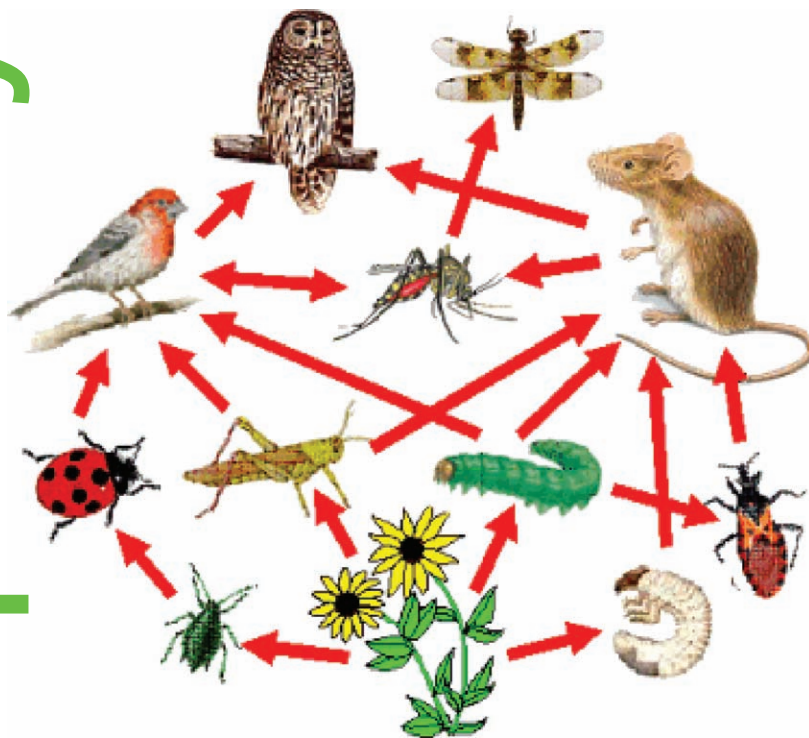


Speakeasy



Mediascapes & discourses in contention > cultural governance & organisational stance

Variant Open Forum events:

Speakeasy no.1

Glasgow - CCA (Club Room)
Thursday 22nd May | 18:30 - 21:30

Speakeasy no.2

Aberdeen - Peacock Visual Arts
Saturday 24th May | 14:00 - 17:00

variant



CCA:

peacockvisualarts
centre for contemporary art

Dear cultural practitioners, artist-run and self-organised groups, co-operative and collaborative practices,

You are invited to participate in a dialogical workshop to explore your experiences and concerns over discursive practices and organisational stance in the arts in Scotland, and how these relate to self-organised and co-operative practices.

These two workshops form part of Variant's current enquiry (part-funded by Creative Scotland) into how changes in cultural governance correlate with our communication and mediascapes, and how these impact cultural practices.

Speakeasy follows on from Variant's range of discussions, articles and workshops over recent years concerning the sites and situations of communication, as well as an interest in our own and others' form of self-organisation in a rapidly restructuring cultural field (and ever louder calls for resilient business models).

In our wider enquiry we are exploring (a) the conditions for discursive practices in the arts in Scotland, especially through contextualising artist-run organisational forms; we are asking (b), by means of a dialogical process, how such practices can (still?) facilitate (political) agency; and we are interested (c) in finding out more about present and future collaborative organisational models.

A couple of years ago, in 2011, our editorial introducing the responses to the interview with (former) Creative Scotland CEO Andrew Dixon observed that,

"the dismantling and overwriting of the previous infrastructure will undoubtedly leave its mark on artists, creative practitioners and arts organisations throughout Scotland. Whether experienced directly through a loss of funding or an inability to maintain activity through diminishing planning horizons and increasingly precarious labour arrangements, including the formalisation of debt, or indirectly through the demise of a sufficiently diverse cultural scene, the impacts will be manifest. The extent to which impacts will be felt, not only for the short-term viability of practice but to the long-term boundaries of what is and what can be constructed through cultural funding, becomes all too clear when the protection of a Traditional Arts, whilst all else is left to compete in an entrepreneurial 'creative economy', is coupled with a new language which narrowly articulates the criteria for artistic practice. It is difficult to ignore the feeling that we are witnessing the formation of 'legitimate' subjects of art and culture and a re-imagining of what it means to use those very words. It is impossible to ignore the sense that this is a challenge to the diversity of cultural and therefore political expression as a democratic right." ("Language is never neutral", Variant, issue 42, Winter 2011)

With 'communication' and 'language' having, in many ways, taken centre-stage in the re-articulation of access to cultural funding and influence (such as the Open letter to the the (former) chair of Creative Scotland's board, Sir Sandy Crombie, signed by 100 Scottish artists, or Creative Scotland's Open Sessions) we intend to examine what has remained at stake in these accentuations. What has been the context and situation that artist-run organisations, and others who attend to self-organised forms, have found themselves in?

The sessions will follow similar formats: members of Variant will introduce and facilitate a dialogue that moves between large group and smaller table-based discussions. We will draw on different materials and experiences to enquire into their range, resonance and divergence; to then explore in more detail the spaces for dialogue in relation to artist-run, self-organised and other collaborative practices.

We are able to reimburse travel costs for participants who travel from the Central Belt to the Glasgow meeting and from the Northeast to the Aberdeen meeting and who have no alternative sources for reimbursement (please bring the ticket or receipt with you).

We are conscious of the need for careful attention to the ethics of what can be said, by and with whom. We will neither audio nor video record these session, but we would like to engage in a dialogue as to how any material generated can form part of our enquiry.

The meetings are open and free to attend but please let us know that you are intending to join us by emailing Variant at : variantmag@btinternet.com



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ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

Supported by Creative Scotland

Variant would also like to thank the support of:



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www.cca-glasgow.com



Peacock Visual Arts
21 Castle Street
Aberdeen AB11 5BQ
www.peacockvisualarts.com

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