




Research Fellow 

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Potential for innovation? Towards  
hybrid events – a curator's approach

## Potential for innovation?

### Towards hybrid events – a curator's approach

The project described in this report examined the potential for hybrid events to generate innovation in the cultural and creative industries. Post-pandemic, what potential do hybrid events have to enrich our lives?

'Hybrid events' have the potential to create opportunities for bringing people together in innovative ways, but only if their conceptualization is well thought out from the earliest planning stages. The decision to host them should be based upon more than simply increasing the number of participants that can be reached. And what if we were to stop using the term 'hybrid events' at all? It might be preferable to use the term 'hybrid events' to describe a phenomenon rather than as a label identifying a distinct category of events. In this descriptive sense, 'hybrid' emerged in response to a pivotal shift that transpired during the pandemic era. The period from 2020 – 2023 can be seen as a hybrid liminality, a time of transition and adaptation, when people grappled with the sudden need for remote interactions and online participation. This was the context in which 'hybrid events' suddenly began appearing on programs and calendars. But what exactly was meant by the term? Firstly, the term 'hybrid events' is used to refer to a vast spectrum of formats, thereby serving more as an umbrella term than as one denoting a distinct category. While 'hybrid events' ostensibly combine the digital with the analog, creating a purportedly enriched experience, the concept inadvertently implies that the two realms are indeed separable – assuming a binary order that has already become too simplistic to encapsulate the multi-dimensional interactions and experiences now integral to everyday life. The narrative that hybridity combines the best of both worlds oversimplifies the complex, intertwined reality of our digital and physical existences. Our everyday experiences, shaped by our digitally mediated interactions as well as – and often simultaneously with – our engagements with physically co-present persons and environments, transcend this binary, forging a continuum rather than discrete realms. Furthermore, 'hybrid events' emerged as a transient adaptive response to a novel and, for many, scary, situation as it unfolded. Rather than uncritically embracing and continuing to work with the practices that were hurriedly developed under those circumstances, which would lead to stagnation, now is the time for a thorough reconsideration and reinvention of concepts and infrastructures in order to navigate towards innovation for the future. It is

necessary to probe beyond the superficial allure of hybridity and engage in a more nuanced discourse that acknowledges the complexities, the challenges, and the opportunities that lie in our journey towards redefining social interactions and communal experiences in a post-pandemic world.

Supported by the CIRCE fellowship program, I conducted a qualitative survey in 2023 with attendees and event organizers within the European cultural and creative industries to explore the various facets of the discourse surrounding 'hybrid events'. The survey's most fundamental finding was that the majority of respondents perceived digital and physical realms as distinct, each seen as its own world. Interestingly, physical space was consistently connoted positively, while hybrid space was particularly appreciated or considered inspiring in contexts when it served as a forum for sharing thoughts, for example, as a thought space or for creative jams. Additionally, the survey's respondents expressed strong belief and hope that hybrid spaces have the potential to enhance accessibility and international collaboration. However, these optimistic prognoses stood in contrast with 'feeling left out' experiences reported by some participants, indicating a discrepancy between the ideals of inclusivity promised and what was actually delivered. This suggests that in order to harness the innovative potential of 'hybrid events' in the cultural and creative industries, the conceptual merits and inclusivity of hybrid spaces must take priority over commercial objectives; there is a need for a more thoughtful approach to bridging the digital and physical worlds to foster genuine engagement and collaboration. In conclusion, as society navigates through the repercussions of this pandemic era, linguistic representations and understandings need to evolve in tandem with lived realities. This means replacing oversimplified binaries with a more nuanced, multi-dimensional comprehension of the evolving paradigms of social engagements and events.

## 1. Research problem

I have been intensively involved in the production of hybrid events in the cultural sector for over two years, during which I gained a deep understanding of their dramaturgical and curatorial aspects. My work has allowed me to grasp the intricacies of the discourse surrounding these events. The CIRCE research project presented an avenue for me to leverage this expertise, offering a unique opportunity to further explore dramaturgical and curatorial strategies and to contribute to their ongoing

