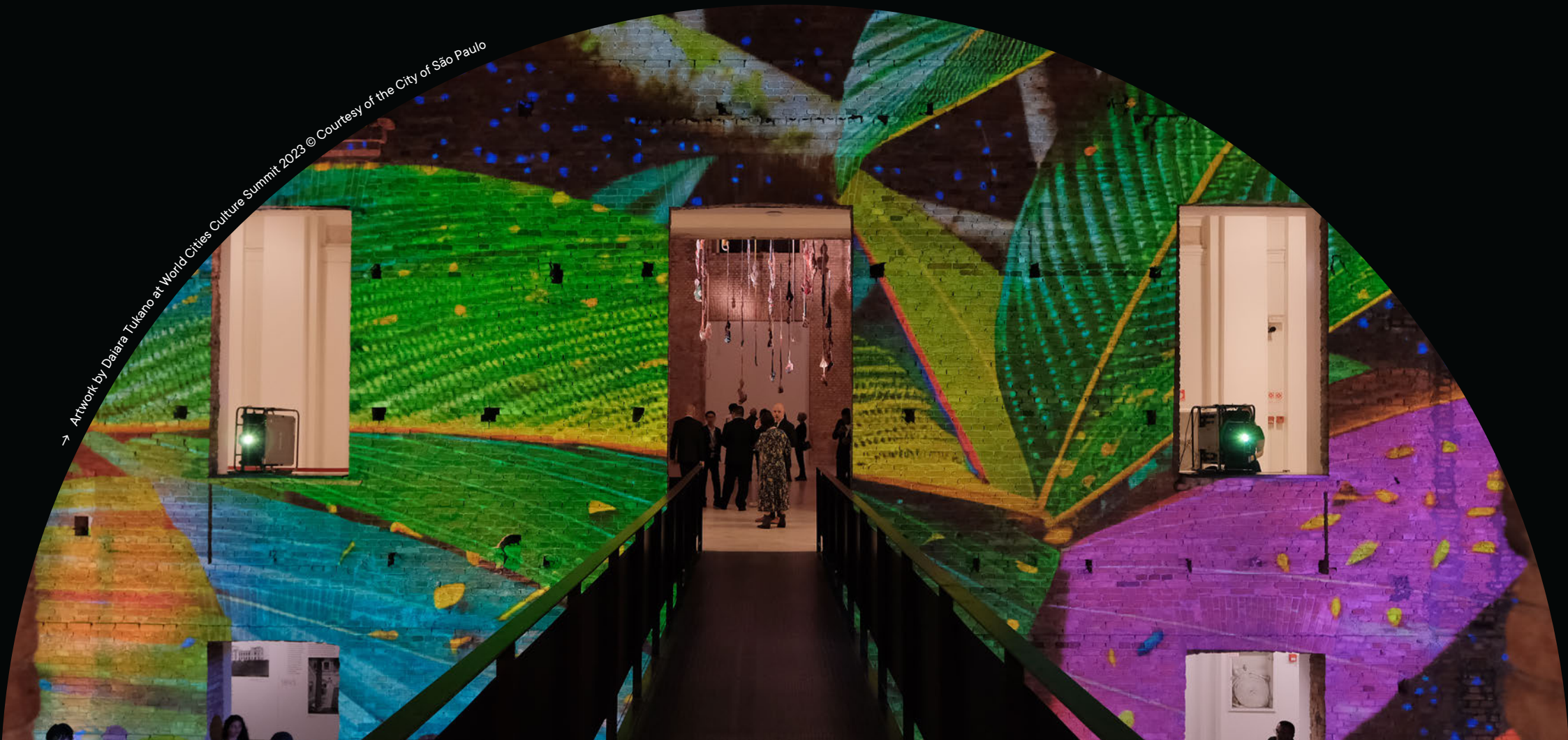


WORLD
CITIES
CULTURE
FORUM

World Cities Culture Trends 2024

10 global trends for
culture in cities

→ Artwork by Daiara Tukano at World Cities Culture Summit 2023 © Courtesy of the City of São Paulo



Courage, culture and leadership for a new world

“Where the world's cultural policies meet”



→
© City of São Paulo

The 2024 Trends Report is based on insights from **our Cities** and the **World Cities Culture Summit** hosted in São Paulo on 25–27 October 2023 under the theme ‘**Culture, Courage and Leadership for a New World**’. The Summit gathered over 140 senior leaders from 40 world cities across 6 continents to discuss the most urgent challenges faced by the world’s leading creative cities today, covering topics from AI to health, power sharing to culture in conflict.

