

21/05/2019 - What Should We Discuss?

The Speakers



Malaika Cunningham - previous What Next? Chapter chair

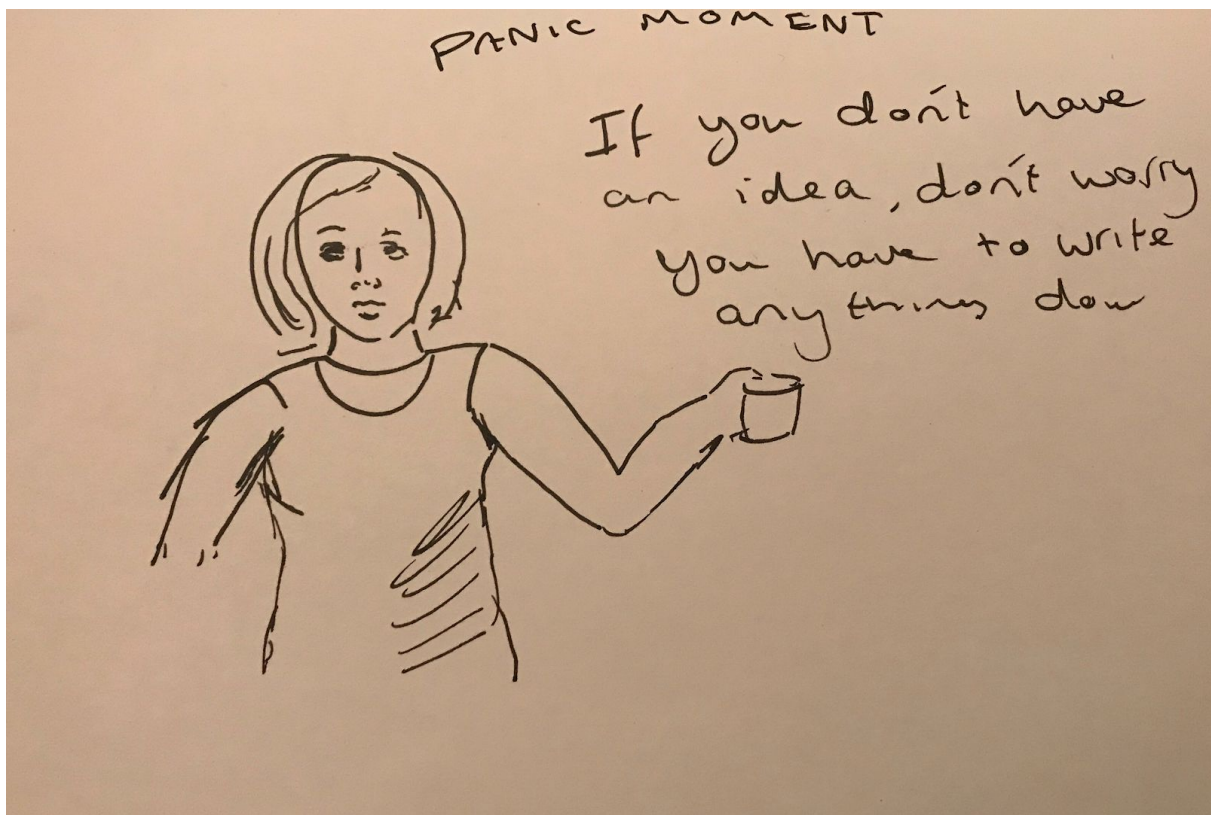
Max spoke about the establishment of the What Next? Movement and its previous chapter in Sheffield

- The formation of What Next? As a response to cuts to arts funding and a general disregard for the role of the creative sector
- The fact that the What Next? National movement has lobbying and petitioning powers
- Previous What Next? Meetings at which participants spoke about the need for Sheffield to have a centralised network to connect artists and creative practitioners
- The Guild grew out of these discussions
- Max spoke about her own satisfaction at seeing What Next? Now pass into the hands of the Guild

