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Cultura e Salute, 3rd of November 2020

Digital transformation in the cultural sector: lessons learned between need, curiosity and resistance

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1. Introduction

Sources and references

- Pro Helvetia, observations and evaluations of Covid-19

- Discussion with various national and international funding bodies

- Diana Betzler/Lara Leuschen, "Digital transformation in art and culture. Approaches to action for the promotion of culture" (unpublished)

2. "The Digital Has Been Around for a While" (Nina Chanel Abney)

Artist Abney launched her augmented reality (AR) project Imaginary Friend on August 28, the 57th anniversary of the March on Washington, as Black Lives Matter held a protest in front of the Lincoln Memorial. Abney tabs into new terrain, already known for her vibrant and humorous paintings. They are st rikingin size and relevance, addressing politically controversial and emotional themes (popular culture, race, gender and history).

Quote:

"I am now thinking more expansively about <mark>what it would be like if one could enter into my paintings</mark>. What would an experience in that world be? It's very exciting to imagine being able to not just look at a work of art, but to be able to live and be within it. <mark>In a time at which our in-person social interactions are limited due to the pandemic, I have been forced to think more about the future of art</mark>."
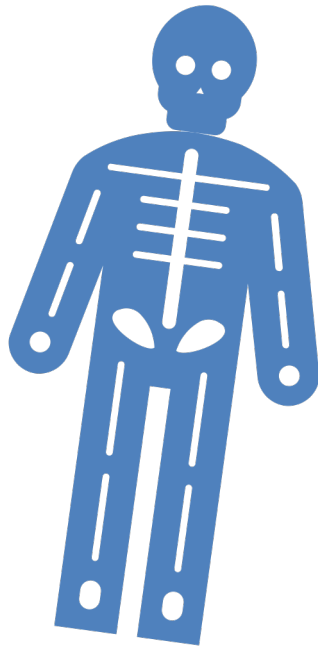
"Imaginary Friend" by Nina Chanel Abne

> download:
Acute Art app
acuteart.com/artist/nina-chanel-abney/

3. End of 2020: the reality of the real - from euphoric to worried expectations

- Cultural institutions are closed
- Mobility is restricted
- Access & exchange are made difficult
- Incomes are reduced
- Structures struggle to survive
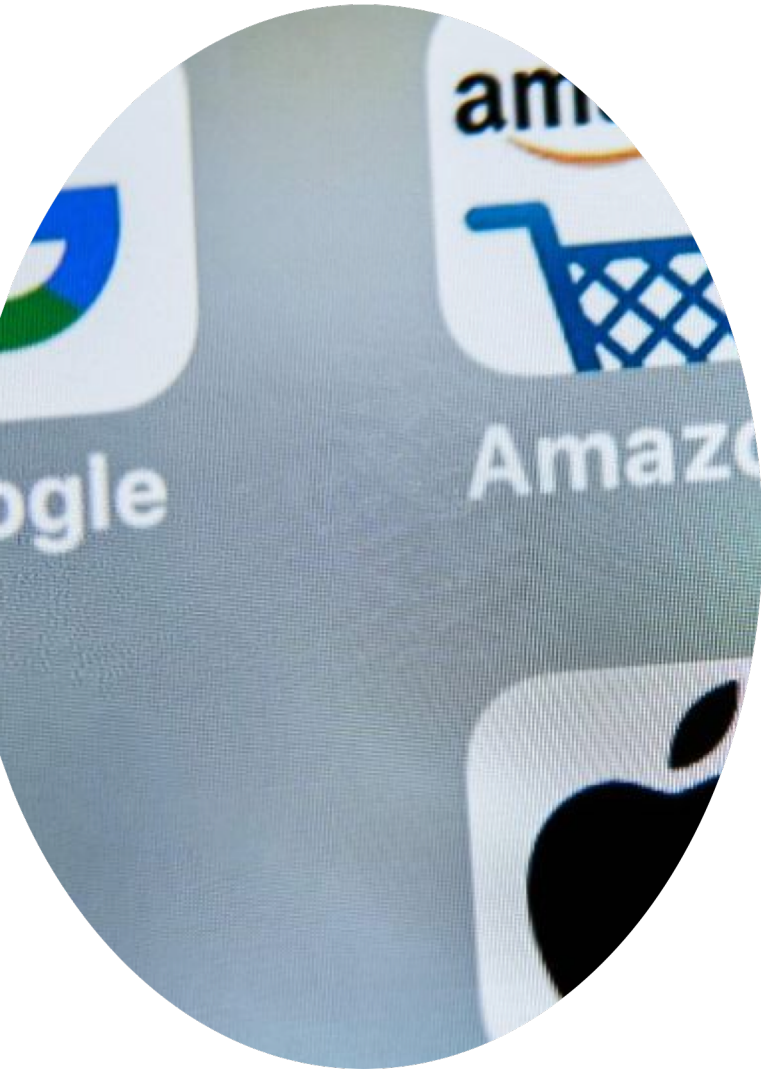
> from euphoria to anxiety
> from will to transformation to need to preserve
> from hoping for change to hoping for survival
> from emergency measures to austerity measures?

