

Leadership for Cultural Liberation

formerly Leverage and Liberation

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KAUMAARTS

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THE KAUMA BRIEF ENCOUNTERS MANIFESTO

This talk was inspired by the Kauma Arts manifesto recommendation that the sector needs to develop new formats of exchange, funding and finance.

Talk

Leadership and 'Cultural Liberation'?

We can no longer rely on a default model of arts production or the subsidised arts system.

The challenge of cultural production

Many definitions of culture –
There are tensions between them.

Culture as a way of life

VS.

Culture as commodity

The idea of *Cultural Liberation*

(as I am using it here)

Cultural liberation begins with having a clear vision for your work in the arts.

It is about asking first - “*What do I need to say or create, and why?*” rather than “*What will get funded or approved?*”

This liberates you to place your values, your community, and your artistic truth at the centre of the creative process.

Cultural liberation helps you make choices and decisions – which might be **difficult**.

You look for the right collaborators and supporters and are less vulnerable to externally imposed agendas and institutional constraints.

It will also confidence to price your work.

Not every project belongs in the same economic ecosystem

When we are producing arts in a context of limited finance, we can not expect all our work to be subsidized.

We have to must ask a crucial question at the outset of each project:

What is the right context for this work?

How and where do I produce my work?

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Some projects thrive as commercial ventures, others require public subsidy or philanthropic support, and many will need to blend models creatively to exist at all.

Understanding where a project sits on this spectrum is key to both its survival and its integrity. Sometimes there is a community that will support a particular artistic practice.

Some models to consider

- Mutual aid, bartering, DIY economies
- Forming collectives
- Working with specific communities
- Delivering an artistic project in phases related to an overall vision

- Launching a hybrid practice combining several areas of professional competency
- Thinking more strategically about what it means to have a portfolio career
- Advocating for your artistic practice in new spaces and places.

Breakout room discussion questions

- We need to think more strategically about what it means to have a portfolio career.
- Where and how should leadership take place now?

Take Away Action Planning Task

Towards the development of career objective

1. Do you run a portfolio career. If yes, would making areas of it more interconnected be better for you? If yes, how. If not, why not?
2. Where do you stand as a leader in the wider ecology of the arts? Can you clearly define between which groups and organisations you are situated? If no, why not?

Take Away Action Planning Task

3. Take 30 minutes to map everything you have ever done, who you have working at different points in your life since you were 16 or younger. Does this exercise reveal skills or contacts you have forgotten or did not realise that you have?

After completing these tasks write some objectives or goals towards re-positioning yourself practice.

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