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Hi. It's lovely to see you all. Thank you so much for coming out. My name is Hilary

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Glow. I'm at Deakin University and I'll explain why I'm here standing here in just a minute.

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But before we go any further, I'd like to acknowledge the people of the Kulin Nation

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on whose land we are gathered and to acknowledge and pay respects to any Aboriginal and Torres

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Strait Islanders who are here today and their elders past and present.

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I'm part of a team at Deakin University that is looking into the issue of audience diversity.

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Our argument is that although I think it's not an exaggeration to say 100% of the people

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who work in the arts will all say that audience diversification is really important to them.

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So issues around cultural democracy, around diversity and inclusion, everyone says that

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that's something that really moves and makes them get out of bed in the morning. And yet,

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the actual demographic profile of Australian arts audiences really hasn't shifted very

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much. And our research is about interrogating why that's the case. We have funding from

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the Australia Council and the Ian Potter Foundation and we have begun a process of surveying Australian,

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publicly funded Australian arts organisations. The reason why Mark Taylor is here is because

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he's been working with us on the survey and on the analysis of the survey results. We're

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just at the point now of putting the survey results together and it's going to give us,

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I think, an unparalleled understanding. I don't think anyone's done this work before,

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an unparalleled understanding of how arts organisations think about diversity as an

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audience issue, how they understand it, how they value it, how they prioritise it within

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their organisations. Our hunch is that to shift the discussion around audience diversity,

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we actually need to confront the need for organisational change. It's not about the

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audience that needs to change, it's the organisations that need to change. We've done the survey

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and we are then moving into a community of practice phase next year where we'll select

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12 organisations from around the country to work with. One of our great helpers and advisors

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in this has been Seb Chan from ACME and Seb, who's the one in the blue, has very kindly

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agreed to host this event and to have this chat with Dr Mark Taylor who's from Sheffield

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University and who is here not to talk about the project I just mentioned, even though

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he's a key part of it, but his other research work which is an analysis of the stratification

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of the UK creative industries. I hope you really enjoy it and please let me know if

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you'd like more information about the work that we're doing. Thanks.

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Thanks a lot, Hillary. We're going to keep this super casual and so my name's Seb Chan,

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I'm the director and CEO here and any chance to speak to someone from Sheffield is welcomed

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given I've loved the music from Sheffield for a very long time all the way back to Cabri

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Voltaire and others. However, Culture is Bad for You was a book that I picked up and read

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and gave to other people as a provocation and I think it's fascinating to see the research

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project that it's based on generate that book and you interviewed hundreds of culture workers

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across the UK and I think what's fascinating about this too is that it wasn't just quantitative

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research, it was these qualitative stories of how difficult it actually is to be a worker

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in the arts and culture sector now. What were the main things you found from this, Mark?

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So in the book we focused on a few different areas. We're interested in the social stratification

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of cultural attendance, who's going to what, what kinds of people are those people, questions

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about access to creative work, so what kinds of people are able to get into creative roles

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in the first place and then subsequently what is their experience like. Just because you

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might have come from a marginalised background and successfully made your way into creative

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work doesn't mean that then your experience is going to be especially positive. I'm going

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to slightly self-indulgently show you a couple of examples of where the debate is in different

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places about this because part of the work that we have been doing, I know this is very

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tediously British, is motivated by concepts of social class. The idea that people who

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are from working class backgrounds might no longer be able to access different kinds of

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creative careers, both get into those jobs in the first place and thrive in them. And

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this is not limited to questions of social class and it's not just limited to questions

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of initial access to jobs, it's also who gets rewarded and recognised once people are more

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established and very successful in their careers. And similarly it's not limited to the publicly

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subsidised sector. Questions of social inequalities and creative work can be seen in lots of different

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settings. This is just one of several examples that I think is interesting. And I just want

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to give a particular shout out to this video by Sam Greer who's a games journalist based

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in the UK for People Make Games, a piece that she put together called The Games Industry

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is Failing the Working Class. And more broadly it's been an interesting sort of environment

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to work in because whenever Nadine Dorries, who was the Minister in the Department for

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Digital Culture, Media and Sport until quite recently, people may be aware that the government

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in the UK has been fairly volatile for a few months.

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Does it even exist?

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Well, I mean, you know, there are buildings, sometimes people go into them. When Nadine

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Dorries is making noise that suggests that she's on your side, then you need to start

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interrogating some of the work that you're doing and think about the effectiveness of

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it. But also this isn't something that is peculiarly British. I found this piece that

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was published a few months ago on the Guardian, premised on Once You Make Art, You Better

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Be Rich, How Australian Culture Locked Out the Working Class. And so, you know, we were

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quite heavily motivated by this question of it looks as if we basically know what the

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problem is. We know that there is a problem wherein both audiences and workforces are

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disproportionately drawn from a relatively narrow section of society.
But identifying

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the problem is not the same as identifying the cause of the problem,
identifying the

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ways that this problem sort of persists through time. And so in doing
some survey work, but

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also talking to hundreds of different people working in what you might
call the creative

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industries broadly conceived. And, you know, this is all the way through
from people working

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in, you know, like orchestras and opera houses through to commercial
television and film,

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these sorts of things, in order to try to understand these problems a
bit better.

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So in that work, you know, you really did highlight that this, that
passion work really

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isn't at all sustainable and it's not accessible to those without
existing privilege. And this

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belief amongst arts workers of meritocracy and excellence, kind of these
sort of trigger

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words almost, or for the younger folks being tenacious or this notion of
the hustle, it's

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sort of in this continuous generational normalisation of this. How's
that playing out? And, you

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know, does this, this is replicated in everything now, right?

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So maybe the circle that we were trying to square is on the one hand, we found that people

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working in what you might call cultural and creative industries, and I think this is absolutely

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the case here as well, disproportionately left-wing and liberal in their social attitudes.

