

Support Systems

some scenarios for supporting the arts in India

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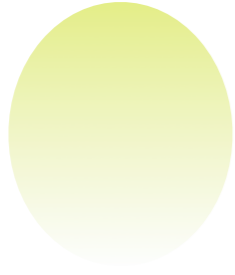
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Abstract



- **The Scenario** - an overview of the governmental and non-governmental cultural organizations working in India
- **What works** - self-organizing to set precedents and experience to advocate for policy change
- **Gaps** - lapses + unmet needs of practitioners and society
- **Possibilities** for alternative support structures for the arts and grassroots art promoters



The Scenario

Governmental

The Ministry of Culture [<http://indiaculture.nic.in>]: Lalit Kala Akademis, Museums, Fellowship programmes for junior and senior artists. Media supported: painting, sculpture, print-making, research

Policy: None / draft / under progress

Non-governmental / self-organized

Khoj International Arts Association, Foundation for Indian Contemporary Arts (FICA), India Foundation for the Arts (IFA), Sarai/CSDS, Art India Magazine, Center For Experimental Media Arts (CEMA), Numerous private galleries. Media supported: Media art, public art, sound art, performance art, arts research, experimental and inter-disciplinary projects.

Association / inter-organizational think-tank: None

Source of funds: Grants (indian, foreign), donations, corporate sponsorship

Self-organized initiatives ↔ **national cultural policy**

initiating and scaling-up self-organized initiatives



set social precedent in terms of a workable + sustainable institutional model



use insights from experience for research to drive a policy-level advocacy effort



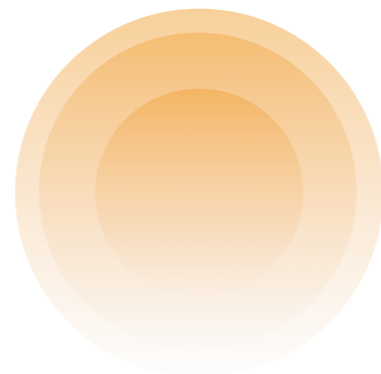
example





Khoj International Artists' Association is a 10-years-young artist led, alternative space for experimentation and international exchange based in India.

eco art sound art public art
experimental art network art
residencies support emerging artists
community art develop audiences bio art
performance art science + art



Research @ Khoj

- baseline study of the funding models of all the cultural non-profits in the country.
- “virtual residency” for artists to understand the place/role of technology in their artistic workflow
- host a business plan competition for arts organizations



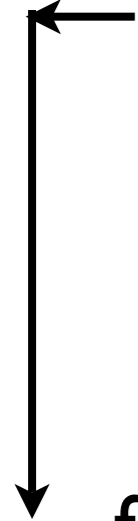
possible recommendations for India's upcoming cultural/creative industries policy

KHŌJ

INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS ASSOCIATION

national and regional network

supports artists to set-up workshops/residency spaces on their own in their own regions. these workshops define their own short and long term priorities.



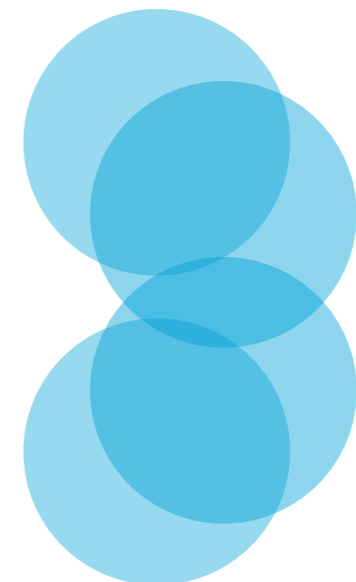
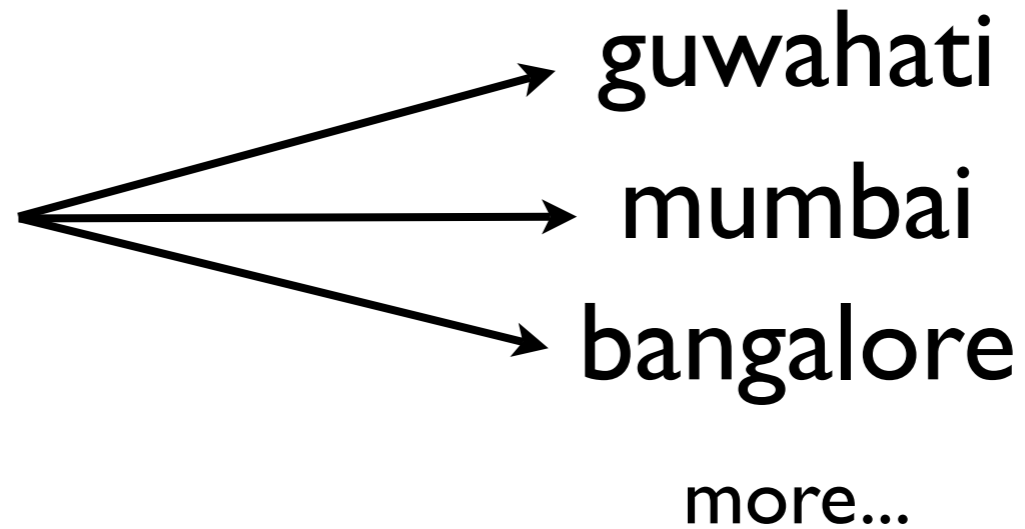
funds

