

## Special issue CFP: *Experiencing Participation*

Special issue editors: Professor Birgit Eriksson, Professor Carsten Stage and Postdoc Tina Louise Hove Sørensen, Aarhus University, Denmark

This special issue of *Conjunctions. Transdisciplinary Journal of Cultural Participation* invites contributions that explore the experiential dimensions of participation as they unfold across social practices, cultural sectors and disciplines.

According to Christopher Kelty, participation relies on individuals who contribute to a collective, but Kelty also criticizes how participation – not least in an era of social media – is 1) increasingly instrumentalized to obtain certain goals and 2) too focused on aggregating individual contributions, not on enabling a truly collective process to unfold. In that way participation has become synonymous with the strategic use of accumulated individual actions and disconnected from a profound experience of taking part in meaningful collectives where the sum is greater than the parts. Based on his historical studies, Kelty describes the experience of participation as “something more than individual” and as “both individual and collective at the same time” (Kelty, 2019, 18).

From a different, and mainly empirical, angle, Ellie Brodie et al (2011) have researched how and why people participate. By examining this from the perspective of individuals and exploring how and why their participation begins, continues or ends, they argue that sustained participation depends on the quality of the experience of participation, including the extent to which participants “feel they are making a difference and having an impact, whether they feel their contribution is valued, and the quality of the social bonds with other participants” (Brodie et al, 2011, 6).

The special issue aims to empirically and theoretically explore the experience of participatory processes and the complex interplay between participation and experience. What (if any) are the differences between the experience of participating in something bigger like a concert audience or crowd, and the experience of a shift in power balance and influence? Or between invited or self-organized participation (Cornwall 2008)? How does the experience of participation change over time? How are various experiences of participation linked to each other – does repeated experiences of participation for instance create expert participants? And what are the difference between participatory experiences taking place in e.g. a museum, political movement, local neighborhood or social media public?

We invite empirical, theoretical, methodological and practice informed contributions that address the question of how participation is experiential. Articles can address (but are not limited to) the following topics:

- The experience of participation in various practices, contexts and sectors
- Potential differences between the experience of participation and other types of collective experience
- Spaces and atmospheres of participation

- Negative experiences of participation and/or citizen involvement
- Participation fatigue
- Methodological challenges of and approaches to exploring participation as experience
- Affect theoretical approaches to participation
- The implications of approaching and evaluating participation as an experiential term and process
- How particular experiences can spur participatory engagements

The overall focus of the journal is to explore the socially transformative and democratic potential of cultural participation processes, to qualify the academic understanding of what 'participation' is and what it involves, and to discuss the complex relations created between user-generated processes and established institutions and discourses.

Please submit an abstract of max 500 words presenting the core argument(s) of your paper. Abstracts must be submitted to the issue editors (on [norcs@cc.au.dk](mailto:norcs@cc.au.dk), [aekbe@cc.au.dk](mailto:aekbe@cc.au.dk) or [aesttls@cc.au.dk](mailto:aesttls@cc.au.dk)).

If your abstract is accepted, and you are asked to submit a full paper, we may ask you to contribute to the issue publication process by (double-blind) peer-reviewing another paper submitted to the issue.

Timeline:

Deadline for abstracts (max. 500 words): February 1, 2023

Notifications of acceptance: February 15, 2023

Deadline for articles: August 10, 2023

Online submissions: <https://www.sciendo.com/journal/TJCP>

About the journal: <https://sciendo.com/journal/TJCP>

Any questions related to this special edition can be sent to:

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