When did culture become a number? When did experience become data?

The way we value arts and culture has gone horribly wrong, say Flinders University scholars Julian Meyrick (theatre and drama), Robert Phiddian (political satire) and Tully Barnett (digital humanities) in their new book on the vital question of how we assessing culture.

Too often, cultural leaders and policy makers try to chase the perfect metric for activities whose real worth lies in our own personal experience.

What Matters? explores the major tensions in contemporary evaluation strategies, and puts forward practical solutions to the current metric madness. It will be of use to arts practitioners, managers, policy makers and board members – to anyone interested in the value of arts and culture today.

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“The book rejects the bogus idea that it is possible to measure the value of arts and culture without knowing anything about them. There is no algorithm that will objectively rank an art gallery against a publishing house or a computer game company. The time is ripe to find a better way to value our culture – by finding a better way to talk about it.”