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THE INSTITUTION OF THE MUSEUM IN THE EARLY TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY IN SCOTLAND

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Abstract

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, cultural policy in Scotland was dominated by the political ideas and priorities of New Labour. Post-devolution government in Scotland, in line with wider British policy, encouraged a new role for the heritage and culture sector, with a new insistence on the language and implementation of a 'social inclusion' agenda. However, more than a decade after devolution, changes in government and economic crisis have reconfigured the priorities of the Scottish museum sector. Central questions posed in this thesis are: Has the Scottish museum's societal role (as promulgated by Labour) been disrupted and altered by recent political and economic shifts and by the threat of future upheavals? And if so, how? What is the current direction of reform within the Scottish museum sector? What are the current narratives of education promulgated within the sector? What symbolic traits are projected by the contemporary museum in Scotland? Building on previous research and theory in museological studies, this thesis offers a fresh perspective on the educational and social role of the contemporary museum in Scotland. Following on from Hewison (1987), I argue that museums in Scotland are responding to post-industrial malaise and fear of decline. Unlike Hewison, however, I argue that this response carries little nostalgia or naïve adoration of the past, but instead seeks to position the museum as an exemplar of stability, business sense and creative thinking in a context of societal anxiety.

The National Galleries of Scotland provides an appropriate case study to explore the role and response of the Scottish museum sector to the economic and political uncertainty of the modern era. NGS is one of Scotland's most prominent and oldest 'heritage' institutions, attracting over one million visitors a year. It is also a multi-sited, national institution, directly supported by government and closely aligned to official cultural policy. This thesis uses archival research and ethnographic methods such as interviews and observation to reveal shifts in educational and reform narratives within the Scottish museum sector as well as underlying ideas that shape these narratives. Conducted over the course of three years, from 2011 to 2013, this

research is situated at an interesting time for the Scottish museum sector, as Scottish society wrestles with the economic uncertainty of the early twenty-first century.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or qualification.

Xavier Sven Colverson Contier

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Abbreviations Used in the Text

HEF: Heritage Education Forum

MGS: Museums Galleries Scotland

NGS: National Galleries of Scotland

NMS: National Museums Scotland

SNGMA: Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

SNP: Scottish National Party

SNPG: Scottish National Portrait Gallery

SVS: Security and Visitor Services

1 Introduction

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, cultural policy in Scotland was dominated by the political ideas and priorities of New Labour, including neoliberal inspired economics, post-modern politics of identity and the discourse of a 'classless' meritocracy[1]. In particular, post-devolution government in Scotland, in line with wider UK cultural policy, encouraged a new, reconfigured role for the heritage and museum sector, with a new insistence on the language and implementation of a 'social inclusion' agenda (see Sandell, 2003; Black, 2005; Tlili et al, 2007). Harking back to nineteenth century 'improvement' programmes[2], cultural institutions across Britain, including museums, were recast as social agents, with an active role to play in the cultivation of a 'positive' society[3]. Expanding the role and vision of the museum beyond collection management and display, policy makers conceived the institution as an instrument of social change, directly involved in the combating of public ills, such as poor health, long-term unemployment and crime. Influenced by post-modern cultural critiques, the institution of the museum was re-imagined as a front line educational provider, offering opportunities, in collaboration with other partners, for increased interaction and engagement with and between diverse 'communities', including society's most disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

Today, more than a decade after devolution, New Labour's direct influence on the museum sector has waned. At a UK level, a new Conservative-led government has exercised power since 2010[4]. More significantly, with the election of an SNP

[1] The term 'meritocracy' was coined by Michael Young in 1958, interestingly, as a warning against the creation of a new kind of class-based society. It was appropriated, however, by New Labour ideologues to denote, more positively, a society that promotes social mobility and rewards ability and achievement over the inherited status of family or social class.

[2] The development of bourgeois civil society in the nineteenth century precipitated novel programmes of education and social engineering designed to mould a new productive and civic-minded populace (see section 1.1.1 below).

[3] New Labour's positive society must be understood in terms of a liberal polity or 'meritocracy' whose mobile and autonomous citizens compete freely for economic opportunity and reward.

[4]New emphases on smaller government and private and corporate philanthropy, epitomized by the 'Big Society' agenda, have encouraged policy makers in England to return to an 'arm's length' principle, and allow the sector greater freedom to direct itself (see HM Government, *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government*, 2010: 14).

administration at Holyrood in 2007, and then again in 2011, the political priorities of the government in Scotland have shifted, and the constitutional matter of independence has become a central linchpin around which many government priorities in Scotland now revolve. Indeed, a seeming loss of confidence in the legitimacy of Westminster government has been accompanied by the steady rise of Scottish nationalism over the last quarter century. This movement culminated in 2014 with the referendum on Scottish independence. Despite the apparent victory of the 'no' campaign, constitutional disagreement continues to dominate and largely characterise the Scottish political landscape. In this context of heightened dispute, the 'national' allegiance of the national museums in Scotland has become increasingly ambiguous.

Coupled with this, major economic anxiety, precipitated by the international financial crisis of 2007-08[5] has generated new priorities and new emphases for government and wider society. Certainly, concerns over the future economic dynamism of Scottish society have pushed policy makers to emphasize ever more greatly the economic 'sustainability' of institutions. With a reduced budget, the Scottish Government has had to make savings, and the museum and gallery sector in Scotland has proved no less vulnerable to cutbacks and austerity measures than any other. While the sector remains publicly upbeat and committed to long-term improvement plans, it is clear that, at all levels of management, there are few more pressing issues than the current and future funding environment[6].

Economic crisis and politico-constitutional dispute constitute major societal phenomena that unavoidably generate or add to uncertainty over the long-term development of Scottish society. Arguably, in 2014 the economic and political choices facing the country were as momentous and as culturally significant as

[5] In 2007-2008, the most serious financial crisis since the 1930s erupted within the banks and financial institutions of America and Europe, resulting, despite extraordinary 'bailout' packages, in global economic turmoil and sustained recession.

[6] As Audit Scotland pointed out: "Scotland's economy is in recession and the public sector is under the greatest pressure since devolution ten years ago. It will be very challenging to maintain current levels of public services and meet new demands when resources are tight" (Audit Scotland, *Report on the 2009/10 Audit to National Galleries of Scotland and the Auditor General for Scotland*).

anything since the Act of Union of 1707. Central questions posed in this thesis are thus: How is the museum sector in Scotland engaging with key societal issues? What symbolic traits are projected by the contemporary museum sector in Scotland? Has the Scottish museum's societal role (as promulgated by Labour) been disrupted and altered by recent political and economic events and by the threat of future upheavals? And if so, how? What is the current direction of reform within the Scottish museum sector? What are the current narratives of education promulgated within the sector? These questions are used as starting points to assess the current self-image and claimed function of the museum sector in Scotland. Focusing on a specific case study (the National Galleries of Scotland), this thesis contributes to a better understanding of the changing symbolism of the museum institution in a particular locale and at a particular juncture in time. Indeed, following and building on previous research and theory of the last half century, this thesis offers a fresh perspective on the educational and social role of the contemporary museum sector in Scotland.

1.1 Looking Back at the Museum Institution

1.1.1 Rational Progress

The museum, as a fully modern public establishment, is a largely nineteenth century development. As an important instructional institution, the museum was both product and perpetuator of a grand *narrative of progress*. Holding nascent humanist pretensions, the museum, through the display and arrangement of objects, outlined a new totalising concept of 'time', in which (Western) Man was implicated in an unstoppable advance and improvement of civilisation. As museum theorist Jean-Paul Martinon put it:

> The traditional temporal ideology of the museum was to situate itself in relation to both a past, which it preserved, and a future into which it

> projected the past it contained. In this way, it turned time into a grand narrative of progress… (Martinon, 2006: 60).

The advance and success of both scientific enquiry and industrial technology through the nineteenth century fuelled an ever-increasing confidence in the power of the refined human intellect. This power was held not only to better understand the world[7], but also to better control the world; indeed turmoil and chaos, it was calculated, might be overcome by the tools of reason. Certainly, many civic leaders promulgated an opposition between disorderly popular culture and so-called 'rational recreation'. This agenda promoted the establishment of public spaces such as libraries, parks, museums and athletics grounds which were to promote alternative behaviour to that practised within a so-called 'rough culture' (Lee, 2010: 80). This rough culture – in particular the rowdiness and drunkenness associated with the public house – was a matter of some distaste to those reformers who dreamed of a more refined and self-controlled society.

Alongside the idea of civilisational progress, therefore, the 'rational' museum was designed to project a sense of civic order[8]. Indeed, the nineteenth century museum and art gallery, argued sociologist Tony Bennett in *The Birth of the Museum* (1995), functioned in conjunction with a host of other 'cultural technologies' that aimed to reshape the "moral, mental and behavioural characteristics" of the populace (Bennett, 1995: 20). For Bennett, new forms of liberal government cast 'high culture' in a new educational role, helping to promote values of individual control and self-discipline across society. The aspiration was to encourage a more ordered society through processes of individual regulation, self-monitoring and adjustment (Bennett, 1995: 20).

[7] As Hooper-Greenhill explains: "Institutions such as museums were established to spread out, as though upon a table, those things which could be observed, measured, classified, named, and which presented a universally valid and reliable picture of the world" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2004: 559).
[8] As professor of museum studies Richard Sandell wrote: "Though these museums had a clear social purpose, the motivations behind them are generally understood as paternalistic and based on notions of civilising and facilitating the governance of the masses" (Sandell, 2002: 21).

Bennett, following Foucault, characterised this early 'liberal governance' as a form of "disciplinary or governmental power". Indeed, Foucault in his body of work[9] charted the emergence of disciplinarian institutions designed to systematize and internalise structures of power. Foucault argued that these institutions arose in the modern era, alongside a new concern over governance and order. The instruments of this new 'disciplinary' society were surveillance, punishment/gratification, and examination. On the one hand, discipline was increasingly applied to the individual in the aim of enhancing precise capabilities of the body, to improve its economic worth and secure its political docility. On the other hand, discipline was also applied to the 'group body' – to society at large, through the control, regulation and administration of population. The development of bourgeois civil society entailed a new governable populace requiring close observation, measurement and classification, and ultimately conscripted into the task of maintaining its own coherence (Smart, 1985).

However, Bennett argued that the nineteenth century gallery and museum was best understood as part of an 'exhibitionary complex'. He contrasted this with the institutions of punishment – such as the prison – that developed in the modern period. For Bennett, the institutions of the exhibitionary complex were different to the institutions of punishment, but should be understood as complementary to the modern programme of order. In contrast to the institutions of incarceration that increasingly removed the exercise of power from the public realm, the exhibitionary complex became a primary context for the public display of power. Whereas the prison or the asylum targeted behind closed doors the problem of deviant behaviour, galleries and museums, along with others in the exhibitionary complex, took on the responsibility of public spectacle and symbolic messaging. Bennett argued that the exhibitionary complex, in a similar way to the new jury system, was designed to assimilate the will of the public with that of power:

> To identify with power, to see it as, if not directly theirs, then indirectly so, a force regulated and channeled by society's ruling groups but for the good of

[9] Notably *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) and *Discipline and Punish* (1975)

> all; this was the rhetoric of power embodied in the exhibitionary complex… (Bennett, 1995: 420).

Nascent liberal governance aspired to achieve control with minimal intervention, to mould society into a self-maintaining and self-correcting system[10]. Of course, this liberal governance was birthed during and functioned in parallel with (and in the shadow of) industrial revolution and colonial expansion. In this context, the museum operated, alongside other state educational institutions, to encourage and improve the self-integration of the citizen into an imperial-industrial regime.

1.1.2 National and Bourgeois Triumph

On the one hand, the museum was put to work 'lubricating' the new mechanisms of modern government; on the other hand, the museum was also designed to consolidate national cohesion (see Duncan & Wallach in Carbonell, 2012; Macdonald, 2003) founded on quasi-religious notions of devotion and duty. Born out of the competitive wars of Europe and consolidated by tumultuous events (such as the French Revolution) and changing elites, the nation-state established itself as the primary political entity of the modern order. This entity attempted to naturalise itself in the nineteenth century, by founding itself as the essential representative of a distinct and 'ancestral' people. Concomitantly, as Philip Bobbitt argued, the nineteenth century state strove to harness the full productive power of the populace (Bobbitt, 2008: 40). To this end, the museum was one of several institutions active in the manufacture of a shared history and cultivation of a national identity and unity. As Sharon Macdonald notes:

> Museums, already established as sites for the bringing together of significant 'culture objects', were readily appropriated as 'national' expressions of identity, and of the linked idea of 'having a history' (Macdonald, 2003: 3).

[10] As Michaela Giebelhausen wrote: "Firmly established as a governmental tool, the museum no longer just confirmed the fledgling bourgeois assumption of citizenry – mostly modeled on some notion of the antique – but also became the space for self-improvement and societal self-regulation" (Giebelhausen, 2006: 49).

The nineteenth century museum, following the archetype of the Louvre, aimed to demonstrate the cultural, intellectual, technological and military superiority of one particular nation-state (see Duncan & Wallach in Carbonell, 2012) over all others. In this way, the museum tied into and complemented emerging forms of modern education. Indeed, towards the end of the nineteenth century, new programmes of universal education were implemented in a bid to secure the loyalty and productive power of the masses in a context of mounting international (European) rivalry. In the United Kingdom, these programmes attempted to inculcate the new civic values of an increasingly democratic, secular, and bourgeois-led order.[11]

Undoubtedly, at the head of society and directing the 'civilisational advance' was a new breed of citizen; a new class of business leader and urban professional that capitalism had raised to the civic fore. Brimming with ever-growing confidence and zeal for influence, society's new elites demanded novel spaces and institutions to validate and affirm their distinctive leadership (see Prior, 2002). 'Liberating' high art (and cultural curiosity) from its dependency on the aristocracy and the church, housing it in a new devotional space set aside for pure artistic pleasure, and exhibiting it for all to see, the modern public museum heralded the triumph of the 'nouveau riche' and the new capitalist bourgeoisie. Indeed, whether cataloguing the wonders of the natural world or charting the development of human cultures, the museum helped, by its very existence, to vindicate the intellectual leadership of the bourgeois capitalist order[12]. In an important sense, the museum was birthed as a new reverential space. "The growth of capitalism," wrote John Dewey, "has been a powerful influence in the development of the museum as the proper home for works

[11] According to R D Anderson: "[modern state education] can be related to the rise of political democracy, marked in Britain by the Second Reform Act of 1867; to the evolution of the modern nation-state, in an age of industrial and military rivalry between the great powers, requiring both more highly educated workers and the inculcation of loyalty and citizenship into the masses; and to the general advance of secularization, transferring social functions from church to state under the guidance of the liberal bourgeoisie"(Anderson, 1997: 26). In fact, in Scotland, the state took large-scale control of education with the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872. Prior to this, much of the education system in Scotland was run by private institutions, charities and in particular the Church of Scotland. The Act was "the culmination of an extended process of state intervention" (Anderson 1997: 20), and as Stanley Curtis explained: "The outstanding feature of the Act was the substitution of State for Church control in education" (Curtis, 1967: 557).

[12] As Donald Preziosi described: "During the nineteenth century, the museum became an indispensable feature of the modern bourgeois nation-state" (Preziosi 1996: 75).

of art, and in the promotion of the idea that they are apart from the common life" (Dewey, 1934: 394). This heightened separateness from the 'common life', designed on the one hand to generate a contemplative and aspirational aura, also imposed barriers for those who had little time or resource to devote to the study and appreciation (or comprehension) of a 'detached' art or culture. The museum was thus, for all its public ambition, equally 'exclusionary' – a theme explored most notably by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.

1.1.3 Exclusion and Response

In the 1960s, Bourdieu presented the twentieth century European art museum as a site that validated the cultural vision and connoisseurship of the upper and middle classes. The museum authenticated the sense of 'natural' cultivation of the dominant class that distinguished the 'cultured' from the supposed 'barbarous' majority who had no natural conception of good taste. Bourdieu concluded that the function of high culture, and museums of art in particular, was to raise an "invisible and insuperable barrier" between citizens, to strengthen for some a sense of ownership and power and for others to underline their sense of inadequacy (Bourdieu, 1969: 112). For Bourdieu, the museum of art helped to crystallise and naturalise unfair social hierarchies that encouraged the self-exclusion or withdrawal of the uninitiated lower classes from participation in the cultural power games of the 'cultivated' elites.

Bourdieu's analysis ties into the 'cultural turn' beginning in the 1960s and 1970s that sought to challenge the assumptions and power structures underlying institutions and society. Prior to this, little intellectual protest or critique had undermined the museum institution. After the Second World War (and the erosion of colonial doctrines in the West), a more sceptical age was ushered in (Fuery & Mansfield, 2000: 149) and a new, critical eye directed towards culture and its practices. The critical examination of museums in the UK was labelled 'the new museology' in 1989. A new generation of academics and theorists aimed to

question the purpose and function of the museum within wider society (Vergo 1989). Much cultural critique at this time tied into post-modern politics of identity and struggles of emancipation conducted by and on behalf of an array of marginalised groups, including those excluded on grounds of class, race, gender and religion. As critical theorists Fuery & Mansfield argued there has been a steady growth, over the last half century, of alternative social movements committed to defending the rights of minority or suppressed groups (Fuery & Mansfield, 2000: 149).

Under a post-modern gaze, the museums and galleries of the past were accused by post-colonial and feminist theorists of naturalizing and legitimating structures of domination and subjugation. They were charged with raising a male-dominated Western bourgeois culture and civilisation to the summit of human achievement while reducing others to a status of primitivism and inferiority (Duncan and Wallach 1980, Mitchell 1989, Kreamer 1992, Porter 1996, Marstine 2005, Edwards & Mead 2013).

