NOTE 7: EVALUATION

ARTWORKS LONDON

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1   PARTNER PROJECTS

1.1   Introduction

This note gives feedback from two of the external projects. The number of respondents is relatively low but the figure nonetheless gives some useful insights.

1.2   AND arts organisations' seminar

1.2.1   Responses

Seven arts organisations replied to the feedback survey. In addition, Barbican Guildhall participants had an internal discussion about the seminar, rather than completing the survey.

1.2.2   Process

Views on the process were generally positive. The meeting was seen as well organised, relevant to them, enjoyable, well-conceived and to some extent different from other events.

Figure 1: Views on the seminar
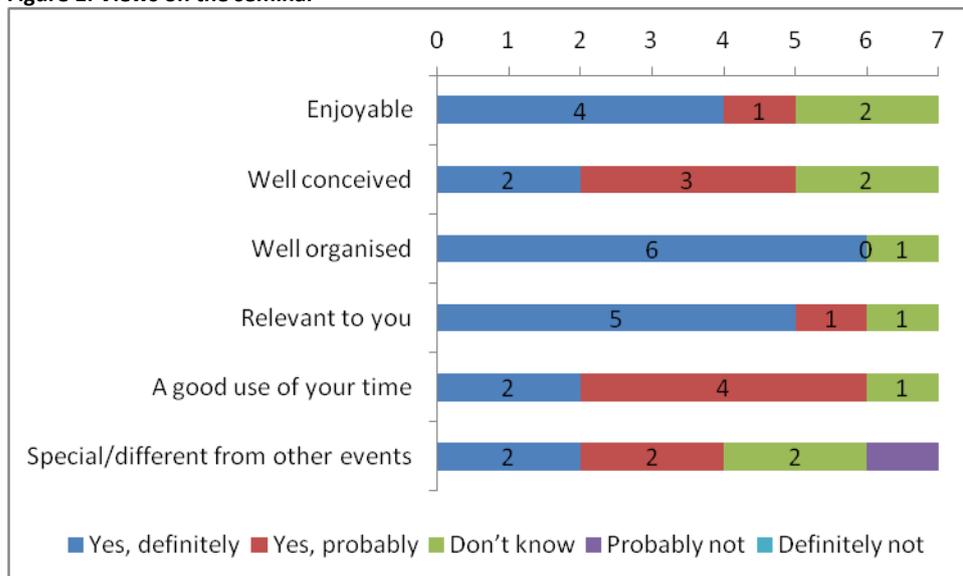
"It was not my usual networks, and it was very well chaired."

"I am part of quite a few groups that look at the cultural offer of young people and around programming for young people and this was good to concentrate on support for artists. It was also good as people spoke as individuals, not towing the party line of their organisations."

"The presentation by the artist was superb, also at painting a very complex arena in a nutshell. I found that the most useful. I fund the approachable, investigative and 'human' (non-hierarchical) ecology of ArtsWorks team, presence of CEO and other leaders from

Artworks to be containing, inviting, thoughtful in helping us grapple with something that still is in the air. However, there was something conventional about the layout of the discussion and interactions which would automatically exclude those participants we collaborate with and so also stunted the thinking at times for me: on a simple level – it was very hard to hear people or for chair to see people who couldn't see."

"It would be a more invigorating discussion with the presence of those leaders from the contexts we work in such as heads of schools, health, science, psychology, corporate world etc. as language can open up, true innovation is in the spaces between us all - keeping it in the arts bubble feels 'old hat'. Do we really want to 'share' at a time of scarce resources - that maybe needs a lot more thought out of the box."

"I was surprise to see so many high profile heads of learning in the room."

