



*God the Father
creating the world*
Stained glass window
Stanisław Wyspiański
1897 - 1904 ca.
St. Franciscans church, Kraków
Photograph by Piotr Ko urno

I Introduction

Maria
Śliwińska
Poland

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth
(Genesis 1.1)

And when the world was brought into being, “God created mankind in his own image” (Genesis 1.27) and gave him various talents, so that people would become creators as well. Therefore, from the very beginning, we have been dealing with the act of creation.

Through the ages, people have created settlements, cities, and complex infrastructures making their lives more comfortable and pleasant. Cultural heritage is one of the best demonstrations of the phenomenon of extraordinary human creativity. The legendary Tower of Babel, the Egyptian pyramids, amazing Gothic cathedrals with frescoes, and sculptures and paintings by great masters have long been awe-inspiring, a pattern for further creation by others.

For a long time, art reflected the surroundings as realistically as possible; the more accurate it was, the better it was received. However, with the invention of photography, artists such as Picasso became a bit depressed with the realisation that they could not be more accurate than this new medium, patented by Louis Daguerre in 1839. Therefore, from that time onward, artists tried to find different, modern ways of expression, and experimented with various styles including Cubism, Fauvism, and abstract and surrealistic art, of which the most famous was Pablo Picasso’s painting *Les Femmes d’Alger* from 1907, often considered a proto-Cubist work. This work has been recalled in the first article by John Favaro and Patrizia Falcone as one of the revolutionary inventions that changed world culture, in the same way that James Joyce shocked literature with his *Ulysses*, Orson Welles’s *Citizen Kane* changed the film industry, and the innovations of Steve Jobs influenced the development of digital creativity (this last example may be seen as the most important for digital creation).

Today we can observe an interesting change in the process of creation. In the beginning, people created their environment by reshaping nature. Now they shape products of their imagination, much like those creative researchers who design robots that initially had only been a product of imagination, made for science fiction films.

According to R. J. Sternberg (in the *Creativity Research Journal*, 2006, p. 96), there are eight types of creative contributions. In a first group, he places types of creativity that accept current paradigms and attempt to extend them. These include replication, redefinition (the creative work leads back to the field in its current state, but viewed in a different way), forward incrementation (a creative contribution that moves the field forward in the direction in which it is already moving), and advance forward movement (which advances the field past the point where others are ready for it to go). In the second group, he includes types of creativity that reject current paradigms and attempt to replace them. Here he lists redirection, which moves the field in a new, different direction, reconstruction/redirection, which moves the field back to a previous point to reconstruct the past in a different way, and reinitiation, moving the field to a different starting point. Finally, integration is treated separately as a type of creativity that synthesizes current paradigms.

Our lives are deeply immersed in digital technologies, and it is not simply a case of creating avatars to live out the daydreams that we cannot fulfil in real life. There are new

forms of culture combining traditional media like books and illustrations, adding an element of social connection like portals and social media that allow communication with the authors and groups of people interested in the same topics. They allow discussion in spite of distance in space and time.

What supports our creativity in the digital era? There are projects bringing together a number of institutions to work on creating something new like educational portals, virtual exhibitions, and games that use digital resources but also include real (not only virtual) presence in the game plot. We learn from each other and customize somebody's creation to our needs. In doing so, we re-create or get inspiration to create something completely new. When we are lucky, these created or re-created artefacts sometimes serve as an inspiration to somebody else. In this way, creativity is endless.

What creativity has been presented in this issue by our authors?

Some of our authors write about creating opportunities to trigger the creativity of their institutional users, and for that purpose they are opening access to their own resources. Most impressively, we can point to the bold decision of Wim Pijbes, director of the Rijksmuseum in the Netherlands, who offers unlimited access to over 200000 works, including the masterpieces of Rembrandt, Vermeer, and Van Gogh, among others, with rights to copy all materials for education, research, pleasure, and even commercial use. It was a rather unusual decision at a time when so many museum custodians are still afraid to show their resources online, worrying that this will result in a lack of interest in visiting museums. Wim Pijbes says in his article that *“Manet couldn't have painted his Olympia without seeing Titian's Danae. Rembrandt was inspired by Mantegna. Andy Warhol copied Brillo boxes, and Jeff Koons uses the classics as well as the vulgar images from daily life. Collage, copy paste, parody, and reproduction belong to the artistic vocabulary of all great artists. Therefore, museums should not be afraid for the loss of the aura of the original work of art”*. Let us hope that this example will encourage other public institutions to follow this path, and to open without restrictions materials they store for the public using public funds.