Professional educators and curatorial personnel, reacting to both societal and institutional pressures, worked to address the issues of imbalance and inequality perceived to underlie much of the museum's traditional 'architecture'. By the 1990s, museum theorists and museum workers were heavily committed to an almost missionary 'decolonisation' of the museum space (see Simpson, 1996). Demands for minority expression were increasingly taken seriously as theorists and professionals began asking how best to integrate postcolonial perspectives into practice. Museum theorist Moira Simpson wrote in her book *Making Representations: Museums in the Post-Colonial Era*:

> The plurality of contemporary post-colonial society gives rise to complex issues in relation to museums: Display and interpretation; the classification and values attached to objects; cultural bias in representing other cultures; the lack of representation of cultural diversity in local history collections; demands for self-representation and self-expression (Simpson, 1996: 2).

Although these issues of representation were pursued by particular social groups, often at variance with traditional 'orthodox' society, their (eventual and partial) assimilation into mainstream, political and institutional programming was facilitated by the progressive strengthening of liberal ideology. As Fuery and Mansfield acknowledged, these struggles were often "coordinated according to the civil philosophy of traditional Western liberalism" (Fuery & Mansfield, 2000: 149). Emerging from the shadow of industrial-imperial agendas, liberal doctrine helped to subvert traditional cultural norms; deference, service, duty, allegiance and obedience to a centralised authority gave way (over the course of the twentieth century and particularly after the Second World War) to a universal entitlement to cultural expression, political participation and economic consumption within a multi-polar, cosmopolitan world. Striving to integrate all individuals into a mass consumer society, liberal doctrine operated against the institutional racism, sexism, and prejudice that might have flourished unchecked under industrial-imperial regimes.

At the same time however, alongside the rise of post-modernism and liberal politics, growing anxiety in the middle classes over Britain's post-industrial future seemed to mark cultural trends; this fear of de-industrialisation and decay was picked up most notably by the cultural historian Robert Hewison, in his book *The Heritage Industry* (1987). Indeed, Hewison critically highlighted the apparent culture of nostalgia[13] that developed in the decades following the end of the Second World War and the final collapse of the British Empire. The expansion of the heritage sector, argued Hewison, was a symptom of a nation in decline and a country "unable to face its future" (Hewison, 1987: 12). The past had become a sanitised idyll for the middle classes to hide and forget. He contended that: "In the face of apparent decline and disintegration, it is not surprising that the past seems a better place" (Hewison, 1987: 43). For Hewison, Britain had suffered a loss of confidence and he urged a new "spirit of renewal" (Hewison, 1987: 145).

[13] Hewison wrote of a "miasma of nostalgia" (Hewison, 1987: 145).

1.2 Central Argument of this Thesis

Critical analyses of the Western museum (especially the Western museum prior to 1945) have often emphasised the programmes of civilisational glorification and class (or race) elevation associated with imperial, nationalistic and bourgeois agendas (see Bourdieu, 1969; Duncan & Wallach, 1980; Kreamer, 1992; Bennett, 1995; Prior, 2002; Macdonald, 2003)[14]. These analyses from the 1960s and 1970s onwards have, in turn, contributed to the slow 'decolonisation' of the Western museum in recent decades (see Wintle, 2013). However, this democratisation of the museum space, I argue, is not the only driver of change in the Scottish context. Following on from Hewison, I argue that museums in Scotland are also responding to post-industrial malaise and fear of decline. Unlike Hewison, however, I argue that this response carries little nostalgia or naïve adoration of the past, but instead seeks to position the museum as an exemplar of long-term resilience, business sense, good self-management and creative thinking in a context of societal uncertainty and debt-fuelled anxiety. This response also ties into a wider educational narrative, operating today within Scottish schools and educational institutions, in which the future encapsulates notions of insecurity, including global environmental instability, rapid technological change and ever-increasing international economic rivalry. Indeed, to cope with this insecurity, the educational narrative has tightened around notions of business acumen, civic partnership, and that post-industrial commodity par excellence 'creativity'; in a highly populated and fiercely competitive world, where much can be copied, replicated and reproduced, both cheaply and quickly, inventing the new and reinventing the old have become crucial state-backed endeavours. To help with this agenda, a new emphasis on nationwide celebrations and grand sporting events has been put forward by the Scottish Government, pushing society into what might be termed a new age of 'permanent festival'.

[14] For Duncan and Wallach, for instance, the museum was designed to emphasise the unchallenged superiority and supremacy of the Western nation-state: "In today's European and American museums, exhibitions of Oriental, African, Pre-Columbian and Native American art function as permanent triumphal processions, testifying to Western supremacy and world domination." (Duncan & Wallach in Carbonell, 2004: 52).

With the election of the Scottish National Party to Holyrood in 2007, the Scottish Government entered a period of consolidation and projection of economic competence, to reassure the public and the business world of stable administrative continuity. I argue that the SNP government has, in the first place, reaffirmed existing New Labour cultural and educational policy, in a bid to maintain stability. However, no significant expansion of the museum's role in frontline 'social work' has been envisioned. Instead, its growing symbolic role as a projector of cultural energy and economic vitality has been emphasised. I argue that the SNP government has little role for culture in direct political struggle, rather culture is used to project a general sense of festive 'well-being' in the nation under SNP administration. Thus, engagement with the 2014 referendum, inside the museum sector remained low-key and circumspect. The institution of the museum, in contemporary Scotland, is geared towards less 'radical' debates. Instead, it is geared towards an agenda of reassurance and the continued portrayal of a vibrant, liberal (and mass consumer) society.

In an important sense, the fears expressed by Hewison in 1987, i.e. the "imaginative death of this country" (Hewison, 1987: 12), have been appropriated by political and cultural policy makers in Scotland. As fear of competitive decline becomes ever more acute, nostalgia is displaced by the somewhat frenetic discourse of innovation and dynamism. Nostalgia (pointed to in discourse, as we shall see, by the prevalent terminology of 'community'), comforting but ultimately counterproductive to liberal ideology, becomes a societal vice to be actively confronted by educational activity. The past and its objects become conscripted into the task of depicting a 'forward-looking' nation, i.e. able to secure the material gains of the present but geared to the exigencies of future competition. I argue then that the museum sector has been encouraged into a role of support and civic demonstration, that the modern Scottish museum performs a function of stability and encouragement for an increasingly doubting, uncertain and economically apprehensive society.

It is important to make clear that the term ‘museum’ is used in this thesis to describe the institution of the museum in its entirety. This incorporates the physical building, its objects, the people that serve it, their practices and programmes and the wealth of texts (including exhibitions) generated by these workers. As I discuss below, this thesis revolves mainly round a narrative analysis of the museum institution, its symbolic role and self-depiction in the twenty-first century. Indeed, the area of interest here is museology. This is something of a hybrid field bringing together the keen interest in objects familiar within art history and the societal interest of the social sciences. As my thesis is concerned not so much with individual artefacts but rather with the more abstract object of the museum institution, I have favoured an approach that borrows some methodology, particularly the semi-structured interview method, from the social sciences, incorporating it into a narrative-based approach perhaps more prevalent in literature or the dramatic arts. Because of the role of people within the physical confines of the museum, the institution is treated here as a symbolic presence within society, a presence with its own values, objectives, ideals and stories.

1.3 Methodology

The National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) provides an appropriate case study to explore the role and response of the Scottish museum sector to the economic and political uncertainty of the modern era. NGS is one of Scotland’s most prominent and oldest ‘heritage’ institutions, attracting over one million visitors a year. With two major renovation (and expansion) projects in the last fifteen years, NGS is an evolving and dynamic institution; it is a (self-proclaimed) “flagship” for culture and art in Scotland and is a leading and influential voice within the Scottish museum sector. NGS is a multi-sited, national institution, directly supported by government and closely aligned with official policy. Now, with the reopening of the recently renovated Scottish National Portrait Gallery, the NGS has become an important

contributor to public representation of Scotland's national history and collective self-image.

Of course, no single museum acts fully alone or independently of the wider sector; all institutions, particularly the nationals, are aware of current professional developments and government policies in the realm of culture. The large museums closely track the practices and new ideas of others within the sector.

> We are very aware of each other's work. Both NGS and NMS are members of the Heritage Education Forum which is about 10/12 national museums, arts, gallery organisations where we collaborate, share and disseminate information (Head of Education, National Museums Scotland, 15/ 10/ 2012).

Museums Galleries Scotland, Scottish Government and National Museums Scotland (and other relevant bodies) provide a source of documents that help to contextualise the discourse and planning of NGS.

The Scottish museum sector (or museum and gallery sector) is defined here, on a first level, as the totality of museums and galleries, publicly or privately funded, large or small, operating today within Scotland. In addition it refers to a sector directly or indirectly influenced by government, the National Development Body (Museums Galleries Scotland) and the example of other museum institutions, particularly the large national institutions (National Museums Scotland and the National Galleries of Scotland).

This study is underpinned by a *qualitative* research strategy and combines document collection, non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews and informal conversation. Over the course of three years (2011 to 2013), I have assembled a large and assorted collection of printed material created by the National Galleries of Scotland. This archive includes corporate publications, educational guides, floor plans, exhibition fliers and other marketing materials. In

addition to these documents, electronic information gathered from websites, 'blogs' and gallery 'touch-screens' was examined.

Moreover, in order to understand the context within which the art gallery stands, it was necessary to draw upon a wider range of resources than those specifically provided by the institution. Specifically, the policy documents of Museums Galleries Scotland and the Scottish Government (and a limited number of other official bodies) provided important information and are of particular relevance as they directly impact the Scottish museum sector and NGS.

Documents are an important source of data for this study. Most often, documents contain only text, but this is not always true. Documents are not limited to text (Prior, 2003: 5); in fact, they are diverse and multi-dimensional, and often combine both textual and pictorial elements. In addition, objects too may be integrated into documents. As Lindsay Prior wrote: "People think with things as well as words, and very often, the arrangement of things is as significant as the arrangement of words" (Prior, 2003: 8). Indeed, the *arrangement* of objects (as opposed to objects themselves), the way they are used and the places they are positioned, constitute supporting sources of information in this thesis. In fact, this study considers documents in the widest sense of the word, treating *gallery exhibitions* as documents of analysis. The numerous exhibitions hosted by NGS (often combining objects, visual materials, texts and architectural settings) therefore constitute an important aspect of data.

Observation of the gallery space, and the activities of the people within it, was thus an important part of this study. This was conducted over the course of two years and examined a variety of spaces and events, including exhibitions, tours, musical concerts, workshops, and outreach projects. The discourse of gallery staff, the visual materials presented, the tasks envisioned and the physical and social contexts were all points of focus. Of interest too were the interactions between institution and public, as well as the general flow of visitors through the gallery space.

This process of document collection and observation was supported by a number of interviews and informal conversations with staff at the National Galleries of Scotland, including gallery attendants, curators, managers, marketing staff, and, in particular, educators. Interviews were undertaken over a one-year period in 2012. Each lasted between 45 minutes to an hour and a half and was semi-structured[15]. Participants consented to their own individual participation and the recording of conversations and were informed of the scholarly purpose of the research. (Further consent was sought after completion of the thesis to print the names of participants alongside their job titles. Those who did not respond to repeated requests have had their names omitted in the thesis). Questions focused mainly on the everyday work and issues faced by staff members as well as wider policy concerns that might impact the institution. All quoted material can be found in the transcript of interviews at the end of this thesis (see Appendix.).

It is also worth noting that academic literature is used throughout my work to contextualise the discussion of key ideas and better situate the findings of the thesis in relation to wider intellectual enquiry.

This research strategy employs a largely inductive approach in which theory and insight are generated from (qualitative) research. In contrast to the positivism of the natural sciences, however, this strategy holds an epistemological position that is *interpretive*; that is, people and their associated institutions are held to be fundamentally different to the objects of analysis of the natural sciences. Social reality has a meaning to human beings that lies beyond the analytical reach of the conventional methods used by the natural sciences (Bryman, 2001). This strategy favours the 'interpretations' made by human beings, their structuring and presentation of social reality. The ontological position held here is *constructionist*. From this standpoint, social phenomena are not held to be external facts or rigid

[15] The semi-structured interview is a research tool used widely in the social sciences. The interview is guided by starting questions and loose themes. It allows for an open, conversational communication between interviewer and interviewee while remaining strictly focused on relevant topics. Allowing the uncovering and following-up of interesting seams of information, this approach offers flexibility and potential for in-depth exploration of issues.

realities but rather are viewed as emerging from the interactions and negotiations of human beings; they are therefore continuously up for revision and change. This position insists on the active role of human beings in the construction of the social world (Sarbin & Kitsuse, 1994; Bryman, 2001)[16]. From this perspective, the social milieu is viewed rather like a game or a play, with artificial parameters, rules and language; social norms and social problems become issues of definition and interpretation rather than objective conditions of life (Holstein & Miller, 2007). This perspective has influenced many critical theorists, and I draw upon this heritage in my own thesis. Critical theory questions the definitions and assumptions upon which social constructions are founded and seeks to highlight the arbitrariness of many social relations.

Nevertheless, there are possible limits to social constructionism and critical theory. As professor of philosophy Levi Bryant warned:

> While ideology, no doubt, plays a significant role in sustaining unjust social assemblages, this overlooks the role that things themselves play in organising power (Bryant, 2013: 19).

In the particular context explored here in this thesis, however, objects (artefacts of museums and galleries) have little organising power, but on the contrary are themselves very readily organised. In this thesis, I seek to uncover particular narratives of pedagogy and education operating within museums in Scotland. These are neither eternal nor natural but are rather constructed in time, by human beings, through language and text, as well as exhibition. I argue that the narratives explored here subsume and incorporate objects regardless of origin or shape and largely bypass whatever older connotations and historical data these objects may hold.

[16] It is worth pointing out here that this philosophical position is also held by many modern educationalists who strive to construct the conditions for liberal autonomy and citizenship. Professor of education Walter Parker wrote: "Democratic living is not given in nature, like gold or water. It is a social construct, like a skyscraper, school playground, or new idea. Accordingly, there can be no democracy without its builders, caretakers, and change agents: democratic citizens. These citizens are constructs too" (Parker, 2003: xvii). This philosophical position is held, particularly strongly, by neoliberal doctrine; in the words of anthropologist Ilana Gershon: "Subjects, markets, economic rationality, and competition are all recognised as socially constructed under neoliberalism" (Gershon, 2011: 539).

Indeed, in a significant sense, objects are largely irrelevant to the functioning of the constructed 'stories', and serve merely as props and stage for human voices or narrators and their preferred outlooks on social life, politics and the economy. While the ways in which objects are used, arranged and chosen may be significant, the peculiarities and particulars of objects are largely inconsequential to the larger scale narratives explored in this thesis. This near irrelevance of the artefact is heightened by the preserving environment of the museum, whose collections remain long in stasis. What becomes dynamic and relevant in this context are the changing programmes and initiatives (educational, digital, exhibitionary) that seek to inject meaning and interpretation into otherwise mute 'things'.

Consequently, this study employs primarily a *narrative analysis* of gathered data. In her book *From Knowledge to Narrative*, museum professional and writer Lisa Roberts asserted that museums are "narrative-based institutions" (Roberts, 1997: 147). More than this, as museum theorist Eilean Hooper-Greenhill argued, narrative is a key structuring device of *education* within museums. She wrote: "Museum pedagogy is structured through the narratives produced through the displays, and also through the style in which these narratives are presented" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000: 124). In fact, this thesis considers museum pedagogy as a narrative in itself, a meta-narrative that, while presenting or integrating the historical and artistic stories of museum and gallery exhibitions, directly implicates the visitor in its unfolding.

Chronologically arranged and connected through logical coherence, narratives are essential ideational structures that order much of the human world. A narrative or story implies a change of state, a change from one situation to another, through a sequence of events. It almost certainly implies a protagonist (or protagonists) who carries that change. This proposition is held explicitly within the educational enterprise. Participants of education are participants in a carefully constructed and indeed self-constructed 'story' in which the main character, the protagonist-learner, undergoes a personal and arduous development, overcoming a series of obstacles and tests along the way, towards some culminating transformation or enlightenment. Indeed, education (and programmes of reform) takes its participants

on a developmental journey. While each individual 'journey' is undoubtedly unique, institutional authorities set up guiding principles and terms of discourse that provide universal waymarks, a common sense of direction and a sketch of the ideal or favoured end. It is these public aspects of education, rather than personal characteristics of learning, that are of interest here.

This thesis reveals the dominance of particular (liberal) perspectives in educational discourse and museum programming and the many repeating terms and associated ideas that populate and connect political, educational and museum texts. Chiefly, this thesis considers the principal developmental stages or junctures that the average visitor-participant of museums (in particular to the NGS) must encounter and pass through while engaging with contemporary educational activities. Junctures are often signalled by key words (buzzwords) that frame and guide a dominant educational narrative. These promoted words, while being individually specific, often share characteristics of indistinct meaning and warm connotation. As social anthropologist Andrea Cornwall observed:

> They gain their purchase and power through their vague and euphemistic qualities, their capacity to embrace a multitude of possible meanings, and their normative resonance (Cornwall, 2010: 2).

Despite this nebulosity, buzzwords share an ultimate design to normalize particular perspectives, to shape and restrict "the boundaries of thought" (Eade, 2010: ix). However, as I explore in my thesis, the inherent haziness of this official language and its diffusely positive suggestion, make it difficult to pin down a precise developmental end in educational terms. Nevertheless this promulgation of indistinct language is itself revealing of a particular educational drama. After all, liberal education posits no definitive shape to the model citizen; as philosopher of education Eamonn Callan argued, the promotion of an "open-ended and protean" ideal of character [17] is an inherent feature of liberal educational doctrines.

[17] Callan noted: "Although it may be an important political principle that the state be impartial in regulating the different ways of life its citizens legitimately choose, this may be better understood in many cases as expressing a respect for the open ended and protean character of the ideals of

In addition to this critical examination of educational discourse, this thesis draws on Gustav Freytag's analysis of dramatic structure[18]. Freytag's structure (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, denouement) is used here as a means to highlight the narrative progression of educational programming. It is understood of course that the comprehension of the educational narrative, the reading of this 'text' will shift in relation to the reader, and individual interpretation may be multifaceted and diverse; this does not however negate the existence of underlying structure, intent, and outlook. Clearly, there is no single or stable 'author' that is responsible for the educational narrative studied here. However this is not to say there is no discernible (multi-authored) intent. Institutions are responsible for delivering integrated educational programmes and whether these succeed or not, they are birthed from stable objectives and ambitions (socially, culturally, professionally, politically, or historically informed) that are publicly given and defended. Junctures, goals, targets, aims and the means by which these are designed to be achieved are of more interest here than psychological outcomes.

