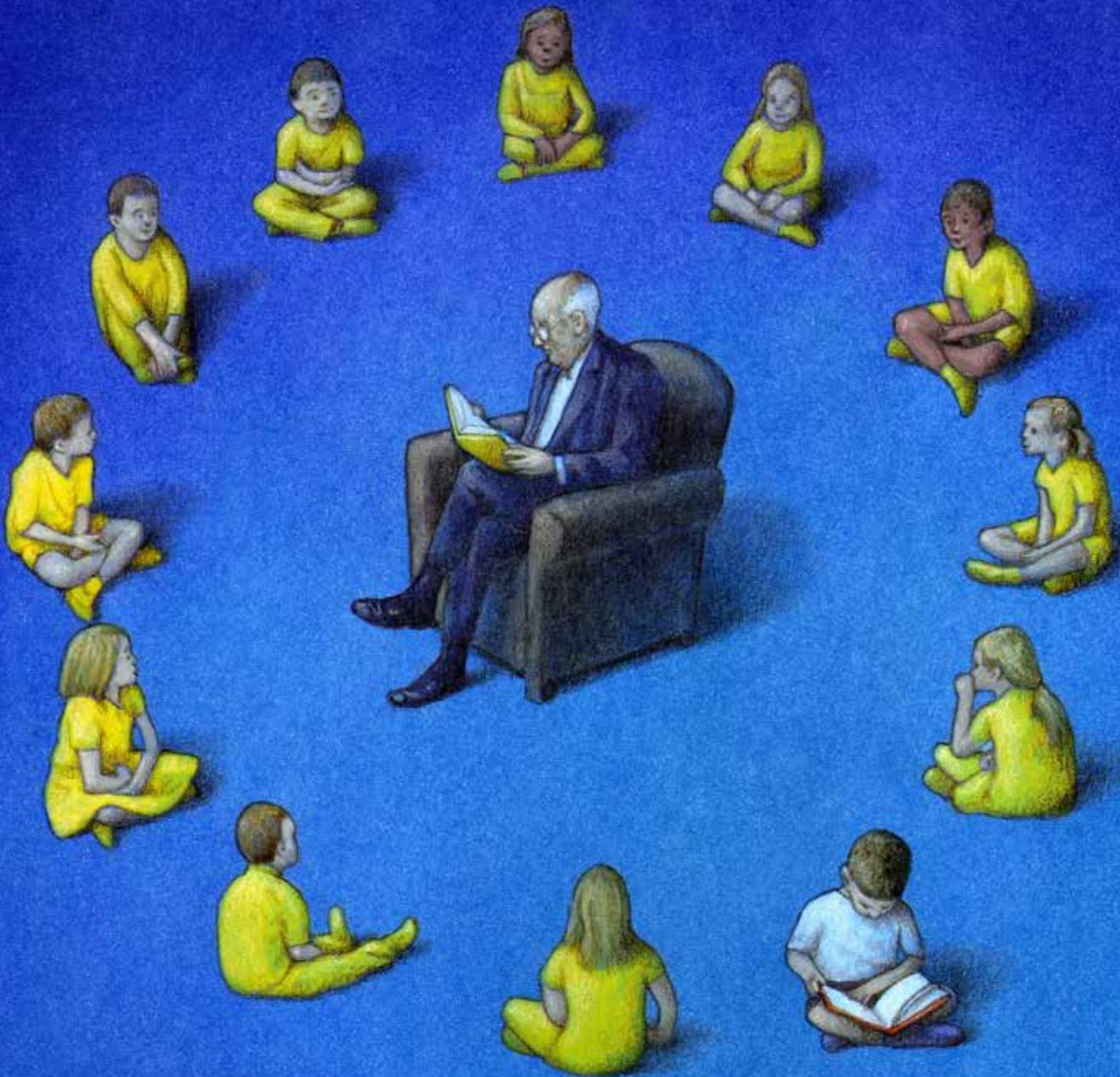


# The Morning After:

The future of the UK's cultural relationship  
with other European nations



*P. Kuczyński 2006.*

#### ABOUT THE BRITISH COUNCIL

The aim of the British Council is to create 'a basis of friendly knowledge and understanding' between the people of the United Kingdom and the wider world.

We do this by using the cultural resources of the UK to make a positive contribution to the people, institutions and governments of the countries we work with – creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. This makes a lasting difference to the security, prosperity and influence of the UK.

Our work helps to keep the UK safe and secure by reducing extremism and improving stability and security in strategically important countries. It increases UK prosperity by encouraging more trade, investment and tourism. It also makes a lasting difference to the UK's international influence by increasing connections and networks with key decision makers globally, increasing the number of people who know and trust the UK.

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Cover illustration: Pawel Kuczynski  
Additional illustrations by Andrzej Krauze  
and Sophie von Hellermann



REBECCA WALTON  
British Council EU  
Regional Director

## Foreword

**O**n 23rd June the people of the UK made the historic decision to leave the European Union. Ahead of the referendum we commissioned this collection of essays by prominent people working in a wide variety of cultural sectors. They offer an insight into the historic, social, artistic, scientific and educational connections between the UK and other European countries, and a reflection on how these might be shaped in years to come.

We asked the authors to write about their own experience, and reflect more broadly on the value of culture as an enduring force of attraction within and beyond Europe. Commissioned artwork offers a wry commentary on the UK's 'European question': the cover illustration suggesting an urgent need for (re) engagement with our neighbours.

The title of the collection – The Morning After – is intended to suggest that the UK is now presented with an opportunity to take stock of its relationships with other European countries, and reconsider its cultural connections with people across the continent.

It is the heterogeneous nature of Europe that has always been at the core of the continent's cultural productivity. From the Eddas to the Iliad, from Picasso to Lascaux, Europe offers unrivalled

cultural richness within a relatively contained geography.

National identities come more easily to many of us, but the continent has always been a de facto collective with exchange and cooperation at its heart. Indeed it is the special conditions of European cooperation that give rise to the continent's creative superabundance.

The European Commission has placed a great deal of importance on cultural and educational ties both within and beyond Europe. Now the UK has voted to leave, these issues are more important than ever, and the likely shift in resources and support will need to be made good from other sources.

The British Council is the UK's national body dedicated to building international understanding. We believe that given the result of the United Kingdom's referendum on EU membership, the cultural connection between the UK and other European nations will remain vital, and can help to build confidence and trust in whatever political and economic settlement is finally reached.

We are a global organisation, with operations around the world, but our roots are European – we were created as part of the UK's response to the rise of Fascism in the 1930s.

We have maintained operations across Europe since then, through the years of post war reconstruction

and the decades of the Cold War, to the challenges of the present. During that time we have engaged others in conversation through the exchange of culture – whether that is expressed in language, education, science or the arts.