Respondents said that the seminar debate was at the right level, although comments were that it was not decisive enough.
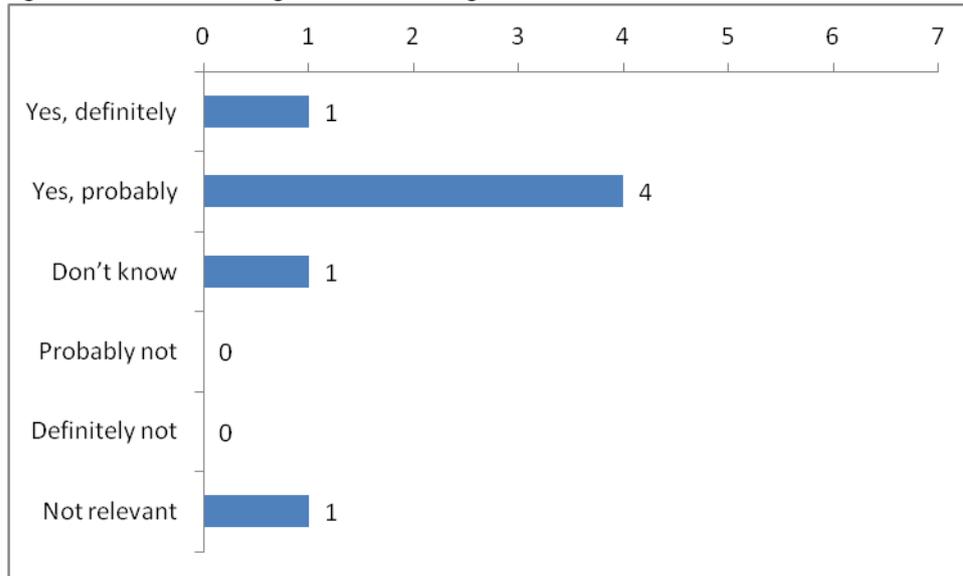
Figure 2: Was the seminar debate at the right level?
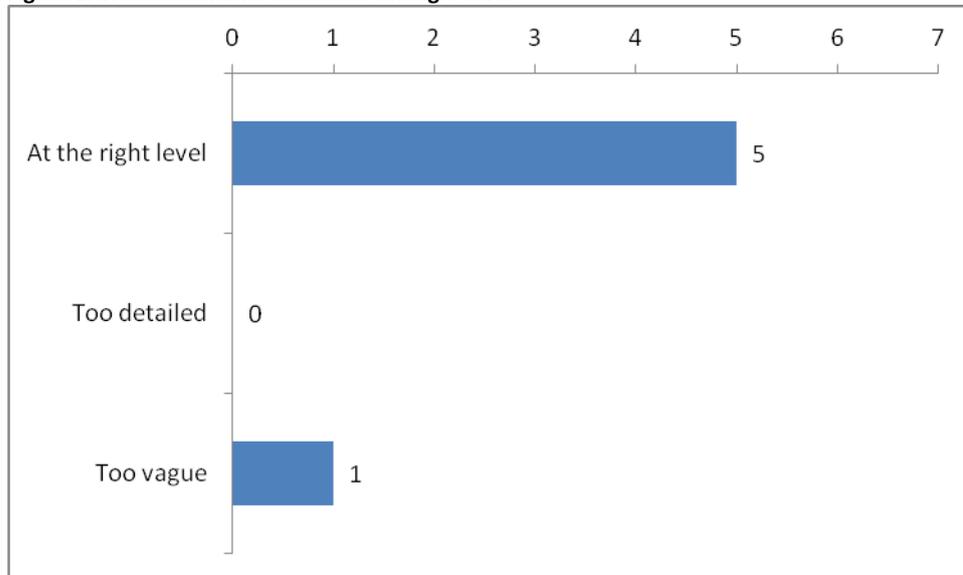
"It was a beginning, and in that sense there is always something to gain, and the presentation by the artist was at the right level. I felt there were some contradictory and possibly conflicting underlying primary tasks, for e.g. focus on young people where for some companies this isn't the primary focus - maybe intergenerational is or disability is, and the need to accrue qualifications was not properly scrutinised in a society that values that above experience - so it made it sometimes difficult to translate one point of view to another context. So a lot of deeply unspoken difference in the room which can exacerbate assumptions about each other if not more directly, sharply and creatively explored. Maybe the chairing needed to be sharper, more provocative even, not an easy task though."
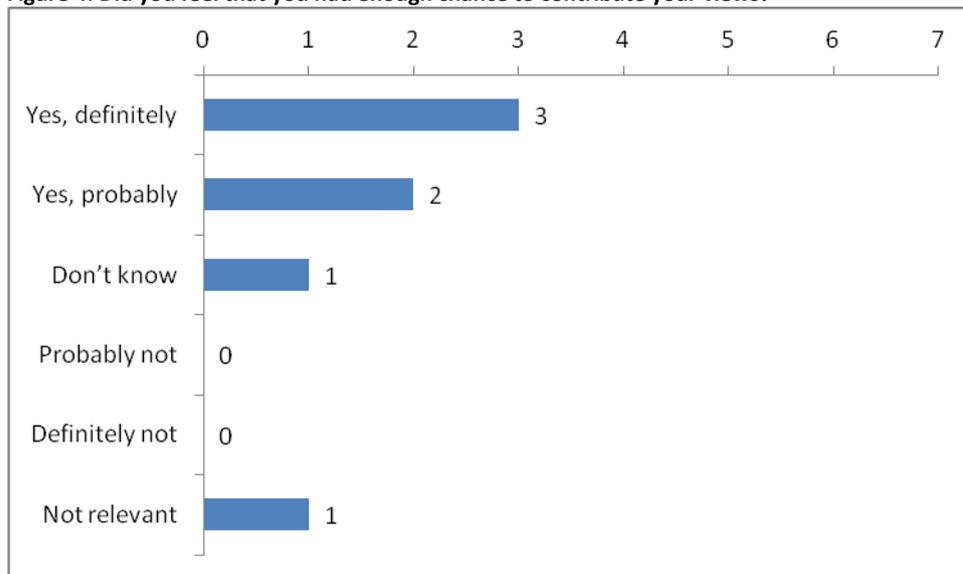
1.2.3   Outcomes

