

DAKAR,
SENEGAL
NOV. 10, 2024

JOURNAL
#1

LA

TABLE

DE



METIS

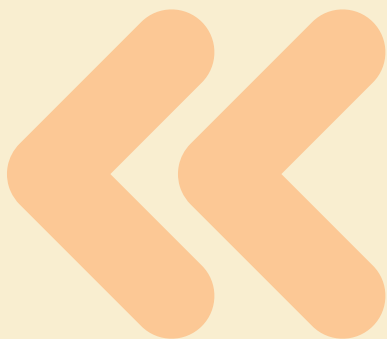


METIS
ARTS & DEVELOPPEMENT

What is 'La Table de Metis's' purpose?

Our aim is to reflect, debate and compare points of view and knowledge in order to better understand the place and role of the arts in our societies. The Metis Table is held all over the world, wherever our Metis takes us. It is always held in small groups. Each time, it brings together around ten committed, enlightened and experienced personalities. A line of thought is proposed, and an exciting, sincere and lively discussion ensues. We are not looking for the truth, but for a plurality of truths.

To keep track of these exchanges, we produce a brief summary each time.



**SYLVAIN
SANKALÉ**
lawyer,
consultant
and art critic

**HAPSA
DIA**
Chief Revenue
Officer at Balooun
Assurance, singer

**JEAN-FRANÇOIS
CHOUGNET**

Director of Lille 3000 and
former director of the
Mucem (Marseille)

**FATIM
SOUMARÉ**

Visual artist
and founder of Falé



TABLE DE METIS

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Responding to the challenges facing society: what contribution(s) can art and artists make?

When we think about the challenges of sustainable development, what role should the arts and artists play? Faced with the day-to-day challenges facing societies and particularly vulnerable populations (health, education, access to water, energy, employment, transport), public policies are essentially implemented via projects that propose technical and financial solutions.

In what way, and how, can the arts, artists and creativity play a special, indeed essential, role in complementing these approaches?

TIPHAINÉ
DE MOMBYNES
Director of the Metis
Arts and Development
Fund

MIHOUB
MEZOUAGHI
Director of AFD's
Dakar office

SOPHIE
ZINKA

Stylist and Director
of the Agency for
the Promotion and
Development of Crafts
in Senegal

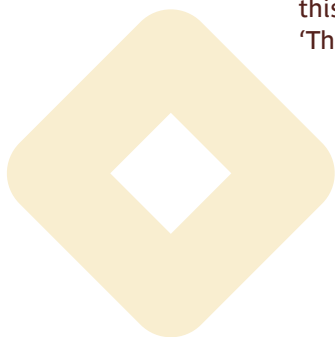
CHEIKH TIDIANE
NIANG

Real estate
agent

AMINATA
NDIAYE NIANG
Deputy Managing
Director of
the Sonatel Group


Our connections to the arts are multi-faceted.

- ◆ **An intellectual connection:**
some explained their connection to the arts as a result of the intellectual object that the arts represent.
- ◆ **An emotional connection:**
many emphasised the sensitive and emotional connection that drives them when it comes to thinking about their relationship with the arts.
- ◆ **A spiritual connection:**
this connection can also have a spiritual dimension. 'They draw us towards something greater'.




These links may have been forged at an early age as a result of a family environment that was open to the arts, but for others, the relationship with the arts emerged later, sometimes in adulthood.

The place and importance of the arts in our lives may, for some, be crucial, central and the focus of attention and action in their daily lives. For others, the arts are perceived as a supplement that complements other aspects, other centres of interest that punctuate their daily lives and that are different or even distant from the arts.



**The arts can serve as
a barrier to poverty.**

**Arts and crafts can
provide economic
opportunities for people
in difficulty.**



Arts and culture: an economic solution to some of society's challenges.

DIRECTLY:

- ◆ The arts and culture strengthen economic development. They are a source of employment (e.g. framing of works, technical labour, job creation in mediation, etc.).

Aren't they themselves
'technical' objects?

- ◆ The arts can serve as a barrier to poverty. Arts and crafts can provide economic opportunities for people in difficulty. They are at the heart of certain value chains. But are they given sufficient consideration?

MORE INDIRECTLY:

- ◆ Certain specific features of the arts and culture support the economy: beauty and aesthetics are characteristic of the arts and culture. Aesthetics attract, and attracting also creates economic value (e.g. tourism).

