

VectorTM. Culture as Urban Practice

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the international
seminar

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The international seminar “Vector TM. Culture as Urban Practice” provided the audience with the opportunity to engage with 27 speakers, specialists in various fields, from 7 European countries. Over the course of two days (December 8 and 9, 2023), a series of discussions took place at Cinema Victoria regarding the conditions under which cultural practices can transform the city. The conversations also focused on the contributions of the European Capital of Culture programs from Wrocław, Maribor, Rijeka, and Timișoara in this regard.

Organized by the Center for Projects of the Timișoara Municipality, the international seminar was an event dedicated to the community of architects, curators, cultural operators, public policy and urban strategy creators, consultants, and decision-makers in public administration. They discussed the extent to which the premises created by Timișoara’s experience as the European Capital of Culture will lead to profound transformations in society and at the city level. What are the vectors of urban transformation generated by the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme, and how can they be integrated into the public agenda for the coming years? The answer to this question can be found in the following pages, which present a synthesis of the discussions during the seminar.

Vector TM is part of the Power Station program, a component of the national cultural program “Timișoara – European Capital of Culture in 2023,” dedicated to increasing the capacity of the cultural sector and implemented by the the Center for Projects of the Timișoara Municipality.





Editors'

— Cosmina Goagea

Vector TM has shown how culture and art function as very powerful city-making tools, bringing to light other new dimensions of the city that have not previously been considered. The seminar started from a shared understanding of the fact that the cultural sector can significantly influence thinking about the city, questioning the management of spaces, regeneration, enhancing the quality of the living environment, intensifying urban experience and identity, to the sense of belonging and ownership. The transformation process triggered by the European Capital of Culture was discussed from multiple perspectives, with its different temporalities – from actions with already concrete and visible results, to changes in mentality and ways of approaching the conceiving of the city that will have tangible effects in the future. In turn, architecture and urban design were valued as fundamentally cultural practices.

The seminar was a laboratory for real-time collective processing of the contributions of all those invited, with the aim of explicitly putting on the table the valuable ingredients/seeds we have now and to see what conditions are needed for these sediments to bear fruit in the coming years. The practices and methods developed within Timișoara 2023 were viewed through new lenses, through the prism of other

cities' and other specialists' experiences. These fresh and zoom out views have brought clarity to potential resources and latent strengths that we, those involved, may not have seen clearly enough. The former European Capitals of Culture provided a mirror of Timișoara and what it can offer in a wider, European reference system. Practitioners, operators and cultural entrepreneurs described where they are, what their aspirations and projects are and what they need to achieve them. Representatives of institutions and administration provided clarifications on the legislative framework and strategies to be developed, in place or on the way, as well as their common vision and ambitions for Timișoara and Romania.

Finally, Timișoara's lesson turned out to be about how to stabilize a system. Timișoara showed courage, confidence and risk-taking to create, under time pressure, an organised system to support cultural production and consumption, with an already visible impact on urban development. The Vector TM seminar put the spotlight on this complex system, with the intention of raising awareness of the assets held by the city and of capitalising on them through action supported by political will to maintain the momentum. We have just seen how culture, done well, is an economic engine. The challenge now is to keep doing it well.

Project Team



Cosmina Goagea Co-Curator

Architect, Curator for "Places" Territory /
Timișoara 2023 European Capital of Culture
— Centre for Projects Timișoara

Cosmina is an architect, curator and editor. Her research and curatorial practice is focused on museum exhibition, art as urban practice, place-making through cultural interventions, bottom-up city making, cultural strategies for urban development. Starting with 1999, designer and curator for exhibitions, publications, activation of public space, research programs and conferences about architecture, design and urban culture both in Romania and abroad. Initiator and coordinator of several programs based on international networks of curators, architects and artists. Director of Zeppelin platform of communication and action for the city.



Raluca Iacob Co-Curator

Power Station Coordinator and Results and Impact
Monitoring-Evaluation
— Centrul de Proiecte Timișoara

Raluca is the Power Station Coordinator and Results and Impact Monitoring-Evaluation specialist, a member of the Coordination Council of the Center for Projects Timișoara. She is a cultural manager and specialist in public policies. She has worked for Romania's Cultural Contact Point and has contributed to advocacy actions for public culture. Through the MetruCub Association, she has launched a series of projects that support collaborations between cultural actors and schools. She has coordinated and contributed to the development of strategies, analyses, guides, and recommendations in the field of cultural management and cultural policies, both nationally and internationally.



Ramona Laczko David Co-Curator

Project Coordinator Timișoara 2023
— Center for Projects Timișoara

Ramona Laczko David is the project coordinator for Timișoara 2023 and a member of the Coordination Council of the Center for Projects Timișoara. She is a cultural project manager with extensive experience working in international cultural organizations in Europe and Asia. She has contributed to the coordination of international collaboration programs between the two regions, developing communication strategies for regional programs, and conducting research in the field of public policies in the cultural sector.



Eugen Pănescu Co-Curator, Moderator

Architect and urban strategist

Eugen Pănescu is an architect and urban strategist involved in quality-based initiatives regarding the national planning framework, housing and policies for architecture and urban regeneration of historic areas. As Chair of the Urban Issues working group and elected member of the of the Architects Council of Europe Board 2015-2021, he follows the European Urban Agenda and the Baukultur approach to sustainability, housing, the wise adaptive re-use and cautious retrofitting of buildings and urban areas. Eugen contributes to a broader professional network response to the New European Bauhaus initiative and he promotes, as a public speaker, the holistic approach of urban-rural regeneration through social and economic equity, linking innovative public governance with civic action. His ideas refer to finding responsible answers through cross-cultural cooperation and social awareness. These actions provided him in 2022 a fellowship in the RISE Cities programme of the BMW Foundation.



Ștefan Teișanu Moderator

Secretary general,
Culture Next Cities network

Ștefan Teișanu is a cultural manager, entrepreneur, and co-founder of the organizations Cluj Cultural Center, Fapte and Nord. He is a member of the Economic and Social Council of Romania, representing the cultural sector and civil society, and works with the World Bank as a specialist in participation and local development. He is the executive director of the Cluj Cultural Center, a non-governmental organization focused on culture and sustainable development with 112 members, including cultural organizations and institutions, universities, business and civil society associations, and local and county administration. He founded the Fapte Association, which organizes the Jazz in the Park festival and other cultural events with an impact on the community, and the Nord Association, a community development organization established in Darabani, his hometown in Moldova. He was the president of AIESEC Cluj-Napoca and founded the Cluj branch of Junior Chamber International. His personal creed is that people can be what they want to be.





Dominic Fritz

Mayor of Timișoara

Timișoara 2023 – European Capital of Culture has laid the foundation. We will use culture to transform the city for many years to come

“The title of Timișoara 2023 – European Capital of Culture provided an opportunity to change the way citizens perceive and interact with their city, and this will continue in the years to come”, stated Dominic Fritz, Mayor of Timișoara, at the beginning of the international seminar “Vector TM. Culture as Urban Practice” within the “Neverending Timișoara 2023” event series.

“From the beginning, it was very clear to us what we wanted from the title Timișoara 2023 – European Capital of Culture. The plan was not to have a single year of grand events paid for with a lot of public money, attracting hundreds of thousands of people, and at the end of December, clean up and go home. The idea was to use culture as a means to transform the city, to find a new sense of community, to provide a new sense of belonging to our citizens, a new vision of the public spaces in the city, and how we can engage in city life. We focused more on the type of projects that generate a new vision of how citizens interact with their city”, said Dominic Fritz.

One of the most well-known projects is the one in the former Opera Square, where a huge tower with 1,000 plants was built, a tower where people can climb and look at the city. “It was one of the most successful projects because it truly changed the way people saw our main square. We tried to change how we see the city, how we see ourselves not just as consumers of art and culture, not just as consumers of political decisions made

elsewhere, but as participants in everything that happens, which is also related to the history of Timișoara”, added Dominic Fritz. One of the major challenges is the urban space, both public space outside and buildings, as well as how they can be transformed into spaces that generate a sense of community and involvement in city life.

“A lesson learned this year is that when we think about culture, we need to have a very broad approach to it. It’s about communities, about the city, it’s not about a very narrow view of art. I think we need to push the boundaries of what we see as cultural projects”, he explained.

In the opinion of the Mayor of Timișoara, the courage to create things that are not perfect, that are temporary, but also the courage to try new ideas and to trust the community to use those things and test those new ideas is something that has been very encouraging in 2023, and these things will continue in the years to come.

“Our grand ambition is to use all the experience and encouragement we gained from the European Capital of Culture as fuel, as a way to build the foundation and values that keep us together, that make us a community. The year 2023 will come to an end, but Timișoara and its ambition to become the European Capital of Culture will endure, will exist next year and the one after, and for many more years”, concluded Dominic Fritz.

Dominic Fritz was elected as the mayor of Timișoara in the fall of 2020. Born in Germany, he first came to Timișoara in 2003, when, after finishing high school, he worked as a volunteer in a children's home in the Freidorf neighborhood. Before entering local politics in Timișoara, Dominic Fritz worked for over 10 years in the German public administration. In 2009, after studying political and administrative sciences in Germany, France, and United Kingdom, he began his professional career as an advisor at the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ). Between 2016 and 2019, he served as the chief of staff to the former President of Germany and former IMF director, Horst Köhler, in Berlin. In this position, he collaborated with many national and international institutions and authorities such as the United Nations, the African Development Bank, or the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Panel 1

Visions for the city: culture-led urban transformation and policy-making





Citizen needs must be at the center of public administration debates. Only this way can urban transformation through culture be achieved

The high quality of architecture and built environment impacts people's health and well-being, and as such is one of the priorities of European public policy, having context, sense of place, diversity and beauty as criteria. It is only by following these principles that a sense of belonging, of connecting people with their living space can be generated.

A successful urban strategy is one articulated around the fundamental values of the local community. Culture plays a key role here, having the power to mobilize and to drill precisely these real, authentic, local values and needs. Policy makers decode these needs and recode them in terms of actions, measures and factors that enable their implementation and enforcement by the decision-making level. Awareness of tangible and intangible heritage and the overlapping layers of memory and meaning is crucial to how people relate to the city.

