Higher Arts Education and the Creative Economy.
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The European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA) believes that a re-evaluation of the relationship between higher arts education and the creative economy is necessary. Rapid technological change and its economic effects have had a serious impact on both higher arts institutes and the vocational perspectives of graduates. The emerging recognition of the creative economy in Europe, pushed by globalisation and digitisation and driven by the graduates of our institutes, has forced institutes of higher arts education to re-consider their curricula, research topics and practices. They must evolve further to make a particular contribution to shaping a society informed by multiple and complex contextualisations.

Many institutes of higher arts education are rethinking their curricula to prepare their students for new business environments and for the need to operate on the borders between art disciplines and between the arts and other domains. The need to respond to the emergence of new modes of value creation while respecting the core mission of higher arts education to nurture creativity and new talent is imperative.

This paper provides arguments that will help higher arts education institutes to sharpen their own approaches and, in particular, define their relationship with the wider creative economy. This intersection can be considered as a space where alternative presents and futures can be discussed and as a driver for alternative value chains. It is written and supported by the ELIA Board 2012-2014 and ELIA experts. As the topic of this paper is subject to many changing factors in society it will be presented as a dynamic paper, meant to be updated when needed.

1. The value of higher arts education

ELIA considers higher arts education as an autonomous domain interacting dynamically with society and focusing on the development of individual creative talents.

Since the economic value of creativity is increasingly recognised by governments and businesses, higher arts education (HAE) is often considered to be an “enabler” for the cultural and creative sector. This tendency to apply a narrow supply and demand model to the relationship between HAE and the creative economy (CE) does not do justice to its diverse and complex function in society, it’s potential for developing individual talent and as a catalyst for innovation. The value of HAE to society lies in nurturing creation and new talent through the support of craft, technique, creative ideas and expressions essential to the development of a vibrant and inclusive society. ELIA is convinced that higher arts graduates will play a key role in social and economic development because a key strength of their creative expression is to challenge and innovate the status quo, not only to describe things as they are but also how they could be. The present and future development of our societies require creative and imaginative solutions and HAE, with their unique approaches to problem solving through new modes of collaborating and new modes of innovating have a real role to play.

2. The wider context of creativity: Creative Economy

Cultural actors are increasingly functioning within hybrid settings, which, in turn, are influenced by global trends. This is why ELIA embraces a broad conception of creativity including new ideas and applications in the form of original works of art, cultural products and services, functional creations, scientific inventions and technological innovation.
To represent these permanent changes ELIA avoids an all-too static formulation of the sector-based approaches to the creative industries. Hence this paper chooses the "creative economy" perspective that requires a conceptual shift from mono to multidisciplinary models dealing with the interfaces between economics, culture and technology. The cultural and creative industries are at the heart of the creative economy, defined as the cycles of creating, making, disseminating, exhibiting and archiving of goods and services that use artistic intelligence, creativity and intellectual capital as primary inputs.

3. Strategic positioning of HAE institutes within the CE
It is vital for the strategic development of HAE institutes that they refine their specific understanding of this field, especially since different definitions of the creative industries are current in different European countries. The positioning of HAE institutes in the grid below suggests a wide range of possibilities, for example with strong links to the public sector and public funding, or with a stronger business-orientation with connections to enterprises inside and outside the cultural and creative sector.

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The key consequence of such a mapping approach is that discussions about the creative industries need no longer be binary ("in" versus "out," "yes" versus "no"), but can instead be more open and closer to the practice of creative actors. ELIA is convinced that the primary aim must be to (better) understand the entire “ecosystem” of the creative economy and correspondingly to devote less time to questions of definition and delineation. Then, whether we speak of the cultural industry, the creative industry, or the cultural and creative industries, whether we mean profit-oriented or not, publicly funded or not, art in a more strict sense or not, and whether everything takes place within formal or informal structures depends on a specific viewpoint. And these viewpoints will finally define the profiles and the variety of identities of HAE institutes in Europe: between cutting edge art
and business oriented services, between local and global, between experimental and skill oriented and between comprehensive and disciplinary.

This list is far from being complete and will evolve over time. Pursuing discussion along these lines will raise interesting questions reaching beyond the confines of the classical art system. From this will emerge exciting perspectives for HAE institutes, which are not primarily independent actors, but platforms, experimental systems, and experimental arrangements where precisely these discussions and debates can take place. At the same time, these are the sites and constellations that provide the space for confronting the established and the new, the proven and the subversive.


