The Æffect Worksheet

Introduction

This tool is designed for artistic activists who want to maximize their impact by clarifying, strengthening, and assessing the affect and effect -- or æffect -- of their work. It is not going to tell you what to do, how to do it, or how to know if you have done it, instead it will lead you through a series of questions so you can discover all this yourself. The seven stages you'll go through in this process are:

1. *Goals:* What do you want to accomplish?
2. *Audience*: Who do you want to reach?
3. *Ethics:* What principles guide your work?
4. *Intervention:* What do you want to create?
5. *Metrics:* How will you know if it works?
6. *Evaluation:* Did it work?
7. *Iteration:* What can you improve for next time?

This fillable worksheet is meant to stay with you through your entire creative process, from clarifying your intent all the way to assessing your impact, and beyond. There are many steps, and to get the most out of this process we encourage you to go through them all. But not all at one sitting! With a pdf reader you can fill-in, save, re-open, edit and re-edit this document as you move along with your project. Or you can print this worksheet out and fill it in by hand.

Goals

The first, and probably most important, question to answer when starting a project is about goals. What do you want your project to do? Artists sometimes call this goal-setting intent, and for artistic activists any discussion of intent needs to include your Artistic Aims as well as your Activist Goals, as well as how you will apply these toward a concrete Objective.

Artistic Aims

Your artistic aim is the *affect* you want to generate. Maybe you want to create an experience that generates a feeling of clarity...or questioning. Perhaps you want your project to foster a sense of community...or alienation. Or, possibly, you want to create an "aha" moment, drawing attention to things that usually go unnoticed in public spaces. Or encourage a sense of empowerment: a feeling that people have the power to change the world. This is not the time or place to plan out your intervention—you'll do that later. Right now just reflect on the affective impact you want your project to have.

What is your artistic aim?

Activist Goals

Now it's time to turn to your activist goal. This is what sort of social change you want to make in the world: the *effect* you desire. Allow yourself to be ambitious. Later, you'll make your activist goal into more do-able *objectives*. Now is the time to Dream Big. Solve climate change. Abolish prisons. End war.

What is your activist goal?

Objectives

With your intent in mind, it's time to get a bit more specific and start thinking about translating your activist goal into concrete *objectives*. Whereas goals are big and bold and sometimes unrealistic, objectives are demonstrable, measurable milestones that let you know if you are making progress and moving in the right direction. Solving climate change is a goal; passing a local law prohibiting the use of disposable garbage bags is an *objective.* There will be multiple objectives along the way to reach any goal, but for now you need just one.

What is the objective of your project?

SMART Objectives

We are going to get a bit wonky here and talk about S.M.A.R.T. objectives. The concept comes from the business world, but it can be really useful for making more æffective artistic activism. S.M.A.R.T. objectives are:

Specific: They identify a particular thing you want to do, change, or impact.
Measurable: They include something that can be evaluated to determine whether you've accomplished, or made progress toward, what you set out to do.
Achievable: They need to be something you can realistically hope to attain.
Relevant: They need to be in alignment with your overall goal.
Timed: They need to have a deadline.

Look back at your objective and see if there are ways that you can make it SMARTer.

How is your objective Specific?

How is your objective Measurable?

How is your objective Achievable?

How is your objective Relevant?

How is your objective Timed?

At this point you can go back and revise your objective above to reflect what you've just discovered here. Then on to...

Audience

Once you have an idea about what you want your project to do, you need to think about who you want your project to reach. Audience is particularly important in artistic activism because social change happens when people are moved to change, and your project can help move them. Every audience has signs, symbols, and stories that resonate particularly with them. Identifying your audience and understanding their culture means a better likelihood of æffecting them. This is easier with a clearly defined audience. We'll start by exploring who has the power to realize your objective.

Power Map

When planning campaigns for social change, activists often do something called power mapping. The basics are simple: you map out *who* has the power to realize your objective

so you can direct your project toward them. If your objective is to get a community creatively involved in your project, then the people who have the power to do this are those people themselves. If your aim is to publicize a problem, then those who have the most power to do this might be news reporters or bloggers or even popular sports figures or musicians. If you want to get a law passed, then who has the power to do that? Probably politicians. But it can get tricky too. While politicians pass laws, the people with power over politicians are voters (or rich donors). Similarly, while the news media can spread your message, often these media are beholden to advertisers. And communities often follow the advice and example of leaders in that community. This is why it is important to map out all those who have power to create the change you want, as well as those who have power over them. By doing this you can determine who is the most impactful audience to target with your project.

Who has the power to realize your objective? And why?

Primary Audience

Now that you've identified who has the power to realize your objective, the question of who is your most important, or primary, audience should be easier.

Who is your primary audience?

Why do you want to reach this audience?

The next step combines who your audience is with impact. A good way to think this through is to imagine what you want your audience to *Think*, *Feel,* and *Do* when they experience your artistic activist intervention. You can't control these things, of course, and people have minds, hearts, and bodies of their own, but reflecting upon these questions helps you clarify your intent and makes for a stronger project.

What do you want your Primary audience to THINK?

What do you want your Primary audience to FEEL?

What do you want your Primary audience to DO?

Your primary audience is the most important audience for your project. It might be politicians, passersby, participants...or even yourself. But unless you are completely isolated in your garret other audiences will come into contact with your project, so it's good to consider secondary and unintended audiences as well.

Secondary Audience

A Secondary audience is not the most important audience you want to attract and move, but it is one that you would still like to reach—or at least not alienate. The media or police sometimes fall into this category. These are not people who can directly help you realize your objectives, but they might help or hurt your chances of success. If you have more than one audience in mind, feel free to list a few.

Who is your Secondary audience?

Why do you want to reach this audience?

Reflect upon what you want your Secondary audience to Think, Feel, and Do. If you have a few audiences in mind, that's OK, you can repeat the prompt for each one.

What do you want your Secondary audience to THINK?

What do you want your Secondary audience to FEEL?

What do you want your Secondary audience to DO?

Unintended Audience

The final group to consider is your unintended audience. This is a hard audience to plan for because it is, well, unintended. Because interventions are often carried out in public you can't always control who comes into contact with your work. People can have all sorts of reactions—both positive and negative—that you haven't imagined. For example, a project aimed at mobilizing neighbors to pick up garbage in an abandoned lot to transform it into a community garden might seem pretty straight forward. But to sanitation workers whose job it is to clear public spaces, or homeless people living in the lot, your project might seem like a threat. So, it's worth considering who you *might* reach and how you might want them to react...or not react.

Who might be an unintended audience or audiences?

Why do you need to consider this audience(s)?

And...

What do you want your Unintended audience to THINK?

What do you want your Unintended audience to FEEL?

What do you want your Unintended audience to DO?

Ethics

With goals and audience sorted out, it's time to think about the *ethics* of your project. Creativity is a powerful force. Most successful struggles for social justice have used artistic activism…but so too did the Nazi Party. Because artistic activism is not only about you, but engages with the wider world, you have a responsibility to think about the *ethics* of your practice. This is why it is important to develop an ethical code that guides your work.

How to do this? One way is to think about your ultimate *goal*, and imagine the qualities of the world you are working toward. Would your world be sustainable? Would that society reward kindness? Would people be truthful? If so, then start your list with: fostering sustainability, caring for others, and telling the truth.

 Another way to clarify what you value is to reflect upon what you dislike about the world today. Humans are destroying the environment, people are encouraged to only look out

only for themselves, and politicians lie. Flip these things on their head, turn negatives into positives, and you have the values of Sustainability, Kindness, and Truth.

What are the core values that make up your ethical code?
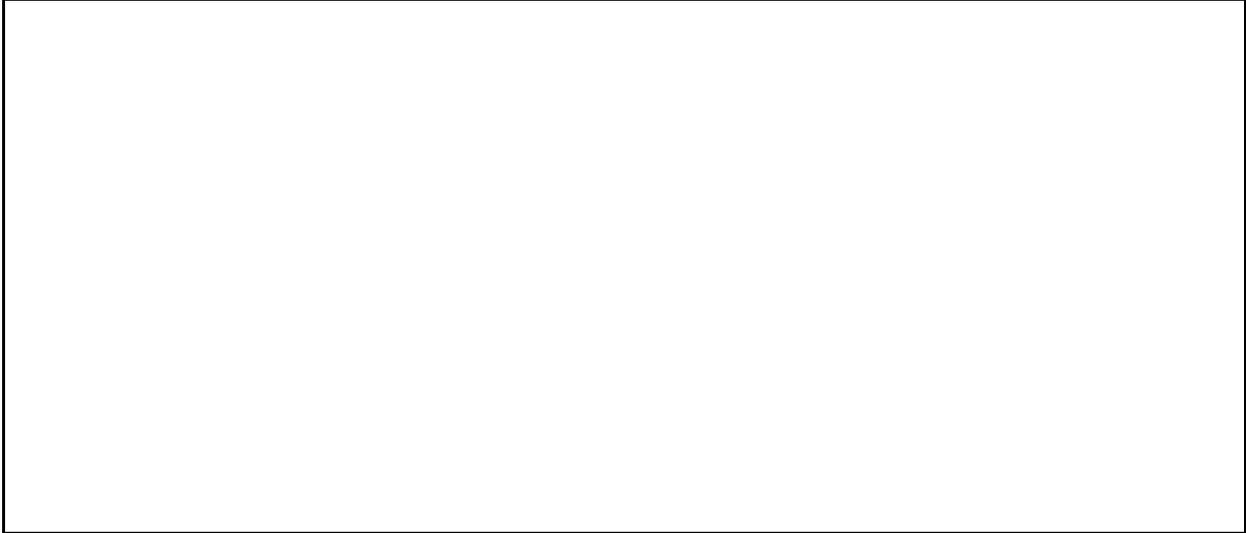
As you move from planning to the execution of your project think back frequently to your code of ethics, and ask yourself:
- Are my aims, goals, and objectives consistent with my ethical code?
- Are the values expressed by my project true to my ethical code?
- Was my project created according to my ethical code?
- Is the intended æffect of my project in line with my ethical code?