The seminar was seen as somewhat good for networking. Relatively few people stayed for the informal networking part.

Figure 3: Was the seminar good for networking?

Response	Value
Yes, definitely	1
Yes, probably	4
Don't know	1
Probably not	0
Definitely not	0
Not relevant	1

"It was a good mix of people from all artforms, many of whom I haven't met before."

"People really came up to me to network, including ArtsWorks team leaders. I had more interesting and actually more honest, less defended, conversations there and more information and contacts were exchanged. I felt like there was a need to iron out some assumptions from the main round table discussion and imagined, or real misunderstandings. I think I 'demonstrated' my point of view more in the big group, whereas in the networking I engaged in dialogue more, possibly being in smaller groups was helpful."

Five respondents said they had enough time to contribute their views.

Figure 4: Did you feel that you had enough chance to contribute your views?

Response	Value
Yes, definitely	3
Yes, probably	2
Don't know	1
Probably not	0
Definitely not	0
Not relevant	1

The seminar was judged to be useful to participants.

Figure 5: Overall, was the seminar useful to you?

Yes, definitely	3
Yes, probably	3
Don't know	0
Probably not	0
Definitely not	0
Not relevant	1
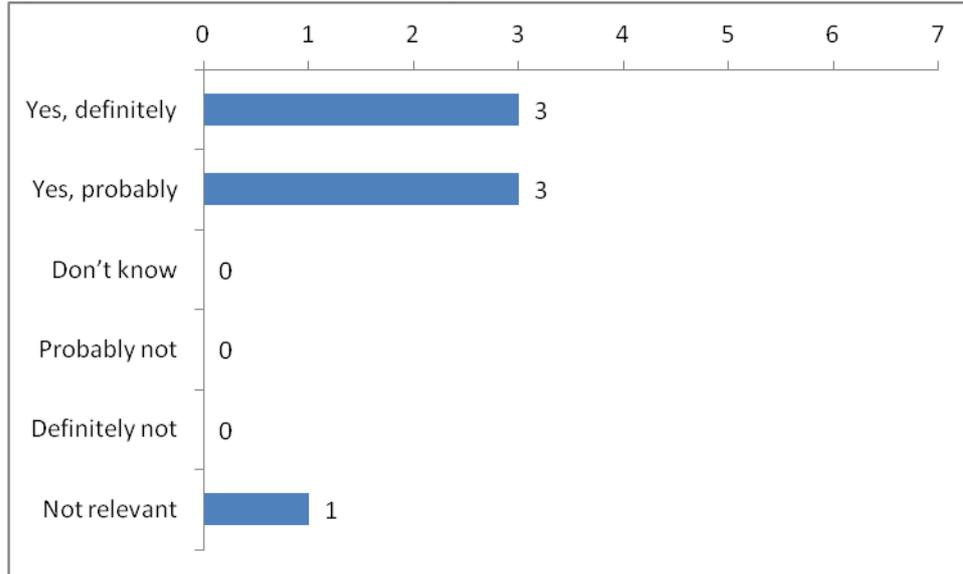
"It made me realise that each company is different and maybe needing different things at times. The networking was better at allowing this to be explored and so I gained from this in how it mirrored and so gave me more insight into the identity of the company I work for whilst being able to truly listen. It is hard to articulate one's own context in such a forum, and hard to try to stay with what we don't know long enough."

"What was good about the artist's presentation was that it wasn't too wordy, it relied on other mediums. It can get heady otherwise."

"It gave me a lot to think about in my new role."

The seminar generally met participants' expectations.

Figure 6: Did the seminar meet your expectations?

