



SALZBURG
GLOBAL
SEMINAR

The Art of Resilience: Creativity, Courage and Renewal

Saturday, February 11, 2017

Join in online!

If you're interested in writing either an op-ed style article for our website or the session report, or a personal reflection blog post while you're here this week, please let Salzburg Global Editor, Louise Hallman know or email your 500-word submission directly to lhallman@salzburgglobal.org.

If you write for your own organization either while you're here or after the session, please observe the **Chatham House Rule** (information on which is in your Welcome Pack). If you're in any doubt, do not hesitate to contact Louise.

We'll be updating our website with reflections from the panel discussions and interviews, all of which you can find on the session page:

www.SalzburgGlobal.org/go/573

You can also join in the conversation on Twitter with the hashtag [#SGSculture](https://twitter.com/SGSculture) and see all your fellow Fellows and their organizations on Twitter via the list www.twitter.com/salzburgglobal/lists/SGS-573

We'll be updating both our Facebook page www.facebook.com/SalzburgGlobal and our Flickr stream www.flickr.com/SalzburgGlobal with photos from the session during this week and also after the session. (If you require non-watermarked images for your own publication, please let Louise know.)

You can also find us on Instagram! www.instagram.com/SalzburgGlobal



@ArtyAbid: Meet some of the family of activists, artists and academics that are our Change Makers here in Salzburg #SGSculture



Arts and culture: How can they support indigenous communities?

Oscar Tollast

When we talk about refugees and migrants, we think of people who have been compelled to leave their homelands. In the case of indigenous communities, we see people trying to keep close and connected to their land and roots – yet they are often also marginalized.

In the world today, there are at least 370 million people who are indigenous. Despite colonization, marginalization and discrimination, indigenous peoples across the planet have continued to show resilience in the face of adversity, maintaining and reaffirming their cultures, languages, and social institutions.

Indigenous communities have had to withstand shocks in the face of difficult conditions. Even today, battles continue. In North America, the Standing Rock Sioux tribe is fighting against the controversial Dakota Access oil pipeline. In February, Energy Transfer Partners (ETP) was given formal permission to continue laying the pipeline under a North Dakota reservoir. The project

previously stalled following protests from Native American communities. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe says the pipeline endangers its drinking water. A legal challenge has again been filed to stall the project's completion. In January, Indigenous Australians marked "Invasion Day" – more commonly known as "Australia Day" – marking the British colonization of the country.

The creative sector provides a source of unconventional thinking and innovation, opening up opportunities to capture civic imagination for greater cohesion and resilience. As part of a panel discussion at The Art of Resilience: Creativity, Courage, and Renewal, Salzburg Global Fellows considered the ways in which artists, cultural workers, and creatives could inspire and strengthen the capacities of indigenous communities. Listed below are a few of their summarized thoughts.

Art can provide education and stimulate social development

Charities such as Amantani work to improve the lives of children, providing greater access to education in rural areas.

Continues overleaf



#SGSculture @SalzburgGlobal



facebook.com/SalzburgGlobal



instagram.com/SalzburgGlobal

Continued from page 1

Since 2008, it has helped marginalized Quechua families in Peru. It has attempted to bridge the gap between home and school for people living in Ccorca. Its Educational Boarding Houses enable the most disadvantaged children in Ccorca to have a place to stay near school, allowing time for extra support and community outreach projects.

Amantani works in a small district comprised of eight communities. The young people are growing up in a different world to what their parents experienced. Amantani helps these young people to take on the narrative of their own communities, change it, and retell their stories from a positive point of view through their video project “Meet My World”. Young people went into their communities and looked for things they wanted to teach others. Short films were made by young people about the production of food and how to have fun without technology. One film showed a child teaching his audience how to catch a fish with their bare hands. Films like this are now shown all over the world. This has led to a large emotional response, including many thank you cards. Through this method of art, children gain skills to negotiate Peru’s modern society, while reinforcing indigenous autonomy.

Art allows people to remember who they are and where they come from

The root of resilience is relationships – respecting, renewing and remember our relationships to all things. Organizations like First Peoples Fund in the US support the “collective spirit” of First Peoples artists and culture bearers. It provides tools, resources and a voice to Indigenous artists. The organization was founded in 1995. It describes “collective spirit” as the feeling which encourages people to stand up and make a difference and to ensure ancestral knowledge is passed on. It believes in the power of art and culture to bring about positive change in

Native communities. It works alongside community-based partners across Indian Country to strengthen their capacity. Since its establishment, First Peoples Fund has supported thousands of artists. It has awarded \$1.5 million in direct grants to individual artists and \$1 million to community-based organizations. The story of resilience can be rooted in songs, stories, and the ways in which people have kept to their way of life.

