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creative solutions to austerity measures



The ever-inventive theatre sector in Spain is developing original strategies to confront economic austerity and arts budget cuts. These currently include selling carrots as theatre tickets (a VAT reduction measure) and creating an audience buzz around pop-up microtheatres in private apartments.

Carrot rebellion

A theatre near Barcelona found a radical solution to protest against new VAT taxes imposed on theatre tickets – instead of selling theatre tickets, it sold carrots to audience members. Vegetables are subject to just 4% VAT instead of the 21% rate introduced for theatre tickets (a rise of 13% from the previous rate of 8%).

This so-called ‘carrot rebellion’ caught the public imagination and received plenty of international press. The ‘carrot formula’ which was first applied in the small theatre of Bescanó, has now been extended to a concert hall in Zaragoza and to the [Festival Còmic de Figueres](#).

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Read more about the carrot rebellion in [Deutsche Welle](#) and [The Independent](#)

Microtheatres in Madrid



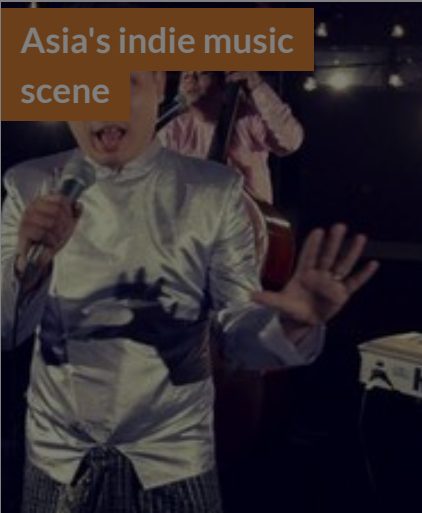
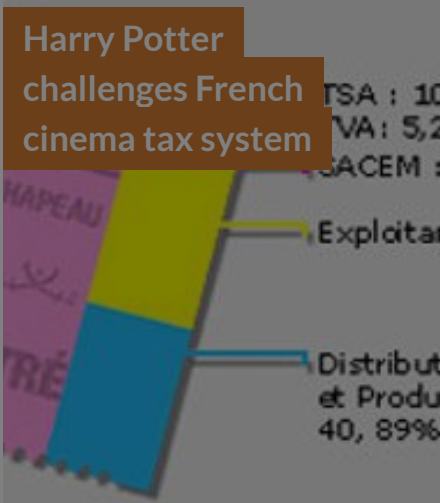
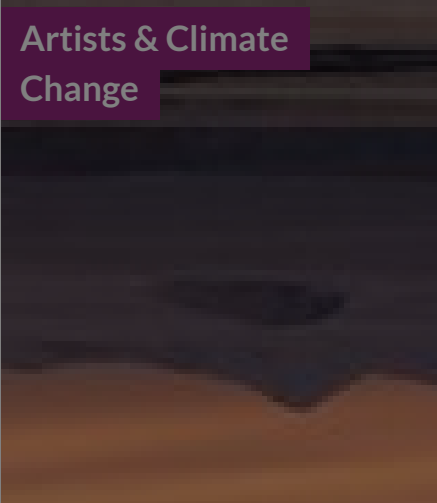
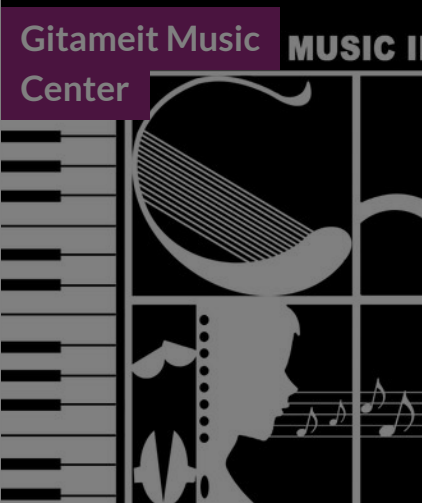
An [article in The Guardian](#) describes how pop-up theatres have revitalised Spain's theatre scene, with plays performed in apartments and a former butcher's shop to audiences of 20 people. Complex laws governing the running of theatres are circumvented by the new microtheatres by calling the new spaces "cultural clubs" and selling theatregoers "temporary membership" rather than formal tickets.

With Spain's budget deficit estimated at about 10% of GDP last year, austerity measures have chopped away much of the country's arts funding. Senior cultural administrators, both public and private, report that average budgets have been halved since Spain lurched into the first part of a double-dip recession three years ago, according to a report by Fundació Contemporànea.

A [recent article \(in Catalan\)](#), presents five tactics for beating the economic crisis:

these include voluntary donations instead of ticket payment; a system of payment on results (the audience comes in free and then pays what they think the show is worth when they leave); and the carrot formula.

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