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**THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES
FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION
FROM WITHIN THE VISUAL ARTS**

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The Centre for Research in Art and Design
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ABSTRACT

The current cultural climate is stimulating an increasing interest in, and need for, collaboration throughout many fields of practice. Collaborative methods of art production are evident across a range of contemporary visual art practices and opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration are becoming more available for artists, particularly those working beyond the gallery context. However, there is currently a lack of literature critically addressing collaborative processes in relation to visual arts practice. This research investigates strategies for interdisciplinary collaboration, which require different approaches than traditional, individual models of art practice. A visual artist (the researcher) adopts a practice-led, naturalistic methodology to investigate qualities and characteristics of the collaborative process and to develop and evaluate strategies for engaging successful interdisciplinary collaborations with practitioners from a variety of fields.

A contextual review undertakes a broad review of literature and examples of practice addressing collaboration from the visual arts and other fields (including organisational and management theory). Key issues and approaches to collaboration are addressed in relation to instances of collaboration evident in the visual arts (*collaboration between artists, collaboration in contemporary Public Art practices and interdisciplinary collaboration*), and two main approaches to collaboration are identified: as a *tacit method* of practice and as an *explicit methodology* of practice.

Three strands of inquiry are undertaken: *collaboration in practice, collaboration in education, and case examples of collaboration*. The researcher develops and evaluates strategies for engaging interdisciplinary collaboration with different collaborators in five exploratory research projects. Two projects are developed in an educational context to evaluate undergraduate Fine Art students' experiences of collaboration. Three interviews with different visual art practitioners are undertaken to address their experiences of collaboration in professional arts contexts. A *qualitative definition of collaboration*, and a description of the *main characteristics* and

key qualities of a collaborative process are obtained through a systematic, cross-comparative analysis of the research data (detailed project reports, pre-interview questionnaire forms and interview transcripts). These outcomes inform the development of a *critical framework*, which presents interpretative and evaluative criteria for identifying, describing and evaluating four distinct models of collaboration. The critical framework is primarily intended for use by visual artists as a tool for developing and evaluating their individual experiences of collaborative practice. The research contributes a new critical understanding of the 'more complex' model of interdisciplinary collaboration and addresses the implications of approaching interdisciplinary collaboration as a viable methodology of practice for visual artists, in relation to both professional and educational visual art contexts.

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1. A PRACTICE-LED INQUIRY INTO INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

1.1 An Introduction to Interdisciplinary Collaboration in the Visual Arts

There has been a notable increase in collaborative and interdisciplinary practices in the visual arts since the mid-nineties. More artists and arts writers/critics are *talking about it*, and artists are increasingly *doing it*. However, few examples of critical literature addressing the particular nature of collaborative processes are available in the visual arts. Information about the qualities of collaboration tends to remain embedded within the tacit experiences of visual art practitioners and is anecdotally described, if discussed at all. Collaborative forms of practice have arguably been present in the visual arts for the past thirty years, if not longer. However, artists have recently been exploring the potential benefits offered by interdisciplinary forms of collaboration in particular. Paula Brown, Principal Combined Arts Officer of the London Arts Board, has recognised:

“Inter-disciplinary collaborative practice has emerged as one of the most significant art form developments of recent years. Yet it has received negligible critical attention, a situation compounded perhaps by the apparent temporality of both the work itself and the collaborative partnerships which create it.”

(cited in Walwin 1997:8)

At the heart of the concept of *interdisciplinary* collaboration in the visual arts are the issues of methodology on the one hand, and of visual arts’ interface with culture on the other. How do visual artists, whose education and professional practice have traditionally followed individual models, develop strategies for collaborating *with* others? How are the contributions and potential roles of visual artists perceived and understood, by both artists and their co-collaborators? How does

collaboration influence ways in which the visual arts (and visual artists) are positioned in relation to other professions (and practitioners)?

In order to begin to address these questions, the ‘*hows*’ (methods and strategies) and ‘*whys*’ (qualities and implications) of collaboration need to be better understood in order to develop a critical and meaningful debate, and to establish whether the current interest in collaborative and interdisciplinary processes implies real and tangible benefits for visual art practitioners or whether it merely reflects a short-lived trend in contemporary practice.

This research undertakes to address some of these questions by developing and evaluating strategies for undertaking interdisciplinary collaboration through a practice-led naturalistic methodology. The research pursues three main strands of inquiry: *collaboration in practice*, *collaboration in education*, and *case examples of collaboration* in the visual arts. Acknowledging the researcher’s perspective as a visual art practitioner, and experiences of collaboration (through a series of experimental research projects), the research contributes a qualitative definition of ‘collaboration’, and describes the main characteristics and key qualities required for successful collaborative processes. These research outcomes are primarily intended for pragmatic use by other visual artists in developing and evaluating their own collaborative practices. They are also intended for practitioners from other fields, who either already collaborate with artists, or who are considering doing so.

1.2 Interest in Collaboration in the Visual Arts

“Suddenly collaboration is fashionable – but it has a substantial history.”

(Butler 2000)

Artist/writer/consultant David Butler recognised a renewed interest in collaboration in the visual arts. Use of the term ‘collaboration’ in describing a range of diverse forms of practice, from gallery exhibitions to ‘issue-based’ Public Art projects, illustrates that collaboration is ‘in the air’ as a topic of discussion (although much of it remains informal) and ‘on the ground’ as pragmatic opportunities for collaborative forms of art practice are appearing¹. The nature of professional visual art practice appears to be implicitly moving towards a collaborative methodology of shared creative practice. But why is collaboration *currently* so popular and if, as Butler suggests, it has a “substantial history”, why is there a lack of established critical debate on the subject?

Evidence of an emergent critical interest in collaboration in the visual arts appeared in the early 1980s. From the 1980s, art critics and writers began addressing the nature of collaboration in the visual arts, attributing it to varied and diverse histories. Cynthia McCabe (1984) attributed the rise of “artistic collaborations”² to the period between the two World Wars, when artists productively exchanged new ideas and developed closely-knit support systems through personal and professional networks. Adopting a broader stance, Dan Cameron (1984:83-87) attempted an inclusive review of artists’ collaborations in an “unofficial history of collaboration”, which traced collaborative processes from the 18th century to the mid-eighties. Similarly, Robert Hobbes (in McCabe1984:63-87) attempted to rewrite art history from the sixties onward by addressing the nature of artistic collaborations and positing a theory of collaborative “pluralist aesthetics”.

From the position of 'alternative' arts practices³, Jeff Kelley (in Lacy 1995:147) identified that "the terrain of collaboration has been tentatively mapped since the sixties by artists and architects interested in exploring the social and ecological landscapes that lay beyond the range of formalist canons"; whilst Nina Felshin (1995:10-11) defined Activist Art as "typically collaborative", attributing it to the "union of political activism with the democratising aesthetic tendencies originating in Conceptual Art of the late 1960s and early 1970s".

More recently, Marga Bijvoet (1997:1-5) attributed the emergence of collaborations between Art, Science and Technology to a search for new contexts for art practice, evident in parallel developments within the Environmental Art and Art and Technology movements of the late sixties, which relate to the developments of Art in Public Places and Media Arts in the 1990s. Charles Green's (2001:xv) re-visitation of collaborative art practices from the 1960s onwards, attempts to trace the evolution of collaboration in the visual arts and "unravel the enigma of alternatively situated 'authors' and their link to the crisis of artistic representation", which he also suggests is a "crisis in artistic intention".

Green's contribution represents a shift in interest in collaboration, from the marginal, into the mainstream of institutional art criticism. But does collaboration, and in particular interdisciplinary collaboration, contribute to the "crisis in artistic intention" Green identifies, or does it present positive pragmatic strategies for artists to develop new paradigms of practice?

Art critics' attempts to develop critical debates on the *aesthetics* of collaborative artworks cannot answer questions about the particular *qualities* of collaborative processes in the visual arts. As art critics and writers have been '*talk about it*', art practitioners have been '*doing it*' and extending and re-framing their practices in the process. However there is a need to make artists' experiences of collaboration explicit in order to more clearly define the positive and enabling implications of

collaboration. What are the particular characteristics and qualities of a collaborative approach to visual art practice? Are there different forms of collaboration in the visual arts? Do they require different strategies and approaches? Is collaboration a characteristic of existing forms of visual art practices? Does it present a new model? How are collaborative processes different to other forms of shared working? Is interdisciplinary collaboration a new phenomenon in contemporary visual art practice?

These are pertinent questions, particularly for visual artists seeking to investigate the potential benefits offered by collaborative working. However, there is little shared understanding of how to develop successful collaborative strategies in practice, nor is there structured critical debate directly addressing the issues and implications raised by collaboration in a field that has traditionally (throughout the majority of the twentieth century at least) upheld notions of *individual* creativity, *expression* and *originality* as dominant criteria of value. The concept of collaboration challenges the notion of visual art practice as an *individual* creative process; signalling an implicit shift towards perceiving artists as collective producers and co-contributors to projects, increasingly in fields not traditionally associated with the visual arts.

Within the visual arts, however, the term 'collaborative' is being used to describe diverse forms of practice. It is often used interchangeably with terms such as 'participation' and 'co-operation', with little explanation of the distinctive qualities of each process. Collaboration is perceived as an *implicit* process, which is more often anecdotally described by visual artists, rather than critically evaluated. Knowledge of collaboration tends to remain tacitly embedded within the experiences of individual practitioners, highlighting that collaborative processes are often 'invisible' and difficult to 'quantify'. As a result, little documentary evidence or critical information about the qualitative nature of collaboration as a particular form of shared working exists.

While visual artists' increasing interest in collaborative practices is implicitly recognised within the field, the need to understand collaboration better and identify whether it presents a new phenomenon in the visual arts, has only recently been recognised, as Butler (2000) suggests:

“...what needs to emerge from the growing interest in collaboration is a discursive rather than an anecdotal discourse – exemplified through the work and critique.”

Artist David MacIntosh suggests a cautious approach, warning against over-analysis or imbuing the process of collaboration with “mystic” qualities. Instead, MacIntosh argues that collaboration is a pragmatic part of art practice:

“...in other walks of life, the idea of collaboration is uncomplicated, people are always making business-like agreements to set up partnerships”.

MacIntosh (2000:12)

MacIntosh's suggestion that in other professions, collaboration is 'less complex' is debatable. Ironically, it is arguably through a *lack* of appropriate critical language to debate the specific complexities of collaboration that 'myths' of collaboration are compounded: by not clarifying what we mean when we talk about 'collaborative art practice', or distinguishing the particular qualities of collaboration from other forms of shared working, or critically evaluating collaborative practices.

For some, collaboration proposes a new methodology of practice, whilst for others it is simply an occurrence in everyday practice. For the latter, addressing the collaborative *processes* directly is viewed as detracting critical attention from the *products* of practice, as Peter Lewis, co-curator of the 1998 'Host' exhibition at Glasgow's Tramway illustrated. At the exhibition's Public Forum, titled “Artists and Collaborative

Practice”, debate about the particular nature of collaborative processes became particularly heated. In reply, and with evident frustration, Lewis remarked that, “it [the exhibition] wasn’t really about collaboration anyway”⁴, although it was promoted as such. Little common ground or language existed with which to critically discuss the phenomenon of collaboration in the visual arts.

Even for those consciously approaching collaboration in the visual arts and wishing to develop critical debate, the concept of collaboration is difficult. In other professions, the complexity of collaboration is also being addressed. Whilst collective and team-based models of shared working are more established in other fields than in the visual arts (as Macintosh identified), collaboration has been recognised as a complex, yet potentially beneficial, *new* approach to work in wide and diverse fields and professions⁵. This current rise in critical interest in collaboration responds to shifts in the cultural climate of work, and the need to develop alternative approaches to traditional team-working models, in order to address: the impacts of new technologies on existing working practices, more effective use limited resources and to tackle complex social, environmental and ethical issues/problems. Within this climate, collaboration has recently “become a very hot topic” (Mattessich & Monsey 1992:6). Research in other fields have approached the complexity of collaboration by:

- Attempting to define the nature of the process.
- Addressing the benefits collaboration offers.
- Addressing the motivational drives to collaborate.
- Exploring the appropriate conditions for collaboration.
- Using analogy and metaphor to describe the qualities of collaborative processes.

Whilst collaboration is becoming recognised as a potentially beneficial developmental strategy for visual artists, there are no equivalent formal research strategies specific to the visual arts. There is a need to

critically understand how collaborative processes re-frame our traditional perceptions of visual art practice, through rigorous research in order to raise informed debates on collaboration beyond subjective discussion. This research addresses this gap and contributes to the development of a critical framework for addressing and evaluating collaborative processes in the visual arts.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

Responding to the recognised need for critical discourse on collaboration and acknowledgement of the complexity of the subject, this research aims to clarify some of the existing confusion surrounding collaborative processes in the visual arts and to develop a critical approach to *Interdisciplinary Collaboration*, in particular.

To address the particular qualities of *interdisciplinary* collaboration, it is necessary to investigate the nature of collaborative *processes*.

Collaboration - a process of shared working involving two or more people – may initially appear straightforward, yet is a complex process and is not specific to any specialist area of visual art practice. At best, collaboration can enable the creation of outcomes that could not have been perceived or achieved by an individual alone ('two heads are better than one'), and at worst result in incoherent outcomes that are compromised by different perspectives ('too many cooks spoil the broth'). Successful collaboration is difficult to achieve and is often a 'hit or miss' affair. To develop strategies for engaging interdisciplinary collaboration within this research, it has first been necessary to identify *how* and *why* collaboration works in order to clarify the potential benefits of collaboration and guard against some of the pitfalls.

A practice-based naturalistic research methodology is adopted in order to develop an in-depth understanding of collaboration grounded in the researcher's (art practitioner) direct experience of collaborative processes (an 'up-close view' of collaboration). Three strands of inquiry are undertaken to investigate *collaboration in practice*, *collaboration in*

education, and *case examples of collaboration*. Through these three strands, the following four stated research objectives are achieved:

- 1) To *identify* and *describe* selected **examples of collaboration** in the visual arts.
- 2) To *develop experimental strategies* for engaging collaboration through a series of **exploratory projects**.
- 3) To *identify* and *describe* **characteristics** and **qualities** of collaborative processes.
- 4) To **evaluate information and findings** obtained from objectives 1-3 and present the research outcomes in a form appropriate for visual artists.

In the first strand of the inquiry (*collaboration in practice*), the researcher initiates and participates in a series of five experimental projects with different collaborators, in different contexts and using different methods. In the second strand (*collaboration in education*), the researcher develops two projects in an educational context (Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen) in order to observe Fine Art students' experiences of cross-departmental collaboration. In the third strand (*case examples of collaboration*), the researcher undertakes interviews with selected professional artists, who regularly engage in different types of collaboration through their practice. Through these three strands of inquiry, different forms of primary data are gathered (evaluative project reports, Fine Art students' comments, pre-interview questionnaire forms and full interview transcripts).

Different forms of collaboration occurring in the visual arts are identified through a broad review of literature and examples of practice: *collaboration between artists: collaboration in contemporary Public Art practices*, and *interdisciplinary collaboration*. Key issues and implications of collaborative processes in each form are identified and

addressed. Literature and examples of collaborative practices from the visual arts and from other fields (including organisational and management theory) are reviewed. Informed by the distinctive approaches to collaboration identified in the contextual review (Chapter 2), the primary research data, gathered and generated throughout the research, is subjected to a systematic, cross-comparative analysis.

Through a two-stage analysis, the main characteristics of collaboration are identified and described and a qualitative definition of collaboration as a 'complex and dynamic shared creative process, which is developmental and context-dependant' is presented and distinguished from other forms of shared working (*participatory, cooperation, collective, interactive* and *partnership*). Four models of collaboration occurring in the visual arts, ranging from 'more simple', to 'more complex' are described. The key qualities required for successful collaboration are also identified and described and the implications of approaching interdisciplinary collaboration as an explicit methodology of practice for visual artists are addressed. The research outcomes contribute towards the development of a critical framework for visual artists to use in initiating and evaluating their own experiences of collaborative practice.

As a visual art practitioner undertaking the research, it is relevant to acknowledge my own interest in interdisciplinary collaboration and my assumptions about the potential benefits it might offer visual artists. My interest in interdisciplinary collaboration developed from a belief that it may offer artists a means of re-positioning visual art practice in relation to a broader cultural context beyond the mainstream 'artworld'. My main assumptions were that collaboration (particularly interdisciplinary collaboration) might offer artists new contexts for practice, new methods of practice, and suggest potential new roles for visual artists in contexts not traditionally associated with the visual arts and in relation to other professions and practitioners. These assumptions were formed through my educational and professional experiences of visual art practice⁶. The

transition from an individual studio-based model of art practice towards a more process-based interdisciplinary model of collaborative practice is difficult as there are no clear routes to follow and few critically documented approaches. This research presents a critical approach to collaborative working from the perspective of a visual art practitioner.

1.4 Thesis Summary

This chapter outlines the need for undertaking formal research into collaboration in the visual arts and defines the four principle research objectives. The rationale for undertaking a practice-led research methodology is described and the three strands of inquiry are summarised.

In Chapter 2, a broad review of literature (from a variety of fields) and examples of collaboration in the visual arts is undertaken. The main forms of collaboration occurring in the visual arts and methods of investigating collaborative processes are identified and key issues are addressed. Existing gaps in current knowledge of what collaborative processes ‘look like’, and how collaborative practices are positioned within current critical frameworks in the visual arts, are identified and described.

In Chapter 3, the principles underpinning the practice-led naturalistic methodology are described more fully. Specific research methods used to generate primary research data within the three strands of inquiry: *collaboration in practice* (five exploratory research projects), *collaboration in education* (two student projects), and *case examples of collaboration* (three interviews with selected artists), are described. A two-stage analytic framework developed to undertake a cross-comparative analysis of the primary data is also described.

In Chapter 4, five basic components of collaborative processes (*aims, collaborators, context, structure and product*) are used to undertake a

cross-comparative analysis of the primary research data and the main characteristics of collaboration are identified and described.

In Chapter 5, these findings are further interpreted to uncover the key qualities of the collaborative processes. A qualitative definition of collaboration is presented and distinguished from other forms of shared working and the key qualities required for successful collaboration are described. Four models of collaboration occurring in the visual arts are described and the implications of approaching interdisciplinary collaboration as an explicit methodology of practice for visual artists are addressed.

In Chapter 6, a summary of the research outcomes is presented. These are evaluated in relation to their achievement of the stated research objectives and discussed in relation to the implications of the research in relation to professional art practitioners and art education. Original contributions to knowledge are described and the strengths and limitations of the research programme are evaluated. Suggested areas for future research are presented and the contents of the thesis are summarised.

Notes from Chapter 1

- 1 Residency schemes such as the 'Year of the Artist', public art commissions, community art projects and, more recently, opportunities created through research funding bodies such as the Arts and Humanities Research Board, seek to encourage partnerships, participation and collaboration between artists, their audiences and institutions.
- 2 A term McCabe coined to describe artists working together in a shared creative process.
- 3 'Alternative' meaning those practices which do not sit comfortably with the traditional arts institutions and mainstream models, often occurring in communities, etc.
- 4 "Artists and Collaborative Practice", a public seminar funded by the Arts Council, complimenting the exhibition 'Host' at Tramway, Glasgow, April 1998. Artist and panellist Toby Webster's described collaboration as a "chance" process, while an audience member described "collaborating" with an artwork. As discussion became tense, the exhibition's co-curator, Peter Lewis, disclaimed the exhibition's collaborative theme. Confusion surrounding the concept of collaboration was evident and Peter Lewis' remarks reflected dissatisfaction with discussing the nature of collaborative processes rather than the artworks themselves.
- 5 Critical interest in collaboration is evident across broad and diverse fields, such as communications technology, organisational theory, management science, healthcare, non-profit and public service sectors.
- 6 I graduated from a traditional, studio-based BA(Hons) Fine Art in 1995, where I began tacitly questioning art's relationship to society and culture. I maintained an individual studio-based model of art practice (exhibiting work in galleries and undertaking commissions) before undertaking a collaborative Public Art commission with a fellow artist. The experience enabled us to work on a larger scale, in a non-art context, and to produce work that combined both our ideas and skills. I continued working with a Public Art organisation in Edinburgh, to explore alternatives to individual art practice and explore the roles and functions of art and artists in social and cultural contexts. I undertook a postgraduate in Exhibition Interpretation (Design Department, Napier University, Edinburgh), which contrasted with my Art College educational experience, as it was more interdisciplinary and collaborative. I recognised the strengths and weaknesses of the studio-based model of education and began a personal quest to find new routes and models of visual art practice. From 1996 to 1998, as a board member of the Nation Artists Association, I met a variety of visual artists across the UK and investigated the needs and aspirations of artists: many felt isolated and unprepared for professional art practice. Principal sources of government funding for the visual arts (the UK regional Arts Councils) provided insufficient funding to support the large numbers of artists and artists were seeking new models of practicing beyond mainstream arts institutions. As a practitioner, my quest to find alternative models of practice seemed to resonate with other artists and provided an opportunity to re-think the nature of art practice (pragmatically and philosophically). I was interested in exploring the potential for interdisciplinary and collaborative models and developed a proposal for an alternative arts venue aiming to encourage, support and facilitate experimental interdisciplinary projects between artists and other professionals. This proposed a fundamentally different approach to a largely dominant traditional view of a visual artist as an individual creator/author. This Ph.D. research project has provided an opportunity to investigate the practicalities of developing an interdisciplinary and collaborative model of art practice, and to address the implications of interdisciplinary collaboration as a potential alternative to individual art practice.

2. A REVIEW OF THE COMPLEXITY OF COLLABORATION

In the early stages of the research, it was recognised that no former British Ph.D. research investigating visual artists' strategies for collaborative practice appeared to exist¹ and very few critical publications addressing collaboration were found in specialist art press and journals. The term 'collaborative' was used to describe broad and diverse forms of visual art and critical references to collaboration were thinly scattered across debates in different areas of visual art practice. Therefore, the task of undertaking a review of key positions and critical perspectives on collaboration has been more a question of *finding*, rather than '*mapping*' the current field.

The review has addressed this difficulty and positioned the research by investigating: **definitions** of collaboration; **current cultural conditions** influencing collaboration; approaches to **research into collaboration** in other fields; **key issues** and questions raised by collaboration in the visual arts; and examples of **different forms of collaboration** in the visual arts. A broad review of literature relating to collaboration was addressed through critical art practice and theory, and organisational theory. This also encompassed examples of collaborative visual art practices, articles and exhibition catalogues.

In this chapter, a review of *definitions* of collaboration from the visual arts, clarifies the understanding of the term "collaboration" in this research (*section 2.1*). In *section 2.2* factors influencing increased interest in collaboration in the broad current cultural climate is addressed, to clarify the current need for this research. A review of *how* and *why* collaboration is addressed in other fields (*primarily management and organisation theory*) evidences current knowledge and relevant positions (*sections 2.2 and 2.3*). In *section 2.4*, key issues and questions raised by collaboration in relation to the visual arts are identified through a review of art criticism and critical writings in the field. In *sections 2.5 (artists collaborations)*, *2.6 (collaboration in*

contemporary public art practices) and 2.7 (*interdisciplinary collaboration*), instances of collaboration across a variety of visual arts practices are identified and key debates in each area are reviewed. In *section 2.8*, two main perspectives and approaches to collaboration are described: collaboration as **method**, and collaboration as **methodology** of practice. A summary of conclusions derived from the review and gaps in current knowledge of the particular *characteristics* and *qualities* of collaboration are clarified.

2.1 Definitions of Collaboration in the visual arts

Collaborating artists Ian Pollock and Janet Silk recognise that “*creating a language to discuss collaborative work is difficult*”². This section reviews definitions of collaboration principally from the visual arts to identify *positive* and *negative* definitions of collaboration and to distinguish between collaboration described as a *process* of shared working, as a type of art *practice* and as a type of *artwork*.

At its most basic definition, ‘collaboration’ describes an endeavour between two or more individuals to produce a collaborative outcome in which ‘*the sum is greater than the individual parts*’. Artist and writer Jeff Kelley has extended the definition of collaboration in relation to the visual arts:

“Collaboration is a process of mutual transformation in which the collaborators, and thus their common work, are in some way changed. Most importantly, the creative process itself is transformed in a collaborative relationship.”

(in Lacy 1995:139-47)

Kelley’s definition describes collaboration as a *positive process* of shared working, whilst art critic William Easton represents a more negative view:

“Collaboration has a bad name. Semantically it touches seams of treachery and deceit and is entangled in the disloyalty of traitors, turncoats, and double-dealers. It would appear that the tone of dissimulation and deception the word evokes reaches deep into the realms of the Fine Arts.”³

In 1984, other early critics of collaboration in the visual arts (Cameron, Hobbes, McCabe, Shapiro) provided definitions of collaboration in art which, whilst recognising collaboration as a positive development in visual art practice, defined forms of collaboration with more negative undertones. Dan Cameron’s “involuntary collaboration” defined a form of ‘appropriation art’⁴ as “a means of getting an outside force to co-operate with one’s artmaking without necessarily getting the outside force’s approval beforehand”⁵. Cameron also defined “institutional collaboration”⁶ as a form of collaboration existing within art institutions, which artists engage in for careerist motivations and in which their individual ‘signature styles’ are neither transformed nor developed. Cameron’s definitions suggest rather cynical forms of collaboration for individual self-advancement (through the development of new artwork or through the strategic positioning of individuals within arts institutions), rooted in the negative definition that collaboration acquired during the Second World War, as “traitorous co-operation with an enemy” (*The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, 1998). Similarly, critic David Shapiro’s definition of a form of “collaboration as resistance”⁷ illustrated an equally negative view, but from the stance of the artist as outsider and activist. Shapiro perceives collaboration as a tactic adopted by artists to subvert the dominant placement of value on the ‘individual’ artist in art institutions, demonstrating an ‘anti-establishment’ stance.

Whilst Cameron recognised that definitions of collaboration are influenced by the broader cultural climate and “demonstrate a culture’s value of individualism at any given point in history”⁸, critic and curator, Cynthia McCabe, traced different cultural perspectives on collaboration.

McCabe recognised that in Europe, although the negative ‘wartime’ connotations of collaboration were closer in peoples’ memories, there was, ironically, a generally positive approach to collaboration. In contrast, she identified that in America, although ‘war-related’ connotations were less evident, collaboration was viewed with more suspicion, because of its inherent ‘threat’ to individualism.

Throughout the nineties in Britain, and internationally, collaboration defined as “the action of working with someone to produce or create something” (*The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, 1998) has replaced the negative definitions previously outlined, signalling a more positive and pragmatic approach to collaboration as a viable way of working for visual artists. This shift is evident in the increasing use of the term “collaborative” by artists (rather than critics) to describe a diverse range of visual arts practices and approaches (including gallery practice, public art, environmental art, and experimental, project-based work in cities and communities). This would appear to suggest that many art practitioners perceive collaboration as a positive and enabling strategy, which is integrative rather than reactionary.

Cameron (1984:87) distinguished an enabling form of collaboration, from his negative definitions of “involuntary” and “institutional” forms by defining:

“...the requirements...for true collaboration: temporariness, equality of input and gain, the need for stylistic breakthrough (or at least change), completely voluntary effort, a good grasp of any political issues involved, and a relative degree of de-institutionalisation.”

This definition of collaboration supports Kelley’s earlier definition of collaboration a process of “mutual transformation”, in which collaborators come together to produce “common work”. The definition

of collaboration used in this research supports Cameron's and Kelley's definitions of collaboration, to mean 'a shared working process that is willingly entered into by all collaborators, for the purpose of producing a shared collaborative outcome'.

It is necessary to clarify an area of confusion evident in use of the term "collaboration" in the visual arts. Collaboration has been used to describe an audience's interaction with an artwork⁹. In this research, collaboration is defined as a shared working process that occurs between *people*. Therefore it is not considered possible to collaborate with an inanimate object. Confusions in how the term 'collaboration' is used require clarification in order to develop a common understanding and critical framework for addressing collaboration in the visual arts.

Definitions and descriptions of collaboration in the field of visual art practice are difficult to address as they are bound up with the motives and values of individual practitioners, and tend to be implicitly approached through evaluations of examples of specific forms of artwork. The review aims to broaden this approach to collaboration and to bridge the gap between *knowing* that there are forms of collaboration occurring in the visual arts and *understanding* the phenomenon of collaboration in the visual arts by addressing the general *reasons* artists choose to work collaboratively, the *conditions* and *climate* influencing this way of working, and the different *manifestations* of this way of working in the visual arts.

2.2 The Current Cultural Climate Influencing Collaboration

To critically understand the phenomenon of collaboration in contemporary visual art practices, it is useful to address the current cultural climate influencing the general 'desire' or 'need' to collaborate. Warren Bennis, professor of Business Administration at Southern California University, has held a long-term fascination with exploring how successful creative collaborative groups operate. Bennis

(1997:199) recognises that “in our constantly changing, global, highly technological society, collaboration is a necessity.” This section addresses the principal shifts in culture that are influencing the ‘desire’ or ‘need’ to collaborate.

2.2.1 Collaboration in a Pluralist Culture: a response to complexity.

The fact that we live in a complex post-modern and pluralist culture with many different values, perspectives and ways of working is widely recognised. Organisational theorist, Barbara Gray (1989:27-9) recognises that many organisational theorists posit, “collaboration is a logical and necessary response to turbulent conditions”. Her research into organisational use of collaboration identifies increasing “environmental turbulence”¹⁰, and proposes “collaborative alliances represent one critical mode of adaptation to turbulent conditions”. This view of collaboration suggests that not only does it provide a practical means of dealing with complexity, but it also suggests a co-operative, rather than competitive landscape.

Management theorist Chris Huxham (1996:4) describes the mutually beneficial support organisations can achieve through collaboration as the search for “collaborative advantage”. As well as providing practical solutions to complex problems by pooling expertise and resources, Huxham suggests that the “the really important reason for being concerned with collaboration is a **moral** one”. She goes on to suggest that “the really important problem issues facing society – poverty, conflict, crime and so on – cannot be tackled by a single organisation acting alone”, and further suggests that “collaboration aimed at tackling these kinds of issues should also be aimed to empower those most affected by the problem to be centrally involved in initiatives aimed at addressing them”. Huxham implies that collaboration encourages organisations to be ‘less-insular’ and more ‘socially-conscious’ in order to recognise and contribute to addressing complex social issues and problems.

Artist and researcher Julie Ross' (2001:75) investigation into the role of the artist working in contemporary organisational contexts, suggests that postmodern theories of contemporary culture "that actively embrace instability, chaos complexity, turbulence and change as key characteristics of the current context" have influenced contemporary organisational styles and developments in co-operative, participatory and collaborative approaches to practice in the visual arts:

"There has been a significant shift from objects to processes and from autonomy to relationships not just in arts practice and theory but in cultural theory and organisational theory and practices."

Ross argues that the modernist view of the artist as autonomous creator of art objects is no longer viable in the current 'postmodern condition':

"In addition, the reflection of critical realism, Marxism, feminism and ecology within art practice represents a move towards collaboration, participation and interaction and the establishment of an artistic process that is about creating art for and with others."

Whilst Ross' view is current and appropriate to the 'socially-engaged' strategies of practice being adopted by artists working in public contexts (addressed in *section 2.6*), there is also an evident dissatisfaction with a perceived 'loss of meaning' and 'narcissism' in postmodernist perspectives. Art critic Donald Kuspitt (1997:22) goes as far as suggesting, "postmodernist self-satisfaction is as decadent and morbid as modernist dissatisfaction". Cultural and political theorist Judith Squires' (1993) call to establish new criteria of value within a pluralist culture, in the wake of the void created by postmodern deconstruction, echoes Kuspitt's view in a less extreme manner. Arguably, collaboration

may be seen as one approach to re-establishing connections and developing new paradigms of practice within this void.

2.2.2 The Development of Non-Hierarchical Working Styles

In the complex context of pluralism and environmental change outlined (section 2.2.1), management styles are shifting from traditional hierarchical models to more democratic structures, which are flexible and adaptable to change and development. Rather than operating in competitive, closed structures, flexible structures are creating “learning organisations” (Senge 1993) which are actively and consciously developing more creative approaches to shared working (Kao 1996) in order to respond to and learn from change. These developments signal not only a re-framing of traditional perspectives of ‘work’ towards new perspectives of ‘learning’, but also suggest a culture in which new opportunities for shared working can be supported, as Ross (2001:71) identifies:

“the boundaryless organisation focuses on relationships and processes rather than on organisational social structure. It concentrates on removing physical structures within organisations and thus, looks beyond any existing hierarchical structures. In breaking down boundaries, it aims to actively encourage democratic and interdisciplinary dialogue and construct new, more liberating alternatives by actively encouraging participation, innovation and creativity.”

Warren Bennis’ (1997:xv-xvi) long-term interest and study of how groups work together creatively, identified that in organisations adjusting to change:

“...the usual way of looking at groups and leadership, as separate phenomena, was no longer adequate. The most exciting groups...resulted from a mutually respectful marriage between an able leader and an assemblage of extraordinary people. Groups become great only when everyone in them, leaders and members alike, is free to do his or her absolute best.”

Michael Schrage (1995:32), researcher at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, similarly recognised the limitations in traditional team-working structures. Schrage posits collaboration as an alternative to traditional team working, describing the nature of the process as “a process of value creation that our traditional structures of communication and teamwork can’t achieve”.

2.2.3 Collaborative Technologies and the Information Age

The past decade has witnessed rapid developments in new technologies: the Internet, electronic mail, mobile communications technologies, portable computers, and video conferencing technologies. Information is more readily available than ever before and there is more of it. In this climate, technologies are influencing the ways in which people work and the speed in which they work. Mobile technologies are reducing the need to be in one place in order to work and communications technologies are enabling individuals to be in contact (even across the globe) more easily, quickly, and in new ways.

Michael Schrage (1995) suggests that increasing communication technologies in business have highlighted a need to develop new ways of working, and suggests that the collaboration is a more creative and productive model of shared working than more traditional team working approaches¹¹. Schrage (1995:191) is particularly interested in the development of new technologies to support the particular qualities of

collaborative processes, and suggests that such tools will revolutionise the way we view work:

“Collaborative tools and environments will spark the same kinds of questions and concerns as other fundamental technologies, which will in turn determine the effectiveness of both individuals and enterprises... The technology becomes a frame of reference and a new infrastructure for the way people relate to one another... collaborative tools must inevitably spawn a new etiquette and manners.”

While Schrage (1995) preaches the dawn of a new collaborative era, supported by new collaborative technologies, he recognises that “the difficulty lies in trying to create tools and environments to support something we don’t quite yet fully understand” (pp166-167). Schrage highlights a need to understand the qualities and characteristics of collaborative processes in order to “play” with the concept of collaborative design, which he believes should structure collaborative relationships rather than group meetings, as “collaborative architectures support a process, not an output” (pp166-167).

One of the leading companies developing collaborative technologies is Xerox Palo Alto Research Centre (PARC) in America¹². In response to identifying a pragmatic need for technologies that support new ways of working collaboratively, Xerox PARC is looking to the future of collaborative working environments. Mark Stefik, an artificial-intelligence expert who has worked with Xerox PARC, predicts that “collaborative computing will be much, much more pervasive than personal computing...because while not everyone needs a personal computer, virtually everyone needs to collaborate” (cited in Schrage 1995:97-98).

Interestingly, Xerox PARC is not only recognised as an innovator in developing collaborative software technologies, but is also recognised

as an innovator in terms of their own interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to work. PARC has looked to artists' creative processes to introduce experimental ways of working in the search for innovation, as PARC's John Seely Brown explains:

“The PAIR program – the PARC Artist-in-Residence program – is one of the ways that PARC seeks to maintain itself as an innovator, to keep its ground fertile, and to stay relevant to the needs of Xerox. The PAIR programme invites artists who use new media into PARC and pair them with researchers who often use the same media, though often in different contexts. The output of these pairings is both interesting art and new scientific innovations. The artists revitalise the atmosphere by bringing in new ideas, new ways of thinking, new modes of seeing and new contexts for doing.”

(in Harris 1999:xii)

While PARC exploit the creative processes of artists, artists internationally are exploiting the potential offered by new technology as a new media for making new forms of art. Many of these examples reframe the view of artists as producers of art objects to be ‘contemplated’ by the ‘audience’¹³. Instead, they require active involvement through participation and interaction as Beryl Graham’s (1997) Ph.D. thesis studying audience relationships with interactive computer-based visual artworks in gallery settings has shown. However for PARC, the artist-in residence program was less concerned with the production of ‘artefacts’, than in attempting to document and understand “the process of the collaborations and to provide insights into the cultural setting” (David Biegelsen in Harris 1999:30).

2.3 Approaches to Collaboration In Other Fields

Within the current climate influencing increased interest in collaboration, practitioners, thinkers, theorists and organisations are recognising the

complexity of achieving successful collaboration. Whilst the desire to collaborate is there, the understanding of the characteristics and qualities of the process is lacking. As Bennis (1997:196) illustrates in his attempt to describe the quality of the collaborative process:

“Some alchemy takes place that results, not only in a computer revelation or a new art form, but in a qualitative change in the participants. If only for the duration of the project, people in Great Groups seem to become better than themselves. They are able to see more, achieve more, and have a far better time doing it than they can working alone.”

Bennis' view of collaboration supports Kelley's definition of a process of “transformation” (*section 2.1*). Approaching collaboration from a Psychology perspective, Vera John-Steiner's (2000:196) investigation of “creative collaboration” recognised that “most of the literature on shared cognition focuses on cognition at the expense of the relational dynamics of collaboration”. John-Steiner's recognition of the *dynamic* quality of collaborative processes is widely supported (Bennis 1997, Gray 1989, Huxham 1996, Mattessich & Monsey 1992, Schrage 1995, Winer and Ray 1994).

In this section, a review of available literature identifies different approaches to describing and understanding the *dynamic* qualities of “creative” collaboration (*section 2.3.1*). Different methods of identifying and describing the characteristics and qualities of the collaborative process in order to recognise and develop practical and successful collaborative strategies are also reviewed (*section 2.3.2*).

2.3.1 Understanding the Dynamics of Collaborative Innovation

The recognition that collaboration is a dynamic process, dependent upon fluid processes of creative innovation, rather than structured processes of shared working, is widely acknowledged (Bennis 1997,

Gray 1989, Huxham 1996, Mattessich & Monsey 1992, Schrage 1995, Winer and Ray 1994). In this section models and metaphors developed to describe the dynamic, relational qualities of collaboration are reviewed.

Conducting research into inter-organisational forms of collaboration, Huxham (1996: 82) recognises in the search for “collaborative advantage” that “in terms of texture rather than structure, collaboration is a distinct mode of organising”, and goes to describe the mode of organising as:

“...an intense form of mutual attachment, operating at the levels of interest, intent, affect and behaviour: actors are bound together by the mutually supportive pursuit of individual and collective benefit.”

These qualities inherent in collaboration, demand a new perspective of shared working, as Huxham (1996:96) describes:

“Explicit ground rules cannot substitute for trust which results from shared experiences of expectations met. The discovery and articulation of shared beliefs and values about conduct can, however, help to promote a sense of inclusion, of predictability or dependability, and of unequivocalty in relationships, all of which as Ring and Van de Ven (1994) have noted, are fundamental pre-requirements for continuing motivation and commitment.”

Huxham has modelled inter-organisational collaborative processes by illustrating the ‘dimensions’ of relationships occurring between key stakeholders and the role of a neutral and ‘trustworthy’ facilitator in the collaborative process. Bennis (1997:196) has equated the quality of relationships between collaborators to that of “a marriage”. Similarly,

Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School, uses the metaphor of *personal relationships* to understand four crucial development stages of inter-agency business partnerships¹⁴:

1. **Courtship** - shared needs bring potential partners together.
2. **Formal Plans** - individual and shared aims and objectives are negotiated and specific roles are established.
3. **Housekeeping** - partners learn to get on together by developing communication skills.
4. **Long-term Development** - the partnership is developed by the creation of new ways of existing together.

While Kanter's first three stages resemble collaboration, stage four highlights a shift of emphasis from a *dynamic* to a more formalised partnership relationship occurring over a long period of time. Schrage (1995:29) also recognises that "collaboration is like romance; it's difficult to define the precise boundaries of the relationship". However, unlike a long-term 'marriage', or 'partnership' collaboration is a "*purposive*" relationship, formed in response to "a desire or need to solve a problem, create, or discover something within a set of constraints". Thus, Schrage defines an intensive and 'deep' relationship that lasts only for the duration of time it takes to achieve that initial purpose.

Organisational management consultants Winer and Ray (1994:26) define collaboration as a "mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organisations to achieve results they are more likely to achieve together than alone". They go on to clarify the dynamic quality of the relationship through the metaphor of a "journey", which they describe as "a *destination*, toward which *travellers* move together on a *road* they build". Their metaphor implies not only a physical, or practical, *destination* (collaborative outcome), but also an

equal process of learning through the **process** of the *journey* (building relationships between collaborators).

Educational practitioners, thinkers and theorists Bray et al (2000:138) have developed a model of collaborative inquiry, which “as a learning and research tool is particularly important in these years of radical change in the workplace, in education, and in societal values”. Based on John Dewey’s pragmatist theories of learning through reflection on experience, Bray (2000:20-21) and colleagues acknowledge, “the role experience plays in learning is relevant to understanding the practice of collaborative inquiry”, and further describe the learning process of collaborative inquiry as a:

“...reciprocal relationship between action and reflection in transforming activity into meaningful experience, coupled with the validation of experience that the nature of the observable consequences”.

This, they recognise, is a dynamic process, with the principal aim of achieving new knowledge. John-Steiner’s (2000:196) investigation of “creative collaboration” borrows Ludwik Fleck’s (biologist and social scientist) term “thought communities” to analyse the psychological dynamics of collaboration:

“I have used the term “thought communities” to refer to experienced thinkers who collaborate with an intensity that can lead to a change in their domain’s dominant paradigm.”

John-Steiner recognises collaboration involves “dynamic, changing processes”, and develops a circular matrix to illustrate various forms collaboration can take (*Fig. 2.1*), whilst recognising that “collaboration often starts as one pattern and over time changes into another pattern”. John-Steiner’s matrix classifies different forms of collaboration by: the

relationships between collaborators (*distributed, complementary, family, and integrative*); their shared values (*similar interests, overlapping values, common vision and trust, visionary commitment*); their methods of shared working (*spontaneous and responsive, discipline-based approaches, dynamic integration of expertise, transformative co-construction*); and their individual roles (*informal and voluntary, clear division of labour, fluidity of roles, braided roles*). When read in concentric circles, the combinations of: types of relationship, values, working methods and roles, suggest a 'deeper' level of collaboration, as a process of 'mutual transformation', occurs closer to the centre of the circle. In this central pattern of collaboration, forms of radical development, or 'collaborative advantage' offered by collaboration (Bennis 1997, Gray 1989, Huxham 1996, Schrage 1995) are realised.

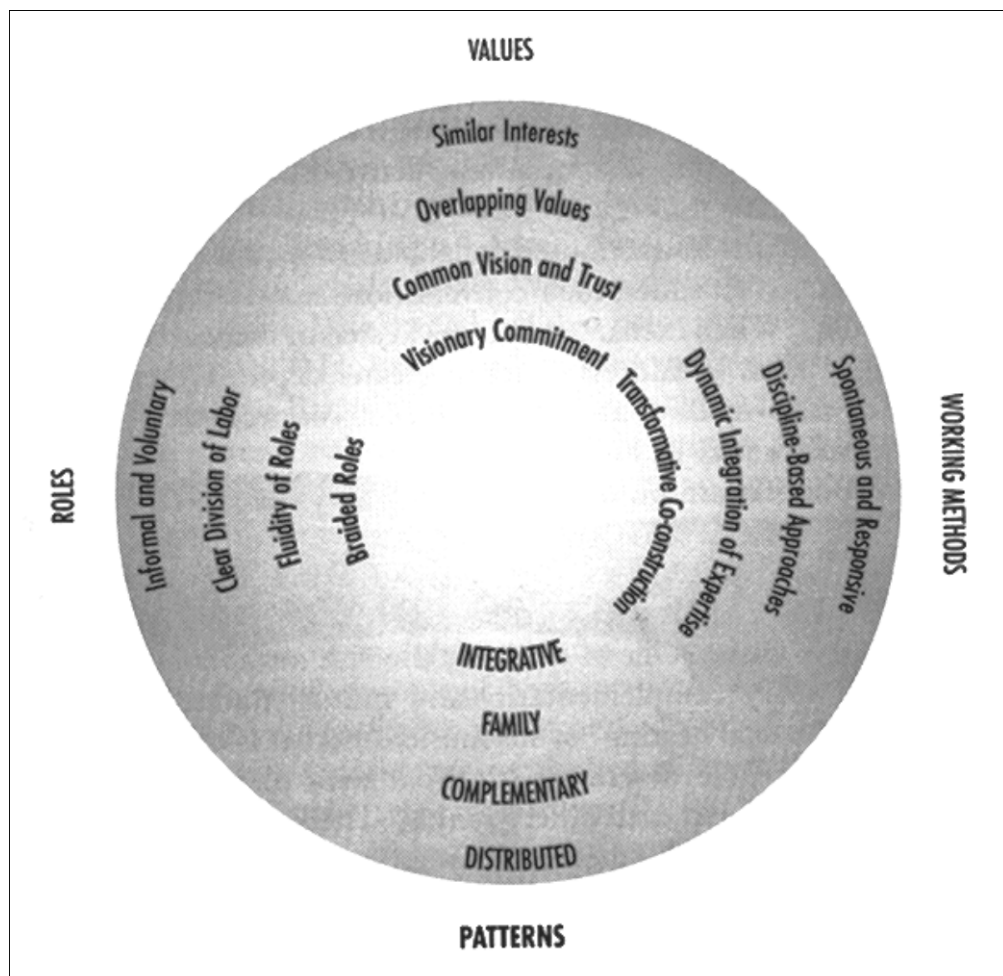


Figure 2.1 John-Steiner's Four Patterns of Collaboration (2000:197)

The examples reviewed in this section illustrate conscious attempts to develop new metaphors, analogies and terminology with which to describe and understand the particular qualities of dynamic collaborative relationships and processes, in a 're-conception' of traditional ways of operating. However, an understanding of the dynamic quality of collaboration alone is not sufficient in providing successful strategies for collaboration, as Gray (1989:54) illustrates:

"In order to capitalise on the potential, we need to understand much more about the fundamental assumptions underlying collaborative processes and the practical dynamics of how these processes unfold and can be managed."

2.3.2 Collaborative Strategies: Towards a User Guide

It is recognised that achieving successful collaboration is difficult (Bennis 1997, Gray 1989, Huxham 1996, Mattessich & Monsey 1992, Schrage 1995, Winer and Ray 1994). In this section, some approaches to 'modelling' collaborative strategies are reviewed.

Bennis (1997:197-215) presents fifteen observations of what makes successful collaborative groups "Great Groups". Schrage presents a matrix on which 'high' or 'low' levels of "technical" or "conceptual" forms of collaboration can be placed. However, his main contribution is his 're-thinking' of communication at the core of collaborative processes. Schrage (1995:94-95) suggests that linear forms of conversation are not appropriate and presents a model based on "shared space" in which "the shared space becomes a frame of reference, a medium, as much as a collaborative tool" and further suggests that "it becomes a collaborative *environment*", in which:

*“Symbols, ideas, processes, sketches, music, numbers, and words can be put into the shared space to be expanded, organised, altered, merged, clarified, and otherwise manipulated to build these new meanings. **It takes shared space to create shared understandings.**”*

Winer and Ray (1994) break down their metaphor of a “journey” into four stages: the first involves individuals talking to envision a collaborative result; the second stage involves individuals approaching organisations to empower themselves and gain backing; the third stage requires collaboration between organisations to involve stakeholders and achieve results; whilst the fourth and final stage involves collaborating with communities to sustain the results achieved. They also describe common difficulties and pitfalls faced at each stage of the journey. Similarly, but with a different approach, Huxham (1996:37:40) presents a twenty step “user-friendly guide to the collaborative process” aimed at community-generated collaborations.

Developing a methodology of “collaborative inquiry”, Bray et al (2000: 13) recognised “a need to provide a general map of the process and a need to avoid suggesting a fixed structure that defeats the intention of collaborative inquiry”. They developed a four-phase map (*Fig. 2.2*) to depict four major phases passed through and identified “the major issues, choices or options, and activities that are likely to arise”. The shaded section of the diagram suggests the start of a new subject of inquiry as the process repeats itself cyclically.

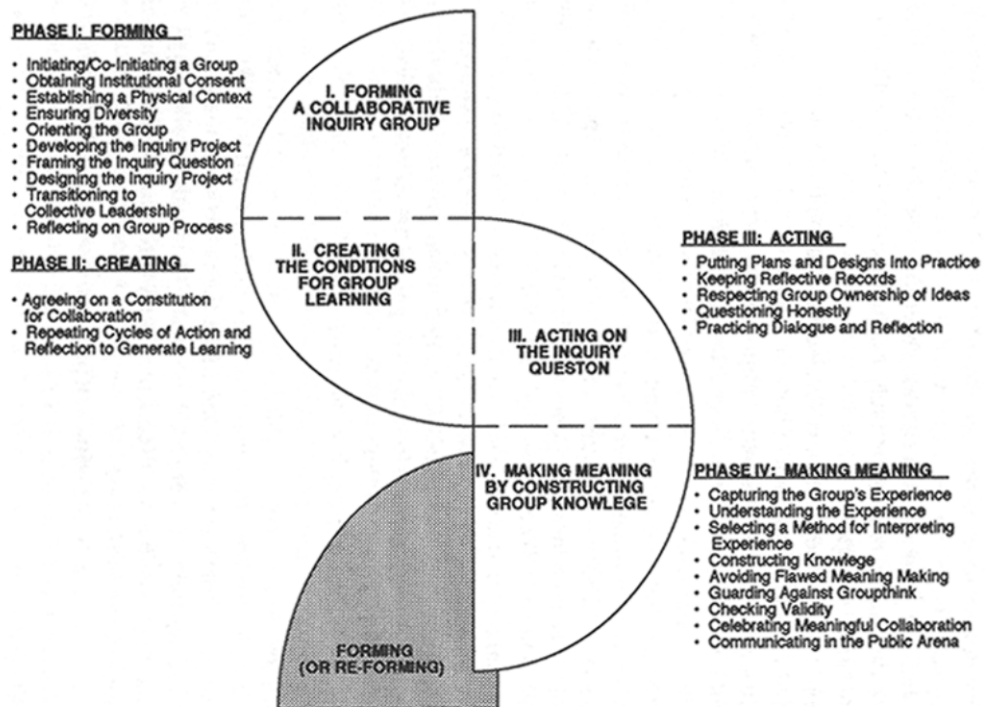


Figure 2.2 Four-Phase Framework of the Collaborative Inquiry Process, created by Bray et al (2000:14)

The most systematic analysis of collaborative processes found in this review, was that undertaken by Mattessich & Monsey (1992) in America. Having identified the limitations of adopting a case study approach to investigating collaboration¹⁵, Mattessich & Monsey undertook a cross-comparative analysis of sixty-two cases of collaboration. They identified nineteen key factors influencing the success of collaboration, which they grouped into six categories: **environment**, **membership**, **process/structure**, **communications**, **purpose**, and **resources**. Each factor was rated in terms of the number of times it was raised in each individual case study.

This example, along with the others presented in this section and (section 2.3.1), demonstrate conscious and concerted efforts in a variety of fields to develop successful collaborative strategies in response to the current changing environment and cultural landscape. In the examples reviewed, the intention has been to understand collaboration

better by identifying and describing the qualities and characteristics of successful collaborative processes and to attempt to make that information available for use by others, by modelling its key stages, whilst warning of pitfalls and difficulties that may be encountered.

2.4 Collaboration In The Visual Arts

Although no similar, British systematic doctoral studies of collaboration in the visual arts have been found in the course of this review¹⁶, artists **are** collaborating. What is influencing artists' 'need' or 'desire' to collaborate? How is collaboration influencing their ways of working? How do they perceive the quality of collaborative processes? Where can the evidence of the characteristics of collaboration and/or collaborative models be found? In this and the following sections, some answers to these questions are sought from a range of different forms of art practice and available literature. Firstly, this section addresses the key issues that collaboration raises in relation to 'traditional' perspectives of individual creative practice.

2.4.1 Rethinking Individual Creative Practice

It is a little-contested fact that the dominant traditional perception of art practice is of artists' developing individual creative processes and aesthetic styles, or 'signatures'. However the accuracy of this perspective is questionable, as artists have developed a range of creative strategies involving the participation, co-operation, or interaction with others, since the 1950s (Cameron 1984, Hobbes 1984, Green 2001, McCabe 1984, Shapiro 1984). However, art historical and critical approaches to documenting and evaluating artwork, have tended to employ aesthetic criteria, and have neglected the methods of production, or processes, of artists until relatively recently¹⁷.

It is not the intention in this review to undertake a complete historical survey of different forms of art practice throughout the twentieth century, nor to adopt an art criticism approach to individual case examples of

collaborative art practice. Rather, it is the intention to review a broad and diverse range of practices to identify areas where collaboration is most evident and most prominently discussed (sections 2.5, 2.6, and 2.7), and to raise key issues posed by collaboration. Therefore, the issue of individualism in art is addressed in relation to how it has consciously positioned artists as separate to other fields and disciplines in society. Art Critic Erich Fromm's idealisation of "the artist's spontaneity" argues that "while spontaneity is a relatively rare phenomenon in our culture", there are (cited in Kuspitt 1993:6):

"individuals who are – or have been – spontaneous, whose thinking, feeling and acting were the expression of their selves and not of an automaton. These individuals are mostly known to us as artists. As a matter of fact, the artist can be defined as an individual who can express himself spontaneously"

In reply, art critic Donald Kuspitt (1993:6-7) challenged Fromm for "attribut[ing] a monopoly on free will and self-integration to the artist", and criticised the view of the "creative artists' self-expression as the model for spontaneous activity", which he argues has been the dominant criteria of value placed upon the 'avant-garde artist':

"he is more spontaneous – primordially expressive – than anyone else because he is more absolutely integrated than anyone else, and he can experience in a more primordial way than other people because his sense perception is not bound by symbolic functioning. It is because the artist is spontaneous in the face of an environment asking him to conform to it that he is able to sense reality in all its presentational immediacy."

Thus the artist's individual 'freedom' to create is what separates him/her from other areas of society, and distinguishes him/her from other 'ordinary' individuals. Thus value is placed on the individuals 'freedom' to undertake self-determined creative activities.

In McCabe's (1984:15) *'Artistic Collaboration in the Twentieth Century'*, she attempts to redress the dominant view of individual creative production by illustrating that "artistic collaboration has been a vital component of avant-garde development". However, art critic Charles Green has criticised her attempt, suggesting it "demonstrat[ed] the ubiquity rather than the significance of collaboration" (2001:xv). Green's criticism is well-founded in that McCabe's contribution does not place collaboration in a clear theoretical position in relation to twentieth century art production and critical debates. However, he does not acknowledge the importance of one of the first publications directly attempting to critique collaborative forms of art practice (collaborations between artists). The value of McCabes contribution is that it evidences art critics' difficulties in finding appropriate languages and critical frames of reference to describe and classify these practices, both in relation to their aesthetic merit, and their situation within wider critical debates and cultural themes (Hobbes 1984, Shapiro 1984).

Green (2001:xv) finds Irit Rogoff's catalogue essay titled 'Production Lines'¹⁸ more relevant in that it:

"identifies a positive strain in art criticism through which collaboration can be viewed of as an "extension" of the field of art, thus demonstrating the ineffable inventiveness of the human spirit."

Green (2001:xv) recognises that:

“Modernist artists worked in revolutionary collaborations and subversive collectives, but these projects were invariably recuperated in the literature by the cult of individual genius”.

And supports Rogoff’s suggestion that:

“...collaborations be seen as highly significant practices within both modernism and postmodernism, because the practice of subjugating the individual signature is a paradigmatic interrogation of artistic production”

Similarly, Green (2001:x-xi) proposes that “collaboration was a crucial element in the transition from modernist to postmodern art and that a trajectory consisting of a series of artistic collaborations emerges clearly from late 1960s conceptualism onwards”, and further suggests:

“A study of artistic collaborations is a telescope onto a larger study: that of a shift to a new understanding of artistic identity that emerged from modernist notions of artistic work – both radical and conservative – and progressed toward alternative and quite extreme authorial models, a long way from the simple paradigm of the single lone artistic originator and creator. The process problematizes straightforward suppositions about both artistic identity and the origin of postmodern art.”

These views all demonstrate the challenges presented to mainstream institutional art discourses, by questioning the concept of individual creative authorship. However, critics, artists and writers situated outside of the populist mainstream artworld have arguably already challenged and deconstructed the dominance placed on the individualism of the artist as a criteria of value in the visual arts (Lacy 1995, Felshin 1995, Gablik 1984 & 1991, Kester 1998a, Allan Kaprow: Kelley, J. (Ed.) 1993,

Miles 1989 & 1997). In response to practices that have moved out of the traditional gallery (and therefore, their dominant discourses) and into social contexts, critics, artists and writers are seeking to develop new and relevant critical frameworks in which to evaluate their practices, in response to pragmatic need. Studying artists' creative processes and methods of practice in public contexts, public artist Susannah Silver (2000:i) identified that:

"...the moment artists step out of the familiar and professional domain of the gallery system into the public realm and engage directly with social and topographical culture, their very identity as artists is called into question."

Silvers' statement might equally accurately read:

*"...the moment that artists step out of the familiar and professional domain of the gallery system into **projects with other professionals** and engage directly with social and topographical culture, their very identity as artists are called into question".*

While the recognition that traditional institutional discourses are not suitable measures of value for such practices is evident, it is less evident how new values should be framed.

2.4.2 Collaboration: A Question of Values

In 1984, David Shapiro (in McCabe 1984:45-57) suggested "we must establish a theory of collaboration to counteract some of the more extreme Romantic and modern versions of individual creation". Shapiro looked towards systems theory, to define "collaborative cultural modes" as " 'open systems' with feedback mechanisms for correction and anticipation of the future", in order to highlight the dynamic and "de-centred"¹⁹ nature of collaborative processes, and in an attempt to define

a “pluralist aesthetics”. Shapiro also suggested “collaboration is one of the surest means to expropriate the myth of origin and authenticity” and that “the sense of collaboration is one of a systematic appropriation and denigration of originality and isolation”.

If collaboration does break down the ‘old values’ of artistic originality and authenticity, the question is: What values can be applied to understanding and evaluating collaboration in the visual arts? Art critic and theorist Suzi Gablik (1991) has suggested a need to develop a new set of criteria for visual art, which are built on the values of interconnectedness” and “social responsibility”. In moving out of gallery settings into social contexts, and in involving others in their creative process, the *processes* and *products* of art practice are challenged, as artist and writer Allan Kaprow (in Kelley (Ed.) 1993: 39-40) suggested:

“Once the artist is no longer the primary agent responsible for the artwork but must engage with others...the artwork becomes less a ‘work’ than a process of meaning-making interactions.”

‘Process-based’ work has been evident in the visual arts for over thirty years. Arts writer Jeff Kelley (in Lacy 1995:147) posits that experimental process-based practices have created a foundation for collaboration:

“The terrain of collaboration has been tentatively mapped since the sixties by artists and architects interested in exploring the social and ecological landscapes that lay beyond the range of formalist canons.”

Kelley (in Lacy 1995:45) also suggests that:

“Processes are also metaphors. They are powerful containers of meaning. You have to have people who can evaluate the qualities of a process, just as they evaluate the qualities of a product.”

The question Kelly raises then, is how we develop values to understand and evaluate collaborative work, when the process itself is central to the creative practice?

Recently, artists, rather than critics, have become interested in collaboration. Critic and arts writer David Barratt (1996:64) recognises that while ‘the artist’ may still generally be perceived as “a solitary figure following an ‘inner vision’”, that “artists rarely see themselves in this light”. He goes on to suggest, “the ‘radical’ act of collaborating has not been considered radical for at least 35 years. So why is everybody suddenly doing it again?” Artist David Macintosh (2000:12) supports this view suggesting that collaboration is ‘mystified’ by critics and that “in other walks of life, collaboration is uncomplicated: people are always making business agreements to set up partnerships”. Whilst many artists’ motives to collaborate may be driven pragmatic, and professional need, arts writer David Butler (2000) also suggests, “the motivation for collaboration involves stretching boundaries, redefining artists’ roles and reshaping the engagement between ‘art’ and ‘audience’.” Butler identifies a challenge in finding an appropriate way to address collaboration:

“But many artists and curators pay homage to these aspirations and operate a collective approach to the presentation, and often production of work. Can you distinguish this from ‘collaboration’? Should you try?”

However, he goes on to recognise that “*what needs to emerge from the growing interest in collaboration is a discursive rather than*

an anecdotal discourse – exemplified through the work and critique". How do we rise to Butler's challenge, when artists work with others in such a variety of ways, and when the qualities and characteristics of collaborative processes tend to remain imbedded in the tacit experiences of individual practitioners?

The following three sections address different forms of collaboration evident across a wide and diverse range of visual art practices. The intention is not to undertake detailed critical evaluations of particular examples of work, but to identify and summarise key issues and questions raised by these different forms of collaboration and to identify relevant areas of debate.

2.5 Collaboration Between Artists

Collaboration between artists appears to reflect a common and recognised form evident in the visual arts. They tend to emerge out of existing relationships, friendships, or through existing professional networks, and they reflect the common interests and philosophies of practice between individual artists. Examples of collaborations between artists are found across a wide range of practices and are traceable through the literature of mainstream art publications (magazines, exhibitions, artists statements and exhibition catalogues). In this section, two forms of collaboration are addressed: *creative collaborations between individuals* (section 2.5.1), and *collaboration in artists groups, collectives and organisations* (section 2.5.2).

2.5.1 Creative Collaboration Between Individuals

Collaborations occurring between artists are possibly the most commonly recognised and 'accepted' forms within the artworld²⁰. They have attracted interest from writers and theorists both from the visual arts and other fields (Bennis 1997, Chadwick & Courtivron 1993, Green 2001, John-Steiner 2000, McCabe 1984, Schrage 1995, Walwin 1997). In mainstream art criticism emphasis is primarily placed on the products

produced, rather than the particular characteristics and qualities of the collaborative processes.

McCabe's review of "artists collaborations" in the interwar period attempted to acknowledge the level of collaborative activity occurring between artists, which had previously been overlooked in favour of critiquing the *products*, rather than the *processes* of production. While her contribution questioned the historical emphasis placed on 'individual authorship' in art practice, it did little in terms of characterising or defining the particular collaborative *processes* of the selected examples.

Cameron (1984:85) recognises that artists collaborations emerging in the 1960s were "earmarked by improvisation, a working situation which practically required the presence of two or more persons working together" and provided "a principle for extending the artist's grasp into the unknown" as one *method* of developing 'art forms' in this period:

"...collaboration joined ranks with a myriad of other proto-stylistic possibilities that were just as flexible in the degree to which they could be applied to concerns of the moment."

Green (2001:69) recognised, that from the early 1970s onwards, commercial and institutional artworlds were broadening to include gender and social critiques, which created a "more opportunistic cultural space". Many artists responded by "coming out" and acknowledging their long-term collaborations publicly²¹. Thus, artists collaborations were more 'acceptable' within mainstream art criticism.

Green's (2001:xii-xv) study of collaboration in the visual arts from the early 1970s divides examples of artists' collaborations into three categories: the first group reflects collaborations in early conceptual art²², the second group reflects "collaborations based on a long-term, lifetime commitment and thus at couples and family units"²³, and finally

“artistic collaborations where artists identified their collaboration as their art”²⁴. Green recognised that the artists’ “works, in part because of their collaborative production, have been difficult to categorise”. The focus of Green’s study was a “need to unravel the enigma of alternatively constituted “authors” and their link to the crisis of artistic representation, which is also a crisis in artistic intention”. Adopting historical/art critical methods of analysis, Green’s study presented a descriptive and interpretative account of ‘cases’ of artists’ collaborations, rather than a comparative analysis of characteristics and qualities of collaborative processes. As a result, Green still placed emphasis on the art products, rather than the collaborative processes.

In summary, collaborations occurring between artists are evident in a wide range of practices (e.g. gallery exhibitions, to environmental, public, activist art practices). They tend to emerge from an identification of similar individual interests, conceptual ‘leanings’ or ‘stylistic’ concerns. Most collaborations occurring between artists are founded on already-existing friendships or personal/familial relationships, where trust and common understanding are present, and many develop into long-term partnerships²⁵. Whilst these relationships are central to their creative process, they tend to be *implicit* rather than *explicit*, with emphasis on the issues/processes/qualities of the artwork produced.

2.5.2 Artists Groups, Collectives, Cooperatives and Organisations.

Critic Dan Cameron, suggests that collaboration has often been “mistaken for artists moving in packs”. There are many examples of artists groups, collectives, cooperatives, where artists organise themselves within a group support structure, or adopt a group artistic identity²⁶. Often forming for similar motives to the partnership model, such as shared interests, personal relationships, mutually supportive networks and support structures, the ability to take on larger projects than could be achieved individually, and the development of a strong group identity, artists collectives tend to involve more than two artists

and tend to have more *formalised* methods of shared working and collective decision-making.

Artists groups and collectives often reflect a particular, shared ideology and create their own professional networks, which sit in relation to, but outwith the mainstream arts infrastructure institutions²⁷. Italian Art Critic Achille Bonito Oliva's (2002:15) recent critical and historical analysis of 'art tribes' describes groups of artists which have "voluntarily or involuntarily revived the typical strategy of tribes, common mental attitudes and lifestyles based on a common identity", but without homogenising individual differences, "groups of artists, but not anonymous collectives". The group is formed to support and provide opportunities for individual artists, whose singular identities, methods of working, and 'signature styles' remain intact.

Throughout the nineties in Britain, there has been an increase in the numbers of artists groups, organisations and collectives. Artists took control of the methods of promotion and distribution of their artwork, rather than relying on curators, critics and institutions. Writing on the increase of the artist-led organisation phenomenon in Scotland, Malcolm Dickson airs a sense of disillusionment with artist collectives' loss of an 'ideological position'²⁸, suggesting that:

*"the function of artist-led spaces is pragmatically grounded in the psychology of self-assertion and self-improvement – attributes commonly acquired after the de-education of art school"*²⁹.

Artist, writer and arts consultant, Susan Jones (1996) undertook a comparative case study of sixteen artist-led groups, collectives and organisations in Britain. Addressing the reasons and conditions influencing the formation of these groups, Jones uncovered some of their motivations and values, and categorised two main approaches:

- a) “groups in which individual activity is enhanced or supported through a group structure”
- b) “groups where collective activity supersedes individual activity”³⁰

Jones identified that the latter category was less common than the former. Jones’ research has been key in evaluating forms of practice that pragmatically employ varied forms of collaborative, participatory and cooperative processes, and which are situated outwith existing institutional frameworks. Jones uncovered complex issues relating to the current economic and political climate influencing the growth of artist-led initiatives and explored diverse strategies adopted to locate artists’ practices within this climate³¹.

It is difficult to summarise the characteristics of such a broad range of approaches to artists’ self-organisation and forms of practice. Some groups adopt an informal structure, whilst some are more formally constituted. In some groups, artists maintain their individual artistic identity, whilst some work under a collective group name. Thus the level of engagement between collaborators (whether collaborative, cooperative, participatory) is reliant on factors such as how well they know each other, whether they are bringing specific skills to a project, or whether they are engaging equally in achieving common goals.

The emphases on process and/or product vary depending on the reasons for working together and the nature of the practice or project. In the professional context, the artworks tend to be critiqued in relation to the quality and characteristics of the artworks, rather than those of the shared working relationships. Groups may evolve, dissolve or reform under different identities, with some lasting longer than others. Artists tend to either know each other beforehand, or get to know one another through the group network. Although collaboration may not be a specific aim within artists’ groups and organisations, a certain amount of trust is

either already present or is developed within the group, as participants already share some values or common ground.

2.6 Collaboration in Contemporary Public Art Practices

Since the mid-nineties, there has been a rapid growth in critical debates relating to artists' processes in public contexts (Finkelppearl 2001, Felshin 1995, Hinchcliffe 2000, Jacob et al. 1995, Jones 1997b, Kester 1998a, Lacy 1995, Miles 1989 & 1997, Selwood 1995, Silver 1999). In such debates, collaboration arises as a common theme, along with issues of artists' roles, relationships with 'audiences' and the nature and value of public artworks produced.

Cameron (1984: 86) identified that artists working in non-art contexts and with non-artists presented a 'truer' form of collaboration:

“Working with other artists and working with people (or forces) outside the artworld would seem to be relatively interchangeable situations, except that the latter concept has described collaboration much more accurately.”

Artist and theorist Susanne Lacy (1995: 35) has developed a critical framework to understand and evaluate what she has termed “New Genre Public Art”. Lacy clarifies the non-traditional 'relational' qualities of this approach to public art:

“All art posits a space between the artist and the perceiver of the work, traditionally filled with the art object. In new genre public art, that space is filled with the relationship between artist and audience, prioritised in the artist's working strategies.”

She goes on to suggest that for some artists “the relationship is the artwork” and recognises that “the skills needed for this relational work

are communicative in nature, a stretch for the imaginations of artists and critics used to the monologic and studio-based model of art.”

This section addresses two main issues/areas of debate arising from contemporary public art practices, in relation to collaboration: art practices that are ‘dialogic’ and which create ‘relationships’ (*section 2.6.1*), and re-conceptions of traditional art/artist/artwork roles and relationships (*section 2.6.2*).

2.6.1 Dialogic Practices And The Creation Of Relationships

A key area raising a critical dialogue to address ‘dialogic’ art practices in public contexts, is that of “Littoral art practice”³². Celia Larner and Ian Hunter (2003) of Projects Environment UK describe ‘social’ and ‘ecological’ ethics of Littoral practices, which are addressed by artists:

“Through a process of dialogue, reciprocity and collaboration, and by becoming fully absorbed in the complexities and instabilities of community life and social processes, the artists attempts to mesh their creativity and imagination seamlessly into the broader survival strategies of the communities which live with and own the problems.”

Whilst not all contemporary public art practices follow the “ecological imperative” (Gablik 1991) of Littoral practices, the importance of the role of dialogue in public art practices adopting collaborative, cooperative, and participatory processes of working, is widely recognised. In many public art practices, the term ‘collaboration’ is used to describe the ‘dialogic’ interactions between the artist and public (audiences).

However, while *dialogue* is recognised as a *crucial* component of these practices, *collaboration* is not, although it is a frequent undercurrent. There is criticism that the relationships formed between artist and participating public audiences are not genuinely collaborative as they

tend to have unequal and unbalanced roles. Tom Finkelpearl (2001:281-283), Program Director of PS1 Contemporary Art Centre in New York, describes “dialogue-based art or education” as “a balancing act between ‘cultural invasion’ on the one hand and mere reflections of popular values on the other hand”. He also suggests, “there is nothing inherently good about collaborating with an audience. If one is to collaborate, it needs to be done with caution and respect”. So how does one develop processes of dialogue that can enable ‘cautious’ and ‘respectful’ collaboration?

Finkelpearl’s recognition that “dialogue is not a means to an end, but a process, an ongoing project of intersubjective investigation” (2001:283) begins to describe the **learning** process of collaboration. Kester (1998b) has gone further and developed a “critical framework for littoral art” based on the characteristics of a “discursive aesthetics”. In Kester’s concept of a ‘discursive aesthetics’, the process of discourse:

“...would locate meaning ‘outside’ the self; in the exchange that takes place between two subjects. Moreover, the identities of these subjects are not entirely set, but rather, are formed and transformed through the process of dialogical exchange...the open-ended process of dialogical engagement, produces new and unanticipated forms of collaborative knowledge.”

Kester’s critical framework suggests that Littoral art is evaluated in terms of the how well it reflects the *quality* of the discursive relationship between “collaborators”. Kester thus situates Littoral art in opposition to traditional aesthetic criteria, positioning it instead in the spaces that occur “between discourses” and “between institutions”. However, his approach is theoretical and political rather than pragmatic. Therefore, he does not explain full *how* such discourses are developed and how they are made ‘aesthetic’.

2.6.2 Redefining Art/Artist/Audience Roles and Relationships.

The perception of the artist producing artifacts, to be placed in a gallery, to be contemplated by a viewing public, has been challenged in a number of areas including Performance Art, Activist Art, Public Art and Interactive Art (Dickson 1995, Felshin 1995, Graham 1997, Jacob et al. 1995, Hinchcliff 2000, Kaprow 1968, Kelly 1993, Lacy 1995, Miles 1989 & 1991, Ross 2001, Silver 1999). Lacy (1995:37) proposes that in New Genre Public Art practice the relationships formed with potential ‘viewers’ or ‘audiences’ are important (if not central) to the practice:

“One of the distinguishing characteristics of the work...is the factoring of the audience in the actual construction of the work. This work activates the viewer – creating a participant, even a collaborator.”

The value of Lacy’s contribution, in relation to collaboration, is not the suggestion that artists can “collaborate” with audiences; but the redefinition of the term ‘audience’ and investigation of how new conceptions of ‘audience’ also challenge the *role* of the artist. Lacy (1995:178) has modeled a new perspective of ‘audiences’, which include all those who contribute in the production of the work at different stages and at different levels (*Fig. 2.3*).

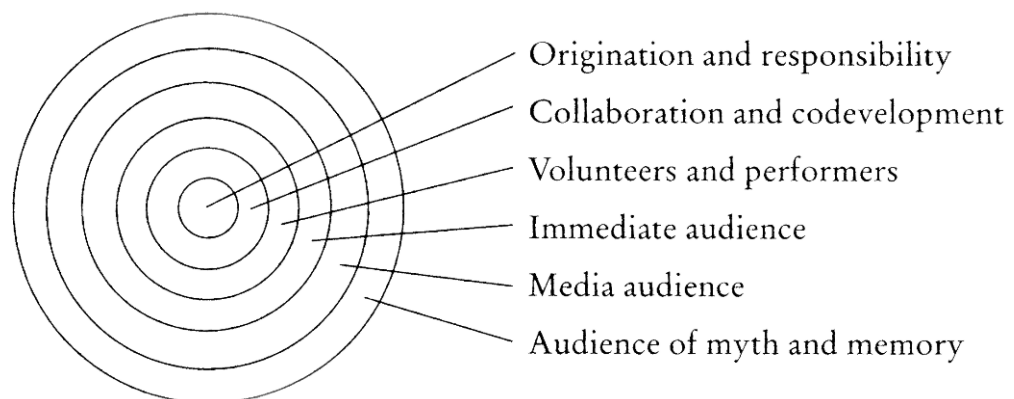


Figure 2.3 Suzanne Lacy’s evaluative model for New Genre Public Art Practice based on categories of ‘audience’. (in Lacy 1995:178)

Lacy's model represents different levels and stages of involvement through a diagram consisting of six concentric circles. At the center are those who are responsible for the conception of the work (normally where the artists would be placed), then the collaborators, co-developers or shareholders who have invested in the project and share a sense of ownership in it. Next are the volunteers and participants, "those about, for, and with whom the work is created", and then the immediate audience, "those who have a direct experience of the artwork". The "media audience" includes those who read about the work through documentation and publications, whilst the "audience of myth and memory" are those whose experiences of the work are passed on through the community.

Lacy's model is useful in distinguishing between different types and levels of engagement, in order to distinguish 'less equal' forms of participation (for example that of the volunteers and immediate audience), with the 'more equal' involvement of the collaborators and co-developers nearer the center. Lacy's model raises the question: in 'true' collaboration (where co-collaborators conceive a project together) do collaborators become part of the artists' 'audience', or do they become 'equal artists'? Or, from another perspective, does the artist lose the role of 'artist' and become a part of the collaborative project's 'audience'?

The reasons for initiating collaboration in these forms of public art practice are dependent upon the artists' intentions, the issues relevant to the work and the context in which they occur. Levels of engagement vary, depending on the level of control that the artist maintains over the final product. Audiences may participate or interact in a structure pre-defined by the artist, or the artist may prefer a more developmental, response to the context.

These forms of practice are 'socially-engaged' and tend to position visual artists as public 'issue-raisers' and "art as an instrument for

change”³³. Lacy (1995: 40) has noted, “in finding new ways to work, artists have drawn on models outside the arts to reinterpret their roles”³⁴. By focusing on processes of creating relationships, placing dialogue at the centre of art practice and broadening the definition of ‘audience’, the collaborative and participatory forms of public art demonstrate a search for new *methodologies* of art practice.

2.7 Interdisciplinary Collaboration and the Visual Arts

Examples of practices where artists collaborate with others from different disciplines are less clearly or critically documented, as Paula Brown Principal Combined Arts Officer of the London Arts Board acknowledges (cited in Walwin 1997:8):

“Inter-disciplinary collaborative practice has emerged as one of the most significant art form developments of recent years. Yet it has received negligible critical attention, a situation compounded perhaps by the apparent temporality of both the work itself and the collaborative partnerships which create it.”

At the heart of the concept of interdisciplinary collaboration in the visual arts, are the issues of methodology on the one hand and of the visual arts interface with culture on the other. How do visual artists, whose education and professional arts practice have largely followed the development of individual strategies of practice, work *with* others? How do artists contribute as co-collaborators and how are their potential roles and contributions understood, both by the artists and their co-collaborators from different fields?

Although *interdisciplinary* collaboration is perceived as a relatively ‘new’ phenomenon in the visual arts, there are close associations between the fields of the visual arts and Architecture, Science and Technology. In this section, collaborations between Art and Architecture (*section 2.7.1*), Art and Science (*section 2.7.2*), and Art and Technology (*section 2.7.3*)

are addressed. In *section 2.7.4*, the search for new models of interdisciplinary collaboration is addressed through the main example of ‘Curious’ (an interdisciplinary research project).

2.7.1 Art and Architecture

The disciplines of Art and Architecture have a long history of close association. American writer, educationalist and culture consultant, Barbaralee Diamonstein (1981:12) recognises that in the 1880s and 1890s, artists and architects “shared a common ground of understanding on which to base their collaboration”. However, this close connection was seen to separate throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as the practices of artists and architects became more specialised and separate, as Diamonstein illustrates:

“If architects and artists are alike in sharing a sense of certitude about their work, in priding themselves on possessing a singular vision, they are about as different as can be in their ways of achieving their goals. Perhaps it is this dissimilarity of method that has been at the root of the historical difficulty in achieving genuine collaboration between artists and architects.”

In spite of the differences between these disciplines, there has been a concerted effort to ‘re-connect’ them through exploring collaborations between artists and architects since the 1980s (Diamonstein 1981:13) :

“Collaboration forces a new role on the artist who not only is used to working alone but whose work is often a detached, idiosyncratic comment – or attack – on society. The architect is more used to collaboration but is very much accustomed to being in charge. Being part of a true cooperative partnership is a new role for the architect as well.”

Diamonstein's study of eleven collaborations between artists and architects identified three categories of collaboration (1981:91):

- Collaboration as “a series of variations on the traditional relationships between architect and painter or between architect and sculptor”.
- Collaboration attempting to “create a new relationship between architect and artist, one in which the work of the artist and the architect is more equal than is traditional, and where there is less of a separation between building and work of art”.
- Collaboration called “visions of the city”, in which “the artist and architect have collaborated on a concept... Neither the architect nor the artist is playing an accustomed role, and the collaboration is on the idea itself rather than on individual elements of the project.”

In the latter category, where artists and architects were “free from their customary patterns of work” Diamonstein recognised that “the nature of the collaboration can be completely new”, whilst also acknowledging that “both architects and artists need to develop more experience of the give and take required by such collaboration” (1981:95). This highlights the need for openness on both parts in order to achieve the ‘mutual transformation’ offered by collaboration. Although the willingness for openness in collaboration might be present, “the mind sets of the artists versus the architect are different”, as Diamonstein recognises, “though it is not easy to analyse how or why” (1981:162).

More recently, architectural professional bodies and educational institutions have supported further debate on the potential for artist and architect collaborations³⁵. Architect Richard M^{ac}Cormac (1997:9) attributed the recent increased interest in collaborations between artists and architects to “the expanding arena of ‘public art’ and, at a deeper level, this exploration of new contexts and media”, which he suggests,

“may be a manifestation of a more general tendency for artists and architects to explore new territories”. However, although acknowledging shifts in practices created by a ‘context-specific’ approach to real places, he suggests that the main issues of collaboration are:

“...less about context and more about personal attitudes, motives and commitments necessary to successful collaborations and to crossing frontiers. Shared vision, open mindedness, recognition of another’s unexpected creativity are frames of mind that artists and architects need to cultivate...”

M^{ac}Cormac’s focus addresses the nature of the collaborative *process* occurring between artists and architects (their individual “frames of mind” and particular perspectives and approaches) in order to achieve mutually beneficial collaboration, which “tends to reward new relationships rather than nurture existing ones”. Claire Melhuish (1997:28) supports M^{ac}Cormac’s view of ‘mutually-transformative’ collaboration. In an article exploring the dynamics of collaboration between artists and architects, she emphasises the pragmatic aims of such approaches:

“Although there are people who would support the idea of collaboration for its own sake, this seems to suggest an investment which has little relation to the real basis of collaborative relationships: a coming-together of minds, with a desire to pursue common interests for the sake of the work and the role it might take up in society.”

Although connections and common ground between the disciplines of art and architecture are widely recognised, collaborations between artists and architects are neither considered ‘simple’ nor

'straightforward', but raise challenges and difficulties for both parties. Melhuish (1997:28) recognises that:

"For artists who have made the passage from the studio into the public domain, the exchange of solitude and 'total control' for the collaborative relationship and compromise...is often a shock and a challenge, but is also very stimulating."

Whilst collaborating architect, Cezary M. Bednarski, and artist, Peter Fink, recognise different difficulties faced by architects in the challenge of negotiating equal collaborative roles and creative ownership:

"...discussion of the issue of collaboration seems to cause real difficulty all round... Architecture is highly dependent on the active exchange of ideas, knowledge, skills and of labour. However, the critical issue of who leads, when and how, and who dominantly shapes this process is not often discussed in any depth, as architects are accustomed to be nominally in charge."

(Bednarski & Fink 1997:71)

Although collaborations between architects and artists are increasing, the issues of difference, in both language and methodology, require further exploration as artist Nathan Coley attests in the RSA Art for Architecture Award Scheme evaluation document³⁶:

"...there is very little of a common language between artists and architects. This should not be seen as a negative statement, but rather as an acknowledgement of difference and therefore the very reason why collaboration between artists and architects can, at its best, be fascinating and rewarding."

2.7.2 Art and Science

While art and architecture collaborations share some common ground, collaborations between art and science are less common as the two disciplines have traditionally been viewed in directly opposite positions. Whilst science has been concerned with reductive and verifiable facts ('positivistic'), the visual arts have been situated in the 'grey areas' of experience, interpretation, and expression ('post-positivistic').

However, collaborations between artists and scientists do occur, and the bridge between the respective disciplines can be crossed. An example is the "Invisible Project", which consisted of a collaboration between artists James Turrell and Robert Irwin, and psychologist Edward Wortz, undertaken in 1969³⁷. The three collaborators shared overlapping interests in the ways in which people experience environments, but from very different perspectives.

Their collaboration consisted of a variety of conversations and experiments, but produced no final artefact, recognisable as 'art'. Their collaboration began by "playing games" together, "games in which we all take common positions and experience them together and talk about them" in order to "[see] how each deals with the experience, how each extracts information – what kind, how we order and structure it to use" (Robert Irwin, cited in Furlong 1994:163). As a result of the conversations and experiments undertaken through the collaboration, all collaborators believed the collaboration to have been successful. However, as art critic William Furlong (1994:161) observed, "they struggle to explain why, falling short each time, but the effect of the their interaction is clear".

Although no visible products were produced, all had been in some way 'beneficially transformed' through the collaborative process, as Edward Wortz surmised, "everything is still the same as it was, but it's different" (in Furlong 1994:161).

More recently, concerted efforts have been made to bring art and science closer together through collaboration. A notable example is The Wellcome Trust's 'Sci-Art' initiative in London (1998). Providing funding for twelve collaborations between artists and scientists through a national competition structure, the 'Sci-Art' initiative was an experimental approach to see what benefits might emerge from 'sci-art' collaborations. Dr. Claire Cohen's evaluation of the initiative recognised its success, whilst highlighting the difficulties that artists and scientists encountered. Cohen's (1998) main conclusions are summarised:

- The main perceived benefit of the sci-art collaborations was that they “encourag[ed] and enabl[ed] scientists and artists to explore viewpoints and methodologies outside those to which they were most accustomed”.
- Although artists and scientists were “eager” to collaborate, their enthusiasm was “not matched by the ease by which they can do so, nor yet by the ease and comfort they have in communicating with each other once they do”.
- Many artists and scientists “were keen to step outside their own disciplinary boundaries but had to overcome numerous obstacles to do so.”
- Issues relating to communication between collaborators raised the question of “*perceived inequalities* and even ‘gate-keeping’ of important information”.

Cohen's evaluation highlights that while collaborators perceived clear benefits, achieving successful collaborative *processes* presented a significant challenge. Cohen (1998:30) concluded that further research into strategies for ensuring successful collaboration was needed:

“...to discover how artists and scientists work together, the way they tackle difficulties in the partnership, and to investigate what input, if any, may be needed from ‘the outside’ in order to ensure that the partnership is successful”

2.7.3 Art and Technology

Academic, Marga Bijvoet’s research into the connections between Art, Science and Technology, and the collaborations occurring between them has posited a view of art as an equal contributor in the ‘practice’ of interdisciplinary, collaborative ‘inquiry’. Bijvoet’s (1997:5) view is based on the recognition that:

“Although it may seem at first sight that there is no continuity between the Environmental Art and the Art and Technology movements of the late sixties and the nineties’ developments in Art in Public Places and the Media Arts, which now include the new Virtual Reality and Cyber Arts, both have their roots in this period, for it is the search for a new context which connects the two periods.”

Bijvoet also recognises that in finding new contexts for practice, artists have also sought different functions for ‘art’, and “art is no longer made from the point of view that it is something autonomous and separate from society”. Furthermore, Bijvoet highlights “a gradual change from a display of simple processes and systems towards works displaying a multi-layered complexity” (1997:237).

Bijvoet’s observations are based on a broad review of examples of varied practices from the sixties through to the nineties³⁸. Drawing parallels and highlighting differences between these two periods, she warns that the experimental practices bringing together art, science and technology in the 1990s “will remain faint reminiscences of the conceptual art expressions of the seventies, if they do not question the

existing concept of art from the start” (1997:237). Furthermore, Bijvoet suggests that if artists rise to the challenge and re-invent our concepts of ‘art’, that “maybe we will then see a change in the modernist concept of art itself happening at the end of this century; a true change in paradigm” (1997:241).

2.7.4 The Search For New Models

The search for new paradigms of art practice, which are interdisciplinary and collaborative, and which “[question] the role of the artist at the end of the twentieth century” (Brind 1999:viii) (as Marga Bijvoet requested), are evident, and are contributing to the growing research culture in the visual arts. However, the platforms for these debates are still relatively disparate.

One example of a conscious attempt to engage artists in new interdisciplinary contexts is that of visual arts Projects, in Glasgow. Between January 1998 and November 1999, the project ‘Curious’ supported five Artists’ Research Fellowships, providing an opportunity for the artists to work within a variety of ‘host’ organisations and institutions³⁹. The artists involved engaged in different levels with the disciplines and individuals ‘hosting’ them and developed varying levels, or degrees, of cooperative, participatory and collaborative processes⁴⁰. In an introduction to the project, artist and writer, Susan Brind, recognised that:

“Both within and beyond the fellowships...the boundaries separating the disciplines of geography, urban planning, science, medicine, ethics, art, architecture and politics have become less clearly defined and the points of interaction more dynamic.”

Evaluating the project, Brind (1997:vii) goes on to acknowledge that “without exception, the artists agreed that their own research became

most interesting in relation to each other's", and that revealed through the processes of collaboration, was "a surprisingly homogenous set of concerns between the different disciplines".

In relation to artists' engagement with other disciplinary fields, artist and writer, Pavel Büchler, posits:

"The more we overlap in our work with the practices of other fields – the more we trespass on others' territories – the clearer and more specific we need to be about our specialist identities and roles to get away with it."

(in Brind 2001:44)

However, practitioners' roles and disciplinary boundaries are not only being challenged within the visual arts. Artist and researcher Simon Yuill identifies an "increasing expansion of networks and of connections between networks...lead[ing] to a condition of convergence". Recognising a broader shift in perceptions of specialist and exclusive disciplines, Yuill (2001:1) suggests:

"The established boundaries...no longer hold. People consciously and unconsciously select different elements from across disparate disciplines to create new, hybrid and sometimes deliberately contradictory modes of practice – nonPractices. Practices which are in some sense outside of the established disciplines to which they relate, and yet which nevertheless operate through and because of them."

While Yuill suggests the promise of crossovers, collaborations and explorations into new territories, situated 'between' traditional disciplinary boundaries, the ease and/or difficulty in developing "nonPractices" is not addressed. Büchler (in Brind 2001:47) suggests that ability to be able to "trespass" disciplinary boundaries is dependent

upon the “*specificity of individuals*”, particularly in the visual arts, where the perception of artists as producers of objects has been deconstructed. However, arts and culture critic, Hal Foster, warns against a loss of disciplinary specialism. Foster argues:

“To be interdisciplinary you need to be disciplinary first – to be grounded in one discipline, preferably two, to know the historicity of these discourses before you test them against each other.”

(in Coles & Defert 1998:162)

Foster’s criticism of contemporary interdisciplinary practices is that, “many young people now come to interdisciplinary work before they come to disciplinary work”; a situation he believes often results in work that is “more entropic than transgressive”.

In the face of these valid arguments, collaboration appears to offer the potential for a happy marriage between ‘*individual specificity*’ and ‘*disciplinary specialism*’. Recognising the values of both, collaboration may not only suggest a redefinition of the roles and function of ‘art’, but might also evolve new types of relationships with new forms of professional disciplines and specialisms. For such a new paradigm of ‘interdisciplinarity collaboration’ to emerge would require a broad ‘re-framing’ of how disciplinary values to relate to others. As Brian Rance (speaking in relation to the relationships between the construction industries) highlights:

“Value systems can be described as a complex set of attitudes and beliefs which determine the manner in which professionals define their role and respond to the role definitions of other professional groups.”

(Muir & Rance 1995:25)

Therefore, the task for artists (and other professions) to ‘re-frame’ the roles and functions of their practices through interdisciplinary collaboration is a considerable one, but one which may reap valuable rewards, as artist Maurice O’Connell (in Brind 1999:20) suggests:

“It is as collaborators and supporters of change that I think artists are offered great potential. ...In the late twentieth century the tools of artists are no longer those understood as traditional. In the same way that the processes of encounter, conversation and even mediation have become the means of development within our society, so they have become materials to be used as a way of actively engaging an audience in the process of art. In such a system we are all, then, equally brokers, negotiators, mediators – or possible collaborators. It is not the products of our actions but the process of action that is increasingly important.”

2.8 Interdisciplinary Collaboration: a Methodology of Practice

In this section, the main conclusions drawn from this broad review of literature and examples of practice are summarised and evaluated. Through the process of undertaking the review, two different approaches to collaboration emerged: as a tacit method within existing practices, and as an explicit methodology consciously adopted by practitioners to ‘transform’, develop or ‘re-frame’ their existing practice. This distinction is explained in *section 2.8.1*. In *section 2.8.2*, a general summary of findings from the review is presented and current gaps in knowledge of collaboration in the visual arts are highlighted. The strengths and limitations of the review are evaluated in *section 2.8.3*.

2.8.1 Approaching Collaboration: as Method and as Methodology.

In the visual arts, the concept of collaboration was found to be complex as it poses a challenge to the notion of an artist as sole-producer of artwork. Although this notion has been challenged countless times, it is

a value that has been deeply imbedded within the educational and professional arts infrastructures throughout the course of the twentieth century. As the review illustrates, collaboration has also been defined as a *negative* process because of this (*section 2.1*), and (arguably) because of the negatively viewed connotation of 'compromise', which goes hand in hand with the idea of 'giving up' individual creative authorship.

These issues, coupled with an observation that in many cases, the term 'collaboration' is used interchangeably with other forms of shared working (such as partnership, cooperation, participation) but with little attention paid to the *qualities* of collaborative *processes*, led to the assumption that for some artists, collaboration is simply viewed as one **method** (amongst others) adopted within their usual practice.

This position was characterised by an emphasis placed on the *individual* artists' work and a lack of interest in discussing, or critiquing the nature of the collaborative *process*. Therefore, this perspective, whilst experienced by the researcher in the course of undertaking the research and entering informal conversations with a variety of artists, is neither fully represented nor critiqued in the review for two reasons: as these artists don't talk about the collaborative process, there is little published information available to refer to; and because the research addresses a *positive* approach to collaboration as a potentially beneficial and 'transformative' process of working for visual artists.

Thus, this second approach to collaboration, which is more evident throughout the review, is a more 'conscious' approach to collaboration, where the process is discussed explicitly and some attempts are made to find a critical language with which to evaluate its benefits, pitfalls and qualities. In this approach, collaboration is perceived not only as a *method* of working by individual artists, but rather as a **methodology** of practice that is consciously entered into with the intention of extending

and 're-framing' existing practices, or potentially developing new models. The following quote from Silver's (1999) Ph.D. thesis abstract illustrates the latter position:

"...a shift in practice towards a process-oriented and collaborative art practice within the strands of art practice in the public realm raises the question 'what is the practical contribution artists make to society?' which can only be answered by first understanding how artists work."

2.9 Conclusions Drawn from the Review

At the beginning of the research, it was the intention to address literature and examples of art practice that engaged interdisciplinary collaboration in order to inform the development of strategies for interdisciplinary collaboration in the exploratory research projects that were developed by the researcher. However, it quickly became apparent that the concept of collaboration was a complex one, particularly in the visual arts. The lack of a recognisable body of knowledge on the subject of collaboration in this field, led to a broadening of the scope of the review to address the concept of collaboration in relation to literature available from a range of different fields.

This approach has enabled **definitions** of collaboration; **current cultural conditions** influencing collaboration; approaches to **research into collaboration** in other fields; **key issues** and questions raised by collaboration in the visual arts; and examples of **different forms of collaboration** in the visual arts to be addressed and reviewed within a wider frame of cultural influences. A summary of the main conclusions drawn from the review is provided:

The review showed that in a variety of different fields, collaboration as a new approach to, and conception of, existing shared working practices

is both current and relevant. Interest in collaboration in other fields was principally influenced by: the complexity of contemporary society; the search for new paradigms of practice to replace traditional hierarchical models (such as team working); the need for new strategies of practice in order to 'keep up with' rapid technological development and change (*section 2.2*). These concerns were approached by addressing how collaborative relationships and processes could enable mutually beneficial outcomes, and supportive ways of working.

Attempts to describe the dynamic and transformational *qualities* of collaboration using appropriate metaphors and analogies were found. This demonstrated a desire, or need, to better understand the complexities of the *process* and to identify what distinguishes successful collaboration from unsuccessful collaboration. Particular emphasis on the ways in which collaboration reframed individuals' patterns of interaction and forms of communication was found. Concerted efforts to identify the main characteristics of collaboration, in order to develop successful strategies and models, which could be used by others, were also evident (*section 2.3*).

Reviewing collaboration in the visual arts raised the issue of collaboration's challenge to traditional individual creative practice, which suggested a need to review tacit values within the field (*sections 2.4 and 2.8.1*). This was an issue that was less relevant in other fields. Perhaps ironically, theorists, thinkers, writers and others interested in collaborative processes often cited examples of creative collaborations between artists (amongst others) as evidence of the creative and dynamic potential of collaborative forms of shared working. However, evidence of critical examples of literature or previous research directly addressing collaborative processes was less than in other fields.

Critical perspectives of collaboration in the visual arts traced the roots of collaboration to the experimental environmental, performative and participatory art practices emerging in the sixties.

