

ARTISTIC FREEDOM IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Parallel Session 6

2 May 2018, 15h30-1700

Background

As UNESCO published its second Global Monitoring Report “Re | Shaping Cultural Policies: Advancing Creativity for Development”, this session puts the focus on artistic freedom in the digital age.

UNESCO understands artistic freedom as a bundle of rights that relate to freedom of creation, freedom of expression, freedom of movement, social and economic rights of artists and cultural professionals.

The new digital environment opens up multiple opportunities for the creation, distribution and funding of creativity (books, music, films, visual arts, etc), digital and social media platforms (youtube, soundcloud, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc) on which artists publicly comment, display and promote their work. These platforms are also spaces where artists receive threats to their rights and freedoms: internet censorship, online ‘trolling’ and harassment, individual artworks removed, posts and accounts blocked, non-transparent and arbitrary “community guidelines criteria” (on nudity and indecency, for example) laws to control access and content shared online. Fair remuneration of artists is also at risk, and it is unclear how artists’ rights will be protected when AI is used to produce new creative works.

Is the digital space becoming a blurred space of control and standards out of step with international human rights standards? The proposed discussion seeks to critically review the emerging challenges faced by artists and cultural professionals in the digital environment and discuss strategies to enable their continued participation in civic, cultural and economic life.

Issues and questions

- What documentation/empirical evidence is available to demonstrate the extent of surveillance and other restrictions on the digital environment specifically as it relates to artists/artworks?
- Are ISPs censorship mechanisms (such as guidelines on ‘standards of behaviour’) having a corrosive effect on arts freedom?
- What are the ways to improve the conditions for artistic freedom in the digital environment?
- Are women artists more greatly affected by threats in the digital environment?
- What are the models and good practices to be developed that can contribute to the documentation, analysis, monitoring and advocacy to promote artistic freedom in the digital environment?

Key reading

[The Right to freedom of artistic expression and creativity](#) (Farida Shaheed, former Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, 2013)

[The State of Artistic Freedom](#) (Freemuse, 2018)

[Re-Shaping Cultural Policies](#) (UNESCO, 2018)

Moderator



Ojoma Ochai (Nigeria) is Director of Arts, West Africa for British Council. In this role, Ojoma works with public and private sector partners in the UK and West Africa to develop and deliver programmes that build skills, international and local networks and other capacity that promote the growth and collaboration potential of the arts sector and creative economy between the sub region and the UK. Ojoma is also a member of the UNESCO Expert Facility on the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression. From 2014 to 2016, she was Entertainment Specialist for a World Bank Growth and Employment project in Nigeria, advising on cluster based approaches for film and music sector development in Nigeria. Ojoma is also a Fellow of the DEVOS Institute of Arts Management at the University of Maryland, USA and an Associate of the Nigerian Leadership Institute (NLI). She is chair of the Lagos Theatre Festival Board until July 2018, Chair of Open House Lagos Board (2015 – 2017) and sits on the board of Music Museum Foundation of Nigeria.

Speakers



Bright Ackwerh (Ghana) is a satirical artist. His practice is situated in the field of painting, illustration and street art. He was the 2016 recipient of Ghana's Kuenyehia Prize for Ghanaian Contemporary art and was also named one of the top 10 artists in the 2017 Barclays L'atelier. Bright's work has been gaining critical acclaim in the media as he uses the internet and social media as a strategy to question the limiting traditional spaces available for displaying art. Bright's practice has recently been centered on investigating pop culture as a medium which he also explores as public posters. He has exhibited his work in a number of group shows home and abroad. He earned a BFA and MFA in painting and

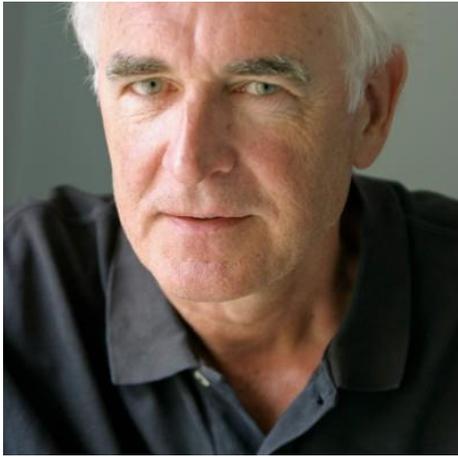
sculpture at the art faculty at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and technology.



Fatou Jagne (Senegal) is regional Director of ARTICLE 19 for West Africa and Senegal. She represented ARTICLE 19 in IFEX lead advocacy activities, and the Tunisia Monitoring Group, and supported programme development for ARTICLE 19 in Tunisia from 2011 to 2012. Fatou began her human rights career in the Gambia in 1999 at the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA) as Programme Officer and is a co-founder of the Coalition of Human Rights Defenders in the Gambia. She also previously worked as a freelance Producer & Presenter at the Gambia National TV. From 2002 to 2005, Fatou coordinated ARTICLE 19's work to assist the African Commission on Human and People' Rights (ACHPR) to adopt a landmark Declaration on Freedom of Expression in Africa and worked with the ACPHR Focal Point to develop the framework for the mechanism of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression in Africa. She serves in several working groups and regional oversight committees including the Africa Regional Advisory Group (RAG) of Amnesty International to provide strategic advice to Regional Offices and Amnesty Sections and Structures.



Hija Kamran (Pakistan) leads Communications and Research at the Digital Rights Foundation (DRF). She combines her expertise and experience in marketing and communications to develop strategic C4D campaigns for DRF. She led the Index on Censorship Award winning campaign on the amendments of Pakistan's cybercrime act, lobbied for domestic violence act and laws against honour killing and acid crimes on provincial and federal level, and is currently working on data protection legislation in the country. Hija has worked on various researches for DRF and has helped develop digital security guides, along with leading various other campaigns, researches, and international submissions to address freedom of expression, online gendered violence and data protection policies in Pakistan.



Ole Reitov (Denmark) is founder and former Executive Director of Freemuse, an international organization advocating and defending artistic freedom. Mr Reitov initiated the first World Conference on Music & Censorship in 1998 and the first ever World Conference on Artistic Freedom in 2012. He is member of the UNESCO Expert Facility and has served as expert consultant to the UN Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights for the 2013 report “The right to freedom of artistic expression and creativity”. He also contributed as lead author of the chapter on “artistic freedom” to the 2015 UNESCO Global Report “Re|Shaping Cultural Policies”.