Like weather fronts and migrating swallows, culture and ideas are not stopped by border posts or passport regulations. That should be a cause for celebration, and a comfort at a time of great uncertainty and change.

Whatever course political events may take over the coming months and years, Europe will remain a place of cultural exchange for all of us, as it has been for millennia.



MARTIN ROTH  
Director, Victoria &  
Albert Museum

## We may vote to leave the EU, but we will always be Europeans

**T**he United Kingdom that I inhabit and identify with is an entity that I can only understand in its entangled European context. Within living memory my country of birth had brought war to the nation that has welcomed me and which I now call home. Cities, lives and families were destroyed on a scale that is almost unimaginable – and yet, just a few decades later, an ambitious, optimistic, tolerant and collaborative Europe defiantly rose. As a formal union, the EU may not have lived up to expectations. But as a cultural union, Europe is unrivalled. The United Kingdom – and London – is the beating heart of this Europe that I know and love. London simply could not be London without the constant exchange of people, art and ideas that flows across the continent. It is our shared creative purpose that makes European cities such powerhouses and the envy of the rest of the world. I – a German leading a British museum in an international European capital – am one lucky beneficiary of this openness.

As a child in post-war Stuttgart, my early memories of Britain are not of an isolated island far from home. British identity and culture was thriving on my doorstep. The VW Beetles that rattled around our towns were there thanks to a British Major, Ivan Hirst, who saved the production

line from demise in the late Forties. We read of Europe's rebirth in *Der Spiegel*, the leading German political weekly founded by the Briton John Seymour Chaloner in 1947.

One of the V&A's current exhibitions explores the life of Ove Arup, the ground-breaking Anglo-Danish engineer. His move to London in 1923 affected him profoundly as he began to collaborate with leading European Modernist architectural theorists such as Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier. Later collaborations helped shape some of the world's most iconic buildings, and today Arup is at the heart of pioneering infrastructure projects such as Crossrail.

In 1970 Ove Arup spoke to his staff in a speech that is still read by every new employee on their first day. In it he sets out '...two ways of looking at the pursuit of happiness: one is to go straight for the things you fancy without restraints, that is, without considering anybody else besides yourself. The other is to recognise that no man is an island, that our lives are inextricably mixed up with those of our fellow human beings, and that there can be no real happiness in isolation'. I, like Arup, opt for that second way.

Europe, and Britain's relationship with it, is truly so much more than a political settlement, a treaty or a gathering of bureaucrats. The committees and debating chambers of Brussels are the dusty engine rooms of Europe,

but it is our museums, galleries, universities, businesses, stadia and studios that provide the fuel.

If a scant majority of the Britons who make it to the ballot box do send the country out of the EU, those who believe that Britain will then float away into glorious isolation will be sorely disappointed. In or out, Britain will always be in its own unique way European, and Europe will retain Britishness in its DNA. The challenges facing the world are not small. Whether we confront these together as part of the European Union or not, The United Kingdom's cultural bonds with Europe – something much larger – will not unravel.

*[A longer version of this essay first appeared in the London Evening Standard]*



NADIA EL-SEBAI  
Executive Director,  
The Arab British Centre

## Widening the Narrative

**E**arlier this year The Arab British Centre brought eight rising stars from the design scene in Lebanon to showcase their interpretation of the theme *Fashion Utopias* at the International Fashion Showcase at Somerset House.

In their stunning exhibition, curated by the Starch Foundation in Beirut, the designers presented their version of a utopian Beirut, forever grounded in its Mediterranean heritage. The exhibition was well received by industry peers and the general public who were eager to learn more about emerging fashion from a country still so stigmatised by conflict. To our great surprise we heard the same thing over and over again. 'Mediterranean? Who knew?'

The Arab British Centre is a UK based charity that was established in 1977 with the aim of improving the British public's understanding of the Arab world. Since its conception, the centre has provided communities across the UK access to content and resources from this vast and diverse region through the work of its resident organisations and the Centre's own cultural programme.

As news and images of conflict from the Middle East flood all levels of the media, the UK is confronted with an impoverished view of an Arab world often reduced to a homogenous

culture; a culture in which diversity of religion, ethnicity, language, artistic practices and cultural heritage is lost.

Similarly, in the past few months we have also been challenged by reductive narratives in the debate about the UK's place in the EU. At times more akin to a football match – Britain vs the EU – it has been impossible not to be confused by an all-encompassing concept of 'Europe'. What is our relationship to 'it'; what is 'its' relationship to us? Of course these singular identities are impossible: our identities are intrinsically interlinked.

If we are to ensure that our relationships with European nations remain meaningful and dynamic, we need to keep working to break apart the narrow narratives we often ascribe to one another. Whatever the outcome on 23 June, cultural institutions will play a major role in this by continuing to foster inclusive spaces.

We are fortunate that many cultural and arts institutions in the UK and elsewhere in Europe provide a safe environment for communities from all over the world to communicate their experiences, identities and imaginations in various art forms. Our history and long-standing relationship with the Middle East, and the strength of our arts and creative industries, ensure that London will remain a meeting point for Arab cultures and therefore an asset to

Europe and the rest of the world. Our role as arts professionals and leaders of cultural organisations in the UK is to make sure that we keep our doors open for engagement, discovery, learning and debate. Inclusive institutions that encourage participation will empower people to interact with each other and direct and shape their own relationships with Europe, the Arab world and the rest of the globe. The UK is at the heart of all those connections. Who knew?



SEAN RAINBIRD  
Director, National  
Gallery of Ireland

## Menschen bewegen – Welten verbinden\*

**C**ommercial slogans sometimes capture aptly and succinctly what we try to achieve elsewhere. German Railways linked human emotion and motion, inclusion and connection in theirs. Cultural connections in the visual arts link the owned and the shared, the stored and the displayed, the hidden and the activated, marking a passage between the place an object is cared for and its imaginative potential for viewers.

The performing arts now increasingly offer live broadcasts in cinemas. Somehow, though, such immediacy is lost in the film of an exhibition. You still need to go to the gallery. Although the packed popular shows that many of us have experienced are probably ripe for such treatment, to supplant rather than supplement the actual presence of the artwork seems more like impoverishment than enrichment.

The inexorable march of digitisation has irreversibly extended the range and reach of the objects in our care, and the activities in our venues. Nowadays it encompasses the most diverse programmes and projects, which can be disseminated to previously unimaginable numbers of people in exhilaratingly diverse ways.

Digital audiences may be many multiples of the number of physical visitors to galleries – but the internet can never replace the experience of an actual visit.

Public institutions, galleries, heritage sites and properties across Europe all offer something unique, and they have been opened to far greater numbers than ever before. Their collections and programmes are enhanced by working with others on digital, exhibition, conservation and research project.

Such exchanges have been advanced by EU policies, projects and programmes.

