



PLAYBOOK FOR MEDIA AND CULTURE INSTITUTIONS

A practical ebook for institutions commissioning public journalistic forms: events, exhibitions, games, installations, audio, research interfaces, and teaching afterlives.

CORE RULE

EVIDENCE BEFORE FORM.

Read it as a working essay. Use the tables as interruptions, not decoration.

01 / INTRO

INSTITUTIONS CAN HOST FACTS

Not a programme around journalism. Journalism as public form.

A newsroom publishes. An institution hosts. Between those two verbs sits a useful field: reported work that becomes a public situation. People listen together, inspect evidence, move through a story, play a system, hear testimony, or meet a document in space.

This guide is for media organisations, museums, festivals, theatres, galleries, schools, foundations, cities, and civic partners that want to support Artistic Journalism without turning it into spectacle. An institution can give journalism a room, wall, stage, archive, workshop, public path, interface, or sound environment. That power is valuable only when the form follows the evidence.

The institutional temptation is to begin from the programme slot: a performance, exhibition, immersive room, installation, festival session, education package, or public campaign. This guide reverses the order. First evidence. Then audience. Then form. Then risk. Then production. Then afterlife.

A cultural institution can make journalism more public without making it less rigorous. That is the promise. It can also make journalism more theatrical, more polished, and less accountable. That is the risk. The difference is method.

A NEWSROOM PUBLISHES. AN INSTITUTION HOSTS.

INSTITUTIONAL ROLE

DO THIS

Create conditions for the public to meet evidence with care, time, context, and access.

DO NOT DO THIS

Use journalism as raw material for a spectacular programme format.

TEST

Can the institution explain what the public learns that a standard article would not carry?

FIELD NOTES

01

Host facts, not vibes.

02

Begin with evidence, not the slot.

03

Name who owns editorial decisions.

ASK

Not a programme around journalism. Journalism as public form.

CHECK

Create conditions for the public to meet evidence with care, time, context, and access.

REFUSE

Host facts, not vibes.

02 / WHY NOW

THE FEED IS NOT ENOUGH

People often do not need more information. They need a better public situation for difficult information.

Al produces information at scale. Feeds flatten attention. Public memory weakens when every story arrives in the same scroll. The problem is not only that people lack information. Often they lack a situation in which difficult information can be met, discussed, remembered, and made usable.

Artistic Journalism creates another public situation for facts. A stage can make testimony audible with others present. A game can make a system's pressure visible through rules. A wall can turn evidence into civic encounter. An audio-first piece can make accessibility the editorial method rather than a late correction.

For institutions, the opportunity is not branding. It is civic infrastructure. The institution can slow down the encounter, create a room for attention, bring disciplines together, and give the work an afterlife beyond a feed cycle. It can let people spend time with complexity instead of scrolling past it.

The responsibility rises with the intensity of the form. If the public will feel more, move more, play more, listen more closely, or stand near a community's pain, the editorial method must become more explicit. A powerful room without source discipline is not a public service. It is an atmosphere machine.

THE OPPORTUNITY IS CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE, NOT BRANDING.

PUBLIC PROBLEM

- FATIGUE** The audience has seen the issue before but has not had a meaningful encounter with it.
- DISTANCE** The issue is spatial, systemic, foreign, technical, or emotionally hard to enter.
- MEMORY** The story needs repeated viewing, public presence, or educational afterlife.

FIELD NOTES

- 01** Slow attention is a public resource.
- 02** AI makes human encounter more valuable.
- 03** Public form needs public responsibility.

ASK

People often do not need more information. They need a better public situation for difficult information.

CHECK

The audience has seen the issue before but has not had a meaningful encounter with it.

REFUSE

Slow attention is a public resource.

03 / PARTNERS

INSTITUTIONS AS PARTNERS

Each institution brings power. The method begins by naming what that power can and cannot do.

This guide is not only for cultural institutions. It is also for media organisations that need a public partner, journalism schools that need teaching formats, foundations that support civic knowledge, festivals that assemble public attention, and cities that host public-interest work.

