

CLORE LEADERSHIP



The dancers of the Bolshoi ballet watching Spain vs. Russia penalties during intermission

Making the Elite Universal: Why Art* Should Imitate Sport**

Jonny Kanagasooriam

*Arts = all arts (with a focus on publicly-subsidised 'high' art forms vs. everyday creative participation such as defined by the Taking Part Survey by Arts Council England)

** Sports = all sports (mainstream, niche, professional or amateur)

Clore Leadership is a dynamic and inclusive resource for leaders and aspiring leaders in the arts, culture and creative sectors.

Clore Leadership awards its flagship Clore Fellowships on an annual basis to exceptional individuals drawn from across the UK and beyond, and runs a choice of programmes tailored to leadership needs of arts professionals at different stages of their career. This provocation paper has been produced under the aegis of Clore Leadership. For more information, visit www.cloreleadership.org.

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Bursting the Clore Bubble

It's summer 2018, and the World Cup is in full swing. Every office has a sweepstake ("How is Iran doing?"). Nigeria shirts are in short supply and tournament brackets adorn the walls of every public house. The World Cup grips football obsessives, energises part-time supporters and enrages those who see it as either a colossal waste of time – or worse, an ethically bankrupt cash-cow controlled by demagogues and corporate sponsors. With every card, through-ball and goal, the world watches, gasps, groans and cheers at the greatest global sporting event outside the Olympics.

Except on the final Clore residential

In our fortnight's schedule, designed to give maximum space to both individual and collective, one of the world's biggest sporting events plays second fiddle to our personal development and self-reflection on the past year. The carefully curated schedule ends 15 minutes ("*You don't mind missing kick-off, right?*") into the start of every evening game and workshops run through the afternoon fixtures.¹ Consumed by all things football for the past fortnight, the absence of watching, or at least closely monitoring every game, leaves a sense of dislocation from the collective experience. However, this sense of separation is not shared by many of my Clore fellows. They are in a completely different cultural space. I get raised eyebrows, chuckles, quizzical looks and in some cases genuine confusion about why I am so emotionally invested in 22 blokes kicking faux-pigskin around Putin's backyard, every apathetic glance loaded with an assumption:

This is not relevant to us. We have better things to do.

Yet, by the time we reach the Columbia vs England penalty shootout, the World Cup has managed to seep into the Clore collective consciousness. The most indifferent of the cohort now stood alongside rabid advocates in sporting communion. Even here in the Clore bubble, the tournament has permeated the lives of non-believers, who suddenly feel part of a movement. Cheering on elite practitioners of a discipline they have no interest in 323 days of the year. Barriers to entry not broken but made semi-permeable.

In the following days, questions are asked, names are referenced, kick off times adhered to, quizzical looks evolve into questions, a meme or two is shared. Even here, where no time was given, we have found time for sport, exposure evolving into an emotional connection. It's a process that most of us are familiar with: the power of sport to subsume all other culture, driving collective effervescence and celebration, be it the Olympics, Wimbledon or even the Super Bowl. Whilst much of the current engagement in the World Cup is driven by a deep sense of national surprise and goodwill towards our overachieving team, this is just the thin end of the wedge. Where other cultural activities fail, sport succeeds. It has an ability to become part of

¹ I must add that due to strong leadership and excellent facilitation, the schedule was amended to accommodate England matches (thank you Clore!)

our lives, be it for a night, month, year or lifetime, regardless of geography, social demographic, access or, as it would happen, pre-existing interest.

Sport seems to always be relevant. How?

All bases covered

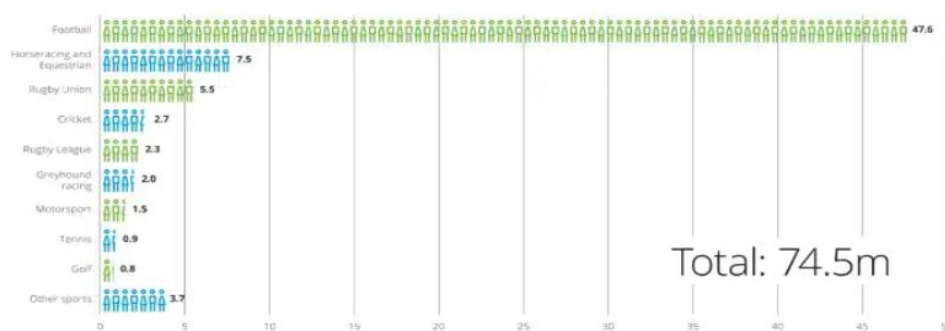
Sports relevance comes from the sheer volume and diversity of access points. Some are about preservation of legacy, others are about embracing sector challenges and preparing for the future. In each case, at least in the UK, they are having a positive impact on audience growth.

