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Audience Design
An Introduction

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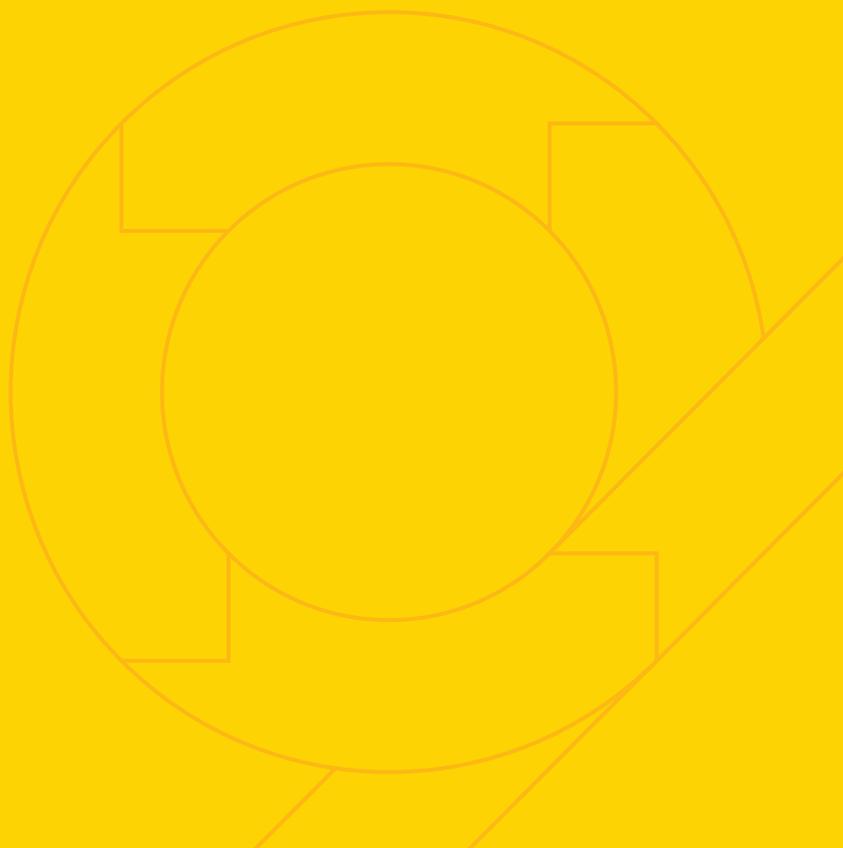
TorinoFilmLab

**Audience Design
An Introduction**

TorinoFilmLab 2018

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Audience Design
An Introduction

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Preface

"If all the world's a stage, where is the audience sitting?"

George Carlin

Welcome to this very first edition of our effort to collect, on paper, our considerations, experiences, and hands-on lessons learned during the last 8 years of developing and defining the concept of Audience Design. The purpose of this publication is to introduce the *concept and practice* of Audience Design in relation to the development, production, and distribution of mainly fiction feature films, especially arthouse and independent.

The focus on how to get the attention of audiences in a noisy and competitive market has increasingly crept into the cultural spheres over the last five years. Across the sector, from philharmonic orchestras to museums, theatres, publishing, and of course film and cinemas, the audience development question has become an acute item on the agenda. Audience engagement and proposals on how to plan and adapt to the right kind of communication are key enablers in the many debates and cases that can be found at conferences, in public reports and analyses that are stacking up online.

The massive shifts that are taking place in this time of digitisation challenge anyone with content to share, and offer amazing opportunities. Improving audience relationships – especially with younger

audiences – has become a priority for established cultural industries, also for the film industry.

From the pressured situation mainly arising from challenges around the international sales and distribution of films, it became clear then – around 2010 to 2011 – that the focus needed to shift towards who these films are seen and enjoyed by: the audiences. This was one of the reasons leading to why TorinoFilmLab became an early adapter when deciding to launch the Audience Design programme in 2011.

We saw a growing need, working with 1st and 2nd time feature filmmakers in TFL's other programmes, and since the current market did not offer any other place to go and experiment with how to integrate an audience engagement approach, our collaborative training programme was kickstarted as an R&D – research and development – learning by doing workshop, a "living lab".

The R&D spirit of the workshop has allowed us to constantly develop the concept and approach, in close collaboration with our participants and as an integrative process with the film teams, who opened up their projects for us and joined the workshops as hands-on cases to develop strategies for.

The concept has now become a unique combination of our initial story-based approach and a mix of new and existing practices, methods, and tools that are put to use in a practical and thorough hands-on process, which includes theory and discussions so as to create context and motivate the approach.

We aim to keep the concept of Audience Design as down to earth as we can. It isn't rocket science, it is a *logical, passionate, and extensive exploration* of how to build connections and relationships between your film and someone wanting to see it. The DNA of Audience Design is *change and adaptability*, it is a mindset to approach your project development and production process:

*Audience Design is the process of creating
audience awareness and engagement around films,
from an early stage of development
through a story-based and multi-angle approach.*

An artist has the prerogative to create her or his art for a one-person audience of "me", for themselves. But a producer needs to think about the bigger picture: who will share this journey with the artist, appreciate and share the result, the film. At some stage, the work needs to find its audience and before any audience relationship can be formed, the road towards them needs to be imagined, anticipated, planned for. This is the journey of audience design.

Our intention is to create space inside the existing filmmaking processes to add a profession and an approach that aims to empower producers and filmmakers to connect with who their audience might be, to look for where they might be, and to find ways to identify how and where they can reach and engage them through their film, their story.

Since 2011 the Audience Design programme has of course changed tremendously. Each year testing a new format, a new way of collaborating, working with projects at different stages, shaping and refining it. We dare to say that we have now found a solid base to stand on, and by sharing these steps and inspirations, we open it up for further discussion, development and to be continuously sharpened.

Starting from the solid ground of the concept, we decided not to share any case studies and results yet. There are several reasons for this, the main being that while the projects we've worked on have implemented their strategies, wholly or in part, we do not yet have a full case from beginning to end, which includes examples, data and statistics, as well as team evaluations, so as to make it a valid study. Another obstacle is the time factor, as it may take at least one to two years from the workshop until release, and there is simply no documentation practice incorporated in the post-release phase yet to provide us with the relevant materials at that point.

In the coming chapters we will take you through an introduction to the film industry context that the Audience Design programme came out of; this part leads into an overview of how the audience design approach connects with the general film development, production and distribution stages, followed by an extensive step by step presentation of how to develop and design an audience design strategy.

Two of our Audience Design Alumnae and two project participants, a sales agent and a producer, who have worked with the audience design approach also share their hands-on experiences and reflections.

So, if you ask us, why Audience Design? Because we cannot create films in a vacuum. Because we want films to be seen. Because we want filmmakers to be able to be filmmakers, and audiences to keep appreciating the art of film.

We look forward to sharing our vision of Audience Design with you!

Valeria Richter & Lena Thiele

Audience Design
Getting in Touch

Changed relationships | proactive attitudes

"You never change things by fighting the existing reality.
To change something, build a new model that makes
the existing model obsolete."

Buckminster Fuller

Back in 2011, when the first Audience Design workshop was initialised at TorinoFilmLab, the industry was debating about the need to find answers to a shifting market. The concept of transmedia and cross-platform storytelling was on the rise and was hailed as one way to approach digitisation, as an answer to create stories in a multidimensional market, a convergent cultural and media environment.

The term of cultural convergence was already coined in 2001 by Henry Jenkins as the new ways that media audiences were engaging with and making sense of these new forms of media content. He argued that cultural convergence had preceded, in many ways, the full technological realisation of the idea of media convergence, helped to create a market for these new cultural products. He assumed that *"...rather, thanks to the proliferation of channels and the increasingly ubiquitous nature of computing and communications, we are entering an era where media will be everywhere, and we will*

use all kinds of media in relation to one another. [We are] dealing with the flow of content — stories, characters, ideas — from one media system to another."

[*Convergence? I Diverge*, in Technology Review, June 2001]

Since some years, re-established technologies like virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and all forms of extended reality (XR) are discussed as "the next big thing" and raise equal discussion about narrative forms and market shifts, about new forms of content reception and user demand. These discussions were and still are perceived as both a promise and a threat by a film industry in crisis mode. The next "revolution" is up. But so far neither – cure or death threat – have become reality. This is, of course, not a surprise, as every new form of narration has its purpose, outstanding qualities and place in the market, film may just not be the only or the dominant format anymore and is facing new challenges as well as opportunities in adapting to the changes.

Then, one might ask – and many still do – why does this discussion of who or what drives the market matter? Cinema has dealt with seemingly threatening challenges before over the last 100 plus years. And looking back at the history of cinema, we can create a much more nuanced picture.

*"Yet, so far, different media rarely completely replace one another.
Neither do they straightforwardly "improve" on each other (...),
nor do they determine each other in the sense of one medium
"answering" a question posed, but left unresolved by another."*

[Elsaesser, T. *Digital Cinema, Conversion or Contradiction*, in *Cinema in the realm of the digital: foundational approaches*; Oxford University Press, 2013]

So, it is a legitimate thought that digitisation is also just another period of technical innovation, and that essentially, it will not change the basics in the industry: the ways how films are being made, distributed, watched, and reviewed. At least the independent film industry has often behaved like this, to react with changes that mostly sustain an existing system, while being in a constantly shifting environment.

The current challenges, however, are based on an irrevocably changed relationship between content and audience. And this requires rethinking on a bigger and longer scale, to understand the evolution of the content industry due to digitisation instead of hyping constant technical innovations that carry the promise and threat to change everything, until "the next big thing" is on the rise.

Let's look at the current situation. In the realm of independent arthouse films, we constantly see the pressure rising, more and more films are being produced, in a democratised expanding market, where those films are competing with the constantly rising amount of content on a variety of existing channels, not only the cinema screen. This rising competition for content attention is especially affecting the young audience segments that are increasingly losing touch with independent arthouse film. The 2017 *Europa Cinemas Innovation Survey* showed that the biggest perceived threat to the future of cinema from their network members was competition for scarce consumer time, and that the biggest threat to European film is the loss of young audiences.

What motivates especially young audiences to go to the cinema is not what it was a decade ago. The cinema venue has become an alternative to watch films, competing with a growing variety of screens and platforms, in this so-called convergent media environment. Going to the cinema is not the main choice to watch a film anymore, it is rather a choice to go to a specific type of location and to have a special experience when watching the film.

Cinemas are reacting to this change. They are shifting towards being event locations, where the whole process, from buying the ticket, meeting in the foyer, watching the film, and staying to discuss it afterwards, is part of the film experience, offering and adding value along the whole experience chain. Watching a film in the cinema becomes a decision for a specific type of experience, not solely about watching the film.

To create a proactive attitude towards these shifts, to move away from an attitude of protection and maintenance, we have to understand the deeper shift and develop a bigger picture, allowing us to go beyond smaller, disruptive innovations, and instead work to

co-create the transformation of the market and the industry as a whole – redefining film culture's unique place of impact.

The core of this shift is to get back in touch with the audience, with people who want to watch and enjoy the stories that filmmakers are telling. Strong stories are still key. And strong stories are what the film industry is built upon. People who want to connect with the art of film still exist. It is about creating a new relationship with them, starting a conversation, one that is built on understanding, reciprocity, and respect, instead of pushing content through the same old structures that seem to lead further into a dead end.

Many big brands and retail businesses are at the forefront of this – they are more than ever putting their customers at the centre of their strategies and creating whole experiences to invite people in, from the first touchpoint to a long-lasting relationship. Stories and worlds are key to start a conversation with their desired customer groups.

By understanding this shift, we support the development of a practical and proactive approach focused on change. Rather than following every new trend or being afraid of a digital paradigm shift, these changes can become a major strength in a rapidly evolving digital environment. By listening, and thereby allowing innovation, driven by human needs and consumer demands, surrendering to the shift may just be the seismic change we need.

Emancipated audiences | from delivery to demand

"I made mistakes in drama. I thought drama was when actors cried. But drama is when the audience cries."

Frank Capra

When we talk about a major shift in the current industry, we specifically point to the changing relationship between audience and content. One main argument that is often brought to light is that digital

change has created what might be called an 'Active Audience' and 'Participatory Culture'. Audiences today may be directly involved in production – including funding, marketing and promotion – and they may even influence the narrative itself, for example through crowd-sourcing or co-creation such as fan-fiction. They might look at the variety of options available and decide to ignore all of them. In current discussions in media theory, for example in *Audience Trans-formations – Shifting Audience Positions in Late Modernity* (2014), it is even debated if we need to rethink the terminology of "audience" itself, whether its conceptual classification holds, whether the term "a passively served audience" even still exists today.

But what does that mean?

One of the main misunderstandings that we are often facing is that "active" automatically is understood as to "interact", to constantly want to be in a "lean forward" state of mind, and that linear con-tent is forced to stay within the attention span of 2,5 minutes, while complex, longer stories are not matching the new audience ex-pectations. But the constant rise of small screen series, even using film talent to achieve a high production standard, and the trend of binge-watching is teaching us differently. People choose both, not either or. There is a time and a place for any kind of desired experi-ence; more or less. And, we just have to look at ourselves, as we are all an audience for something – how has our behaviour changed in, say, the last 5 years?

The rising activity of the audience lies in a different area. It is about the relationship that the content builds with an audience and to understand the challenge, the change and the opportunities that lie within this unique relationship. This is essential. It describes how technology has shifted power from the supply side to the demand side. And it's not only about the shift from supply to demand, but also the fragmentation of demand.

The explosion of choice and the consumption of more films, on many more platforms, is what makes it hard to get through to an audience and to keep their attention. The audience is organised in different patterns, communities, the flow of information is not

centralised on some major media channels anymore, but flows via recommendations through all kinds of communities and is highly infiltrated by platforms and their algorithms, which are much more based on user behaviour, likes, clicks and interests. Content needs to function in a communicative environment, where being in context and creating relevance is key.

In 2018, the annual report of The Nostradamus Project — which is run by the Gothenburg Film Festival — strengthened this argument by highlighting the challenge of content becoming relevant and creating meaning. To an audience today, quality alone is not enough anymore to guarantee that you reach them: *"The technological changes affecting our industry are reshaping daily life, industry, relationships and culture — all culture — in the entire world. [...]. As opera houses and theatrical institutions would be happy to tell you, the quality and power of your content is not enough to bring you broad audiences [...]. The content has to make sense in people's lives. It must fill a need."*

Change in user behaviour is also reflected in the constant demand of content being available 24/7 in all varieties of form and on a multitude of channels. This has led to a huge rise in content. Logically, this should be a golden era for those in the entertainment business. But the challenge is to be found in a constantly growing content market with new gatekeepers in place. So, reaching out has become a completely different field of communication.

In addition to this it has become increasingly difficult to devise financial models for a highly diversified world with many different communication rules, where each individual expects to be entertained, whenever and wherever he or she wants, often for free, or with new subscription models that support different types of gatekeepers. Existing and established business models have been cannibalised, and the film industry struggles to openly integrate the audience in their thinking and to step back from a linear and one-directional way of producing and distributing.

To embrace it means that we need to think about the when, where and what, about the expectations and level of engagement, about

communication that includes two-directional channels, that creates context and relevance. It means to think about film in cinema, on computers, TV, phones, in social media, the access to film and the context in which a film is being recognised, watched, talked about, shared.

And that is one of the biggest challenges, especially for independent filmmakers without a budget, knowledge or manpower to create huge marketing campaigns and compete with big Hollywood productions to get the awareness of a potential audience.

But if we look closely, we DO see shifts happening in several areas of the industry. Cinemas for example are increasingly aware of how to improve their audience connections – including the digital bond – and are building loyalty while aiming at different types of audiences:

"When the cinema becomes a meeting space for diverse communities, the potential to develop new audiences increases. [...] Digital technologies and an increasingly audience-centric mission have also allowed experiences to be extended, with new offers from localised festivals to Event Cinema screenings of opera from around the world. Innovation is now being employed to broaden the appeal and importance of venues to the communities in which they are located, and beyond."

[*Europa Cinemas Innovation Survey*, 2017]

Another area is the field of documentaries. Here we recognise the experimentation with new forms like i-docs, alternative distribution models, working with Impact Producers, looking for alternative business models, distribution, and alternative screening locations. Documentaries have grown both online, in cinemas and on SVOD platforms.

Both examples allow us to feel encouraged to embrace change and to co-create it. To build a sustainable career and business, we believe in a shift towards understanding, finding, addressing and building a relationship with your audience and taking them seriously. The demand is there, and a pathway from script to audience needs to be built.

Following audience taste | keeping the soul of the art

We wrote about the shift from supply to demand structure and the need to integrate this shift in the way content is created and distributed.

But what does that mean? Just to feed your audience with what they demand? Does it mean, that film as an artform only survives if it answers to the users' needs, based on extensive evaluations of user data, behaviour patterns, and technological innovations?

The commercial segment increasingly works that way and it has an influence on production by feeding certain tastes. But this is nothing new, only the source and level of detail of live data has changed. Digitisation comes with a completely new possibility to track, and to create the most detailed data, and often, even as it happens, accommodating live changes to content. There have never been so many options to get information about our potential audiences, their user data, habits, needs, wants, their reactions to certain communications, ads, sequences, characters. We can even add algorithms and artificial intelligence, with the first steps in creating scripts via AI in place, including the prediction of market success.

But still we believe that the fear of the filmmaker, to produce solely for a defined market in order to please a potential audience, thereby killing off the autonomous story and artform, is unfounded. So how can an independent filmmaker tap into this field without losing his or her independent voice? By tapping into and using the same tools to target specific niches and by creating new forms of connection – but in ways that fit their needs in the film industry.

We see this happening already. New tools are created to collect data and statistics and more and more programmes and cases are emerging that tackle these issues. However, it seems like the broad majority of the film industry mainly still work with data that looks in the rear-view mirror: how a film performed overall, how long it stayed in the cinema, how many tickets were sold etc., instead of in a forward-looking way.

Digital data analysis looks at the here and now, and allows to better predict for the future. We are aware that predictions are notoriously difficult, especially in a highly dynamic market, and we don't push towards constant data surveillance, but we do advise to work much more with basic, even anonymous user data to collect further targeted input for the future. To understand, work with, and monitor these insights throughout the course of the development, production and distribution phases can become a core part of understanding our audience.

But still, the relevant question arises: can we create art, produce films that matter, if we are just feeding the need of the audience? How can we provoke, raise new questions, initialise critical thinking and ask uncomfortable questions?

This question pushes us even more to find a connection between the digital shift and the art of filmmaking, to search and look for where to best take advantage of these new opportunities, without losing the soul of the art, to think towards innovation and remain authentically who we want to be, as filmmakers.

Starting to work with these questions in 2011, our aim was to discover a bridge that would best begin to connect the independent filmmaking community with the digitised world of the audience. Designing a communication strategy that could be integrated into the filmmaking process seemed like a filmmaker-friendly way to propose how to still be in control of how the art could influence an audience, and to create influence for film teams, giving their wishes of how to invite their audiences to connect with their film a platform. We set out to create a fertile meeting space rather than a battleground.

Audience Design grew out of a wish to meet the fears and the digital promises and opportunities head on. Audience Design is not the answer to all of the issues that the film and entertainment industries are grappling with, it is however a solid starting point for embracing one of the big shifts of today.

Audience Design
A Definition

Where is the change | mindset

Based on the assumption of a changing relationship and shifting demand structures, the need to learn about and understand your potential audience inspires the following questions:

- How can you identify the right audience niche(s)?
- How can your specific content connect with your defined audience?
- How can we understand and meet the demand by staying authentic and independent – as artists and as an artform?
- How can we build a sustainable industry?

These were and still are the guiding questions that we followed when developing the approach for Audience Design.

Audience design is a mindset that aims to approach a film from a holistic content creation perspective. We don't differentiate between the story and marketing, we work from the story towards the audience to create content that comes from inside the story and reaches a (number of) passionate niche audience(s), while also informing the communication towards a wider audience. We build on existing methods and tools that are successfully used in other creative fields to create pathways from a script to its audience.