Culture also contributes to a better quality of life by providing leisure opportunities in neighbourhoods, which is why audiences are often a key ally in ensuring the sustainability of initiatives such as cinemas in Timișoara, for example.

These are some of the ideas put forward during the session, while also reviewing various practices of involving residents in impacting the urban agenda, with a focus towards mainstreaming citizen participation through a series of informal-innovative processes (participatory city walks and guided tours, exhibitions, social labs and thematic workshops, participatory budgeting etc.).

Panel reporting:
— Cosmina Goagea



Ivan Blasi

Program Director of the European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture | Mies van der Rohe Awards, European Commission

We understand that architecture is a public interest activity, and there is a need to promote the architectural quality of buildings, public spaces, and urban planning. Working on a high-quality living environment is a priority in European public policies. This has not always been the case, but it is happening now at the European level.

There are no specific European policies for architecture because these policies depend on each member state of the European Union. Still, there is a mandate to work on architecture-related policies.

A report published in 2021, titled "Towards a shared culture of architecture. Investing in a high-quality living environment for everyone," presents a collection of case studies worked on by 39 experts from EU member states. It includes good practices and recommendations regarding visions of the city.

According to this report, one of the criteria for a quality living space is that it should not only be functional, ecological, or cost-effective

but should also meet psychological, cultural, and social needs and generate a sense of belonging.

European architecture policies began 20 years ago, and their foundation is based on two pillars: the Council of Europe, which encouraged the European Commission and member states to promote quality in architecture, and the launch of the European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture in 2001.

Decision-makers are aware of culture-driven transformations. Culture transformation programs should belong to the cities, not the political decision-makers. Those who genuinely want to transform cities through culture must ensure that each initiative arises from the needs of citizens, the people living in the city, and that these needs then become the focus of discussions in public administration. It is a process of continuous adaptation.

Born in 1976 in Barcelona, Ivan Blasi studied architecture at the Barcelona Architecture School (ETSAB-UPC) where he graduated in 2002. He co-founded the architecture studio 100to Arquitectura in 2003 and has taught at the Barcelona Architecture Centre since 2005, concentrating on 20th Century Architecture and Contemporary Architecture in Europe. He collaborated in several programs of Docomomo Ibérico (2007-2010) and was Secretary General of Docomomo International between 2010 and 2015. He is the curator of programs and prizes at the Mies van der Rohe Foundation in Barcelona where he oversees the EU Mies van der Rohe Award and the interventions in the Barcelona Pavilion.



Gruia Bădescu

Researcher at the University of Konstanz &
Urban Development Expert at CRIDL

Timișoara is a city with many layers of memories, one of the cities in Romania that has not suffered many destructions in recent decades, unlike many other cities in Romania that suffered substantial damage during the 80s.

We need to look at cities, but also at the culture in these cities in terms of how we manage different stages of the past. Timișoara is in a unique position that allows it to speak about the influence of an empire, of a nation. It is a very powerful thing, one that we can see in public space, in urban space, and also in cultural production. Let us talk about the empire, let us not ignore this aspect.

I think Timișoara does many things well, from the many vibrant public spaces, the interest in thinking about more such spaces, to all the

cultural programs that are good practices. We need to look at how we manage other aspects, such as heritage, and how we can improve this part. This is a city that thrives on the image of its cosmopolitan nature, but what do the new forms of diversity mean that the city has acquired, people coming from other parts of the country or other regions of the world? When building a new form of urban social space, you need to consider how you interact with these new forms of diversity, these people coming from other parts of the country or the world. Urban and cultural projects need to spark the interest of citizens and reach all types of people. If everyone feels included, we might see a transformation.

Gruia Bădescu is a researcher and practitioner specialized on urban recovery in post-war and post-dictatorship contexts, integrated urban development, and urban memory. He holds an MSc in City Design and Social Science from the LSE's Cities Programme and a PhD in Architecture from the University of Cambridge. As a practitioner, Gruia worked in integrated urban development planning in Romania, Armenia, Georgia and Moldova, as well as policy research, urban design, and strategic planning for the Center for Sustainable Destinations at the National Geographic Society, UNDP, the World Bank, Space Syntax Romania, and the Association for an Urban Transition. He is the vice-president of the Romanian Center for Innovation in Local Development. He has taught as a departmental lecturer at the University of Oxford, and since 2019 he has been a Research Fellow at the University of Konstanz in Germany and a visiting lecturer in urban studies at SNSPA Bucharest. He published extensively on post-war reconstruction in the former Yugoslavia and the Middle East, as well as post-dictatorship urbanism and memorialization in Romania, Chile and Argentina.



Ioana Dragomirescu

Cinema Manager & author of the Strategy for
Timișoara's traditional cinemas

If we think about a cultural sector that people say is condemned, unwanted, irrelevant, cinema is the first that comes to mind. I am referring to the cinema itself, the building where we go to watch a film. We don't think the same way about theaters, classical music, or any other type of art performed on stage, but more and more people think this way about cinemas. Thus, the first challenge is to open a cinema.

Timișoara is a cultural hub for the western part of Romania; it is a vibrant city, and the quality of life in a city is not only determined by schools, roads, and public services but also by what you can do with your leisure time in that city. We strongly believe, both I and the public administration of Timișoara, that cultural

opportunities represent a way to improve the quality of life in the city. The two aspects are closely linked. Our plan was to build more than cinemas; it was to bring life to places that used to be the soul of their neighborhoods, which had been closed for 10-20 years, places that had created a void in the cinema scene in Timișoara.

I think it is crucial to recognize the merits of the people behind the projects and for these teams to grow. Also, I think it is crucial to connect the various public cultural institutions in Timișoara, to share experiences, technicians, resources, so that we all have access to these resources. It's not about money; it's mostly about people and skills.

Ioana Dragomirescu has over 10 years of experience in the European cinema industry and is currently the manager of Cinema Victoria and Cinema Timiș, the first venues which reopened in Timișoara, with three others expected to follow in the coming year. Between the years 2018-2022 Ioana coordinated the Elvire Popesco Cinema, the venue of the French Institute in Bucharest, one of the main independent cinemas and the most frequented single screen venue in Romania, member of Europa Cinemas. In addition, Ioana coordinated the French Film Festival in Romania, which took place in 12 cities simultaneously, and she moderates workshops for industry professionals in the cinema sector in Romania or abroad. Before 2018, she lived, studied and worked for 11 years in Paris, Amsterdam and Berlin. A graduate of Sciences Po Paris University, Ioana initially worked for Europa Cinemas and then for the independent French distributor Le Pacte, in the international sales and marketing department.



Iza Gajny

Architect, researcher, co-author of the Social Foresight 2036/2056 project within Wroclaw 2016 – European Capital of Culture

Culture and urban planning should work together in the development of cities from scratch. Architecture is just a part of it; the most important things are the connections between citizens and local, cultural events. It is also important for the private and public environments to work together to achieve these things. From my point of view, to create a vibrant city, which ensures a good quality of life, people must be part of this process.

Developers look at variety, at properties where culture and art are involved. These aspects increase the attractiveness of a place and

implicitly the investment opportunities. This openness is revolutionary, but there are many aspects to be considered. Urban planning can be stimulated by good administration, good management of cultural events, everything must be well-managed from a cultural perspective.

I think we need to think outside the norms, not keep public policies in rigid structures, be flexible in the public-private approach, have good leaders and transparency, first and foremost.

Since 2002 Izabela Gajny has designed and collaborated in the design of residential and commercial projects in the UK, Poland and Europe. She specializes in high-quality architecture in conservation areas and areas of special natural and cultural interest. Projects include revitalization and reconstructions of existing historical buildings. She has also carried out a number of projects including complex interior design in historic buildings. She graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at Wrocław University of Science and Technology and gained experience in leading international architectural design studios. Member of the Lower Silesian Chamber of Architects (DOIA) and of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).



Daniel Tellman

President, The Romanian Order of Architects - Timiș Branch

The Order of Architects has been involved in the entire European Capital of Culture process from the beginning. We are responsible both to our members and to society at large.

Romanian society is not accustomed to being asked what it wants. I think we need to emphasize communication, openness. From our perspective, these things have changed in recent years; the administration has been open, we have gathered resources, answered questions, and, ultimately, together we have managed to bring some social aspects of

architecture – and especially the participatory dimension – to the forefront in the European Capital of Culture.

I think that one of the main lessons we learned this year is about the rewards you get if you are open. I believe it is important to conceive ways to open ourselves and implement some rules of this process. The dialogue between the administration and the private sector is crucial. I think this openness will be revolutionary in the years to come.

Daniel Tellman is an architect and associate professor at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism in Timișoara with over 20 years of experience in planning and construction. He has completed projects in various fields, ranging from energy-efficient houses to automotive or pharmaceutical production plants. Over the years, he has had the opportunity to develop master plans and urban studies, conduct research, and be present in projects and on-site in heritage buildings or large logistics centers.

Since December 2019, Daniel has been a managing partner and senior architect at SUBCONTROL, a company specializing in project management, general planning, architecture, urbanism, and site supervision.

Panel 2

Decision-making in support of
culture-led urban transformation





Cities are about people. We build for the future, aiming for a public space that can be used differently by each individual

Cities, with all their complexity, are unanimously recognised as the laboratories of the future. Solutions to global problems come from cities, not countries, and depend fundamentally on local conditions. Culture is a people's right and as such a public responsibility. To what extent this is achieved for all depends largely on the city's vision and political will.

During the session dedicated to decision-makers, discussions focused on the role of public administration in guaranteeing the functioning of a healthy system of production and consumption of cultural content. The title of European Capital of Culture should be seen for the city not only as a series of events condensed in one year, but as a chance for reinvention, a milestone on which the administration can build its development strategy for the future. The cultural programme provides very valuable information about what the city is now and what it aspires to be, about potential and vision. It offers different scenarios and explores new possibilities for using the city in a human-centred way.

It provides an opportunity to test new models of public-private cooperation, new

financial mechanisms and to establish new multidisciplinary teams within institutions to facilitate partnerships.

All these should be encouraged and further developed.

