

PUBLIKUMSGESPRÄCHE FÜR ALLE

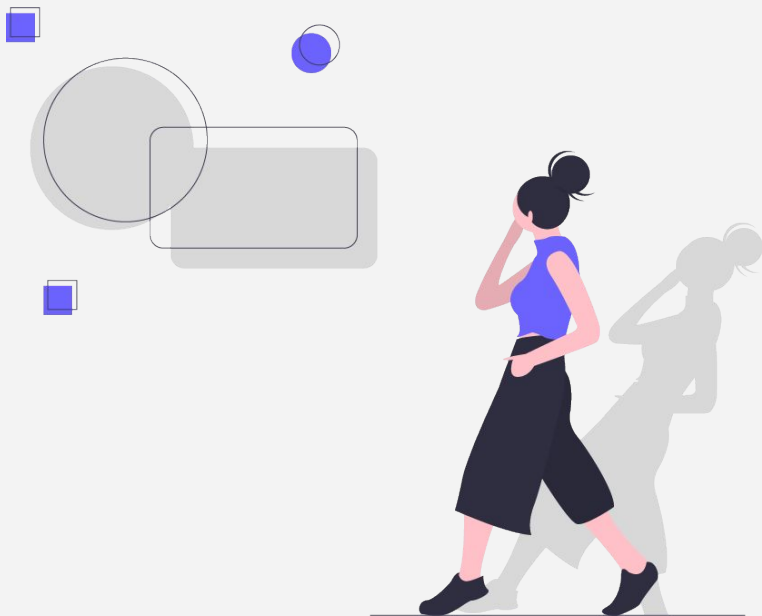
Berliner Ensemble – NEEUU – Project documentation



Context

About 2 or 3 times a month, the audience is invited after the show to join an artist talk after the play. The actors, and sometimes the director, attend and answer the questions of the audience.

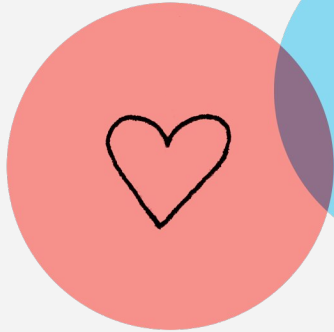
Thought the conversation is sometimes be funny and interesting, it can also be intimidating for audience members without an academic knowledge of theater to ask questions.



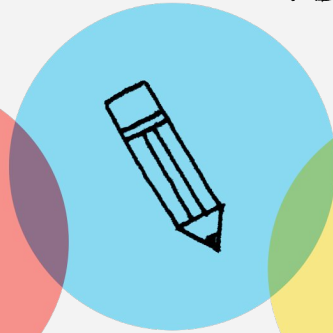
The design process

Design and technology begin with a real knowledge of people's needs, desires, and motivations. We use a qualitative and human-centered approach to gather meaningful insights and propose adapted solutions. It typically consists of 5 steps: *Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, Test*. This is the method we have followed along this project.