Each institution brings different power. A museum can create duration and evidence rooms. A theatre can carry testimony and presence. A festival can create audience density. A school can turn method into repeatable learning. A foundation can support the slow reporting that public form requires. A city can connect the work to place.

The partnership works when each role is named early. Who owns editorial decisions? Who protects sources? Who holds rights? Who leads access? Who maintains the archive? Who handles public criticism or corrections? Who decides when the work should not be shown?

Without this role map, the project will still make decisions. They will just happen through pressure: the venue calendar, the grant deadline, the marketing need, the available artist, the budget line, the opening date. That is how public form drifts away from editorial method.

PARTNERSHIP WORKS WHEN ROLES ARE NAMED BEFORE PRODUCTION.

PARTNER MAP

MEDIA	Reporting, editorial review, source protection, verification, corrections.
CULTURE	Space, audience, production, interpretation, education, public programme.
SCHOOL	Method transfer, workshops, critique, teaching versions, documentation.
FUNDER	Time, independence, risk capacity, access budget, afterlife support.

FIELD NOTES

- 01** Name decision rights.
- 02** Do not outsource editorial accountability.
- 03** Budget for slow work.

ASK

Each institution brings power. The method begins by naming what that power can and cannot do.

CHECK

Reporting, editorial review, source protection, verification, corrections.

REFUSE

Name decision rights.

04 / USE AND REFUSE

WHEN PUBLIC FORM IS JUSTIFIED

The institution must know when to support a form and when to protect a story from one.

Use Artistic Journalism when a topic needs presence, space, choice, testimony, reconstruction, listening, collective attention, or public location. Use it when the public needs to understand pressure rather than only information. Use it when the story gains responsibility by entering a room, wall, game, audio structure, archive, or interface.

Refuse it when reporting is weak, the topic needs a simple text, rights are unresolved, sources could be exposed, or the institution mainly wants a distinctive programme slot. Refuse it when a community becomes atmosphere. Refuse it when a public form would make uncertainty look final.

The refusal is not conservative. It protects the field. Artistic Journalism becomes credible when teams can explain not only why they chose a form, but also what forms they rejected and why. A responsible institution should welcome this discipline because it makes the eventual public work stronger.

The question is not whether a topic can become an exhibition, performance, game, or installation. Almost anything can. The question is whether becoming that form will make the public understanding more honest.

REFUSAL PROTECTS THE FIELD.

COMMISSIONING FILTER

USE	Evidence is strong, encounter matters, public context exists, and the institution can protect the work.
DELAY	Reporting, consent, rights, access, or production capacity is not yet strong enough.
REFUSE	The form would make the story more impressive but less honest.

FIELD NOTES

- 01** Do not programme uncertainty as certainty.
- 02** Let the article compete.
- 03** Protect communities from atmosphere.

ASK

The institution must know when to support a form and when to protect a story from one.

CHECK

Evidence is strong, encounter matters, public context exists, and the institution can protect the work.

REFUSE

Do not programme uncertainty as certainty.

WHAT CAN BE COMMISSIONED



A stage, wall, game, interface, and audio piece are not interchangeable containers.

The institution can commission many public forms, but they should not be treated as interchangeable containers. A stage changes testimony. A game changes agency. A wall changes scale. An exhibition changes duration. An interface changes inspection. Audio changes intimacy. Accessibility changes who the public is.

The commissioning brief should compare forms by editorial function. What does this form make legible? What does it make too emotional? What does it hide? What does it cost? Who does it exclude? What does it leave behind? The form is not chosen because it is attractive. It is chosen because it solves a public problem better than the alternatives.

The article route should remain in the comparison. If the public form cannot beat the article on editorial grounds, the institution should support the article, discussion, or teaching package instead. This is not a retreat from ambition. It is how institutions avoid turning journalistic work into cultural decoration.

The strongest commission brief names the form and its refusal sentence together: why this route, and why not the others.

