

EUROPE:BEYOND

A Magazine of the Institute for a Greater Europe

High Culture vs Popular Culture: The Euro Lens



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Thank you so much for your support of our newest endeavour at the Institute for a Greater Europe!

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" Culture is always political. Writing and art are inherently tied to cultural debates and change which spread from country to region to the global scale. Culture is also intertwined with Europe, debates about its identity, and discussions of its global reach.

Articles from this issue range from the diplomatic role of museums and their broader role in society to the work of Edvard Munch. There are also interviews covering education, intercultural intelligence, industrialisation, and modernity, as well as artwork showcasing expansive physical and subliminal space. Brought together, these contributions are insightful on a range of issues, both historical and current. By bridging historical and physical gaps in our considerations of art and culture, this edition of the Europe Beyond Magazine serves as a poignant reminder that these works and discussions are central to the sociopolitical dimensions of European affairs."

-Dan Ziebarth, Editor-in-Chief of the Greater European Journal (GEJ)

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Note from the IGE President

Samuel Crooks

Dear reader,

2024 will go down in history as the most important election year ever, with more people across the world going to the polls in the coming twelve months than ever before. This year you will read hundreds if not thousands of articles, commentaries and other publications dedicated to political issues affecting both specific national contests as well as those which affect all of us as global citizens. This magazine, however, is not one of them.

With its focus on subjects outside of the conventional political arena, Europe Beyond allows the Institute for a Greater Europe to demonstrate that that it is possible if not desirable for all of us to step back from purely political discourse and instead consider the wider world we live in. With its title of "High Culture vs. Popular Culture: The Euro Lens", this edition will take you on a journey from museum diplomacy to the psychology of Edvard Munch and beyond. With a massive thanks to all those who contributed to its publication, I wish you a very happy reading of our first magazine edition of what will be a momentous year.

Best regards,
Samuel Crooks





Note from the Magazine Managing Editor

Dyuti Pandya

My association with IGE has proven to be an immensely enriching journey. Recently assuming the role of managing the magazine board, even while residing outside of Europe, has presented me with a unique opportunity. Engaging in thought exercises and dialogues with my European colleagues from diverse backgrounds has broadened my perspectives, providing a profound understanding of global affairs, particularly in the context of European dynamics. This newfound knowledge has become a driving force, compelling me to sustain my membership here. The magazine I oversee is more than just a publication; it encapsulates a mission. It serves as a platform where young scholars and professionals worldwide come together to address pressing global issues in a nuanced and impactful manner. Similar to our inaugural issue and subsequent publications, the creation of this magazine is a source of dedication by my brilliant team members and colleagues around the globe. As you delve into this magazine, I encourage you to not only read but also to reflect upon, internalize, and even respectfully challenge the perspectives presented by the diverse authors featured in this edition.

We decided to make this issue go beyond the present-day geopolitical turmoils and complexities. Art and culture have influenced and shaped societies since time immemorial, serving as catalysts for change. An existence bereft of the tapestries woven by institutions such as libraries, museums, galleries, and each individual's personal experiences in the realms of literature, music, and art would be devoid of the creative discourses that reminisce the past, invigorate the present, and envision the future. Arts and culture learning exposes individuals to multiple ways of experiencing the world, fostering human development. Consequently, these modalities express the vision of the patron, which remains the hue for the interpretation of life and social change. As we navigate the different periods of how culture has continued to influence societies, the need to understand this phenomenon remains pertinent. We need to celebrate the cultural contribution and the social transformation that has contributed towards the making of history and order.

In this issue, we present articles that explore culture from various perspectives, encompassing culture through the prisms of high and popular culture. We also had the privilege to interview two renowned experts who shed their thoughts and perspectives on what culture and arts mean to them. We also feature a 'photo studio' that allows you to perceive art and culture through the lens of photographers, along with some excellent book recommendations to further expand your knowledge in this area. Reflecting on how society has transitioned, it is imperative to understand what culture is, unravel its depths, and wield its influences on our daily lives.

May the journey through this edition be a symphony for your profound exploration!

Mumbai, India.





Updates from the Institute

Doina Portas (Director of Chapters)

Recruitment & Membership:

Our membership has increased by 30% since 2022. Another call for applications will be open in January 2024.

Chapter System:

We have created plans for the chapter system in the parts of Greater Europe where we have most of the members. In particular, we will have ones in Greater London and Greater Brussels. We also plan to appoint a Head of the Chapters, who will be the main point of contact.

Editing and Publishing:

We had many structural changes in 2023, introducing Chairs of Studies, Desk Officers, and an independent journal team. This year 22 articles and 1 major publication in 2023 have been produced.

New Executive Board:

After the AGM (Annual General Meeting), a new Board and structure have been established. We congratulate:

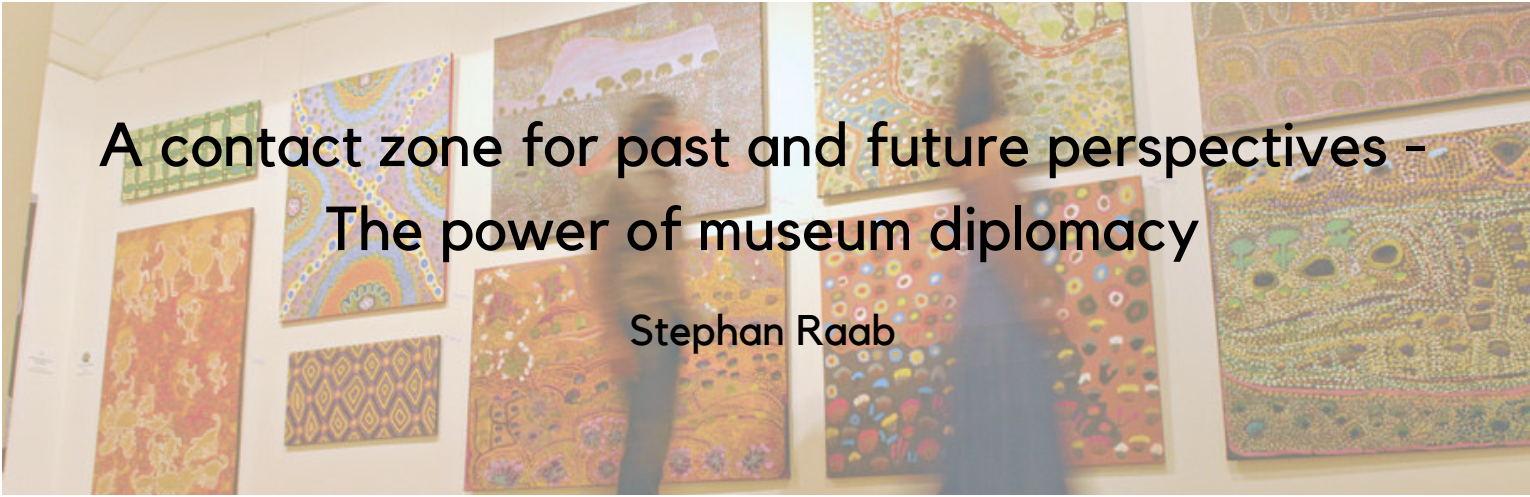
Samuel Crooks (President), Doina Portas (VP People), Conor Owens (VP Financial Affairs), Ishika Paruthi (VP External Relations) and Martyna Hanak (VP Editorial)

Events:

The events team has been very busy and has organised events featuring guests ranging from a former UK Ambassador to Afghanistan to young professionals from Belarus. For the European Youth Event (EYE) IGE sent a dedicated taskforce to the EP in Strasbourg, hosting the successful workshop "EU 2050: Designing Our European Future" which included the participation of MEPs in-person and online. We ran 9 events in total this year!

Upcoming:

2024 will be the Institute's best year ever, with exciting events and projects online and in-person. Follow our website and social media for information.



A contact zone for past and future perspectives - The power of museum diplomacy

Stephan Raab

Do you know what a giraffe and the German Grundgesetz have in common? Both were part of a historic event, taking place at the Bonner Museum Koenig for Zoology in 1948. The giant stuffed giraffe was watching over the heads of a social and political elite, searching to establish the Federal Republic of Germany after the war. Taking this anecdote as a starting point, during the last decades, museums have experienced a change from simple containers of collections, towards contact zones for public discourses on local, national, international, and global levels, contributing to the increasing importance of museum diplomacy as part of a wider, newer form of public diplomacy.

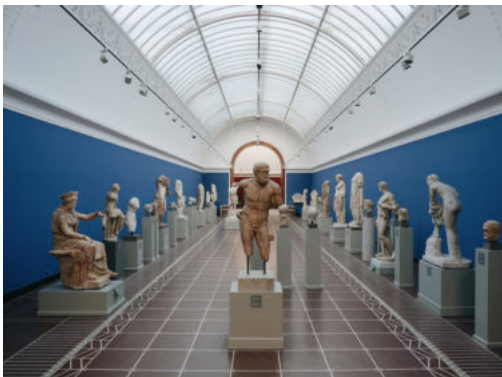
Evolution and the meaning of museums

In the middle of May, organised by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), many museums traditionally open their doors for free, providing a special program for their visitors. This day reminds visitors and the general public that these institutions fulfil a tremendous role in the field of multidisciplinary education,

intercultural dialogue, and cultural as science diplomacy. Apart from exhibiting history, these sites became places of history as well.

Those places stand at the intersection between science diplomacy and intercultural education. Having survived the war as one of the few representative buildings in Western Germany, the museum of zoology in Bonn became a cradle of democracy. Here, the parliamentary counsel had gathered for the first time to elaborate on the latter Grundgesetz, and this place even served as the interim official address of chancellor Adenauer. Due to those improvised circumstances this giraffe, mentioned in the introduction, could not be removed, as curators were fearing damage to the object. Therefore, this giraffe became a witness of this historic moment and itself became an icon for the young German democracy overcoming the National Socialist past (Heine, 2017, p. 129).

Originally the term museum derives from ancient Greek (μουσεῖον mouseion) and describes a sanctuary for the muses; a place for study and arts, such as the Mouseion of Alexandria close to the famous library of the same name (Findlen, 1989, p. 60). Today's definition is: *"a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society **that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits** tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing"* (International Council of Museums, 2022).



Having started as famous "cabinets of wonders" only accessible to rich and elite, mostly male audiences, nowadays museums serve as a public place. Simultaneously, today, diplomacy has become more open to the public. Both are highly interconnected for the evolution of modern nation states. Consequently Crooke (2006, p. 174) suggested that the "development of museums in Europe is intricately linked to the emergence and fostering of the nation."

Modern museums such as the British Museum and other national museums emerged alongside a broader societal shift from feudalism to modern national states, from colonies to independent states. Many artefacts, sometimes with a controversial background, became "nationalised" as cultural symbols of a state (Shuchen, 2018, p. 725).

The establishment of such a place serves a greater purpose than simply being a representation of the past, but rather, serves as a tool to legitimise a particular ethnic, cultural or national identity, highlighting ambitions to create a sense of unity. Such places create visibility for claims to representation as participation (Kaplan, 2006, 153f.).

Confronting zones or museums as platform for public diplomacy

"Museums are at the vanguard of cultural work—they are the diplomats of the 21st century. They can be used as a platform for dialogue and exchange, especially when working with challenging partners;" emphasised Andreas Görgen, General Secretary of the German Ministry of Culture, when commenting on the role of museums (Görgen. Andreas, 2016). Diplomacy first of all stands as a form of *"institutionalised communication"* (Bjola and Kornprobst, 2013, p. 4). Traditionally, this communication took place behind closed doors, and yet, thanks to modern mass media and the digital sphere, diplomacy has become more public, involving actors such as NGOs, media, universities or even museums.

"Public diplomacy deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy" (Cull, 2006). According to Cull this concept is based upon various pillars. First of all, it is important to listen to the foreign audience.

