The Short Report of Safe Havens 2020 Global Stream
24.11.2020

Table of Contents

Part One: Introduction to the Short Report of Safe Havens 2020 Global Stream.

Safe Havens is an international gathering of artists; arts organisations and artists residencies; activists; human rights and free speech NGOs; legal specialists; funders and policy makers all committed to protecting and defending free artists expression and at-risk artists. Taking place annually in early December since 2013, it has been rooted in Malmö, Sweden, moving to Cape Town in 2019. It will occur virtually in 2020 with a four-day, invitation-only international 'global stream', 10-13 November, for artists and smaller on-the-ground organisations, and a one-day public webinar on 3 December for resource-givers and policy makers to discuss the report of November's 'Safe Havens Global Stream'. What would normally be the on-stage panel discussions at the conference are now spread over the year as monthly ´Freedom Talks´ streamed and shared through social media, with artists and experts in the network discussing specific instances and approaches to freedom of artistic expression.

In 2018, both the 2018 Safe Havens participants and keynote speaker, Karima Bennoune, the current UN Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights, highlighted two priorities which became the underlying principles for the events of 2020. They will be in focus in the 3 December webinar Round Tables: to work more cooperatively and less competitively (Round Table Two), and to direct support for local, on-the-ground initiatives (Round Table One). As Ms. Bennoune put it in 2018:

First and foremost, if you might allow me to say in the friendliest way, that it is essential that we all work cooperatively rather than competitively. Alas, there is enough work for us all to do and if we do not have powerful coalitions and networks and allies and recognize our complementarity, we will never succeed in meeting our goals no matter how well our own organizations and initiatives may do.

It is also important to consider that sometimes small amounts of funds provided to local, regional, grassroots, frontline initiatives to help artists and cultural rights defenders on-the-ground, to help tackle root causes of human rights violations and persecution can be the most effective way to work, even if it may be less flashy than bigger external approaches which may also play a key role...

The Safe Havens Global Stream 2020 was comprised of five primary 'hives' or discussion sessions and six further break-out hives. 164 people from all parts of the globe registered for the four days of participative discussion, presentations, and musical contributions from artists who have experienced persecution. The full programme is an annexe to this short, highly edited Report focusing on recommendations. A longer Report is forthcoming.

To conclude this introduction and bridge the principles outlined in 2018 with this year's discussions we present difficult questions that began with the first 'hive' of the 2020 Global Stream; Who is at Risk/What is at Risk?

What is complicity; what is the role of those who have power, information and privilege? What is the difference between objectively verifiable threats to life, and subjective threats to the integrity of one's own consciousness? When we use the word 'solidarity', does it entail an unequal power relation, with a stronger party 'provider' deigning to offer support to a 'recipient' party deemed to be 'in need'? In the essay quoted below, the concept of solidarity is likened to a competitive marketplace of 'causes', with 'a tendency towards monopoly', that 'disregards the interconnectedness of problems in the world today'. Is the concept of partnership perhaps more equitable?

> Partnership, in contrast to solidarity, has no centre; works in multiple directions rather than one; is based on equality rather than power; and is at odds with mutual competition, and the polarization that follows therefrom. It has the potential to be a positive undertaking for the reality of global interconnectedness and an acceptance of the shared ownership of the world. Causes and cooperation are not located in two different worlds, as the ideology of solidarity implies. It is the same world, and the same one cause, even if its faces and expressions vary…

> …What was valuable in the concept of solidarity was the framework of worldwide responsibility, breaking down the segregation of human pains from one another. What could retain this value is transcending solidarity to partnership in a world that today progressively forms a single framework of responsibility, but still provides levels of freedom and capability of utmost disparity.

Yassin Al-Haj Saleh
https://www.aljumhuriya.net/en/content/critique-solidarity

Part Two: Overall Issues and Recommendations

2.1 Local/Global

Whereas differences between the so-called Global South and the so-called Global North were cited, there were also calls for more support to local initiatives, and more fair partnerships between the local and international.

Recommendations:

Local and regional networks need to be encouraged and supported.

Global North countries must live up to the commitments made in the UNESCO Convention (including Articles 14 and 16 relating to preferential treatment for artists from the Global South)

There should be more synergies between local and international Human Rights Defenders (HRD) protection schemes, in order to ensure that the post-relocation scenario is safe. Events such as Safe Havens help create these synergies.

