

Creating, innovating, disrupting through Arts & Business organisations

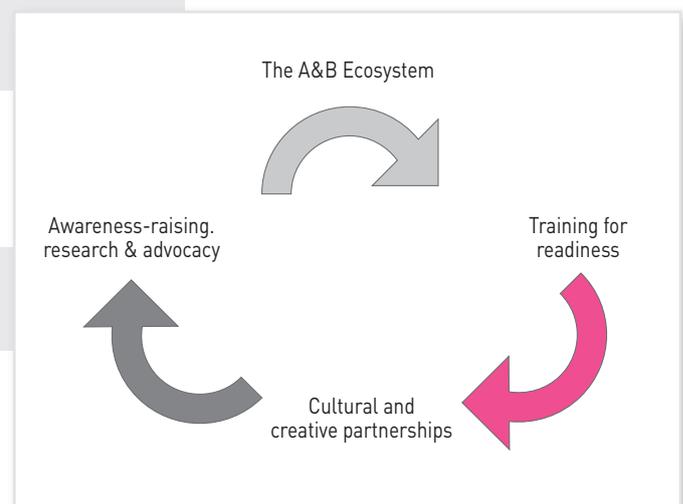
In the current economic context, cuts in the budgets of public administrations are leading arts and cultural organisations to look for new business models, sources of financing, and ways to engage with old and new audiences. At the same time, the experience economy has brought about new mindsets and lifestyles where intangible values are becoming increasingly important: successful organisations are indeed those capable of constantly innovating by integrating the “experience” factor in their products and services. Concepts such as “cross-fertilisation” or “creative spillovers” are becoming more and more frequent both on the research and policy agendas which are crystallising into actions and projects to break silos and foster cross-sectoral innovation¹. Among the key enablers of such innovation, Arts & Business organisations (A&B organisations) deserve special attention. The activities carried out by these intermediaries have been explored in our recent publication “Creating, innovating, disrupting through A&B organisations”² prepared within the framework of the project Connecting Arts and Business³.

What is an Arts & Business organisation?

A&B organisations are intermediary organisations that provide their expertise to facilitate the dialogue between the arts and business sectors. They understand their specificities, assets and needs, speak their different languages, and bridge the gaps between them. A&B organisations are thus key enablers of fruitful dialogues and collaborations between the arts and business worlds. In promoting the A&B approach, they carry out a variety of A&B initiatives or, as we define them, “*mutually beneficial exchanges or collaborations between one or various participants from the arts and culture sector (cultural organisations, artists, etc.) and one or various participants from the business world, in which both parties bring an added value*

to each other, providing (innovative) solutions to specific needs and/or situations they face”⁴. A&B initiatives by A&B organisations range from traditional practices — such as patronage or sponsorship— to more recent models — such as artistic interventions in organisations—, to training for A&B, to awareness-raising, research and advocacy actions. Recent research conducted by KEA⁵ adopted a comprehensive approach that considered all of them to propose both a typology of A&B initiatives and the notion of an A&B ecosystem where these constitute the mechanisms of a self-feeding cycle.

During the elaboration of the study, KEA prepared a mapping of A&B organisations active in 13 EU countries⁶ and invited a hundred of them to propose successful A&B practices. The study describes in detail a selection of miscellaneous initiatives showing the added value of the A&B approach whilst inspiring European A&B organisations to experiment with new A&B models.



1. KEA is active in this field since 2009 by designing and participating in European projects such as Connecting Arts & Business (www.connectingartsandbusiness.eu), on the added value of initiatives fostering connections between these two worlds; Creative SpIN (<http://urbact.eu/en/projects/innovation-creativity/creativespin/homepage/>), to foster creative spillovers for innovation; KiiCS (www.kiics.eu), exploring art&science incubation towards new forms of innovation; and Creative Clash (www.creativeclash.eu) and TAFI (<http://trainingartistsforinnovation.eu/>), on artistic interventions in organisations.

2. KEA European Affairs. 2014. Creating, innovating, disrupting through A&B organisations. Brussels. Available at: http://www.keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/Creating-innovating-disrupting-through-AB-organisations_FINALwith-logos.pdf?4f4eb7

3. www.connectingartsandbusiness.eu

4. KEA European Affairs. 2014. Creating, innovating, disrupting through A&B organisations. Brussels. Available at: http://www.keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/Creating-innovating-disrupting-through-AB-organisations_FINALwith-logos.pdf?4f4eb7

5. Idem.

6. Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and United Kingdom.

A&B organisations in practice: some examples of A&B initiatives

The A&B organisation Prométhéa (Belgium) created and manages the Bruocsella corporate patronage club, gathering 20 to 30 companies that invest a relatively small amount of money in order to jointly finance projects that contribute, generally through art, to the improvement of the urban environment in the Brussels-Capital Region. A competition is organised yearly to select the project(s) that will be funded.

Since its establishment in 2010, Conexiones Improbables is a specific programme run by the A&B organisation c2+i (Spain) that promotes exploratory processes to inno-

vate and transform organisations through 3-12-month artistic and culture-based experiences. The successful programme has resulted in more than 60 collaborations between artists/creators and organisations so far.

Summa Artium (Hungary) is another interesting A&B organisation. Each year, within the frame of its Maecenas Day Gala, an auction of cultural projects takes place to raise the funds necessary to carry out a selection of outstanding cultural projects. The event allows different independent companies and/or individuals to offer the funds these projects need to be realised.

A unique added value

Different aspects of the A&B approach highlight its added value. On one side, the arts offer the business world valuable resources such as creativity, artistic processes and/or artworks that may contribute to new processes, approaches and attitudes; they may also bring visibility and communication opportunities; or provide learning environments where the company's employees can further develop their skills. In return, businesses may contribute to the arts not only with traditional economic or in-kind support but also by helping this sector to discover new market opportunities, sources of inspiration, business models and techniques and materials to experiment with. These are only but a few among the many and varied possibilities that A&B collaborations can create as shown by the cases KEA has selected within this inventory.

About the European project Connecting Arts & Business



Connecting Arts & Business (www.connectingartsandbusiness.eu) is

a European project prepared by KEA for Cultuur-Ondernemen (The

Netherlands). Selected for funding under the Culture Programme, it has been running since 2013 to show the added value of initiatives that facilitate mutually beneficial exchanges between the arts and business sectors. The project brings together 6 partners from 5 countries⁷ and focuses on the capital role that A&B organisations play in bridging the gap between these two worlds. Within this project, KEA carried out the study *Creating, innovating, disrupting through A&B organisations* (2014) which establishes a typology of A&B initiatives, identifies innovative and successful A&B practices across Europe, and shows how A&B organisations foster, facilitate, research and raise awareness on them. Inspired by this study, the project partners are currently experimenting with new ways of connecting the arts and business sectors. The results of the project will be gathered in an online and printed publication and presented during the project's final conference, to be held in April 2015 in Brussels.

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7. Cultuur-Ondernemen (NL) as coordinator, Prométhéa (BE), Center for Cultural and Experience Economy (DK), Summa Artium (HU), National Centre for Culture (PL), Arts & Business England (UK), and KEA European Affairs (BE).

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