To be clear, this is not a sociological study. In the words of art historian Carol Duncan, "I have no findings to report about how an average or representative sample of visitors reads or misreads museums. The visitors I am after are hypothetical entities – ideal types implicit in the museum's galleries" (1995: 4). To be precise then, this thesis is not directly concerned with biological, 'flesh and

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character that liberal democratic culture promotes, rather than a blanket repudiation of all soulcraft." (Callan, 1997: 5)

[18] Freytag's analysis of ancient Greek and Shakespearean drama uncovered five main elements. These were:
The exposition: This supplies background information to situate the narrative. It usually includes the presentation of characters and environment. This is also where an *inciting incident* occurs: the trigger event that begins the story and the transformational journey. 2.The rising action: Conflict is injected into the narrative. The protagonist must face challenges and trials as the tension mounts.3.The climax: This is the culmination of conflict and the highest point of tension. It is usually a moment of crisis and decision. Often associated with climax, the *peripeteia* is the turning point and reversal of fortune of the main character. 4.The falling action: This is the action that follows the climax and peripeteia. The earlier tribulation is reversed and the protagonist proceeds towards a final *resolution*.5.The denouement: This is the conclusion of events that end the story. Conflict is overcome and a change of state has been reached by the protagonist. (However, not all questions are necessarily answered, nor are the characters' futures fully determined.)

blood' visitors, but rather with the symbolic and the aspirational, with the exemplary prototypes and ideals written into institutional narratives.

1.4 Structure

The thesis is set out in nine chapters. Chapter one gives a brief introduction to the thesis: its aims, theoretical influence and methodology used.

Chapter two explores the major operational concerns that underlie the contemporary mission and functioning of the NGS institution. These are 'business', 'access' and 'public service' priorities. Indeed, much institutional operation is geared today to the procurement of funds, the pursuit of large-scale and multi-background audiences, and the development of a dynamic educational programme. Pushing to become ever more economically self-sufficient, open to the world, and open to new ideas, the institution strives to present itself in the twenty-first century as a vital and vitalising force within society.

Chapter three explores a symbolic projection of constancy and permanence in the context of one individual gallery – the Scottish National Gallery, the oldest of the NGS sites. The preserved collection is exhibited not only as a treasure to be enjoyed by present generations, it is also presented as an offering to 'posterity'. Thus the collection acts as reassuring evidence of the ongoing dependability of the institution and its guardians, and the continued stability of the society from which these guardians are drawn. Against a backdrop of twenty-first century uncertainty, NGS is concerned with maintaining and reinforcing the strong image of the museum as a secure and reliable constant within society.

Chapter four explores liberal themes in the context of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. Inside and around the gallery space, the institution presents to the public an ever-changing programme of artistic variety and contrast, of free

expression and cultural experimentation. Projecting an image of artistic curiosity, diversity and opportunity, the gallery celebrates the whimsicality of individual human expression, while promoting civic ideals of tolerance and equanimity. Its strongly international, cosmopolitan exhibitions exhort the continuing vitality and energy of liberal society.

Chapter five explores a theme of rejuvenation and regeneration in the context of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. This is arguably the most important of themes to a society burdened with the ghosts of an industrial past and the 'communities' once dependent upon it. Threatened with permanent closure in the 1990s, the Portrait Gallery has found a new lease of life in the early twenty-first century. Though it was closed to visitors for some two years to undergo major renovation work, the gallery was reopened in late 2011, with some fanfare, presenting to the public a host of new spaces, facilities and exhibitions. Not only was the architectural space refreshed, the very idea of the Portrait Gallery was considered anew; shifting from a mausoleum of the great and the good, the modern gallery has been re-imagined as an educational storyteller (for locals and tourists), and a hotspot of contemporary cultural activity (including film and photographic exhibition, musical rendition and artistic performance), with considerable café and retail space for the contemporary consumer.

Chapter six explores educational activity at NGS. Like others in the sector, NGS has adopted a strong discourse of 'communities' in the context of its educational mission. Indeed 'community' has become the symbolic environment and identity that begins its educational narrative. Members of 'communities' have become favoured model learners; used as exemplars to illustrate the direction and ideal progress of the educational endeavour, they demonstrate the possibility of individual renewal and the 'transformational potential' of arts education to lead citizens from insularity and socio-economic stagnation to a participative ideal centred on self-motivated cultural consumption and production.

Chapter seven considers the context of Scottish post-industrial, twenty-first century society. It then goes on to give an overview of the major policy developments concerning museums and galleries in Scotland, since devolution. For well over a decade, educational programmes and learning opportunities in museums and galleries have been designed to increase the social and economic participation of the widest possible population, including the marginalised and disadvantaged 'communities' of post-industrial Scotland, in growing cultural consumption and activity. This policy agenda continues today under an SNP administration which strives to promote the worth of 'culture' and the arts in Scottish economic success.

Chapter eight explores some important contemporary educational contexts, including the *Curriculum for Excellence*, developed soon after devolution, upholding business values, liberal citizenship ideals, and creative aptitudes (flexible skills, and versatile thinking). Indeed, modern educational policy and strategy aim to foster the development of a self-sufficient, innovative, global competitor, empowered with an enterprising spirit, a liberal, cosmopolitan worldview and adaptive cognitive skills. The chapter also explores the popular discourse of 'communities'. Certainly, of all the terms used by modern educational policy makers, there can be few more ubiquitous than 'communities'; it is a leading expression in government communication and connects to a propounded 'empowerment' agenda, designed to encourage individuals along a trajectory of decreasing dependency and increasing autonomy.

The thesis ends with a final conclusion, summarising the main findings and detailing some final thoughts. In the context of post-industrial malaise and decline, 'culture' has emerged as a possible salutary activity, reassuring the population of the existence of viable new seams of economic opportunity. A new emphasis on nationwide celebrations and grand sporting events has become apparent, seemingly leading society into a new age of permanent festival. This intensified festive atmosphere, designed to bolster a cultural economy, has seeped into the museum space. The museum sector now offers a new and expanding range of artistic performance and ephemeral entertainment to entice economic consumption of and

through culture. The museum also offers educational opportunities to encourage participation and expand interest in the cultural products and artistic goods of post-industrial society. The educational narrative operating in the museum follows a trajectory of increasing self-sufficiency, starting at closed ‘community’ level and leading on through key waymarks (engagement, inspiration, creative discovery) to a final end (or life-long pursuit) of individual, self-driven cultural and economic participation.

2 Institutional Priorities at the National Galleries of Scotland

I focus now on the institution of the National Galleries of Scotland, on its strategic reform and stated priorities. The main galleries of the NGS are located in Edinburgh, Scotland's capital city. With an estimated population of around 480,000 or 1.6 million if one includes the greater Edinburgh City region (see Edinburgh Council, *Edinburgh City Region: Economic Review*, 2011: 4), it is Scotland's second largest city and home to a number of the country's most popular visitor attractions, including Edinburgh Castle, the National Museum of Scotland, and indeed the National Galleries of Scotland. In fact, Edinburgh is the most visited city in Scotland and second only to London as a UK tourist destination; it is estimated around 4 million people visit Edinburgh every year and around a third of these are of international origin (see Edinburgh's Tourism Strengths, at www.edinburgh-inspiringcapital.com). The NGS is spread across several sites and buildings, in and around the city centre, and comprises today three main galleries: the Scottish National Gallery, the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. Although each gallery has a distinctive character and remit, they are constituent parts of the same institution. The National Galleries of Scotland, as a modern organisation, was established by an Act of the Westminster Parliament in 1907. However, the two oldest galleries were established in the nineteenth century; the Scottish National Gallery was opened to the public in 1859 and the Portrait Gallery thirty years later, in 1889. The Gallery of Modern Art, in contrast, is a twentieth century creation and was opened, much later, in 1960. Nevertheless, leaving aside some refurbishments and inconspicuous redevelopments, all the *buildings* of the National Galleries of Scotland (including the Gallery of Modern Art) are manifestly nineteenth century creations[19]. The institution as a whole houses over 90 000 objects, including over 45 000 works on

[19] The architectural heritage of the galleries is an inescapable and significant aspect of their identity. All the gallery buildings of the National Galleries of Scotland now stand within the boundaries of a UNESCO World Heritage site. The galleries do not simply reside there; through their architectural heritage they actively contribute to the city's World Heritage status (indeed, the Modern Art galleries delineate a large section of the western edge of the UNESCO site boundary). As authentic 'relics' of the Edinburgh New Town, they undoubtedly help sustain the city's international 'distinction'.

paper, 4700 sculptures, and over 3500 paintings (see NGS *Annual Accounts 2010-2011*). The collection comprises an eclectic body of works mostly of European origin – works that date from the early Renaissance to the present – and includes examples of work from many of the prominent figures in the history of Western art. Internationally famous painters and sculptors feature in the collection alongside more locally recognised artists. Open throughout the year, from Monday to Sunday, the galleries organise frequent temporary exhibitions and offer a diverse educational programme. Admission is free, and in contemporary times, NGS has successfully attracted over 1 million visitors a year (See NGS Annual Reviews).

This chapter investigates the current strategic direction of the National Galleries of Scotland, exploring its primary priorities and modern concerns. It examines, in particular, three main areas of interest that revolve around ideas of 'business', 'access' and 'service'. These priorities incorporate many of the values, aims and themes encouraged by government and found within a wider state educational narrative (explored in the penultimate chapter of this thesis).

2.1 Self-image

The National Galleries of Scotland operates largely autonomously from government. Its reliance on public funds, however, commits the institution towards being mindful of government policy, including the National Performance Framework, a central policy document, published in 2007, setting out the Scottish Government's aspirations and vision for Scottish society over a ten year period (see chapter 7, subsection 7.2.4). It is in reference to this document that the contemporary NGS institution has drafted its current mission statement, setting out its official objectives and priorities.

In fact, NGS sets out, today (in 2012, at time of writing), three key "priorities" (see 'Mission and Objectives', at www.nationalgalleries.org). These are:

- To develop a sustainable and efficient business model to support our aims and ensure long-term viability
- To increase access, encourage participation and promote learning
- To use the national collection to inform and inspire the public and to encourage artistic excellence, innovation and creativity

These priorities and their associated objectives (which include practical concerns associated with the safekeeping of the collection) constitute major overlapping parameters that frame the actions and energy of the institution. It is within these parameters of concern that NGS largely operates and defines its success. These priorities link in to wider discourse in the museum sector, and address the envisioned role of a twenty-first century national cultural institution. NGS seeks, today, to be increasingly entrepreneurial (expanding its money-generating operations), to adopt a global outlook (promoting local and international participation and access), and to be more creative and lively in its delivery of leisure and educational services. These priorities line up comfortably with the ideas and language of the contemporary SNP government, and in particular with a contemporary educational discourse centred on the themes of 'enterprise', 'citizenship' and 'creativity' (see chapter 8, section 8.1). These claimed priorities constitute, I argue, a response to twenty-first century governmental pressures and diffuse societal anxieties in Scotland which include fears over increasing economic instability and declining competitiveness and fears around a dependent citizenry.

Drawing on government-endorsed discourse, the modern NGS corporate plan (its mission and aims) presents a perhaps unusual blending of educational and business-flavoured themes and terminology. For instance, National Galleries of Scotland declares in its official 'vision' an aspiration to become "an ambitious, international institution" (see 'Mission and Objectives', at www.nationalgalleries.org). 'Ambition' speaks of determination, success and continual growth, and there is little doubt that it is a key personal value propounded by business ideologues. An 'ambitious' and 'international' vision also recalls the civic outlook put forward by

educational authorities in schools (see Curriculum for Excellence in chapter 8, subsection 8.1.3). It is also a word highly favoured by cultural authorities. Scotland's new *National Strategy for museums and galleries* is replete with the discourse of 'ambition'. Its ten-year vision also incorporated the term, linking it explicitly to the notion of 'enterprise'. It stated: "Scotland's museums and galleries will be ambitious, dynamic and sustainable enterprises." Connoting an ongoing drive for personal improvement, 'ambition' exhorts extraordinary effort, ability and imagination directed towards some powerful and indefinite end. Furthermore, it is tied up in this discourse with an ideology of competition and international rivalry.

Within this dominant philosophy, 'innovation' emerges as a key weapon in an imaginary fight to stay ahead of a competing crowd. This is one of NGS's official core values. As the institution clearly states: "Innovation: NGS will lead rather than follow" ('Mission and Objects', at www.nationalgalleries.org)[20]. A word rather more familiar to the world of business and industry, 'innovation', has now been fully conscripted into the world of museums. A celebration of the 'new', innovation speaks in the twenty-first century not simply of novelty but also of an *international* (economic, technological or cultural) edge, of leadership in a global race.

Moreover, innovation and leadership are today closely associated with the educationally potent term of 'excellence' (the very first of NGS's propounded official 'values'). More than any other key word in cultural discourse, 'excellence' seems to ideally frame the aspiration of the modern cultural institution. Connoting an energetic stability, it labels the institution's public response to the idea of stagnation or decline.

Popularised in Scotland with the advent of the Curriculum for Excellence, 'excellence' is now a common term in educational and cultural circles, including museums and galleries. Like 'ambition', 'excellence' properly refers to a chased

[20] Innovation and global outlook are also key ideas that recur within the discourse of NMS: "We are also a centre for unique learning experiences, inspiring people of all ages, encouraging a global outlook, and boosting creativity and innovation" (National Museums Scotland, *Strategic Plan 2011-2015*).

abstraction. In educational circles, it is an ideal standard towards which the learner is directed to strive – the perfect goal of a permanent competitive enterprise. It is fundamentally a tantalising objective; it is an aim, an aspiration, a nebulous target that gives direction to the educational endeavour. Lying, as it were, forever beyond the horizon, it enables the illusion of constantly 'seeking', of a never-ending march of improvement and personal progress. Like ambition, if one is striving for excellence, one denies the possibility of stagnation. NGS has fully appropriated this terminology. The institution declares thus: "NGS is committed to the pursuit of excellence in all its activities and services" (see, 'Mission and Objectives', at www.nationalgalleries.org). Excellence is to be chased but never permanently caught; the modern institution, like the modern learner, is in constant motion and constant action; it is in life-long competition with itself and others.

Though snapshots of 'excellence' are occasionally recognised and rewarded by outside parties (as with the Sandford Award for Excellence in Heritage Education), if anything, such awards underline the briefness of achievement, and the never-ending struggle to keep up with or (better still) lead a competing (international) pack[21]. NGS declares then: "We aim to be a benchmark for excellence in the sphere of gallery education" (National Galleries of Scotland, 'Education', www.nationalgalleries.org)[22]. In this struggle for excellence there is no objective final standard; it is rather the shifting position of leadership that becomes the 'benchmark' for others.

The celebration of 'excellence' is certainly not unique to the Scottish or British museum context and it is interesting to note the overlap that exists in language and themes between European/international museum discourse and that of the domestic sector. In 2013, the Scottish National Portrait Gallery was one of 28 museums nominated for the 'European Museum of the Year Award' for its pursuit of

[21] "We wish to be recognized internationally for the excellence of our education and interpretation programme" (National Galleries of Scotland, Education Vision, Flyer, 2011).
[22] Parallel discourse operates within National Museums Scotland: "as an international centre of excellence, we believe that it is appropriate and necessary that we should provide advice and support to the museums community (National Museums Scotland, *Strategic Plan 2011-2015*: 14).

‘excellence’ (See ‘The Purpose of the European Museum of the Year Award Scheme’, at www.europeanmuseumforum.info). This evaluation and recognition of excellence was framed characteristically within a structure of competition. Indeed, it is within the context of local and international competition (for resources, visitors and recognition) that NGS, like others in the cultural sector, now readily present themselves in relation to wider society.

2.2 Business at NGS

2.2.1 Economic Pressures

NGS is a non-departmental public body and registered public charity managed on behalf of the Scottish Government by its Board of Trustees, receiving the bulk of its funding from the Scottish Government. In recent years, following the economic crisis of 2007-08, the Scottish Government has put pressure on NGS to reduce its costs. As Audit Scotland stated: “NGS is realigning its business model to adapt to reduced support from Scottish Government…” (Audit Scotland, *Annual Report on the 2010/11 Audit to National Galleries of Scotland and the Auditor General for Scotland*: 4). Although the NGS remains publicly optimistic and committed to long-term development plans (including rethinking the display of the ‘Scottish collection’, currently exhibited in a sublevel at the National Gallery, and refreshing the facilities at the Gallery of Modern Art) it is clear that, at a senior management level, there are few more worrying issues to NGS than the current and future economic climate. “Looking ahead,” wrote the Chairman of NGS Ben Thomson in 2010, “the funding environment for culture and the arts in Scotland presents many challenges” (National Galleries of Scotland, *Annual Review 2010-2011*: 3).

Indeed, in response to these ‘challenges’, the organisation has been forced to cut costs. This has impacted various areas, for instance the ability for NGS to purchase new works. The institution had previously held an acquisitions budget of some £1m

a year. Yet, with Government reducing NGS funding for 'capital expenditure' to £1.2m over three years (starting 2012), the institution has reduced its allocation for new works to £200,000 a year. This has pushed the institution to rely ever more on alternative means of acquisition. As the Director-General commented: "We do become ever more creative in relation to private collectors, looking for gifts, loans, bequests, something we have always done and done skilfully" (Director-General, in The Scotsman, *National Galleries' Art Budget Slashed by a Fifth to Derisory £200,000*, Published 12th of April 2012, at www.scotsman.com). In response to financial pressures, the institution has moved to improve its efficiency at all levels. NGS is working also in partnership with the National Library of Scotland to share 'backroom' services, including IT, HR and finance functions, in an effort to further reduce cost.