- Only human

# End of 2020: The winner takes it all

- Amazon triples profits in 3rd quarter of 2020
- In the third quarter, ==sales grew by 37 percent year-on-year to 96.1 billion dollars (82.3 billion euros==). Profit tripled to 6.3 billion dollars.
- Similar with Google, Facebook, YouTube, Alphabet, Spotify etc.

- [Article Der Spiegel](#)
- [Streaming-Land Schweiz: Netflix und Spotify auf dem Vormarsch](#)

Oct 21, 2020: Netflix

- Netflix has increased its revenue in the 3rd quarter of 2020, reaching a peak of $6.44 billion.
  - This represents an increased revenue of $1.2 billion over the same quarter last year.
- Netflix reported a profit of around 790 million US dollars for the third quarter of 2020
- The number of paying subscribers rose by around 2 million to around 195 million in the third quarter of 2020.

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what can art do?

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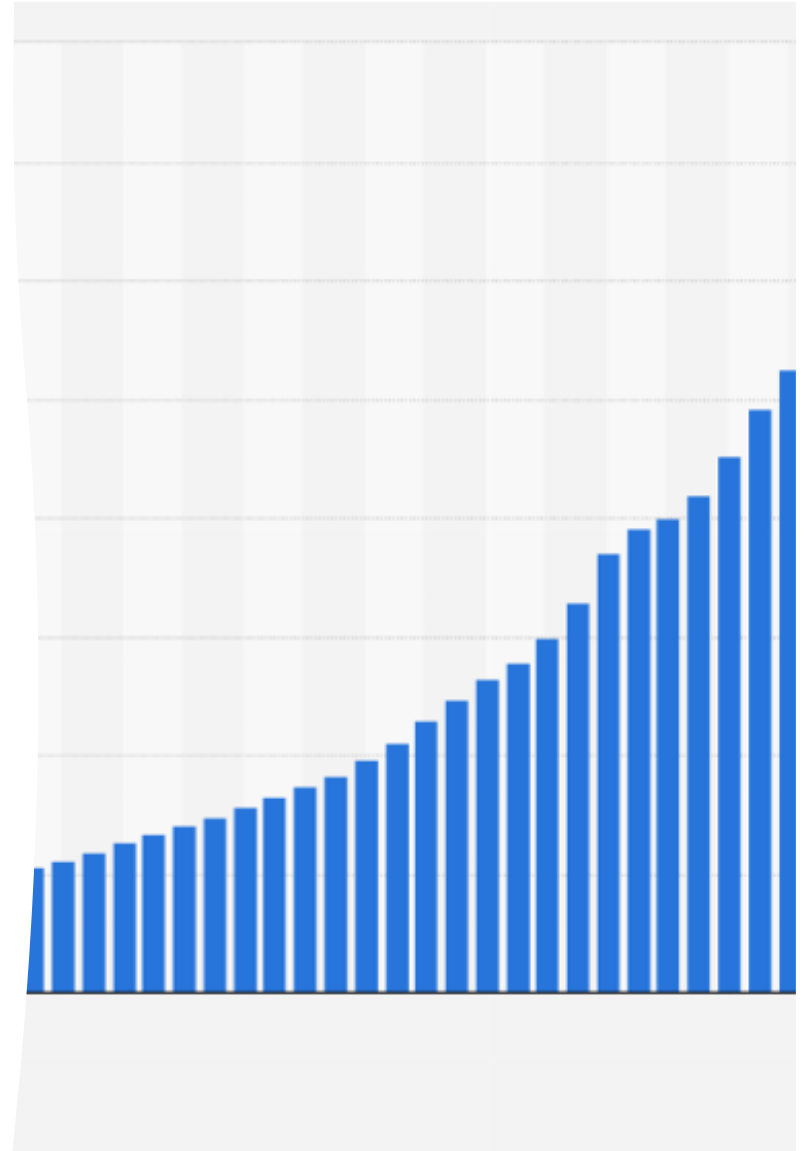
4. Good practice from Swiss Artists and Curators

