Innovating electrofringe: a distributed curatorial platform for electronic art

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Innovating Electrofringe:
a distributed curatorial platform for electronic art

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This thesis proposes that distributed curating is a form of cultural innovation that offers benefits to community-led arts organisations. Given the uncertainty of public funding for the arts, leaders in the creative industries take personal and financial risks in uncharted, entrepreneurial territory. In response, curators and creative practitioners are utilising new technologies for production, presentation, and engagement. It is necessary to generate, test, and evaluate new models of cultural production to develop sustainable initiatives.

This practice-based research project examines the Sydney arts organisation Electrofringe to investigate current issues in the organisational infrastructures of community platforms for electronic and new media arts. Through two years of professional practice in my executive position as artistic director from 2016 to 2018, I examined the curatorial process and organisational infrastructure of Electrofringe through the application of reflective curatorial practice and design thinking. Furthermore, this thesis proposes and analyses a new curatorial model based on innovating (the organisation), distributing (the labour), and networking (the community) for future use by subsequent Electrofringe personnel. The analysis is based on observation, action, and reflection across four key Electrofringe events.

This research generates applied knowledge regarding how to distribute curatorial practice by developing new means of sharing agency with others and identifying methods of using proprietary and open-source tools for supporting distributed curation. The outcomes of the research provide a comprehensive guideline with theoretical groundings and practical realisations, which contributes evidence to the emerging research field of contemporary curatorial practice and offers a sustainable model for community-led arts organisations.

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Acknowledgements

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Preface

The motivation for this project emerged from co-producing underground media arts events, living in artist communes, and creating interactive artwork in Australia, Europe, and the USA from 2010 to 2016. Although this was a productive period, it was not until my graduate research that I began analysing my practice and the people and technology I interacted with. From my experience in working with several community arts initiatives internationally, I noticed little interpersonal reflection in leadership positions and a lack of organisational foresight in such a rapidly changing techno-socio-economy.

Throughout my projects, I have been driven by a larger inquiry: what will become of society when automation and intelligent machines are the dominant labour force of our world? In Australia alone, it is forecasted that 40% of jobs will be lost in the next 10-15 years. And while new jobs will be created, we must ask ourselves what we will do in the transition. Perhaps we will benefit from becoming more engaged in community activities and a more participatory approach to the arts. This means we need cultural leaders to enable such a movement by innovating their organisations and developing new platforms that centre on community engagement. In order to partake in this, I recognised that I needed an integral reflective approach to distribute my leadership. This thesis presents approaches to curating and events I co-produced that directly respond to making Electrofringe more participatory and engaging.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In Chapter 1, I provide an overview of the study and my motivation for innovating Electrofringe. I first present a brief history of Electrofringe, starting in 1998 in Newcastle, through to 2016. I state the problems that Electrofringe faces, and how they relate to common issues in the artworld, such as funding, sharing ownership, cultural production, and archiving with sociotechnical changes. I introduce my practice-based research approach of reflective curatorial practice and design thinking, and then lay out the aims, questions, rationale, and the new curatorial model of Electrofringe. I conclude by outlining the chapters of the thesis.

'Cultural institutions should be radical and participatory, they should lie in the heart of their communities, providing moments of great joy and wonder, they should provide pathways, lead social change and create and deliver on our individual and collective ambition.' (Havilah, 2016)

I want to begin this thesis with the story of my journey with Electrofringe, the importance of the community in Electrofringe, and how its exhibition outputs are generated. I will discuss the past, from where Electrofringe has been, to where it is heading in the future. This will provide a sense of the motivation driving this study and what it takes to innovate an existing organisation to distribute leadership in underground arts platforms.

In 1997, Nick Ritar and Sean Healy joined forces with the idea of merging the rave community with media activists, hackers, and electronic artists in the derelict spaces of Newcastle, Australia. In 1998, they launched the first Electrofringe as part of the Newcastle Fringe Festival. Electrofringe was a part of the Octapod collective that went on to form This Is Not Art, the successor of Newcastle Fringe. This Is Not Art is a fringe festival that takes over Newcastle's empty spaces every year. Newcastle suffered significant economic struggles in the early 1990s and again in 1999 when the steelworks closed. Although Newcastle gradually recovered from both recessions, after 15 years of events, and more than 20 producers, Electrofringe festival started to decline in participation and lacked sustainability to run on minimal funding. Therefore, Electrofringe relocated to Sydney for better prospects and to ideally reconnect with the community that had also moved to Sydney from Newcastle. While the exhibition format continued, there were two significant problems with this move: the reconnection with the community was moving slowly, and struggles for funding and cultural recognition continued.

During my interview for the position of artistic director of Electrofringe, I proposed a plan to innovate the festival platform by transforming Electrofringe into a technology-enabled community. Whereas Electrofringe emerged organically as a community in the early days, I had to implement a strategy to encourage a new community to form, to rebrand Electrofringe, to restructure the organisation, and to bring back its roots of openness. Starting my master's concurrently with beginning my position as artistic director with Electrofringe allowed me to determine the problems

with the organisation and how they align with critical issues in the artworld: namely, closed institutional systems and exclusive cultural production. However, innovation relies on rethinking weaknesses and strengths. Therefore, I quickly shifted my lens from the problems of the community to its possibilities to encourage a collaborative and connective community of peers and boost entrepreneurial confidence to bring the artists' and communities' ideas to life, which is needed in our current era of diminishing public funding. My goal with Electrofringe, and throughout the master's, was to create the conditions for diverse communities to thrive and to be sustainable despite the growing pressures of funding, increasing censorship, and the division of labour.

The strategy I developed to tackle the problems of participation in cultural production and distribution of labour, were based on my own experiences, interests and commitments, as well as meeting the commitments of other people in the community. I further developed and articulated this vision with my findings from reviewing Electrofringe's documentation and written material, my experience attending Electrofringe events in 2009 and 2010, and my conversations with the new team and former co-creators. As the director of the organisation, I proposed the four values of shared space, open platform, knowledge sharing and greater connectivity to the leadership team, and they were keen on implementing the new vision for Electrofringe.

Shared space
Face-to-Face through meet-up's, workshops, labs, networking

Open platform
Opening up the organisation to community, non-selective entry, and free cooperation

Knowledge sharing
Ideas sharing, fostering collaborations, peer mentorship and soft-infrastructure that supports creative communities

Greater connectivity
Better use of communications platforms, technical and social networking, streaming of events

Figure 1: Four values

Providing shared physical and virtual space over an extended period of time is important for encouraging and maintaining inclusivity. For the community to be able to share ongoing spaces beyond the main showcases, I proposed meetups, workshops, labs (co-working spaces), and online networking. Openness encourages communities to participate in decision making and provides practitioners freedom of expression which is important to autonomous and decentralised arts organisations. Open platform allowed community members to share labour through cooperation and distributed leadership, and provided an alternative to the rigid selection criteria that Electrofringe and other local exhibiting platforms held. Knowledge sharing is fundamental to encourage participation and strengthen meaningful engagement among people. Developing an infrastructure that encouraged the sharing of ideas, supported collaborations, and enabled mentoring amongst each other meant that we were engaging in reciprocity and meeting the community's commitments to Electrofringe. Making use of new technologies for greater connectivity is essential for improving the networks of organisations, not just for continuing their function. I had to implement smarter use of existing communications tools and propose new tools to carry Electrofringe over into a strengthened digital and networked space.

Articulating my values as a practitioner and aligning them with the organisation's values and needs provided the evaluative criteria for my decisions and actions in practice over the course of this research. In terms of "reflective practice" these four values can be seen as an articulation of my "appreciative system" – the means by which I judged the successes of my actions in the context of innovating (the organisation), distributing (the labour), and networking (the community). In Chapter 2.1.3, I discuss in detail how these values were crucial to my appreciative system based on Muller's reflective curatorial practice (2008) and Schön's reflective practice (1983). Evaluating practice against these values guides the discussion sections in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

1.1) Domain of Problem and Possibility

There is an opportunity to innovate and generate new forms of cooperative cultural production, i.e. the social conditions of the artist's production and consumption (Bourdieu, 1993), considering the discourse of post-work network cultures and information economies (Scholz & Schneider, 2016). During the past thirty years, international electronic art events and art institutions have responded to this need by making significant, strategic changes to address cultural and practical issues associated with the selection, presentation, and archiving of new artefacts and how the public engages with this process (Byrne & Kelliher, 2015). Artists are not only using new technologies for production, but they also use these tools to publish and experiment with how their work can be interacted with, taking curating as a self-initiated activity (Krysa, 2015). Artists are driven to engage with audiences by taking control of how their work is accessed (Murchú, 2016), and social networking platforms provide channels for this direct artist-audience interaction. But who owns the power of these platforms, and who is being empowered by this form of networked audience engagement?

Technology-enabled social networks for art grew from sociologist Niklas Luhmann's systems thinking and the military's analysis of systems theory (Burnham, 1968), which, conversely, was popular in art and counterculture in the 1960s. Roy Ascott's networked and cybernetic art was built on Jack Burnham's theories of 'systems esthetics'. Burnham's proposition of a systems aesthetic expanded the domain of art, and within this system, a self-aware practice must question the relationships between oneself, one's environments, and everything in one's environments (Burnham, 1968). Ascott's (1984) anecdotes explain how networking amongst artists worked in the early days of telematics and how it offered a new form of communicating, revealing the artworld as a complex, distributed system that accommodates nodes from different parts of the globe. Network theory, as further explored in Chapter 3, attempts to provide an insight into contemporary society, as to how interaction can enable a sense of freedom, as well as the critical reminder that freedom is always determined by the system in which it is situated (Nichols, 1988).

Members of creative social networks tend to self-organise their communities in the online environments of digital systems, but they do this by using the functions

already provided, such as blogs, social networking platforms, and peer-peer communities (Smite, 2012). These members and digital systems can be described as agents, which are human and non-human producers of a product or social system. Peer-to-peer (P2P) thinking, advocated by the P2P Foundation, attempts to develop a strategy for freedom of self and society by considering the emergence of distributed networks (Bauwens, 2005). The current expansion of peer-to-peer communities provides many advantages to cultural production, as it allows people to share their information, talents, and resources to create more sustainable infrastructures. Varnelis (2012) illustrates how the power attributed to the curator with centralised forms of agency was challenged by cybernetics, ICT, and systems thinking, which has led to the DIY curator. Smith (2013), proposes that curators have been developing a language that has defined new forms of curatorial practice, which is similar to how other DIY subcultures that create their own vocabulary and invent their own ways of doing things. This shift in curatorial agency is reimagined by the democratic potential in networked curating (Krysa, 2015), where individuals and technological tools are actors which collaborate to produce cultural artefacts. For curating to harness the emergence of human-machine networks, the practice should respond to these specific technical conditions and understand their relations. Curators and cultural leaders have the power to play an agentic role in assisting people to adopt and to foster criticism of these new art forms. With this critical position, my research examines curatorial labour and the capacity of networks in the field of cultural production.

1.2) Rationale

My research addresses sociotechnical changes in networked and distributed cultural production, experimenting with the technology and participatory infrastructures available, and the solutions I applied to innovate Electrofringe. The organisational structure of Electrofringe, namely selective callouts for artists and leaders on a volunteer (gift) basis, tends to exploit artists and organisers. Due to increasing funding cuts from the state, many arts organisations must resort to crowdfunding as a primary source of financing. However, since the labour of running a campaign often exceeds

the rewards, crowdfunding is not a sustainable solution of public support for art and culture, and free work is inequitable in our current economic situation.

The rationale of this study is that arts curatorial platforms are built on both established and experimental technology-enabled frameworks. I explain the elements of these frameworks through an investigation and restructuring of the Electrofringe curatorial model while I was practising as artistic director from 2016–2018. If we consider innovative curatorship as an entrepreneurial activity, this thesis proposes taking risks and assuming responsibility in a continually evolving industry to advance beyond standardised exhibition models.

1.3) Research questions and activities

The research asks:

How can the Electrofringe curatorial platform be more participatory and engaging?

The thesis structure follows the three sub-questions that support the primary question:

1. Why should the Electrofringe curatorial platform be innovated?
2. What are effective approaches to encourage curatorial participation?
3. Which networking tools can facilitate creative community engagement?

The research approach is practice-based and conducted through reflective curatorial practice (Muller, 2012) and design methods, which are covered in more detail in Chapter 2. Throughout the study, four major curatorial outputs were produced. I address the questions through these activities but also through theoretical development throughout Chapters 3, 4, and 5. The major activities were as follows:

◊ **EF16 Showcase of Creative Technology**, 22–23 October 2016, 107 Projects, Sydney. The two-day, semi-selective showcase presented electronic artwork, including custom instruments, audiovisual performances, and workshops from 33 participants. I co-produced EF16 with Caitlin Gibson and Andy Huang. EF16 was supported by the City of Sydney.

◊ **EF17 Art + Technology Showcase**, 4 November 2017, 107 Projects, Sydney. The one-day, non-selective showcase presented electronic artwork, including VR exhibits, audiovisual performances, and workshops from 30 participants. I co-produced EF17 with Jessica Kirkby and Kelly Hayes. EF17 was crowdfunded and supported by ARC UNSW Art & Design.

◊ **ElectroLab Pop-Up Space for Electronic Arts**, 1 February–31 May 2018, William Street Creative Hub, Sydney. ElectroLab was a large, temporary space allocated to co-working and as a meetup venue for Electrofringe community. ElectroLab was crowdfunded and rent was subsidised by the City of Sydney.

◊ **EF18:** *Your Privacy is Very Important to Us*, 15 September 2018, 107 Projects, Sydney. The one-day, semi-selective showcase with external workshops presented electronic, new media, and sound art from s 30 participants. EF18 was produced by Ellen Formby, Sally Lewis, and Patrick Diment. I mentored the new team as well as leading the fundraising. EF18 was crowdfunded and supported by the City of Sydney.

EF16	EF17	Electrolab	EF18
Experimentation	Implementation	Facilitation	Handover
Curating, branding and design, fundraising and videography	Distributing curating, co-designing, fundraising and videography	Management of the lab, coordinating meetups, and participating in activities	Mentoring EF18 leadership team, fundraising and developing a wiki toolkit

Figure 2: Practice activities

Figure 2 illustrates the key practice-based activities and responsibilities of my curatorial research on Electrofringe from August 2016 to October 2018. In between and succeeding these four projects, my practice involved iterative stages of website design, coordinating meetups, technology testing, crowdfund campaigning, and wiki-toolkit

development, which were integral to the development of these outputs. It began with experimentation in 2016 through curating the EF16 showcase. The reflection-on-action of this experiment led to action plans with which I started to re-design the curatorial model for 2017 and implemented it for the EF17 showcase. As a response to EF17, I managed and facilitated ElectroLab over four months in 2018. During this time in the lab, I began the handover of the organisation and mentored the new team to produce the EF18 showcase. The final stage is in opening the wiki-toolkit for public contributions. There is documentation of these practice activities at (URL https://www.circuitboard.im/ef-outputs 8/12/18).

Throughout this period, I worked with three rounds of teammates due to the overlaps in our handover periods. In August 2018 I handed over the Electrofringe artistic director position to Ellen Formby, who works with the new co-producers Sally Lewis and Patrick Diment, but I remain in the community as a peer mentor.

1.4)   Chapter outlines

Chapter 2: Practice-based research design

This chapter outlines the research design which introduces the two main methodological approaches I have combined: reflective practice and design thinking. I establish which techniques from these approaches I employ in the study and contextualise the overall approach of practice-based research. Finally, I explain the theoretical framework of distributed cognition, which impacts the study through analysis of human and non-human interactions.

Chapter 3: Why should the Electrofringe curatorial platform be innovated?

This research question leads the inquiry of this chapter. Firstly, I provide a reason to innovate Electrofringe based on the literature of network theory and distributed aesthetics. The second part is a review of my practice-based activities which respond to innovation strategies, and I introduce the innovated curatorial model. I conclude with a discussion of how innovation through distribution meets the four values (shared space, open platform, knowledge sharing, and greater connectivity).

Chapter 4: What are effective approaches to encourage curatorial participation?

In chapter 4, I present examples of alternative and entrepreneurial approaches to curating and presenting electronic art to demonstrate how collaboration and sharing labour are viable approaches to distributing curating. I then describe the methods I have employed for exhibition-based collaboration activities for Electrofringe and present the information I gathered during reflective curatorial practice. I conclude with a reflection that discusses my shared agency and the implications of distributing leadership in Electrofringe through the four values of my appreciative framework.

Chapter 5: Which networking tools can facilitate creative community engagement?

In Chapter 5, I focus on digital systems and technological agents which can support distributed curating. Secondly, I survey collaboration technology and social networking platforms used in this study through my autoethnographic position. I conclude with a discussion of how agency is shared by introducing new tools and how these results contribute to the values of the study.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

I begin the conclusion by outlining a synopsis of the study, which provides the basis for answering the central research question, 'How can we make the Electrofringe curatorial platform more participatory and engaging?' I then explain how I used the three sub-questions to develop my thesis statement. The outputs section comprehensively responds to the curatorial model and its implications in terms of distributed labour, co-ownership, archiving, and networking. In the further work section, I discuss my next moves in the research direction of distributed curation and offer recommendations to other arts workers.

Chapter 2: Practice-based research design

This chapter opens by positioning my practice in the research framework. I discuss how practice-based research was produced in this thesis and link the methods drawn from reflective curatorial practice and design thinking approaches with the evaluation criteria of appreciative systems. The chapter ends by presenting the theoretical framework of the study, distributed cognition to describe activities that are socially distributed and incorporate other tools such as technological artefacts.

2.1)   Research framework

The research framework presented in Figure 4 depicts the consolidated research design of my thesis. The approach of my study is based on reflective curatorial practice, developed by Lizzie Muller as an extension of Donald Schön's notion of reflective practice, Scrivener's practice-based research, and John Dewey's philosophy of experiential aesthetics (Muller, 2008, 2012). I also practised design thinking, which offered cooperative problem-solving techniques and methods. These approaches helped me develop a critical framework for comprehending the knowledge I was producing, and I further explain these components in more detail below following the figure.
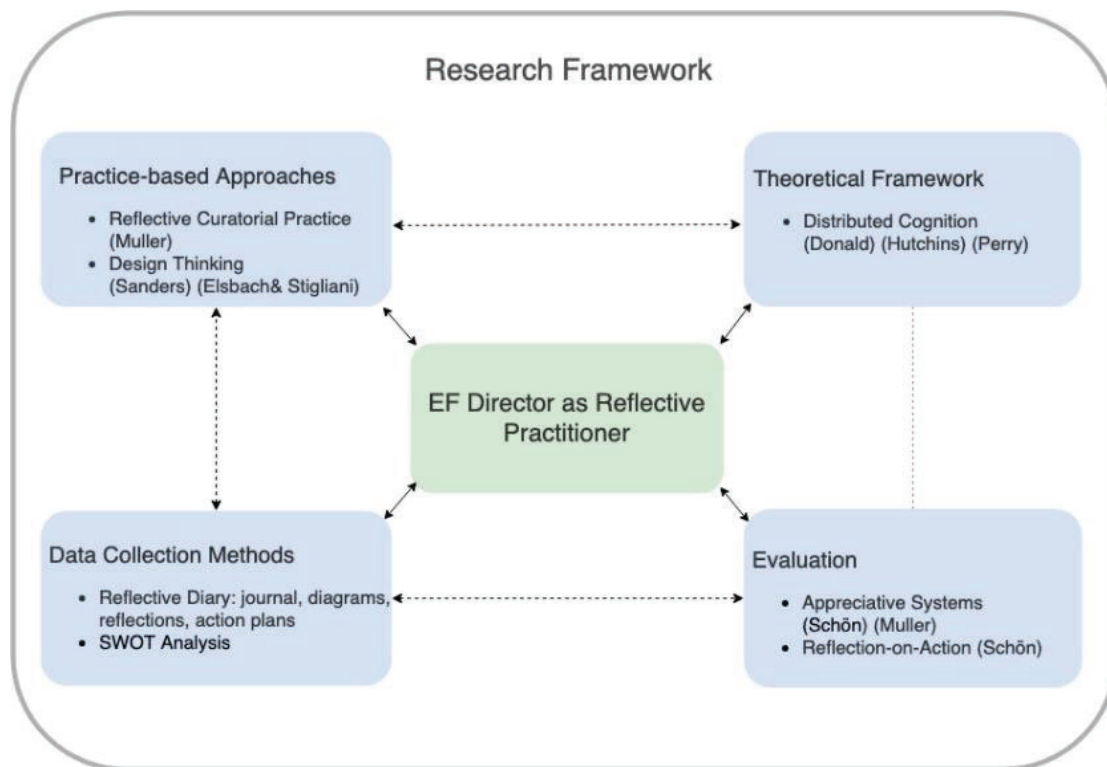
Figure 3: Research framework

2.1.1) Practice-based approaches

Practice-based research is an approach and methodology for the creative arts and professional practitioner disciplines. This approach can materialise as artefacts, but

also intangible outputs, such as curating an exhibition (Candy, 2018). In my research, the curatorial modelling and set of curatorial activities constitute the objects of practice in this framework. As Muller states, 'This movement from a focus on 'objects' to 'process' or 'situations' in creative practice-based research mirrors a movement in both contemporary art and contemporary curating. The rise of participatory, relational, social and new media art has caused a widespread reconsideration of the practice of curating' (Muller, 2012:96).

The concept of reflective practice (Schön, 1983) is an individual's reflection on his or her profession or actions and the articulation of those decisions. It is a form of action research concerned with the epistemology of practice, as we are unable to explain what we do until we do it. In reflective practice, competency is generated through tacit knowing, that is, discovering by observing what we do (Schon, 1983). Teachers and medical practitioners initially adopted the reflective practice approach, but more recently, contemporary practice-based researchers in the creative arts and design are taking from, and adapting, this method (Candy, 2011).

The reflective practice model is an iterative and dynamic process that changes to suit an individual's approach. In the professional setting, it involves a set of five phases or aspects as suggested by Schön (1983). First, the researcher formulates a research design to address his or her desired problem based on his or her past gradual discoveries. The second phase involves active engagement in the actual practices included and guided by the research design. The next phase involves evaluating the result obtained from the study. The evaluation is focused on establishing the accuracy of the data collected and the analytical techniques which will serve to answer the research question. Since each researcher's case is unique and different from the standard theoretical procedures, he or she must develop a new set of structured enquiries. The fourth phase occurs if the analysis does not answer the research inquiry due to the influence of new variables or disruptive findings and the interpretation needs to be re-designed. The last phase is iterative, where the researcher repeats the study processes with corrected procedures to arrive at new findings for more accurate results. From these findings, I have created a cyclical model that include these five phases.
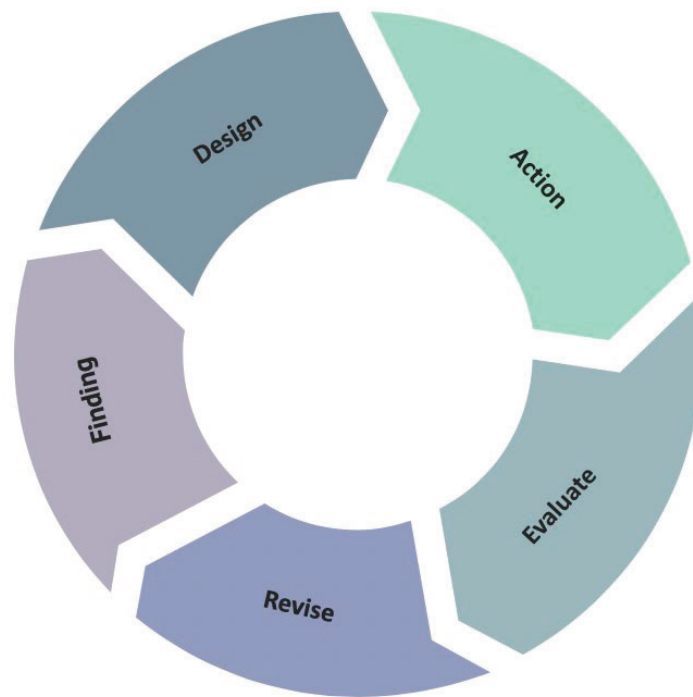
Figure 4: Reflective cycle based on Schön's phases of reflective practice

Reflection in practice-based or practice-led research involves engaging in continuous learning by critically evaluating an individual's creations or actions, which leads to a significant development of insight. Candy (2011) recommends that curators, producers, and creative practitioners use the reflective method to enhance their practice, mainly when interacting with their artefacts and other people. She suggests the best approach to practice-based research involves an iterative cycle of production, reflection, and evaluation. This reflection provides a pathway for comprehending the fundamental questions and assumptions in the creative work. As noted by Schön (1983), practitioners gain tacit knowledge by reflecting on their original actions. It is essential to encourage the application of reflective practice in contemporary curating since it can lead to the development of new ideas, forms, and artwork. Additionally, reflection-in-action develops the ability to consciously think about what we are doing, while we are doing it. The reflective practitioner must make sense of an uncertain situation that initially makes no sense (Schon, 1983). Curators must do this well to deal with surprises and disruptions. Reflection-in-action is needed to display competence in the zone of creativity (Schön,1983), where unpredictable circumstances abound.

Specifically, reflective curatorial practice is a detailed form of participatory action research developed for curators and facilitators working in creative projects to integrate their process and values into a designerly way of curating (Murchu, 2016). Muller's purpose for developing this approach was to study the audience's experience of engagement with interactive art, working reflectively with the artists to produce curatorial outputs. Practice-based curatorial research was a foundation of her research since the traditional art-historical research approach is about curating, whereas knowledge in curatorial practice-based research is gained through the act of curating in a real situation (Muller, 2012). The approach is readily adaptable to my own cause, as it allows me to study the engagement of distributing curatorial agency with artists and organisers to produce Electrofringe curatorial outputs.

2.1.2) Design thinking

Design thinking is a cyclical process carried out to solve problems, either individually or with a team. Analogous to reflective practice, experimentation in design is judged by the practitioner's progress. Using design methods, the design thinking approach redefines issues in an attempt to develop innovative strategies that were not obvious in the initial encounter (Elsbach & Stigliani, 2018). Use of the approach involves questioning issues, assumptions, and implications. Design thinking theory evolved through the work of designers and social researchers in the 1960s, such as Herbert Simon, Horst Rittel, and Victor Papanek. Anyone can apply design thinking in his or her practice to solve problems and innovate; however, leaders of organisations typically carry out the phases involved in the design thinking process to ensure that the organisation changes its strategy to attain its new objectives. This often means that the design thinking process is closed off to the community, possibly due to its limitations to respond to the larger societal context; hence, more cooperative approaches such as participatory design and co-design were formed.

Participatory design was founded as a democratic movement towards community decision-making in Scandinavia in the 1970s. Initially, the approach dealt with political and industrial issues, emphasising active cooperation between workers and researchers. These cases were based on individual experiences and provided participants with toolkits and strategies to improve upon conflict. The project Utopia

(Bødker, 1987 and Ehn, 1988) brought this movement to urban planning, and this resulted in a set of experience design techniques, proving a demand for new cooperative structures for organisations (Bødker, 1987).

Since the mid-2000s, the concepts of design thinking, co-creation, and co-design have been used in conjunction with, and have also replaced, the term 'participatory design'. This renaming was a response to the networked era, replacing a focus on the product with a focus on consumer experience (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). However, co-design has been criticised for shifting the scenery of human-centred design exploration (Karasti, 2014; Sanders & Stappers, 2014), as it focuses on co-creation over a user-centred design approach.

Different cultures have adopted varying approaches towards the incorporation of co-design methods. For instance, in the Scandinavian countries, there has been substantial support for a participatory strategy where non-designers and designers engage in games with shared objectives to generate new, innovative technologies. Organisations have project workshops where their teams share ideas, learn crucial skills, and conduct cooperative surveys of ordinary individual activities (Frow et al., 2015). These interactive sessions enable participants to collaborate regardless of their diverse origins and professional experiences in the design field. While participatory design and co-design both involve legitimate participation with all stakeholders, participatory design is explicitly engaged in solving political and ethical issues (Moline, 2017). Participatory design strategy focuses on the involvement of all the stakeholders to ensure that the final project meets the expectations of everyone involved and the users or audience. Co-design, on the other hand, places more stress on the aspects of skills transfer among experts or focus groups working together to improve the quality of a project (Huybrechts, Benesch, & Geib, 2017). In my understanding, this makes co-design a refined type of participatory design that is more pragmatically focussed, rather than ideologically driven.