Following that, those actors are free to pursue a certain mission, such as climate protection, or democratisation. Eventually a cultural exchange opens the door for exchange diplomacy, leading to the exchange of scientists, artists, or students. Finally this leads to relationship building between different nations and cultures. (Cull, 2019). education in particular, is often used as a soft power tool in public diplomacy -making foreign students aware of a different culture, getting them acquainted with the culture, all which then leads to spill over effects in their home country (Amirbek and Ydyrys, 2014, p. 515).

Furthermore, museums combine the art of communication with the power of education, standing as "*windows to the historical and contemporary art and cultures of a country*" (Shuchen, 2018, p. 725). From a pedagogical perspective, museums, as educational centres, are associated with crises. There are no predefined learning goals, yet, through interaction with the items, moving in the context of the exhibition, visitors are encouraged to reconsider their framing, gaining new perspectives on culture, reading the sublime message of the curators (Dinkelaker, 2018, 201f.).

National governments searching to convey a positive image abroad have always strongly supported museum diplomacy by fostering cross border cooperation of museums.

Most of the work is done behind the physical displays through communities of scientists, artists or activists, forming international relationships and bonds, creating a network based on mutual trust and respect (Grincheva and Natalia, 2023, p. 77). Through this collaboration platforms, a "truth-seeking dialogue" is built (Fitzpatrick, 2010, p. 91), where politics can integrate itself. Politics searches to harness such locations as "contact zones" of soft power, where divergent viewpoints and interpretations of history can be brought together to voice concerns and discuss new approaches on transnational concerns (Chalcraft, 2021, p. 489).



Consequently, museums are not politically neutral, representing a certain worldview or perspective. However, those institutions seek to act as diplomats, remembering the past while caring and encouraging debates around the future (Portin, 2021, p. 688). Those "contact zones" serve as a materialisation of the fact that culture was never bound to political boundaries, but has instead always been dynamic, hybrid and shaped through the exchange of diverse people (Cuno, 2011, p. 3).

A common house or the House of European History

As the previous chapters have shown, museums today are more than a simple collection of artefacts, but a whole world of ambiguity, allowing leeway for interpretation and experience. Modern conceptions of museums do not instil one monolithic concept but instead stimulate dialogue. Referring to the idea of a House of European History, such an approach was highly needed. Museums are strong actors in cultural diplomacy, revealing the soul of a nation. Through promoting culture, mutual awareness improves, and the learnings from other traditions and cultures are enriched (Cummings, 2003, p. 1). When Hans-Gert Pöttering from the German Christian Democrats was elected as president of the European Parliament in 2007, he announced the foundation of a museum on European history. Different from establishing a national museum, this posed a particular challenge, as this project had to start right from scratch. Therefore, the well-known museologist Kenneth Hudson claimed that due to its complexity, a House of European History would need a genius rather than an interdisciplinary group.

First, a common narrative was needed, and only after that, could appropriate items from all over Europe be assembled. Seeking to represent the diversity of Europe, 22 experts from various fields and 15 different countries were gathered, speaking 20 languages (van Vovk Gaal and Dupont, 2012, 45f.).

About ten years later, in May 2017 the House of European History was inaugurated, mostly unnoticed by the media and public. Designed to be a *"bridge between an academic world and the general public"* the concept resembles the multi-layer structure of the European Union. At the first layer a general chronological 90 minutes overview introduces the main narratives, considering the low general knowledge about European history in the 19th and 20th centuries that surveys reported. A second and third layer going deeper appeals to visitors with more specific interests. Founding director and art historian Taja Vovk van Gaal emphasised that a teleological approach should be avoided. Instead, several processes and developments were combined in a wider context. Through all senses, the aim was, appealing to visitors for refreshing their knowledge, but also contrasting their experiences and perspectives with those of others. The history presented here was intentionally curated to be controversial instead of affirmative (van Vovk Gaal, 2019, p. 117ff.).

Despite its claim to be a hub for all member states and even beyond the European Union, about 55 % of the items presented in the exhibition were donated by just five countries; Belgium, Germany, Italy, France, and the United Kingdom, with smaller member states not contributing any items. Consequently, it could be argued that the selection of artefacts was mostly driven by a desire to legitimise a one-sided narrative of European Integration.

In that sense it can be argued that European Integration through cross border interaction should be presented foremost as positive leaving negative side effects out of sight. Excluding the public from participating could be one reason for the reduced perspectives (Quintanilha, 2019, 73f.). Jakub Jareš, lecturer for museology at the Charles University in Prague, criticises the exhibition, that it focuses mostly on central Europe with a sense of German remembrance culture; putting a special focus on negative experiences, and disregarding important aspects of northern and southern European history (Jareš, 2013). Taking this point of view into mind, the European House of History was conceived primarily as a museum out of the comfort zone. Instead of affirmative history, controversies shall actively be exposed through the interaction of visitors with the items (van Vovk Gaal, 2019, p. 119). Inaugurated in 2017, the House is in a steady process of change, and much like the European integration process, is never finished. Reminding of the historic common past of the European continent, *"Memory is at the same time what divides and what unites Europe"* (van Vovk Gaal and Dupont, 2012, p. 48).

Museum on the move or the future of museum diplomacy

Concluding this exploration into museum diplomacy, it has become obvious that contemporary museums are no longer based on displays, but on encouraging debates. A shift has happened with museums no longer being seen as "container, shrine or temple" but as forum, contact zone, platform or social activist" (Mason, 2013, p. 19). These institutions have had to reinvent themselves from hierarchical structures into learning organisations. Today the museum is not created by the board of directors and curators, but in its ability to interact with the visitors, and contribute to their views. Nowadays, museums are no simple collections, but are instead driven by missions, exposing their values while simultaneously putting those same values, and narratives perhaps previously taken for granted into question d for encouraging new dialogue. (Anderson, 2012, 3f.). These institutions act as representatives of a society, both its past and its future. Through this they serve a democratic function as a dynamic and vivid contact zone of interaction and experience. Therefore, as an outlook for the future of museum diplomacy I leave you with the words of David Fleming, President of the ICOM: "Museums need to be acutely aware of changes in society and behaviour, in a way that they never have previously" (Fleming, 2019, p. 109).

A portrait of Stephan Raab, a man with dark, wavy hair and glasses, wearing a grey suit jacket, a light blue shirt, and a dark tie with diagonal stripes. He is looking slightly to the right. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

About the Author

Stephan Raab has worked as advisor for civic education at various institutions such as the German conference of Bishops. Prior to that he belonged to the scientific staff at the Museum of the Future in Nuremberg. He is a contributor and editor at the youth-led think tank Institute for Greater Europe. He holds a Master in Political Science and a Master in Adult Education/Continuous Education from the Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg as a graduation from the European Academy of Diplomacy Warsaw. His interests are located in comparative educational research, global education and the development of democratic dialogue in the European context.

High Culture vs Popular Culture: The Euro Lens

Valentina Koumoulou

"Without culture, and the relative freedom it implies, society, even when perfect, is but a jungle. This is why any authentic creation is a gift to the future."

-Albert Camus (BrainyQuote, n.d.)

Culture has always been a dividing factor among nations, bearing in mind that understanding reality happens through a culturally affected lens. Apart from one's national culture, though, there is the expression of culture in terms of personal taste that comes through one's choice. There is a distinction between high and popular culture, where each term holds different connotations. To be more specific, high culture brings to mind paintings, opera, classic literature, black-and-white movies, or theater plays (van den Haak, 2018). On the other hand, popular culture suggests video games, comic books, TV series, or romance novels (van den Haak, 2018). It is often observed that in most people's minds, high culture has its origins on the European continent, while anything that has to do with pop culture comes from the US's approach to culture.

Globalization has played a significant part in this realization, considering that nowadays there is a great transmission of content across continents. The important question is: to what extent is pop culture affected by high culture, and what is the distinction in what is expressed through each pattern of culture?



Definition of High Culture

According to many sociologists, high culture stems from "the socially constructed result of processes of distinction by high status groups in society", meaning that the elite within every societal group has the power to categorize what is considered high culture or not (van den Haak, 2018).

Furthermore, this type of culture appears to have created a cultural hierarchy that is characterized by canonization and institutionalization with rigid boundaries (van den Haak, 2018). There is also a sense of moral superiority in works classified as high culture, usually seen through the lens of religion as well as ethics (van den Haak, 2018).

What is worth noting is that in the minds of people, high culture is reflected in the European values and artists, possibly due to the seniority of civilization rather than the modern values of the 'New World' that is called America (DiMaggio, 1991). Lastly, the link between high culture and the refined idea of Europe creates a false image about culture in general in terms of cultural superiority, which is not valid.



Definition of Popular Culture

Popular culture brings to mind a more modern type of cultural activity and item. Usually, it is characterized as a 'low' culture given that the connotations that stem from it present something that would be considered immoral or vulgar by contrast to the classic ideals of beauty and art (van den Haak, 2018). This link happens due to the images, words, or sounds appearing in the works of popular culture that have also been linked to sexual boldness or violent behavior over the years (van den Haak, 2018).

Banksy's graffiti makes a great example of the former sentence, bearing in mind that graffiti is related to vandalism practices.

Moreover, popular culture symbolizes originality and innovativeness that speaks to the people and expresses everyday struggles, worries, dreams, or reality in general. Lastly, popular culture appears to be more linked to everyday life, thus making it more accessible to people, while high culture always comes with a price.

Europe vs. USA

Within Europe but also in the US, there have been patterns of high culture or popular culture that are linked to specific regions. For example, Amsterdam as well as Berlin constitute the capitals of techno music, clearly a part of popular culture, in contrast to Vienna and Paris, which are traditionally linked to opera and ballet. Furthermore, with regard to fashion, the haute couture brands come from France or Italy, while the more eccentric houses come from Spain, England, or the Netherlands. Apart from Europe, though, the US has also occupied the high vs. popular culture debate. States within the USA have made a name for themselves where their citizens can enjoy all sorts of modern or classic works, such as New York, which is characterized as the US cultural capital where modern and classic are married into a strong pattern of diversity, offering everyone the equal opportunity to enjoy the art that expresses them (Gans, 1985; DiMaggio, 1991).

In general, high and popular culture are considered to be opposites, given that they represent different aspects of cultural works. However, this is far from true because culture starts with the people, regardless of their societal status. Whether one prefers romance novels or philosophy books has to do with their own taste and likes. Culture starts within one's personality and character.



There is no divide between high and popular culture because one can be attracted to both types of culture and express oneself through various works according to the situation. People are multifaceted beings who find different ways to refresh themselves through culture and art. It should not be a debate on high vs. popular culture but rather a debate on when vs. where culture. There is a place and time for everything, as people say, something that also applies to culture. One cannot miss the underground stages of Berlin or the Shakespeare plays at the Globe. It is also a matter of cultural heritage, after all.

