Seminar on Social Innovation
Segovia, 6–7 April 2017:
a chronicle
In 2013, the European Network of Cultural Centres was invited to Spain by Puertas de Castilla Cultural and Arts Centre, the City of Murcia, and Murcia Area of Culture, to host a Shortcut Europe conference. The theme of that meeting was “Cultural Centres and their Neighbourhoods in a Time of Crisis”. In January 2016, the network met again in Murcia, this time with 70 cultural operators from Spanish cultural centres. That second meeting resulted in the decision to create the Spanish Network of Cultural Centres. One year later, we meet again, this time in La Carcel Segovia Creative Centre, to work together on social innovation.
index

culture vs. architecture of control  6
rights & responsability  10
cultural management vs. entrepreneurship  16
health (of the cultural worker and the cultural project)  18
technology/sensibility  20
the third place  26
inmates/outsiders  30
ritual  36
fragilities  38
the future  42
modo colaborativo  44
La Carcel_Segovia Creation Centre. Our seminar is hosted in a former prison used to detain women and political prisoners under Franco. It closed definitely in 1999 and is now a newly renovated, multidisciplinary cultural space, with a special emphasis on work by women. Opposite: inside the main penitentiary building.
You know that many institutions built at the end of the 19th century were built to control the individual. And these institutions have specific architectural characteristics that we used in our exhibition.

Several speakers present projects involving people who inhabit controlled spaces such as prisons or mental health facilities. Here, Mery Cuesta discusses the exhibition *Balsamo y Fuga* which she curated at Caixa Forum, Barcelona, and which showed work by prison inmates alongside pieces by well-known figures of the contemporary art world.

Top: diagram of a prison environment used for the scenography of the exhibition “Balsamo y Fuga”. Drawing by Mery Cuesta, who is also a comic artist. Bottom: the modern prison of Segovia, a few kilometers west of the city.
From left to right: Concha Hernández, Director of Conde Duque Cultural Centre (Madrid); Clara Luquero, Mayor of Segovia and Céline d’Ambrosio, Project Manager at the ACC (Association of Cultural Centres of Francophone Belgium).

Clara Luquero, former Culture Counselor and present-day Mayor of Segovia, describes the central importance of contemporary culture for her team, her city and her political project.
Opposite: a street in the Juderia, the medieval Jewish ghetto.
Céline d’Ambrosio from the ACC on how the 2013 decree on Belgian Francophone cultural centres recognizes the idea of cultural rights and makes it operational.

The right to live a life in conformity with human rights... with a special focus on cultural rights.

What the decree ensures is that you will have access to culture all over the territory.

Culture doesn’t generate income, but it does generate wealth for the community. Every euro spent for culture is not an expense, it’s an investment.

Clara Luquero again. Amen to that!
Concha Hernández from Conde Duque on the politics of local involvement and social action embraced by the cultural centre she directs.

We consider it our responsibility to create opportunities for employment.

I don't even want to mention the levels of women who are unemployed. So we decided to link culture and employment.

We have no oil or raw materials per se... but we do have cultural resources.

It's true that culture is a right, but the right to work is also a right, and we want artists to be able to work!
cultural management vs. entrepreneurship

Round table between Iván Diego, project coordinator at Valnalón (Langreo), public agency for entrepreneurial education and promotion, and Raluca Iacob, coordinator of Culture in Education (Bucarest). Iván begins his presentation by wondering if social innovation is an enduring concept or a buzzword — a question that will be approached from different angles by several participants.

So what we did is to create a lab, an incubator to help the students of the vocational training centre develop their ideas.

We are one of the few organisations who still works in cultural management and cultural policy...

...you know, that idea from the 90’s of civil society, that is now being replaced by “entrepreneurship”...

Raluca Iacob, who is also president of M3 - Resources for Culture.
health (of the cultural worker and of the cultural project)

Having a lot of things happening is not necessarily an indicator of a healthy cultural sector.

To be honest, this past year I’ve been feeling very tired as a manager.

The internal drive to do well is so strong that often we are giving too much.

How do we know when a project is dying? How can we tell? How can we make the dying better?

How do you put up a website that says “this project is dying”?

To be honest, we’re not measuring the impact as much as we should. Of course we have statistics, satisfaction questionnaires, but we haven’t really found the key to measuring that.

Raluca Iacob on monitoring the evolution of the sector and the well-being of cultural professionals, two important themes for the Culture in Education project.

Iván Diego answering a question from the audience about evaluation.
Christian Cherene describes the virtual reality experiences developed by his lab, which allow users to “be another” (by exchanging skin colors, genders or situations) for a short period of time, and defines some guiding principles for using those tools with vulnerable population groups.

Somehow the norms of society no longer seem to apply, because the experience is situated in the realm of technology.