Good practice 1: machina ex

> network theatre

- The telegram theatre play "Homecoming" by machina eX (s. Website)
- A live theatre game for home: In Homecoming, the audience* stays at home together. From there, they set out to explore a story that reaches far beyond their own four walls in prominent and remote places on the Internet, in live performances and chat sessions.
- A computer with Internet access, a telephone and a letterbox are required to play along.
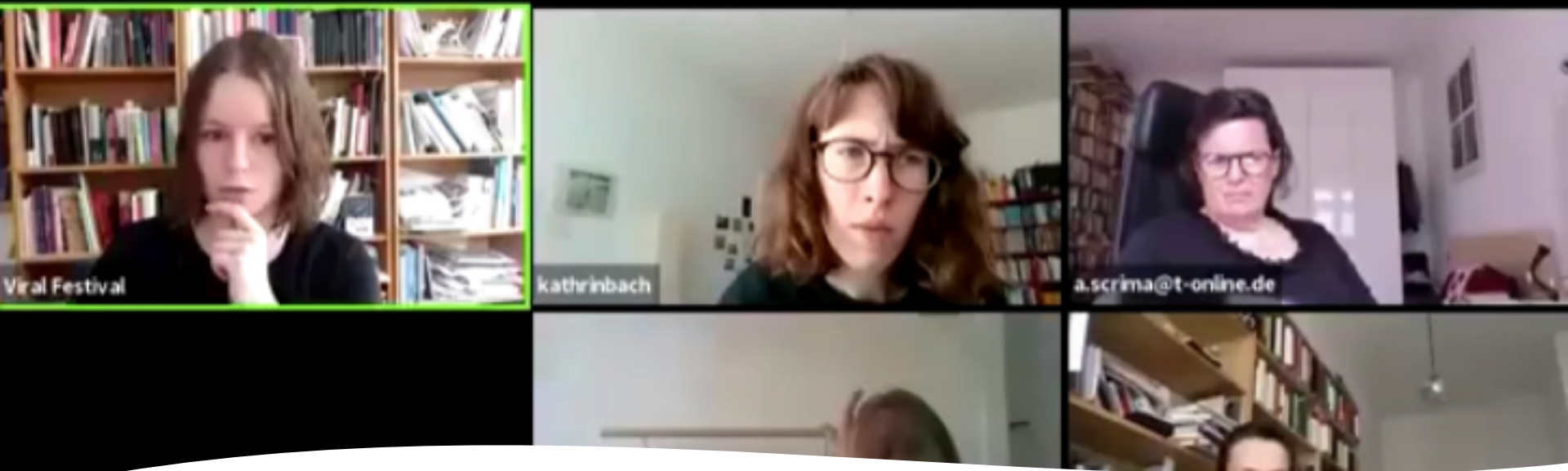
Good practice 2: viral

