DICO Toolkit
for Digital Career Stories

IL CAPITALE CULTURALE
Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage
Supplementi 14 / 2023

eum

DICO Toolkit
for Digital Career Stories

edited by Mara Cerquetti, Concetta Ferrara

DICO
Digital Career Stories

Collective and individual identities in an era of co-creation: a workshop

Carola Boehm*

Abstract

This chapter describes a workshop developed as part of an effort by a European group of pedagogues, who developed insights and tools for supporting creatives to form a more powerful digital narrative of their often-fragmented career stories. Thus, the group explored and developed digital storytelling tools, media and online tools, autobiographical practices, design thinking, and embodied practices for identity formation. As part of the latter, this chapter is about a workshop that considers individual and collective identity formation for creating more powerful and holistic digital career stories that balance our individual nature with a more collective understanding of ourselves as human beings. A separate chapter about the conceptual framework underpinning this workshop can be viewed in this toolkit. Artists have a long historic tradition of forming collectives and co-creative processes. However, in a world that has emphasised individual endeavours and individualism as the highest concept associated with freedom, they have not always received positive value judgements. Thus, current neoliberal tendencies to elevate the individually identifiable creators established a perceived meritocratic society of individual power and choice. But the

* Carola Boehm, Professor of Arts and Higher Education, C3 Centre for Creative Industries and Creative Communities, Staffordshire University, Mellor S-209, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2DE, UK, e-mail: Carola.Boehm@staffs.ac.uk.

multiple current crises in governance, society, environment and economy suggest a dead-end of this trajectory. Perhaps, as a result, current discourses of more collective, cooperative and collaborative endeavours are on the rise in the art sector as in others. Thus, the concepts around Culture 3.0 are worthy of being highlighted, as in the absence of this phenomenon of Culture 3.0, authors and creative professionals have often needed to resort to other terms, such as "community arts", "socially engaged arts", "participatory arts", "non-traditional arts". But these terms are often associated with value judgments in themselves.

1.   *Culture 3.0: a short explanation*

In short, Culture 3.0 is the third iteration in a cultural evolution that was first proposed in 2011 by Sacco[1] and expanded in its implications for the creative industries by myself in 2016[2]. The conceptualised evolution of cultural engagement traces a journey from Culture 1.0 to Culture 3.0. Culture 1.0 is «characterised by a distinction of high-brow vs low-brow, arts patronage, gatekeepers and value absorption»[3]. Sacco contends that Europe is hung up on Culture 1.0 type of cultural engagements and that this is holding us back in terms of productivity, creativity and diversity. I have suggested that in its creative industry and cultural policy, the UK is still focused on Culture 2.0, characterised by a focus on intellectual property (IP), and still has gatekeeping functions in place that create challenges when wanting to support open access to cultural and creative engagements and with it challenges for increasing diversity and wider access to the arts. My work suggests that the UK's focus on Culture 2.0 type of creative engagements subsequently resulted in creating policy that still relies on capitalistic, extractive processes focussing on commodifying outputs of creative endeavour based on individualistic conceptualised identities (e.g., IP), inherently extractive, pooling wealth to the top and based on the high individualism of the 20th century.

But Culture 3.0 has entered the picture, supported by a high amount of digital content production and digital connectivity. With its ubiquitously available tools of production, mass distribution of content happens without mediators. One example of this is the relatively new medium of the podcast, which is highly distributed, low tech, low effort, and results in diversity-rich, active participation with high audience listenership. These are also often enabled through open platforms, with social media supporting these platforms and co-production occurring at various levels. This type of cultural engagement is often seen as "democratic" with constantly shifting roles of content producers

[1] Sacco 2011.
[2] Boehm 2016.
[3] Boehm 2016, p. 37.

and users. Today, I might listen to a podcast; tomorrow, I am recording one. Economic and social value is produced in sales and participation, and thus it does not absorb value anymore. As it is ubiquitous, it is hard to demarcate the industry. With no pre-determined market channel bottlenecks, the creative and cultural industries in the extreme may cease to exist, with culture no longer an aspect of free time use but entrenched in the fabric of everyday life. It is immersive.