Making sure your message is heard

The term "Audience Design" in its original use is a sociolinguistic model, first proposed by Alan Bell in 1984. In this previous context, audience design is the practice of shaping language to take a speaker's audience, his or her addressees, into account, and subsequently, to adapt the language to the needs of the audience. It is the basic thought of "think about who you talk to" and "talk in a way so your message is heard".

In this perspective, we are aligned with the term's original use, as our core concept is based on how you can think towards the audience, and design a content and communication strategy to identify, reach, and engage this audience in and around a film.

This is the mindset that the audience design concept is built on:

Audience Design is the process of creating audience awareness and engagement around films from an early stage of development through a story-based and multi-angle approach.

For that purpose, we create a strategic communication approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content across a number of channels, to attract and retain a number of anticipated audiences, and by implementing this content to build a sustained relationship that can lead to the desired audience action.

Audience design takes the story seriously and works outwards from the core of the film, as story and as artform. This is the starting point. From there, step by step, throughout the whole process of the development, financing, pre-production, production, post-production and distribution stages, we create a strategy that constantly seeks to build context for the film to facilitate and activate actions that can build and engage an audience around the film.

This happens as an integrative process involving the core film team and any close partners, like a sales agent or distributor. The approach is a looping and living process that is divided into four phases: *Discovery, Development, Design and Delivery* – (the 4Ds), each with their steps. The audience design work requires an ongoing research, tracking, updating and implementation of results.

Where is the change | from script to audience

Audience Design is a communication strategy approach for films. The basic change towards existing communication realities in the film industry lies in the "audience-centred" approach, which works as an integrative process. To understand this change, let's look at the way current film marketing and distribution is still largely set up; keeping in mind however that technological disruption is having an influence on the market as we write, but obviously not at an intensive enough scale to force any big, transformational shifts yet.

The film industry comes from a more or less linear and hierarchical financing, production and distribution history, which is increasingly diversified, but still on the conservative side.

Described in a simplified way: a film is developed based on what story the filmmaker wants to tell; moving into financing and production the focus is on securing funding through allies, who also want this story told, sometimes based on their interpretation of their target audiences' tastes, if it's a broadcaster for example. If the film achieves a good festival release and good international sales then, based on around 3 months of marketing, maybe 6 months with a teaser campaign, one can hope that the general audience for this type of film will catch it during its 2-3 weeks in the cinema and secure the film an okay result in its home territory. From here, its life can go on to various VODs and then public and/or private television. Where any audience engagement, development or building is happening here is an open question and very much up to each individual film production.

This is of course generalised and in recent years there are examples of films that have considered their audience from earlier stages, as well as moving into alternative financing, co-creation, and alternative distribution strategies, but they are still exceptions and audience building is not integrated naturally at all the stages in a way that ought to be natural in today's market. We don't factor in the big Hollywood productions here that have spent millions on innovative and often fan-building marketing, as we can't compare comic book franchise worldwide premieres to a single arthouse film.

The audience should be top of the list; not as in catering to their taste, but in making an effort to engage with those whose tastes your film connects with. The impact of digitisation so far has mainly influenced the delivery platforms, like VOD platforms integrated for distribution and new business models for digital cinemas.

CLASSICAL APPROACH
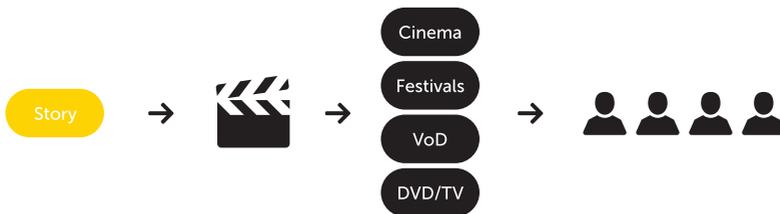
Reached via classical
marketing / distribution channels

In addition, the industry is used to work from the principle of "scarcity", as films are produced for certain windows. Availability outside of the pre-defined windows is rare and mostly comes with a long wait. Artificial limits keep audiences blocked and impatient. Experiments with day and date releases – simultaneous premiere in cinema and online/pay-TV or other combinations – have not yet convinced to be successful enough to truly change the window-thinking and there is a wide disagreement as to what the solutions might be.

By still following these linear and by-and-large limiting concepts,

the audience expectations and the potential that lies in meeting the request for access to content is not seeing its full potential.

Asking filmmakers about their potential audience, even in times of vast data tracking and audience communication, often still renders a general definition such as 'men and women between the age of 20 and 60 with a high education'.

Now, think about it. Think again. How many different people with how many different interests, how many different media usage habits, how many different tastes and contexts can you think of in this group of men and women? In a market that is highly segmented, highly driven by algorithms, interests, needs and community exchanges, we have to think differently to reach our potential.

In addition, it is not common in film marketing to consider and create any end user experience, which is not just focused on the actual watching of the film, but also the contextual, societal, physical, and technical context. Audiences watch different types of films in different contexts, their choice is not just the film, but also where to watch it, when, and with whom – and who to share the experience with afterwards. It is all logical, we all know it, but do we take it into account when we produce and distribute our films?

With audience design we change the perspective. We invite you to think from the perspective of the audience. Who is this person? What are his or her characteristics?

Which narrative element, actor, music, setting, graphics or style would attract whom?

Audience design works from the inside out keeping the outside view in mind. How can we create a context and connection that invites this person in? How can he or she get in touch with the film?

All content is part of the audience experience, whether "created", such as teasers, trailers, stills; "engaged" such as comments, fan-fiction, publicity; or "paid" such as ads – the film lives in its communicative context and all its parts are linked to its overall narrative, which collectively builds a consistent world, and creates touchpoints designed to invite the identified audiences in.

Considering where and why to hear about the film, where to watch it, where and why to share and talk about it. This is not only creating context and awareness, it is also a way to look for additional business-models, alternative licensing and sales options that can create a long life for the film. Audience design proposes a process of constant testing, achieving or failing, and adjusting. This also means a need to integrate ways to monitor audience behaviour in the process.

## Where is the change | collaborative and looping processes

Another core characteristic of audience design is its constant collaborative and interdisciplinary work structure and approach, inspired by other creative fields and disciplines.

As we ourselves come from different professional backgrounds, we aligned the methods and practices from other disciplines like script consulting, game-design, experience design, social media communication, and even software development, and fused them into a new model called Audience Design. We adapted this knowledge to create a strategy process and document that aims to work in connection with the reality of the film industry, its development, production, financing and business models, taking one step in the direction of adjusting to a changing market.

The core of audience design is a so-called Audience-Centred-Design-approach, which derives mainly from the field of Experience Design, which is a methodology to make people's interactions with complex systems and products more pleasant. We transferred this customer centred approach to narrative projects, to stories, and used the established design-process and methods such as defining and working with personas, prototyping, user testing and user-journeys, thinking about touchpoints and interactions. It is an integrative process, where the potential audience is always considered.

Another change is to consider the audience from the beginning – namely the late development phase – and to work from a story-based focus, which is not something that the film community is used to. This requires an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach, and it integrates the needs from the scriptwriter/director, to the producer and feeds into the sales and distribution stages, primarily by thinking into different markets and audiences. We dive deep into the content and its potential connections to build relations.

Instead of working with large-scale roll-outs of untested ideas, the aim is to create ideas and test the results in a collaborative process with the film team. In our workshops this is at the heart of the process – creating and sharing new ideas among the participants and the film teams, with a very practical focus and a constant looping of ideas. This relates to so-called agile processes that are proven in other creative industries, such as software and games development, where prototyping and implementation are a core part utilised to test ideas and limit risks before they hit the market.

Audience design is therefore a looping process of understanding, creating, communicating, testing, and adjusting, leading to implementation.
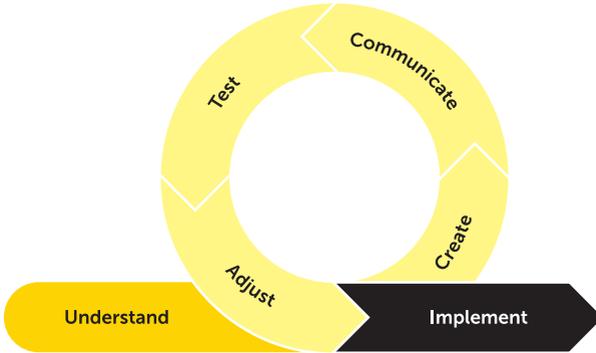
Where is the change | integrative approach

By being a dynamic process, audience design can be integrated in a fluid production reality. That is why audience design is not only collaborative and interdisciplinary, it is an integrative process. While most times the communication strategy work starts shortly before a festival release, audience design aims to be integrated through the whole process, from development through to the public release and beyond, considering the long life of the film.

Creating an active audience needs time, time to create awareness, time to build a relationship, time to test and adjust, and to re-integrate the feedback into the production and distribution processes.

This audience is built constantly. To have an audience in place from the earlier stages allows you to:

- constantly build an audience from the development phase
- activate a core audience to spread the message and support the communication up to the festival and public release

- create added value when moving into sales and distribution by already having an active community around the film
- think of the long life for the film and the next productions to carry the audience with you; someone who liked your film may be the first to check the next one
- support better financing for upcoming productions through insights into user data that go further than box office sales
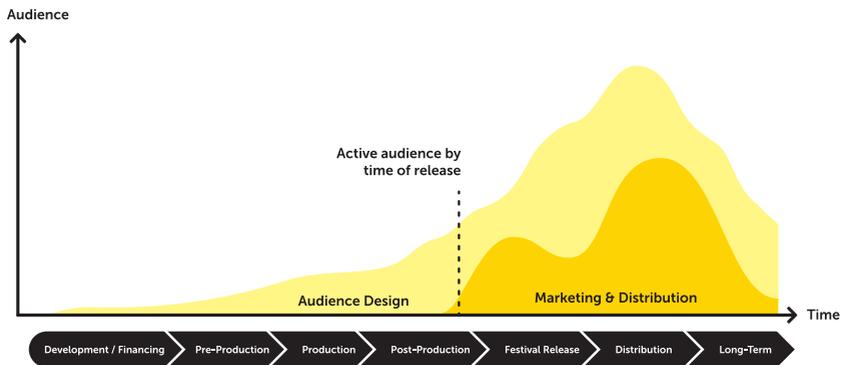
Another reason to work with this highly integrative process is to strengthen the agency of the film team in the distribution and communication process.

The sooner a film team starts to consider the questions of who their anticipated audience is, the sooner they can start thinking about their short- and long-term goals for the film and how to reach them. The more time they therefore have to find out what they need, how to get it, and to test, build, identify, and – importantly – how to become more certain about what decisions to make when later facing all the crucial choices for the communication of their film.

The next part gives a short overview of the different stages, goals and outcomes in the process of audience design. The chapter *Audience Design – Building a Strategy Step by Step* dives deeper into the hands-on strategy work and takes you through each step of the creative work processes, methods and tools.

Development & Pre-production Stage

The audience design work can start at a very early stage, best at the final script stage. This is where the work with mainly the writer/director and producer team begins.

The main aim is to dive deep into the script, excerpt the main topics, themes and to unlock the audience potential that lies in the script. It is the phase to analyse and ideate and set up the strategy by, to name a few (see image):

- Researching the context of the film and team
- Thinking about assets and USPs
- Setting the goals
- Identifying the core of the story
- Defining potential audiences

One key aspect of the process is for a film team to define the goals for their project. What do they want to achieve in relation to the film's life? This is a question no distributor will ask, yet it is crucial for the prioritisation of the – often limited – efforts and resources that are available for the promotion and marketing. And often, those goals go far beyond sold tickets and revenues. Especially strategic long-term goals, like financing their next film – for a first-feature director, or starting an international career – for the producer as well, or, often in relation to documentaries, to create impact and enable change. The goals set the direction of the strategy, the road that is to be taken.

Knowing in which direction the audience design strategy will develop can – as a side effect – influence changes in the script, and inspire which possible partners to attach and how to integrate the audience direction into other creative aspects of the film, such as production design or sound design. The team can also think about alternative financing strategies, looking for new partnerships, crowdfunding options and so on. The strategy will propose additional materials that have to be produced during the shoot and can already be planned ahead.

Following the exploration of the script, setting goals and looking at the 360-degree context of the project now leads to the process of defining your audiences: who is your primary audience, who is your secondary and third? This is where the first relationship with your audience starts.

The bonus effects of an early start are, to name a few, that it gives space for the producer-director team to discuss things that may otherwise not come up until a last-minute situation during the promotion. It brings the creators more in control of how the film is communicated, and it allows for a possible longer relationship with the audience, which can potentially be transferred to future film projects.

ANALYSE AND IDEATE

- Research the context of the film incl. production universe and team
- Think about assets and USPs
- Set the strategy goals
- Identify the story core
- Define potential audiences
- Consider synergy with creative team/story world/production/ financing strategy
- Integrate it in the next steps for the project

> **Set up your strategy early**
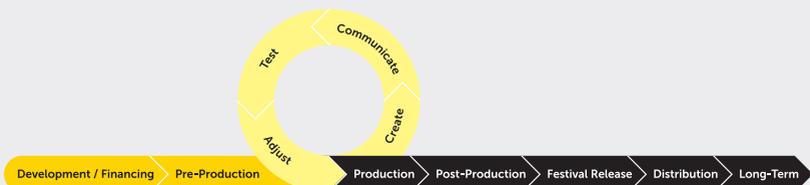
Production & Post-production Stage

The strategy's implementation may start during the production and post-production stages with considerations as to what assets, like making-of's, stills and photographs, videos and other materials to produce, as well as which audience discussions to create in the right groups, spreading the word in the right communities, and building a sense of connection with select core audiences. Also, this is the stage where it is important to set up the right communication platforms and establish key partnerships.

What happens now will also feed back into the strategy as there will inevitably occur changes during this stage. What works, what doesn't? Happy coincidences or surprises that can inspire new ideas or enhance existing ones, and things that may not deliver as expected and should therefore be rethought. That allows you to save time and money, like ineffective adverts, or unsuccessful communication elements. It is the time to adjust the expectations to reality by getting in touch with your audience.

Having started at the final script stage there should be time to prepare and plan for how to make the most out of this phase. It is of course a stressful time preparing for and shooting the film, so having the strategy to help integrate and plan for these initial materials and ideas is important. For the film team it is crucial that someone takes charge of the audience design strategy part of the production, so they can rely on having the materials, the self-made assets, which will be vital for the later communication.

This step leads into the international sales stage. The aim is to early on create the right packages for the project so they can be shared with the right partners and give added value to their festival or local strategies.

Development / Financing Pre-Production Production Post-Production Test Communicate Create Adjust Festival Release Distribution Long-Term
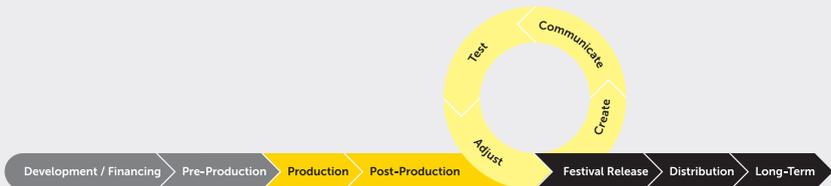
Festival & Distribution Stage

After production and post-production, the next big stage is the international premiere and release. The film may already have built a small, but active fanbase to support the release, spreading the word and connecting with the online activities. Depending on how intense the audience engagement and idea testing has been during the production, now is the time for more active communication. Activate the main strategy actions to raise the level of awareness and integrate anything specific and unique that can support the first release.

Now the implementation of the ideas and the strategy concept have to stand the test. As you develop the sales strategy with the sales agent and the local marketing and PR strategy with the distributor, the efforts spent during the audience design process and the materials collected so far will feed and inspire the decision-making processes for promos, teaser posters, main poster, other key art,

stills, trailers, social media materials, and so on. This is where the audience design strategy's actions are coordinated with everything else kicking off.

Someone should be dedicated to keeping track of the communication and secure that the chosen key elements are shared and used as planned between the different partners and campaign hotspots. Some of the things to secure during this stage of active communication are – to name a few (see image):

- Prepare any promotional packages; materials for events, things like memes and other online communication materials like visuals, special teasers, trailers, items – anything needed to roll out the different actions
- Think of alternative distribution models, like day and date, tours, events etc.
- Roll-out the campaign and coordinate between efforts – local and global
- Engage the identified communities to help spread the word

The film now starts to have a life of its own. The audience design process aims to strengthen the impact of the film across all the levels and areas of sales and distribution, anywhere it can come into contact with the audience, so as to maximise the impact during the limited time of release and utilise the available resources as much as possible. It is not in competition with what everyone else is doing to support the film, it is an add-on. It aims to create an early momentum that can be built on through each of the following stages leading to the release, and beyond.

INITIATE COMMUNICATION

- Prepare promotional packages and communication materials
- Define shareable actions/ideas/content across campaign activities
- Think of alternative distribution models
- Roll-out of local and global audience design campaigns; track the impact
- Engage the identified communities and audiences

> **Activate your community**

Long-term

When the local and international release roll-out starts to wind down and the film no longer is available in cinemas, the long-term life of the film starts. This is a period that, at least for the filmmaker, often limits their participation to select festivals or award events as the attention shifts to a new project. This is understandable, but it is still important to look at the opportunities that lie in an active long-term communication potential. Think of alternative partners like educational institutions, alternative distribution venues and the "afterlife" of the film's campaign.

In addition to this it is also important to think about which audiences you want to stay connected to in order to support the development of your next project. If there already is an active audience in place, there is an anticipation and value to build on and a community to be looked after for the next project. It can be a substantial support for

the development of upcoming projects to consider the long-term life by – to mention a few (see image):

- Making the packages easily available for the long-term life of the film
- Sustaining the film's presence (recycle materials) or decide how to end it
- Keeping the attention on your core audience as you develop the next film
- Building a fanbase or community for the director/company

This whole process of building and adjusting an audience design strategy across the main stages of a film's life may seem a little overwhelming at first. There is no doubt that it is easier to integrate everything if you start before pre-production, as the audience design process is a small parallel production in itself.

The closer to the release you start, the harder it might be to integrate the steps and actions into everything else going on, but it is still worth the effort for the enhanced communication and marketing of the film. Thinking towards audiences and integrating a communication strategy in the production process is new or unfamiliar to most filmmakers. Yet, considering the many and fast changes and shifts happening around us, there is no escaping that filmmakers have to take an interest in who will see their films.

We believe that it pays off to start to think and act differently, to try, test, fail, succeed and learn from any result possible.

"Connecting a good film to a specific audience will not be difficult, especially if social media platforms figure out how to get a piece of the action. It just demands bravery in exploring how these new value chains would best be put together, and of course being very clear from far before the start of production on who the audience will be. Anyone who can afford to experiment should do so now, and those who can't alone should pool their resources. This goes for knowhow as well as money."

[Quote from the *Nostradamus Report 2017*, p.12; published by the Gothenburg Film Festival]

LONG-TERM

- Make your packages available to partners, festivals, educational etc.
- Sustain the film's presence by reusing/maintaining collected materials
- Keep attention on the core audience and build towards the next project
- Start to build a fanbase for the company/director
- Document, debrief and create your own best-practice
- Consider possible expansions of the story world (e.g. TV series, web, book)

> **Build and keep a long-term community**

Development / Financing ⟩ Pre-Production ⟩ Production ⟩ Post-Production ⟩ Festival Release ⟩ Distribution ⟩ **Long-Term**
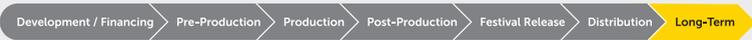
Audience Design
Building a Strategy
Step by Step

From workshop to making it work

Having presented the main motivations and film industry context that inspired the creation of the Audience Design programme and approach, this chapter will walk you through the steps of the hands-on process of developing, collaborating on, creating, writing, and implementing an audience design strategy.

