

Siglinde Lang

(Arts) Management and its role in encouraging cultural production

Abstract

In the sense of a contemporary, democratic understanding of public space(s) (Mouffe 2007, Fraser 1990, Klaus/Lünenborg 2013), the production of a polyphonic discourse can be seen as the guiding principle within the arts and cultural management process, as outlined in a relevant research study at the University of Salzburg. The talk will present the findings from this interdisciplinary inquiry into the extent to which cultural management processes are able to initiate and professionally coordinate cultural meaning production. On the basis of cultural studies, supported by concepts of cultural citizenship (Klaus/Lünenborg 2013) and participatory culture (Jenkins et al 2005), cultural production is hereby defined as a collaborative process in which perspectives and attitudes are generated, gathered, and distributed in a public circulation process. Specifically, as key result of the research, a communication (management) model will be introduced: It illustrates this very mediation process that fathoms the production of a polyphonic discourse as the central objective of cultural managers' actions and communication.

Current trends toward active audiences and participatory practices in arts and cultural management mean that diverse and also contradictory perspectives are given space for articulation. These developments become virulent, particularly in participatory art projects, as such projects refer to concrete social phenomena, whereby a current cultural or social situation is taken up in a specific context, and collaboratively deliberated within specific social groups. In the charged atmosphere of the imaginary aesthetic realm, a participatory process gives rise to a space located between "fact" and "fiction," between the worlds of "what is" and "what could be." In its insularity as art, or as cultural project, a temporary microcosm is drafted that opens up "conceptual gaps," and thereby, creative leeway beyond common parameters of perception and conventional interpretation schemes. Created are

(counter-)spaces beyond and yet within the space of everyday experience and action that allow the discovery of new perspectives.

These (counter-)spaces are consequently (also) to be understood as temporary, staged spaces of communication that compress various perspectives and open alternative, polysemic options for interpretation. Their spatial constitution is based on interaction and difference, which creates, or is capable of creating conditions for alternative paths of (cultural) development (Massey 2005). In this way, precisely this format of an imaginative-relational microcosm, as I call this space between “fact” and “fiction,” can be regarded as the motor of collaborative meaning production.

A new understanding of the communication management work carried out by arts managers is thus necessary for initiating and professionally guiding the negotiation processes among diverse interests. When the goal of communication in the cultural sector is understood as the creation of space for diverse interests, contradictory interpretations cannot be considered unwelcome, but instead, must be seen as necessary and goal-promoting. Accordingly, the main responsibility of cultural managers can be seen as rooted within a mediation process of hegemonic and alternative attributions of meaning.

References

Jenkins, Henry/Puroshotma, Ravi/Clinton, Katherine/Weigel, Margaret/Robison, Alice J. (2005), *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*. Online at: <http://www.newmedialiteracies.org/files/working/NMLWhitePaper.pdf>.

Foucault, Michel (2012), “Andere Räume,” in eds. Dünne, Jörg/Günzel, Stephan (2012), *Raumtheorie. Grundlagentexte aus Philosophie und Kulturwissenschaften*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 7. ed., pp. 317–329.

Fraser, Nancy (1990), "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in *Social Text*, no. 25/26, Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 56–80.

Mouffe, Chantal (2007), "Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces," in *Art & Research. A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*, no. 1/2, online: <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n2/mouffe.html>.

Massey, Doreen B, (2005), *For space*, London, UK: Sage Publications.

Klaus, Elisabeth/ Lünenborg, Margreth (2013), "Cultural citizenship. Participation by and through Media," in Zobl, Elke/ Drüeke, Ricarda (eds.), *Feminist Media. Participatory Spaces, Networks and Cultural Citizenship (= Critical Media Studies, vol. 9)*, Bielefeld: Transcript, pp. 197–212.