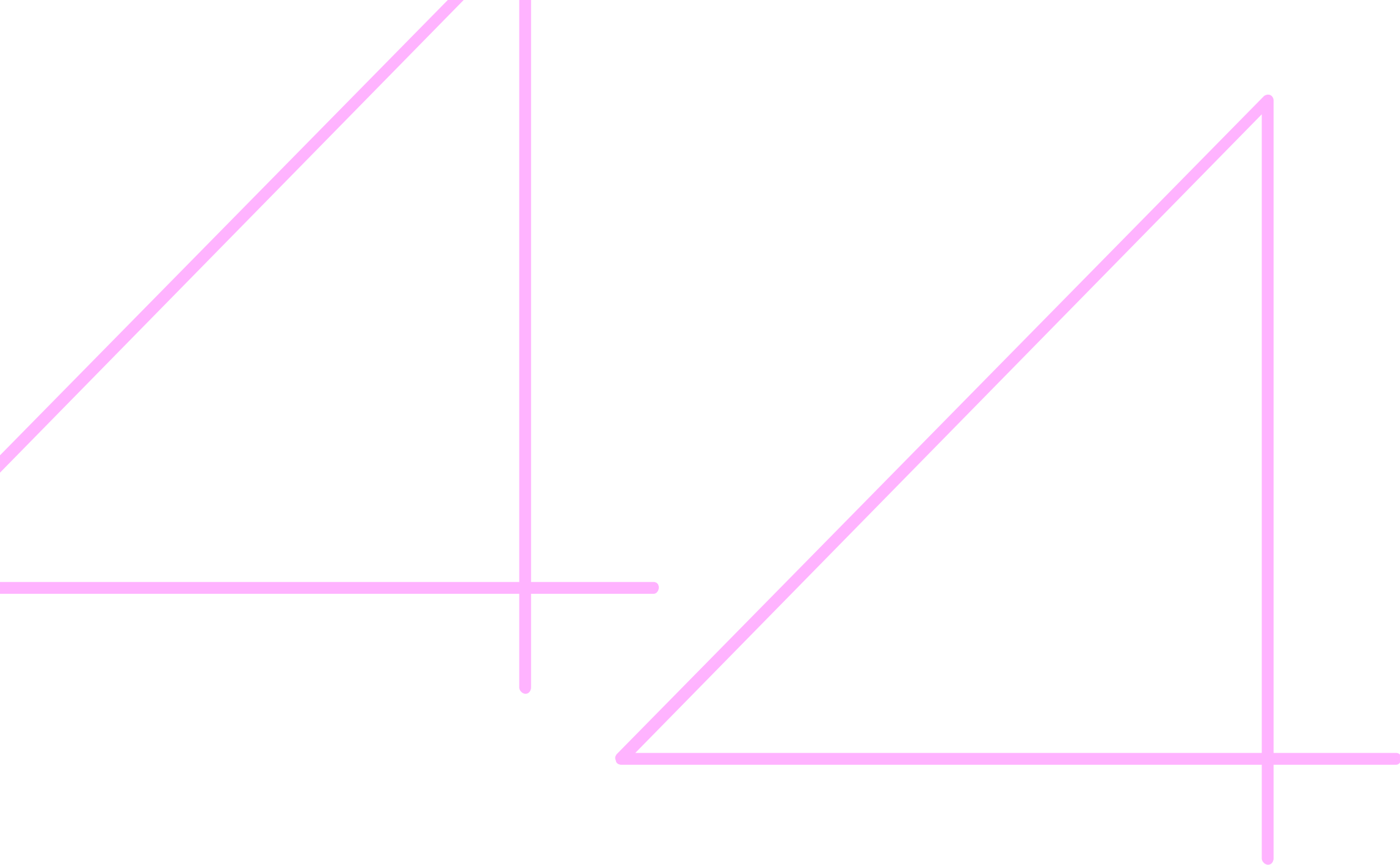
- 1- Risk: it is hard to believe that good art can exist without taking risks
- 2- Life experience: a story that validates the artistic discourse sustained as there is no point to have, for example, a middle / upper class person developing a discourse about life in the slums. An artistic practice should be validated by a life experience that validates it.
- 3- The day after: art, like people, has to be rich enough to “give birth” to children. How can it be developed for decades, in new series?
- 4- Positioning: How does it position itself in the wider context of artists that tackle that issue?
- 5- Genealogy: understanding where that comes from, historically. It may sound funny, but again, like human beings, we have parents and grandparents.
- 6- Impeccable execution: I want to know EVERYTHING, source, process, who works in it, why, how, when, with which intent, etc.
- 7- Relevancy: I ask myself: why does the world needs this? Why can't the world live without this? Why this is urgent? And other questions like this.

