

2018



WORKING GROUP
PROPOSAL

WORKING GROUP ON EUROPEAN ART

CONTACT

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INTRODUCTION

EUArt is a working group that intends to transcend national boundaries with art. Looking at the present paradigm, it becomes clear that European art has been dominated by a white, male elite while 'other' artists are either not recognized as such or deemed to be 'exotic'. Works like the *Mona Lisa* by Da Vinci, the *Self-portrait* of Van Gogh, *Les demoiselles d'Avignon* by Picasso or *Who is Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue?* by Barnett Newman are all recognized as part of the canon of European art. However, given the multicultural background of Europe, its artists are from different origins, genders, religions, and lifestyles. Therefore, **EUArt challenges the paradigm** that the universality of European art emerges from a small elite while works by Eastern Europeans, women, artists of non-Western origins, or the LGBT+ community - to name but a few - are categorized as group-specific rather than European or universal. Indeed, these artists are the ones who bridge classes, societies, and national borders.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONCEPTUALISATION & OBJECTIVES

Conceptualization (p. 2)

- **European artists** = artists who view themselves as European; focus on unrecognized artists
- **Art** = defined broadly beyond current biased categorisation
- **Emotions** = starting point of the working group; universal link between all artworks that enables the transcending of boundaries

Objectives (p. 2)

- Start a conversation about the current **paradigm** of European art
- Offer a **platform** for unrecognized European artists as shapers of universal art
- Focus on the **process** rather than the outcome

PROJECTS (P. 3)

- Art competition
- Video portraits
- Documentary
- Exhibition
- Research report & policy recommendations

STAKEHOLDERS (P. 4)

- **Composition of the working group:** Students and young professionals from a diverse background
- **Participants:** European artists; reached via the network of the EST and local networkers
- **Audience:** European citizens between the age of 16 and 27

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Art is universal and has therefore the power to transcend national boundaries. As such, the paradigm shift EUrArt seeks to initiate is one away from art as group-specific or 'ethnic' and towards *all* art made **in Europe and/or by Europeans** as an integral part of this notion of universality of European art. The definition of Europe is not confined to distinctions such as the EU but depends to a large extent on the individual artists who consider themselves as European. Due to the current elitist paradigm in art, the working group further focuses on **unrecognized artists** and marginalized religious, cultural, ethnic, political, or sexual minorities. More specifically, approximately three to five artists from eight different countries in Europe are set as a starting point for the working groups, although a more diverse intake is of course encouraged.

Given that such a wide range of artists is strategically overlooked because their art, vision, or style is not recognized, EUrArt **defines art** in its broadest sense instead of following pre-existent conceptions and distinctions. As such, art includes but is not limited to photography, street art, design, music, spoken word, calligraphy, interactive art, painting, performing art, wood working, or sculpturing.

The connection between these different art forms will be established by using the theme of **emotions**. Due to the fact these they are universal and can be understood by everyone, emotions transcend language, culture, class, and all other (national) boundaries. By having a shared experience of emotions induced by art, it hence becomes to a certain extent the art of the audience as well, which functions as a catalyst for the envisioned paradigm shift.

OBJECTIVES

Although the objectives of EUrArt differ slightly per project, the core aim of each project together is to **initiate a public discussion** about the fact that European art is not only made by and for an elite and should therefore not be recognized as such. Accordingly, another objective of this working group is to **offer unrecognized European artists a platform**. Not only does this increase the integration of those who have previously been structurally excluded from the canon, but it also enables regular citizens of Europe to experience first hand how diverse the field of European art truly is.

On the whole, the working group operates in line with an incremental, hermeneutic approach, in which the emphasis does not lay on the outcome but on the specific findings and **developments in the process**. During this process, the working group will go back and forth between empirical findings and expert advice. Since it is at the very core of the working group to merely function as a catalyst, the research method also mirrors an anthropological, inductive approach. After all, it is European artists themselves who should have the authority to change the paradigm.

ENVISIONED PROJECTS

ART COMPETITION

A first component of the projects is having a competition between different artworks on the EST website. The working group is currently conducting negotiations to exhibit the winner in a Museum. Out of all participants a certain number will be part of the exhibition in 2019 (see below). The theme 'emotions' will guide the nature of each project while a short video portrait will serve as a means for comparison.

VIDEO PORTRAITS

A 60-second video portrait will introduce each artist and the respective artwork in the competition. The format will be strict to minimize distractions from the content; participants will be wearing black shirts and will sit in front of a white background. The structure of the portrait is as follows:

- Name and city of the artist
- Occupation and/or interests relating to art
- Introduction to the artwork; including its name and form as well as information about what emotion the artwork conveys

DOCUMENTARY

Together with supplementary material, these short video portraits will be combined into a coherent documentary.

EXHIBITION

One year after the competition, EUArt plans to display a certain amount of the artwork featured during the competition (plus additional pieces should they be submitted) in its own exhibition. The details concerning when, where, and how this exhibition will take place depends on future negotiations as well as the input by artists themselves.



RESEARCH REPORT

In the end of each year, a research report of the working group will be published. The data, though guided and inspired by historical and literature analysis, will largely stem from artists themselves in the form of semi-structured interviews and anthropological analyses. The report will conclude with several policy implications and recommendations for transnational institutions such as the European Commission or UNESCO.

STAKEHOLDERS & PROJECT REALISATION

The working group itself consists of students and young professional with different backgrounds. As a general rule, personal drive, enthusiasm, and experience are more important than having a matching academic background. In the course of EUrArt projects, several stakeholders have to be identified and kept in mind. Broadly speaking, a distinction can be drawn between **participants** on the one and the audience on the other hand.

Participants in the project, i.e. European artists, will be approached through the existing network of the EST with its ambassadorial connections. Moreover, the working group consists of several local networkers, namely art enthusiasts, whose tasks is to visit local art-related events, talk to upcoming artists, and overall establish a grassroots network in their respective country.

On the other hand, the **audience** of the projects more or less mirrors the followers of the EST and as such consists of European citizens between the age of 17 and 27. However, during particular projects such as the EUrArt exhibition, this demography may change considerably.

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS & FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Overall, funding is vital for the art competition with its video portraits and subsequent documentary as well as for the EUrArt Exhibition. The latter is of particular need of funding since an exhibition costs between 5.000 - 50.000€, especially when the artworks first have to be shipped to the location from all over Europe.

Given the broad scope of this working group, a wide range of potential partners will be sought after. In addition to its initial partner and platform, the European Student Think Tank, the working group will also attempt to collaborate with transnational institutions such as the European Cultural Foundation as potential partners in terms of networking as well as for funding purposes. In addition to European funds, cultural and art funds on the municipal or city level will also be approached such as the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts (AFK), the Cultural Participation Fund, or VSB Fonds in the example of the city of Amsterdam, Netherlands. These and similar funds in different countries will be contacted to put the envisioned projects into practice.

Organizations that are interested in supporting EUrArt are welcome to contact Cindy Langer or Chaima Nbigui (contact information on the next page).

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PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Do you have a passion for heritage and the arts? Are you tired of the rigid and elitist paradigm of 'European' art that neglects the current diverse spectrum of the arts and artists? Do you want to be involved in a project that seeks to challenge the dominant narrative about what European art is? Then apply for one of the listed vacancies on <http://www.esthinktank.com/working-groups/eurart/>



@eurartist



EUrArt



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