

Culture Counts: a practical tool for capturing cultural value

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Value *noun*

- ❖ **the amount of money that can be received for something**
- ❖ **the importance or worth of something for someone**
- ❖ **how useful or important something is**

A brief history of Culture Counts

- Began as part of a project to develop a 'Public Value Measurement Framework' in Western Australia
- Number of projects to experiment with and develop the approach in the UK:
 - Peterborough Creative City evaluation
 - Manchester Quality Metrics
 - Digital R&D Fund for the Arts
 - evaluation of the Glasgow 2014 cultural programme
 - Quality Metrics National Test for Arts Council England



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Culture and the Arts**

Culture Counts is based on **standardised metrics**

- Collaboration with the cultural sector to identify key dimensions of quality
- Testing quality metrics at a range of cultural events
- Standardised approach helps organisations track audience experience over time
- Aggregate data helps us understand how different kinds of cultural activity achieve different outcomes



Culture Counts captures feedback on the quality of an event from expert **peers** and **audience members**, and compares this with the objectives of the **artists** who produced the work

PEER



SELF



PUBLIC



Culture Counts provides an **online platform** for creating surveys, collecting data and analysing results

Survey Name: Giselle Opening Night Opened: 29/08/2014 3:05PM Closing: 08/11/2014 9:30PM Survey Type: Pre/Post

Survey Links

Online: <http://www.culturecounts.cc/waballet/efw321s> COPY TO CLIPBOARD PREVIEW

Paper: [GiselleOpeningNight-PaperSurvey.pdf](#) PRINT

Results

GO TO FULL REPORT

201 TOTAL RESPONSES 195 PUBLIC RESPONSES

4 PEER RESPONSES 2 SELF RESPONSES

Category	Public (%)	Peer (%)	Self (%)
Concept	80	65	35
Rigour	55	60	50
Distinctiveness	75	85	90
Relevance	20	40	10
Challenge	50	50	65
Captivation	30	25	0

Contents

9 TOTAL QUESTIONS 6 DIMENSIONS 3 CUSTOM QUESTIONS

1. Concept: It was an interesting idea/programme
2. Rigour: It was well thought through and put together
3. Distinctiveness: It was different from things I've experienced before
4. Relevance: It had something to say about the world in which we live
5. Challenge: It was thought provoking
6. Captivation: It was absorbing and held my attention
7. It made me reflect on who I am and where I come from
8. What three words best describe how you felt about it?
9. Please share additional thoughts or comments here

Respondents

Peers

Kevin Lee	
Elizabeth Rosa	✓
Edna Barriga	✓
Troy Eckel	
Steven Wilkerson	✓
Leroy Williamson	
Kelli Harris	
Devin Griffin	✓
jamie@artswa.com.au	

Core quality metrics: peer and public assessment

Dimension	Metric Statement
Concept	'It was an interesting idea'
Presentation	'It was well produced and presented'
Distinctiveness	'It was different from things I've experienced before'
Rigour	'It was well thought through and put together'
Relevance	'It has something to say about the world in which we live'
Challenge	'It was thought provoking'
Captivation	'It was absorbing and held my attention'
Enthusiasm	'I would come to something like this again'
Local impact	'It is important that it's happening here'

Core quality metrics: peer assessment only

Dimension	Metric Statement
Risk	'The artists/curators really challenged themselves with this work'
Originality	'It was ground-breaking'
Excellence	'It is one of the best examples of its type that I have seen'

Also ask:

- 'What three words best describe how you felt about it?'
- Age, gender, postcode

How it works: objective setting

- Start by selecting the metrics you want to use to evaluate your event; typically a combination of:
 - core metrics for the sector
 - recommended metrics for your artform or field of activity
 - custom metrics for your particular event
- Score each metric to show what you hope to achieve with the event

How it works: peer assessment

- Identify a small number of people to act as peer reviewers
 - experts in your field
 - people whose views matter to you
- Use the Culture Counts platform to design your survey and email it to your peers
- Option for peers to complete the survey both before and after the event
 - compare expectations with reality

How it works: public assessment

Three options for surveying audience members/visitors:

- post-event email surveys
- interviewers using a web app on a tablet computer
- audience members download the app to their own phones

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DISTINCTIVENESS

It was different from things I've experienced before

Strongly Disagree

Neutral

Strongly Agree



Move the slider to record your selection

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The image features a solid orange background. Two white, curved lines sweep across the upper and lower portions of the frame, framing the central text. The lines are thin and elegant, creating a sense of movement and design.

