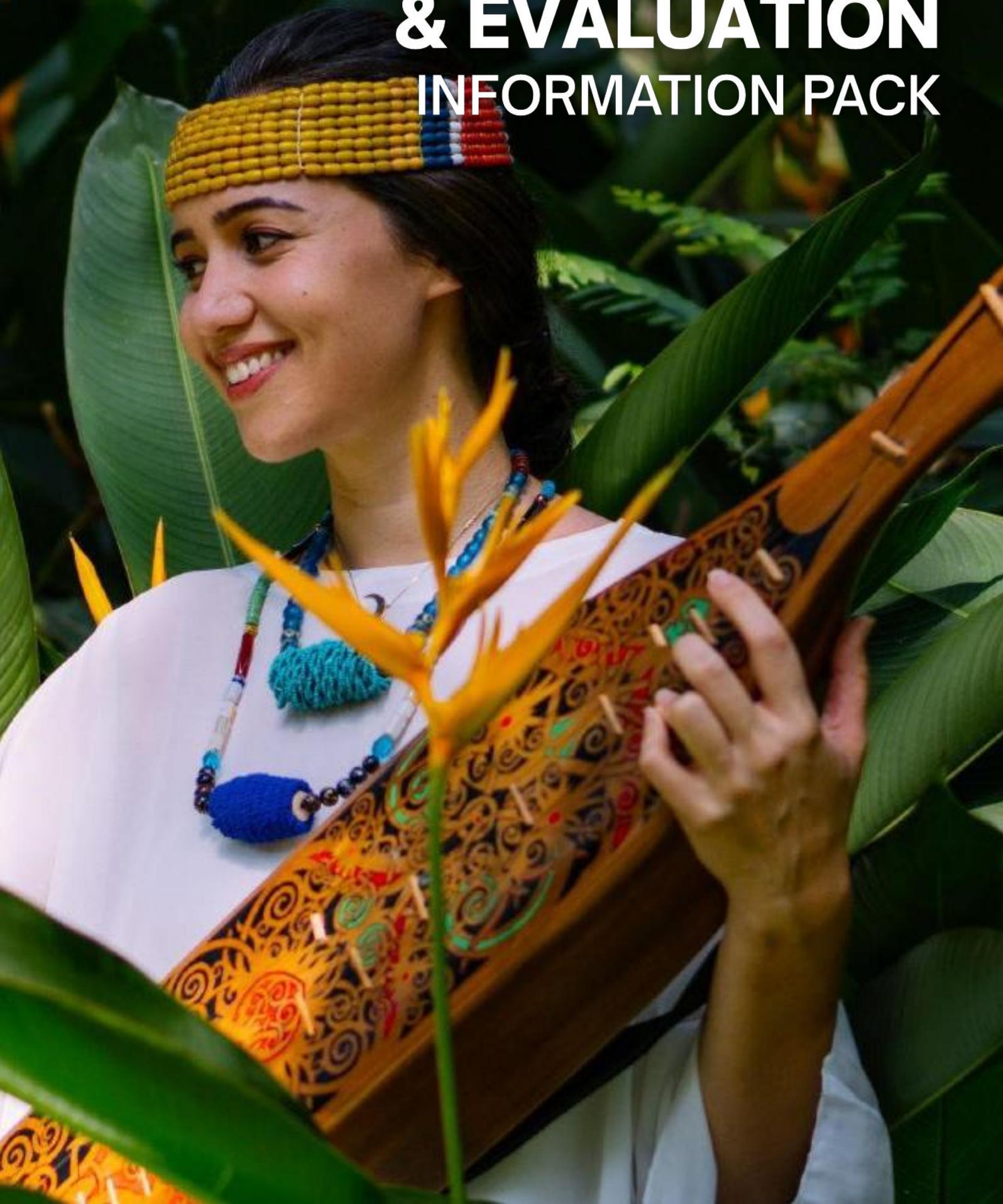


Disconnected Bodies

CULTURAL RESEARCH & EVALUATION INFORMATION PACK



ART WITHOUT DISCOVERY MOVES NOBODY

Disconnected Bodies: A social enterprise working to improve access to the arts, culture and heritage.

Supporting innovative people and projects: we help people choose, create, or take part in bold and brilliant arts experiences.

