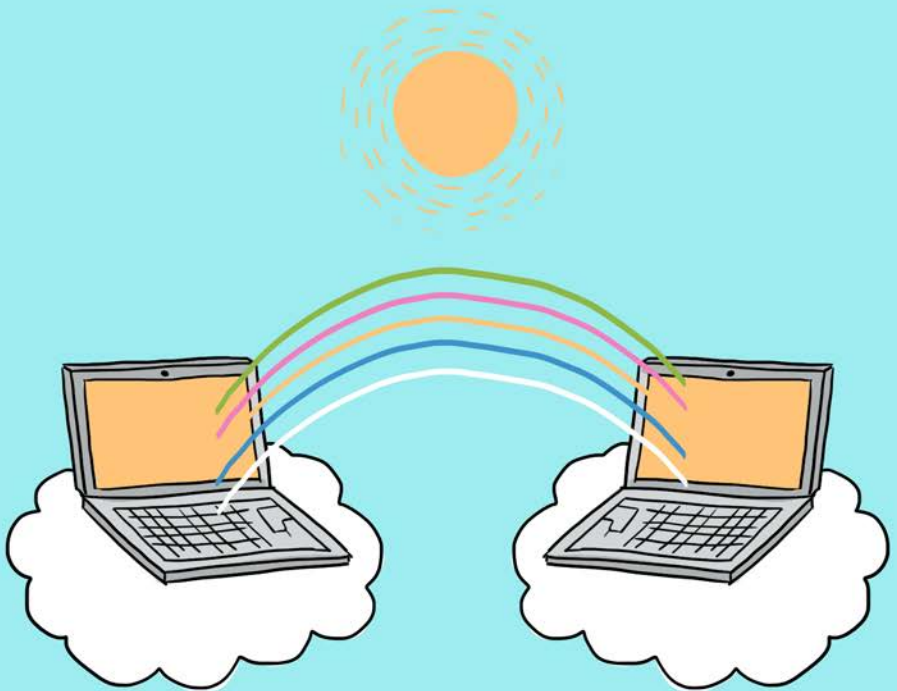


Meaning Making During A Pandemic

A new course on
Digital Storytelling

Episode 4:

The digested read by
Azam Masoumzadeh



This online program is hosted by:

Andrea Geipel



Abhay Adhikari



Guest speaker
Zoe Seaton



Our digital producer is
Jenni Mueller



This episode of Meaning Making was dedicated to engagement and participation. This session was led by Andrea Geipel and we had really interesting conversations. In that spirit, I have made a greater effort to include the viewpoints of as many participants in this comic



The session started with a surprise. Our guest speaker Zoë invited us to play a little game

A murder mystery... On Zoom!

She sent a secret message to one of the participants and assigned them to play the role of the murder



The murder went on a killing spree by sending other attendees the letter X via direct message. Once they received an X, they had to switch their video off. The one who were still alive had to guess who the murderer was

Our murderer was brilliant. We never guessed their identity during the game. If you want to know who it was, keep reading this comic



Our first question from our audience was:
What is **engagement** for you?

● Setting rules?



● creating acces?



● creating permission?



Mathias:

I see all of these as layers that are interconnected. Setting rules and creating access helps create permission



That's interesting! I never really considered them to be interconnected. I feel if we start by creating permission, that enables our audience to create their own rules

Zoë: Can I add one more thing to the list? We give agency to our audience. Agency can be real or an illustration. But it helps us create permissions together with our audience



Matthias: It depends on your perspective. For example, from an IT point of view, first we need to set the rules and then we can create access and permissions

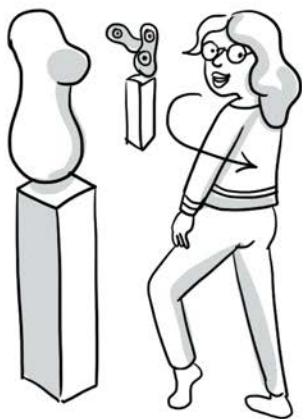
max: I like what Matthias says. Creating access by itself, doesn't change anything. We need a combination of all three to create engagement



On the subject of creating permission, Andrea then asked us, If you could, would you:

Sit, Crawl, Dance or Walk
In a museum?