Evaluation examples

Swan Lake by the Royal Opera House



Matthew Golding as Prince Siegfried and Natalia Osipova as Odette in Swan Lake. © ROH 2015. Photo by Alice Pennefather 2015

The Royal Opera House auditorium © Rob Moore/ROH 1998



Royal Opera House, London

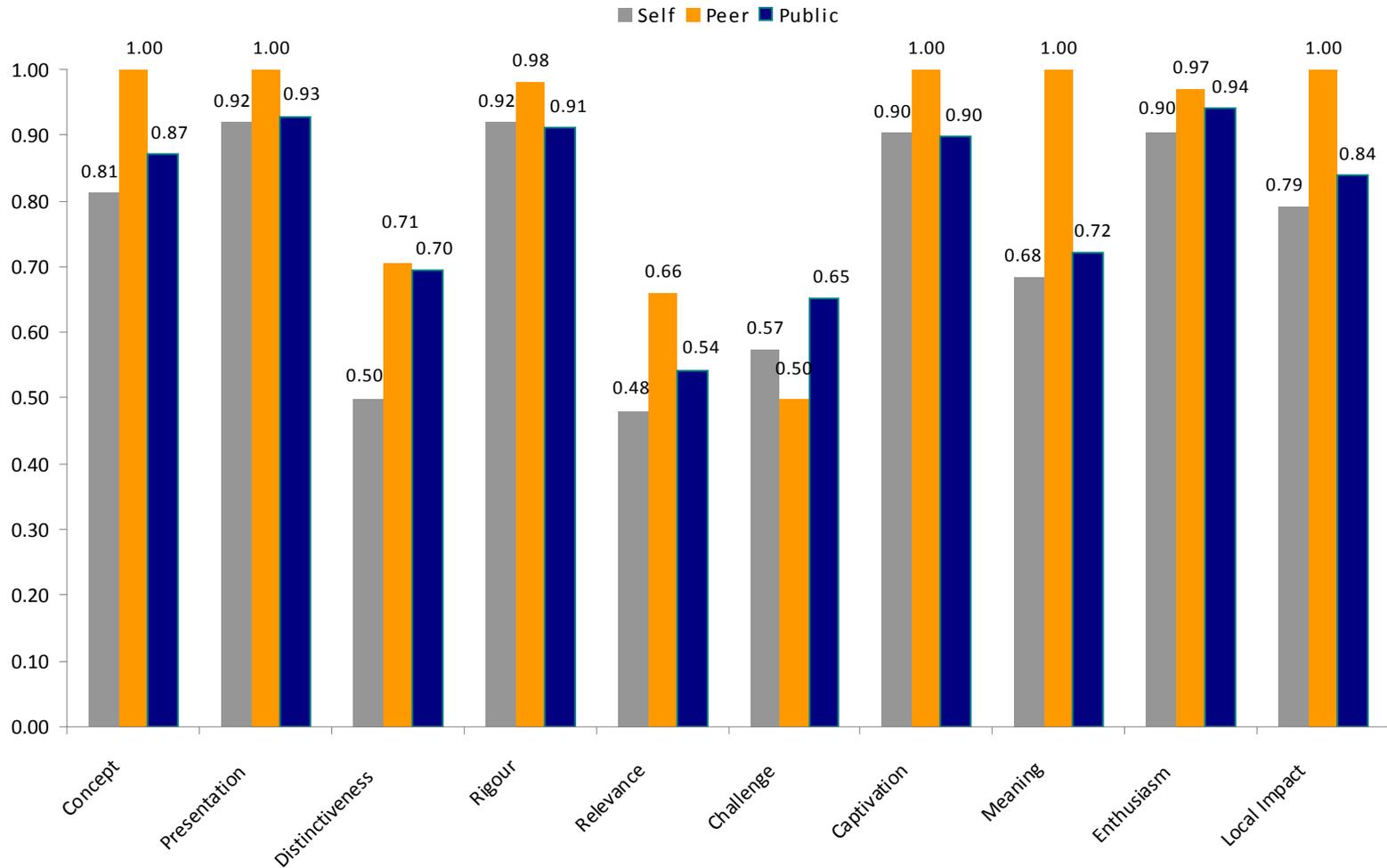


Odeon Printworks, Manchester



Key Theatre, Peterborough

Average self, peer and public scores for Swan Lake



Self n=3
Peer n=2
Public n=83

Words used to describe Swan Lake

Top 10:

Beautiful

Amazing

Captivating

Excellent

Exciting

Fantastic

Inspiring

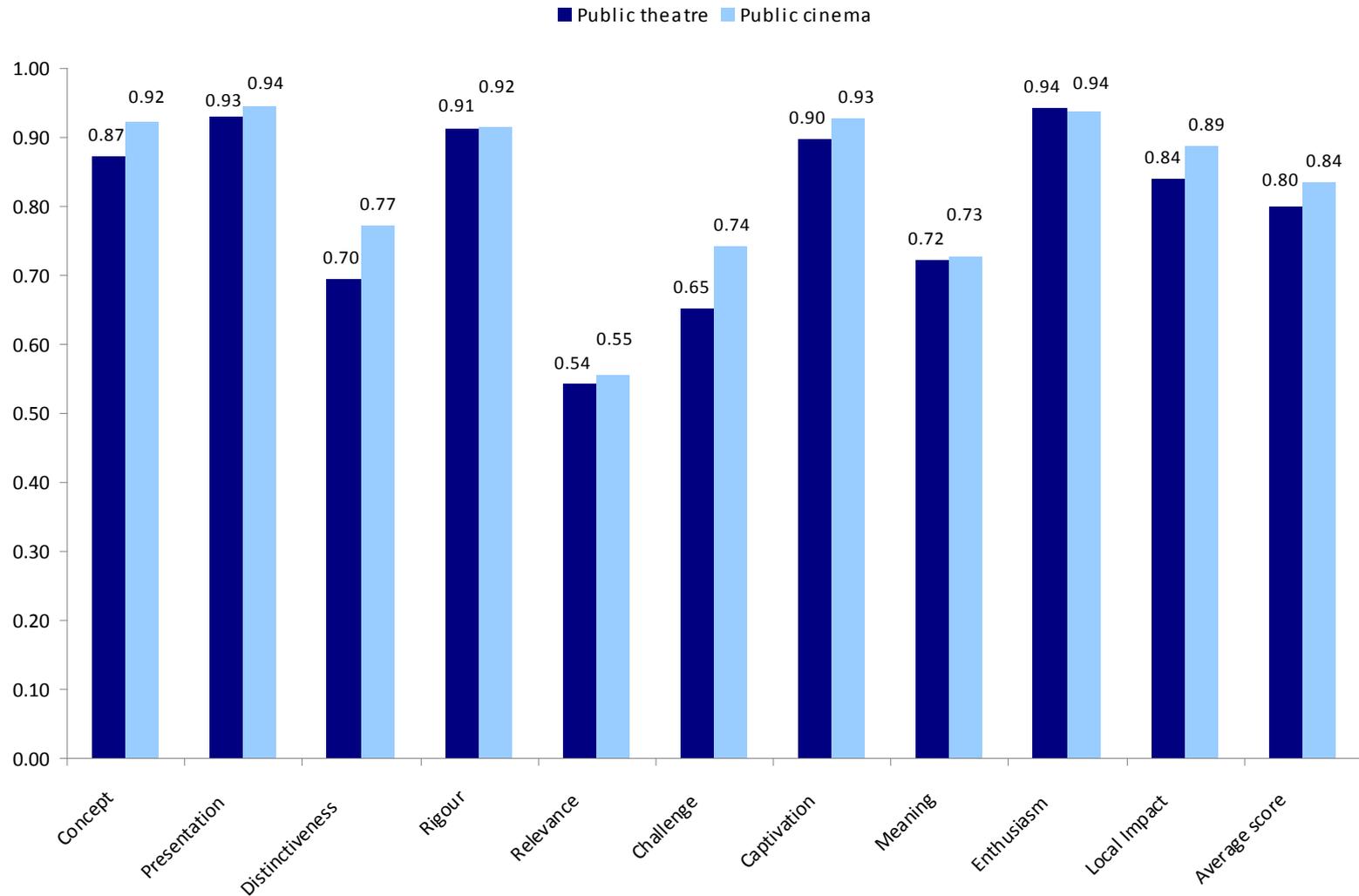
Absorbing

Impressed

Breathtaking



Comparison of average public scores for Swan Lake theatre and cinema performances



