

6th ASEM Culture Ministers Meeting 2014
19-20-21 October 2014, Rotterdam, the Netherlands
Creative industries for society: talent, technology and trade

ASEM Culture Ministers 2014

The ASEM dialogue addresses cultural issues, with the objective of strengthening the relationships between our two regions, in a spirit of mutual respect and equal partnership. Building on the outcomes of previous ASEM Meetings, the aim of the 2014 meeting will be to contribute further to a shared future. Asian and European countries alike have experience in using the creative industries for job and wealth creation and for promoting sustainable development, social inclusion, regeneration, and empowerment. The ASEM Culture Ministers will use this 6th meeting to exchange experiences and discuss the benefits and challenges of creative industries.

Three guiding principles

1. Culture: Delegates can visit creative industries hubs as well as cultural venues.
2. Contact and Cooperation: Ministers will exchange views in the plenary meeting. All delegates will be able to learn from and take part in several workshops.
3. Commerce: Networking between Asian and European professionals in the creative industries.

Creative industries

Societal progress depends on innovation, new ideas, and solutions for the major problems of our time. The start of the 21st century has required Asia and Europe to employ development strategies to foster human creative potential to respond to the cultural, economic, social, and technological shifts taking place. Creative industries have the ability to make use of culture to provide new insights and new solutions to benefit both societal and economic goals. The creative economy is part of the world economic and development agenda. Adequately nurtured, creativity fuels culture, infuses human-centred development, and is key ingredient in job creation, innovation and trade, while at the same time contributing to social inclusion, cultural diversity, and environmental sustainability.

Challenges to the development of creative industries

The challenges faced by many countries where the creative industries are part of the cultural policy agenda are: how to create links between different creative entrepreneurs and between entrepreneurs in creative and "non-creative" sectors, how to make education/science interact with creative industries, and how to make these developments filter through at regional and city level. National policy needs to reflect on the fostering of creative talent. A clear link should be created between the creative industries and the social goals that they can help achieve. This requires the value of the creative industries for competitive advantage to be recognised. Innovation does not come through technological advancement per se: technological advancement can be traced back to imagination, creativity and craftsmanship.

Tentative programme

The first day of the conference – 19 October 2014 – will have an informal character. Delegates will be offered a cultural programme related to the theme of the conference. In the afternoon, a Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) will likely be convened to discuss and finalise the content of the workshops. The ASEM conference will formally start the next day with a plenary programme in the morning and several workshops in the afternoon, after which the City of Rotterdam will offer a formal dinner at the town hall.

On the third day the chairs will exchange conclusions and, after a farewell lunch, the delegates will be offered the opportunity to visit creative and cultural sites in Amsterdam.

Workshops

To elaborate on the theme and enhance the dialogue, the following topics have been chosen for the workshops (more detailed information on the workshops is enclosed):

- Creative skills
- Creative entrepreneurs
- Creative cities
- Social design
- Sustainable design

Networking for creative industries

A matchmaking event will be organised in tandem with the ASEM conference. Professionals in the ASEM countries' creative industries will be invited to participate in this event. The purpose of the match-making sessions will be to promote international exchange between creative industries professionals and to achieve new and/or improved cooperation.

Becoming a co-chair or co-sponsor of the conference

Co-chairing:

Workshops at ASEM CMM meetings are usually chaired by two presidents (co-chairs) from two countries, one Asian and one European. The co-chairs are expected to prepare the workshops (including a preparatory SOM meeting), arrange speakers, make the opening and closing remarks, and moderate the workshop. In terms of structuring the workshop, there are usually presentations by two co-sponsoring countries, followed by three or four registered interventions. The co-chairing countries are responsible for preparing the workshop's closing report.

Co-sponsoring workshops

Besides co-chairing a workshop, each workshop is co-sponsored by two countries, one Asian and one European. A co-sponsor gives a presentation on the workshop's topic. This can be a case study, an illustrative example from their country, or a policy paper. In addition to this opportunity within the workshops, sponsor countries can contribute additional value to the meeting through such activities as sponsoring an official meal or a cultural visit.

