

Evaluation framework

**Connecting
Communities:
Evaluation of
the Gasworks
Participatory
Artists
Residency
Programme**

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Evaluation Framework

During the past two years, we (FOTL – Andrea Francke and Ross Jardine) have been developing an evaluation framework for Gasworks' Participatory Artist Residency Programme. Over and over in that period, we met a variety of people that were interested in rethinking evaluation practices and who wanted to try to figure out how to do something similar. Like us, they felt that although they had to follow evaluation processes that were demanded by funders, those processes only function to certify that their projects had successfully functioned as some sort of 'investment' that had gathered the appropriate returns.

We came into this project thinking that 'evaluation' could be appropriated and redefined as a space for thinking and learning together. It became clear that this meant that the way that we evaluate had to be specific to the institution, to the projects, but mainly to the people that were involved in producing, experiencing and evaluating.

This framework is our attempt to share our experiences at Gasworks as a framework that is general and open enough to be adapted for different concerns, needs and conditions. Not less because we wanted to leave behind a framework for Gasworks itself that can continue to develop without us. A main concern for us has been to always resist the temptation to build some sort of institutional need on the basis of our 'unique expertise'.

The framework that follows is a series of questions or issues to think about in order to develop and carry an evaluation that we hope will be helpful for anyone trying to develop their own framework.

We also share some of the references we looked at while we were finding our way around each of the questions. We believe that by focusing on the questions that structure the evaluation, we could make it easier to return to this framework over and over. This is neither a template to fill nor guidelines to follow. Think about the process of continually rethinking and redefining the evaluation framework as part of the evaluation process itself.

The last thing is that although this framework was developed for a social participatory arts programme, there is nothing specific about the arts in it. More than anything, it is a proposal to what evaluations that use processes and frameworks that come from social art practices, pedagogy and politics can offer and produce in terms of infrastructure.

1 Why and what are we evaluating?

This might sound basic but a lot of evaluations take their usefulness for granted. In the field of social art practice, for example, most of the time they are transplants of methods that come from policy and/or social enterprising which were developed to measure and compare very different objects, scales, and reify quite specific hierarchical structures.

We think that evaluations should be tools for institutions to reflect and learn about what they do, ideally with the people they 'do to' or a more generous person would say 'do for'. We think a good evaluation framework is an infrastructure for learning to do better (and to define better together and as an ongoing target) instead of to produce proof of fulfilment of the indicators of social change proposed by funders.

We think evaluations should be the space in which an institution produces theories about itself and its programmes.

We use theory here, inspired by Elizabeth Grosz, as a practice that allows us to come up with new questions and to understand the 'transformability of what is given'. It is by making transformability possible that evaluation can create systems of accountability in relation to their own community, not to funders.

So, the question here is what do you want to learn more about? They can be direct questions about projects. Is it about how the programme functions? How do

people relate to it? What are you putting into the world and leaving behind? But they can also be broader questions about what is the role/impact of the institution in its broader community? It could be how your actions are affecting other groups and institutions that might be serving the local population more effectively. It can be about understanding the sort of relations it is setting up with partnering local groups. It can also be about figuring out the economic relations the institution exists in order to plan for redistribution of equity.

Good questions are a matter of ambition and imagination and they will probably get a lot better over time and also by expanding the group of people who get to formulate them.

Sometimes we focus so much on getting the first questions 'right' that we stop ourselves from reformulating them and re-examining them over and over. Going back to why and what and reformulating questions and again is part of the evaluation process itself.

Some things that might help you think about: Why and what are we evaluating?

Elizabeth Grosz: 2007 Keynote at the Feminist Theory Workshop
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwHoswiw5yo>

Tompkins, K.W., 2016. We Aren't Here to Learn What We Already Know [WWW Document]. Avidly. URL
<http://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2016/09/13/we-arent-here-to-learn-what-we-know-we-already-know/> (accessed 9.23.20).

