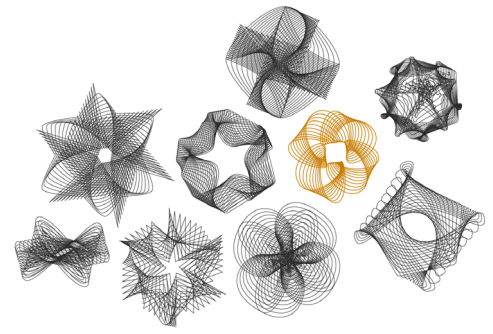


## Time for Cultural Mediation

- 1 What is Cultural Mediation?
- 2 Cultural Mediation for Whom?
- 3 What is Transmitted?
- 4 How is Cultural Mediation Carried Out?
- 5 **What Does Cultural Mediation Do?**



### 5.0 Intro

Policy debates about cultural mediation often centre around the effects of projects on their participants: the people they target. One has the impression that the decision to fund a cultural mediation project comes down to whether the “effects” question is answered correctly. A fairly large share of the → *research on cultural mediation* seems to have been conducted with the intent of finding evidence of projects’ effects. We take a different track for this publication and avoid the active use of the “effect” concept (with the possible exception of the “Changing Perspectives” texts, which were written by others). We have chosen to do so because we are not convinced that it is possible to persuasively establish a direct causal relationship between cultural mediation and its users. The factors which result in a change of attitude or knowledge gain, i.e., factors associated with a learning experience, cannot be isolated with sufficient clarity. For that reason, the next section of this publication, “6. Cultural mediation: why (not)?”, takes the view that the purported effects put forth by proponents of cultural mediation in public debates on the subject are in truth arguments serving to legitimize it. We consider the nearly ubiquitous focus on changes in participants effected by cultural mediation to be problematic: it casts participants in the role of people “to be improved”. We believe that one ought first to examine the effects of cultural mediation on those who initiate them, run them or commission them – i.e. on cultural institutions themselves and the organizations and agencies engaged in funding and carrying out cultural mediation.

Therefore, this chapter, introduced by the question of what cultural mediation does, sets out five functions cultural mediation can serve for institutions.

The order in which the functions are presented should not be read to reflect a hierarchy or in the sense of historical-chronological stages of development. In practice, more than one of them tend to operate at any given time. A brief description of the problems associated with each function is included at the end of its description.

→ *research on cultural mediation* see  
Text 7.5

- 6 Cultural Mediation: Why (Not)?
- 7 Who “does” Cultural Mediation?
- 8 Good Cultural Mediation?
- 9 Transmitting Cultural Mediation?