# Keynote

## Jerry Yoshitomi

### *The transaction between the public and the museum or gallery and frameworks for increasing participation and community engagement.*

Jerry Yoshitomi is an independent cultural facilitator and consultant, engaged by foundations, public arts agencies and arts organisations to research and provoke innovative practices. Over ten thousand arts professionals, artists and arts organisations have successfully implemented methods from his writings.

Jerry is the facilitator for a collaborative group of Performing Arts Presenters at major research universities and has served as facilitator for the START initiative of the Wallace Foundation, managed by Arts Midwest. He also chaired the National Task Force on presenting and touring the performing arts, resulting in the seminal 1989 report, 'An American Dialogue'. He chaired three panels at the National Endowment for the Arts, served four years on the California Arts Council, was treasurer of the Music Center of Los Angeles County and was the executive director of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center in Los Angeles.

Engage Now!

Jerry Yoshitomi began by saying how much he was enjoying his visit to the UK and the pleasure he had gained from visiting arts institutions in London. He commended those present and drew attention to the gems of good practice clearly evident just by looking at the websites of many of the delegates.

Blue cards were passed out to delegates. He asked everyone to think about a personally meaningful museum or gallery experience, of which they were a participant, not an organiser and to write down answers to the following questions on their cards:

- When was it?
- Who was with you?
- Describe it with a sensory memory, a metaphor, a simile or just a word

Everyone was then encouraged to talk about this with someone whom they had not met before.

A selection of delegates shared their moments:

- Stopped in tracks by a painting by El Greco at a gallery in New York, which looked as if it was being specially lit but was just beautifully painted.
- 'Bodies' exhibition made me cry
- Friendly welcome of staff – so surprised
- British Museum when 12 – the magnitude of the collection dazzled me.

Jerry encouraged people to take these cards away with them and put them on their desk or somewhere visible because this should be the reason we go to work. These are the sort of things people are looking for when they come to our institutions. We should use this process to elicit personally meaningful reactions to our collections and exhibitions from our patrons.

Some quotations might introduce the topic of the day well:

> *'What really counts is what you learn after you know it all.'*
> Helen Hayes/Harry Truman

> *'If you always do what you've always done, you'll always be what you've always been.'* Anonymous

> *'You can't solve a problem with the same consciousness that created it.'*
> A. Einstein

Many of us have been in the business a while. We should take the opportunity to consider how well we are doing, what we think we are doing and look at the ways we can improve and challenge ourselves. For the next few hours delegates should think about how we can do things differently.

The history of arts marketing looks progressive, but perhaps all we have done is learn how to dig our trough even better – the 'grand canyon method of arts management'. What we need is to get out of the trough and do some lateral thinking.

What are we doing to create new brands for new generations of people? A good example is the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco. They changed their closing times so that instead of ending at 9pm, they stayed open till 11pm in order to encourage young professionals to attend openings on Friday nights. The accompanying service delivery was also subtly changed for the different groups. It's the same art but they have slightly different experiences.

Senge's theory of 'Counteracting Diminished Expectations' is useful here. Perhaps we should re-set our aspirations for 2008 rather than continuing with the ones we are still trying to achieve, less and less successfully for 2002. This needs to be supported with the development of contemporary capacities and pursuit of new knowledge.

Liminal Space

Liminal Space is the gap between our 'current experience' and 'new practice'. If you want to get out of your 'state of stuck' in which you might be feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, directionless, hopeless, battle-torn, worthless and alone you will have to move through this threshold space in which you are bound to have failures, make mistakes and feel discomfort. Eventually we'll get to the other side. To achieve this we need to find the innovators. Remembering, the innovation diffusion curve; as with any field, there will be laggards. In the arts perhaps they could be described as 'squelchers' who are going to find our new innovations a challenge.