2.2 Temporary relocation

based on human rights defender practice, for persecuted artists living under repressive regimes, to countries where they can be safe and able to resume and disseminate their creative practice, is a necessary and essential response especially when saving and protecting lives, but is not without problems. Post-relocation, artists often face legal and economic obstacles to the exercise of their profession, potential trauma and intersectional prejudices. The context of an at-risk story has large, and sometimes unwanted, implications on the way their work is presented and received.

An ICORN/University of York study of the wellbeing needs of people on protective relocation found that significant resourcefulness was required to access protective relocation. This showed that such people are high-functioning despite their high levels of stress and trauma. But this means they sometimes hide their need for aftercare, creating a dilemma for those who run relocation programmes.

The lack of harmonized EU legislation regarding social and legal status of artists, including those coming from the third countries, results in the most vulnerable not meeting requirements for funding and support schemes. The situation is particularly difficult for refugee artists working for years together in ensembles, and who, in the absence of the common EU asylum policy and relocation strategy, are distributed across different countries and regions, which prevents synergies and collaborations.

Much-needed funds to support foreign artists during the Covid crisis have been mobilized primarily through civil society organizations and private donations. The cooperation on the authorities' part is necessary.

Communication and sharing of expertise and experience among all the involved actors is key for finding solutions on both local, national, and regional levels. A special effort needs to be made to enable artists share their subjective and deeply contextualized experience, since they themselves are often the main source of insightful solutions.

Recommendations:

Funding must be allocated to have safe and supported full time multidisciplinary staff teams (psychologists, security advisors, daily accompaniment officers, etc.) to assist with individuals' relocation.

Temporary relocation programmes must have an intersectional perspective and ensure that languages are not a barrier.

Care must not be a burden for relocations, and the option of a family relocation should always be on the table if needed.

With regard to supporting foreign artists who are stuck due to Covid-19-related issues, cooperation with public and private foundations as well as the municipal authorities should provide funds to financially support foreign artists until they can return back home.

Referring to EU countries, but applicable elsewhere, the precarious conditions of refugee and displaced artists exacerbated by the Covid-19 ongoing calls for:

> a. a common EU asylum policy, and synergies in the national approaches to the relocation of artists/cultural professionals in exile;
> b. the harmonization of social systems in Europe with regards to the social status of artists;
> c. reconsidering the complexity of European funding schemes for artists, including the accessibility of the Creative Europe funds to the more fragile ones and those with a recent resident status;
> d. Developing the specific European policy and special funds supporting the cross-border artistic mobility and collaboration, in particular with an aim to correspond to the reality of artistic work living in the cross-border regions.

It is essential to continue insist on the centering of artists at every level of the field. It is clear form these conversations that the opinions, values, and agendas of administrators, those that inevitably inform their decisions, cannot account for the incredibly varied experiences of at-risk artists.

2.3 Offense Free expression famously includes 'the right to offend'. Is there a corresponding 'right to be offended'? In view of so-called cancel culture debates, we need to increase our understanding of intersectional, complex perspectives. Who defines offense? Do certain groups have the privilege of naming and claiming of offence, leaving other groups without voice or platform? The intention of the artist matters: an artist can choose to stimulate the imagination, challenge old modes of thought, open minds to new possibilities, or give voice to the previously silenced. There is a line to be drawn between causing offence in this way and causing or encouraging actual harm or retraumatising those who have suffered and may still suffer from violence, danger, dislocation, disempowerment, and other forms of systemic injustice.

Recommendations:

> Those advancing cultural rights globally should provide spaces to work together towards a statement of principles around artistic freedom that is fit for our times. Such a statement could serve as a direct challenge to current debates that privilege powerful voices, erasing or diminishing all others, while fudging the line between offence and actual violence - and might also point to an ethic of artistic practice that is sensitive to such questions, while retaining its freedom to challenge, interrogate, imagine and, if necessary, offend

Essential to expanding and enhancing artistic freedom in a meaningful way is to build and develop networks and collaborative platforms for arts and cultural workers which are representative of the wide diversity within the sector, whether it is around gender, minorities, excluded groups, or status as grassroots, national or regional entities.