So what kind of strategy is this? It is the condensed, well-considered sum of a collaborative work process, the results of which have been collected and prioritised – designed as it were – so as to be presented in a well-motivated, coherent working document.

The audience design strategy is a written, still adjustable, plan that will follow a project through its production and distribution stages, serving as a set of instructions or roadmap, as well as a constantly developing source of inspiration for how to connect the project with its anticipated audience.

The concrete steps that we walk you through are also to be seen as an inspiration to create the work process that best suits each particular set-up. They are easily adapted to a production reality because they can be added to and coordinated alongside work that is being done anyway throughout the different production and distribution stages. The aim is to maximise the output by also utilising the avail-

able resources with an audience in mind. Like any development- or production-related effort, it does of course take some additional planning, and to show up during the crucial steps where specific actions need to be set in motion or new materials need to be produced or shared in the team.

That is why we recommend appointing a dedicated person, preferably an audience designer or audience design manager, who is not the main producer, to keep track of the parallel production and monitoring of audience-related materials and activities. The strategy work covers a relatively long stretch of time, up to a year and often longer, and the benefits of having someone in charge of the implementation, execution, adjustment, and documentation of the strategy actions are obvious.

The backbone of our approach is the collaboration between an audience designer (or an appointed audience design manager) and the film team, including their closest partners and collaborators, for example the sales agent and local distributor, as well as the extended film team. The producer can choose to have everything done in-house, but someone has to have the main responsibility for this part of the project.

The advantage of someone dedicated to being an audience designer – versus someone just being assigned the task – is that they bring not only fresh "outside" eyes, but add a whole different skill set to the film team. The role of the audience designer is new and just like there was a period of adjustment before it became second nature to work with story editors or script consultants, the same adjustment will for sure be needed for this new profession.

The step-by-step walk-through also implies how a collaboration with an audience designer develops across the different steps. The role is intended to be someone who, in the beginning of the collaboration, has an intense work phase, where the film team also needs to be dedicated, so as to lay the groundwork. The audience designer then creates the initial draft of the strategy, which will be finalised following some rounds of feedback and adjustment with the film team. After the delivery of the final strategy, the audience designer can step out; or s/he can be hired for a defined number of days or weeks that

match the anticipated workload and budget, stepping in and out of the implementation process as planned. Alternatively, a shorter transition phase can be planned, where the strategy and main responsibility are handed over to an in-house strategy manager.

Audience design as a discipline and work process can only function as a group effort, a sharing of skills, insights, knowledge and experience. It is a 100% collaborative framework.

What might be a little hard to convey about audience design is that, just like any other deeply creative work process, everything does not emerge or become clear in the first sitting; it takes some rounds, some contemplation and to-ing and fro-ing. Time is needed to allow everyone involved to take it all in, to reconsider, and simply find their way into the right mindset.

The question of whether to include audience design in your project work is not a question of either-or, a little goes a long way, and using just some of the steps, tools and processes still offers useful insights, which help to clarify and structure the key priorities for the release of a film.

It is, almost, never too late, and, definitely, never too early.

It, however, makes a difference whether there is still time to utilise the production or post-production stages to produce dedicated and relevant materials for the promotion – or not. Once the international premiere of a film is looming, time starts to run very fast and decisions need to be made with little time to reconsider if the key materials don't get the film's core or tone across as intended. It seems like a shame to spend so much energy on making a film and then have hardly any breath left to also make the people who'd enjoy it, find it, and engage with it.

These people also include festival audiences, who – whether in their professional capacity (as for example journalists, critics, other programmers, distributors etc.) or as film buffs – are the first audience-wave to potentially share and spread the word about a film. The first public presentation therefore often sets the tone for the rest of the film's promotional fate and is crucial.

From our point of view, it is not a question of whether to make it work or not, it is a question of deciding to just start doing the work, as much or as little as you can, and finding ways to make it work as you move through the process.

So – let's get to it.

The only rule: do the work and have fun

Audience design is not made up of rules. These steps are guidelines, methods, tools and processes that we have tried and tested, and keep developing. Our recommendation to audience designers, producers, filmmakers, sales agents, distributors, and anyone interested in working with audience design, is to see what works for you and what doesn't. That said, the end point is of course to do the work, to create a strategy and to realise it.

Start by building on our existing concept and adapt it to your own specific situation, timing, needs and opportunities. It can seem like a huge amount of work, but the aim is to make it as intuitively and seamlessly integrated with the existing work processes as possible, so as to make the audience engagement work a natural part of the development and production.

That is why the only rule is: do it – and have the most fun with it that you can.

When to start: when you are ready

As outlined in the previous chapter, the main stages where the audience design process runs in parallel are, basically, across most of the film project's lifespan. The collaboration ideally starts around the final draft script stage. Why? Because the story needs to be developed far enough, so as to be ready to be scrutinised from the point of view of an anticipated audience. The film team needs to feel comfortable answering – or beginning to consider – the many questions about their story and their intention and vision of the project as a whole. They have to be ready to open up the world of the project and let the first audience in.

So, let us move into a quick overview of the phases that the audience design work moves through, and how they can connect with the film production stages. Dealing with fluid processes, where every film project is different, this of course also influences the audience design collaboration.

The 4D-phases

If one boils down the audience design strategy process into four main phases, each phase containing different work steps towards a final strategy, one can relate them to the two parallel processes of film production and of audience design.

The 4Ds:

- Discover
- Develop
- Design
- Deliver

The eleven strategy work steps linked to these four phases can take place through most of the film's production and early distribution stages – depending on when you start the audience design work, and depending on when you plan to implement the first audience engagement actions. The phases and steps can be adjusted to the production reality and are flexible in this regard; meaning that they tend to overlap and loop, starting and restarting at different times throughout the project's stages.

Our best-case proposal is to plan the four phases and their steps once you know the starting point of the strategy process and the timing of the film's overall production, so as to find the best way forward for the collaboration and the strategy building (see the box on p. 46).

Overview of the 4D audience design phases in relation to a project's production stages

DISCOVER | DEVELOP | DESIGN – the process ideally starts here
- Development: final draft or shooting script
- Final financing stages

DELIVER – can start here, in parallel with continuing to Discover, Develop, Design
- Pre-production
- Production
- Post-production

DELIVER | DEVELOP | DESIGN – the main delivery phase;
the process loops back to the first phases
- Sales
- Festival: international premiere and festival run
- Distribution: local, global and select territories, i.e. if a co-production etc.
- Long-term: all types of VOD, educational, and alternative distribution etc.

Introducing the 11 steps

We have divided the audience design strategy process into eleven main steps. Each step includes important elements, tools and methods, and they all feed and loop into each other. It is an organic process and there is no right or wrong with regard to how you choose to integrate them into your audience design work or production process. The proposed timing is a recommended process that foresees how to best make it work for the audience designer and for the film team so as to make efficient use of the available time.

Here is an overview of the main work steps and their timing during the 4D-phases:

DISCOVER
- Open exploration: a 360° view
- Dialogue: team collaboration
- Goal setting: focus
- Audiences: who, where, why

DEVELOP
- Core: a compass to steer by
- Ideation: story, emotion, connection

DESIGN
- Dive deep: the real strategy work
- Looping: are we still on the same page?

DELIVER
- Strategy delivery: base camp view
- Implementation: the crucial step
- Long-term: packages, documentation, debrief

The first basic element of the audience design strategy work is that it is based on *passion*. The audience designer steps into the world of the project and their passion to discover this world meets the film team's passion to tell this exact story.

The goal? To let their initial, mutual passions drive the whole pro-cess, and to transfer it onto the audience by way of the planned actions of the final strategy.

D1 **D2** **D3** **D4**

DISCOVER

DISCOVER

STEP 1 | Open exploration: a 360° view

The logical starting place is to get to know the project as well as possible. We call it the 360-degree view. The aim is to get access to as much material and information as possible about the project and its journey until now from the film team, so as to get a sense of the whole project, relating both to the story and to the reality informing the making of it – what we call the production universe.

Depending on which stage the audience design work starts (script, post-production, pre-festival premiere etc.), the amount of materials available will differ. It however always makes sense to include the script as a key reference point.

Some of the key reference materials to include are:

- Script
- Relevant script notes; i.e. if a revision is imminent
- Character descriptions
- Synopsis
- Director's vision; and if separate, the Writer's vision
- Producer's vision
- Mood boards and any other visual materials; i.e. storyboard
- Visual tests, location research, possible cast, clips, trailers etc.
- Anything else related to style, tone and production design
- Anything else related to sound design
- Anything else related to music
- Anything uniquely part of the project; i.e. any references, if it's an adaptation, personal or fact-based important input
- Existing partnerships and production information relevant to the promotion
- Existing marketing plan and audience plan
- Sales strategy; if a sales agent is already attached
- Distribution strategy/-ies; if a distributor is already attached
- Link to the film; if the work begins at a later stage
- Links to relevant previous works by the director

Point of view: the script

Reading a feature film script with an eye towards the audience is a bit different from reading it in other contexts. The *first read* focuses on pleasure, on emotional connection and reaction; which by the way is mostly also a script consultant's first read. It should be driven by curiosity, keeping the future work aspect in the background. As a first audience, the impact of this reading is important. The idea is not to note every reaction all the time, that would just disturb the reading. Make notes of any emotional reactions, they could be related to the story, rhythm, sense of tone or characters. If something does not make sense or confuses, or if something is moving or really great, or boring – only when it evokes a big enough reaction to be noted. When finished, take the time to write down your uncensored and immediate thoughts.

The *second read* is to analyse the material and story, to identify all the characters and key elements, the tone, rhythm, language/dialogues or certain phrases, the themes, topics, any impression of the style and visuals indicated, any hint of sound and music, props, production design, locations, any detail that is given meaning in the script. This reading is the first collection of input to detect which elements and access points the script offers an audience.

Going beyond the script, gather the same impressions from any other materials available, so as to get a good impression of what the world of the project contains.

The discovery process has started and it often leads to some initial research. What do you need to know more about before meeting the film team? Questions start to form, unknowns that can further help to connect with the story and project.

Initial understanding: what to look for

Taking on the role of being a (professional) first audience also means to go beyond personal tastes and interests. What this means is to be aware of them, while moving past them and putting on a pair of curiosity glasses, packing an initial toolbox, and traveling deep into the world of the project. If audience design was something one

could do in Virtual Reality it would be like stepping into a diverse landscape or a big house and walking through it, peaking into all of its rooms, getting a sense of its heart, mind and soul.

Keeping an open mind is key. To analyse the project with empathy. Having collected a lot of impressions and questions in the initial exploration of the materials, now is the moment to pick out and identify the more specific areas that are needed for the first meeting with the film team. They are the starting point for the joint discussions and as the collaboration gets going, the content of each area will change, be expanded or discarded, revised or reinforced, and the ones that reach the step of strategy writing will be prioritised and linked to concrete goals and actions.

The initial areas of discovery to highlight are:

Core of the project: what is the audience designer's impression and understanding of what the core of the project is; it is a good exercise to write a logline and short synopsis already now to see what things got stuck in the mind as the main storyline and theme. The story core is an important part of building the strategy later.

Topics: these are facts, subjects, issues, ideas, or even questions that are being explored in the story; include everything at first, topics are often one- or two-word items. Also look at the conflicts of the story and at what opposites are at play in relation to the inner or outer conflicts, like freedom vs. responsibility, urban vs. rural or man vs. nature for example.

Themes/emotional themes: theme is often described as what is under the surface of the story, it generally informs how and what is said in relation to a topic, i.e. the message or moral; what the film is really about; the central idea behind the story or a perspective; expanding and relating the topics to the story – a human dilemma for example. Themes are more often formed as a sentence and sometimes it's hard to separate topics and themes. Emotional themes generally relate to the emotional meaning of the story. Include any theme you can think of.

Elements: these can be related to style, tone, sound, music, location, production – note anything not part of the other areas, anything that seems important for the project and could inform any aspects related to identifying possible audience connections.

Characters: who are they, what do they stand for, which topics and themes are connected to whom. Look at the gender aspects of the story – how do the characters identify and express themselves; list the major impressions of and questions about each character.

Assets and resources: as far as they are detectable in the materials, what existing assets and resources does the project have? These can for example be: cast, locations, production- and team-related elements that can be harnessed as strengths, existing partners, other artistic collaborations – like bands/music, any previous assets – if it's an adaptation or remake for example, social networks and media/online presence etc.; and it makes sense to also include any trending elements that could be used – depending on the timing of the release.

Initial audience profiles/interest groups: based on all the input so far, which audiences are the first that come to mind. Make your own brainstorm and list every type of audience, every interest group or niche you can relate to the project. Also include the core arthouse, genre or mainstream audience, if the project aims for any of these bigger audience segments.

Initial ideas: if any ideas for audience engagement emerge, or any key words, emotional clues or other things that already give ideas for the communication, then collect and include them; consider which topics, themes, and audiences they connect with, and how they link to the perceived core.

A few discovery process methods/tools:

SWOT/BMC: it is always a good basic exercise to make a SWOT analysis; a possible alternative could be a Business Model Canvas (BMC) or similar. The SWOT is more accessible and adaptable as a quick overview, whereas the BMC might be useful to identify more detailed assets for example. These analyses move the perspective away from the story towards the broader market situation of the project. (See box for more detail).

More detail on how to use SWOT and the Business Model Canvas

SWOT stands for these four areas:
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.
S/W are usually viewed as internal to the project, and O/T as external issues.
The first two you have the power to change, the external not so much,
but knowing their potential impact on the project helps to plan for them.
It is usually set up as a four-square template (S/W above O/T), but works just as well as a simple list. One could say that SWOT outlines optimism vs. pessimism.

Business Model Canvas
The Business Model Canvas (BMC) is a template that helps to dive deeper into the potential market, collaborations and partnerships. It is an easy tool for describing, visualising, assessing and changing business models, and to think about the value of the project in the market. You adapt it to your needs in the audience design process.

Depending on the degree of detail required, the business model can be carried out using the business model navigator concept of the University of St. Gallen, or using the globally known method of the Business Model Canvas, as presented by Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur in their book in 2010.
The BMC wiki is quite helpful for further details on the template's building blocks.

In short, the BMC maps out key partners, key activities, key resources, value propositions, audience (customer) relationships, channels, audience (customer) segments, revenue streams, and cost structure, i.e. the main production and distribution budget figures in a film context.

The BMC is more elaborate and may not appeal as widely as the SWOT analysis. There are templates available online for free download of either model.

Research: do some initial research and see what unexpected things might pop up; note any questions for the film team and make sure to research at least their digital footprint in advance. Digital footprint means how present the project, the filmmakers, production company, cast etc. are online – in general, on various social media – and in what connections they have been mentioned previously. It is also worth checking possible previous works, and any main topics, themes,

and specific elements that will be explored further. Research helps to establish what the context of the film is that you can later build on. If there are any communities or organisations already attached, check them, and see who else might share topics or interests with the project. Research is part of the whole process until final delivery – and beyond.

As the audience designer enters the world of the story, the film team will gradually be asked to step beyond the borders of their story and into the no-man's land that currently lies between them and the audience, a land that the audience design strategy will now start to map out.

STEP 2 | Dialogue: team collaboration

It is time to bring everyone together in the same room. The audience designer is ready to meet the film team and share the first impressions and ideas. The film team usually consists of the producer and director; and if at an early stage, the scriptwriter as well. It is optional, but helpful, to include the sales agent and/or local distributor if they are already on board. Plan enough time for this. Ideally at least a minimum of one full day or two half days are reserved for the work of STEPS 2 to 5, and in part STEP 6.

The audience designer may already have asked the film team to answer some audience related questions in advance, so as to prepare for the meeting and make the most out of the time available.

Preparatory questions for the film team are:

- Make a preliminary list of three goals for the project or for themselves in relation to the project (see STEP 3)
- To define their ideal audience; local/international
- To motivate how and why the film would speak to this audience
- Note what they most want to say/convey to their audience
- Preliminary ideas on how to engage this audience and with which elements, themes or characters
- On which platforms/channels to best start a conversation with this audience
- To list their assets incl. any existing audience related plans/ideas

The first meeting is all about sharing discoveries and experiences of engaging with the project. The outcome is to find common ground and make sure everyone is on the same page. At this stage it is good to be open about what you see. Consensus is not a goal in itself, it is important to share all impressions and doubts in a constructive way so as to understand the intentions behind the story and project.

Did the audience designer get it? Does the script convey what is intended – from an audience point of view? The initial exchange has to build trust as the story takes centre stage. Questions and careful testing of what has been understood, intuited, what is not clear yet, are at the heart of this step of shared discovery. The dialogue will show what everyone sees, what the film team thought was clear (and maybe isn't), what the audience designer thought was clear (and maybe isn't), but what possibly should or could be clear, and what no one has yet seen might emerge from this open-minded investigation.

The collective input from the areas of discovery listed in STEP 1 are tested, brainstormed and adjusted further together. The story core is discussed (see STEP 5 on deciding the final story core) and the characters are explored more deeply. Everything needs to be reworked. What is the story more than anything else? What is it definitely not? The unfiltered brainstorm lists of topics, themes and elements are divided into clusters, grouping them, and from these new lists a first prioritisation is made, for example picking 3-6 of each topic and theme, and organising the elements, assets, and resources in order of the most relevant.

In addition to the areas covered by the audience designer in STEP 1, answers to the following questions need to be established together:

Story related:

- Key scenes
- Main theme; what is it more than anything else?
- Any artistic vision, motivation or similar, not yet shared in the delivered materials
- No-go's – what does the film team not want to use, focus on, or communicate

Project related:

- Production universe – what are the circumstances of the project/story and the production reality; practically, financially, logistically etc.
- Unique Selling Points/Propositions
- Existing deals/assets/partnerships/network etc.
- Assets related to the extended film team
- Digital footprint; checking the information, sharing all social media assets
- Needs – Challenges – Wants
- Recent project updates
- Current timeline of the project
- Which distribution areas the strategy should focus on, i.e. the local market, a global approach, any co-production territories, any specific forms of distribution, international festival premiere, alternative events etc.

These highlighted focus areas are starting points. Each project may have its own special areas that need to be covered.

A sense of playfulness is incredibly helpful throughout the whole discovery and development stages. It is work, and it is fun. The story, characters and everything related to the project are given everyone's full attention.

Since we like collections of words with the same first letter, we made this set of 5Ps as they are excellent guiding principles for the collaborative approach of audience design.

The 5Ps to guide the collaborative process:

- Preparation
- Passion
- Playfulness
- Purpose
- Practicality

The audience designer has to make sure that everyone in the group feels included and to allow time for detours. Discussions of themes and characters especially open up very interesting talks that can bring new insights to the table for everyone.

Practical methods and handy meeting items to include are for example (check the box for more details on the 3 highlighted methods/tools):

- Big sheets of paper or a whiteboard; and a wall to hang the papers as they multiply, and a dedicated person to photograph the whiteboard before each wipe out and all the papers on the last day – leading to a shared Google Drive or Dropbox for all the gathered materials
- Post-it notes and pens; multi-coloured
- **Brainstorming methods**
- **Mind Mapping methods**; templates can be made in advance
- **Archetype cards**
- Wi-Fi access (research is always needed)

Now that the project has been explored in a team effort, it is high time to define the film team's goals in the next step, as the whole strategy will be designed taking these main goals into account.

