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Role of culture in tackling global issues



[caption id="attachment_14803" align="aligncenter" width="518"] ASEF's Connect2Culture programme brought together diverse players from artists to environmentalists for a debate on environmental sustainability[/caption]

There is a growing recognition within civil society and governments that the arts and culture sector has a fundamental role to play in addressing global challenges. Culture has an instrumental part connecting many areas of human development such as education, human rights, economy, sustainable development, health awareness and environment, as well as science and technology.

Identifying and developing the role that culture plays in the debate on environmental sustainability was the objective of the four-year [Connect2Culture programme](#), initiated by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in 2008. The programme engaged many experts from different sectors in Asia and Europe to address issues related to art and environmental sustainability through artistic projects, workshops and policy meetings.

ASEF will publish the outcomes of Connect2Culture in a special dossier titled, [Arts. Environment. Sustainability. How Can Culture Make a Difference?](#) The dossier will be presented during the ASEF-supported roundtable, *A Climate for Change*, on 4 October 2011 as part of the [World Summit on Arts and Culture](#), which takes place in Melbourne, Australia. This dossier will summarise ASEF's work in the area of arts and environment from 2008 and will reflect on the issues raised and discussions by the people involved.

Singaporean dramaturge and participant of the Connect2Culture project in 2009, Ong Keng Sen said, *“The arts can play a part in making each and every individual personally responsible for his or her actions through inspiring dialogue, through negotiating conversation, through enhancing the human dimension, through igniting the imagination.”*

Specifically, the dossier contains discussion papers that resulted from two Connect2Culture events: *Arts, Culture and Sustainability workshop: Building Synergies between Asia and Europe (held alongside COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009)*; and *Climate Leaders: Release Your Creative Powers - How can art enhance our ability to think and act differently?* (a workshop for young climate leaders held in Thailand in 2009). It also includes a directory of all the programme’s alumni – almost 100 experts working in the art and environment fields.

Cultural practitioners David Hailey and Jaya Iyer highlighted the importance of including artists in the global debate in their discussion paper: *“A dialogue is not so much about generating new knowledge, as it is about changing the way we think.”* Participants of the Connect2Culture programme observed that the arts is fundamental to the way we understand the world and that it is through the arts that we can understand the complexities of environmental sustainability. Many believed that solutions must be found through innovation and creativity, and that the arts and culture can help facilitate this process.

As Rosina Gomez-Baeza Tinturé, director of the LABoral Centre for Art and Creative Industries (Spain), stated during the 2009 *Connect2Culture* project, *“The mission of artists is to inspire, educate and engage themselves with society. Creativity is the capacity to produce things that are new and of value; it is the capacity to reach new conclusions and come up with original solutions to problems. Art is able to excite our curiosity. That is its primary function.”*

You can download the 4 part dossier over here

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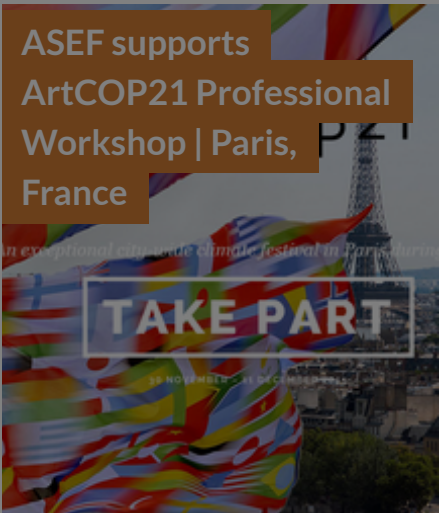
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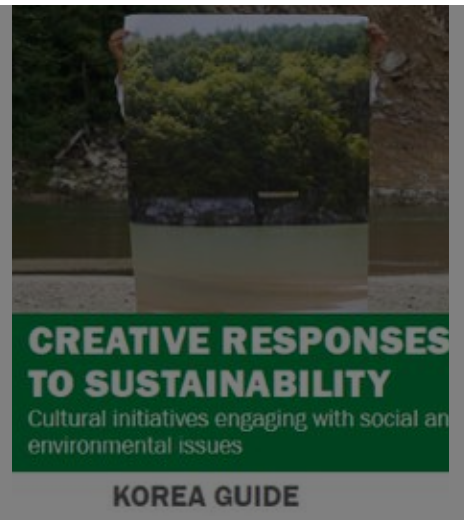
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