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Autor(en): **Staines, Judith**

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# CULTURAL MOBILITY IN EUROPE / NEW PROSPECTS FOR SWISS ARTISTS?

Judith Staines

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Many artists and arts organisations in Europe are unaware that Switzerland does not participate in the *European Culture Programme*, an EU funding mechanism which has supported many collaborative arts projects across Europe. It would also come as a surprise to hear that some Swiss cultural observers feel Switzerland may be a bit isolated with a rather low level of participation in international cultural cooperation projects. But plans for Switzerland to join the new *Creative Europe* programme from 2014 should offer more opportunities and enable artists and organisations – both inside and outside Switzerland – to meet, work together and learn more about each other.

Seen from other parts of Europe, there appear to be any number of initiatives in Switzerland to support the mobility of artists and cultural managers, both inward and outward. The *Pro Helvetia* network of offices abroad and residencies opportunities looks like a great resource. The *artists in residence ch* website was a pioneer online information pool, alerting artists outside Switzerland to artist in residence and guest studios there, and inspired similar residency information websites in other countries. Specialist cultural projects like the *Swiss artists-in-labs Program* and *Arts@CERN* residencies demonstrate the highest level of arts-science collaboration, with wide international disseminati-

on. Combined with high profile galleries and international art events, the Swiss visual arts 'cultural footprint' is indeed impressive for observers in other countries.

Since 2006, Switzerland has participated in the *EU MEDIA programme*, accessing EU financial support for film and audiovisual industry projects, co-productions, distribution circuits, markets, festivals and training workshops, with advice and information for applicants through a dedicated *MEDIA Desk Suisse*. However the *EU Culture Programme*, supporting cross-border arts collaborations has not been open to applications from Switzerland.

To date, the EU's funding programmes for cultural cooperation and for the audiovisual industry have been separate, currently represented by the *Culture Programme* (2007–2013) and the *MEDIA Programme*. Both come to an end in 2013 and there has been a protracted period of proposals, consultation and negotiation over the new programmes and budgets. The growing focus on the role and potential of culture in the overall long-term European competitiveness strategy, as evidenced in various studies and economic data, requires a broader vision for the cultural and creative industries (CCIs), to encompass the traditional arts sectors (visual arts, performing arts, music, literature), cultural heritage and museums, alongside audiovisual and digital industries (film, broadcasting, video games), design, publishing and architecture. The European Commission therefore proposed *Creative Europe* as the new programme for the cultural and creative sectors for 2014–2020, designed to bring the current *Culture* and *MEDIA Programmes* under one umbrella in a much larger overall programme. A substantial budget increase has been sought. *Creative Europe* would be open to new participating countries in the 'European neighbourhood area' of Southern and Eastern Europe and the Swiss Confederation is due to become a participant.

*Creative Europe* has passed through a number of important political stages towards its adoption. However, the EU Member States still have to approve the overall programme and to vote on the bud-



get. The debate and vote in the European Parliament take place in October and November 2012. Switzerland's participation in *Creative Europe* would be on the basis of a bilateral agreement which is to be concluded.

Therefore, Swiss cultural organisations need to keep their ear to the ground and be ready for when *Creative Europe* opens the doors to applications for projects. If it follows the same schedule as the current *EU Culture Programme*, there would be a call for proposals in mid-autumn 2013 for projects due to start in 2014. This timetable may vary and, as decision-making and contract approval are relatively slow compared to most national grant schemes, project planning needs some flexibility. In principle, there will be a *Creative Europe* Desk in each participating country to provide information and advice to potential applicants; the *MEDIA Desk Suisse* is the best point of contact to learn more about when and where this is established in Switzerland.

For Swiss artists and arts organisations interested in European collaboration projects, it's worth noting that the Programme is only open to applications from organisations. You don't have to be a large well-established institution – smaller artist-led organisations and networks with a legal structure have participated in EU cultural projects, but individual artists are not eligible to apply. Artists can benefit from a project, for example through grants and participation opportunities for residencies, commissions, exhibitions and training. Projects must meet the programme objectives and application guidelines, to be published in detail once *Creative Europe* is in place. There's a lot of competition for the funding which is allocated on a co-financing basis with at least 50% matching funding provided by applicants in the current Culture Programme, and strong auditing and financial viability checks are in place.

The main thing to remember is that EU funding is for transnational (cross-border) co-operation projects which bring together cultural organisations from at least three different eligible countries. In

fact, the first sign that the *Creative Europe programme* is open to Swiss participation may well be a surge of enquiries for partnership with Swiss arts organisations. The best advice is to consider such requests slowly, don't accept 'blind date' project partner offers from people you have never heard of, and try to work with partners you trust, people you know (at least by reputation or recommendation) and with whom you share common values and a real sense of joint project ownership. European collaboration projects, particularly those with a large number of partners from different countries and diverse organisational structures, require experienced coordination and negotiation skills to achieve their goals. Complex, longer-term projects with many partners usually benefit from a project leader with a good level of experience of EU cooperation activities.

The present *EU Culture Programme* aims to promote mobility and encourage the transnational circulation of cultural and artistic output and foster intercultural dialogue. Mobility will be a continued priority area for *Creative Europe* – both the mobility of artists and cultural players and the transnational circulation of their works; mobility is seen as an investment in reinforcing the sector's capacity to operate transnationally and as a way of reaching new audiences and improving access to cultural and creative works.

So, let's consider some trends and interesting initiatives in terms of artistic mobility and collaboration in Europe. Mobility is now a well-integrated concept in arts initiatives supported by EU funding and there are increasingly inventive and sophisticated ways of investigating it through European cultural cooperation. Artists' residencies are a strong focal point for artistic mobility with much interest in the process and experiences of nomadic artists and how best to support this type of mobility.

