



# PRODUCER PACK PART 1: HOW TO REGISTER



**Melbourne Fringe Festival**

13 – 30 September 2018  
[melbournefringe.com.au](http://melbournefringe.com.au)

Anya Anastasia at Opening Gala, Melbourne Fringe Festival 2016  
Photo by Theresa Harrison

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*Church* by Mama Alto, Melbourne Fringe Festival 2016  
Photo by Jacinta Oaten

# What is Melbourne Fringe?

Melbourne Fringe is a celebration of cultural democracy and art for everyone. By embracing diversity and a spirit of independence, we create a unique space for artistic self-expression linked to the life of our great city. That's why Melbourne Fringe is the most adventurous, inclusive, all-encompassing multi-artform festival in Australia. Every year we feature thousands of artists from every discipline you can name (and a few others besides) performing 400+ events in over 160 venues to an audience in excess of 350,000 people.

Melbourne Fringe is the place to go for pure, unadulterated, uncurated and unexpected artistic discovery. We help artists develop and provide a platform for a vast, diverse range of voices, in celebration of the idea that when we come together, we create a safe space for risk taking. We find ideas from the margins and shout them to the world. We're here to challenge perceptions and shake up the hierarchy, to be brave and unafraid, to explore the boundaries of art and to change the way you see the world.



*Flesh Fanatics*, Melbourne Fringe Festival 2016  
Photo by Theresa Harrison

## What even *is* a producer?

They are ninjas. Wizards. Other areas of the cultural industries might know them as project managers, curators, arts administrators, company managers, even editors. We think of them like grand coordinators of the tasks and responsibilities involved in developing, rehearsing and staging an event, performance, exhibition or installation.

**A producer is a facilitator.** The specifics of the role can vary depending on their particular skill set, and the skills and strengths of other team mates. Some producers might be very involved in the creative/conceptual development of a production while others might have nothing to do with what happens inside the rehearsal room. If you've got a great director and some wonderful actors, but no marketing manager, then that's where your producer should be devoting their attention. Good producers know what it takes to get quality shows together and will make those tasks their priority. They simply Get. \$#!t. Done.

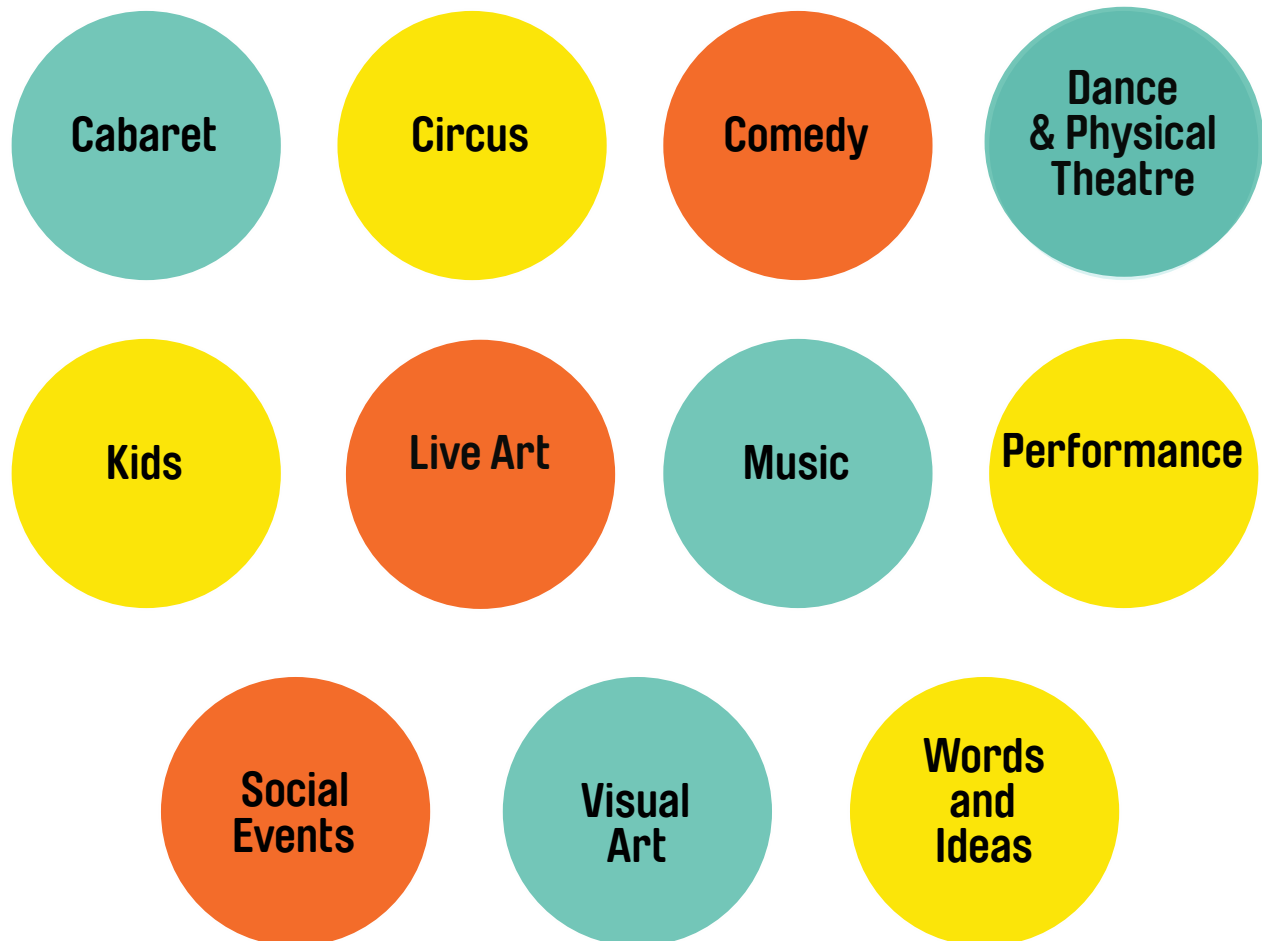
**Let's be  
real, if you're  
reading this  
pack then your  
producer might  
be YOU!**

