

ANNUAL REPORT

World Arts Forum

July 2018 - June 2019



Impact Model

In the past year, the Forum has collaborated with many Cultural Leaders, cultural and scientific institutions, NGOs, businesses and media outlets to highlight under-represented voices and to call on leaders to take action on urgent issues. As part of this work the Forum has helped produce exhibitions, installations, screenings, performances, knowledge products and campaigns, employing its events, media and social media presence to foster local and global debate as well as action.

1. Why culture matters

There is a cultural aspect to many intractable issues from inequality to climate change. The failure to easily resolve them may be the result of fear, prejudice, entrenched beliefs, a collective failure of the imagination, and even exclusionary narratives. Conversely, these cultural dimensions can become the beating heart of inclusive and sustainable change.

Dynamic forces shape people's perceptions. These forces constantly interplay: our experience of culture, manifested in our education, arts, entertainment, technology and media; our sense of belonging, expressed in our values, ethics and group identity; and our behaviours, realized in how we think, how we see, and how we make decisions. This tension, critical to society, is what we can call culture.

2. A theory of change

The repetition of cultural experiences help to change assumptions, rewrite narratives, inspire new thinking and bring people in contact with new realities. Alongside this, they also have the power to change a person's sense of belonging and, in turn,



Tree VR, Annual Meeting 2019

their behaviour, which once scaled up becomes a process of cultural change. To create more inclusive and sustainable societies requires focused efforts towards cultural change. In this respect, the World Economic Forum has a unique role to play, reflecting its pursuit of sustained impact.

2. A. Theoretical basis

The Forum's work in the arts and culture employs the following theories and assumptions:

- Culture plays a critical role in society.
- The theory of awe: repeated experiences of awe arouse altruism, humility and kindness, which support inclusive societies.
- The intergroup contact theory (aka "Contact Hypothesis"): in appropriate conditions interpersonal contact is one of the most effective ways to reduce prejudice.

- The power of narratives to shape beliefs: narratives can lead a nation to war and keep communities in poverty, but they can also dismantle discrimination and energize movements for justice.
- The Overton Window concept: positive change takes place when what is considered the entire acceptable window of discourse moves towards inclusivity. Moving the Overton Window in such a direction requires radical thinking and action.

2. B. Activating the platform

In using these theories of change, the Forum employs four key resources:

- Our network of Cultural Leaders and world-class institutions. The network includes some of the most exceptional creative and interpretive artists working across disciplines. Within this are

cultural commentators, historians, culture experts and sports leaders, and each has significant influence at the local and global levels. Together these leaders and institutions work with the Forum, using its platform to learn, share inclusive narratives and develop partnerships throughout sectors.

- Our global and regional events, which attract leading politicians, policy-makers, business leaders, scientists and civil society leaders.
- The unique Forum network of stakeholders from across the world, with expertise in every domain and access to unparalleled resources.
- The Forum's significant media presence, including in social media, which makes it a media organization in its own right.

2. C. Delivering content

We use the platform to produce and distribute cultural content. This takes the form of curating topical panels, visual presentations, interviews, exhibitions, installations, workshops, performances, film screenings and award ceremonies. These are intended to reflect cultural tensions, prompt the questioning of fundamental assumptions, liberate the imagination and develop relationships. We also co-produce special projects beyond Forum events. Examples include commissioning, executive-producing and world-premiering the Emmy-award winning virtual reality film *Collisions*, by Lynette Wallworth, and producing the first international tour of the *Afghan Women's Orchestra*.

2. D. Creating impact

Using the platform to produce and distribute cultural content creates layers of impact by:

- Helping leaders learn and challenge



Mandla Mlangeni at the World Forum World Economic Forum on Africa 2019

their perceptions and assumptions

- Helping generate stories of change that receive global attention
- Enabling direct engagement by people at the local level
- Creating a feedback loop in the cultural community

2. E. Advancing cultural change

These layers of impact, taken together, can liberate the imagination and create an openness of mind that can contribute to changing individual and collective behaviour as well as fostering a sense of belonging. In turn, this may prompt the creation of new ways to build a more inclusive and sustainable world.

2018 - 2019

Our Activities

Events

Cultural Leaders participated in eight major Forum events: the 2018 World Economic Forum on ASEAN in Ha Noi; the Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2018 in Tianjin; the Sustainable Development Impact Summit in New York 2018; the Annual Meeting of the Global Future Councils 2018 in Dubai; the Annual Meeting 2019 in Davos-Klosters; the 2019 Middle East and North Africa at the Dead Sea; and the Family Business Retreat 2019.