Understanding the history of design thinking, the requirements for co-design, and the ideology of participatory design allowed me to adopt a more general design approach which draws from these three areas. My design thinking process dynamically included all stakeholders, such as the leadership team, artists, volunteers, sponsors,

and audience in the curatorial process to ensure that the outcomes could strive to meet our communities' requirements.
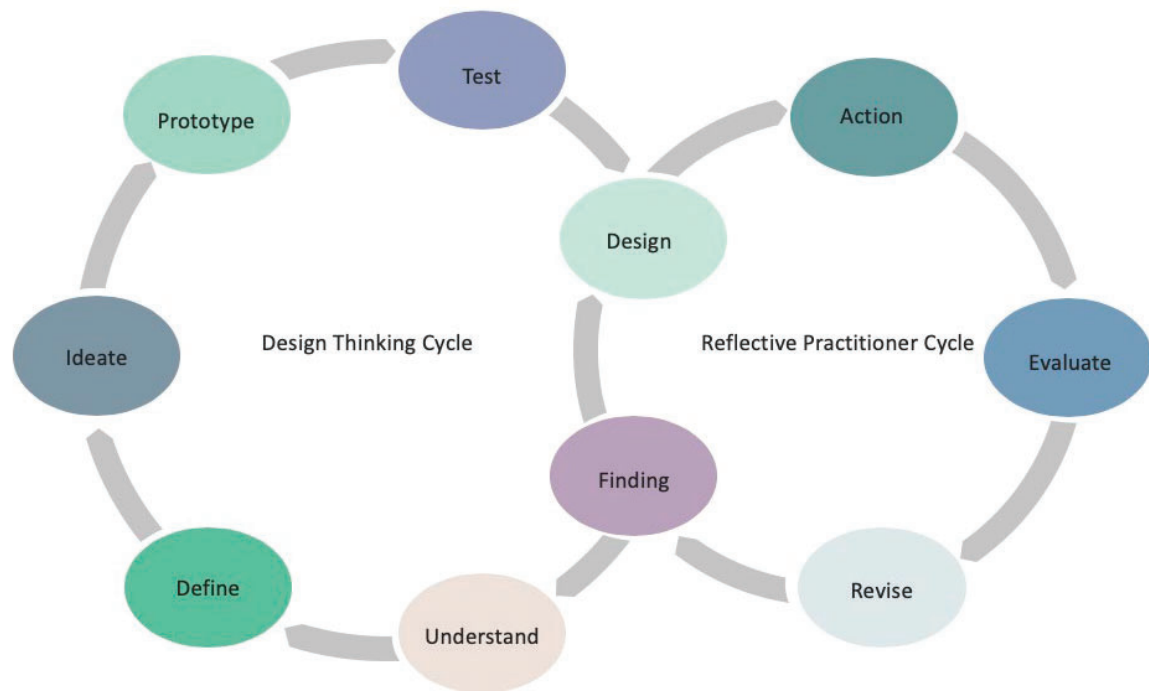
Figure 5: Reflection and design cycle

Design thinking and reflective practice map onto each other well as complimentary research approaches. A reflective conversation is a form of design, and reflective curating is a designerly practice. Both design thinking and reflective curatorial practice require an iterative and cyclical process of action, reflection, and acting again until one is satisfied with the outcome. In Figure 6, I have illustrated the cycle of reflective practice based on Schön's phases in Figure 5 and conjoined this cycle with a design thinking cycle. The phases of design thinking include understanding, defining, ideating, prototyping, and testing. This breakaway from the individual reflective cycle into a designerly approach is as follows:

- When I made a finding or encountered a problem within Electrofringe, I could, as an individual, attempt to solve the problem through a reflective cycle and iteratively improve my approach. However, I often identified the need for external support and thinking, and therefore I would step into the design thinking cycle.

- By bringing the finding or problem into a co-design or designerly scenario, I would try to understand and define the problem with other stakeholders such as the

Electrofringe team, venue, or artists, and determine which tools or people I would need to work with to make an improvement.

- As co-creators (human and non-human agents), we would work together on activities to construct the ideas, event, or plan and strategies to solve the problem or make the improvement. Members of the group or the tools used also gained recognition for their involvement.

- Through prototyping the infrastructures, exhibitions, and programs, I was then able to evaluate the suitability of the project.

- Either individually or with the Electrofringe team, we would then test the new solutions, technology plans, guidelines, or infrastructures that we standardised, and which were available to implement.

2.2) Data collection methods

2.2.1) Reflective diary

An electronic diary (eDiary) is an effective method for collecting data on reflective practice (Bolton & Dederfield, 2017). The various types of information included in the eDiary for my study were keeping a reflective journal, writing critical reflections, diagramming, and concept mapping. The eDiary also holds further information such as event documentation, creative expressions, logged information, and brainstorming.

- Journal

  Keeping a reflective journal allowed me to record reflections-in-action, which provided me with a data source to which to refer. The reflective journal could be considered a process of inquiry itself (Bolton & Dederfield, 2017), which was evident in my own reflective practice. Documenting the whole process of curatorial activity is a crucial step in reflective curatorial practice (Muller, 2008).

  Referring to the journal during event pre-production phases, allowed me to recall similar situations I had been in and how I dealt with any problems before. My journal allowed for me to express more emotional judgements, and overall was used as more of a personal reference for this study, as well as a

memory jotter, which triggered memories to write about in the critical reflections. Keeping this journal allowed me to evaluate my progress and take not of repeating incidents and mistakes.
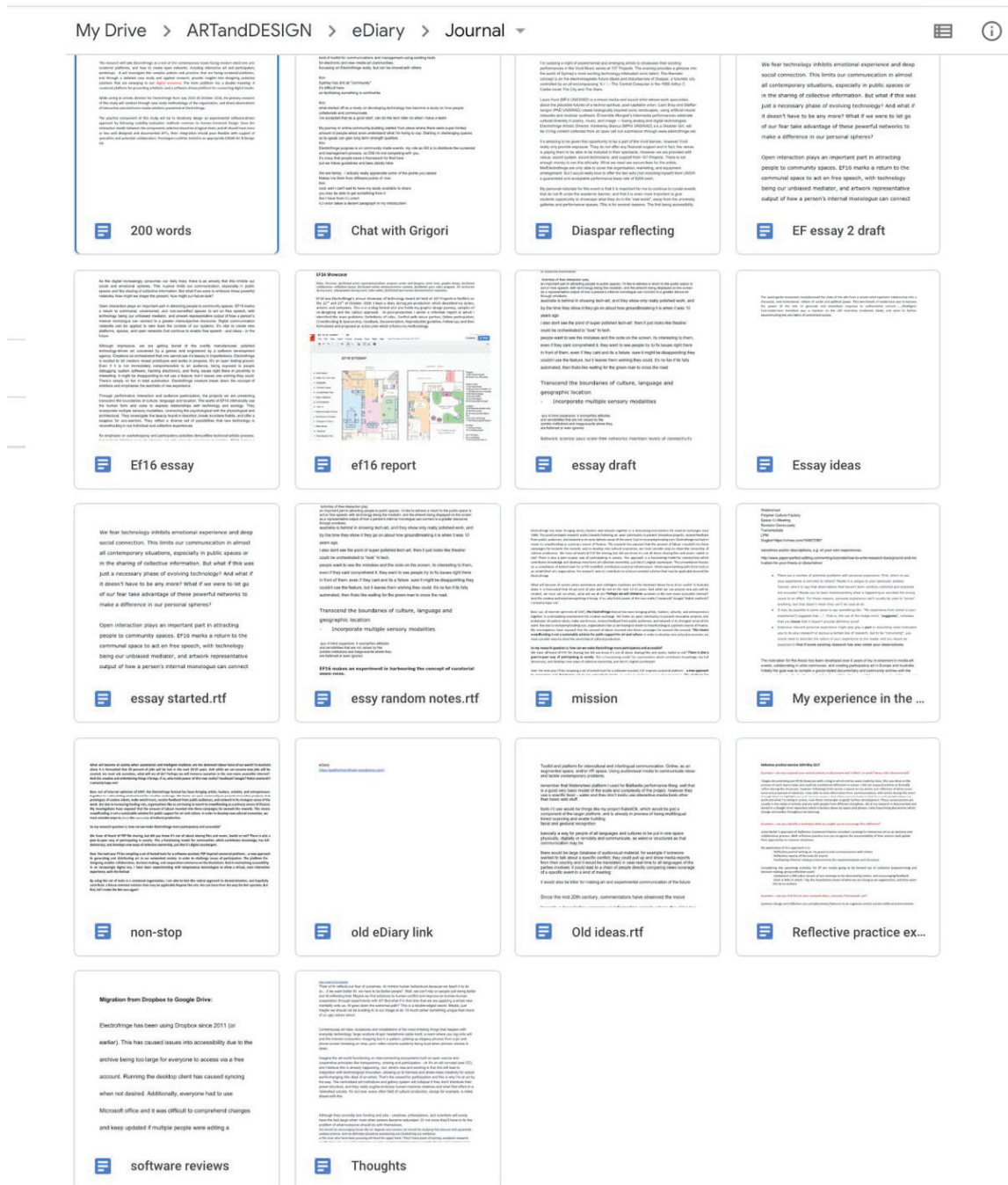
Figure 6: Screenshot of journal folder

- Critical reflections

Critically reflecting takes critical thinking and reflective practice to a more mature level of reflexivity and recursive conversations (Grocott, 2010). My critical reflections throughout this study took the form of refined considerations of the journal reflections, evaluations of my practice and of the organisation, and action plans on how to improve the Electrofringe showcases. I compiled these techniques into reflective reports that responded to the key curatorial outputs in this study. The action plans are further described in section 4.2 of this thesis.
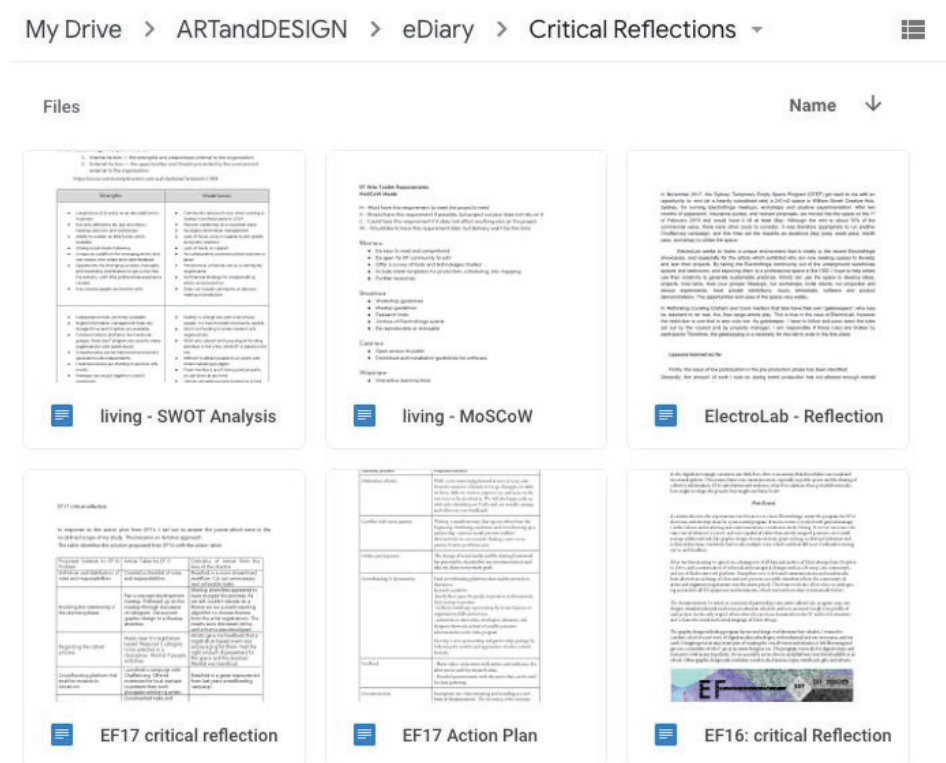
Figure 7: Screenshot of critical reflections folder

- Diagramming and concept mapping

Diagramming can help make sense of where a reflective practitioner fits into organisational structures (Grocott, 2010). Throughout this thesis, I have used diagramming and concept mapping to capture patterns of reflection and organise my ideas visually. The process of making diagrams helps practitioners engage in

reflection–in–action (Resnick & Myers, 2005). Visualising the concepts and plans were not only a brainstorming method, but I also iterated the diagrams to implement plans and strategies which supported innovating Electrofringe. Iteration was a fundamental
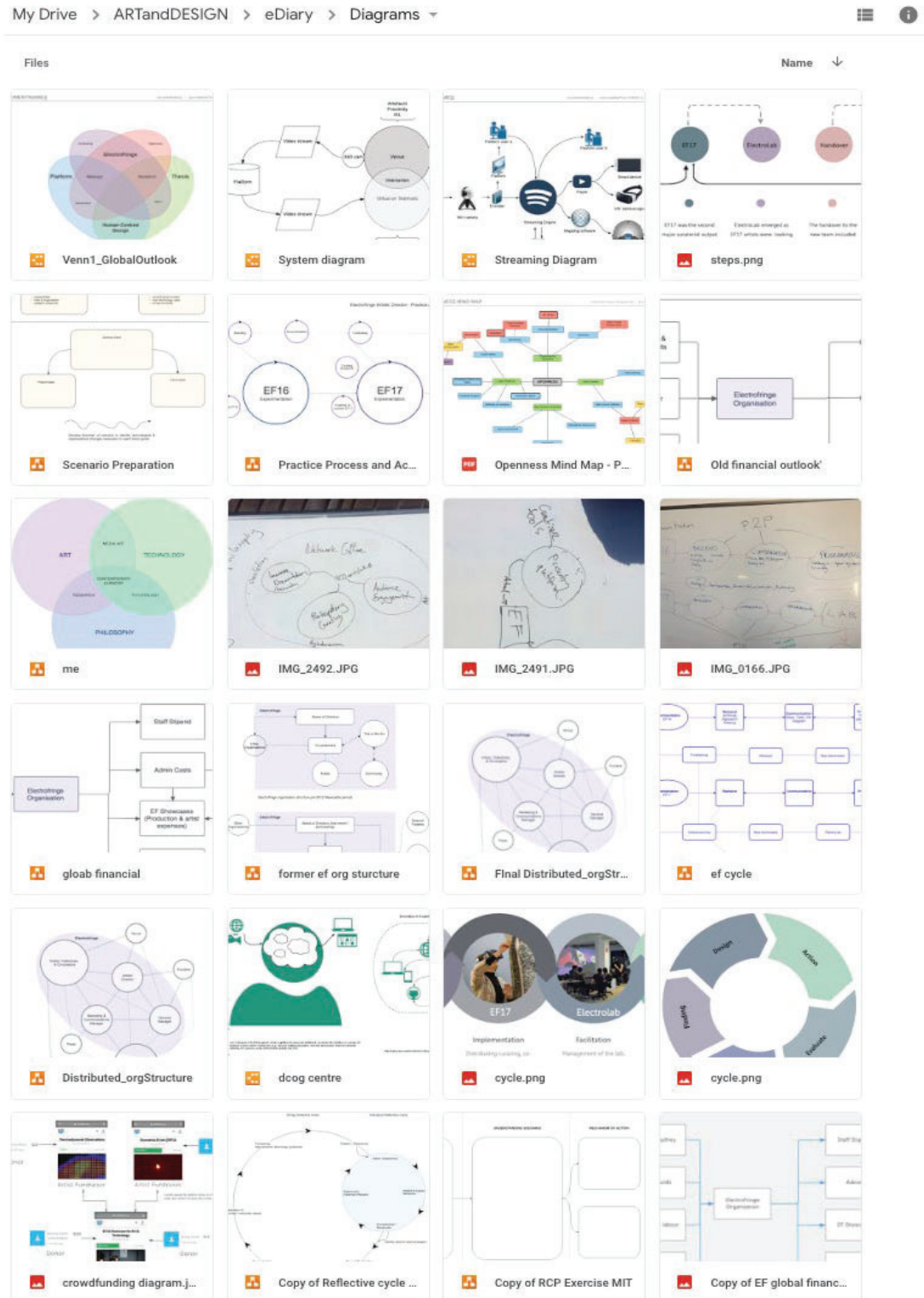
part of my process, and some instances can be seen in section 2.1 of this thesis.

Figure 8: Screenshot of diagramming folder

2.2.2) Design thinking techniques

- SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis is a design thinking method that I employed to find the strengths and weaknesses within Electrofringe's internal operations and community, and the opportunities and threats in the environment within which we operated. The development of SWOT began in the 1960s when Albert Humphrey lead a research project at Stanford University to establish why corporate planning was failing (Morrison, 2016). Largely due to its corporate origins, SWOT does not have the best reputation in academia and is often misused in management today, as action plans are rarely drawn up based on the findings (Chermack & Kasshanna, 2007). Nevertheless, when I began my research, this is one of the first things I employed for Electrofringe, as I had previous experience with this method in developing educational games during my undergraduate studies. In section 3.2, I discuss how SWOT was a useful method in conjunction with reflective practice, as it helped me to draw up an objective and critical assessment of Electrofringe.

- MoSCoW method

The MoSCoW method is a prioritisation technique commonly used in software development and project management and is another method I had experience in using during my undergraduate studies for creating interactive artwork. MoSCoW is an acronym of 'must have', 'should have', 'could have' and 'won't have', which are the categories of priority. Dai Clegg developed this technique in 1994 as the agile project delivery framework known as the Dynamic Systems Development Method (DSDM) (Kukhnavets, 2016). I have employed the MoSCoW method in prioritising the requirements for the wiki handover toolkit in section 5.2.

2.2.3) Limitations of the study

At the MPhil level, and with a primary focus on practice-based action research, it was beyond the scope of this study to do a full qualitative analysis of the organisational history of the organisation. However, this thesis provides a foundation for undertaking such a study in the future.

Initially, the research design included observations of the use of networking tools and technology available through cooperative engagement in the Electrofringe community. It became apparent that considering my position as artistic director, and the other roles I took on for the organisation such as graphic designer, videographer and workshop coordinator, as well being the sole researcher in this study, that I would not be able to make a timely, ethical and objective case study on these factors. My personal actions influenced the organisation in such a variety of ways that producing an empirical case study of the initial intended nature proved unreliable. While these aspects would make for a strong and valuable research project, I came to appreciate that it was my practice that was the driving force of this study and was most useful to contribute knowledge on considering the circumstances. Therefore, the scope of this study was limited to the reflective practice approach, working in a distributed organisation, with technology, artefacts and community to produce new infrastructures and activities.

2.2.4) Evaluation

To practice reflection at the organisational level, I examined how reflexive practitioners engage in critical self-reflection while simultaneously attending to the effect of the broader organisational context. To be an efficient reflective practitioner, I have incorporated adaptations and transformational means that consider how present sets of ideas and systems shape my perceptions. This phenomenon can be explained by the concept of an appreciative system, whereby my current standard of judgements is dependent on my experiences (Muller, 2008; Schön, 1983; Vickers, 1983).

An appreciative system is how a practitioner evaluates a set of pre-determined values (Schön, 1983). Our appreciative systems allow us to see situations as variants of our repertoire; they allow us to see present scenarios as past experiences, not as a

reduction of those experiences, but as a model for action (Schön, 1983). Reflective practice inherently relies on an appreciative system, whether that system has been identified or is generally implicit. The values of my reflective practice are, as suggested by Schön (1983, p. 163), the ethic for inquiry. Conflict situations are conflicting values; therefore, we must make our values consistent before we can solve unexpected problems (Schön, 1983). These situations of uncertainty are not technical problems, so I cannot rigidly apply to them the rules I have set out in my research framework. With consistent values, the research I had done, and the planning strategies I proposed added to my appreciative system, I could challenge the problems with a level of confidence.

The four values I clarified in Figure 1 in the introduction helped shaped my appreciative system. With 'shared space', I needed to make a judgement of what formats of sharing space were useful for Electrofringe and reflect on my facilitation role and interactions with others. With the criterion of an 'open platform', I had to be cautious of the risks associated with opening up an organisation to community decision-making and evaluating the progress of cooperation. With 'knowledge sharing', I had to ensure there was a safe support network for fostering collaborations, and I was only able to evaluate this progress through my appreciative system. For 'greater connectivity', I drew from my repertoire of technology-based creative projects as well as research on technology in the course of the study to determine what new tools we could use and what existing tools we could use more effectively in Electrofringe.

Throughout my curatorial practice, critical reflection has been an invaluable tool, since I engage in active learning from personal experience instead of solely relying on transferring knowledge from my formal education. Reflection enables me to recognise assumptions, frameworks, patterns of thoughts, and behaviours guiding actions and thinking (Hudson, 1995). As Muller puts it, 'Reflective curatorial practice reveals that the curator is always accountable to both a situation and his or her own appreciative system' (Muller, 2012, p. 105), I have expanded my own appreciative system to understand why Electrofringe should be innovated and how it can influence the greater conversation in community-arts leadership. Identifying my appreciative system has enabled me to advance my knowledge by drawing reflective ideas from

past and present findings on the content of our work. However, reflective practice is not confined only to past experiences, but also guides current thoughts that formulate future learning in matters related to the areas of emphasis and the overall research direction. Through reflective curatorial practice, I continually evaluated my present actions, responses, and past experiences to hone my research questions and points of view.

Reflective curatorial practice enabled me to grow as a practitioner. Understanding how my appreciative system shapes and is shaped by my experiences expanded my perspective on cognition. I use the term 'distributed curating' to represent this form of reflective curating in an extended cognitive system and argue that it is important for developing sustainable and future-prepared arts organisations. Distributed curating advanced my appreciative framework beyond my own tacit repertoire and allowed me to look to the tools I use and the history of how I used them (through memory recall and data retention) and reflect on the interactions I had with other people in action. I saw the potential for distributed curating and its tools to allow reflection-on-actual-actions and not merely personal accounts of those actions. When I was not able to remember something, I discovered that I could go through my digital data and analyse my moves. Therefore, I looked to cognitive theories to better understand and harness the complex network of interactions in which I was participating.

2.3)   Theoretical framework: Distributed cognition

'Art is always created in the context of distributed cognition. Human cultures can be regarded as massive distributed cognitive networks, involving the linking of many minds, often with large institutional structures that guide the flow of ideas, memories, and knowledge. Artists are highly placed within these cultural-cognitive networks, often serving as the creative engine that drives much of the enterprise. They influence the cognitive activity of their particular tribe or generation (for artists, like everyone else, are situated in space and time), both by preserving and by modifying its symbols, images, and other expressive forms. In a sense, they are one with the network: they derive their most basic ideas and techniques, as well as their inspiration, from it, and must operate within the limitations it imposes.'

(Donald, 2006, p. 4)

The importance of exploring cognitive theories in this study is that it creates investigations allowing me to reflect on the way I distribute my agency with artists, artefacts, teammates, and digital technologies.

Merlin Donald is a cognitive researcher who studies anthropology through a cognitive lens. He proposes that art is a way that human beings distinctively show their cognitive activity, which has various features including influencing the minds of the audience, occurring in the context of cognition which is distributed, and that art is aimed at elaborating the perceptions of different aspects in the world (Donald, 2006). Other characteristics of art include having a role that is metacognitive, being shaped by technology, that the positions of the artist and art are not fixed, and that art is focused on causing a cognitive outcome (Donald, 2006). This implies that the artist is at the centre of these meta-cognitive networks, and artists are the creative drivers who guide the cultural enterprise. Artists present ideas that inspire the perceptions and change the thinking of people in the world (Donald, 2006). The distributed curatorial approach I investigated for Electrofringe brings together these ideas of distributing curatorial agency to artists and other factors into a unit of analysis which can be scaled depending on internal and external influences.

Cognitive theories common to organisational and cultural studies can help describe how the leaders of Electrofringe distribute particular concepts or tasks to other agents in different ways, depending on our capabilities and the resources available. There is a spectrum of cognitive theories that describe absorption, retention, and the processing of information in a given environment, be it work, class, or in this case, an arts organisation. The theories of community of practice, activity theory, and distributed cognition provide insight as to how individuals, the environment, technology, and social networks of an arts organisation can function together and can be harnessed to create change.

A community of practice (CoP) focuses on the personal and professional development of individuals by sharing experiences and information. The people involved in a CoP interact and share their experiences and discuss areas of interest that help in building a sense of community (Pyrko, Dörfler, & Eden, 2016). Etienne Wenger, an educational theorist, and Jean Lave, a social anthropologist, were the first

people to propose the CoP approach in 1991. Organisations develop as CoPs by encouraging the sharing of information and experience among employees. Such action leads to the reflective learning of the workers and can result in improvement in performance and productivity.

Activity theory (AT) studies human actions and practices, placing value on social and individual processes. AT points to the different interactions in people's way of life based on purposeful human activities (Halverson, 2002) and aids in understanding relevant skills and people's roles. The theory provides a framework to understand the interrelationship between activities and a subject's motives and objectives, together with aspects of the societal and organisational context. The development of the theory relied on the work of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky in the 1920s together with his students, who included Sergei Rubinstein and Alexei Leontiev.

Distributed cognition (DCog) is a network and systems theory of sociotechnical interaction, commonly used in organisation studies, design contexts, computer-supported collaborative learning, and studies of communities and cultures. DCog is used to analyse activities that are socially distributed and incorporate other tools such as technological artefacts to coordinate activities (Perry, 2003). The DCog process can entail spending time in a workplace environment to investigate and determine the problems that exist with the current technology or work practices to develop recommendations as to which systems need to be modified or preserved to improve the coordination of individual activities.

DCog has similarities to the theories of CoP and AT. For instance, like CoP and AT, DCog is affected by an individual's behaviour, the influences of other people, and non-human interactions. All three theories depend on each other and involve both natural and artificial intelligence in their execution of judgements. They are processes of socialisation realised through the transmission of discrete knowledge through contextual and social means (Coverdale, 2008). Therefore, there must be engagement, experience, and participation in human activities (Fischer, 2005), and there is an involvement in infrastructure technology in embracing the activity (Halverson, 2002). DCog could also be compared to or replace AT when analysing an organisation from a systems perspective. DCog and AT are quite similar theories, and

as Zalpuri (2011) suggests, these two theories may merge in the future. However, in AT, the individual is in the centre of everything, and it and focuses on the cognitive practice of a person situated in a cultural, historical, and environmental sphere. In comparison, DCog concentrates on the sociotechnical system and places equal value on artefacts and people.

Figure has been removed due to copyright restrictions

Figure 9: Traditional cognition and distributed cognition (Nilsson, van Laere, Susi, & Ziemke, 2012)

Figure 10 illustrates how traditional cognitive theories confine cognition to an individual, with the input of information and output of more information, and interactions with other agents situated outside the individual. On the right, cognition is distributed among people, technology, and the environment of their interactions. In DCog, resources are socially shared to accomplish a group effort and its processes are spread between machines and humans through cognitive systems consisting of individual agents, peers, and other sociocultural tools and artefacts (Hutchins, 1995).

Upon comparing cognitive theories, I established that DCog was essential to the study for reflecting on the design of socio-technical cooperative work by understanding interactions between artists, my teammates, technology, artefacts, and the environment. DCog manifests not only within an individual, nor does it only describe interactions, but it distributes meaning among collaborations, tools, and mental agility. As a theoretical approach, DCog facilitated system implementation and design, and therefore provided me with a framework through which I could reflect on and analyse the various cognitive events in Electrofringe.

In this research, the functional unit of analysis is the Electrofringe organisation, which is composed of distributed agents that make up the organisations system.

DCog, design thinking, and reflective curatorial practice are complementary, and all explain thinking by doing. DCog makes visible that we perform cognitive tasks better when we manipulate things in our environment and distribute agency. Design thinking and reflective practice could be considered forms of distributed cognition. The DCog framework enables a generative theory, which is prepared for advances in the way curators integrate our social processes with other people, technology, and the environment.

Chapter 3: Why should the Electrofringe curatorial platform be innovated?

This chapter begins by reviewing the literature of network theory, peer-to-peer (P2P) cultural production, and distributed aesthetics through the work of Castells, Bauwens, Varnelis, Rossiter, Goriunova, Lovink, Smite, and Munster. With this theoretical background, I propose models for innovating Electrofringe that situate specific issues in the organisation within a broader context. I then present the design thinking techniques of SWOT analysis and diagramming I used to determine these issues and how I developed the objectives to restructure, re-envision, and innovate Electrofringe. The chapter concludes by evaluating how innovating Electrofringe through distribution supports the four values of shared space, open platform, knowledge sharing, and greater connectivity.

3.1) Distributed aesthetics

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Figure 10: Baran's 'Centralized, Decentralized, and Distributed Networks' (1964)

Any organisation can be described as an open or closed system where agents interact with each other to achieve a common goal. Looking at Electrofringe from a systems perspective reveals that before 2016, Electrofringe was, in practice, a closed system that had adopted an open philosophy. Baran's figure in 'Introduction to Distributed Communications Networks' (1964) is often used as an aesthetic and literary trigger in organisational studies and new media arts as an alternative to hierarchical models of community and arts organisations. The distributed model influenced my approach to innovating Electrofringe and gradually transforming its organisational structure into a distributed network.

Even though Baran's distributed network was designed to illustrate communication technology networks, society is also a complex system of social, cultural, and technical networks. In the field of sociology, the concept of a society that consists of networks has been used since the 1930s. These social networks refigure the morphologies of past and present societies; their constant refiguring means that participants and their interactions are continually reintegrated into what will ultimately form social changes or even entirely new social structures (Smite, 2012). Technology has had an enormous impact on communities since technological networks can positively impact their autonomy by asserting relationships among stakeholders, solidifying social relationships and customs. Technological networks have allowed the information age to reach the social constructions that were not attainable in the industrial age, and these networks are impacting societies exponentially. This impact has been evaluated for decades through the proliferation of information technologies,

particularly those used for biological purposes and communication (Luhmann, 1995). These new technologies allow for geographically disparate communities to arise, which in turn has led to the emergence of many online communities. These online spaces allow for many of the tasks of more traditional face-to-face communities to be carried out, such as the role of the public sphere. Because of these new infrastructures, networks have transformed everyday life, work, education, and culture.