> online literature

- "VIRAL" - THE ONLINE LITERATURE FESTIVAL IN TIMES OF QUARANTINE
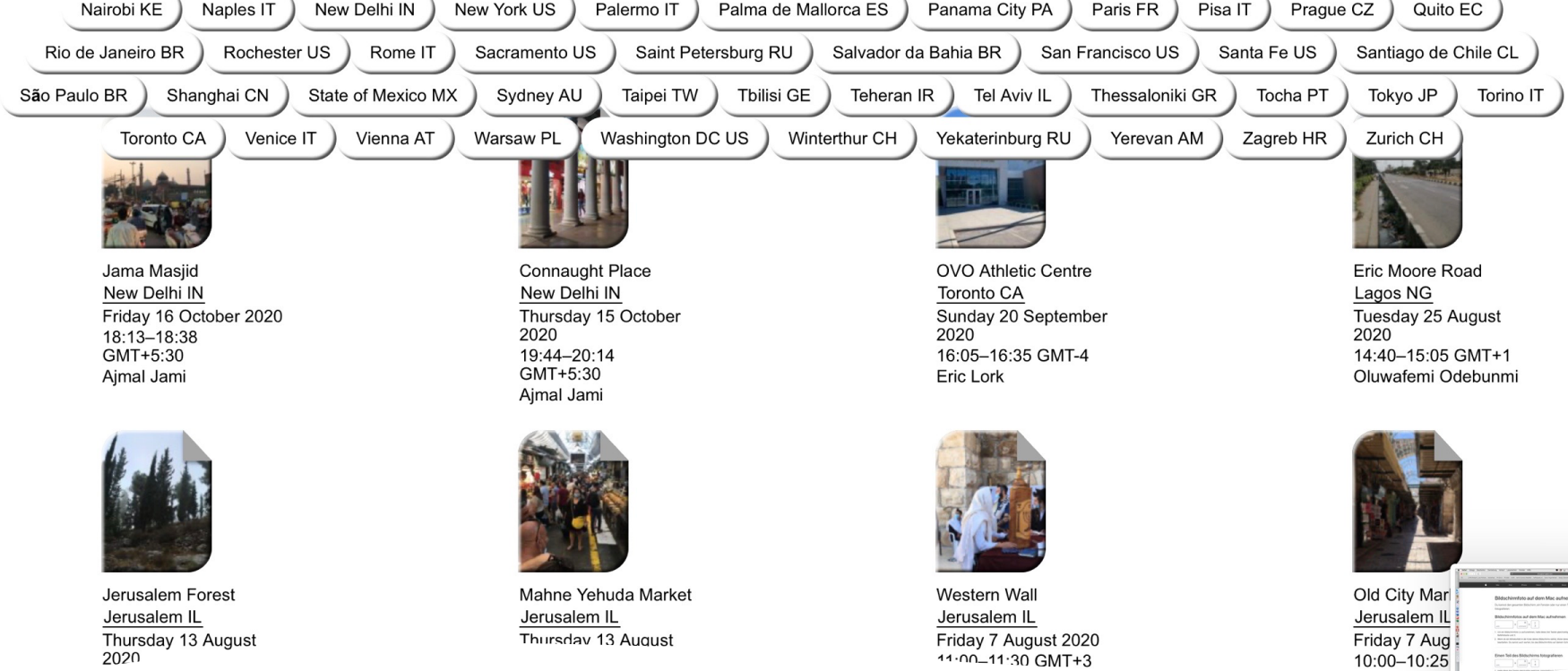- "VIRAL" - this is the name of the online literature festival in times of quarantine. Author Donat Blum has brought the format into being without further ado together with the authors Kathrin Bach and Melanie Katz. Together they present literature readings from Switzerland, Germany and Austria via livestream.
- [Facebook Site](#)