EMPATHIZE



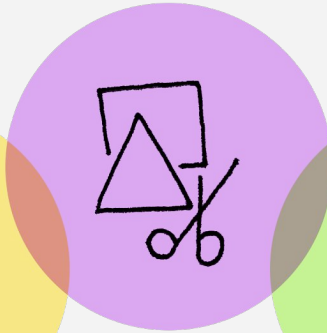
DEFINE



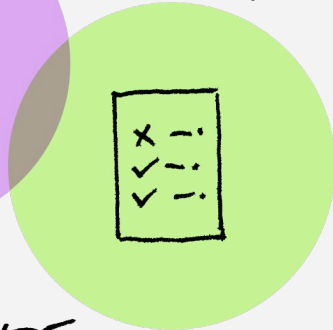
IDEATE



PROTOTYPE



TEST

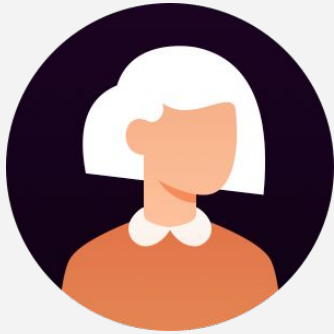




1. Empathize

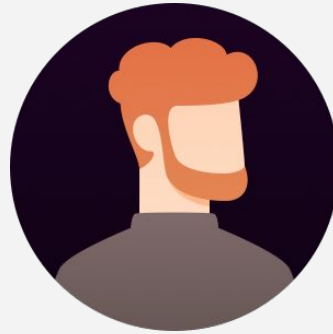
Good design starts by understanding the people we are designing for. We invited the Berliner Ensemble team for a whole day workshop. We opened the discussion by asking a simple question: *“Why do you think people come to the artist’s talks and what do they expect?”*

Who are we designing for?



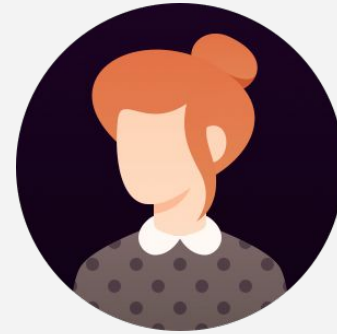
The academic

- Knowledgeable about theater
- Frequently attends plays
- Confident asking questions



The newcomer

- First time at the BE
- Self-conscious
- Excited



The artist

- Self-confident
- Needs an incentive
- Enjoys good questions





What are we trying to accomplish?

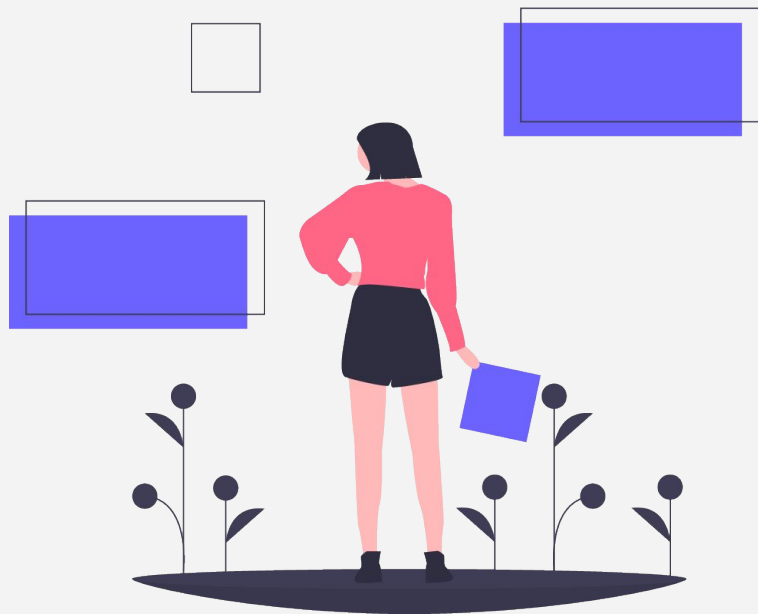
- Make it more interesting for actors to attend the artist talks
- Connect the audience to the actors while keeping the actors feeling safe
- Offer people a way to get involved without exposing themselves
- Maintain the connection to the historical audience of the talks
- Offer a solution that works equally well for for big and small groups
- Engage a larger and more diverse audience, including younger spectators





Look for inspiration

For the audience talks, we looked for solutions to the question of audience participation in other contexts (for example: town hall meetings, activism in public space, online forums). This helps us build a better understanding of the design challenge and see how others approach it creatively. Some of those solutions might be transferable or trigger ideas relevant to our specific challenge.



2. Define the problem

This is where we take the insights we gathered in the earlier stages and turn them into a statement that encourages problem solving (typically in the form of a “How might we... “ question).

Denken Sie an etwas, das
für große Gruppen
funktioniert.

