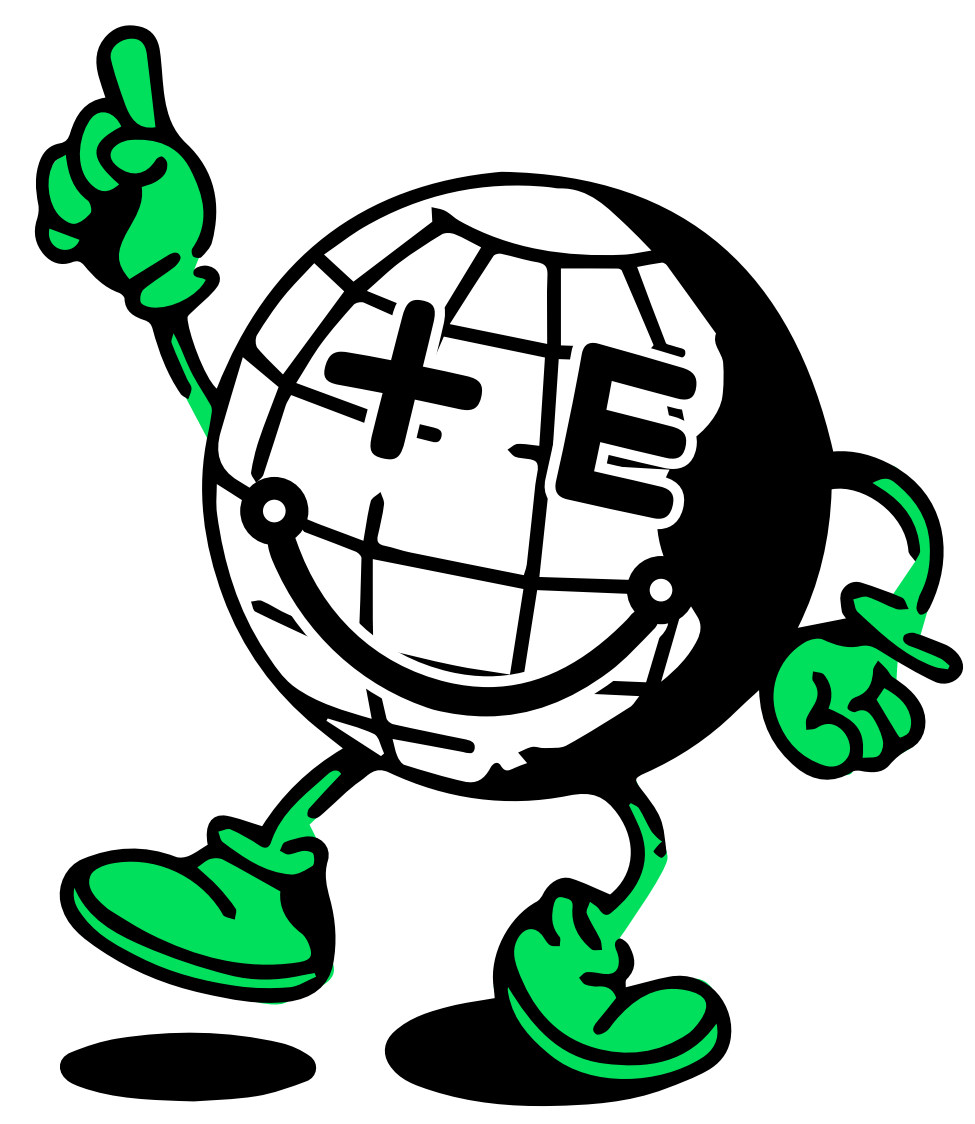


**FAMILY  
TABLE**  
BACK TO  
THE FIELDS



# GREENHOUSES, LONDON, 26-02-2026

Bringing people together is part of what we love doing the most, and in late February we hosted an intimate discussion with inspiring and progressive leaders, thinkers, doers and change-makers at our second Family Table.

## The setting?

One of the most spectacular spaces in London. The Greenhouses

## The guests?

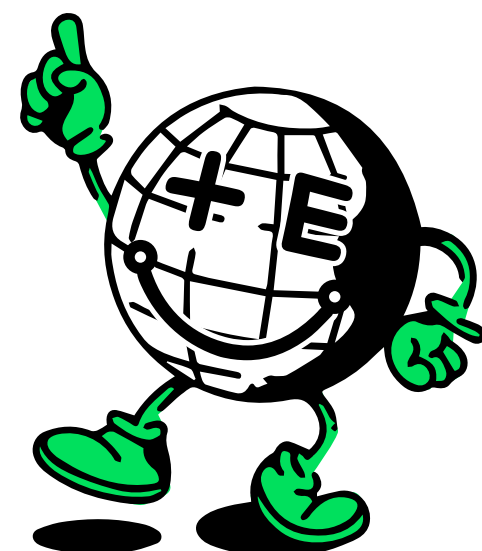
Some of the most forward-thinking creative leaders in the industry.

