

What a Feeling!

Strategic Roadmap for
a Meaningful Cultural Experience

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Abstract	
<p>This qualitative study explores how to use experience design to create a meaningful cultural experience. I have used multiple methods of data collection. Literature review is concentrated in experience design and event design. I deepened the knowledge with case studies and collected data over several years. After the analysis I have created a draft of an inspirational strategic roadmap that includes values and ideas. The road map was evaluated by experts in the field during semi-structured interviews.</p> <p>The main focus of the study is the inspirational strategic roadmap for a meaningful cultural experience. The values are in the core and the organization can search for a pathway to execute the values through ideas in the road map. Other findings were connected to the event design. Cognitive engagement actions create more meaningful event experiences. Credibility and authenticity develop respect which can build trust both ways. Community and other stakeholders should understand and live the same values as the organizer, and also the content of the event should be aligned with the values. For marginalized groups the meaningful events can be transformative, but also a safe haven. The roadmap can be used by the event organizers and organizations to explore and build their strategy and vision towards more meaningful events, and to implement their values.</p>	
Keywords	
<p>experience design, meaningful experience, inspirational strategic roadmap, event roadmap, values, transformation, inclusivity, community, atmosphere, equity, experience value, safer space, event management, new concept</p>	
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

Getting goosebumps, crying out loud, jumping for joy, hugging friends... Sounds familiar? Culture moves us. Some of those experiences change lives. Culture and arts raise loads of feelings. How could we make these experiences even better and more interesting and inclusive? How do people feel welcomed and safe? How to design a meaningful cultural experience?

I have gathered ideas for a roadmap on how to design a more meaningful cultural event where more people feel welcomed. It is built through theories and cases and with the help of some experts. The challenge of the study is that the value of the experiences and art is very hard to measure and it varies for different people. Through the experience design there is a possibility to explore this further. I wish that this map would help organizers to find more inspirational ways to lead people towards better experiences, even transformative ones. I hope this map will be a very useful tool also for myself in the future event and strategy planning.

Events make the cities more attractive (Berridge, 2014, p. 14). Events can even affect civilization: they can provide education and promotion, but also be a place to entertain, to be entertained and participate (p.9). Experiences are important business and leisure activities (Ahola, 2005, p. 91). Events can be tourist destinations, build local communities as well as act as platforms for the personal transformation (Neuhofner, Egger, Yu, Celuch, 2021, p. 1). Events and experiences touch the lives of each one of us, and they shape the world around us.

Art organizations and cultural events are competing more in an ever-growing environment of activities. We live in the world of temptations, in real life as well as online. There are many studies about the fluency of the events as well as service design studies in the cultural field, but how to build up the atmosphere? I believe the experience design connected with the strong feelings, which arts very often provide, can deepen the experience. What do people really want? Can we provide them

happiness, experiences, and possibly a transformation experience (Pine and Gilmore, 2020)? How to succeed to provide a meaningful experience?

I have been working in cultural events and in the cultural field for over three decades and it has always been interesting to me how people feel differently about cultural experiences. For me it has played a big role building up a certain atmosphere for specific situations. How could I learn more about it? What are the particles that affect this? This study tries to find a passage for designing better. Multiple layers like co-creation, gender, sexual orientation, racism and economics give different frames for the niche experience research (Biaett & Richards, 2020, p. 6). In my own work in the cultural field I started to think more than 10 years ago who was invited and why. When I began to organize more events, that thought deepened and I wanted to do better.

The importance of understanding customer experience has risen in the past 20-30 years. Getz states that there is a gap between academic researchers and practitioners (2007, p. 7) which I hope that this study narrows. Richards says that one of the main challenges is the complexity of the events. Events are hard to measure (2019, p. 4). How do the experiences are feel? How the user values can be measured and what are they? What dimensions does an experience have?

I have been searching for the literature for the experience design in the cultural field, and the result is narrow. Multidisciplinary approach led me to visit Aalto University for their lectures in experience design to learn more about their methods. User experience in the cultural field has not been studied fully. Though experience design is used in art events and galleries as well as in exhibitions, theaters and museums to make the service path more fluent – and hopefully with more experiences. Also music gigs are planned to build up a certain atmosphere – often unconsciously by musicians. I approach experiences as feelings and values and how they are connected to people and connecting people. This study connects the values and ideas and shows inspiration for building pathways to execute more meaningful events and create strategies that implement the values from the organization's website to come to life.

1.2. Research literature and the research gap

“... the most important question is—what are we measuring experiences for? We easily think about marketing, but could there be also the other dimension, making a meaningful event for a good purpose?”

Biaett & Richards (2020, p. 10) conclude in their article that it is challenging to measure events with only one method, because the phenomena is complex. The literature on event experiences “is very scarce and fragmented”, states De Geus, Richards and Toepoel (2015, p. 4). Diller, Shedroff and Rhea claim that it is impossible to design every touch point (2006, p. 22). It is unclear what the event experiences are and how they can be operationalized. Berridge asks the individuals designing the events to be aware of the complexity of the events (2014, p. 12).

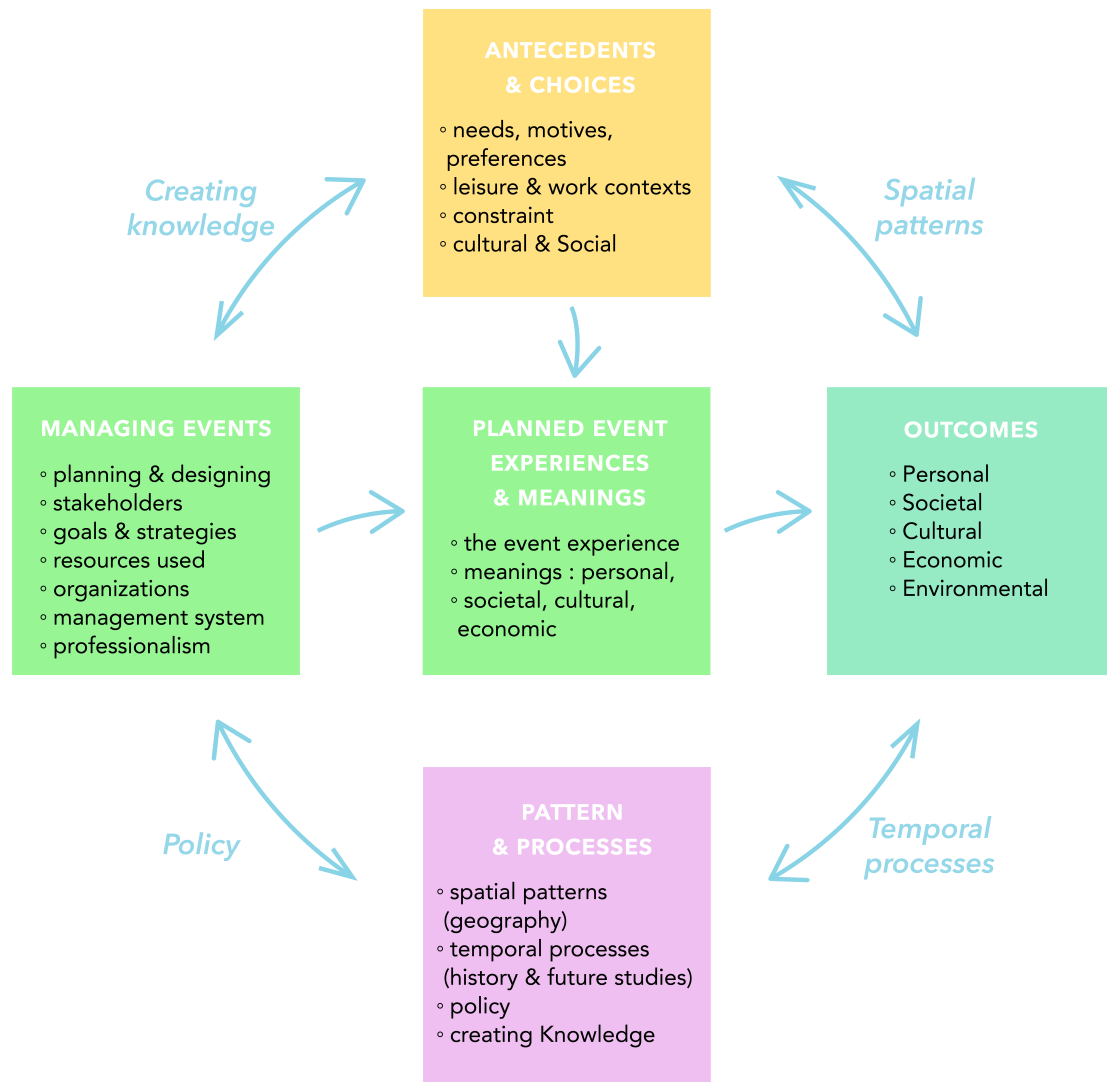
Chiehyeon and Kwang-Jae state that it is hard to articulate the experiences (2018, p. 149). Richards also admits the challenges in measuring the events (2019, p. 9): he tells examples of different dimensions that researchers have made to organize their thoughts about events. Morgan has used multiple dimensions in their study, for example “Design and Programming and Social Interaction”. Wood and Masterman have divided their study in seven attributes: involvement, interaction, immersion, intensity, individuality, innovation and integrity. Pine and Gilmore use the division of entertainment, education, esthetic and escapism. There are as many classified dimensions as there are researchers.

Silvers (2004) has written about events with very detailed information: she has checklists and practical guidelines on how to organize an event. Silvers says that an organizer has to think and imagine about the whole experience from the beginning until the very end from the attendee’s point of view to understand how to build an event. “An event is all about people—people coming together to create, operate, and participate in an experience” (Silvers, 2004, p. 15). When this idea is connected with experience design, there is a possibility to get more information on how to affect to people. Berridge says that only few academic studies have been made by those who are actually staging events – though the ones that have been made are studied by the practitioners themselves (2014, p. 3). The work in the field of events gives

tools to fulfill the services but as well to understand the experience of the participators.

The book "The experience economy" by Pine & Gilmore first started to use qualitative methods in events research (Biaett & Richards, 2020, p. 7). Event Experience Scale (EES) by De Geus has been one of the models that have been used in the event experience research (p. 7). Biaett & Richards are giving examples in their article about different qualitative studies made in the experience events industry. Caitlin Brooks has studied the Burning Man event with semi-structured interviews, with the result that the event creates meaning in participants' lives. Elaine Rust has been collecting data with qualitative case study form three small events (p.8). The major findings for making an event experience were a sense of belonging, place, atmosphere and reputation. Alex Grebenar has studied house music events using "Event Experience Mapping Model" to be part of the crowd and experience the euphoric feeling rise up as the main findings. Jonathan Moss, Peter A. Whalley & Ian Elsmore used Descriptive Experience Sampling (DES) in their study and concentrated on process, personal impact, authenticity, leveraging structures and event design.

The Event Management Body of Knowledge has portrayed five knowledge domains: administration, design, marketing, operations and risk (Getz, 2007, p. 2-3). Event-related knowledge consists of multiple disciplines. Close fields are tourism, sport, arts administration, leisure, recreation and hospitality (p. 5). These fields often overlap. Only few researchers are concentrating on planned events studies. Phenomena around social, economic or cultural fields are studied more (p. 352). According to Getz, there are many outcomes from planned event experiences. If the experience is meaningful for a person, it can also be meaningful for society, culture, economics and/or environment (p.10). Events also create value in all these levels. In this study I concentrate on personal experience and especially meaningful personal experience.



Picture 1: Event studies, Core phenomenon and major themes by Getz, 2007, p.10. Modified for this work by Jérémy Gaudibert.

Liu, Sparks and Coghlan (2017) claim that an event experience is a part of an "ecosystem" where the touchpoint can be designed. "Why are events held? What is their intended outcome?" (Getz, 2007, p. 23) are some of the questions that guide the organizer in the beginning. With these questions the experience design can be useful. Richards is demanding more linkage between the different parts of the events, because the experience is wider (2019, p. 11). For example online experiences, co-presence at the events, the role of the management and the event design could all be studied more (p.12). Researchers are asking more of the studies on transformational experiences (Neuhof et al., 2021, p. 1) and sum up that these synergetic effects for transformation are missing (p. 3). More meaningful

experiences are affecting people's lives and create a platform for possible transformations, for themselves and even for society.

1.3. Aim of the study and the research questions

This thesis concentrates on the question: How to design a meaningful cultural experience? The aim of the thesis is to fill the gap of the research of the meaningful events and events experience design concentrating on values. Understanding the complexity of the event research and exploring the possibilities of experience design in designing events, this study dives into the values of the events and investigates how to execute them better. This study is not a neurological or psychological study. Experience design is often connected only with technology and its user experiences. This is also left out from this study.

The main research question is:

How to design a meaningful cultural experience?

The following supportive questions are:

A roadmap of the meaningful experience? How to make people feel more welcome? How do you know what people want? How to build up the atmosphere? How to include people?

The idea of the meaningful cultural experience that makes a mark can also bring value for the communities and society. The values can be strengthened through strong experiences. Through the inspirational strategic roadmap it is possible to learn new ideas that could add the value of the event and attract more. Hopefully it could even provide some ideas that participants do not even comprehend themselves that they want. The roadmap helps to narrow the core of the event and the customer experience. With inclusion and equity people feel more welcomed.

In the following chapters the study introduces the main themes around experience design and event planning. Literature review consists of many checklists and charts. This was made on purpose to highlight the themes that will rise in different sources.

With the SCORE analysis of the cases and the thematic analysis of the literature I have gathered the main themes and built an inspirational strategic roadmap. The roadmap gives inspiration on how to design a meaningful cultural experience. The roadmap has been tested by experts in the field. The roadmap consists of values and ideas on how to implement those values. The building of the pathways from the ideas needs to be done by the organization who uses the roadmap. The roadmap can also be used for visioning the strategy and for future planning.

1.4. Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of five chapters and additional relevant sub-chapters. The introduction chapter presents the background of the study and the road to creation of the research question. The literature review is focused on experience design and experience design concepts, event organizing, the previous research of meaningful events and the value of the arts. Through literature it is possible to understand the theories behind the values and ideas of the inspirational strategic roadmap and also the framing of the experience design used in this thesis.

The third chapter presents the research approach and the data collection. The chapter also enlightens my own background in events and culture industries. The data collection process included the literature as well as interviews and event cases. In the end of the chapter are the critical reflections on the research process.

Fourth chapter consists of data analysis of the cases and interviews as well as the first draft of an inspirational strategic roadmap for a meaningful event through findings. I have divided the findings into the sub-chapters of the stakeholders, content, meaningful actions and meaningful outcomes. The fifth and the final chapter concludes the study and presents the final inspirational strategic roadmap for a meaningful event with my own critical analysis and philosophical and managerial implications. The final subchapter includes suggestions for further research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Experience design

"An event experience must be choreographed and blocked out as carefully as any dance or play. The professional event coordinator crafts a plan that takes the attendee or guest through a structured progression of various sights, sounds, tastes, textures, smells, highs, lows, climaxes, diversions, and discoveries that delivers the intended impact and message of the event." (Silvers , 2004, p. 271)

Experience is a noun and a verb, which refers to awareness, perception and learning (Getz, 2007, p. 171). It is attached with feelings, emotions and values. Transformational experiences have emerged during the centuries, especially in religious connections (Neuhofer et al., 2021, p. 1). Now we live in a post-material world, where the importance of the experiences rises (Roto, Bragge, Lu, Pacauskas, 2021, p. 6).

Experience design was first mentioned in academic study in 1995 (Roto et al., 2021, p. 6). Newberry and Farnham (2013, p. 71) explain the nature of experience design that combines the strategy, expression, value and the engagement of the organization. It is not business design nor customer service design. They demand the businesses to ask "why" and "how" when making decisions (p.83). Design thinking explores human needs (Curedale, 2013, p. 25-26): for example security, relaxation, meaning, mattering, community and transcendence. On the same track are also Bruce and Bessant (2002, p. 1) commenting that design gives purpose for human creativity. It is easy to notice when something is not designed but harder to spot well-designed actions: normally they go so fluently that the customer does not need to think about the actions behind the process. This is oftentimes the situation in events: the customers do not think why everything goes smoothly. When problems occur, then the blame game starts.

What different stakeholders want from designed experience (Getz, 2007, p. 9)? The previous history of the person has made a mark and it is very different in different minds. Customers want to have a certain product – they do not want to choose (Pine and Gilmore, 2020, p.102). How to customize an event that would give customers what they want? A good manager or organizer can interpret for different stakeholders the aims of the event (Tassiopoulos, 2010, p. 200, Pine and Gilmore, 2020, p.191) and this can lead to a successful outcome. The work of the interpreter can be for example asking from the organization, what kind of atmosphere they wish to have in an event, and then interpret that wish to the technician, who is actually building the set. At the same time the organizer interprets the goals to performers and builds the schedule, the theme and the communication to customers the wishes of the organizations in their mind.

The organizer needs to understand as much as possible from the different building blocks of an event, that they can create the wanted atmosphere with all the stakeholders. The organizer decides what to include into implementation. In my own experience the interpretive skills are needed when contacting all the different stakeholders and let them know about the production.