# Who can be part of Fringe?

**Anyone** can be part of Fringe. We're a proudly inclusive, open access Festival made by the great people of Melbourne – and their interstate and international friends as well. We're all about variety, whichever form that comes in. Arts focused or not, we welcome events of all kinds. Our Festival embodies freedom of expression – at its loudest. So if you have something to say, here's the place to say it.

## Event genres

To help audiences navigate the beautiful beast that is Fringe, we ask artists to





*El Tarro, Melbourne Fringe Festival 2015*  
Photo by Teresa Noble

## Sub-genres

Feel like you want to bust open that genre matrix? We know selecting one of these genres can be tricky when you have a cabaret show that's also pretty funny, or a spoken word event that's really a bunch of trapeze artists reading poetry. That's why you can add **sub-genres** as well. You'll find a full list of sub-genres on our Registration site.

## Why do I need a genre?

Genres help audiences discover your work among hundreds of others. The Festival guide is divided into each of these art forms so it's easier for people to navigate, and many people search the website by genre.

Plus, eligible events\* will be considered for peer-assessed 'best in category' awards. You want to be cosying up with similar events to ensure you have the best chance of being seen by the right industry members.

\* »More info on what makes your event eligible for awards is available on the Registration





*Flesh Fanatics*, Melbourne Fringe Festival 2016  
Photo by Theresa Harrison

## Event types and ticketing

Decisions about the style and content of your show are important, but it's also important to think about what type of event you'll run. Will it be ticketed or will it be free? Does it make more sense as a one-off event, or will you run it over a period of days/times? How many shows do you need to recoup your spending? Should you have a longer season to develop an audience through word-of-mouth?

Every registered event must be listed as one of the following event types:

### **Free event**

These often include Visual Arts or free Social Events

### **2-3 paid sessions**

Perfect for any kind of event that runs across a weekend or an event that repeats for just a few days

### **One-off paid event**

These often include Music events or Social Events that occur once only and charge a fee to attend

### **4+ paid sessions**

Most often used by performances that have longer seasons of the same event like Cabaret, Circus, Performance, Dance, or Live Art

# Your team

At Fringe, we like hats. That's why we wear so many – often being artists, producers and venue managers, all at once. If you're like us, it can be a good idea to get a core team together early on in the process and be really clear about who does what.

Here's a few questions you can ask yourself to get started. You might be surprised by some of the roles and tasks, but don't sweat – we have heaps of info on how to get the job done and hone the skills you need to feel totally confident.

