

Host Partner - Aberdeen City Council

Project Title: Transnational Dialogue through 'Subculture': lessons to be learned for a wider cultural exchange

Seeking partners from eligible member states for the October round of the EU Culture programme 1.2.1 – Cooperation Projects

Achieving new and meaningful dialogue which breaks down national barriers is incredibly difficult to achieve through traditional arts and cultural exchange methodologies. Successful exchanges often require working with relatively small numbers and targeting specific demographic groups that already identify themselves as being 'cultured'. There is however cultural activity already taking place within Europe that offer opportunities for transnational dialogue and exchange on a much wider scale.

Aberdeen is interested in exploring with other European partner cities the extent to which 'subculture' events create opportunities for communication that breaks down barriers that more traditional cultural exchanges have not achieved. Aberdeen's particular 'subculture' focus would be on the experience of Aberdeen Football Club winning the 1983 UEFA Cup-Winner's Cup in Gothenburg. Globalisation has resulted in increasing transnational communication, networking, information exchanges, resource mobility and migration. Football is widely recognised as the 'global game' but thus far it has not been recognised as by the majority of its followers as tool for cultural exchange and cooperation.

As the thirtieth anniversary of Aberdeen's victory in Gothenburg approaches we feel there is an opportunity to explore the extent to which major transnational events such as this shape both the hosts and visitors perception of each others culture and nationalities and what legacies can be put in place. For many participants such events may represent their first time outside of their own country to another 'migrating' culture. Local identities are shaped through shared social history, civic pride and family history in a way that reflects and is determined by their social and cultural environment and in that respect sport is pivotal for many citizens across Europe. From this, the mass migration of supporters to other countries through major events results in each becoming 'Cultural Ambassadors'; an important medium for facilitating and informing transnational exchange

A further layer of transnationalism is present in contemporary European club football which may have particular relevance or lessons when applied to other cultural professions opportunities for exchange within Europe. Football now operates within a global market which has led to greater mobility of professional players and staff. A local team's personnel are now likely to comprise of a broad

range of nationalities but this has not significantly altered traditional patterns of supporters' loyalty to their clubs or cultural identity.

We would like the opportunity to examine if there are lessons to be learned from the transnationalism of 'subcultures' which can be applied to other cultural activity in order to develop an International Cultural Exchange Strategy that can be applied to a wider range of arts disciplines. Aberdeen would like to use their 'subculture' experience to develop a project that recognises and explores the long term benefits, cultural pride and exchange. We see this as a catalyst to explore potential artistic collaborations with cultural professionals across Europe, developing new work that breaks down barriers to participation and cultural dialogue.

We would like to work with other cities around Europe who have experienced the impact of mass participation 'subcultural' events, who have an interest in exploring the legacy and lessons of these experiences and considering how the can be applied to sustainable cultural collaboration and dialogue.

Deadline for responses – Please send an expression of interest identifying what you can bring to this partnership by Friday 10th August.

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