The notion of the network has become a fundamental feature of society, since networks help bind people together and outline relationships and norms within society. Castells (2003) states that within the global paradigm of new information technology, i.e., the network, there is a durable material basis influencing the pervasive expansion in the entire social structure. The advent of any networked technology, whether it is the telegraph or the smartphone, has changed people's lives and interactions. If everyday life is made up of the small moments that establish a routine, then technology has an extremely disruptive power through how it transforms daily tasks. Contemporary networks mostly refer to virtual social spaces and how different entities are linked together in these constructs (Smite, 2012). Therefore, the layperson in the present day is much better able to understand how networks shape his or her life, as the networks are more usable and adaptable to him or her.

The contemporary individual is a socially constructed subject, one who is deeply embedded not only in social relationships, but also in technologically mediated relationships, interactions, and information (Lovink, 2016). Although these spaces are digital, they often represent social connections to those 'in real life', even though it reflects socio-technical systems and information. The many networked communities that have organised themselves on the Internet show how society tends to align under the same frameworks and rules whether it is digital or not (Lovink, 2016). The use of networks has transformed society through unifying people who might not have connected otherwise. Networked communities and networked publics are evidence as to the increasingly transformative nature of the digital age (Varnelis, 2012). The networked society represents social and economic dynamics as well as the technological advancements that define this new age of information technology. Our global economy is now characterised by the exchange and flow of information, along with communication that facilitates economic trade and the flow of culture.

Despite the homogenising promise of digital networks, they tend to create and reflect distinctive cultures. Outside of national customs and regulations, these online cultures live in relationship to more traditional cultures, as well as meeting the unique needs and features of online communities. Consequently, this has transfigured the power relationships in society, granting more power to those who are skilled at controlling information and at promoting the type of information that benefits those in power (Bijker, Hughes, Pinch, & Douglas, 2012). Communities have become dependent on the networks that appear as the only forms of organisation that serve their community. It is interesting how creative communities acknowledge that this dependency is manufactured by leading social media corporations, yet still remain committed to using them when there are alternatives.

Cultural, social, and technical networks have long been some of the most critical basic units in modern society, but the digital world has heightened their importance. These networks have influenced how people see the community, rather than merely providing information; they act as mirrors instead of just a pragmatic conduit of information exchange (Smite, 2012). Contemporary societies are not only characterised by technology, but also formed by their political, cultural, and economic contexts. From these factors, a network community can arise. The concept of the network community encompasses 'key people' who have the potential of comprehending and handling the existing situation in addition to working on a general goal (Smite, 2012). These key people are core influencers who can influence how information or ideas move through the network. The initiators or key people are generally assumed to circulate new ideas or issues at a high level so that other parts of the network can take them up. One among the key people is expected to adopt the role of a connector by identifying people with common traits, and engaging with them at the local, trans-local, or international level, in which the network is capable of influencing sustainability through innovation. This new conception of the network has altered societies' perspectives as they transform into networking communities, especially those with different backgrounds and perspectives. According to Varnelis (2012), the most critical question is whether the inhabitants of networked systems and communities are ready to expand their networks to reach beyond their micro-clustered worlds. Network cultures provide platforms for such interactions, but the onus is upon

the individuals and the societies to decide whether to take that opportunity to interconnect and what platforms to use.

In 2010, net artist Juan Martín Prada suggested that we should be focussing less on peer—to—peer (P2P) networks and more on social processes based on the P2P network model, to emphasise how a social organisation develops participatory social methods and cooperation in all human activity that relies on networks. Now an established theory, P2P thinking attempts to develop a strategy for the freedom of self and society by considering the emergence of distributed networks and the P2P relational dynamic (Bauwens, 2005). The most recognisable example that illustrates P2P thinking is the manner in which the World Wide Web interconnected different societies to create a global village. According to the creator of the World Wide Web, Tim Berners—Lee (2014), the Internet is only now flourishing as the open, egalitarian, and decentralised platform it was designed for, by creating a platform for individuals to establish P2P interactions. Several benefits are associated with P2P thinking in the arts. For instance, the World Wide Web offers the much—needed openness to empower people both socially and economically, and the arts could join in to challenge the closing off of the Internet by corporations and governments.

In 'The Art of Collective Coordination' (2018), Lovink and Rossiter propose organised networks as a solution of the crisis of centralised structures. Organised networks are crucial, as they are more horizontal and develop from within the communication infrastructure. Organised networks are, on one side, affected by issues of hierarchy and power and deliver flexibility and scalability, yet they also have the 'born digital' feature which results in many constraints due to the uncertain and insecure nature of their longevity (Lovink & Rossiter, 2018). The establishment of sustainable networks can spread knowledge and facilitate the development of lasting ties between different cultures and disciplines.

The study of networks covers a wide range of philosophical and social theories and should not be merely limited to creating network maps and diagrams. Instead, Munster and Lovink (2005) suggest that the study of networks should be conceptualised within its sophisticated nature and that relying solely on scientific theories or the visualisation of networks exclusively might not be the best approach towards the understanding of some critical elements of networks. The mapping of

networks has drawn on topics from diverse dimensions such as community relations and sociability instead of focusing only on traffic flows and connections (Munster & Lovink, 2005). Thus, it is imperative to look into the modification of networks as a human and cultural commitment, and not merely as an algorithm that automates connections to represent data.

There are many different ways of describing our networked society in the information age, but they all amount to the same theme – increasing interconnectivity and innovation. Whether we have or have not advanced beyond the information age, there are apparent changes in society to which all industries must respond. Organisations and businesses are continually updating and changing their infrastructures and models to keep up with the increasingly networked world. While artists and organisations have been functioning in a distributed aesthetic since the birth of the web, networks are no longer subjugated as a phenomenon of interest to create on, with, or through. It has become common practice to work within networks, and networks are embedded in our lives. It is through explicitly identifying this network perspective that Electrofringe needed to define its organisational model and have its organisational structure distributed amongst the community of agents.

3.2)   Innovating Electrofringe

In May 2016, I was selected for the role of artistic director of Electrofringe and would begin duties in July. I had already been considering a research program to examine the potential for a software–assisted curatorial platform, so when this position arose, I immediately knew Electrofringe would be a valuable case study.

The brief for the role of artistic director was to innovate Electrofringe. This involved re–establishing a community in Sydney after relocating from Newcastle in 2013, curating the programs for the annual EF16 and EF17 showcases, and developing a continuing program of events. While preparing the masters proposal, I began research on Electrofringe and made a plan for how I would align and eventually merge the two tasks ahead of me. This plan is very similar to how Graham and Cook (2010) explain that independent curators create new infrastructures or squat existing

platforms. By squatting Electrofringe, I was able to harness the existing network and reputation to solve organisational problems and make research inquires.

Historically, Electrofringe has been consistently independent of formal institutions. This autonomy makes Electrofringe unusual because often longstanding initiatives will form commercial ventures or advance into institutional, cultural sectors such as government, academic, or tourism. While not fitting into the institutional, cultural sector, Electrofringe is a node in an expansive network of grass-roots media arts organisations in Australia.

Organisations such as ANAT (Australian Network for Art and Technology) and dLux MediaArts (formerly the Sydney Intermedia Network), have had a substantial impact on Australian new media arts and also work with artists in community contexts. Many people from Electrofringe's history have been involved with these similar organisations at different times, as well as simultaneously, creating both partnerships and informal interconnections. Electrofringe, ANAT and dLux all create bridges between the Australian cultural sector and creative communities. While these organisations play varied and complementary roles in the Australian media arts landscape, Electrofringe provides an alternative opportunity to present work, which other initiatives may not consider. This is characterised by its openness and non-selective, participatory criteria for its major showcase, and these other organisations do not currently offer a comparable platform. Both ANAT and dLux are historically invested in community-driven programs with extensive opportunities for emerging artists. ANAT and dLux are also in the position to present at academic institutions, work with remote communities, and partner with commercial galleries, which Electrofringe is currently not.

The network theories presented in 3.1 attempted to provide this thesis with a constructive understanding of the dynamic ways that organisations and creative communities interact in a cultural ecosystem. It is challenging to define media arts and electronic arts culture with all its sub-categories and debates about what is considered new media, interactive art, and electronic art. Australian scholarly work on media arts, such as Toft's 'Interzone: Media Arts in Australia', tries to reposition the discussion of media arts from an arts historical context, to a discussion of *interface* and how these

artefacts can be understood in a sociotechnical system. In 'Synthetics: Aspects of Art and Technology in Australia, 1956–1975', Jones (2011) investigates the emergence of computing and how that gave rise to new tools so that artists could create technological artefacts, and technologists could create art, which lead to collaborations and cross–sharing of knowledge. While surveying artworks, these two books describe a landscape and network, with which art and technology are no longer separate entities, but share a significant history in how they shape communities and cultures through reciprocal feedback loops.

Organisationally, Electrofringe shares much in common with the organisations mentioned in chapters 4.1 and 5.1 despite their country of origin or institutional recognition. Poole (2001), affirms the international nature of Electrofringe in 'An ecology of Oz mutant media':

'The chance to reaffirm or establish links between nodes on the network seems to fulfil an important function for an electronic arts community spread so widely apart. And yet for a festival with a built in DIY ethic, and one which tries to sever the hype from the technology, Electrofringe is increasingly an International festival, with its high profile net collaborations, a growing overseas guest list and the interconnected, global nature of aesthetic and conceptual artistic evolution. It'd be silly for a data ecologist like yourself to miss it.'

(Poole, 2001)

Not only does Electrofringe's digital and international base contribute to its aesthetic, but I also found more similarities in Europe's DIY electronic arts communities and meetup's than I could with existing Australian based organisations. Jean Poole's description of Electrofringe in 2001 hardly differs from the changes I set out to make. Innovating, in this case, really meant digging up the archaeological, retro ethos of Electrofringe, and re–integrating this into the new vision.

Nicolas Low, an artist, critic, and a former workshop organiser of Electrofringe 2008, wrote about Electrofringe in Art Monthly Australia (2010):

'One of Electrofringe's important contributions is ensuring the Australian electronic art community can participate in open conversations about challenging, new ideas. Mostly this happens in panel sessions. The festival's deliberately informal

atmosphere also affords the chance to discuss works in progress and common interests outside of organised events.'

(Low, 2010)

The informal atmosphere at Electrofringe events can still be described as deliberate after 20 years of operation. It is this informality that Low (2010) describes, which has helped keep Electrofringe around for so long, and so consistent, arguably making Electrofringe unconventional in the media arts landscape of Australia.

The cultural importance for new media and technology-based art has been acknowledged by funding bodies in Australia such as the Australia Council, Create NSW, and the City of Sydney with an ever-changing assortment of intermedia, hybrid, multimedia and inter-arts categories. Electrofringe has had success with Australia Council in the past; however, since moving to Sydney, Electrofringe has been supported by the City of Sydney and other funding sources. The City of Sydney has been increasing support for local arts initiatives, especially those on a smaller scale. They are in-tune with what is happening in specific geographic locations and have a better understanding of local sub-cultures than the larger funding bodies. A criticism that members of Electrofringe have is that the labour involved in applying for Australia Council grants is not accounted for, and if approved, the vision has been restricted to fit into the Australian government's idea of what is culturally relevant. With a higher chance of being successful through the City of Sydney and other local initiatives, Electrofringe has been successfully applying for city council support, seeking sponsorships from local technology companies, and crowdfunding.

Strengths and weaknesses

Before embarking on the curatorial research, I set out to discover the organisational strengths and weaknesses of Electrofringe, to set up an information management system, to map out the structure of Electrofringe, and to improve the financial model.

To prepare Electrofringe for future activities, I applied the SWOT analysis method, which was a pivotal starting point in identifying issues and opportunities for Electrofringe. SWOT analysis allowed me to identify problems through an

entrepreneurial lens very early in the project. This allowed me to formulate a strategy of the key issues with Electrofringe through which I could further this study. Before I handed over my position of artistic director in 2018, I drew up another SWOT analysis to determine to what extent progress was made.

Electrofringe's strengths, as seen in Table 1, embody some unique traits such as surviving for two-decades on little funds, and that for an arts organisation, the community is not artwork-centred, and instead accommodates for artists and non-artists to network and share skills. The concern that Electrofringe had no centred focus was a weakness at the same time, especially when it came to apply for grants. Electrofringe was also known as a festival, however, it had been many years since Electrofringe events represented a festival format. The opportunities I identified were mostly driven by forms of social networking; using productivity platforms, social networking platforms, crowdfunding, meetups, and recognising that discourse in local government was also interested in participatory and networked creative formats. The threats are more difficult to respond to. Without more funding and resources, there is no way to control the threats, but it is important to comprehend what the threats are, and how they can either be worked around or avoided.

Table 1: Swot analysis (2016)

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Long history (19 years) as an arts platform in Australia • Not only confined to art, but also music, hacking, activism, and workshops • Ability to sustain itself on minimal funds, when available • Strong social media following • Unique as a platform for emerging artists and non-artists who create and want feedback • Opportunity for emerging curators, managers and marketing coordinators to step into the industry, with little professional experience needed • Has a familiar brand	• Community reduced in size when moving to Sydney from Newcastle in 2014 • Recruits leadership on a volunteer basis • No digital information management • Lack of focus, esp. in regard to arts grants and public relations • Lack of funds or support • No collaborative communications systems in place • Perceived as a festival, not as a community organisation • No financial strategy for compensating artists and presenters • Does not include community in decision-making or production
• Collaboration tools are freely available • Digital information management tools like Google Drive and Dropbox are available • Communications platforms like Facebook groups, Slack, and Telegram are used by many organisations with positive results • Crowdfunding can be harnessed and used to generate funds independently • Local businesses are starting to sponsor arts events • Meetups can be put together to build community • Local government is supporting participatory and community approaches	• Sydney is a large city with a lot of busy people, it is hard to build community quickly • OzCo cut funding to small-medium arts organisations • NSW arts council are focussing on funding activities in the west, while EF is based in the city • Difficult to attract people to an event with small marketing budgets • Team members aren't being paid properly, so can leave at any time • Venues are getting more expensive to hire as demand raises
Opportunities	Threats

With the SWOT analysis, I developed a set of objectives from the weaknesses section, which generated the aims that steered my practice throughout the study:

◊ Start running meetups, Open/ BYO-art environment
◊ Find incentives to generate income, through grants, crowdfunding, sharing job resources. Or re-brand as an internship program for more recognition
◊ Use digital information management tools like Google Drive and Dropbox to file and work on artefacts
◊ Re-write mission statement to explain why this is the case
◊ Find a format EF fits in
◊ Apply for grants with 'community showcase' context rather than 'festival'
◊ Try crowdfunding
◊ Implement digital communications platforms for community and leadership team
◊ Re-brand EF as a community organisation, with participatory activities
◊ Set up a crowdfunding model where all funds go to presenters
◊ Encourage presenters to be entrepreneurial and sell their work or promote their services
◊ Use communications platforms and meetups to invite community to participate in decisions.
◊ Open the callout process to be non-selective

Organisation Structure

Electrofringe's primary function is to provide an exhibiting platform for emerging electronic artists to connect with each other and audiences, and present their work (Electrofringe, 2013). With this definition, Electrofringe does not have the artwork-audience as the focus, but rather the relations between artists, and artists with the audience. This suggests that the purpose of the Electrofringe organisational team is to be facilitators and enablers. On clarifying this purpose, I began to see the collective, fluid and distributed process of programming activities to be an alternative curatorial

process to what had been standardised, and I identified that the hierarchical organisational structure of Electrofringe needed to change.

A program of formal interviews with Electrofringe personnel was beyond the scope of this study, which focused more on experiments in action and reflection than organisational analysis. However, I was able to gather information from casual discussions I had with former artists and organisers of Electrofringe, as well as organisers of TiNA at the Electrofringe events presented in this study. These leads guided my inquiry and helped me formulate the new vision. Due to their anecdotal nature, I do not present these encounters as evidence.

As there were no previous organisation charts or models made for Electrofringe that I could locate, I drew up two charts based on the knowledge I had gathered through sorting through the former Electrofringe data, as well as the tacit knowledge of how the organisation was structured immediately before I became artistic director. As in Figure 11, pre-2013 Electrofringe was governed by a board of directors (as was formerly stated on Wikipedia), whom were often affiliated with other organisations they were a part of or started. Many of the people on the board had been involved in Electrofringe since the early days. Considering Electrofringe had funding distributed to them by the umbrella festival This is Not Art (TiNA), there was less pressure on Electrofringe to be entrepreneurial and hone relationships with stakeholders. Due to Electrofringe's frequent changes in leadership team positions, I have used the co-producers, as that was the most recent roles of that time. In the past Electrofringe had anywhere from one to a dozen co-producers at a given year.
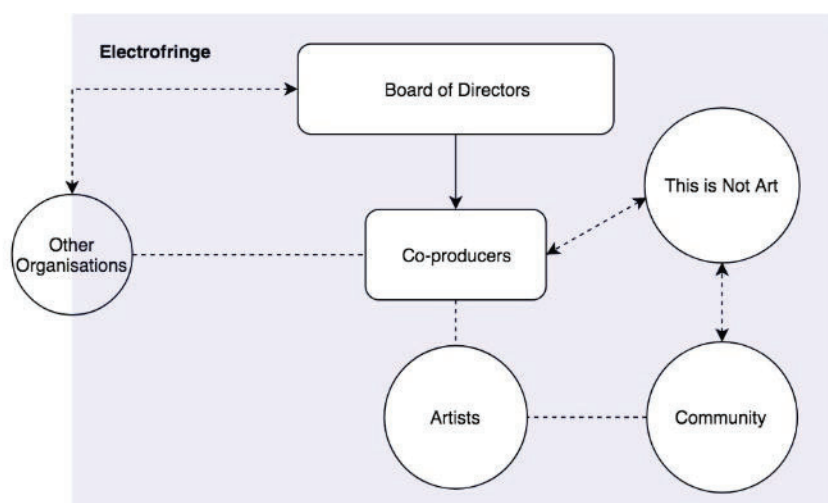
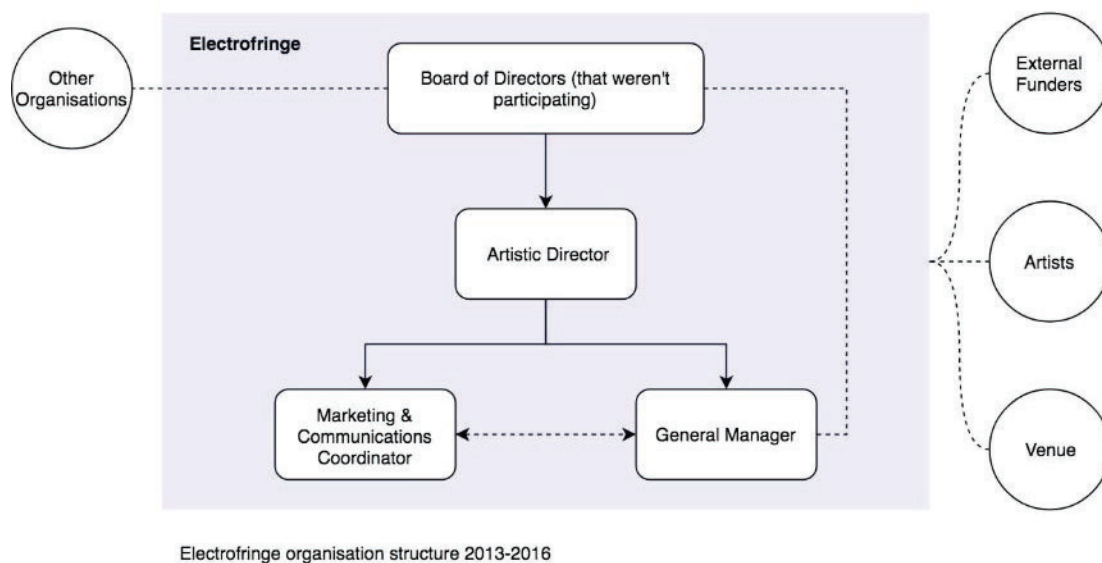Electrofringe organisation structure pre-2013 (Newcastle period)

Electrofringe organisation structure 2013-2016

Figure 11: Electrofringe organisation structure's pre-2013 and 2013-2016

When Electrofringe became independent from TiNA in 2013, a more traditional hierarchical structure was formed. Due to funding disagreements had with TiNA, this new structure was a less risky and practical move. Since Electrofringe had moved to a new geographical location, there was no longer the community of artists and venue partners as there were in Newcastle, therefore, these parties sat outside of the organisational boundaries. From 2014, Electrofringe developed the three-person-team of artistic director, general manager and marketing and communications coordinator. I have included the board of directors in the chart, even though, after confirming in 2016 with the board members, they were not active since Electrofringe moved to Sydney, and were not interested in staying on the board due to uncertainty of Electrofringe's future.

Responding to the need to innovate Electrofringe, and my new assumptions on what would improve the model of Electrofringe, I set out to draw a new organisation structure as a distributed network map. I was influenced by Graham and Cook (2015, chap 10) that distributed network maps work well with modular model of curating because it presupposes autonomy in the organisation.
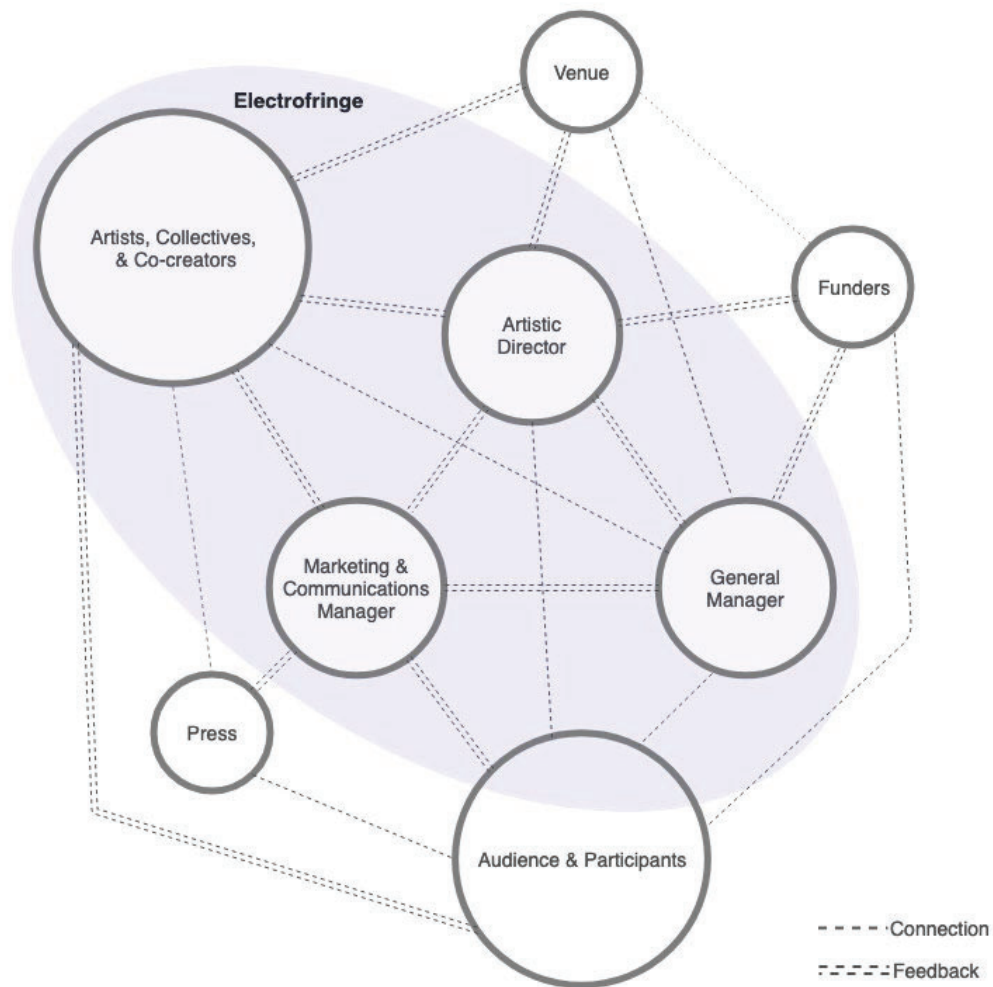
Figure 12: Electrofringe organisation structure post-2016

In this updated organisation structure, the significance of the entities is emphasised by the size of the circles. It is clear that artists, collectives and co-creators (the latter which also include some crowd-funders) hold the most significance. The audience and participants are also emphasised; however, they are not always considered part of Electrofringe; it depends on the context of the event. The single dotted line represents connections in communication; the double dotted line represents a more feedback informed relationship. The new distributed organisational model was developed and iterated over the course of the research. This model improves the sustainability of Electrofringe through peer-to-peer activity. Thus, the functioning of Electrofringe is not dependent on individual leaders, and if someone leaves Electrofringe, the model proposes that there is always another connection to a

stakeholder. The model also allows for scalability and can be expanded to include new nodes, but also made smaller, for example when working with smaller events, projects and meetups.

Information Management

Soon after starting my position with Electrofringe, I was surprised to discover that there were no records management. This was an unexpected hurdle, but I drew from my experience in archiving and information management, with which I was trained for in an internship at the German Film Museum in 2014, to get an elementary information system started. The data available to me consisted of one cardboard folder of receipts and contracts over a five-year period, the material on the Electrofringe website, forwarded emails with Dropbox links, and electronic hardware and equipment. While I would have liked to trial decentralised platforms for Electrofringe's data, I needed to act quickly, and as we had no funding, I chose to use Google Suite with its associated apps – Google Docs and Google Drive. I transferred all available data and archival material of Electrofringe's history since 1998 including the paperwork, Dropbox media, email attachments, and dead-linked blog posts, into a new Google Drive repository. This also allowed me to catalogue, tag and archive all Electrofringe equipment and documents in the space of two weeks. My teammates and I kept adding to this inventory for more creative reasons as I describe in Chapter 5. Therefore, the time and resources to change the chosen platform became more difficult to consider.

Website and Branding

Branding is an important part of engagement as well as the vision of the organisation. In 2016, the website and branding didn't represent the Electrofringe's vision. As part of the duties of artistic director, I began the new branding of Electrofringe, which is something I updated every year. This involved re-designing the logo's, letterheads, imagery and the website. Rather than edit the existing website, I started a new website which allowed me to set up a new page structure, a new layout, and implement the new branding. I included widgets in the website that showed Electrofringe's social media posts in real-time, and I also added in a new forum feature. The forum started

off as a community notice board, where artists and organisers could sign on and post their work. The forum has now been discontinued by the new team but replaced with an online gallery that further promotes artists' works beyond the event-driven model.
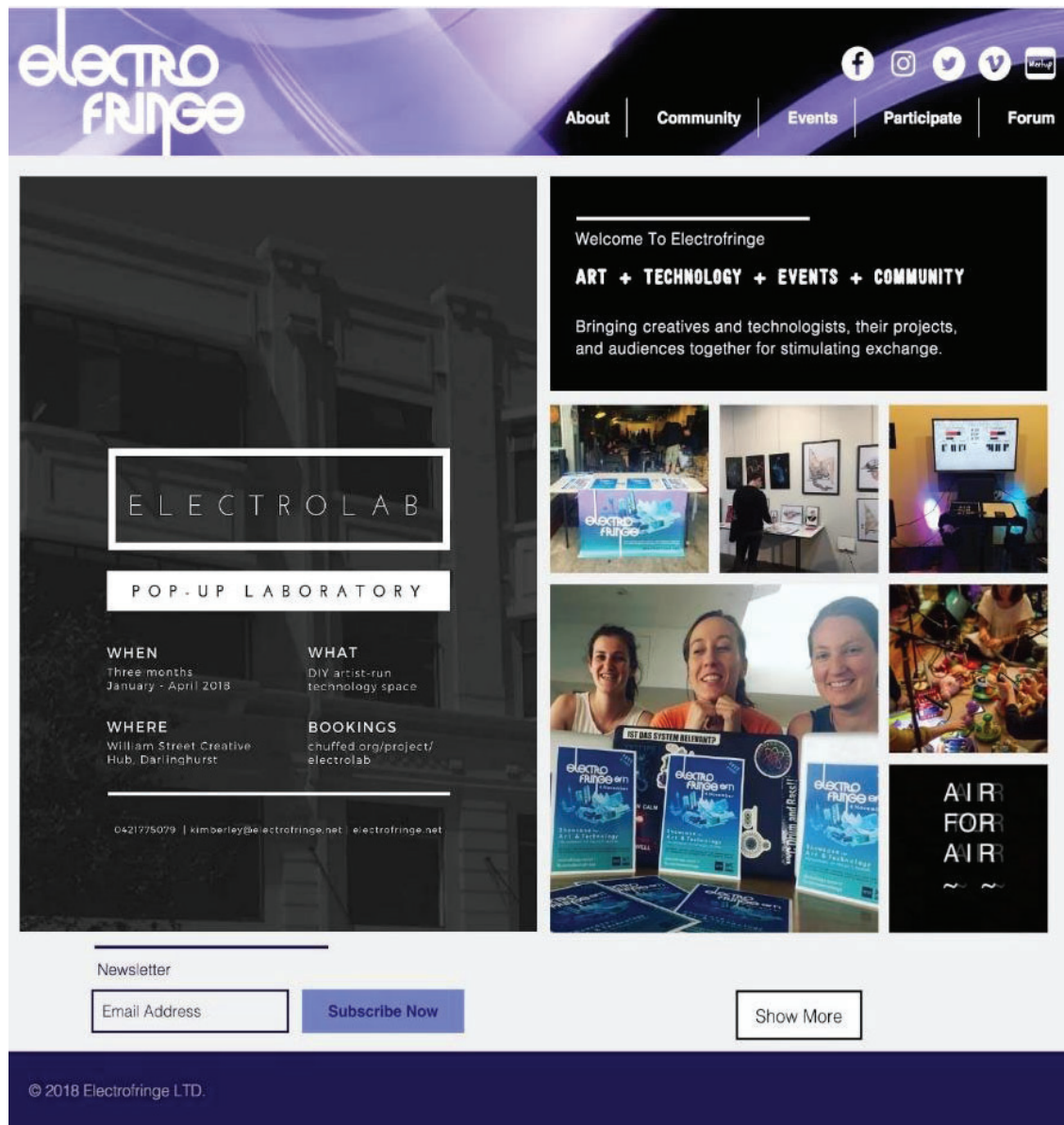

Figure 13: Electrofringe Website home page in November 2017

Financial Structure

Familiar to underground arts organisations, Electrofringe has always struggled with getting funding. I want to make transparent how much cash Electrofringe runs off on average per year – from $7000 to $15,000 AUD. There is about the same, varying

amount in free-labour, and about $5000 in in-kind support (resources and venue subsidies). It may be difficult to comprehend how Electrofringe can operate on such little funds, and it is extremely difficult, but it is the reality.