More info

Contact us at ASEMculture2014@minocw.nl

Workshop 1 - Creative skills

Introduction

Innovation is a key prerequisite to meeting the societal challenges of the 21st century, such as health care and ageing, mobility, and the management of natural resources. The creative industries, as no other, are capable of fostering innovation. Creative skills – sometimes referred to as 21st century skills – are increasingly in demand in business. The OECD defines creative skills as skills in thinking and creativity (critical faculties, imagination, curiosity). The convergence of art, business, creativity, innovation, engineering, and science must be encouraged. Large multinationals insist that creative skills are indispensable to finding new solutions to problems and to facilitating growth and acceleration. Education can contribute to the development of these skills, which is illustrated by recent curriculum reforms in some countries. From a cultural policy standpoint, the contribution of arts education to the development of these skills is particularly relevant. In some countries, for example, schools and arts institutions are engaging in cultural partnerships in order to bring creative approaches into the classroom.

Focus

What skills are needed in industry? What role can education play in endowing future generations with creative skills? And how can government policy contribute?

Direction

With these questions in mind the workshop on creative skills can discuss presentations and case studies from different points of view, for instance:

Creativity in schools:

An increasing number of countries see the fostering of creativity and critical thinking as the next educational challenge. What can we learn from examples of educational initiatives aiming to foster pupils' creativity and critical thinking?

Creative cooperation:

How can schools and creative professionals engage in long-term cooperation? How can this cooperation be put to use: focus on the programme for pupils or teacher support and development?

Skills for business and industry:

Many companies feel they have to make a shift from product focus to a more service and human-centred approach. Creative thinking is needed to facilitate this shift.

Creativity in higher vocational training:

In higher arts education students develop their passion into a profession. Can programmes in higher vocational training be forerunners in further developing creative skills? How can graduates contribute to continual innovation in the arts and improve the quality of society?

Workshop 2 - Creative Entrepreneurs

Introduction

Creative entrepreneurs are viewed as the backbone of the creative industries, and much of government policy for the creative industries focuses on creating the proper conditions for creative entrepreneurs to develop their potential. Moreover, it is widely felt that tapping the full potential of creative talent requires the development not just of artistic capabilities, but entrepreneurial and leadership skills as well. The creative entrepreneur must be able to lead change, do business, and work with people (team, board, governance).

In the literature on the subject, the artist is often viewed as the originator of the concept of a creative entrepreneur, making it the task of policymakers to provide tools for artists to develop themselves into creative entrepreneurs. In other words: we as policymakers should provide artists with the right tools to enable them to transform a creative idea into a product that meets consumers' demands. In this concept – which reinforces the popular image of a creative entrepreneur as a young, independent, creative, conceptual, and, last but not least, struggling thinker – the creative entrepreneur more or less controls or manages the entire creative process. Struggling to bring their ideas into the limelight. Struggling to put their ideas into practise. In this image, the artist has insufficient practical/professional training and is insufficiently equipped to function as an entrepreneur.

But one also comes across other definitions and images. A creative entrepreneur can also be seen as an entrepreneur who deals primarily with making the most of creative capital and ideas. In this concept, a creative entrepreneur is looked upon not so much as an artist but as an intermediary link between the artist and the consumer: the concept of a creative entrepreneur as an investor in talent.

Focus

It would be worthwhile to examine the relevancy of the two concepts of a creative entrepreneur and what they mean for government policy. In what direction – if any – should government policy move?

Direction

Two concepts of creative entrepreneur

Should we look at an artist as a creative entrepreneur who deals both with the creative idea as well as the transformation of this idea into a practical product, or should we look at the creative entrepreneur as a vital link in the whole creative process?

Role of the government

Is there a role for government – as commissioning body, as regulator or as funding agency – with regard to stimulating and supporting the creative entrepreneur, and if so, on what areas should government policy concentrate and how compelling and forceful should government policy in this area be?