Rio de Janeiro BR · Rochester US · Rome IT · Sacramento US · Saint Petersburg RU · Salvador da Bahia BR · San Francisco US · Santa Fe US · Santiago de Chile CL

São Paulo BR · Shanghai CN · State of Mexico MX · Sydney AU · Taipei TW · Tbilisi GE · Teheran IR · Tel Aviv IL · Thessaloniki GR · Tocha PT · Tokyo JP · Torino IT

Toronto CA · Venice IT · Vienna AT · Warsaw PL · Washington DC US · Winterthur CH · Yekaterinburg RU · Yerevan AM · Zagreb HR · Zurich CH

Jama Masjid
New Delhi IN
Friday 16 October 2020
18:13–18:38
GMT+5:30
Ajmal Jami

Connaught Place
New Delhi IN
Thursday 15 October 2020
19:44–20:14
GMT+5:30
Ajmal Jami

OVO Athletic Centre
Toronto CA
Sunday 20 September 2020
16:05–16:35 GMT-4
Eric Lork

Eric Moore Road
Lagos NG
Tuesday 25 August 2020
14:40–15:05 GMT+1
Oluwafemi Odebunmi

Jerusalem Forest
Jerusalem IL
Thursday 13 August 2020

Mahne Yehuda Market
Jerusalem IL
Thursday 13 August

Western Wall
Jerusalem IL
Friday 7 August 2020
11:00–11:30 GMT+3

Old City Mar
Jerusalem IL
Friday 7 Aug
10:00–10:25

Good practice 2:
Veronika Spierenburg, mass files

> digital art practice

- "Mass Files is an ongoing archive of auditory urban landscapes captured around the globe. Professional sound recordists and artists were invited to capture a selection of their surroundings in sound of around 30 minutes in duration.
- Sound constructs political narratives – it highlights the invisible, the unheard, the wandering and the weak. Mass Files is a sensory exercise, a pause of unspecified length.
- This self-initiated project relies on donations for pursuing ideas and compensating contributors. All donations are very much appreciated.
- massfiles.net

5. Pro Helvetia: adapting to Covid-19 and learning from it

"Close Distance": Seeking New Cultural Formats

Why and what for this Call for projects?

- Covid-19 pandemic has drastically ==reduced mobility and stopped cultural life in public==.
- This situation requires ==innovative solutions== for the arts and cultural scene.
- What ==creative strategies and alternative formats== can be applied when mobility is severely curtailed?
- What ==role can technology play== and what cultural and social ==networks== are relevant in this context?

- To deal with such questions, the Swiss Arts Council is launching a call for projects «Close Distance»
- Pro Helvetia intends to support projects ==that are seeking creative and innovative ways of coping with the newly imposed distance==.
- The call for projects encompasses ==all disciplines== that are supported by Pro Helvetia
- Projects are wanted that ==initiate or intensify new formats== under conditions of restricted mobility.
- These can be ==new formats of reflection, international networks or platforms, or experimental forms of artistic collaboration==.
- Preference is given to ==projects that could be maintained== intend a long-term re-thinking of mobility.

- Call on Website

Facts & Figures

- Duration: 7 April 2020 - 3 June 2020
- Number of applications: 591
- Number of projects supported: 59 (approx. 10% commitment rate)
- Contribution rates: CHF 5'300 - CHF 35'000
- Total contributions: CHF 1'181'235

Supported projects
- German speaking Switzerland: 29
- French speaking Switzerland: 25
- Italian speaking Switzerland: 5
  > (In cooperation with international partners: 35)

- Visual Arts: 171 (18)
- Performing Arts: 138 (15)
- Music: 125 (15)
- Interdisciplinary: 78 (11)
- Literature: 53 (5)
- Interactive Media: 33 (2)

- 6 months later:
UNESCO exemplary nomination

Realisation of planned "physical" projects in digital form

Research

➢ **Home Not Alone Residency**
  - ➢ 3 months with financial and technical support
  - ➢ including the provision of a guide and 'critical friend' from the context that the artist would originally have been situated in
  - ➢ [Website information](#)