Since moving to Sydney, Electrofringe had no business plan, or clear funding strategy. While, I developed products for these plans in iterations over the two-years (See Appendix A, Co-create EF18 for a recent product), we did manage to secure financial support in different forms. Figure 14 below shows as accurate description as I could draw, of Electrofringe's cash and labour flow immediately prior to my involvement. What's interesting is how the staff used to put their own funds into Electrofringe and then received stipend's, only to circle back and put their own funds in again. This goes to show the high level of dedication Electrofringe leaders have for the organisation. Internet *Net* culture developed this unusual form of labour, work as a gift, which has in turn generated radical of ideas of freedom (Gottlieb & Kleiner, 2013). While ideologically interesting, work as a gift is no longer a suitable model for Electrofringe.
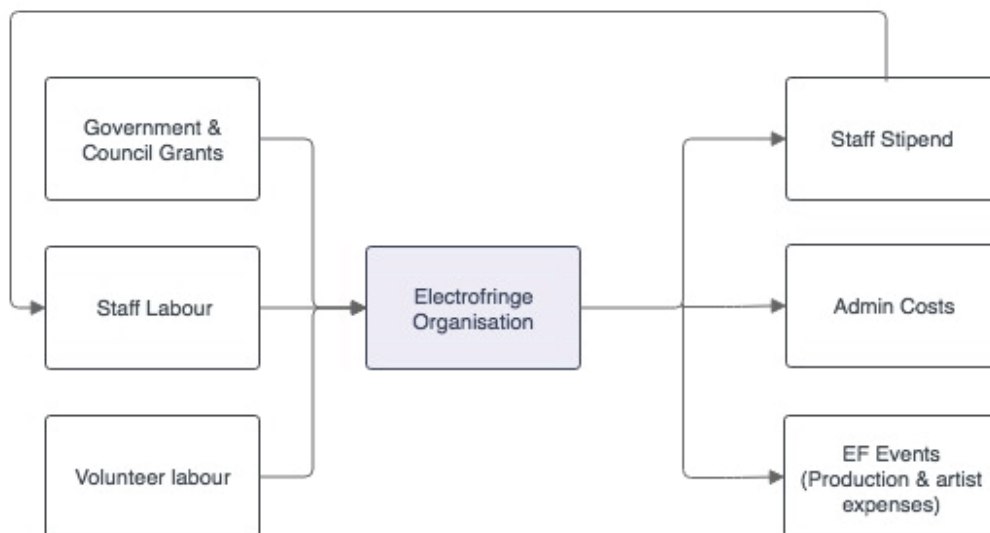

Figure 14: Cash and labour flow pre-2016

Figure 15 below represents the general, current cash and labour flow outlook of Electrofringe. The three major changes are that Electrofringe got sponsorship, that workshops and meetups have been added to the activities (and therefore need cash and labour), and that a crowdfunding strategy has been implemented to raise funds

form a larger pool of people over the Internet. Also, I have sought to disrupt the financial model so that staff are getting a stipend for their labour, and not pushing their (minimal) payments right back into the organisation. This move is important to the sustainability of Electrofringe and to continue to attract new team members and to be able to form a viable business model in the future.
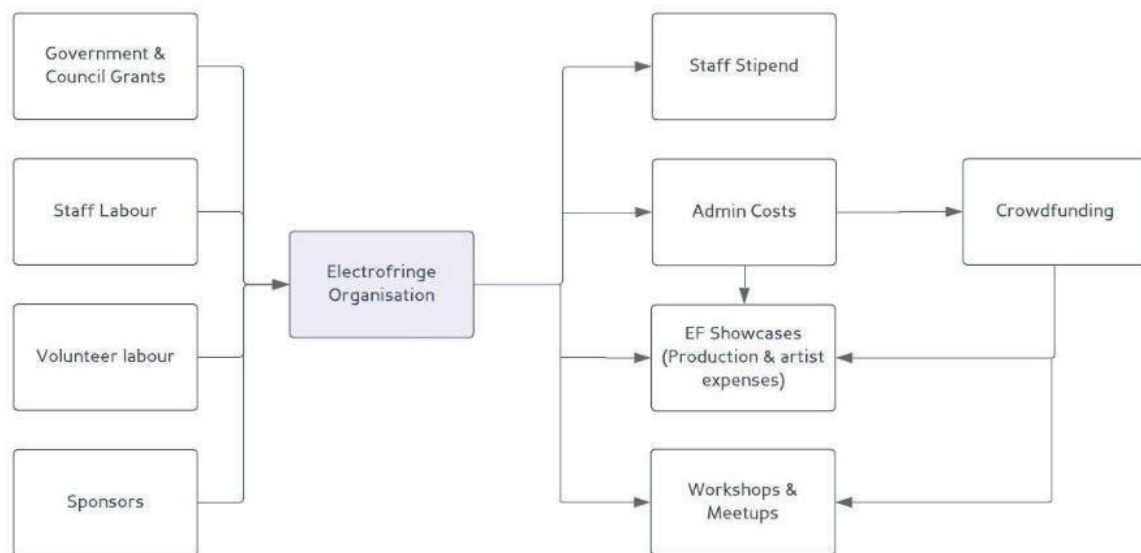

Figure 15: Cash and labour flow post-2016

SWOT Analysis Post-EF18

From my former experience, the SWOT analysis method is more effective with another SWOT drawn up at the end of the researcher's activity. As compared to Table 1, the updated SWOT analysis in Table 2 shows new strengths, continuing and new weaknesses, new opportunities and updated threats. This analysis has been forwarded to Electrofringe's new general manager.

New Strengths	Weaknesses
• Unique open platform. Anyone can present as long as the register in time and fit in the categories • Free for artists to present • Large community base in Sydney • Has one major sponsor • Strong engagement in the Slack group chat and the Facebook group • Solid digital information management • Large following on Meetup platform, with strong turnout at each meetup • Opportunity for emerging curators, managers, and marketing coordinators to enter the industry, and gives them a 10-week stipend	• Lack of focus, esp. in regard to arts grants and public relations • Lack of funds and sponsorship interest • Does not include community in democratically recruiting leadership team • Short on team members for the scale of the events, which leads to lack of organisation and attention • Weak financial strategy and no business plan • No training materials in place for leadership team • Incomplete strategic plan
• Harness the fact that local businesses are sponsoring art events • Meetups can be put together to build community • Local government is supporting participatory and community approaches	• Maintaining community members • Public funding is progressively diminishing • Has received many grants from the City of Sydney – may be running out of chances • Difficult to attract people to an event with small marketing budgets • Team members are not being paid enough to be fully committed • Venues are becoming more expensive to hire as demand rises • Crowdfunding is changing
Opportunities	Threats

This new data reveals that a considerable number of objectives form the first SWOT analysis have been met, but does not disguise or obscure what weaknesses and threats remain within Electrofringe. It is through exposing this information that more improvements can be made, and SWOT analysis can be a continuous, iterative activity for Electrofringe leaders.
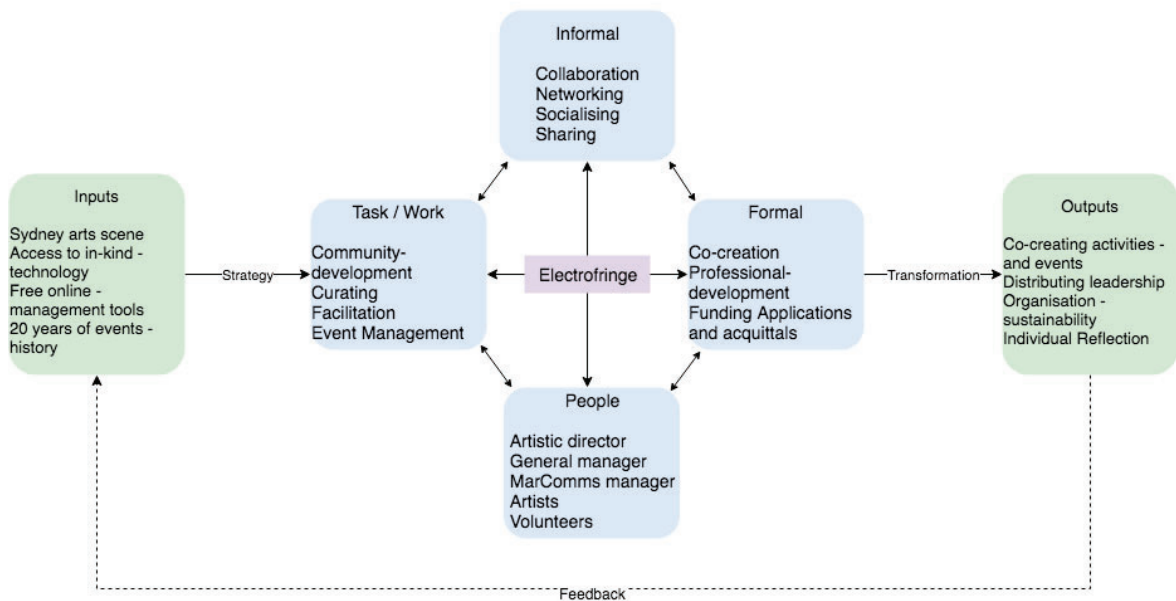
Innovated curatorial model

Figure 16: Electrofringe Curatorial Model, adapted from The Nadler–Tushman Congruence Model (1981)

The innovated curatorial model I developed for Electrofringe is based on the Nadler–Tushman congruence model (1981) for innovating organisations. David A. Nadler was an organisational theorist known for his work with Michael L. Tushman on organisational design and strategic architecture of organisations. Nadler and Tushman define organisational architecture as 'decisions about the configuration of the formal organizational arrangements, including the formal structures, processes, and systems that make up an organization' (Nadler & Tushman, 1997, p. 48).

The congruence model they published is based on a general systems model, but it is structured around input, transformation, and output (Nadler, 1981). The congruence model's strength is that it can be used as a template and be iterated as it operates on a feedback loop. Although the authors intended this to be used for for-profit organisational change, I found the model to be applicable to creating a strategic model for Electrofringe. The curatorial model I have outlined in Figure 2 considers environmental factors, the history of Electrofringe, cultural scenes, and resources as inputs. The various strategies and methods of this study are applied to the curatorial model of Electrofringe. The core of the model represents a congruence of the inherent 'tasks' or 'work' Electrofringe does, the 'people' involved who perform the

organisational duties, the 'formal' arrangements which consist of processes and systems, and the 'informal' aspects of organisation which are not explicit, but form over time. It is through applying the strategies laid out in this thesis that the transformation occurs and leads to the outputs. The model enables a feedback loop, which can drive an updated strategy so that the four elements of the model can achieve more consistency and work together better in the future.

Summary

Based on the concept of distributed aesthetics, I built a more supportive infrastructure that prepares Electrofringe for the future of the technological and financial changes in our increasingly networked era. With the premise of innovation and future-preparedness, I focussed on challenging issues within the organisation structure, financial structure, information management, and branding through entrepreneurial practice. By organising and visualising the network, I clarified Electrofringe's vision to better reflect the distributed nature of its flows of information, structure, and interactions. The culmination of the methods outlined in this chapter contributed to the development of the Electrofringe Curatorial Model (see Figure 2).

3.3)   Discussion

Electrofringe was not alone in being a closed organisation. The artworld is a global decentralised network with distributed activities and sharing of information, but the protocols of decision-making and organisational management often exclude anyone outside the specific institutions or disciplines. The model of the artworld is challenged by the formation of a new creative economy. Throughout the last fifteen years, the creative arts and media practices have been clustered into the 'creative industries', since creativity and innovation are significant factors for economic growth (Bridgstock, 2013). The creative industries are even larger networked clusters of sole-traders, freelancers, micro-businesses, small enterprises, and large institutions. The artists, curators, and managers of the creative industries are innovators, as they are constantly trying to make changes and disrupt the cultural status quo. Another feature is that they

rely on generating sustainable income for their ventures, which is quite different from the romanticised vision of the struggling artist.

From my experience working with entrepreneurial artists and creatives through Electrofringe, even if they are struggling to gain capital from their practice, they always try to innovate and develop new approaches. Alternatively, they may find another source of income to fuel their creative enterprise until it gets traction, which is hardly different from the tech start-up scene. These innovators often have unstable careers, and success is based on the quality of their previous work (through a portfolio) rather than via a job application process (Bridgstock, 2013), implying that the current generation of cultural producers must possess arts entrepreneurship skills as well as the technical and conceptual skills associated with their practice.

The Electrofringe curatorial platform should be innovated because it opens up the organisation to greater participation from the community and sets an adaptive model in motion that is prepared for organisational changes. These changes can be triggered by the people involved, the funding available, the technology and resources available, the changing landscape of the local arts scene, and broader socioeconomic changes in society. The values of an open platform and knowledge sharing are discussed below.

Open platform

Through innovating Electrofringe I not only set out to change the organisation as an entity, but to encourage the leadership team, the artists, and other producers to consider how they want to configure themselves into the network of the local creative industry. Fostering openness meant that Electrofringe could provide a real-world platform for people to perform this entrepreneurial experimentation. Modelling the platform as a non-threatening environment of peers is helpful for emerging cultural producers to avoid the unnecessary intimidation common to the artworld and in commerce. According to the Peer-to-Peer Theory Foundation (n.d.), P2P networks form a collective life of intersubjectivity that builds on but does not replace individuality and culture. The peer approach reassures the individuals involved that they do not have to fit into a predetermined vision. They are able to freely participate, and there is no

control over their ideas and artwork. However, they use the peer platform to monitor progress, share information, and reach beyond the organisation.

Knowledge Sharing

Electrofringe's updated organisation structure offers an alternative to the hierarchical charts common to arts organisations and institutions. I re-designed the organisation structure by placing equal value on Electrofringe's various leadership roles, and equal value on the leadership roles as those of the artists and the audience. According to Lovink (2016), the framework should, over time, adapt to align these rules with Electrofringe's growing digital base. By sharing this structure with the community, the key people in the community network of Electrofringe, can be informed of their importance and become more involved in working with the organisation. Grounded in distributed aesthetics (Munster & Lovink, 2005) and P2P theory, the model is an understanding of an integrated journey of network agents and represents the modification of networks as a human commitment. As a human actor in this network, it was important for me to be reflexive, as my actions and behaviours affect the larger system. Using a reflective lens, I continuously assessed my level of influence and impact on the project.

Using digital networking tools for practical purposes and applying networking concepts in a reflexive environment allowed me to simultaneously construct a more connected organisation and self-critique what it is I was innovating. In order to develop a new cultural economy, we (cultural producers and leaders) should not simply continue down the path of profit-driven innovation. We must innovate and design these new networks from the social cause, from the ground up. This is what makes the network creative and culturally relevant, what makes a community survive for two decades and not merely another event or exhibition which increases in size until it is no longer sustainable, or worse, no longer interesting.

The largest problem Electrofringe continues to face is that team members are not paid fairly. Public funds continue to diminish, and there is also a growing lack of interest towards crowdfunding creative projects. This could be tackled by responding to one

of the existing weaknesses: the new Electrofringe team needs to complete the strategic plan, and then an updated business plan and financial strategy will emerge more easily. Overall, Electrofringe has come a long way in the last few years, and new strengths have evolved, which should help the organisation better build its network in Sydney's electronic art scene.

Chapter 4: What are effective approaches to encourage curatorial participation?

This chapter begins by recognising, drawing from, and reviewing contemporary curators and theorists, as well as participatory curatorial projects and movements developed with participatory goals. At the core of this chapter is the description of my practice of distributing curatorial leadership in Electrofringe and the challenges that accompany this workflow. I analyse my reflective curatorial practice exercises and reflect on the successes and failures of sharing agency and distributing leadership. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the approaches to encourage curatorial participation and how these approaches contribute to the values.

3.1)   Distributed and participatory curating

Having analysed interconnectivity through networks and how it is manifested through technology, this section examines how innovative social practices such as creative entrepreneurship and platform cooperatives can stimulate curatorial practice and create change in organisations such as Electrofringe.

Creative entrepreneurship has transformed society in the wake of increased technological advancement and globalisation. While both the classical sense of the entrepreneur and even the creative entrepreneur pre-date the industrial revolution, today the term represents an approach to leadership that solves problems and uses technical and creative expertise to develop innovative solutions (Henry, 2007). Creative enterprises are often dynamically structured, less hierarchical, more communal, depend on distributed networks, and more likely to take risks than other industries (Banks et al., 2000). However, just as centralised models are being broken down, distributed models run the risk of becoming more centralised as they grow. Varnelis (2012) illustrates how the rise of the DIY curator challenges the power attributed to the curator with centralised forms of an agency. According to Varnelis (2012), art is no longer dedicated to museum exhibits but has become an emergent phenomenon. Varnelis's assessment offers a new viewpoint for examining the technological effects of curating.

As with dialogical art practice, participation from an audience position is vital in establishing more effective communal access to artefacts (Pinch, 1984). If curatorial practice is affected by the politics and infrastructures of power, what happens to this power when it is distributed among the artists and audience? Today, these ideas resonate strongly through galleries, museums, and public institutions. There are often callouts to the public in Sydney to participate in these activities. However, they have a one-hit-wonder approach where after the activity is over, and the archives or exhibitions made, there is not much community that lingers on or deep connections that are made to continue with the production or discussion. It is also questionable as to who the current trend of participatory curating rewards. Who takes in the large salary and credit, while the technician codes the entire system, and do the participants freely and voluntarily contribute the data?

Contemporary curatorial agency is deconstructing the traditional role of the curator, but this is not new; traditional curatorial models and centralised institutions of art have been challenged since the 1960s, along with the emergence of systems aesthetics discussed in Chapter 3. According to Burnham (1968), dematerialisation of the art object inspired philosophical movements and attempted to challenge social systems. In 1968, Reichardt's *Cybernetic Serendipity* presented an entirely new form of curation; not only were the artefacts computer-driven works, but the whole exhibit itself was designed thematically to a systems aesthetic, and the works introduced interactive elements.

Today, curating electronic art and digital curating are popular endeavours, frequently presented at contemporary arts festivals and galleries of modern art all over the world. However, despite the fact that curating is commonly based on technology networks, the artworld does not recognise innovative curatorial practice as a technological endeavour. Maria Lind (2015) describes this phenomenon as 'critical mass' – an overload of practice that needs to reach a pinnacle in order for anything new to emerge. Even with over 50 years of progress and significant contributions to culture, it is clear that institutions, with the possible exception of European ones, are not acknowledging the technology-curator. This could be due to a lack of evidence of this progress, which is less often recorded in scholarly texts and less covered by the mainstream press than the traditional fine arts.

The emergence of media arts activities from 1990s net culture has consistently grown and flourished. Throughout the 2000s, technology started to catch up to the ideas of the technology-artists, and significant contributions to new media art were made in this period, as well as the acceptance of exhibiting new media art in public institutions. NODE.London (Networked, Open, Distributed, Events. London) operated from 2006–2009 and was a networked mediation organisation between artists, organisations, and the public. They facilitated dozens of artistic and social work projects, mostly across London. Many of their projects were in electronic arts and intercultural experiments. Catlow and Garrett (2008) highlight that one of the most exciting challenges to this enterprise was that the notion of openness can mean many different things, not just in different contexts or with different goals, but is understood differently by individuals.

There are two massive annual gatherings with a robust and international community, existing both online and face-to-face, both built on the foundation of openness. These are Burning Man and Chaos Communication Congress. Since 1986, Burning Man has been an annual event in the United States, now based in the Black Rock Desert. The event is denoted as an experiment in community and participatory art. Anyone can participate in Burning Man, and there is no curator except for granted projects. One is likely to see massive sculptural works, often interactive, and prototypes of engineering feats. The format is modular and mobile, with music stages and installations popping up and moving around. Burning Man is complemented by a large sub-culture, many who have never been to the main event, but they communicate and share ideas online and through satellite events.

Chaos Communications Congress, on the other hand, is a hacker conference, albeit a large one. Similarly to Burning Man, there is an open assembly format, where anyone can cluster together to collaborate and present projects, run workshops, and run alternative programs to the curated conference rooms. The Chaos Communications Congress is realised by the Chaos Computer Club (https://www.ccc.de/en/), Europe's most significant association of hackers. They also run satellite events, communicate on multiple digital platforms, share toolkits, and hack each other for practice.

In addition, there is the Demoscene. With roots in the 1970s computer revolution, the Demoscene is a thriving computer art subculture. The Demoscene runs demoparties, internationally dispersed multimedia art festivals that can last several days, including partying at night. Revision Demoparty in Saarbrucken is the largest in the world. A 'demo' is a product, technical artwork, or prototype created by groups of people or single individuals to demonstrate their skills. Visitors are encouraged to participate, and it is unusual not to be involved in some form. The online community is active all year round. Although there are Demoparties in Australia, they seem to be relatively small and inclusive.

VJ (live video mixing) culture grew alongside the Demoscene, and the Live Performers Meeting (LPM) provides a similar place of creative and technical exchange, dialogue, and competition among artists and participants. Formed in 2004, in Rome, Italy, LPM is now an established annual multimedia performing arts event, with satellite

events occurring year-round. LPM considers experimentation a cornerstone of its ideology. Although there are founders and programmers, the organisation is mostly artist-run. Artists create profiles for themselves and each of the projects they may present or workshops they run. Artists enrol in the events and there are no selection criteria; however, there is funding for some projects, and this requires a different process. The venues are usually well equipped, for example, a whole cinema or a planetarium. It is usually three days of creating, demoing, playing, eating together, giving feedback, making contacts, and meeting new collaborators. There are several events like LPM across Europe and the USA. However, there is a lack of such events in Australia. Although there may not be any Burning Mans, Chaos Congresses, or LPMs in Australia, locally, there have been some underground initiatives that follow similar participatory approaches, and there are also several established electronic art institutions and organisations generating valuable resources and knowledge.

Dorkbot is a global organisation with more than 50 chapters internationally. The founder of the original Dorkbot in New York, Douglas Repetto, formed the initiative to meet others with interest in electronic art so he could create an adult's version of show and tell (Beckman, 2006). Sydney's chapter of Dorkbot, curated by Pia Van Gelder, is currently on hold, but it ran from 2006 to 2016. The format in Sydney consisted of formal talks, performances, and presentations followed by an open 'show and tell' slot at the end. They also hosted workshops and laboratories for experimentation. Van Gelder presented The Year in Dorkbot at Electrofringe in 2009.

Experimenta (https://experimenta.org/) is an Australian art organisation that is dedicated to the promotion, production, and presentation of media art both in Australia and in other nations. This agency supports and commissions artists to create new work and present it. Experimenta runs monthly social nights which provide an open format for media arts practitioners to network and arrange informal presentations.

Clan Analogue (https://www.clananalogue.org/) is an Australian-based electronic music and art association, collective, and record label currently based in Melbourne, but it continues to run activities in Sydney and Brisbane. On their website, Clan Analogue states that since 1992 they have aimed to support artists to produce and publish their work for free, and the network of members act as a pool of resources

to reach artists' goals. It is free to become a member online, and they have an active Facebook group for networking and sharing work.

What is remarkable about these events and projects is that no matter their scale and their open structures, they manage to operate successfully, often non-commercially, and contribute new skills and knowledge to the regions in which they are held and from anywhere that their online forums are accessible. These examples demonstrate that in organising collaboration and artistic participation, there are usually websites and platforms that are integrated with the functioning of the organisations. In some cases, there are administrative fees for participants to register, but these are often waived in the case of low-income participants. There is also a recurring feature of including laboratories and workshopping spaces to build community and experiment on ideas outside of institutional and academic boundaries. The laboratories promote participants' experiments with the process of cultural production, which transforms the traditional spaces focussed on displaying art into research labs (Graham & Cook, 2010). There is usually a collaborative goal to work on, rather than merely a space for co-working. With this kind of space, collaboration can be enhanced with the technical skills the participants are open to sharing (Graham & Cook, 2010). By forming a program of activities in the lab, the participants are exposed to each other's skills and interests and are encouraged to share knowledge. This means the curator can take on the role of a planner or facilitator.

3.2) Distributing Electrofringe

In 4.1, I presented examples of distributed curating, co-curating, and other forms of contemporary curating with and without digital platforms. This section makes use of 'distributing' to present the process and methods I undertook to perform distributed curatorial practice for the exhibition-based collaboration activities of Electrofringe.
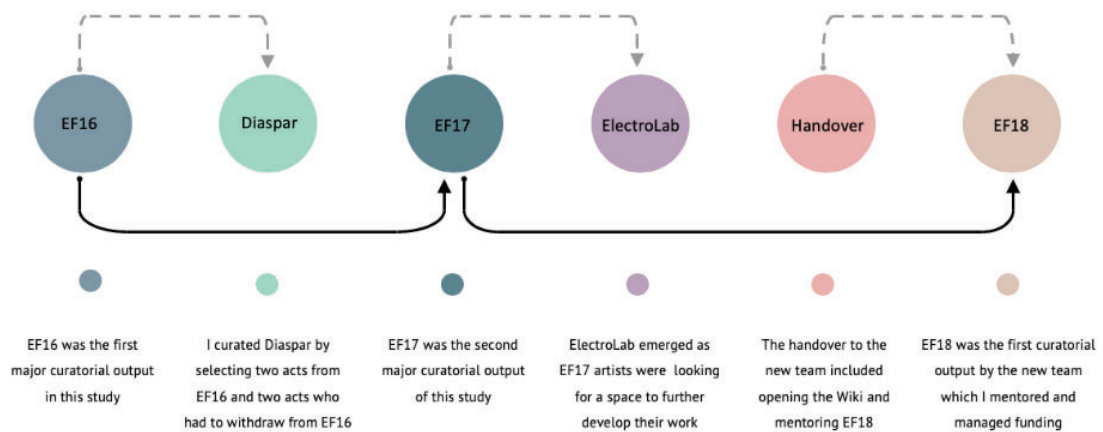
Figure 17: Curatorial activity timeline

EF16: Experimentation

The intention of EF16 (and Electrofringe in general) was to open a platform for creators to reveal prototypes and works in progress. Even if it is not immediately comprehensible to an audience, being exposed to people debugging custom software, hacking electronics, and fixing issues in proximity to the audience is not only educational, but it can be entertaining. Through directing EF16, my aim as a curator was to introduce openness to build new relationships between organisations, presenters, and audiences. I felt it was important to not attempt to make a radical transition in order to reflect upon the scenarios and situations before developing a strategy of how to adapt Electrofringe to this new model.

Electrofringe had previously been labelled as a festival, but due to the open nature of the event, and the fact that we encouraged prototypes, I changed the format to that of a showcase so that artists and the audience could understand that EF16 was not a ticketed and selectively curated event. The callout for the showcase was made on numerous platforms and newsletters, but most of the traffic came via posting on Facebook. Applications could be submitted by filling out a Google form. Initially, the callout did state that it was selective entry, as I had re-purposed the former year's application text; however, I made the decision to change this format mid-callout, and include all artists that applied, under the assumption that several artists would withdraw from the event, allowing there to be enough space for all presenters. This was a

misjudgement, as there were few withdrawals, and therefore I had to make arrangements with the venue to use more space and host additional workshops on a second day. The ability to book any venue for a second day at short notice is risky, and we were fortunate that 107 Projects offered us the extra time and space at no cost, considering we would bring in an audience on a usually quiet Sunday.