Growth of live and on-demand viewing

World Cup matches on the BBC have been record breaking, with a total of 44.5 million tuning to watch coverage and 66.8 million match requests online. England's quarter-final win over Sweden saw the highest peak TV share of the tournament, at 89%, which was also the BBC's highest online-viewed live programme ever with 3.8 million.² England's thrashing of the Panama team was watched by more people than the Royal Wedding.³ The World Cup is a not statistical anomaly. The impact of live tele-vised sports is reflected in the global bidding war for sports rights, where the buying power of subscription services like Amazon and Netflix⁴ is starting to present genuine competition for traditional broadcasters, causing domestic and global TV rights for league and tournament viewing to skyrocket.⁵

Overall Sporting Attendance UK (2017)⁶

Overall sporting attendances in 2017 (m)



Note: Where applicable, figures are based on the 2016/17 or 2017 season. Source: Event organisers; Deloitte analysis.

Download a full version of the infographic

² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/44850988>

³ <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/world-cup/world-cup-2018-england-vs-panama-bbc-tv-viewing-figures-average-peak-royal-wedding-itv-a8415811.html>

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/aug/01/amazon-outbids-sky-to-win-exclusive-atp-tour-tennis-rights>

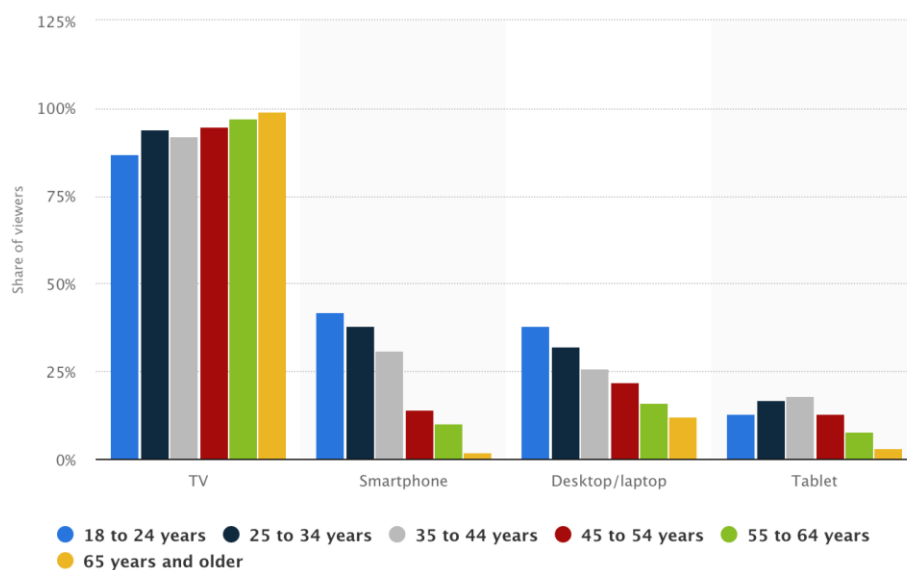
⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2018/jun/06/premier-league-clubs-profit-record-revenues-tv-deal>

⁶ <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/press-releases/articles/almost-75m-tickets-sold-for-uk-sports-events-in-2017.html>

Growth of live attendance

In the UK at least, this demand for sports content is mirrored in live attendances, where paying audiences for professional sports events totalled 74.5m in 2017. This represents an increase of 7% on last year’s figure of 69.8m, supplemented by the UK hosting several major international tournaments, and the largest recorded total since London hosted the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012.⁷ Beyond the tent-pole tournament moments, it’s worth noting that football attendance accounts for more than 60% of the total and is driven by leagues rather than tournaments. One startling example that shows unswerving loyalty in the face of declining quality is in the English Football League Championship, where attendance increased by almost 15% to 11.3m, boosted by Newcastle United attracting the sixth highest average league attendance in the country in 2016/17 despite their relegation to the Championship (the tier below the Premier League).