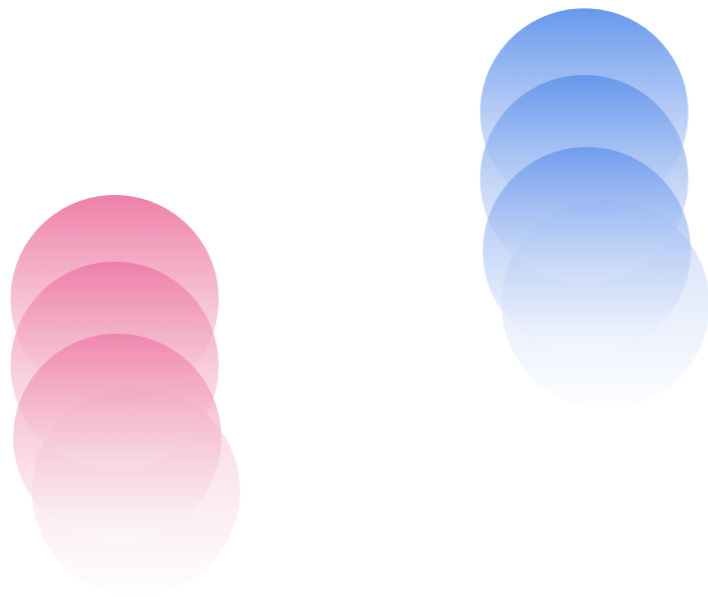
Rs.7 lakhs/annum
(USD 17,500/annum)

handholds

shares accounting/admin
best practices

encourages them to
form their own
national/intl. networks





➡ how can it become **easier** for **self-organized**/non-governmental **arts organizations** to “**startup**” and stabilize?
what **role** could the **government** play?

towards a arts-supportive policy framework: **systems**

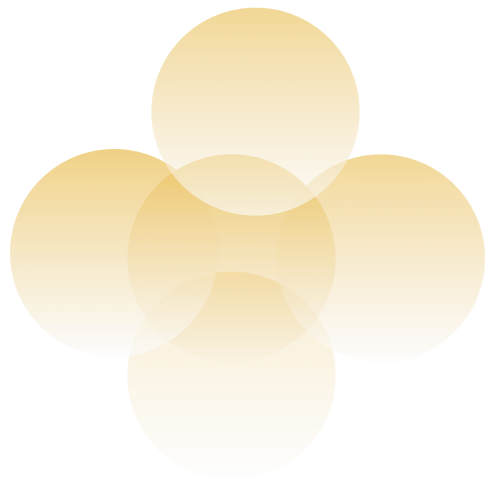
focus is not on a “venture capital-like” obsession with growth and revenue, but on the development of viable niches/sub-cultural markets