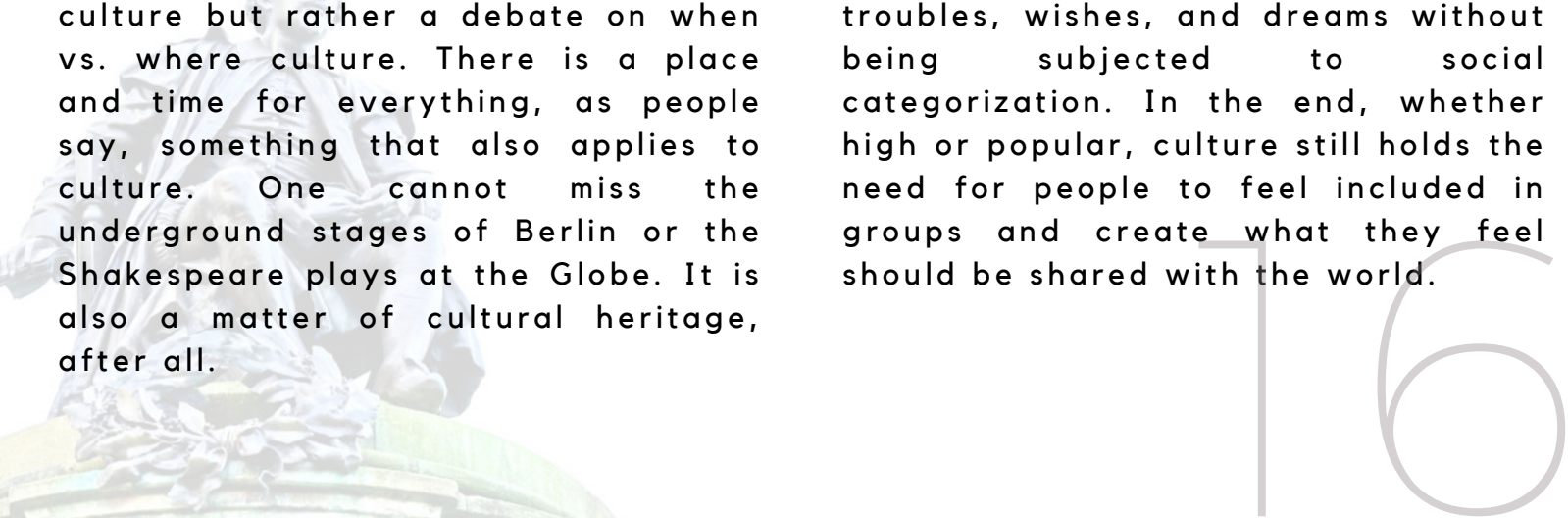
Conclusion

All in all, defining culture as a term is a somewhat perplexing endeavor. Defining high and popular culture is an even more complicated attempt. While high culture falls under the premises of an elevated pattern of works of art, such as opera, classical music, philosophical works, or plays, popular culture seems to be linked with a more modern and fresh view of art.

Both types of culture have the same significance for the soul and provide people with different experiences. Europe as well as the US have regions that have become infamous for promoting one cultural pattern over the other or even combining the two in an effort to satisfy everyone.



The important thing about culture is to be inclusive and respectful of all aspects of life. It needs to be a safe place for people to express their troubles, wishes, and dreams without being subjected to social categorization. In the end, whether high or popular, culture still holds the need for people to feel included in groups and create what they feel should be shared with the world.





About the Author

Valentina is a multilingual graduate student from Greece who has a passion for travel, foreign cultures, and mediation. She has studied Translation, International and European Studies, and is currently enrolled in an MSc in Crisis and Security Management in The Hague. In 2020, she started as a writer in the Institute for a Greater Europe and has also been part of a few events organizing team.



IGE Interview: Juliana Tzvetkova

Juliana Tzvetkova is an academic and intercultural intelligence trainer with a passion for education. She was born and educated in Bulgaria, where she gained a Ph.D. in Social Philosophy. In the late 1990s, she moved to Canada with her family and taught at community colleges in Toronto. She has since worked on educational projects around the globe—from Bulgaria to Angola, Canada to China, and the UAE to Kazakhstan. Today she writes on culture and continues to provide intercultural intelligence training as well as developing her cultural projects, Kanadiana and K-drama 101.

Good morning Ms. Tzvetkova, thank you for joining me today. I find it fascinating to explore the relationship between high culture and popular culture and would love to know your views on it.

"Even the most universal of notions are born and acquire shape in the particular experience of people tied to a specific place and time." These are the keywords I am going to use to explain this relationship. I just quoted my favorite social theorist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman. The notion of culture emerged in the 18th century in Western Europe. The 18th century was a time when the world's vision was rearranged around human ideas by some of the greatest European philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (who established legitimate authority compatible with individual freedom in a political community), Denis Diderot, David Hume, Giambattista Vico, and many others. These were great ideas that brought about crucial political and social changes. In the late 18th century, industrialization in Great Britain set in motion enormous cultural change, improvements in science and technology, mass education, rising levels of literacy, class consciousness, and nationalist feelings. All of this taken together has changed the cultural milieu of the world forever.

Over the course of centuries, culture and art have preserved bits and pieces of the amusements of the lower classes. For instance, William Shakespeare's plays included a lot of entertainment such as folk music, street and fair performances, competitive games, and contests.



The 18th century saw refined English authors mix and match the vernacular and elevated literature in very surprising ways - some examples include John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, which is the story of the criminal underground in Newgate. Jonathan Swift wrote ballads, satirized popular books, copied songs glorifying crooks, and imitated the vernacular language of folk poems. Henry Fielding described watering-hole scenes with rough humour.

The 18th century witnessed the birth of a culture available to anyone willing and able to buy a ticket. Before the Industrial Revolution culture was the aristocracy's privilege, but now it had become the perfect way of filling the leisure time of the newly rich, who had the money to spend on literature, music, and the arts. Pleasurably spent leisure time became synonymous with culture, so it became essential for the higher classes to make a clear-cut difference between high and low entertainment (later known as popular culture). Once culture had been turned into a product, cultural taste became the social differentiation, and because it was a product, culture now could easily be commercialized and turned profane. As the new popular culture expanded and grew, the educated elites set out to create national cultures that only they could appreciate in the right manner. The more "elevated" cultural products were set apart as "high", the greater the divide between high and low became.

The awareness that common people might produce, consume, and enjoy culture, appeared simultaneously with the conception of the brand-new idea of "high" culture. Thus, the latter became the refined twin of the "vulgar" popular culture. Popular culture is the vernacular culture predominant in a society at a particular point in time. So, high culture would be the refined, extraordinary, different version of culture, or in other words, the culture of the refined, the educated, the elitist social layer of society. So how could we decide what is high culture then? My personal opinion is that high culture products and artifacts become status symbols –very, very few can afford paying dozens of millions of dollars for a painting, and very few can pay hundreds of dollars for an opera or a ballet ticket. This is how things started to separate and form the content of these two concepts.

The process continued to develop it and intensify. Yet, because now more and more people had leisure time on their hands as well as money to spend on it, the lower classes were finally granted access to previously inaccessible socially acceptable recreation activities in newly created public spaces such as music halls.

The great technological inventions of the 20th century not only standardized the vernacular of the European nations within a generation; they also elevated popular culture, influencing and changing it forever through the medium of films, broadcast radio, and television.

This led to a standardization of language: an excellent example is the BBC, which standardized spoken English. By the 1960s the significance of this new media was so profound that cultural studies became a subject of university programs. Television in particular became the leader in heralding worldwide cultural changes that increasingly challenged existing social and political institutions. The culture was everywhere and influenced everything.

The 20th century witnessed a curious phenomenon – high culture born from a huge resentment of popular culture. This intellectual disgust at popular culture, the rising literacy levels, and the growing empowerment of the masses became the breeding ground for much of modernism in art and literature (i.e. something that only a chosen few could claim to truly enjoy and appreciate). This wasn't new as many works of art once considered low have since achieved "high" status: the dramatic arts (Shakespeare's Globe theatre, it which was once considered sinful and full of vice) were embraced and welcomed by the upper classes, becoming their exclusive entertainment. When pop sensation the Beatles took America by storm in 1964, William Buckley Junior called them "unmusical and destined to fade away". Fifty years later US pop singer and songwriter Bob Dylan received the Nobel Prize for Literature. In the 21st century high culture and pop culture are indelible parts of the cultural preferences of millions. This is why I enjoyed a classical concert - Beethoven's 7th Symphony - and then joyfully went to Taylor Swift's concert two days later (I am talking Toronto, of course). This can happen anywhere. Most sociologists agree that concepts such as high culture cannot be objectively defined, being the socially constructed result of processes of distinction by high-status groups in society according to French sociologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu.

2. "A high culture is the self-consciousness of a society", once wrote the late Roger Scruton. Putting this statement in the present scenario, where do you think the society is presently heading with this?

Scruton belonged to the schools of conservative scientists and thinkers, so it is quite natural for him to make such a statement. However, this sentence is divorced from his thoughts on high culture. I will take the opportunity to read the sentence that follows so that people can understand his opinion more clearly. He says, "*High culture is the self-consciousness of a society. It contains the works of art, literature, scholarship, and philosophy that establish a shared frame of reference among educated people*". These are some well-chosen words. In layman's terms, it means that if you and I are both enjoying popular culture, hip hop, or some popular artists, and we use a quote from a song that describes a situation in a few words, both you and I will understand what we mean, and we will not need to clarify what it means: this is the shared frame of reference. The second important part of this is "educated people".

This is why Scruton includes philosophy and sciences, as well as art and literature. People who go to university will be trained in one of the sciences and form an elite class of people sharing frames of reference. I believe that our frames of reference today are taken from popular culture, rather than classical works of philosophy and art.

Then he says "*High culture is a precarious achievement and endures only if it is underpinned by a sense of tradition, and by a broad endorsement of the surrounding social norms.*" In this case, Scruton uses the term "high culture" quite freely, putting literature and the arts together with the social sciences and equating them to a shared frame of reference among the educated. It also demands tradition and a broad support of the existing social norms. In other words, high culture is the traditional and widely endorsed frame of reference of the educated elites. The quote exudes the intellectual disgust of the philosopher at the inability and unwillingness of the majority to indulge in deep philosophical, ethical, aesthetical, and epistemological discourse, and elevate their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. He wants the impossible because we are all different. The quote also excludes marginal literature, the arts, fashion, television, and sports from the frame of reference he talks about. Yet, having been born in a specific place and a specific time, culture represents the shared frame of reference among the specific people that created it - both educated and not so well educated. Culture is a multi-layered cake; it's up to its consumer which layer to start eating first - the cream, the chocolate, the toppings, or the base. We are not born with a specific cultural code imprinted on our genes; we are born within a specific culture. It depends on how our life will unfold, where we'll first meet great literature, great music, great cinema, great dance, and how our cultural tastes will be formed and cemented.

Cultural taste can be taught, developed, enhanced, and elevated gradually. The educational systems of most countries around the world include music, literature, art, and sports in their curricula. For parents in Asia, for instance, playing an instrument is an essential part of a child's early education - the violin or the piano for instance. Classical music becomes a part of the young person's life from a very early age. For North American parents sports are an essential part of this early education. The soccer mom phenomenon is typically American, for instance. Therefore, cultural tastes in different parts of the world will differ greatly based on the early extracurricular activities of children, usually chosen by their parents. Dance is another popular activity young people love. Hip-hop in North America, tango and salsa in South America, Bhangra in India, hip-hop in South Korea, and break dance in China are good examples. Hip-hop culture turned into a worldwide phenomenon, having been localized and practiced both professionally and for fun.

In line with present-day egalitarian ideas, many of us object to the proposed concepts.

High culture is often associated with elitism, arrogance, and pretension; and low culture with disparaging speech and discrimination. Some think that this distinction is forced upon us by 'bigwigs' and 'experts' and others find it outdated. High culture, for most people who have been asked this question, is for 'a small audience', 'a select group of people', and is 'certainly not based on the market.' Low culture, on the other hand, refers to 'the popular', 'massive', and 'commercial stations', etc. This century started blending these two concepts.

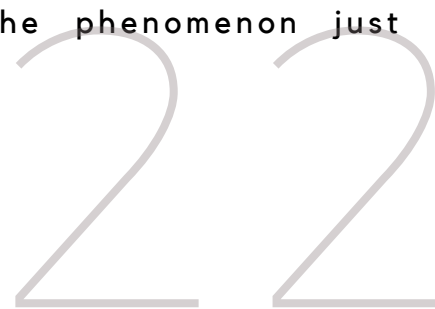
How do you think art matters right now when we are being overloaded with information about crises across the globe?