evolution. In the following, I will outline the scope for hybrid events and highlight some best practices – then circle back to consider certain perceived limitations, speculating on how they can be critically addressed. In this way, I hope to open up space for further exploration, inspiring a lively discourse that could drive meaningful progression and deeper insights into this realm. Are, as is often claimed, hybrid events a groundbreaking and innovative category of events that represent a paradigm shift in the way we approach gatherings, blending the digital and physical realms like never before? The term ‘hybrid events’ is vague, hard to grasp. Its essence remains elusive. In considering concepts of ‘hybrid events’, then, which aspects could be explored to gain a deeper understanding? The term ‘hybrid events’ rose suddenly from relative obscurity to become all but ubiquitous when the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic led to transformations such as the abrupt and widespread incorporation of video conferencing platforms like Zoom into people's everyday lives for work and socializing, and for cultural events and gatherings. While the constraints on physical gatherings imposed in response to the pandemic situation meant that only very small numbers of individuals, if any, were able to physically attend events and gatherings, organizers strived to engage broader audiences via diverse online platforms. In this sense, the notion of ‘hybrid events’ can be seen to characterize an in-between phase that marked a pivotal shift that transpired during the pandemic era. However, delving deeper into the nature of hybrid events unveils the complexities and ambiguities surrounding the term. The term ‘hybrid events’ is used by different people in diverse ways to refer to a wide range of phenomena. ‘Hybrid’ can serve as a linguistic marker denoting a period of transition and adaptation when people grappled with the sudden need for remote interactions and online participation. The term ‘hybrid events’ is applied to refer to myriads of formats that serve to bring people together, including concerts, external participation enabling both on-site and remote attendance, interactive lectures, residencies and shared cultural activities, experiential archives offering real-world meetings within digital or physical archives, seminars or workshops conducted simultaneously in-person and online, immersive experiences like World Cafés, Exit Games, and performances in hybrid settings, 360° drop-ins for virtual and physical attendance of discussions or on tours, podium discussions, multi-day conferences, one-to-one-events, previews or teaser showcases, ‘With the Object in the Museum’ blending physical viewing with digital interaction, live tours, community meetings and exchanges, long-term collaborations in theatre or workshop settings,

and many more. Thus, 'hybrid events' increasingly functions as an umbrella term. Indeed, the term 'hybrid events' seems to serve as a description of a phenomenon rather than constituting a distinct category of events. The adjective 'hybrid' describes mixed phenomena combining two or more components. In many articles and essays it is declared that hybrid events fuse the best of both 'worlds'. The underlying assumption is that everyday life is non-hybrid: lived in opposing spheres of attention and significance associated with different realms of thought. This often taken for granted reference to the digital and the analog as two distinct realms presents a rather reductive framework for comprehending the intricacies of contemporary society. It is important to acknowledge that such a binary view tends to overlook the nuanced interplay of factors and complexities that exist. We should consider the implications of the assumed binary of real versus analog that is inherent to the discourse surrounding hybrid events, and the repercussions that may have for society. What consequences are to be anticipated if we continue to use this term as an umbrella? The customary demarcation between digital and analog realms seems too rigid, almost stifling. I invite the reader to transcend this binary as we delve into the realm of hybrid events. Through this exploration, we can foster a more fluid understanding.

The research problem under investigation revolves around the transformative potential of hybrid cultural events: Digital events are accessible to audiences and speakers via an online platform. Hybrid events expand upon this. A hybrid event is a combination of a live experience and a virtual event – with guests attending on site or from any other location. Numerous interactive functions such as virtual rooms, chats, polls, conference software, and messenger apps may be used to incorporate participants into the event and provide them with means to actively influence what takes place. This intensifies the experience, disrupts boundaries and brings audiences together. These mixed forms of events – called hybrid cultural events – can create a sense of closeness, of having a real share in a project, of being able to participate, to shape interaction, and contribute to the development of new forms of knowledge. Hybrid events can enable new audiences to be reached digitally, audiences that would otherwise be unable to join due to geographic, physical, or linguistic barriers. Hinderances that cannot be overcome in this way are for example the time difference and the digital divide. Transcending geographical locations digitally can conserve resources and promote international discourse. During the pandemic, some

inspiring projects such as discussion events and experimental formats were produced at the Stiftung Humboldt Forum, which indicated great potential to be built upon further.

