

Australia Council for the Arts



Artistic vibrancy

Self-reflection tool

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Other resources


This paper may be read in conjunction with a set of resources on the Australia Council for the Arts website which we hope will be useful for companies thinking about how to evaluate their artistic vibrancy. They are:


- [*“Tell me honestly...”: good practice case studies of artistic self-assessment in performing arts organisations*](#) - a set of Australian and international examples of companies which have made artistic self-assessment a meaningful and useful process for them, and how they did it
- [*Meaningful measurement: a review of the literature about measuring artistic vibrancy*](#) - for the research enthusiasts, a comprehensive literature review of the academic research in this area
- [*Defining artistic vibrancy: a discussion paper*](#) - a look at what artistic vibrancy means, and the traits of an artistically vibrant company

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[http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/music/reports_and_publications/artistic_vibrancy_self-reflection_tool]

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Introduction

“Artistic vibrancy” includes artistic excellence, audience stimulation, innovation, development of artists and community relevance. For a more detailed discussion of the definition of “artistic vibrancy,” please see *Defining artistic vibrancy: a discussion paper for the major performing arts sector*, on the Australia Council for the Arts website.

Companies can measure their own artistic vibrancy through artistic self-assessment. There are a variety of processes which companies use to help them know if they are on track in terms of artistic vibrancy. There is no one-size-fits-all way for a company to assess its own artistic vibrancy. However, we hope that the attached “self-reflection tool” provokes conversation and exploration by companies.

Who should use the self-reflection tool?

The “self-reflection tool” is intended for use by arts organisations and their boards. It provides detailed suggestions for ways to monitor, reflect upon and evaluate artistic vibrancy.

How was the self-reflection tool developed?

The tool was developed using the input from performing arts companies and the available research on performance measurement in the arts, which can be reviewed in the separate paper *Meaningful measurement: a review of the literature about measuring artistic vibrancy*.

Companies seemed to agree that artistic self-assessment is a multi-faceted process, which cannot rely too heavily on any one stakeholder view, be it the audience, peer, critic, staff, artists or funding body’s views. Processes which companies pointed to as being genuinely useful and meaningful in the self-assessment process included:

- an artistic director statement at the outset of a planning cycle, which sets out what the company is going to try and achieve and gives the company and other stakeholders with a basis for assessment
- open and frank dialogue about artistic matters amongst the board and staff, including regular artistic director reports to the board
- staff consultation and engagement in artistic decision-making
- artist consultation and engagement in artistic decision-making
- identifying peers to review the company’s work
- peer review, including international experts where a company’s peers are internationally-based
- active consultation with communities, to ensure community relevance
- audience surveys, including surveys to uncover impact on the audience
- an artistic director statement at the end of the cycle which talks about what lessons have been learned from self-assessment, and how these lessons will be incorporated into the next planning cycle

Testing the tool

We will be testing the tool with a group of companies during 2010. Their feedback, including what works, what doesn't work and what else might be useful, will be incorporated into a new draft of the tool at the end of the test period.

Who can I contact for more information?

We invite comments, feedback, criticism and suggestions on this tool and the other resources provided. Please direct your views to Jackie Bailey on j.bailey@australiacouncil.gov.au or Ph: 02 9215 9000 or Toll free: 1800 226 912.

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