But right now, give some thought to how you will apply your ethics.

How will you apply your ethical code to your project?
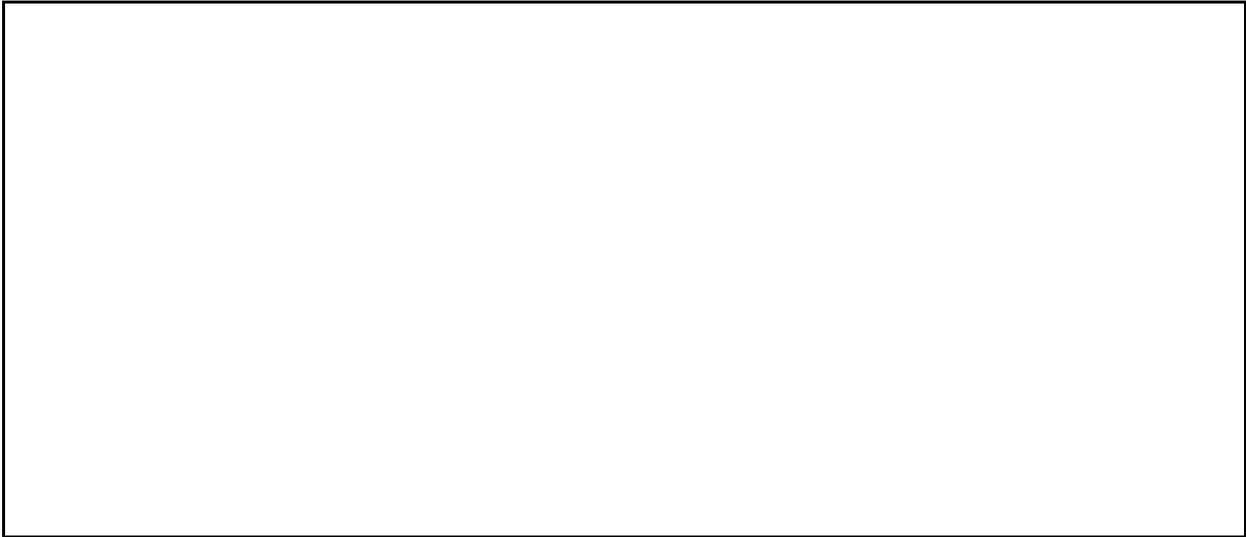
Intervention

You have a better idea of the impact you want your project to have, who you want your audience to be, and the ethics of your practice. It's *finally* time to get down to the creative business of designing your artistic activist intervention: What do you want to create? Keep in mind all of the work you've done so far about intent, audience, and ethics. Let all this information support your creativity, but don't let it constrain you. This is just a preliminary sketch of what your project will be like. Don't try and get it perfect. You'll revise, and revise again, as you give it more thought and it moves from an idea to reality.

What is your idea for an intervention?

Intention Check-in

Now that you have a sketch of your intervention, you'll want to check it against what you originally wanted your project to do:

How will your intervention get you closer to your aims, goals, and objectives?

Having thought a bit about your intervention in light of your original intent, you might want to go back above and revise it.

Audience Check-in

It's time to do the same check-in with your audiences, thinking about whether the intervention you are planning will reach the audiences you want in the ways you want it to. You may not have all the answers now. That's OK, but by asking these sorts of questions, even if you have to guess a bit with the answers, you get closer to creating work that can touch and move people.

How will your intervention address your audiences?
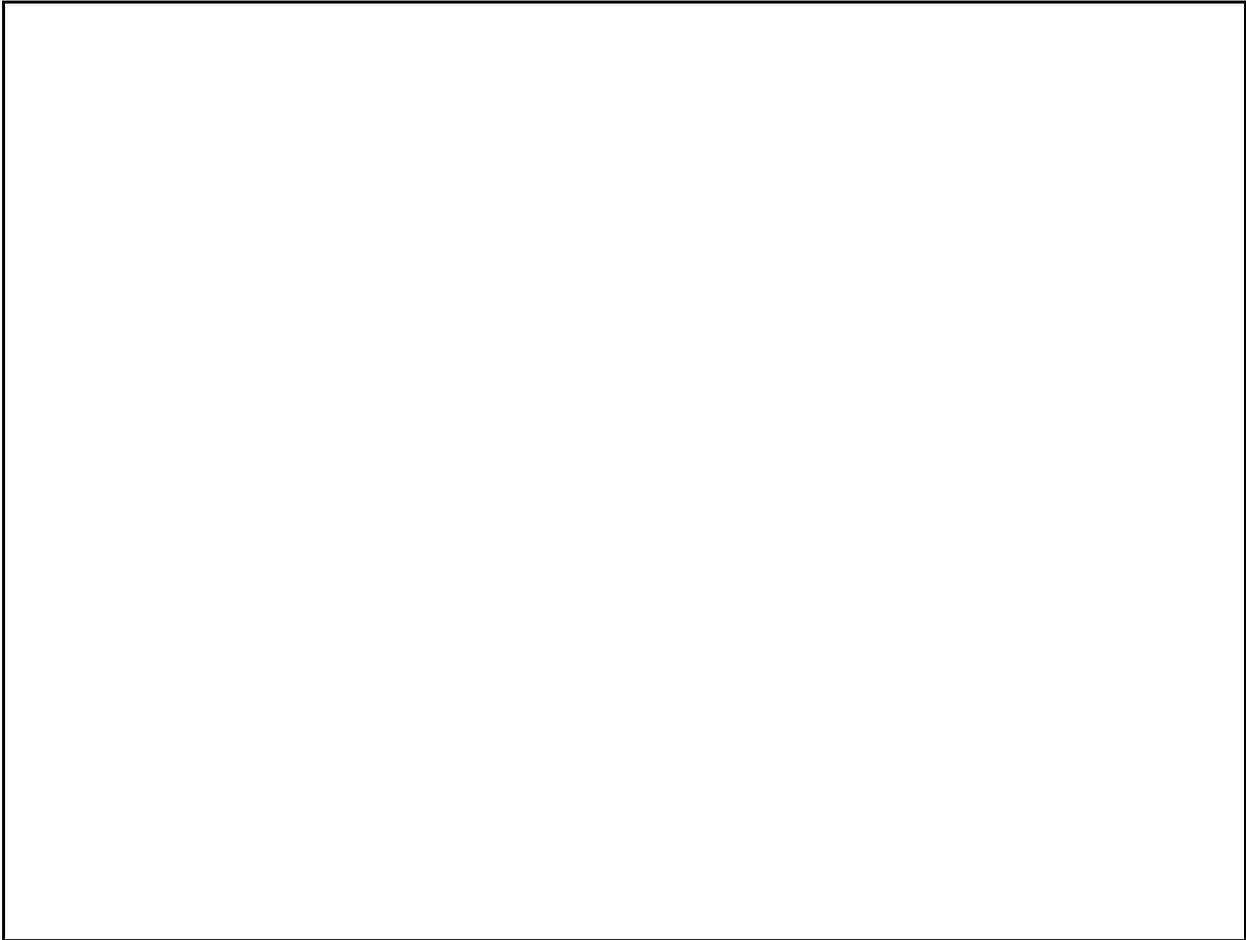
Having reflected upon your audiences, do you want to revise your intervention idea? If so, go back and do so.

Ethical Check-In

The final check-in you need to do is with your ethics. Does your project conform to your ethical code? You'll need to reflect back upon your ethics often as you move from the planning to the execution and evaluation of your project. But now that you have an idea of what your intervention will look like, it's time for your first check-in:

How will your intervention meet your ethical code?

Having thought a bit more about ethics, do you want to revise your original intervention idea?

Metrics

It is only now, after we've gained clarity about our goals and audiences and ethics, and come up with an intervention idea, that we can begin to directly address the question of: How will you know if it has worked? This is the moment to give some thought to how you might know if you have met your goals. Or, because goals are usually pretty big and ambitious, whether you are moving in the right direction. A good way to do this is to ask yourself this question: If everything goes amazingly well with my project, what will be the result? In other words:

How will you know if your project is a success?

Evaluation Tools

But how, exactly, will you know this happened? To determine with any certainty that you've done what you set out to do, you need to observe your intervention and people's interactions, you need to talk to people and ask them what they think, feel, and might do, and you need to keep an eye out for media mentions and look for changes in policies and power. In other words you need to come up with ways to measure the impact you want to have.