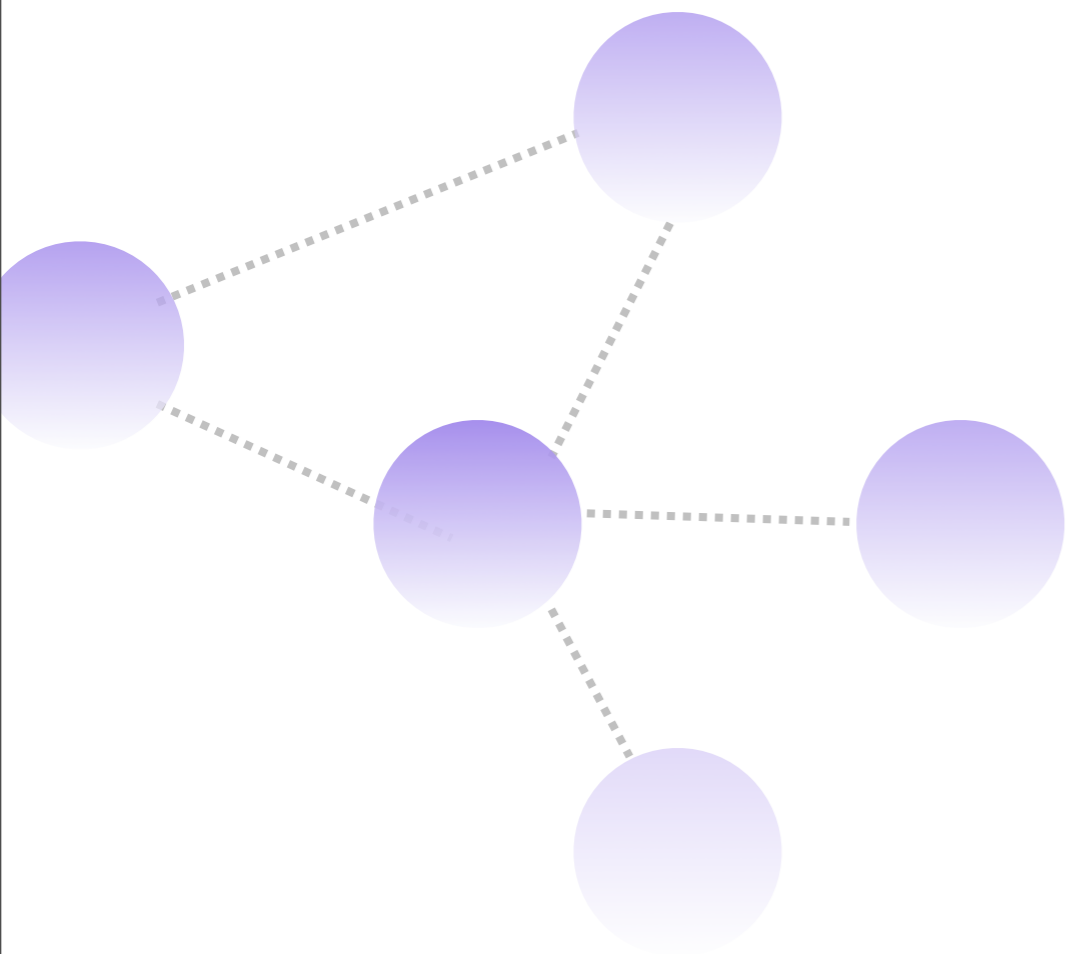
which commit to work with diverse local talent and innovate on sustainable models to do that

the risk of these incubation centers becoming a clique for the urban elite could be avoided by organizing business-plan writing workshops at B-schools or A-schools and by locating the incubators in rural/small-town settings

all support follows the “arms length” philosophy

➡ setup national and regional **infrastructure** for the **incubation, seed funding** and **mentoring** of **startup arts organizations**





+ support/promote local publishing culture (little magazines, presses)



to collaborate
to avoid replication and overlap



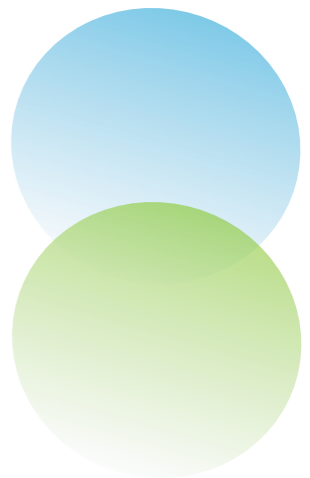
➡ **organize** cross-disciplinary **conferences** for cultural organizations to **share ideas, insights** and **agendas** for action.

“investigating, questioning and celebrating what culture actually does in and of itself”¹ is also critical

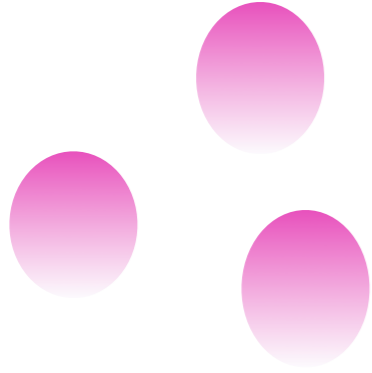
provide data for assertive, proactive action

will put culture as a parameter on the development index of the country

➡ commission a **study** on **links** between **culture** and **development** (economic + social)



towards a arts-supportive policy framework: **advocacy**



to ensure a supportive environment for self-organised art organisations over the long term

to be competitive they'll be in touch with global movements in the sector

and will innovate business-models for support for the marginal, experimental as well as mainstream arts practices.