Most of the literature re-addressing historical evidence of collaboration in the visual arts was principally by art critics and historians, rather than artists themselves. Critiques tended to place emphasis on the *artworks* produced in examples of collaboration, rather than the collaborative *processes*. Thus, discourses were theoretical, favored selected case examples (rather than detailed comparative analyses), or used historical and anecdotal information to address particular artists collaborative processes. Most of this literature primarily addressed collaborations occurring between artists (*section 2.5*).

Collaboration was identified as an undercurrent and common theme in debates and examples of contemporary Public Art practices. Much of the literature in this area arose through the critical practices of artists and cultural theorists, rather than 'mainstream art critics'. Key themes were identified in the emphasis placed on the art practice as a practice of creating 'relationships' (mainly with public 'audiences') rather than objects or 'artworks' in a traditional, aesthetic sense. These practices were mainly context-specific, situated outside of traditional gallery contexts, and were 'dialogic'. The importance of dialogue and communication at the core of these practices were evident and attempts to develop a critical framework for understanding and evaluating these 'dialogic' practices were evident. Much of the critical debate tended to concentrate on ethical, political and social issues relating to the artists role in society, the function of art practice in public contexts and the re-definition of 'audience' as an active participant in the creative process. Thus the traditional views of art/artist/audience were questioned. Whilst clear attempts to critically model and evaluate these forms of practice were evident, there was little thorough or cross-comparative analysis of

the particular characteristics of collaborative processes in this area (section 2.6).

Interdisciplinary collaborations between artists and co-collaborators from other disciplines were less frequent and less documented. Examples found tended to relate to specific issues of 'compatibility' between particular disciplines. However, in the literature and examples found, the collaborative *process* was more explicitly and critically addressed than in the previous examples (collaborations between artists and collaboration in contemporary Public Art practices). Key themes were: the relationships between collaborators, creative ownership and the negotiation of collaborators roles, and issues of difference (in language, methodologies and values). Also evident, were conscious attempts to create new, shared languages, methodologies and values. Mutual benefits and inherent difficulties in achieving an equal and transformative collaborative *process* were recognised. The conscious desire to develop new collaborative models of practice was also evident, although case exemplars of collaboration, rather than the characteristics of a transformative, mutually beneficial collaborative model were presented (*section 2.7*).

These strands of the review highlighted different levels of interest in collaboration, different approaches to investigating collaboration and different critical perspectives. The following gaps in current knowledge of collaboration in the visual arts were identified:

- Claims that collaboration in the visual arts emerged as a popular phenomenon in the 1960s, highlights omissions in addressing collaborative processes of practice in historical and critical documentation.
- Collaboration does not appear to be a phenomenon particular to any specific area of the visual arts. However, there is little

evidence of critical debates addressing the specific nature of collaboration within discrete areas of art practice.

- Examples of collaboration between artists, collaboration in contemporary Public Art practices, and interdisciplinary collaboration were identified in the visual arts. However, only in the latter example was the collaborative *process* specifically critiqued.
- The term collaboration was used indiscriminately and applied to describe different forms of shared working in the visual arts (e.g. audience participation and interaction in Public Art practices). Therefore, definitions need clarification.
- In examples of collaboration addressed explicitly, as a potential new methodology of practice (e.g. interdisciplinary collaboration) for visual artists, collaboration was perceived as a mutually beneficial, transformative *process*. However investigations into the particular qualities of this process were specific to individual cases.
- Within the broad cultural context, research identifying and describing successful strategies for collaboration were evident. However in the visual arts, little research addressing the particular characteristics and qualities of collaborative processes, from a pragmatic perspective, were evident.

The review has clarified definitions of collaboration and positioned the research question within a broad context of cultural influences, and visual art forms. The research addresses current gaps in knowledge by further clarifying definitions of collaboration, developing practical strategies for engaging different forms of collaboration (through a series of research projects developed by the researcher), and identifying and

describing the particular characteristics and qualities of collaborative processes. The research methodology is explained, and specific research methods used are described in Chapter 3.

2.9.1 Strengths And Limitations Of The Review

The review has contributed an investigation of collaborative processes in the visual arts in relation to broad cultural influences and research in other fields. Current interest in collaboration and critical positions in the visual arts have been reviewed across a variety of different forms of art practice. The review has contributed to increasing clarification of definitions and critical perspectives of collaboration, and identified relevant issues and approaches to collaboration in the visual arts. In general, the review is considered successful in clarifying and unraveling some of the complexities of collaboration in this field. However, the following limitations are recognised:

- The broad scope of the review was considered necessary for reasons already described. Therefore, examples of collaboration in the visual arts were summarised rather than analysed more deeply.
- A simplification of forms of collaboration in the visual arts (collaboration between artists, collaboration in contemporary Public Art practices, and interdisciplinary collaboration) was considered necessary to gain a broad overview of instances of collaboration in the visual arts. As a result, full representation of the different positions and perspectives within each area of practice covered have not been represented.
- The depth of the review has been limited by the lack of literature addressing collaboration directly, from a clear critical and/or theoretical position.

Notes from Chapter 2

- 1 A search of the Allison (1992) Research Index of Art and Design was undertaken at the beginning of the research. No previous practice-led research addressing collaboration in the visual arts was identified. Since the start of the research, Silver's (1999) research into artists' generative processes in context-specific public practice in order to address the role of artists working in the public realm and Hinchcliffe's (2000) investigation of 'trans-disciplinary' models of good practice in public art practice within Birmingham in the 1980s and 1990s, have been found relevant as they recognise collaboration as a key strategy in public art practice of artists' roles when engaging with both public audiences and other professionals in social and cultural contexts. Ross' (2001) research into artists' collaborative, interactive and participative art practice in organisational contexts, was more directly relevant, although Ross used case study methods to look specifically at artists' roles within organizational contexts, rather than the characteristics of collaborative processes.
- 2 Ian Pollock and Janet Silk, 'Educating the Third Mind', featured in a special edition of *Afterimage: The Journal of Media Arts and Cultural Criticism* addressing Collaboration, New York: Visual Studies Workshop, Vol. 27, November/December 1999, p4. Ian Pollock and Janet Silk are American artists who have collaborated since 1992.
- 3 William Easton (1994) 'Collaboration and Other (Not So Scandalous) Plots', in *Fibrearts* magazine, Sept/Oct, pp45-9
- 4 Appropriation art was a form particularly evident in the 1980s, in which artists 'appropriated' objects and artworks and altered them to make new pieces of work. Critic Donald Kuspitt has critiqued appropriation art as, "a crisis in the sense of the purpose of art. It is the outward expression of an inner crisis. It implies creative bankruptcy, or the reduction of avant-garde creativity to an ironic game played for its own amusing sake. It reduces avant-garde creativity to a "fine disregard" for the old rules of art in order to make a new game." (Kuspitt 1993:107)
- 5 Dan Cameron (1984) 'Against Collaboration', *Arts Magazine*, March, pp83-87 Cameron gives the example of artist Julian Schnabel's "improvement" of David Salle's painting in the early 1980s: Schnabel painted over a gift given to him by Salle. Salle was outraged, and when the pair finally resolved their differences, the painting "Jump" was exhibited at the Mary Boone gallery. See also Thomas Lawson, 'Last Exit Painting', *Art Forum*, October 1981, pp 40-7
- 6 Cameron, *Ibid.*
- 7 David Shapiro, 'Art as Collaboration - Towards a Theory of Pluralistic Aesthetics 1950-1980', in McCabe, C.J (1984) *Artistic Collaboration in the Twentieth Century*, Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, pp45-62
- 8 Cameron (1984:83), see note 4.
- 9 Robert C. Hobbes suggested that artist Robert Morris "initiates a new type of collaboration that depends on viewer response", in his artwork 'Column' (1961), because "it causes viewers to reconsider the role of sculpture and the meaning of

Notes from Chapter 2 (continued)

art”, in his essay ‘Rewriting History: Artistic Collaboration since 1960’, in McCabe, C.J (1984) *Artistic Collaboration in the Twentieth Century*, Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, pp72 Similar claims have been made in art criticism debates, through the suggestion that artist, artworks, audiences and critics ‘collaborate’ in the production of art’s meaning.

- ¹⁰ In relation to the American organisational and business cultures, Gray (1989:29) cites the following six main influencing factors: “rapid economic and technological change, declining productivity growth and increasing competitive pressures; global interdependence; blurring of boundaries between business, government and labour; shrinking federal revenues for social programs; dissatisfaction with the judicial process for solving problems”.
- ¹¹ Schrage (1995) identified that whilst increasing communications technologies are being used in business to increase communication and enhance productivity, the expected effects were not always achieved. Instead, he discovered that communications technologies often highlighted more problems than they solved. He recognised that the increase in communication technologies in the organisational environment did not solve communication problems, but *increased* existing forms of communication. Thus, existing problems in communication were found to increase, rather than reduce. Schrage’s response was to address the way that individuals in organisations communicated.
- ¹² At Xerox PARC, Colab and Argnoter are two examples of software programmes developed to support collaborative brainstorming and innovation.
- ¹³ Use of new technologies has been a noticeable growth area in the Visual Arts throughout the nineties, as has regularly been showcased by the International Symposium of Electronic Art (ISEA), and key exhibitions, such as the annual ‘Digital Dreams’ conference in Newcastle (November 1996).
- ¹⁴ cited by Georgia Siora in ‘Shall We Dance??? Tips for Successful Partnerships’, an article in the Department for Education and Employment’s (DfEE) Higher Education Business Partnership Network newsletter, *Network News*, Edition 1, November 1997
- ¹⁵ “The problem with research on collaboration is that virtually every study employs only a case study methodology, not detailed empirical methods. Case studies are not amenable to the pooling of quantifiable data.” (Mattessich and Monsey 1992:43) Although it can be argued strongly that case study research methods produce valid data and knowledge, Mattessich and Monsey’s cross-case comparative “meta-analysis” is valuable in identifying common characteristics of collaboration from a broad and diverse range of case studies and is the only study found that has based its findings on such a wide and substantial pool of data.
- ¹⁶ However, Charles Green, artist, critic, lecturer and Australian correspondent for *Artforum* magazine, recently contributed a historical and critical account of collaboration in examples of selected artists practices from the early 1970s, in the publication (2001) *The Third Hand: collaboration in art from conceptualism to postmodernism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota press. Green’s publication evidences an increase interest in artists’ collaborations within mainstream art criticism. Green’s study “take[s] special account of collaborations that are not simply mergers of two “hands” into one and look instead at collaboration that manipulate the concept of signature style itself. (pxiii)

Notes from Chapter 2 (continued)

- ¹⁷ Arguably a seminal publication documenting a shift from artists production of products to artists development of processes was Lucy Lippard's (1973) *The Dematerialisation of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972...*, University of California Press. As artists became more concerned with processes of production, and developed more performance-based and participatory forms of artwork, the Art Historical approach to evaluation has shifted towards a more broad form of Art Criticism, in which cultural and contextual issues of class, gender, race, etc. are considered, as well as the 'aesthetic'. However, little critical attention has been paid to collaborative processes and that which has, has tended to remain in a marginalized position outwith the mainstream arts magazines and publications (see Felshin1995, Kester 1998a, Lacy 1995).
- ¹⁸ Irit Rogoff, 'Production Lines', in Susan Sollin's and Nina Castelli Sundell, curators and eds., *Team Spirit*, exhibition catalogue (New York: Independent Curators Incorporated, 1990:33-39), cited in Green (2001:xv)
- ¹⁹ Shapiro borrowed cultural theorist Gilles Deleuze concept of the rhizomatic and decentred, which are placed in direct opposition to hierarchic structures.
- ²⁰ Green identified (2001:201) "a small spate of survey articles of alternative modes of artistic work" in the main American art magazines and critical forums for art in the late 1980s and early 1990s. He also acknowledged, "although considerable critical attention was lavished on new British collaborations in the mid-1990s, they were rarely considered in terms of artistic collaboration".
- ²¹ Green cites the example of Christo and Jeanne-Claude.
- ²² Particularly, Joseph Kosuth, Ian Burn and Mel Ramsden's collaborations through the Art and Language group.
- ²³ Particularly, the Boyle family, Anne and Patrick Poirer, and Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison.
- ²⁴ Particularly, Gilbert and George, Marina Abramovic and Ulay, and Christo and Jeanne-Claude.
- ²⁵ For example; Jake and Dinos Chapman, Jane and Louise Wilson, Gilbert and George, Marina Abramovic and Ulay, Helen Mayer and Newton Harrison, Peter Dunn and Loraine Leeson, etc.
- ²⁶ For example; The Guerrilla Girls, Gran Fury, Group Material, Space Explorations, Those Environmental Artists (TEA), The Art of Change (Peter Dunn and Loraine Leeson), etc.
- ²⁷ Galleries, academic art institutions and funding bodies.
- ²⁸ Community arts groups and collective that formed earlier, in the sixties, had consciously adopted political/activist positions in opposition to the dominant aesthetic values of the mainstream art institutions.
- ²⁹ Malcolm Dickson (1998) 'Another Year of Alienation – On the Mythology of the Artist-Run Initiative', in McCorquodale, Siderfin & Stallabrax (Eds.) *Occupational Hazards*, London: Black Dog Publications Ltd., p84

Notes from Chapter 2 (continued)

- ³⁰ Jones, S (1996) *Measuring the Experience – a study into the scope and value of artist-led organisations*, Unpublished research , p47
- ³¹ Jones, S(1997) *Roles and Reasons: the scope and value of artist-led organisations*, Published by Susan Jones and distributed by AN Publications, Sunderland. Note: “Roles and Reasons” is a separate document, nevertheless clearly informed by Jones’ 1996 unpublished research, *Measuring the Experience – a study into the scope and value of artist-led organisations*. In *roles and reasons*, Jones summarises the complexity of the artist-led initiative: “The term artist-led organisation encompasses a diverse and complex range of activities and philosophical stances. It includes studio groups of all sizes, gallery spaces, groups concerned with community action, others focused on creating networks or increasing the market for their work, campaigning associations and the artists’ collectives generating collaborative art in public places projects. Some have lasted for many years, others grow up to challenge a particular set of circumstances and, having achieved their aims, metamorphose into something else.”p2
- ³² ‘Littoral’ is a geographical term describing the meeting point between sea and land between high and low tides. The term has been adopted by Projects Environment UK (Celia Lerner and Ian Hunter) to describe a form of art practice that is “about new ways of understanding and responding to the life world, where, increasingly, social, economic, and environmental problems are being redefined as an intractable ‘wild zone’ (Urry), resistant to conventional professional practice. These zones of complexity, uncertainty, underinvestment, marginality and social instability are where Littoral art attempts to gain a purchase.” Projects Environment describe the approach of the Littoral artist as “a problem structuring, as opposed to a problem solving approach; a search for complex situations which may eventually yield yet more creative problems on which to work”. They further describe the approach as “seamless working”, in which “the artist attempts to ‘disappear’, or ‘deprofessionalise’ themselves”, which they acknowledge is “one of the most contradictory and difficult aspects of Littoral practice”. (www.littoral.org.uk/background.htm)
- Third in a series of International ‘Littoral’ conferences, the conference ‘Critical Sites: issues in critical art practice and pedagogy’, was hosted by the Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Ireland in September 1998. this conference was organised by ‘Projects Environment UK’ in collaboration with Critical Access, Dublin. Projects Environment UK describe the “*Littoral Initiative*” as “an independent, international network of artists, critics and teachers with an interest in contributing to new thinking in contemporary art practice, art research and pedagogy”.
- ³³ Mary Jane Jacob cited in Lacy(1995: 53-4) for a review a public art projects by Jacob, see Jacob, M. J. et al(1995)*Culture in Action* Seattle:Bay Press
- ³⁴ Allan Kaprow has defined the artist as “educator”, Mary Jane Jacob defines the artist as “spokesperson”, Yolanda Lopez and Suzanne Lacy have defined the artist as “citizen”, Helen Mayer defines artists as “mythmakers in the social construction of reality” and Guillermo Gómez-Peña defines artists as “media pirates, border crossers, cultural negotiators and community healers”.
- ³⁵ For example, *Architectural Design* magazine (‘Frontiers: Artists and architects’, no. 128, 1997), discussion forums hosted by the Royal Academy of Arts, London (1997), and The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) ‘Art for Architecture’ award scheme, set up in 1990. There have

Notes from Chapter 2 (continued)

also recently been a number of conferences and symposia, such as: 'Sculpture in the City', Glasgow School of Art, October 1997; 'Art and Architecture: space, architecture and psyche', University of Bath, March 2000; 'Spaces: art and architecture', Dynamic Earth and Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, May 2000.

- ³⁶ See note 35. Evaluation document published by The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA), London, 1999.
- ³⁷ The project was initiated by the Los Angeles County museum in America, for the exhibition 'Art and Technology' (1970), curated by Maurice Tuchman.
- ³⁸ Examples include: the group Experiments in Art and Technology (EAT); Jack Burnham's 'systems theory'; Hans Haacke's approach to art as a 'social scientist'; Robert Smithson's concept of art as 'entropic phenomenon'; James Turrell's 'perceptual sculpture'; Nancy Holt's 'contextual site-works' relating to astrophysics; Robert Irwin's exploration of the 'hidden' structures of art; Alan Sonfist's and Helen Meyer and Newton Harrison's 'ecological' approach to art; and Nam June Paik's and Bill Viola's use of media technologies and video.
- ³⁹ This approach bears some similarity to the Artists Placement Group (APG) operating in the 1970s, where artists were placed in organisations and institutions and created art objects and/or processes in response to the particular context. However, 'Curious' had an explicit 'research' bias, as opposed to an 'art' bias.
- ⁴⁰ The artists and host institutions were: Christine Borland and The Medical Council's Social and Public Health Sciences Unit at Glasgow University; Wendy Kirkup and the Department of Geography and Topographical Science at Glasgow University; Thomas Lawson and RMJM Ltd in Edinburgh; Pat Naldi and the Remote Sensing Group, Department of Applied Physics and Electronic and Mechanical Engineering at The University of Dundee; and Maurice O'Connell and the Development and Regeneration Services Department of Glasgow City Council.

3. METHODS FOR INVESTIGATING COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIES

In this chapter, the rationale and principles underpinning the practice-led naturalistic research methodology are discussed (3.1). The three principal strands of inquiry (*collaboration in practice*, *collaboration in education*, and *case examples of collaboration*) are described (3.2), as are the specific research methods used to generate and gather data from within each strand (3.3). The development of an appropriate analytic framework is described (3.4) and the scope of the inquiry and the appropriateness of the methods adopted is summarised and evaluated (3.5).

3.1 Methodology: A Practice-Led Naturalistic Inquiry

3.1.1 The Academic Context of Art and Design Research

It is important to recognise the relatively recent development of practice-led research by practitioners in Art and Design, and to acknowledge the intense debates surrounding growth in this area, particularly over the past ten years¹. Debates have mainly addressed the *function* of doctoral research in relation to the professional and academic art and design contexts, the *ontological positioning* of art and design practitioners as researchers, and the *methodological* and *epistemological* questions of how practice can form a central methodology in formal academic research, and how knowledge acquired through practice-led research is valid and relevant to other practitioners.

These debates were particularly current at the outset of this research and have been a central concern throughout the research process, as they have been to all practitioners undertaking practice-led research in art and design. Julian Malins (Researcher and Reader in Design at Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen) acknowledged that:

“Undertaking research for a higher degree in Art and Design is a relatively new concept and for this reason research in this field is at a particularly dynamic and evolving stage. Methods and procedures will need to be revised and adjusted through feedback following the successful completion of future research.”

(Julian Malins, cited in Ross 2001:79)

Groundbreaking work both by individuals and institutions across the UK² has contributed to the development and articulation of appropriate methodologies for research in Art and Design. A number of successful Ph.D.s now exist in which individual artists and designers have developed and adapted research methods appropriate to their specific areas of study (Douglas, 1992; Wheeler, 1996; Graham, 1997; Pengelly, 1997; Bunnell, 1998; Silver, 1999; Hinchcliffe, 2000; Burt, 2001; Ross, 2001). Therefore, it is not the intention to recount the histories and debates on formal research methodologies in Art and Design within this thesis, as critical accounts are already available³. However, it is important to recognise that this research methodology of ‘practice-led naturalistic inquiry’ is built upon the foundations provided by such precedents.

3.1.2 Rationale for the Practice-led Naturalistic Inquiry

The practice-led naturalistic methodology used within this research is informed by ‘*post-positivistic*’ or ‘*new paradigm research*’ methodologies that have emerged as a means of deriving meaning from complexity from within the ‘soft’ sciences⁴, and the naturalistic methodologies developed and adapted by Bunnell (1996) and Silver (1999) in relation to *practice-led* Art and Design research (see section 3.1.3).

The following key considerations, identified in the early stages of this research, highlighted the need for a naturalistic and practice-led research methodology:

- No previous Ph.D. research projects addressing collaborative processes from the perspective of a visual art practitioner were identified.
- Collaboration is a complex phenomenon. A lack of available critical sources addressing processes of collaboration in Art and Design was identified through a review of literature and selected examples of art practice (see Chapter 2).
- Practice is a central strand within the inquiry (see section 3.1.3). Research projects engaging 'real' collaborators in 'real' settings required a flexible approach to the development of appropriate research methods.
- The researcher's direct experiences of initiating, participating in and evaluating collaborative processes are recognised as central to the process of developing appropriate research methods (see section 3.1.3).

Since no previous Ph.D. research addressing the development of collaborative processes in the visual arts was found to exist, no appropriate research methods were readily available for use in this research. Different understandings of collaboration identified in the contextual review (Chapter 2) uncovered the complexity of the term 'collaboration' as it is used in Art and Design practice. Collaboration requires the contributions of individuals within particular settings and is therefore highly specific, often complex and difficult to control. Therefore, to develop an explicit, informed and critical understanding of collaboration and its implications for visual art practitioners, the research needed to be sensitive and adaptable to the complex and specific nature of collaboration identified in the early stages of the research.

The practice-led naturalistic research design is a *qualitative* research framework, which enables a heuristic and explorative approach that is both flexible and responsive to the specificity and complexity of collaboration. Therefore, it is considered a suitable approach for describing and analysing

the complexity and ‘messiness’ of collaboration as it is experienced *directly* through practice. Throughout the research process, the continued identification of key issues and specific research questions occurred through an ongoing critical review of available literature, the researcher’s immersion within collaborative processes as a ‘*participant-observer*’⁵ within the research projects, and from an analysis of the experiences of other Art and Design practitioners engaged in collaborative practices. Thus, three main strands of inquiry were developed in order to uncover the *particular* qualities of collaborative forms of practice and address their implications in relation to visual arts practice:

- Collaboration in Practice
- Collaboration in Education
- Case Examples of Collaboration

These three research strands informed one another throughout the research. They are described in further detail in section 3.2 of this chapter.

3.1.3 Positioning ‘Practitioner’ and ‘Practice’ in the Research

Previous doctoral research by Bunnell (1998) and Silver (1999) provide examples of use of the naturalistic paradigm in practice-led Art and Design research. Integrating new technologies into designer-maker ceramic practice, Bunnell adapts Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) interdependent characteristics of naturalistic inquiry in relation to the particular field of contemporary ceramics. Equating designer-maker practice with Myhali Csikszentmihalyi’s inductive and cyclical model of creativity, Bunnell argues that the creative model, when situated within the naturalistic paradigm, locates the practitioner as researcher, thus validating practice as a rigorous research methodology. Illustrating the argument, Bunnell integrates Csikszentmihalyi’s model of creativity with Douglas and Moustakas’ (1985) three stages of ‘naturalistic’ research⁶ to construct a naturalistic, practice-led research model⁷.

Silver’s subsequent research into artists’ generative processes in public art practice also draws on Csikszentmihalyi’s model of creativity: in this case,

adapting it for use as a framework for analysing artists' tacit processes within Public Art practice. Silver's use of the naturalistic paradigm, develops the strategy of '*immersion*' (a strategy already familiar to her public art practice) within the research framework as a method of generating qualitative primary data from a live public art project, in order to make artists' tacit creative processes explicit. Silver adopts the role of '*participant-observer*'⁸, acting both as a participating artist within the 'Taming Goliath' public art project, and as a researcher employing qualitative research methods (such as transcribed interviews, artists' diaries and video documentation) to generate primary data from the artists' individual creative processes, which she subsequently subjects to detailed and systematic analysis.

Profiting from these examples' contributions to the development of a naturalistic and practice-led methodology specific to the growing field of Art and Design research, this research similarly adopts a naturalistic approach to research, although interprets the role of '*practice*' differently. Bunnell (a ceramist) validates her tacit creative process as a method for integrating and evaluating new technology in designer-maker practice through the adaption of Csikszentmihalyi's model of creativity. Her individual creative process is a central method for generating data throughout the research as well as a method for evaluating the integration of new-technology within designer-maker practice. Silver employs naturalistic research methods to make the tacit creative processes of individual artists (including herself) engaging in public art practice explicit. Although each example reflects different types of practice and research questions, both employ the use of tacit knowledge⁹ in relation to their *existing* creative practices, and in doing so, position their *individual practice* at the centre of the research methodology, through a critical and '*reflective*'¹⁰ creative practice.

This research also positions '*practice*' as a central strand of the research methodology. However, in this case, the '*practice*' is formed entirely *within* the research framework, and shaped the researcher's developing understanding of the nature of collaborative processes as the research unfolds. Therefore, the practice is *intentionally 'new'* and does *not* relate to

either the researchers' *individual* creative process or previous art practice, which are less relevant in than in Bunnell's model (where new technologies are integrated into her current ceramic designer-maker practice) and in Silver's model (where she locates her professional experiences of public art practice inform the subject of her inquiry).

This is not to say, however, that the researcher's tacit experiences of practice are removed from the research. The very premise for researching interdisciplinary collaboration within the visual arts is founded on the tacit knowledge of the researcher's experiences of being an artist and familiarity with the professional context¹¹. This research was based on the researcher's assumptions that collaboration might provide benefit for visual art practitioners, by:

- developing potential new roles for visual artists
- developing new potential new methods of visual art practice
- identifying potential new contexts for visual art practice.

These assumptions were founded on the principle that by working collaboratively with practitioners (particularly from disciplines outside the visual arts), visual artists could extend the traditional boundaries of the discipline and discover new ways of practicing beyond the dominant models supported by the existing professional arts infrastructure. In the early stages of the research, a critical review of available information addressing collaboration in the visual arts (see Chapter 2), identified two main perspectives on collaboration in visual art practice:

1. artists who approached collaboration as an existing method (amongst others) within their individual methodology of practice.
2. artists who approached collaboration as a conscious methodology of practice.

The differences between these perspectives are evidenced by how collaboration is approached in practice and discussed. In the first group, the

term 'collaboration' was used indiscriminately in relation a wide range of forms of interaction and engagement with other individuals throughout the process of creating an artwork, whilst in the second group, there appeared to be a more conscious effort to describe the process of working with others as a central principle (or methodology) of their practice. The qualities of collaborative creative processes have tended to remain imbedded within the experiences of the collaborators, in the professional arts context. Systematic and critical accounts of processes of collaboration in the visual arts were not available, and so methods of exposing and analysing the nature of collaborative process were developed throughout the research. This research attempts to fill an existing gap in knowledge by critically describing and analysing the characteristics, qualities and implications of collaboration approached as an *explicit methodology of practice*.

Throughout the research, the researcher's observations and assumptions about collaboration were consciously and critically reviewed through a series of research projects, which located the researcher's experiences of collaboration at the core of the research. The "knowledge in action"¹² gained by initiating, experiencing and evaluating collaborative processes, informed a critical understanding of the process and enabled the '*invisible*' and tacit nature of collaborative processes to be made *explicit* through the reporting of the researcher's experiences. Knowing 'what to look for' in the research projects was guided by the researcher's recognition that a collaborative process is qualitatively distinct from other forms of shared working (e.g. '*participation*', '*interaction*', '*cooperation*'), and from a continued critical reflection on the benefits and drawbacks of collaboration in relation to visual art practice. Lincoln and Guba recognise the use of the researcher's individual knowledge and experience as a guiding force in research design:

“..the advantage of beginning with a fund not only of propositional knowledge but also tacit knowledge and the ability to be infinitely adaptable make the human investigator ideal in situations in which the design is emergent; the human can sense out salient factors, think of ways to follow up on them, and make continuous changes, all while actively engaged in the inquiry itself.”

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 107)

The main research projects engaging collaboration have followed an emergent design, in response to the researcher’s developing understanding of collaboration as the research unfolded. Thus, the ‘practice’ of collaboration provides a central strand of the research (section 3.2.1), whilst research projects framing collaboration in an educational context (to observe students’ experiences of collaboration) (section 3.2.2) and interviews with selected visual art practitioners (engaged in collaborative forms of practice) (section 3.2.3), inform the research design and increase the validity of the research.

The ‘practice’ of collaboration and the position of the ‘researcher/practitioner’, which have been central in guiding the inquiry as it has unfolded, are continuously substantiated by cross-comparative analyses with research data obtained through these other strands. This has insured that the researcher has maintained a level of objectivity by continually reviewing direct experience of collaborative processes, with the experiences of other artists engaged in collaborative practice. Lincoln and Guba cite Rowan’s (1981) use of Hegel’s proposed levels of consciousness to illustrate the process by which the researcher develops qualitative knowledge: beginning with an emotional “one-sidedly subjective” view, moving to a “one-sidedly objective” view of what facts can be known, to a final stage of realisation, which is “objectively subjective”, as Rowan states, “enabling us to continually see the wood as well as the trees”¹³.

3.2 Overview: Three Principal Strands of Inquiry

In section 3.1 above, the three principal strands of the research were introduced. This section describes the specific function of each strand (*collaboration in practice*, section 3.2.1; *collaboration in education*, section 3.2.2; and *case examples of collaboration*, section 3.2.3) in relation to the objectives stated at the outset of the research (Chapter 1) and provides a visual overview of the chronological relationships between these three strands throughout the research (Fig. 3.1). The specific research methods adopted within each strand of the research are described in greater detail in section 3.3.

3.2.1 Collaboration in Practice

The aim of the research was to develop strategies for engaging interdisciplinary collaboration from the perspective of a visual art practitioner. Five research projects were developed to explore a variety of strategies for engaging collaboration with different collaborators, in different contexts and employing different methods. These research projects contributed in full to achieving the stated research Objective 2) to develop experimental strategies for engaging collaboration through a series of exploratory projects, and in part to the achievement of the stated research Objective 3) to identify and describe characteristics and qualities of collaborative processes.

In **Projects 1, 2, 3** and **4**, small-scale, experimental approaches to collaboration were developed to address specific aspects of collaboration. They involved one-to-one collaborations between the researcher and identified individuals. A comparative review of data obtained from these projects at the stage of transfer from M.Phil. to Ph.D., produced findings leading to the development of a more complex project engaging more collaborators, in **Project 5**.

Throughout the research, each project informed the development of the subsequent project by a process of heuristic modelling to address particular features of collaboration as key issues and questions were identified:

- **Project One** (*'Collaborative Drawing', July 1997*) developed methods of collaborative drawing to investigate the researcher's assumption that the quality of 'spontaneity' is often considered a prerequisite of collaboration in the visual arts.
- **Project Two** (*'Parklife', February 1998*) investigated qualitative distinctions between different forms of shared working (participation, co-operation and collaboration) through a public art project (situated in a Public Park) using a metaphor of 'people as sites', which was adapted from the construct of 'site-specific' practice in Public Art.
- **Project Three** (*'The Contract Book', November 1998 - April 1999*) investigated methods for negotiating 'mutual' engagement between collaborators through the mechanism of 'a contract', and using a metaphor of "inter-subjective space" (Kester, 1998) to describe a 'third' or 'shared' space created between collaborators.
- **Project Four** (*'The Kissing Card Game', July 1999 – January 2000*) further investigated the 'shared' space created between collaborators, this time using a metaphor of 'playing games', to develop strategies for structuring the equal input form collaborators. The concept of the 'game strategy' became both a method *and* a product of collaboration.
- **Project Five** (*'Re-Visioning the Gallery', January - August 2000*) investigated strategies for engaging a complex form of collaboration between practitioners from different disciplines. Collaboration was used as an interdisciplinary research method to 're-think' the roles and functions of a Public Art Gallery from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Methods for developing *common ground* between collaborators and *shared ownership* of the project were developed.

The researcher identified potential collaborators and enlisted their participation in the research projects in a variety of ways. As the researched progressed, questions of *who* the collaborators were, and *how* they were

approached became of central importance in evaluating the *level of engagement* achieved between collaborators:

- In **Project One**, Multi-Media Artist, Pernille Spence (previously known to the researcher), volunteered to participate in making series of collaborative drawings with the researcher.
- In **Project Two**, the researcher elicited different forms of engagement between members of the public, volunteers, and Aberdeen City Council and Park staff through a public art project in Aberdeen's Duthie Park. During the project, an unplanned collaboration emerged with research student, Lauris Symmons, (previously known to the researcher). With a background in Communications and interest in developing creative methods for eliciting 'oral histories' and narratives from members of the public (as part of her own research on the interpretation of communities), Lauris contributed to the design of the project as it unfolded.
- In **Project Three**, the researcher approached Art Historian and research student, Duncan Comrie (previously unknown to the researcher). Having identified a common interest in the work of artist and film-maker, Peter Greenaway, the researcher invited Comrie to collaborate in making an artwork.
- In **Project Four**, German Linguist Christian Zursiedel (previously known to the researcher) offered to assist with the research, out of a curiosity about 'what artists do'. The researcher used this opportunity to explore structured methods for engaging *equal input* in collaboration between an artist (the researcher) and an individual with little prior knowledge of the visual arts. Due to different nationalities, the theme of cultural difference was identified as an initial starting point.
- In **Project Five**, potential collaborators (all previously unknown to the researcher, with the exception of artist, Roxane Permar) were identified by the researcher through their specialist research interests and

expertise in the fields of Architecture (Professor Robin Webster), Geography (Dr. Mike Wood), Psychology (Dr. David Pearson) and Public Art (Roxane Permar). In response to an initiation from David Atherton (Cultural Services Education Officer, Aberdeen City Council) to undertake a project in the Aberdeen City Art Gallery, the researcher approached the individuals identified and invited them to participate in an *interdisciplinary research project* to ‘re-think’ the roles and functions of the Gallery from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. The project was deliberately *not* described as an ‘art project’ and the collaborators roles were not defined by the researcher.

These five projects provided the principal source for gathering and generating qualitative primary data. Detailed and descriptive accounts of each project are provided in the project reports (Appendix 1, p283). As the researcher developed a clearer understanding of collaboration throughout the research process, appropriate methods of data gathering and analysis were integrated into the design of the collaborative projects (specific research methods are described in section 3.3).

3.2.2 Collaboration in Education

A second strand of inquiry developed and evaluated collaborative processes developed by students of Fine Art in an educational context (Gray’s School of Art, Aberdeen). Having identified that collaboration within the visual arts presents an approach to practice which is essentially different to the model of *individual* art practice still largely dominant in tertiary art education, the researcher developed two educational projects to observe student’s experiences of collaboration within a clearly structured framework:

- **Project One** (*‘A Celebration of Being Human’, March – April 1998*) was undertaken with third year students from the Fine Art subject areas of painting, sculpture and printmaking. Forty-three students were divided into eight collaborative groups consisting of five to six individuals. The collaborative drawing method explored in *Collaborative Project One*,

was developed into a series of 'ice-breaking' workshops, which introduced the students to basic collaborative processes. Students then responded to a project brief titled 'A Celebration of Being Human'. The brief listed the following social processes as starting points from which to brainstorm ideas within the group: communication, movement, environmental hygiene, sensory seduction, commodities and the transfer of goods, spaces of reflection and contemplation, public and private, and traces of ageing. Students were encouraged to research their ideas in response to these themes within the context of the City of Aberdeen; thus moving their working processes outside of their usual individual studio environments.

The workshops presented the students with highly structured methods of collaboration, while the project brief provided a framework in which they could explore and develop their own methods of collaboration through experimentation. Although initially planned to run over one week, the project required rescheduling as a result of students' existing study programmes, and was therefore spread over seven weeks.

- **Project Two** (*'2nd Year Fine Art Project', November 1998*) was undertaken with second year students from the Fine Art subject areas of painting, sculpture and printmaking. Sixty-nine students were divided into twelve collaborative groups consisting of five to six individuals. The project ran for three weeks, with three days each week specifically allocated to the project. Students were asked to collaborate within their groups to produce mixed media work for exhibition. A project brief outlining the following objectives was issued:
 - 1) To develop ideas within a group
 - 2) To explore a range of different media and approaches
 - 3) To make artworks that combine individual elements from each group member
 - 4) To critically review both individual and group progress.

These projects contributed to the achievement of stated research Objective 3) to identify core characteristics of collaboration drawn from case examples and derived from experimental practice, by providing an opportunity to witness how the students developed their own collaborative processes and to evaluate the benefits and problems of collaborative art practice which they experienced.

The educational setting provided clear framework for observing the impact and implications of collaborative processes within a traditional Fine Art context, where a dominant subject-specific model of individual studio practice exists. Within these projects, the collaborations were tightly-framed by the project briefs issued to the students, and were therefore more simple and less 'messy' than the research projects undertaken within the *collaboration in practice* strand of the research (section 3.2.1), where wider influencing factors increased complexity of the collaborations. Therefore, the limited forms of collaboration that the educational context allowed is recognised. The main contribution to the research provided by this strand of inquiry was the opportunity to directly observe the impact and implications of collaborative processes within the traditional Fine Art context. Detailed and descriptive accounts of each project are provided in the project reports (Appendix 2, p377), and specific methods of generating and gathering data are described in section 3.3.

3.2.3 Case Examples of Collaboration

The third strand of inquiry addressed selected professional artists' experiences of collaboration within their own practices. The researcher identified practitioners who engage in different types of collaboration on a regular basis through their professional art practice. The researcher identified practitioners who were believed to be representative of the three main forms of collaboration identified in the contextual review (Chapter 2): *collaboration between artists*, *collaboration in contemporary Public Art practices*, and *interdisciplinary collaboration*:

- **Interview One** (15/7/2000) was conducted with Gordon Young at Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex. Gordon Young is a mid-career artist who collaborates with a broad range of individuals through a wide variety of projects. He underwent a traditional Fine Art education and practiced as an individual artist producing sculptures for public sites, before developing a project-based, interdisciplinary and collaborative methodology of practice. He was selected for interview because his working practice demonstrated a shift from individual to collaborative practice, and because he now practices entirely outwith an 'art' infrastructure (working mainly on public projects with City Council Planning departments, and specialists from a variety of different fields).
- **Interview Two** (20/7/2000) was conducted with James Mariott, a founding member of the collaborative 'arts' group 'Platform', at their London office. Platform (formed in 1983) are a core group of individuals from different backgrounds (playwrights, musicians, educationalists, artists, activists), who share the philosophical aim of bringing people from the arts and sciences together to create projects which address ecological and democratic issues. The group was selected for interview because they have developed an established interdisciplinary and collaborative methodology of practice over a number of years, and because individuals within the group operate within a collective, group identity. Their work is recognised and supported by the arts infrastructures as well as by other fields, such as science and ecology.
- **Interview Three** (1/9/2000) was conducted with Matthew Dalziel and Louise Scullion at Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen. Matthew Dalziel and Louise Scullion are both visual artists, and have been partners for number of years. From their personal relationship, a professional partnership developed as they began to collaborate to produce installation art. They now work in partnership all the time and their artwork reflects their shared interests and aesthetic. They have worked on large-scale public artworks, gallery-based installation and commercial multiples. Their work is recognised primarily within the current contemporary art infrastructures. They also work with other

individuals from different disciplines (including architects) on specific projects. They were selected for interview because they are both artists, and have developed a long-term partnership approach to working together, primarily within a visual art context.

The three interviews generated data from the interviewees' personal experiences of collaboration and contributed in part to the achievement of the stated research Objective 1) to identify and describe selected examples of collaboration in the visual arts, and Objective 3) to identify and describe characteristics and qualities of collaborative processes.

The research found that examples of collaboration in the visual arts were poorly documented, with little critical information available about the specific nature of the process (Chapter 2). This strand of the research uncovered data from artists' individual experiences of collaborative processes and highlighted key issues and core values within a collaborative methodology of practice. The interviews were undertaken in the latter stages of the research, when the researcher had developed a critical understanding of collaboration, in order to direct key questions relating to collaboration to the interviewees. The interview data was used to substantiate the findings identified through the research projects.

The three strands of inquiry outlined in this section (3.2): *collaboration in practice*, *collaboration in education*, and *case examples of collaboration*, are interdependent and informed each other throughout the research process. A simplified chronological overview illustrating the relationships between the research projects is presented in the diagram below (*Fig. 3.1*).

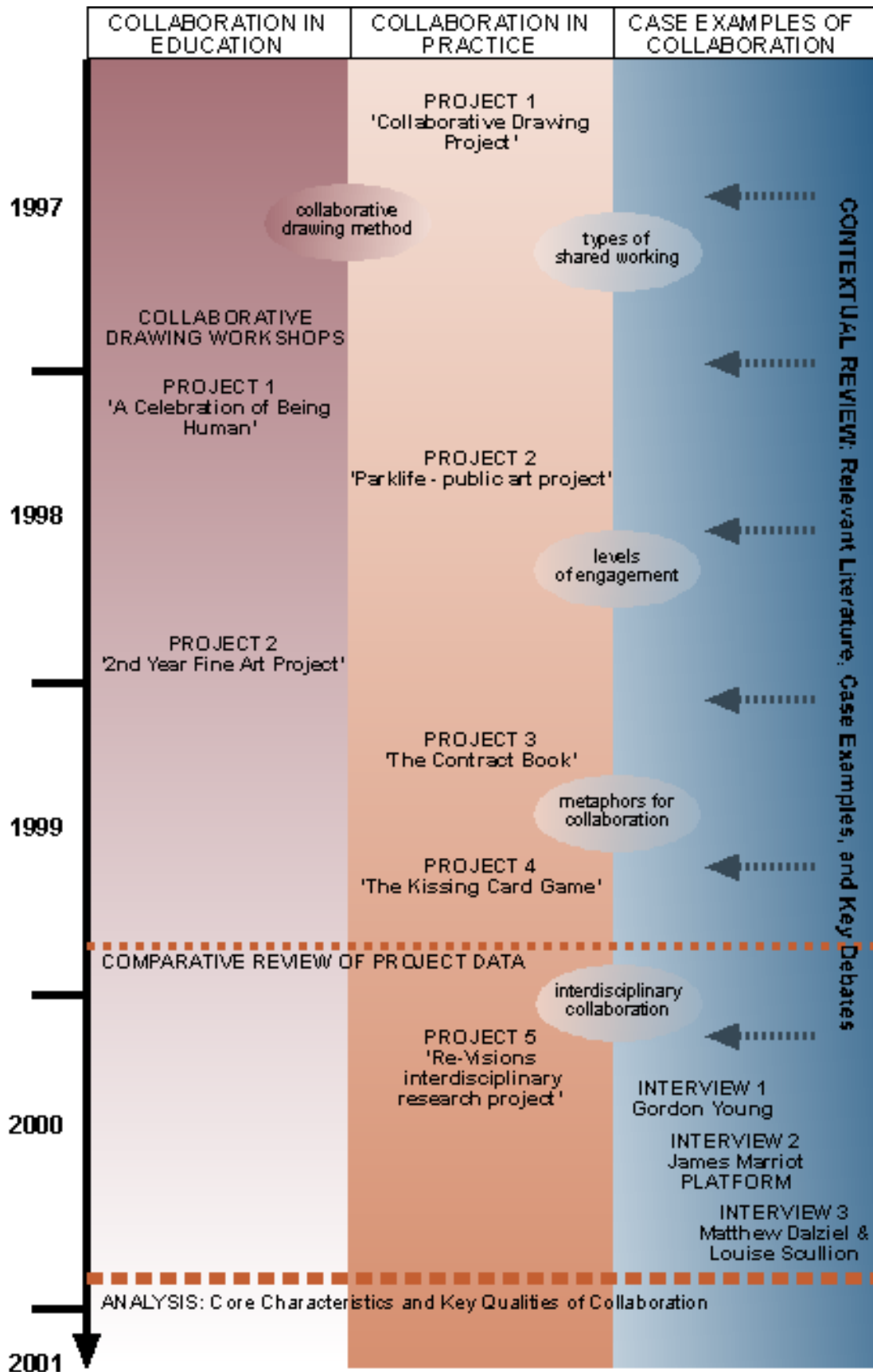


Figure 3.1 Simplified Overview of the Three Strands of Inquiry

3.3 Research Methods and Data Generation

Section 3.2 introduced the three main strands of inquiry within the research and provided a chronological, visual overview of their relationships. This section describes the *specific methods* employed to *generate* and *gather* research data. Due to the exploratory nature of the research, a variety of methods of generating *different* forms of primary data (interview transcripts, observational notes, textual and visual documents and records) have been consciously developed to increase the validity of the research findings. The specific research methods employed in generating data from the five research projects are described in *section 3.3.1*. Methods of gathering data from the two educational projects are described in *section 3.3.2*, and methods of conducting interviews with selected artists are described in *section 3.3.3*. Research data is included in the thesis Appendices.

3.3.1 Five Research Projects: Collaboration in Practice

The five research projects developed in order to initiate and evaluate strategies for engaging collaborative process with varied collaborators in different situations were small scale and developmental. Initially, this was a response to pragmatic factors limiting the research¹⁴. However, as the research progressed and uncovered some of the complexities inherent in collaborative processes, small-scale, experimental projects were preferred as they allowed an in-depth investigation of *processes* of shared working, without external pressures emphasizing the *products* of practice in a professional arts context (although work produced from Project Three and Project Five was exhibited in professional contexts).

The research design of each project developed through an inductive process of '*heuristic modelling*', whereby the researcher's experience of one project informed the design of the subsequent research project as key issues and concerns relating to particular aspects of collaboration began to emerge. A comparative summary of the five main research projects is provided below (*Table 3.1*). Individual project methods are then described in sections 3.3.1.1. to 3.3.1.5.

	Project 1 'Collaborative Drawing'	Project 2 'Parklife'	Project 3 'The Contract Book'	Project 4 'The Kissing Card Game'	Project 5 'Re-Visioning the Gallery'
Research Aims	Develop and document of collaborative drawing processes.	Identify, document and distinguish different types of shared working from collaboration.	Explore shared "inter-subjective" space between collaborators through contract analogy.	Explore shared "inter-subjective" space between collaborators through metaphor of game strategy.	Develop a complex collaboration between selected specialists from different fields.
Aim of Collaboration	To create a series of collaborative drawings in different contexts.	To develop public interaction and participation through a public art 'event'.	To develop a 'contract book' as an analogy of collaborative process.	Develop strategies for collaboration and interaction through analogous game processes.	To 're-think' the roles and functions of a Public Art Gallery.
Collaborators	Pernille Spence, Multi-media Artist.	Lauris Symmons Communications Design.	Duncan Comrie, Art Historian.	Christian Zursiedel, German Linguist.	Professor Robin Webster (Architect), Dr. Mike Wood (Cartographer), Dr. David Pearson (Psychologist), Roxane Permar (Artist), David Atherton (Educationalist)
Type of Collaboration	One to one. Guidelines for collaborating.	One to one. Collaboration emergent through project.	One to one. Guidelines negotiated for collaboration at outset.	One to one. Collaboration emergent through project.	Group. Collaboration negotiated and developed through project.
Project Structure	Pre-defined structured.	Pre-defined structure.	Emergent structure.	Emergent structure.	Emergent structure.
Setting	Studio setting and Aberdeen beach.	Duthie Park, Aberdeen.	Aberdeen University and collaborator's flat.	Collaborators' flat and art exhibition.	Aberdeen Art Gallery, The Robert Gordon University and Aberdeen University
Timescale	12 th – 13 th July 1997	24 th - 27 th February 1998	November 1998 to April 1999.	February 1999 to January 2000	January – August 2000
Methods of Generating and Gathering Data	Video, Photography, Transcribed discussion. Observational Notes.	Photography, Informal Discussion, Observational Notes, Postcards.	Contract, Collage, Photography Recorded Discussion. Notes.	Observational Notes, Descriptive game methods, Photography	Observational Notes, Photography, Video, Workshop artefacts.

Table 3.1 Comparative Summary of the Five Main Research Projects.

3.3.1.1 Project 1: 'Collaborative Drawing' (12th to 13th July 1997)

Project 1 developed methods of collaborative drawing as a strategy for engaging spontaneous interaction between collaborators, following a hunch that 'spontaneity' is considered a quality of collaboration in the visual arts. A tightly-structured, 'quasi-experimental'¹⁵ research design was developed by the researcher to compare different collaborative drawing processes in contrasting settings: in a studio environment (Gray's School of Art) and in the natural environment (Aberdeen beach), and using different materials. In the studio environment, guidelines were provided for producing the drawings. A more flexible approach in the natural environment, allowed found materials to be improvised as drawing implements.

The collaborative process was recorded using SVHS video and still image photography, and the researcher made notes following an informal evaluative discussion between collaborators at the end of the project. See Appendix 1.1 (p284) for the full project report. A visual summary of the process is presented below (*Fig. 3.2*).

3.3.1.2 Project 2: 'Parklife' (24th to 27th February 1998)

Project 2 was developed to initiate and frame different levels of engagement with a variety of different people (specifically non-artists) through a public art 'event' (Duthie Park, Aberdeen). The project was designed to develop methods for engaging participants interaction and documenting their experiences. Public park users were invited to participate by wearing a rosette on entering the park and invited to write a postcard documenting their experience on exit. The rosettes and postcards were archived, and collated for exhibition at the end of the project. Public participation was documented through these artefacts, and through still image photography.

Although different people contributed to the project (*permission* was granted by Aberdeen City Council Arts and Recreation Department, Duthie Park Staff *cooperated* by supplying display tables, volunteers *assisted* and *participated* by approaching the public, and public park users *participated* by *interacted* through the rosettes and postcards) it was difficult to identify methods of recording the different *levels* and *qualities* of engagement that occurred.

The researcher made notes to document observations made throughout the project, and to record key comments made by Lauris Symmons (the collaborator who became involved in the project in the latter stages) in discussions reviewing the project. See Appendix 1.2 (p301) for the full project report. A visual summary of the process is presented below (*Fig. 3.3*).

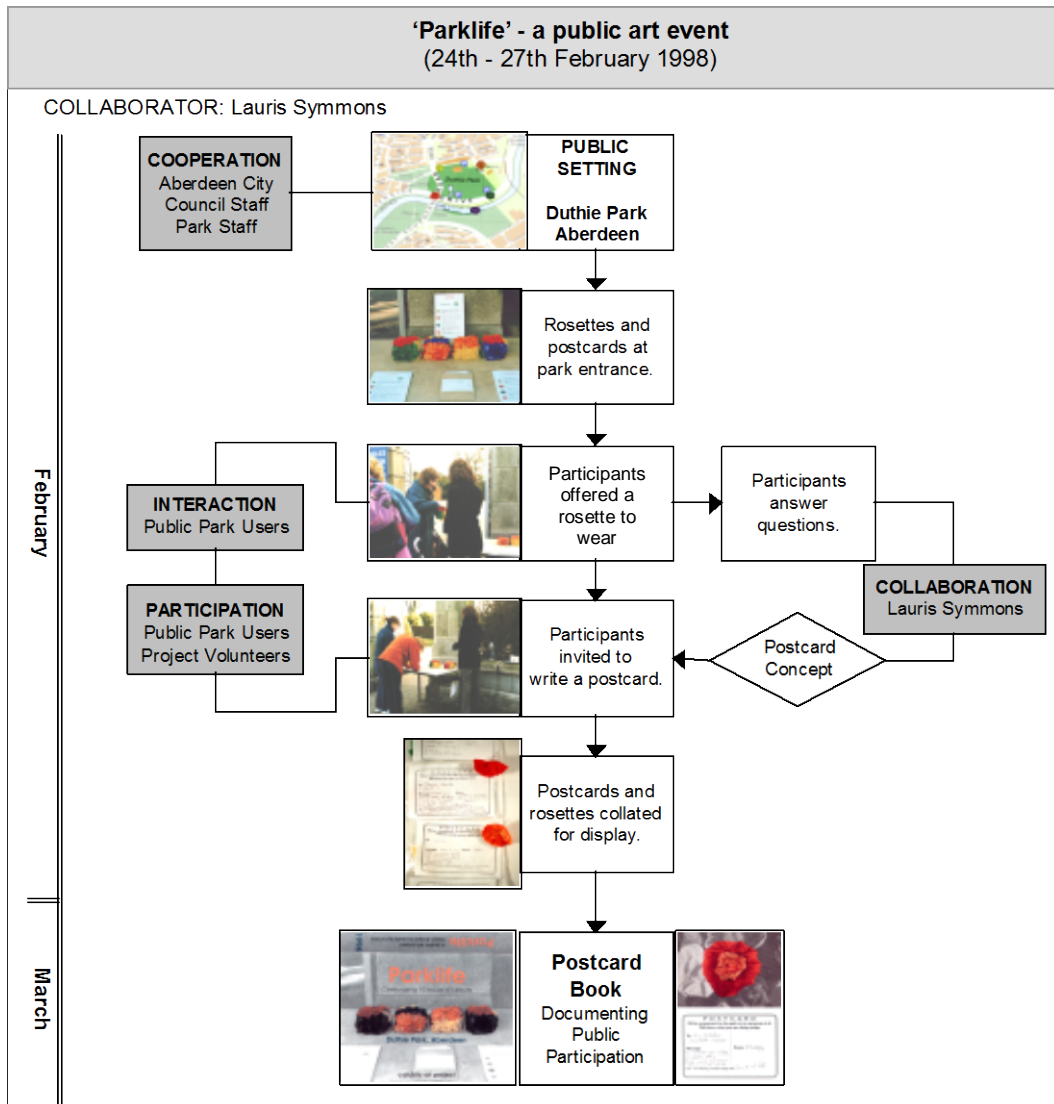


Figure 3.3 Project 2 Process Diagram

3.3.1.3 Project 3: “The Contract Book” (February to July 1999)

Project 3 was developed to initiate collaboration between collaborators previously unknown to each other, from the different disciplines of Art History and Art Practice. Aiming to develop strategies for enabling a ‘deep’ level of collaboration (with equal input from both collaborators), the concept of a ‘contract’ was used as a metaphor to frame the interaction. A common interest in the work of artist and film-maker, Peter Greenaway, was identified as a starting point, from which collaborators negotiated the development of a collaborative artwork, through an open and flexible project structure.

A series of collages were made, both individually and collaboratively. Photographs of images representing ideas of ‘joining’ and ‘connecting’ were produced. These were used to make a series of final collages, with the intention of collating them to produce a visual ‘contract book’, as a final collaborative artwork. Maquettes visualising the structure of the final book were produced, although the final book was not completed. All the artefacts produced were documented using still image photography.

The researcher made observational notes throughout the project to document the collaborative process as it unfolded. A discussion between collaborators to review progress at an interim stage was audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Excerpts are included in the project report. See Appendix 1.3 (p318) for the full project report. A visual summary of the process is presented below (*Fig. 3.4*).

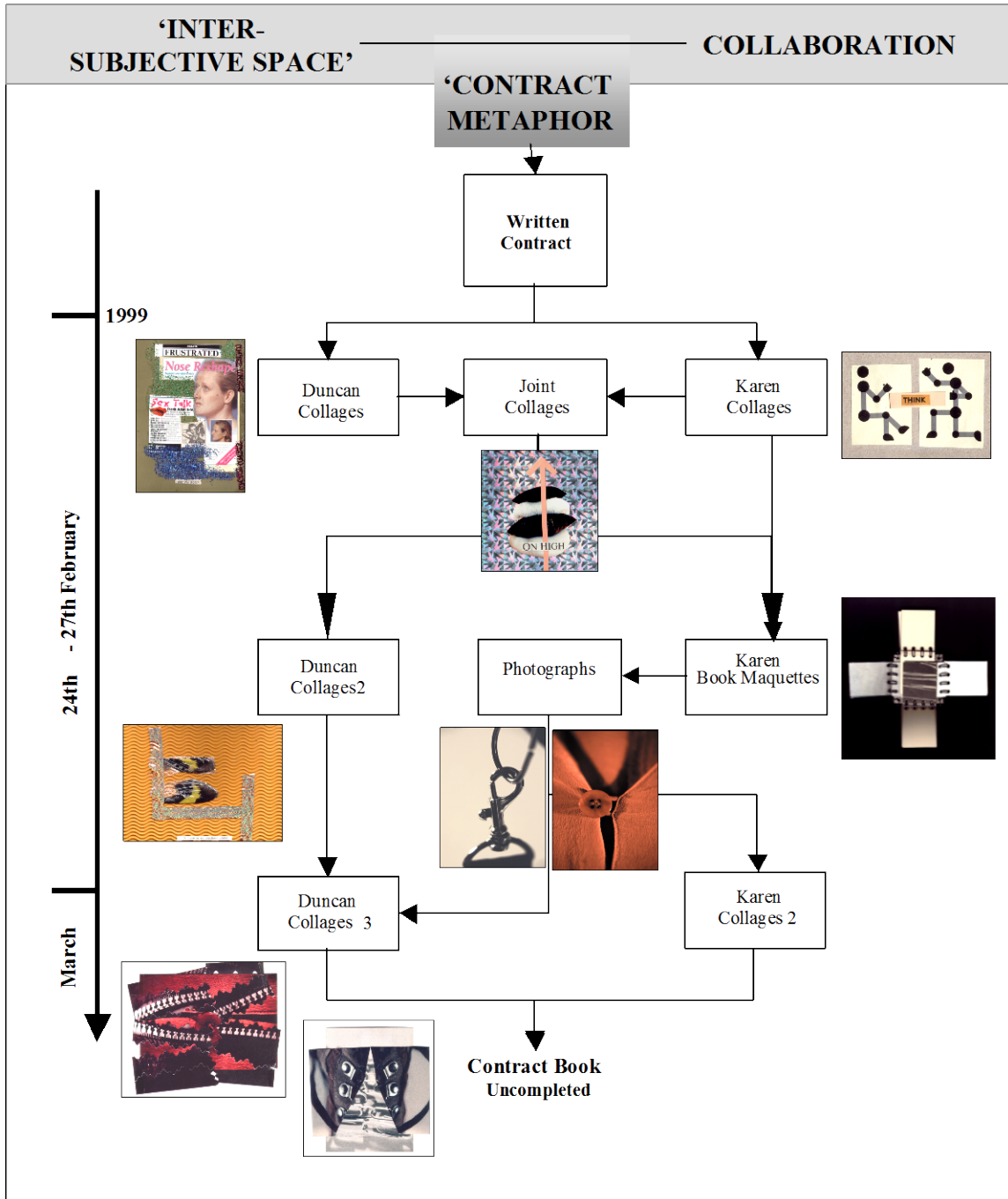


Figure 3.4 Project 3 Process Diagram

3.3.1.4 Project 4: “The Kissing Card Game” (February to August 1999)

Project 4 emerged through an informal opportunity to ‘experiment’ with strategies for engaging collaborative interaction with a participant with no previous knowledge of the visual arts (Christian Zursiedel, a German linguist). The notion of ‘inter-subjective space’ (Kester, 1998) provided a conceptual framework in which to explore the shared space created between collaborators. The project was not pre-designed, but evolved in a natural manner.

Initial discussions on the theme of ‘cultural identity’ provided a starting point for the project, and a method by which collaborators uncovered and exchanged their personal perspectives and experiences. Structured methods for eliciting interaction between collaborators were developed through the metaphor of ‘game-strategies’. Methods of developing equal input and mutual exchange through words were adapted from the word-game ‘Scrabble’ and visual artefacts were produced.

In response to an invitation to submit a proposal for an exhibition on the theme of ‘*Kissing*’, the collaborators developed the game-strategies further, and a visual and textual card game was created. Collaborators negotiated individual roles in the process of developing the game, which was exhibited in January 2000. All of the artefacts produced during the project were documented using still image photography.

The researcher made notes throughout the project to document observations as the collaborative process unfolded and to record informal discussions and decision-making processes between collaborators. Excerpts are included in the project report. See Appendix 1.4 (p336) for the full project report. A visual summary of the process is presented below (*Fig. 3.5*).

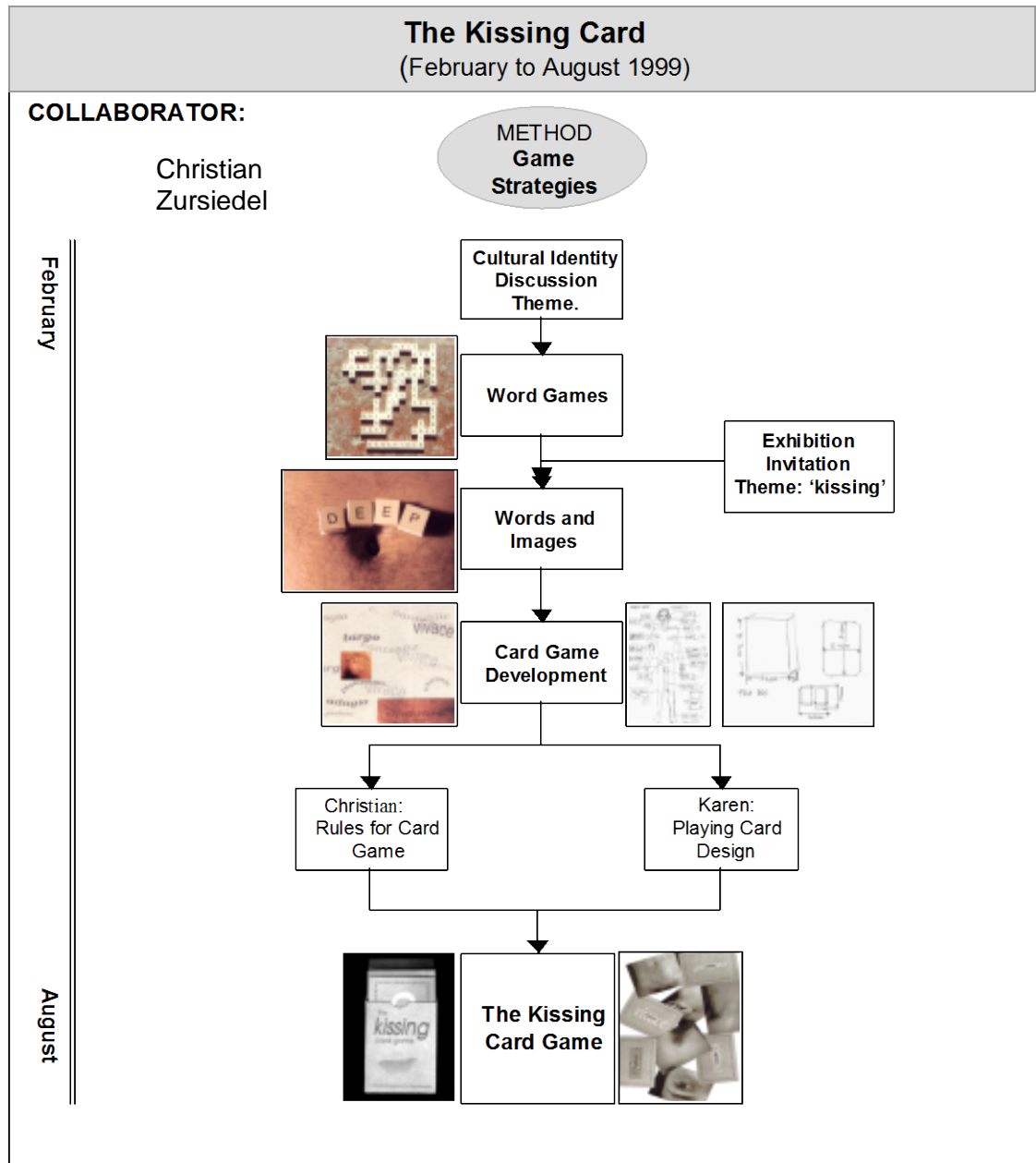


Figure 3.5 Project 4 Process Diagram

3.3.1.5 Project 5: “Re-Visioning the Gallery” (January to August 2000)

Informed by the experiences of working with individuals in one-to-one collaborations in Projects 1 to 4, the researcher initiated a more complex form of collaboration in Project 5 between a collection of individuals from different disciplines (visual art, Architecture, Geography, Psychology and Education). Potential collaborators were identified through their academic research interests, which were found on The Robert Gordon University (RGU) and Aberdeen University (AU) Internet web sites. Individual’s whose research interests in some way addressed concepts of ‘visualisation’ were approached. The researcher invited them to ‘re-think’ the roles and functions of the Aberdeen Art Gallery within an interdisciplinary collaborative project. The researcher consciously described the project as a “research project” as opposed to an “art project”, in order to prevent confusions arising from individual assumptions about what ‘art’ is.

An initial meeting, and subsequent meetings, were held in the Aberdeen Art Gallery, which presented the principal context for the project. Individual's interest in relation to the project's aim were described and discussion ensued about the possible approaches that group might adopt. Through regular meetings, the group shared and exchanged ideas and subject expertise in the areas of visual modelling, mapping and interpretation, in relation to the Gallery context. Six 'activities' (or mini-projects) were developed during the project (the outcomes of which were fed back to the group at Gallery meetings):

- **Activity 1: Group Workshop** involved the participation of all collaborators. Individuals' recorded their personal responses to the gallery using maps and postcards.
- **Activity 2: Architectural Modelling** involved Professor Robin Webster (Architect), first year BA Interior Architecture students of the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture (RGU) and the researcher. Students were issued a brief in which they were asked to produce architectural

models of the interior and exterior Gallery space.

- **Activity 3: Reportive Visual Memory** involved Dr. David Pearson (Psychologist), David Atherton (Cultural Services Education Officer, Aberdeen City Council), and BA (hons) psychology students (AU). Students explored Secondary School Pupils' experiences of the Gallery through their 'reportive visual memory'. Gallery visitors were offered a tour of the gallery and asked to draw a gallery plan from memory.
- **Activity 4: Posing a Position** involved the researcher, David Atherton, and a group of young people (12 to 15 years) in foster care from Aberdeen. Participants were introduced to the Gallery's collection of portrait paintings, and invited to 'pose' for their own photographic portraits; which were exhibited throughout the Gallery's main collections.
- **Activity 5: Commemorative Plaques** involved Roxane Permar (Artist), David Atherton, the researcher, and Primary School Pupils from two schools in Aberdeen. Pupils were given a tour of commemorative plaques in Aberdeen City (administered by the Gallery), to recognise the Gallery's relationship to the city. Pupils were invited to make their own commemorative plaques in clay. These were cast in plaster and painted.
- **Activity 6: 'Visual Mapping'** was an ongoing activity with contributions from all collaborators. Principal involvement by Dr. Mike Wood (Cartographer/Geography) and the researcher explored possible approaches to mapping the gallery and creating maps that could record individual experiences of the Gallery.

A shared collaborative vision was developed between the collaborators, who expressed a desire to continue working together to develop the project further. This resulted in a collaborative research proposal, which was

submitted to the Arts and Humanities Research Board.

The researcher made notes throughout the project to document observations as the collaborative process unfolded, and to record discussions and decision-making processes between collaborators. All the artefacts produced were documented using still image photography. Instead of presenting a visual overview of this project, a full description of the range of activities undertaken, with images documenting the artefacts produced, is included in the full project report (Appendix 1.5, p350).

3.3.2 Two Experimental Projects: Collaboration In Education

Two experimental teaching projects were developed to provide a framework for observing undergraduate BA Fine Art students' responses to collaborative processes in an educational context (Gray's School of Art). Students from the subject areas of painting, sculpture and printmaking worked in collaborative project groups, in response to project briefs provided by the researcher. *Table 3.2* below summarises the projects undertaken in the educational context, whilst *sections 3.3.2.1.* and *3.3.2.2.* describe the methods of data gathering in more detail.

	Introductory Workshops	Project 1 'A Celebration of Being Human'	Project 2 '2nd Year Fine Art'
Project Brief	To participate in a series of experimental collaborative drawing processes.	To develop collaborative artwork in response to a Public Art brief, and to document the process.	To develop collaborative artwork in response to a postcard image, using at least two different media.
Structure	Two tightly-structured workshops.	Clearly defined project brief.	Clearly defined project brief.
Students	Forty-three Fine Art students (from Painting, Sculpture and Printmaking departments). Eight mixed collaborative groups.	Forty-three Fine Art students (from Painting, Sculpture and Printmaking departments). Eight mixed collaborative groups.	Sixty-nine Fine Art students (from Painting, Sculpture and Printmaking departments). Twelve mixed collaborative groups.
Timescale	October to December 1997	March to April 1998	Three Weeks November 1998
Methods of Generating and Gathering Data	Observation notes, Photographic Documentation.	Observation notes, Student Critical Evaluation Forms, Photographic Documentation.	Observation notes, Student Critical Evaluation Forms, Photographic Documentation.

Table 3.2 Summary of Collaboration in Education Research Projects.

3.3.2.1 Project 1: "A Celebration of Being Human" (March – April 1998)

Project 1 involved third year students. Forty-three students were divided into eight collaborative groups consisting of either five or six individuals. The collaborative drawing method explored in (*research in practice*) Project One (*section 3.3.1.1*), was further developed for use as an 'ice-breaking' activity to introduce students to collaborative processes. A series of collaborative student drawings were produced. (A detailed description of the workshop activities is included in the full Project 1 Report - Appendix 2.1)

Students were then issued a project brief titled 'A Celebration of Being Human' in which the following social processes were provided as starting points from which to brainstorm ideas: *communication, movement, environmental hygiene, sensory seduction, commodities and the transfer of goods, spaces of reflection and contemplation, public and private, and traces*

of *ageing*. Students were encouraged to research these themes within the context of the City of Aberdeen: moving their working processes outside of the normal studio environment.

Whilst the workshops presented students with highly structured methods of collaboration, the subsequent project provided a framework in which to explore and develop their own methods of collaboration. Initially scheduled to run for one intensive week, problems in departmental timetabling required that it ran over seven weeks. The researcher conducted regular tutorials to evaluate group progress. Artworks produced by the student groups were exhibited at the end of the project and a critical review with members of the lecturing staff was held. Students completed Critical Evaluation Forms to document their experiences of the project and to evaluate their group and individual progress. Excerpts from these forms are included in the full project report, along with images documenting the students' artwork (Appendix 2.1, p378).

3.3.2.2 Project 2: “2nd Year Fine Art Project” (November 1998)

Project 2 involved second year students. Sixty-nine students were divided into twelve collaborative groups consisting of either five or six individuals. The project ran over three weeks with three days of the week specifically allocated to the project. Students were issued with a project brief and a randomly selected postcard. In response to the postcard image they had been issued, each group was asked to collaborate to produce a mixed media artwork for exhibition. The brief specified that students achieve following objectives:

- 1) Develop ideas within a group.
- 2) Explore a range of different media and approaches.
- 3) Make works that combine individual elements from each group member.
- 4) Review both individual and group progress.

The researcher conducted regular tutorials to evaluate group progress. Artworks produced by the student groups were exhibited at the end of the project and a critical review with members of the lecturing staff was held. Students completed Critical Evaluation Forms to document their experiences of the project and to evaluate their group and individual progress. Excerpts from these forms are included in the full project report, along with images documenting the students' artwork (Appendix 2.2, p391).

3.3.3 Three Interviews: Case Examples of Collaboration

The researcher conducted three interviews with selected artists in order to gather information from other practitioners' experiences of collaboration. The interviews were undertaken in the latter stages of the research, in order to obtain information that was directly relevant to the characteristics of collaborative processes that the researcher had identified through the previous two strands of inquiry: *collaboration in practice* and *collaboration in education*. From these findings, the researcher devised a pre-interview questionnaire form, which was issued to all the interviewees prior to interview. The questionnaire form was designed to generate specific responses to the characteristics of collaboration identified by the researcher. It also served to prepare the interviewees for the subsequent semi-structured interviews, in which questions relating to the characteristics of collaborative processes were raised. Interviews were semi-structured, with the researcher adopting a flexible approach in order to allow the interviewees to discuss what *they* believed to be most important, from their personal experiences of the benefits and drawbacks of collaborative working in professional contexts.

The completed pre-interview questionnaire forms are included in Appendix 3.1 (pp 417-435). The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Full interview transcripts are included in Appendix 3.2 (pp 436-509). A summary of the interviews is provided in *Table 3.3* below:

Interviews	Interview 1 Gordon Young	Interview 2 James Marriott of PLATFORM	Interview 3 Dalziel & Scullion
Selection Criteria	Individual practitioner engaging in interdisciplinary collaborative projects.	Founding member of collaborative group Platform. Interdisciplinary project work.	Artist partnership. Engaged in interdisciplinary projects.
Interview Format	Posted Preliminary Questionnaire. Interviewed at Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex.	Posted Preliminary Questionnaire. Interviewed at Platform Office, London.	Posted Preliminary Questionnaire. Interviewed at Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen.
Dates	15 th July 2000	20 th July 2000	1 st September 2000
Primary Data	Questionnaire & Interview Transcripts	Questionnaire & Interview Transcripts	Questionnaire & Interview Transcripts

Table 3.3 Summary of Case Examples of Collaboration through Interview.

3.3.4 Summary of the Primary Research Data

Types of data obtained from three main strands of inquiry are summarised:

Collaboration in Practice

Five Project Reports, including:

- Detailed descriptions of collaborative processes.
- Simplified visual process diagrams.
- Main observations made by the researcher.
- Comments made by the collaborators.
- Documentation of the artefacts produced.

Collaboration in Education

Two Project Reports, including:

- Detailed descriptions of collaborative processes.
- Main observations made by the researcher.
- Excerpts from the students' Critical Evaluation Forms.
- Documentation of the artefacts produced.

Case Examples of Collaboration

- Four completed pre-interview questionnaire forms.
- Three complete transcriptions of audio-recorded interviews.

3.4 Methods of Analysing the Research Data

Since few research precedents directly addressing collaboration from a visual arts perspective exist¹⁶, it was necessary to develop appropriate methods for analysing the research data. Throughout the naturalistic practice-led research methodology, a continuous, tacit process of inductive analysis occurred through the researchers' direct experiences of collaboration. In order to bring together the different types of primary data generated throughout the research (summarised above, *section 3.3.4.*), and to substantiate the knowledge obtained through the researcher's direct experiences of collaboration (*collaboration in practice, sections 3.2.1. and 3.3.1.*), the researcher developed a two-stage analytic framework. The framework employs a systematic method of cross-comparison of data to identify the core characteristics and key qualities of collaboration. The analytic framework is described in *section 3.4.1.* Chapter 4 presents an detailed descriptive analysis of the *main characteristics* of collaboration, while Chapter 5 interprets the *key qualities* of collaborative processes in relation to the visual arts. Outcomes from the research are summarised and evaluated in Chapter 6.

3.4.1 A Two-Stage Analytic Framework

Mid-way through the research, 'patterns' began to emerge, highlighting key features relating to the success or failure of achieving collaboration in practice. The researcher considered a 'true' collaborative process to be qualitatively different to other shared working processes (such as *partnership, participation, cooperation*; which also occur in the visual arts), and to individual art practice. Therefore attempts to *clarify* and make *explicit* the specific nature of collaborative processes approached as a *conscious methodology of practice*, and to evaluate the *implications* of collaboration for visual art practitioners, were undertaken. The researcher developed a two-stage analytic framework in order to achieve reliable outcomes through a systematic cross-comparison of the research data.

The framework was developed using five basic components of collaborative projects: *aims*, *collaborators*, *context*, *structure*, and *product*. These five components were considered to be fundamental: if anyone of these components were missing, collaboration would not be possible. *Table 3.4* below provides definitions of these five basic components:

BASIC COMPONENTS OF COLLABORATION	DEFINITION OF BASIC COMPONENT
Aims	Reasons for collaborating and anticipated benefits.
Collaborators	Individual contributors in collaboration
Context	The conditions and environment in which collaboration is conducted.
Structure	The methods of organising collaborative processes.
Product	The outcomes generated from collaboration.

Table 3.4 The Five Basic Components of Collaboration.

These basic components are used as 'filters' in the **first stage of analysis** in order to identify and describe the '**main characteristics**' of collaboration, through a 'sifting' and *cross-comparison* of the primary research data. These *characteristics* are the *pragmatic* features that shape the *form* collaboration takes:

- What *kinds* of **aims** are suited to collaboration?
- What *types* of individuals make good **collaborators**?
- What *kind* of **context** is appropriate for collaborative working?
- What *kind* of project **structure** best supports collaboration?
- What *types* of **products** can be developed through collaboration?

The **second stage of analysis** involves an interpretation of the main characteristics identified (Chapter 4), to identify and describe distinctive '**key qualities**' of collaborative processes. This stage is concerned with uncovering information that usually tends to remain imbedded within the experiences of the collaborators and is often 'invisible'. It also relates to the

implications of collaboration in the visual arts, as it is concerned with the *values* underpinning a particular collaborative methodology of practice.

Perhaps a way of describing this more clearly is to use an analogy of a street of houses. Each house has the *same basic components* (roof, walls, floor, windows and doors), but each house might have *different characteristics* (for example, it might have a *pointed* roof or a *flat* roof; *big* windows or *little* windows; a *wide* door or a *narrow* door, etc.). The characteristics therefore describe the 'look', or the 'form' of the house and distinguish one particular house from another. However, houses 'feel' different as well as 'looking' different. Each individual house has *particular qualities*, which can be thought of as the numerous little details that contribute to a particular style (for example, Georgian detailing, or Victorian ornamentation, or Modernist simplicity). Thus *qualities* describe not only 'what it feels like', but also suggest a set of *implicit values*: people choose to live in different houses because they have different *values* about *how* they want to live.

Similarly, by addressing the *qualities* of collaboration, the researcher attempts to expose the values underpinning a collaborative *methodology of practice* and the implications it raises in relation to traditional values of individual creative practice in the visual arts, particularly in relation to the educational context. *Section 3.4.2.* provides a summary of the analytic framework.

3.4.2 Summary of the Analytic Framework

A two-stage analytic framework is developed to identify and describe the **main characteristics** and **key qualities** of collaborative processes in relation to visual art practice:

- **Stage One**

The **main characteristics** of collaboration are identified and described through a detailed and descriptive cross-comparison of the primary research data. Five basic components of collaboration (*aims, collaborators, context, structure, products*) are used to filter information

and uncover patterns in the data.

- **Stage Two**

The **main characteristics** of collaboration identified and described in stage one, are subjected to a further interpretative analysis to uncover **key qualities** of collaboration. These outcomes are used to construct a critical framework distinguishing four models of collaboration that are relevant to visual art practices.

Analysis of the research data is presented in Chapters 4 and 5. In Chapter 4 collaborative strategies are evaluated through the identification and description of the **main characteristics** of the collaboration. In Chapter 5, a critical framework is constructed to distinguish between different forms of collaboration and evaluate the five main research projects. These outcomes are summarised and evaluated in Chapter 6 and the implications of approaching interdisciplinary collaboration as a potential new methodology of practice for visual artists is discussed in relation to professional and educational visual art contexts.

3.5 Summary of Methods

The research aimed to develop strategies for engaging interdisciplinary collaboration from within the visual arts. The researcher identified a need to identify and describe the characteristics of collaborative processes and the particular qualities of collaboration, when approached as a *conscious methodology of practice* in the visual arts (Chapter 2). The researcher adopted a practice-led naturalistic research methodology, which recognised the researcher's direct experiences of initiating and participating in collaboration and allowed the research design to evolve as the project progressed.

Three main strands of inquiry were undertaken to investigate: *collaboration in practice*, *collaboration in education*, and *case examples of collaboration*. The first strand consisted of a series of five exploratory projects in which the researcher initiated and participated in collaborations with different

collaborators, in different contexts, and using different strategies. The second strand consisted of two projects undertaken within an educational context, to observe Fine Art students' experiences and responses to collaborative processes. The third strand consisted of three interviews with selected professional artists engaged in collaborative forms of practice. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews after issuing interviewees with pre-interview questionnaire forms.

These three strands of inquiry employed a variety of methods to generate and gather of different types of primary data: detailed descriptive, evaluative and illustrative project reports (included in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2), and fully transcribed interviews and pre-interview questionnaire forms (included in Appendix 3). The researcher developed a two-stage analytic framework to identify and describe the main characteristics and key qualities of collaboration through a systematic cross-comparison of this data. Analyses of the research data are presented in Chapters 4 and 5, and outcomes from the research are summarised and evaluated in Chapter 6.

Notes from Chapter 3

- ¹ RADical Conference 1994 (The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen), Matrix Conferences 1988, 1993, 1995 and 1997 (Central St. Martins, London), Research Through Practice Conference 2000 (University of Hertfordshire), and Research and the Artist Symposium, 1999 (The Ruskin School of Art)
- ² Pioneering work by The Centre for Research in Art and Design (The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen) has contributed to the development of rigorous formal research methodologies in Art and Design. Critical debates have been documented through the Matrix Art and Design Research seminars and conferences from 1988 to 1999 at Central St. Martins, London. A range of Art and Design Research Centres have emerged throughout the UK to promote specialist areas of research with Art and Design.
- ³ A useful historical and critical review of the development of issues relating to the development of formal research in Art and Design is provided by Ross (2001:77-130).
- ⁴ The 'post-positivistic' naturalistic research paradigm described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) is situated in direct opposition to the positivistic experimental methods of the physical, or 'hard' sciences. The naturalistic approach addresses research questions in the "natural setting" (where the problems are identified in complex and real situations) and acknowledges the tacit involvement of the researcher (since in asking particular questions and engaging with the natural setting, the research processes is directed and influenced). Concerned with obtaining qualitative information about complex issues, the naturalistic research paradigm has recently become favoured in the social, or 'soft' sciences, (such as ethnographic research, and action research in education) which are reliant on interpretative methods, although its use in the late 1960s in psychology is acknowledged by Tesch (1990). Various proponents of qualitative research methods describe naturalistic approaches to inquiry and data analysis (Robson, 1993; Douglas and Moustakas, 1985; Tesch, 1990) although Lincoln and Guba's (1985) descriptions of the characteristics and key stages of what they termed 'Naturalistic Inquiry' is still one of the most comprehensive accounts.
- ⁵ A method of immersing with problems in a live situation, Jorgensen (1989) defines the intention of participant observation as being to "generate practical and theoretical truths about human life grounded in the realities of daily existence" (pp13-14), recognising that "the visibility of particular aspects of human life depends on where you are located, as well as on your previous knowledge and experience" (p42) and that "defining a problem for participant observation is a complex process through which you refine and elaborate the issues to be studied while participating and collecting information in the field"(p43). The participant-observer method is developed by Silver (1999) and Ross (2001) within the context of practice-led doctoral research in Art and Design.
- ⁶ 'Immersion' with and within the research problem, 'acquisition' of data through conscious and subconscious reflection in action, and 'realisation', through structured analysis of data and dissemination of findings. Douglas and Moustakas (1985), cited in Bunnell (1998: 92)
- ⁷ Bunnell (1998), p93
- ⁸ see note 5.
- ⁹ The validity of tacit knowledge in qualitative research is advocated by both Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Schön (1991).
- ¹⁰ Schön (1991) coined the term 'reflective practice' as a method of "double loop learning" for practitioners situated in live professional contexts, in order to recognise and evaluate

Notes from Chapter 3 (continued)

the knowledge that is embedded within their disciplines and their individual tacit knowledge that is acquired through their experiences of practice. Schön argues that the processes of 'reflection *in* action' and 'reflection *on* action' provide a valid foundation for the development of knowledge within a discipline.

- ¹¹ As an exhibiting artist, I was becoming frustrated with what appeared to me to be a lack of alternative models of practice for visual artists beyond the dominant studio and gallery models in Scotland in 1997, at the onset of this research. Contact with other artists throughout the UK in my capacity as a member of the board of directors of the National Artists Association re-enforced my impression that artists were generally felt frustrated and limited by a lack of variety and opportunity within the field of professional visual art practice.
- ¹² Bamberg and Schön describe action as intuitive and based on the accumulative experiences of the practitioner/researcher in 'Learning as Reflective Conversation with Materials', in Frederick Steier (ed.)(1991) *Research and Reflexivity*, London: Sage, p189
- ¹³ Lincoln and Guba, citation of Hegel's proposed three levels of attaining consciousness, by moving from a naïve inquiry to a "realised" level (p 103), is analogous to the parallel proposition of three stages described by Douglas and Moustakas (1985). See note 6.
- ¹⁴ As a newcomer to Aberdeen at the outset of the research, access to existing professional networks was limited. In the early stages project proposals were developed and taken to local arts administrators with the intention of developing larger-scale projects in the professional context, supported by local agencies and individuals. This approach was time-consuming and largely unsuccessful. Therefore, a series of un-funded, small-scale projects were developed with selected individuals. Similar problems in achieving access to situations is acknowledged in participant observation by Jorgensen (1989): "Gaining access to a setting is one of the most difficult and demanding aspects of participant observation, yet it provides much room for creative engagement by the researcher. Successful entry to a setting depends on his or her interpersonal skills, creativity, and commonsense decision-making." p49
- ¹⁵ The design of the project bears some resemblance to an experimental approach of testing pre-defined hypotheses in a controlled environment. However, the intention was not to analysis the specific cause and effects of phenomenon occurring as a result of the environmental influences, but rather to gain a qualitative sense of how the different contexts influenced the development and experience of the shared working process.
- ¹⁶ Those in existence tend to give a 'descriptive', rather than critical account: such as Kemp and Griffiths (1999) descriptive account of collaboration between art, science and community in the 'Quaking Houses' project, or Walwin's (1997) descriptive account of three artists' collaborative practices. Although both examples are situated within the professional, rather than academic research context, their approach is considered representative of an anecdotal form of reporting in the visual arts.

Research undertaken in America, by Mattesich and Monsey (1992), addresses factors influencing the success of collaboration in the human service, government and non-profit sectors. They undertook a cross-comparative analysis of a diverse range of cases of collaboration in order to gain an empirical overview. This method responded to their identification of a problem that most studies of collaboration "employ[sl] only a case study methodology, not detailed empirical methods" (p43), which they believe is "not amenable to the pooling of quantifiable data" (p43).

4. IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS OF COLLABORATION

The research has recognised that while examples of collaboration in the visual arts exist, there is a lack of information available about the particular characteristics, which ‘shape’ collaborative processes; which has tended to remain imbedded within the tacit experience of art practitioners (Chapter 2). To understand the implications of collaborative working in relation to visual art practice, it was necessary to identify and describe the main characteristics of collaborative processes. This chapter presents a detailed *descriptive* analysis of the main **characteristics** of collaboration (i.e. main features that influence the specific *nature*, or ‘shape’, of collaborative processes, and impact upon its success or failure).

In this analysis, my direct experiences of engaging experimental collaborative strategies through the five main research projects (*collaboration in practice*) are acknowledged and discussed. Using the five **basic components** of collaboration, described in Chapter 3, (*aims, collaborators, context, structure, and product*) the **main characteristics** of collaborative processes, identified through the three principal strands of inquiry (*collaboration in practice, collaboration in education, and case examples of collaboration*) are described and discussed with illustrative cross-reference of the primary research data: *five project reports, two project reports from collaborative projects developed for students in an Art College context, pre-interview forms and interview transcripts from the interviews undertaken with four professional artists.*

Diagrams illustrating *specific stages* in the collaborative process have been developed to show generic patterns, which emerged through this comparative analysis of the research data. This chapter is written with the assumption that the reader has first read the researcher’s evaluations of the research projects, presented in the individual project reports (Appendices 1 and 2) and the full interview transcripts and pre-interview questionnaire forms (Appendix 3).

A critical description of what collaborative processes *'look like'* is presented by addressing: the *types* of **aims** that collaborative projects can achieve (*section 4.1*); how **collaborators'** individual *motives*, *contributions* and *expectations* influence the form of collaboration (*section 4.2*); how the **context** which collaboration *occurs within* and *creates* influences the collaborative process; how the **structure** of collaborative processes influence the *success* and *limitations* of collaboration (*section 4.4*); and how the **products** of collaboration are *defined*, and the ways in which they *influence* the form of collaborative process adopted (*section 4.5*). A summary of outcomes from this first stage of analysis is presented in *section 4.6*, and evaluated in *section 4.7*. In the second stage of the analysis (Chapter 5), a more detailed, *interpretative* analysis of the key **qualities** of collaboration is presented.

4.1 AIMS: Reasons For Collaborating And Anticipated Outcomes

Why is there a need to work collaboratively? What outcomes can collaboration achieve that could not be achieved by other methods? Journalist and researcher, Michael Schrage (1995:29) has identified that “at the very heart of collaboration is a desire or need to solve a problem, create, or discover something within a set of constraints.”

To evaluate the main influences upon the success or failure of collaboration, it is necessary to understand the **aims** and **anticipated outcomes** of collaborative projects. This is particularly pertinent in the visual arts, where dominant models of **individual** creative practice prevail in the professional context. In this section, the *kinds* of collaborative projects undertaken in the visual arts are addressed, to understand *how* and *why* collaborative working is relevant, and what *kinds* of “professional need” it can fulfil, as an *alternative* to individual art practice. Collaboration is addressed as a *method* of approaching **complexity** (*section 4.1.1*), increasing the **scale and scope** of practice (*section 4.1.2*), and as a process of **learning through practice** by *sharing* and *exchanging* particular skills and expertise (*section 4.1.3*).

4.1.1 Addressing Complex Aims through Collaboration

One of the principal reasons for undertaking collaborative practice is that collaboration (in particular, *interdisciplinary* collaboration) is a method of working that is suited to addressing **complexity** (complex issues/problems or complex technical or logistical requirements). Of the artists interviewed (Appendix 3.2), all believed that collaborative projects could enable them to address *complex* issues more appropriately than through individual practice. In pre-interview questionnaires (Appendix 3.1), all identified the same main aims that they believed collaboration could achieve (listed below in order of priority):

1. To address complex issues.
2. To develop ways of working across disciplines.
3. To develop new perspectives between disciplines.

Interdisciplinarity was also considered a main aim of collaborative working. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the artists' desire (or 'need') to address *complexity* through *interdisciplinary* collaboration appeared to be intertwined. Interdisciplinary arts group, 'Platform' initiate interdisciplinary collaborative projects with the aim of addressing complex current cultural, ecological and social issues:

"We have a set of very important cultural questions: whether it's that we're boiling the planet, or that there is an increase in deprivation... Those are really important questions and how we address them requires as many people as possible to think imaginatively and constructively about it, but it also requires that society have spaces where that imagination and freedom can flow. The trouble is that often those processes are very blocked."

(James Marriot, 'Platform', Appendix 3.2b; p468)

For Platform, the ‘problems’ addressed through collaboration are predominantly political in nature. Marriot recognises not only the *complexity* of the issues that Platform address, but also the *difficulties* of finding ‘easy’ solutions to these problems through a ‘monological’, single-disciplinary perspective¹. In this approach, collaboration is the vehicle for creating new ways of “thinking creatively” about complex problems/issues. Thus the aims of collaboration are ‘*issue-driven*’, or ‘*problem-framed*’, with the intention of developing a “thought community”² to address complexity.

With many years experience of working in public contexts, artist Gordon Young identified “...a massive change in the last twenty years...we [artists] have potential clients and audiences that didn’t exist 15 years ago” (Appendix 3.2a; p448). His art practice has evolved from an individual model towards a collaborative model³. He attributes part of the reason for a general increase in interest in (and increased opportunities for) collaboration to a *pragmatic* need to find solutions to new problems:

“It’s just social change. I think a lot of people are up for new thoughts. Technology is making us have to rethink. Society is making us have to rethink...If there’s a problem solving built environment issues, the people who are going to be successful are the people that come up with the good, or satisfactory, solutions. It’s forces as basic as that forcing the collaborations.”

(Young, Appendix 3.2a, p448)

Although Young and Marriot operate different models of collaboration, they both share an **interdisciplinary** approach to addressing **complex** issues and/or problems. Working collaboratively enables them to *actively contribute* to addressing these issues/problems (although these

may be framed in a variety of different ways: political, technical, conceptual or even hypothetical).

Since collaboration involves the participation of more than one individual by definition (a collaborator needs collaborators to collaborate with), this shapes collaboration as a 'project-model' of practice. If only in order to harness the interest of potential collaborators, collaboration needs to *have* an aim, regardless of *what* that specific aim might be. As Young and Marriot exemplify, 'issue-driven' or 'problem-framed' project aims are conducive to *interdisciplinary* working, whilst the *collaborative process* presents an innovative approach to 're-thinking' **complex** problems/issues in new ways.

Of the five research projects that were undertaken, the one considered most successful in achieving collaboration was also the most **complex**. Project Five ('*Re-Visioning the Gallery*') developed an interdisciplinary approach to "re-thinking the roles and functions of the Gallery" (Aberdeen Art Gallery). The complexity of the project was two-fold: addressing the *complexity* of the institutional context of the Gallery, and addressing the *complexity* of collaborating across disciplines (*interdisciplinary methods*).

In this example (as with the other collaborative projects instigated by the researcher), the *way* that the project aims were defined and communicated to (and between) collaborators was found to influence both the *direction* of the collaboration and the *form* that it took. If project aims were too specific, or 'tightly-defined', only a *limited* form of collaborative engagement between collaborators occurred⁴, whilst if no tangible aims were defined, the collaborative process began to deteriorate: losing direction and focus⁵.

Therefore in Project Five, the aim of "re-thinking" the Gallery provided a *practical* project aim, in order to approach potential collaborators and engage their participation, whilst also being 'indefinite' enough to allow

collaborators the space to *interpret* the aim *individually* and in relation to their *particular* specialist perspectives and expertise. Thus an important stage in the research, was in identifying the importance of developing practical strategies for engaging collaboration in the first instance, by:

1. Bringing collaborators together to *inhabit* a problem/issues.
2. Eliciting the contributions of individual collaborators in 'reframing' the problem/issue within the collaborative group.
3. Developing a 'mutually-beneficial', *shared* collaborative aim, or 'vision' for the project.

This process is illustrated in *Fig. 4.1*. Regardless of individuals' initial perception of the 'problem/issues' (whether experienced from the 'inside' or the 'outside'), was the need to 're-frame' the 'problem/issues' within the group and agree upon a shared collaborative vision of how to best achieve a 'solution', in which 'the whole is greater than the sum of the parts'. The process led to a 'deep' level of discussion and debate between collaborators. The broadly defined aim of 'rethinking' the Gallery was both *complex* and *relevant* enough to engage the interest of the collaborators from different fields and generate a variety of possible approaches⁶. The processes of collaborative 're-framing' continued throughout the project in order to review projects aims and identify any shifts occurring during the *dynamic* collaborative process (see *section 4.4.1*). In addition to addressing how collaborative project aims can engender and reflect the contributions of individual collaborators, and generate outcomes that are mutually beneficial, it is was also necessary to address the motives and expectations of individual collaborators, particularly those of artists (*section 4.2.2*).