+

Three discovery process methods/tools that are widely used in audience design

Brainstorm

A very basic and efficient tool. Everyone has to be able to see what is being gathered in a joint brainstorm, which is why those big papers and boards are just perfect. Brainstorms can be done alone (as in STEP 1), but are more fun in a group. The aim is to not leave anything out at this point, no boundaries or limits. Sitting alone, writing a simple list works fine, or using a mind map tool to help you (see p. 58). In a group setting, one person has to steer the brainstorm and collect all the input. Sometimes post-its and a set time (5-10 minutes) to write individually do the trick, sometimes a fast shout-out of words or ideas, or a longer discussion adding to or reshuffling an existing list. »

This does not have to be a structured process; the important thing is that everything is collected and noted for later use. There are many brainstorm techniques to be inspired from, so pick those you find most useful. In our experience the most important thing is to vary them so as to keep up the energy in the group and to add elements of surprise and time pressure. Grouping people two and two for some of the post-it-sessions is a good variation. Brainstorms work for an initial gathering of input (such as topics, themes, audiences etc.), for connecting different input (link themes to audience groups for example), for asking questions about certain things (like, how can idea x reach most people), to develop lots of fast ideas (timed output – ex. 3-5 min. max., no censorship) and to explore certain things deeper (such as one cluster of topics). It is really only the imagination that can limit the use.

Mind Mapping
Another well-known and widely used method. Depending on how your mind works there are many available tools, apps and templates online to choose from in order to find a mind map format that suits your thinking. Some prefer to use pen and paper; a printed template of choice could come in handy for the group work though.

Basically, a mind map is just a visual diagram to organise information. It can be a way to make brainstorms on your own or to get a "feel" for an idea, to see how much is linked to it and what it covers. It is a very useful tool to structure brainstorm ideas as you, literally, "map out" all the collected thoughts, building a physical map that guides you through the content.

Whether alone or in a group, it is wise to start with a guiding question for the specific "map": is it a topic, a theme, ideas, an asset, a challenge, a character, a summary of elements you've chosen, or to "wildly" create new ideas.

If you want to use the mind map for the idea process (STEP 6), these stages can guide the process:

- Structure your ideas
- Look at the ideas and start clustering them; it can be by content, channel, timing, audience, theme...
- This can be in one big map at first; subsequently, divided into one map per cluster to explore each
- Build relationships between the ideas by drawing arrows
- What are the relationships, the synergy – do they overlap too much, could any be combined, are any superfluous?
- You can add subtopics, cause and impact, similarities, dependencies, subcategories, start and ending points etc. – add the input to the map
- Individual ideas can also be explored exhaustively in a map, testing the potential each offers, i.e. note everything associated with it or see how the idea ties in with the rest of the strategy's prioritised elements »

Archetype cards

A fun tool to use, if the moment calls for it. This is a deck of 72 cards with images of a selection of the most known archetypes. They are a playful way to explore the main characters or aspects of themes. To explore the characters, the writer/director and producer, in turn, draw two cards while thinking deeply about a character. The cards are then used to freely associate the selected archetypes with the character. The point of drawing two cards is to use the dynamics and connection between the different archetypes, their light and shadow sides, opening up different traits of a character. If it's hard to connect them, two more cards can be drawn.

Often the talk brings out themes and intentions linked to the characters, opening up new ways to talk about them, emotionally and in relation to the story's core. There is no right way to use this tool, it's just an easy way to get everyone's minds to think more freely and to step outside any undetected fixed roles or ways of perceiving something in the story.

[ref. author Caroline Myss, but there are other Archetype cards available]

STEP 3 | Goal setting: focus

What do we mean by setting goals for the project and team? Obviously, the main goals are to produce the film, secure a good premiere at an international festival, and have as successful sales and distribution in as many territories as possible. When looking beyond these natural goals it is possible to open up a discussion about what each member of the team might like to achieve at different stages, for the film and for themselves – personally and/or professionally.

Asking the director and producer (and sales agent, if s/he is participating) to write down all the goals they can think of is a good way to start. Preferably they did this before the first meeting, so all goals can be gathered on a big paper and everyone can see if they wish to add new ones to the joint list. The discussion now focuses on what they want to achieve with this film, what they hope its journey will bring with it, what kind of impact or results they wish for. Small or big. Realistic or not. There is no limitation at this stage – why not consider any goal you can think of?

The initial goals almost always change during this process. A good average number is to prioritise up to 4 main goals at the end of the discussion. These goals have to be the ones that can inform the whole strategy. A similar process of clustering and sorting them into groups can be helpful.

Smaller goals or goals related to just one specific part of the strategy can be put aside and listed in connection to the part they belong to, for example if they are considered too narrow to inform the whole strategy, but important enough for a part of it. This is a balance and judgement that only you and the film team can make.

Another aspect to consider is that of need and want. What are the 'need to achieve' goals or items, versus what would be great as an addition, a 'want to achieve'. This angle helps when discussing the prioritisation of possible strategy ideas and their scale; separately and in relation to the goals. What is a necessity? What is a luxury? One can of course argue that all promotion-related actions are a luxury, but setting that aside, it is simply another way to weigh in on the overall priorities of the strategy so far.

The goal setting process brings direction and focus to the coming steps and creates space for important exchanges between the producer and director.

The team's goals are, so to speak, the fix point of each audience design strategy.

Everything else from now on is related to them in some degree, as you start to consider which elements, topics, themes, ideas, assets, audiences, channels and platforms, territories etc. support which goal in which way? Do any clear synergies emerge? What timeline, materials, and actions are needed to help reach the main goals?

The audience designer also weighs in on the prioritisation of the goals and may ask the film team to consider other aspects, which have been observed during the preparation and discussion. In order to make the goal setting process cover as much ground as possible, we have listed the four main areas to explore.

The four main areas to explore for setting the goals:

Personal: does the team have any personal goals in relation to the film; for example, to communicate something they've experienced; or to overcome something in relation to the work with the film.

Professional: does the team have any professional goals in relation to the film; for example to create a strong enough impact at festivals; to build their international reputations and secure the filmmaker's next film; to brand/position the producer/production company in a specific way or connection, or to achieve a certain technical standard; to make the film as green as possible – meaning, green filmmaking/low carbon footprint; this area can cover a wide range of goals.

Financial: does the team have any financial goals in relation to the production, sales, release, audience engagement etc.; for example, a number of territories or tickets sold; raising specific funds and build a community via crowdfunding or crowdsourcing; engaging a specific community to invest in the film, or fundraise for the audience engagement activities with specific partners or places in mind.

Project: what does the team want their film to achieve and why; this can be on any level: artistically, socially, politically, culturally, whatever is important to them; for example to push a certain agenda; to engage young women or another specific audience, which they know is not obvious, but important for their film; to diversify; to create something lasting beyond the film; to have a strong guerrilla style visibility; to screen at a certain venue; to push the spirit or voice of the film; to change a debate or attitude towards something; to simply move people – and so on.

Goals can also be "negative", for example to not be perceived in a way that the team sees as limiting for the film. They can be connected to pretty much anything and be defined in varying scale and scope. The key factor is to take enough time to consider the goals, which often means coming back to them at a later stage (looping), and to check if the chosen ones really are the main goals to work towards.

As with all the previous elements, the grouping and listing of goals helps to check if some of them overlap and maybe could be com-

bined into one goal. Similarly, it is a good idea to consider the timing of the goals. Do they cover the film's entire life, or are they specifically aimed at the immediate future or to be reached half-way?

When discussing the goals, also consider them in terms of timing:

Short-term: anything that is important here and now or for the next stage of production, which the strategy could find ways to support; it could for example be an important application, connecting someone new to the project or recruiting the right extras in a fun way.

Mid-term: the strategy can consider different goals for different stages of the production; these would then be in addition to the main strategy goals; examples of stage-by-stage goals could be to reach a certain number of followers before the shoot to get more impact for a planned live-shoot diary idea, or to finalise a crowdfunding campaign before post-production, so as to involve the audience community in testing the edit. Any goal or part of a goal that supports the further implementation of actions towards the release can be considered here.

Long-term: there will almost always be some goals or hopes for the long-term life of the film; these can also link back to the personal, professional or financial goals, for example if one goal is to finance the next project in parallel to finalising and premiering this film; other examples can be to build an alternative distribution – online, museums, download packages etc.; to reach a number of specialised festivals, or to secure a film/music/event/lecture-tour; the options are limitless.

The goals in relation to short-, mid-, and long-term will often be connected directly to concrete actions and to the implementation of the strategy (STEP 10). Implementation is the step where you observe, learn from doing, share your experiences of the strategy rollout and adjust accordingly. Especially short- and mid-term goals can be a close part of the continued film production process and it's a good time to test ideas and visual choices towards how they engage the intended audience.

This way of looking at the goals also offers another way to cluster and place the ideas, seeing which ideas may work better during the

production – having an immediate pay-off – and evaluating their placement on the overall timeline from pre-production onwards. Will the idea have more impact before someone has seen the film, or afterwards? This is an important question if the intention is to use it to create a want to see the film. Other ideas work best after seeing the film and can help push word of mouth.

A final line of questioning for the goal setting concerns how to measure them and is also related to the later evaluation of the audience design efforts and how to define their impact.

Qualitative and Quantitative assessments

The general standard of measuring results is quantitative. Numbers are relatable, but they don't tell the whole story. Quantity is important, and we are challenged when it comes to gathering numbers and data in general in the film industry, and in audience design. In the context of goal setting, it is therefore important to also consider the ways in which the goals are and can be assessed as qualitative or quantitative.

If one goal is to secure one-hundred audience ambassadors for the project before the shoot, then this is of course a quantitative measure, but working with the idea of finding ambassadors and planning to collaborate with them, involving them in the production in a specific way that aims to expand the community organically, is a qualitative element.

The evaluation must therefore be two-fold. Did we reach one-hundred? Yes or no. If the answer is no, we only got 56 people to engage, then the result is quantitatively bad. If these 56 ambassadors however engage far beyond the expected during the collaboration, then – from a qualitative viewpoint – the result is a success, albeit over time. That is why we make a point of considering these two aspects and suggest that the strategy identifies how the goals might be measured later on when looking back at the whole process, at the results, at the documentation, and when it's time to evaluate what worked and what didn't.

The question of defining the goals from the point of view of "how do we measure their impact and success afterwards", is important, because it ties in with the overall question of measuring the value

**A short distinction between the ways
of assessing the goals in relation to effort,
priority and expected success**

Qualitative goals: they are often closely linked with the aim to create a meaningful relationship with an audience – to enrich them, to answer their needs; they connect with the content and how to engage with it; the focus is more on questions like how and why, on the conversations and emotional connections that are built; on the tone and quality of a debate. Their impact can be documented via social media comments, shares, public relation clippings, articles, blogs etc.; by keeping track of and photographing direct audience meetings, offline events, and in many other ways; what is mainly needed is an awareness on how to track the qualitative results of the implemented actions overall, and in relation to the set goals.

Quantitative goals: they are closely linked to any specific results that the film team wishes to achieve, and to any goals that combine quantity and quality; they can be linked with social media, search engines, any online activity that can be measured, such as likes achieved, number of followers, unique users, rates of interaction, comments, fans, shares etc., and of course to the various release numbers of a film, such as sales, screens, tickets, downloads, festival premieres, and awards. It is an advantage to have someone dedicated to following these numbers where and whenever it is possible to collect statistics and any useful data.

of the efforts made during the audience design process. Having an intention or plan for how to measure the expectation of success, of reaching the set goals, is a help when it's time to wrap up the project at the end of the journey.

Do some of the main goals need to be defined by levels of success? "If we secure at least this, we are satisfied and anything else is a bonus". Or – "If we haven't reached this by then, we will move onto new actions because we have to reach this specific goal". Setting up success criteria is a general goal setting element, but because the impact that a film can have manifests itself in a multitude of ways, whereof many cannot be properly measured, it is important to have this discussion upfront.

Additionally, the value of the whole collaborative process itself is also hard to put any concrete figures on, so it is beneficial to include a qualitative evaluation alongside the hard figures. Keeping the qualitative in mind also helps to build the general field of audience engagement methods and approaches as these experiences are shared.

Setting goals is an integral part of audience design and it helps to sharpen the focus on what you have, what you need and want, and on where and how far you ultimately want to take it. Finally, it foresees how to define the success levels of the planned communication. Goals help to focus on the resources available, how to best put them to use, and at what time during the stages of the film's life.

Two additional methods to use during STEPS 2 to 4

Classic benchmarking: this is an additional tool to include and moves the view a bit away from the audience towards the general film market, looking back at previous results and positioning the film towards the current market. Here you explore who went to see similar films, genres etc. that are comparable to this, and how these films were released: which countries, number of cinemas, profile of cinemas etc. If it's still possible to track their digital trail it might show how and what they did to communicate the film and to follow their campaign. What was their poster, their social media interaction etc. It may also be valuable to look at similar films that failed in their key markets.

The benchmark overview:

- List the main reference and comparable/similar films (recent vs. older)
- List all available and relevant data on their release:
  - Screens and spread (urban/rural)
  - Box office
  - Top 5 performing countries
  - Main reviews (compare IMDb or most relevant industry press)
  - Any campaign info still available to track possible audience reaction/interaction

If someone really wants to go deep and create a more detailed overview of the market and the competitive situation that the film will be released in, it is of course an option to study all the relevant statistics and market trends of the »

home territory (and any relevant co-production territories). Most countries have a yearly update on box office numbers, trends, and audience patterns in regard to attendance. What factors may have influenced the films that did well in recent years? Can any lessons be learned? To get an overview of the European theatrical market, the network of cinemas focusing on European films, *Europa Cinemas* (supported by Creative Europe – MEDIA and CNC), is a valuable resource for their part of the market. The network now has 1121 cinemas (2808 screens) in 677 cities and 44 countries. It would of course be valuable to collect all such resources from territories and continents around the world in one place.

Empathy Map: if you get stuck brainstorming audiences or thinking of how a character or theme connects to an audience, or how to place personas in a user journey (see STEP 4 and 6), or a persona doesn't seem to work, this can be a possible tool to test. You very simply draw, centred on a piece of paper, a round head, and add the face in profile view – the eye, nose, mouth and ear. At the top of the paper you write who it is, i.e. the name of the audience type/character/persona. Above the head you write what they think and feel, in front of the eye you write what they see, below the head what they say and do, and in front of the ear what they hear. You can also add, at the bottom of the page, the pain and gain for them in relation to the connection you are testing. The guiding principle for the empathy map is to try to put yourself in their mind and imagine what their outlook on the world is, to empathise with the person you map. This provides an overview of their experience and can also be used during the testing of concrete strategy ideas during the implementation.

Empathy maps are for example used in interaction-design, and models like Maslow's Pyramid are useful to identify the user's hierarchy of needs, for example love/belonging needs or self-actualised needs. Ask what needs the story and film can help fulfil for the audience. As with most other tools, free templates and Maslow's model are found online.

STEP 4 | Audiences: who, where, why

Cinema-going is a socially motivated activity, even web- or TV series have inspired public, social gatherings in the style of watching a World Cup football match together. When there is passion, anything can happen.

People are influenced by others when choosing which film to see, where to see it, and with whom. Therefore, the initial "why" is such an important question: why should this or that specific person go see your film? How does your film become relevant for the conversations your audience is having?

To research the anticipated audience of your film you need to ask:

- Who are they?
- Where are they?
- What are they interested in?
- What is their media usage?
- What are they talking about?

There are many more questions to ask, and one of the main methods we use is that of creating personas as representatives of some of the anticipated audiences (the method is explained later in this step). The key thing when it comes to identifying audiences is to start thinking towards them and figuring out which "openings" in the film's story world can invite them in. Audiences go beyond numbers and markets, they are real people. Like us.

As the world of the story is now expanding with every step, it needs to take the final jump from being a closed world to becoming a wide, open story world. The film team still controls the access to it via the strategy's action plan, but as a mindset, it is opened up.

It is imperative that the film team leaves their comfort zone, while the audience designer respects the jointly established boundaries of the story world.

Once the goals are in place, even if they may still be adjusted as the strategy develops, the next big, joint brainstorm is therefore a good long look at all the possible audience groups who could be relevant for the film. To help consider all the possibilities, the following lists of how to categorise and divide audiences can be a useful guide.

Audiences to consider are:

- Main audience – often the classic arthouse audience, or a main genre audience; locally and internationally
- Global audience; people linked by taste, interests, not geography
- Core audience within the main audience group
- Niches within/outside the main audience group
- Local niches
- International niches
- Other relevant niches – an expanding niche is for example LGBTQ, others could be the 60+, or DINKs (double income no kids)
- Special interest groups – i.e. from topics, themes etc.
- Audiences inspired by assets, cast, music, partners, extended team etc.
- And – to repeat – keep in mind that women and the over sixty-seventy-year-olds generally are very culturally active, incl. attending cinemas

These questions help to think further and to identify/divide possible audience groups:

- Who is your ideal audience?
- The audience you expect and why?
- The audience you want, but who could be hard to reach
- A more diverse audience would include… who?
- An audience who would really appreciate this film, but may not attend cinemas or choose this genre, or…
- A surprise audience – can they even be anticipated?
- Potential influencers, ambassadors, fans…; any existing and any you need/want to find
- Communities and special interest groups that could be activated or considered for collaboration
- Any trending conversations/groups to tap into or follow
- Friends, family, wider network – who is your "6 degrees of separation" audience – i.e. the people linking you to others beyond your own network
- Am I the audience for my/this film?

The list can be narrowed down or expanded as needed. Different ways of asking inspire different answers and help to widen the scope.

As with topics, themes, and goals previously, the next step is to divide the raw lists of audiences into clusters of similar and overlapping groups in order to get a better overview. Based on this overview, you prepare shorter lists of which groups best match the local or home market, who fits into the global audience, and you can even list them for possible co-production territories.

This provides an overview of which audiences could be reached across all of the expected release markets and which groups might only fit one or a few. Collecting them in groups also helps to filter out groups that may be too small or unrealistic to reach with the resources at hand.

Doing this distinction facilitates the linking of audience groups to ideas, and to the chosen goals, seeing which audiences best connect with which goal. All of this needs to be reconsidered carefully later (STEPS 6 and 7) and often needs additional research, resulting in a final proposal of how to best divide the many possible audiences into helpful and workable groups that are subsequently prioritised.

The global audience is linked to the strategy's global elements. This is the part of the strategy that focuses on the wider international appeal; on audiences and ideas that are connected globally by their interests and tastes, not by territories. Ideas for the global roll-out can be translated and adapted to local audiences (see STEP 11 regarding packages). We include the global approach because it feeds into later decisions for the festival premiere, and because especially online actions – that can help reach the global audience – need to consider how to deal with possible language- and geographical barriers. According to Netflix we all belong to more than one (international) community, and they have so far identified 1300 so-called "taste communities", codified by using viewing behaviour alone. So, there is something to tap into.

There are many studies and data to support how incredibly valuable it is to know your audience, and the efforts invested in one film project may very well benefit the next. It can't be said often enough that niches are

powerful, they can multiply, set an agenda, spread their passion, and small groups of very dedicated audience members like fans or ambassadors can become some of the most valuable people for your project.

Two of the main tools for identifying and working with the anticipated audiences are *personas* and *user journeys*. Personas are in part created in collaboration with the film team – creating two key personas together – and in part by the audience designer alone, if the strategy needs any additional personas. The user journeys are done around STEPS 6 and 7 because they can't be done without a number of concrete ideas in place to relate the persona's user journey to. The persona alone is not enough, because we need to connect them with the ideas, which in turn connect them with the film – and the user journey illustrates the so-called touchpoints between the film and the persona, showing where the two can meet.

Persona: the audience character

In order to make the audience and their whereabouts even more concrete we create a number of personas from the main selected audience clusters.

For the purpose of the strategy it makes sense to have at least one, if not two, personas from the home territory, one global audience persona, and one each from the strongest niche and interest groups, and from any co-production country that might have a specific group to explore deeper.

Personas are developed as needed, and when included in the strategy document, we recommend to have summaries of the main 3-4 personas in the strategy document and full persona profiles incl. any additional ones in the appendix.

