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## Festivals in society | Interview with Sydney Festival Director, Lindy Hume

# sydney festival 2011

During its participation in the second edition of [LIVE!Singapore last June 2011](#), culture360.org has interviewed two festival Directors, from Australia and Korea, to get their opinion on the role of festivals in Asia and Europe.

Here is the first of this two-part interview with Lindy Hume, Festival Director of Sydney Festival.

### 1. How important is the local context in putting on a festival?

A city's festival should be based on a solid foundation of contemporary work created by artists from that place; and work that explores the **very distinctive dynamics and stories of that place**. Only then is that festival truly having a conversation with the world. One of the most important legacies of a festival must be a confident local arts community fruitfully engaging with their global colleagues' ideas and work.

### 2. How do you think collaboration between Asian and European festivals can be beneficial for the societies of both regions?

Both have a lot to offer to, and learn from, each other artistically, while audiences are always hungry to discover work from people and places they haven't yet explored. Established festivals can get stuck in a cycle of going to the usual places to find work and working the same way each year. We will all be better festivals by exploring different rhythms and ways of working and often these collaborations can be a catalyst for change and growth. I don't think these fusions should be engineered - but if there is a **genuine artistic impulse behind the collaboration**, and it forces people out of their comfort zone, it can

only be good for the producers, the artists and the audiences.

### 3. What could festival arts managers from Asia and Europe learn from each other working closer together?

See above.

### 4. How have you approached programming of Asian/European work in your festival?

I try to find a balance in each program of work from diverse cultures and artists with different world views to the mainstream; to balance the more popular programming which tends to be quite Anglo/Eurocentric. I think more "globally" than regionally, that is **I tend not to focus on any region particularly**, except our own (i.e. the Asia Pacific region). Although I do like to hear many "voices" across the breadth of the festival journey, I know there are also places we tend to represent less than others, but that is more due to travel time restraints - if I did all the research I wanted to do I'd never be in Sydney!

### 5. Do you think there should be one key model for Festivals?

NO absolutely not – there is no perfect model and for a festival to connect with its audience, it must be created **from the ground up**, it must be part of the city's identity, come from the city's DNA. Singapore is unique, Sydney is special, Helsinki is distinctive, as each of their festivals are.

*A festival is fundamentally a reflection of our time and place in the world.*

The city itself will tell festival creators what kind of festival it needs to challenge, provoke, delight, celebrate and stimulate it.

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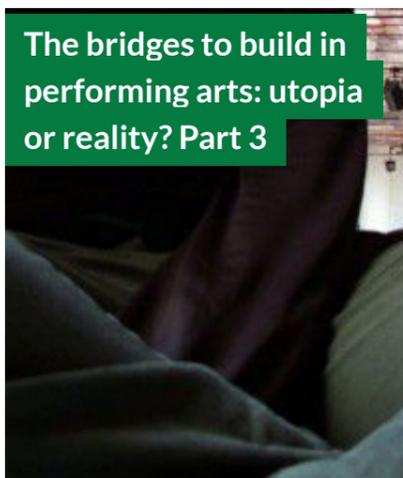
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