Fast, Short-Lived and Exclusive: Rethinking Arts Policy in Accelerated Time

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Abstract

The article argues that performing-arts production and circulation are structured by institutionally produced and politically mediated dynamics of acceleration. Using Portugal as a primary case within broader European trends, it examines the rationales behind these patterns, including short production runs and limited lifespans. It shows that public policy focused on new creation weakens diffusion; competitive funding generates pressures for ever-faster production; project-based logics shorten the lifespan of works; and venue ownership and scale constrain alternative modes of dissemination. The result is an ecology in which acceleration becomes structural, driven by policy settings that reinforce these temporal pressures rather than mitigating them, generating far-reaching artistic, social and political consequences.**Keywords:** acceleration, performing arts, cultural policy, competition, Portugal

Introduction

The article argues that performing-arts production and circulation are structured by accelerative dynamics. It examines how these dynamics are institutionally produced

and politically mediated and contends that recognizing them is essential for understanding their artistic, social, and political consequences.

Situated within a doctoral investigation into the coherence between arts policy aims, instruments, and effects, the analysis adopts a critical political economy perspective, grounded in field experience and multi-source data. Drawing on Portugal as the primary empirical setting and situating its trajectories within broader European developments over recent decades, the article combines insights from diverse disciplinary traditions, including Hartmut Rosa on social acceleration (*Social Acceleration*), Bojana Kunst on projective temporality ("The Project Horizon"), Patrice Pavis on festivalization, and Richard Schechner on the niche regime.

The argument unfolds in three parts. The first identifies contemporary accelerative dynamics in Portugal, read alongside the French case, highlighting short production runs and limited lifespans. The second examines the rationales embedded in arts policy and in the sector's material conditions and underlying social relations, tracing how public funding priorities, competitive frameworks, project-based logics, venue control and scale, and event-driven programming shape and normalize temporal patterns of creation and public encounter. The final section considers their effects on audiences, arts workers, and artistic production, identifying emerging contradictions and arguing for policies that expand, rather than compress, the temporal horizons of the performing arts.

Across Europe, the coronavirus pandemic precipitated a crisis in the performing arts that both exposed existing structures and appeared to herald structural transformations. The 2020 shutdown hit the sector hard. In a field where activity is frequently intermittent and labor relations are often not formally recognized, many workers were effectively discarded. In Portugal, as elsewhere, most had no access to unemployment benefits and would have been left without social protection had it not been for emergency schemes. These shared vulnerabilities quickly produced collective responses, solidarity with those most in need and an unusually strong consensus around key demands. At the same time, the stoppage created room for a discussion that moved well beyond immediate claims. Some raised their voices to refuse a *modus operandi* based on relentless activity yet devoid of the resources required to sustain it. The ever-shrinking time allocated to artistic processes and to a production's stage presence was called into question, as were other structural problems that had been identified.

Yet as soon as rehearsals and performances could resume, the machinery started running as before, and even faster. Postponements and rescheduling demanded double the work, and time that had been "lost" had now to be recovered. There was no spare time, and certainly no time to think. As a result, the reflection process that

began during the pandemic was interrupted. While there was a certain euphoria about returning to performance venues, often fully booked, the sector became exhausted, and more and more colleagues had to stop due to burnout. This is a dynamic that has persisted, as shown by the British platform Producer Gathering,[1] which in 2025 issued *Pause*, a collection of texts on hyper-production and burnout. Together, these contributions frame exhaustion in the arts as a collective crisis rather than an individual failing and call for fairer working conditions and everyday practices of care and rest (Producer Gathering).

Passing Through and Ever New: The Era of Short-Run, Short-Lived Productions

Impermanence is an ontological condition of the performing arts. As Rebecca Schneider argues, performances are ephemeral, yet they endure insofar as, once they have passed, they remain with us in other ways (90–9). This does not mean that the experience that moves through us cannot or should not be repeated, although never in exactly the same way. What right would we have, more than others, to such an encounter?

Yet for decades, production runs have shortened, touring has declined, and revivals have nearly disappeared. Productions remain on stage for only a few days and vanish very quickly from calendars. In the arts in particular, novelty consistently trumps durability. But the outcome is contradictory: while everything accelerates and innovation is cumulative, it often seems that nothing of substance really changes (Lijster 219–20).