Benutzen Sie die 15
Minuten Pause.

Denken Sie an eine
Lösung, die ohne
Anwesenheit der
Gastgeber funktioniert.

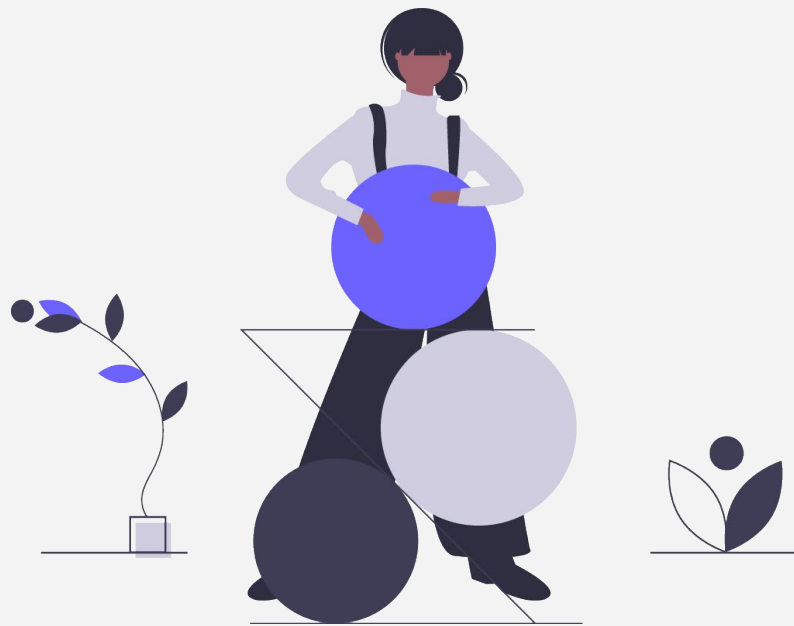
Understanding the challenge

As a first brainstorm exercise, we turned the early design challenges into brainstorming prompts in order to trigger ideation and get familiar with the constraints of the project.

We then selected the most relevant challenges and rephrased them as “How might we...” questions such as “How might we create a safe space in which both actors and audience feel comfortable?”

Problem statement

How might we transform audience participation at the Artist Talks to make the event more inclusive?



3. Ideate

Now that we know what we are trying to achieve, we can start generating ideas. In order to encourage creative thinking, feasibility is not yet considered at this stage.



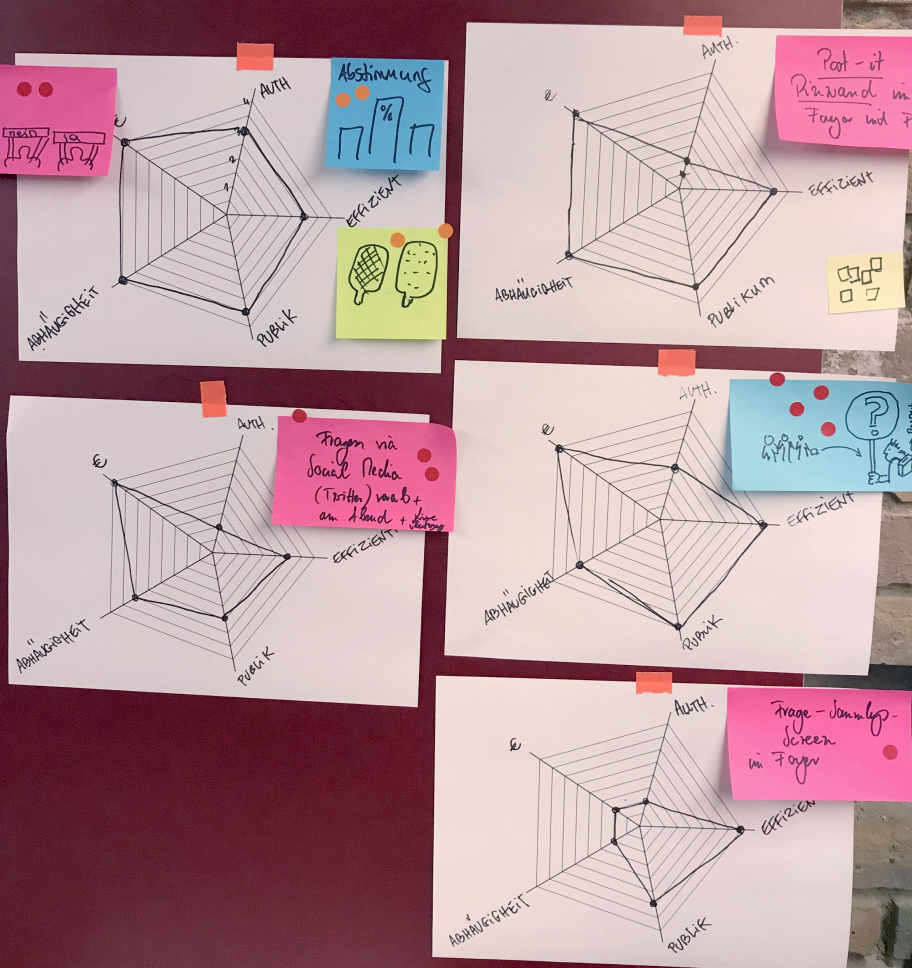
But will it work?