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You know, when you ask them about how they understand society in general, they tell us

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that, you know, they vote in particular ways, they protest, they behave in certain ways

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because they see the game as being rigged. But then when you ask them about their own

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trajectories and the trajectories and the sector that they work in, people were saying

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that, you know, really the things that are most important are hard work, talent and ambition.

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One of the stories that I think is really the sort of balloons that it's important to

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deflate is the idea that there are big generational differences. The idea that, you know, like

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people who are maybe working in creative jobs in their 50s, 60s, 70s, are, you know, have

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maybe a healthier work-life balance, whereas people coming up through their 20s now are

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more sort of committed to the grindset. Actually, what we found is that this commitment is pretty

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much universal. Younger people and older people articulated it slightly differently, but among

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the people that we talked to who were, you know, maybe had had longer careers, the sort

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of narratives of sacrifice and, you know, how it was all worth it, you know, they sort

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of lived in these terrible conditions for a long time and they were really hustling

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and they were really grinding and they were taking all the work that they could, but it

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was all worthwhile, is for me part of the problem. You know, if the people who are then

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directing hiring practices, thinking about promotions, are the same people who have this

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belief in the sort of validity of their suffering, then, you know, you have to start to wonder,

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is this one of the key ways through which younger people continue to get exploited?

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Arts, this kind of sort of working with that, do you think that there is, though, a sense

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that for younger folks the opportunities are different and the support structures coming

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out of, you know, 30 years of neo-kind of liberalism, 15 years of austerity perhaps,

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student debts, the support context is more fragile now. We often hear about the golden

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age perhaps in the UK of when people could go to art kind of school and be on the dole

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and, you know, was there ever, I mean, is your research showing there was a golden age?

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So the clearest example, I think, of the difference between maybe somebody who's working in, say,

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in a creative job who's 25 versus somebody who's working in a creative job who's 55,

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the clearest difference is whether they did an unpaid internship or not, or to be honest,

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whether they did three, four, five, six unpaid internships. We see quite big differences.

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I'd be interested to hear your own experiences in this part of the world about this experience

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of unpaid internships, where we found that professions that were more sort of associated

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with employment contracts, so, you know, less to do with freelancing, film and TV, but also

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fashion is quite a clear example. People were working unpaid under fairly formal contracts

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for long times. When we spoke to people who were working in these same industries, who

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were maybe in their 50s, they hadn't had that experience. They were being paid for their

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work for quite a bit longer. But at the same time, I think it's important to slightly torpedo

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the notion of a golden age. When you see what Judy Dance says, and when you see what a lot

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of actors, this is quite prominent, this idea that if you were training in the 70s, it was

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a much more mixed environment. People from lots of different kinds of backgrounds were

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much more likely to succeed, and now it's marginalized people are much more locked out.

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I'd say two things. The first is, say that's people of color who were trying to succeed

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in the 1970s in Britain. I think most of them will see through that pretty quickly. But

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the second, this is a slightly boring technical point, but I'll take you through it anyway,

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is that the social structure in Britain has changed really significantly. In, say, people

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my parents age, who were, some of my parents were born in the 1950s, the majority of those

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people grew up in households where the main income owner was working in a working class

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job. Manufacturing, mining, these sorts of industries were much, much bigger in, say,

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the 1950s. I was born in the 1980s, and in the 80s, you were much more likely to have

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grown up in a household, and not everyone was, but you were much more likely to have

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grown up in a household where at least one of the people was working in a middle class

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job. And so while it's true that there are far more people working in the arts from middle

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class backgrounds now than there were a few decades ago, this isn't because the arts

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has got particularly worse. This is because Britain is dreadful. And so while it is true

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that the arts has become more socially exclusive, that's because Britain has got more socially

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exclusive. And that just sort of points to the other question around social mobility.

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Yeah. A lot of talk around social mobility, and are you seeing, your research would show

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that that is worsening perhaps, but are there fields or disciplines where this is changing?

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And I think if you look at, if we go out of capital A arts and we talk about arts and

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culture, lowercase, and that commercial and the subsidised, is there, what are you seeing

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in this?

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So for me, some of the, like it's always interesting seeing different interventions that are going

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on in different industries. For me, this is one of my least fashionable opinions. The

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organisation that does the best on diversifying its workforce in the creative industries in

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the UK is Sky. The Murdoch Enterprise is doing more than almost any of your large cultural

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institutions. And in some ways that's absolutely shocking, that it's incredible that Sky should

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be the pioneer. On the other hand, Sky, being a large commercial organisation, wants to

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recruit as many people that it can. And it's noticed this real sort of, I feel very weird

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about the sort of Harvard Business Review language of the commercial benefits of diversity,

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but places like Sky have embraced it. By contrast, so in the last couple of years, and I know

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that you share this, I've become much, much more interested in games. I've been interested

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in games for a long time as a punter, but I've known a little bit less about the games

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industry as a side to professional work. And I know there's people from games in today,

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and I'd be really interested in perspectives on, you know, because while I've sort of studied

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it and I've spoken to people, I don't have that day-to-day experience. And games is interesting

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for a number of reasons. On the one hand, among the games workforce in the UK, the gender

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and sexual diversity is significantly greater than you see in other industries. And when

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I say gender and sexual diversity, I mean that the percentage of people who are trans

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or non-binary, people who are, for example, LGBTQ+, is quite a bit greater in the games

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industry than it is elsewhere. At the same time, I think there was this idea that within

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games, because, you know, it's a young industry, it doesn't have necessarily some of the legacy

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hangovers that the, let's say, the capital A arts have, that it might be an environment

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that's more conducive to social mobility. It might have people from more of a mix of

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backgrounds than the capital A arts, and that's not the case. Percentages of people working

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in games from middle-class backgrounds in the UK is even greater than you see in the

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capital A arts. And there's lots of reasons why this might be. You know, it might be that

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if you are working in games, then you have to, like, it's, if you grew up in a household

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that had computers, that had access to equipment, then you're more likely to have got into games,

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whereas if you didn't grow up in one of these households, then it's less likely. But also,

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and this, we might as well be straightforward about this, money is important. Junior roles

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in games do not pay especially well. And so, you know, one of the things that we find,

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and I think this speaks to the capital A arts issue really strongly, that art salaries are

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bad. Junior art salaries are especially bad. If you want to get a job in London that's

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paying 18k, then I...