There is still a need for creative bureaucracy and flexibility in the interpretation of legislation and guidelines to support the use of public space and available buildings for cultural and community uses. There is a need for the administration to be open to change and to take risks. To provide opportunities for public participation and co-creation of the city with the community. To invest in the quality of cultural infrastructure and public space, involving experts and organising international competitions. To put in place and to stabilize mechanisms to access funding for heritage conservation, with clear quality criteria, for the private sector. Integrate culture into the vision for the city as a whole, not only in the city centre but also in the neighborhoods. Decentralising opportunities improves cohesion, attractiveness and the sustainability of our cities and regions.

Panel reporting:
— Cosmina Goagea



Stojan Skalicky

Chief Architect, Maribor – Maribor 2012 –
European Capital of Culture

Maribor is the second-largest city in Slovenia and was the European Capital of Culture in 2012, over ten years ago. Undoubtedly, the title of European Capital of Culture was an architectural milestone for the city of Maribor, but the scenario is still unfolding.

We do not see the European Capital of Culture 2012 title as an event that spanned only a year but rather as a sustainable project through which many initiatives were completed from 2012 until the present. At that time, we established a long-term scenario for the redevelopment of the city's historic center and the riverbank area, a zone that is nearing completion.

The role of the city architect in Romania is crucial, and it goes beyond the institution or individual. It encompasses the structure itself because it is the sole entity, voice, or authority for public space. Whether it's a modern gallery or a historical museum, they have a leader. This leader "drives" the making of political decisions for improvement. However, public space lacks such a leader, which is why a structure like the city architect is necessary.

Stojan Skalicky (1973) graduated from the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Ljubljana in 2000 under Professor Aleš Vodopivec. He pursued his architectural practice at the TU Munich. From 2008 to 2013, he coordinated and directed urban development in Maribor as the city architect. Since 2010, he has worked as a visiting expert on spatial problematics of cities and architecture at the Department of Architecture, Faculty of Civil Engineering of the University of Maribor. Stojan Skalicky's extensive activities include various areas of work: architectural and urban planning exhibitions, journalistic activity, architectural and urban planning competitions, workshops and seminars, as well as the production of various architectural and urban planning projects across different countries. He is the co-founder and general manager of the company Arhisol.



Gabriel Almăjan

Chief Architect, City of Timișoara

I will talk about the impact of architectural competitions at the municipality level and at the level of cultural infrastructure, a very important aspect because the history of our administration in general has not emphasized it much in the past. Recently, we have become more open to qualitative selection criteria and have decided to transfer decision-making to a qualified entity, formed by professionals, to select the best solutions not only for architectural or construction objectives but also for cultural projects.

The first idea for me when we talk about the future European Capital of Culture is how we continue this process and how we scale this process from being a one-year event to being a city that enhances connections with people and creates opportunities for the exchange of creative acts and emotions. This means that our objective will be to promote a greater number of competitions, not only for large objectives such as museums, art galleries, multifunctional activity centers, but also for smaller projects in neighborhoods, interventions that are closer to the lives of the city's citizens.

Now everyone is involved in measuring the impact of cultural infrastructure on the quality of life, not only in terms of this year but also in terms of what can happen in the future. If we can measure this impact, we will be able to outline indicators of the quality of life that involve not only mobility, energy consumption, accessibility but also the cultural component of life.

Timișoara has an immense tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Last year, together with the Order of Architects, we discovered that it is possible to map and then open all spaces already built, which are not used or are in poor condition, to later become stages or places where certain scenarios can unfold, with minimal financial investments or interventions. In Timișoara, regardless of political leadership, as long as people discover as many of these spaces and possibilities as possible, this connection will make it possible for all this infrastructure of spaces and buildings to continue to be available to people and help them develop this cultural vector, which means not only artistic events but also connections and meetings between people.

Gabriel Almăjan is the Chief Architect of the City Hall of Timișoara. His portfolio primarily encompasses the construction of medium and large apartment buildings, industrial and office halls, multifunctional centers, entertainment and sports facilities, as well as the restoration of historical buildings. Among the main objectives of the Chief Architect were the completion of the new General Urban Plan for Timișoara, the restructuring and the digitization of the Urbanism Department, and strengthening the municipality's capacity to develop its own urbanistic vision for the city's development.



Ivan Šarar

President of the Supervisory Board of Rijeka 2020 –
European Capital of Culture

We live in cities that have a clear identity linked to climate, architecture and lifestyle. Tourists who come to a country don't come to see the country, but specific cities. In Croatia, for example, the lifestyle in one part of the country is entirely different from the one in another part. From this perspective, the state doesn't exist, only the cities exist. That's why there's the concept of the European Capital of Culture.

Cities don't just mean buildings; cities are about people. I believe that people are the most important part of a city. I believe much

more in cities with great people, even without great buildings, because great people can implement projects, policies, and investments. I have three messages: everything is about cities, these cities are about people, and the third one is that I believe in this way of public investment that doesn't rely on reason. I think people in culture and politics fear failure, and that's why the private sector is brilliant, big, and the public sector is modest and old-fashioned.

Ivan Šarar was born in 1973 in Split, Croatia. He graduated in Psychology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Rijeka, studied Marketing at the postgraduate studies of the Faculty of Economics in Zagreb. He spent entire professional career (since 1995) in the field of cultural and creative industries, as a freelancer, private entrepreneur, professional musician, music promoter, marketing expert and co-founder of several NGOs and companies. Since 2000 he has been employed in managerial positions. From 2011 until 2023 he has been working as Head of the Department of Culture of the City of Rijeka. During the course of 2012, he led the "Strategy for Cultural Development of Rijeka from 2013 to 2020". From 2013 to 2016, he led Rijeka's candidacy for the European Capital of Culture 2020. From 2016 until 2021, he has been the President of the Supervisory Board of Rijeka 2020 d.o.o. He has been awarded multiple times on national level for his work in marketing and advertising fields, as well as in the music industry.



Jorge Bonito Santos

Head of Division, Interventions in the Public Space,
Lisbon Municipality

We constantly think about public space not for architects or landscapers to have an amazing design, but as a stage where things happen. We don't want to have a very beautiful public space without people there; we want a public space that people use, that can be used differently by each individual.

We build for the future, and we need to do it very well and try to build our future together. It's not a matter of taste, of what we like or don't like, but about building the city together as a community.

This idea of good practice guides is quite important for us and for all the architects and landscapers designing the city. They can also give the public, the municipality, the chance to lead the process through example - not by imposing measures, not through strict rules, but through the power of example.

We talk about people, but one thing we must be sure we have is allocating enough time to talk with people. It is probably one of the best ways to ensure the future of our city.

Architect and urban planner, Jorge Bonito Santos has a wide experience in architectural policies. He has contributed to the realization of the National Policy for Architecture and Landscape of Portugal, the National Housing Strategy for 2015 - 2031 and the Urban Rehabilitation Area - Coimbra ALTA | Urban Rehabilitation Strategy for the Uptown of the City of Coimbra, receiving several prizes for his works. He has worked for Moita and Lisbon municipalities, as Head of Division, in the areas of Architecture, Urban Management, Urban Planning, Urban Rehabilitation and Public Space, and also as Project Manager for the Business and Projects Development Department of Parque EXPO in Portugal.



Irina Iamandescu

Deputy Director, National Heritage Institute,
Ministry of Culture Romania

We identified a gap in the heritage market because tools such as European funds, which are immense but sometimes perilous, cannot be accessed by private owners and ordinary people; only institutions with significant capacity can apply. In 2020, we managed to establish a mechanism with its own rules – criteria for quality – with open access for private owners, but not only for them; it is also open to public administrations and all types of NGOs, and so on.

One of the thematic calls for this instrument was for Timișoara in preparation for the European Capital of Culture 2023. This was an experiment; it was actually the first thematic call we had in this regard. We are learning as we build it, and not many applied, but

nevertheless, seven projects were funded at that time, including one from the municipality. Many of them were private owners who collectively owned a building in Timișoara. Cultural heritage matters; it is not just an obligation but matters for society and is part of economic development and community development. One of the tools we have developed for these programs is to analyze the impact of restoration projects on the community and the development of a particular place. It is something very new, and we haven't had this experience until now. Twenty years ago, the National Heritage Institute used to restore buildings and leave them as they were, with no one to use them. Now we have started to incorporate such considerations into projects.

Irina Iamandescu is an architect, lecturer at the "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urban Planning - "Sanda Voiculescu", Department of History and Theory of Architecture & Heritage Conservation, Deputy Director for Immovable Heritage at the National Institute of Heritage and President of ICOMOS Romania. She has been involved in numerous projects on heritage value recognition and its recovery in Bucharest, Cluj, Sibiu, Anina, Petrița, and others as well as in World Heritage protection projects – Roșia Montană, Brâncuși, Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Dacia. Her field of scientific interest is the protection of built heritage with a focus on the research and recovery of industrial heritage, a subject which she approached in her PhD research (defended in 2015).



Lukasz Medeksza

Deputy director of the City Strategy and Development Department, The Municipality of Wrocław

Strategia este mai mult un proces decât un set de documente și acțiuni fixe, trebuie să vedem totul într-un context mai larg. Este bine să legăm strategia cu principalele programe politice pe care le ai la nivel local, de exemplu. Trebuie să ai un fel de legătură în special cu programele autorităților municipale, însă trebuie să ai grijă pentru că strategiile și programele politice au funcții diferite.

Trebuie să verifici constant dacă valorile tale fundamentale și țintele tale strategice sunt respectate de politicile sectoriale și de investiții.

Sunt anumite contexte și factori care perturbă o abordare, factori care ne împing la acțiuni și decizii pe termen scurt: ritmul politic, activitatea competitorilor, o criză, stările publicului și tendințele. Astfel, strategiile trebuie să țină cont de acești factori, în timp ce încerci în mod constant să înțelegi viitorul și să-și păstrezi valorile cheie.

Singurul lucru pe care te poți concentra și pe care să-ți construiești o strategie sunt valorile tale. Astfel, cel mai important lucru este să vă recunoașteți valorile, să vă articulați valorile și să vă păstrați valorile.

