



“Perfect Mirror”

Street performance

*A pilot project of Embaixada da Juventude at the interface of adult education, active citizenship and art in the framework of the Erasmus+ - project „Fusion of Art and Education“
October 21 – November 22*

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Introduction

The street performance of " Perfect Mirror" was determined through group discussion and was focused on the theme of "returning back to humanity" in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Street performance has gained importance during the pandemic as a safe and socially distant option for entertainment, and as a way to provide income for artists and bring communities together

Project Preparation

35 adult participants with artistic experience or none were chosen to take part in the project. Some of them already tried and experienced performative arts, theatre, filmmaking, dance, music, multimedia and juggling. All of them participated or volunteered before in the artistic residency lab challenge. During their time together in a house in Paredes, they spent three days exploring and uncovering their inner personalities while disconnecting from the outside world. The goal was to create a live performance in the street that would showcase their newfound discoveries and artistic expressions. Among them

Eduarda Alves is an actress with experience in theatre and cinema. She is a theatre teacher and runs a school for performative arts and dance. She took the role of the lead of the coordinator of the artists and facilitator.

Pedro Ribeiro is an actor, audiovisual producer, film director and event organiser. He is producing local series and movies with his founded association NotProStudios. He works with the principle that you don't have to be a pro to make something awesome. His wide experience on filmmaking and organising events was great to take the role of directing the performance and document parts of the process.

Gabriel Manea is cultural mediator and trainer in adult education. Has coordinated and facilitated the implementation of the workshop agendas of international cultural centres. He is a trainer and facilitator of non-formal education and social entrepreneurship. Took the role of the lead adult educator.

The topic

The process of formalising the topic for the theatre play involved several steps as the participants were encouraged to actively participate by sharing their ideas and suggestions for potential play topics.

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In order to determine the most suitable topic, the group considered the type of audience they wanted to attract and what kind of topics they might be interested in. They considered the current COVID events and social issues to gain a deeper understanding of what might resonate with the audience. A group discussion was held to narrow down the list of potential play topics and determine the best fit for the group. It was important that the group reached a consensus on the final play topic to ensure that everyone was invested in the project and motivated to work together towards a successful outcome. The chosen topic was to return back to humanity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a major shift in the way people interact with each other, as well as the world around them. With lockdowns, social distancing measures, and quarantines, many people have become more dependent on the virtual world for their social needs. This has had a profound impact on people's lives, as they have been forced to find new ways to connect and engage with one another.

One example of a life shift can be seen in the Kamchatka street theatre, which inspired the creation of the performance. The street theatre is a unique form of performance art that not only interacts with the public and addresses social issues, but also incorporates elements of music, dance, juggling, and other arts. This makes it a dynamic and engaging form of entertainment, as it provides a platform for artists to express themselves and engage with audiences in new and exciting ways.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KIJ7wYG23Y&t=41s>

The relevance of street performance has increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic due to several key factors. Firstly, with restrictions on large gatherings and indoor events, street performance provides a safe and socially distant option for entertainment. This is especially important in a time when people are looking for ways to continue enjoying cultural events while also staying safe.

In addition, the pandemic has severely impacted many performers, including musicians and street artists, by reducing their opportunities to perform and earn income. Street performance provides a platform for these artists to continue practising their craft and earn a living, even in the face of the pandemic.

Another important factor is the role that street performance can play in bringing communities together and providing a sense of normalcy. In a time when many people are feeling isolated and disconnected, street performance can offer a source of connection and community building.

Street performance is also an important form of cultural expression, allowing for the sharing of diverse perspectives and experiences. This not only enriches the cultural landscape, but also provides a space for people to engage with new ideas and perspectives.

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Finally, street performance can offer a source of joy and upliftment during a difficult time, which can have positive impacts on mental health. This highlights the important role that street performance can play in promoting well-being and resilience in the face of adversity.

Working phase

The planning process played a crucial role in the success of any project and had to be approached with careful consideration of several key elements. The definition of clear goals and objectives was a top priority. By doing so, all participants - artists and adult educators alike - worked towards the same end and had a comprehensive understanding of what was required of them.

The assignment of roles and responsibilities was another essential component. By assigning tasks specifically to each team member, everyone understood their responsibilities and worked efficiently towards the project's objectives. This also prevented misunderstandings and conflicts from arising.