Social scientists have devised many ways to do this: Documentation, Observation, Interviews, Surveys, Focus Groups, Publicity Analysis, and so on. These are traditional evaluation tools, but you needn't be limited to them. Use your creativity to devise your own tools, and perhaps even build them into your intervention. Artistic activists have created Comment Walls so their audience can write out their thoughts and feelings. Others have concluded their interventions with Speak-Out Sessions to solicit feedback,

facilitated a Call and Response to voice division or unity, and built Interactive Props that measure public opinion. Check out the Evaluation Tools Resource link where you downloaded this form, do some research, ask advice from friends, brainstorm a bit and come up with "tools" that will help you measure your impact. Then ask yourself:

What evaluation tools will you use to know if your project is a success?
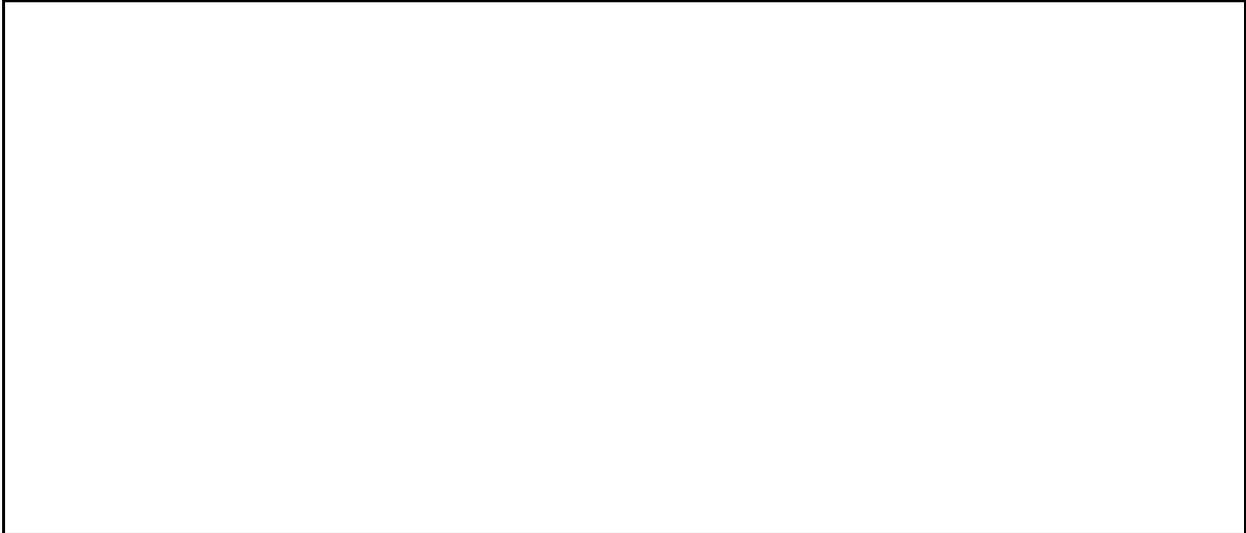
And..

What can you learn from each of these tools?

It's time to get a bit more granular. Earlier you identified your Primary audience and what you wanted them to Think, Feel, and Do. Now it's time to ask:

How will you know if you've reached your Primary audience?

How will you know what they are Thinking?
How will you know what they are Feeling?
How will you know what they are Doing?
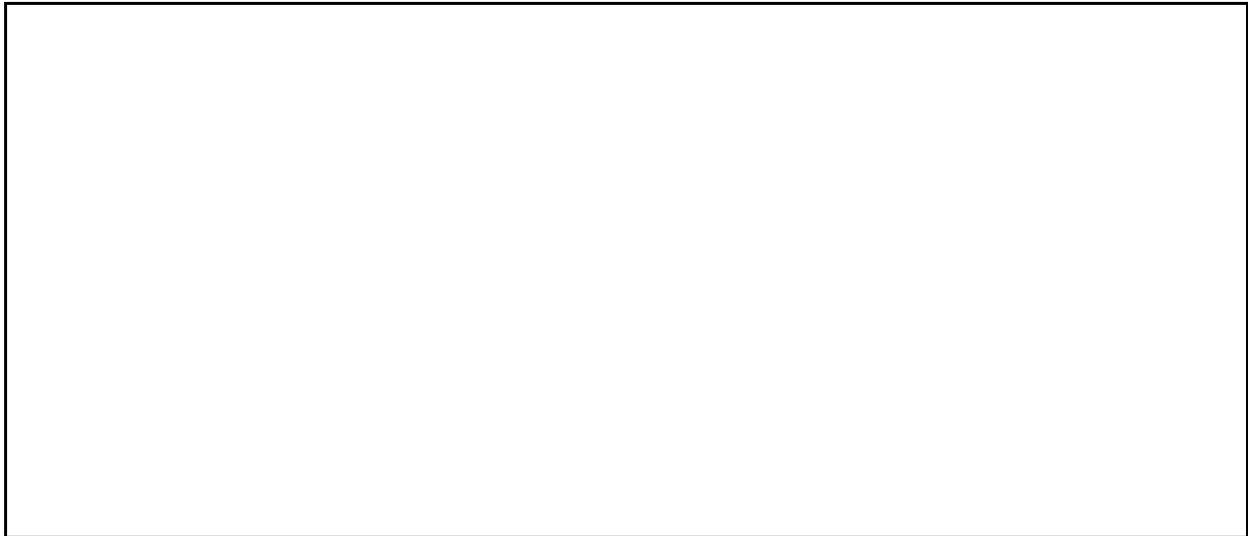
Again, we need to get a bit more concrete and think about the tools you might use to measure whether you've succeeded at what you set out to do.

What evaluation tools will you use?

What can you learn from these?
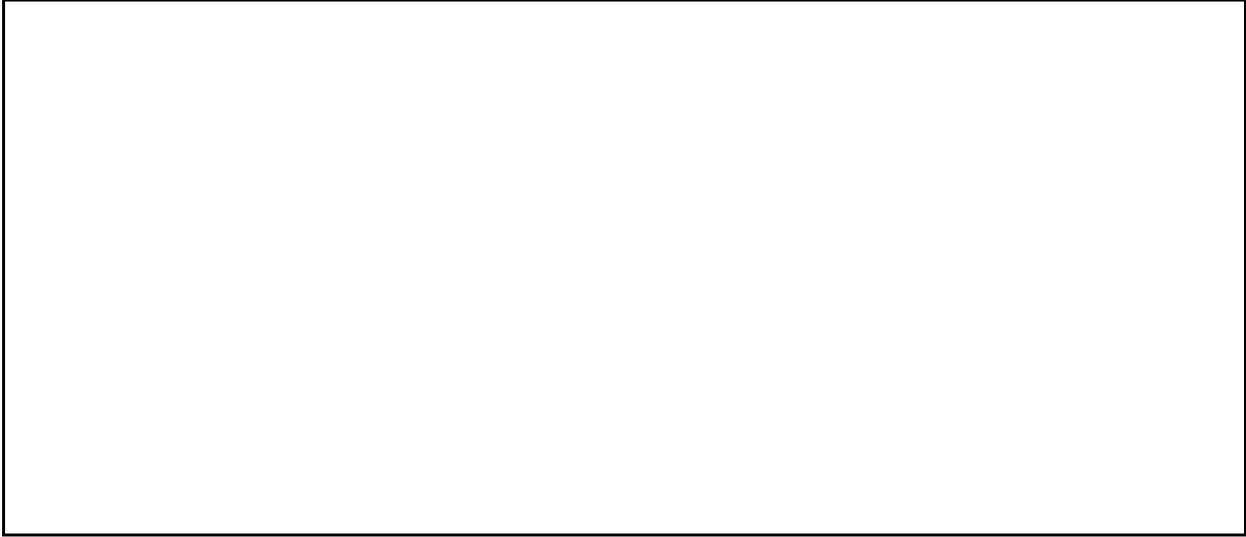
Now turn to your Secondary audience:

How will you know if you've reached your Secondary audience?

How will you know what they are Thinking?
How will you know what they are Feeling?
How will you know what they are Doing?
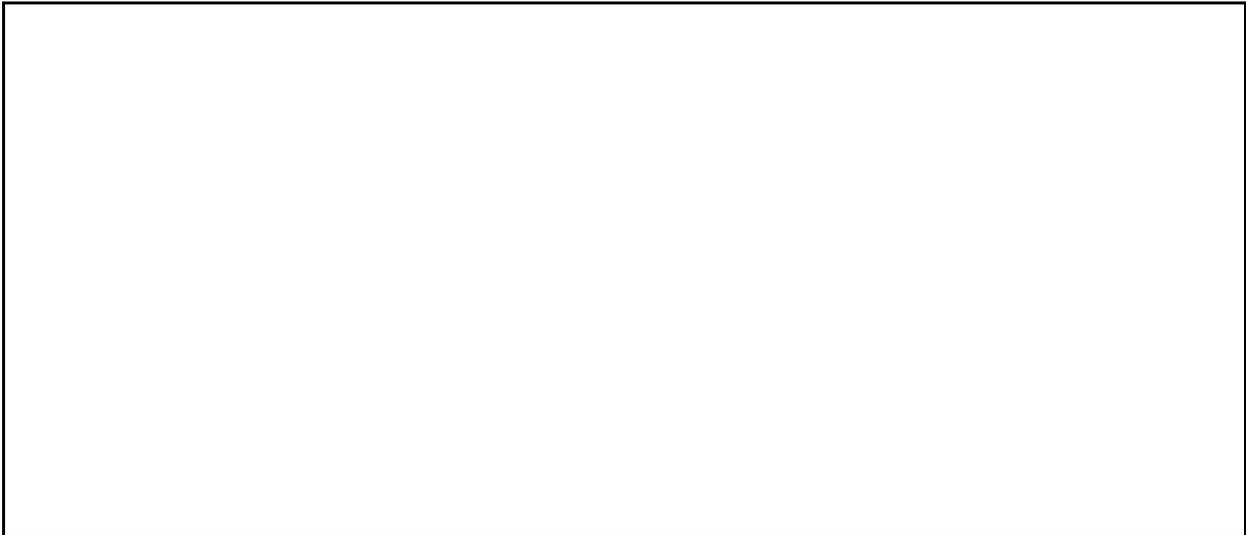
Again, we need to get a bit more concrete and think about the tools you might use to measure whether you've succeeded at what you set out to do.