Lukasz Medeksza has served as the Deputy Director of the City Strategy and Development Department at the Municipality of Wrocław since 2019. With expertise in strategic planning, foresight, data analysis, and shaping public policies, Lukasz is a key figure in fostering multi-sector/multi-level cooperation and linking culture with development programs. Lukasz is the co-author of the actual strategy of Wrocław ("Wrocław 2030") and is also responsible for shaping the next strategy of Wrocław ("Wrocław 2050", to be completed in 2024). He supervised the foresight for Wrocław (2022) and is responsible for the annual state of the city reports, which are the basis for the votes of confidence for the Mayor of Wrocław. He is co-responsible for shaping the relations of the Municipality of Wrocław at the metropolitan, regional, national, and European levels. Actively engaged in municipal and metropolitan networks at both national and European levels, Lukasz is a member of the Managing Committee of METREX, a network for European Metropolitan Regions and Areas. He is also the co-author of the Metropolitan Vision for Europe, which is due to be announced by METREX in November 2023.

Panel 3

Cultural practices as policy shapers and city-creators





Cultural hubs are the backbone of cultural dissemination. Timișoara can become a cultural exporter in the region

Cultural and urban activation practices can become real think-tanks for the city, often triggering the questioning of the existing situation and boosting an urban and political debate.

Usually, these initiatives involve professionals from different fields, collaborate with institutions, address local problems and find the most appropriate solutions together with the community they address. Sometimes they act as a catalyst, bridging the gap between institutions and administration. Their contribution is immense, from reclaiming rich socio-cultural heritages to reprogramming disused landscapes and buildings, to creating spaces that positively impact the collective wellbeing. The practices discussed in the panel exposed a series of values around which they are articulated, such as design for sustainable behaviour change, a life-centric approach, a shared understanding and a shared experience of problem solving, a shared risk or a shared sense of vulnerability through fun, joy, living together and building a community.

Public administration must ensure through concrete measures that creative capital and talents stay in the city and attract others as well. To encourage the cultural and creative sector by integrating cultural policies into the city's development strategy. To provide predictability for funding and space allocation for culture and community. Ensure that public space and cultural activities are inclusive, and be prepared to manage disagreement when it arises.

Panel reporting:
— Cosmina Goagea



Maria Charneco Llanos

Architect & Co-founder, MAIO Architects,
The Nursery. 1306 Plants for Timișoara

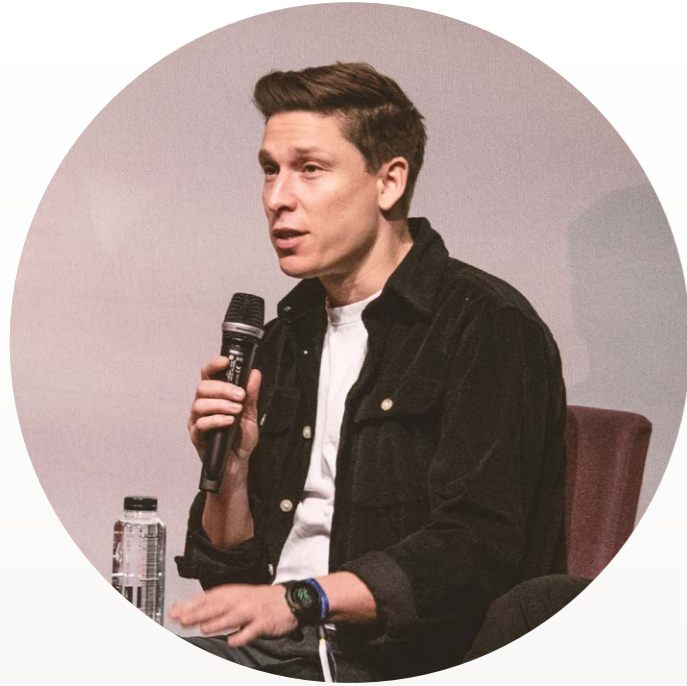
Regarding the role of architects in public space, I believe that working in collaboration with professionals, public institutions, private companies, and involving as many people as possible is crucial. I think projects like the one we carried out in Timișoara are possible only if many people join and make efforts in the same direction.

As for the project in Timișoara, we hope that something of it will endure. I'm not referring to something physical, but something at a mental level. We are happy because this project was

more than an object. We believe it was an important project for us, and we hope it was the same for the city.

It was a wonderful working process; the energy in Timișoara during this period was special from all perspectives, from project creators to the city council, and the people in general. For us, it was a unique experience. We were delighted when we realized that this tower had become a place for organizing events, exhibitions, and concerts, providing a different perspective of the city.

Maria Charneco (1975) is an architect and PhD candidate. She graduated from the Escola d'Arquitectura de Barcelona (ETSAB) and holds a Master's degree in Advanced Studies in Architectural Projects from the UPC. She combines research with professional and teaching activity and has been a content advisor in documentary filmmaking. Visiting Fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. She is currently writing her dissertation on Josep Lluís Sert, and teaching at the Elisava - Escola de Disseny i Enginyeria. Maria is co-founder of MAIO Architects, an architectural office based in Barcelona and New York that works on spatial systems that allow variation and change through time. MAIO Architects is the studio proposing the concept for the installation *The Nursery. 1306 Plants for Timișoara*.



Jak Spencer

Co-Founder, Urban Scale Interventions

The strategy for the next 10 years for Belfast has helped us align with the climate strategy, cultural strategy, urban planning, and so on. This was our starting point, working strategically with the Belfast City Council and the municipal council.

We feel like we have become an institution; you sense it when you start receiving negative reactions on social media when making changes in direction or taking certain decisions. This also indicates how important the project is to the community and the city, which is a positive aspect.

You never know what will happen when you open doors, and I believe it's an important discussion for which we haven't found all the answers yet. It's about evaluation, impact, and is a part of what we have done with museums and tourist attractions.

What we found challenging in our project was the lack of connection between administration and players in the cultural sector, and then trying to coordinate this communication to achieve our goals from the cultural strategy.

Dr. Jak Spencer is an award-winning researcher and designer focused on people centered innovation projects. He is a founding partner at Urban Scale Interventions, a creative studio that uses design thinking to support public and private organizations in people-centered innovation to tackle challenges in the places we live, work and play. With notable projects in Northern Ireland, the studio specializes in culture-led development in cities, improving wellbeing and mental health in public space and co-designing government policies and strategies. His PhD in design for sustainable behavior change from Loughborough University in the UK developed a framework for understanding and influencing behavior across different markets. In industry, he has led a diverse array of people-centered innovation and strategy projects for global brands including Google, Facebook, IKEA and Unilever. He is an established researcher, having led the Social and Global Research Space at the Royal College of Art, Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design in London. He has been involved in design research projects across the globe, with a particular focus on improving mental health and wellbeing, from Brazil to India and from Mozambique to Northern Ireland. His research interests lie in developing the methods and tools of people-centered design to solve difficult global social and business challenges. He recently co-authored Design for Global Challenges and Goals for Routledge, which looks at the role design can play in helping to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.



Bogdan Demetrescu

Architect, Co-founder & Architecture Coordinator,
Locks on Bega

With the Locks on Bega project, we focused on restoring the relationship between people and the Bega River. This river is crucial for Timișoara and the entire region. The project aimed to understand the river's value for the entire region, especially concerning relations with the Serbians, as the purpose of the canal 200 years ago was to transport agricultural products, wood, and so on, to central Europe. This connection was interrupted 70 years ago, and since then, relationships have started to weaken, with no such connections in the last 20 years.

One of the most significant outcomes of our project was mobility, reopening navigation on the Bega, a very challenging task for us. We want to create a think tank because we usually gather many professionals, and we want to collaborate with institutions, and this period is suitable for such a think tank.

In conclusion, if 200 years ago Timișoara was a port for transporting agricultural and forestry products, now Timișoara can transport culture to Europe.

Bogdan Demetrescu is an architect from Timișoara, graduated from the Faculty of Architecture in 2000, when he decided to look for different ways of exercising his profession in the country, together with the beginning of his teaching profession. At the moment he is a lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the Polytechnic University of Timișoara, being responsible for the course and workshop of design in the field of Heritage Interventions, as well as for the coordination of the sub-unit of diploma works on the theme of Hydrotechnical Heritage on the Rivers of Banat. In addition to his teaching activity, he founded the D Proiect office in Timișoara, with an activity of more than 20 years in the area of intervention projects on heritage and historical landscape, being awarded with several national and international prizes for his professional and teaching activity.

He is a co-founder and the architecture coordinator of the "Locks on the Bega" project, which aims to discuss the resumption of navigation on the Bega River throughout the entire length of the canal. The project also seeks to strengthen Timișoara's position as a cultural hub and port in the region.



Oana Simionescu

Co-founder & Chief Executive Officer of FABER,
Coordinator on behalf of FABER – Bright Cityscapes

This fantastic journey has transformed many of us from individuals into key pieces of a beautiful and powerful common story. We truly believe that addressing the complexity of our city and world requires creativity and the contribution of professionals in the creative sector. We do this every day; it's our way of working, even at a basic level. We hope that what we do and what we will continue to do will gradually become part of public policies and actions that our administration builds over time.

The people in the FABER team have experience in the cultural sector, and we knew that there was a great need for cultural infrastructure in Timișoara. So, we started from a local need. This year, we had a good partner in the local administration. What has happened in Timișoara in the last two years is a kind of miracle; the local administration suddenly woke up and began to support the local environment.

Oana Simionescu is an architect and manager, consistently concerned with how people and the built environment mutually influence each other. She has been an assistant professor at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism in Timișoara since 2010. She served as the coordinator of the Annual and later the Biennial of Timișoara Architecture from 2014 to 2018 (an activity for which she was nominated for the AFCN Cultural Management Award in 2016). Oana is also a co-founder of the collaboration platform F O R (2010 - present), a member of the Board of Directors of the Order of Romanian Architects - Timiș branch (Vice President, 2014-2018), and later at the National level (Treasurer, 2018-2022). She has been part of the teams behind projects such as undelocuiesc.eu (2016-2020), Upgrade My City (2016-2018), Triplex Confinium (2019-2022), and last but not least, the co-founder and coordinator of FABER.



Saša Randić

Founder, Randic and Associates

Rijeka is a former industrial city currently undergoing transformative changes, so the European Capital of Culture program was an opportunity to address identity issues. The project was not linked to new construction projects; the only exception was a building called Children's House, constructed from bricks.