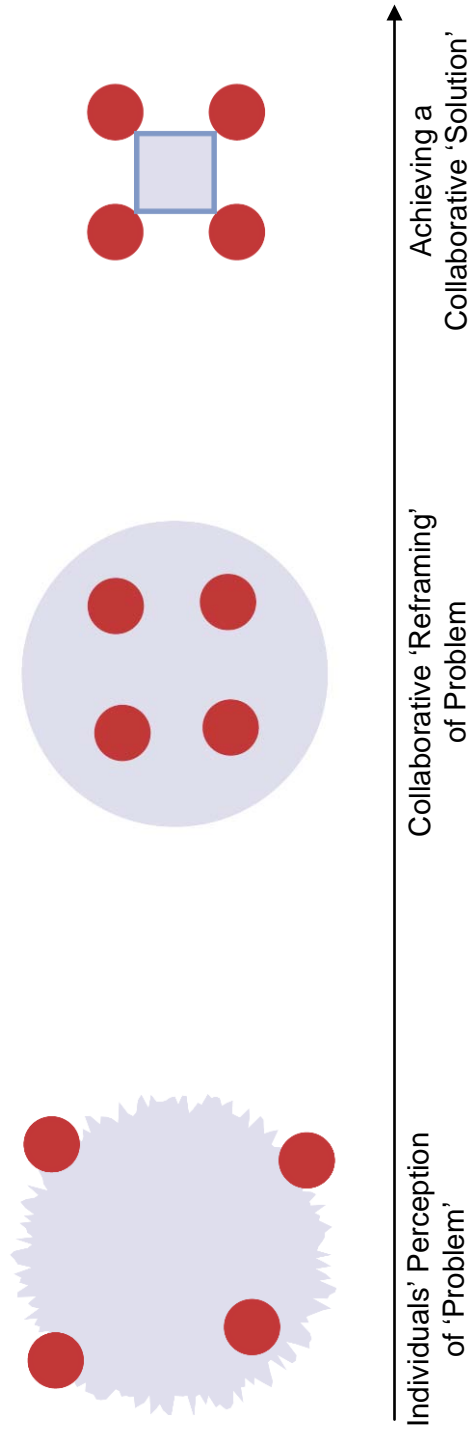


Figure 4.1 Diagram illustrating the process of individual collaborators identifying, inhabiting and solving a problem collaboratively. (Scopa, K.)

4.1.2 The Scale and Scope of Collaborative Projects

The five main research projects undertaken to engage different forms of collaboration, with different collaborators, in a variety of contexts, were small-scale, due to the limitations of funding and the research timeframe. However, it was recognised that an important feature of collaboration is the potential it can offer art practitioners to work on a larger **scale** than individual practice would normally allow. Artist partnership Matthew Dalziel and Louise Scullion described the positive benefits of collaboration on their professional practice, by enabling them to work on complex, large-scale public artworks⁷, as well as the opportunity to *work within*, and *produce work for* a variety of contexts beyond the **scope** of the ‘artworld’ infrastructure (the *contexts* of collaboration are addressed in *section 4.3*). As Scullion describes:

“For me, it’s just being able to tackle projects that I’d have never dreamt of doing on my own - that would have been too scary, too much responsibility and I’d have had difficulty controlling. Since beginning collaborative projects, I’ve been able to do such varied types of work. It’s been really interesting. When I think about the amount of work that we’ve actually got through and the lengths that we gone to...I know that, as an individual, I wouldn’t have had the energy to be able to do that. I would have accepted a lot less or not even tried for things.”

(Appendix 3.2c, p505)

Scullion’s experience of collaboration has enabled her to expand the **scope** of *possibilities* for developing her art practice further than she could have “dreamt” of achieving individually.

Fine Art students’ perceptions of the **scope** of art practice were also expanded through the experience of collaboration, although in a different way. The two projects undertaken at Gray’s School of Art

(Aberdeen) were developed to observe BA Fine Art students (of painting, printmaking and sculpture) experiences of cross-departmental collaboration. Whilst student's reported both positive and negative experiences of collaborative working, all were *challenged* by the process and had to approach the concept of making artwork differently than in their individual studio practices.

One student (Painting Department) commented that the experience of collaboration "made me think in a much broader way...about what it means to be an artist, not just a painter" (Appendix 2.1, p385), whilst another student (also a painting student) comment that it had made her realise how "isolated" painters are. Thus the experience of collaboration provoked them to question a 'discipline-specific' view of art practice and stimulated them to think more broadly about **the potential scope** for practice. It was notable to observe that in general, the students of painting (adopting a traditional, 'skills-based' approach to individual practice) found the collaborative process the most challenging, whilst the students of sculpture (adopting more contemporary, 'conceptually-based' approaches to practice) appeared less 'phased' by collaboration.

4.1.3 'Learning' Through Collaborative Practice

The process of collaboration was also found to offer the potential for collaborators to **learn** through a creative process of sharing and exchanging particular skills and/or expertise. This process of **learning through practice** was particularly evident in *interdisciplinary* collaboration, where individuals shared specific subject knowledge and expertise, from their particular disciplines, through a process of collaborative exchange.

In Project Five, where potential collaborators were identified through their individual professional research interests and expertise, the process of 'learning through exchange' was particularly relevant, and influenced the ultimate success of the project, which was realized at the

end of the project, when the group decided to continue working together to advance the development of their 'shared learning'⁸. Part of the success of the project was dependant on the 'complimentarity'⁹ of the collaborators skills and expertise. The importance of having different skills and expertise to contribute in collaboration, in order to prevent 'stepping on each others' toes', and ensure a successful collaborative working relationship is described by artist Matthew Dalziel (who works in collaboration with fellow artist and partner, Louise Scullion):

"I think the partnership has worked because we do different things, and we have different skills... I think that's how it works - like a blend that's producing this third thing. I could imagine a lot of partnerships would flounder if peoples' interests and their skills were too similar... That's how it works with us - we are different and we are interested in different things."

(Appendix 3.2c, p490)

The process of collaboration also enables artists to use a wider range of skills beyond traditional 'art-making' skills, in creative practice. For Fine Art students, the experience of collaboration 'forced' them to develop their existing communication, planning and organisational skills and helped them to recognise the relevance of these 'new' skills¹⁰ in the production of collaborative artworks. In this way, they began to view themselves as 'co-contributors' rather than 'sole-creators', as this student's comment exemplifies:

"Although I don't think I produced anything specific, I feel I contributed to every stage of the project in some way, whether it be coming up with ideas, helping with printing, sorting out the slides or just making sure that I and everyone else knew what was going on with the rest of the project."

(Appendix 2.2, p400)

Collaboration required artists to recognise and develop a range of new skills, and this necessitated them to be open to a process of learning and development. Young acknowledged the importance of having “certain skills to trade and they can be mundane or complicated”, he also recognised that the collaborative process reaches “beyond skills”, to a process of “sorting out devices to cover people’s strengths and weaknesses: you play them to their strengths and you cover their weaknesses” (Appendix 3.2a, p439), in order to achieve collaborative outcomes.

‘Platform’ “bring people together from the arts and the sciences to...utilise the individuals’ creative abilities to make projects about ecological and democratic issues”¹¹ (Appendix 3.2b, p455). Whilst they invite potential collaborators by identifying their particular skills and expertise in relation to the issues/problems of a specific project, they involve participants in a collaborative process of *exchange*. Individuals are not ‘contracted’ purely for specialist skills/expertise, but are *involved* in the process of sharing ideas and **learning** from one another through ‘doing together’.

The notion of ‘**learning through collaborative practice**’ raised the question of individual collaborators’ motives and the personal benefits that collaborators expect to achieve. Young is often surprised by the people who are “willing to collaborate”, and recognises “a kind of...‘arms open’ attitude...which I find recurring [that] wasn’t there five or ten years ago”, although he also recognises and accepts that often people are not interested in the collaborative process: “they just want their pay or their component and that’s fine” (Appendix 3.2a, p440).

4.2 COLLABORATORS: Individual Contributors to Collaboration

As the research progressed, the principal questions from my perspective were: *who* to collaborate with and *how* to engage their *interest* and *willingness* as potential collaborators? Although apparently

straightforward, these questions posed difficult challenges throughout the research, in relation to both the *practical* issues of initiating collaborative projects within the delimited timeframe of the research programme¹², and the project '*design*' issue of *who* to approach to establish a 'deep' level of collaborative engagement in order to achieve a successful and interesting collaborative outcome. Therefore, the research projects explored a variety of strategies for engaging different forms of collaboration with different types of individuals, with the principal aim being to develop *interdisciplinary* collaborations. Achieving different levels of success, the projects represented both **simple** and **complex** forms of collaboration (*section 4.2.1*).

Since Visual artists have tended to pursue the dominant model of individual art practice, the **individual motives** driving artists to work collaboratively were addressed, along with individuals' perceived **expected benefits** (*section 4.2.2*).

In relation to the issue of whether collaboration adopts a **simple** or **complex** form, and the question of what **motivates** individual collaborators to engage in collaborative processes, the question of **how individual roles are negotiated** and defined, is also addressed (*section 4.2.3*).

4.2.1 Simple and Complex Forms of Collaboration

Some forms of collaboration are **more simple** and **more complex** than others. The research investigated strategies for engaging collaboration with different types of collaborators, in different contexts and in different ways. The first four research projects developed relatively **simple** forms of collaboration, involving the input of only two collaborators (the researcher and a co-collaborator)¹³. Three of the four co-collaborators were previously known to the researcher in different capacities¹⁴. In these three examples, the collaboration either emerged out of, or developed further, a pre-existing relationship, in which levels of *trust*

already existed¹⁵. In the case of Project Three, the collaboration took longer to establish as the collaborator was approached ‘cold’¹⁶.

In Project Five, a more **complex** form of collaboration involving five collaborators (discounting the researcher) from different disciplines was established. Although the collaborators were, in the main, unknown to the researcher, in this example the collaboration was established quickly, as a result of careful consideration about how to ‘frame’ the collaboration appropriately to attract potential collaborators’ interest (see *section 4.1.1.*). Thus throughout the duration of the research, and as the researcher became more skilled in identifying and implementing characteristics of successful collaboration, the collaborations took on more **complex** forms, and occurred over longer periods of time¹⁷. This development is illustrated clearly by contrasting the first research project with the final research project:

- **Project One** (*‘Collaborative Drawing Project’*) occurred between two artists, over two days, and with a tightly pre-defined structure.
- **Project Five** (*‘Re-Visioning the Gallery’*) occurred between five collaborators, from different disciplines, over eight months, with a jointly negotiated structure.

Whilst Project One was not considered successful in achieving a ‘deep’ level of collaborative engagement, Project Five was considered the most successful in achieving a ‘deep’ level of collaborative engagement, although it was also more **complex**, and more *challenging* than the first project.

Imagine a straight line describing the continuum from **simple** to **complex**. Collaborations between individuals from the same (or closely related) disciplines would represent forms of collaboration on the **more simple** end of the scale, while collaborations involving collaborators from different disciplines would represent forms of collaboration towards

the opposite, **more complex** end of the scale. As the numbers of collaborators increase, so too does the complexity of collaboration, as more individual contributions and perspectives are introduced.

However, in highlighting a distinction between **simple** and **complex** forms of collaboration, it is not to suggest that **simple forms** of collaboration are *simplistic*, or easy. The Fine Art students' experiences of cross-departmental collaboration with fellow students showed that the collaborative process, even in a **more simple** form of collaboration, still presented many challenges (Appendix 2).

Artist partnership Dalziel and Scullion (engaging in the **more simple** form of collaboration) have developed a successful shared working process over time, but they acknowledge that it was not always easy to establish their individual roles, as Matthew recounts, "We almost take for granted who does what, but that was quite sensitive negotiation to get these positions" (Appendix 3.2c, p489). However, they *also* engage in **more complex** forms of collaboration with individuals and organizations from a range of disciplines and practices. Dalziel's comment below illustrates the importance of trust in their core partnership, and highlights the difficulties of identifying roles and building a basis of trust for collaboration with new collaborators from non-arts-related fields:

"We've spoken about negotiating the intentions between the two of us. We've been working together for quite a while and got used to that, but the problems arise afresh when you start collaborating with other parties. Negotiating the intentions has to start again. That's why we work with the same musician and same construction people because we've been through all those negotiations in earlier projects, we don't need to do that again."

(Appendix 3.2c, p499)

Distinctions between **simple** and **complex** forms of collaboration are addressed more fully in Chapter 5. The issues of negotiating roles between collaborators are addressed in *section 4.2.3*. Firstly, it is necessary to address the issues of **individual motives** for engaging in collaboration and the collaborators' anticipated **benefits**, to identify collaborators' *expectations* of collaboration.

4.2.2 Individual Motives and Perceived Benefits

The issue of individual **motives** for undertaking work is pertinent to the Visual arts, where artists traditionally have undertaken the production of artworks, which reflect individualistic and stylistic interests. As sole-producers of creative work, artists engaged in traditional studio practice have the liberty of self-determination and self-expression through their individual practice. Therefore, artists may be motivated to undertake work for reasons as varied and diverse as individuals' personal interests, professional goals, economic and social circumstances, or for other pragmatic or philosophical reasons. Artists' reasons for collaborating equally might be as varied. However the research found that artists adopting a **positive** approach to collaboration and consciously seeking opportunities for collaboration in their professional practice, there were similarities between their individual **motives** for undertaking collaboration and perceptions of the **benefits** it offered them as individuals.

As a visual artist undertaking research into collaboration, it is important to acknowledge my individual **motives** for developing collaborative forms of practice. These stemmed from the assumption that interdisciplinary collaboration might present the following benefits:

- New methods of visual art practice.
- New contexts for visual art practice.
- New roles for visual artists.

Similarly, the interviewed artists all identified the desire to develop their art practice through collaboration: by working in new *contexts* (three out of four specifically expressed the desire to work in public contexts), by developing new *ways* of working, by *exploring* complex issues, and by *learning* from and about other disciplines. When asked to describe the main **benefits** they felt collaboration offered them as individual artists, their responses were grouped under the following six broad categories:

- **EDUCATIONAL** - the benefits of learning to resolve differences and “practice democratic methodologies”: learning to listen, respect, and learn from people’s experiences, skills and talents.
- **EMPOWERMENT** - the benefit of developing more confidence to face clients/audiences, with the support of co-collaborators.
- **SOCIABILITY** - the benefits of working on collaborative projects that are “rooted in collective action, not individual ego”, and the enjoyment of working with others rather than “being on one’s own”.
- **CRITICAL MASS** – the benefits of brainstorming, discussing and discarding ideas within a supportive, critical group, while being “encouraged in my creativity”.
- **EARNINGS** – the benefit of “being able to generate more income as artists”.
- **PRODUCTIVITY** – the benefit of being able to take on more work, and “make work I could not make on my own”.

(from pre-interview questionnaire forms, Appendix 3.1, pp414 - 432)

The artists described **positive benefits** offered by collaboration, both in relation to the development of their professional art practice, and in relation to their personal development as individuals. Although they all had experienced challenges within collaboration processes, all believed

that the positives of collaboration out-balanced the negatives. Their responses demonstrated openness to ‘change’ and desire for positive ‘individual development’ through collaboration. In approaching collaboration with a positive approach and willingness to become involved in a process of ‘**learning through collaboration**’ (particularly through interdisciplinary collaboration), the artists were motivated by the potential for individual *transformation*¹⁸. Thus collaborative process, whilst being a form of “common work”¹⁹, also benefited collaborators on an individual level. For Young, this **benefit** was presented through opportunities to work with other individuals, whom he “respects”. Thus, his principal individual **motive**, which he describes as being “part of my agenda” to identify potential collaborators:

“I proactively look and I proactively listen to people everywhere I go. I’m obviously self-consciously looking for...things that make me wonder or think...That person’s got certain talents or certain attitudes that I really respond to.”

(Appendix 3.2a, p433)

Young has recognised the transformative benefits of collaboration occurring amongst some of his co-collaborators: “on an individual level, those people are changing too... They change as individuals as much as the projects” (Appendix 3.2a, p450).

In Project Five (*‘Re-Visioning the Gallery’*) it was my *conscious agenda* to identify potential collaborators who had skills and experience that I could learn from and who could challenge my ways of thinking and approaches to practice. I was surprised to find that collaborators from non-art disciplines had similar motives and expectations, and wanted to develop their ways of thinking and working through further interdisciplinary, collaborative research.

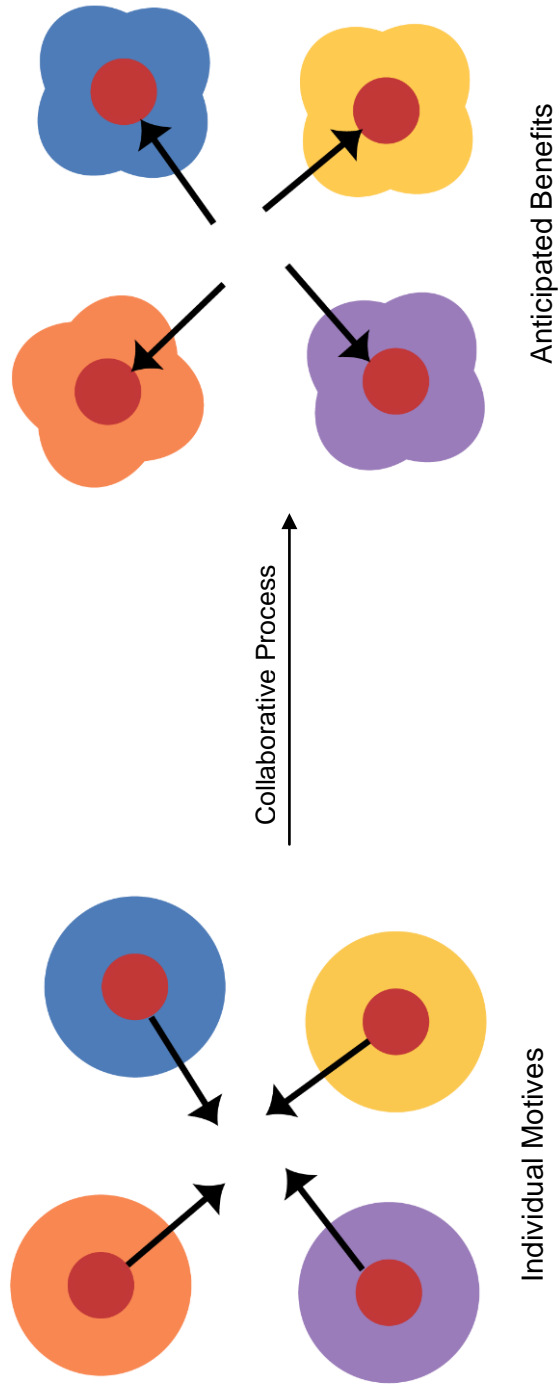


Figure 4.2 Diagram illustrating individuals' transformation through collaboration. (Scopa, K.)

A diagram illustrating the process of *individual transformation* achieved through the collaborative process is presented in *Fig. 4.2* (p132). The first stage of the diagram shows individuals entering into collaboration with particular experiences, knowledge, skills, methods and frames of reference. The transformative potential of the collaborative process for individuals' experiences, knowledge, skills, methods and frames of reference to be both challenged and developed through a process of learning *through* and *from* others, in a **mutually beneficial** process, is shown in the second stage of the diagram. This process was most evident in Project Five, where collaborators extended their disciplinary perspectives in approaching methods of 'visualisation' and decided to continue the **mutually beneficial learning process** beyond the intended end date of the project²⁰.

4.2.3 Negotiating Collaborators' Roles.

While artists and non-artists recognised the individual **benefits** offered by collaboration in relation to their own personal and professional development, the question of *how* to work collaboratively was less obvious. In the three stands of the inquiry (*collaboration in practice*, *collaboration in education* and *case examples of collaboration*), the process of **negotiating collaborators' roles** presented the main *challenge* for collaborators²¹. This was particularly evident in the case of **complex** forms of interdisciplinary collaboration²².

The **complexity** of the collaborative *process*, whether in 'more simple', or 'more complex' *forms* of collaboration (*section 4.2.1*) resulted from the recognition of individual collaborators' motives and expectations of the process²³. Whether or not collaboration was considered *successful* reflected the ways in which individual roles were defined and actively incorporated, to achieve collaborators' **equal input** and **mutual motivation**.

Engaging in a 'more simple' form of collaboration²⁴, the Fine Art students' experiences of collaboration demonstrated the importance of **communication** in the process of negotiating individual roles for collaborators. Many described the process of discussing potential ideas in the initial stages of collaboration as **positive**, while experiencing difficulties of communication 'break-downs' as the process moved on from *exchanging ideas*, to *negotiating individual roles*. In the most successful projects, students maintained high levels of **communication** and **commitment** throughout the duration of the collaboration, and incorporated individuals' ideas and skills to elicit **equal input** from all collaborators.

The following comments made by students reflect the central importance of **communication** in negotiating individual roles, and incorporating individuals' ideas and skills to achieve the **equal input** of all collaborators in contributing to a **collaborative shared vision**:

"...ideas were well shared and were incorporated into the final piece. The group seemed to agree on tactics and each person's expertise was taken into consideration."

(Oliver Robb, Appendix 2.2, p407)

"...we managed to produce a piece of work that involved a range of skills that everybody contributed to."

(David Marr, Appendix 2.2, p402)

"We decided unanimously to make a constructed piece in order for us all to participate and we managed to incorporate everyone's ideas/views into the piece."

(Sandra Johnston, Appendix 2.2, p406)

“All ideas were thoroughly discussed by everyone...Everyone was prepared to listen to what everyone else thought and we all learnt a lot from it. The idea really was a group decision; so much so that I can’t actually remember where the original thought came from.”

(Kirsty Mackrelston, Appendix 2.2, p411)

In projects that were considered less successful, students’ reported more **negative** experiences of collaborative working. Their negative experiences resulted from a lack of **communication** and infrequency of meetings between collaborators, difficulties in negotiating individual **roles** and maintaining an **equal** level of **commitment** from all collaborators.

In particular, students described how the “difficulty” of **communication** and “lack of **commitment**” of some collaborators made them feel “disheartened”. Some students were more interested in their own ideas, rather than the ideas of the group and felt forced to have to **compromise**. For some students, having to compromise was a **negative** experience, when “...enthusiasm for our personal ideas outweighed the collective idea, i.e. everyone compromised...” whilst for others, compromise was perceived as a natural component of the **positive** experience of collaboration, where “everybody seemed willing to discuss ideas and issues to the limit, even though compromises were made by everybody”. (Appendix 2.2, p408)

Students’ **negative** experiences of unsuccessful collaboration were also largely influenced by a lack of **equal input** from collaborators, both in terms of contributing ideas, or contributing in the production of collaborative outcome. This affected the ability of the collaborative group to develop processes of **joint decision-making**. For some, “progress [was] somewhat marred by conflicting ideas and opinions”, whilst for others the time taken to develop ideas and negotiate roles “mean[t] that

we were left with very little time to physically do the things we wanted to". In the group who were least successful in developing collaborative processes, the problem of negotiating **equal roles** for individuals was evident. One student decided to "assum[e] the mantel of organiser and group leader", but then "got frustrated with our lack of progress" and left the group to work on his own, as "the group had shown me I could do it all on my own...being in the group gave me the hunger to do it myself". As a result, other group members **lost motivation**, as they felt abandoned (Appendix 2.2, p409).

In the successful collaborations, students overcome difficulties and individual differences through the process of **shared negotiation** and **joint decision-making** and continued this process of collaborative 're-framing' (section 4.1.3, Fig. 4.1) throughout the duration of the collaboration, as the comments below illustrate:

"...we probably had a few problems with decision-making to start with but with discussion, these were overcome...the majority of the work we produced together through discussion and collaboration...the effort was spread equally among most members of the group."

(Rebecca Harrington, Appendix 2.2, p408)

"We worked as a team from the start and any problems that occurred were solved by consulting the whole group. Although some contributed more than others, the outcome would not be as it is without every member."

(Robert Forrest, Appendix 2.2, p404)

In the successful collaborations "nobody seemed anxious to be 'top dog' and everyone listened to the others' ideas and gave them consideration". The collaborators "generally came to a consensus on each aspect of the project before implementing it" and all individuals

contributed their opinions “before an idea was rejected”. There was also recognition of the need to consider the overall needs of the collaborative group, because “you have got more than just yourself to satisfy”. Ultimately, the students felt that they had **learnt** from their experience “not only about group work, but about compromising, listening, limitations and resources.” (Appendix 2.2, p405)

The skills required to be able to successfully **communicate ideas**, **negotiate roles** and turn compromise into a positive process of **shared decision-making** in collaboration are skills that are **learnt** over time, through the experience of collaborating. As Scullion explains:

“I do think it is a learned skill to be able to communicate an idea to someone you want to help you make something and to be comfortable with the other person’s input - if it starts to move away from what you initially visualised, to feel comfortable with that if it’s moving in a direction you think is good. It took me a while... We had very different views about things...”

(Appendix 3.2c, p494)

All of the artists interviewed identified the crucial need for **trust** to exist between collaborators in order to **negotiate roles** and develop **shared decision-making** processes that are *sensitive* in acknowledging individual **motives** and **expectations**. Similarly the Fine Art students who collaborated successfully were either “all really good friends, so could talk through any ideas or problems easily” or experienced “no real conflicting personalities” and therefore developed “a good understanding and mutual respect for each other” (Appendix 2.2, p411).

The presence of **trust** enabled collaborators to develop open lines of **communication** that are both *respectful*, and *supportive* of individuals’ needs, whilst being *direct* and *critical* enough to enable collaborators to

move in the same direction, towards achieving the shared collaborative vision²⁵. All of the artists interviewed worked with a core group of individuals, between whom **trust** had been built up over a period of time through collaborative relationships, as well as working with collaborators outside that group, who were relatively unknown²⁶.

For Platform particularly, the question of *how* to **negotiate individual roles** and *develop* processes of **shared decision-making** is paramount to the group's conscious desire to "work on a consensual basis and a democratic basis". Marriot acknowledges that in close to twenty years of collaborative practice (p456):

"...we've never taken a vote on anything - we argue it out until we all come to an understanding. So at the core of what we do...we're collaborating and trying to do that."

The philosophy of *democratic* collaboration means that Platform (p460):

"try to work absolutely equally, we try to discuss everything equally, everybody's got the same rights, everybody's got to discuss it, and we argue it out until we come to a decision"

While being consciously aware of the need "have to constantly re-learn and try to learn *how* to be democratic...which is why discussion is really, really important" (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p464).

For Platform, **negotiating equal roles** and developing **shared decision-making** processes means *constant* and *continuous learning* and 're-framing', over a long period of time. Similarly, for Dalziel and Scullion "*It's always a process of negotiation...*" (Dalziel, Appendix 3.2c, p495). These difficult and sensitive processes of negotiation are built upon the **trust** between collaborators, but can also require an openness and willingness to trust individuals who are relatively unknown to co-

collaborators. For Young, key importance is placed on the ability to **respect** individuals:

“...If you respect someone and you respect their talents, you’ve then got the basis for collaboration. You haven’t got a clue whether you’re going to...lead[ing] or if they’re going to. It’s never, ever the same deal. There isn’t a standard deal - its different every time.”

(Young, Appendix 3.2a, p433)

Achieving a **balance** between collaborators’ individual identities and the identity of the collaborative group is also important, particularly in the case of artists partnerships (Dalziel and Scullion) and small collaborative groups (Platform). Platform recognised the “need to work collectively but without strangling the possibility that someone might need to work independently” (p461), whilst Scullion felt a need to maintain her identity as an artist, whilst still attaining the benefits offered by collaboration. As their comments below illustrate:

“There is a time when you need to allow somebody to be completely free doing what they want to do...At the same time...we work as one ‘group ego’, or ‘group artist’.”

(Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p461-2)

“It’s trying to get a balance between not loosing your identity (as an artist), because there are artists who have become more businesslike and...it doesn’t take long for them to stop being seen as artists.”

(Scullion, Appendix 3.2c, p492)

Marriot’s comment reflects a need to recognise and support individuals’ **motives**, or needs, within collaboration, whilst still maintaining a collective, group identity. Dalziel and Scullion identified the **benefits** of

collaborative working, without losing their identity as ‘artists’ in the professional context²⁷. For Young, the flexibility of using the term ‘artist’ was broad enough to allow him the opportunity to work in a variety of ways, on a variety of projects, collaborating with a variety of different types of individuals. The successes of Young’s experiences of collaboration have increased as “we’re getting better at communicating as individuals and we’re getting better as a group at certain things”(Appendix 3.2a, p450). This raises the issue of how artists, who have tended to be viewed in the professional art context as *individual* practitioners define their individual identity as creative practitioners within a collaboration.

Approaching collaborators from different disciplines in Project Five (‘Re-Visioning the Gallery’), I was concerned about how my role was perceived by co-collaborators, both as an ‘artist’ and as the ‘project coordinator’²⁸. Initially, my role was principally that of facilitator and coordinator in bringing collaborators together in the context of the Aberdeen Art Gallery to work together. I found it necessary in the initial stages to metaphorically take a ‘back seat’ to enable collaborators to establish a sense of **ownership** over the direction of the project²⁹.

Through a process of discussion and **negotiation**, collaborators agreed to work collaboratively, “rather than as individuals within a group” (Appendix 1.5, p371). As the project progressed, my role became that of a co-collaborator (rather than a facilitator). Through processes of **negotiating** individual roles and contributions, and developing processes of **shared decision-making**, the collaborators developed a shared sense of **ownership**, particularly in the latter stages of the project (the group wrote a proposal for further interdisciplinary collaborative research)³⁰. This shift from being at the *centre* of the collaboration in the early stages, to adopting a more **equal role**, with **shared ownership** and responsibility for the project, is illustrated below (Fig. 4.3).

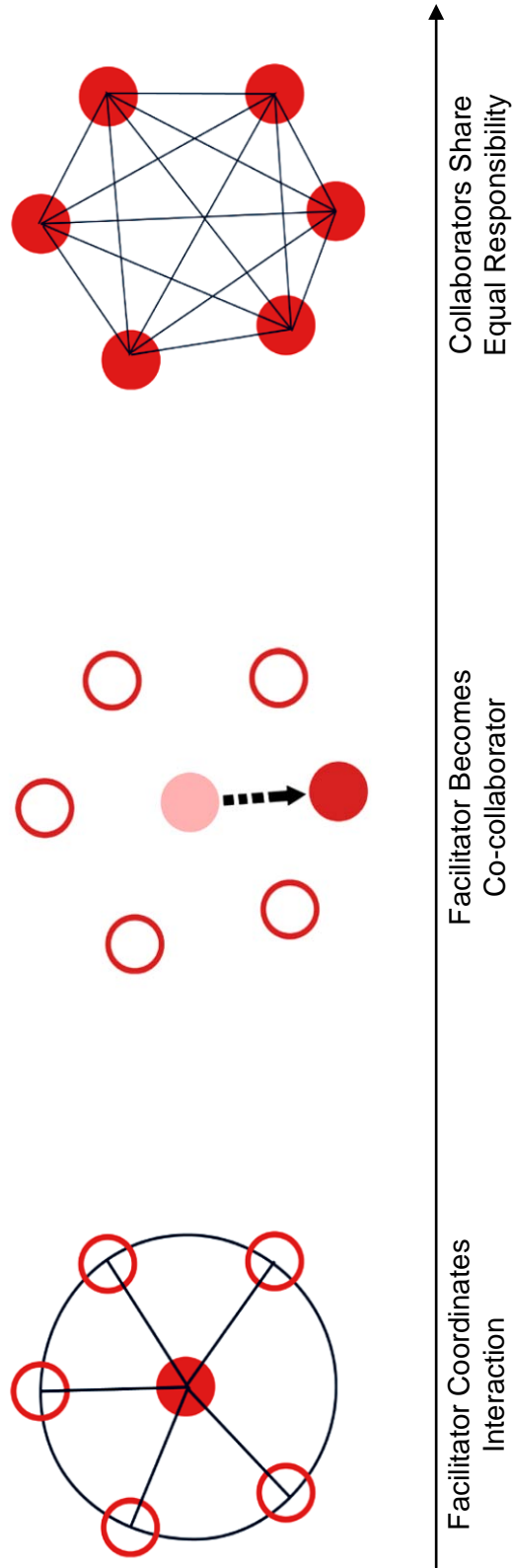


Figure 4.3 Diagram illustrating the development of the collaboration initiator's role from facilitator to co-collaborator. (Scopa, K.)

Although the collaborators had *different* individual skills and expertise, they all had a shared interest in the project aim and were able to negotiate individual contributions and roles throughout the project. However it was recognised that coming from different disciplines, and with different **methodologies** of practice, the *challenge* was to develop ‘truly’ collaborative methods of ‘doing together’³¹. **Trust** was established relatively quickly in the project as individuals made their **motives** and **expectations** explicit with the group. However, in Project Three (*The Contract Book*), the process of building **trust** and **negotiating roles** was more difficult, as a result of collaborators **different expectations**, and **aesthetic values**³².

Throughout the research, the *complexities* of **negotiating individual roles**, developing **shared decision-making processes**, **ownership** and a collaborative **shared vision**, were found to be the true *challenges* at the ‘heart’ of collaboration. The ability to ‘rise to these challenges’, and achieve successful collaboration was dependent on the abilities of individual collaborators to **communicate** their **motives** and **expectations**, **respect** the views of co-collaborators, elicit **equal input** from individuals and build **trust** between members of the group.

4.3 CONTEXT: The Environment And Conditions For Collaboration

Like most other forms of practice, collaboration can occur in a wide range of different environments and under different conditions. In the initial stages of the research, one of the principal intentions in developing a variety of strategies for engaging collaborations with different collaborators, and in different contexts (through the five main research projects – *collaboration in practice*) was to identify *if* and *how* different **environments** and **conditions** influenced the form of the collaboration and nature of the collaborative working processes. While some ‘physical’ conditions *were* found to be more and less conducive to collaborative working, the main focus for consideration shifted from

addressing the physical context, to addressing the ‘invisible’ **context created between collaborators**.

This section addresses how the **environment** and **conditions** collaboration occurs within influences both the collaborative processes, and in particular, the *ways* artists work (*section 4.3.1*). It also addresses the more **complex** context **between collaborators**, which is created when individuals come together to engage in collaboration (*section 4.3.2*).

4.3.1 The Environment and Conditions for Collaboration

In the process of listing individual motives for ‘desiring’ or ‘needing’ to work collaboratively, all of the interviewed artists stated a desire to work in new contexts, and three stated ‘public’ contexts in particular (from pre-interview questionnaire forms, Appendix 3.1). The opportunity presented by collaboration for artists to work in a variety of **different contexts** provided an alternative to traditional individual, studio-based art practice³³.

As described in *section 4.2.2*, one of the assumptions underpinning the research was that interdisciplinary collaboration might present *new contexts* for visual artists to work within. The ‘**context-specific**’³⁴ nature of collaborative projects was also perceived as an important and attractive feature by the artists interviewed. For artist partnership Dalziel and Scullion, collaboration enabled them to work in public contexts with other organisations and practitioners; for interdisciplinary ‘arts’ group Platform, collaboration enabled them to actively engage in complex ecological and environmental issues in their local London context, with a variety of professionals and specialists from different disciplines; and for artist Gordon Young, collaboration enabled him to work with a range of different people from all sectors of society in a broad range of public contexts.

Collaboration, and in particular, *interdisciplinary* collaboration, enabled individuals to work both in ‘new’ contexts and in *response to* particular contexts. Therefore, the **context-specific** nature of collaboration demands methods of practice that are **relevant** to that particular setting³⁵.

As Dalziel describes:

“We’re presented with situations or contexts to respond to and that’s quite exciting because it does keep you fresh and having to come up with new ideas for different contexts...In the way we work, the context is changing rapidly all the time, which is helpful and quite exciting. You can bring new people in to fit these new contexts. Probably, why we don’t work with the same person all the time is because the context is shifting and that person may not be right for that context.”

(Appendix 3.2c, p493)

As well as providing new opportunities and approaches to practice, Dalziel (Appendix 3.2c, p504) also recognises the need to be able to be **adaptable** in developing **relevant criteria** for creating and evaluating context-specific work in relation to different audiences:

“When you operate in a gallery, you have to get used to the context: who frequents that place, who is likely to experience the work, and how they view it. You have to know that to make a work in context. ... I think we are getting quite good at knowing and working with these different contexts and different audiences. It’s not something that everybody can do because some people get used to working in the gallery all the time and other people get used to working in the public all the time, and find it difficult when they come to the gallery, because the criteria they’re trying to work with is different.”

Context-specific collaborative projects presented the “realis[ation] that you can do things on a ‘bigger stage’”. For Young this meant “the agenda is to do *different* things”, which required working in *different* ways, particular to each **specific** collaborative context:

“There are projects where I’m trying to hand over and get out to do something fresh, and there’s other projects where the parameters are set and there’s a very specific job and its a case of saying ‘yes’ or ‘no’... You’ve got to feel comfortable... that it’s worth doing... There’s no one model: all the time, you’re judging it on it’s own merits.”

(Appendix 3.2a, p453)

For Dalziel, responding to different and specific contexts, collaborators and ‘audiences’, required being “open to changing situations that change the nature of what you do” (Appendix 3.2c, p506). Such an **open** and **dynamic** approach to practice meant that artists worked in an **exposed** way and had to feel “comfortable” (*Young, see previous quote*) working in a particular context in order to prevent being *vulnerable* in the process of making collaborative creative works. The need to feel **comfortable** within collaboration was influenced by both the *physical environment* and **conditions** of the particular context, and also by the presence (or lack of presence) of **trust** existing in the context created **between** collaborators³⁶. (The context created *between* collaborators is addressed in *section 4.3.2.*)

The five research projects initiated collaborations in a variety of different *physical environments*, and under different **conditions**³⁷. From these examples, it became evident that whether the collaborative **environment** was **open** (public/professional) or **closed** (private/domestic) influenced the conditions under which the collaboration was conducted. In an open environment, a **more formal, professional conditions** were presented, whilst in a **closed**

environment, more **informal** and **spontaneous conditions** were presented³⁸. In **closed** environments, a **safe space** for *discussion*, *debate* and *negotiation* between collaborators was provided and this was considered a necessary requirement in contributing to the development of **trust** between collaborators (this is addressed further in *section 4.3.2*). In **open** public/professional environments, **less time** was available for *discussion*, *debate* and *negotiation* as the need to develop **products** was more dominant than the *process* of collaboration³⁹.

In **open** environments, **more formal** conditions for collaboration were presented. In **closed** environments, **more informal** conditions for collaboration were presented⁴⁰. However, the **environments were not fixed**, but changed throughout the duration of some projects, which also **changed the conditions** for the collaboration and in some cases influenced a re-focusing of collaborative **aims** in order to produce a collaborative product⁴¹.

In **Project Five**, the collaborators worked *within* and *in response to* the **open**, public context of the Aberdeen Art Gallery. Whilst collaborators undertook activities with participants and members of the public in the **open** public spaces of the Gallery, group meetings occurred in **closed** non-public spaces, to enable more open and **informal** *discussion*, *debate* and *negotiation* to occur between collaborators. The Gallery context also provided a **neutral space** for collaborators to meet, as it was not a usual place of work for collaborators⁴². In contexts providing a **shared space** for collaborators to work together was found to have a more **positive** influence on collaboration than a context that did not provide a neutral space for collaborators⁴³.

The main features of the **context** of collaboration (defining the **conditions** for collaboration and influencing the collaborative *process*) were the projects **aims**, the **collaborators** themselves, the

environment in which the collaboration occurred and the **resources** available. These are illustrated in the diagram below (*Fig. 4.4*):

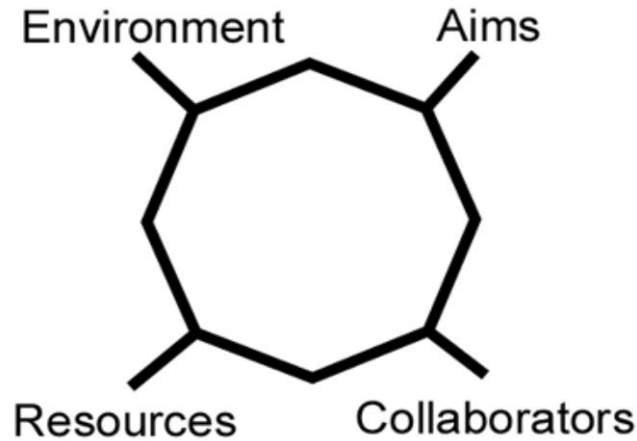


Figure 4.4 Diagram illustrating the main features shaping the context of collaboration and influencing collaborative processes. (Scopa, K.).

4.3.2 The 'Inter-subjective' Context Formed *Between* Collaborators

However, an even greater influence (than **environment** and **conditions**) on the form that collaboration takes was found in the context created and developed **between collaborators**. Collaboration requires the participation of more than one individual, and this itself defines the most fundamental context for collaboration: the meeting-place between two or more individuals. The focus in the research shifted from looking at the **external influences** of context on the collaborative process (such as the physical environment), to looking at the **internal**, 'inter-subjective',⁴⁴ context formed **between collaborators**.

The *complexity* at the heart of collaborative processes was found in the *exchanges, dialogues, debates* and *negotiations* through which collaborators develop individual roles and recognise the roles of others (*section 4.2.3*), and develop a **shared collaborative vision** (whilst acknowledging **individuals' motives** and **expectations** (*section*

4.2.2)). The value of having a **safe space** for undertaking these processes (section 4.3.1) and developing **trust** between collaborators was also recognised. Thus, *communication* was crucial in these processes, as Platform explain:

“We’ve often said that the logo of this company should be a donkey missing its hind leg, because we talk about everything: we ‘chew the hind legs off donkeys’. Talking is very important here and we discuss everything... What we’re doing in discussing things is exercising.”

(Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p463)

While Scullion recognised some of the *challenges* of communication in collaborative ‘relationships’:

“I think communication is so important... In a relationship with someone (whether a musician or an architect) you have to understand if something’s going wrong, why is it going wrong and try to articulate that. Those are all quite difficult processes - to both understand and to communicate it back at a time where you can still do something about it.”

(Appendix 3.2c, p500-1)

Scullion’s comment also identifies the *different* process involved in communication. The ‘inter-subjective’ context formed **between collaborators**, required *complex* communicative processes that went deeper than *conversation*, and required the development of a **shared language** (particularly in interdisciplinary collaboration), to establish implicit **shared values** between collaborators⁴⁵. It required ‘communicative work’ to develop these processes at relevant stages throughout the collaborative process, and the ‘inter-subjective’ context was not **fixed**, but **fluid**.

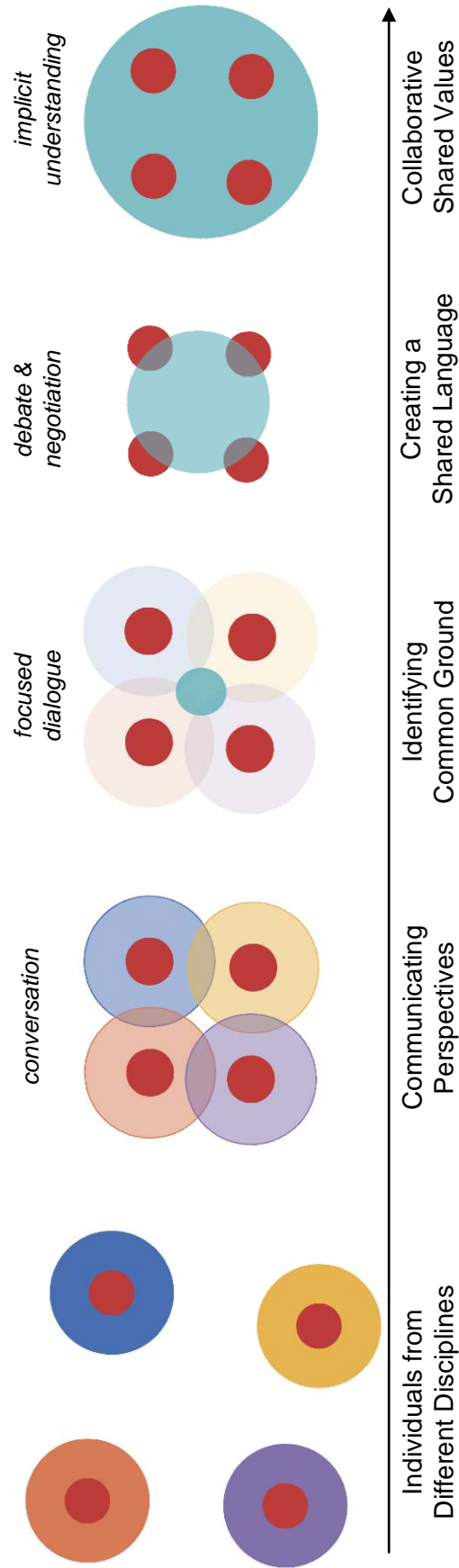


Figure 4.5 Diagram illustrating the 'inter-subjective' context of shared values created between collaborators, through the identification of common ground and development of a shared language. (Scopa, K.)

Attempting to clarify the **types of communication** and **functions** of communicative forms at different stages throughout the collaborative process, the above diagram (*Figure 4.5*) presents a simplified illustration of the *complex* processes of creating and defining the **'inter-subjective' context formed between collaborators**. In the first instance, collaborators come together with specific individual perspectives. In the early stage of collaboration, communication is **more conversational** and involves individual collaborators *sharing* their particular *perspectives* with the group. At this stage (of 'introduction'), collaborators tend to be recognised by '*what they do*' and '*where they come from*'⁴⁶. In this process, "you just unpack all the information you have. You share the information... If the person is triggered or interested, you're up and flying" (Young, Appendix 3.2a, p442).

The *conversational* stage evolves into a **more focused dialogue**, in which specific areas of overlap (in relation to individual interests and project aims) are explored and common ground between collaborators is identified. Even within the established collaborative group Platform, where trust has been developed over time, "we're in constant dialogue and we're constantly realising how close we are and how far away we are" (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p478). This stage is parallel with that of 'inhabiting' and 're-framing' the 'problem/issue' (project aim), as described previously (*section 4.1.1, fig. 4.1*). The focus shifts from individuals' interests and values, towards the development of a **shared collaborative vision** of how to proceed.

Collaborators become more concerned with '*what to do*' and '*how to do it together*'. This stage involves processes of **debate** and **negotiation** and uncovers the *differences* between collaborators, particularly in relation to specific **methodologies** of practice, and therefore sets of **values**. In this process, a **shared language** is created to make **values explicit**. This may be a lengthy and difficult stage, as it requires the

development of *understanding* between collaborators. As Young described:

“To get a shared language takes a little bit of time. It’s not immediate. You assume people are picking up on what you are saying and it’s not the case. So the shared language (getting used to how somebody expresses themselves) is a recurring issue.”

(Appendix 3.2a, p445)

Through this process, the collaborators are drawn together more closely and achieve ‘deeper’ understanding of individual perspectives and positions. Through this process, **trust** is developed.

If achieved, the ‘**inter-subjective**’ **context** formed **between collaborators**, creates a ‘deep’ level of understanding between collaborators. The collaborators are drawn into an ‘inter-subjective’ context, in which **values** are *implicitly* communicated through a **shared language**.

In the case of ‘more complex’ forms of *interdisciplinary* collaboration, the development of **shared collaborative values** is particularly complex⁴⁷. Platform acknowledged the differences of values, languages and methodologies in bringing very different disciplines together:

“...when one is trying to combine arts and sciences for example, there are huge problems to do with concepts of language, concepts of truth, concepts of success, and they pose real problems, issues and difficulties... Methodologies is a very important question... one needs to constantly try to find a common zone, where they can interplay.”

(Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p472)

However, Marriot goes on to suggest that differences in disciplinary values can be overcome “ultimately through friendship...It’s certainly what works for us (the core group) and also with people we work with on projects...Trust, I think is crucial” (p473). In an ‘**inter-subjective context formed between collaborators**, a ‘deep’ understanding of individuals builds trust and prevents misunderstandings/judgements being made on a superficial basis.

The types of **communication** (*conversation, focused dialogue, debate and negotiation and implicit understanding*) and stages in forming an ‘**inter-subjective collaborative context** (*communicating perspectives, identifying common ground, creating a shared language and establishing collaborative shared values*) are presented in the illustrative diagram (*Fig. 4.5, p149*) in a linear, simplified way to enable the description of complex processes. However, the processes occur in fluid, changing and inter-changeable ways in the live context and stages in the process may need to be re-visited and repeated throughout the collaborative process.

4.4 STRUCTURE: Methods of Organising Collaborative Processes

Collaboration was found to be highly **context-specific** (*section 4.3*), influenced by collaborators **individual motives** and **expectations** (*section 4.2*), and often addressed **complex aims**, which needed to be *inhabited* and ‘*re-framed*’ by collaborators (*section 4.1*). In addressing appropriate ways of structuring, or organising collaborative processes, it was necessary to approach each particular case individually, in relation to the specific **context**.

However, the research identified and developed some examples of strategies for **organising collaborative processes**, which were found to be either **more** or **less conducive** to achieving ‘successful’ collaboration, and identified some key factors that **limit** its development.

This section addresses the **dynamic** nature of collaborative processes and describes **key limiting factors**.

4.4.1 Managing the Dynamics of Collaboration

Throughout the research, the **context-specific** and *changeable* nature of collaboration was identified. The structure defined the ‘shape’ of a collaborative project in relation to the **project aims** (*section 4.1*), the **context** (*section 4.3*) in which it occurred, and the **conditions** available. Therefore, the structure defined the *framework*, within which *methods* were developed to achieve **collaborative aims**.

As an understanding of the complexity of **dynamic collaborative processes** emerged during the research, the focus shifted from looking at the ‘design’ of collaborative *projects*, to developing appropriate **strategies** to support key stages in collaborative *processes*⁴⁸. This required a *heuristic* and *exploratory* approach to ‘modelling’ *parts* of the collaborative process, rather than developing a definitive, model of collaboration, which the **context-specific** nature of collaboration would not allow, as Young identified:

“You can only throw out models and hope that another generation follows it up and does something better. All you’re trying to do is leave markers and models. It’s a tautology where you’re trying for something and you know before you’ve even started that it’s impossible to achieve... You look at the models and if they are not applicable for you, you just do your best.”

(Appendix 3.2a, p454)

The research projects demonstrated that **without a clear structure** (or *methods of organising* collaborative processes), collaboration was **difficult to achieve** and **less successful**. Projects that were ‘**overly structured**’ tended to result in **limited** levels of engagement between

collaborators, and presented **less-successful** forms of collaboration. This was most evident in the Fine Art students' experiences of collaboration and the first four experimental research projects⁴⁹.

In general, the research showed that a **pre-defined** project structure did not allow collaborators to *inhabit* and *re-frame* the problem/issue being addressed (*section 4.1.3, Fig. 4.1*) and as a result, it was *difficult* to develop a **shared collaborative vision** of how the project should proceed. The achievement of a *shared collaborative vision* was **more successful** in projects where the structure of collaborative working was allowed to **evolve**, in response to the particular *context* and *contributions* of individual collaborators. This required collaborators to be **adaptable** to the context and **responsive** to one others' individual input. Thus, **tightly-defined** project structures were **less flexible** and **reduced** the levels of *engagement between collaborators*, whilst **loosely-structured** projects were **more flexible** and **adaptive** to the directions agreed by collaborators in the process of developing a **collaborative shared vision**, and **ownership** of the project.

The dividing line between an '**overly**' **structured** project and the lack of a **clear structure** in influencing the success (or lack of success) in achieving collaboration, was **subtle** and required constant evaluation. For Platform (Mariott, Appendix 3.2b, p477), the development of "democratic" collaborative structures eliciting collaborators' **equal input** and **shared ownership** has demanded constant *experimentation, re-development* and *evaluation* since the group's formation:

"We evolved it by constant trial and error... we slowly gain courage over time to talk about the things that we do, which we know are important but that we never really talked about with anyone else... The constant reforming, the sense that we're equal, and that we have a weird economic structure, is absolutely fundamental to what we do."

Achieving the **fine balance** between a **flexible** and **adaptable**, yet **structured** approach to collaboration is **difficult** and **complex**, but important in achieving **implicit collaborative shared values** (section 4.3.2, Fig. 4.5) and influencing the **success** of collaboration. Platform view this complex process as the ‘**creative core**’ of their practice:

*“The structure **is** the practice. We’re constantly in a process of saying, ‘How are we going to structure this?’ We tear the thing up...every year and re-design what we do... That’s a constant, ongoing process...so that the actual organism that is this institution reflects the people who are in it. They’ve made it themselves...and constantly ‘re-make’ it. I see that as a sculptural process, a forming process.”*

(Mariott, Appendix 3.2b, p457)

4.4.2 Factors Limiting Collaborative Processes

Throughout the research, main factors found to **limit the success** of collaboration were those that **prevented** the development a **shared collaborative vision** between collaborators (sections 4.1 and 4.2), and the development of **implicit collaborative shared values** in the ‘**inter-subjective**’ collaborative context.

When asked to list factors that can **limit the success** of collaboration, all of the interviewed artists identified **time** and **money** as the main two (from pre-interview questionnaire forms, Appendix 3.1, pp 414 - 432).

Lack of time reduced the type and amount of communication between collaborators, which were required in order to build **trusting relationships** and develop **shared collaborative values**. Although issues of funding and payment were not directly addressed through the five main research projects⁵⁰, the artists interviewed identified the limitations that **funding** and **payment** can create in the professional

context: more people to be paid, more money required for travel, and economic differences between collaborators. Platform recognise that:

“...time and money is pretty fundamental in a capitalist society. If you can’t assist the process financially...then there’s a ceiling on time, and that’s a real pain. I think that the biggest problem is in the economic sphere. It’s not in the sphere of people debating and sharing ideas.”

(Mariott, Appendix 3.2b, p474)

To address these issues and maintain openness and accountability Platform developed a *democratic* system, whereby all collaborators are **paid equally** for their collaborative contributions. Often working with organisations, Dalziel and Scullion “noticed that the project managers and engineers were getting paid significantly more than the artists”, and so developed a strategy in which “we treat ourselves like an *organisation*...and we’re always paid the same as the architects or the engineers”. They recognised the importance of being “on a level”, do that “you don’t need to feel *inferior*. The ‘individual artist’ is a bit vulnerable because they’re seen more as the ‘quirky artist’ (rather than an organisation)” (p491). Young also identified the importance of financial accountability in collaboration. In one project, he “opened a specific bank account and did ‘transparent accounts’, so that anyone...on the job could...see where the money was going on any component of it”. This process meant that collaborators “remained friends on into the future”. (Appendix 3.2, p437)

4.5 PRODUCT: Outcomes Generated From Collaboration

The product(s) of collaboration are important: why collaborate (*or do anything for that matter*) without some sense of an end result or desired goal? Depending on the specific aims of collaboration, the resulting collaborative products may be varied and diverse: **physical objects/artefacts, new processes or solutions to problems/issues.**

Whilst one of my assumptions outset of the research was that collaboration might enable artists to create different *types* of products (as well as providing *new contexts* for artists to work within and *new approaches* to art practice), the main research concern was not to develop criteria for evaluating the success/failure of collaborative **products**, but rather to *identify* and *describe* the **characteristics** and *qualities* (Chapter 5) of successful collaborative **processes**. Through the process of undertaking the research, a distinction was made between the **tangible products** of collaboration and the **less tangible outcomes** of successful collaborative processes. The latter is addressed below in (*section 4.5.1*), which describes the ‘**invisible**’ **products** of collaboration.

4.5.1 The ‘Invisible’ Products of Collaboration

Throughout the research, **successful** collaborations were found to produce **tangible** (or ‘*visible*’) collaborative outcomes, whereas in less successful, examples, **tangible** outcomes were less evident and collaborators had *difficulty* in achieving a **collaborative end product**⁵¹.

Dalziel and Scullion evaluate the artwork they produce collaboratively principally by aesthetic criteria, whilst recognising that collaboration influences both the ‘look’ and ‘feeling’ of their artworks (Dalziel, Appendix 3.2c, p505):

“the work itself takes on a social aspect, that probably working on your own doesn’t... the artists’ ego can get so involved working on your own...there is a difference between works done collaboratively and those done by a person working on their own... I think it’s because of the quality of the process...the work is made by a third person (if its two people working): it is this ‘other thing’ that’s not ‘me’. I think that’s different to each of us working on our own. It’s hard to say what it is exactly...”

For Platform, the main products of collaboration are not physical artworks, but projects which enable a their direct and active engagement with *social, political, cultural and environmental issues/problems* in order to “effect social change” (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p465). Although their projects do produce tangible outcomes, these tend not to be evaluated by ‘traditional’ aesthetic criteria, but rather by their success in addressing problems/issues and *contributing to solving the problems* identified⁵².

Similarly, Young is less concerned with the production of ‘artworks’, than in contributing to projects that produce a variety of physical outcomes⁵³. He recognised that “some people are interested because they think that you are extending the parameters of what is Art. It’s interesting to us, but it’s not the primary motive” (p450). Young also recognises that the **less visible processes** of collaboration influence the visible end products: “what you see there is the result of a lot of hard work and a lot of arguments and discussions to do with how we move forward.” (Appendix 3.2a, p452).

In **Project Five** (*‘Re-Visioning the Gallery’*), which was considered the most successful of the five research projects undertaken, the main outcomes of collaboration were also those considered the **least visible**: *a new way of looking at the Gallery, an innovative approach to interdisciplinary working, the development of new ways of working collaboratively and the development of a new collaborative perspective*. Thus, the project outcomes were not ‘artworks’ in either a ‘traditional’ or ‘physical’ sense.

Platform recognised that the way the group works (*democratically and collaboratively*) and the ways in which their processes are structured and ‘re-structured’ is the main ‘creative practice’ of the group. Similarly, the collaborative creative process of Dalziel and Scullion is central to their **methodology of practice**, which is different to individual practice:

“There is a lot of emphasis on...individuals themselves as being the work, which is what we’re trying to get away from... We’re trying to develop a practice that is interesting, but is seen more like an interesting company...so there is less emphasis on the ‘individuals’ and more emphasis on the ‘company’ that does interesting things.”

(Dalziel, Appendix 3.2c, p502)

For these artists, their ways of working collaboratively present **‘invisible’ products** of their collaborative *processes* and ‘frames’ their **methodology of ‘creative collaborative practice’**, as opposed to **‘individual’ art practice**. This provided different perspectives of their roles as artists, as Young illustrates: “I’m no different from small businesses. I *am* a small business” (Appendix 3.2a, p438).

4.6 Summary of Outcomes

The research undertook to *identify* and *describe* the **characteristics** (the particular features that ‘shape’ collaboration and influence its success/failure) of collaborative processes (stated research objective 3, Chapter 1). In this chapter, five project reports, two student project reports, four completed pre-interview questionnaire forms, and three full transcripts of interviews with artists were subjected to cross-comparative analysis. This primary research data was obtained through the three strands of inquiry (*collaboration in practice, collaboration in education, and case examples of collaboration*). Five basic components of collaboration (without which collaboration could not exist) were used as filters to organise the data. Under these headings (aims, collaborators, context, structure and product), the **main characteristics** of collaboration were identified and described.

From this analysis, the **complexity** and **dynamic** nature of collaboration was identified. Although collaboration was found to be highly **context-**

specific and influenced by a variety of factors relating to each particular example, similarities and patterns in characteristics of the collaborative *process* were identified. A summary of the identified main characteristics of collaboration is provided:

Collaboration (in particular *interdisciplinary* collaboration) is suited to addressing **complex problems/issues**. It can enable visual artists to work on a **larger scale** than individual practice. *Interdisciplinary* collaboration in particular provides artists with opportunities to cross over disciplinary boundaries, broaden the **scope** of art practice beyond traditional art infrastructures, and to **learn** through the process of collaborating with others. Collaboration needs **clear aims** to engage the interest of co-collaborators. Aims need to be **challenging** enough to engage the *interest* and *contributions* of all collaborators, whilst being **flexible** enough to allow collaborators to *inhabit* and *'re-frame'* the 'problems/issues' being addressed (*Fig. 4.1*). This process enables collaborators to develop a **shared collaborative vision** of *how* to proceed, which requires constant review and evaluation due to the dynamic and developmental nature of collaboration. (*Section 4.1*)

Collaboration can take many **forms**. *Fewer* collaborators, from similar or related disciplines, presented a **more simple** form of collaboration. *More* collaborators, from different, or unrelated disciplines, presented a **more complex** form of collaboration. However, **no** form of collaboration is *'simplistic'*. Collaborators' **individual motives** and **expectations** (*Fig. 4.2*) are made *explicit* in the process of *inhabiting* and *'re-framing'* project aims to develop a *shared collaborative vision*, and **negotiating individual roles**. Individuals' *skills/expertise/knowledge* should contribute to achieving the **shared collaborative vision** and be *complementary*, to enable collaborators' **equal input**. Roles can change and evolve (*Fig. 4.3*), and should be *continually reviewed* to maintain collaborators' **motivation**. (*Section 4.2*)

Collaboration is highly **context-specific**. It is influenced by the conditions provided by the particular project **aim**, the **collaborators** involved, the **environment** in which it is conducted and the **resources** available (*Fig. 4.4*). A **shared** or **neutral environment** for collaboration provides a non-threatening, **safe space** for collaborators to develop **trust**. The ‘**inter-subjective**’ **context** formed **between collaborators** influences the formation of **shared collaborative values**. Different **types of communication** are necessary to achieve **mutual understanding** between collaborators. **Shared interests** are identified in *conversation*, **common ground** is identified through *focused dialogue* and a **shared language** is developed through *debate* and *negotiation*. **Communication** is central in developing **shared collaborative values** and achieving **implicit understanding** between collaborators (*Fig. 4.5*). (*Section 4.3*)

Collaboration is a **dynamic** and **emergent** process. Achieving an **appropriate structure** for successful collaboration is a **delicate balance**. A *too ‘tightly-structured’* collaboration resulted in **limited levels of engagement** between collaborators and limited the development of **collaborative methods** of practice. A *too ‘loosely-structured’* approach contributed to a **loss of direction** and **focus**, which **de-motivated collaborators**. The **structure** of collaboration needs to be **flexible**, **adaptable** and **responsive** to the particular **context**, and to the *evolving* individual **roles** and **shared collaborative vision**. The main **factors limiting** the success of collaboration are **time** and **money**. Lack of **time** reduced the level of communication required to achieve **mutual understanding** and **trust** between collaborators and develop **shared collaborative values**. **Funding** influenced the *amount* of **time** available for concentrating on collaborative *processes* and influenced whether collaborators were **treated equally** (*Section 4.4*).

Successful collaboration results in the production of **tangible outcomes**. Some of the products of collaboration are **more visible**, whilst some are **less visible**. **Visible products** reflect the achievement of **practical project aims**. **'Invisible'** products reflect the **mutually beneficial outcomes** achieved through the collaborative **process** (such as the development of a *new perspective*, or *new methods* of practice). (Section 4.5)

4.7 Evaluation of Outcomes

The cross-comparative, descriptive analysis uncovered *common patterns* in the primary research data and enabled the **main characteristics** of collaboration to be *identified* and *described*. The **form (or 'shape') of collaboration** and the **implicit characteristics of collaborative processes** were made **explicit**. Diagrams were developed to *illustrate characteristics* of **complex collaborative processes**. The following limitations of the analysis are acknowledged:

- The five research project reports (Appendix 1) evaluate the researchers' *experiences* and *observations* of collaboration. Therefore, the primary research data provides information principally from the artists' (researcher) perspective of collaboration, rather than the perspectives of co-collaborators.
- The inter-dependency and 'interwoven-ness' of the characteristics identified in this chapter is complex in live collaborative projects. In order to identify common patterns (across a variety of different types of primary research data) and extract information from which to describe those characteristics, it was necessary to 'simplify collaboration' in relation to five basic components (*aims, collaborators, context, structure and product*) in order to identify and describe general characteristics.

- The diagrams presented in this chapter are ‘over-simplified’ in order to visually illustrate complex characteristics of the collaborative process.
- The main characteristics of collaboration identified have not been subjected to further verification by ‘testing’ in relation to specific case examples due to the timescale and limitation of the research programme.

The main characteristics of collaboration uncovered through the cross-comparative, descriptive analysis in this chapter are addressed further (Chapter 5) to identify and describe the **key qualities** of **particular forms of collaboration**. The collaborative process is **qualitatively** distinguished from other processes of shared working and a **critical framework** is constructed, which is used to describe four models of collaboration and to evaluate the five main research projects.

Notes from Chapter 4

- ¹ The logic behind the Platforms methodology of *interdisciplinary* collaboration lies in the belief that since the complexity of these issues is contributed to by multiple-parties, a multi-disciplinary approach to addressing them is also necessary, and collaboration can enable this. This logic is also recognised by practitioners in non-arts fields. Barbara Gray argues for professions to adopt a position of social and cultural responsibility beyond their narrow disciplinary boundaries. Gray, B. (1989) *Collaborating: Finding common ground for multiparty problems*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. In an investigation of forms of “creative collaboration” in the fields of art and science, Vera John-Steiner describes “*integrative collaboration*” as a form of collaboration that “transforms both the [professional] field and the participants”, in the search for new paradigms of knowledge and practice. John-Steiner (2000) *Creative Collaboration*, New York: Oxford University Press (p70).
- ² This approach to collaboration, where individuals are brought together to address complex issues is described by John-Steiner as the development of “*thought communities*”, in which “experienced thinkers...collaborate with an intensity that can led to a change in their domain’s dominant paradigm” (2000:196). Although specifically describing ‘thought communities’ within single disciplines, Vera-Steiners description of the aims and approach to collaboration are similar to Platform’s aim to bring practitioners from different disciplines to contribute to ‘thinking’ about how to address complex social, economic and ecological issues.
- ³ Young underwent a traditional Fine Art education in sculpture, and practiced for many years as an individual artist producing sculpture for public sites. His recent practice is now entirely collaborative, as he works of projects (principally in the public contexts) with a wide range of collaborators (including members of the public, urban planners and craftspeople).
- ⁴ In Projects One (Collaborative Drawing Project) and Two (Parklife), where the aims of the project were pre-defined to achieve *specific practical outcomes* (drawings and a public artwork, respectively), *before* approaching or involving co-collaborators, the resulting *level* of collaboration was limited, and considered ‘shallow’, rather than ‘deep’.
- ⁵ In Project Three (The Contract Book), the collaborative relation dissolved as the initial intention to produce a collaborative artwork (in the form of a visual and textual ‘contract’) book became difficult to achieve. In Project Four (The Kissing Card Game), an open and experimental approach to collaboration (without pre-defined intentional aims) engendered a ‘deeper’ level of engagement and interaction between collaborators. Whilst this was successful in the early stages, it became more problematic in the middle-stage of the collaboration, when it was necessary to re-focus the project aims to define a *pragmatic* direction for collaborators to follow. The opportunity to produce a piece of artwork for exhibition provided collaborators with a renewed focus, which resulted in the development of the Kissing Card Game.
- ⁶ The collaborators included Professor Robin Webster (Architect), Dr. Mike Wood (Cartographer/Geography), Dr. David Pearson (Psychology), Roxane Permar (visual artist), David Atherton (Cultural Services Education Officer, Aberdeen City Council) and myself. The ‘problem/issues’ of addressing the roles and function of the Aberdeen Art Gallery were seen as complex. The opportunity of utilising collaborators’ particular knowledge and expertise in addressing these issues was recognised through this process of ‘re-framing’ and a common interest in methods of ‘visualization’ between collaborators was identified. The process of *identifying* and *inhabiting* the problem/issue through the perspectives of different disciplines, led to the development of a “thought community”, in which collaborators discussed new ways of developing and implementing methods of ‘visualization’ in relation to the gallery, through an experimental interdisciplinary and collaborative approach.

Notes from Chapter 4 (continued)

- ⁷ Their collaboration to produce 'The Horn' (a large-scale public sculpture situated on the M8 motorway on the outskirts of Edinburgh) took five years to complete and involved working with specialist engineers.
- ⁸ As the project progressed, collaborators became most interested in the ways in which they could contribute and exchange their specialist subject knowledge, within a collaborative framework, to advance a new, collective form of knowledge. This led to the decision to develop a joint research proposal for further academic study of processes of 'visualization', from an interdisciplinary perspective (submitted to the Arts and Humanities Research Board). The proposal proposed departmental and institutional collaboration between Aberdeen University, The Robert Gordon University (Aberdeen) and the Aberdeen Art Gallery. Recognition of the role of collaboration in achieving 'breakthroughs' by creating new ways of thinking in the production of knowledge is well documented (John-Steiner, 2000; Schrage, 1990; Pycior, 1996). However, there is little critical understanding of the ways in which interdisciplinary collaboration, between traditionally 'separate' disciplines, can advance the development of new knowledge and new forms of practice in both academic and professional contexts. Professor Robin Webster, a practicing Architect familiar with inter-disciplinary working practices, described the interdisciplinary approach in Project Five as "innovative". In recognition that the orthodox approach to interdisciplinary in the professional context is to come together to contribute to solving a pre-defined problem; whereas the open-ended, collaborative approach to identifying and framing the problem from *within* the 'multi-disciplinary' perspective offered by the collaborative group, was new.
- ⁹ The term "*complimentarity collaboration*" is defined by John-Steiner (2000:198) as a common form of collaboration, which is "characterized by a division of labour based on complementary expertise, disciplinary knowledge, roles and temperament. Participants negotiate their goals and strive for a common vision". John-Steiner's use of the term describes collaborations between individuals within the same disciplines.
- ¹⁰ These skills are distinct from the 'technique' skills-based approach to making artworks in their individual studio practice. Some students of sculpture had experienced using these skills to some extent in making larger installation work with a conceptual ('ideas-based' rather 'technique-based') approach to practice, although all experienced the need to further and develop their communications skills. (This is discussed in section 4.2.3.)
- ¹¹ A core collaborative team of artists, writer, educationalist, musician, initiate interdisciplinary projects with individuals from different disciplines (e.g. scientists, local government employees, ecologists, etc. Operating in many different contexts and crossing professional disciplinary boundaries (Platform received an awarded from a science organisation), they view themselves as positioned within the broad sphere of the 'arts' rather than a narrow visual art, or fine art context.
- ¹² Although the initial intention was to engage a form of 'cold' collaboration (with individuals previously unknown to me) and from different disciplines, this was found to be difficult in the early stage of the research. I found that the development of 'cold' collaboration takes time. In Project Three (The Contract Book), I approached an Art Historian, previously unknown to me, as a potential collaborator. Initial contact was made in July 1998, but the collaboration did not commence until January 1999. In the interim period a gradual process of 'getting to know one another' occurred, which was crucial to achieving the collaborators trust in order to collaborate with me. As a newcomer to Aberdeen at the beginning of the research, I was 'unknown' within the existing professional and institutional arts networks, and therefore did not have direct knowledge or access of potential artists, or art-related practitioners to approach. This also took time to establish during the period of the research. The *opportunity* to undertake Project Five in the context of the Aberdeen

Notes from Chapter 4 (continued)

Art Gallery was enabled through the support of David Atherton (Cultural Services Education Officer, Aberdeen City Council). This was considered rather ironic, as he had been the first ‘insider’ of Aberdeen’s art institutions, who I had approached with a project proposal at the beginning of the research. At this point, he was unwilling to support the proposal, as he did not have a clear enough understanding of my practice and motives and therefore did not ‘trust’ me. However, as I participated in other art activities and projects within the city, this trust developed, with the result of him inviting me to use the Gallery to do a project of my suggestion.

¹³ One-to-one collaborations are referred to by John-Steiner (2000:04) as “dyads”. In her investigation into the ‘psychology’ of creative collaboration, she chose to look at examples of dyads and small-group collaborations.

¹⁴ In response to the practical limitations of time and access already described (see note 11), one-to-one collaborations in Projects One (Collaborative Drawing Project), Two (Parklife) and Four (The Kissing Card Game) occurred with collaborators previously known to me, through previous professional (Pernille Spence – previous co-collaborator), educational (Lauris Symmons – co-student; postgraduate diploma) and personal relationships (Christian Zursiedel – friend).

¹⁵ In Project One, I had previously worked with artist Pernille Spence in making a commissioned installation artwork, although neither of us had experienced making collaborative drawings previously. In Project Two, the collaboration emerged in an unplanned manner in response to the recognition of our common interests in developing creative ways of eliciting information from individuals in a public context. In Project Four, the collaboration evolved from an opportunity to ‘test out collaborative strategies’ in an informal way, with a known and trusted friend. Neither of us had worked together in a creative or professional capacity prior to collaborating.

¹⁶ See note 11

¹⁷ Project One lasted two days; Project Two lasted one week; Project Three ran over one month; Project Four ran over 7 months; and Project Five ran over 8 months.

¹⁸ Artist, writer and art critic, Jeff Kelley described collaboration as “a process of mutual transformation in which the collaborators, and thus their common work, are in some way changed”(in Lacy, 1995:139-47).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ See note 8

²¹ For the researcher initiating collaboration, for the Fine Art students (Gray’s School of Art) and from the interviewed artists’ experiences of collaboration in practice.

²² In Project Five, whilst all collaborators identified shared interests in the early stages of the project, and expressed the desire to work together to learn from one another and create new perspectives through the interdisciplinary approach, the practical questions of what we would ‘do’ and how we would ‘do’ it was less obvious, and was developed throughout the project as individual roles were identified and negotiated.

²³ Unlike more traditional team-working models, where individual’s roles may be defined independently of other participants and in relation to a *specific component* of a project’s aim, the collaborative process (in recognising individual collaborators’ motives and expectations) develops *equal input* from collaborators through a complex process of negotiating individual roles from within the collaborative group. Organisation theorist Chris Huxham’s investigation into inter-organisational collaborative processes in the search for “collaborative advantage” recognises the relationships formed between collaborators as “*an intense form of mutual*

Notes from Chapter 4 (continued)

attachment, operating at the levels of interest, intent, affect and behaviour: actors are bound together by the mutually supportive pursuit of individual and collective benefit."(Huxham,1996:82)

- ²⁴ Collaboration between five to six individuals from different subject areas, but from within the Fine Arts.
- ²⁵ Organisational theorist, Chris Huxham investigation of inter-organisational collaborative processes recognised the importance of trust in collaborative, negotiate processes: "Explicit ground rules cannot substitute for trust which results from shared experience of expectations met. The discovery and articulation of shared beliefs and values about conduct can, however, help to promote a sense of inclusion, of predictability or dependability, and of unequivocality in relationships, all of which, as Ring and Van de Ven (1994) have noted, are fundamental pre-requirements for continuing motivation and commitment." (Huxham 1996:96)
- ²⁶ However, the numbers of collaborators in the core group fluctuates in Platform. Artist Gordon Young maintains an individual professional identity, but recurrently works with the same people, on different projects. Dalziel and Scullion maintain their core partnership collaborative identity, whilst building up a pool of individuals whose skills and expertise they draw into different projects as necessary. They have also worked with large organisations and experienced that "*when those organisations are working with artists, the intentions and expectations can be different between the two parties and it's negotiating what the intentions are (or not negotiating them) that can create a lot of difficulties.*" (Dalziel, Appendix 3.2c, p499)
- ²⁷ Although they view their way of working as being "like an organisation", they also recognised a danger of "*loosing your identity (as an artist) - because there are artists who have become more businesslike...it doesn't take long for them to stop being seen as artists.*" (Scullion, Appendix 3.2c, p492)
- ²⁸ I identified collaborators (see note 6) who had specialist individual research interests and expertise, which I believed might be relevant to the context of the gallery, and to the interests of the co-collaborators. Although I had no pre-conceived ideas about how the collaboration would evolve, I had considered the *potential* contributions and roles the might collaborators adopt, before approaching them. I was also careful to describe the project as a "research" project, rather than an "art" project to avoid the influence of individuals' assumptions about 'art' or 'artists'.
- ²⁹ It was made clear to collaborators that they had to decide how they wanted to work together.
- ³⁰ See note 8. My role as co-ordinator continued throughout the project (as I continued to organise the meetings, and liased between collaborators).
- ³¹ See note 22.
- ³² Project Three was a 'simple' form of collaboration between an Artist (the researcher) and an Art Historian (Duncan Comrie). Collaborators were Collaborators each wrote a 'contract' at the beginning of the collaboration and it became evident that each had different expectations of 'shared working'. Although coming from related disciplines (Art Practice and Art History), collaborators had very different aesthetic taste and judgement. This made it difficult to work collaboratively to produce an artwork ('The Contract Book'). See Appendix 1.3
- ³³ Although this is the generally-held 'traditional' view of art practice, it is arguably no longer the reality for most contemporary Visual artists, working in the realm of Public Art (Silver, 1999; Hinchcliff, 2000), to Commission, undertaking Artists Residencies, and working within Organisations (Ross, 2001). Few practicing artists solely produce artefacts for art galleries. In the interview with artists, all perceived

Notes from Chapter 4 (continued)

collaborative models of practice as being in direct opposition/contrast to the traditional view of art practice as an isolated, individual studio-based activity.

³⁴ The term “context-specific” is a recognised and commonly used term in Public Art practice, to describe a methodology of practice, where artists’ *respond* to a particular public context through processes of *reconnaissance*, *immersion* and *investigation*, to create artworks specifically for that context, and resulting from their experiences of engagement with it. (Lacy, 1995; Finklepearl, 2002; Miles, 1997; Silver, 1999)

³⁵ See note 33.

³⁶ This was also evidenced in the Fine Art students’ experiences of collaboration: Students who approached the process of collaboration with an *inquisitive* frame of mind and were *open* to the idea of working across subject-areas and with other individuals, tended to develop more **successful** collaborative relationships and had a more **positive** experience. Students who approached the process of collaboration with a *‘closed’* frame of mind, and were *disinterested* in the idea of working across subject-areas, or *uncomfortable* working with other individuals, tended to be **less successful** in developing collaborative relationships and had a more **negative** experience.

³⁷ **Project One** (‘Collaborative Drawing Project’), occurred in the contrasting ‘*closed*’ environment of an art studio (Gray’s School of Art) and ‘*exposed*’ natural environment (Aberdeen Beach), an under both ‘*tightly-controlled*’ and ‘*flexible*’ conditions, respectively. **Project Two** (‘*Parklife*’) occurred both in an ‘*exposed*’ public environment (Duthie Park, Aberdeen) and a ‘*private*’ environment (the researchers’ flat), and under both ‘*formal*’ and ‘*informal*’ conditions, respectively. **Project Three** (‘*The Contract Book*’) occurred mainly in a ‘*private*’ environment (the co-collaborators’ flat), and under ‘*informal*’ conditions. **Project Four** (‘*The Kissing Card Game*’) occurred in a ‘*private*’ environment (a shared, domestic setting) and under ‘*informal*’ conditions initially, before shifting towards a ‘*professional*’ environment (art exhibition), with ‘*formal*’ conditions. **Project Five** (‘*Re-Visioning the Gallery*’) occurred in the ‘*public*’ context of the Gallery, in both ‘*public*’ and ‘*private*’ environments (private group meetings and public activities), and under ‘*more- or less- formal*’ conditions. The collaboration shifted from the ‘*open*’ public context of the Gallery, to the more ‘*closed*’ context of Academia (The Robert Gordon University and Aberdeen University) in the latter stages.

³⁸ Although this was found to be the case in most of the projects undertaken, it was the direct opposite in **Project One**. This was considered a result of the way the project had been pre-designed by the researcher: a formal, tightly-structured approach to making a series of collaborative drawings in the first context (art studio), to adopting an open and flexible approach in the natural and open (although still ‘public’) context of the Aberdeen Beach.

³⁹ In **Project Two**, the production of a public artwork with a limited period of time took precedence over creating the conditions required for a ‘deep’ level of engagement between collaborators. This was also due to the fact that the co-collaborator entered the project in its middle-stages, a lack of time was available within the pre-defined timescale to make major changes. Engaging members of the public within this environment also created a very limited form of ‘participation’, due to both the public-ness of the environment and the limited time allowed for interaction (people engaged with the project only when entering and exiting the Park). In **Project Four**, the pressure to complete the Kissing Card Game to a quality suitable for exhibition and within a limited *timescale*, shifted the initial emphasis on the collaborative *process*, towards concentrating on completing the collaborative *product*. In **Project Five**, the shift from public Gallery context, to professional Academic context resulted

Notes from Chapter 4 (continued)

in a more formal process of structuring the group's interests and ideas within the defined format of an application for academic research funding.

⁴⁰ See note 36.

⁴¹ See information on **Projects Four** and **Five** in note 38.

⁴² With the exception of David Atherton (Cultural Services Education Officer, Aberdeen City Council), whose work put him in regular contact with the Gallery.

⁴³ **Project Four** (*'The Kissing Card Game'*) occurred mainly in a *shared* domestic space, which both collaborators were *familiar* with and *comfortable* within. **Platform** work from a studio/office space in London, which provides a *shared space* for collaborators. In **Project Three** (*'The Contract Book'*) meetings occurred mainly in the co-collaborators' *private* flat, which did not provide a *shared space* for *both* collaborators. This context was *less comfortable* for me to work in as it was not *neutral*.

⁴⁴ Writer and art critic Grant Kester has used the term "intersubjective" to define the "intersubjective exchange" between artists, which gives them "mastery over a universal form". Kester uses the term to contrast his concept of a "discursive aesthetic" which would "locate meaning "outside the self; in the exchange that takes place, via discourse, between two subjects", with 'Littoral art', which is "interdisciplinary. It operates 'between' discourses (art and activism, for example) and between institution (the gallery and the community centre or the housing block)". He goes on to emphasise that in his proposition of a '*discursive aesthetic*', the "identities of these subjects are not entirely set, but rather, are formed and transformed through the process of dialogical exchange". Quoted from an unpublished transcript of a keynote paper 'Discursive Aesthetics: a critical framework for littoral art', presented at the Third International 'Littoral' Conference hosted by the Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Ireland in September 1998."

I use the term "inter-subjective", to define the *individual* collaborator as the 'subject', with complex values constructed through *personal experiences, histories, formal and informal education, and professional training*. In particular, I am addressing the ways in which these complex subjects, from *different* disciplines interact "inter-subjectively" through collaboration, and how they negotiate their values ("are formed and reformed", as Kester suggests) through the process.

⁴⁵ In **Project Five** (*'Re-Visioning the Gallery'*), collaborators recognised that the 'real' locus of collaboration was in the context of the collaborative group meetings, rather than in the range of activities undertaken within the public Gallery context.

⁴⁶ That is, by their disciplinary background, professional reputation, specialist expertise or general areas of interest. For example, in **Project Five** collaborators were identified from their disciplinary backgrounds and academic research interests. At this early stage, the form of connection/recognition was superficial (a limited perspective of individuals). A good example of this is in **Project Three**, where the co-collaborator was identified by recognising we had a common interest in the work of Artist and Filmmaker, Peter Greenaway. However, as the collaboration progressed, it became apparent that the commonality was superficial and we actually had very different views on art, aesthetics and concepts of collaboration.

⁴⁷ Brian Rance (1995:25) defines "value systems" as "a complex set of attitudes and beliefs which determine the manner in which professionals define their role and respond to the role definitions of other professional groups". Rance's definition is useful in highlighting the complexity of *interdisciplinary* collaboration, particularly in relation to examples engaging collaborators from 'non-related professional fields'.

Notes from Chapter 4 (continued)

- ⁴⁸ In the early stages of the research, **Projects One** ('Collaborative Drawing Project') and **Two** ('Parklife') were 'pre-designed', with 'tightly-defined' structures. In the latter projects, emphasis shifted to identifying metaphors, such as, the notion of a 'contract' (**Project Three**), 'game-strategies' (**Project Four**) and 'inter-subjective' space (**Project Five**), to address ways in which collaborative processes, and relationships between collaborators were formed.
- ⁴⁹ For example, students who found it difficult to structure regular meetings and collaboratively agree on the direction of the project encountered difficulties that prevented them 'gelling' as a collaborative group, whereas those who structured the project by way of specific, 'narrowly-defined' roles for individual collaborators achieved only *limited* forms of collaborative relationships. In **Projects One** and **Two**, the project aims were *too defined* and relationships were *overly structured*. This limited the levels of input that collaborators could contribute to the projects' development and as a result, the collaborations were considered *less successful* as *shared ownership* was not achieved. In **Projects Three** and **Four**, *less clearly structured* projects were initiated in order to allow all collaborators to *contribute* to the design and direction of the project. These projects were considered *more successful* than the first two projects, as the collaborations were able to *evolve* at their own pace, and co-collaborators achieved a sense of *shared ownership* of the projects. However, as these two projects progressed, lack of a shared collaborative vision (**Project Three**) of the project direction, and lack of a clearly defined product/project aim (**Project Four**), lead to a loss of momentum (**Project Three**) and focus (**Project Four**). In **Project Four**, these problems were overcome by re-focusing the project aims to achieve a specific product (*The Kissing Card Game*), which resulted in a *clearer project structure and direction*, and *more successful level of engagement between collaborators*.
- ⁵⁰ The impact of funding and payment structures has not been directly addressed, as the five main research projects were un-funded. This has been beneficial as the projects occurred without the pressure of meeting particular funding requirements, but also gave a limited perspective of collaboration, as financial issues play a major part in the success or failure of most professional projects.
- ⁵¹ Four of the five research projects produced different types of tangible end-products. **Project One** produced a series of *collaborative drawings*, **Project Two** produced a *public artwork*, **Project Four** produced '*The Kissing Card Game*', whilst **Project Five** produced *physical outcomes* from the six main Activities and a *collaborative and interdisciplinary research proposal*. **Project Three**, which was considered *least successful*, did not produce a tangible end product, as '*The Contract Book*' was not completed. In Fine Art students' experiences of collaboration, the two groups who had the most negative experiences of collaboration were those who could not work together to produce a *final end product*.
- ⁵² An example of a physical outcome achieved by Platform is the installation of solar panels and a hydraulic generator in a school, to implement 'environmentally-friendly' power sources.
- ⁵³ Young has contributed to large-scale Public Art projects, such as the regeneration of Morecambe town centre.

5. QUALITIES OF THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

In Chapter 4, the main characteristics influencing the form collaboration takes were identified and described. This chapter develops a further, discursive and interpretative analysis of *qualities* of the collaborative process. To distinguish the particular qualities of collaboration from other forms of shared working evident in the visual arts, a **qualitative definition** of collaboration is presented in section 5.1. Four **key qualities** inherent in successful collaborative processes are identified and described in section 5.2. In section 5.3, the identified characteristics and qualities of collaboration are used to describe **four models of collaboration** (derived through a matrix), which represent 'more simple' or 'more complex' forms of collaboration. The four proposed models present a critical framework, which is used to evaluate the successes and limitations of the collaborative strategies employed within the five main research projects. The models are evaluated in section 5.4.

Collaboration is a **dynamic** process, which cannot be fully ascertained prior to its unfolding, due to its highly **context-specific** nature (it develops in response to the particular context in which it occurs), and the possible variable influences of collaborators. However, cross-comparative analysis of the research data in Chapter 4 identified the main characteristics found to shape the form collaboration takes. The following interdependent characteristics were found to inform the development of collaborative processes:

- *What* collaboration **aims** to achieve and *how* these aims are defined.
- *Who* the individual **collaborators** are: their motives, expectations, roles and contributions.
- The specific **context**: the *physical environment* in which collaboration occurs and the *inter-subjective context* formed between collaborators.

- The methods of collaboration: how *formally/informally*, *tightly/loosely* the collaborative process is **structured** and the strategies of interaction occurring between collaborators.
- The **outcomes** produced through collaboration: visible and *tangible products* and less visible, *qualitative benefits* to collaborators.

The process of identifying these characteristics highlighted the complex nature of collaboration (each collaborative project is shaped by a particular combination of these characteristics) and contributed towards making the collaborative process more visible. The characteristics are useful for understanding the main features influencing collaboration and provide pragmatic criteria against which other artists' examples of collaboration might be compared and evaluated. However, they do not adequately describe the *qualities* of the collaborative process, or provide a critical language for making explicit and evaluating individual *experiences* of collaboration.

The five main research projects involved different collaborators, defined project aims in different ways, occurred in different contexts, structured collaborative processes in different ways, and produced different kinds of outcomes. In my experiences of these projects, the different characteristics, conditions and strategies for initiating and engaging collaboration led to a variety of different *qualities* of shared working. Not all of the research projects were considered successful in achieving a 'deep' *quality* of collaborative engagement between collaborators. Project Five (*'Re-Visioning the Gallery'*) achieved the most successful collaborative *process*, even though it was the *most complex* of the projects (involving the most collaborators, from the broadest range of disciplines), and it did not produce a resolved 'finished product'¹.

This raised the question of how to appropriately evaluate the success of collaboration: by the achievement of an intended collaborative aim, or by

the production of a satisfactory product or outcome? Whilst these may both be valid criteria for evaluating art projects, they do not adequately explain the *qualities* of the collaborative *process* or evaluate degrees of success in achieving different levels of collaborative engagement between collaborators. For example, was the process *restricted* and *limited* or did it feel *open* and *dynamic*?

It has been necessary to develop a critical language with which to describe and analyse the *qualities* of the collaborative *process*. Individuals' qualitative experiences of collaboration were difficult to document and were imbedded within the project reports and artists' interview transcripts². Therefore, for this second-stage analysis, I undertook a critical review of the characteristics described in Chapter 4 and revisited the primary research data. I critically reflected upon my experiences of collaboration in the five principal research projects and compared them with the Fine Art student's experiences of cross-departmental collaboration and the interviewed artists' experiences of collaboration. I developed an **interpretative and discursive framework** for analysing the qualities inherent in successful collaborative processes and lacking in those considered less successful, and describing the different forms of collaboration that visual artists can experience. This analysis involves:

1. Formulating and describing a **qualitative definition** of collaboration informed by the critical evaluation of my experiences of shared working processes in the five research projects, and the main characteristics of the collaborative process described in Chapter 4. The definition of collaboration presented is qualitatively distinguished from other forms of shared working (participatory, cooperative, collective, interactive, and partnership).
2. In relation to the proposed *qualitative* definition of collaboration, describing the **key qualities** inherent in *successful* collaborative *processes*: by analysing the interviewed artists' experiences of

collaboration and comparing the research projects considered the *most* and *least* successful in achieving a 'deep' quality of collaboration.

3. Developing a matrix to define **four models of collaboration**, in terms of the relationships between *collaborators* and their respective *disciplines*. Each model is described in relation to its main characteristics, key qualities and whether it presents **more simple** or **more complex** form of collaboration. The interviewed artists experiences of different forms of collaboration are used to illustrate examples of each model and the five research projects are evaluated by using the proposed models as a critical framework.
4. Evaluating the **four models of collaboration** in terms of whether they present a useful critical framework for evaluating different forms of collaboration and strategies for achieving successful collaborative processes. Each model is discussed in relation to whether it represents a **more simple** or **more complex** form of collaboration for visual artists, and evaluated by comparison with Vera John-Steiner's (2000) four patterns of creative collaboration (Fig. 2.1, Chapter 2, p29).

5.1 A Qualitative Definition of Collaboration

In order to evaluate the success of a collaborative *process*, it is necessary to know what *qualities* to look for. During this research, my search for a 'deep' level of collaborative engagement with co-collaborators throughout the five research projects sometimes seemed as challenging and as illusive as a search for the Holy Grail. Each project achieved varying degrees of success in attaining anticipated collaborative aims and producing tangible outcomes³. Each provided insights into particular characteristics of collaboration, and also highlighted where *qualities* of the collaborative *process* were lacking⁴. Even with willing collaborators, expectations of the collaborative process

could be quite different and a qualitative, 'deep' level of collaborative engagement was difficult to establish⁵.

In order to describe the *qualities* of shared working that I was seeking from collaboration more specifically, I began formulating a *qualitative* definition of the collaborative *process*. This was evolved through my direct experiences of collaboration (in the research projects) and refined in relation to characteristics identified in Chapter 4 and the qualities of collaboration described by the interviewed artists:

Collaboration: a complex and dynamic shared creative process, which is mutually beneficial, developmental and context-dependent.

The **complexity** of the collaborative process (described in Chapter 4 (section 4.2.1 and further discussed in section 5.3.) results from its **dynamic** and **developmental** nature. Collaborators require space to develop mutual understanding and shared collaborative values, which are jointly negotiated and developed over time. Collaborators 'inhabit' and 're-frame' an issue/problem in order to define collaborative aims (fig 4.1, p121), which are **mutually beneficial** (fig 4.2, p132). They develop a shared creative vision and collaborative values in order to achieve these aims (Fig. 4.5, p149). Therefore, collaboration cannot be controlled by one individual, but relies on an equal and democratic **shared creative process** (fig 4.3, p141). This quality of shared working is influenced by and dependent upon the particular collaborators and **context** and conditions for the collaborative process (Fig. 4.4, p147). Achieving an intensive, 'deep' quality of collaborative working requires a delicate balance between structure and flexibility (Chapter 4, section 4.4) and the development of shared collaborative values between individuals (where values are the principles or beliefs underpinning individual actions/perspectives within the context of working together to

create something, and are not to be confused with group aims and/or individuals' personal motives or goals).

Some artists might view the collaborative process as introducing a chance element into an individual artist's creative processes⁶. A collaborative creative process is "purposive" (Schrage 1995), as the intention is to create something together, and needs to be honed and harnessed in order to successfully develop (in Project Four, the aims needed to be refocused in order to prevent the creative process losing motivation).

In my experiences of the five main research projects, the development of a shared creative process was the most challenging, yet most beneficial and satisfying, aspect of collaboration. I was seeking the possibility of achieving a creative 'fusion' with co-collaborators in my conception of a 'deep' quality of collaborative engagement. As a visual artist, I wanted to contribute my ideas and methods towards a shared collaborative aim and to be stretched and challenged by co-collaborators in pursuing the creation of an outcome beyond our individual conceptions. This occurred most in the last project (Project Five), where collaborators from different disciplines shared and exchanged their knowledge and expertise within the group and challenged one another's particular views and approaches.

Collaboration is a process of learning about and through others, and achieving outcomes that would not be conceived or achieved by an individual alone. This process requires the recognition, understanding and respect of individual differences. Individual collaborators contribute towards the **mutual benefit** of the collaborative group and new ideas and/or perspectives are formed through a fusion of the multiple perspectives of individual collaborators. This process is **developmental**; relying on the continual forming and reforming of a shared collaborative vision between collaborators (Chapter 4, section 4.3.2.). In order to enter into collaboration, each collaborator must anticipate some form of

benefit to in order to contribute towards a **mutually beneficial** collaborative process.

Project Five (*'Re-Visioning the Gallery'*), was most successful in achieving a 'deep' quality of engagement between collaborators. Its success resulted from a combination of individuals' approaches to the collaborative process and the methods by which the collaborative processes were structured. Collaborators were equally willing to collaborate and open to the possibilities it might present, whilst methods of making individual motives and expectations explicit (through structured discussion and methods of documentation) helped to develop collaborative relationships based on mutual understanding and recognition of difference. The qualitative definition of collaboration presented (p175) is applied to the project:

*Project Five was **complex** as it brought together the different perspectives of six individuals from different disciplines, to address issues relating to the multiple roles and functions of a public art gallery. A **dynamic, shared creative process** was developed as collaborators contributed individual ideas and approaches. These merged to create a new perspective of the gallery context, and a shared collaborative aim to develop interdisciplinary visual research methods. All collaborators found the collaborative process **mutually beneficial** and felt they had learnt from the innovative approach to interdisciplinary working. The project was **context-dependent** as it was not only specific to the context of the gallery, but also **developed** out of the particular context of shared ideas and perspectives that was formed through the interaction between collaborators.*

To understand what distinguishes the qualitative process of collaboration from other methods of shared working, I compared my proposed definition of collaboration with other recognisable and established forms of shared working occurring in the visual arts⁷. The following definitions of shared working processes were formulated from dictionary definitions, my own experiences of different types of shared

working methods in the research projects and the interviewed artists experiences of different methods of shared working:

- **Participatory** - working within and in response to a defined project structure. Participants have a share in or take part in something that already exists.
- **Cooperative** – working jointly to assist one other in achieving individual goals, for mutual benefit. Individuals exchange skills/expertise/knowledge in a shared working environment in order to support and help one another.
- **Interactive** - interacting through the mutual exchange and manipulation of objects and/or processes. Individuals ‘participate’ in something by physically engaging with tangible things/activities.
- **Collective** - working jointly to achieve group aims, often in an informal structure. Individuals contribute skills, expertise, and/or knowledge in the achievement of a shared common goal or ideology.
- **Partnership** – sharing a common vision and values developed over a long period through mutual understanding, to support one another and to commit to working towards achieving common goals.

The main distinction between *collaboration* and *participation* is that in the latter, individuals are invited to take part in and make individual contributions to a project/event/activity that has already been created or conceived by someone. For example, in Project One (*‘Collaborative Drawing Project’*) and Project Two (*‘Parklife’*) individuals were invited to participate within projects that I had conceived and pre-designed, as the artist/researcher⁸. This resulted in a *limited* level of engagement, as participants did not share equal roles in creating the project from the

outset and a **shared creative vision** did not develop out of the interaction between individuals.