Key terms are co-production and co-creation, and its big emerging geographical centres are likely to be in Asia. And whilst Sacco has suggested that Europe's creative assets are held back by its Culture 1.0 focused investments, I have suggested that the UK is held back by its primary focus on Culture 2.0 focused investment, as displayed in the last Creative Industry Sector Deal[4].

Why this is important is that this new conceptualisation can completely "bypass the attachment of value judgement" to art and cultural engagements, e.g., it simply does not have a high-brow vs low-brow division. This divide has wreaked havoc on our understanding of what art is, what should be funded, and how diverse it actually is. Accepting a high-brow vs low-brow divide leads to exclusivity. However, Culture 3.0 concepts provide a conceptualisation to understand creative and cultural engagement without needing a value judgement or a patronage model. Thus, the concepts around Culture 3.0 are worthy of being highlighted, with related terminology including "community arts", "socially engaged arts", "non-traditional arts", and "everyday creativity".

2. *Artists balancing individualism with collectivism*

The concept of community arts, for instance, has often been the first type of cultural engagement to be cut when budgets are tight and thus were often relegated to local regionalism and local authorities rather than investing in it nationally. This has shifted over the last decade, as can be seen in a shift of policy within the Arts Council England and culminating in a 10-year strategy[5] called *Let's Create*, emphasising the act of making over the quality of an end product. The positioning of the collective act of making as a lesser valued type of cultural engagement compared to the individualistic output of one artist has increasingly been understood as problematic when desiring to bring the benefit of arts to as many people as possible.

From a Culture 1.0 perspective, these co-creative and socially engaged activities, often labelled community arts, were often not even considered "real

---

[4] Boehm 2019.
[5] ACE 2021.

art", and their outputs were not understood as "pieces of art", and thus the label of community arts allowed the "othering" of a particular type of cultural engagement. But it is just this type of cultural engagement that emphasises the co-creative aspects of a creative practice that is so efficient in minimising any gatekeeping, a gatekeeping that supports access to only a privileged few. From a Culture 3.0 perspective, these engagements are valid cultural engagements with all their benefits for access and diversity-rich participation.

Thus, first, we have to understand the role of terms and labels in creating power imbalances. Classing something as one of the terms associated with community arts (such as applied arts, participatory arts, socially engaged art) allowed it to be differentiated and excluded from traditional funding with budgets dedicated to specifically this kind of cultural engagement, it was easier to manage whole arts budgets, often safeguarding the more individualistic conceptualised artistic process and creating, in turn, a wealth divide also in our creative professional communities. Thus, there is some evidence that the richest designers in the UK tend to be richer than in those parts of Europe that have not had as much an individually focused status of artists. Those creative sectors with the largest numbers of super-rich artists are often conceptualised as super-successful sectors without mentioning or foregrounding that they have other creatively active professionals, almost always less well-off. Thus, society's wealth differentials are mirrored in the creative sectors.

Tate suggests the definition of the following relevant terms revolve around the fact that their «creative processes are based in and generated in a community setting»[6] and also include a «collaborative community artistic process»[7]:

I.   Community arts
II.   Participatory arts
III. Applied arts
IV.   Socially engaged arts
V.   Community-based or community-engaged art
VI.   Dialogical art
VII. Social art

It should be noted that related but different in their nuances are the opposing terms often discussed in this context, that of Cultural Democracy vs Democratic Culture.

Community arts and its related concepts are often defined as «useful in economically depressed areas»[8]. These definitions still demarcate the individuals who are artists from the ones who are not, such as suggesting that it «typically involves developing participation by non-professional members of local communities»[9].

---

[6] <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/community-art>, 15.11.2022.
[7] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_art>, 15.11.2022.
[8] *Ibidem.*
[9] *Ibidem.*

This demarcation between who is the producer and who is the consumer is often more or less moot in contemporary collaborative creative processes, and this creates a tension between the funders and investors still immersed in a Culture 1.0 conceptualisation of art and what they want to achieve in terms of impact.

Forms of collaborative practice can have their range in how co-creative they actually are, as identified by the International Centre of Art for Social Change (ICASC), with:

I.   artist-driven practices, wherein social change commentary/content is in the work of a single artist or group of artists;
II.   practices in which the artist acts as a facilitator or catalyst for art-making with groups using specialised forms of art creation;
III.   dialogic practices in which the artist acts as a facilitator in group problem-solving contexts (such as strategic planning) using arts-based processes but not necessarily with the goal of group art presentation[10].

