

Working Group 5

Transition – A Sustainable Future for the Performing Arts

Friday 24th April 15:30 17:30

Working group in collaboration with 2020 Network.

Moderator:

Hilde Teuchies– Brussels – Crew www.crewonline.org

Speakers:

Guy Gypens – Brussels – Kaaitheater www.kaaitheater.be

Judith Knight – London – Artsadmin www.artsadmin.co.uk

Andrew Ormston – Edinburgh – RGA Consulting <http://rgaconsulting.co.uk/>

Andrea Zlatnanska – Bratislava – Greenpeace www.greenpeace.sk

Introduction by the moderator: Climate change is a subject which is difficult to avoid in today's society, but in performing arts it is not yet a big subject. It is discussed for the first as the main theme of a working group at an IETM meeting.

The representative of Greenpeace, Slovakia: Slovakian people do not think that climate change exists, education in this field is poor. Advice – start with yourself, at your own venue. Instead of plastic cups use eco-friendly material etc. Greenpeace has support from artistic circles in Slovakia.

Andrew Ormston: British government claims to have the first green budget in the world. Ormston presents a general question on the screen: How do you artistically explore and advocate sustainability when working from venues and organisations that don't understand their environmental impact, and aren't doing much about it? Ormston argues that international conferences use on average about 1 ton of CO2. The IETM network can lead, influence, explore, advocate and inform about this topic. **RGA Consulting** that Ormston represents, works with organisations to be in shape for the future - business planning, investment cases. Piloting green initiatives in the hotel sector, and questioning the lack of action in the cultural sector.

RGA associates are:

- **WSP:** buildings, energy audit, carbon management strategies.
- **Ecometrica:** innovation and whole organisation. Online tool to involve a whole membership.

Ormston presents project outcomes (cooperation of RGA and IETM):

- A carbon impact assessment of IETM
- Emission reduction scenarios for future events
- Fact sheet and good practice guides for members
- Web contents for the IETM site
- Presentation and briefing document

- Online delegate travel carbon calculator
- Case studies of representative member organisations
- Detailed GHC assessment of plenary meeting using data collected during and after the event.

Ormston shows that air travel makes 69% of environmental costs (according to an event similar to an IETM meeting), car travel makes 8%, accommodation 14%, venue waste disposal 2%, and venue energy consumption 5%.

Ormston presents online carbon calculator and online assessment tool on the screen. One can get all kinds of info according to land, organization etc on the internet. The venues can use it for investigating their public. Ormston's message is: „It's about action. No reason why it can't be done now“. The aim is to present the program at 2010 IETM meeting in Glasgow.

Guy Gypens presents the 2020 Network that was initiated by Rose Fenton and a number of European performing arts organisations. The network provides possibilities for professionals in the performing arts, scientists and artists to meet each other in order to discuss climate change and other related issues.

2020 Network:

1. level: sustainability of presenting, touring. What to do to be more eco-friendly?
2. level of awareness. How can we contribute to the discussion, the awareness of the people?
3. level, political. How can performance arts sector influence political decisions?

Partners of the 2020 Network Thin Ice are:

Kaaitheater Brussels,
Mladi Levi, Ljubljana
Arts Admin, London
Lift Festival, London
Le Quai, Angers
Le Domaine d'O, Montpellier

Judith Knight, director presents Artsadmin and tells about its many years of experience in stimulating artists to reflect upon ecological themes. Another big question is: how to work internationally, but ecologically at the same time? The aim should be to create performative actions about climate change:

Guy Gypens presents two activities by **Kaaitheater**:

1. ECOPODIA: initiative to be aware of the carbon footprint of the performing arts in Flanders. In November 12th, 2008, a conference in collaboration with the Flemish theatre institute took place. It presented speakers and working groups on sustainable production and management. The initiative is ongoing.
2. Burning Ice Festival – an event on climate change that took place in Brussels from 20 to 24 January 2009. Scientist and artists and audiences came together for a week discussing ecological issues. The program included discussions, debates, lectures,

meetings with politicians, documentary films, performances, installations. The whole festival worked well for the artists to think about the topics. We need a paradigm shift, it is a big challenge and very inspiring. Many young artists attended.

The public discussion.

A participant from Australia: Recently there were huge bush fires in Australia for four weeks. The government took money from the culture budget and put it into nature. Is there a danger that climate issues take money away from the arts?

Guy Gypens: If art can give an important contribution to the issues, then there is a reason to get more money for the arts. He does not see a problem. The major question is – how to contribute to the topic. It is not easy to have an interesting contribution. Arts institutions have different responsibilities for the artists. He sees more and more artists that want to contribute to topics and scientists linking with artists.

Report by:
Madli Pesti