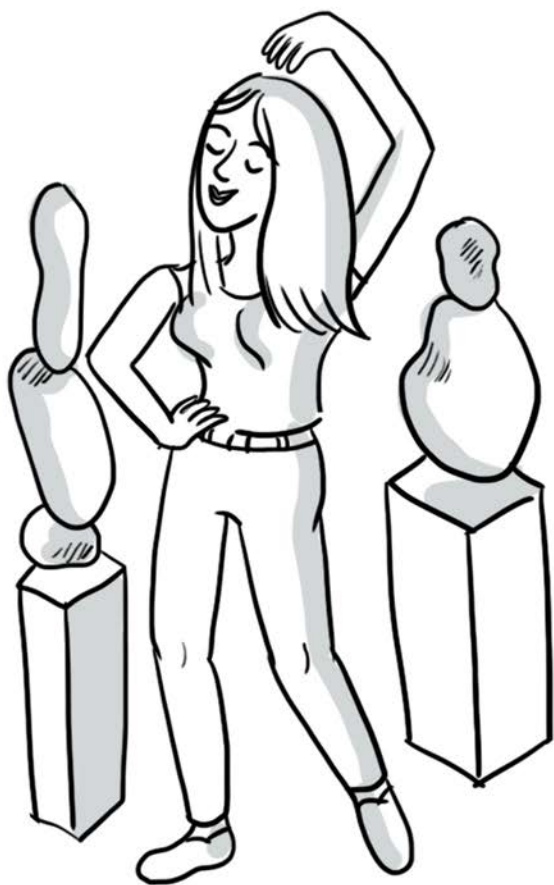
Aneke: I appreciate it when I can sit in a museum in front of my favourite object. I like walking as well. And I really like observing other people moving in a museum. Their body language is fascinating



Alicia: I'm not sure about crawling because it sounds uncomfortable. But I'd like to be able to move in any way. For example, walking backwards in a museum!

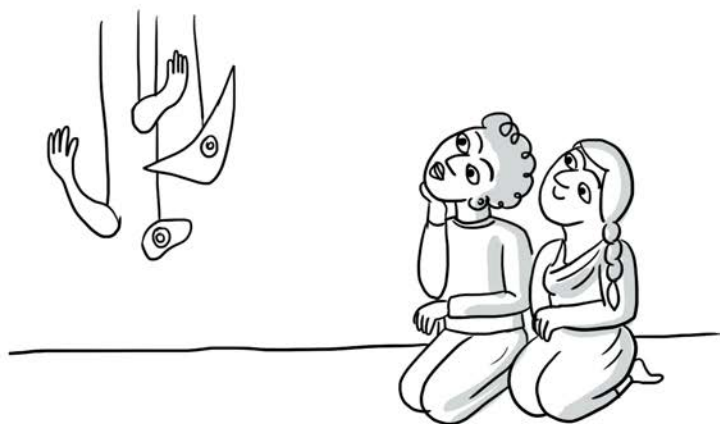
And one of my favourite answers from Jenni!

Jenni Barbara: It would be great if we could dance in museums - as a way to express ourselves in a place that is full of emotion and colour! I wish we had the liberty to do that



Abhay pointed out something that had been troubling me as well

Abhay: Coming from India, I'm so used to sitting on the ground. And I always wonder, can I do that in a museum? Or will it look too strange?



What if there were absolutely no rules? How would people behave then? I can imagine my favourite museum in Iran. It could quickly become quite chaotic... and fun

Azam: This whole discussion made me think about how different cultures move in public spaces. For example, my own experience of growing up in Isfahan and my life in Brussels where 'personal space' gets so much importance. And we should learn more about this to become inclusive and ensure everyone feels comfortable



So, Andrea continued to guide us into a deeper discussion on permission:

What does it mean to create permission?

