

## Dance Forum Minutes

Friday 3 May 2019  
Moray Arts Centre, Findhorn  
2.00pm-5.00pm

**Chair: Saffy Setohy**

### **Attendees:**

Ian Abbott; Kresanna Aigner (Findhorn Bay Arts Ltd); Emili Åström (Creative Scotland); Laura Bradshaw; Paul Burns (Creative Scotland); Anita Clark (The Work Room); Christine Devaney (Curious Seed); LJ Findlay-Walsh (Take Me Somewhere); Janine Harrington; Karl Jay-Lewin (Dance North Scotland); Sara Johnstone (The Work Room); Sara Kemal; Jonathan Krebs (Éowyn Emerald & Dancers); Rosalind Masson; Jo McIntosh (One Dance UK); Allan McIntyre (Macrobert Arts Centre); Wendy Niblock (Indepen-dance); Lewis Normand; Niamh O'Loughlin; Sharon Took-Zozaya (Dance North Scotland); Peter Vallance (Universal Hall Arts Centre); Marie Williamson (All or Nothing)

### **In attendance:**

FST: Anna Broomfield, Jude Henderson, Amanda Liddle

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

Saffy Setohy led introductions and warm up activity.

The aim of this forum was to explore the role, potential and impact of festivals including: the communities and experiences that exist during festivals; the opportunities they present for artists to develop; and how to thrive outwith festivals.

## 2. The Role, Potential and Impact of Festivals

### **Janine Harrington (Choreographer, Performer)**

- Janine's choreographic practice is informed by visual art and how audiences react, interact and move in different spaces.
- Curation in museums and galleries can be difficult to access. Festivals present exciting settings to work in. Programmers are more able to take risks for festivals, can accommodate different scales of work and are not held to one specific genre (e.g. theatre).
- Festival programming can feed into year-round, mainstream programming
- Please see: Artists as leaders: Radical Non-symmetrical (Reciprocated) Advocacy <http://www.janineharrington.com/radical-nonsymmetrical-reciprocated-advocacy>
- Janine has been made to feel like she should be smaller, less complicated, and tidier in her engagement with institutions. She is actively challenging this

### **Karl Jay-Lewin (Dance North Scotland)**

- During Rise Festival, the population of Findhorn becomes a mix of residents and people visiting which brings a mix of perspectives
- Festivals are an opportunity for artists to build relationships – it is important to be available to each other and look after ourselves/each other
- All about collaboration: Rise started small then grew as more people get involved
- For Rise Festival, it is important that artists want to be part of the festival for more than just showing their work
- “Festival” is an adjective not a noun
- Biggest challenge/concern for Rise Festival: audience numbers, balancing the needs of multiple people (yourself, colleagues, artists, audiences). A pressure to prove your worth.

### **Discussion**

- Festivals provide a sense of place. Sharing diversity, network of international artists. Rural locations, big cities and abroad – integrating into different communities.
- The Arts community is international and festivals are a great way to bring people together, for example artists being hosted by local families, artists invited to stay for a week prior to the festival, etc.
- Festivals create a sense of occasion, which means audiences pay more attention. Festivals are more visible, they feel part of the town rather than a separate bubble.
- Festivals offer an opportunity for artists to be discovered and audiences to discover new things.
- Different scales and formats made possible.
- Birmingham Be Festival: artists hosted by local families. The festival presented four works per night, with an interval for dinner where artists and audiences ate together. Workshops during the day, by artists for each other. Created a community of a mix of visitors and locals.
- Denmark Festival: Strong volunteer pool, the artists cook dinner for the volunteers and put on a free show. Value and importance of people staying and integrating in the local community.
- Shetland Folk Festival: The festival supports the locals to host performers.
- There can be challenges – e.g. visiting artists not understanding how to work with people who have never hosted these kind of events before (and vice versa with the hosts). Sensitivities while building relationships.

