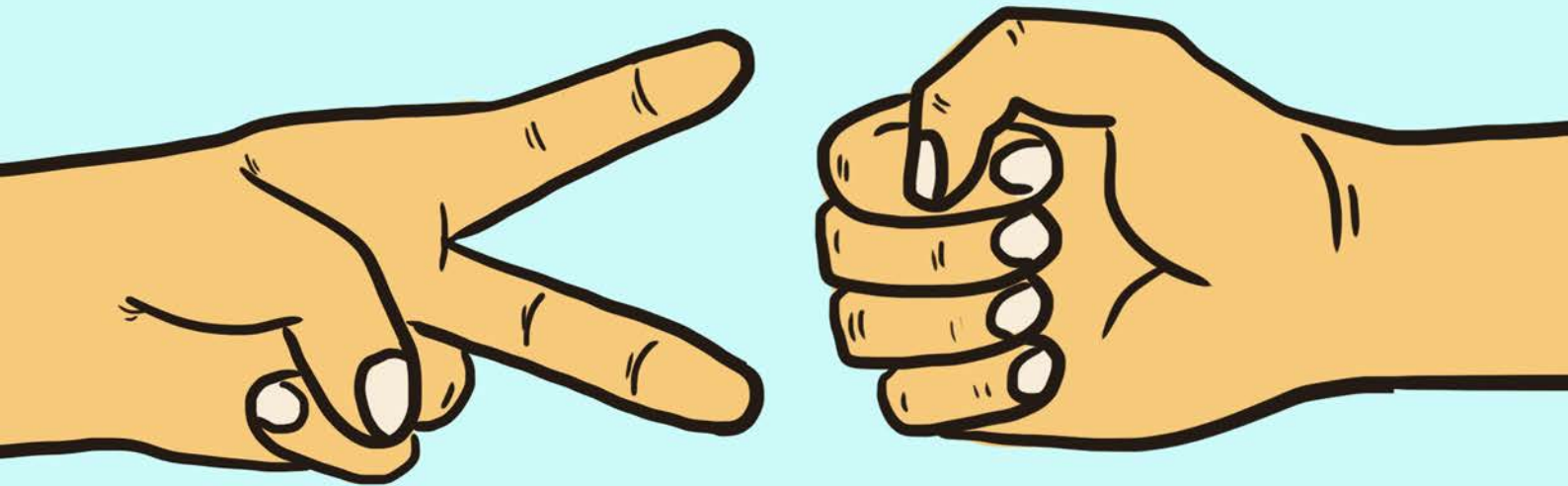


Meaning making
during a pandemic

A new course on
digital storytelling

Season 2
Episode 5:

The digested read by
Azam Masoumzadeh
Andrea Geipel
Abhay Adhikari



our host for this series of meaning making are:



Andrea Geipel



Abhay Adhikari

our guest speakers are:



Zoe Seaton



Wiebke Finkler

our digital producer is:



Jenni Mueller



Welcome to our penultimate episode of meaning making. For Episode 5 we've invited speakers from Northern Ireland and New Zealand. They are going to help us understand the biggest buzzword of them all: Engagement



Hello everyone! I'm Zoe and I'm an artistic director of Big Telly, a theater company in Northern Ireland. Our mission is to create a community through theatre. We want everyone to have a voice and shine



During Zoe's talk we heard how they shifted all their performances online. And I was surprised because that's not something I expected. Before this talk, I thought that theatre has to live because personal contact is so important



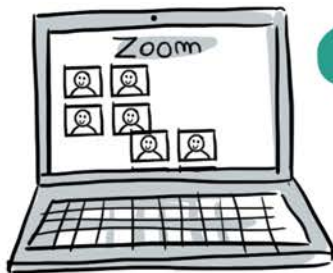


Here i would like to highlight a couple of the advantages that the digitized theater has brought to us:



We have participants from all around the world. No matter where they are living they now become part of a theater performance

This includes people who were unable to access the physical theatre because of accessibility issues



The audience and performers are no longer divided by a stage and everyone is on the same level playing field



It was also interesting to hear how this has become a sustainable business model for Big Telly. Could other cultural institutions such as museums learn from this to invent their digital offer?



Wow these are some very powerful points Zoe. But I see that you have created a sense of expectation, how do you meet these audience expectations now?

