

The background of the slide is a dark, textured pattern of repeating floral or scrollwork motifs. The pattern is rendered in a slightly lighter shade of the dark background, creating a subtle, intricate texture.

The idea of audience

Conceptualising audience engagement

Simon Piening

iNARPA 2018

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*What do we want from our audiences?
Beyond ticket sales and subscription
commitments, what is it that we are seeking
from the intimate exchange at the core of
the artistic/arts event/audience triad?
For many arts workers, the answer is simple:
We want to connect. (p. 97)*

Lynne Conner

*Audience Engagement and the Role of Arts Talk in the
Digital Era (2013)*

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For the performing arts, Twitter is shaping up to be revolutionary...

"It's a democratisation of art... Audiences can talk directly to artists and each other."

"I think Twitter is a game-changer... It gets people talking about art forms and it builds creative communities."

Elissa Blake

Geeks, tweets and bums on seats – SMH (2010)

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For the past couple of decades, we've been building a framework of ideas and supporting institutions that have led us to a dominant, orthodox take on the value of culture as primarily economic.

Philip Schlesinger

'The creative economy: invention of a global orthodoxy' (2015)

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In the course of conducting research into a number of performing arts companies, we found that while many artistic directors and general managers could discuss their audiences' demographic – the gender, age, postcode, and other subscriber habits – they knew strangely little about what audiences were getting out of the experience (p. xiii-xiv)

Radbourne, Glow & Johanson
The Audience Experience (2013)

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That newly graduated artists were working in small company structures is by no means new to Australian performance, but what is distinctive about this postmillennial generation is their mimicking... of the business structures of a flagship theatre company (p. 87)

Kathryn Kelly

'Post-Millennial Australian Dramaturgies' (2013)

The Audience Project

Stage One

- Participants drawn from the small-medium sector
- Participants include artists, arts marketers, producers
- Monthly meetings for six months

Stage Two

- One on one interviews (ongoing)

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A1: I don't think we have gatekeepers in the sense of their saying "you can't see the work", but I do think that sometimes there is a cultural, you know, implied gatekeeper, that if [you don't] have this level of education, or this level of cultural literacy, then you may not, this work may not be for you.

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A3: Sometimes it's a bit about who has literacy or, to understand what I'm talking about or not. But a part of me is also kind of... I don't hate that.

Because sometimes I wanna make work that only that community, or that people with certain education or whatever can [understand].

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M2: So the question I ask [is] how do we access audiences that aren't part of this community already, that aren't our fellow artists, and its not passing the same 20 bucks back and forth for the rest of our lives?

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*A1: I think like a lot of other people at its purest
I create work to please myself.*

A2: Yeah that's what I would say too

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M1: Its never working with an artist to actually think about that stuff from the very beginning, its always kind of, it's the afterthought that I have to kind of try and plug, plug this into somewhere to make it fit.

M2: And I've found that often that's met with resistance from artists that I work with as well.

M1: Absolutely.

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M2: That's when it becomes really challenging and kind of feels a bit futile as a producer to even try and find that way to engage with audiences beyond our peers.

A3: And then what do you do, just kind of disregard them and go "Alright fuck it, they can't talk about it, let's just think about, what does my product have, how is it different from whatever else is on the market?"

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M2: We have created those walls for ourselves. Because perhaps not enough artists and producers are thinking about who they are making the work for and why its relevant and being really realistic and honest with themselves about it.

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