Dublin's 2017 Vermeer exhibition, for example, will gather works from many cities. It will show how Dutch painters of the Golden Age modified their style, techniques and subject matter in response to one another, in a spirit of healthy rivalry, inspiration and mutual respect, all the while operating within a lively market for their works. The exhibition is conceived with related projects in the Netherlands, in France, on the web, on film and within our conservation departments. These multiple strands linking colleagues across Europe and America will enrich our understanding of Dutch art in the Golden Age.

What does this have to do with the UK being part of – or no longer part of – the European Union?

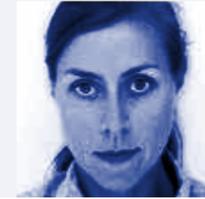
The connectivity within our international cultural relations will adjust to the circumstances, whatever they turn out to be. The barriers and conventions of custom controls, loan agreements, cross-border research etc. will become less or more onerous.

There would be other, more subtle changes. If people no longer attend meetings in established groups, working on mutually important issues and trying to define common goals, communication channels will fall silent, or fragment.

Creating new relationships will require time and the rebuilding of trust. Europe-wide research projects will become less accessible. Different nationalities bringing new perspectives to jobs in other European countries will face new barriers if the UK is no longer part of the EU. Certain developments – think of the ongoing north-south dialogue in Ireland in which cultural exchange plays a part – have benefitted from alternative channels outside the bilateral relations between two states. Interventions by the EU and the US, for example, have provided alternative ways of building greater understanding.

Cultural institutions attempt to bridge rather than divide. But they are not immune to political developments. Some barriers would surely return if the UK turns away from 60 years of European cooperation, however flawed, infuriating or bureaucratic some EU processes have become.

Different tables, different people, some empty chairs. It will take a while to find out just how the intertwined strands of connectivity are affected; but affected they will be, and not necessarily to the UK's advantage.



AGNÈS CATHERINE  
POIRIER  
Journalist, writer  
and broadcaster

## The Attraction of Opposites

**W**hatever challenges history throws at us, the attraction of opposite minds will always endure. Fifteen years after low cost airline companies literally opened the European sky to Europeans on a budget and students hungry for novelty and discovery, there is no going back to a closed borders mentality whether we are part of the same market or not. The United Kingdom and the continent are forever joined up, culturally, intellectually, artistically, scientifically and, of course, economically.

Our differences in the way we think, live, speak, dress, eat, drink, and love, to name but a few, mean that as long as there are enquiring minds, young and not so young people will want to travel, discover, understand their neighbours and report back home on the wonders they have found beyond their borders. Europe, whether made of members of the Union or not, is a collection of very distinctive cultures, every one singular and fascinating in its own way. And Great Britain has always been, and will always remain, one its most uniquely attractive ingredients.

To the question 'What is Britishness about?' the British don't often agree among themselves. We, on the

continent, have perhaps a clearer idea and more distanced view. It is, for most of us Europeans, its language, its literature and its theatre. Great Britain has given the world a rich and mellifluous language which is now the world's lingua franca. In many ways, the English language has become Europe's language too. And if young Europeans flock to British universities, it is to take part in this linguistic exchange and celebration of a common treasure.

The British also often think differently, which fuels though-provoking debates that enrich and very often elevate our common discourse. In return, Great Britain hugely benefits from an influx of young European minds coming to its shores, and the most fruitful cross-fertilization operates in every field, from sciences to the arts. We all individually hold a mirror to our neighbour and this confrontation of ideas and different perspectives enriches the European conversation. It is now part of our lives and there is no turning the clock back. Today, many of our greatest art institutions are trusted to the hands of knowledgeable art historians born across the border. To think that such iconic national institutions such as the British Museum, Florence's Uffizi

Gallery or Venice's Accademia are now headed by German art historians, is extraordinary. This would have been unthinkable only twenty years ago, and this, precisely, is Europe in action, a Europe of excellence and of exchange beyond national prejudices.

As long as people vote with their feet and as long as they want to discover what lies beyond their horizon, the European spirit will continue to be well and alive. Vive la différence!



CHRISTOS CARRAS  
General Manager,  
Onassis Cultural  
Centre, Athens

## In Praise of Openness

**E**ngagement across a broad range of social and professional fields is central to the success of cultural projects – and unique to the sector. Culture engages people intellectually, emotionally and physically, it brings into play new technologies and new theories, it challenges preconceptions and opens relational possibilities.

These inherent attributes of cultural work have an intrinsic value that has often been obscured by the recent need to justify investment in culture primarily in terms of its (undeniable) positive economic impact.

It may be that the blindness of a market-oriented and fundamentally bureaucratic organisation to the importance of these values, combined with the belated understanding of culture's economic and social importance, has had a catastrophic result. The European Union never attributed sufficient resources to harnessing the dynamics of local (cultural) identities to the vision of a common, shared environment. This insufficient valuing of cultural work has returned to bite us in the backside, as the worst forms of perceived local

cultural differences re-emerge as nationalist, isolationist and intolerant political forces. A conception of cultural identity that goes beyond nationhood could be a counterweight to this dangerous trend.

Nonetheless, over the past decades, the ease with which artistic work can be exchanged within Europe has gone some way to creating a shared sphere of practice and experience in ways that only cultural action can achieve. As is the case with most of the (many) good things about the European Project, this ease has become transparent to us to the point of losing its perceived value.

At one level, cultural exchange is not dependent on forms of political union. Ideas, styles,

materials and knowledge have found their way across otherwise impermeable borders throughout history. Artistic ideas resonate, and resonance

propagates. However, what is unique to the European Union is on the one hand the freedom to move and produce cultural work within the Union and on the other the incentives that are in place to create and maintain

