A. Austin. Participatory Engagement: Embodied Information Behaviors in Performing Arts Programming. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. April 2020. 56 pages. Advisor: Megan Winget

This study looks at how participatory programming addresses each of the Arts Audience Experience Index intrinsic attributes; knowledge, collective engagement, risk and authenticity, particularly as they relate embodied experience. Semi-structured interviews with a purposive sampling of artists and arts administrators was used to evaluate the relationship between participatory arts, embodiment and audience reach. This research will be a valuable addition to knowledge around increasing audience involvement, widening the impact of the performing arts and creating quality experiences for audiences. It also adds more arts-based dialogue to research about embodied or corporeal knowledge and information behaviors.

Headings:

       Performing Arts in Libraries

       Embodied Information

       Library Outreach Programs

       Curatorship

       Sensemaking Theory

       Learning

PARTICIPATORY ENGAGEMENT: EMBODIED INFORMATION BEHAVIORS IN
PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMMING

by

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Introduction

Participatory programming, including developing partnerships with community organizations and co-creating artworks with audience members, is becoming one of the primary ways cultural institutions can reach widen audiences (Simon, 2010 & 2016). Participatory events often allow audiences to engage with art works through physical action with their bodies. In cases where participation is action-based, participants use sensory, spatial and physical language to gather and analyze information. The Arts Audience Experience Index created by Radbourne, et. al (2009), measures quality of audience experience by the intrinsic attributes of knowledge, risk, collective engagement and authenticity. This study looks at how participatory programming addresses each of these intrinsic attributes, particularly as they relate to embodied experience.

Arguably, the primary function of public cultural heritage institutions is to engage with their surrounding communities. One aim of this paper is to identify the link between collaborative, participatory approaches to engagement and creating valuable, genuine relationships with a diversity of communities. Examining what performing arts engagement is and addressing the imbalance in socioeconomics, race, gender and ability in performing arts audiences could have significant implications for the policies and practices of artists and arts organizations (Cuyler, 2013).

I argue that embodied experiences and information behaviors are underutilized within this engagement. In "Sharing Breath: Embodied Learning and Decolonization" (2017), editors and writers note that the body can be knowledgeable in ways that are not solely cognitive and link this understanding of body knowledge to decolonization.

(Batacharya & Wong, 2017). The separation of mind and body that dominates Western thought often undermines the use of the body in learning, sharing and using information (Taylor, 2003; Lakoff & Beard, 2001). Learning, remembering and transmitting knowledge through the body was privileged by indigenous cultures such as the Aztecs, even as the written word became the primary form of sharing information after Spanish colonization (Taylor, 2003). Writing was not and is not the antithesis to embodied practices, and hieroglyphs and ancient codices were used by performers to act out social codes. However, in the 16th century, though friars brought their own embodied, physical practices, they also brought a prioritization of verbal and written language, burning ancient codices and teaching writing to a small group of conquered males who colonizers believed would pass along their ideals. Embodied practices such as mask making, once considered expertise, were belittled under the power garnered by book learning (Taylor, 2003). In an account by contemporary Peruvian Andean writer, Ortiz Rescaniere (1973, p. 239-243):

> "God had two sons: the Inca and Jesus Christ. The Inca said to us, "Speak," and we learned to speak. From that time on we have taught our children to speak .... The Inca visited our Mother Earth. He con- versed with her and took her gifts and asked her for favors for us. The Inca married Mother Earth. He had two children.... When they were born it made Jesus Christ very angry and unhappy .... The moon took pity on him. "I can help you," she said, and sent him a paper with writing. Jesus thought: "This will certainly frighten the Inca." He showed him the paper in a dark field. The Inca was frightened because he didn't under- stand the writing. ... He ran far away. ... He slowly died of hunger. When the Inca was no longer able to do anything, Jesus Christ struck Mother Earth and cut her neck. Then he had churches built on her" (Classen, 1990, p.725)

Western logocentrism is still alive and well today. However, scholars continue to challenge the idea that written language is more traceable, understandable and farther reaching than embodied practices and spoken word. Scholars have been able to follow the

changes and traces of performances across borders. They can distinguish

between and understand the influence of different geographies and people on how a

performance transmits knowledge. The ability to evaluate and decipher embodied

information based on its location and context is similar to how an archivist would

acknowledge the provenance of an artifact. (Taylor, 2003)

Addressing and defining embodiment in audience experience contributes to both

practical knowledge for arts organizations and theoretical frameworks in information

science. Current literature in the field reveals that there is little consensus on the

definition of performing arts community engagement (Mutibwa, 2019). Walsmsy (2011)

notes that there is little research on performing arts audience experience and engagement

overall. In terms of information behavior, Cox (2018) acknowledges that embodied and

sensory theories aren't as prominently researched as cognitive theories and Lupton

(2014) says that the "use of information in the arts is an under-researched experience" (p.

69).

There is, however, a wealth of information about why the arts are valuable and

important. While this paper won't go deeply into the benefits of arts attendance,

discussion about arts engagement is inextricably linked to what the audiences feel they've

gained. This paper assumes that those gains contribute to overall quality of life, societal

growth, and well-being (Walmsy, 2013) in order to bypass a larger discussion about the

value of art overall and focus on the research questions below.

Literature Review

This study examines participatory art experiences, embodied information behaviors and meaningful collaborations for creating more fulfilling audience experiences. The literature review begins with an overall look at ideas and measures of audience quality of experience. Several perspectives on quality of experience are examined in the context of Radbourne, et. al's (2009) Arts Audience Experience Index highlighted by examples of participatory art programming from around the world. Next, research around participatory engagement is reviewed in the context of embodied experience. Embodied experience is limited to information science, art and pedagogical perspectives. The last section looks closely at current performing arts audience reach as well as audience and organization demographics.

Audience Quality of Experience

Knowledge, collective engagement, risk and authenticity are attributes associated with measuring the quality of an audience members experience (Radbourne, et. al, 2009). Radbourne, Glow and Johanson (2010) conducted focus groups aiming to gather narrative information from audience members. By situating their performance experience within the context of their lives, audience members provided the affective information necessary to gauge the quality of their experience (Foreman-Wernet & Dervin, 2013).

Knowledge can be 1. gathered before the audience member comes to a performance, which helps them contextualize and understand what is happening and 2. gathered during a performance, making the performance an educational opportunity (Radbourne, et. al, 2009).

Pre-existing knowledge about the performance creates more fulfilling experiences and encourages buy-in from audience members. Audience members in Radbourne, et. al's 2009 study noted that not having pre-existing knowledge before entering the performance made them feel like outsiders, a term Nina Simon also uses in "The Art of Relevance" (2016). Their outsider status made their desire to risk seeing the performance low, because they felt that the work would be too high-brow, they wouldn't understand it, and would feel like the entire evening was unfulfilling (Radbourne, et. al, 2009). For Simon, knowledge on the part of the organization is meeting people where they are, listening to their needs and becoming familiar with the community. Without that knowledge, the organization opens its doors on its own terms, resulting in outsiders feeling unwelcome even once they've made it in the door (Simon, 2016).

In terms of lessening outsider status, Dervin's sense-making methodology is used to bridge gaps between organizations and the communities they serve. Dervin and Foreman-Wernet's (2017) research focused on audience emotions, intuition and feeling as well as audience evaluation of usefulness and meaning of a performance. Foreman-Wernet and Dervin acknowledge complicated questions and views around elitism and populism that surround arts accessibility. Their approach calls for an understanding of what potential audience members find valuable, though it may contrast with how value is defined by arts curators and performance programmers.