Key things to consider when creating a persona are:

- Gender incl. genderfluid – any identification that is relevant for the audience they represent
- Age
- Nationality – Geography – Location; country/urban or rural/ specific area

- Education
- Occupation
- Family relation
- Values
- Social status and circle; friends, network, student life, colleagues…
- Social activity; do they eat out, go to cafés, sports, evening classes etc.
- Political attitude/special interests – such as Amnesty, Avaaz, climate, vegan, conservative – any side of the spectrum
- Cultural attitude/interests/activity – such as museums, lectures, opera, theatre, festivals…
- Cultural identification – for example via family, friends, tribe, nationality, community…
- Any religious background/standpoint
- Transport – do they bike, drive, use public transport etc.
- Travel – do they fly/drive/bike on holidays or go camping or…
- How does their day look like, from when they wake up till they go to sleep…
- Habits or routines
- Where do they shop – offline, online etc. – anything they do on a typical day
- Media usage – do they read or watch news, subscribe to anything, listen to podcasts, watch flow TV or SVOD, pirate films, go to the cinema, buy books or magazines, read blogs, write a blog, have a YouTube channel etc.
- Communication channels – where is their main communication happening; where do they look for tips and inspiration; where do they chat to friends; which platforms are they active on and how much?
- Here is a sample of a few social media and communication channels and platforms: Facebook, Google+, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr, Instagram, Reddit, Snapchat, Shazam, Flickr, Vine, Pinterest, MySpace, Flipboard, Goodreads, Flixter, Raptr, and sites like Vimeo, IMDb, LinkedIn, Skype and many more.

The background information can be listed and it is decided what to include in order to create an overview of a day in their life. By set-

ting up a persona's sample day the audience's reality becomes more concrete, you start to walk in their shoes – offline and online.

How does their activity and presence link to the goals, topics, themes, and what initial ideas/actions are relevant for them, what content can you create and place where and when in order for them to discover and hopefully interact with it? Personas also help to spot opportunities for where to advertise or to identify which partners to seek out, they feed ideas and connections.

In this step it can also be interesting to consider what kind of audience or persona you are yourself.

Think about yourself as an audience:

- How do you interact, what kind of persona would you be?
- How do other films, series, books etc. and cultural events get your attention?
- How often do you know about something, but don't act on it?
- What would make you act?

The personas created for the audience design purpose are equal parts statistics and mixed data, research, observation, and intuition.

This was the final step of the Discover-phase. Lots of information and hopefully early ideas have been gathered; the working goals are in place; the anticipated audiences and personas are in place. Now it's time to enter the Develop-phase and rework the material to establish a central story core, a strategy core – or strategy concept – and to fire up the ideation, which in turn leads to a loopback via the user journeys as the process approaches the Design-phase – but one step at a time.

A short note on personas

Creating a persona is a method that has been widely used since the mid-90's within especially software design and it is also linked to content marketing. The idea is to find a way to empathise with and model specific representatives of the core audience groups so as to map out who they are and where they come into touch with your film/story – as illustrated through the user journey.

A persona is not a real individual, but a synthesis of information from many people collected into one. They are a form of fictional character that you create – an audience character with a narrative of their own. Even if the demographics – age, education, occupation, and so on – are listed, the main focus is on the persona's daily life. The things that mainly inform people's interests and choices, things driven by our hobbies, beliefs, values, the culture we grew up in, and the one we have created for ourselves, the patchwork of likes, dislikes and digital tribes that we navigate. Being offline, the slow-movement, meeting IRL (in real life), embracing JOMO – Joy Of Missing Out, the gender debate, or many other new trends and ways of relating to life and to the digital evolution; these all play into the considerations of what your audience is up to and how to earn their attention.

There are many templates available online for how to describe and present a persona, so it's a free choice on how to design and find the one way that appeals to you or fits best to the project.

D1 D2 D3 D4

DEVELOP

DEVELOP

STEP 5 | Core: a compass to steer by

There are two very important cores that need to be defined and confirmed: firstly, the core of the story and, secondly, the core of the approach for the strategy – what we call the concept. The concept will inform the choices that need to be made during the strategy development and design processes.

The core of the story has most likely been established during the scriptwriting, but sometimes the understanding of what that core is changes over time. The discussions with the audience designer can also shift the sense of what the core of the story is and which part of the core the film team mainly wishes to communicate.

The story core informs the overall communication and the visual representation of the film. The story core may well be a combination of things that are equally important, the main thing is that it becomes clear for everyone what the story is more than anything else and what will serve as the gravitational centre of the film's outward journey.

Because the audience designer arrives with a fresh view, and navigates from their initial impressions in STEPS 1 and 2 through the joint exploration with the film team, they are in a good position to test the story core and test ways to express it.

Writing proposals for loglines – often theme- or topic-based, short synopses and taglines is a great way to see how the story core can be expressed in a condensed way. We differentiate between a logline and tagline because the logline often works as an ultrashort synopsis, but is often not catchy enough for a poster, for example, whereas a tagline has to create impact on a poster or other promotional materials.

How do you best catch the feel or tone, the main storyline or theme of the project? The written proposals also have to consider which audience they are for. Which persona or audience group does each logline and synopsis speak to and why? The suggestions are discussed and weighed against each other. The best ones are collected

in the strategy and can serve as inspiration to feed the key words and sentences that can be used in the different ideas.

In addition to the loglines and synopses, a list of key words is assembled. These are typically used for social media word clouds and are helpful when selecting the main hashtags for the film. Hashtags (#) are very important and can be linked with different parts of the strategy, so as to target different audiences across different channels. The general recommendation is to have 2-3 core hashtags, so the choice is important, and further hashtags can be divided into a #-set for the home premiere, key global-#, or hashtags to use before the release vs. a set to use after the release – the choices all depend on what the strategy aims for.

It is important to share all social media handles, hashtags and core strategy actions with everyone involved in the production and promotion, as they are the film's first active ambassadors.

Since communication options today allow us to specifically target certain niches and audience groups quite directly, it can be a challenge to find the right balance and negotiate the level of coherency between the global communication/audience – incl. the project's core visuals, core hashtags etc. – and the specialised versions aimed at different niches and key interest groups.

While the audience design strategy has to be coherent – guided by its core concept – the ideas and actions can of course use very different materials to best engage each audience group. The coherence is important for the combined efforts of the strategy, so as to motivate how they each support the different goals.

There is sometimes a fear of signalling too many different things, if it is not the same images, tone and words across the whole campaign. This fear is no longer sustained. The detail of the audience design strategy helps to plan for this in a coherent and motivated way. The possibilities offered by social media marketing and the user options of other communication channels allow you to not only test which materials resonate more within certain niches, they also allow you to target them with the materials best suited to hook or entice each specific audience group.

Audiences are smart and they know they are being marketed to. If done with authenticity and passion they are fine with being targeted and understand that other aspects of the film may be communicated differently elsewhere.

Another fear is that of being seen as an issue-film. Again, if the film has a strong issue at its core, then the part of the strategy that is directed towards an audience who will appreciate this can be targeted in a way that bypasses the global audience, who will for example be met with a more emotionally-driven campaign.

Once the story core is defined, you test and motivate it in relation to the goals. One of the constant strategy-looping moves is to check that the decisions are developing in a consistent direction. Does anything need to be re-evaluated or changed from here on?

The story core does not automatically define the strategy core. In order to see what the core concept of the strategy could be, you need to consider the big picture of everything collected till now. Just like a logline can condense the film's story core in one short and descriptive sentence, it is possible to develop a sentence or key words that can describe and condense the strategy's core. It is not always possible, but having a strategy logline, as it were, is very helpful when testing ideas and considering how the prioritised strategy elements relate to the overall concept.

Sometimes the strategy core materialises from working with the ideas, some words or an expression suddenly nails what it is that connects all the intentions, efforts and goals. Sometimes the contours of a strategy concept start to light up in the mind when you least expect it; almost like the green digital code of the Matrix revealing itself – and if it does, make sure to note any thought down at once, as this moment of insight can easily get lost again.

Story core and strategy core combined are the main compass needles to help steer the strategy towards the goals. If the goals are the shore that you seek, the twin-cores are your navigational support.

The next step of the development phase is therefore focused on how to create the main content of the strategy – the ideas.

A thought on expanding the story world

The audience design process sets many things in motion, and of course there will be adjustments and initial decisions that may or may not hold up. The film team is starting to see how things can exist outside of the film, how concrete ideas share or even expand the core spirit of the film.

From the steps of defining the core and committing to ideation, the strategy starts a life of its own. The story world must be freely explored. The expandability of the world of the film must be defined and tested. What are the "rules of engagement" with regard to how far any ideas can take the story's elements or the characters' lives or personalities. The no-go's may be clear, but the sense of the boundaries can only be tested and defined as the strategy is developed.

Sometimes only concrete ideas can fully demonstrate how much of an "outside" life or voice the characters can have, how far any element can be pushed. Can the stories that didn't make it into the script feed new ideas, can other creative elements add to the proposed actions? Can supporting characters get a bigger role outside of the story or can a subplot be explored further and get a story of its own in social media? These things can be hard to predict until tried, the more they are discussed and tested in the brainstorms, the better the ideation process can navigate the possibilities and test the limits of the story world as it breaks down its walls.

STEP 6 | Ideation: story, emotion, connection

Ideation really happens from the get-go and is a continual part of the strategy work. The discovery phase/process will generate ideas and they are collected throughout these steps. Once the goals, audiences, and the twin-cores have been set, the ideation process will eventually bring everything together in the effort to build concrete actions that support the "how to" of the strategy implementation.

The initial approach mirrors the other content-generating steps. All existing ideas are gathered and further ideas are added through discussion, brainstorms, and whatever is needed to stimulate the development of engaging ideas, such as research, checking out other

campaigns (not necessarily from the film world), and so on. Any existing partnerships or specific artistic collaborations, certain locations... everything is explored anew to scan for hidden idea potentials.

Ideation is really at the heart of the strategy work, and it often turns out to be the most difficult part. To come up with ideas from inside the story world and to organically connect them with a goal, a channel, an audience, the chosen elements and the twin-core, is demanding. Story, theme and character-based ideas simply need some time to develop. One advantage is that the big ideation process comes at a point where everyone around the table knows the project really well.

We are so used to looking from the outside in, to think from a channel, for example Instagram, towards the story instead of looking from the specifics, the unique aspects of the story/film towards the landscape of social, interactive or other types of platforms. What can the film/story/characters etc. offer that can creatively interact with the specific strengths and features of a certain platform? Can the content bring something new to a channel, to how its specific features are utilised?

It is very helpful to start noticing and collecting examples of how others are using channels. One project for example found a way to utilise Skype as one of the channels in their campaign, not an obvious choice; the unusual inspires and stimulates thinking towards a wider range of options.

That said, one might as well get all the obvious ideas out on the table immediately. Anything that seems easy, right in front of you, or requires little effort is often based on things seen before and done by many, especially social media ideas. But this does not disqualify them. If done by many, they probably also deliver results.

Sometimes, very simple and obvious ideas turn out to be strong and must-do actions. Some ideas can be twisted and take exciting shapes when challenged or combined with other ideas. They carry the seed to really unique ideas. Many may fall through the cracks in the end, but the focus right now is to gather as many ideas as possible.

Dare to note all the 'bad' ideas too. We urge to use free thinking, for example by having intense, timed idea rounds where everyone writes down their wildest ideas in 5-minute slots, the most radical – no limits. In design thinking and product development, one such approach – "dark horse" prototyping – is used for so-called divergent thinking; to think outside the box and explore anything that may be seen as too risky, impossible, crazy, unrealistic or unacceptable.

The point with the "dark horse" thinking is to challenge all previously made assumptions. By exploring highly risky and sometimes rejected ideas, it allows the team to think bigger. Inspired by the horse racing metaphor, it argues that the dark horse may become the unexpected winner. For our purposes the wildest ideas can become stepping stones towards more viable, yet innovative ideas.

The challenge for the audience designer is to have tools at hand that can quickly get the group out of the conservative mode that most of us reside in until pushed. The unusual needs some nudging. Leaping off from wild ideas to explore more acceptable or realistic ideas is one way to develop unique ideas. Post-it's are a neat item to use; collecting ideas on them and then randomly combine and discuss them can be one method; another of course is to brainstorm and cluster ideas, looking for patterns and unusual links; choosing groups of ideas and working with them in teams of two, presenting the results to each other, can also open up new twists on the familiar.

When you have exhausted the collection of ideas and have created an overview of the types of ideas you have, you can start to question and explore them deeper to see how they connect with the goals and the strategy concept.

Some helpful questions to ask in order to organise and prioritise the collected ideas:

- Which ones to choose directly?
- Which ones to research more?
- Which ones to save for later?
- How do the ideas support which goals?
- What audiences do they connect with?

- On which channels?
- At what time during the roll-out?
- For how long should they be active?
- What topics and themes do they link to?
- How do they connect with each other?
- Which part of the story world do they convey?
- How do they reflect the story core?
- What emotional connection do they favour or inspire?
- What resources are needed; materials, time, money, team?
- What is the scale, scope and possible success criteria?
- Can the idea or its materials be recycled or become part of a package?
- How does the idea answer the question "why should I engage?"

Once you have a list of prioritised ideas, the list will also include notes related to the above questions and what each idea still needs in order to become a finished and workable idea. Their sustainability, so to speak, will also be tested within the framework of the overall concept of the strategy.

As mentioned in STEP 4, where the personas were developed, it is now possible to move on to make the user journeys and see how they connect the individual personas with the prioritised ideas.

User journeys: the search for touchpoints

As a start, you create user journeys for the main 3-4 personas that represent the prioritised audience groups. If you need more, you of course develop more.

A user journey is a visual model that can either be a drawing or any graphic illustration tool you find helpful. The main intention is to visualise each persona's/user's journey in relation to how they get in touch with each of the proposed ideas – and thereby the film.

The persona development has provided most of the clues for what to consider when making the user journeys. Some further questions and reminders, and additional tools, might help the process along.

Additional user journey questions and considerations:

- What is the user's motivation?
- Do they have any needs or questions the film can help answer?
- What is their particular context, the external factors – where are they, where do they want to go, and what influences this?
- Progression – how does each step lead to the next?
- Devices – which do they use when during the day, what apps, features etc.?
- Public spaces and activities – where is their attention when off-line?
- Emotion – what is their emotional state at each step?
- Can the idea influence their emotional state?
- Touchpoints – where can the film/action connect with them and how does the action invite them to engage further and possibly lead them to the next action and so forth, until the desired act of seeing the film or attending an event etc.
- Pain points – what might be in the way of them reaching a touchpoint, connecting with the film, or actively engaging, like buying a ticket?
- Gains – what do they gain from engaging at the touchpoints?
- Tasks they want to achieve or desires they may have; which action could meet these goals or dreams of the user?

Not all of these considerations are visible on the user journey sheet, but they inform the thoughts behind and the design of it.

We call it searching for touchpoints because the exercise of the user journey is to see how any particular audience will connect with an idea intended to engage them; specifically, when, where, how, in what way, and for how long will a touchpoint engage them? Will they cross paths with the idea again at a later point or will the idea nudge them along to the touchpoint of another idea that asks another form of action or engagement from them, and so forth. How do the touchpoints ultimately lead the user to engage with the film? One could say that the user journey challenges the idea's real-life viability: does it connect to an audience and if yes, where does that then lead to?

Sketching out user journeys can almost work like a form of mind map, seeing quickly how the channels and timeline of an idea can play out across someone's sample day and media use.

A simple image of a user journey can be a line that moves from one corner of a paper to its diagonal corner. Along the line the journey illustrates their key choices, activities and the communication that takes place during that persona's day; how does their line cross the lines that the ideas move along, their online and offline trajectories.

It is often easier to play with the user journey on paper first and then find or create the best model for sharing the final version; various templates and models can be found online. Some simple graphic models can be used as well, like family-tree type text boxes. User journeys are more of a work-in-progress tool to inform the strategy development; so, there are no demands for delicious graphic design as long as it is clear where the touchpoints are. For the sake of the strategy's final user-friendliness they can be placed in the appendix for reference.

The journey can have as many steps as needed to best represent how the persona and film paths meet, keeping in mind that we – people – often need to come across something up to seven times before we act on it. So, considering multiple touchpoints or anticipating how one idea/action may inspire and lead to the next and the next until they reach the film, are necessary exercises to make.

If the creation of personas was the first step towards walking in somebody else's shoes, the user journey is getting you in with both feet. The challenge is to balance on one hand going deep into each idea, and afterwards taking the helicopter view to see how the possible combinations of – and connections between – ideas can best support the journeys of each audience group towards the film, and towards realising the film team's goals.

If, for example an extensive Facebook campaign (idea 1) is connected with a pop-up event (idea 2) and a cultural partner's parallel Twitter and ad-campaign (idea 3), then how will the persona get in touch with any of these ideas' possible touchpoints, and how will each point lead them to at least one of the other? Is the order or timing important – do you need to get the persona to the event first,

or can they engage on Facebook or Twitter and then still be guided towards the ad-campaign and event? Do any of these touchpoints also lead to other parallel ideas/actions, which could appeal to this persona, for example a Pinterest-page (idea 4) or the film's international hub (idea 5) with all the core visual materials and a local competition (idea 6)? How can the online documentation of the event afterwards reach this persona and still be of interest to them, nudge them closer to deciding to see the film, whether at a festival, an event, online, or in the local cinema?

How can you connect and potentially create synergy with the ideas? The user journey is a good method to help you consider the many questions related to the choice and combination of ideas, as well as the later timeline and roll-out plan, which decide the timing of the actions for the implementation.

A final area that it's helpful to practise when working with audiences, personas, ideation, and user journeys are – emotions. To expand your emotional vocabulary and to immerse yourself in finding ways to communicate and activate emotions in an audience in an engaging and eye level fashion is worth investing some time in. We have some inspirational tools to begin your own journey into higher emotional awareness (see the box).

Moving into the Design-phase, the next step is where the real and deep strategy work for the audience designer begins.

Emotional awareness

When developing story-based ideas it helps to boost and broaden our *emotional vocabulary*. Films are full of emotions. Characters are full of emotions. People connect with emotions. So how do we activate them in relation to the communication of the story and to show why it's worth engaging with it?

It can be tricky to use and translate the often unspoken or subtler emotions in a film into meaningful or enriching promotional materials, ideas and social media campaigns, to mention a few outlets. It takes an extra effort to go beyond the trivialised, to not diminish the emotional connection or 'message'. While the banal can be strong, and the cliché certainly can wield its power, the aim is to find each film's unique combination of ideas and 'messages' that most authentically convey what the story and thereby the filmmaker wants to express and how. To do this, some emotions will come into play, so how to decipher, distinguish and develop them?

Some of the inspirational tools we have found useful are:

Emotion wheel: American psychologist, Dr. Robert Plutchik's emotion wheel, or emotion cone rather, is a good tool to get an overview of the relations between emotions, their intensity, opposites and pairings. Using his model helps to distinguish and identify emotions in a way that can put words on how to connect with each of the characters, for example, and bring out nuances and layers that can open up spaces for the audience to connect and enter. It is available for free online.

Atlas of Emotions: a more recent mapping of emotions is the online *Atlas of Emotions*, developed by Dr. Paul Ekman (emotion scientist) and Eve Ekman (emotion researcher and trainer) in collaboration with the Dalai Lama; this is a free interactive tool that helps build emotional awareness by, among other factors, gaining better control over what triggers your emotions and how you respond, and by learning to identify and describe how you feel and why.

Purpose-seeking: a different inspiration source to include here is from Pamela Pavliscak, who specialises in emotionally intelligent design, which among other things looks at our emotional connection with technology. Key words are for example *empathy*, *connection*, and *self-awareness*. We can ask what purpose – besides engaging someone in the film – an idea, concept or overall strategy has. Does it for example add to someone's personal well-being, like their autonomy, motivation, courage, creativity, learning, or does it add to the collective well-being; for example through loyalty, trust, belonging, unity, or generosity. 》

What emotions does it (the idea/action/goal) want to fuel? Does it want to transform or to provoke, and so on. In order to develop audience engagement, story-based content needs to get into the game that everyone else in technology and consumer businesses are searching for ways to create, namely rich emotional connections with their users.

