

ISPA ACCEPTANCE 2015

Friends and colleagues, thank you. And thank you Eric for those mostly accurate facts about my career. If any of you are still interested, you can always come round later and hear a (much racier) unexpurgated version over a dram or two of fine single malt!

Seriously, this is a huge honour for me, principally because I value ISPA so much as an organisation, and also because I think it's always the recognition by your professional peers, which is the most valued, since they know only too well what your strengths are...and also your weaknesses. As a collective of diverse creative professionals, leaders and aspiring leaders in this organisation, I know very well the pride all ISPA members take in adopting values of the very highest level - artistic values, values of integrity and ethics, values of innovation, nurturing new talent, imagining new spaces and sounds, and in seeking out new and challenging work.

And there are sadly ever fewer global professions that can lay claim to those high values and standards. The arts profession, thank goodness, remains one of these.

It's great to see ISPA in such rude good health - that's 'rude' in the old Anglo-Saxon sense of course. It's more diverse than ever, more innovative than ever, and (most depressing of all....) younger than ever! Though it's a depression I am happy to live with...

When I joined ISPA 20 years ago, everyone was older than I was. Now.....well let's move on! But thank you Shelton, for your lucid advocacy of the benefits that we older members bring to the community at large.

So thank you ISPA, thanks to the Nominating Committee and the Executive Board, and congratulations also to my fellow awardees. Thanks also to all my British Council colleagues here, who have turned out in support....it means a huge amount to me. Thanks also to the sponsor of this award Ann Summers Dossena.

When I started my career in the arts back more years ago than I care to remember, as a BBC Radio 3 Classical Music producer, I had pretty much no idea of the value of what I was doing (if any), or who was interested, who was listening, who benefitted from the programmes I was making. I was doing what I knew I could do as a recently graduated music student, trying to earn a living. And I guess the same situation

probably applied then to most of us here now who are in the later stages of our careers. In those days, it seemed we were just "doing a job in the arts".

How things have changed now - and how that change has moved so vividly front of MY mind through my work over the last three years at the British Council, deploying the arts within a cultural relations landscape of increasing challenge and complexity. Even though my passion throughout my career, from the BBC to the Barbican, has been for increased impact and influence of the Arts through international partnership and collaboration. That's why ISPA has been so important to me personally and remains so.

Now the arts and creative industries have fought their way to the front line of public and political consciousness - not in terms of public subsidy (in the UK and most other countries), in fact the reverse. But nations worldwide, and even more significantly cities, are seeing the value of the arts and creativity in "soft or smart" power and diplomacy, in influence, in social inclusion, in job creation, in economic growth, in health and well-being issues, in building tolerant, balanced and peaceful societies, in education - quite apart from their self-evident intrinsic benefits.

So here we all are, highly influential and increasingly effective creative entrepreneurs within our respective societies, recognised more and more for our impact. Let's use this power responsibly, confidently, collectively, imaginatively. And ISPA is a great global mouthpiece through which to exercise this power.

My award mentions "life-time achievement"...I sincerely hope not! "I ain't done yet" and I hope I've got more juice in the tank for more years harassing you all and my wonderful colleagues at the British Council in our common cause - a cause which seems all the more urgent and relevant in the light of last week's barbarism.

Remember "nous sommes tous Charlie", both in our resolute defence of freedom of expression, and in building trust, mutual respect and understanding amongst diverse cultures.

This is both a vital and essential role.

Thank you again....

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