

CHEAT-SHEETS

Part of
Producing Liveness in Interesting Times

the uncultured

Ever find yourself in a conversation with an artist/commissioner/funder and feel out of your depth when they are chatting about needing ‘a schedule for the gaffer’, or saying ‘we’ll just pivot and do a book or podcast yeh’? Well reader, we have been those people and we didn’t like it one bit.

As live performance producers, we know a bit about other artforms but wanted to chat to people we see who are doing this different kind of work instead of always just nodding along.

Biggest thing we learnt:

Being a producer of live work sets you up with a really strong foundation to work in many other forms, so don’t lose heart just yet!

Here are a few cheatsheets that you can refer to if things start feeling a bit like deep-water territory, with some lingo, tips, reminders and practicalities.

Making An Artbook

During the pandemic, a lot of performance-based artists turned to print in order to think about how they can continue to make work, connect with audiences, reformat existing work and build a legacy. We booked a free advisory session with **Paul Sammut at Book Works** to ask more about what it means for an artist, specifically one working in performance, to make a publication of their work.

Book Works are artists and makers – everything about the production of their works is their artistic practice. They therefore seemed like the right place to go to talk about how work intended to be experienced physically or sensorially can be translated or conceived of as a publication. Producing work that will directly meet an assembled group of people feels like a world away from producing one that finds itself in print. However, producing a publication is similarly about connecting directly to an audience, likely one-to-one. It is about voice, touch, smell and experience. If there are similarities to be drawn between the intended artistic experience, we wanted to understand the similarities between the production of that artistic outcome.

“Approach publishing a book as you would producing anything else. You are still collaborating with other people.”

Paul Sammut

Main things we took away from our onversation and research:

An artist I’m working with wants to make a book – where do I start?

Start with deciding what they want the project to do and who they want it to reach:

- Choosing whether the project is a book, a zine or a chapbook should be led by what they want it to achieve – the type of product that is made is the mode of distribution.
- Work out whether a DIY approach is preferred or if working with a creative team and a publisher is needed to bring the work to fruition.
- Once you have this information, spend some time researching options before making the next step – you’ll need to pull a team together, find partners, raise funding all before you start!

I have no idea about design so where do we start?

You don’t need to know about graphic design, that’s why you find a graphic designer to work with! Find them by looking at other books that do something similar to what you’d like to achieve and research the designers.

Go and have a look around bookshops like:

Arnolfini Bookshop, Bristol
 Artwords, London
 Bookartbookshop, London
 Colours May Vary, Leeds
 Good Press, Glasgow
 Family Store, Brighton
 Fruitmarket Gallery Bookshop, Edinburgh
 ICA Bookshop, London
 La Biblioteka, Sheffield
 Live Art Development Agency Study Room, London
 No Alibis, Belfast
 Oriel Myrddin Gallery, Carmarthen
 Tenderbooks, London

Artbook v published book?

Depending on who you want the project to reach, this might influence the design – if you want it to be in bookshops, it needs to be of particular dimensions to sit on a shelf, not be too fragile, etc. If you want it to be more experimental, research the type of shops that will stock it first. Or if you want to distribute yourself, there is more freedom in design, but you will have to think about your channels of distribution.

An artbook can take many forms from newspaper, pamphlet, chapbook, right up to monograph or a score, box of artefacts or multi-media publication. Try to see them in real life so you can decide what the right form is for the project.

How do we find a publisher?

Every publisher works in different ways so do your research before approaching. Some publishers take projects throughout open call, others seek commissions themselves. Some like to be involved from the very beginning of a project, others will join once it exists. Look up publishers that have supported similar projects and contact them directly.

Finding ways to connect with publishers is a good in – attend book readings, look for advisories and workshops – opportunities not to pitch but to build a relationship.

Can we make money from this?

Depending on the type of relationship you have with the publisher, there may be money offered for the creation of the book. Some may offer a fixed fee upfront or a cut of profits – as in performance, always take the upfront fee as book sales are not a given!

In most cases you'll need to source additional funds to support the project and some publishers will support this process. Books can be expensive to produce when content, design, print and distribution is factored in. In England, artists can apply for a DYCP and include a book as part of the development activity – seems to be a harder sell for Project Grants applications, particularly if this is the key focus of the project. Many books are made with support from crowdfunders.

Read more on the Book Works website here

Making A Podcast

Case Study: *Black In Power* – Koko Brown

Black in Power is a podcast series that aims to demystify the roots into leadership roles, with a specific focus on arts and culture. Koko Brown spoke with Artistic Directors, Executive Producers, Founders and Leaders about their journey, what they wish they had known and what being a 'leader' means to them. Podcasts include talks with Natalie Ibu, Matthew Xia and Stella Kanu.

