

A Manifesto for Creative Producing

Background

As interdisciplinary collaboration emerges as a vital linchpin in an increasingly interconnected world, the role of Creative Producer is coming to the fore.

For many, having self-defined as a Creative Producer or developed a Creative Producing practice independently, we are now looking for community and collective identity. During a six-week program, Nicholas Medvescek and Lizzie Crouch led an international cohort of 22 emerging and established practitioners from different sectors and cultures, with different abilities and lived experience. We critically reflected on our role, and we collectively co-authored this manifesto for Creative Producing.

Hope and expectations

Many of us came to this program seeking a supportive, caring, and critical community. We hoped to learn from each other and examine our practice through diverse perspectives. Through these lenses, we looked to refine our practices and challenge current production models that reinforce dominant perspectives.

Socially and commercially, there is often only a vague understanding about the work done by creative producers. When creative labour is frequently under-valued, this often makes our work invisible. Through forming this community, and finding convergences and divergences, we hope to make our work visible so we can enact positive cultural change, and strive towards inclusive, equitable futures.

Context

We are a hugely diverse international group. However, we can not speak for everyone and everything. We can only speak to the lived experiences, cultures, abilities, and values that we have as a cohort of 22 humans.

Despite the benefits of digital tools, and the ability to come together in space in the virtual realm, we acknowledge that these technologies shaped our interactions and

processes. They privilege some while limiting others, and we lacked the basic human contexts that in-person collaboration can give us.

There is never enough time to fall down rabbit holes, to dive deeper, to connect and understand each other, but we are proud of what we have achieved within such limitations. The program pulled apart our lived experiences, explored the processes and values that connected us, reflected on frameworks used in our practice, and considered the impact of our practice. In this process, we have found rich convergences, and richer divergences within the group.

This manifesto captures a moment in time. We acknowledge it is not perfect, and these words and graphs are only the start of its journey. As we ask ourselves how we continue to evolve as a community, we look forward to how our words and exploration manifest in new contexts and forms—inside and outside this initial group.

We invite you to take these words and do with them what you will. Find yourself in them, critique them, manifest them, take them into your communities and explore them in different contexts. Far from being fixed proclamations, they invite dialogue—and we welcome and seek further discourse.

Creative Producers

Creative producers don't just add value to a project, they add *values* to a process.

In this moment we, an international cohort of 22 humans, believe:

Creative Producers are Trans*formers.

We are the catalyst and mediator across, within, between and beyond distinctive forms—the * that joins trans*formation.

Creative Producers are Transducers.

We work fluidly to embrace chaos as a site for emergent processes.

Creative Producers are Transpirators

We prioritise moving at the pace of care, respect and wellbeing in shared spaces.

Creative Producers are Transfigurators

We recognise and seek the potential of the hidden, unseen, and unheard to reconfigure (our) biases, beliefs, and values.

Creative Producing

Creative Producing is creatively critical and critically creative.

Creative Producing is both a playful and deliberate process that provides a support structure for interdisciplinary work while simultaneously facilitating the creation of magical menageries of thought. This process trusts emergent frameworks and strategies to form curious spaces that offer a way to embrace the notion that questions often have more power than answers. This process walks the line between chaos and order, allowing new, other, and different possibilities to emerge.

Creative Producing requires fluid thinking.

Creative Producing is a process that uniquely requires thinking macro and micro simultaneously—seeing the potential in the mundane and the impact of the bigger picture. It is often a vital way to find balance between thinking quickly, and slowly, about the requirements of time, space, and stakeholders.

As such, this process enables people to constantly negotiate and facilitate the tension between the need to deliver an outcome and the possibilities that open-ended creativity presents. In this way a creative producing approach creates and maintains the conditions in the present that empower stakeholders to (un)learn and (re)imagine future possibilities.

Creative Producing is pluralistic.

Creative Producing is a post-disciplinary approach to work. By drawing on multiple methodologies and combining them in unique ways, it empowers a cross-section of disciplines to do deep creative work. This involves prioritising inclusive methodologies that set the conditions for creating or maintaining shared spaces of diverse perspectives. When these perspectives engage with each other they can challenge dominant forms of thinking.

Creative Producing embraces radical relationality.

Creative Producing is a process that involves scanning multiple types of knowledge—past, present, and emerging—at multiple scales to connect unexpected paths and relationships. These can translate and coordinate the personal and

collective needs, wants, and reflections of stakeholders, facilitating meaningful exchanges between societies and cultures.