There are often gaps in the understanding of meaning and experience between the so-called arts expert and the lay person. Dervin and Foreman-Wernet (2017) note that audience members can be subdued by the desire to correctly interpret the work, using language that compares their understanding of the work to how "they", the arts elite,

likely understand it. This language implies a perceived gap by the audience in how they interpret the work and how someone with more knowledge and experience would interpret it. Therefore, it might be the perception of knowledge, rather than actual knowledge that influences an audience member's quality of experience. By mitigating the assumption that someone who knows more will understand the work better, audience members might feel more comfortable with their own expertise. Audiences show strong critical assessment of performances, see universal values and contemplate existential questions based on performances which is further evidence of their well of necessary knowledge (Foreman-Wernet & Dervin, 2017).

Collective engagement is expressed in the audience members desire for three relationships: 1. audience communication to performer, meaning the audience's desire to share reactions to what's happening with the performer, 2. audience communication to other audience members, involving the cultivation of shared interests and ability to discuss with the work with peers, and 3. performer communication to audience, in which the performer acknowledges that the audience member is part of the experience as a whole (Radbourne, et. al, 2009). Influenced by the communication between participants in the focus groups of previous research, Pitts & Gross (2017) examined peer-to- peer information sharing between audience members after a performance. Carolina Performing Arts creates this peer-to-peer exchange with the Durham Independent Dance Artists group in their informal conversations after dance performances called Post-Performance Gatherings. By inviting audience members into an informal setting, and offering a free drink, they are encouraging audience communication and the cultivation

of shared or differing interests. Performing arts organizations can encourage conversation between new performing arts attendees in order to develop wider audiences (Pitts, 2015).

Two examples of artist recognition of the audience are the performances "Where We Are Not" and "If I Could Take Your Place" (Bala, 2019). These works invite participants to become the artist and the artist to become the participant. Lebanese artist Lina Issa physically replaced audience members in their jobs and lives in "If I Could Take Your Place" and was replaced in her life by performer Aitana Cordero in "Where We Are Not" after Issa had trouble with her Dutch residency permit. As a result of not being able to leave the Netherlands, she sent Cordero to her home country with instructions on what to do once there. Cordero embodied Issa's desired behaviors, attempted to transmit feelings of home and experienced the dichotomy of connecting with a loved one as another person would connect with them in the case of Issa's family (Bala, 2019). Like in "Nomad City Passage", a performance work explored below, there is an element of being a guest and a redefining of home. The collective engagement involved in a participatory art experience such as "Where We Are Not" is about a level of intimacy that is achieved when there is a social contract between artist as host and audience as guest or vice versa. The artist acknowledges the participant as necessary and just as involved in the creation of the environment as the artist. In this case, without the audience, the performance, including taking over a couple of days of sadness for one participant or having dinner with the ex-husband of another, could not happen. This is an extreme example of how each party contributes and conforms to social rules as active participants in collective engagement.

The level of intimacy involved in becoming someone for a day lends to questions about mitigating risky themes in performance and how discomfort is navigated. In "Where We Are Not", Cordero experiences the discomfort of not knowing the language of Issa's family. Bala (2019) suggests that this discomfort is central to the idea that participatory work should allow for the disruption of a stable sense of identity. The broadening of a person's idea of self and ability to relate fully to another is transformative according Issa. The public and empathetic exchange in this performer-audience acknowledgement has the potential to "make people realize that a seemingly simple act of witnessing, when consciously undertaken, can potentially help to generate public reflection and action on issues that may otherwise remain hidden." (Bala, 2019, p. 105). Bala (2019) argues that the willingness for people to drop their idea of a fixed self, in what she calls vicarious participation, creates a solidarity that is not about recognizing or celebrating differences, but about true destabilization and a sort of de-centering of self. In embodying the gesture of others, taking on actions in the space and place of another, Issa sparks an interruption that causes conscious thought, attention and recognition of the life of another. "Participation in such a performance thus does not consist in immersing oneself in the subjectivity of another person or situation, but in being repeatedly reminded of the situatedness of one's own subjectivity" (Bala, 2019, p. 113).

This leads well into the risk attribute of AAEI. Some audience members prefer not to mitigate risks and enjoy the element of surprise in seeing a new performance. This might be due to the level of trust they've developed for the performance company or arts organization, since many of the risk-taking audience members studied were also season subscribers. (Radbourne et. al, 2010).

"Nomad City Passage" is an example of a risky work with little scaffolding. The work by Rebekka Reich and Oliver Gather, invites participants to sleep in tents in unconventional spaces. The act of sleep as participation is counterintuitive to what would normally be viewed as participation. This instance of participatory programming is interesting because it subverts the connotation that there is a level of physical activity required for an event to be considered participatory. Further, sleep is an automatic behavior that, as the author notes, is involuntary and seen as accidental when it happens in the context of a performance (Bala, 2019). This complicates how participation is defined. In this project, little direction is given to participants about how to interact with the space, which the artists say is a way for participants to appropriate the space. Participants are not asked to "busy themselves" (Bala, 2019, p. 120) with activities but to sleep. "Sleep itself thus becomes valued as a conscious, corporeal, intimate activity, as non-passivity on the one hand, and simultaneously as an act of defiance towards the demands of what Jonathan Crary calls the 24/7 world, on the other." (Bala, 2019, p. 120)

Sleep has been a method of participation for Atlanta (USA) artist Tricia Hersey, who is interested in reclaiming time and addressing the negative effects of capitalism, especially for people of color. The Nap Ministry is an arts and social platform that touts the benefits of taking one's time and suggests that naps should and could be taken every day. Participants are invited to Collective Napping Experiences. Hersey writes, "I am pondering all the ways in which our collective liberation and accountability are tied to truly shifting the culture around rest." (Hersey, 2020)

Some participants in "Nomad City Passage" expressed heightened senses, hearing sounds of the space that they normally wouldn't. Audience relationship to space and

relationship to each other documents a combination of risk, since audience members are stepping into an unguided, fully participatory situation and collective engagement, since the experience was fairly communal by nature. Artists consider the participants guests and consider the event as more visual art-based than performative. They are also not trying to make a direct political statement with the work (Bala, 2019). However, connotations about the approved and unapproved bodies that are allowed to occupy public space in intimate ways are present in the work. Hersey's work, on the other hand, is more overtly political, which also implies some risk. Politically challenging works have psychological and/or social risk for audience members. The work might be threatening to their self-image, or to their image in the eyes of others, which is a determinant in the quality of their experience (Tung Au, et. al, 2016). Creating and curating performance that might challenge an audience member's social, cultural and political beliefs is complicated for artists and arts organizations who rely on financial and critical support from audiences.

