Introducing a new format to synchronize user generated content with scritped content:
DRAMA 2.0

The way people use media is fundamentally changing. The audience is no longer a passive consumer of content but is moving to a more active use of media. This convergent behavior is spreading over all kinds of screens, from mobile phones to cinemas. The viewer doesn't want his favorite content to be limited to just one medium; he wants it always and everywhere. He wants to be able to discover and submerge himself into his favorite universe in many different ways. The viewer wants to interact with the content.

With *The Artists*' format, we want to allow the viewer to play a more active part in fiction, through different media. In this drama 2.0 concept text, we will list the most important elements of this participatory TV drama format, and go more deeply into its underlying mechanisms.

This concept text is the result of a search for a coherent fusion between TV drama and participation. It reflects the chronological development of the concept. The starting point of this concept text is the audience. To define their role, we start with the question: "What is participation". Next step is how to connect the fictional TV universe to the "real world" participation. How to create a unified story? Finally we look at the role of the community of the participants which is of crucial importance to the success of this project.
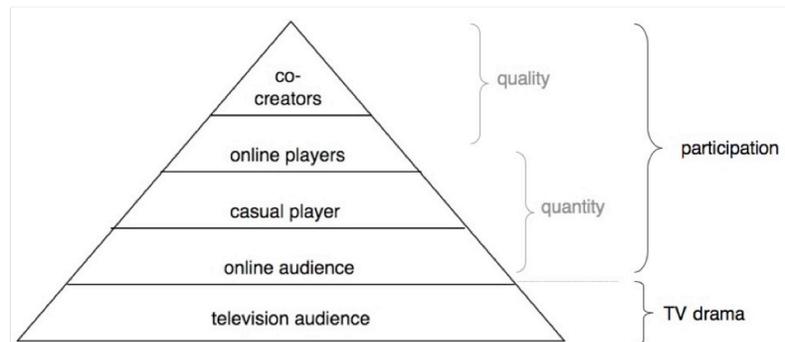

Participation
From the moment the viewer actually *does* something inside the fictional universe, more than just switching on his TV and watching, he becomes an active participant. Participation can take many forms: clicking a web link; watching an online video; playing a game; creating a profile; communicating with others about online content; searching for hidden content; participating in events. Participation is a rich universe where everyone decides to what extent he or she wants to be involved. In *The Artists*, the search for the stolen paintings invites people to participate on a large scale. Ranging from accidental, casual participation to physically meeting the characters: all possible forms of participation are offered.

The participation pyramid
We look at participation through the model of a layered pyramid. The base of the pyramid represents the broad TV audience. The other layers above it constitute participation. The higher up the pyramid, the more intense participation gets.

The participant himself can choose how active he wants to be:
- A passive viewer (*television audience*) watches quality fiction, enjoys a psychological thriller, discovers a whole new world…
- … and becomes an online visitor (*online audience*), who wants to know more about this unique experience and watches a video made by other participants. Participating is easy and tempting, so that…
- … the viewer wants to play and discover The Spiral (*casual player*); he takes up an easy challenge, solves riddles and discovers there is a lot to do, and that he could even be the one to find the paintings. That's why…
- … he collaborates with other players (*online players*) to solve the Spiral riddle and to come closer to the characters and the paintings they stole, and…
- … meet them, to help them realize their dream or to find a painting, and his vote might even influence the outcome of the story (*co-creators*).

This experience is accessible to each and every viewer – it's up to him or her to decide to what extent he or she gets involved.

Quality & quantity participation
At the top of the pyramid are those participants who fully engage and contribute to building *The Artists'* universe. Through their activities, online as well as in reality, they generate a stream of *user-generated content*. These participants mainly make a qualitative contribution to the pyramid. The upper layer of *quality participation* is not only designed to provide an intensive experience to the participants, but also to generate large volumes of *user-generated content*. The higher up the pyramid, the more intense participation and the smaller the number of participants.
The majority of participants are a bit more down the pyramid, in the middle of it. The large group of viewers that go online and, thus, participate on a lower level, represents *quantity participation*. As they massively watch and discuss *user-generated content* from the upper layers and TV from the base of the pyramid, they ensure distribution and viral marketing.

Both elements are essentially connected inside the community. The top of the pyramid primarily targets a niche of hardcore participants, our avant-garde. The layers underneath comprise increasingly broader varieties of engagement, open to a wide audience. They are hand and glove, because they need each other. Experience shows that 10% of a community participates actively (*quality*), whereas 90% participates passively (*quantity*).

