

The untold story: the creativity of events

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Whether academically or professionally, events are emerging as a distinct area of study, research and practice. Like anything that grows, it is difficult for events not to be the result of its roots. The courses that have been developed have their roots in, for example, leisure, tourism, hospitality and performing arts. Some sit in Management Schools and Faculties and others in stage and theatres or stand alone departments. The academic base is just as broad and has chartered a similar course to tourism where there has been a positive tension between management and critical theories. One area that has had limited attention is the nature of creativity in events and this article will take an applied focus to this interest. The positioning of the events industry is something that is important for its identity but more importantly, it will shape event education, research and professional practice in the future.

Events have been identified as experiences (Getz 2005; Berridge 2007) and studied as such (Jackson 2006, 2015). However there has been little research undertaken about the creative nature of this experience, especially in how they are created. Models of the Creative Sectors depict a relatively blank circle that is titled 'Experiences' (NESTA 2006; British Council 2010). Events could be positioned within the creative industries because of this. This article is formed of different stories that illustrate the nature of creativity in the production of outdoor event experiences. These stories are narrated to add insight into the elements that are important for creativity, that of fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration, risk-taking, complexity, curiosity and imagination (Guilford 1956, 1965, 1988; Sternberg 2012). This research is also novel in that it focuses more on the process (Stuhlfaut and Windels 2012; Tsoukas 2005) and environment of creativity (Amabile 2006) in the production of an event experience and less on the personal characteristics required for creativity or on the effectiveness of the creative experience itself. It aims to aid our understanding of creativity not just in outdoor events but in the creative industries as a whole (de Propis 2013; Freeman 2008).