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WHY CULTURE?

The Landscape of Motivation for Arts and Culture

for COMMUNITIES
for ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SPACES
for NETWORKING
for TOLERANCE

for VIBRANCE

for EXCELLENCE

for HEALING

for SPIRITUALITY

for CREATIVE EXPRESSION

for EDUCATION
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for IDENTITY & STORYTELLING

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for KNOWLEDGE

for SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

for ACTIVISM
for HUMAN RIGHTS
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for FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

for CONFLICT RESOLUTION

for CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

for COMPLIANCE

for the ECONOMY
for TOURISM
for the CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
for URBAN REJUVENATION

for INVESTMENT

FUND RECIPIENTS:

ARTISTS MUSEUMS OPERAS BALLET
CULTURAL SPACES CULTURAL OPERATORS

AUDIENCE

Encouraging sustainability in the arts and culture sector through public & private investments, and through entrepreneurial business practices - www.arabculturefund.org

WHY CULTURE?

The Landscape of Motivation for Arts and Culture

Why are Arts and Culture so vital to us as individuals, communities, nations, and global citizens? Why do the arts deserve to be supported? Why are they already actively endorsed, funded and promoted by philanthropists, investors, educators, politicians, diplomats, governments and foundations all over the world, as well as by the larger public?

Mapping the motivation of this myriad of stakeholders against the perceived benefits of Arts and Culture, gives us a complex picture of numerous and often overlapping incentives: Some stakeholders engage in arts and culture because of their indirect impact on personal development, building human capacities and societal vibrancy; others seek a direct return for ideology, profitability or visibility; some are not convinced this sector is worthy of investment in the first place, nor that it is a priority.

As cultural practitioners, individuals or institutions, well aware of the intrinsic significance that Arts and Culture has in our daily lives, our immediate past and future, we are busy imagining, creating, producing, interacting with audiences and fundraising for our work, but in the context of shrinking public support and an ever expanding and omnipresent popular culture, we struggle to reexamine our own motivations in relation to those of the "other" and often end up talking past each other. This "map of motivation" attempts to give us a better insight of what drives the other to support Arts and Culture and thus should allow us to better frame future discussions with potential partners and supporters.

for COMMUNITIES

Social cohesion is vital for the health and well being of communities. Arts and culture create physical and virtual spaces for open engagement, discussion and participation.

For ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SPACES

The relationship between private and public spaces is brought to the fore through the art. How do we define our place? How do we relate to our environment? How can we reclaim the public space? These are the questions that art raises.

For NETWORKING

Cultural events, visits to museums, theatre performances, art exhibitions and festivals are all excellent opportunities for individuals to connect and interact, for new ideas to emerge and old ideas to be challenged.

For TOLERANCE

If tolerance is the art of disagreement and tolerant societies are ones that allow for differences to cohabit, it is often through the arts that such differences and diversities are best celebrated.

for VIBRANCE

Arts and culture are important for allowing more open and vibrant societies to thrive. The collaboration, creativity, entrepreneurship and experimentation of artists stimulate communities, neighborhoods and cities that may otherwise become stagnant.

for KNOWLEDGE

Critics, journalists, curators, librarians and archivists play an important role in collecting, analyzing and disseminating thoughts and ideals to become part of shared human knowledge. Such works shed light on realities that might otherwise disappear and serve as compelling tools for challenging stereotypes and misinformation.

for SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Introducing arts and music into the national educational curriculum of Singapore has proven to have a direct impact on the number of patents and technological creativity few years down the line. In Silicon Valley, there is a higher national average of musicians, artists, filmmakers and poets. Creativity in the scientific realm feeds on creativity in the arts.

for ACTIVISM

Calling for justice on societal issues can be significantly strengthened through impactful artistic and cultural productions. Artistic works offer creativity in the face of adversity and coalesce communities around relevant topics.

For HUMAN RIGHTS

Children right, Women rights, Minority rights, Refugee rights - all those who are abused or voiceless can better deliver their message through arts and cultural. Films, songs and stories have an impact on public awareness while also increasing pressure on governments and policy makers to address injustice left otherwise neglected.

For ENVIRONMENT

Many artworks and performances are created to heighten the reality of a threatened environment, of water scarcity and pollution, for example. While scientific evidence on environment in crisis is plenty, awareness and sense of responsibility are better activated through the arts.

For FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Freedom of expression freedom of assembly and congregation, or lack thereof, is a barometer for the advancement of societies and cause for action.

for CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Art used in post-conflict and post-war times help with the development of dialogue and empathy, respect for diversity and for peace building initiatives. Projects like "Theater for the Oppressed" use play acting to embody crisis scenarios and explore alternative approaches to dealing with differences and tensions.

for EDUCATION

Arts education, visiting museums, learning to paint or play a musical instrument or perform in a school play have been proven invaluable in improving the personal development of children and adults.

For CONFIDENCE

Youth involved in the arts have higher perceptions of self-worth than those not engaged in the arts. Arts and Culture offer opportunities to improve self-expression and self-esteem.

For EMPOWERMENT

While anyone can benefit from artistic practices, the impact of arts education is strongest on underprivileged youth and students of low socio-economic status.

