

Critical reflection on practice: a set of provocations

'Expanding Artistic Horizons' was the theme for Regional Arts Victoria's Regional Cultural Forum in Port Fairy on 21 November 2015, curated by Jo Grant. The day presented the kinds of perspectives that inspire critical reflection on your practice, your collaborations and your organisation – including practice development, physical and mental health, working with leading regional institutions, and pitching and presenting your work.

Regional Arts Victoria's Director, **Esther Anatolitis**, started off the conversation with a few provocations to help you assess the health of your practice:

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- What drives you?
- How do you make the space to understand what drives you?
- And how's your health?
- What does your typical day look like?
- When you need to think something through, what tools do you use? Be aware of how those tools structure your thinking before you've thought it all through.
- Do you routinely reflect on what you're making?
- What stage is your practice at?
- Are you craving space and time for deep practice? Or are you craving instead the networks and provocations to broaden your practice?
- What is it about your practice that's most sustainable? Unsustainable?
- Are you able to articulate what a meaningful, productive, successful practice would mean for you?
- And how would you know?
- Is your practice still developing?
- What risks are you still taking? Where is the risk in your practice?
- Where do your provocations to practice come from?

- Are there mentors in your life? Someone in your life whose role is to challenge you – someone you already feel challenged by – someone outside of your field – more than one person – co-mentoring – formal and informal mentoring?
- How do you set the most productive constraints for your work? Are you happy with the scope of your experimentations?
- What characterises your working style as an individual? As a collaborator? As a leader?
- How does your working style change as an individual? As a collaborator? As a leader?
- If you packed yourself off on a week-long retreat, what would you do? What wouldn't you do? What could it mean for your practice? For your physical health? For your mental health? What could you make possible with that space and time? Or if you consistently dedicated fifteen minutes per day to this kind of reflection, what would it mean for your practice?

It's the arts. We've each chosen to live our lives at a high level of creative and intellectual intensity. If we don't take our bodies with us, our bodies will take us somewhere else altogether. And this affects the work. And this is the work.

Make reflection a habit. Develop your commitments to your practice.