Looking at these definitions and demarcations, it is possible to consider how this concept of socially engaged arts has a range, e.g., how co-creative or how Culture 3.0 they actually are. The first model mentioned above could still be conceptualised as a Culture 1.0 type of cultural engagement, with the artists creating the work which, by being seen by audiences at a particular time and in a particular context, has the potential to become the catalyst for social change through social commentary addressed in its work.

The second model has the potential to move from a Culture 1.0 or Culture 3.0. However, it is useful to note that any art (or almost any) is in constant need of audiences, and their interaction may initiate a separate cultural engagement activity. How separate the artistic process of the artist is from the artistic process by the community may dictate how Culture 3.0 or co-creative the process actually is. The definitions and demarcations here are less important than understanding the impact and empowerment the artists may want to initiate. Keeping the demarcation between the person calling themselves the artists and the persons that the artists call "the community" might be less empowering than starting from a basis in which both artists and the community call themselves the creators, ones who are engaged in the process of making art that is co-created by the whole community, including the artist. This facilitation still needs a lead artist, but the conceptualisation of who has authorship over the artwork is significantly different and results in a different level of empowerment for all who engage in this process.

---

[10] International Centre of Art for Social Change n.d.

The third model proposed by ICASC is a "process-driven" or "dialogic model", in which a social purpose comes before an artistic or creative process, be it art for well-being and health or art to support awareness raising of social or environmental concerns. The finally produced artwork might or might not be intended for public presentation. In the latter two models, the facilitators or artistic leads may not define themselves as such; they may consider themselves as «practitioners of an art-making process that produces social change»[11].

There are substantial limits to these conceptualisations, based on prior value judgments of what art is of value, and also constrained definitions of the roles that individuals play in bringing about art pieces or art activities. Thus, the concept of Culture 3.0 is a powerful one specifically for art education, where the critical engagement with this concept will allow empowerment of creatives who want to be recognised for their leadership roles in the cultural field but also see themselves as artists, ones who co-create with their communities and in that process bring about change. Thus, there is less of a need to differentiate between those who produce or those who consume, when that art takes place and when it does not, and who has the power of creation and who does not.

Within our respective communities, Culture 3.0 co-creative methods allow us all to not only live more creatively but also experience playfully the collaborative act of making that is such an inherent part of human nature and that over the last 100 years (the long 20th century of high individualism) we have tried so hard to push into a box by millions of individuals struggling their way up the career and life ladders.

Therefore, this workshop will begin to provide the opportunity to weave in a bigger context of collective creativity, balancing the predominance of an individually-led narrative. It is critically underpinned by a conceptual framework that includes:

- how the co-production turn of the creative economy influences and provides opportunities for digital storytelling that is inclusive;
- how the concept of Culture 3.0 allows creative individual and collective identities to understand the shifts in cultural engagement;
- how relationships between the self and the collective, including what individual creative leadership means in the context of cooperation, collaboration, and co-creation, can minimise gatekeeping to provide diversity-rich participation.

The more neutrally formulated conceptual framework of a Culture 1.0 – Culture 3.0 ecosystem (described in the separate chapter in this special issue[12]) redefines art and cultural engagement to be inclusive of those forms of activities that are more diversity rich but tend to receive less public funding.

---

[11] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_art>, 15.11.2022.
[12] Boehm 2023.

Thus, this workshop allows the individual to be part of understanding how to make art and culture more inclusive and benefit society and the economy whilst seeing themselves in the context of a collective.

3. *Example exercise list*

List 1 – Identity can be creatively devised, distorted, imagined
I. Exercise – Drawing from your five senses to build an identity (10 min).
II. Exercise – Imaginative Persona. Imaginative projection of sensual experiences (10 min).
III. Exercise – Imaginative Self. Desire (10 min).

List 2 – Individual and collective identities
IV. Exercise – A collective Wishful We (10 min).
V. Exercise – Collaboration and Subversion (10 min).