*Church* by Mama Alto, Melbourne Fringe Festival 2016  
Photo by Jacinta Oaten



# Your team

## Creative

Who are your creative collaborators?

It's likely you won't need ALL of these kinds of collaborators, but here are a few suggestions:

- Performers
- Musicians
- Visual Artists
- Digital Media Artist
- Designer
- Director
- Dramaturg
- Writer
- Choreographer
- Photographer/Videographer
- Lighting Designer
- Sound Designer
- Production Manager

## Project management

Who is your Producer?

(Maybe it's YOU!)

- Who answers the emails and phone calls?
- Who finds the venue and signs the contracts?
- Who handles the box office and other finances?

Who is leading your marketing & publicity campaign?

(Maybe it's YOU!)

- Who can help you get a killer promo image?
- Who can write a punchy blurb and press releases?
- Who can social media like a boss?
- Who can coordinate your invitations?

## Other support

Can you ask someone to be your mentor?

Is there an artist that makes the kind of work you admire? Maybe they can be your outside eye or give you critical feedback as you develop your project. Don't be afraid to ask!

Do you know anyone who has produced work for the Melbourne Fringe Festival before? Getting someone's personal experience of participating in Fringe can be really enlightening. Sometimes you can learn a lot for the price of a coffee.

*Flesh Fanatics*, Melbourne Fringe Festival 2016  
Photo by Theresa Harrison

# Four very important things (to nail) for Fringe

## THING 1. (Nail) Your venue

There are as many kinds of venues as there are Fringe events, but here's some info about our most common.

**Established Venues:** You can apply to be part of one of the many programs hosted at established venues right across Melbourne. Your relationship is with the venue, from that initial meeting to booking and signing an agreement, right through to arranging bump out. We know hundreds of these guys and can hook you up with the best venue for you. Some run an expression of interest (EOI) process and have a dedicated Fringe program, others are just happy to be a straight-out hire. These venues are where the majority of the Festival happens around town.

**Festival Hub:** You can apply to be part of the program at one of our Fringe-run venues in North Melbourne. We manage one series of venues – the Festival Hub. Housing 10 different rooms of varying sizes, the Hub is home to around 70 acts. Expressions of Interest for the Fringe Hub close on 23 April. Speak to the Participant Services Team first before you apply.

**DIY Event, BYO venue:** Go your own way, do your own thing, present wherever you like. Your lounge room, a bookshop, the kebab shop, your car. Details need to be confirmed by the registration closing date.

**Please be  
sure to talk to us  
about your  
'BYO venue' early.  
We can help you iron  
out any potential  
kinks.**

## VENUE TIPS

### Make sure it's the right venue for you and your work:

Don't just think about size and location – consider if you want to be part of a program at an established venue or if it's better to be on your lonesome in a cool warehouse in the burbs. Think about access – will your target audience be able to get in the door and enjoy the event? These decisions can impact on the creative choices you make as well as your experience/engagement with the Festival as a whole.

### Be upfront about what's on the table:

Make sure you're really clear on what your venue can/is offering, right from the start. There are SO many different arrangements with venues – be upfront when you're shopping around and don't sign anything until you know what the venue is providing and what they expect you will be providing. Also, obvs be very nice about it.

### Keep your venue informed:

If you're exploring multiple options, be honest with your venue manager/programmer. It can make people feel very unkindly toward you if you have seven different spaces booked and they don't know you're looking elsewhere. Just be honest – people get that you need to shop around, they just need to know so they don't have any nasty surprises if you pull out of your booking.

## ADDING A VENUE TO YOUR REGISTRATION

Before adding a venue to your registration online you **MUST** have confirmed your booking directly with the venue management. Applying to a venue through the Registration site is not enough to secure yourself a booking. If you have not secured a venue, we suggest you use the [Eventotron search function](#) to find somewhere that meets your needs, and then contact the venue directly. We are more than happy to move heaven and earth\* to find you a venue, so don't hesitate to get in touch.