Pavliscak talks about self and social, which is relevant in a film context because films and stories are social experiences that we engage with on a very personal level. Therefore, the questions of how we communicate and use social and emotional technological options to engage people are a crucial part of audience design and of the responsibility that lies behind the ways we choose to engage with the world.

Persuasion-methods: there are many sources to pick from when it comes to exploring persuasion principles or methods. Persuasion is not manipulation, it is the art of getting people to do things in their own best interest – which also benefit you. Considering that audience design is about connecting audiences to content they might appreciate, persuasion is also a part of that. The first step is to identify those people who, at a given time, are persuadable to what you offer, and by making it about them, i.e. asking what you can do for them, you are already turning the perspective towards audience enrichment. In order to be persuaded, someone first has to be interested. A few of the key things to be aware of when thinking in terms of persuasion and audiences are:

- Reciprocity; because it compels, it is a social norm that can inspire commitment through mutual benefits
- Persistence; because you have to keep asking while demonstrating value
- Not to assume; by offering your value, but leaving the choice to them
- Context and timing; because each dictates what we want when in our lives
- Creating scarcity/urgency; these are debatable (due to the special constructs of the film industry and value chain), but people generally want what others have and sometimes these demand cards can be played to an advantage
- Social proof; because influencers matter

To use storytelling to sell a story is not as straightforward as one might initially think. There are of course many other inspirations to find. The joy of audience design is that there is no limit to adding tools and methods that help the process and support the development and design of the strategy.

DESIGN

DESIGN

STEP 7 | Dive deep: the real strategy work

The development of the actual audience engagement ideas is at the centre of the strategy building; the ideas that will become the concrete actions that will connect with people across the digital and real-life landscapes that the film will meet. To make this happen, a plan is now needed.

To enter the deep dive development step, grit is needed. This is where passion meets perseverance and the hard work of reassessing, reworking, recombining, and realising everything gathered till now begins.

We have all the input we need, and if not, we gather it now. It is time to design a workable strategy. The extent of the work process and the insights achieved at this stage are quite a mouthful, and one could be tempted to simply make a summary of everything, add the extra materials to the appendix – and there is your strategy. It is not.

The reason we call this step the real strategy work is because this is the real process of organising, assessing, and connecting the input, building coherency and synergy, making sense of everything within the unique framework of each particular project. The connecting of the dots.

This step is the audience designer's process of defining – or re-confirming – the strategy concept; figuring out how to reach the goals and to make the most of the available resources. This might seem overwhelming, as there are many elements and aspects to consider. There are however already many stepping stones, and many prioritisations and choices have been made, which can guide the design. In addition, this is a story world, a place that is ultimately fun to strategize.

Some key words and steps to guide the structuring of the strategy:

- Design mind: shifting between *chaos mode* and *systematic mode*
- Helicopter view
- Details
- Focus
- Get the material in order
- Rework – Reassess – Reconsider – Remodel – Recombine
- Dynamics
- Balance
- Imagine
- Intuit
- Realise the potential
- Test the concept
- Adjust the concept
- Adjust the ideas: reconsider scope/scale/timing
- Recycling
- Coherency
- Connections
- Organise the content in a logical way
- Loop

These elements need to be added to the strategy:

- Timelines
- Roll-out plan
- To-do list
- Recommendations – Research – References
- Appendix

The combination of two very different skill sets has shown to be helpful at this stage:

1. Being systematic; moving through the material logically; paying attention to the details, and using whatever tools you prefer to get a good overview – the so-called helicopter view.

2. After which the second skill set is applied: to engage intuition and imagination, rekindling the energy of the initial curiosity and the wildest ideas.

This work process allows for the necessary chaos to happen, which in turn guides you back into the logic, and so forth. The work process gains from switching between *chaos mode* – as in: free no-limits thinking and testing unexpected connections – and *systematic mode* – as in: narrowing down, sharpening and challenging the concept and content.

The strategy writing process is quite a strict process, where one of the main challenges is to focus and to get things in order. It demands a certain amount of stubbornness and to start seeing the strategy as a whole.

There is an element of repetition as you go back over everything in order to build all the elements and priorities into a realistic and efficient plan. Sometimes things already done during the joint meetings are redone, sometimes extra research is needed. Whatever it takes to get the material in order and to purposefully reassess, reconsider, remodel, and recombine it.

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Here are a few extra tools/methods that can be used to rework the different elements at the design stage of the strategy work:

The 4Cs: this is a tool to go back and look closer at the topics. This can be useful if the chosen topics don't really get activated as much as you want or you want to test them in relation to the chosen ideas. The 4C's are a way to go deeper into each topic that you want to explore.

The first C is Components: what are the parts of the topic, how can you divide it into its separate parts.
The second C is Characteristics: what are the features of the topic, any specific qualities or traits connected to it.
The third C is Challenges: which obstacles are associated with the topic.
The final C is Characters: what type of or groups of people can be associated with the topic – including the fictional characters.
This can help to find direction and connections between the audiences and personas and how they link back to the topics, themes, characters, emotional links etc. »

Mood-boards: these are generally used by film teams and can also be useful for exploring moods, emotions, tone and style of how to visually develop, express and present an idea. They can also be used in connection with mind maps to go deeper into the idea design. A mood-board can also help to shape the concept/ core of the strategy if this is not yet clear.

Scope and Scale: some ideas may be low-cost, low-time and low-maintenance, others the exact opposite. Scope refers to the reach, breadth, depth of something; how wide or far does the idea/action reach? Scale refers to the size, mass and proportion of an idea; how big is the idea/action in itself? Some ideas can be scaled up or down, meaning that the idea can be included as a prioritised small-scale action, and should the opportunity arise, it can be scaled up to full size. Similarly an idea/action can be tested in a limited scope, and if it works, you expand the scope – reaching more people. Starting small also supports the intention to test assumptions and see whether the anticipated audiences react as expected. Testing ideas helps to make more informed choices about which ideas/actions to scale up later or to exchange with others. A general understanding has emerged in all things cross- and transmedial, which is that of failing fast. Media, and social media especially, move forward constantly in endless feeds, so there is nothing lost in testing and developing ideas directly on the channels you've chosen for the strategy, and then adapt them accordingly.

Recycling: meaning, which materials can be used differently across the various actions – and by linking different channel posts, for example Facebook and Instagram or Twitter, where the same posts recycle, expanding their reach. Especially any offline actions can have a good second run online, being recycled over time and making the event last longer. There is a real interest in the lure of live, the thrill of being there in reality and sharing something special and one-off, and people enjoy following this online, live as well as afterwards. Offline events really have a double value, a high degree of shareability, and it is a great way to create a unique experience and novel materials for a campaign. It is worth it to look for opportunities to reuse content across channels, for how to optimise content on the prioritised channels, and how to distribute the content more effectively across the chosen channels.

Audience design is also about dynamics. Dynamics in the story and the production universe of the film, inside the team, in the world of the audience, and inside the strategy itself. Which forces or existing relations are at play? Do they support or challenge the strategy?

How to balance the elements, the actions? Again, the question of timing occurs: what makes sense to share and reveal before anyone has seen the film, and what makes sense to share while the film is available – which includes after someone has seen it and wants to reconnect with it? The consideration of touchpoints (from the user journeys) is also worth repeating here, as they are the place where the two main parts of the strategy cross paths: the film and the audience.

Which hooks have been identified, where can you give the audience access to the meaning and emotions behind the story, how can you show trust in them to add and connect with the world of the film? Audiences mostly want to be invested, so how will they recognise that this or that action is an invitation to enter the film's wider universe?

Does the proposed strategy really support the goals, or does the concept need to be adjusted? This is the constant question to ask. Is what I am designing making sense in relation to the main objectives?

The helicopter view is useful to look at the bigger lines across the strategy, its coherence. Is it coming together in a purposeful way? Some of the actions may need mini-strategies of their own, for example an important local collaboration or some special packages (see STEP 11) that have their own needs and details to be included. The shifting detail versus overview approach is an integrative part of finishing the strategy.

There is not one tool or method that can guide exactly how to do the final writing and strategizing, as it were. Partly because each strategy has its own priorities, scale and needs to be met; and mainly, because this is the core organic, creative process that cannot be described in its entirety – it has to be internalised as a learning by doing process.

The main criterion is that the strategy answers the core questions that have been worked out during the discovery and development phases. It needs to crystallise the chosen objectives, the priorities, and reflect the direction agreed with the film team. It has to present the actions in a considered and motivated way, relating them to the goals, and to function as a usable, easy to access working document. The written or visual form that it takes, how it is presented, is

free as long as it does what it's meant to do: be a guide and work plan, an inspiration and a tool box for the film team as they bring their film to the audience.

But before the strategy is completely ready, a few more items have to be included so as to make it actionable and ready to implement.

The final elements to include in the strategy are:

Timelines: first the existing timeline of the production incl. the expected premiere and main release dates, secondly the timeline of the strategy's needs and actions in parallel to the first timeline, so as to see when to gather/deliver which materials, when to have key meetings, when certain steps need to be decided, when to roll out the actions. The proposed synergy between the film production, release, and the strategy actions can be described in relation to the timeline, which can also include the endpoint of the actions (see STEP 11), as well as the timing for other partners or collaborators to step into the implementation.

Roll-out plan: this is the hands-on timeline and it has two parts: the strategy production plan and the implementation plan. It sums up what is needed in order to make the actions happen – i.e. to establish social media pages or hiring someone to manage the community activities. Use any format you prefer, whether it is an excel sheet or any easy to use template. The roll-out plan should present an overview of *when* to have *which materials* ready for *which action* (production plan) and *when* to activate those actions *where* and for *how long* (implementation plan). If an action has an in-built scaling or expansion plan, the roll-out can demonstrate the steps of expansion; the same for any testing steps. Think user-friendliness.

To-do list: this can be a support for the film team and the people, who will work with implementing the strategy. Especially if the audience designer is not following the project into the next stages. The to-do list can for example be divided into the upfront, immediate to-do's – done right after the delivery of the strategy, and to-dos linked to each action as an easy overview of which boxes need to be ticked so the timeline and roll-out plan can be followed.

Recommendations — Research — References: for some projects the audience designer may want to highlight some special recommendations to the film team, things that don't fit into the tighter organisation of the strategy, but support it. These can be related to the overall strategy, to specific actions or be suggestions for further research or lists of references that can be useful. This information can be added to the appendix with a short text in the strategy that motivates what has been added and for what purpose.

Appendix: this is where any additional material and background work, like extra personas, user journeys, research results, full lists of topics and themes etc., anything considered valuable for the further development of the strategy, is placed. The appendix needs a separate index or can be a folder with organised materials in a cloud or server. More material is not automatically better, use the appendix wisely. Only add what supports the strategy, what is valuable and useful reference material. An audience design strategy must be a workable document, it is a tool in its own right, and has to function as such. That's why it's best to not overload it and consider which additional materials are useful to include.

Final checklist for the strategy design work:

- Does it include what was agreed?
- Have you reworked and developed everything that needs to be?
- Do the story core and strategy core/concept reflect each other?
- Does each set of actions connect to a goal?
- Does it support the prioritisation of goals?
- Does each set of actions connect to the prioritised audiences they aim to engage?
- Do the chosen channels make sense in relation to the audiences and goals; channels being any media, social media, online, offline, messenger pigeons — anything chosen to make the ideas/actions move?
- Do the actions that need to connect with each other do so?
- Do the actions that need to work separately or in parallel do so? Meaning, actions meant for just one audience group or a specific issue that therefore don't link with other touchpoints from the global actions, for example.
- Is the timing/timeline realistic?

- Does the strategy reflect the agreed resources (including man-power)?
- Is it scalable? (Use scaling to adapt and propose possible options)
- Do the roll-out plan and to-do list make sense?
- Is the entirety of the strategy viable and ready to implement?
- How is the overall usability of the strategy?

Now the strategy document has been through the first part of the design process and is a solid draft, ready to receive feedback from the film team before going through a final round of adjustments leading to the final steps towards implementation.

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Additional thoughts on what a strategy consists of

The origins of the word 'strategy' came out of its military use, and since the 1960s it has been used in modern business and management theory; today it is used widely in almost any context. Strategy can be described as: *plan*, *pattern*, *position*, *ploy* and *perspective* (ref. Henry Mintzberg's five definitions, 1998), words that all relate to audience design – even if we don't really use the trickery of ploy, but rather the magic of play. And incidentally it's also 5Ps (see p. 56)...

Professor Richard P. Rumelt described strategy as a type of problem solving in 2011; good strategy has an underlying structure he called a *kernel*.

The kernel has three parts:

1. A diagnosis that defines or explains the nature of the challenge;
2. A guiding policy for dealing with the challenge; and
3. Coherent actions designed to carry out the guiding policy.

He wrote that three important aspects of strategy include *"premeditation, the anticipation of others' behavior, and the purposeful design of coordinated actions."* – all of which are part of the audience design strategy approach.

A final example is from Bruce Henderson, who in 1981 wrote that the basic requirements for strategy development include:

1. Extensive knowledge about the *environment, market and competitors*
2. Ability to examine this knowledge as an *interactive dynamic system*; and
3. the *imagination and logic* to choose between specific alternatives. »

Our approach to strategy work is based around a *story core* and a *strategy core* that during the Development and Design phases "fuse together" as the *twin-core* (STEP 7). We employ the idea of *diving deep* into this core in order to *leap off* from it and create meaningful connecting threads – actions – between the prioritised content/elements and the anticipated audiences in a coherent and well-considered way.

Thus, in light of these two strategy descriptions, our audience design strategy approach consists of:

1. Analysis, research and 360-degree view (ref. diagnosis), defining opportunities, challenges, as well as core, goals, audiences, assets etc. (ref. extensive knowledge);
2. Diving deep into the found core (ref. examine) and build a strategy outline (ref. guiding policy) based on and leading to
3. The process of ideation and the looping feedback dialogue to select and connect the best of the proposed actions (ref. imagination and logic) in order to achieve the goals and communicate the project's story core (ref. what to carry out when, how and why), thus motivating all these choices in the final strategy.

A final thought on strategy development and writing comes from the Strategic Thinking Institute, and introduces the term "negative capability", which means the capability of a strategy designer to embrace uncertainty, mystery or doubt, to accept to be moving into the unknown. This is a good capability to have even if the audience design process aims to gather as much information and make as well-informed assumptions as possible; risk-taking and uncertainty are a part of the equation, the sum of all our knowns and unknowns are what finally make up all audience, marketing or sales strategies.

STEP 8 | Looping: are we still on the same page?

The strategy work demands a constant reworking of the content mixed with research, questioning, decision making, and seeing how the different elements can work together. Do they make sense, did something important get lost, has something new emerged from the process, do the different choices connect so as to create a workable concept?

The looping step is included as a reminder about the work flow of moving back and forth as you develop the strategy. Looping is inspired by the design process, moving in circles between the steps of the strategy development and design, and even delivery. This process insures that you have packed everything you need, it helps to double check that the journey plan that is now laid ahead of you is based on the established common ground – to use a travel metaphor.

The process of listening to each other and of considering all the various input can take some getting used to. The feedback loops allow for all new impressions and connections to sink in and to rethink the major decisions.

The almost final strategy draft may reveal things that were not visible or stood out as clearly before, and the film team's feedback at this step is therefore a welcomed set of fresh eyes to inform the final strategy rewrite.

The final revision process relies on careful listening and mutually signing off on the next steps as the strategy is finalised. This is a precious time and – as the whole journey has hopefully confirmed – inspiration goes both ways.

At this stage, the strategy has freed itself from the logic of the narrative of the film, while at the same time reflecting how that same logic has inspired the actions that now form a narrative of their own, namely the coherence and synergy of the strategy.

The audience design strategy and the film are walking hand in hand, looking in the same direction, but taking different paths towards a joint goal.

D1 D2 D3 D4

DELIVER

DELIVER

STEP 9 | Strategy delivery: base camp view

We are highlighting this as a stepping stone towards the implementation and long-term considerations of the strategy and film. The feedback from the film team has been worked into the final strategy and the last rewrite has wrapped up any loose ends, finalising the strategy – for now.

Delivery is the conclusion of a process; the audience designer passes on the results in what can be described as an open file. The audience design strategy can be seen as a living document, a source to find and add new inspiration and information.

We call this the base camp view, because the delivered strategy is like a base camp for the audience journey. Now is when it takes off, you look at the landscape you've created around the film, which you are about to venture off into, as the implementation starts. The base camp can be adjusted, refuelled, updated, and you can rely on it as a place of support throughout the journey.

The strategy is of course a concrete plan with concrete steps on how to make the planned actions happen during the implementation, and it is also a catalogue of ideas. A source document for the whole production team, useful to send to partners or funders as well.

The strategy may also propose strategic collaborations and even fundraising plans to help realise some of the actions or the strategy as a whole. It can be a tool for the core film team. For example, if any of the ideas are closely connected to areas like sound design, music, production design, cast, locations and local communities, and so on, it makes sense to share them and make plans for the team's involvement and how to best feed their artistic work into the strategy's actions, how involved do they want or need to be, and how are the materials best collected for later use.

The exciting and partly challenging thing about an audience design strategy is that it blends the two worlds of logic and analysis with

passion and, yes, the sensual world. It is in many ways an approach, which by necessity, has to use systematic and pragmatic tools so as to find ways to transport and activate the qualities of the sensory, as inspired by the film's world, into the world of the audience, while keeping the quality of the emotions and senses intact, transforming them by other means of expression, while also making sure that it's done in a strategically sound way so as to achieve the wanted results, thereby – ultimately – creating meaningful and enriching audience engagement.

The audience designer is just one person, and the demands of developing, preparing, implementing, following up, coordinating and reporting on a full strategy are most times asking for more skills and more time than one person can cover. Audience design includes many different types of demands and materials, so while one person can take the strategy to its delivery-phase, the implementation will without doubt involve more people.

STEP 10 | Implementation: the crucial step

This step is where everything really starts. Every previous step leads up to the implementation.

This is the most crucial step as it requires an understanding of communication, backchannels, team coordination, and how to readjust the actions to changing realities as the film moves towards its release.

Since the audience design strategy's implementation runs in parallel with the film's production stages and overlaps with the international premiere, local release, and possibly further local releases in other territories and beyond, it is important that someone keeps track of the materials, timeline and roll-out plan, as well as oversees how the impact is developing, so as to adjust the actions by pushing what creates resonance and engagement, and stopping what does not appeal to the anticipated audiences.

This someone may be the audience designer, who developed the strategy, or the implementation may be run by someone in the production company or from one of their partners. If the latter is the

case, the strategy should include a to-do list of the prioritised actions, so as to secure that any initial upstart needs are met.

The film's core team needs to be on board and aware of the strategy plans, especially since they will most likely become involved along the way, either directly, sharing parts of their work, or being interviewed or involved in any of the behind-the-scenes plans, and of course, as the primary ambassadors of the film. It makes sense that they know the major hashtags, the core concept, and how the communication of the film is intended – especially up to and during the shoot and post-production phase.

Producing and implementing the strategy actions usually starts with everything that needs to be done up till and during the shoot, so as to secure all the outlined materials that are needed for the different actions. This is the step where it's all about making the most out of what is already being done. Taking advantage of having people at the same place and making unique and well-considered audio-visual and any other type of material with them that the strategy needs.

Any online or offline activities connected with the shoot need to be coordinated. Whether they are live or saved for later in the roll-out. The testing of early ideas is also an option at this stage. A well-planned behind-the-scenes production is just one element of how to make the most out of the pre-production and shoot; and the parallel audience design production can continue through post-production.

It is a great moment to collect unique materials for the overall strategy concept, anticipating the planned actions and later releases. Good stills are for example still an issue, as are high enough quality images for posters. In a visual culture like the digital, good images are key – as basic as that sounds.

Parts of the implementation may need outside people, like a social media manager or agency, community managers, web- and graphic designers, event coordinators – whoever the strategy has anticipated in the roll-out plan to cover the needs to realise the actions. The strategy may propose a rough budget or suggest the time and

resources needed per action; normally this will be developed together with the producer according to the scale and resources agreed during the strategy development process.

