

### **TAULA 3 COMUNITATS / MESA 3 COMUNIDADES / PANEL 3 COMMUNITIES**

*Construcció cultural comunitària / Construcción cultural comunitaria / Community cultural construction*

*Dissabte 19 nov. / Sábado 19 nov. / Saturday 19th nov.*

*11:00h – 12:30h*

*Paral·lel 62 (sala club)*

#### **Títol: Community artistic practices and civic/political participation: experiences of theater groups in Europe and Latin America**

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##### **Summary**

Community artistic practices, as devices of approaches to cultural rights, have come especially in recent years to be configured as a field that brings together a growing interest, translated into a diverse and intense, practical and theoretical production. This movement is transversal to different geographies. In addition, the construction of these practices has happened in a double sense: if, on the one hand, contemporary artistic creation has deepened its participatory dimension, on the other, education and community and social intervention have resorted to artistic languages as an alternative to traditional approaches.

##### **Introduction**

Community arts practice has received growing interest in recent years. This has included both practical and theoretical exploration of the form. This activity cuts across different geographies and has asserted as its characteristic the epistemological and methodological hybridity, integrating contributions from different disciplinary origins. The construction of these practices has also taken place in a double sense: on the one hand, contemporary artistic creation has deepened its participatory dimension, on the other, education and community and social intervention have resorted to artistic languages as an alternative to traditional approaches. In response, this communication seeks to analyse this meeting of theatre and civic and political participation, through a deepening of the dialogue between theory and practice. The defining elements of community artistic practices are approached and discussed, as well as the strengths and weaknesses that their creative processes contain and, finally, the question of the dimensions

that connect them to civic and political participation. This is based on the experiences of those who do community art – citizens and artists – but also from the perspectives of the audiences, social and cultural organizations and politicians. This work summarizes a world historical review of community art with particular emphasis on the Anglo-Saxon, European and Latin America contexts and proposes possible paths for this field of action, namely in the pandemic context. For that it leans in three studies that seek to respond to the need for research in this area, particularly in the mentioned geographies, which can support best practices and their monitoring, giving indications for greater investment in them. The studies activated the participation of 332 people, focusing on non-professional artists from 31 artistic collectives in Portugal and Brazil. The main reflections point towards the identification of elements that permit a redefinition of community artistic practices, as well as proposing a new way of assessing the quality of cultural and artistic participation. Approaches to the arts and its effects based on the relationship between artistic creation and civic and political participation are also suggested. The sources mobilized in the research cover different disciplinary areas (arts, education, anthropology, cultural studies, etc.) from different geographies, with a focus on Anglo-Saxon, European and Latin American contexts.

### **Methodological Approach**

The research design, based on interpretive and critical paradigms, in a multiple case study format, using mixed, qualitative and quantitative methods. This last option, unusual in this field, mobilized, as main devices, field notes, interviews, focus groups and questionnaire surveys, which are presented, explaining its construction, procedures and methods of analysis. In this space, the contexts and participants of the investigation are also characterized, 332 in total, 84 in qualitative studies and 248 in quantitative, mostly female. The reason for the diversity of participants in relation to the three studies is clarified. The groups involved in the investigation are also characterized, 31 in total, with 23 participating in the studies and 8 collaborating in an exploratory phase, in 16 locations in Portugal and 2 in Brazil.

### **Main results and conclusions**

The main reflections of this investigation point to the meaning of the identification of elements (eg horizontal relationship between professional and non-professional artists; linking these practices to socio-political contexts; processes based on collective creation and artistic experimentation; crossing of diverse artistic and aesthetic languages in the context of groups) that allow updating the definition of community artistic practices. According to these studies it was possible to develop 5 dimensions that structure the concept of quality of cultural and artistic

participation: forms of participation; dynamics of creative processes; fundamental themes; professional and non-professional relationship; and spaces of creation and presentation. Finally the this presentation analyze The quality of participation is manifested in the dimensions – creative processes and organizational group processes – which are interrelated. These work dynamics, activated by the specificity of theatrical approaches (performance, physical theatre, devising, improvisation and anthropological research) seem to contribute to the development of theatre conceptions that express processes of democratization and cultural democracy.

**Keywords:** Community Artistic Practices, Civic and Political Participation, Theatre, Quality of Cultural and Artistic Participation, Democratization and Cultural Democracy.

### **Hugo Cruz**

Hugo Cruz has a PhD from the University of Porto with the topic “Community Artistic Practices and Civic and Political Participation”. He publishes and teaches in national and international contexts, in the areas of “artistic creation and public space”, “community artistic practices and civic and political participation”, “art and politics” and “cultural policies”. Noteworthy is also the coordination of the books “Art and Community ” (2015) and “Art and Hope” (2019), edited by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and is the author of the book “Artistic Practices, participation and politics” (2021) by Edições Colibri. He Is a Member of the external evaluation team of the PARTIS / Art for Change Initiative - Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian and Fundação La Caixa. He Is the Artistic director of MEXE\_International Meeting of Art and Community. Consultant, trainer and artistic director in different national and international projects (eg.: Spain, Brazil, Guinea Bissau) in municipalities, festivals and foundations (eg.: Consultant Artistic Program and Participation in the candidacy for European Capital of Culture Braga'27, Festival de les Arts Comunitàries de Catalunya and the “Culture for All” Program in several municipalities). Artistic direction of several theatrical projects in co-construction with local communities, namely in schools, prisons, social neighborhoods and people's houses.

He is a Co-founder of MEXE, Pele and Nomad Art & Public Space. Hugo also assures the Artistic direction of several theatrical projects in co-construction with local communities, namely in schools, prisons, social housing districts and municipalities.

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