

Week 12 – Promotion and Public Positioning

Category: Uncategorized

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This week, we mostly focused on how to promote the exhibition and on what other form it might take. Reflecting on our joint exhibition, *Our Shell*, I realized more practically how audience insights work. A work will not come to the audience. If the message is unclear or the presence in the city is weak, it may not be seriously received or understood. Here, Claire Bishop's work on participatory art was helpful as it's not just about whether people are there but how they are invited, how they are included. This helped me recognize that just because the work is in the city, it doesn't necessarily mean that it is participatory. Marketing draws people in, through, and out.

This is particularly true for my project. It is outdoors, but is not dependent on a single entry point, so visitors can't usually be brought into the museum. Entrances must be coordinated across maps, QR codes, site boards, pamphlets, and online. Once we had realised this, visual design and printing had to be taken more seriously. It is not only for information, however, but also so that people understand, very quickly, that this is not a walk around the city or a sightseeing tour. It is a curatorial project interested in inequitable spatial practice.

I also began to think about the audiences for the project. Nina Simon points out that a cultural project is relevant when it relates to the lives of its audiences. To me, that means "the public" cannot be thought of as a monolithic group. More distinctions among residents, passers-by, commuters, and tourists are needed. Most residents are likely to perceive how tourism, commerce and spatial organisation impact long-term

belonging so the project needs to have a stronger experiential appeal for them. Passers-by might pass more quickly, so needs to be visually and verbally accessible. Commuters might be in a hurry, so brief encounters need to be enabled. Tourists may have more time to explore, say, but they tend to know Edinburgh via canonical walking routes and a set of city tropes. In this way we saw that promotion is not just about getting more visitors to the exhibition. It is also about enabling these publics to get into it for themselves in their own time.

References

Bishop, Claire. *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. London: Verso, 2012.

Cardoso, Kristen. Review of Book Review: *The Art of Relevance*, Written by Nina Simon. *Weave* (Ann Arbor, Mich.) 1, no. 6 (April 2017). <https://doi.org/10.3998/weave.12535642.0001.605>.