

New Approaches to
Socially Engaged
Creative Practice

Grundtvig Partnership
Project 2013 - 2015



Contents

About the project

Background and why we do this this project

What we have done so far

Reflecting about the project

Case Study / Italy Migrant Women

What's next?

Useful contacts

"This project can help us develop new skills and gain new perspectives about working creatively with the public"

Deborah Astell
Capture Arts

What is participatory creative practice?

Participatory creative practice has its roots in socially engaged art, this phenomena began to be recognised in the United States in the late 1960's, primarily influence by the work of [Alan Kaprow](#) and also the incorporation of feminist educational theory within arts practice. An influential figure within this field was [Charles Garoian](#), who explored both performance and pedagogy.

Quite often this work is referred to as "social practice", and is now more formalised and integrated into art schools, and broadly used as a term by creative professionals. It simply means artists whose specialty includes working with society in a professional capacity.

Click [here](#) to read more



About the project

Creative Skills

Sharing ideas

Developing new tools

Learning Focused

Exchange of approaches

Co creating tools

Analysing methods

As creative professionals how can we share and exchange ideas and methods about meaningful engagement with the public?

Following on from the success of a previous Grundtvig partnership, a core group of participants applied for a new partnership grant to explore a specific area that we touched on in the last project. We wanted a more in-depth exploration of the ideas around creative practice and public engagement, how artist's work, what methods and approaches they use and how we can share knowledge and skills.

We are focusing more on creative professionals and collaboration of ideas.

Click [here](#) for info on previous project

A key area of the project is the deconstruction and analysis of existing workshop methods, this work is often time consuming, but the reward is that it can give artists and creative practitioners the ability to do things *beyond* the best of their present available knowledge, move creative practice forward and give a space for self-reflection.

We have begun the co creation of an analysis framework method that incorporates the use of a Critical Creative Friend.

Another area we are exploring is the

cross fertilisation of artistic practice to generate new ideas and approaches, test some of these ideas out, and then innovate and create possible new workshop methods.

There are a broad set of skills and practices within the partnership including music, voice, creative thinking, costume design, theatre, performance, traditional music etc. During the next phase of the project we will be working in small groups to explore these methods and look at generating cross over examples of practices that can be used with the public.



Partner organisations involved in the project

[Maison de la Création](#) – Cultural Centre based in North Brussels, BE

[Capture Arts](#) – Cultural and Educational organisation based in London, UK

[Iddac](#) – Cultural Agency of the department of Gironde, based in Bordeaux, FR

[Fracas](#) – Musical organisation based in Bordeaux, FR

[Lutherie Urbain](#) – Music organisation based in Paris, FR

[Ilcantinonearte Teatri](#) – Community Theatre based in Montepulciano, IT

[Salako kulturos Centras](#) – Cultural Centre based Zarasa, LU



What has happened so far?

Project milestones 2013 - 2014

Kick of meeting in Paris

December 2013 the partners met to discuss the project and begin to plan and shape the seminars. We discussed the handbook and whom it was for, also undertook a needs analysis and a skills audit of the partners, this information would help shape the projects objectives.

[Click here](#) for a needs analysis template

Creative Thinking Training in London

In February 2014 Capture arts shared a method of their best practice in a training seminar with participants from the project partners. Capture are specialists in Creative Thinking techniques.

Artists meeting in Bordeaux

During March 2014 Artists from Iddac and fracas met with the project manager from Capture Arts to discuss the project and also how to create a tool to analyse workshop methods, it was decided that capture would lead on this part of the project and co create the tool with artists across the project.

Development of a draft analysis tool

During April 2014 Capture Arts returned to Bordeaux to test out the first draft of the analysis Tool, it was used during 2 workshops delivered by Fracas and Bertrand Manzano, an artist and social worker working with IDDAC.

Seminar and workshops Italy

During April and May 2014 a workshop was organised in Italy that included both artists and project managers and professionals. We shared a range of problem solving tools, experimented with some new ideas, some partners demonstrated a short example of a method of best practice and we tested out the analysis tool during these workshops.