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How much is that in Australian dollars? That's, that's like a couple of coffees.

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Yeah, you know, like, a coffee a day and you've already burnt through it. Coffee is very good.

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I know everyone who comes from the UK says this is their first thing, but my god, the

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coffee.

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Oh, here, yeah. It's not in London.

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Oh, no, absolutely not in London. I'm very close to...

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I'm a bit shocked there for a moment.

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I'm very close to proud Mary in Collingwood and I'm there all the time. If you're, if

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you're on 18k, you cannot live unless you have another source of income.
And the other,

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you know, for some people that other source of income is bar work. For some people that

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other source of income is just working every hour that God sends. For other people, that

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source of income is the bank of mum and dad. You might be being subsidised, but directly

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through just bank transfers, you may alternatively be subsidised more indirectly by being able

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to continue to live in your parents generous house somewhere in North London. But I think

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you can see echoes of that. Like, that's one of the really interesting areas where I think

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more commercial and more capital A arts, if you like, there's a significant crossover.

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And that also affects who workers spend time with in their spare time and who they socialise

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with and who their social networks are. Your research was pointing to the really skewing

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of that and the people who worked in the arts really did not socialise much beyond their

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like minded people.

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Yeah, I mean, to be honest, like, so we did some work on this, we asked people about,

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you know, who do they hang out with, who are their friends, who do they see regularly.

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00:19:18.000 --> 00:19:22.680

And the most like a lot of people working in the arts, to be honest, I hang out with

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00:19:22.680 --> 00:19:28.320

people like me. The numbers, the percentage of people working in the arts who have sort

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of friends who they see regularly who work in, you know, who work as, for example, like

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bus or train drivers who have sort of administrative roles in local governments, in sort of trades,

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is very, very limited compared with the number of artists who like obviously they're hanging

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out with other artists, but they're also hanging out with teachers and academics and these

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sorts of things. And this does, this affects how you see the world. If the sort of sets

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of experiences that you have are drawn fairly narrowly like this, the sort of struggles

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that people are going through are these sorts of struggles. And you know, I don't want to

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00:20:04.360 --> 00:20:11.080

do this down, like we're on strike for a reason. But the sorts of experiences that I'm having

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00:20:11.080 --> 00:20:15.040

are very different the sorts of experiences that if you're a bus driver, you're having.

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00:20:15.040 --> 00:20:20.920

And so I think this really affects what kind of people are getting recruited into the arts,

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but also, and you know, we'll come to this, what kind of work they're making, the sorts

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of stories they're getting told if the people working in the arts are disproportionately

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for certain kinds of backgrounds, and they want to tell stories, that's going to be informed

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by their own experiences.

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On that storytelling piece, and this perhaps bleeds into the games piece too, is this focus

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on storytelling and who gets to tell the stories. I've been working through this with the staff

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here too, is this sort of sense of, is that focus on personal narrative, which seems to

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be a thing that's been, well it has been a thing that's been very celebrated in the last

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20 years, as of course storytelling tools have become more democratised. But as you

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pointed out, the stories that get to broad audiences haven't grown at the same pace.

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Do you feel that there's perhaps a bit of a change coming through digital culture and

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sort of a shift from, this is something I'm still very much working through, is this sort

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of a shift from a focus on storytelling to this sort of broader sense of world building

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00:21:33.640 --> 00:21:42.240

where more stories can coexist, and you might see this in the less toxic realms of fan culture

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and sort of these things. I'm not quite sure.

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I'm a bit torn on this, because on the one hand I agree. Almost all the really cool stuff

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that I see is coming through the sorts of digital cultures that you describe, like a

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lot of more sort of online grassroots communities. I think that stuff is great and it's really

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exciting. On the other hand, these people are not making money. The value in creative

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00:22:06.640 --> 00:22:12.480

expression is enormous, the value in people being able to engage in this sort of media,

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it's fantastic, but these are not people who are making a living. I'm a little bit torn

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where you end up with a situation where more and more great cultural products are coming

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out all the time. The language of cultural products, I don't love, but go with me on

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this.

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But if what you end up with is a kind of two tier system where there's a load of really

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exciting work being made by marginalised people for nothing and people who are sort of playing

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life on easy mode are being able to make their living more comfortably, telling these more

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limited stories, then I think that's a challenge in itself. The other thing that I would say

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in this area is the stuff that I'm most concerned about isn't people from relatively privileged

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backgrounds telling interesting stories about themselves. We're all ambivalent about this,

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but let's face it, we all love Fleabag.

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The bigger challenge, I think, is the sense of as more of a push comes in to reflect diverse

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stories, but the people making the decisions about which diverse stories to commission

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stay the same, then you can end up with something that I often see as quite patronising. One

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of the people that we spoke to, and hers are some stories that I come back to all the time,

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00:23:36.840 --> 00:23:42.919

is a producer in film and TV who is from a working class background. She's British South

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00:23:42.919 --> 00:23:50.959

Asian. The quote from her that I think about all the time is, I don't want to make any

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more worthy stories about diversity. This is a really fantastic producer who was saying

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that she was getting fairly regular work. She ended up moving to the US, but most of

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the commissions that she was getting were like, can you make a show that's very sad?

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We're going to have slow piano music in the background. It's all going to be black and

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white and you're going to show stories about how people that look and sound like you are

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really suffering. She was like, I don't want to do that. You're not going to ask the white

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middle class guy to make the equivalent of that. He can make whatever he wants. Whereas

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marginalised people, we heard from so many people there was this expectation that the

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set of stories that they were going to tell were going to be very narrow. Why shouldn't

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they make a film about aliens?

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How do we escape from this? The book leaves us in a quite doomerish sort of sense in a

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way.