How Koko built a team:

“Three checkboxes: I can’t do it, I don’t want to do it, someone can do it better than me – if I tick all of those I need to find a team member who can do it”

Roles in the team

Black in Power was made and promoted by a team of 5, plus 10 interviewees. Here is how the work was broken down:

1. Koko’s role: Producer, Host, Sound technician/recording technician, Lead Artist (at the face of it, doing other podcasts to promote etc), Finance Manager, Pastoral Care and main point of contact for everyone on the team.
2. Haus of JBK: Marketing Manager, illustration design, asset creation, social media posting.
3. Forward Motion: Sound Editors/Designers – editing sound for podcast, creating theme tune, sound throughout interviews.
4. Project Assistant: uploading to distribution platform each week, transcribing each episode.
5. Beaumont London: PR Company, promote the project and raise Koko’s profile more generally.

Funding

Part of a broader Arts Council England Project Grants application made at the start of Covid pandemic.

We asked Koko how she and the team made the podcast, literally, so we could visualise the process:

Space set up

- Soundproofed bedroom as best as possible – towel under her door, closed window, blind down while she sat on the floor. Made her room an airless, windowless space.
- Used wardrobe as recording area – thick dressing gown and blanket around the wardrobe, balanced laptop in a drawer, clipped microphone to stabilise.

Interviewee instructions

Made a useful information sheet for recording, including:

“To get the best recording, it would be great if:

- You are in a quiet room where you won’t be disturbed.
- Your laptop is charged or plugged into a power socket.
- You’re connected to strong internet or wifi.
- You have headphones plugged in – this will stop my voice echoing in the background.

Although a built-in microphone works fine, if you have an external microphone feel free to use it (as it will give us a cleaner sound).”

The recording

- Sessions were recorded on Zoom.
- Koko used a Tonor condenser microphone which was very sensitive and gave a professional-level sound.
- Bought lapel mics that plug into phone to send to the interviewees but didn’t use them in the end.
- Saved the audio only from Zoom and sound team worked their magic to ensure the levels were right.

Safeguarding and access

- Clause in contract about wellbeing with internal process information and independent support contact information.
- There was a check in with each interviewee after the recording to ensure they are happy.
- Provided transcript of each podcast episode on website.

Listen Here:

***Black in Power* – Lost Kids Collective (Koko Brown)**

Making A Film

Maybe the most obvious way to think about performance having an extended or alternative life is to stick it on film. But that's not a simple process and we had no idea where to start. We had a chat with **Tobi Kyeremateng** to find out more.

"I assumed I had basic skills to understand film because I knew I had the skills in theatre. It's basically similar: Holding relationships, budget management, people management, contracts. It's building a team – the way you work with them depends on the content."

Tobi Kyeremateng

Tobi learnt the skills on the job, picking up the lingo and working out people's roles whilst on a project – and wouldn't necessarily recommend working that way! So here's some helpful information to get you started:

Things Not To Forget:

1. Treatment and mood board is really important to pull together. An idea is not enough. In liveness we have the space to be abstract, in film you have a lot less room for this and it needs to be more specific because it dictates who you need, what locations are needed and what the visual reference points are to be able to even think about the lighting etc. Having this as soon as possible is vital because everything will depend on it.
2. Flexibility of live space relies on imagination, but in film you have to show them what you want them to see – locations matter.
3. All these things can be done in simpler and creative ways – it can be done on a real bare minimum if needs be.

Crew Involved In Making A Short Digital Film:

There are waaaaay more people involved in this process and not all roles are super clear based on their names/nicknames, so here's a rough breakdown:

Director – works with cast and crew to get the best result for audience. They also help to refine the story and script before filming and review the edits during post-production

Director of Photography (DoP) – responsible for visually how this will look on camera, they're usually the ones filming

Producer – responsible for organising the production and filming from start to finish. Might include preparing the script ready for shooting, fundraising, organising and managing the crew, planning and scheduling the shoot, reviewing the edits with the director and organising the distribution of the final film

Assistant Director (1st AD) – responsible for making a shooting schedule, going through the script or treatment to make an intricate schedule

Script Supervisor – responsible for the continuity of the work you will do. Keeping timestamps of each scene

Assistant Camera (1st AC/Focus Puller) – works closely with DoP making sure the shots are in focus, in charge of lens change

Camera operator: responsible for filming and setting up the camera shots for each scene

Lighting (Gaffer) – work with the DoP or camera operator to set up lighting for each scene

...Plus the cast.

There's More...

Additional roles depending on the type of thing you are filming...

