

7

THINGS  
I  
AM  
STILL  
THINKING  
ABOUT AFTER  
ATTENDING THE

**8<sup>th</sup> World  
Summit  
on Arts  
& Culture**

**'linear mindsets – and the hierarchical systems and structures they give rise to – are not fit for purpose in a non-linear world.'**

*Scott Howie attended the 8<sup>th</sup> World Summit on Arts & Culture with financial support from the NSW State Government through Create NSW's Artist Support program and from his employer, Eastern Riverina Arts*



The 8<sup>th</sup> World Summit on Arts & Culture

March 11-14, 2019 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Mobile Minds: Culture, Knowledge and Change

The times in which we live are marked by profound and ongoing transformation. Globalisation, technology, climate change, and migration reshape societies, create complex challenges and invite new solutions. The 8th World Summit on Arts and Culture will bring together leading policy makers, researchers, managers and practitioners from the arts and culture sector from around the world to address these issues and examine how governments, cultural organisations, creative practitioners, and citizens can – and do – work together to actively lead change.

Co-hosted by the National Department for Culture and Arts (JKKN), Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Malaysia and the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA).

SUMMIT WEBSITE [LINK](#)

KILEY AROYO - SUMMIT DISCUSSION PAPER [LINK](#)

# 1

**EVERYONE HAS THE  
RIGHT FREELY TO  
PARTICIPATE IN THE  
CULTURAL LIFE OF  
THE COMMUNITY, TO  
ENJOY THE ARTS AND  
TO SHARE IN  
SCIENTIFIC  
ADVANCEMENT AND  
ITS BENEFITS.**

ARTICLE 27 (1)  
UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS  
[LINK](#)

The conference keynote was delivered by  
**Dr Karima Bennoune (Algeria / USA)**  
**UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights**  
who established a cultural rights framework for us to hang everything off over the next three days.

It is clear that globally there is a huge challenge to actually fulfilling Article 27. How do I as an artist make work that is accessible and relevant to all? How do I as an arts manager make sure that our activities are inclusive, that we support artists from diverse cultural backgrounds, whether gender, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, class? How do governments fund arts to ensure that cultural expression and participation by all members of the community is possible? What do cultural institutions have to do to radically change their models to increase participation by underrepresented communities?

**“cultural rights will have no meaning if there is not an environment in which they can be enjoyed”**

**Patrick Shannon (Canada)** an artist and storyteller and **Tristan Shultz (Australia)** both talked about decolonization and the way in which marginalised communities to be designed into decision making processes.

SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR IN THE FIELD OF  
CULTURAL RIGHTS [LINK](#)

EASTERN RIVERINA ARTS' PLATFORM PROJECT  
[LINK](#)

# 2

**16% OF THE WORLD'S  
POPULATION HAVE  
NO ACCESS TO  
ELECTRICITY.**

Many speakers highlighted issues of inequity and voices being extinguished. The 'freedom' to participate in the new digital economy is valid only on a small scale. The majority of the people do not have the means to create art. Entire groups are disappearing from the cultural/digital realm. **Annette Novak**, Director General Swedish Media Council argued:

**"there is a new stifling of voices through algorithms, manipulative design and the erosion of civil liberties"**

She went on further raising concerns about the metaphor of the digital giants being our new town squares. Town squares used to be in the public sphere not privately owned.

**James Williams (UK)** talked about the way in which tech companies work with persuasive design that has goals that don't align with our lives, ethics and needs ... that the arts & cultural sector goals are in direct competition with commercial interest.

**Diane Rigsdale (USA)** furthered the conversation around diversity of voices. Funding bodies and institutions need to embrace new voices, viewing them as the future not a hassle. Is it possible that government funding and philanthropy controls and sustains institutions that may no longer be fit for purpose? How can institutions engage deeply and authentically with new voices and forms that threaten the 'established order'?