## The topic?

Festivals, brands & the power to design better worlds (in a field)

## Key talking points;

- How do you/ we shift the audience from being **spectators to co-creators**
- Festivals create intense but short lived belonging. But **what creates genuine collective joy?**
- What responsibility comes with gathering people, and **how can brands positively contribute to that?**



# A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR **GUESTS**

**Gary Pitt**, Managing Director, Alive Advertising Ltd

**Joe Barnett**, Festival Director, We Out Here

**Rhona Mc Keran**, UK Head of Marketing, MOTH:

**Courtney Bole**, Senior Account Manager, The Collab

**Austen Cruickshank**, Brand Partnerships, ILOW

**Peter Cowen**, Brand Activation Specialist, Bettys and Taylors

**Francesca Pearson**, Senior Brand Manager, MOTH:

**Katie Leeman**, Executive Creative Director, Another Acronym

**Rees Hitchcock**, Co Founder & Strategy consultant/Director, Amiiigos

**Adam Butters**, White Asega

**Olly Crown**, Brand Experience Manager, MOJU

**Jack Horner**, Creative Strategist and Founder of Nearfield Magazine

**Rik Haines**, Managing Director/Founder, Positive Experience

**Michelle Fischer**, Creative Production Director, Positive Experience

**Victoria Robinson**, New Business and Sustainability Manager, Positive Experience



# FESTIVALS AREN'T JUST TEMPORARY EVENTS, THEY ARE TEMPORARY WORLDS

- Places where people experiment with **who they are**
- Where **joy, identity and connection** are heightened
- And where brands can either **add to the culture or erode it**

**“If a brand won’t listen to the culture, it shouldn’t be there.”**

## **BIG QUESTION:**

What responsibility do we have when we design these worlds?

- Design worlds where people feel **secure enough to let go**
- Prioritise **participation over consumption**
- Don’t include any mechanisms that could take people out of the festival bubble
- Brands should only exist in these worlds if they **add value** to them
- Design worlds that have **impact beyond the live event**



# THE FOUNDATION SAFETY → JOY → PLAY

## Joy isn't the starting point, safety is

People only access freedom, play and spontaneity when they feel:

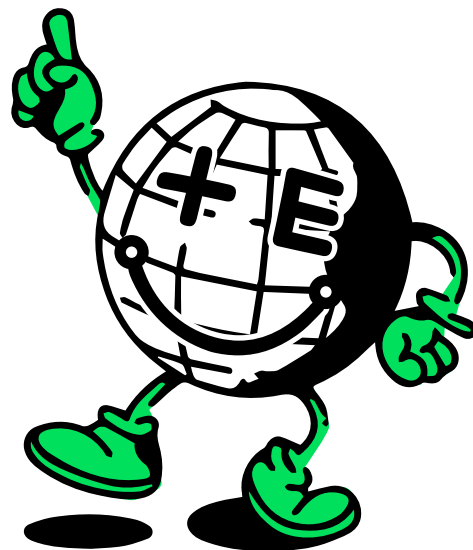
- Safe
- Seen
- Immersed in a different world
- Like they belong
- Held by the environment

**“You’ll tolerate the mud and chaos if you feel fundamentally safe.”**

## Shift the audience:

From watching → to doing

- The most meaningful experiences are not the things you watch but the things you do
- Participation creates emotional impact
- These experiences build connections between strangers and break down social barriers
- Helps to reinforce the ‘temporary world’ feeling



# UTILITY + MAGIC

The best experiences do two things, combine useful utility with a layer of enchantment.

## Solve a real need

- Morning coffee
- Shade, rest, reset
- Simple human care moments

## Add a layer of wonder

- Surprise
- Story
- Light enchantment

“Sort the need - then add the magic.”

## Key thoughts:

Magic works best when it **deepens the moment**, not distracts from it

In “temporary worlds”, basic human needs are amplified, so meeting them becomes deeply memorable.

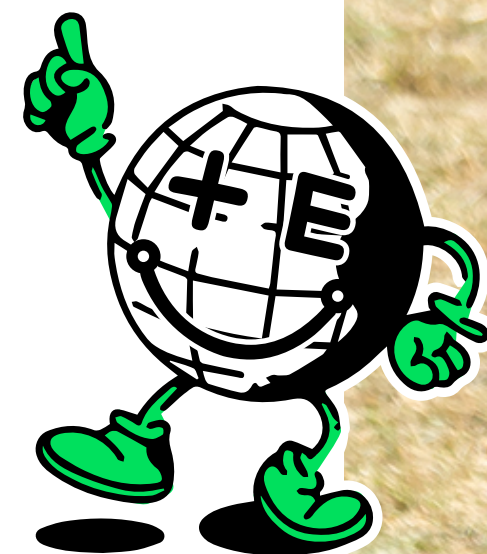
## What doesn't work:

- Random gimmicks
- Experiences that feel disconnected from the festival's world

## What does work:

Surprise that:

- deepens immersion
- enhances the existing feeling of the festival





## **BELONGING & IDENTITY**

Festivals thrive on shared identity and belonging; the challenge is widening access without diluting culture, by removing barriers while preserving what makes each community feel distinct and authentic.

