Art, Not Apart is guided by contemporary philosophies of meaning and culture.

Theories provide strong reference points for the event’s content and development. The ideas resonate with the more conceptual artists, motivates their involvement and sets a unique atmosphere for everyone. Audiences have often commented on the “great vibe” at the event. They don’t need to understand that the vibe derives from more than aesthetics.

**The idea is simple: this is art, no-one’s apart.**

The goal is to create a space that emphasises, rather than ignores, the connections between varying perspectives. Interesting stuff happens in the margins between genres. The festival rejects the typical marketing approaches of ‘define a demographic and give them what they want’. This naive approach is fragmenting society. Polarised events and narrow products are disconnecting people from each other and themselves. It is senseless to think a ‘demographic’ only likes one type of art, but most events are art-specific, as though jazz-lovers don’t like poetry, film or just a different type of music.

Contemporary philosophy has criticised the disconnected the perspectives of Western society. Jean-Luc Nancy believes this fragmentation has proliferated so intensely “[1]there is no longer any world: no longer a mundus, a cosmos, a composed and complete order (from) within which one might find a place, a dwelling, and the elements of an orientation.” (The Sense of the Word, 1997, 4) The result, as Nietzsche warned a century earlier, is a permeating sense of homelessness. Depression, anxiety, suicide and other mental imbalances are the symptoms of this philosophical diagnosis. Nancy argues for the need to conceive new approaches to create a more sensitive, connected culture. With this will come a sense of being at home in oneself.

Art, Not Apart is a response to this vigorous thinking.

Nancy said “there is ‘art’ every time a sense more ‘originary’ than any assignation of a ‘self’ or ‘other’ comes to touch us” (Ibid., 135). Termed loosely, he was saying art expresses more than what is meant by ‘you’ or ‘I’. Art is freedom from these fragments. Through art, we can find connections the left hemisphere might not see – connections we all need.

Dienstag has made similar comments. By not adhering to the limits of ‘you’ or ‘I’, art is able to shape the patterns of existence into something recognisable. And when something becomes recognisable, we can include it in our daily thinking.

Art, Not Apart is encouraging a culture of more open and sensitive thinking. The festival uses art to present the richness of life and encourage people to delve in. The idea is simple: this is art, no-one’s apart. And the art is respected because it is well presented and usually accompanied by the person who made it, smiling in the sun and ready for a chat. Even if people don’t like it, they respect it. With this comes openness, and we need more of it in society.

The purpose of the festival drills down to the post-subjective understanding of meaning, where identity and significance are not limited to the individual, but to the threads of energy and ideas that define our culture and make us who we are. But people don’t need to realise this, the philosophy is realised by audiences who search, views, chat, challenge and dance in one day.

David Caffery, 2015

Identity is the impression of being upon becoming. Art, Not Apart presents a series of local impressions. These artworks thread into a cultural identity.

We must foster artists in this process. To underfund art is to underfund identity, no matter what else the money is used for.