It surpassed my expectations.	1
It met all of my expectations	3
It met most of my expectations	1
It met only met a few of my expectations	1
It did not meet any of my expectations	0
Didn't really have expectations	1
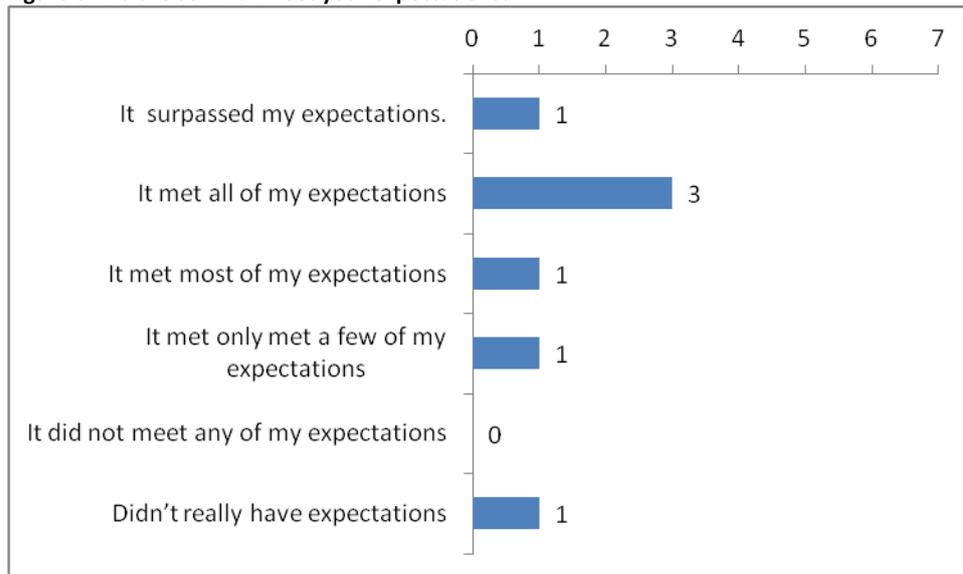
1.2.4   Views on collaboration

Respondents were asked about the potential benefits of arts organisations collaborating to organise, debate or support CPD for artists. Answers had these themes:

- **Learning**. Collaboration would give different perspectives on professional opportunities and so help to spread good practice, including encouraging different organisations to become critical friends. This would include sharing good practice from artists such as Sam and Neville.

- **Resource-sharing**. Collaboration would provide a wider range of venues for use by artists for CPD.

- **Planning**. Collaboration would give strength in numbers so that the group could develop ideas and support the financing of CPD and participative work.

- **Joining up**. Collaboration would develop a cross sector approach to CPD and avoid the tendency of silo working.

- **Increasing impact**. Collaboration could raise quality, and the appreciation of quality, and so increase the benefit of the sector on participants, practitioners, organisations, the sector and society.

- **Raising profile**. Collaboration could elevate and map local contexts, revealing currently hidden exemplary work.

> "I think it's an opportunity to learn to advocate for authentic, ethical, and high quality art (unique to participatory practise) in an arts world that is becoming more conservative due to scarce resources."
>
> "It is very helpful in understanding how much we are in the role (as artists and producers), of moving across boundaries, and how threatening this can be to some larger institutions and even funders. It is hard to feel legitimate and we carry the illegitimacy of those emerging artists and talented participants who have been invisible. Therefore it might help us to better deal with the fall-out from inadvertently provoking the norm. It might help me to stand up for participatory arts, that it is equal to other arts practices, by finding new language to do this."

Respondents were asked about the potential challenges of arts organisations collaborating to organise, debate or support CPD for artists. Answers had these themes:

- **Being open**. Organisations are often the gatekeepers to paid work, and so honesty, openness, and listening to artists' voices can be compromised. One respondent mentioned the temptation to promote your own practice above others.

- **Feeling of competition**. Increase pressure on funding resources has the potential to increase competition which reduces the scope for collaboration and partnership-working as organisations fight for shrinking resources.

- **Capacity**. Management teams are overstretched and so have little time to dedicate to partnership working. In addition, there is a lack of organisations to take on administration.

- **Subjectivity**. Organisations will differ in their views of quality and their preferred artists.

- **Inclusivity**. Artists and participants should be included as well as that arts organisations are not speaking on their behalf.

- **Agreement**. It is a challenge to find mutual ground, times, venues and shared visions.