Not Taking Bad Advice: a Pedagogical Model [WWW Document], n.d. URL
<https://www.iessestommel.com/not-taking-bad-advice-a-pedagogical-model/> (accessed 9.23.20).

2 Who are we evaluating with?

So now you that you 'sort of have an idea'* of what evaluation could be and what it could do for you, the next question is who do you want to do it with?

This is a crucial question that should be asked repeatedly. It is a lot easier to get other art institutions, funders, community workers, etc. on the table than participants and members of the local community (for example).

The question of who we invite/ask to think with us is not formulated because of moral concerns. This is about rigorous thinking. This is about owning the massive gaps in knowledge we all have. We understand diversity as a matter of competence. Don't invite people as a performative gesture, respect other people's knowledges and competences.

You are not doing someone or a community a 'favour' by giving them a seat at the table. Don't waste people's time.

This is a good moment to re-think question 1. Who got to determine the questions and the learning and who gets to 'share it and own it'? Who do we need to be accountable to? A system of accountability is not about power, is about creating and sustaining the relations that allow accountability to happen.

*Sort of having an idea is an important definition here because we need to get used to the idea of not fully knowing through this process. What the evaluation is for and what it looks at will probably change over and over through this

process. That's how learning and learning with others look like.

Some things that might help you think about: Who are we evaluating with?

Haraway, D., 1988. Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies* 14, 575–599.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>
<https://philpapers.org/archive/HARSKT.pdf>

Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern, Bruno Latour. *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Winter 2004), pp. 225-248. The University of Chicago Press
<http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/89-CRITICAL-INQUIRY-GB.pdf>

Terese Mailhot- How to Write the Story of Your Life - Some advice from outside the white male literary canon
<https://gay.medium.com/how-to-write-the-story-of-your-life-3a865cc21781>

Morita, A., 2013. Traveling Engineers, Machines, and Comparisons: Intersecting Imaginations and Journeys in the Thai Local Engineering Industry. *East Asian Science, Technology and Society* 7, 221–241.
<https://doi.org/10.1215/18752160-2145403>
https://www.academia.edu/5042127/Traveling_Engineers_Machines_and_Comparisons_Intersecting_Imaginations_and_Journeys_in_the_Thai_Local_Engineering_Industry

3 Intentions are great but, what are the different conditions we all need to address to be able to sit at the table together?

This question develops in two realms. The first one is about infrastructural issues around the meetings. Who is paid for that work (curators and social workers might fit them in their working hours, for example) and who are we asking to volunteer? Are the meetings scheduled during working or leisure hours? What are the costs involved in getting to a meeting? Where do we meet? Is the space accessible? What happens if you have child care responsibilities? How much time do we demand from members of the board? Are we clear about how contributions will be valued?

Who gets to be an author and claim ownership over their analysis?

The second realm is about how we create the conditions for everyone to participate in the meetings. We all bring our differences to the table. How do we learn to really listen to each other? How do we carve time to let us develop a common language? How do we learn to let others hold us accountable? How do we learn to take the knowledge and concerns of others seriously?

We developed a structure to hold all of us together: the evaluation board. This meant we could create a pay structure. We opted for monthly meetings. We went online when covid-19 hit. The second realm? It took time and persistence and togetherness and a lot of awkwardness.

Some things that might help you think about this question:

Hamraie, A., 2016. Beyond Accommodation: Disability, Feminist Philosophy, and the Design of Everyday Academic Life. *philoSOPHIA* 6, 259–271. <https://doi.org/10.1353/phi.2016.0022>

Document 0 – Teresa Cisneros
<https://www.independentsunited.co.uk/product/document-o>

Access Intimacy: The Missing Link, 2011. .
Leaving Evidence. URL
<https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2011/05/05/access-intimacy-the-missing-link/> (accessed 9.23.20).