THE FORM IS CHOSEN BECAUSE IT SOLVES A PUBLIC PROBLEM BETTER THAN THE ALTERNATIVES.

ROUTES

ROOM / STAGE Live journalism, documentary theatre, staged documents, public listening, moderated evidence encounters.

RULE SYSTEM Playable reporting where incentives, scarcity, consequences, and failure explain a system.

WALL / EXHIBITION Public installations, evidence rooms, murals, posters, documentary exhibitions, civic space.

INTERFACE / ARCHIVE Maps, models, databases, timelines, spatial reconstructions, public source interfaces.

FIELD NOTES

01 Compare forms by function.

02 A public wall is not neutral.

03 The article remains a serious route.

ASK

A stage, wall, game, interface, and audio piece are not interchangeable containers.

CHECK

Live journalism, documentary theatre, staged documents, public listening, moderated evidence encounters.

REFUSE

Compare forms by function.

06 / MODEL

EVIDENCE TO AFTERLIFE

Simple sequence. Hard discipline.

Institutional commissioning needs a stricter sequence because several systems meet at once: editorial, artistic, legal, educational, spatial, technical, accessibility, and public relations. If the sequence begins with format, all later systems are forced to serve the wrong decision.

Start with evidence. What is verified, witnessed, uncertain, restricted, sensitive, or missing? Move to audience. Who must meet the work, who is usually excluded, and under what conditions? Move to form. Which public encounter clarifies the evidence? Move to risk. What could be distorted, exposed, simplified, or harmed?

Only then move to production and afterlife. The archive, teaching version, documentation, tour, recording, transcript, maintenance, and takedown plan should be part of the first commission, not the panic after launch.

The model is simple because the work is complicated. It keeps the institution from mistaking production readiness for editorial readiness. A venue can be available while the evidence is not ready. A budget can be approved while consent is unresolved. A designer can make the work look finished before the method is stable.

PRODUCTION READINESS IS NOT EDITORIAL READINESS.

SEQUENCE

EVIDENCE	Claims, sources, confidence, uncertainty, restrictions, and safety.
AUDIENCE	Public need, access, language, location, exclusion, and context.
FORM	Encounter, comprehension, distortion, production demand, and refusal.
AFTERLIFE	Archive, teaching, maintenance, rights, corrections, and takedown.

FIELD NOTES

- 01** Keep the sequence visible.
- 02** Do not let calendar pressure become method.
- 03** Archive planning starts early.

ASK

Simple sequence. Hard discipline.

CHECK

Claims, sources, confidence, uncertainty, restrictions, and safety.

REFUSE

Keep the sequence visible.

07 / CASE

ROOM AND STAGE

A room can become a publication.

A room can become a publication. Reakcja, Living Newspaper, Musta Laatikko, and related live journalism formats show how reported work changes when people hear it together. Timing, voice, silence, images, music, and bodies become editorial tools.

For institutions, the room is powerful because it creates a civic situation. People arrive, sit, listen, react, and leave with a shared memory. The event can also become a transcript, recording, workshop, article, or teaching format. But the stage creates conviction quickly, and conviction can outrun sourcing.

A responsible stage commission asks for scripts with source cues, a consent plan, rehearsal protocol, fact-checking route, rights note, accessibility plan, audience context, and afterlife decision before tickets, lights, and partners make the work hard to change.

The institution should resist the idea that rehearsal makes journalism theatrical in the weak sense. Rehearsal can be fact-checking under time pressure. It can reveal when a quote is too compressed, a transition creates false causality, or a sound cue manipulates beyond the evidence.

THE STAGE CREATES CONVICTION QUICKLY. IT MUST SHOW ITS SOURCES.

STAGE DESK

EVIDENCE	Script pages should mark documents, interviews, observation, reconstruction, and omission.
CONSENT	People need to know what happens when their words become performance.
AFTERLIFE	Decide before opening whether the work can be recorded, quoted, taught, streamed, or toured.

FIELD NOTES

- 01** Rehearsal can be editorial review.
- 02** Presence is powerful, not automatically honest.
- 03** A room needs an archive decision.

