**Culture Comms 2016 – Reaching new audiences**

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Penny Mills, the Audience Agency (PM)

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(HC) Everything in the organisation, from front of house to programming to catering offer needs to be geared towards reaching new audiences

(TH) Disabled people are interested in the same things as able bodied people – it comes down to access

(PM) New people, new audiences are visiting cultural venues every day, there is huge potential and it is not running out, but you need to be aware that you can’t appeal to everyone at the same time. Research shows that most people are engaging with the arts in some way, but they may not relate to institutions – you have to respect the ways in which people want to engage with culture.

(BJ) The World Service has a global audience of 66 million, with a growing digital audience. They want to expand their geographical reach – currently their largest audience bases are Africa and North America. They are thinking a lot about young people (the average listener age is 34) and are making more short clips for distribution “not dumbing down, just shorter.” World Service arts programming includes the Arts Hour and Cultural Frontline – they are interested in UK stories but they must have a global resonance. A large number of the World Service’s 2m UK listeners are from the African diaspora.

(HC) Engage with audiences by showing your venue as a place for them – representation on stage, producing innovative assets around the show, working with partners who have a way in to your target audience. Press and marketing need to work together and strategically to push the important messages. The Royal Court is trying to be more content led in its communication rather than simply pushing ticket sales – developing this content is a hugely useful joint effort, and they think together about which publications to target.

(TH) With disabled arts the challenge is to overcome the perception that audiences won’t be interested.

(PM) Ideally a conversation which flushes out priorities, audiences and content would happen for every project. Yu can look at ways outside the core offer to up the engagement with potential new audiences.

(HC) If asked to bring a new audience to a piece of work which you don’t think has obvious appeal to them you can be frank and say “why should they come?”

(BJ) Sometimes to attract a new audience you have to be flexible and tweak the product. You can’t force audiences to do what you want, you need to change to fit in to what they want.

(PM) Nothing happens if you just try it once. To build a new audience you have to commit to them. Tokenism won’t bring a new audience, there needs to be integrity and authenticity.

(BJ) You have to educate your bosses - a key piece of coverage for the new audience you are aiming for may be a huge achievement, but not make them feel personally impressed, you need to agree together – what does success look like?

(HC) Everyone at the organisation needs to have the same idea of what success is

*Comment from the floor:* We need to overcome nervousness around language to talk about issues like representation.