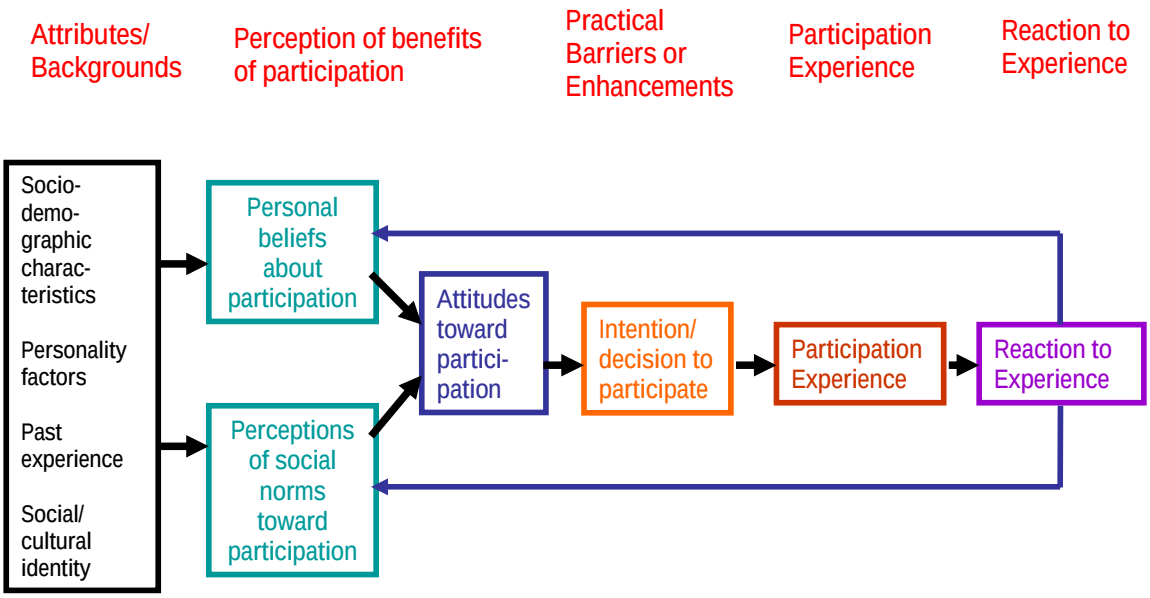
A little research helps. National research into the visual arts attenders of New Zealand showed that the top three factors of those who were most likely to attend were: 'more interest

29%', 'more time/fewer commitments 18%' and 'others to go with/encouraged 18%'. Creative New Zealand is now looking at how it can use peer to peer strategies to encourage attendance through social means, particularly looking at the 'others to go with' aspect.

Some American theatres are encouraging attendance by enabling the downloading of plays and playguides from their websites so that they can be studied in advance in book club style groups. After attending they meet again to talk about it. What are we doing to encourage our gallery visitors to get to know each other? At an opening, we could put not just our name but also our favourite painter on our badge.

In that same New Zealand research, amongst those who were likely to attend 'less often' the key factor cited for not attending (by 51%) was 'time and other commitments'. What this suggests is that we need to develop time specific strategies to make it easier for people to access what we do. Some of you are already doing this through online exhibitions for example. But how are you making it easier for me to get to your exhibition if I can't physically get there? In the performing arts this might be about shorter performances.

McCarthy and Jinnett's Model of Participation shows how we can diversify, broaden and deepen our visitor experience. It's available online and Chapter 3 of their book is especially worth reading.




Research shows that socio-demographic characteristics are fundamental drivers of interest in the arts. The only way to move participation overall would seem to be to increase wealth, attain higher education levels etc. This is difficult and essentially beyond our influence. So, for us there are other aspects further along the model which are more important: the perception of benefits and participation and the practical barriers or enhancements for example. Once these barriers have been dealt with it is necessary to ensure that the participant's experience is rich. This is not just about enabling people to download programme notes before visiting, but also about helping them to find the painting that they want to see.

Schwartz's 'Paradox of Choice' is pertinent. If you go into a supermarket and there are eight choices of jam you are more likely to buy something than if there are twenty three choices because your decision making is more difficult. Better guidance narrows down the choices so that people can make better decisions.

Reaction to experience is about the co-production of our experience with that painting. It may have been painted 500 years ago, but it has no importance to us until we are there in front of it. The painting then lives in us as long as we can hold on to it – which is partly why our gift shops are so important. Then as other people are told about it they are brought into the loop.

The good galleries find ways of involving visitors in this experience, so that they can download images to their phones or upload their own photos to an arts website, extending our reaction to the experience. The National Trust [in the UK] has an initiative which encourages people to write in and give their thoughts about why buildings are important to them.

Alan Brown's 'Values Study for the Connecticut Arts Commission' found that *identity formation and enhanced sense of self* was an important reason for some participants' involvement in the arts. Museums and galleries are actually helping people to construct an idea of who they are.

21st Century Business Model

So, there are several consequences for a new business model

- Values based art/artists - profiles, aspirations, plans (address societal ills)
- Distributed leadership and responsibilities - shared risk/reward - team/network approach
- Peer to peer marketing - customer evangelists; less gatekeeper control
- Multi-faceted products and distribution systems, free test drives
- Sensitive to needs of time starved customers

Csikszentmihalyi's work on 'Flow' shows that our 'challenge should meet our skills level'. If you play tennis against someone who is far superior or inferior to you will be frustrated. So it is with our visitors, we need to match their level with what we can offer.