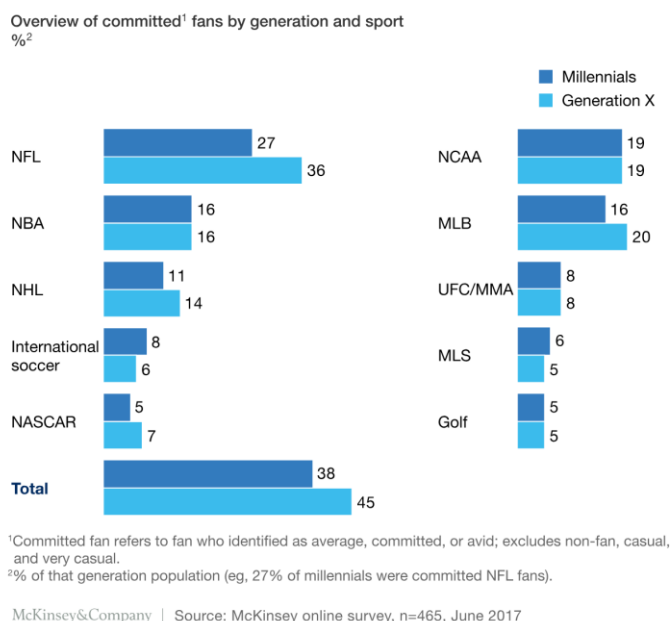
Share of sports viewed on selected devices by viewers in the United States in 2017, by age⁸



⁷ <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/press-releases/articles/almost-75m-tickets-sold-for-uk-sports-events-in-2017.html>

⁸ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/786744/sports-viewed-selected-devices-by-age/>

Overview of committed fans by generation and sport in US in 2017 ⁹



MLB = Major League Baseball/ NCAA = College Basketball/ MLS = Major League Soccer/ NFL = National Football League/ NBA = National Basketball Association/ NHL = National Hockey League/ UFC = Ultimate Fighting Championship

Growth of digital consumption

Beyond growth of live attendance, sport's leagues, teams and broadcasters have embraced digital disruption, acknowledging that with so many options to view, fans of all ages – not just Millennials – will watch fewer live televised games and engage with the event through highlights or short form content, which offers a daily connection to teams and players and is in fact a far more efficient method of participation.¹⁰ Briefly taking a global view, embracing digital consumption is offsetting the decline in the US of viewership of sports content across traditional media. Nielsen data, in the year 2016–2017 in the US, shows that National Football League (NFL) ratings among Millennials declined nine percent. However, the number of millennials (adults aged between 22 and 37) watching the NFL actually increased from the prior season (from 65 percent to 67 percent of all millennials). Similarly, in UK market, we see sports such as F1, now finally under new leadership; invest heavily in a digital future: live streaming, Netflix documentaries and e-sports, all channels with which to reach and capture new audiences.¹¹ This tells us that digital consumption habits are beginning to drive sport fans' loyalty and, over time, this will become even more pronounced as they begin to have a larger share of total sports viewing. Sport has accepted the challenge to its status quo and has embraced

⁹ <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/media-and-entertainment/our-insights/we-are-wrong-about-millennial-sports-fans>

¹⁰ <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/press-releases/articles/almost-75m-tickets-sold-for-uk-sports-events-in-2017.html>

¹¹ <https://www.ft.com/content/8a20961c-4a3c-11e8-8c77-ff51caedcde6>

the socially enabled transformation of fandom and ultimately loyalty, swapping tickets and warm beer for push notifications and 30 second clips.

Millennial Consumption of short-form sports content in 2017¹²

Millennials avidly stream sports content on the Internet and follow sports accounts on social media.