There are no quick fixes for many of the challenges we face, from rapid technological change to the climate crisis and geopolitical instability. But with cities now representing over half of the world’s population and with rapid urbanisation, the role of cities is fundamental. Culture plays a critical role in addressing urgent city priorities: from driving sustainable growth and inspiring climate action, to leading efforts to redress historic inequality and bringing communities together.

The World Cities Culture Forum is making the case for culture’s role as a ‘golden thread’ through urban policy, bringing data and evidence to demonstrate how culture and creativity can deliver against economic and social challenges as well as being of intrinsic value to its citizens. Our cities share a belief in the power of culture to support communities, improve health and wellbeing, attract tourists and boost economies.

In this 2024 Trends Report we look at ten emerging trends in cultural policy for the next year, with examples of how cities are putting ideas into action.

World Cities Culture Summit

São Paulo highlights:

- Described as a “A masterclass in cultural policy”
- Attended by over 140 senior city leaders from 40 cities including Amsterdam, Buenos Aires, Dubai, London, New York, Paris, San Francisco, Seoul and Tokyo as well as new cities joining our network in 2023: Bengaluru, Chicago, Rio de Janeiro, Shenzhen, and Kyiv and Observer cities Cologne, Johannesburg and Nairobi.
- Hosted an ‘In Conversation’ session with Viktoriia Mukha, Chairman of the Commission on Culture, Tourism & Communications from the City of Kyiv on the role of culture in conflict.
- Discussed the impact of our flagship **Leadership Exchange Programme**, supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, where cities share their best ideas.
- Launched **A Goal for Culture: São Paulo Manifesto** with 21 cities calling for a dedicated UN Sustainable Development Goal for culture post 2030
- The Summit took place in inspiring and cultural spaces in São Paulo including SESC Pompeia, designed by Lina Bo Bardi, and Ibirapuera Auditorium, designed by Oscar Neimeyer. Key Summit sessions were translated into 6 languages
- Invited guest partners included: Andani. Africa, Bloomberg Philanthropies, British Council, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Google Arts and Culture, Itaú Cultural, Race Forward and Vibelab

Read more about the 2023 Summit [here](#).

→ Vai Vai Samba School at World Cities Culture Summit 2023 © Courtesy of the City of São Paulo



What our city leaders said...

“

The Summit was an inspirational and meaningful experience. I learned so much from our peers”

“

The São Paulo Summit was an extraordinary experience, transcending beyond the insightful panel discussions to forge meaningful connections with fellow delegates”

“

A vital and relevant Forum from which we learn so much”

“

The Summit is unparalleled in its support to global cultural practitioners”

“

A world stage to share value of culture and best global practices”

→ World Cities Culture Summit 2023 © Image Courtesy of City of São Paulo



Recovery and wellbeing

→ Trend 1: Culture drives city recovery but suffers from 'long Covid'

The long term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are still being experienced by culture and the creative workforce. Our **Creative Recovery report** with King's College London identified five '**Long Covid**' symptoms being experienced by World Cities. Globally, cities have launched innovative cultural programmes to drive economic and social recovery but our data shows slower growth in Asia compared to Europe.

CITIES IN ACTION

- The **Let's Do London campaign** encouraged citizens and visitors back to the city centre, supporting businesses and cultural institutions and generating £81 million additional visitor spend.
- **Austin's** Covid-19 response introduced **new funding measures** to support communities experiencing multiple inequalities, recognising the increased impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on these communities.
- **Rio de Janeiro's Zonas de Cultura** programme also focused on equitable distribution of post pandemic funding beyond central areas.
- Cities across the world like **Seoul** and **Zurich** provided financial support to artists during the pandemic to cover lost income and support creative activity.

In 2024, cities will continue to find new ways to care for their cultural and creative economies.

→ © Greater London Authority



→ Trend 2: Culture and health: happier and longer lives

Many cities are realising the power of culture to support citizens' wellbeing: integrating culture with healthcare to address Covid-19 recovery, working with health services increasingly under pressure, and preventing long term clinical interventions.