The last attribute, authenticity, is the believability of the performance or perception that the performance is emotionally resonating. (Radbourne, et. al, 2009, Tung Au, et. al, 2016). Performance ethnography grapples with some of the complex questions concerning authenticity, performance and culture. By combining performance, fieldwork materials and audience participation in "Searching for Osun", artist and scholar Joni L. Jones aimed to "explore bodily knowing, to stretch the ways in which ethnography might share knowledge of a culture, and to puzzle through the ethical and political dilemmas of fieldwork and of representation" (Jones, 2002, p. 7). In "Searching for Osun" traditional garments, foods, accents, voices, and rituals that would be worn, eaten and performed by

Yoruba women were exhibited. African American performers embodied the experiences of Nigerian women using their observations and studies to interpret the Yoruba experience. The contrast between the performers and Yoruba women was made transparent by the use of fieldwork video and audio and exhibition design used to replicate Yoruba village homes. Additionally, art works from Nigerian and Texan artists were featured in the space. The educational aspects of the work, including books about Yoruba pottery making and cosmology and Nigerian history also pointed to and made visible the contrast between the performer's embodiment of Yoruba and Yoruba women. The performers were not pretending to be the women, but instead interpreting and offering evidence of the difference between their own movements and the movements of the women in the videos (Jones, 2002). Further, postcards stating "What happens when images of Nigeria are brought to Austin, Texas for a performance installation: cross-cultural understanding or reinforcement of stereotypes?" were included in the exhibition. The image on the postcards were from Osogbo, but read "Greetings from Austin". The ethics of displaying non-Western cultural artifacts and performance in a gallery setting were discussed in an exhibition brochure. However, the performers were not in the space for the entire month of the exhibition. Some of the nuances about being African American and searching for identity may have been lost on audiences attending the exhibition without the artists there to answer questions (Jones, 2002). Jones notes that some audience members simply saw a recreation of Nigeria, rather than an investigation of recreation.

Jones (2002) follows principles of performance ethnography that she notes holds her accountable to her fieldwork community, acknowledges the gaps between her own

embodiment of the culture and the actual voices of the culture and commits her

to a responsibility to "provide varied, even contradictory perspectives" (Jones, 2002, p.

9). Jones (2002) says of the participatory aspects of performance ethnography,

> "Through participation, the audience can contrast their own culturally inscribed bodies with those from the community being shared. They get an opportunity to practice the physical elements of culture through the performance. Participation is where some of the deepest understandings occur. We learn a great deal about cultural continuities and discontinuities, about the malleable and contingent features of identity when we humbly attempt to perform across cultural divides." (p.10)

In line with the AAEI, audiences are likely to be more connected with a

performance when they feel an authentic emotional connection, like cheering for a

protagonist's successful defeat of an enemy in a play (Tung Au, et. al, 2016). Jones

complicates authenticity and leans on ambiguity as a way of pushing back against

feelings of inauthenticity created by essentialism as well as historical subjugation of

black bodies and identities across the diaspora (Jones, 2002). In many ways, she invites

the audience to do the same through the participatory aspects of the work, which may in

turn foster deeper emotional connections with the subject matter. Participation might

allow for the type of authenticity warranting "genuine emotions to be perceived and

aroused" (Tung Au, et. al, 2016, p. 41).

The types of work that resonate with audiences may differ across place and time,

making attributes like authenticity or riskiness hard to generalize (Hager & Winkler,

2012). Even collective engagement is challenged by the type of performing arts event and

the location of the event. Hager and Winkler (2012) found that audience members who

prefer to go to the opera in some U.S. cities do not come for social opportunities. These

audience members would not consider audience to audience engagement as part of their

quality of experience. Importance of and satisfaction with each attribute

determines the weight of the attribute on an audience member's quality of experience. In

many cases, collective engagement was not important to the audience, thus not always as

relevant of a factor in satisfaction or overall quality of experience (Tung Au, et. al, 2016).

Participation as Embodied Experience

A look at embodied information behaviors could spark dialogue around how

audience members gain and use knowledge and how that might influence their quality of

experience. Embodied knowledge and information is gathered by people as they practice

something which has implications for participatory engagement and also speaks to the

physical and practiced nature of the performing arts (Olsson & Lloyd, 2016). Juliette

Binoche muses, "as an actor, you cannot get stuck with your head, otherwise the cells are

not vibrant, they're not alive. And you have to work with your body, otherwise you

cannot transmit to the audience the experience of the play." (Aiken, 2018, p. 99) She

seems to be referring to embodied cognition in that her body plays a "significant causal

role, or physically constitutive role" in her and her audience's processing and experience

of the play's events. (Stanford University, 2015). Binoche is talking about her role in

Anne Carson's "Antigone", which doesn't require audience participation. But if

embodiment plays a role in seeing a play, understanding embodied knowledge and

information behaviors could help more clearly examine the function and benefits of

actual participation in a play. In participatory programming, audiences are acting upon an

object, person or idea, using their bodies to relate to the work. In the performing arts,

there is often a message, theme or story being conveyed, representing and/or transmitting

some sort of knowledge through the body, even if the work is abstract or non-linear.

Andrew Cox (2018) gives an overview of literature on embodied phenomenology, practice theory, sensory studies and embodied cognition and discusses how literature and research in information science has or has not reflected these theories. The sensory studies aspects of Cox's review provide examples of the cultural and social significance of the senses and the unique meanings attached to the senses in different cultural contexts. Not just metaphorically, the world is experienced in different ways based on the dominant sense in a particular culture, such as the Incan emphasis on orality demonstrated by analysis of creation myths (Classen, 1990).

Olsson & Lloyd (2016) suggest that focusing on cognition while ignoring information and knowledge that is gathered from the body limits research in information behavior. Lloyd (2011) describes embodied information practices as "sites rich in knowledge in that they happen in situ, are expressed corporeally, act as a site of know-how knowledge that can't be in written form and are available at the moment of practice" (Olsson & Lloyd, n.p., 2016). This view of embodied information practices informs ideas around how audience members develop rules about the performance reality in which they choose to enter. The participatory art experience becomes the collective practice that "connects people…to the embodied and affective aspects that shape, identity and situate people within that social context" (Lloyd, 2011). The understanding of the environment, the use of material objects and the language acceptable in the experience is particularly salient in a participatory environment, rather than in something like an artist talk, because participants' actions and words become legitimized through a produced and collaborative outcome.

Perhaps, audiences are developing a way of understanding the world outside of the context of the participatory experience, but that was developed within it. Lloyd (2011) does not explicitly talk about how the understanding of information manifests outside of the co-participation. How do collaborators in a specific space and time, performing a specific activity translate that information into their other situations? In this case, participation in art experiences might effect an audience member's overall world view, but how? Lloyd (2011) notes how know-why knowledge is obtained by saying

> "through this engagement, interaction and connection with others, we become entwined and are spoken into our settings through our engagement with information, e.g. we learn to act like a student, a librarian, a teacher, or an ambulance officer. In effect, we become enacted as we become informed." (p. 779).

She may be alluding to the idea that participants are equipped to practice the knowledge in other settings. Another clue that knowledge extends beyond the situation is in Lloyd's description of how embodiment of knowledge prompts the practitioner to seek out other people just outside of the community to inform their practice.

Lloyd's work conjures up the idea that information gathering from the body creates an individual's reality. By using the senses, an individual situates herself in a place and time (Lakoff & Beard, 2001). For dance audiences, spatial and temporal understandings of a dance performance in real time offer insights into the audience experience that reflection after a performance may not convey (Vincs, 2013). Some artists, like performer Okwui Okpokwasili prefer working in an environment where audiences and performers can get lost together and resist the need for interpretation and evaluation of what the audience member sees. In describing the durational tremor

movement at the beginning of her work "Bronx Gothic" as "endured by both dancer and audience" (Brehman, n.p, 2019), she implies a sense of collective embodied experience in the moment.

For dancemakers, having a sort of sensitivity to how bodies move together, cultural and social signals conveyed through the body and technical elements that factor into making a dance like weight sharing and stillness versus movement, are all learned and practiced in order for dancemakers to turn their research about the world into choreographed, physical studies (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995). The body is not only used for perception, but also understanding, conceiving of ideas and reasoning (Lakoff & Beard, 2001).