”Professionals must have a broad base of knowledge together with the ability to reflect upon how it will shape both specific managerial or business decisions, and the wider implications of events in society and the environment. They also have to possess a well-developed sense of ethics and professional responsibility which should be based on a solid foundation that includes philosophy and comparative cultural studies.”

(Getz, 2007, p. 6-7)

When planning events, event organizers design, plan and create experiences. Experience design models can predict the quality of the experiences (Berridge, 2012, p. 8). Experience can be one situation that stands out or it can be a flow of experiences (Dewey, 1934, p. 37-38). Experience is normally delivered following components: product, service, brand, channel and promotion (Diller et al., 2006, p. 72). Duration of the experience can be divided in initiation, immersion, conclusion

and continuation (p. 75). The intensity of the experience can be measured as reflexive (impulsive buys), habitual (repeated pattern), and engagement (oftentimes provides a possibility to create meaning) (77-78). This study is concentrating on engagement as the driving force for transformation and/or a meaningful experience.

The customer's point of view is the key factor in all events. Berridge (2014, p. 278) ponders if the people respond to the event design as wanted in the first place. "Companies should realize that they must make memories (not goods) and create the stage for generating economic value (and not deliver services)" (Pine and Gilmore, 2020, p.133). In the customer's point of view the outcome can be learning, memories and positive feelings, but as well as disappointment or negative memories (Geus, Richards and Toepoel, 2015, p. 277). When visiting the Vuoden huiput Festival 2019, the moderator Mikko Hakkarainen of the panel said in the end of the panel that maybe empathy, cooperation, sharing and connections are the most important things when designing a space for experiences.

One of the key factors is that for whom is the event designed for and how (Berridge, 2014, p. 277). Different stakeholders will experience it differently. The engagement of the stakeholders makes the experience more purposeful. Social and cultural constructs will affect the experiences and for the event designer it is impossible to know all the variables. Also Pine and Gilmore talk about the importance of engagement (2020, p.39) and they mention different dimensions of the engagement: guest participation and connection. These dimensions can be connected with the four realms of an experience: educational, escapist, esthetic and/or entertainment. In Biaett's research with PX (participant experience) social capital bonding and engagement were higher in the cases where participants were part of the experiences, compared to just spectating (2015, p. 3). Richards (2019) notices that "the customer does not necessarily need to be entertained" but the event should rather engage the customer (p. 4).

When designing an experience, Diller et al. (2006, p. 50-52) discuss the importance of participatory actions, inclusivity, co-operation, executions, transparency, and setting goals. Goldblatt (1997, p. 86) says that other than providing a passive experience, guests want to participate and be active. When participants have some

control in designing and/or decision making or even in setup work, they engage more (Pine and Gilmore, 2020, p.119). In experiences participants need to be physically, mentally, socially, spiritually and emotionally involved (Tassiopoulos, 2010, p. 198). Educational experiences normally require the active participation (Pine and Gilmore, 2020, p.41) as well as the escapist experiences (p.43), but the latter might be even adventurous activities. According to Pine and Gilmore in the esthetic realm of experience, the participant normally just wants to be (p.46).

From a philosophical point of view Getz raises up the following questions: "How does the event appear to them? What meanings are they attaching to their experiences and behaviour? How does it affect them emotionally, intellectually, spiritually?" (2007, p. 76). Customer participation already in the creation-phase creates a production paradigm (Rossman and Schlatter, 2015, p. 2), though the customer participation might help with the final outcome. The greater impact with the uniqueness for an individual and a community social capital is possible to achieve with knowing the participants psychological and interval behavioral needs (Biaett, 2015, p.1).

Who is responsible for the organization's innovation process in experience design? Diller et al. (2006, p. 40-47) would invite the whole team to the work, to make the whole staff understand the experience chain and the building of the meaning. Diversity in all forms is one vital force in designing experiences: it brings more perspectives for customer points of view as well (p. 50). When the whole staff is included to design and execute the functions of experience design, the result is more effective (p.93-98). The company's leaders are encouraged to experience the customers point of view (p.93-98).

Visualization works as making the organization visible as well as communicating (Shedroff, 2009, p. 91). Visuality sets the style right, but also awakes expectations and understanding (p. 278).

Event experience is an interaction between an individual and the event environment (both physical and social), modified by the level of engagement or involvement, involving multiple experiential elements and outputs (such as satisfaction, emotions, behaviors, cognition, memories and learning), that can happen at any point in the event journey.

(De Geus et al., 2015, p. 5)

Events can create an atmosphere for learning or for enjoyment (Berridge, 2012, p. 10). How make the environment comfortable (Pine and Gilmore, 2020, p.51)? Entertainment is the more passive aspect of an experience: How can guests enjoy more (p.52)?

Dramatic structure is a valuable tool to design events and experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 2020, p.142). The drama rises from exposition to the climax and then normalizes. Stories have at least a beginning, a middle, and an end (Shedroff, 2009, p. 208). In the ExS (experience service design) model the dramatic structure is one of the main points (Chiehyeon and Kwang-Jae, 2018, p. 145). Only the service factors alone are insufficient to build a memorable experience (Ralston, Ellis, Compton & Lee, 2006, p. 27). Experience factors are needed as well.

Sari Kujala was talking in her lecture "Evaluating user experience and values over time" (Kujala, lecture, 2019) about the peak experience and its importance. She was using as an example the Disney World experience: even though people are lining up for a long time, the end experience might be on the positive side. How to measure this? To add more spontaneity, Biaett suggests for example "flow of experience" (2015, p. 7), something that is surprising and adventurous. The wow factor seems to be one of the building blocks of a memorable event (Getz, 2007, p. 181). In real-time events people are present, engaging, interacting and possibly understanding the storytelling (Shedroff, 2009, p. 116), which is one of the oldest strong experiences and still continues to be one (p. 208).

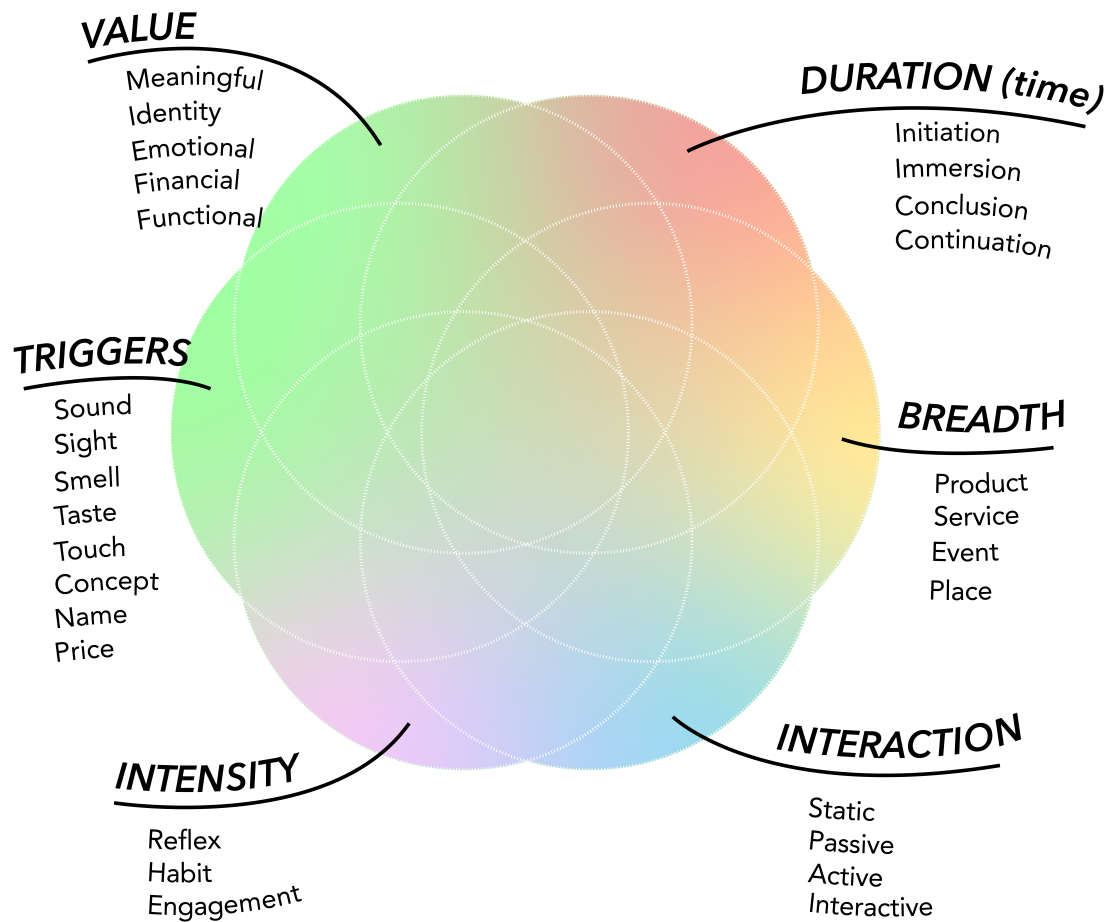
2.1.1. Experience design concepts in events

In this chapter I have collected different concepts of experience design in events. I analyze them and search for similarities and the touch points of a meaningful cultural experience.

"There is no consensual scientific understanding of the concept of experience. Various disciplines address it from different perspectives and for different purposes, thus we need to understand experience as a multi-disciplinary concept." (Roto et al. 2021, p. 23)

Experiential design connects with time and space, and finally creates a multidimensional "umbrella" that customers experience at the event (Berridge, G. 2012, p. 8). Pine's and Gilmore's various dimensions in events are duration, breadth, intensity, interactivity, value and triggers (*Pine and Gilmore, 2020, p.80*). According to Getz (2007, p. 209-210), design in events is especially problem solving. The challenge is to have a transforming impact for all the stakeholders of the event. Getz also states that experience is so personal that it is impossible to plan beforehand. He suggests designing following elements: setting, theme and program design, services and consumables (Getz, 2007, p. 212). The process of designing the experiences for Diller et al. is starting with finding the opportunity, continuing with framing the business idea, then building the concept (p. 53-). Finally it is time to improve the experience and execute the experience.

In Shedroff's model the meaningful experience is connected to the values. For him the pieces of experience are value, duration, triggers, breadth, intensity and interaction, as shown in the following picture (Shedroff, 2020). This picture has been the starting point for different possible visualizations for the roadmap in this study. The most important dimension in the event experience is the value: meaningful, identity, emotional, financial and/or functional value.



Picture 2: Shedroff, N. A model of Experience <https://nathan.com/tool-experience-model/>, 28.04.2020). Modified for this work by Jérémy Gaudibert.

Shedroff has listed some value types on how to create meaningful experiences. This list is a broad vision of different value types that form a core of the roadmap.

- Accomplishment*
- Beauty*
- Creation*
- Community*
- Duty*
- Enlightenment*
- Freedom*
- Harmony*
- Justice*
- Oneness*

Redemption

Security

Truth

Validation

Wonder

(Shedroff, 2009, p. 123)

De Geus et al. (2015) divide the affect of the event in four dimensions. This division is used to analyze the ideas how to execute values.

- *affective engagement (what one gets from an event; excitement, emotional energy, intimacy, adventure, values and recollection)*
 - *cognitive engagement (interpretation, cognition/learning, intellect, learning, knowledge acquisition, reflexivity)*
 - *physical engagement (behavior, (active) participation, creativity, and multisensory)*
 - *experiencing novelty (distinctiveness of event, unfamiliarity, and uniqueness)*
- (p. 14)

Ralston et al. have been integrating the models of services factors (by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry 1988; Ralston et al., 2006, p. 31) and experience factors by Pine and Gilmore (2020, p.80). Pine and Gilmore compare that "services are about time well saved while experiences are about time well spent" (p. xii). Ralston et al. state that service factors are connected to experience factors.

When building a concept, the main focus should be how it is understood by the audience (Shedroff, 2009, p. 60). Experience design was not successful in the Casino Royale themed party that Berridge was studying in his research. In my opinion as well as Berridge's opinion the event organizer was not professional enough to understand the drama arc of the night nor the wishes of the guests so the event was not perceived well (2012, p. 12-21). I think this is a perfect example of how important professional event planning and experience design is. The organizer in Berridge's sample case was organizing some casino activities with a band and some dancers, but did not communicate the DJ of the night as entertainment at all. If the whole night would have been under the same theme, it might have helped the

people enjoy more. Also it seemed that the beginning part (casino) was too long for the participants, who actually wanted to see other guests and party.

Pine and Gilmore (2020, p.106-107) write that firms design for "the average customer", who actually does not exist. If the firm has a possibility to get contact with a real individual, they both have a possibility to learn from each other. When studying the uniqueness of a customer, one can get some specific information about their particular needs (2020, p.112). This relationship has been digitalized over past years and continues to evolve. When larger number of customers teach the company, the more it can provide the goods they really want (p.113). The different stakeholders are attached to events, and the event experiences affect all of them (Berridge, 2014, p. 3).

For successful transformation design should involve intentionality, a strong value-set and permanence to able person's growth in the future as well (Neuhofer et al. 2021, p. 11). Neuhofer and Celuch have used a model called PERMA (2020, p. 6) that includes the dimensions of positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment, to create transformative event experiences. In their study the significant factors for transformative experiences were aesthetic stimuli and contextual theming. They suggest that experience designs should "build the right environment, ambience and atmosphere" (2020, p. 17). They state that there also comes a responsibility for the experience designer: when the event is over, the human transformation might just begin (p. 19).

2.1.2. Roadmapping and blueprints in experience design

Especially when presenting knowledge, the visuality can even change the idea of the whole subject. There might be a possibility to form the presentation of an experience or design in a variety of ways (Shedroff, 2009, p. 66). "Since everyone has different skills and experience, no one way of organizing data is capable of creating understanding for everyone" (p. 72). This also applies to how to experience events, and makes the idea of mapping the experiences more challenging.

Inspirational roadmaps are painting the picture about the future and how to build the strategy. Thomas describes the inspirational strategic roadmap (2020, p. 216) that shows the concepts of the industry, concerning the future of boats. I have used this idea of inspirational roadmapping to build a formula for a more meaningful event. I got some influences also from the trend and implication framework of Newberry and Farnham (2013, p. 129) which starts with recognizing a trend, understanding the needs and ideate the offers. Then there is a possibility to interpret a new concept.

When one finds many touchpoints through mapping, it is possible to focus on some of them and finally to create value (Kalbach, 2016, p. 20). A strategy map can give tools for employees to learn, to understand what customers value and to gain financial benefit (p. 62). Oftentimes the map shows causality. Roadmap can bring a vision and a platform for innovations (Simonse, 2017, p. 15). It shows the strategic direction of the organization.

Design roadmap puts visually different elements on the timeline (Simonse, 2017, p. 10). Normally they have a strong visual identity and the map helps to make decisions. There is not a standard for a roadmap (p.11), but it normally has four layers: user value, markets, product-service and technology. Experiences differ for people and situations. Selection of the mapmaker is giving the map the point of view (Kalbach, 2016, p. 21-22). I have used the division in the following: value, idea, pathway (Simonse, 2017, p. 16-18). Calabretta, Gemser and Karpen say that is important to keep the visuality simple and not to complete the map (2016, p. 48). In this case the pathway is something that the future user can create and complete with their own terms.

Roto, Law, Vermeeren and Hoonhout (2011, p. 4) have defined the term "user experience" (UX) that it is multidisciplinary and may have many approaches, from psychological to value centric. It is normally understood as the usability, customer experience and emotion, among all other terms. The UX professionals normally work with designing, evaluating and studying (p.5). UX is individual for each person and connected with cultural context (p.6). On the website of the Experience Research Society Nielsen-Norman Group states that UX is all aspects of

interactions with the organization. Firstly it needs to serve the customer, secondly they bring joy, and in the end finally UX brings something that the customer does not even know they want (website, UX Definitions).

Chiehyeon and Kwang-Jae (2018) present a tool called Experience design board, which they hope to visualize the delivery process (p.142). The tool is used for service design in experience economy, so it does not tackle the challenges of the meaningful experience. They raise as the main features of the design of the physical environment, the actions of other customers as well as the arc of drama (with possible performances) (p. 143). As they mention in their study, many existing service and experience visualizations concentrate on services or technological services (p. 144). Chiehyeon and Kwang-Jae wish that their experience design board will provide new ideas and designs (p. 149). In my point of view their board (p. 146) has an interesting division using the theater model to divide the different stakeholders. It also visualizes well the actual working places of the stakeholders. For this study it does not distribute the direct answers, but it gives especially service ideas for the meaningful cultural experience as well.

Grebenar (2020, p.370) has designed an event experience mapping model by studying the crowd of the house music events. The matrix has four variables: the shared community, experience, identity and the music (p. 373). The matrix explores the personal experience in the house music event. Kalbach has created an experience map, which explores chronologically behaviors, goals, actions, thoughts and feelings (2016, p. 93). This type of map is normally used by the product managers, designers and developers. The focus is how the events "fit into a person's life", in this case how the event comes meaningful for a person (p. 95). Dr. Erik-Jan Hultink is interviewed in the book "Design Roadmapping" and their compaction is "make it visual. Visual mapping really opens eyes" (Simonse, 2017, p.172).