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The book, you'll like this. Originally, the book was going to come out in May of 2020.

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In March of 2020, we thought, do you know what? If we do this, we're not going to be

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able to have any in-person events. We're not going to be able to do that much of a launch.

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What we're going to do is we're going to push this back to September 2020.

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It'll all be finished by then.

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00:25:12.440 --> 00:25:18.320

Everything will be fine. If you think the doom is bad already, then when we start speculating

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00:25:18.320 --> 00:25:23.720

about what's the pandemic going to do about this, it's going to get worse. We can come

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back to that in a sec.

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In terms of what we... I know this is a bit annoying. It depends a bit on who we are.

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You are a person who runs a major and serious Australian cultural institution. The expectation

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should not be that you have to do this on your own, where you get parachuted and it's

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like you need to personally transform this organisation. It needs to be something that

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comes through from the bottom up.

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I think there are a couple of straightforward things that we can do. Some of the examples

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that I sometimes provide are no unpaid internships ever, no unpaid work experience. People really

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feel like they're doing young people a favour because so many kind young people are applying

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for unpaid work experience, but who can afford to do that and who can't?

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Salaries on every job ad, that's a huge one where if it's not explicit how much people

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are going to get paid to do certain kinds of roles, then if you're confident that you

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can make it work, if you have the kinds of connections where people can explain, oh,

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it's probably going to be about this amount of money. Some people have those networks,

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some people don't. There are a few of these policies that I think can be brought in pretty

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straightforwardly and I think there's basically no excuse to not be doing this already. But

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there is some more radical stuff as well.

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Tell me about that.

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Tell me about that. Well, because the danger is always you employ a couple of... When you

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do your next hiring round, you're going to employ a few more diverse staff and they're

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going to solve all your problems. Actually, they are going to be the people who are experiencing

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your problems most pronounceably because historically marginalised groups who may be coming in in

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their early mid-20s or even may be coming in after careers experience is doing something

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else. They need significant institutional support. One of the things that you can do

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is more pressure from... Look at who's got the money. If bodies like... And I don't want

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to put anyone under any pressure. I know this is being recorded. So the Arts Council in

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the UK, the Australia Council and the state arts councils here looking for real commitments

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towards diversity in all of its forms in practice. So audiences, workforces, governance, all

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of these things. If you've got a well-meaning but ineffective board, nothing is ever going

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to change. What do you think? You're a professional.

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I mean, I agree with those and I think the cultural safety piece for diverse workers

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is absolutely the key and it's been one of the things we've been working really hard

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on here, having had some difficult experiences where workers were put under kind of a due

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stress as representatives of an entire group of people which would not be expected of anybody

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00:28:16.280 --> 00:28:23.280

else was really a good lesson for us to go through. It was terrible for them. But the

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organisation I think is in a better trajectory now. The intersectionality issues are very

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complex and I think you're right that it is a whole of cultural sector transformation

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that needs to happen. I guess how we work is key to this too and I think the type of

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work is representative of the how we work. And I've been interested and excited at the

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rediscovery, I guess, of unionism and solidarity amongst workers. I think it's been really

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positive. I think particularly having spent some time in the US, I've been surprised

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at that resurgence. Of course, here we are a unionised staff which is very important.

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But that kind of thing I think that also coming out of the pandemic or whatever phase we're

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now in, a lot of us had hoped that that would have been a transformational moment that would

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have made quick, rapid, radical change and that hasn't happened and it was unrealistic

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for us to expect that that would have. But I do feel like it has been a moment where

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people have been reconsidering what they put in to their work and that sense of working

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purely for passion has come under question and rightly so. And it's whether we can transform

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that questioning of that into policy change and on the ground change. It doesn't just

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change the labour force but also changes the type of creative works that are made, capital

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00:30:06.680 --> 00:30:14.520

A or love or case A arts and who gets the chance to be inspired by it. Running a large

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museum as you see here. The responsibility is to inspire people to become more curious

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but not to put themselves into careers which are going to burn them out by their mid kind

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of 20s. I think that's the challenge and I think it's hard.

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There is one other thing that I should have said when you asked me this originally which

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is if you have people working in your organisation who are relatively senior and everyone thinks

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they're a genius and they have a bit of a reputation for being a bit sleazy, a bit handsy

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with junior staff, you need to fire them. If you have those people and your organisation

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makes a lot of noise about how much they believe in diversity and how committed they are to

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the future of the institution but somebody with a let us see in their job title has got

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a bit of a reputation and you have to handle them so they're never alone with junior staff

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and you don't fire them then you might as well not have bothered. This is something

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that I take really seriously because I think there's been so many examples and there are

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without naming any names when there have been high profile cases where individuals have

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everything is suddenly blown up and it's become clear that somebody has been behaving badly

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for years and boards have said oh we have no idea this is dreadful. If I knew and the

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board didn't know then the board should all resign because there are two options, either

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the board was genuinely ignorant of how their CEO was behaving or their artistic director,

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you have no idea, I mean it's pretty obvious what I'm talking about. If you have no idea

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then you're incompetent. If you knew and you're pretending that you didn't know then you're

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00:31:58.479 --> 00:32:04.919

mendacious and you should resign. Either way you should resign. I think this is something

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that's maybe been more vivid in commercial organisations where there's been high profile

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people with very bad behaviour, a lot of whom are still in post. If you have a staff EDI

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group and...

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Well can you just unpack that acronym?

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00:32:23.320 --> 00:32:27.560

Oh yes, one of the things that we agreed before this is that any time I use an acronym and

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I don't explain it. EDI is equality, diversity and inclusion. EDI is a kind of language that's

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used fairly extensively in the UK, I don't know how widespread it is. It's something

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that I've never felt that enthusiastic about. Academics tend to use the language of inequality

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but I can understand why wanting to frame things more enthusiastically. But yeah, if

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you're an organisation that has a director of EDI and simultaneously has a COO who you

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have to keep away from junior staff whenever there's a drinks party, you might as well

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00:33:07.879 --> 00:33:11.320

not have bothered. Sorry, that wasn't an answer to your question but it's important and I

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always want to bring it up.