The institution has also turned, in recent years, to volunteers to help deliver services. Set up in 2010, new voluntary 'opportunities' (low-skill and low responsibility) have been offered to gallery attendants, students and others. On one level, volunteers help save money for the organisation, in what is an increasingly difficult funding environment. "We really needed volunteers", explained Sarah Saunders, deputy head of education, "we were getting to the stage where we couldn't afford to pay for all the help that we needed; we just couldn't afford it." (Sarah Saunders, Deputy Head of Education, Interview 8/ 02/ 2012). On another level, the volunteer programme also served to bolster a particular liberal vision of self-driven opportunity, self-motivated participation and individual contribution. This is an idea epitomised in emphatic terms by the British Government's 'Big Society' agenda, which aimed to encourage greater private giving (philanthropy) to bolster the provision and services of the state. Certainly, the NGS voluntary programme was directly inspired by this agenda (see interview with Sarah Saunders, Deputy Head of Education, in appendix), and now successfully recruits volunteers in exchange for experience, skills-development, and future references.

However, one of the most important cost-cutting measures undertaken by NGS in recent years has been the steady reduction in permanent staff numbers. This has

been achieved through various means, including "voluntary severance, flexible working, sabbatical leave and partial-retirement schemes" (National Galleries of Scotland, *Submission from the National Galleries of Scotland*, 22nd of November 2010). In addition, NGS has sought to reduce its salary bill further "by continuing its recruitment freeze and through natural wastage." (National Galleries of Scotland, *Submission from the National Galleries of Scotland*, 22nd of November 2010). One of the most important impacts of the economic downturn on the NGS has been the significant reduction in permanent and full-time staff across all departments. Indeed, permanent staffing levels have been decreasing yearly since economic concerns became manifest (for instance, in 2008, there were 143 permanent members of warding staff; by 2011 this had fallen to 108) (see *Annual Accounts*, National Galleries of Scotland). An official submission to Scottish ministers in 2010 warned of the impact of continuing cutbacks on service provision:

> NGS has reduced its headcount year on year over the last three years…The most obvious impact of reducing staff will be on restrictions on public access to the collections, for example, through room closures. Reduced staffing will also impact on our ability to maintain a public programme of national and international resonance (National Galleries of Scotland, *Submission from the National Galleries of Scotland*, 22nd of November 2010).

The document warned of the impact of cuts on the current level of service. Although the organisation was able to cope thus far, it declared, the public programme (including new exhibitions, education, and outreach activity) was becoming ever more vulnerable. With the strain on finances growing ever more acute, so the pressure to consider more drastic measures seemed to be increasing. The organisation submitted to government that:

> Inevitably there is a point where the model breaks down and, if further cuts are added in subsequent years, the Trustees of NGS may have to turn to more radical solutions such as the complete closure of a site or the introduction of admission charges to the permanent collection (National Galleries of Scotland, *Submission from the National Galleries of Scotland*, 22nd of November 2010).

Certainly, the introduction of admission charges would be a controversial decision. The Scottish Government holds to free admission as a point of principle, yet the NGS warns that this introduction may be 'inevitable' if financial pressures continue to mount. Such a decision rests theoretically in the hands of the NGS Board of Trustees, but of course, the institution is well aware of the ideological problems associated with such a move, as inevitably this would undermine the whole notion of broad-spectrum inclusion. As the institution admits, this would have "a major impact on the present concept of public ownership" (National Galleries of Scotland, *Submission from the National Galleries of Scotland*, 22nd of November 2010). Nevertheless, while access issues and visitor numbers are a key concern for NGS, in the end, management's first priority remains the pursuit of what it deems to be adequate funding. This funding concern constitutes the primary tension that exists between government and the museum sector in the contemporary era.

2.2.2 Business Ethos

Since the advent of Scottish devolution in 1999, the National Galleries of Scotland has been funded largely by the Scottish Government and managed on its behalf by a Board of Trustees whose members are appointed (at time of writing) by the minister for Europe, External affairs and Culture. The general functions of the Board of Trustees are detailed under the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985[23]. As edited on the NGS website ('Who We Are', at www.nationalgalleries.org), the principal functions of the Board are now:

- To care for, preserve and add to the objects in their collection.
- To ensure that the objects are exhibited to the public.

[23] The Board of Trustees is responsible amongst other things for setting the overall strategic direction of NGS. The operational management, however, is delegated to the Director-General and his team.

> •To ensure that the objects are available to persons seeking to inspect them in connection with study or research, and generally to promote the public's enjoyment and understanding of the fine arts both by means of the Board's collection and by such other means as they consider appropriate.
> •For those purposes to provide education, instruction and advice, and to carry out research.

As well as setting out general duties and powers, the Act also clarified the Board's power to pursue commercial interests, detailing means by which the institution might supplement its income stream (including the production and publication of books, the sale of souvenirs, the provision of catering and other services), and helping to usher in a new era of commercialism at NGS.

In the nineteenth century, bourgeois elites, despite their capitalist credentials, preferred not to conceptualise the museum as a 'business'. The nation's 'patrimony' was not particularly open to retail activity, marketing, competition, or market research. Crafting the museum primarily as a representational tool of civilisational self-validation, the paternalistic ideologies of the past seemed to override direct business interest in the museum. Indeed, it is only in more recent decades (since the end of the Second World War), with the continued transformation and industrial decline of many Western societies and Western economies that stronger capitalist influences have begun to be felt within the modern museum sector (see Krauss, 1990; Mathur, 2005).

As its 'corporate plan' makes clear, one of the key priorities of NGS today is to strengthen the institution's economic stability and self-sufficiency (*"to develop a sustainable and efficient business model to support our aims and ensure long term viability"* NGS 'Mission and Objects', at www.nationalgalleries.org). The term 'business' may seem odd for an organisation that presents itself as a custodian of heritage, yet the organisation, like others in the sector, makes little apology for this terminology. In pursuit of economic stability, senior management has moved to diversify the institution's income flow, and moved to expand its self-generated

income. Indeed, in 2011 NGS founded a new *trading company* to increase efficiency and boost its income (the new trading company now operates, amongst other things, events and venue hire at NGS). This business operation is scripted as a matter of sustainability and good practice. Indeed, in recent years, NGS has become ever more 'forceful' in its pursuit of money. The organisation declared in 2011:

> Self-generated income in 2010-2011 increased significantly from the previous year due to an up-turn in corporate sponsorship, the development of trading and a more aggressive approach to ticketing exhibitions. The formation of the trading company will continue to develop the commercial income stream in 2011-12 (National Galleries of Scotland, *Annual Accounts 2010-11*: 8).

Clearly, the institution is not afraid to be 'aggressive' when money is involved. In any case, the organisation has moved to expand considerably its 'commercial' space in recent years. Both the Playfair project and the Portrait Gallery revamp were envisioned, at least partly, to improve the functional and commercial facilities of the organisation; in certain specific and reserved spaces within the institution, the visitor is invited to become a shopper and consumer. But this 'retail' role is only one aspect of the modern museum business. As the Director-General explained, the modern museum and those who work for it must become ever more imaginative in pursuit of financial opportunity:

> Generally as public funding pressures increase and that level of funding either stays the same or shrinks, then if you're going to keep going and keep meeting the expectations of the public then you have to be ever more creative and inventive in finding new ways of funding it (Director-General, Interview 15/ 02/ 2012).

Thus, for instance, evening hours, after the galleries have been closed to the public, have been made available for private provision. In this 'closed' time, purged of the public, the institution, no longer bound by public service, is able to indulge alternative operations in which reserved entry and private entertainment are drafted into a larger narrative of 'sustainability'. All three of the institution's Edinburgh sites are available to hire for special functions and "private parties" (National

Galleries of Scotland, 'Private Parties', at www.nationalgalleries.org). To attract custom for its service, NGS offers the possibility of 'tailor-made' events to suit the needs of its clients. These venue hire opportunities are aimed to attract corporate clients and the wealthier class of citizen. NGS promise their customers that their parties "will exude style and sophistication":

> Guests can enjoy champagne, cocktails and canapés in wonderful surroundings, plus an exclusive private view of the Gallery's treasured art collection in the company of an expert curator (National Galleries of Scotland, 'Venue Hire', at www.nationalgalleries.org).

This projection of 'good taste' is an important marketing device, used by NGS at every opportunity to attract private and business support. It is closely associated with a discourse of 'exclusivity'[24]. Indeed, the organisation offers its public the opportunity to become fee-paying members of its 'friends' club. These 'friends' may take advantage of many exclusive benefits, "including free entry to exhibitions, an exclusive events and lecture programme, and invitations to exhibition preview days" (National Galleries of Scotland, *What's On*, Spring 2012). Benefits may also include trips and dinners, and other special entertainment.

NGS continually strives to supplement its income, and continually seeks out private sponsorship for its many exhibitions and educational activities. Curatorial and educational departments have been encouraged to become ever more proactive in this regard. Whatever the potential dangers (a particular company may have unsuitable links, or place unwanted conditions on the organisation), the pursuit of private business opportunity is legitimated by an overriding narrative of survival. Michael Clarke, Director of the Scottish National Gallery, declared thus:

> There are lots of dangers, or challenges shall I put it, in seeking this necessary outside funding, and […] you have to evaluate carefully what you're doing in that respect. But you have to do it, because otherwise […] if

[24] "In return for helping to fund the National Galleries' valuable work, you and your employees will enjoy the many privileges offered only to corporate supporters – from exceptional branding and promotional opportunities to access to superb venues for corporate entertaining (National Galleries of Scotland, *Corporate Sponsorship & Membership*, n.d. :2).

> we can't keep going then we would have to start closing a few days a week or shutting down one of the branch galleries (Michael Clarke, Director of the Scottish National Gallery, Interview 14/ 03/ 2012).

Decline is the underlying fear, and unfortunately for NGS, despite the many successful sponsorship deals and increased corporate support, most outside funders have little interest in paying for the everyday maintenance of the galleries[25]. Accordingly, NGS still remains dependent on government money for the everyday costs and salaries of the institution. Because of this dependency, it falls to the management of NGS to validate the contribution of the institution to society, to bury the idea of 'burden' and project ideas of 'profit' and 'benefit' to the wider Scottish economy.

2.2.3 Self-Advocacy - Wider Economic Contribution

A large fraction of the NGS audience is of international origin, brought into being by the global tourist industry. In 2011 overseas tourists accounted for about 25 to 30 percent of visits to NGS galleries. If we include tourists from England and the rest of the UK, this rose to about 50 percent (see *Visitor Research Annual Report 2011/12*: 28). In fact, the 'tourist' appears to be an important character of the modern age. For sociologist Adrian Franklin, the tourist represents more than an overseas or distant traveller, the tourist has come to represent the essence of a modern global citizen. Even the local resident, he argued, in his or her home environment, increasingly seems to resemble the tourist, mimicking the same choices and behaviour (Franklin, 2003: 5). Certainly, the distinction between tourist and consumer seems increasingly blurred. The tourist is perhaps better defined by what he or she is not – and he or she is emphatically not a threat. The tourist, of course, is safe – contained, managed, processed – and tied into a global industry. The tourist's presence is transitory, short-lived, ephemeral. He/she is gone just as

[25] "…because so much funding these days is project led, outside funding, apart from what you receive from your sponsoring body, is absolutely not interested in paying the rates, or the lighting, or the heating, these very boring things that are absolutely essential for a place like this to continue" (Director, National Gallery of Scotland, interview 14/ 03/ 2012).

he/she arrives, to be replaced by another, in a tamed flow of coming and going people. This pacified flowing citizenry has come to represent a major source of economic opportunity for twenty-first century Western societies.

There is little doubt that tourism and the tourist economy (valued at some £4.3bn by the Scottish Government - see 'Tourism', at www.scotland.gov.uk) are of significant importance to Scotland and the Scottish Government. To attract tourist flows, government and private enterprise have moved to exploit, develop and cash in on the immaterial assets of image and identity. Government sponsored initiatives such as the 'Year of Food and Drink 2010', the 'Year of Creative Scotland 2012', or the 'Year of Natural Scotland 2013', have helped to forge and sustain a veritable enterprise of national image celebration. Promoting anything from Scotch whisky to contemporary arts, a host of new festivals and cultural events have been launched to raise the touristic profile of the Scottish nation. The aim is to help draw visitors, spending, business and investment into 'festival Scotland'.

The National Galleries of Scotland, like other cultural institutions, has been conscripted into the profile-raising agenda. The institution is keenly attentive to the political desire to lift both its own national and international status and that of Scotland more generally. To help in this end, NGS is keen to forge links with partner institutions, either by contributing to international conferences and meetings or by lending works from its collection to local and overseas collaborators. In this way, the NGS hopes to raise awareness of its existence and its offering, nationally and internationally. For example, in February 2010, the NGS announced a new partnership with the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, USA. The reasons for doing this were made plain:

> The NGS will be sending a series of exhibitions over the next four years to Atlanta and to other institutions in the US to raise the profile of the NGS and its collection in North America. The NGS wants to attract attention to the world-class quality of its holdings and to broaden its international base of support. The National Galleries also hope to help raise awareness in the US of the importance of Scotland as a centre for the visual arts (National

Galleries of Scotland, Press Release 26th of February 2010, at www.nationalgalleries.org).

Connecting itself within a wider web of local and international cultural providers, the National Galleries of Scotland strives to attract and welcome people from both home and abroad. Like others in the Scottish museum sector, NGS is very aware of SNP government priorities and the increased emphasis on economic contribution and 'well-being' (see National Galleries of Scotland, *Submission from the National Galleries of Scotland*, 22nd of November 2010). In line with the National Framework (see chapter 7, subsection 7.2.4), NGS is engaged in an ongoing effort to demonstrate the value of the galleries to both the flourishing of society and to the development of the economy[26].

NGS endeavours to establish a reputation for itself (and the wider city and nation) as a centre of internationally consumable cultural activity. Indeed NGS and the wider sector strive to cast culture as an essential economic lifeline and stabilizing force in these times of austerity and crisis, and have come to embrace the new fad for endless festival[27].

[26] National Museums Scotland is also keen to declare explicitly its purported economic contribution: "The revised report concluded that we will contribute at least £3.19 to the Scottish economy for every £1 invested by the Scottish Government" (NMS Strategic Plan 2011-2015: 2).
[27] There is now even a Scottish 'Festival of Museums', developed by Museums Galleries Scotland.

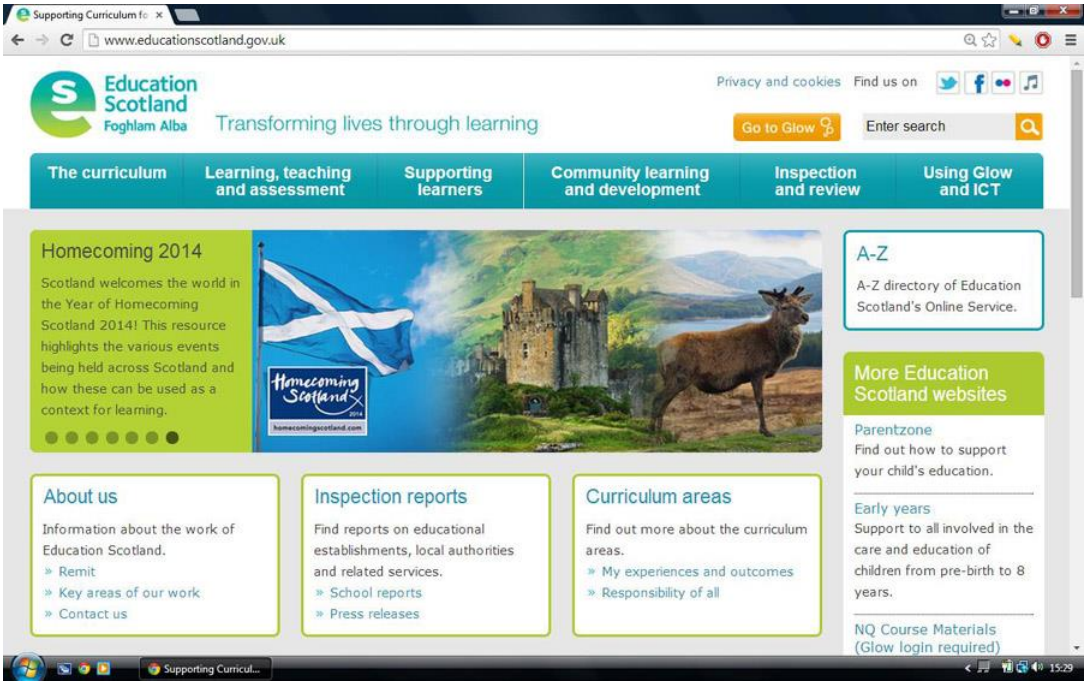

Image 1: Screenshot of Education Scotland Website
Promoting Homecoming Scotland 2014, Available: www.educationscotland.gov.uk [12th of March 2014]

Nationwide celebrations such as the 'Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games' or 'Homecoming Scotland' 2014, used increasingly as *contexts of learning* (see image 1), project a desired sense of national 'dynamism' and 'energy' onto Scotland's image and the Scottish Government's stewardship of the country. At the same time, these celebrations also emphasize the idea of international participation and consumable culture.

Vibrancy, pageant, voice, fun – a whole host of new words have been embraced by gallery workers and educators as they attempt to gear the museum to the task of selling culture (in all its nebulosity) internationally. This culture is scripted to seduce, entice, and attract. It is touted as being unique and authentic, but equally it is lauded for its humanism and its openness to the world. Most importantly, this culture is proclaimed as a central stimulator of economic activity in the twenty-first century. As economic prosperity appears ever more uncertain, the future ever more gloomy, so the culture of the museum is transformed into an exemplar of rejuvenating vitality and renewal. "We would emphasize our view," declared NGS

managers, "that a vibrant cultural sector is not a luxury for Scotland but an essential part of our country's future recovery and prosperity" (National Galleries of Scotland, *Annual review 2008-09*: 3). The National Galleries of Scotland, a large national cultural provider, is keen to contribute and be seen to contribute to the successful development of the cultural and tourist economy, and to the maintenance of wider societal prosperity.