Widening cultural access and democratising the arts: the arts must remain a force for public good.

Advising on cultural audience engagement and securing funding: we work for those who most require the help; tackling industry gate-keeping and discriminatory practices to amplify voices.



19 years

Changing the face of cultural audience engagement and contributing our expertise to enabling more people to choose, create and participate in brilliant cultural experiences.



15 countries

Improving access to the arts and culture in 15 countries across the United Kingdom, Europe and Africa.



720,000 audiences

Reached in 2024. 375,000 being first time attenders.



2.1 million people

Engaged digitally in 2024.



8 national research projects

5 international research projects.



764 hours

Free advice provided in 2024.



“At Disconnected Bodies, we champion inclusive cultural access—empowering communities through bold engagement, free expert guidance, and equitable arts participation. Join us in transforming who the arts serve and how they connect us”.

- Pablo Colella, Founder



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Over the past year, Disconnected Bodies has made significant strides in advancing cultural equity through bold, audience-led engagement.

Our work continues to centre around those often excluded from traditional arts spaces, creating access points that are responsive, locally embedded, and artistically ambitious.

While independent of Arts Council England, our approach is deeply aligned with the Let's Create strategy. Through previous commissions, internal reviews, and frontline programme delivery, we've developed a strong understanding of the strategic outcomes that shape public investment in culture.

This allows us not only to report effectively against those outcomes but to model innovative practice that others now look to as a benchmark.

Our engagement work has taken place in diverse settings, from refugee support centres to rural community hubs and large-scale festivals; proving that inclusive cultural practice is both scalable and impactful.

We've seen increased confidence, wellbeing, and creative agency among

participants - while our partners consistently cite our methods as transformative for their own work.

As the Let's Create strategy approaches its 2025 review, we remain active contributors to the evolving conversation around public engagement, cultural access, and the future role of the arts. We continue to ask: who are the arts for, and how can we build frameworks that allow more people not just to take part, but to shape culture on their own terms?

This year has reinforced our belief that equitable engagement is not an add-on; it's the foundation of a thriving cultural ecology.

Disconnected Bodies will continue to deliver standout, values-led programmes that push the sector forward and ensure meaningful participation is a right, not a privilege.

HOW CULTURE SHAPES MINDS, MOVES HEARTS, AND BRINGS US TOGETHER.

Prove the Power of Arts and Culture

Our commitment to showcasing the impact of arts and culture—and increasing access—is central to the research and evaluation projects we support. We focus on initiatives that empower communities to take an active role.

The Secret to Getting Real, Honest Insight

We use methods that prioritise people, encourage open dialogue, and centre fairness and inclusion—ensuring authentic findings and meaningful reflection, especially in place-making projects.

Data That Actually Means Something

By setting clear research objectives and using tools built around real-life experiences, we highlight cultural impact, uncover areas for growth, and help clients meet funding body reporting requirements with confidence.

Go a step further

Combine research and evaluation with one of our other services:

- **Bespoke Visitor Surveys** to gather first hand insights.
- **Audience Profiling** to segment your audience through the data we've gathered.



Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage Fund's mandatory reporting.

Over 15 years we've overseen the changing mandatory evaluation and voluntary reporting for all ACE and NLHF funded projects or initiatives. These include **National Portfolio Organisations, Creative People and Places, Cultural Compacts, ACE Project and NLHF Heritage Grants.**

We align all ACE projects with their **Insights and Annual Summary** reports, and **ACE Core Dimensions**; specifically Cultural Experience and Participatory categories.

Our work looks to be a triple threat; supporting ACE on the achievement of their **2020-30 Let's Create** strategy, supporting the NLHF on their **Heritage 2033** strategy, supporting clients to develop and report on their public engagement work, and ensuring that public continue to be the beneficiaries of the arts and culture industry.

CHALLENGING GENERIC SEGMENTATION AND PROFILING.

Pablo Colella, arts audience researcher and founder of audience engagement psychology consultancy Disconnected Bodies, has spoken out against the prevailing engagement strategies employed by major cultural venues. He argues that these strategies, based on generic segmentation and profiling, are discriminatory and fail to capture the nuanced nature of cultural audiences.

