

How to Reimagine the Future of the Arts

Good morning Woodstock.

And so week 9 begins. Just finished morning walk with Josje. This morning she had three modes – lay down on Peterkin Hill, chew the leash and chase chipmunks! It is with some relief that I was able to leave her on the couch for someone else to manage and head to the office to run the projector and write this scintillating weekly missive.

While it is true that Governor Scott wisely turned the spigot another quarter turn and allowed some businesses and outdoor activities to resume, it's probably a pretty good bet indoor entertainment venues won't be greenlighted to open until water is gushing out!

With that I question the possibility or utility of planning a gradual re-opening with limited numbers? Like any indoor business; restaurants, bars, and movie theatres etc. re-opening guidelines will be handed down from the State. Using what we know about the required 6ft of social distancing we measured all applicable distances from the sidewalk in front of the Town Hall, from the front door to the concession stand and within the theatre itself.

The distance from the front door of the Town Hall building, to the entrance of the theatre would allow for 5 individuals to be in line. Our 386-seat theatre would be reduced to 60 seats with individual patrons 6ft apart in all directions. In addition, we would need to mark off 360 ft in 6ft increments down the sidewalk in front of theatre where those 60 folks would wait patiently to enter 5 at a time.

The last piece of the alternative means of gathering inside for a shared artistic experience is ticketing and concession. To reduce human to human contact tickets and concession could be pre-purchased. Patrons could be given a number based on the order in which their purchase was received. That would be their place in line to pick up that order and proceed to their assigned seat. Sounds like fun does it not?

In all seriousness we need to look ahead and find a way forward to strengthen the entire cultural sector in response to this unprecedented time. Again, we are reminded that while the arts are essential to our well-being, to our sense of community and connectedness, our work is not on the front lines. But there is and should be a role for the arts to help build community, to through all its forms capture this moment in history, and tell stories of resistance and the suffering of those hardest hit by the pandemic. The arts can also provide solace and comfort during times of crisis. The question we all face as artists and presenters is the how and the when?

On May 19, at 4:00 pm I will be on a panel with six other art presenters from across the state to learn from each other and reimagine how the arts can support communities during and after the pandemic. Here are the following links to register and information on the other two panels that include Artists/ Teaching Artists and Performing Arts Groups.

- Facebook event: [facebook.com/events/925278884577298/](https://www.facebook.com/events/925278884577298/)
- Info & registration: communityengagementlab.org/arts-forums
- Panelists list: communityengagementlab.org/arts-forum-panelists

Readers I ask that you tell us what changes you would like to see from Pentangle Arts as we reimagine our future. Please brainstorm with family and friends and send your ideas to me at director@pentanglearts.org.

Collectively we can find creative ways to continue to bring the community together for shared artistic experiences.