

democratic
culture opening
up the arts to
everyone

JOHN HOLDEN

DEMOS

ISBN 978-1-906693-077
First published in 2008
©Demos. Some rights reserved
Magdalen House, 136 Tooley Street
London, SE1 2TU, UK

Copy edited by Susannah Wight, London
Series design by modernactivity
Typeset by modernactivity

Set in Gotham Rounded

democratic culture

JOHN HOLDEN

Open access. Some rights reserved.

As the publisher of this work, Demos wants to encourage the circulation of our work as widely as possible while retaining the copyright. We therefore have an open access policy which enables anyone to access our content online without charge.

Anyone can download, save, perform or distribute this work in any format, including translation, without written permission. This is subject to the terms of the Demos licence found at the back of this publication. Its main conditions are:

- Demos and the author(s) are credited
- This summary and the address *www.demos.co.uk* are displayed
- The text is not altered and is used in full
- The work is not resold
- A copy of the work or link to its use online is sent to Demos

You are welcome to ask for permission to use this work for purposes other than those covered by the licence. Demos gratefully acknowledges the work of Creative Commons in inspiring our approach to copyright. To find out more go to *www.creativecommons.org*



contents

	Acknowledgements	6
	Foreword	7
	Introduction	8
1	Culture	10
2	Excellence or exclusivity?	14
3	Art and life	16
4	Keeping the mob at bay	18
5	Letting the public in	23
6	Democratic culture	25
	Conclusion	34
	References	35

acknowledgements

Many thanks to the Gulbenkian Foundation and to City University, and to all of the people who have generously commented on early drafts: Clare Cooper, Sam Jones, Richard Reeves, Shelagh Wright, and especially to Robert Hewison who has been an invaluable source of strength throughout. Thanks also to the staff at Demos who have made publication possible, particularly Peter Harrington. I am also very grateful to Nicholas Hytner for his encouragement and for providing a foreword.

I would like to dedicate this essay to James as a mark of friendship and thanks.

John Holden
December 2008

foreword

Take a play. For the sake of argument, take a play by Shakespeare. You've been thinking about it for several years. You spend the best part of a year bringing actors together for it, creating a stage world for it, rehearsing it. You examine every line in it, every thought. 'There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow.' You and your actors try to know as much as Hamlet must have known about Calvinism and pre-destination, about God's direct intervention in human affairs. At no point during the process does it occur to you that you may want to trade in quality for popularity. You assume that the years of thought and experience and the months of investigation have been deployed to produce the best possible Hamlet, and you hope that the best possible Hamlet will be the most popular possible Hamlet.

Arts policy has sometimes seemed to be out of step with arts practice but John Holden has done us a tremendous favour first by identifying the false dichotomy between excellence and access, and then by demolishing it. He takes on the cultural snobs, for whom a democratic culture is a debased culture, and he challenges cultural professionals to acknowledge their responsibilities as educators and public servants. It is not enough merely to hope that a good Hamlet will be a popular Hamlet: our education system and our cultural institutions have to work to extend the cultural franchise so that the discussion of Hamlet can be universal.

This paper could not be more welcome.

Nicholas Hytner
National Theatre
30 October 2008

introduction

If art which is now sick is to live and not die, it must in the future be of the people, for the people, by the people; it must understand all and be understood by all

William Morris¹

In a recent Radio 3 programme, *Is This a Record?*,² the classical music critic Norman Lebrecht was in discussion with the record producer Tom Shepherd. This is an excerpt from their conversation:

Lebrecht: *The pressure to record public celebrities originated in the 1970s...*

Shepherd: *Norman, every one of us at some point or other, I think, is tempted to ride the coat-tails of a success that may not have been there for purely musical reasons. I signed up Eugene Fodor, who was a perfectly decent violinist... but I didn't sign him up because he was good but because he was making headlines, because he was, like, playing the violin in a cowboy suit... Everybody in those times, in the mid 1970s, when everyone was trying to somehow democratise classical music, the person who wore the cowboy boots... was the person who you were going to go after because they were turning great art into what was considered popular taste, popular consumption, and I think we all fell victim to that. I mean... sometimes you do these things, which you do for purely mercenary reasons, and it pays off.*

Lebrecht: *The generic term for these compromises is 'crossover', and, as times got tough in the 1990s when the compact disc boom ended, it spread across the record labels like a black death.*

Shepherd's application of the term 'democratise' to the cynical use of gimmickry by a record company in pursuit of profit may seem surprising, but to bring the concept of 'democracy' into the cultural discourse raises interesting

questions: what might 'democratise' mean in relation to culture? If democracy is desirable in the political system, why do some people consider it undesirable in the cultural world; why was democracy – the bedrock of American values – here used by the American Tom Shepherd in a pejorative sense?

This paper sets out to answer those questions. It asks what 'cultural democracy' might look like, if we had it, and begins by addressing what 'culture' means today.

Notes

- 1 'Hopes and fears for art', 1882, quoted in Arnold (1961 [1869]).
- 2 Lebrecht, *Is This a Record?*

1 culture

The meaning of 'culture' has always been difficult to pin down. The academic and critic Raymond Williams devoted his life to trying to define it. He pointed to the word's 'intricate historical development in several European languages' and the fact that it 'has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines... and incompatible systems of thought.'³

In the late twentieth century, 'culture' was principally used in two senses: to refer to the high arts of opera, ballet, poetry, literature, painting, sculpture, music and drama; and in a more general, anthropological sense to encompass all of the practices and objects through which a society expresses and understands itself.

This dual meaning gave rise to much confusion. In the post-war welfare state, culture in the sense of the high arts was defined and enjoyed by a mandarin class; in this context the term 'democratic culture' becomes an oxymoron or a contradiction in terms—how can culture be democratic if it is confined to one small section of society? But using 'culture' in its other sense turns 'democratic culture' into a tautology—how can culture be anything other than democratic if it is defined as the sum total of everything that people do?

TS Eliot implicitly acknowledged the two different uses of the word culture when he pointed out that individuals could adopt a 'conscious aim to achieve culture',⁴ whereas at the level of society 'culture is the one thing that we cannot deliberately aim at'.⁵ This developed into an opposition between the individual and the mass, between what many saw as a debased popular culture and a refined higher culture. Eliot takes it for granted that there is a hierarchy, but when he concludes that 'culture may even be described simply as that which makes life worth living',⁶ he sidesteps the question of who decides just what it is that 'makes life worth living'.