2.4 Language was identified as problematic. Not only the prevalence and prioritising of major languages to the detriment and exclusion of others, but also the seemingly unavoidable necessity of using human rights defender language, jargon and criteria to describe the often very different situation of an artists' persecution. It is challenging for artists to seek help or submit applications when they have to translate their experiences into unfamiliar human rights language in order to get the resources they deserve, and when they are stressed and threatened.

Recommendations:

An artist's inability to classify themself as a human rights defender such should not prohibit the support of protection schemes for Human Rights Defenders. Defender NGOs and the arts sector should collaborate on easily understandable language and descriptions.

Minority, and indigenous language support must be made more available and accessible.

2.5 Covid The emergence and global spread of the Covid-19 virus has both positive and negative effects to an artistic sector experiencing widespread privations. Recognizing that the current situation is traumatic, artists and cultural workers have to find ways to tread the fine lines between isolating to stay safe, staying connected to keep work alive, staying in tune with reality but also resisting the push (often from funders) to focus only on Covid-19.
Recommendations:

COVID-19 should not be used as an "excuse" to push for shortcuts, whether funding projects, facilitating travel for artists from the Global South, shifting attention away from long-existing and pressing concerns, or pushing for one-size-fits all digital solutions.

2.6 Digital solutions also have both advantages and pitfalls. Indeed, not only but also in the Safe Havens 2020 Global Stream, both presenters and participants in several places had difficulties related to internet capacity and other technical issues. Relevant factors when conceiving or implementing artistic projects (performances, residencies, exchanges…) include access to digital platforms; cost; compensation for opportunities lost due to the impossibility of completing projects physically; safety and so on. The digital environment can be supportive, for example, to create an app or platform similar to those used to track other forms of violence. It can be a tool for censorship or unwanted surveillance. It can lead to attacks and persecution, or it can be a tool for positive campaigning and artistic diffusion.

The digital sphere is useful in staying connected, overcoming travel constraints, boosting visibility for causes as a means of holding leaders accountable. Its main limitations are cost, especially for artists with difficult access; exacerbation of existing forms of discrimination such as against artists who already weren't able to travel and the "white box phenomenon" whereby differences in background, experience, habits... are flattened out by the format of Zoom.

Recommendations:

Leverage new technologies, for example work with YouTube to ensure they don't remove content as censorship.

Interface with the platforms and media the artists are already using, such as one for censored art, Instagram takeovers, different regional or contextual responses.

Part Three. Ensuring support for less visible voices to exercise their full agency, be heard and valorised; support for local, on-the-ground initiatives. (Round Table 1)

In many countries it is impossible for artists to function, not only because of repression, but also because of the struggle for a basic livelihood. Often funding is linked to the priority countries of the funders, leaving others with less advantage.

Local and regional civil society and artists' networks are important vehicles for sharing, building solidarity, building visibility for individual cases and/or causes, and amassing momentum for advocacy initiatives (rather than always looking for top-bottom solutions from funders, governments, etc.).

There is a lack of joined up monitoring of violations against artists in Africa and many other world regions such as Asia. It is very fragmented thus very difficult to know the magnitude of the problems that are faced by artists.

There is a need to discuss the roots of risks both in countries where the risk occurs and in the countries that 'welcome' those at risk. Incomers may face discrimination on any number or pretexts, or being refused a refugee application. Again, and again, the need to consider the intersectionality of vulnerabilities was highlighted.

Even in the EU, there are pressures, for example in Poland and Hungary. There is little talk in Greece about artistic freedom of speech. The whole artist sector is under distress (for the last ten years during the economic crisis). There is no international focus.

Recommendations:

Support local-level coalition building efforts & broad network of artists. Replicate international coalition successes at a country and local level; build networks for strength.

Support more national and regional monitoring of violations against artists. There is a need for Engagement with African (and other world regions') censorship boards, law enforcement and legislators on inconsistencies with UNESCO and other international human rights conversations.

Regarding artists and human rights defenders in exile, the topic of white torture and torture in general should be discussed and experiences shared. The issue of should be raised within a potential civil society coalition in the United Nations involving also the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture. Connecting the UN Special Rapporteur son Torture and in the Field of Cultural Rights could be promising.