What evaluation tools will you use?
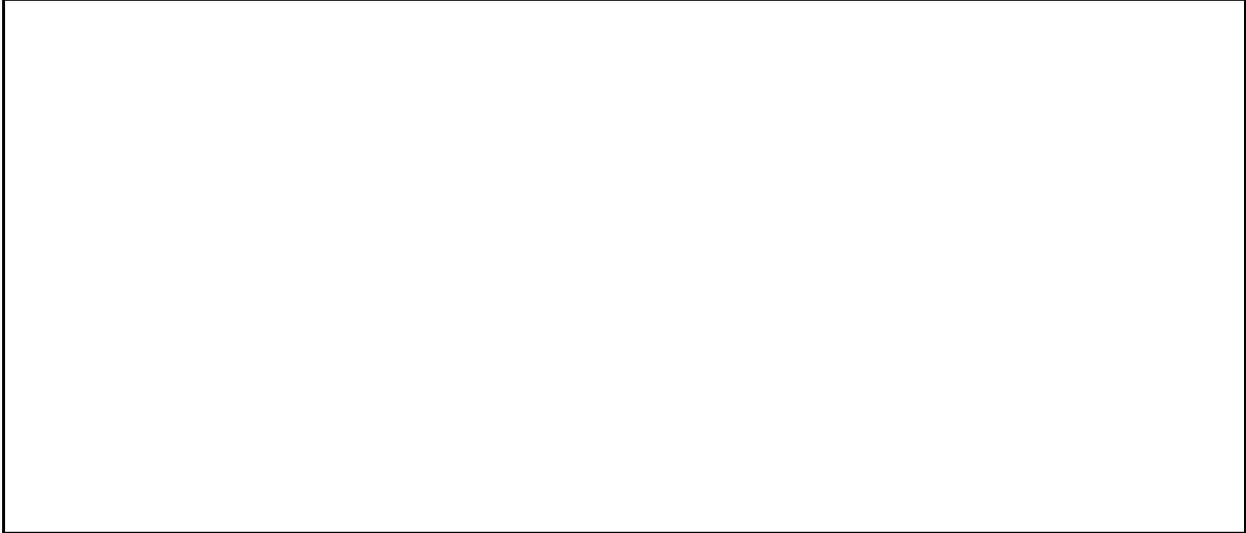
What can you learn from these?
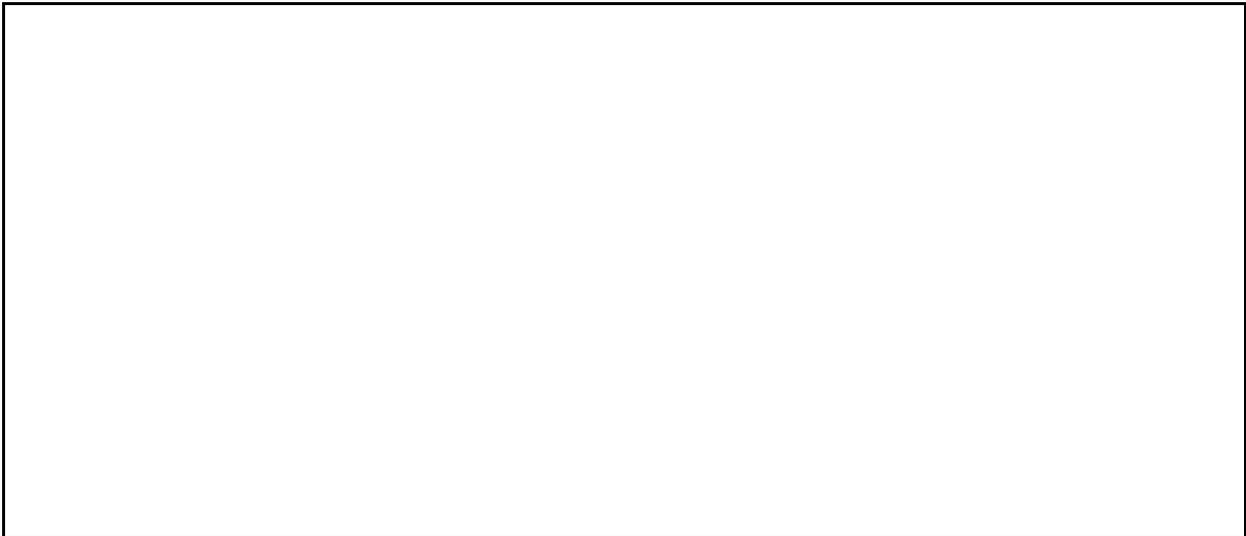
And finally:

How will you know if you've reached your Unintended audience?

How will you know what they are Thinking?
How will you know what they are Feeling?
How will you know what they are Doing?
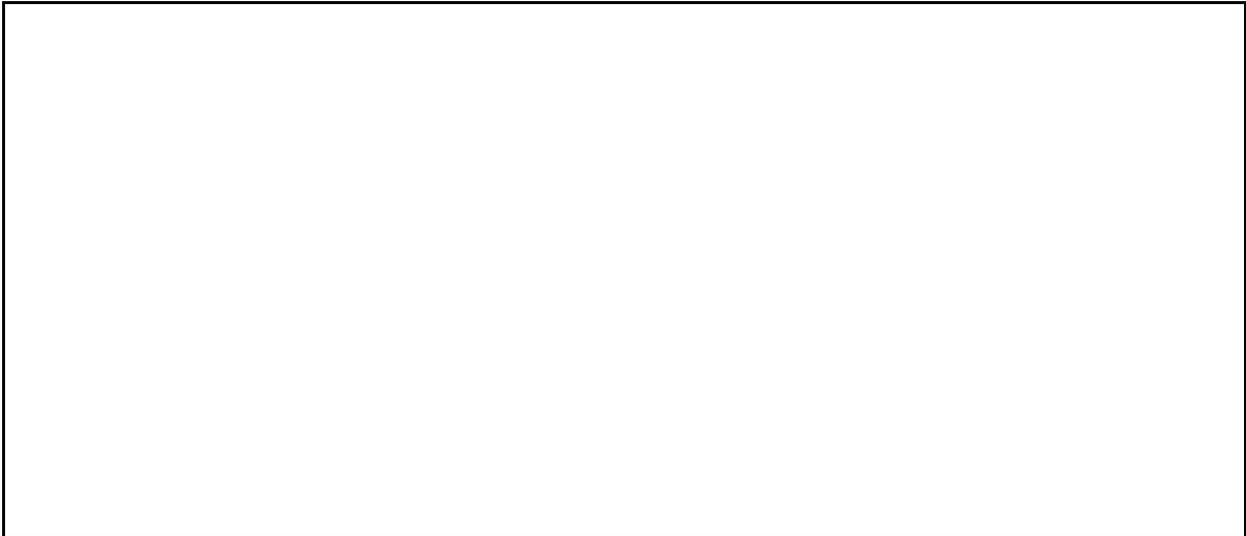
What evaluation tools will you use?
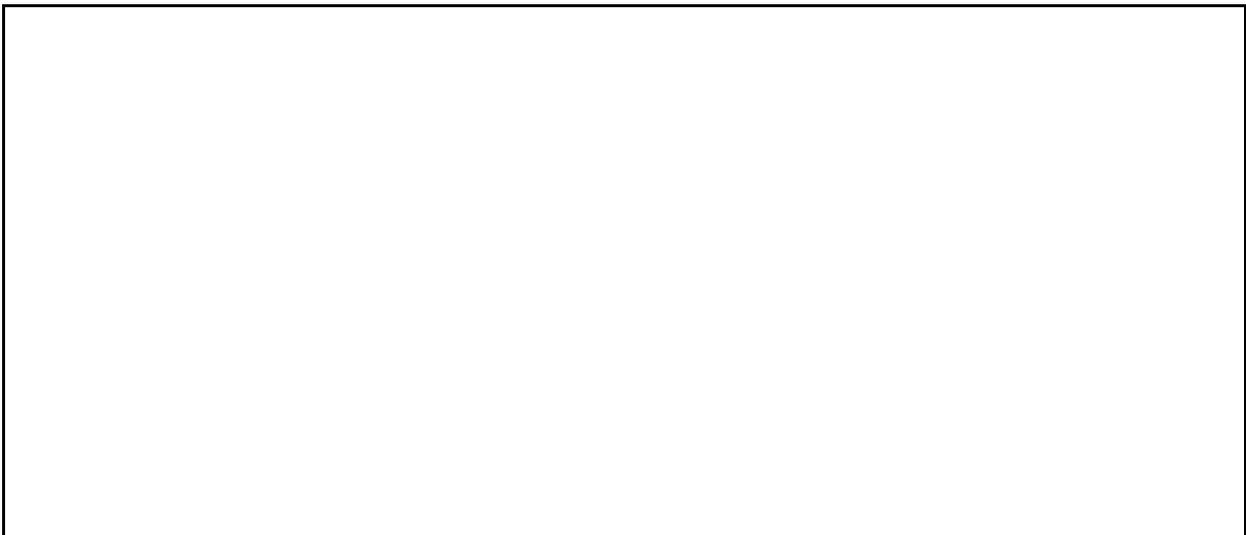
What can you learn from these?
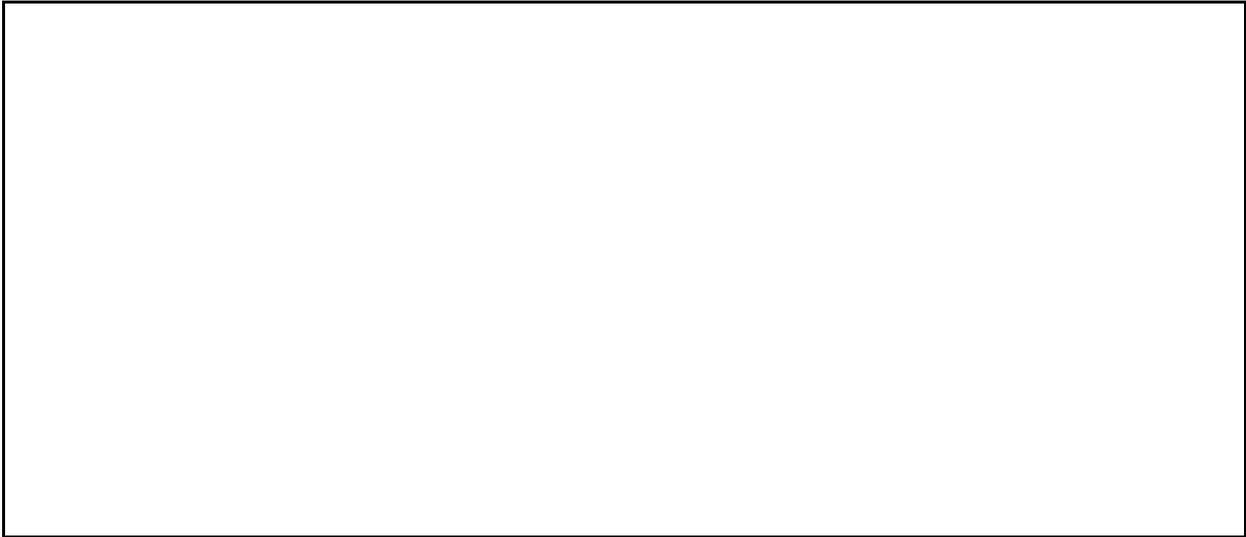
Evaluation Plan

You now have a good idea of what evaluation tools you will use to evaluate the impact of your project, but we need to come up with a plan for how this measurement will happen. What resources will you need? Is there any research or training that might be helpful? Who might help you? What will they do? Keep your plan simple, but try and anticipate what needs to happen to measure impact in the way you want.