The forum split into four specific discussion groups – group feedback below:

### **Relationship to place and community**

- What is needed from a community? For example, in Ullapool there is a need for dance in the community, not just as performance (ceilidh, line dancing etc.)
- Dance as a language and a way to explore the world in different ways, which crosses cultures.
- Bodies are a universal language, a shared experience.
- Making sure we support what is already there as well as giving locals an opportunity to try new things
- How different communities will respond, the difference between rural/urban communities

### **Relationship between festival and year round programming**

- Festivals as feasts vs daily bread of year-round programming
- “Slow festival” concept
- How can the festival nurture itself the rest of the time? What can big festivals do during the year? Most effective ways for smaller festivals to share?

- Tension of using volunteers: is it just unpaid work? The idea is that this connects with the community, but who and how does it exclude?
- Successful relationship building (with artists and/or communities) is not a one-time thing, there are many approaches
- Flipping perspective: The festival is not the event that all other activity is building up to, but rather the activity around the festival is what allows the festival to exist.
- But festivals do have a sense of occasion: the excitement of waiting for the festival, waiting to find out what is coming. They exist in the local calendar as an important event.
- Festivals can be a way to get audiences into new spaces and encouraging a sustained relationship with that space
- Where and how is the work being made in order to present at festivals, and does the festival support local artists' practice?

### **Opportunity and new contexts for artists and their practice**

- Contribution to a conversation or a theme can be fulfilling (clarity of invitation)
- Festivals allow art to cross over with other subjects (e.g. science)
- Sense of belonging and fostering relationships, opportunity to see others work
- Rural festivals often have a different kind of relationship between artist, audience and place that is not necessarily present at large urban festivals
- Manufactured relevance – an artist needs to want to work with specific communities. What are you interested in?
- How does the artists' practice, not just the final product, align with the festival? Brussels festival – Kunsten 'free school', workshops for artists and public too

### **Festivals developing audiences for dance**

- Creative pricing initiatives, e.g. pay what you can, bring a friend for half price
- Festivals must be run with purpose and passion in order to develop returning audiences
- Build trust with audiences and they will take risks with you, as they can provide that space for work that doesn't sit in the usual context
- An opportunity to take risks: programmers can cross programme and introduce new types of work to audiences (unexpectedly sometimes).
- Festivals have a part to play but can be expensive for audiences (time and money). They should also be supported by regular programming year-round (e.g. Imagine growing from Children's Festival to a year-round organisation)
- Public space festivals: e.g. free light shows. People will attend because it's something taking place in their city and people feel invested in those spaces

### **Challenges or negative impacts**

- Prominent festivals eclipsing year round activity
- Financial risks when producing work: e.g. Edinburgh Fringe, international travel
- Festival rage: impact of people living and working in the city (e.g. traffic, crowds, displacement, rent costs)
- How can artists experience the work and make connections with visiting artists?
- Balance of programming: genres, local/international, realistic scale etc.
- Environmental impact: carbon footprint (especially for travel), recycling materials (consumer and artist), additional cost of green practices. A much bigger shift in attitude is needed

- Weekend outdoor festivals: in some circumstances headliners will get paid, but smaller acts may not – this leads to artists feeling disconnected and undervalued
- Preaching to the converted
- Should we be lobbying Scottish Government specifically for festivals?

### 3. FST Update

#### **CTEEA update**

The CTEEA has launched an inquiry into arts funding. The call for evidence closed on 12 April and FST submitted [evidence](#) based on the members' meeting and our previous discussions.

Separately, Creative Scotland provided an update to the committee on 2 May regarding progress with their organisational and funding review processes, and to follow up on the Committee's report on screen – see [CS Update](#) below.

#### **Advocacy: Brexit**

The three ends of Brexit remain, with new timescales. They are:

1. Leave without a deal, which will happen automatically on 31 October 2019, unless we:
2. Leave with a deal
3. Revoke Article 50.

Members are urged to be aware of when their passport runs out and make sure they renew before it gets to 6 months out, if they wish to travel. All other advice is on the Scottish Government's webpages. If you have specific queries relative to your work, please contact [Jude](#).