2.3 Access at NGS

2.3.1 Visitor Focus

In recent decades in Britain, museums have been pressed to become ever more inviting and welcoming spaces, and have been driven to actively encourage the public to visit[28]. As museum professional David Fleming argues, there has been a sea-change in institutional approaches to audience engagement (David Fleming, Director, National Museums Liverpool, 2005). Fleming identifies two forces that have pushed a change in attitudes in Britain. Firstly, an internal 'democratisation' of the museum profession has opened up opportunities for people from different socio-economic backgrounds to enter and impact the museum sector. This shift in background is creating an increasingly diverse profession, more aware than ever of wider 'social responsibilities'. Secondly, museums have been forced by governments to justify their public funding; museums have been forced out of 'isolation' and pushed into becoming more responsive to the needs of wider society. Fleming speaks thus of a motive of 'self-preservation' (Fleming, 2005).

[28] NGS declared: "We are aware that visitor numbers can be a fickle indicator of success but we are proud to record that in 2006 the National Galleries of Scotland attracted over 1.5 million visitors, the highest figure yet in our history" (NGS, Annual Review 2006-2007: 3).

The evolution of the museum is thus being driven, in essence, by both a 'belief' in change and by an instinct for 'self-preservation'. This is an analysis accepted by Michael Clarke, Director of the Scottish National Gallery:

> …in our general, as you might call it, social contract or political contract, we have to present ourselves in the market place as the most attractive option we can, in order to continue to get support, […] just in terms of general advocacy and financial support from the outside world. So, there's a belief in what we're doing, but also there is an element of self-interest in it as well. It would be idle to pretend otherwise. (Clarke, Director of Scottish National Gallery, Interview 14/ 03/ 2012).

The 'introverted' attitude dominant in mid-century, with its focus on objects and collection-building[29], has been superseded (though by no means abandoned) by a much more outward-looking and, to use a popular institutional word, 'ambitious' social vision. "Collection building is tremendously important," points out Michael Clarke, "but we are about much more than that. We are about trying to provide a whole experience for the visitor." (Clarke, Director of Scottish National Gallery, Interview 14/ 03/ 2012). This new visitor-focus represents an opening up not simply of the gallery space but, perhaps more significantly, of the institution's interest towards society. A new spirit of welcome, driven by twin interests of business and education, has suffused the halls of the institution. The idea is expressed in the National Galleries within an encompassing notion of 'access'.

2.3.2 Changing Apparatus

However much the museum has embraced a new spirit of openness, it remains framed, firstly, within an unavoidable structure of security. Thus 'access' is tempered by a competing priority to 'protect'. The guardianship of the collection is a primary responsibility of the institution, and one taken very seriously by all staff.

[29] In the words of Michael Clarke, head of the National Gallery "…it was really only the art history I suspect, and connoisseurship and adding to the collections that they concentrated on, and they didn't think for a number of decades, round about mid-century, at what one might call the wider aspect of institutions such as this" (Director, National Gallery of Scotland, Interview 14/ 03/ 2012).

Security and Visitor Services is the biggest department at NGS and has (at time of writing) about 150 staff (rising to around 210 over the summer period).
SVS personnel are employed to ensure the safety of the public, the artworks and the buildings. They also enforce gallery rules. Visitors usually regulate themselves, however, rarely contravening the implicit and explicit rules of the institution. Thus SVS personnel seldom need to intervene. On the odd occasion that members of staff are moved to enforce rules, this is done in a firm but friendly way. Undoubtedly, the most common intervention is to request visitors to remove their backpacks.

Despite the pleasant manner of the guards, incidents of polite disciplining by staff, often witnessed by other visitors, reinforce the authority of the institution and remind everyone that accidents are an anathema. Indeed, the NGS website presents the following instructional dialogue:

> Can I take my backpack in when I visit?
> No, these are outlawed for two reasons, but can be checked into the cloakroom free of charge. Visitors accidentally back into works, especially sculpture. Visitors back into each other and cause accidents (National Galleries of Scotland, 'Frequently Asked Questions', at www.natioanlgalleries.org).

The gallery space is to remain unsullied by mishap. The avowedly unique and 'irreplaceable' nature of the objects of collection demand of the public a heightened sense of care. Visitors are thus encouraged to control their physical movements and regulate their perambulations within the institutional space.

> Why can't I point at artworks?
> We understand that visitors like to get close to artworks to see brushstrokes, signatures etc, and to point out things to their friends. However, the works and their frames are fragile and, in most cases, irreplaceable. We ask visitors to respect this and keep a safe distance (National Galleries of Scotland, 'Frequently Asked Questions', at www.natioanlgalleries.org).

The 'sensible' precautions of the institution, advertise both the high value of the exhibited treasures and their 'fragility'. This 'inherent vulnerability' of collected

objects is an important and recurring theme within institutional narratives that helps carve out the museum's societal position as a guardian of 'authenticity' and a custodian of objects in the long term. The institution's dutiful devotion to protecting objects 'for future generations' reveals an acute attention to detail: "Wet brollies can increase humidity in the galleries and ultimately damage works" (National Galleries of Scotland, Frequently Asked Questions, at www.natioanlgalleries.org). It is not only water, but also air and light, and all elements that are potentially harmful to the protected objects. The outside, everyday, ordinary world is a hazard that continues to be separated from the gallery space. The security apparatus, which appears as much symbolic as it is real, frames the collected object. The security precautions reinforce the symbolic 'stasis' of the gallery space. In this frozen space, few spontaneous or energetic actions are approved. Only sanctioned (professional) performers may produce unusual actions, though, even then, within carefully formalised boundaries.

The presence of security staff is a ubiquitous reminder of the constant surveillance that surrounds the collection and the gallery of art. Indeed, security personnel are the most obvious members and representatives of the institution visible on the gallery floor. Yet, it is also clear that this security presence has been given a new, friendlier face in the twenty-first century. Certainly, the institution has become more preoccupied in recent years with 'softening' its security presence. As one manager explained: "No-one likes to be told what to do or what not to do" (SVS Manager, Interview, 23/ 10/ 2012). Staff members have been coached to be welcoming and pleasant, and instructed to eliminate all negative language. One gallery attendant explained that:

> Rather than say 'you can't carry your rucksack', you say 'can you please carry your rucksack by hand' instead, so rather than offering a negative then turn that round and make it a positive (NGS Gallery Attendant, Interview, 30/ 10/ 2012).

With long hours spent wandering the same familiar rooms, average duties can be monotonous and security personnel can often be found today chatting pleasantly

with colleagues or visitors in halls and galleries as they, no doubt unconsciously, attempt to stave off the general ennui. Interestingly, they are sometimes the only individuals talking and at times the most audible people inside the gallery space. Although interactions between security staff and public remain fairly limited, SVS personnel do represent, on many occasions, the first port of call for many visitors seeking information; they are usually well informed about the exhibitions they 'patrol' and simple requests may be handled by them individually.

In the past, wardens used to have a strict security role and were not supposed to converse with visitors. Indeed, under previous regimes, wardens could apparently be "told off" for speaking to people. The role began to change, however, in recent years. In 2009, warding personnel were incorporated into the new Security and Visitor Services department. Managers changed the remit of staff members and their training. Instead of focusing exclusively on security, the new gallery attendants were encouraged to become more visitor-focused. Now, staff could give directions and advice on artworks or offer assistance. Included in their new functions was a responsibility to promote the institution's exhibitions and galleries. Managers wanted staff to adopt some of the professional ethos of the retail sector, where employees often meet, assist and sell products but also keep an eye on the shop floor, looking out for accidents and shoplifters. Managers also changed "how they recruit, where they recruit, and the skills they recruit for" (SVS Manager, Interview, 23/ 10/ 2012). The NGS used to recruit heavily from the security sector, so staff would be made up of ex-police and prison officers or ex-military personnel. However these wardens often lacked good people skills. As one manager explained: "What we were finding was not all of them had the sort of softer skills for the direction we were wanting to take the department" (SVS Manager, Interview, 23/ 10/ 2012). In pursuit of an improved 'customer service', the NGS recruits much more broadly at present. Managers look for people who like working with people. One of the most important questions put to potential recruits at interview now is "what do you like about working with the public?" (SVS Manager, Interview, 23/ 10/ 2012). Increasingly, the NGS has tended to employ individuals with an artistic background, either practising artists or individuals holding art degrees. These new

staff members are, it is thought, better able to speak about the collections and possess more background knowledge; they are also more likely to be engaged with their work and be concerned about the protection of the collection. According to managers, the role has been broadened because visitor expectations have changed:

> Visitor expectations are changed, you know, visitors don't expect to come in and have their conversations kept to a polite minimum. They expect to engage with the staff. They expect to get knowledge from the staff and information (SVS Manager, Interview, 23/ 10/ 2012).

It is not only SVS employees who contribute to a purportedly improved customer service at NGS. In 2012, the *Scottish Café and Restaurant* at the Scottish National Gallery won the award for *Best Customer Service of the Year* at the Scottish Restaurant Awards 2012[30]. All around the gallery space, educators and freelance artists, restaurant waiters and shop workers work hard to project a sense of human warmth; all have been chosen not only for their immediate professional competence but also for their ability to greet and interact with the public. The personnel of NGS, to varying degrees, have become important agents of an institutional programme of 'welcome', helping to project NGS as a universal friend, hospitable and respectful to all.

2.3.3 A Gallery without Walls

In recent years the institution has been encouraged to pursue a number of strategies geared towards raising greater awareness of the collection and bringing new visitors to the galleries. One of the most important of these strategies has been the development of the NGS outreach programme.

The outreach arm of the National Galleries of Scotland is a small but dedicated two-person team; passionate and committed, it is composed (at time of writing) of one

[30] "The award for Best Customer Service of the Year recognizes a restaurant which goes above and beyond to ensure that diners enjoy time spent in their establishment"(www.nationalgalleries.org *news 28th of February 2012*).

full-time officer and one part-time senior officer. Frequently out in the field and out on the road, the outreach officers seem to constitute something akin to the public ambassadors of the galleries. Recruiting participants predominantly from those sections of society unaccustomed to visiting the National Galleries of Scotland, or art galleries generally, the team develop and run a diverse programme of activities and events. These are designed to spark an interest in cultural activity generally and the cultural artefacts of the institution in particular. Indeed, the official strategic aim of the outreach programme is to bring the NGS collection, and awareness of the collection, to a wider, 'communities' audience[31] (a topic explored in greater detail in chapter 6, section 6.2). This work is undertaken primarily in collaboration with practising free-lance artists, hired for their practical expertise, artistic experience and professional charisma. Collaboration, generally, short-term and flexible, is an important theme in the professional life of the outreach team. As budgets are often small, cooperation with local authorities and partner organisations offers the outreach team a number of benefits including quick and ready access to target groups and opportunities to share skills and resources. In fact, local contacts are generally crucial in helping to forge working relationships with many of the more 'hard to reach' groups.

The outreach team is an adaptable outfit. Tailoring their formality, language, and behaviour to the specific audience they are interacting with, outreach officers attempt to build and consolidate relationships with a wide variety of groups. Contact time between staff and participants is often limited, and so connections must often be consolidated quickly. The 'face-to-face' encounters between professionals and participants are crucial events which build up confidence and trust between parties. In turn, this trust determines the subsequent levels of participation and commitment given to a proposed project. Indeed, much of the team's success or

[31] As the institution makes clear: "NGS is committed to making our art collection and exhibitions accessible to a wider audience. To help fulfil this aim, our Outreach team develops partnerships and creative collaborations between artists and communities throughout Scotland" (National Galleries of Scotland. *Annual Review* 2007-2008: 5).

failure seems to rest upon the level of confidence and belief given to the educators as individuals.

As well as being introduced to gallery staff, participants are also introduced to celebrated art objects or, more usually, for security reasons, their reproductions (the original works being deemed too precious to leave the safety of the galleries). Art objects are chosen, where possible, for some connection, direct or indirect, to the lives of the target group. The artistic artefact is supposed to function primarily as a catalyst for debate, arousing intellectual engagement and especially 'curiosity' in the participants – a leading emotion in any further commitment to a given project. Indeed, artworks form an essential starting point for all proposed projects and are used as precipitators of reflection, conversation and action.

NGS today is publicly concerned with breaking down physical and mental barriers and encouraging ever more people to access the collection. Figuratively, the NGS is attempting to dissolve its walls:

> The concept of a **Gallery without walls** is crucial to our approach, embracing the notion of a collection which is accessible both in the traditional art gallery context and through other means both physical and virtual (NGS 'Mission and Objectives', at www.nationalgalleries.org).

On one level this is about encouraging the wider world into the gallery space, about inviting more people inside the hitherto quasi-sanctified halls. On another level, this is also about bringing the gallery *to* the world, about opening up and sharing the collection with a 'non-visiting' public:

> Our outreach programmes have opened the National Galleries of Scotland to new audiences through initiatives both in the galleries and with partners across Scotland. To support this we have significantly increased our online presence through continued digitisation of our collection as well as further development of our website (National Galleries of Scotland, *Annual Review 2008-09*: 2).

Within the last two decades or so, the Internet has emerged as a powerful tool for mass communication. As part of the institution's on-going endeavour to raise its profile and encourage interest in its collection, the organisation has worked to develop its online presence. In fact, this technological initiative has enabled NGS to disseminate images of itself and its works far and wide, to share its objects 'virtually' with a potentially global audience.

The institution's online presence is secured, to begin with, through the organisation's own *website*. The NGS website is a constantly updated and developing resource for both public and institution, and has become a primary gateway to information about the organisation, its collection and its activities. Indeed, the NGS site allows the organisation to advertise its programme of exhibitions and events. This is undoubtedly the most obvious and crucial role, enabling people to gain quick and easy access to the description, dates and cost of particular shows. The website also functions as a digital archive for the public, where information on past projects and past exhibitions can be called up and retrieved. More generally, it is an important source of information regarding the structure and organisation of the institution, as well as its policies and objectives. In recent years, there has been a move to expand the role of the website further. The website now offers a large number of digital displays of many of its most prominent works, with accompanying texts and interpretations; over 3000 artworks are now available to view online. The website also features an online shop, where customers can buy a variety of products, including prints, posters, books, stationery and other art-related products, most often connected to or inspired by the NGS collection.

As well as developing its own website, the organisation has also begun to utilise other online platforms. For instance, in January 2009, NGS joined the *Commons Photograph Archive* on the photograph-sharing website *Flickr*: "National Galleries of Scotland is now the 18th organisation to have launched a presence there, and the first Scottish organisation to do so" (National Galleries of Scotland, Press release 16th of January 2009, at www.nationalgalleries.org). A desire to increase its international 'visibility' and to position itself within a broader network of global

institutions has also moved NGS to collaborate with the business giant Google. Indeed, in 2012, NGS joined the *Google Art Project* to bring 150 of the institution's most prominent works to a wider world audience. As NGS explained: "Google Art will allow those that cannot attend any of the three galleries in Edinburgh in person to get a taste of the NGS collection wherever in the world they are" (National Galleries of Scotland, Press Release 3rd of April 2012, at www.nationalgalleries.org). The *Google Art Project* displays high resolution images on screen revealing some of the world's most famous artworks in great detail. More importantly for the institution, it allows access to more than 30 000 artworks from 151 "partners" across 40 different countries. By positioning itself alongside other 'leading' institutions, NGS of course consolidates the reputation and value of its own collected works. In an important sense, Google or, more accurately, the network of collaborating museums help to authenticate the collected objects through a mutual show of esteem and institutional recognition.

The organisation is increasingly active too on social media sites (Twitter and Facebook). These mainly provide a platform for advertising new events, new exhibitions, and raising awareness of the institution with a younger, technologically informed audience. The NGS provides in addition an 'e-bulletin' (via-email) helping to disseminate its image further, communicate its offering and entice the public to visit. This expansion into social media remains an ongoing work and an active ambition of the institution.

> It is probably fair to say that the National Galleries of Scotland have been late adopters of social media. This is not because we ever doubted its importance or failed to recognise the opportunities it presented, but because we were fearful that we would not have sufficient resource to be able to do it well (Quinn, T. Head of New Media at NGS, *A Toe in the Water: Social Media at the National Galleries of Scotland*, at digitalfutures.rcahms.gov.uk).

Beyond the role of raising awareness of the institution's existence, collection and services, online activity has also begun to hold some educational dimension. The website, for instance, features online presentations called eTours, offering

information about particular works and supplementary knowledge, materials and links to other resources. An *Artist Rooms Game* accessible via the website encourages players to create their own Artist Room. Players are asked to consider various aspects of interpretation, marketing, preservation and technical set up (see www.nationalgalleries.org). The two-way communicative nature of some platforms allows scope for some public input, and question and answer sessions. On the 30th of January 2013, for example, NGS asked its Twitter followers to submit questions related to the Jitka Hanzlová exhibition inside the Portrait Gallery: "For the next half an hour or so we'll be tweeting all about Jitka Hanzlová and her work. Enjoy! Do send in any questions!" (National Galleries of Scotland, #Hanzlova, at www.storify.com). Social media offers the institution a convenient forum, outside of the temple space, to increase the dialogical opportunities with audiences and the general public. In an important way, the digital move ties into a wider projection of NGS as a listening, caring, and concerned institution. As the Head of New Media at NGS explains, the aims of the digital arm (social media) are to reach new audiences, increase the NGS profile and to "engage in a dialogue/ conversation with our audience, encouraging audience loyalty, engagement, participation and feedback" (Quinn, T. Head of New Media at NGS, *A Toe in the Water: Social Media at the National Galleries of Scotland*, at digitalfutures.rcahms.gov.uk).

Certainly, the institution strives hard to cultivate a greater 'sense of ownership' within its new audiences. Of course, the ownership in question relates rather more to the intangible notion of culture than to the material control of objects. At any rate, NGS staff work to promote the image of the collection as an intellectual possession of society as a whole. Thus, educators have increasingly sought to inject a degree of 'community' input into the activities and interpretations surrounding new exhibitions, both on-line and elsewhere. The authoritative status of the institution, while not wholly renounced, is increasingly played down. Other voices, other views, other perspectives are solicited and discussion and debate around artworks and objects actively staged.