In our own time we need to look again at what we mean by culture. For practical purposes there are three, deeply inter-related, spheres of culture: publicly funded culture, commercial culture and home-made culture. What counts as culture is decided by different groups in each of these cases, but the existence of a critical discourse, with arbitration of standards and quality, is a significant feature in all of them.

In publicly funded culture, culture is not defined through theory (you will find no definition of culture on the website of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), nor of heritage on that of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), but by practice: what gets funded becomes culture. This pragmatic approach has proved useful in allowing the Arts Council to expand its definition of art over the last 50 years to include things like circus, puppetry and street art as well as opera and ballet, while still controlling what 'culture', in this sense, means. Similarly, 'heritage' comes to be defined by English Heritage's decisions about what to list, and the HLF's decisions about what to fund. Who makes these decisions, and on what basis, is therefore a matter of considerable public interest.

Commercial culture is equally pragmatically defined: if someone thinks there is a chance that a song or a show will sell, it gets produced; but the consumer is the ultimate arbiter of commercial culture. Success or failure is market driven, but access to the market — the elusive 'big bucks record deal' of Springsteen's *Rosalita*, the West End stage debut, the first novel — is controlled by a commercial mandarin class just as powerful as the bureaucrats of publicly funded culture. So in publicly funded culture and commercial culture there are gatekeepers who define the meaning of culture through their decisions.

Finally there is home-made culture, which extends from the historic objects and activities of folk art, through to the post-modern punk garage band and the YouTube upload. Here, the definition of what counts as culture is much broader; it is defined by an informal self-selecting peer group, and the barriers to entry are much lower. Knitting a sweater, inventing a new recipe, or writing a song and posting it on MySpace can be done without much difficulty — the decision about the quality of what is produced then lies in the hands of those who see, hear or taste the finished article.

In all three of these spheres individuals take on positions as producers and consumers, authors and readers, performers and audiences. Each of us is able to move through different roles with increasing fluidity, creating and updating our identities as we go. Artists travel freely between the funded, commercial and home-made sectors: publicly funded orchestras make commercial recordings that get sold in record shops and uploaded onto websites; street fashion inspires commercial fashion; an indie band may get a record deal and then play at the Royal Festival Hall.

A recent Demos report, *Video Republic*, has pointed to the way in which the internet has fuelled an ‘explosion in audio-video creativity’.⁷ In fact the rapid and enormous expansion of the internet as a space for cultural interaction and an enabler of mass creativity has changed the possibilities for all types and all three spheres of culture, presenting, across the board, a wealth of new opportunities (audiences; art forms; distribution channels) and questions (what to do about intellectual property; investment in technology; censorship).

The internet is credited with driving mass creativity, but in reality it is only one of the factors that explains it. Fifty years ago, it was impossible to buy a Fender Stratocaster guitar in London — Cliff Richard brought the first one into the country for Hank Marvin sometime around 1960 — but now musical instruments are universally available and relatively cheap. Fifty years ago, there were fewer theatres and concert halls, but now, investment in public infrastructure has made it possible for millions to participate in all sorts of cultural activities.

But this upsurge in creative activity should not lead us to conclude that we have already achieved a ‘democratic culture’ where everyone can enjoy culture equally. There are stark differences between individual capacities to make informed choices, and there are still parts of the cultural world where the vast majority of people feel alienated: one of the main findings from Arts Council England’s Arts Debate is their discovery of ‘a strong sense among many members of the public of *being excluded from something that they would like to be able to access*’ (my italics).⁸

Clearly, they are not referring to commercial or home-made culture — almost everyone reads books and listens to music — but to publicly funded culture. In 1945, John Maynard Keynes announced public funding of the arts with

these words: 'we desire to assure our people full access to the great heritage of culture in this country'.⁹ As his economic ideas once more become relevant, we should look again at this cultural aspiration, and ask how, in relation to publicly funded culture, it can be achieved.

Notes

- 3 Williams, *Keywords*.
- 4 Eliot, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Hannon et al, *Video Republic*.
- 8 See www.artscouncil.org.uk/publications/publication_detail.php?sid=4&id=609&page=4 (accessed 5 Dec 2008).
- 9 In 'The newly established Arts Council of Great Britain (formerly C.E.M.A.) its policy and hopes', broadcast by the BBC on 8 Jul 1945.

2 excellence or exclusivity?

Listening to Lebrecht, Shepherd and other contributors to *Is This a Record?* reveals that there is a thin line between on the one hand mounting a defence of quality, and on the other erecting barricades both against change and against outsiders. In view of Sir Brian McMaster's report to government, *Supporting Excellence in the Arts*, which stresses that the arts should be 'excellent',¹⁰ there is an urgent need to discuss where that thin line lies, because it is not always clear.

Sir Brian himself says: 'Excellence itself is sometimes dismissed as an exclusive, canonical and "heritage" approach to cultural activity. I refute this.'¹¹ He is right to do so. There is no reason why 'excellence' should imply a backward-looking culture and, equally, there is no reason why 'excellence' should be conflated with exclusivity. But, conversely, we should be aware that appeals to 'excellence' and 'quality' can be used as a cover for maintaining social superiority. As John Seabrook, the author of *Nobrow*, has observed, in the cultural field, sometimes people are 'pretending to maintain standards but really just preserving status'; we must beware of 'taste as power pretending to be common sense'.¹²

Three ideas are embedded in the conversation between Norman Lebrecht and Tom Shepherd: first, that collaboration between classical musicians and other musicians is always bad; second, that popular success is always bad, with 'bad' here used in the sense of 'debased' or 'of poor quality'; and, third, that there is some pure category of art that is polluted ('a black death') when it comes into contact with non-art.

All of those assumptions can be contested, but some of the programme's contributors went on to say that these 'bad' crossovers are tolerated 'because', in the words of one of them, 'they fund Alban Berg'.¹³ In other words, the public essentially exist to be exploited: crossovers sell, and however 'compromised' they may be, they are a means to a higher end.

What is at work here is the belief that only a small minority can appreciate art, and that art of quality needs to be defended from the mob. If the mob gets its hands on the art, the art will be destroyed. Therefore art must be kept as the preserve of the few, because only the few understand and value it. This attitude can be seen again in remarks by Francesco Corti, the music director of Scottish Opera, who says 'We must have a faithful product, something true, not something cheap, just to catch an audience... I'm sorry; probably this is heretical, but I believe that opera is still something for the elite.'¹⁴

So while the elite will enjoy 'something true', the poor benighted public will be fobbed off with second-rate 'compromises' in order 'to fund Alban Berg'. It is as if a baker justified adulterating his bread with sawdust so that he can make *madeleines* for those who have a taste for them.

