

# **ATELIER FOR FESTIVAL MANAGERS**

## **TOOLKIT**

### **PROGRAMMING AND CURATING A FESTIVAL**

**Compiled by Lily Hughes, Mauricio Lomelin & Adel Abdelwahab**



## About our Toolkits Series

Since September 2019, The Festival Academy and its community have been developing the series of toolkits of which this volume is part within the framework of the [Act for Global Change: A Global Conversation from the Arts to the World \(ACT\)](#) project supported by [Creative Europe](#) (Cooperation Projects 2019-21).

The aim of this series is to **provide festival experts and sector practitioners with information on current trends and inspiring examples** from the industry, as well as relevant contextual information on their specific issues. With this, the toolkits are developed with the intention of enabling readers to get insights and inspiration for current and future challenges in their own practice. They include **knowledge gathered in the series of activities (Ateliers, keynotes and working sessions) promoted by The Festival Academy** since September 2019, as well as information from a variety of existing research resources and sources produced and brought by our community of Alumni, mentors, experts, speakers and festival practitioners.

The series covers **six topics**, within the scope of their relevance to festival and cultural practitioners:

1. Digital Technology
2. Programming and Curating a Festival
3. Caring for Artists and Technical Crew
4. Sustainable Business Practices
5. Audience Development and Retention
6. Festivals, Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability

The content of each topic-based toolkit includes theoretical knowledge and relevant case studies that can be used as reference and as a basis for the practice of festival making. For such, each toolkit is divided into **two parts**: the first one compiling the **pertinent theoretical background** on its specific topic and the respective links and sources for additional information; and the second part gathering **best practices and examples** related to the specific Toolkit theme which can serve as inspirational guides for festival-makers worldwide.

These Toolkits are not meant to provide 'one-size-fits-all' templates as conditions in which festivals take place vary substantially across the globe depending on political and social contexts, access to resources, and a range of other factors. We have attempted to glean case studies from as many different contexts as possible. It is up to readers and festival managers to interpret and apply the principles contained in the Toolkits to their respective conditions.

Readers are welcome to **navigate these toolkits by clicking through their interactive summaries** and being redirected thus to the parts that most interest them.

These toolkits were developed by teams of alumni with The Festival Academy staff and Atelier facilitator also contributing. The alumni team comprised:

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Please refer to each toolkit for the names of its specific authors.

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The toolkits are **open-sourced, continuously developed tools**. Therefore, festival and cultural practitioners from all backgrounds and levels of experience are **invited to expand these materials** by adding their own contributions, building on the gathering of knowledge and insights shared with the whole festival-making community worldwide.



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# 1 Introduction

*A Festival is an organized socio-spatial phenomenon that is taking place at a designated time - outside the everyday routine - increasing the overall volume of social capital and celebrating selected elements of tangible and intangible culture. - Waldemar Cudny<sup>1</sup>*

What is a festival? A festival offers the opportunity to subvert the norm, allowing us to exist for a moment “outside the everyday”. A celebration in an abnormal setting. While festivals are shaped—perhaps even defined—by their context (audience, budget, community, genre, history, location, mission, relationships, values, etc.), they are realised through curatorial work.

## 1.1 Why this toolkit

Curating and programming are at the heart of festival making. This toolkit is an investigation into curatorial practices across the globe, understanding why curation is important, interrogating different models, examining internal and external factors, and questioning how COVID-19 has changed programming practices.

## 1.2 Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is primarily concerned with secular festivals, i.e., open to the public, focused on showcasing and celebrating art and/or culture. Within this subset, however, there are multiple different approaches to programming and curation—and multiple different challenges to each approach. This toolkit is for anyone interested in these diverse approaches and the challenges associated with each. We hope to inspire new ways of thinking, offer moments of reflection, and help tackle complex issues.

## 1.3 How to use this toolkit

This toolkit provides an overview of what the curatorial process entails, examples of different practices, and helpful contextual information. Throughout the toolkit you will find contradicting examples and unanswered questions which we hope will act as starting points for creative and productive discussions.

This is a living toolkit, and we hope it continues to expand and improve as we learn more about curation and how festivals across the globe are adapting. We are looking forward to expanding our case studies and we welcome contributions from our users.

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<sup>1</sup> Waldemar Cudny. “The Phenomenon of Festivals: Their Origins, Evolution, and Classifications”, *Anthropos* 109, no. 2 (2014): 640-56. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43861801>.



## 1.4 How to provide feedback, amendments, and contributions

We are always looking for ways to improve and are open to presenting new ideas. Please email: [info@festivalacademy.eu](mailto:info@festivalacademy.eu) for feedback, amendments, and contributions especially if you want to share an unusual programming approach or provide your festival's programming approach as a case study.



## 2 What is meant by “curating” in the festival context?

### 2.1 What is curating?

Curating is the process by which a festival’s programme (indeed, perhaps even a festival itself) is conceived and realised. Depending on the model of curation, which will be discussed in Section 3, the focus and organisation of this process may vary. Curatorial processes overseen by an artistic director, for example, may be primarily concerned with aesthetic value or an understanding of “high” art. In contrast, curation through an open call, may concentrate on scheduling and venues to prioritise both audience and artist accessibility.

Different factors can heavily shape the curatorial process. The festival’s mission, budget, stakeholders, audience demographic, amongst other elements will be outlined in detail in Section 4. However, regardless of which method of curation a festival favours and which influencing factors impact this process, all festivals are curated. Decisions are made. Events happen. Even the rejection of programming (as seen in the “Jazz & The City Salzburg” case study) is a curatorial choice on itself.

Though the act of curating is universal, the processes linked with programming are diverse. This toolkit defines a range of curatorial models and features case studies that demonstrate some of these different approaches, but the list—and examples provided—are by no means definitive. Some festivals use a combination of multiple curatorial models and new methods of regarding curatorial processes are constantly being tested.

### 2.2 Why is curation important?

Programming and curation models are not fixed and may change gradually over time or instantly in response to the community they appeal towards. For example, socio-political tensions, climate change, amongst an innumerable number of factors can shape these models. In turn, curatorial models and practices also have the potential to impact socio-political factors and reshape our understanding of art forms.

One clear example are film festivals, given they showcase the impact of curation on a specific medium. The creation and evolution of Film Festivals is linked to a shift in both the understanding of film as an art form and its utilization as a tool for cultivating national identity. For example, the “Venice Film Festival” was launched in 1932 during Benito Mussolini’s Fascist regime and it featured a curated programme which specifically positioned Italian cinema as an art medium to be respected alongside great Italian music and heritage. This simultaneously stimulated a social understanding of film as art and followed an idea of glorifying (and solidifying) the nation state.

As film festivals evolved, curatorial models based on selecting a limited number of submissions, offering competitions, and acquiring specific texts, allowed the respective curatorial panels to separate, categorize, and assign value to different types of cinema genre and perspectives. Similarly, the use of retrospectives in film festival programming continues to uphold the artistic and aesthetic value (and authority) of certain directors. They demonstrate the power of curation



beyond the creation of a festival—as curatorial choices have the potential to influence our global understandings of art forms, power structures, and complex national identities.