What is your evaluation plan?
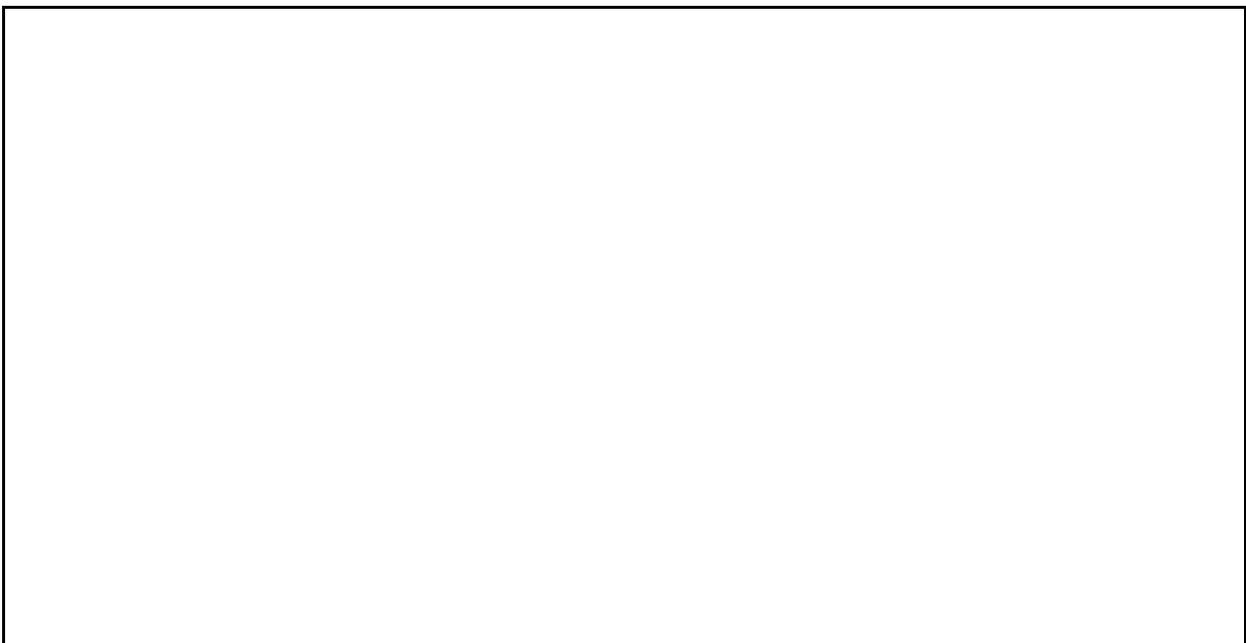
Evaluation

Intervention Evaluation

You did it! You staged your intervention!! Pat yourself on the back and take a breather. Ready to start up again? It's time noe to analyze and evaluate what happened, asking: Did it work? This doesn't mean judging your project as a "success" or "failure," only taking the opportunity to reflect upon what happened: what worked as you expected, what didn't, and what worked in ways you never anticipated. The first step is to just describe, in as much detail as possible, what happened when you carried out your intervention. What was the location, the duration, the look and feel—and maybe even the sound and smell—of it?
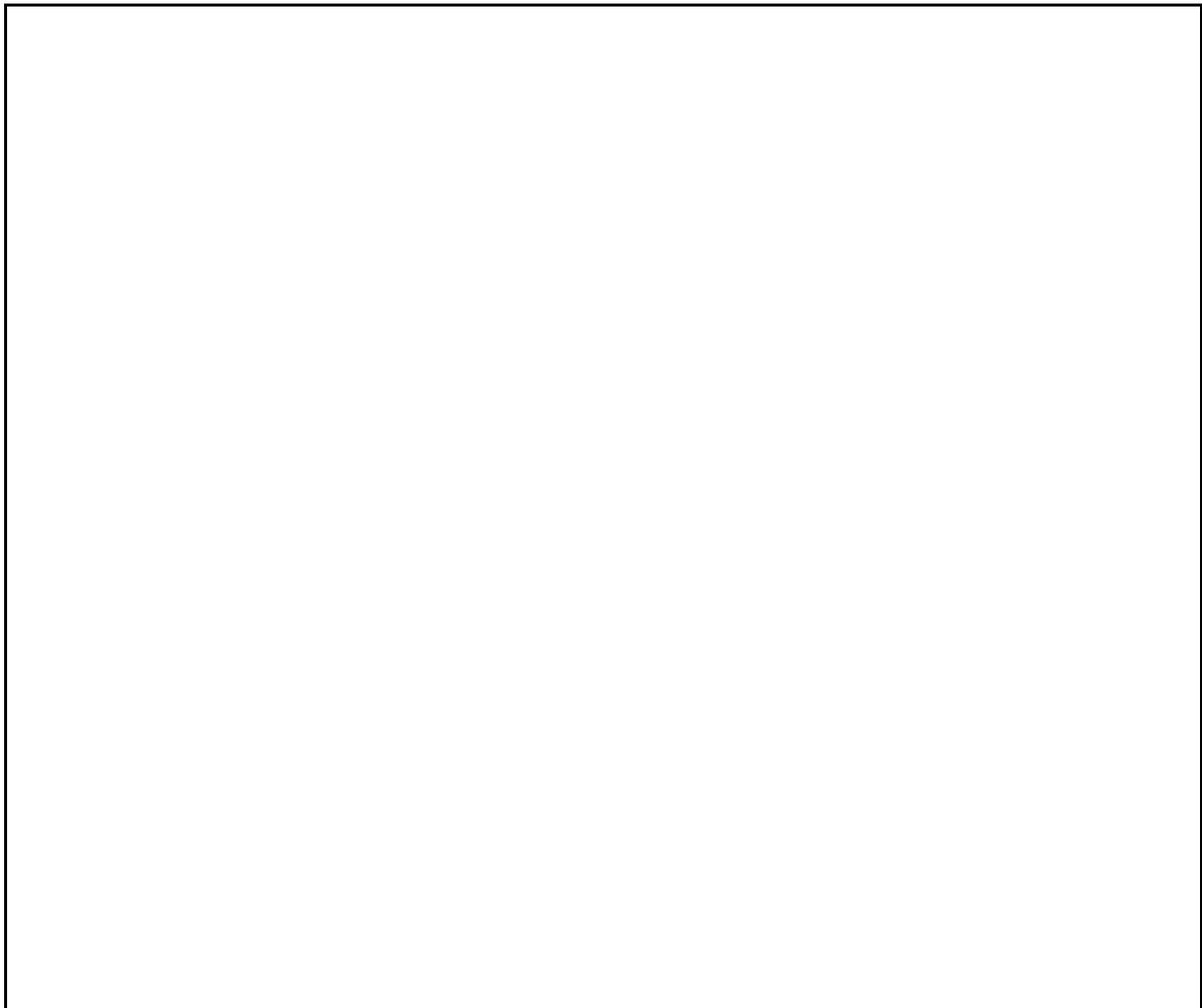
What happened?

Next, take a few moments and describe how you feel about what happened. Sometimes in recalling our feelings we notice things we might otherwise leave out of our description.

What did you feel?

```

```

Did anything happen you weren't expecting? Artistic activism, like all forms of artistic expression, often surprises us by generating unexpected outcomes. Sometimes these are happy wonders, and sometimes they are unpleasant blows. But in all cases, good or bad, these surprises can signal new ways to approach our project and our practice. This is why it's useful to reflect upon what happened that you weren't expecting to happen.

What surprised you?

```

```

Audience Evaluation

It's time to go a bit deeper into your evaluation. We'll start with your audiences because the social impact of artistic activism largely comes through its impact on an audience. The tools you used to measure audience impact are a good starting point, so be sure to report what each tool allowed you to discover. But don't be surprised if along the way you've discovered other ways of evaluating whether you reached your audience. The important thing is to reflect deeply on what actually happened. Start with thinking about your main audience:

How do you know if you reached your Primary audience?

Evaluating whether you reached your audience is a good first step, but what we really want to know is what sort of impact we had on our audiences. What did you want them to Think, Feel, and Do... and did any of this actually happen? That's what you are going to explore now:

What was your Primary audience Thinking?

How do you know this?