New and emerging cultural landscapes - locally and internationally - combined with rapid current political and economic change require new qualities from graduates in all artistic disciplines. These qualities have to combine the traditional richness of artistic and cultural craftsmanship with interdisciplinary and social skills, cultural entrepreneurship, research competencies and storytelling approaches.

ELIA identifies the following main challenges, which will influence curricula building, teaching and learning settings or the impact of HAE institutes and their graduates on society:

– One crucial influence and change is globalisation. Accordingly, the European “exception culturelle” is relativised by the existence of different notions of “mainstream” in different regions of the world, as illustrated by the dominance of commercial films, computer games, television series, etc. Thus, European culture is shaped by dominant contents from the United States, by Asian innovations, and by the growing significance of legal and technical, logistic and organisational aspects of the production, performance, and dissemination of art and culture. Nevertheless, being skilled in traditional European values and modes of reflection will continue to be relevant, in particular as a context and export good for up-and-coming Asian markets and actors.

This changed landscape of the 21st century must lead to a rethinking of the old relationship with a new emphasis on partnership and exchange in an intercultural world which mirrors developments in the creative economy globally. These new approaches will be even more complex for teaching and learning contexts when realizing that globalisation drives us to approach problems in force fields like global–local, cultural–economic, innovation–preservation, public–private, strategic–experimental, formal – informal. Force fields refer to extreme poles which are a priori mutually exclusive, but they can also serve as a starting point for projecting new settings, models and strategies, in which initiatives of HAE institutes can take place and in which their actors can develop individual and singular positions and thereby distinguish themselves.

– Another decisive influence on higher arts education is digitisation. It forces open traditional value chains and thereby engenders constantly new ways of creating, producing, disseminating, and exploring art and culture. Digitisation also prompts discussion about quality, as exemplified by open source and social media, or the emergence of digital communities and self-organised knowledge communities.

Hence, digitisation has implications for content. Because what does being “professional” mean if the access to production possibilities becomes increasingly simpler? Which old and new contents must the production of art and culture respond to? Which shifts at the interface between production and consumption become relevant?

– Diversification and fragmentation derive from these developments. They have fundamental impacts on the creative economy. Classical "leading cultures" are losing significance. They are being replaced by new audience structures establishing themselves and constantly
changing along community lines.

It is up to every HAE institute to decide how these massive shifts will be reflected with regard to developing curricula towards project based settings where such trends can be critically discussed and where together with partners from the creative industries new approaches can be developed.

Another crucial topic for the CE is the new value creation processes: as a result of digitisation these processes are no longer linear – from the idea to the production to the audience – but more and more blurred. At the same time value creation happens not only within the creative industries but increasingly also between the creative industries and other sectors. Finally these two shifts focus on the question of what we understand by value creation beyond a narrow economic point of view.

Global “value creation systems” involve a “creative core” of original creation (creative industries), an “extended sphere” of creative and innovative actors and a multitude of “collocated organizations and industries” (financing, real estate, etc.). Being at the heart of such systems, HAE institutes need to understand the interactions between the dynamics of these three spheres. The more complex and heterogeneous these fields are, the more important are the organisations, actors, and communities debating these relationships and processes and shaping their dynamics.

5. An Agenda for Higher Arts Education
Most HAE institutes are well aware of this rapidly changing landscape and realise the need to develop new educational initiatives involving both students and educators. The question of which strategies to follow should become part of the agenda of both the HAE institutes and of the CE as a starting point for new approaches.

Everywhere in Europe, new creative practices and locations are emerging, next to more traditional settings as concert halls, museums, festival stages and design studios, both commercially and non-commercially driven. Artists, designers and other creatives are currently developing formats and models to further develop their artistic practices and entrepreneurial strategies. While being active in their local and regional area, they will at the same time be keenly aware of the new possibilities and challenges an increasingly globalised world has to offer both at home and abroad.

The following are some of the strategic projects which already are or should be on the agenda of HAE institutes in Europe for the years to come in order to face these challenges.

Re-framing the understanding of value creation
Value creation in the CE is no longer linear. It is characterised by the process constellations constantly interlinking creation, development, realisation, production, dissemination, staging, knowledge development, communication and archiving in new ways. The boundaries between activities and processes are constantly shifting, just as those between art and design, computer science and architecture, robotics and dance, film and theatre are blurring and opening up new fields of action and boundary-drawing dynamics. Consequently, where exactly novelty emerges from value-creation processes and where the existing is reinterpreted, copied, or simply appropriated is becoming increasingly more open. HAE institutes have to ask themselves where impact is generated, where global trends and general tendencies are followed, where difference is achieved, and where the mainstream served.