List 3 – Co-creating identities
VI. Exercise – Embodied Practice of Collaboration (Action-Reaction) (10 min).
VII. Exercise – Co-creation and Collaboration (One to Many) (10 min).

4. *Preparation and props*

The workshop can be held online or live in person. Ideally, group sizes are between 7 and 15. If delivering these online, ensure that breakout groups can be created in the sizes you need.

All participants need access to paper and pens. Additional unusual props or tools can be added to the mix when delivering live. However, the idea is to have as minimal creation tools available so that the focus is on the process of making and not the tools.

It would be useful for participants to prepare by reading the article in this toolkit that provides the critical and conceptual frameworks for this workshop. In addition, specific footage of films, videos and/or music can be chosen as introductions to the theme.

Depending on the length of the workshop, one may have to choose a selection of activities carefully. However, at least one exercise should be from each of the lists provided above.

At the end of the workshop, participants should have sufficient time to reflect on the whole experience, either in the whole group or in breakout groups. Questions asked in this reflection could be:

– What have you found new? What have you found known or common to your practice?
– How do you imagine taking some of the experiences forward into your practice?
– How do you now see yourself as an artist, having considered the range of artistic activities from an individual to a collective practice?
– What are the biggest challenges or resistance you find you will encounter when applying some of the learning, and what are your biggest critiques of what you have learned?
– What is of value (keep), and what not (chuck)?
– etc.

5. *Workshop activities: from individual identity to collective identity to co-created identity*

5.1. *Exercise – Drawing from your five senses*

The following exercise was inspired by my attendance at one of the creative writing workshops by Liz Lochead, the Scottish poet and playwright best known for her stage version of Bram Stoker's Dracula and for her collection of poems *The Colour of Black and White: Poems 1984-2003* and *Good Things* (2006). The exercises which were adapted from her workshops centred on the act of transferring sensual experiences to creative ones.

The following exercises still focus on an individual, but an imaginatively devised one, but in that they feature as the starting point. This first little exercise focuses the participant on developing an embodiment of an abstraction by actively projecting own sensual experiences onto the abstraction.

Exercise: Drawing on your five senses
Think of a few abstract nouns, such as hate, love, alienation, fear, trust, respect, etc. Choose one and write it in the middle of the page.

Answer the following questions by replacing BLANK with your chosen word.
— What does **BLANK** look like?
— Does **BLANK** smell?
- The sound of **BLANK** is what?
— **BLANK** tastes like _____?
— What does **BLANK** feel like?
— What does **BLANK** say?
Re-arrange, throw one out and read out. BLANK can be left blank like a riddle, or explicitly mentioned.

The above exercise can have a playful fun variation, where participants are not allowed to put their chosen abstract noun into their final poem, thus creating a riddle. Surprisingly often is the group able to guess the abstract noun that has been "embodied" in this way.

5.2. *Exercise – Imaginative Persona*

Also adapted from an exercise from Liz Lochead is this one, where some preparation is needed for this next exercise. Everyone chooses one role without disclosing it.

<u>Preparation: Choose one without telling anyone else which you chose:</u>
Baker,
Composer,
Homeless person,
Traveler,
Sailor,
Author,
Joiner,
Priest,
Professor,
Professional Athlete,
etc.

Each individual is asked to actively imagine this person and answer the following questions.

<u>Exercise: Imaginative Persona (Senses)</u>
Choose one of the personas and imagine being that person. Write about the following questions, describing what you feel (while imagining being that person), what you see, what is happening:
- Looking out of the window. What do you see?
- What do you see, smell, hear?
— Looking around the room, inside?
- SHOCK!!! You remember something! What do you remember?
— You go out. Outside it is...?
— <Anything, joining above lines, concluding, free association in order to have a sense of closure.>

Take 1 minute to refine.

Read out and explore.

Again, this is an exercise whereby employing one's senses, an imagined and projected alternative reality is developed through making use of personal memories of sensing the world. One creates an identity through an imaginative projection of sensual experiences of one's past.

5.3. *Exercise – The Desiring Imagined Self*

The following exercise is sourced from the contemporary art workshops of Linda Weintraub (Oberlin Henry R. Luce Professor in the Emerging Arts, New York). Her pedagogical practice integrates «the intractably avant-garde and explores the manner in which […] artworks necessitate innovative pedagogical strategies»[13].

