CultureCase

Using Theatre Talks as an audience development tool

This research was conducted by **Louise Ejgod Hansen** at the **University of Aarhus, Denmark**

Summary

This paper describes an in-depth study of 'Theatre Talks' which took place at 18 theatres in central Denmark between 2010 and 2012. The paper highlights the potential of Theatre Talks for audience development (a priority among cultural policies at the Scandinavian and European level). By recording and analysing the opinions of participants, the author assessed the success of Theatre Talks on several fronts. For example, the talks attracted new audiences potentially interested in the arts. They also helped participants open up to new genres and new types of theatrical events.

A focus on the theatre experience

The Theatre Talks took place immediately after the performances and gave the participants the opportunity to reflect on their experience and listen to other points of view. For this study, groups of roughly eight people (all new to the venues) were asked to attend three performances and then talk about them, starting with the question: 'what did you experience?' The focus was not on the 'correct' interpretation of the performance but on having people share their personal reactions to it.

All perspectives were considered valuable

The study examined a variety of performance types and audiences, with the aim of using the talks to generate insight into the diversity of the theatre experience. The philosophy behind the method is that audience development is about entering into dialogue with different groups: theater-goers and people

who rarely go; or people with either a positive or negative attitude towards theatre.

This summary is by **Barbara Bravi, King's Knowledge Exchange Associate**

Keywords

Denmark **theatre** **audience**

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