

Listen closely

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Propositions belonging to the dissertation

LISTEN CLOSELY

Innovating audience participation
in symphonic music

Veerle Spronck

1. The innovation of audience participation challenges the existing aesthetic framework in which symphony orchestras operate. As such, innovating participation is aesthetic work for orchestras.
2. In innovative projects of symphony orchestras, what is aesthetically relevant is not given in advance: from the placement of chairs on stage to the programme leaflet handed out to audience members, everything can have an influence on the quality of the project as a whole.
3. The innovation of audience participation asks orchestral practitioners to move away from an understanding of aesthetic quality as fixed and singular, and instead to acknowledge that various 'repertoires of quality' continuously have to be put into practice, played with, and expanded upon.
4. Rather than coming up with new evaluation criteria that distinguish between aesthetic and societal quality, cultural policymakers should critically question such distinctions because they are challenged in projects that innovate audience participation.
5. We tend to associate innovation with grand ideas and radical technological changes, but should not overlook that modest insights and subtle tinkering with norms in practice can innovate artistic and academic practices in impactful ways.
6. To examine how practices work, science and technology studies (STS) scholars are trained to focus on tensions, problems, and controversies. The arts can inspire STS scholars to develop a research attitude that attends to quality, joy, and passion to investigate why practices (continue to) matter.
7. Transdisciplinary collaboration between art and academia generates uncertainty about both worlds. To be able to learn from such uncertainty, it is necessary to reserve time and space throughout the collaboration to share mutual experiences of not-knowing.
8. Researchers should make an effort to learn from artists, musicians, and designers how to perform, curate, and present their research in ways that move beyond conventional academic forms of dissemination. Taking artistic methods seriously, research could start to take the form of performative writing, exhibitions, or a collection of études.
9. Learning how to play the double bass is also conceptual work.
10. 'Now that I've asked thirty-two questions, can I ask forty-four more?' (Cage, 1961: 42)