Art is the mirror of our lived experiences; from the cave paintings of Cro-Magnon humans to abstract art today, we see examples of it all around us. Times create the artist, not vice versa. Andy Warhol reflected on the time he lived in, just as Leonardo and Rembrandt painted theirs. This is why Banksy is our contemporary, and hip hop was born in America. Crises also become sources of inspiration and produce incredibly powerful stories, films, and visuals. Just one example: Afghani writer Khaled Hosseini and his novels, especially *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Documentaries about conflict become the best source of our recognition of the historical moment years after this conflict came to an end. Art is an escape from reality, too. In times of conflict, crises, and war, human beings have a real need to escape both physically and mentally, and our imagination is the perfect machine we can use for this escape. Art, music, and beauty, in all their forms, help immensely in this respect. War and conflict became the story of classic works of art and literature: *Guernica* (Picasso), *War and Peace* (Tolstoy), *Catch 22* (Joseph Heller), Charlie Chaplin's *The Dictator*, *Saving Private Ryan* (Stephen Spielberg) and *Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola), depicting the horrors of war much more powerfully than documents, history books, or photos.

One last thought: this overload is our personal choice, just like the way we choose whose Instagram accounts to follow. And that is how we survive.

4. How can culture still play a role? Do you believe it is still an actor of political and social change?

No doubt culture played, plays, and will play, an integral role in the world. I have prepared a good example to illustrate this: After the Second World War, there were two parallel processes in Europe; Americanization, and the widespread anti-Americanism it provoked. Cultural perceptions often supersede politics, yet the latter is crucial for understanding the phenomenon just mentioned.



After the end of World War II, Americans discovered with surprise that Europeans didn't generally like their lifestyle, belief system, and popular culture. US politicians and academics in the 1950s agreed that they had to promote the American dream and way of life all over the world. Culture became one of the tools the US used to achieve this result. US policymakers used literature, cinema, and television to project American culture and democratic values to the world. American cinema of the 70s was a high-quality cultural product that influenced young generations worldwide. The result is pretty obvious, although it took years of concerted effort to achieve. The end of the century saw the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Culture played an important role in this long process.

In the 21st century the process continued –American materialism, consumerism, and commercialism, so well promoted by cultural products, have become an integral part of both West and East European countries, despite having met serious antagonism before the fall of the Berlin Wall. The soft power of American culture, combined with modern technology, a strong economy, and military power, succeeded in winning the Cold War and establishing a uni-polar world for more than three decades.

What are some of your favorite instances when high culture and popular culture have both influenced people and made a difference?

As stated above, my personal opinion is that being elitist and exclusive, contemporary high culture products might influence only insignificant parts of society. This is why I'll focus on the huge impact of popular culture. Take, for instance, hip-hop. The global influence of hip-hop culture has shaped music styles, fashion, technology, art, entertainment, language, dance, education, politics, media, and more. To this day, hip-hop continues to be a global phenomenon, developing new art forms that impact the lives of new and old generations. It is an incredible soft power that we witness and live, and this is an experience. Another example is something which I am interested in, Hallyu, the Chinese term meaning "Korean Wave". The Korean Wave started about twenty years ago and became a soft power during the last ten years. It is a collective term used to refer to the phenomenal growth of Korean popular culture encompassing everything from music, movies, and drama, to online games and Korean cuisine, just to name a few. It is huge and its economic impact is great, as people from all over the world started to enjoy the culture of a tiny far East Asian country. Hallyu has fans across the world. It is incredibly popular in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the US, not to mention South America, which was the birthplace of teledrama (telenovelas). It is a cultural phenomenon whose impact we will see in the future. So yes, culture continues to be a huge force.

Through the economic lens, popular culture is seen as a set of commodities produced through capitalistic processes driven by a profit motive and sold to consumers. Do you agree with this?

Yes, and no. Yes, because a cultural product can be produced, reproduced, and multiplied. Take a song or an album, for instance - you have platforms today where you can go and sell millions of copies. You do not need material to produce CDs, you don't need plastic anymore (Cassettes and Discs). You simply create and upload it on a platform, and it is downloaded millions of times, sometimes in just a day or two. It is, of course, made for profit. Lots of people participate in the dissemination of the cultural product, and at the same time, lots of money is made, it is redistributed and has a huge impact on the economy.

No, because the effect and impact of popular culture cannot be measured in money. It has a soft power, and, (going back to my example of the K wave), Korean cultural products have been strongly supported by the government. Money from the government went into the industry and helped develop and turn it into a tool that had an incredible, long-lasting impact. Instead of investing in culture to make money, governments around the world subsidize their artists, writers, and singer/songwriters to produce culture, thus turning it into soft power to promote its values around the world. I can say the same about Canada. Canada subsidizes culture a lot, and there is a governmental institution that takes care of it. Movie directors and writers can always rely on financial assistance for their projects from the Canadian government. And it is not done for profit. Profit may come, but it is not the primary goal.

What do you think is the global impact of the Communication Revolution going on right now?

Your generation has been living through it. My generation created it and gave it to you. We have seen the profound way how technology has transformed the way we interact. 2020 and 2021 are excellent examples of how; we relearned to do our jobs - online from the comfort of our homes. We are greatly impacted by the digital media technology. Many of us were pessimistic in the beginning, but later we could see the good things that came out of it. New media existed before 2020 and created incredible opportunities. Anyone can create content today, and competition is great. New devices and platforms are constantly coming out. We can communicate and work seamlessly while being remote or traveling. In homes and offices, we can get information and operate things with the stroke of a finger or the sound of a voice. The communications field, in particular, has been greatly impacted by digital media and technology.

The quality of information offered online and the big issue of fake vs true is a huge subject for a separate conversation. New technology has created compelling opportunities for advertisers and media organizations to communicate with audiences. People used to rely on newspapers and television to get information. There are now numerous channels and outlets for people to consume content, spanning websites, video platforms, and social media. Social media apps and sites, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, are now the go-to sources for breaking news and information. This has caused competition between professional journalists and amateur publishers for readers' attention. Although we are spending more time online, technology has saved us time and money in many areas of our lives, whether in online shopping and banking, less paper use, or the assistance of navigation and location tracking while driving and traveling. Communication today is instantaneous with the help of social media, emails, and text messaging. We can send a message and receive a response in seconds. Digital communication also allows us to share photos, videos, and stories instantly. Technology has changed how businesses market, operate and interact with employees. For businesses, technology has improved collaboration, costs, and co-worker communication. Today, work teams have several options to communicate without being face to face, including by email, instant and direct messaging, and group collaboration software. Video conferencing and teleworking also became major activities recently as people across the world worked from home during the coronavirus pandemic. Digital media has become an essential part of daily life. It has become a part of formal education through courses such as Digital Storytelling, Mass Media Society, and Communication Ethics at colleges and universities. What's most important though, is that today we are not only the consumers but also the producers of information.

As time goes by, and we become more technocratic, how do you think generations will continue to react to cultural changes, both from the popular and high cultural front?

I will not focus much on high culture, because it feels too stagnant, conservative, and too big: and when I say big, I mean volume and effort. To be able to listen to a symphony, you need to sit, prepare, and listen to fifty or sixty minutes of music that develops and evolves, this is something we need to understand, and takes time and education. Popular cultural content can be created, produced, and disseminated by anyone willing to dedicate their talent, time, and effort to do so: as a result, we have millions of videos on YouTube, and the ever-popular clips on TikTok (3 secs to 10 min). This process of creativity has led to fragmentation, and currently, things are consumed in smaller and smaller doses. This is why high culture and its products will be used as status symbols, or enjoyed by exclusive audiences.

Culture will continue to reflect our lived experiences: The short art form will take over, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) art will become a part of the culture (it remains to be seen when, how and to what extent). The preference of virtual reality to the real thing may be one of the future trends. Once I was asked to demonstrate how to teach a lesson in 10 ten minutes, and it turned out to be a very difficult task for me. Today, younger generations have absolutely no problem with pushing the message within ten seconds. Another interesting example of the future of culture is taking a culture product, and turning it into a more classical product. Just a week ago, I attended a candlelight night of music – pop music, arranged and performed by classical ensembles – a quartet playing Pink Floyd, one of the greatest pop bands of the 80s. This transformation follows in the steps of another musical phenomenon – operatic arias turned into popular songs by great opera singers Domingo, Carreras, and Pavarotti, popularly known as the three tenors. This mix and match, blending of the classic with the popular, turning the popular into classic – in my opinion, these will be the trends shortly.

What is your favourite piece of artwork ever?

When we say artwork, we usually refer to painting and the visual arts, so in the realm of visual arts, I like Modernists, (my favourites are Joan Miro and Salvador Dali), as well as the Impressionists (Monet and Manet). I can sit and watch their paintings for hours. I would like to add another favourite of mine - popular music, in particular, the music of the Beatles and the K-pop phenomenon BTS (called the Beatles of the 21st century). As we speak, culture is being produced every single moment of every single day.



Cigarette Visions: The Psychology of Edvard Munch

Andrew den Boggende

The brilliance of Norwegian artist Edvard Munch is undeniable to anyone who sees his work. The vivid colors and distorted forms have become a quintessential image in the mind of the public: from casual gallery-wanderer to esteemed art historian. Operating in the symbolist and post-impressionist movements, Munch's work effectively portrayed the changes in the human psyche throughout some of the most potent developments in human history including the Industrial Revolution, constant war, economic and political instabilities, and changing cultural and artistic expectations. The portfolio of such an artist can perhaps be labeled as one of the most innovative and inherently modern to emerge from the 19th and 20th centuries. Munch's extensive focus on human psychology through symbolic vehicles, burgeoning cultural transitions, and harsh anti-establishment sentiments allows his work to embody the modern spirit of the world.

Although symbolism was prevalent throughout this period, it came to be a special tool of Munch's.

With his manipulation of symbols, he wielded this technique to create deeply personal narratives which set him apart from other artists of this period. For instance, Munch's most famous work, *The Scream* or *Le Cri* (Fig. 1, 1893), displays this perfectly. The work depicts simplified, fuzzy forms; abstracted setting; and horrifying subject matter which culminates in an intense viewing experience unlike any other. Munch used this piece as an opportunity to insert symbolism, particularly through his use of color.

As researcher Ida K. Lund describes it: "*Le Cri*, in which a pale spectre is haunted by an almost beastial terror; one is strangely affected by this creature, starving both physically and spiritually, which its emaciated head, its mad stare, and open mouth ejaculating a cry. Here Nature herself, seems to be an accomplice of evil, for the heavy sky, crossed with red stripes like hot iron, only crushes the distressed man more." (cf Lund, 1937, 22)



Fig. 1, Edvard Munch, *Le Cri*, 1893

I find Lund's simile between the red sky and hot iron crushing the figure in the painting to be especially pertinent. While many other artists of the period, such as Gauguin and Cezanne, sought to retreat from the industrializing world, Munch approached it head-on by using symbolism to describe the grave consequences of the period. During the late 1800s, the iron industry was lucrative in Northern Europe, particularly in Germany, (cf Webb, 1980, 309) where Munch spent many years before producing the four versions of *Le Cri*. It was likely Munch had kept this advancement in mind when painting the outlandishly colored sky, which not only represented pollution but also the weight of the world itself, as Lund implies, crushing the anguished man with its awful burden physically and mentally. Moreover, attention to mental illnesses increased during this period, and it is believed that Munch himself suffered from depression, which may have also influenced his portrayal of *Le Cri*.

Lund also compares *Le Cri* to another famous work, *Puberté* (Fig. 2, 1894-95).

