

POST-EMERGING/MID-CAREER How to proceed?

Present: Paul O'Donnell and Tina Hofman (both emerging artists)

- The conversation started off by challenging: where is actually the problem? Both have a limited knowledge of the situation that befalls “mid-career”, but as no one mod career is present to the session, much time goes into guessing the problem which might be laying ahead of ourselves one day too.
- We acknowledged the recent article by Lyn Gardner “Why does support for emerging artists vanish once they have emerged” in which the problem of the lack of opportunities for mid-career is being tackled
- Considerable amount of time spent on defining “emerging” and “mid-career”, and evaluating the positive and negative attributions to both. Why are there negative attributions to “emerging”, as every artist needs to have an “emerging” phase with very new project they create.
- Is “emerging” someone who has several shows behind them and knows the industry better/has developed industry relationships. Concluding that there is spectrum of “emerging”
- As both of us would define ourselves as “emerging”, we realised we are truly missing the presence of “mid-career” artists in this conversation to make it a rounded one
- The conversation is stirred into looking at the artists’ point of view on “emerging” with the conclusion that an artist needs to “emerge” with every new project, if they are creating always new challenging work
- Does the amount of expectation from the industry proportionally grow with industry experience/time spent in the industry?
- When looking at a path through emerging, mid-career, are we stipulating that everyone’s career moves in this predictable linear way?
- Does it happen that a lot of creative professionals stay mid-career for a long time, possibly most of their working life?
- Are we correct in saying there are far more opportunities for emerging artists’ than mid-career opportunities? If so, why is this happening? Is it that the funding is scarce so better use it “often and little”?
- Some minutes spent on fantasising what kind of opportunities would be great for a mid-career artist: some would include gaining experience creation of “bigger” shows
- ACTION: Difficult to take one, as we were as such considering a problem with no rounded amount of information to it. As still emerging, we could take each step as it comes. To stay curious about each new project, to enjoy the emerging process and try to learn as much on the way as possible. To recognise valuable partnerships that are being forged on this path, and look to value them and develop them further. To develop the relationship with our funders, learning how to start dreaming bigger. To appreciate the process of self-producing we are undergoing at the moment, in order to know better how to include a producer in our process further down the line.

Tina Hofman