What was your Primary audience Feeling?
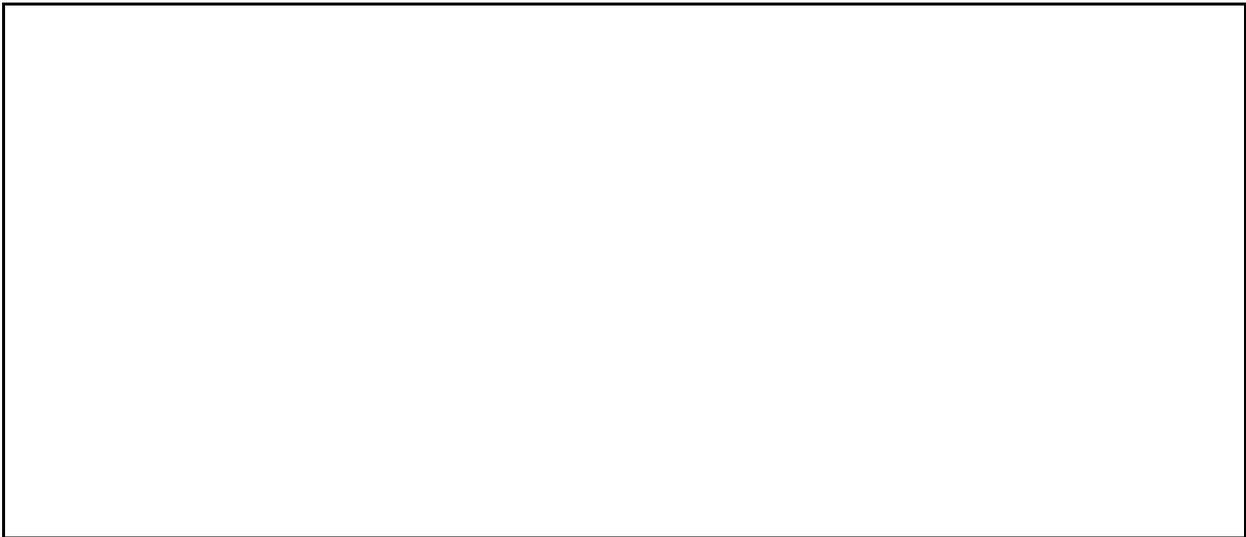
How do you know this?

What was your Primary audience Doing?
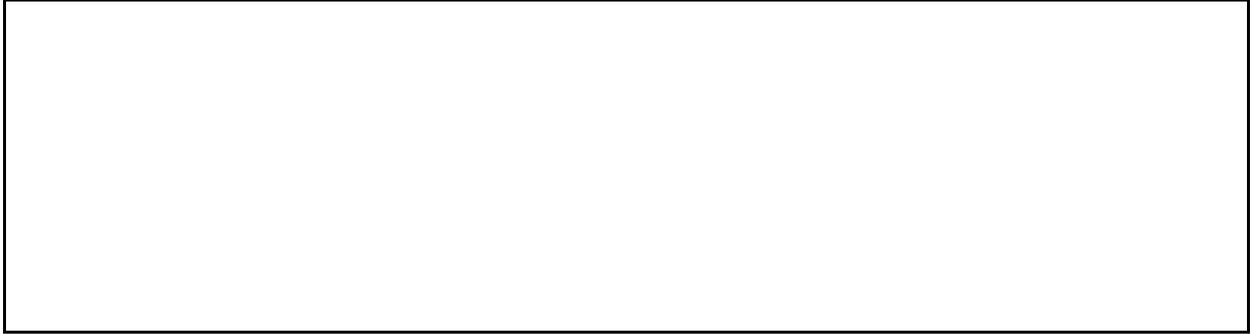
How do you know this?

Moving on to your Secondary audience:

How do you know if you reached your Secondary audience?
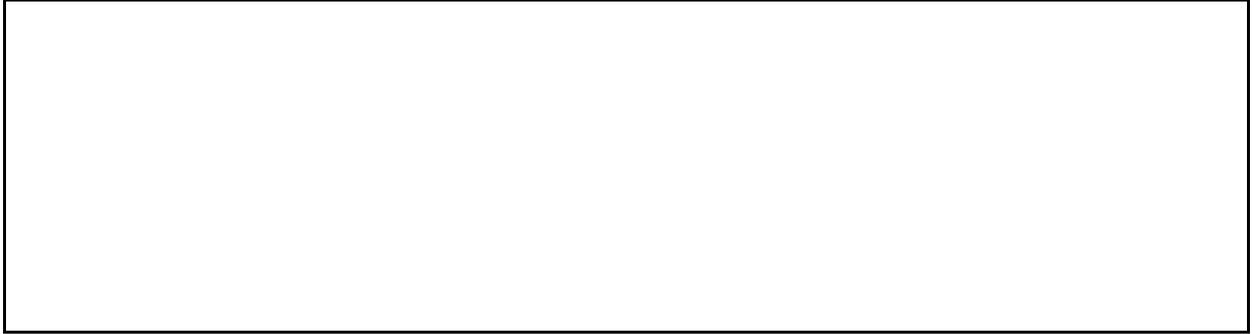
What was your Secondary audience Thinking?

How do you know this?

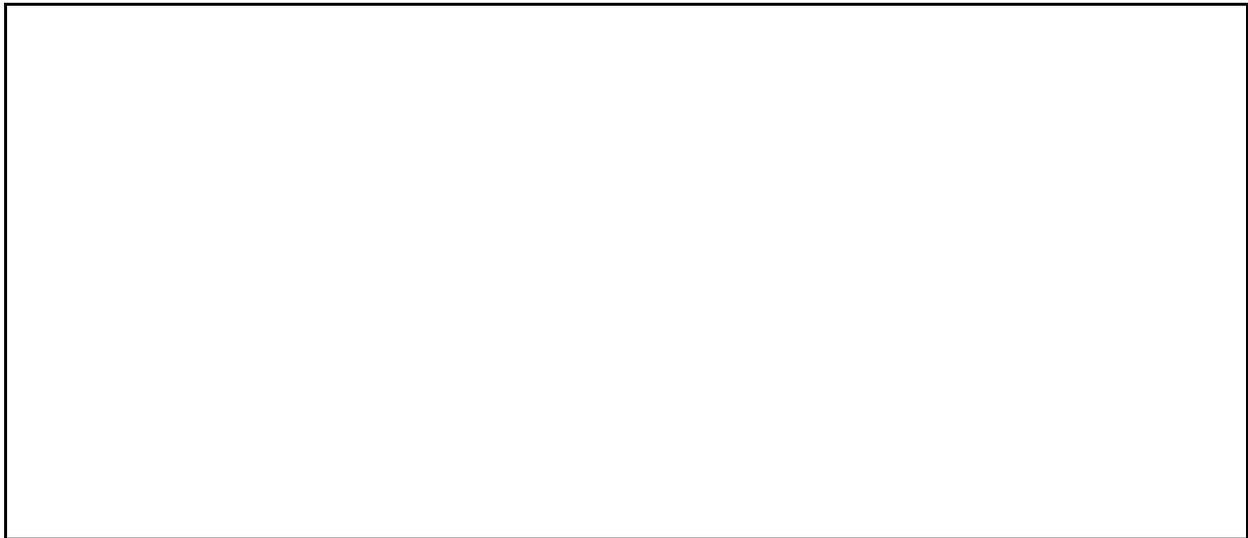What was your Secondary audience Feeling?

How do you know this?

What was your Secondary audience Doing?

How do you know this?

Finally, your Unintended audience. The thing about Unintended audiences is that they are often a surprise. You plan for one unintended audience and another one shows up. Maybe this happened to you.

Who did your Unintended audience(s) turn out to be?
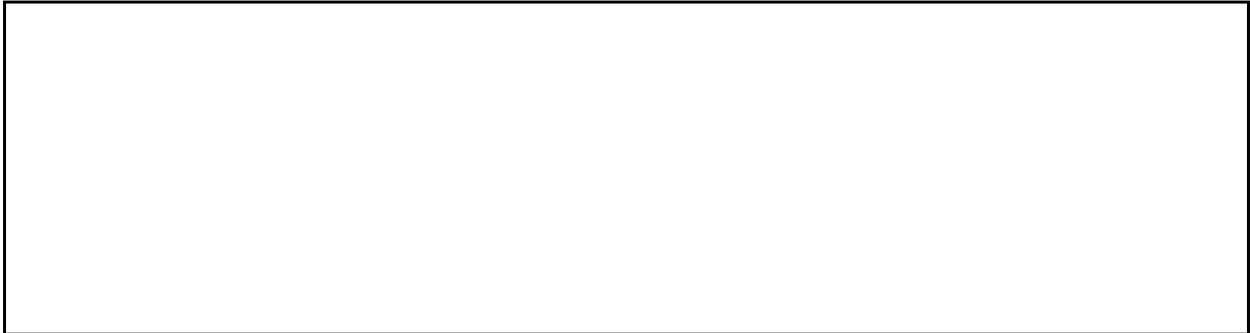
What was your Unintended audience Thinking?

How do you know this?

What was your Unintended audience Feeling?

How do you know this?
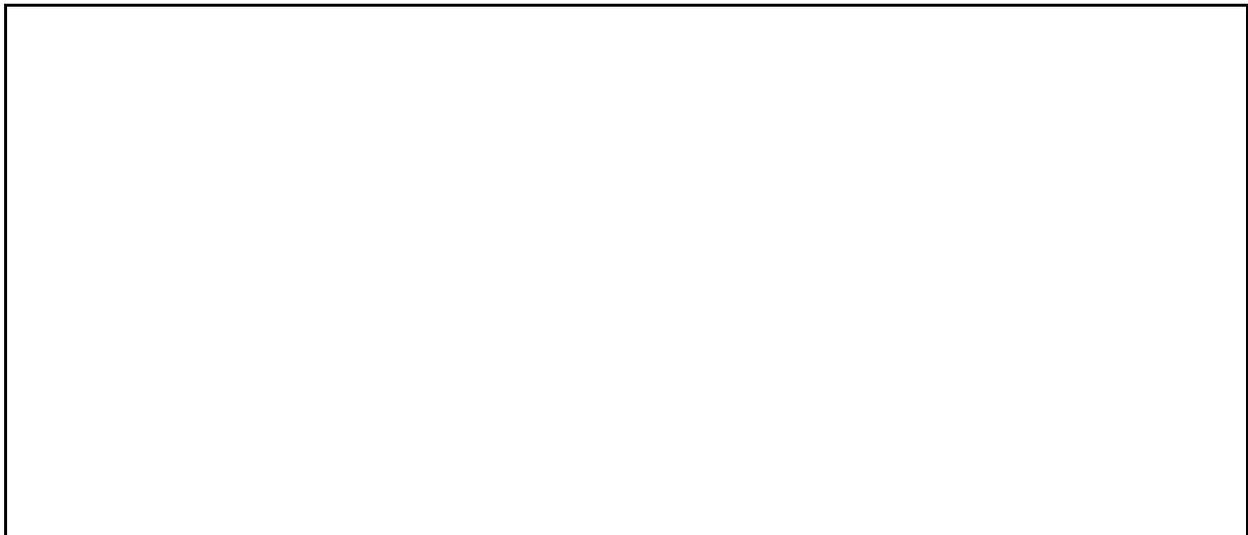
What was your Unintended audience Doing?

