

Preface

For many decades and for many reasons, the social organization of arts and culture has interested us. It is true that there is extensive literature on many topics related to the organization of arts and culture, for example, in business management and cultural economics, cultural policy analyses, arts in urban environments, artistic copyright and other legal matters, as well as other issues about the particular aspects of managing arts. We have considered and interpreted the interconnections between these different approaches and empirically scrutinized cases on individuals and organizations, such as the corporate penetration of cultural markets, transformations of the music industry, the social positioning of arts organizations, particularly of museums, or the intrinsic dynamics of artistic practices. However, what was lacking in these two decades was a comprehensive understanding of arts and culture from a sociological organizational perspective. With this book, we want to provide such a systematic theoretical work that highlights the theories and theoretical concepts of the social organization of arts. We want to juxtapose these diverse and sometimes contradictory theories and concepts to highlight their differences and similarities.

We have different educational and professional biographies. However, we share common interests and perspectives. Volker Kirchberg has been researching the social organization of museums in the United States and Germany since the 1990s. As an assistant professor of sociology at William Paterson University in New Jersey, he taught the sociology of arts, organizational sociology and master's courses in contemporary sociological theory. Since the mid-2000s, as a professor of cultural organization and cultural mediation at Leuphana University in Germany, he has spent fifteen years developing and improving an introductory lecture on cultural organization as part of the university's cultural studies program of study. The contents and structure of this course served as the inspiration for this compendium. Tasos Zembylas began thirty years ago to analyze arts from a philosophical perspective in a pragmatic and practice-oriented approach. His ongoing collaboration with colleagues from social, political

and economic sciences at the University of Music and the Performing Arts in Vienna and with scholars at other institutions, and the in-depth exchange with artists, employees of arts organizations and politicians has deepened his approach. Volker's invitation in 2019 to write this compendium together was more than welcome.

The writing took several years as both of us had other professional duties to attend to. The writing process was generative, and the contents and the structure of this book took shape during the course of writing. Inevitably, our selection of the key theories is personal and we hope it will provoke some vigorous disagreement. Yet our choices of theoretical structures and processes are not intended to be immutable. Rather we hope this text will be a basis for further theoretical discussions involving, as in a sociology of arts they must, close collaboration with subdisciplines of sociology such as the sociology of culture, the sociology of organization, the sociology of work, the sociology of technology among others. In fact, it would also profit from an interdisciplinary dialogue with philosophy, economics, psychology, the sustainability sciences, the political sciences to name a few more. Such an approach to the arts and their organization should provide food for thought and for practice. We sympathize with Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust* (2000, 2038) who laments, "Grey, dear friend, is all theory." And we have endeavored to make our compendium more colorful by not only addressing fellow academics, but also reflective practitioners.

In keeping with Howard Becker's dictum of arts as collective action, this book was realized with the support of many minds. We thank Tobias Lutze and Sharon Maluche for satisfying our precise and sometimes obscure needs for literature, Claudia Schacher for her graphical design expertise, Michele Perry for correcting first drafts, Ute Finkeldei and Paul Lauer for their comprehensive proofreading, and Ulf Wuggenig, Constance DeVereaux and Victoria Alexander for their scholarly advice. Additionally, we would like to thank mdwpress for their kind proposal and support for this publication. Last but not least, we thank our employers, the Leuphana University and the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, who have funded the open access electronic publication of this book.

Volker Kirchberg and Tasos Zembylas