some examples of:

Arts-Based Evaluation

Jumblies Theatre 2013
Since 2005, we have explored and experimented with many approaches to arts-based evaluation. Integrating evaluation into our art-making at all stages of a project, drawing on themes, imagery, materials, skills and current passions has become second-nature to our staff and artists, and something that we teach and stress in our orientation, mentoring and professional development activities.

We have also become mindful of navigating some of the challenges and pitfalls of arts-based evaluation: recognizing that the protocols of “evaluation” and “art” are not identical and responding to the necessity to record and articulate the evaluative meanings held in abstract, ambiguous or transient art.
Pebbles

In 2007, following the large-scale Production in the third year of our Etobicoke Residency and on the brink of its Legacy Phase, our artists and staff were asked to write follow-up desires and unfinished business on pebbles, which we laid out as a path forward. We then divided the pebbles into two piles: items we wanted to realize and those which we were willing to let go. The former became part of our plan for the coming year, was saved in a bowl to revisit a year later. The latter we threw in the nearby river.
Giant puppets at school

Qadar

Learn

cineme

Kathakali

Talk

to get

Malick painted

by Olu Jacobs

Qamar

Hello Roger

Vidro at

Makhel
Charts

Following our 2011 Scarborough production of Like An Old Tale, community participants were invited to a feast and art-making evening, serving purposes of evaluation and social closure. A wall mural was created to capture 4 years of experience, with colour-coded leaves to organize and solicit categories of comment as well as open space for less directed response. This chart was subsequently photographed and transcribed for use in reports and accounts of the project.
Year 1 2008-2009 Nesting
Year 2 2009-2010 Like an Old Tale Gallery
Year 3 2010-2011 3 Lands of Scarborough
I met so many people in the show that are real nice and fun to be around with. Second is the stilt walking and the puppet mastering.
Jumbies changed me...

Thank you...
Maps

We often use mapping exercises to capture evaluative feedback – whether from artists, participants or other stakeholders. Often these will be guided group drawings lead by a visual arts facilitator. Maps can be collective or individual, drawn from varied vantage points and more or less abstract. It is important to allow time to share and record explanations, which can become another arts-based activity: a storytelling circle.

The following maps are from an artist and staff evaluation session, midway through our multi-year Etobicoke residency.
Ernie:
Next year we'll make an even bigger connection...

Are you one of those Jungles?

I'm in bugs (poop)
Will you come back?

Eye drop from the past - tooth

Tunnel to Tea

We meet again

"Hello"
Seniors

FAMILY
Does anyone want some of my apple?
Murals

For our 2012 Regina Arts For All Essentials, we started by creating a collective fanciful landscape mural. This was then use throughout and at the end of the 6-day workshop for the participants to add in their feedback and reflections.
Models

In 2005, Arts4All collaborated with Davenport Perth Neighbourhood Centre to solicit community feedback for developing new strategic directions. Working with a variety of their existing programs, artists facilitated the creation of model neighbourhoods (and accompanying explanatory story books) that expressed what people liked, didn’t like and wished for. For example, in the following pictures, the swimming pool, basketball court and seniors’ bus don’t actually exist but are wished for by the youth and seniors groups respectively.
Trees

Following a week-long workshops with Aanmitaagzi Storymakers at Nipissing First Nation, we used the image of a tree, which related to previous activities and stories, to capture and share evaluation. First everyone wrote and drew on their own leaves, and then, in a circle we added them to a collective tree, while reading/showing and recording what we had put down.
Parking/Transportation

Downtown Location/Partner

Washrooms/accessible

Landscaping

Infrastructure Operating Funds

Ongoing Activities

Improv Troupe
Scrapbooks

Collecting and arranging fragments from a project or workshop in a tactile non-digital form helps to preserve, remember and present the experience in a . Scrapbooking can be done after and/or during an arts project or workshops and it can sometimes be appropriate to integrate as a daily closing ritual.
Jumbies Visual Arts Intern Report: Priscilla Groom
Thinking About Space

Looking back through my notebook, so many great quotes or topics of conversation had to do with space—which I love thinking about, so I was pleased to realize this. Cedar Ridge is a gorgeous, magical place, but we discussed its inaccessibility to a majority of its community members, especially compared to MAYBELLEArts, Arts 4 All and Making Room, which are all centrally situated within their neighbourhoods. Of course, like Ruth and others mentioned, Scarborough is not like downtown Toronto neighbourhoods because of its sprawling layout, so the fact that people have to travel a little further to come to Cedar Ridge is a reality of living in Scarborough.

“emphasis is more on the physicality of the space”

Lowell mentioned the specialness of “having a festival space,” which is what the beautiful landscape and atmosphere of Cedar Ridge creates. To me, a festival space means a space apart from the monotonous landscape of the everyday; a place to play and be inspired. But although Cedar Ridge is gorgeous, it’s not the average home of a Community Arts organization. What happens if you’re operating out of a church, a gymnasium, a community centre, or any place that doesn’t have the luxury of beauty and space and is very much a part of the everyday landscape—is it important or necessary to have “a festival space” and if it is, how do you create it?