We also experienced first hand some community theatre created by the Italian partners, as well as interviewing a migrant women's group to discuss their experiences of participating in cultural projects, that had a deep impact on their integration into Italian society.

What do we feel about the project?

What did we enjoy?

What have we learned so far?

During our evaluation sessions the overall feeling from partnership was that we had enjoyed the project so far. For the participating artists and creative professionals it was a great opportunity to try out new methods and experiences together. We have shared new methods and tools and we will be working together to co create and develop an analysis tool for other creative professionals and artists to use as well as an e book with tips, methods and case studies included.

Critical Friends

We have looked closely at the role of a critical creative friend as a method to support creative practitioners to analyse and shift their thinking in regards to their workshop practice. A critical friend can be defined as “a trusted person who asks provocative questions provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critiques of a person’s work as a friend A critical friend takes the time to fully understand the context of the work presented and the outcomes that the person or group is working toward. The friend is an advocate for the success of that work.” The role of the critical friend is therefore a **strategic** one and can be important in assisting improvement. It is essentially a role of support and challenge Critical friendship has also been described as less formal than mentoring or coaching and probably best described as “a professional relationship based on mutual regard and the willingness to question and challenge.”

What makes a good critical friend?

- Someone who is trusted
- Someone you feel you can develop a strong relationship with
- Provides honest feedback

- Is a skilled observer and listener
- Is able to ask provocative/stretch questions
- Provides balance between support and challenge
- Provides a different perspective/new eyes

People learn best from peers, if there is sufficient opportunity for ongoing, purposeful exchange”. The critical friend process enables this exchange

As we develop our analysis tool we will incorporate the role of critical friend into the next phase of the project. Capture Arts are now the Critical (and creative!) friend to both Fracas and Bertrand Manzano, an artist who collaborates with IDDAC.

How do we move forward?

Having reflected on what happened during the project we feel that we can take what we have learned forward and adapt the principles and learning to keep the aims and objectives moving forward and innovate and develop new possibilities.

Newsletters, blog and e book

For the E book, we have looked closely at:

1. Who is it for?
2. How do we make it, what designs do we use?
3. How can we use it to promote our project?
4. How do people find it

The newsletters and blog are aimed at all stakeholders and anybody interested in participatory practice, also as tools for the partnership to utilize and collaborate on.

PARTICIPANTS FEED BACK

“Thank you, thanks to people in Montepulciano having organized the seminar, the concerts, and moments together”

Ulla Hase

Artist at Maison de la Creation

Areas of focus

We need to maintain very good communication between project managers, co –ordination team and participants, and encourage and support those who need it.

Clear allocation of roles and tasks as we move forward into the next phase of the project.

Make sure all participants understand their roles.

Create and on going dialogue about the direction, aims and objectives of the project.

Have clear milestones that we all understand and can achieve.

Carry on the good will and excitement participants felt during the seminar in Italy, regular meetings via Skype and Facebook.

Artists participating in the project are willing and happy to collaborate and co create an analysis tool together, and look at developing the role of a critical creative friend more deeply. The analysis tool/method will possibly incorporate both formal and informal approaches.

Case study

Migrant Women Project



Il Grifo e il Leone, Italy / Migrant Women Project

The Cultural Association “Il Grifo e il Leone” was founded in 1992 in Montepulciano, Tuscany, Italy, with the aim of promoting and realising activities in the territory that can increase cultural knowledge and consciousness.

In 2003, the Association broadened and solidified its actions by opening a space as a base for its activities; a place capable of hosting and creating events and new cultural projects. ilCantinonearte Teatri (CAT) is the result of the Association’s intentions. This is a theatre and exhibition hall comprising more than 400 square meters. It is a part of the antique basement of the sixteenth century structure of the Ex- Conservatory of San Girolamo, one of the historical buildings of the city, protected by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Activities. ilCantinonearte Teatri opened officially to the public in January 2005.