A conclusion would be that the cultural aspect has a measurable impact on society in terms of economic indicators and visibility, which was evident in the case of Rijeka and also in the case of Timișoara. A second lesson learned is that traditional typologies of cultural buildings still function. Regarding the brick building constructed for children, parents say they like it a lot because it's not just a place where culture is consumed, but also where

children can produce cultural products. They have exhibition spaces, video studios with equipment, a library, workshops; we have created a cultural center there.

Cultural centers are the backbone of cultural dissemination and have been the backbone of social life throughout almost the entire 20th century, especially in Eastern European countries. However, for various reasons, we have stopped funding such cultural centers and have considered that cultural activities should take place elsewhere and in other ways. In conclusion, considering how culture is funded today and what funding is available, I believe we should rethink how we look at cultural institutions, carefully consider cultural centers, see that they are functional, and find ways to build them.

Saša Randić (1964) graduated from the University of Zagreb (1990). In the following period he joined the Post-graduate Program at the Berlage Institute in Amsterdam, where he got his MA in 1992, being among the Institute's first generation of graduates. Saša Randić established Randić-Turato Architects in 1993. Randić and Associates, his present practice, was formed in 2009. He has received several Croatian state prizes for architecture and was shortlisted for Mies van der Rohe EU Prize for Architecture in two editions, 2007 and 2011 and BSI Swiss Architectural Award in 2008. He has represented Croatia at the International Architecture Exhibition at the Venice Biennale twice, in 2006, and in 2010. From 2003 to 2007 he held the position of the President of the Croatian Architects' Association, where he initiated various research projects dealing with the contemporary condition of the Croatian territory. He teaches at the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Architecture and Geodesy, Split University.

Panel 4

Connecting the dots.
Policy, politics and practice
work together

Jordi
Pascual

Pablo
Otaola

Marina
Batog

Alexandra
Rigler





The most important gain of the cultural capital project is to regain trust as a working principle of the ecosystem of organizations, procedures, practices, collaborations

Through the European Capital of Culture project, Timișoara has rapidly developed, managing a vast ecosystem of organizations, procedures, practices, collaborations.

Timișoara 2023 has given people the chance to re-question their relationships with the city and society. A social network will have a significant impact in the coming years, extending beyond cultural production. This network of people and institutions is a sustainable and solid one, because it has demonstrated in a context of heavy demands from all directions and strong legislative dynamics, under pressure of time, that they can trust each other. So capturing trust is one of the fundamental gains of the year of the title.

The institutions, mechanisms and practices developed within the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme already form a reference system for further monitoring the transformation phenomenon in the coming years, both for Timișoara and at national level. It is important to open a dialogue with the rest of cities of Europe and the common shared guidelines among them, in order to consolidate strategic objectives at European level. Also, international framework make nations accountable. It is necessary to pursue linking the values of culture (heritage, diversity, creativity and transmission of knowledge) with democratic governance, citizen participation and sustainable development.

Ensure there is a city policy, independent of party politics.

Panel reporting:
— Cosmina Goagea



Alexandra Rigler

Cultural manager, Director of the Center for Projects of the Timișoara Municipality / Timișoara 2023 – European Capital of Culture

From the very beginning, we have had the support and trust of the local authorities, and I know that this will continue. We have managed to gain the trust of cultural operators, a relationship that we hope will be a long-term one.

We need a more stable legislative framework when it comes to culture and beyond, but this aspect is hard to control. This year, I believe we have had five laws that put us in an uncomfortable position; we had budgets that we couldn't spend, and at one point, we couldn't expand our team. If we talk about a new public institution, I think it is harder for them than for larger ones because it seems that every law affects them.

We have other plans for a Legacy programme; we are working on restructuring our institution. We have a team of experts working together

with us on a Legacy plan, and we will have interviews and a participatory planning workshop with all stakeholders involved. We have analysts and planners involved, and we want to do it fairly because the Timișoara 2023 Legacy plan has to be something developed together with everyone involved, not just by us.

We will do everything possible not to lose all the accumulated cultural capital here in Timișoara, and direct measures will be taken. For example, the municipality has announced that it will continue the residency, grants, and mobilities programme, with a significant allocation, a programme that will take place both ways, from Timișoara to other places and from other places to Timișoara.

In addition to her basic training in architecture and urban planning, Alexandra Rigler specializes in cultural management and production. She is the initiator, coordinator, and collaborator in numerous projects within the cultural and creative sectors. She has been active in the team of Timișoara Architecture Annual and later in the Timișoara Architecture Biennial Beta, where she became the coordinator for its third edition in 2020. She was also a member of the Territorial Council of The Order of Romanian Architects - Timiș Branch, the expert committee of the European Prize for Urban Public Space, and has participated in various projects and platforms (F O R, FABER, Creativa, În comunitate, De-a Arhitectura).

Currently, she works in the public sector as the director of the Center for Projects, a structure whose main purpose is the implementation of the multisectoral framework for non-reimbursable public funding, in line with local public strategies and policies.



Ștefan Bâlici

President, The Order of Romanian Architects

Architecture is a cultural profession; it is a technical one that must adhere to certain legal and technical aspects, but it is essentially a cultural one. Therefore, every architectural action should be a cultural one.

I believe that this year has been significant for the relationship between architecture and culture in general. We've had major projects, some of which have demonstrated how important and well-thought-out architectural projects can be, how crucial it is to ask questions, and to place people in a position to rethink their relationships with the city and society. That is what makes good architecture. There have been many projects related to architecture that have sparked new discussions and ideas. This is very important for us because it reminds everyone

that architecture is not just a response to a commission; it's not just about designing a building. Practicing architecture means much more and can be done from various positions: as an architect of the city, within a state organization, or within a cultural institution, whether public or private.

Architecture is not limited to buildings alone but encompasses buildings and their surrounding environment. This means it extends into urban space, public spaces, the local landscape – it is a profession that intersects with many cultural domains as well as the realm of social sciences.

This year, Timișoara has been a testing ground for all ways of placing architecture in the best positions to bring positive results for society.

Ștefan Bâlici is the acting President of the Romanian Order of Architects. He is an associate professor at the Chair for Architecture History and Conservation of Cultural Heritage of the "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism, Bucharest (since 2000), teaching architecture conservation, with a focus on archaeological heritage. He has been active in several professional and civil society organizations, among which Europa Nostra and ICOMOS, is a founding member and project coordinator (2006-2016) of the Association ARA (Architecture. Restoration. Archaeology), and managing partner and conservation planner with OPUS Architecture Studio, Bucharest (2001-2016). He headed the National Institute of Heritage (2016-2022), where he was responsible for the implementation of public policies and programs for the conservation of cultural heritage in Romania.



Marina Batog

Co-founder and partner, MKBT - Make Better

I am a professional in urban regeneration, and culture is a development vector in my field of activity. Urban regeneration involves working over very long periods. Thus, if you work in urban regeneration, you need to better integrate into the professional process the intervals of time in which you must be part of the process and see the results of your work. I don't think you can have a major impact in urban regeneration in many cities throughout your career, I don't think there is an urban regeneration process that lasts more than 10-15-20 years.

I believe Timișoara has faced the major challenge of developing in a short period, an immense ecosystem of organizations, procedures, practices, collaborations,

essentially a social network that could and will generate a significant impact in the coming years, an impact that will go beyond cultural production. This is the most valuable result of any European Capital of Culture competition. You have to work for this competition, and after this exercise, you are stronger for the work that comes next.

You cannot help but be impressed by this connection between the city and nature, as well as the industrial heritage that the city has. I would like to continue collaborating with Timișoara; I believe it is important to be part of this fraternity in western Romania, and I think there is much to learn from Timișoara's experience.

Marina Batog is a development professional specializing in planning and local economic development. Over the past 15 years, she has done extensive grassroots work across Romania assisting communities in participatory strategic planning processes. At the same time, she collaborated with international organizations such as UNDP, the World Bank and the Council of Europe in policy design and evaluation processes in the field of integrated planning, urban regeneration and housing, serving government and local authority counterparts. She is co-founder and currently coordinator of Bucharest-based MKBT, an organization dedicated to innovation in the practice of urban regeneration in Romania.



Pablo Otaola

Former director of Bilbao Ría 2000 & director of the Zorrotzaurre Management Commission

I was impressed last night to see how many people in Timișoara were enjoying the city and the concerts.

Normally, cultural projects should be developed by the administration, by the public sector, with a top-down strategy. This is what we did in Bilbao with the Guggenheim Museum and other projects. For such projects, consensus is needed; a project supported by multiple administrations is much stronger, ensuring its continuity. The third thing is that I believe organizations are needed. We have created

many special organizations to develop projects, some public, some public-private. Also, we need to have a strategic plan, one with a long-term vision.

I have the feeling that people are starting to understand culture through the eyes of other people, especially through the eyes of foreigners. In our case, people began to trust and love the Guggenheim Museum after foreigners came and expressed their desire to see it.

Pablo Otaola is a civil engineer, specialized in urban planning and transport. From January 2020 to July 2023 he served as the General Coordinator for Infrastructures and Projects at the municipality of Málaga. Between June 2004 and December 2018, he was the director of the Zorrotzaurre Management Commission, a public-private entity responsible for the urban development of the Zorrotzaurre peninsula in Bilbao. From 1993 to 2000, he served as the general director of Bilbao Ría 2000, a publicly owned company with projects aimed at the recovery of the Bilbao metropolitan area through interventions that integrate urban planning, transportation, and the environment. From 2003 to 2004, he was the deputy director of IVAM, the Institute of Modern Art in Valencia. Over the past 20 years, he has been a consultant for various international projects, serving as a member of the Quality Circle of Euralens, an initiative for the development of the city of Lens in northern France, around the new Louvre-Lens Museum. Additionally, he has been a member of the jury for various international architecture and urban planning competitions.



Jordi Pascual

Coordinator, UCLG Culture Committee

Culture has transformed from a sector into a vector. In fact, that is what we have been trying to achieve in the 20 years of existence of the UCLG Culture Commission. We believe that culture should be understood as a vector of sustainable local development, and we have endeavored to use the best tools from each moment in our history. Every five years, we have renewed our tools.