This is the point where feasibility comes back into the picture. The most promising ideas were selected by a vote (each participant gets 3 points to distribute across all ideas). We then evaluated the solutions based on the following criteria:

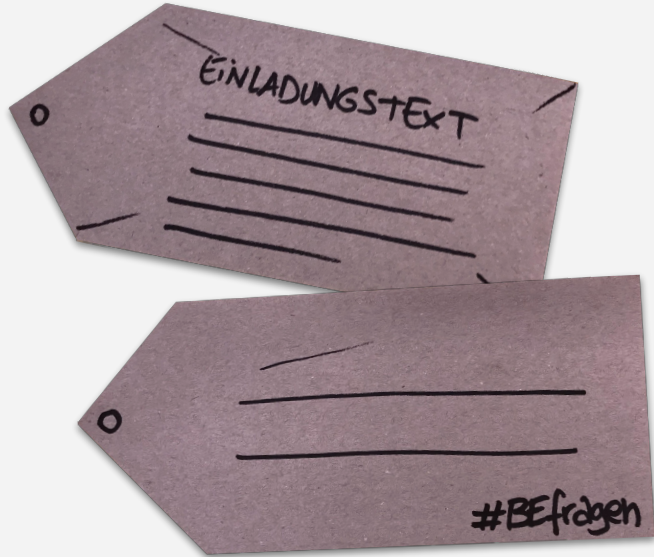
- **Authenticity:** does it fit the BE spirit?
- **Cost:** how affordable is it?
- **Efficiency:** does it help collect many questions?
- **Public:** how engaging is it for the audience?
- **Independence:** how low-maintenance is it?

Optimal solutions in this round were: 1) a “pinboard” wall, 2) writing questions on postcards, and 3) audience voting.

Note: “asking questions on social media” was rated low on authenticity and public engagement, but since it is very low cost, we decided to include it in our user testing in order to compare how it performs next to paper-based solutions.



4. Prototype



Paper prototyping

The earlier we make an idea tangible, the earlier we can address potential roadblocks and come up with creative solutions.