"Really if we are honest there is an undertow of even more competitiveness between organisations with the semblance on the surface of 'let's collaborate'. We are fighting for our jobs! I am not sure of the solution. I would suggest exploring ways of designing liminal spaces where people can de-role and paradoxically step out of the company they represent (the very place where they have gained expertise), for a moment at least. Then step back in."

Respondents were asked what form they would like to see any collaboration take. Suggestions were:

- Artists should lead on ideas, themes and decisions rather than organisations. Artists need to be paid for their time as well.

- We should have a test CPD project to pilot a joint partnership project around CPD. This would test the ground and helps to drive momentum around sharing practice.

- Set up a social and safe space for critique of the work and looking at writing around the work - possibly contributing to journals to develop the critical language around the work.

- Set up an opportunity to shadow practitioners in workshop/rehearsal.

- Share training offers.

- Find time for reflection, time to question the "how?" of it - "how does it work for you?" "How do you do what you do?"

- We should involve top thinkers from the corporate world, academic, education, health, etc. in the mix from the beginning. It will be more lucrative for arts companies anyhow - the debate will be less predictable and more honest debate. We won't be allowed to cling to our clichés.

"I'd like to see skill-sharing for artists, where the need is led by them rather than the orgs who employ them."

There was support for the idea of a series of events for critical debate. Possible subjects were:
- Self-employment rights and support.
- Self-representation in online spaces.
- Critiquing outcome and process - what and how do we evaluate this and how do we create a dialogic framework around this type of work.
- Communication analysts/NLP trainers.
- Neuroscience (adolescent brain).
- Community/sector representatives.
- Non-verbal thinking spaces.

Figure 7: Do you think it is a good idea to organise more critical debate around CPD in participative practice e.g. through a regular series of salons?
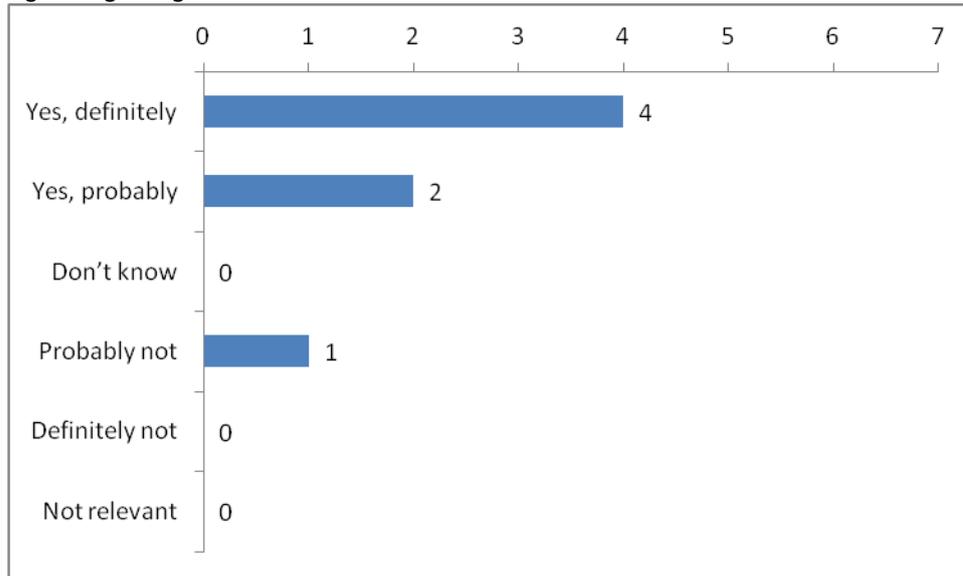
All respondents said they would like to be part of a group considering the possibilities around organising a collaborative fellowship.

1.2.5   Conclusion

The strengths of the meetings were:

- The preparation: having case studies prepared in advance.
- The high level representation from across the participatory arts.
- The communication of openness from the ArtWorks team.

The weaknesses of the seminar were:

- The board room format naturally limited the depth to which discussion could reach.
- Many participants chose not to stay for the networking element.