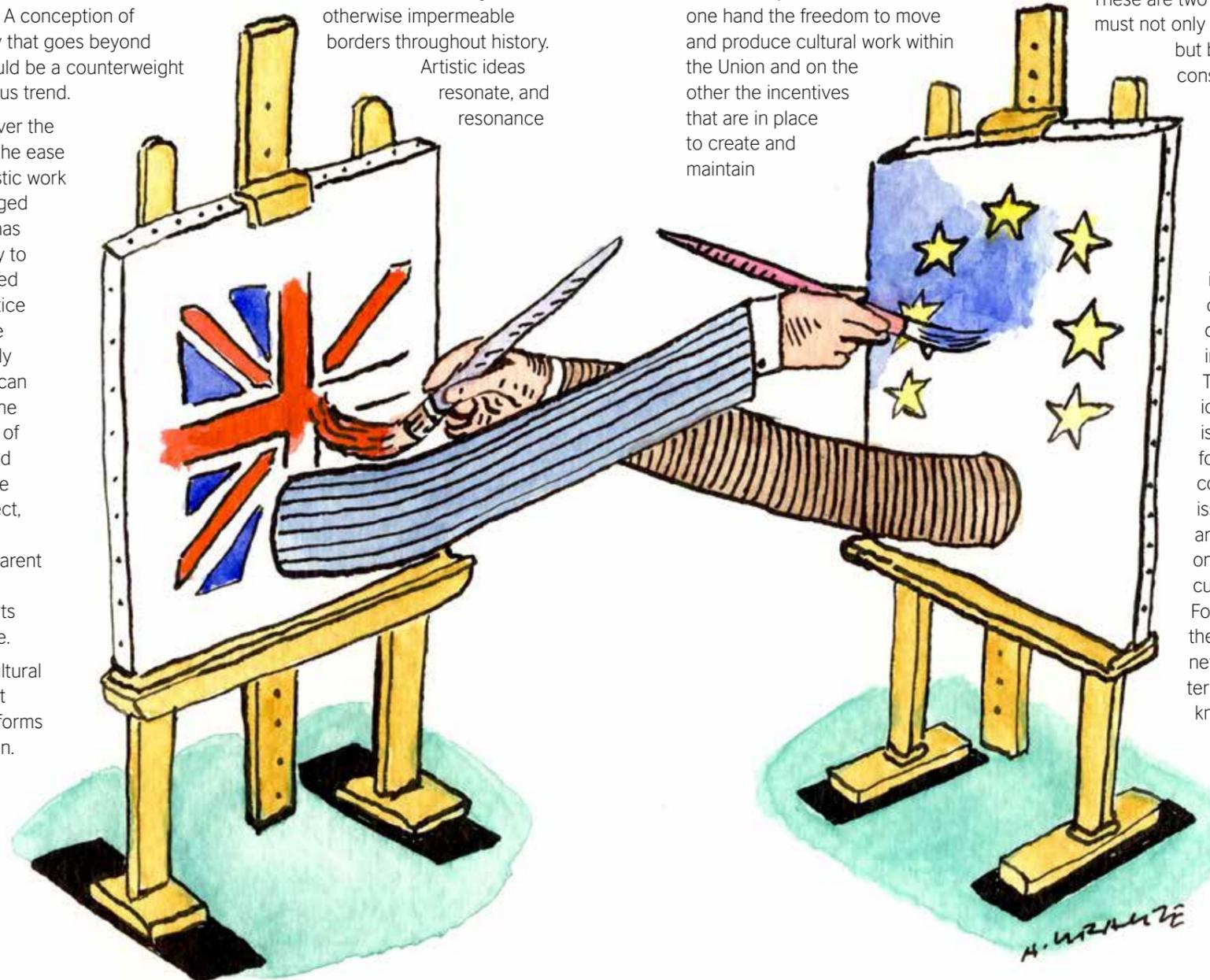
networks of cultural institutions. These are two frameworks that must not only be maintained but be further consolidated in the

future. There must be no barriers to artists working and showing their work freely across Europe and institutions must develop and share cultural work on an international level. The free flow of ideas and practices is a powerful force for (re)phrasing contemporary issues in ways that are not limited to one historical and cultural perspective. For institutions, the benefits of networking in terms of exposure, knowledge transfer, mobility of cultural actors and a range

of multiplier effects is evident. But this networking concurrently adds a financial and managerial burden, and so incentives to engage in it must be maintained and even extended.

For a Greek cultural institution that focuses on contemporary work in theatre, dance, music, visual and applied arts, cultural criticism and arts education, the benefits of European cultural cooperation are evident on a daily basis: facilitating the mobility of young artists, exchanging know-how and best practices, participating in the elaboration of new strategies within networks that provide a critical mass for their implementation, financial support for actions that are often innovative and experimental but provide important insight and experience. These facets of our work, and others also, would be often impossible or at least very difficult to realise outside the European Union and the frameworks it develops.

If one wants to preserve and enhance cultural exchange, it makes no sense to leave a trans-national structure that enables it.





JOHN DUBBER  
Head of Policy & External  
Relations, British Council

## Ask not what Europe can do for us...

**T**he referendum campaign has created much heat, but not always the same amount of light. In the rush to make the case about the relative merits of access to the single market, the protection of workers' rights or the ability to control immigration, campaigners on both sides often neglected the wider cultural dimension that is integral to discussions of national identity and the UK's international role.

The UK is today a meeting point between Europe, the Commonwealth and the rest of the world; a global hub for people, cultures, ideas, language and connections. However, while our status as a global cultural nexus has huge advantages, it has not always helped us to a clear conception of ourselves as a nation.

The UK has long struggled to come to terms with its European, Atlantic and imperial histories and identities. We remain torn between our geographical location and shared history and culture with the continent, our ties of language and culture with the English speaking world, and our historical and cultural connections with the broader Commonwealth.

Following the referendum, culture can play an important role in helping

us come to develop a clearer contemporary conception of ourselves as a nation and better define our international aspirations. A national cultural debate can help us explore what it means to be British in today's world. It can provide the means for people to ask what kind of country they want to live in and what kind of vision we have for our global role.

The UK's distinct history and collective memory means that many people feel differently about the EU than our European peers do. For many, membership of the EU has always been more a case of pragmatic calculation than an affair of the heart. For their part many Europeans are mystified by British ambivalence towards the 'European Project'. Cultural exchange can help us to see the world through the eyes of others on the European continent and beyond, and to understand their views and aspirations. It is also essential to building and re-building international friendship and trust – something that will be needed whether our future lies within or outside the European Union. We will certainly continue to share major international challenges with our neighbours and will need to work together to overcome these – from climate change to the rise of extremism.

In one of the most powerful speeches of the 20th century, the new President of the United States John F Kennedy used his inaugural address to tell the world that the 'torch had been passed to a new generation' of Americans, and challenged his audience to 'ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country'. Less well known was the line that followed, asking 'fellow citizens of the world' to 'ask not what America will do for you, but what together we will do for the freedom of man'.

This sums up an important challenge facing the UK today. Whatever the result of the referendum, now is a fitting time to ask ourselves some deeper questions about the UK's cultural identity and values. It is also a chance to explore not just the short term benefits we want from relations with other European countries, but what vision we have for our future contribution to Europe and the world.



SIR MARTYN POLIAKOFF  
Chemistry Research Professor,  
University Of Nottingham; Vice  
President, European Academies  
Science Advisory Council;  
YouTube science presenter\*

## A Date to Remember?

**J**une 23rd is always an important day for me. It's my wedding anniversary. This year, I booked a table for 6pm so that our dinner would not be spoilt by exit polls. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

I have an international background and have worked on international science issues for a number of years. I am a university Professor in chemistry. My father was Russian, my mother was English and I grew up in a house where Russian, French and German were spoken.