Executive producer (EP): The person who provides the money and support to make the film

Boom Operator/Sound Mixer - responsible for holding the microphone and recording sound on set. The boom operator also monitors the sound during filming to check for volume levels and any sound issues or background noises

2nd AC (Clapper or Loader) - assistant to 1st AC. They'll have a clapperboard. You might not need this person depending on what you're shooting. They might also double up as a Digital Imaging Technician, or this might be another person - they will upload files off cards to hard drives. They will make sure all footage is backed up

Lighting (Spark) - will assist the Gaffer, but you might not need this, although useful to have for hands

Steady Camera Operator (Steady Cam Op) - camera operator working on this equipment

Production manager - works with the Executive Producer to organise the people needed to make the film

Key grip - responsible for much of the equipment used in filming, including tripods, dollies, cranes, lighting, etc

Location Manager - if you're doing stuff in a few places, they will scout and look after the locations, sort out permissions etc.

Casting director - The person who auditions the actors to play the characters in the film

Production Designer/Set Designer - focused on design of the space

Art Direction - focused on concept and aesthetic creation, creating storyboards and overseeing the delivery of the visual aspects of the work

Wardrobe/Costume/Styling - focused on how the cast are styled for the film

Hair and make up - normally separate people but could be one

Runner or 2 - responsive to any requests the team has

Assistants - all of the above roles may also have an assistant

Then It Goes Into Post...

The team who will work on the film once everything has been captured will be very dependent on the budget and time you have to complete the job, and each role might be broken down into smaller roles, but will usually include:

Editor - puts raw footage into order and shapes the storyline alongside Director

Colourist/Grader - responsible for making the image look exactly the way it should. Works with Director and sometime DoP to ensure each scene maintains visual style and continuity

VFX Supervisor - works in similar way to Director but with visual effects, ensuring all scenes come together with live footage

Sound Designer/Composer - making sure sound complements visual elements, including dialogue, sound effects, musical score.

Courses

If you want to learn more about this type of producing, **Screenskills** has a number of training courses, a lot of which are free, as do **National Film and Television School (NFTS)**, specifically for those who want to work in TV and film.

Making It Accessible

More and more now we must be embedding access into our live, recorded and streamed work, but often we're not sure which option we should choose or how to approach it. We spoke to **Sophie Flack at New Wolsey Theatre** about their mixed-model panto in 2020 and how they integrated access into both the process and the final outcome, and here are a few of our key takeaways:

- **We want to but...**
People want to make and provide accessible work, but it often comes down to financial resources and capacity. Don't be disheartened if you can't provide everything, you're starting a welcomed conversation.
- **Build it in from the start:**
Decide on what access provision you are embedding and bring those access freelancers into the process at various points to understand the work from creation through to filming, performance or livestream.
- **Know your audience:**
Understand what provision is needed for local audience/community and provide that as a minimum. Be open to asking people to say what they need at the point of booking tickets and being transparent about if you can provide it now, or if you plan to build it into future projects.
- **Make sure you reach the right people:**
Marketing plans must include reaching out to the people you are providing provision for, and access support offer should be very clear on all marketing.

The Snow Queen (2020) was a Rock 'n' Roll pantomime at New Wolsey which mixed together live action, live music, pre-recorded film and animation. Sophie described the show as having "spread" audiences in which they weren't considered separate, but rather where in-person and digital audiences had a variety of experiences within the same work. This mixed model was embedded from the start of the creation, enabling some innovation in thinking about how the work might be accessible to a range of audiences.

In the run, the offering for panto included:

- Providing pre-recorded audio description - synced with lighting cues.
- Captioning every 2 weeks at specific performances.
- BSL - 3/4 in the run, including 1 in Christmas week.
- Relaxed performances - 3/4 in the run for SEN schools, mobility access groups, audiences with ESOL, audience with dementia.

This level of provision took over 5 years to build, consistently adding more accessible options over the years, and cost about £9,000 on top of staff with specific expertise time, such as captioning.

Types of wraparound they provided for the panto run that we haven't tried yet but are interested in building into future projects:

- **Digital Touch tour** - for audiences watching online, a digital touch tour can give an introduction to some of the sounds and textures of the set, props and costumes in the production - **See here**.
- **Visual storyboard + time coded activity** - pack that highlights specific activities in the production.
- **Spotify playlist** - sharing music from the production ahead of time.
- **Commentary on recorded productions** - supporting audiences to see important plot moments adding commentary such as "did you see that bit with the hammer? It's really important to the storyline, so rewind it if you didn't notice it".

Further reading

Check out the resource sections on:

Unlimited
Shape Arts
Access All Areas
DAS

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Producing Liveness in Interesting Times is a collection of writing, thinking and cheat-enabling works by Live Art and Performance Producers and Producer-adjacent arts workers who are working in the UK.

To explore other writings from *Producing Liveness in Interesting Times*, visit:
the-uncultured.com/pliit

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