In its 2022 report *Le soutien du ministère de la Culture au spectacle vivant*, the French Cour des comptes reiterated long-standing concerns about the declining number of performances per production in public theatres (11). Despite what it described as an abundant supply and sustained public investment since the 1960s, it concluded that efforts to broaden audiences have produced only modest results. Productions circulate very little and extending their runs remains difficult. Examining the average number of performances per production across the principal segments of the publicly funded performing-arts network in France, the report found that, in 2019, a production averaged 3.7 performances in *Centres Dramatiques Nationaux* and 2.3 performances in *Scènes Nationales* (Cour des comptes 14).

No equivalent systematic data were available for Portugal. For this reason, the doctoral research underpinning this article developed and implemented an enquiry entitled “Survey on Rhythms and Temporal Regimes in the Performing Arts (2018 and 2024)”.[2] The survey targeted independent performing-arts entities and comprised two modules. The first collected organization-level data (premieres, total performances, venue access, funding sources and related indicators); the second collected production-level information on the trajectories and life cycles of works

premiered in each year. Preliminary findings show a heterogeneous landscape, in which several consistent patterns emerge.

Most entities premiered two or more productions per year, both in 2018 (58%) and 2024 (63%). As for the total number of public performances presented (combining those of that year's premieres with earlier productions), the results are notably more dispersed. Even so, in both 2018 (73%) and 2023 (72%), the vast majority reported giving fewer than fifty performances in the year. Only 7% (2018 and 2024) reached 100–150 performances, and just 2% (2018) or 4% (2024) exceeded 150 (see **Figure 1**).

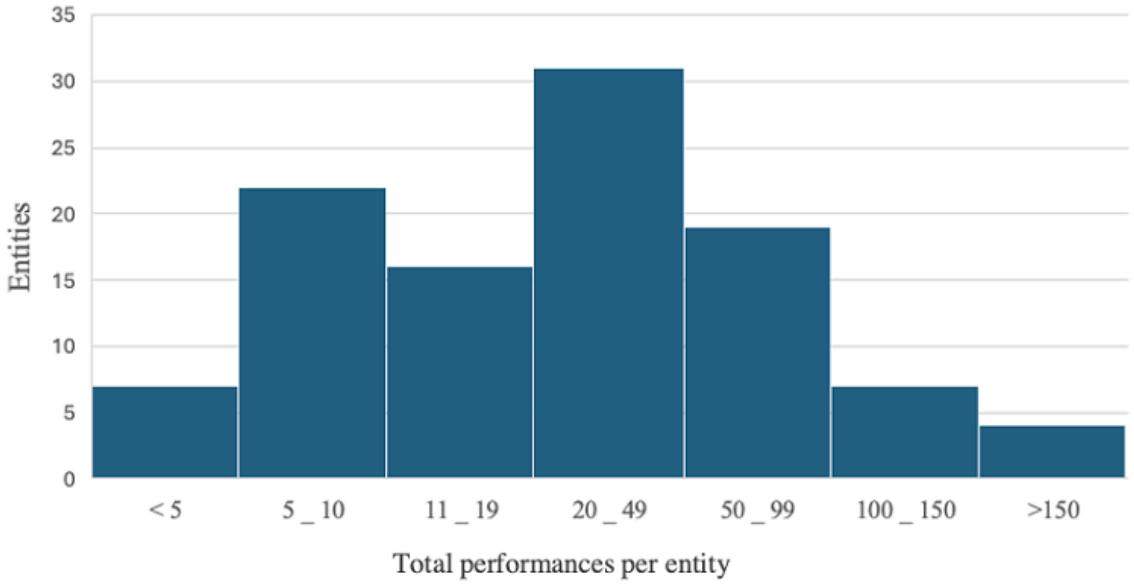


Fig.1. Distribution of entities by their total performances in 2024 (including both 2024 premieres and earlier productions). Source: Author's survey, 2025

Data on the premiere year of productions—a key indicator of the longevity of works—further highlight the short temporal horizons shaping the field. Although many entities presented older pieces, just over half (54% in 2018 and 52% in 2024) performed productions premiered in the previous year, and this proportion declines steadily as productions age. Most independent entities operate without an in-house venue (a space they manage, coordinate, or own): 67% in 2018 and 71% in 2024, indicating a structural dependence on external venue operators.