Percentage of total millennial and Gen X sports fans

	Watching highlights		Checking scores and news updates	
	Millennials	Generation X	Millennials	Generation X
Uses at least one of ESPN, NBC, CBS, or FOX	45%	44%	52%	54%
ESPN sites and app	37%	32%	43%	42%
NBC sites and app	6%	8%	7%	7%
CBS sites and app	6%	8%	7%	15%
FOX sites and app	8%	10%	12%	13%
Uses at least 1 social-media platform	67%	50%	60%	40%
Facebook	40%	31%	36%	29%
YouTube	42%	18%	12%	9%
Twitter	20%	10%	20%	9%
Instagram	18%	3%	14%	3%
Snapchat	9%	2%	10%	1%
Reddit	1%	1%	2%	0%

Growth of neglected areas

Mirroring the golden age of women’s football in the 1920s, when matches attracted more attendance than men’s matches, the number of fans attending elite women's sport in the UK is set to break the half million barrier for the first time in 2018, new research suggests.¹³ Since 2013, attendances for UK women's sports have grown, on average, 38% year-on-year, according to sports marketing agency Two Circles. It now predicts the number of fans watching women's sport will increase by 49% on 2017 to hit 682,000 in 2018.¹⁴

Growth of participation

Participation at a grass roots level has always been a big part of sport, but in recent years with the catalyst of London 2012 investment, grassroots initiatives have become movements. Few have seized the national consciousness as much as *This Girl Can*. An unedited story of women who exercise and play sport - celebrating the reality of cellulite, sweat and jiggling flesh – drove 2.8 million 14- to 40-year-old women to take up some form of physical activity within the first year of campaign, inspiring similar activations in 110 other countries.¹⁵

The above points tell the story of a sector that is collectively managing and investing in its existing infrastructure whilst being responsive the changes that are coming. It is

¹²<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/media-and-entertainment/our-insights/we-are-wrong-about-millennial-sports-fans>

¹³<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/33064421/the-secret-history-of-womens-football>

¹⁴<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-43304154>

¹⁵<https://www.sportengland.org/our-work/women/this-girl-can/>

balancing the protection of current audiences whilst embracing the behaviours and needs of new ones. Given this, should UK art and arts organisations take note, and try to replicate some of these changes in order to protect their own future?

The Art Delusion

The answer on one hand is simple – yes – but in admitting that fact we unlock a long-running and sibling-like rivalry between sports and art, often told in inelegant metaphors. In 2014, prior to Arts Council England’s spending review, a statement emerged from a National Theatre report.¹⁶ Articulated with a degree of glee, it stated that theatre attendance in the capital across its 241 professional theatres was higher than for the whole of the Premier League, with more than 110,000 seats and attendances of 22 million. That compares with 13 million attendees for all of England’s Premier League football matches.

“London theatre is better attended than Premier League football and takes more at the box office than London’s cinemas.”
Alistair Smith, Editor, *The Stage*

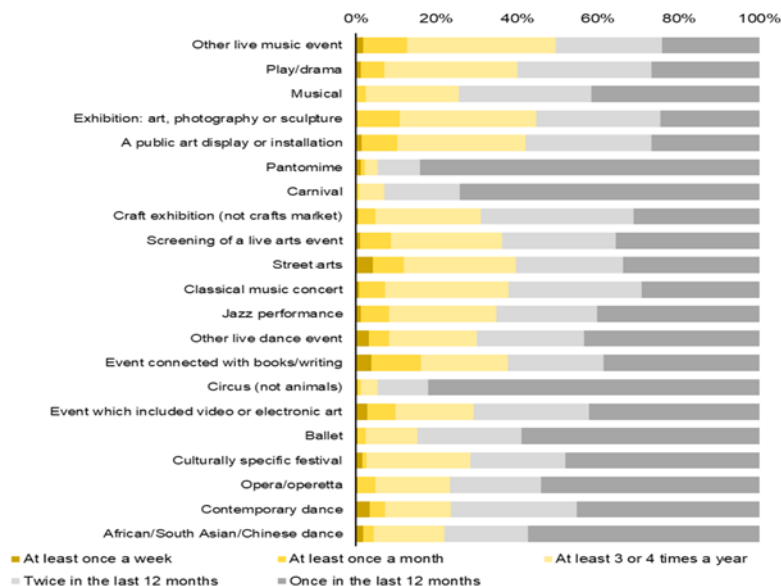
As ammunition for a spending review, these live stats are compelling and misleading, inaccurately representing the total reach and impact of Premier League, which has a much wider ecosystem than attendance of live matches (as outlined above). It is this diversity of offering that underpins sport’s relevance with a broad range of audiences. If anything, the above statistics demonstrate the inflexibility of theatre to look at audience engagement beyond the stage. Herein lies art’s catch 22. We have built equity in buildings, spaces and places, and in so doing have presented the sector with an issue of frequency. Live theatre is a once or twice year event for most of the public, like Wimbledon or the World Cup.¹⁷ How can it generate lower levels of participation that turn art from a pursuit into a habit? What is the sector’s version of a mid-season Newcastle game, push notification or 30-second highlight reel? What are theatre and other art forms doing to make themselves relevant to audiences every day?