An example of perception and the finely tuned sensory abilities of dancemakers from the 2019-20 Carolina Performing Arts season is *Rosas Danst Rosas*. *Rosas danst Rosas* premiered in 1983 alongside the creation of the dance company Rosas by Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker (De Keersmaeker & Cvejic, 2012). The work has four movements. The first, "night", is low to the floor, with movements derived from sleeping and conversations in bed with a lover. The second, "morning", is higher energy, an awakening. The third is "afternoon" and the fourth is an exhaustive finale of movement without the dancer's use of counting. Movement is performed based on a grouping of four choreographic cells that make dynamic shifts in quality between slow and attacking. It is exhilarating to watch even the slow sparseness of the beginning of the work. Between the four women, there seems to be a code of honor and an invisible thread among them that becomes a force stronger than counting the number of times each phrase is repeated. The pace of the entire work accelerates and decelerates in magical unison, as

if they were all genuinely swept up by the same emotion at the same time. The

frictionless movement convinces the audience that the dancers' trajectory on this

imaginary wave is inevitable. The music is a driving factor, but there is also a sense of

presence between the dancers, an unspeakable and unwritten knowing. There are non-

verbal signifiers for dancers to shift into new phrases that are made visible for the

audience. Dancers nod to each other, which becomes part of the choreography and also a

heightened display of togetherness that contributes to the rush of exhilaration for the

audience. De Keersmaeker describes a rigorous attention to rhythm , especially in her

discussion of the third movement, where there is a sense of constant harmony

accompanying the melody that is mimicked in the structure of the choreography (De

Keersmaeker & Cvejic, 2012). How does sensuality play a role in the way dancers

communicate information with each other and with the audience through their bodies?

> For dancers who were studied in research on social dance,
>
> "tactile and kinesthetic information included the feel of the partner's body and the partner's interpretation of the music. This information was used to gauge the skill level and confidence of the partner that informed the range of movements that could be used" (Lupton, 2014, p. 78).
>
> Gauging information from the bodies of others is also central to the work of renal

nurses and firefighters. Firefighters are able to verify and confirm important

environmental information through a reading of the bodies of their peers and other actors

in the space (Lloyd, 2014)

> This may have implications for performing arts engagement that involves action

from audience members. The transmission of dance knowledge, according to Karreman

(2015), can be better understood by connecting choreographic ideas with a dancer's

embodied experience. Having an understanding, or prior knowledge of the process of

creating dance might help audience members feel more like insiders, and thus

have better audience experiences. By being actors together in an environment, they are

creating a sort of physical language that can be understood by others in the environment

(Lloyd, 2014). There is an agreed upon understanding of the environment, in its context

and situation. For people who are normally outside of the dance-making process, the

body can offer a way in, as an addition to other ephemera, like programs or

choreographers notes.

Karreman (2015) also notes that reconstructions of a dance work can be a way of

discovering something new. Fumiyo Ikedo, one of the original dancers in *Rosas danst*

Rosas and a choreographer says, "things that are said verbally are for your body to store,

don't write them down" (De Keersmaeker & Cvejic, 1995, n.p). The idea that dance is

exchanged through the body, even if there is verbal language involved, plays a part in the

ways that education is approached in the performing arts context.

Reproductions of works can be participatory. While *Rosas danst Rosas* as a stage

work doesn't require participation from the audience, Anna Teresa De Keersmaeker did

invite dancers all over the world to learn the "chair dance" section of the work and upload

their rendition to the website Re:Rosas (Re:Rosas, n.d.). This came after Beyoncé, who

has also taken ownership of replications of her work by putting a stamp of approval on

her fans' renditions, used a portion of *Rosas Danst Rosas* in her music video

"Countdown". (Kraut, 2016) Carolina Performing Arts in collaboration with the

University Libraries at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill created *Rosas*

Danst Rosas Library Takeover as a response to the virality of the dance. It was an answer

to the call to action to recreate the work. Student and Durham-based professional dancers

learned the movement and performed it in two libraries on October 3, 2019. De Keersmaeker's dance company performed the work on stage at Memorial Hall on October 9th and 10th, 2019. This program localized a worldwide call for participation. Collective engagement on a mass scale, the dancers were able to directly and indirectly connect with other movers around the Triangle area, former Rosas dancers and with the current company who performed the work at Memorial Hall the next weekend.

Audience Reach

Through master classes and artistic engagement like the *Rosas Danst Rosas Library Takeover*, University performing arts organizations like Carolina Performing Arts have the capacity to facilitate movement experiences in university classrooms, augmenting what can be a static learning environment. Bringing embodied experience into academia is a method of acknowledging the multiple ways of learning and connecting with internal knowledge (Ng, 2018). It is also a method of acknowledging oppressive systems that we reproduce through our everyday actions, mindfully reorienting our behaviors to align with healthier ideas and beliefs and making social transformation (Ng, 2018).

Acknowledging the need for change in traditional engagement formats means addressing who is currently impacted by performing arts engagement, why and in what capacity. A call for change also means addressing some of the reasons for lack of representation in performing arts audiences, linking audience representation to diversity in performing arts management and evaluating the presence or absence of participatory, collaboratively made engagement in organizations lacking diversity.

Each of the above-mentioned intrinsic attributes has implications on the

reach of audience engagement and whether or not surrounding communities attend

performance programming. Another factor involved in determining what audiences feel

about performances is how the performing arts organization approaches or defines

community engagement. It is difficult to pinpoint one overarching definition for

engagement (Mutibwa, 2019). Donna Walker-Kuhne mentions in a 2016 Lincoln Center

Education talk that arts organizations can define community engagement however they

choose, but it should be defined (Lincoln Center Education, 2016). She notes that

organizations should ask how important community engagement is to their mission and

says that it needs to be deeply rooted into the structure of the organization. It should

come from an inner desire and joy to learn about new cultures, understand what they need

and build programming around their needs. In the same discussion, she emphasizes that

people are having valuable cultural experiences, whether they go to a performing arts

organization or not. If they are not invested in and attending the organization, they are

still getting their cultural fulfilment from somewhere else equally or more valuable to

them. In a similar vein, Kolb (2006) proposes that education and income are not as strong

of determinants for arts attendance as the values and tastes that influence what African

American audiences want to see and what benefits they will derive from an art event. In

a study of six ethnic communities in Australia, Le (2015) finds that social inclusion is a

factor in arts attendance. Participants desired a link to their home culture and other

cultures and to feel a sense of connectedness. Participation can bridge the gap between

the hierarchy that might be inherent in the artist/audience relationship and allow for real-

time feedback of the experience. "Participation becomes the category for registering

ruptures in the social-political and the artistic spheres" (Bala, 2019) so that

aesthetics and values are being determined by a more varied group of people. It allows

for questioning not only cultural and political issues, but also the way that people make

their voices heard.

Some of the problems with performing arts engagement programs are due to lack

of representation in arts administration staff. Cuyler (2013) advocates for a wider

definition of diversity to be used in arts administration programs. Cuyler also advocates

for arts organizations to address the homogeneity of identities still prevalent in arts

organization staff. Currently, recruitment practices show that people are hiring potential

candidates who look like current audiences, or like arts management educators, who are

largely white, middle class women (Cuyler, 2013). Greater representation in arts

management would diversify perspectives on policy, decision-making and problem

solving. Cuyler (2013) notes that "since the first performance of an opera took place in

the United States in 1735, only four people of color have attained executive-level

positions with non-culturally specific opera companies" (n.p.)

