

## INTRODUCTION

The team of the journal *Culture Crossroads* is truly pleased to be presenting this volume to you, our reader. First, since the previous issue, two events have taken place, and we will be experiencing their impact in a long time to come. The former of the events is that *Culture Crossroads* has been reviewed for indexing with Scopus and the decision was positive. Hence, this is the first volume to be Scopus-indexed. The journal team are enormously proud of this achievement. The latter event concerns the streamlining of publication processes – the journal has migrated to a brand new electronic system of journal management. This means, that in future, all publication processes will be state-of-the-art. Second, we are pleased with the content of the volume we are now presenting to you. It is versatile and multidimensional, yet there are three clearly distinguishable and exciting thematic strands. A closer reading, however, finds several cross-thematic conversations going on, which makes this volume even more interesting.

The authors address large issues (creativity, identity, censorship), key turning points in the history of the phenomena they analyse, and identify new exciting trends in art, sometimes questioning the existing boundaries and sometimes finding new similarities.

The first paper in the volume, by Žanete Eglīte – “Creative People, Industries and Places in Small Cities and Rural Areas” – offers a theoretical review of the relation between creative people, creative industries, and creative places in small cities and rural areas. Žanete Eglīte probes into the relationships that are known since Richard Florida’s statements, however this overview takes into account the trends set into motion by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another large issue is analysed by two authors – Laura Brutāne and Ketrisa Petkeviča in their paper “Artistic Freedom, Censorship and Self-Censorship in the Film Industry of Latvia”. This is an account of the phenomenon which at a superficial glance seems related only to authoritarian regimes, however the study presented in the paper uncovers multi-shaped manifestations of censorship in the creative activities and dominant conditions in which it forms; allows to follow up the sources of self-censorship for artistic activity, and draws conclusions on the conditions and barriers of creative freedom in Latvian society.

The third paper in the triad tackling the very foundations of creativity and self-expression is the paper by Māra Simons – “Russian Speakers from Latvia in Sweden: Between Identities and Memories”. This paper reflects ethnographic research on identities that have to be remade, and interpretations of sensitive events, which do not fit the new life situation of the informants. In a sense, the article is about everyday creativity, and specifically the creativity of the constant remaking of what we used to know as true.

Interestingly, the next article that begins the theatre-based strand of themes in this volume, also discusses hybridity and the emergence of known theatrical genres in a new form. Lauma Mellēna-Bartkeviča in her article “Contemporary Music(al) Theatre in Latvia: Problem of Definitions and Formats” concludes that the hybridization of genres and the

devised creation methods necessitate the questioning of former analytical instruments and discourses in order to develop the criticism of performing arts in line with emerging trends.

The next paper looks at performing arts, specifically theatre, as a tool for raising awareness on urgent environmental concerns. Kitija Balcare in her paper “Ecotheatre: Changing Perspective from Who We Are towards Where We Are” examines the processes that allow her to conclude that ecotheatre is becoming the form of environmental activism or, so called artivism, of theatre practitioners in Latvia.

Continuing the thematic strand of performing arts, the article by Dita Jonīte – “Choreographer in Contemporary Theatre: The Case of Latvia” – discusses the new approach to theatrical choreography within the changed paradigm of dramatic theatre. The author examines the ways in which the new generation of contemporary dance choreographers influence the aesthetics of productions and co-responsibility of dramatic actors, thus contributing to the contemporary focus on the living, immediate relationship between theatre and audience.

A new metaphorical perspective on the work of theatre artists is explored in the article by Ramunė Balevičiūtė and Agnė Jurgaitytė-Avižinienė – “Theater Artists Between the City and the Non-city: the Spring of Withdrawals and Returns”. The authors discuss four meta-themes that provide insight into the impact of the city and non-city environments on the work of theatre artists. The authors find that it is the change of perspective and creative state that provides impulses for new universes to emerge both aesthetically and psychologically. This article, with its contemplation of creative processes, sets the transition from the “theatre theme” to the next three articles that focus on the visual art.

The first article of the triad, by Laine Kristberga – “Transdisciplinary and Transnational Manifestations in Ojārs Feldbergs’ Art: The Concept of Borders” critically focusses on the centre-periphery relationship and examines the role of hybridity and intercultural encounters in art production. Overall, the author questions the suitability of knowledge production systems in terms of the Western art discourse when attempting to interpret the Latvian artist Ojārs Feldbergs.

The next contribution to the volume is by Ketevan Tsetskhladze – “The Art of Pere-stroika: New Movements in Georgian Art of the 1980s”. The author explores the establishment of non-official art groups in Tbilisi, in the context of the broader contemporary art movement and change of 1980s. The article zooms in on the art scene of Tbilisi where the artists within merely one decade managed to create their own aesthetic and theoretical principles.

The concluding paper of the volume also provides a broad-lens exploration of a turning point in the Latvian art scene. Elīna Veilande-Apine, in her article “Foundation and Operation of the Association of Latvian Textile Art (1994–2014)” views the contribution of the independent association in textile art ALTA as seen against the backdrop of transitions happening in textile art globally.

As we have tried to demonstrate by this short introduction, the volume provides intriguing insight into psychology of creativity, as well as various paradigm shifts and changes in the roles of creative professionals. We sincerely thank all the authors and hope that this collection of articles will provide impetus for further exploration of the multi-faceted world of culture and art, identities, borders and transitions.