

AiR Valletta 2018 – Not Just the City: A crossroad of cultures, communities and disciplines.

5 keywords: Artist in Residency, Community, Empowerment, Co-creation, participation



Short text:

In this presentation we will focus the theme of the session ‘Renewal of the City’ through the 3-year Artist in Residence programme developed within the Meeting Points Strand of Valletta 2018 as the ideas behind the Meeting Points Strand, illustrated through a couple of projects. The strand wanted to connect the dots between disciplines, projects, sectors and partners; keywords were collaboration, co-creation and interaction. As such one can say the strand functioned as a crossroad between cultures, backgrounds and inspirations. Liveability, sustainability and well-being became important elements of the programme, through the projects involved. That the project gave interesting impulses into certain communities and settings, proved to be an important side-effect.

Designing the programme for the Meeting Points Strand proved to be a very inspiring challenge. First and foremost one needed to create a balance between disciplines, art forms, contemporary issues, creative output and communities. One also wanted to see where unexpected and new connections between art/design and other sectors could be made. Furthermore with sustainability in mind, one also looked for the best possible partners to embed the knowledge and the experience gained for future projects, past the European Capital of Culture year.

This resulted in a multi-faceted programme addressing both national and international artists; taking place in different settings and contexts. As such it was

not a one-size-fits all programme, but a programme tailored to the partners and spaces the Valletta 2018 Foundation collaborated with.

A fairly independent structure existed for the collaboration on residencies with Blitz, Valletta's first independent art space. A very intense collaboration on the other hand was set up with Spazju Kreattiv for the residencies on Gozo. This joint programme resulted in 27 projects and multiple activities, spread over mid-2016 up to the end of 2018 involving 37 artists and a multiple number of collaborators and participants taking part in the projects. The residencies were well connected with the different communities on the Island and resulted in links with both the programme of Valletta 2018 as well as the programme of Spazju Kreattiv. Take for instance the 'Home is where Mom is' that resulted in the 1001dreams project by artist Deema Shahin, or the Azur Window project by Giuseppe Fazina the was also presented in 2018 edition of VIVA.

Collaborations also went across sectors. As such a site-specific, 2,5 year residency was set up at Sir Anthony Mamo Oncology Centre. This programme evolved from Pamela Baldacchino's Deep Shelter Project and included for instance sensory workshops for patients and staff, creation of collaborative site-specific art works, refurbishing of the multi-faith room and the interview room, an international residency and a lot of research. And a year-long programme was developed with Esplora, the science centre, including an international residency, workshops for teachers and a masterclass for the staff.

Although most of the programme is dedicated to residencies and the mobility of artists through the collaboration with Roberto Cimetta Fund, part of it also gives room to capacity building and co-creation. As such there was the support for the masterclasses for young singers conducted by Marco Mencoboni and the inset courses for teachers on Creativity in the Classroom between 2016 and 2018.

And last but not least, Design4DCity was set up and developed with the Design Cluster. Instead of doing a one-off international workshop on liveability and sustainability with participants from different backgrounds, the project got embedded into the programme of the Design Cluster and evoked collaborations with different national and international partners; the exchange with AiR Wro to name one and the collaboration with local councils such as the one of Birzebbugia.

What all these projects have in common is that they all strongly engaged with communities, artists, and creatives on the Island; creating new alliances and partnerships; and that has proved to be very successful.

Looking forward we already know that part of what was initiated or supported by the Valletta 2018 AiR-programme will continue in one way or another, since bringing artists/designers/creatives to the Island for a certain amount of time generates new ideas and offers new ways of collaboration.

This presentation is based on indirect and direct feedback of participants, partners and creatives involved. As such this paper/presentation reflects on the

different levels of impact as well as the intensity and the possible future effects of the programme.

Presenters:

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