Production-level data point to truncated dissemination paths and compressed creative processes. Average performances per venue show that only about one quarter of productions were presented more than four times in the same space in both 2018 and 2024. Regarding creative-development duration, in most cases the interval between the start of the creative process and the premiere was under four months. Rehearsal periods were most commonly one to two months and, in nearly all cases, under five months.

These figures demonstrate that entities struggle to maintain extended seasons and sustain circulation. These tendencies exist within a broader context in which the number of tasks expected from each person continues to increase while the time available to complete them contracts. Hartmut Rosa has described this as an accelerated world, generating alienation from space, objects, others, one's own actions, oneself, and time itself (*Social Acceleration*). Alongside Rosa, a wide range of authors have examined temporal structures: from E. P. Thompson on industrial time-discipline and Barbara Adam on the social organization of time, to Bernard Stiegler on short-termism and Byung-Chul Han on hyperactivity and exhaustion.

These and other contributions show that we are always doing more things in less time, or at the same time, and with fewer intervals. Models of continuous production take hold and systems of instant communication deprive us of the right to disconnect. Being busy is a sign of success. Durability is devalued, products, knowledge, institutions and even people quickly become disposable, and planned obsolescence becomes paradigmatic. To maintain or increase profit, the combination of processes such as globalization, digitalization and financialization sets the pace of changes.

Yet the fact that performing arts productions that take years to develop vanish after only a few nights continues to provoke perplexity both within and beyond the artistic field. There is a shared intuition that something here defies common sense. Why, then, does this pattern endure?



Fig.2. Rehearsals for Teoria das Três Idades, written, directed, and performed by Sara Barros Leitão. 2018. Photo: Eduardo Breda

Exploring Rationales

To answer this, attention must be directed to the mechanisms embedded in the field's material configurations. Producing and presenting performing arts requires coordinated commitment across many people and institutions. Their inherent characteristics, such as risk, ephemerality and co-presence, help explain the need for "structured contracts" (Caves 73). Disputes over interests, ideas and institutions shape these networks of interaction (Blyth; Hall). Power relations, rooted in the allocation of key means of production, including access to funding and control of venues, play a defining role in determining what happens.

Public policy design is a structuring force in these dynamics and their outcomes. Indeed, the problem of short runs and short-lived productions becomes especially evident within public or publicly funded projects and entities, those explicitly mandated to sustain artistic activity in the public interest. In purely commercial regimes the reality is quite different. On Broadway, in New York, where tourists account for almost two-thirds of the audience, the picture contrasts sharply. In a study analyzing productions[3] presented between 1998 and 2017, the average number of performances of any given show was about 492 for musicals and 145 for non-musicals (Warne 33).

How, then, do public institutions and funding schemes end up reinforcing accelerative logics that contradict their stated goals?

The Enduring Bias Toward the Ever New

A system of public support for the arts that is historically centered on renewing artistic creation has, according to the French Cour des comptes, contributed to the weak diffusion of works. Despite what it describes as an abundant cultural offer, the report argues that a predominantly supply-side policy, one that channels resources primarily into creation, is not accompanied by minimum requirements or effective incentives for circulation and dissemination (Cour des comptes 14).

The same conclusion can be drawn for Portugal. An analysis undertaken within the doctoral research informing this article shows that, across the various state funding programmes, creation of new works is clearly the prevailing "domain of activity." This is visible in the periodicity of calls, the expected duration of funded activities and, above all, the budget allocation.

To focus the analysis on the public support regime for independent entities is therefore justified: in Portugal, only a few public institutions are engaged in creation, [4] the municipal venue network is geared towards presentation, and patronage plays only a residual role. Looking closely at these funding models, it also becomes

possible to discern further contradictory dynamics within arts policy that extend beyond the imbalance between investment in creation and in diffusion.

Producing More to Remain Competitive

In Hartmut Rosa's theory, competition is the central mechanism driving and interlinking the processes of social acceleration. Saving time is a mode of saving costs and thus, of securing competitive advantage. Both classical and neoclassical economic theories, for their part, frame competition as the route, imposed or necessary, not only to profit but to survival itself. In this sense, as Hartmut Rosa notes, it also becomes the means through which one must conquer and preserve *recognition*,[5] particularly within an increasingly unstable reality *(Alienação e Aceleração 83)*. If standing still means falling behind, acceleration becomes the only viable option.