## 2.3 Questioning Curation

Curation has an authoritative role, but one which is influenced by socio-political systems, geographic, economic, and historic contexts, and the relationship between aesthetics and audiences. While festivals may exist outside everyday curatorial processes, they are not immune to existing power structures and/or oppressive practices. The authority of selection, the desire to dazzle, the fear of the other, the colonial lens, etc. are some of the aspects that are important to continually consider throughout the stages of the curatorial process and how that impacts our choices.

“Festivals are powerful tools for building social cohesion, understanding international relations, celebrating artists, and fostering community wellbeing”<sup>2</sup>. The curatorial process—and the context in which it takes place—affects the design and impact of all festivals. Understanding how the process shapes a festival, therefore, is key to that festival’s success.

There is no “one size fits all,” no “correct answer,” no “best practice” when it comes to curation. Every festival is different and requires a different approach. This toolkit is designed to help readers think critically about curation, consider the pros and cons of each approach, and understand what factors might affect decision making. Here are some of the questions to consider when thinking about curating your festival:

- Does your festival present, commission and/or (co)produce artworks?
- Does your festival work with local artists? International artists? Both?
- Does your festival work with emerging artists? Established artists? Both?
- Does your festival work with local communities? International communities? Both?
- Are your festivals themed?
- Does your festival centralise or distribute artistic decision-making?
- Is artistic decision making a top-down or bottom-up process?
- Which individuals or collectives are making the artistic decisions?
- Who sets and controls your programme budget?
- How long does it take to create your programme?
- Do geographic, governmental, historical, religious, or social factors impact your programming?
- What is the mandate to and from your governing board?
- Does an artistic selection process assure quality?
- Does an open call selection process assure access & greater participation?
- Does a committee or community selection process assure greater inclusion?
- Does an individual selection process lead to exclusion?
- Are your answers to the above fixed or changeable?

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<sup>2</sup> Salzburg Global Festival, “Introduction” in *What Future for Festivals? Report on Session 646*, ed. Susanna Seidl-Fox, Ping-Ann Addo, Beatriz Garcia, and Louise Hallman (Salzburg: Salzburg Global Seminar, 2020), 8-9.

## 3 Different models for curating or programming festivals and the pros and cons of each

Programming methodologies and approaches vary drastically even within different programming models. Depending on the art form of the festival, the personality and taste of the curatorial staff, and several of the factors to be addressed in section 4, multiple festivals could use the same programming model yet produce different results. Alternatively, festivals often use multiple or hybrid models, for example, combining an artistic director model with a community programming model (as seen in the “Festival der Regionen” case study).

The pros and cons of each model are general and by no means conclusive. A more extensive “Health Check” tool on curatorial practices is available in the Resources Section, designed by Festival Academy alumni María Azucena Rodríguez Franco and Hannah Strout.

### 3.1 The Artistic Director

The artistic director is responsible for setting the artistic vision of the festival. They take upon selecting and programming the artistic productions participating in the festival in accordance with the ethos, strategy, and traditions of the festival. The power in this model, for better or worse, usually lies with the individual and decisions are made using a top-down approach.

PROS	CONS
An internationally recognised and historically successful model, a singular vision creates a uniform and cohesive programme with a very solid artistic approach and quality.	The model is sometimes regarded as elitist, targeting very specific audiences and not open to wider classes and groups in society. Highly dependent on the individual.

### 3.2 The Artistic Committee

Similar to the artistic director model, the artistic committee model consists of a group of artistic programmers, whose mission is to choose and set the activities and programme of the festival. Decisions might be made collectively using a top-down approach or with a programming rubric. Festivals might have both an artistic director and an artistic committee.

PROS	CONS
A cohesive and quality driven artistic programme with the benefit of having multiple voices and programming experts who share the responsibility of curating.	Questions around leadership and difficulty making decisions or presenting a clear festival identity and mission. May still be elitist or exclusionary.

### 3.3 The Open Call

There is more than one approach to open call programming. Open calls could be completely open, such as a fringe festival, where artists might pay a fee to participate but there is no selection process; or open calls could be followed by a curatorial process, where an artistic director and/or committee select works from the open call to be included in the festival programme.

PROS	CONS
A more inclusive approach, providing equal opportunity to artists to participate in the festival programme. Often leads to programmes that are broad, diverse, experimental, and unexpected.	Might create the illusion of greater access, equality, and inclusion without addressing other barriers to participation (e.g., socio-economic, geographic). Artistic quality or ethics may be compromised.

### 3.4 The Main Festival and the Fringe Festival

Programming is a mixture of the previous models. The main festival is programmed by an artistic director and/or an artistic committee and the fringe festival is programmed through an open call. The festivals happen concurrently.

PROS	CONS
The “best of both worlds” this model is traditional and popular in many western countries and societies. Creating a vibrant and joyful atmosphere, successful business model and fertile space for generating networks and cooperation.	Creates a hierarchical relationship between “high art” (the main festival) and “low brow” (the fringe festival), privileging certain art forms and artists over others. This division risks excluding artists and audiences from different backgrounds from different components of the festival.

### 3.5 Audience Selection and Community Programming

A bottom-up or grass roots approach to programming, these models place decision-making with the audience or community and programming is decided through democratic vote or community engagement. These models are often used in tandem with other models, for example, audience selection might be used to programme a “best of the fest” showcase towards the end of a festival.

PROS	CONS
A highly democratic and interactive model that directly engages with audiences and society. Programming is likely to be representative of the community and foster strong engagement.	Could present (and encourage) biases and stereotypes present in society, preventing marginalised artistic voices from being represented and audiences from engaging with people and ideas new or different to themselves.

### 3.6 The Artist in Residence and Guest Curator

Similar to the artistic director or committee model, however, the artistic vision and programming responsibilities are fulfilled by (or in collaboration with) a visiting artist or curator. This model can also be used to transition between artistic directors (as is seen in the “rEvolver” festival case study).

PROS	CONS
Vibrant and refreshing artistic programming that can manage to balance the traditions of the festival with new and outside-the-box thinking. Access to artists the festival might not previously have had.	Inconsistent programming and less opportunity for curators and festivals to grow or develop over time. Lack of stability and increased time spent going over operational procedures.



## 4 Factors to consider when curating a festival

### 4.1 Vision and Mission of the Festival (the festival as the end or as a vehicle)

The vision and mission indicate the direction and goals of a festival. When we go into daily operation, it is easy to get lost in the many issues we deal with in order to produce a festival and, consequently, we tend to lose focus on what our festival is for. As such, mission and vision statements help keep the focus placed on what we have determined matters the most. Drafting a vision and a mission statement can take time, and will be constantly revisited, depending on where our organisation is, which are your objectives as a curator, and the needs of both the artists and your community.

The vision of the festival focuses on what we want to accomplish with the festival and programme. It dictates the overall strategy, what the festival would like to achieve and a vision for the future. The mission of the festival determines how to achieve these goal(s) and the day-to-day operation of how to get there, including the primary goals, strategies and how to achieve them.

In planning it is important to include a timeline, as well as measurable objectives, which can be used to track the progress being made towards achieving the festival's vision.

It is important as well to list which are the core values of your festival.

