



We Love / Need / Want You

Rules & Regs and Audiences

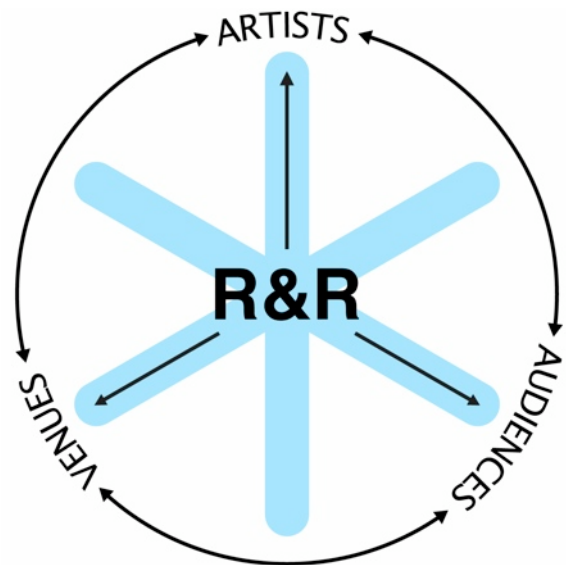
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R&R occupies a space between artists, partner venues and audiences.

Brokering relationships between all three, R&R creates situations of collaboration and mutual benefit unattainable alone.

R&R offers audiences:

- A unusual peek behind the curtain of the creative process.
- A safe space in which to encounter brand new performance.



R&R is unusual in that, though focusing on developing the artist rather than the product, it still requires an audience.



This is a two-way exchange, a dialogue between artist and audience, facilitated by R&R. In order to examine this relationship, R&R convened a seminar exploring the role of audience in supporting artistic innovation.

In June 2012, at the offices of Arts Council England South East, leading professionals from Live Art, Dance, Theatre and interdisciplinary practice presented provocations and case studies under the umbrella title **We Love / Want / Need You.**

Several key points emerged from these presentations:



It is important for venues to understand the needs of casual audiences and their appetites.

- Thomas Frank: Director, brut, Vienna

Audiences feel secure with new work if it is presented with confidence and wit.

- Mimi Banks: Co-Director, Home Live Art



Focusing on an audience interested in the arts can create a growing constituency which is inviting to a non-arts audience as a safe social experience.

- Anthony Gross: Director, Temporary Contemporary



Making work for specific audiences can limit immediate economic return but multiply artistic impact.

- Simon Vincenzi: Artist

Audiences are primary actors in the creation and interpretation of experiences via interactive technologies and social media.

- Tassos Stevens: Co-Director, Coney



Informed by this discussion, R&R has defined its relationship with audiences:



The presence of the audience creates a focal point for the programme and gives weight to the rules.

The audience helps to complete the work and provides the artist with feedback, both live in the moment of performance and later, through conversation and formal structures.

In return, R&R offers audiences:

- **Brand new performance.** Unashamedly not polished and safe, this is work born out of a desire to try something genuinely new. An antidote to the anodyne, R&R does not shield audiences from raw and risky work. Rather, R&R invites audiences in, revealing the workings behind the performance and what it means for the artist.
- **A safe space** in which to encounter the work. Care is taken in the design of the audience experience, combining a welcoming atmosphere with thoughtful presentation of the work... and an opportunity for everyone - audience, artists and curators - to mingle in a relaxed social environment.
- **A friendly welcome.** The rules create a game-like atmosphere with an 'easy-in' for audiences less experienced with experimental work. Extensive supporting material and commentary from artists, curators and critics provides a rich resource for deeper engagement.



R&R is a rare peek behind the curtain of the creative process.



- The entire R&R programme is transparent and clearly communicated, led by the rules.
- The audience has unusual access to the artists throughout the process, both formally (e.g. open studios and online critical texts) and informally (e.g. blog posts on process and post-show chats).

R&R facilitates this open, supportive dialogue by treating the audience as it treats the artists: Combining a friendly and supportive space with a challenge to try something new.

Always reactive to the artists' work - often completed only shortly before the performances - R&R employs expertise, gained through working with over 75 artists over eight years, to design the audience experience from start to finish.

R&R creates a conceptual armature for the audience, including:

- Background on the artists: Past work and why they are participating in the programme.
- Context from the curators: Why the rules were chosen and their relevance to the artists.
- Insight into the creative process: Artists' writings throughout the programme and curators' thoughts on the artists' journeys.
- Producing associated activities, including open studios, seminars and workshops (both for public and invited audiences) and showings of work from other relevant artists.



R&R works with partner venues to consider the audience, from how they discover the programme...



- Providing bespoke materials and advice to support the venue's audience marketing and publicity activities.
- Publicising the events to R&R's own extensive contacts in the performance sector.
- Reaching out to relevant non-arts audiences. Past R&Rs have, for example, made links with universities, disability groups, local political action groups, gaming hobbyists...

...through the moment of performance, working with front of house staff and technical teams to:

- Create a welcoming and relaxed environment.
- Sensitively deliver the work and clearly present the role of the audience, be it witness, collaborator, activator...

...and after the performance:

- Planning formal events (e.g. Q & A sessions) and hosting informal chats in the bar.
- Designing mechanisms for feedback, critical response and evaluation.

Through experience, expertise and deep collaborations with partner venues, R&R offers a unique opportunity:

A friendly challenge - for artists and audiences - to try something new.



Photos, from top: Jo Bannon from *Exposure*, South Hill Park 2009. From Levantes Dance Theatre's *Room Temperature Romance*, The Nuffield Theatre Lancaster 2008. All photos © Rules and Regs. For full photo credits and more information visit www.rulesandregs.org