This very basic prototype brought some useful insights such as:

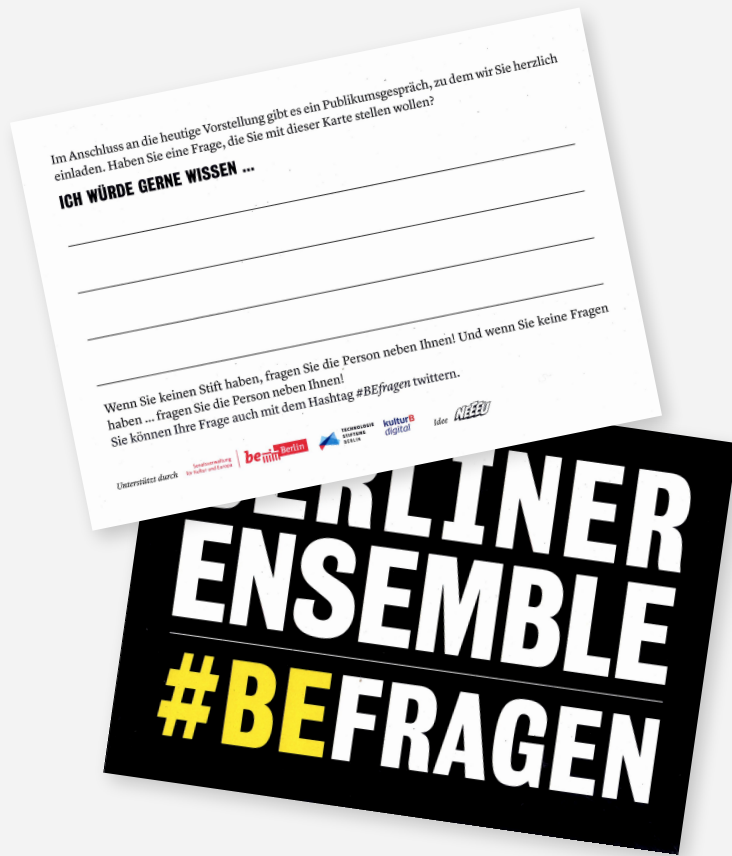
- Large space and fewer lines encourage shorter questions
- We need some way to hang the postcard on the wall
- We can include the #hashtag to inform people that they can also ask their questions online
- We can include an invitation text and give out the postcards before the show to inform the audience earlier about the artist talk, which may help increase attendance

5. Test



Usability testing

The only way to check the validity of a solution is to put our prototype to the test in a real-life scenario. Berliner Ensemble specially organised an Artist Talk to put our prototypes to the test.



I would like to know...

In collaboration with the graphic design team at Berliner Ensemble, we designed postcards to gather questions from the audience. They also inform them that they can ask their questions on Twitter with the hashtag #BEfragen.

The postcards are distributed to the audience before the show. They also serve as a way to inform the public that an Artist Talk will happen after the performance and invite them to join.

Im Anschluss an die heutige Vorstellung gibt es ein Publikumsgespräch, zu dem wir Sie herzlich einladen. Haben Sie eine Frage, die Sie mit dieser Karte stellen wollen?

ICH WÜRD GERNE WISSEN ...

Wenn Sie keinen Stift haben, fragen Sie die Person neben Ihnen! Und wenn Sie keine Fragen haben ... fragen Sie die Person neben Ihnen!
Sie können Ihre Frage auch mit dem Hashtag #BEfragen twittern.