There is strong support for further discussions about collaboration.
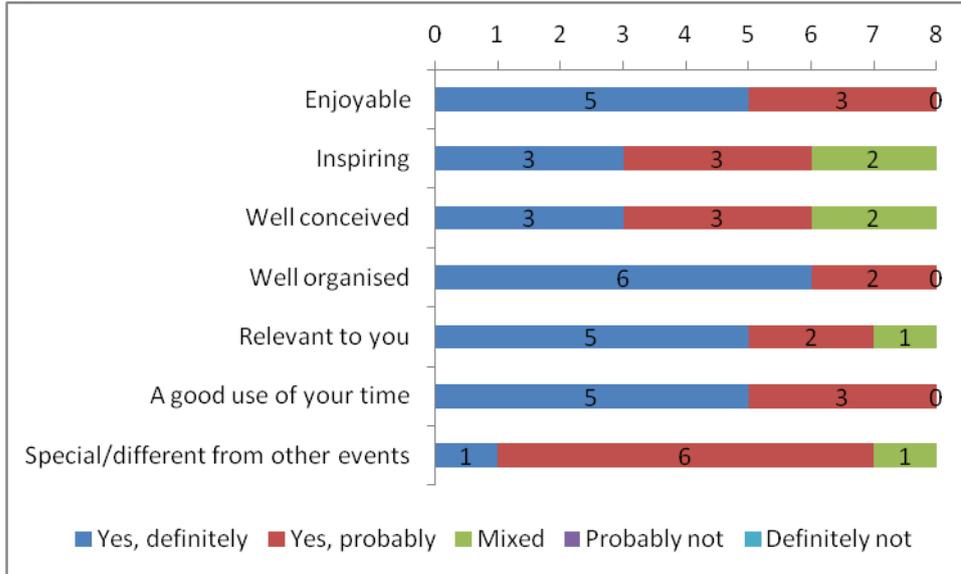
1.3   ICA salons

1.3.1   Responses

We have nine respondents. Eight attended the first salon and eight attended the second. Respondents said they heard about the salons from the ICA e-newsletter, but also from newsletters such as those through Goldsmiths. Ony one respondent said they had been to an ICA salon before.

1.3.2   Process

The salon was seen as enjoyable, well organised, relevant, a good use of their time, special/different from other events, and relatively inspiring and well organised.

Figure 8: Views on the salon

Views	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Enjoyable						5		3	0
Inspiring				3		3		2	
Well conceived				3		3		2	
Well organised							6	2	0
Relevant to you						5		2	1
A good use of your time						5		3	0
Special/different from other events		1			6				1

■ Yes, definitely ■ Yes, probably ■ Mixed ■ Probably not ■ Definitely not

> "The opportunity the artists had to talk about the approach to working with participation and "non-artists" was really interesting and happened spontaneously. For me this was the best part of the event."
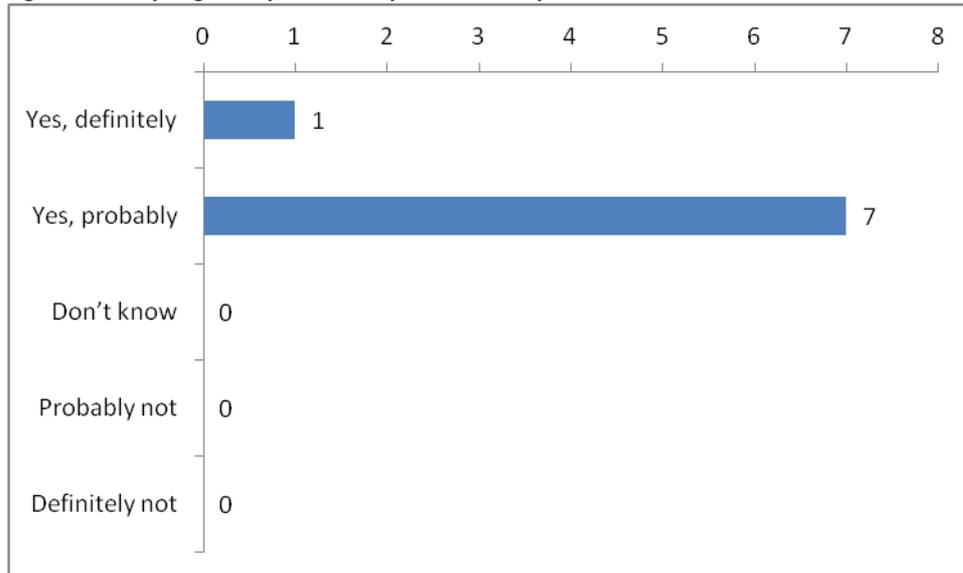>
> "It was nice to see the artists introduce/explain their work but it was the discussion about approaches that was more engaging. Their projects I could look up independently but their views on approaches etc. were something you wouldn't get from looking at their websites, for example."

All respondents thought the salons were at the right level.

