

## TANIO - PARTICIPATORY ARTS - BEYOND THE LOCKDOWN

Thursday 18th June 2020

Host - Lisa Davies (Tanio)

### JEN ANGHARAD - ARTIS COMMUNITY

What is the future of us as a community of creative practice?

- There are many more questions than answers. Jên has collected questions from Artis and included some of them here.

How might the community arts sector navigate its way out of lock down?

- Navigation requires kindness and support for mental health and wellbeing
- We are a community of practice that holds a common unity - we can draw strength from this unity. The more we come together and share, the more we can share understanding and form a united voice.

What impact can we have now, in the next few months and further ahead into the future?

- Artis is making some difference to participants through non-digital activities
- Their digital activity has had an impact on their own thinking about what digital can do – originally it was driven by a need for them to maintain connections with participants. Refocusing the practice into a digital domain has been time consuming, but it has been worth it.
- We need to add our voices to the arts sector voices to persuade the Westminster government of the value of the work we do and the impact of our work.
- Priceless and Life changing
- We now need more than ever investment in the arts - not just in larger organisations, but in smaller companies, charities and independent artists

Artworks Cymru is discussing the DCMS call for evidence

We need to convince the powers that be of our value and relevance.

What are the challenges of facing a new and different future?

- Coming out of lockdown requires a sensitive approach to re-engagement
- Lockdown has unearthed the ugly truth about inequalities
- We need to investigate what we really mean by **all** people - we must proactively change our focus and look to people and places we aren't reaching
- We can't do this alone - we need to work together with other organisations and individuals
- The Unknown is uncertain - but we can look to our practice and call on our collective creativity and resilience to see us through.

## **KATE STRUDWICK - HEAD 4 ARTS**

- Head 4 Arts is a partnership of local authorities and trusts
- About delivering community arts across the four counties they cover
- It's a small ship compared to the big organisations but can be adaptable. They have few overheads and a small staff team. This means they haven't had too many financial issues to deal with.
- They had to make some choices - keep calm or freak out?
- h4A has a strong business plan that guides them. It still guides them at this time. We just need to find different ways of doing things. We had to ask what can we do?
- Change is not always comfortable - they have had to find ways to do things differently. Coming out of lockdown, things won't go back to the way they were. We still have to deal with Climate Change, inequality.
- Practices they are using now - this will be how they adapt.
- The Celtic Cafe and choirs are still going on and are bigger.
- They still want to do our regular big events - Earth Hour took place just as lockdown happened - instead of a lantern parade they created a book and a film
- They need to remember that there are people out there who don't have digital capacity. H4A connected with umbrella orgs who linked with people who were isolated. They knew well being would be an issue so they worked with artists to create doorstep art packs - to enable people to be creative. They are just about to deliver our 1000 pack.
- They need to look at how we deliver this beyond lockdown and what they might deliver.
- They are working with a parent network - looking at their feelings about lockdown and what they are going to be anxious about in the future. They are making a book which is in production at the moment. Helping people to be brave enough to make steps out of lockdown.
- H4A - lost a member of their steering committee. What Next Valleys commissioned Ruth Garnalt to explore what they might be doing to support the legacy of Covid 19 Bereavement.
- The transition period will last a long time.
- H4A had put funds aside to look at how they would get past brexit. They will use this to support new delivery.
- They are using lockdown to support artists by employing them to create doorsteps arts. They also have four artists on their lockdown language programme learning Welsh. Kate says "We have to be imaginative, work together, support each other and be kind."

## **ALYS BYRNE- FOREST SCHOOLS**

- Freelance drama and outdoor arts facilitator
- Drama online and forest schools - she has been looking at online provision
- Her projects had to change quickly - she moved them on to zoom. Participants in two groups she was working with were visually impaired.
- She was working with an older group - but its been much harder to get them online so this group hasn't met
- Alys and the participants have worked together to find a way through.

- She feels we need to prepare for an either / or situation. She has talked to the groups about the way forward. For the foreseeable future, it looks like they will work on zoom. Social distancing is hard for blind people - they are anxious about public transport. Live workshops would be a stressful experience.
- Participants have suggested that they could combine live with zoom - Alys's first reaction was that it could only be either or, but she thinks this needs more consideration.
- Participants agree that the shift to online has been essential. It kept the connection going, but they have missed the live.
- As a facilitator, Alys thinks that online work will change things for the better and connect to more people.
- Alys is thinking about an affordable, safe solution for project delivery. She sees her outdoor arts as having more potential.
- She regrets that she couldn't work with her adult groups - she wants to ensure this doesn't happen again. She thinks connecting with other groups who link with older people in the community is the best way.