Meanwhile the good news is you can still apply for some EU funding through the [Creative Europe UK-Scotland Desk](#). Kate Deans is the contact for theatre ([kate.deans@creativescotland.com](mailto:kate.deans@creativescotland.com) or 0131 523 0072)

#### **Advocacy: Theatre Licencing**

The way that theatres are licensed is about to change. Local Authorities will in future license theatres under a public entertainment licence rather than the current Theatres Act licence. Each LA will have to come up with its own licensing policies. This means there will likely be a role for FST to work with members on advocacy at national and local level to determine a series of principles for any new licensing schemes.

#### **Made in Scotland Showcase**

Stats from MiS:

- 16 applications from dance, of which 4 chosen (25%)
- 40 from theatre, of which 10 were chosen (25%)

#### **Dates for your diary**

##### [Upcoming FST Training](#)

- Mental Health First Aid: 12-13 June – Edinburgh ([more info](#))
- Wellbeing: Friday 21 June, Edinburgh – FREE - FST Members only ([more info](#))
- Dignity at Work for Independent Artists: Friday 5 July, Glasgow – FREE - FST Members only ([more info](#))

- Negotiations and Contracts: Thursday 26 Sept, Edinburgh ([more info](#))

#### FST Members Meeting: Wednesday 19 June – 1pm -5pm – Aberdeen Music Hall

The June Members' Meeting in Aberdeen will be looking at FST's input to the future of arts funding in Scotland. Take advantage of our travel and childcare bursaries to come along and have your say as we develop a sector-wide position to feed into Creative Scotland and beyond. Join us for a vegetarian lunch from 1pm and check out the newly-renovated Music Hall before catching up with friends and colleagues over a networking drink. RSVP to [hello@scottishtheatre.org](mailto:hello@scottishtheatre.org). More info [here](#).

#### Go, See, Network, Share Fund – next deadline: 30 June

This fund aims to support FST members by funding attendance at key sector events, both domestic and international, including conferences, showcasing events, festivals and sector body meetings where attendance provides significant opportunity for continued professional, creative and project development. The intention is that members will share the learning from their attendance with their peers. More info [here](#).

#### FST, ITC & UK Theatre Festivals Reception: Tuesday 20 August - Our Dynamic Earth

Join FST, ITC and UK Theatre for a drinks reception at Our Dynamic Earth during the Edinburgh Festivals. FST Members will receive their invites in the summer.

#### NRTF Rural Touring Dance Initiative call out – deadline 5 September 2019

The Rural Touring Dance Initiative (RTDI), a partnership between The Place, Take Art the National Rural Touring Forum and China Plate has launched a call out for dance artists to tour their work to rural spaces across the UK. Previous Scottish recipients include Joan Clevillé and Curious Seed. More info [here](#).

## 4. Creative Scotland Update

Creative Scotland submitted evidence to the Culture Tourism Europe and External Affairs Committee (CTEEA) on 2 May 2019 at the Scottish Parliament, attended by Iain Munro (Acting Chief Executive of CS). You can read the full written submission [here](#), and watch the video of the meeting [here](#).

Organisational review: Open Change are facilitating the review through double diamond structure. Various aspects of Creative Scotland are going through change process which is expected to last approximately another 2 months.

Funding review: Creative Scotland have issued a [callout to attend conversation events](#). These events will gather feedback from the sector on priorities for public funding and how Creative Scotland should distribute the Scottish Government and the National Lottery funding it receives. If you would like to be part of this conversation but are not able to get to one of the events, you can take part in an [online survey](#).

Touring Fund: The deadline for round two was 30 April. There were 48 applications to this round of funding; approx. £4.4m requested with slightly less dance applications received this round. There is £800k available in this round, and decisions will be announced the week commencing 24 June 2019. The date of the next round is still to be set but is expected to be autumn 2019.

## 5. AOB/Topics for next forum

Members suggested they would be interested in discussing [Culture Declares Climate Emergency](#) and sustainability (both artistic and environmental) at the next forum.

**Date of next forum:** Thursday 10 October 2019, Glasgow (venue TBC)