For the EF16 branding and graphic design, I created the social media banners, logos, letterheads, GIFs, adverts, and the programme. Due to the submissions consisting of art made with both analogue and digital technologies, as well as electronic music and punk rock, I worked on a new-wave aesthetic which I felt represented the content and mediums. I introduced industrial materials inspired by the venue's unpainted concrete. Through this process I discovered how intimate graphic design is for the overall vision and identity of the showcase, but also how much I would become stuck in the flow of designing and put off other important tasks. The most laborious task was in designing the digital-only program, which was interactive and linked to every artist's website. The full set of designs and program can be seen in Appendix B, EF16 Program.

Figure 18: EF16 advertisement in The Brag

In total, 33 artists presented their works, performed experimental music, and hosted workshops over the 22nd and 23rd of November 2016 at 107 Projects in Redfern. Over the two days, I acted as setup support for installations, set up for the music performances along with our sound technician, and I was the videographer for the showcase. Video documenting has been a part of my creative practice since I was a teenager, even in combination with other roles such as events coordinating, so I have had to develop techniques that allow me to multi-task. This kind of multi-tasking does not make for the cleanest video recordings, but the aim was to document every activity as it was, not creating a stylised film for social media marketing. An advantage of videography is that the videographer must explore every position in the environment in which he or she is working. One must constantly, and energetically, seek opportunities to see something from different perspectives, which I think enhanced and contributed to my reflective lens. The act of documenting at EF16 was very social, allowing me to communicate with the team, artists, and audience/participants, but the content in this case was more passive, as I was not interviewing people.

Figure has been removed due to copyright restrictions

Figure 19: Documenting audience trying Maschinenmensch by NewvoDeco

For the open video-screening programme, 'open' meaning that any video submitted would be played, we received an outstanding 41 submissions totalling four hours of screen material. Submissions came from Australia, the USA, Israel, UK, Greece, Lithuania, Germany, Russia, Spain, France, Slovenia, China, Argentina, and Poland. The screening was set in the theatre of 107 Projects and ran until the same space was transformed into a music stage. With the exception of the feature film, this program was not curated for quality, and I intentionally did not watch the films (I only made sure they all played). There were some limitations on the submissions: (a) they had to be original work or remixing, and (b) they had to be under 10 minutes. The

spontaneity of the program and the responses from the audience showed me that this is a model of screening that could be further investigated. Although it may not be practical in some situations, nor politically correct, we welcomed obscure and uncensored videos, so long as they were original.

Figure 20: EF16 Cinema

EF16 action plan

After the EF16 showcase, I identified problems and proposed solutions to take action upon for the EF17 showcase. These can be seen in the table below.

Table 3: EF16 action plan

Identified problem	Proposed solution
Not defining roles between EF team and taking on too much of a workload	With a new team being formed in 2017, it was my aim from the moment of handover to go through the skills we had, skills we wanted to improve on, and areas in which we did not want to be involved
Conflict of interest with venue partner	Outlining conditions and drawing up a partnership contract could prevent conflicts. Alternatively, we could consider finding a new venue partner if more problems arose.
Involving the community in the planning of the showcase	The change of social media and file sharing framework had potential to foster collaboration
Donation−based, no rewards crowdfunding. Labour involved in creating the campaign far exceeded the reward	− Find crowdfunding platform that enables rewards to donations. These rewards could include booth/floor space for people to promote or demonstrate their start−up or product − Facilitate workshops representing the donor business or organisations skills and services − screen time for artists, developers, educators, and designers to show reels as a kind of socially conscious advertisements
Regulating the callout process	In keeping with the idea of all those interested being able to present, make defined categories, and have a first−come−first−served policy rather than closing date
No detailed recorded feedback from audience and artists involved	− Short video interviews with artists and audience, for after movie and for research aims − Detailed questionnaire with the artists that can be used for data gathering.
Videography is becoming mundane	Incorporate 360° video streaming and recording as a new form of documentation. The streaming of the meetups and showcase could be through YouTube and onto VR headsets to reach a wider audience than physical proximity
No guidelines for reproducing the event	Create a wiki for editing by organisers, the public, and myself to be integrated into the new website.

EF17: Implementation

For EF17 I worked with new general manager, Jessica Kirkby, and marketing and communications coordinator, Kelly Hayes. In response to the action plan from EF16, we, as a team, acted on the proposed solutions I drew up. This became an iterative approach. The table below identifies the solution proposed from EF16 along with the action taken. I eliminated out-of-scope propositions from the EF16 action plan.

Table 4: Action plan and outcomes (2017)

Proposed Solution to EF16 Problem	Action Taken for EF17	Outcome of action from the perspective of the director
Definition and distribution of roles and responsibilities	Created a checklist of roles and responsibilities	Resulted in a more streamlined workflow. Cut out unnecessary and unfeasible tasks
Involving the community in the planning phase	Ran a concept-development meetup. Followed up on the meetup through discussion on telegram. Outsourced graphic design to a meetup attendee	Meetup attendees appeared to have enjoyed the process. As we still couldn't decide on a theme, we ran a word counting algorithm to choose themes from the artist registrations. The results were discussed online, and a theme was developed.
Regulating the callout process	Made clear that it is registration-based. Required a category to be selected or a description. Waitlist if people withdrew	Artists gave me feedback that a registration-based event was encouraging for them. Had the right number of presenters for the space and the duration. Waitlist was beneficial
Crowdfunding platform that enables rewards to donations	Launched a campaign with Chuffed.org. Offered incentives for local start-ups to present their work alongside exhibiting artists	Resulted in a substantial improvement from last year's crowdfunding campaign.
Guidelines for reproducing the event	Documented tasks and duties in a detailed schedule of operations accessible via Google Drive	Improving on the existing documents made the documentation and guidelines more refined

EF17 was the only showcase where I facilitated a series of meetups that were designed thematically towards the production of and callout for the showcase. These were

mostly held at UNSW Art & Design, but occasionally at local bars and 107 Projects. EF17's callout process was similar to that of EF16 in that we used a Google Form (Appendix C, Call-out forms) and had similar sections to fill out. The major differences were that we wrote a clearer statement about the participation format and we also set up a limit to submissions with a waitlist. In order to receive a diverse range of concepts, we intentionally did not set a theme or artistic statement during the callout period. Instead, I hosted a series of co-creating meetups at the research studios of UNSW Art & Design, where anyone who was interested could come and help define a theme.

I followed the co-design methods of Sanders (2008) to run the brainstorming session. This session was not ethics approved, as the study did not produce any data on people to analyse; nevertheless, it is one approach I took as a reflective curatorial practitioner to see where my ideas meet with others'. One of the tasks I proposed was to write on cards (as many as needed) ideas for themes people would like EF17 to be based on. We then shuffled the cards and sprawled them out. Together, the six of us tried to arrange and link them through common concepts. We did not come up with a single theme, but we brainstormed an alternative way to come up with one. The method eventually used to decide upon the theme was by detecting common words and concepts in the artist descriptions and synthesising this into a broad theme.

Figure 21: Brainstorming cards at Co-create EF17 meetup

inharmonic **percussive** sound
electroacoustic art chamber music
communication, interaction and improvisation
removes the constraints of written music
opens up the challenge of improvisation
rhythmic and vocal improvisation
voice, **percussion** and novel gestural system
a string instrument metaphor
raise awareness of **environmental and social sustainability**
digitally recorded scattered rays
the space between asleep and awake
granular landscapes with hypnotic melodies
percussion
unaffected by human qualities such as anxiety or emotional fragility
forward-moving **rhythm**
mass hypnosis and consciousness alteration
science and the occult
sound waves and electronic impulses
bioelectrical activity
iso-chronic sound
rhythms reset, and emerge fresh
audience's reaction and ambience
evoke positive emotions like happiness, wonderment and
empowerment
transport you to a place where you create fun and wonder
giving YOU the power
extending drumming technique through machine interaction
stitching multiple ecosystems together
glitchy synapses and living organisms deconstructed to a cellular
level
alternate universe
built environment
remoteism and urbanism
Australian iconography

Figure 22: Common words and themes detected in the artists texts

Considering the EF16 program design was excessively time-consuming and not instantly accessible to the audience at the showcase, I created the EF17 program on the new Electrofringe website. This could also be optimised for mobile view. Rather than writing about each project, I linked the images to the nominated website provided by the presenter. Some had developed specific project pages on their own websites or blogs, launched their own Facebook or Meetup event to be directed to, and others chose to have their links go directly to promotional pages. This is a small but important example of distributing the curatorial labour, as the artists were able to express themselves in their own words, and in their own media formats. The link to the program along with the graphic and information was printed on a business card, which I designed with the event artwork by Lipstik Design. This was a cost-effective and convenient way to distribute the program, not only during the showcase, but also prior to and after it.
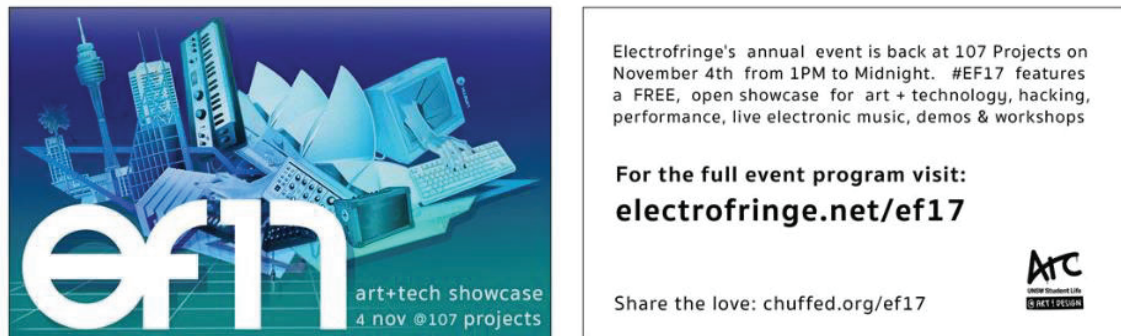
Figure 23: Front and back view of program on business card

EF17 was held once again at 107 Projects, this time over one day and night, on the 4th of November 2017. There were 31 presenters involved, forming a similar composition and variety of disciplines of electronic art as EF16. Please see Appendix D, Screenshot of the EF17 program and Appendix E for the poster. In directing EF17, my aim as a curator was to be an *enabler* (Graham & Cook, 2010). I felt I had more creative freedom than during EF16, and I was less afraid of recognising my position of power, as I knew this was how I could then distribute it amongst the community.

Figure 24: Screenshot of crowdfunding campaign for EF17

For EF17, I worked with several collectives and facilitators who contributed to the crowdfunding campaign to co-curate activities. Mark Olivero contributed to the crowdfunding campaign by hiring the upstairs space as his reward, and therefore he curated his own program by selecting musicians from the open EF17 registrations. Analog Cabin joined us for the second year in a row, and they curated their own participatory performance program in the performance space until the end of the event. Platypus Initiative (https://letsjusthackshit.org/), a Sydney-based hacking community, brought two free workshops: mousejacking and lockpicking. This was a mutual exchange for an event of theirs at which Electrofringe artists had run workshops the month before. Interestingly, the exchange with Platypus Initiative ran much more smoothly than the crowdfunding exchanges. There were fewer expectations and demands when working in a simple, cash-free exchange of cooperation.

Figure 25: Analog Cabin at EF17

Figure 26: Platypus Initiative lockpicking workshop at EF17

EF17 was on a smaller scale than EF16, as it ran on about half the funds, but the estimated audience numbers were not significantly less. Reflecting on my practice during EF17 and actions, I think I did improve my overall ability to reflect-in-action, and after the event, I contributed extensive work to my eDiary in the form of more frequent journal entries and reflective reports. I also created a new action plan and handed it on to the new team in 2018; however, I did not monitor how this was used for the EF18 showcase.

ElectroLab management

ElectroLab fostered a unique environment post-EF17 showcase, and especially for the artists who exhibited who sought spaces to develop and test their projects. By taking the Electrofringe community out of the underground warehouse spaces and bedrooms and exposing them to a professional space in the city centre, I strived to facilitate a regular environment and program for artists and audiences to meet, network, collaborate, and exchange feedback. Throughout the occupation, we hosted seven meetups, which are further discussed in Chapter 5.
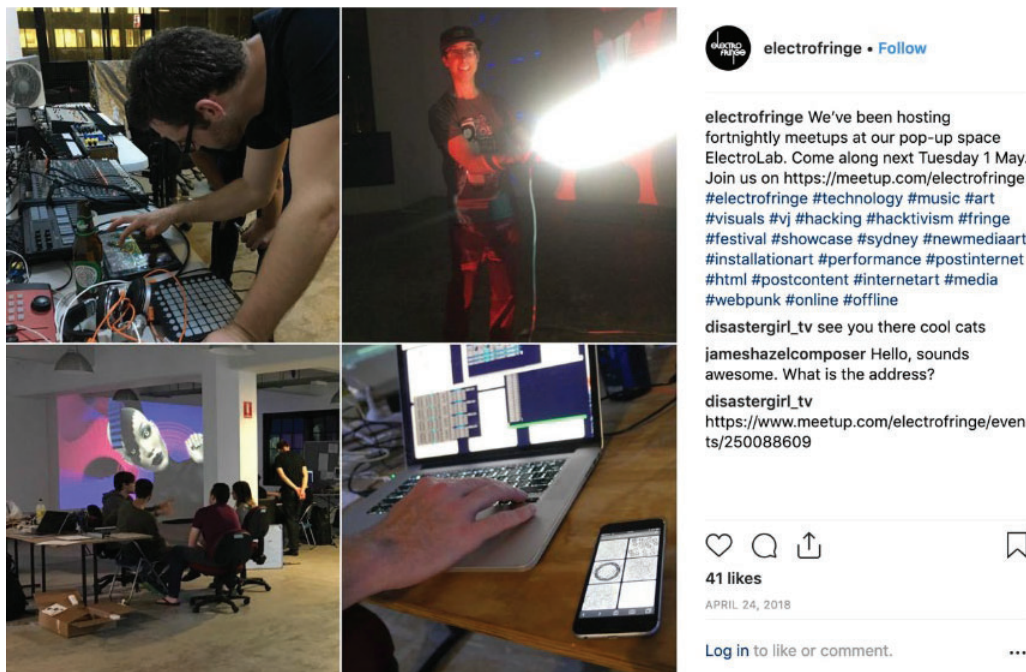
Figure 27: ElectroLab Instagram post

We acquired the space for Electrofringe through the City of Sydney's Sydney Temporary Empty Space Program. This opportunity was to rent (at a subsidised rate) a 241m^2 space in William Street Creative Hub, Sydney, for running Electrofringe meetups, workshops and creative experimentation. After two months of paperwork, insurance quotes, and revised proposals, we moved into the space on the 1st of February 2018 and had the space till 31 May. Although the rent was about 10% of the commercial value, there were other overhead costs to consider. Considering Electrofringe did not receive a grant in 2017, it was necessary to run another

crowdfunding campaign, and this time set the rewards as durations (day pass, week pass, month pass, workshop) to utilise the space.

In *Rethinking Curating*, Graham and Cook (2010) mention that labs have their own 'gatekeepers', who may be reluctant to let real, live, free-range artists play. This is true in the case of ElectroLab: as the gatekeeper, I had to follow and pass down the rules set out by the council and by the property manager. I was responsible if participants broke these rules. Therefore, the gatekeeping was a necessity for this lab to exist in the first place. However, in this four-month period, I also participated in using the space. As the gatekeeper, I understood the rules and the space so well that I also knew how close I could get to breaching them.

Having the lab for an undetermined, temporary period made it difficult for occupants to commit to a duration in the space, and also restricted how much equipment people brought. Being such a casual and cooperative environment, where I also paid for a space, I let my professional guard down and developed friendships and collaborations with the others. ElectroLab was a valuable trial for determining Electrofringe's need for a brick-and-mortar space.

Handover & mentoring EF18: Finalisation

When seeking a new artistic director, we considered making it a requirement to continue based on the model I had developed in the previous two years, but I did not want to encourage that kind of bias in selecting someone. It would have gone against Electrofringe's nature of allowing emerging curators to disrupt the organisation. Instead, what we were looking for in the new artistic director was someone who had their own radical ideas and needed a platform to execute them. We were not necessarily looking for the next up-and-coming or educated curator. In fact, we recommended that some outstanding applicants apply for more sophisticated positions that would need their expertise. Since Electrofringe took the risk with me, this was the most important criterion in my head. Ellen Formby, our youngest candidate, had been coding art websites since she was in primary school; she came into the interview with ideas to create online galleries and migrate Electrofringe to a stronger online space. This is something I originally envisioned too, but we needed to build the

community first. Now that the community had emerged, this was the perfect time for someone like Ellen to advance Electrofringe, so we selected her. As I was about to hand over my position, our general manger had an accident, so I acted as general manager for a further three months, adding some surprises (and delays) to my research. However, this gave me an opportunity to focus on the financial model of Electrofringe, with a grant from the City of Sydney, securing a sponsor, and developing a new peer-based crowdfunding approach.

In March 2018, I registered the EF18 showcase as part of the Sydney Fringe Festival. Since Electrofringe's peak period was part of a larger fringe festival, I thought it would be a good experiment to try this in Sydney. Since Electrofringe was still struggling to be fully independent with the amount of funding we received, being a part of the Sydney Fringe Festival meant we could use be a part of their marketing platform, and also EF18 would then be running alongside a massive program of grass-roots and experimental events throughout Sydney. For the EF18 Showcase, I mentored the new team, artistic director Ellen Formby, general manager Patrick Diment, and marketing manager Sally Lewis, in the production of the EF18 Showcase. I also was the lead fundraiser (due to being acting general manager up until three weeks before the showcase) and contributed as the videographer as I had in 2016 and 2017. The value of mentoring was to pass down the tools and approaches of Electrofringe's infrastructure and branding I had developed, and to offer to help out with any tasks that the fresh team was struggling with or was unsure of.

Summary

In summary, I experimented and applied new approaches to curating that responded to infrastructural issues in Electrofringe and also in the larger context of contemporary discourse in curatorial practice and in cultural leadership. I cycled through an iterative series of curating events and facilitating meetups while critically reflecting on my behaviour and creating action plans to disrupt and change my subsequent actions. While not originally planned for the study, ElectroLab added a valuable experience in which our community could have a temporary, fixed space to collaborate, network, and share working progresses. Due to unusual circumstances, I acted as general

manager for an extended period in 2018, during which I contributed to fundraising for the EF18 showcase and mentored the new team.

3.3)   Discussion

A crucial contribution to this research is that I approached curating as infrastructure building. The notion of the curator as a collector and presenter of exhibitions is being challenged by contemporary curators, artists-as-curators, and the wave of group shows organised collectively through social media and on or with online platforms (Goriunova, 2011; Krysa, 2006; Murchú, 2016). Community organisations and DIY platforms require infrastructure building on every occasion when something new is being produced or innovations are made to existing initiatives. The boards of major galleries and institutions have been building their infrastructures for over a century with large amounts of resources, and due to the bureaucracy, rapid change in these institutions is less likely. Smaller organisations and independent curators are by nature entrepreneurial, and rapid change is not only likely but part of the methodology. They are constantly trying to adapt to changing political and technological climates, keeping updated with current trends and networking with others. With so many infrastructural roles and responsibilities to take on as an independent curator or cultural leader, it is difficult to find time for reflection.

Terry Smith (2012) and Lizzie Muller (2008) share the sentiment that it is rare for curators to reflect on their professional practice in printed form, public forum, or academic texts. Smith (2012, p.179) says that there is a notion that the exhibition is the voice of the curators' work, and that it speaks for itself. Furthermore, Muller states, 'This emphasis on the discursive historical and canonical role of the curator tends to de-emphasise his or her creative agency and maintain a certain veil of mystery around the personal practice of curating' (Muller, 2012, p. 95). For these reasons, the reflective nature of my research sought to challenge exclusivity. Through reflective practice, the role of the mistake is very important. For curatorial practice to be researchable, its failures, not only successes, need to be documented, and even its successes need to be challenged in different contexts to determine where the knowledge can be adapted, implemented, or made redundant. Through my lived

experience, I identified issues and worked on plans to implement and iterate the curatorial process of Electrofringe events. The amount of work I took on during event productions did not allow me enough mental space to effectively reflect-in-action; therefore, I reflected-on-action. However, this has also provided an example of how the reflective practitioner can continually improve on his or her technique. I have found the importance of reflection in collaborative situations extremely valuable when considering others' ideas in relation to my own. In brief, I have identified reflection as a requirement for successful distributed leadership and infrastructure building.

The following sections present approaches to encourage curatorial participation in the evaluative criteria of shared space, open platform, and knowledge sharing.

Shared space

The first approach to encouraging curatorial participation meets the core value of providing a shared space. Prior to my involvement, Electrofringe's shared spaces were only offered during the annual showcases and other curated events. My approach was in facilitating a brick-and-mortar space for the community to access subsidised and free working space as a regular space for meetups and to run workshops. I introduced my past experiences of coordinating meetups into the objectives based on the SWOT analysis. In order to prepare for such spaces, I had to reimagine our curatorial and managerial roles to facilitators and enablers. The shared space allowed for enhanced knowledge sharing, as the community were able to meet in the planning and production of the showcase through a series of co-creation and co-design meetups.

Open platform

The second approach to distributed curating was in opening the showcase callout to registrations rather than selections, regulated by category and time submitted, with a waitlist, and involving the registered participants in the programming of the schedule and allocation of exhibiting spaces.

Interestingly, I found that distributing the curatorial process is arguably more laborious than curating in the traditional sense, making it less efficient. However, it is very rewarding for everyone involved in the co-creation, and it offers significant cultural

value. While sharing ownership and leadership challenges issues of participation, there is an economic flaw with distributing labour – it requires free labour from the public. With an organisation like Electrofringe, running on so little funds, it requires free labour from the team. Through crowdfunding, we gave rewards to donors, offered incentives for local start-ups to present alongside exhibiting artists, and shared funds with the artists. I posit that a more evolved peer-to-peer production model can challenge this exploitation.

Knowledge sharing

Distributing curating provided a platform for sharing knowledge and building the infrastructure on the shared ideas. I had to constantly reflect, evaluate my interactions, and change my approaches to allow the shared vision to grow and not block others' ideas when situations became risky or uncomfortable for others. While I was determined to ensure that there was a support network and protocols in place for exchanging ideas and collaborating, I did not consider that some people did not want the agency to participate in curating, and I did not have any plans in place to address this issue. It was an issue because it meant that their promotional materials were not as in-depth as others who created their own, and furthermore, it was challenging to find the appropriate time to spend with them, as a more traditional curator would.

Contemporary curatorial leadership models are as diverse as the organisations and people involved in them. There is no set model that fits all. Distributing curatorial labour can give artists and organisers a great deal of freedom, and it is a cost-effective approach for organising cooperative showcases. However, it requires extensive research and risk-taking, which may not be possible for many smaller organisations and events.

Australian arts organisations, institutions, and even the government are starting to invest in similar open dialogues and participatory cultural production. This investment is purposeful, and the transformation of communities can emerge through the act of co-creation. Electrofringe has joined this cultural wave, but still aims to disrupt and propose innovative actions in Australia's underground and emerging artist exhibiting platforms.

Chapter 5: Which networking tools can facilitate creative community engagement?

In the last chapter, I highlighted the fact that contemporary curatorial leadership models are diverse and digitally responsive, and described my case study to show an example of this in action. I introduce this chapter's literature review as an extension of the last two chapters. Firstly, I discuss what art platforms are and what social networking can offer to the study. Then, I present Electrofringe as the unit of analysis in a model of distributed cognition considering the technology, artefacts/media, and people/human agents in this ecosystem. I review a selection of proprietary and open-source tools, documentation approaches, and peer platforms that I used in this study. I end with a discussion based on the findings and how they contribute to strengthening the values of the curatorial platform.

5.1)   Social networks and art platforms

Arts and cultural organisations today are forming infrastructures of online, face-to-face, and blended relationships. The current generation of cultural producers have already been integrating their practice with either peer-based or open-source platforms, but more commonly today, they are appropriating a network of centralised and proprietary platforms. It has become natural to use the web and social media as the preferred mode of communication, callouts for talent, and event management.

Olga Goriunova, who co-built the Runme.org art platform and repository (http://readme.runme.org/), and who also organises software arts festivals both online and IRL, explains that art platforms typically centre around a database which users and participants can interact with by adding to, retrieving, and downloading from it (Goriunova, 2011). These platforms also often host activities such as forums for discussion, ranking and voting, and sharing of media assets. Art platforms can go beyond digital databases and online services and 'appear as experiments in the aesthetics of organization' (Goriunova, 2011). This kind of experiment can create a cultural space for the community, or in some cases, can be artworks themselves. Suzon Fuks's *Waterwheel* (http://water-wheel.net) was a collaborative platform for sharing and interacting with media assets to create networked performances. It also used a networked, decentralised co-curation framework. *Waterwheel* was unique in that it was both a participatory curatorial platform and an artwork. As an artwork, it was concerned with water as a subject of activism and metaphor (Fuks, 2016). As a platform, it provided a participative system for archiving and distributed curatorial events. In a 2008 study, Itso Huvila proposed an approach of 'decentralised curation, radical user orientation, and contextualisation of both records and the entire archival process', highlighting the issues of communication, among others, in archival contexts. Most interestingly, Huvila (2008) discovered that participatory archives rely on a social system that must be in place for people to contribute and that the social system or network needs to be in place long-term for it to be effective in contributing to cultural history. This social system can be supported by a curator in a mediation position. Muller (2008), explains that people who curate can also be mediators, and

this mediation can be even more potent in the way it can affect a whole organisation or subculture.

Beryl Graham and Sarah Cook are the co-creators of CRUMB – Curatorial Resource for Upstart Media Bliss (http://www.crumbweb.org). CRUMB is a research resource that includes models and activities that contribute to the practice of curating new media art (CRUMB, 2018). Graham and Cook (2010) suggest that a participative system which enables artists to be the hosts needs to be clearly understood by everyone involved, as the system is, in a sense, invisible, and that the curator's role must be defined as the curator of the participative system. Distributing the curatorial process by including other actors and also software agents depends on a participation model that is functional but also open to adaptations.

The idea of creating a cooperative platform is a critical measure that organisations should consider developing in order to enable an environment that gives everyone the opportunity to make personal contributions. The cooperative platform is another participatory curatorial platform, as Krysa (2015) observed in her book *The Politics of Contemporary Curating*. Although curating may not hold significance politically, it can be a reflection of an alternative form of organisation (Krysa, 2015). The intermedia project Art of Free Cooperation by Howard Rheingold, Christoph Spehr, Brian Holmes, Geert Lovink, and Trebor Scholz investigates, debates, and promotes cooperation, where the interactions in all spheres of life are not forced (Scholz & Lovink, 2007). The project stemmed from Christoph Spher's essay 'Free Cooperation', which proposes riskier approaches for exchanging ideas and how innovative technologies may address social issues (P2P Foundation, 2017).

As much as platforms can enhance networking and cooperation, it is also essential to be cautious of the norm of 'social software', which insinuates that software can bring people together at all. Blog sites and wikis are merely short-term solutions aimed to curb the pertinent crisis in society today. With the aid of distributed aesthetics, network theory demystifies the utopia of perpetual growth (Munster & Lovink, 2005). Concisely, it is significant to realise that distributed aesthetics is not just reflecting, imagining, or imaging, but is all about restructuring and configuring networks (Munster & Lovink, 2005). Lovink (2016) questions the credibility of the modern Internet to act as a decentralisation source and argues how Google and Facebook have transformed

towards a monopolistic model of the economy, besides being used by government agencies to access people's private data. It is important to add to the account that there is a possibility of the emergence of strange and unpredictable attractions between spectacle and spectator within distributed aesthetics networks. Thus, aesthetic distribution indicates people's changing consumption habits as we develop a greater understanding of art and its potentials in a networked generation.

Still relevant today, Nichols's (1988) idea of the 'fetishisation' of cybernetic interactions could be used to define the process of interaction and the experience of simulation in electronic art forms. In particular, this experience questions what our sense of reality is when reality is adjusted by computation and digital communication networks (Nichols, 1988). The term 'cybernetics' is not new as far as electronic art is concerned. However, it is critical to examine other possibilities regarding the meaning of the term. For instance, thinking of cybernetics as a mental phenomenon that requires physical interactions will provide useful insights into how electronic arts engage the audience with current technologies.

Scholz and Schneider (2016) suggest that the most valuable products of the future will be ideas and experiences, not material things. This theory relates to discussions of the idea that we are entering the 'experience age'. Automation triggered post–industrialism, and this gave rise to the information age, where knowledge was commoditised and valued as a currency of its own (Castells, 2003). In the information age, information was still not fully open and was held within centralised, hierarchal systems. As information was fed to the masses through mass media channels, historically curated by those in power (Castells, 1996), there was the growing rise of the network society. In this new social structure, decentralised systems allow for the rapid growth of knowledge sharing amongst anyone with an Internet connection (Castells, 2003). An interesting feature of the speculated experience age is that technology is used either to serve or to collaborate and not something by which to be controlled. While we currently feel consumed by our technology, an era of experience should mean we can overcome these tendencies and take back control of these systems. People in the creative industries are responding to this by designing original electronic and new media artefacts, and platforms for them, that are culturally valuable, technologically refined, and that engage communities in the value of

experience. However, this value can and is being commoditised by capitalism's branding of community value (Goriunova, 2011). This provides an opportunity for creative entrepreneurs and social innovators to discuss how the labour power of free and open source movements can challenge definitions of production.