¹⁶<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/11001177/Almost-twice-as-many-people-visit-the-theatre-than-attend-Premier-League-games.html>

¹⁷https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/702800/April_2018_Arts_Focus_report.pdf

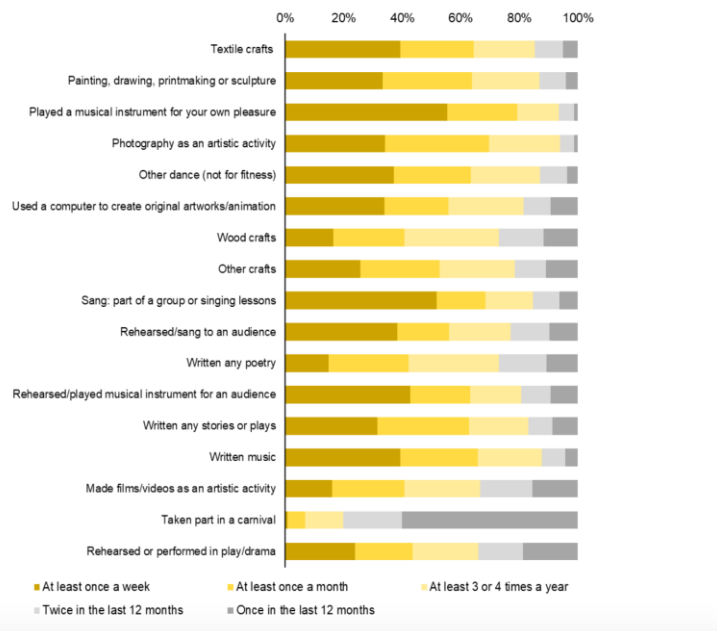
Frequency of attendance at specific arts events among those who have attended, 2016/17¹⁸

Figure 2.2: Frequency of attendance at specific arts events³ among those who have attended, 2016/17



Frequency of participation in specific arts activities among those who have participated, 2016/17

Figure 2.1: Frequency of participation in specific arts activities² among those who have participated, 2016/17



¹⁸[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/702800/April 2018 Arts Focus report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/702800/April_2018_Arts_Focus_report.pdf)

The R Word

At the BBC (my day job), 'relevance' is fast becoming the most commonly used word in the office. It didn't used to be. It used to be quality, distinctiveness and excellence (remind you of anyone?), but as the world and audience consumption rapidly changed over the last decade, focus shifted to how much time people spend using services, watching programmes or indeed listening to audio content, as well as the frequency with which they return. The higher the frequency, the more our services and content are relevant. Relevance in this sense can be found in big cultural moments, but is much more valuable when part of the individual's daily life and ritual. It is no surprise, therefore, that sports content regularly crops up as being relevant for a broad and diverse range of audiences, a cultural glue that covers a number of occasions. Art, or at least publicly subsidised arts and culture, seem to also be reconsidering its value in the same way. ACE's Taking Part survey data (above) not only references "attended arts" but also "everyday creativity", broadening out the understanding of what UK arts and culture encompasses. This includes playing instruments, sculpture, photography or animation. No surprise that through this categorisation we see a higher frequency and daily role for the arts than when compared to attendance of more established art forms such as theatre, live music, contemporary dance and opera alone. Whilst nearly 60% of those surveyed who sang or played an instrument made it a weekly ritual, over 60% of those who attended live music, theatre or musical did so just once or twice in a year.¹⁹ Everyday creativity offers an avenue for arts to forge that daily habit with its audience beyond the £90 theatre ticket. However, is this enough, if we want arts to be truly relevant?

