

March 2, 2020

*Work Made In Collaboration*

1. Welcome
  - Land Acknowledgement
  - Introduction of VDF
  - Announcing the concept of the forum - Work in Collaboration
    - questions about workshops, what do you feel ownership over
2. Introductions
3. Topics
  - a) *What is your design: the idea, the stuff, the implementation/integration with the piece*
    - Curation rather than content creation?
    - Execution vs content?
  - b) *When a project moves from one phase to another - how do we deal with that ethically?*
    - Is the workshop an audition process for a designer?
      - A chance to see if a creative team will work well together as collaborators
      - Should producers be obligated to hire the workshop designer or should they have the freedom to move in a different direction?
        - Reasons why the workshop designer or producer might not want to move forward: scheduling, personality, “the name” or status of the designer, sometimes its because they don’t feel like the designer and director can get on the same page as to what the design should be, level of experience
      - Workshops often mean designers work for less than they’re worth
    - How much of the content created for a workshop can be used in the production?
      - For quantifiable content for some disciplines - you can contract to co-own 50% of the design, and must be paid for the portion of it used in the production
      - When you know the show designer is not the workshop designer, how should the workshop designer be credited?
        - If a new designer is brought on, what (if anything) from the workshop can be utilized?
        - Producer/director needs to get approval from the original designer and they need to be credited for the design
      - Should the workshop designer be hired by the show designer?
        - Maximum transparency is a must
          - The new designer should talk to the previous designer
          - If the process is different, but the result the same, how do we acknowledge that?
        - Producers could consider hiring the more senior artist as an assistant to an emerging designer who did the workshop as an ethical way to get the product the producer wants if it is beyond the scope of the workshop designer, while maintaining the workshop vision and created content
    - Is it best to sign first right of refusal for workshop contracts?
      - Remember that if you’ve been used for a grant, part of the funding has been given based on your reputation
        - There is a level of trust, respect and track record - its a greater risk for the producer to hire someone they haven’t worked with before

- How do you work when what is being asked for is re-creating an existing design (a classic show or a design that was implemented by an earlier production)?
  - Hard to pin down what is the source of the inspiration
  - If the ideas are funnelling from a director/choreographer, where does the ownership lie?
  - Can we recycle ideas with a new twist?
  - As shows are developed more and more, and ideas become more integral - how can that be separated?
  - When shows have very specific stage directions towards the design, how can this be dealt with mindfully - what is a design choice and what is following through with the writers intention?
  - What is more important process or outcome?

*c) How do we collaborate well, when working in a team?*

- How do we best acknowledge the work everyone has put into originating work?
- How do we have people know that there is a difference between content creation and execution?
- How do we get well supported?
  - When we ask designers to work without a crew or support, it limits their design
  - Check in about expectations and assumptions - do it early and often: framework, process, words used
- How do we grow as artists without putting too much on the TD, technicians or other designers?
  - Designers need to be clear about they can and can't do - and communicate that if they're taking a job, where they will need support
  - Ask for the help you need, be clear about what support you are expecting, be clear about what you can provide, be very clear about your level of technical skill as a designer
- How much ownership does a technician have?
  - How do technicians feel about the role they play in building a show?
  - Helping get someone to the end result they know they want is different than creating the execution that creates a design
  - Technicians have a specific skill set - if the designer can't execute it, but the technician is paid by the venue for their time, is there a presumption that the technician has influenced the design?
  - If technicians are good, they get more work - that isn't always true of designers.
  - Technicians have set boundaries on their time and role.
  - Impression that the designer has a specific artistic skill set, technicians are trained to do specific exceptions - execution is part of the art, and this is hard to separate.
  - What level of skill does the technician have and how much of that skill is being used?
  - How much is just acknowledging the help of the technician moving forward (on CV, in awards thank-you's)
  - If the work is collaborative between designer and technician (or creator of a house hang) - its important to credit the people that have helped make the art

- What are the minimum choices that must be made to be “a design”
      - In lighting this minimum might be colour and placement
  - When you feel an executed design is too similar to a previous or workshop design, what do you do?
    - Talk to the person you first negotiated with
    - If you have a boat, how much can you change before its a different boat?
      - What is the rubric around which we measure this change?
  - If a new show goes onto long running financial success - what accreditation and compensation does the originating design team need?
    - Shows like Hamilton, in which the design and early runs formed the show into the success it is, have had contracts re-negotiated to recognize and honour the collaborative efforts of the team
  - What are the practical things people want:
    - Communication: early and often
    - Knowing the expectations from the producer
    - There is a power imbalance between designers and producers that needs to be acknowledged - it doesn't need to be adversarial
      - Having producers inviting designers to be forward about their needs
    - Being clear about level of technical skill a designer is bringing to the job
    - Vancouver Design Forum will set producers up with designers to get coffee and chat about the process and what each discipline does
    - [artistproducerresource.ca](http://artistproducerresource.ca), ADC producers handbook
- d) *Your career is in a collaborative form, how do you structure your practice?*
- If you are hired in after another designer, it may be beneficial to speak with the original designer
    - You might find out why they didn't take the job, how the earlier process went, the content that was created
    - Some venues are requiring TDs
      - This helps bridge the producer/designer gap
      - Everyone should hire a PM and TD!!
4. Upcoming Forum Events:
- Sound Workshop @ the Cultch - March 23, 7-9
    - Speaker placement, listening to designs from different seats
  - Video Workshop @ SFU - April 5 (TBC)
  - CHRC Workshop March 15 @ The Post, East Studio, 4pm
    - Maintaining Respectful Workspaces workshop
  - Emerging companies and Producers Chat
- Designers will speak on what it is designers do, what a well functioning creative team looks like, who do you need to hire to support a show
5. What would you like the forum to do?
- Good working practices for smaller companies
  - Changing aesthetics in each region of Canada, especially different income brackets
  - Alternative open source plotting programs
  - Share link to Asst. Database (<https://vancouverdesigners.org/assistant-professional-database>)
  - Suggestions for structure changes for the Forum
    - Would like more breakout groups in the forum structure
    - Facilitating a method for when the conversation is changing tacks to make sure everyone/everything gets addressed without being derailed

- Please use VDF email and website as a resource ([vandesignforum@gmail.com](mailto:vandesignforum@gmail.com)) ([vancouverdesigners.org](http://vancouverdesigners.org))
- We like to knowledge share as a community - please contact the VDF if you have a skill you'd like to share, the VDF can help facilitate a workshop
  - GVPTA micro-subsidy for people who are looking for a small learning grant

6. Closing and acknowledgement of ADC