*\*we may not be able to move heaven and earth but we will try very, very hard.*

## VENUE RESOURCES

- You can find a searchable list of all the venues that are interested in being available as a Fringe venue on our [Registration site](#).
- Here's our [Venue Agreement Template](#), useful if your venue doesn't have it's own contract/agreement. We highly recommend you have an agreement in place.
- [Venue EOLs](#)
- [Fringe Hub tech specs](#) and [info pack](#)

### It is ok to ask lots of questions.

*Do they provide lighting and sound equipment? Will they run a box office? Do they take a cut of the door?*

**Any relationship with a venue is strictly between the Producer and the venue, not with Melbourne Fringe. Get confirmation of your agreement from your venue in writing.**



## **THING 2. (Nail) Your image**

We eat with our eyes, and killer imagery will ensure your event is one tasty feast. You'll need to supply one promo image for the Festival program and website, so make it strong. Give us bold, memorable visuals that communicate what is exciting about your work. And remember: your image needs to work at the size that it will be printed in the Festival Guide.

**This is a Public Service Announcement:** DO NOT put text, including your show title, on or in the image. Under any circumstances. It can mean media won't use your image, and it looks proper ugly. The show title will appear directly underneath the image in the printed and online guides anyway, so there's no need to add anything else.

» For more info on the proper dimensions, see the [registration site](#)

**Make it  
memorable**

## **Examples**



### **DION**

Presented by Gold Satino  
Written and Directed by Davina Wright  
Photo Credit: Pier Carthew

**What works:** The image is framed in an interesting setting and the content is unexpected – it intrigues readers and makes them want to know more.



### **Salty**

Presented by  
NORMAL CHILDREN  
Photo Credit: Yasi Peiris

**What works:** The use of strong colour and visually arresting imagery forces the audience to stop and make sense of what they're looking at.



### **Not Another Indie Cabaret**

Presented by Jessamae St James  
and the Butterfly Club  
Photo credit: Rachel Mia

**What works:** Combined with the show title, the image gives you a strong sense of the style and mood of the show.

## THING 3. (Nail) Your blurb

Imagine someone who knows nothing about art picks up our Festival guide. Even if your show is abstract and experimental, it doesn't mean the language you use to describe it should be. Keep things succinct and relevant. Use concise language. Short, sharp sentences work best. Pretend you're actually talking to another human-being. Be direct. Address the reader, use words like 'you' instead of 'audiences' or 'people'. Ask yourself: *What will they experience? What will they see? What will they think about when they leave?*

**This is another Public Service Announcement:** Avoid making the entire blurb a review of your show. For instance, a blurb that just reads: "Everyone and their dog-walker absolutely needs to see this saucy number. Simply outstanding! – \*\*\*\* Ballarat Bugle" will not, by itself, sell tickets.

**You only have a few words to say a lot, so make them count.**

## Examples



### ***Onstage Dating***

Bron Batten is going on first dates – live onstage.

Featuring a different participant each night, Onstage Dating toasts the conventions of the traditional first date.

Watch as Bron interrogates, deconstructs and gleefully destroys the rituals of contemporary romance.

'Super-intelligent performance' \*\*\*\* – The Age

'A hilarious shared delight' – Australian Stage

'Bron Batten is a national treasure' – Across the Aisle



### ***Madame Tulalah's Magnificent Box***

A most fortunate fortune-telling machine

Let all your tomorrows come at once with a visit to the mysteriously mechanical Madame Tulalah's fortune-telling booth. Part drag queen, part automaton – Madame Tulalah offers a convenient yet insightful one-on-one consultation at the touch of a button. Why wait? Your future is in her hands.



### ***Blank Tiles***

A former SCRABBLE World Champion struggles with memory loss.

Once the toast of the board game world, Austin's life was full of bottomless champagne and endless parties. But now it's Nescafe and doctor's appointments as he spends his time searching for words.

Let Austin tell you his story. If he can remember...

## THING 4. (Nail) Your ticket prices

By using an average of 30% capacity houses over your season as a guide, you can begin to work out what box office takings you need to recoup in order to break even with your projected income. The average ticket price for the 2017 Melbourne Fringe Festival was \$23. Just remember: you set your own ticket prices, so have a think about what your audiences will happily pay. Don't undersell yourself either – \$5 tickets aren't going to help you pay your actors (or your rent!).



**Make sure the price is right.**

### Handy ticketing jargon

- Inside charge: the fee charged per ticket to the event producer for tickets sold through Melbourne Fringe's ticketing site.

