

EDITORIAL

Culture is inseparable from the identity of a society. Artistic creation and the importance given to cultural policy are key indicators of the democratic advancement of national states.

The Fonds culturel national was created in 1982 with the aim of supporting the development of the cultural sector in Luxembourg. Although the country's cultural and artistic landscape has significantly changed since that time, the Fonds has not lost any of its importance. On the contrary, it has constantly evolved to meet the expectations of the cultural scene, encouraging artistic creation and promoting culture in its most varied guises.

Art evolves because it reacts to dynamic contexts: cultural production has developed into an economic sector in its own right, artists and cultural producers have professionalised, and finally culture on the whole has become more democratic. The Fonds has in turn adapted to the changing demands arising from this situation.

As a public institution, the Fonds plays a key role in the cultural field in Luxembourg. Its mission is to collect, manage and distribute the contributions and donations from public and private sources for the promotion of the arts and sciences, and the conservation, restoration and appropriate purposing of national historic and cultural heritage, both movable and immovable.

The development of the artistic and cultural offer in Luxembourg and its dissemination at home and abroad has been at the heart of the Fond's vision since its inception. To this avail, the executive board supports innovating projects and emerging talents, assisting their promotion and dissemination while encouraging the mobility of artists and cultural producers as well as encounters between artists and cultural actors.

To ensure it can fulfil its mission to the best of its ability, the Fonds operates according to five criteria: excellence; artistic creation and renewal; dissemination and mobility; long-term development; transparency.

Excellence

The principle of excellence guides the work of the Fonds both as regards the selection of projects or artists and the organisation of juries made up of renowned professionals. This approach is underpinned by the idea that promoting quality also fosters artistic renewal.

Creation and artistic renewal

Through its policy, the Fonds aims to preserve the innovating and critical potential of culture. To achieve this, it is essential to make sure that freedom of expression is respected and guaranteed. Art must be able to grow freely and according to its own logic. This requires developing new perspectives for both creation and heritage.

Dissemination and mobility

Opening up to international markets is a key factor in the dissemination of Luxembourgish art and culture. In order to improve the career opportunities and encourage professionalisation, the Fonds helps artists to:

- access to new markets,
- establish contacts and partnerships with cultural institutions, artists and professionals,
- establish career-relevant networks, and
- access international programming networks and pursue professional careers.

One of the Fond's policies in view of promoting the work of Luxembourgish artists on the national and international stage concerns the establishment of artist residences, which stimulate the development of artistic knowledge and skills.

Long-term development

While it may be necessary to provide punctual funding to projects, it is essential to give artists the possibility to develop their work in the long term. The Fond's policies in favour of promotion and dissemination gives vital impulses to the careers of promising talents.

Transparency

All the activities of the Fonds are channelled via its website. Applications are made using online forms and are published on the website on a regular basis. This includes the duly motivated decisions taken in compliance with the 'Guide for the allocation and evaluation of grants and funding', which is also accessible online. While attracting attention to the successful applications, this approach also helps to make the Fonds's funding policies more accessible, understandable and transparent.

Naturally, this level of transparency calls for sound management practices. While its funding budget is exclusively provided through an endowment from the Œuvre National de Secours Grande-Duchesse Charlotte, the Fonds also gives private patrons the possibility to provide support to professional artists through a specific funding scheme.

The Fonds is furthermore entitled to receive tax-deductible donations and act as an intermediate funding body. Organisations wishing to finance cultural activities can find all relevant information online.

This functioning mode guarantees the Fond's independence and allows it to accomplish its missions as intended. All of its actions are aimed at promoting three fundamental principles:

- Culture is a value in itself
- Art is a public good
- Creation must be independent

The functioning of the National Culture Fund is still a long way from the British model where, to avoid political or other interference in the cultural and artistic field, the budget for culture is devolved to autonomous bodies such as the Arts Councils, which determine their own funding policies. But the spirit that animates the Fonds culturel national in the accomplishment of its tasks clearly points in that direction.

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