In order to do this we need data, which is admittedly difficult to obtain for Museums and Galleries, but there is plenty that can be done, such as capturing email addresses on websites and giving people exit surveys to fill in. Roger Tomlinson's book, 'Full House' [co-author Tim Roberts], provides excellent advice about how it is possible to turn this data into revenue. But we need data – how do we do get it – perhaps the equivalent of an Oyster Card for museums and galleries is the way forward?

There are a number of theoretical models which are relevant here. Thomas Gadd's 'Four Dimensional Marketing Model' looks at the journeys which people make between spiritual and mental and functional and spiritual. It is about connecting customers to each other. In

practice this might mean our visitors stating their favourite five paintings in the collection and then putting those people together based on painting match.

J. Walker Smith says that marketing needs to be more complex than it once was because of the different values of ‘multiple generations’. With our new generations come new methods: word of mouth/postcards, viral e-marketing, multiple channel influencers/initiators and children’s choices segment managers.

Bob Cialdini is the most quoted social psychologist in the world. His ‘principles of persuasion’, the way in which people are prompted to make decisions – their triggers - is very interesting.

- Reciprocity - obliged to give back those who’ve given to us
- Consensus - decide what's appropriate by examining what others do – social identity theory
- Authority - rely on superior knowledge for guidance
- Consistency - once making choice/stand, personal and interpersonal pressure to be consistent with that commitment.
- Scarcity – opportunities appear more valuable when less available
- Liking - say ‘yes’ to those we know/like (or who like us)
- The Contrast Phenomenon
- Timing

The JB Speed Art Museum in Louisville, USA, for example, has used the motivation of ‘consistency’ to persuade people to attend, asking parents ‘do you want to bond with your children this weekend?’ It’s much easier to communicate with people about their already existing values than to try and get them to change them. The JB Speed Art Museum is helping them to meet their own goals.

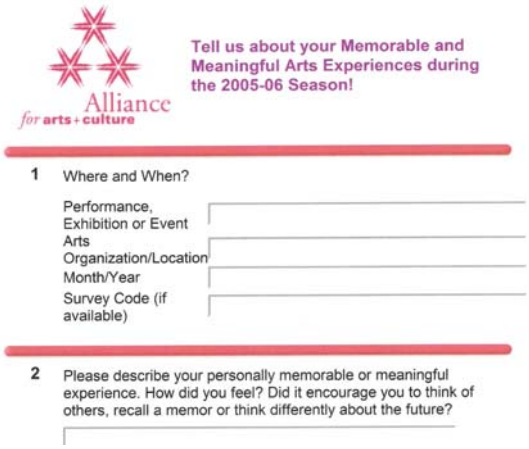
The Long Tail shows how impact fades over time:

The yellow section has a bigger area than the red, so cultural work may not continue to have such a big immediate impact, but its legacy continues for a large number of people. Galleries and museums could continue to activate the personally significant moments of the hundreds and thousands of people that pass through our exhibitions (eg. at celebration of anniversaries), activating the asset of the image (in their heads).

Incidentally, Galleries and Museums still seem reluctant to use images in their marketing or more broadly in their communication of information, such as on maps and brochures.

Testimonials by audiences and visitors etc can then be used to show what the arts or your institution means to them. It's about perceptions of benefits – 'why do I go to this place?'

Words can easily be collected through an online survey [right]. Downloaded from the survey, straight into Excel, not only does the arts manager have good material to use in marketing material but also attitudes which can be linked to their data.


Alliance for arts + culture

Tell us about your Memorable and Meaningful Arts Experiences during the 2005-06 Season!

1 Where and When?

Performance, Exhibition or Event

Arts Organization/Location

Month/Year

Survey Code (if available)

2 Please describe your personally memorable or meaningful experience. How did you feel? Did it encourage you to think of others, recall a memor or think differently about the future?

Then it is possible to work the whole theory through, as discussed in the 'keynote in conversation' session to follow the keynote.

- Whose (what group) behavior do you want to influence? – What segment?
- What do you want them to do? - Intended Behaviour
- What are their Attributes & Current Behaviours
- What New Strategies would you suggest?
  - Perception of Benefits
  - Practical Aspects
  - Experience
  - Reaction to Experience
- What evidence would you gather to demonstrate success?

Jerry closed by encouraging delegates to think about:

- What key concepts have I learned here that I can use tomorrow?
- What next steps will I take?
- What next steps could we take together?