Sharing practices in multidisciplinary research
Research led by HAE institutes goes beyond traditional academic research. It integrates theory, practice and real-world delivery by interdisciplinary teams, building upon the nature of actual arts
practices. Industrial players are starting to consider these approaches as part of their R&D and invest in creativity. Some HAE are developing research projects for the CE aiming to establish a more precise understanding of how creative and innovative processes are organised — both from a global perspective and in diverse cultural, social, economic, and scientific fields. Such projects seek to contribute to developing new perspectives and strategies for HAE institutes through its own experiments and initiatives. The role of judgment devices becomes crucial – both for HAE institutes and for actors in the CE.

_Shring adequa busines models for HAE graduates_

The creative economy is described increasingly as a network-based economy, in which the actors of a core area of the CE collaborate with actors and organisations from other sectors to establish problem-solving constellations. Such constellations can be temporary or more permanent; they can be rather formal or informal; and they seem to occur between certain sector constellations rather than others. Thus, HAE institutes assume that interesting business models no longer emerge solely from the core area of the creative industry, but just as often through exchange or in association with related or collocated sectors. “Communities of practice” bring forth new types of entrepreneurs, who involve their clients or principals already in the development of products and services and thus consider innovation always as a process.

_Active engagement in incubation, enterprise support and partnerships_

Practical learning in (near) real life such as project education, production units and career centres have provided effective ways to enable student/graduate start-ups in collaboration with industry, cultural and societal organisations. Increasingly, long-term partnerships stimulate innovation and knowledge transfer beneficial to the higher arts education institutes, young artists and the industries. In regions and cities, institutions can develop as hubs for experimentation and innovation drawing together artistic talent, cultural places and creative business. Different expectations by industry and by young artists persist, but appreciation for the artistic contribution to innovation is growing.

_Recoemedations_

HAE institutes and their students and graduates require open and safe spaces to deepen their talents and, above all, to experiment. This does not mean that these institutes are ivory towers cut off from the realities of the outside world. On the contrary: the confrontation with the various actors of the CE - audiences, visitors, clients, politicians, sponsors - are part of the learning process.

HAE institutes are not independent actors, but platforms, experimental systems, and experimental arrangements where discussions and debates on the future of the CE can take place. For a future orientated discussion of the various intersections between HAE institutes and CE ELIA makes the following recommendations:

_Develop CE strategies starting from the core identity of your institute_

Taking into account the broad spectrum of different understandings of the CE, ranging from a specific focus on arts and culture, to the cultural and creative industries or rather on the overall economy, a mapping process is a necessary step for the successful positioning of a HAE institute in the field of CE. This will obviously have an impact on course content and teaching and research strategies.

_Hligh new teaching and learning settings in HAE_

ELIA should invest in collecting views, data, examples of good practice on skills developments within HAE and show higher education professionals, policymakers and CE professionals how art students
are educated both in traditional core competences of the art field and in critical thinking, creation and project skills.

**Develop strategic partnerships outside the artworld**
For higher arts education institutes it is crucial to seek alliances with actors outside the artworld but also outside the core area of the CE. ELIA should liaise with new European arenas with reference to the CCIs, higher education and research such as the European Creative Industries Alliance; the European Design Leadership Board; Business Europe; the League of European Research Universities; the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT);

**Commission research in the field of creation and innovation processes**
HAE institutes should place a greater emphasis in their curricula on thinking about how possible futures of the CE could be. A research project focusing on documenting and evaluating ways of collaborating and ways of innovating in order to better understand the whole ecosystem of the CE on a global scale should be commissioned. Research activities should explore the different settings where value creation takes place and how quality and success are judged.

**Develop career services adapted to the needs of artists and designers**
Higher arts institutes should not simply copy existing models of career services and standard business incubation. Classic models of career services models operate with reference to well-structured labour markets and to standardized career tracks. The cultural and creative sector has a very different career structure which reflects the fact that the creative economic sector is largely made up of small scale companies with a defined cultural mission who are dynamic, flexible and made up of project focused teams operating in an area of high turnover with a rapid innovation cycle.

**Use the CE as a driver for internationalisation**
Huge cultural infrastructures, such as knowledge societies, creative industries, and cultural capitals are currently being built in the Middle East and in South East Asia. European art universities/schools need to be well informed and prepared to set up new relationships with partners within these regions. ELIA should also start a dialogue with other parts of the world and learn how cultural and creative industries are understood in other parts of the world with a focus on mutual learning.