#### 4.1.1 Example: Festival Musique du Bout du Monde

Link: [Festival Musique du Bout du Monde](#)

- **Mission**

Musique du Bout du Monde organises events for the community in order to discover and celebrate different cultures through music and other mediums.

- **Vision**

To create unforgettable experiences and encounters with a unique blend of world cultures set in our magnificent region.

- **Values**

The values that define The Musique du Bout du Monde have come together and been clarified over the past few years of the organization. They are the key criteria used as a reference to help make good choices for the orientation of the project.

- Goodwill
- Sense of belonging
- Audacity
- Pleasure
- Authenticity



## 4.2 Audience demographics (age, class, ethnicity, gender, education, etc)

Compiling as much data as we can from our audience can be an invaluable tool for our curatorial and programming efforts. Having a full understanding of who our audience is, where they are coming from, how they commute, their ages and lifestyle, can help us create programmes that connect with their interests. With this information, we can create a stronger bond between them, our festival, and the artistic programmes that go in synchronization with their interests.

Some of the variables to include:

### 4.2.1 Age

Age can be viewed as specific ranges of age (0-5, 6-14, 15-25, 25-40, 40-60, 60 and up), by cycle stages (babies, children, adolescents, adults, middle age, and seniors) or generation based (Baby boomers, millennials, X-ennials, Generation X, etc).

### 4.2.2 Gender

We should be careful not to assume gender stereotypes and not to assume the gender of our audience.

### 4.2.3 Income, Occupation and Lifestyle

Understanding incomes, occupation, and lifestyle (including marriage status) can help us plan our curatorial efforts as well as design our marketing efforts and develop effective pricing strategies.

### 4.2.4 Education

Understanding the education levels of our audience can also help us program our festivals by selecting programs to which our audience might have a stronger connection.

### 4.2.5 Ethnicity, Religion and Other Cultural Factors

As with age, we should not assume the race, beliefs, and background of our audiences. Having a full understanding of their traditions and cultural background can help us with our planning and scheduling. Being mindful of religious holidays, and traditions can help us avoid making mistakes when programming and scheduling.

Please refer to the *Audience Development and Retention* toolkit for more in-depth information on demographic segmentation and other types of segmentation models.



## 4.3 Budget

There are different ways to budget for a festival. There are some key components that can be easy to forget while budgeting, for which it is always important to include an amount of contingency.

Some of the concepts to consider while budgeting:

### 4.3.1 Artistic Costs

- Artistic Fees
- Management agencies fees
- Royalties / Rights

### 4.3.2 Production Costs

- **Technical and Managerial staff**
  - Production Managers
  - Technical Directors
  - Stagehands and labour
  - Designers: lighting, sound, video, scenery, costumes
  - Sage managers
- **Production**
  - Scenery
  - Lighting
  - Sound
  - Video expenses
  - Trucking and freight
- **Travel & hospitality**
  - Hotels
  - Flights / Train
  - Local Transfers
  - Per-diem
  - Visa expenses (if needed)
- **Front of House expenses**
  - House managers
  - Ushers
  - Box office (staff, ticket printing, ticket fees)



### 4.3.3 Marketing Costs

- Advertising campaigns, including press, radio, social media
- Publicity expenses
- Website and social media
- Contingency: depending on the size and complexity of the programs that will be part of the festival, this amount can be adjusted, but a 10% of the general budget is a safe place to start.

## 4.4 Donor/Partner interests

Being mindful of our stakeholders, in terms of donors and partners is very important. In the end, we can subsist partly because of their generosity. Here are some questions to consider:

- Are we taking them into account when programming and curating our festivals?
- Does our mission and vision align with their needs and interests?

Alternatively, depending on the programmes and artists we plan to present, we can look for specific donors, sponsors or partnerships which might be interested in our specific programme. For example, if we are presenting a work from a specific country, we should reach out to the Consulate or Embassy of such country and try to create synergy efforts with them, from resources, in-kind benefits, or marketing efforts.

## 4.5 Geographical location and Socio-Political Factors

Understanding the geographic location of our festival can also help us with programming and, simultaneously, become more creative curators. Several questions to consider are:

- Are there limitations on the types of work we can present because of the specifics of the region where our festival takes place?
- How can we use our location as a curatorial opportunity?
- What is the landscape and weather like?
- Which is the current situation of freedom of speech/artistic expression and censorship laws?
- Who owns or occupies the land?
- Are there any risk factors because of our region?

## 4.6 Costs for the audience to attend (accommodation, transport, tickets, etc)

As festival programmers we should always consider our audience and fully understand the efforts they make to attend our festival, and more precisely, the economic factor. We need to go beyond thinking solely in terms of pricing our events as we need to be mindful of the additional actions they do that showcase their commitment and loyalty to the festival. Some questions to consider:

- Are they traveling from out of town? If so, what is the average spending they make?
- Can we create partnerships with local hotels, restaurants, and local attractions to make it easier for them to attend?





- If they are local audiences, how do they commute to our events and is the commute cost a factor?

#### 4.7 Environment/climate change

With the current climate change and global warming challenges we are facing, we need to be mindful of our programming and be prepared for repercussions that this might have in our events. With climate emergencies such as tropical storms and hurricanes happening more often, we should be prepared and plan accordingly when programming our events.

Questions to consider:

- If we are programming an event outdoors, do we have an alternate plan in case it rains?
- For international artists and the weather affecting international travel more often, do we have contingency in our schedules in case their flight gets delayed or cancelled?

#### 4.8 Access

Accessibility should always be in our minds when programming our events. Some questions to consider:

- Are we taking into consideration members of the audience with specific needs and programming performances for them, such as relaxed performances for audiences within the autism spectrum?
- Are we including assistant listening devices, audio described performances?
- How are we promoting diversity with our audience and being inclusive with our programming and outreach?

#### 4.9 Internal capacity

When programming a festival, we should be mindful and keep our goals realistic with our assets, both in terms of physical facilities and capabilities, and in terms of human resources.

Questions to consider:

- Do we have the capabilities to serve properly to a wide audience when programming a popular event? (Enough ticket takers, ushers, restrooms)
- From a technical perspective, is our in-house crew enough to fulfil the needs of the program we are presenting? Do they have the skills to do the job, or do we need to bring a specialist?

#### 4.10 Conflicting Interests

Occasionally, programming needs to factor in conflict throughout the multiple stages surrounding festival programming, whether that is before, during it, and afterwards. Environmental factors around travel may impact accessibility factors for audiences and artists. Geographic or socio-political factors may impact artistic expression, which may, in turn, have an impact on sponsors or budget. Negotiating these conflicts can be difficult and it is important to have a strong mission and value statement guide decision making. Here are some questions to consider:



- What are our core values and mission and are they being compromised by internal or external, creative, or operational choices?
- What happens if our core values are compromised or undermined?
- Are all stakeholders (artists, audiences, funders, etc.) in agreement on values or do some have different values? If so, is this difference in values good, bad, or neutral?
- How do we communicate and negotiate with our stakeholders?