Plattforms / Promotion / Networking

➢ **Swiss Selection Edinburgh:**
  - ➢ Coaching und Vernetzung der CH-Gruppen
  - ➢ u.a. „Virtual Brunch" mit über 70 „Industry Professionals", wovon 40 Leiter*innen / Programmverantwortliche von UK-Venues und Festivals)
  - ➢ [Website information](#)

➢ **Swissgames Showcase 2020**
  - ➢ New mentorship programme to help independent studios access business opportunities
  - ➢ Swiss studios applied through video pitches which were reviewed by a panel of international experts. Each member of the jury chose their favourite games that they will personally coach via online sessions and introduce to potential business partners within their networks.
  - ➢ Industry matchmaking organiser MeetToMatch will provide additional tailored support and event coordination for the selected studios.
  - ➢ [Website information](#)

6. Good reasons for strengthening digital culture and competence: Categories and learnings

5 categories of projects (descending frequency)

- <mark>Networking</mark> between national and international artists and cultural practitioners (network formats)
- New <mark>approaches to the audience</mark> and the public
- New <mark>access/entrants to markets</mark>
- Formats of <mark>critical reflection and exchange</mark>
- Analogue projects in <mark>public space</mark>

Which formats should Pro Helvetia promote in future?

- <mark>Podcast</mark> formats
- Digital <mark>platforms</mark> for promotion and networking
- International <mark>collaboration</mark> formats digital networking
- <mark>Mediation</mark> formats that take account of hybrid forms
- <mark>Mediation</mark> to audiences without being tied to a particular location

7. Digital Transformation in the Cultural Sector: Next necessary steps in Switzerland

- Digital transformation in art and culture is mostly happening by accident
- Often institutions are behaving in a reactive manner
- The institutions lack competences and resources, but also a clear intention and public/political mandate
- Funding does not specifically invest into nor demand for digitisation
- Cultural policy lacks the clear will to invest and encourage digital innovation
- All too often digitisation is associated exclusively with archives and collections

- COVID-19 has been an accelerator, but:
  - There often is a "value gap" at innovation and production without adequate remuneration of cultural workers
  - There is a need of appropriate framework conditions
  - There is a need of specific public and private funding

Challenges for the Swiss promotion and funding systems

==Cultural Politics==

- No coordinated policy (across all federal levels)
- Very dispersed responsibilities and competences for digitisation (public administration)
- No official mandates of institutions via subsidy

==Ressources==

- No specific budgets
- Non-existent or/and very fragmented resources
- Hardly any specific competencies in institutions

