



# HIVE MIND

#POWEREDBYSHUNPIKE

## CROSS-POLLINATION: Connecting the arts ecosystem

September 10, 2015

### Key Takeaways

**Cross-pollination means collaboration.** Collaborations come in many forms, from those that are co-created by a group to those that are directed by an individual leader. However, we agreed that collaboration is different from project management. A true, cross-pollinating effort will engage the intelligence and creativity of each member.

**Collaboration is hard.** It requires a lot of things that we are not trained to do in society—such as working outside a hierarchy, listening closely, and transcending the need to be in control, as well as a certain level of comfort with uncertainty and risk.

**Trust the process.** Some level of trust in the process is necessary for collaborators to succeed. In fact, it's more important to trust the collaborative process than the collaborators.

**Power dynamics exist and need managing.** It's easy for the participant with the most power to dominate a collaboration, with the result that, to quote a participant, "The dominant person becomes the weakest link." Self-awareness, generosity, and conscious listening can help prevent that, as can creative hacks, such as putting the least powerful person in charge.

**Collaboration is often worth it, for its own sake.** Not every collaboration is successful, but every connection across genres helps generate boundary spanners and create new possibilities—not just artistically, but in terms of audiences and the broader community.

### Notes

This was our most diverse Hive Mind yet, in terms of attendees' artistic practice. Acrobatic arts, ceramics, choral music, comedy, dance, installation art, oral history, photography, printmaking, storytelling, technology-based art, theater, video and new media arts, and writing were all represented. Registrants told us that the primary reason they undertake a collaboration is to reach new audiences or communities, followed by artistic benefits and sharing of resources. The biggest reported challenge by far is differing expectations among collaborators.