Crowdfunding is a strong contender for challenging modes of creative production. However, crowdfunding promotes an illusion of democracy that may look fairer and more autonomous, but the labour behind a campaign is hidden, and reasons for supporting a campaign are often based on material products that are not intended outcomes of the projects (Ridgway, 2013). To develop new cultural economies, creative entrepreneurs must consider going beyond the reward-based crowdfunding model and develop ways to crowd-share ownership of cultural production. As Bourdieu (1993, p. 46) explains about relationships to the audience, economic or political interests are reasons for supporting art as a patron, and products will be distinguished according to the degree of success with the audience.

Curators who work in mediating and moderating positions work in between artefacts, between artists and their artefacts, and between people, so how can curators materialise that kind of labour? We are not the ones manufacturing the artefacts, but we are part of designing the experience. The labour is in the mediation, the action, and the practice (Graham & Cook, 2010). Lotti (2016) expresses the potential for cryptocurrency as a medium, and the blockchain for the exchange of art experiences can respond to current socio-technological discourse. Employing a blockchain infrastructure would only require a moderating figure, as the blockchain is the mediator, essentially removing the middle man. An example of a blockchain-based art platform is how Ampliative Art (http://www.ampliativeart.org/en/welcome/) enhances the prospects and conditions of artists and DIY curators. The site uses blockchain technology to allow artists to make their artwork accessible and aims at fostering the dynamics of engagement, collaboration, sharing, and co-creation. The future of cultural production on the blockchain hints at a new entrepreneurial era regarding the role of the art dealer and of the curator.

5.2)   Networking and peer platforms at Electrofringe

Community organisations such as Electrofringe aim to bring people together by organising points of contacts and sharing relevant pieces of information. They belong to diverse individuals who embrace and put into practice activities and knowledge. As a leader, I have developed an understanding of what to impart to the community and have been committed to acting accordingly. The DCog model considers the systems of meta–design, bringing dispersed people together and enhancing shared customs, while taking place over a period of time.
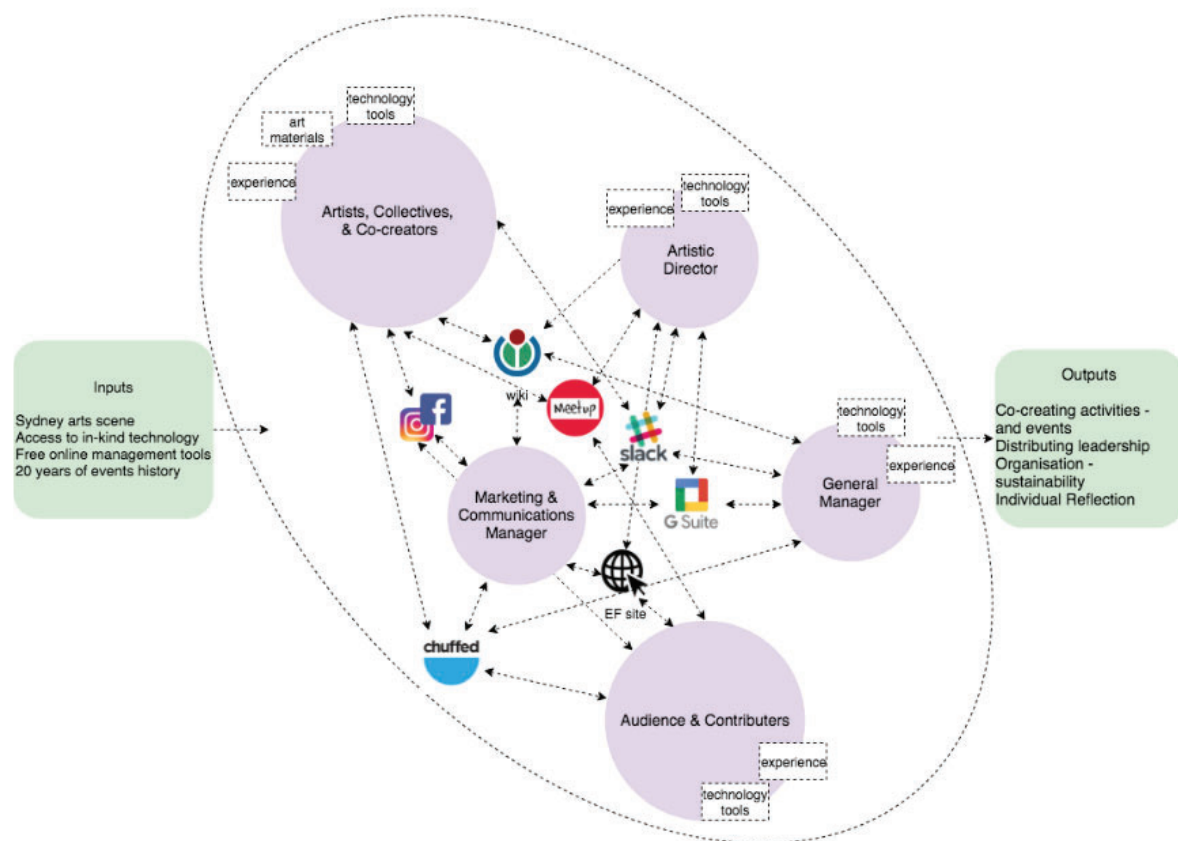
Figure 28: Electrofringe as a unit of analysis in distributed cognition

Figure 21 shows Electrofringe as the unit of analysis in a distributed cognitive ecosystem. The decisions and choice I made and actions I performed are distributed amongst artefacts, technology, and other people. The tools and mediums used are

part of our cognition. We collaborate with the mediums as agents, as if they were an extension of ourselves, and collaborate with other people.

According to Hutchins (1995), 'different individual cognitive activities that comprise a system can be viewed as computations that occur through the propagation of representational states across media.' In Electrofringe, media refers to both external and internal representations that make up components found in an activity programme such as our experience (professional and personal), art materials, technology tools such as smartphones and laptops, and virtual elements in the form of communication platforms and management agents. Through the lens of a distributed cognitive framework, knowledge is disseminated across these various representational states through different communication pathways that include non-verbal communication. Also, other communication channels entail varying the modes of operation, transforming data between multiple modes, and the use of external representations and mental computations to generate a new representation.

After trialling event platforms in former projects, I began a transformation by creating a Meetup.com community, and the use of the Slack teamwork platform. Using these new web-based communications and social media hubs allowed an exchange of ideas and presented accessible data that reflects the community of artists' and organisers' negotiations over the entire period. Throughout the study, I trialled nine social network, productivity, and crowdfunding platforms: Google Suite, Riot, Slack, Trello, Facebook, Telegram, Meetup.com, Chuffed.org, and The Australian Cultural Fund. Each of the platforms served different purposes, and I documented each platform according to its functionality and adoption by users. Currently, Electrofringe maintains the use of three online social networking platforms: Facebook, Slack, and Meetup.com, as well as other social media platforms to share news. Facebook has dominated the competition, since most people access Facebook every day, and has been beneficial for the promotion of events, especially in encouraging artist-audience interactions. However, there is a growing community (which includes some Electrofringe associates) against using Facebook. Meetup.com offered an alternative to Facebook to stay in touch with hacker collectives and expanded our network to a new technology-centred audience. Meetup.com also provided an easy-to-use platform for managing the meetup events.

The final tool we used is Slack, as a digital workplace and to communicate one-to-one and in small groups.
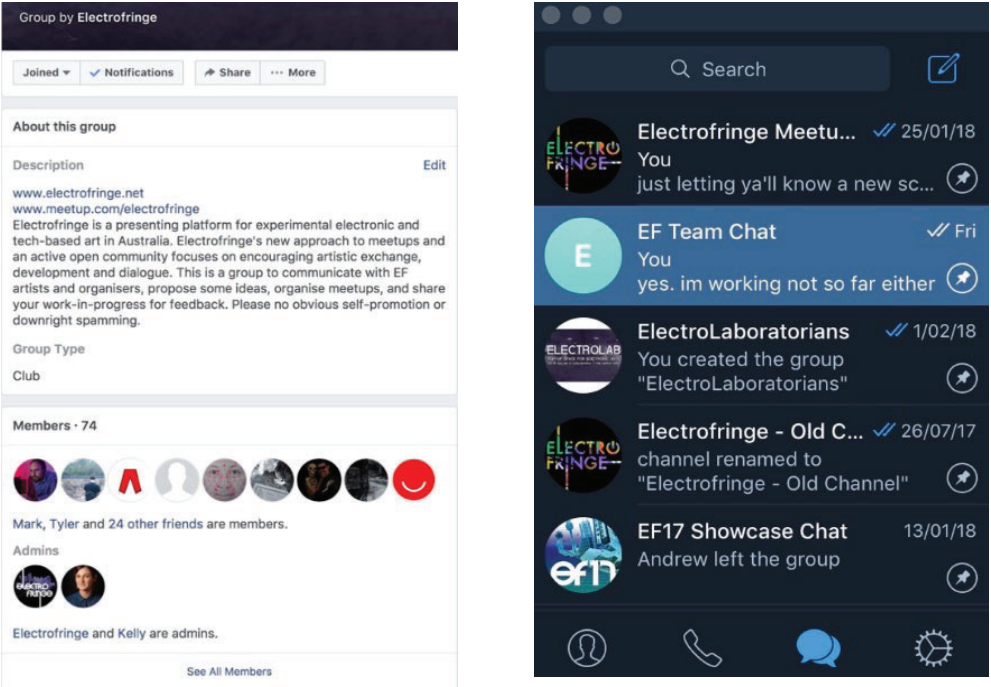
Figure 29: Screenshots of Facebook group (left) and Telegram chats (right)
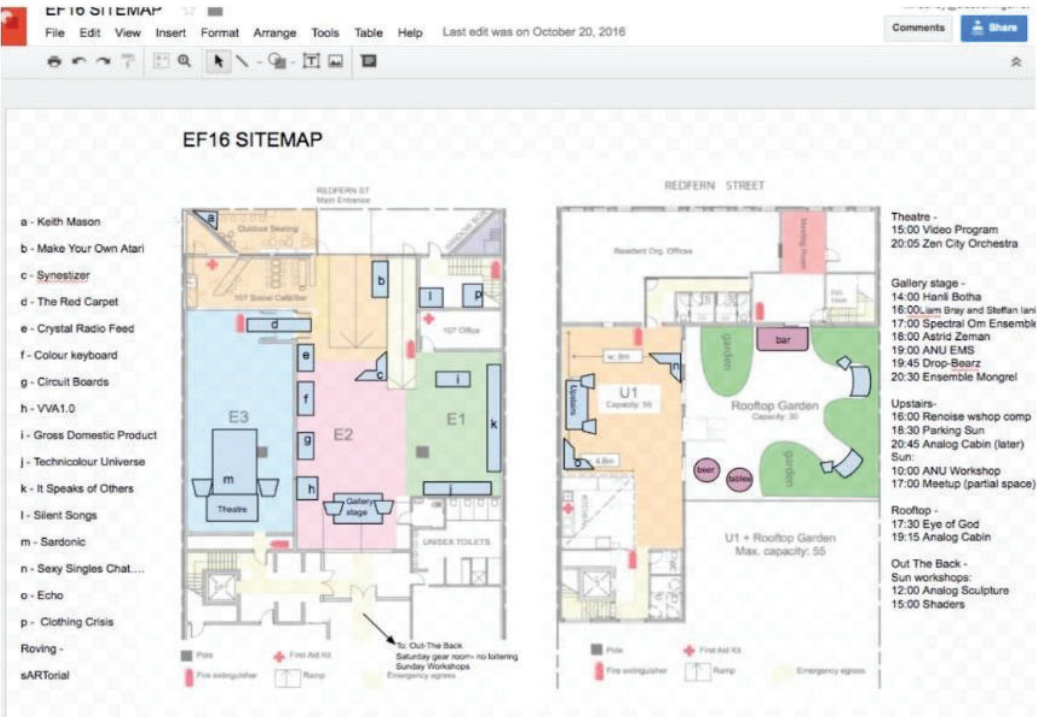
Figure 30: Site map drawing for EF16 made with Google Suite

During the pre-production phases of the showcases, I set up a Slack teammate platform account and invited all those taking part to communicate with me and with each other. In the Slack platform, people could also introduce themselves, discuss each other's progress, and organise ride sharing, and I set up a help thread for people to provide advice for each other when I was not available. The exhibition layout was shared with presenters as an open document, embedded in Slack. I initially laid out a rough plan, and then artists could move and resize their blocks, add notes, and negotiate amongst each other through Slack. The production schedule was shared through Slack in a similar fashion. The biggest disadvantage with depending on Slack was that only 19 of the 33 presenters took advantage of using it. Of the 19 users, several were confused with the interface and the amount of information that wasn't relevant to them. I found myself having to persuade people to engage through it and constantly ask presenters to sign up.

Meetups, online and IRL
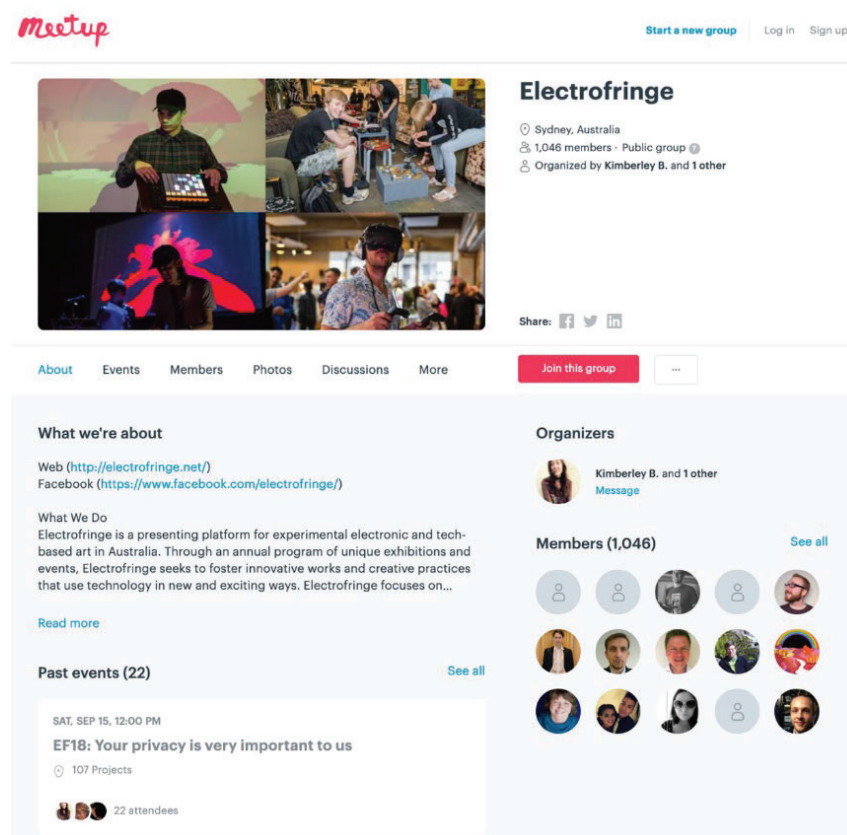
Figure 31: Meetup.com/electrofringe front page screenshot

In consultation with my new teammates in 2016, we decided that having meetups with the public would provide a more unanimous approach to the creative community direction. The participatory meetups provided times for artists, computer programmers, and designers to prototype and evaluate their works over an extended time, taking into account audience response and feasibility. The aims of the meetups were to build a collaborative community of presenters and to distribute EF17 curatorial responsibilities. Distributing event responsibilities allowed participants to take on tasks that they had an interest in doing, not just a proficiency in doing, and time to execute. This allows people in teams to negotiate their skills and knowledge depending on the task at hand and exchange insights, leading to new learning. Some responsibilities could be completed by multiple people at a time. The distributed responsibilities were as follows: event concepts and themes, artist callouts, crowdfunding, graphic design, site layout, sound technician, lighting technician, audiovisual installation, photography, videography, and logistics.

Through Meetup.com, I organised the meetups at venues across Sydney, including the function room of the Beauchamp Hotel in Darlinghurst, 107 Projects, and UNSW Art & Design. Please see Appendix F, for the Electrofringe meetups announced on Meetup.com. The constant shifting of locations proved difficult and confusing for the community, which made it hard to achieve regular attendance. On the contrary, each location brought new guests because of the location change. I determined that a regular group was of more importance, and that a dedicated, well-sized and well-located space would prove beneficial. I made an application to the Sydney Temporary Empty Space program, highlighting that Electrofringe had never had the opportunity for a dedicated space in Sydney before, and that the opportunity would be a valuable test for our needs and requirements as a community-run organisation.
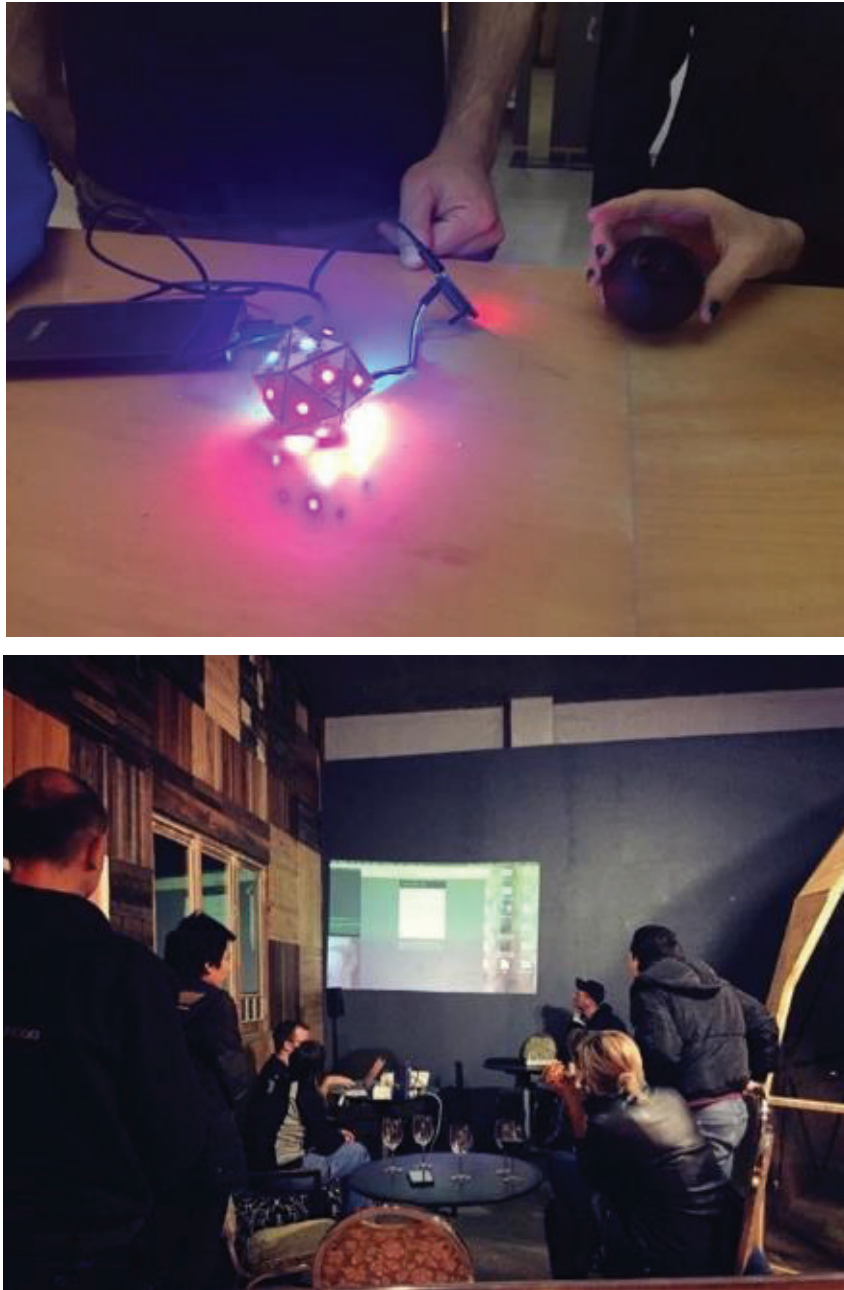
Figure 32: Images from two different Electrofringe meetups

Crowdfunding

The Australian Cultural Fund (ACF) is managed by the Australia Council for the Arts. ACF is a donation-based platform with which one can set a target, but still redeem all the funds raised if the target is not met. I set up the fund as a dedicated crowdfunder for the presenters' expenses, and I aimed to have all presenters actively involved in promoting the campaign, as the funds are essentially for them. Unfortunately, some

of the responses I received were that they did not want to look like they were begging for money, that they did not need any money, and that there were no incentives for people who contribute funds. I was unsuccessful in encouraging presenters to spread the campaign through a peer approach. The result was only $305 to support the 33 presenters, so with approval from the presenters, the funds went to food and beverages from 107 Projects, and for any local travel costs.

Chuffed.org is an Australian-based crowdfunding platform for social causes. Campaigns need to be approved by the committee to assure they meet their categories. Like ACF, it is a donation-based platform; however, they do allow for rewards to be given as long as they are not monetary. I developed an approach to set up rewards as community contributions to present at EF17. This would allow for more developed projects and local start-ups to pledge on the campaign and in turn get to present their projects alongside the registered presenters. We had six responses to this approach ranging from VR design, software demonstration, to music. These made up to $3557 and provided a significant portion of our budget. With the exponential increase from the EF16 campaign, this format of co-producing amongst artists and local start-ups shows potential for future years.

Electrofringe received a grant from the City of Sydney for the EF18 showcase. While we weren't dependent on crowdfunding, I wanted to continue implementing it for future years. Figure 33 shows the peer-based crowdfunding model I implemented in 2018. It expands on the 2017 model by allowing artists and presenters to start their own campaign from the main campaign. Once an artist selects the option to create his or her own sub-campaign, he or she can design a page with his or her own amount he or she wants to raise and add unique rewards to give to pledgers. This approach encourages the artists to be entrepreneurial and think about what they could offer in exchange for their art. Considering the showcases are free, we encouraged attendees of the showcases to contribute directly to the artist/s of their choice, and not to the main campaign. However, the spread of each artist's campaign on social media means the main campaign gets increased traffic from potential sponsors and donators. Another feature is that the total raised by all artists and the main campaign shows on the main campaign page. Since people are more likely to support a project

that has funds raised, this works as a marketing tactic. The artists get 100% of the contributions made to their pages, and we did reserve some funds in the grant to give the artists pages an equally distributed boost in funds, which at minimum covered their travel expenses.
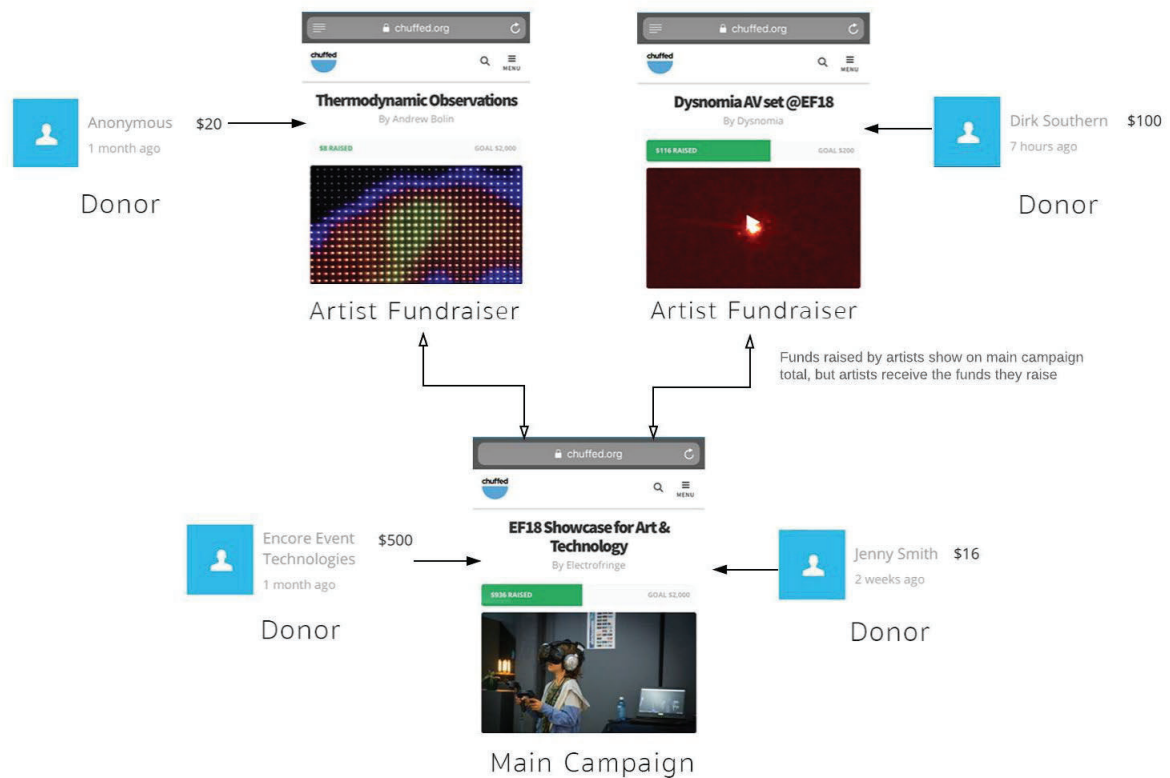
Figure 33: Crowdfunding diagram

Wiki toolkit

The wiki aims to serve as a toolkit for future Electrofringe producers to use, and is also open to the public to re-purpose for their own organisations and projects. The peer approach to editing the wiki is designed to be flexible in that it offers a free choice for the people to contribute and when/where they contribute. Staff and volunteers of Electrofringe can use the wiki as a project management system or as a collaboration platform. See Appendix G, Wiki development documentation.

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Figure 34: Electrofringe wiki-based toolkit, Screenshot of the main page

I used the MoSCoW model to determine the requirements for the wiki:

Must have
- Be easy to read and comprehend
- Be open for Electrofringe community to edit
- Offer a survey of tools and technologies trialled
- Include blank templates for production, scheduling, site-mapping
- Further resources

Should have
- Workshop guidelines
- Meetup guidelines
- Research tools
- Archive of Electrofringe events

Could have
- Open access to public

- Download and installation guidelines for software

Won't have

- Interactive workshop tools
- Translations into other languages

The wiki in its current stage meets the 'must have' category. Currently, the toolkit awaits further activation and contribution from the other team members of Electrofringe. After a recent attack on the wiki and excessive vandalism, in which hackers created 7000+ pages of obscene content, it is our aim that the wiki will be secured and open again before the 2019 showcase.

The peer framework in which the Electrofringe wiki toolkit is being further developed will be introduced through a voluntary co-design workshop offered to the Electrofringe community. The participants will have a follow-up online activity in editing the toolkit. The next inquiry for the new team is how to consolidate the participants' competencies in creative, strategic, and collaborative elements into a toolkit which can be expanded upon and deployed.

Summary

Over the two-year period, I expanded Electrofringe's relations across a distributed network of people, tools, social networking platforms, and artefacts, and built a visual framework from this using distributed cognition. I tested a variety of proprietary and open-source platforms for use by the community and we, as a collective, determined the tools we preferred to use. The current set of platforms in use has the technical ability to work together, which makes the sharing of information and media more intuitive. Through four experiments with crowdfunding, I developed a new peer-based crowdfunding model for Electrofringe. The wiki aims to provide a resource of not only these platforms, but of the organisational resources presented in the former chapters.

5.3) Discussion

In Electrofringe, online and face-to-face social networks play a crucial role as the backbone of the organisations' interconnectivity. Distributing curating supported both informal and formal interactions between peers for networking and collaboration purposes. The premise was that if we could compile and use digital platforms and social media as places of communication, experimentation, production, and communal ownership, managing Electrofringe would be more cooperative, and having the system established would make the curatorial process semi-automated for future events. The networking technologies chosen, allow more people to participate, generating a strong collective memory bank (Scholz & Lovink, 2007), where problems can be solved through retrieval of group knowledge.

This study of distributing curatorial agency was assisted by software agents, not only humans. The relationship between the people involved, the tools used, and the cultural works created were interrelated and dependent on each other. I suggest that the dependency of the tools and platforms were equal to that of human commitment.

The findings on the following page reveal how we shared agency in Electrofringe by introducing new tools. The findings are linked to the evaluative criteria of shared space, open platform, and greater connectivity.

Shared space

In addition to face-to-face shared space, Electrofringe now fosters shared space on digital networks. While there were already some shared protocols in place, primarily a Facebook page and Twitter account, prior to my involvement, Electrofringe had no other online presence, and these were not open to the community. This was a major issue that I wanted to change by conceptualising a new digital curatorial platform for Electrofringe, along the lines of *Runme.org* and *Waterwheel.* However, due to the limited amount of time and resources for the project and the fact that there was not a strong community in place to trial a custom solution, I sought existing tools to test and integrate together. In this sense, the shared online space I developed is not a

standalone platform but is made from compiling common social media and productivity tools.