However, I've lived in the UK all my life and feel British. My great-grandfather was a peer, and a great-uncle was a Cabinet Minister during the First World War. Since 2011, I have also been Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society, during which time I have been essentially an ambassador for UK science. By the time I finish in November this year, I will have visited 30 countries outside the UK, 15 of them in the EU, promoting the work of UK scientists and the role of science as a global enterprise.

I am also active in research and, like most researchers, much of my time is spent in applying for funding. Securing research grants has been hard throughout my career and

now it's more competitive than ever. My research has received support from the EU for over thirty years.

I am not alone. Under the EU Framework 7 programme, only Germany received more research funding than the UK. Indeed, the UK receives more than it contributes to EU research funding; official statistics indicate that between 2007 and 2013, we contributed €5.4 billion to EU R&D activities, while receiving €8.8 billion EU funding for R&D and innovation over the same period. This funding includes grants from Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) which support postdoctoral fellowships and studentships for young researchers coming to the UK, including to my lab.

Currently I have a talented postdoc and student working under MSCA schemes. MSCA funding has led to three international marriages amongst my co-workers, and two couples stayed here, contributing to research in UK industry. Of course, there is bureaucracy associated with EU funding, but it is less than on some UK grant schemes.

The real value of the EU to me and many other UK researchers is the collaboration that it fosters. Much of the funding is given to consortia

of scientists in several EU countries working together to address important research challenges. In fact, UK collaboration with EU partners is growing at a faster rate than collaboration with US partners. In 2015 around 30% of the UK's research output involved collaboration with EU partners, including my best piece of work for that year.

I also have a third job. I'm a Vice-President of the European Academy of Sciences Advisory Council, which produces authoritative reports to inform policymakers across the EU on issues such as extreme weather or marine sustainability. Such advice is important because these issues are transnational and affect the whole continent and beyond. UK scientists can make a huge contribution but we cannot solve these problems by ourselves.

By the time you read this, the result of the referendum will be known, and I will be busily assessing the impact of the result on UK science. Whatever the outcome, 23rd June will remain a happy date for me – but only time will tell whether the referendum result is something that will be remembered fondly.



NICK BARLEY  
Director, Edinburgh  
International  
Book Festival

## The Flowering of the Human Spirit

One of the more striking features of Britain's European referendum debate was the relative absence of passionate voices in favour of the European Union. Most people living in Europe today weren't yet born in 1950, when countries began to unite around the sentiment that they could work together to secure lasting peace. Yet less than seventy years later, its critics have gained traction with their claims that the European Union is too often undemocratic, almost always bureaucratic and in some ways just not fit for purpose. How quickly these critics have come to overlook the EU's successes. Aside from the fact that it is a thriving trading zone, this united Europe has fulfilled its aims in myriad ways, and perhaps most importantly in two key areas. Firstly, its highly effective championing of human rights and democracy have helped make Europe one of the most attractive areas in the world to live. Secondly, after centuries of bloodshed, the EU has succeeded in maintaining more or less lasting peace across the continent. In the mid-20th century, with peace in mind, Edinburgh, Amsterdam and Avignon were designated as festival

cities, to offer 'a platform for the flowering of the human spirit'. Today, Edinburgh's festivals are a world-famous success story, doubling the city's population each August as visitors from around the world flock to Scotland for a cultural feast. That success shows little sign of abating. Festivals are the 21st Century's growth industry for culture: not just literary festivals like my own, but also music, theatre, comedy, art and cultural festivals of all kinds. The politician Shirley Williams once remarked to me that festivals have replaced political rallies and church congregations as the most significant public gatherings in British life. Her comment also applies in many other European countries. Because of this, festivals offer an extraordinary opportunity for Europe to nurture cross-cultural exchanges, whether at the theatre festival in Avignon, the Eisteddfod in Wales or the Joseph Conrad Literary Festival in Krakow. Most arts festivals rely on some public investment in order to function, but they generate impressive returns, both economic and cultural. Taken as a whole they bring together millions of European citizens each year to celebrate the 'human spirit', giving

voice to local, grassroots activities and presenting them alongside internationally-renowned artists. The possibilities for collaboration are almost endless. Digital media and distribution channels are making it possible for festival events to be recorded and shared widely either online or even in cinemas – thus offering the possibility of widespread dissemination of ideas. Moreover the growth of online learning frameworks such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) is beginning to offer serious possibilities for festivals also to generate longer-term partnerships involving audience members and academic institutions alike. Feisty, independent and often anarchic, festivals are not a panacea and they will not necessarily persuade their audiences to love the EU. Nevertheless they can play a frontline role in the quest for European enlightenment.



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GAIL CARDEW  
Royal Institution Professor  
of Science, Culture and  
Society, and Chair of the  
EuroScience Open Forum  
Supervisory Committee

## European Cities of Science

Did you know that the European City of Science 2016 is Manchester, UK? This title was conferred on the city because in July this year – a few weeks after the UK population heads to the polls to vote in the European referendum – it will play host to the EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF), Europe's largest general science conference. I've been a loyal member of EuroScience – the non-political, grass-roots organisation behind this conference – for many years. As a result I chair the committee that chooses the ESOF host cities, which I like to imagine is a bit like choosing an Olympic city, only for science instead of sport. There is more to this comparison than you might think. The whole essence of ESOF is that it brings together leading scientists from across Europe (the 'elite athletes', of European science, let's say) to discuss and debate science in its widest sense. Scientists share their work with others outside their disciplines, reflect on factors that affect their working practice – such as ethics, policy, business, funding, and careers – and discuss important trends facing the scientific community. There are even prizes, awards and bursaries for young researchers and science journalists.

All of this, however, is discussed in an open format, in the heart of the city, alongside the rest of the cultural scene. There are science exhibitions, poetry readings, cafés, film festivals, plays and myriad other activities that inspire, challenge and pique the interest of a much wider audience (or in Olympic-speak, 'spectators'). This is very important to me. Science shapes our lives, our cultures and our futures in many ways. The task of working out how best to harness it for the maximum benefit of society is, I believe, far too important to be left to scientists alone. Although this positioning of science at the very heart of 'culture' may seem very modern in its approach, it is in fact not entirely new. For 200 years the Royal Institution – with its varied public talks on arts and humanities as well as the maths and sciences – has also embraced this concept by seeking to overcome the tendency to separate into the 'two cultures' identified by CP Snow. We've been discussing what to do in Manchester in the event that the UK public votes to leave Europe. Many scientists are worried about the long-term and short-term impacts, especially on funding and the mobility of early-career scientists, which is essential for gaining valuable research experience. Others are worried about the UK's ability to

play an influential role in large pan-European science projects. But even less clear is the long-term effect that leaving the EU would have on the societal and cultural aspects of science. In terms of science and culture, would UK society be enriched, weakened or unchanged outside the European Union? To some degree it will depend on the relationships between scientists – the personal relationships formed between individuals who are energised by a common interest in scientific discovery and technological creation. Those connections are very strong, and often operate beyond the bounds of any particular nation or supra-national body. But it will also depend on continued efforts to genuinely position science at the heart of culture and to involve a wider cross-section of society in discussions about our shared, science – and technology-dependent future. Whatever the result of the referendum, one thing won't change – I will still be championing the science, culture and society agenda in Manchester this July. And I'll be doing the same in Toulouse for ESOF2018, and in whatever European city we decide will play host to ESOF in 2020.