Under the rule of the coercive law of competition, its dynamics are imposed not only upon producers but also upon subjective choice. As Giulio Palermo notes (23), competition spills beyond the economic sphere, becoming a general regulator of social relations and an internalized principle. It thus becomes a dominant principle of allocation across domains, including science and the arts (Rosa *Alienação e Aceleração* 37–8).

In Portugal, public arts funding schemes are structured as competitive calls. In these contests, the successful projects are those that, besides meeting formal eligibility criteria, most effectively impress the jury panels. Given the fixed number of projects that can be funded and the budgetary cut-off lines, competition results in exclusion for all proposals below the threshold. Moreover, to meet the call's requirements, such as securing a performance venue, entities compete again, either to persuade programmers or to obtain rent subsidies from local authorities. These dynamics create multiple and overlapping races. Artists and entities must remain in constant "good shape", producing intensively and at speed, adapting to shifting trends, and sustaining continuous visibility. They must do more and do it faster than others because in a competitive framework, only the "best" prevail.

And beyond organizing behavior, these state-engineered competitive logics have fostered the belief that artistic worth can and should be ranked. Indeed, public policies are built upon a meritocratic logic and apply it to the arts without hesitation. The field itself also internalizes this logic. It's not uncommon to hear someone complain that a project "inferior" to their own received public funding while theirs did not. The system of public support for the arts often operates as if dealing with interchangeable commodities or contractors competing to build the same bridge, rather than with heterogeneous projects, pursuing different aims across distinct

contexts and territories. Moreover, as the Portuguese pop-folk musician Bernardo Cruz Fachada has put it:

State subsidies cannot come disguised as a naïve cultural meritocracy. Because state subsidies ought to serve to rebalance inequalities of privilege and to take money out of the hands of the cultural elite and place it in the hands of others. Yet subsidies do exactly the opposite. For we make a point of culture being—we think culture will be—a meritocracy. (Pinto and Ramalho 2:16:32)



Fig.3. Karōshi by Teatro da Cidade, Teatro Nacional D. Maria II, Sala Estúdio, Guilherme Gomes and Nídia Roque, 2019. Photo: ©TNDM II. Filipe Ferreira

Project After Project, Horizons Close in

Allied to competitive pressures is the logic of working project by project, a structure further reinforced by policy design. In Portugal, although some public schemes support artistic entities for two or four years, many programs fund only a single project and, as noted earlier, channel most resources into new creation. As a result, artistic entities exist in recurring cycles of uncertainty: every six months, every year, or every two to four years, they await the outcome of calls that can determine their survival. Regulatory and bureaucratic changes are frequent, requiring continual study and adaptation. This creates a state of permanent instability, in which projects remain inherently ephemeral and the search for the next round of funding never ceases. The consequences are manifold, extending even to health, as producer Nassy Konan observes:

The system itself fuels exhaustion . . . We are expected to hold risk, deliver impact, and remain accountable, often while navigating unclear structures, complex processes, and a lack of meaningful support or accountability. (Producer Gathering 3–4)

Projects thus impose a logic of successive cycle closure, a dynamic that Bojana Kunst, describes as a “projective temporality”: a model in which the ultimate horizon of creation becomes the fulfilment of a predefined endpoint, an orientation that sits uneasily with the idealized notion of an open-ended artistic process (*The Project Horizon* 112). In this temporality, “the future is projected as equivalent or somehow proportionate to the present”, which means that “the future has already been seen” (*The Paradox of the New Institution* 170). Moreover, by the time one project ends, the next is already being conceived, or even underway, leaving no time for assessment, consolidation, or reflection. This continual need to imagine and execute new projects generates intense pressures: to produce, to demonstrate artistic and social value, and to navigate competition, regulatory shifts and budgetary adjustments. In this context, the risk is becoming disciplined, compliant, “good” cultural agents (Kunst *The Paradox of the New Institution* 170–72). In a 2023 interview, Joana Brito Silva, director of *Lobby Teatro*, captures this predicament with striking clarity:

We depend on this model of arts support . . . So, every year we have to submit a new proposal. Every year I have to put forward a new production for funding. Every year I need to have something to say to the world for my work to be funded. And that’s not true, we don’t always have something to say to the world. I don’t always have a production to create. Sometimes I would just wish I could spend three years touring with one . . . But this is the logic of arts funding, and either you are part of it, so that the engine keeps running (in my case, to make my company evolve, which is what has happened until now), or you die a little. (Pego 19:46)

Bound to the Stages: Gates, Maps and Scales Matter

Yet funding alone does not determine temporal regimes. Dissemination depends equally on the material infrastructures through which works circulate. Dance and theatre can in principle take place anywhere; nonetheless, professionals continue to work in, and audiences continue to go to traditional theatre buildings, which remain one of the main means of production in this political economy.

In an interview with playwright and director Tiago Rodrigues, reflecting on the differences between leading an independent company and a national public theatre, he went straight to the point:

I used to have a company in which I spent my time looking for the means of production… What I do [in a national public theatre] is manage how those means are

shared and used; instead of checking whether the rent has been paid, I talk to many tenants. (Borges 51)

In Portugal, as shown above, very few theatre or dance companies control their own venue. The position of artistic creators differs markedly from that of those who “create the creators,” programmers or curators (Madeira 1). The former must rely on the latter for access to stages, audiences, dissemination and visibility.

Most venues in Portugal are municipal facilities (Neves et al. 70), often understaffed, with a single person responsible for programming while performing other duties. When productions are presented by companies or artists from another region—and it is important to note the strong territorial concentration of artistic entities in Lisbon (Neves et al. 87)—the usual practice is to schedule a single performance, sometimes two. Venues tend to be large, and budgets do not allow company teams to remain away from home for many days. Each theatre also receives hundreds of project requests, placing programmers under pressure to accommodate as many as possible.

In Lisbon, the situation is similar, primarily due to venue size. Mark Deputter, a programmer at Culturgest, observed in an interview:

As a programmer I like to have more sessions, or as many performances as possible, but at the same time I need to be careful not to go too far. Why? We have a 600-seat auditorium. When you have a 50-seat venue, the situation is obviously different. (Oliveira 5:17)

This issue is not restricted to Portugal. Commenting on the *Cour des comptes* report, Marie Didier, director of the Marseille Festival, noted that it considers the number of dates but disregards the types of venues in which performances take place. She further observed:

Productions arrive at theatres that were designed decades ago. When you have a 1,000-seat auditorium, such as the Théâtre de Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, and you programme Umwelt by Maguy Marin, you know that you will probably not have very many spectators, and certainly not for several performances. (Philippe Noisette)

Festivals, Celebrations and the Rule of the Event

*Festivalisatio*n has become an indispensable concept in studying the world of the performing arts. Patrice Pavis included it in his *Dictionary of Contemporary Theatre and Performance* in 2016, beginning by noting that in the previous fifteen years the number of festivals in Europe had multiplied by thirty (75). For Jean Jourdheuil, already in 1984, a *festivalized system* was emerging in which festivals, rather than

theatres (with companies, repertoires, means of production and their own creations), became privileged places for the diffusion of performances.

For Patrice Pavis, festivals have become a shop window or showcase for professional tour organizers to do their shopping, while audiences must choose among a vast number of performances, “as if this massive dose of theatre taken over just a few days then had to suffice for months at a time” (75).

The contradiction in this dynamic is that festivals are popular and attractive, yet remain an institutionalized exception. By tying artistic practices to special events, art is positioned not as part of everyday life, but as something reserved for moments of escape. This suspension of the ordinary enables festivals to concentrate audiences, media attention, and resources. The mechanism has proven so effective that event-driven cultural policies have become a major global trend, largely due to their success in attracting tourism (Zherdev).

It is also worth noting how commemorative moments persist as an important element in the performing arts. In the last decades of the twentieth century, evoking historical occasions, and promoting the country in big events, became a relevant part of arts policy and programming in Portugal. Committees have long been set up to organize celebrations and artists are called upon to participate (George 267–68).

Taken together, festivalization and commemoration reinforce accelerative logics by reorganizing artistic time around exceptional, short-lived events rather than sustained forms of engagement. As an increasing share of venue programming is devoted to festivals, annual schedules begin to resemble festivals themselves.