Before my CIRCE fellowship, as part of the “museum4punkt0” project facilitated by the Stiftung Humboldt Forum foundation, was involved with numerous events that aimed to incite dialogue and encourage participation and cooperation across national borders. These events ranged from discussions where remotely connected guests and on-site audiences participated via online tools and chats, to more experimental formats such as spontaneous live encounters with researchers in their extraordinary working environments. The goal was to explore ways of blending live in-person experiences with opportunities for remote participation. One strategy developed was the incorporation of interactive tools that enabled all participants to actively influence the course of the events, thereby bridging geographical barriers and fostering a sense of community among diverse audiences. Those who worked on the “museum4punkt0” project emphasized that merely streaming an event was not enough to make it hybrid; interaction is key. Self-evaluation of the events held led to the publication of guidelines on how to effectively plan hybrid events, addressing issues such as technical preparedness, audience focus, time zone considerations, moderation techniques, creative dramaturgical strategies, and the provision of virtual support to ensure smooth execution while enriching the audience's experience. One such publication was the Toolkit “Hello Hybrid” [1]: a tool to guide and assist museum staff and event organizers in evaluating the suitability of the hybrid format for their events, showcasing best practices and offering inspiration. The toolkit emphasizes the importance of addressing key questions during the planning stages of a hybrid event: “Is the event aimed at audiences both online and on site?”; “Are the participants to play an active role in the process?”; “Is the event content suitable for unrestricted dialog? (Does it include sensitive topics?)”, and “Are you prepared to surrender partial control of the proceedings and allow your audiences to influence the flow of proceedings?” (Toolkit, p. 8).

One particularly innovative event held was the "Call a scientist" ([2], [3]) livestream at the “After Nature” Exhibition at the Humboldt Laboratory, which enabled participants located in the museum to engage in one-to-one talks with researchers stationed in Antarctica. The following fictional experiential account describes the set-up:

On the day of the event, I visited the “After Nature” exhibition at the Humboldt Lab. Within the exhibition space, I discovered a specially arranged room. There was a large screen, a violet retro-style telephone receiver, and a metallic chair. The screen displayed the words: “CALL A SCIENTIST – 3-minute conversations with scientists LIVE from afar. At this station, your image and sound will be transmitted to a video conference, please consider this before initiating a conversation. 1. Pick up the receiver to start a conversation. 2. Hang up the receiver to end the conversation.” I picked up the receiver, and a countdown of 3, 2, 1 appeared on the screen, then the image changed to show live video of the researchers in Antarctica. It felt almost surreal to be standing in this room in Berlin, knowing that I was about to have a live one-to-one conversation with scientists working in one of the most remote places in the world. I could see the scientists sitting next to a window in the research station, wearing warm clothes. Together we looked out of the window at the Antarctic landscape and we started talking about the research station and how it can be moved when extreme weather conditions make that necessary.

The event brought together virtually and physically present attendees by means of a videoconferencing system and iterative design process with a programmed image-switching system that was activated by the telephone handset.

What was particularly notable about this event was how it activated and stimulated participants. An audience survey indicated that the majority of museum visitors had felt curious and excited. Rather than simply receiving information or following a pre-determined script, participants were challenged to think for themselves, to ask their own questions and to shape the conversation in their own ways. This kind of active engagement can be transformative, not only for the individuals involved, but for society as a whole. The example above illustrates how hybrid events can break down barriers and hierarchies that otherwise perform gatekeeping functions in society.

## 2. Process

The research project that I conducted with the support of the CIRCE fellowship was conceived with a steadfast commitment to ethical principles that safeguard the rights, well-being, and dignity of all stakeholders involved. Therefore, ethical considerations formed the bedrock of the project’s trajectory. I appreciated the opportunity to access guidance and support by participating in three different workshops.

The first workshop was about awareness, diversity, and discrimination, led by Same but Different, Diversity Management + Consulting. This workshop offered support to

CIRCE fellows in developing their research projects in accordance with ethical guidelines. After an informative presentation on diversity and discrimination followed by a Q&A, workshop participants formed small groups to discuss and reflect on the question, “What role do diversity and difference play in your work?”. Two further workshops that were formative for the development of my ethical approach took place at the CIRCE Community Summit at Tabaklera, the international center for contemporary culture in San Sebastián. The first of these was the “Care Session” led by empowerment and diversity coach Melanie Erzuah. Finally, I participated in the summit’s panel discussion on “Why is collaboration important for creative impact?”. In the barcamp we discussed how to further develop the network we are building in CCE in Europe. During this conversation, the idea to develop a platform for open collaboration was proposed. The issue of data anonymization was addressed in a workshop held by Prof. Dr. Koloma-Beck for CIRCE fellows and the Impact Fund People. In order to find an online survey tool that ensures high levels of data protection and privacy, I undertook comprehensive research. My ethical stance of the project was formative in shaping the way that potential participants were approached and invited to take part in the online survey:

I participated in the CIRCE symposium “Transforming economic systems through creative impact”, which included the workshop “Imagining Equitable Futures” on the theme of collective dreaming led by the artist Sonya Lindfors. Inspired by this, I experimented with collective dreaming practices to explore how that method could further my research within the domain of hybrid events. Methodologically, I adopted a qualitative approach, involving in-depth survey questioning and scenario-based questionnaires. This approach enabled me to explore participants’ narratives and to consider the potential impact of hybrid event formats on their sense of enriching our lives. At the end of the fellowship, the project was presented to other fellows and creative impact fund people, leading to a group discussion on “Technologies for Participation” at the Oyoun Cultural Center.