This need for more focus on greater representation of identities and backgrounds

in arts administration speaks to a need to re-conceptualize what arts engagement looks

like. More voices at the table are necessary for engaging surrounding communities. At

this point, the benefits of embodiment and participation in mixed communities, facilitated

by a wide range of identities is understudied and largely unseen. Impact of performance

on an audience member, such as the work having a quiet, but lasting effect on the person,

being cathartic, resonating with emotions and triggering visceral responses is not

necessarily the answer that policy makers are looking for when they ask about the impact

of an artwork on a community (Bala, 2019). The need to prove the worthiness

of ephemeral arts for funding and other forms of validation might have to do with how

much participation has been integrated in the processes of artists and arts organizations.

While this is thought of as a positive thing, that the arts *can* have an impact on

communities, it also creates a hierarchy of importance, in that a work isn't impactful in

and of itself. For a work to be impactful in a scenario where the organization has to prove

its relevance, it must attempt to make a social, political or cultural shift or statement

(Bala, 2019). As mentioned, this isn't always cut and dry. Writing about creating

inclusive spaces for artists, Debra Brehmer (2019) jokingly asserts, "when one is asked

about "intended outcome" on a grant proposal, for example, does anyone answer

"spiritual communion, brotherhood, positive energy exchange?" (n.p.) In Brehman's

reflection on the symposium "Interrogations of Form: Culture in a Changing

America", she reports on artists' call for the creation of more active experiences for

audiences, rather than "passive viewing", with artist Marc Bamuthi Joseph calling

empathy the currency of choice in art.

  While the lasting impacts on audience can be difficult to measure, there are more

recognizable impacts in the building of partnerships between arts organizations and

administrators that aid in participation. Partnerships can "increase organizational

capacity, increase credibility and legitimacy and provide access to skills, technology,

space or other desirable goods" (Grams & Farrell, pg. 91, 2008). The partnership between

the University Libraries and Carolina Performing Arts, or CPA and DIDA are examples

of these potential partnerships. Neither organization should approach the work as if one

organization is helping or giving a leg up to the other. (Grams & Farrell, 2008) Equitable

exchange and open communication is even more important. "A successful

partnership recognizes that each partner is autonomous, but occupies a niche in the

relationship" (Grams & Farrell, pg. 93, 2008). Although there are examples in this study,

library and performing arts organization partnerships are underdiscussed (Urrutiaguer,

2018)

Embodied experience through participation is and could be more

intentionally deployed by artists and arts organizations. By acknowledging that risk,

authenticity, knowledge and collective engagement are addressed through embodiment

and that diversity of leadership fosters greater understanding of these variances, artists

and arts organizations can implement participatory events in nuanced and meaningful

ways.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research questions for this work are: How do artists and arts administrators define, implement and measure success of participatory engagement experiences? How do their approaches to participation differ in perspective and execution? Is there a relationship between embodied experiences and audience demographic? And is there a relationship between embodiment and the intrinsic factors of risk, authenticity, knowledge and collective engagement. I hypothesize that experiences that involve learning and using information from the body are more likely to address each of Radbourne's intrinsic qualities. Additionally, this method of co-creation and collaboration reaches wider audiences, or "outsiders" (Simon, 2016)

Methodology

I conducted semi-structured interviews with artists and arts administrators who have curated or created participatory art experiences in the Triangle area, such as the *Rosa danst Rosas Library Takeover* previously mentioned. Interviewees were chosen through a purposive sampling process.

Semi-structured interviews allowed for more data collection from participants who are directly involved with creating, programming and facilitating performing arts engagement programs. As opposed to a fixed survey, interviews allowed for more breadth of information (Wildemuth, 2016).

Researcher Role

The University Libraries at UNC at Chapel Hill support and sustain the Carolina Academic Library Associate (CALA) program. Through CALA, I am a graduate research assistant in the University Archives working closely with Carolina Performing Arts' archives and records management. In addition to researching performing arts archives and evaluating recordkeeping methods for CPA, I have also co-facilitated Archiving for Performing Artists workshops, co-authored the Carolina Performing Arts 2019-20 performance season library guides and co-curated a library exhibition for two of CPA's Artists-in-Residence. I have personal and working relationships with many of the interviewees in this study.

Ellingson notes in a 2012 article on embodiment in interview methods that "the researcher's body—where it is positioned, what it looks like, what social groups or classifications it is perceived as belonging to, what experiences it has had, what its daily routines are—matters deeply in knowledge formation". In remaining aware of this, I must also note that my outlook on embodied experience is influenced by former and current work as a choreographer and dancer.

Research Participants

This study was conducted with artists and arts administrators in the Triangle area of North Carolina. Presenting organizations in the Triangle have a wide-ranging potential audience. Along with UNC at Chapel Hill, major performance institutions such as Duke Performances, American Dance Festival and the Durham Performing Arts Center program world-renowned performance seasons and participate in various forms of outreach and engagement. At UNC at Chapel Hill, Carolina Performing Arts currently has four Creative Futures Fellows who will work with community members, students and faculty on immersive creative processes. For the Creative Futures Fellowship, artists embed themselves in the culture of the Triangle and focus on building relationships and honing their practice, rather than working to create a final product. This fellowship allows for extended participation from community members.

Taking advantage of the richness of resources described above, interviewees were recruited through email through purposive sampling. General background information is provided on each person to situate their comments in relevant context. Interviewees include two engagement librarians, an arts administrator, and a working artist.

Data Collection Methods

Interview questions were pre-tested by a UNC School of Information and Library Science faculty member. Questions were designed so that artists and arts administrators could talk through a process, such as a participatory event, or their creation of a performance. Further questions probed interviewees to elaborate further on each scenario (Wildemuth, 2016). This method was used so that asking for more details, especially sensations and feelings during actions, could lend to more in-depth analysis of language for better understanding of how artists and administrators make sense of participation.

Arts organizations are increasingly turning to the audience in order to address the changing economic and social landscape of the arts. (Foreman-Wernet & Dervin, 2017). Sense-making methodologies have impacted interviewing techniques by considering the human factor of the interview process. They were created under the premise that time and space are chaotic and the ways in which people interpret the reality of that chaos is partially chaotic. Therefore, humans need to make sense of the chaos in some way. They can articulate things that happen and connect them to internal and external conditions. However, the constraints with which people express themselves often leave them unable to convey their narratives, moods and emotions. The sense making methodology allows for the process to be slowed down, making room for deep reflections and connections. It asks the interviewer to listen deeply, using questions and answers to artfully assist in the interviewee's sense-making (Foreman-Dervin, 2017) Rather than use this methodology to question the audience (although Dervin and Foreman-Wernet would urge me to do so), I practiced deep listening to "experts", counter to much of the research I've cited. With the language provided by interviewees, further research can be done, with time and

access to audience members, on their relationship with embodiment in participatory art experiences. Are arts administrators and artists describing the somatic experiences being had by audiences? Perhaps this research can give some language to those somatic experiences.

Further, creating a cultural lifeline, a technique in the sense-making methodology, involves having the interviewee narrate all of the experiences they've had with a work, institution or medium. Readings of cultural lifelines are deepened with questions about the positive and negative associations the interviewee has had with the institutions they described. Experts and lay people have both had negative and positive experiences in institutions. By asking curators when a performance deeply moved them, they are positioned as people who not only curate the work but who are also potentially emotionally and physically affected by the work. While much of the research I've cited creates a binary between expert and audience member, in many cases, a person can be an artist, curator and audience member all in one moment or at any given time in their life.

