



2.3 Other approaches to defining audiences

Moving away from the socio-demographic, socio-economic and psychographic attributes that traditionally define target groups, audience groups can be defined on the basis of interests shared by members of a range of conventional target groups. Thus, one can define the audiences invited in terms of the content of the cultural offering in question. For example, a performance with contemporary electronic music might be supplemented by a cultural mediation offering intended specifically for electricians and electric engineers or programmers which is designed to stimulate interaction between people with those professional viewpoints and the artistic approach. Or, one could invite young interior decorators to a Rococo exhibition to discuss current approaches to interior decorating and then take that further in a workshop based on the formal language of Rococo.

These examples point to the possibility of an imaginative approach to the target-group concept that plays with pre-defined categories. Cultural mediation can try to call preconceived notions into question or reinterpret and refresh them, just as the arts themselves do. Offerings that are unconventional – which do not quite fit with the self-image of the institution – are often those which generate the most attention.

A cultural institution can also open itself in other ways to active exchange with the surrounding community and develop programmes for the people who live or work there. It can also identify a problem in the community and use its cultural mediation programme to take a stance on that problem. This is another way to reach new users and co-campaigners within a local community – for instance by making common cause with activists working to improve living conditions in their district, who may initially have seen a cultural institution primarily as a factor contributing towards increased rents and evictions.