Jane Shields

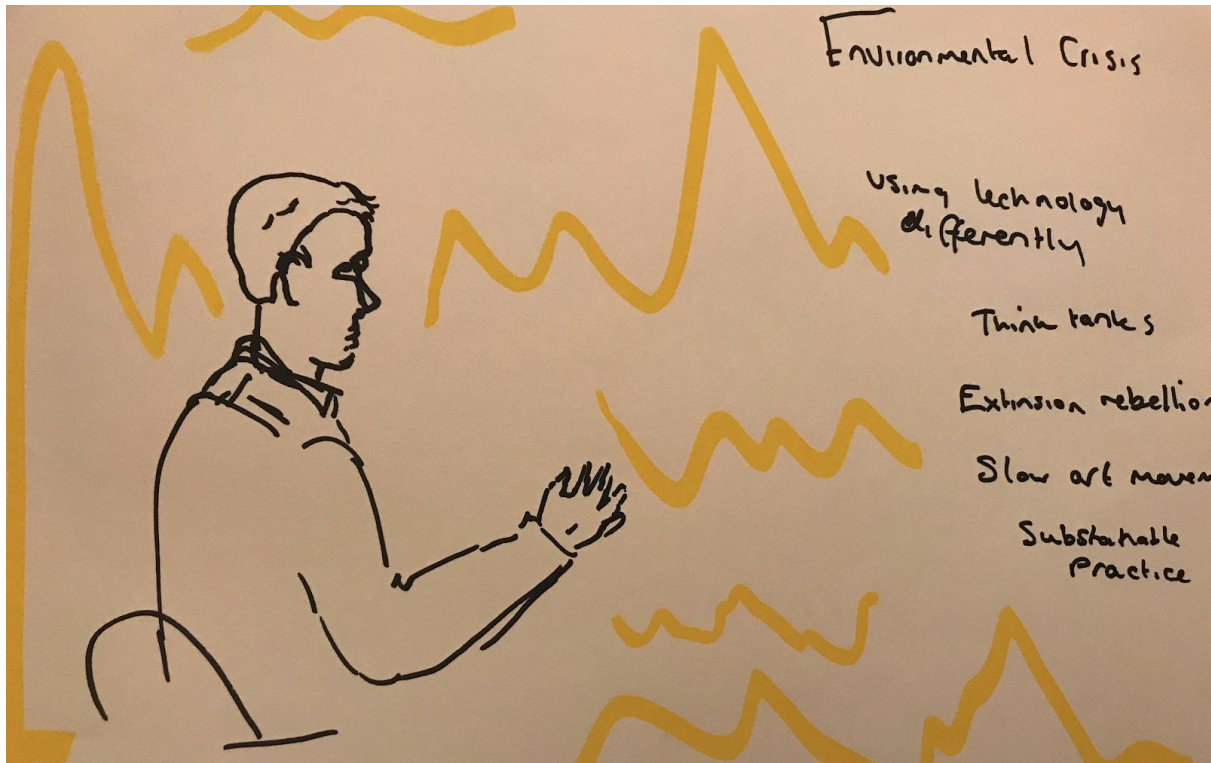
Outlined the structure of the evening, which was as follows:

1. Communal meal, prepared by Food Hall
2. Individual contemplation, writing what we would like to discuss with the group on individual pieces of paper
3. These were pinned up at the front of the room, and the group talked through all of them
4. The group was asked to vote on which topics they would most like to discuss.
The four topics with the most votes were:
 - "Environmental crisis"
 - "Living well whilst trying to earn a living through arts"
 - "How can we best celebrate everyday creativity, not just 'culture'?"
 - "Arts and wellbeing"
5. The participants who had suggested these four topics moved to separate areas in the room, and others who wishes to discuss these topics joined them (though movement between groups was not a problem)
6. Each group finally fed back on their discussions, the content of which will inform the next four What Next? Meetings



Group discussions - subjects covered

Environmental crisis



- We are beyond the point of making minor changes - a fundamental shift in our thinking and behaviour is now necessary to preserve what we can of the natural environment
- This includes our approach to marketing, localised culture and travel
- The use of tech (for example NT Live or developments in VR capabilities) can be used to combat a number of issues, specifically those surrounding the travel of musicians, delegates etc
- The arts can be a means to develop new ways of living and working
- Using the arts in this way can solve a multitude of issues, not only those relating to the environment
- We cannot avoid the fact that this is a political issue, and politics will inevitably form a part of the conversation
- Some sources to look at: Julie's Bicycle, Creative Carbon Scotland, Chrysalis Arts, Slow Art

Living well whilst trying to earn a living through arts



- When we speak of 'living well', what do we mean?
 - Issues surrounding anxiety/ depression and the mental health of artists
 - Knowing how to value oneself (not being willing to work for nothing)
 - Diving work and your life (where are the boundaries? Are boundaries always useful?)
 - Workers rights/ lack of care for freelance practitioners
- The role of unions - BECTU, Equity etc
- How to create space for creative thinking?
- Universal basic income - disassociating money and value
- Some sources to look at: medium.com has lots of content on work/ life balance

How can we best celebrate everyday creativity, not just 'culture'?



- Cultural democracy - bottom up/ community arts, open to new artforms
- More exhibition spaces are needed
- The importance of the winter gardens
- Support mechanisms needed for socially engaged artists - and artist-led social network
- Integration of the young and over-70s
- Recognising the value of art and creativity for wellbeing
- The impact of Brexit and the uncertainty for individuals affected by it
- Realising one's own creativity and the correlation between creativity and personal happiness
- Food as a source of creativity and wellbeing
- The social prescribing by GPs
- Giving ourselves a license to play - Hillsfest Maker Dome and other fun palaces
- Some sources to look at: the Art House's work with ASSIST, knitting circles and guerilla knitting, Ignite Imaginations, Elephants/ Phlegm/ Brickopolis