Notes

- 10** McMaster, *Supporting Excellence in the Arts*.
- 11** Ibid.
- 12** Seabrook, *Nobrow*.
- 13** Lebrecht, *Is This a Record?*
- 14** Corti, interview, *The Herald*.

3 art and life

It may be that there is a natural human tendency to protect those things we love by keeping them to ourselves. Some scientists put a cordon around their work and repulse public discussion of things such as nanotechnology and alternative medicine by saying that only they have the specialist knowledge that qualifies them to have an opinion.¹⁵

When it comes to the arts, there is indeed a sense in which they are 'special'. They are not the same thing as entertainment, and they take us beyond everyday life. Art's role as a substitute for religion,¹⁶ its important social function in critiquing the status quo,¹⁷ and its constant quest to explore new territory and to provide wonder, all militate in favour of seeing the arts as being a step away from mundane, diurnal experience. But that should not place them 'off limits' to anyone, because while the arts are 'special' they are also simultaneously, inextricably and healthily part of the everyday.

That may seem contradictory, but in fact, in most times and in most places, this synthetic point of view was commonplace. The Balinese dancer, or the medieval peasant standing in front of a fresco, or the Mughal prince admiring his collection of miniatures, could all appreciate both the normality and the extraordinariness of what they were doing. In our own time, public funding, which enables the arts to occupy a position that is neither divorced from, nor wholly overwhelmed by, the market is one practical manifestation of our ability to live with these ambiguities.

As the three spheres of culture mentioned earlier – the public, commercial and homemade – become increasingly interconnected and networked, these ambiguities are likely to increase, and the reaction to that on the part of people who think that art is 'for an elite' will be to try to maintain their power to define what art is by separating it from everyday life. For example, in an article titled 'The Philistines are upon us', the think tank Civitas said that it was 'vulgar' to talk about

the economic effects of cultural activities. They concluded that ‘perhaps some of those people who are working in the “creative industries” should go and stand in front of... a *fête champêtre* by Watteau, and ask themselves what it means to them’.¹⁸ But artists are part of the commercial world, even if their primary motivation is the creation of meaning and not financial gain: Watteau’s final work was not a *fête galante*, but a shop sign, now in the Charlottenburg Palace in Berlin.

The arts and culture can be looked at in many ways, from many perspectives, and they are a legitimate concern for everyone. There should be no barriers to entry and no place for thinking that ‘opera is still something for the elite’.¹⁹

Notes

- 15 See, for example, this review of Dick Taverne’s book *The March of Unreason* by Margaret Cook, www.guardian.co.uk/books/2005/apr/02/scienceandnature.highereducation (accessed 5 Dec 2008).
- 16 Collings, *This is Civilisation*, p 76: ‘Religion’s depths, its beauty, its consolations, and answers to questions that can’t be answered in any other way—this is now the realm of art. Art has that civilising possibility, it proposes the same resistance to chaos that religion used to have and was in fact invented for.’
- 17 Levine, *Provoking Democracy*.
- 18 See www.civitas.org.uk/blog/2007/07/the_philistines_are_upon_us.html (accessed 5 Dec 2008).
- 19 Corti, interview, *The Herald*.

4 keeping the mob at bay

The defence of cultural exclusivity sits oddly with most other areas of life. No one, for example, would suggest that watching elite athletes competing at the Olympics should be the limited preserve of a group of cognoscenti well versed in the sport. Nor would it be suggested that if the athletes were to lower their standards and give a worse performance that would make them more popular.

The notion that art needs to be defended from the mob also flies in the face of the economist's concept of art as a non-rival good, meaning that one person's enjoyment of a work of art should not, in theory, interfere with someone else's enjoyment. But in practice, the very opposite seems to be true; indeed the cultural gatekeepers of the avant-garde go so far as to *define* art in terms of exclusivity. As Schoenberg put it: 'If it is art, it is not for all. If it is for all, it is not art.'²⁰ 'Art' is another very difficult word to pin down, but surely, defining it in terms of its demographic reach is a poor place to start.

Nor should we tolerate the Modernist artist's claim to authority over what counts as art and what doesn't. Duchamp said 'I don't believe in art, I believe in artists.'²¹ When artists themselves exclusively determine what art is, no one else has a voice in deciding an important question in which everyone has an interest.

Schoenberg and Duchamp are not alone in attempting to wrest questions about art away from the public. There are, in fact, three main categories of those who wish to erect 'keep out' signs around culture.

The first example is that of the malign—as distinct from the beneficent—expert. In culture, just as in every other part of human life, different people have different levels of expertise. It is a truism that a lifetime devoted to the study and practice of a subject should result in a greater degree of knowledge, expertise and appreciation. This applies equally to museum professionals, sculptors and dancers as well as

plumbers or lawyers.²² Expertise and informed judgement qualify people to speak with authority and to set critical standards.

At its best, expert professionalism is used to educate, inform, serve and enable the public; this might be termed benign, inclusive, socially useful and democratic professionalism. At its worst it is used to bamboozle, patronise and exclude the public; and we might call this malign or antagonistic professionalism. This distinction between two types of professional attitude and practice applies well beyond the cultural world, but is certainly apparent within it.

The second example of the gatekeepers is that of the cultural snob. The arts and culture have historically been used, and continue to be used, as a means of asserting social status. Some corporate sponsors align themselves with culture precisely because of the social status of the audience that it attracts, as this quote from American Airlines makes clear: 'the huge success of the show and the strength of the brand association has helped us to raise our profile within the UK market, particularly to a core ABC1 audience'.²³ Again, a distinction must be made between 'malign' and 'benign' sponsors: those who delight in the exclusivity of an audience and those who wish to make that audience as wide as possible. As another sponsor, Ernst and Young, points out: 'business sponsorship of the arts allows works to be shown to a wider audience than would otherwise have the chance to see them'.²⁴

From Veblen's²⁵ writing on conspicuous consumption, to Bourdieu's theories of cultural capital²⁶ there are well-established models showing how processes of exclusion work. Although these theories are most often concerned with critiquing 'high' culture, in the form of opera, ballet, music, drama and the visual arts, the arguments are equally applicable in the context of contemporary sub-cultures, where knowledge for instance about hip-hop or reggae serves to define inclusion or exclusion in relation to a group. Pop music sub-cultures have their specialisms, arcana, cults and cliques just as much as the contemporary visual arts.