Open platform

The first finding is that peer-to-peer crowdfunding is an improvement on the usual rewards-based crowdfunding model. The peer approach to running the campaigns distributed the labour of managing, making it more efficient and less burdensome on the leadership team. The reward of being able to co-create the showcase enabled sponsors and donors to take part in the experience of the event, marketing their own enterprise alongside artists, and other curators could contribute to the programming of the event by buying in to the costs of the showcase.

Greater connectivity

The second finding is that proprietary tools offer advantages over free and open-source tools, considering the size of our organisation and (lack of) ability to maintain open-source solutions. Most proprietary tools and platforms offer free, unlimited use for non-profit organisations, making it practical and quite helpful for underground organisations like Electrofringe. This finding challenged my assumption that the community would prefer free and open-source tools, when, in fact, they chose otherwise. I was surprised that the hacker community, Platypus Initiative, who we partnered with, were supportive of Slack integration over Riot.im, and I found this was due to the security and longevity of the platform. Having our wiki hacked and vandalised is a good example of how risky these open-source platforms can be, but it is a productive challenge to learn how to overcome these breaches and find new solutions.

The social networks and peer platforms implemented in this study have connected more groups of people and increased the audience of Electrofringe. A challenge that remains is enabling people to filter through the massive amount of information we have generated, allowing them to more easily connect to suitable collaborators to generate new ideas. This is where the next stage of innovation in Electrofringe could come from being more selective with the data and tools I have set up so that the community can interact with more pleasure and clarity.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In the concluding chapter, I provide a synopsis of my research, returning to the research questions to demonstrate how they were answered. I describe the curational model initially presented in the introduction and discuss the outcomes of the study and the implications of my approaches. I then offer my contribution to the sector and recommendations for Electrofringe's future. Finally, I encourage others to adapt, repurpose, and further develop the content and material I have contributed through this study.

Synopsis

This thesis generated applied knowledge about how to distribute curatorial leadership in the Sydney-based electronic arts organisation Electrofringe. Over two years of practice-based curatorial research and directing events (see Appendix J), I studied how to share agency with others and identified proprietary and open-source tools for supporting distributed curation.

The primary research question was:
How can the Electrofringe curatorial platform be more participatory and engaging?

This research has shown that the ability to share the ownership of cultural production through distributed curating and social networks is essential for challenging issues of participation and accessibility and thus contributes to a new curatorial model.

In order to develop this statement, I had to break the main inquiry down into three sub-questions that support the primary inquiry, which I will discuss consecutively:

1. Why should the Electrofringe curatorial platform be innovated?

This inquiry set the purpose for the entire study. The Electrofringe curatorial platform was innovated because it opened up the organisation to participation and generated a model that is prepared for disruptions. As substantiated in the introduction, Electrofringe needed drastic changes in order to solve problems of a lack of participation and engagement after relocating to Sydney. However, I recognised while applying the SWOT analysis method to Electrofringe that the issue was not likely caused by the relocation, but due to Electrofringe's inability to maintain a network, and I proposed that online platforms could assist in that. This led me to review literature from systems theory, network theory, and distributed aesthetics, as I needed to comprehend the inherent theoretical and aesthetics of practice if I were to build a creative network infrastructure. The methods I undertook were primarily in diagramming and mind-mapping to visualise and make sense of the organisational structures and flows of information. Once I had mapped out the structures, I was able to alter and

re-design them. Having a set of visual models to share with others in Electrofringe allowed us to implement them and adapt them over time.

2. What are effective approaches to encourage curatorial participation?

This question explored sharing agency through distributed curating and shared labour. This being a pragmatic study, I needed to find and apply practical approaches to answer this question. Through the literature review, I discovered a trend in the electronic art exhibiting platforms and events that I was interested in: they all had made use of social networking platforms and often had their own participation systems in place. Live Performers Meeting, Chaos Communications Congress, the demoparties, as well as many events I experienced in my travels have participation open to all that register. Although the EF16 call-out process was listed as an application with a selective entry, I experimented with selecting all applicants to present, and arranged an extra day for the showcase to accommodate this. For the 2017 showcase, I changed the callout procedure as registrations rather than selections; however, it was regulated by category and time submitted, with a waitlist. The result was a dedicated, returning community who may not have had the opportunity to present elsewhere due to not having an artistic history or public profile, which other initiatives require.

Taking participation another step forward, I set out to change Electrofringe's production planning by involving the community in the planning and production of the showcase through a series of co-creation and co-design meetups. We used communication and networking tools to facilitate the meetups, and also to continue discussions online. A strong sense of community was built through these activities, as shown by the fact that we developed friendships and collaborations.

Since we were struggling to obtain enough funds to sustain the organisation and put on the showcases, I implemented crowdfunding into Electrofringe's financial strategy. The crowdfunding model went from donation-based, to giving rewards to donors, to offering incentives for local start-ups to present alongside exhibiting artists, and finally, to get funds to the artists directly from the funders.

The final major approach was to operate a brick-and-mortar space for the Electrofringe community to access. This was managed by offering subsidised co-

working space to artists and organisers (as a regular space for hosting meetups and as a space to run workshops).

3. Which networking tools can facilitate creative community engagement?

This question determined the best networking tools to share agency between humans and non-human actors. I was initially investigating the necessity of developing a custom digital platform for Electrofringe, but I quickly discovered that there are existing tools that could serve the purpose and be more widely adopted the community, as well as giving me an opportunity to explore our extended capacity to produce with digital networks.

Through trialling four crowdfunding campaigns on two platforms (the first one being unsuccessful), I applied peer-to-peer theory to eventually design a peer-based crowdfunding model on Chuffed.org, which gave artists and presenters control over their own sub-campaigns and the funds they raised. Use of crowdfunding platforms in a peer-to-peer manner relieves some of the work from the organisers, and also encourages artists to think entrepreneurially about how they would like to engage audiences.

Both open-source and proprietary tools and platforms have advantages, and after trialling a set of tools with Electrofringe over the two years, a combination of these are currently in use by Electrofringe. My study integrated the following tools: Google Suite for project management and information management; Slack for direct and group teammate communication as well as channels in the Slack workspace for community discussion, sharing media assets, and planning; Meetup.com for organising meetups and partnering with other meetup groups; and Chuffed.org for crowdfunding.

Outcomes and implications

This thesis has shown that distributing curatorial agency does not reduce work, but makes work more shareable, and generates discourse on shared ownership of creative outputs, design thinking in curatorial practice, and co-production in cultural production. Labour in the context of Electrofringe was invisible, and therefore I

discovered a way to track labour and agency through distributed cognition. Additionally, I developed ways to archive and process artefacts (digital and physical) to prevent loss of knowledge. There remain significant problems regarding precarious labour, not only in the community—arts sector, but in the creative industries in general. My research into network cultures and distributed labour aimed to probe new ways to think about how we can challenge this problem.

Returning to the Electrofringe curatorial model in Figure 2, innovating Electrofringe to provide shared space, an open platform, knowledge sharing, and greater connectivity contributed to shaping a future—oriented curatorial model for the Electrofringe platform. Currently, Electrofringe is less dependent on the core leadership team, and the community is able to use the tools, concepts, and platforms to cooperate at their own accord.
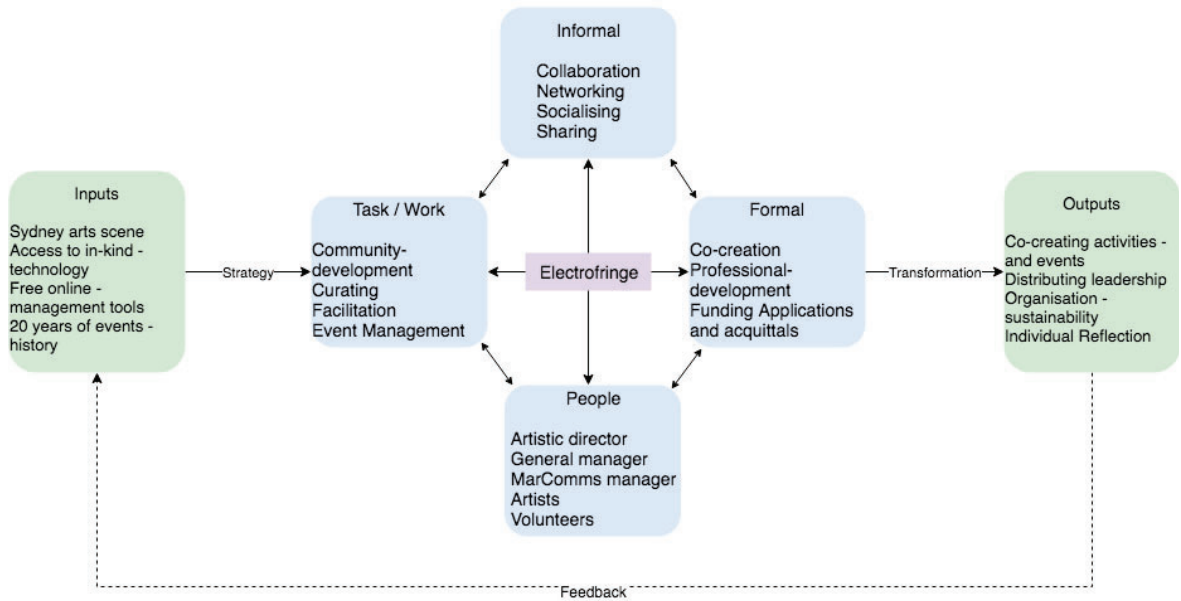
Figure 35: Electrofringe Curatorial Model

All elements of the curatorial model in Figure 35 were covered in this thesis. The inputs are the current environment (Sydney arts scene), resources (access to in—kind technology and free online management tools), and history (20 years of Electrofringe events, showcases, and community development). The foundation of this model is based on innovating Electrofringe, distributed curating, and networking for engagement. There is congruence between the four transformative sections of labour Electrofringe represents as an organisation. I have identified these as task/work

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(community development through meetups and networking events), curating and co-curating exhibitions and showcases, facilitation of workshops and labs, and event management. The key people included in the curatorial model are the artistic director, general manager, marketing and communications manager, the artists, and volunteers/participants, which are visualised as a distributed network in Figure 13. The informal aspects which form over time are collaboration, networking, socialising, and sharing of information and skills. The congruence of these four elements led to a transformation and resulted in the outputs where we co-created activities, distributed leadership and shared agency, generated a more sustainable organisation, and practised individual reflection. The feedback loop is constant, and new environmental factors are continually being reset. The new team is able to change this model that responds to the new factors and that suits their new vision for Electrofringe.

Electrofringe needed to be innovated, and this needed to be done through distribution and networking to stay relevant and culturally valuable. Practice-based research was the most effective way to reveal the workings of the organisation and allow the reflective curatorial approach to make changes in it. As a reflective practitioner, I reflected on experiences to reinforce continuous learning. Using reflective practice and design thinking, I was able to solve problems, change my behaviour, and think and act reflexively. Reflexivity was important in framing Electrofringe in distributed cognition, as I had to remove myself form the centre of the inquiry. Distributed cognition helped harness human agency and values in this system, despite the level of involvement of the organisers. This cognitive process of cooperation between humans and non-human agents facilitates the development of shared understanding and the generation of new knowledge. Distributing ownership and leadership with the community network has improved the curatorial model of Electrofringe, as artists and audiences can participate freely, and through a peer-to-peer model, can do so without expending their time and resources beyond their means.

Imagine what cultural history would look like if it were written by the participation of whole communities. Curators should think about what the past will look like in the future, not just what is interesting or significant now or was before. The implications of

participatory and distributed approaches to cultural production could help us achieve that goal. This thesis implies that innovative curatorship is a reflective and an entrepreneurial activity, where curators and arts leaders have the positions and means of power to transform traditional cultural production–presentation models and can include participation in the core of their processes. Although the threat of automation replacing jobs grows in our network society, the arts and creative industries are one of the most economically secure industries against this threat. Since the outcomes and implications of this study encourage expanding participation in the creative industries, I hope these ideas could prove beneficial in a post–work economy.

Further work

I encourage curators, practice–based researchers, and arts workers to adapt, repurpose, and further develop the content and material I have contributed through this study. This includes any ideas proposed and tested in this thesis, downloading and using the templates in the wiki, and furthering the study in their own organisations with group reflection and social media data analysis to determine which tools are most effective for their organisation.

There is potential for Electrofringe to run a participatory study at a meetup that builds on the discoveries and arguments of this thesis. Organisers, artist–participants, and audience members could interact in a semi–structured format for organisational decision making, dialogue and presentation of works. Such a study could help better understand the collective features of participatory curating.

It would also be interesting to assess the effectiveness of distributed curating and the need for creating a custom, digitally assisted platform for distributed curating. While these aspects would make for a strong and valuable research project, a case study on platforms would be best done by someone who is outside of the core leadership positions of an existing organisation. Alternatively, it would be valuable to determine these factors prior to starting a brand–new venture that does not have existing responsibilities, deadlines, and performance risks. Expanding on distributed cognition, reflective practice, and especially the method of reflection–in–action could be better analysed using specific tools that record experiences in real–time. This

approach could be refined for a more in-depth qualitative and quantitative analysis on reflective curatorial practice.

During my research on this project, as well as my freelance work as an audiovisual technician and VJ, I have been growing concerned with the consumption and waste of resources by technology-based artists and how this clearly is not sustainable practice in our rapidly changing environment. The field is inherently dependent on emergent technologies, and artists and creative technologists can appear ethically exempt from ecological practice for "art's sake". In the future, I would like to research a peer-to-peer framework for investigating the social, cultural, and technological dimensions of ecological, electronic media arts practices. This would involve developing a platform for both online and IRL exchanges of ideas, data and pre-owned hardware.

However, as I discovered through this thesis, building such a platform is probably not going to be very effective without a culture and community based on these values and assessing the need for it. This master study was performed through pragmatic actions – I want my future research to look at epistemic actions. Such a study could be based on observations/qualitative/ethnography studies to map out units of distributed cognition or meshworks. Distributed cognition can be used to identify the sociotechnical networks, exchanges of information, and the exchange of hardware (to find ways to minimise e-waste) between these fields and the people in them. A meshwork, on the other hand, is less about binary functions and may be a more suitable theory to consider when trying to map out the ecosystem of, for example, artists and creative technologists working in collaboration. To make it more complicated, mapping these collaborations takes place in increasingly ubicomp environments.

I deeply believe commons-based peer production will continue to provide alternative economic advantages to an increasingly post-work, automated era. Reflective practice can aid creatives in discovering new ways to generate ethics in ecologically conscious electronic art. Naturally, as an artist and curator, I think creative media is a powerful approach to start in visually mapping out and exploring emergent environments we do not understand yet. And through a critical lens, develop a more eco-ethical grounding for creating resource heavy art and technology projects.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Co-create EF18

electro fringe

EF WEBSITE   EF FACEBOOK   EF MEETUP.COM

Kimberley Bianca
General Manager
kimberley@electrofringe.net

Cover page

OVERVIEW

ELECTROFRINGE

Established in 1998, Electrofringe is arguably the only open presenting platform in Australia that caters to electronic art, VR & AR, audiovisual technology, design, hacking & DIY culture, and experimental music

EF18 SHOWCASE

This years showcase will be held on September 15th at 107 Projects in Redfern, Australia. The full EF18 program is free to the public and our events attract people of all ages. This year, EF18 will also part of the Sydney Fringe Festival program.

WHAT WE DO

We are a not-for-profit, community based, electronic arts and culture organisation, dedicated to presentation, entrepreneurship, skills development & art

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

We are seeking cash and in-kind sponsorship from $1000-$5000 towards the EF18 showcase production, and rewards to give to the artists and presenters

| 400+ | 30 | 2-4 |
| Attendees | Presenters | Workshops |

Page 1

PERKS OF CO-CREATING

EXPOSURE

Your branding across Electrofringe social media, website and print advertising including EF18 signage and program guides, as well as the opportunity to exhibit at the showcase in a demo, workshop or booth format

FOLLOWING

Reach out to a new audience, and an existing audience of creatives who use your tools and technologies. If you're looking to recruit creative technologists of all ages and skill levels, this is the place to be!

CONTRIBUTION

Provide the technology, software and methods for a future generation of creatives. Help fund independant culture and be a part of making a more vibrant city

NETWORKING

We offer a platform to connect with the creative technology industry AND the art-music-maker community. This is also an opporunity to investigate your market in a social setting

5000
Social media audience

10
Hours to exhibit

Page 2

MORE INFORMATION
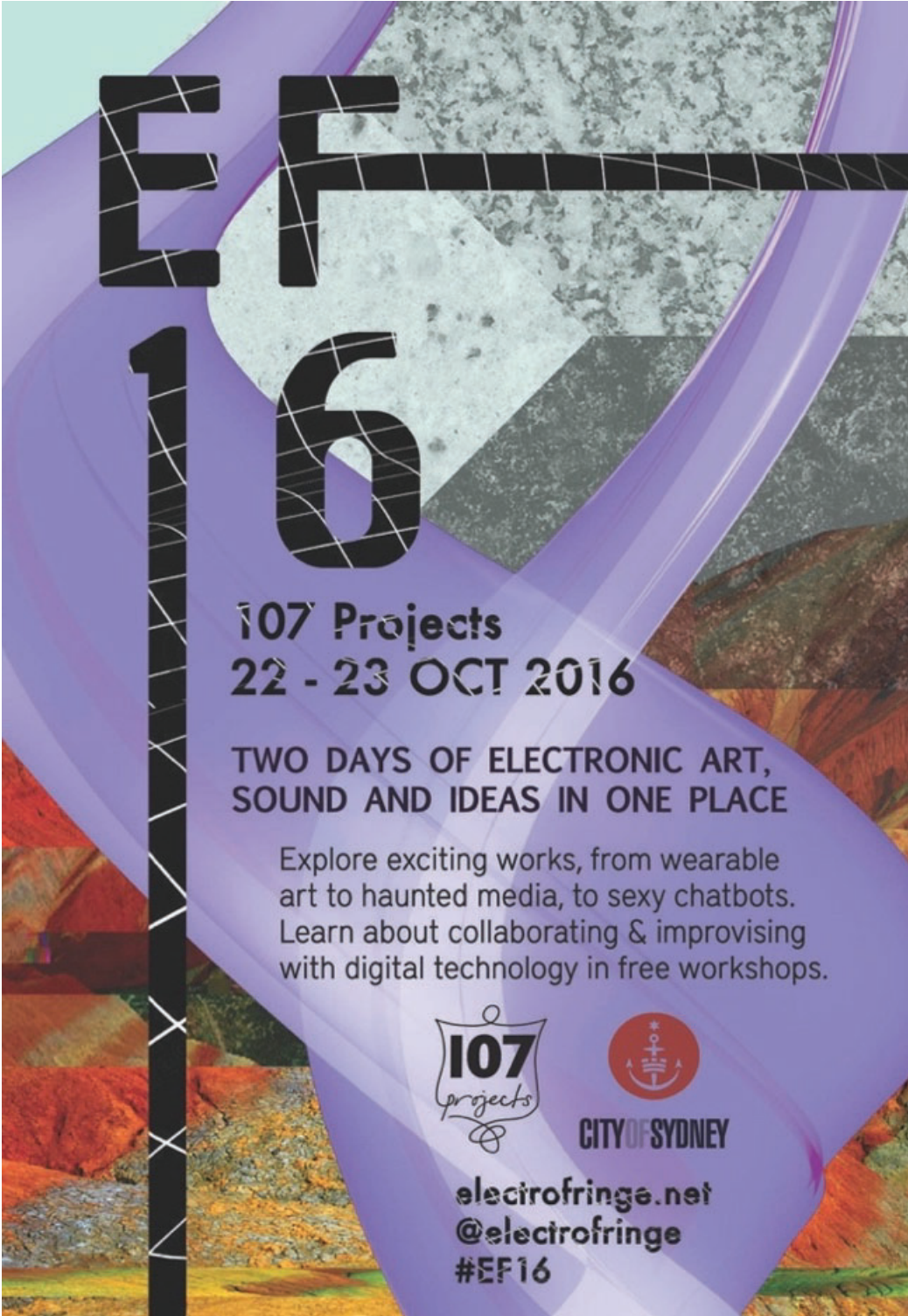
EF18 is the keystone event in the annual Electrofringe program, a showcase of Australia's diverse ecology of emerging electronic art and creative technology. The program features an interactive exhibition in which 30 of Australia's exciting new electronic artists are present with their works in alongside a program of tech-infused performances, product demonstrations, practical workshops and industry speed-dating sessions.

EF18 serves as a stepping-stone for students, recent graduates, entrepreneurs, and independent practitioners to gain exposure and make valuable connections by offering a unique space in which to exhibit their work. This interactive showcase format creates opportunities for audiences to explore, interact with and provide feedback to new technologies and the presenters. EF18 fosters an organic environment in which presenters can meet and network with each other, industry professionals and audiences to share skills and develop future collaborations

Page 3

Appendix B: EF16 Program

EF16

107 Projects
22 - 23 OCT 2016

TWO DAYS OF ELECTRONIC ART,
SOUND AND IDEAS IN ONE PLACE

Explore exciting works, from wearable
art to haunted media, to sexy chatbots.
Learn about collaborating & improvising
with digital technology in free workshops.

107
projects

CITY OF SYDNEY

electrofringe.net
@electrofringe
#EF16

WELCOME TO
EF16

Open interaction plays an important part in attracting people to community spaces. EF16 marks a return to communal, uncensored, and non-surveilled spaces to act on free speech, with technology being our unbiased mediator, and artwork representative output of how a person's internal monologue can connect to a greater discourse. Digital communication networks can be applied to take back the controls of our systems. It's vital to create new platforms, spaces, and open networks that continue to enable free speech - and ideas - in the future.

Although impressive, we are getting bored of the overtly manufactured, polished technology-driven art conceived by a genius and engineered by a software development agency. Creations so orchestrated that one cannot see it's beauty in imperfections. Electrofringe is excited to let creators reveal prototypes and works in progress. It's an open testing ground. Even if it is not immediately comprehensible to an audience, being exposed to people debugging custom software, hacking electronics, and fixing issues right there in proximity is interesting. It might be disappointing to not use a feature, but it leaves one wishing they could. There's simply no fun in total automation. Electrofringe creators break down the concept of artefacts and emphasise the aesthetic of raw experience.

Through performative interaction and audience participation, the projects we are presenting transcend the boundaries of culture, language and location. The works at EF16 intrinsically use the human form and voice to express relationships with technology and ecology. They incorporate multiple sensory modalities, connecting the psychological with the physiological and architectural. They investigate the beauty found in distortion, break mundane habits, and offer a soapbox for eco-warriors. They reflect a diverse set of possibilities that new technology is reconstructing in our individual and collective experiences.

An emphasis on workshopping and participatory activities demystifies technical-artistic process, but instead of taking away its interest, can only serve to encourage inspiration. EF16 makes a comeback to harboring openness in the relationships between organisations, presenters and audiences - something that I will be expanding upon in my time with Electrofringe, and I hope to see it emerge in the larger institutions in Australia. We hope that EF16 offers creative insights into understanding the technology that moves us, controls modern society, and has the potential to generate equal control of individual empowerment and environmental activism.

ABOUT

ELECTROFRINGE

What We Do

Electrofringe is a platform for experimental electronic and tech-based art in Australia. Through a program of unique events, Electrofringe seeks to foster innovative works and creative practices that use technology in new and exciting ways. Electrofringe focuses on putting artists and their works in the same place at the same time to encourage artistic exchange, development and dialogue.

History

Electrofringe was established in 1997. From 2001 to 2011, Electrofringe Festival was presented as a five-day annual festival in Newcastle, NSW as part of This is Not Art (TINA). From 2013 Electrofringe has incorporated a year round calendar of events such as Electrofringe @ IRL at Brisbane Powerhouse, Game Set Patch, and Electrolapse BYOB as part of Vivid Ideas.

Our Mission

To lead the way in consistently supporting emerging electronic and tech-based artists through the presentation of work and ideas; To lead the way in nurturing a vital culture of experimental electronic and tech-based art in Australia through innovative programming and engagement with audiences.

Links:

Electrofringe

EF16 event page

EF Meetup

107 Projects

The Team:

Kimberley Bianca
Artistic Director

Caitlin Gibson
General Manager

Andy Huang
Marketing and Communications Coordinator

QUICK GUIDE

EXHIBIT

Saturday 13:00-20:00

Clothing Crisis - Erica Deluchi, Tara Pearson, Lloyd Barrett, Andrew Burrell
Gross Domestic Product - Hamish Dobinson
it speaks of Others - Kate Brown and Thomas Hungerford
Crystal Radio Feed - Jade Boyd
Colour Keyboard - Tara Jade Pearson
Silent Songs - Romi Nam and Darwin Vickers
Technicolour Universe - Rose Staff (Radiance)
Printed Circuit Boards - Tim Heiderich
Synestizer - Dan MacKinlay, Christoph Stähli and Kaspar König
SEXY SINGLES READY TO CHAT IN YOUR AREA - Celina Jayne
VVAA 1.0 - Glenn Remington
Sardonic - Skye Gellmann
Echo - Loc Nguyen
The Red Carpet - Deborah Redwood
Maschinenmensch - NewvoDeco

VIDEO PROGRAM
Saturday 15:00-19:00
Theatre

40 Local and International entries ranging from 5 seconds to 55 mins

Electrofringe meetup #1
Sunday 17:00 Upstairs
Click here

PERFORMANCE

Saturday 13:00-22:00

Gallery Stage -
14:00 Hanli Botha
16:00 Liam Bray & Steffan Ianigro
17:00 Spectral Om Ensemble
18:00 Astrid Zeman
19:00 ANU EMS
20:00 Drop-Bearz

Upstairs & Rooftop -
17:30 The Eye of God
18:30 Parking Sun
19:15 Analog Cabin

Theatre -
19:30 Ensemble Mongrel
20:15 The ZenCity Symphony Orchestra Project

WORKSHOP

Sat 15:00-17:30, Sun 10:00-17:00

Sat 15:00   Atari Game Workshop with Tim Heiderich
Sat 16:00   Renoise Workshop & Speedcomp with Melt Unit & Hedonist
Sun 10:00   ANU EMS Unit Workshop
Sun 12:00   Analog Electronic Sculptures with Sydney Interactive Arts Meetup
Sun 15:00   Hands-on Intro to Shaders with Sydney Interactive Arts Metup

Please join us for Sunday breakfast from 10:00, just as our workshops start up again. There will be a $10 brekkie and coffee deal.

EXHIBIT

SATURDAY 22

13:00 - 20:00
Gallery

Clothing Crisis
Co-creation of Erica Deluchi, Tara Pearson, Lloyd Barrett and Andrew Burrell

Clothing Crisis is a wearable artwork exhibited through performance that aims to highlight, interrogate and ultimately take advantage of the invisible data networks that surround us. By collecting and repurposing a Twitter data stream that exposes fashion anxieties, a system is created from which emerges a generative conversation between audience and artwork. The work is realised as an illuminated garment yelling tweets, and containins elements of unworn clothing collected from people's wardrobes. It is an exploration into clothing excess that reinterprets traditional items of clothing.

13:00 - 20:00
Gallery

Gross Domestic Product
Hamish Dobinson

'Gross Domestic Product' features a low powered computer instructed to count up by one until it reaches infinity or the demand task becomes too much. The work critiques the notion of constant growth and progression in both economic and technological terms: it shows that even if a task is reasonably simple, there will inevitably be a breaking point. This breaking point will be attributable to some restrictive force acting upon the system working to complete the task.

13:00 - 20:00
Gallery

it speaks of Others
Kate Brown and Thomas Hungerford
Curated by Elyse Goldfinch

In the contemporary age of disembodied voices where machines speak back to us, the distinctions between the human voice and the automaton is increasingly uncanny. It speaks of Others' is a collaborative artwork that traces the impact of new technologies on the human voice to unpack the way we communicate in the post-digital world. This work reveals the elusive, immaterial and infinitely textured nature of the human voice through non-verbal forms of communication to reimagine the way these sounds can be traded across bodies.

13:00 - 20:00
Gallery

Crystal Radio Feed
Jade Boyd (created with assistance from Nick Wishart)

Channeling a live video feed of live crystals growing in an illuminated liquid solution, this Spooky Tesla Spirit Radio responds to -- and manifests -- the invisible forces around us. This work deals with themes around haunted media, occulted energies and interference, as well as the merging of nature and technology.

13:00 - 20:00
Gallery

Colour Keyboard
Tara Jade Pearson

Colour Keyboard' is part of an ongoing project involving the semiotic use of colour created by Tara Pearson. Different colours are used to communicate by representing individual letters. The focus of the artwork is how your interaction changes when the output of your computer keyboard is colours rather than letters.

13:00 - 20:00
Upstairs

Silent Songs
Romi Nam and Darwin Vickers

'Silent Songs' disrupts the traditional order of knowledge, emphasising bodily experience and sensory engagement. This work uses a custom-made speaker, programmed to rhythmically translate songs by releasing a corresponding amount of mist. The effect is that viewers will not hear a song but visually observe the mist dance out of the speaker.

13:00 - 20:00
Gallery

Technicolour Universe
Rose Staff (VJ Radiance)

In this work, the viewer's motion is transformed into forces that affects the projection using generative coding made with VVVV and a kinect. 'Technicolour Universe' uses an aesthetic of bright colours and childlike illustrations to invite the viewer to play with the installation. Interactivity is used as a means to explore our understanding of what an interface can be, how it serves as a mediator between two separate realms of human and virtual.