To build strategic goals, Rossman and Schlatter suggest that organization needs to produce amazing programs, services, places and spaces. They need to take care of natural and historical resources, build community, manage the access and recruit effective workers (2015, p. 127). All these ideas from previous roadmaps and

strategies have been an inspiration to look for the themes for the inspirational strategic roadmap for a meaningful event.

2.2. Organizing events

Events are defined as "a planned gathering of people with a purpose" (Dowson & Bassett, 2018, p. 2). Events are temporal phenomena (Getz, 2007, p. 18) which are normally planned in advance. Planned events can be cultural, sporting, political, life-cycle, private, entertainment, educational, recreational and business occasions (Tassiopoulos, 2010, p. 9-10). Many of them are community festivals and are related to tourism. Ever since the beginning of time people have come together, to join themselves. They have gathered together and have a feeling of "communitas" (Getz, 2007, p.178, Biaett, 2015, p. 4).

Silvers suggest that events have six dimensions: anticipation, arrival, atmosphere, appetite, activity, and amenities (2004, p. 6). The event is built from a huge amount of smaller pieces, for example elements, site, infrastructure, accommodation, safety, environmental issues, entertainment and art, technical production, food and beverages and the staff. In Getz's model of the planned event experience (2007, p. 179) he states that people have needs and motives, which this "special place" event fulfills with effects and levels of engagement. In the end the person has feelings of renewal, loss or even transformation.

In professional event coordination there should always be a script for the event, which includes the activities, timing and setting (Silvers, 2004, p. 274). In my experience it also needs the program and the program's needs. The actual script for the performers should be separate, and not to give too much detailed information for technicians or catering. Silvers agrees with this idea (p. 277). She also underlines the fact that everybody in the production needs to know the script with the schedule and the aim of the production that they can be mentally and physically ready to execute the event (p. 276).

While event managers have become experts at managing the economic, promotional, and operational aspects, or in other words, the objective product and service aspects of community festival, the future challenges will be to acquire a deeper subjective understanding of what attendee actions lead to a genuine transformational experience and how to use this knowledge to let significant human social impacts to develop out of their events. (Biaett, 2015, p.3)

Professional staff is vital, in all levels, also in the performers. It might seem like a good deal to take an amateur performer, but it might cause some troubles during the production (Silvers, 2004, p. 279). It requires professionalism to pick the right artists, and that is why event organizers often use entertainment agency services. Even the most experienced artist needs to be treated well before and after the show (p. 286). In my experience this is one detail that really sets the mood for the evening. When the performers are engaged for the process, it is easier to engage the audience as well and to create the right atmosphere.

Silvers' checklist (2004, p. 12) for atmosphere includes for example audiovisual equipment, heating/cooling, landscaping, dance floor, lighting etc. This is a list to check to fulfill the basic needs but how about building the atmosphere more? Silvers talks about choreographing the event, meaning to plan beforehand how to move customers. Personalizing the experience and noticing the details upgrades the value of the experience (p. 23). The organizer can ask simple questions to get the information what is needed: why, who, where, when, what, and how (p. 30).

How to design an atmosphere? For Tassiopoulos design and creativity in events could include for example the following: soundscaping, visual cues, smell, taste, blending, amenities, areas, innovative sites, edible displays, decoration, theme, environmental issues, timeline, security and communication (2010, p. 196-197). This is all very service based thinking as it is meant to be, but it does not help us visualize the meaningful outcome. Silvers underlines the importance of timing in the event production (2004, p. 276). Balance between stimuli and rest constructs the ambiance. Neuhofer et al. say that layout, lighting and atmosphere will affect to a person's emotions (2021, p. 3).

Tassiopoulos suggests creating the concept first, developing a blueprint at the same time (2010, p.194). Theme can build the right ambience. When coordinating the event environment, Silvers talks about the importance of decorating and theme development, (Silvers, 2004, p. 204-). Silvers lists sources from television to politics and also mentioned brainstorming techniques (p. 206). Pine and Gilmore have made a check-list for the theme of an experience:

- *Theme the experience*
- *Harmonize impressions with positive cues*
- *Eliminate negative cues*
- *Mix in memorabilia*
- *Engage the five senses (2020, p.80)*

In professional event coordination there should always be a script for the event, which includes the activities, timing and setting (Silvers, 2004, p. 274), and resembles writing a play. There is an actual plot and climax with character and motives (p. 272). In my experience it also needs the program and the program's needs. The actual script for the performers should be separate, and not to give too much detailed information for technicians or catering. Silvers agrees with this idea (p. 277). She also underlines the fact that everybody in the production needs to know the script with the schedule and the aim of the production that they can be mentally and physically ready to execute the event (p. 276). A good organizer verifies that all stakeholders have a possibility to fulfill their part.

Silvers suggests using all five senses: sight, sound, taste, touch and smell (2004, p. 209) as well as Pine and Gilmore: they swear that the use of the senses will make the experience more memorable (2020, p.77). Senses are very personal (Shedroff, 2009, p. 245). Especially smell and taste are often overlooked, but make a huge impact on a personal level. Touching needs to be appropriate, but also an active role in touching is designed, like using the computer mouse (p. 259). Sounds are often the major source of information for us (p. 265): if one watches TV without sounds, it is hard to understand what is going on. If one only hears sounds, then it is more understandable, like radio. Sight gives us data of the surrounding world (p. 270). For accessibility it is also important to understand that not everyone has the possibility to use all the senses.

Pine and Gilmore compare the business with acting: people must take roles to engage guests in memorable ways (Pine and Gilmore, 2020, p.187). In my own experience in experience design as well as working with the artists as the choreographer and director, the best way is to stay as real as possible, but definitely go through the whole production with the staff so that they are aware of the "big picture". When a person tries to be another person in the production, if something goes wrong or needs to be fixed, it is impossible for that person to know what the "fake" person would do. Shedroff agrees: authenticity is one important part of our identity, and this concerns also the organizations (2009, p. 196).

Getz ponders at 2007, if the events actually are wanted:

"One question that gets at the heart of the issue is this: If all festivals were removed, would people create new ones? If sports events were cancelled, would there be high demand to bring them back? If conferences ceased because of terrorism, how long would it be before companies and associations found alternative ways to get their people together? Clearly, there is demand for events, and history has demonstrated that this growing level of demand reflects underlying, fundamental needs." (Getz, 2007, p. 240)

After this book there has been a worldwide pandemic, which closed everything for almost two years, some places for even longer. Getz mentions some of the big challenges in the future: virtual events, global warming, pandemic, wars, terrorism and energy cost rising. Ironically, all of those horror scenarios have become true in the past few years. In 2007 Getz said that "pandemic sends chills down the collective spines of everyone in tourism and events industries" (p. 377-378). Getz predicts that planned events will become more important in the future (p. 379). Mega-events might change to region and community events, but events will still happen, and bring people together.

2.3. Meaningful experience

Event experiences can be commercially or economically meaningful, but also culturally meaningful (Getz, 2007, p. 196). Spiritual and ritualistic celebrations have guided the way of meaningful experiences (Getz, 2007, p. 183; Biaett, 2015, p. 4), followed by the celebrations of marriages and coronations (Biaett, 2015, p. 5). Personal meanings are attached to personal needs (Getz, 2007, p. 197). Events can provide meaning on a social level: community and place set the mood for common values and interests (p. 200). The crystallized event aim together with the event concept helps the events team to deliver the best possible value (Dowson & Bassett, 2018, p. 104).

How to make people feel that something is meaningful? Many of us are looking for some sense of how the world is or should be (Diller et al., 2006, p. 31). Curedale lists in his book some definitions for meaning: aliveness, challenge, contribution, creativity, exploration and purpose (2013, p. 26). In the Burning Man Festival context the community value seems to be in such a deep level that people call the festival place home and the festival crowd as a "family" (Neuhofer et al., 2021, p. 9-10). This has similarity with the ballroom culture which is explained in the following chapters. According to Getz, to make a memorable event one needs the "wow" factor and stimulation (2007, p. 181). Meaning is produced when we sense our own identity and when we have a feeling of "belonging" (Hall, 1997, p. 3).

The organization can look for an opportunity for meaning (Diller et al., 2006, p. 57-58). It can be done by understanding the key players, learning new trends, profiling the target audience and coring customer needs. Details are important in the process. Interactivity, control, adaptability, interaction, communication, triggers and language affect how the customers feel about the product and what it means to them (p. 82). The triggers also vary depending on the cultures (p. 90-92).

Experiences can make people happier than purchasing material things (Pine and Gilmore, 2020, p.17). This can be a trend for the future: when the past decades

have been material, considering the ongoing climate crisis, the possibilities with events could bring something new and significant for people.

2.3.1. Stakeholders

For different groups the experience may vary a lot. Sponsors, vendors, paid staff and the media have work-related relationships with the event, when responsibility defines their engagement with the event (Getz, 2007, p. 191-192). Different stakeholders have different outcomes of events. For the paying customers the main points are having the worth for their money. Event experiences can be used for branding and advertising, so there is also a question, is something deceiving or propaganda (Getz, 2007, p. 11). Silvers suggests that for the event it is important to specify the measurements that indicate success (2004, p. 4-5). For some clients it is very clear what they want from their event, and for others it might need more work to find out.

For the volunteers the sense of community is strong. For the paying customers and guests escaping, socializing and networking are important. The sense of belonging to a community seems to connect all the stakeholder groups from VIP's to volunteers: in the end the sense of belonging is something that every human person needs. This feeling is especially strong in some subcultures, for example in Ballroom, when community can be the only place where people feel safe.

The best way to describe a customer or a user is a participant. Participating in actions and being a part of the community makes the experience meaningful (Shedroff, 2009, p. 148). Community makes meaning, and successful communities can help their members with identities, communicate together and interact with meaningful topics. Community leaders can guide and help (p. 178). Richards states that in atmosphere socializing seems to be the most important positive thing for visitors (2019, p. 5): for example in music festival consumer-to-consumer interactions are supporting the development of atmosphere. People also need to be heard and they want to communicate (Shedroff, 2009, p. 178). It can be a possibility to meet new people or share one's own stories.

Diller et al. argue that a person who has grown with the Web and social media, wants to have some other aspects for functionality: the togetherness with friends (2006, p. 19). Personal meaning is connected with belonging to a group (p. 27). Some companies make us become "the co-creators of our lives" (p. 30) and this type of bond will last longer than a marketing trick. The customers should be able to co-create, not only feel. When the program is well designed, the guests are satisfied. Even catering can provide a sense of a community, and production design offers some "wow" factors (Tassiopoulos, 2010, p. 201).

Customer understanding is vital: what types of meaningful experiences they expect, what kind of experiences already exist and how to deliver a meaningful experience to this customer (Diller et al., 2006, p. 58). The best way to know the customer is to interview them and also notice what happens in the environment (2006, p. 59). People intend to say different things about what they actually feel, so observation is also a good tool to explore the customer's mind. To understand more of the customer's needs, Diller et al. (2006, p. 60-61) suggest interviewing with the laddering technique or indirect questions. One successful way to learn more has been the possibility to make an image board of the feelings. For a meaningful experience Diller et al. (p. 81) tell a story about the person buying a car: they do not get impressed by the qualities of the car, but the overall experience in the test drive, when they felt cool and could pick their music. Suddenly the car buying process became a meaningful experience to them.

2.3.2. Content

When designing meaningful experiences, participants should be able to make connections with their lives and values (Shedroff, 2009, p. 122). Meaningful experiences are normally the most valuable ones. We appreciate more of the experiences that are connected to our interests and behaviors (p. 184). To understand the significance, one can answer to the following questions:

- *Does this do what I need it to do?*
- *Is this worth it?*
- *Does this make me feel good/excited/relaxed etc?*

- *Is this me?*
- *Does this fit my concept of the world? (Shedroff, 2009, p. 122).*

Pine and Gilmore are conclude their theory about experience economy with an idea of transformation (2020): the outcome of the experience is so big that it leads to a transformation of an individual. The Pine and Gilmore's idea of the transformation is deeply rooted in the event Burning Man (Neuhofer et al., 2021, p. 1-3): The personal growth is happening through co-creating, positive and negative triggers, education and participation. In music events the transformation happens through emotional and social context. In Burning Man the experience design 'is helping practitioners to design for an orbit of specific spheres and factors that either trigger awakening or elevate on-going transformational journeys' (p. 11): it is happening through art works, music and surprisingly, through outfits. Gaggioli (2016, p. 101) thinks that transformative experiences have two dimensions: epistemic and personal ones. The transformational experience has to be embedded in the culture of the participants. It needs to have a connection with their identity and it needs to be guided furthermore after the event.

2.3.3. Meaningful actions

The challenges of the event organizing are many, but one big issue is: how authentic the event is (Getz, 2007, p. 201)? This is directly connected to the discussion of cultural appropriation. Already back in the year 1934 Dewey (p. 2) talks about appreciation of arts and compares it with flowers: all can admire the beauty of flowers but the one who knows how to take care of them, sees deeper. Thinking that this idea has been talked about for almost one century, it seems unfair that we still have a discussion about cultural appropriation, which includes the exact idea: the more a person knows about a certain culture, the more one understands and the more they can use it in their work. Still today other art forms than European high culture are considered less valuable – due the shortage of knowledge and structural racism.

Many museums are products from nationalism and the communities spend money to build opera houses to verify their good taste in culture and capitalism has become the power to fabricate the value of art (Dewey, 1934, p. 7). Who is invited? Hall

(1997, p. 15) starts the book with the idea that "representation means using language to say something meaningful to other people" and negates the idea right away. The representation is a more complicated process. This study explores the values and ideas for a meaningful cultural experience and sums some meaningful actions and meaningful outcomes in the chapter 5.

2.4. Art and culture

Throughout the times there have been different opinions about how the arts are affecting us. In this thesis it is valid to touch the value of the arts when discussing meaningful cultural events. Art is considered to be something connected with production when appreciation is connected with the receiver, the one who enjoys the art (Dewey, 1934, p. 48). Carey suggests that there are no absolute values in the arts (2006, p. 249). Dewey states that if the perceiver does not go through the similar phases as the artist, the act of recreation, the object might not be understood as art (1934, p. 56). Since the 19th century there has been an assumption that arts mission is to improve people (Carey, 2006, p. 97). "Creating art and being a collaborative part of the process and performance, however, is what leads to a liminoidal experience", says Biaett, and adds that the future of experiences can learn from the past (2015, p. 7-8).

Already back in the 1830's the accessibility of the arts was considered to diminish the gap between the rich and the poor (Carey, 2006, p. 98). In the beginning of 2000's this idea was presented as social cohesion by Neil Mc Gregor, the Director of the National Gallery. Carey continues that many of the art museums that were established in the 1870's, like New York's Metropolitan Museum of Arts, were believed to build unity and democracy (2006, p. 102). Tolstoy among others have claimed that only the Western art is "true" and not even all Europeans get to taste "real art" in their lifetime (1904, p.69). "Popular" and "high culture" are still divided around the world (Getz, 2007, p. 52). "High culture" is often more attractive for grant money as well as for the cultural elite. Only in recent years, the culture has been understood as a way of living and as shared values (Hall, 1997, p. 2).

Carey is searching why it seems that arts are a dividing force (2006, p. 116): many art preferences are class-based (p. 119). Art is a collective experience, states Bilton (2007, p. 143) and continues that art consumers want to participate more in the experience. Even the arts marketing has shifted more into an experience led model, where the audience somehow co-creates with the artists (Bilton, 2007, p. 143). Neuhofer et al. conclude in their study about Burning Man Festival that art seems to be the driving force in the festival, as consumed, co-created and finally giving the sense of transformation (2021, p. 10).

According to Boorsma and Chiaravalloti, the autonomy of art is a modernist concept (2009, p. 6). They claim that artistic mission is the guide of an artist, not the artists' audience nor the society. Recently there has been a thought that artistic value does not exist without the experience of the arts (Rossman and Schlatter, 2015, p. x). Arts are a part of society and building it among other things.

Why do people want to experience art? Some of the user values are social values, emotional values, stimulation and epistemic values, growth, self actualization and self-respect, traditional values, safety values and universal values (Kujala, lecture, 2019). These overlap with the values that arts and culture are bringing. Oftentimes the content of the events consists of culture and arts and make the events more meaningful.

2.5. Summary of the literature review

Experiences have existed as long as the human-kind. Every person has a unique point of view to their experience in the event. When the organizer is familiar with the target group, they can better assume how their actions will affect them. Engagement creates more long-term customer relationships, and engagement can be developed in many levels: for example with participation, atmosphere, content and service. Program and services need to be well-designed for the specific customer group. The community plays an important role in the events. Overall experience creates an atmosphere where people enjoy or where people leave home disappointed. Customer understanding is one of the key factors in how to search for what to do.

