

## How to balance your international ambitions with climate responsibility?

In this live online session, presented as part of the Fringe Central programme 2021, we explored the future of international working given the current global challenges .

How can we realise ambitions to create and share our work around the world and to be more environmentally and socially responsible whilst we do it? Are there options with a low-to-no carbon footprint that could inspire even more beautiful, challenging, life-changing, inclusive, and urgent work that can engage more meaningfully on the local level, that take the work into new realms of possibility in the digital space, that widen our reach, that are also more efficient, time saving and keep costs down?

Watch the recording of the event and case studies:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CcXY8B3NEg>

Here are some key thoughts, questions and tips from the breakout sessions:

### Digital

- Digital brings people together who might not otherwise be able to work together.
- It allows people to work together over a longer period of time. Physical residencies are limited by time and space but digital working can expand that.
- It can enable people to develop a relationship ahead of physical visit, making in person meeting more fruitful.
- Digital connection can heighten intimacy, which can be leveraged for collaboration or 1:1 performance.
- Digital projects and residencies need to be supported with the same care as physical ones.
- Digital opens up possibilities for seeing work we might otherwise be able to as audiences and programmers.
- Developing digital work also gives artists a choice about how much they want to travel
- Readily available technologies – Whatsapp, Zoom etc. – offer different experiences but plenty of choice for connection.

### Green operational practice

- Operational practice needs to go beyond recycling and offsetting and be integrated into how we plan, create and operate.
- Travel is a key polluter yet people are reluctant to change their habits. How can we encourage or incentivise audiences to travel to see work in more sustainable ways?
- Arts professionals need to take responsibility for their own actions and weigh up whether an action like flying is really worth it.
- Remote working can reduce the need for staff to travel but digital working still has an environmental cost.

- We need to budget effectively to support environmental ambitions. It can't be an afterthought.
- Can we be more strategic when planning international meetings? Can you organise it so it's more central for everyone? Planning should consider public transport links and ensuring flying is not the only option for travel.
- Developing projects and relationships should be digital first, with the in-person meetings coming later on once collaborators know they can work together effectively.
- We need to shift to sharing rather than touring approach to international working. Getting rid of exclusivity clauses would allow more sharing and increase the impact of each visit.
- We need to slow down decision making to allow for greater consideration of sustainable practice.

### Slow touring

- We're past the point of mitigations now it's time to adapt quickly and boldly. We need to be prepared to let go of old models and embrace new ways of working.
- Slow touring combines many things. It is choosing to travel by train rather than plane, travelling less and spending more time in one place.
- It is choosing to stay with local people or being hosted by them as this is more sustainable than staying in a hotel or buying plastic wrapped food.

### Concept touring

- Concept touring has been around for a while. It enables international work to be more local by including local performers, artists or audiences, the engagement of whom becomes part of the rider for presenters.
- Considering local contexts when creating the concept is really important. Think about why someone based abroad would want to engage with the project. Will it translate or resonate?
- Artists need to make the concept is suitable for touring and let presenters know upfront what they need from them. Consider what's really important to the integrity of the piece and what you can be flexible on.
- Concept touring creates a new, more connected relationship between artist and presenter. It requires trust.
- For the presenter/ producer it will require more effort and time. It's simpler to bring a show over but concept touring offers more potential for engagement and local resonance.

### Speakers

- Rita Marcalo [instantdissidence.org](http://instantdissidence.org)
- Lindiwe Matshikiza [lindiwematshikiza.com](http://lindiwematshikiza.com)
- Esther Huss [esther-moves.com/about-me.html](http://esther-moves.com/about-me.html)

- GIFT Exchange - [giftfestival.co.uk/rethinking-global-cultural-exchange](http://giftfestival.co.uk/rethinking-global-cultural-exchange)
- Maiko Yamamoto - [theatrerplacement.org/people/](http://theatrerplacement.org/people/)
- Serious [serious.org.uk](http://serious.org.uk)

### Useful Links

- LIFT Concept Touring Commissions - [liftfestival.com/events/concept-touring/](http://liftfestival.com/events/concept-touring/)  
<https://www.liftfestival.com/events/concept-touring-announcement/>
- Getting More Mileage From Your Creative Ideas resource:  
[housetheatre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Getting-mileage-from-your-artistic-ideas-a-guide.pdf](http://housetheatre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Getting-mileage-from-your-artistic-ideas-a-guide.pdf)
- Julie's Bicycle Resource Hub [juliesbicycle.com/category/resource\\_hub/](http://juliesbicycle.com/category/resource_hub/)
- Green Touring Guide [greentouring.net/downloads/GreenTouringGuide\\_EN.pdf](http://greentouring.net/downloads/GreenTouringGuide_EN.pdf)
- GALA Funding Guide for Arts and Culture Projects Related to Environmental Sustainability  
[on-the-move.org/resources/funding/gala-funding-guide-arts-and-culture-projects-related-environmental-sustainability](http://on-the-move.org/resources/funding/gala-funding-guide-arts-and-culture-projects-related-environmental-sustainability)