Figure 9: Were the salons at the right level?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
At the right level									8
Too specialised	0								
Too basic	0								
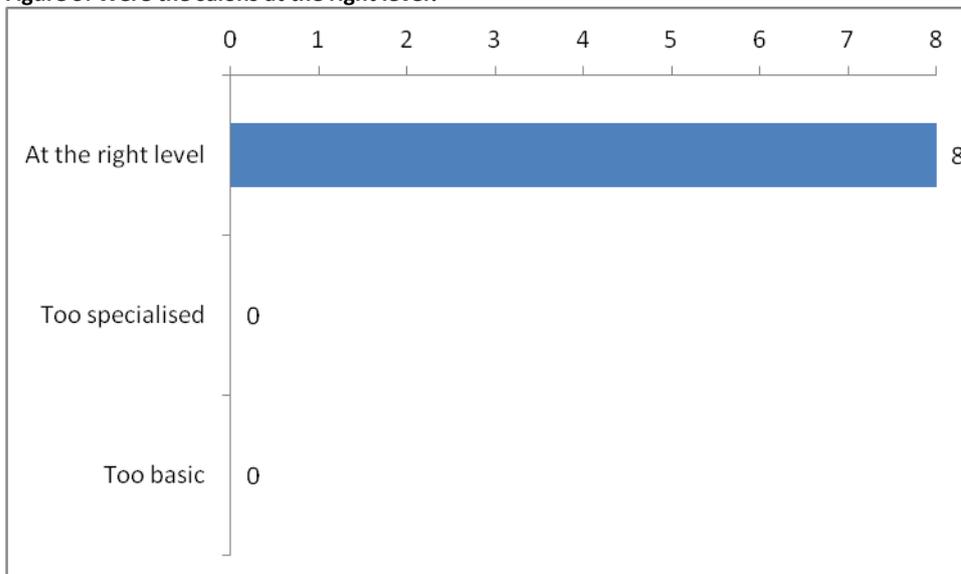
All respondents said they gained ideas they could use in their work.

Figure 10: Did you gain any ideas that you can use in your work?

Response	Count
Yes, definitely	1
Yes, probably	7
Don't know	0
Probably not	0
Definitely not	0

The salon was moderately useful for networking. One respondent commented that the chair layout inhibited conversations between audience members.

Figure 11: Was the salon useful for networking?

Response	Count
Yes, definitely	1
Yes, probably	3
Don't know	2
Probably not	2
Definitely not	0
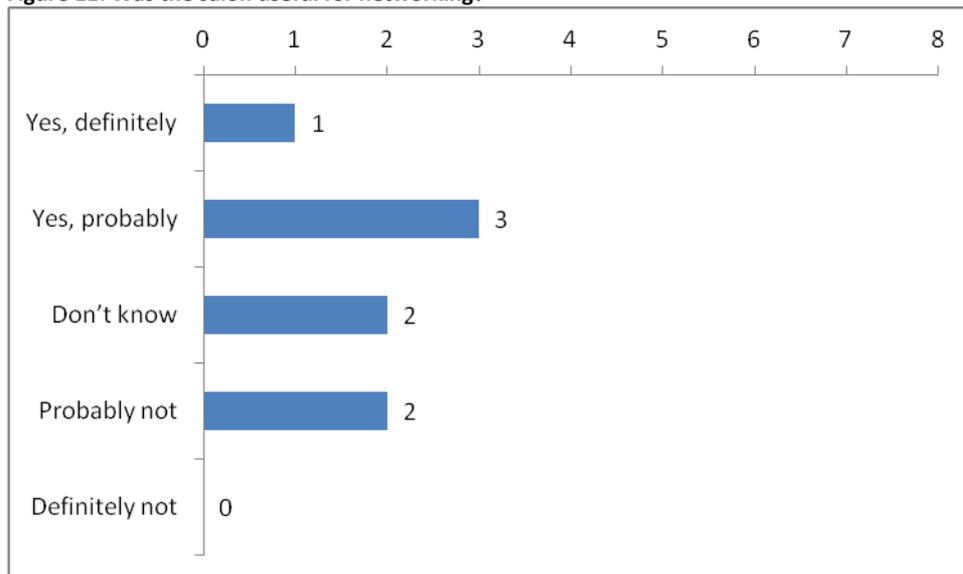
The salons did not particularly create a sense of community.

"There weren't really the opportunities for this, whatever form that might take, so I think people just stuck with who they knew (including me!)."

"You would need a more social element to make that happen, not just a traditional talk format."