Education, entertainment and other forms of events create different kinds of engagement for the experience. Transformational experience requires the next level of service and experience factors, and it will be the interest of the future participants.

Experience design concepts have different approaching angles. To create an inspirational strategic roadmap I will use Shedroff's model of experience values (2009, p.123) as well as the model of the effects of the event of De Geus at al. (2015, p. 14). The roadmap is created with the theories of Simonse (2017, p. 16-18) and Thomas (2020, p. 216). The inspirational strategic roadmap of the meaningful cultural experience consists of values and ideas. To think it further, every organization can learn their own pathway.

The theories of organizing events include an enormous amount of checklists, which I have been going through to find the main themes that touch on the organizing of meaningful events. When studying especially meaningful event theories, some themes were highlighted: the role of stakeholders and the community, the content and the actions made. Transformation of an individual was the outcome in some events. The authenticity of the event and the content engages the customer. This is connected to the idea of the value of the arts, and how it affects people. Transformation through an event is a huge voyage and it does not happen every single event. I hope that the inspirational strategic roadmap of the meaningful cultural experience could help the organizers to find new ideas to engage their customers.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The aim of the research is to find ideas to build a meaningful event. The strength in this study has been my own experience in the field, and the observations I have made along my career. At the same time it is a challenge to distance myself and to be as objective as possible. The study has been made from a managerial and organizational point of view: how to do better? How to make a meaningful event?

3.1. Research approach

I have used multiple methods of data collection. In this study the case is defined by collective case study to examine phenomenon experience design in art and cultural events. Data sources are books, studies, documents, articles, lectures and talks with experience designers, event data as well as the interviews. The interviews are semi-structured interviews individually from experts. The thesis has many checklists and lists of values on purpose to find thematic connections between data.

In the theoretical framework I dived in the experience design and event design theories to find some similarities to how to design a meaningful event. The data needed was roadmapping information and data of experience design and events. The data has been gathered through literature mainly 2021-2023. The data has been analyzed through thematic analysis. Data has been collected after a couple of years of "detective" work, and happily I have noticed that the literature in the field has increased a lot during the past few years. The literature has been retrieved from several libraries and online due to complexity of the research. The focus has been on concepts and models of experience design in events, and how to connect them with organization strategy and vision building.

I have used qualitative methods for this study (Kuala, 2012, p. 93). According to Arbor and Bjerke (2009), theoretical triangulation combines two or more metatheoretical perspectives (as cited in Kuala, 2012, p. 122). It is often recommended for students to combine theories. Thematic analysis was made by

gathering the check lists and main ideas from the different researchers that have studied events and experience design. I went through the theories and literature several times and gathered a list of ideas for the roadmap from the repeated themes (appendix 1). The list of ideas was categorized so that overlapping meanings were dismissed and the main themes were highlighted. The findings are presented in the chapter 4 and divided by the frame of the event effects in four dimensions by De Geus, Richards and Toepoel (2015, p. 14).

I deepened the knowledge with case studies. I have collected data over several years from event organizer's notes and essays and feedback from the participants. The qualitative methods used in this part were case studies, observation, participant observation and content analysis. I have total access to the cases because I have been the organizer. At the same time there is a risk that I am unqualified to judge the actions of the events, because I have been inside in the production. I have used as a framework the SCORE analysis to analyze the events (Graves, 2006, p. 3). I wanted to explore more than just SWOT -dimensions of the cases, because meaningfulness of the event is in the key of the study. Cases have been executed between 2017-2022. After the analysis I have created a draft of an inspirational strategic roadmap that includes values and ideas. Together with the theories these case studies provided a discussion around the nature of creating meaningful experiences and understanding design which was continued with the interviews.

For the inspirational strategic roadmap I have used the value types for a meaningful experience from Shedroff (2009, p. 123). An inspirational strategic roadmap is visualizing values as dancers. The idea comes from Silvers (2004, p. 271) who talks about choreographing the event. I have the same experience when organizing events: moving people in spaces and atmospheres reminds me a lot of dance choreography.

For the inspirational strategic roadmap I have used the model of Thomas (2020, p. 220) to start with. The division has been made by the idea of Simons: value, idea, pathway (2017, p. 16-18). Because the events have a complex nature, it has been hard to categorize ideas under certain bullets. The customer engagement ring was

conducted by searching the main themes in the literature and the data from the cases. In this thesis I have used a pragmatic way of thinking (Kuala, 2012, p. 61). Interpretivism disbelieves in objective observing (p. 74). The research needs to understand the different situations of people and how they experience them (p. 77). The contexts are explored as well. The data has been analyzed as inductive research (p. 100): I have formed the map through data, which the interviews deepen.

The interview data was processed with content analysis identifying relevant data: for example similarities and differences and thematizing the data. I interviewed 6 professionals who are experts in experience design and/or event organizing. Interviews were made as semi-structured interviews with the idea of UX Expert evaluation (website Experience Research Society) and expert walk-through. Two of the interviews were conducted in Finnish and two in English. All interviews were made via an online platform: 3 of the first ones via Google Meets and the last one via Zoom. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed and if needed, translated in English. After transcription, the information was analyzed and divided according to their relevance under the main themes of the interviews: atmosphere, people's wishes, welcoming people, inclusion, transformation in events, values and the roadmap comments. The division was made by using color and number codes in transcription text.

In the interviews we discussed the roadmap and they gave me feedback and ideas to develop the map. The discussion's main point was how experience design can help to forecast event outcomes for the organizer and how it can be an inspirational tool to create an event. The results were conducted by comparing the answers in the interviews and the data from the literature, in the frame of the experience design. The originality of the research lies in the new map on how to design meaningful experiences.

Event management studies have been using the qualitative methods only after The experience economy by Pine & Gilmore, 1999 (Biaett & Richards, 2020, p. 7). De Geus has been presenting the Event Experience Scale (EES) (Biaett & Richards,

2020, p. 7, Richards, 2020). The origins of EES are in literature review, expert review and testing with consumers (Richards, 2020, p. 426). This has been used later by Willem Coetzee and Shahab Pourfakhimi and they found that excitement is the most powerful predictor of behaviour. Greg Richards also conducted a survey with EES (Biaett & Richards, 2020, p. 10). The event experience was connected with behavioral outcomes. Richard found it interesting that in the study 2020 he found that cognitive engagement dimension made the strongest impact in the audience, not the affective engagement (p. 432). This study uses the same origins as EES, using the literature review and expert review. For the future studies I suggest testing the roadmap with consumers and a real event.

I wanted to use experience design in my thesis already in the first draft of the research plan. Violeta Simjanovska from the Sibelius Academy deepened my interest in values in arts during the studies. I visited numerous times at Aalto university to learn more about experience design, so that I could use it in the right way in my thesis. Markus Ahola from the experience design department at Aalto University (personal meeting with Ahola February 20th, 2019) suggested some related approaches for the study: the research of creation of the experience, the management of the experience and the measurement of the experience. The lecture and a personal meeting with Virpi Roto (September 26th, 2019) inspired me to explore more about different research methods in experience design. Toni-Matti Karjalainen from Sibelius Academy suggested that I concentrate on making a blueprint or a roadmap to make the study practical for my work. During the literature review, I understood that my dream is to make an inspirational strategic map.

3.2. Data collection / producing empirical material

I have been generating data from the literature, the cases and from the interviews.

Through data I have designed a roadmap model of how to design a meaningful experience.

I have done participative observations and I have access to all data concerning the events. Therefore it is possible to use documents and archives from these events. I

have done action research for the past years through the events I have organized. I planned the event, executed it, evaluated it, tried to learn from it and started from the beginning again. With the content analysis I explored the relevant and thematic data for meaningful event organizing. From my experiences and the data collected from the literature I have created a model on how to make more meaningful events. After the model was ready, I interviewed some experts in experience design and inclusive events and modified the model with them.

The research material of the cases is collected between the autumn 2017 until the spring 2023. The research cases are executed in the Helsinki area. The interviews were held in the autumn 2023.

3.2.1. My own background with events, experience design and culture

My background comes from the dance and show world, where we are taught to create something special and build the arc of drama that astonishes people. I started working as a dance teacher when I was 14 years old and my first professional job was around 18 years old. Throughout these years I wanted to make people feel more and surprise them. First ideas of the real experience design in events started to form around 2005, when I was a choreographer of NRJ Fashion Awards. We created a fashion show with show design that even the stakeholders from abroad were impressed by.

Later I continued that work for example as an executive choreographer in UMK (Finnish National selection show for Eurovision Song Contest) as well as in Emma Gala (Finnish version for Grammys). I got an opportunity to be a director and a choreographer for the first Olympic Stadium gig for a Finnish artist, who was Robin. We created an experience for the crowd that hopefully they would remember for a long time. All these events deepened my enthusiasm with experience design: how people are feeling? How to make a great atmosphere? How to make a meaningful event? I have used experience design more and more in my work in the past years, by interviewing some of the main stakeholders and customer groups as well as making some polls.

In my work at different events I have collected a list of how to think further. These questions helped me to realize how I would like to develop my production skills. The main idea was to interview the customer or client what is the actual core of the event. People may think they have an idea, but it takes time to design the concept that actually works for all different stakeholders. Steve Jobs has stated that people do not know what they want until you show it to them. This idea has haunted me for a few years now, and even my thesis will be around this theme: what is a good experience and how to build it? Especially when people cannot always describe their desires.

If organizations are promoting events to be something specific or for example ecological, the event has to fulfill the promises. I started to think who is invited and why? Why are we often inviting the same people? Could "the new generation" come in earlier? I also learned to think about the extra value and who is willing to pay and for what. I thought a lot about making the events more participatory: how is that made? The search for collaborative partners is not easy and it should be more and more connected with the same values. A lot of creativity is needed to add the extra value, also in the commercial works.

I have gathered my own checklist of questions to execute the event better. Here are few things that could apply for every event:

- What is the core of the event?
- Who is important to be as a guest?
- What is the guest experiencing?
- Who is the organizer?
- What does a person see at the event?
- When is the event compared to other events?
- How is ecology taken into account in the event?
- How is diversity taken into account in the event?
- What would be the extra value for the people if they buy tickets?
- What is participatory?
- How to connect with people outside of the event?
- Could the audience affect the event?
- How are the co-operations working? Are they with the same values?

I have worked with the idea of inclusivity and diversity or at least I needed to take that into account with my previous productions of the (Vogue) Balls which I have been organizing since 2012 (appendix 2). (Vogue) Ballroom scene is a safer space for LGBTQIA+ community. Ballroom as known today has started by African-American and Latinx LGBTQIA+ communities in New York in the 1960's and it originates from the Balls in Harlem back in the 19th century. When organizing Balls, it is vital to understand the culture of the Ballroom. Persons involved need to be attached to antiracist actions and they need to have a deeper understanding of the gender and sexual minorities. We use the culture today to give respect and "copyrights" to the people who have created the culture. In the street cultures or marginalized cultures this is the only possibility to do the right thing.

I fell in love with voguing back in 1990, when I saw a music video of Willi Ninja voguing. I taped it, and tried to practice. It took more than two decades until I finally met some original Ballroom people from New York, and eventually became a part of the same collective, a house, where Willi Ninja was in. Unfortunately he had already passed away then. I have travelled as much as I can to learn how to vogue as well as from the history of Ballroom. When I became a member of the Ballroom house 2011, I felt like I could do something for the community. I started organizing Balls in 2012, and have been doing it ever since.

Feeling of security has been important for me when I have taught dance, which I started already back in 1989. In dance the person is often open and vulnerable, so my mission has been to create a safer space to try different movements as well as be a part of the group. I had the privilege to help young people to find some new content for their lives after school shootings at Kauhajoki 2008. Later I have been one of the pioneering people of the Finnish Ballroom scene, the safer space for LGBTQIA+ people.

3.2.2. Interviews

The interviewees are chosen because they are experienced in experience design and/or event organizing: They have been talking publicly about different forms of making events better, for example about community, safer spaces and atmosphere.

Some of the interviewees are also professional choreographers which I found useful when visualizing the values in the roadmap as dancers in a choreography.

I wanted to interview Dr. Nelly Ben Hayoun-Stépanian, who is a designer of experiences. I met them for first time at the Vuoden Huiput Festival in 2017, and they made a huge impact with their lecture about experience design. I used the technique which they actually taught me in that lecture - the hammering technique - to contact Ben Hayoun-Stépanian. We first agreed to the interview before pandemic 2020, but due to the happenings in the world the interview was postponed, and we finally did it on 25th October 2023. The actual interview was really challenging to organize. I was forced to use their link, and that is why my recording did not work the way it was supposed to. Luckily I recorded the interview with another device as well, so I got the data needed. They are really talkative and they also showed me their keynotes, so the time that was reserved for the interview went really fast, although I was able to ask all the questions planned. When meeting such a pioneer of your own field, I assume the time is never enough, because there would always be a desire to hear some more.

Before I narrowed the study to the idea of the roadmap with values, I had an idea to research the relationship with senses and experiences. With that idea in mind, I wanted to interview The Head of Music at YleX Tapio Hakanen (DJ Orkidea), who has been working with sound for all his life. I also had in mind the Deputy Director for Education in the Modern Art Museum in New York Wendy Woon, who we met on our study trip there, and who was talking about the experience design at MoMA. When the value based roadmap was formed, I left Hakanen out of the interviewees. Woon was not working in the Modern Art Museum in New York anymore, so She was left out as well.

When the study deepened, my focus turned towards the Ballroom and people who worked with values and inclusion. I wanted to interview the International Ballroom Icon, consultant for Ballroom TV-series and a producer for Ballroom events for decades, Jack Mizrahi Gorgeous Gucci. Luckily we have met several times during the years, and I had a direct contact with him. Unfortunately he is always busy, so the actual interview, which was first planned in September, was postponed in October.

After the pandemic Finland was ready for the new club idea, which was invented by Caroline Suinner, Meriam Trabelsi and Sophia Wekesa. They are pioneers of safer spaces in Finland and they have worked for years for inclusivity and representation, for example through Ruskeat tytöt collective and Pehmeet.

When the roadmap was almost ready, I really wanted to interview also my colleague for several years, who has been organizing similar events in Finland as I have. Roza Ahmad is one of the main figures in the Finnish Ballroom scene. Ahmad has a wide experience from different fields of arts and culture, and she has been working as an event organizer, a choreographer as well as a photographer.

I also asked if choreographer and organizer Sonya Lindfors, who has been awarded several times nationally, could be able to be interviewed, but unfortunately she had too busy autumn.

The interview questions were made after thematic learnings from the literature and cases. The framework for the interview questions was the research questions. The interviews were conducted based on the following questions:

Mapping of the experience?

What would you change in the map?

Why would you change that?

What do you think is important in the map?

Why is that thing important?

How do you know what people want?

How to design a meaningful cultural experience?

How could you learn more from the people?

What kind of art values are important for developing the experience?

Why attract more?

What is the added value?

What could be done to make people feel more included?

What extra value can a creative experience bring for culture?

What do you think about the atmosphere?

What do you do to achieve a certain atmosphere?

How does it come alive?

Why do you think this is a good way to achieve the certain atmosphere?

Why do you have this assumption?

How is the atmosphere constructed?

Why do you think this is a good way to achieve a certain atmosphere?

The words and concepts that were helping out to formulate the questions were: designing the meaningful experience, creating a meaningful experience, experience management and measuring the experience.

3.2.3. Event cases

I wanted to deepen the knowledge I got from the literature with my own experience. When analyzing the previous events I have organized I have learned some formulas that are repeated. I used SCORE analysis: strengths, challenges, options, responses and effectiveness (Graves, 2006, p. 3). I have used SCORE instead of SWOT, because it is a wider concept, it measures more the overall impact and is more connected with values and community (p. 5). I divide the information in five SCORE dimensions (p. 7-13) which include the following ideas, modified a for the event analyzing:

- Strengths meaning the strengths and services that the event has.
- Challenges meaning understanding the weaknesses and later finding the skills, services and capabilities needed.
- Options meaning the opportunities and actions, which rise from the risks.
- Responses meaning the responses from different stakeholders: in events these are often the performers, the production team, the customers and partners.
- Effectiveness: is the use of resources valuable? Is the event meaningful? Is the atmosphere correct? Does the event bring value for the stakeholders?

After I analyzed through SCORE, I wanted to deepen the idea of effect and measure it with the dimensions that de Geus, Richards and Toepoel have developed (2015, p.14). In their research the the affect of the events can be divided in four dimensions:

- *affective engagement (what one gets from an event; excitement, emotional energy, intimacy, adventure, values and recollection)*
 - *cognitive engagement (interpretation, cognition/learning, intellect, learning, knowledge acquisition, reflexivity)*
 - *physical engagement (behavior, (active) participation, creativity, and multisensory)*
 - *experiencing novelty (distinctiveness of event, unfamiliarity, and uniqueness)*
- (p. 14)

With the idea of De Geus et al. it is possible to think a bit further how ideas are actually engaging the people. At first I compared with SCORE and engagement two cases of the Balls and what actions we have made to make the events better. Then I studied the event Spring Night's Dream.

