

OPENING UP T@E

# WHEN WILL T@E RECOGNISE THE URGENCY OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS

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## DISCUSSION NOTES

- Lack of places to seek good help/advice on sustainability: Sustainability officer at the Guild doesn't know enough about theatre to give detailed advice.
- Timescale - everything moves so fast, how to find the time? As the show gets closer, time gets squashed.
- Consensus that this topic that is never really broached within theatre societies, or with performers.
- Desire to focus less on the performance outcome, and more on the creative process itself: enjoy finding sustainable solutions.
- Structure of Committee doesn't allow for long term planning - a quick turnover breaks up the ability to implement change over a long period. When implementing changes, a Committee may not yield the results of the investment themselves - being selfless and investing for future members.
- Sustainable frameworks do exist out there, but they would need to be adapted for student theatre.
- Susannah is writing a Stash & Publicity document to combat wasteful techniques.
- Money - we often go for more convenient options/wasteful options because of a low budget.

- Committees want to share equipment, but there needs to be more respect when borrowing expensive items.

### **How can we explore climate breakdown and sustainability through the content of our work?**

- Traumatic to hear about the environmental collapse: can we frame it as a positive conversation, how can we cultivate change? Moving conversation from dire grief, to hope and beauty.
- Acknowledgement of our privilege: to make theatre about Climate Change is privileged. We can afford to ignore and be ignorant: we look away because we're scared, and the change required is so immense - how do we make tangible change that isn't performative? The worst thing we can do is make a nice piece of theatre that says nothing.
- Sustainability can be found in any text - e.g hurricane in Wizard of Oz.
- Climate lens by Una Chaudhuri: in the same way that you would draw out the feminist narratives, we have a commitment to draw out the climate/sustainability themes in contemporary/classic text.
- Themes of the climate crisis can be embedded in the production in a way that's not overt, which can be more effective - more hidden = more powerful?
- Discussing important topics with actors - switching from an inward focused rehearsal process to outward focused. Importance of exploring global issues.
- Normalising the conversation - creating the balance where people don't feel forced to explore it but are passionate and engaged.
- Changes at Theatre @ Exeter need to be bleed into everyday life: long-term and widespread implications on our community.
- Theatre @ Exeter is very insular, we make incredible work for ourselves, but we never take it outside of the bubble (very self-indulgent).

- Students are seen as radical intellectuals, but we're propagating a system that doesn't allow change.
- Repurposing - why are we actually making theatre at Exeter? Is the result worth doing it in the first place?

## PUSHING FOR CHANGE POINTS

- Further explore the role of the Committee: to instil sustainability in the process, and also to provide the timescale and space for creative teams to consider it thoroughly.
- Include sustainability recommendations in Committee Handover Guides, or provide a list of resources to give a Creative Team/Prod Team.
- Create a benchmark - scale/check how sustainable a show has been specific to T@E
- ExeTech to include sustainability ranking on their equipment hire
  - Lighting: investment into better lighting equipment, including LED lights or rechargeable batteries. This would be a very large investment - £400 for 116 batteries.
- Create a Chronos for Costume.
- Implement a Sustainability focus for T@E 2020/2021?
- Remove the pressure for the work to be good and for it to be 'normative' - experiment more with radical work out of the regular bubble - push the boundaries.
- Less shows would reduce waste, increase ticket sales and lower carbon emissions.

- Rehearsing and performing outside - utilising free, accessible spaces around us.
- Protect audience and cast: Warning cast about difficult topics, and making a protective space for their mental health. Trigger warnings for the audience. Tackle difficult discussion in performance but have a post-show discussion.
- Bringing in NGO's to hold discussions - inspire people into positive activation e.g. how to get into Sustainable work, how to help people - Culture Ecology & Crisis Module leader as a point of contact.
- Using Props on Chronos or gathering furniture/costumes for charity shops.
- Collaborate: lend each other materials to use in other shows.
- Applying to a Scrap Store to get materials
- Consider the environmental cost of travel to Fringe: swapping plane travel for train, or travelling to a Fringe closer to us e.g. Camden.
- Create a Sustainability Networking Site/Forum - reaching out to each other and asking for help, which would increase a generosity of spirit and sharing. Allow people to be creative on an ad-hoc basis, to solve problems and share knowledge. Would encourage a sense of togetherness/community, which would reduce competition.
- Termly 'Sustainability' discussions with everyone to consistently re-evaluate/celebrate.
- More events around the show that aren't just fundraisers - discussions, talks, workshops (would take the pressure and focus off the performance as the sole creative output).

- AXE BUYING STASH! Bypassing fast fashion - printing, embroidering, patching onto vintage clothing or clothes you already own.
- Shows decided earlier - Prod Team would have longer to explore, run the project on back burner and implement ideas - isn't suddenly a massive rush job.
- Looking outwards for help: e.g. BetheChange Society might have ideas, look within the student community for help (Students with relevant specialities - people who are already knowledgeable about sustainability). Guild has compiled a Community Sustainability list - Potential to tap into this.