JOHANNES EBERT  
Secretary-General,  
Goethe-Institut

## Reaching Across the Fault Lines

**E**uropean cooperation is strategically important to the Goethe-Institut, and has been a fixed element of our work for many years.

Our cooperation with European partners within and outside Europe offers us the opportunity to help shape the future of Europe in a creative, critical as well as constructive dialogue. Our jointly implemented, successful projects prove this!

Regardless of the outcome of the UK referendum on membership of the European Union (and I sincerely hope while drafting this text today that those who vote to stay in the EU, and thus for a cohesive common Europe, will prevail), the Goethe-Institut will advocate continuing the dialogue with its long-time partners in the United Kingdom.

We would in particular like to address the aspects that received less public focus during a sometimes heated debate, but that are still crucial. While at present mainly political, economic or financial arguments are being exchanged, it seems that a broader discourse on questions about shared values, has been moved into the background: questions about cultural diversity or about opportunities in European cultural and educational work for European cohesion and Europe's role in the world.



So Glad You Stayed, Britannia  
Artist: Sophie Von Hellermann

But if we do not deal adequately with these aspects, key issues, which are also ultimately about the establishment of a European identity, will remain untouched. The Goethe-Institut is working actively and with commitment in the United Kingdom and wants to utilise its good connections with institutions in culture and education for the revival of this discussion.

In my opinion, it will be especially necessary – as well as very exciting – for us to focus attention on the fault lines in society. If reservations about European unity and solidarity exist among significant parts of society, we must ask ourselves with what subjects, offers and formats we can reach and address those who are critical of Europe.

The Goethe-Instituts in London and Glasgow are involved in numerous local and European networks. These not only provide platforms for specific project work, but also for strategic considerations, which are important for a common shaping of Europe's future

No matter how the referendum on 23 June ends, the prior debates, the division of society in the UK – but also in other countries of the Union – into EU advocates and opponents presents a challenge to, and also a revitalization of, cultural exchange. Perhaps the referendum will turn out to be the event that gives rise to important discussions and developments, not only in the UK but throughout Europe!



FRANK BURNET  
Professor of Science  
Communication

## Notes from the House of Wisdom

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cience has always played a leading role in the creation and maintenance of cultural relations.

It could be argued that the most important example of this dates to the first Millennium, when the Abbasid Caliphate based in Bagdad established the House of Wisdom and had brought to it – for translation into Arabic – scientific texts from Greece, India, Persia and China.

The Caliphate also employed brilliant scientists, like the legendary Banu Musa brothers, to apply and extend the scientific knowledge acquired in this way; both in large scale civil engineering projects to, for example, improve irrigation systems; and also to furnish the Caliph with the first executive toys that he could use to enthral and impress and very probably subtly intimidate visitors to his Court. It was another Caliphate based in Cordoba in Islamic Iberia that facilitated the transfer of scientific knowledge into Europe at the turn of the first Millennium.

In our time one of the pinnacles of recent scientific achievement in Europe, the Large Hadron Collider,

is a child of this cultural bridge. Its realisation involved contributions from over 100 nations, many with histories of mutual enmity but willing to work together to share skills and knowledge as they created the conditions that existed a billionth of a second after the Big Bang, and went on to track down the very elusive Higgs boson.

It has been suggested that a similar model of creating an international specialist facility needs to be agreed urgently as a way of countering a threat to all the cultures on the planet: Climate Change.

That this might even be a possibility is testimony to the global nature of the matrix within which UK scientists work, and the nature of their voyage of discovery which draws them into a tight network of international collaborations that are only marginally dependent on geopolitics.

This sharing needs to be done by scientists with the right skills and new engaging formats for knowledge transfer.

It was my privilege to be part of the team that devised FameLab, an international talent contest that

gives scientists three minutes to tell a science story to a public audience. FameLab is now staged in over 30 countries across the world, including this year 13 EU members; and the International Final brings together all the national winners. Most of these scientists are early in their careers, and many will remain friends for life.

The next big step is to harness their commitment and energy to be sure that all the world's citizens have a chance to share in their journey of adventure – because it is in essence a journey into the future of all humankind.



MICHAEL BIRD  
Director Russia,  
British Council

## People, Respect, Trust – a long-term View from Russia

I

n the course of the EU referendum campaign, I recall just two Russians asking me whether the

UK was really going to leave the EU, whereas during the Scottish referendum campaign I had at least two conversations every day about the potential break-up of the UK.

I've asked myself why this is, and come to the conclusion that the possibility of Scottish independence fascinated Russians because it didn't fit with their idea of the UK, whereas the complexities of UK's relationship with Europe are recognisable in terms of Russia's own relationship with Europe.

Russia, it's said, has an unpredictable past, but there's a thread running through Russian history which is whether Russia is part of Europe, or whether it has a destiny all of its own.

We see it in the 19th Century in the polemic between Slavophilism and Westernism; we see it in the 20th Century in the ideological battle that resulted in Socialism in One Country; and we see it today, 25 years after the break-up of the Soviet Union, in the re-assertion of 'Russian cultural values'.

In the 21st Century I see it as Modernity vs Conservatism. Are people, nations and humanity interconnected,

or is there a future in the idea of a self-sufficient nation state?

Working for an organisation that connects people worldwide, I know my own answer; and working for the British Council in Russia, I see what we do as reminding Russia that it is part of Europe and part of the world.

This is significant at a time when many feel that Russia is turning in on itself, and many in Russia feel that Europe and the world are turning on them.

For me, this isn't a political statement, but an affirmation of shared cultural values. In Russia, the more difficult the political relations, the more valued the cultural relations.

Our UK-Russia Year of Culture 2014, the year that political relations seriously deteriorated, was described by Martin Roth, Director of the V&A (and another contributor to this publication), as 'a cultural emergency kit in a difficult situation'.

Our UK-Russia Year of Language and Literature 2016 is celebrating Shakespeare, 'the most Russian English writer' according to Russian presidential adviser for international cultural relations, Mikhail Shvydkoy.

We need much more of this. The conductor Valery Gergiev, Director

of the Mariinsky Theatre, says: 'Russia without culture is not a country – it's just a huge piece of land'. In the 21st century, digital platforms give us the tools to connect people, culturally, across this huge piece of land.

