

Issue number: 016

Issue: Advocacy for the audience

Convener(s): Nicolas Bertrand (Image Aigue), Ondrej Hrab (Archa theatre), Hen Keizer (Treaty of Utrecht)

Participants:

Summary of discussion, conclusions and/or recommendations:

The audience of our companies and venues is not just a mass of individuals to whom we sell tickets, send newsletters or Facebook friends/fans. Audience is necessary for our organisations to exist, on both artistic and social levels.

Part of the debate was about considering the audience as an anonymous mass versus dialoguing with each “not exchangeable” individual.

We were told about this satiric artistic group in Estonia, who had lots of fans, using perfectly interactive web-platforms and almost pretend to be a political party. But how to take the asset of the hype and make a more sustainable artistic/political action ?

For sure web tools are very popular at the moment for keep a sustainable link with audiences but they often go in on way (producer to consumers).

Art works produced in direct relations, on daily bases, with communities seem to be an efficient way for creating closeness with contemporary approaches : through human contacts, things are more familiar. Empowering individuals in the audience is an important aim, which may also push cultural workers to revise evaluation's criteria of their actions (different audiences different perceptions of performance quality; what people want is different than what they do). Most of the time, criteria are define through numbers but each organisation tries to define its own qualitative criteria for not considering the audience as a mass.

An audience is not just a consumers 'audience, it has to be considered as a partner, a citizen's audience. We should work on new ways for a true dialogue, which gives us the opportunity for better connexions with our societies. The internet tools are for sure part of it, more in a marketing approach, but our organisations should also consider themselves as Civil society actors and

participate to the game by inventing relations with organisations wich are active in other fields (social, educational...) and of course politicians.