ASK

A room can become a publication.

CHECK

Script pages should mark documents, interviews, observation, reconstruction, and omission.

REFUSE

Rehearsal can be editorial review.

08 / CASE

RULES AND GAMES

Games work when a story is a system.

Games work when a story is a system. BOTTLENECK, Testris, The Uber Game, and other playable reports show how rules can carry pressure: money, time, scarcity, incentives, failure, debt, public health, logistics, or political constraint.

For institutions, games are tempting because they create participation. Participation is not automatically understanding. A game can trivialise harm, blame players for forces real people cannot control, or turn a serious issue into a memorable mechanic with weak evidence behind it.

A responsible game commission asks for a rule sheet, assumptions note, model limits, failure loop, source map, accessibility test, and public context. The game should teach through constraint without pretending that real people had clean choices.

The question for a playable report is not whether it is fun. The question is what the player learns through friction, failure, scarcity, or consequence that would be harder to understand through reading alone. If the answer is only engagement, the game is not ready.

PARTICIPATION IS NOT AUTOMATICALLY UNDERSTANDING.

PLAYABLE DESK

RULE SOURCE Every rule should trace back to reporting, data, expert review, or documented pressure.

FAILURE What does losing teach, and does it blame the wrong actor?

ASSUMPTIONS What is simplified, excluded, made measurable, or made unplayable?

FIELD NOTES

01 Ask what losing means.

02 Rules are claims.

03 Model limits must be public.

ASK

Games work when a story is a system.

CHECK

Every rule should trace back to reporting, data, expert review, or documented pressure.

REFUSE

Ask what losing means.

09 / CASE

WALL AND EXHIBITION

A wall changes the scale of evidence.

A wall changes the scale of evidence. Newspaper Mural, View From Somewhere, Forensic Architecture, World Press Photo exhibitions, and public evidence rooms show how journalism enters civic space. The public does not only read. It stands near the work, returns to it, passes it with others, and remembers it as a place.

For institutions, exhibitions can create duration and dignity for complex reporting. They can also expose sources, flatten communities into display, or make partial evidence look official because it is framed in a cultural space.

A responsible exhibition commission asks how claims are captioned, where uncertainty is visible, what rights allow display, what sources need protection, who can access the space, and how the work will be documented for people who cannot visit.

The institution should treat the site as an editorial variable. A city square, gallery, school corridor, theatre lobby, festival tent, and website do not produce the same public meaning. The site changes who sees the work, how long they stay, what authority the work appears to have, and who may feel exposed by it.

THE WALL IS NOT NEUTRAL. THE SITE EDITS THE STORY.

WALL DESK

- CAPTION** Each public claim needs source status, context, and uncertainty where relevant.
- SITE** Location changes meaning; the wall is not neutral.
- ACCESS** Plan language, height, contrast, seating, route, sensory load, and digital documentation.

FIELD NOTES

- 01** Scale creates authority.
- 02** Caption uncertainty.
- 03** Document for people who cannot visit.

ASK

A wall changes the scale of evidence.

CHECK

Each public claim needs source status, context, and uncertainty where relevant.

REFUSE

Scale creates authority.

DRAWING, SOUND, ACCESS

The so-called support layers can become the editorial method.

Drawing can protect people, sequence memory, and show places cameras cannot safely enter. Sound can carry voice, silence, rhythm, and proximity. Accessibility can become the method that makes the reporting more precise for everyone.

Comics journalism, Favela vs COVID-19, The Photographer, Drawing the Times, and Auditorial show that the so-called supportive layers of journalism can become primary editorial structures. The risk is that drawing invents certainty, audio creates intimacy without consent, or access is treated as decoration after the main experience is finished.

A responsible commission asks what is observed, reconstructed, inferred, symbolic, described, translated, captioned, screen-reader ready, and controlled by the audience. If access changes the form late, the project started too narrowly.

Institutions can be especially useful here because they can fund the parts of access that newsrooms often under-resource: translation, audio description, transcripts, relaxed formats, screen-reader testing, physical access, documentation, and education versions. These are not extras. They are public form.