A second element is the cultural objective. At the local level, it is very challenging to succeed in this regard if, at the global level, nations do not accept to acknowledge the power of culture and how culture interacts with all the other objectives that humanity must advance towards, to be more participative in achieving them. Meanwhile, we need to be critical of ourselves and prioritize the means through which we can contribute from the position of cultural actors.

I believe that a good path for an initiative like Timișoara European Capital of Culture 2023 is to continue to operate both locally and internationally. You have learned a lot, often with outstanding results, but you need to explain to cities around the world how the process was, what difficulties you faced, and what challenges you encountered.

If cultural actors do not have a presence in local and global debates, then we cannot achieve sustainable development goals. Without valuable content, sustainable development goals cannot be attained. It is not a personal issue; it is about the evolution of the entire cultural system.

Jordi Pascual is the coordinator of the Committee on culture of the world organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). The work of the Committee is based on Culture 21 Actions, a complete cultural rights-based toolkit on culture in sustainable cities. The Committee organizes a global award as well as a biennial Summit, manages a unique database of good practices and promotes a range of learning and capacity-building programmes for cities. As coordinator of the Committee, he is involved in the global campaign #culture2030goal that advocates for the role of cultural factors and actors in the UN Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, including the need of a Culture Goal. Jordi Pascual holds a PhD on cultural rights in sustainable development (University of Girona) and teaches cultural rights and globalization (Open University of Catalonia).



Closing



Ruben Lațcău

Vice Mayor of Timișoara

As for how we continue and ensure that the things we do are sustainable and move forward, this has been a topic we discussed even before this year. In most discussions, one thing I consistently emphasized was how to ensure that this will continue, how to ensure that this is a sustainable project, how to ensure that the things we do and the money we invest are not just for a one-year show, for a fabulous moment, but for something we will build, continue, and grow in the future.

One of my concerns, considering my responsibility for public investments, was that we would have a lot of spaces, cultural spaces, infrastructure, and that perhaps we would not be able to fully use them or that some of them would end up being neglected. But this year demonstrated that the energy and resources within the city exist to bring them to life and fill them with real actions.

The political will of this administration in Timișoara is what created the possibility for

this capital of culture to function as it did. Political will created an institution, the Center for Projects of Timișoara Municipality, and allocated 20 million Euro to spend on the capital of culture in the last two years, ensuring at the same time the artistic independence of the cultural content.

I feel that Timișoara is now functioning as a place where the creative energies and cultural sector of Romania can find a space to grow, where they can find an open, strategic environment, but one that also considers sustainability in this field.

This year, Timișoara had the chance to truly see itself, to be recognized, to see that it is a beautiful city, that it has resources, a year in which it was validated by others. We feel like a true cultural city in Romania, a real economic power, a real intellectual hub of Romania, and now we need to build on this foundation and continue at this pace. It is very important for us to continue this endeavour.

Ruben Lațcău is Deputy Mayor of Timișoara, responsible for investments, urban regeneration, public transport and building infrastructure. His experience includes complex project management, coordination of large teams and sustainable urban development, which he uses to gradually change the face of the city. Prior to serving as Deputy Mayor, Ruben held senior positions in the automotive industry, where he gained over 12 years of experience managing teams of engineers, budgets and project timelines. He strongly believes that all public investment must contribute to creating a people-friendly and open urban environment. Passionate about alternative mobility, Ruben Lațcău is an advocate of cycling as a means of transport and is often seen cycling to work.



Conclusions

— Jordi Baltà
 Consultant & Researcher, Trànsit Projectes
 & Advisor, UCLG Culture Committee

This short text collects a series of thoughts on the basis of the contributions made in the course of the seminar “Vector TM: Culture as Urban Practice” (Timisoara, 8-9 December 2023). They aim to contribute to the continuation of a conversation on culture, urban planning, architecture and local development in Timisoara.

I was inspired by the words of Gruia Bădescu, in the opening plenary, regarding how cities develop through a multiplicity of layers that have accumulated over the years and centuries. This led me to consider to what extent the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) in Timisoara 2023 could be one such layer. And, if this is the case, **what is the legacy or the sediment that we would like it to leave**, and how it could dialogue with other, previous layers.

Of course, before further considering the legacy that this layer could leave, it is important to stress that the ECoC should be seen not exclusively a year, but rather as a process, with elements that started earlier and others that will continue later. I would also like to suggest that, potentially, the legacy of this period could combine some tangible changes in the landscape and the built environment of the city (e.g. new cultural facilities and spaces) and, maybe more importantly, new ways to conceive and think of the city, in its intangible

dimension. And it is also important to note that what we present here are somehow aspirations, partly based on what has been emerging or which exists at the small scale, and partly based on what other cities tell us that Timisoara could aim for.

So this layer could be about:

- About **seeing culture and arts activities as a space that builds the city**, and contributes to thinking about the city and owning the city – broadening the traditional scope of culture and ensuring that it caters to different tastes and activities.
- About **seeing cultural heritage as something valuable for a diverse range of reasons** (cultural, social, etc.) that needs to be preserved and made relevant to contemporary life.
- About **seeing architecture and urban design as a cultural practice**, that integrates good building quality, a sense of aesthetics, adaptation to social context, and cultural relevance, thus leading to ownership.
- About making sure that **public space and cultural activities are inclusive** and can allow to address urban frictions and somehow mending them.

- About **developing common visions between public, private and CSO actors**, insofar as possible – on the understanding that, despite their differences, there can also be some common causes.
- About **seeing public space as a commons, a shared space**, where people can mix and feel safe, and which contributes to the building of citizenship.
- About **active participation and co-creation** of processes and projects by communities.
- About **giving a sense of purpose to the new interventions that affect public spaces**, specifying why new developments are launched, but also allowing them to evolve in interaction with the context.
- About exploring **how urban life relates to the natural environment**, in more sustainable ways.
- About **decentralising opportunities** for cultural participation and enjoyment of public space, making sure that good design reaches neighbourhoods too.

What is needed to achieve this? What follows here are some of the **specific actions, measures and factors that could be needed** to enable the legacy of Timisoara 2023, as

described above, to emerge. In listing them, we are also identifying implicitly some of the challenges and obstacles that may hinder such developments.

- **Take advantage of the energy and the learnings** that the year has generated – don't lose the momentum but understand this as a stepping stone to continue.
- Ensure there's **political will to maintain the momentum** and build on it, and that this is seen **as a city policy**, independent of party politics.
- Fully **integrate culture in the vision of the city and its aspirations**, connecting it with sustainable development, and **develop a cultural policy** accordingly, which includes new infrastructural developments where they are necessary and can be made sustainable.
- **Address legislation and guidelines**, so that there can be **flexibility** in the interpretation of norms for new, justified uses of public space and cultural development, and that **guidelines for public space** recognise cultural and social values.
- **Convince the gatekeepers and involve those who can enable change** –this includes leading politicians, bureaucrats

who understand the value that culture brings to transforming societies, city architects understood as people with foresight and a willingness and ability to test new approaches.

- **Establish permanent teams that facilitate projects**, with appropriate human, technical and financial resources.
- Allocate some form of **funding to take risks and innovate**, ensure that there continue to be opportunities to be creative.
- **Build capacities of those who need to facilitate and produce culture in the city** – including collaborative skills and ensuring that the skills developed in the learning process that has been the ECoC continue to be relevant.
- Ensure that there are **good opportunities for networking, collaborations, partnership and building trust**.
- Ensure that projects and programmes invest in **real participatory opportunities for communities**.
- Make sure that **urban planning takes into account art** as an element to improve the experience of the city.

- Maintain the willingness to **take advantage of unused spaces** where this allows to innovate in the ownership of the city, in terms of participatory projects, ephemeral initiatives, etc.
- Adopt measures to ensure that the **talent existing here can remain**, that **others can come** and that there are **opportunities for cross-border and international exchanges**, through events like this and other collaborative activities.
- Integrate opportunities to **record and make meaning of the transformation that the city is experiencing** (through suitable monitoring and reflection which is fed by different kinds of data, recognising different forms of knowledge, and provides useful information and knowledge at different levels, both for policy and for practice).

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Measures

— Eugen Pănescu

Vector TM offers opportunities to support the continuation and implementation of the 2023 cultural agenda in support of the creative sector, based on action lines from its own programme or derived from the Vector TM international festival.

The valuable discussions and presentations held during the VECTOR TM international seminar, hosted between 8-9 December 2023, indicate the need for a recurrent meeting, a Round Table format, organised and facilitated locally by the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timisoara. It will be a platform for debate, action and coordination, between institutional and non-governmental participants, to share ongoing or planned actions, to prioritise issues and directions for improvement, to strengthen the local ecosystem of relevant actors. Starting a regular system of communication of coordinated actions will create a productive background for integrating stakeholder perspectives.

As the Vector TM event revealed, the importance of the existence of and the access to spaces dedicated to culture are

crucial. In this respect, creating a system of facilities, including financial ones, at local level is a necessary process to support individual actions and to find the best integrated common path of those providing these resources. The path Timisoara is pursuing is to continue to be a pioneering city, providing a testing ground for public-private and public-public partnerships that will ensure access to various spaces for various periods, governed both for culture and the local community. The benefits of this local system are obvious and multiple, from hosting cultural production activities and presenting it to the community, to the sustainability of reusing spaces through functional circularity, to preserving cultural heritage, to connecting institutions to the cultural life of the city.

The cumulative and diverse measures contribute to a more consistent and lasting result, which create a climate of confidence in the cultural environment of Timisoara and attract both local public and private and international resources.

The institutional consolidation of the Project Centre, in constant connection with the

local ecosystem, is a solid and validated direction, to be joined by the public and private partnerships, the attraction of individual skills and a financial management system in the cultural area.

The actions and measures can be constantly quantified, measured and evaluated for better calibration and reinforcement of their relevance. The ingredients of a shared vision, generated by the Timisoara 2023 European Capital of Culture Programme, are already in place, the important thing at the moment being constant and continuous action.

The results sought through the Round Table format include getting to know the main actions of the participants, investigating the connections between them, shaping and affirming a local method of cooperation and a shared goal of continuing the legacy of the ECOC year, engaging areas of local society and resources to support the local cultural phenomenon.