Colella states, **“grouping audiences solely through demographic data is highly presumptuous. This approach overlooks the diverse psychographics of audiences and perpetuates outdated stereotypes”.**

When Good Strategies Go Bad

Brilliant cultural experiences are being overlooked due to inadequate engagement strategies being implemented, that seem effective on paper, but in reality miss the wants, needs and expectations of the audience.

Organisations must recognise that audiences are complex individuals, even within the same demographic group. To say the entirety of a particular culture, or age group, or gender, or postcode wants the same cultural experience, to me, is discriminatory”.

The Real Risk of Getting It Wrong

With uncertainty around future funding and the need for audience support, including through donations and memberships, the culture industry cannot afford to alienate audiences with misguided strategies and patronising views of their personal, situational, cultural, and historical circumstances”.

Time to Ditch the Demographics

How can the UK’s 67 million people fit into a handful of predefined categories?

The solution lies in collaborating with psychologists, sociologists, and arts professionals to develop strategies that truly resonate with audiences.

Organisations must consider the complete audience journey, from initial engagement to post-engagement impact. Relying on fixed audience segmentation is akin to trying to fit a square peg into a round hole.

Organisations must determine their own relevant audience sets and tailor approaches accordingly.

Don't let postcode and census data lead you to an engagement dead-end.

Postcode and census data can provide some insight, but relying on them alone to shape cultural engagement is impersonal and ineffective. Audiences are individuals shaped by unique personal, cultural, and psychological factors that data can't capture. **Reducing people to demographics risks stereotyping and discrimination.**

Not everyone in a postcode is the same or wants the same cultural experience. Defining audiences by location or stats oversimplifies and ignores real diversity.

To truly connect, cultural organisations must see people as individuals with distinct stories and needs—not just numbers on a map. Only then can cultural experiences become genuinely meaningful and inclusive.



READ A CONCERNING DISCLAIMER FROM A POSTCODE DATA SOURCE

There's a widely known audience profiling service that utilises census and postcode data from an international source. This is their disclaimer that accompanies the data they provide, and our **thoughts**.

'The information contained within this report is not intended to be used as the sole basis for any business decision, **so, what's it's use?**, and is based upon data which is provided by third parties, the accuracy and/or completeness of which it would not be possible and/or economically viable for [source] to guarantee. **So, it shouldn't be trusted?** [Source's] services also involve models and techniques based on statistical analysis, **so, that's how real people should be treated? Through statistical analysis and not from an understanding of them as individuals**, probability and predictive behaviour. **Why not just speak to them?** Accordingly, [source] is not able to accept any liability for any inaccuracy, incompleteness or other error in this report'. **Why not just work with a consultant that takes pride in being accurate and providing completeness? Errors in audience engagement lead to audience hesitancy and distrust.**

THE SECTOR'S PERVERSION WITH HOMOGENISATION

Your audience is unique to you. Your work is unique to you. Yet **there seems to be a perversion within the industry to homogenise the research and evaluation of cultural audiences**; watering down the impact your work is having on specific groups of people by **throwing them in the same data pot with everyone else**.

Using these homogenised methodologies, such as template surveys, results in **template outcomes that overlook the nuances of cultural engagement**. We advocate for bespoke methodologies where researchers immerse themselves in an organisation's culture, **seeking to answer what is it we don't know, that we don't know?** Our approach focuses on achieving **the micro-dynamics of your engagement research and evaluation objectives**.

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND AGREE

What follows are citations from the Arts Council England published report 'Developing Participatory Metrics'.

'Measuring people's engagement with 'arts and culture' is fraught with challenges for a number of reasons:

- The surveys and tools that have traditionally been commissioned by for example Arts Council England to measure cultural engagement, such as those used in this study, are by definition **skewed towards the forms of culture that are funded**, or are part of the **cultural 'establishment'**.
- The basis on which **cultural engagement is measured does not therefore currently take into account less 'traditional' forms of culture**, and in particular cultural activity that does not take place in cultural places and spaces.
- Placing a measurement on **'how much' of something a person, community or area does inevitably invites data-led judgements, which results in low, medium and high segmentation of expected and actual participation, resulting in unhelpful labels such as 'hard to reach', 'cold spot' or 'cultural desert'**.
- Audience Spectrum is heavily based upon booker behaviour concentrated on mainstream artforms in established / funded venues, but even so is **the least consistent measure when trying to predict patterns of 'actual attendance'** at such types of events. It is limited in its usefulness as the data set is too small to be used at anything below local authority level'.

CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS: OFF-THE-SHELF VISITOR SURVEYS

Our Creative Conversations framework is ideal for any organisation that requires **investigation and evaluation of a local audience or cultural participants, but whose budget is limited.**

We identified that by **distilling down our methodologies** we can provide a service which'll still achieve **comprehensive findings**, but at **minimal cost and a much quicker turn around**. Perfect for charities, community associations or organisations who require community outreach expertise to facilitate the investigation of participation.

- **Audience profiling and segmentation** that identifies behaviour, locations, preferences and cultural consumption patterns.
- **Resident mapping** that's relevant to your cultural activities and audiences.
- **A comprehensive strategy** for engaging identified audiences, defining clear objectives and outcomes for their engagement.
- **Audience and resident outreach activities** that are easily accessible and bespoke.
- The **opportunity for all residents and audiences to submit their own thoughts** and ideas through a range of methodologies.

We can guarantee:

- A **greater insight** of how residents feel and interact with your arts and cultural provision, with accompanying recommendations.
- A clear overview of the **opportunities of, and gaps in, your offer.**
- A **framework for on-going audience data collection** and audience profiling.
- **Raising your profile and demonstrating the value** of your offer to your intended audience.

COORDINATING MULTIPLE WAYS OF KNOWING

Bespoke Research

When overseeing research we look to strike a balance between measurable impact and immeasurable value. We strive to **capture, illustrate and interpret the value and impact of your audience's experience.**

Although audience research can be time consuming, over a number of years we've distilled down methodologies that largely focus on observational and participatory dialogues and 'deep hanging out' through an immersion of ourselves within your culture.

Cultural engagement is complex and requires a multi-stage approach to investigate, despite what funded organisations are being led to believe, a single template survey won't be adequate.

We promise to continue to **peel back the layers of the unique context in which your organisation or project sits,** until we reach the ah-ha moment and an audience's engagement psychology is revealed.

National and Regional Context

Our research methodologies are **inwardly focused but outwardly positioned.** That is, specific to your requirements but contextualised with regional or national data.

We have access to a number of desk-based data sources that help build a situational overview of local, regional and national demographics, both within and outside of the culture industry.

Those we regularly use are **Local Insights, Mosaic, Audience Finder, Audience Spectrum and ACE's Active Lives survey.** This is in addition to publicly available reports from councils and public bodies, and access to The Office of National Statistics.

We must stress the importance of giving an **equal consideration to bespoke fact finding, to reduce presumptions and stereotyping** that is common when solely using desk-based sources.

A large, colorful sculpture made of many stuffed animals hanging from the ceiling in a gallery. The sculpture is composed of numerous stuffed animals of various colors and sizes, including teddy bears, rabbits, and other animals, arranged in a dense, spherical shape. The colors range from bright red and orange to blue and yellow. The sculpture is suspended by several white ropes from the ceiling. In the background, a woman is sitting on the floor, and a large yellow geometric sculpture is visible on the right. The floor is a light gray color.

SANDBOX TOOLKIT

MASTER ARTS AUDIENCE PSYCHOLOGY AND ENGAGEMENT

The Secrets of Arts Audience Psychology

Sandbox is our cutting-edge suite of models and frameworks designed to deliver a deep, complete understanding of how arts audiences think and engage.

Supercharge Engagement

By breaking down the intricate dynamics of audience behaviour, Sandbox helps cultural organisations shape participation with the most comprehensive profiling and a fresh, audience-focused approach.

he Cultural Sector's Game Changer

Born from expert collaborations and thousands of audience interactions, Sandbox is revolutionising engagement strategies—and it's only available through Disconnected Bodies.



Our standout engagement research has shaped practice and policy making, is informing the 2025 review, and contributing to the national conversation on cultural audience development.

Sandbox and Arts Council England

HOW TO USE SANDBOX

Sandbox is a practical toolkit of 146 adaptable frameworks and models, designed to be shaped and used at different stages of the Engagement Journey, just like toys in a child's sandbox.