The cultural sector has a responsibility to accurately tell histories

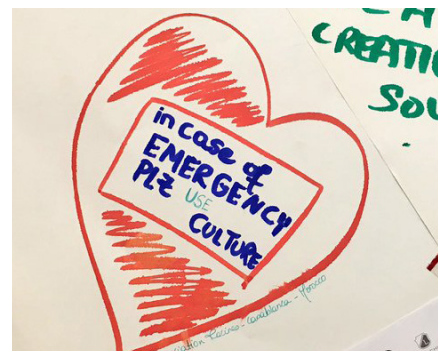
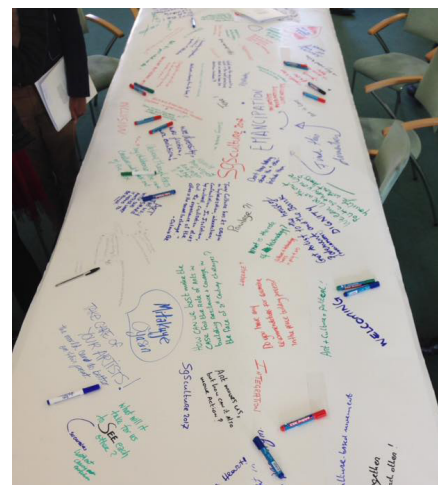
Despite the mainstreaming of Indigenous art, such as dot paintings, which decorate walls of contemporary offices across Australia, there still lacks a widespread understanding for the stories and the complexity of culture behind such artworks. Many Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians consider the nation to be in the midst of a history and culture war, determining what version of the country’s history is told and valued. Controversies include the opening of the National Museum of Australia in 2001, which led to accusations that the exhibitions had politicized the country’s history.

First Nations people have been able to regain their identity as the original inhabitants of Australia, following the Racial Discrimination Act (1975), but social marginalization persists. There is a view that the First Nations people in Australia “should know their place,” representing a significant barrier to achieving meaningful recognition within its constitution.

The arts and cultural sector has a significant role to play to ensure that indigenous peoples’ histories and cultures are represented accurately and respectfully. As one Fellow remarked, “I strongly believe in the power of museums and the creative sector. More broadly, I believe they have a responsibility in building social capital. I believe they have a civic role and can be agents for social and political change if carried out in a non-polemical way.”

Long table learnings

To share their focus groups learnings so far, our Fellow gathered in Parker Hall for a “long table discussion.”



Anida Yoeu Ali: “You can have very powerful conversations without speaking a single word”

Cambodian-American artist explains how her use of movement, humor and brightly-colored structures in public spaces can open wider conversations

Andrea Abellán

Anida Yoeu Ali likes to refer to herself as a “global agitator” It is the best way for her to define the social provocation her art is constantly seeking. The poem she shared with the audience at the opening of the recent Salzburg Global Seminar session *The Art of Resilience: Creativity, Courage and Renewal*, set the tone for the following five days, creating a special and inspiring atmosphere:

I will return to a country I have never known

That burns a hole inside my heart the size of home

The piece, titled *Visiting Loss*, describes how she felt before returning to Cambodia, her country of origin, after 25 years living in the United States. Her path to self-discovery and reflections about her own identity play a fundamental role in her work.

Ali combines her work as an Art and Global Studies teacher at the University of Washington Bothell with the development of her own projects through Studio Revolt, a media-lab she manages with the Japanese filmmaker Masahiro Sugano. Together they develop “unconventional narratives” that range from short videos and films to live performances. These projects largely differ to what audiences are used to finding in traditional media, both in terms of content and form. Although she points out that they are not always fully understood by the audience, Ali keeps believing in that “sort of chemistry” that emerges when connecting her creative performances with Masahiro’s special visual aesthetics.

The Buddhist Bug, one of her most recognized projects, is one such example. It consists of a bright, huge, saffron-colored creature that Ali has taken to a number of open spaces. The main goal of this project is to raise awareness about identity and displacement issues. Ali’s body is a



fundamental part of the performance as it makes the bug be alive and able to move so it can get closer to people.

“The work I do would not mean anything without the use of my body,” she explains. “I truly think that arts, and specifically performance, can engage the audience through the energy that our body emits. Of course I want people to ask themselves questions while observing my work, but I also want them be aware of those different emotions that are surfacing. You can have very powerful conversations without speaking a single word.”

Another important feature that characterizes the Buddhist Bug is the use of humor to talk about challenging and compelling topics. “It leads the audience to reflect on different subject such as the challenges of religious hybridity, or what the sense of belonging and tolerance means. However, people always have to look twice to understand what is really happening. Then they smile, or laugh because in the end they are just looking at a bug,” Ali states.