13:00 - 15:00
Theatre

Sardonic
Skye Gellmann, with programming by Shell Osborne

'Sardonic' is a performance piece designed to dislocate the audience, performer, and objects from their relative time and space. Through the investigation of game design, performance artist Skye Gellmann works within a gamified space where the body is tested through brutally fragile and system-based acrobats.

13:00 - 16:00
Upstairs

Echo
Loc Nguyen

'Echo' is a live soundscape shaped by the audience's awareness and engagement of space. The work uses stutters and echoes inputted through microphones and then feeds these sounds back into the space; which changes according to feedback within the site and bodies occupying and interacting in that space. Calling attention to the human body and agency, 'Echo' attempts

15:00 - 19:00
Theatre

The Red Carpet
Deborah Redwood

'The Red Carpet' continues Redwood's exploration of entropy: the breaking down of organised objects and systems, through ageing or catastrophe, into chaos. This work simulates the experience of fame, inviting audiences to step onto the red carpet. As they walk along the carpet, there are cheers, claps, whistles and cameras flashing. Once they step off the carpet, there is nothing. This work describes the rise to fame and power and then fall, that is, the breakdown of identity through time.

18:00 - 20:00
Roving

Maschinenmensch
NewvoDeco

Toydeath member Nick Wishart, fashion designer Carley Rose Wolski and visual artist / PhD candidate Jade Boyd come together for the first time to work on these wearable technology pieces, first presented as part of Dlux's sARTorial project. The gown incorporates fibre optics, mirrors and light reflection and was partly inspired by Cocteau's La Belle et La Bête, while the Theremin and light projecting headpiece took inspiration from Fritz Lang's 1927 film Metropolis.

13:00 - 20:00
Gallery

Printed Circuit Boards
Tim Heiderich

An exploration of organic branching forms recontextualised in the format of a circuit diagram, using the same production techniques of early photography and Daguerreotype, this work transplants photography into a different medium.

13:00 - 17:00
Gallery

Synestizer
Dan MacKinlay, Christoph Stähli and Kaspar König,
supported by the Zürich High School of Arts

An interactive online open-source experiment in cheap and easy musical creation, and synaesthetic perception. Synestizer uses the ubiquitous browser technology to empower people to create their own music and control it using their webcam.

13:00 - 20:00
Upstairs

SEXY SINGLES READY TO CHAT IN YOUR AREA
Celina Jayne

Jayne explores sexuality on the internet through projecting herself in the style of webcam girls. Another component to the work is an automated chatbot service that the audience can communicate with via the installation and their smartphone – further blurring the lines of lived reality and false reality on the internet. Taken together, the video and chatbot service creates at once a 'real' performance...

13:00 - 20:00
Gallery

VVAA 1.0
Glenn Remington

Glenn Remington develops audio and video feedback systems that investigate the potential beauty found in noise. His current work revolves around exploring and using signal processing that disrupts a signal to create a dense sonic field that emphasizes the physical properties and presence of sound. In this work, Remington uses feedback to create an audio video system that is circular and generated in real time that amplifies the disruption to the signal.

PERFORMANCE

SATURDAY 22

14:00 Hanli Botha
Gallery Stage

The music originates from an intense interest in field recordings relating to sound from construction sites, roads, people, and how it can be incorporated with electronic sound. The work explores the intensity and musicality of sound in daily life and the emotional release it can offer the physical body.

15:00 K Mason
Out front

Keith Mason has been performing his own brand of electro blues and folk music since 2001 under the name K Mason. His most recent live work takes the street music traditions of blues and folk and adds the flexibility of battery amplification to add electronica to the traveling musicians kit.

16:00 Liam Bray & Steffan Ianigro
Gallery Stage

This work is a collaborative exploration of musical neural networks, with Bray using these networks to drive live modular synthesis while Ianigro will use them to trigger rhythmic events and as a generator for sound. This work delves into the creative possibilities of using computers as musical companions, challenging the way we think about music and technology.

17:00 Zibethicus - The Spectral Om Ensemble
Gallery Stage

An improvisation, maybe two, on some Pujols. A Pujol is an instrument which might be thought of as a 'self-propelled Aeolian harp' – an air jet is directed over a series of arrayed strings, generating pure harmonics. The instruments used are prototypes made with common domestic items.

17:30 NEWT
Rooftop

'The Eye of God' is an immersive performance installation that investigates the terror of drone strike, comprising analog sound and visual components. NEWT consists of Audrey and Heli Newton, who work within visual arts and music respectively. Being of Pakistani descent, NEWT explores in this project the impact of Western intervention on Pakistan's cultural and social identity.

18:00 Astrid Zeman
Gallery Stage

Astrid is a vocalist, composer and multi-instrumentalist who creates live, ambient soundscapes using a loop pedal. Through recent explorations of her physical self as an instrument, she has learnt throat and harmonic singing alongside body percussion and mouth manipulations including tongue clicking. Her compositions often contrast organic, embodied sounds with electronic manipulations and distortions.

18:30 Parking Sun
Upstairs

Dan MacKinlay will be resampling live audio from whatever objects come to hand using custom hand-built audio-analysis software which uses machine-learning. Come hear Indonesian pop made out of the sound of your spilled beer and passing traffic.

19:00 ANU Experimental Music Studio
Gallery Stage

The Australian National University Experimental Music Studio was founded in 2014 to give students the opportunity to participate in an anarchic collective interested in improvised multimedia performance. Music and visual art students work together to create innovative projects which would otherwise have no place in their formal training.

19:30 Ensemble Mongrel
Theatre

'Erythrean Pictures' is an immersive new media environment. Four distinct works comprise this multi-movement interactive performance artwork, which presents a collection of abstracted themes and data streams as an emotive meditation on the death/destruction of the familiar in our world.

20:00 DROP-BEARZ
Gallery Stage

Drop-Bearz is an experimental/glitch electronic music collective lead by artists Deep Discourse, Mister.E & NyQuest. They will present a 30-minute set of six textured audio/visual performance works that feature live video and sound experiments, framed within a series of pointed socio-political commentaries.

19:15-close ANALOG CABIN Showcase
Rooftop/Upstairs
Event Page

Analog Cabin's music is hypnotic, summoning sounds that charm both the body and the soul. Their music is a door to perception, inviting those who step through into their own rarefied vision of techno and house. Analog Cabin Showcase is a collective performance of original Australia electronic music highlighting the work of four local Sydney producers.

The showcase will feature DJ sets from Adrian Burns (Drox), Mike Witcombe, Felix Warmuth & Rob Erskine (aka Illbot)

Later on in the evening see a rare improvised live set from all four of us utilising a mix of hardware and software and a bunch of synths.

20:15-Close CYBORGANITECTURE - The Battle of Treeitnam
Theatre
Event Page

Calling for real time & virtual time 'collaborators w/ The ZenCity Symphony Orchestra: battling to preserve and protect the seed from further 'genetic - artificial modification' the machine 'engineering' our 'vital sources of life'. Shiva V, 2014: (Collaborations of Virtuality) Nicola Morton 'Club Sound Witches' Eric Jenner 'Electrello', Julian Cerreto 'Trips' Dewi 'Madboots' Dylan 'Barge' Skye 'Bent' Drake 'Formaldehydes' Henry

This project has its roots in Electroacoustic sensibilities, which from a live-art installation position stems from Dada-Fluxes and the Avant-garde - of unconventional approaches to live performance using audio-visual references as a form of communication with audience.

VIDEO PROGRAM

SATURDAY 22

**Theatre,
15:00–19:00**

Pamela See (Xue Mei-Leng)	For Android
Li Gang	Burning Snow
Alinta Krauth	Bioluminous Walking documentation
Marta Di Francesco	VAULT
Peter Wildman	Gifting Heart
Peter Wildman	Movement is Life
Luke Hespanhol	Maybe, Maybe Not
Nightdiary - Day & Night	Day & Night
TinyarVisuals	Messy Flow
Sandrine Deumier and Sonia Paço-Rocchia	[Play;]
Reza Golchin	Class
Daniel Wechsler	Unsync
Daniel Wechsler	Asphyxia
PRNTRROR	PASSING BY.
Carlo Giuseppe Zuozo	Contro natura
Patricio Ballesteros Ledesma	Drawings to dance
Patricio Ballesteros Ledesma	Zapping
Amy Summer	Every Woman Needs Mascara
Aszyk	Masks of Light
APOTROPIA	Echoes of a Forgotten Embrace
Piotr Piasta	TOM
Medusa Misunderstood	Medusa Misunderstood
Ben Landau	WYWH_House
MICHELLE XEN	My Cells
MICHELLE XEN + THE NEON WILD	SpringFlare @ Brisbane Riverstage
Jennie Feyen	The Making of 'Body of Water'
JD Young	Plausible Heads
Zoey Vero	Pigmorph
Delineated Echoes	Delineated Echoes
Rimas Sakalauskas	Doukit medali (Give a Medal)
matthias moos	The Purest Of All Sounds
Abdoul-Ganiou Dermani	S-map-Phone
Rochford & Shapley	[HIT] PLAY all day, fight all night
Thomas Vallianatos	FRACTUS MACHINE_KOSMOS
Mike Celona	The Right Strain
Mike Celona	Legendary Variations
Russell J Chartier & Paul J Botelho	cocotte
Russell J Chartier & Paul J Botelho	1999 deconstructed
Vanja Mervic	Blowing bubbles on a micro scale
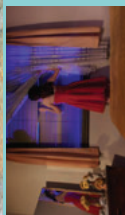
Panorama, in ten pieces - 18:00

Dumbsaint is a four-piece instrumental band from Sydney, Australia. They combine cinematic music with original narrative film projections, performed in synch. Utilising the screen on stage as an integral 5th member, the band seeks to present an installation where sound and image interact in unexpected ways.

Appendix C: Call—out forms

EF16 Application Form

Electrofringe is now accepting proposals from emerging electronic and technology based artists, designers and developers to be part of our annual flagship event: EF16. The event will take place Saturday and Sunday October 22 & 23 at 107 Projects in Redfern

EF16 features a one-day showcase for exhibiting and performing, with a second day workshop and demo program. This is an opportunity to present new work, demonstrate practice, express new ideas, test prototypes, receive direct feedback from eager audiences, and connect with peers and industry partners.

CRITERIA
Electrofringe presents a diverse range of electronic and technology-based art forms that utilise hacked technologies, DIY software, artist-made machines, computer networks, robotics, wearable technology, wireless technology, immersive virtual reality systems, electronic sound, circuit bending, repurposed corporate and industrial tools, data and internet-based applications, etc.

Works can be at ANY STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT; across all electronic artforms, and we also encourage applications from practitioners to run workshops.

For more information about the criteria and to apply, fill out the application form here: www.electrofringe/net/apply

APPLICATIONS CLOSE FRIDAY AUGUST 19, 11.59PM
Successful applicants will be notified by email at the end of August.
For further information and enquiries, please email kimberley@electrofringe.net

EF17 Registration

REGISTRATIONS ARE CURRENTLY FULL - PLEASE STILL REGISTER IF YOU'D LIKE TO BE ON THE WAIT LIST

www.electrofringe.net
Date: November 4th, 2017
Location: 107 Projects, 107 Redfern St, Redfern
Time: Midday to Midnight

We welcome anyone, of all ages, genders, experience, education levels, and cultural backgrounds working in art & technology to contribute to EF17. The open registration, however, is limited to non-commercial and NFP projects, works-in-progress, prototypes, activism and stuff that doesn't belong in the real world.

Please note that this is a free and open showcase, without government funding, run by volunteer efforts. There are no artist or performance fees paid to you or by you, but there is also no oligarchy control over your concepts or content. Be wild. Be extreme. Sell yourself and your work. Most importantly, get public feedback. And we will help create a high profile for you through the showcase, our website, and our social media networks. If you need funds to create your project please contact kimberley@electrofringe.net and we can discuss support letters for grants or how to help you crowdfund.

If you have a design brand, small business, startup, gallery, shop, music studio, radio show, club night, software firm or organisation etc. please consider contributing through our crowdfunding campaign to be involved. Your contribution is tax deductible and goes to production costs of the showcase. https://chuffed.org/project/ef17

Due to the open nature of this showcase and the amount of submissions only one of your works will be able to be presented. So apply for more than one if you want, but later we can decide which to present. As well due to the open nature, please save us time and effort and only apply if you can definitely contribute. We will have a wait list for drop-outs.

You are able to update this form until 15th October 2017

Join our Telegram group https://t.me/joinchat/FYeCpgymSumfF20udxoPpw

Appendix D: Screenshot of the EF17 program

Screenshot of EF17 Program from (https://www.electrofringe.net/ef17)

Appendix E: EF17 Poster

Appendix F: Electrofringe meetups announced on Meetup.com

(https://www.meetup.com/electrofringe/events/past/)

List　　Calendar

Upcoming

Past

SAT, SEP 15, 12:00 PM

EF18: Your privacy is very important to us

107 Projects

FB Event: http://fb.com/events/200371780649632 Electrofringe presents EF18, an annual showcase of local and international artists and practitioners working in the electronic mediums. 2018 marks 20 fantastic years of Electrofringe performances, exhibitions, Meetups and events...

22 attendees　　1

THU, JUL 5, 7:00 PM

EF18: CALLOUT FOR PRESENTERS - online

Online

Submissions for EF18 have officially OPENED! The theme is 'Your privacy is very important to us'. Electrofringe invites the first 20 submissions to exhibit and perform at 107 Projects as part of EF18: Your privacy is very important to us, to celebrate our 20 year anniversary. There are extra...

2 attendees　　1

THU, JUN 14, 7:00 PM

VJ Union Berlin Meeting pres. Electrofringe

Panke

From[masked], VJ Union BERLIN facilitated meeting and creating in a freeform & open audiovisual jam session environment at Panke. Since then, our former organiser is based in Australia managing Electrofringe, and during her visit, we will reunite again for another meeting, inviting ...

1 attendee　　1

FRI, MAY 25, 7:00 PM

ElectroLab Closing Party Meetup

William Street Creative HUb

Electrofringe has been occupying a HUGE space since February where we have facilitated meetups made for & by our community, & development opportunities for experimental technology artists. *Please note that this meetup will be more party oriented, and it will be hard...

10 attendees　　1

TUE, MAY 15, 6:30 PM

ElectroLab Pop-Up Space for Electronic Arts

William Street Creative HUb

Electrofringe is occupying a HUGE space until May 2018 where we can facilitate workshopping made for & by our community, & development opportunities for experimental technology artists. Please bring your own projects and ideas if you'd like to share what you're doing. You can come...

7 attendees

TUE, MAY 1, 6:30 PM

ElectroLab Pop-Up Space for Electronic Arts

William Street Creative HUb

Electrofringe is occupying a HUGE space until May 2018 where we can facilitate workshopping made for & by our community, & development opportunities for experimental technology artists. Please bring your own projects and ideas if you'd like to share what you're doing. You can come...

12 attendees

TUE, APR 17, 6:30 PM

ElectroLab Pop-Up Space for Electronic Arts

Location visible to members

Electrofringe is occupying a HUGE space until May 2018 where we can facilitate workshopping made for & by our community, & development opportunities for experimental technology artists. Please bring your own projects and ideas if you'd like to share what you're doing. You can come...

6 attendees

TUE, APR 3, 6:30 PM

ElectroLab Pop-Up Space for Electronic Arts

William Street Creative HUb

Electrofringe is occupying a HUGE space until May 2018 where we can facilitate workshopping made for & by our community, & development opportunities for experimental technology artists. Please bring your own projects and ideas if you'd like to share what you're doing. You can come...

4 attendees   1

TUE, MAR 20, 6:30 PM

ElectroLab Pop-Up Space for Electronic Arts

William Street Creative HUb

Electrofringe is occupying a HUGE space until May 2018 where we can facilitate workshopping made for & by our community, & development opportunities for experimental technology artists. Please bring your own projects and ideas if you'd like to share what you're doing. You can come...

6 attendees   2

TUE, MAR 6, 6:30 PM

ElectroLab Pop-Up Space for Electronic Arts

Location visible to members

Electrofringe is occupying a HUGE space until May 2018 where we can facilitate workshopping made for & by our community, & development opportunities for experimental technology artists Come check out ElectroLab on 6th March and see how you can get involved. You can also come...

19 attendees   1

SAT, NOV 4, 1:00 PM

Electrofringe EF17 Art+Tech Showcase

◎ 107 Projects

Electrofringe EF17 (https://www.facebook.com/electrofringe/?fref=mentions) is creating a cosmic rip in 107 Projects to liberate artists, hackers, musicians and entrepreneurs into the expanding space of electronic art. From scattering rays to altering consciousness, EF17 sets an open...

36 attendees   💬 2

THU, OCT 19, 6:00 PM

Co-create EF17 - Open to EF17 Artists and Anyone Else!

◎ Location visible to members

ABOUT THIS MEETUP: Open to presenters of EF17 (http://www.facebook.com/events/696273203904722) and anyone else who can or can't make it to EF17 but want's to show something or check it out anyway! This freeform workshop...

6 attendees

WED, SEP 20, 6:00 PM

Co-create EF17 - Organisational Meeting

◎ Location visible to members

We are going to gather together on Level 4 and then attend the opening of the Big Anxiety Festival for Art+Science downstairs. It's free. We will be upstairs till about 6:15 and then probably be back up at 7 or so..approx. So if you're late just head to the Gallery on street level. It should b...

4 attendees   💬 1

WED, SEP 6, 6:00 PM

Co-create EF17

◎ Location visible to members

UPDATE: Hey there community- good news! We now have confirmed to have our fortnightly meetups at 107 Projects (the venue for EF17) on Wednesdays. This allows us to have more creative freedom and familiarity with the event space. New Meetup dates, all 6-8:30PM: Wednesday 6th...

21 attendees   💬 2

TUE, SEP 5, 7:00 PM

EF17 Callout for Projects, Startups & Volunteers

◎ Needs a location

This is the call out for Electrofringe annual showcase EF17! https://www.electrofringe.net/register Event Date: November 4th, 2017 Location: 107 Projects, 107 Redfern St, Redfern Time: Midday to Midnight Theme & Title: TBD by a concept detecting algorithm We welcome anyone, of all ages,...

3 attendees

SUN, AUG 20, 7:00 PM

EF17 Callout for Projects, Startups & Volunteers

Needs a location

This is the call out for Electrofringe annual showcase EF17! https://www.electrofringe.net/register Event Date: November 4th, 2017 Location: 107 Projects, 107 Redfern St, Redfern Time: Midday to Midnight Theme & Title: TBD by a concept detecting algorithm We welcome anyone, of all ages,....

8 attendees

TUE, AUG 8, 6:30 PM

Co-create EF17

Location visible to members

EF17 is at 107 Projects, Redfern, 4th of November Website link (https://www.electrofringe.net/) Facebook link (https://www.facebook.com/electrofringe/) Telegram Chat (https://t.me/joinchat/FYeCpgymSumfF2OudxoPpw) For nearly 20 years Electrofringe has been...

6 attendees

1

TUE, JUL 25, 6:00 PM

Co-create EF17: Concept Development

Location visible to members

As the title states, this meetup will have an underlying discussion on the concept/theme/vision for EF17 showcase on the 4th of November at 107 Projects. Think things like post-singularity, a green future, cyberpunk, transhumanism, new senses etc. A creative representation of emerging...

17 attendees

6

WED, MAY 17, 6:00 PM

Meet & Greet, Show & Tell 2.0

Location visible to members

Electrofringe turns 20 this year and we are looking to give new life to embrace another 20 years of Electorfringe. We are new to the meetup.com community and we hope to be able to harness this fantastic framework to generate some exciting electronic art events, educational workshop...

10 attendees

1

THU, APR 6, 6:00 PM

Meet & Greet, Show & Tell

UNSW ART & DESIGN

Electrofringe turns 20 this year and we are looking to give new life to embrace another 20 years of Electorfringe. We are new to the meetup.com community and we hope to be able to harness this fantastic framework to generate some exciting electronic art events, educational workshop...

15 attendees

6

SUN, OCT 23, 5:00 PM

Electrofringe Meetup at EF16

107 Projects

Electrofringe would love to invite you to our first Meetup at our annual showcase EF16. In case you didn't see our event page for that you can see it on our meetup profile or here: https://www.facebook.com/events/581466008706824/ It will be held upstairs after the official...

16 attendees

1

SAT, OCT 22, 12:00 PM

EF16 Annual Showcase

107 Projects

Now across two days, our annual flagship event is back at 107 Projects. #EF16 (https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/ef16) features a one-day showcase of experimental work and performance, with a second day of workshops and demonstrations. We bring artists, their...

38 attendees

4

Appendix G: Wiki development documentation

Meetups Overview

Electrofringe has been running frequent meet-up's since January 2017 with the aim of building a community and harnessing the Meetup.com framework to shape Electrofringe as an organisation of contributors. These meet-up's have been held at various bars and university meeting rooms, but also once in Berlin, Germany. You can find out more on our meetup.com community here.

How to get involved Get Involved through our website

Electrofringe hosts free and open showcases, without commercial funding, run by volunteer and collaboration efforts. We are looking to build a community to help us make this organisation more integrated and accepted in the Sydney art and technology sphere. With a community of 30 artists, technologists and facilitators, and regular meetups, we are always working on new ideas and scenarios. We welcome you to host audiovisual showcases, workshops, collaborations, intermedia projects, and video screening programmes.

Electrofringe Toolkit [edit]

About the Toolkit
This toolkit is emerging out of a radical, participatory approach Electrofringe has been developing. We believe that arts institutions and organisations should share cultural production with creatives, emerging producers and audiences if that's something those people want to do. Electrofringe believes that transforming communities emerges in the act of co-creation. The ability to share the ownership of cultural production through collaborative curating, peer-to-peer networks and cooperative crowdsourcing is essential for challenging issues of participation and accessibility. The toolkit is a living document, being constantly added to and updated.

You can use it too

While Electrofringe-centric, this toolkit is free and open source. This means all the information and templates attached to this Wiki can be freely used by other artists, arts organisations, and anyone else who may find the tools useful. You can read our copyright statement here. The toolkit can be implemented by a leaderless group of individuals who would like to put on an event or a leadership team who want to distribute their roles out to a community.

Tools [edit]

Definitional Tools [edit]

What is the direction of our organisation? We explain the logic and theory that was used to develop the intervention. This set of tools articulate the strategic approaches to define our organisation and events, including templates that consist of structural diagrams and approaches to co-designing event themes with the community.

Planning & Productivity Tools [edit]

What is our plan and how do we develop it? These tools describe what the implementation plan is and how it was developed. These tools are initiative-specific and include timelines, checklists, site-maps and sample schedules.

Communication & Engagement Tools [edit]

We provide reasons for the need to engage with the community, the leadership team and the stakeholders, and also provide templates and forms that can be used. We offer insight on the use of various communications and networking platforms, and the importance of regular face-to-face meetups.

Design Tools [edit]

The design tools provide a basic rundown on design approaches, ways to make quick designs for free and without Adobe, and templates which include business cards, program guides, and brochures. How neat is that?

Financial Tools [edit]

We present a list of grants in Australia, but also discuss the importance of seeking funds outside the public fund's system. We discuss two crowdfunding options and how we used them to generate our own funds. There is also a list of templates which include budgets and sponsorship documents.

Documenting & Presenting Tools [edit]

In a day where everyone documents, how can our documentation stand-out? How can we best capture our events? How can we reach people in different geographic locations or who are not physically able to participate? This set of tools show some experimental approaches to documenting and presenting immaterial and interactive art.

Marketing Tools [edit]

We provide templates which may help teams who don't have a marketing person or where a few people share the role of marketing. These templates include marketing timeline, social media plan and a contact list focussed on NSW, Australia.

Evaluation Tools [edit]

How do we know that what we did actually works? Reflective reports, social media surveys and asking for feedback can be used to assess what works, even without a research team. The evaluation tools include identified outcomes, methods of reflection, and templates.

Electrofringe Archives [edit]

Appendix H: Five Minutes with Kimberley Bianca, artistic director of Electrofringe | Brag Magazine

new era of unpredictable art?

Clothing Crisis explores the repurposing of both immaterial networks and material clothing. It's the result of a collaboration between new media artists, a fashion designer and a sound designer. The most unpredictable art going on now is happening across industries, in science laboratories and underground technology studios. We're excited about – and highly encourage – improvisation and inspiration from these sources.

Do you think electronic experimental art might prove itself more accessible to budding creators than traditional forms?

Electronic experimental art has been progressively thriving since the '60s. I think it has proven itself to be both accessible and exciting for artists and non-artists to realise new, daring concepts.

How will EF16's workshop series encourage participants to get involved?

The workshops are open to everyone, and through them we hope to demystify the technical-artistic process, to provide an access point for people to get hands-on and involved with creative tech beyond experiencing it as a viewer. There's two workshops using older technologies (Atari game programming and Renoise tracker software for music), and another on analogue electronic sculpture/robotics (no programming required).

[Pictured: Open Source by Aurora Scott and Mahira Sobral at EF2015, photo by Ash Berdebes]

EF16 takes place at **107 Projects, Saturday October 22 – Sunday October 23.**

KIMBERLEY BIANCA ELECTROFRINGE 107 PROJECTS NEWT

THE EYE OF GOD HAMISH DOBINSON

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT IT SPEAKS OF OTHERS

ELYSE GOLDFINCH ECHO LOC NGUYEN SILENT SONGS

ROMI NAM ASTRID ZEMAN SKYE GELLMANN CLOTHING CRISIS

ELECTRONIC EXPERIMENTAL ART ATARI GAME PROGRAMMING

RENOISE TRACKER SOFTWARE

ANALOGUE ELECTRONIC SCULPTURE/ROBOTICS

ELECTROFRINGE OPENS UP A WORLD OF TECHNOLOGY IN SYDNEY

Written by Jesse Chaffey (/blog/Jesse-Chaffey) | Thursday, 02 November 2017 11:46

Published in Tech (/tech)
| Tagged under Sydney (/tag/Sydney) Technology (/tag/Technology) Hacking (/tag/Hacking) Electronic (/tag/Electronic) Exhibition (/tag/Exhibition) Art (/tag/Art)
Showcase (/tag/Showcase)

(/media/k2/items/cache/ea44f8c34f735f45f7da11e6c0888de0_XL.jpg)

Circlepath

Sydney's electronic art community is set to converge on 107 Projects for Electrofringe 2017 (EF17): a free-to-attend melting pot of performers, hackers and artists with skills across a variety of areas in their world.

Through this annual programme of unique exhibitions and events (https://www.electrofringe.net/ef17), Electrofringe brings together artists, entrepreneurs, technologists and educators to present innovative works, ideas and creative practices that aim to push the boundaries of art and technology.

EF17's Artistic Director Kimberley Bianca is super keen for the showcase event.

"We're trying to make something somewhere between an art exhibition and experimental music showcase, a hacking meet up and a networking event," Kimberley says.

Spectral Om Ensemble will play this year.

"We're trying to generate a new format inspired by events in Europe where there's no hierarchy as such, there's no Festival Director in control, everyone is involved in some way in creating the showcase vision, programming where they want to be and how long they want to play for."

Electrofringe is only on for one day but that doesn't mean limited experiences and opportunities. 107 Projects in Redfern will be open for a huge 12 hours and there's no shortage of things to see and – most importantly – do.

"There will be a central exhibition area as you walk in where there'll be 11 electronic artists exhibiting standalone pieces, from interactive VR [virtual reality] works to video projections to sound pieces where you put on headphones and you listen.

"Then, in the performance space we have eight audiovisual music performances, one after the other. Upstairs we have another co-curated programme where one of our regular artists has actually helped contribute to hiring the venue so he can curate his own music programme."

NEWT performing at last year's event.

Exhibitions and performances aside, expect to get your hands dirty, literally. Workshops will teach you how to infiltrate and investigate... Ethically

of course.

"This year we have the Platypus Initiative hacker collective from Sydney who will be running two workshops at the front of the space and they're going to do one really old-school way of hacking which is lock-picking," Kimberley reveals. "Then they'll also run a more structured workshop where you will learn how to hijack people's mouses and keyboards through Bluetooth. It's all for fun though!" she assures.

Thirty artists, hackers and musicians will be given a spotlight for the day and this year's Electrofringe is completely open registration with no 'headline acts' as such. This means electronic artists and hackers of all ages, genders, experiences, education levels and cultural backgrounds can apply to be a part of the show.

Platypus Initiative

Not only is the event open to practically anyone, it's also aiming to be as interactive and immersive as possible. When an artist finishes a workshop or a performance, don't expect them to walk away never to be seen again!

"The artists stick around, they talk to people, after a music act ends people come up to the desk and they can talk to the acts... There's a real community spirit there," Kimberley gushes.

"I think electronic art is not a new, weird thing anymore. It's kind of a given in any institution now, it's a common unit that you study, people are working with digital and electronics all the time, so I think it's just really important to display that artists are taking control of the media that people feel so controlled by."

EF17 (https://www.electrofringe.net/ef17) takes place at 107 Projects Redfern on 4 November.

SCENESTR OF THE DAY

Appendx J: Documentation of practice

See https://www.circuitboard.im/ef-outputs