Shouldn't the publicly subsidised institutions and organisations that take the lion's share of funding also take responsibility and reformat?

If so, what should they do?

Fans vs. Audiences

The answer to this comes down to the fundamental difference between how sport and art view attendees.

Sport has fans. Art has audiences.

- Audiences are anyone, anywhere, and always have a choice as to whether they spend time with you.
- Fans are loyal; their values are intertwined with the organisation, people or person they support; they are or are made to feel equal to the organisation, people or person they support; and they are active in the narrative and future of the organisation, people or person they support.

Fans are what you need if you want to be relevant.

¹⁹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/702800/April_2018_Arts_Focus_report.pdf

On Sunday July 22nd 2018, at the Olympic Stadium in London, a tearful Greg Rutherford ended his career, quipping that his four-year-old son could now jump further than him so the time was right to “hand over the flame to someone else”.²⁰ The gold-medal winner from London 2012 spent his last day as a professional athlete taking selfies and signing autographs. The TV commentators said “it’s the fans who made him who he is”,²¹ as he began to cry. This scene is a prime example of the visceral transaction between athletes, teams (domestic or international) and clubs with their fan base. It is a clear value exchange that shows you that without the fan, an athlete is nothing. With art, the artist always comes before the audience. I know that you could counter that by saying all art is created with an audience in mind, but in sport, there is the clear understanding that without the fans there is no sport. Generally, when the public attend art it is one sided; we are not part of their preparation, are inert in their performance. We are receivers of a pre-ordained experience, doling out our appreciation at the allowed time or through the delayed response of a review or recommendation. Open dress rehearsals and occasional behind-the-scenes films sometimes give you a glimpse of the creative process. Athletes reveal their real selves to us through the process of competition and rely on the energy of fans to power them through. Arts performers only reveal themselves to us when perfected, when they are ready to receive us and convey the meaning of their work to the audience.

**In sport, the fans’ role is to participate.
In art, the audiences’ role is to experience.**

Sport may place athletes on a pedestal but they have to earn their place there, and the fans are ultimately the arbiters of their overall value and legacy. Whereas in the arts, there is an altogether more hierarchical power structure, especially amongst the audience we might define as being loyal enough to be fans. By that I mean that there is an upper echelon of audience members, especially across the ‘high’ art forms, who see themselves as arbiters of taste. That taste is built on knowledge and access that is available to some and not to others.

Sport leaves space for fans regardless of background – art does not.

There is a (variably impenetrable) barrier to participation for the arts tribe (semi-permeable for musicals, rock solid for opera) that is founded on knowledge and access to knowledge. Today, some high arts find themselves in a tricky position where the audience, who some might argue enjoy the exclusivity and social capital attached to being in a select herd, need the herd to grow. Perhaps these sectors need to look at sport and do the same pivot, from a concept of loyalty that is driven by knowledge and understanding of quality to a much wider definition – one that is potentially universal in its access and also comprehension. This begins with a transformation of the relationship with the audience.

²⁰ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/sport/other-sports/athletics/greg-rutherford-leaves-london-stadium-12964215>

²¹ Petra Abbam

We need to create a more equal value exchange with arts audiences and turn them into fans.

Below are three considerations for arts organisations that could help them turn their audiences into fans. They are inspired by sports and are stated with an intent to drive broader participation, engagement, loyalty and relevance.

Embrace competition

“I have always felt that the arts could learn failure from sports. The idea that there is an intrinsic learning about self and others through failure that is not possible to learn through success. And I am not talking about what is commonly understood as failure is the stepping stone for success. I am interested in that mirror that failure holds up for self-reflection and critique that success never can.”

-Arundhati Gosh

When we think of competitiveness in art we might think of skill and persistence. Becoming a professional musician, dancer, actor or anything really seems to require a complex equation of patronage, nepotism and sacrifice to get to the top. It is this elite pursuit that is tied up with our veneration of live performance. Sport is the same to an extent, but is infinitely more meritocratic; you're the fastest, strongest or most skilled. But unlike art, there is a clear competitive role for the audience as supporters. Fierce tribal identities that foster a sense of belonging provide a clearer value exchange between player and fan. This is the primary experience that transforms an audience member into a fan, fuelled by the universal currency of competition rather than knowledge. This deeply entrenched symbolism around teams and players fosters a collective connection with other fans, manifesting in lifelong affiliations with clubs and individuals, standing alongside relative strangers who they see as brothers. Often they don't share a language but have a shared purpose.