Data Analysis Methods

Each interview was partially transcribed. I created a coding scheme, acknowledging that each interviewee will have their own vocabulary to talk about engagement and participation based on their working environment and job position. There weren't predetermined categories or themes, however, questions were divided into background information, questions for artists, questions for curators and questions about audience engagement for both artists and curators. Interview questions were initially developed with the AAEI in mind, though changed drastically to greater reflect the research interests. For data analysis however, it was appropriate to use the intrinsic values

(knowledge, collective engagement, risk and authenticity) from AAEI, even

with the population and methods difference between this research and Radbourne's

studies. This study is focused on the effects of participatory engagement on audience

quality of experience. Using the AAEI to examine how facilitators of programming

address these attributes might further our understanding of quality performing arts

programming and its connection to participation. Using an index that has already been

pre-tested contributes to validity of this study.

Data analysis followed the same deep listening methodology as the data

collection. Western-oriented research methods have traditionally privileged the mind, and

the disembodied researcher and participant in attempts to claim objectivity and neutrality.

Oftentimes, participants' nonverbal communication and the existence of their body is

either ignored, or essentialized by using markers such as race or gender to make

connections to phenomena, rather than taking a holistic view of identity. (Ellingson,

2012).

Though it may seem counter to the idea of putting the body and holistic

experience of interviewees at the forefront, participants interviewed in this study are

anonymous. However, relaying and using the non-verbal signals gathered from

participants is a method of integrating theory and practice and conducting this research in

consideration of the subject matter it aims to study: embodiment.

Transcription often further disembodies participants by taking out some of the

identifiers that make how we process oral speech different from how we process written

speech (Ellingson, 2012). Thus, rich notetaking and hyperawareness of how all of the

senses are engaged during data collection allows for more textured interpretation of the

transcription during data analysis (Ellingson, 2012). Like Della Pollocks

(1999) vivid descriptions of the bodies of women from whom she gathers birth stories,

and the sensuality of her language, this research aims to acknowledge the information

that is rich and alive in the body as much in method as it does in subject matter.

> "When we resist the Cartesian mind/body split and embrace writing about our interview research as something we enact with our whole bodies, not just our heads, we more easily recall sensuous details and construct more visceral prose and richer accounts in other media as well" (Ellingson, p.9, 2012)

In order to conduct interviews and sensory-focused analysis I 1) prepared for

improvisation in posing questions. Improvisation allows for fluidity of conversation and

ability to ask follow-up questions that provide richer detail. Ellingson notes that

improvisation can happen more smoothly when researchers are knowledgeable in the

subject, theories and ideologies that inform the research and that knowledge becomes

internalized. This is similar to how dancers are able to use improvisation. Years of

training allows for fluid thinking on one's feet, 2) recognized that participants cannot be

categorized by their bodily markers and that their visible identities are not essential to

who they are, 3) interrogated my own embodied experience during the interview and 4)

used sensuous language while taking notes during interviews. (Ellingson, 2012)

Results and Discussion

After pursuing 8 participants, I received 5 responses for interviews and 1 response requesting questions over email. One arts administrator had to forgo their initial agreement to an interview due to a family emergency and one artist was on tour and did not send responses back through email, leaving four total interviewees.

Each participant self-identified the stage of their career as well as their role in creating, curating or facilitating participatory art experiences. Participants included one emerging artist, one emerging engagement librarian, one mid-career engagement librarian and one mid-career engagement director. Each interview was conducted in a unique environment, with 3 out of four participants choosing the location of their interview.

Interviewee 001 is an early-career engagement librarian at a large, public institution. She is a recent MSLS graduate who stepped into her role very soon after graduating. We met in a warm basement conference room in the morning for our interview. It was my first interview, and I was nervous to implement the embodied interview techniques I hoped to practice with all interviewees. Her introspection and ease softened my nerves and we unexpectedly explored the ins and outs of a library engagement program that isn't arts-based but still very choreographed and participatory. The conversation helped frame how I would approach other interviews and the questions that would be most pertinent going forward. Interviewee 001 describes genuine commitment to a sort of democratized use of rare books and the library as a whole. She mentions students gaining confidence and exerting autonomy several times in the

interview and her desire to help foster a welcoming environment in her library.

When I asked her to describe her library's audience, she immediately said "researchers". After thinking about it, she said "really, anybody interested in the South". After a pause and more thought, she laughingly expands the audience to "everybody" as she describes more and more library events, programs and collections that would serve different groups of people.

Interviewee 002, a mid-career, white engagement director at a large, public research university, has worked as a community organizer, an art teacher, a visiting assistant professor, a gallery director, and has been in countless other roles that have influenced the way she currently approaches engagement. She's been in her current position for two years and has worked in some form of engagement for over 10 years. We met for our interview in a warm upstairs office about an hour before the interview was scheduled, having misinterpreted the start time for an unrelated meeting. Our time together was intermittently filled with laughter and each story connected to her answers was peppered with colorful detail and a sense of joy that often accompanies her astute observations. In her current work, described as "beautiful and amazing, but there can be so much going on", she helps faculty members integrate performing arts pedagogy into their curriculum, oversees resident artist projects, and contributes to writing grants that fund extended partnerships between faculty members, community members and artists. The terms of the current artist residencies at her organization were created in response to their "thinking about what locality meant" in previous grant-funded projects. The organization is interested in how faculty, community and artists can connect in a deep

way and how scholarship can be determined reciprocally between each party during long-term, sustained engagement.

Interviewee 003 is a mid-career, white engagement librarian at a large, academic institution. She has been working in libraries since 2011. Since then, her work has been at least half or wholly centered around engagement, having leaned into those aspects of her work. We met for our interview in the middle of the week in her office, which was also warm and smelled of what I thought was eucalyptus. When I mentioned it, she listed the names of what was in the essential oil blend, which did not include eucalyptus and was made to aid in focus. We talked about the herb holy basil for a while and she made a joke about what an herb called 'sinful basil' might entail. I think this personifies her joyful and lighthearted communicating style. She pulled out a pen and pad of paper before we began and laughingly apologized in advance for any rambling. From the beginning of the conversation, we talked a great deal about the experience of seeing and participating in performance, which she is admittedly often moved to tears by.

Interviewee 004 is an emerging artist and community organizer in Latinx and immigrant communities who creates anti-racist experimental dance. Her thesis work involved asking what can be changed "about the dance and the dance-making process to welcome people in, possibly before the premiere of the work, but also as part of the work." She sees this practice as a space where "the work thrives and grows in beautiful and unforeseen ways". She is currently working with themes and processes that interrogate risk, subversion and control. Inspired by movements like Fluxus and artists like Dana Caspersen, she creates work that highlights alternative ways of bringing people into the live performance experience in addition to creating interactions that extend

beyond a single performance. We met for our interview on the back patio of a

small coffee shop. It was the coldest interview of the four, though hearing the sounds of

birds, feeling an occasional brisk wind and speaking with a fellow artist, who exhibited

her usual warm nature, made it the most physically comfortable. The physical nature of

interviewee 004's communication style fit the environment, and at one moment she both

performed a shoveling motion with her arms and aggressively vibrated her hands in

demonstration of a technique called 'state work'.

The relationship between embodiment as it happens during participation and the

intrinsic attributes of the AAEI (collective engagement, risk, knowledge and authenticity)

overlap in exciting ways. Based on interview responses, participatory engagement is

defined by its existence in a present moment, it's potential to be built upon and cultivate

authentic and trusting relationships and its ability to exist without prior knowledge.

Interruption and the ability to opt-in or out of an experience is also deeply considered by

several interviewees. From these ideas, I created sub-themes under the larger umbrella of

intrinsic attributes in the AAEI.