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00:33:13.320 --> 00:33:22.639

So, well I guess the last piece before I guess we throw to the audience is, you know, do

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you think COVID has created a moment for more change or has that moment already passed?

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Do you feel optimistic about the structural changes that may be coming? I mean, we've

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re-elected a progressive state government here, we've elected the first progressive,

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semi-progressive federal government in more than a decade. We will have a national cultural

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policy for the first time in nearly 25 years. The UK is maybe entering a period where there

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might be change, having had the false dawns of that change before.

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Two years to go.

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Counting down.

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00:34:02.880 --> 00:34:03.880

Yeah.

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00:34:03.880 --> 00:34:08.480

Will it happen and will that actually bring the kind of transformation that's needed

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00:34:08.480 --> 00:34:15.240

or is this, this feels much deeper rooted and it feels very much bound up in what we

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00:34:15.240 --> 00:34:20.639

get to call arts and who gets to call it arts?

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00:34:20.639 --> 00:34:26.800

So God, where to start with COVID? I would say, so the first thing I would say is that

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we had a really significant scarring effect in the UK at the start of COVID where we found

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that people who were in their 20s, who were creative workers at the start of COVID, were

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00:34:40.760 --> 00:34:46.040

very likely to drop out of the workforce and not come back. The number of people who were,

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they'd maybe graduated from college, they'd maybe sort of like were trying to make things

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work but it was in that sort of precarious period, their contacts weren't necessarily

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great. And under other circumstances, they might've made it work. Those people have dropped

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out and they've not come back. And that's, I think it's really important to acknowledge

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00:35:03.680 --> 00:35:08.120

that what some people had a fairly rough pandemic, maybe they were working on their own, they

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00:35:08.120 --> 00:35:12.319

were on limited incomes. Some of those people have been able to come back and others have

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00:35:12.319 --> 00:35:16.680

gone completely. And that's like a really dangerous scarring effect.

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My anxiety about digital, so I'll give you a quick vignette on this.
During the pandemic

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in the UK, the National Theatre, which is a very large London based
organisation, had

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for a long time been running something called NT Live, where broadcasts
that they were,

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shows that were taking place in the big room on the South Bank would
also be broadcast

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into cinemas. So they had a significant back catalogue of this and they
were able to develop

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a programme called NT at Home, where people were able to watch these
excellent productions

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and they really are good, these excellent productions at home.

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A concern that I have is that one of the effects of this is that digital
broadcasting of certain

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kinds of performing arts, I think a lot of organisations have been told,
this will solve

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all your problems. You can now get audiences from all over the world,
whereas previously

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00:36:08.240 --> 00:36:12.520

you were primarily drawing from where you are. And what's actually
happened is that

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00:36:12.520 --> 00:36:19.800

everyone's watching NT at Home and that people's local institutions are
really, really struggling

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because they haven't got that huge level of investment that major organisations have

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had.

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00:36:25.520 --> 00:36:32.280

At the same time, I think one of the effects of COVID, and this has been a bit mixed, is

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to really make a stop and think, what the fuck are we doing? We've been behaving like

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00:36:37.120 --> 00:36:41.960

this for such a long time, nothing's ever really changed. We're all really trying. One

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00:36:41.960 --> 00:36:48.920

of the ongoing stories of policy interventions in inequalities in creative work is that none

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00:36:48.920 --> 00:36:54.040

of them really do anything. There are exceptions. I have a long-standing relationship with an

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arts charity called Arts Emergency about whom I cannot say enough positive things, but they're

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the exception rather than the rule. And so I think that kind of radicalism of, look,

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we feel like we've tried everything, we've been tinkering at the edges, now we need to

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tear the whole thing down and start again. Whether a general election in 2024 will do

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that or not, I think we don't want to set ourselves unrealistic expectations. But give

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it two years. I think we might... I think as you say, what's really exciting is this

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like thinking about programming, because part of the problem had historically been that

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you might try to attract a more diverse audience, you might try to attract a more diverse workforce,

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but ultimately the stuff that cultural organisations were putting on was basically the same. And

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the expectation that if you put on another production of Turo and Dot, but if you just

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change your marketing strategy, that's going to bring in a completely different set of

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00:37:46.440 --> 00:37:52.920

people was never realistic. And so where there are changes to programming, I think that's

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00:37:52.920 --> 00:38:00.720

where there's potentially real opportunities. Yeah. That's certainly... I would certainly

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agree with that. And the kind of T-Live example is interesting because I think in working...

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my background in the digital space would suggest that what has happened in the digital space

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even before the pandemic was it does tend to be a winner takes all environment. It's

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been very much the case, the platformisation of the web over the last decade as well. And

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the bigger brand, the branded arts will crowd out the smaller. It's an infrastructure piece,

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it's a capabilities piece and it also becomes then a salaries piece in that the small art

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halls cannot recruit the staff needed to do the work to make the competitive thing in

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that space. And the question is, should it be competitive and how do we build a... I

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don't want to say this, but more decentralised form of digital that would allow for smaller

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scale things to work and be supported. Yeah. So speaking personally, the art form that

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I got most into during the pandemic, I don't know if anyone else had a similar experience,

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was Twitch. There is an Australian mime called Tom Walker, who I don't know if people are

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familiar with his work, who during the pandemic moved to Twitch where he played American Truck

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Simulator and European Truck Simulator. He plays video games. They would call it a simulation.

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There is no fun in American Truck Simulator. You are playing as if you are genuinely an

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American Truck Simulator getting from origin to destination. I think Twitch is such an

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interesting counter example where, obviously, I'm not an expert. I'm only talking from my

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experience from having watched a lot of things. While there are still a handful of huge players

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who with these enormous revenues and I think in a lot of cases, very, very poor behaviour,

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there's a long tail. There's a long tail of people doing quite interesting, quite confrontational

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work with diverse audiences. I have never found myself on a Discord with more trans

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people than on the American Truck Simulator related Discords. It's cool. I wasn't expecting

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to get to an American Truck Simulator today, but I think more than anywhere else, I have

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seen exciting work take place on Twitch because it is people working with digital as digital

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rather than trying to translate other art forms into the digital space.