Refocus existing audiences

Identify any kinks in the flow of an existing audience's journey that's causing poorer quality engagement, and be proactive in providing new access points, deepening satisfaction and extending impact.



Audience dialogue and focus group structures

As conversation prompts that hone in on the nuance psychology of their engagement, especially useful when they find it difficult to verbalise this engagement; ensuring the complete audience journey is explored and maximum benefit is gained from time spent with audiences.



Research methodologies

With a wide range of adaptable frameworks and models to implement and a clearly defined audience engagement journey, research planning becomes a personalised and efficient process. Methodologies become highly relevant to the intended outcome.



Design your offer based upon audience profiling

When considering new offers Sandbox can be used as the exploration tool to determine an audience's profile around which future programming can be designed.



Develop new or under-engaged audiences

Sandbox provides a structure to guide intuition about new or under-engaged audiences to anticipate sticking points and in turn plan engagement strategies that address these.



Understand lived experiences

Appreciate the personal, situational, cultural, institutional and historical factors of audience groups, that may be influencing their willingness to engage.



Structure communication and PR strategies

Be efficient despite limited resources by designing communication and PR strategies around an audience's 'engagement priming' process of awareness, contextualisation, decision making, preparation and anticipatory meaning making.



Ensure accessibility and inclusion

Consider not only practical and physical accessibility and inclusion across the complete audience journey, but also psychological accessibility, i.e raising participation confidence.

HAVE A LOOK INSIDE SANDBOX

Here's a sample of the contents of Sandbox. We've kept the best to ourselves. Naughty people in the past have tried passing our approach off as theirs.... tut! tut!

Baseline Psychology

- Thinking Preference and Process
- Motivations
- Motivation Direction

Cultural Baseline

- Visible Culture
- Invisible Culture
- Ethnocentricity
- Intercultural Competence
- Psychological Foundations of a Culture
- Stigma and Group Inequality

Barriers

- Practical, technical, cultural, situational, personal, attitudinal and perceptual.

Decision Making

- Speed
- Planning Style
- Influence Preference
- Stimuli

Artistic Exchange

- Engagement Pathway
- Engagement Direction
- Entry Point
- Gamification
- Importance of Modelling
- Psychology of Meaning
- Small Group Psychology

Post-Engagement

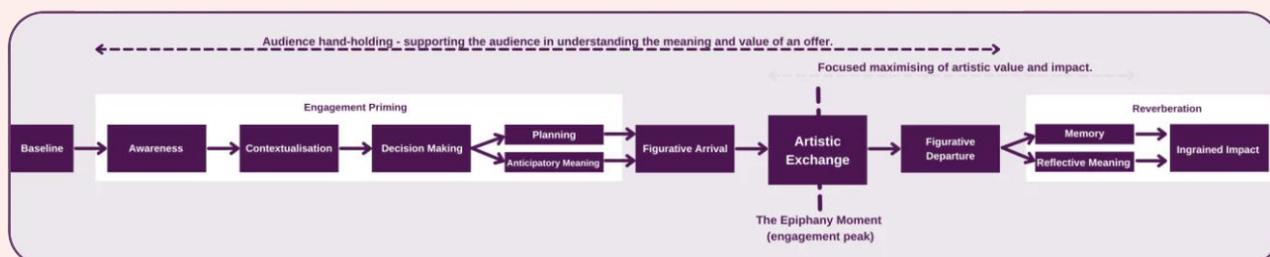
- Selective Remembering
- Misremembering

Request a walkthrough of Sandbox with our team

With over 150 frameworks and models, Sandbox is best explained one-to-one where we can talk you through the full range of Sandbox' applications; tailoring each framework or model to your desired outcomes

THE AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT JOURNEY

We recognise the complexity of an audience's engagement process can never be fully captured. That being said, our modelling as been developed from over three-thousand conversations with audience groups and provides us satellite perspective on the journey audiences routinely take.



Sandbox for research and evaluation

Sandbox's value lies in **the ability to simplify the complex dynamics of researching arts engagement.** It's use allows cultural organisations to better understand the impact of their work and then further influence engagement behaviour, through the use of the most comprehensive engagement methodologies available.