The arts help to put the senses back at the heart of technique, and in so doing support innovative and enlightened technique.

THE LINK BETWEEN THE ARTS AND A TECHNICAL APPROACH TO THE CHALLENGES FACING SOCIETY IS NOT OBVIOUS.

- ◆ Technique is what solves the issues. But it is human beings who create technical solutions.
- ◆ That's where the arts come into their own: art, creativity and sensitivity can nourish our humanities. Creativity and the arts can enlighten, shape and support technique.
- ◆ Today, in the world of business and organisations in particular, the human component is sometimes lost in favour of procedures... perhaps to the detriment of finding appropriate solutions to the real challenges facing society.

Art helps to give space to the human dimension, to put it back at the centre of our thinking.

- ◆ Putting the senses and the arts back at the centre also means making room for the imagination in the design of technique - and therefore innovating.



**In French,
the terms
'art' and 'culture'
overlap.**

**In many
languages,
there is no
equivalent.**

The arts provide a foundation for human 'being': spontaneous or worked/studied?

THE ARTS ARE AN INTANGIBLE LEGACY THAT MUST BE PRESERVED.

- ◆ The arts are an intangible heritage. They are a collective history.
- ◆ It is a history, traditions that are perpetuated through the arts.

Art cannot exist without history. The arts must be systematically contextualised in their time and their geography.


- ◆ Underlying the arts and culture is the quest for identity.
- ◆ Art is a quest for aestheticism: it's the first concern we should have as human beings.
- ◆ Art is imperceptible. Music is an obvious example. It provides an inexplicable awakening, a connection to something greater.



- ♦ Promoting the arts/crafts/culture goes beyond economic development. It also means paying attention to the way in which people look at their own practices, traditions and artistic histories.
- ♦ Art is something imperceptible, something we feel. Without filters, without convention. Just look at the children's reactions to the works. Their reactions are spontaneous, and they always discover something that resonates with them.
- ♦ Obvious, spontaneous or not? The question is: is art, if it's that immediate feeling, accessible to everyone? I'm not sure. Don't you need an education, a foundation, to be able to appreciate art?

CAUTION:

- ♦ In French, the terms 'art' and 'culture' overlap. In many languages, there is no equivalent. Notions to be handled with nuance and humility?
- ♦ Beware: artists are not the only people who bring spirituality and this human dimension to life.



In the history of art,
art has always had a
prophetic dimension.

Artists are seen as a kind
of 'watchmen'.


They perceive certain
social dynamics before
they emerge in public
debate.


Artists, 'watchmen' of our societies... anchored or disconnected?

- ◆ In the history of art, art has always had a prophetic dimension. Artists are seen as a kind of 'watchmen'. They perceive certain social dynamics before they emerge in public debate. They reveal certain movements even before they materialise. They are precursors in the identification of issues; they enable technical solutions to emerge more quickly, through their political and artistic commitments (e.g. the fight against AIDS).

ARTISTS ARE LIKE SENTINELS IN OUR SOCIETIES.