Figure 12: Do you think the salon(s) helped to create a community of practice of artists who work in participative settings?
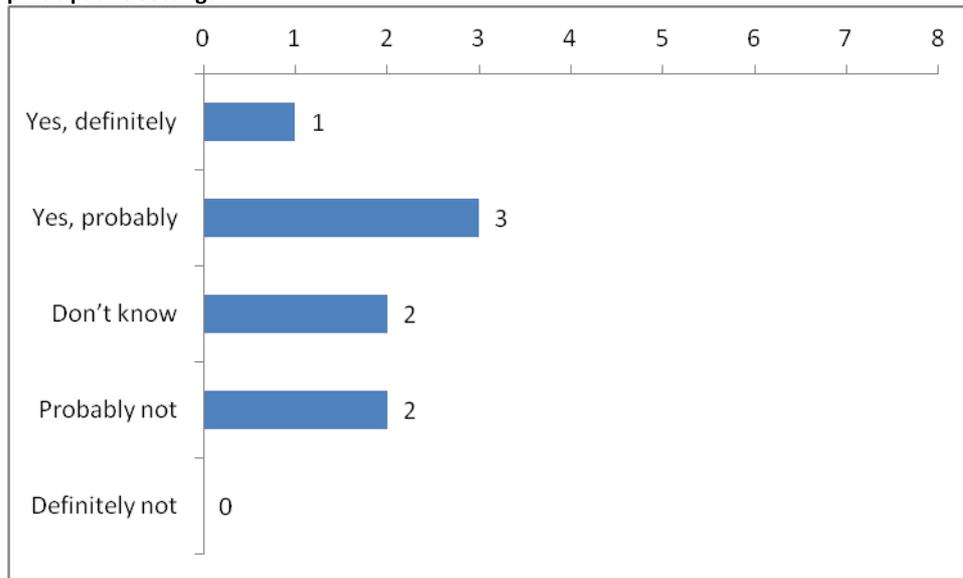
Respondents supported the idea of a regular series of salons on participative practice.

Figure 13: Do you there should be a regular series of salons on participative practice?
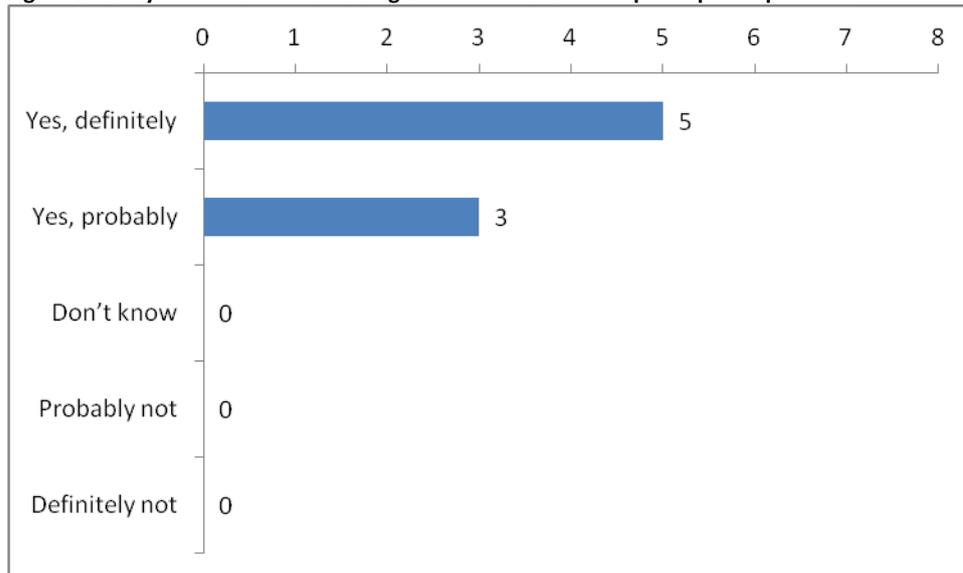
Respondents were asked about any subjects that they would like to see covered or speakers you would like to see featured. Answers were:

- Seeing a range of artists over a set period of time who work in a participatory way but who have different approaches to getting the work done.
- Participation within museum practices
- More socially engaged not gallery based practice
- Artists should be able to conceive of the sessions themselves as participatory events beyond the usual presentation, question and answer.
- A combination of artists and theorists (art historians,etc.).

1.3.3   Conclusion

The strengths of the salons were:

- The high calibre of the presenters and partner.

- The high demand.

- The new audience reached.

The weaknesses of the salons were:

- The format, which was not participatory and did not foster networking or community building.

- The relatively brief timing, which inevitably limited the depth.

The follow up survey from the artists involved in Connecting Conversations and labs confirmed the strong demand for a format for critical debate about artists working in participative settings.