Implementation is a period of constant adjustment to production realities and to audience behaviour. The process of looping as a creative work process continues with as much force here.

The audience design strategy serves as a good basis for the dialogue with a sales agent, key distributors and key cinema managers – to mention some of the main partners; and it is a good source for finding and adding relevant input for any further fund applications or later reports.

Implementation is the long haul. The discovery, development and design processes are intensive and exhaustive. Initial delivery is relatively swift, but the real delivery is in the execution of the planned actions, the implementation of the ideas, from pre-production until – whenever the long-term plan is expected to end.

To deliver on the anticipated effects of the strategy, to follow the goals, demands a different kind of time-consuming and focused effort, which brings us to the final step, where we look towards the film's post-release life. The final step includes options to create particular long-term packages of ideas and takes a final look at the challenge of documentation.

STEP 11 | Long-term: packages, documentation, debrief

The audience design strategy must take the film's long tail, its long-term life into consideration. The strategy goals may include a specific long-term goal or the actions may have long-term plans for widening their scope or how they eventually feed into future actions. Because of the long period of time that a strategy's implementation covers, the concept of making specific content or action packages is a good way to add value to the long-term life and to spread the ideas in a user-friendly and practical way, so that more partners and events, for example, can get to implement them or be inspired to add them to their campaigns.

The choice and development of which packages to include begins in the ideation process (STEP 6) in collaboration with the film team. The content of each package and plans on how to share them during implementation is designed in detail during the deep strategy dive (STEP 7), and of course finalised during the feedback with the film team.

Packages are very simply collections of ideas that can work independently or together, either as an inspirational bundle of ideas to simply inspire others, such as festivals or local distributors, to work along the core concept of the film's communication, or as more strategic packages with their own specific mini roll-out-plans attached.

Packages can be designed for any purpose or context, but there are three types of packages, which are typically considered:

Festival package: ideas and materials for how to create bigger awareness at a festival, by for example offering special attention towards festival audiences through actions that engage them in innovative ways. This package proposes how to collaborate or partner up with a festival in order to give them an added value for their audience through the film. The package can also be aimed at the international premiere – including ideas both for the premiere events, as well as for the festival audience. This package can be just for the film team to implement at the festivals they attend or be planned so a festival can implement the ideas on their own, for example by downloading the package and the "instructions" for the actions from a link or server.

Distributor package: ideas and materials that can work as a global inspiration for how distributors – in the territories the film is sold to – can add and localise ideas/actions to their PR and marketing campaigns that are in line with the film's audience and communication concept. This package can be aimed at both the broader anticipated audience, and global niche audiences. As with the festival package, readymade materials, translatable social media ideas, links to a global hub, offline ideas etc. can be added, anything that can work across territories. Similarly, the package can be a downloadable folder with all materials and anything needed to implement them available. The same goes for the third type of package, which distributors sometimes are also involved in.

Educational package: ideas and materials that support the use of the film in one or more educational contexts. The materials can possibly be translated by local distributors, who wish to use them for their local educational "systems". Some countries have state-run organisations that distribute and even produce their own packages for schools, others have online forums or school radios or other ways to share educational materials. This package can be made freely available through the film's main hub, like a website, or sent directly to interested parties. The content for this package can be directed at specific schools or ages, like university, high school, or primary school; or as a general educational package for any interested teacher to adapt.

Other possible packages are for example an *Alternative Distribution package*; if the team considers self-distribution or pay-per-screening download packages – there are sites that offer this – museum screenings or an alternative venue tour, as an example. A *Special Interest package*, which for example could be an important niche to work with directly or to inspire to help create impact, maybe via a local NGO or any relevant political, social, or arts organisation; or a *Tour package*, which could be a combination of for example talks or a performance in combination with the film, planned to either reach audiences with no access to a local cinema or to continue the film's life after the local theatrical distribution has ended.

Packages can be designed for any purpose you need and some of them, like alternative distribution, of course depend on the sales and distribution contracts that exist for the project.

The more the packages are set up in advance – their content, practical use, and so on – the easier the access is, or the more detailed their usage is planned, the less attention they need afterwards. Gathering everything needed for the long-term life of the film in one or more dedicated and shareable folders makes it more time-saving for everyone involved; and they provide added value to potential partners, making their life easier.

This brings us to the end. Almost.

Before rounding off with the documentation, the question of how and when to end the different actions must be addressed. Any social media pages, websites or other digital activities need to have an exit-plan concerning how long they run and when they are terminated.

Do they fade into a quiet existence of limited activity, are they shut down, deleted, are some actions or activities and their digital documentation collected and saved in a key online hub, referencing the project's journey, giving it an "eternal", public afterlife? Some sites cost money to keep alive, so it is necessary to plan for when to end what, and how to save or recycle any materials elsewhere.

Documentation

The process of collecting all the key documentation of the actions, the strategy and campaign results, premiere press, key reviews etc. similarly benefits from having a dedicated place for everyone to "drop" their materials. The best is of course to keep tabs continuously and gather everything as it is implemented and starts a life of its own. No matter who is the dedicated keep-track person, some team-coordination is needed.

Who wraps things up, who gathers the qualitative and quantitative results, who sets up a debrief meeting for the core team? Who gathers all the documentation? If the strategy has any workshop-type events, any sharing of knowledge with audience groups, any outreach programmes, or other resources that could be saved and shared, then it has to be decided how to document them, how to keep them accessible, how to save them at the end. This is all part of the long-term strategy of the project.

By documentation we mean visual examples and any relevant data and statistics from the general campaign and all the strategy actions. These can be in the form of screengrabs, photos, print-outs etc., and the materials can be set up in chronological order or divided by online, social media, offline, or whatever order makes sense for the team. The documentation can – at the end of the film's main run – for example be divided into a "here is what we did" presentation document and a sample folder, and summarised in a short text

version – roughly a 'this worked, this didn't, this we take with us' overview. This final big effort covers a lot of ground for the wrapping up and supports the sense of having taken care of the film, things are in order, team members know where to look and copy what they need – for example for final reports to funders.

Debrief

Finalising this documentation-collection, whether as one big collection or as an edited presentation, is a good way to create an agenda before holding a project debrief meeting, and the results of the meeting can subsequently be added to the result summary.

Important questions for a debrief meeting and a result summary are for example:

- Did we reach our goals?
- What worked, what didn't?
- What went as anticipated, what was a positive surprise?
- What was easy, what was a big effort?
- What can we learn from this process and bring into the next project?

Maybe you found a way to adjust the strategy and its implementation so it worked better with your production style or suited you better as a filmmaker. Not all filmmakers enjoy being very visible or active online or on stage, so a plan was – hopefully – made to accommodate this in the audience design strategy, how did that work?

The debrief meeting is an important closure as it rounds off the most active period of the project and sets the course for the fade out, the long-term, and it creates a moment to consider what to take with you and to set up the needed folders and collections as the film hopefully continues its journey.

Doing it at this moment saves you from digging things out at a much later point where some actions may have been deactivated or just take longer to find the results of. Any later documentation can easily be added to the folder though.

This is of course an ideal scenario – and there is so much to be done in a day. The audience design steps and processes offer a parallel structure to merge with the production and distribution reality.

Each project holds the keys to its own best strategy, these steps offer guidelines to set up your own process to find those keys. There is not a one fits all strategy, there is a mindset that fits all, and an audience awareness that can be developed and nurtured project by project. This requires commitment and vision, as well as risk-taking and willingness to walk into the unknown.

Closing Thoughts

"My play was a complete success.
The audience was a failure."

Ashleigh Brilliant

Starting something new and building experience and awareness as you develop it is an endeavour that brings lots of sceptical questions and criticism with it, especially when you are questioning the status quo. We've endured, and audience development, audience engagement and audience design have since become terms that are being used widely across the creative and cultural industries. This programme is far from alone in shining a light on the much-needed audience awareness and content-audience-relationship, but it is the first film-focused programme that has insisted on bringing together audience designers – in training – with film teams, and by doing so, aims to help build a whole new profession, and thus bridge the gap between creators and audiences.

Working within a mindset like this, using different methods and integrative processes, intended to work in synch with the realities and resources available in the current film industry, has proven very rewarding, while of course bringing its own set of hurdles with it.

A programme like Audience Design builds on a belief in constant change, now and in the future. Some of the main questions that seem to stand in the way of a wider integration of audience design

into the general field of film production, are the doubts surrounding finance, success, and access.

The main financial questions are linked to the outcome: why spend money on this when there are not enough statistics or data to support the results of the effort? The answer is, because it is worth it in spite of the results not staring us in the face. The benefits of the audience design process itself not only support the film's promotion, giving the content more time to connect with an audience, it is also a personal and collaborative gain – giving precious time and preparation to the core film team, which can benefit them later; and the different steps support the overall development of a project. Other bonus effects are a heightened awareness of how to talk about the film, with the press for example, and an inner certainty from knowing that efforts are underway to support the film, so you can focus on making it.

A contributing factor to the lack of statistics and data is that manpower and a budget are also needed to collect and document the results; and these results are spread across a wide selection of channels, formats, countries, with some being hard to measure. It is one thing to use your available time and budget resources to include audience design from an early stage, working towards an audience with concrete actions – here the effort has intention, it is another type of effort to set aside resources to document, collect data, statistics, follow up… At this point most of the film team have moved on to new projects or have their hands full with the release itself.

Documentation is however important, success stories are important, and therefore we also encourage film teams who include audience-engaging actions to document them and collect data as much as possible along the way, so as to build their own catalogue of results and references regarding what has worked and what hasn't. It will just take that bit longer to get this "habit" integrated in a dynamic and efficient way.

But how to define success then? The strategy process focuses around goal setting, so the question of success is individual for every film team. Each audience design strategy has to be measured by the goals and intentions it sets up, its specific internal success criteria.

So, while we can note the classic benchmark numbers following a release, how do we measure if the tickets were sold to people who would not otherwise have seen such a film – thanks to the early actions made, or if they were the people who were most active online, which maybe led to a debate article that the film team needed? Some of the ripple effects of audience design are hard to measure and validate financially, in hard figures. Yes, you can execute exit polls and tracking conversations on social media will give you clues, but it takes that extra effort of collecting and analysing it all. For now – we have to trust in the process and do the work, collecting as much data and qualitative feedback as possible moving forward.

The need to find your audiences, your niches, in a changing market, the need to find new solutions, are facts that are on the table; producers, funders, sales agents, distributors and cinema owners, are all aware of it. This leads us to the question of access. Not the film's access to the audience, there are more channels and screens to reach them than ever before – which of course also makes it harder to locate them – but the audience's access to content, to the film.

So, even if you integrate audience design, create a convincing strategy and implement it successfully, the question that lingers is: how will the audience get to see the film now that they've discovered it, and really want to buy a ticket or pay to download or otherwise watch it?

The Nostradamus Report highlighted the issue of access back in 2014, pointing to the heightened impact of audiences on industry practices, stating that consumers would find *"holdback times, regional releases and platform exclusivity frustrating and confusing"*.

In 2018, the Nostradamus Report cemented the importance of taking audiences' frustrations and changing habits seriously and noted how little change has been implemented. Writer and Media Analyst Johanna Koljonen pointed out:

"Monetising audience attention in the value chain, reaching especially the younger audiences who don't respond to advertising, and remaining relevant in the content, all requires shifts in attitudes and business models. [...], and especially European filmmaking with its slow-moving structures really needs to become proactive to stay connected to the audiences."

The report challenges the industry as a whole to become proactive and to embrace proactive efforts aimed at finding ways to bring relevant content to its relevant audiences. The approach that audience design offers is not a business model in itself, and it is not changing the content of the filmmaker's story, but it does offer steps towards figuring out to whom their story is relevant and how to push through the barriers to get their attention. Quality alone is not enough anymore, just as the old image of a tree falling alone in the forest, quality can go unnoticed, if no one is in the forest to discover it.

This is no doubt a complex and much debated issue. No new standard practice has yet been found, and more experimentation with for example release formats could definitely be done. Many films do not get the audience they deserve and could have had, in part due to the release models still favoured in the majority of distribution strategies. Film was historically created with a "scarcity" model in mind, available for a certain time, in certain cinemas, at a specific festival. But that "scarcity" model has not adapted to the constant access and availability offered by digitisation. Scarcity is great when creating special events, whether at cinemas or at new, exciting or alternative venues, and audiences love it, but limitation is otherwise recognised as an obstacle.

This is why we strongly believe that the way to look at future models of how to reach and engage with audiences needs to take a wider perspective, step by step changing the existing models, and to keep working from the inside out, from the stories, adding the view from the outside, from the audience, and to keep supporting collaborations across the spectre of players involved at each step. We all want the same thing: for films to be seen, enjoyed and discussed.

The more we can share our experiences, our resources, our results, the more we can share our failures and our successes, the better for the audience, the better for us, and for our efforts to engage them and to engage ourselves in the journey.

We hope that we, by sharing our approach, can contribute to inspire a readiness to embrace change and to spread, in even wider circles, our sense of curiosity and the passionate mindset that audience design is comprised of.

Because, after all, we are all an audience for something.

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From the Nostradamus Report 2018

"Young audiences do not grow up to adopt the media habits of previous generations. We, the film industry, still conceptualise the relative importance of windows and platforms around which of them provide the most revenue. When, if we were serious about our desire to impact people's lives, the most important platforms should logically be those where the viewers' ongoing love affair with feature film is actually consummated.

An average Swede will watch a whopping 90 movies a year [1], of which about four in the cinema if they live in a big city; in small towns the latter number will be one. The one annual theatrical title will be a US blockbuster or a broad Swedish comedy, a fact that tells us a great deal about marketing and very little about individual taste. Should we like to sell more movie tickets, or for instance measure the true market share of local cinema, it's the other 89 titles that person sees each year that we should take a thoughtful look at.

When Netflix releases 26 original features in 2017 (with up to 80 expected this year) it is not intended as a challenge to the theatrical window [2]. Netflix is competing for the attention of home audiences. In the long run, that is the audience that matters. Home is where film shapes everyday lives. In the next five years, almost everything about the wider film and TV ecosystems will change. [...] Those of us whose interest in film is also motivated by artistic or democratic considerations will need to listen attentively, think fast and work together to have a voice in the conversation.

In the end, of course, it all comes down to the content. Plenty of films of a high technical or artistic quality are lacking in relevance, and plenty of relevant »

content is drowning in the enormous quantities of film being released (not to mention all the other kinds of audio-visual content crowding the same screens). Our main challenge going forward will be to minimise the noise and connect the right content with the right viewers. In all likelihood this will require new technological tools, individually targeted communication, and a release strategy that extends through the film's full active lifetime."

[1] SFI: Filmåret i siffror
[2] Their wish to submit films to major festivals and do theatrical premieres for visibility notwithstanding.

[Quote from the Nostradamus Report 2018 (p. 16); written by Johanna Koljonen and published by the Gothenburg Film Festival. The full report can be downloaded for free on the festival's website]

Audience Design Experiences & Reflections

From Workshop Participation to Starting a Company

by Riema Reybrouck
Audience Design Alumna,
participated in the workshop in 2015, no project.
Founding Partner, Post Bills PR, Belgium

When I received the Call to apply for the TFL Audience Design programme in the beginning of 2015, through the Flemish Film Fund (VAF), I was immediately drawn to the content of the Call. It said that they wanted participants for a high-level workshop for various media professionals with a goal to require insight into developing audience strategies for independent arthouse film projects. It further said that creating awareness is key to reaching an audience at an early stage, with all of the partners, going beyond the film marketing approach by using storytelling as a driving force to create strategies in a collaborative process.

At this point I was working as a communication, press and industry officer for Film Fest Gent, where I was very interested in broadening our festival audience with all of the arthouse films we were screening. A festival, just like a film, has to constantly work to engage their audience in the event and the films they are screening, so for my current job the workshop sounded perfect.

I also had a couple of years' experiences working at production companies where I saw too many films being released in a way, where one of the partners involved (sales, distributor, director, producer) always was unhappy or not even aware of how their project would go out into the world, how it would be presented to its first audiences. It was beyond my comprehension that there were film teams out there that had to give up control over their core materials, strategies, even budgets, to different parties, as soon as the sales and distribution phase started.

I remember a film director being very clear about which elements he did not want on the poster. Two weeks later we were sitting with the distributor, going through poster proposals… with of course various designs of the one thing the director did not want on it. To this day, this experience remains one of my primary motivations to work as a main point of contact, listening to everyone's goals/desires and way of working, before the film team starts pre-production. I think the most rewarding feedback I get from film teams is, even though it takes a lot of extra energy and time away from the actual film-making, that they can focus more on the film, knowing that what is being communicated links creatively to their project – and makes sense for all partners. But I am getting ahead of myself.

So, back to the Audience Design programme. The first meeting was in my home country of Belgium, which was a nice start to working on something outside of my comfort zone, staying in a well-known setting. It was a group of 6 and we worked on a strong female-oriented Israeli film by Yaelle Kayam, *Mountain*. The film follows an Orthodox Jewish woman living in a vast cemetery on Jerusalem's Mount of Olives, struggling with her husband's lack of interest in her.

The first aspect we worked through was how to work from the core of the film, its topics and themes, and how to connect them with different audiences. This was the basis to create a solid strategy. Besides that, we were working directly with Yaelle AND the producer, Eilon, to define the goals and key aspects of the film. That really helped to understand the film's core and to set up the whole collaborative process.

Belgian director Gilles Coulier was at the same location, participating in the TFL ScriptLab workshop with his feature film, *Cargo*. Interested in what the mentality behind Audience Design was, we started having some brainstorms on another one of his projects, the TV series *The Natives*, which they had just finished shooting. We started to define the goals, with no restrictions whatsoever, our best-case scenario. And linking those goals to all of the different elements and materials of the series. Finally, we made a timeline of when we would reach our target audiences and through which channels and partners. A great exercise, we thought, and started working on the promotion; hoping for the best for an absurd comedy series on a small, alternative public broadcaster. The series ended up having never seen before ratings and national press attention, as I was handling the press together with the broadcaster. After the series had run, I stumbled upon photos of our white board with the goals, every one of them had been reached.

After that I started my company, Post Bills, so I could work for Film Fest Gent part time and for other producers, such as Czar Film, when I was not working for the festival. But soon after, more projects kept on being presented to me. With *Home* by Fien Troch and *King of the Belgians* – which was released without a distributor and with very little money – two partners joined the company. We now focus on press and promotion of films, series and film music.

Not all of our projects at Post Bills are a massive national success, but we keep on working on behalf of the film team, so that they can look back at their projects and know that everything that could be done was done, without many regrets afterwards.

For me, Audience Design has become a way of thinking, combining content with creative strategies on different levels, at various times of a film's career, with as many partners involved as possible. It's not only about satisfying the film team and the partners involved, it's also about the audiences. It seems to me that an audience reacts better to authentic materials and communication, coming from the film's content. Thinking about different ways to reach audiences that would not have heard about the film otherwise, in unexpected places, but still with a clear creative link to the film. And last, but not

least, all of this has to be feasible for the team and the budget. That's why you have to think about partnerships and audiences interested in the content of the project so that they can be your ambassadors, preferably at an early stage.

In the end, it is extremely difficult, but extremely satisfying when you can reach your goals and other audiences beyond the same dominating arthouse visitors that everyone is so eager to reach in the same way, at the same time. Because times are changing so rapidly, and on different levels, it is necessary to start thinking about how and where to reach people that do not read the weekly reviews of their local cultural digest.