Developed from collaborations with psychologists, sociologists, arts professionals and over three thousand audience interactions, **Sandbox is genuinely becoming a game changer for the wider cultural sector, and is only available via Disconnected Bodies.**

Sandbox for reporting

Sandbox has been **designed to support publicly funded organisations and projects that require reporting and/or evaluation to take place at some point.**

We're passionate about **formalising the impact a piece of work has had on an audience,** yet have identified shortfalls in current approaches that are centred around template surveys and basic questioning which don't give either the organisation or the audience the due they deserve.

The use of Sandbox's 146 frameworks and it's design around engagement psychology provides significantly deeper levels of understanding. When presented to funding bodies Sandbox will elevate your organisation; helping secure future funding and building your legacy.



CASE STUDY: PEDESTRIAN'S TELL TELL TALES

As Researcher and Evaluator for Pedestrian's Tell Tall Tales project, Disconnected Bodies were commissioned to assess the impact of young people's participation in Leicester and Leicestershire. Tell Tall Tales, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, explores local folklore through creative storytelling, including a graphic novel, animated film, school sessions, and public exhibitions.

Pedestrian, a leading Leicester-based arts charity, specialises in providing creative education and outreach for young people at risk, NEET, or facing disadvantage.

The evaluation measured how Tell Tall Tales enhanced young participants' engagement, skills, and confidence, assessing the benefits of creative and heritage-based learning. The report provided insights into the project's effectiveness in fostering inclusion, artistic expression, and connection to local history, ensuring its legacy in arts education and community storytelling.

CLIENTS, PROJECTS AND PARTNERS

We're proud to celebrate 19 years of delivering impactful, growth-driven projects across 15 countries. Our work reflects strong partnerships built on trust, innovation, and shared vision. As we enter our third decade, we remain committed to excellence and meaningful solutions. Thank you to our clients and partners for being part of the journey.



Arts Council England

Recognised by ACE for our robust evaluation frameworks, we guide clients from concept to submission, ensuring alignment with priorities at every stage. We've contributed to ACE's audience and participation strategies and are involved in the independent review of its operations. Our expertise helps organisations understand audiences, create inclusive engagement strategies, and design evaluations aligned with ACE's outcomes and principles. We support the full lifecycle of ACE-funded projects, from shaping ideas to measuring impact, helping clients deliver and evidence high-quality work. As experienced bid writers and access support workers, we simplify complex funding processes.



National Lottery Heritage Fund

Recognised for our in-depth understanding of the National Lottery Heritage Fund's (NLHF) priorities, we support clients in developing projects that align with the Heritage 2033 strategy. Our work includes helping organisations identify heritage value, engage diverse communities, and create inclusive participation and learning opportunities. We design robust evaluation frameworks that demonstrate impact and legacy, ensuring projects meet NLHF's outcomes and reporting requirements.



Community Fund

We help organisations bring community-driven ideas to life, with a strong track record of securing support from the National Lottery Community Fund. From the earliest spark of a project to final reporting, we guide teams to centre lived experience, tackle inequalities, and design activities that make a real difference. Our approach blends practical planning with values-led thinking, helping groups build trust, deliver positive change, and show clear evidence of impact that resonates long after the funding ends.



British Council

We've supported community outreach for international projects via British Council Arts, providing tailored engagement resources and helping secure funding for international clients to deliver impactful, culturally responsive programmes.



MoMA

MoMA recognised our audience development research in 2010, using it to inform programme design, including their ongoing Arts and Activity initiative, shaping inclusive, intergenerational engagement strategies still in use today.



Somerset Libraries

Supporting audience profiling to enhance community outreach efforts, helping Somerset Libraries identify target groups, tailor engagement strategies, and increase library usage through more relevant, inclusive, and effective programming and communication.



The National Maritime Museum

We led community outreach for *Our Connection With Water*, the first Black-led exhibition of its kind, attracting diverse audiences through targeted engagement strategies and culturally relevant programming.



The Culture Trust

Leading comprehensive evaluation of a NLHF-funded project, supporting strategic redevelopment and enhanced programme delivery across four heritage sites for lasting community impact.



Black Country Touring

Leading the evaluation of BCT's Community Producers programme, assessing impact, strengthening community engagement, and informing future development strategies.



This is Croydon

Collated evidence of audience and community outreach for The Mayor of London's Borough of Culture Croydon year, demonstrating engagement impact.



Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation

Commissioned to support on an Arts Council England funding bid to reach the city's Sikh, Hong Kongese and Sri Lankan residents.



Pedestrian Arts

Leading evaluation of NLHF-funded *Tell Tell Tales*, ensuring youth engagement and increased access to local folklore and heritage.



Let's Create and Reuse

Supported securing funding for *Let's Create and Reuse*, enabling 184 contact hours in Coventry and Warwickshire, fostering creativity and environmental awareness among 560 young participants.



Muslim Artist Academy

Supported securing funding by guiding navigation of the arts sector, amplifying underrepresented voices, and widening cultural access for impactful growth.



Blanket Fort Club

Secured funding for The Blanket Fort Club's immersive theatre projects co-created with young children and those with complex needs, enabling therapeutic play and inclusive engagement across South Yorkshire.



Black Boys Choir

We helped secure funding by shaping a strong case for a nurturing, creative space where Black and South Asian boys build confidence, community, and wellbeing through music.



Bolton Contemporary

Supported securing funding for a project that facilitates community arts activities with elderly people in Yorkshire's local community spaces.



BIMM

Supporting students in marketing their work and navigating the creative industries, providing guidance, resources, and tailored career development advice.



Norwich University of Art

Leading student workshops on understanding cultural audiences and managed research projects, empowering students to develop effective engagement strategies and informed programming decisions.



UAL

Supporting students to navigate the creative industries by sharing expertise, offering mentorship, and providing valuable internship opportunities to enhance practical experience.



InDance International, Barcelona

Secured Erasmus+ funding for a dance programme connecting Spain, Hungary, and Georgia, fostering international collaboration and cultural exchange.



Mathare Foundation, Kenya

Secured British Council funding and led community outreach for a project connecting Kenyan and British creatives, fostering cross-cultural collaboration, sharing artistic practices, and building inclusive networks between diverse creative communities.



Circus Factory, Ireland

Developed an audience development strategy targeting new demographics, increasing engagement and accessibility within the circus arts community.



Art Meets Culture

Invited to speak about securing funding and navigating arts funding landscape.



We Restart

Invited to lead a workshop for recent refugees on how to access Arts Council England Develop Your Creative Practice grant.



Hounslow Creative People and Places

Invited to talk about community outreach and how freelance artists can connect with a wider audience through project partnerships.



Creative United

We act as advisers in audience development, providing strategic guidance to enhance engagement, diversify audiences, and strengthen programme impact.



Artist Run Alliance

UK ambassadors for the Artist Run Alliance, promoting collaboration, sharing best practices, and supporting artist-led initiatives nationally.



Artquest

Leading audience development workshops and one-to-one sessions, equipping participants with tailored strategies to grow and engage diverse audiences effectively.



The Space

Advising on audience development and profiling, enabling targeted engagement strategies that grow and diversify their audiences effectively.



A Bit of A Do Festival

Leading audience development and marketing for disability-led festival A Bit of A Do in Croydon, creating inclusive strategies to reach diverse communities and increase engagement and attendance.



Aurora Orchestra

Leading community outreach and evaluation with Aurora Orchestra at Printworks, developing a tailored performance that enhanced accessibility and engagement for deaf and hearing-impaired audiences through inclusive collaboration.



Creative Dance London

Supporting marketing for an over-60s dance company, increasing visibility and engagement, which led to a prestigious commission by Lacoste.



Create Arts

Managed arts workshops for young carers, coordinating logistics, ensuring smooth delivery, and fostering supportive, creative environments tailored to their needs.



Creative Access

Supporting young people to navigate the creative industries by sharing expertise, offering mentorship, and providing valuable internship opportunities to enhance practical experience.



Arts Emergency

Mentoring young people to launch careers in the creative industries, providing guidance, skill development, and industry insight for successful beginnings.



BOOK A FREE 30-MINUTE VIDEO CONSULTATION

Book a free 30-minute consultancy call and speak with Disconnected Bodies' Founder Pablo Colella.

We pride ourselves on offering free, no strings attached advice. Book a day and time that suits you then leave it to us to get you moving past sticking points and towards your goals.

Don't want to wait? Give our team a call on 020 3633 7617

