

Festival Futures, 30th May 2022—Notes

FK Alexander

- Has had different positionalities in relation to the fringe
- Alcohol and drugs as an access need
- As an assessor for the fringe, performer drinking alcohol, offered to the alcohol, drink culture/fringe as a “holiday moment”
- Navigating the fringe space as a sober person is incredibly difficult
- More communication between artists, venues, audiences about access, especially around substance abuse
- “working drugs”—the relationship between substances and labour, especially in relationship to producers, tech people
- Liberal arts scene, wealthy city, and the problematics of where those drugs are coming from—narco-capitalism

Natasha Ruwona

- Currently not in a moment of planning/feeling exhausting about festivals
- What would it mean to incorporate rest and care into festival structures?
- Burnout, short-term contracts, etc
- Slow, considered, intentional work
- Deprogramming
- Invent slow practices at festivals/Slow programming
- Fatigue and festivals
- Festivals—a rush to consumerism
- Tricia Hersey, *The Nap Ministry* (2016–present)
- Jess Brough, Fringe of Colour
- Overwork and demands of the festival create burnout
- Collaboration as a form of rest and care
- Collaboration and shared labour are a practice of care
- Rest as an unlearning of capitalist logics

Anthony Schrag

- “Sustainable prosperity”—how can we live well/do less culturally/artistically with less?
- Infrastructure within cultural management
- Infrastructures as invisible
- Infrastructures support certain politics/identities etc
- Sustainable prosperity still centered upon notions of wealth, capital—can we continue? Can we continue exhausted?
- Is the festival model **ecologically** sustainable?
- Are we in an abusive relationship with the festival? When do we recognise the damage?

Mamrou Iriguchi

- Fringe from a performance artist’s perspective
- Financial implications of making festival shows

- Government-supported shows, “fringe experience in paradise”
- Shows toured nationally and internationally afterwards
- Why fringe? to meet international programmers, to meet national and international artists (sharing the same artistic view), meeting national and international audiences, have an extensive run and “really own the run”—“it’s already in your body physically”.
- The different spaces/buildings of the Fringe allow certain types of work and limit other forms of art/performance making?
- Is it possible to have a more community based curatorial approach, that allows flexibility/is best suited to the type of project (a less singular vision)?

HJ Giles

- Hybrid events/in-person events
- Explosion of mutual aid groups
- Paid not to work
- Individual action feeling close to meaningless
- Festival of landlords, housing markets entirely shaped by the festival ecology
- Going into debt to “sell your wares”
- “do you remember when it all stopped?”
- How did capital so quickly reassert itself?
- Accessibility as not affordable

Discussion

- Collective rest
- Alcohol as an “unsafe” space, festivals in general are unsafe spaces, holiday mode, festivals as carnivalesque
- The romance of the fringe and “making it”, “the fringe diet”
- How do we not formalise and professionalise a fringe that is joyous?
- What about performers with children, who other care responsibilities, how do they participate in the fringe?