As shown above, public policy centered on new creation weakens diffusion; competitive funding generates pressures for ever-faster production; project-based logic shortens the lifespan of works; and venue ownership and scale constrain alternative modes of dissemination. The result is an ecology in which acceleration becomes structural, driven by policy settings that reinforce these temporal pressures rather than mitigating them, with far-reaching consequences.



Fig.4. Audience gathering at the entrance to Batalha Centro de Cinema during Porto/Post/Doc, 2025. Photo: João Cruz

Niche Regime, Exclusive Circuits, Standardized Practices and Other Contradictory Effects of Arts Policy

Social acceleration reshapes individuals' temporal perspectives, producing experiences such as time scarcity, diminished horizons of expectation, a pervasive sense of urgency and exhaustion (Rosa). While these effects emerge from a social theory that seeks to account for the totality of modern society, specific phenomena that both participate in and are subjected to acceleration will inevitably generate further, more context-specific consequences.

If theatre and dance operate within a regime of high-turnover production and diffusion marked by fleeting presence and rapid disposability, multiple dimensions will be affected: artistic work itself, the people it could otherwise reach and the lives and working conditions of those within the arts.

This model of fast circulation creates closed circuits that reinforce the persistent stratification of artistic participation among the population. Venues may register full houses even when a new production is presented every week or fortnight, yet it is largely the same people who are there each time, namely those few who are able to follow the season closely.[6] Rather than widening access, this tends to produce a *niche*, one *regime* (Schechner 895) that is difficult to enter both for the wider public and for many artists themselves.

Democratization and broad access to the arts have long been widely accepted social goals, proclaimed by governments across the political spectrum and strongly upheld within the artistic field itself. In recent years, theatres, companies, and artists—often more than public authorities—have set increasingly ambitious commitments to diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Yet actual cultural practices, which resist easy assessment, reveal a different reality. EU-wide data on cultural participation remain limited, but available Eurobarometer figures confirm longstanding patterns. Participation is generally low and deeply stratified by education, income, age, and geography, with Portugal among the lowest-ranking countries. In 2025, fewer than half of Europeans engaged in any artistic activity. In 2013, the most common cultural activities were watching or listening to cultural shows on TV or radio (72%), reading (68%), and cinema-going (52%), while concerts (35%), theatre (28%), and dance, ballet, or opera (18%) were considerably less frequented. The reasons given for non-participation follow familiar trends: lack of time among highly qualified groups, cost among those facing financial hardship, and lack of interest among individuals with lower education levels. The data also reveal significant inequalities between European countries (European Commission, *Cultural Access and Participation*; European Commission, *Europeans' Attitudes towards Culture*).

Thus, although it contributes to the stratification of artistic practices, the accelerated regime in the performing arts is far from the only factor sustaining it. It must be situated within a broader constellation of structural conditions: the acceleration of everyday life, persistent economic inequality, and growing labor exploitation and precarity, all further amplified by the far-reaching effects of the digital revolution.

Beyond their effects on audience development and access, these temporal regimes also deepen inequalities within the field itself: they concentrate opportunities among those most able to absorb the pressures of continuous work, while further marginalizing those with fewer resources, less flexibility, or greater care responsibilities. In a labor context in which uncertainty over employment and income is normalized (Menger 542), frenetic programming and increasingly intensified production cycles create shorter deadlines and a constant demand for availability, placing a cumulative burden on arts workers. What, then, can we expect from artistic creation when those who create are exhausted?

This question points directly to the consequences that these ever-faster modes of creation and dissemination have for artistic works. Across theatre and dance studies, scholars show that time, rhythm and duration are central concerns. García Martinez argues that contemporary theatre works increasingly reflect acceleration, through more, shorter or simultaneous episodes, events and actions, fewer pauses and

temporal experimentation and thematization (103); while dance theorists such as André Lepecki read slowness and stillness as critiques of modernity's kinetic imperatives (45). Rather than analyzing artistic objects in the manner of these studies, our aim is to contribute to this line of inquiry by reframing the conditions under which such works come into being.

There is always a certain mystery in the processes through which the modes of producing art become inscribed in the work itself, yet it is equally clear that they do. In the performing arts we even have a direct glimpse of some of these modes and means of production, which themselves become matter and form of performance. Moreover, throughout art history (Duchamp, Ukeles, Brecht or Katie Mitchell), artists have repeatedly brought the material conditions of production out of the shadows, whether as a political or critical gesture, or as a symptom of an ever more self-referential artistic sphere.

