

INTRODUCTION

Culture Crossroads is an international journal published by the Latvian Academy of Culture (LAC). The Latvian Academy of Culture is a state-founded (1990) and accredited institution of higher education and research that realizes academic and professional programmes, conducts scientific research and performs creative work. The goal of the Academy is to ensure studies in the fields of humanities, social sciences, theatre, audio-visual art and choreography, as well as to conduct research and to advance the education of new artists and researchers. Interdisciplinarity is a crucial aspect of the Academy, as it enables to deal with a broad variety of complex issues both in the study process and in the research. It ensures the acquisition of new scientific knowledge, facilitates the design and development of a qualitatively novel approach to the research of culture and art phenomena, and promotes active participation in the research processes in cultural politics. Interdisciplinarity is emphasized as an essential principle of the Academy's activities in the LAC Strategy for 2015–2020, a document, in which we promised to ourselves and to the society that we shall continue to develop not only as a national interdisciplinary art and culture school and a platform for artistic creativity and creative industries, but will also become a strong, dynamic and innovative research centre. One of the tools that helps to implement LAC priority plans is the annual research conference *Culture Crossroads*, organised by the LAC Research Centre.

The title of the conference *Culture Crossroads* appeared in the first years of the Academy's existence. In accordance with the administration's intentions of that time, it was supposed to signify "a centre, a place for meeting and dialogue". Back then, LAC clearly set its sights on the dialogue. Already at the beginning of its work did the conference stand out both due to its democratic attitude and innovative theoretical reasoning about culture, gathering professionals from various disciplines and ensuring the opportunity to share ideas independently of the academic degree or affiliation, the high quality of research, originality and topicality of analysed issues being the main criteria for presentations. Over time, we started to collect the valuable and interesting materials from the conferences and to publish them in a printed edition, so as not to let them perish. Logically, that laid the groundwork for the tradition of making a follow-up publication on the basis of the conference presentations.

Our Academy's journal of research articles has been continuously developing, and also this year's issue displays a variety of topics and a different format, besides, certain steps have been taken to ensure its status as a SCOPUS publication, where SCOPUS is the biggest online data base of internationally reviewed research journals, books and conference proceedings.

The online format is new to the publication; however, the journal will remain loyal to their thematic tradition. In the digital collection of articles, not only do professionals and experts in the domain of culture introduce the reader to the newest achievements and discuss the most topical research issues in the field, they also indicate possible models of collaboration with governmental and international culture policy-making bodies, outline the prospects for culture and art research at the regional and global levels, thus confirming the necessity for an interdisciplinary approach and its importance in the research of culture phenomena as well as their promotion abroad.

I am happy to congratulate everyone on the electronic edition of *Culture Crossroads*. On behalf of the Latvian Academy of Culture I would like to thank the administration and the scientists of the Research Centre, the authors of the articles, the editorial board and particularly the peer reviewers for the generous work that has made the valuable ideas and conclusions accessible to all of us as a new source of knowledge and as an inspiration to ask new research questions, to solve scientific problems, to elaborate on new topics, thus enriching both the local and the global educational, cultural and research space.

Rector of the Latvian Academy of Culture,
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The preservation of traditions and intangible cultural heritage has been one of the priority topics for the Research Centre of the Latvian Academy of Culture, alongside the research of interaction of traditions and socially economic innovations. These topics have been analysed both in the CoHERE (Critical Heritages: Performing and Representing Identities in Europe) project, funded by Horizon 2020, which involved working in a consortium of researchers from 12 countries, and within the framework of the state research programme *Sustainability of Latvian Cultural Traditions in an Innovative Environment* (Habitus) (LAC 2014–2017, funded by the Ministry of Education and Research), which implies research in collaboration with the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian governmental organisations, local authorities and NGOs involved in the sustaining of the Song and Dance Festival tradition. We have compiled the most important results of this research in the 9th issue of *Culture Crossroads*, thus introducing a certain focus for the issue. We have included findings from US, Estonian, Lithuanian, and Latvian researchers, emphasising opportunities for comparative research of national cultural phenomena and manifestations of glocalisation.

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