Providing tools to help artist to develop as a creative entrepreneur

To what extent can or should government educational policy contribute to the development of artists as creative entrepreneurs (e.g. leadership programmes, commercial skills, multidisciplinary cooperation, funding in microcredits)?

Workshop 3 - Creative cities

Introduction

More than half of the world's population live in cities. Cities are increasingly playing a vital role in harnessing creativity for economic and social development. The 'Creative Cities' concept is based on the belief that culture can contribute substantially to urban renewal. The creative industries can enhance the quality of life of citizens by contributing to a city's social fabric and cultural diversity, strengthening a sense of community, and helping to define a shared identity. The Creative Cities theme offers opportunities to focus on cities and communities by looking to their inherent potential for cultural innovation. The theme is comprehensive, however, and there have been endeavours around the world to put the Creative Cities concept into practice. Many cities are developing creative clusters to stimulate economic and urban growth. Many cities even refer to themselves as 'creative', though the interpretation of this notion may differ from case to case.

The fact that the majority of people on earth live in cities means that they are confronted with issues that hamper the quality of life: air quality, adequate sewage and clean water, or mobility. As the societal challenges grow more and more complex, so do the solutions. A multidisciplinary approach is needed. The creative industries, characterised by small enterprises that work in multidisciplinary teams, are found in co-operative ventures with other sectors, e.g. urban development, infrastructure, high-tech systems and materials, ICT, life sciences and health services, security services and systems, transport and logistics, etc. The design sector is taking a new approach, with the creative industries addressing complex societal issues by asking questions, promoting cooperation, fostering new ways of getting things done, etc. Through its emphasis on multidisciplinary cooperation and connecting parties and points of view, the creative industries are well-suited to taking on the role of finding solutions to these complex societal challenges.

Focus

What role can governments (both national and local) play in creating conditions for the development of creative cities? What should be the contribution of public-private cooperation to this field? And how can the creative industries effectively contribute to the creation of a sustainable living environment?

Directions

Building on the outcomes of

- the Heritage Cities as Generators of Creative Economy workshop (5th ASEM CMM), which emphasised the strong connection between cultural heritage and business and the importance of involving citizens in spatial planning processes; and
- the Sustainable Creative Cities (ASF 2010) workshop, which concluded that a shift in policies is required, away from 'creative class' and global competition of 'creative cities' and towards more ecological-social-cultural engagements and more genuinely participative urban developments,

We could examine the issues of culture and sustainable urban development – which is also the central notion of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network. How can the creative industries foster societal issues on a local level?

We could examine the creation of new social and business structures and spaces; the scope and scale of so-called new-industrial clusters (Creative Clusters) in local cultural and creative quarters; urban planning and public space; and the role of cultural heritage and the adaptive reuse of the built fabric.

Workshop 4 - Social design

Introduction

Designers, industry, and the cultural sector play a role in a society where consumption and individual interest prevail and lifestyle, image, and profits predominate. But the creative industries also include professionals who are determined to change people's behaviour regarding pressing social issues. It includes artists and designers who want to have a societal impact with their work.

Design for humanity and social well-being, or "social design", offers a broad spectrum of discussion topics. The term "social design" is used in many different ways. It may refer to a design process carried out by mentally disabled designers, to a design which is made with care for natural resources and the environment, to a product intended to stimulate social interaction in a community, and even to the way a society is organised. Social design is about projects that demonstrate an awareness of design and entrepreneurial culture in relation to personal needs and context. It is about sustainable development, about linking design with social benefits. It really targets people in the creative industries and initiatives for social design, as with other types of design, are often small initiatives spurred by a single person.

The topic of social design is consistent with one of the outcomes of the 5th ASEM CMM, where art and culture were labelled as essential drivers for stimulating dialogue and creating awareness of societal topics. The underlying assumption is that design is not only about beauty and aesthetics, but also about proposing alternatives and finding solutions for social issues, both in urban environments and in small communities, to improve social well-being. It is designing for people's needs rather than their wants. For governments, it is crucial to foster initiatives that spring from social design. The challenge for a designer is to think about their designs and the impact they have on our society and people's behaviour.

