

**CREATING HOPE
TOGETHER
VIRTUAL SERIES**

**IN TIMES OF
CRISES**

Friday

22 MARCH 2024

**IMP
ACT**

**TRANSFORMING
CONFLICT WITH ARTS
AND CULTURE**

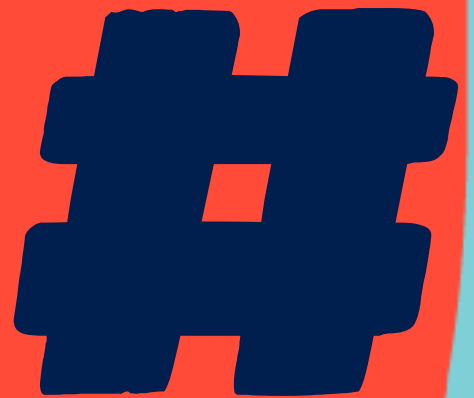


CONVERSATION
SUM
MA
RY

Harsha Bhamidipati,
Rosanna Lewis, Armine Avetisyan
April 2024

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INTRODUCTION

This event is the first of IMPACT’s virtual series “Creating Hope Together” which launched with the inaugural online event in January 2024. The virtual series explores the work of artists in zones of violent conflicts, ways of creatively addressing rising authoritarianism and confronting gender-based violence in different contexts, the role of networks, trust-based philanthropy, and systems thinking in arts, culture and conflict transformation.





The "In Times of Crisis" event explored the intricate interplay between art, technology, and individual agency against the backdrop of violent conflicts and social upheavals. The forum provided a diverse array of artists and cultural workers with a platform to share their lived experiences, artistic endeavors, and insights on navigating through times of crisis.

‘In Times of Crises’ In Numbers

ARTISTS AND CULTURAL WORKERS



REGIONS



REGISTERED



PARTICIPATED



FEEDBACK RESPONSES



ARTISTS AND CULTURAL WORKERS SHARING THEIR EXPERIENCE

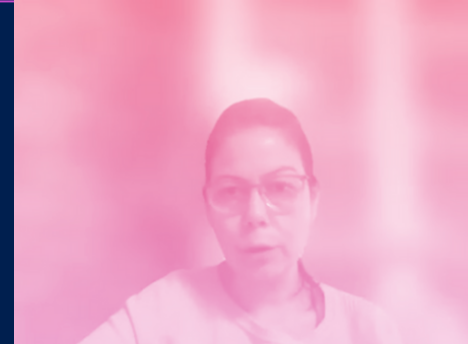
DIJANA MILOŠEVIĆ IMPACT, DAH Theater (Serbia)

Dijana, in the role of the host and moderator, set the stage for the discussion with probing questions. on how to address societal radicalization amidst outbreaks of violence and facilitate communication between the "oppressor" and the "oppressed", while finding resilience in personal and communal sources to nurture creative endeavors and community engagement.



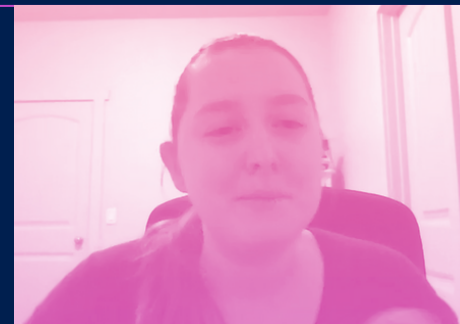
RANA YAZAJI Artasfoundation (Switzerland)

Rana, with her background from Syria and involvement in cultural projects in the Arab region and South Caucasus, emphasized the importance of understanding the roles of insiders and outsiders in conflicts, the necessity of silence in dialogue, and the need to ground peacebuilding efforts in grassroots initiatives rather than formal international organizations.



ANASTASIA LEVKUN Actress and student (Ukraine)

Anastasia, a Ukrainian actress and student, discussed the political nature of art and its potential to provide different perspectives through storytelling, despite the emotional challenges posed by ongoing conflicts.



SEBA KOURANI

Associate of Artists with Elbows (Lebanon)

Seba, theater practitioner from Beirut, highlighted the diverse forms of conflict and the role of art in navigating through them, emphasizing the importance of creating safe spaces for expression and empathy.



SARRA SAEED

Associate of Artists with Elbows (Sudan)

Sarra shared personal narratives from the war in Sudan, emphasizing self-care and introspection.



SINAI PETER

Palestinian and Jewish Arts Solidarity group (Israel)

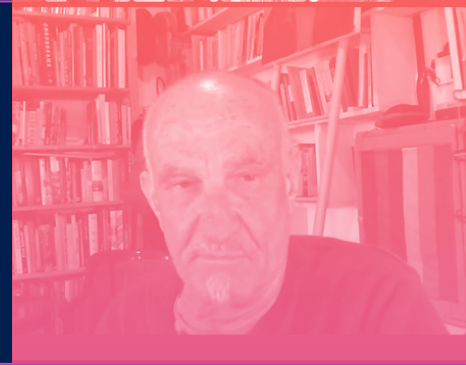
Sinai reflected on his efforts in Jewish-Arab theatre in Israel, advocating for a model of coexistence that acknowledges and transcends oppression and occupation.