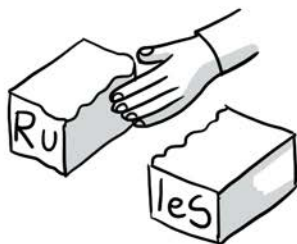
playing god?



waiting for inspiration?

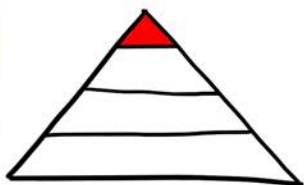


breaking rules?

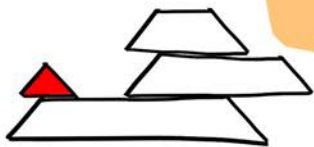


Most of our participants chose 'waiting for inspiration' and 'breaking rules'. Max, voted for Playing God, So we asked him to explain his choice:

Max: As long as there is something in the position of creating rules and permission, we have a hierarchy. We cannot escape that



Matthias added: What if we assume that all rules are meant to be broken? What that means is that we must constantly negotiate rules and make space for change





Our guest speaker Zoë, who is based in Northern Ireland, shared her experience of creating interactive online theatre during the quarantine

On our interactive theater on zoom, we create a spectrum of opportunity for people to be part of the play



there is no obligation to be fully engaged

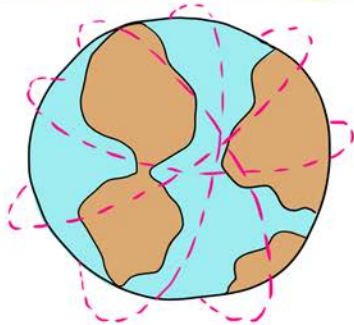


but we put the spotlight on people who are more participative and comfortable and in this way we motivate and encourage others!

Of course there is always this question, what if people don't react and interact, but we learned that those who participate are normally eager to interact! plus we always try to create a welcoming environment where people feel safe and not embarrassed!



On-line theatre is great because you can connect with people from all around the world and do things that physically is too hard or expensive to do



I'm very happy to receive so great feedbacks from my audiences:



I am very happy with online theatre because it can be a challenge to visit the theatre in person with my child who is autistic

And for me, it was great because I could breastfeed my baby whilst watching and participating in the play



Then **Andrea** surprised us by sharing that she's discovered her inner chicken participating in one of the recent productions by Big Telly

I would like to conclude this comic with the response from our participants who shared the one thing they are going to take away from this episode on engagement:

theatre can be online
giving space breaking rules is good
be a rebell - break rules
engagement by clear rules
engagement is permission
theatre x museums - yes
suprise even yourself
leading visitors

So, our murder was Alicia! She sent me a screenshot of her chat window.

	Chat	
From Zoë Seaton to Me: (Privately)		3:10 PM
M		
From Me to siddhi: (Privately)		3:11 PM
X		
From Me to Jenni - PRODUCER: (Privately)		3:11 PM
X		
From Me to Matthias Leitner: (Privately)		3:11 PM
X		
From Me to Anke von Heyl : (Privately)		3:11 PM
X		
From Me to Soeren Affeldt: (Privately)		3:11 PM
X		
From Me to Andrea - HOST: (Privately)		3:11 PM
X		
From Me to Silke - XR HUB Bavaria: (Privately)		3:12 PM
X		
From Me to Verena Braun: (Privately)		3:12 PM
X		
From Me to Michal Čudrnák: (Privately)		3:12 PM
X		
From Me to Max Westphal: (Privately)		3:12 PM
X		
From Me to Georg: (Privately)		3:12 PM
X		
#		
From Me to Katharina Bock: (Privately)		3:12 PM
X		
From Me to Georg: (Privately)		3:12 PM
X		
From Me to Spoorthy: (Privately)		3:12 PM
X		
From Me to Abhay - COHOST: (Privately)		3:12 PM
X		

it was a little funny game who engaged everyone! don't you think?

**Thank you to everyone who participated in
Episode 4 of Season 1
of Meaning Making During a Pandemic**



Illustrated by: Azam Masoumzadeh