In the case of cultural snobbery, an individual's acceptance or rejection by a social group is based on the uninitiated accepting the norms and gaining access to the knowledge of the initiated. Paradoxically, the more people gain the knowledge, the more diluted the group

becomes, leading to an ambivalent attitude on the part of members of the group to the 'education' of the uninitiated. This is why some users of public libraries, some museum-goers and some classical music aficionados resist 'new audiences' encroaching on their turf.

In the third example of exclusivism, that of the avant-garde, what started out as opposition to the Academy degenerated into antagonism towards the public, who are excluded not simply through preference, but by a process of logic. The avant-garde *defines* itself in oppositional terms: anything that is comprehensible by the mass is by definition excluded from the avant-garde. In order to maintain its own self-worth and status, the avant-garde *must* either alienate the public ('épater le bourgeoisie', as the late-nineteenth-century French Decadent poets put it) or withdraw from contact with the public. The American composer Milton Babbitt, writing in 1958, put it this way:

I dare suggest that the composer would do himself and his music an immediate and eventual service by total, resolute and voluntary withdrawal from this public world to one of private performance and electronic media, with its very real possibility of complete elimination of the public and social aspects of musical composition.²⁷

All three positions — those of the malign expert, the cultural snob and the avant-gardiste — collectively the 'cultural exclusivists' — rest on a belief that it is *they* who have a right to determine standards, that *they* know best, that *they* decide.

Alliances form between malign experts and each of the other groups. Battle-lines (often but not always reflecting a right-left political divide) are drawn up between the cultural snobs and the avant-garde. Arguments and disputes frequently break out within the ranks. But these are false battles, because the malign experts, the cultural snobs and the negative avant-garde share a fundamental common purpose: to assert their exclusivity, to guard the territory that they have mapped together, in order to keep the public out.

The *real* battle is not between the different battalions of the cultural exclusivists, but between all of them on the one hand, and on the other, the fragmented, disputatious and heterogeneous public, plus the benign professionals who wish to enlarge the public franchise.

And it is here that we find echoes of a parallel battle in politics. Where in culture walls are built to defend the order of the canon, the discipline of practice, and the legitimacy of tradition against the disorder of popular culture and the threat of relativism, in politics there is a division between authority and anarchy.

The sociologist Bruno Latour, in his essay 'The invention of the science wars', makes the point that in Plato's *Gorgias*, where Socrates is debating with Callicles whether might or right should prevail in government, Socrates pulls off a neat intellectual sleight-of-hand. Socrates sets up an opposition between rule by reason and rule by a dominant nobility. But Latour points out: 'What is beyond question for both Socrates and (Callicles) is that some expert knowledge is necessary, either to make the people of Athens behave in the right way or to keep them at bay and shut their mouths.'²⁸ But as Callicles and Socrates debate, 'there is a second fight going on silently, offstage, pitting the people of Athens, the ten thousand fools, against Socrates and Callicles, allied buddies, who agree on everything and differ only about the fastest way to silence the crowd'.²⁹ In other words, Socrates debates which type of expert should rule in order to avoid the question of whether the non-expert should rule.

In *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), the poet and cultural critic Matthew Arnold's position parallels that of Socrates — only he sees culture as the means to stifle the mob. What for him began as an argument about the civilising effects of culture, its 'sweetness and light', ultimately turned into a question of authority. Arnold explicitly asserts culture as a source of authority in the face of anarchy: 'If we look at the world outside us we find a disturbing absence of sure authority; and culture brings us towards right reason.'³⁰ In turn 'right reason (is) the authority which we are seeking as a defence against anarchy'.³¹

In exactly the same way, debates about dumbing down over the past half century pit a knowledgeable, self-defining and self-regarding cultural *aristos* against the mob, which appears in various guises; in Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death*³² as television, and in Lebrecht's *Is This a Record?*³³ as 'crossover' music.

Notes

- 20** Quoted in Ross, *The Rest is Noise*.
- 21** See http://thinkexist.com/quotes/marcel_duchamp/ (accessed 5 Dec 2008).
- 22** See Sennett, *The Craftsman*.
- 23** See www.forum-arts.ch/page5.php (accessed 18 Nov 2008).
- 24** Ibid.
- 25** Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.
- 26** Bourdieu, *Distinction*.
- 27** Ross, *The Rest is Noise*.
- 28** Latour, *Pandora's Hope*.
- 29** Ibid.
- 30** Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*.
- 31** Ibid.
- 32** Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*.
- 33** Lebrecht, *Is This a Record?*

5 letting the public in

The point here is not to deny that popular literature, television and crossovers on the whole produce rubbish (they do, although they occasionally produce brilliance); rather it is to assert, as does Latour, that there is another way out of this opposition between authority and anarchy, between cultural exclusivism and a debased, diluted, popular culture. If we stop thinking of the *demos* as an anarchic mob, and start thinking of them, of us, as a self-governing, enlightened citizenry, with the capacity to make judgements and decide questions, then a dialogue develops: 'Instead of a dramatic opposition between force and reason, we will have to consider three different kinds of forces... the force of Socrates, the force of Callicles, and the force of the people.'³⁴ In culture, we will have to stop thinking of a dispute between high and popular culture, and enter into public debate about cultural quality wherever it is manifested across all three spheres of publicly funded, commercial and home-made culture — in opera, crime writing, ballet, salsa, art galleries, TV, MySpace and so on. We will ditch the sixth-form debates between the avant-garde and the cultural snobs, between one set of experts and another, between Robert Hughes and Damien Hirst, and enter a much more interesting discussion that includes all of us.

In this context, how the recommendations of Sir Brian McMaster's report are implemented will be crucial. Questions of cultural excellence cannot and should not be determined *solely* by a group of peers (who represent a producer interest), any more than questions relating to GM foods or nanotechnology or bioethics should be decided solely by scientists and big business (who equally represent a producer interest).

It is essential that the many competing voices of the public are admitted into the debate as well. For we must recognise that 'the public' is a collective term for what is in fact a multitude of different and sometimes opposing viewpoints.

We need to understand ‘the public’ much better than we do. Our knowledge is increasing all the time, and we are getting a much more nuanced understanding of public attitudes and public segmentation through such endeavours as Arts Council England’s Audience Insight research,³⁵ through consultation, debate and all sorts of processes of public engagement.