The main distinction between *cooperation* and *collaboration* is that individuals *cooperate* to assist one another in achieving individual aims, whilst in collaboration individuals contribute towards achieving *shared* aims. In Project Two ('*Parklife*'), Aberdeen City Council employees *cooperated* by providing access to the park and its facilities. They supported the project because they were interested to know park users' comments and responses. My collaborator, Lauris Symmons, also cooperated by helping to solve the problem of finding a way of eliciting personal responses from park user, by contributing the idea of asking people to write a postcard. Whilst I viewed this contribution as having a major input in the creative concept of the project (therefore seeing her as a co-collaborator), she viewed her role differently: contributing to a project which she did not share ownership of as the project had been conceived and initiated prior to her involvement. Both the council staff and co-collaborator contributed to the success of the project. However, the qualities of the shared working *processes* and relationships were limited, as an equal sense of **shared ownership** was not established.

All of the research projects implemented *interactive processes* by eliciting exchanges between collaborators, which were mediated through objects and/or processes. Methods of interaction, such as the 'game strategies' developed in Project Four (*Appendix 1.5*), were developed to encourage equal input from collaborators and provide a common focus. The relationships formed between collaborators were considered more important than individual interactions with the objects and/or processes used. In collaboration, the *interaction* occurs between individuals, rather than between an individual and an inanimate object or process⁹.

In the visual arts, *collective* and *partnership* forms of shared working between artists are well established and recognised (Chapter 2, *section 2.5*). Both of these are intense forms of shared working, which require

common aims, shared values and the presence of trust between individuals. This ‘deep’ level of shared working requires collaborators’ trust, commitment and understanding, which are developed over time. Dalziel and Scullion’s personal and professional *partnership* is qualitatively collaborative because they jointly develop artworks through a shared creative process (Appendix 3.2c). Platform consists of a core *collective* of individuals who share a common ideology and desire to effect ecological, social and economic change. They work together equally and democratically to achieve these aims (Appendix 3.2b). Both examples demonstrate an “intense form of mutual attachment” (Huxham 1996: 82) between collaborators, which has been developed through a commitment to work together (and live together in the case of Dalziel and Scullion) over a number of years. The core group of individuals, who collectively form Platform, develop projects through a shared creative process. Similarly, Dalziel and Scullion develop the creative concepts for artworks, before involving other individuals in the development and production stages, in order to maintain creative control of the concepts behind their work. Both have formalised their collaborative relationships by presenting themselves as a *collective organisation* (in the case of Platform) and as an *artistic partnership* (in the case of Dalziel and Scullion). The artist Gordon Young does not work within a formalised collaborative group, but does have a group of individuals that he recurrently works with, although like the others, he also works with a wide variety of individuals and on different levels (Appendix 3.2a).

The analogy of personal relationships/partnerships has been used to describe the intense quality of engagement in a collaborative process and highlight that “its difficult to define the precise boundaries of the relationship” (Schrage 1995:29)¹⁰. *Partnerships* and *collectives* represent more established shared working relationships, as they are built upon mutual understandings and shared values developed and evolved over substantial periods of time (Chapter 2, *section 2.3.1.*) In

collaboration, mutual understanding and shared values need to be identified and developed between collaborators in order to develop an intensive shared creative process.

In the ‘messiness’ of live projects, it is less easy to draw rigid distinctions between different methods of shared working. More than one method can and does co-exist within collaboration:

“I see the value of saying ‘collaboration’, ‘participation’, ‘interaction’... However, search me where you draw the lines between them. In a way, I think the most successful thing is when it’s all confused and nobody really knows.”

(Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p473)

However, collaboration can be distinguished by the need for the *equal* involvement of collaborators in conceiving *shared* collaborative aims and developing a *shared creative vision* of how to proceed in order to achieve outcomes that are *mutually beneficial*. The qualitative definition of collaboration proposed in this section contributes criteria for describing and evaluating the key qualities inherent in successful collaboration¹¹. Platform are less interested in naming processes of shared working, although they have been intensely interested in developing strategies for achieving democratic collaborative processes for twenty years, and support the definition of collaboration as a **dynamic shared creative process**, “When it works. Definitely. No doubt about it.”(Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p483).

In this research, I approached each collaborative project with “a desire or need to solve a problem, create, or discover something within a set of constraints” (Schrage 1995:29), and it was not my intention to develop permanent or formalised long-term working relationships. The projects undertaken in this research have consisted of a series of collaborations lasting from two days (*Project One*) to eight months (*Project Five*).

However, it is recognised that long-term shared aims and values can naturally emerge from a collaborative relationship due to the intensity of collaborative processes and the potential for mutually beneficial outcomes. Collaborations can evolve into more formalised *collectives* or *partnerships*, as was the case with Platform, which grew out of an initial “meeting point between two different individuals” (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p455), and Dalziel and Scullion, who decided to develop a shared artistic practice following a successful collaborative ‘experiment’¹².

The qualitative definition of collaboration as **a complex and dynamic shared creative process, which is mutually beneficial, developmental and context-dependent**, which I have proposed is characterised by the *equal* involvement of collaborators in conceiving *shared* project aims and developing a *shared* collaborative vision. Collaborators *negotiate* individual roles and contributions and share a *mutual* desire for some kind of beneficial *transformation*.

As a visual artist undertaking this research, I have been particularly interested in the idea of initiating ‘cold’ collaboration: exploring strategies for establishing the intensive quality of collaborative shared creative processes ‘from the ground up’, with collaborators from different disciplines and previously unknown to one another. This has raised the question of what *key qualities* are necessary for achieving a successful dynamic shared creative process and lacking in less successful collaborations? The next section further investigates the particular qualities inherent in successful collaborative processes.

5.2 Key Qualities Required for Successful Collaboration

Having proposed a qualitative definition of collaboration in the previous section, this section describes the **key qualities** inherent in collaborations that successfully achieve a **mutually beneficial, dynamic shared creative process**. Through a further interpretation of the characteristics of collaboration described in Chapter 4, re-visitation

of the primary research data and critical reflection of my experiences of collaborative processes in the five main research projects, the following four key qualities present in successful collaboration and lacking in unsuccessful collaboration were identified:

- **Common Ground:** the presence of common understanding established within the shared space created between collaborators, upon which a shared creative vision is developed.
- **Shared Creative Vision:** the presence of common aims and expectations of collaboration developed through dialogue, negotiation and the establishment of shared collaborative values.
- **Shared Ownership:** the presence of an equal sense of shared authorship, control and responsibility in achieving a collaborative outcome, which is felt by all collaborators.
- **Mutually Beneficial Transformation:** the presence of a shared openness and willingness to learn from and about co-collaborators through the shared creative processes and to be challenged and changed through the collaborative process.

These qualities are described in sections 5.2.1 to 5.2.4, in relation to the degree to which they are present in *least* and *most* successful collaborative processes: **Project Five** (*'Re-Vision the Gallery'*) was considered the most successful in developing a mutually beneficial, dynamic shared creative process, whilst **Project Three** (*'The Contract Book'*) was considered least successful.

5.2.1 Common Ground

Common ground is a '*third space*' formed in the '*meeting place*' where collaborators can come together to identify mutual interests, common aims, questions, issues or problems. It is the foundation upon which

collaboration is built and requires that collaborators have “a good understanding and mutual respect for each other” (Fine Art student, Appendix 2.2, p411) and are equally open to and willing to develop collaborative aims and contribute to the development of a shared creative vision.

Common ground might be identified in variety of ways. Collaborators might share an interest in a particular thing, or be interested in exploring a common issue, problem or question. Working across disciplines, Platform “come together on an ecological point of view” and “constantly find points of common ground with people” (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p478). Potential collaborators might also come together because they like and are interested in one another. For artist Gordon Young the “basis for collaboration” is that “you respect someone and you respect their talents” (Appendix 3.2a, p433).

Beyond the issue of whether or not collaborators ‘bond’ with one another, is the need for focused dialogue to go beyond a superficial level of common interest to uncover individual motives for collaborating, expectations and common values. This process of identifying, or uncovering common ground between individual collaborators is a preliminary stage in developing a shared collaborative vision, which is illustrated in Fig 4.5 (Chapter 4, p149). It requires the recognition of *difference* as well as commonality. In the early stage of working together, artist partnership Dalziel and Scullion discovered that “aesthetically we weren’t in tune, although ideologically, we were” (Scullion, Appendix 3.2c, p484).

In interdisciplinary collaboration, there is a need to identify common ground between *disciplines* as well as between individual collaborators. This can be a challenging process of uncovering and highlighting differences between specialist fields of practice, which might be underpinned by different sets of values. In “trying to combine arts and sciences”, Platform have experienced “huge problems to do with

concepts of language, concepts of truth” and “concepts of success” (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p472).

Identifying common ground and difference requires a process of learning about individuals as well as understanding how their values are formed within a particular field of practice or discipline. For Young, the process of identifying common ground with potential collaborators requires “unpack[ing] all the information you have”, so that if they are “triggered or interested” or there is “empathy for you and what you’re doing”, then “you’re up and flying” (Appendix 3.2a, p442).

More important than the issue of difference between potential collaborators, is the crucial need for *mutual* interest and willingness to try to understand one another and look for areas of common ground. Whilst the issues of individual and disciplinary difference can be overcome “ultimately through friendship” (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p473) by building mutual understanding and trust between individuals, potential collaborators cannot be *made* to respect, or be interested in one another. There must be a “two-way fascination” (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p483), shared willingness and desire to learn about, through and from one another, which is inherent in collaborators’ attitudes and approaches.

Individuals may identify common interests that spark the desire to collaborate, however common ground is rarely immediately present. It needs to be developed and clarified through focused dialogue in order that collaborators develop a substantial, rather than superficial, basis of mutual understanding and trust. If collaborators are known to one another, they may already share a mutual understanding and trust and identify common ground more quickly and easily than if they are strangers. However, the process of identifying and clarifying areas of common ground is continuous. The core members of Platform have been working together for many years. However, they are still in

“constant dialogue” and “constantly realising how close we are and how far away we are” (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p478).

Common ground needs to be nurtured through the development of a common language and shared values. Individual egos are set aside, in favour of developing a shared creative vision and working towards mutually beneficial, collaborative outcomes. This requires that collaborators voluntarily approach the collaborative process with a positive attitude “over and above the notion of being an individual artist” (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p476), and that they “feel *comfortable*...that it’s worth doing” (Young, Appendix 3.2a, p453-4). This was most evident in the Fine Art students’ experiences of collaboration. Those with an open attitude and willingness to learn from and about their co-collaborators, experienced more successful collaborative processes and as a result, felt “more confident” and aware of “the broader concept of ‘art’ rather than the idea of the isolated artist and their own individual creativity” (Appendix 2.1, p388).

In the five main research projects, collaborators’ willingness to share and exchange information through continuous focused dialogue, in order to find and develop common ground, influenced the success or failure of collaboration.

In **Project Three** a common interest in the work of artist and filmmaker Peter Greenaway was identified as a starting point for collaboration. However, a substantial foundation of common ground was not developed and the collaborative process began to flounder at an early stage. This was a result of both a failure of the collaborative methods to develop a constructive, focused dialogue and a lack of collaborators’ ability and mutual desire to find common ground between the respective disciplines of Art Practice (myself) and Art History (collaborator). Although we were both familiar with language, criteria and values relating to the visual arts, the different

perspectives, methods and values of these particular fields were not automatically compatible¹³.

Little common ground existed in relation to our individual expectations of the collaborative process. The method of making our tacit expectations explicit in the form of a written 'contract' highlighted our different approaches to shared working and different views on the value of individualism in art. This provided a catalyst for discussing our commonalities and differences. However a constructive focused dialogue about how to make our differences compatible in order to achieve a mutually beneficial collaborative outcome did not develop, although we discussed our differences and were interested in learning about each other's views and approaches. This raised the question of whether substantial differences between individual values can be resolved, or used successfully in collaboration, to achieve 'collaborative advantage'?¹⁴ In this case, it was difficult as there was not a mutual willingness to find a shared space, or common ground between collaborators¹⁵.

In **Project Five** I was more aware of the need to develop a substantial foundation of common ground between collaborators and their respective disciplines. I investigated fields of practice that might be compatible and make relevant contributions to the project aim ('re-thinking the gallery'). I identified potential areas of common ground between the disciplines of art, architecture, geography and psychology and looked for individuals with relevant and compatible specialist expertise within these areas. Potential collaborators investigating methods of visualisation in different ways (in respect of their different disciplines and methodologies) were approached. I consciously described the project as an interdisciplinary and collaborative *research* project (since they worked in universities and had active research profiles, they were familiar with research), rather than an *art* project (to avoid a wrong assumption that they were being

asked to make ‘art’). This provided some common ground and implied a positive approach to collaboration: as researchers, they were likely to be open and willing to share ideas and learn from one another. Collaborators identified areas of common interest very quickly and were equally interested in developing common ground (whilst acknowledging and respecting differences) between their respective disciplines. They also shared a mutual desire to explore compatibilities between their overlapping interests and different methods of visualisation, in order to develop collaborative processes that would be mutually beneficial. Continuous focused dialogue and methods of making tacit expectations and values explicit in the early stages of the project aided the process of identifying common ground¹⁶.

5.2.2 Shared Creative Vision

“If people subscribe to something...they go the extra mile.”

(Young, Appendix 3.2a, p442)

Developing a shared creative vision, which collaborators subscribe to, is important in ensuring that collaborators work together to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome, “so the whole lot of you give it your best shot” (Young, Appendix 3.2a, p443). Collaborators’ input and contributions are responsive to the shared expectations and perceived outcomes of the collaborative group, and built upon a foundation of common ground and shared interests.

In an individual visual art practice, the artist is normally in control of their creative process and is responsible for decision-making. In collaboration, “the individual ego is not making all the decisions” (Dalziel, Appendix 3.2c, p505). The creative process (methods for developing and realising ideas) is complex and dynamic, as it is not controlled by one individual. A collaborative creative process can be

thought of as a ‘melting pot’ amalgamating collaborators’ ideas, skills, expertise and methods. A shared creative vision comes out of the melting pot and is the “result of a lot of hard work and a lot of arguments and discussions to do with how we move forward” (Young, Appendix 3.2a, p452).

Collaborators need to be responsive and adaptable to new ideas and perspectives and “to be imaginative about what they’re doing” (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p474). Recognising and responding to collaborators ideas and contributions requires an openness and respect for individuals’ skills, experience and expertise. This process is built upon a mutual understanding of collaborators’ *‘individual specificity’* and *‘disciplinary specialism’*¹⁷. For Platform’s James Marriot, understanding and learning how collaborators ‘look’ at issues through different perspectives helps him to ‘see’ creatively, and “it’s more productive if we work as equals...because then their using their creative capacities as well and hopefully it becomes collaboration” (Appendix 3.2b, p482).

A collaborative creative vision in which individuals share a new perspective is an evolving and dynamic process, requiring the development of shared values and expectations. Collaborators need to feel they are equally contributing to something exciting and innovative, whilst at the same time, achieving some form of individual benefit. This requires building up a “kind of consciousness” (Dalziel, Appendix 3.2c, p497) between collaborators, which is “different to each of us working on our own” and as if “the work is made by a third person” (Dalziel, Appendix 3.2c, p505). This ‘third person’ is the shared creative vision created between collaborators, which determines how the creative process will unfold.

Achieving a collaborative aim and realising a shared creative vision requires the development of continual shared decision-making processes. To develop a shared creative process, ideas and

expectations need to be made explicit through the decision-making process. Collaborators have to be able to communicate ideas, expectations and intentions, and resolve any conflicting ideas about how to best realise a shared creative vision, through debate and negotiation (Fig. 4.5, p149). Negotiating roles and intentions can be a sensitive process and “can create a lot of difficulties” (Dalziel, Appendix 3.2c, p499). Collaborators need to develop relationships and interactions based on trust, openness, experimentation, evaluation, and consensus. Collaborators share the decision-making process and this requires an ability to ‘let go’ and the ability to resolve differences positively. The “learned skill” of being “able to communicate an idea to someone...and to be comfortable with the other person’s input” as well as being open to the fact that it might “move away from what you initially visualised” (Scullion, Appendix 3.2c, p494) is important as the collaborative creative process is dynamic and can change and develop over time.

How well a collaborative group deals with changes in direction and things that have not worked out as anticipated is crucial to the success of the process. Collaborators must maintain equal involvement in the decision-making process and steering the direction of the project. A collaborative creative process can be intensive and require a lot of time spent discussing, debating and negotiating how to proceed throughout the process (see Fig. 4.5 for an illustration of the different forms of communication employed in the development of shared collaborative values, p149). As collaborators get to know one another better and achieve mutual understanding, trust is developed and both individual and disciplinary differences can be overcome. Shared values and a shared creative vision emerge from a confident respect for, and trust in, co-collaborators, and a belief in their capabilities, reliability, motives and willingness to collaborate.

Project Three was unsuccessful in achieving a shared creative vision, although a collaborative aim was agreed. We decided to make a

'contract book', but had different ideas about what it should consist of and how we should proceed. The creative process was more a process of exchanging individual ideas back and forth between one another and adopting individual roles and responsibilities, than developing a shared creative vision through which the work is produced by a 'third person'. Our different perspectives on art, creative processes and collaborative methods of working appeared incompatible. We struggled to combine our different individual creative processes¹⁸ to achieve a collaborative outcome (a visual 'contract book'), but momentum and interest in the project dissipated after six months and the book was not completed.

Due to a lack of substantial common ground to build upon, collaborators tried to incorporate individual interests rather than consolidate collaborative aims. Our different values in relation to visual art (aesthetically and ideologically) subsumed the potential for developing a shared creative vision, as we could not overcome our ontological and methodological differences and this led to a lack of trust¹⁹. The process of to-and-fro working was successful in mediating individual input and contributions towards the development of the book, but unsuccessful in establishing a process of shared decision making. A shared collaborative vision was not clearly negotiated and as a result, decisions were made through compromise, rather than consensus.

Project Five was more successful in achieving a shared creative vision although this took time to evolve. Collaborators came from very different fields of practice, although more common ground was uncovered upon which to develop a shared creative vision. Methods of discussion, focused dialogue, debate and negotiation were undertaken through a series of regular meetings between collaborators. Collaborators respected individual differences and shared a mutual desire to find ways of working together. The group developed shared decision-making processes and agreed to call the

project 'Re-Visioning the Gallery'. This helped to define the shared creative vision, although the question of how to proceed to "realise some of our ideas in practical terms" (Mike Wood, Appendix 1.5, p372) was recognised as collaborators had different methods of practice. The group worked together on satellite activities in pairs and brought artefacts back to the group for evaluation and further debate. After eight months, collaborators were 'just getting warmed up' and had a much clearer idea of how we wanted to proceed and what benefits the collaboration could offer. We defined and consolidated our shared expectations in a collaborative proposal for long-term research funding, which aimed to develop interdisciplinary and collaborative methods of visualisation.

5.2.3 Shared Ownership

Common ground is the '*meeting place*' where collaborators can overcome differences and develop a shared creative vision to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. Without common ground, it is difficult for collaborators to work together to develop a shared creative vision, which leads to the achievement of 'something greater than' a combination of their individual contributions. To achieve the innovativeness, or 'otherness', of a collaborative creative process, in which 'the sum is greater than the parts', collaborators share ownership and responsibility for the decision-making processes and direction that collaboration takes.

Shared ownership of the collaborative process is more than 'design by committee'. It is the presence of a sense of shared authorship, control and responsibility in achieving collaborative outcomes, felt by all collaborators. Developing a sense of shared ownership is crucial to the success of collaboration as it builds trust between collaborators and directly influences collaborators' motivation and contributions.

Collaborative processes can be structured in different ways and collaborators may enter the process at different stages. It can be "like a relay race", where collaborators "pass the baton" and take responsibility in contributing to parts (or components) of the shared creative process.

Collaborators can 'opt out' or hand over ownership to someone else, if they do not like the way a project is developing or cannot "subscribe to the way its taken shape" (Young, Appendix 3.2a, p453). In Projects One (*'Collaborative Drawing'*) and Two (*'Parklife'*), collaborators were invited to participate and collaborate within projects that I had already conceived and designed. Therefore there was not an equal sense of shared ownership, as collaborators had not had an opportunity to shape the projects from the outset.

In collaboration where collaborators are brought together in the initial stage to conceive a collaborative aim together, it is important that an equal sense of shared ownership is developed by recognising individual motives for collaborating and expectations of the process (Chapter 4, *section 4.2*). Collaborators can create a sense of shared ownership by 'inhabiting' and 'reframing' the problems or issues being addressed through collaboration (Fig. 4.1, p121), and negotiating their individual roles and contributions in order to realise a shared creative vision.

For Platform, the structure of the group and the methods of collaborating constitute the core of their collaborative practice. Collaborators constantly and democratically re-define the shape of their collaborative model, "so that the actual organism that is this institution reflects the people who are in it". In this way, collaborators share ownership of Platform because "They've made it themselves. They've helped make it and constantly re-make it" (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p457) and the financial and economic risks and gains are spread equally between collaborators. For Platform, sharing ownership of a collaborative 'organism' requires that collaborators "work as one 'group ego', or 'group artist'" (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p462), so that although it is created by individuals, it has an identity and life beyond those individuals and can continue to exist and grow if individuals leave or new individuals come onboard. This is a different model to an individual art practice, which tends to be endorsed in the professional context

through the recognition of an individual artists' conceptual interests and aesthetic style (a 'signature style'): "working as an individual artist I have to brand everything with my name, otherwise I don't exist" (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p477).

Dalziel and Scullion work as a creative partnership and "completely share the conceptions of the works" (Scullion, Appendix 3.2c, p488). Although they contribute in different skills and divide tasks between them, they share ownership of the decision-making processes informing how the work evolves and are equally recognised and named as co-creators in the professional presentation of their works.

For collaborators to feel an equal sense of ownership in collaboration, they must be able to recognise their individual contributions to the decision-making processes, and perceive some form of collective and individual benefit from the process. In **Project Three**, although the aims of the project, and the roles and contributions of collaborators were decided through joint negotiation and decision-making processes, an equal sense of shared ownership was not achieved. We were unsuccessful in defining common ground between our different perspectives and approaches and did not manage to develop a shared creative vision of how to proceed. It was difficult to maintain motivation and interest. As this was an experimental project, the work was not being developed for a professional context. This also influenced a lack of focus, or *need* to achieve a resolved collaborative outcome.

Project Five was more successful in achieving an equal sense of shared ownership amongst collaborators, which was established in the latter stages of the project. This took time to develop and resulted from the continual discussion and review of collaborators individual intentions and expectations throughout process, and a shared decision-making process achieved through ongoing debate and negotiation. My role as instigator and initiator of the project, changed from 'facilitation' in the initial stages, to becoming an equal co-collaborator. This shift required

that I ‘took a step back’ in the initial stages to provide space for individual collaborators to input their own ideas and take equal ownership in steering the direction of the project (Fig 4.3, p141)²⁰.

5.2.4 Mutually Beneficial Transformation

A collaborative creative process is complex, dynamic, and developmental. It requires that collaborators build up trust and mutual understanding, develop a sense of shared ownership, and equally contribute to the decision-making processes. Successful collaboration can present visible practical benefits.

Platform can address complex ecological, political and environmental issues and “effect change” (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p465) in direct and practical ways by collaborating with community groups, local government, scientists and engineers. Dalziel and Scullion can produce larger and more ambitious artworks than would be possible individually and gain access to new contexts for practice beyond a gallery setting. Young can work in different contexts in different ways and with a wide variety of individuals who have “certain talents or certain attitudes that I really respond to” (Young, Appendix 3.2a, p434). Beyond the obvious practical benefits of being able to take on more ambitious projects, having more ideas, skills, knowledge, expertise, and manpower to contribute towards achieving collaborative products, collaboration also provided less visible, qualitative benefits for individuals: the *educational* benefits of learning from other people’s experiences, skills and talents; experiencing feelings of *empowerment* through the support structure of a collaborative group; a *sociable* (rather than isolated) working environment; sharing and refining creative ideas more quickly through the *critical mass* created by collaborators; and improved *earnings* and *productivity* (Chapter 4, section 4.2.2., p130).

Cameron (1984:87) defined some of the essential “requirements” of “true collaboration” for artists as being, “equality of input and gain, the

need for stylistic breakthrough (or at least change), [and] completely voluntary effort” (Chapter 2, p17). Artists become co-contributors (rather than sole creators) in innovative processes (not just an extension of an individual art practice) and are motivated to try something new or explore new ground. “Collaborative advantage” (Huxham 1996) reaches beyond the exchange of practical skills, to learning from, about and through other individuals and developing new perspectives and processes as a result. Kelley (in Lacy 1995: 139-147) described collaboration as a process of “mutual transformation” in which “the collaborators, and thus their common work” and “the creative process itself” are all in some way changed or transformed (Chapter 2, p15). Kelley’s definition of mutual transformation suggests that the individual collaborators, their artworks/artefacts/products, and their methods of creative working are all positively developed through collaboration.

For Dalziel and Scullion (Appendix 3.2c), the qualitative benefit of collaboration is that they are “more open to changing situations that change the nature of what you do” (p506). Collaboration presents “new problems to solve all the time”, in “new” and “exciting” contexts that are “changing rapidly all the time”, and by working with “new people” (p493) that they have “built up” relationships with and “grown with” (p497). As a result, they have learnt to work in response to different criteria and different ‘audiences’ (not only those of the studio or gallery context) and “are getting quite good at knowing and working with these different contexts and different audiences” (p504).

For Gordon Young (Appendix 3.2a), his main concern is “not a question of style” or “a question of media” but the desire to develop “new models” (p454) of practice. Collaborative practice allows him to develop his practice in different ways and to do “*different* things” (p449). It is not only artists who can benefit from the ‘transformative’ possibilities of collaborative processes. Young’s collaborators “change as individuals as much as the projects” because they develop new skills and new

approaches to working collaboratively and are “getting better at communicating as individuals” and “getting better as a group at certain things” (p450). Developing mutual understanding and a collaborative creative vision can be a challenging process with “some really sore learning curves” (Dalziel, Appendix 3.2c, p498) because trust can be broken and expectations may not be met. It requires being open to the possibility of change and challenges to our individual perspectives and values and an awareness that “we have to constantly re-learn and try to learn how to be democratic” (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p464).

Collaborators must be equally willing and open to the transformative benefits of collaboration in order to learn from each other and develop new perspectives and “new collaborative knowledge” (John-Steiner 2000). This potential is dependent upon collaborators’ abilities to create an inter-subject context by sharing skills/knowledge/expertise and being willing to expose individual values and beliefs and accept challenges to their existing perspectives and methods. In order that this process is empowering rather threatening, trust and mutual understanding are important within the collaborative group. Individual collaborators also need to have “something to trade” (Young, Appendix 3.2a, p438) and to recognise skills that they can contribute, and what benefits they hope to achieve from the process.

Successful collaboration recognises and is responsive to collaborators’ individuality, rather than submerging it within the group. If the potential for change and transformation offered by the collaborative process is approached as a positive quality of collaboration, individuality can be developed by testing and challenging ideas, methods and values against those of co-collaborators. The Fine Art students who found collaboration most difficult (and experienced least successful collaborative processes) were those who were not able to communicate or translate individual skills, perspectives and values (normally implicit within their individual studio practices) to the collaborative context, and who were closed to the potential for individual development presented

by collaborating with others. They viewed the change from their individual ways of working (individual studio practice) presented by collaboration as *negative individual compromise*, rather than *positive individual development* (or ‘mutually beneficial transformation’)²¹.

As the research progressed, I became most concerned with the questions of *who* to collaborate with, and *how* to attain individual benefits from interdisciplinary collaboration? Projects One to Four were ‘art’ projects (they produced visual artefacts)²². Although projects Two to Four involved non-art collaborators, there was a lack of equal ownership of the projects and collaborators viewed their roles as contributing to the development of ‘artworks’ within my research. Perceived by collaborators as the ‘artist’ and the ‘researcher’, they presumed that I would lead the projects and require them to do particular things²³. However, for the collaboration to be successful and satisfying from my point of view, I wanted to work with individuals from other fields who would take equal control and challenge my views and methods. I wanted to learn from different discipline’s methodologies and different collaborators skills and approaches, so that the experience was beneficial from my perspective as a visual artist seeking to develop new skills and find new ways of applying my ‘art skills’ in new and different contexts.

Project Five was more satisfying from my perspective, as I approached collaborators whose specialist areas of expertise I was interested in learning about and whose field of practice might be compatible and produce new insights when brought together. By bringing together a *group* of collaborators²⁴ the possibility of achieving mutual benefits was increased, as a broader range of perspectives, skills and knowledge were shared within the group. The collaborators were interested in particular aspects of one another’s practices and wanted to learn more about one another’s areas of expertise²⁵.

Although it took time to develop shared ownership and a shared creative vision between collaborators, because although a mutual willingness and desire to work together existed, we had to develop new methods for working together due to the ‘experimental’ approach and ‘unorthodox’ nature of the collaboration. One collaborator, Professor Robin Webster (an architect familiar with team and group working methods), recognised that “since we have not come together in response to a pre-defined ‘problem’ and are adopting a very open and exploratory approach”, the project was in his view, “innovative and possibly even unique” (Appendix 1.5, p352). All collaborators found the group discussions and the process of learning about and from one another’s perspectives/skills and knowledge, most beneficial and decided to write a collaborative research proposal to try to extend the project and investigate the development of interdisciplinary visual research methods.

5.3 Forms of Collaboration in the Visual Arts

Throughout the research, I became more aware that in interdisciplinary collaboration, the relationships between collaborators and their respective disciplines, or fields of practice, greatly influenced the collaborative process. As a visual artist initiating collaborative projects, I became more concerned with the questions of *who* to collaborate with and *how* to engage them in a successful collaborative process? In the five main research projects, I used different strategies to engage different individuals in different forms of collaboration. Similarly, the interviewed artists experiences of collaboration also demonstrated different approaches and different forms of collaboration, depending on who the collaborators were and the compatibilities between their respective fields of practice.

If individuals knew each other before collaborating, and were from the same, or closely related disciplines (or fields of practice), the form of collaboration was ‘**more simple**’, as some common ground, shared language and understanding of values were already present. If

collaborators did not know each other before collaborating and were from different, or unrelated disciplines, the form of collaboration was '**more complex**', as common ground had to be identified, a shared language had to be developed and collaborative values needed to be formed. This raised the question of how to evaluate strategies for engaging *different* forms of collaboration, and how to identify the particular challenges and benefits each collaborative process presents for visual artists?

The qualitative definition of collaboration, main characteristics and key qualities inherent in successful collaborative processes raised a critical language and criteria for evaluating collaboration. I developed a matrix (Fig. 5.1, p204) using the variables of whether collaborators are *familiar* or *unfamiliar* at the outset of collaboration, and whether disciplines, or fields of practice are *related* or *unrelated*, to distinguish **four models of collaboration**, which visual artists might experience. The spiral diagonal axis running from the bottom left (the **Associate Model**) to the top right (the **Interdisciplinary Model**) quadrants of the matrix represents a continuum from **more simple** forms of collaboration and **tacit** collaborative methods, to **more complex** and **explicit** collaborative methods. Collaborations between artists are situated towards the 'more simple', tacit end of the spiral, while interdisciplinary collaborations are situated towards the 'more complex', explicit end (although no form of collaboration is considered 'simplistic'). The spiral represents degrees of complexity within the proposed models.

In sections 5.3.1 to 5.3.4, each model of collaboration is described in relation to its **main characteristics** (*collaborators, aim, context, structure* and *product*, Chapter 4) and **key qualities** (*common ground, shared creative vision, shared ownership, and mutually beneficial transformation*, section 5.2), and evaluated in relation to whether it presents a '**more simple**' or '**more complex**' form of collaboration. Interviewed artists experiences of different forms of collaboration are

used to exemplify each model. The proposed models are used as a critical framework for evaluating the five research projects' success or limitations in achieving **a complex and dynamic shared creative process, which is mutually beneficial, developmental and context-dependent**. Use of the four models as a critical framework is evaluated in section 5.4.

The four proposed models of collaboration are summarised below:

In the **Associate Model**, collaborators are familiar and are from the same, or closely related fields of practice within the visual arts. Individuals choose to work together in response to a common 'desire' or 'need' to explore an identified shared interest, or to develop a new artwork, process, technique or method within a professional art context. Collaboration emerges from and is responsive to opportunities and relationships created through personal and/or professional networks. The collaborative process is 'more simple' as common ground between individuals and their respective fields of practice already exists. This model is evident in collaborations between individual artists and in artists' collectives and organisations (Oliva 2002, Jones 1996 & 1997a).

In the **Personal Model**, collaborators are familiar but are from disciplines or fields of practice not normally related. Individuals may have different perspectives, languages and values, but choose to explore an area of shared interest, create artefacts, and/or develop new ideas, perspectives or methods of approaching a subject together. Collaboration emerges from and develops a mutual understanding between individuals, by exchanging information and learning from one another, in an inter-subjective and cross-disciplinary context. The collaborative process is 'more simple' as shared interests and/or trust already exists between collaborators. However, it is 'more complex' as common ground between different disciplines is not already present. This model is evident in specialist interest groups (including discussion

forums) and informal collaborations developed through existing friendships/relationships, which are not often publicised or documented.

In the **Professional Model**, collaborators are unfamiliar but are from closely related disciplines or fields of practice. Individuals from different fields come together to contribute their specialist skills, expertise and knowledge towards the development of something specific, which could not be achieved within one area of practice. Collaboration emerges from recognised compatibilities between disciplines, professional procedures and protocols of practice, and is responsive to needs and opportunities identified in professional contexts (not necessarily art contexts). The collaborative process is 'more simple' as collaborators' respective fields of practice interface in a professional context and their common and different values and methodologies are recognised. However, it is 'more complex' as relationships between individuals do not exist and mutual understanding needs to be developed. This model is evident in recognised areas of practice (for example, Public Art), where different practitioners (for example, public artist and urban planners, or architects) contribute to achieve a tangible, common goal.

In the **Interdisciplinary Model** collaborators are unfamiliar and are from disciplines or fields of practice not normally related. Individuals choose to come together to investigate an issue/problem in a new way and to develop new collaborative perspectives, knowledge, interdisciplinary methods, and to develop mutual understanding. Collaboration develops within an experimental, inter-subjective, and inter-disciplinary context and is both responsive to and emergent from compatibilities uncovered between individuals and their respective fields of practice. The collaborative process is 'more complex' as no existing common ground between collaborators or their respective disciplines exists. Collaboration is initiated 'from scratch', rather than on the basis of existing relationships and shared knowledge. This form of collaboration may lead to the development of new knowledge informed by individuals'

specialist expertise and disciplinary knowledge. This model is evident in experimental unions between traditionally disparate fields, such as art and science.

5.3.1 The 'Associate Model'

The Associate Model of collaboration is principally a meeting place between individuals with similar interests and from the same, or closely related fields of practice. This model would include collaborations between artists, or between artists and other art practitioners, such as curators, art agencies or organisations.

Collaborators are known to one another (personally and/or professionally) within the same, or closely related fields of practice within the visual arts. The **aim** of collaboration is to explore an identified shared interest between individuals, or a response to a shared 'need', or 'desire' to develop a new artwork, process, technique or method. The collaboration is situated within a visual art **context** and is responsive to opportunities and/or relationships presented through personal or professional art networks. The **structure** of collaboration is informal and dynamic and individual roles and contributions converge and evolve during the collaborative process. The **products** of collaboration are new artworks (or concepts for artworks) and/or new methods or techniques for producing artwork.

This is a 'more simple' form of collaboration, as **common ground** (the foundation for developing collaborative methods) already exists. Individuals' personalities, interests and skills are familiar and some existing level of mutual understanding, trust and respect informs their desire to choose to work together. Collaborators also share knowledge and understanding of the conventions within the field (the language, values, methods and criteria), which may be implicitly embedded within individuals' perspectives and methods and are not necessarily explicitly stated between collaborators.

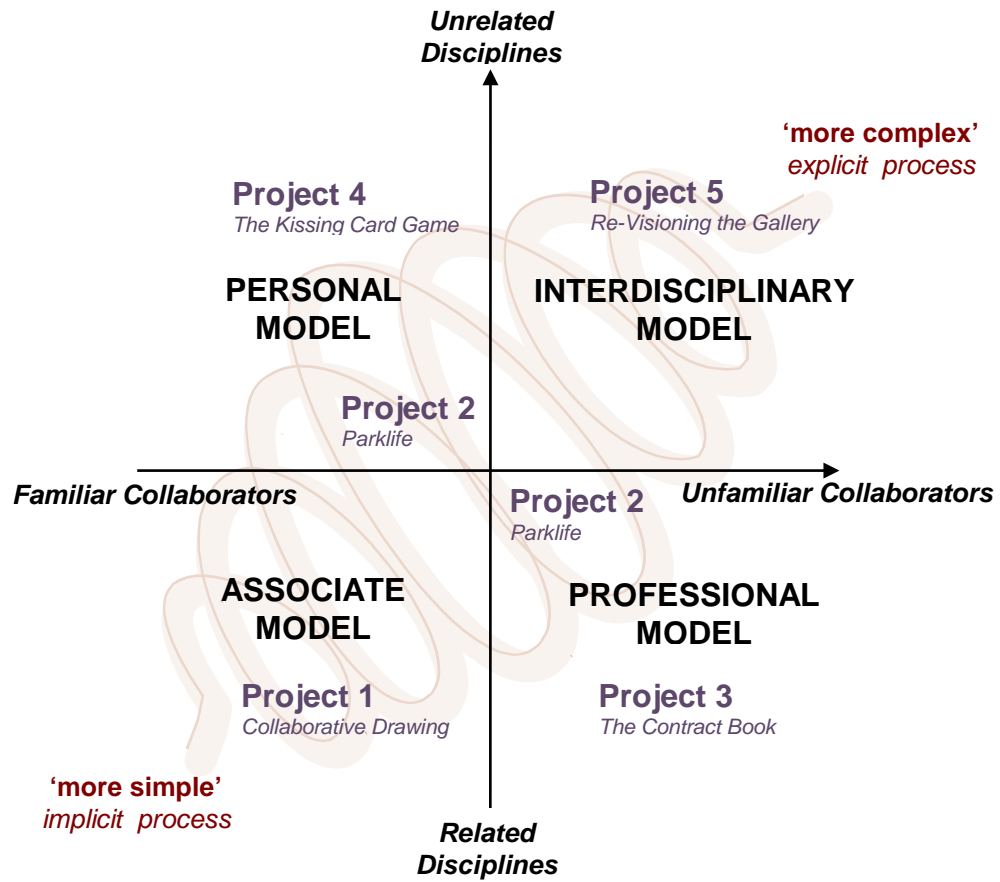


Figure 5.1 Forms of collaboration in the visual arts, defined by the relationships between the artist and collaborators, and between their respective disciplines (Scopa, K).

Individuals contribute and exchange ideas to develop a **shared creative vision**, which is informed by their respective individual art practices (their interests, methods, and conceptual and aesthetic judgement). Because individuals *choose* to collaborate to address common concerns, they **share ownership** of the collaborative process and equally contribute individual ideas and/or skills. The process is **mutually beneficial**, as it enables artists to explore ideas together and develop new concepts for artworks; to exchange specialist practical skills, techniques and/or methods; and/or to work on a larger, or more ambitious scale, than could be achieved individually.

In the Associate Model of collaboration, artist's individual creative processes and practical skills may be developed through collaboration and their influences, subject matter, and/or aesthetic styles may be developed, although their models of individual art practice are not necessarily **transformed**, since collaboration occurs in an art context and in response to the tacit conventions, values and criteria implicit within it.

Dalziel and Scullion's practice provides a good example of an Associate Model of collaboration, which developed into a more formalised, long-term artist *partnership*. Both visual artists, they met in an art context: studying at Glasgow School of Art at the same time, and later exhibiting individual artworks in the 1990 British Art Show. They formed a friendship that developed into a long-term relationship and now share a professional identity as an art partnership, as well as a family. They first collaborated about three years after forming a relationship, so a strong foundation of mutual understanding and trust existed. As individual artists, they had similar interests and were 'in tune' 'ideologically' (in terms of the concepts behind their art practices), although they had different aesthetic styles and had to develop a new, shared aesthetic sensibility. They approached their first collaboration as an experiment, in response to their shared interests and in response to a desire to support

each other's professional art practice²⁶. The experiment was successful: they were happy with aesthetic style of the collaborative artwork (which was a "strange fusion" of their individual aesthetic 'signature styles'), and the work was well received within the professional art context. They continued working together and began taking on larger-scaled, more ambitious and complex projects which took longer to develop and involved working in public contexts, for new audiences, and employing the skills of engineers and other practitioners²⁷. Although they work with a variety of individuals from a range of fields, they conceive the ideas for projects between themselves and maintain creative control of the development of their artworks. They also maintain their identity as visual artists within the professional art context, and have developed an aesthetic 'signature style' that is recognisable as 'Dalziel and Scullion'. They work in a variety of media, on different art projects in different public contexts and view their partnership as an "interesting company". They have developed a network of individuals who understand their conceptual and aesthetic concerns and methods of working, and who they often work with. Their collaborative partnership is mutually beneficial both professionally and personally: they bring together their different skills and share tasks and responsibility; cover for one another when the other is busy working on something else; produce more work (and more ambitious work) than they could when working individually; and have improved their income and created a mutual support structure.

The Associate Model is applied to **Project One** (*'Collaborative Drawing Project'*) to evaluate the successes and limitations of strategies employed for engaging collaborative processes:

Collaborators were both visual artists, sharing both a mutual understanding of each other's individual art practices and an existing friendship. I proposed that we make a series of collaborative drawings and designed the structure of the project, which lasted two days and resulted in a series of collaborative drawings (and a sculpture) made in

both a controlled studio environment (to specific, pre-defined methods) and a contrasting natural environment (to non-specified methods)²⁸.

Although the project was successful engaging individual interaction through the process of drawing and developed a spontaneous collaborative drawing process, the *quality* of the collaborative process was very limited and was not successful in achieving **a complex and dynamic shared creative process, which is mutually beneficial, developmental and context-dependent**. Strategies for engaging collaboration could have more successfully achieved the necessary key qualities of the collaborative process, if they had been more responsive to the particular characteristics of the Associate Model.

The pre-defined project aim (to produce a series of collaborative drawings within controlled environments and using pre-defined methods), limited the potential for dynamic development of the collaborative process, because the project was rigidly structured. If already existing **common ground** between our individual art practices and shared knowledge of the visual arts had been identified at the start of the project, a stronger foundation for the development of the collaborative process would have been provided. My collaborator would have had an opportunity to equally contribute to the process of defining collaborative aims and would have been more able to develop an equal sense of **shared ownership** over the collaborative process. A **shared creative vision** was not developed as the collaborative process engaged only a limited level of practical interaction through the collaborative drawings. This would have been better achieved if the collaborative process had been perceived by individuals as an opportunity to explore ideas, techniques and/or processes within our existing individual art practices and particular interests, in a new ways, by exchanging ideas and negotiating possible collaborative methods.

The project was designed to meet my intention (research aim) to explore experimental collaborative drawing *methods*, which sacrificed the potential for developing outcomes that would have been **mutually beneficial** to us both as visual artists. Our individual practices remained unaffected by the project as the opportunity to learn from one another and developed our existing approaches to art practice was not exploited. If the collaborative drawings had been made with the intention of producing artworks for exhibition in a professional art context, there would have been more incentive to develop a shared creative process and more intensive negotiation of collaborative methods. We would also have required more time to develop a shared creative vision and to produce collaborative drawings, which we agreed were of a suitable quality to 'put our names' to them in a professional art context (as our professional reputations would equally have been implicated).

5.3.2 The 'Personal Model'

Like the Associate Model, the Personal Model is also principally a meeting place between individuals with common interests, but from different fields of practice, not traditionally, or professionally related. This model would include collaborations between artists and any other 'non-art' practitioners, which could occur either within or outwith professional organisations and institutions²⁹.

Collaborators are familiar (personally and/or professionally), but are from different disciplines, not typically related. The **aim** of collaboration is to explore an area of shared interest between collaborators and to exchange information and learn from one another. The collaboration occurs within an inter-subjective and cross-disciplinary **context** and is responsive to individuals' interests and areas of similarity and difference. The **structure** of collaboration is informal and fluid and potential individual roles and contributions are identified and negotiated during the collaborative processes. The **products**, or outcomes, of collaboration may be physical artefacts, or new ideas, perspectives or

methods of approaching a subject, and the development of mutual understanding between individuals and their respective disciplines or fields of practice.

The Personal Model is 'more simple' in that the collaborative relationships develops out of an existing relationship and individuals' identification of common interests. However, it is 'more complex' as collaborators may not have a mutual understanding of one another's respective disciplines and may have different disciplinary perspectives, languages, values, methodologies and evaluative criteria.

Common ground exists in part through collaborator's shared interests, but needs further development through focused dialogue and exchange of views, in order to develop a **shared creative vision**. Individuals share a mutual interest in a particular subject (or in each other) and are equally motivated and open and willing to learn from and about one another. Collaborators **share ownership** of the collaborative process by negotiating individual contributions and/or developing specific roles. Collaborative methods may include exploring shared concepts and ideas, and exchanging specialist knowledge, skills and/or methods. Visual artists may initiate this form of collaboration to learn about different perspectives, methods and approaches to a particular subject or problem/issue; to expand their own knowledge and understanding; or to combine individuals' compatible knowledge, skills and expertise of from different fields of practice, and exchange techniques and methods. The collaboration is **mutually beneficial**, as collaborators share a mutual desire to learn from one another and enhance their individual knowledge, whilst exploiting their particular skills and expertise.

Gordon Young develops the foundation for the Personal Model of interdisciplinary collaboration by forming friendships with a wide range of individuals from different disciplines whom he respects or whose talents he admires (Appendix 3.2a, p433). He responds to invitations to

collaborative with people he has met and invites people he has met to collaborate with him if they have skills, expertise or knowledge that are relevant to a particular project.

The organisation Platform, was developed from a Personal Model of collaboration through an existing personal friendship between James Marriot (an artist interested in writing and theatre) and Dan Gretton (a political activist)³⁰. As Platform has evolved, the core collaborative group has included more or less individuals at different times. Jane Trowell, (trained as an art teacher and musician) is also a current member of the core group. These individuals from different fields of practice come together through a shared desire to develop creative projects addressing ecological and democratic issues. Platform also initiates collaborations with individuals from disciplines such as science, engineering and economics, when they “find points of common ground with people” (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p478). They recognise that practitioners from different fields can have different concepts of success, methodologies, language and values, but also that “we can share”, through collaboration, by being democratic and crossing into each other’s “ground” a little bit (p482), and recognising the creative processes of practitioners from non-art fields (p483).

The Personal Model is applied to **Project Four** (*The Kissing Card Game*) to evaluate the successes and limitations of strategies employed for engaging collaborative processes:

Collaborators were from the unrelated fields of visual art practice and language studies³¹, and from different cultural backgrounds, but shared an existing friendship. The collaborative process developed informally, without pre-conceived aims or expectations of where it might lead. Experimental methods of collaborative exchange and interaction were developed using word games. In response to an opportunity to submit work for an exhibition on the theme of ‘Kissing’, the ‘game-strategies’ of

interaction were developed to produce a visual and textual Kissing Card Game³², which was exhibited in a professional art context.

Although a specific issue/topic of shared interest was not identified at the outset as a starting point for collaboration, we decided to explore the possibilities of working together in response to a mutual curiosity and interest in learning about each other's different cultural backgrounds and fields of practice³³. Trust was already present within our existing friendship, and we identified areas of **common ground** and difference through a series of informal discussions, in which we shared information about our individual backgrounds, interests and likes and dislikes. My collaborators interest in languages and word games, and my interest in exploring game-strategies as a potential method of collaborative interaction, came together as we developed a more focused and structured dialogue through the development of experimental visual word games. The opportunity to produce work for exhibition defined a clearer aim for our collaborative process. We discussed ideas for how to develop our experimental word game processes further and developed a **shared creative vision** for creating a card game. As we both contributed to the development of the idea for the card game, there was a sense of **shared ownership** of a shared creative process. As the project progressed, we negotiated more specific individual contributions and roles, in relation to our particular skills and areas of expertise³⁴.

The collaborative experience was **mutually beneficial** on a personal level, as it enabled us to learn more about each other and our respective fields. The collaborative process was considered successful as we both contributed to the creation an artefact (*The Kissing Card Game*) that we would not have conceived of individually. However, on a professional level, sense of shared ownership of the outcome and its potential to 'transform' our individual practices was limited, as the card game was exhibited in a visual art context, rather than a professional context that was new to us both³⁵. The exhibition provided a good resolution to our collaboration and gave my collaborator an

understanding and insight into a field (visual arts) that he had little previous knowledge of. However, I was disappointed that it shifted the project back into ‘my’ art context (as a visual artist), in which my collaborator felt ‘out of place’. In my opinion, I would have received more benefit from the collaboration if we had continued to develop the card game for commercial production and distribution in a non-art context, as it would have allowed us to develop a new joint venture and enabled us both to develop our skills and knowledge in a new area.

Project Two (*Parklife*) can also be evaluated using the Personal Model as collaborators knew one another, but were from different disciplines (visual art and cultural interpretation). The collaborative process was more limited than in Project Four, as my collaborator came onto my ground, by contributing to a public art project that I had already conceived and initiated. The collaboration would have been more successful in achieving a sense of **shared ownership** and **shared creative vision** if we had developed a new project together (on the basis of **common ground** provided through our shared interests in methods for developing public interaction and eliciting people’s ‘stories’ in our respective fields³⁶), and would have been more **mutually beneficial**.

5.3.3 The ‘Professional Model’

The Professional Model of collaboration is principally a meeting-place between disciplines or fields of practice, which are compatible and which contribute specific skills and expertise in the co-construction of something in a professional context. This model would include ‘art projects’ situated in public contexts or other professional contexts, where the expertise of different practitioners is required in order to make something³⁷.

Collaborators are unfamiliar (or superficially known through professional reputation), but are from fields that are inter-related within a

professional context. The **aim** of collaboration is to bring together specialist skills, expertise and knowledge from different fields to contribute to the development of something that could not be achieved through only one field of practice. The collaboration occurs within professional **contexts** (though not exclusively art contexts) and is responsive to the needs and opportunities existing in professional networks and systems. The **structure** of collaboration is more formally defined and individual roles and contributions are negotiated and defined early in the process. The outcomes, or **products**, of collaboration are usually 'tangible' common goals.

The Professional Model is 'more simple', as the collaborative process is built upon compatibility between the particular skills, expertise, and knowledge imbedded within specialist fields of practice, which interface through professional procedures and protocols. However, it is 'more complex' as individual interests and perspectives need be uncovered through discussion and exchange to develop mutual understanding between collaborators (as no personal knowledge and trust does not exist at the outset).

The foundation for collaboration is provided through established relationships between fields of practice, which can contribute specialist skills/knowledge/expertise towards the achievement of a clearly defined common aim. **Common ground** between individuals does not initially exist, but is developed through mutual exchange and recognition of similarities and differences. Collaborators' **shared creative vision** is provided by defined project aim and is not necessarily developed between collaborators. Collaborators may enter the process at different stages and have different perspectives, language, values, and methods (relating to their particular fields of practice), but can **share ownership** by negotiating individual roles, making specific contributions and taking responsibility for particular components of the project. The collaborative process is **mutually beneficial** as collaborators contribute to the

achievement of a common aim, which they would not be able to achieve individually. However individual practices are not necessarily changed or **transformed** through the collaborative process. Collaborators can work independently, alongside one another on particular components of the project, without necessarily learning from, or about individuals, beyond their existing understanding of each other's respective fields of practice.

This is a common form of collaboration in professional contexts and can be driven by practical need or specialist requirement. Gordon Young, Dalziel and Scullion, and Platform had all engaged in this form of collaboration in their different professional practices. The levels of engagement between collaborators were more or less 'deep' depending on each particular project and the relationships developed, or not developed, between individual collaborators. Often working on large-scale, multidisciplinary projects in public contexts, Young recognises that "some people have...no interest that they're collaborating". Instead, they "want their pay or their component" and contribute individually to parts of the project "within the direction that the crew are heading" (Appendix 3.2a, p440). However, all the artists interviewed had also built up friendships with individuals from different fields of practice, during collaborative projects and continued to maintain occasional or more regular shared working relationships with them.

Often in this form of collaboration, differences between disciplinary perspectives and approaches and a lack of mutual understanding between collaborators can present challenges. If roles are not clearly negotiated, or if intentions are not clearly communicated or understood by collaborators, "that can create huge problems" (Scullion, Appendix 3.2c, p500). How failures, or things which have not worked out as intended, are addressed and resolved is important, as collaborators have to "understand if something's going wrong, why is it going wrong and try to articulate that" (p500), which can be challenging if

collaborators have different perspectives, values, and methodologies, or don't understand one another's disciplinary approaches.

The Professional Model is applied to **Project Three** (*The Contract Book*) to evaluate the successes and limitations of strategies employed for engaging collaborative processes:

Collaborators from related fields (visual art and art history) were not familiar before coming together to collaborate. I identified a common interest in the work of artist and filmmaker Peter Greenaway and on this basis, invited my collaborator to work with me in an exploratory collaborative project. After initial discussion about our individual interests, we decided to collaborate to produce a visual 'contract book', in response to Greenaway's film 'The Draughtsman's Contract', and as a metaphor for shared working processes. We produced a series of collages and book maquettes, but we were unable to realise a finished and resolved 'contract book'. As a result, interest in the project and motivation diminished.

Of the five main research projects undertaken, this was the least successful in achieving a **complex and dynamic shared creative process, which is mutually beneficial, developmental and context-dependent**. Strategies for engaging collaboration could have more successfully achieved the necessary key qualities of the collaborative process, if they had been more responsive to the particular characteristics of the Professional Model.

Although collaborators contributed to develop a clear aim for the project at the outset, we had different individual expectations of how to develop a collaborative process, different disciplinary perspectives of art practice, and different ideas about what to include in the contract book. Although we were both interested in collaborating, we identified opposing views on art and individualism, which made the process of

collaboration difficult. If more attention had been given to identifying **common ground** between our respective disciplines in the early stage of the collaboration, we may have been more successful in developing a **shared creative vision** of how to best achieve our common aim. We tried to combine and incorporate our different individual interests and aesthetic taste and judgement by making individual collages and then coming together to evaluate them and develop them collaboratively. However, we found it difficult to agree on how to proceed and our collaborative methods and joint decisions were made through compromise rather than consensus. We may have been more successful in developing a shared creative process if we had negotiated clear roles and contributions on the basis of our specialist skills, knowledge and expertise from our respective fields. We contributed equally to the project, although motivation and interest in achieving a finished 'contract book' lessened as the project progressed. A greater sense of **shared ownership** may have been more successfully maintained if we had explicitly described our expectations of what the contract book would contain and what compatible skills and expertise we would each contribute more clearly at the outset. A more clearly structured collaborative process and defined collaborative aim would have enabled us to acknowledge our individual differences and contribute specific skills toward the development of the 'contract book'.

The project provided an opportunity for my collaborator to explore his ideas in the practical, visual "language of expression" (John-Steiner 2000:198) of art practice, as opposed to the textual, literary methods of art history. However, the collaboration would have been more **mutually beneficial** if the book had been developed with the intention of publication in a professional context, for a broad art audience including practitioners, critics and historians, as it would have been more directly relevant to our respective fields of practice.

In **Project Two** (*Parklife*), staff from Aberdeen City Council contributed resources and access to the public park context where I undertook a public art event, but they had little substantial collaborative input or influence on how the project was developed or unfolded in practice.

5.3.4 The 'Interdisciplinary Model'

The Interdisciplinary Model of collaboration is both a meeting place between individuals unknown to one another, and between disciplines or fields of practice not traditionally, or professionally related, in order to investigate or develop something in an innovative way. This model would include exploratory or research-based projects situated between recognised professional contexts or fields of practice³⁸.

Collaborators come together 'cold' as they are unfamiliar and from different professional fields. The **aim** of collaboration is to investigate issues/problems innovatively and to develop new interdisciplinary perspectives, methods and knowledge. The collaboration occurs within an inter-subjective, and inter-disciplinary **context** and is both responsive to and developed out of compatibilities uncovered between individuals and their respective fields of practice. A clearly negotiated collaborative **structure**, which is adaptable and flexible, allows individual roles and contributions to be identified within the group and negotiated throughout the project. The outcomes, or **products** of collaboration may be new interdisciplinary perspectives, methods and knowledge (informed by individuals' specialist expertise and disciplinary knowledge), the development of mutual understanding and/or shared collaborative values. The Interdisciplinary Model is 'more complex' as little or no prior knowledge exists between collaborators or their respective disciplines.

In response to a common problem/issue, collaborators communicate interests, perspectives, knowledge, values and methodologies *explicitly* in order to explore similarities and differences and to identify **common ground** between individuals and their respective fields. Individuals

'inhabit' and 'reframe' the problem/issue collaboratively (Fig. 4.1, Chapter 4, p121) to define a shared project aim. Through the process of identifying common ground and a shared aim, individuals construct a shared language and develop mutual understanding. The collaborative process is intensive and individuals work closely together from the outset to develop a **shared creative vision**. Individuals *choose* to collaborate and are equally motivated, open and willing to learn from, through and about individuals and their fields of practice, and to have their own perspectives and approaches challenged and developed throughout an innovative and dynamic collaborative process. A sense of **shared ownership** and responsibility is established at the outset and individual roles and contributions are negotiated and evolved throughout the duration of the project.

The collaborative process is **mutually beneficial** and can develop or **transform** individual collaborators perspectives through the discovery and creation of new knowledge. Collaborators share a desire to learn from one another and advancing their respective disciplines or professional areas through an explorative collaborative process. This form of collaboration can be viewed as a research methodology for innovative inquiry (Gray et al 2000). Located between recognised disciplines and/or traditional areas of expertise/skills/knowledge, the process can identify and develop new areas of common ground between disciplines and new collaborative knowledge.

Platform develops interdisciplinary collaborations between artists and scientists to address complex and "important cultural questions" (ecological, political and economic issues) democratically, by sharing different perspectives and knowledge and expertise. Because they tackle "really important questions", they recognise that working collaboratively enables "as many people as possible to think imaginatively and constructively" about these complex problems. Interdisciplinary collaboration provides a new space, between

recognised disciplines and methods of practice where “imagination and freedom can flow” and collaborators develop new creative perspectives, methods and values (Marriot, Appendix 3.2b, p468).

The Interdisciplinary Model is applied to **Project Five** (*‘Re-Visioning the Gallery’*) to evaluate the successes and limitations of strategies employed for engaging collaborative processes:

Six collaborators (from the fields of visual art, architecture, geography, psychology and education) were invited to collaborate to ‘re-think’ the roles and functions of a municipal public Art Gallery (Aberdeen Art Gallery). Active researchers (academics) and/or practitioners with specialist interests in methods of visualisation, were identified from disciplines/fields of practice that appeared to have the potential both to be compatible with one another and to contribute specialist expertise that would be relevant to the gallery context. Collaborators met in the neutral context of the gallery to discuss ideas about how to approach the project, and to exchange information and specialist knowledge. Individuals were equally open and willing to develop collaborative, interdisciplinary research methods to investigate the gallery context. The group decided to meet regularly within the gallery and develop ideas and activities that would enable collaborators to learn about, from and with one another, through the collaborative process. Individuals proposed six activities to explore particular aspects of the gallery context and worked in small sub-groups to undertake these throughout the eight months of the project. Throughout the project, regular meetings were also undertaken in the gallery context and individuals fed back on outcomes achieved from the activities, which were discussed and evaluated within the group. A final evaluation meeting was held to review the project and collaborators decided to continue the project and to write a collaborative funding bid to support further research into the development of interdisciplinary methods of visualisation.

Of the five main research projects undertaken, this was the most successful in achieving a **complex and dynamic shared creative process, which is mutually beneficial, developmental and context-dependent**. Strategies for engaging collaboration were appropriate to the characteristics of the Interdisciplinary Model. Collaborative methods were suitably balanced between developing common ground between *individuals* (and responding to individual expectations of collaboration), and between identifying and developing compatibilities between their respective *disciplines/fields of practice*. The selected collaborators shared a mutual desire to develop shared values and find new areas of compatibility and common ground between their specialist fields of practice.

Before approaching collaborators, I spent time researching fields that I thought would be able to contribute to 're-thinking' the gallery context, and identified individuals with overlapping specialist interests in methods of visualisation. This enabled collaborators to identify common interests and develop **common ground** quite quickly in the first few meetings. The project was presented as an interdisciplinary *research* project (rather than an *art* project) to ensure individuals felt they could contribute equally to the project (and to avoid any wrong assumptions that I was inviting them to participate in 'my art project'). Collaborators came together to 'inhabit' and 're-frame' the problem of 're-thinking' the gallery. Based on over-lapping interests in methods of visualisation, the group developed a **shared creative vision** by deciding to call the project 'Re-visioning the Gallery' and to develop interdisciplinary visual research methods for investigating the context in new ways. A large amount of time was spent sharing ideas and making individual perspectives, knowledge, skills, methodologies and values *explicit*, in order to maintain shared creative process and to clarify perspectives, expectations and perceived benefits of the collaboration throughout the project. This informed a sense of **shared ownership** of the development of the collaborative processes. Collaborators contributed

ideas, skills and expertise and worked in small sub-groups to investigate particular exploratory activities. Outcomes from each activity were always brought back to the main site of the collaboration (the regular group meetings in the gallery, which was external to their respective professional contexts). Through discussion, focused dialogue and debate and negotiation, the group established shared values and developed shared decision-making processes. The collaborative process was **mutually beneficial** as individuals learnt from one another and developed their individual areas of interest through sharing and exchanging knowledge and skills within the group. Collaborators felt that the process had been **transformative** in enabling an innovative approach to interdisciplinary working and the development of a new perspective and approach to the gallery context. This benefit was manifest in the collaborators mutual decision to investigate the development of interdisciplinary methods of visualisation further, beyond the proposed end date of the project. The main factors found to limit the development of the project were the lack of time and funding to develop interdisciplinary methods further within the scope of this research project.

5.4 Evaluation of the Proposed Critical Framework

The four models of collaboration presented through the matrix (Fig. 5.1, p204) are proposed as a critical framework for understanding and evaluating different forms of collaboration. They are not presented as a definitive topographical 'map' of collaboration, neither are they viewed as inflexible or isolated forms of collaboration. From my perspective as a visual artist approaching interdisciplinary collaboration, the main factors influencing my approach to instigating collaborative projects were the collaborators themselves and the potential or actual relationships of their respective disciplines to the visual arts. These variables are not presented as exhaustive. They are not presented as the only factors for distinguishing forms of collaboration that visual artists might experience.

The matrix presents a simplified overview of models of collaboration that are *qualitatively* distinct. It is and is not intended as a determinate method for defining unequivocal models of collaboration, but as an interpretative framework for distinguishing *degrees of difference* between forms of collaboration that visual artists can experience. The models describe subtle, qualitative differences between each form of collaboration, which inform and influence the collaborative experience, for example, an Associate Model *feels* different from an Interdisciplinary Model, because the collaborative process is approached more explicitly in the latter.

The four models described are presented as a critical framework for artists to use in identifying their own experiences of collaboration with particular models, evaluating the successes and limitations of their own strategies for collaboration and recognising the potential challenges and benefits of each model. It is recognised that in situations of live practice, the proposed models are less easy to distinguish and one project may involve different models, or one model may evolve into another model over time, as collaboration unfolds. For example, a successful Personal Model of collaboration may evolve into either an Interdisciplinary Model, or a Professional Model, as relationships are developed and new areas of common ground and compatibilities between different disciplines are identified and developed. Platform (Appendix 3.2b) began as a Personal Model of collaboration between two individuals, and grew into an established professional organisation (Associate Model), which initiates projects that include both Professional Models and Interdisciplinary Models of collaboration.

This section evaluates the use of the four proposed models as a critical framework in terms of its suitability for evaluating the five research projects (section 5.4.1), and in comparison with other existing models of collaborative processes identified in Chapter 2 through the contextual review (section 5.4.2).

5.4.1 Using the Models as a Critical Framework

In section 5.3, the four models of collaboration were each described in relation to their particular characteristics and the four key qualities inherent in successful collaborative processes. The five main research projects were each positioned on the matrix (Fig. 5.1, p204) and evaluated in relation to its relevant model of collaboration.

My use of the four models as a critical framework for understanding distinctive forms of collaboration, was based on the following principals:

1. Collaboration ('a complex and dynamic shared creative process, which is mutually beneficial, developmental and context-dependent') can be achieved in all four proposed models, as long as individual collaborators are willing to collaborate (as collaboration cannot be 'forced').
2. The main characteristics influencing the particular form of collaboration (*collaborators, aims, context, structure, and product*) and key qualities required for successful collaboration (*common ground, shared creative vision, shared ownership and mutually beneficial transformation*) inform the development of the collaborative process in each model.
3. In collaborative projects considered unsuccessful in achieving 'a complex and dynamic shared creative process, which is mutually beneficial, developmental and context-dependent', the strategies adopted for developing collaborative processes are unsuitable, or limited.

Using the four models of collaboration proposed as a critical framework for evaluating the five main research projects highlighted *how* and *why* particular strategies for developing collaboration had been unsuccessful

and resulted in limited qualities of collaboration. In projects considered less successful in achieving collaboration (Projects One to Three), the collaborative strategies adopted were less suited to the particular characteristics of the collaborative model they reflected. In projects considered more successful in achieving collaboration (Projects Four and Five), the collaborative strategies adopted were less suited to the particular characteristics of the collaborative model they reflected. In summary:

Project One was less successful as collaborative strategies did not build upon the existing common ground between collaborators (both visual artists). **Project Two** was less successful as collaborative strategies did not formulate a shared collaborative aim on the basis of collaborators common individual interests. **Project Three** was less successful as collaborative strategies did not celebrate the differences between collaborators individual fields of practice or recognise the specific skills, knowledge and methods of individual collaborators, by defining complimentary roles to contribute to achieving a common aim. **Project Four** was more successful as collaborative strategies identified and developed collaborators' shared interests. Collaborative methods developed and evolved on the basis of trust and openness, which was already present between collaborators. **Project Five** was most successful, as collaborative strategies were developed to make collaborators individual interests and disciplinary perspectives, methodologies and values explicit. Therefore, common ground was established and collaborators contributed equally in developing a mutually beneficial outcome, although the project was limited in its ability to fully explore and evaluate the mutual benefits of developing interdisciplinary visual research methods within the scope of this research project.

In the process of developing and undertaking the research projects, it was possible to identify the characteristics influencing the collaborative

process, but less easy to identify why a 'deep' form of collaborative engagement was not occurring. As the research progressed, I tacitly began to develop strategies for engaging collaborative process that were more responsive to the particular individuals I approached and their respective fields of practice. However, it was difficult to say exactly why the strategies adopted in Project Five were more successful in achieving collaboration than the strategies I adopted in Project Three, for example. The success or limitations of the projects were also largely influenced by my collaborators' input; therefore the collaborative process was dynamic and subject to chance. However as the research progressed, strategies were adopted which provided a structure for collaboration, whilst allowing the collaboration to evolve and collaborators to influence the development of the process. This was largely due to my developing awareness that working with different individuals from different fields of practice influenced the development of different forms of collaboration, which were qualitatively distinctive.

Using the critical framework to evaluate the five main research projects has helped to clarify *how* and *why* the collaborative strategies I adopted were more or less successful in achieving collaboration and provided a simplified overview of the different forms of collaboration that can be experienced, from the perspective of a visual artist. If I had had this critical framework to hand during the process of undertaking the research projects, it would have been more easy to recognise why collaborative strategies were not working and to adapt them to making them more suitable to each particular model of collaboration. For example, a more mutually beneficial form of collaboration could have been achieved in Project One if a 'more simple' and tacit approach to the development of a shared creative process had been adopted by building the collaboration from individuals' shared interests and existing art practices.

5.4.2 Comparison with Existing Models

Investigating dynamic collaborative processes from a psychological perspective, Vera John-Steiner (2000) defined four patterns of creative collaboration, whilst recognising that due to the dynamic and developmental nature of the collaborative process, these patterns could change, merge and overlap as the collaborative process unfolds (Fig. 2.1, Chapter 2, p29).

I compared my proposed four models of collaboration with John-Steiner's generic four patterns of creative collaboration. I found that the different qualities of the collaborative process described in each pattern, were comparable with the qualities distinguishing each of the four models:

- The **Associate Model** is comparative to '**Family Collaboration**'.
- The **Personal Model** is comparative to '**Distributed Collaboration**'.
- The **Professional Model** is comparative to '**Complementary Collaboration**'.
- The **Interdisciplinary Model** is comparative to '**Integrative Collaboration**'.

The **Associate Model** of collaboration can be compared to John-Steiner's pattern of '**Family Collaboration**', which is characterised by a "mode of interaction in which roles are flexible or may change over time" (2000:200-201). The qualities of this form of collaboration are evident in the **common vision and trust** shared between collaborators, the **fluidity of roles** adopted by collaborators, and the **dynamic integration of expertise** in the development of the collaborative creative process. Like a family, the relationships are intimate and built upon acceptance of difference, mutual support and

understanding, and shared (or similar) values. A family communicates *explicitly* through a shared language that is understood by family members, and communicates *tacitly* through codes of behaviour and shared values and conventions. In the ‘associate model’ of collaboration, qualities and characteristics of the process tend to be implicitly negotiated between collaborators and information remains imbedded in the experiences of the collaborators. The collaborators (family members) work together ‘behind the scenes’ to create works for an audience that are presented in a professional art context.

The **Personal Model** of collaboration can be compared to John-Steiner’s pattern of ‘**Distributed Collaboration**’, which occurs in “casual settings” as well as “more organised contexts” (2000:197). In this form of collaboration, “participants exchange information and explore thoughts and opinions” (2000:198). The qualities of this form of collaboration are evident in the **similar interests** shared by collaborators, the **informal and voluntary** roles adopted by collaborators, and the **spontaneous and responsive** approach to individual perspectives and contributions within the collaborative process. This form of collaboration reflects a meeting of minds and ideas across disciplinary boundaries and may include the development of collaborative ideas and new perspectives between collaborators geographically distanced from each other. Collaborators from different disciplines or fields of practice, recognise their differences, but are open to exploring shared interests, or investigating a subject/issue/problem together, whilst exploiting their particular skills and expertise.

Professional disciplines may be far apart, but collaboration can emerge through existing personal relationships. There need not be an in-depth understanding of collaborators respective disciplines but collaborators can develop shared understanding, even if individual values and methodologies of practice are very different. For visual artists, this form

of collaboration need not necessarily produce 'artworks/artefacts', but must provide a mutually beneficial collaborative process.

The **Professional Model** of collaboration can be compared to John-Steiner's pattern of '**Complementary Collaboration**', which is characterised by "a division of labour based on the complementary expertise, disciplinary knowledge, roles and temperament" of collaborators. On the basis of their respective fields of specialism, collaborators "negotiate their goals and strive for a common vision" (2000:198). In this form of collaboration, a 'deep' form of engagement between collaborators can occur through the "translation of one's thoughts into a new language of expression, or into the developed mode of expression of one's partner" (2000:198). The qualities of this form of collaboration are evident in the **overlapping values** between individual collaborators and their respective fields of practice, the **clear division of labour** between collaborators, and the **discipline-based approaches** or methods of contributing to the co-construction of something and achievement of a satisfactory collaborative product/outcome. This form of collaboration is developed to exploit the skills and expertise of individual collaborators who can share and contribute *across* recognised disciplinary boundaries³⁹, even if their values and methodologies may be different.

The **Interdisciplinary Model** of collaboration can be compared to John-Steiner's pattern of '**Integrative Collaboration**', which is characterised by the "construction of a new mode of thought or art form" and "a prolonged period of committed activity" in which collaborators "thrive on dialogue, risk taking, and a shared vision" (2000:203). The qualities of this form of collaboration are evident in the **visionary commitment** shared between collaborators to discover something new, the **braided roles** adopted by collaborators (which are inter-dependent and inter-related), and the **transformative co-construction** of something new, through innovative and exploratory collaborative creative processes.

The collaborative relationships are intimate and intensive and are built upon equal support and the development of mutual understanding and shared values. Collaborators seek to integrate similarities and differences in order to create something new, which could not be conceived of individually and which cannot be predicted out the outset.

The **Interdisciplinary Model**, which illustrates an explorative and experimental approach to collaboration as a process of shared investigation and learning, was found to be comparable with education specialist, John Gray and colleagues' (2000), four staged 'road map' of reflexive and cyclical **collaborative inquiry** (Fig. 2.2 Chapter 2, p32).

Project Five, which engaged a successful Interdisciplinary Model of collaboration, demonstrated the four stages of collaborative enquiry. The process included considering the most appropriate way of forming a collaborative group and approaching potential collaborators (stage one), creating the conditions for collaborative learning by establishing inter-subjective space and a foundation of common ground between collaborators (stage two), negotiating how to proceed to undertake the collaborative inquiry through a series of exploratory activities which were fed back to the collaborative group (stage three), and by evaluating progress and identifying relevant and mutually beneficial outcomes within the group to formulate new collaborative knowledge (stage four).

The comparisons identified between the four models of collaboration developed through this analysis and John-Steiner's four patterns of creative collaboration validate the existence of qualitative differences in approaches to collaboration. However, further research would be required to fully analyse John-Steiner's models of collaboration in relation to the four collaborative models presented, which relate specifically to the context of visual art practice.

5.5 Summary of Outcomes

In Chapter 4 a systematic, cross-comparative analysis of the research data showed that the main characteristics influencing the shape of collaboration are dependent on: the collaborative **aims** (and how they are defined within the group); the motives, expectations, roles and contributions of individual **collaborators** (and how they are defined and made explicit within the group); the physical environment and inter-subjective **context** formed between collaborators; how collaboration is **structured** and collaborative methods developed; and the types of **outcomes** achieved.

These characteristics highlighted some of the main features shaping and influencing forms of collaboration. However, they did not fully describe the qualities of the collaborative process. In this chapter, the qualitative definition of collaboration as **a complex and dynamic shared creative process, which is mutually beneficial, developmental and context-dependent** was presented and distinguished from other forms of shared working occurring in the visual arts (participation, cooperation, interaction, collective and partnership). The criteria of this qualitative definition of collaboration were clarified:

- Collaboration is a temporary, rather than permanent, relationship created out of a common need, desire, and/or willingness to address common interests, problems and/or issues.
- Collaboration is an intensive and 'purposive' relationship, which is less stable than more formalised, long-term shared working processes, such as collectives and partnerships.
- Collaboration is a complex shared working process, as it requires the development of a shared creative vision.

- The collaborative creative process is dynamic and developmental as cannot be controlled by individual collaborators.
- Ownership of collaboration is shared and collaborators equally contribute to and share responsibility for the direction it takes.
- Collaboration is less concerned with the achievement of individual collaborators' goals, and more concerned with the attainment of goals that could neither be conceived nor achieved by one individual.
- Collaborators seek mutual benefits from the collaborative process by learning about, through, and from co-collaborators.

On the basis of this definition, key qualities required for successful collaborative processes were identified and described through an interpretative analysis of the research data and a comparison of the two research projects considered *most* and *least* successful in achieving collaboration:

- **Common Ground:** mutual understanding and shared values developed between individual collaborators, and/or their respective disciplines.
- **Shared Creative Vision:** common aims and shared expectations of the collaborative process developed between collaborators by exploiting both 'individual specificity' and 'disciplinary specialism' to achieve mutually beneficial collaborative processes and outcomes.
- **Shared Ownership:** an equal sense of shared authorship, control and responsibility in achieving a shared creative vision, achieved

by debating and negotiating collaborators' individual contributions and roles.

- **Mutually Beneficial Transformation:** a shared openness and willingness to learn from, about and through collaborators and the collaborative process, and to have one's views challenged, changed and developed through the process.

Throughout the research, the most challenging aspect of collaboration for a visual artist was found to be the development of a **shared creative process**, which is different to an individual creative process in art practice, where the individual artist is responsible for decision making. The qualitative definition of collaboration, together with the main characteristics (described in Chapter 4) and key qualities (section 5.2) of collaboration, raised a critical language and criteria for identifying and evaluating collaborative processes. These outcomes were brought together to describe different forms of collaboration that visual artists can experience.

A matrix (Fig. 5.1, p204) distinguished four models of collaboration (*the Associate Model, the Personal Model, the Professional Model and the Interdisciplinary Model*) on the basis of the relationships between collaborators and the actual or potential relationships between their respective fields of practice and the visual arts. The particular benefits and challenges offered by each model were described in terms of whether it presented a 'more simple' or 'more complex' form of collaboration for visual artists. The main characteristics and key qualities of these four models of collaboration were used to evaluate the successes and limitations of strategies employed for engaging collaborative processes in the five main research projects. The **Associate Model** appeared to present the '**most simple**' form of collaboration for visual artists, while the **Interdisciplinary Model** appeared to present the '**most complex**' form of collaboration.

5.6 Evaluation of Outcomes

The critical framework for identifying and evaluating different models of collaboration presented in this chapter was evaluated in terms of its usefulness in evaluating the appropriateness of collaborative strategies adopted in the five main research projects (section 5.6.1) and compared with other existing models of collaboration (section 5.6.2).

The qualitative definition of collaboration, description of main characteristics and key qualities of collaborative processes, and four models of collaboration proposed, have been developed through systematic processes of analysis. However the following limitations are acknowledged:

- The definition of collaboration as **a complex and dynamic shared creative process, which is developmental and context-dependent**, reflects a positive and explicit approach to collaboration, and might not reflect the opinions of artists who have negative experiences of collaboration.
- Distinctions between collaboration and other forms of shared working are provided to aid the development of a clear, qualitative definition of collaboration. It has not been the intention of this research to analyse 'participatory', 'cooperative', 'collective', 'interactive' and 'partnership' forms of shared working in greater detail other than to assist the clarification of the qualitative definition of collaboration developed throughout the process of this research.
- The key qualities of the collaborative process, described in section 5.2, need to be understood in relation to the main characteristics of collaboration, which were identified and described in Chapter 4.

- The four models of collaboration ('Associate', 'Personal', 'Professional' and 'Interdisciplinary') presented in the matrix (section 5.3) are simplified in order to distinguish between different forms of collaboration that might be experienced by visual artists. It is important to note that these models are not proposed as separate, discrete entities. In the complex reality of professional practice, artists' experiences of collaborative projects may include characteristics of one or more of the models.
- Distinctions between '*more simple*' and '*more complex*' collaborative processes do not suggest that any form of collaboration is 'simplistic'.
- The critical framework presented in this chapter has been useful for evaluating the successes and limitations of the strategies adopted for developing collaborative processes in the five main research projects. However, further testing by artists in professional contexts would be useful for further evaluation and verification of this contribution.

Notes from Chapter 5

- ¹ A series of activities producing artefacts were undertaken during the project. The final outcome was not a physical artefact, in the way that the *Kissing Card Game* provided a final product in Project Four. The final product was a collaboratively written research proposal.
- ² The main intention was to evaluate my experiences of the collaborative projects, from the perspective of a visual artist, rather than to document my collaborators experiences, for example through interviews. Methods of recording the collaborative process (for example, video was used to record the collaborative drawing process in Project One) did not capture the qualities of collaborators experiences of collaborating. The project reports (Appendix 1) evaluate my experiences of the different forms of collaboration and different strategies undertaken and include qualitative evaluations of the collaborative projects.
- ³ For example, Project Four exceeded expectations to produce a resolved artefact (the *Kissing Card Game*), while Project Three was unsuccessful in creating a completed *Contract Book*.
- ⁴ Project One established a pragmatic form of collaboration that was limited in terms of the development of shared ideas/concepts. Project Two engaged a limited form of interaction with members of the public, who participated in a pre-designed public art event. Project Three produced a limited form of engagement as collaborators ideas and approaches were incompatible. In Project Four, collaborators developed an equal level of engagement, although roles became imbalanced towards the end of the project, in the latter stages of producing the card game.
- ⁵ In Project Three, collaborators were willing to work together, but had different expectations of the collaborative process and found it difficult to agree how best to proceed.
- ⁶ Project One showed that achieving *spontaneity* in the process of shared working did not automatically lead to a 'deep' level of collaboration (Appendix 1.1).
- ⁷ In a similar way, Mattessich & Monsey (1992) and Winer & Ray (1994) made qualitative distinctions between definitions of *cooperation*, *coordination* and *collaboration*, to describe the particular qualities of the latter form of shared working. The contextual review highlighted the need for clearer definitions of collaboration in the visual arts, as the term was often used inter-changeably with other shared working processes, such as participation, cooperation, etc. (see Chapter 2).
- ⁸ In Project One, my collaborator was invited to make a series of collaborative drawings within a set of conditions that I had designed. Members of the public were invited to participate in a pre-designed public art project, by wearing rosettes and writing postcards. Although they contributed to and influenced the shape of the projects as they unfolded, they projects were conceived and pre-designed prior to their involvement.
- ⁹ The term 'interactive' is commonly used to describe artworks and/or technologies that invite viewer response. In the visual arts, the term collaboration has been used to describe interactive artworks where the viewer's participation and experience of

Notes from Chapter 5 (continued)

an artwork affects it and contributes to the construction of meaning (Chapter 2, note 9, p69). In this research, collaboration is not considered to occur between and individual and an inanimate object.

- ¹⁰ Schrage (1995:29) and Bennis (1997:196) used the metaphors of “romance” and “marriage” respectively to describe the ‘depth’ and ‘intensity’ of collaborative relationships.
- ¹¹ The need for raising a critical dialogue of the particular qualities of collaborative working, and in particular interdisciplinary collaboration, in the visual arts is described in Chapters 1 and 2. Throughout the research, it was necessary to develop a critical language with which to describe and evaluate collaborative processes.
- ¹² Dalziel and Scullion’s first experience of collaborating together was approached as an experiment. Because they considered the work they produced ‘The Bathers’ successful, they decided to continue working collaboratively (Appendix 3.2c, p486).
- ¹³ My collaborator, Duncan Comrie identified that “part of the problem of us working together is that you’re coming from an environment where everything is conducive towards exploring ideas visually. I come from an environment where it is the opposite - it’s not allowed in fact.” (Appendix 1.3, p328)
- ¹⁴ The term developed by Huxham (1996) to describe the mutually beneficial nature of collaboration.
- ¹⁵ Duncan was wary of an “imposed unity” (p329).
- ¹⁶ For example, collaborators were all asked to write their individuals motives for being involved in the project, expectations of the process, and perceived benefits on postcards which were circulated amongst the group, in order to make individual expectations explicit (see *Table 5.3*, Appendix 1.5, p356).
- ¹⁷ The ability to be able to cross disciplines is dependent upon the “specificity of individuals” (Büchler in Brind 2001:47), and an understanding of different disciplines values and methodologies (see Chapter 2, p58-61).
- ¹⁸ I viewed myself as a ‘practitioner’, while Duncan viewed himself as an ‘intellectual’. Duncan was interested in the “aesthetic freedom of the individual”, whereas I was interested in developing a shared collaborative vision. I approached the process of collaboration as the “mutual input of both participants” with a view to achieving a common aim, whereas for Duncan “in the agreement between one person and anyone else there should be no condition except that there are no conditions.” (Appendix 1.3, p 327).
- ¹⁹ If the motivation for collaborating was not the desire to find points of common ground upon which to create something new and shared, I found it difficult to understand what the perceived benefits of the collaboration were, and what my collaborators expectations of the process were.
- ²⁰ As I initiated all of the five research projects and invited collaborators involvement, it was difficult to encourage collaborators to take equal ownership of the projects as they were perceived as part of my research.

Notes from Chapter 5 (continued)

- ²¹ This was partly due to the fact that projects were presented as a *requirement*, which all students had to do, rather than an optional activity.
- ²² In Project One collaborators (both visual artists) produced collaborative drawings. Project Two produced a postcard book containing public participants' postcards and rosettes, with a collaborator from the field of cultural interpretation. Project Three produced a series of collages, with the intention of compiling them into a visual 'contract book', with a collaborator from the discipline of Art History. Project Four produced a visual and textual 'kissing card game', with a collaborator from the field of foreign language studies.
- ²³ In Project Four, my collaborator often asked 'if this was what I wanted' when he presented ideas and suggestions.
- ²⁴ Rather than working in collaborative pairs, as in Projects One to Four.
- ²⁵ One of the collaborators (the Cartographer) stated that the main reason he agreed to become involved in the project was due to his interest in the work of another collaborator (the Psychologist), whom he had not previously met. He was particularly interested in this collaborator's research into 'reportive' visual memory might inform his own research and practice of 'visual mapping'.
- ²⁶ Because they were both practicing individual artists, they found that "it can get quite stifling to keep being supportive of each others' individual practice and you invariably end up devoting a lot of time to each others' projects". Because supporting each other's individual practices was "becoming quite wearing and difficult" they decided to try to combine their energies by working collaboratively (Scullion, Appendix 3.2c, p484).
- ²⁷ 'The Horn' (a public sculpture for the M8 motorway) took five years to develop and involved working with specialists including a large engineering firm.
- ²⁸ I designed the project to investigate how experimental methods of collaborative drawing, under different conditions and in different contexts, might influence the development of the collaborative process. Pernille Spence (collaborator) knew of my research and volunteered to assist, out of curiosity. The project aimed to document the influences of a formal, controlled studio environment, and an informal, natural environment, in creating a spontaneous collaborative drawing method, rather than to create resolved artworks.
- ²⁹ The collaborative project 'Primitive Streak' (a winner of the Wellcome Trust's 1997 Sci-Art Competition) shows a personal model of collaboration between the sisters, Dr Kate Storey (scientist working in biomedical research) and Helen Storey (fashion designer). The collaboration was initiated on the basis of their personal relationship and shared interest in biological structures, which they each approached differently, in respect of their very different disciplines and forms of individual practice. They collaborated to create a fashion collection influenced by biological imagery. Their project is documented on the Sci-Art Internet site (<http://www.sciart.org>).
- ³⁰ Dan Gretton was involved in the National Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and student politics, when they both met at Cambridge University.

Notes from Chapter 5 (continued)

- ³¹ My collaborator, Christian Zursiedel was a foreign language university student at the time of the project.
- ³² Our word game strategies were beginning to lose focus, as we did not have a collaborative aim to work towards. The opportunity to develop artwork for an exhibition on the theme of 'Kissing' provided a new focus and helped us develop a shared creative vision for how to proceed with the collaboration and further develop the game methods we were exploring.
- ³³ Christian volunteered to assist with my research as he was interesting in knowing more about art and my work. I was interested in exploring methods of engaging *equal* input from collaborators from a non-art discipline. After initial discussions, we decided that we could use the opportunity of working together to learn more about one another's different individual cultural background (German and British) and different disciplines (languages and visual arts).
- ³⁴ Christian researched appropriate text for the cards and began developing the rules for play, whilst I worked on design layout and images, using computer design packages, which Christian was not familiar with.
- ³⁵ The card game was exhibited in a group exhibition titled "The Kiss" in Dundee in January 2000, and we both attended the private view. The decision to produce collaborative work for this context was opportunistic (resulting from an invitation to submit work for exhibition) rather than a conscious decision on the part of both collaborators to seek out a visual art context to work within.
- ³⁶ I was interested in public participation in public art events, and my collaborator, Lauris Symmons, was interested in interpreting communities and people's oral narratives of 'place'.
- ³⁷ An example is Public Art, which can involve and include the expertise and knowledge of local government officials, planners and specialist construction/manufacturing expertise. Susanne Lacy (1995:178) has developed an evaluative model for viewing different forms of participation and involvement in Public Art practice as constituents of the art 'audience' (Fig. 2.3, Chapter 2, p48).
- ³⁸ An example is the Wellcome Trust's Sci-Art initiative, which intends to instigate and support new crossovers between the different areas of art and science, by creating funding opportunities for artists and scientists to develop collaborative projects together.
- ³⁹ Hinchcliffe (2000) has termed this form of interdisciplinary working 'trans-disciplinary'.

6. TOWARDS A CRITICAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

As was highlighted in the introduction to the research (Chapter One), the nineties in Britain have seen increasing interest in collaborative methods of art production, which have become more common across a broad range of contemporary visual art practices. More opportunities for artists to engage in interdisciplinary collaborative projects in professional contexts have presented new ways for artists to work with practitioners from non-arts fields (particularly in projects beyond the gallery). However, at the start of this research in 1997, there were very few publications critically evaluating interdisciplinary and collaborative creative processes or addressing the differences between these new approaches to practice and more traditional models of individual visual art practice. This research has responded to the gap in knowledge of the qualities of interdisciplinary and collaborative practices, by presenting formal research that addresses the nature of collaborative working in the visual arts.

This research set out to develop and evaluate strategies for engaging interdisciplinary collaborative processes of shared working between a visual artist (the researcher) and other practitioners. The central issue emerging through the research was the nature of the collaborative process itself. In the process of creating artworks, many visual artists work with other artists and practitioners from a variety of fields, in different ways; and describe the process as collaborative. However, individuals can have different conceptions of collaboration, as has been shown in studies of collaboration in organisational theory (Huxham 1996).

Investigating the nature of the collaborative process has presented two main challenges. Whilst it has been necessary to clarify the concept of collaboration in order to focus the research study, it is difficult to provide

a categorical definition, as the collaborative process is located in the experiential relationships developed between collaborators, which are specific to particular circumstances and can be interpreted differently by each individual. In professional arts contexts, where critical emphasis tends to focus on the products (rather than the processes) of practice, collaborative working relationships are often not documented. In addition to these complexities, is the issue of addressing collaboration in the visual arts; a field that has (for the major part of the 20th century at least) promoted a largely dominant value of *individual* creative art practice. To develop and evaluate strategies for *interdisciplinary* collaboration from the perspective of an individual visual art practitioner (the researcher), the research has initiated, documented, clarified and critically evaluated collaborative processes in the context of visual arts practice and in relation to the wider cultural context influencing the need to engage collaborative working processes.

Before attempting to draw conclusions from the outcomes of this research, it is important to emphasise that whilst collaboration has been investigated as a viable *alternative* to individual art practice, the research does not denigrate the value and importance of individual visual art practices, or present collaborative forms of practice as 'better than' individual practices. My intention (as both an artist and researcher) has been to address interdisciplinary collaboration in a exploratory way and to see what new approaches to practice and issues might emerge for a visual art practitioner.

In this chapter, the research is summarised in *section 6.1* and the main research outcomes and new contributions to knowledge are described in *section 6.2*. The key issues emerging from the research, which address the implications of approaching interdisciplinary collaboration as a potentially viable methodology of practice for visual artists, are discussed in relation to professional art practice and visual art education (*section 6.3*). Areas identified for future research are described in

section 6.4 and the main strengths and limitations of the research are summarised in *section 6.5*. A summary of the content of the thesis is provided in *section 6.6*.

6.1 General Summary

The research adopted a broad epistemological investigation of the nature of collaboration as a *distinctive* process of shared working, and identified the challenges, benefits and implications of collaborative creative processes for visual artists. With the aim of developing and evaluating strategies for engaging interdisciplinary collaboration between a visual artist (the researcher) and other practitioners, a practice-led, naturalistic inquiry was undertaken.

Exploratory collaborative strategies were developed through a series of research projects, which provided the core strand of the research and the principal primary research data. Throughout the research, a critical understanding of collaboration (as a process of shared working to create collaborative outcomes) was developed, which was largely informed by my direct experiences of collaboration (as practitioner and researcher), by a broad literature review of collaborative processes and practices, and by other artists' experiences of collaborative working in professional contexts. The qualities and characteristics of the collaborative process and the implications of interdisciplinary collaboration as a model of practice for visual artists are addressed from the perspective of a practitioner. This approach has resulted in the development of a practical critical framework (primarily intended for visual artists), which can be used to identify, compare and evaluate collaborative models of practice, and practitioners own experiences of collaboration.

Due to the lack of existing critical language or criteria for evaluating collaborative processes in the visual arts, a review of literature critically addressing collaboration in other fields (such as management and organisational theory) uncovered different critical approaches to

describing the nature of collaboration, and formulating strategies for achieving successful collaborative processes. The review also addressed a broad and diverse range of practices in the visual arts and identified three main areas of professional art practice where issues and debates relating to collaborative forms of practice were located: collaborations occurring between artists; collaborations occurring between artists, audiences and other practitioners in contemporary Public Art Practices; and experimental collaborations occurring between artists and other practitioners in interdisciplinary collaborations. The review uncovered two broadly distinct approaches to collaboration in the visual arts:

1. Collaboration approached as a method within an individual artist's practice.
2. Collaboration approached as a methodology of practice; where individual artists explore the potential of collaboration as an alternative to individual practice.

This identification signalled a key stage in the research as it clarified the focus of the research, which was to explore the potential for interdisciplinary collaboration to present a new approach to visual art practice. Adopting the second approach to collaboration, my initial assumptions (as a visual artist undertaking the research) were that interdisciplinary collaboration might offer potential new roles for visual artists, potential new contexts to work within and encourage the development of new methods of practice. To understand the particular benefits, challenges and implications of this approach to collaboration in the visual arts, the specific nature of the collaborative process was addressed through the following key questions:

- What does collaboration 'look' like and how can its characteristics be made visible?
- What does a collaborative process 'feel' like and how can the qualities of the process be made explicit?

- What main features influence and/or limit the success of collaboration?
- What are the main benefits and challenges of *interdisciplinary* collaboration for a visual artist?

These questions were addressed through four research objectives:

1. To clarify the nature of collaboration as a particular process of shared working, selected examples of collaboration in the visual arts were *identified* and *described* through a review of available literature and interviews undertaken with selected artists engaging collaboration in their professional practices.
2. To understand how to develop appropriate strategies for achieving successful collaborative processes, a series of exploratory projects were developed. Experimental strategies for initiating collaboration and developing collaborative methods were investigated and evaluated.
3. To evaluate the main features influencing the success of collaboration, the main characteristics and key qualities of collaborative processes were identified and described through a systematic, cross-comparative analysis of the primary research data.
4. To develop useful critical tools and criteria for approaching collaboration from within the visual arts, a critical framework was formulated (using the outcomes of the first three objectives) for identifying and evaluating different models of collaboration that visual artists can experience.

The research followed three strands of inquiry (*collaboration in practice*, *collaboration in education* and *case examples of collaboration*), which

enabled different types of primary research data to be gathered and generated, and provided insights about collaboration that informed each strand:

‘Collaboration in Practice’ consisted of a series of five exploratory collaborative projects initiated by the researcher. Each project engaged different collaborators in a variety of contexts and employed different exploratory strategies (including ‘game strategies’ and metaphors of ‘inter-subjective’ space and ‘contract’). As the principal collaborator in each project, I evaluated the successes and limitations of collaborative processes achieved in each project, and used the insights gained to inform the development of the subsequent project. As the research progressed and I developed a clearer understanding of the characteristics and qualities influencing the nature of collaborative engagement, the projects became more complex (Project Five involved six collaborators from different disciplines) and strategies for engaging collaborative processes became more successful. Detailed project reports describing and evaluating each example of collaboration provided qualitative primary data for subsequent analysis. As the principal strand of the practice-led inquiry, these projects provided an opportunity to experiment with different strategies for engaging collaborative processes and enabled a pragmatic, ‘up-close’ view and experience of collaboration.

Recognising that collaboration requires skills not traditionally associated with individual art practice and challenges a view of visual art practice as an *individual* creative process, I set out to investigate students’ experiences of collaboration in a Fine Art educational context, where individual studio practice is the dominant model. **‘Collaboration in Education’** consisted of two projects developed to observe 2nd and 3rd year Fine Art students’ experiences of cross-departmental collaboration (between painting, sculpture and printmaking) in a traditional Art College context (Gray’s School of Art, Aberdeen). The collaborative process

prompted students to consider the nature of art practice and methods of practicing as a visual artist beyond individual interests and specialist subject areas, and highlighted the need for additional communication and organisational skills, not traditionally considered essential within visual art training. The students' encountered challenges working collaboratively and had both positive and negative experiences. Students approaching collaboration with an open attitude and willingness to share ideas and learn from one another achieved more successful collaborative processes and experienced positive benefits. They were also more able to deal with the challenges presented by collaboration and resolved problems through discussion and negotiation within the group. Detailed project reports described and evaluated students' collaborative strategies for adopted by the students and identified the main benefits and pitfalls that they experienced. Students' own evaluations of their experiences of collaboration were included in the project reports, which provided qualitative primary data for subsequent analysis.