# 3

## ATTENTION IS THE NEW TARGET ASSET IN THE AGE OF DIGITALISM

ASHKAN FRODOST [LINK](#)  
TAEYOON CHOI [LINK](#)

**Ashkan Fardost (SWEDEN)** gave a keynote provocation ‘interrogating’ what it means to be human in the digital age. The slickness and confidence of his delivery with minimally-designed slides made me think about the oppressive nature of the TED-style talk - where everything is presented so compactly, at speed, and designed to capture your attention, to be so easily digested that its very form overwhelms your ability to critically respond.

But Ashkan is excited by the potential of digitalism, the way information technology radically changes the prevailing meaning in a society, the way the internet and digitalization ‘everyone’ can bypass traditional gatekeepers of information and meaning.

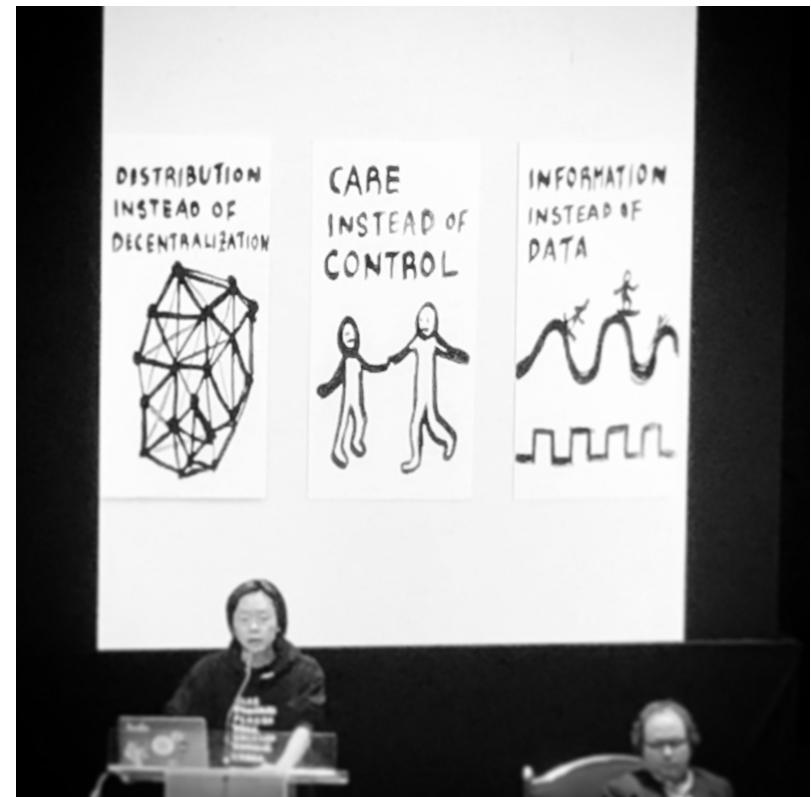
**“the internet is a meaning production engine.”**

Young people are forming digital tribes, developing new forms, new sports, new media ... disrupting broadcasting. And it's these new forms that are attracting mass attention on Instagram - allowing young people to become influencers and make money. Culture and the ability to attract people's attention will be the new ‘capital’ that replaces property in the digital age. It's all just content for the machine :(

It was wonderful to hear a dissenting voice to the inevitable-ness of this model by **Taeyoon Choi (South Korea/USA)** artist and founder of the School of Poetic Computation who believes that we need to develop the technological skills to develop our own networks, to take ownership.



ASHKAN FRODOST @TOURISTINSPACE



TAEYOON CHOI @DRWNGDRWNG

# 4

## **THE GRAND PROJECT OF THE 21C IS TO TEACH THE ARTISTIC PROCESS NOT INCREASE THE CONSUMPTION OF THE ARTS**

HIJJAS BIN KASTURI'S FUNDED RESIDENCY [LINK](#)

HIJJAS BIN KASTURI'S TABUNG HAJI [LINK](#)

This popped up on a slide in **Ashkan Fardost (SWEDEN)** keynote provocation. Ashkan's arguement came from the point of view that people need to be able to get attention and trade that attention in the new era of 'digitalism'

From a more humanist angle, Malaysian architect and philanthropist **Hijjas bin Kasturi** stressed the importance of arts education in schools, the need to teach creative process as a fundamental skill to participate in the changing environment.