The piece likely reflects Munch's revolt against the agony of human existence. The painting shows a nude teenage girl sitting awkwardly on a bed, called out by a single source of light, trying to cover her body from the viewer. It is important to note that this was not created for the viewer's pleasure, but discomfort. As viewers, we see the pain and hurt that she must feel, the shame of appearing in such a naked way. The single source of light, not only energizes the physical center of the composition, but its spiritual center as well; we are beckoned towards her, and we want to know what is behind those terrified eyes. It is a hard picture to look at, but an even harder one to look away from. All these adverse yet empathetic reactions can be attributed to Munch's use of line. Mirroring the slenderness of the girl, the entire composition — from the bed to the shadow, to the girl herself — is outlined in thick or thin black lines. Drawing the figure forward, Munch's lines invite us to take a closer introspective look into her mind, into the presented situation without being too intense or disgusting to the viewer.

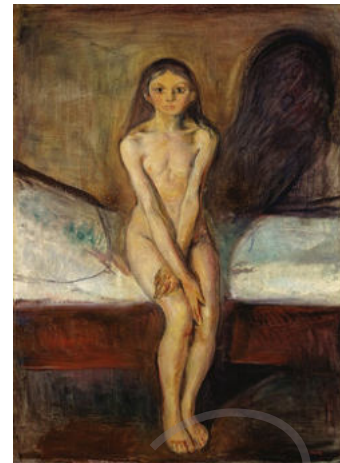


Fig. 2, Edvard Munch, *Puberté*, 1894

³As if a spirit, or her spirit, was diverging and watching from a third-person perspective, Munch's particular ability to use both color and line in this instance proves his mastery in creating an open and interpretive environment, making this psychological experience unique for every viewer.

Along with *Puberté*, *Girl Looking out the Window* (Fig. 3, 1892), creates a similar environment, lacking nudity and adding serenity. Combining the open brushwork of the impressionists with symbolist color and framing, Munch was able to create a distant, yet somber setting. As Jay A. Clarke describes, "The somber brown tones mingle with electric violets and moonlit blues to create a feeling of both melancholy and anticipation. The window itself serves as a narrative device, prompting viewers to wonder why (or at whom) the figure looks and to speculate what she might be thinking. It also serves as a symbolic barrier separating the outside world, brightly lit by the moon and newly invented streetlamps, from the young woman's dark, cocoonlike room. She stands in shadow, her feet placed just at the edge of the pool of light that falls on the floor before her" (cf Clarke, 2004, 70).



Fig. 3, Edvard Munch, *Girl Looking Out the Window*, 1893

Again, we see a multi-leveled use of symbolism in *Girl Looking out the Window*. Leaving the narrative of the painting open, Munch is inviting the viewer to take a closer look, not necessarily at the painting itself (due to the lack of detail) but at the overall feeling and theme of the story: is it sadness? Regret? Pity?

Although the composition could be considered sparse, much is left for onlookers to interpret, thanks in large part to the usage of symbolism (Cf Berman, 1993, 633). As if a spirit, or her spirit, was diverging and watching from a third-person perspective, Munch's particular ability to use both color and line in this instance proves his mastery in creating an open and interpretive environment, making this psychological experience unique for each viewer. His art remains unmatched by any other artist of the time while inspiring generations to explore this visual device further.

In the modern study of art, Munch himself has become a special character of interest, not only for his life itself but for the culture surrounding it. Munch's time in the bohemian circles of Norway and Germany exposed him to several emerging cultural norms that stood in contrast to the prudish conduct of the upper classes. Through these new freedoms, Munch was allowed to express himself in different manners and behaviors, such as smoking cigarettes. Originally rolled from discarded tobacco in cigar butts, cigarettes were always synonymous with the lower classes, but this was only exacerbated in 1881 when James Albert Bonsack invented a rolling machine that could cheaply mass produce cigarettes, encouraging the working classes to adopt them, furthering a social distinction that still stands today (cf Berman, 1993, 627). Many in Munch's intellectual circles frequently smoked, and Munch himself enjoyed associating the cigarette with his identity.

Perhaps this is most visible in *Self-Portrait with Cigarette* (Fig. 4, 1895) where the artist himself adorns a suit while lighting up, surrounded by the dark haze of cigarette smoke.

It's worthy to quote art historian Patricia G. Berman at length on the subject: "Lacking an identifiable environment and depicting the artist viewed frontally and slightly from below, the self-portrait represents Munch as a man directly engaging his viewer yet distanced from the world. Lit theatrically from below, his face and his right hand stand out in sharp relief against the blue background in a manner that is, as one of his critics noted, related to Rembrandt. Tiny spatters of blue paint, which form a mist across his cheeks and shirt collar, initiate the gradual absorption of the artist's darkly clad body by the swirling blue background. The control and self-assurance projected by Munch's rigid posture and direct gaze are belied by the physical dissolution suggested by the sickly ochre highlights on his hands, eyelids, and mouth. The cigarette that Munch holds in his right hand, from which plumes of blue smoke rise upward to thicken the already hazy atmosphere, is the symbolic agent of this dissolution."

Scholars have suggested that Munch included the cigarette as a formal device, "a quasi-naturalistic explanation for the symbolically enveloping haze," as a sign of sexual potency, or as a loose reference to the cafe society that the artist was known to frequent.

It could also be argued that tobacco is foremost a physical addiction, and that by representing himself smoking, Munch provided a public view of his daily life. Although the cigarette smoke unquestionably furnished Munch with a practical source for the theatrical lighting and disjunctively hazy quality of his painting, and revealed a private habit, it also provided him with an identity that was accessible and familiar to his audience (cf. Berman, 1993, 636).



Fig. 4, Edvard Munch, *Self-Portrait with Cigarette*, 1895

As the excerpt points out, by using the cigarette as a prop, Munch is not only displaying a physical representation of habit but also a symbol⁸ for his bohemian lifestyle and ideals themselves. In addition to cigarettes, "cafe society", as mentioned in the article above, shows an embodiment of this newly acceptable demeanor, with cigarettes often filling such spaces.

Instead of the uptight dinner parties and banquets of the upper classes, bohemian circles preferred cafe-concerts and bars where intellectuals of both genders could debate art and ideas, while also enjoying eccentric entertainment.

In Munch's drypoint print *Kristiania Bohemians II* (Fig. 5, 1895), we see these novel cultural forces at work in such a setting. Like Munch's self-portrait, the setting is ambiguous, appearing like it could be in any European city. We see bearded men and women sitting at the same table, in the middle of a conversation, with an open bottle of alcohol and lit cigarettes, perhaps discussing new ideas on art and philosophy.

The electrification of cities like Oslo and Berlin where Munch lived allowed for a much seedier lifestyle than was previously imaginable; however, it wasn't all entertainment for this modern class of personalities, they embodied a new worldview as well. As Berman states, "artists framing themselves as Bohemians occupied the borderland between the bourgeois stability and the anarchy of the streets. Living on the margins, but aspiring to the center, the Bohemians of the 19th century found themselves in relation to the stable middle-class. Rejecting the inaction of domestic life, these intellectually cultivated individuals chose instead the cafes, night clubs, and music halls of Paris. These became the favored loci for the spectacle they made of their aesthetic debates (similar to his usage of line and color in the last paragraph). In addition to the social differences this new class of individuals presented, they also brought with them an increased awareness of psychology, particularly mental illness, which was often reflected in their work, in part because of this new social class. Namely, the open representation of mental struggles through art itself.

For instance, in *Kristiania Bohemians II*, we are presented with a gloomy and dark atmosphere. Although it may be new, it certainly isn't an uplifting space. Patrons of the bar have droopy and abstracted faces, many of them looking down, perhaps displaying the oddity and depression that occurs within the bar.



Fig. 5, Edvard Munch, *Kristiania Bohemians II*, 1895

As I mentioned previously, Munch's emphasis on mental illness is one of the defining factors of why his work is so modern, with the emerging research and understanding of mental illnesses at the time playing a large role. It's important to note that different groups responded to these developments in different ways; some chose to run from it, and others refused to look away.

The former group could be describing the upper-class conservative intellectuals who viewed art like Munch's and his acolytes, as degenerate and unfit for the psychology of the age.

This philosophy was clearly outlined in the book *Degeneration* by Hungarian Physician Max Nordau, who condemned any art that wasn't up to his moral standing, claiming such expression was akin to encouraging criminal activity and the downfall of civilized society. He writes, "The artist who complacently represents what is reprehensible, vicious, criminal, and approves of it, perhaps glorifies it, differs not in kind, but only in degree, from the criminal who actually commits it" (cf. Nordau, 1892, 296).

This growing disapproval of Munch's bohemian circle amongst the upper circles of Europe is further reflected in the art of the period, oftentimes characterizing them as stuffy and ignorant of the true issues of the world. Despite this, Munch continually chose to portray his struggles through mental illness in his art. *Self-Portrait with Cigarette* shows that Munch embraced the label assigned to him with his unfinished, obscured painting reflecting in no manner the academic style that the upper classes praised. Furthermore, the vehicle of the cigarette (along with the alcohol in *Kristiania Bohemians II*) represents the ugly indulgences of humanity. As Berman notes, "By the 1880s, the concept of bohemia was enriched by the discourse of Decadence" (cf. Nordau, 1892, 6). This was despised by Nordau and his contemporaries as degrading to the mental health of the era, although their point of view wasn't entirely misguided.

A recent book by Dr. L. Bremer entitled *Tobacco, Insanity and Nervousness* believed that widespread cases of neurosis and other mental illnesses were due to alcohol and tobacco, especially cigarettes (cf. Bremer, 1892).

Throughout art history, the tragic relationship between madness and creativity is undeniable: from Goya, to Van Gogh, to Munch himself, and he capitalizes on that perceived association. Munch was aware of his critics, of those who called him a 'degenerate' yet chose to portray himself as a madman nonetheless. He embraced his depression and mental illness, something the upper class simply couldn't understand.

As he famously wrote of his inspiration for *Le Cri*: "I was walking along the road with two friends — the sun was setting — suddenly the sky turned blood red — I paused, feeling exhausted, and leaned on the fence— there was blood and tongues of fire above the blue-black fjord and the city — my friends walked on, and I stood there trembling with anxiety — and I sensed an infinite scream passing through nature" (cf. Munch, 1892).

Using his art as an outlet for his depression, Munch was able to display his struggles through his works of art, as taboo as it may have been for the upper classes.

A faded, grayscale portrait of Edvard Munch serves as the background for the page. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a dark tie. His expression is serious, and he is looking slightly to the right of the viewer.

In sum, Munch's ability to grapple with modernity in his artwork is what truly sets him apart as the modern artist of the period. His development as a symbolist artist, using intricate techniques and subjects to portray the subtleties and nuance of a newly emerging bohemian lifestyle, compares to none other of the era.

Likewise, his focus on psychology, and the newly conducted research thereof allowed for more deeply personal looks into his life at the turn of the century. Lastly, his feuding with the upper conservative classes, whose failure to come to grips with the present cultural changes, allowed for his artwork to carry a more self-aware understanding of his own and others' psyches. We may never fully understand Edvard Munch, but surely the ones interested can we can get a good idea by looking at these attributes that made him so special.

A portrait of a young man with light brown, wavy hair, smiling at the camera. He is wearing a dark grey suit jacket, a white dress shirt, and a red tie with a subtle geometric pattern. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue and white.

About the Author

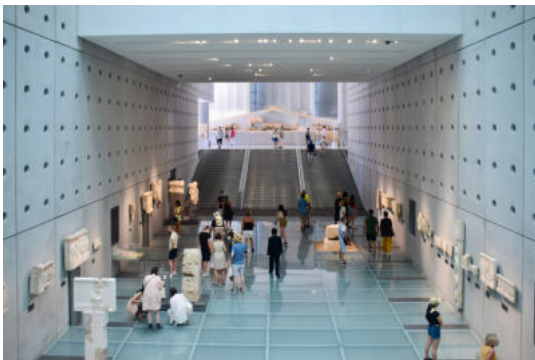
Andrew den Boggende is a Senior double major in Art History/Museum Studies and Economics at Florida Southern College. Active in the Honors Program, he also serves as an Economics Tutor on campus assisting his peers. Further, Andrew is the Campus Representative for the James Madison Institute hosting events to promote awareness of U.S. founding principles, responsible government, and economic freedom.

