

## **Editor's introduction: Seeking a new editor for *Participations* ...**

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We are looking for someone interested in taking over the pivotal role of editing this Journal. If you are at all interested, please contact either Ernest Mathijs ([ernest.mathijs@ubc.ca](mailto:ernest.mathijs@ubc.ca)) or Sue Turnbull ([sturnbul@uow.edu.au](mailto:sturnbul@uow.edu.au)). If you would simply like more information about what the role involves, don't hesitate to ask me ([mib@aber.ac.uk](mailto:mib@aber.ac.uk)).

*Participations* is one of a small number of Journals which are entirely non-commercial, and not affiliated to any publisher – free-to-use with all materials intellectually owned by contributors. It has now been running for 18 years, and for 38 issues (in our first two years we trialed 3 per year). In that time, we think it has established itself as a major contributor to the broad fields of audience and reception studies. I have been main editor for this whole period, but age and circumstances are dictating that I must now step aside and hopefully pass it on to a next generation ... who may well, and rightly, decide to do a lot of things differently, although hopefully continuing some core ambitions.

From its launch in 2003, *Participations* set itself a series of goals. First, and most simply, to raise the profile of audience and reception studies which were not, in our view, well served by many of the academic journals in the media, communication and cultural studies fields – let alone the arts, museum and etc. fields. We wanted to create a welcoming environment for actual empirical research, of all kinds, while not shirking resulting conceptual and theoretical questions. We hoped to bring together and encourage dialogue between areas of interest that tended to work in isolation from, even unawareness of, each other. And we wanted to provide a ready outlet for specialist topics which often emerged from particular conferences, but might get lost and unknown to any but their immediate participants. This new (18.2: November 2021) issue typifies all those ambitions, in its range of successful submissions. Mostly, we think we have made substantive contributions to just about all of these. I personally have odd regrets – such as, nothing at all on poetry readers, or poetry performance audiences. And gallery and museum visitors are hardly represented. But mainly, I think we have reason to be proud of the individual and collective contribution of the well more than 500 essays we have published up to now.

I am also proud of the ethos that has grown up around the Journal. Friendly and encouraging, open about criticisms, but wherever possible inviting authors to strengthen and develop their work, rather than rejecting. Over our 18 years I have been really pleased to receive messages from authors thanking us for our open and supportive procedures – unusual in their experience. If little more than that survived the transition which I hope will shortly take (my) place, I will feel well content.

The role that I have played has been complicated, and a lot of it I have made up as I went along, with brilliant support from other members of the core editorial team – all of whom are happy to carry on with their contributions. I am preparing a document detailing what I do. It is not easy, and needs care, but equally it is not arduous. We publish twice a year (May and November) at the moment, and that is for now the default. But even that is not a fixed decision.

If you are either a well-established scholar in our area, or a quite recent entrant to the fields of audience and reception studies and keen to grow your involvement, please think whether you might want to take on this – always interesting, sometimes challenging, surely prestigious – role, for however long you feel you could commit to it.