**"who controls the means of cultural production controls the stories the nation tells itself"**

Writer Tash Aw (Malaysia) believes it is important for us to distinguish between making product that succeeds in the marketplace and making art

The challenge is of course how do governments and funding bodies use there scarce resources to increase participation?

But the larger challenge is the battle against increased consumption generally. How do we equip our community to fight back against persuasive design, to master everchanging technology and control the means of distribution? How do we keep ourselves off the technologixal 'treadmill of incompetence' designed to keep us in a state of constant learning, never achieving mastery?

**"culture is the coping mechanism for sentient beings living in a cold and brutal world"**

mangled quote from Fardost's keynote. possible attribution to Anoushka Chakraborty

# 5

## ARTS FUNDING NEEDS NEW MODELS

Everyone across the world is struggling with funding models. Whether it is scarce resources, whether it is around who decides what gets funded, whether it is do we fund participation or professional artists? How we do we fund new voices? New artforms? How can bureaucracy be nimble in response to changing environment? How do we distinguish excellence from its by-products (money + fame)? How do we increase diversity? Should government be funding arts at all (often asked by artists themselves)? How hands off should government be? How do we deal with the tension between the commercial value and cultural value of the type of works funded?

If artists are in control of funding, will it become entirely self serving? If we invite the broader community in will relevance and/or populism become the over-riding criteria? How could agencies then intervene strategically, how would we implement flexible, rapid responses?

**“how do we balance what the public wants and needs versus what artists want and need?”**

How do we fund new projects from people that don't know that you can apply for funding? How can the arts sector prevent arts funding just being an echo chamber - where we only fund what we like?

So many questions and I didn't speak with anyone who proposed any new models - maybe I went to the wrong sessions :)

# 6

## IS THE ARTS REALLY A SAFE SPACE FOR UNSAFE IDEAS?

THE SALOONI PROJECT [LINK](#)  
AURAT RAAJ PROJECT [LINK](#)

When a panelist off-handedly quoted a colleague's definition of 'arts being a safe space for unsafe ideas', the reaction was quite mixed. In my favourite panel **Hijjas bin Kasturi** reminded us all that in many countries artists risk their lives and their freedom on a daily basis.

And then I started reflecting on our own country and how 'safe' a space the arts is here. I thought about Eryn Jean Norville and the treatment she got for complaining about sexual harrasment in the rehearsal room. I thought about the poets of the Bankstown Poetry Slam being trolled through the Daily Telegraph by Mark Latham. I thought about the Ian Potter Cultral Fund removing promotional support from soda\_jerk's 'terra nullius' because it was "a very controversial work of art". I thought about the response to Yassmin Abdel-Magied's tweet on ANZAC Day that hounded her out of our country. I thought about how a durational performance I made once as an individual resulted in a phone call to my employer by an irate MP. I thought about how reliance on arts funding frightens so many arts organisations into not wanting to upset funding agencies and governments, to not raises our voices.

And while inside our bubble we might feel safe discussing some unsafe ideas, most of our artists' ideas aren't that radical, we work in constant uncertainty, we have to stretch every dollar, we hardly earn any money - the arts is not a safe space to work.

# 7

## WE'RE ALL IN THIS MESS TOGETHER

During moments in the conference I was overwhelmed by the challenges faced by those of us working on the ground - the ethical responsibility to make ourselves more open, transparent, to increase our dialogue with others, to invite a range of voices into the decision making process, to reduce inequity, to adapt to a global digital society filled with fragmented niche groups.

And yet amidst all the fear was a sense of optimism and hope. From the artists I listened to, whose projects were having real impact around the world. From the arts workers committing to push forward, take on the challenges.

The largest challenge the arts faces is an age old one. **Stephen Wainwright (NZ)** the CEO of Creative New Zealand brings it all back to the public value of arts & culture.

**"if we can't convince ourselves, that we articulate our value, why would anyone else care?"**

He implored us to position ourselves through our impact and work as part of the system as opposed to thinly resourced individual organisations.

I tended to gravitate to artists and arts workers in the breaks for conversation and was struck by the samebutdifferent-ness of our challenges. It's like we are working on the same jigsaw puzzle but the pieces are shaped differently or maybe we are working on different puzzles but the pieces are all shaped the same. I'm not sure but I felt connected.