Unterstützt durch     Idee 

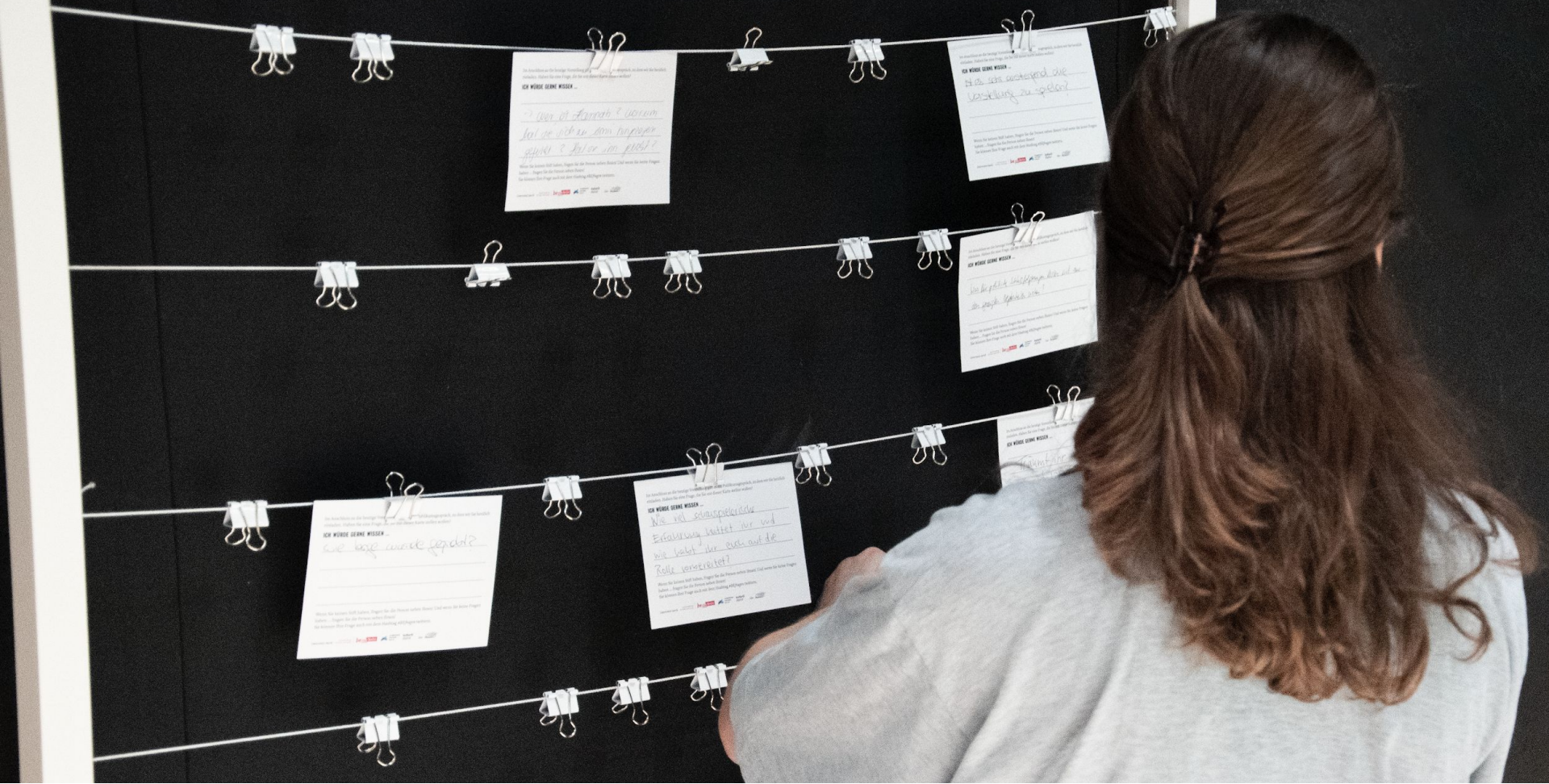
**BERLINER
ENSEMBLE**