3.3. Critical reflections on the research process

I remember visiting the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York on the school trip in 2018: feeling a bit insecure to go in, because the building is so glamorous. I am still very privileged: middle-classed, straight-passing and white. Cultural institutions are not always easy to approach. Many of them are posh and pompous. Luckily in many places the organizations have started to raise the inclusivity. Cultural experiences are related to one's culture, origin, upbringing, education and other background related matters.

Since the beginning there was a challenge to combine the arts management studies and experience design. I hope my research would help to build a bridge between different organizations and diverted groups of art consumers. The understanding of the different privileges has risen during the past and ongoing activity movements like #metoo, Black Lives Matter and Trans Lives Matter. The idea of accessibility has broadened from the idea if the wheelchair can come into a long list of intersections to be taken into account when organizing an event.

I have been questioning my position as a white person to write about Ballroom in the Master's thesis. Even though I have been a part of the culture about for about 15 years, and maybe because I have been a part of it for so long, my privilege puzzles

me. The Ballroom is and it should always be a safe space especially for the BIPOC LGBTQIA+ -people. At the same I have an understanding of a marginalized culture of which practices should be ordinary in everyday life: safer spaces, accepting people as they are and including people more.

I have been the organizer of the case events, so I am not sure if I have been able to be as neutral as a researcher could be in their studies. At the same time I have a great accessibility to all information. Overall the research has been demanding because I am questioning my position as an organizer of the cases as well as a white person writing about Ballroom. I hope that my deep self-examination has not been in vain and that I could bring some new ideas for the organizing of meaningful events which would benefit many stakeholders, and even make the world a little bit better place to live.

When reading the huge amount of checklists of organizing events, it was challenging to pick the main themes connected to the meaningful events. Some themes rise up more than others, but in the end for one person a small detail can make the difference in an event. Especially when thinking about marginalized groups, for example different accessibility issues can make the person feel totally left out.

In my research I have noticed that many event related programs and practices have changed during the years. In the event production book by Silvers (2004) there are many program examples that would actually be thought of as cultural appropriation in the year 2023. In the book "Making meaning" (Diller et al., 2006, p. 77) is a phrase "Our spokesperson, maybe even the CEO if appropriate, could be a woman who is both attractive and a top athlete". Even though the meaning is to find a nice angle to marketing, in the year 2023 this sounds very misogynistic. Silvers specifically warns that not always the companion of the CEO/event participator is a woman (Silvers, 2004, p.343), which sentence seems really old-fashioned in the year 2023. Since I started the studies at Sibelius Academy 2017 to the year 2023, even the words used in the common discussion have been changing a lot. People talk 2023 more about

equity than equality and they talk more about inclusion and representation than diversity.

In my research I have noticed that often the researcher makes a note that the panel or sampling lacks diversity (example de Geus at al., 2015, p. 11). Still there are not many suggestions on how to clear more space for diversity. It might take a bit more time in the beginning, but surely gives better or wider results in the end. Also I want to raise a question: what is considered as a cultural event? Are the hip hop gatherings of the youth a cultural event? In my opinion definitely yes. Our long history with colonialism makes us appreciate so-called "white culture" more than, for example indigenous cultures.

Also I noticed that if the person making the study has not actually worked in the field, it might cause a problem, because they do not know what to study. Especially in the events, where the work is often very practical, I think the experience in the field would be beneficial. I wish that some art organizations would be interested in my study. I also hope that I could deepen my own work in the arts and I could enable more meaningful experiences.

4. Analysis and findings

This chapter presents the short presentations of the cases and then analysis of the cases. The cases are analyzed with SCORE analysis and affect analysis to learn themes of a meaningful experience. Affect analysis shows us possibilities to engage the participants. After the thematic learnings from literature and the analysis of the cases I have formed a draft of the inspirational strategic roadmap. The roadmap was tested and analyzed by the experts in the field. The interviews were based on the concept of the meaningful events and the roadmap. The interviews are semi-structured interviews individually from experts. The interview data was processed with content analysis.

4.1. Presenting the cases

First case is an event called Vogue Ball "In Love with Nature" on 21st October 2017 in Nosturi, Helsinki and the vogue workshops during the weekend 20th-22nd October 2017 (appendix 3). The Vogue Ball event was an evening with competing in 12 vogue categories such as runway, vogue new way, best drag, best dressed etc and showcases of the judges. International MC Jack Mizrahi was hosting the Ball. There were two other international guests: judge Leiomy Maldonado and the judge Aviance Yamamoto. There were also vogue workshops during the weekend from Friday 20th October until Sunday 22nd October for the dancers and others involved in ballroom culture.



*Photo of Leiomy Maldonado
In Love with Nature Ball 2017
by I. Hurme.*

I made my own project report about the event right after the event. Back then my goal was to make an event which is economically profitable, but also gives a social impact for the night life of Helsinki with its open minded atmosphere. I wanted the vogue/ballroom culture to be seen as fashionable and I wanted to raise its status. Because the Ballroom culture was born to bring safe space for Black and Latinx queer youth, the fear of doing cultural appropriation is always present. Education is the key to understanding this culture. Technology is needed for marketing and informing about everything. It is also very valuable for educational reasons. I was spending a lot of time on social media. I needed to explore that all my decisions were suitable for all the different stakeholders and at the same time, I needed to make the audience understand the culture and respect it. I had to keep the sponsors and partners satisfied as well.

I was the manager of the project and because of my networks I had a possibility to bring some icons to represent the culture. Also the Finnish scene helped me to organize. There were 390 people attending the Ball and for the workshops there were about 150 entrees. My own work tasks were to be an executive manager of the project, developer of the concept for "In Love with Nature", marketing, contacts with funders, development of co-operations, ticket sales, communications and overall production. We got some media coverage from Ruskeat tytöt and Radio Helsinki as well as on social media. Some of the main things I thought were important was that our guests would like to be in Finland, that they have good flights, accommodation and food to enjoy themselves. They were the stars of the show, so if they are happy, the audience will enjoy it as well. I also learned a lot about co-operation.

In my conclusion at the beginning of the year 2018 I stated that in these kinds of events one needs to build the community. *"When the event is well done, everyone including the audience wants to invest for the evening. The social profit was bigger than economical - in the audience there were happy people - to have this kind of evening where everybody was welcome."* I have been organizing many Balls after this one. Each time I try to develop the actions and overall communications for the better.

In the affect analysis, experiencing novelty was the dominant engagement factor, because this type of events were not so normal back in 2017. This Ball was also a

good starting point for building a community and the cognitive engagement factor was built with the education. Physical engagement factor was seen with the participants, who became a part of the community after the Ball. The understanding and adapting of the values started.

BALL 2017	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	OPTIONS	RESPONSES	EFFECTIVENESS	AFFECT ANALYSIS through Geus, Richards and Toepoel model (2015, p.14)
	International guests, new event	How to reach people, community not ready	Social media	Sponsors happy even though the event needs to be a certain kind	Understanding the culture	First timers get an affective engagement: strong feelings when see people walking and values are strong. Experiencing novelty happens because the wow affect of the culture.
	Networks in the field	Cultural appropriation, have to be alert	Community building through education before and after	390 attendees in the underground event	Being member of the culture	Cognitive engagement: people heard about the history of ballroom and what is happening from experienced host
	New, interesting venue	Safer space, how to succeed		Media coverage	Building the community	The participants experience first of all the physical engagement, because they are a part of the performance. The culture invites also the guests to participate.
				The understanding of the culture developed strongly through this event.	Strong values	Participants, who are performing, also share the values, learn and experience surprises. This is a four dimensional experience for them.
				Wow experience for many newcomers	The culture that has literally saved lives from the 60's works still in the same way, and makes a huge impact for each visitor. Understanding and living the culture goes deeper than 'just visiting'.	International guests brought a big wow-factor to the event with their skills. Networking started to build the community.

SCORE and affect analysis 2023, Ball 2017. Visual implementation By Jérémy Gaudibert with the guidance of Kurkihovi.

If I compare this event to the international Ball that I organized in the year 2022, there were many things differently. Some things have changed for the better:

The safer space policy has evolved enormously. I wrote the first safer spaces text for my event at GLO Hotel Art (4). After this event I started to explore more of the safer spaces policies through Brown Girls Collective as well as Culture for All community, and later created my own safer spaces policy, especially for the Balls. I created the first longer safer spaces text for the Archie Ball held in January 2019. Later the text has evolved (appendix 5).

This specific text has been borrowed by many organizers around Europe and I have felt really flattered that the work spreads. In this case I added the short history of the Ballroom events to make people understand where they are coming and how they

should behave. Physical accessibility instructions were added to make the event more inclusive for people who are suffering from physical restrictions. Toilet policies were made more inclusive when the understanding of different genders has evolved in the society. Later due to the corona pandemic I added the health instructions. The idea of safer space needs to be examined every now and then because society changes and the needs vary for different people.

I have learned how to reach more people who should participate in the functions. I have built a free ticket system: even though I have always put "names on the list", nowadays people can also reserve a free spot online in the case of lack of funds. There are also free spots especially for trans people, because their actions started the whole culture. I still send invitations and ask people personally to join the functions.

People are also participating more widely in the planning: I have been able to raise these salaries a bit, so it has given me the chance to ask for help and other opinions which give more point of views for everything. The accessibility in all different levels has been rising: the venues are physically accessible (even though sometimes the person needs to book an escort beforehand). There is always at least one gender neutral toilet.

In the Ball 2022 (appendix 6) after the pandemic I did not have the courage to bring out iconic judges from New York. Luckily I got a great representation of the guests from Europe: all guests were BIBOC and LGBTQIA+ -people. I still do not have the resources to have the full accessibility for the events: when making social media there could be better texts in plain language as well as in many languages. There could be verbal explanations of the photos.

The co-operations have diminished due to the utilization of time. It was great to have many co-operative partners but some of them did not give any extra for the event, and it took too much time from organizing. The work is still not sustainable financially when thinking about the production: there is a huge amount of work, and the salary for the producer comes only if the risk pays off: if there is a full house of people, and not even then. Only possibility to develop the functions is to apply for grants to have some kind of reasonability for organizing.

In this Ball I thought very carefully again, who is coming to judge and who will be on the stage. I think that is one main point how to give back to the community as well make the community more interested. As mentioned earlier, the accessibility level was better than before: physical accessibility was taken care of, financially everybody had a possibility to participate, there were gender neutral toilets and we obeyed the pandemic restrictions not to take too many people in. More people were planning the categories. We can still progress with the invitations and how to reach more people.

In the Ball 2022 the community was already established and that brings affective and physical engagement. The community had been developing for over ten years already, so the multiple factors of engagement affected more people than ever before. The education is happening at the Balls as well as outside of the Balls through different workshops and weekly voguing classes. Accessibility brought more options mentally and physically.



Photos from Ninja Ball 2022 by Eva-Lisa Örupöld

Ball 2022	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	OPTIONS	RESPONSES	EFFECTIVENESS	AFFECT ANALYSIS through Geus, Richards and Toepoel model (2015, p.14)
	International	How to reach people	Social media	Sponsors happy even though the event needs to be a certain kind	Understanding the culture	First timers get an affective engagement: strong feelings when see people walk, values are strong and wow affect of the culture as experiencing novelty.
	Networks in the field	Cultural appropriation, have to be alert	Free tickets system, who is invited and how	More community attending because of the free ticket system	Being member of the culture	Cognitive engagement: people heard about the more about the ballroom.
	Deeper understanding of the safer space	Pandemic	More community participation in the planning	Full house, 200 participants	Building the community	The participants experience the physical engagement, because they are a part of the performance.
	Free tickets	Restrictions in the event organizing	More co-operation needed, when more time	Personal invitations as much as possible	"I felt safe first time in two years"	Participants, who are performing, also share the values, learn and experience surprises. This is a four dimensions experience for them.
	Better accessibility (gender neutral toilets)	Who is paying for the ticket if many of the community don't	Grants	People participating more in the planning	"This is the only place where I can be myself."	International guests brought a big wow-factor to the event with their skills.
		Plane tickets were super expensive	Judges, who is on the stage	How long can the organizer go on without getting paid normally	Understanding of the culture has developed through all different stakeholders.	Community coming together brings affective and physical engagement.
		Better accessibility in social media	Who is invited and how	Possibility to educate the society to understand the importance of these type of events-> grant possibilities	Intersectionalism in event organizing has developed.	In this Ball the Ballroom community had been developing for over ten years already. The four-dimensional experience attracted more people than before, and even the visitors were inspired to take part for the next one.
		Lack of resources, funds, and time	More engagement in all levels			
			More accessibility in all levels			

SCORE and affect analysis 2023, Ball 2022. Visual implementation by Jérémy Gaudibert with the guidance of Kurkihovi.

Already after the Ball in 2017, I wanted to evolve the idea of the experience design further in the events outside of the Ballroom, and I designed an event: a house full of experiences with GLO Hotel Art. We started to dream together with the director of the hotel in the autumn of 2018. We wanted to utilize the beautiful spaces of the old hotel building and fulfill them with diverse art. The event day was right before Mayday and it was the start of the summer time, so we decided to call it The Spring Night's Dream (appendix 7).

I was searching for different artists sharing the similar values with the basic idea of the event: inclusivity, diversity, state of being environmentally healthy and creativity. There were a lot of discussions about whether there should be an entrance fee to the event, but in the end we agreed that the event is more inclusive if admission is free.

I gathered a lot of different artists, for example Brown Girls Collective, Ansvor Oksman, Teemu Keisteri, Molly Moonstone, House of Disappointments, Outsider art, voguing classes, afro classes, yoga classes, hair stylists, floral crown workshop – and many of them actually came. Two artists cancelled in March and one three days before the event. I hoped to collect many street fashion sellers in the event as well as painters, jewelry artists and dance artists. I also wanted the event to have many participatory parts so I looked for different workshops that could go together with the spring theme.

The actual program had a treasure hunt (the main prize was a painting by Teemu Keisteri) all around the hotel. There were dance workshops, pop up sales event by different artists, a disco, some club kids as hosts, floral crown workshop and even sauna and spring hairdo's. The artists were from a very large spectrum: from outsider art to voguing and from African dance to painters. Overall there were around 300 visitors in the event.



Photos from Spring Night's Dream 2018 by Maija Astikainen

With the lenses of affect analysis the event was using all engagement levels. Participatory parts of the workshops created the physical and cognitive engagement. We tried to attract the senses in many ways: audio in the workshop spaces, flowers in the common spaces as well as in the workshop with their visuality and smell, the food was thought specifically for this event etc. The whole event concept and especially the treasure hunt provided the novelty factor. The values and diversity in the artists attached to affective engagement as well as to cognitive engagement.

Spring night's dream	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	OPTIONS	RESPONSES	EFFECTIVENESS	AFFECT ANALYSIS through Geus, Richards and Toepoel model (2015, p.14)
	New concept	Contacts with many artists, waiting for replies	New artists	Customers shared the same values	Values inclusivity, diversity, sustainability, creativity	Affective engagement and novelty were present through values and how everything looked like.
	Free event	Too much to do and too long event	Use of the senses	GLO Hotel Art was the main co-operative partner: people got to know the spaces	"It was great that the kids were also invited during the day."	Workshops were providing cognitive engagement.
	Diversity	The concept is too wide	Surprises	Participation in many levels	"It was a really great party! Maybe too much of everything, so it was really hard to communicate when there were so many things. May Day is also a little bit problematic because there are so many house parties. Concept great, thanks! Floral workshop, club kids, Kalevi Helvetti, Keisteri... amazing artists. Thanks!"	The whole event was planned to be participatory in multiple ways so physical engagement happened.
	Use of senses	How to engage the artists before the event	The art hunt	Creative design for the event as well as atmosphere	"This was possibly the nicest event that I've taken part in, thank you! I want to be part in the future. Quality concept, space, performers, production, staff and food made the event memorable. What to develop: shorter program, better segmentation, better visibility outside of the hotel (for the people passing by, for hotel guests).!"	People were excited and experiencing novelty to participate the different actions and especially the treasure hunt.
	Novelty	Lack of marketing	Starting the use of the safer space policy	Diversity in the customers as well	"Could have been a shorter time."	There could have been even more surprises (needs more resources).
			Still dream about creating a community of creative event lovers		Participation in many ways, not forcing	The multi sensory and sense-using planning can be even deeper.
			More communication and engagement with the artists before the event			Diversity of the artists and participants brought something good in all engagement levels.

SCORE and affect analysis, Spring Night's dream. Visual implementation by Jérémy Gaudibert with the guidance of Kurkihovi.

After this event I decided to work even more for designing the experiences and making the events more inclusive. I started my own firm Experiencing in the autumn 2019. The main idea is following:

"Experiencing is an events production agency on the forefront of culture. Together with you we will create impactful unforgettable tailored experiences. We believe in experience design and well-controlled production. Our wide networks of creative people in arts and culture will guarantee an original experience with surprises. We appreciate equality, creativity, diversity, participation, co-operation, learning, new experiences and a good atmosphere." (website experiencingevents.com)

Later, when pandemic came, I expanded my functions to be also an artists agency. Some of the artists are the same that participated in this production of the Spring Night's Dream.