The collective engagement sub-themes are *participation, interruption and opting*

in and *being in the present moment*. The authenticity sub-theme is *interaction with*

knowledge and trust. The knowledge sub-theme is *the necessity or lack of prior*

knowledge. Risk is discussed as a component of creating or facilitating participatory

engagement under authenticity and collective engagement.

Collective Engagement and participation

Participation, interruption and opting in

Based on the interviews, duration and interruption are elements of participation that are in contrast to traditional engagement programming like artist talks and lectures. Participation involves opting in to something beyond seated listening. Here, collective engagement overlaps with risk in terms of how audiences will respond to duration, interruption and in some cases, unexpected changes to their environment. One interviewee describes a recent durational participatory event as one of the most risky programs she's facilitated in her career thus far. The ability or inability to opt-in raises questions about whether or not people exposed to a public participatory art event are collectively engaged if they aren't necessarily consenting to participation. Under what circumstances, if any, is interruption participation? Interviewee 003 notes,

> "If somebody has come to the library in pursuit of something, a momentary interruption of that by something beautiful like a performance, can be a welcome break. It can be a moment of pause and surprise and delight from which you then pivot back and return to what you were doing. But I think if that interruption happens again and again and again, over time and you lose your capacity to focus and to pivot back to what you were doing, that can be intrusive. It can interfere with the reason why you came to the library."

If the term interruption is used to describe a break or pause in the midst of routine, audiences can be interrupted in more traditional settings as well. While describing a solo work performed in a black box style setting with audiences seated on two sides of the performer, interviewee 004 makes a point to note that she prepared for audiences to have optional ways of interacting with the work. If an audience member did not want to lift their hands in the air, they could choose the option of changing seats, picking up and arranging objects, or other forms of participation. Though this audience was aware that they'd come to a dance performance, they were not necessarily aware there would be participation. In a sense, an audience member could choose their interruption with the

options interviewee 004 gave them. She notes that this choice is in conversation

with themes of her work saying, "my question to audience members is 'why are you

doing what I'm telling you?' I think there's an inherent trust in performance that should

not always be there" She compares this with how we take in information from other

media outlets, like tv and radio. She states, "I think people should always question. How

do we move forward when I don't want to do what you want me to do? And why are you

even telling me to do these things?"

When audiences do collectively opt-in to participation, the outcome can be

impactful. Interviewee 003 describes recent public performances in UNC's Wilson

library:

> "I think the most notable experience of the first performance was the oddness, the
> unusualness of sitting in a room full of people in explicit, intentional silence for
> ten minutes. And then the musical performance was one that was very technically
> virtuosic. And so that one felt very much like the experience of appreciating
> music. It was a kind of cognitive experience of being impressed more than being
> moved. And then, (names artist), who is a singer, was a totally different
> experience. It was far more emotional. It almost seemed transcendent. And it felt
> more like all of the people in that space were having a shared experience. I felt
> that (this artist's) performance brought in a sense of communion or community.
> And it was moving in that ineffable quality of art that is the capacity to move
> people."

Collective engagement as being present in the moment

In thoughtfully considered descriptions of two scenarios, one involving an

interviewee creating participatory work and one involving another interviewee's

experience of participatory work, "being in the present moment" is a powerfully evident

attribute of collective engagement.

Interviewee 004, when discussing collective engagement that involves the body,

intentionally inserts ways to mitigate risk, inviting the audience to disengage if feeling

triggered or overwhelmed. Within movement instruction, there is permission to

listen to the body, permission to discontinue, pull back or to question what's happening.

She gives an example of a creative process, one in which the work she made involved

audience participation,

> "I rely heavily on the present moment of the performance or the workshop or the rehearsal to indicate the direction moving forward. In the case of (names an arts festival) I kind of put the pieces together (in terms) of here I am in the space, here are some sounds or some voices or some music that my intuition has pulled together for me in that moment and that can be with and including people in the room."

> The sense of presence mentioned in creating the work has implications for how

people receive it. A collective sense of presence is described in a participatory event by

interviewee 003:

> "Because that (performance) ended up happening outside, the experience of that was also a transcendent one. Because of nature. It had this rare surprising thing where it was supposed to happen in the library, and part of it did happen in the library, but it ended up happening outside and humans, when we spend time in nature in stillness, we can experience those moments of transcendence as well. When you realize that something that's happening on a single blade of grass can consume your entire attention, and that ended up happening to me and for me in that moment while listening to this beautiful, moving music."

Authenticity and participation

Interaction of knowledge and trust

Participants can, but don't need to, have prior knowledge of the artist,

performance or themes of the work. In many cases, prior knowledge involves logistical

information about the space or organization. When asked about goals, all interviewees

expressed their intention to make spaces feel welcome. Sometimes this involves looking

for alternatives to large institutions. Interviewee 004 asks, "how do we create a fifth

space that people trust that is outside of these institutions?". Sometimes this involves

helping people know that institutional spaces are available and can be

welcoming as demonstrated in interviewee 003's goal:

> "I would say my overarching goal, which has animated all of my work in the Libraries is to make the Libraries feel welcoming and friendly and to convey that spirit of possibility to everybody who comes in here. But especially to people who may not be inclined to think of libraries in that way."

While talking about the relationships that need to be built with communities, trust

is often a consideration. When communities know that the organization is authentically

on their side, there is a foundation for them to feel comfortable participating. This can be

difficult with a large, academic institution, where not everyone is on the same page about

what engagement looks like and not everyone has the desire to be on the page at all.

Interview 001 notes,

> "Overall, my goal is for people to know that they can be in the space if they want to be. I don't ever want people to not come into the library because they feel like they aren't welcome or they don't belong or it's an uncomfortable space, which is hard to do especially in (her workplace) because it is an intimidating building. I think my goal is for people to know that they can come in, and these are the ways in which you can engage in the collections. You don't have to be a researcher, you don't have to have a project. I don't want anybody to not come in because they feel like they can't."

Sometimes the disconnect with institutions comes from differing views on the

definition of engagement. For interviewee 002, explaining how she defines engagement

in some circles can be rough, especially since she feels like there is more than one

answer. She says, "I think that engagement is something that is lived and something that

changes. It shouldn't be static and certainly, it is not outreach." This flexible approach

could lend itself to greater authenticity, but might be more difficult to convey when there

is an affinity towards concretized, standardized and often unfulfilled outlooks on

engagement in large institutions.

Authenticity in the sense of building a trusting relationship can be expressed through a commitment to creating equal partnerships, rather than one organization attempting to "build up" another. This is seen in the definition of engagement for interviewee 002:

> "If you think about 'outreach' as something that's embodied, that means I would be taking my hand and putting my palm out and "lifting them up": that person or that organization. And engagement, whether it's a marriage engagement or just being engaged in a conversation means that there's a partnership there, or there should be a partnership there in my mind. Where both parties are invested and alert and want to bring something to the table. I try never to use the word 'outreach'."

For interviewee 002, authenticity looks like honesty about the institution and its motives. She mentions being upfront and transparent about who is getting paid, who is billed and how people are being represented. Engagement is not recruiting community members to fulfill a single-authored vision. It's by working with people, rather than for them or in attempts to "uplift" them, that can make engagement an authentic experience. She says that there should be shared articulation of what the engagement program is and what each individuals' role is, as "nobody is the one star of the show".