#BEFRAGEN

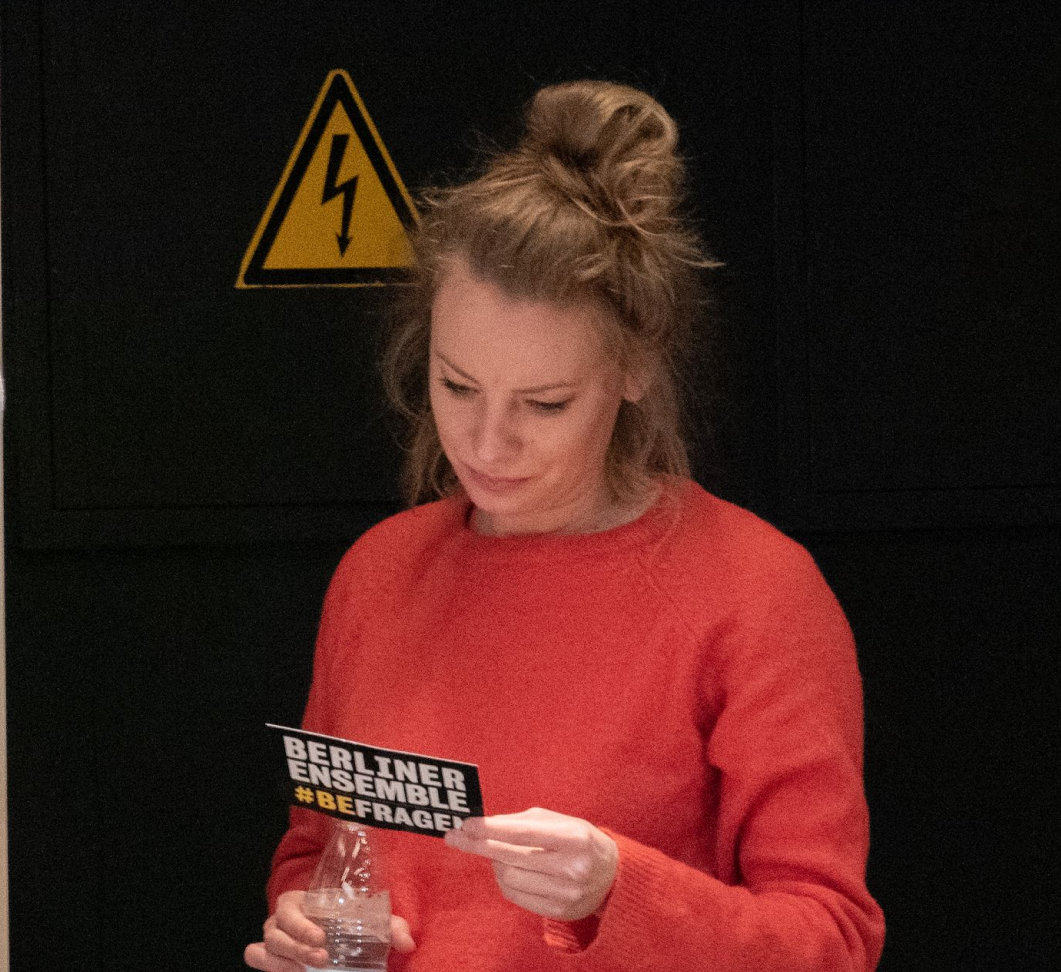
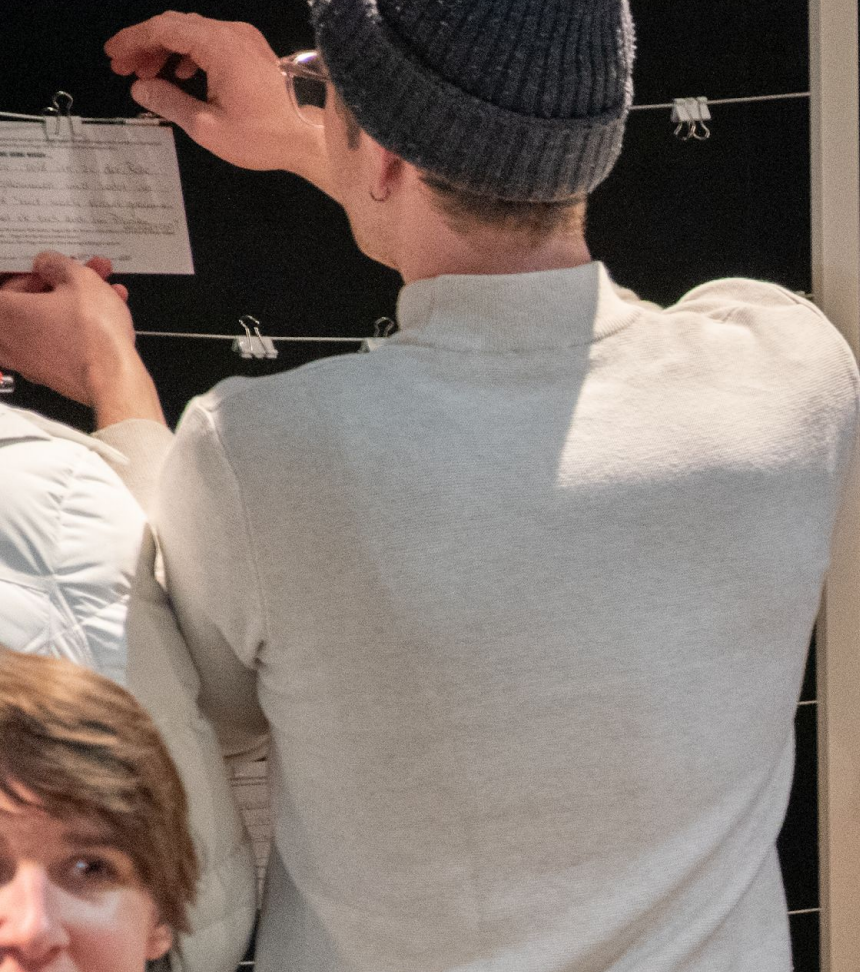