IGAL EZRATY

Jaffa Arab-Hebrew Theatre (Israel)

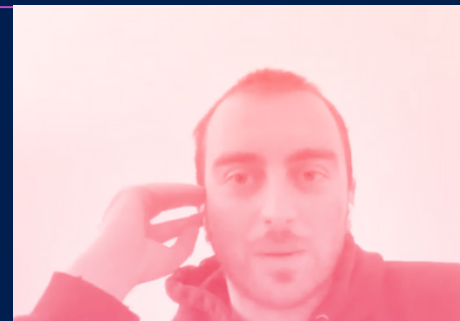
Igal shared insights from his experiences in Jewish-Arab collaborations through theatre, emphasizing the challenges of empathy and coexistence amidst aggression and violence.



GIORGI RODIONOV

Untitled Tbilisi (Georgia)

From Tbilisi, Georgia, discussed peacebuilding efforts in the South Caucasus, especially around queer and feminist issues.



The participants collectively addressed the complexities of dialogue, the significance of acknowledging historical and ongoing oppression, and the challenges of fostering empathy and understanding across diverse perspectives. The discussions underscored the role of art in creating spaces for reflection, connection, and potentially transformative exchanges, highlighting the need for context-sensitive, inclusive, and empathetic approaches to peacebuilding and reconciliation in times of crisis.

THEMES OF EXPLORATION

Navigating Insider-Outsider Dynamics

The discussion commenced with an examination of the insider-outsider dichotomy in conflict zones. Rana Yazaji proposed that the perspective of an outsider could sometimes offer a liberating lens to engage with conflicts more objectively, initiating a dialogue on the fluid identities and art's potential to foster inclusive discussions beyond geographical and cultural confines.

**"BEING AN
OUTSIDER WAS A
HUGE
LIBERATION...TO BE
PART BY CHOICE
AND NOT BY WHERE
WE WERE BORN."**

Rana Yazaji

Silence as a Communicative Tool

The nuanced role of silence in conflict and post-conflict settings was a focal point of the conversation. Contrary to the belief in the perpetual necessity of dialogue, the speakers pondered over silence as a potent form of communication, suggesting that it might not signify denial but could provide a respite for normality and contemplation amidst chaos.

**"WE WORK WITH
YOUNG PEOPLE,
WOMEN, DIFFERENT
COMMUNITIES...TO
CREATE BRIDGES
THROUGH ARTS."**

Seba Kourani

Redefining Peace

The dialogue on peace unveiled the complex interpretations attached to the term. The speakers illuminated the gap between grassroots conceptions of peace and its more abstract, politicized versions, advocating for art's capacity to ground the concept of peace in tangible, everyday experiences.

"UNDERSTANDING OF PEACE FOR ME IS A LITTLE BIT ABSTRACT...WE SHOULD REALLY START DECOLONIZING NOT JUST CERTAIN IDEOLOGIES BUT UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORD ITSELF."

Giorgi Rodionov

Artistic Limitations and Potentials

Acknowledging the frustrations inherent in artistic endeavors amidst violence, the conversation recognized art's unique capability to navigate these limitations creatively. There was a shared belief in art's power to offer alternative narratives and foster empathy among divided communities.

"WE FOUND OUT THAT THE REAL PROBLEM IS THE LACK OF EMPATHY...WE MADE A PLAY CALLED 'HOW TO REMAIN A HUMANIST AFTER A MASSACRE IN 17 STEPS'."

Igal Ezraty

De-learning Non-Profit Practices

A critique of the non-profit sector's impact on artistic and cultural work revealed a need to move away from certain entrenched practices, particularly the superficial ticking of diversity checkboxes. This sparked a dialogue on the authenticity of engagement and the significance of community-driven initiatives.

Navigating Assumptions and Identities

The discussion highlighted the human propensity to form assumptions based on nationalities and names. This segment underscored art's role in challenging these assumptions, allowing for more nuanced personal expressions of identity.

Acknowledging Historical Injustices

Concluding the conversation, there was a unanimous call to recognize historical injustices and power imbalances. The speakers emphasized art's vital role in addressing these complexities, fostering an informed and empathetic dialogue.

**"THE MORE I
FOCUSED ON
MYSELF...THE MORE
I WAS ABLE TO BE
CLOSER TO A TRUTH
THAT I WOULD
WANT TO BE PART
OF."**

Sarra Saeed

**"WE TRY TO HELP
PEOPLE TO IMAGINE
ANOTHER WAY...WE
PRESENT AN OPTION
FOR SOMETHING ELSE
MUCH BETTER BEYOND
THE HORIZON."**

Sinai Peter

ABOUT IMPACT

IMPACT is a diverse global organization, advocating for arts and culture to transform conflict and build more creative and just societies. IMPACT is governed by a diverse and dynamic board comprised of artists, scholars and practitioners in the field of arts, culture and conflict transformation from around the globe, including Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Israel, Kenya, Japan, Serbia, and the Philippines.



JOIN THE IMPACT COMMUNITY

- Partner with Us: we are looking for like-minded individuals, networks and organizations to work collaboratively with in the space of arts, culture and conflict transformation
- Take part in our upcoming events: sign up to our newsletter to receive news about our in-depth event series on the key themes from IMPACT: Creating Hope Together
- Join the IMPACT community: sign up to our newsletter, follow us on social media: @impactartorg
- Find out more about our inaugural event “Creating Hope Together”: read our report and check out the videos on our YouTube channel
- Donate to IMPACT, so that we can support our growing IMPACT community by advocating to policymakers, funders and leaders for arts, culture and conflict transformation
- Get in touch: info@impactart.org



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