Cultural relations with Russia are all about people, respect and trust. They also require us to take a long-term view. We should not allow our work to be defined by political cycles, which in Russia tend to be extreme.

When I look beyond the immediate issues of the day and take a long-term view, the big idea is the one articulated by Mikhail Gorbachev at the time of my first posting to Moscow: the Common European Home. I still don't see how it works in the political world, but in the cultural world, in my view, it works very well indeed.



LYUBOV KOSTOVA  
Director Bulgaria,  
British Council

## Science: the Global Language

**A**t a party in a crowded Stockholm club Bo ordered a drink. The waitress looked at him and exclaimed, 'Oh, you're a FameLabber! I watched you at the museum in London!'

Bo was a Bulgarian PhD student in Sweden, and had just returned from the 'Hall of FameLab' event we put on for European Researchers' Night at the Natural History Museum in London.

He was with a few other young career scientists we had brought together from various European countries, all FameLab alumni. FameLab is the brainchild of the Cheltenham Science Festival. It is a science communications competition in which contestants have just three minutes to convey a scientific concept of their choice, and are judged on the content, clarity and charisma of their presentation.

Since 2007 FameLab has gone international through a partnership with the British Council. Now, less than 10 years later, it has gone 'viral', with more than 30 countries around the world running national competitions. Participants unanimously say that what they value most is the two-day masterclass led by UK science communicators in each country – and the international alumni network. In 2016 alone, winners from 13 European

Union member states competed at the international final in Cheltenham. Science is a cultural phenomenon just as much as the visual arts or literature – and connection with others, across borders, is just as essential in allowing scientists to do their best work.

Science is truly global: 48% of the UK's scientific articles result from international collaborations, and 40% of researchers working in the UK are not from the UK. More than 50% of PhD students in the UK are international students. More than that, between 10% and 20% of the UK's scientific research funding goes to international collaborations; and research undertaken in UK higher education institutions has made a contribution to every country in the world.

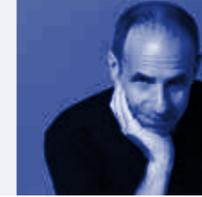
FameLab geography is equally rich and complex. Along with fellow FameLabbers from Italy and Greece, Bo worked to set up the competition in Sweden. A Croatian alumnus enthused his Swiss university to start FameLab and it now also runs at CERN. The Austrian winner of 2008 was Italian – she in turn inspired the launch of FameLab in Italy, and later another winner of the Austrian FameLab went back to consult his home team in Spain to start the competition which eventually caught the attention of

... the current Spanish queen!

In Bulgaria we invite international FameLabbers every year to the Sofia Science Festival through partnerships with our sister national cultural centres. While in Sofia, they meet their British science idols Robert Winston or Richard Dawkins – also speakers at the festival.

These meetings are no coincidence – science is a global language. It is also a powerful tool for cultural relations. The UK has a special place in this global striving for progress and prosperity, including through networks like FameLab International. Those networks will continue to be vital to the sharing of scientific ideas across Europe and further afield – both for the development of science itself, and the formation of valuable personal connections.

Back at the club, Bo plunged into an intense conversation with the waitress, who turned out to be a British biochemistry student on an exchange year to Sweden. After gaining his doctoral degree, Bo is now a post-doc in Oxford. And mark my words: one day his name will be in the news with some bold discovery in nano-technology. But for the moment I'll remember his words, 'Hi, I'm a FameLabber and I'm addicted – to the friendships it has given me'.



TIM SUPPLE  
International  
theatre director

## Lear's Fool and Europe

**I**f the UK votes to leave the EU on 23rd June I will shift my home and artistic base elsewhere.

This is not as negative as it might sound. While the UK's membership of the EU is not crucial to the making of theatre, my decision to leave would be in part about my perception of who would be running the country, to what ends and with what mandate. And in part it would be a best guess at how I can retain the open and fluid artistic relationship with the rest of the world that I need.

The important question of how we can retain dynamic and meaningful cultural connections with Europe is best approached through a first principle: nations come and go but the soul of art is indestructible. The creation and enjoyment of what we mean by culture (theatre, films, art, books, music) manifests a nation of its own that is global and cuts across national and supra-national borders. For sure, national identity, concerns, traditions and sometimes expression are all part of what can make for dynamic and meaningful artistic creation. But the greatest works and experiences are never limited by that focus. Like good parents, nations must nurture art but never hope to own it.

Who now thinks of the ancient Greek plays as 'belonging' to the modern Greek state? The same will one day, I hope, be true of Shakespeare.

Dialogue and collaboration between artists should be as free as possible from national (and economic, religious, ideological, tribal) interests. When culture is harnessed by these forces it becomes just another agency for power and a means of domination. This is rarely a good thing. Artistic activity flourishes as an alternative and free arena. Strange, I know, that we should ask those who have money and power to give and expect nothing in return – gratitude maybe, but not loyalty, support, discretion. But this is the best deal that can be made with artists – as King Lear knew with his Fool: what's the point of him if you don't let him say what he wants?

With or without the EU the best way to keep cultural connections alive is to fund them, support them and crucially let them be. In practical terms the most powerful response of a funding agency to Brexit would be to immediately announce the following action:

1. A radical increase in funding for artistic exchange and collaboration (visits, co-production

and communications) – there is not nearly enough money;

2. A radical re-think of funding processes – it has become far too prescriptive, too many schemes with precise criteria ... it must be more open to whatever artists want to do;
3. Lobbying government to relax visa processes for artists – it is shamefully difficult for many.

But I would advise these three actions whatever the outcome of the referendum. With or without the very recent construct of the EU, we must work harder to retain dynamic and meaningful cultural connections. They are desirable, necessary, and at the heart of why I make theatre.



BIDISHA  
Writer and broadcaster

# Dissolving Cultural Borders

I am currently based in Beijing. From China, England sometimes looks like a tiny place tormented by baseless fears: of refugees, of terrorists, of immigrants, of people who look or sound 'different', of being invaded or controlled by some outside force, whether it's Brussels bureaucracy or radicalised violence.

Britain has a certain amount of repair work to do in terms of its cultural relations. We must show that we are not fatally mired in fond, monoracial memories of greatness which begin with Beowulf and end with Virginia Woolf, taking in William the Conqueror and William Morris along the way. We must show that we are not culturally arrogant philistines who only want to play in the great communal sandpit if we can be the leader and call the shots or be favoured by the powerful players – or only play with those who are exactly like ourselves.

We must accept that the dominant sources of cultural power are not just American and English-speaking but could come from anywhere, from Chinese, Indian and Iranian film-makers to visual artists and choreographers from Latin America to poets from the Middle East, novelists from central Europe and documentary makers from eastern Europe.