The local community active in Vector and its spin-offs exceeds the cultural production areas, having the potential to attract economic players, further education area, social organisations and professional re-skilling. The intense local contact is with the administrative and political areas. The financial resources

brought in are of course welcome, but this type of cooperation is a two-way street for human resources, information management and catalysing administrative and political decisions.

The Round Table will provide support for the integrated consolidation of the contributions of present and future participants, based on the VectorTM model as a local think-and-act tank.

Institutional directions for action

Implementation at the strategic and executive level of measures to facilitate access to spaces for cultural production and dissemination, as one of the greatest obstacles to sustaining a diverse and independent cultural life.

Administrative and organisational measures

- System of public-private and public-public partnerships for the temporary or long-term use of publicly owned spaces for culture
- Consolidation of an organisation/entity dedicated to the management of spaces for culture (CdP)
- Promotion of a ceiling on rents and costs for cultural spaces
- Encouraging the private sector to form pan-organisations
- Strengthening local cooperation at municipal-county-metropolitan-regional level

Fiscal measures

- Occasional or regular subsidies to support cultural production
- Public funding system
- Exemptions from local taxes or fees under certain conditions
- Granting of residencies, scholarships, mobility and awards

Professional measures

- Survey of the potential spaces to be used for cultural production and dissemination - temporary or permanent
- Consideration of alternative spaces in addition to the established ones - adaptive re-use, spaces in the school network during holidays
- Building new cultural infrastructure
- Acquisition/Lease of medium/long term spaces for further cultural use (adaptive re-use)
- Encouraging the emergence of spaces for culture in private projects/developments
- Continuation and enhancement of competitive procurement of projects for built spaces and public/open space developments
- Continuing the rehabilitation of networks of dedicated spaces, similar to cinemas
- Developing a network of cultural-community spaces in city neighbourhoods

Mixed measures

- Public-private and public-public partnership schemes for the temporary management (10-15 years) of spaces, their renovation and rental on preferential terms to cultural operators, followed by the subsequent return of the spaces to the owners
- Platform and system of consultation and governance for art in public spaces

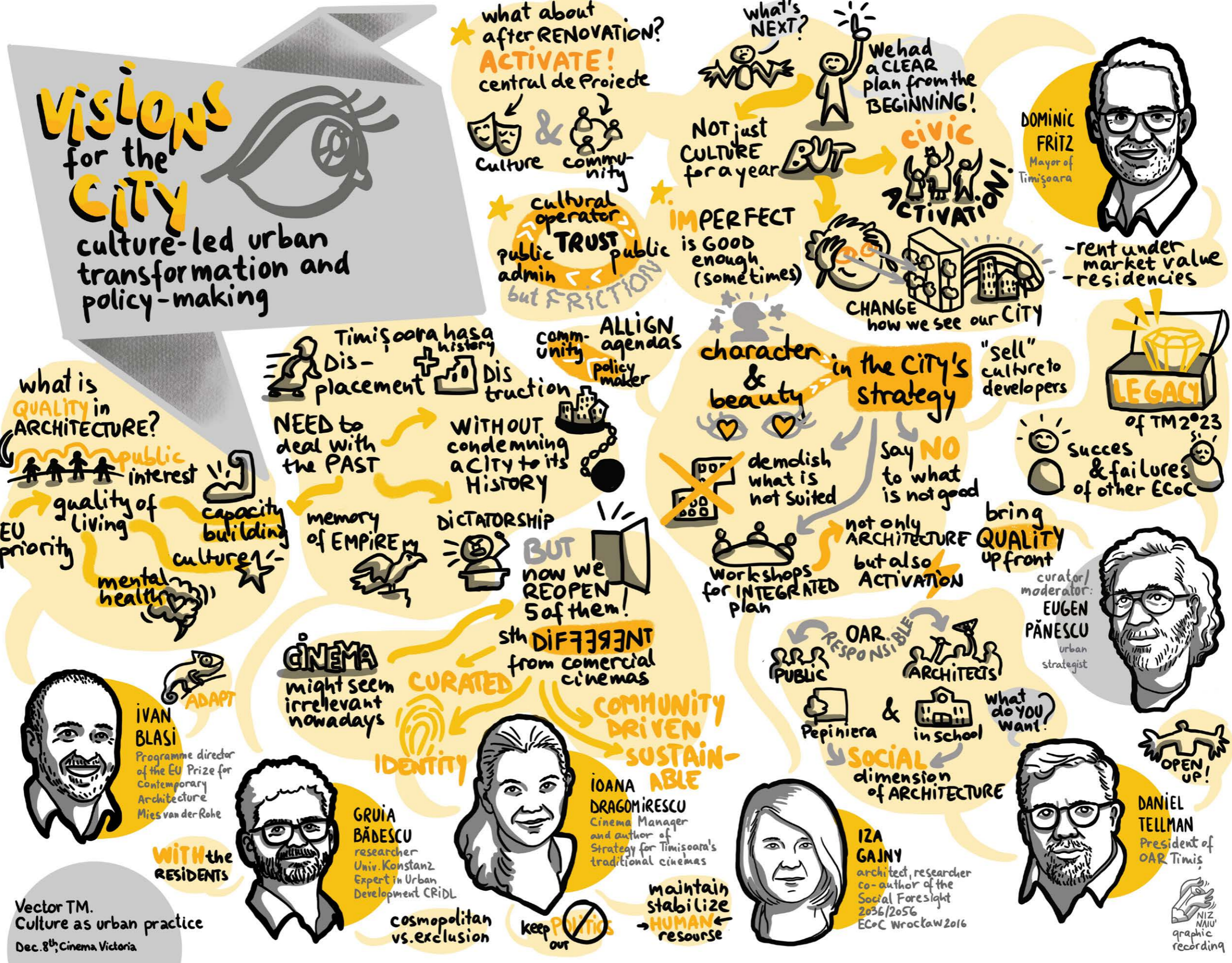
Vector Round Table

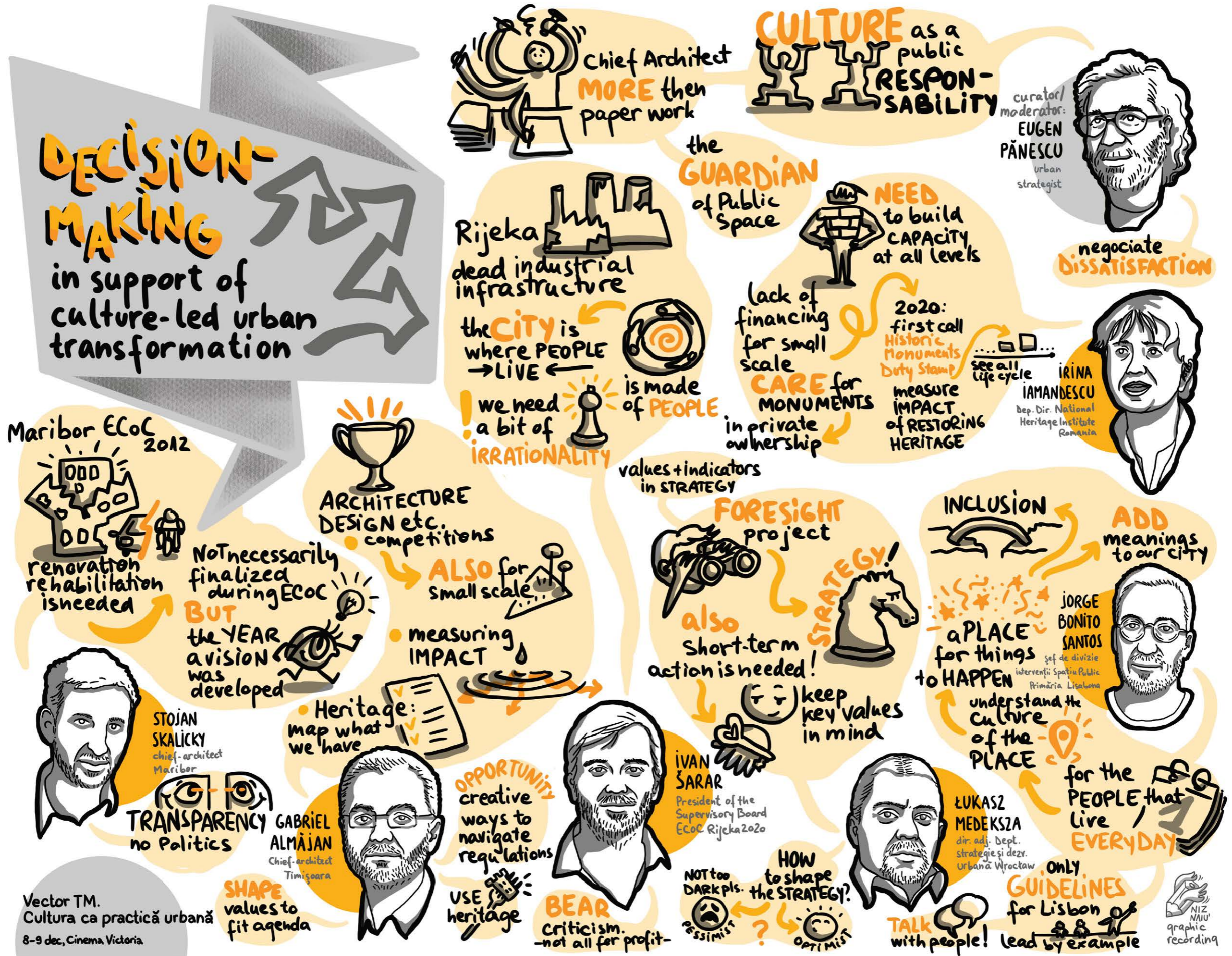
- Recurrent local system of communication, negotiation and governance - the Round Table as a method and Vector as a local think+act tank, a platform for reflection and action at city level.