Andrew has also conducted extensive work at the Polk Museum of Art and the Florida Museum of Photographic Arts as a Collections and Curatorial Intern. He is currently working alongside the art history department chair on a project entitled "Robert Henri, William Merritt Chase, and the New York School of Art." He is also a founding editor of the Journal of Art History & Museum Studies. Outside of campus, Andrew enjoys reading everything from French poetry to economics, loves a good round of trivia, and has traveled extensively, visiting all fifty U.S. states and several other countries. After college, Andrew aspires to become an Economic Policy Analyst and continue to graduate school for economics.

To what extent do museums play an important role in the future of society?

Kimberly Wagner

Museums have been a fixture of society for centuries, showcasing art, historical artifacts, and items with the potential to shape humanity's future. By stimulating visitors' thoughts and facilitating discussion, museums aim to arouse curiosity. However, to what degree do museums contribute to society going forward? Can they truly foster meaningful discourse? Do values only persist or do they also serve a communicative purpose? What implications does this have for the future?



Preservation of cultures and values

For decades, museums have been tasked with shaping values and creating identities (cf. Kratz, 2011, p. 21). They present different eras to visitors, conveying values and providing an opportunity to influence young visitors specifically because young people are still enthusiastic about learning and are in the process of forming their values.

They can also "play" with values. If certain museum pieces are taken out of the market circulation and combined with other pieces in exhibitions, they become part of a social circulation of values, according to Kratz (cf. Kratz, 2011, 22f.).

Museums can use this method to transmit and preserve cultural values. Such an example can be found with the "Haus der Deutschen Geschichte" (House of German History) in Bonn and Berlin. Here, visitors are guided through the becoming of Germany as a nation along historic landmarks. Especially in the German context, this question is of high importance, as no question seems to be more typically German than to ask; what it means to be a 'German'. Echoes of this message are also found in the German Reichstag, flaunting "dem deutschen Volke" (to the German people). In a time of identity searching, identity building, and identity politics (Fukuyama 2018), this plays a crucial role in promoting cultural heritage for future generations, fostering a future-oriented remembrance culture. In other words, museums can support the experience of history, concluding, and learning for the future.

The reason for that lies in the importance of cultural heritage, whether physical or intangible, as it plays a significant role in a society's culture of remembrance, awareness, and identity formation.

Furthermore, UNESCO has designated museums as a place of preservation, study, and reflection on cultural heritage (cf. Bärnreuter; Schauerte, 2016, 26). These components will remain significant in upcoming years and have a profound impact on society. Certain aspects of history must be remembered, and they can either bring people together or, in the worst-case scenario, divide them.

Museums are involved in debating and expressing cultural values, not only through text but also through images (cf. Kratz, 2011, 28). This implies that they can operate multiculturally, as there are no language barriers, especially due to the visual components. In this way, visitors can learn the values and memories of other cultures, because you can understand images without knowing the other language.



For instance, a series of pictures can be used to illustrate a historical story and convey a message without understanding the text, thus breaking down language barriers. As discussed through confronting visitors with a multisensory experience through text, images,

and artifacts, those institutions provide a platform for self-reflection, and awareness, putting myths and perceptions into question. Especially today, it is essential to establish institutions that prioritize preservation and communication. The internet's proliferation of fake news can warp critical events and misrepresent vital values. There is a critical need to establish institutions that safeguard the most crucial elements of history from distortion and misuse. In this way, museums remain a valuable asset for future generations, providing invaluable knowledge beyond the internet's many uncertainties regarding truth and falsehoods.

Promoting research and opinion-forming

Besides their societal responsibility, museums also play a crucial role in research - one that should not be underestimated. Here, too, they render an important contribution to society. Due to particular features, they serve as globally operating networks, and so not only can the quality of research be improved, but valuable collections can also be preserved (cf. Graf, Leinfelder, Trischler, 2016, 44). By researching contemporary topics, they contribute to current scientific and social issues. In particular, research on emerging topics is not only of scientific importance but also affects every individual. Take climate change, for example. Museums can act not only as research institutions but also as educational institutions for visitors to sensitize them to social issues.

The Museum of the Future in Nuremberg is a good example of how to encourage those discussions. The museum regularly hosts "Future Talk," where guests can watch and participate in expert debates. Topics such as AI, space debris, and space travel play an important role. Visitors are encouraged to look at these topics from different perspectives and contribute their thoughts. In this way, topics are addressed that may not be on people's minds in everyday life.

As another example, the educational nature of museums can contribute to ensuring that current social issues are not only communicated to society but that citizens can also contribute. The variety of ways in which museums convey knowledge today makes it easier for visitors to absorb the issues. As an example, through interactive exhibitions, visitors explore topics together and have the opportunity to engage in discussions and exchange ideas (cf. Noschka-Ruos, 2016, 61). This not only promotes social cohesion but also has a significant impact on the future. Museums can thus help shape the future of society and culture.



In this way, the museum not only promotes the formation of knowledge but also promotes the formation of opinions among guests.

In the age of social media where everyone is influenced by hundreds of opinions a day, it is important to take a moment to reflect on your own opinions, especially when it comes to issues that affect the future. But reflection can also be beneficial in other environments and museums. In historical museums, for example, encouraging discussion can lead to reflections on the past. This is also important when thinking about the future of society. Some mistakes should not be repeated, and some actions from the past can be groundbreaking for the future.

Shaping the Future of Society

How do museums play an important role in the future of society? On the one hand, they play an important role in the creation of knowledge. Whether they are art museums, history museums, transportation museums, or museums of the future, they provide a place of knowledge. They teach about the past, the present, and the future, and they confront visitors with controversial and important issues. They succeed in making learning accessible to visitors through visual, emotional, and multisensory appeal. In many modern concepts, visitors play an interactive role in this process.

Museums have been communicating values for many centuries. Whether they are values of the past or the present, they preserve them and keep them for future generations. Important issues are not lost through exhibitions, even hundreds of years later you can look at them, learn from them, and form your own opinion.

So, you could say that museums preserve these values and views to pass them on to future generations. Through these means, cultures cannot be lost; they can be remembered. Furthermore, they provide a place for research and discussion, conducting research in areas that also affect the future. They are networked all over the world, can support each other, and thus offer high-quality exhibitions. Visitors not only see the preserved pieces of the past but are also involved in the research and can learn from it.



As a place of discussion, museums offer citizens the opportunity to reflect and share their own opinions. They address issues that are important to society, history, and the future. Visitors are encouraged to think about things that don't normally occupy much space in their daily lives, but which are important in the grand scheme of things. The presence of experts who take part in the discussion provides an opportunity to consider alternative points of view and to experience the opinions of others.

In conclusion, museums play an important role in the future of society. They do not only preserve cultures and their values but also encourage research and discussion. They help visitors experience the past and help shape the future. Museums combine multiple cultures and subjects, standing a spot to remember the past while envisioning the future. Maybe this academic journey to the world of museums has opened new perspectives - when visiting a museum for the next time, you might explore these places with different eyes.



A portrait of a young woman with short brown hair and glasses, smiling. She is wearing a white ribbed sweater. The background is a soft-focus image of autumn leaves in shades of yellow, orange, and pink. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

About the Author

Kimberley Wagner was born and raised in Hamburg. She moved to Erlangen to study German and Politics at the Friedrich-Alexander University, where she graduated in 2022. Her main interests were literary studies, human rights policy and the political situation in Asia.

During her studies, she worked at the Museum of the Future in Nuremberg, which helped her to develop a view on the role of museums and to get more involved in future issues.

A photograph of Timothy Edensor, a man with glasses and a mustache, sitting in a train. He is looking directly at the camera. The background shows the interior of a train with seats and windows. The text "IGE Interview: Timothy Edensor" is overlaid on the image.

IGE Interview: Timothy Edensor

Tim Edensor is an Emeritus Professor of Social and Cultural Geography at the Institute of Place Management, Manchester Metropolitan University. He is the author of *Tourists at the Taj* (1998), *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (2002), *Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality* (2005), *From Light to Dark: Daylight, Illumination and Gloom* (2017) and *Stone: Stories of Urban Materiality* (2020). He is the editor of *Geographies of Rhythm* (2010), and co-editor of *The Routledge Handbook of Place* (2020), *Rethinking Darkness: Cultures, Histories, Practices* (2020), *Weather: Spaces, Mobilities and Affects* (2020), and *Dark Skies: Places, Practices, Communities* (2023). His most recent publication is *Landscape, Materiality and Heritage: An Object Biography* (2022), a book about a Scottish medieval cross.

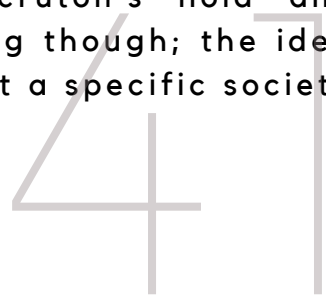
Good morning Professor Edensor, thank you for joining me today, I find it fascinating to explore the relationship between high culture and popular culture, and would love to know your views on it.

As Raymond Williams said many years ago, culture is one of the most complex words to define in the English language. It is an incredibly complex notion, culture. I think it means two things - first, a great range of culturally creative outputs, cultural forms, and all sorts of practices from music, television, film, and visual arts, all those areas. We can think of culture as that, but second, culture is also a way of life, an everyday thing; it is not something that is even reflected upon much, but it is manifest in groups and in how people live, in the kind of values, ideas, and habits they have. I think it is important to think about culture in this way when we talk about high culture and popular culture. This was especially pertinent in the 1990s with the emergence of ideas about postmodernity; unlike in high modernity, theorists claimed, postmodernity signified a period in which the distinction between high culture and low culture became blurred, and thus this separation does not make sense any longer. When the football World Cup in 1990, in Italy, was broadcast in the UK, the theme music for each time a match was televised was Luciano Pavarotti's *Nessun Dorma*.

This exemplified a kind of blending, where the high culture was the opera, and the low culture was football. This is what commentators asserted. However, I do not accept the distinction between high culture and low culture. I do not think it exists or has ever existed. The reason for making such a distinction is that people who claim to be aficionados of high culture are simply using their supposed 'expertise' to boost their status, their cultural capital, and their identity. And it is hard to judge why, for instance, La Bohème is any better than any pop music record, let's say by Radiohead. What criteria are deployed for such assessments and why? Pop music and popular culture can certainly be as rich and complex as music that is identified as high culture, and vice versa. I do not think the distinction can hold anymore. It did mean something once upon a time because it had a sociological and political purchase that was widely accepted. To emphasize, there is no such thing as high or low culture. The difference has been articulated as a way to distinguish between particular classes and those who believe they possess forms of status that are reinforced by those who self-appoint themselves as the cultural elite; it is important to resist this and not take it seriously.

"A high culture is the self-consciousness of a society", once wrote the late Roger Scruton. Putting this statement in the present scenario, where do you think the society is presently heading with this?

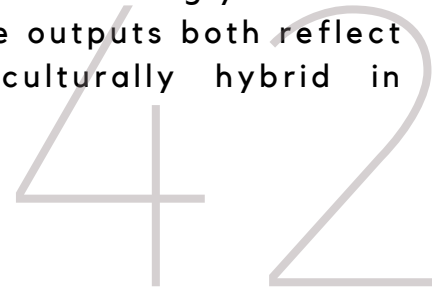
As I have emphasized, I do not really like such conservative thinking, and I entirely reject Scruton's notion. It belongs to a tradition of people who like to identify national literature canons, the greatest film ever made, the best poet throughout history, and the best music ever. There is no point in making these statements. Things can be assessed according to very different values in all sorts of ways and these judgments inevitably change and drift over time. Elitist ideas about high culture can be traced at least to Mathew Arnold's statement in the late 19th century where he says that we need to take account of 'the best that has been thought and said'. But this is irrelevant now. There is no best. Rather, there is a multitude of very rich and complex ways in which cultural expressions have been perpetrated and consumed, and will continue to be the case. We need to disentangle assertions that rank culture according to its value and one way of focusing on this is by looking at the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who says that such ideas are simply a way of marking status and identity, of claiming distinction. In the example to which you refer, Roger Scruton was just marking his status as one who has a certain expertise, who consumes and possesses knowledge about particular cultural forms and practices, or who rather asserts that the forms and practices of culture he particularly likes and favours are superior to others. The era in which claims such as Scruton's hold any significance or weight has vanished. Now here is another thing though; the idea of thinking about a particular society – but I do not know what a specific society is.



