

THE CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION MOVEMENT (CTM) PROJECT  
REFLECTION WORKSHOP #4

**Stop << Rewind ((Breathe)) Forward >>**

TEH Camp Meeting 98 'Argatia'

Friday, October 11, 2024, 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Venue: Venue: Elderly Entertainment House - Public Spaces, Epanomi

Report by:

Laura Camacho Salgado - Artistic Transformation Facilitator, CTM project

TEH Camp Meeting 98 'Argatia' took place between Thursday, October 10, 2024, and Sunday, October 13, 2024 and hosted by Fix in Art in Epanomi, Greece.

**About the TEH Conference in Epanomi:**

From 10–13 October, we gathered in Epanomi, Greece, to celebrate the spirit of Argatia—a concept of communal support rooted in the Pontic language. The Camp Meeting focused on strengthening community bonds through shared cultural practices, sustainable living, and artistic freedom. We explored how intergenerational knowledge and collective action can help build resilient, connected communities. Join us in embracing the Argatia spirit to nurture a more sustainable, inclusive future.

**About the CTM project:**

Cultural Transformation Movement (CTM) project is a context-based process to diversify artistic production and its destination starting from within the organization. It is led by Trans Europe Halles with four of TEH members, Brunnenpassage from Austria, VIERNULVIER from Belgium, Zo centro culture contemporanee from Italy, IZOLYATSIA. Platform for Cultural Initiatives from Ukraine. With the Cultural Transformation Movement project, we are taking real steps, making genuine commitments and openly sharing experiences with the other TEH members about how to make social justice a priority in arts, culture and creative industries.

## On Reflection Workshop: Stop << Rewind ((Breathe)) Forward >>

The cultural sector continues to face challenges: voices are silenced, communities are underrepresented, and independent art spaces struggle to survive. While there is growing interest in making the cultural sector more inclusive, genuine transformative action remains rare. The sector's focus on economic growth and neoliberal success often overshadows true inclusivity.

This workshop, inspired by *Argatia*—the concept of collective support within a community—encourages participants to rethink work and collaboration in the arts. Lasting change requires a shift from individualism toward collective action. Join us as we STOP to reflect, REWIND to unlearn, and FORWARD to act together.

---

### 1. Context

The Reflection Workshop, part of the CTMP, provided cultural professionals with a space for introspection and planning on systemic issues and inclusivity in the arts. Under the guidance of an Artistic Transformation Facilitator (ATF), these workshops take place at TEH Camp Meetings, deepening the CTMP's impact by allowing artists and practitioners to share experiences, unlearn biases, and co-create actionable strategies. This session, held at the Elderly Entertainment House in Epanomi, Greece, gathered 30 attendees, each bringing unique perspectives to a shared exploration of cultural transformation.

### 2. Workshop Overview

- **Objective:** To promote a shift from individualistic to community-centered practices by questioning current dynamics and supporting diverse representation in the arts. Centering on *Argatia*—the spirit of collective support—participants were invited to “Stop” to reflect, “Rewind” to unlearn, and “Forward” to act collectively.
- **Structure:**
  - **STOP:** Initial grounding exercise to foster a shared sense of purpose.
  - **REWIND:** Decolonial Story Circles for reflecting on biases and systemic barriers.
  - **FORWARD:** Action Mapping to develop steps toward more inclusive practices.

### 3. Workshop Dynamics and Methodology

## **Part One: (STOP) New practices of listening and collective Grounding**

- **Objective:** To create a space of trust and openness by slowing down and centering the group around a collective purpose. This grounding exercise emphasized deep listening without imposing personal opinions or biases, setting a tone of mutual understanding and shared responsibility. Inspired by the work of Pauline Oliveros, the exercise aimed to heighten participants' awareness of different “soundscapes,” encouraging deep listening to others.
- **Activity:** Participants engaged in deep breathing and mindfulness exercises, symbolizing the need to work at a “human pace” rather than the productivity-driven pace often imposed on the arts. This activity grounded participants, opening them to collective learning and engagement.