# other voices



Rebecca Blackman  
@RebeccaBlackma6

'Good people who want to do the right thing but don't speak up - is the most crushing'  
Powerful call to action from Kathy Rowland at #ArtSummitKL @ifacca



PatSam  
@iampatsam

The concept of 'import substitution' is key to shift ownership and create new opportunities for young people. Malaysia did it, Namibia can do it, and Africa must do it #ArtSummitKL



The Godown  
@TheGodownKL

The revolution will not be funded! Unfortunately. #ArtSummitKL @DERagsdale @ArtsJournalNews #cendanamalaysia @mysenibudaya @ifacca #thegodownkl #artscentrek1



Creative Economy  
@UK\_CE

"Disability is the only context that doesn't discriminate. We can focus on gender and other topics, but disability doesn't go away!" Caroline Bowditch of @ArtsAccessVic provokes us to think if we should talk about #Equality rather than #Diversity #ArtSummitKL @ifacca @AtlasFuture



Solar  
@civilsolar

Could not agree more with @tchoi8 when he states that "another Internet is possible". That our role as cultural activists & managers is to make those alternative technological futures more visible and attainable. Move away from narratives of technological determinism

# #artsummitkl



Borderline Offensive  
@border\_offensiv

[anzsog.edu.au/resource-libra... inspiring call-to-action](http://anzsog.edu.au/resource-libra... inspiring call-to-action) by @CreativeNZ at #ArtSummitKL: lets have a measure of public value provided by public governance as conceptually clear and understandable by constituents as "profit", its counterpart for private value.



Sarah Gardner  
@sarahmgardner

Tash Aw #ArtSummitKL @ifacca The best arts funding agencies are those that attempt to be fair and attempt to be unconditional....Not corrupt, not nepotistic, not run by bureaucrats or artists that are self-serving. There must be genuine attempts to reach outside the familiar.



Toni Attard  
@AttardToni

Change is meaningful when it is rooted in cultural dignity - Eddin Khoo @ifacca #ArtSummitKL #MobileMinds



Sarah Gardner  
@sarahmgardner

@kulturradet Kristen

Danielsen: Artists move faster than arts councils or govt.s. New voices are not a hassle, they are our future. We were storytellers before borders existed. As nations, it's time to invite artists in and share not to compete to tell the best story #ArtsummitKL



Cathy Runciman  
@CathyRunciman

BOOM! @TouristInSpace takes us from the dawn of civilization to the attention economy & power of cultural capital via trance music, ant colonies, Martin Luther, hobby horsing & @pewdiepie. Awesome tour - thank you! #ArtSummitKL



Patrick Riel  
@PATRICKRIEL

Arts evolve much faster than government funding bodies. #ArtSummitKL

**alexlouiseomara** I loved the thinking from Nang K'uulas - Patrick Shannon- an artist and storyteller of Haida ancestry - especially that leadership is about bringing other people up - 'the rising tide floats all the canoes'. Also about the challenges of mistrust and colonial thinking. That people from marginalised communities need to be making the decisions, that good intentions are only good if not causing more harm, the importance of showing meaningful care and not virtue signalling #ArtSummitKL #kualalumpur #creatensw



Sarah Gardner  
@sarahmgardner

@TristanSchultz #artsummitkl

We need to demonstrate urgent patience #urgentpatience to deal with today's world and its serious crises, to create transitional pathways

## LINKS

**Ifacca.org/**

**artsummit.org/**

**artsummit.org/discussionpaper**

**un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/**

**unhchr.org/en/issues/culturalrights/pages/srculturalsrightsindex.aspx**

**platformriverina.com**

**ashkan.io**

**taeyoonchoi.com**

**rimbundahan.org**

**thesalooni.com**

**auratraaj.co**

**easternriverinaarts.org.au**

**create.nsw.gov.au**



chubbygristle Amidst all the ads and  
duty free and flashy lights and taxi touts  
were two little pull up banners out there  
just to make me feel welcome  
[#artsummitKL](#)