Creative Producing advocates for all.

Creative Producing is an ethical approach toward creating generous spaces for critical discussion about power, privilege, and biases, and intentionally positions outcomes in relation to these. With care embedded at its heart, a creative producing approach seeks to serve people over outcomes, and empowers stakeholders to think about the (un)intended impacts of every (in)action. It attempts to challenge dominant ways of thinking to create accessible, equitable, and responsible cultures/outcomes.

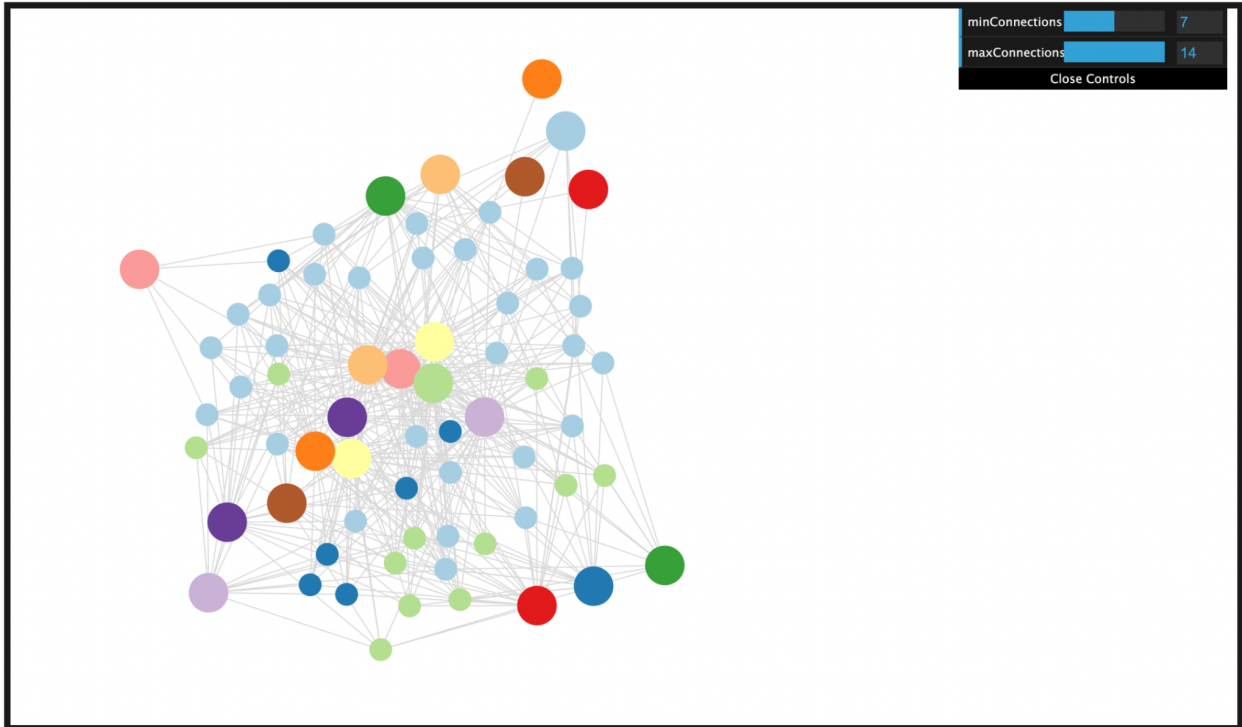
Divergences

During our six weeks together, it became clear we, an international cohort of 22 humans, contain multitudes that cannot be reduced to a common denominator. While there are clear ties that bind us together, we differ in our approaches and identities, and so it was equally important for us to map the negative space between us and celebrate our heterogeneity.

We've imagined the key concepts that emerged during the program as a constellation of nodes. The connections between these nodes show where we each find alignment with concepts.

While some nodes have many connections and show the places where the cohort converges, an equally powerful number have only a few. These soft connections form discursive relationships or stand alone entirely.

This map illustrates the dynamic tension in our community. The same force that attracts us to points of convergence also spins off our divergent perspectives. The nuance in the space between is what creates the unique context for this particular collective and the manifesto it has produced.



This diagram is a static glimpse of the dynamic node graph described above. It depicts the program participants as large, multi-colored dots. The larger dots are connected by lines to smaller, pale blue and green dots that represent the statements and opinions held by those individuals. An interactive version of this diagram is available to view at the link below.

<https://gin.gold/ForceTest/2DForceGraph/example/2D-CPS-NodeMiro/>