

'Walking the Fine Line: Engaging and Respecting Community'

General Considerations for art, culture and social science practitioners

Keywords / *practiceable* items

Engagement; a two-way process that brings two parties together involving interaction and active listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit

Public Engagement tends to focus on a wider population and include more general methods of engagement

Community Engagement tends to focus on individuals or groups of people somehow affected by, or connected to a research study

Context; Understanding the complex and layered circumstances surrounding a particular place or situation. Contextualisation and re-contextualisation are important considerations in artistic and cultural practice to navigate sensitive issues.

Ethics; a philosophical discipline considering ideas of good and bad, right and wrong

Intent & Transparency; Importance of conveying purpose – the reason we are here and doing what we do / difference between intention and purpose / Are you resolved in your thinking or determined to do (something). Does it matter?

Cultural sensitivity and respect for the vulnerable; experienced with non-experienced / The need to take responsibility for content, even if consent forms have been signed (subject may not be fully aware of the full repercussions of sharing their experiences) / The importance of not 'assuming' your subject, allowing them to ask questions of you (researcher) also

Consent; how? For who? For what?; Make clear how you will use/share their contribution to your 'research' with your subject – asking for consent multiple times throughout a project (aka dynamic consent) as your subject may not be fully aware of where your research will be published and what ramifications it may have on the subject in the longer term

Negotiation; Flexibility (Flexibility as researcher/art worker - revising intent with assessment of potential harm to both ourselves and the participants/subjects of our research

Response-ability; how to respond to matters mutually, that benefit both parties. (understanding power relations within the community you are researching and the position you are perceived to hold as researcher); This is not only between people, but also between mediums/disciplines (interdisciplinary) – think on the possible power positions perceived between disciplines (this is particularly relevant when working between 'traditional' practices (such as 'craft') and 'fine art' practices

Research; what material are you collecting – how are you recording, what impact does your choice of media have on their 'representation'; what language are you using to liaise?; Be aware of how a story may change in fact and motive when it passes from subject to facilitator to audience; Be aware of language and how it privileges particular people

Communication; clarity of understanding, consideration of language (which language?); being aware of who is representing who (and why)

Mutual benefit; how is the time and tasks of assistance to all parties?; opportunity for a group of people to tell the researcher what is the most critical problem for them – importance of not assuming what your subject thinks and feels

Think about how something may benefit one group of people but not others → are we willing to 'sacrifice' said group for the betterment of the greater good? Is there a way to create particular 'programs' or 'activities' to

'do good' for/pay/pack back parties that are subjects of our research/work? ie. 'Social value' --> What is the person or community left with?; what forms of agency (developing a community's confidence to solve their own problems) will this nurture?

Acknowledgement; giving credit where it is due to all stakeholders and audience where applicable/reasonable

Authorship; understanding role and contribution to existing landscape of mass media as cultural workers (ie. Are we supporting or exacerbating social ills with our work?); the role of mentorship and internal assessment as a constant question in the research process concerning who has right to use, document, represent.

Tension; A relationship between ideas or qualities with conflicting demands or implications. Constructive or Destructive? Be aware and think strategically so as to give respect to all parties

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Keywords / protective items

Boundaries; Be aware of your stakeholders and the 'position' of their representative – understand the power relationships between researcher and subject/subject and community

Consent for all; consider researcher and subject to both sign consent forms, for each of their respective shared information

Intellectual property; understanding 'use' of a subject's experience, objects, relations, being sensitive to their right to be credited

Giving time; understanding the impact of trauma in sharing with strangers