Inside charge for tickets under \$15:	\$3.00
Inside charge for tickets \$15–\$24.50:	\$3.50
Inside charge for tickets \$25–\$39.50:	\$4.00
Inside charge for tickets \$40+:	\$4.50

- Ticketing price types:
  - Full** – full price/adult ticket
  - Concession** – can be offered to valid concession card holders including students, unwaged, health-care card, MEAA members, etc.
  - Tuesday** – it's often good to have a cheap night to encourage bookings and offer a different price point for audiences. Fringe has a tradition of Cheap Tuesdays. This price type isn't compulsory unless you're in the Fringe Hub.
  - Member** – 25% off full-price ticket. This price will be available to all of our Fringe Dweller members.
  - Preview** – a good way to test your show in front of a paying audience. As it's a test for you and them, give them a discount to match their expectations.
- Usually Tuesday, Group and Preview ticket prices are similar to Concession tickets.
- Special offers and packages – when you register you'll be able to opt in for ticket deals and specials, such as 'Early Bird tickets'.
- Promo codes – producers will often want to create a special discount for particular user groups to promote sales and awareness. These are generally organised closer to your event once you know more about how it's selling.



# Is that it?

Here is a little checklist before you start your registration:

Have you...

- ☐ Secured your venue?
- ☐ Finalised your image?
- ☐ Finalised your blurb?
- ☐ Confirmed your ticket prices?

# Now what?

The only things left to do are:

- ☐ Enter all of this information into our registration site which closes on 28 May 2017.
- ☐ Pay your registration fee online via the registration site. If you do it before 7 May, you can save dollars.
- ☐ Celebrate your coming-of-registration with cheese/wine/jig/other

**You can't  
complete your  
registration without  
your venue, image,  
blurb, ticket prices  
and payment**

*Cult*, Melbourne Fringe Festival 2015  
Photo by Theresa Harrison

## Registration fees

To be a part of the 2018 Festival, you'll need to pay a fee at registration. Fees vary based on the length of your season and whether your event is free or ticketed. You can save \$50 off your registration fee if you get organised and get in early.

Event type	\$50 off full price	
	Standard Register by 28 May	Early Bird Register by 7 May
Free (including free ticketed); One-off paid event	\$275	\$225
2-3 paid sessions	\$355	\$305
4+ paid sessions	\$425	\$375

## Ready to go?

Click [here](#) to register.

*Flesh Fanatics*, Melbourne Fringe Festival 2016  
Photo by Theresa Harrison

## Ways we can help

Don't worry, once you've registered your event we don't just cast you aside into a bubbly chasm of endless nothing. We are always here to help. We offer a stack of free and low-cost information sessions and workshops about all of this stuff, so come along to one of them and ask us all of your burning questions. It's also a great opportunity to meet fellow artists and build your networks.

Get along to one of our [Registration FAQ sessions](#) for help with all things registration and preparing for the festival.

**We're only  
ever a phone  
call away!**

How to  
Take Part  
Monday  
9 April

Venue Speed  
Dating  
Monday  
16 April

Access Planning  
Monday  
7 May

» For more information on how we can help - including how to produce a Fringe show - see **Part 2** of our Producer Pack.





Josh Glanc at Opening Gala, Melbourne Fringe Festival 2016  
Photo by Theresa Harrison

## Key dates & contacts

Registrations open for 2018 Festival	9 April
Registration FAQ: How to Take Part	9 April
Registration FAQ: Venue Speed Dating	16 April
Registration FAQ: Access Planning	7 May
Earlybird registrations close	7 May
Registrations close for 2018 Festival	28 May
Website-only registrations open*	13 July
Melbourne Fringe Program Launch	15 August
2018 Melbourne Fringe Festival opens	13 September
Artist Party	13 September
Melbourne Fringe Awards	29 September
2018 Melbourne Fringe Festival closes	30 September

\*If you can't complete your registration by 28 May, don't panic, you won't miss out. We'll be opening our website-only registrations on 13 July. Your event won't appear in our printed guide but you'll still be in the Festival and receive all of the same support from our team.

We'll send you regular Producer Updates via email with plenty more detail on everything you need to feel prepared for this year's Festival.

Questions? Call our **Participant Services Team** on 9660 9600

Or reach out to **Danny Delahunty**, Festival Producer:  
PH: 9660 9600  
Email: [danny@melbournefringe.com.au](mailto:danny@melbournefringe.com.au)

# Glossary

**Cabaret:** Think performances that include song, dance, recitation and/or drama. They can also be along the lines of burlesque, vaudeville or variety, and generally include music – original, or covers following a theme or story. Cabaret works in all kinds of venues but somewhere with a decent sound system and/or acoustics will help bring the vibes, intimate or otherwise.