CITIES IN ACTION

- **Brussels** and **Montréal's** doctors are prescribing museum visits for mental health as part of '**social prescribing**' initiatives which are being tested in many other cities globally.
- **Brasilia's** programme offering music **performances to patients**, and **Tokyo's Creative Wellbeing** programme demonstrate the additional benefits culture brings to health.
- Older people are particularly benefiting from culture such as **Barcelona's Apropa Cultura** bringing creative activities to isolated citizens, **Lisbon's** initiative to **connect the elderly with their communities**, and **Edinburgh's** programme **supporting citizens living with dementia**.
- **Los Angeles** has developed new partnerships to offer creative activities to young people within state systems such as justice, incarceration, welfare, or foster care systems to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

In 2024, collaborations between health and culture will increase, and further integrated cultural-healthcare models will emerge.

→ © City of Barcelona



Power sharing

→ Trend 3: Citizens as decision-makers: democracy in action

Citizens are at the heart of the social and cultural life of neighbourhoods. Many cities are adopting new ways to involve citizens in shaping cultural programs that reflect their diverse needs and viewpoints including exploring co-creation and citizens' assemblies.

CITIES IN ACTION

- **Chicago's** first city-wide plan **'We Will Chicago'**, drafted by communities and civic leaders demonstrates how courageous leadership involves sharing power and building trust over time.
- Cities are using technology to increase connections between citizens and governments, like **Taipei's** introduction of **i-voting and participatory budgeting**.
- **Lisbon's** **Festival of Politics** inspires public engagement in political and social issues.
- Other cities are also boosting civic pride through culture including **Dublin**, **Brussels**, and **Bengaluru**.

In 2024, cities will continue to invest in authentic collaborations with community leaders.

→ © City of Chicago



→ Trend 4: Culture addressing inequality and historical injustices

Supporting anti-racist and pro-social justice initiatives continues to be a priority for many cities, with increased efforts following the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020. This involves addressing systems of discrimination including racism, sexism, and homophobia. Cities are examining how culture has historically reproduced inequality, for example in their public art, monuments and street names, and taking steps to address this.

CITIES IN ACTION

- **San Francisco's** **Monuments and Memorials Advisory Committee** brought together community leaders to advise on improved representation in the public realm.
- **São Paulo's** **Afflicted Memorial project** is rebalancing the stories represented in the city archives, for example, preserving memories of Black communities in the Liberdade neighbourhood.
- **Sydney's** **Eora Journey**, is an ambitious public art programme series to recognise First Nations Australians.

In 2024, focus on culture's role in addressing inequality and amplifying the voices of diverse communities will continue.

→ © City of Sydney



Cultural ecosystems

→ **Trend 5:** Culture at Risk: protecting artist studios, cultural spaces and community infrastructure

Cultural infrastructure is fragile. Small venues, workspace, and community institutions are often threatened by increasing property prices, rapid urbanisation, gentrification, rising costs of living and the long Covid-19 impact on culture.

→ © City of Sydney



CITIES IN ACTION

- Programmes to protect cultural spaces like **London's Culture at Risk** office have been effective, as well as new partnerships like the **Austin Economic Development Corporation**, and models in **Vancouver**, **London**, **Sydney**, and **San Francisco**.
- **Barcelona's 'Art Factories'** have re-purposed disused spaces as low-cost creative space.
- New initiatives are bringing together creative workers and enterprises, including the **Yangcheng Creative Industry Zone** in **Guangzhou**, and **Dubai's Al Quoz Creative Zone**.

In 2024, dedicated programmes to support culture infrastructure will become more necessary and important.

→ **Trend 6:** Supporting the creative workforce: freelancers and micro-businesses

The creative economy relies on freelancers. Yet the employment conditions for creative workforce are precarious, and increasingly becoming more uncertain and insecure due to economic and technological changes. This puts workers at risk and creates barriers for new creatives to join the workforce.

CITIES IN ACTION

- Universal Basic Income programmes for artists is being tested in **San Francisco** and **Ireland**, while **Tokyo** offers financial advice for freelancers through its **Support Centre for the Arts and Culture (ARTNOTO)**.
- **Paris** have expanded the definitions of the creative workforce and identified **100,000 creative jobs in other sectors**, like designers in the automotive industry.
- **Melbourne's The Warehouse Residency** demonstrates the need to support increased representation and access in the creative workforce, through incubating new work by Deaf and Disabled artists, particularly those from additional marginalised communities such as First Nations and LGBTQIA+. Cities globally are investing in diversifying the workforce such as **Milan's Presenti Accessibili** festival.

→ © City of Milan



In 2024, new programmes are being introduced to support creative workers.