ART WORK AND PRACTICE WORTH SUPPORTING



The generation of social capital is certainly something to which the experiences we live-by-getting in “touch” with a piece of art - can powerfully contribute. And it is tremendously needed. That requires the artwork to trigger my neighbour’s emotions going beyond the reluctance and cynicism that a time with little hope - our time - inspires to us all.

SOCIAL CAPITAL GENERATION



The first thing we must do is to stop thinking about a 'we', ie the artists etc, as separated from 'they', ie the audiences etc.

— THE FIRST STEP



Nowadays, at least in the Netherlands, lots of musicians and bands almost dare not ask for money by fear they will no longer be invited to appear on stage. So instead of fearing, let's start refusing to be afraid. We might not play for a while, that's true, what is an empty stage good for?

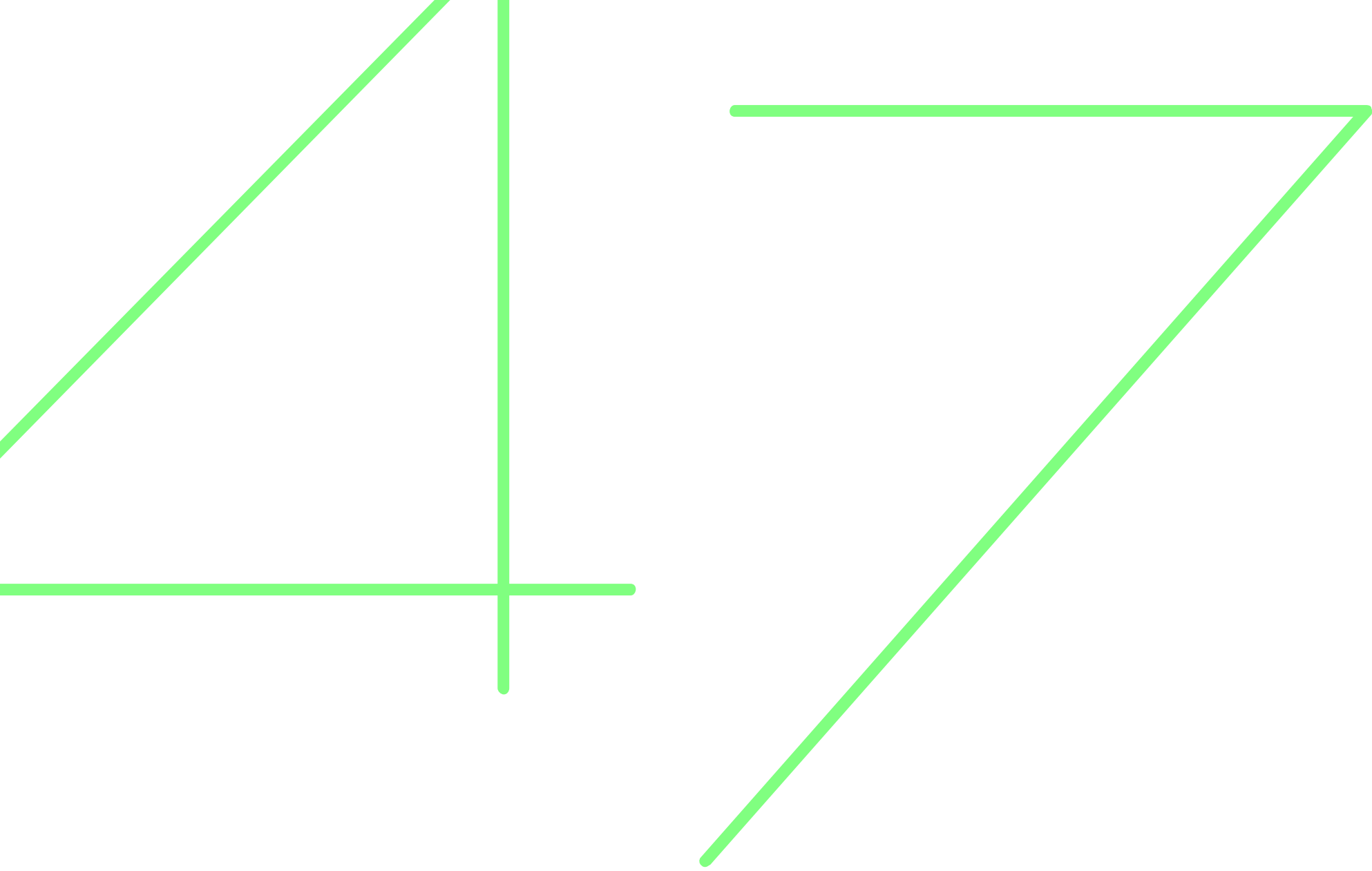
It's an old way of thinking that you need to be paid for playing music, or show up any form of art, there is many other economical ways to win money, if you need some. The world is changing all expression, art, music, theatre, need to change their view of economical aspect too. Let's refuse that old world blocknewworld. There is crowdfunding, participation, sharing, donation, and many other ways to get money if you need some.