Anderson, E.S., 1999. What Is the Point of Equality? *Ethics* 109, 287–337. <https://doi.org/10.1086/233897>

4 What to measure, how to measure and why measure?

Now we have some questions, a group of people to think about them with (and rewrite them) and we have created the structures that will allow us to work on them together. How can we work through those questions to find answers, or what does it look like to use them as a frame of analysis? Also, now that you are a group it is important to realise that there will be a variety of questions and take on questions and ideas on how to collect data and how to use it to address those questions.

There are many methods to collect qualitative and quantitative data. Which one to use depends on what and how you want to know of something, as well as for whom you are measuring.

For example, a quantitative survey for a small programme like ours might not tell us much locally. Still, if the funder is collating data from across the country, it might be useful in terms of their funding policy evaluation. We don't have anything against any specific form for collating information and looking for answers. It is about rigour again. To choose a method, we should understand the type of knowledge it can or can't produce, its biases and how it can be useful to us (or how it can create an illusion of knowledge or obscure what we really want to access).

We used a lot of different evaluation methods: surveys, forms, interviews, workshops, tools like theories of change and impact maps. The critical aspect for us was to use them as part of a process of collective reflecting and learning. We developed our methods of gathering data with the artist and the evaluation board and used them to inform our discussions. A lot of those methods failed, they either didn't engage participants, or they didn't really help us understand things.

Some things that might help you think about this question:

IfG LIVE – Discussions with the Institute for Government: Civil Service reform: How to measure success on Apple Podcasts, n.d.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/civil-service-reform-how-to-measure-success/id1503524246?i=1000485866257>

Espeland, W.N., Stevens, M.L., 1998.

Commensuration as a Social Process. Annual Review of Sociology 24, 313–343.

<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.24.1.313>

Daston, J.G. interviews L., n.d. Historicizing the Self-Evident: An Interview with Lorraine Daston [WWW Document]. Los Angeles Review of Books. URL

<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/historicizing-the-self-evident-an-interview-with-lorraine-daston/> (accessed 9.9.20).

Mol, A., 2015. Who knows what a woman is... On the differences and the relations between the sciences. Medicine Anthropology Theory | An open-access journal in the anthropology of health, illness, and medicine 2, 57.

<https://doi.org/10.17157/mat.2.1.215>

Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy by Cathy O'Neil

Davies, W., 2016. The happiness industry: how the government and big business sold us well-being, Paperback edition. ed. Verso, London.

Strathern, M., 1997. 'Improving ratings': audit in the British University system. European Review 5, 305–321.

[https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1234-981X\(199707\)5:3<305::AID-EURO184>3.0.CO;2-4](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1234-981X(199707)5:3<305::AID-EURO184>3.0.CO;2-4)
<https://archive.org/details/ImprovingRatingsAuditInTheBritishUniversitySystem>

5 What ways of thinking are reflected in your evaluation?

It is quite common in our day-to-day lives to inherit metaphorical frameworks and accept them as somehow 'natural'. Evaluation metaphors of war, sports or industrial frameworks, appear in the language of impact, strategy, product and success. Sometimes evaluation takes on social policy and social enterprise vocabularies such as stakeholders and community.

Most funding and evaluation in the arts are geared towards ideas of innovation. The project-based funding model that has replaced maintenance and infrastructure models treat art institutions as relentless producers of pilot programmes that are then evaluated through concepts like impact, assumptions, inputs and outcomes, and methods like SWOTS and theory of change diagrams. They reify an endless loop of coming up with new models which are tested as policies which bring change and have to be dropped and reinvented in order to seduce the next funder.

But metaphors matter. Metaphorical frameworks can define what we can see and what we ignore, what we value and what we don't, what we imagine is possible, what we care for.

We made a conscious decision of trying to frame our evaluation in metaphors of learning, maintenance and politics, but this was by no means the only possibility. Metaphorical frameworks around hospitality, care, ecology, New Weird, economics, etc. would all allow for different modes of valuing and practice to emerge.