Effective communication and collaboration were also critical for a successful project outcome. Clear lines of communication had to be established between artists and adult educators to ensure that everyone was on the same page and could work together effectively. A collaborative environment that promotes open communication, feedback, and mutual respect was also vital. Participants agreed to maintain professional standards, promote inclusiveness, and be open to changes as the planning process progressed due to COVID-19.

Time Frame:

Regular weekly meetings of 90 minutes "ResgatARTE" were organised to learn various performance techniques and assignments were given to perform in public. Performing arts was used as a tool for social change that respects themes such as: bullying, gender equality, motor and psychological disabilities, citizenship, human rights, sustainability and more.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1pwepiMOCHICqhDvLIL5LwRS963QDI6zx>

The first performance was named the "Perfect Mirror." Its goal was to shed light on the impact of technology and social media on people globally. 20 participants took part in this dynamic and significant cultural activity. Cell phones have been a lifeline for staying connected with friends and family during the COVID pandemic, but it has also led to a new phenomenon where people have transformed their entire lives into a virtual world.

The performance started at São Bento train station, where the participants walked for 15 minutes through the crowds, each holding only their cell phone and wearing eye patches that

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restricted their vision to just their phone screens. As they moved through the public, they paused to draw attention to this issue. The performance culminated in a square with three stalls: one selling masks resembling the filters used on social media, the second offering food for "technological zombies" to take pictures, and the third selling talent, portraying a disappointing reality in this generation. The performance concluded with a dance and mirrors facing the audience, as theatre serves to reflect the reality we experience.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1qOzOry5lzTwrypv11n4snZdPSxzpEpe>

The second piloting was developed during an artistic residency. 20 participants converged at the Embaixada da Juventude youth house for 5 days to work together on the street performance "Music on Wheels". The group transformed a van into a mobile music recording studio to give a voice to people who grew up in poverty and whose voices are still not heard enough. The participants created a performance that combined music, dance, and theatre, focusing on topics such as equality, social inclusion, diversity, identity, etc. The studio-van was decorated with graffiti art and was taken, along with the equipment, to Jardim do Morro in Porto for the open-air performance in front of an audience of over 1000 people. Many from the crowd not only participated in the performance through singing and dancing, but also went into the studio-van to record their own tracks. The event was so well-received and it lasted for 5 hours.

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Outcome

Reflection - Evaluation – Lessons learnt

Evaluation

The impact of the project was broad and multi-faceted. It encompassed different areas such as education, entertainment, community building, cultural enrichment, and advocacy for social causes.

From an educational standpoint, it served as a learning experience for both the participants and the public. They offered opportunities to raise awareness on relevant topics and encouraged the audience to expand their knowledge and understanding. As an entertainment source, the project brought excitement and joy to the community, providing a fun and engaging experience for the audience.

In terms of community building, it played a crucial role in fostering social interaction and promoting a sense of unity and belonging among the people.

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The street performances also increased cultural appreciation by exposing the public to different artistic styles and cultural diversity. They served as a platform for advocating and promoting social causes, generating awareness and support for important issues.

Participation in the street performances offered many benefits for both artists and adult educators as well as organisations. It served as a personal growth opportunity, allowing them to develop new skills, increase self-confidence, and gain a deeper appreciation for the arts.

For artists and adult educators, participation provided a chance for professional development, helping them enhance their craft and expand their professional network. Organisations benefited from increased visibility and credibility within the community by producing successful workshops.

The street performances also had the potential to improve community relations, bringing people together and fostering a sense of community. Sometimes, street performances led to unexpected outcomes, such as the discovery of new talent, the formation of new partnerships, or the development of new programs. These outcomes could be just as valuable as the planned ones and provided new opportunities for growth and development.

Challenges

Logistical challenges can pose a significant challenge. These challenges may include securing a suitable performance space, obtaining the necessary permits, and managing the technical aspects of the performance effectively.

Ensuring the artistic quality of the performance can also be a challenge, particularly when working with amateur artists or limited resources. In addition, the safety and security of the performers and audience must be a top priority, as there may be unpredictable elements in the public environment. The weather can pose a barrier to a street performance, as inclement weather can impact both the audience's engagement and the technical aspects of the performance.