IF ACCESS CHANGES THE FORM LATE, THE PROJECT STARTED TOO NARROWLY.

ACCESS DESK

- DRAWING** Mark observed, reported, reconstructed, inferred, symbolic, and anonymised details.
- SOUND** Plan consent, transcript, description, captions, volume, silence, and context.
- INTERFACE** Screen readers, keyboard navigation, contrast, pacing, language, and control are editorial.

FIELD NOTES

- 01** Access is method.
- 02** Drawing needs evidence rules.
- 03** Sound intimacy needs consent.

ASK

The so-called support layers can become the editorial method.

CHECK

Mark observed, reported, reconstructed, inferred, symbolic, and anonymised details.

REFUSE

Access is method.

HOW AN INSTITUTION STARTS

Start with a diagnostic workshop, not a production meeting.

Start with a diagnostic workshop, not a production meeting. Bring one story, the source map, the audience need, institutional constraints, available partners, and one unresolved form question. Do not bring a finished format disguised as an open brief.

The workshop should produce a source map, risk map, form comparison, prototype memo, and afterlife note. The source map names evidence and uncertainty. The risk map names consent, safety, rights, trauma, legal exposure, accessibility, and public context. The form comparison includes at least three forms and the article route.

The prototype memo describes the smallest test worth making. It might be ten lines of script, one wall panel, one rule loop, one audio passage, one interface screen, one drawn sequence, or one evidence card. The question is not whether it looks finished. The question is whether it reveals the right problem.

The institution should fund this early thinking explicitly. Without it, the real editorial method is squeezed into unpaid preparation and then blamed when the production becomes fragile. A diagnostic is not overhead. It is the first public safety system of the project.

DO NOT BRING A FINISHED FORMAT DISGUISED AS AN OPEN BRIEF.

WORKSHOP OUTPUTS

- SOURCE MAP** Evidence, confidence, restrictions, unknowns, and source protection.
- RISK MAP** Consent, rights, trauma, access, safety, legal exposure, and public context.
- FORM MEMO** Three routes, refusal logic, prototype question, and afterlife route.

FIELD NOTES

- 01** Fund the diagnostic.
- 02** Prototype the question, not the polish.
- 03** Write the refusal route.

ASK

Start with a diagnostic workshop, not a production meeting.

CHECK

Evidence, confidence, restrictions, unknowns, and source protection.

REFUSE

Fund the diagnostic.

12 / GATE

BEFORE PRODUCTION MONEY MOVES

The checklist is not bureaucracy. It is how an institution protects public value.

Before commissioning or building, prepare the operational desk: editorial lead, producer, reporting owner, partner roles, access lead, legal review, rights windows, consent plan, fact-checking path, public safety note, documentation plan, archive route, teaching version, and takedown protocol.

The stronger the public form, the more visible the responsibility. A room, wall, or game can travel farther than the team expects. A quote becomes a performance. A model becomes a public claim. A recording becomes a durable object. A workshop turns method into education. A festival slot creates documentation whether or not the team planned it.

The checklist is not bureaucracy. It is how an institution protects the public value of the work. It also gives the team a shared language for stopping. The most useful gate is not yes or no. It is green, yellow, red: public launch, prototype only, or stop.

A good institution does not only make ambitious work possible. It makes responsible ambition possible.

A ROOM, WALL, OR GAME CAN TRAVEL FARTHER THAN THE TEAM EXPECTS.

PRODUCTION GATE

GREEN	Evidence, consent, rights, access, production, and afterlife are sufficiently mapped.
YELLOW	Prototype can continue, but public launch is not yet responsible.
RED	The form exposes sources, hides uncertainty, exceeds rights, or cannot be accessed responsibly.

FIELD NOTES

- 01** Use gates before contracts harden.
- 02** Plan takedown early.
- 03** Do not confuse launch with completion.

ASK

The checklist is not bureaucracy. It is how an institution protects public value.

