



## STATEMENT ON ARTISTIC MERIT

As a charitable arts organisation, Packed Lunch places artistic merit at the forefront of its studio, including commissioned and public-facing initiatives, and through it strives for high levels of inclusivity and increasingly diverse participant groups, audiences and content.

We strive to identify the positive standards of a work, collection of works or initiative while recognising and enabling areas of continued creative growth that add value and purpose to an individual's practice. In this way, we aim to have an equally positive impact on greater socio-cultural ideas of what counts for quality within art, facilitating more open, inclusive platforms for celebrating artistic learning and achievement.

We determine artistic merit based on metrics recognising the intrinsic value of the works of visual storytelling that we display, present, promote, perform and develop (both in studio and through partnerships and learning initiatives) in consideration of the various backgrounds and sensory and learning needs of the creative practitioners and audiences with whom we work. The metrics are Quality and Social Resonance.

### QUALITY

This metric gauges technical proficiency with respect to:

1. the techniques used to create a work and
2. storytelling ability.

### Techniques

These are the traditional and non-traditional art mediums and implements used in the creation of works. They include, but are not limited to,:

- fine-art mediums and related tools,
- performance-based skills,
- moving-image skills and development techniques,
- writing-focused practice and
- digital content creation.

These techniques need not translate into visual storytelling works (as is often the case with written art) to be considered artistic, although Packed Lunch focuses only on creative content in the realm of visual storytelling in its own initiatives.



When any of these techniques are put into practice, a work or collection of works can be appraised for its artistic merit.

### Storytelling

Being able to tell a story is a particular skill that is practised uniquely from person to person, community to community.

When a work or collection of works developed with any of the techniques previously mentioned is purposeful in speaking to, about and/or for a selected audience - e.g., a community, a social group or a wider culture - it immediately holds value as an artistic storytelling endeavour. Examples include, but are not limited to, works that:

- reflect culture,
- comment on contemporary issues of social relevance,
- share historical and/or third-person narratives,
- share personal stories that possess a greater social significance and
- explore themes that are otherwise timely or widely-recognised as urgent.

When this form of technical proficiency is on display, a work or collection of works can be appraised for its artistic merit.

### SOCIAL RESONANCE

This metric considers:

1. the success with which audiences engage with creative content and
2. how creative content engages with audiences.

### Audience engagement

Audiences can engage with the arts both in person and virtually. For established creative practitioners seeking to collaborate with the studio, their existing audiences are factored into considerations of the artistic merit of their work. For young, developing and early-career creative practitioners whose work we display, present, promote, perform and help develop, levels of audience engagement are considered at the project review stage.

Audience numbers offer insight into the value placed on a piece of creative content, and as such give an indication of whether or not a particular piece or group of work resonated with others.



Audience feedback is another factor from which to assess the social resonance metric. When working with established and early creatives alike, audience feedback is important in deciding artistic value before, during and after production, operating under the principle that social impact is felt by the few, not just the many.

Significant quantitative (attendance numbers) and qualitative (feedback) audience engagement metrics are distinct indicators of artistic merit. For the former, significance is determined by attendance figures at in-person and virtual displays of work, measured against expected attendance and the overall audience reach of both Packed Lunch Productions and the creative practitioner(s) being profiled. For the latter, the level of critical engagement is the determining factor, which can include nuanced verbal and written feedback, third-party reviews as well as art sales.

### Engaging audiences

Engagement can happen in person or virtually. It can be passive, active and anything in between and may consist of participants helping in the creation of works or audiences turning up to view, absorb and critically reflect on it.

Facilitating the engagement of audiences requires more than providing platforms for display, presentation, promotion and performance. It also requires a fundamental understanding of the context and background informing both artistic practice and the resulting content.

Context consists of everything about a work that might have influenced it and/or its creator(s) but which is not actually a part of the piece. The idea is that contextual information deepens and/or improves one's understanding of a work, contributing to learning and a more critical overall engagement with the work.

Background refers to the historical anchor associated with a work and/or the person who created it. The idea is that by looking at a piece of art, craft or performance from the past people can gather knowledge and inspiration contributing to how we communicate as well as feel and view the world around us.

Context and background work together to lend social and creative relevance to works and creators, enabling also a launch pad from which to actively engage people and communities in art appreciation, creative communication and learning experiences in visual storytelling.

The purposeful use of context and background to engage audiences ties into the storytelling aspect of the Quality metric for assessing artistic merit. However, if a work or collection of works engage audiences without an overt attempt at a definable narrative or direction to a



particular audience, it can still hold artistic merit on the grounds of a more academic endeavour towards contextualising its historical significance and/or the influence behind it as expressed through its creator. This is determined by the same forms of feedback as in *Audience engagement*.

## MONITORING

This statement is approved by the trustees and is a part of their quarterly service reviews.

## CONTACT US

For more information this statement or if you have questions, please email us at [hello@packedlunch.org](mailto:hello@packedlunch.org) or write to Packed Lunch Productions, 7 Cooper's Yard, London SE19 1TN, United Kingdom

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