==Strategy==

- No coordination of know-how and knowledge transfer (networking strategy).
- Large differences in activities, capacities, interests and political motivations
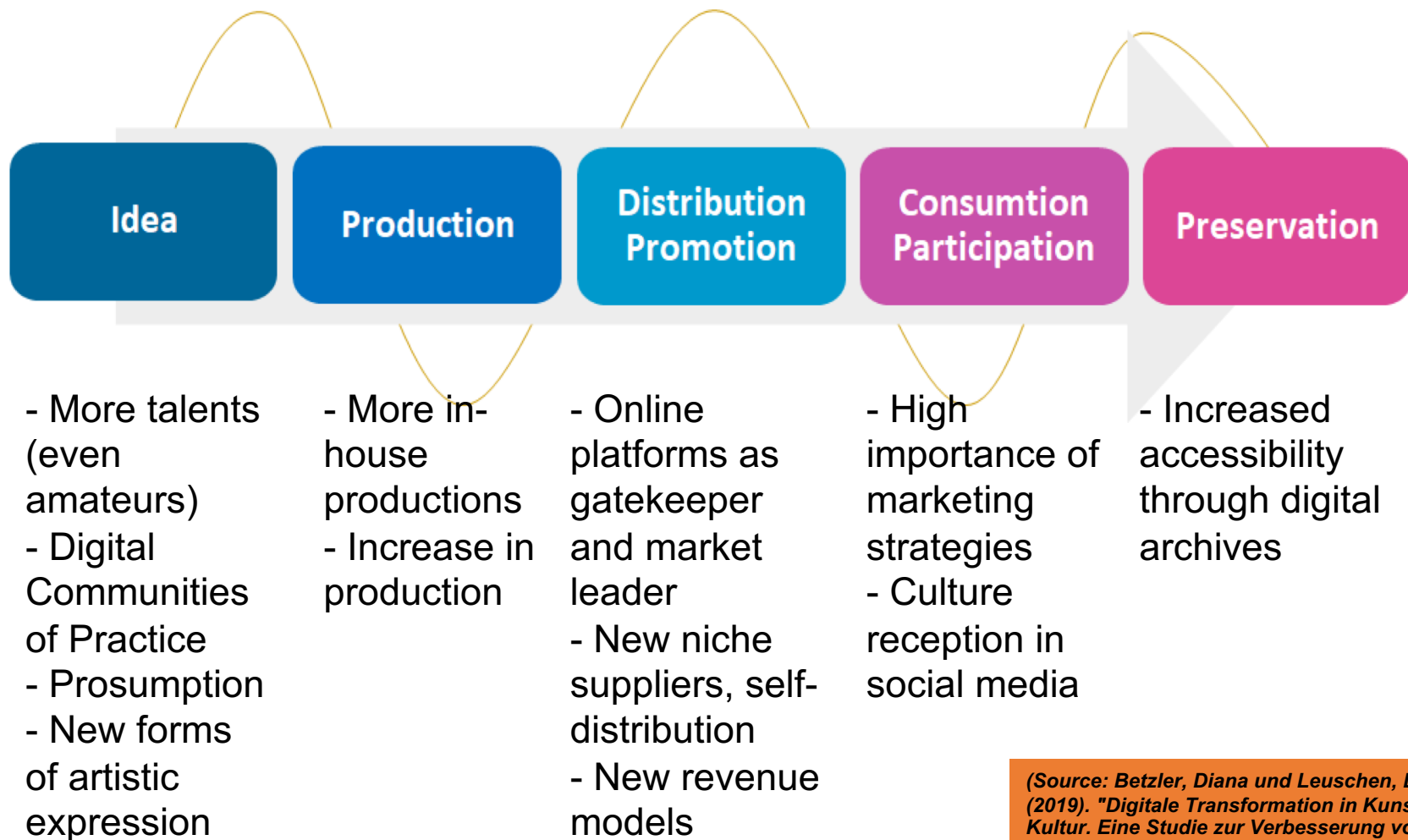- Resistance and scepticism towards new technological topic(s)

Key questions within Switzerland

- How can good, relevant ideas be generated?
- How do we want to deal with the increase in production?
- How should we deal with gatekeepers?
- How can cultural producers achieve higher/better returns?
- How can we achieve more media competence?
- How can we find common focal points (synergies through cooperation)?

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**8. Overarching recommendations and areas for possible involvement – and a ethical necessity!**

Thinking and acting within "The digitised cultural value chain"
(Dr. Diana Betzler)

Idea	Production	Distribution Promotion	Consumtion Participation	Preservation
- More talents (even amateurs) - Digital Communities of Practice - Prosumption - New forms of artistic expression	- More in-house productions - Increase in production	- Online platforms as gatekeeper and market leader - New niche suppliers, self-distribution - New revenue models	- High importance of marketing strategies - Culture reception in social media	- Increased accessibility through digital archives

(Source: Betzler, Diana und Leuschen, Lara (2019). "Digitale Transformation in Kunst und Kultur. Eine Studie zur Verbesserung von Produktions-bedingungen in der Kultur- und Kreativwirtschaft" ZHAW Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften.)