The ways we usually think about this is precisely in national terms as kind a 'natural' society - British Society, Indian Society, American Society - but to think about a 'natural' society that is culturally confined and bounded in this way is absurd. In contemporary times, we can look at small social groups, and local societies that are characterized by particular cultural expressions, and we can also look beyond, continental, say European culture, and multiple forms of global culture. Ideas about what constitutes a society are complex. There are different scales to consider, from the small to the very big. For instance, in a European context, some attempt to outline what a shared European culture might be can be claimed that there are shared forms of high culture – for instance, classical compositions in literature and art. But to me, this does not work. Because I cannot think of any culture, from the local to the continental that is or has been in any way fixed or uncontested. For instance, before the 1960s, there was a widely proposed idea that the summit of British culture was pre-eminently constituted by the works of Shakespeare, Keats, and other high literary figures, and in painting, Turner and Constable would be identified, and so on. It would be these figures and canons that would signify the greatness of British or English culture. But nothing holds this central role anymore. In my understanding, national culture, say, for instance, British culture – but this can apply to all cultures at any scale - is a matrix. In this matrix, we can express our sense of Britishness by making an infinite number of connections between the incredibly complex, changing, and diverse cultural forms and practices that continuously emerge. We can and do incorporate numerous aspects of supposedly other cultures into our own, for instance, by taking aspects of Indian identity and heritage within an expanding sense of national belonging. There are almost infinite ways in which we may connect to different cultural strands within this matrix. The most important thing to emphasize then, is that culture is continually reforming and expanding in complex ways. Culture is dynamic and changes over time, and no one can authoritatively pin it down.

How do you think art matters right now when we are being overloaded with information about crises across the globe?

The overloading of information about crises and all sorts of other issues is producing a defensive reaction that is so complex, so overloaded with ideas and thoughts, that we tend to retreat in the face of this overwhelming complexity, as a defense mechanism. One dimension of this defensiveness is that we claim that we are exclusively British or French and that we have our own bounded culture. But this also produces a reaction, for instance, for many British people going through Brexit. Young people especially hate this exclusivity because it harms the social progress that has been made as culture becomes increasingly diverse. But as is obvious, a huge proportion of artistic and creative outputs both reflect cultural and political complexity and are extremely culturally hybrid in themselves, disavowing any notion of bounded exclusivity.



What are some of your favorite instances when high culture and popular culture both influenced people and made a difference?

Numerous art movements have encouraged people to view the world differently, in Europe certainly and also elsewhere, from the end of the 19th century to the 20th century. We've had impressionism, expressionism, pop art, and many other movements that have encouraged people to look at the world differently. Also, most obviously, there were many creative practices during the 1960s that changed people's thinking, with the sexual revolution, feminism, and black power, and the challenge to accepted hierarchies through popular music, film, theatre, and numerous other creative experiments. We can also think about how the punk movement was important, not necessarily musically but for challenging the idea about who can join a band, namely, anyone - the importance of inclusivity was important. One of the most important cultural developments throughout the 20th century was the emergence of jazz, especially from the American Black community. The effects have been profound, from the 1930s until today, with musicians producing astonishing, excellent music that completely demolishes any ideas about racial superiority. Such achievements are illustrative in recognizing how culture has made a huge difference to wider ideas about identity and value. This applies in the UK, which is such a mixed cultural land - for instance, in the music industry which is fantastically hyper-diverse, and musical influences are immensely varied. You cannot predict what might emerge from this mix and match - there are great West African, Bangladeshi, and Indian bands in London, and there are hybrid television shows, for instance, that extend cultural debates. It is important to acknowledge that the UK is becoming a far more inclusive society and the reality is that people are mixing in a way never known before, in more sophisticated ways than previously, and this feeds into generating a host of different everyday cultural habits, tastes, and practices.

Through the economic lens, popular culture is seen as a set of commodities produced through capitalistic processes driven by a profit motive and sold to consumers. Do you agree with this?

It is obvious that most popular culture is driven through commodification; there is no doubt about that. Popular films, television shows, and fashion are driven by economic interests, but if we think this is all that popular culture is, then we have a very reductive way of understanding it. For instance, in the UK from the 1900s to 1960, there was an incredibly coherent, strong working-class culture that revolved around trade union activity, shared music performance and consumption, and a street culture where people would meet and make their own culture, and this was not driven by capitalism. It emerged from people's collaboration and collective creativity. Another example is the growth of DIY culture, with, for instance, the great increase in people interested in cultivating their gardens and in making things as part of the huge recent expansion of craft culture. This has nothing to do with buying cultural commodities but with creatively making your things.

Now it is true that a lot of pop music is driven by commodification, for instance, as with boy bands. But with the rise in the 1960s of fan cultures, fans adopted different ways of celebrating pop stars and bands, making their pictures and stories and sharing their particular rituals and dress styles in creative ways. This challenges the ideas from such thinkers as those from the Frankfurt school which conceives of popular culture as that which is disseminated from above to the masses. But this is only partial, for people are not stupid and robotic, passively consuming what they are given. Such ideas come from a crude Marxist analysis of economy and culture. I want to emphasize that we are never brainwashed by culture. People can react in unpredictable and often creative ways. This also challenges Guy Debord's famous contention that people passively consume spectacles staged for them and they lack any agency of their own. I think the idea that people just sit there and consume passively is ridiculous. It is important to understand how culture can be received and interpreted.

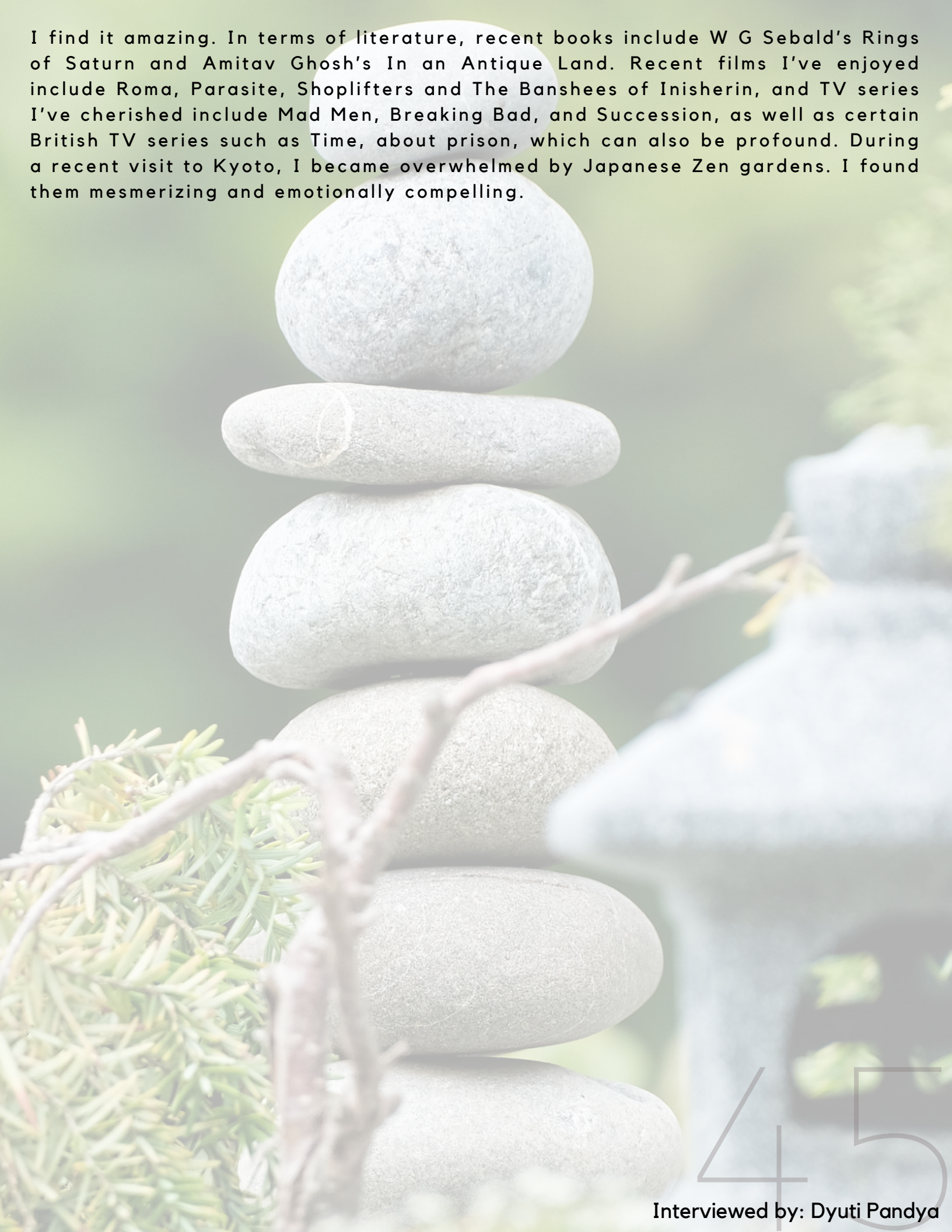
What do you think is the global impact of the Communication Revolution going on right now?

It is a complicated question because the communication revolution has had an enormous impact and has emerged only relatively recently. It certainly allows greater connectivity and exchange. For example, it is now very easy to access Nigerian Music and Indian novels. I can find people who share my cultural interests and passions. But also, we need to note that there is unequal access to those who can connect and those who are excluded from this. Moreover, while it can make us global in thought and cultural habits, it can also encourage ghettoized thinking - Trump is one example. People do not necessarily move between blogs and other sources of information, entertainment, and creativity, but stick to sources that tell them things they want to hear. The communication revolution can stop people from engaging with different ideas and connect people who share the same ideas and tastes which can generate over-patriotic thinking and insular culture. Yet we must remember that there is always this potential for greater connectivity, which many of us take advantage of.

What is your favorite piece of artwork ever?

I cannot boil this down to one artwork, it's impossible, so I am going to give you a list. Many jazz records, old and new, I love, as well as 1970s reggae from Jamaica, and contemporary West African music. In art, I have been especially enchanted by video work, by artists such as Bill Viola and Shirin Neshat, and I love contemporary painting, such as by Peter Doig, as well as old Dutch masters from the 17th century. I love Barbara Hepworth's sculpture as well as work by James Turrell, who plays inventively with light.





I find it amazing. In terms of literature, recent books include W G Sebald's *Rings of Saturn* and Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land*. Recent films I've enjoyed include *Roma*, *Parasite*, *Shoplifters* and *The Banshees of Inisherin*, and TV series I've cherished include *Mad Men*, *Breaking Bad*, and *Succession*, as well as certain British TV series such as *Time*, about prison, which can also be profound. During a recent visit to Kyoto, I became overwhelmed by Japanese Zen gardens. I found them mesmerizing and emotionally compelling.



STUDIO CORNER: WHAT IS ART TO YOU?

1.



I recently moved to Belgium. Recently pretty much every day I see the Antwerp train station. It's a piece of art. Simultaneously I also got acquainted with the Belgian tax system which pretty much ensures that this level of relative wealth can never be achieved in this country again. Of course, we all will get richer and richer, but there is no doubt that Belgium takes away its inhabitant's chance to be the best place to live on earth. I mean - the perfect geography, the perfect place in Europe, connected to France, Netherlands, Germany, UK - and yet it's stagnant

-Anonymous

2.