The five main research projects were situated within a research context (and were small-scale and un-funded) and the Fine Art students' collaborative projects were situated within the confines of an educational context. Both strands of inquiry presented valuable insights into the nature of collaboration, highlighted the benefits and challenges of collaborative processes for visual artists, and yielded rich qualitative primary data. However, the limitations of the research and educational contexts were recognised and research outcomes from these two strands of inquiry were further validated and refined through a third strand of inquiry, which investigated selected visual artists' experiences of collaborative practices in professional contexts.

'Case Examples of Collaboration' consisted of three semi-structured interviews with artists engaging in different forms of collaboration in their professional practices. The artists selected for interview represented

different forms of art practice and employed different collaborative strategies; reflecting the three forms of collaboration in the visual arts identified in the contextual review (*collaboration between artists, collaboration in contemporary Public Art practice, and interdisciplinary collaboration*). In preparation for interview, artists were issued pre-interview questionnaire forms, presenting specific questions relating to the characteristics and qualities of collaborative processes identified through the research. This allowed me to 'test' my definitions of the characteristics and qualities of collaboration and prepared the artists for interview by providing some initial criteria for critically evaluating their own experiences of collaborative *processes*. Interviews were undertaken in which the artists described their experiences of collaboration and raised issues relevant to the professional context. The pre-interview questionnaire forms and interview transcripts provided qualitative primary data for subsequent analysis.

To identify and describe the main characteristics of collaboration and the key qualities influencing the success or failure of collaborative processes, the primary data obtained through these three strands of inquiry was subjected to a two-staged systematic cross-comparative and interpretative analysis.

In the first stage, five basic components of collaboration (*aims, collaborators, context, structure and product*) were used to filter information from the data. The main characteristics shaping and influencing the form collaboration takes were identified and described. Understanding the characteristics of collaboration enabled key stages in the development of the collaborative process to be visualised through a series of process diagrams (Chapter 4).

A further, interpretative analysis of these characteristics, the primary data, and my experiences of collaboration (the research project reports) was undertaken to develop a *qualitative* definition of collaboration (as a

distinctive shared working process) and to identify and describe the key qualities inherent in successful collaborative processes (*common ground, shared ownership, shared creative vision* and *mutually beneficial transformation*). The two research projects considered *most* and *least* successful in achieving collaboration were compared and critically evaluated using these evaluative criteria (Chapter 5).

Throughout the research, my experiences of initiating collaborations with individuals from different backgrounds and fields of practice, highlighted two main factors influencing the collaborations: *who* the collaborators were (and if they knew one another prior to collaborating), and *what disciplines* they came from (whether their respective fields of practice were related or unrelated in a professional context). Using these two factors as variables, a matrix was developed (Chapter 5, Fig. 5.1, p204) to identify and describe four distinct models of collaboration that visual artists might experience (an *Associate Model*, a *Personal Model*, a *Professional Model* and an *Interdisciplinary Model*) in relation to the main characteristics and key qualities of collaboration previously identified. These four models of collaboration provided a critical framework for identifying and evaluating appropriate collaborative strategies within distinct forms of collaboration. This critical framework was 'tested' by locating the five main research projects on the matrix and evaluating each in relation to the collaborative model it exemplified. The outcomes showed that the critical framework was useful in highlighting *how* and *why* strategies for engaging collaboration in each of the research projects had been successful, or had resulted in limited collaborative processes. Achieving the key qualities required for successful collaboration was either *more simple* or *more complex* depending on the particular characteristics of each collaborative model. Achieving successful collaboration ('*a complex and dynamic shared creative process, which is mutually beneficial, developmental and context-dependent*') was 'most simple' in the Associate Model (where substantial common ground between collaborators and disciplines

exists), and 'most complex' in the Interdisciplinary Model (where no common ground between collaborators and disciplines exists). An Interdisciplinary Model of collaboration presented the most complex and challenging form of collaboration for visual arts, but offered potential benefits in enabling artists to extend, develop and reposition their existing individual art practice. The interviewed artists' experiences of collaboration and the characteristics and qualities of Vera-John Steiner's (2000) four patterns of creative collaboration (Chapter 2, Fig. 2.1, p29), were compared with the four models of collaboration presented in order to further validate the viability of the critical framework.

6.2 Research Outcomes and New Contributions to Knowledge

As the contextual review has indicated (Chapter 2), this appears to be one of the first practice-led, formal research projects to directly address strategies for engaging interdisciplinary collaborative projects (between a visual artist and other practitioners). As such, the aim has been to raise a generic critical framework for understanding and evaluating collaborative processes across a variety of different areas of visual art practice. Whilst the research presents clear outcomes intended for practical use and further development by other artists/researchers, conclusions are drawn more tentatively as there does not yet appear to be an established body of published material on collaboration in the visual arts to fully validate or refute the findings of this research.

The main outcomes from this research contribute a new interpretative and evaluative critical framework for articulating the qualities of collaborative creative processes, and for identifying and evaluating different models of collaborative practice that can be experienced by visual artists. This critical framework is primarily intended as a useful tool for visual artists to compare and evaluate their own experiences of collaborative processes in professional contexts, and comprises of the following research outcomes:

- A **qualitative definition** of collaboration is presented.
- The **main characteristics** shaping collaboration are described.
- The **key qualities** inherent in successful collaborative processes are identified.
- **Four Models of Collaboration** for visual artists are presented and described.

6.2.1 The Qualitative Definition of Collaboration

Throughout the research, the intention of developing appropriate strategies to achieve a 'deep' form of collaboration between individuals has been central to the development of the five main research projects. In order to develop and evaluate collaborative strategies throughout the research it was necessary to develop a clear understanding of the collaborative *process* and to raise a critical language with which to address it. To clarify the qualities of the collaborative process sought through the research projects, and to address the unclear and often confused use of the term 'collaborative' in the visual arts to describe a range of different shared working processes and artworks (Chapter 2), a qualitative definition of collaboration was evolved throughout the research.

Collaboration (a process of working with others to create collaborative outcomes that could not be achieved individually) is defined as:

A complex and dynamic shared creative process, which is mutually beneficial, developmental and context-dependent.

This definition, which was developed in Chapter 5, contributes a clear benchmark against which different shared working processes can be compared and collaborative processes can be evaluated. The definition qualitatively distinguishes the collaborative process from other types of shared working that visual artists might experience as part of their individual art practice. Although collaboration can include a variety of shared working methods (such as *participation, cooperation, interaction,*

collective and partnership), it is distinguished by the need for the *equal* involvement of collaborators in conceiving *shared* project aims and developing a *shared* collaborative vision.

Collaboration is a temporary shared creative processes, which is formed out of a common need, desire, and/or willingness to address common interests, problems and/or issues. It is an intensive and 'purposive' shared working relationship in which collaborators *negotiate* individual roles and contributions and share a *mutual* desire for some kind of *transformation*. Collaboration requires the development of a shared creative vision between collaborators and is less stable than more permanent or formalised, long-term shared working processes, such as collectives and partnerships.

The collaborative creative process is complex as it is dynamic and developmental. Therefore, it cannot be controlled by an individual as ownership is shared and collaborators equally contribute to and share responsibility for the direction it takes. Whilst collaboration may enable individuals the opportunity to achieve individual goals, it is more overtly concerned with the attainment of shared goals that could neither be conceived nor achieved by one individual alone. Therefore, collaboration is a developmental process of discovery and exploration, through which collaborators can attain mutual benefits by learning about, through, and from co-collaborators throughout the collaborative process.

6.2.2 The Main Characteristics of Collaboration

Collaboration is a project-based way of working, rather than an individual approach to practice. The collaborative process occurs in the relationships created and developed between collaborators and is highly **context-specific** (each collaboration is specific to and develops in response to the particular context in which it occurs). Whilst it might be straight forward to describe a specific example of collaboration through a case-study approach, the intention of this research has been to

develop methods for comparing and evaluating strategies for successful collaboration. In order to do this, it was necessary to develop a method for identifying the main characteristics that describe the shape collaboration can take. The following characteristics of collaboration were identified and described in Chapter 4, through a systematic, cross-comparative analysis of the primary research data. These characteristics describe the basic conditions required to enable collaboration to occur and contribute criteria for describing collaboration and evaluating the main features, which can influence the form collaboration takes:

- *What* collaboration **aims** to achieve and *how* these aims are defined.
- *Who* the individual **collaborators** are: their motives, expectations, roles and contributions.
- The specific **context**: the *physical environment* in which collaboration occurs and the *inter-subjective context* formed between collaborators.
- The methods of collaboration: how *formally/informally*, *tightly/loosely* the collaborative process is **structured** and the strategies of interaction occurring between collaborators.
- The **outcomes** produced through collaboration: visible and *tangible products* and less visible, *qualitative benefits* to collaborators.

The research found that, whilst collaboration is a dynamic and development creative process of shared working, it requires a structured approach which is open and flexible enough to enable the process to evolve naturally, whilst being defined enough to provide clear boundaries that are shared and recognised by collaborators. Although the success of collaboration depends to some extent on chance,

serendipity and the ability of collaborators to ‘click’ and understand one another on a tacit level, the collaborative process is not to be confused with spontaneity alone. Rather, the ‘design’ of collaboration and the ways in which productive collaborative working relationships are structured and developed between individuals was shown in Chapter 4 to be a complex and delicate balance between the need for clear guidelines which are agreed (and understood) by all collaborators and the need for flexibility and adaptability to allow the process to change and develop over time. The importance of communication to the process of structuring and developing collaborative processes has been clarified through this research by identifying key stages in the collaborative process and the different forms of communication that are required at each stage. These key stages were modelled through diagrams in Chapter 4 to provide simplified visualisations of the collaborative process.

The main characteristics of collaboration and key stages in the process of developing collaborative processes contribute practical guidelines and criteria for describing and analysing the features influencing the success or failure of collaborative projects. These criteria are intended for use as a practical user guide for visual artists (and others) initiating and ‘designing’ collaborative projects and developing collaborative shared working processes with others. Whilst they relate specifically to achieving the qualitative definition of the collaborative process already presented, they are general enough to be applied to a variety of diverse forms of collaboration occurring in a wide range of contexts.

6.2.3 The Key Qualities of a Collaborative Process

The research attests that collaboration is a complex process of shared working and that successful collaboration is difficult to achieve. As a *process* of shared working, the success of collaboration is reflected in the success of the collaborative relationships developed between collaborators. The main characteristics of collaboration identified

through the research have proved useful in informing the design of collaboration to provide suitable conditions for developing collaborative relationships. As my understanding of the ways in which the characteristics of collaboration influence the qualities of the collaborative relationships created between individuals developed throughout the research, I was able to use these characteristics effectively in the design of the research projects in order to develop more successful collaborative processes (as was the case in the final research project). However, the characteristics of collaboration alone did not fully describe the less-visible, tacit experiences of successful collaborative relationships. Whilst the research showed that agreeing a collaborative aim was relatively straightforward, the question of how to develop collaborative methods for achieving that aim were more complex and difficult to develop. In Chapter 5, an interpretative analysis of the research data revealed key qualities present in successful collaborative processes and lacking in those considered less successful. The following key qualities of successful collaborative processes were presented:

- **Common Ground:** the presence of common understanding established within the shared space created between collaborators, upon which a shared creative vision is developed.
- **Shared Creative Vision:** the presence of common aims and expectations of collaboration developed through dialogue, negotiation and the establishment of shared collaborative values.
- **Shared Ownership:** the presence of an equal sense of shared authorship, control and responsibility in achieving a collaborative outcome, which is felt by all collaborators.
- **Mutually Beneficial Transformation:** the presence of a shared openness and willingness to learn from and about co-

collaborators through the shared creative processes and to be challenged and changed through the collaborative process.

Whilst these key qualities directly relate to the qualitative definition of collaboration and main characteristics of collaboration already presented, they contribute further criteria for evaluating the less-visible, intangible qualities of successful collaborative working processes. As such, they address collaborators' attitudes and approaches to working collaboratively to create something new together. These key qualities can be used to evaluate collaborators' experiences of collaborative processes. Within the research, they have proved useful in helping to understand how and why the collaborative relationships created in the earlier research projects fell short of achieving a 'deep' level of collaborative engagement between individuals, and in making the *experience* of collaborating more explicit.

6.2.4 The Four Models of Collaboration in the Visual Arts

The qualitative definition, main characteristics and key qualities of collaboration resulting from the research have contributed a new critical language and criteria for addressing collaboration and evaluating the main features influencing successful collaborative processes. In the visual arts, different forms of collaboration exist across a variety of different forms of practice and artists collaborate with a variety of individuals including other artists, other practitioners or professionals or even with 'audiences' (Chapter 2).

The five main research projects initiated different forms of collaboration, with different individuals, and in a variety of contexts. The issues of *who* the collaborators were and *how* their respective disciplines interfaced, were found to be crucial factors influencing the form collaboration took. To develop a useful critical framework for identifying and evaluating different forms of collaboration that can be experienced by visual artists, a matrix was developed, which distinguished four models of collaboration relevant to visual artists. The matrix presents four models

of collaboration distinguished by the familiarity/unfamiliarity of collaborators and the relatedness/unrelatedness of their respective disciplines. The following four models of collaboration were identified and characterised:

- The **Associate Model**, occurs between artists and/or art practitioners within a professional art context and is 'more simple' as common ground already exists between individuals.
- The **Personal Model**, occurs between practitioners whose fields are not professionally related, and is 'more simple' in that shared interests and trust already existed between collaborators, but is 'more complex' as common ground between different disciplines is not already present.
- The **Professional Model**, occurs between different fields of practice that are related through professional networks and models, and is 'more simple' in that different disciplines or fields of practice already interface in a professional context and their common and different values and methodologies are already recognised, but is 'more complex' as relationships between individual collaborators do not already exist and mutual understanding and trust needs to be developed.
- The **Interdisciplinary Model**, occurs between unfamiliar individuals from different disciplines or professionally unrelated fields of practice and is 'more complex' as no existing common ground between individual collaborators or their respective disciplines exists, so the collaboration is initiated 'from scratch', rather than on the basis of existing relationships and shared knowledge.

These four models (presented in Chapter 5) highlight distinct forms of collaboration, which require strategies for engaging collaboration that are appropriate to each particular situation. The matrix was used in conjunction with the qualitative definition of collaboration, and main characteristics and key qualities of the collaborative process, to evaluate the successes and/or limitations of the five main research projects in Chapter 5. Together, these research outcomes contribute an initial critical framework for identifying distinct forms of collaboration relevant to visual artists, and for identifying and evaluating appropriate strategies for engaging successful collaborative processes in each model. Use of the critical framework was demonstrated in Chapter 5, where an evaluation of the research projects highlighted the main strengths and weaknesses of the collaborative strategies adopted in each project. This suggested that different forms of collaboration require different strategies to achieve the key qualities necessary for a successful collaborative process. As my understanding of the main characteristics and key qualities of collaborative processes developed throughout the research, so to did the appropriateness of the strategies I adopted for initiating and developing collaborative processes through the research projects. Whilst the critical framework was useful in identifying and evaluating why strategies for engaging collaboration had been successful or unsuccessful in relation to the five main research projects, it requires further testing and development by other artists/researchers to evaluate its usefulness for other artists.

6.2.5 Summary and Evaluation of New Contributions to Knowledge

This research has achieved the four objectives stated at the outset (Chapter 1) and highlighted the complexities and challenges of addressing collaboration in the visual arts, which became more apparent as the research progressed. From my perspective as a visual artist undertaking this research, the experience has been a journey, which has thrown up many questions and challenges in relation to the nature of visual art practice and its tacit values. My initial assumptions at the

outset of the research were that interdisciplinary collaboration might provide opportunities to adopt new roles, to work in new contexts and develop new methods of practice, and to some extent, this has been the case through the variety of research projects undertaken.

Understanding the nature and implications of collaborative working more clearly, and recognising possible models of collaboration that visual artists can experience, I am (at the end of this research) only at the beginning of the process of constructing a collaborative *methodology* of practice as a visual artist. In this respect, the research has provided a valuable, yet incomplete journey. The research has shown that it takes time to initiate and develop successful collaborative working relationships. After six months, the collaborative process in the final and most successful research project (Project Five), was still developing momentum, although it was not possible to further continue the project beyond the three-year timescale intended for this Ph.D.

The research has also shown that whilst collaboration is a complex process and successful collaborative processes can be difficult to achieve, visual artists choose (or agree) to collaborate either with other artists, other practitioners or professionals or even with 'audiences', because they perceive positive benefits from doing so. As was shown in Chapter 4, the artists interviewed chose to collaborate with a wide range of different individuals through different kinds of projects in order to achieve the following benefits: educational, empowerment, sociability, critical mass and increased earnings and productivity. For artists committed to collaborative working, the challenges and even frustrations of collaboration are outweighed by the positive benefits it presents as an alternative to individual visual art practice.

The research has shown that interdisciplinary collaboration is a particularly complex model that requires the development of common ground and mutual understanding between collaborators who may have different disciplinary backgrounds, methodologies and values (Chapter

5). In this context, collaboration requires not only a willingness to understand and learn from others, but also a recognition and analysis of one's own individual values and methodologies. Perhaps the most challenging and pertinent aspect of collaboration to emerge in relation to visual art practice is the concept of a *collaborative creative process*, in which collaborators share ownership and control of decision-making processes. This approach to practice contrasts dominant models of individual art practice, where artists traditionally are sole creators of their own individual practices and creative processes.

At the start of this research, there were very few publications presenting informed and critical approaches to collaboration. Throughout the duration of the research, more publications have become available, which either directly address the nature of collaborative processes or critically approach issues relating to interdisciplinary and collaborative practices (Bennis & Biederman 1997; Bijvoet 1997; Bray et al. 2000; Cohen 1998; Dunn & Neeson 1997; Finkelppearl 2002; Green 2001; Harris (ed.) 1999; Hinchcliffe 2000; John-Steiner 2000; Jones 1997b; Kemp & Griffiths 1999; Kester 1998b; Macintosh 2000; Melhuish 1997; O'Connell 1999; Oliva 2002; Pollock & Silk 1999; Ross 2001; Silver 1999; Walwin 1997; and Yuill 2001). Such publications have provided invaluable information and informed the research, however the focus of this research has been distinct in its intention to adopt a broad epistemological investigation of interdisciplinary collaboration and to provide useful, practical strategies for visual artists to initiate and evaluate their own experiences of collaboration. The development of the critical framework presents a significant new contribution to the visual arts by addressing the potential benefits, challenges, practical considerations and implications for visual artists wishing to develop interdisciplinary and collaborative methods of practice.

It is intended that this contribution will provide visual artists (from a variety of areas of visual art practice) and potential collaborators with a

practical 'road map', or 'user guide' for those interested in developing their individual practices and making the transition from an individual model of practice to a collaborative model, whilst preparing them for some of the potential benefits and challenges offered by such a route. In addition to the potential practical applications of the critical framework, which can be used by artists to describe, develop and evaluate their own experiences of collaboration, the research has also uncovered key issues relating to the professional and educational implications of approaching interdisciplinary collaboration as a methodology of practice for visual artists (discussed in *section 6.3*).

The practice-led naturalistic inquiry has enabled an empirical investigation of collaborative processes that is relevant to visual art practitioners. Appropriate research methods were developed pragmatically in response to knowledge gained from my direct experiences of participating in the five main research projects. Whilst in professional contexts, the products of collaboration tend to be evaluated by aesthetic or conceptual criteria, and the *qualities* of the collaborative *process* are often only anecdotally described, the evaluative project reports have presented a new method of describing and documenting the collaborative *process*. Whilst the five experimental projects allowed the collaborative process to be explored without external funding pressures or the need to produce resolved 'artworks', their limitations are recognised. These small-scale and un-funded research projects allowed an explorative and experimental approach to the collaborative process, although the financial and political complexities of interdisciplinary collaborations in larger, commercially funded projects have not fully been addressed. The interviews with selected visual artists have to a greater degree raised issues regarding the financial implications of collaboration in professional contexts. With the principal focus of the research placed on the development of strategies for interdisciplinary collaboration, the investigation of Fine Art students' experiences of collaboration has not fully addressed the pedagogic

implications of cross-departmental collaboration in the context of Higher Education within the scope of this research.

The two-staged analytic framework developed to undertake a detailed and systematic cross-comparative analysis of a variety of primary research data has allowed the identification of generic patterns in collaboration, which would not have been achieved through an individual case study method. This cross-comparative analysis of data adds validity to the research outcomes as information gathered from different sources substantiated each other (for example, information from the artists' interview transcripts substantiated and refined the characteristics and key qualities of collaboration identified from within the five project reports).

The critical framework developed through the research requires further 'testing' and validation by other artists/researchers, to evaluate its practical 'usefulness' as a tool for developing and evaluating artists' experiences of collaboration. The four models of collaboration presented in Chapter 5 were comparable with Vera John Steiner's (2000) four patterns of creative collaboration (Fig. 2.1, Chapter 2, p29). However, further analysis is required to validate the appropriateness of these models in relation to specific case examples of collaboration from within the visual arts. It is important also to acknowledge that the positive approach to collaboration (as a strategy that offers potential benefits to individual artists) adopted within this research might not represent the opinions of visual artists with more negative views of collaboration; largely due to the fact that little published material presents such views was identified in the contextual review (although such views may exist).

The breadth and comprehensiveness of the contextual review has sacrificed the 'depth' and 'detail' that might have been achieved through a review of individual case examples of collaboration. However, the broad and cross-disciplinary review of approaches to collaboration across a range of visual art and other fields (including organisational

management and theory) has instead enabled a variety of approaches to collaboration to be addressed within the broader cultural context influencing an increasing need for and interest in collaborative processes of shared working. The review of instances where collaborations occur between artists, emerge through contemporary Public Art practices, and appear in exploratory interdisciplinary projects, raised relevant key issues, debates and questions that are not narrowly limited within any one specific area of visual art practice. This has enabled the identification of two broad, yet distinct approaches to collaboration in the visual arts: collaboration as *tacit method* of individual art practice and collaboration as an *explicit methodology* of practice.

6.3 Key Issues Emerging From the Research

With the aim of developing and evaluating strategies for engaging interdisciplinary collaborations between a visual artist (the researcher) and other practitioners, this investigation into the nature of collaborative processes of shared working has raised more questions than initially anticipated. The research has addressed some of the ‘*hows*’ (methods and strategies) and ‘*whys*’ (qualities and implications) of collaboration and presented a critical framework for understanding and evaluating examples of collaborative practices. However, far from being a purely pragmatic concern of how to develop successful collaborative strategies, this study of collaboration has raised key issues with regard to the nature of visual art practice and the values underpinning the discipline.

Visual arts education and professional practice have traditionally promoted individual models of practice, whilst collaborative projects require strategies for collaborating *with* others. The research has shown that collaborative methods of practice can present opportunities, benefits and challenges for visual artists. Interdisciplinary collaboration, where an artist becomes a co-contributor alongside practitioners from fields not associated with the visual arts, towards the development of

something which cannot be conceived of at the outset, and which might not result in the creation of a recognisable 'artwork', can present particular challenges. In the context of visual art practice, the concept of interdisciplinary collaboration raises questions about artists' methodologies and the visual arts' interface with other disciplines. This not only necessitates a new approach to visual art practice, but also suggests the need for a fundamental re-thinking of the nature and function of the visual arts, its relationship to other disciplines, and the roles of visual artists in relation to other practitioners. In light of the fact that a current cultural imperative to address collaborative forms of practice exists (Chapter 2), the potential viability of interdisciplinary collaboration as a new methodology for visual artists is discussed in relation to the concept of a collaborative creative process (and the challenges it poses to individualism) within both professional and educational visual art contexts.

6.3.1 Interdisciplinary Collaboration: a New Methodology for Artists?

Visual artists might decide to collaborate with others for varied and diverse reasons, as Chapter 2 has shown:

- Collaborations between artists or practitioners within the visual arts appear to emerge from the artists' desire to extend their individual creative practice by developing new skills, ideas and methods in the process of creating artworks.
- Collaborations between artists, other practitioners and audiences in contemporary Public Art practices appear to emerge from the artists' desire to re-frame relationships between art/artist/audience by creating processes of participation and engagement and by positioning art as a process of creating relationships and issue-raising in public contexts.

- Experimental interdisciplinary collaborations appear to emerge from interest in investigative processes and individuals' common desire to address issues in new ways, to exchange knowledge and find new methods of interdisciplinary working to either reframe or extend their disciplinary boundaries.

The research uncovered a distinction between two broad approaches to collaboration: as a tacit method within an artists' individual practice, and as an explicit new methodology of practice. Neither approach is considered mutually exclusive of one another. Artists can adopt both approaches within their practice (for example artist partnership Dalziel and Scullion viewed collaboration both as an opportunity to develop their individual practices, whilst creating a new approach to practice which is similar to the structure of a small business or architectural practice). However, this distinction marked a crucial stage in the research and raised a key question: whether or not a visual artist produces 'art objects' or retains an individual aesthetic or 'signature-style' (which are recognised criteria in professional art contexts) throughout the collaborative process?

As the research progressed, I became more interested in and open to the potential new directions that interdisciplinary collaborative processes might present, and less concerned with 'art practice'. Adopting the latter approach to interdisciplinary collaboration (as a potential explicit new methodology of practice) I became interested in how shared creative processes can be developed within collaborative relationships and in the potential uses of visual art skills to develop methods for contributing to the development of a dynamic collaborative creative process. This led to a shift in my perception of 'practice': away from the concept of 'art practice' towards the concept of an 'interdisciplinary research practice' which is not delimited by discrete disciplinary boundaries or values, but which is a processes of shared learning, or what Bray et al (2000) termed 'collaborative inquiry'.

This shift from a clear conception of what visual art practice is, towards a more hypothetical and unclear view of what visual art practice could be, might too easily be construed as a crisis in my identity as a visual artist. Green's perception that collaborative forms of visual art practice reflect "a crisis in artistic intention" (Chapter 2, p41) would appear to support such an assumption. However, in my experience of the most successful of the five research projects (Project Five) interdisciplinary collaboration gave me a clearer sense of identity as it provided me with a means of contributing my skills, experience, and expertise towards the achievement of a purposeful aim that was shared by collaborators. In this respect, it presented an opportunity to re-position my individual practice within a new interdisciplinary context and to provide a recognised role and function within the group, which I felt was empowering. Similarly, the artists interviewed in this research described the feeling of empowerment as one of the key benefits of collaborative practice.

The visual arts is a creative field which principally values the qualities of individual perspectives, methodologies and styles, and in which artists can (to a large extent) enjoy the freedom of self-determination and creative control in the production of artworks, which are evaluated once placed in a public professional visual art context. Most artists would agree that this is the principal motivation and benefit of individual practice. In contrast, 'surrendering' one's individual creativity or 'relinquishing' creative control in collaborative practice does indeed seem like 'a crisis in artistic intention' as it suggests giving something up, or losing control of one's practice.

A creative process is an intensive process, which requires a large degree of self-knowledge and ability for critical reflection. However, in my experience, the collaborative creative process is equally, if not more intensive and also requires a very high degree of self-knowledge and ability for critical reflection. The main difference is that the creative process is located within the inter-subjective relationships created

between individual collaborators, and not *within* an individual. Kelley's point that "the creative process itself is transformed in a collaborative relationship" (Chapter 2, p15) not only highlights that there *is* a difference between a collaborative creative process and an individual created process, but also suggests that *the collaborative relationship itself becomes the creative process*.

In the context of New Genre Public Art practices, where collaborative and participatory forms of practice are most evident, there is an established critical recognition of a reciprocal process between artist and viewer that is central to an artists' creative practice, and that for some artists "the relationship is the artwork" (Lacy, Chapter 2, p45). Within this area of practice, there is also recognition that artists can adopt and define a variety of roles for themselves beyond the professional art gallery context, and that this approach to practice in public contexts requires a different approach and different skills and methods than individual art practice.

Far from demonstrating a 'crisis of artistic intention', many artists practicing in this area tend to demonstrate and communicate very clearly defined artistic intentions and individual roles (Lacy 1995). However, such practices do not sit easily within the criteria for evaluating artworks of more mainstream traditional gallery contexts (for example, individual creative intention and aesthetic style), but require different criteria (for example, appropriateness of place, qualities of audience experience, impact of issue-raising/awareness). Perhaps then, if the artists interviewed in this research also choose to collaborate because they find it more empowering and productive than individual practice, then the 'crisis in artistic intention' that Green suggested, might rather signal a 'crisis in art criticism', as the formal evaluative criteria are not applicable to the new methodologies of interdisciplinary collaboration that some artists are choosing to adopt? For example, the interdisciplinary arts group, Platform, installed a micro-hydro turbine in a

river to generate natural energy for lighting part of a school. This is not easily evaluated by formal aesthetic or conceptual criteria but sits within an interdisciplinary ecological, scientific, social and political context. Such examples of collaborative practice, which result in the creation of innovative processes of thinking and responding to real issues/problems in very creative and pragmatic ways (rather than the production of art objects) demonstrate new ways of looking at 'art' and its relationship to other disciplines, and the potential compatibilities between visual artists other practitioners and professionals within a broad cultural context.

Rance's description of value systems "a complex set of attitudes and beliefs which determine the manner in which professionals define their role and respond to the role definitions of other professional groups" (Chapter 2, p60) raises a key issue in relation to the visual arts. If the principal value underpinning the visual arts is the freedom to express *individual* creativity, aesthetic style and technical ability, then it may be difficult for other professionals to recognise and respond to the role definitions of visual artists, as they are defined by individuals rather than by 'profession'. When approaching potential collaborators throughout the research, I became aware that individuals from a variety of non-arts related fields had different, but specific views about the visual arts and what artists do. In order to prevent misconceptions about myself and about art practice, I consciously decided to describe Project Five as a 'research' project and not an 'art' project, when approaching potential collaborators. Because the Geographer, Architect and Psychologist had clearly recognised and acknowledged professional (disciplinary) roles, they very quickly related to each other and saw potential areas of common ground upon which to collaborate. However, they had less of a clear understanding of what visual artists do in the first instance or in what ways we might be able to collaborate. It was important therefore, to communicate clearly the potential relevance of visual art practice in relation to their individual fields of practice. As a visual artist approaching interdisciplinary collaboration as a potential new

methodology, it is important to be able to clarify and communicate both 'individual specificity' and 'disciplinary specialism' (Chapter 2, p60) in order to define roles in relation to other individuals and fields of practice.

As the research projects undertaken with BA Fine Art students showed, collaboration cannot be forced, but requires a willing attitude and desire to learn from others; and ability to have one's own perspective, methodology (and even values) challenged through the process. In this respect, collaboration may not be every artists' cup of tea, but in order to gain benefits from interdisciplinary collaboration, a positive approach to the process is essential. Whilst opportunities for collaboration are being created through new funding structures (for example the Arts and Humanities Research Board funding of collaborative research projects), there might be potential danger that artists more suited to individual practice are being forced into situations where they feel they have to collaborate with others in order to compete for limited sources of funding. Such a situation might well signal a crisis in artistic for many visual artists pursuing individual models of professional practice.

6.3.2 Educating Practitioners: Implications of Collaborative Models

Adopting a collaborative methodology of practice requires additional skills/knowledge/expertise that are not necessarily included within the 'individual studio experience' provided by many Art Schools. In the research projects developed for BA Fine Art students, many students did not have the social, organisational or communication skills required for successful collaboration. Despite this, those students who approached collaboration with a positive attitude found that it enabled them to broaden their perspective of art practice from a narrow subject-specific perspective of being a painter, sculptor or printmaker, towards the broader perspective of being an 'artist'.

A collaborative creative process prompts a repositioning of individual practice to make individual's skills relevant to collaborative project aims

and highlights the need for additional skills in *shared* working. This research has shown that even for artists and individuals with both the desire and the willingness to collaborate with others, collaboration can present many challenges. A particular challenge for visual artists is that collaborators share control of the creating process, which might lead to tensions and friction, as Fine Art education has been dominantly concerned with encouraging artists to develop individual creative processes (Chapter 2), or what the artist Gordon Young described as “rugged individualism” (Appendix 3.2a). Making the transition from an individual creative process, to a collaborative, shared creative process can be difficult. Although as a student Young was interested in working with other people, he did not know how to go about it, and lacked confidence in knowing what skills he had to contribute.

If interdisciplinary collaboration does present a viable new methodology of practice for visual artists, then a key question is raised about the nature of visual art education. How can educational institutions ensure that students acquire the necessary skills and methods required for successful creative collaboration, in order to attain the benefits of a collaborative methodology of practice? Do visual artists need to be grounded in a particular Fine Art subject area before being able to work collaboratively with individuals from different disciplines? As yet, there are no obvious examples of collaborative educational curricula in the visual arts. Perhaps now, with increasing financial support becoming available for artists to engage in collaborative projects, it is a timely opportunity to rethink our approaches to visual art education as a whole. From my professional experiences as a lecturer in art and design, I believe that there is value not only in educating students in different ways of working with others, but also in introducing collaborative educational projects as teaching methods in order to accelerate and enhance students methods of learning and to enable them to tackle more challenging and complex issues which may be more difficult to address individually.

If rethinking the Higher Education Fine Art curriculum to prepare students better for collaborative models of practice, the obvious question is where to start? Whilst care would need to be taken to ensure that the baby is not thrown out with the bathwater and the strengths of the existing education are not lost, there may also be an opportunity for experimenting with completely new approaches to visual art education. A possible approach might be to re-view the way in which individual creativity is implicitly approached within the educational context, whilst at the same time undertaking a skills audit of examples of collaborative models of practice in the professional context and relating this back to the educational context to ensure that students are being given the skills they will need to successfully function as professional practitioners. In the first stage it might be useful to draw upon Csikszentmihalyi's (1988 & 1996) systems model of creativity, which positions the creative process within the social systems and relationships occurring between the individual, their field of practice (professional discipline) and the domain in which the products of practice are situated (cultural context). In the second instance, it might be useful to further develop the critical framework presented from this research to evaluate specific case examples of collaborative practice in the professional context in order to identify the skills experience and expertise that visual artists working in these ways have developed.

6.4 Areas Identified for Further Future Research

This research contributes an initial critical framework for approaching interdisciplinary collaboration within the visual arts, but there are still a number of key areas identified for further future research, before a critical body of knowledge can be fully developed:

- Although collaboration has been related to experimental art practices in the sixties (and even before then) it has not seriously acknowledged or critiqued as a viable method of practice in historical, theoretical and critical accounts of the visual arts. A

critical review of historical examples of collaboration in the visual arts is required in order to identify how 'individual', individual art practices have been.

- The critical framework developed through this research requires further testing and development by artists/researchers in professional contexts (which are politically and financially informed) to validate its appropriateness, and usefulness as a 'user guide' to interdisciplinary collaboration for visual artists. In particular, the four models of collaboration presented within this framework require further investigation in terms of their relevance and application in identifying and evaluating examples of collaborative practices in visual arts through a detailed case study method.
- The definition and distinctions drawn between the collaborative process and other forms of shared working in this research require further investigation and clarification, along with the concept of collaboration as a 'shared creative process'.
- Further research into the viability of interdisciplinary collaboration, as a methodology of practice, or potential 'new' model for visual artists is required.
- Further research addressing the implications of collaborative forms of practice in visual art, in relation to existing Fine Art curricula in Further and Higher Education is required.
- The viability and sustainability of collaborative models of practice and the particular challenges and opportunities they offer visual artists in professional contexts requires further detailed analysis.

6.5 Summary of the Thesis

In **Chapter One** the subject of collaboration in the visual arts was introduced and the need to develop a critical understanding of the nature of collaborative processes and their implications for visual art practitioners was described. The rationale for undertaking a practice-led naturalistic methodology from the perspective of a researcher/visual artist was described and the research aims and objectives were presented.

In **Chapter Two**, a broad review of practitioners, theorists, writers, and critics' approaches to collaboration (in the visual arts and other fields) was undertaken using available literature and examples of collaboration in the visual arts. Positive and negative definitions of collaboration in the visual arts were identified and the current cultural climate influencing increasing interest in collaboration in a range of fields was reviewed. Evidence of collaboration occurring between artists, in contemporary Public Art practices and in experimental interdisciplinary projects was reviewed and two broad approaches to collaboration in the visual arts were identified: as *method*, and as *methodology* of practice. Existing gaps in current knowledge of what collaborative processes actually 'look like', and how collaborative practices can be critically addressed were addressed.

In **Chapter Three**, the principals underpinning the practice-led naturalistic methodology were described in relation to the academic context of Art and Design research and the ontological position of the practitioner/researcher. A comprehensive description of the three strands of the inquiry: *collaboration in practice* (five exploratory research projects), *collaboration in education* (two student projects), and *case examples of collaboration* (three interviews with selected artists) were provided. Specific research methods employed within each strand of the inquiry were described along with the two-staged analytic framework developed for analysing the primary research data.

In **Chapter Four**, (the first stage of analysis) a cross-comparative analysis of the primary research data obtained through these three strands of inquiry was undertaken. Five basic components of collaboration (*aims, collaborators, context, structure, and product*) were used to organise the different types of data and the main characteristics of collaboration were identified and described. The outcomes from the analysis were summarised and evaluated. **Chapter Five** (the second stage of analysis) further interpreted these characteristics along with the primary research data, to develop a qualitative definition of collaboration, which was distinguished from other forms of shared working (*participatory, cooperation, collective, interactive and partnership*). Key qualities required for successful collaboration were identified and described. A matrix was developed to identify four distinct models of collaboration that can be experienced by visual artists (*Associate Model, Personal Model, Professional Model, and Interdisciplinary Collaboration*), and which present 'more simple' or 'more complex' forms of collaboration. These outcomes were used to evaluate the successes and limitations of the collaborative strategies adopted in each of the five main research projects.

In this chapter, a general summary of the research was provided and main research outcomes and new contributions to knowledge were summarised. The contribution of a new critical framework for approaching collaborative models of practice was evaluated in terms of its potential use for visual artists. Key issues were discussed relating to the viability of approaching interdisciplinary collaboration as a viable new methodology of practice for visual artists, and its implications for Fine Art education. Areas requiring further future research were identified and the contents of the thesis were summarised.

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CONFERENCES/SYMPOSIUM ATTENDED

- 2001 Contextual Practices Network Meeting, University of The West of England, March
- 2000 'Research into Practice', University of Hertfordshire, July
- 1999 'Matrix 4', art research conference, Central St. Martin's School of Art, London, July
- 1998 'Critical Sites: issues in critical art practice and pedagogy' at the Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dublin. Third International 'Littoral' conferences; Projects Environment and in collaboration with Critical Access, September
- 1998 'Host' exhibition and public forum 'Artists and Collaborative Practices', Tramway Glasgow, April
- 1997 "Sculpture in the City", Glasgow School of Art. 17-18 October.

SPECIAL FEATURES AND PUBLICATIONS

- Afterimage: The Journal of Media Arts and Cultural Criticism*, New York: Visual Studies Workshop, Vol. 27, November/December 1999
- 'RSA Art for Architecture Award Scheme', London: The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, 1999
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Scopa, K. (2001) "What is Contextual Practice?", paper presented at the Contextual Practices Network Meeting, University of The West of England, March. Unpublished

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APPENDIX ONE

Collaboration in Practice

PROJECT REPORTS

- Appendix 1.1** **Project 1 Report:** Collaborative Drawing
- Appendix 1.2** **Project 2 Report:** Parklife
- Appendix 1.3** **Project 3 Report:** The Contract Book
- Appendix 1.4** **Project 4 Report:** The Kissing Card Game
- Appendix 1.5** **Project 5 Report:** Re-Visioning the Gallery

‘Collaborative Drawing’

(12 – 13th July 1997)

Research Aims

The ‘Collaborative Drawing’ project was devised in order to develop experimental collaborative drawing processes in different situations, using different methods and materials, and to document the processes using SVHS video and still image photography.

Since a common and recognised form of collaboration in the visual arts occurs between artists¹ (often in order to introduce ‘chance’ elements into the creative process²), this project addressed a hunch that *spontaneity* in shared working processes is often equated with *collaboration* in the visual arts. Project 1 engaged a small-scale collaboration between visual artists as a pragmatic starting point for the research³. The main aim of the research - to address *interdisciplinary* collaboration from a visual art perspective (a phenomenon less well understood and poorly documented⁴) - is addressed more directly in the subsequent research projects.

Collaborator

Multi-media artist, Pernille Spence⁵, (who volunteered to participate in the research) was invited to collaborate in making a series of drawings. Since drawing is a fundamental method of research, concept-development and problem-solving common to visual artists, it was believed that it might provide a useful tool to focus and facilitate the collaborative processes. Thus, the project was designed to develop experimental strategies for engaging collaboration, using the method of drawing, whilst also attempting to document the collaborative processes.



Pernille Spence

Project Design

Aiming to keep the project simple, potential influences on the collaborative drawing processes were limited by a pre-defined, quasi-experimental⁶ design. Addressing the hunch that spontaneity is often equated with collaboration, the project design reflected a progression from a tightly structured, initial approach to collaborative drawing (which was expected to mediate against achieving spontaneity), towards a more open and flexible approach to collaborative drawing (which was expected to be more conducive to achieving spontaneity).

Exploratory collaborative drawing processes were developed in contrasting settings: in a studio (at Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen) and in the natural environment (at Aberdeen Beach). Consisting of clearly recognisable stages, the project began in a controlled manner (with a set of guidelines to produce collaborative drawings in the studio environment), and moved towards a more flexible approach in the natural environment (with found materials improvised as drawing implements in the beach environment). *Figure 1.1* presents a simplified visual overview of the project: illustrating the initial hunch, the use of drawing as a shared working method, and the collaborative processes undertaken.

Description of Process

Spanning two days (12th – 13th July 1997), the project consisted of distinct stages: stages 1 (studio drawings) and 3 (beach drawings) were pre-defined, whilst stages 2 (beach sculpture) and 4 (final collaborative drawing) emerged from within the collaborative process. Images documenting processes and outcomes from different stages of the project are included at the end of this report. A summary description of each stage of the project is provided below:

Stage 1: Studio Drawings (Day 1 - morning)

We began by undertaking a series of collaborative drawings in a Fine Art studio at Gray's School of Art (Aberdeen). Large pieces of paper were laid on the studio floor, along with basic drawing materials (i.e. pencils, pens, charcoal, inks, and acrylic paints). A Hi-8 video camcorder set to a 30 second time lapse documented the collaborative drawing processes. The finished drawings were recorded using still image photography. Three drawings were produced in response to the following specific guidelines, which limited the time allowed for each drawing, presented a theme for us to work to, and defined whether or not talking was allowed during the drawing process:

1. 5 minutes. No theme. No talking allowed.
2. 10 minutes. Theme "The Sea". Talking allowed.
3. 15 minutes. Theme "The Sea". Talking allowed.

These restrictions were placed on the collaborative drawing processes in order to provide a framework in which to observe *if* and *how* the type and quality of interaction between us during the process of making the collaborative drawings would be influenced, and to identify if these qualities could be made visible.

Stage 2: Beach Sculpture (Day 1 - afternoon)

The second stage of the project was carried out at the Aberdeen Beach. Contrasting the tightly designed structure of stage 1, the intention here was to enable a more open and flexible approach to collaborative drawing in the natural environment, using available materials found on site (pieces of

driftwood, rocks, etc). My intention of using found materials improvised as drawing materials to make a collaborative drawing in the sand was discussed with Pernille. Viewing drawing as a process of 'mark-making' could be applied to making drawings in the sand with a variety of implements. The possibility starting from the theme: 'the sea', to provide a catalyst for engaging the drawing process was also discussed. Pernille preferred to work without a theme and to respond in an intuitive manner to found materials and emergent processes. Therefore, the process took on an evolutionary form.

Pernille began by finding and placing a large piece of wood upright in the sand. A sculptural form emerged as we both added objects to this piece of wood, by using materials we found lying around. Although this approach was not my initial intention of make a drawing by 'mark-making' in the sand, I decided to follow Pernille's lead, and to be open to see how the process would emerge. There was no open discussion at this stage about what we each intended the object should become, or how we had moved away from the initial notion of drawing, towards a more sculptural product.

Initially, the process evolved in an unstructured manner (we both added materials as and when we found them). Then Pernille suggested that we each took turns to find and add objects to the sculpture. I agreed, so the decision to develop a more structured and 'game-like' form of individual contributions was consciously decided. The decision to end the process occurred intuitively, when we both reached a point where we felt the sculpture had become overworked and that neither of us could add anything extra to it. As we both viewed the sculpture as an experiment in shared processes, neither of us had the intention of making a 'resolved' artwork. Therefore, neither of us was concerned with evaluating the resulting sculpture either aesthetically or conceptually.

Stage 3: Sand Drawing (Day 2 - morning)

Occurring on the second day of the project, stage 3 again took place at the beach. This time, I asked that we return to the notion of drawing as a process of 'mark-making' as a starting point, as I was still interested in the differences

between producing drawings under the controlled situation in the studio, and within the natural setting of the beach. Again using objects found on the beach (e.g. sticks, pieces of driftwood), we began to make marks in the sand. Beginning at the same starting point, the 'drawing' then started to spread out in different directions and eventually covered most of the flat space available in the section of beach where we were working. As the drawing progressed, Pernille started to build up piles of stones in some areas, whilst I began digging and piling up mounds of sand in some areas and placing stones and seaweed in other areas. We worked for approximately two and a half hours on the 'drawing' but were eventually forced to stop due to the onset of heavy rain. Having both become immersed in the process, we both felt we would have continued working for longer on the drawing, had it been possible.

Stage 4: Final Drawing (Day 2 – afternoon)

To escape the rain, we went to my flat in Aberdeen, and I suggested that we make one final drawing together to complete the project. Having developed shared experiences by working together through each distinctive stage of the project, I felt that we had developed a stronger *tacit process of interacting* with one another, which had not been present at the beginning of the project. Consequently, I was interested in whether a final collaborative drawing process would be noticeably more spontaneous or qualitatively different from the drawings undertaken in the initial stages of the project. Using a sheet of A1 cartridge paper and the same drawing materials as in stage 1, we made a final collaborative drawing. Our approach was relaxed and spontaneous and we quickly became immersed in the drawing process. Although there were no restrictions on the drawing process, we talked little during the process, apart from agreeing to rotate the page in order to prevent us each from working only on one area of the page and so that we could both view the drawing from different viewpoints throughout. We worked on the drawing for approximately one hour.

Evaluation

From a tightly defined approach to collaborative drawing in stage 1, the project evolved towards a more spontaneous and flexible structure, which did appear to influence the quality of our interaction.

In stage 1, the defined structure (with guidelines steering the drawing processes) and formal environment (a studio with video camera) was found to *limit* the level of engagement between us in the drawing process. Whilst the limited periods of time (five to fifteen minutes) and '*rules*' allocated to the studio drawings did act as ice-breakers and achieve a quality of spontaneity, (which was successful for *initiating* a shared working process), the formality of the activity and the lack of negotiation between us (in discussing how we wanted to proceed) limited the sense of progression towards a collaborative goal.

I experienced a tacit sense of resistance to working on top of each other's marks: we tended to draw *away from* each other rather than *towards* a centralised, shared area of the drawing. The large paper size allowed space for each of us to comfortably work on different sections of the drawing, whilst in the final collaborative drawing, the restriction of the smaller paper size (A1) forced us to work on top of each other's previous marks more. We were more relaxed in our approach and less self-conscious about drawing over each other's previous marks. This was considered a result of our shared experiences, which developed throughout each stage of the project and resulted in a more tacit and intuitive form of interaction towards the end.

Evaluating our experiences of the project, we discussed our initial reluctance to draw on top of each others' previous marks, and agreed that boundaries could have been negotiated more explicitly at the beginning of stage 1, since the process of collaborative drawing was new to both of us. As the project developed, so did our confidence in working together, which was evident in the shift from an initial tentative approach to a more relaxed and spontaneous approach in the final stages. Although we knew each other relatively well before undertaking the project, trust had to be built upon and developed

further throughout the process in order to develop our confidence in shared working.

In stage 2, Pernille was confident enough to take the lead and suggest a different approach, which was sculptural rather than drawing-based and also made the suggestion that we each take turns to contribute to the sculpture. This was an important stage in our process, since as I had developed the project design before Pernille's involvement, the tight structure of stage 1 meant that there was not an opportunity for Pernille to alter or influence the way our processes developed (apart from preferring not to work to the guideline of a defined theme given for the second drawing made in stage 1). In stage 2, the structure was more flexible and Pernille's contributions influenced and altered the initial intentions and design of the project in a substantial way. I had to make a conscious decision whether to respond to Pernille's lead (in making a sculpture), or whether to insist that we limited the process to drawing. I decided to respond to shifting direction of the project, which meant giving up control over the direction of the project. From a collaborative point of view, this was positive (as Pernille became more of an *active collaborator*, rather than a *participant* in 'my' project), whilst from a research point of view I found it difficult, as I had designed the project in order to see the differences in collaborative *drawing* in different contexts.

Whilst my motives were to critically explore the qualities of our shared working processes in different situations, Pernille's motive for volunteering to participate in the process stemmed more from a personal curiosity. In evaluating the project, Pernille explained that she liked the fact the project wasn't "owned" by her and that she felt less intimidated and free to experiment as a result. She also described her preference for an instinctive and "playful" approach without discussing the direction or outcomes during the working process. My approach, however, was less tacit and more explicit, as I consciously wanted to address the processes we were developing by discussing them throughout the project. Instead, I felt that I had to resist the temptation to force more detailed discussion about our interactions, as

Pernille preferred to immerse herself within the spontaneous processes of 'doing' the drawings and sculpture, without discussing the process.

In stage 2, our interaction was made more explicit through the 'game-like' structure that evolved (where we each took turns to contribute to the evolving sculpture). This noticeably and effectively managed our equal input and allowed us to consciously see and respond to each other's individual contributions more directly. In stage 3, the quality of the process was similar to that in stage 2, although this time, there was only the requirement to make a drawing in the sand and no other guidelines to limit or structure the process. Due to the scale of the space available to us, a similar process of working away from each other was noticed (as had happened in the studio drawings). This had not happened in stage two, since the central sculptural form focused the activity. In stage four, the final drawing again elicited an equal input from both parties, partly because the decision to make a final drawing on paper had not been pre-decided and partly because we worked on a smaller piece of paper, which we rotated to ensure we each worked on all of the areas of the drawing. The atmosphere was relaxed and the approach was spontaneous and immersive.

Throughout the project, as the quality of spontaneity increased throughout the drawing process, it was expected that so too would the level of collaboration. However, I did not feel this to be the case. Although we both became more *confident* in working together and on top of each other's previous marks, it was a process of layering *individual* mark-making, rather than a joint process of shaping a shared artifact, which I had tacitly understood to be an important quality of collaboration. The initial drawings made in stage one, within very short periods, did provide a good 'warm-up' activity to the shared working process and developed a sense of spontaneity. However the structured studio situation limited the development of a deeper form of collaboration, since the timescale was very short and the conditions had been pre-defined, thus restricting Pernille's input in deciding how to approach the shared drawing process. Working in the natural environment beach, and later in the informal environment of my flat, the timescale was

more flexible, the process became more open and emergent and Pernille's input became more equal to my own (for example in deciding to develop a 'game-like' strategy in stage two).

Whilst *spontaneity* was a quality present to different degrees in all of the collaborative processes, this did not lead to the level of shared input that I considered to be important in my understanding of the nature of collaboration. Instead, it introduced a process of 'chance', where we both responded to each other's mark-making and actions by physically interacting through the drawings and sculpture objects. Part of my dissatisfaction with our level of interaction was with the lack of discussion between us during the processes of making. In stage one, this had been a conscious decision to limit the level of engagement in a controlled environment and tightly structured process. However, even as the structure became more flexible, immersion in the physical processes of making and doing were dominant over processes of discussion. It had been my belief that the method of drawing would provoke discussion and a more conscious (rather than spontaneous) approach to shared working, but I felt this had not been the case.

At the end of the project, we discussed the nature and function of drawing processes and uncovered different perceptions of what drawing is. Whilst I considered it to be a process of visual thinking, in which ideas and potential solutions to problems are visualised, Pernille viewed it as a subconscious process, which is more abstract and spontaneous. It emerged that we had different perceptions of drawing and of the concept of collaboration. Whilst we both enjoyed the process of working together and found the experience interesting, I felt that the quality of our engagement was lacking a 'depth' that was difficult to describe, but which I tacitly understood to be central to my notion of collaborative working.

Throughout the project, I consciously sought to document evidence the quality of the shared working processes. I noticed that this was distracting, since in stopping to photograph the process, I was being distanced from my

involvement in it. I also discovered that the qualities of the collaborative process that I was most interested in (such as the presence of spontaneity and confidence in interacting with one another), could not be evidenced by methods of visual recording. Rather, the inherent qualities of our *experiences* of the process and how to *access* them and make them *explicit* raised questions: *where* does the collaborative process occur and *how* it can be made explicit?

Summary of Main Findings

The project showed that drawing could be used as a tool for developing shared working processes between artists. As visual artists, we were both familiar with drawing methods and this provided a *common ground* from which to develop shared working processes, although neither of us had experienced collaborative drawing previously. The clear aims and structure of the project provided a framework, which enabled us to quickly engage in the collaborative drawing processes, but also limited the project in terms of its pre-defined outcomes. Our roles within the project were to equally contribute to the development of a series of collaborative drawings, and this limited the amount of negotiation and joint decision-making that took place. The move from the initial, tightly-designed project structure towards a more flexible, open approach in the later stages, enabled Pernille to have more of an equal input into the project.

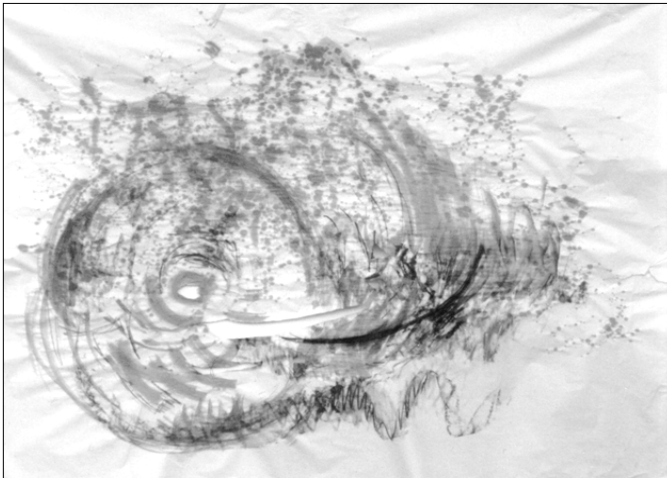
We each had different individual motives for engaging in the process, which we discussed at the outset of the project. Pernille was interested in finding out more about the research and was curious to become involved in some way. She approached the project with an open and playful curiosity, whilst, from a research perspective and as designer of the project, I was more involved in the details of the conditions for undertaking the collaborative drawing processes. In this respect, the project was imbalanced as we were not both aiming to achieve a shared goal. The project focused on the processes, rather than the products of collaborative drawing. It was my feeling if the end product had been created for a professional context (e.g. an exhibition), the process would have been different as there would have been

more at stake and the ownership of the project would have been more equally shared.

Whilst the quality of spontaneity is tacitly associated with collaborative processes between artists (as was reinforced by Pernille's comments about preferring an immersive and open approach to collaboration) it was not considered in my view to be an automatic pre-requisite of collaboration, as I did not believe that the level of engagement created by spontaneous activity achieved the '*depth*' of engagement between collaborators, which I had understood to be a key quality of collaborative processes. This realisation raised questions for me about the qualitative nature of the collaboration: What is the particular qualitative nature of the collaborative process that distinguishes it from other forms of shared working? What are the catalysts for engaging a 'deep' level of engagement between collaborators?

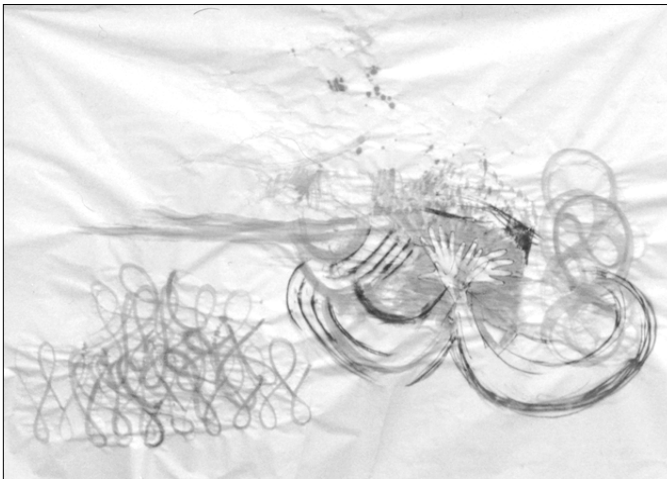
The project also showed that the interesting and relevant issues for visual artists about collaboration are concerned with individuals' qualitative experiences of the process and the quality of the relationships between collaborators, which are difficult to evidence through traditional visual documentation methods. Thus a question was raised: What are appropriate types of data for recording the qualitative nature of collaboration?

IMAGES FROM PROJECT 1



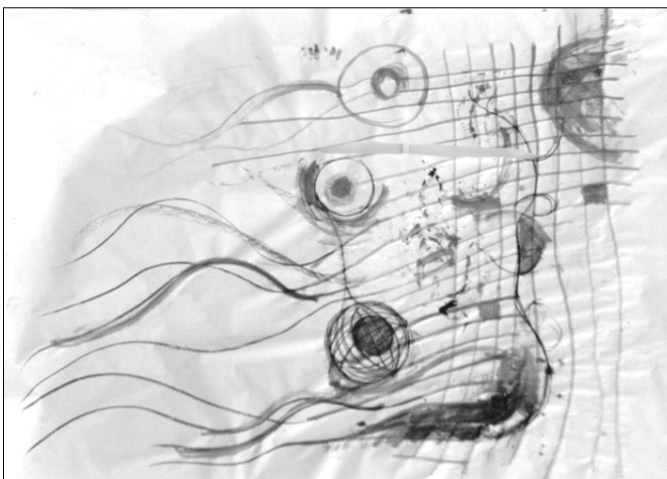
Drawing 1

- 5 Minutes
- No Theme
- No Talking
- Drawing Materials



Drawing 2

- 10 Minutes
- Theme "The Sea"
- Talking allowed
- Drawing Materials



Drawing 3

- 15 Minutes
- Theme "The Sea"
- Talking allowed
- Drawing Materials

Fig 1.2 STAGE 1: Studio Drawings

IMAGES FROM PROJECT 1 (continued)



Fig 1.3 STAGE 2: Beach Sculpture: Images showing the beginning, middle and end stages in the development of the beach sculpture. Found materials.

IMAGES FROM PROJECT 1 (continued)



Fig 1.4 STAGE 3: Sand Drawing Images showing stages in the development of the beach drawing and including detailed sections. Found materials.

IMAGES FROM PROJECT 1 (continued)

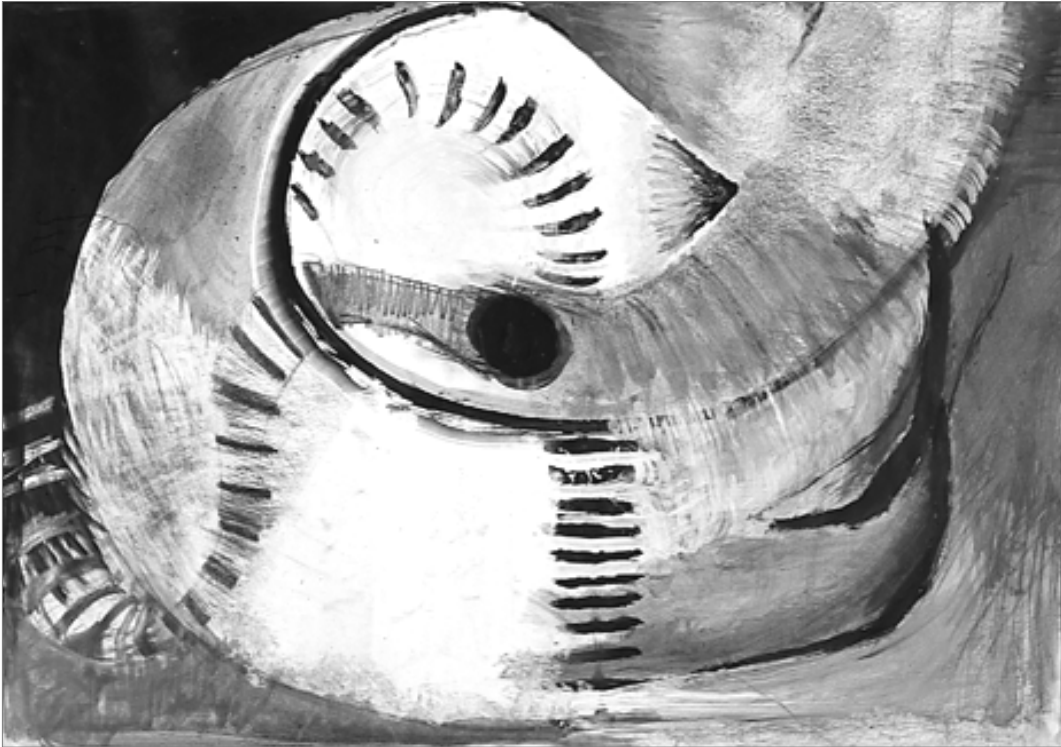


Fig 1.5 STAGE 4: Final Collaborative Drawing – Mixed media, A1 paper.

Notes from Project 1 Report

- ¹ Critical interest in artists' motives and methods of working together to produce artwork is documented by McCabe, 1984; Cameron, 1984; Butler, 2000 and Macintosh, 2000.
- ² Such a motive was evidenced by the Surrealist movement, which was "intended to function as the spontaneous expression of affinities between independent collaborators" according to founding member, Andre Breton, in William S. Rubin (1968) *Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, p107 and cited in McCabe (1984, p30). Strategies for spontaneous experimental processes and collective ownership developed by the Surrealists from the late thirties (such as the Exquisite Corpse method of collective drawing and Surrealist Games), provided a legacy that influenced subsequent generations of artists and which is evident in contemporary examples of artists' collaborations.
- ³ As a newcomer to Aberdeen (and therefore an 'outsider' to a certain degree), it was difficult to develop collaborative projects with the support of local agencies and individuals, since access to existing professional networks was limited to me. Therefore, I decided to develop a series of small-scale projects, in which particular individuals were identified as potential collaborators.
- ⁴ Paula Brown, principal arts officer of the London Arts Board acknowledges: "Inter-disciplinary collaborative practice has emerged as one of the most significant art form developments of recent years. Yet it has received negligible critical attention..." in the foreword to Walwin, J (1997) *Low Tide*, London: Black Dog Publishing Ltd., p8
- ⁵ Pernille Spence is a multimedia artist working in video installation and single screen video. Having collaborated previously on a commissioned installation, there was already a basic level of trust and common ground between us, although our individual practices were different.
- ⁶ The project design bears some resemblance to an experimental testing of hypotheses in a controlled environment, although the intention was not to analysis specific causes and effects of the environmental influences on collaboration, but to gain a qualitative sense of how different contexts influenced the development and experience of the shared working process.

‘Parklife’ - a public art project

(24-27th February 1998)

Research Aims

The ‘Parklife’ project was devised in order to initiate different forms of interaction between myself and non-artists, through a public art project. Seeking to engage different levels of engagement with a variety of people by working in the context of a public park (Duthie Park, Aberdeen), the project aimed to clarify distinctions between my understanding of the qualities of collaboration and other forms of interaction and engagement in context-specific public art practice¹. The project consisted of public interaction and participation through a public art ‘event’ and developed methods of evidencing the qualities of interaction by recording individual participants experiences of the project.

Collaborator

This project aimed to explore different kinds of relationships with a variety of members of the public who used the park. Volunteers were also enlisted in the project and relationships were formed between council and park staff in order to get the project underway. As the project commenced, an opportunity to work with Lauris Symmons (a PhD student from Napier University, Edinburgh) presented itself. I already knew Lauris as we had studied together previously². Lauris was interested in the project; in particular in how you could creatively elicit the responses and experiences of members of the public, as her own research was in the interpretation of communities through individual narratives. The collaboration was unplanned at the outset of the project.



Lauris Symmons

Project Design

Following Project 1, where it was identified that a spontaneous approach to shared working is not necessarily a pre-requisite of collaborative processes, and that different qualities of shared working were developed; not all of which were considered to be collaborative, this project aimed to explore different forms of engagement with people (non-artists) previously unknown to me. The area of public art practice had been identified as important in developing an awareness of collaboration, largely through involving audience engagement with the artist in forming the artwork, as Suzanne Lacy states, “for some [artists] the relationship is the artwork”³. In the literature about Lacy’s form of *New Genre Public Art* practice⁴, the term collaboration often occurs to describe how artists’ come in contact with others during the creative process of generating an artwork. It was my belief that the terms ‘collaboration’ and ‘participation’ were often used in a ways that suggested they are interchangeable. Therefore, I aimed to consciously explore the nature of these relationships in order to distinguish the qualitative nature of engagement inherent in each.

Considering the notion of ‘site specific’ (a recognised construct in public art practice, where the site or location is the catalyst for material for making artwork), I developed the metaphor of ‘people as sites’ in order to conceptually frame the focus of the Parklife project on how forms of interaction and participation with individual members of the public can provide the main content and approach to art practice. The project also explored my initial assumptions that collaborative processes might create new contexts for working, new methods of practice and potential new roles for visual artists.

The project consisted of a small-scale public event, as there was no available project budget. It was designed to reflect the range and types of engagement with different people when working in public contexts. The project required the permission of the city council Arts and Recreation department, the cooperation of park staff (who supplied and removed display tables throughout the duration of the project), the support and participation of

volunteers to greet the public at different entranceways to the park and of course, the participation and interaction of public park users.

Using the concept of rosettes as a symbol for developing shared public consciousness and framing everyday experiences of using the park, I made a batch of different coloured rosettes from crepe and tissue papers. These were to be offered to public park users to wear on entry to the park. A postcard-sized piece of paper with three questions was prepared to record peoples' experiences as they left the park. Participants were asked to hand back their rosettes on exiting the park, and to write answers to the questions asked on the pieces of paper. Individuals' rosettes and completed questions were put into clear wallet-sized plastic pockets. Thus each person's recorded experience was kept for public display at the end of the project.

A simplified visual overview of the project (*Fig. 2.1*) shows the research focus: the links between collaboration and other forms of shared working, the framing of a public event as a method for engaging different types of engagement participation and interaction and the use of the rosettes and postcards symbols and documents for framing and recording everyday experience.

Description of Process

The project ran over four days at Aberdeen's Duthie Park (24th – 27th February 1998) Distinct stages emerged and images documenting the processes and outcomes at various stages of the project are included at the end of this report. A brief description of each stage of the project is provided below:

Stage 1: Preparation

Preparation for the project involved enlisting the assistance and support of Aberdeen City Council Parks and Recreation Staff, staff from Duthie Park and volunteers.

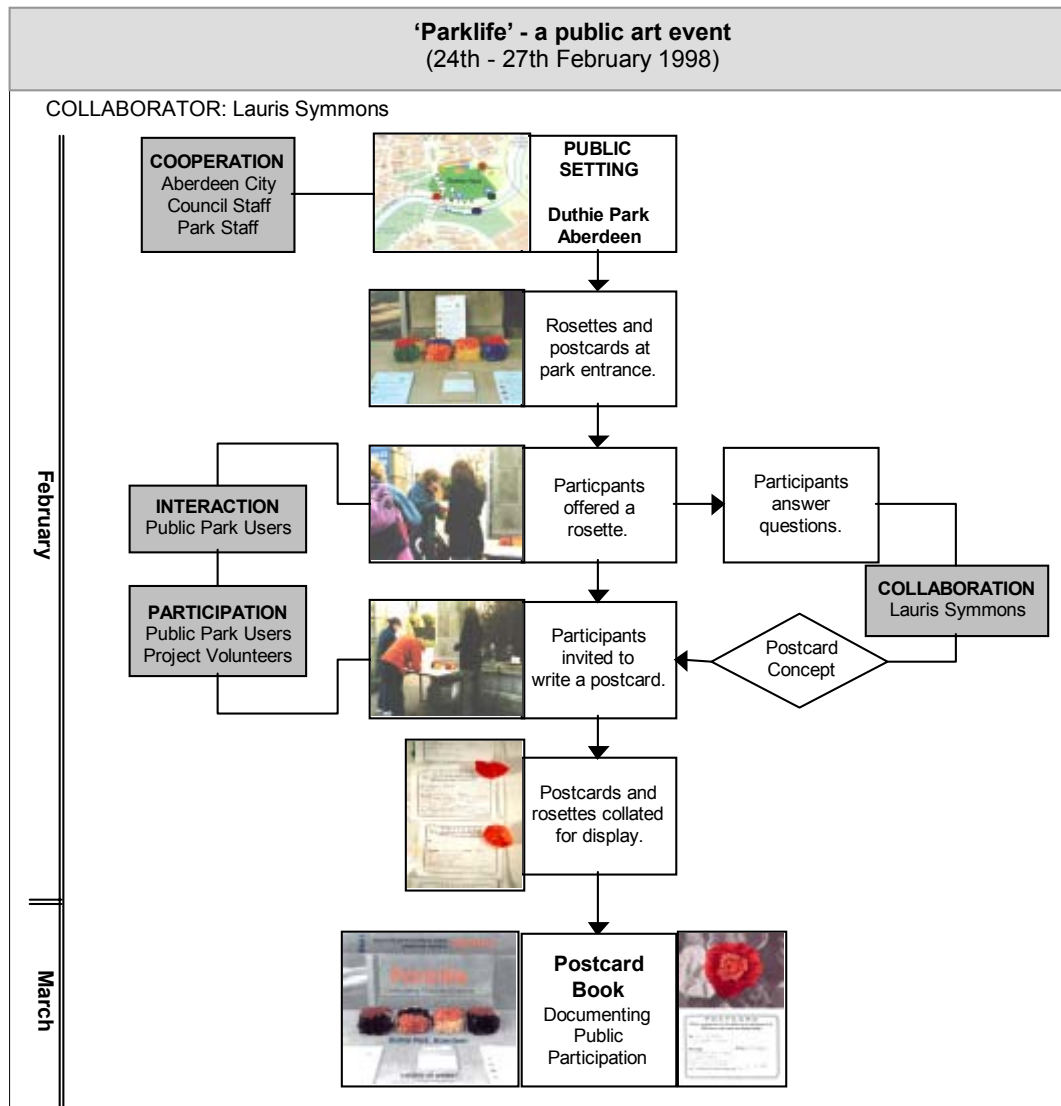


Fig 2.1 Simplified Visual Overview of Project 2

Aberdeen City Council Parks and Recreation department was contact initially to gain permission to run the project in Duthie Park. Council staff were supportive of the project as they were in the process of planning their own public surveys of public use and were interested in my 'unorthodox' approach to eliciting public experiences and feedback. Following their support, I prepared different coloured rosettes and question forms to issue to the public. I also prepared posters to advertise the project which were displayed in Duthie Park and the Aberdeen Central Public Library. I also advertised for volunteers to assist with the project at Gray's School of Art.

Stage 2: Public Participation

On the first day at the park, myself and two volunteers from Gray's School of Art (a doctoral student and an honours design student) set up tables at different sites in the park near each gateway. We each had information sheets about the project, and rosettes question slips to issue to the public.

The question slips asked three questions:

- 1. What is the main activity you use the park for?*
- 2. Has wearing a rosette affected your activities in any way?*
- 3. Has it made you feel different today? How?*

Volunteers were briefed to approach public users as they entered the park, offer them a rosette to wear and ask them to return to fill in a question slip before leaving the park. At the end of the afternoon, we had gathered 20 responses: individuals' rosettes and completed question slips were collated in individual plastic pockets.

It became clear that while participants had been willing to wear the rosette, they were less interested in completing the questions slip on leaving. There was an air of suspicion, with only 'yes' or 'no' answers to the questions, which seemed a very limited form of engagement. I started to think about how to develop a more imaginative format for eliciting more qualitative, individual feedback.

By chance, Lauris Symmons called me that evening, and through our discussion, I explained the problem I had in trying to elicit more detailed public responses. She was very interested in the project as she was exploring similar issues in her own PhD research on interpreting communities through individual experiences and histories. She explained that she was interested in the use of postcards to record individuals' personal experiences and values. I agreed that it was an interesting idea and asked if she would mind if I explored this approach in my project. She was happy with this and wanted to contribute more. She asked if she could come and help with the project as she was interested to see how I had approached the project as a public art project, and she also wanted to gain experience in working with members of the public (in a pilot project), in order to help her with her own research.

After the conversation with Lauris, I developed a postcard, which asked the public to *"Write a postcard to the park or to someone in it. Tell them what you are doing today."* The following day, these postcards were issued to members of the public instead of the question slips. The response was much better and appeared to elicit more interest in the project. Volunteers were not available and I worked on the project myself until Lauris' arrival in Aberdeen (from Edinburgh) the next day. On day 3 of the project, Lauris arrived and we worked together in issuing and collecting rosettes and postcards from the public. We were both surprised by how members of the public were willing to share their personal and private experiences with us in discussion about the project. For example, someone in the process of divorce brought their children to the park to try to take their mind off their difficulties, and someone else visited the park on the anniversary of his wife's death in an act of remembrance. It was becoming clear that whilst the park is a very public context, people had very personal and private experiences of it.

Stage 3: Collating Material

Day 4 was the final day of the project and I had intended to display the rosettes and postcards in the centre of the park at the Central bandstand, so that people could read all the responses from participants. Approximately 60

responses from members of the public had been elicited over the 3 days. Each individual postcard and rosette was bagged in clear plastic. These were then collated to make a large 'banner', which was to be exhibited in the centre of the park. Unfortunately, gale-force winds prevented the hanging of the banner at the end of the day. Lauris and I discussed our experiences of the project before she returned to Edinburgh.

Stage 4: Development of a Final Product

Since it had not been possible to display the postcards and rosettes as had been intended, and since the postcard responses contained some very interesting material, I decided to compile the responses into a postcard book. All rosettes and postcards were digitally scanned, formatted and presented in print format as a concertina postcard book. I arranged a meeting with the councillor responsible for Aberdeen's public parks to discuss the possibility of attaining funding to print the postcard book and make it available to the public. Whilst there was great interest in the responses that had been gathered, there was no funding available to take this further.

Evaluation

This project enabled an exploration of working *with* participants in a public context. The design on the public event enabled the creation of shared experiences and interaction between public participants, and the experience of working in a form of public art practice, which enlisted and co-ordinated the participation of volunteers.

Although I designed the project structure, it required the involvement of a range of different individuals in order to be realised. In this respect, it was already '*authored*' by me, but dependent on the cooperation of council and park staff, participation of volunteers and members of the public, who interacted through the activities of wearing rosettes and sharing their experiences by writing a postcard.

Susanne Lacy's (1995; p178) evaluation of various forms of participation and engagement in public art practices, would consider these individuals as constituents of the project's audience.

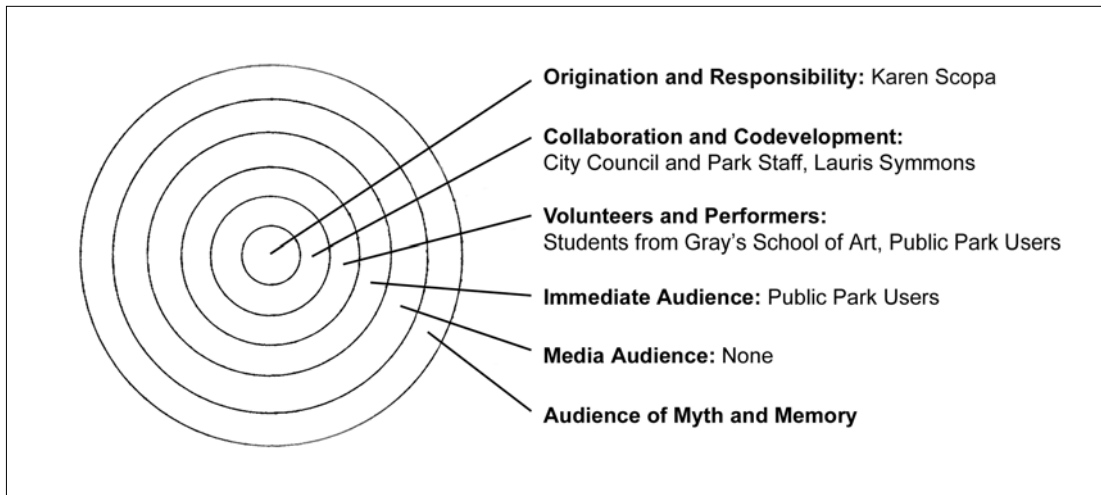


Figure 2.2 Diagram adapted from Suzanne Lacy's "audience-centred" model of interactivity in *New Genre Public Art Practices* (Lacy 1995; p178) to illustrate levels of participation and involvement in 'Parklife' Project.

Using Lacy's model of constituent 'audiences' to evaluate the levels of interaction within the project (*Fig. 2.2*), it is clear that the ownership of the project rested with myself, as I had devised and designed the project. The 'collaborators' or 'codevelopers' are those whose contributions are required in order for the work to progress, but who do not necessarily have an impact on the character of the project. In this case the Aberdeen City Council staff and Duthie Park staff had to give permission for us to use the park and engage public participation, or it would not have been able to progress. However, their involvement in the actual content and structure of the project was negligible, unlike that of Lauris Symmons, whose involvement is also categorised within this sphere. Although Lauris had no real involvement in the preparation of the project (entering the project as it was underway and with the majority of decisions having already been made), her engagement in terms of the concept of the project was clear in her suggestion to use postcards to elicit public responses and participation. Lauris' contribution had

a large influence over the character of the project as it led to a creative decision to alter the content and appearance of the project to some degree.

Whilst I had designed the 'event', Lauris had contributed to the development of an appropriate mechanism to collect information about participants' experiences (through the idea of using a postcard as a means of generating qualitative information). In this respect, her involvement was considered more collaborative, as it resulted in a more equal discussion between us about the concepts and intentions of the public event, rather than a pragmatic negotiation of available resources. However, in practice, when Lauris became involved in the project on site, she became less clear and confident in her role and contribution. In discussion, Lauris explained that through the experience of working on site with the public, she realised that she was less interested in the practical aspects of running a project, but would prefer to be in the role of controlling of a project concept, as a co-ordinator, interpreter, curator or commissioner. Thus the experience had enabled her to identify the types of roles she would feel most comfortable working within. Although I considered Lauris' contribution to the project to be absolutely central to the creative direction of the project, it was still seen by both of us as 'my' project as I had devised the project and undertaken most of the decision-making before Lauris' involvement. Therefore, ownership of the project remained unequal.

The '*volunteers*' and '*performers*' in this case were the volunteers from Gray's School of Art who issued and collected rosettes and postcards to and from the public, and the public themselves, who agreed to participate in the activity. Without the volunteers it was much more difficult to man the project as less park users could be approached, although they did not alter the creative design of the project. The park users who participated in the project provided the main content of the project, as Lacy describes, "those about, for, and with whom the work is created" (Lacy 1995; p179). In this respect, they were volunteers, performers, participants and audience at the same time. However, their involvement existed within a clearly pre-defined event structure and last for only a short period of time as they participated by

wearing the rosettes and completing their postcards, and then left the park. Such a limited *period* for interaction resulted in a limited *level* of engagement. It was interesting to observe that the deepest level of engagement between myself and park users occurred through (sometimes lengthy) discussions that emerged, which were not often reflected in the information written on the postcards. There was no '*media audience*' for this project, as the postcard book was not published.

Lacy's model is useful in beginning to categorise the different qualities of engagement and participation of those individuals who come in contact with a public art project. However, the intention is not to over-simplify the complexity and shifting nature of different types of engagement, "At no point is the level of participation fixed, and depending on the criteria established through work, participants move back and forth between levels" (Lacy 1995; p180). In this project, the levels of public participation were relatively fixed through the design of the project, and this resulted in a limited level of engagement due to a lack of time to develop deeper relationships with those participants and also due to the pre-designed form of interaction (through rosettes and postcards), which were *presented* to the participants. This meant that although the participants' contributions were central to making the final artwork, they were not involved in the crucial, creative decision-making in the early stage of the project. They did not, therefore, have '*ownership*' of the project.

Whilst Lauris' participation was at a deeper level, and concerned with the creative content of the project, the fact that she had not been involved from the beginning meant that she too did not feel a sense of '*ownership*' or a central and clear '*role*' in the project. Therefore, although close to collaboration, the relationship was limited.

Summary of Main Findings

The project highlighted different levels of participation in a public art event. Relationships were identified by their levels of engagement with the artist

(myself) and the types of contribution towards the production of the artwork (the postcard book).

The main finding from this project was that the pre-designed event structure resulted in a limited form of public participation (where participants engaged with the project through wearing rosettes and writing postcards in a form of interaction with objects) rather than becoming engaged in a deeper level of collaboration in the creative concepts of the project. This finding (similar to that in Project 1), suggested that in order to engage a deep level of collaborative engagement, the collaborators would require an equal contribution in the design of the project from the outset.

Timescale was also an important factor in building the 'deep' level of engagement that I considered to be essential to a collaborative relationship. This was also recognised in Project 1 and, although this project ran over a longer period of time, the actual contact with participating members of the public was very limited, and this was felt to limit the quality of relationships being formed. This was in part considered a result of the public context in which the event took place. Whilst the public context was suitable for engaging public interest and involvement, it was not considered appropriate for engendering collaborative relationships, precisely because it was too public; a place where people pass through, rather than stay and build relationships over time. This appeared to correlate with my initial impression that in debates on public art, 'collaboration' is a term often used indiscriminately with other terms such as 'participation', 'cooperation' and 'interaction' to describe public involvement in these practices. However, in my understanding, 'collaboration' is qualitatively different, as it requires a sense of shared creative ownership and 'deep' level of engagement between collaborators, which is developed over time.

In order to find potential collaborators to work with to build collaborative relationships, it seems more appropriate to identify specific people with specialist skills, interests, and/or perspectives to contribute to the development of a collaborative project, rather than to seek participation from

anonymous members of the public. A shared interest in ways of working with the public, between Lauris Symmons and myself (although we were from different disciplinary backgrounds and perspectives) was the most useful connection in beginning to develop a collaborative creative process.

However, it seems important to develop equal involvement from collaborators at the outset of the collaboration. This raises the question of how to facilitate a collaborative level of engagement between individuals who do not know each other – in a form of “cold-collaboration”. Does collaboration rely on the identification of shared interests between collaborators from the outset?

How can collaborative relationships be ‘framed’ or made *visible* within a project? Even with a limited level of public participation in this project, the most interesting forms of engagement with members of the public occurred mainly through discussion and were mostly invisible in the products (the completed postcards).

From this project, the following key concerns were raised:

1. The need to look more closely at ways of identifying collaborators.
2. The need to explore ways in which collaborative relationships can be developed within the initial stages of designing a project.
3. The need to explore ways of producing artwork about the collaborative relationships itself, in order to visualise the quality of the relationship.
4. The need to identify and describe the physical environment and conditions conducive to engaging collaborative relationships.

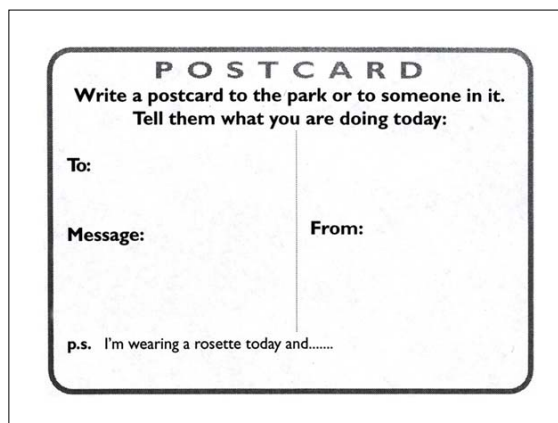
IMAGES FROM PROJECT 2



Information table at Park entrance.



Rosettes issued to the public.



Postcards issued to the public.

Figure 2.3 STAGE 1: Preparation

IMAGES FROM PROJECT 2 (continued)



Figure 2.4 STAGE 2: Inviting Public Participation Images showing public participation and interaction on site.

IMAGES FROM PROJECT 2 (continued)



Postcards and Rosettes collated in clear bags



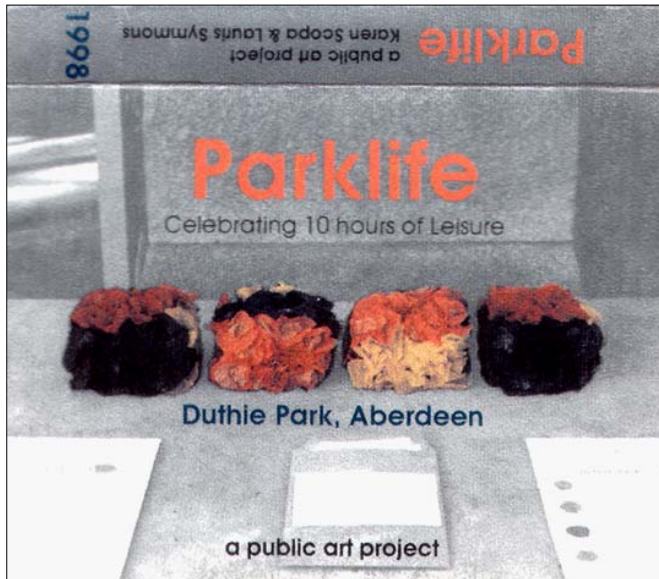
Postcard and Rosette 'banner'.



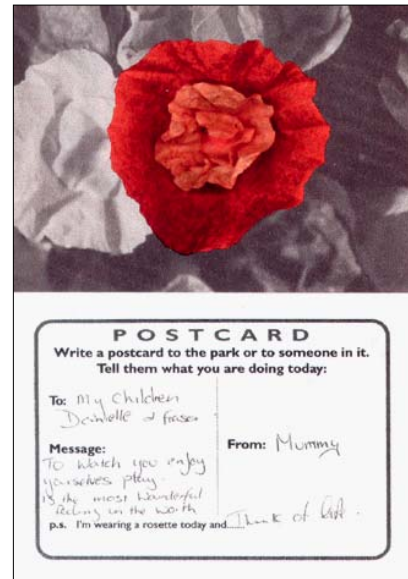
Park Bandstand: intended display area for banner.

Figure 2.5 Stage 3: Collating Visual Information

IMAGES FROM PROJECT 2 (continued)



Front page of Postcard Book.



Individuals' postcards and rosettes.



Section of concertina layout.

Figure 2.6 Stage 4: Developing a Product: a concertina postcard book.

Notes from Project 2 Report

- ¹ A process of making artwork that is positioned and developed from within in the actual public site, emerging from a direct response to the different features of the specific context.
- ² We were both students on the Postgraduate Diploma in Exhibition Interpretation at Napier University, Edinburgh in 1996, and were familiar with each other's work and research interests.
- ³ Suzanne Lacy (ed.)(1995) *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, Washington: Bay Press p35
- ⁴ New Genre Public Art is a term coined by Susanne Lacy to define a form of socially-engaged public art practice emergent in America. Lacy's book *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, is the key text in this area of public art practice.

'The Contract Book'
(February to July 1999)

Research Aims

This project investigated the qualitative nature of engagement occurring between collaborators from different disciplines, using the metaphor of '*inter-subjective*', or '*shared*' space¹. Aiming to evolve a 'deep' level of engagement between collaborators, the project was not designed with preconceived ideas about how the collaborators would develop a shared working process, or of the outcome of the project; but adopted an open and flexible structure from the outset. The main research question was how to initiate equal levels of engagement and shared ownership between collaborators who were previously unknown to each other and from different disciplines², and to explore the possibilities of documenting the qualitative nature of the collaboration through a final product (or artwork – the form that this would take was not specified).

Collaborator

Duncan Comrie, an art historian (and Ph.D. student at Aberdeen University), was identified as a potential collaborator when an existing common interest in the work of artist and film-director Peter Greenaway was discovered³. I contacted Duncan (in December 1997) and initiated a meeting to discuss our interests in Greenaway's work and suggested the possibility of collaborating on a paper for the Scottish Word and Image Group (SWIG) annual conference⁴. Although Duncan was not interested in collaborating on a paper, he agreed to an informal meeting to discuss our interests in Greenaway. We next met at the SWIG conference, where we both presented papers on Peter Greenaway's work. Following two subsequent informal meetings⁵, we began a collaboration, which took place between February and July of 1999 (see *Fig. 3.1* for simplified visual overview of project).

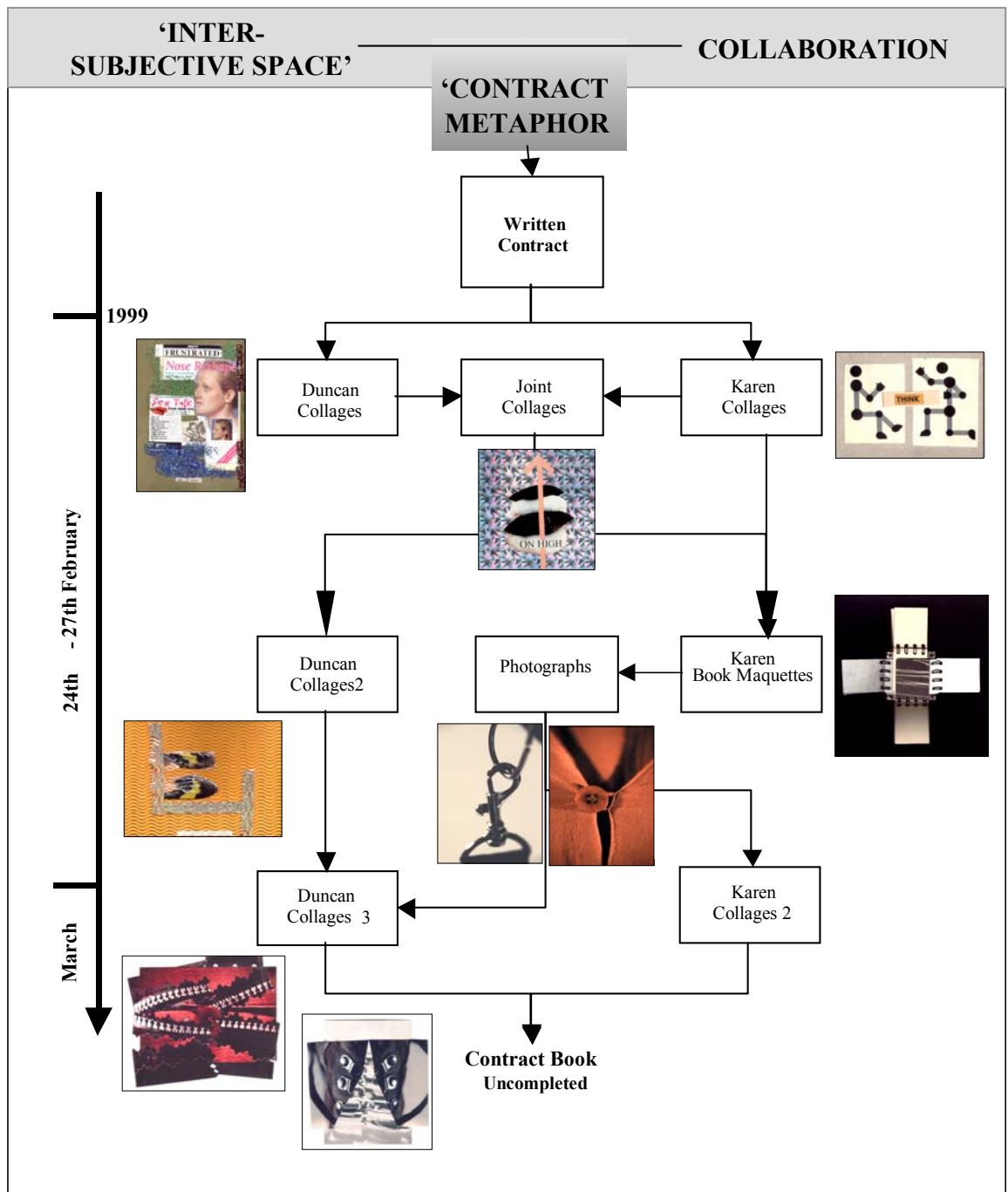


Figure 3.1 Simplified visual overview of Project 3: 'The Contract Book'

Project Description

In February, I arranged to meet Duncan to discuss (in practical terms) how we might work together. Throughout February we met three times and communicated back and forth by email to brainstorm some possible starting points and to uncover our individual interests and preferences for how a project might be developed. I visited Duncan at his workplace at the Aberdeen University for these meetings and explained my intention to develop a collaborative project that focused on the notion of '*inter-subjective*', or '*shared*' space to understand the qualities of shared working.

Drawing on our initial common interest in the work of Peter Greenaway, we decided that his film, '*The Draughtsman's Contract*' might be a good starting point, as we were both familiar with it. The notion of a 'contract' then developed as the central theme for our project. This seemed an appropriate theme as it related to my interest in attempting to visualise the 'shared' space, negotiated between the collaborators. From this starting point, distinctive stages in our process of shared working emerged.

Stage 1:

Initially, we approached the notion of a contract quite literally. We each wrote an individual 'contract' for shared working in order to state our individual interests, positions and expectations (*Fig. 3.2*). We then discussed possible shared working models and began to negotiate a structure for the project. There appeared to be two main options; the first being to work outwards from our central common interest in Greenaway, and the second being to start from our different individual interests and positions, and to work inwards, attempting to identify a common aim or goal (*Fig. 3.3*). We also discussed the limitations of available time and resources and developed a project schedule for March 1999 (*Fig. 3.4*).

<p style="text-align: center;">Duncan</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Intellectual's Individual Covenant</p> <p>To carry out the artist's project, I the intellectual require to express my views on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to declare Alienation, from conventional values. -to expose Philistinism, an intellectual construct that reinforces cultural prejudice. -the Aesthetic, a concept of a positive individual experience. -Culture, the right to a personal one. -Rabelais, the right to shit. -the Aesthetic freedom of the individual does not impinge on anyone's personal freedom. It is a manifestation of the individual's ideas and ideals that are given expression. -an individual has the right to assert their own aesthetic choice in any way they choose. They are not undermining society's laws; the person is expressing freedom of thought. The contract requires that both parties accept that the individual's aesthetic is freedom of expression. -no concern with collective or institutional aesthetics. The individual aesthetic I have in mind, however, will be situated in a contemporary context. -in the agreement between one person and anyone else there should be no condition except that there are no conditions. From contradiction comes clarity, happenings and occurrences are irrelevant, they have no significance; only the pleasure of style matters. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Karen</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Contract: vision, expectations, framework for realisation, context.</p> <p>Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to create a situation where the space/interaction between participants ("inter-subjective space") is explored through an art work. - to produce an art work which is resolved through the mutual input of both participants. <p>Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to develop methods to explore the "inter-subjective space" created between participants through the development of the notion of <i>'people as sites/contexts'</i>. - to produce an artwork which combines and evidences the skills of each individual participant. <p>Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to explore and develop methods of practice which enable participant's responses to each other's ideas and individual methods. - to explore existing and/or new media in ways which expand upon individual participants' existing knowledge. - to engender the mutual input of both participants. - to observe, document and analyse the processes engaged in and progress made throughout the project. <p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an art project which is focused on exploratory methods of practice. - initiated within an MPhil/PhD research framework: which places specific demands on the gathering of data. - a situation in which both parties can expand and develop initial areas of interest and overlap previously identified; through the shared methods of the project.
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Figure 3.2 Written Contract

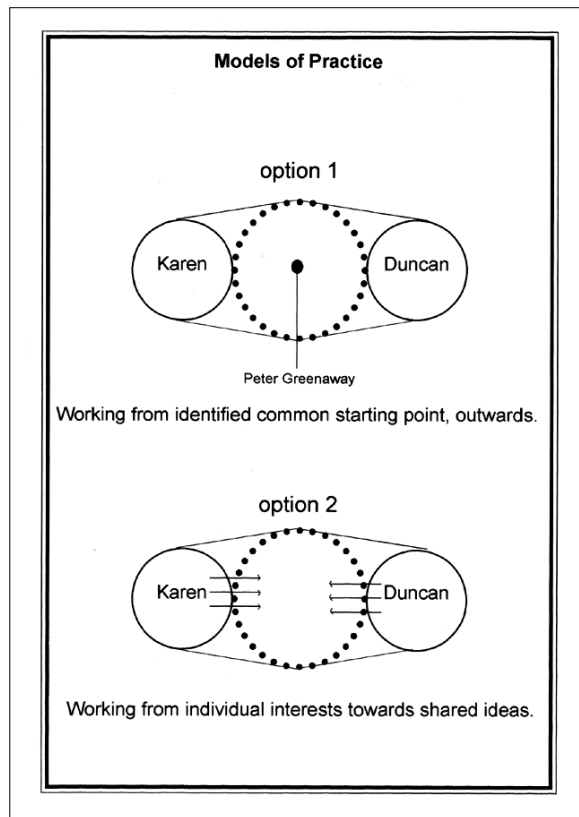


Figure 3.3 Diagrams of two possible approaches to collaboration.