Cultural Leaders

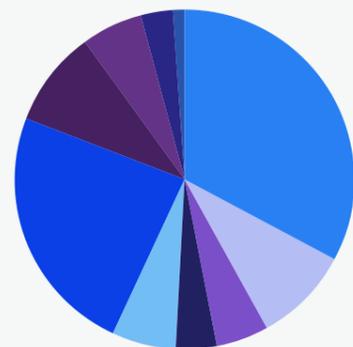
There are currently 173 active* Cultural Leaders including 22 who engaged with the Forum for the first time in the past

fiscal year. These include broadcaster **Sir David Attenborough**, naturalist **Jane Goodall**, 2018 global teacher of the year **Andria Zafirakou**, virtual reality filmmakers **Milica Zec** and **Winslow Porter**, video star **Papi Jiang**, science fiction author **Chen Qiufan**, vocal artist and beatboxer **Harry Jeff aka Reeps One**, photographer **Rena Effendi**, endurance artist **David Blaine**, Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year **Skye Meaker**, and disability advocates **Yetnebersh Nigussie** and **Caroline Casey**.

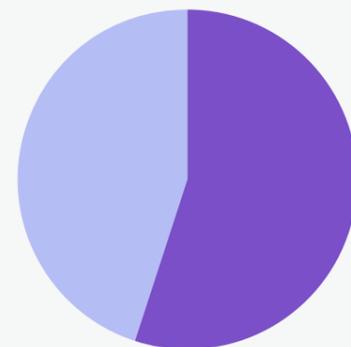
Institutional partners

Cultural partnerships development has included:

Cultural Leaders by region



Cultural Leaders by gender



Sir David Attenborough receives his Crystal Award from Hilde Schwab, at the 25th Crystal Awards

- The ongoing collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution, through collaborative exhibitions with new museums from the Smithsonian network, the joint curation of the Arts and Culture Transformation Map, including a new Transformation Map on Inclusive Design, and the engagement of experts from the Smithsonian's network into Forum events and networks, including the Young Scientists network.
- A new collaboration with the Natural History Museum, London, through the presentation of the Wildlife Photographer of the Year Award, and the integration of museum network experts into the Forum's Young Scientists network.
- Partnership with the Sundance Institute, beginning with a "Sundance

- at Davos" series of documentary film presentations at the Annual Meeting 2020.
- The confirmation of a partnership with the Ford Foundation for the New Narratives Lab, a year-long leadership fellowship for future Cultural Leaders, which will launch at the Annual Meeting 2020.

The 2019 Crystal Awards

This year marked the 25th year of the Annual Crystal Award. The ceremony began with the presentation of a specially produced video containing contributions from 10 past awardees ranging from Bono to Yo-Yo Ma and Shirin Neshat.

The 2019 Crystal Award was awarded to: music director Marin Alsop (USA), for her leadership in championing diversity in music; filmmaker Haifaa Al-Mansour

* These "active" Cultural Leaders embody the ethos of the Forum, have participated in one of the Forum's events in the past five years, are engaged in one of our related networks such as the Board of Trustees, Young Global Leaders or Global Future Councils, have contributed to Forum publications, and/or are active on Toplink.

(Saudi Arabia), for her leadership in cultural transformation in the Arab World; and broadcaster Sir David Attenborough (UK), for his leadership in environmental stewardship.

Campaigns and key topics

Cultural Leaders made significant contributions at many Forum events and to its media and social media platform, providing inspiration and thought-leadership on a range of critical issues. At the Annual Meeting 2019 in Davos-Klosters, Cultural Leaders had 68 speaking roles in 43 different sessions (representing 15% of the overall programme), sharing the stage with policy-makers, chief executive officers, civil society leaders and others. Sir David Attenborough's conversation with the Duke of Cambridge on the topic of the urgent need to care for our planet garnered more than one million live views alone. Nature continues to be a key topic highlighted through our programming and experiences. The Arts and Culture team also launched a major disability inclusion campaign to raise awareness of the need for better inclusion of the more than one billion people worldwide who live with a disability, tied with the #Valuable campaign to enlist 500 top businesses to commit to accessibility. Other important topics related to diversity and inclusion included gender equality, youth empowerment, and the freedom of expression of artists and journalists.

Programming also focused on the implications at the individual and community levels of two very different themes: the Fourth Industrial Revolution and cultural polarization. Several Cultural Leaders shared their visions for a more sustainable and inclusive future. See [A Conversation with Sir David Attenborough](#),



[The Business Case for Disability Inclusion](#), [The Female Icon](#), [Designing for Everyone](#).

Media and social media

Cultural Leaders enjoy significant influence through the Forum's media and social media platforms. At the Annual Meeting 2019 alone, Cultural Leaders received 9,000 media mentions and 1.8 million video views online.