Recommondations for possible engagments
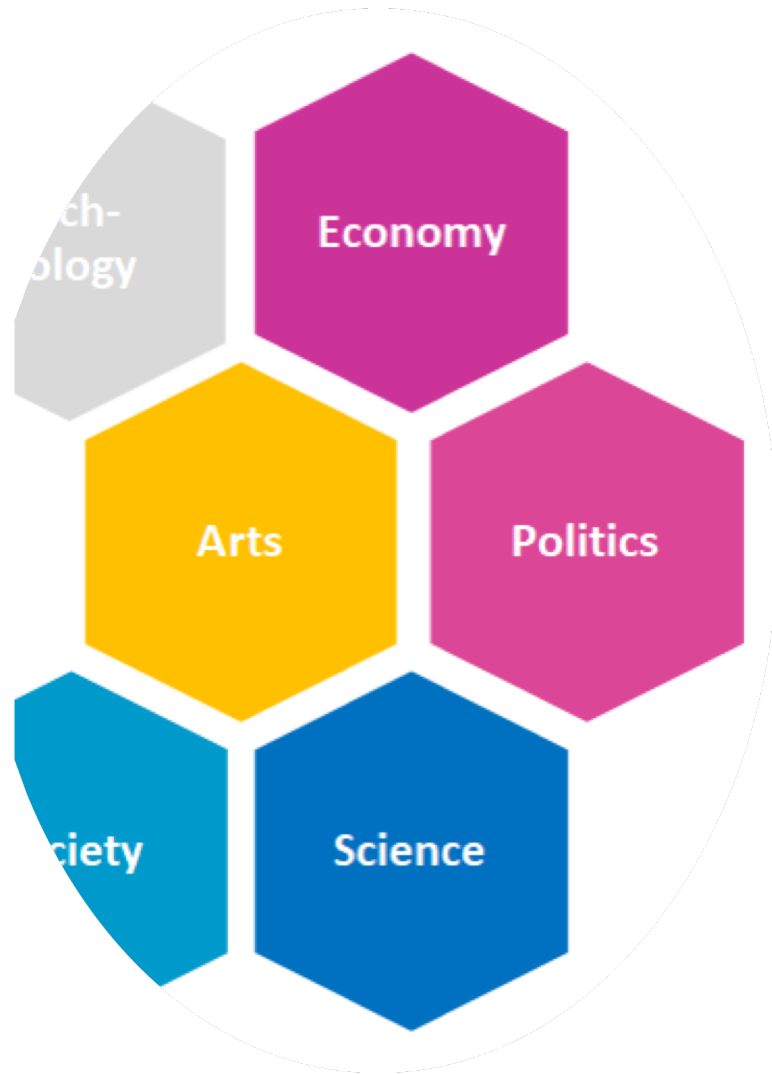
- **Platform** models (museums, interactive media)

- **Support and advisory** models for cultural organisations and projects

- **Business** models for artists* and creative start-ups

- **Alternative financing** models (e.g. financing networks)

- **Innovation** projects in digital art creation

- Guidelines for **Participation and Inclusion**

Thank you
For your attention

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9. "What does the digital say?"

"What does the digital say?"
(Nina Chanel Abney)

"What does the digital say? <u>The cultural logic of the binary</u> that is enforced and materialized through the digital increasingly becomes contested ground, a site to be broken up. For decades, this theoretical work has been done by the so-called disciplines of minorities: feminist theory, postmodernism, and poststructuralism.

They have <u>questioned the Enlightenment way of constructing everything as binary oppositions—nature/ culture, human/machine, Black/white, master/slave</u> (the latter terminology is used in informatics and software engineering, by the way), and more. But here I specifically speak of the practice, the actual work of programming. <u>It is possible to code differently, to build networks other than those that are currently authoritative, networks with "structures that privilege difference and inclusion"</u>.

I'm curious to radically think about and experience such a field. It calls for a <u>re-conceptualization of relations — between the living, the technical, the environment and the world, the material, and all of their intersections.</u> It involves the reinvention and recollection of and resistance to the world we live in right now."

"The Digital Has Been Around for a While"