The restoration project is a private initiative financed by its founder and with a support of Association and its members, and with the help of the Local Council Administration, the Ministry of Cultural Activities, the European Community (through the Tuscany Regional Institutions and the Fidi Toscana agency based on European funds under Doc.UP, objective 2.2.2). In June 2006, the Cultural Association “Il Grifo e il Leone” and its President Claudio Borgoni received the certificate of “European Ambassador”, specifically related to the financial investment for the creation of ilCantinonearte Teatri. And in July 2006, the Association was legally recognised by the Regional Government of Tuscany.

Since the 2008 - 2009 the Association started to work on intercultural subjects through a European Project, centered on the feminine view. The project was funded by “Culture Programme” 2007-2013 Strand 1.2.1 “Cooperation Measures,” in partnership with organisations from Italy, Great Britain and Portugal, lead by the Association.

In the 2010, the Association created a regional network called “Rete Migrant Women” composed by public institutions and organisations involved in immigration policies. Migrant Women accomplished many projects by European, national, regional and local funds. All the projects promote the empowerment of foreigners, women in particular, and their children (Learn or improve Italian Language, enhance the awareness of governing their own life). The projects involve in particular women of first migrant generation from North and Centre of Africa, India and East-Europe and their children (second generation) especially inside the School. Migrant Women used the language of the Theatre and Arts in general to ease the intercultural relations and to raise awareness of diversity as a wealth for everyone, everywhere.

From October 2012, the Association has been signed up in two official Regional books: the first one about Social Promotion Associations, the second one about Organisations for No-formal Education. On January 2013, the Association was nationally recognized by the inscription in the Welfare Ministry National Book of Associations working on immigrants and to them.

During the Italian seminar a group of participants attended a specially arranged meeting to interview a small group of the migrant women. This interview was to get a deeper understanding of the project and the impact it had on the women who took part.

To read a more detailed account from one of the attendees click [here](#)

What happens next?

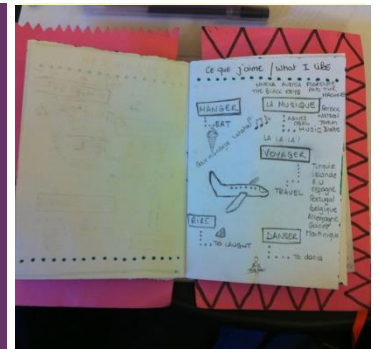
London, UK September 2014

[Deptford X Contemporary Art Festival](#)

A visit to explore an established Contemporary Art Festival with exceptional methods of public engagement.

"I loved this workshop, it was great fun and built my confidence!"

Jean Pierre Brossard
EU Project Consultant



Paris, France December 2014

Music based workshops to share methods and ideas around best practice and innovation.



"I will use this technique for problem solving with my team back in the UK"

Magaret Rose, Director
Capture Arts

Bordeaux, France February 2015

Focusing on socially engaged innovative artistic practices with hard to reach participants.



Zarasai, Lithuania May 2015

Traditional Voice and theatre workshops and looking at new methods of cross fertilisation with contemporary practice.



Brussels, Belgium June 2015

Final event and sharing of outcomes of the workshops and the finale of the project

Contact us

Maison de la Création – Cultural Centre based in North Brussels, Belgium

Capture Arts – Cultural and Educational organisation based in London, UK

Iddac – Cultural Agency of the department of Gironde, based in Bordeaux, FR

Fracas – Musical Company based in Bordeaux, France

Lutherie Urbain – Music organisation based in Paris, France

Ilcantinonearte Teatri – Community Theatre based in Montepulciano, Italy

Salako kulturos Centras – Cultural Centre based Zarasa, Lithuania



MAISON BXL
DE LA
CRÉATION NoRD

Capture Arts



ilCantinonearte
t e a t r i



CENTRE OF CULTURE
OF ZARASAI MUNICIPALITY