Important warning: metaphor frameworks are not the same as the co-option of language.

Some things that might help you think about this question:

House, E.R., 1983. How we think about evaluation. *New Directions for Program Evaluation* 1983, 5–25.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.1342>

House, E.R., 1978. Assumptions Underlying Evaluation Models. *Educational Researcher* 7, 4–12.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X007003004>

Schön, D.A., 1979. Generative metaphor: A perspective on problem-setting in social policy. *Metaphor and thought* 2, 137–163
http://www.academia.edu/download/61516192/Andrew_Ortony_-_Metaphor_and_Thought-Cambridge_University_Press_199320191214-31564-1cv3p9k.pdf#page=149

Tuck, E., Yang, K.W., 2012. Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, education & society* 1.
<https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630>

Emejulu, A., 2015. *Community development as micropolitics: Comparing theories, policies and politics in America and Britain*, 1st ed. Bristol University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1t896mx>

6 What does using maintenance to think evaluation looks like?

Maintenance is a drag.

It is boring, relentless, it feels completely unproductive, and it doesn't give you much to show unless it fails. But maintenance is also the work that sustains the world. Maintenance work doesn't feature high on the usual list of priorities of evaluation models in the arts. Maintenance is not interested in ideas about the artist as a genius author. Instead, it is concerned with the structures and bodies that support and maintain the work. It is not interested in judging if a work is good or bad, or 'proving' its outputs, but in how to support, care, repair, develop tools and carry on-going light modifications.

Questions about how money is distributed through a project, how ownership/authorship /responsibility/labour are distributed, how pre-existing communities and practices are not conjured by the artist but ‘interfered’ with, become central.

For the past two years, we tried to be attentive to the way the institution and the artists in residence, and the evaluation framework worked to support already existing groups, practices and institutions. Our discussions were focused on what was happening or had just happened and in how to maintain relations, support other institutions and individuals doing similar work. This was influenced by Jacob, who brought their own metaphor framework of decolonising to the project, focused on decentring practices, slowing down and imaging different futures. It was also influenced by The Alternative School of Economics' work on feminist economics, reproductive labour and care practices.

One of my favourite things that came out from commissioning participants from the evaluation board to write analytical takes on the projects; it's how incidental their interaction with the artists can be.

This doesn't diminish the art. It gives the institution a different perception of how working with others in a more equitable way can look like.

Some things that might help you think about this question:

Lisa Baraitser – On Time, Care, and Not Moving On (5 Jul 2018)
<https://www.ici-berlin.org/events/lisa-baraitser/>

Russell, A.L., Vinsel, L., 2018. After Innovation, Turn to Maintenance. *Technology and Culture* 59, 1–25.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/tech.2018.0004>

Reckitt, H., 2013. Forgotten relations: Feminist artists and Relational Aesthetics, in: Dimitrakaki, A., Perry, L. (Eds.), *Politics in a Glass: Case Feminism, Exhibition Cultures and Curatorial Transgressions*. Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, pp. 131–156.
<http://research.gold.ac.uk/7103/>

7 What does evaluation as learning look like?

Learning here relates to ideas of radical pedagogy and should be understood in an expanded form. Learning does not imply there is an agreed content or canon to be learned. We understand learning as a collaborative process between people that bring different skills and expertise. We are very intent in displacing the idea of making a judgement on quality and to focus instead on how to use all our different positions and expertise to understand something together. This means we talk a lot about knowledge, changing, seeing things we couldn't see before.

One of my favourite things about using learning as framing is that it assumes a constant realisation of previous failures or gaps in knowledge, and it rewards us for acknowledging them and constantly re-building ourselves and the project. It sees accountability as an active everyday practice instead of a guilt relief machine. That's how we think about these evaluation framework questions. We have returned to them over and over and will keep returning to them. There are no right answers. If you are not continually re-assessing and changing, you are not doing it right.