“having a Festival space”

(Lowell)
One day, I was tired of my shadowy, multi-walled, tiny cupboard of a kitchen in my basement apt. So I decided to make it an always-sunny room of happiness. I painted imagery on my cupboards & wrote Joni Mitchell & Beatles lyrics on the walls, featuring lines about sunshine. From then on, all mornings were sunny.

“Radical Hospitality... never leaving anyone out of your welcoming.”

— Ruth
Graphs

At the end of our 2010 Arts For All Essentials course, the participants reflected back on and interpreted the ups and downs of the 6 days in large graphs that could be laid out, compared and discussed.
Quilts

Another thing we have enjoyed creating are “evaluation quilts”. Participants write or draw comments on pieces of fabric, often colour or shape-coded to distinguish categories of response (e.g. highlights, challenges, wishes, suggestions). Subsequently we (sometimes with the help of the same or other participants) sew the squares onto a fleecy fabric base. The results are photographed and transcribed, and we end up with something durable that can be displayed, used as a blanket, shown as an example or given as a special gift to a partner. We have created such quilts for several conferences, workshops and productions, and, with the contributions of many diverse community members, we made one at the end of each of the four years of the Scarborough residency.
Table Settings

The Big House is a 2-year project in partnership with Vancouver Moving Theatre, exploring food-art collaborations and performative feasts. As part of a 2013 developmental community feast, we designed forums for evaluative feedback into the table setting designs, and were rewarded with dozens of informative comments and doodles – from complaints to accolades.
Terrific event!

Nice mix but wondering:

- About intergenerational;
- Where are the young.

Jack's children know it is challenging but be good to get median age down.

Chopsticks go here.
Get the Carnegie Centre involved.
3 DTES Women's Centre
Clean clutter off the kitchen counters... clean here.
All the lovely decorations are a feast for the eyes. Thank you for a magnificent feast! The smiles are everywhere and the sounds of community are harmoniously alive today. A Beautiful experience that had me believing in magic and time travel. Before being aware of such grandeur, I learned so much from such.
Try Something New

For each project or workshop, we plan arts-based evaluation activities according to available materials and skills, current artistic predilections and relevant themes and imagery. Even (or even especially) if something works well once, we favour varying the idea or inventing a new one the next time.
It's always political.
I know I stand on land where once members of the Papaschase First Nation lived a life in balance with Mother Nature. I wonder: what it will take to help us find that point of balance again.

GROUND ZERO PRODUCTIONS
Photography

Photographs are effective in capturing evaluative response. Next are 3 examples:

- creating expressive tableaux at the end of the 2010 workshop with Aanmitaagzi, in response to prompts of “challenges” and “highlights”.

- Setting up miniature scenes with written text to express memories of working with Jumblies at Cedar Ridge, at a Sept. 2012 garden party.

- Taking a picture in response to a specific question: in this case, part of a research project at Camp Naivelt, a secular socialist Jewish community in Brampton, answering the question, “What makes you feel uneasy about our community”.
I have been twice or thrice to Cedar Ridge. We Seniors came from Tuxedo Court and I sang a song. We did sewing and knitting. Kamala

23/9/12
Performance

Evaluative responses can be elicited through performance activities and games. The challenge here, due to the transient nature of live performance, can be capturing the results. This can partially be done through video, photos and follow-up discussions and writing. However, the best application of performance-based evaluation can be for personal reflection or to awake memories and feelings that can then be captured through more material media.
At the end of our 2013 Finding Common Ground workshop (about collaborations with First Nations), the participants expressed their experience of the workshop through a silent movement-based journey across the room.
We concluded our 2013 Concordia Artfare Essentials with a ceremony designed by the students, for which they were asked to include elements of evaluation. It ended with everyone asked to send an imaginary boat down the river, while whispering or shouting out what we had learned.
Images as Indicators

As well as being a medium for participatory arts-based research and evaluation, photography is an excellent means to demonstrate the success of specific objectives, especially (but not only) when dealing with art. Below are several images, which indicate the success of specific articulated objectives for that particular project.
Etobicoke 2006 – showing mixing of ages, ethnicities, cultural traditions, experience levels (professional drummer and student penny whistle player).
Scarborough 2011 – showing central involvement of First Nations artists and cultural forms in large-scale, cross-cultural production (Like An Old Tale)
Etobicoke 2008 – showing access to tea-making facilities at Montgomery’s Inn, a City-run heritage site, after several years of opposition from British-tradition tea-making volunteers
Harbourfront Centre 2007 – showing the scope and diversity of engagement, artistic quality and innovative presence of a participatory community arts production at a mainstream arts venue and Festival (World Stage)
Davenport Perth 2008 - showing enjoyment of art and trying out new creative forms by a community participant (Iole Bianchi from Arts4All)