For COGNITIVE CAPACITY

Individuals that engage in arts tend to have better memory, better attention capacity and higher literacy rates. The practice of music in particular correlates with mental skills central to geometry and spatial awareness.

For COMMUNICATION

The capacity to listen carefully, to empathize with others, and to speak well is improved, particularly with performance arts.

For DIVERSITY

Experimenting with the arts encourages a more open and curious attitude towards others. Exploring other cultures, visiting cultural centers and artistic events promote openness and respect to diversity.

for HERITAGE

The preservation, celebration and sharing of cultural heritage, tangible and intangible: collective memories, archaeological sites, languages, folklore, and museum collections: traditional, modern and contemporary are fundamental duties of nation states.

For CONSERVATION & ACQUISITION

Important resources are spent on conserving historical buildings and architectural vestiges of previous eras. National collections of masterpieces that range from paintings and sculptures to pottery, tapestries and manuscripts are protected as national treasures, and a tangible evidence of perseverance and wealth.

For IDENTITY & STORYTELLING

Protecting collective memories and the intangibles of culture is extremely valuable, particularly when individuals and communities are uprooted and access to their land are interrupted. Through language, food, song, dance, etc. they continue to exist for future generations.

for HEALING

The therapeutic side of the arts is essential for transforming painful experiences into opportunities for growth and wisdom. Metaphor, movement, color and imagery help shore up problematic subjects in a safe and respectful environment and pave the way to resolving trauma.

for EXCELLENCE

Distinction in quality is the ultimate goal of artistic and cultural works. To support high-quality artistic production is to invest in virtuosity and talent, to bring out the best in people's craftsmanship and skill.

for SPIRITUALITY

Art connects us to the present moment and expands our awareness beyond the limits of words, towards a place that words cannot capture. Religious traditions have long used the arts to evoke this greater intelligence.

for CREATIVE EXPRESSION

The impulse to create, self-express through colors, poetry, music and dance is a basic need and fundamental to our existence as fulfilled human beings.

for CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Support for arts and culture under the banner of Corporate Social Responsibility is gaining more traction among major regional and international corporations along more common sectors like health and welfare, and as a necessary re-investment into consumers' communities.

for the ECONOMY

Cultural events, one-time or recurring, and the Creative Industries, have risen to become prominent components of economic growth, helping spur urban renewal and development and attracting tourists, entrepreneurs and corporate investments.

For the CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Creativity and talent are magnets for industry and entrepreneurship. By supporting the arts, brain drain can be averted and talent can be retained. Artists brought into the business sector offer new perspectives and inspire creativity and collaboration and impact significantly local and regional economies.

For TOURISM

Museums, festivals, fairs and biennales in art, music, cinema, literature and theatre make a significant contribution to promoting the places where they take place and to attracting audiences worldwide thus generating substantial wealth and employment.

For URBAN REJUVENATION

Abandoned warehouses turned exhibition spaces and derelict neighborhoods becoming prime art-studio locations and centers for cultural exhibitions and events are common strategies to revive stagnant cities, towns and neighborhoods.

for COMPLIANCE

Visionary philanthropists have led the way in supporting arts and culture as a vital component of societal development; leading corporations have acknowledged cultural philanthropy as best practice in CSR. These early adopters will pave the way for others to follow suit to comply with what will become an established practice.

for POLITICS

Artistic and cultural productions have long been effective tools for politics and propaganda. Governments, past and present, democratic or autocratic have traditionally supported arts and culture to further their political agendas both nationally and internationally.

For NATIONAL IDEOLOGY

Architecture, monuments, museums, murals, national anthems and poetries of praise have long symbolized cult of personalities, citizenship or national belonging.

For CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Diplomatic circles play a prominent role in promoting artists and cultural exchange. Foreign cultural centers have served as venues for education, exhibition as well as research. The large-scale franchising of prominent foreign museums is a statement of international influence and political partnerships.

for VISIBILITY

In our contemporary societies, visibility often equates to success. Nothing has thrived better on such principle than the market for contemporary art. Galleries and auction houses have eclipsed esthetics and curatorial expertise to position contemporary productions as prime vehicles for visibility and prestige.

For NATIONAL BRANDING

Celebrity architecture, celebrity artists and celebrity cultural brands are hot commodities that demand the highest prices from those that seek fame, positioning and international exposure.

For SOCIAL PRESTIGE

Modern and contemporary artworks are sought-for status symbols that have command record prices over the last decades. Economists call this 'positional goods' - items that are valuable precisely because not everyone else can have them.

for INVESTMENT

Modern and contemporary works of art have recently emerged as a valid alternative for diversifying the investment portfolios of banks, funds, and high net-worth individuals. Many seek to purchase art they believe will appreciate in the future while benefiting from the visibility and status it caters for.

for ENTERTAINMENT

Popular culture from television shows and soap operas to formulaic movie productions in Hollywood or Bollywood are by far the place where we find the highest investments, expenditures and returns on investment. Is popular culture distinct from the "higher" arts; is it solely defined by its commercial aspects?