

What is the Role of Art and Culture in the design of future cities.

Cities are defined by communication, exchange, association. They were founded around culture, that's why they are centers of civilisation, so they are not a peripheral external that can be related to cities, they are at the core of what a city is. A city without art and culture is unthinkable, art and culture not in the city is unthinkable, so they are twin dimensions of what cities are about.

Do cultural organisations do enough to state their value to cities?

There's always a danger when you talk about culture and the city about art and the economy that you instrumentalise and trivialise art and culture and obviously those who care about culture are anxious not to trivialise it - rightly so. But on the other hand, the reality is culture and the arts make an enormous contribution to the economy of the city that's simply a fact and without trying to instrumentalise it, it's certainly worth talking about that. I've seen estimates that range anywhere between a factor of three and five of what the arts cost and what they contribute back to cities in revenues and taxes, in activity, in peripheral secondary businesses and so forth, that feed off the arts. So they play a vital role in the economy of cities - they're also critical to education. Education is about cultivating the imagination - the arts do that powerfully. No education system - primary, secondary or university can be whole without a fundamental core element of culture and the arts as well. So what we want to try not to do is create two different entities - the city and the arts and how they relate to each other, but to think about the city and culture as two dimensions of a single core identity that interplays at every level - economic, educational, cultural and even political.

How Should an Arts organisation explain its value to the city

You can't explain the value of art to people who don't get it. You end up instrumentalising it - if the city council asks for the outcomes of the arts in terms of economics, demography business profits and so forth, on the way to giving them a satisfactory answer the arts disappear. I think there is no better way to demonstrate the power and relevance of the arts than to practice them so that in cities like New York and London, Tokyo and Paris - great cities and in smaller cities like Hamburg and Louisville an effective, moving symphony orchestra that plays new as well as old works, that has outreach programmes to children in schools becomes an argument in itself - you don't have to argue for the arts the symphony orchestra through what it does and what it is, does that. or a big city like London, to make the argument for its importance There's no better way I think whether its a city like Bristol or Manchester by simply being and doing what it is and that's what I think at their best the arts do well - and in the places where it works no-one is having an argument about whether the arts are of value - it's often where there is no culture that people want to be persuaded of its importance. So the simple answer to artists and cultural organisers about what you need to do to persuade people is do what you do - you're artists. Do that. Show what it is. The people will come, the children will come, people will care and the revenues will follow.

Do the Arts spend too much time worrying about the economic value of its output over the artistic value of its output?

The problem is that you've got two agendas. You have a political and economics agenda persuading those that hold the purse strings that it's worth investing in the arts and investing in artists and providing fellowships and spaces where art can be created and for that you tend to need economic arguments and on the other hand there is an argument about what the arts are, which is an end in itself - and I think artists in a sense have to practice both sides of that, I mean they can't ignore the fact that city councils are going to ask "What's it going to do for the economy of our city?" And because there are not just satisfactory, but very good answers to that question, there's no reason not to give the answer. What you require when you give that answer is the caveat "I will tell you just how much money the arts will earn for this city - it's three or four times what they will cost you. But let me say, that is totally irrelevant and even if that wasn't the case, you ought to be supporting them because a city is about art and culture, education is about art and culture, we can't imagine civilisation without them and the city is in effect the core of what civilisation is about. So I will give you a satisfactory economic answer - I hope you put it in your hip pocket and don't use it, but support us for what we are."