Some of the partnerships developed are a result of interviewee 002's authentic relationships with people in the community. In describing work with resident artists, it's apparent that these relationships allow her to connect artists and people in the community in authentic ways, based on the interests of both parties. In describing connecting one resident artist with a community organization, she mentions ways the parties would and could connect personally. For example, both parties work professionally with their romantic partners and have families from the same geographic origin in addition to working with similar themes and ideas in their creative process. It turns out that the

partnership is fruitful so far, an authentic connection that may not have

happened without interviewee 002's knowledge of and relationship with surrounding

communities.

Authenticity and trust are essential when asking audiences to participate.

Interviewee 004's role as a community organizer, authentically connecting to

communities outside of an arts context, is essential to establishing trust. Rather than

inviting people to an institution, she aims to take the work into communities and her work

with communities is not based on her artistic pursuits. She feels strongly that she needs to

establish herself as a trustworthy person before she can ask people to come out and spend

their time seeing performances. "They're going through such unique challenges. I can

continue to make art on the side while I'm developing these relationships." In many

ways, interviewee 004's work is a model of authenticity, illustrating how trust and

authenticity are interwoven and how participation becomes a component of authenticity.

Similarly, Interviewee 001 mentions going to student events, not just to "talk shop" but to

support individual students and organizations in the ways they need support. She says,

> "Community-first. It's got to be relevant to the community or whoever we're
> trying to reach. We can do whatever we think is interesting but it might not match
> up to what people are interested in or what people want. It's got to be relevant"

Interviewee 002 notes that sometimes there is the expectation that working with

certain themes guarantees that an artist will be well suited for work within a community.

Working with themes, such as race, memory or history or being of a particular racial

background has been misconstrued as being able to work closely and authentically with

community organizations. She notes that this is not the case and this assumption needs

further unpacking.

Knowledge and Participation

The necessity or lack of prior knowledge

When there is long-term engagement and participants have opted in to workshopping and performing a work, participation is knowledge. Speaking about the planning and implementation of a recent engagement program, interviewee 002 notes,

> "I thought it would be really great for students and for community members who were invested in dance to have familiarity with (the choreographer and dance company) going into the performance, but then also potentially embodying a portion of the performance"

In some cases, specialized prior knowledge, like a section of choreography or a language, might be the only way to piece together an understanding of a work, though it might not hinder participation. This is by the artists' design for interviewee 004 who constructs performances in both Spanish and English and whose work is fully realized for audience members who speak both languages.

For a participatory engagement program created by the library and described by interviewees, knowledge is expressed in the participants' ability to discover things on their own. Art experiences contribute to this sense of discovery, which is described as everyday possibility by interviewee 003. Additionally, she notes that by definition, an engagement experience is one in which a person does not need to have any prior knowledge for it to be successful or impactful saying,

> "It's successful because it can communicate what it is without having people prepared with some sort of prior knowledge or any sort of prior preparation. That should just be a self-contained thing...A performance or engagement experience should have a concrete beginning where people understand that something is happening, even if they don't understand immediately what it is."

In an engagement experience, knowledge can be built in a low stakes way. Interviewee 002 notes that engagement programs are where some context and richness

can be developed around a performance. It is an optional addition to another experience that might ease audiences into harder-to-digest performances. Interviewee 001 notes that given a story, a framework and some rules, students who come into the library for a well-loved engagement program are "the ones in control, and they're discovering things on their own".

Prior knowledge isn't necessary to have a moving experience. This can be compared to interviewee 001's moving experience with seeing the *Rosas Danst Rosas* performance at Memorial Hall. She notes that while she didn't understand the beginning, and it took a while to get into, the work was enjoyable. She further noted that she wanted to "re-read" the performance, as you would with literature, take some time to "explicate" it, see it again, and notice how "phrases evolve and repeat". She also compares the students who learned a section of *Rosas Danst Rosas* to how she has interacted with Shakespeare in the past, which does involve having prior knowledge:

> "I've seen Shakespeare plays, and being able to read and study the play in class first and then see it, I already have a background and a foundation. We've explored some themes, and I can say, "oh this is what this performance is. These are the themes that this performance is focusing on. These are the decisions they've made for this performance.""

Familiarity with the space is also a type of prior knowledge that fosters further participation and relates to above-mentioned examples of how authenticity interacts with knowledge and trust. This type of familiarity can come from building on other engagement experiences. Interviewee 002 talks about several programs that created personal and intimate relationships between her organization and surrounding communities. The relationships led to a community performance of their own work in a space operated by interviewee 002's organization. These relationships allowed for further

partnership including members of one local community organization sharing

their life stories with two current artists-in-residence. The work that developed would not

exist without the involvement of the community, as the stories were used in musical

compositions and in an audio exhibition by the artists. These communities may not have

shared as freely had there not been prior knowledge of the organization and the person

who was facilitating the connection. They are just as invested in the organization as she

is, because they have stake in the space. Interviewee 002 says:

> I get a lot of pleasure out of people feeling like a space is their space or
> feeling like a space is a space they feel comfortable in and that they own.
> The goal of (a past engagement program) was not about non-profits
> making perfect performances, it was about them feeling like they had
> claim over our more avant garde art space so that when future
> performances happened there it would be about them feeling like they had
> access to it as well. I feel like I've done my job when people feel good in a
> space. If there's something that I can do to make people feel more at home
> there. If they've gone to a workshop there and can associate that space
> with their own personal experience. If they can say "oh, I practiced or
> rehearsed in this space for a week, then I did this performance and now I
> want to tell my friends about something in the space."

Conclusion

This research combined many topics that might seem disparate at first glance, but are intimately connected. They are all big subjects on their own and will require more study and continued links highlighting their relationships. Embodiment is directly connected to participation, participation is being widely discussed by artists and curators building arts programming, arts programming cannot thrive without community involvement and communities cannot thrive without the arts. Based on the sub-themes created with this research and examples in past literature, knowledge, collective engagement, risk and authenticity play a significant role in participatory art experiences. Future research connecting embodied information experience to participatory performance could uproot more valuable discoveries about the benefits of collectively creating something in a present moment. This is especially important as we experience a global economic and social crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The necessity of social distancing and stay-at-home orders in response to the novel coronavirus outbreak means people are experiencing isolation that will be ongoing for an unforeseen amount of time. While this work is about performance engagement, it also has implications for what it means to learn and socialize without collective embodiment or embodiment at all. How does embodiment impact learning when communication has largely moved online, especially for those of us whose work is tactile, collaborative and deeply understood through sensory knowledge in a present moment? Can there be a sense of togetherness

when watching a performance digitally, together from two separate locations? How is being in the present moment and opting in reflected in the embodiment of our digital selves, our avatars?

These examples from the pandemic make learning about embodiment even more salient and generalizable. However, the pandemic only surfaces complexities around embodiment that exist on a day-to-day basis for most people. Any continuation of this research will need wider commitment to understanding how embodiment manifests in people with varying abilities to participate. There are larger conversations to be had about how embodiment or lack thereof benefits some more than others and how choosing not to embody may even be a protective measure for some.

Although this research was limited in that I interviewed 4 experts, artists and arts administrators have valuable experiential knowledge and language to describe how participation and embodiment influence space, relationships and the ways we make meaning of the world.

 Specifically, the sub-themes created in this study can add to research about the benefits of privileging learning, using and sharing information from the body and bring more arts-related topics into the conversation around embodied information behaviors. They also add to current conversations around increasing audience involvement, widening impact of the performing arts and creating quality experiences for audiences.

Further research could involve gauging the experience of audience members after participation in a performance or engagement program by using sense-making methodologies and comparing responses to the AAEI. Comparing audience reflections to

that of artists and arts administrators could also give a sense of the similarities

and differences between each groups' perception of quality of participatory experience.

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