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Interviews were conducted by Giannalia Cogliandro, Secretary General

How can we create more just and less unequal creative cities? How do we make creative cities creative for all citizens? What is your personal view point in relation to your experience in Brazil?

I believe that a creative city is more just and less unequal to the same extent that its population is sufficiently empowered to freely propose and creatively implement sustainable solutions for typical problems of the city of the XXI century, i.e. growing poverty, gentrification of revitalized urban areas, lack of urban mobility, the growth of violence, degradation of public property and the economic decline of its core areas, among others.

Of course, the empowerment and involvement of all citizens in this process will require a great deal of community cooperation with various decision-institutional bodies other than those exclusively of governmental character.

In Brazil, some large, medium and small cities have adopted the mechanism of participatory budgeting. Participatory budgeting is a government mechanism for participatory democracy that allows citizens to influence or decide on public budgets, usually the investment budget of municipalities, through community participation processes. These processes often rely on open and regular meetings and stages of direct negotiation with the government. Personally, I think this mechanism by itself does not meet the necessary and sufficient conditions to characterize a creative city, but it's a first step in that direction.

What is in your opinion the role of artists, cultural agencies and artistic organisations in preventing culture-led gentrification in fast changing city landscapes?

I believe that artists and cultural organizations should institutionally dialogue with local governments and propose solutions to avoid creating economically and culturally elitist urban areas. Such solutions should provide mechanisms to ensure the presence of diverse cultural expressions in all areas of the city, beyond the easy access of the low-income populations to social housing, for example. I think that only natural and democratic integration between artists and creatives in general and the local community can avoid phenomena such as urban gentrification.



How do you think we could advance the dialogue between researchers, policy makers and creators working in the field of urban cultural policy and creativity?

Dialogue among these three actors can be greatly facilitated through the creation of physical and virtual spaces of interaction. These spaces range from forums, seminars and conferences promoted by universities to electronic platforms for exchange of knowledge and information on the subject.

In a more advanced stage of integration one should consider the transformation of urban spaces in creative districts, linking the activities of the academy, the entrepreneurs and the local government.

How do you think we can mobilize the power of art, business and citizens for creating an inclusive city for all?

Arts have an incredible power of social mobilization and economic dynamism. If properly supported, cultural activities are able to engage economically and socially lower income populations. They can also contribute to the revitalization of degraded urban areas. And even for being environmentally sustainable activities that demand, as a rule, low volume of financial investment, cultural businesses have the ability to strengthen the economic and social structure of a city.