#### 4.11 Transitions

A transitional period can impact festival curation. Festivals, programming models, and curatorial practices are not fixed. Festivals evolve and change, whether in response to environmental crises, global pandemics, or a change in leadership. Some questions to consider are:

- Are my stakeholders (artists, audience, funders, etc.) transitioning with me? Is my programming leading the way? Running ahead or lagging?
- What does my festival look like now and how might it be different at the end of this transition? Where do I want to go and how am I going to get there?



## 5 Curating and programming a Festival in a time of COVID-19

### 5.1 The impact of COVID-19 on the curation and programming of Festivals in particular

COVID-19 has significantly disrupted the festival world. The health crisis and consequent economic collapse in combination with domestic and international restrictions on gathering and travel has laid waste to the infrastructure of festivals.

If a festival is curated for one specific context, for example, a thematic proposal in a place with content that depends on physical gatherings, the entire programme could be disrupted if said context is significantly altered. In some cases, it might be possible to postpone the programme, digitize the art, or move the festival to an outdoor or social distanced setting. However, the ability to do this would depend not only on the agility and flexibility of the festival staff but also on budget, global public health, the artworks, the artists, amongst other factors. Digitization, postponement, hybrid models, socially distanced, and outdoor adaptations are some of the immediate or short-term curatorial response to COVID-19. There will likely be long-term implications as well.

While it is too soon to tell, these could take the form of new programming models and, possibly, a radical reimagining of festivals. Successful programming often aims to address societal needs. The vast global impact of COVID-19 will, undoubtedly, alter every community's needs and, as a result, is likely to change the way we programme festivals.

Questions to consider:

- What do my community (and stakeholders) need right now?
- What will my community (and stakeholders) need in a post-COVID-19 world?
- How was my festival able to respond to this crisis?
- How can we prepare for future disasters?

### 5.2 Challenges and opportunities for curating physical and on-line festivals

While there are always challenges to programming, restrictions have long been used by artists and curators as opportunities for creative experimentation and exploration—COVID-19 is no different. Some challenges to consider:

- Lack of physical mobility, travel restrictions
- Unable to be in and share the same physical space with people
- The loss of in-between time, walking places, hallway conversations, pre/post show drinks
- Re-evaluating our understanding of access to include digital privilege

Some opportunities to consider:

- A chance to explore the local and rethink space



- New possibilities to connect and collaborate digitally
- New emerging artworks and artforms in response to COVID-19
- A moment to pause, reimagine and improve our practice
- National and indeed global audiences: how do these shape curation?

### 5.3 Learnings and strategies to take forward beyond these times, and integrated into future festivals

It is good to pause to rethink, reimagine and rework the role of festivals in a changed world, perhaps even undo some of the practices in use before COVID-19.

Festivals might want to flip their narratives. Instead of connecting prestige to premieres, exclusive performances, large scale productions and packed venues, festivals may want to think of success in terms of how well they support their communities or opportunities they offer to artists. There may be a shift from evaluating tickets sales to evaluating social impact, a shift from diversity to inclusion.

Instead of competing with other festivals or media forms, festivals might consider working together to make their content more accessible and environmentally sustainable. Well-resourced festivals may want to disrupt their wealth and engage smaller or emerging festivals, knowing that both have assets to share.



## 6 Case studies of existing festivals and their curation/programming models

*[The following examples should be read as testimonies from festival workers who have provided this information anonymously. The final introductory text for this section is still in development stage.]*

### 6.1 *Dance Umbrella*, South Africa

The festival ran for 30 years when, due to lack of funding, it had to close down. It was supported for the first 26 years by the corporate sector. The last six years were difficult as the access to funding was limited with no interest from the city or government in assisting the platform. I would like to discuss the mistakes we made as well as share how it expanded over the years developing into a ten-day event that presented work all over Johannesburg in venues, museums, galleries, and open spaces. It also developed international partnerships along the way.

The Dance Umbrella started as an open and free platform for artists to show work on a series of mixed bills. For the 10th edition, we commissioned new work and opened the platform to international artists. The last 20 years we curated mostly full-length programmes but continued to assist young artists in presenting work.

We initially programmed all works in the Wits Theatre complex (two venues). When we expanded the festival to including the Dance Factory and Market Theatre (Newtown), we realized that we would have to ensure that the programme was curated to present works in the Wits Theatre complex one night and in Newtown the next, as people would not want to leave the venue to travel. We saw this when we programmed one work in Wits Theatre and another in Market Theatre. It was as if we "lost" audience. If we curated two works in Wits' complex, the audience moved from one space to the other comfortably and the same applied in Newtown between the two venues there. We also eventually supplied transport for the audience when we expanded to the Soweto Theatre in Soweto to assist them to move between spaces. We learned to consider audience and if possible, assist them in how to better attend the various programmes.

### 6.2 *Mind the Fact*, Greece

**Link:** <https://www.mindthefact.gr/en/home/>

This Festival is curated on projects based upon True Stories: either non-professional actors participate in it (refugees, homeless, etc.) or real stories (from life in camps) are brought into the public space and interact with the audience.

A group of teenagers, living in a shelter in Athens, presented a performance in Athens Town Hall, presenting themselves as the future Mayor and politicians of the city. The interaction with the audience, as well as the genuine aspect of their speeches, created a common field - a bridge between the two sides. In our eyes, this was a presentation of unification and integration.



### 6.3 *Festival der Regionen, Austria*

Link: <https://fdr.at/en/>

The 2021 edition is a new format. We made an open call for artists to serve as 'CultureNauts', who together with the artistic director, will research the territory in joint residencies and collaboratively develop the projects for the festival. Additional projects are to be curated by the artistic director. Out of the 410 applications we selected 15 CultureNauts.

For the previous edition we developed a project with Ondamarela from Portugal/UK, in which we created a citizen's orchestra and choir. The music and lyrics were all composed and written in collaboration with the citizens. We worked with numerous local partners including regional music schools. The main goal for the festival was to network and connect the artists with both citizens and organisations, and to build trust, as the festival takes place every 2 years at a different location. Over 100 citizens participated in the opening concert of the festival. I am sure that if the festival stayed in the region over 200 would have participated the following year.

### 6.4 *rEvolver, Canada*

Link: <https://www.upintheairtheatre.com/festival-about>

"rEvolver" is a submission-based festival. Emerging and early to mid-career artists from across Canada are invited to submit their work through an open call. Our curatorial team consists of our two Artistic Producers and two emerging Resident Curators who join the company on overlapping two-year terms.

Our Resident Curators are vital to the process as they represent the community of artists that the festival serves. The program has grown in recent years to become central to the way we work. As our Artistic Producers have grown older, it has become increasingly important to us to have representation from the emerging and early-career artists whose work the festival presents on our curatorial team. They bring knowledge from "the front lines" in terms of who is doing vital and important work, how younger artists are working, etc. that we used to have when we were young artists ourselves. Increasingly, they also are more able to reach out into under-represented communities and help us build bridges to ensure we can use our resources to support artists who might not otherwise access the opportunities we offer. We have recently expanded this program from one curator on a single year term, to two curators serving overlapping terms, so there is always a "first year" resident, and a "second year". This helps in the transmission of knowledge as individuals move through the roles and allows the residents to have a year to learn about the organization and the festival, and a year to provide feedback into it and help make us stronger.