But in publicly funded culture the public still tends to be seen in terms of ‘audiences’ or ‘attenders’ or ‘non-attenders’, whereas in contemporary society the individual is ‘the origin rather than the object of action’.³⁶ As the Harvard Business School Professor Shoshana Zuboff explains: ‘the new individuals seek true voice, direct participation, unmediated influence and identity-based community because they are comfortable using their own experience as the basis for making judgements’.³⁷ If that is true in business and public services, why would it be different in the case of culture?

As the cultural sector engages more with the public, it must of course be alive to the dangers of the public voice being captured by special-interest groups, and of what Raymond Williams called ‘administered consensus through co-option’.³⁸

But processes of public consultation are improving across public services,³⁹ and the cultural world must learn from them. Self-assessment and peer review must not, *pace* McMaster, be the sole methods of determining artistic excellence. As Francois Matarasso has so perceptively said, when it comes to McMaster, ‘perhaps, in the end, what really needs to be excellent is the conversation we have about culture’,⁴⁰ and that conversation cannot be excellent if it excludes the voices of the public.

Notes

- 34** Latour, *Pandora’s Hope*.
35 See www.artscouncil.org.uk/audienceinsight/ (accessed 5 Dec 2008).
36 Zuboff and Maxmin, *The Support Economy*.
37 *Ibid*.
38 Williams, ‘The Arts Council’.
39 See for example www.demos.co.uk/publications/democratisingengagement (accessed 5 Dec 2008).
40 Matarasso, ‘Whose excellence?’

6 democratic culture

Admitting the public into the cultural conversation will mean a battle. As we have seen, the cultural *aristos* necessarily wishes to exclude the public, the *demos*, from its ranks, because to admit the *demos* would undermine its own status. But it is a battle worth fighting. In pursuit of the political ideal of self-government, and ‘active self-creation’⁴¹ on the part of citizens, what better place to start than with cultural life? And if the *demos* is allowed in, what, then, would cultural democracy look like?

My argument is that it would look very much like political democracy, and that it would ideally display characteristics of universalism, pluralism, equality, transparency and freedom. It would be disputatious and contested and it would develop representative institutions. Its professionalism would be rooted in public service, and it would have its basis in the rule of law.

The rule of law

In fact, the legal basis of cultural democracy already exists. It is underpinned by the UK’s treaty obligations. Article 27 of the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights states that ‘Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, and to enjoy the arts’; and article 31 of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child says that every child ‘has the right... to participate freely in cultural life and the arts’.

These treaty obligations form only the most basic building blocks of a legal framework for a democratic culture. There is little in domestic legislation to make the treaty obligations more than mere aspirations. A number of national institutions, such as the British Museum, are governed by their own parliamentary statutes, and local authorities are obliged to provide public libraries, but beyond these examples there is no requirement to provide citizens with the makings of a cultural life.

To form a legal basis for cultural democracy, the treaty obligations mentioned above should be given force in domestic legislation that obliges central and local government to provide citizens with the tools and infrastructure to understand the cultures of the past and create the cultures of the present. This would include:

- commitments to cultural learning and cultural activity in the education system
- commitments to the arts and culture within public service broadcasting
- local authority arts provision becoming a statutory obligation, with guaranteed access to, and animation of, cultural infrastructure, events and participation

The goals would be for everyone to have physical, intellectual and social access to cultural life, and to have the ability and confidence to take part in and fashion the culture of today.

Representative institutions

When it comes to the institutions of culture, could they be said to be representative? In most cases the answer must be 'no'. Most cultural organisations (in contrast to schools and hospital trusts) are governed by non-representative, self-perpetuating oligarchies. Governance arrangements are widely criticised by people within the sector and are hidden from the public gaze.

In the recent past there has been an improvement in some aspects of public representation. For example, Arts Council England's 2007 Arts Debate⁴² was a notable and praiseworthy exercise in public involvement – but it was the first of its kind in the organisation's history.

There are pressing concerns within political democracy and across public services about how people can be represented, and how they can be drawn into democratic participation. There are many suggestions about how to achieve this – making voting compulsory, proportional representation, financial rewards for voting, using new technology to make voting easier, reducing the voting age, to name a few. In the cultural world there has been

a long and healthy obsession with growing audiences by widening access and promoting diversity, but there has been little attention paid to what in the world of science is called 'upstream engagement', in other words having public representation to inform decision making about such things as the allocation of funding, choice of research goals and ethical questions.

In Culture, consideration needs to be given to:

- the composition and appointment of boards
- public representation within the cultural funding system
- greater use of public consultation

Transparency

The cultural world is also poor at transparency. As a recent report into Arts Council England's last allocation of grants confirms,⁴³ it is often unclear how decisions about funding are taken. This is equally true when it comes to local authority grants. Many cultural organisations are opaque: the practice of making annual reports available to the public is not universal. In addition, the financial statistics are Byzantine—no one knows how much public money is spent on the arts in total.

Opacity is often used as an exclusionary tactic, and it is also dangerous; as recent events in the financial markets have shown, non-disclosure leads to malpractice at worst, and confusion at best. We need:

- full public disclosure of artistic policies and financial information
- clear criteria for funding decisions (which does not exclude the possibility of expert judgement, but encourages clarity and explanation when that happens)
- public disclosure of how board appointments are made and by whom
- compulsory annual information from local authorities about expenditure on culture
- research into the influence of elected, non-elected and

commercial interests on arts and cultural organisations

- clearly stated policies in relation to arts and cultural broadcasting on the part of publicly funded broadcasters

Pluralism

A democratic culture necessarily implies plurality, with competing ideas and multiple forms of highly developed critical approaches. This is an area where contemporary culture in Britain is strong. Apart from a handful of voices on the political extremities (see for example the website of the New Culture Forum, which states, 'in the culture wars the Left dominates. The New Culture Forum has been created to challenge the dogma and relativism of the establishment'), few would argue that our culture is anything other than eclectic and diverse, whether looked at in terms of art forms, content and practice, ethnicity or gender. Where there *is* a problem is with class, as discussed below – which reinforces the argument for expanding the cultural franchise.

