



# About Sophie Brown



Sophie Brown is a visual artist living and working in Scotland. She is uniquely qualified to advise on hosting virtual events. A 2020 graduate, her degree show was the first to go digital, bringing an unexpected challenge. Sophie has hosted and participated in a number of online events over the course of the pandemic from live-stream exhibitions to Zoom Q&As and workshops.

Most recently, she has worked with Circus ArtSpace as a Graduate Intern where she choreographed the filming and editing of a video essay and interview series entitled "The Wicked Witch", that centred around the historical iconography of the witch and how this has come to shape our contemporary notions of womanhood and ritualistic practice.

She is soon to start her MA in Art and Social Practice through UHI - a course which focuses on creating community engaged art and facilitating social projects out-with conventional ideas of where and when artistic practices should be experienced.

## Sophie Brown's Guide to Hosting a Virtual Event.

Over the past few years, the concept of a "Virtual Event" has become less and less futuristic, with platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Zoom making attending and hosting such events more accessible than ever. Making sure your event is well organised and successful can prove more of a challenge than simply going live.

In this guide, there is a compiled list of 5 questions you may want to ask yourself before hosting your first Virtual Event!

### 1. What kind of event do I want to host?

This relates to not only what the core of your event is and what its about but also how do you want to reach people. Which method would best lend itself to what you are trying to achieve?

Do you want to create the feeling of exclusivity through Zoom? For example, if you want to host an online life drawing class, Zoom will allow you to retain a level of privacy and allow you to moderate and control attendance.

Or do you want the event to reach a larger audience with a more relaxed atmosphere through the use of a live-stream? This follows on to the question...

### 2. Who is my target audience?

This is an important consideration in choosing which platform you want to use. Reaching a larger audience isn't always the main objective in virtual events – especially if you are not creating quality engagement with each individual attendee.

It is also important to note that although it is easy to talk about the accessibility of social media – this isn't always the "one-size-fits-all" attitude to every demographic.

For example, if your target audience encompasses those of an older age, it might be a consideration to seek out platforms that they may be more familiar with using and easier to navigate – such as Facebook or video sharing platforms such as Youtube or Vimeo.

## 1. How do I want to advertise?

Advertising is key to hosting a successful event. Not only is it important to organise and plan out the event you are hosting, but you should also plan out your advertising.

When advertising your event online, it is important to be consistent and utilise all of the tools afforded to you in reaching your target audience. It is also helpful (where possible) to keep the advertising for your event to the platform you are hosting from.

For example, if you are using Instagram to host a joint live-stream between you and another online creative – you could use reels to post “spoilers” of what you topics you may cover. These can be posted to both your feed and re-shared to your stories and may be more visually engaging than a standard post.

## 2. How long will the event run for?

This is a really important consideration when planning an online event. The main aim of hosting an online event is to hold the audience’s attention. Depending on what kind of event you are hosting, you want to consider what is an appropriate amount of time to ask the audience to commit to in attending.

For example, if you are hosting a Q&A about your recent body of artwork – a half an hour livestream is an appropriate length of time to engage and hold your audience’s attention without them getting bored. However, a 2-3 hour in depth analysis may be too long for people to commit to for a live-stream – so may be more appropriate to pre-film and post as a stand-alone video that your audience can watch in their own leisure.

## 3. What do I do after?

Hosting an online event – just as hosting an in-person event – can be exhausting so it is important to not jump straight into the next venture. Take time to reflect on what you feel went well, and steps you could take to improve for the next time. Remember to ask your audience for feedback – this information is crucial.

But above all, celebrate your achievement! It takes a lot of work and confidence to host an online event – however big or small!