### 3. Main insights

Supported by the CIRCE fellowship program, a qualitative survey was conducted to investigate various facets of the discourse surrounding ‘hybrid events’. While the results primarily reflected prevailing attitudes of the general public, they also offered valuable insights into the experiences of both attendees and event organizers within



the European cultural and creative industries in recent years. Post-pandemic, what potential do hybrid events have to enrich our lives? The survey incorporated the viewpoints of 19 European individuals from these sectors with a wide range of expertise. Survey participants came from diverse professional backgrounds, including product design with a focus on sustainability, design research, event production, consultancy for non-profit organizations, psychology, theater, journalism, museum, and multi-media arts. The high percentage of respondents (58%) who were involved in organizing hybrid cultural events themselves provided the survey with a substantial grounding of first-hand knowledge and practical experience. All these respondents had also participated in hybrid events as attendees, so there was a high degree of familiarity and direct experience with hybrid events among the participants.

One significant finding of the survey was that participants considered the content and strategy behind an event more important than the format itself. A stark comparison was drawn by numerous respondents: Traditional lecture formats with well-prepared speakers were deemed more rewarding than tech-heavy 'hybrid events' – highlighting the importance of ensuring high quality content and of strategic planning. Those who reported having made positive experiences at hybrid events often cited events where there had been a balanced effort to cater for both physical and digital participants. Elements such as timing, well-placed pauses, and clear explanations were highlighted as factors that contribute to an engaging and enriching hybrid event. Small-scale hybrid events were singled out as particularly enjoyable by some respondents. They found that these events fostered a sense of trust and engagement among attendees. Several survey participants described certain hybrid events as energy-draining and sensorially limited. Some participants reported disappointing experiences made at hybrid events where the focus seemed to lean heavily towards the physical attendees, potentially leaving remote participants feeling marginalized. Educational hybrid event formats that included decentralized online meetings, workshops, and opportunities for participants to connect with each other received positive mentions. Creative jams, which involve sharing journeys and experiences online, were also seen as valuable and engaging. Respondents proposed that, to be successful, hybrid events need to create a space where trust can flourish, which can be influenced by factors such as event size, curation, atmosphere, and the chosen topic.

A subset of participants expressed reservations about the utilization of technology in hybrid events. They noted that in some cases, technology tools had been used without

adding significant value to the event, raising questions about the extent to which technology increases value in event curation. While opinions on hybrid events varied, many respondents particularly appreciated them when they incorporated multisensorial aspects. They suggested that such experiences forge a stronger connection among participants to an event's topics. However, it was recognized that the experience differs significantly between physical attendance and online participation. Several respondents expressed a preference for physically attending hybrid events, saying that this enabled them to feel more strongly connected to the other attendees on-site. The diversity of responses reflected a range of perspectives, with some participants expressing skepticism about hybrid events while others were optimistic about their potential. A recurring sentiment was the need for human-to-human interaction. Some participants felt that hybrid events often lacked the depth of interpersonal connections achieved in purely physical gatherings. Respondents stressed the need for hybrid events to be thoughtfully organized, and claimed that simply offering a live streaming option was not enough. They emphasized that careful planning and execution is required if hybrid events are to facilitate meaningful interactions.

Finally, technical proficiency emerged as a critical factor in participants' perceptions of hybrid events. They stressed that the technical solutions and engineering behind these events must be seamless in order to ensure a high-quality experience. Out of 19 participants, seven reported not having experienced a strong connection to the subject matter in hybrid events. The other 12 identified several factors that contributed to their sense of engagement, including interactive non-formal set-ups, creative and artistic elements like illustrations and music, creative use of technology, effective moderation and facilitation, format consent, multi-sensory elements such as spices and coffee, engagement techniques tailored to participants' surroundings, live-on-screen surveys, a diverse global audience, and dramaturgical strategies.