Many years ago, when I [Andrea] was just starting out as a social art practice, my friend Jackson Lam took me to a Centre for Possible Studies meeting. There were about twenty people in the room, current and former participants, curators, artists.

There was an intense discussion about the artist that had run the last project. Most of the participants liked their work, most of the curators didn't. I had never seen anything like this. Everybody felt comfortable explaining their positions, and they were trying to figure out how they could account for those differences, understand them, and think together about how to invite the next artist. This was a life-changing experience so, years later, when I met Janna Graham (who ran the Centre of Possible Studies at the time with Amal Khalaf) the first thing I asked was: how did you do that?

Maybe if you don't work with people (or if you don't pay attention when you work with people) you can't appreciate how rare it is to be able to create an environment in which such a disparate group of people with such disparate aims can have in-depth discussions and disagreements and then leave with a sense of common understanding and a shared (even if temporary) aim. I never forgot Janna's reply: It took years.

First, we used to hold the meetings, make coffee, get biscuits, and no one came. Then we figured out how to get people to come. Then we started building ways to talk together.

Some things that might help you think about this question:

Radical Education Workbook

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/kslnn5ll14atih6/ref%20workbook.pdf>

Mac an Ghail, Mairtin, Mac an Ghail, Mairtin, Mac an Ghail, Máirtín, 1988. Young, gifted, and Black student-teacher relations in the schooling of Black youth. Open University Press, Milton Keynes ; Philadelphia.

The UnMute Podcast: Episode 053:

Michael Burroughs on Children & Agency on Apple Podcasts, n.d.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/episode-053-michael-burroughs-on-children-agency/id956404060?i=1000473689294>

Moten, F., 2018. Stolen Life. Duke University Press. Chapter 12 - Annassignment Letters

8 How does your evaluation exist in time?

Although time is very much connected to the metaphors we use to think about evaluation, we felt it deserved its own question. We ought to think about time in the relation between the time of social art practice and that of the moments evaluation measures.

Some projects do things that can only be understood after a long period. Some projects do things that exist so embedded within the time of the participants or the institution that can't be reflected upon if the evaluation only exists in the time of the funder (which will probably be project-based and concerned solely with their project). Some projects elicit follow-ups that must be disregarded because so much of our funding structures are project-based.

Both maintenance and learning share similar temporalities. Both are focused on ongoingness and slow change (embodied change) over externally measured results or impact.

This needed to be reflected in how much the evaluation board met, for example. The number of meetings you need if you want to have a board that is trying to learn together and affect 'as it goes' is very different from the number of meetings of a board that just formulates questions from an external position. The same applies to the report. We chose to make the report as an alive and ongoing document so it could reflect different moments in time and become a platform that allows for continual interpretations and analysis—different forms of thinking and acting demand different time frames.

The evaluation board functions a bit like a time machine that allows an assemblage of embodied knowledges of the programme to understand it from different moments in time. A participant analysis from one project might change after seeing how other projects have moved certain ideas forward or left them behind. Board members also embody the institutional memory of the projects that happen before. The evaluation board is not dismantled and reassembled in between funding streams. That is a time frame decision.

Some things that might help you think about this question:

Nguyen, C.T., n.d. Autonomy and Aesthetic Engagement. *Mind*.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/mind/fzz054>

Baraitser, L., 2017. *Enduring time*. Bloomsbury Academic, London Oxford New York, NY New Delhi Sydney.

9 What is a report for?

**Who is the report for?
It is for us, for the
evaluation board, for
the institution, for the
artists, for the
participants.**

If the evaluation aims to reflect, learn and enact change in real time, the report can't be the main result. The report becomes then another tool that enables other types of reflection and learning through the practices of commissioning writing, narrating, expanding the audience of the discussion, including new voices and perspectives. Writing itself provides another type of learning by forcing different modes of attention and articulation. It makes new aspects of projects visible and forces them into the analysis. The report also becomes an object produced by the evaluation board that can also help transport things across time, projects and funding streams. All of this with the aim of doing things and allowing things to be done, not the aim of justifying projects to the external observer that is the funder.

