Editorial

Among the articles in this edition of the Asia Pacific Journal of Arts and Cultural Management, we are pleased to offer three contributions stemming from the 2012 international conference Making Culture Count: Rethinking measures of cultural vitality, wellbeing and citizenship presented by the Centre for Cultural Partnerships, University of Melbourne and the Cultural Development Network.

In recent years, culture and cultural development have become recognised as important dimensions of contemporary governance and public policy both internationally and locally. As in other policy areas like economic, social, environmental, the production of accurate and relevant data has become central to cultural policy and how the cultural lives of citizens are understood. Conceptual and practical developments in measurement tools, such as new forms of cultural indicators, have the potential to enrich our understanding of culture’s role in wellbeing, vitality and citizenship.

Making Culture Count hosted a cross-disciplinary space for academics and practitioners to explore these questions of cultural value and measurement. Here, we present three diverse perspectives: scholarly, creative, and policy-focused, with a view to the broader context of the international politics of cultural measurement but with a nuanced attention to local context. Within this context, these authors explore new approaches to the evaluation of community arts programs and local activity centres.

Rosalie Hastwell and Simon Wollan consider the development of indicators from a broad cultural vitality approach for activity centres in the context of local government. Their Industry Paper, Towards the Use of Cultural Indicators in Planning for Vibrant Activity Centres, addresses the fundamental challenges in this type of strategy and offers promising solutions for planning and enlivening these centres. As an arts manager and urban designer, their industry perspectives offer a unique place-based and technical approach to understanding the relationship between local cultural factors and planning considerations including housing density and employment opportunities.

The concepts of gift exchange and reciprocity are explored as a currency of cultural value in Joanna Winchester’s ‘Now someone like me finds me’. This article contributes to the theorisation of the field of community arts practice by exploring the types of artistic relationships unique to this field. Winchester follows the trajectory of community participants and the career development of artists involved in the Bankstown Youth Development Service arguing for the need for longitudinal research investigating community arts to best understand this relational value.

David Adair broadens the conversation on arts evaluation by drawing on Mark Moore’s strategic management frame of ‘public value’ (1995). In particular, Adair explores the example of Adelaide Festival Centre’s Our Mob Indigenous visual arts project. Genuine Mutual Benefits: A Public Value Account of Arts Community Engagement a Core Business argues for attention to socio-political contexts and the potential of cultural leadership.
We look forward also to an additional outcome of the 2012 conference: the edited anthology *Making Culture Count: The Politics of Cultural Measurement* (Palgrave Publishers 2015) with an international selection of authors, edited by Lachlan MacDowall, Marnie Badham, Emma Blomkamp and Kim Dunphy. We hope that these contributions can assist theorists in better understanding the practices of community arts and cultural evaluation with due care and attention to the politics of cultural measurement.

The additional article by Emily Gilfillan and Guy Morrow, *The Impact of Public Funding on Creative Processes in Australia*, uses case studies of three artists’ experiences to explore the interaction between government funding and creative practices. This is an important area for research as there are significant public policy considerations at stake. In a nuanced approach, the authors consider the potential tensions between the importance that artists attach to fluid organic artistic processes and the expectation on the part of funders that applicants be able to name outcomes in advance of their realisation.

In a complementary Industry Paper, *Supporting Emerging Artists and the Next Generation of Australian Visual Art*, Christine Tipton provides a summary of an extensive research project that she undertook of the composition of, and services provided by, Victoria’s independent visual arts sector. As she notes, this sector plays a significant role in the support of emerging visual artists. Her findings as to the sustainability of these organisations, their location and the extent to which they charge artists fees for gallery access and entry into prizes provides an insight into the dynamics between creativity, open access and organisational longevity in providing services to emerging artists.

In Notes from the Field we hear from Colombian playwright and director Carolina Ribón about her collaborative theatre making with the indigenous women of the Emberá Chamí community, in an interview conducted after the 2013 AIMAC conference in Bogotá.

Finally Kate MacNeill reviews the collection of essays *Cultural Policies in East Asia: Dynamics between the State, Arts and the Creative Industries* recently published by Palgrave Macmillan and edited by Hye-Kyung Lee, in which contributors explore various manifestations of cultural policies in Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, China and Singapore.

Dr Marnie Badham and Dr Kate MacNeill

University of Melbourne