Riema Reybrouck & Post Bills PR

Riema studied photography at the Royal Academy of Arts in Antwerp and later graduated as an Arts & Culture Mediator, specialising in strategic communication in order to act as a bridge between cultural organisations and their audiences. She immediately applied her studies by working for various film festivals in Flanders. With a growing interest for promoting films outside of Belgium she started promoting short films and independent features for international Belgian production companies. After several years as a press and industry officer at Film Fest Gent, she founded the PR firm, Post Bills. Consisting of three partners and several active freelancers, Post Bills promotes festivals, films, series, film music and talent.

www.postbillspr.com

Why Wait? Using Audience Design in Script Development

by Kirsten Loose
Audience Design Alumna,
participated in the workshop in 2016, no project.
Scriptwriter/Script Consultant, Germany

"Can we talk about that later?"
This was the reaction I got from a scriptwriter I worked with when I asked him what audience he imagined for his film. I understood that he felt vulnerable, as he was still in the process of developing and writing his script.

But then, of course he wanted an audience for the film he was about to create. Of course, he wanted people to watch it, to be successful. And he already had a first audience, even without thinking about it – people he had given his script to read: his producer and me, his script consultant.

This writer was facing a fear most scriptwriters are facing when thinking of an audience: that he might be asked to push the script into a specific direction in order to please people instead of following his own artistic vision. But that was not the intention of my question. It is not the intention of the audience design approach. This approach is a tool to empower filmmakers. It is a different type of reflection of what is in their project. How scriptwriters decide to use the information they get from the audience design process is entirely up to them.

As a script consultant I often read scripts and work with writers at an early stage of the development process. I analyse the themes, characters, dramatic structure in the script, and evaluate the project's artistic quality, as well as its market potential and positioning. The audience design approach is a very valuable extension and addition to the script consultancy work. Brainstorming with the writer about three initial sets of questions helps to identify the core of the project, to understand the creator's goals, and define who the audience for the project can possibly be.

The three key areas of initial discussion:

What do you want to tell?
- What is your story?
- Why is this story important to you and why do you want to tell it?
- Whom do you want to tell it to?
- How do you want to tell it?
- What experience do you want to create for those watching it?

First, it is the writer's turn. Let him/her answer and describe any themes, elements and aspects in the project that are important to him/her. Then, share which themes and elements left the strongest impression on you during your analysis of the script. Compare your views. Do you see the same vision of the project? Where are the differences? Did you miss out on aspects that are important to the writer? Depending on how far the script is in the development, the answers may change during the script development process.

What are your goals?
- Do you want the largest audience possible?
- Do you want to reach a specific audience?
- Is this specific story/topic important to you, why?
- Do you want to communicate a message and make an impact?
- Do you want this project to be a milestone in building your career or what is driving you?

Let the writer identify his/her goals. Which ones are more important, which ones are less important? Which ones cannot be answered till later? If these questions block the writer, see if you can talk your way around them, and possibly, some answers will start to emerge from your discussion about the ideas and emotions driving the story. The writer's goals can be very personal and very concrete and measurable – the point of including goals at this stage is to start building an awareness of what is important for him/her to consider and to start to prioritise for the journey of this project in his/her life.

Who is your audience?
- Who could be interested in the story and why?
- What reasons or "doors" does the story give to invite them in?
- Are you your own best audience, or not? (writers often write for other demographics than themselves, and it's important to also look at yourself as an audience)

Brainstorm on this together and be as specific as possible. The classic reply of "My film is for everyone" does not hold up, and saying the targeted audience is women between the ages of 20 and 50 is fine to a degree, but who are these women specifically, where are they, what do they do in their everyday lives? Is it the 20-something hipster girl glued to her smart phone that you see in the coffee shop every day? Is it the writer's 45-year-old sister who's interested in gardening and occasional visits to the local arthouse cinema with her friends? What would make them connect with the story? Thinking about audiences and their possible connection to your film project can become a lot of fun.

In my experience, using the audience design approach during script development can help writers and producers in multiple ways:

- It is a great tool to become even more focused and clear about the core of the story and the writer's artistic vision.
- It helps writers and producers to be on the same page concerning what the project is about and why they are making it. It creates consent on finding the right financing partners, distributors, platforms, and of course, audiences.
- It allows to collect potential ideas on how to raise the audience awareness for the film project and consider them in the financing strategy and pre-production.

The sceptical writer in the end liked the idea of thinking about his audience this early. He was creatively inspired by the list of audience design ideas that we collected: additional social media content, casting decisions, ideas for music collaborations, and much more – and he realised that thinking about the audience for his project supported him in strengthening his artistic vision.

My experience from the TFL Audience Design workshop has given me a bigger toolbox for my script consultancy work. Looking at projects from the "audience angle" at an early stage adds another dimension to the script development process. Talking about the audience later is of course better than not talking about it at all, but why wait?

Kirsten Loose

As a freelance scriptwriter and creative consultant, Kirsten develops projects for film, television, web and transmedia. She has profound experience in the production of serial drama and was the creative producer for the German TV series *Lindenstrasse* for almost a decade; among other projects, she co-wrote the award-winning web-series *Stage Fright*.

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Offering Time for Cinema to Exist

by Hédi Zardi
Participated in 2016 with the below project;
attended as audience design trainer in 2017 and 2018.
Sales Agent; Owner and Founder, Luxbox, France

TFL Audience Design Fund project: Apprentice, *Singapore.*
Directed by Boo Junfeng; produced by Raymond
Phathanavirangoon, Fran Borgia and Tan Fong Cheng.
Released in 2016.

Short synopsis
Aiman is a 28-year-old Malay correctional officer, who recent-
ly transferred to the territory's top prison. He lives with his older
sister, Suhaila, in a modest housing estate. At his new workplace,
Aiman begins to take an interest in a 65-year-old sergeant named
Rahim. Soon, it is revealed that the charismatic Rahim is actually
the long-serving chief executioner of the prison. Rahim also takes
notice of the principled and diligent Aiman. When Rahim's assis-
tant suddenly quits, he asks Aiman to become his apprentice. Aiman
tells Suhaila of his new job position, but Suhaila becomes upset, as
their father was executed by Rahim. Aiman knew this all along. Can
Aiman overcome his conscience and a haunted past to possibly take
over as the prison's next chief executioner?

I had the pleasure of joining the Audience Design (AD) programme for
the first, very interesting sessions for our film *Apprentice*, which pre-
miered in Un Certain Regard, Cannes 2016. By that time, we worked
side by side with the producer to prepare the film's launch and its first
big market appearance. In our existing strategy we focused on the
iconic figure of the film, the apprentice Aiman, who was featured visu-
ally on the poster. We put lots of attention on synthesising the heart of
the film's topic: the disturbing journey of a young prison executioner.

We focused on several facets of the strong and sensitive subject of
the film relating to the death penalty, but without focusing directly
on it. All these considerations allowed us to build a strong marketing

strategy and a consistent tone that created a great echo during the Cannes Film Festival. The artistic DNA of the film was clearly defined and the sales catch line illustrated it well. It had a clear male focus, which the French distributor later underlined, giving it a strong male genre-feel in their campaign; and a special attention to the unhabitual profession that tried to invite the audience to question the man behind the practice.

Our audience design experience brought a surprising and unexpected insight. The work of the group underlined some interesting parallel elements that were not considered at first sight. It's important to mention that the AD group work started shortly before Cannes and was followed up in June and November, offering to their assignment an interesting time window to observe the life of the film. It was very instructive to work with a proactive audience, available to give their time to think about different ways to reduce the obstacles between a film and its audience.

The group was creatively inspired by the supporting roles of the film. These characters allowed them to express important topics of the film, such as family, fatherhood, sisterhood. Their work grasped emotional elements of the film from a different perspective, more female-associated sides of the story. Our marketing was focused on the relationship between the hangman and the apprentice. The work with the group also pointed to this, but it opened up the perspective of the main character by questioning his relationship with his sister and the family values involved. Regardless of the severity of the subject, this type of questioning also gave an important viewpoint to the possible judgement or position of the audience. Their ideas of promotion widened the scope of which audiences the film might appeal to, something which could be utilised for the second round of international sales.

The AD group, composed of media professionals with different backgrounds, offered a challenging brainstorm process that gave us, as sales agents, a unique audience to work with. The experience provided a precious time to start questioning the marketing tools we'd chosen at an early stage.

As a sales agent you always run to be ready on time to promote and sell your film. The launch window gets more and more narrow and limited, and finetuning or adjustments are basically rarely possible. Unfortunately, the market pushes for immediacy while arthouse cinema needs time. The market pushes you to be global and general, while arthouse cinema can be universal and at the same time local and close to specific cultures and audiences. So, you find this time upstream by being invited to meet a potential audience at an early stage of your process. An experience that questions the universal and the specific environment of your film.

This first AD experience has been followed by further participations as guest trainer, where I've always found a personal rewarding moment, where you find yourself questioning the experience of cinema. Exploring your tools and processes with a vivid and curious group helps you to face the possible obstacles between your film and your expected audiences, between your strategy and its expected impact. By comparing the different marketing approaches of a film by different distributors, from different cultures, for different targets... for the time and the attention of an audience, as specific as it can be – this journey to reach an audience is sometimes obscure. We learn as much from what fails as from what succeeds.

And as times change so fast, there is certainly a constant question to face for every sales agent, distributor, producer, director... Not (only) for profit and not (only) for fame, but how to meet an audience in the right time and the right space? This audience that has chosen the cinema for its bigger screen, its deep darkness, and its collective experience. This audience that has chosen the comfort of a home screen, its quick access, and individual experience. This audience, which is constantly evolving, but always searching an openness to the world.

Audience Design. The first word, A.u.d.i.e.n.c.e., is what we all try to reach, an Audience for our films. The second, D.e.s.i.g.n., is this perfect shape we try to inject into our communication, marketing, packaging, advertising campaign... all these elements that we create to remove any barrier between our film and the audience. As sales

agents, we are constantly working to find the right moment, the right slot, the right person, to create the perfect match between a film and its future audience. We work to give *T.i.m.e.* to our film: the time to discover it, the time to experience it, the time to talk about it, the time to sell it, the time to distribute it, the time to share it... offering time for cinema to exist.

The TFL Audience Design programme offers you time to think about your film with a stimulating and engaged first audience, trying to give to each independent film its deserved capital letter in Time.

Hédi Zardi & Luxbox

Luxbox is a Paris-based company, dedicated to international sales and co-production of selected projects. With a complementary industry knowledge built on experience in production, distribution, acquisitions, sales and festival programming, Fiorella Moretti and Hédi Zardi started with a solid film catalogue and a passionate pool of world cinema directors such as Lisandro Alonso, Bruno Dumont, Amat Escalante, Carlos Reygadas and Jonas Carpignano. The company launched at the EFM 2016 *Hedi* by Mohammed Ben Attia (Best First Feature Film and Silver Bear for Best Actor). In Cannes 2016, they presented *Apprentice* by Boo Junfeng at Un Certain Regard and *Mimosas* by Oliver Laxe (Grand Prize Critics' Week). This year, Luxbox, among other films, presented *The Heiresses* in Berlin, a first feature by Marcelo Martinessi (Silver Bear for Best Actress, Alfred Bauer Prize), and *Museo* (Silver Bear for Best Script). In Cannes, among others, *The Dead & The Others* by Joao Salaviza & Renée Nader Messora (Special Jury Prize, Un Certain Regard). Lately, they had two films in Locarno, *Ray & Liz* by Richard Billingham and *Suburban Birds* by Qiu Sheng, and Benjamin Naishtat's second feature, *Rojo*, in Toronto and San Sebastián's competition.

www.luxboxfilms.com

Being in Charge of the Game Changers

by Elias Ribeiro
Participated with the below project in 2017
and in FrameWork in 2014 — winning a TFL Production Award.
Producer; Owner and Founder, Urucu Media; Market Director at
Cape Town International Film Market & Festival.

TFL Audience Design Fund project:
The Wound (Inxeba), South Africa
Directed by John Trengove; produced by Elias Ribeiro
and Cait Pansegrouw. Released in 2017.

Short synopsis
Xolani, a lonely factory worker, joins the men of his community in the mountains of the Eastern Cape to initiate a group of teenage boys into manhood. When a defiant initiate from the city discovers his best kept secret, his love for another man, Xolani's entire existence begins to unravel.

The Wound by John Trengove was in development and financing for almost five years. When it finally came together it took the festival circuit by storm after its World Premiere in Competition in Sundance and at the European Premiere as the Berlinale Panorama Opening Film in 2017. The film went on to win 28 international awards and was licensed for distribution in over 30 countries to date, through Pyramide International. *The Wound* also represented South Africa in the race for the Foreign Language Film Academy Award nominees, making it to the pre-nomination shortlist of 9 films.

The film was licensed on the whole African continent and adjacent islands by Mnet, a pay-TV channel, as well as European and North American Broadcasters and VOD platforms such as Arte, ZDF, HBO and Netflix.

Above and beyond *The Wound*'s critical and commercial worldwide success, the film also became a national movement in South Africa, representing black queerness, and contributing to build national consciousness by taking this story into the cinemas. Robert Mugabe

had recently stated – before the film was made – that being a ho-mosexual was a disease of the West and un-African.

The film was banned from cinemas by the Film & Publications Board in our country, they overturned their own previous rating of the film as allowed from 16 years of age, reclassifying *The Wound* as X-Rated. This was after it sold 30.000 admissions in only 10 days after its theatrical release. We were well equipped to push back and drove a legal battle to ensure our freedom of expression, guaranteed in our constitution. Currently, the film is back at its original classification of 16. During the 4-month window where the X-rating was enforced, the film reached audiences through a number of pirated links and DVDs distributed on the black market.

Participating in the TFL Audience Design Fund's Consultancy, this was one of the strategies we considered during the workshop: to supply the pirate DVDs ourselves, as in South Africa it is almost im-possible to bypass piracy, as the market is segregated by class as well as languages, as the country has 11 official languages. Access to the pirate distribution channels became impossible and officially the film could only be sold in sex shops after being X-rated. We would not only be pirating our own film, and I suppose we would not sue ourselves, but the ban kept our hands tied across all distribution platforms for months. The film trended as number one on Twitter for weeks and really became a national priority. There are still many in South Africa, who haven't seen the film, but I can guarantee that everyone has heard of it.

The Consultancy played a pivotal role in preparing us to deal with all the success, as well as the heat we went under as the makers of this film. It helped us to focus and agree on our positioning, locally, internationally, what would be game changer scenarios, and work strategically towards them. At a time where our energy and passion for the project was still embellished by the state you are left in, when you finish something you've worked so hard to achieve, we were able to make sound decisions and have am-munition to deal with the backlash, driving the public opinion in a favourable manner. None of this would have been possi-ble without the help of the audience and an authentic story, told

from a strong perspective. When a small group of patriarchal men decided to take issue with our fictional story, it was the "army" of people who had seen the film, who came to our defence. Like the crazy idea of pirating ourselves, we also decided to facilitate free screenings of the film to any Xhosa community who wished to see it and could facilitate a safe space for a Q&A with someone from the film team afterwards. One at a time, we won them over and with the same passion that the film haters protested, the film lovers marched. I still love searching the hashtag #inxeba, to see again and again the many voices out there who fought for this film's right to exist.

Our original motivation to apply for the TFL Audience Design Fund was first and foremost an economical one, as we went into production underfinanced, so there was zero marketing and distribution budget. But above and beyond that, knowing the professional level of training at TorinoFilmLab, already being part of the TFL family through the FrameWork workshop programme (now FeatureLab), we saw the knowledge and expertise, and the access, as big motivators for us to apply.

We prepared for the workshop remotely, after which John and I joined two TFL Alumni Consultants for a few days during the TFL Meeting Event. Together, we workshopped different scenarios, looked at different routes and strategies, and in the follow-up, received a well-considered and thought through Audience Design Strategy outline that informed the road map of our roll-out campaign. It took a lot of time, hard work and resources to implement the action plan we collectively had drafted.

It also took a very focused driver, and here I would like to acknowledge my producing partner, Cait Pansegrouw, who took the baton from my hands as campaign leader when I disappeared into my paternity leave 6 months after the film's first exhibition.

In future productions we will certainly be applying a lot of our newfound knowledge from the development stage onwards, as this no doubt will allow for an even more powerful strategy. With *The Wound*, the audience activities came in late, right before the world

premiere, when time is even more scarce. If we had started building the audience base actively from an earlier stage, I believe we could have realised the potentials on a whole other level.

Elias Ribeiro

Elias is a Brazilian-born, South Africa-based Creative Producer. His company, Urucu Media, produced 5 feature films over the last 6 years, mostly award-winning international co-productions. His films include 2018 Foreign Language Oscar entries *The Wound* (South Africa) and *Train of Salt and Sugar* (Mozambique). In 2016 he launched *Realness*, a pan-African Screenwriter's Residency, heading for its fourth edition next year, having developed 15 film projects in 12 countries in Africa. Most recently, Elias was appointed Market Director for the Cape Town International Film Market & Festival.

www.urucumedia.com
www.filmfest.capetown

The Authors

Valeria Richter

Creative Producer and Scriptwriter Valeria Richter works internationally and writes, develops, coaches and consults in the areas of feature film, TV series, workshop innovation, pitching and script development since 1997; she consults for various funds, festivals and film institutes in the areas of project selection, assessment, and tailored labs. She has developed several concepts, recently *Nordic Genre Boost* for Nordisk Film & TV Fond, *POWR* for Baltic Event, *Engage* with CTIFMF, and she works for TorinoFilmLab since 2008.

Since 2004 she works in her own companies, Pebble and Nordic Factory Copenhagen, and has co-produced features and documentaries, such as *Granny's Dancing on the Table*, *The Feminist* (Sweden), *Cora* (Brazil), *Alien Food* (Italy). Currently she showruns a fiction TV series in collaboration with Bufo, Helsinki. In 2014, she premiered (as producer) 4 short films at Directors' Fortnight, Cannes FF at a special event screening. One of the films, *Listen*, won Best Narrative Short 2015, Tribeca FF, was nominated as EFA Best European Short, and has won 50+ awards at over 150 festivals; it is available online via Staff Pick on Vimeo.

Valeria taught Film Adaptation at the University of Cph. and holds an MA in Film & Media Science; she has a background in distribution, festivals, and production, is a graduate producer of the Danish Super16 film-collective and since 2009, member of the European Film Academy.

Prof. Lena Thiele

Creative Director and Author Lena Thiele designs and produces international digital media formats in the fields of film, games and transmedia since 2003. In 2012 she joined Miiqo Studios, where she focuses on creating meaningful experiences through innovation in storytelling, technology and design. Her productions received numerous awards like the SXSW Innovation Award, Grimme Online Award, Prix Italia and Deutsch-Französischer Journalistenpreis (nomination).

Furthermore, she was juror in the digital programme (non-fiction category) for the 2011 and 2012 International Digital Emmy Award. In 2018 she was Jury member of the Grimme Online Award and was appointed as a member of the advisory board of the Grimme Institute. In addition, she works as trainer and consultant for the international media industry and educational programmes like Berlinale Residency, HFF Munich, Filmakademie Ludwigsburg, Filmuniversität Babelsberg Konrad Wolf, Dok Leipzig NetLab, or ZHdK in Zürich. She works for TorinoFilmLab since 2012.

In 2016 she was appointed Professor of Digital Narratives – Art and Design at the ifs – internationale filmschule köln.

Lena Thiele holds a Master of Arts degree from the University of Arts Berlin in Communication in Social and Economic Contexts with focus on experimental media design and cinema studies.

TorinoFilmLab started in 2008 and is a year-round, international laboratory that supports emerging talents from all over the world – with a special attention to those working on their first and second fiction feature films – through training, development, funding and distribution activities.

TorinoFilmLab runs several activities and offers various forms of support in each of these fields, aimed at both feature films and TV series. The training initiatives run throughout the year and reach their conclusive moment at the TorinoFilmLab Meeting Event in November.

Linked to the Torino Film Festival, TorinoFilmLab is promoted by Museo Nazionale del Cinema and the main film institutions established in Turin and Piedmont, collaborating with Film Commission Torino Piemonte. TorinoFilmLab is supported by the Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo, Regione Piemonte and Città di Torino, and by the Creative Europe – MEDIA programme of the European Union.