*Trans Artists*, the Amsterdam-based knowledge centre on artists' residencies, led the EU-funded *ON-AiR* project. With 19 European partners in 15 different countries, it ran an ambitious two year programme (2010–2012) to establish a European



tool for artists including mobility workshops, training programmes on artist-in-residence (AiR) opportunities and specialist information resources. As a result an *ON-AiR Toolkit* is now available online as a free download, creating a valuable legacy to improve artistic mobility for others not directly connected with the project. The Toolkit includes new research into residency opportunities such as those for curators and digital artists. The final *ON-AiR Evaluation Report* identifies 10 Success Factors which benefited *ON-AiR*:

1. A solid foundation
2. An experienced team leader
3. A large and diverse partnership
4. A high degree of transparency
5. The project was flexible and responsive to context and need
6. Local partnerships were highly valued
7. The project encouraged partners to achieve more
8. Ongoing self-evaluation was integrated into the project implementation
9. A willingness to listen and learn
10. The project encouraged synergies and long-term collaboration

While some of these are specific to the *ON-AiR* project and are described in more detail in the report, they can be seen more broadly as recommended principles for European cultural cooperation projects.

One of the priorities for the new *Creative Europe programme* is audience development, the theme for a conference on *European Audiences: 2020 and beyond* in October 2012. A current EU-funded project linking audience development and mobility in an interesting way is *Unpack the Arts*. Described as a European residency programme for cultural journalists, *Unpack the Arts* focuses on contemporary circus and performance festivals and offers writing residencies for cultural journalists at the twelve European festivals which form the project partnership. Traditional print journalists, cultural bloggers, critics and editors will be selected to attend a festival, contribute to the programme and publish their writing. This project offers mobility for journa-

lists, encourages a much wider international audience for the events and ultimately should result in greater visibility and mobility for the artists and performers. A similar approach could work well in the visual arts, bringing international perspectives and better dissemination of visual arts events and artists' works.

Details of all cultural cooperation projects selected for co-funding by the European Commission are found on the *EACEA* website. If and when Switzerland becomes a full participant in the new *Creative Europe* programme – and an active strategy to inform politicians in Switzerland of the benefits is being implemented – the involvement of Swiss arts organisations in European projects will certainly be welcomed by arts organisations across Europe. Swiss arts organisations are urged to participate in the information process and to seize the opportunity to engage as partners in projects under a future EU culture programme.

There is a lot to learn on all sides through collaboration between artists and cultural organisations. It's important to recognise that every European cultural project is different and borders – whether geographical, cultural or in the mind – are meant to be crossed!



### MOBILITÉ CULTURELLE EN EUROPE / NOUVELLES PERSPECTIVES POUR LES CRÉATEURS SUISSES ?

Judith Staines explique comment la Suisse est perçue à l'étranger comme un intervenant dynamique dans les projets internationaux de mobilité culturelle. Elle présente le nouveau programme UE *Europe créative*, qui combinera dès 2014 les allocations pour la collaboration artistique transfrontalière avec le programme Film et Audiovision (anciennement programmes culture et médias). Pour la première fois, *Europe créative* offre à la Suisse de participer à des projets culturels et au programme médias, auquel le pays a adhéré en 2006. Plusieurs projets intéressants, financés par le *programme culturel UE*, sont décrits, et l'auteur invite les organisations artistiques suisses à participer intégralement à de telles collaborations créatives à l'avenir. Elle énumère les facteurs de succès de la collaboration culturelle européenne, qui n'est pas toujours facile en raison des forces des partenaires artistiques, des divers pays, des différentes langues et des motivations concurrentielles. Comme le montre l'expérience des projets culturels UE, le bénéfice peut toutefois être considérable, et le processus intensif d'apprentissage profite en fin de compte à chacun, aux organisations et aux communautés avec lesquelles ces organisations collaborent.

• Judith Staines

tiven Zusammenarbeiten in Zukunft vollumfänglich zu beteiligen. Sie zählt die Erfolgsfaktoren der europäischen kulturellen Zusammenarbeit auf, die aufgrund starker künstlerischer Partner, verschiedener Länder, unterschiedlicher Sprachen und konkurrierender Motivationen nicht immer leicht ist. Wie die Erfahrung mit EU-Kulturprojekten zeigt, kann der Gewinn jedoch beträchtlich sein, und der intensive Lernprozess kommt letztlich den Einzelnen, ihren Organisationen und den Gemeinschaften zugute, mit denen sie zusammenarbeiten.

• Judith Staines

### KULTURELLE MOBILITÄT IN EUROPA / NEUE AUSSICHTEN FÜR SCHWEIZER KUNSTSCHAFFENDE ?

Judith Staines erläutert, wie die Schweiz in anderen Ländern als aktiver Akteur in internationalen Projekten für kulturelle Mobilität gesehen wird. Sie präsentiert das neue EU-Programm *Kreatives Europa*, das ab 2014 die Zuschüsse für grenzüberschreitende künstlerische Zusammenarbeit mit dem Film- und Audiovisions-Programm (die früheren Kultur- und Medien-Programme) kombiniert. Zum ersten Mal bietet *Kreatives Europa* der Schweiz an, sich an Kulturprojekten wie am Medienprogramm zu beteiligen, dem das Land 2006 beitrug. Mehrere interessante, vom *EU-Kulturprogramm* finanzierte Projekte werden beschrieben, und die Autorin legt den Schweizer Kunstorganisationen nahe, sich an solchen krea-