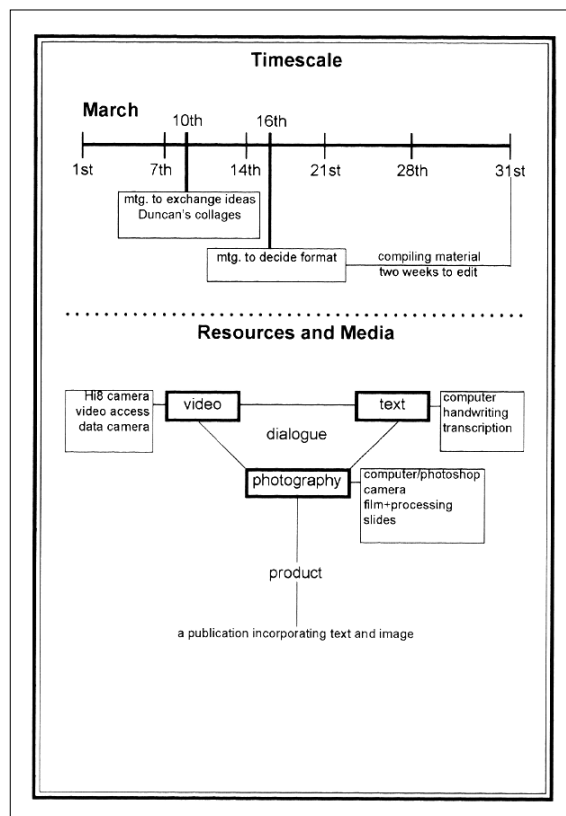


Figure 3.4 Diagram of time and resources available to project.

Having negotiated the boundaries of the project and developed an initial structure, we discussed the content of the project and how we intended to proceed. Duncan described his interests in aesthetics and collage, and in approaching the notion of a contract to explore aesthetic experience (through colour and texture). I described my interest in approaching the notion of a contract as a visual document depicting the framework for shared working. We decided to work individually on small collages and to think more about the notion of a contract book. We agreed that for our next meeting, Duncan would make a small batch of collages, whilst I would develop possible structures for a *'contract book'*.

Stage 2:

At our next meeting (at Duncan's flat), we looked at Duncan's collages and my ideas for the design of a contract book. Duncan wanted me to make some collages and I agreed, although I explained it was not a medium that I liked. We made some quick collages using magazines and available scrap paper, and then discussed our approaches to art, from our different perspectives of Art History and Art Practice. Duncan described himself as an "intellectual" interested in "intellectualising the aesthetic", and I described myself as a "practitioner", where "the materials methods that best suit the idea and the function of the work are adopted". Thus, a distinction between our notions of *'intellectual'* and *'critical'* practice began to emerge.

We then decided to try to make collages together. We both found this process of collaborative making quite difficult as it was becoming apparent that we had very different ideas about art practice, art production and aesthetic judgement. I felt that using magazine images to make collages was distracting us from our agreed starting point, which was to visualise our notions of a contract, whereas Duncan was enjoying bringing in random visual images to make more random associations. We discussed some of our frustrations. The extract below (transcribed from an audio recording) exemplifies our different approaches:

K: ...these images are bringing in a whole range of other content. I found that quite difficult because it raised issues about test-tube babies, but to me that's not where the content lies.

D: Well no, its contracts, but that's still within the broadest context. I don't think in a narrow context. That's still a contract - genetic manipulation - it's still a contract that scientists are making with us, the public, that they are doing their best for us. So we get these products...

K: But it's a bit tenuous to make those connections?

D: Well, yes it is tenuous to us two as individuals, but you've got to explore the boundaries to get to the focus. "

I suggested that instead of using magazine images, we should take some photographs of images that we considered representative in some way of the notion of a contract, which we could use in the collages. Duncan agreed and said that he would continue making collages but would use different colours and textures of paper rather than magazine photographs. A week after this meeting, Duncan gave a lecture titled, *'Wilde about Style: Individual, Collective and Institutional Aesthetics in Late 19th Century Scotland'* as part of the Art History seminar series at Aberdeen University, and I attended. Duncan's lecture focused on the aesthetic movement and the work of Oscar Wilde. As much of this material was from his PhD research, it gave me an opportunity to gain a better insight into Duncan's interests, references and influences.

Stage 3:

Having taken a series of photographs of different forms of joining, tying and binding (which I believed represented the notion of a contract as 'a bond between two parties') I took two sets of prints to Duncan's flat for our next meeting (26th March 1999). I also took slides of my own artwork to show Duncan. As I had found Duncan's lecture useful in gaining a better understanding of his perspective, I felt it would be useful if he had a similar insight into my work, to understand my perspective better.

We used this opportunity as a review stage in the project. Following a discussion about my artwork, we looked at all the collages that Duncan and I had made individually and collaboratively, and possible ideas for a contract book (which I had developed into maquettes) and evaluated our progress to date. I audio recorded our discussion to have a record of this key decision-making stage in the project.

As we were approaching the date initially agreed for the end of the project (31st March 1999), we decided to concentrate on ways of bringing the work together, towards a final outcome. We agreed on an A5 format for the final contract book, which would include primarily the collaged images, and with the possibility of text included in the latter stages. We each had an identical set of photographs, which we agreed to work with individually to make the final series of collages. We agreed to meet on the 31st March to compile these collages into the final book. I asked that for this next meeting, we meet at a studio in Gray's School of Art, as I felt it would provide an appropriate space to lay out all of our work and get a clear overview. I also felt that the project was imbalanced as all the meetings were occurring at Duncan's flat, which was his own personal space.

Stage 4:

Since Duncan had taken on lecturing work and I had been getting heavily involved in research project 4, the meeting we had planned for the 31st March was cancelled. There was a large gap before we were able to meet again. We finally met on 17th June 1999 (again at Duncan's flat). The momentum of the project had dissipated somewhat by this stage. Duncan had completed a few of his collages, but I had not completed mine, as I was finding it difficult to make my collages without a clear enough understanding of how and why we were going to use the images in the final book. We discussed our ideas relating to the concept of the final contract book. Duncan suggested joining the pages of the book in different ways (such as using zips, ties, etc), which would link in with the analogies of joining and binding in the photographs used for the collages. I explained that I still did not have a clear understanding of the book's function and content: was it to document our

shared working process, or to address the theme of '*individualism*' (which emerged as a key concept for Duncan during the project) in relation to the notion of a contract?

We agreed on using different ways of joining the pages and decided that rather than approaching the book as a document, it should be viewed as an artwork that embodies our individual collages. We agreed that we would need one final meeting to bring our individual collages together into a book and to then decide whether or not we wished to add text to the book. However, this final meeting never occurred and the project naturally came to an endpoint as we both became more involved with other work commitments. The book was never completed.

Evaluation

This project signalled a key stage in the research as it raised highlighted the complexities and difficulties in attempting to develop a 'deep' level of collaborative engagement between two different individuals, previously unknown to one another, from different disciplinary backgrounds and with different perspectives on art. The main difficulties encountered were in establishing ways of individually contributing to a collaborative product and in developing a shared vision for the project outcomes.

Developing Understanding and Common Ground

In the initial stages of the project, it was important to first get to know each other and develop a better understanding of each other's interests and particular perspectives in order to build a foundation for the collaboration. Our shared interest in the work of Peter Greenaway presented common ground between us, which provided a good starting point from which to develop the collaboration.

In stage 1, writing individual contracts was useful in defining our individual expectations and perspectives of shared working. The contracts highlighted differences perspectives and expectations. For example, in my part of the contract I stated an expectation for the collaboration to arise from the "mutual

input of both participants”, which I tacitly understood to require a mutual willingness by collaborators to work towards a common aim. In Duncan’s part of the contract, his interest in the “Aesthetic freedom of the individual” was dominant and this influenced his perception of the process of working collaboratively; “in the agreement between one person and anyone else there should be no condition except that there are no conditions” (Fig. 3.2). Although I respected his view, I found it did not relate my ideas of collaboration being a process of constant negotiation and ‘compromise’ (which I viewed in a positive light, as a process by which collaborators learn from one another by putting aside individual ‘fixed’ views in order to learn from one another).

The process of writing the contract provided a stimulus for discussion between us, which enabled us to gain a better understanding of each other’s different perspectives. Through discussion we negotiated a method of sharing and exchanging our *individual* perspectives and approaches by working individually on a series of collages and then bringing our individual collages together for review and discussion at following meetings. We developed the idea of making a ‘contract book’, which would provide a way of collating our individual collages within a collaborative outcome.

Different Disciplines: Language and Methods

Issues of language and disciplinary difference were important throughout the project, as the following excerpt from a transcription of an audio recording made during a discussion evaluating our progress illustrates (K – stands for Karen/researcher):

K: ...you’re talking about language and dialectics, aesthetics and synthesis and I’m thinking about definitions of individual, metaphors of joining, and the idea of a shared context, so we’re thinking in different languages...

Whilst we were both familiar with the visual arts, in personal and professional capacities, we had different perspectives resulting from our different disciplinary backgrounds (Art History and Art Practice). The following excerpt

from a transcription of an audio recording made during a discussion evaluating our progress illustrates our different perspectives and individual approaches: (K – stands for Karen/researcher, D – stands for Duncan):

“K: ... We are still working individually at the moment although there is beginning to be a shared space and shared way of thinking... I’m getting used to your aesthetic and the kind of materials you enjoy using and the way that you’ve been thinking about making your collages.

D: A part of the problem of us working together is that you’re coming from an environment where everything is conducive towards exploring ideas visually. I come from an environment where it is the opposite - it’s not allowed in fact. Its not tolerated that you put into practice any ideas about art...the Art Historian treats the Artist like some kind of rare plant who lives in a greenhouse and the Art Historian lives outside that.

K: So how do you feel when you’re making images?

D: I just do it for my own pleasure, although I have a context of intellectual ideas. Obviously my ideas about the aesthetics come from my studies of Art History, but I’ve combined them. I’ve ‘aestheticized’ myself so that I can enjoy the pleasure of making things - instead of only enjoying it as an intellectual experience. I’ve had to overcome the general prevalent position - the view in Art History against actually doing anything practical because that’s what amateurs do.”

As well as perceiving ourselves differently as a result of coming from different disciplines, as evidenced in Duncan’s description of himself as an “intellectual” and my description of myself as a “practitioner”, we also preferred to use different materials and methods of making. Whilst I did not like working with collage, preferring to explore ways of using text visually, Duncan was less interested in using words, preferring to explore the chance visual connotations suggested by bringing images together through collage. Our different approaches seemed to suggest that some kind role-reversal between was evolving (following excerpt from transcribed discussion):

“K: Perhaps we could interpret each other’s collages, so that text is layered on top of the collages that each of us has done individually?”

D: I don’t know...I think probably its because I come from a daily environment of text that I’m... I’m bogged down in text.

K: If we work with the images first, perhaps text could be added afterwards. It could be a response to the final images and might be the thread that makes the content throughout the book more coherent. The images might be quite random, but the text might enhance the content in some way?

D: Yes, we could have separate text. We could talk about all of these things: dialectics, synthesis, organic evolution. I think probably other artists would be interested in reading that, whereas if the text is superimposed ... well, this is the trouble with text and images. I always prefer...the text as a work of art itself. There’s obviously meaning in the text, in Greenaway certainly. In a lot of other textual artists, there’s no meaning in the text... The text, if you’re going to have text, has to be used as an aesthetic itself.

K: I agree that text should only be used if its relevant to what we’re trying to put across through the book... What *do* we want to put across in this book?

I like the idea of having some of the text standing alone, so when you open the book there is an image and a piece of text. We can use the structure of the book to give the text meaning. For example, if the word ‘disable’ was spread across these two pages, you’ve got ‘dis-’ and ‘able’ when you turn the pages - there are different levels of meaning. It might be a metaphor for the way we’re working: individually we have ‘part’ meanings, but we’re bringing them together into a whole, so there is a synthesis. Or perhaps we both start with identical things: a list of words, or a set of images, or some of the materials you’ve collected, and work on them individually and then bring them together.

D: Well that would give an imposed unity, yes. It would be a surer way of getting some relationship. If we each started off with half of these words and half of the images...although that doesn’t mean to say we would have to stick to them...the creative process doesn’t always work...”

Timescale, Motivation and Structure

The timescale of the project influenced resulting success, or lack of success, in achieving the intended final outcome: the contract book. The project had initially been intended to run throughout March with a final meeting on the 31st to make any final adjustments to the book. However, as this meeting was cancelled, we did not meet again until June: almost three months later. During this time, motivation had dwindled somewhat on both our parts. From my perspective, motivation had begun to wane earlier in the project as it became evident that the work was not really coming together into a 'collaborative whole' and we were not able to come to agreement about making key decisions about what the final book would look like. Duncan was reluctant to narrow our options or limit the creative process by imposing rigid decisions, however I was feeling the pressure of time running out (as I had also become very involved in Project Four) and I also found it difficult to work without a clear vision to aim towards. Although we had negotiated and agreed a clear structure and timescale for the project, we had not been able to work to it and as a result, the project lost focus and motivation began to dwindle.

Trust and Territory

A final issue that I believe influenced the collaboration was that of 'territory'. Whilst Project One had occurred in the contexts of an art studio and public space (the beach), and Project Two occurred in a Public Park setting, in this project, our meetings occurred in Duncan's home (as I went to his flat, with the exception of our first meeting, when I went to his place of work at Aberdeen University). Although I did not mind going to meet Duncan (since he had agreed voluntarily to contribute to my research by collaborating with me), I did suggest on more than one occasion that I collect him and we could meet in my home, and I also suggested that we have a meeting in a studio at Gray's school of Art, where we would have space to spread out our work and look at it clearly and objectively. However, Duncan refused these offers and I began to feel more uncomfortable going to meet him at his home as I was

conscious that it was 'his' environment and not a 'neutral', or shared territory⁶.

Summary of Main Findings

This project brought together collaborators from different disciplines, who were previously unknown to one another. The structure and aims of the collaboration were negotiated between collaborators at the beginning of the project. This meant that Duncan, the invited collaborator, shared ownership of the project as it had not been pre-designed by me, the researcher.

Using the concept of a 'contract' was a useful way of exposing and documenting our individual expectations in the early stages, and served in helping to identify differences and potential contrasting, or contradictory perspectives. Sharing an interest in Peter Greenaway's artwork and films gave us a focus for discussion and provided us with a common ground from which to develop a collaborative, shared vision. However, as the project progressed, differences in our approaches to the contract book, and our perspectives of collaborative working, presented challenges. Motivation began to dissipate as the project ran over time and the possibility of achieving a satisfactory final product that we would both be happy with appeared less realistic.

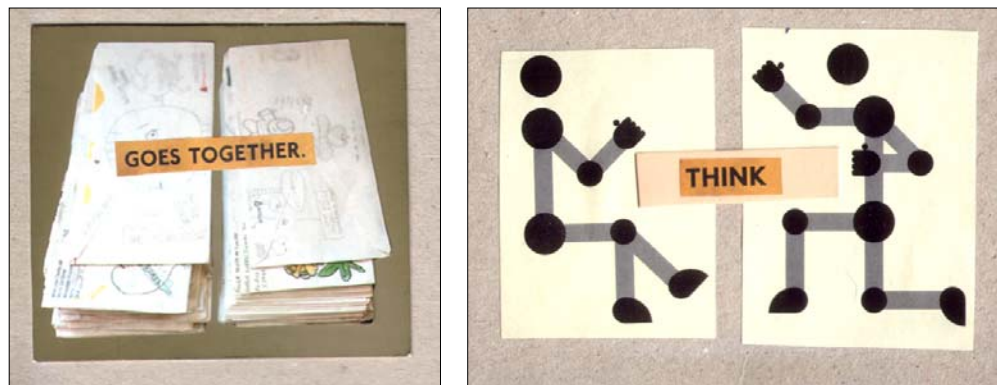
Through this project, the following questions were raised:

1. How is trust developed between collaborators who are previous unknown to one in the early stages of collaboration?
2. How can the products produced by collaboration metaphorically (and visually) represent the nature of collaboration?
3. Is it better for artists to collaborate with individuals from disciplines *not* related to the visual arts?
4. Is the *process* of collaboration more important than the *outcomes* of collaboration?

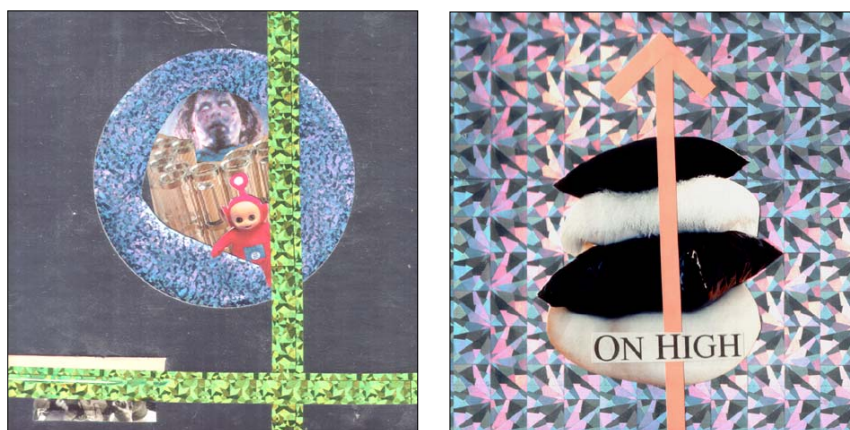
IMAGES FROM PROJECT 3



Examples of Duncan's Collages



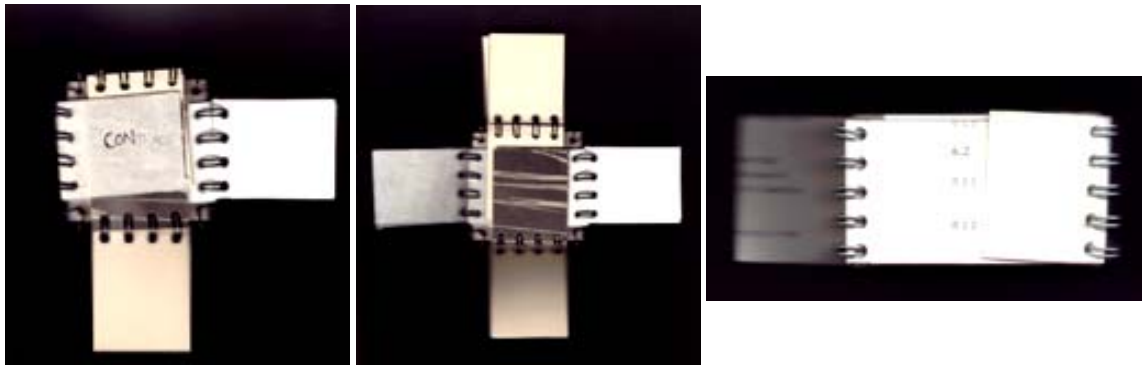
Examples of Karen's Collages



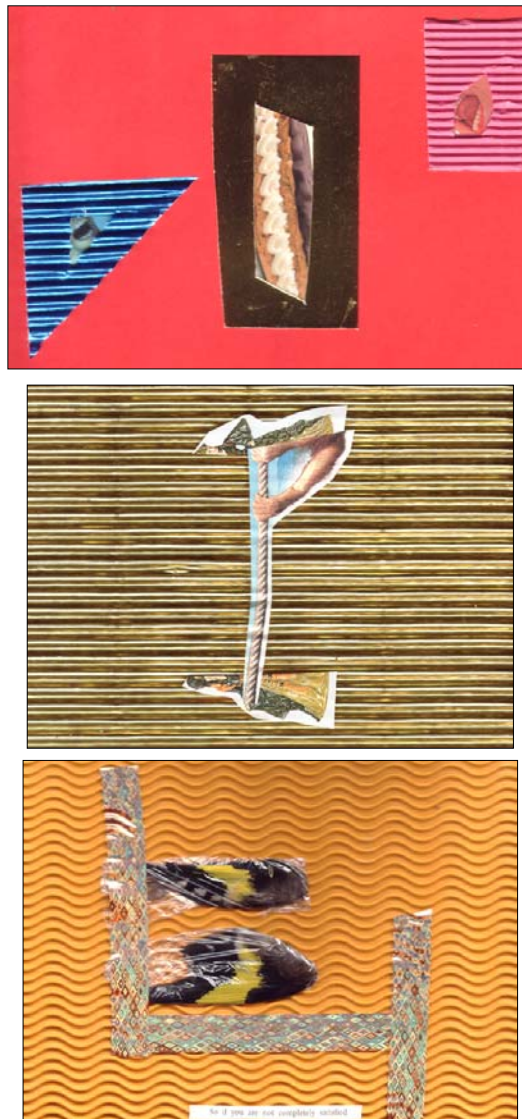
Examples of Joint Collages

Figure 3.5 Stage 2: Examples of collages.

IMAGES FROM PROJECT 3 (continued)



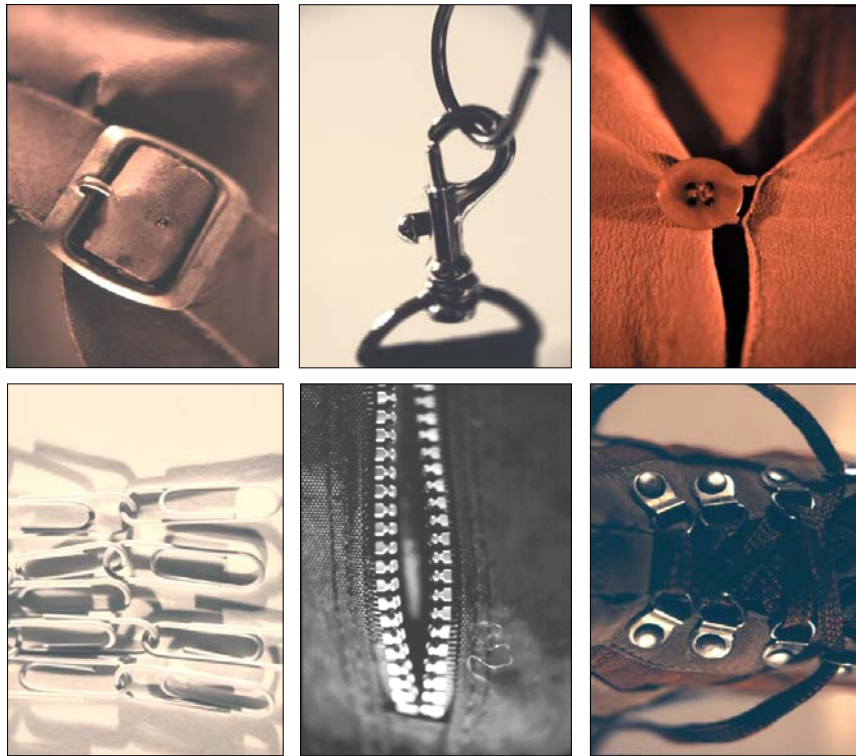
Karen's Book Maquettes



Duncan's second batch of Collages

Figure 3.6 Stage 3: Book Maquettes and Collages.

IMAGES FROM PROJECT 3 (continued)



Karen's Photographs for Collages



Duncan's final collages

Figure 3.7 Photographs for collage and final collages.

Notes from Project 3 Report

- ¹ Extending the references to public art practice and the notion of context, or site-specific practice, the project developed the concept of 'inter-subjective space' as a metaphor for understanding the qualitative experience and nature of interaction between collaborators. Having identified in the area of Littoral practice (drawn from concepts of New Genre Public Art) at a conference in Ireland (Critical Sites), the debates about practices where the purposes of the function of art practice as a method of exploring and understanding 'the other' appeared appropriate to the notion of collaboration and the process of collaboration, which had been identified as largely focusing on processes of communication and dialogue. Thus, Grant Kester's keynote paper on the concept of "Discursive Aesthetics" was found relevant and the concept of inter-subjective space was consciously addressed through the design of the project, which began with a loose starting point of identity as an initial theme.
- ² What I would term 'cold' collaboration, in order to distinguish a situation where collaborators are previously unknown to one another, from collaboration that may emerge from the individuals' previous or existing personal or professional relations.
- ³ I was submitting a conference paper on Greenaway's films when a colleague mentioned that Duncan Comrie was also interested in Greenaway's work and was also considering submitting a paper on Greenaway's work to the same conference.
- ⁴ Held at the Aberdeen University, in May of 1998
- ⁵ Having discovered a common interest, whilst acknowledging our very different approaches (coming from different disciplines), I began thinking about how we might be able to work together collaboratively and arranged another meeting with Duncan in July of 1998, to find out if he would be interested in collaborating on a project. We did not meet again until January of 1999, when Duncan contacted me to inform me of an exhibition and public lecture being given by Peter Greenaway at the Talbot Rice Gallery in Edinburgh and to invite me to travel down with him and his colleague. Spending a day together at the exhibition and lecture, presented us with an opportunity to discuss our individual interests in Greenaway's work and our own research projects in more detail.
- ⁶ Michael Schrage acknowledges the importance of having a "shared space" in which collaborators can feel free to "play" and explore ideas comfortably and freely: a situation which is dependent on mutual respect, tolerance, trust and a shared goal. Schrage, M (1990) *Shared Minds: New Technologies of Collaboration*, New York: Random House and 'Concepts of Collaboration: Collaboration is a Process of Value Creation', internet essay.

'The Kissing Card Game'

(February - August 1999)

Research Aims

'The Kissing Card Game' emerged out of an informal opportunity to explore strategies for engaging collaboration with an individual from a non-arts-related discipline (linguist, Christian Zursiedel). Having encountered some difficulties in bringing individuals' contributions together to achieve a shared collaborative vision and outcome in Project Three, this project aimed to explore *'inter-subjective space'* between individuals by eliciting equal input and exchange between collaborators.

At this stage of the research, I felt the need for an 'informal' space in which to explore different strategies for engaging a 'deep' level of engagement between collaborators in an experimental way. Therefore, the intention was to concentrate on investigating the *processes*, rather than the *products*, of collaboration. It was considered an opportunity to 'test out', or 'pilot' experimental strategies, which could be used in other projects, and was therefore not viewed as one of the main research projects in the initial stages. However, as the project evolved, it gathered momentum and was considered to be the most successful of the first four research projects: both in terms of achieving 'true' collaboration (with a 'deep' level of engagement between collaborators) and in terms of achieving a successful end product (which was exhibited in January 2000).

Collaborator

Following the fall-through of a collaborative project I had been developing with a native German Primary School Teacher¹, Christian Zursiedel (a native German Foreign Languages Assistant working in Aberdeen) volunteered to assist by participating in “trying things out”. Although we previously knew one another through friendship², Christian knew little about my artwork and research and expressed an interest in understanding better “what artists do”, as he had little previous interest in, or knowledge of the Visual Arts.



Christian Zursiedel

Project Description

The project evolved in an unplanned and informal manner. The theme of cultural identity was agreed as an appropriate starting point in exploring our differences as we had different nationalities (Christian: German, Karen/researcher: British). The Cultural Theorist, Sarat Maharaj, had explored using collaboration as a strategy for learning about cultural difference³. From initial, informal discussions exploring cultural identity and differences in our individual experiences (Stage 1), the project moved towards developing strategies of practical interaction between collaborators through a series of experimental ‘word games’ (Stage 2). Over a period of approximately one month, variations in approaches to these word games were explored. However the project focus began to dissolve as we ran out of variations or ways of further developing the strategies. Therefore, in response to an invitation (received by the researcher) to submit a proposal to exhibit a piece of artwork on the theme of ‘Kissing’, we decided to re-focus the project to address this theme and to direct our activities toward producing an artwork for exhibition. In Stage 3, we added images to the initial word game strategies to create visual meaning relating to the exhibition theme, and developed the idea of making a ‘kissing card game’. In Stage 4 we developed the card game, and negotiated individual roles and

responsibilities. A simplified visual overview of the project is presented below (Fig. 4.1):

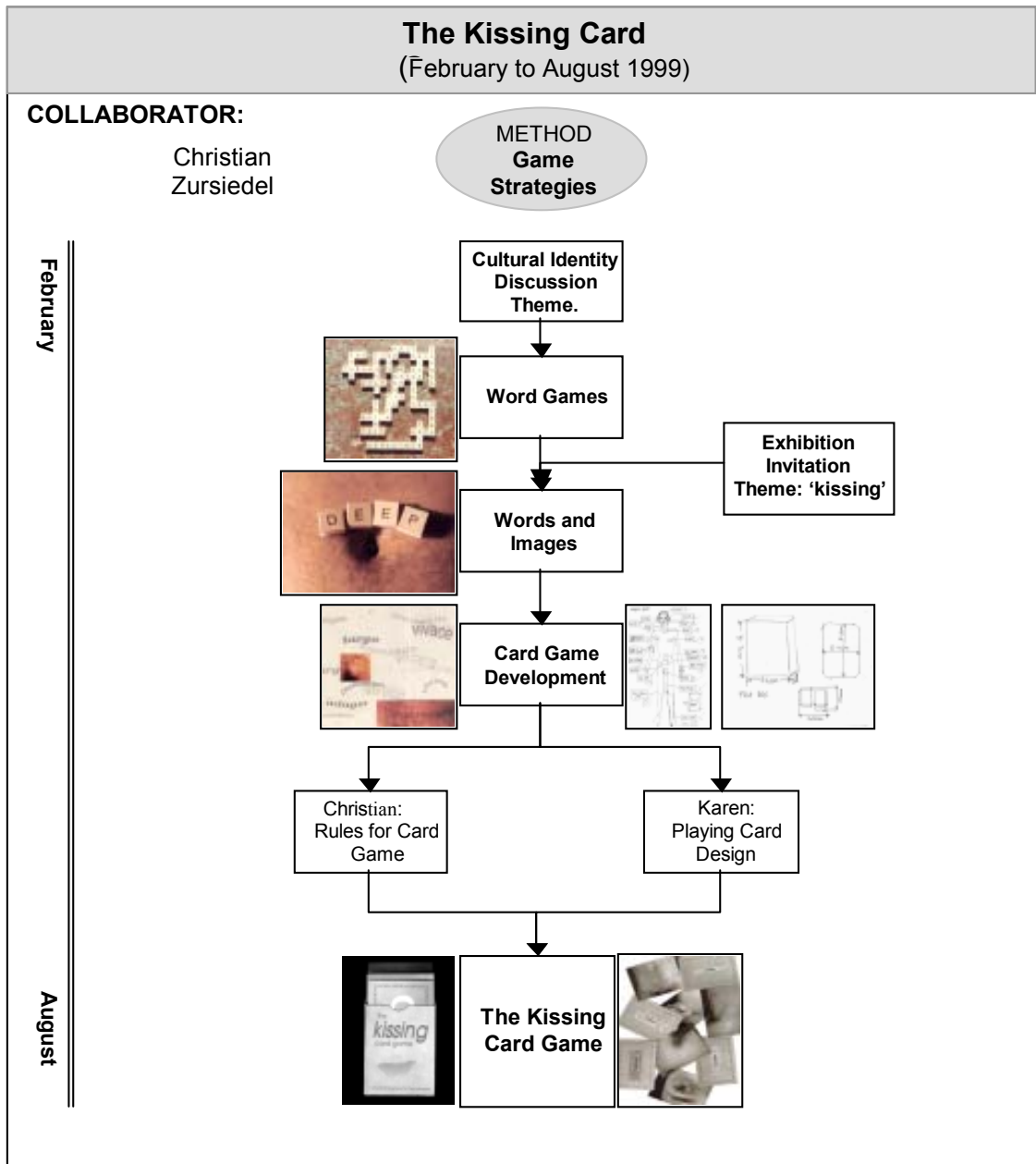


Figure 4.1 Simplified visual overview of Project 4 process.

Stage 1

We began by discussing notions of 'identity' and what cultural identity meant us individually. We talked about differences in our experiences resulting from our different cultural backgrounds. Christian made notes of our key interests and thoughts about identity. Our discussions became very broad and general: for example, addressing how education, social environment and personal experience shape and inform cultural and personal identity. I suggested to Christian that we might try to identify a common area of interest that was more specific (as I felt that we would need a more tangible idea to work with in order to create visual 'artwork'), and we tried to identify key areas of common interest or themes emerging that we could develop in some way.

At this stage I was consciously reluctant to steer the process in a specific way, as I wanted Christian to develop an equal ownership of the project from the outset and feel that he freely make his own suggestions and contributions. As he had *volunteered* to participate within *my* research, he tended to ask "if this is what you want" as we discussed issues. I explained that I no pre-conceptions and wanted him to take equal ownership over deciding what we should do together. However, it was evident that with a background in languages, Christian found it difficult to relate ideas to visual processes or artefacts, as he had no previous experience of creative visual processes. We discussed this and I suggested that we start with something known to us both, and something that would visually represent Christian's interest in language. I suggested we start off using the board game 'Scrabble', as it is a visual use of text (language) and I knew it was a game that Christian liked to play.

Stage 2

We started to play Scrabble, firstly using the set rules of the game, but with the intention of making words that would relate to the theme of identity, which we had discussed at length in Stage 1. Similar to Project One (where collaborators used a game strategy to frame individual contributions to the

development of a sculpture), the act of taking turns to add words to the board framed our equal input, in response to each individual's previous contribution.

Although we started using the 'official' Scrabble rules, we found that the seven letters were too limited, and so we decided to use more letters and to allow the substitution of letters when required in order to make a specific word. We continued to explore variations of this process, by setting different themes for each game (such as 'personal likes and dislikes') and we allowed different languages (so that Christian could use German words and I could learn their meanings). We became frustrated by the lack of letters available and so moved onto paper and each took turns to write our words. I made more, smaller 'Scrabble' letters from cappa board, and we used these to make larger word patterns on the floor (freed from the size limitation of the Scrabble board).

The process began to lose direction as we began to run of ideas about what to do with the word game strategies to further develop them. At the same time, I received an invitation to submit a proposal for an art exhibition on the theme of 'kissing'. I discussed this with Christian and we decided to re-focus our theme of identity and to try to make a piece of work for this exhibition.

Stage 3

Continuing to use the word game strategies we had developed, we re-focused our theme to 'kissing', and discussed how we could bring images into the game strategies to describe qualities of kissing using both words and images. We used the letters I had made and experimented by placing words that described qualities of kissing on parts of the body and then photographed them. Through experimentation and discussion, the idea of making a kissing game that people could play emerged. It seemed appropriate that since we had developed game strategies a method within our own collaboration, we could develop them further to produce a product that would stimulate other people's interaction. In this way, our *process* of collaboration would also become a *product* of our collaboration. We reviewed

the photographs that we had made and decided that we would develop a textual and visual 'kissing card game' that could be played by partners.

Stage 4

We started to discuss our ideas about how the kissing card game might be played and what it might contain. In our earlier experiments photographing text on the body (Stage 3), we had discovered that it was difficult to describe the qualities of a kiss in a word. We discussed this further and I suggested that look at musical notation as a way of describing feelings and qualities that are difficult to express in only one word. We looked up definitions of classical musical terms (such as *largo*, *andante*, *lento*, etc.) and found that they tended to describe both 'depth' of emotion and quality of tempo (for example, *fast*, *slow*, *brightly*, *lazily*, etc.). This seemed appropriate to the qualities of kissing that we were finding it hard to describe. We decided to use these words with images of the body (as we had done in Stage 3).

We then started discussing how many cards we should have in a pack and how many parts of the body we would need images of in order to make enough cards. We decided to use an equal amount of male and female body parts. We both participated in photographing the various body parts. I then digitised these images and we began to work on the computer using Adobe Photoshop to add text to the images. We discussed different ways of combining the text and appropriate ways of making the words look like the qualities that they describe (for example, the word *crescendo* was stretched to make it look as if it was getting louder). Christian contributed his ideas as I developed the designs on the computer.

A question of whether or not we should include definitions of the terms on the cards arose. We felt it would be more appropriate if individuals playing the game could make their own interpretation from the visual suggestion provided by the way the words were manipulated (e.g. *stretched*, *emboldened*, *shrunk*, etc.). However, we also felt that definitions *should* be included so that the players could 'check' their individual interpretations with

the actual definitions of the terms. We decided to use the definitions to make a visual border for each card (with small font, so it was not instantly obvious).

As the design was becoming clearer, it was evident that we needed to decide strategies for how the game would be played, as it would influence the visual design of the cards. We discussed possible options and agreed that while I was working on the visual design of the cards using Photoshop, Christian would devise some sets of 'rules' for playing the game. I designed a box for the game, organised the printing and put together the final cards. The final product was exhibited in the exhibition 'The Kiss' in Dundee, January 2000. We both attended the exhibition's opening private view.

Evaluation

The project was considered successful by both collaborators as we achieved an outcome that we were both pleased with. We both felt that the process of collaboration had been beneficial, as we had each contributed to the development of something that we would not otherwise have produced and we had also learnt more about each other during the process.

A large factor influencing the success of our collaborative process was the *trust* that was evident between us. This was partly due to the fact that our collaboration was built upon an already existing friendship, but also due to both individuals' *willingness* (rather than formal agreement) to collaborate, which was expressed openly in the initial stages of the project. Christian was motivated by the desire to find out more about "what artists do", whilst I was interested in getting to know Christian better by learning more about his cultural background and his interest in languages.

Developing the word game strategies focused our thinking and individual input through a shared and equal process. These processes also acted as catalysts, which stimulated discussion between us throughout the project. We learnt about each other's interests and points of view by questioning each other about why we had thought of a certain word and discussed issues emerging from the words we chose to use.

As the project progressed the opportunity to produce and artwork for exhibition help to *re-focus* the collaboration, which was beginning to loose direction as we ran out of ideas of how to develop the word game strategy further. In developing our ideas for the kissing card game, we began to negotiate more specific roles as a result of our individual skills. We had both participated in taking photographs in Stage 3, I did the computer work as Christian was not familiar with digital image manipulation (Photoshop), and so Christian took on the role of devising rules for playing the game (he was the game 'expert', as he enjoyed playing lots of different types of games).

As the project developed, a shift occurred from an informal context (in which we experimented with word game strategies in an open and flexible way), to a professional art context, as we moved towards producing a resolved piece of artwork for public exhibition. As this shift occurred, I felt that the balance of the collaboration also shifted as I took a more dominant role in the aesthetic design and production of the cards in order to develop them to the level of quality suitable for exhibition. This was due to the fact that Christian did not have the tacit knowledge of 'what works visually' as he did not have a visual background.

We both attended the private view of 'The Kiss' exhibition. Seeing the work exhibited gave us both a sense of satisfaction and culminated the end of our collaboration. It was also a *new* experience for Christian as he had not attended a private view before and had had little previous interest in galleries or art exhibitions. In seeing his name exhibited with the kissing card game, he expressed a feeling of gratitude that he had been able to enter into a context (the artworld) which he would otherwise have had contact with.

Summary of Main Findings

The project was considered more successful than Projects One to Three in achieving a 'deep' level of engagement between collaborators and in producing a successful product. This was a result of the presence of trust between collaborators, the flexibility of the approach to developing collaborative strategies and the mutual motivation of the collaborators. The

kissing card game not only reflected the game strategies developed as a strategy for achieving a collaborative process, but also provided a product that would initiate strategies for interaction between the players/audience. Thus the *process* of collaboration was successfully translated into the *product* of collaboration.

The following key issues were identified:

- **Trust** is important in establishing a 'deep' level of engagement between collaborators. Whilst it may take a long time to develop a trusting relationship, it can be developed in collaboration through collaborators *willingness* to learn about/from one-another. Explicitly describing perceived personal benefits (individual agendas), and therefore making individual motives transparent at the outset, can increase the level of trust between collaborators.
- **Mutual Benefits for Collaborators** are important to achieve in order to maintain equal levels of motivation. Matching or balancing individuals' skills and interests enables equal input and ensures that both collaborators benefit on some way.
- **Project Aims and Project Direction:** A collaborative goal or intended outcome directs the collaborative process, preventing loss of focus. Aims and expectations need to be reviewed throughout.
- **Project Structure:** Some form of structure is required to direct the collaborative process, but needs to be flexible and adaptable to possible shifts in direction.

IMAGES FROM PROJECT 4

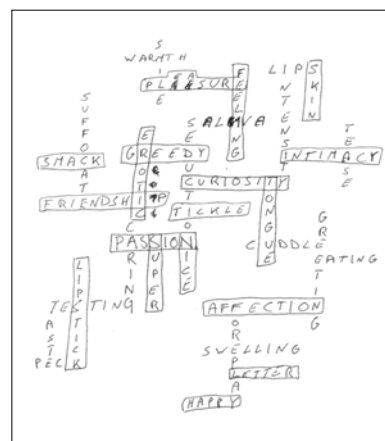
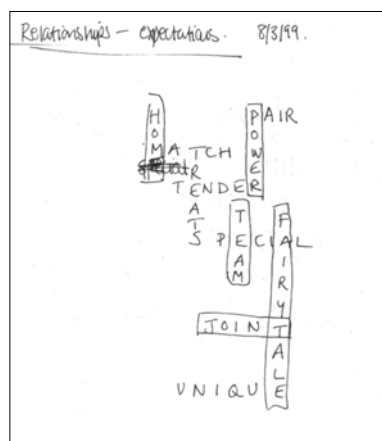
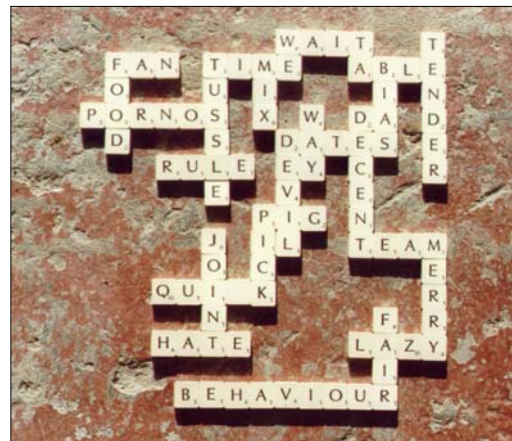


Figure 4.2 Stage 2: Images for experimental word game strategies.

IMAGES FROM PROJECT 4 (continued)



Figure 4.3 Stage 3: Words and images relating to 'Kissing' theme.

IMAGES FROM PROJECT 4 (continued)

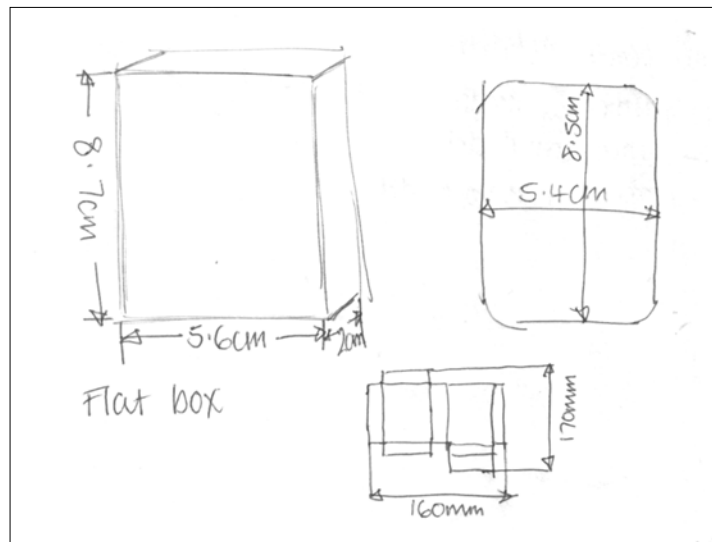
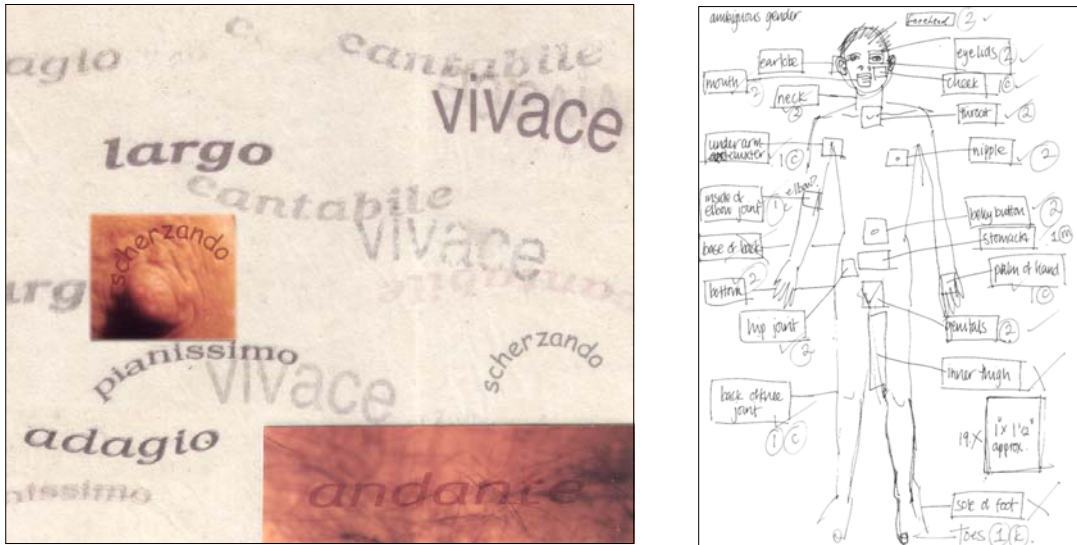


Figure 4.4 Stage 4: Images from card game development.

IMAGES FROM PROJECT 4 (continued)



Figure 4.5 Images of completed Kissing Card Game.

Notes from Project 4 Report

¹ I had invited Sabine Schacht (a native German Primary School Teacher) to collaborate with me on a project exploring cultural identity, which I believed would provide an interesting theme from which to develop collaboration. Sabine was approached because she was interested in art in relation to primary school education. We already knew each other through friendship, although we were very different. We both believed there was a strong potential for collaboration, but she had to return to Germany unexpectedly and the collaboration never occurred.

² I had met Christian a year previous to our collaboration, when he moved into a shared flat I was living in at the time. Therefore, we had developed a friendship that was not related to our work or professional interests. Most of our collaborative work occurred in the informal context of our domestic environment. This provided a shared space, which was familiar to us both. This was different to Project Three, where the meetings also occurred in a domestic context (in Duncan's flat), but this did not provide a shared space as it was Duncan's personal territory.

³ Cultural Theorist (Goldsmiths University) Sarat Maharaj proposed the benefits of collaboration within a form of 'polyphonic' and 'empathetic' art practice (in which multiple voices and cultural and individual values are expressed), as a reaction to the "shut-itis", which he suggests occurs within the insularity of the artworld infrastructure. Keynote paper 'The Anthro-apologising Machine: a self-erasing, self-dissolving model' presented at a conference titled 'Critical Sites: issues in critical art practice and pedagogy', hosted by the Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Ireland in September 1998. Third in a series of International 'Littoral' conferences, this conference was organised by Ian Hunter and Celia Lerner of 'Projects Environment UK' and in collaboration with Critical Access, Dublin. Projects Environment UK describe the "*Littoral Initiative*" as "an independent, international network of artists, critics and teachers with an interest in contributing to new thinking in contemporary art practice, art research and pedagogy".

At the same conference, author and critic of political art practices Grant Kester (Washington State University, USA) presented the keynote paper 'Discursive Aesthetic: a critical framework for littoral art', in which he defines the characteristics of a form of art practice that is "conversational" in nature, and which "would locate meaning 'outside' the self; in the exchange that takes place between two subjects. Moreover, the identities of these subjects are not entirely set, but rather, are formed and transformed through the process of dialogical exchange." Kester goes on to recognise the evolving, collaborative nature of this approach: "the open-ended process of dialogical engagement, [which] produces new and unanticipated forms of collaborative knowledge."

‘Re-Visioning the Gallery’
- an interdisciplinary research project -
(January – August 2000)

Research Aims

This project aimed to initiate a more complex form of collaboration than in Projects One to Four (which engaged one-to-one collaborations with the researcher), between collaborators from different disciplines. Working within and in response to the context of Aberdeen Art Gallery¹, the project aimed to engage interdisciplinary collaboration² between selected practitioners from particular professions and with specific perspectives and skills³. My intention was to create a framework, within which collaboration could develop between different individuals with ‘compatible’ research interests, in response to the Art Gallery context. The potential for approaching collaboration as an interdisciplinary research method to ‘re-think’ the roles and functions of the Gallery from a variety of disciplinary perspectives was explored.

Collaborators

In the previous Projects One to Four, I had felt that the one-to-one collaborations had resulted in limited levels of collaborative engagement⁴. Therefore, I decided this time to identify a range of potential collaborators, from different professions, and with specialist research interests, and invited them to participate in “*‘re-thinking’ the roles and functions of the Gallery*” collaboratively, within an interdisciplinary research group. I identified potential collaborators from disciplines that I believed could make relevant contributions to the Gallery context (Architecture, Psychology, Geography and Visual Art), and whose individual academic research interests seemed to relate to concepts of ‘visualisation’ in some way⁵. The following individuals were invited to participate: Architecture (Professor Robin Webster), Geography (Dr. Mike Wood), Psychology (Dr. David Pearson) and Public Art (Roxane Permar). *Table 5.1* below provides a summary of their positions and their particular academic research interests.


	POSITIONS	RESEARCH INTERESTS
	Professor Robin Webster Architect	Senior Lecturer Architecture, The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen Architectural Practice. Physical and virtual modelling of the interior civic building space, to develop different ways of “reading” space. Interest in climate and materials in architecture.
	Dr. Mike Wood Cartographer	Senior Lecturer in Geography, Aberdeen University Creating cartographic images and systems to facilitate the exploration, analysis and presentation of spatial information. The nature and characteristics of professional map design. Map use and human information processing. Terrain modelling for tourism.
	Dr. David Pearson Researcher in Psychology	Lecturer in Psychology, Aberdeen University Creative visuo-spatial thinking in imagery, in virtual environments, and with different forms of external stimulus support: the impact of drawing and the manipulation of real and computer-generated objects.
	Roxane Permar Visual Artist	Senior Lecturer in Fine Art, The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen Contextual Fine Art Practice. Working in response to sites, contexts and architecture. Facilitating public interaction and participation in the creation of artwork.

Table 5.1 Summary of collaborators positions and research interests.

Two individuals with crucial roles in the project are *not* represented in the table above. These are: myself (the researcher), since my research interests were stated at the start of this report and David Atherton (Aberdeen City Council Cultural Services Education Officer), whose professional role and responsibility for the Aberdeen Art Gallery Education Programme provided the opportunity to develop the project in the context of the Gallery⁶. David’s role was central to the project as he was the provider of access to the Gallery and the main representative of the Gallery’s issues. Although I considered him to be a ‘co-coordinator’ to the project initially (a role that he also recognised), he also saw himself as an equal ‘collaborator’ within the group.

I approached the identified collaborators ‘cold’⁷ as we had no previous personal or professional relationships (with the exceptions of Roxane Permar and David Atherton, who were already known to me) and invited them to participate in the interdisciplinary research project⁸. I then coordinated a first meeting to allow collaborators to meet one another⁹ and discuss the possibilities for the project.

Project Description

It was made clear to participants at the first meeting that although I had presented them with the initial broad aim of “*re-thinking’ the roles and function of the Gallery’* within the context of Aberdeen’s principal Public Gallery, I had provided only an initial framework in which to bring the collaborators together. Therefore, I had no preconceived ideas about how the project would develop and although it was conceived from within my own PhD research, I would not be ‘leading’ the project, as the design and development of the project structure and focus had to be negotiated and decided collaboratively, from within the interdisciplinary group¹⁰.

The collaborators introduced themselves and described their initial interests in response to the project. Interestingly, it was commented that aside from their individual interests in the Gallery (in relation to their specific research interests), the collaborators were attracted to the project because of the ‘experimental’ approach ‘unorthodox’ nature of the collaboration. Robin Webster stated that:

“...there are many examples of practices where different professionals work together. My feeling is that since we have not come together in response to a pre-defined ‘problem’ and are adopting a very open and exploratory approach; that it is innovative and possibly even unique.”

(Robin Webster, 17/12/99)

Thus the first meeting was successful in establishing the collaborators interest and willingness to participate further. We discussed how we would proceed to develop a structure for the project, and agreed that we should meet regularly as a group to discuss and share ideas and then see where that would lead us.

Between January and August 2000, ten group meetings were held in the Gallery, and six 'activities' (or mini-projects) relating to the Gallery were undertaken. The core group meetings and 'activities' are described separately:

SUMMARY OF THE CORE GROUP MEETINGS

The regular core group meetings provided the main framework for discussion and negotiation between the collaborators. Through these meetings, collaborators shared and exchanged ideas and subject expertise in the areas of visual modelling, mapping and interpretation, in relation to the Gallery context. David Atherton informed the group of pertinent issues facing the Gallery: the need to develop new audiences in relation to social inclusion policy, the need to develop methods of obtaining useful, qualitative feedback from Gallery users, and the desire to extend the present functions of the gallery by developing new ways of exploiting its resources.

The principal focus for the group became concerned with developing visual methods to address the venue's presence within the City of Aberdeen, and explore the perceptions of its current and potential audiences. The meetings provided a space to brainstorm ideas and a number of possible activities to achieve these objectives were discussed. As the project progressed, particular activities were developed throughout. These activities involved 'mini-collaborations' between two or three members of the group (these are described later in this report). Outcomes from these activities were then fed back to the group through the core meetings. *Table 5.2* below provides a summary of the main issues discussed and outcomes of the core group meetings held throughout the project:

MEETINGS	DATES	FOCUS OF MEETING	OUTCOME FROM MEETING
1	17/12/99	Introductions: Sharing individual interests and discussing possibilities for the project. Tour of the Gallery.	Individual interests were expressed. Decision: to hold regular core group meetings at the Gallery.
2	13/01/00	Discussion: Identification of overlapping interests in visualisation, mapping, modelling, the notion of journey, and addressing the gallery from the 'inside-out'. Postcard Activity: Individual interests, contributions, limitations, and potential outcomes.	Decision: To name the project "Re-Visioning the Gallery", reflecting collaborators interests in developing processes of visualisation to explore the Gallery context.
3	24/01/00	Discussion: Clarifying areas of shared interest, specific subject knowledge and different perspectives. Exchanging individual references. Suggesting questions for a questionnaire for school groups visiting the Gallery.	Decisions: To develop individual workshop proposals for next meeting. To work collaboratively, rather than as individuals within a group.
4	21/02/00	Review of collaborators' workshop proposals, which were developed through group discussion.	Practical Planning: Identify possible dates for workshops and potential participating groups.
5	08/03/00	Feedback on progress in developing Architectural Modelling (<i>Activity 2</i>), and 'Reportive Visual Memory' (<i>Activity 3</i>) Group Workshop (Activity 1): Collaborators individually toured the Gallery; chose four places of interest, described their interest, and mapped their journey. Group discussion about individual's favourite places/parts of the Gallery.	Outcomes: Material generated from Group Workshop (Activity 1) produced. To be developed further. Over 100 questionnaires returned from School Groups visiting the Gallery.
6	23/03/00	Review of collated material from Activity 1: Discussion about ways of developing the method for use with public Gallery users.	Decision: To develop experimental maps for use in the Gallery to elicit qualitative feedback from public users.
7	18/04/00	Planning: 'Posing a Position' (<i>Activity 4</i>), and 'Commemorative Plaques' (<i>Activity 5</i>) Discussion: Possible ideas for developing appropriate questionnaire forms to be used in the Gallery.	Preparation: Details of workshops to be arranged.
8	09/05/00	Planning Update: Activities 4 & 5	
9	26/05/00	Feedback: Progress and outcomes from Activities 4 & 5.	Planning: Dates for possible exhibition and seminars in the Gallery.
10	03/08/00	Group Review and Evaluation	Decision to develop long-term research funding bid.

Table 5.2 Summary of the core group meetings.

Key Meetings

- Meeting 2 (13/01/00) was important as it consisted of more specific discussion about individual perspectives of the project in relation to their personal interests in the Gallery and professional research interests. I suggested that we each write down our individual interests in relation to the project, the contributions and limitations of our intended involvement, and the outcomes that we expected to see from the project, on a postcard. The intention being to make our individual expectations explicit and to provide a record of our positions at the beginning of the project, which could be reviewed as part of an evaluation at a later date in the project. Information generated through this activity is presented in *Table 5.3*.
- In Meeting 3 (24/01/00), we decided that we would each develop proposals for workshops/activities that we would like to undertake. These were brought to Meeting 4 (21/02/00) and discussed within the group. Individuals' workshop proposals are summarised in *Table 5.4*.
- In Meeting 10 (03/08/00), a group review and evaluation of the project was undertaken. The group reviewed all the artefacts that had been generated through the Activities undertaken and discussed the successes and limitations of the project. Although the project had initially been expected to end in August 2000, collaborators felt that a vast range of potential for further research had been uncovered and that the project was just beginning to develop momentum through the various activities that had been developed. The two main limiting factors that had prevented further developments and activities to take place were time and money. The group decided continue the collaboration and increase the scale of the project by developing a collaborative research bid for long-term funding.

	Robin Webster	David Pearson	Mike Wood	Roxane Permar	David Atherton	Karen Scopa
PERSONAL INTERESTS	Potential uses of the building fabric. Different ways of "reading" and using the existing fabric. Potential development and extension of the building. The <i>IDEA</i> of an art gallery in the city/community. The making of stimulating, exciting and beautiful images.	Mental representation of space: how people use this representation in active tasks. Creative synthesis: processes leading to creation of art. Processes involved in art appreciation, etc.	Geography. Mapping. Cognitive spatial visualisation. Styles, effectiveness and perception of map design. (2, 3 + 4D products) Changing concepts. International issues and links. Mapping mountains: Germany, Austria, National Parks, U.S.A.	To work collaboratively with professionals + specialists from different disciplines to my own. To investigate the art gallery in relation to the notion of 'inside-out'. To engage with new audiences in Aberdeen. To work in Aberdeen. To "turn" the gallery "inside out".	New audiences. New uses of spaces. Outreach work. Exciting events/activities. Educational use of space for: primary + secondary schools adult groups special needs groups Social inclusion.	Inter-disciplinary. Context-specific. Working with public/users. Multiple approaches. Different media. "inter-subjective space" (with public and collaborators). Exploring 'game strategies'
CONTRIBUTIONS & LIMITATIONS	Workshop for architectural students and artists - building models of existing building and proposals of future possibilities. Longer term: Studio project with architectural students and multidisciplinary "clients". Maintain regular input (1-2 days per month) into project. Limitations: no funds, which restricts immediate fabrication of model and time other than indicated above.	Mental representation of space: How do people navigate in the gallery? How do people remember the gallery? Making people aware of how they perceive/appreciate art. Making people aware of their creative processes. Limitations: Nothing major, though depends on time, other commitments, etc.	Map-related Schemas: Linked to geography topics (urban history, prehistory) Interactive 'atlas' (concept) Comparisons of designs for specific products, e.g. city centre maps, campus maps.	Contributions: Experience of gallery education work: exhibiting in art galleries; working in response to sites, contexts and architecture. Experience of working in collaboration. Particular use of media, e.g. sound for animating spaces. Access to institutional support at Gray's School of Art. Limitations: time – commitments in May and April.	Workshops in multi-arts activities: In Gallery Activities: 'interventions', 'installations', 'interactives'. Out of Gallery Themed Activities: e.g. Satosphere exhibition. Contributions: access to Gallery and Council resources, e.g. administration. Limitation: little money.	Activities with public/users. Visual documentation (photography/ video). Inquiry: 'publics' perceptions/ uses of venue. Visual metaphors. Limitation: Ph.D. requirements: documentation of process. Timescale- July 2000 deadline for Stage 1.
POSSIBLE OUTCOMES	Public workshops: ideas for building. Public exhibition: models and possibilities. Research papers. Published articles. Eventual use by local authority, Gallery and community, of ideas for future development.	Some form of publication(s). Funding for long-term project. Honours students' involvement. Interested in looking at synthesis in creative arts - links to enable that. Exhibits.	Thematic Displays, e.g. geo-historical topics. Display of international interactive <i>electronic</i> 'atlases'. Interactive display of different map designs of similar locations/ topics with feedback.	Seminar or Publication? Radio broadcast or temporary radio station? Web site – live web-cam? Articles, conference papers. Contribution to Aberdeen's cultural policy ideas? Exhibition that stretches the idea of an exhibition.	New Audiences: Greater use of Gallery and sense of its potential. The creation of a unique, exciting project.	Live Projects. Visual Materials. Exhibition. Public Seminar. Publication. Artwork. Long-term: proposal for substantial funded project.

Table 5.3 Summary of collaborators initial expectations of the project.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES	
Robin Webster	<p>3-D modelling workshop with Architecture students:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To develop large wooden block models, which will also show the surrounding area (e.g. His Majesty's Theatre). 2) The models produced may be of used in subsequent workshops and displayed in the gallery.
David Pearson	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Pilot Project: 3rd year Psychology students to test school groups' actual and recorded memory of the gallery. 2) Develop an interactive exhibition on the Perception of Art and the Origins of Creative Thinking. Staff members from Aberdeen Uni, as well as participants in the "Re-Visions" project could contribute to the content of the exhibition. 5-6 months preparation time would be required.
Mike Wood	<p>Exploring how maps communicate information, ideas, and can be used to gather information from people about their environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Redesigning the current navigational map used in the gallery and gaining public feedback. 2) Map Design: testing the effectiveness of three different map styles by involving gallery visitors. 3) Other ideas: 4th Year 'Cartographic Visualisation' students to think about using maps within the gallery, developing a series of maps and/or models which reflect the pre-history and history of the area surrounding the gallery as an educational tool (perhaps in collaboration with the City's Archaeology Unit), and a longer term idea for developing a virtual model of the gallery with information about the exhibits (could form a new web-based 'home-page' for the gallery).
Roxane Permar	<p>In response to Aberdeen City's commission of five new commemorative plaques, which come under the remit of the art gallery, to use the notion of 'memorial' and the objects within, and/or administered by the gallery, in order to create obvious links between the gallery and sites throughout the city. The workshop involves:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The placement of gallery objects in the city, and the selection of new objects/individuals for commemoration. 2) Ideas for objects/events of commemoration, to be sited throughout the city are invited. 3) The notion of mapping to be introduced in guiding audiences round these new sites. The purpose of the workshops would be to initiate external collaboration and attract new audiences.
Karen Scopa	<p>Re-thinking the 'function' of the gallery through workshops that generate, collect and display visitors'/users' experiences of the gallery and personal memory as 'exhibits' or 'artefacts':</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) An exploratory workshop (drawing on the shared theme of mapping which emerged through our meetings) in which participants use maps to document their physical journey round the gallery and to locate their favourite aspects and personal memories (in relation to their selected aspects) was presented. Postcards and photography used as methods of recording individuals' experiences. 2) The long-term aim of the workshop would be to generate a large-scale map (or metaphor of a map - through a 'board game') containing the information generated, which itself would be an exhibit. The workshop was written for our project group. Following a trial run within the group, it could be rewritten to target specific public groups.

Table 5.4 Summary of collaborators workshop/activity proposals.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

Six activities were developed and undertaken by particular members of the collaborative research group. A summary of the activities is provided in *Table 5.5* (below) and each activity is then described in further detail.

ACTIVITY	SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY
Activity 1	'Group Workshop' involved the participation of all collaborators. Individuals recorded their personal responses to the gallery using maps and postcards.
Activity 2	'Architectural Modelling' involved Professor Robin Webster (architect), first year BA Interior Architecture students of the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture (RGU) and the researcher. Students were asked to produce architectural models of the interior and exterior Gallery space.
Activity 3	'Reportive Visual Memory' involved Dr. David Pearson (psychologist), David Atherton (Cultural Services Education Officer, Aberdeen City Council), and BA (hons) psychology students (AU). The psychology students explored Secondary School pupils' experiences of the Gallery through their 'reportive visual memory'. Gallery visitors were offered a tour of the gallery and asked to draw a gallery plan from memory.
Activity 4	'Posing a Position' involved the researcher, David Atherton, and a group of young people (12 to 15 years) in foster care from Aberdeen. Participants were introduced to the Gallery's collection of portrait paintings, and invited to 'pose' for their own photographic portraits; which were exhibited throughout the Gallery's main collections.
Activity 5	'Commemorative Plaques' involved Roxane Permar (artist), David Atherton, the researcher, and primary school pupils from two schools in Aberdeen. Pupils were given a tour of commemorative plaques in Aberdeen City (administered by the Gallery) to recognise the Gallery's relationship to the city. Pupils were invited to make their own commemorative plaques in clay. These were cast in plaster and painted.
Activity 6	'Visual Mapping' was an ongoing activity with contributions from all collaborators. Principal involvement by Dr. Mike Wood and the researcher explored possible approaches to mapping the gallery and creating a map that could record individual experiences of the Gallery.

Table 5.5 Summary of Activities Undertaken.

Activity 1: ‘Group Workshop’ (08/03/00)

Collaborators: devised by Karen Scopa, participation from all collaborators

This was a short exploratory workshop exploring collaborators’ individual perspectives and experiences of the gallery. The workshop was devised using the concept of a ‘Mapping Game’ to stimulate individuals’ involvement with the Gallery space. Participants were given two gallery floor plans (pre-prepared) and four blank postcards and asked to:

- 1 Tour the gallery, showing your movements by drawing on the first floor plan provided.
- 2 Select four locations of interest (e.g. a painting, an exhibit, part of the architecture, etc), saying why you chose it (e.g. aesthetic imagery, personal memory, detail, atmosphere, etc). Describe your selection on the postcards provided.
- 3 Tour the gallery again, this time travelling to your most favourite location first, then second favourite, etc. Show your movements through the gallery as before, but on a new floor plan.

The workshop provided an ‘ice-breaker’ activity, enabling individual collaborators to share their individual experiences and responses to the gallery within the group. I then took the resulting postcards and maps, and developed them into ‘individual tour guide maps’ of the Gallery and ‘collective response maps’, collating individual collaborators’ perspectives through colour coding (*see Fig. 5.1*). These maps were presented to the group at Meeting 6 (23/03/00) and discussion emerged exploring ideas about how different concepts of ‘mapping’ could be developed further to obtain qualitative information from Gallery visitors about their perceptions and experiences of the Gallery.

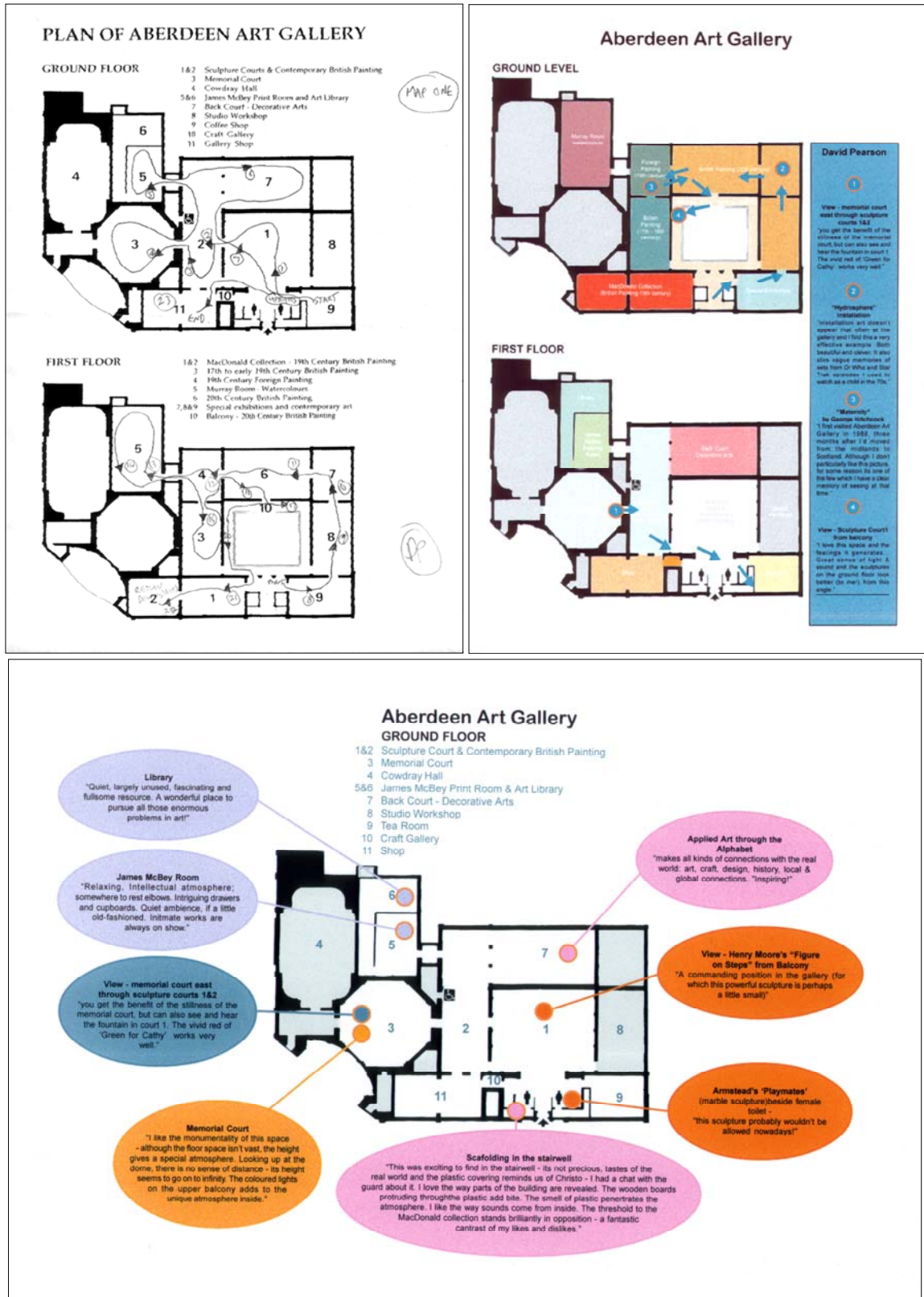


Figure 5.1 Images from 'Group Workshop': Activity 1

ACTIVITY 2: 'Reportive Visual Memory' (08/03/00)

Collaborators: Dr. David Pearson & David Atherton

This activity also focused on the concept of mapping, but from a Psychology perspective, from David Pearson's academic research interests in 'reportive visual memory'. The activity aimed to look at how individuals' describe their experiences of a physical space from memory, and how their 'reportive visual memory' correlates to the *actual* physical space.

Briefed by David Pearson, Honours year Psychology students were introduced to the Gallery through a talk and tour by David Atherton. Working in the Gallery, they then tested a group of Secondary School Pupils' reportive visual memory of the physical space.

The participating pupils produced drawings illustrating their visual memory of the Gallery space (*Fig. 5.2*). These reportive visual memory 'maps' of the Gallery were presented to the group at Meeting 5 (08/03/00) and discussion emerged exploring ideas of how this idea could be developed further in relation to public Gallery users.

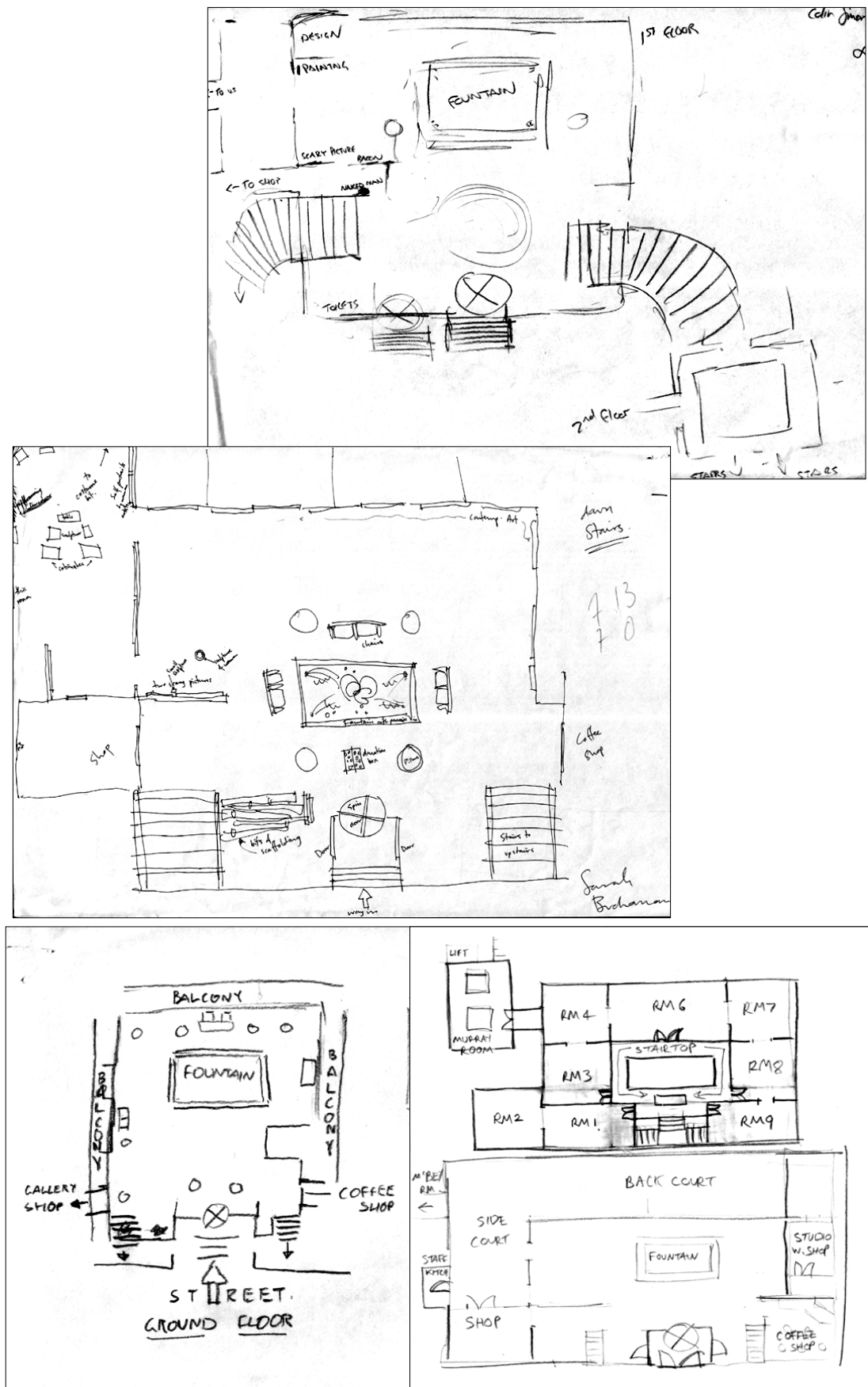


Figure 5.2 Images from 'Reportive Visual Memory': Activity 2

ACTIVITY 3: 'Architectural Modelling' (08/03/00)

Collaborators: Professor Robin Webster & Karen Scopa

This activity also focused on ways of 'visualising' the Gallery space, but from an Architectural perspective, and from Robin Webster's interest in 3-dimensional modelling. The activity aimed to develop a series of different 3-dimensional models representing the actual physical space of the Gallery in different scales, from different perspectives, and using different materials.

Briefed by Robin Webster and myself, first year BA Interior Architecture students (RGU) were issued with a series of original architectural plans of the Gallery. Working at the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Surveying, the students worked in groups to produce 3-dimensional models of different sections of the Gallery, in different scales, and with different materials. The models produced were photographed (*Fig. 5.3*).

Whilst in Activity 3, the participants had translated their perceptions of the actual 3-dimensional physical space of the Gallery into 2-dimensional drawings, the Architecture students in this Activity (working only from the architectural plans) translated the 2-dimensional Gallery plans into 3-dimensional models.

Feedback to the group occurred at Meeting 5 (08/03/00). The group decided that the models should be displayed in the Gallery at a later date. This also stimulated discussion about what types of artefacts that would emerge from the project, and how they would be presented.

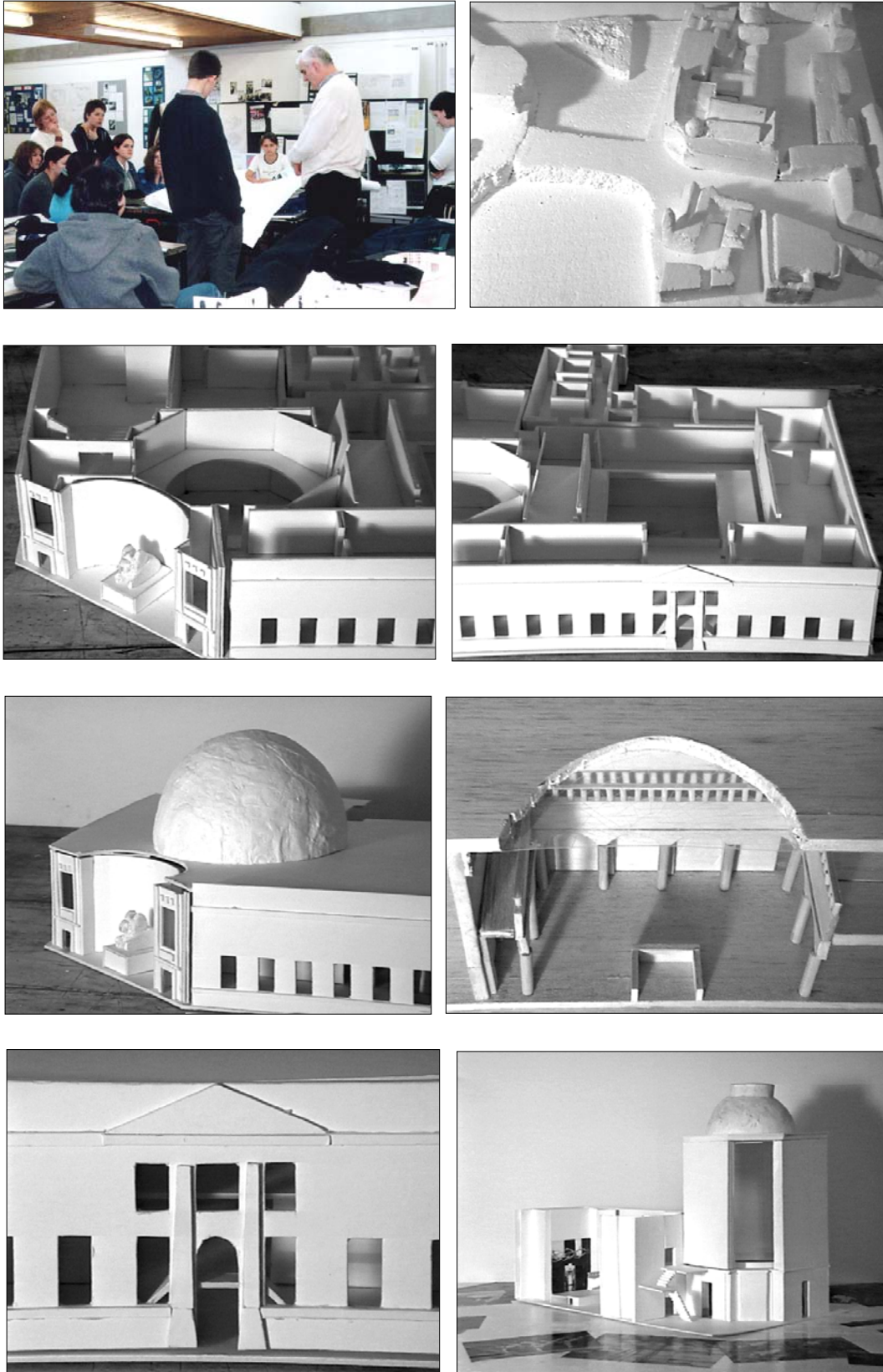


Figure 5.3 Images from 'Architectural Modelling': Activity 3

ACTIVITY 4: 'Posing a Position' (15th- 16th May 2000)

Collaborators: Karen Scopa & David Atherton

In this Activity, the Gallery's collection of portrait painting was used as a vehicle to explore the concept of 'identity', and to address ways that individuals (who would not normally visit the Gallery) might 'use' the resource in a way that was directly relevant to them: i.e. 'personalising' potential users experience of the Gallery.

The activity ran in the Gallery, over two days, with six young Aberdonians aged between twelve and fifteen years. Participants were given a tour of the Gallery and a talk relating specifically to the portraiture collection. They were then asked to discuss the concept of 'identity', in relation to the traditional portraits with the Gallery collection, and contemporary forms of photographic portraiture (evident in the media). They were asked to think about how they would like to present themselves in a photographic portrait. The following day, participants '*posed*' for an individual photographic portrait. They then chose locations for their portraits within the Gallery's collections and wrote information labels to 'describe' their portraits.

The photographic portraits were hung in the Gallery, with the participants' interpretative labels. Visitor maps were produced in order to inform members of the public about the activity and to enable them to 'tour' the 'intervention' portraits. Images documenting the activity are shown in *Fig. 5.4*.

Feedback to the group occurred at Meeting 9 (26/05/00).



Figure 5.4 Images from 'Posing a Position': Activity 4

ACTIVITY 5: ‘Commemorative Plaques’ (17th - 18th May 2000)

Collaborators: Roxane Permar & Karen Scopa

In this Activity, relationships between the Gallery and the City of Aberdeen were examined through the vehicle of ‘commemorative memorial plaques’, which are located throughout the City and administered by the Gallery. The activity was developed through Roxane Permar’s interest in creating participatory artworks in response to public places.

Working in the Gallery with pupils from local primary schools, the notion of ‘memorial’ was addressed in relation to public sites in the city. Pupils were introduced to the concepts of ‘commemoration’ and ‘memorial’ in relation to civic spaces and the Gallery’s role in overseeing them. Pupils were given a tour, identifying commemorative sculptures and plaques in the city. Returning to the Gallery they were asked to think of someone (or something) whom they felt should be remembered in a commemorative plaque, and to describe the reasons for their choice. Pupils were then assisted in making their own commemorative plaques using clay. These were then cast in plaster and painted (*Fig. 5.5.*). They were then asked to think about where their plaque should be located.

Feedback to the group occurred at Meeting 9 (26/05/00).



Figure 5.5 Images from 'Commemorative Plaques': Activity 5

ACTIVITY 6: 'Visual Mapping'

Collaborators: Dr. Mike Wood & Karen Scopa

The Visual Mapping activity was not a *specific* activity in a defined timescale, as were previous five Activities. Whilst these previous five 'mini-projects' were conceived by individual collaborators, developed through discussion within the core group and undertaken by particular collaborators, the visual mapping activity was more a series of focused conversations and discussion, than a definite 'activity'. It developed out of discussions arising in response to the individual maps produced from the Group Workshop (Activity 1) about the possible uses for 'maps' within the Gallery. Although all collaborators contributed ideas relating to mapping through the group discussions, it was a topic of particular interest to Dr. Mike Wood (a specialist in Cartography), and to myself, as I was interested in developing the mapping ideas, from the first activity, further to use maps as a type of 'game' for public Gallery users.

We were both particularly interested in potential of using maps both as a method of obtaining qualitative information about public users' perceptions and experiences of the Gallery, and as a vehicle to provide users with a particular 'new' experience of the gallery. We reviewed the maps I had produced from Activity 1:

- Two maps of the upper and lower Gallery floor plan with colour-coded comments from individual collaborators.
- Five individual maps describing collaborators' favourite parts of the gallery, and illustrating their individual journeys through the building.

Mike Wood suggested developing maps for different individuals' personality types or specialist interest areas. This would enable members of the public to choose a particular 'tour' of the gallery. He was interested in developing these specialist maps using his cartographic skills, as he produces hand-illustrated tourist maps in his profession. Due to the time-consuming nature of this activity, the maps were not produced within the duration of the project.

Evaluation

General strengths and limitations of the collaboration

Of the five research projects exploring different strategies for engaging collaboration, this final project was considered the most successful in achieving a 'deep' level of engagement between collaborators. The collaboration was more complex than the one-to-one collaborations of the previous for research projects, as a number of collaborators were involved, from different disciplines. The fact that the group decided to continue working collaboratively beyond the anticipated end-date of the project, demonstrated that the collaborators had achieved individual benefits from the experience and felt that it could progress further. The main limitation felt by all collaborators was in the limited amounts of time they could give to the project (as all had full-time professional work commitments), and a lack of money to develop practical activities and 'satellite' projects further.

Quality of Collaboration Achieved

The 'deep' level of engagement achieved between the collaborators, is considered a result of individual collaborators' *willingness* to work together to share and exchange ideas and professional expertise. There were also clearly over-lapping research interests between collaborators and this clearly *motivated* individuals to become involved, whilst ensuring they all would *benefit* from the themes and topics of discussion, which were relevant to individuals' professional interests. Another notable point is that although from different disciplines (with different professional perspectives and methodologies), the majority of collaborators were also academics with active research profiles and therefore were on an 'equal level' and 'common ground' in relation to research processes.

The experimental and flexible approach to the project meant that the group negotiated ways of proceeding, and therefore developed a collaborative, *shared ownership* of the project. The collaborators all felt that the most interesting aspect of the project was its interdisciplinary and collaborative nature. At the second group meeting we agreed to name the project "Re-Visioning the Gallery", as it provided a group title reflecting individuals'

interests in methods of 'visualisation'. As the project progressed, this became shortened to the 'Re-Visions' group, as a title for the collaboration itself. In the third group meeting, when deciding how best to proceed, it was stated by all participants that wanted to work collaboratively, "rather than as individuals within a group" (Roxane Permar (13/01/00)).

During the group project evaluation meeting (*Fig. 5.6.*), collaborators expressed the desire to develop the collaborative processes further, and frustration that limitations of time and money had prevented them from developing more collaborative activities throughout the project. Most felt that they were 'just getting warmed up', and there was a sense that collaboration could still achieve a deeper level of engagement between collaborators.



Figure 5.6 Collaborative Group Evaluation Meeting

Collaborative Vision and Outcomes

All involved viewed the collaboration as a positive and beneficial experience. This is considered mainly because during the project, the group developed a shared collaborative vision of issues of “visualisation” that the project could address. However, it was not initially evident how potential collaborative outcomes could be achieved. Although collaborators were professional practitioners experienced in interdisciplinary working, the experimental nature of the project highlighted the need to develop collaborative methods of working from within the group, in order to achieve practical outcomes. Dr. Mike Wood expressed this in particular: although he could see how collaborators interests and expertise overlapped (there was *common ground* between collaborators) he did not know how we proceed “ in order to realise some of our ideas in practical terms” (24/01/00). Therefore, he suggested at the third group meeting that we develop workshop/activity proposals to state what individual collaborators would like to do (see *Table 1.54*).

The six activities undertaken by collaborators throughout the project, produced a variety of different types of products and artefacts and were generally considered successful in contributing to the initial project aim of ‘re-thinking’ the Gallery, from a variety of perspectives and through a range of approaches. They were of direct benefit to the Gallery as they brought in new users and developed new ways of using the Gallery context, whilst also bringing other Gallery and City Council Staff (Fine Art Curators, Exhibitions and Publicity, Photography, and Security staff) into contact. In relation to the core group collaboration, the artefacts produced through the Activities stimulated discussion and the development of ideas within the group for further research activities. Whilst the success of these Activities were recognised, the main area of interest for collaborators was the central collaboration between the core group and the ways in which collaborative strategies could be further developed to achieve the emerging shared vision for the project.

Thus it was decided in the project evaluation meeting that the group would continue working together to produce a proposal for research funding to

further develop interdisciplinary and collaborative visual research methods. With this decision, the context of the project shifted from the Public Context of the Gallery, to the institutional context of formal academic research. Further meetings were held at The Robert Gordon University to write the proposal, which was submitted to the Arts and Humanities Research Board. From my perspective, this demonstrated the success of the project in achieving 'true' collaboration, in which the collaborators took equal ownership in developing the group vision within the professional, academic context.

Summary of Main Findings

The main success of the project in achieving a 'deep' level of collaboration between collaborators from different disciplines resulted from the collaborators common ground, shared interests and willingness to work together, the flexible project structure and the exploratory approach to developing collaborative strategies.

The following key issues were identified:

- Within disciplines familiar with concepts of interdisciplinary shared working (for example, Architecture), an 'open' and 'exploratory' approach to interdisciplinary collaboration is uncommon.
- While collaborators from different disciplines may share similar interests, perspectives and methodologies of practice may be different, and the development of *collaborative methods* of working is required.
- A 'deep' level of collaboration, or 'true' collaboration, requires the development of a shared collaborative vision and equal ownership.
- Strategies for making individual collaborators' motivations and expectations explicit at the beginning of the process are useful in developing common understanding, and trust between collaborators. This can contribute to the development of a shared collaborative vision.

- A shared space is created for collaborators from different disciplines by conducting the collaboration in a 'neutral' context.
- The initiator of collaboration moves from a facilitator/coordinator role in the initial stages, to becoming an equal collaborator. This can require consciously 'taking a back seat' in the early stages.

Notes from Project 5 Report

- ¹ David Atherton (Aberdeen City Council Cultural Services Education Officer) invited me to undertake a project within the Aberdeen Art Gallery. Responsible for the Gallery's educational programmes, David was interested in previous educational outreach work that myself and visual artist, Roxane Permar, had undertaken in October 1999, as part of an art project addressing the regeneration of the Aberdeen Beach area (led by Aberdeen City Council and Art in Partnership, Edinburgh). I had already been developing ideas for an interdisciplinary project, bringing together collaborators from different professions. I suggested the possibility of using the Gallery as a venue for undertaking 'interdisciplinary inquiry' and explained my idea to contact potential collaborators with particular research interests from Aberdeen University and The Robert Gordon University. David was enthusiastic as he felt it related to the current needs of the Gallery and would develop links between the Gallery and the two Universities.
- ² Interdisciplinary collaboration between individuals with specific disciplinary approaches, perspectives and methodologies is a form recognised in the Visual Arts by Bijvoet, M (2000) *Art as Inquiry: Toward New Collaborations Between Art, Science, and Technology*, New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., and Griffiths and Kemp (1999) *Quaking Houses: Art, Science and The Community - a collaborative approach to water pollution*, Charlbury: Jon Carpenter Publishing
- ³ I was interested to see how common ground and common working methods could be developed between practitioners from disciplines that are not usually associated, or who have very different philosophies and methodologies of practice. Or to put it another way, to see how 'disciplines' influence 'inter-disciplinary' collaboration. In relation to the construction industries, Brian Rance has identified that professions' particular 'value systems', which he describes as "a complex set of attitudes and beliefs which determine the manner in which professionals define their role and respond to the role definitions of other professional groups" are important factors influencing the nature of collaborative practices. Muir, T and Rance, B (Eds.)(1995)*Collaborative Practice in the Built Environment*, London: E & FN Spon, p25
- ⁴ Since the projects were experimental, small-scale and un-funded, there were no professional benefits to be offered. As a result, I had relied upon the generosity and goodwill of individual collaborators, who volunteered to participate due to interest and/or curiosity in my research project, rather than for their own professional interests. I felt that this had limited the level of engagement that could be achieved through the collaborations, as our individual motives for collaborating were different. This made me conscious that ownership of the projects was imbalanced, and it was difficult for my collaborators to adopt a leading role within the collaboration, since they perceived it principally as my research project. This also limited the benefits that I attained through the process of the collaboration, as I wanted to be able to learn more from the participating collaborators, rather than being the one always leading the process. Therefore, for practical and personal reasons I decided to identify potential collaborators from *professions* that I found interesting, and who had specific individual research interests that might relate to the context of the Gallery (whilst I could not offer payment for their involvement, I felt that there may be tangible benefits to individuals if they had the opportunity to further their academic research interests through the project). I also decided to engage collaboration between a *group* of individuals, as I hoped that (unlike the previous one-to-one collaborations), the group dynamic would divert emphasis away from my role as 'the researcher', and develop a collective ownership over the direction that the project might take.

Notes from Project 5 Report (continued)

- ⁵ I identified individual's academic research interests through a search of staff research profiles on The Robert Gordon University and Aberdeen University Internet web sites.
- ⁶ See note 1
- ⁷ I developed the notion of 'cold' collaboration in Project Three, to describe a collaborative process developed between collaborators previous unknown to one another.
- ⁸ Although I explained that I was an artist and that the project would be part of my PhD research, I took care to stress that it was a "research project" and not an "art project", in order to prevent potential confusions arising from individuals' assumptions about "Art". As professional academics with active research profiles, the concept of a collaborative research project was familiar to them. Also the intention of the project was not to produce 'Art', but to investigate the development of strategies for interdisciplinary research.
- ⁹ Some of the collaborators either knew, or knew of one another already, but none (apart from myself and Roxane Permar) had worked with each other previously. Interestingly, Dr. Mike Wood (Geography Department, Aberdeen University) stated that one of the main reasons that he agreed to come to the first meeting was because he knew of, and was interested in, Dr. David Pearson's research work (Psychology Department, Aberdeen University), although had never met him.
- ¹⁰ Although I also explained that in my role as participating researcher, I would be recording and documenting the decision-making processes within the group and the artefacts that we might produce.

APPENDIX TWO

Collaboration in Education

STUDENT PROJECT REPORTS

Appendix 2.1 **Project 1 Report: 'A Celebration of Being Human'**

Appendix 2.2 **Project 2 Report: 2nd Year Fine Art Project**

'A Celebration of Being Human'
(3rd Year Fine Art Students)

Research Aims

'A Celebration of Being Human' was the first of two research projects developed to provide a framework, within which Fine Art students of Painting, Printmaking, and Sculpture (Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen), could work in cross-departmental collaborative groups to produce collaborative artworks. The project provided an opportunity to observe students' experiences of collaborative processes within a relatively 'traditional' Fine Art educational context¹. The project consisted of a series of preparatory workshops, in which the students were provided with pre-defined strategies for collaborative drawing², and followed with a project brief entitled 'A Celebration of Being Human', in which the students developed their own collaborative working strategies in response to given themes. Forty-three students worked in eight cross-departmental collaborative groups, consisting of five to six individuals.

Description of the Preparatory Workshops

Three workshops developed short and structured collaborative drawing strategies, which served as 'ice-breakers' to introduce the students to the concept of 'shared working' and provided a platform for me to get to know students before dividing them into collaborative project groups of five to six individuals. The workshops were undertaken with four groups of ten to eleven students and ran between September to December 1997.

It was important to timetable the workshops so that they did not clash with the particular timetables of the Fine Art departments of painting, printmaking and sculpture. Wednesday afternoons were allocated for the workshops and all the students were required to attend.