In short, quality participation aims at the production of user-generated content, quantity participation is the distribution and marketing of it.

The bridge between fiction and participation
We want to build a wide and accessible pyramid, so that the viewer can move easily and seamlessly from TV drama to participation in the universe of *The Artists*. But how do we connect them?
TV drama and participatory drama are two different formats. They differ in their use of time. Fiction takes place in a fictional time, whereas participatory drama happens in real time, in the here and now. A fiction series is finished a long time before the audience gets the chance to watch it. Participation only develops at the time of broadcasting; it's a live happening that generates an unpredictable stream of information (text, photo, audio and video) across a cluster of different media.

The illusion of participation
In the traditional production model of quality fiction, the story leaves no room for participatory input. Because of its particular use of time, narration cannot be based on what the audience does or does not do. That's why a fiction series is the backbone of this project and the base of participation.
What we can do is give participants the illusion that they influence the story, by integrating elements of what happens in reality (participation) in the fictional series. That way, we synchronize both streams of information.
This overlap between participation and TV drama is what makes drama 2.0 so unique. The whole is *more* than the sum of its parts. Synchronization adds value to this project, as it enables a seamless transition between both worlds.
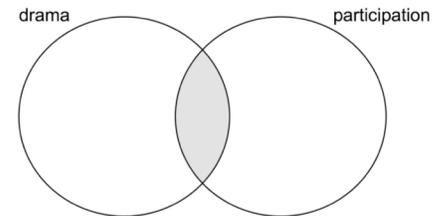

In order to stimulate participation we use each medium's specific techniques. The viewer is not explicitly aware of those techniques, and we do not intend to list them here. What matters is the underlying mechanism, as well as how interaction with TV drama works.

Matches, donut holes and agency
A *match* is a piece of information inside the story that inspires viewers and makes them want to participate. This match can be just a little spark (a web link that appears in an episode and that the viewer visits later on) or a big torch (the search for the painting). The main goal of it is to stimulate the imagination of the participant and to inspire him to participate through the community, games, user-generated content, events and so on.
One match may be easy to blow out, but a hundred matches will kindle a great firestorm.
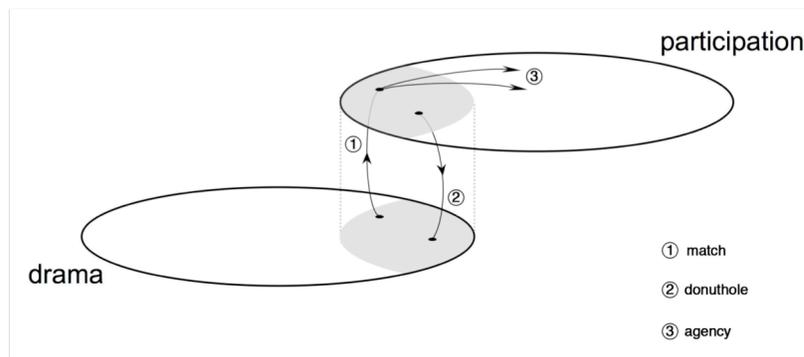
A *donut hole* is a small opening in the TV story, where space is left open to insert user-generated content. This content can be very recent (a person finding a painting after episode 1 would appear in episode 2 of the series) and can be created in many different ways (self-shot footage, reports of events, etc.).

Drama 2.0 increases the viewer's *agency*. The term "agency" comes from gaming and comprises all actions a participant can perform within the framework of the fiction. Drama 2.0 offers a whole new range of active possibilities. The audience is no longer restricted to pushing the on/off switch of the TV set.
The matches stimulate and direct the agency of participants. Donut holes are the result of that agency, and give the participant the illusion that what he does influences the further development of the story. Their actions take place on platforms more suitable for interaction than TV. In the universe of *The Artists*, this platform is The Spiral, both in its online shape and in the form of local art communities.
In fact, this model is not new to the audience. Tele-voting (match) also engages the viewer to vote (agency) which candidate can stay and who has to leave. The outcome of the vote affects

the development of the program (donut hole).
The seamless interaction between TV drama and participation blurs the boundaries of the different media and creates the illusion of a whole and undivided universe. This "unified story" joins the pre-recorded TV drama with the here and now, "live" happening of the participation. The participants are not co-writers of the story, they are characters and part of the unified story.