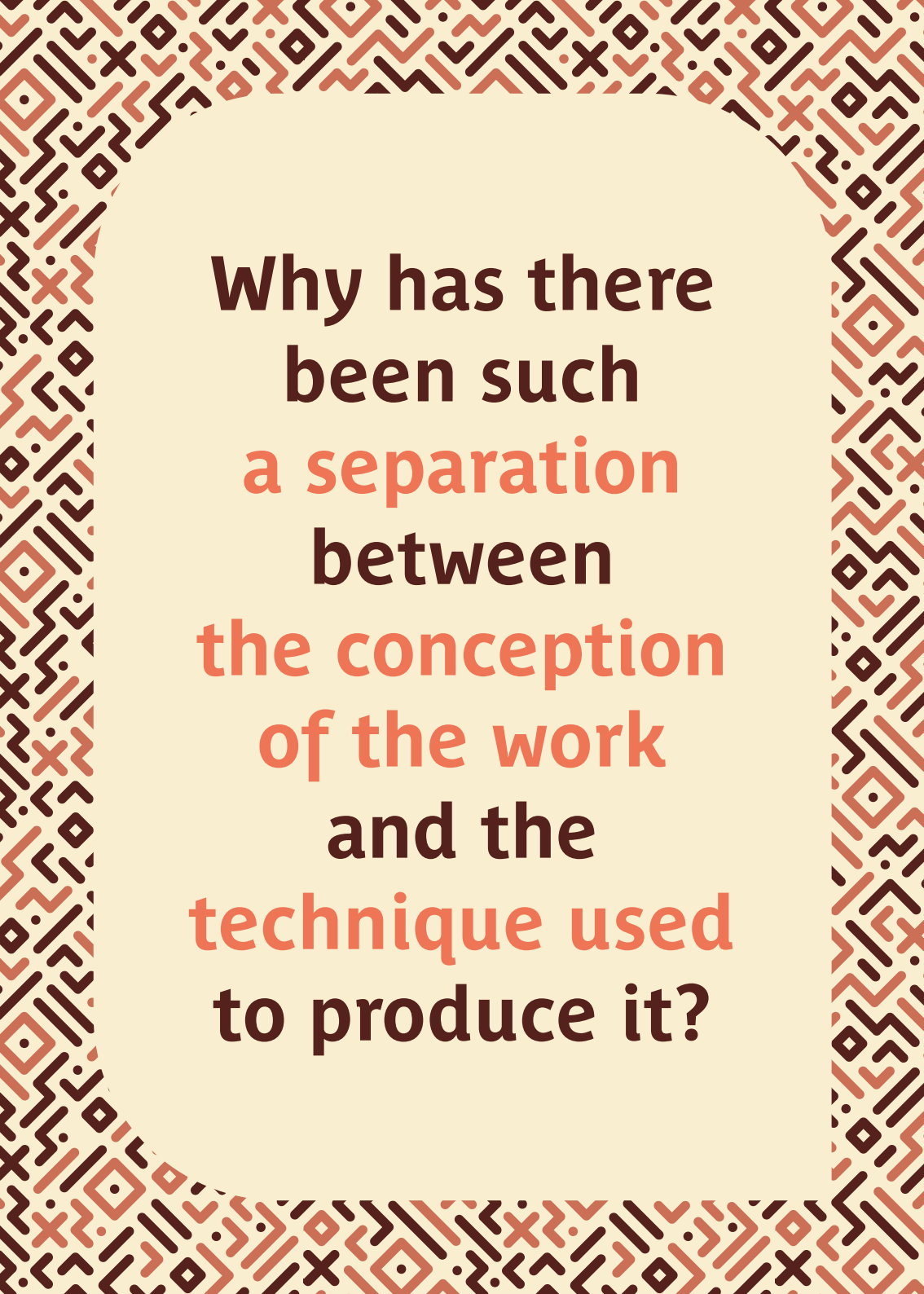
- ◆ But do artists create outside this society - and observe it from afar? Has art separated itself from society? Or is the artist at the heart of it?

- 
- ◆ Today, a large number of diplomas are required to be a recognised artist. But there are many self-taught artists. And what place is there for young people? Do artistic sensibility and creation really require training?



Art used to be intimately linked to society, because it was individuals who commissioned it. They commissioned a creation, but also a technique, a know-how.

- ◆ Today, the challenge is to find ‘new’ commissioners. And when you have technique, then you can move on to creativity, and propose new uses.



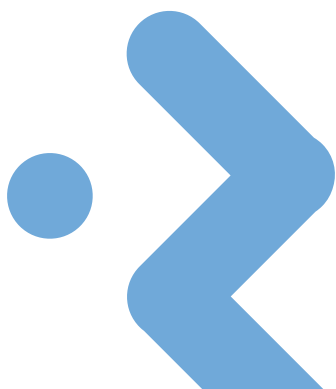
**Why has there
been such
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to produce it?**

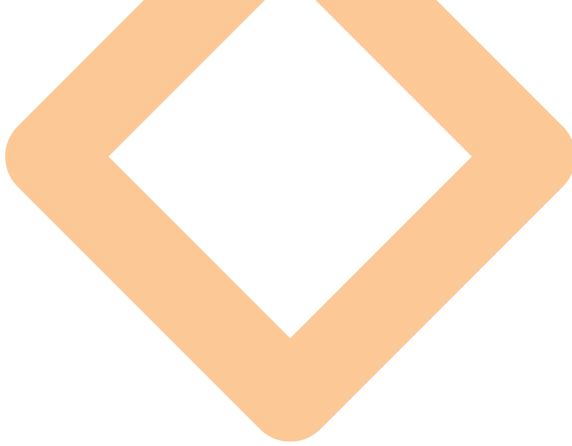
Arts and crafts: a split to be reconsidered?