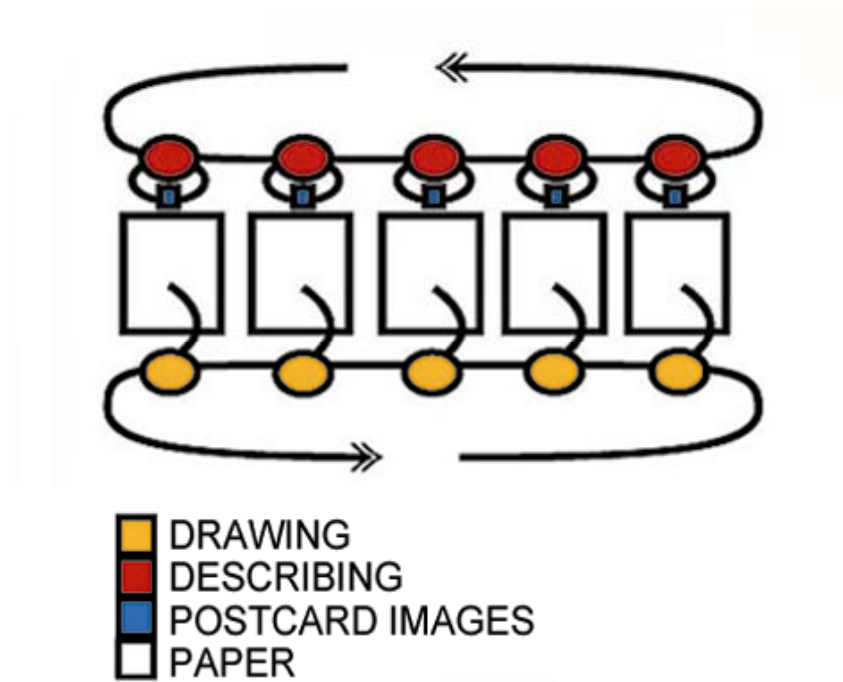


Figure 1.1 Collaborative Drawing Workshop 1: process diagram

Workshop 1

The first workshop presented a basic approach to interpretative collaborative drawing processes. Five sheets of A1 paper were laid out on the floor. Each group was subdivided into two groups of five students. One group was given a randomly selected postcard image (the 'describers'). Individuals in the other group were each given a different coloured drawing pastel (the 'drawers'). Sitting on opposite sides of the paper, students holding the postcards were asked to describe their image to the person opposite, who were asked to draw the 'describers' description of the image.

After one minute, the students moved to the next piece of paper and repeated the process with a new postcard image. The 'drawers' added to the previous 'drawers' drawing and the 'describers' described a new image (each postcard remained with each drawing). The two groups were rotated in opposite directions, so that the drawer/describer pairing was always new. Group roles were then reversed, so students

experienced being both a 'drawer' and 'describer'. The process is illustrated in *Figure 1.1*, (above) and an example of the collaborative drawings produced is provided in *Figure 1.2* (below):

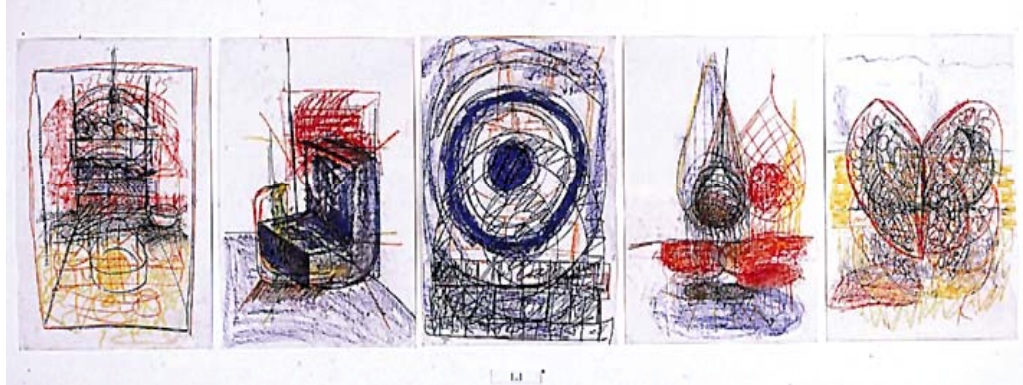


Figure 1.2 Examples of collaborative drawings produced in workshop 1.

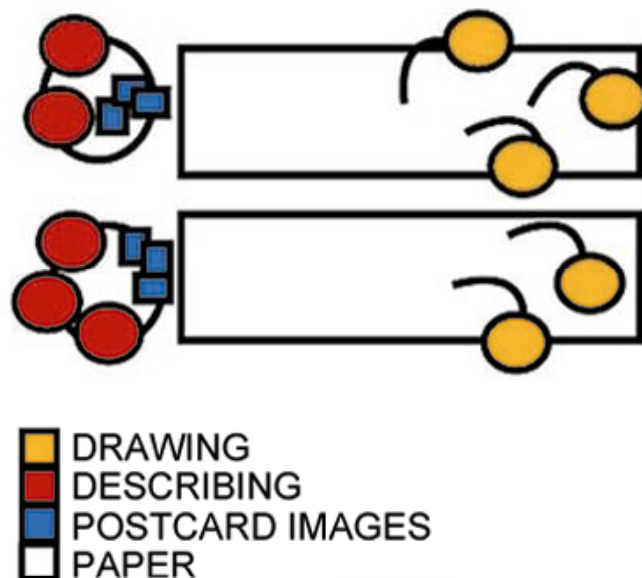


Figure 1.3 Collaborative Drawing Workshop 2: process diagram

Workshop 2

This workshop advanced the initial interpretative drawing process of the first workshop. Each group of five students was further subdivided into two groups of two and three students. One group were asked to select one image of an object, one image of a place and one image of an artwork. This group was then allowed five minutes to decide how they would be 'descriptively collage' their three images and describe their ideas to the second group, who would draw their descriptions. Working this time on very large strips of the paper, the 'drawers' were instructed to be 'actively drawing at all times'. They were not allowed to ask the 'describers' any questions, but could consult with their drawing partner³. Half an hour was allowed for each drawing. The groups then swapped and repeated the process with new images⁴. The process is illustrated in *Figure 1.3*, (above) and an example of the collaborative drawings produced is provided in *Figure 1.4* (below):

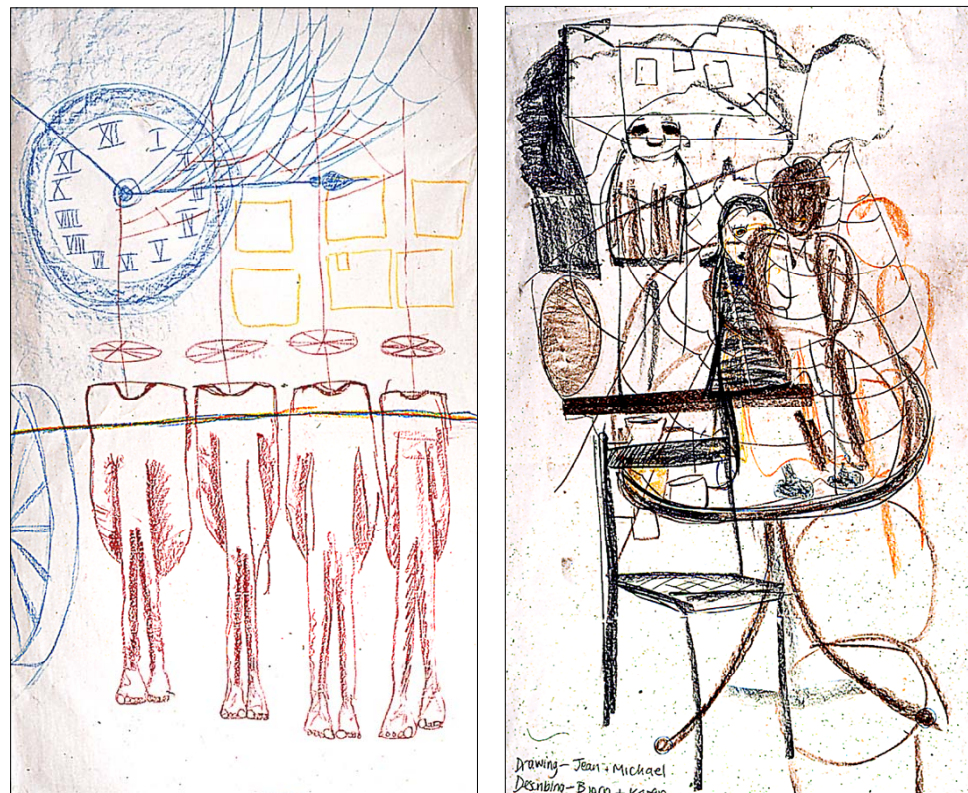


Figure 1.4 Examples of collaborative drawings produced in workshop 2.

Workshop 3

In this final workshop, students were asked to bring in their own objects/images, with five words describing their choice. Each student added five words to describe each other's images or objects. From the long descriptive lists produced, each student was asked to select five words. The group was then subdivided into two groups of five and each group was asked to share their individual words selection with their group. The group was asked to reduce their words by selecting one word per group member. In response to these five words, the groups produced a collaborative collage (on A1 sized paper, using coloured papers and pastels). *Figure 1.5* shows an example of students' word lists and an example of the collaborative collages.



Figure 1.5 Examples of workshop 3 word lists and collaborative collages.

Description of Collaborative Project

Following on from the preparatory workshops, the collaborative project was scheduled run in one intensive week, although this was altered and the project ran for seven weeks in total⁵. Whilst the workshops presented the students with highly structured methods of collaboration, the project provided a framework in which to explore and develop their own methods of collaboration. Other student commitments were to be suspended during this period, so they could concentrate fully on the project and would perceive it as a timetabled, curricular activity.

The students were issued a project brief (02/03/98) titled 'A Celebration of Being Human' in which the following social processes were provided as starting points from which to brainstorm ideas: *communication, movement, environmental hygiene, sensory seduction, commodities and the transfer of goods, spaces of reflection and contemplation, public and private, and traces of ageing*⁶. Students were encouraged to research these themes within the context of the City of Aberdeen: moving their working processes outside of the normal studio environment⁷.

Regular tutorials with the groups were conducted to evaluate progress and address any problems that emerged. The collaborative artworks produced were exhibited at the end of the project and a critical review with members of the lecturing staff was held (28/04/98). Students completed Critical Evaluation Forms to document their experiences of the project and to evaluate their group and individual progress.

Evaluation

Evaluation of Workshops

The workshops were considered successful 'ice-breakers' to working together across the three Fine Art subject areas (painting, printmaking and sculpture). Workshop 1 developed a *spontaneous* process of shared drawing and reduced any feelings of 'preciousness' over

individual sections of the drawings (by forcing students to draw on top of each others' previous marks). Workshop 2 encouraged *collective decision-making* and *shared ownership* of the drawings by enabling them to select images and decide how they would 'collage' them together. The 'drawers' had to ensure that everyone contributed to the drawing process. Workshop 3 provided a *catalyst* for individual interpretations of students' objects/images, which facilitated further *discussion* and *collective decision-making* in choosing words as themes from which to develop a collaborative collage. In Workshops 1 and 2, each 'drawer' used a different drawing pastel so their individual contribution to the collaborative drawing was visible.

Most students responded positively to the experimental collaborative drawing processes, although enthusiasm started to wane and attendance decreased throughout. This was considered due to the break in momentum created by the long period of time between each workshop for each group⁸. The workshops also highlighted the challenge of trying to bring students from different subject areas together to work collaboratively, as each department had their own timetabled activities.

Evaluation of Project

With a large number of students (43 students, 8 collaborative groups), and the project running over a long period of time (7 weeks), it was difficult to organise regular tutorials and maintain regular contact with the students throughout the project⁹. This influenced a gradual loss student motivation as the project progressed.

Students Experiences of Collaboration

Initially some students were apprehensive about the project as they had not worked collaboratively before and it was a new experience. As the tutorials progressed, students were encouraged to discuss their individual interests and this encouraged them to 'open up to' the collaborative process, *sharing their ideas* and *contributing suggestions*

about how they might proceed to work together. They began to view the project as a frame in which they could explore their individual interests in different ways.

Most groups developed collaborative *momentum* quite quickly through the exchange of ideas. However for some, the collaborative process was approached merely as an 'exercise to fulfil the brief', or worse, as an *irrelevant distraction* from their individual studio practice.

Seven of the eight groups produced final work for exhibition. One group had encountered conflicts within their group, that could not be resolved and as a result, they did not complete the project. In general, the students who completed the project (although experiencing challenges in the collaborative approach) had a **positive** experience overall. They adopted an '**ideas/issue based**' approach and **negotiated** individual roles. They also investigated **different contexts** for artwork beyond the 'traditional' institutional context (studio/gallery).

Painting students, in particular, commented on how the experience of cross-departmental collaboration made them shift their ways of thinking about art practice; as the following two comments (made in tutorial sessions) illustrate:

- (i) Q: What do feel that you have got out of the project?
A: It has made me feel depressed.
Q: Why depressed?
A: Its made me realise how isolated we are as painters.
- (ii) Q: What do feel that you have got out of the project?
A: It has made me think in a much broader way ... about what it means to be an artist, not just a painter.

Summary of Students Critical Evaluation Forms

Twenty-one completed Critical Evaluation Forms were submitted:

- **Group Evaluation:** 13 students felt that their group had **achieved** their expected target, while 6 students felt that their group had performed below their expected target.
- **Personal Evaluation:** 10 students felt that they had **achieved** their expected target, while 9 students felt that they had performed **below** their expected target. No students felt they had exceeded their expected targets and two students declined filling in the 'achievement' target checkboxes.

In order to analyse the students' written comments reflecting their experiences of the project, I identified issues that were **specifically stated** and more general views that were implied, although not **stated directly**. In *Table 1.1*, the numbers of students who made specific statements about their experiences of collaboration is summarised. In *Table 1.2*, the number of students who implied general feelings in response to the project is summarised. This was intended to show the range of general opinion expressed by the students in relation to their experiences of collaborative working.

Specific Statements	No. of students
Timetabling was problematic/clashing with assessments.	9
Group meetings proved difficult to organise.	11
Project work was beneficial and relevant to studio work.	10
Project work was irrelevant to student work.	1
Individual roles were clearly established within the group.	12
Individual roles were unclear within the group.	3

Table 1.1 Summary of specific statements made by collaborating students.

General statements	No. of students
Project was a good experience.	2
Project was a bad experience.	3
The cross-departmental nature of the project was beneficial.	10
The cross-departmental nature of the project was negative.	1

Table 1.2 Summary of students' general experiences of collaborating.

Students' experiences of collaboration were influenced by the structure of the project. With the project intermittently spread over seven weeks, other commitments encroach upon the students' focus on the project, and this contributed to the difficulties they experienced in arranging regular group meetings. It also contributed to a general lack of motivation as the project progressed.

Most students who had a **positive** experience of collaboration enjoyed working with students from different subject areas, made the project relevant to their individual interests in their studio work, and negotiated clear roles for individual collaborators within the group.

The most common **challenge** encountered was to arrange regular group meetings, which were attended by all collaborators. As the following student's comment illustrates:

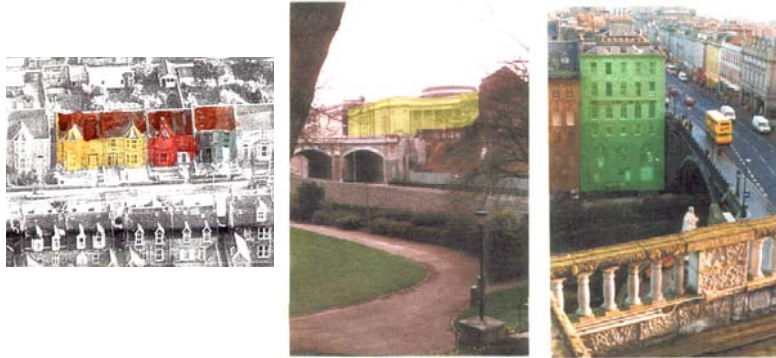
"The greatest problem we encountered as a group was trying to get people to come together to discuss the project."

For students with **positive** experiences of collaboration, one of the main benefits perceived was that the collaborative process had offered potential new ways of approaching art practice. As the following student's comment illustrates:

"It has made me feel more confident about the possibility of collaborative projects and the broader concept of 'art' rather than the idea of the isolated artist and their own individual creativity."

Images documenting a selection of work produced by the groups are shown below.

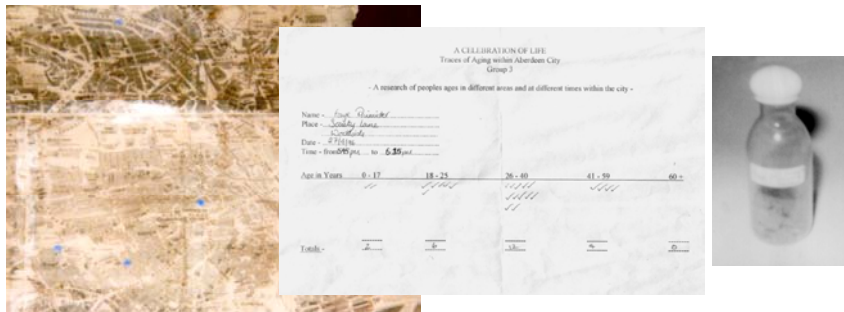
Images of Student Work



GROUP 1: **Sensory Seduction: colour in the City**



GROUP 2: **Environmental Hygiene: anti-litter advert**



GROUP 3: **Traces of Aging: investigating living environments**



GROUP 5: **Spaces of Reflection & Contemplation: coordinated events**

Figure 1.6 Images from Students' Collaborative Project Work

Notes from Student Project 1 Report

- ¹ Supporting a subject-specific, individual studio model.
- ² Developed from the experimental collaborative drawing strategies explored in Project One (*Collaborative Drawing Project*).
- ³ This was in order to reduce questions about whether the drawing was 'right' and to emphasise students' own interpretations within the process.
- ⁴ So all students experienced both 'drawing' and 'describing' activities.
- ⁵ Discussions between Lennox Dunbar (Acting Head of Fine Art) and myself began in January 1998, in decide how to structure the project. It was agreed to allocate a specific and limited timescale for the project. The workshops had encountered difficulties due to incompatible timetables across departments; colliding with events such as 'Guests at Gray's'. It was decided to allocated the 'reading week' to the project as it was assessment week in all the departments and students did not have access to their studios.
- ⁶ Briefs were intended to be issued to students by departmental staff before the main project briefing, however, this did not happen. At the briefing session, although students expressed interest in the project, they felt surprised and frustrated that it had been "dropped on them out of the blue". Following the briefing session, a meeting was held with all students to discuss how best to proceed with the project, in light of their concerns. The students agreed to proceed with the project, if they were allowed a longer period of time to respond to the brief. An agreement was reached to proceed with tutorials in the first week and to extend the project beyond the initial one-week plan. As a result, the project eventually ran over seven weeks. Progress was made difficult due to differences in departmental timetabling and this affected the intensity and momentum of activities. Many students lost focus and momentum as a result.
- ⁷ This was appropriate as it allowed students to work in a context that was separate from their individual studios (which they could not use anyway due to assessments).
- ⁸ Four groups undertook three workshops. The workshops ran once a week. Workshop 1 was undertaken with each of the four groups, over a period of four weeks, before undertaking Workshop 2 with each of the four groups, over the following four weeks, and so on. This meant that each group had a gap of three weeks in between each workshop.
- ⁹ I was only available once a week to conduct tutorials and monitor all eight groups' progress.

2nd Year Fine Art Project Report

Project Aims

The 2nd Year Fine Art Project was developed to provide a framework, within which Fine Art students of Painting, Printmaking, and Sculpture, would work in cross-departmental groups to produce a collaborative, mixed media work for exhibition. The project involved sixty-nine students, divided into collaborative groups of five to six individuals.

Each group was issued with a randomly selected postcard image to respond to. Students were briefed to achieve the following stated objectives:

- To develop ideas within a group.
- To explore a range of different media and approaches.
- To make works that combine individual elements from each group member.
- To critically review both individual and group progress.

The requirements that at least two different media should be evident in the final work and a maximum size limit of one meter cubed, were also provided.

The project was well structured and organised and as a result, relatively few problems arose¹. The project was successful, in that all the groups (barring one, where group members were not able to find similar ideas and had personality clashes) completed finished collaborative artworks for exhibition. The students' final artworks demonstrated a range of different approaches, including exploring multimedia (video, slide projection and audio) and considering 'viewer response' through interactive installations. A confident approach to new media (most groups experimented with some form of time-based media) was evident in the final pieces, which (although unresolved) showed vitality. Students also developed new methods of collaborative working within the group structure, which contrasted their usual individual studio practices.

Some problems within the project structure influenced both the students' experiences of the project and their final submissions. By addressing these problems in this report, I make some recommendations for the structuring of future student collaborative projects.

Introducing the project

At the introductory briefing session, students were issued with the project brief, the project timetable (including tutorial and submission dates and times), and the Critical Evaluation Form (for self-assessment).

The brief was discussed at length and students were encouraged to ask questions about aspects of the project of which they were unclear. Discussion about what kinds of practices might be explored through the project, and what approaches to collaborative working might be adopted, was facilitated with the use of selected examples of artists' practices (which demonstrated innovative use of materials and experimental processes)². During the briefing session, students demonstrated enthusiasm for the project, and perceiving it as an opportunity to try out new ways of working (in particular students asked if they could use video and explore Performance Art).

From the outset of the project, one student expressed dissatisfaction with the project, explaining that she was "angry" about being made to work in a group, as she did not see the value in it. In response to her views, we discussed different ways in which she might work within group, without compromising individual 'artistic' identity. I gave examples and described situations where artists work collaboratively with other artists and other professionals, but she still had clear reservations about the purpose of the project. Although much time was spent with the student throughout the project to help her find a way of participating, which she felt comfortable with, it was clear that she had irreconcilable problems with the project and eventually 'opted out', because:

“As a ‘direct’ mature student, I am conscious of being on the ‘outside’ – I have no intention of compounding this for the sake of a diluted idea with those who lack group commitment. ...I am not prepared to make myself unpopular for a project I have no faith in.”

The student’s negative response to the project was a result of personal feelings about her situation. However, her comments raised the issue of ‘cross-generational’ collaboration between elder and younger students. Although differences in ages did not appear to cause problems within the other groups, the tendency for mature students to either *dominate*, or take a *minor role* (to consciously avoid being seen by others in the role of “organisational leader”) was evident.

The student previously mentioned stated that she had no interest in working in groups as she had worked for a number of years (in nursing) in ‘teams’ and did not feel that she would learn anything new from the project. Whilst the development of *organisational* and *negotiation* skills that the project offered (particularly to younger students) might not have benefited *this* student’s experience, the importance of discussing work and ideas with other students through the process of creating collaborative artwork, was also not acknowledged. This student’s obvious discomfort with the concept of producing collaborative artwork, highlighted that individual artists working collaboratively have to devise *new methods* of working together as there are no existing models which can be easily “imported” from other disciplines. Even with substantial professional experience of team working, the student was not able to resolve the difficulties of working collaboratively in a situation where the roles are not clear and need to be negotiated from the beginning. As a result, she “opted out” from the project, without attempting to resolve the issues within the collaborative group. It was my impression that had she been in a group with individuals she knew better (and trusted), her initial reservations and negative expectations might have been resolved more easily and swiftly.

Forming Collaborative Groups

Careful consideration was given to the issue of how to divide students into collaborative groups. Possibilities for randomly composed, or self-organised student groups were considered. As I had no previous knowledge of the students (or their individual studio work) and wanted to avoid unnecessary “bad” experiences of collaboration by grouping incompatible personalities, whilst wanting to work with individuals other than existing friends, I developed a method of self-organising with assistance at the project briefing session:

- 12 students were asked to volunteer for and each volunteer was given a group number.
- Stressing the importance of mixing subject areas, the remaining students were asked to then volunteer to join the volunteering 12 students, to create groups of five to six individuals.
- Before individuals were allowed to join each of the groups, they were asked why they wanted to join that group. If student’s only reasons were because of existing friendships, and if the groups were imbalanced in terms of departmental subject areas I made adjustments to ensure an equal balance and mix. The final group lists were displayed in each department.

In retrospect, the process was not the best method as it was time-consuming and ‘messy’. Several students suggested it would have been ‘fairer if I had put the students into random groups beforehand, or if they had been given time in advance to organise themselves into groups. However, it did provided an ‘ice-breaking’ activity, which stimulated the students’ discussion about the project at the briefing session.

The majority of the groups were able to work together without any ‘individual frictions’ and students made attempts to overcome any problems or disagreements that were encountered within their groups. One group out of the twelve proved completely incompatible and were unable to resolve

differences and disagreements, which prevented them from producing any work.

Project Structure

Group tutorials were scheduled in advance of the project and times were distributed with the brief at the introductory session. This was useful as it gave the students a clear overview of the structure of the project, including submission dates and times. The table below gives an overview of the project structure. The first week [13], consisted entirely of tutorials; the second week [14] was mainly tutorials, with one day of studio visits; and the last week [15] was taken up with general problem-solving and preparing the groups for the final submissions of work:

	Week 13	Week 14	Week 15
Wednesday	1 st tutorials	studios	studios
Thursday	1 st tutorials	2 nd tutorials	Submission
Friday	1 st tutorials	2 nd tutorials	end of term

Table 2.1 Summary of Project Structure

***NB:** The project was timetabled within a three-week block. Students were also allocated Mondays and Tuesdays for the project. On these days, students worked unsupervised, and were visited in their studio spaces on Wednesdays to evaluate progress.*

The group tutorial sessions marked specific stages of the project. The first tutorials provided an opportunity for students to get to know each other better. They were intended as brainstorming sessions to develop possible themes/issues/ideas in response to the group's postcard image, and explore potential directions for research and development. Students were encouraged to think about what media they might like to explore and how they might begin to experiment on a small-scale.

My initial expectation was that by the end of the first tutorial group members would have agreed on 'experimental tasks' to get the project underway. However, most were reluctant to be 'pinned down' too specifically at this point; feeling they needed more time to discuss ideas further within their groups. Most groups decided to organise follow-up meetings in order to negotiate practical starting points and roles for group members. Students brought their work to the next tutorial, the following week. Student attendance at the first tutorials was good.

The second tutorials were intended as progress reviews. Practical evidence of research and development work was expected: such as sketchbooks, notes, photocopies, material tests, etc. Some groups had undertaken video induction sessions to find learn how to use equipment and edit footage. Some individual sketchbooks and mind maps (recording group ideas) were evident. However, there was a general lack of development work as groups had either not focused their ideas enough, or encountered disagreements, or changed their initial ideas completely.

Midway into the project, these reviews highlighted some of the problems students were beginning to encounter: either in developing shared ideas within the collaborative groups, or negotiating individual roles, or making collective decisions about the direction the project should take. Student attendance was poorer at these tutorials, signalling that some individuals' motivation was waning, and that the initial enthusiasm for collaboration was beginning to lose momentum as some groups began to experience difficulties. If not done so already, students were urged and encouraged to make group decisions and allocate individual tasks for collaborators, in order to 'start somewhere', with suggested approaches provided.

Over the course of the three weeks, I visited students' studios to monitor progress and to help with any problems that the groups were experiencing. This time was spent dealing with practical problems; such as what to do if members of the group weren't turning up, mediating disputes between group members and tracking down individuals to re-establish broken

communication channels within some groups. It also involved facilitating the groups' desires to work with particular equipment and resources (e.g. locating audio-visual equipment for them to use). As a result, there was not enough time to discuss the students' creative ideas and development work in sufficient depth³.

Evaluation

With such a large number of students (69 students, 12 collaborative groups), lack of time was a conscious limiting factor and the tutorial timetable had to be strictly adhered to. Although attempting to be flexible and adapt to the specific needs of each group, I was aware that there was little time available to reschedule tutorials or spend longer with individual groups who were experiencing difficulties. Some groups clearly need more support, particularly when they were having problems resolving disagreements. Some groups needed a lot of practical help setting up video equipment and finding space to test out projections. Extra time (during tutorial breaks and lunch times) was given to provide as much assistance as possible.

Of the twelve groups, eleven submitted finished works, which were exhibited at the end of the project. These demonstrated a range of approaches and combinations of different media: including sound, projection, installation and construction. The diversity was very positive and the students were interested to see what other groups had produced. The exhibition presented a good opportunity to see the diversity of work.

By the end of the project, some individuals and groups had lost momentum and interest in the project. In some groups, individuals had "opted out", leaving a core few group members to complete the work in the last few days of the project. Loss of motivation was contributed to both by the encroaching end of term (some students went home early for the Christmas holidays), and the nearing 'end of term assessments' occurring in each subject area.

Critical Evaluation

The Critical Review:

A Critical Review took place during the exhibition. It presented an opportunity to see all the works in their entirety: since the majority of works were installations involving sound, slides or video projection. Due to the difficulty of obtaining the appropriate equipment, many of the works were not seen 'working' until the critical review.

The Critical Review discussions enabled students to obtain insights into the ways in which other groups had tackled the challenges of collaborative working. Students asked each other questions about how they developed their ideas within the group, what they did and how they made their final pieces. Thus, students' shared and compared their experiences of collaborative working. This was a valuable opportunity, since information about the ways in which they had implemented collaborative processes was not evident from simply looking at the finished works alone.

Members of the lecturing staff from each subject area attended the critical review session. This was valuable and students benefited from the broad and varied range of questions posed to them about their work. Many of the students had seen the project as separate and unrelated to their studio practice. Staff presence at the review session was important in consolidating and validating the students' experiences of the project, since it bridged students' perceived gap between the group work and their individual studio practice.

Critical Evaluation Forms

Individual Critical Evaluation Forms were an important part of the project evaluation and assessment process. Providing students with a vehicle for evaluate their experience of collaboration, in terms of both their group and individual progress throughout. Students provided genuine and considered accounts of their experiences of collaboration. Selected quotes from the students' evaluation forms are included below in order to illustrate specific

responses to the project. In general, comments about the project appeared to fall into the following two positions:

- Students with **positive** experiences of collaboration found the project *interesting* and ‘*new*’ and enjoyed working in *different ways* and *learning* how other students think and work.
- Students with **negative** experiences of collaboration either found the project *irrelevant*, or did *not* want to produce a collaborative outcome, or did not ‘*gel*’ within the group, or found it *too difficult* to organise meetings.

Conclusions

The project was well-structured and integrated into the curriculum, and as a result, was generally more successful than the first project (*‘A Celebration of Being Human’*, Appendix 2.1). However, it was still perceived in the main by staff and students as less relevant than students’ individual studio work. This view contributed to an evident loss of motivation from many students as the project progressed (as some saw it as unimportant)⁴. Thus, the ‘culture of individualism’ of within the art college environment, limited the students’ views of and approach to collaboration⁵.

Students who approached the project with an *open* and *experimental* approach generally achieved a **positive** experience of collaboration, whilst those who approached the project with *disinterest*, *suspicion*, or with *narrow* expectations, tended to have a **negative** experience of collaboration. In groups where students worked closely to realise a **shared idea**, a **deep level of commitment** to the collaboration achieved positive results. In contrast, groups where students worked *individually* under a group ‘theme’, appeared to encounter problems more frequently, and had **negative** experiences of the process. The most common problems, which students’ repeatedly encountered were difficulties in organising and attending group meetings. An

invisible barrier appeared to prevent students from going into different departments to find group members and arrange meetings.

The most positive outcome from the project, (apart from the obvious benefits of exploring new materials and ways of working), is that students began to recognise, acknowledge and evaluate tacit, “process” skills that are perhaps less obvious in individual practice. Robert Forrest’s statement illustrates this well:

“Although I don’t think I produced anything specific, I feel I contributed to every stage of the project in some way, whether it be coming up with ideas, helping with printing, sorting out the slides or just making sure that I and everyone else knew what was going on with the rest of the project.”

Recommendations

Recommendation for establishing future collaborative projects with Fine Art students would include the following considerations:

- A maximum number of four students (with one student representing each subject area) in each group, rather than six.
- Staff to student ratio is sufficient to provide students with closer guidance and assistance throughout the project.
- Collaboration is supported by departmental lecturing staff as an *equal, equivalent* to individual studio practice. Each group could be allocated a staff tutor/mentor from each subject area.
- Availability and access to a variety of equipment and resources be made clear to students at the start of the project.

- A 'book-able' experimental 'project' space (outside of individual studios) for testing ideas/materials/installations is made available to students.
- A neutral, shared space (outside of subject departments) is made available as a venue for group meetings and place to address/resolve problems arising within the groups.
- A selection of exemplary 'collaborative models' for group working processes is provided to help students negotiate individual roles and develop joint decision-making processes within their groups.

Students' Comments

The following selected students' comments illustrate the benefits and problems raised by collaboration. These comments are cited from individual's Critical Evaluation Forms, in which students evaluated both group and individual progress. They highlight how students approached the idea of collaborative working, the problems they encountered and how they attempted to resolve problems. The illustrations show details of each group's final artworks.

Group 1 Group evaluation: on target.

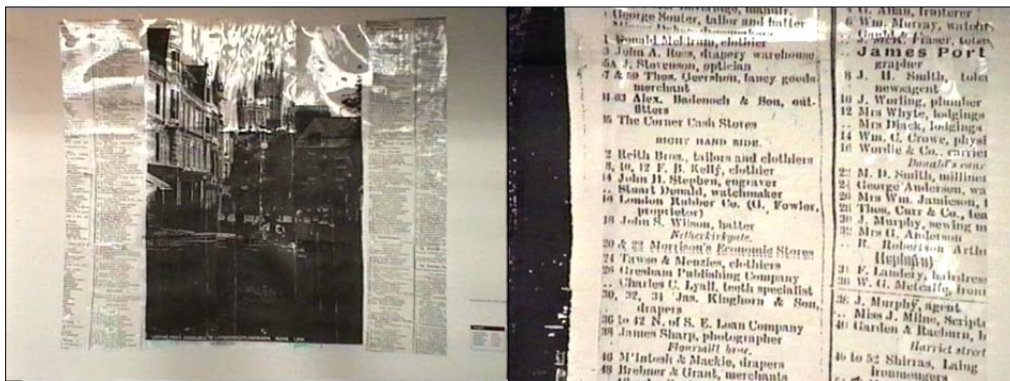


Figure 2.1 Student Group 1 Images

"...our group was a little dislocated at points, but considering our initial differences of ideas, we did reasonably well. I feel that enthusiasm for our personal ideas outweighed the collective idea, i.e. everyone compromised... To begin with I didn't know what to expect as I didn't know the rest of the people. It was interesting to hear everyone else's views about the issues raised. However, I was sceptical from the beginning as to whether a general group idea would come through, but was surprised." [Kenneth Oram]

"Due to an abundance of ideas, I think it was hard to work towards one final idea as a group. The finished piece was quite simple and it was hard to allocate jobs to six people." [Jennifer Stroud]

"... we managed to produce a piece of work that involved a range of skills that everybody contributed to." [David Marr]

Group 2 Group evaluation – below target.

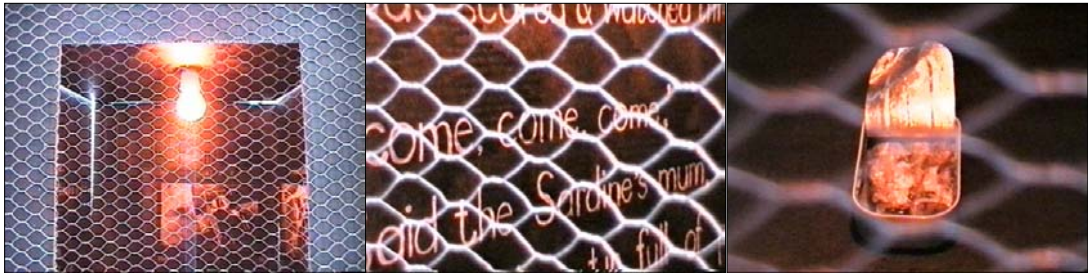


Figure 2.2 Student Group 2 Images

“Nobody took the project seriously” [Ingeborg Kvame & Silje Klippen]

“We had a good brainstorming with interesting thoughts and ideas. It was after this that things started to get more difficult. ...we had problems coming up with things that everybody agreed on. ...when we were going to build the thing, two of the group members never showed up. The rest of the group lost the “spirit” totally... When we started this project I was quite inspired... It was when we started to discuss how we were going to make our thing that I lost the spirit. ...I do not like to work in groups. It is so difficult to come up with something that everybody likes, and everybody has got different pictures in their heads of what the result is going to be like.” [Ingeborg Kvame]

“The concept of the group project ... is not bad at all – rather interesting; but in my case I was rather selfish. I just wanted to develop my own ideas in my own work; to develop my own skills and ideas.” [Silje Klippen]

Group 3 Group evaluation – on target.

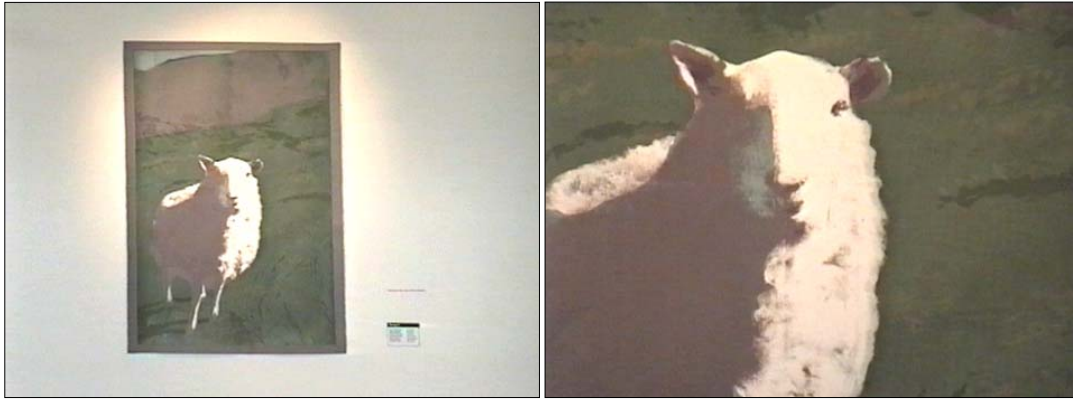


Figure 2.3 Student Group 3 Images

“The group was very co-operative and many ideas were discussed.

...Although part of the project was to mix our skills, I found that we all sectioned off and didn't achieve this. ...It was a different way of working for me – I need time and to be by myself – working at speed and having to share ideas was quite awkward.” [Clark Robbie]

“The group liased well and became a cohesive unit quickly, which was advantageous.” [Pam Lyall]

“We worked as a team from the start and any problems that occurred were solved by consulting the whole group. Although some contributed more than others, the outcome would not be as it is without every member. Also, nobody felt the need to totally take over; we all worked together. ... Although I don't think I produced anything specific, I feel I contributed to every stage of the project in some way, whether it be coming up with ideas, helping with printing, sorting out the slides or just making sure that I and everyone else knew what was going on with the rest of the project. I did find it quite hard to step back and let everyone get on with it sometimes, but my interfering in specific tasks would have been counter-productive.” [Robert Forrest]

“It was hard to track everyone down and get them together to agree, and each had very personal and individual views on the final piece. I found that at every stage of my print, I had to stop and ask others their opinion.” [Diane Elder]

Group 4 Group evaluation – majority on target, two below.



Figure 2.4 Student Group 4 Images

“We found it quite hard to get the group together and get started, probably due to varying levels of commitment. However, once we had an idea, it was easier to get on with our own part of it. We had difficulties putting the piece together at the end, as enthusiasm and time had run out. The project taught us a good lesson on compromising, but the main problem was getting everyone to work. We did set deadlines and arrange meetings but without any authority this was meaningless. ...I enjoyed the project for the most part, but had several moments of annoyance... Some people did not seem to be as enthusiastic as I was and I felt I was bullying people into working. ...I have learnt a lot, not only about group work, but about compromising, listening, limitations and resources. ...It was infuriating but fun.” [Jennifer Nicholson]

“We worked well as a group as we all managed to meet regularly and all put ideas in for the project. Nobody fell out and we all seemed to enjoy the final idea. ...I found the project fun and interesting as it was very different from the work I am doing at the moment and I liked finding out the other group members’ interpretations of the picture we were given.” [John Nicol]

“I found problems I wouldn’t have expected – the three subjects...didn’t work as well as I hoped. ...There were very good ideas but working in a large group; its hard to keep tabs on people. ...I have enjoyed the project and was very enthusiastic until others in the group let us down.” [Kate Chandler]

“Our group’s progress has been somewhat marred by conflicting ideas and opinions. However, that is not to say that we didn’t work well together, as we all agreed on the final idea’s concept. It did take a lot of effort as the initial plans didn’t work.” [Kate Riordan]

“Everyone had a lot of ideas to contribute and we managed to incorporate everyone’s suggestions. ...I worked well with my group until the last day, when we all had different ideas and had trouble coming up with a final outcome. ...we should have spent more time on planning and the presentation.” [Emma Crichton]

Group 5 Group evaluation: above target.



Figure 2.5 Student Group 5 Images

“Decided on a concentrated time-span which worked well. Everybody participated well. Majority ruled. ...was happy to compromise but not sure if that would apply in more exam-like circumstances.” [Jo Campbell]

“...my group worked very well together...and managed to create a final outcome which all were happy with. Any problems we had together were in narrowing down the volume of different ideas people came up with. However, these decisions were made amicably and without argument. In all situations, we managed to make compromises and all contributed equally in the work... I participated more than I thought I would, as normally I don't put ideas forward when working within a group because I am so used to working individually, so don't usually have to have my ideas accepted or rejected by others.” [Nicola Fraser]

“We decided unanimously to make a constructed piece in order for us all to participate and we managed to incorporate everyone's ideas/views into the piece. ...Enjoyed working as a group and although I'm quite comfortable to control and manipulate others, I feel we all participated in our own ways...and really didn't need leadership.” [Sandra Johnston]

“There was a point where, when we had to decide on our idea, there were many ways to make the actual construction but these had to be limited and we had to get on with making it... We managed to combine together almost all of the ideas of each person in our group – contributions from all.” [Dawn Fraser]

“Initially, I was sceptical about this brief and about working within a group. However, it went much better than I expected. Our group worked well together, all contributing equally. Together we produced a piece of work that, as a group, we were pleased with. ...As I was working within a group, not as an individual, I tried hard to contribute fairly and worked hard...I did have a few problems; accepting ideas was occasionally difficult but overall I felt I worked well within the group.” [Kirsty Walker]

Group 6 Group evaluation: on target, some above.



Figure 2.6 Student Group 6 Images

“...ideas were well shared and were incorporated into the final piece. The group seemed to agree on tactics and each person’s expertise was taken into consideration.” [Oliver Robb]

“...our group worked reasonably well together but...some members could have been there a lot more. I also feel that some members of the group were a little afraid to speak up. ...I find it strange working in a group as I am quite independent. But it was an enjoyable experience.” [Claire Reid]

“..nobody seemed anxious to be ‘top dog’ and everyone listened to the others’ ideas and gave them consideration. We generally came to a consensus on each aspect of the project before implementing it. ...sometimes frustration set in if we didn’t all meet up as intended. ...I enjoyed the project – in particular seeing how others’ minds work in response to a stimulus like our one. It was a good opportunity to do something different and was fun. ...we all contributed to the final outcome – before an idea was rejected we all had our own say and I don’t think anyone felt particularly unhappy if what they suggested didn’t get majority-approval. It is good to work in a group because you have got more than just yourself to satisfy.” [Doleen MacLennan]

“...our group worked well as a team. We seemed to have plenty of ideas – in fact it was a problem reducing it to one! We did encounter problems in getting all group members together. Despite this, when we did manage to, I feel we were at our most productive and we solved visual problems much more easily. ...this project was well worth doing because it gave me a chance to see how other ‘fine artists’ think and work.” [Donna Harvie]

Group 7 Group evaluation: on target.



Figure 2.7 Student Group 7 Images

“We worked well together as a group overall. At the beginning, we generated a lot of ideas with everyone contributing. ...we spoke for a long time and went into a lot of issues that we would not have been covered if we hadn't been in the group situation. It was worthwhile, though very difficult and stressful. We compromised until we reached conclusions that everyone was happy with. ...I found it difficult to think 'big' and 'mixed media' after concentrating on print, so it was worthwhile to have to do. I wasn't able to contribute to the technical side of the piece, with no prior knowledge, but learnt a lot.” [Moira Laing]

“I felt it went as well as it could have done considering we all had different ideas. Towards the end it was getting a bit tiring and I think we all began to annoy each other.” [David Hamilton]

“Everybody seemed willing to discuss ideas and issues to the limit, even though compromises were made by everybody. A lot of time was spent discussing and debating, as well as researching, which I feel was extremely valuable and helped us to come to our final conclusion. ...we probably had a few problems with decision-making to start with but, with discussion, these were overcome. ...the majority of the work we produced together through discussion and collaboration. ...the effort was spread equally among most members of the group.” [Rebecca Harrington]

“The idea and process of thinking was good. The execution of preparing everything was also good. We had regular meetings which meant most things ran smoothly.” [Richard Keyte]

“Our group took too long analysing everything we were going to do, meaning that we were left with very little time to physically do the things we wanted to. ...we did have very different views and ideas but were able to reach a compromise on everything.” [Mark Bremner]

Group 8 Group evaluation: below target.

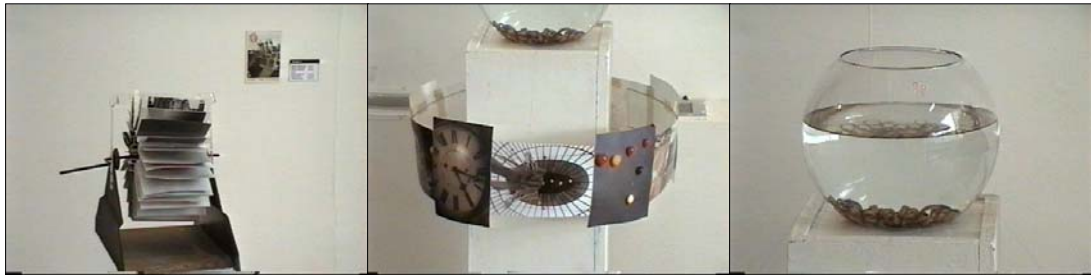


Figure 2.8 Student Group 8 Images

“Group discussions started reasonably well, but lack of commitment and indecision led to a split within the group. ...we all wanted to pursue entirely different ideas. ...I feel disillusioned by the whole project – I compromised wholly and the only input I had creatively...was taking photos and cutting cardboard. I became increasingly frustrated and thus decided...to make my own piece of work on the theme, which I felt the combined project had left.” [Lindsay Brown]

“I found the whole project a valuable experience, although not as I thought it would be. Assuming the mantle of organiser and group leader, we had a video induction, which was fantastic. We had several discussions on the subject, which revealed that the group wanted to do different things. ...I got frustrated with our lack of progress and decided to rely on the only person you can rely on, yourself: as the group had shown me I could do it all on my own. Although this seems a cynical attitude, at our second meeting only half the group turned up. In evaluation of our group I would have to say that everyone had different levels of commitment and ambition. ...I was pleased with my attitude throughout and feel that after I left my group to do my own work, everything went into place. Being in the group gave me the hunger to do it myself. ...it was interesting to see that my individual project had a fair amount in common with the group’s work. ...Interestingly, the same thought processes and discussions we had at the start of the project led us to a similar solution. What doesn’t kill you, only makes you stronger.” [Malcolm McPhail]

“Began well with discussion and ideas were good. Took too long to move on. Didn’t meet often enough. Not enough commitment from some group members, which disheartened the others. ...I found the whole process disheartening at times. The group leader went off and did his own piece, which meant that I ended up telling people what to do.” [Claire Roche]

“Our group fell apart right at the beginning. ...None of us were very happy about the whole project; I think mainly because it started so badly. I was annoyed by people leaving the group because I thought it was selfish. ...It could have been done much better but starting badly made it a struggle to get it done because no one was that keen to do anything. ...Everyone could have done better. I’m just glad its over. I would have enjoyed it much more if

my group got together more and we started well and were willing to compromise more.” [Gemma Patchett]

“The group started off as a complete disaster after the group leader decided after one week to do his own thing. ...I was slightly frustrated with the brief, in particular with the size restriction set on it. I never got really into the project but that was partly because what we did was a group decision, and I wanted to work in a different medium.” [Andrew Flemming-Brown]

Group 9 Group evaluation: vary between below +on target.



Figure 2.9 Student Group 9 Images

“I found working in a group frustrating. Working with other departments meant working with people I had no means of contacting and did not know. Poor communication between everyone; ideas changed without everyone being made aware. I would have preferred to work alone and probably did not get into working as a team as a result. Initial ideas good, but became confused as time moved on. ...I enjoyed my piece but not the experience as a whole. ...I finished my piece on time but was slowed down by the uncertainty of what was happening as a whole. I found it hard not knowing the others in the group. I felt confined by the restrictions of the group.” [Claire Morris]

“...communication was quite difficult. It was nice working with new people, meeting them, but we didn’t really work as a group. It was good to try something different, although I would have rather done it by myself or been able to do it as research for part of a print. ...I liked the idea of doing something different, it was just a shame it had to be compromised by sharing it, which I found frustrating.” [Elaine Mitchell]

“First meeting very productive: all members of the group produced good ideas and views and in the end we all agreed on a final idea. ...we found it hard to meet up to evaluate our progress. Due to the lack of communication and time; we found it hard to pull everything together in the end. ...I was pleased with the collective idea we came up with. However, due to the lack of communication, I felt disheartened with what I was doing.” [Robert Linsey]

“...we strayed a bit in different directions which led to confusion over the general themes that were meant to unite the project. Everyone in the group

was open to other opinions and I don't think anyone felt scared to offer ideas. We should have met as a group more and made sure everyone was clear about what we were doing. ...I didn't really give this project as much thought as I should have. ...I maybe didn't put enough ideas forward because I don't like having my ideas changed by other people and I know what I want." [Ross Fulton]

Group 10 Group evaluation – on target.



Figure 2.10 Student Group 10 Images

"We had quite a clear idea of what we wanted straight from the beginning and we all were agreed on the basics. We are all really good friends, so could talk through any ideas or problems easily. ...I loved the fact I got to work with my friends, because it made it much more enjoyable. I think it is important to do projects like this because you can get too caught up in what you want to do, and sometimes you will need to compromise or work to someone else's brief." [Laura Walker]

"All of us contributed something for the project to progress. ...when we disagreed on particular ideas, we all were ready to give or take back things to help the project go ahead and progress. ...Being a mature student within a young group, I didn't want to dominate. ...I thoroughly enjoyed working with the group. ...If I had to do this project on my own, I would have gone about it totally differently but the result might not have been as effective." [Marianna Mihalic]

"I found this project stimulating to the mind and for my expression as a person and as part of a group. ...I don't usually enjoy working as a group but I enjoyed this – maybe because we got to choose groups instead of being put into them. It was a great experience." [James Morrison]

"All ideas were thoroughly discussed by everyone. ...Our group was well mixed with no real conflicting personalities. We were all friends beforehand and I think that has helped us a lot, because we had a good understanding and mutual respect for each other. ...Everyone was prepared to listen to what everyone else thought and we all learnt a lot from it. The idea really was a group decision; so much so that I can't actually remember where the original thought came from." [Kirsty Mackrelston]

Notes from Student Project 2 Report

- ¹ Organisation of the project showed a marked improvement from the 3rd Year collaborative project ("A Celebration of Being Human", 1998), which had been to structure due to timetabling difficulties arising from the different departmental programmes. A large factor in the success of this project was a direct result of a much tighter schedule and project framework.
- ² Examples were: Robert Rauschenberg, Helen Chadwick, Janine Antoni, Cathy DeMoncheaux, Sarah Lucas, Joseph Kosuth, Susan Hiller, Chris Burden, Long, Christo, Joseph Beuys, and TEA (Those Environmental Artists).
- ³ I was only available on Wednesdays (apart from the tutorial sessions) to monitor progress in the students' studios. Students' attendance was often poor and meant that I was not necessarily made aware of problems encountered. It would have been more beneficial if more time were available between tutorials to spend with the groups, during their processes of making the work.
- ⁴ Many students reverted to their usual studio work on Mondays and Tuesdays, although they were timetabled to work unsupervised on the project on these days. Full-time studio lecturing staff did not enforce the timetabling for the collaborative project on these days. Input from departmental lecturing staff at the critical review was valuable as it reduced the students' perception that the collaborative project was 'less important'. However, staffs' active involvement in the project would have been more beneficial earlier in the project.
- ⁵ At the final critical review session, it was apparent that some members of the departmental lecturing staff assessed the students' final artworks only by aesthetic criteria; viewing the collaborative process as less important than the final product. In some cases, this conveyed the negative view that the students' experiences of the collaboration were unimportant.

APPENDIX THREE

Case Examples of Collaboration

INTERVIEWS WITH ARTISTS

Appendix 3.1 Pre-interview Questionnaire Forms:

Gordon Young

Jane Trowell (on behalf of Platform)

Matthew Dalziel

Louise Scullion

Appendix 3.2 Full Interview Transcripts:

Appendix 3.2a Gordon Young (15/07/00)

Appendix 3.2b James Marriot (on behalf of Platform) (20/07/00)

Appendix 3.2c Matthew Dalziel & Louise Scullion (01/09/00)

Gordon Young

strategies for interdisciplinary collaboration in the visual arts

QUESTIONNAIRE: Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION

Collaboration is a complex and dynamic shared working process which is influenced by many factors.

This questionnaire is designed to evaluate some "core characteristics" of collaboration which have been identified through this PhD research project.

HOW TO COMPLETE THIS FORM

The form has 10 sections: one section for each characteristic of collaboration (a definition of each characteristic is provided in each section's title bar). To save you some time, most questions require 'tick-box' answers. However, space is also provided within each section for your comments (e.g. further information about collaboration, specific personal experiences of collaboration, or views on the appropriateness of the questions).

- Please tick the appropriate boxes where relevant.
(tick as many boxes as you feel are appropriate)
- Please use the comments spaces provided to **give more detailed information** or to comment on the appropriateness of the questions.
- Please fill in the form using **your own experiences** of collaboration.
- Please **date and return** the form in the envelope provided.

NAME	GORDON YOUNG	DATE COMPLETED	June 00.
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You will be fully acknowledged in any references to the information you have supplied in this form.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Figure 1.1 Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Gordon Young

Gordon Young

QUESTIONNAIRE: Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION				
MOTIVES Your personal reasons for collaborating - anticipated benefits.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you consciously initiated a collaborative project? Have you responded to invitations to collaborate? Which of these motives for undertaking collaboration do you think are important? 		Yes	No	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- to work in new contexts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to develop new ways of working	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to create new roles for artists	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to explore complex issues	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to work in the public realm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to learn from and about other disciplines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable successful collaboration, do you think it is important that: - Collaborators share mutual motivations (same motives) - Collaborators have equal motivations (different motives but equally driven) 		Yes	No	Don't Know
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have your motivations changed during a collaboration? 		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:				
CONTEXT The context, aims, structure and environment in which collaboration is conducted.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which of these aims do you think collaboration can fulfill: 				
	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- to develop ways of working across disciplines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to challenge the values held by specialist disciplines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to develop new perspectives between disciplines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to address complex issues	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to develop democratic approaches to 'issue-raising'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to develop democratic approaches to 'problem-solving'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to achieve common understanding between collaborators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to challenge the values held by individual collaborators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which of these organisational factors are important influences on the success or failure of collaboration: 				
	VERY IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	POSITIVE INFLUENCE	NEGATIVE INFLUENCE
PROJECT STRUCTURE: - a formalised working structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- an informal working structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PROCESS: - a tightly defined working process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- a dynamic, changeable working process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WORKING ENVIRONMENT: - working in individual collaborators' territories	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- working in shared territory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- working in neutral territory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER (please describe).....				
<p style="text-align: center;">neutral. neutral.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">all / none</p>				
Comments:				
Questionnaire Form © Karen Scopa 2000				
Page 1 of 4				

Figure 1.1 Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Gordon Young

Gordon Young

QUESTIONNAIRE: Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION

PRODUCT Outcomes generated throughout a collaboration.

- Is it important to define expected outcomes at the outset of a collaboration? Yes No Don't Know
- Is it important that the collaboration produces a tangible product as an end result? Yes No Don't Know
- Is it important that individuals' contributions are visible in the final product? Yes No Don't Know
- Which of these outcomes from collaboration do you think are important?

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- a shared vision (new perspective)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- a mutually beneficial process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- a mutually beneficial product	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- a shared creative process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- new methods of practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- individual and professional development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- solutions to complex problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....				

Comments: I FIND THE ANSWERS VERY DIFFICULT TO PUT INTO THE BOX'S. IN EACH CASE I HAVE EXPERIENCED SITUATIONS WHERE YOU COULD PUT A TICK IN EACH & EVERY BOX.

METHODS Types of shared working processes adopted by a collaborative group.

- Which of the following shared working methods have you experienced through collaboration?

- Participatory (working within, and in response to a defined project structure)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Co-operative (assisting each other to achieve individual goals)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Collective (working jointly to achieve group aims)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Interactive (interacting through the exchange and manipulation of objects or processes)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Partnership (shared vision developed over time - the desire to continue working together)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Collaboration (dynamic process, equal motivations, shared input, negotiation of shared vision)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....	

Comments: ITS ALL WEEKLY PRACTISE.

TIMESCALE The duration of a collaboration.

- Is it important to clearly define the timescale of a collaborative project? Yes No Don't Know
- In your experience, has a collaboration come to a natural end regardless of timescale? Yes No Don't Know
- In your experience, has a collaboration developed into a long-term partnership? Yes No Don't Know
- Is the timescale of collaboration one of the main influencing factors on its success? Yes No Don't Know
- Do you prefer working on long-term or short-term collaborations? long-term short-term no preference

Comments:

Questionnaire Form © Karen Scopa 2000 Page 2 of 4

Figure 1.1 Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Gordon Young

Gordon Young

QUESTIONNAIRE: Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION

ROLES The positions, input and responsibilities of individual collaborators.

• Is it important to define the roles of individual collaborators at the beginning of a project? Yes No Don't Know
 • Is it important that individuals' roles are recognised by all the collaborators? Yes No Don't Know
 • Is it important that roles are equally balanced throughout a collaboration? Yes No Don't Know
 • Is it common for individuals' roles to change during a collaboration? Yes No Don't Know

• Which of the following ways of developing individual roles within a collaboration have you found successful:

	VERY SUCCESSFUL	QUITE SUCCESSFUL	LEAST SUCCESSFUL	NOT SUCCESSFUL
- identifying individual areas of interest	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- identifying skills through previous practices/ experience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- specialist disciplines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- personality types	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- natural, evolving process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

I NEED SOMETIMES BOX'S

OWNERSHIP The sense of authorship, control and purpose within a collaboration.

• Is it important to develop a sense of individual ownership within a collaboration? Yes No Don't Know
 • Is it important to develop a sense of shared ownership amongst collaborators? Yes No Don't Know

• Which of the following are important in developing a sense of shared ownership within a collaboration?

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- the type of working environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- the development of 'shared space'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- the range and types of project aims	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- the clarity of individual roles & responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- the visibility of individual contributions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- the presence of trust between collaborators	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

TRUST Sharing a confident belief in the honesty and reliability of collaborators.

RESPECT

• Is it important to trust potential collaborators before embarking on a project? Yes No Don't Know
 • Do you think trust is developed during the collaborative process? Yes No Don't Know
 • Is trust a product of collaboration? Yes No Don't Know
 • How would you define a 'trusting relationship' between collaborators?...

CAN BE
RESPECT.

Comments:

Questionnaire Form © Karen Scopa 2000 Page 3 of 4

Figure 1.1 Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Gordon Young

Gordon Young

QUESTIONNAIRE: Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION

COMMON GROUND The shared creative space created between collaborators.

• Do you think 'shared space' is required for successful collaboration? Yes No Don't Know

• How do you define 'shared space'?.....

• What are the important functions of 'shared space' in a collaboration?

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- creating a democratic working environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- creating a platform for exchanging and sharing perspectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- generating an understanding of collaborators' individual languages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- developing a shared vision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SOMETIMES. SOMETIMES. SOMETIMES. DONT KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS.

• Which of the following methods for developing common ground between collaborators are successful?

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- individual presentations of past works	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- sharing material and references from each discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- focusing discussion through a specific theme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- creating space for discussion about individual interests & concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments: ALL. ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
NONE. ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
SOME. ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

DEPENDS ON SITUATION
" " NATURE OF COLLAB.
IT ISN'T A FIXED THING, IT CHANGES CONTINUALLY.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

• In your experience, what are the most beneficial factors of collaboration?

RESPECT
TALENT (S)
RESULT (S)

• In your experience, what are the main drawbacks of collaboration?

SO MUCH TALENT (S)
TIME.
~~TIME TO THINK ALONE~~

**This is the end of the questionnaire.
Thank you for sharing your experiences of collaboration.
(Please use the back page if you wish to add any other comments.)**

Questionnaire Form © Karen Scopas 2000 Page 4 of 4

Figure 1.1 Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Gordon Young

Jane Trowell (Platform)

strategies for interdisciplinary collaboration in the visual arts

**QUESTIONNAIRE:
Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION**

Collaboration is a complex and dynamic shared working process which is influenced by many factors.

This questionnaire is designed to evaluate some "core characteristics" of collaboration which have been identified through this PhD research project.

HOW TO COMPLETE THIS FORM

The form has 10 sections: one section for each characteristic of collaboration (a definition of each characteristic is provided in each section's title bar). To save you some time, most questions require 'tick-box' answers. However, space is also provided within each section for your comments (e.g. further information about collaboration, specific personal experiences of collaboration, or views on the appropriateness of the questions).

- Please tick the appropriate boxes where relevant.
(tick as many boxes as you feel are appropriate)
- Please use the comments spaces provided to **give more detailed information** or to comment on the appropriateness of the questions.
- Please fill in the form using **your own experiences** of collaboration.
- Please **date and return** the form in the envelope provided.

on behalf of PLATFORM

NAME	Jane Trowell	DATE COMPLETED	24. 8. 00
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You will be fully acknowledged in any references to the information you have supplied in this form.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Figure 1.2 Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Jane Trowell (Platform)

Jane Trowell (Platform)

QUESTIONNAIRE: Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION

MOTIVES Your personal reasons for collaborating - anticipated benefits.

- Have you consciously initiated a collaborative project? Yes No
- Have you responded to invitations to collaborate? Yes No
- Which of these motives for undertaking collaboration do you think are important?

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- to work in new contexts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to develop new ways of working	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to create new roles for artists	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to explore complex issues	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to work in the public realm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to learn from and about other disciplines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....				

to break down barriers nurtured by over-specialization through school + education - generally

- To enable successful collaboration, do you think it is important that:

	Yes	No	Don't Know
- Collaborators share mutual motivations (same motives)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Collaborators have equal motivations (different motives but equally driven)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Have your motivations changed during a collaboration? Yes No Don't Know

Comments:
It's not the motivations but the overall political aim that makes it work. If you share the same aim then the sub-categories of different motivations are no problem. but you have to keep checking during the process

CONTEXT The context, aims, structure and environment in which collaboration is conducted.

- Which of these aims do you think collaboration can fulfill:

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- to develop ways of working across disciplines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to challenge the values held by specialist disciplines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to develop new perspectives between disciplines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to address complex issues	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to develop democratic approaches to 'issue-raising'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to develop democratic approaches to 'problem-solving'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to achieve common understanding between collaborators	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to challenge the values held by individual collaborators	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....				
- Which of these organisational factors are important influences on the success or failure of collaboration:

	VERY IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	POSITIVE INFLUENCE	NEGATIVE INFLUENCE
PROJECT STRUCTURE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a formalised working structure - an informal working structure 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PROCESS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a tightly defined working process - a dynamic, changeable working process 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
WORKING ENVIRONMENT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - working in individual collaborators' territories ① - working in shared territory ② - working in neutral territory 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER (please describe).....				

develop listening skills

Comments:
TIME to decide how to work and then to check everybody is happy with the process on a regular basis. I have a problem with this because I could answer positive + v. imp to every question - it all depends on how the project collab is set up. For example: it is a formal requirement of our work to come to consensus, but we discuss very informally. One thing of is for sure - shared territory is best.

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Figure 1.2 Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Jane Trowell (Platform)

Jane Trowell (Platform)

QUESTIONNAIRE: Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION

PRODUCT Outcomes generated throughout a collaboration.

- Is it important to define expected outcomes at the outset of a collaboration? Yes No Don't Know Sometimes!
- Is it important that the collaboration produces a tangible product as an end result? Yes No Don't Know
- Is it important that individuals' contributions are visible in the final product? Yes No Don't Know ✓
- Which of these outcomes from collaboration do you think are important?

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- a shared vision (new perspective)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- a mutually beneficial process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- a mutually beneficial product	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- a shared creative process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- new methods of practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- individual and professional development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- solutions to complex problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....	<i>better listening + conflict resolution skills</i>			

Comments:

METHODS Types of shared working processes adopted by a collaborative group.

- Which of the following shared working methods have you experienced through collaboration?

- Participatory (working within, and in response to a defined project structure)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Co-operative (assisting each other to achieve individual goals)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Collective (working jointly to achieve group aims)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Interactive (interacting through the exchange and manipulation of objects or processes)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Partnership (shared vision developed over time - the desire to continue working together)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Collaboration (dynamic process, equal motivations, shared input, negotiation of shared vision)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....	

Comments:

TIMESCALE The duration of a collaboration.

- Is it important to clearly ^{*}define the timescale of a collaborative project? Yes No Don't Know Sometimes!
- In your experience, has a collaboration come to a natural end regardless of timescale? Yes No Don't Know
- In your experience, has a collaboration developed into a long-term partnership? Yes No Don't Know
- ♥ Is the timescale of collaboration one of the main influencing factors on its success? Yes No Don't Know
- Do you prefer working on long-term or short-term collaborations? long-term short-term no preference

Comments:

** negotiate, as all have to be happy*

♥ attitudes to time, and therefore £ issues are crucial to negotiate

□ it depends but mostly we're out to make long term connections with everyone we work with if it's mutually desired.

Questionnaire Form © Karen Scopa 2000 Page 2 of 4

Figure 1.2 Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Jane Trowell (Platform)

Jane Trowell (Platform)

QUESTIONNAIRE: Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION

ROLES The positions, input and responsibilities of individual collaborators.

Yes No Don't Know
 • Is it important to define the roles of individual collaborators at the beginning of a project?

Yes No Don't Know
 • Is it important that individuals' roles are recognised by all the collaborators?

Yes No Don't Know
 • Is it important that roles are equally balanced throughout a collaboration?

Yes No Don't Know
 • Is it common for individuals' roles to change during a collaboration?

• Which of the following ways of developing individual roles within a collaboration have you found successful:

	VERY SUCCESSFUL	QUITE SUCCESSFUL	LEAST SUCCESSFUL	NOT SUCCESSFUL
- identifying individual areas of interest	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- identifying skills through previous practices/ experience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- specialist disciplines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- personality types	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- natural, evolving process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....				

Comments: *social location of the work before anything else happens*

don't know what balanced implies

OWNERSHIP The sense of authorship, control and purpose within a collaboration.

Yes No Don't Know
 • Is it important to develop a sense of individual ownership within a collaboration?

Yes No Don't Know
 • Is it important to develop a sense of shared ownership amongst collaborators?

• Which of the following are important in developing a sense of shared ownership within a collaboration?

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- the type of working environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- the development of 'shared space'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- the range and types of project aims	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Δ the clarity of individual roles & responsibilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- the visibility of individual contributions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- the presence of trust between collaborators	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....				

Comments: *shared passion over issues*

imagine mutual negotiation of individual roles - its developmental + reflective

TRUST Sharing a confident belief in the honesty and reliability of collaborators.

Yes No Don't Know
 • Is it important to trust potential collaborators before embarking on a project?

Yes No Don't Know
 • Do you think trust is developed during the collaborative process?

Yes No Don't Know
 • Is trust a product of collaboration?

Yes No Don't Know
 • How would you define a 'trusting relationship' between collaborators?...

Comments: *where any collaborator can put forward the ideas aims + forms of any other collaborator with respect, even if critical. This means you really have to have understood the other even if you disagree. Respectful disagreement is the ultimate exercise in trust*

if it's healthy

Questionnaire Form © Karen Scopa 2000 Page 3 of 4

Figure 1.2 Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Jane Trowell (Platform)

Jane Trowell (Platform)

QUESTIONNAIRE: Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION

COMMON GROUND The shared creative space created between collaborators.

• Do you think 'shared space' is required for successful collaboration? Yes No Don't Know

• How do you define 'shared space'?.....
a) physical belonging + welcome + ownership
b) linguistic respect - different ways of speaking, negotiation, transcribing
c) creative space - however it best happens + whenever it best happens

• What are the important functions of 'shared space' in a collaboration?

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- creating a democratic working environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- creating a platform for exchanging and sharing perspectives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- generating an understanding of collaborators' individual languages	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- developing a shared vision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....				

- a space for airing of difficulties + time for conflict resolution

• Which of the following methods for developing common ground between collaborators are successful?

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- individual presentations of past works	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- sharing material and references from each discipline	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- focusing discussion through a specific theme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- creating space for discussion about individual interests & concerns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....				

Comments:

very very important as each individual's internal interdisciplinarity comes out here.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

• In your experience, what are the most beneficial factors of collaboration?

- being supported ^{critiqued} + encouraged in my creativity
- learning to resolve differences + practice democratic methodologies
- being fascinated by people's experiences + skills + learning from them
- having many more legs to stand on
- project aims are rooted in collective action not ego ^{indiv.}
- Great Parties!

• In your experience, what are the main drawbacks of collaboration?

- it takes time - you need energy + commitment to negotiate with others constantly. Sometimes that's v. hard.
- more mouths to feed, more travel money to get etc.
- ~~the system of media~~ economic differences between collaborators can be the toughest hurdle - as ever time + money

This is the end of the questionnaire.

Thank you for sharing your experiences of collaboration.
(Please use the back page if you wish to add any other comments.)

Questionnaire Form © Karen Scopa 2000 Page 4 of 4

Figure 1.2 Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Jane Trowell (Platform)

Matthew Dalziel

strategies for interdisciplinary collaboration in the visual arts

**QUESTIONNAIRE:
Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION**

Collaboration is a complex and dynamic shared working process which is influenced by many factors.

This questionnaire is designed to evaluate some "core characteristics" of collaboration which have been identified through this PhD research project.

HOW TO COMPLETE THIS FORM

The form has 10 sections: one section for each characteristic of collaboration (a definition of each characteristic is provided in each section's title bar). To save you some time, most questions require 'tick-box' answers. However, space is also provided within each section for your comments (e.g. further information about collaboration, specific personal experiences of collaboration, or views on the appropriateness of the questions).

- Please tick the appropriate boxes where relevant.
(tick as many boxes as you feel are appropriate)
- Please use the comments spaces provided to **give more detailed information** or to comment on the appropriateness of the questions.
- Please fill in the form using **your own experiences** of collaboration.
- Please **date and return** the form in the envelope provided.

NAME	Matthew Dalziel	DATE COMPLETED	
-------------	-----------------	-----------------------	--

You will be fully acknowledged in any references to the information you have supplied in this form.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Figure 1.3: Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Matthew Dalziel

Matthew Dalziel

QUESTIONNAIRE: Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION

MOTIVES Your personal reasons for collaborating - anticipated benefits.

- Have you consciously initiated a collaborative project? Yes No
- Have you responded to invitations to collaborate? Yes No
- Which of these motives for undertaking collaboration do you think are important?

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- to work in new contexts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to develop new ways of working	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to create new roles for artists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to explore complex issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to work in the public realm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to learn from and about other disciplines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....				
- To enable successful collaboration, do you think it is important that:

	Yes	No	Don't Know
- Collaborators share mutual motivations (same motives)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Collaborators have equal motivations (different motives but equally driven)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Have your motivations changed during a collaboration? Yes No Don't Know

Comments:

CONTEXT The context, aims, structure and environment in which collaboration is conducted.

- Which of these aims do you think collaboration can fulfill:

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- to develop ways of working across disciplines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to challenge the values held by specialist disciplines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to develop new perspectives between disciplines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to address complex issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to develop democratic approaches to 'issue-raising'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to develop democratic approaches to 'problem-solving'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to achieve common understanding between collaborators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- to challenge the values held by individual collaborators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....				
- Which of these organisational factors are important influences on the success or failure of collaboration:

	VERY IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	POSITIVE INFLUENCE	NEGATIVE INFLUENCE
PROJECT STRUCTURE: - a formalised working structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- an informal working structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PROCESS: - a tightly defined working process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- a dynamic, changeable working process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WORKING ENVIRONMENT: - working in individual collaborators' territories	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- working in shared territory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- working in neutral territory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER (please describe).....				

Comments:

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Figure 1.3: Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Matthew Dalziel

Matthew Dalziel

QUESTIONNAIRE: Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION				
PRODUCT Outcomes generated throughout a collaboration.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it important to define expected outcomes at the outset of a collaboration? Is it important that the collaboration produces a tangible product as an end result? Is it important that individuals' contributions are visible in the final product? 	Yes	No	Don't Know	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which of these outcomes from collaboration do you think are important? 	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- a shared vision (new perspective)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- a mutually beneficial process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- a mutually beneficial product	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- a shared creative process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- new methods of practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- individual and professional development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- solutions to complex problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:				
METHODS Types of shared working processes adopted by a collaborative group.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which of the following shared working methods have you experienced through collaboration? 				
- Participatory (working within, and in response to a defined project structure)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Co-operative (assisting each other to achieve individual goals)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Collective (working jointly to achieve group aims)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Interactive (interacting through the exchange and manipulation of objects or processes)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Partnership (shared vision developed over time - the desire to continue working together)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Collaboration (dynamic process, equal motivations, shared input, negotiation of shared vision)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:				
TIMESCALE The duration of a collaboration.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it important to clearly define the timescale of a collaborative project? In your experience, has a collaboration come to a natural end regardless of timescale? In your experience, has a collaboration developed into a long-term partnership? Is the timescale of collaboration one of the main influencing factors on its success? Do you prefer working on long-term or short-term collaborations? 	Yes	No	Don't Know	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	long-term <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	short-term <input type="checkbox"/>	no preference <input type="checkbox"/>	
Comments:				
Questionnaire Form © Karen Scopa 2000				
Page 2 of 4				

Figure 1.3: Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Matthew Dalziel

Louise Scullion

strategies for interdisciplinary collaboration in the visual arts

**QUESTIONNAIRE:
Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION**

Collaboration is a complex and dynamic shared working process which is influenced by many factors.

This questionnaire is designed to evaluate some "**core characteristics**" of collaboration which have been identified through this PhD research project.

HOW TO COMPLETE THIS FORM

The form has 10 sections: one section for each characteristic of collaboration (a definition of each characteristic is provided in each section's title bar). To save you some time, most questions require 'tick-box' answers. However, space is also provided within each section for your comments (e.g. further information about collaboration, specific personal experiences of collaboration, or views on the appropriateness of the questions).

- Please tick the appropriate boxes where relevant.
(tick as many boxes as you feel are appropriate)
- Please use the comments spaces provided to **give more detailed information** or to comment on the appropriateness of the questions.
- Please fill in the form using **your own experiences** of collaboration.
- Please **date and return** the form in the envelope provided.

NAME

Louise Scullion

DATE COMPLETED

You will be fully acknowledged in any references to the information you have supplied in this form.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Figure 1.4: Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Louise Scullion

Louise Scullion

QUESTIONNAIRE: Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION																																																						
MOTIVES Your personal reasons for collaborating - anticipated benefits.																																																						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you consciously initiated a collaborative project? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Have you responded to invitations to collaborate? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Which of these motives for undertaking collaboration do you think are important? <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>VERY IMPORTANT</th> <th>QUITE IMPORTANT</th> <th>LEAST IMPORTANT</th> <th>NOT IMPORTANT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>- to work in new contexts</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- to develop new ways of working</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- to create new roles for artists</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- to explore complex issues</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- to work in the public realm</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- to learn from and about other disciplines</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- other (please describe).....</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> 					VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	- to work in new contexts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- to develop new ways of working	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- to create new roles for artists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- to explore complex issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- to work in the public realm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- to learn from and about other disciplines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- other (please describe).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>											
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- other (please describe).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																																																		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable successful collaboration, do you think it is important that: <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> <th>Don't Know</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>- Collaborators share mutual motivations (same motives)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- Collaborators have equal motivations (different motives but equally driven)</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Have your motivations changed during a collaboration? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/> 					Yes	No	Don't Know	- Collaborators share mutual motivations (same motives)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- Collaborators have equal motivations (different motives but equally driven)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																																							
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- Collaborators have equal motivations (different motives but equally driven)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																																																			
Comments: <i>Yes, sometimes the length of time taken to realise a project will mean that personal and/or professional motivations slide in a slightly different direction, or my understanding of the work changes in some way - this would result in us altering perhaps the material, or at the other end, the way we promote the work.</i>																																																						
CONTEXT The context, aims, structure and environment in which collaboration is conducted.																																																						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which of these aims do you think collaboration can fulfill: <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>VERY IMPORTANT</th> <th>QUITE IMPORTANT</th> <th>LEAST IMPORTANT</th> <th>NOT IMPORTANT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>- to develop ways of working across disciplines</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- to challenge the values held by specialist disciplines</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- to develop new perspectives between disciplines</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- to address complex issues</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- to develop democratic approaches to 'issue-raising'</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- to develop democratic approaches to 'problem-solving'</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- to achieve common understanding between collaborators</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- to challenge the values held by individual collaborators</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- other (please describe).....</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> 						VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	- to develop ways of working across disciplines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- to challenge the values held by specialist disciplines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	- to develop new perspectives between disciplines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- to address complex issues	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- to develop democratic approaches to 'issue-raising'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- to develop democratic approaches to 'problem-solving'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- to achieve common understanding between collaborators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- to challenge the values held by individual collaborators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- other (please describe).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which of these organisational factors are important influences on the success or failure of collaboration: <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>VERY IMPORTANT</th> <th>LEAST IMPORTANT</th> <th>POSITIVE INFLUENCE</th> <th>NEGATIVE INFLUENCE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>PROJECT STRUCTURE: - a formalised working structure</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- an informal working structure</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>PROCESS: - a tightly defined working process</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- a dynamic, changeable working process</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>WORKING ENVIRONMENT: - working in individual collaborators' territories</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- working in shared territory</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>- working in neutral territory</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>OTHER (please describe).....</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> 						VERY IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	POSITIVE INFLUENCE	NEGATIVE INFLUENCE	PROJECT STRUCTURE: - a formalised working structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- an informal working structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROCESS: - a tightly defined working process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- a dynamic, changeable working process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WORKING ENVIRONMENT: - working in individual collaborators' territories	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- working in shared territory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	- working in neutral territory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER (please describe).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
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OTHER (please describe).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																																																		
Comments: <i>To realise an idea much better than I could do alone</i>																																																						

Figure 1.4: Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Louise Scullion

Louise Scullion

QUESTIONNAIRE: Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION

PRODUCT Outcomes generated throughout a collaboration.

- Is it important to define expected outcomes at the outset of a collaboration? Yes No Don't Know
- Is it important that the collaboration produces a tangible product as an end result? Yes No Don't Know
- Is it important that individuals' contributions are visible in the final product? Yes No Don't Know
- Which of these outcomes from collaboration do you think are important?

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- a shared vision (new perspective)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- a mutually beneficial process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- a mutually beneficial product	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- a shared creative process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- new methods of practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- individual and professional development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- solutions to complex problems	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....				

Comments:

METHODS Types of shared working processes adopted by a collaborative group.

- Which of the following shared working methods have you experienced through collaboration?

- Participatory (working within, and in response to a defined project structure)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Co-operative (assisting each other to achieve individual goals)	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Collective (working jointly to achieve group aims)	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Interactive (interacting through the exchange and manipulation of objects or processes)	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Partnership (shared vision developed over time - the desire to continue working together)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Collaboration (dynamic process, equal motivations, shared input, negotiation of shared vision)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....	

Comments:

TIMESCALE The duration of a collaboration.

- Is it important to clearly define the timescale of a collaborative project? Yes No Don't Know
- In your experience, has a collaboration come to a natural end regardless of timescale? Yes No Don't Know
- In your experience, has a collaboration developed into a long-term partnership? Yes No Don't Know
- Is the timescale of collaboration one of the main influencing factors on its success? Yes No Don't Know
- Do you prefer working on long-term or short-term collaborations? long-term short-term no preference

Comments:
** my collaborative work with matter is long term, however we collaborate with others on a short-term basis.*

Questionnaire Form © Karen Scopa 2000 Page 2 of 4

Figure 1.4: Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Louise Scullion

Louise Scullion

QUESTIONNAIRE: Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION				
ROLES The positions, input and responsibilities of individual collaborators.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it important to define the roles of individual collaborators at the beginning of a project? Is it important that individuals' roles are recognised by all the collaborators? Is it important that roles are equally balanced throughout a collaboration? Is it common for individuals' roles to change during a collaboration? 	Yes	No	Don't Know	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which of the following ways of developing individual roles within a collaboration have you found successful: 	VERY SUCCESSFUL	QUITE SUCCESSFUL	LEAST SUCCESSFUL	NOT SUCCESSFUL
- identifying individual areas of interest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- identifying skills through previous practices/ experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- specialist disciplines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- personality types	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- natural, evolving process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....				
Comments:				
OWNERSHIP The sense of authorship, control and purpose within a collaboration.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it important to develop a sense of individual ownership within a collaboration? Is it important to develop a sense of shared ownership amongst collaborators? 	Yes	No	Don't Know	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which of the following are important in developing a sense of shared ownership within a collaboration? 	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- the type of working environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- the development of 'shared space'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- the range and types of project aims	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- the clarity of individual roles & responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- the visibility of individual contributions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- the presence of trust between collaborators	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....				
Comments:				
TRUST Sharing a confident belief in the honesty and reliability of collaborators.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it important to trust potential collaborators before embarking on a project? Do you think trust is developed during the collaborative process? Is trust a product of collaboration? 	Yes	No	Don't Know	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How would you define a 'trusting relationship' between collaborators?... 				
<p><i>between Matthew and I this was established before we began working together and has subsequently grown we know each others strengths and together we work at keeping the philosophy of the practice in focus.</i></p>				
Comments:				

Figure 1.4: Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Louise Scullion

Louise Scullion

QUESTIONNAIRE: Core Characteristics of COLLABORATION				
COMMON GROUND The shared creative space created between collaborators.				
	Yes	No	Don't Know	
• Do you think 'shared space' is required for successful collaboration?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• How do you define 'shared space'?.....				
• What are the important functions of 'shared space' in a collaboration?				
- creating a democratic working environment	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- creating a platform for exchanging and sharing perspectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- generating an understanding of collaborators' individual languages	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- developing a shared vision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....				
• Which of the following methods for developing common ground between collaborators are successful?				
- individual presentations of past works	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
- sharing material and references from each discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- focusing discussion through a specific theme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- creating space for discussion about individual interests & concerns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- other (please describe).....				
Comments:				
PERSONAL REFLECTION				
• In your experience, what are the most beneficial factors of collaboration?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being able to make work I could not make on my own • having more confidence to face a client/audience. • more fun than being on ones own • ability to trashout / discuss and discard ideas. • Able to generate more income as artists, therefore perhaps sustaining our practice longer than we may have been able to do on our own? • Able to take on more work. 				
• In your experience, what are the main drawbacks of collaboration?				
<p>I honestly can't think of any ... ?</p>				
<p>This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for sharing your experiences of collaboration. (Please use the back page if you wish to add any other comments.)</p>				
Questionnaire Form © Karen Scopa 2000		Page 4 of 4		

Figure 1.4: Pre-interview Questionnaire Form: Louise Scullion

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1 **KS:** *I'm interested in your collaborative processes...*

2

3 **GY:** When you say 'what is the mode of operation'...do you lead, or are
4 you equal partners, or are you unequal partners? With the
5 example I just gave you, the abstract painter never dreamt of
6 approaching us, we approached her. We were proactive with the
7 idea, the partnership and the link. The old woman with the knitted
8 breakfasts (she's been knitting them for years and we genuinely
9 thought they were marvellous. I cannot knit and we thought they
10 were really nice and humorous - we just liked them and the
11 colours) could not or was not equipped to make the leap: that they
12 could be cast really accurately; it looks like knitting but is used as
13 'signage'. She didn't have a clue about what we were up to, so we
14 were unequal partners in some ways. In other ways we weren't:
15 we couldn't do it without her. Sometimes you're leading and
16 sometimes the expert (like the painter), as soon as she comes into
17 the frame, is leading us in the collaboration, so we've got to trust
18 her. The thing that is recurring for me is to respect people. If you
19 respect someone and you respect their talents, you've then got the
20 basis for collaboration. You haven't got a clue whether you're
21 going to do the lion's share of leading or if they're going to. It's
22 never, ever the same deal. There isn't a standard deal - its
23 different every time.

24

25 **KS:** *From your experience, how do attempt to build trust with someone*
26 *you don't know?*

27

28 **GY:** I proactively look and I proactively listen to people everywhere I
29 go. Because I'm obviously self-consciously looking for... I don't
30 know, just things that make me wonder or think, or talents that I
31 think, 'wow, I'm a fan'. I would love to own a lot of stuff that people
32 do but I can't afford to collect...but you can work with people. I'm

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33 frequently a big fan and that can be of blacksmithing or anything
34 whatsoever or I'm a fan of the person; I think that person is doing
35 a good job. That person's got certain talents or certain attitudes
36 that I really respond to and that's...I don't think it's uncommon.

37

38 **KS:** *Going back to the transition from when you were working*
39 *individually as a sculptor...*

40

41 **GY:** This is a long time ago...

42

43 **KS:** *Were there key points or stages when you became conscious*
44 *about wanting to collaborate? The difference between you and the*
45 *abstract painter, is that you saw the potential for her to collaborate*
46 *in designing a planting scheme, because of her use of colour...*

47

48 **GY:** But that was part of *my* agenda. It was not part of hers and there's
49 no reason why it should be. A painter, isolated in a studio, is a
50 valuable person in society as far as I'm concerned. It was part of
51 my agenda to look for talent that we didn't have, not hers. When I
52 was a young student, I thought I would like to work with other
53 people (because I'm sociable, I think) but I couldn't think of a way
54 of doing it and I don't think I personally had much to offer any
55 collaboration - either in terms of skills or techniques. I just had this
56 desire to work with people. I like people. I think that's the basis all
57 the time. I haven't found people difficult.

58

59 **KS:** *Have you had to change your practice to develop the skills to be*
60 *able to work with others?*

61

62 **GY:** There were a variety of reasons that accelerated it. For example,
63 I'd been doing these big carvings and a great big carving in a
64 public place equalled a year's bills, because I never wanted to

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65 teach. I had trouble with my hands and I could no longer physically
66 do a big carving a year to pay my mortgage - my hand was going
67 on me and I couldn't carve all week. The first job I did was the *Fish*
68 *Pavement* in Hull. A few mates helped me out because they knew
69 about my hand- its non-recoverable, I've got it and that's that. I
70 was really worried and I thought, 'how am I going to pay my bills if
71 this is my future?' The *Fish Pavement* worked with four or five of
72 us - all contributing and being paid. They all knew what they were
73 doing and I thought, 'hang on, this works'. This practice of working
74 with other people works: in that they're all happy with the money
75 they got, we're all happy with the result, I've paid my mortgage
76 and I've done a job that was far stronger than me working on my
77 own. I've worked on my own in isolation and I found the solitary bit
78 difficult, it's not easy. I respect artists who can work solitarily
79 month after month. The physical thing and the economic thing
80 forced me to think, 'well hang on, how can we all have a fair cut?'
81 I'm trying to safeguard paying my way really, so that was a very
82 *real* lever to deliberately furthering the practice. It wasn't because
83 it was fashionable or unfashionable. I did a series of about twelve
84 drawings with David Nash (they've never been shown) - I did
85 stone drawing, he did tree drawing and we did stone and tree
86 drawings. David was generous enough to say, "well yeah, two
87 people could do one drawing, it might be a possibility", although he
88 wasn't particularly interested in it himself. It was interesting but
89 never went anywhere further. So there were little instances...

90

91 **KS:** *Were there any key questions that came out of that experience for*
92 *you or was it an experiment that was put aside?*

93

94 **GY:** Well, you have problems because the tradition in Britain has
95 normally been 'rugged individualism'. To survive as an artist in
96 Britain you've got to be tough, you've got to be organised and

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97 you've got to manage your time. Consequently, a lot of artists in
98 this country have been 'well educated'. A lot of artists, when I
99 came out of college, had all been to public school. It wasn't simply
100 a class thing (that they could do business at dinner parties), it was
101 also because in public schools you're paying for that rugged
102 individualism; it was useful for running an empire! So
103 consequently, they were rugged individuals: they were individuals
104 who could take the social battering and survive as artists and I
105 think that was a component of it. I was suspicious of this kind of
106 rugged individual - I'm using David as a 'for instance' - but there's
107 a lot of people like him who were surviving partly because they
108 had been well educated in survival techniques, which the public
109 schools gave to a lot of artists; it's nothing to do with art. But from
110 my background and education, life wasn't like that.

111

112 **KS:** *Did you have access to examples of alternatives to this 'rugged*
113 *individualism'?*

114

115 **GY:** Of course I did. Absolutely. Definitely...

116

117 **KS:** *Where did they come from...did they come through college or after*
118 *that?*

119

120 **GY:** From life, college and after that. For example, I love Egyptian
121 carving. If you go to the Egyptian room in the British Museum:
122 there wasn't a single artist carving that big arm, there was a team
123 of people. If you read the history books about how these things
124 were done: they were done by a gang of Egyptians who all had
125 different components of the job to do. That was one example. The
126 other example was cathedrals. Even in Carlisle there's a
127 cathedral, which was definitely a team effort. There wasn't even an
128 architect. I remember doing a thesis at college about dry

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129 stonewalls in the English Lake District and I thought they were
130 unbelievable. They're incredible structures, they're anonymous
131 and there were gangs of people making them. For me they fulfilled
132 every aesthetic criteria: appropriateness of place, material, and
133 structurally brilliant in use of material. So, dry stonewalling was an
134 example and the sculpture department didn't discourage me from
135 researching that, but at the same time I was into 'rugged
136 individuals' like Brancusi, Picasso, and so on...

137

138 **KS:** *I'm interested in you talking about making a living from your*
139 *practice...*

140

141 **GY:** It's a proper job.

142

143 **KS:** *How are collaborative jobs different to individual jobs? Are there*
144 *are more opportunities for commissions and jobs if you work with*
145 *others? Have you raised funding to pay others to work on your*
146 *own projects?*

147

148 **GY:** Sometimes I have, yes. Sometimes we've raised quite large
149 amounts of money. Sometimes I haven't. The economic side is a
150 question and answer in itself because it differs per job. For
151 example, in the Plymouth project we opened a specific bank
152 account and did 'transparent accounts', so that anyone who was
153 on the job could have a look at the accounts and see where the
154 money was going on any component of it. That way we remained
155 friends on into the future. Finish the job and close the account.
156 Sometimes it's not like that; sometimes I'm running an account. So
157 the economic thing differs every time. ...A long time ago, I met a
158 Danish sculptor called Jorgen Haugen Sorensen, who is a
159 successful stone-carver. He was working in Britain, doing
160 exhibitions and I was working for him doing blue-collar work. He

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161 kept asking me, "Why do artists in Britain think they're artists and
162 teach in colleges? This is just nonsense; you're either an artist or
163 your not an artist. Why is Britain different?" He made me think: if
164 you don't see it as a proper job, you're never ever going to... I just
165 think that all these forces (which I thought were friendly forces),
166 i.e. teaching, part-time teaching, he saw as very unfriendly forces
167 to achieve anything as a creative person. He kept going on about
168 it and I kept thinking about it. For me, the consequence was
169 poverty (we got money from charity for artists who were destitute).
170 That was an economic consequence of following through his
171 theory, but it didn't stay like that. Because you're focused, you
172 become a better practitioner and bits and pieces of jobs start
173 materialising. By concentrating on this every day of the week - and
174 it becomes your life - you *do* get better at something than other
175 people. So a big issue for me was that guy saying you must treat it
176 as a proper job. A lot of artists I know are registered for VAT, or
177 they are limited, or they are self-employed, but that's no different
178 than craftspeople. At the stage I've got to now, I don't see that I'm
179 different to a design group, or a craftsperson. I'm no different from
180 small businesses. I *am* a small business. It's just no different to a
181 self-employed plumber.

182

183 **KS:** *You said you began by wanting to work with other people but not*
184 *knowing how to, and now that you've got a recognisable job like*
185 *everyone else. By working with other people, have you become*
186 *aware of skills that you have which you weren't aware of*
187 *otherwise, or of how they can be applied?*

188

189 **GY:** I think it's beyond skills. Skills come into it. You have certain skills
190 to trade and they can be mundane or complicated (I can weld, I
191 can...whatever). It doesn't matter what it is. It doesn't even have
192 to be a physical thing, but rather 'I can do something well', so

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193 you've got something to trade. The other thing is personalities:
194 people gravitate to certain jobs. One of the people I work with (and
195 he's really good) hates any hassle whatsoever. In a situation
196 where there's got to be a confrontation (like 'this is unsatisfactory')
197 he cannot cope with it. So frequently I'm pushed into the situation
198 where I've got to deal with it. There's other situations where I
199 stand back and I let them deal with it. You've just met a guy that I
200 collaborate with [Reg Haslem] and in certain situations - it could be
201 to do with money or committees or a certain 'respectability' (a man
202 in a suit) - he leads it and I'm quite happy. In other situations, I'm
203 leading him. So you gravitate to your strengths.

204

205 **KS:** *Do you think 'personality' makes you take on these roles?*

206

207 **GY:** When we started (there were two or three of us) we looked for
208 strong personalities with strong 'autographs' who could put up with
209 us, because we all can argue and fight our corner. We looked for
210 (and we *still* look for) strong 'autographs' - this person has a strong
211 autograph that's entirely different to mine, but that's why we want
212 it. We used to look for people like that. What happened is that life
213 gets more complicated and isn't black and white. You get a strong
214 character who has weaknesses and they could be anything - it
215 could be personality weakness... All you do is cover the
216 weaknesses and play to the strengths. So, if they're not very good
217 with organising their time and money, you organise their time and
218 money for them. There's one craftsperson in particular (I've heard
219 this craftsperson written off again and again) who is not successful
220 because of their weakness, but I kept looking at their work thinking
221 'this is a really talented person'. Basically, it's sorting out devices
222 to cover people's strengths and weaknesses: you play them to
223 their strengths and you cover their weaknesses.

224

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225 **KS:** *Do people know that you are doing this? Is it an explicit process?*

226

227 **GY:** Sometimes we do, we discuss it. Some people are interested in
228 discussing it but sometimes people have no interest whatsoever
229 and it's inappropriate to discuss it. You've still got objectives and
230 you head towards the objectives. Some people have no interest
231 whatsoever in what's going on and they've no interest that they're
232 collaborating. They just want their pay or their component and
233 that's fine; if it's within the direction that the crew are heading.

234

235 **KS:** *Does the stage that you become involved in projects differ from*
236 *project to project?*

237

238 **GY:** Yeah, it does differ.

239

240 **KS:** *But you were involved from the early stages in the project with*
241 *Reg Haslem...*

242

243 **GY:** With that particular project, it was the very early stages. Basically,
244 he had little money and wanted to get a sculptor to make a
245 sculpture. I'd experienced the job of working with the little team on
246 the *Fish Pavement*, so I already had a sketch pad with a certain
247 feel and he looked through it and it was a case of, "How can we
248 allocate these limited resources and take this further than just
249 sticking a sculpture into an impoverished place? It's so poor that it
250 would have no effect whatsoever". It was seen simply as seed
251 money for heading elsewhere and so the partnership was formed
252 early in the day because we just didn't have the resources and
253 they were desperate. Basically, Reg wanted intellectual input more
254 than anything and so that's what he was paying for. It wasn't so
255 much about doing a sketchpad - I did do sketch pads - but it
256 wasn't that. A lot of the value, I thought, was in throwing a spanner

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257 into the works - the conceptual works of where they were heading
258 - and Reg responded really quickly on the first day. Two women
259 put this together, who suspected that it could be interesting:
260 Virginia Tandy and Caroline Prinnit. They were both in there very
261 early thinking, 'Hey, this could be interesting', and it was to a
262 greater extent than we'd have dreamt – it had a far humbler
263 beginning than you'd imagine.