We just try to stick to our integrity and keep the theater alive. And for the rest we go with the flow!



Yohooo





But when do you draw the line?

well I don't want to give the whole responsibility of engagement to our audience but of course within our possibilities we try to engage our audience in different ways. For example we have an online soap opera and it's our audiences who decide what happens in the next episode



And next episode will be about...?



oh, yes

John and Janet getting divorced?

I agree

I always think digital performances can become very messy as technical problems can happen at any moment!



one of our participants



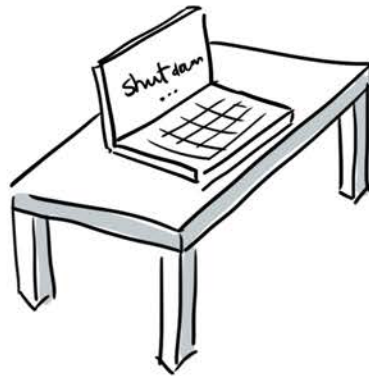
Well, that's why I say we go with the flow. Even though we are using digital, it is still a human operation. And don't forget: problems can happen in live theater as well

After Zoom calls I always feel lonely and gloomy, because within a sec you lose contact with everyone?



one of our participants

Well we have noticed that people after the zoom call try to stay in touch with each other. And that has changed my view of what a performance should achieve. Now, I consider thos performances to be the beginning of a conversation between the community we have created across the world



So lovely people I'll try to stay in touch with them!

That's what we hope will happen with Meaning Making! That our participants stay connected even beyond this programme.



On-line experiences are as valuable as real ones but just different



Our second guest speaker Wiebke, joined us from the other side of the world

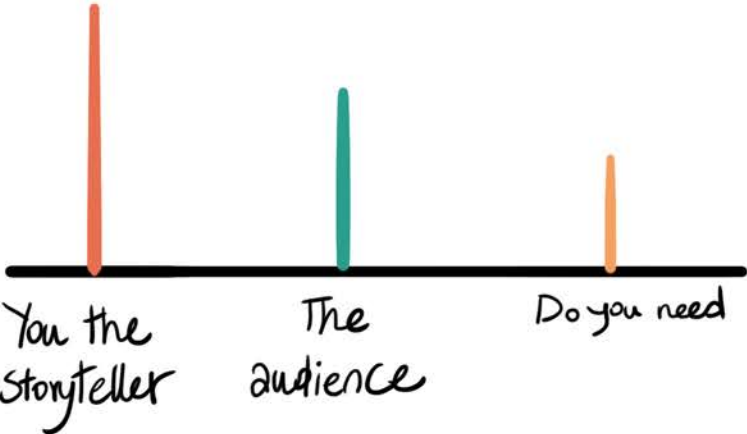


I'm Wiebke and I'm a lecturer at the Department of Marketing at the University of Otago in New Zealand. I have a background in science communication, marine biology and most importantly in film making!



In this talk, I want to challenge the question of engagement by looking at who is the hero of our story!

Who is the hero?



Who actually is a hero and if we have a hero, do we also need a villain?

one of our participants



Yes, those questions can lead us to new ideas of how to tell the story of science. Is there a journey of science, like the one we know from Lord of the Rings and wouldn't it be interesting if we think about who could be a villain in science

So true. And speaking of villains and heroes, are those characters black and white? What if our villain wasn't entirely evil?



Interesting point Adrea and this is where we can learn from marketing. We often think marketing is about selling something to someone who doesn't need it

True!
I must have it



But I believe we can learn a lot from marketing techniques. Because marketing is about psychology and social science. We use similar techniques, we just refer to them differently



Yes please stop fighting over who knows more! Collaborate and save me and the planet!

I think one of the biggest mistakes in science communication is that most of the time science is the hero of the story that's been told. While I think it should be the other way around. It's the audience who should be the hero of our stories



Yes!
Don't be shy, become
the hero and change
the planet
for better!

that's very true, I personally take action when I feel I have
the power

Wait red fish
I'm coming to
save you!



Take-away

Be present, observe and don't be afraid to reinvent yourself



Let your audience become the hero of the story



Thank you to everyone who participated in
Episode 5 of Season 2
of Meaning Making During a Pandemic



Illustrated by: Azam Masoumzadeh