Reflection

Defining roles and responsibilities and establishing open communication were crucial factors in the cooperation between artists and adult educators for a street performance. Both parties had a clear understanding of their respective tasks, such as creating the performance concept, rehearsing, promoting the event, and managing technical aspects. Regular and open communication involved regular meetings, progress updates, and open discussions about any challenges or issues that may have arisen.

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Fostering trust and mutual respect, encouraging creativity and innovation, and sharing resources and knowledge were also important for a successful street performance. Building trust and mutual respect involved recognizing and valuing each other's contributions, being open to feedback, and working together to resolve conflicts. Encouraging creativity and innovation helped to make the performance dynamic, engaging, and original. Finally, sharing resources and knowledge ensured that the performance was well-executed and successful, from securing funding and identifying performance spaces to managing technical aspects.

Strengths:

Complementary Skills: Artists and adult educators bring different skills and perspectives to the performance, which can complement each other and result in a more dynamic and engaging performance.

Increased Creativity: Cooperation between artists and adult educators can foster creativity and innovation, leading to the development of new and unique performance concepts.

Mutual Support: By working together, artists and adult educators can provide mutual support and help each other overcome challenges.

Broader Reach: Cooperation between artists and adult educators can result in a wider reach for the performance, as both groups bring different networks and audiences to the performance.

Weaknesses:

Conflicting Priorities: Artists and adult educators may have different goals and priorities for the performance, which can lead to conflicts and disagreements.

Limited Resources: Cooperation between artists and adult educators may be limited by a lack of resources, including funding, equipment, and time.

Different Work Styles: Artists and adult educators may have different work styles, which can lead to communication difficulties and misalignment of expectations.

Resistance to Change: Some artists or adult educators may resist changes to their traditional work methods, which can hinder the cooperation and impact the success of the performance.

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Photographic Report



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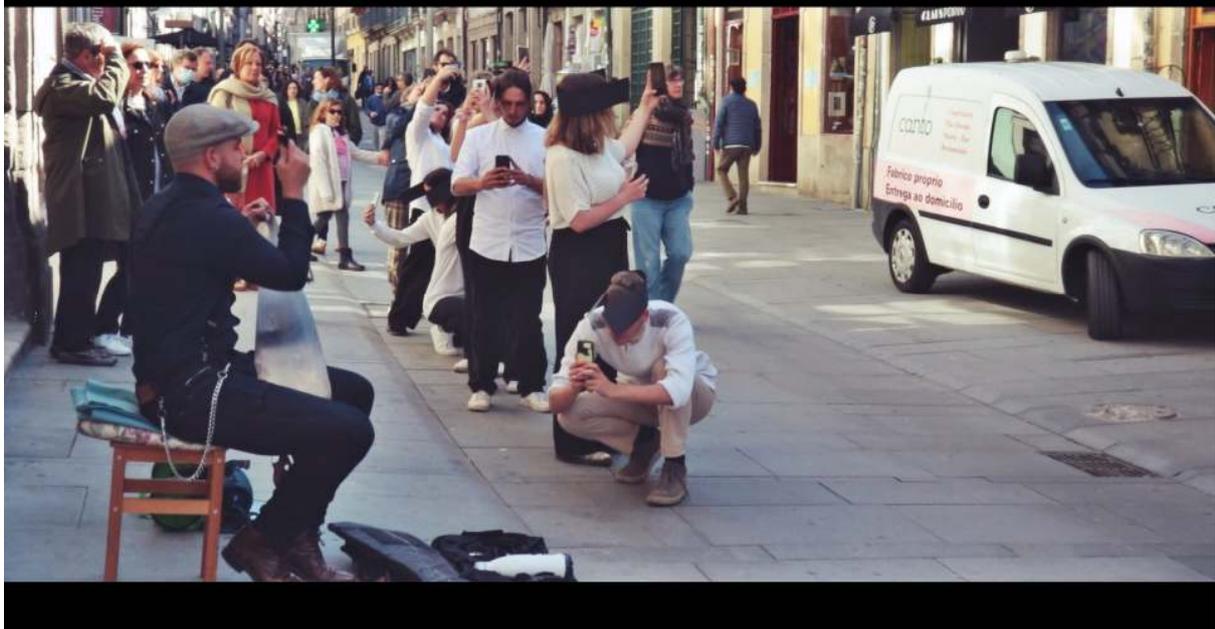
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