The online stage is a young and developing arena. Its primary role is to support more traditional activity, which remains, despite the increasing digitisation, very much committed to face-to-face encounter. Nevertheless, this embracing of technology has allowed the institution to safely draw collections from their longstanding 'stasis', and incorporate these into a new projected vision of ongoing creative renewal and development, to keep up with and exemplify the often frenetic discourse of innovation and vitality familiar within governmental, cultural and educational circles.

2.3.4 Studying Access – Market Research

In line with an enhanced preoccupation with audiences at institutional, sectorial and governmental levels, NGS is engaged today in the task of better understanding the composition of its public and the type of 'access' favoured by its visitors. On the one hand this is about being able to cater better to the needs of its audiences, on the other it is about encouraging a particular kind of participation, encouraging a more interested and loyal form of engagement with museum culture.

Beginning in 2005-06, NGS commissioned the consultancy firm *Morris Hargreaves McIntyre* to undertake "a rolling programme of visitor research" carried out at all the institution's main galleries. Beyond the statistical findings, the research is interesting as it reveals an important abstraction of the visitor in relation to their engagement with the institution, as well as a narrative of model development. While not one directly constructed by NGS, this abstraction undoubtedly informs much institutional policy. After all, the rolling programme informs anything from exhibition planning to educational priorities (see *Visitor Research Annual Report 2011/12*: 9).

The research authors have carved up NGS's audience into seven broad 'segments' labelled 'Aficionados', 'Culture Vultures', 'Experts', 'Self Developers', 'Third Spacers', 'Siteseers' [sic] and 'Families'. Each segment corresponds to a particular

grouping of people sharing broad expectations or 'customer needs'. This simplification or abstraction of the visiting public has been made to facilitate the institutional management and understanding of audiences, as NGS strives to cater for and respond to the desires and requirements of a diverse public. "NGS knows that its audience is not homogenous," the report declared, "Visitors are endlessly diverse, but dividing them into discrete segments that share more similarities than differences helps us make sense of visitor diversity in a way that we can both manage and monitor" (*Visitor Research Annual Report 2011/12*: 58). 'Segments' are derived from identified visitor 'needs' which are, in turn, determined, not by general demographics, "but by visitors' more fundamental drivers, attitudes and approaches."

One of the key objectives of the ongoing study is to reveal people's 'motivations' for visiting the NGS. To be more precise, it is to reveal the motivational make-up of the NGS audience, as well as changes to this make-up over time. The report uses four so-called 'visitor drivers' to measure this. These are classified, in order, as 'Spiritual', 'Emotional', 'Intellectual' and 'Social' and associated with a categorisation of the museum experience, labelled 'Church', 'Spa', 'Archive' and 'Attraction', according to visitors' perceptions of the institution. These 'drivers' have been established from previous data built up over a number of years by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (see (*Visitor Research Annual Report 2011/12*: 50)

What is illuminating here (in connection to this thesis) is the way in which these 'drivers' have been structurally arranged by the authors. Beginning with 'Spiritual' at the top and ending with 'Social' at the bottom, 'drivers' have been graded according to the level of cerebral 'engagement' they are supposedly producing or able to produce. They are arranged into and form an explicitly hierarchical structure. This is a structure of 'ascending' connection to the institution and its collection which frames not static individuals but 'mobile' citizens able, nominally, to develop from one driver to another.

At the 'bottom' Social level, the report states that people seek "ease of access and orientation, good facilities and services, welcoming staff". They visit because they are "drawn to interesting buildings" and "major attractions" and like "to spend time with friends and family." This represents a state of low engagement and presumably a rather weak connection and loyalty to the gallery. At the Intellectual level, visitors "seek a journey of discovery", are keen to improve their "knowledge", "to get a better understanding of other people/cultures/insight into artists' minds". At the Emotional stage, visitors have made "a personal connection to the subject matter" and seek a "deep sensory and intellectual experience". They wish to "see beautiful things" or "fascinating, awe-inspiring things" or "to have an emotionally moving experience." Finally, at the Spiritual heights, people seek "food for the soul" and visit for "creative stimulation and quiet contemplation".

In positing this hierarchy, the authors have constructed a narrative of increasing engagement and integration:

> We have found that, in moving up the hierarchy from social to spiritual motivations, visitors experience increasing levels of engagement with the gallery and its contents (*Visitor Research Annual Report 2011/12*: 51).

This reduction to four ascending drivers frames a very simple model 'journey' for visitors and institution to follow in pursuit of deepening relationships. The climb from the social to the spiritual, whose final culmination ("I visit to stimulate my own creativity") points to wider official ideologies, is also a climb to a preferential model participant. After all, there is no suggestion of visitors 'moving down' the hierarchy. The narrative here is entirely unidirectional. The lower end is the 'social', characterised by family or community dependency; the higher end is the 'spiritual' which is entirely individual and private.

The report declared: "We have […] found that visitors are only able to move up the hierarchy and deepen their engagement if their needs at the lower end are met" (*Visitor Research Annual Report 2011/12*: 51). This narrative is one adopted entirely by the educational arm of NGS. Although it is those at the lowest end,

locked in ‘community’, that will require, in the eyes of the institution, the strongest framework of support, and the strongest degree of educational targeting, the report makes clear that ‘needs’ must be addressed on all levels if the institution is to forge stronger connections with the public at large and if visitors are to deepen their interest in the collection. Education must thus be broad in its vision, differentiated according to level of ‘need’, but offered generously to all sections of the NGS audience.

2.4 Public Service at NGS

2.4.1 Consolidating Exhibitionary Activity

NGS strives to be an energetic institution, constantly busy and continually in action. To ensure a constant stream of visitors to the galleries, curators endeavour to organise a dynamic calendar of exhibitions throughout the year. These changing shows explore a variety of artists, movements, periods and themes, and are often short-term, lasting anywhere from a few weeks to a few months. They are varyingly free or fee-paying, depending on resources and circumstance. These exhibitions utilise a variety of objects, including items from storage, recent returns, new purchases and works on loan from other galleries. The ‘What’s On’ booklet, published every three months or so, keeps the public informed about the latest shows and upcoming events.

The need to constantly refresh this exhibitionary product pushes NGS to continually seek out opportunities to accumulate objects. Increasingly this may be achieved through partnership. As finances become ever tighter, and works ever more expensive, cooperation with other institutions, as well as resource sharing, becomes ever more necessary. A recent example of this cooperation was the creation of the ‘Artist Rooms’ collection. ‘Artist Rooms’ is a relatively new public art collection,

acquired jointly by the National Galleries of Scotland and the Tate gallery in 2008. The collection comprises over seven hundred works of international modern and contemporary art, originally owned by the prominent art dealer Anthony d'Offay. The collection was 'sold to the nation' for the sum of £26.5million – at a claimed fraction of their estimated market value. The acquisition was supported financially by the Art Fund, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Scottish Government and the UK Government. The *Artist Rooms On Tour* project enables this collection to travel around the United Kingdom, helping to bring contemporary cosmopolitan art to the attention of a wider public. Presenting exhibitions of single artists in different venues, this pan-British collaboration was designed on the one hand to take modern art out of large urban centres and make it more accessible to outlying audiences. In 2010, some twenty-one diverse galleries and museums hosted works from the collection (see www.nationalgalleries.org). On the other hand, the project allows NGS to attach its name to a new and what is described as 'exciting' exhibitionary programme, and extend its profile further afield. The new project was designed in this sense to encourage cultural consumption from new audiences, in particular young people[32].

The entire NGS exhibitionary programme, long-established, has been supported in recent years by a growing *educational* programme. Indeed, this development has accompanied the changing expectations of the public, government and the cultural sector.

2.4.2 Developing an Educational Mission

[32] "ARTIST ROOMS will transform the nation's collections of contemporary art. Its aim is to strengthen displays of contemporary art and create exhibitions in museums and galleries throughout the UK so as to inspire new audiences, especially young people" (National Galleries of Scotland, Artist Rooms, at www.nationalgalleries.org).

Image 2: Underground Complex at the Scottish National Gallery Opened August 2004

The influence of educators inside western museums has grown considerably over recent decades (see Lisa Roberts, 1997: 1). In line with the developments in Britain and elsewhere, taking place over the last thirty years or so, the National Galleries of Scotland has, in recent times, shifted the balance of its operations. In a desire to keep up with British and general trends in the Western world, the institution has fixed new public-focused and people-friendly objectives. Pushed on by government policies and the priorities of funders, the institution has re-galvanised its societal engagement and revitalised its educational programming. As NGS educator Sarah Saunders explained:

> … more and more now, when we're applying for funding, especially for things like the heritage lottery fund, the emphasis is on the education. What are people getting out of this? Why are we giving you nine million pounds? What are you going to use it for? And huge amounts of those application forms are about what are the benefits to the public. What is the education potential? What are the learning outcomes? How is learning going to be

> achieved? And you can't get any money without that anymore, at all (Sarah Saunders, Deputy Head of Education, Interview 8/ 02/ 2012).

Certainly, through instigating a competition for resources, funding authorities maintain a strong leverage over the direction of reform and development within the museum sector, and cultural sector more broadly.

As well as pressure from outside, two important *internal* events have also pushed the development and emphasis of educational operations at NGS during the last decade, and given a new boost to the educational mission that the institution has, to varying degrees, maintained over the years.

First, an underground complex was built and opened in 2004, linking the National Gallery with its long-established partner institution, the Royal Scottish Academy (The RSA building has been owned by NGS since 2001). The underground Weston Link took some five years to build and was the biggest construction project undertaken by NGS since the foundation of the organisation by an Act of Parliament in 1906. The Link was part of the larger *Playfair Project* that also included the refurbishment and rejuvenation of the Royal Scottish Academy. By linking the two temples on the Mound, the project enabled the creation of a single integrated art complex, at an estimated total cost of £32million (see www.nationalgalleries.org). Funded in part by government (the Scottish Executive) and the Heritage Lottery Fund (a non-departmental public body accountable to the Westminster parliament), this money was further boosted by a fundraising campaign which raised over £12million from private donors and corporations. This modern extension now holds many of the 'service' facilities of the National Gallery complex, including toilets, lockers, information hub, restaurant and shop. The Weston Link crucially provided room for new educational spaces. These included the Hawthornden lecture theatre, with tiered seating and room for some 200 people, a touch-screen 'IT gallery' with exhibition space to display educational and 'community artwork', and two new classrooms, fully equipped with art materials and washing areas.

The educational facilities have provided educators with the physical means to considerably develop and expand the institution's educational enterprise, without this undermining (from a curatorial point of view) the contemplative space of the main gallery level above. With the new space therefore came new educational opportunities and concomitantly the need to coordinate and organize new educational activities. A new position of Playfair Learning Coordinator was thus created to maximize the usage and benefits of the facilities, especially the two new classroom and workshop spaces. The initial responsibility was to highlight the new facilities and bring in as wide an audience as possible, right across the board, from children and families to adults and 'community groups'. The 'perceived 'success' of these facilities has inspired the allocation of further educational space at the Portrait Gallery, and plans for development at the Gallery of Modern Art.

The second important event was a change of leadership at the top of NGS. In March 2006, a new Director-General took the helm of the National Galleries of Scotland and, with the support of the NGS Board of Trustees, moved to refresh the public image of the organisation. Without directly undermining the traditional curatorial and art history approach that has long defined the galleries' business, the new Director-General pushed the organisation to restate its public mission. Re-emphasizing the institution's aspirations to expand its audience and develop its social engagement, the new leadership encouraged the organisation to adopt a more visible educational mission.

To explain the recent shift of focus and educational turn at NGS, the current Director-General points to the broader context of museum and gallery development in Europe and America over the last 30 years. If, during much of the twentieth century, there was a tendency for museums and galleries to become more inward looking and to focus on their role as "treasure houses", for their activities of collecting and of research to become focused on "self-perpetuation", then in recent decades museums and galleries have sought to open up more to their audiences, and discover new ways to relate to their publics. He argues that museums and galleries

have sought to forge a new kind of relationship with their audiences – one that is more open and inclusive. From an "introverted" position, therefore, they have become more "extroverted" and have looked to build a new social contract with the public that supports them. According to the Director-General this "generalisation" holds good for the National Galleries of Scotland, for during the 1970s and 1980s, the institution remained focused on high profile acquisitions, and building the collection. It was not until the 1990s that the institution began to look more to education and modern conceptions of learning, to develop new relationships with schools and so-called 'community audiences'. In this respect, the NGS was "a little bit further behind some of the other bigger organisations in London, in New York, in other parts of the world". The Director-General was thus keen for NGS to catch up with other leading museum institutions in the Western world:

> When I came here 6 years ago, I was very keen to encourage that direction. And you are never talking about extremes. You don't go from this one day, we do that the next. It's more about direction and tendency and influence. So, I was very keen to nurture that, and develop that […] while not losing the traditional curator-based skills of research and collection building (John Leighton, Director-General, Interview 15/ 02/ 2012).

For the new Director-General there was to be no radical shift, or sudden transformation of the institution, rather, the galleries were to be steered towards a gradual evolution of practices, and a process-driven development of the galleries' educational provision, in line with wider Western trends.

Under new leadership, the concept of education has become increasingly important to the institution. Indeed, education is no longer, at least publicly, a subsidiary concern of NGS – an auxiliary to the more important task of collection development and preservation – it has apparently become a central idea helping to define the institution's very being. Yet, despite the invigorated attention, the concept of 'education' inside the galleries remains quite nebulous and is not by any means openly defined; able to comprise a vast assortment of activities and capable of being directed to a variety of ends, the NGS educational enterprise is difficult to pin down

with any precision. In truth, the institution shuns any narrow reading of the word, as the following statement makes clear:

> The galleries has embraced education – interpreted in the widest sense of the word – across the entire organisation, with all staff working together to fulfil its tremendous potential (National Galleries of Scotland, *Annual Review 2006-2007*: 20).

Preferring a much looser definition than one might find in any dictionary, the institution is apt to stretch its meaning to include the entire activities of the galleries. Certainly, the educational remit of NGS concerns more than a single department. Beyond the overt educational activities of the education team, the entire organisation is deemed to be involved, in a broad sense, in delivering an educational experience. This clear emphasis on the importance of education within NGS as a whole has encouraged ever-greater collaboration between educators and curators and pushed all staff to consider ever more closely the implications and opportunities for learning and teaching that arise from everyday exhibition. Indeed, there has been an undoubted erosion of the traditional roles of both curators and educators, as both are increasingly called upon to collaborate on projects and initiatives.

Nevertheless, it is the dedicated education department that leads the task of realizing the "tremendous potential" of the galleries' educational operation. Certainly NGS strives hard to promulgate the idea that the national collection is a unique resource for learning, capable of improving the well-being, confidence and skills of the public at large; in particular, visitors are encouraged to celebrate ideas of inspiration, dynamism and 'creativity' (ideas explored in more detail in chapter 6).

With its volunteers, freelance workers and full-time staff, the education department is an important and busy unit in the organisation of the NGS. It is a central department that works across all the galleries of the NGS and is strategically concerned with *people*, for whereas the attention of curators is largely focused on the collection and the works of art, the attention of educators is firmly focused on

the visiting public. The educators bring to the NGS an expertise in the area of audience development and teaching and learning. With this expertise at hand, the educators of NGS steer a course for both public and institution to follow as both parties come to meet in the turbulent world of the here and now. In an important sense, the education department is tasked with leading the institution into greater engagement with present society, and the living audiences who attend its halls.

Educators continuously endeavour to develop and consolidate wider intellectual and emotional connections between the institution and the public at large. A large programme of activities is organised by the department to encourage this. These activities are designed to be as varied and as attractive to the public as educators can make them. Crucially, however, the collection is cast at the heart of everything educators do. This is a strategic requirement, aimed at consolidating the value of the collection and the very usefulness of the institution.

Of course, it is much easier to assert a requirement than it is to meet this in reality. Initiatives designed to bring people into the buildings may highlight the particular event at the expense of the institutional objects. In such cases, the collection may be largely ignored, functioning as little more than a quirky backdrop for what is in essence an autonomous performance or activity. Examples of this might include musical concerts organised within the gallery space, or life drawing sessions on the gallery floor. Moreover, the issues and ideas that educators might wish to explore may have little obvious embodiment in the works of the galleries. Outreach officers exploring difficult personal and social issues with their audiences may quickly move beyond any obvious link to the institutional object. In this case works are used primarily as a pretext for contact and a means of sparking a dialogical process. Indeed, a most popular strategy adopted by all educators is to claim a starting ‘inspirational’ value for the collection, to cast the collected object as a beginning point, a stimulus for some further educational action. While the object is thus present at the commencement of the educational process, it can soon disappear

completely. The activity can then lead on to a final outcome, such as a community exhibition, holding very little visible connection to any particular part of the collection. Despite the sometimes tenuous links made in practice, educators strive to connect as much of their work as they can back to the objects of the galleries. Musicians are invited to 'respond' to the collection; storytellers are made to use characters from the paintings; artists are asked to discuss gallery works to inspire learners.

The department organise hundreds of tours, talks, events, projects and workshops every year. Although lots of these activities fit into familiar, standard practice found across educational services in museums and galleries, the institution has increasingly allowed educators to diversify and experiment in an attempt to 'reinvigorate' the museum offering. Many educational projects appear rather experimental and whimsical, as the department strives to become more 'fun' and attractive to audiences. As one educator explained:

> I think what else characterizes our programme, also, hopefully, is that it's really good fun, that it's slightly quirky and alternative, sometimes, as much as we can make it. And I think that has changed over the period that I've been here, that it's become a little bit more quirky, a little bit more dangerous, a little bit more experimental (Sarah Saunders, Deputy Head of Education, Interview 8/ 02/ 2012).

The discourse of 'fun' ties into a wider festival ideology (discussed in chapter 5, subsection 5.3.3). It is a prominent term designed to help recast the image of the museum as a place of excitement and energy, and to help entice new people into the gallery halls. This image feeds also into the organisation's ability to promote its work as well as that of the sector as a whole, in an era of increasing economic precariousness and fear of decline.