Weintraub has categorised crafting an artistic self into four activities: a) disclosing biography, b) in-venting biography, c) transcending biography, and d) epitomising biography. Thus, the creation of a self-portrait can take on many alternatives, from the real-self and the imagined-self to the clichéd and caricatured self.

This small exercise is an exploration of an imaginative self. But as the last exercises used the projected sensual experiences, this one uses an invented biography based on an unfulfilled desire.

```
Exercise: Imaginative Self (desire)
Make/draw/play something that represents/fulfills a personal desire
(e.g., order, freedom, adventure). The representation can be abstract
or objectified.
```

5.4. *Exercise – A Collective Wishful We*

The following exercise takes the individualised process of imagining an identity of the task above to co-creating a collective imagined identity.

```
Exercise — A Collective Wishful We
Take the wishful "Me"s (task above) of your group.
Create a collective visual story using all wishful Me's.
It can be a written narrative, a told narrative.
It can be a picture, a collage, a network.
Create a collectively created piece of work (story, sketch, perfor-
med, comic, photograph, etc.).
```

5.5. *Exercise – Collaboration and Subversion*

The next exercise moves into the collaborative act of making. In her book *Making Contemporary Art*, Weintraub describes several pedagogical methods that work with collaborative teams of two, teams in which individuals are not

---

[13] Weintraub 2003, pp. 9-10.

always supposed to "work together" but rather "work against each other" with the intentional undermining of the other person's goal. This "subversion" in its most extreme form can be very fun for students to explore, although often, the link to work in the real world is not so clear.

It is helpful to point out that many works of art are products of some form of collaboration and that some form of what Weintraub called "subversion" always takes place, albeit implicitly. Specifically in music production, this paradigm is well understood; where until recent history, the sound engineer has seldom had an explicit and official role in the creative direction of a music production process, but nevertheless, they have always had a very substantial influence over the final artistic product. This often happens by using similar a methodology as is practised in the exercise below:

Exercise: Collaboration and Subversion
• Partner up with the person to your right.
• Decide who will be "leader" and who will be "follower".
• Leader will try to force follower to do what they want.
• Follower will try to force some of their creativity into the process without disobeying.
• Leader should dictate actions and instructions as precise as possible.
• Follower should execute these while trying to introduce their own creativity without disobeying leader.

5.6. Exercise – Embodied Practice of Collaboration with Action and Reaction

The next exercise is derived from Dymphna Callery's workshops and her methods used for Physical Theatre[14]. She uses mainly physical exercises that explore creative theories, liberating the imagination through the use of the body, making the creative process able to be experienced physically. This is part of an embodied creative practice that can potentially form identities.

Exercise: Action–Reaction
• Stand opposite each other. Do not speak, there is no dialogue. First person creates a short gesture with a definite beginning and end. The next person reacts immediately and spontaneously (no thinking allowed, it has to be spontaneous). First person re—reacts. And so on.
• Change partners and repeat.
• Pure play, improvisation with personality through spontaneous gestures, playing off the other person.

---

[14] Callery 2001.

As a musician, I personally think that this is as close a method as it gets to free jazz improvisation. But the practice of this allows the gestural (musical and physical gestures) to be explored and its spontaneous application to be practised. In both cases, the beginning and the end of a gesture is practised to be clear and transparent, and non-verbal communication is developed. Within that process, and through "doing" it, you carve out characteristics, personality and identity as a gestural presence.

5.7. *Exercise – Co-creation and Collaboration with One-to-Many*

As in above exercise, the following is one of pure improvisation, albeit with the difference that a whole group has to suddenly react as one entity in co-creating a world around the leader's-initiated scene.

Exercise: Collaboration (One-to-Many)
• Select one neutral object.
• Appoint one leader. The leader will work with the rest of the group. Ask everyone to work without words.
• Hand it to the "leader" who will improvise a scene, the object taking on a specific real-life function (broom, paddle, gun, flower, etc.). The group has to immediately react to this and create a fitting scene around this. Once this scene is "finished", the leader hands the object to a new person, who creates a new scene with it.