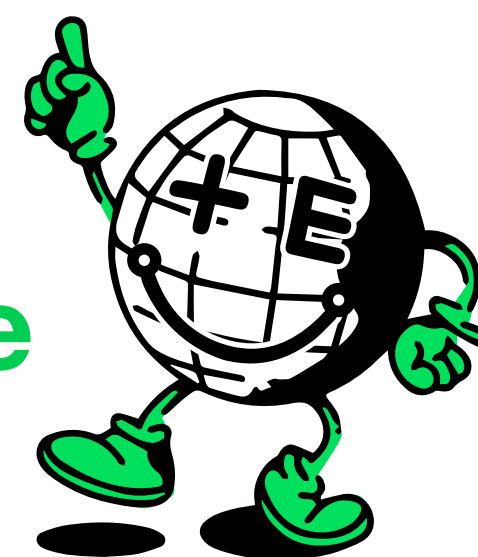
### **BIG QUESTION:**

How do we **widen the circle** without losing the culture?

#### **Examples:**

- Sober / low-alcohol spaces
- Family-friendly formats
- Morning & alternative programming
- Inclusivity not exclusivity
- Let the community guide the evolution

**“Widening the circle isn’t about changing who the festival is for, it’s about removing the barriers that stop more people feeling like they belong within it.”**



# THE ROLE OF BRANDS

## From intrusion → to contribution

Brands have a choice: interrupt the experience or enrich it. The most valuable brands move from visibility to contribution, actively enhancing the festival world rather than extracting attention from it.

Festivals are not backdrops for marketing, but shared cultural spaces. Therefore brands have a responsibility to respect, support and enhance those spaces.

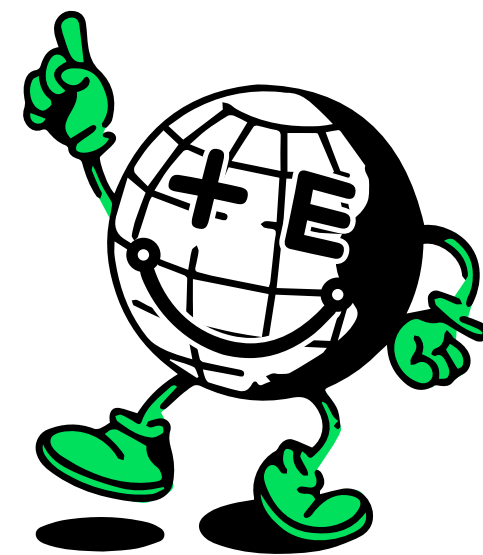
### What doesn't work anymore:

- VIP privilege
- Generic activations
- "Drop-in" global toolkits

### What does:

- Helping people get there + get more from it
- Deep understanding of the audience
- Listening to cultural gatekeepers

**“If you wouldn't hang out with the brand - it shouldn't be there ”**





# **IDEAS WE EXPLORED**

## **How can brands show up differently?**

Brands can show up differently by starting with real human needs, designing for participation and connection, and contributing meaningfully to the festival world. This means moving beyond visibility and transactions toward hosting experiences, enabling inclusion, and creating lasting impact through thoughtful, culturally aligned, and purpose-driven design.

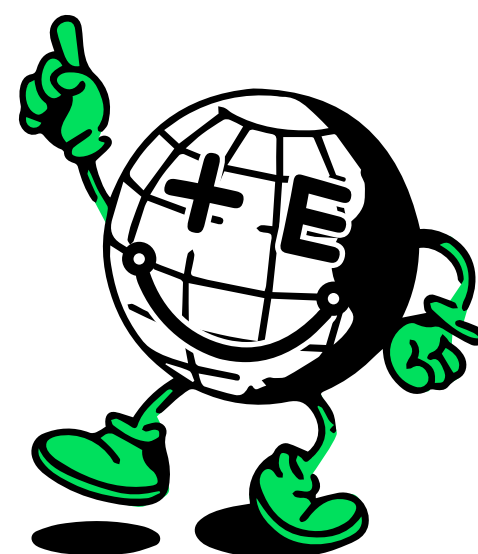
### **1: Familiar → Journeys, community, care**

- Guided walks, connection to nature
- Stories of makers + circularity

### **2: Link Up → Access, Inclusion**

- Tickets + travel for underserved groups
- Tech that includes (not excludes)

Brands need to be committed to design for discovery through roaming, unexpected moments, commitment to long-term relationships over one-off activations, and be willing to protect culture, relevance, and integrity.



## WHAT WE COULD TRY NEXT

The shared feeling in the room was that we are well-placed to be the change, to move festivals, brands and agencies toward more human-centric and society-centric experience design - and to prove it can still deliver the numbers, without losing the soul.

**“If we design these spaces with more care, we don’t just create better activations - we create better worlds.”**

### Small but meaningful shifts:

1. Start with a **real human need**, not a KPI
2. Design **one participatory moment**
3. Commit to a **long-term story**
4. Measure **connection**, not just reach
5. **Say “no”** to one misaligned opportunity