### 6.5 *Freespace Jazz Fest, Hong Kong*

Link: <https://www.westkwoon.hk/en/jazzfest#overview>



We launched “Freespace Jazz Fest” in 2019, during the first year that the new arts centre FREESPACE opened. Freespace is part of West Kowloon Cultural District, one of the largest arts and cultural developments in the world.

Freespace is located in the middle of The Art Park, a huge gorgeous open space on the bank of Victoria Harbour. We chose to launch Jazz Fest, an annual jazz and world music festival, to support Hong Kong's talented and undernourished jazz scene, and provide a new focal point for jazz in Asia.

The festival is hosted both indoors and outdoors. In our first year, we had nearly 14,000 people over two days. We never expected these many attendees in our first season, as it took place amid Hong Kong's ongoing protests. It was a huge success, however there was not enough food and beverage for all the people -- a happy problem to have. We incorporated a photo exhibition, jazz dance, workshops, film screenings, as well as incredible headliners and amazing local talent. We learned a lot. This year's festival during COVID will be a new experience altogether.

## 6.6 *Kina Festival, Rwanda*

**Link:** <http://www.ishyoartscentre.org/kina-festival/>

“Kina Festival” is curated by Ishyo, executive director, in close collaboration with a group of 3 regional and international artistic advisors. The role of the advisors is to identify shows across the world which are responding to the festival's values, mission, and the yearly artistic line. Every two years, one artist/company is attached to accompany the development of a new collaborative production involving young African artists. Kina festival also curates specific Pan-African co-productions to support regional collaboration and touring within Africa. Kina Festival activities include performances, workshops for professional artists and children, an International Conference bringing together guests and local artists, teachers and educators and researchers, and “Kina Labs”, a platform for creations in process to be seen by a small audience of children and professionals.

Rwanda belongs to the Great Lakes region. For the past 25 years, the region hosted many conflicts due to political and economic issues. With the intention of analysing and supporting theatre for a young audience in the region, the Kina festival coordination team initiated a two-year project with 20 young artists (writers, set designers, actors, directors) from the three countries were invited on quarterly basis to Rwanda. During these meetups, they would discuss these regional issues and eventually create performing arts works for young audiences around these issues. This was an incredible journey as artists in each country are still developing work together, supporting one another, and created a strong sense of commitment to continue developing TYA in the sub-region.

## 6.7 *Protest Arts International Festival, Zimbabwe*

**Link:** <https://www.facebook.com/Protest-Arts-International-Festival-221924007904522/>

This is a multi-genre festival that focuses on arts and activism. The programming is specific, as it looks at works of art that promote freedom of expression, respect for human rights, challenge oppression, and advocate for a just society in a country that is difficult to operate in due to the



heavy handedness of the state. Arts activism becomes the central issue but should be delivered in a way that is exciting and engaging. The activities at the festival also target diverse audiences who have different interests rather than just activism.

In programming the festival, I have realised that people come to the festival to have an experience outside of probably the thematic elements of the festival. In all the editions of the festival, the question has always been, how do can entertainment and activism be balanced so that people enjoy the festival outside of the themes that it is pushing. It has therefore been a learning experience in trying to programme work that engages with issues but at the same time being of high entertainment value such that people will not be bored by issues. The festival also takes place in a country that is very critical of dissenting voices. The navigation between being banned by the authoritarian state and giving the audiences an experiential festival is the exciting element that has been a considerable aspect within the festival programming. The intellectual engagement through a vivid symposium and the performative platforms should create an interesting balance to the festival pushing ideas, entertainment, and activism.

## 6.8 *Jazz & The City Salzburg, Austria*

**Link:** <https://www.salzburg-altstadt.at/en/salzburgjazz>

The programming is based upon the idea that it should demonstrate and invite to adapt and understand the idea of improvisation, different venues across the city, spontaneous performances in public space and "Out of the Box" think-workshop about performing arts in context, city planning, participation, blind Date concerts, open slots that are curated by the artists on site, and a totally free minded definition of Jazz.

It is a FREE ENTRANCE Festival:

I am bored by programming everything and think of concerts as defined 60-min slots. I like to take risks at my own festival and love to invite the artists and visitors to take risks too - since this is what life is about: be open for things that turn out to be the opposite of what you expected, except that you cannot control everything around you and embrace the unknown! So, over the years I programmed the festival much more open, with many slots that I leave undefined until some artist takes them spontaneously on the festival. Sometimes 20 minutes before the timeslot, I don't know who is coming. The idea behind those Blind Date concerts: perform with somebody you do not know. Find somebody on the festival and pick a Blind Date Slot: meet each other in front of the audience. It is a great way to show the people the magic of improvised music and performances.

Two years ago, I decided to cancel my GALA Grand Finale Concert on Sunday night and end the festival instead with a great improvisation in the baroque Mirabell Garden in Salzburg. All the artists from different fields of arts were invited to come into the garden and do whatever they wanted to. It was very special, and the garden department did give out the permission to do so. I thought: "The artists will love it: a big playground!!". A such, I decided to take full risk, planned nothing, and led everything open to the artists if they wanted to do something and what they wanted to do from 12-3pm. At 12 the garden became packed with visitors but no artists. People started complaining and asking me what the programme is, and I could only tell them: "I don't know!". I didn't feel great.





After 1 pm, a few musicians came, some dancers, clowns, but really not many. It was a disappointment and I thought that maybe I asked too much. But later, many more artists came to check out the situation and said that this is an actual great idea and that next year they would want to participate. Nowadays, the Sunday Park Impro creates itself and still I do not interfere. People love it now.

## 6.9 *CULTURESCAPES*, Switzerland

Link: <https://culturescapes.ch/en>

We start research 2 years or more in advance and we travel to the chosen country/city/region and find out the most burning questions/topics/issues. Subsequently, we build a network of artists, institutions and follow said line. At the same time, we continue our relations with our co-presenters in Switzerland and slowly bring together the ideas/topics/existing projects and venues to show.

So far, we have had an array of topics depending on countries or cities. The last three were Iceland, Greece, and Poland, with the theme being Europe and its challenges, and using the selection as a trilogy programme. Each time, we found very quickly strong topics pertaining environment, society, history, ruptures, and conflicts. But all was still based on a "country" with its borders, its cultural canon, its proud in certain heroes of history etc. And, after 16 years of programming like this, we needed another challenge. We also felt that borders and countries are more of an obstacle than a solution for the main topics of our time. Consequently, we changed into a planned series for the upcoming 4 editions by focusing on critical zones of our planet/bio-systems with upmost importance such as: 2021 Amazonas, 2023 Sahara, 2025 Himalaya, and 2027 Oceans. Let's see how this is possible during Covid-times!

## 6.10 *Science in the City*, Malta

Link: <https://scienceinthecity.org.mt/>

A theme is chosen, and a call is opened for researchers and artists to participate. We do so since it is part of Researchers' Night across Europe, so we communicate research in an artistic manner. We shortlist the proposals and have meetings with the artists. We develop each work and, subsequently, partner them with local researchers. We keep doing so until the festival.