CHECK

Evidence, consent, rights, access, production, and afterlife are sufficiently mapped.

REFUSE

Use gates before contracts harden.

ABOUT JAKUB AND KPO

The institution-facing guide is one part of a two-part public methodology work.

Jakub Gornicki is a Warsaw-based journalist, artist, and media innovator. He is co-founder and Creative Director of Outriders, creator of Reakcja, and author of the Artistic Journalism method developed through live, playable, physical, spatial, and public forms of reporting. His work has been recognised with the Paszport Polityki in Digital Culture, INMA Global Media Awards, the Polish-German Journalism Award, and European Press Prize recognition.

This guide was prepared as part of Jakub Gornicki's KPO culture scholarship research on Artistic Journalism methodology. Przedsięwzięcie realizowane w ramach Krajowego Planu Odbudowy i Zwiększania Odpornosci, komponent: Odpornosc i konkurencyjnosc gospodarki, inwestycja A2.5.1, STYPENDIA 2025. Dofinansowanie z UE: 36 000,00 PLN brutto. The public version includes the required KPO, RP, and NextGenerationEU visual marks.

The grant application describes a two-part digital guide: one part for creators working with facts, and one part for institutions supporting and implementing the method. This PDF is the institution-facing part of that public methodology work.

The funding context matters because Artistic Journalism is not only a design experiment. It is a competence-building project: a way for journalists, artists, producers, institutions, schools, and public partners to work with evidence under new forms.

For public use, the KPO mark, RP colours, and NextGenerationEU mark are placed in a visible official strip. The editorial page around them stays Raw Reportage, but the marks remain full-colour and protected by a white field as required for dark backgrounds.



THE MARKS IDENTIFY THE PUBLIC FUNDING BEHIND THE METHOD WORK.

KPO SUMMARY

PROJECT	Development of Artistic Journalism as a new trend in media.
PROGRAMME	Krajowy Plan Odbudowy i Zwiększania Odpornosci, STYPENDIA 2025.
OUTPUT	Two digital guide parts: creators and institutions.

FIELD NOTES

- 01** Keep grant wording editable.
- 02** Use the official sign strip in visible places.
- 03** Treat this as methodology, not promotion.

<p>ASK</p> <p>The institution-facing guide is one part of a two-part public methodology work.</p>	<p>CHECK</p> <p>Development of Artistic Journalism as a new trend in media.</p>	<p>REFUSE</p> <p>Keep grant wording editable.</p>
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BRING A PUBLIC PROBLEM

Bring a story. We will find its public form, or refuse the wrong one.

Use this guide as the first desk in a commission. If the evidence is thin, fund reporting. If the public need is unclear, sharpen the brief. If the form is justified, prototype early and keep evidence visible.

The institution's best contribution may be a room, exhibition, game, installation, workshop, archive, or research interface. It may also be time, care, access, rights support, and the courage to tell a team that the work is not ready for public form.

Next: study the Artistic Journalism hub, Research Library, and Case Studies, then use a diagnostic conversation before production money is spent. The goal is not to make every story bigger. The goal is to make the right stories more public without making them less true.

Bring a public problem, not a finished format. Bring evidence, not only ambition. Bring constraints, not only taste. A good commission begins there.

THE BEST CONTRIBUTION MAY BE TIME, CARE, ACCESS, RIGHTS SUPPORT, AND REFUSAL.

COMMISSION MEMO

- PUBLIC ISSUE** What public problem does the institution help people meet?
- EVIDENCE** What can be shown, heard, played, staged, taught, or archived responsibly?
- AFTERLIFE** What remains after the event, exhibition, launch, or workshop ends?

FIELD NOTES

- 01** Bring a story, not a spectacle.
- 02** Fund the first diagnostic.
- 03** Let the wrong form die early.

<p>ASK</p> <p>Bring a story. We will find its public form, or refuse the wrong one.</p>	<p>CHECK</p> <p>What public problem does the institution help people meet?</p>	<p>REFUSE</p> <p>Bring a story, not a spectacle.</p>
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