

Changes are afoot

Descrizione

Changes are afoot politically: rising tides of nationalism and populism, stunning election results, and loads of analysis to decipher when and how these movements came to be. Months after the Brexit vote, Britain now considers the specific and practical realities of exiting the EU, as well as the governmental and economic effects. Likewise, in the United States, the Trump administration faces the practical challenges of governing a complex nation, a stark departure from the fluidity of making campaign promises.

Trump's administration—as well as many other conservative politicians over the past three decades—has publicly discussed the complete elimination of U.S. federal agencies that support arts and culture: the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which supports the Public Broadcasting Service and National Public Radio.

Although U.S. federal support for the arts is quite small in comparison to many other Western countries, and although the combined budgets for these agencies is insignificant in relation to total U.S. spending, these threats are often successful in rallying support from conservatives who value limited government.

In fact, the FY 2017 enacted appropriations gave small increases to the NEA, NEH and IMLS, while keeping the CPB budget the same. For FY 2018, rather than reducing these agencies' budgets by 80-90%, leaving only "expenses necessary to carry out their closure," the appropriations currently making their way through legislation include reductions of about 3%.

It seems timely, then, that two articles in this edition of the Tafter Journal examine the role of the state in politics and culture.

George Tridimas contributes a detailed account of political economies surrounding King Otto's reign in early Greece. Tridimas examines the circumstances and effects of monarchy or republic in nation-building, as well as the economic and political influence of the Protecting Powers in establishing Greece's livelihood. Directly relevant to the management of cultural organizations is the exploration of succession planning, "Founder's Syndrome," and "successor's dilemma."

I would enjoy reading a companion article that explores the correlations of Greek political economy events with Greek arts and culture in this period (1832-1862), or the cultural economics of monarchy versus republic. I invite interested readers to tackle the subjects.

A second article in this edition has been written by my colleague and friend, Leslie Scott. I've had the distinct pleasure of working with Scott for two years, and am both inspired and impressed by her article, "Quantifying Dance in a Capitalist Society."

Scott clearly and elegantly covers a topic that is dense, complex, and seemingly eternal: When necessitated, how do artists and arts managers create metrics to justify funding for the arts?

Despite studies **[1]** that have shown enormous economic ROI for arts-friendly policies and financing, it seems that few outside the arts have heard this message—especially in the States. In order to seek and obtain funding, thus, artists and arts managers must provide concrete metrics to "prove" the value of their art.

Scott adeptly explains the challenges in doing so, as well as the pros and cons of quantification, with specific reference to dance. Also discussed are the measurement systems used by various agencies around the world, and the requirements these systems put upon artists.

Regardless of the political climate on any given day, one comforting thought remains steadfast: Artists are called to their sacred duty and they will continue to create, through good times and bad. In fact, revolution, protest, and change often spark the greatest works. It is up to us—the academics, advocates, and administrators—to give voice and access to these works.

[1] <http://www.americansforthearts.org/research>

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