How do you know this?

Ethics Evaluation

With your audiences evaluated, it's time to reflect upon the successes and challenges of creating your project and staging your intervention according to your moral code.

Did your creative process and product follow your ethical code?

No matter how hard we try, and what good people we are, we inevitably fall short when it comes to applying our moral code. We are human, after all. It's useful to think about any ethically challenges you encountered so you can do better next time.

How did your creative process and product fall short of your ethical code?
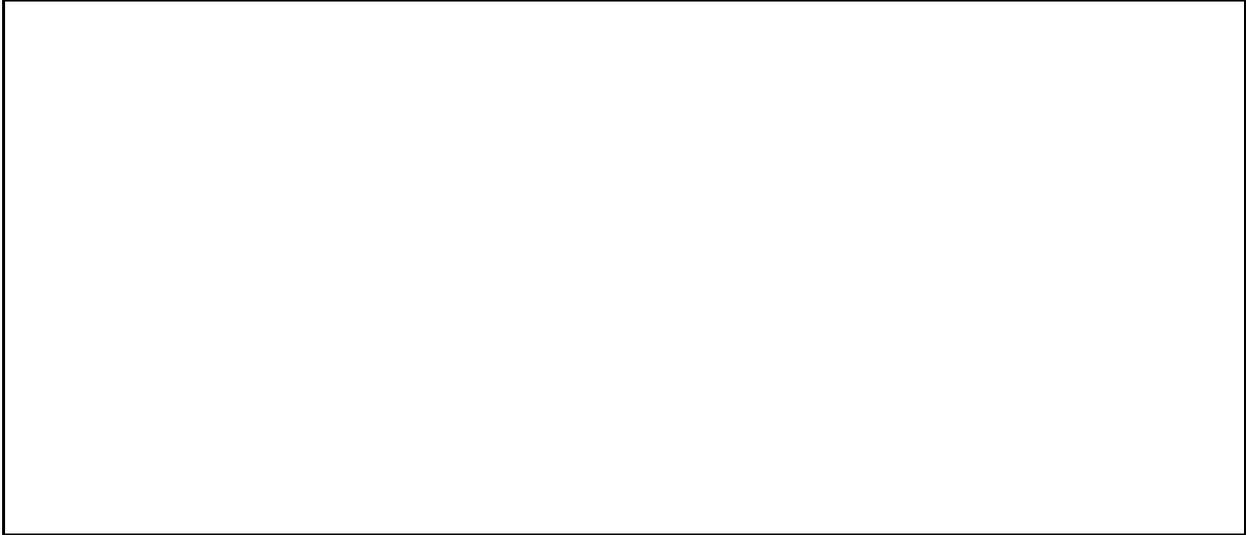
Long-Term Evaluation

The results of artistic activism are often not immediate. You can't always know in the present if your project set into motion a process that will result in radical changes in the future. In fact, you may *never* know. Still, it's important to reflect upon what *might* be the long term æffects of your projects and how to evaluate these.

What might be the long term æffects of your project?

How might you evaluate these?
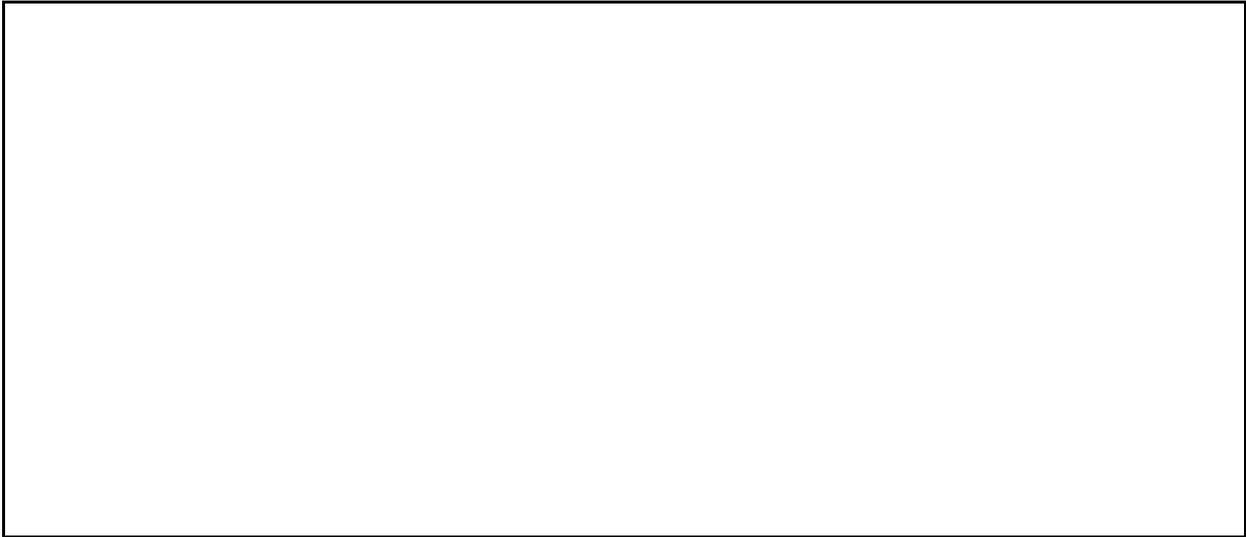
Intention Evaluation

Now that your project is done and you've had time to reflect upon its impact, it is time to take a step further back and look at your original objectives, aims, and goals and evaluate how the outcome of your project matched up with your original intent. We'll start with your concrete objective:

Given your original objective, how does your outcome compare to your intent?

You also set an artistic aim for yourself—the *affect* that you wanted your project to generate. Did it do this?

Given your artistic aim, how does your outcome compare to your intent?
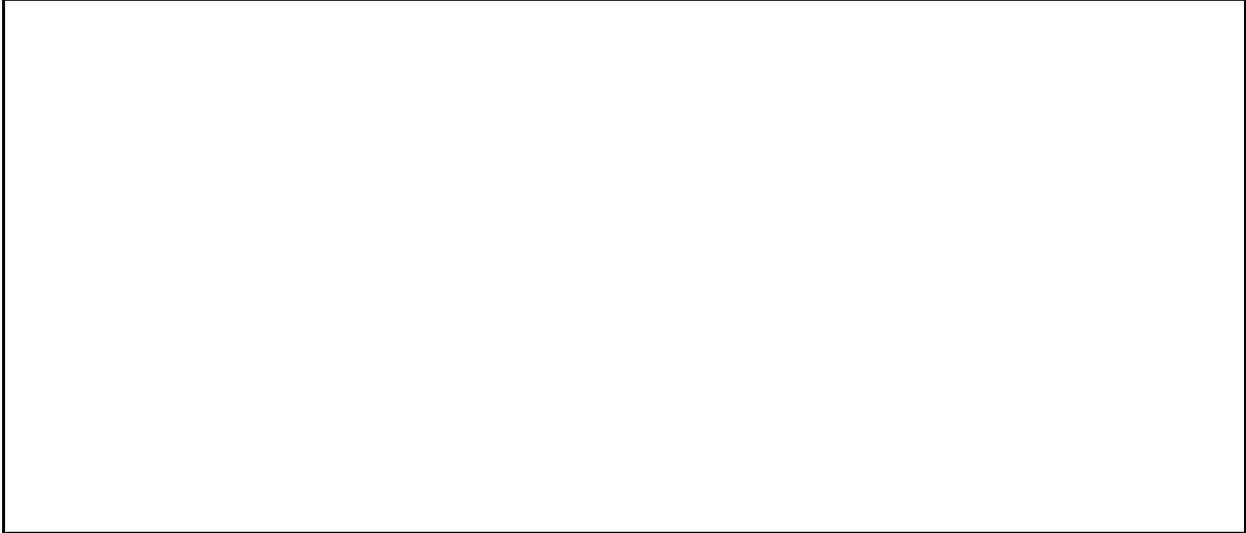
Now reach wider and think back to your activist goal, or the broader social *effect* you wanted your project to have. Did this happen?