We set up our report with the idea that it is a live document that would enable different analyses to exist next to and conversation with each other. It will live in a permanent state of maintenance. In order to do this, we had to give coherence up.

Coherence is an important characteristic of evaluation which at its core presupposes that an external entity can create a neutral narrative and analysis that will paint the 'true' picture of a project. But coherence can also mean that a certain narrative is privileged by erasing others, reinforced through 'extracted speech' and that dissonant positions are dismissed or re-framed to reinforce the main conclusions.

We want our report to be a document that we can constantly add to, remove from, correct and disagree with. We want the evaluation board to use it as a way to identify what's missing in our analysis and commission short pieces of writing from participants or other people that we decide would be useful. That means our report needs a budget, a form and structure that will make those interactions not only possible but easy. It also means that as the evaluation board meetings continue it will require constant adjustments so that it can stop being what we want it to be and become what the board wants it to be, or a thing that has inner rules of functioning.

Our favourite evaluation reports:

Group, B.B.W., 1984. Black Women Organizing. *Feminist Review* 84–89. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1395018>

Greater London Council. creator, 1986. The Campaign for a popular culture - a record of struggle and achievement, the G.L.C.'s Community Arts Programme

1981-86. Greater London Council,
London.

**Some things that might help you think
about this question:**

The UnMute Podcast: Episode 009: Kristie
Dotson on Ignorance -
<https://www.podbean.com/ew/pb-d3cfw-59a47a>

House, E.R., 1979. Coherence and
Credibility: The Aesthetics of Evaluation.
Educational Evaluation and Policy
Analysis 1, 5-17.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1164072>

Hunter, S., 2008. Living documents: A
feminist psychosocial approach to the
relational politics of policy
documentation: Critical Social Policy.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018308095300>
. Available at (
https://www.academia.edu/12612943/Living_documents_A_feminist_psychosocial_approach_to_the_relational_politics_of_policy_documentation)

This is Not a Boundary Object: Reflections
on the Origin of a Concept - Susan Leigh
Star, 2010 [WWW Document], n.d. URL
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0162243910377624> (accessed 9.9.20).

McKinney, R.A., 2016. Extracted Speech.
Social Theory and Practice 42, 258-284.

Tufte, E.R., 2003. The cognitive style of
PowerPoint.
<https://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/powerpoint>

10 Who are you talking to about evaluation?

This framework is more than anything, a syllabus. Who you are reading, talking to, and writing to is just an expansion of the question of who you are bringing to the table to think with you. The reading/watching/listening recommendations in this framework cut across a variety of disciplines and experiences.

Again, this is not an exercise in performing diversity but a matter of rigour.

These recommendations are all also very personal, they are not by any means an established canon of evaluation thinking. They are the texts that we enjoyed reading, that supported us through this project and sometimes that we disagreed with in rewarding ways. Whatever we do, other people have done

it before us and are doing it now. Whatever we are thinking about, other people have reflected on it before us and are doing it now. That is exciting. It means the world is full of brilliant conversations that we haven't started yet.

We mainly bumped into texts by finding ways to connect with people over shared evaluation nerdiness. We realised we had friends that were rubbing against evaluation in their working lives and were facing similar questions but in different fields. We published a newsletter sharing our research and thinking (although chronic illness and parenting have taken that off the table for a bit). We organised a public event, we had coffee with other people that were trying to start similar projects. We read many, many reports from social art practice funders and institutions.

Some things that might help you think about this question:

Sara Ahmed - Making Feminist Points
<https://feministkilljoys.com/2013/09/11/making-feminist-points/>

Living Cities (they ran our favourite programme of anti-racist institutional change and evaluation)
<https://www.livingcities.org/resources>

Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You, 2003 in: Touching Feeling. Duke University Press, pp. 123–151.
<https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822384786-005>