REFUSING TO BE AFRAID



Would it be possible to create a “comfortable space”(digitalofphysical) to capture the “artistic attitude” of normal citizens?

AN ARTISTIC SPACE FOR THE CITY



The surge for a Europe-wide movement for culture that is more than ever a necessity to help our society to step out up from its depression. That is what we should and can do. [...] So, in the end, instead advocating the sector or debating policy for the sector, we shall lobby and help the sector to team up with other civil society players, making the best of each peculiarity to fight in support of common causes.

If we are able to overcome our laziness and mobilize, of course inter-sectoral collaboration is necessary. But why couldn't each of the professional sectors preserve this certain uniqueness they possess? You do not have to give up on these unique traits, specific skills, professional training - I do not think we should, since only through specific skills each and every one can contribute with their own share, and thus make for strong collaboration.



ARTISTIC EUROPEAN WIDE MOVEMENT




One point would be creating a possibility, through financially supporting established cultural institutions, to invest in big-scale advertisement and for focusing on the quality of the art itself. Another possibility is creating an on-line working group for an ongoing discussion about the purpose and value in arts. Define the need of the arts and make it more present in everyday life, where people are not looking for it. Instead of verbally trying to convince others, that we do not have a bright future without culture being in the center of attention, it is maybe possible to show what the arts do to you and then take the discussion. I know this is already happening many places, but I feel European money often support entrepreneurs and big projects, whereas continuous local projects can have more impact for understanding of the necessity of culture.

BIG PROJECTS AND LOCAL PROJECTS




We should generate, creatively, a new form of space, removing ourselves from our usual niches and paradigm of culture as commodity. We should stop running after the concept of culture as essential to society, because, by doing so, we still accept culture as a product and not as THE element which shapes community/society (and therefore institutions). Mapping ourselves, accepting our fragmentation as a diffuse presence in the European landscape, should help us to reposition 'culture' outside the bipolarity, physically spread in a horizontal concept of construction of politics, in a new vision of a tired European landscape. Our networks, often still virtual, should work outside old parameters, becoming real labs in the landscape.

HORIZONTAL NETWORKS



Artists are bound to be an unavoidable (necessary?) part of change, by showing the community what's not working. When enough people share the discomfort, social change is inevitable.

DISCOMFORT AND SOCIAL CHANGE



If we want to create a WE, we have to focus on a common DNA, Manifesto, Meta-connection and communication, rather than on the specific battle we will fight. Each of us, has its own, and can reinforce and inspire first of all the people who feel the same kind of deep emotion and/or discomfort. We have to protect our personal battles, and the battles of the other people who are trying to do something similar, with similar attitude in their own fields. In that sense we can become a WE: Macro WE, with many micro I/we dedicated to their own personal almost autonomous heterogeneous challenges.




MICRO AND MACRO WE



I visualise this as a strategy based on some kind of elaborate democratic 'wiring diagram'; we don't all need to engage everywhere, be familiar with every issue. We each act as we can, where we can, when we can. But, in doing this - as artists with 'particular attributes', we are not isolated, either from those around of us - all of whom have their own 'particular attributes, - or from each other.

OVERCOME ISOLATION



I'd like to put under the discussion the artist's work place - a studio, usually. - A very luxurious situation: you can be alone, in peace. It is so important to get a distance from the tiring, noisy, messy everydayness... The basic condition to work creatively. But, on the other hand, this perfect isolation is troublesome, too. No exchange of ideas, no relation with the community. If you want to work with social/political issues, you start to be fed up with this isolation, to miss a collective.