264

265 **KS:** *And you were involved in these initial meetings?*

266

267 **GY:** All of them. The thing I found interesting was that Reg actually
268 insisted that I read research. He said, "I don't just want 'suspicions
269 of' or 'feelings of'. I have commissioned this research about our
270 problems. This is factual information, go and read it". It was the
271 first time anyone had ever said, "go and read it" - I mean they all
272 assume we're thick, don't they? So I went and read it and I could
273 understand what the fundamental issues and problems were. Any
274 person with the desire to read it could understand what the
275 research said. It wasn't just useful, it was really interesting and I
276 thought, 'Bloody hell, what can we do with this?' I found it *very*
277 interesting and stimulating but by the same token, I don't see why
278 another person - another artist - should find it in the least bit
279 interesting. It just happens to be interesting to me. ...I don't
280 know... again and again it's bespoke tailoring for the people and
281 the situation and the job.

282

283 **KS:** *How then, would you convince someone to work with an artist?*

284

285 **GY:** Why should I? It could be a crap artist on a crap job. I make value
286 judgements. I don't think everything's 'wonderful marvellous'. I
287 think there are some crap artists so how could I say to them,
288 'Have an artist?' It could also be a crap client...

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289

290 **KS:** *But let's suppose you are approaching someone to work with. How*
291 *do you sell yourself to them? What is your function as an artist?*

292

293 **GY:** You just unpack all the information you have. You share the
294 information. You unpack everything - 'Do you find that interesting
295 or relevant?' If the person is triggered or interested, you're up and
296 flying. If they're not interested, or brain dead... sometimes you
297 cannot. I have a small element of choice. One of the parts of that
298 element of choice is trying to sort out in the people (the client if
299 you like, the hirer, the person with the problem) whether there's
300 empathy for you and what you're doing. Whether they respect
301 what you're up to, because I did one job - which involved a large
302 amount of money – but there was no respect and it was totally
303 unproductive.

304

305 **KS:** *Was this job completed?*

306

307 **GY:** The job was completed but I wouldn't put it on a CV and I think the
308 person is a shit. For me, that's not profitable but it can happen.
309 Now, I put some energy into thinking 'Is this worth doing?' I want
310 to be careful where I place my energies. You just want to be
311 careful who you contribute with. I can work *with* anybody, but I
312 can't work *for* anybody. Normally I'll work all hours if I'm working
313 *with* somebody... When I was a kid, I remember talking to an old
314 Irish guy called Ocean Kelly (I later found out he was a well known
315 artist - he's dead now) and he said to me, "People can work for
316 lolly or the lash; they can work for fear or bribes or they can work
317 for dreams". I think that's about the tightest insight into why people
318 work that you could have; it's like that. If people subscribe to
319 something, it's like, 'Let's dream a cathedral'; they go the extra
320 mile. If it's the fear of unemployment or the fear of not paying the

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321 bills, then it's basically the lash, isn't it? You've got your choice
322 and you get the consequences... I think there's an element of truth
323 in that. So, you're trying to work on jobs where the whole lot of you
324 subscribe to it, so the whole lot of you give it your best shot.

325

326 **KS:** *What part of your practice now is most interesting and most*
327 *different to working individually?*

328

329 **GY:** The surprises with people who are willing to collaborate. I think the
330 surprises can be a social thing. There's a bigger thing happening
331 in this country, way beyond art or culture. I think some of it's to do
332 with technology, some of it's to do with where we are historically –
333 the millennium is bigger than just a tent and a calendar. I get
334 continuously surprised by the people who are talking to me
335 seriously or treating me respectfully. Like going into the chemistry
336 department of the university of Hull, when I'd never been in a
337 science department in my life; I never did 'O' Level chemistry or
338 physics. These very successful chemists, who invented liquid
339 crystal were saying, "Why not this, or this?" and treated me
340 seriously even though I know nothing about chemistry whatsoever;
341 it shocked me that I was sitting talking to these chemists. You get
342 surprises like that... I never dreamt I'd work with an old knitting
343 biddy who I like. That's the thing I really like: the surprises.

344

345 **KS:** *Is it you who goes out and contacts these people? Is this your*
346 *role?*

347

348 **GY:** You're saying is it you? It's part of my agenda so it must be me
349 because I want to do it, but they've got to be a willing participant.
350 There is a kind of (how can I put it) 'arms open' attitude, an
351 attitude of 'well, lets see', which I find recurring. This, 'well, lets
352 see', wasn't there five or ten years ago.

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353

354 **KS:** *What, do you think, has caused that shift?*

355

356 **GY:** It's just social change. I think a lot of people are up for new
357 thoughts. Technology is making us having to rethink. Society is
358 making us have to rethink. I feel that a lot of it is economic. I think
359 that the forces of capitalism and making money are forcing it on
360 people anyway. I work with some young people who are
361 successful economically and very talented. They might be
362 technocrats, they might not, but the reason they're successful is
363 they've got talents to trade. So there's not the assumption that
364 because you're doing art you're going to be doing it at rock
365 bottom. You shouldn't be looking at the profit motive all the time
366 (not at all) because that's not the point of being an artist (otherwise
367 you'd run a business), but a lot of talented people are successful
368 economically. If you're working in a partnership, it's just the forces
369 of supply and demand. If there's a problem solving built
370 environment issues, the people who are going to be successful
371 are the people that come up with the good, or satisfactory,
372 solutions. It's forces as basic as that forcing the collaborations.
373 ...We had an industrial revolution (and we weren't even aware of it
374 at the time) and I just think that we're the first into another one. I
375 find it interesting that even studios and workshops in central
376 London are physically different because of the computers in them.
377 You can have two people in a really successful company and it's
378 physically not a factory - it doesn't require factory surrounds. I
379 suspect the reason why it's exciting, why there are these
380 partnerships, is because of historic forces. We're probably in there
381 early. We are not bad at reinventing ourselves in Britain.
382 Recurring, there have been re-inventions of what we do and how
383 we do it, using our wits and imaginations. I think we're not bad at

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384 it. I don't think there's any book that tells you 'you must change by
385 doing this' - I think it just happens.

386

387 **KS:** *A report by Dr. Claire Cohen, exploring collaborations between*
388 *artists and scientists, identified that although the collaborators*
389 *shared the desire to work together, there was a noticed imbalance*
390 *between the artists' individual approach and the scientists, who*
391 *had a strong support structure within in the scientific community*
392 *and also, differences of language were found to create problems...*

393

394 **GY:** I could believe that. I could believe the problems with language but
395 we have problems of language with other professions, not just the
396 science profession. To get a shared language takes a little bit of
397 time. It's not immediate. You assume people are picking up on
398 what you are saying and it's not the case. So the shared language
399 - getting used to how somebody expresses themselves - is a
400 recurring issue.

401

402 **KS:** *Does your work oppose traditional ideas about the role of an*
403 *individual artist... I think it was Schiller who said that the poet's*
404 *role was that of commentator and that they shouldn't try to create*
405 *change, because they should be a distanced commentator...*

406

407 **GY:** I don't have a problem with that. I think if he needed to say that, he
408 should say that, but you could have another who would disagree
409 with him completely and say that their role had different functions.

410

411 **KS:** *Have you chosen other roles and functions?*

412

413 **GY:** Maybe. I think it's unfashionable and unpopular to have a
414 Constructivist tradition. What I'm doing is in a Constructivist
415 tradition but without the historic style. If you look at what they were

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416 trying to do by inventing bicycles that flew, or clothes or trains...

417 You can name a hundred and one things that people tried to do -

418 within a short period of time – and they didn't do that under

419 duress; there were volunteers to try things. That was a specific

420 tradition but it's unpopular at this point in time. It's not an issue of

421 *style* it's a tradition of *attitude*. That's my position and what I want

422 to do but at the same time, if somebody wants to paint all the time

423 in social solitude, I would back it to the hilt. I'm not saying that all

424 artists should go off and practice like I practice.

425

426 **KS:** *I agree, but there is, or perhaps was, a model of individual practice*

427 *and you've chosen a different model...*

428

429 **GY:** Yeah, there is, definitely. The artists and people on the current

430 Arts Council Committee have a specific ideology, a very specific

431 worldview. They say that the things I'm interested in gives you bad

432 art to start with. I'm not focused on the specifics of the aesthetic

433 (which I do, but that's another issue) but they would say that my

434 agenda is a priori bad and they rule the roost and I don't have a

435 problem with that. It doesn't stop me existing. They just have a

436 certain worldview.

437

438 **KS:** *Is it 'bad' because you apply art?*

439

440 **GY:** We all do, don't we?

441

442 **KS:** *You apply it in non-art contexts, with others?*

443

444 **GY:** I consciously try to.

445

446 **KS:** *You said that you are no different to a designer...are you a*

447 *problem-solver, are you a...*

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448

449 **GY:** People have said to me 'Oh Gordon, I'm worried about you, you're
450 turning into *merely* a designer' and I'm saying hang on, I'm
451 working with '*merely*' designers who are so talented that this
452 '*merely*' the designer makes my blood boil. So, OK, I can be
453 '*merely*' a designer, '*merely* a problem-solver...the snobbery
454 between these domains of practice! I'd rather *merely* be a knitter
455 or '*merely*' a graphic designer if its come to that. It's hierarchies
456 gone mad.

457

458 **KS:** *You've also chosen a different audience - you mentioned that the*
459 *artworld is the last sector you would think of informing about your*
460 *work...*

461

462 **GY:** Yeah. Consciously. Deliberately. That's been for quite a while.

463

464 **KS:** *Can you remember why you felt it important to break away?*

465

466 **GY:** I've been in very close proximity and I know how it works.

467

468 **KS:** *Was there a cut off point, or a gradual transition in situating your*
469 *practice elsewhere?*

470

471 **GY:** I got a full-time job at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park when it had
472 just opened. The guy who ran it then had a remit, to make work in
473 Yorkshire so that people could see it there. I see it as a big game
474 park now but at the time I thought it was - it is - important. I'd drive
475 tractors and site things. It was a job I could do and be paid and I
476 subscribed to what I was doing and I liked the 'whys' of doing it. I
477 learnt a lot from coming cheek by jowl with 'successful' artists, like
478 Sir Anthony Caro, whose work I like. I don't have a problem with
479 him or his work or 'Romantic Formalism' - it's just not my agenda.

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480

481 **KS:** *Considering your current practice, what makes you look back*
482 *critically at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park now, whilst you can still*
483 *respect it?*

484

485 **GY:** Well, it's just that more and more people realise that you can do
486 things on a bigger stage. The grounds of an old stately home were
487 useful in terms of what people were making then; it was useful to
488 show art to anyone who wanted a nice place to go or walk and that
489 background was really valuable. When I was young, I'd seen a
490 similar approach in Holland and it had impressed me. I didn't see
491 why it shouldn't impress other people, but you've got to have the
492 opportunity - you can't all go to Holland, so it was useful. But
493 there's been a massive change in the last twenty years - people
494 have cottoned on and are interested and we have potential clients
495 and audiences that didn't exist 15 years ago. They just didn't exist
496 and now they do. It's progress.

497

498 **KS:** *Has your work always been quite concerned with or conscious of*
499 *social issues?*

500

501 **GY:** Yeah.

502

503 **KS:** *Has this become more developed through your current practice?*

504

505 **GY:** It's developed from all kinds of things. I went to Art College to do A
506 levels (we didn't have a Sixth Form College) and at the end, I said
507 'I'm going to do a foundation course, I want to do Fine Art', but this
508 guy had categorised me for a vocational graphics course and said,
509 'Don't do fine art'. I thought 'stuff that' and went and did the
510 degree. I had Terry Atkinson (of Art and Language) from Barnsley,
511 who treated me better than other students just because I had a

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512 Leeds scarf and a Northern accent. It was useful. to give you
513 confidence on a degree, where all the posh lads and lassies were
514 getting hassled and browbeaten and I had someone who was soft
515 with me. Really, that was useful, but it was things like that.

516

517 **KS:** *If someone saw the projects you'd been involved in (for example in*
518 *Morecambe or Plymouth) and asked you to do the same for*
519 *another town, would you?*

520

521 **GY:** No, they've missed the point. We've had that. They've missed the
522 point entirely. People say 'Oh, Gordon, he does thematic work',
523 just because I've done two thematic jobs. They miss the point. I
524 only did a thematic job because it seemed appropriate to the
525 situation. I could have a business setting up walks, or museums -
526 I've done a successful museum, but it's not the agenda. The
527 agenda is to do *different* things.

528

529 **KS:** *What gives you the opportunity to move on to new things?*

530

531 **GY:** The desire to move on?

532

533 **KS:** *Or the opportunity to move on?*

534

535 **GY:** You've got to see the opportunity or be offered the opportunity. It's
536 about interest. We're not here very long and life would be boring if
537 it was about repeating things.

538

539 **KS:** *Is a project-based way of working support your development?*

540

541 **GY:** I keep tabs on some of the people who recurringly work with us
542 and I think that on an individual level, those people are changing
543 too. Talk to Russell Coleman or Owen Cunningham or Jonathan

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544 Carter. They change as individuals as much as the projects. I think
545 the reason why we're getting better, is that we're getting better at
546 certain things as individuals. We're getting better at
547 communicating as individuals and we're getting better as a group
548 at certain things.

549

550 **KS:** *How many are in the core group?*

551

552 **GY:** Well, everybody's just self-employed artists, but there's a person
553 in Hull, a person in Derbyshire, and frequently a person in
554 Glossop. Then there's key characters who recurrently rub
555 shoulders alongside that core group of three or four. We all
556 discuss these things; those three or four certainly would. One
557 person is Johnathan Carter in the museum world, one is Reg
558 Haslem, one is Juliet Dean, one is Andy Altmann, and one is
559 Rocco Redondo. Some people are interested because they think
560 that you are extending the parameters of what is art. It's
561 interesting to us but it's not the primary motive. It does interest us
562 that you can extend the parameters so that it's more embracing...
563 I think that the reason a lot of people don't know what to make of it
564 is because they haven't cottoned on to how far ahead in
565 expanding the parameters you've reached. It's like the woman in
566 America [artist, Suzanne Lacy], with the manipulation of the
567 media, which I understand completely.

568

569 **KS:** *Were you conscious of expanding boundaries and of what that*
570 *meant?*

571

572 **GY:** Yes, but I don't think that anybody else was interested. Frequently
573 you have clients or collaborators who have no interest in that
574 whatsoever but I think that's healthy. I think the more you cover
575 the pitch and make it unpure, the better. Personally, I'm not a

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576 purist but then again, I've always been a fan of Brancusi, which
577 seems to me crazy. I love what he did but that pursuit of 'pure
578 essence' is not for me.

579

580 **KS:** *Who do you want the work to benefit?*

581

582 **GY:** I just want to keep working. Even in a big gang, we don't achieve
583 much. Let's not beat about the bush; we don't even scratch the
584 surface. I have no illusions; we don't get far... Russell once said
585 about a year ago (this is a lad I work with) he said, 'You remind me
586 of Tinguely. You use people as Tinguely uses rubbish' and I said,
587 'I don't know if that's a complement or an insult'. In one way, it's a
588 funny thing for him to say but I know why he said it. I don't think
589 it's right but it was a humorous, throwaway comment, which I
590 found quite interesting coming from him because he knows my
591 thoughts.

592

593 **KS:** *A Viennese artists group, Wochenclausen, sometimes manipulate*
594 *decision-makers to get projects to happen... their tactic is straight*
595 *in, straight out...*

596

597 **GY:** They're working in an interesting tradition. One person who
598 interests me is Hunderwasser. I think his architecture and his
599 buildings are really interesting, and his assaults on architects and
600 attitudes to building. He's interesting because he doesn't just
601 theorise, he actually gives you concrete models - he gives you
602 buildings and streets. It's not just theory; there's the practice as
603 well. He is a painter, but that's the kind of impurity I like. I would
604 not like the whole of Vienna, or the whole of the world to look like
605 his work, but it's great when you come across these places where
606 he's done it. His attention to his own specific wackiness is
607 wonderful; you just feel human all over again.

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608

609 **KS:** *How has working with other disciplines changed the time-scale of*
610 *your practice? Is there a longer process before you get to the*
611 *making stage?*

612

613 **GY:** What people miss is the thinking. I think that the time to think is
614 the total root of everything. It's not a case of practice versus
615 theory; it's a one-all draw. There's got to be a theoretical basis - it
616 can change or be wrong, but you've got to have it. Working with
617 Reg was really interesting because there was theoretical talk, but
618 we actually put it into practice. So what you see there is the result
619 of a lot of hard work and a lot of arguments and discussions to do
620 with how we move forward.

621

622 **KS:** *For how long?*

623

624 **GY:** About six years, on that particular job. We had the time because
625 we had pockets of activity, pockets of work, but we were thinking
626 beyond the pocket of work. There are details to do with that
627 particular schedule that's specific but the dialogue - the debate -
628 was going on way beyond the specificness. So we could be
629 installing rocks on roundabouts with a specific artist or a specific
630 landscape architect and there's the issues of the funding and so
631 on, but the rocks on the roundabouts were only a detail of the
632 bigger dialogue that was going on. It's as good as the person...
633 I've met some people where you go round and round in circles and
634 nothing comes out of the theory or the dialogue and again, some
635 people that can't be arsed with theory or dialogue and they run on
636 headless and you can see where they go. It's a case of balance.

637

638 **KS:** *You're involved in the evolutionary process...*

639

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640 **GY:** Well, just for me...for me I am.

641

642 **KS:** *Suppose someone has done all the feasibility and development*
643 *work, and they want an artist to contribute to a particular part*
644 *...would you be interested?*

645

646 **GY:** Sometimes, because its like a relay race. I've passed the baton to
647 you; you run and do it your way. Sometimes you pass the baton to
648 me. When you work with an architect on a building it's frequently
649 like that. They've made a lot of fundamental decisions and then
650 you've got to make the decision 'yes; I like this building or project. I
651 will take the baton and run with it'. So, sometimes you do work like
652 that; sometimes it's the other way... There's projects where I'm
653 trying to hand over and get out to do something fresh, and there's
654 other projects where the parameters are set and there's a very
655 specific job and its a case of saying 'yes' or 'no'. The only freedom
656 we have is the freedom to say no... you can say 'no, I don't want
657 to do that'. It's not clear-cut. It's not that case that every job I start
658 and then pass the baton on - it's not like that. I'm working with
659 Alan Stanton and he's done all the donkeywork - I haven't done it -
660 and I listen to him. There's another job that I won't be involved in
661 for two years, because other people are doing what you've
662 described. So in two years time, I've got to go and say either, 'this
663 is really interesting', or 'I'm not interested in this'. At the moment
664 I'm trying to get out of a job. It was really exciting and interesting
665 but I cannot subscribe to the way its taken shape and I don't want
666 to be involved in it. In the past, I might have gone along with it but
667 at the present time I can say, 'somebody else can do it'. You've
668 got to feel *comfortable* - that's the word - with yourself that it's
669 worth doing. I'll do any compartment of the schedule providing I
670 subscribe to it and it's interesting. There's no one model - all the
671 time, you're judging it on it's own merits.

Interview 1 Transcript: Gordon Young
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672

673 **KS:** *Is 'artist' an appropriate title to describe what you do?*

674

675 **GY:** Funnily enough, over a decade ago, I used to insist that I wasn't
676 an artist I was a sculptor. What's happened is that 'artist' is a
677 definition that is elastic. So I've adopted that not for any other
678 reason than its elastic enough for me to do all sorts of work in all
679 kinds of media, and in all kinds of styles, because its not a
680 question of style, it's not a question of media. They are issues but
681 they are side issues, not *the* issue. You can have an artist whose
682 whole work is a question of style, but it misses the point as far as
683 I'm concerned.

684

685 **KS:** *What is the point? Can you sum it up for me?*

686

687 **GY:** ...Quality. Excellence. To do your best. I just feel that if you can't
688 see the problems when you travel around Britain, there's
689 something wrong with your senses. If you're waiting for grown-ups
690 to solve them (I've been waiting and then suddenly I realised that I
691 was a grown-up and that it was my turn)... If you look around you
692 and you see the problems, you're in this dilemma that whatever
693 you do, you just can't solve them. You can only do your best.
694 ...For example this is a model - we're in an icon [De La Warr
695 Pavillion] that's an excellent model of 1920s practice. You can only
696 throw out models and hope that another generation follows it up
697 and does something better. All you're trying to do is leave markers
698 and models. It's a tautology, where you're trying for something and
699 you know before you've even started that it's impossible to
700 achieve. Jorgen Haugen Sorensen was right - it's either for real or
701 it isn't for real. It's a lot easier than you think. You've got to get on
702 with it. You look at the models and if they are not applicable for
703 you, you just do your best.

Interview 2 Transcript: James Marriot
'Platform', 7 Horselydown Lane, Tower Bridge, London (20/6/00)

- 1 **KS:** *Perhaps you could begin by describing 'Platform'?*
- 2
- 3 **JM:** What Platform does as it currently stands, is bring people
4 together from the arts and the sciences to create projects which
5 utilise the individuals' creative abilities to make projects about
6 ecological and democratic issues. The work that we do is
7 focused largely in our home, which is London and Tidal Thames
8 Valley, although we work elsewhere also. Platform has been
9 going since 1983 and it's changed through many different forms
10 during that time. In terms of origin, it really began as a kind of
11 meeting point between two different individuals - myself and Dan
12 Gretton, whom I've worked with ever since.
- 13
- 14 **KS:** *Are you both artists?*
- 15
- 16 **JM:** No, but that's what's interesting. I came from a theatre
17 background; I wrote and directed plays. We met at Cambridge
18 University in the early eighties when there was a lot of theatre
19 going on. Although there was a very fine theatre tradition, it was
20 extremely un-engaged in political, social and ecological issues as
21 I saw it. Dan had experienced being a political activist - heavily
22 involved in the National Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
23 (CND) and in student politics – and also felt there was a lack of
24 creative imagination in that sphere. It didn't answer his desires
25 for creative expression and he felt that it was stultified by a lack
26 of a creative expression. So, already at the core was a
27 collaboration between an artist and a political activist. There are
28 different fields of collaboration that take place in Platform's work.
- 29
- 30 The first field is the collaboration that takes place between the
31 core members. The core number goes up and down a bit: at the
32 moment it's three, at other times it's been four or five. The way

Interview 2 Transcript: James Marriot

'Platform', 7 Horselydown Lane, Tower Bridge, London (20/6/00)

33 we work has always been the same: we work on a consensual
34 basis and a democratic basis. Democracy is a very wide term but
35 in our understanding, we're trying to work on a flat basis. In
36 sixteen years we've never taken a vote on anything - we argue it
37 out until we all come to an understanding. So at the core of what
38 we do (whether we're discussing a new carpet or an issue; for
39 example 'form') we're collaborating and trying to do that. It's
40 important also to understand that Jane comes from a different
41 tradition. She trained as an art teacher and is at heart a
42 pedagogue, but also trained as a musician and is very skilled in
43 violin and piano. Similarly, as an artist, I was never just
44 interested in the arts. I was always interested in writing and being
45 a player, and am particularly interested in the history of ideas.
46 Dan, as a political activist was a writer largely, so you could say
47 that there's a process of collaboration - or 'battle' - that's going
48 on within each individual anyway.

49
50 Between us, there's a process of collaboration that takes place
51 all the time and it's very important. At other times there's been
52 more people: we had somebody from an economics background
53 who worked in a major merchant bank, and we had somebody
54 from a performance background who was involved in radical
55 activism, like 'Reclaim the Streets'. Always, there's a
56 collaboration at the core and then we do projects which take
57 place over time. The process of collaboration takes place all the
58 time and I think the interesting thing is that because we're
59 collaborating from different aspects, you would get a slightly
60 different interpretation if you talk to each of us. I tend to look at it
61 from the point of view of a visual artist. Although I was involved in
62 theatre, I drifted slowly into visual arts and went back to college
63 to study as a sculptor. I tend to look at things as a visual artist
64 and would say that Platform is essentially not an organisation, but

Interview 2 Transcript: James Marriot

'Platform', 7 Horselydown Lane, Tower Bridge, London (20/6/00)

65 an artwork - a conceptual artwork. So that one is constantly in
66 the process of forming and reforming the thing - you're constantly
67 working on it.

68

69 **KS:** *So, the structure is the practice?*

70

71 **JM:** The structure is the practice. We're constantly in a process of
72 saying, 'how are we going to structure this?' We tear the thing
73 up from the floorboards about every year and re-design what we
74 do. We've just re-designed the way we describe ourselves now
75 as being in three zones: process, production and pedagogy,
76 which we've never done before - it used to be in a different
77 shape. That's a constant, ongoing process and I think it's really
78 important, so that the actual organism that is this institution
79 reflects the people who are in it. They've made it themselves.
80 They've helped make it and constantly re-make it. I see that as a
81 sculptural process, a forming process. You've got that organism
82 in the middle and then we also do productions, or projects, and
83 those take place because we're working in collaboration with
84 other disciplines.

85

86 **KS:** *Are the projects normally seeded from within the core group?*

87

88 **JM:** Yes, absolutely. They're always seeded from within the group.
89 The projects are a constant flow of the work - much like a painter
90 who's just rolling on and then it comes out in forms of projects,
91 as it were. I'll just show you something...this is a flow chart of all
92 the work that we've done since '83. What you can see there are
93 different processes of flow. The way these projects work varies a
94 lot but the most easily explainable is 'Still Waters', which is
95 perhaps the one that we're best known for and is also, for us, a
96 kind of archetype of 'how to collaborate' in a particular type of

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97 way - although I think we now feel that there are problems with it.
98 We wanted to do this project about the buried rivers of London,
99 which is trying to look at the relationships between the City and
100 the bioregion on which it's built. All metropoli are built on some
101 geological formation: for example, Edinburgh is on an old
102 volcano. London is fundamentally, we felt, built on the upstream
103 end of a tidal valley and that's what it's about, from a certain
104 ecological perspective. We wanted to look at how the city related
105 to that biosphere, how it didn't, and how it might. So, roughly
106 speaking you've got two lumps of hills: one in the north, which is
107 Hampstead Heath; one in the south which is Crystal Palace, and
108 running down from that into the Thames are fourteen rivers and
109 all but four of them are buried.

110

111 We wanted to talk about the revival of these rivers as a kind of
112 utopian provocation, not only about the rivers themselves, about
113 trying to encourage people to re-think the concept of the city. We
114 structured the project by deciding to work on four of the rivers -
115 two south and two north - and to build projects around that. So,
116 in the south we worked on the Wandle and the Effra and in the
117 north we worked on the Walbrook and the Fleet. Projects were
118 structured around pairs of people. We decided, quite formulaicly,
119 that we would try to have a gender balance a balance between
120 an artist and a non-artist. But life is more complicated and on the
121 Walbrook it didn't quite work out that way - we had a
122 performance artist working with a clinical psychotherapist but
123 they were both male. On the Fleet we had a political activist
124 (largely) working with a teacher. On the Wandle, I was working
125 as a sculptor with an economist (a Green economist) and on the
126 Effra, a performance artist was working with a publicist, an
127 advertising person. So there were eight different people and an
128 administrator as well. Eight people from eight different fields, split

Interview 2 Transcript: James Marriot
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129 into groups but working together as a whole. It worked
130 surprisingly successfully. So that's a form of collaboration.
131

132 **KS:** *Do you think it is essential to have an external facilitator?*
133

134 **JM:** ...Not necessarily. She was an administrator; she wasn't really a
135 facilitator. She provided the fundamental administrative
136 background to make sure that the whole thing ticked over.
137

138 **KS:** *Was the structure formally decided by the group of people to be*
139 *involved in 'Still Waters'?*
140

141 **JM:** Yes...well, no. Within the core group we decided how we would
142 structure it and then went out with ridiculous briefs - like, to find a
143 female economist - and it didn't always work out. I think it all
144 depends on people working together. We found that the process
145 of collaboration worked very well, partly because it was a
146 system, which came out of a lot of... By that time we'd been
147 working for about ten years and we'd figured out things that
148 hadn't worked. What was good about it, I think, is that the pairs
149 of people working intensively together would come to a wider
150 forum of nine people including themselves, and there was
151 interplay between those different people. At the beginning in '83,
152 we had a sort of - what I would call - amateur Maoism: that
153 everybody was equal; everybody was doing everything. We
154 worked on a sort of slogan, 'the lights-person can dance', and we
155 had 'the five directors principal': that everybody would write,
156 direct and perform, and that was the flat structure. I think that
157 we've moved quite a long way from that. The pairs worked very
158 well but I think that there were certain sorts of problems which
159 didn't arise because we had such a short time-span, but might
160 have arisen if it had been a longer time-span.

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161

162 **KS:** *For example?*

163

164 **JM:** Well, I've always been (we've all been) very interested by the
165 work of Joseph Beuys and through Beuys, the work of Rudolph
166 Steiner. Beuys took loads of ideas from Steiner and one of the
167 things Steiner talks about is called the Dreigliederung; which
168 means 'the three spheres'. He had an interesting idea, that there
169 are three different dimensions in which people can operate: in
170 the Geistesleben [trans: spiritual-life], which means the spiritual
171 dimension - you need liberty; in the Rechtsleben [trans: law-life],
172 which is the kind of 'rights' sphere, you need democracy and in
173 the Wirtschaftsleben [trans: economy-life], which is the sort of
174 'material' sphere, you need socialism. He's talking about the
175 need for these different balances and he illustrates it by flipping it
176 over by saying, for example, that if you apply Socialism across all
177 boards, you get the kind of art (in the creative sphere) that you
178 get under a Socialist society, which often tends to be very
179 negative. Or, if you apply Liberty across the board, Liberty is
180 killed because there is inequality. I personally find those three
181 spheres very interesting in relation to the work that we do.

182

183 What does that mean practically? Well we've already talked
184 about the fact that we try to work democratically: between the
185 three of us we try to work absolutely equally, we try to discuss
186 everything equally, everybody's got the same rights, everybody's
187 got to discuss it, and we argue it out until we come to a decision.
188 In the economic sphere, we have a very odd system of waging,
189 where each person comes to the core and we say, "What do you
190 need?" We discuss, for example, your clothes budget, your rent
191 budget, everything - how much you spend on food, how much
192 you spend on magazines, how much you spend on debts. It is all

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193 out in the open, which is a tedious process and quite difficult
194 because people would rather talk about their sex lives than talk
195 about money. But it's important so that I know, as much as
196 possible, that if for example, there's a wage cut, that the pain
197 falls equally on Jane as it does on me or Dan and that's an
198 important thing.

199

200 **KS:** *Is this your process of building trust before working together?*

201

202 **JM:** Well...not necessary before but it's part of the ongoing process. I
203 think it's very important because money can rip everything to
204 shreds and generally is the thing that does rip things to shreds.
205 In one way, it's nothing to do with what you're trying to do and in
206 other ways it's got everything to do with it.

207

208 The other thing is the question of liberty - we need to work
209 collectively but without strangling the possibility that someone
210 might need to work independently and that's a very interesting
211 interplay. How much do people go off and do their own thing?
212 We've used metaphors: it's a mistake for someone (even when
213 you know each other really well) to come and bring an idea too
214 soon to a group. The shoot needs to have come above ground. If
215 you bring the seed, people don't understand it and they trample
216 on it by mistake and then you can be really hurt. There is a time
217 when you need to allow somebody just to be completely free
218 doing what they want to do - we're not going to ask you any
219 questions, we're going to support you doing what you're doing,
220 we trust you to be able to carry on and we know that something
221 will come out of it in the end. I think that is a very, very important
222 dimension. To give an example, this set here [an installation for a
223 performance] is the physical part of a piece of work that Dan has
224 worked on, almost independently, for three years. For a long

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225 time, there didn't seem to be much to show for it (it wasn't three
226 years consistently) but it was important for us to say, "well, carry
227 on and do it, we believe you", but at the same time saying, "come
228 on now, lets see something" - because it is important for him to
229 know that there's someone cracking a whip a bit, but it was also
230 important for him to know that he's allowed to stray a bit. At the
231 same time - this is where ego's come into play - he knows that
232 while he's creating, although he's working independently, he's
233 actually part of all of us and that therefore this isn't Dan Gretton:
234 it's Platform. That's important because we work as one 'group
235 ego', or 'group artist'.

236

237 **KS:** *For an external project like Still Waters, do you have some kind*
238 *of 'ground rules' to ensure people are equally motivated? Does it*
239 *matter if somebody dips in and out? How does it work?*

240

241 **JM:** This is a very interesting question. I think these different spheres
242 I was just talking about apply centrally to the core - the
243 collaboration that goes on in the core. However, you see mirrors
244 of that in the projects. For example, on a basic level, everybody's
245 paid on the same flat fee - there's no distinction. Although we, as
246 the core, have said, 'OK, this is the shape of the project, this is
247 the subject, would you like to join in?' and there's a clear
248 hierarchy of creativity there, there's no hierarchy of economics -
249 everybody's given the same wage, which is actually complicated.
250 It has complications because one of the big differences between
251 say, somebody who is a performance artist and somebody who
252 is a clinical psychologist, is that the person who is the clinical
253 psychologist (working in a hospital with a salary) is working on a
254 completely different economic set of realities to somebody who
255 is...

256

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257 **KS:** *Are you revenue funded? In the times in between projects are*
258 *you financially supported?*

259

260 **JM:** We haven't yet been. That's a whole other ball game, but within
261 a particular project it's important for us to see that the clinical
262 psychologist and the performance artist are paid at an equal
263 level. That means that the performance artist is probably being
264 paid much more than they normally are and that the clinical
265 psychologist slightly less, but its important to try and make it
266 level. It's not charity - we are a charity but it's not charity. The
267 other thing that is important on projects is the Liberty element. In
268 Still Waters, you see a group of eight people, but people in each
269 groups of two were able to go off and do something. One of the
270 ground rules was that although two people would work on this
271 part of the project over here, they come back and discuss it as a
272 group. The group as a whole had an accepted rule (and luckily it
273 was never pushed) that they didn't have the right to override
274 somebody else's particular zone. For example, if somebody who
275 had been working on another part of the project thought what
276 another person was doing was a load of crap, that wasn't enough
277 grounds to force them to change. I think that's a very important
278 thing.

279

280 **KS:** *How long was spent negotiating the structure of the project and*
281 *getting it right?*

282

283 **JM:** It depends. In the core, it's happening all the time. We've often
284 said that the logo of this company should be a donkey missing
285 it's hind leg, because we talk about everything - we chew the
286 hind legs off donkeys. Talking is very important here and we
287 discuss everything. Some people when they witness it think,
288 'what the hell are these people doing, they're wasting their time'

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289 but we're trying to... It's like a dance troupe, for example: if you
290 watched a dance troupe over a week, they might not actually be
291 working on 'the piece'; a lot of the time they would be exercising.
292 What we're doing in discussing things is exercising. It's important
293 because although we're trying to be democratic, we grow up in a
294 culture that is not democratic and the cultural underlay (although
295 nominally with a democratic structure) is one of autocracy, or
296 oligarchy at best. Similarly, within the arts, I think the strain of
297 modernism (although modernism is nominally often linked to the
298 rise of democracy), the actual cultural structure built around the
299 artist, is the artist as autocrat - as Napoleon. I think we have to
300 constantly re-learn and try to learn how to be democratic, but
301 we've got nothing to go on and are fighting in the dark, which is
302 why discussion is really, really important.

303

304 **KS:** *What are your personal aims in seeking a 'socially-engaged' form*
305 *of practice, and have you achieved them through Platform?*

306

307 **JM:** Phew...Um...

308

309 **KS:** *...in relation to collaboration. Does collaboration give you social*
310 *engagement?*

311

312 **JM:** Yes. Absolutely. Fundamentally. I want to be involved in culture
313 (I appreciate this isn't what everybody wants to do - we need
314 poets who sit in towers), or a segment of culture that is
315 fundamentally trying to tackle social and ecological questions
316 and effect social and ecological change. We can argue that all
317 art does that and indeed all art is political, but I'm interested in
318 really trying to engage very directly, in a more tangible way. Here
319 ['Still Waters'], out of a crazy little idea came about a way to bring
320 these rivers to life [metaphorically]. Here ['Renue' - Millennium

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321 Project], we're talking about a physical project, which is going to
322 build the largest renewable energy scheme in an urban area in
323 the UK. It's coming into physical reality; we are physically
324 bringing this about. Other people could say, 'it's a waste of time'
325 but for me it's important because I can see that cultural ideas,
326 crazy ideas, can actually come into reality and effect social
327 change. I hope and I think that Platform can do that. We strive
328 endlessly and fail but I think it can be done and I see what we're
329 doing as an important part.

330

331 **KS:** *Can you distinguishing your model from an individual practice?*

332

333 **JM:** Yes. I think one of the important things is to do with time. To
334 make anything change in this world takes a bloody long time.
335 One of the 'tricks', or the manifestations, of the white cube of
336 modernism is to create timeless spaces in which you feel that
337 you can effect change but because it's set apart from the world,
338 I'd argue very strongly that it doesn't affect change. You feel that
339 you can effect change but because of the market structure to do
340 with the white cube - that has to constantly regurgitate itself - it's
341 constantly changing itself. The work that we've been doing on
342 the river Wandle has taken ten years. That's not unique in
343 contemporary arts practice; it's not unique in twentieth century
344 art practice - look at James Turrell. Artists have done long pieces
345 of work but it is a very difficult thing to do over time and I think
346 that without collaboration, you just get steam-rolled by reality.

347

348 **KS:** *There are examples of collaboration that exist within the*
349 *'artworld'. Perhaps most popular is a partnership model - as*
350 *another way of creating a 'signature' developed over time*
351 *between two artists. It seems to me that working on different*
352 *projects, with different people throughout, is different. Is it a*

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353 *question of who the work is for – who is the audience? Where do*
354 *you see yourself situated - is it important to relate to an 'artworld'*
355 *audience or are you located within the broader cultural*
356 *industries? Do you have multiple identities?*

357

358 **JM:** I would say the most important audience is the thing itself. Take
359 for example, one of these streams of work from Still Waters:
360 Delta. We wanted to work on this piece of river - which is three
361 and a half miles long; eight square miles of watershed - in part of
362 this valley, to try to raise the river in people's consciousness and
363 their dreams and then physically assist in its transformation, so
364 it's no longer a place which is full of rubbish and heavily polluted.
365 And, on another dimension, to draw upon the fact that it's history
366 is one of milling and talk about it as a renewable energy source,
367 and therefore look at the relationship between this river to this
368 valley and new schemes of renewable energy and try to effect
369 actual schemes. We're working on a process that will lead to a
370 solar powered pub, a solar powered school, and a partly solar-
371 powered further education college within this zone.

372

373 So, who is the most important audience if that's the artwork,
374 that's the sculpture? Well, obviously the people who are there
375 and living and working there, but that's a very complicated thing
376 in a metropolitan situation. We're not talking about Nairn or
377 Scoraig (outside Ullapool); we're talking about a situation that's a
378 heaving metropolis - of ten million people - constantly changing
379 and community means lots of different things to lots of people.
380 It's a very complicated issue about who those people living in
381 that area are and that's very important but there are other levels
382 of importance also. I would say that it's very important to work
383 with the local council, the government, and specialists who are
384 involved, so that you can effect those changes. Those institutions

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385 can absolutely block any community work that one might want to
386 do. As for whether or not it's important to engage the 'artworld' –
387 I think it's important on a certain level, in as much as it helps
388 facilitate the realisation of the work.

389

390 **KS:** *In what sense...support through funding, or developing the*
391 *profile to be able to initiate projects?*

392

393 **JM:** A lot of things, yes. It's about profile. It's about funding.

394

395 **KS:** *What about where the debates happen...are the debates*
396 *emerging within the projects normally satisfactory in themselves,*
397 *or is there a need to extend those debates through platforms*
398 *provided by the 'artworld'?*

399

400 **JM:** I think that the sphere or the 'arts', not necessarily the sphere of
401 the 'artworld', provides (and this is part of the legacy of
402 Modernism again) a curiously free space within society as a
403 whole. It's like the little hole in a golf course. Personally, I'm not
404 interested in increasing the sense of freedom within that
405 particular hole; I'm interested in trying to increase freedom
406 outside it. If you look at it like a putting green, there tends to be
407 very intense freedom in this part [the hole], called the arts. I'm
408 interested in trying to increase the questions of democracy and
409 ecology within the sphere as a whole, rather than within that arts
410 sphere. However, that arts sphere can provide a means to that
411 end.

412

413 **KS:** *Can you say what your understanding of this freedom is?*

414

415 **JM:** Well, ...

416

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417 **KS:** *Is it the freedom to have a role and responsibility to act in cultural*
418 *issues?*

419

420 **JM:** I think it is manifest in very practical things. The overall freedom
421 is to be able to bring new ideas into reality it seems to me. We
422 have a set of very important cultural questions: whether it's that
423 we're boiling the planet, or that there is an increase in deprivation
424 (despite the overall increase in the wealth of society in the past
425 three decades). Those are really important questions and how
426 we address them requires as many people as possible to think
427 imaginatively and constructively about it, but it also requires that
428 society have spaces where that imagination and freedom can
429 flow. The trouble is that often those processes are very blocked.

430

431 Let's illustrate something: the good thing about art is that it's
432 fairly free capital (again because of Modernism). When people
433 bought Yves Klein's gallery called 'Espace' (which was just air)
434 then you've turned the concept of purchase and money on its
435 head. I would say that when we get money from the arts field, the
436 freedom we have to adapt and change and do what we want, is
437 infinitely larger than the freedom when you get it from other fields
438 (whether it's an environmental field or whatever), who want to
439 know exactly what you're going to do before you've done it. In
440 the arts field, it's more open to risk so they say, "OK we trust you,
441 we know you will do something interesting", and that's what's
442 great about it on the financial side. On the political, or
443 bureaucratic side, the other thing is that because people don't
444 know what artists do in this society it allows you some freedom to
445 do it. A good illustration is part of this project 'Delta' where we
446 wanted to put a Micro-hydro turbine – which would light part of a
447 school - in a river. It had never been done in an urban river
448 before and we had to get past the 'river police' basically - which

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449 used to be called the National Rivers Authority and is now called
450 the Environment Agency. So we went to them and said, "Hi, we
451 want to put a little Micro-hydro in your river. How about it?" They
452 looked at us if, "Well, a bunch of artists. Let them get on with it" -
453 thinking that we'd just go away, but we turned up again and said,
454 "Hi, we've hired this international organisation called Intermediate
455 Technology to do a study and they show that we can do it. How
456 about it?" They were, "Come on, they'll never get it
457 together"...then, "Hi, we've got the money together. How about
458 it?" By that time we were too far into the body of it - organising it.
459 We'd already got inside them, like a virus.

460

461 **KS:** *Do you use confusion as a strategy?*

462

463 **JM:** Yeah. I think that if we'd gone to them and said, "Hi, we're from
464 'Williams and Williams', structural engineers, and we want to do
465 a project" they'd have said, "Sorry, rule 13B, not possible".
466 Because we're a bunch of artists they hadn't even bothered to
467 get the rulebook out. That's what I mean by cultural freedom; you
468 can use that and it can bring new ideas. Once it was done, they
469 were happy that it had been done. The artistic process, the
470 cultural process, allowed them to realise what they would,
471 perhaps in the back of their consciousness, like to be realised.

472

473 **KS:** *When working with people from different backgrounds, is it*
474 *important for you to have or express a role that is perceived by*
475 *those you are working with? Is it something you try to define from*
476 *the outset, or do you trust it will evolve throughout the process?*
477 *How does it work and have you encountered problems in the*
478 *perceptions of roles within a collaboration?*

479

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480 **JM:** Yeah. I think that it can be problematic. We just did a series of
481 interesting interviews with about 20-25 people involved in some
482 way or another throughout the 'Delta' project (which also
483 involved an education project). We asked a range of different
484 people involved - council officers, local environmental groups,
485 head teachers - "Is this art to you? What's the relationship
486 between this and art?" What is interesting is that we discovered
487 (years after the event) that the fact we are artists had in some
488 cases worked against us. For example, there was a guy from the
489 local council who was resistant in helping us, because we were a
490 bunch of artists. Because we're a bunch of artists, we've been
491 able to get into places that would normally be shut down, but it
492 does work the other way as well.

493

494 **KS:** *I'm interested in the issue of 'naming'. You've changed the name,*
495 *or rather the definition, of Platform. Is it important to keep trying*
496 *to redefine it as specifically as you can?*

497

498 **JM:** Oh yeah. Actually, this is a manifesto that we wrote a while back
499 - the opening bit of that is interesting. There's no genius behind it
500 - we discovered by mistake - that in some ways it works against
501 us that nobody knows what we do. We've been working for
502 sixteen years and lots of people don't have a clue what we do.
503 But on the other hand, that's wonderful, because people don't
504 know what their going to... As long as we can get to the point
505 where people think whatever we are going to do is interesting. It
506 seems to me that society needs rogue spaces where people are
507 floating – and they don't know what it is.

508

509 **KS:** *Do you see a need to try to formalise discussion and debates*
510 *about Platform, happening through word of mouth and peoples'*

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511 *direct involvement in the projects, whether through conferences*
512 *or publishing or other forms?*

513

514 **JM:** Maybe a bit, but I think the most important thing is quality not
515 quantity. We're not interested in reaching millions of people.
516 We're trying to reach a few people really intimately - trying to
517 involve people in an intimate process.

518

519 **KS:** *I suppose I'm asking if you feel the projects are successful in*
520 *themselves as mechanisms for consolidating those debates – in*
521 *a democratic process, with a lot of people involved, who go away*
522 *with different experiences. Is it important that the projects start*
523 *those dialogues (which can evolve in their own way) or do you*
524 *feel a need for resolution in the dialogues that you're creating?*

525

526 **JM:** Yeah. It's definitely the former. I would say that's one of the
527 differences between art and politics. Politics, as I understand it,
528 is about the power play within the polis and in that situation,
529 you're trying to engender processes of evolution and then
530 capture and control them - to use them as you're power block.
531 That's fine – it's life and we're do that as well to some extent to
532 try to realise projects - but what I think is important about art, is
533 that it doesn't try to capture; it just gets people going. What is the
534 intention of a political manifesto? It's to get somebody to vote for
535 you or support you. What is the intention of a poem? It's to get
536 somebody to feel something or see something - it's much more
537 open I think. I hope that what we try to is like the latter.

538

539 **KS:** *Are the projects then catalysts for change, without trying to 'find'*
540 *solutions? You're trying to 'effect' change?*

541

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542 **JM:** We're just trying to provoke people to change and not capture
543 that change. If it means that the work leads to other things that
544 have got nothing to do with us - that we've got no ownership of -
545 that's fine, it doesn't matter. We have to be 'big enough' to cope
546 with that. But so many of these things that we've been talking
547 about, depend upon collaboration. The story about the National
548 Rivers Association only worked because after having gone to
549 them saying, "Hi, we're a bunch of artists and we'd like to do
550 this", we went back to them and said, "Hi, we're a bunch of
551 people who include artists and engineers (who've studied this)
552 and we're working closely on this". That relationship is crucial.

553

554 **KS:** *Could we talk a bit about issues of language within and also*
555 *beyond the core group? Are there key issues that have emerged*
556 *about language?*

557

558 **JM:** I think it's fascinating. It would be useful for you to talk to Dan
559 and Jane also. It's very interesting for you to be asking this
560 because it's this level that often never really gets talked about. It
561 seems to me that when one is trying to combine arts and
562 sciences for example, there are huge problems to do with
563 concepts of language, concepts of truth, concepts of success,
564 and they pose real problems, issues and difficulties. The majority
565 of work that we've done has been with people from the 'soft', or
566 social sciences, where the distinctions between the social
567 sciences and the arts are very blurred. It becomes most
568 problematic when working with people who are in the 'hard'
569 sciences - like the engineer.

570

571 **KS:** *Would you agree to work with someone if there were clear*
572 *differences in their ways of working, language and values of*
573 *success, or would you be reluctant?*

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574

575 **JM:** No. I think you've just got to try and go with it. The other thing is
576 that... We went to find a female economist and so you find
577 someone who comes with a great big label, but after a few
578 months you discover over a pint in the pub that before she was
579 an economist she went to art school. People are more
580 complicated. After a month or two you get to know her and go to
581 her place and you think, 'this isn't an economists house, it's an
582 artist's house' - there is no difference. It goes back to this point
583 about intimacy. You can overcome the question of disciplinary
584 difference ultimately through friendship. Just as one knows that
585 you love your friends, because you love your friends - it doesn't
586 matter if they're working on an oilrig or in a bank. Friendship is
587 really important. It's certainly what works for us - the core group -
588 and also with people we work with on projects. For example,
589 people who worked with us 11 years ago are still working with us
590 because we've become mates.

591

592 **KS:** *Does the nature of the working relationship change if it develops*
593 *over a longer period of time?*

594

595 **JM:** Yeah. Definitely. I think so because...there's a lot of trust. Trust, I
596 think is crucial.

597

598 **KS:** *Would it be fair to say that it becomes a partnership?*

599

600 **JM:** ...These words...I see the value of saying 'collaboration',
601 'participation', 'interaction' and can see what you're getting at,
602 and I think you're right. However, search me where you draw the
603 lines between them. In a way, I think the most successful thing is
604 when it's all confused and nobody really knows. It's about people

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605 really and about those people's ability to be imaginative about
606 what they're doing, I think.

607

608 **KS:** *What is the biggest barrier to collaboration that you've come*
609 *across?*

610

611 **JM:** I think that time and money is pretty fundamental, in a capitalist
612 society. If you can't assist the process financially, or if people are
613 constantly worried about whether the cash is going to run out,
614 then there's a ceiling on time, and that's a real pain. I think that
615 the biggest problem is in the economic sphere. It's not in the
616 sphere of people debating and sharing ideas. As I said before,
617 we're not brought up in a democratic tradition particularly but I
618 think that people quickly swim with the ability to say, "OK, you
619 are a scientist and I am an artist - let's talk as equals". People
620 can quickly do that if they get on well, but I think that the
621 economic sphere is very difficult sometimes.

622

623 **KS:** *Is working collaboratively more challenging or simpler than*
624 *working individually?*

625

626 **JM:** It's very difficult to say whether it's plus or minus. In my own
627 experience, looking at my personal history: I started out as a
628 writer (an individual process), but very quickly I became involved
629 in theatre (a collective process). The distinction between writing
630 and co-directing melded very quickly. I also went to art school,
631 where the process of the 'individualisation of the artist' is huge
632 and was a terrible shock to me. It still is, although I'm not holding
633 this against the particular institution I went to (Chelsea College of
634 Art), but it's a tradition. The whole concept of, 'there's your studio
635 - go and work in it', and three years later you come out as this
636 kind of 'individual'. I think it's bizarre, quite frankly, because I

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637 don't think it's particularly successful. It's also probably to do with
638 my own psyche - I actually like working alone but I like working
639 with other people. That's why I work like this. I like working in
640 groups because I personally find it quite hard to work on my own
641 in some ways. The whole process of sitting in a box, next door to
642 someone else sitting in a box in an art college, was both
643 frustrating and frightening. I couldn't see how one could actually
644 work like that. It was a negative process for me; I didn't enjoy it
645 and it didn't really help me. I think the art college is structured to
646 channel you to a situation that is an extension of the white box -
647 the white cube - where you're channelled to be 'the individual'. If
648 you are successful, there are lots of people in the background
649 who aren't seen. Damien Hirst works with a team of helpers,
650 assistants, advisors, and PR people. There's a whole little
651 industry going on and that's cool, but it's a different kind of
652 collaboration. It's fundamental that they remain invisible,
653 otherwise they nullify the value of his work, and it's not to do with
654 democracy because those people are consultants - it's an
655 autocratic structure. In a sense they're courtiers to the King and if
656 the King dies, a new court is instated. If Damien - he's a good
657 artist - but if he gets run over by a bus, then all the court is out of
658 a job. Hopefully, in a democratic structure, if I went under a bus
659 Dan and Jane would carry on doing the work.

660

661 **KS:** *How did you decide on a group name rather than individual*
662 *names? Was it discussed in the early stages?*

663

664 **JM:** It grew really. We've been through all the little nasty wrinkly bits,
665 particularly when you get to a certain point in the work and are
666 constantly in the papers or whatever. People can be awkward
667 about their name not getting in, but we now very strongly
668 emphasise the fact that the work is Platform. If we get invited to

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669 give a talk somewhere, it's Platform that's talking. We've been
670 nominated for an award by the Schumacher Society (an
671 environmental award). Perhaps because of the particular zones
672 of work which I've done, I'm better known in that field, so they
673 said, "We'd like to nominate you" and we said, "It's for Platform to
674 get a prize, we won't take it otherwise". I think it's incredibly
675 important because in the nominations list you see individual
676 names and then PLATFORM... Who is this thing? That's an
677 important part of the mystery and it's good.

678

679 **KS:** *We've discussed some of the problems of collaboration. Do the*
680 *inherent difficulties, particularly in interdisciplinary collaborations,*
681 *provide part of the material of practice? Is the 'shared' or 'inter-*
682 *subjective' space between collaborators part of the material?*

683

684 **JM:** Yeah, I think it is. It is important to enter into a process of
685 collaboration with some positives in relation to collaboration, over
686 and above the notion of being an individual artist. For example,
687 I'm working at the moment in collaboration with somebody who is
688 a business analyst - who analyses how corporations work. I
689 come to him as...something that he can understand
690 conceptually. I'm not some odd artist, I'm somebody who is part
691 of an organisation, I pay taxes and I get a wage (we have an
692 annual salary here, which is unusual for an artist - we've worked
693 bloody hard to be salaried - it was an important strategic
694 decision). I can face this person as more of an equal than if I'm
695 desperately driven by the cultural structures of commission after
696 commission. Also, it's not 'would you be involved in this project
697 which is branded James Marriot', it's branded as Platform. Of
698 course he comes from another organisation, but it's less of an
699 ego problem because if he is interested, it can be branded a
700 collaboration between Platform and the organisation he works

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701 for. If I'm working as an individual artist I have to brand
702 everything with my name, otherwise I don't exist - unless that's a
703 game you want to play, like Duchamp. I think that branding of
704 collaboration can be a real problem.

705

706 **KS:** *Are you conscious of trying to present an alternative model of*
707 *professionalism within Platform; has it been discussed?*

708

709 **JM:** Occasionally. We just evolved it by constant trial and error.
710 Occasionally (more so now because we've been around for so
711 long), we work out we must be doing something right. I think we
712 slowly gain courage over time to talk about the things that we do,
713 which we know are important but that we never really talked
714 about with anyone else. If you did this interview five or six years
715 ago, I don't think I'd have described as clearly that the discussion
716 that takes place between us, the constant reforming, the sense
717 that were equal, and that we have a weird economic structure, is
718 absolutely fundamental to what we do and that without doing
719 that, we wouldn't get anywhere. It's become clearer, but I'm not
720 trying to say that other people should do what we're doing.

721

722 **KS:** *In a disagreement between Derrida (deconstruction) and*
723 *Gadamer (hermeneutics), Derrida said the function of dialogue is*
724 *to start at the same position and end up in different places,*
725 *through the process of challenging one another, while Gadamer*
726 *said the opposite; that you come from different places and*
727 *through dialogue, try to reach shared understanding –*
728 *common ground. I'm interested in the issues of dialogue and*
729 *common ground, especially in inter- or cross-disciplinary working.*
730 *What do you see as the function of dialogue?*

731

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732 **JM:** From my experience, both things are happening at the same
733 time. There's no fixed point; it's all fluid. At the micro-level within
734 the core group, we're in constant dialogue and we're constantly
735 realising how close we are and how far away we are. After
736 sixteen years of talking with somebody about serious things and
737 things we really care about, I can still wake up one day and I
738 don't know this guy. We're constantly realising how much is
739 already there beforehand - about how we were brought up as
740 children, or whatever. So, one is right in saying it's about
741 processes of coming together and the other is right in saying that
742 there's a process of discovering how different you are. I once
743 said to Dan, "we agree on more things than I do with anybody
744 else, but we're 99% different".

745

746 **KS:** *Is the function of issue-raising (whether with councillors or*
747 *others) about working with people to effect change, and if so*
748 *would you use challenging strategies?*

749

750 **JM:** Yeah. You have to. It says on the door: ecology, democracy,
751 pedagogy. We're working with people on those things. We're not
752 necessarily interested in discussing art with people (we might
753 want to talk about art practice). What we're trying to do is
754 about... Why do I get to work with Dr. Arthur Williams, a micro-
755 hydro specialist? Why does he bother to come? It's because
756 basically, he cares about ecological issues to the same degree
757 that we care - it's what led him into an avenue of engineering
758 known as renewable energy. So, why did I come to the same
759 point as him? Because I am also interested in making art that
760 helps to alleviate the problem of boiling the planet. We come
761 together on an ecological point of view. That's where we can
762 start to work. We constantly find points of common ground with
763 people. We're working with a Merton councillor on a project to

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764 build an environmental, ecological renewable energy centre. She
765 has no interested in the Tate Modern and why should she? She
766 knows a lot that I don't, but we are both interested in this one
767 particular thing - how to make something in that locality which is
768 going to effect ecological and democratic change. It doesn't
769 really matter if we come at it from different points of view; we're
770 going to make it happen.

771

772 **KS:** *When you can agree on the issues to tackle through a project,*
773 *are there then issues about different methods and*
774 *methodologies?*

775

776 **JM:** Methodologies is a very important question. We could go back to
777 this question of the difference between ballistic science and
778 poetry. One of the differences between ballistic science and
779 poetry is different concepts of what constitutes success. In
780 ballistic science, you can measure a rocket's success by figuring
781 out whether it got to the moon - you can actually see that. What
782 is the success of a Keat's poem? How can you measure that
783 one? What's the success of a short story by George Mackay-
784 Brown? It's not the number of books that he sold; that's a by-
785 product. It's the equivalent of saying that the Apollo 11 rocket
786 looks nice, but that's a by-product of the key thing, which is to get
787 to the moon. Science and art do have different concepts of
788 success, of reality and of truth, but at the same time one needs
789 to constantly try to find a common zone, where they can
790 interplay.

791

792 **KS:** *Over the years, have people who have seen your previous work*
793 *asked you to do the same thing for them? Has that ever*
794 *happened?*

795

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796 **JM:** Yeah. Often.

797

798 **KS:** *And would you take up a project like that?*

799

800 **JM:** No. Not particularly, although it depends. People have said, "Will
801 you do a rivers project in Manchester like that?" We'd say,
802 "Thanks but no. That's not the point, but if you'd like we'll come
803 and tell you how we did it and you can do it differently and as you
804 want". Lots of people ring up and say, "You put a micro-hydro in
805 a river to light a school. Please will you come and do it for our
806 school?" We'll say, "This is how we did it - it involves an engineer
807 and a sculptor and a musician, and so on... As far as we're
808 concerned all those roles are important. Now it's up to you to
809 approach as you want to. Here are some phone numbers of
810 some people who might like to do it, and some material that
811 describes how we've done it - go and do it". Some people have
812 berated that, saying it leads to economic suicide but we're not in
813 it for the money.

814

815 **KS:** *Can you sum up what the point is?*

816

817 **JM:** The point is to effect democratic and ecological change in this
818 city, this Tidal Thames Valley. It takes a long time to do that - it
819 will take much longer than we're alive and people have been
820 doing it a lot longer and in parallel with us much more
821 successfully. We're just contributing but that's the work.

822

823 **KS:** *You mentioned about 'community' and the context-specificity of
824 the area and rivers here in London. That seems important...*

825

826 **JM:** Absolutely.

827

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828 **KS:** *Is part of the function and specificity of your collaborative*
829 *practice about trying to either understand or trying to mould that*
830 *notion of community here, in an area where you are living? Is*
831 *that a conscious, or difficult issue?*

832

833 **JM:** Part of what we're trying to do is to understand that. To 'mould' it
834 is another matter but it's very important to try to understand it.
835 You have to reach very deep, and very high to make an axial
836 process. It's a process of constantly looking again and again at
837 the thing. I think about Mt. St. Victoir, a series of paintings by
838 Cezanne, or Monet's paintings of waterlilies... By looking again
839 and again you might see some sort of truth. Looking at a
840 Giacometti, constantly trying to make those lines, you can get to
841 see something. You have to look very closely at something and
842 one of the drawbacks of our society is that we tend to move
843 constantly sideways and not look at things very closely. I think,
844 by looking very closely at things you can understand them but if
845 you're distracted, you can't do that.

846

847 We're doing work at the moment about trying to look at the
848 relations between the City of London and the financial sector
849 particularly the relationships between corporate life to the oil and
850 fossil fuels industries and to climate change. Its called '90%
851 Crude' ('90%' to do with the amount of carbon dioxide emissions
852 that we need to eradicate in the UK - 90% reduction over the
853 next 50 years - and 'Crude' because of oil). Part of that work
854 requires trying to understand very deeply how these systems
855 work. How does oil come out of the ground and become that
856 [plastic]? Who is the investment analyst that makes that happen?
857 Who is the insurance company that makes that happen? Who is
858 the PR company that makes that happen? Who is the
859 corporation that makes that happen? Were trying to understand

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860 that and it takes ages. We had to go and find people who know a
861 lot more about it than us, and also to ask odd questions about it.
862 So, it requires very deep looking, looking, looking. I don't think it
863 is all that different to Giacometti looking, looking, looking.

864

865 **KS:** *In collaboration you're looking through different perspectives.*
866 *What is exciting, or useful about having a range of people*
867 *looking, looking, looking, rather than just one person looking?*

868

869 **JM:** I am interested in being able to see. I need to look so that I can
870 see and I need other people to help me see. To understand how
871 the largest company in the country, BP Amoco, works - the
872 systems by which it functions - is a very difficult thing to see; it's
873 all around us but we can't see it. Therefore, I have to work with
874 somebody who has spent longer looking at it and who knows
875 how to look at it. That helps me to see it. I think it's more
876 productive if we work as equals (rather than just as my
877 consultant) because then their using their creative capacities as
878 well and hopefully it becomes collaboration. They can see that
879 my concepts of success are perhaps different from the ones you
880 might normally apply. For example, I'm interested in describing
881 the structure of this corporation in and of itself per se - that's
882 enough, it's all I want to do. From the world he's coming from,
883 nobody's ever done that because it doesn't have to be done. He
884 has to look down avenues to see what the company is doing in
885 particular bits. Nobody's yet tried to look at the beast; the total
886 landscape. That's what we're trying to do and I have a different
887 concept of success than he does, but we can share. He has to
888 come a bit onto my ground and I have to go a bit onto his
889 ground.

890

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891 **KS:** *Do you think a fair description or definition of collaboration is a*
892 *'shared, dynamic creative process'?*

893

894 **JM:** Yeah. When it works. Definitely. No doubt about it. It's very
895 important that there's a two-way fascination. A crystallising
896 moment for me when I was working with Arthur Williams (the
897 micro-hydro engineer) was when he could write down on a piece
898 of paper an equation by which he could measure the generating
899 capacity of a river. It's a very complicated equation. I thought 'my
900 god, with this set of fifteen objects (little figures and equals
901 marks) he can look at this piece of natural landscape and say
902 this equals this many watts'. I said, "Arthur, that's incredible,
903 that's about the most beautiful thing I've ever seen - it's both
904 scary and very beautiful". He said, "What do you mean? It's what
905 I do." I said "Well it's beautiful, it's amazing" and we used it in a
906 poster to show 'this is your river, this definition of a stream'.
907 That's an important moment, where I'm saying, "Actually, what
908 you're doing is the most creative stuff. You might not think it, you
909 might think the artist is the creative partner." It's important to say,
910 "No, actually, that is better than anything I can do".

Interview 3 Transcript: Matthew Dalziel & Louise Scullion
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1 **KS:** *Can you recall your decision to begin working collaboratively?*

2

3 **LS:** We knew each other's work when M did a post-grad at Glasgow
4 and I was on my BA. We remembered each other's end of year
5 shows...

6

7 **MD:** There were similarities in the shows, in the work, and differences.
8 We were both dealing with landscape and the environment.

9

10 **LS:** ... then we were both in the 1990 British Art Show and we each
11 had to give a talk about our work. I think we realised then that we
12 had similar interests, although at that stage our work was really
13 different. I liked the ideas that M was dealing with, but I didn't
14 really like the way he presented it, and probably he thought mine
15 was a bit too 'crafty' - he was quite 'high-tech' at the time. So, I
16 think that aesthetically we weren't in tune, although ideologically,
17 we were. Not long after that we started going out together, but it
18 was probably about three years between that and deciding to try
19 working together on a project. We just thought we would try it as a
20 'one-off', because when you are in a relationship with another
21 artist, it can get quite stifling to keep being supportive of each
22 others' individual practice and you invariably end up devoting a lot
23 of time to each others' projects. I suppose we were aware of it
24 becoming quite wearing and difficult, and this opportunity arose for
25 a project...

26

27 **MD:** I suppose I should say that before we started to collaborate, I had
28 been working in collaboration with a group called 'Image and
29 Installation' (who were Olidale Bangaboy and Stephen Hurrell -
30 who still works in Glasgow and collaborates), so it was quite
31 familiar to me. I had worked with them and I enjoyed it because I
32 felt that I was quite good at was coming up with ideas, but was

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33 lazy in conceiving the ideas and that's where Stephen was pretty
34 good. He was great at getting work done and organising things, so
35 I enjoyed collaborating.

36

37 **KS:** *How did that collaboration come about?*

38

39 **MD:** It was a bit of a fluke. A lot of these things happen through chance
40 and circumstance. I shared a flat with Oli, and I also shared a
41 studio with Stephen. The three of us had just left art school, were
42 working away and were all absolutely skint. Then, it was Glasgow
43 1990 and there was a lot of money floating about, but it was more
44 for organisations. We were all sitting in the pub one night,
45 bemoaning that we had no money and no projects to do. Then we
46 thought 'Well, all this money is floating about. Why don't the three
47 of us just form an organisation quite quickly and get some
48 applications in?' That's what we did. It was just expediency to form
49 a group but then it was quite exciting. I quite enjoyed working with
50 other people: you weren't working in isolation, you could share
51 responsibilities and each of us had different skills that we could
52 bring to the collaboration. Then, after 1990, we all went back to
53 doing our own thing again and it goes back to what L was saying.

54

55 **KS:** *Were you cautious about working together in the initial stages; you*
56 *said it took quite a while to decide to?*

57

58 **LS:** I suppose I was a bit more reluctant... I don't know if it's to do with
59 being female, or just struggling for your own independence. I'd
60 always been quite ambitious at art school and I'd got a good
61 degree. That wasn't something that I wasn't prepared to give up,
62 but then we worked together on our first project, which was 'The
63 Horn' (the project we did for the M8 motorway) - actually,

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64 somebody had invited me to put in a proposal and we decided to
65 work on it together.

66

67 **KS:** *What year did that begin?*

68

69 **MD:** It started in '92 and it took five years.

70

71 **LS:** All we really did was work on the idea together and submit the
72 proposal. When we wrote about the idea, I was aware then that
73 the ideas were changing because of M's input, and probably the
74 look of it was changing because of my input - but it didn't happen
75 for years. The first work we actually realised together was at the
76 French Institute – it was an installation called 'The Bathers'. We
77 got a really good response from that because a lot of people said
78 "That's so like what you would do if the two of you amalgamated".
79 It wasn't like what I would have made and it wasn't like what
80 Matthew would have made - it was this strange fusion. It was just
81 really good fun working together and I suppose because we were
82 also at the beginning of a relationship, it was quite a romantic work
83 and it celebrated the village that we had moved to (St. Combs,
84 where we still are). It was a distillation of all those things.

85

86 **MD:** If The Bathers hadn't been successful, that might have had an
87 impact on whether we would continue to work together or not. I
88 think because it was successful, we thought 'we'll do another one',
89 as you do if these things work.

90

91 **LS:** ...and at that time we also thought we'd do the joint works, but if
92 somebody approached us, me in particular for what I did, or Mat in
93 particular for what he did, then we would still do that. Then, as it
94 turned out, all the work that came our way were things that we felt
95 would be better if we did them together. Along the way we did

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96 some daft projects...they weren't daft, but they weren't... It took us
97 a while to realise what we were interested in and it was a mixture
98 of doing things that earn you a living. We did a project for the
99 science museum which we've never really used again when you
100 showing our work, but it's still quite good and it taught us a lot
101 about dealing with a bigger institution and quite a complicated
102 contract. It was also physically a large work and a fairly big
103 budget. It was a good work to learn things from, but we realised
104 that it didn't really fit into the philosophy that we wanted our work
105 to have. We didn't want to be just doing whatever work came our
106 way. We wanted to give it its own style and outlook and interest,
107 so in the years that we've been working, we've concentrated on
108 trying to develop a portfolio of works that physically take different
109 forms, but have a core philosophy.

110

111 **KS:** *Has the philosophy developed through your collaboration?*

112

113 **LS:** In a way, our work has always been about this - even when we
114 were working individually...

115

116 **MD:** ...it's quite a simple philosophy really: we're interested in
117 mankind's interaction with the environment but its quite difficult to
118 say what that is. We've veered off and come back to it and tried to
119 be open minded about new influences and exploring different
120 avenues. I suppose we came back to the original thing we were
121 interested in by trying other things, but that's what excites us and
122 what we're interested in making work about.

123

124 **LS:** ... even if we think of our upbringings, you can see there's a linear
125 development of this theme. M was brought up in Ayrshire and was
126 interested in poaching and breeding dogs. I was brought up in
127 Helensborough near Faslane Base and my parents ran a B&B

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128 guesthouse that put up people from the Base. I was quite aware of
129 that type of landscape as a child.

130

131 **KS:** *Is it possible to say whether working together has made the*
132 *process of making a piece of work easier, or are there specific*
133 *difficulties that come up through collaboration?*

134

135 **MD:** We were speaking about this in the car and we couldn't see any
136 drawbacks at all. We feel it's much better working in collaboration.
137 We couldn't think of any disadvantages at all.

138

139 **LS:** ...there's a tiny disadvantage that I'm aware of where (and I think
140 its the same for M) one of us has a strength, we tend to let the
141 other do that, so you don't develop that at all. If we were ever to
142 become separate individual artists, then that's probably leaving
143 you open to a kind of weakness, but at the same time it would be
144 stupid when, M's got certain skills that I don't have (and there's
145 always so much work to be getting on with), that I should muscle
146 in on that area, or he on mine. Over the years, we've become
147 much more proficient in our strengths. I suppose that's the only
148 thing, the thought you might be allowing yourself to become a little
149 vulnerable having handed over all of that...things like
150 administration, doing drawings and even doing typing. I can type -
151 M can't, but he knows all about photography and light readings.
152 He does all the documentation of the work and I have nothing to
153 do with that now and he has very little to do with the day-to-day
154 administration, but then we completely share the conceptions of
155 the works. Even when were out in the field doing the photography,
156 I think I still have an input into the composition of the image and M
157 does all the kind of maths behind it. Probably, on my own, I
158 wouldn't be doing photographic work because I've never mastered
159 the light reading side of it.

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160

161 **MD:** ...although you do enjoy it.

162

163 **LS:** I love the process of it.

164

165 **KS:** *Have you noticed developments in the nature of the working*
166 *relationship, or your roles, from when you started working*
167 *together?*

168

169 **MD:** It took a bit of time to establish what the roles were. Its like L says,
170 it's quite clear now. We almost just take for granted who does
171 what but that was quite sensitive negotiation to get these
172 positions. In a way (as L said) it was quite natural as well, because
173 she's good at lots of things but other things she's not so good at,
174 and it's the same with me. There are certain things that I can't do
175 and it is a weakness because I haven't bothered learning much
176 computer skills, although I do all the video editing on computers...

177

178 **LS:** ...but it's a small thing to gripe about because really, there's little
179 point of us both doing the same job in the studio. I'm dredging to
180 think of problems. On the whole, it's been so beneficial to us. I
181 think also just in the empowerment of being in a situation, whether
182 it's talking to a gallery or to a client, of going in as two rather than
183 one and being able to read the situation. Even when M's giving a
184 pitch about something, if I can see a weakness in the pitch, when
185 he stalls, I cover the weakness and he does the same for me.
186 Over the years, we've got quite good at meaningful glances...

187

188 **MD:** ...reading the signs, sort of thing...

189

190 **KS:** *Would you now take on projects that you wouldn't have*
191 *considered applying for as individuals?*

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192

193 **LS:** Definitely.

194

195 **MD:** Yeah, definitely. A lot of the work we do is quite big scale. We're in
196 the middle of building a building just now and doing big things
197 involving engineers, electrical engineers, solar panels, and quite
198 major structures that we would never dream of taking on
199 individually. I think the partnership has worked because we do
200 different things, and we have different skills. I can't imagine ever
201 working with some people because they're too similar and it might
202 create friction in the partnership if you both want to do the same
203 jobs. L doesn't want to do the things I like doing and vice versa. I
204 think that's how it works; like a blend that's producing this third
205 thing. I could imagine a lot of partnerships would flounder if
206 peoples' interests and they're skills were too similar. ...I suppose
207 it's like putting a team together. Like the old football analogy: you
208 don't want all forwards or all middle of the park players; you have
209 to have a good defence, middle of the park and attack. That's how
210 it works with us - we are different and we are interested in different
211 things.

212

213 **KS:** *How would you describe the difference between the collaboration*
214 *that happens between you – the 'team' - and your collaborative*
215 *working relationships with other people, for example with the*
216 *engineers?*

217

218 **MD:** I suppose we see ourselves a bit like an architecture practice - as
219 a little firm. When we go to approach the engineers, they see us
220 as being another organisation. They don't see us as being 'an
221 individual artist' - they treat us like an organisation. As L was
222 saying, there are two of you going in. Sometimes just one of us
223 goes in and says that the other person is busy doing something

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224 else and they realise that we're doing a lot of other jobs, so you
225 get treated with more respect because you are a firm - even when
226 it comes the wages. Some people have sent us applications to
227 look at (for a second opinion) and we've noticed that the project
228 managers and engineers were getting paid significantly more than
229 the artists in their briefs. Because, in the projects that we work on,
230 there are two of us, they recognise us as an organisation, and
231 we're always paid the same as the architects or the engineers or
232 whoever.

233

234 **KS:** *Did it take time to establish that?*

235

236 **MD:** It did. We treat ourselves like an organisation and have all the
237 things you need - letter headed paper, emails and faxes - so they
238 think we are an organisation. That's good because you're on a
239 level when you're dealing with these people - you don't need to
240 feel inferior. The 'individual artist' is a bit vulnerable because
241 they're seen more as the 'quirky artist' (rather than an
242 organisation), I think that makes you more vulnerable. We often
243 employ other people (its like the team analogy again - although
244 we're the core team we quite often have to bring other skills in)
245 and we've got a portfolio of skills that we can pull upon from other
246 people we've worked with in the past. We can say, 'this person
247 would be good to work on with this'. We've worked with different
248 musicians and composers three or four times now and can say,
249 'they're the person for this project'. We think it's good that we don't
250 necessarily just work between the two of us - we're expanding the
251 collaboration. It's something we're going to work on a lot more -
252 having people working with us on a more regular basis rather than
253 bringing them in part time, and maybe taking on people full time as
254 part of the team.

255

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256 **KS:** *Are you conscious of a shift in the importance of collaboration –*
257 *perhaps from the functional to the philosophical position?*

258

259 **LS:** It's trying to get a balance between not losing your identity (as an
260 artist) - because there are artists who have become more
261 businesslike and then...it doesn't take long for them to stop being
262 seen as artists. We want to keep the team quite small and tight
263 and bring in people that we need. The projects we do are really
264 different depending on if it's for a gallery, if it's for a performance,
265 if it's an outdoor, if it's permanent, if it's temporary. Where we're
266 based just now in St. Combs, we've got a nice little network of
267 people that we work with but that's not to say that it will always be
268 like that. We have been thinking that maybe it's about time for a
269 new influence. In order to develop the theme that we're interested
270 in, we've looked solely at the North East of Scotland as our base
271 and a lot of our work directly references that. It gave us a niche
272 and people knew the area that we were working in - it
273 distinguished us from artists working in more urban places.
274 Recently, we've been thinking about perhaps broadening that
275 foundation we have established. We don't want to lose our identity
276 as 'Scottish artists', but we want to widen our references as it
277 were. Maybe by not solely working in the restrictions of this
278 geography but travelling to use other places and look at different
279 types of landscapes. That's a broadening of the philosophy within
280 our small team, and trying to keep the team quite fresh. We heard
281 on the radio that comedy writers didn't think you could sustain a
282 writing partnership for much longer than ten years, because it gets
283 tired and you lose the freshness. We take that on and think it does
284 happen - you can see it in history happening - yet it doesn't
285 happen with architects firms. Sometimes, the people who found
286 them leave although they're still half the profile. We felt we maybe
287 do have to bring in things that keep the business fresh.

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288

289 **MD:** ...revitalised.

290

291 **KS:** *Is the nature of collaborative practice - working with others -*
292 *different or interesting in particular ways or in contrast to the*
293 *ongoing development of an individual practice?*

294

295 **MD:** What is interesting (L touched on it) about architects, is that an
296 architecture firm keeps getting presented with new problems to
297 solve, rather than having to keep presenting *themselves* with new
298 problems to solve. That's what happens with us as well. We don't
299 have a form or a style...well, we do have a style, but we don't
300 have a form or a medium that we keep working with all the time.
301 We're presented with situations or contexts to respond to and
302 that's quite exciting because it does keep you fresh and having to
303 come up with new ideas for different contexts. That's why we don't
304 like working in the gallery all the time. It's more or less the same
305 context all the time although some are a bit bigger and some are a
306 bit smaller. It's the same willing suspension of disbelief - like going
307 to the theatre, going to the gallery is the same situation. That's
308 why we like working with multiples, with film, doing odd thing for
309 television, or working next to a motorway. It presents us with new
310 problems to solve all the time, new forms and new material to
311 come up with. In a way, it does keep you fresh - unlike the comedy
312 situation, where they're on the stage or in front of a camera all the
313 time (maybe it doesn't work because the context is always
314 generally the same). In the way we work the context is changing
315 rapidly all the time, which is helpful and quite exciting and you can
316 bring new people in to fit these new contexts. Probably, why we
317 don't work with the same person all the time is because the
318 context is shifting and that person may not be right for that
319 context.

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320

321 **KS:** *Do you think working outside the context of the gallery naturally*
322 *increases the need for collaboration?*

323

324 **MD:** Well, we collaborate when we working the gallery too. We often
325 work with musicians and people who build things for us when we
326 work in the gallery, so...

327

328 **LS:** ...but it probably does.

329

330 **KS:** *Is it a different type of working relationship?*

331

332 **LS:** A lot more artists are doing this now and have individual practices
333 also. I do think it is a learned skill to be able to communicate an
334 idea to someone you want to help you make something and to be
335 comfortable with the other person's input - if it starts to move away
336 from what you initially visualised, to feel comfortable with that if it's
337 moving in a direction you think is good. It took me a while... M had
338 done some collaboration before and I hadn't. It's hard now to
339 remember just what the difficulties were, but there were some. We
340 had very different views about things and just ironing them out and
341 then finding ways of creating things...all that's short-cut now,
342 although sometimes...

343

344 **MD:** ...although we still have pretty serious... Just the other day there
345 we were working on a piece of text and it got quite difficult,
346 because you *are* subjective and you *do* feel 'this is right', so
347 there's a lot of negotiating to arrive at a middle situation, or
348 sometimes you admit that the other person was right in this
349 instance. I suppose that goes on with anything especially if the
350 people are equal. We don't have one director of one
351 choreographer who says, 'this is the way it's going to be done' and

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352 everybody does it. It's always a process of negotiation to arrive at
353 what we think is the best we can do.

354

355 **KS:** *Does trust play a part in that?*

356

357 **LS:** Yeah, it does. Since Ethan [our son] has come along, one of us
358 often has to do the job that both of us used to do, and so that's
359 tested the trust a bit further. We discuss everything that we're
360 doing and keep each other in touch with how a project is
361 progressing - if one of us misses a meeting or whatever.

362

363 **MD:** Quite often in projects (like in this building) L is the person
364 directing that project. She's taken ownership a bit more than me.
365 Maybe in other projects (like with the tents) I took a bit more
366 ownership than L, so it sometimes works out like that as well.

367

368 **KS:** *Do you have criteria for deciding whether or not to accept a project
369 involving working with other people?*

370

371 **LS:** I don't think they are hard and fast. We couldn't write them down,
372 but I think it generally involves responding to an interesting
373 location - one that presents a kind of 'charged' situation - and what
374 we think we can bring to it through our work and what already
375 exists in the location. The locations vary hugely: from a motorway,
376 to an airport...

377

378 **MD:** The criteria we have is, 'Does it fit in with the themes that we're
379 interested in?' We're trying to build up a body of work that adds up
380 to more than the sum of its parts. It's more like the album than the
381 single. We want the body of work to be strong, so does this new
382 opportunity fit into the building up of that body of work? We don't

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383 want to be digressing just for the sake of good money because if
384 your heart isn't in it, you don't do a good job anyway.

385

386 **KS:** *So if someone (say having seen 'The Horn' on the M8) asked you*
387 *to deliver a similar piece of sculpture, you would or wouldn't do*
388 *that?*

389

390 **MD:** We might if it was abroad or an interesting place where it would
391 work equally as well. It would be quite nice to be asked to do
392 another one, because it can be quite exhausting keeping coming
393 up with new ideas always. Some artists get one idea and they do
394 variations on that one good idea for their whole career. We've got
395 to come up with new ideas all the time, which can be quite
396 exhausting and demanding if people want a one-off all the time -
397 something unique each time. We like doing that but it's not that
398 profitable... In industry, if you do a lot of research and
399 development, you get that research and development money back
400 by mass-producing the item that comes from the research and
401 development. Artists also do a lot of research and development,
402 crack an idea, come up with something a bit new or fresh; then
403 they get that research and development money back by keeping
404 producing that. We spend an awful lot of time with research and
405 development and then make a work, which doesn't really pay for
406 the amount of research and development, so the way we work is
407 not entirely economical. The theory is that you charge a lot more
408 for that one work but because of the economy scale you can't. You
409 can charge a bit more but not really enough to cover all the
410 research and development time.

411

412 **KS:** *Is part of the motive for working with other professionals to do the*
413 *research within a team?*

414

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415 **LS:** I wouldn't say that really happens...

416

417 **MD:** I suppose we do between the two of us as a team...

418

419 **LS:** It tends to be that you work with a team, local to where the project
420 is happening. I can think of a musician that we've worked with on
421 three projects and it's been good to go back to him. The last time
422 we worked with him, he produced something quite different from
423 the first two times. We don't have to continually feed him work –
424 he's getting on with his own thing ...

425

426 **MD:** ...but he has come along with us, because we can go back to him
427 and he knows the feeling that we're looking for. It's the same with
428 people like David Macmillan and the likes in Glasgow. He knows
429 the kinds of form or sensibility that were looking for. We have built
430 up and grown with these people, but they do other things as well. I
431 suppose it's building up this kind of consciousness with other
432 people but not necessarily tying them in because they like working
433 with other people as well. There's a network of them out there.

434

435 **LS:** With the types of people we work with, the relationships that are
436 more successful are with people who are working in a similar scale
437 to us. We've worked with big engineering firms when we had to
438 because that was the nature of the contract. With *The Horn* it had
439 to be someone with that amount of public indemnity, but they
440 would probably be very reluctant to work with us again because it
441 proved so costly for their firm, since these projects drag on and on
442 and you end up doing the same meeting five times...

443

444 **MD:** ...although economically it wasn't cost effective for their firm,
445 they've had masses of publicity from it, so they're gaining a
446 different thing from working on these projects.

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447

448 **KS:** *Would you work with a firm like that again?*

449

450 **LS:** They were quite difficult to work with. Similarly, with an
451 architecture firm we're working with just now, we thought they
452 would be fantastic to work with but it's been really difficult. They're
453 probably just that bit too big. They're too busy and although they
454 like the idea of working with artists, when it comes down to it
455 there's really not enough money in it for them to justify the time
456 and money it takes. However, people working on a smaller scale
457 give a lot more time than is economically viable for them and I
458 think that's still the nature of the arts: there's a hell of a lot of folk
459 working for very little financial reward. It's not that we don't want it;
460 it's just that it's not around...

461

462 **MD:** It's quite interesting because of the reputation that artists are a bit
463 'dizzy' and they're not very professional. Quite often we find that
464 the artists are more professional than a lot of the so-called
465 professionals. The architecture firm has been very slack
466 professionally - in responding to deadlines, doing things within the
467 brief, and with the amount of money. Working with a lot of
468 engineers, architects and sound people, you realise that a lot of
469 these organisations are not what they're cracked up to be either,
470 and a lot of the mystery and the facades come down. Through
471 experience you realise you've got to get things in writing and
472 you've got to watch the front they put on. It's just learning how to
473 do all that. We've worked with quite a lot of different people now
474 and there have been some really sore learning curves.

475

476 **KS:** *What are the biggest disappointments you've experienced? Is it*
477 *lack of time or different motives, or...?*

478

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479 **LS:** It's something to do with the nature of the projects. You probably
480 only do a handful of projects like *The Horn* in your career. We both
481 still like that work and it was difficult to make, but in doing a
482 smaller-scale project with a smaller team, you definitely have
483 much more direct control. It gets quite scary when it gets
484 completely out of your control. With *The Horn*, there were some
485 really scary moments, when we just felt this is an absolute
486 nightmare - we can't control it (especially in the early stages).

487

488 **MD:** I think the problem is that because the projects are unusual, they
489 don't really know what you want and they're not used to supplying
490 the likes of certain finishes. The finish on *The Horn* was a big
491 problem - we wanted it to look engineered and manufactured, not
492 hand-welded, so we demanded certain type of finish and they
493 thought we were being a bit too...

494

495 **LS:** ...premadonna?

496

497 **MD:** ...pernickety. It's the same with the architecture firm. The building
498 we're working on is a conceptual building - it doesn't need to last
499 25 years - so we were expecting more conceptual ideas about the
500 building but instead, they've got stuck on all the practicalities.
501 When those organisations are working with artists, the intentions
502 and expectations can be different between the two parties and it's
503 negotiating what the intentions are - or not negotiating them - that
504 can create a lot of difficulties. We've spoken about negotiating the
505 intentions between the two of us. We've been working together for
506 quite a while and got used to that, but the problems arise afresh
507 when you start collaborating with other parties. Negotiating the
508 intentions has to start again. That's why we work with the same
509 musician and same construction people because we've been

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510 through all those negotiations in earlier projects, we don't need to
511 do that again.

512

513 **KS:** *Are there other issues in working with these firms - for example,*
514 *do they see the functionality of your work or are there tensions*
515 *there?*

516

517 **MD:** I think there is always going to be an area of tension. As an artist,
518 you're spending all your time working on ideas and concepts and
519 art things, so you're always going to be a bit ahead of the game -
520 or you should be because that's what you do, than people who are
521 not doing that. It's logical: if they're not spending all their time
522 working on art ideas and concepts they're going to be a bit behind
523 and therefore they're not going to understand if there's a nuance
524 that's crucial for the whole thing working. It's about communicating
525 how important that is as clearly as you can, but if they don't
526 understand it, that can create huge problems...

527

528 **LS:** I think communication is so important. I remember when *The Horn*
529 was leaving for the construction site: we decided to go and look at
530 the structure before it left the workshop (we hadn't been invited to
531 come and see it). Initially (because it had all been on paper until
532 then) we were bowled over by the size of it, but there was
533 something at the back of our minds that we weren't sure about.
534 We left the site late and were driving home when we started to talk
535 about what wasn't right about the feel of it. It took us a while to
536 work out what was wrong. I think that happens with a lot in
537 projects where - because you're doing it all for the first time -
538 you're not aren't sure what expectations you can have. In a
539 relationship with someone (whether a musician or an architect)
540 you have to understand if something's going wrong, why is it going
541 wrong and try to articulate that. Those are all quite difficult

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542 processes - to both understand and to communicate it back at a
543 time where you can still do something about it before it's too late.

544

545 **MD:** That's correct because the 'normal' way of working as an artist (or
546 the conventional or the traditional way - its probably not normal
547 now) was that you'd experiment and work things out in a studio
548 and if something wasn't right, you'd either modify it or start again.
549 We do that with galleries, although even in the gallery, if it's a
550 video-projection or a big structure, it's difficult to actually try out
551 and you don't get the opportunity to modify it unless you have
552 video projectors. Working with engineers on an architectural
553 project, with big ideas, you don't get a second chance. You can't
554 modify them or change them or say, 'that's not right'. We've
555 learned that - even on a small scale – you have to work out all the
556 detail before actually going into production and it's quite a tricky
557 job. We're getting more interested in resolving this...if there is a
558 new way of operating that we can develop, so that in taking on
559 bigger things and we could cover all these problems with working
560 with other people. To have it all worked out and resolved clearly
561 before you pass the information on and say, 'this is what we want'.

562

563 **LS:** ...although, that maybe an ideal. I don't think we necessarily want
564 to take on bigger projects...

565

566 **MD:** No...

567

568 **LS:** It's about keeping a balance. We want to keep gallery projects on
569 the go because they keep your profile as an artist, rather than
570 getting too pushed into one thing. We want occasionally do big
571 projects but still be able to do multiples. It's just keeping a balance
572 between what we feel...and remaining artists as well - not letting it
573 stray too much from our original intentions.

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574

575 **KS:** *Are you conscious of the nature of your creative processes*
576 *changing?*

577

578 **LS:** If it is, it happens very slowly. Yes, there have been changes but I
579 think our core interest is still something we've had since we were
580 children really and maybe that's what's been successful with us.
581 We are still getting to make works that... If someone said to me
582 when I was a schoolgirl that I'd get to do these types of projects,
583 I'd think 'that's fantastic'. I just hope we can sustain it as we get
584 older because there is a big expectation that artists should be
585 young and that they're only interesting when they're young. I hope
586 we can still be interesting and that the collaboration still works, as
587 we become older artists.

588

589 **KS:** *Do you think the emphasis on collaboration it will become more or*
590 *less important?*

591

592 **MD:** There is a lot of emphasis on (I don't know if it's in Britain or
593 everywhere) the individuals themselves as being the work, which
594 is what we're trying to get away from – we're not great at
595 networking or exhibition openings. We're trying to develop a
596 practice that is interesting, but is seen more like an interesting
597 company. You're not absolutely sure who the individuals in the
598 company are but you know the company produces interesting
599 projects. So there is less emphasis on the 'individuals' and more
600 emphasis on the 'company' that does interesting things.

601

602 **KS:** *Have you considered a 'partnership' title?*

603

604 **LS:** We have considered it and were thinking of 'Future Systems' in
605 London and how they work under that name. I don't know if it is

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606 difficult for the art world to embrace you when you take on that
607 kind of name. We operate under that wing and so it's just trying to
608 get a balance again, where you're not seen to be too kind of... The
609 artworld is incredibly traditional really and very conservative. We
610 have to straddle this line where some of the people who will give
611 us employment want to know that they're employing artists. You
612 have to keep a foot in both camps - to be like an architectural firm
613 and also still be seen as an artist.

614

615 **MD:** I think our names *are* becoming more like a company name. I'd
616 imagine there are people who recognise the names 'Dalziel &
617 Scullion' but don't know who the individuals are. That's probably
618 what we'll keep doing – where the company name is actual
619 names...

620

621 **KS:** *Like in a law practice?*

622

623 **MD:** Yeah. It could be quite interesting (even as an experiment) if other
624 members work for us or represent us at some meetings but who
625 aren't us, so that people wonder who they are.

626

627 **LS:** ...or, we'd considered doing both - Still doing 'Dalziel & Scullion'
628 projects but also having another name to do different types of
629 work under. They're just ideas that come up over a glass of wine...

630

631 **KS:** *Who is the primary audience for your work? Is it art audiences or*
632 *others?*

633

634 **MD:** With *The Horn* it's certainly not an arts audience. It's interesting
635 because we meet people who don't know the arts and if they ask
636 them what we do (it's notoriously difficult for us to say what it is that
637 we do) we just say, 'you know that thing on the M8 motorway...'

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638 and it's amazing the amount of people (especially truck drivers
639 and commuters) who know what it is. We've done work for
640 television, which is not an art audience either. It's about contexts
641 again. When you operate in a gallery, you have to get used to
642 what the context - who frequents that place, who's likely to
643 experience the work, and how they view it. You have to know that
644 to make a work in context. With *The Horn* we were interested in
645 the people that travel on the motorway, and with television, it's
646 going to be viewers who might tune in by chance, so it's a different
647 audience again. I think we are getting quite good at knowing and
648 working with these different contexts and different audiences. It's
649 not something that everybody can do because some people get
650 used to working in the gallery all the time and other people get
651 used to working in the public all the time, and find it difficult when
652 they come to the gallery, because the criteria they're trying to work
653 with is different.

654

655 **KS:** *Knowing now that the horn took five years, would you take on*
656 *large projects like that again?*

657

658 **LS:** We're doing one in Aberdeenshire that should have been a year
659 and it's taken nearly three.

660

661 **MD:** Knowing now that a project can take five years, it wouldn't daunt
662 us. We know how it works - you just move it on a bit and forget
663 about it and move it on again and forget about it again. We're
664 working on a project in Orkney that was supposed to be up this
665 year but planning permission can take four or five months (or
666 sometimes years if you get rejections). In five years, some artists
667 maybe do hundreds of works, but how interesting are they? It's
668 relative – in a lifetime, even if projects take five years, you can still
669 do loads of work.

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670

671 **KS:** *What is the most important thing that working collaboratively has*
672 *given you as individuals, or influenced your practice?*

673

674 **LS:** For me, it's just being able to tackle projects that I'd have never
675 dreamt of doing on my own - that would have been too scary too
676 much responsibility and I'd have had difficulty controlling. Since
677 beginning collaborative projects, I've been able to do such varied
678 types of work. It's been really interesting. When I think about the
679 amount of work that we've actually got through and the lengths
680 that we gone to in trying to get it what we want it to be, I know that,
681 as an individual, I wouldn't have had the energy to be able to do
682 that. I would have accepted a lot less or not even tried for things.

683

684 **MD:** I would say that the difference is that the work itself takes on a
685 social aspect, that probably working on your own doesn't - it can
686 be such a singular view and the artists' ego can get so involved
687 though working on your own. I think when you work collaboratively
688 there is a more social thing in the work. It's hard to say what that
689 is, but I think there is a difference between works done
690 collaboratively and those done by a person working on their own.

691

692 **KS:** *Can you see that difference in the work itself, or is it the quality of*
693 *the working process that's different?*

694

695 **MD:** I think it's because of the quality of the process because the
696 individual ego is not making all the decisions. Its like the work is
697 made by a third person (if its two people working), it is this 'other
698 thing' that's not 'me'. I think that's different to each of us working
699 on our own. It's hard to say what it is exactly but I think it comes
700 through in the work - this social aspect. Maybe that's why we keep
701 working in different contexts and don't just do gallery work -

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702 because the nature of the process is a parallel. We like working
703 collaboratively and we also maybe like sharing that collaboratively
704 with a wider public than the gallery situation presents. We like
705 doing what were doing and although it has its ups and downs, it
706 leads to quite and interesting life. We've done and seen a lot of
707 things, worked with a lot of people and had a lot of interesting
708 experiences. That's what's good about it - rather than this angst (it
709 can be quite angst-ridden when you're working on your own) -
710 especially when maybe your career is not going so well and the
711 pressure builds up. You can get angry and become quite bitter,
712 whereas, working collaboratively you're more open to changing
713 situations that change the nature of what you do, I think.