Criticism included a sense of passivity, lack of clear objectives, neglect of the audience, and the absence of a shared physical space. There was, however, consensus among the responses concerning the transformative potential of hybrid events to overcome geographical, economic, and accessibility barriers, thereby promoting inclusivity, diversity, and global collaboration. Hybrid events were praised for eliminating travel constraints, allowing individuals from war-torn, economically disadvantaged, or remote areas to participate. They were also viewed favorably for

catering to individuals with disabilities, as well as people with responsibilities, such as parenting, that might hinder physical attendance. The international collaboration and knowledge exchange facilitated by hybrid events were seen as steps towards fostering cross-cultural understanding and collaborative problem-solving, especially concerning global issues like the climate crisis.

In terms of cost and environmental benefits, hybrid events were recognized as cost-effective and environmentally friendly alternatives to traditional events, reducing both travel-related expenses and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The potential to reach marginalized segments of society and create a platform for a broader spectrum of voices was acknowledged, although a cautionary note was stated that there is a risk of exacerbating digital divides if events are not well-managed. Hybrid events were also believed to have the potential to foster a sense of community and global unity by transmitting cultural experiences across borders. The integration of digital and physical elements in such events were seen as a way to provide enriched experiences, although the level of engagement achieved may depend on the trust and openness among participants. However, challenges like the necessity of advanced facilitation techniques, potential exclusion of those with limited digital literacy or access, and the dilemma of content paywalls hindering accessibility were also noted.

In response to a survey question concerning the future of hybrid events and the influence of technological advancements, participants offered a multitude of imaginative ideas and considerations. Some envisioned the creation of perpetually accessible virtual collaboration spaces akin to open studios. Others proposed the use of 360-degree livestreams for site visits, providing an immersive experience for remote participants. The potential of virtual reality (VR) to allow users to experience physical spaces from different viewpoints and locations was also highlighted. Additionally, participants emphasized the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) to facilitate multilingual communication with minimal infrastructure, as well as the concept of video game-inspired events, which would open up further creative possibilities. However, concerns were also raised that not all events lend themselves well to transposition into virtual spaces. Whether the experience of being part of a crowd at concerts can be adequately felt in a virtual environment was met with uncertainty, emphasizing the need to address data protection and accessibility issues. Some participants proposed leveraging hybrid events to challenge the prejudices and exclusion mechanisms at play in physical events, thereby serving as a starting point for more inclusive

experiences. Furthermore, there were suggestions that accessibility could be enhanced, for example, accommodating neurodivergent individuals through tools like translators, read-aloud mechanisms, and customized settings.

Concerns about the potential prioritization of technological spectacle over substantive content quality were raised, along with the monetization of an often under-funded field, highlighting the importance of fair compensation for creators. Participants also envisioned interactive museum experiences and collaborative audio-visual performances facilitated by augmented reality. The transformative potential of hybrid events to connect people in unexpected ways and provide access to otherwise unattainable experiences was heralded. Nevertheless, the critical issue of access and inclusivity was underscored, as emerging technologies may remain inaccessible to a significant portion of the global population, raising concerns about leaving certain groups behind.

To summarize, a fundamental finding of the survey was that digital and physical realms were perceived separately, each seen as its own world. Furthermore, physical space was consistently connotated positively, while hybrid contexts were particularly appreciated and described as inspiring when they served as a venue for sharing thoughts, in the sense of a “thought space” or for creative jams. Additionally, survey respondents expressed strong conviction that hybrid spaces hold the potential to enhance accessibility and international cooperation. However, this optimism stood in contrast with experiences of feeling “left out” reported by some participants, indicating that the ideal of inclusivity promised by hybrid settings was not always met in practice. This observation indicates that the conceptual merits and inclusivity of hybrid spaces need to take priority over commercial objectives if genuine engagement and collaboration is to be achieved, underscoring that a thoughtful approach is required to successfully foster genuine engagement and collaboration.

In recent years, particularly in the cultural domain, a wealth of exciting publications that creatively explore innovative event formats have emerged. The majority of these document specific formats that have proven effective in practice. As an example, the ‘Hello Hybrid’-Toolkit [1] provides an inspiring introduction to hybrid formats and offers practical implementation suggestions.

Particularly in contexts in which hybrid events are seen as a tool to enhance international cooperation, organizers need to focus on conceptual foundations to

ensure accessibility for all potential attendees. The disappointing experience of having felt “left out” reported by some respondents should serve as a warning here.