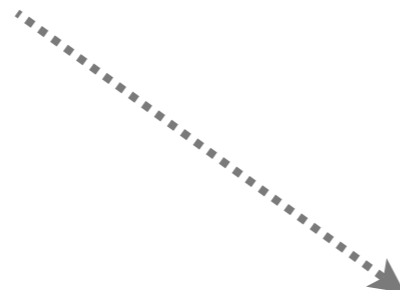
artists will have autonomy in terms of critical positions they want to take, media they want to work with and distribution methods they want to adopt

➔ a **confident** but **cautious** engagement with the government

preparation + ground-work: **community-building**

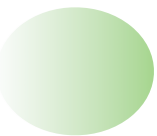


artists come together



to engage

with the institutions,
modalities and tools of
“support”

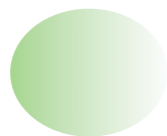


understand ways of
having their concerns and
needs accommodated

to reflect

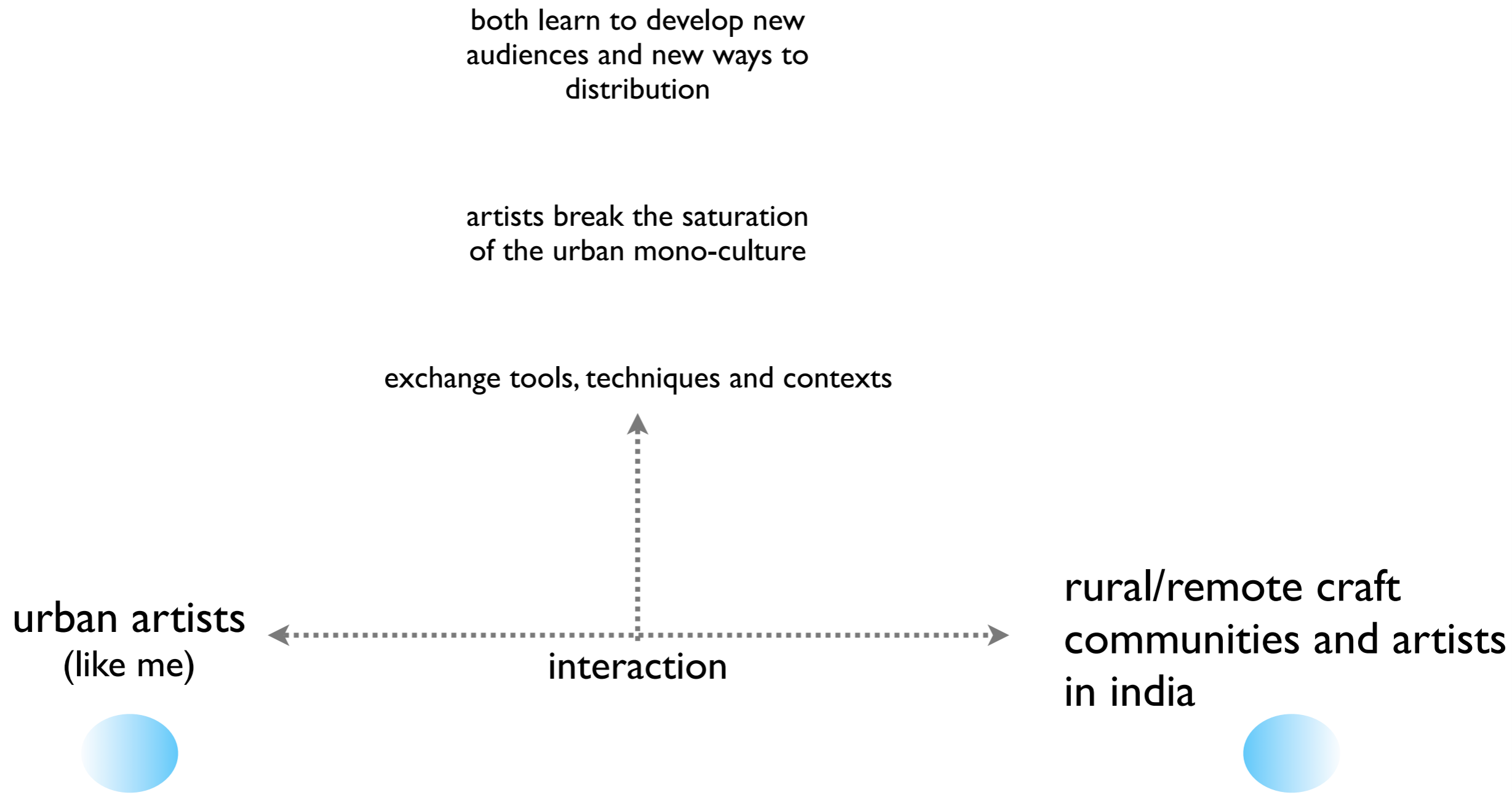


on their social function and role

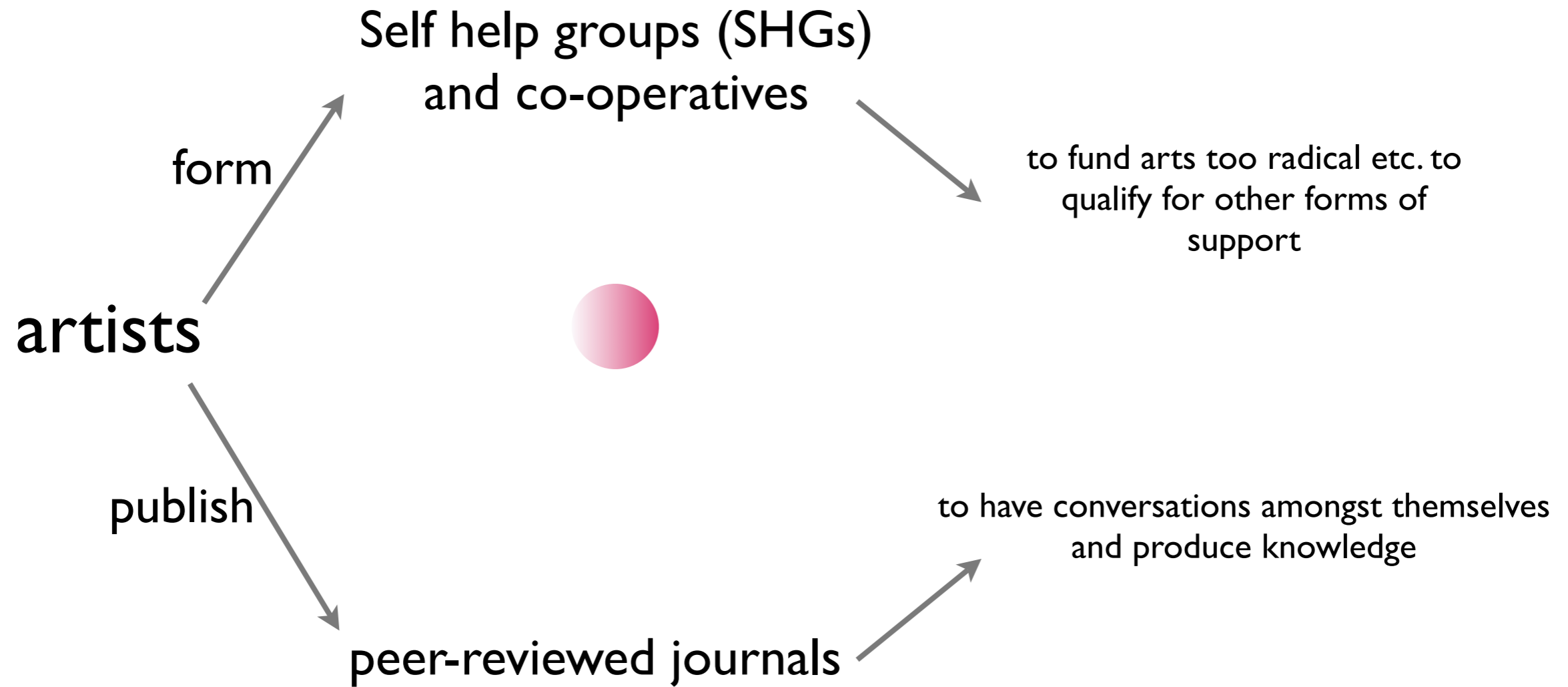


and who they would like to support their work and why

preparation + ground-work: **inclusiveness**



➡ artists need to acknowledge the numerous craft communities in India



open cultural archives

the digital records of our **national cultural archives** (film, natural history, history) need to have a **web repository**. this will make it possible for people at large to **explore** their recent and past **cultural heritage**.

being part of a contextualized web archive will allow people to **draw** and **add** their own **meanings** to the **digital records** in the form of comments, annotations, re-mixes etc.



crowd-sourced digital heritage ²

a **participatory curation** program with folk art, music and craft communities to appropriately **document** and **archive** their works can create an **equitable** and accountable **model** for sharing and **distributing** folk art forms



Thanks:

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