## **Part two: (REWIND) Unlearning biases: Who I am forgetting?**

- **Objective:** To explore personal experiences with systemic bias and marginalization and identify areas where we may unknowingly perpetuate exclusion. Participants revisited the question posed a year earlier in Tbilisi, Georgia: “Who are we forgetting?” prompting reflection on their own processes of unlearning and action in their respective contexts.
- **Activity:** Small groups (6-8) discussed this question, examining experiences with marginalization and personal biases. Participants explored ways they may have unintentionally excluded others in their work or community practices.
- **Insights:** Participants identified often-overlooked groups and dynamics, including:
  - Financially vulnerable individuals and those with limited access to the arts due to economic insecurity.
  - People needing support for mental and physical well-being.
  - Individuals excluded by overly academic or niche language.
  - Youth and elderly voices needing representation.
  - Communities in conflict zones affected by violence or displacement.
  - Non-human entities such as animals and the environment in cultural storytelling.
  - Technicians, production teams, and other “invisible labor” often overlooked.
  - Parents without childcare, and diverse artists of various backgrounds.

## **Part three: Action Mapping (FORWARD)**

- **Initial Objective:** To translate reflections into actionable goals and foster a sense of shared responsibility for cultural transformation.
- **Activity:** Groups reconvened to share their insights and brainstorm collective actions that could disrupt exclusionary practices.
- **Revised Objective:** As the second part of the workshop demanded longer time than planned and an additional break. There was not enough time to go deeply into the actionable goals, instead this time was used to share the key points, challenges and reflections to go forward.
- **Outcomes and challenges:**
  - Short-term goals included supporting diverse artistic practices and challenging exclusionary practices within local organizations.
  - Long-term strategies emphasized fostering inclusive language, redistributing funding to marginalized artists, and increasing cross-border collaborations.
  - Example actions included creating resource-sharing networks, establishing mentorship programs, and advocating for inclusive policy changes.

#### 4. Key Findings: Challenges and Reflection Points

1. **Underrepresentation and Bias:** Discussions revealed challenges across perspectives:
  - **Financial Barriers:** Economic insecurity often limits engagement in the arts, creating a barrier for both artists and audiences.
  - **Mental and Physical Care:** Recognizing the need to support mental and physical well-being as part of sustainable diversity efforts.
  - **Language Accessibility:** Acknowledging that academic or niche language can make cultural content inaccessible.
  - **Generational Representation:** Ensuring that both youth and elderly perspectives are included.
2. **Questioning Structural Dynamics:** Participants explored the complexities of “forgetting” versus “remembering,” examining whether forgetting certain groups is an inherent bias, an unconscious exclusion, or sometimes a conscious act.
  - **Key Questions:**
    - Is forgetting a right or a privilege?
    - Why do we forget certain groups, and do we want to remember?
    - Are we, as cultural practitioners/artists, unknowingly contributing to systemic exclusion?

3. **The Role of Funding:** Participants noted that small, inconsistent funding pools hinder sustainable change, raising concerns that the sector is expected to assume responsibilities more appropriate for state interventions.
  - **Funding Challenges:**
    - Precarious funding conditions restrict project scope, leading to unsustainable short-term initiatives.
    - There was a strong call for long-term funding focused on systemic change, rather than short-term diversity metrics.
    - Participants debated whether current diversity policies enhance inclusivity or limit artistic freedom.
4. **Accountability and Inertial Structures:** The conversation highlighted the sector's structural inertia and lack of accountability mechanisms.
  - Participants questioned whether the emphasis on structure stems from privilege or a scarcity of resources.
  - Suggestions included creating accountability frameworks that go beyond superficial representation to ensure true inclusivity.

## 5. Recommendations

- **Broaden Representation:** Include groups often excluded due to financial, linguistic, or logistical barriers by ensuring accessible programming, childcare support, and recognition of non-human entities in culture.
- **Strengthen Collective Practices:** Prioritize collective responsibility over individual success by establishing mentorship programs, cooperative learning platforms, and resource-sharing networks.
- **Advocate for Structural Changes:** Participants suggested engaging policymakers and funders to emphasize the need for long-term, substantial funding and accountability for diversity. Structural change was viewed as essential for shifting from tokenistic efforts to genuine inclusivity.

## 6. Conclusion

This Reflection Workshop highlighted that achieving meaningful inclusivity in the cultural sector requires introspection, accountability, and a commitment to action. Participants emphasized collective responsibility in creating an environment that fully represents diverse voices and dismantles exclusionary practices. Moving forward, the workshop underscored the need for both individual and systemic efforts to create a sustainable, inclusive future for the arts in Europe.