The survey not only revealed the binarity of respondents’ conceptualizations of the analog and the digital; it also showed their concern regarding the potential for innovative technologies to be deployed in useless – or, worse still, harmful – ways. Furthermore, some respondents were inclined to see “content/strategy” in opposition to “technology”: drawing yet another divide that is not future-proof. All these elements are intertwined and need to be thought together to create a world worth living in.

#### 4. Linking back to CIRCE

Exploring the field of ‘hybrid events’ demonstrates solid alignment with CIRCE’s overarching goals and provides a pragmatic way for the cultural and creative industries to develop innovative solutions to today’s demands and tomorrow’s unknowns. By advocating for a collective effort in the formulation and publication of values-based conceptual frameworks, this project has proposed a resilient way to foster innovation and helps address potential bottlenecks in post-Brexit policy and program development.

The potential for hybrid events to foster innovation is not solely dependent on the successful integration of cutting-edge technology into event management, rather, innovative potential should be assessed based on the depth of shared experiences and the richness of connection and the practice of critical access. For this reason wouldn’t it be more intriguing to explore what is significant irrespective of location and time?

The oversimplified notion that our lives are structured between two separate worlds (analog and digital) rests upon a static categorization that fails to capture the ways these two realms are embedded in one another. Considering this, could an independent ‘dimension’ of intensity be a more useful criterion? The way forward demands a critical approach to the practice of creation itself. What are the risks of persisting with the current narrative, and why is it problematic to cling to a term born out of crisis response? A term that could potentially lead to stagnation. Post-pandemic, what potential do hybrid events have to enrich our lives? The task for navigating futures is not just to delineate hybrid events but to ask how they can be orchestrated to resonate with and engage a broader and international audience, offering a realm where ideas flourish and meaningful connections thrive.

Additionally, care should be taken to prevent the term 'hybrid' from becoming a meaningless label randomly attached to various initiatives. There seems to be a tendency for event planners to try to simply 'add' hybrid aspects without considering their appropriateness in relation to an event's core objectives. This is illustrated, for example, when organizers hurriedly compare digital software tools rather than considering what kinds of activities could best bring remote and on-site participants into mutual engagement. Such an 'add-on' approach overlooks the broader societal mechanism. To orchestrate genuinely successful hybrid events, a transformation in our thought process is needed. The call for collaboration in formulating and publishing conceptual, value-based building blocks is a subtle but crucial push for a new paradigm. It is no longer about presenting concrete examples of implementation, but about fostering a milieu in which conceptual frameworks are promoted that significantly enrich the field. In essence, it is about more than integrating cutting-edge technology; it is about fostering a field where innovation is measured by the richness of shared experiences, the depth of engagement, and the onset of collective ideation. Discarding the on-site vs. off-site, virtual vs. analog dichotomy, and shifting the focus to what can be shared to attain meaningful engagement is vital. Can analog and digital media complement one another when deployed in combination towards a single aim, central to which is fostering a shared 'thought space'?

Post-pandemic, numerous cultural projects embracing digital, hybrid, or at least technological elements have been promoted, which is commendable. The aim now should be to further develop these initiatives. Within the hybrid and digital domain, the prevailing desire seems to be to promote innovation. However, this does not necessarily imply, for example, creating crypto-QR codes for the Metaverse but entails a broader scope. We need to devote ourselves to critical conceptual practices that ask the questions: "Who is left behind?", "What do accessibility and participation really mean?". It is crucial that participation should not only be seen as a means to increase audience engagement, but as a complex and critical concept that requires thorough reflection on power relations, social dynamics, and aesthetic goals (see [4]).

Fostering a collective endeavor to articulate and publish conceptual, value-based building blocks may be more fruitful than merely showcasing more concrete examples of implementation. In collaboration with our cluster domain "Technologies for Participation" it will be fruitful to explore the realm of "Evaluating Innovation" within this context. The crux here is to transcend the somewhat superficial badge of technology

integration and delve into a more nuanced understanding of what truly constitutes innovative events. We should establish funding structures that allow enough time for thorough re-thinking of underlying concepts – in order to foster a more connected world and strengthen international interrelations.

The project's findings suggest a captivating prospect– whenever individuals are able to partake in different thought worlds or engage in collective contemplation, meaningful, distinctive moments of connection emerge. How can we nurture such environments?

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The AI tool ChatGPT by OpenAI was employed for brainstorming, structuring, refining content, and, in some cases, searching for synonyms and performing partial translations. Its initial outputs were further molded to align with the specific objectives and tone of the essay.