So how does art embrace competitiveness?

For one it needs to stop being snobbish about tribalism. Again, I refer to the fact that sport and art have classically been placed at the opposite ends of the cultural spectrum. If you dismiss art you're a Neanderthal. If you dismiss sport, you're rational, educated, cultural and not into base tribalism, assuming it ends in braying, biting, snarling skinheads on the terrace, driven to divisive and violent beer-soaked ends! That's just not true. We need to double down on creative risk-taking as a way to differentiate our-selves from one another, and make artistic work tied to our target audience's identity and values. Art needs to stand for something to build a fan base who will fight for it. Think of the classical music riots of the 19th and 20th centuries as programmers embraced the new and people took to the streets to protest Berg, Debussy and Stravinsky.²² There is an appetite for it. Just look at the interest in competition formats such as BBC Young Musician of the Year, City of

²² https://www.theguardian.com/music/tomserviceblog/2014/dec/02/top-ten-classical-music-riots-protests-stushies?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

Culture bids, (dare I say it also in formats like the Voice or The X Factor), or the winners of the Turner or Booker Prize.

Considerations for arts organisations:

- What do you stand for, beyond the production of great art, excellence or creativity?
- Who are your fans, what are their values and how to you reflect that in your art?
- What is the active role of the audience in performance that places them in dialogue with the artist?

Make it easier to participate

By this I mean:

- Participation via moment (engage and retain with a digital ecosystem).
- Participation via movement (create participatory campaigns that make arts part of people's every-day lives).

As discussed earlier in the paper, sport has acknowledged that they are not tackling declining interest in the sector but combatting shorter attention spans. In doing so they have made the lengthy process of watching live sport snackable and accessible on any device, via digital and social media. Sport's ability to create cultural moments rather than moments of culture, successfully embeds it into the daily lives of a new generation of fans. Through a clip or an image we can be fully immersed, often in a very different way to the live experience, but with no less agency. Arts organisations need to imitate and implement this model. It will require making some difficult decisions, perhaps challenging the sacredness of the live performance as the only method of conferring artistic experience. However you could argue that more opportunities to discover work (via digital) will make the live experience more valuable, as content drives reappraisal and consideration of live performance. Cultural or artistic performances often warrant our undivided attention, seated in a large group but in silent individual appreciation. Conversely, sport is often viewed not just with a group, but alongside multiple interfaces that bring you into dialogue with a wider sports community. You spend your time looking up trivia and players' stats or messaging friends, and that drives your social capital as a sports fan. It takes your undivided attention, but doesn't mind how you give it.

Arts need to embrace compression and find meaning in moments through better content strategy.

Considerations:

- Should all arts organisations have a pre-set amount of spend in digital only IP for audiences who cannot attend live?
- How can art create a daily habit with its audience beyond live experience?
- What are the most compelling narratives to distil into moments of 30 seconds or less?

- What is the lowest barrier to participation for an audience member who doesn't know about your art form?
- How can we foster and build communities of fans in multiple spaces (physical and virtual)?

Secondly, with movements, we need to consider how we make art part of the daily life of people who are not considering it. A great example of this in sport is the £250m strategic reposition by Sport England to tackle inactivity. It takes sport away from the elite athletics and focuses it on the one in four people in England who do less than 30 minutes of physical activity a week. The five outcomes of this new strategy – physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development, and economic development – are a far cry from development of Olympic athletes, but no less relevant or necessary in terms of the national role of sports, focusing on barriers to entry or participation rather than performance. With this pivot, Sport England are putting the onus on the wider population, much like *This Girl Can*. We are the athletes; we are the practitioners, transforming our fandom into participation and an even greater connectedness to sport.

Arts organisations need to think about what meaning they can have for people who have no current interest in arts.

Make things easier to understand

By this I mean:

- Easy use of data.
- Accessible tone.