Once, we had research we wanted to communicate regarding the interesting phenomenon that exists all around us but only becomes apparent at the microscopic scale: light can push objects around. Just like leaves flapping in the breeze, tiny objects can be pushed one way or the other simply by shining light at them. This is now an active and fascinating field of science that promises to give us quantum drums, computers that use light instead of electricity, and small beads of glass being in two places at once. We wanted to create a light installation, so we contacted local artists who work with such medium and paired them up with Dr. André Xuereb. They produced a piece that was part-funded by the research outreach fund, Arts Council Malta, and the festival itself, which consisted of kinetic lights being pushed up by means of torches held by the audience members. The artwork was engaging, felt alive with all the participating audience and the research was communicated through animation and live explanation.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtkGp\\_3RIOk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtkGp_3RIOk)



## 7 Conclusion

Curating a festival is one of the biggest challenges as it has to take into account so many variables. There are internal elements to consider such as the budget, the vision of the festival, the demands of sponsors, and the expectations of audiences. Then there are external factors like political considerations, the weather and whether there is a pandemic in play!

But, much like putting together an exhibition of works by various artists or programming a conference with topical themes and interesting speakers, curating a festival is also one of the most exciting privileges that a curator or curating team could have.

We trust that some of the ideas in this Toolkit and the experience of other festivals with regard to curating and programming will resonate with readers and will encourage and inspire them for future editions of their festivals.



## 8 Resources

This section has a compilation of several sources that could be relevant for your programming and curatorial practice. It is in constant development as new resources, especially those concerning with festivals during the pandemic as well as online and hybrid planning, are constantly being developed and thought about. If you wish to contribute with content for the Resources section, whether that is a tool you use on your programming practice, or a practical guide on how your festival handles post-pandemic challenges, please email: [info@festivalacademy.eu](mailto:info@festivalacademy.eu) for feedback, amendments, and contributions.

### 8.1 Hay Digital Program Work Guide

Hay Festival Arequipa, moved from "face-to-face" to digital structure. To give you a general view on how the festival works face-to-face, please watch: <http://www.hayfestival.com/arequipa/video>. We thank the team from Hay Festival for their contribution.

#### 8.1.1 Festival Digital Model

Hay's digital program must run and replicate the model of a face-to-face program, consisting of a series of events, one after another, on our website. Punctuality and quality of production are essential.

The events that make up the program will be mostly live, and in some cases, we will offer recorded content, which will be inserted into the program, as "false live" or as a recording.

All events of the Hay Digital programs must become available within 24 hours on the Hay Festival website once they have been broadcast live in the programme. To do this, once the activity has taken place in the program, the recording of it must be posted on a shared Drive so that the webmaster can post it on the festival website. Once these 24 hours have passed, the recorded session will be in Hay Player (accessible with subscription).

All events must show the Hay Digital branding (generic, the flower with "Hay Festival Digital"), throughout the transmission or video, appearing at the top left of the screen. In addition, there will be specific branding per event, which will be put on either on the screen or introducing a video / image during the transmission (this information event will be detailed in the production sheet).

#### 8.1.2 Technology and Equipment

The transmission platform will be selected amongst the most appropriate in each country / festival. This platform must:

- Have a capacity to host up to 5000 people
- Have a channel for simultaneous translation
- Have a virtual waiting room for speakers
- Allow registration and reminders through its system



- Allow to record the sessions in audio and video
- Allow each session live to be branded through the video frame (since it is only allowed to show the Hay logo in the live or pre-recorded event) it should also allow to make certain camera movements to enrich the image.
- Have a chat for comments and a chat for Q&A (separated)
- Transmission links of this platform will appear on the Hay website and partners that require it, and on Hay networks.
- Zoom Webinar is the option that we are going to use in Mexico (cost 2,500 USD per month). Explore the most appropriate option in each country.

Teams in charge of different areas should be established as follows:

- **Technical team:** In charge of the transmission platform (Zoom Webinar, Crowdcast).

Duties:

- To help and guide people to sign up for each session.
- To facilitate links for speakers, translators and team
- To test the technical tools before hand
- To coordinate the transmission of the program
- To put on visual elements as branding, video, slides
- To record and to broadcast each one of the sessions of the programme. This includes camera movement, sound control, translation channel, if applies.
- To post the recorded events on the selected share drive, right after the end of each session.
- To connect the transmission platform to the festival's social networks if needed.

We suggest:

- To have a private space with excellent internet connection and all the technical equipment
- A specialized team of non-less than 4 people to work exclusively for Hay Festival, pre, during and post 2020 programme, to take care of:
  - The press conference launching the program
  - The various tests programmed before the festival streaming
  - The festival itself (The technical team establishes the beginning and the end of each session giving green light to the session's moderator to start and to finish each event.
  - Interpreters must be hired in advance to participate in all the technical tests: platform, internet connection, etc.

- **Production coordination team, must:**

- Coordinate with the Technical team, in a permanent basis and guided by the production sheet designed by the Programming Team.
- Provide the technical team with the best internet connection
- Be in charge of the artistic performances within the programme, as concerts, if any.
- Assign someone from the coordination team to check registration figures prior the festival



- Coordinate with the Social Networks team to enhance registration figures prior the festival
- Coordinate and facilitate the tools for the interpreters
- Be in charge of the open chat during each session, to control messages that might be offensive or inappropriate (racist, xenophobic, classist, sexist comments or any other of that kind).

- **Programming / Coordination team for guest participants/speakers, must:**

Establish the program, schedules, and contents of each session/event.

Check:

- The number of participants
- The visual complements for each session (branding, videos, slides, charts, etc.)
- Keep the production sheet continuously updated
- Update the Website with the latest programme
- Host the guests in the virtual waiting room, giving them all the info required for their session: format, session participants and all the instructions of who's who regarding technical issues as muting microphones and putting on visual complements.
- Present the session if required, appearing live in front of the cameras.
- Advise moderators on how to lead the session.
- Manage/check/control the Q&A chat, sharing the selected questions with the moderator through Zoom's internal chat.

- **Video editing: team in charge of:**

Editing pre-recorded videos that will get the Program team advise and recording suggestions.

- **Communication team, in charge of:**

- Having knowledge of all the programme details.
- Programming interviews, press conferences, press releases and information about the festival
- To feed the Social Network team with contents to be broadcast through the selected social media networks.
- Gathering local, national and international media representatives; journalists, and influencers to attend the press conference launching the programme.
- Organizing press conferences or private meetings with guest authors if needed and with the approval of the Programming Team.

- **Social network team, in charge of:**

- Managing and shaping the contents for each digital social media, given by the Communication team.
- Enhancing the promotions of certain sessions if they show a low number of previous registrations.