Pinboard/frame

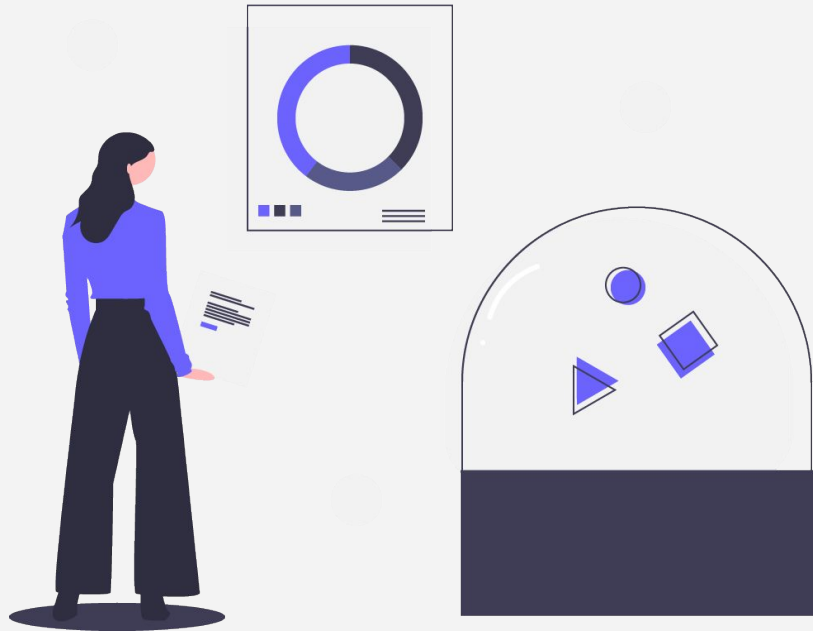
The audience was invited to write and hang their questions on the frame for all to see.











Results and impact

Though the audience at the Artist Talk was relatively small (about 13 people), we still got 8 question cards, showing the public's readiness to adopt this solution.

The question cards were also a big success for the actors. They could see all questions at a glance, and pick their favorite. Actors enjoyed the playfulness of pulling the questions of the wall and passing them to their colleagues.

No questions were asked through Twitter or Facebook. This might be due to the social stigma of using your smartphone in a theater. The low penetration of Twitter in Germany (5% of the population) may also be a factor.

These results will have to be confirmed in a larger group, at the next audience talk.