This exercise demonstrates how one might still have a lead in a co-created process. One might still have roles whilst maintaining a collaborative dynamic where at the end, it is not able to be – nor necessary to be – discerned who the main creator may be.

Key literature for the workshop

Barthes R. (1977), *The Death of the Author*, in *Image, Music, Text*, edited by R. Barthes, London: Fontana Press, pp. 142-148.
Boehm C. (2016), *Academia in Culture 3.0: a Crime story of Death and Rebirth (but also of Curation, Innovation and Sector Mash-ups)*, «REPERTÓRIO: Teatro & Dança», 19, n. 2, pp. 37-48.
Boehm C. (2022), *Arts and Academia: The Role of the Arts in Civic Universities*, Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing.
Clay R., Latchem J., Parry R., Ratnaraja L. (2015), *Report of CATH Collaborative Arts Triple Helix*, Project Report, Birmingham: University of Birmingham.

Heart of Glass and Battersea Arts Centre (2021), *Considering Co-Creation*, London: Heartofglass, <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/ConsideringCo-Creation.pdf>, 17.02.2022.

Jeffers A., Moriarty G., eds. (2017), *Culture, Democracy and the Right to Make Art: The British Community Arts Movement*, London-New York: Bloomsbury.

Matarasso F. (2019), *A Restless Art*, Branch: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, <https://arestlessart.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/2019-a-restless-art.pdf>, 07.09.2020.

Murphy K., McGlynn D., Stewart D., eds. (2018), *Making Common Cause. Exploring the Potential of Cultural Commoning*, Voluntary Arts, <https://www.voluntaryarts.org/news/makingcommoncause>, 17.02.2022.

Sacco P.L. (2014), *Culture 3.0 and Its New Approach*, Creative Factory, with Pier Luigi Sacco, <https://vimeo.com/100156465>, 17.02.2022.

Shelton Trust for Community Arts (1986), *Culture and Democracy: The Manifesto*, London: Comedia.

Voluntary Arts (2020), *Common Ground: Rewilding the Garden*, Report, Voluntary Arts, <https://www.voluntaryarts.org/news/commonground>, 17.02.2022.

Wilson N., Gross J., Bull A. (2016), *Towards cultural democracy: promoting cultural capabilities for everyone*, London: King's College.

References

ACE (2020), *Our Strategy 2020-2030*, Arts Council England, <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/our-strategy-2020-2030>, 17.02.2022.

Boehm C. (2016), *Academia in Culture 3.0: a Crime story of Death and Rebirth (but also of Curation, Innovation and Sector Mash-ups)*, «REPERTÓRIO: Teatro & Dança», 19, n. 2, pp. 37-48.

Boehm C. (2019), *The end of a Golden Era of British Music? Exploration of educational gaps in the current UK creative industry strategy*, in *Innovation In Music: performance, production, technology and business*, edited by R. Hepworth-Sawyer, J. Hodgson, J. Paterson, R. Toulson, New York-London: Routlege, pp. 494-511.

Boehm C. (2023), *Collective and individual identities in an era of cultural co-creation*, «Il capitale culturale. Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage», Supplementi, n. 14, pp. 69-82.

Callery D. (2001), *Through the Body: A Practical Guide to Physical Theatre*, New York-London: Routledge.

International Centre of Art for Social Change (n.d.), *What is Art for Social Change?*, <https://icasc.ca/what-is-art-for-social-change/>, 17.02.2022.

Sacco P.L. (2011), *Culture 3.0: A new perspective for the EU 2014-2020 structural funds programming*, European Expert Network on Culture (EENC), <https://www.interarts.net/descargas/interarts2577.pdf>, 17.02.2022

Weintraub L. (2003), *Making Contemporary Art: How Today's Artists think and work*, User Manual Addendum, London: Thames & Hudson.

Texts by
Carola Boehm, Maria Buckley Whatton, Giuseppe Capriotti,
Mara Cerquetti, Fanni Csernátony, Dorottya Féja, Pierluigi Feliciati, Concetta
Ferrara, Nicola Herd, Pirita Juppi, Barbara Knežević,
Michelle Malone, Robert Marsden, Anna Pais, Ilona Tanskanen.

http://riviste.unimc.it/index.php/cap-cult/index

Euro 25,00