Focus

The central question in this workshop will be: how can the creative industries effectively contribute to products, programmes, and events which improve human well-being, humanity, and livelihood? The workshop will focus on topics relating to the value of public-private partnership. The industry has an important role in this and the market is very relevant. What are the major issues and challenges? Which problems should be tackled jointly? The creative industries can provide leverage to create social and economic value.

Direction

Role of the creative industries

Artists and designers approach social issues from unexpected angles and thus contribute to possible solutions originating from their social ambitions. How can the creative industries effectively contribute to products, programmes, and events which improve human well-being, humanity, and livelihood? If there is a need to solve problems from an artistic and creative point of view, industries/companies will also need to invest in human capital. Should broader partnerships be formed within the creative sector and across other sectors?

Role of the government

What should the government's role be in creating a wider audience for social design and contributing to more awareness of sustainability and quality? Should the government primarily target the design and the design process, i.e. the designer and the industry at the beginning of the production chain? Is there a role for government policy with regard to stimulating and rewarding societal initiatives? If so, what are the possibilities for both national and local governments to stimulate design for social well-being and humanity?

Public-Private Partnership

What are examples of a public-private partnership in this field? Sample cases from Asia and Europe can highlight potentials and pitfalls.

Workshop 5 - Sustainable Design

Introduction

Sustainable design is about designing physical objects, the built environment, and services to comply with the principles of social, economic, and ecological sustainability. The aim is to eliminate negative environmental impact through skilful, sensitive design and to connect people with the natural environment. Beyond this, sustainable design must create projects that are meaningful innovations that can modify behaviour. Finally, a dynamic balance must be achieved between economy and society, intended to generate long-term relationships between user and project or service, and to be respectful and mindful of the environmental and social differences.

Considering the growing number of people on earth and the finite boundaries of our planet, the challenges are well-known: to supply everybody with energy, water and food within planetary constraints (climate change, biodiversity and ecosystem services, availability of natural resources). As the societal challenges grow more and more complex, so do the solutions. A multidisciplinary approach is needed.

The creative industries are characterised by small enterprises that work in multidisciplinary teams, in ever-changing combinations. The creative industries are found in co-operative ventures with other sectors, e.g. urban development, infrastructure, high-tech systems and materials, ICT, life sciences and health services, security services and systems, transport and logistics, etc. Through its emphasis on multidisciplinary cooperation, and by connecting parties and points of view with the aim of achieving crossovers with other sectors, the creative industries are well-suited to taking on the role of finding solutions to these complex societal challenges.

Focus

How can the creative industries effectively contribute to the creation of a sustainable living environment? What is the importance of crossovers with other sectors? What role(s) can governments play?

Directions

Roles of the creative industries

The creative industries are already taking on a role in solving problems relating to sustainability, at the level of the product (eco-car), product-service combinations (leasing office lighting), influencing behaviour (fuel-efficient driving), strategic design (new, more sustainable processes, strategies, business models) and at systemic level (circular economy).

Up to now, a lot of these developments seemed to have happened randomly and spontaneously. Moreover, the creative industries do not automatically deliver efficiency and sustainability, because customers might demand something else. How can sustainability become more permanently embedded in creative industries?

Role of government

Considering the complexity of issues surrounding sustainability, taking into account the active role that other actors are increasingly claiming (citizen participation, Triple Helix) and internal market regulations (EU), the government's role is becoming less and less that of regulator.

How can eco-design be stimulated? What can governments do to create more crossovers between the creative industries on the one hand, and manufacturing as well as environmental technologies on the other, which can lead to solutions through eco-design? How can consumers, producers, and intermediaries be influenced and nudged towards more sustainable behaviour? Should governments take part in co-creation with other actors, hold competitions and offer awards and prizes, and take the lead in sustainable procurement?