**Choreography** is the art, practice and/or design of movement sequences, like dance. A **Choreographer** is the designer or composer who arranges said sequences.

**Circus:** A genre of performances where circus skills like juggling, aerials, balancing, sideshow and clowning are used to tell a story or explore an idea. Sometimes Circus events have special venue requirements like rigging or a high ceiling, so be sure to book somewhere that can handle your moves.

**Comedy:** Laugh-out-loud performances including stand up, storytelling, clowning and/or improvisation. Physical comedy and comic plays often fall into this category too. You may be going solo, or have a number of performers on the bill. Loads of different venues work well for Comedy events, from pubs to theatre venues and many places in-between, so you can get busy shaking bellies pretty much anywhere.

**Cultural Events** (as mentioned in the Social Events section)

**Dance:** Performances with choreography or movement languages, as solo or group works. Think every genre of dance, from the latest hip-hop moves and contemporary stylz through to ballet – heck, even Maypole dancing is welcome at Fringe. Dance venues can be your typical dance space/hall with sprung floors, or a found space with all the room you need to cut your shapes.

**Dramaturgy** is the theory or practice of dramatic composition. A **Dramaturg** can work as a literary editor or developer of live performance. They typically focus on research and development phases of writing and devising theatre, plays, opera and dance.

**Kids:** All kinds of performances and events, for young ones and adults alike. These can be held anywhere, and may include music gigs, workshops, social events, visual arts, book launches – anything aimed at a younger crowd (0–12yrs). Family events are best scheduled to tie in with the school holidays and during peak times for micro-humans.

A **found space** is what we call a venue that you identify as a great space to hold your Fringe event. Found spaces haven't been homes for Fringe before, and might be a back-alley bar that you stumbled upon, a community hall, warehouse, garage, car – whatever suits your style.

**Live Art:** Performances where art is made in front of – or with – an audience in real time, facilitating some kind of encounter between artist and audience/participant\*. Live Art events are rarely held in traditional bricks and mortar theatres. Those with a small capacity or modest installation/setup may consider running multiple sessions per day.

**Movement Languages** are forms of body movement that express feelings, themes or stories without the use of vocals/spoken language. It can include gestures, posture, facial expression and more.

**Music:** Strum it, bang it, blow it – we don't mind how you make your sounds at Fringe. Music events range from intimate gigs at the local pub to garage-electronic sets and full symphony orchestras. It might be a one-off, part of a season of compositions, a double or triple bill of acts. Melbourne is spoilt for full-time music venues, but you might have a newfound noise house in mind. The choice is yours!

\* We took the lead from Joshua Sofaer's What Is Live Art? on this one. It's a relatively new term in art history so we're sure it's up for grabs – surprise us!

**Performance:** Contemporary performance, devised works, plays from existing texts, adaptations, and/or postdramatic theatre, storytelling, participatory encounters, lectures – do any of these mean anything to you? Performance events work well anywhere, from traditional theatres and multi-purpose black box studios to found spaces, like in the back of a car, a cupboard, café or laundromat.

**Sprung Floors** are floors that are designed to absorb shock and have a softer feel. They are best for dance and physical performances as they can reduce the risk of injury and lessen the blow of hard falls (planned and unplanned!).

**Social Events** are culturally focused events that offer audiences a great reason to gather together. This might be a guided tour, a dinner, a market, speed dating, community meetups, anything. Some are one-offs that run over many hours, while others may run for specific times repeatedly throughout the Festival. They can happen anywhere!

**Visual Art** events can include painting, drawing, sculpture, digital media, video art, film, photography, textiles and crafts. You can be a solo artist or part of a group show, arranged as an exhibition, a series of screenings, an installation or program of events. There are hundreds of rad artist-run galleries, exhibition spaces, cinemas and new media studios in Melbourne, but you might have a found space in mind. You may also choose to install your work as public art – there are no boundaries for finding your own venue and creating your own context.

**Words and Ideas:** Think events that focus on the power of words, whether that be a slam poetry night, a series of discussions and talks, a history tour, a literary launch, a zine fair, a play reading, a public letter or even a book launch. Venues might include bookstores, libraries, music venues, cinemas, galleries, theatres, toilet stalls, car parks... wherever you can draw a crowd.