

## PUBLICATIONS 2015

Ruth Rentschler, *Arts Governance. People, Passion and Performance*, London and New York, 2015, 202 pp. Hardback.

Josephine Caust, *Arts and Cultural Leadership in Asia*, Routledge, London and New York, 2015, 204 pp. Hardback.

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As one who is engaged in teaching of arts and cultural management in Australia, I welcome the release of two books that offer extensive material for use in the tertiary sector. Ruth Rentschler, Professor in Arts Management at Deakin University, has produced a monograph on the experiences of Board members in both Australian and more generally, Anglo settings. Josephine Caust, previously Director of the Arts and Cultural Management program at the University of South Australia and now Principal Fellow at the University of Melbourne, has edited a collection of articles under the title arts and cultural leadership in Asia. Both Rentschler and Caust have had extensive experience in teaching and curriculum development in the arts and cultural management field, and are therefore well positioned to provide useful materials for pedagogical purposes. These books engage with matters of great currency: the role of the Board in an arts organisation is particularly crucial and no more so than in these times of shifting imperatives with the reduction in government funding as a proportion of arts organisations revenue. Equally important, is enhancing our understanding of practices and organisations in a diverse range of Asian countries, a result of government policy and as a result of genuine interest and demand for wider engagement with our Asian neighbours,.

Rentschler takes a conversational approach to her material, influenced by extensive interviews conducted in the course of the lengthy research project which gave rise to *Arts Governance. People, Passion and Performance*. Anecdotal and grounded interview material is combined with an overview of current theoretical approaches to governance in the arts and cultural sector, noting that such analysis is at a very nascent level. The main focus of the book is the stories of men and women on the boards of arts organisations. The stories roam from community arts festivals to the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and from venues such as major performing arts centres to art galleries. Stories are told of generational change, mission formulation, inclusiveness on Boards and the role of the chair as a change agent. This is in itself a work of passion, as the author herself is a committed board member and has vividly conveyed the reasons why people give generously of their time, and indeed their financial and personal resources, to the oversight of these significant cultural assets.

*Arts and Cultural Leadership in Asia* is a survey volume of articles contributed by both practitioners and academics, who engage with a wide range of cultural contexts and art forms. The use of the term 'leadership' in the book's title is variously interpreted throughout the volume which is divided into three main sections: Politics, art and culture; Integrity, adaption and entrepreneurialism and Organizations, collaborations and individuals. The Politics, art and culture section covers a range of case studies from Singapore, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Terence Chong explores the nature of leadership encapsulated by the development of an arts manifesto by theatre practitioners, writers, artists and academics, and assesses the limited possibilities for such an initiative to flourish when city-state apparatus in Singapore is committed to a state led arts policy. A similar tension is revealed in Liao Hsin-tien's analysis of

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cultural leadership in Taiwan through the lens of a Citizens Movement for Cultural Rights, arguing that this created a dialogue with government and that this in itself is a form of cultural leadership and demonstration of democratic power. Oscar Ho Hing-kay examines the role played by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, established at the time of the return of Hong Kong to China, as an expression of the ambitions of the Hong Kong arts community to retain independence from government policy. Chinese cultural policy is the focus of Luqiang Qiao's analysis of the way in which the expansion of large performing arts centres across China has focussed far more on the architectural features of the infrastructure, leading to concerns regarding the programming that might take place within, and the means by which it might be supported.

The second section: Integrity, adaptation and entrepreneurialism contains four case studies of companies that have thrived in the face of external challenges, each needing to ensure their own financial sustainability. Sonny Rustiadi and Isti R. Mirzanti describe the activities of the Sunda community in Bandung, Indonesia in their art and culture both through performance and the production and sale of artefacts. Self-sufficiency was the driving motivation for the organisations at the heart of three further case studies: Thuy Do describes the methods used by the Tran Huu Trang Cai luong Theatre in Ho Chi Minh City in its efforts to transition from government support to independence; Alam Khorshed describes the establishment of the Bishaud Bangla arts centre in Chittagong, Bangladesh and Sudhanva Deshpande writes about his own involvement in fundraising for a permanent home, Studio Safdar, for the theatre company Jana Natya Manch in Delhi.

Seven articles make up the third section: Organizations, collaborations and individuals. Chi Cheung Leung and Ka Yan Tung analyse collaborative leadership within the Hong Kong New Music Ensemble, Suyin Chew and Leonie Hallo write about leadership in dance companies in Singapore and Josephine Caust examines the leadership practices of individuals heading up major performing arts centres in Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and South Korea. Sun-man Tseng's article also provides an examination of individual leadership – a solo case study of Patrick Chiu and his influence in the development of choral and a cappella festivals in Hong Kong. John Fangjun Li describes the way in which the Shanghai Music Publishing House responded to economic and technological change, and Anupa Mehta analyses the close relationship between private and public support in the Indian arts scene through an examination of the Kiran Nadar Museum of Modern Art in Delhi, owned by the Nadar family. The final chapter is an overview by Alison Carroll of cross-cultural understandings that must lie at the heart of engagement between the West and Asia, highlighting different cultural approaches to time, space and selfhood.

The breadth of material, contexts and artforms covered in this volume makes this an extremely useful text, providing comprehensive case studies of a wide range of leadership and art form practices across Asia.

Kate MacNeill, University of Melbourne