### 8.1.3 Work Calendar

- Once the festival dates are defined, the platform that will be used for registration, streaming, and recording of events must be selected and rented.
- The digital press conference for launching the program must be set 3-4 days after the beginning of using the selected platform.
- The complete program and specific details about each session will be open for public access at the festival's Web site in both, online and pdf formats, right after the launching press conference.
- The registration process to access each session at the selected platform -cost free- will be available right after the press conference.
- At the same time, the production team will update the registration data for several purposes.
- The day the use of the platform begins, the technical team must duplicate the online program in it (which will be already finished and available either in a Word document or through a feed on the Hay Festival website) and generate the records for programming / coordination participants to add this record on the Hay website.
- During the month prior the festival, tests must be done simulating the programme sessions (this is to be coordinated by the technical team) and tests with participants and interpreters).
- The technical team creates the links, the program / coordination team in charge of guest speakers/participants, does the tests.
- Recordings of deferred events will also be made and those are in charge of the technical team accompanied by the programming/ coordination team (in charge of the guest speakers).
- Production sheet and audio-visual materials for events are constantly updated.
- During the festival: the technical team will work all day, making each transmission. Production/ Coordination team, will be following and providing assistance to the interpreters.
- As mentioned above, a person within the Coordination Production Team will be in charge of the comments chat and someone from the Programming Team, in charge of each guest speaker during each session.
- Quality and punctuality will be much appreciated, all characteristics that make Hay Festival one of a kind.

Watch Hay Festival Digital Queretaro to foresee Arequipa's structure:

<https://www.hayfestival.com/m-152-queretaro-2020.aspx?skinid=19&genrefilterid=0&categoryfilterid=0&sectionfilterid=588&pagenum=1>

## 8.2 Health Check Tool

**Authors: María Azucena Rodríguez Franco (Alumna) and Hannah Strout (Alumna)**

**First presented at Atelier Gothenburg 2018**



## The meaning in the meeting

A practical guide for Festival Managers  
in critical self-reflection and  
organisational strategic thinking

### Values...

- Various utopias
- Artistic inspirations
- Logical steps
- Ultimate principles
- Earnest convictions
- Secret inspirations



In ethics, **value** denotes the degree of importance of some thing or action, with the aim of determining what actions are best to do or what way is best to live - things with high value (subjective) may be perceived as "good".



## Be a “good” festival manager

“Leadership is... about setting a positive example for staff to follow, by being excited about the work, being motivated to learn new things, and helping out as needed in both individual and team activities.”

(Leadership <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/l/leadership.asp#ixzz5PNsg2VNO>)



## A Health Check for your practice

We've attempted to create a practical resource for checking in with your values, for self-reflection, and for building a “good festival”.

- ▶ The way that we enact our values as individuals, as an organisation and as an event changes over time.
- ▶ Personal, political, environment, social, and cultural changes require us to reassess regularly.
- ▶ Opportunities to develop new skills and embed reflection into our practice are valuable.
- ▶ We have enough information. We need, practical actions, clarity, results.



## An overview of the Health Check



1. LOOK INSIDE: You, The Festival Manager



1. LOOK OUTSIDE: Your Festival



1. APPLY YOUR VALUES: Critical Thinking in Action





LOOK INSIDE: **The Festival Manager**

How can you use your strengths in greatest service to the festival?

What 5 things are you most proud of concerning the festival?

What 5 things *will you be* most proud of?

What does your ideal day look like? When you get up? What do you do? With whom? For whom? Imagine it in vivid detail! How is that connected to your festival?

What would you do if you weren't afraid?

If you were guaranteed to succeed, what's the #1 thing you would do for the festival? What else?



What is it that your colleagues/ co workers can do for the festival?

LOOK OUTSIDE: **Your Festival**





LOOK OUTSIDE: **Your Festival**



LOOK OUTSIDE: **Your Festival**



LOOK OUTSIDE: **Your Festival**





## LOOK OUTSIDE: Your Festival



## APPLYING YOUR VALUES: Getting Real

### **There is no one right way to do this!**

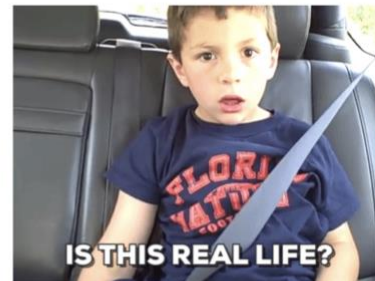
This is about understanding how you work best and finding an approach that matches.

### **Create rituals**

The most important thing is getting into the habit of critical reflection: to be thinking about these things which are so fundamental to everything you do.

### **Give yourself permission to change**

Your values will not always be necessary or relevant — and it's worth creating space to examine that too.





## APPLYING YOUR VALUES: Getting Real



### Together Everyone Achieves More (lol)

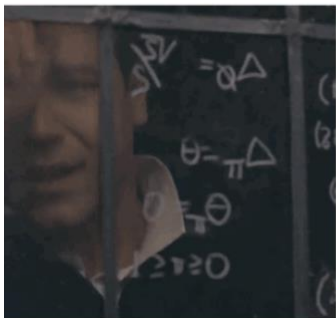
Commit to creating space for your team to feed into, understand, and to share the same values.

This includes new team members!

### Treat yo'self

Think about ways you can embed your values - e.g. job descriptions, recruitment, induction, professional development- and also what kind of reward systems you might have in place

## APPLYING YOUR VALUES Starting Big: The Checklist Method



Value	Actions	Rating	Reflection / Remedy / Actions
E.g. <b>Diversity</b> We believe in creating and supporting a diverse organisation and in championing stories that exist beyond the mainstream	<b>Overarching goal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensuring that diversity exists at all levels of the organisation, particularly in positions of power: governance, operational, artistic</li></ul> <b>1 year plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensure at least 50% people identifying as women on the board</li><li>Ensure at least 25% Indigenous representation on the board</li><li>Programme at least 75% work by non-Pakeha</li><li>Programme at least 75% work by artists identifying as women</li></ul>	  	E.g. if you are having trouble finding work by women <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Investigate the creation of an artist development programme for women</li><li>Partner with other institutions</li></ul> E.g. if you are having trouble finding Indigenous representation on the board <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Consider a tuakana / mentorship programme where a less experienced person could be trained on the job</li></ul>

## APPLYING YOUR VALUES DIY Training Wheels

Week	How I want to demonstrate [value]	Rating	Reflection / Remedy / Actions
1	E.g. use more te reo in email and daily conversation	  	
2			
3			
4			





## APPLYING YOUR VALUES

### Follow up: The Check-In

1. **The Good.** Reflect on a moment where you acted in accordance with your values
2. **The Less Good.** Think of a situation where you DID NOT act in accordance with your values
3. **The Prescription.** What is one change you could make to enable you to act more in accordance with your values next time?



## Tips for completing the Health Check

1. **Record your explorations:** Keeping a journal makes a big difference and will prove an invaluable resource when it comes time for making changes.
2. **Small Steps:** You might not make it through the whole check the first time. That's OK.
3. **One resolution at a time:** You don't have to implement all your changes and ideas at once.
4. **Repeat:** This tool is designed to be used on a regular basis, and we think you'll benefit much more if you repeat it regularly
5. **Be conscious:** Of why are you doing it, and how having your foundations, aims, and of course values clear, will make everything easier.





### 8.3 HOW TO ORGANISE A FESTIVAL AFTER COVID 19 (FOR DUMMIES): AN INSTRUCTION MANUAL

- **Authors:** Lily Hughes (Mentor), Amira Alsharif (Alumna), Samantha Nampuntha (Alumna), Tobias Kokkelmans (Alumnus), Kanobana Roman (Alumnus).