Later I had an opportunity to make some similar events than the Spring Night's Dream at Klaus K Hotel 2020 and 2021. We had Let's Come Together events after the pandemic with pop up sales, workshops and some after parties. The learnings from these events have brought me new job opportunities where I have felt that my learning process is evolving as well as it is worth for all that work. I could mention for example projects like Yle Moves Like Summeri (dance program for youth; the core values are diversity and respect for dance cultures), producer and experience designer for the Untitled (stream) Festival by Demos Helsinki (which is a festival that dreams the possible futures) and Vuoden huiput gala (I have been the executive producer for the event since 2013), where the production has moved towards to feminist values for years.

Both the Spring Night's Dream and Let's Come Together gathered many different artists under the same roof. I wondered if I could bring diversity to the artists, could it bring diversity to the participants as well, and it surely did. There is a dilemma who is invited (Jani Toivola, Terveiden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos, 2023). If the person is the only one in the room, how they could feel welcomed? Organizing these events taught me a lot, and the idea of the meaningful events where everybody is welcome, started to take shape in my mind.

4.2. Draft for the strategic roadmap for a meaningful experience

Thomas (2020, p. 220) shows an inspirational strategic roadmap for the future of boats. I have used this model as a canvas to build the formula of the more meaningful event. Values have been rising as a theme from the literature: they also connect the organizer, the customer and other stakeholders easily and create a strong engagement. The roadmap consist of Shedroff's (2009, p. 123) value types how to create meaningful experiences:

Accomplishment

Beauty

Creation

Community

Duty

Enlightenment

Freedom

Harmony

Justice

Oneness

Redemption

Security

Truth

Validation

Wonder

Our values define our lives. According to Klamer, realizing values have two meanings: awareness and making the values real (2017, p.22). "Values are relational concepts in the sense that they are at work in the interactions among people and in the interactions between people and things or states of affairs (p. 52)." When I was thinking about the values, I remembered Silver's words (2004, p. 271) about choreographing the event, and decided to choreograph the values together. When I got the value type silhouettes, to place them in the right positions I wanted to cut them out from the paper. What happened was that I understood that I could move them and choreograph them for different situations with different value positions if needed. Luckily I wanted to cut the value types out from the paper, which gave multiple choices for value propositions.

In this first version the positions above are choreographed like this because this is an event, where the main value types are community and oneness. If they collide successfully, it can create a wow effect: wonders and enlightenment. The community lies on shoulders of duty, security, truth and justice and community validates the person. When a person becomes a part of the community, the feelings of freedom and harmony emerge.

In the core there are values. They are surrounded by ideas on how to move forward to execute the actual values. I will call it a customer engagement ring. In the next ring there would be the possible outcomes. Each organization can find their own pathway depending on what values and ideas they choose to prefer.

The ideas are found from the theories and literature (appendix 1), leaving out the ideas that would overlap with values, organizer parts or with other ideas. I divided the ideas of the meaningful event (appendix 1) with De Geus, Richards and Toepoel (2015) division of the effects of the event in four dimensions:

- *affective engagement (what one gets from an event; excitement, emotional energy, intimacy, adventure, values and recollection)*

Representation

Language

Personal benefits

Safer space

Understanding the culture

- *cognitive engagement (interpretation, cognition/learning, intellect, learning, knowledge acquisition, reflexivity)*

Resources

Education

Credibility

Understanding the customer

Authenticity

Content

Service

- *physical engagement (behavior, (active) participation, creativity, and multisensory*

Participation

Senses

Inclusion

Access

- *experiencing novelty (distinctiveness of event, unfamiliarity, and uniqueness)*
(p. 14)

Wow factor

Arc of drama

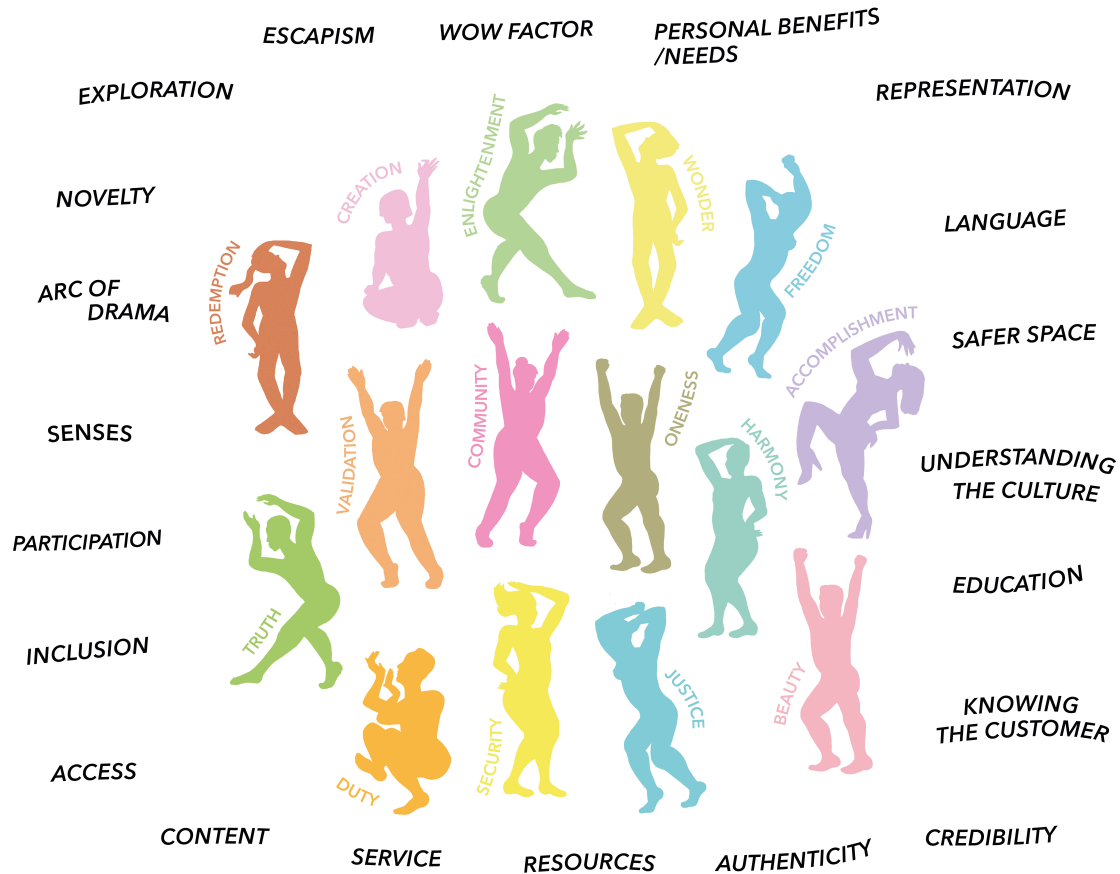
Novelty

Exploration

Escapism

The map can be used to find pathways to execute the values through ideas and define strategies. Organizations can pick the values that they want to cherish, and after that they can use the customer engagement ring to explore what would be the best way for the implementation of those values.

As an example there can be a Ballroom event organizer who uses the map. If the organization would like to implement an event with the core values of community and creation, they can pick the ideas to find the pathways to execute the values. In this example case they could choose credibility, language and senses. The organization needs to have a credibility in the field, so they can use the language of the community in their communication. Senses can be linked with creation: maybe there could be a dress code that uses more than one sense? Maybe the atmosphere could be built with senses? Creation with the community can be utilized already before the event, for example in finding the theme for the event.



*The first draft of the inspirational strategic roadmap for meaningful events.
Visual implementation by Jérémy Gaudibert with the guidance of Kurkihovi.*

4.3. Analysis of the interviews

Idea of the interviews was to test the roadmap and get some ideas for the future development of the map. I started with an interview frame, which I changed for the second interview. I also noticed that I want to ask the questions first and then show the idea of the roadmap. All biographical information is gathered from the interviewees and from the official sources. All interviewees were willing that their names can be published in the study.

The first interview was conducted online 25th September 2023 with Meriam Trabelsi, Sophia Wekesa and Caroline Suinner from the Club U-Haul. Club U-Haul is a club created by three friends Wekesa, Trabelsi, and Suinner: "The club's purpose is to

serve its community, to make you feel free and enjoy and dance in a revolutionary way.” The club started from two needs: to hear amapiano and to be a lesbian in a club. They want to bring safer club experiences, especially to marginalized people. At the same time Club U-Haul is about good vibes and enjoying the dance floor to the fullest. The club also asks people to mind the space they have if one is outside of marginalized identities. DJ Wekesa has been playing for over 6 years and is a pioneer of the safer space practices in Finland. Trabelsi and Suinner are multidisciplinary artists and MC’s who have expanded their skills in DJ:ing. In this interview the main speakers were Wekesa and Trabelsi, but Suinner attended the session.

I know the interviewees beforehand, and I appreciate the work that they have done with safer spaces, antiracism and lifting up the marginalized bodies. My assumption was to hear more about the safer spaces in the events, but the main finding for me was their number one value ”pleasure” (appendix 8, the first interview framework). I have used the second interview framework in the last three interviews with Ahmad, Mizrahi and Ben Hayoun-Stépanian (appendix 9, the second interview framework). I have noticed after the first interview that it is better to ask the questions first and then present the roadmap not to affect too much on the answers of the interviewees.

The second interview was 26th September 2023 with my colleague Roza Ahmad, who has been a Ballroom community leader in Finland for years. We have been organizing some events together, but mainly separately. I was keen to hear her opinion of the value map and the ideas around it, because we have been talking about what should be in the center of the Ballroom event. Roza Ahmad is The Nordic Mother of the House of Ninja Ballroom house and she is a performer, DJ and a Ballroom photographer. She is working as a CEO outside of the Ballroom. She has been participating in Ballroom since 2010 and she has also been documenting the European Ballroom scene since 2016 and has had her pictures exhibited in The Finnish Museum of Photography 2023, Kunsthal Rotterdam 2021 and Cultural Centre Caisa 2020.

Jack Mizrahi Gorgeous Gucci (born Jacques Ceran JR) is one of the driving forces in the Ballroom community. Known as the “Voice of the Ballroom scene” Jack Mizrahi is revered for his services as the Master of Ceremony all over the world. He has been a consultant in the TV-series *Legendary* and *POSE*, which he also co-starred in. Jack Mizrahi’s contributions to the ballroom community are respected and valued. It has earned him the status of icon and the respect from his peers. He co-created the National Ballroom Awards Ceremony and established The Ballroom Hall of Fame and The Ballroom House Hall of Fame. As a community leader Jack Mizrahi is an advocate of HIV/STD prevention and has volunteered his time and talents to spread the message.

We have met several times with Mizrahi and he has made a huge impact by his ability to create atmosphere and get to know and be friendly with everybody. As seen previously, he has a long experience in organizing and hosting events, especially with marginalized groups. He is nowadays world-known for his work in the Ballroom scene, and still continues to develop himself but also is a strong leader who uplifts others. We had the interview with Mizrahi on 11th November 2023.

Nelly Ben Hayoun-Stépanian PhD is an awards-winning designer of experiences. Their work is multidimensional and experiential in the intersection of film, science, tech, theatre, politics, music and design. Their projects have been for example NASA’s International Space Orchestra, University of the Underground and their own Design studio. Recently they are having a festival called “Tour de Moon” in the United Kingdom.

We have met once at Vuoden huiput festival in 2017, and they were my first inspiration to get deeper involved with experience design. They were talking about “hammering technique”, the idea not to give up, which I have actually used to contact them, because they are really busy with their work. After multiple contact attempts we managed to organize the interview on 24th November 2023.

4.3.1. Atmosphere

"It is very reflective, in what kind of space the event is, who do you want as guests and what do you want yourself", says Trabelsi. Of course it is also about lighting, staff, schedule and many other service factors. Wekesa thinks about the arc of drama: everyone has their own way to execute the arc of drama. "People like the balance of safety and surprises", says Wekesa. If there is a safe space, one could find a sweet spot of this balance.

Ahmad thinks that the atmosphere is one of the most important things in events; what is the energy. There should be people hosting people, and of course the space affects. Arrival is the "make it or break it" moment in Ahmad's words. People should know beforehand what to expect before they arrive. If one feels alone or "lost" when they arrive, it is discouraging, if there is nobody welcoming. Ahmad says that also because of her Kurdish culture, she expects the certain hospitality.

In Mizrahi's opinion the atmosphere is the main thing in events, especially in Ballroom events: "Ballroom for us, is because people come to get away, to express, to let the energy out". "The experience begins at the door, that's how you almost curate the event", says Mizrahi and continues with the idea that if you are inviting people to your home for dinner, one wants the guests to enjoy themselves. The organizer needs to start with themselves: to be ready with no anxiety: "You are in a good place and it starts with you and your team". Team needs to know what is the goal we want to accomplish in the event. "Your talent got you noticed, but your professionalism will keep you booked with me", says Mizrahi to his team. People are talented but they need to also want to work for the event.

Ben Hayoun-Stépanian a meaningful event means the story is what they are trying to tell and that the story is as holistic as possible. Having perspectives that are not human centric, for example sounds of insects. Also the experience can be non-linear: "something where you cannot just go in and out but where you can get lost". Ben Hayoun-Stépanian never thinks about the atmosphere in the beginning, but rather the multidisciplinary team of professionals that they are putting together, who come in with their perspectives and experiences. They think about what kind of

aesthetics they want to share and to make a strategy that all the stakeholders will be connoted to the event. When the event is actually going, Ben Hayoun-Stépanian wishes that the atmosphere will be inclusive and supportive: federation of care. The stakeholders of the event, the policy makers and the communities will engage with each other. Many people understand the events as "one-of element", but it also has the long-lasting legacy which should be designed already from the start; specifically to support the community and the organization of the community.

Compared to the literature of how to create atmosphere, the interviewees were highlighting the welcoming aspects and the acts of the staff more. In the literature many researchers talked about the importance of technical factors like lighting (Silvers, 2004; Tassiopoulos, 2010 and Neuhofer et al. 2021). The technical factors do not exclude the creation of the atmosphere through social factors as well. Richards believes in communication between customers (2019, p.5) and furthermore Shedroff underlines the communication between stakeholders to be one part of atmosphere creation (Shedroff, 2009, p. 178).

4.3.2. What do people want?

Wekesa and Trabelsi think about what they want for themselves: for example the Club U-Haul has started from their own needs. Wekesa states that you need to be honest about what you want. If one wants to have a huge crowd, that might be possible with really popular content. "If one really wants to make a meaningful event, the content needs to be meaningful for oneself as well" they say. When there is a trust between the organizer and the crowd, it is easier to get feedback. When the club's story continues, they have started to focus more on what others want. They also observe other events continuously.

Also Mizrahi starts with the idea: "what I want?" People want experiences, and they want to be taken away from their everyday lives. People wish for a perfect world, says Mizrahi and gives an example of a restaurant: if you did not get a knife with your steak, you make that little "ewww" sound, and you start thinking about tipping. Ahmad wants to be ready before the person is even asking. Anticipation is the key. If

one has been in different roles in an event, it helps to organize, because one knows what a certain group needs. That is how one can make assumptions.

Ben Hayoun-Stépanian says that they do not know what people want. They are creating a "multiverse". They are taking a reference in space science: the universe expands and there are many bits that are developing at the same time. They like to design spaces that are not linear or chronological. They like to think that they will put up an event where everyone defines what they want: "It becomes a bit like what I love to call chaos. To me chaos is something that I love. I know that many people find it very uncomfortable, but for me there is nothing more interesting than when things get really chaotic and it goes completely uncontrolled, because when things go uncontrolled, you kind of face your fear, where our systems of references, our systems of knowledge." They say that this is the best space to actually unlearn, to start fresh, and to start to look at other means, where things can develop.

4.3.3. How to make people feel more welcome?

When asked about welcoming, Wekesa said the easiest thing to say: "Hey, nice that you came." One needs to appreciate the people who are joining the event. The event is often a community effort, and if one does not understand it, it shows. If there are safer space rules, the language in the safer space instructions is important. If there is a specific event, the language used needs to be focused. "If there is All different, all equal -type of language, the event is not valid", says Wekesa. Safer space rules should be written with the language of the target group. Ahmad talks about different cultures: Finland versus Middle East versus USA: sometimes for some people hospitality might be even too much. Normally Ahmad says that saying hello to everybody brings people closer.

Mizrahi says: "It is my job to be welcoming! I might not be able to go around in the room, but the few that I can genuinely meet and have interaction with, the few things I can help people in the room navigate, again to get closer to that perfect enjoyable experience." The host needs to be genuine, and in Mizrahi's case he takes time to compliment people for example of their outfits. Even in a hurry he calls for taking your time with guests: "That little act of kindness that you remember that person,

feels good. You try your best to be you and to be genuine, and I think that all comes when you go to your events in full confidence, that you are ready for anything that comes on, because you are organized and equipped and your team is organized and equipped. Nothing is perfect, but we can try.”