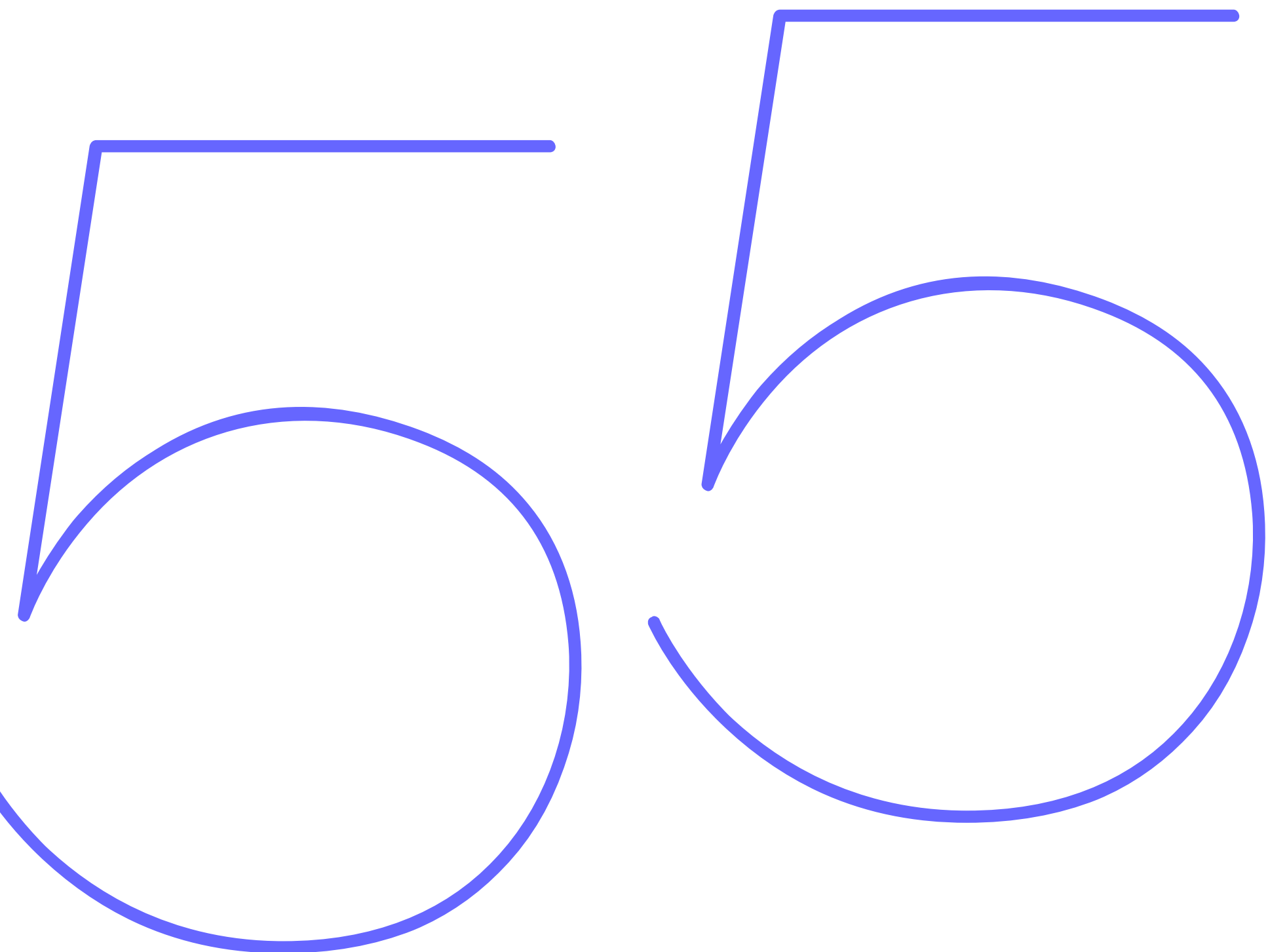


BASIC CONDITIONS TO WORK CREATIVELY



Pour avoir de l'impact sur la société l'art doit aller à la rencontre de l'autre, sortir de sa zone de confort, tenter de nouvelles expériences, utiliser les outils de sa société et de son temps. Il faut donner à voir, mettre l'Art dans les nouvelles cathédrales, à titre d'exemple l'impact du streetart sur la société est indéniable. Si l'art a perdu de son influence c'est par le fait que les "artistes" ont créé une sorte d'entre soi élitiste, aux travers de forme spéculative, qui dénature le sens même de l'art qui est l'innovation, le donner à voir, à réfléchir, à penser, la spéculation engendre le mainstream et tue l'innovation y compris dans l'art.

NEW CATHEDRALS



We may be dispersed, fragmented maybe, but we are diverse too so let's try not lose the diversity of our voices (languages and points of view) for the sake of unity that would «guarantee» our « impact »....Could we organise synchronised events, public meetings across continents? This requires planning and technological skills, but would give space for different voices while providing impact at a given, strategic moment. And of course would have to be very careful about the way it is done so we are not censored or don't endanger our fellows!! Often in the quest to define a collective 'we', the beauty of different perspectives, and, the histories that have created the divisions, are often relegated as secondary considerations. This potentially creates a sub-culture of questioning the authenticity of the 'we' that has been created. If there is to be a collective 'we' it should be a 'we' that has open dialogue and that encourages plurality of thought and action.

SYNCH