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So that born digital practises still may offer some hope towards a more diverse group of

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cultural practitioners. I worry that we get back to that same issue we got to very early

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on around there being two tiers, a large semi-professional amateur, long tail and this giant professional

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head that crowds out everything else.

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Yeah, there's always a danger of getting overexcited about new art forms. This idea that, because

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we saw it with YouTube, the idea that YouTube is going to be this enormously democratising

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force and actually a small number of people are making a ton of money off it. The reason

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why I'm a bit more optimistic is not that I think it's going to be more even because

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we know that a small handful of actors are just going to make truckloads of money off

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YouTube. It's more that I think one of the things that's exciting for me about this space

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is the barriers to entry are so low and it's really giving people an opportunity to try

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things out and fail.

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One of the case studies that came out a lot with the people that we spoke to is losing

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thousands of pounds at the Edinburgh Fringe. And you know, they're at like similarly here

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obviously there are major festivals where performers are losing a lot of money when

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they're taking risks. Occasionally I talk to Australians who try to do an Edinburgh

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Fringe run and the losses are just incomprehensible to me. Whereas if you try YouTube and it went

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badly, not that bad. And so without wanting to get overexcited I do think there's some

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opportunities there that I'm a bit more excited about.

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But do you think that the Edinburgh Fringe will still be seen as the necessary stepping

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stone to a capital A serious arts career versus the Twitch streamer, the Discord community

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manager?

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I guess the question is seen by whom. I think if you are a commissioner at Channel 4, maybe

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that's an unfair example, maybe it isn't, then for you the environment in which you

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for example meet young interesting Australian comedians probably is the Edinburgh Fringe.

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And the idea, and you know I'm sure they're doing interesting work on this, but for what

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you might let's dismissively describe as legacy art forms, the idea of being able to sidestep

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this probably isn't realistic. But what if we didn't need it anymore? What if you had

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00:43:07.319 --> 00:43:12.359

more of a mixed ecosystem? You know, I don't get optimistic very often and I'm sure my

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optimism will be crushed by reality very soon. But what if you could sidestep it? You know,

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this isn't to say that Twitch doesn't have its own problems. Of course Twitch has its

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own problems. Of course YouTube has really serious problems. And you know, in some ways

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the bureaucracy associated with large cultural institutions, at least in theory, squashes

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some of the more nefarious out there practices that we see. But honestly, if we're going

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somewhere I think that's where we need to go because we have tried for decades to fix

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these institutions and they've been very, very good at saying, oh you know we do want

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to respond, we do want to make changes and then weirdly nothing happens.

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On that note, let's open it up to you. There are roving mics somewhere, yes. Question up

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here. Rebecca.

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Hi, thank you so much for that. I'm Rebecca Gibblin. So we've talked a lot about the institutional

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cultures and the difficulties around changing those. But I suppose the other really big

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piece of this is the economics of creative labour markets and the fact that there is

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so little money that trickles down to creative workers, particularly when we look at YouTube

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and Twitch and particularly Amazon's recent change to Twitch's royalty arrangements,

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which sort of encapsulates pretty much everything that is wrong with these markets that are

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controlled by a small number of very powerful firms. They get to decide the material conditions

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on which people get paid for their creative work.

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I look at some of my friends who are artists and it's not just that they were able to do

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the internships for free and it's not just that they can live in their parents' houses.

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They know they don't have to worry about superannuation or saving for their retirement because there's

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going to be inherited wealth as well. And I know a lot of people are just not able to

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consider these jobs going in. So my question is have you given much thought to this? How

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do we get more money trickling down to the people who are actually performing the work

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in order to solve that piece of the puzzle?

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I mean this is a bit glib but the short answer is join a union. So one of the difficulties

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with the kind of areas that we've been talking about is that we've been talking about sort

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of artistic career as relatively homogeneous. And so if you are an employee working for

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an organisation then you might be able to join a union and you might be able to negotiate

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that way. If you are a Twitch streamer then the idea of joining a union is less realistic.

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I'd love it if it was more widespread but I don't want to patronise people by saying

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if you personally join a union then all of your problems will be solved.

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I'm a bit torn on this because I think as you say there's a lot of money. I think there's

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often a temptation to think there is no money in creative work and there is, that it's just

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concentrated in certain places and not others. I also think there's often a temptation to

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people often boo Spotify as if Spotify is the central problem. Spotify is not the problem,

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record labels are the problem. There's so many points at which money is getting sliced

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off. You've words of music, what do you think?

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I think Rebecca's done a great book called Chokepoint Catalystm recently which really

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talks to this challenge around platforms and the way that money is siphoned off at the

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platform level and talks a lot about monopsony which is the most difficult word to say almost.

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But I think it's very, I think this sort of piece around the sort of sense that they're,

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sorry Siri's going off for some reason because Siri's always listening of course. So the

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thing that, the way that platform culture now is in a kind of a devigilising and making

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freelance culture very much the norm makes it very easy for workers or creators to be

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exploited or the opacity of how platforms make money for a small class of venture capitalists

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is really a huge challenge. See I've triggered everybody's Siri here, I don't know how.

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Siri's always thinking about our book.

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Yeah, yeah. Rebecca, in your book there's a lot about this and sort of what are some

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of the ways forward for culture creators in this digital space where platforms are so

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dominant?

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Well that's the reason I was asking Mark because well, so this book's with Corey Doctorow

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by the way so I didn't write it by myself but our whole second half is talking about

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solutions, how do we widen these chokepoints out but the reason I was asking is do you

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have better ideas than what we've got? So we talk a lot.

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No.