Given your activist goal, how does your outcome compare to your intent?
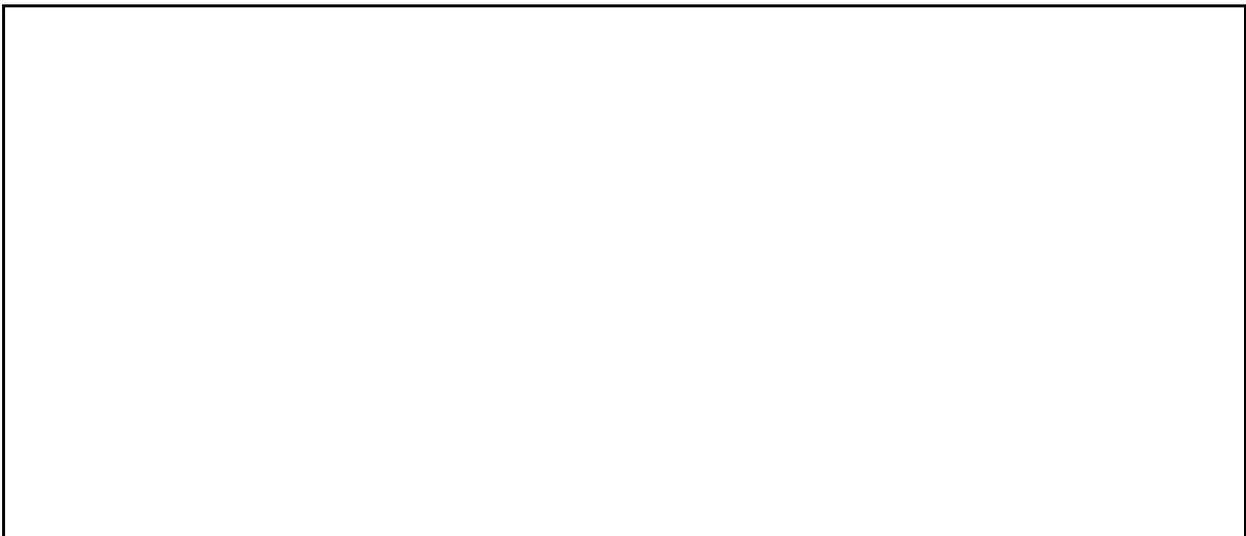
If you didn't end up reaching your goal, don't worry. If your goals are ambitiously Utopian you may never get there. (Utopia, in Ancient Greek, literally means *No-Place*.) Utopias set a point on the horizon that can guide our journey, but we need to keep walking.
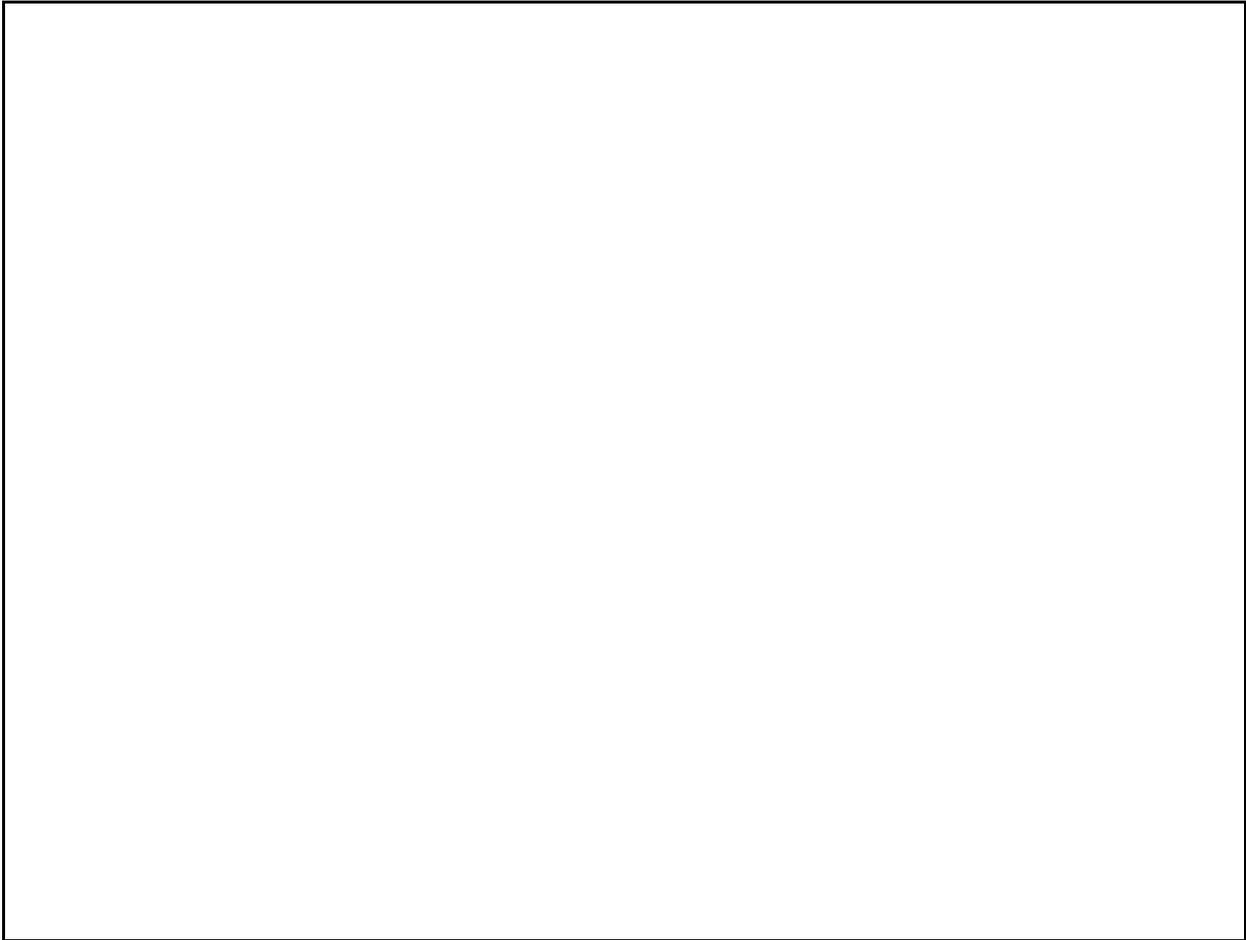
Iteration

What comes next? One of the frustrations of the creative process is that it's often not until the end of your project that you realize what you might have done better. One of the joys of the creative process is there's always a chance to do it over, and do it differently. It's good to think of artistic activist projects as an artist thinks about sketches, each one gets a little closer to what you want it to be like. Creativity is all about *iteration.*

Knowing what you know now, how might you change your project?
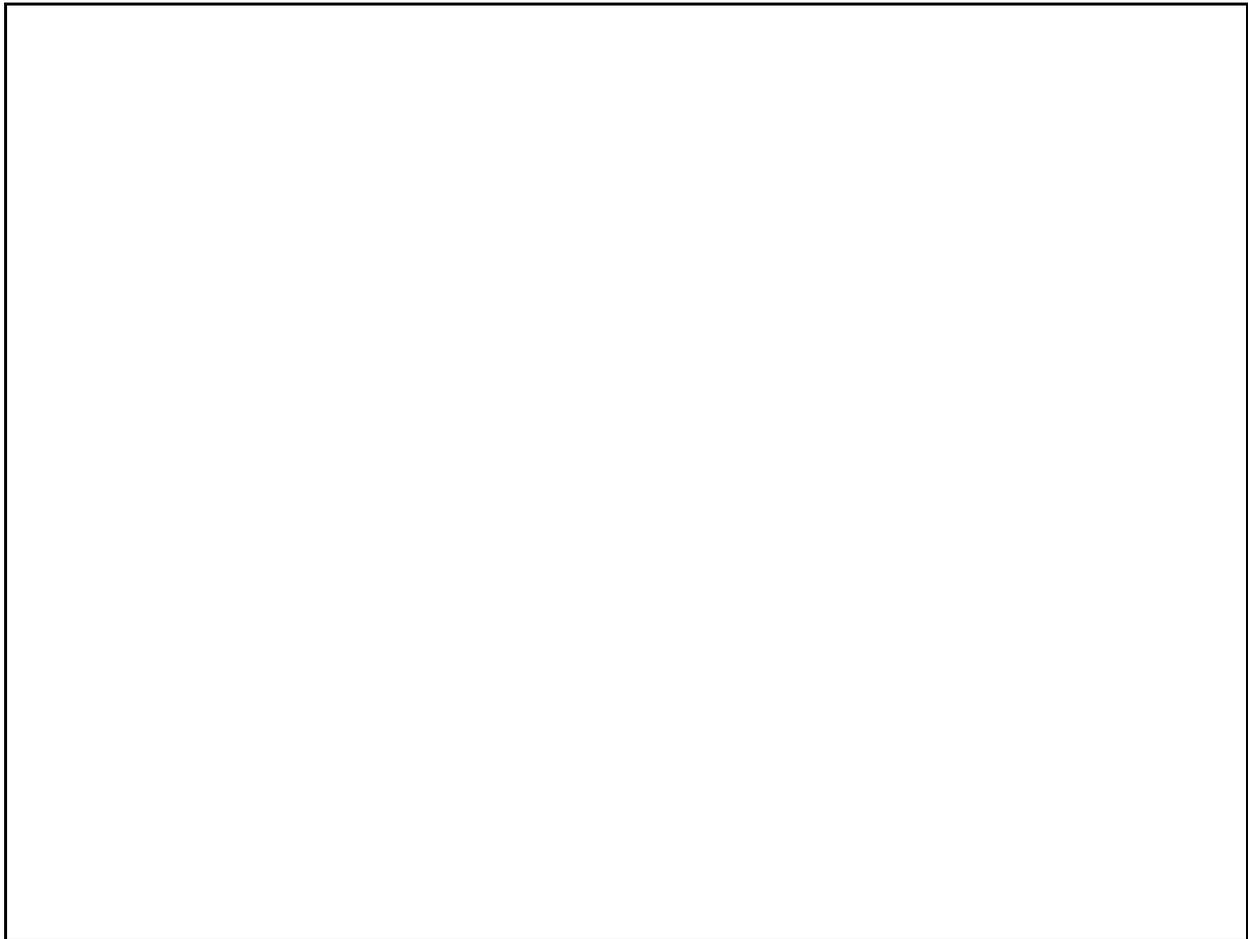
There's so much to do. You can re-do your intervention with what you've learned, you can set a new objective and design a new intervention, or you can come up with an entirely new goal and project. Or you can take a rest and work on your garden. It's really up to you. But start the process by asking:

What do you want to do next?

Now, go do it.