

## Culture Professionals Network

Creative thinking, advice and connections for the arts and heritage community



# Remix conference 2013 roundup

**Matthew Caines** reports back from the Remix conference in London, which featured some of the leading minds from the worlds of culture, technology and entrepreneurship



Jude Kelly gave the most sincere and personal presentation of the day: her message was that culture should be for the many, not the few. Photograph: Ciaran Spencer

What does the future hold for arts and culture? According to culture minister Ed Vaizey, "it's the very exciting coming together of culture, creativity and digital technology". If not a bit too general, that's as good a quote as any to describe yesterday's Remix conference which, from the creators of CultureLabel.com, looked to explore the intersection between culture, technology and entrepreneurship.

## 'Computers are growing up'

While Vaizey delivered one of the most neatly packaged soundbites of the day, it was the more complex and difficult debates that really delivered. One such conversation was between the Guardian's Jemima Kiss, Berg's Matt Webb and creative director of Tate Media, Jane Burton, who all weighed in on the overall theme of the conference.

"We're seeing the end of the PC era," said Webb matter-of-factly when asked about what he sees on the horizon for the creative arts and enterprise. Technologies like the revamped Kinect on the Xbox One console are signalling a move towards more group-based, socially interactive digital experiences, he explained. It sounds a bit "like computers are growing up," added Kiss.

What about from an arts point of view? It's less about group interaction, and more about the personal experience, answered Burton. Technologies in the gallery space are great, she admitted, but what we don't want is people hunched over mobile phones – we need to ensure visitors don't "go back to the screen".

So what's the answer: Google Glass? While she personally won't be donning a pair, Burton still thinks heads-up technologies are the way forward. The problem galleries

have is "a reverence" for the White Cube aesthetic, she said, before adding that there's something said for getting "messy" in the gallery space – allowing audiences to "leave their mark" digitally.

---

## 'There should always be a fee for the artist'

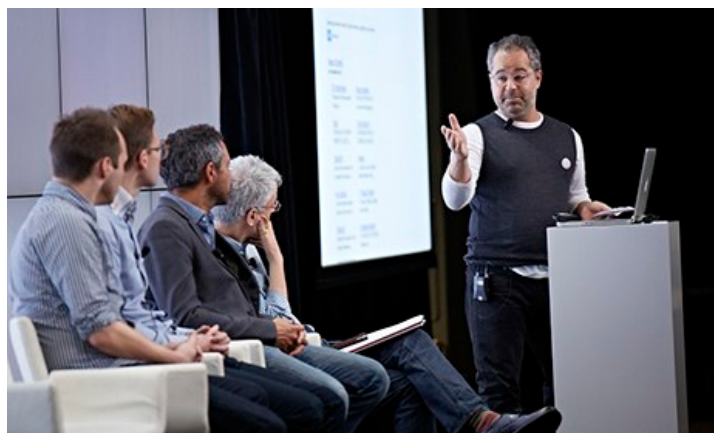
---

A panel on building creative businesses promised plenty, featuring senior figures from Arts Council England, Spotify and Eventbrite. But it was Emily Pethick, director of The Showroom's who really spoke the most sense.

When questioned about new artists and their need (or not) to be entrepreneurial, she answered: "As a young artist, you don't have much choice but to jump into a mixed economy." She explained that a young artist might do odd jobs, or hold several to support their work: "Young artists are incredibly resourceful in creating economies through which they can produce."

So what do they need? Time, she answered, and not just a few extra days; more like a year, to develop and be fully supported. What else? Pay, said Pethick: "There should always be a fee for the artist."

Arts Council England chief Alan Davey didn't really address the issue when he mused on the "worrying" practices of some larger organisations in paying artists very little, while Pethick rightly called for proper artist fees to be built into new business models in the arts.



James Brett at

London's REMIX conference. Photograph: Ciaran Spencer

---

## Passion projects

---

James Brett, founder of the Museum of Everything, proved a refreshing voice on a panel about making your audience fall in love with you. Brett, who started by accusing a lot of creatives of "phoning their passion in" went on to reveal that real passion came from staying true to yourself or your brand.

One conference attendee raised a good question about audiences becoming disgruntled or put-out in the face of their favourite organisations looking to change, likening the situation to getting a new boyfriend or girlfriend, when your friends (the audience) prefer the old one.

In Brett's view, it was simple: you don't think about the audience; you stay true to yourself. It's difficult in a corporate structure, he said, but the best films, for example, don't think about their audience and are not compromised by them. "If you're coming from an authentic point of view, that authenticity will communicate," he concluded.

## Culture for the many, not the few

In the most sincere and personal presentation of the day, Jude Kelly, artistic director at [Southbank Centre](#), spoke about the democratisation of arts and culture – a problematic phrase she found difficult to define.

She called for a move away from the tribalism and institutionalism that surrounded art and instead encouraged organisations to explore and implement, like Southbank, "new kinds of initiation" – they should insist, she added, "that culture is at the forefront of that". Her key message? That culture should be for the many, not the few.

## Lessons learned

The last keynote of the day was reserved for Richard Reed, co-founder of [Innocent Drinks](#) and [Art Everywhere](#), the world's largest art show. In an entertaining presentation, Reed gave five lessons learned from his various projects – ones that any entrepreneur, arts venue or tech startup should find useful:

- Organise around a simple, single idea
- Recruit dreamers who do – and get rid of those who don't
- Start small – but do start
- Work the details – "it's not the elephants that will kill you; it's the ants"
- Be open – allow the audience to participate in and with the brand

*The [Culture Professionals Network](#) is media partner for REMIX*

**This content is brought to you by [Guardian Professional](#). To get more articles like this direct to your inbox, sign up free to become a [member of the Culture Professionals Network](#).**

[Previous](#)

[Blog home](#)

[Next](#)

### More from the Guardian [What's this?](#)

[Nordicana sale in London makes a killing from Scandinavian culture](#) 02 Feb 2014

[Anne McIntosh's deselection doesn't equal a crisis for Westminster's women](#) 03 Feb 2014

[Why film's outsiders get our sympathy](#) 31 Jan 2014

[Corrections and clarifications](#) 05 Feb 2014

[Sinkhole swallows car in High Wycombe](#) 03 Feb 2014

### More from around the [What's this?](#)

#### web

[Stop Paying So Much For Your Hotel Room. 4 Simple Steps to Cheaper Rates](#) (A Luxury Travel Blog)

[How to Outsmart the Airlines and Beat the Shrinking Airplane Seat](#) (Skift.com)

[Top Five Packing Tips](#) (iTrip)

[What Happens to Your Workplace Pension When Changing Jobs or Taking Leave](#) (www.gov.uk)

[How to Study in Six Simple Steps](#) (Dummies.com)



© 2014 Guardian News and Media Limited or its affiliated companies. All rights reserved.