But you can’t just walk in and say “This is how we can improve your life”. Because at the end of the day, we want them to decide how to use our technology.
The situation was: in 2016, about 25,000 refugees entered Austria. A lot of support was created then, but most of it turned out to be short-term.

Having a space where nothing is asked of people, no papers, no documents, no questions, turned out to be very important.

In 2015 there were all these images in the media..., "The refugees are coming!" "There are so many of them!" Well...

Having a space of encounter... We started to react also in terms of programmes.,

Basically, migration is part of history. And just by breaking it down and meeting each other...

First of all, highlight the diversity that is there... because it’s already there!
Sensibility

10 things you need to consider if you are an artist — not of the refugee or asylum seeker community — looking to work with our community.

1. Process not product
2. Critically interrogate your intention
3. Realise your own privilege
4. Participation is not always progressive or empowering
5. Presentation vs representation
6. It is not a safe-space just because you say it is
7. Do not expect us to be grateful
8. Do not reduce us to an issue
9. Do your research
10. Art is not neutral

By Tania Canas, RISE Arts Director / Member
Mikhail Barzkin, Director of Praxis (Sochi) and Eleonore Hefner, Director of Kultur Rhein-Neckar Cultural Centre and member of the ENCC Board of Directors, on their collaboration on the German-Russian Quattrologie project.
About the state...
We are very independent.
The first year, I worked in an
office and spent all my money on our
project. In Russia, all big art
projects are very commercial. They are
funded by business, not by
the state.

I think one particularity of our
relationship is the asymmetrical
aspect... We were always the ones
with money. And I think we need to
imagine places where we can meet
on equal terms... Some people
say that art is that
third space...

No one expects anything. I mean
not only artists... In Russia
nobody expects anything
from the state.
inmates/outsiders

Marta Cantero, Director of Paladio Arte and Mery Cuesta, curator of the exhibition Bálsamo y Fuga.

Opposite : Marta Cantero discussing the Paladio theatre company, whose members are also psychiatric hospital patients. Many seminar participants attended a dress rehearsal of the company’s latest production the night before her presentation.

What is outsider art?
The book says that it rejects the socially beautiful and the traditional perspective on art that is coherence, harmony, unity. That it makes use of diverse materials: concrete, butterfly wings...
I realized that if I organized an exhibition only with works by prison inmates, I would probably be offered the “social space”—you know, the small space at the back used for projects that are not considered as valuable as the work of other artists.

We’re doing pretty much what Mery is doing. We’re linking what is considered “professional” work with what is considered “non-professional.”

What is art? Something that is presented to you and that creates an emotion.

Mery Cuesta, center, describing how she came upon the idea to associate unknown artists living in prison with stars of the contemporary art scene. Marta Cantero also describes the perception and legislation of “non-professional” theatre as obstacles to producing and showcasing Paladio’s work. Following pages: photographs of Balsamo y Fuga exhibition at Caixa Forum from Mery Cuesta’s presentation.
This is the exhibition. This piece by Ed Ruscha was enormous. So, famous rich artists often have the means to produce bigger pieces...

Here we have a very large piece by Miguel Barcelo.

Here we have a very small painting made by an inmate, that reflects exactly the same thing...
ritual

A break in the sunny prison yard. Arantza Rodrigo (left in the top left photograph), from the Museo del Paloteo and Centro de Interpretación del Folklore, in San Pedro de Gaillos, initiates seminar participants to traditional paloteo dances and their patterns of stick-clashing. Relatives of these ritual weapon dances seem to appear in the traditions of many other European countries.
Iván Diego from Valaron on his structure’s project to rehabilitate Nitarasur, a polluted industrial heritage site. Above left: inside the abandoned complex. Photograph from Ivan Diego’s presentation.
Christian Cherene from BeAnotherLab. Above left: photograph of a virtual reality experience from his presentation.

Mikhail Barzykin from Praxis.
We want to invest in culture and in education. We think universities are the future.
modo colaborativo

Iván Diego on collaborative problem-solving. Valnalón uses this strategy in its own projects and advocates introducing it in schools, where it is rarely taught. Further reading: Solved! Making the Case for Collaborative Problem-Solving, by Rose Luckin, Ed Baines, Mutlu Cukurova and Wayne Holmes, with Michael Mann (http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/solved-making-case-collaborative-problem-solving).
The Seminar on Social Innovation was held in Segovia, 6-7 April 2017. It was coordinated by Elvira Adeva from the Cultural Department of the City of Segovia and Ioana Krugel from the European Network of Cultural Centres, and hosted by La Carcel_Segovia Centre de Creacion. Interpreter Victoria Perez Orr translated the presentations into Spanish and English. This report was made by Lucie Perineau from the ENCC, with help from Kasia Skowron and Ioana Krugel. Many thanks to Clara Luquero, Mayor of Segovia, and Marifé Santiago Bolaños, Counsellor for Culture of the City of Segovia.