Funders need to see their role as encouraging pluralism by nurturing a diverse (in every sense) cultural ecology. They must pay attention to the small-scale, the marginal and the emergent, as well as the mainstream and established. Plurality can be encouraged through:

- commissioning and programming policies adopted by major cultural organisations
- devoting Lottery funds to very small-scale grants to new artists and students
- closer collaboration between publicly funded and commercial subsectors to improve transition of work to larger and wider audiences

Freedom

Freedom of artistic and cultural expression is enshrined in the UN treaties referred to above. Limits are placed on that freedom in the form of censorship by legislation (the Obscene Publications Act for example), self-censorship (such as The British Board of Film Classification) and powers held by local authorities (local licensing powers), but as with

plurality, in this area the UK's contemporary culture can be given a generally positive mark. Much more serious are the hidden barriers that limit participation in the arts.

Universalism

John Maynard Keynes' goal of making 'the theatre and the concert hall and the art gallery a living element in every-one's upbringing'⁴⁴ is very far from being met. Indeed, a recent paper has accused Arts Council England of more or less giving up on the job:

To quote an Arts Council England report of April 2008, 'even if we were able to eliminate the inequalities in arts attendance associated with education, social status, ethnicity, poor health and so on, a large proportion of the population would still choose not to engage in the arts.... Insofar as non-engagement with the arts is a matter of lifestyle choice, or "self-exclusion", should the state still intervene?' 'Self-exclusion'? Pardon? This takes the passivity of accessibility work to a new low. After sixty years of this work, not only is it the public's fault if they do not attend or participate in live arts events subsidised by an arts council. We now have a name for the condition they are suffering from.'⁴⁵

Of course, in a free society, no one should be obliged to enjoy the arts and culture, any more than they should be forced to go to university, eat organic food or exercise every day. But the disproportionate adoption of all those things by economically privileged sections of society should be a source of concern to anyone who wishes to release the talents and increase the capital of the whole of society, which is surely what a democracy is trying to achieve.

People should have an equal capacity to make choices; otherwise they are not real choices at all. Celebrating people's inability to enjoy culture is one way in which cultural exclusivists have defended their territory; Lord Goodman's remark when he was Chairman of the Arts Council that 'one of the most precious freedoms of the British is freedom from culture'⁴⁶ may be interpreted in this way.

Despite the UN treaties, most people have only limited and sporadic engagement with culture. The *aristos* has been a very effective gatekeeper.

When asked how much they participate in culture, 84

per cent of the population say that they ‘do little if anything’ or participate only ‘now and then’.⁴⁷ A mere 12 per cent count themselves as enthusiastic participants in the arts (which means they do something only three or four times a year, which isn’t much). And a tiny 4 per cent can be described as voracious cultural participants, meaning that they go to all sorts of arts events frequently. Importantly, the 84 per cent of people – that’s about 50 million – who rarely attend, are doing so not because of sheer indifference. On the contrary, as already noted, one of the main findings from Arts Council England’s Arts Debate is their discovery of ‘a strong sense among many members of the public of *being excluded from something that they would like to be able to access*’ (my italics). ‘They had a belief that certain kinds of arts experiences were not for people like them.’⁴⁸ These findings are an indictment not only of the cultural exclusivists, but of the entire education system.

Promoting universal access to culture means working with people where they are, and not expecting them to come to the culture. In turn that means

- funders paying much more attention to demand-side factors, alongside nurturing the supply side
- more cooperation and coordination between publicly funded culture and mainstream broadcasters to reach wider audiences
- a greater understanding of how existing audiences resist new entrants, and strategies to overcome such resistance
- working closely with schools and the education system

Equality

The regular enjoyment of culture is far from being universal, and it is far from equally distributed. Those who engage with the arts are still drawn overwhelmingly from educated and social elites.⁴⁹ Clive James recently said that ‘after World War II, the best of the Labour politicians knew what the gentry had but wanted the working class to have it too, and they were right. Any state that tries to eliminate the idea of gracious living will eventually impoverish everyone except pirates.’⁵⁰

He has a point. The full and free participation of an overwhelming majority of citizens in cultural life is attainable, but steps need to be taken to make it happen, and those measures are not all within the remit of cultural organisations. The achievement of cultural democracy lies as much within the education system as it does with arts organisations. We need:

- rapid universal adoption of the ‘Find your Talent’ scheme, or something similar, in order to put cultural and creative learning at the heart of every child’s experience
- commitment to making arts and culture a part of primary education, to include compulsory annual visits to a museum, public library and performing arts venue, and opportunities to perform, write and draw
- a review of the multitude of educational initiatives and programmes to ensure there is universal access to high-quality experiences in cultural education
- national reading programmes in public libraries to develop high-level reading capacities in all young people; OECD research shows that a love of reading is more important for a child’s success than their family’s wealth or class⁵¹

The role of the professional

In relation to cultural democracy, the role of the expert should be that of public educator and public servant. Experts should see themselves ‘as an agency of public education not of populist manipulation’.⁵² Expertise is hard-won and valuable, but everywhere from medicine to TV talent shows, the relationship between expert and non-expert is being renegotiated.

The concept of a vibrant democracy – whether political or cultural – rests on the existence of an informed, educated but not necessarily expert public. The development of such a citizenry rests on twin pillars of education⁵³ and a professional class intent on the creation of public value.⁵⁴ To quote Philippe de Montebello, the soon-to-retire director of New York’s Metropolitan Museum, ‘in the end, no-one appreciates being indulged or patronized and it is by treating our visitors with respect that we will gain theirs’.⁵⁵

Mutual respect is vital. Cultural democracy does not imply art by plebiscite, with artists, cultural experts and professionals being told what to do by whimsical public 'input'. On the contrary, it implies a mature relationship where the public recognises, respects and benefits from expertise, while simultaneously being alive to its dangers and able to question its credentials. It implies professionals recognising that their role is to release the talents and potential of the whole community, not just one bit of it, and realising that they are part of, not separate from, that community. Culture should be something that we all own and make, not something that is 'given', 'offered' or 'delivered' by one section of 'us' to another.

Defending democratic culture

Together with the positive features of transparency, universalism and so on, a cultural democracy would also safeguard its integrity by adopting defensive measures similar to those taken by political democracy. Just as in politics, publicly funded cultural organisations and the funding system need to:

- guard against undue influence through donations and gifts
- fight against the tendency (inherent in all large systems) to become bureaucratised
- guarantee freedom of information
- engage in public debate

Notes

- 41** Kovar, 'John Stuart Mill, Victorian firebrand', review in *The Liberal*.
- 42** See www.artscouncil.org.uk/publications/publication_detail.php?sid=4&id=609&page=4 (accessed 5 Dec 2008).
- 43** See www.artscouncil.org.uk/publications/publication_detail.php?rid=0&sid=&browse=recent&id=626 (accessed 5 Dec 2008).
- 44** 'The newly established Arts Council of Great Britain (formerly C.E.M.A.) its policy and hopes', broadcast on the BBC on 8 July 1945.
- 45** Joss, *New Flow*.
- 46** Quoted in Collini, *Common Reading*.
- 47** ACE, *From Indifference to Enthusiasm*.
- 48** Bunting, *Public Value and the Arts in England*.
- 49** See ACE, *From Indifference to Enthusiasm*.
- 50** Clive James, *A Point of View*, BBC Radio 4, 2 Nov 2008.

