

AMA Symposium 2005, A Road Map to Utopia

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Symposium recommendations and ideas for further discussion

The AMA symposium was started in 2003 to meet the needs of the AMA's senior members (arts professionals with ten or more years' professional experience). The symposium focuses on 'big picture' sector issues. This year the symposium encouraged delegates to look collectively towards the next twenty years to agree a blueprint for the future for the arts and audiences. The following document highlights some of the key suggestions from the event.

Topics for further exploration from symposium 2005 discussions:

1. Collaboration: raising awareness of the value of the arts to public life

A core theme was arts organisations working together to co-ordinate effort, raise awareness collectively, lobby collectively and share resources.

This might include exploring some of the following:

- potential arts ambassadors (e.g. as Jamie Oliver has been for food and cooking),
- joint campaigns across arts organisations to communicate 'the arts as fundamental to public life',
- branding the arts (although not consensus on this issue) – perhaps developing collaborative marketing campaigns, rather than a branding exercise i.e. not one brand fits all, but celebration of diversity of art and diversity of value to society,
- running a favourite 'arts moments' ad campaign.

In exploring the content for joint campaigns, it was discussed that consideration should be given to:

- how to demonstrate the value of the arts as part of everyday life (art for arts sake and art for life's sake),
- establishing qualitative forms of measurement for the value of the arts e.g. a model for wellbeing and happiness, and communicating this to the public,
- re-evaluating the language of the arts, making it meaningful to the public.

2. Globalisation

– role of the arts in defining national identity and role for the arts internationally

3. Tapping into the Olympics

either literally e.g. presence at the Olympics, or through creating a similar (non competitive) combined celebration

4. Making art integral to the curriculum and embedded in education

5. The role of technology and its impact on the future for the arts, e.g.:

- using technology to increase access,
- using technology to create desire,
- collaborative use of technology to achieve the above (shared resources),
- how to combine / work with the live event to avoid all art becoming individualized.

6. What future for funding the arts?

- how to develop balance between public and private subsidy to reduce reliance / dependency on any single funding source,
- growing individual patronage of creators and creative bodies,
- exploring the idea of funding from taxation,
- how to ensure relevant and achievable targets set in funding agreements,
- how to reduce the uncertainty of funding,
- should some art should be funded as heritage?,
- how to fund research and development (R & D), not linked to investment – encouraging entrepreneurs and creativity,

7. Developing flexibility in availability of art to meet modern lifestyles

- training to cope with change,
- opening times / performing times,
- free / public facilities for art (like with sport).

Taking these ideas forward

The AMA is now exploring how best to take these forward and will be considering how these recommendations / ideas fit into its current business plan and what strategic partnerships the AMA should build to take these ideas forward.

AMA think-tanks

While the AMA is not promising to be able to deliver all of these action points on our own, we do feel that much of this is worthy of greater exploration and would like to start the ball rolling in the industry on several of these topics.

In order to do this we are exploring ideas for creating a new service for senior members, an AMA think-tank, which will tour the UK and take place online, to allow members to explore these ideas in more depth and start to plan for some of their implementation.

The think-tanks would be led by an experienced facilitator and would bring together cultural leaders and those at the top of their game in arts marketing and audience development to discuss these key issues for the future of the sector. The AMA would like to use these think-tanks as a catalyst for change and would then develop the findings into an advocacy and action plan aiming to place audiences at the heart of cultural planning and government agenda.

Your thoughts and comments on this idea would be much appreciated, e-mail:
Julie@a-m-a.co.uk with your feedback or to register your interest.

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