Her work is usually placed in public spaces; location a key part of her performances. Ali’s goal is to take contemporary arts out of galleries, the “boxes” where artistic representations are frequently trapped. Her hope is to open conversations with bigger

populations. The “surprise element” is another of her priorities when building a project. The original – and not discreet – clothes she wears together with her unexpected actions enable her to catch audience’s attention when they less expect it. The artist likes playing with the surprise factor as a form of engagement.

Even though she recognizes that she could not imagine herself doing anything else rather than arts and teaching, she is very clear when talking about the difficulties that being and artist involves. “You must have a lot of faith and courage to do what you do. As artists we often lack resources and proper support. Also, we are constantly judged, especially in my case as my work is always placed in the street. I get a lot of criticism and judgment by the press and through social media. I guess you need a very thick skin to do this,” she declares.

Despite the many difficulties her work involves, she still has many ideas to keep the audience surprised. For instance, she is planning to focus her next project in the United States on the so called “Trump-lands,” those areas where the current president was voted for the most. “I am very interested in opening up discussion there. These are mostly rural areas where people do not see difference so they can only imagine what difference means and that often relies just on stereotypes and misinformation,” Ali explains.

When asked about the outcomes she was expecting to achieve through her participation in the session *The Art of Resilience: Creativity, Courage and Renewal*, she didn’t hesitate for a second. “I believe we have to create and reinforce these international connections as we have already started to do. We need to break up our bubbles and try to put ourselves on the radar. As artists we should work together for our communities and the world.”

To conclude, Ali insists on “the need to produce new and innovative projects, instead of keep trying to make old models work – which did not help in the past.”

Hot Topic: “How can art narratives mend division or tackle apathy in a way that other sectors cannot?”

Denise Macalino

“Visual storytelling begins by truth telling. Just as climate change relies on science narratives to rely on truths we couldn’t see, visual storytelling among Indigenous people, is about telling truths we can’t see. I’m interested in those other aspects of the world that are concealed by dominant narratives. Visual art and narrative storytelling begins by opening wounds, by telling cultural stories, historical stories, that might be hidden away.”

David Garneau

Metis Nation of Canada; University of Regina, Canada

“[There is arguably no better sector to be able to do exactly that than the cultural sector. In many ways, the embodiment of the cultural sector is tangible, creative ideas and concepts – and in many ways, communication. Be that, through ideas, or outputs, or art and installations. The people that work in this sector are doing that day in and day out.”

Tom Fern

Strategic Communications Manager, European Climate Foundation, UK

“Narratives can tackle apathy in a way that other sectors can’t because they personalize the human experience – by telling stories and creating work around both personal stories, and cultural stories. I think it brings things home to people’s hearts. It’s not expressing things to the mind through facts and figures – which, of course, can always be incorporated in. But I think our first front should always be the heart..”

Frank Kuzler

DecadesOut – Science and the Arts Programming, USA

“In our experience, the narrative has been instrumental in the way that young people relate to other people from their country [Peru], and kind of level the playing field. It allows them to reconstruct [and] redistribute the power

and the relationship. The narrative on the young people’s part is to not feel belittled or marginalized by the dominant culture, but to recognize that they can come to the table with equal weight. In terms of changing narratives on the other side of the fence, there’s an over-simplistic narrative. We want to create a more complex narrative about young people from marginalized communities.”

Fred Branson

Co-director of Amantani, Peru/UK

“What art has done in isolated communities is enable people to document their ancestors’ stories that have been handed down. They used their artwork as a communication tool. For instance, the Aboriginal dance company, called Bangarra...they use traditional dances, but bring them into a more contemporary form to showcase to Australia Aboriginality. It’s not just internally, within the communities, where art and culture has helped – but to promote diversity.”

Dawn Casey

National Museum of Australia, Western Australian Museum, Powerhouse Museum, Australia

“Art – I’m talking from a contemporary space – can really reflect the dialogs and conversations that people can’t often bring to the table – for fear of offending, for fear of not being able to find the voice to say it correctly. It has the ability to speak to people in a way that can take away loneliness and pain. It can allow people to feel less isolated, to be heard. It allows you to be included. And it allows us to open up debate.”

Nike Jonah

PanAfrican Creative Exchange and Afrovibes UK

Have an opinion? Tweet [@SalzburgGlobal](https://twitter.com/SalzburgGlobal) using the hashtag [#SGSculture](https://twitter.com/SGSculture)

Opinion too long for a Tweet?

Write an op-ed!

Email 500 words to Louise Hallman

lhallman@salzburgglobal.org

Time-out!

Our Fellows have a well earned break, exploring the city of Salzburg!
Credit: Erwin Maas – thanks!