- 51** See www.pisa.oecd.org/knowledge/summary/e.htm.
- 52** Kovar, 'John Stuart Mill, Victorian firebrand'.
- 53** See Robinson, *All Our Futures*.
- 54** See Moore, *Creating Public Value*.
- 55** de Montebello, 'Art museums, inspiring public trust'.

conclusion

The artist and Turner Prize winner Grayson Perry recently said in an interview for the Royal Society of Arts: 'Democracy has terrible taste. The public wants to bring back hanging as well don't they? The public is very unreliable. If you put it to a referendum, I think we'd have no immigration and no tax. In some ways you do have to be a bit dictatorial as an artist and say that sometimes the art person does know best.'⁵⁶

But the fact is, democracy is *not* a referendum. We *do not* have hanging, and we *do* have immigration and taxation. Our political democracy works because we have developed, over many centuries, systems that benefit from expert opinion but that accommodate dispute, changing circumstances, media scrutiny and populist sentiment.

We need to develop equally sophisticated approaches to cultural democracy. Arguably, culture has been at its most vibrant and most enduring when most exposed to the *demos*: think of Greek drama, the Elizabethan playhouse and Italian opera in the nineteenth century — and increasingly perhaps also the art of today.

Democratic culture is not an unattainable high ideal, nor is it, *pace* Tom Shepherd and Francesco Corti, synonymous with debased quality. Rather, it is something that should be an essential part of a wider political democracy. A community of self-governing citizens, a *demos*, understands, creates and reinvigorates itself through culture. It is only when we have a cultural democracy, where everyone has the same capacity and opportunity to take part in cultural life, that we will have a chance of attaining a true political democracy.

Note

56

Perry, 'I want to make a temple'.

references

ACE (2008) *From Indifference to Enthusiasm* (London: Arts Council England, 2008).

Arnold, M, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed J Dover Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961 [1869]).

Bourdieu, P, *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*, tr R Nice (London: Routledge, 1984).

Bunting, C, *Public Value and the Arts in England: Discussion and conclusions of the arts debate* (London: Arts Council England, 2007).

Collings, M, *This is Civilisation* (London: 21 Publishing, 2008).

Collini, S, *Common Reading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Corti, F, interview, *Herald*, 9 Oct 2008, available at www.theherald.co.uk/features/features/display.var.2458364.0.The_passion_of_Scotlands_new_maestro.php (accessed 5 Dec 2008).

de Montebello, P, 'Art museums, inspiring public trust' in J Cuno (ed) *Whose Muse?* (Cambridge, MA, and Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press and Harvard University Art Museums, 2004).

Eliot, TS, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948).

Hannon, C et al, *Video Republic* (London: Demos, 2008).

Holden, J, *Publicly Funded Culture and the Creative Industries* (London: Arts Council England and Demos, 2007).

Joss, T, *New Flow* (2008), available at www.missionmodels-money.org.uk/page.php?id=19 (accessed 23 Nov 2008).

- Kovar, S, review of Reeves, R 'John Stuart Mill, Victorian firebrand', *The Liberal* (Summer 2008).
- Latour, B, *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the reality of science studies* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press: 1999).
- Lebrecht, N, *Is This a Record?*, BBC Radio 3, 9 Aug 2008.
- Levine, C, *Provoking Democracy: Why we need the arts* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007).
- Matarasso, F, 'Whose excellence?', *Arts Professional*, 2 Jun 2008.
- McMaster, Sir B, *Supporting Excellence in the Arts: From measurement to judgement* (London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2008).
- Moore, M, *Creating Public Value: Strategic management in government* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
- Perry, G, 'I want to make a temple', *RSA Journal*, Autumn 2008.
- Postman, N, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public discourse in the age of show business* (London: Methuen, 1986).
- Robinson, K, *All Our Futures*, 1999, available at www.culture.gov.uk/PDF/naccce.PDF (accessed 5 Dec 2008).
- Ross, A, *The Rest is Noise* (London: Fourth Estate, 2008).
- Seabrook, J, *Nobrow: The culture of marketing and the marketing of culture* (London: Methuen, 2000).
- Sennett, R, *The Craftsman* (London: Allen Lane, 2007).
- Veblen, T, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (Oxford: Oxford's World Classics, 2007 [1899]).
- Williams, R, 'The Arts Council', *The Political Quarterly* 50, no 2, April 1979.
- Williams, R, *Keywords*, 3rd ed (London: Fontana, 1988).

Zuboff, S and Maxmin, J, *The Support Economy: Why corporations are failing individuals, and the next episode of capitalism* (London: Penguin, 2004).

Demos – Licence to Publish

The work (as defined below) is provided under the terms of this licence ('licence'). The work is protected by copyright and/or other applicable law. Any use of the work other than as authorized under this licence is prohibited. By exercising any rights to the work provided here, you accept and agree to be bound by the terms of this licence. Demos grants you the rights contained here in consideration of your acceptance of such terms and conditions.

1 Definitions

- A **'Collective Work'** means a work, such as a periodical issue, anthology or encyclopedia, in which the Work in its entirety in unmodified form, along with a number of other contributions, constituting separate and independent works in themselves, are assembled into a collective whole. A work that constitutes a Collective Work will not be considered a Derivative Work (as defined below) for the purposes of this Licence.
- B **'Derivative Work'** means a work based upon the Work or upon the Work and other pre-existing works, such as a musical arrangement, dramatization, fictionalization, motion picture version, sound recording, art reproduction, abridgment, condensation, or any other form in which the Work may be recast, transformed, or adapted, except that a work that constitutes a Collective Work or a translation from English into another language will not be considered a Derivative Work for the purpose of this Licence.
- C **'Licensor'** means the individual or entity that offers the Work under the terms of this Licence.
- D **'Original Author'** means the individual or entity who created the Work.
- E **'Work'** means the copyrightable work of authorship offered under the terms of this Licence.
- F **'You'** means an individual or entity exercising rights under this Licence who has not previously violated the terms of this Licence with respect to the Work, or who has received express permission from Demos to exercise rights under this Licence despite a previous violation.