The work of the Cultural leaders is highlighted regularly on the [World Economic Forum's Facebook page](#) (7.5 million followers) and the Forum's dedicated [Arts and Culture Facebook](#)

[The Female Icon](#), Betazone, Annual Meeting 2019

[page](#) (2,000 followers); the Forum's [Twitter account](#) (3.4 million followers); the Forum's [Instagram account](#) (1.3 million followers); [Transformation Maps](#) (150,000 users); a [quarterly newsletter](#) reaching 1,000 key actors in culture and the arts; and the [Forum Agenda blog](#) (6 million monthly readers).

Recent media coverage of Cultural Leaders and the arts and culture at the Forum has featured in the [BBC](#), [The Art Newspaper](#), [Forbes](#), [Bloomberg](#), [Corriere della Serra](#), [CNBC](#), [CNN](#), [The Guardian](#), [Deutsche Welle](#), [The National](#), and several other prominent outlets.

Exhibitions, installations and special experiences

The Forum worked with Cultural Leaders and institutional partners to produce numerous exhibitions, installations and special experiences during 2018-2019. Highlights included:



Access + Ability

Developed with the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Museum of Design, the main exhibition at the Annual Meeting 2019 presented ingenious designs made with and by people with disabilities, demonstrating that designing for inclusion spurs innovation and benefits everyone. The exhibition was part of a major campaign about access and disability inclusion spearheaded by the Arts and Culture team. (Annual Meeting 2019)



Tree VR

An award-winning multisensory experience by virtual reality artists Milica Zec and Winslow Porter, which simulates becoming a tree. Participants experienced the tree's growth from a seedling to full height and witnessed its fate first-hand. Experienced by more than 1,000 participants at the Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2018 and at the Annual Meeting 2019, Tree VR has become part of a wider campaign focused on sustainable living. (Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2018, Annual Meeting 2019)



Manus

An installation by Madeline Gannon where robots move together like a pack of animals based on their interaction with participants. The lifelike nature of the robots triggers questions about our relationship with robots. (Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2018)

Wildlife Photographer of the Year

A collaboration with the Natural History Museum, London, to bring the venerated Wildlife Photographer of the Year to the Annual Meeting in monumental scale projection mapping form, dwarfing participants and reminding them of the ecosystems on which they depend. (Annual Meeting 2019)



Finding Hope

A site-specific surrealist mural by artist Mehdi Ghadyanloo in the heart of the Congress Centre, evoking the fine line between diversity and inclusion. (Annual Meeting 2019)



Cartooning for Peace – Davos Edition

An outdoor exhibition with 20 cartoons from around the world addressing cultural taboos and thorny issues through art and humour, in collaboration with Patrick Chappatte. (Annual Meeting 2019)

Dinner in the Dark

In collaboration with Capaxia and Sight of Emotion, a powerful immersive experience led by visually impaired guides, which changed people's perception about ability and disability. (Annual Meeting 2019)



Removed

A Forum-commissioned Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) - edition of photographer Eric Pickersgill's photo series *Removed*, which showcases everyday situations with the subjects' mobile phones removed from their hands, exposing in a playful manner what remains of our relationships with each other once our phones are gone. (World Economic Forum on ASEAN 2018)

Performances

Throughout the year the Forum produced event opening and closing performances that served to highlight excellence and diversity as well as act as inspiring gateway experiences. These included:



The closing performance at the Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2018 by vocal artist and beatboxer **Reeps One** on the power of the human voice.

The closing performance at the 2018 World Economic Forum on ASEAN in Ha Noi by young Vietnamese singer songwriter **Le Cat Trong Ly**, on themes of hope and freedom.



The opening concert at the Annual Meeting 2019 highlighting three generations of female leaders, led by Crystal Awardee **Marin Alsop**, conducting an all-female orchestra made up of members of the Southbank Centre and London's Royal Academy of Music, with special guest Clara Shen, the 13-year-old winner of the Junior Menuhin Competition 2018, and a world premiere composition by Anna Clyne. The concert was sponsored by Intesa Sanpaolo.



A performance at the Open Forum and the closing concert at the Annual Meeting 2019 by four members of the **Sphinx Virtuosi**, made of some of the best young African-American and Latino soloists in the United States, in collaboration with National Geographic, and supported by Robert Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Vista Equity Partners and Board Chairman, Carnegie Hall.

Film screenings

In the past year we experimented with film as a means of **inspiring leaders to act on major issues**:



Our Planet

In collaboration with Netflix, Silverback Films and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the exclusive world-premiere showing of *Our Planet* series by Netflix, in the Congress Hall with live stage narration by Sir David Attenborough. This project was part of the mobilization for a social media campaign, [#voicefortheplanet](#), which garnered 167,000 individual pledges worldwide to contribute to protecting our planet. (Annual Meeting 2019, World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa 2019)



My Body is Not a Weapon

The world premiere screening at the Open Forum of Platon's documentary tracing the lives of survivors of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, followed by a Q&A with gynaecologist and 2018 Nobel Prize winner Denis Mukwege. (Annual Meeting 2019)