The Romanian article by Oana Dimitriu also presents resources that have been digitised by the Romanian Academy of Sciences to support education, research, and user creativity. The LoCloud initiative presented by Kate Fernie has the same purpose: it is devoted to bringing materials possessed by small institutions into collections in the Cloud. In contrast, the Spanish article by Joan Boadas and Anna Gironella presents the digitisation of just one old book. However, it is a book of extraordinary value, listed in 2013 on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. The book, from 1448, records the struggles of the peasants of Catalonia to secure their freedom, resulting in the official abolition of medieval serfdom for the first time in 1486. In a more contemporary context, Edward J. Valauskas presents digitally born materials, giving as an example *First Monday*, an online open journal created twenty years ago at a time when such possibilities were just emerging. This initiative changed the world of researchers, who obtained free access to valuable articles without a fee. It is amazing that a single individual is so engaged in this initiative that he has run this journal for twenty years, regularly producing a new issue each month. One more article, by Barbara Dierickx, concentrates on resources selected for educational use by the Flemish Institute for Archiving.

In order to present resources online, intensive work on creative tool development has been necessary. Cristian Ciurea and Florin Filip have made an effort to establish criteria



for selecting ICT Platforms for digital exhibitions. Valentina Vassallo and Sorin Hermon present creative re-use of data with GIS support that helps to trace the provenance of Cypriot cultural heritage. Another software presented here is PuQI – a smart way to create better data for the digital museum – prepared and described by Stefan Rohde-Enslin, who supports over 400 German small museums using his portal Museum Digital, as well some Hungarian museums (more versions, including Polish, are underway). In her article, Julia Katona of Hungary describes an experiment on metadata improvement.

In this issue, there are a number of articles presenting initiatives of cultural institutions that try to create much more attractive services for more demanding contemporary users, who ignore museums with the old ivory-tower rules of “don’t touch” and “silence”. To this group belong those described by Lizzy Komen and Andrew Kitchen in their article on the Europeana Creative project, which encouraged creative industries to re-use Europe’s digital cultural resources and offer them to users. Over the lifetime of the project, they created different types of innovative pilot applications within thematic areas focused on education, tourism, social networks, and design that include interactive exhibitions and games, among others. Olga Kissel and Natalya Potapenko give an overview of various actions through which museums in Russia try to promote masterpieces of culture, including the so-called Magdeburg Gates that are probably much better known in Poland than elsewhere. The French National Library has also noticed the value of supporting user creativity, and has assembled a special team working on social media with users and promoting resources offered by the Gallica portal, as presented by Melanie Leroy-Terquem.

Finally, a few articles concentrate on introducing games based on cultural institution content and promoting cultural heritage in this way. In this group, we include a game promoting culinary culture, developed in the framework of Europeana Food and Drink project, and described here by Annalise Duca, Peter Meadley, and Maria liwi ska. Two other games created in Poland are presented by Piotr Ko urno and Maria liwi ska. One of them was dedicated to the ups and downs of Polish history, and was prepared together with teenagers in 2006, in the framework of the eMapps.com project. The other includes a city quest with software developed in the AthenaPlus project, which they treat as a continuation of learning about history and culture.

In this group, we also have an article by Ivelin Ivanov, art director of the Imperia Online game, who discusses the needs of the creative industry. It would be interesting to interview other creative industry representatives to learn about their needs, and conversely, to learn whether they know about the present offerings of cultural heritage institutions.

This issue of Uncommon Culture also includes an article by Maria Teresa Natale and Marzia Picinunno, based on the Recommendations for Cultural Institutions that were elaborated by a group of Italian researchers under supervision of the Italian Ministry of Culture. Their goal is to make cultural resources more attractive for users, especially tourists.

I hope that this issue of Uncommon Culture will meet the expectations of our respected readers.