Graphic records

— Cristina Labo / NIZNAiU





CULTURAL PRACTICES

as policy-shapers and city-creators

EMBRACE complexity

the ripples of cultural practices

institutions are **PEOPLE**

curator/moderator
EUGEN PĂNESCU
urban strategist



old industrial space bought with **OWN MONEY**
FABER
renovated + activated
hosted content + own content
DESIGN + **BUSINESS**
MUSIC

EDUCATION for the city

BEGA the RIVER

International Harbour in TIMIȘOARA
Let's **EXPLORE!** in and out of the city
open NAVIGATION
Connection to SERBIA
historical importance
cultural platform
PELICANUL restored
1000 km in 2023 on Bega

ECOC 2020 Rijeka

MORE programmes (less building)
repurpose re-furbish old industrial building
CHILDREN'S HOUSE
managed by **MORE** institution
a place to **CONSUME & PRODUCE** CULTURE = cultural center (for kids under 12)

TOP DOWN what Belfast could be?
BOTTOM UP BANANA Block Space for YOUTH to experience **CULTURE**
in deprived neighbourhood
POLYLOOP DIGITAL TOOL to connect
10 year strategy with city
A → B → C

URBAN KITCHEN platform to DEBATE FOOD
the **NURSERY** start with LETTER INTENTION
many wanted to join after

BOGDAN DEMETRESCU
Locks on Bega Timișoara



HOUSING BLOCK
DOUBLE DOOR connection to public space

inst. arch. org. → Think Tank



SASA RANDIĆ
Randić / Suradnici
Arhitektore Studio
Rijeka & Zagreb

can't predict how it will work



JAK SPENCER
Urban Scale Interventions
Belfast

partner with institutions but privately operated
want measured → hard to deliver

INDEPENDENCE
fragility
free dom

OANA SIMIONESCU
FABER & Bright Cityscapes
Timișoara

business income vs subsidised content
KEEP in BALANCE



MARIA CHARNECO LLANOS
MAIO Architects
Tree Nursery

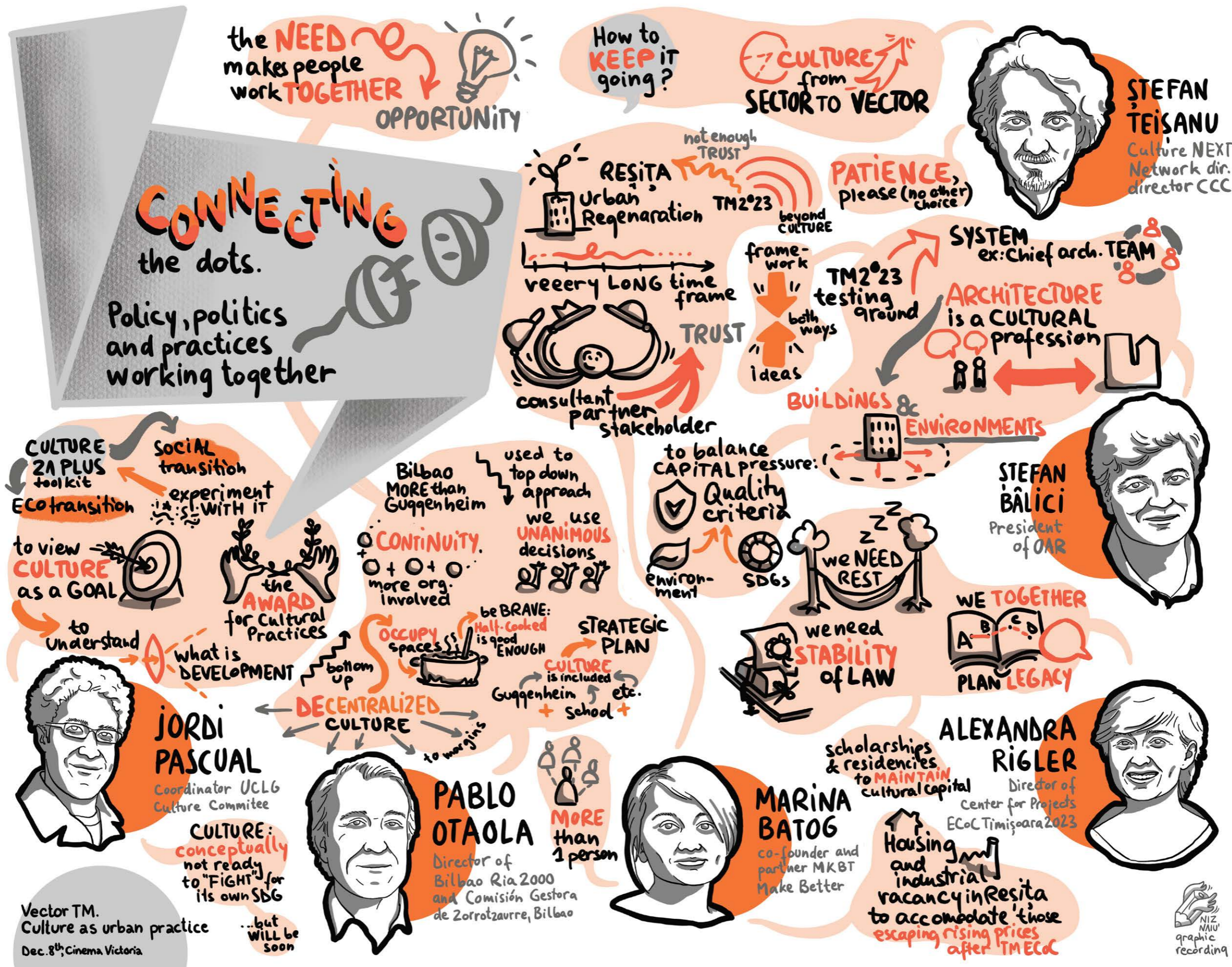
WHAT it leaves behind...

SELFIES
CONTROVERSY

how it **SHAPES** people

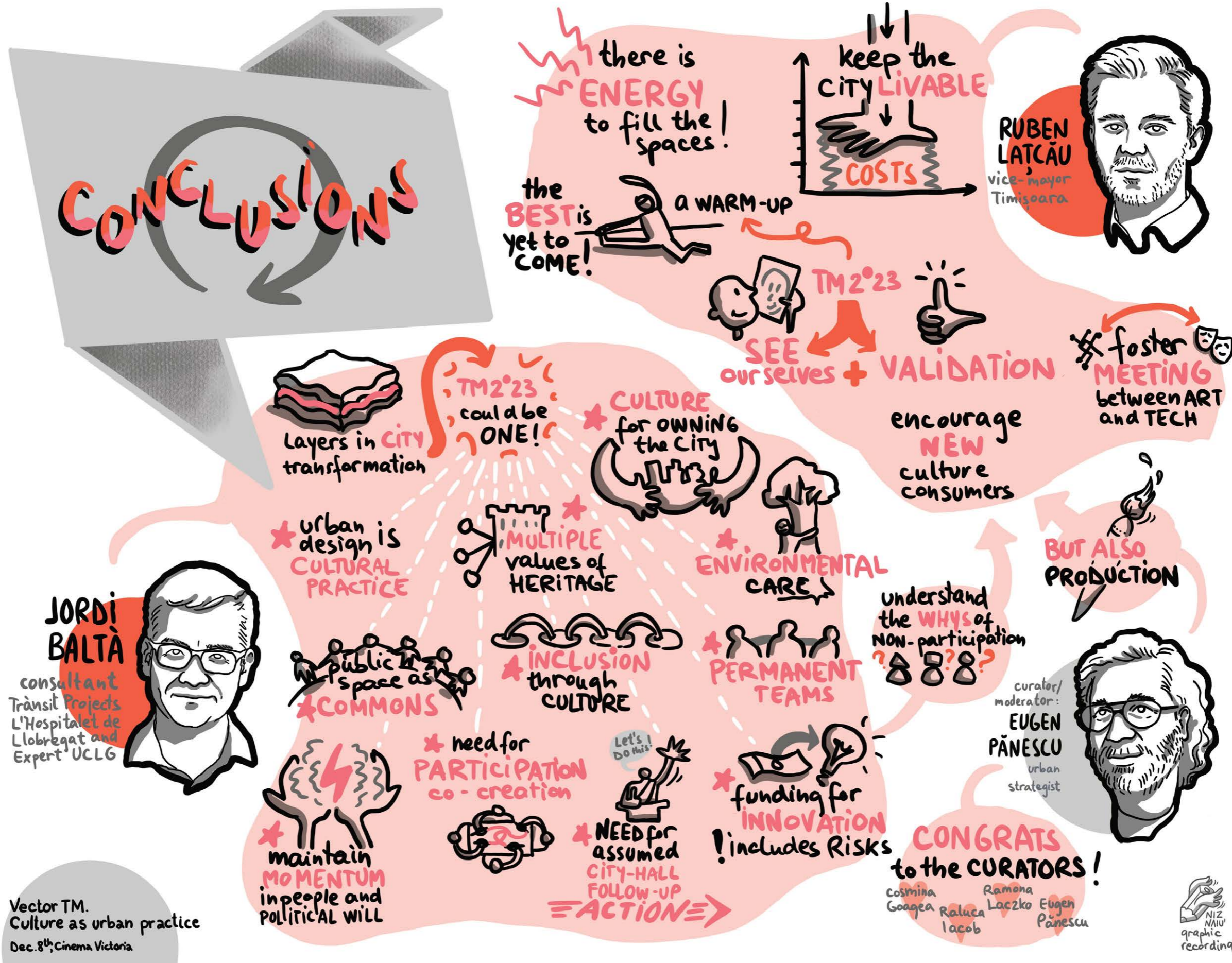
NIZ NAIU graphic recording

Vector TM. Culture as urban practice
Dec. 8th Cinema Victoria



Vector TM.
Culture as urban practice
Dec. 8th, Cinema Victoria





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Vector TM.
 Culture as urban practice
 Dec. 8th, Cinema Victoria



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The event is part of the Power Station programme, the component of the National Cultural programme "Timișoara – European Capital of Culture in 2023" dedicated to the development of capacities of the cultural sector and implemented by the Centre for Projects of the Timișoara Municipality.

The Centre for Projects is a public institution under the Timișoara City Council. It facilitates the community's access to resources and supports, from the city's budget, projects in the fields of culture, education, youth, civic involvement, sport and the environment that give life to a creative, dynamic and inclusive city. The Centre for Projects functions as the implementing body of the Municipality of Timișoara for the National Cultural Programme "Timișoara – European Capital of Culture in 2023".



**Center for
Projects**
Timișoara



**City of
Timișoara**

Vector TM. Culture as Urban Practice
Conclusions of the international seminar
Timișoara, December 2023