2 Fair Use Rights

Nothing in this licence is intended to reduce, limit, or restrict any rights arising from fair use, first sale or other limitations on the exclusive rights of the copyright owner under copyright law or other applicable laws.

3 Licence Grant

Subject to the terms and conditions of this Licence, Licensor hereby grants You a worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive, perpetual (for the duration of the applicable copyright) licence to exercise the rights in the Work as stated below:

- A to reproduce the Work, to incorporate the Work into one or more Collective Works, and to reproduce the Work as incorporated in the Collective Works;
- B to distribute copies or phonorecords of, display publicly, perform publicly, and perform publicly by means of a digital audio transmission the Work including as incorporated in Collective Works; The above rights may be exercised in all media and formats whether now known or hereafter devised. The above rights include the right to make such modifications as are technically necessary to exercise the rights in other media and formats. All rights not expressly granted by Licensor are hereby reserved.

4 Restrictions

The licence granted in Section 3 above is expressly made subject to and limited by the following restrictions:

- A You may distribute, publicly display, publicly perform, or publicly digitally perform the Work only under the terms of this Licence, and You must include a copy of, or the Uniform Resource Identifier for, this Licence with every copy or phonorecord of the Work You distribute, publicly display, publicly perform, or publicly digitally perform. You may not offer or impose any terms on the Work that alter or restrict the terms of this Licence or the recipients' exercise of the rights granted hereunder. You may not sublicense the Work. You must keep intact all notices that refer to this Licence and to the disclaimer of warranties. You may not distribute, publicly display, publicly perform, or publicly digitally perform the Work with any technological measures that control access or use of the Work in a manner inconsistent with the terms of this Licence Agreement. The above applies to the Work as incorporated in a Collective Work, but this does not require the Collective Work apart from the Work itself to be made subject to the terms of this Licence. If You create a Collective Work, upon notice from any Licensor You must, to the extent practicable, remove from the Collective Work any reference to such Licensor or the Original Author, as requested.
- B You may not exercise any of the rights granted to You in Section 3 above in any manner that is primarily intended for or directed toward commercial advantage or private monetary compensation. The exchange of the Work for other copyrighted works by means of digital filesharing or otherwise shall not be considered to be intended for or directed toward commercial advantage or private monetary compensation, provided there is no payment of any monetary compensation in connection with the exchange of copyrighted works.
- C If you distribute, publicly display, publicly perform, or publicly digitally perform the Work or any Collective Works, You must keep intact all copyright notices for the Work and give the Original Author credit reasonable to the medium or means You are utilizing by conveying the name (or pseudonym if applicable) of the Original Author if supplied; the title of the Work if supplied. Such credit may be implemented in any reasonable manner; provided, however, that in the case of a Collective Work, at a minimum such credit will appear where any other comparable authorship credit appears and in a manner at least as prominent as such other comparable authorship credit.

5 Representations, Warranties and Disclaimer

- A By offering the Work for public release under this Licence, Licensor represents and warrants that, to the best of Licensor's knowledge after reasonable inquiry:
 - i Licensor has secured all rights in the Work necessary to grant the licence rights hereunder and to permit the lawful exercise of the rights granted hereunder without You having any obligation to pay any royalties, compulsory licence fees, residuals or any other payments;

- ii The Work does not infringe the copyright, trademark, publicity rights, common law rights or any other right of any third party or constitute defamation, invasion of privacy or other tortious injury to any third party.
- B except as expressly stated in this licence or otherwise agreed in writing or required by applicable law, the work is licenced on an 'as is' basis, without warranties of any kind, either express or implied including, without limitation, any warranties regarding the contents or accuracy of the work.

6 Limitation on Liability

Except to the extent required by applicable law, and except for damages arising from liability to a third party resulting from breach of the warranties in section 5, in no event will licensor be liable to you on any legal theory for any special, incidental, consequential, punitive or exemplary damages arising out of this licence or the use of the work, even if licensor has been advised of the possibility of such damages.

7 Termination

- A This Licence and the rights granted hereunder will terminate automatically upon any breach by You of the terms of this Licence. Individuals or entities who have received Collective Works from You under this Licence, however, will not have their licences terminated provided such individuals or entities remain in full compliance with those licences. Sections 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8 will survive any termination of this Licence.
- B Subject to the above terms and conditions, the licence granted here is perpetual (for the duration of the applicable copyright in the Work). Notwithstanding the above, Licensor reserves the right to release the Work under different licence terms or to stop distributing the Work at any time; provided, however that any such election will not serve to withdraw this Licence (or any other licence that has been, or is required to be, granted under the terms of this Licence), and this Licence will continue in full force and effect unless terminated as stated above.

8 Miscellaneous

- A Each time You distribute or publicly digitally perform the Work or a Collective Work, Demos offers to the recipient a licence to the Work on the same terms and conditions as the licence granted to You under this Licence.
- B If any provision of this Licence is invalid or unenforceable under applicable law, it shall not affect the validity or enforceability of the remainder of the terms of this Licence, and without further action by the parties to this agreement, such provision shall be reformed to the minimum extent necessary to make such provision valid and enforceable.
- C No term or provision of this Licence shall be deemed waived and no breach consented to unless such waiver or consent shall be in writing and signed by the party to be charged with such waiver or consent.
- D This Licence constitutes the entire agreement between the parties with respect to the Work licensed here. There are no understandings, agreements or representations with respect to the Work not specified here. Licensor shall not be bound by any additional provisions that may appear in any communication from You. This Licence may not be modified without the mutual written agreement of Demos and You.

We can all now make YouTube videos and buy musical instruments, but this upsurge in 'homemade' culture should not blind us to the fact that access to publicly funded culture is still very limited, with only 4 per cent of the population enjoying the arts regularly. This report looks at what 'culture' means today, and challenges audiences, critics and cultural professionals to change their attitudes in order to allow greater access and participation.

There is a thin line between defending quality and erecting barricades against outsiders, and it is not always clear where that line is. Sometimes 'maintaining standards' just means preserving status. The pamphlet asks what a 'democratic culture' in the arts would look like, and finds the current system wanting in terms of legislative frameworks, representation, transparency, equality, and universalism. Culture should be something that we all own and make, not something given, offered or delivered by one section of 'us' to another.

John Holden is a Demos Associate and a Visiting Professor at City University.