Ben Hayoun-Stépanian said that this question was quite at the core of their festival planning with the Tour de Moon Festival youth and night culture festival, which celebrated new beginnings. The decolonial narrative was distributed as a forefront of any form of creation. The starting point was that the festival was a commission by UK government, and it was supposed to celebrate Brexit. It came from nationalism, but it ended up being “chaos”, a complete universe of different voices. Play and humor are in the forefront of their productions to make them more accessible. Already in the beginning they are starting with “open calls”. Ben Hayoun-Stépanian borrows the idea of Hannah Arendt: every new beginning is political: “The form of activism is to develop something new to the world”.

As one can see from the interviews, communication and inclusion play a vital role in welcoming people. A simple “hello” was mentioned in most of the interviews. Different cultures have their own ways of welcoming people, and that is why the authenticity and understanding of the language of the target group is fundamental. The good preparation and anticipation can help to be ready for the customers. To make a research of what people want and need makes the planning more focused.

4.3.4. How to include people?

Wekesa and Trabelsi have noticed that people like when they have power: for example organizers can ask questions in social media. If people get advances or power, they get more engaged and also bring their friends. Including does not mean only that “I help you” but rather “I will give you power” or “I share my power”.

Ahmad likes this question, and says that she has been pondering this for very long and it has been a thought point in her work. If one organizes an event, where community is in the core. When talking about Balls, if you are not really active inside

the community, and come from outside, it does not work. The community does not feel welcomed, because one is not a part of the community. "What does this mean in different contexts? In what ways will I bring them together? What kind of people do I want to bring together? What people? What communities?" Ahmad asks, and wishes that her new event would work, which is combining versatile audiences. In Ahmad's opinion the inclusion question rather raises more questions.

Ben Hayoun-Stépanian says that already from the start of the event planning they start with marketing strategy, checklists and with the question "are the venues supportive for the audiences". They made a commission research where they could make the difference. They got some core demographics where they could be more supportive, and started to target those. They had a questionnaire in the open call, where they asked specific questions about the origin, gender identity and also if they are a creator or a scientist who is there for the disabled. They wanted to distribute the funds to the right targets. They want to ask the question: where the very large grants are going and where the public service is needed? In the context of Tour de Moon they wanted to explore where they did not invest: in the UK 50 % of youth clubs were gone and only about 10 % of night clubs existed after Covid.

They have a venue booking checklist: how to support new ideas? They have for example questions: do they support new programs and do they include BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ communities? If they do not, "it's ok": then they are providing the education and they support the venue: for example safe space training. In the check list are some of the core values.

The customer needs to be in the core of planning. Sharing the power to the participants is a modern way to engage. Rossman and Schlatter talked about the paradigm of the production, if the customers are participating already in the planning phase but they also admitted that it might help with the final outcome (2015, p. 2). Both Ahmad and Ben Hayoun-Stépanian highlighted the problems in value differences: what communities can come together? What stakeholders are sharing the same values? Ben Hayoun-Stépanian is offering the education for organizations to understand the values and safer space, which I find as a really inspiring idea.

4.3.5. Is there a possibility for transformation in events?

Trabelsi states that some people have given some feedback, that some of their events have been world changing for participants. At the same time, the transformation sounds "a bit scary" if the whole event is based on the idea that people should make a transformation. Wekesa says that the Club U-Haul is based on the idea that "the dance floor is revolutionary". In the western arts oftentimes people want to get out of humanity and to be "over-humans". For them the more important thing is rather grounding and healing: "one does not need to change, you are enough. For example in street dances the main idea is: dancing together is fun! I am a human being and I want to dance together. That is a valid thing and a valid need, and one does not need to make it more complicated." Service is important for them in the idea of serving the participants: they serve the pleasure of the guests. It is also attached to the promises that the Club is giving. In their opinion the culture is in transformation, not a person.

Ahmad thinks that the world is in change: it is not enough just to organize a Ball or a club night, but rather experience something new, network, eat, drink... the experience aspect has risen. How to make the event better? The so-called basic nights do not interest her anymore. There should be a wow effect. Dubai is an interesting example: organizers have the weirdest events in the world! People have money and they are bored, so it has become like a fair of events. Without the wow effect she does not want to organize without something extra. When people reach a certain age, you already have seen quite many varieties.

For the transformational experience there are many things that affect Ahmad's opinion: age, how much one has been traveling, what is one's background, education, activeness in events... There are many aspects that have an effect. The Ballroom has a huge effect: I want to be a part! But it needs a strong content and vision, that a person can be a part of something. When a person finds their "own thing", they will little by little find events that suit them, and get into the culture and community that touches that person. "Transformation is very possible: Ballroom has shown that to us multiple times!"

People are after the perfect experience, says Mizrahi. They want to be served correctly. Everybody who is hired should be working for the same aim. He says that

in his experience the people want to be seen by the organizer not the ones who have money, but as the people who have fun. Not every experience is not immersion. In the Ballroom there are often situations where people do not believe their eyes, and get to experience something very different. There are many ways to make that transformation experience: "You as the promoter you have to find out what that is. You have to create that electricity."

Ben Hayoun-Stépanian thinks that almost all the experiences are somehow transformative. In the transformative experience one starts to think differently: about one's position in the world. Ben Hayoun-Stépanian's goal is to make transformative events, but because for everyone the transformative experience is different, it might not be possible. Nowadays they wish more new beginnings: if they start their own community, launch a new youth center, create music... In their work a big part of the work is the policy workers and there is a need to challenge the institutions.

In the literature the transformation was performed only as a goal and something to look forward to (for example Pine and Gilmore, 2020; Neuhover et al. 2021). That is why I found really interesting the idea of Wekesa: "one does not need to change, you are enough" as well as Trabelsi's comment of transformation to be "a bit scary". Maybe this world of "achieving more" has slithered also in our free time and events, and we have started to accomplish and perform also our free time. At the same time all the interviewees were thinking more about how to make the transformation in the big picture, maybe not that much as personally. The internet, traveling and people always being more and more has raised the bar of the success of making personal wow effects. There has to be a deeper meaning.

4.3.6. Important values

Wekesa and Trabelsi state that important values for them are safety, accessibility, communication with participants and community over individualism. Sometimes people talk about the community and it might not be real. The pleasure is the most important thing. Pleasure affects the revolution in the capitalistic society where one always thinks that I can enjoy it if I consume; only if there is a capitalistic exchange one can feel pleasure. "You have the body and you move it, you can be the only one

that benefits from the situation”, says Wekesa. They also talk about accessibility: that everyone can have access to events regardless of the money situation. At the same time there should be sustainability for the organizer: one needs to get some salary from their work so that they are able to continue it. If there is a need for a safer club culture, everyone can feel like they got something out of the situation.

When talking with Ahmad, she first thinks about the spaces, and how they are sometimes problematic. But at the same time she ponders, if that should be the reason to take that space for an event, and make a change and teach people to work better. The co-operative partners are very attached to the values. If the spaces are not safe, Ahmad has made a decision not to use those spaces. The most important values for her are safety and employer’s role; that everyone gets paid, creating a good atmosphere, and hiring people who are friendly and know what they are doing.

For Mizrahi, one of the main values is integrity. “You want 100 % guest satisfaction and 100 % guest retention”, sums Mizrahi. I want more and I want bigger, but not for me but for us”, says Mizrahi and continues, that he makes sure that every time when his name is on something, the production is reliable and integral. Since the beginning he has made sure that his productions pays the bills and salaries, even though as an entrepreneur he did not get paid. But when the production was over, the crowd and all the stakeholders were so happy that they came back, and the revenues started to get bigger: “They were paid, they were respected, they had a good time, I gave them a space and an opportunity, I created the electricity.”

4.3.7. Feedback of the roadmap

When Wekesa and Trabelsi are reading the roadmap, the values they pick to be the most important ones are: representation, personal needs, language, safer space, understanding the culture, credibility, education, senses, inclusion and access. “Nobody wants events where the organizer does not understand the culture”, says Wekesa. Education is not at the core of Club U-Haul, but it is a good thing if people learn how to act in the clubs and if they learn something new about culture.

Ahmad tells as an example of an event that was successful in her opinion: the crowd was about her age, there were young people in the production that took care of the pr: inviting the right people, curating the right content etc. "These people are here, because that one young person knows everybody, who is fun and who is a nice person", tells Ahmad. Sometimes even that one person could make a difference. Not in all events all this (what is in the roadmap) happens, but maybe some of them are lifted.

For the Ballroom, the most important thing is safety, even though we must concentrate for the community and togetherness. When in this map everything is on the same level, Ahmad starts to think how to concentrate on other things as well. She thinks that with this map it could be possible to find new ways of organizing Balls. "If I could only move those", she added almost desperately. I have to admit that this roadmap brings me the same feeling. The roadmap seems to inspire Ahmad with new ideas for events.

Important values in the map (among safety) for Ahmad are oneness, community and freedom. From the ideas she picks escapism, representation, authenticity, credibility and understanding the culture. These same ideas also arise in my own work more and more each day.

In the map Mizrahi respects the values community, creation and harmony the most. Ideas to execute with the lenses of Ballroom understanding the culture, language, representation, resources, inclusion, service and knowing the customer authenticity. "Once you get those done, you understand and you know the community, you know the customer base, the wow factor will come automatically through, the senses will come through, participation will come through, because you are already respected and understand the culture."

I was very proud when Mizrahi commented on the roadmap: "This is a great concept. Can I take a picture of the screen?" Of course this might also be American

hospitality, but it seems that he was actually really interested in the map. He loves that the center creates everything on the external ring: "But you need everything from the outside to somehow, somehow to keep the people on the inside happy and entertained."

Ben Hayoun-Stépanian asked first who is the customer of this map? They did not get it in a minute which I had time to explain. They would like to know more about the context and how you are going to use this. They always encourage people to start the event design with thinking about the core values to share with a member of the public. It is a positive thing to start with a client or community as a tool kit.

The pleasure is in the core of Club U-Haul. They also talk a lot about radical self expression and freedom of movement. Wekesa states that escapism can be understood in various ways: for a marginalized person, an event could be escapism from oppression to a safer space. At the same time they wish that people would "return" to their own body and to humanity and feel more freedom than escapism. "The wow factor in U-Haul is people themselves: people are great!" If the basic pillars like safety are in control, it can create a wow factor.

Wekesa likes the fact that things can be moved, and one could pick the ones that one can concentrate on. Otherwise the map is too wide. Also Trabelsi would like to pick the main values and what ideas to attach to them. It is good that there are alternatives for different people. Mizrahi would add competition as an idea to execute the values.

Ahmad sees that there are values and the next steps are in the "engagement ring". "It is sometimes hard to put in words and think, what different values and things include in an event, because there is a lot going on, so what would be your focus", thinks Ahmad. Ahmad would possibly change the map from the sun like theme towards headliner and subtitles. Values would still be aligned together. In the case of Balls, Ahmad thinks that all values and ideas run through the safety web: that should be embedded everywhere. In the end Ahmad asks that "please make this as a tool". The visuality and the dancers give a possibility for movement, as I planned.

For a meaningful cultural experience, Mizrahi starts with history. One needs to understand what was there before and get empowered by the young generation and the future: "That is how I've been able to manifest and engage my culture and keep that going, because I knew my past, I know my present and I was always looking towards the future."

For Ben Hayoun-Stépanian some of the terms were a bit complex, like an arc of drama. Knowing the customer is also complex because for example in their events they do not ask for an entrance fee. "I love the fact that you can cut out and you can kind of position in a certain way to help you." When they are looking at the map, they are questioning the color choices: "What do they mean?" Also they add: "It can also look horrible, whatever works for the project". Ben Hayoun-Stépanian believes in chaos:

"When designing an event, you can never really fully plan it. There is absolutely no way that you can 100 % know what the audience is going to do with it. It's just like you can have great ideas - the more thinking I put into things, the less they work, because they are too complex."

They added that every person has their own approach, and they showed the Tour de Moon experience design, which has some similarities with the inspirational strategic roadmap of this thesis. In the roadmap that I saw in the call there are some of the core ideas in the center, how the moon is divided and then the implementation of these core ideas is explained on the outer ring. The picture does not have colors, because they do not want to position those ideas in a certain way. "It can even be a shitty piece of paper; all that matters is that you have some core ideas and values that you are going to try to implement through the development of your event." What is important for Ben Hayoun-Stépanian now is that the event is "wild", that participants stake something out of it, make a niche smash of it.

After all the interviews I made a decision to add a couple of more values and ideas. In values I wanted to add respect, that both Wekesa and Mizrahi talked about.: respecting the customers and the customers will respect you. Wekesa and Trabelsi

also mentioned pleasure as their core value, which I would like to add to the map, because I feel like none of the existing values in the map do not compensate it. Mizrahi talked about integrity which is also a new value idea for the map. For the ideas to find some new pathways to execute the event I would like to add storytelling from Ben Hayoun-Stépanian, anticipation from Ahmad, sharing power from Wekesa and competition from Mizrahi. These all generate new dimensions to approach the execution.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter I present the principal findings and discuss the managerial consequences of the findings. Theoretical framework, the case study and the interviews have highlighted some of the values stronger than the others and some ideas for the pathways stood up to be more important in this specific era of time and in certain cultures. I divide the chapters with the same thematic lenses that I have used to separate different components of the meaningful event in the chapter "2.3. The meaningful experience". In the subchapter 5.4. I will present the final inspirational strategic roadmap for meaningful events. The final two sections include the final discussion and suggestions for further research.

Through the literature and the cases I have selected some of the most important ideas of how to make a meaningful event.

Representation

Language

Personal benefits

Safer space

Understanding the culture

Resources

Education

Credibility

Understanding the customer

Authenticity

Content

Service

Participation

Senses

Inclusion

Access

Wow factor

Arc of drama

Novelty

Exploration

Escapism

In the next subchapters I explore some of these ideas deeper, attach them to event organizing and make managerial suggestions. To finalize the map, I will add to the final inspirational strategic roadmap for meaningful events the following ideas: storytelling, anticipation, sharing power and competition. Already Silvers (2004, p. 6) listed the idea of anticipation as a part of event organizing, but it is also a valuable idea in executing the values. In Shedroff's list of value types in meaningful events (2009, p. 123) there are already 15 values, but after the interviews I would like to add to the final roadmap the values respect, pleasure and integrity.

5.1. Stakeholders

Throughout the study the idea of community or "communities" has been at the core. To build a community the person who is the organizer needs to be a part of the community or hire the people from the community. To build a community one can start with what one wants for themselves. The communication needs to be clear and made with the same language that the target group uses. One needs to appreciate the people who are participating in the event. If the customers are seen only as money or resources, they are not trusting the organization and the actions are not meaningful but rather suspicious to them. It is hard to build a community without being a part of it, though sometimes even one person in the staff can make the difference and build the atmosphere or invite the right people.

"What kind of people are fitting well together" is one question that the organizer can ask. The organizer can build up the actions that help with accessibility: physical, financial, mental and spatial accessibility. The safety and the safer spaces rules have to be written with the specific language targeted to the customers. People are fond of the idea of power and the organizers have the possibility to share their power. Organizations need to find their ways to do that, but only a questionnaire is not "sharing of power". One needs to be ready to share their resources.

Space affects people. Many organizations are pompous and hard to reach, and they might be the ones that oftentimes smaller event organizations work with. The co-operative partners should work with the same values as the organizer. It might be

possible to teach the co-operative partner one's needs and values and what is behind them, but it needs time and resources. Unfortunately these types of actions seem to fall on the shoulders of the marginalized groups, who might not have the resources to do the work. I suggest that in the future the venues would hire the groups organizing specific events to give education for the organization, for example in safer space policies, that the organization could execute the events better and possibly improve their own actions as well.

The staff must know what is in the core of an event. This happens with briefing the staff but also booking the staff from the community, if possible. The staff has the understanding of situations happening in the event, so they need to be heard as well as other stakeholders. When the staff is involved already in the planning, they want to give more of their professionalism in the event. Taking care of the staff is vital: they are normally the first contact to the customer. If the staff is fed, well paid, inspired and dedicated to the event, the customer will feel it in positive ways.

Welcoming and respecting the environment is hospitality. Anticipation and professionalism assist to build up this atmosphere. When the person is entering the event, the first impression sets the mood and the atmosphere. The actual saying "hello and welcome" are important for all the organizers, and create a real bond between the customer and the organization from the first step.

The customer should always be in the core of the event planning. The feedback can be done also before the event, to get the customers to participate more. In professional event organizing one possibility can be interviewing the customer or stakeholders beforehand. Interaction with the organization creates engagement to the event, and that can and should be done before, during and after the event. Every customer has their personal needs and they want to benefit from the event: they are hoping for a perfect world, many times subconsciously. Personalizing one's event journey deepens the experience, and engages more.