This new generation of sports fans has a very advanced relationship with statistics, often through short-form content or articles enhanced by easily referenced data. Sports has always found it easier than the arts to convey mastery; a PB (personal best) or 0.01 of a second is a clearer measure of excellence than the multiple factors needed to understand world class performance in a theatre or opera house. In many ways, we come back to this golden thread of competition, which makes sports about persevering until you fail or can't get better. It makes sports an unforgiving and compelling battle vs. art where the sacrifice has less veracity and is hugely complex (except perhaps in dance where the physical prowess is evident). Fans understand the commitment to excellence in sport, and this has been amplified by the use of data and statistics through content. Data demystifies the elite and makes it universal, empowering fans to know what is actually going on. Factoids are a universal language with which to communicate with the rest of the community. It's no coincidence that during this World Cup we were transformed into a nation of armchair critics and sport scientists. Conversation informed and powered by reams of data fed into the ether by broadcasters, publishers and betting companies through the 24-hour news cycle, generating conversations where the granularity of insight was bordering on the ludicrous.

The number of touches or miles run by a player

The ethics of using VAR in match-decisions The recovery time of a metatarsal sprain

Considerations:

- What can we do to make the arts more quantifiable and understandable – perhaps more celebratory of performative elements?
- Can we think of how art forms can be expressed as data narratives rather than critical appraisal?
- Can we think of artists as athletes and quantify their achievements in order to give a hook into form?

Finally, you knew it was coming, memes: the content that was most shared during the World Cup. There's a reason the "it's coming home" meme became a national sensation: it's a universal method of participation in a national conversation, a way for anybody – regardless of background – to feel connected to the movement that was England's march to the (semi) finals. The ubiquitousness of sports memes show us how tone is a huge part of driving relevance across many demographics. Sport has always been good at presenting an accessible front. Pundits such as Claire Balding, Ian Wright or Gary Lineker speak for the people and voice the thoughts we have in our head, programmes such as, *The Last Leg*, coming out of the London 2012 Paralympics bring lightness, humour and humanity to sport that doesn't diminish the achievements of the athletes. Some commentators in America have attributed the meteoric rise in popularity of the National Basketball League to its "freewheeling attitude" and "fun" when compared to the relatively sober and somewhat archaic National Football League.²³

So can the arts take itself less seriously and drive access through tone?

Considerations:

- How can we be publicly funded and worthy, but also disruptive and irreverent?
- How can we shed our inherent responsibility and prioritise joy, warmth and humour for audiences?
- How can we be thought provoking in a way that isn't academic?
- What are the implications for marketing and advertising if we choose to act in this way?
- How can we position art differently for audiences who will come to art with lower interest or cultural awareness?

Returning to the final Clore residential and the aftermath of the victory over Columbia...

On that summer evening, I was ecstatic. The tournament stretched out in front of the whole country and the joy of the first England penalty-shootout win in 28 years wrapped the long bar of the hotel in a warm glow. A fellow Fellow, Kathleen, a self-confessed non-fan of football, had sat by my side throughout the whole ordeal with

²³<https://www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2018/04/30/a-game-and-its-culture/>

a huge smile on her face. Watching me (and the two other Clore Fellows who were into football) crumble during the late equaliser, squirm during the 90 minutes of free flowing attack from Columbia and the agony, then ecstasy, of the final shootout. When the final whistle had been blown I turned to her with what must have been a lunatic grin and asked...

"So are you into football now!?"

She replied *"I'm just enjoying watching you guys watch it. Magic"*

When you're a fan, what's happening on the pitch can sometime pale into insignificance compared to the camaraderie and connection you share with the people around you. It may sound cheesy, but sport breaks down barriers. It brings us together in ways that are ephemeral and emotionally powerful. Art has the capacity to do that, but often places the audience within a clear space and context where they have no freedom. They can only experience, not participate.

That's not enough.

I want to be a fan. Shouting, hugging, checking my phone, drinking, laughing and connected to every moment. I want to feel a deep sense of pride and ferocious protectionism for the heroes and heroines who are sacrificing everything to represent me. I want to know exactly what's going on, down to the last detail, so I can evangelise about it to strangers and change their lives as well. I want to have the means to tell them about it in a way that's immediately relevant to them and crystal clear, without them having to learn a thing.

I want to start movements and share moments.

I want people to join my tribe.

I can do that with sport.

I can't do that with art, but really should be able to.

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