**First Presented at Atelier for Solidarity 2020**

#### Introduction:



As we discussed during the working group themes and answered the questions, it became clear that while COVID-19 was a problem that affected us all, there were also many other problems we had been dealing with for a long time.

This moment, this pause—this atelier, this working group—gave us time to reflect and we decided, if and when we come out of this pandemic, **WE ARE GOING TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY.**  
But how?

For those who do not know the 'For dummies' series of books take a very complicated/comprehensive topic and give simplified instructions on how to go about it. We have taken the very complicated process that is festivals and the very comprehensive questions that the Atelier has made us answer and compiled them into instructions for ourselves.

#### **Step 1: Get out of bed.**





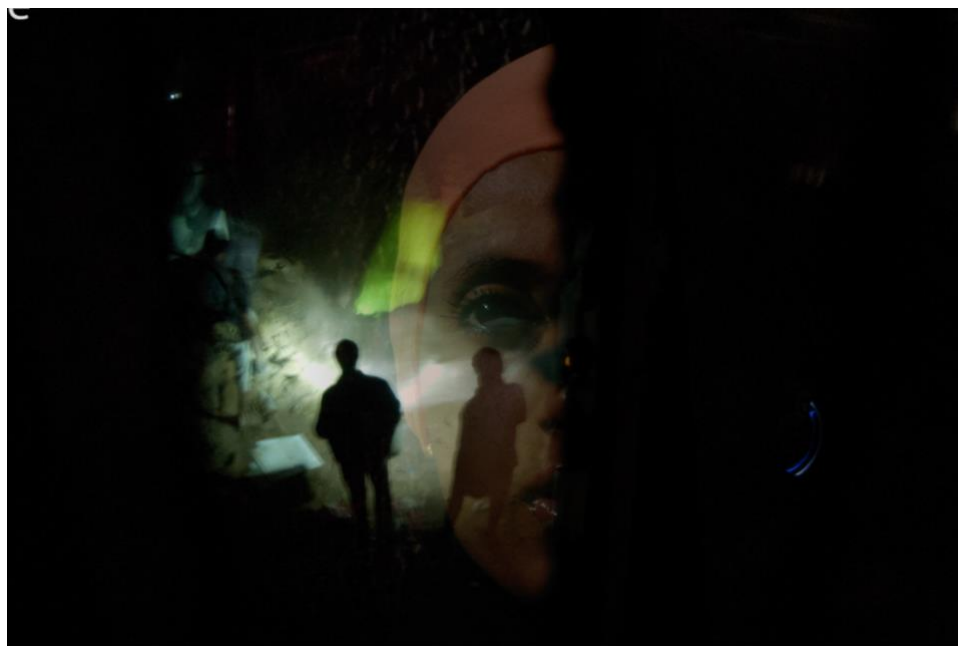
**Step 2: Rethink everything you know.**



Rethink festivals, rethink programming, rethink success. Stop measuring success by tickets sold or audience reached. Bigger and louder might not always be better. Continue asking questions. Convince funders, sponsors, stakeholders, partners, board members, artists, vendors, audiences, neighbours, volunteers to do the same.



**Step 3: Stop focusing on the product and start focusing on the process.**



If it's too expensive or too damaging for the ecology to bring productions to your festival, try to focus on bringing the people to your festival. Prestige is not the goal anymore. Don't hold yourself back because you're afraid to make mistakes. No-one is an expert anymore. We have to start learning by doing. Doing something now doesn't mean you have to do it fast. Take your time. Produce less.

**Step 4: Confirm your commitments.**







Make a commitment to kinship.  
Make a commitment to listen.  
Make a commitment to art.  
Make a commitment to community.  
Make a commitment to the earth.

**Step 5: Acknowledge your audience.**



A festival is not just a manifestation of arts. A festival is also a manifestation of audiences. Don't treat them as cattle, as merely numbers on your spreadsheet. Look at your audience, as individuals from very different walks of life who take the risk to come together. Because they, because we are drawn to each other. Because we need difference to understand who and where we are.

You are not coming back to the same audience - COVID 19 has changed people, their attitudes, perspectives, priorities, financial status, global status etc. Work to encourage the positive outcomes and remove the negatives. You have a potential new audience. You have a potential new community.

**Step 6: Open up.**



In times of physical distancing, festivals should promote social proximity. In times of lockdown, festivals should open up. We can't afford to cave in. Don't let restrictions get in the way of opening up. There's always a way.

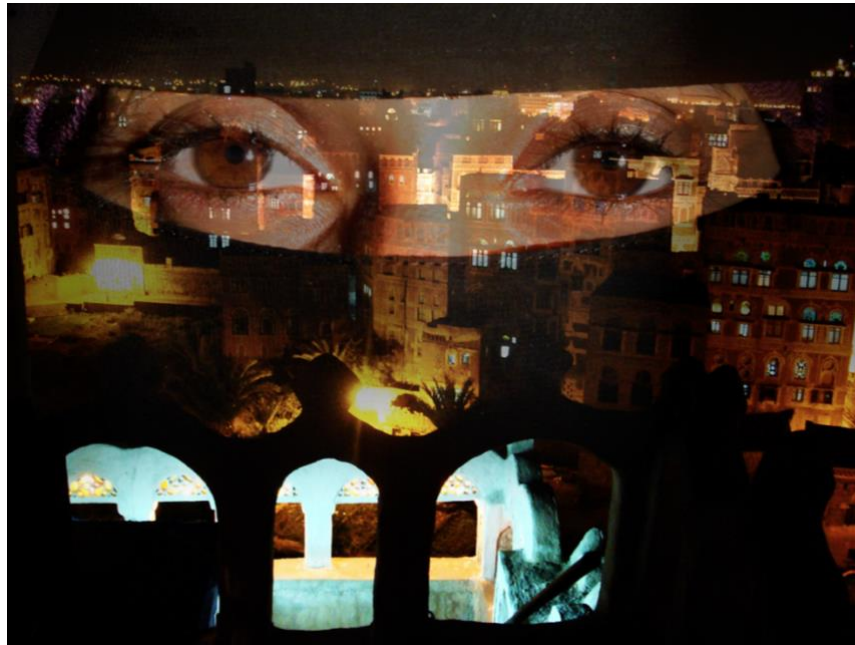
Act local, think global. When people can't travel, ideas still can. International exchange is something we cannot do without. Make art viral.

If we want solidarity, it should be international solidarity. If we want solidarity, it should not be between the arts only. It should be between the arts and so many other aspects of our society that create our wellbeing.

Culture is an ally to society. Culture is an accomplice to social justice.

The arts don't serve the economy, the arts create abundance. Abundance of perspectives, abundance of narratives, abundance of oxygen, abundance of time, abundance of space, abundance of freedom. Nina Simone once said: freedom is: no fear.

**Step 7: Use festivals to create the world you want to see.**



Actively work on dismantling power structures—western oppression, racism, capitalism, patriarchy—work collaboratively, give power and voice to people who have been silenced by oppression. Remember festivals are a vector for change. Share stories. Share histories. Share art. Share food. Share freedom.