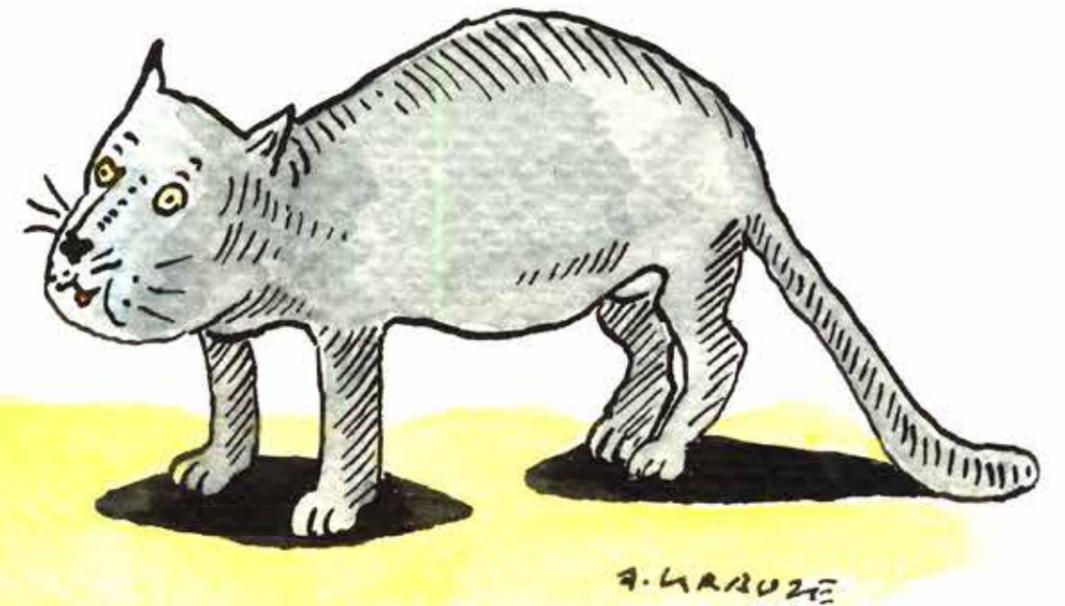
The only way Britain will survive as a respect-worthy participant in the international artistic and political community is by opening and dissolving cultural borders. We should start by embracing the languages of our neighbours – and the languages of those who are not so geographically close, too – by teaching children multiple languages at school level, backed up by studying other countries' novels, films, art and history. I am in favour of making it mandatory that kids learn at least one language which is not in the Roman alphabet – Mandarin, say, or Arabic, or Farsi, or Russian. We could continue by reinvesting in the arts and humanities at a university level, offering faculty positions

to prominent international artists and academics while encouraging applications from foreign students whom we

ask to pay reasonable, not exorbitant, fees. We could also enable individuals to practise as artists or learn as apprentices or employees at British cultural institutions after their studies.

We could facilitate long-term residencies and exchanges for artists in all disciplines from poetry to pottery, in collaboration with partner universities, galleries and foundations worldwide. I would like to see money invested in the publishing of more literature in translation within the UK, and an effort by major British theatres to showcase contemporary theatrical work by European playwrights; the same

goes for film, art and dance venues and festivals. We must also open up the mainstream media to forge a new tradition of rigorous critical engagement with European creative figures, without tokenism or cynicism. This means opening up, not closing ranks; lowering the drawbridge, not pulling up the ladder; feeling inspired by new influences and creating a cultural community that looks different from before, not feeling threatened or superior or cliquy. It means making a huge effort to change course before it's too late and we become, truly, a tiny island isolated in a cold sea.





ELIF SHAFAK  
Novelist, essayist  
and public speaker

## Dreaming in more than one language

**O**n my first visit to London, many years ago, I strolled the streets observing the blue plaques on the facades. They were dedicated to artists, philosophers, statesmen, scientists, writers... Coming from Istanbul, a city with a deep history but a deeper collective amnesia, I was struck by the way in which urban memory was kept alive. I stopped in front of a big, white building, my eyes glued to the round sign outside. 'Here lived the Ottoman statesman and diplomat Mustafa Rechid Pasha'. Rechid Pasha was the brain behind the Tanzimat – a series of progressive reforms (introduced in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire), one of which was the abolition of slavery and the slave trade. What a pleasant surprise to see the city of London remembering and honouring him – probably more than he has ever been remembered and honoured in his own motherland.

Cultural connections are ripples that travel far and wide, reaching unmapped shores. As a child I always felt connected to England thanks to Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, Roald Dahl and other writers. Over time, in the English language I found a new homeland. While I was criticised bitterly in Turkey for writing in English and in Turkish, I still believe it is possible, and quite natural, to dream in more than one language.

Unfortunately, not everyone can be a globetrotter or a nomad. Alarming

numbers of people never set foot in 'other lands' or come face to face with someone of another cultural, religious or ethnic background. Isolation breeds xenophobia. Where there is a cognitive gap between 'us' and 'them', it is much easier to make generalisations that feed fears, clichés and stereotypes. There is nothing more dangerous for a human being than failing to notice they have been engulfed by a single narrative. The first thing undemocratic societies deny their citizens is multiplicity. One of the biggest problems in Turkey and the Middle East today is how millions of people are subjected to a single narrative imposed from above with regards to their own history, their own regime, and the state of the world.

Within this context, cultural connections of all kinds make an enormous positive difference. The art of storytelling replaces singularity with diversity. Culture reaches those who might have remained cloistered forever. Fortunately, stories do not need a passport to travel.

Politics burns bridges. Literature builds them. Politics divides people into categories. Literature challenges and dissolves them. Politics thrives on the assumption that 'We are better than them'. Literature whispers: 'The Other is me'. The United Kingdom's cultural relations with Europe and beyond will be even more significant from now on. Today it is not only the European Union as an institution that is being

questioned, but the very notion of democracy. More and more people across the Middle East have started saying, 'Maybe democracy is not the only way forward. What we need is a strong leader and a competent cadre of technocrats and loyal bureaucrats'. And they are saying that women's rights, LGBT rights and freedom of speech are all Western values – not universal ones. These are dark and dangerous statements. There is an alarming rise of illiberal democracies: countries (like Turkey) that have some kind of electoral system, but no proper rule of law, separation of powers, diverse media or freedom of speech. And without liberality, no 'democracy' can be properly democratic.

Writers are solitary creatures. But we no longer have the luxury of being apolitical or aloof. Now is the time to raise our voices and step into the public space to revive humanism and core human values. Culture has become the new battleground in this century.

We can only have a better, safer, and more peaceful world if we build strong cultural connections that transcend religious, national or ethnic boundaries. More than politicians or diplomats like Mustafa Rechid Pasha, individual citizens will make a difference in the new world order, for better or worse. There is a choice awaiting each and every one of us: are we going to be bridge-builders or bridge-burners?

**Editor: Roy Bacon**

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