Following this line of thought, two preliminary hypotheses can be proposed. First, accelerative logics appear to homogenize modes of production, for example through shorter rehearsal periods, thereby contributing to the standardization of artistic outcomes. A second set of issues concerns the unfolding of productions themselves. It is often emphasized that creation does not end on opening night; it continues to unfold each time it is presented, remaining alive and renewed in relation to every audience it encounters.

Concluding Thoughts

What may until now have seemed like nothing more than a phase of intense work and constant activity is, in fact, the culmination of a long-running reconfiguration of the conditions under which art is made and lived.

Acceleration in the performing arts unfolds across forms, practices and relations, revealing itself as an eminently political question. It reshapes modes of production, circulation, access and participation and it undermines pathways toward equality and democratization, even when intentions and efforts point in other directions. Short-run and short-lived productions, intersecting with economic and territorial inequalities, generate obstacles to the broader normalization of routine engagement with multiple artistic forms and experiences. By tracing the map of power relations within the artistic field and the trajectory of arts policy in a neoliberal context, the article identifies a set of possible explanatory mechanisms, such as competitive pressures, project-based systems and festival-driven programming.

Without lapsing into naïveté, we argue for a rethinking of the temporal assumptions embedded in cultural policy tools so that they better align with their stated transformative ambitions. It is important to note that within this accelerated regime

there are countertendencies: productions with impressively long runs, long-duration practices, or slow curatorial approaches. These do not refute the article's diagnosis but unfold within its very conditions, whether as reflexive responses to the consequences of acceleration or as institutional extravagances. On a more skeptical reading, such practices may even correspond to what Hartmut Rosa terms "islands of deceleration": functional and contingent spaces of retreat that help regenerate the prevailing regime without transforming it and are easily captured as profitable experiences of slowness (*Social Acceleration* 84–7, 111–21).

Be that as it may, these formats demonstrate that alternative temporalities are both thinkable and practicable, yet they tend to depend on concentrated resources or exceptional commitment. The problem, therefore, is structural: within prevailing funding regimes and institutional logics, they appear less as constitutive norms than as compensatory correctives to acceleration.

In this sense, political claims have also begun to surface: strengthening incentives for diffusion through longer runs, restaging, and touring; supporting curatorial approaches that privilege slowness, care, and continuity over incessant novelty; and developing public funding instruments less tied to the sheer quantity of work produced, while setting more ambitious goals for audience reach, renewal, and diversity. Taken together, these and related proposals constitute a modest yet necessary contribution to temporal practices capable of expanding both artistic possibility and democratic life.

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Endnotes

[1] Producer Gathering is a UK-based initiative supporting independent producers in the arts sector. Established in 2016, it offers a wealth of free resources, including budget templates, funding bids, and access to information, to foster best practices. The platform also provides bursaries, case studies, and commissioned writings to nurture producers at all career stages.

[2] The online survey was completed in the summer of 2025 by 191 independent performing-arts entities in Portugal. Respondents work mainly in theatre (92), but also in cross-disciplinary forms (41), dance (26), circus and/or street arts (5), and music. They include both very young and long-established entities and are based in Lisbon (53), Porto (26), and a wide range of other municipalities (53).

[3] The study is based on a sample of 429 productions, 242 musicals and 187 non-musicals.

[4] The Portuguese public cultural institutions dedicated to the performing arts include three national theatres — Teatro Nacional de São Carlos (the opera house), in Lisbon, Teatro Nacional D. Maria II, also in Lisbon, and Teatro Nacional São João, in Porto—along with the National Ballet Company and the Centro Cultural de Belém (which operates solely as presenting venue). Casa da Música, in Porto, may also be included here, as it is formally private but receives more than 50% of its funding from public sources.

[5] The concept is drawn from Axel Honneth' *The Struggle for Recognition*. Honneth argues that social life is structured by struggles for intersubjective recognition, which function as the basis for self-realisation and social integration.

[6] A significant part is very likely composed of those whom Jean Jourdheuil, ironically described as "professional spectators": people who are directly or indirectly involved in the sector, whether as funded artists, institutionally connected practitioners or active critics, and who also attend in search of networking, visibility or institutional legitimation.

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