2.5 Conclusion

NGS is concerned with the financial stability and societal durability of the institution. This constant concern is met unflinchingly by an avowal of business values which include the affirmation of competition, universal flexibility, the entrepreneurial spirit, management skills, and commercial acumen. Like others in the sector, NGS is also particularly focused on sustaining high numbers of visitors to its galleries and exhibitions, endeavouring to attract ever more people into its halls, and promoting a valuable individual experience open to all, regardless of local origin or identity. Finally, the institution is concerned with the societal function or the public service of the national collection; this concern relates directly to the institution's ability to self-promote and its ability to access funding and public resources. This is a general concern over the purpose, relevance and raison d'être of the institution, which it comes to characterize generally as *education* and is increasingly entwined with a discourse of fun and renewal.

3 Heritage and Long-term Constancy at the Scottish National Gallery

Image 3: Scottish National Gallery

Underlying NGS's key priority to "develop a sustainable and efficient business model" is Objective 3.4: to "ensure the best possible protection for the collection" (See NGS Mission and Objectives, at www.nationalgalleries.org). Whatever the institution's other responsibilities, the safekeeping of its treasured objects remains its primary function. This function informs its long-term commitment to a deeper stability, and is validated by the discourse of 'future generations'.

This chapter explores the important theme of long-term stability at the Scottish National Gallery. It begins by looking back at the founding of the gallery in the nineteenth century, and goes on to explore the self-imposed continuity pursued by the contemporary institution. Indeed, despite a change of agenda from Victorian elitism to democratised consumerism, the NGS continues to pursue an important symbolism of constancy.

3.1 A Brief History

The Scottish National Gallery was opened by Prince Albert on the 30th of August 1850. The gallery was founded with the approval and financial backing of the British state, and, in many respects, its founding represented an early local example of a general nineteenth century British phenomenon which saw the building of an infrastructure of local museums and galleries throughout the major cities of Britain. Examples include the Manchester City Art Gallery (whose origin stretches back to the Royal Manchester Institution established in 1823), the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool (main building opened 1877), the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (main building opened 1885), the Leeds City Art gallery (main building opened 1888), to name but four. Indeed, following the 1845 Museum Act, a new impetus was given to the establishment of these institutions in large population centres.

Scotland's acquisition of a national gallery as opposed to a 'city' gallery must, however, be understood within the context of an ingrained institutional and civil independence that, while fully implicated in the project of Empire and the British state, still held on to an older and romanticised conception of nationhood. In the mid-nineteenth century, the British state was "unusually decentralised, the first and ultimate example of the laissez faire system" (Hearn, 2000: 117). Indeed Scottish institutions, including schools, universities, the Church, legal system, and local government bodies, enjoyed a remarkable level of autonomy and looked after much of the daily administration and governance of the Scottish population.

Although funded largely by the London Treasury, the founding of the Scottish National Gallery (and later The Scottish National Portrait Gallery) was stimulated by the private will of influential individuals, drawn universally from the social and cultural elite. In particular, the gallery was founded to resolve long-standing conflict and feuding within the artistic and cultural elite, north of the border (Prior, 2002). It

must be understood that the general populace at this time was largely ignorant of the pleasures of art and "there was no general artistic appreciation in Victorian Scotland" (Checkland, 1980: 145). According to social historian Olive Checkland:

> Art as a cultural experience, both educative and humanizing, which ordinary men and women could enjoy, was remote from the lives of Victorian Scots, largely bent as they were on more mundane matters. Art galleries were prized only by a few… (Checkland, 1980: 143).

The Scottish National Gallery was completed and opened to the public in 1859. Designed by the architect William Henry Playfair, the building was constructed to house a public collection of Scottish and European art 'treasures' in emulation of the National Gallery in London and other European art museums. Built to resemble an ancient Greek sanctuary, the Scottish National Gallery was Playfair's second temple-inspired building on the Mound. It was created at the apogee of the nineteenth century passion for classicism; the highly distinctive and prominent structure characterised the classical ideals that inspired much of the architectural development of Edinburgh's New Town, and indeed, the two crowning 'temples' on the Mound did much to reinforce the classical 'aura' of the surrounding city. Harking back to the misty origins of Western civilisation, the gallery's architectural style was deliberately *antique*, presenting the host nation and its people as the rightful inheritors of Western civilisation. Prince Albert expressed this idea at the ceremonial founding of the gallery:

> The building of which we have just begun the foundation is a temple to be erected to the Fine Arts. Let us hope that the impulse given to their culture in this country, and the daily increasing attention bestowed by the people at large, will not only tend to refine and elevate the national taste but will also lead to the production of works which will give the after generations an adequate idea of our advanced state of civilisation (Prince Albert, in Gordon, 1976: 114).

These words reflect a dominant view of the time. 'High taste' and the consumption of a particular kind of art founded on classical traditions was regarded by elites as a measure of a group or an individual's 'civilised' credentials.

The details of the Scottish National Gallery's historical beginnings are, of course, particular to the institution, yet, as sociologist Nick Prior argued in *Museums & Modernity*, the birth of the gallery was entangled in a broader history of an emergent bourgeoisie. Prior argued that the gallery, like its British and European counterparts, was founded largely as a symbolic monument to bourgeois distinction. According to his analysis the new gallery was a consequence of the endeavour by the bourgeois class to carve out and mark a distinct social space. The gallery was thus a ceremonial set where the Scottish bourgeois visitor found his 'higher' tastes legitimated and where ideas of order, purity and refinement reigned. On the other hand, the dirty and the noisy, the unpalatable and the vulgar (characteristics associated with the lower classes and indeed to a lesser extent with a 'degenerated' aristocracy) were left firmly at the door. The gallery was therefore "a cultural resource predisposed to demarcate, valorise and select refined modes of apprehension" (Prior, 2002: 210). In Prior's analysis then, the early Scottish National Gallery, despite its nominal public status, was located within a domain of exclusive bourgeois culture. At the same time, however, Victorian paternalism undoubtedly cast the museum as a site of high moral and social exemplarity, setting standards of taste and good conduct for the lower classes to aspire to.

3.2 Acknowledging Change

Change has taken hold of the institution, since its early foundation. Whatever the continued sense of 'refined authority' projected by NGS, the interaction between visitors and gallery space has shifted, and the institution has sought to move beyond the idea of elite distinction to a more democratised consumption. Undoubtedly in the past the institution was perceived by some sections of society to be very intimidating; indeed it is still viewed as intimidating by some – a fact recognised by educators working within:

> I think a lot of people are intimidated, and they're intimidated by this building. I think the building itself is quite intimidating, you know, the Renaissance columns, you just think […] 'I don't want to go in there; it looks far too scary'. And, you know, everybody in check trousers looking very formal, I do think it puts some people off. They just think that's not for me (NGS Educator for Schools, Interview 23/ 02/ 2012).

Of course, the institution has made great effort to market the contemporary gallery as a place for all, to reach out and develop its educational programme. This has meant developing opportunities for many more people to visit, encouraging conversation, and questioning established artistic narratives (see chapter 4 and 5). This has also meant encouraging visitors not to copy works but to consider the imaginative and inspirational value of objects, to use the collection, artistically, however they see fit. The old nineteenth century principle, whereby elite students would complete their artistic training by looking closely at how the 'old masters' painted and worked, has eroded away. The idea that 'great art' should be made available for an elect few to study and copy, no longer seems to find much relevance in the twenty-first century:

> …in the nineteenth century one of the reasons for the establishment of institutions such as these, was that people should come in and study and copy. […] It's interesting when you look at illustrations of here or the National Gallery in London or the Louvre or anywhere, there are easels all the way down, and there are people completing their art education by looking at how the masters painted, doing their own copies or studies. And actually that used to go on until quite recently. […] That's all stopped now. (Director, Scottish National Gallery, Interview, 14/ 03/ 2012).

What Director Michael Clarke terms the 'practical appreciation' of the collections seems to have "withered on the vine", to be replaced by a much greater emphasis on a popularised intellectual appreciation of art. Even where such drawing activity is arranged by education staff, the emphasis is put very much upon *inspiration*, rather than practical emulation of traditional techniques and style. There is an acknowledgment today, led by educators, that the production and consumption of art should not help raise one group over another, or help discriminate on grounds of gender, race, religion or class background. From the institution's perspective there

is no longer a particular right or wrong response to art, no longer a perfect ideal of beauty that must be copied and pursued; on the contrary there are only individual responses, individual conceptions of beauty: "Opinions may differ from established views of art but this is just as valid" (*Finding Francesca*, Learning Resource, see chapter 6, subsection 6.3.5).

Nevertheless, despite the intellectual change that has impacted on the institution, there is no sense in which the merit and value of the collected artworks is diminished. On the contrary, NGS is keen to commend and praise its collection to all. This "sensational collection" (National Galleries of Scotland, About the Scottish National Gallery, at www.nationalgalleries.org), inherited from years long past, now carries that most legitimising quality of any museum: old age. Indeed, the maturity of the collection now justifies in large part its continued existence and overrides any complaint of elitism one might level at the objects. Whatever the bourgeois 'violence' one might uncover from the gallery's history, the gallery, as a space and a collection of objects, can legitimately claim to have become a museum of itself. This idea is reinforced by the aesthetics of the gallery space and the arrangement of its objects, which are firmly delineated today within the parameters of a 'foundational past'.

3.3 Symbolic Continuity

3.3.1 Return to Foundational Aesthetic

The present aesthetic décor inside the Scottish National Gallery dates back to changes made during the leadership of Sir Timothy Clifford (Director and Director-General of the NGS from 1984 to 2006), and resulted from his vision of reviving the original colour schemes and atmosphere of the early institution.

Clifford saw the National Gallery's 'lineage' stretching back beyond the nineteenth century to the Italian Renaissance[33]. The Renaissance, and the heritage of Antiquity upon which much of the Renaissance was founded, seemed to represent something of a spiritual beginning in Clifford's vision of art history. Indeed, the Scottish National Gallery and the broader institution became fixed under his leadership on the continuing task of charting, in depth, the development of Western art from the Renaissance to the present day. Under Clifford, this task, with its concomitant need to enlarge the collection, became the primary mission of the institution. For Clifford this insistence on developing and expanding the collection was more than a simple matter of 'improvement', it was something of an existential necessity. He wrote: "It is my belief that a museum or gallery not geared to collecting has a great tendency to become moribund" (Clifford, 2005: 10). Clifford prided himself on the ability to acquire 'high quality' works despite the limited funds available to him and the institution, in comparison to similar museums in Europe and America.

Like many of his colleagues and fellow directors, Clifford studied at the University of London's famous *Courtauld Institute*. He became dedicated to an "encyclopaedic" mission for the Scottish National Gallery, under the structural guidance of the discipline of art history. The Director had no doubt, therefore, that the most important and central people at the heart of the institution were the gallery curators. He wrote thus:

> The curators themselves, it goes without saying, are the vital element of any museum or gallery and the hiring of, and their subsequent training and nurture, is the *sine qua non* of any distinguished art gallery (Clifford, 2005: 10).

The Director encouraged his curators to demonstrate their skill and scholarship to advance the collection and lauded them for fulfilling a forward role in his vision.

[33] Although it might be argued that the first art museum for the people was opened at the Palais du Louvre in Paris in 1793, for Sir Timothy Clifford the Scottish National Gallery drew upon a deeper 'private' history. He wrote: "The National Gallery [of Scotland] is an archetypal nineteenth-century cabinet for displaying great paintings that has a history stretching back via the British Institution Gallery, Dulwich Picture Gallery, the Picture Gallery at Attingham, to the Galleria Doria Pamphilij, Rome, and the Tribuna of the Uffizi, Florence" (Sir Timothy Clifford, 2005: 14).

During his tenure as Director of NGS, Clifford transformed the exhibitionary practice at the National Gallery. Rather than continue the 'modern' practice of displaying a single line of paintings on a background of neutral colour, Clifford steered the National Gallery towards an older exhibitionary tradition, 'double-hanging' paintings and exhibiting them on richly coloured walls. In fact, Clifford returned the gallery to the original decorative scheme devised by David Ramsay Hay in the mid-nineteenth century. This was "claret walls, geranium pink pedestals and Dutch weave green carpet, offset by grained oak cornices and skirtings" (Label for painting *Interior of the National Gallery of Scotland* c1865-70 Anonymous, viewed 2012).

Clifford was fascinated with symmetry and grand frames, and brought many more sculptural works into the gallery space. He declared: "The fine octagonal galleries of the Mound demand symmetry and are greedy for grandeur" (Clifford, 2005: 14). Clifford also developed the idea of setting lavish furniture within the gallery as a decorative context. Indeed, placed below and amidst the works of art, items of specially selected fine furniture provided a further suggestion of opulence. The furniture was positioned to complement the artworks on the walls and pedestals, and served also to further remove the artworks from the bodily realm of the visitor. As Clifford wrote:

> It provides a strong architectural foundation for the pictures, further indicates the period and environment in which the picture was painted and, practically, provides a protective 'apron' in front of the picture without necessitating the use of ropes to keep the public removed from the picture's surface (Clifford, 2005: 14).

For Clifford, it was important to invisibly separate the public from the 'precious' artworks. The collection was not solely the property of the present generation, but of future generations to come. The 'timeless value' of the collection was self-evident. As Clifford made plain: "we and our successors will be caring for such treasures hundreds of years hence" (Clifford, 2005: 15).

Although distanced from the artworks, the visiting public could undoubtedly admire and glean intellectual stimulation from their intended universal harmonies. For Clifford the grand frames that contained the artworks served ultimately as windows onto a world of "magic". He wrote: "Frames act as a theatrical proscenium arch, divorcing everyday life from magic" (Clifford, 2005: 14). Beauty was the central, repeating enigma carried by the Gallery's collected 'old masters'. Given as something stable, universal and enduring, beauty was the quality simultaneously left most undefined and mysterious. It was the puzzle at the heart of the exhibited object, a frozen riddle promising eternal reward.

3.3.2 Continuing the Discourse of 'Beauty'

The contemporary interior décor of the National Gallery and the aesthetic philosophy (the return to authentic foundations) remains largely unchanged since Clifford's departure. Moreover, the institution of today, under the leadership of a new Director-General, continues to actively uphold the discourse of 'magic' and 'beauty' that surrounds the collection's 'Old Masters'.

In 2009 the National Galleries of Scotland acquired, in conjunction with the National Gallery (London), Diana and Actaeon, by the Renaissance artist Titian. The work was one of two Titian paintings owned by the Duke of Sutherland and 'offered to the nation' at the 'reduced', and preferential price of £50m each. What was perhaps most interesting about this episode, was the central argument put forward to defend the acquisitions. On the 31st of August 2008 an article written by John Leighton, Director-General of the NGS, in support of the campaign to purchase the two works by Titian, was published in the Observer on Sunday. The article defended the expense and promised important long-term returns on the initial investment in terms of "education" and "inspiration". The article stated: "A decisive intervention now will be paid off many times over in the inspiration, education and imagination of future generations" (Director-General, 31st of August 2008, at

www.guardian.co.uk). Moving beyond instrumental benefits, John Leighton's thesis rested ultimately on a rather more emotional appeal to *beauty*:

> There are historical, heritage and even economic arguments to be deployed in favour of investing in these works of art and a wide range of witnesses, past and present, who can be called upon to speak in their favour. Yet perhaps the most convincing argument – and also the most risky – lies in the sheer beauty and power of these huge canvases. (John Leighton, Director-General, 31st of August 2008, at www.guardian.co.uk).

With a lavish celebration of the artist's technique, the Director-General alluded to the almost magical ability of the great master (his "technical wizardry") to conjure up raw emotion. He argued that on viewing the paintings, the intellectual impact was such that it might betray itself as a weakening of the body. Indeed, the viewer might even be compelled to kneel before the presence and power of the artworks:

> Over the past few days, I have heard many descriptions of the two Titians, but it was Scottish artist John Bellany who, in my view, came closest to conveying the almost physical reaction some of us experience in front of the two pictures. The Titians, he said, 'make me feel week at the knees' (John Leighton, Director-General, 31st of August 2008, at www.guardian.co.uk).

The Director-General implicated himself, as part of a larger expert opinion, in the emotional reverence of beauty. From this perspective, social and intellectual attachments may have value but are ultimately superseded by the final potency of a deep, almost 'spiritual' engagement with art.

For the institution, the 'beauty' of Titian's work is universal and timeless. The NGS website celebrated the new acquisitions, again, by calling upon the words of an 'expert witness'. "Seldom have works of art drawn such universal praise and been so immune to the vagaries of fashion and changing taste," declared the website. "One of Britain's most respected living artists, Lucian Freud, has described them as 'simply the most beautiful pictures in the world'" (National Galleries of Scotland, 'Titians Secured', at www.nationalgalleries.org).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the planned purchase proved rather contentious at a time of national economic downturn. In the first instance, the campaign to raise the necessary funds was a rather high profile and public affair, with many interested parties voicing their support for the purchase in the media. By the time the NGS and the National Gallery (London) were ready to purchase the second painting however, the campaign had become decidedly less public. The pressure to reduce costs and share the economic pain felt across much of society had made the NGS wary of a *public* fundraising campaign, finding it increasingly difficult to justify publicly the massive costs of acquiring 'worthy' collection pieces. "Both institutions were acutely aware of the challenges of launching a public campaign during such difficult economic times", explained the NGS website (see National Galleries of Scotland, 'Titian's Diana and Callisto is Secured for the Public', at www.nationalgalleries.org). Nevertheless, the institution remained determined to push ahead with its acquisitions, deciding to approach private donors and trusts for help.

The high profile purchase (in conjunction with the *National Gallery* in London) of two Titian 'masterpieces', at a final cost of £95 million (bought with money raised from trusts, private donors, funding organisations, government and from the institutions' own reserves), during a time of economic downturn, was perhaps the NGS's most controversial (part-)acquisition in recent times. Nevertheless, the purchase was particularly important for the National Galleries of Scotland as it secured the continuation of the *Bridgewater* loan. The Bridgewater collection, which includes works from Raphael, Poussin and Rembrandt, is also owned by the Duke of Sutherland, and has been on display in the Edinburgh galleries since 1945.

