

Programming & Curating

Key points

Programming or curating events is about more than just dreaming up something you feel like offering at the time

Programming is a powerful strategic action. What you offer to your audience says a lot about who you are and where you want to go

Programming is a practical application of your vision – it is a clear and tangible way to communicate your vision with an audience

Themes can be a useful overarching concept in order to deliver a variety of offerings as a connected and cohesive whole

Equally important perhaps is what you DON'T programme. If you are a venue in particular, it might be worth considering having a programming guide, where it is clearly stated what you are NOT comfortable with

Evaluation – at the end of a season or period of time – is an important step as you strategically plan your next 'season'

Me mātau ki te
whetū, i mua i te
kōkiri o te haere

Before you set forth
on a journey, be sure
you know the stars

Useful questions

What makes good programming?

What drives your programming?

Who aren't you – what would you not programme?

Is your programming in line with your artistic vision and/or your organisational goals (where you want to go)?

How much of your programming reflects your identity?

Does your programming have a point-of-view? Does it need one?

Are you operating at 'arm's-length' from your audience?

How 'audience centric' are your programming choices?

Do you schedule your programming for each year, or go project to project?

Would you say your programming is ad hoc and depends on what comes to you, or do you set themes and look for performance/workshops/gigs/exhibitions that align with the theme?

What sort of conversations do you want your work/events to generate? Is your current programming the spark for these conversations do you think?

Do you bring big picture thinking to your programming?

What would happen if you were to think of where you want to be in 5 years time and your programming reflected this and moved you there?

Do you connect with what else is happening in your community/the world? Matariki for example, or World Poetry Day or broader social or environmental considerations. If not, do you want to?

How does your programming relate to the place/community within which it exists – and is this relevant/important to you?

Does your programming address attendance barriers in any way and is this important/relevant to you?

What do you want your programming to say about you/your organisation? Over a year, over 5 years...?

Whatever you're doing, is it working?
What would you change if you could?