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Yeah, so yeah of course, solidarity, collective action, collective ownership, you know finding

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ways to promote things like creator co-op so that we can control more of the means of

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00:48:41.160 --> 00:48:46.839

the production, interoperability so that you can move your libraries away from abusive

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platforms like Audible for example and facilitate some of these things. We also need to be much

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more targeted in the way that we do copyrights so that you don't have these massive rights

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reservoirs that as Mark points out the big three record labels that control almost 70%

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of the world's recorded music used to control the future of that even though they're no

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longer anywhere near as essential as they used to be. So these are the kinds of interventions

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that we talk about but you know I really want to hear other people's ideas because we need

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to urgently make changes to take back control over all of these different areas because

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it has such a huge impact on the kinds of stories that get to be told and when we look

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at industries like book publishing and we say yes that's very white, yes it's very privileged,

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you know part of that is that those are the only people who can afford to work there because

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publishers are being shaken down so hard by others particularly Amazon. So I think this

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is just such an essential piece of the puzzle if we're going to promote diversity we've

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got to make these the kinds of jobs that people can afford to work in even if they don't have

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that prospect of inherited wealth if you do have to plan for your own retirement and look

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after yourself. Yeah I mean one of the things that came up very strongly from the short

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version is I haven't got any better solutions. One of the things that's nice but also annoying

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about being an academic is that you don't have to provide solutions and you can just

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tell everyone did you know that everything is bad which I know is not. And write a book

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with the call that. Yeah one of the but I think part of why I say this is that one of

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the things that I have become quite intolerant of and I'd be interested in your perspective

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on this is tinkering at the edges where you see proposed policy interventions that you

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know it's like we're going to have this new mentoring scheme for example as if all this

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will somehow solve all the problems and it's like it won't. If you are not willing to talk

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about money then actually a lot of the kinds of problems that you're talking about are

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just going to persist because the fact that some people have got more money and some people

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don't is actually at the core of the inequality here. That when people in the past when I've

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done presentation like this and people have asked me for solution I've sort of slightly

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glibly said either build a time machine or destroy capitalism. And it's similarly not

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very helpful but in the absence of really radical solutions nothing's going to change.

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If you do want to I don't want to make this a record show but if you do want to respond

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to that so look I think I was I was thinking that way you know quite a lot and I had some

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conversations with Douglas Rushkoff recently and he's persuaded me otherwise. He's persuaded

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me that that that sort of burn it all down thinking is almost a little bit the lazy

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approach because we can't imagine how we do it differently. Now of course also it's a

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massive massive job because we've allowed it to get to this point right. But the only

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way to eat an elephant is to do it one bite at a time and I think that there are lots

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of interventions that we can start to make including demanding that our politicians give

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us copyright policies that actually support creators instead of rights holders that actually

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make it easier for them to hold on to their rights you know rights to fair remuneration

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and transparency rights so like in the European DSM directive so that you you know how your

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work's being used what kind of money's coming in from that and so on. All of these are the

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kinds of interventions we can start making. We can start freeing up energy and money that

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can go towards the fight and hopefully get some kind of momentum. That's my hope anyway.

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I'll read the book. Thank you.

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00:52:31.200 --> 00:52:38.480

Hi my name's Maria Dunn. I've just got a question in regards to looking at kind of inequity

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in the cultural and creative industries but looking at from the perspective of low art

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versus high art. I just wanted to kind of get your perspective on perhaps that maybe

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some of the limitations on getting access is that some art is just not taken as seriously

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as others and some of that art sorry in my research I did a bit on drag for example and

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some of that art has a variety of different performers and underground scenes and such

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but it's just not having that kind of connection with government grants or you know certain

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organisations support.

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Again I mean so I said the question that I always ask is taken seriously by whom because

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like I think drag is a good example of an art form that is taken very very seriously

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in some areas like from walking around Smith Street drag seems to be thriving. I had a

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lovely evening out at Molly's on Thursday but you know I think you alluded to this in

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the second part of your question where it's like is it being taken seriously by people

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with money. A government's taking these sorts of things seriously. One of the most interesting

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examples of this in the UK was we had something called the Cultural Recovery Fund. So during

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Covid when it had become clear that a lot of arts organisations were not going to have

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any opportunities to raise revenue for the foreseeable future it became clear that they

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were going to need really significant cash injections to stay open and so while you know

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the Arts Council funds some kinds of organisations and doesn't fund others the Cultural Recovery

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Fund you know the gig venue that's 10 minutes walk from my house where I go and see punk

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gigs got a six figure sum. There's lots of organisations like commercial organisations

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got money from the Cultural Recovery Fund and at the time I was really excited because

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like you know this seems to reflect like this seems to illustrate that the Department for

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Digital Culture and Media and Sports and the Arts Council seems to be really openly on

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board with the fact that what art is is not just the things that they regularly subsidise.

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And then the Cultural Recovery Fund has closed and if you have a look at who the Arts Council

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has funded for the coming few years it's basically the same as who it was before. You know there

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are some changes some people have come in some people dropped out but broadly it's very

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very similar and as you say this like I think one of the crucial elements of this is people's

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00:55:11.640 --> 00:55:17.640

ability to make a living at the start. If you I mean drag is such an interesting example

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because those outfits are not cheap. It sounds like a glib example but if you're spending

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00:55:24.680 --> 00:55:29.160

thousands of dollars on custom-made material in order to impress people some people have

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got thousands of dollars and some people don't. You know you can learn to sew but then the

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materials themselves are not cheap necessarily and so yeah like it's something that really

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concerns me that a lot of these sorts of art forms through not having a sort of pipeline

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for people at their early career stages it's you know people from marginalised backgrounds

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are getting locked out almost immediately. So yeah I share your concern and anecdotally

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it feels like organisations like the Arts Council are aware that this is a problem because

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it's not just that you have a wide range of art forms and only some of them being recognised

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for the creators but also the audiences for these art forms are different. You know like

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if you're only going to subsidise the activities that middle-class people like then of course

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you're subsidising middle-class audience. We'll see. I'd love it if that changed and

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I think it's really important for a diverse sometimes people use the language of ecosystems.