On my recent visit to Europe, I visited the Basílica i Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família, or in layman's terms known as Sagrada Família in Barcelona. There is not an inch of this building that is not intricately detailed. It was designed by Antoni Gaudí who was super influential in the Barcelona architectural scene. The church combines Gothic and curvilinear Art Nouveau forms. And remains as the largest unfinished catholic church, a sight that can be marveled upon for hours.

-Alan Chau
Cornell University

STUDIO CORNER: WHAT IS ART TO YOU?

3.



I tried thinking about the plethora of art I have come across in my life but for some reason, I still wanted to talk about this picture I took from when I was in New York this summer.

This is Nydia - the blind girl of Pompeii. Nydia's journey has been about the importance of resilience, adaptability, and self-reliance; which I think is something I've inched closer toward the whole of this year. It is very fascinating how she was determined to navigate through the ruins of Pompeii, relying on her senses and adapting to her surroundings. In a way, I feel, it makes me embrace my journey of self-discovery and solitude in a world that can often feel overwhelming. Her story also continuously highlighted the significance of empathy and compassion, despite her struggles. It's just a timeless piece and acts as a reminder that no matter the circumstances, we have the power to shape our destiny and find our place in the world.

-Rajashree Hazarika
University of Maryland

4.



To me, this Pierre-Narcisse Guerin's (1774-1833) *Coriolanus Banished from Rome by the Plebeians* (c. 1800) is germane to the contemporary classical liberal's struggle against populism—not that Coriolanus was a liberal of any kind! Nonetheless, Coriolanus's look of sheer contempt for fashion, i.e., for popular opinion, reminds us not to base our own conception of the Good, Just, and True on the whims of the moment.

-Jonathan Nicastro
Duke University



STUDIO CORNER: WHAT IS ART TO YOU?

5.



The Centaur, by Igor Mitoraj, stands in the Forum of Pompeii since 1994, built purposefully to mimic the statues that were already there, broken and rusted. But this doesn't create the effect of decadence but an aesthetic of its own and it reminds me of the Japanese Wabi-Sabi style. The Centaur looks proud and defiant, transcending the timely nature of its creator and surroundings, embracing its out-of-placeness and forever incompleteness, like a myth that is born already half-remembered, a legend of itself; a god come not to haunt the ruins but to tower over them, highlighting that they're not a legacy that has died but one that remains.

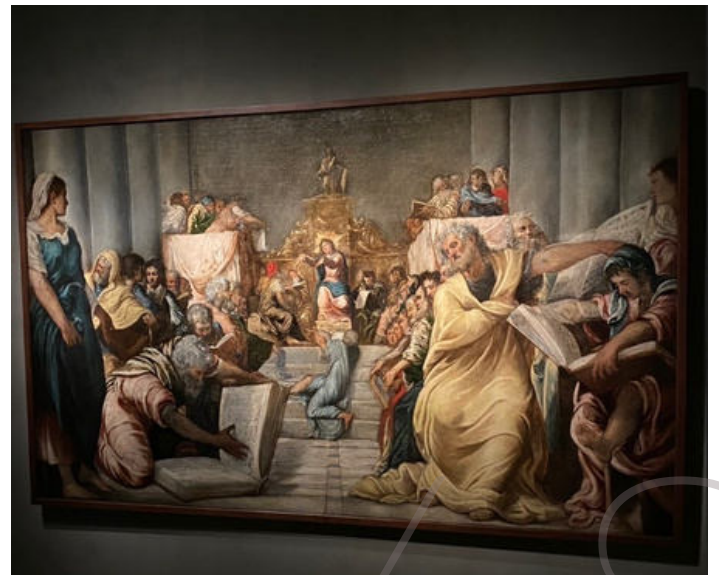
-Eloy Vera Beltran

6.



The Nightwatch by Rembrandt van Rijn
-Mirza Hozdick, University of Zagreb

7.

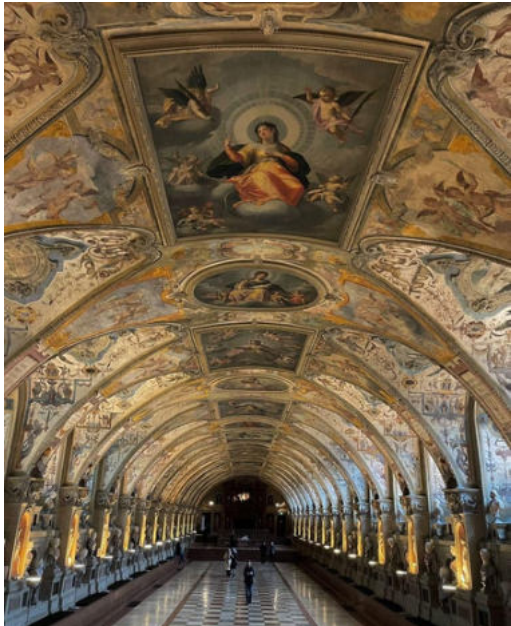


Christ Disputing in the Temple by Paris Bordeone
-Anastasije Popovic, University of Belgrade



STUDIO CORNER: WHAT IS ART TO YOU?

8.



Munich, Residence, Antiquarium
-Mariam Berdzenishvilli, Free University of Tbilisi

9.



Water Lilies by Claude Monet
-Priyanka Jayaprakash, Instituto Marangoni

10.



The Dance by Carl Eldh
-Shivam Jha, IIM Calcutta

11.



The Capitol Hill
-Ika Bezhuashvili, Columbia University



IGE BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

Liz Moran

Culture, history, and Europe

Peter Rietbergen: Europe. A cultural story (2021).

The book examines the structures of culture in this part of Eurasia from the beginnings of human settlement to the genesis of agricultural society, greater polities, urban systems, and the slow transitions that resulted in a (post-industrial) society and the individualistic mass culture of the present. Using economic and socio-political analytical concepts, the volume outlines cultural continuity and change in Europe through the lenses of literature, the arts, science, technology, and music, to show the continent's ever-changing identities.

Catherine Fletcher: The Beauty and the Terror: An Alternative History of the Italian Renaissance" (2020).

The Italian Renaissance shaped Western culture - but it was far stranger and darker than many of us realize. We know the Mona Lisa for her smile, but not that she was married to a slave trader. We revere Leonardo da Vinci for his art, but few now appreciate his ingenious designs for weaponry. We visit Florence to see Michelangelo's David but hear nothing of the massacre that forced the republic's surrender. The Beauty and the Terror is an enrapturing narrative that includes the forgotten women writers, Jewish merchants, mercenaries, prostitutes, farmers, and citizens who lived the Renaissance every day. Brimming with life, it takes us closer than ever before to the reality of this astonishing era, and its meaning for today.

Popular culture and Europe

Ewa Mazierska (ed): Popular Music in Eastern Europe: Breaking the Cold War Paradigm (Pop Music, Culture and Identity) (2016).

This book explores popular music in Eastern Europe during the period of state socialism, in countries such as Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Romania, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Estonia, and Albania. It discusses the policy concerning music, the greatest Eastern European stars, and the music press. By conducting original research, the authors take issue with certain assumptions prevailing in the existing studies on popular music in Eastern Europe, namely that it was largely based on imitation of Western music and that this music had a distinctly anti-communist flavour. Instead, they argue that self-colonisation was accompanied by creating an original idiom and that the state not only fought the artists but also supported them.

Gender and (popular) culture in Europe

Deborah Simonto: Women in European Culture and Society: A Sourcebook (2013)

This book encompasses the history of women in Europe from the beginning of the eighteenth century right up to the present day. A central feature is its exploration of how women operated within gendered worlds and used their skills and abilities to shape and claim their own identities and to engage with how they contributed as practitioners to shaping European culture and society. With over 200 sources, the book allows us to 'hear' women's voices as they articulate their understandings of their worlds and helps capture a sense of women's motivations, options, and choices as they understood them - allowing readers to focus on either a period or a theme and providing a comparative resource.

Kornelia Slavova and Krassimira Daskalova (eds): Gendering Popular Culture: Perspectives from Eastern Europe and the West" (2012)

Gendering Popular Culture: Perspectives from Eastern Europe and the West – is a useful guide to understanding the meanings and contradictory effects of popular culture and gender today. The texts in this collection reveal how popular culture is a dynamic terrain where gender norms and identities are simultaneously produced and contested. The authors explore such contemporary issues as the role of pop music during the Cold War and the post-socialist transition, representations of procreation in Hollywood science fiction, the visibility of women filmmakers, the rise of domestic femininity in the post-communist world, and the retreatist scenarios for women in the USA, as well as changing models of masculinity."

Katy Hessel: The Story of Art without Men (2022)

How many women artists do you know? Who makes art history? Did women even work as artists before the twentieth century? And what is the Baroque anyway?

Discover the glittering Sofonisba Anguissola of the Renaissance, the radical work of Harriet Powers in the nineteenth-century USA, and the artist who invented the Readymade. Explore the Dutch Golden Age, the astonishing work of post-war artists in Latin America, and the women artists defining art in the 2020s. Have your sense of art history overturned, and your eyes opened to many art forms often overlooked or dismissed. From the Cornish coast to Manhattan, Nigeria to Japan this is the history of art as it's never been told before.

Cultural theory

Mark Fisher: Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?" (2009)

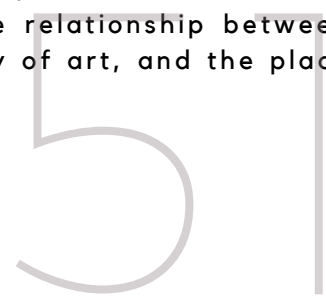
After 1989, capitalism has presented itself as the only realistic political-economic system. What effects has this "capitalist realism" had on work, culture, education, and mental health? Is it possible to imagine an alternative to capitalism that is not some throwback to discredited models of state control?

John Storey: Cultural Theory and Popular Culture. An Introduction (2021)

John Storey presents a clear and critical survey of competing theories of, and various approaches to, popular culture. Its breadth and theoretical unity, exemplified through popular culture, means that it can be flexibly and relevantly applied across several disciplines.

Peter Osborne: Philosophy in Cultural Theory (2000)

Philosophy in Cultural Theory boldly crosses disciplinary boundaries to offer a philosophical critique of cultural theory today. Drawing on the legacy of Walter Benjamin, Peter Osborne looks critically at central philosophical debates in cultural theory, such as the relationship between sign and image, the technological basis of cultural form, the conceptuality of art, and the place of fantasy in human affairs.



CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Joseph Ndondo

J S Q P A A Y J S B A C P D
S Q E R O T N C B C A U A Y
Z M E I E P I I I W R L O B
V P R I D H U R M P T T S E
O R C O T E F L R E J U U Y
W O M E N A M F I K H R F H
S M U S I C E O V S O E T P
N O I G I L E R C P M U U O
W I E R U T A R E T I L B S
C O N S C I O U S N E S S O
S C H O L A R S H I P G E L
Y T I S R E V I D H Z S E I
T N E M N I A T R E T N E H
E T H N O C E N T R I S M P

- ☐ Acculturation
- ☐ Africa
- ☐ Anime
- ☐ Art
- ☐ Comedies
- ☐ Consciousness
- ☐ Culture
- ☐ Diversity
- ☐ Ethnocentrism
- ☐ Europe
- ☐ Literature
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Norms
- ☐ Opera
- ☐ Philosophy
- ☐ Populism
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Scholarship
- ☐ Soap
- ☐ Society
- ☐ Values

Answers can be horizontal, vertical, diagonal and read backwards.
Solutions can be found on page 56.



SOURCES

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A contact zone for past and future perspectives

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Joseph Ndondo

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