

## FailSpace: The Five Facets of Failure interviews

### PARTICIPATION TRANSCRIPT

Rita ([00:04](#)): [Profanity warning]

The nature of the project was such that there were an awful lot of huge partners, and it meant that things were signed off months in advance because of the amount of money and the amount of, well, it was a project with 11 executive producers for fuck's sake. I mean, it was just ridiculous. But at no point was that play actually made in response or in collaboration with the people who actually lived there. So something we talk a lot about was the failure here that we failed by not allowing the participants to really have any ownership over the creative process. So whilst they did have an amazing experience and we dutifully reported back to our funders and everything that they did, actually, there was a much richer experience there for them that they could have had if things had been different.

Jeremy ([01:05](#)):

There are a couple of projects I can think of where actually, I'm not sure that all of the participants...you know there were a couple of participants who actually the participation in the project made things worse for them. Either it wasn't a positive relationship with the artist or it wasn't a positive relationship with the organisation or there was this sense of kind of combative. You know, where does the power sit in this relationship for me that's about harm? It's about harm in terms of that individual sense of building their confidence and their kind of likelihood to decide to get involved in these things again. Yeah. So for me that... the kind of emotional response of the participant is absolutely where these things can tip.

Greg ([02:14](#)):

I mean, the thing about it is if you are middle class and white, which I am, it was great. I saw some great theatre. I went to quite a few things that weekend, but I didn't see a Muslim family. I didn't hear a Polish voice because there was nothing there for them. There was nothing there that said, join in, you are part of it. There was nothing there that said, come and join us.

Christine ([02:53](#)):

People are giving a bit of themselves through participation, and I think there is so often a failure to acknowledge what people are putting in. I think I've been guilty of that. We have a certain amount of time and capacity, and we have outcomes expected. I put a lot

into engaging a particular community, but once they're in the room engaging, maybe we fail to acknowledge them and what they're putting in, like how these projects end so abruptly. Quite often, I think in the sector, I think we fail them because that engagement just stops because the funding's finished and then there's nothing to keep them supporting them or even ease them out the process again. So I think it's... a lot of it is about what comes out at the end and how respectful it is for what the participants have contributed, but also what they are, their needs are.

Chris ([04:05](#)):

Look, we get artists and arts organisations coming to us all the time and nobody asks, what does this community get out of it? How could they influence that? How can we support what's already happening, what that community might need? Nobody is really asking how can we actually work with that community to come up with a project idea that entirely suits them? That's with their agenda, on their terms in their spaces. Instead, the approach is always the organisation gets the money, they do the project, then they live again, and it is entirely disjointed.