Support initiatives to counter ideologies with counter-ideologies (such as bringing in Islamic scholars to discuss those who would censor music from an Islamic perspective; or challenging ideas of 'African traditions' that are in fact colonial era laws imposed by European states).

Continue and expand research on artist security on a continental level such as that undertaken by the Martin Roth Initiative.

There is a need to continue the work of Safe Havens in bringing together spaces of safety on a continental level, for example for artists across Africa.

Build a sustainable regional response for cases where local remedies are difficult – Learn from the work of ARC & African Defenders Network.

Funding should support collaboration between organisations working on the ground in a territory or a region, not only individuals. What is needed is new formats, new modalities the build a stronger and more cohesive territorial response.

Efforts to build a more equitable arts system need to focus simultaneously and strategically on the local and the international/policy levels (where much can be done to hold signatory countries accountable to their commitments). In this regard, continuation of initiatives such as Safe Havens in Cape Town 2019, is important for bringing together spaces of safety for artists across a continent.

Part Four. Ensuring that the sector is collegiate, collaborative, cooperative and non-competitive; more cooperatively and less competitively. (Round Table 2)

Sharing knowledge is crucial; organisations involved in our sector need to be committed to a work of service to those who need it, and not first and foremost a work of public relations. Structures that are developed should not favour only certain structures and networks.

There is a need to further discuss the notions of solidarity and partnership to express the relations between the artist at risk and the protection mechanisms as one community with common values.

Artistic freedom needs to be seen within the wider social, economic and political landscape, and collaboration with other organisations working to promote these rights – educators, human rights defenders, social, economic defenders, etc. where freedom of expression is a cross-cutting issue. Many of these sectors themselves experience similar repression to those faced by artists so these experiences and expertise can be shared for the benefit of all.

There is a significant overlap of experiences and methodologies that artists at risk share with other groups such as journalists at risk.

Artists can speak to and explain issues, often complex, through performance and other art forms that lawyers and human rights defenders often cannot, and thus the two sectors can work together. Legislation including offensive content, defamation, threats to public order, cyber bullying, risks of challenging the official narrative, cross-border censorship, blasphemy, insulting and defamatory content – all of these examples in Africa are being addressed and have led to release of artists, thanks to joined-up work from various organisations.

The pandemic may reconfigure the funding landscape for the arts, taking stock of the explosion of new funds for Covid-19 related projects; the freezing of funds (especially those that covered travel); and the risk that artists may be paid even less than previously for projects that are moved to digital platforms or born digital.

Recommendations:

Funding is an issue – responses need to be ongoing, joined up and sustained. There should be alternative funding for artists at risk to reduce overdependence on funders of HRDs. There needs to be a real dialogue with donors to provide input on how they design their programmes. The growth of the arts rights justice sector should see a growth in interest from donor organisations, rather than be a cause of resource competition among the sector's organisations.

Useful toolkits and informative guides created by different sectors regarding at-risk professionals, need to be shared, accessible and available more easily, so that artists and others can find them. Information about support and funding needs to be more widely disseminated in the art world.

Networking and collaboration between arts and cultural operators with other civil society sectors – education, social and economic development, human rights etc and across regions is highly important and should involve an integrated approach towards achieving change. Collaboration should be at grassroots, national and regional levels to reflect the diversity of activities across these levels.

Collaboration should balance widely varied needs with concrete support, should extend from monitoring abuses to referring relocation cases to the appropriate protective mechanisms, and should help avoid duplication in the arts rights justice sector.

It's important to think about the post-relocation scenarios, and create synergies between programmes (grant-making organizations, host organizations, etc.) to ensure the relocated person is in a safer and better situation than they were before participating in the programme.

Funders should fund collaboration and collaborative initiatives between organisations working in the same territory.

This type of event (Safe Havens, other platforms) should increase access to information, also for artists in other disciplines.

Participants were enthusiastic regarding UN Special Rapporteur Karima Bennoune's 2018 suggestion that a coalition of cultural rights advocates be formed so as to ensure that cultural rights are represented across UN mandates.

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Annexe : Safe Havens Global Stream 2020 |Compact Programme

Tues Nov 10
15:30 - 17:00   Come to the party to *Link and Greet*, hear music, break out and meet old and new friends!
16:00 – 16:55   Workshop with UN Special Rapporteur, Karima Bennoune in the Field of Cultural Rights.