Public theatre n=83

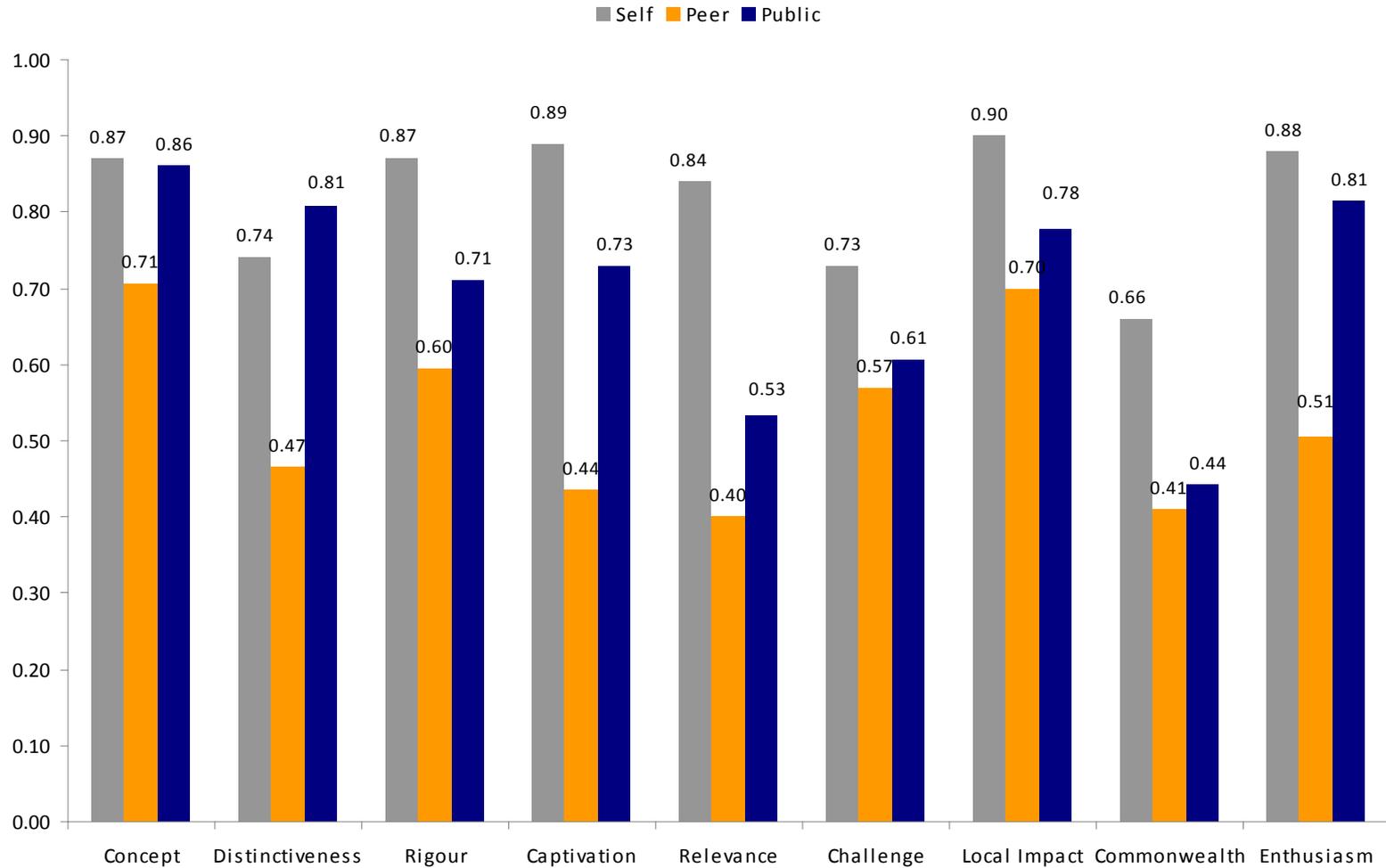
Public cinema n=73

Perch by Conflux – part of the Glasgow 2014 cultural programme

CONFLUX



Average self, peer and public scores for Perch



Self n=1
Peer n=2
Public n=151

Understanding Perch scores

“A wonderful evening that captured my imagination and that of my children. We all skipped home full of chat and excitement”

Audience member

“Really enjoyed the beauty, fragility and comic pathos expressed in the performance”

Audience member

“Lack of interesting choreography or narrative - it needed something to pull the pieces together”

Audience member

Whilst I appreciated the world class talent of all involved and the incredible logistical ... I did not feel very well looked after as an audience member and was unsure of my role, where I should stand, where I should look, why I was there”

Peer

“Audience members were able to move around freely in the audience arena and encouraged to do so by performers; however, this could have been a challenge in itself to first time street theatre goers”

Conflux

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Reflections

When it works best

- Organisations work together to develop metrics
 - debate what ‘quality’ means
 - identify shared goals
 - put aside organisational interests
- Time and expertise to understand data
 - combining quantitative and qualitative
 - creative intention statements
 - thoughtful comparison of events
- Building datasets over time

Challenges and limitations

- Lots of concern about how funders might use this sort of data
- Not appropriate for benchmarking performance or for making judgements between organisations
 - context, audience and nature of the work are different for every event
 - it's not how high you score that counts – it's how you understand and respond to the results
- In theory, funders could use aggregate data to help balance their portfolios around key outcomes
- Artistic quality needs to be considered alongside other outcomes

What next?

- Arts Council England will be supporting NPOs to use quality metrics from 2018-2022...watch this space!
- Culture Counts has pilot projects underway in Australia and Singapore and soon to start in China and Canada

Contact

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