Synchronizing TV and user-generated content
The production cost of content is directly proportional to the size of the screen for which it's being produced. Feature film is more expensive than TV drama; user-generated content is almost free, but limited to smaller screens.

In the drama 2.0 format, the TV drama absorbs the biggest part of the production budget. A smaller part of it is used to develop the participatory component, designed to stimulate and direct the stream of user-generated content towards various screens and media.
The best user-generated content is promoted to bigger screens and used in the TV drama. That way, TV's fictional time and user-generated content's real time are synchronized and the two content streams merge.
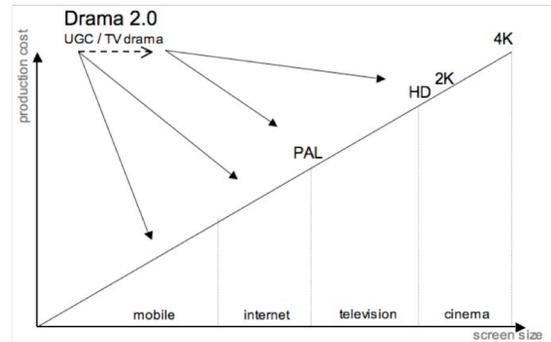
We have defined and synchronized the 2 content production tracks of drama 2.0. Now we take a closer look and the distribution and marketing of this content. The community is the key component in this process.

Community
Participation can only start and come to full bloom in a distinct, structured environment. New participants want unambiguous directions and specific help to participate in the experience, and human contact to share their experiences with others. The community of users is a place for meeting, exchanging information and sharing emotions.

The community is the driving force behind the production and distribution of user generated content and it plays an important part in the projects marketing. The community is not restricted to the online universe of *The Artists*. Through the participants' personal networks, it spreads 'virally', over a much wider world.

As we mentioned before, merely 10% of the community contributes actively to the content. The remaining 90% communicates and distributes the content. In the beginning, the focus is on the 10% who generate content. The content they produce attracts new visitors who generate new content, etc. On this mechanism the community is built. This is the 'honey pot principle' where bees leave honey just like participants leave content. The honey attracts new bees/participants who then produce more honey/content attracting even more bees, etc. Brands such as IMDb, Facebook, etc. are based on the same principle. First you only build the pot, and then you attract the bees that provide the honey.
The strategic construction of the community takes place in different phases, which go hand in hand with the timing of the TV drama's production.

Phase 1: building
The building of *The Artist*'s community starts from the very first shooting day, with a *Live Action Role Playing Game* (LARP). The back-story of *The Artists* (the art squat where the

main characters meet, their paradise that tragically ends with a police raid) is staged in a Live Action Role Playing Game, in collaboration with a few dozens selected, qualitatively valuable participants. For this event, the best participants throughout Europe will be brought together with the series' cast. Participants will record the LARP extensively from the inside.

The tragic end of the art squat is the beginning of a new dream: regaining the lost paradise. This dream is the base on which the community will be built. The participants themselves (supported and edited by the production) put the mass of video images of the LARP online. The dream lives on via the Internet, and the LARP's original participants become ambassadors of the community. The production supports the community by involving new people and especially local cultural organizations, because they benefit from it themselves. We link networks of museums, cultural organizations, artists, etc. with the community and spread the word. Here, our efforts are mainly oriented towards addressing the avant-garde, the *first users*, the trendsetters who can inspire and push others.