Social interaction with the staff can be planned and guided beforehand, but the social interaction between the customers is hard to reach. Arts bring value for many customers and they even feel that they are getting better because of the arts (Carey, 2006, p. 97). The organizer can create the welcoming mood to the space and build

up an atmosphere with various actions that embeds towards certain actions and interactions. Participants are the ones who are giving meaning to people, objects and events (Hall, 1997, p.2). The respect of the customer and the staff are the key elements to success. Personal experiences are connected with participants' life somehow to make the experience more meaningful. Different stakeholders want different outcomes and the outcomes can be societal, cultural, economical and/or environmental (Getz, 2007, p.10). Sometimes the wow factor can even be just the people themselves (Wekesa, 2023): "People are great!"

5.2. Content

Language, authenticity, representation, understanding the culture and credibility share a similar frame. "Culture is shared meanings", says Hall (1997, p.1). Language defines meanings, and languages are systems of representation (1997, p.61). Throughout the interviews and the cases understanding of the culture was the key factor. Almost all interviewees underlined the words of Wekesa: "Nobody wants events where the organizer does not understand the culture!" The content has to be done with credibility and the stakeholders and the content needs to be authentic; respecting the customers and the culture.

Different cultures share diverse values, and are respected in society in various ways. The street cultures have not been respected until now when it shows that they are also financially very productive. Cultural appropriation is present always when a person not knowing what they are doing, is trying to execute the event. As mentioned before, this idea has been understood already back in the year 1934 Dewey (p. 2) in the context of the so-called "high culture" but it also applies for indigenous cultures, marginalized cultures and street cultures. If someone made fun of opera, society would get mad, but it has been "normal" to make fun of marginalized people or sub cultures and use them without consequences – until these days. Only now after the internet and social media also the marginalized people have voices loud enough to make the change. People finally start to appreciate and understand other cultural perspectives than only "high culture".

How does the content connect with the event and the target audience? When knowing the customer and being a part of the community, the execution is more natural. Who is performing and why they are performing plays an important role in this equation. The content of the performances is sending a message to the customers, and the booking person can choose what it will be. Is the target group represented somehow in the performances? Can they be mentally connected to the performers?

Pine and Gilmore (2020, p.142) as well as Chiehyeon and Kwang-Jae (2018, p. 145) believe in the dramatic structure and Ben Hayoun-Stépanian was questioning it: though they had a really strong vision about chaos, which is an idea of an arc of drama as well. In my opinion the good organizer understands the arc of drama and storytelling. It can be constructed with a strong vision, resources and well-known scheduling. People enjoy the balance between safety and surprises. When trying to design something that the audience does not know they want, the organizer needs to know all the pieces of the event very well and have competence, to be able to surprise even themselves (in a good way). The inspirational strategic roadmap for the meaningful events could work as one tool to explore new ways to reach the wanted values with the tools and ideas that are important for a certain organization.

5.3. Meaningful actions

"You have to create that electricity", said Mizrahi. A huge amount of work piles on the table of the organizer, but the mission for them is to concentrate on what is in the core. In the study of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry they have ten dimensions of service:

Access

Communication

Competence

Courtesy

Credibility

Reliability

Responsiveness

Security

Tangibles

Knowing the customer (1985, p. 48)

In their Experience factor model they wanted to find the right balance: to create positive cues and reduce negatives. When looking at the list, all actions have been mentioned in the interviews and other theories as well. The services enable the experience, and even the transformation. The organization is there to serve their customers.

With the division of De Geus et al. it is possible to think how the ideas are engaging the customer. Richards stated that that cognitive engagement dimension made the strongest impact in the audience (2020, p. 432). The strongest ideas according to this study would be the following: resources, education, credibility, understanding the customer, authenticity, content and service. This study agrees with Richards' statement.

When the cases were analyzed, one of the biggest engagement factors was education. It can engage people to the theme of the event. It can be done before, during and/or after the event. In the case of Ballroom, I have noticed that education makes people understand the framework of the culture and is the reason why people feel attached to the culture. When people can take part in the planning, creation and participation, they feel more engaged with the event and possibly others in the community too. Applying themes and exploring the use of senses can generate new paths for the people who have "seen it all".

In the case of marginalized cultures, the organization should think how they profit from the situation, for example getting more grants in the future because they are doing diversity programs, and they should be willing to contribute something back to the culture. When the intensity is to do good, but if there is not enough knowledge, the situation might end up in confusion. The language and credibility of the target group are a part of the competence. When the target group trusts the organization, there is a possibility for truthful feedback, that the organization can learn continuously. In the year 2023 the meaningful actions include understanding of the environment and natural resources.

5.4. Final strategic roadmap for a meaningful experience

The main question was the following: how to design a meaningful cultural experience? In this chapter I will present the final inspirational strategic roadmap for meaningful events.

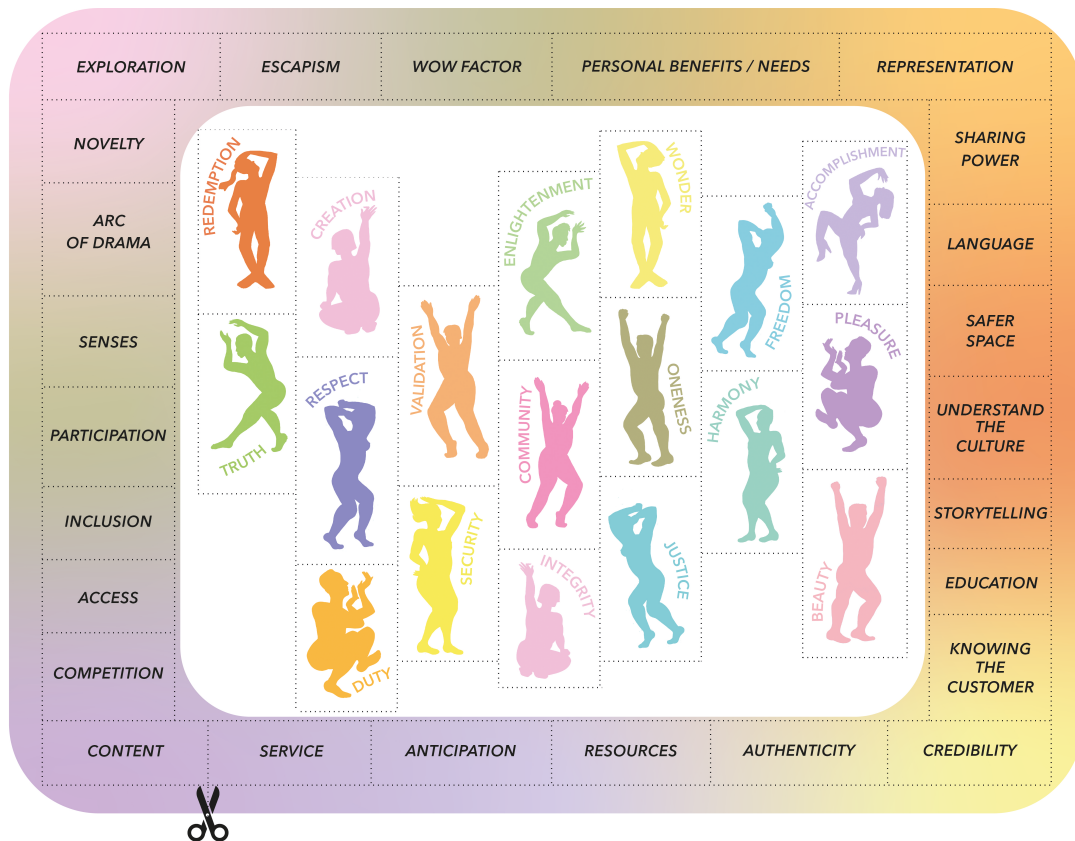
The final inspirational strategic roadmap for meaningful events consists of two layers: values in the middle and the "engagement ring" with engaging ideas on the outer ring. In the final map there is a possibility to move the characters which are presenting the values as well as the ideas. The values can be executed with the ideas of what is the outer ring. The organizer or the organization can also pick only one value and think the ideas how to execute it – or they can form a map with the dancers where one can see what of their values are "dancing together". With this map it is possible to explore new ways to organize and build strategies.

When working with a marginalized group, event organizers need to think about safety first, but it should not exclude the other, also very important values, like togetherness (Ahmad, 2023). The example map layout lies on the shoulders of truth, duty, security and justice. These values could also be presented as the dance floor for the other values. The customer engagement ring is what is needed "to make the dancers happy" (Mizrahi, 2023).

The map is also considered really wide and hard to perceive on the first look. It needs a deeper exploration to match the values and ideas, and finally find the pathways. The first questions for the organizer could be "Why is this event held? What is the intended outcome?" Map hopefully helps the organizer to share the core values and ideas for the whole staff and other stakeholders.

The idea of being seen and heard and to be a part of something, a community, was in the center of all studies as well as in interviews. Understanding of the community as well as the customer is at the core of organizing. All the stakeholders should share the same values to make the event authentic and meaningful. The staff needs to know the core values and ideas to make the pathways to a successful event.

Hopefully the inspirational strategic roadmap can help the organizer to articulate them better. The content needs to have credibility in the eyes of the participant. The content should be aligned with the values. To make meaningful actions, one has to provide the services, but learn how to make a cognitive engagement.



Final inspirational strategic roadmap for meaningful events.

Visual implementation by Jérémy Gaudibert with the guidance of Kurkihovi.

5.5. Final discussion

The main research question was: How to design a meaningful cultural experience? The following supportive questions were: A roadmap of the meaningful experience? How to make people feel more welcome? How do you know what people want? How to build up the atmosphere? How to include people? I believe I met the goal of answering the core research questions by analyzing the literature and the cases and implementing the deepening interviews by the experts in the field. I have found meaningful ideas on how to make pathways to execute the values. Due to the complex nature of experience design in events, the roadmap is to bring clarity and to vision the route to more meaningful events. Even though the field of event studies is wide, I believe that I have succeeded within the limitations of a Master thesis' length and scope.

I believe that I have achieved some answers to the original research question and learned some new ideas on how to make more meaningful events. I hope that organizations can engage to their values stronger than before and live like they preach. All organizers, including myself, need to commit themselves to do better and to share power with customers; to build a more valuable cultural field.

Education guides society to better actions. Events can be a place where diversity, inclusion and representation build a new world for us. Atmosphere can be created by authenticity and choreographing people wisely through the event. Social and cultural communication engage the participants. Community works over individualism. Meaningful experiences can provide a safe haven for some marginalized groups. Through representation, credibility, authenticity and inclusion the events can be done with the respect of the community, respecting the culture. Without this frame the content is empty, even though it can be crusted with beautiful things outside. The content is the key. The transformational experience cannot be the goal of an event, but when succeeded, it could bring an extra – even life-changing – value for some people. Knowing the history, celebrating the present and visioning the future will guide us to better and more meaningful experiences.

5.6. Suggestions for further research

For the further studies I suggest testing the roadmap with consumers and/or a real event. Mapping is oftentimes used to explore for a certain person or an organization, so I suggest that this map could be used by an organization with the exact details. This map does not include the pathways that would implement the values through ideas. The organization could pick the important values for them and search through ideas what pathways they can find. The organization can use the map also with the customers and with their values. Customers are now connected to the values, but how to know what values certain customers prefer? This research could be done as quantitative research as well. There are other stakeholders in the events, like co-operative partners. How could the map be used with them? One challenge to reorganize the map could be how to add the customer to the map.

When an organization uses the map, they could also measure the effects of the event experience to the society or for example economics. When strong, transformational affects touch an individual, it can also make a huge impact on the world surrounding us. Here is another example of Ballroom: LGBTQIA+ groups have been doing their art for decades and it has totally changed lives. In the year 2023 Beyoncé has used Ballroom people in her tour to lift up black cultures. Her tour has been economically successful as well: according to the Touring data website the revenues have been almost 500 million dollars this far (24th September 2023). There is a possibility to measure the success of an event before using the map for inspiration and afterwards. Also transformational experiences in events could be studied deeper: how they affect the people and are all the findings only positive?

The map can be explored piece by piece. "The engagement ring" is divided into four parts, which overlap in this work, but could be studied separately. All connections between the values and ideas could bring new information, if studied with the target group. In the overall experience design research it would be interesting to explore how the community is created, and how to make it meaningful.

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Vuoden huiput Festival 7th March 2019

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

Thematized ideas. All the ideas from the literature. I have combined or removed the ones, that overlap with with values, organizer parts or with other ideas. The chosen ones are bolded.

Thematized ideas

Access	Knowing the customer
Aliveness	Language
Arch of drama	Memorabilia
Authenticity	Novelty, uniqueness
Briefing the staff	Participation/interaction
Choreography	Personal benefits
Connections with participant's life	Personal needs
Content, why	Personalizing
Contribution	Program
Creation	Purpose
Credibility/ competence	Reliability
Cultural Communication	Representation in all levels
Customer teaching the organization	Responsiveness
Diversity	Senses
Education	Service factors
Emotions	Social interaction
Entertainment	Safer space
Environment/natural resources	Staff
Escapism	Stakeholders
Esthetic emotions	Stimulation
Exploration	Taking care of the staff
Feedback	Theme
Historical resources	Transformation
Inclusion	Triggers
Intensity/engagement	Understanding of the culture
Involved staff	Wow factor
Involvement	

Appendix 2:

The Balls I have organized:

Touch This Skin Vogue Club at GLO Hotel Art 2022

International Ninja Ball and workshops at GLO Hotel Art 2022

We Are Here Ball at Kansallismuseo 2021

Age of Love Ball at GLO Hotel Art 2021

International Move Your Body Ball in Pride Week at DTM and workshops 2019

International Archie Ball 60 at DTM and workshops 2019

International Under the Sea Ball and workshops at DTM 2018

International Winter Wonderland Ball and workshops at DTM 2017

International In Love with Nature Ball and workshops at Nosturi 2017

Benny Ninja in Finland, workshops and a Ball 2012

Appendix 3:

Event

Vogue Ball in Love with Nature, 2017

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1468274863228334?ref=newsfeed>

Appendix 4:

Spring Night's Dream event is a safe space for all.

We do not accept any form of discrimination.

Yes to equality, diversity, creativity, participating, learning, new experiences, arts and love.

Everybody is welcome! (Event Spring Night's Dream 2019 at GLO Hotel Art)

Appendix 5:

Ballroom scene is a safe space for LGBTQIA+ community. It has started by African-American and Latinx LGBTQIA+ communities in New York. All visitors will respect and celebrate the Ballroom culture and its roots. If you are not from this community, please be mindful of the space you take up. Respect the performers and the space of the performers. If you want to participate, to walk the Ball, take some time beforehand to learn what it means. If you need any help before or at the Ball, just ask, and we will help you.

Everybody is welcome to feel free and loved!

Safer participation

There is a limited amount of tickets to the event that there is a possibility to have personal space. If you are sick, wait for the next event. Remember washing your hands and using hand sanitizer in the event.

Accessibility: The Ball at GLO Hotel Art is accessible by ringing the doorbell. The staff will guide you to the lift and to the second floor.

The gender neutral toilet is situated near the entrance.

You can be yourself.

Let's not assume anything about other people.

If something uncomfortable happens, please inform the organizers.

When filming, please make sure that people in the photos/videos are comfortable with publishing the photos.

These instructions are made from the base of Kulttuurikaikille and Ruskeat tytöt -safer space policy, recommended:

https://www.kulttuuriakaikille.fi/en.php?k=18237&hakustr=safet#a_18237

No to sexism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, ageism, ableism, body shaming or any form of discrimination.

Yes to equality, diversity, creativity, participating, learning, new experiences and togetherness.

Welcome to experience together!

Appendix 6:

Event

The Ninja Ball, 2022

<https://www.facebook.com/events/743634276819217>

Appendix 7:

Event

Spring Night's Dream, 2019

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1140542026124622>

Appendix 8:

The first interview framework

Bio

May I mention your name in the work?

May I record the interview?

Mapping of the experience?

What would you change in the map?

Why would you change that?

What do you think it is important in the map?

Why that thing is important?

How do you know what people want?

How to make people feel more welcome?

How you could learn more from the people?

Why attracting more?

What is the added value?

What could be done to make people feel more included?

How do you think about atmosphere?

What do you do to achieve the certain atmosphere?

How does it come alive?

Why do you think this is a good way to achieve the certain atmosphere?

Why do you have this assumption?

How the atmosphere is constructed?

Why do you think this is a good way to achieve the certain atmosphere?

How to include people?

Transformation

What kind of values are important for developing the event experience?

How to design a meaningful cultural experience?

Appendix 9:

The second interview framework

Bio

May I mention your name in the work?

May I record the interview?

How do you think about atmosphere?

What do you do to achieve the certain atmosphere?

How does it come alive?

What do you think this is a good way to achieve the certain atmosphere?

Why do you have this assumption?

How the atmosphere is constructed?

How do you know what people want?

How to make people feel more welcome?

How to include people?

How you could learn more from the people?

Why attracting more?

What is the added value?

What could be done to make people feel more included?

What do you think: is there a possibility to transformation in events?

What kind of values are important for developing the event experience?

How to design a meaningful cultural experience?

Mapping of the experience?

What would you change in the map?

Why would you change that?

What do you think it is important in the map?

Why that thing is important?

Thank you my spouse Ville and our kids Leo, Onni and Anton.

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