Wed Nov 11
13:00 – 13:20 Introduction to the Safe Havens Global Stream 2020
13:30 – 14:30 <u>Who is at Risk/What is at Risk</u> Animated by Pelin Başaran, curator/producer, Contact, Manchester UK
13:30 – 14:30 <u>Artistic Choices in the Time of… , or, Acknowledging the Hell around Us</u> Animated by Abdullah Alkafri, Director Ettijahat-Independent Culture, based in Beirut, serving Syrian artists in Syria and the diaspora - and Nayse Lopez, curator, producer, festival director, journalist, activist, Panorama Festival, Rio de Janeiro
14:45 – 16:15   Sub-Hive **<u>Dissecting the "Offensive" Crafts: An interactive Subhive Reflecting on the Current State of Artistic Freedom in Africa</u>** Animated by Ayodele Ganiu, program director of Intro Afrika, a cultural organization that advocates against social injustice through the arts, formerly Nigerian national coordinator and later continental coordinator for Artwatch Africa.
14:45 – 16:15 Sub-Hive **<u>Protecting Artists in Distress, a practical guide</u>** Animated by Julie Trébault, Director of PEN America's Artists at Risk Connection (ARC), an international project based at PEN America aiming to protect at-risk artists, and Gabriel Fine, ARC's Program Coordinator.
16:20 – 17:00   Wrap Up, short feedback, questions.

Thurs Nov 12
13:00 – 13:20   Introduction to Day Two
13: 30 – 14:30   <u>To Unify, Strategize and Support</u> Animated by Daniel Gorman, Director of English PEN with Basma el Husseiny, Action for Hope in Lebanon, Landscapes of Hope international network, based in Beirut; Sarah Belal – Justice Project Pakistan, and Eritrean poet, writer and radio presenter, Yirgalem Fisseha.
13: 30 – 14:30 <u>Current Covid-19 Relocations – Changes and Solutions</u> Animated by Marie LeSourd, Secretary General of On the Move, with Bénédicte Alliot, Director of the Cité internationale des Arts (France); Leonardo Moreira author and stage director, Company Hiato (Brazil); Eckehard Pistrick, Alba Kultur, expert on music and migration (Germany); Gaston

Abé aka Valsero, rap singer and founder of Triple AAA (Cameroon) and Julie Trébault, Director, Artists at Risk Connection (USA).

14:45 – 16:15 Sub-Hive **Strategies for Supporting Performers At Risk: Reflections on a Year of SHIM:NYC** *(yet to be confirmed)*
Animated by Ashley Tucker, Director of Programs, AFI – Artists Freedom Initiative and Matthew Covey, lawyer and founder of Tamizdat.

14:45 – 16:15 Sub-Hive **Communication platforms for the Safe havens network; how to shape a global exhibition to promote change**
Animated by Fredrik Elg, founder of the Safe Havens conference, Jan Lothe Eriksen, founder of Safemuse and Celina Jerman Bright-Taylor, Safemuse Program Manager

16:20 – 17:00 Wrap Up, questions, short feedback.

Friday Nov 13

12:30 – 12:45 Introduction to Day Three

12:45 – 13:45 **Specific Perspectives** *or, From My Point of View*
Animated by Bisi Alimi, LGBTIQA+rights activists, public speaker, Executive Director Bisi Alimi Foundation; and Faris Cuchi Gezahegn, performance artist and LGBTQIA+ advocate.

14:00 – 15:00 Sub-Hive **Monolingual session on the book "White Torture, Voices from Prison"-** led by Parvin Ardalan, activist, writer and journalist

14:00 – 15:00 Sub-Hive **Monolingual session "Temporary Relocation in Latin America: Three bees in one hive", in Spanish-** led by Luciana Peri, Coordinator EUTRP, formerly Coordinator of the Shelter City Costa Rica with Laurence Cuny, human rights lawyer and researcher, UNESCO Chair on the diversity of cultural expressions, Laval Faculty of Law (Québec), International Arts Rights Advisors and Franks Martinez, non binary human rights defender, photographer, drag performer

15:15 – 16:15 Closing Hive: **'Going Forward' Panel**
Moderated by Ole Reitov, UNESCO and UN expert, founder and former Director of Freemuse

16:15 Wrap up, Next Steps and Thanks