Cultural ecosystems

→ **Trend 7:** 24 hour cities: culture leading the rise of the night time economy

Cities are increasingly focusing on 24 hour cultural policies and there are now '100 'night mayors' and night ambassadors globally. Culture and the promotion of activity at night is driving this trend and quickly expanding into other policy areas such as safety and the rights of night time workers.

CITIES IN ACTION

● **Amsterdam's 2023-26 Night Culture Implementation Agenda** allocated 1 million euros to support night time accessibility and 1.2 million euros for to boost night-life businesses by young talent.

● **Toronto's night economy review** in consultation with communities resulted in reviewed licencing and zoning, as well as a new industry guide including best practices in providing safe spaces.

● **São Paulo's legalisation of street vendors** supports informal street culture, and champions late-night sober spaces like restaurants and cafes.

In 2024, investment is increasing to create 24 hour cities that work for everyone.



Future challenges and opportunities

→ Trend 8: Culture fosters hope and resilience

Culture is a powerful force for inspiring hope and resilience in times of climate crisis, financial pressures and geopolitical uncertainty. Creative cities experience additional benefits for their citizens such as economic resilience and improved health outcomes.

CITIES IN ACTION

- In **Kyiv**, culture plays an important role to bring hope and aid recovery, with cultural spaces like **cinemas and museums** becoming places of sanctuary during the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- Culture has the power to inspire change and support social welfare, as seen in **Warsaw's Culture for Climate Collective** and **Buenos Aires' Abasto Barrio Cultural** transforming a disadvantaged neighbourhood through new partnerships.
- Culture brings communities together, such as **Lisbon's 'A Theatre in Each Neighbourhood'** initiative developed through the **Leadership Exchange Programme**; **São Paulo's PROMAC** and **Virada Cultural** initiatives; and **Hong Kong's Intangible Cultural Heritage Mobile Centre**.

In 2024, culture will be recognised as an essential means of inspiring hope around the world.



→ Trend 9: Technology is challenging culture and creativity

Technology and artificial intelligence (AI) bring new possibilities for innovation and creative expression, but also concerns around job losses, intellectual property, and new legal dilemmas. As technology evolves, cities are working to understand how to support creatives as well as looking at how AI can improve cultural policymaking.

CITIES IN ACTION

- Cities are digitising cultural assets to increase access, including **Dublin's digital cultural heritage archives** and **Nanjing's City of Literature Development Programme**, as well as documenting culture at risk as in **Backup Ukraine**.
- AI has the potential to broaden access to cultural content worldwide. **Google Arts & Culture** supports over 3,000 cultural partners to bring their artworks, collections and exhibits to an international online audience.
- Cities are supporting education into technological innovation from **Buenos Aires' new research centre to connect technology and artists** to **Stockholm's Digital School of the Arts** for young people.

In 2024, cities will need to invest time and money into understanding new technologies in order to fully access their benefits.



Future challenges and opportunities

→ Trend 10: Culture, climate change and the global development agenda

Cities recognise culture's role in supporting sustainable global development. Culture is a fundamental human right, providing identity, resilience, joy, and contributing to economic, social, and environmental sustainability. In 2023, World Cities Culture Forum joined others in calling for culture to become a dedicated United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal post 2030 in **A Goal for Culture: São Paulo Manifesto**. Without a dedicated UN Sustainable Development Goal, culture risks being overlooked and its benefits not harnessed.

CITIES IN ACTION

- Sustainability is integrated in projects like the **Helsinki model** where communities have a say in urban regeneration, to **New York City's equity based funding review** to support those facing historical, systemic and social inequalities, and **Warsaw's funding for NGOs** to deliver cultural activity for social change.
- **Hamburg** is hosting a new **sustainability conference to unite sectors** around the Sustainable development Goals.
- Supporting environmental sustainability and climate action is an increasingly urgent priority for many cities from **green infrastructure development** in **Chengdu** and **urban planning** in **Oslo**, to **Stockholm** and **Paris** initiatives supporting **circular economies**, and **Hong Kong's** work to **inspire the next generation of climate champions**.

In 2024, cities will continue to demonstrate culture's role in supporting people, places and planet in the sustainable development agenda.



WORLD CITIES CULTURE FORUM

World Cities Culture Forum is the leading global network of civic leaders from over 40 creative cities from across six continents. Our leaders share ideas and solutions to build a world where culture is at the heart of thriving cities. We have established the principle that culture is a golden thread in cities: supporting communities, improving health and wellbeing, attracting tourists and boosting economies.

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