

ABSTRACT: SILVER STORIES INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Critical Evaluation and Cultural Values

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Abstract

This paper offers a critical perspective on the ‘norms’ and ‘forms’ of evaluation in relation to participatory arts in general, and digital storytelling in particular. The evaluation of arts-based community interventions, presents numerous challenges and opportunities. These include balancing the economic and political imperatives of funding bodies with the desire to establish recognition and reputation with a like-minded community of interest, according to shared notions of practice, identity and value. Evaluation is often reduced to monitoring, evidence gathering and advocacy in order to meet the expectations of funders and commissioners. However, evaluation can be a genuine opportunity for critical reflection on the value of a project for all partners and participants. Drawing on examples, this paper will examine the relationship between the values that underpin a project, organization or programme of work and how they are they can be incorporated (or not) into an evaluation of its success.

Examining the EU funded projects 'Extending Creative Practice' and 'Silver Stories', the paper will look at how the stories and visual materials produced through these projects interplay within an evaluation context which might reach beyond the commissioned framework. Addressing issues of translation in multi-partner projects, the paper also aims to understand the processes involved in unpicking the local, national and transnational contexts of these visual arts projects.



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