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I increasingly think the language of ecosystems is valuable because it makes us remember there

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00:56:33.000 --> 00:56:40.520

are some predators and there are some prey. We'll take one more I think.

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00:56:40.520 --> 00:56:48.120

Sweet thanks. I actually got two questions so I'm going to be cheeky. One was just towards

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the end I started thinking about I think I read actually in The Guardian about the Arts

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Council in the UK not funding like the Premier Opera Company and I was running because the

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head of the Arts Council said that the future of opera was in parking lots and estates and

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I was wondering about if you could speak to that as a just that in general because it's

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interesting and then I wanted to know a bit more about this partnership with Deakin next

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year. I'm an alumni of the Arts and Management course so hello everyone. Thank you and I'm

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just interested in if that's only with institutions or if you'll also be working with local governments

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as a part of that kind of research going forward just because I've moved from institutions

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into local government purely from thinking around that ecology point of view so I'd be

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interested in knowing more about that for next year. Thank you.

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Cool. I'll answer the first question I'll hand over to my colleagues from Deakin to

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answer the second question. Ian, sorry English National Opera. So we you know I was just

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saying this like the way that the Arts Council works is a little bit boring is that it has

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a sort of regular funding cycle where from periods of 20 the previous one was from 2018

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through 2022 the next one is going to run through to 2026 and so on. There's been a

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whole flashpoint about the fact that the English National Opera has effectively been told that

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in order to continue its very significant government funding it is going to have to

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change the focus of what it delivers where previously it's run the Coliseum which is

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a large venue in Covent Garden in London but the idea is that it's going to have to move

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to another part of the country and as you say the chair of the Arts Council has said

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that you know they're going to have to be putting on more different kinds of things.

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I have two thoughts on this. The first one is that if you are going into a competitive

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funding stream there are going to be winners and losers and brutally someone was going

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to get cut. I don't have any particularly strong opinions about the relative merits

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of the English National Opera. I'm not into opera. I'm not going to try and make an argument

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about whether I think what they're delivering is bad or good or somewhere in the middle

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but I do think that this you know this is a competitive process and the thing that I've

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been finding a bit annoying is that if there's been a sort of petition from opera people

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about how awful it is. If you think that it's anathema that the English National Opera should

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be defunded then you should have complained at the point that they were asked to apply

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for funding. It's not it feels unfair to sort of turn it you know because if they review

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that decision every single company that got knocked back should be able to say do you

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know what if you're going to review their application you should review ours as well.

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At the same time the claim that opera should be taking place in car parks and in other

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places feels a bit like motivated reasoning to me. It feels a bit like you've been caught

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on the back foot and you're trying to come up with a good excuse and you're trying to

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say to the opera people that they need to be more radical whereas actually what happened

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is you couldn't fund everything and they just were unlucky. You know you mentioned the idea

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of them being the premier opera company. The opera company the organisation that gets the

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01:00:11.760 --> 01:00:20.160

most money is the Royal Opera House. I don't understand any of these differences but it's

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01:00:20.160 --> 01:00:25.940

not as opera has not been defunded. The amount of public money that goes to opera as a fraction

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of the public money spent on music is enormous. I if it were me you would look at how much

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money goes to opera houses and you would look at how much money goes to places like the

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01:00:37.280 --> 01:00:42.360

grassroots music venue that's ten minutes quarter of an hour from my house where teenagers

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01:00:42.360 --> 01:00:46.960

who are forming their first band can play. I'm pretty clear on who I think should get

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more public subsidy out of those two.

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01:00:50.560 --> 01:00:51.560

Hillary.

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01:00:51.560 --> 01:00:56.080

Thanks for the sounds like a door open picture.

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01:00:56.080 --> 01:00:59.040

Oh I've just got to get that.

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01:00:59.040 --> 01:01:02.680

Yes so really quickly because we've gone over time. So the next phase of our audience diversity

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research we are going to be working we haven't quite finalised who we're going to be doing

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this with but it will be from with arts organisations from around Australia. They will range in

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size. So there are some real biggies who are interested in a lot of small independents.

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There will be a range of art forms including museums and we have had the involvement of

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01:01:27.560 --> 01:01:37.040

local government entities all the way through in terms of advice because they've got a very

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particular set of concerns around audience diversity. The only thing I would add just

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01:01:42.759 --> 01:01:48.100

I don't know whether this connects up to what we've been talking about but it does seem

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to me that in the UK the conversation around diversity is very punitive. So there's a stick

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01:01:56.920 --> 01:02:02.560

approach you know unless you can report on diversity outcomes we will look seriously

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01:02:02.560 --> 01:02:10.520

at your funding. In Australia that hasn't happened but there is a culture of compliance

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01:02:10.520 --> 01:02:15.920

so that what's grown up we think is that organisations you know you mentioned the word diversity

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01:02:15.920 --> 01:02:20.760

in there and people's eyes roll back in their heads because in fact it's about you know

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01:02:20.760 --> 01:02:25.580

meeting various government requirements or funding requirements or philanthropic requirements

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01:02:25.580 --> 01:02:33.040

around diverse workforces and diverse audiences. And in the process of this new of this regimen

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01:02:33.040 --> 01:02:43.240

the conversation has become locked off so that instead of being able to have a good

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challenging conversation about what diversifying your workforces or your audiences means we've

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01:02:48.440 --> 01:02:52.680

got this sort of rather instrumental view and that's the piece we're hoping to change

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01:02:52.680 --> 01:02:57.080

with this research. If you want to find out more we've got a website it's called leading

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01:02:57.080 --> 01:03:02.660

change audience diversity diversification in the arts. We will also be doing reporting

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01:03:02.660 --> 01:03:09.919

to the whole sector once we've got some concrete outcomes. Thanks.

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01:03:09.920 --> 01:03:28.320

Thanks so much for coming. I think that's a good moment to close. Thank you.