During the shooting of the TV drama, we enlarge the community to a solid base. This expansion will not take care of itself. The buzz around the LARP is just the start. By giving well-placed impulses, so-called 'heartbeats', we feed the community to make it grow from a few dozens of LARP participants to more than a thousand creative people. We actually invite people and organizations to help build The Spiral.
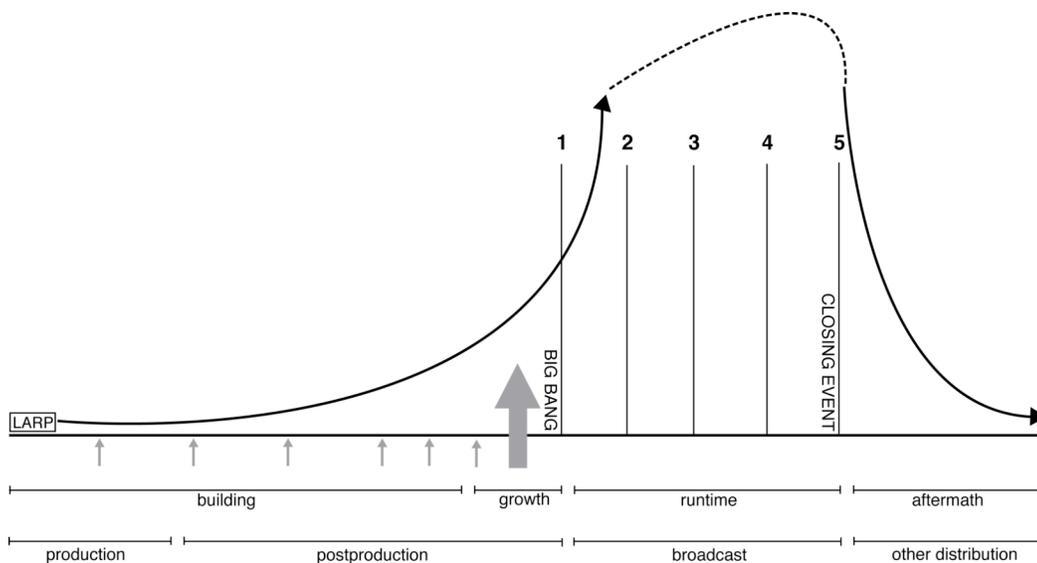
Phase 2: growth
In the project's marketing period, some six weeks before the first episode is broadcast, the impulses are intensified and spread throughout different media, including television, and the broad audience is attracted. The countdown to the big starting event has begun and is supported by a viral campaign.

The art theft (*Big Bang*) is the starting point for participation on a large scale. The massive influx of new participants keeps on growing during the airing of the episodes. The community grows exponentially and very fast. The experienced members of the community feel privileged. They know more, they are aware of the backgrounds, and they might even unconsciously have helped *The Artists*. They like helping newcomers discover this universe. They organize, moderate and support newcomers. They are guides and show the way to go.

This is a turning point. The efforts put into expanding the community are now fully paying off. The stronger the original community, the better new participants are assisted and the more

powerful the viral marketing. Building a solid community, capable of supporting the massive influx of new participants coming from TV, is one of the keystones of the project. This influx gives the community enough critical mass to get the honey pot principle's dynamics going.

Phase 3: runtime
By participating, the viewer gets actively involved in the story and through the spiral he becomes a character in the story. In the community, participants communicate with each other and with characters from the TV drama, by means of text, photo, audio and video. The participants generate this content themselves (user-generated content) and share it with the community. The community is a network of participants, united around the backbone of the TV drama. Through the individual participants' personal networks, the content of the community spreads broadly into the wider world. The success of the community is driven by interesting and valuable user-generated content, which keeps attracting new participants according to the honey pot principle. Every viewer is invited to participate in this unique experience. The transition from TV drama to participation is seamless.

Phase 4: the end
With the last episode and the final event, participation ends too. The community is now on it's own and is no longer supported by TV. It is up to the members of the community and the organizations linked with it to let the community and the universe of *The Artists* live on.

The unified story
At the center of the drama 2.0 model is the *unified story*, the crystallization of three basic elements under one organic umbrella, one whole universe that offers the viewer a natural and seamless transition between TV fiction and participation. We give the viewer the feeling that everything is happening in the here and now, and we synchronize the fictional time of TV fiction with the actual time of participation.

TV fiction is the backbone of the unified story. It encourages participation and invites the viewer to get involved. It offers an active experience through different media. By participating actively, the viewer becomes a participant and a character in the story, and producer of content. Since people are social animals, they like sharing this content with others and communicating about it. The participants constitute the community, which distributes and actively spreads user-generated content via internal communication.

Interweaving participation (user-generated content) with quality television, supported by an active community, results in a transmedial story that spreads its content through different media. The story is told through a cluster of different media, the media cluster, creating a giant virtual screen for the audience to view and interact with the content. The unified story is the cornerstone of drama 2.0, joining TV fiction, participation and community into one universe.

Drama 2.0 meets the audience's changing living environment and behavioral patterns. The active media user (mobile, events, games, online, etc.) can actively live the story through different media, and be a part of this wider fictional universe.

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