CRAFT AND ART ARE TOO OFTEN OPPOSED.

- ◆ We are prisoners (particularly in the West) of the separation between arts and crafts that was encouraged by the Italian Renaissance. In some cultures, there is less of a separation. Today, this distinction is perhaps obsolete.
- ◆ Yet craft is also an artistic language that engages a significant number of people in society. Crafts have a heritage, societal and historical value. Crafts are more everyone's business. The challenge is to put craft back at the heart of people's lives, to bring beauty and usefulness, and therefore creativity and sensitivity, back into everyday life.

Craftsmanship is a link
between art and technique,
but one that is not very
obvious.





Why has there been such a separation between the conception of the work and the technique used to produce it?

WHEN YOU'RE CREATING SOMETHING, IT'S IMPORTANT TO LOOK TO YOUR HERITAGE AND YOUR HISTORY.

- ◆ By using local tools and traditional techniques, we can speak the same language. We need to nurture this, and avoid breaks in transmission.
- ◆ Caution: The decompartmentalisation of art and craft, on the other hand, runs the risk of reducing artists' role as watchdogs and sentinels.



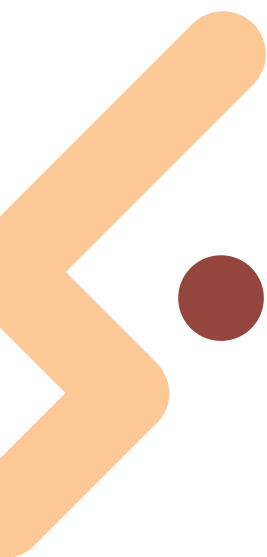
Can the arts become trapped by technique?

Is there a risk of confining the arts? Isn't there a risk of seeing the arts solely as an economic or technical tool? Is there a risk of depriving it of its human and spiritual essence?

- ◆ Not necessarily: if art is an effective tool for conveying certain issues, for raising awareness, then we use it. But it doesn't take away the artist's freedom.

IT'S PERHAPS A QUESTION OF STAGES AND PROPORTIONING :

- ◆ You have to give meaning - art allows you to do that
- ◆ Art is a powerful medium, and it would be a shame to do without it.
- ◆ But even if it can be used to pass on ideas and raise awareness, artists are not confined. They remain free in their creation.



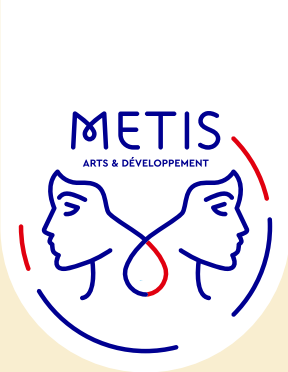
- ♦ Art blurs our divisions. Asking artists to pigeonhole themselves into thematic compartments, like the 17 SDGs, is not to fail to perceive something more complex in artistic creation. You can't talk about one SDG without involving another. Art decompartmentalises and allows us to go beyond thematic readings. Art cuts across and links subjects. It allows disciplines to be 'decompartmentalised'. This is also what gives artistic creation its freedom and strength compared with other approaches. It can create misunderstandings between the worlds of technique and the arts.
- ♦ The arts can reinforce technical and social dynamics, create value and support economic development - without losing their 'spiritual' value.

It is important not to pit the cultural economy against creativity. Culture has economic potential.

- ♦ That's not to say that culture exists primarily for that purpose - it's not necessarily its primary function.
- ♦ One particular point about culture is that it is a prototype economy. Culture, a cultural initiative, cannot be reproduced everywhere. This makes it a specific object that cannot be confined. We must not deny this specificity; on the contrary, we must enhance it and play on it.



The arts can
reinforce technical
and social dynamics,
create value and
support economic
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without losing their
'spiritual' value.



The Metis Fund warmly thanks all the participants for their contributions to this rich debate, which will enable Metis to feed its philosophy and its actions.

Thanks to Mr Mihoub Mezouaghi for his warm welcome.

Thanks to Marie Diehl for taking notes.

Finally, a big thank you to Table Pana, its founder Nadia Kopogo and chef Omar Ngom for the culinary, gustatory and artistic experience which, thanks to them, enlightened this meeting.