> We are delighted that the purchase of Callisto will now keep that loan intact and allow the public to continue to enjoy some of the greatest achievements of Western European art (National Galleries of Scotland, 'Titian's Diana and Callisto is Secured for the Public', at www.nationalgalleries.org).

The Bridgewater loan contributes to the realisation of the institution's aspiration to chart in concrete terms the classic narrative of Western European art from the

Renaissance onwards, to own high profile exemplars of the major artistic figures of European art history. Thus, from the institution's encyclopaedic perspective, the 'beauty' and appeal of old paintings may rest as heavily upon their authenticity as artefacts, as upon any intrinsic aesthetic qualities they may or may not possess.

3.3.3 A Resource for Future Generations

Authentic artefacts are vastly more important to the institution of the museum than aesthetically pretty objects. What old paintings bestow to the institution, the public and society, above all else, is their testimony to the past. The Director-General put it this way:

> I'm sure you like, when you look at, I don't know, a painting by Leonardo, you like the play between knowing that it's five, six hundred years old but at the same time it's speaking to you right now in a very vital and lively way. And that sense of time and long-time is very important (John Leighton, Director-General, Interview, 15/ 02/ 2012).

In the warm and dignified setting, devoid of windows onto outside reality, the artistic glories of the past are laid out for quiet contemplation and admiration. Detached from whatever original contexts they may once have inhabited, removed from an exterior world of pollution and decay, separated from human touch, these objects hang in double rows, amidst rooms of fine sculptures and polished furnishings. Delicately preserved and cared for by dedicated specialists, the objects of contemplation have been placed ritually and symbolically, if not physically, in a realm of suspended time and space. The collected objects are held in 'stasis' for that most unreachable of moments: posterity. Age and durability, the constancy of objects despite the inevitable advance of entropy, emerge as important projected ideas of the preserved collection. John Leighton expressed this idea clearly on behalf of the institution:

> I think, increasingly, that sense of permanence, however illusory it might be in our volatile universe, that sense of permanence, that sense of longevity, of

> things that have been acquired over time, which will remain with us over time, is a key part of our whole ethos […]. People, I think, like to imagine that the same picture that they are looking at will be available still in 500 years or a thousand years and so on (Director-General, Interview, 15/ 02/ 2012).

Instability, turmoil, unpredictable change, violence are antithetical ideas that oppose the Gallery's central sense of long-term stability. They are underlying negatives that help fix the institution's sense of purpose and importance. The museum stands as a beacon of order, a bastion of knowledge and inspiration against forces of decline – not only for the here and now, but for the preservation of order into the future. "The National Galleries of Scotland and its partner museums and galleries in Scotland form an asset of incalculable worth," declared NGS, "providing a rich source of knowledge and inspiration for this and future generations" (National Galleries of Scotland, *Annual Review 2008-2009*: 3). Indeed, a sense of long-term worth and importance is validated recurrently by the discourse of 'future generations' (a discourse also found in the National Strategy, see chapter 7, subsection 7.2.7). It is a recurring expression that seeks to distinguish the institution from other organisations in society, and confirm the institution as a binding thread of society, a cohesive entity helping to connect different people and generations through time.

3.3.4 Emphasising Foundational Values

The gallery space of NGS is an unusual space, and its relationship with time is perhaps its most unusual aspect. It may be argued that the gallery space is a changing space, a dynamic realm reacting to the tides and influences of wider society, yet, just as it is interesting to note that which is morphing and evolving, so it is interesting also to acknowledge that which remains intact and indifferent to the course of time. For the institution interacts with time in a peculiar way: on the one hand, the gallery space is designed to be accessed by living people, and consequently is continually pressured to interact with the present, on the other hand, it is a 'frozen' space and this immutability is one of the keystones of the museums and galleries world – a vital parameter that museums and galleries strive to maintain

through processes of conservation and restoration. While the modern museum may display many interesting new adaptations, it is important to acknowledge too its refusal to be drawn too far into a volatile universe.

The NGS institution that stands today is the inheritor of more than 150 years of gallery history. As well as the buildings that remain, at least above ground, largely Victorian creations, the institution has maintained its original collection, building upon this over the years to accumulate a grand assortment of European and Scottish 'treasures'. Although recent decades have seen important shifts in policy and practice across the museum sector in both Britain and Europe, the museum institution remains, at its heart, a recognisable and steady entity. Certainly at NGS any change is moderated by the institution's own appointed role of 'custodian'. Change, though certainly real and significant, is framed within an ethos of stable continuity. As the former Chairman of the Board of Trustees wrote:

> We have been fortunate in our leaders over the last one hundred years, not least in that, remarkably, there have only been seven of them in that time. Our role as a custodian in the long-term on behalf of the nation makes such stability a prized asset (Sir Brian Ivory, Chairman of the board of trustees, in *Annual Review 2005-2006*: 2).

Custodianship is an essential concept in the museums and galleries world. For NGS, this safekeeping, this linkage of the contemporary galleries back in time to the founding gallery on the Edinburgh Mound, is made visible by the preserved buildings and enduring artworks. Yet, beyond the physical continuity, an important linkage to the past is maintained within the domain of motivating intentions and values. As the Director of the Scottish National Gallery acknowledges:

> The intention is still the same; it is to make available the best and most interesting art possible for genuine enjoyment […] across the population. That fundamental principle […] has remained the same from our foundation to now (Michael Clarke, Director, Scottish National Gallery, Interview 14/ 03/ 2012).

In fact, the modern Director-General of NGS identifies three main motives behind the birth of the Scottish National Gallery – motives, he contends, that continue to

resonate in the twenty-first century. “If you simplify,” he argues, “the values that we have today are remarkably similar to those from the founding years of the 1850s and beyond (John Leighton, Director-General, Interview, 15/ 02/ 2012). These founding motives concern interests in the wider *economy*, issues of *identity* and public *access.*

Indeed, the original establishment of the National Galleries of Scotland was overseen by the Board of Manufactures (the Board of Trustees for Fisheries and Manufactures in Scotland), a body specifically set up to encourage economic activity in Scotland. According to the Director-General, a founding economic motive for art galleries, particularly strong in Scotland, related to the perceived low standards of industrial design in the nineteenth century and a desire to improve these standards by giving people access to ‘great’ examples from art. Although this desire is no longer directly relevant to a twenty-first century Scotland, an economic driver is still present, with the institution keen to promote its benefit to the tourist industry and the ‘creative’ sector. Certainly, a central claim to positively influence the wider economy continues to motivate the advocacy of NGS and indeed the wider museum sector.

The issue of ‘identity’ was also, in John Leighton’s view, a key concern for the gallery founders. According to the Director-General the main objective was to engender “a sense of pride in things Scottish, and a sense of place.” This concern with identity continues to resonate inside the contemporary institution. However, this is no longer so much about engendering a sense of local or national pride, as about helping people to “navigate their way through their own personal debates about who they are”. Rather than attempting to instil a collective attachment to a nation or a ‘community’, the modern institution strives rather more to instil a personal self-esteem and confidence. Questions that visitors are encouraged to ask are: “what interests me, what inspires me, what moves me?” Indeed, the gallery today supports people to “project their own identities”. The response to identity issues promoted by NGS, today, is thus rather more individualist and liberal.

In contrast to earlier, exclusive proto-museum models, the nineteenth century art museum was, at least in principle, a shared public space. Established as a public and civic symbol, the museum was scripted as a site of learning and moral improvement. The Director-General argues that although the language may have changed – the modern NGS would not use the rather Victorian expression 'improvement' anymore – the underlying principles remain similar. The desire to allow the widest possible public to access the "very greatest art treasures" and to reap the resultant hypothetical benefits still largely corresponds to what the galleries do today. The institution strives hard today to welcome as many people as it can into its halls, regardless of age, race, gender or background.

The preoccupation with remaining true to foundations is strong at NGS:

> I think where we are now is […] we're almost kind of going back to the original aims of what museums were about (Sarah Saunders, Deputy Head of Education, Interview 8/ 02/ 2012).

It seems the desire to consolidate a perception of continuity has increased with the threat of instability and insecurity. Today, the present is no longer so readily portrayed as a glorious extension of the past, but more often now, as a creative and multidimensional 'response' to what has gone before. The course of improvement is no longer so certain; progress is, more than ever, a negotiated term – no longer as 'civilisational' as it is individual, professional, private. Compared to the arrogance of an imperial past, the future seems to have lost its imposing sense of triumphant certitude; the apparent securities and constants of an imperial society have given way to increasing precariousness and competition at all levels. The museum then acts to reassure, to reaffirm that the important values of society remain intact and its achievements still safe.

3.4 Conclusion

The objects of the museum are old and enduring. NGS understands well, on a corporate level, what its core business is; the institution works hard to preserve a central idea of ‘treasure’, founded on the venerable age and traditional ‘beauty’ of its objects. Little attention however is given to the aristocratic and bourgeois tastes that selected these treasures for ‘eternal’ preservation in the first place. In an important sense, their elitist origins are irrelevant to the modern age and the modern museum that values their authenticity and the sense of permanence they provide. It is no longer necessary or desirable to copy these works, to spread their divisive aesthetic of ‘refinement’. Largely impotent within the stasis of the museum, they provide instead a warm reassurance against a potentially volatile universe. Indeed, against an uncertain future, the museum stands more than ever as a symbol of dependability and cultural persistence.

4 Liberal Experience at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

Image 4: Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

This chapter explores the underlying liberal experience crafted by the NGS institution in the context of its modern collection. Appropriating a neoclassical façade, the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art is a highly playful and ambiguous gallery that purposefully fosters ambiguity and the irrational. Open and welcoming to all, the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art functions as an exemplar of endorsed liberal authority: tolerant, seductive and purportedly impartial. Whatever intellectual or emotional challenges are thrown up by the objects on display, the institution encourages forbearance, openness to diversity, dialogue, and individual thought.

4.1 A Humanist and Liberal Gallery

4.1.1 An Antique Façade for a Modern Gallery

The first serious plans to create a national gallery of modern art were mooted by the trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland in the late 1930s and the campaign for its establishment led by the Director Stanley Cursiter. In the 1940s, Cursiter commissioned designs for a Museum of Modern Art from the architect Alan Reiach with a proposed site at York Buildings, immediately opposite the Portrait Gallery on Edinburgh's Queen's Street. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this early campaign was the proposed design of the building. Conceived as a Bauhaus-inspired arts centre, the new building was to be highly modernist in appearance. Support for this project from the ranks of the NGS management was strong. Yet, in the years of the Second World War, and in the subsequent years of reconstruction, there was little appetite from government to help fund the museum and financial support for the project proved elusive. In fact, plans for the proposed museum eventually came to nothing, as the civil servants that occupied the existing York Buildings proved reluctant to relocate (Thomson 2011). The Scottish Gallery of Modern Art would not come into existence till well after the end of the Second World War, when the National Gallery of Scotland transferred the majority of its 'modern' pieces to a new collection, displayed at Inverleith House.

Inverleith House, opened in August 1960. It was the first gallery in Britain dedicated to modern (twentieth century) and contemporary art. Yet, like the present buildings, the house was no modernist arts centre. On the contrary, it was built in 1774 and was originally designed as a large family home. It did offer NGS a relatively central location in Edinburgh and a reasonably large space set amongst the grounds of the Royal Botanic Garden. As the collection grew over the years, however, the space eventually proved inadequate.

In 1984 the gallery was relocated to Belford Road on Edinburgh's west side, taking over the premises of the former John Watson's school for fatherless children. The former school, designed by William Burn in 1825, is a grand neo-classical building,

with two symmetrical wings fronted by a large classical portico. In 1999, the National Gallery of Modern Art effectively doubled its space with the opening of the Dean Gallery, also on Belford Road (Formerly the Dean Orphan Hospital and now named Modern Two), and used now as a temporary exhibition space. Located outside the main city centre, on leafy high ground, bordered by the Dean Village and Ravelston bungalows, and by private schools to north, south, and west, the galleries command a rather secluded and privileged position overlooking the Water of Leith. Standing opposite each other, both surrounded by large grounds with well-tended lawns, box hedges and many mature trees and green spaces, including the Dean cemetery and school playing fields, the modern art galleries dominate something of a little 'estate' on Edinburgh's west side (a "city centre oasis" to quote the NGS venue hire brochure).

The gallery buildings that stand today on Belford Road also display few outward symbols of twentieth or twenty-first century modernity, save for the outdoor artworks set amidst the large grounds. Indeed, in a rather post-modern move, the NGS institution has appropriated an altogether ancient-looking façade for its galleries of modern art; undeniably the institution has come to firmly embrace its antique buildings, along with their classical symbolism. Certainly, this classical symbolism is echoed within many of the galleries' major permanent artworks. For instance, in the Great Hall of the old Dean Gallery (now renamed Modern Two), there stands a giant statue of an ancient god; this is Eduardo Paolozzi's *Vulcan* – a huge permanent sculpture commissioned specifically for the space, and standing over seven meters tall. The massive figure is constructed of metal and stands as an embodiment of Modernity. "He is half-man and half-machine – a monument to the modern age" (National Galleries of Scotland, 'Vulcan', at www.nationalgalleries.org), as NGS puts it. In contrast to Ron Mueck's organic monster *a Girl* (discussed below in subsection 4.1.4), Paolozzi's monumental mechanoid is charged not with devastating weakness but with overwhelming power. Inorganic, divine and male he surpasses the flesh as an immense metallic being. Yet, his physical nature still holds him in the clutch of monstrosity. Hobbled by the

materiality of his body, Vulcan remains in a sense inadequate. He is a lame God and Paolozzi has sculpted him with a crutch.

The great sculpture inside Modern Two – for all its size and impact – is, however, ultimately no holy shrine; for the galleries, of course, are not consecrated to ancient gods. Neither are they wholly consecrated to *modernism* and its totalising power, which they continually seek, whether successfully or unsuccessfully, to question, respond to and transcend with notions of the post-modern. Forever battling with the question of 'modernity', the galleries seem consecrated to something much more elusive and difficult to define: to intellectual playfulness. As Simon Groom, head of the SNGMA put it:

> For a lot of people the idea of modern contemporary art is quite forbidding. It's not. It should be a palace of fun, a palace of propositions and proposals, and in a way this is what we are offering, through the collection… (Simon Groom, Director of Modern and Contemporary Art, interview for *Celebrating 50 Years of World-Class Art* short film at www.nationalgalleries.org).

Inside Groom's 'palace of fun', the visitor is invited to free his or her curiosity and rejoice in the 'creativity' of the human mind.

4.1.2 Inspiring Curiosity

The earliest proto-model of the Western museum can be traced back to the private cabinets of curiosities of Renaissance Europe. Founded by princes, aristocrats, merchants and scholars, they were collections of objects un-discriminated by category or origin. They were collections of the strange and the beautiful, the bizarre and the un-deciphered – objects whose histories and interpretation were as yet un-scrutinised by a rigorous scientific method. Born from an influx of new and rediscovered objects and specimens, these collections were driven in part by a fascination for the unusual, and their display intended to arouse the curiosity and wonder of the viewer (Weschler, 1995: 77). Of course, these were private

collections, their contents displayed to invited guests only – to a select elite. These proto-museums were personal collections that undoubtedly reflected the eccentricities of their owners. The accumulation and display of such objects was a symbol of power or wealth, but in many cases, and more significantly perhaps, a symbol of intellectual engagement and philosophical reflection. These collections served as stimuli to a new breed of investigator. This predecessor of the museum was not an educational entity in the modern public sense, as the beneficiary of any learning was the collector himself and the small elite of invited viewers and fellow appreciators. Nevertheless the cabinet's links to a domain of learning are clear. As Paula Findlen put it: "Collecting was about the confrontation of ideas and objects, as old cosmologies met new ways of perceiving, that fuelled the learned and curious discourses of early modern Europe" (Findlen 1989: 27).

The cabinet of curiosities was in many respects the precursor of the modern scientific museum, yet it is the museum of art, more than any other sort of museum, that draws immense inspiration from the Italian and European Renaissance. It is to this flowering of new intellectual thought, and concomitantly to the art of the ancients upon which the Renaissance itself drew inspiration, that Western galleries – and in this respect the NGS is a fine example – turn to as the 'spiritual' starting point of their historical narratives. It is the gallery of art more than any other that continues to seek the confrontation of ideas that continually seeks new ways of perceiving and reflecting.

Of all the NGS galleries, the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art presents itself as perhaps the most comfortable inheritor of the proto-museum's culture of wonder. Inside the gallery space, myth, beauty, belief, imagination and reason are scripted to entwine and give birth to a creative and free imagination. Like the cabinet of curiosities before it, the SNGMA seeks a fuller consciousness of the world, revering in particular *curiosity* – curiosity about the physical universe, the body and the 'inner', emotional realm of man. The Renaissance mind inhabited an intellectual universe where magic and alchemy, the imaginary and the irrational still held sway. Today, though the gallery endorses to some degree intellectual sobriety and

methodical inquiry, in truth, the promotion of reason inside the gallery space reveals itself to be but one strand of a greater whole, one that brings all together into aesthetic 'confrontation'.

4.1.3 A Test of Inner Resilience

In 2012, the NGS education department published the *Sculpture Trail* for children and their families to explore the extensive grounds of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. It introduced the gallery with these words:

> The gallery has two buildings, which look a bit like ancient Greek temples. Modern One used to be a school, and modern Two an orphanage. Both of them had lots of green outdoor spaces for the children's sports and games. Now this space is here for you to explore and enjoy. Have fun! (National Galleries of Scotland, *Sculpture Trail*, 2012).

As the educational trail intimates, the old sports and games that schoolchildren used to play here hold little relevance to the new purpose and function of the institution that now rules over these grounds. The bodily training and physical exertion that might have characterized the amusement of the playing field has been replaced by an altogether different conception of 'fun' – one devoted to a particular sort of intellectual meditation. This is a reflection open not only to rational thought but also to 'magical' experience and the inner world of feeling. Certainly, the discourse of 'magic' is readily appropriated by NGS. For example, the institution invites its visitors to explore its outdoor artworks with the help of its "magical sculpture trail" (National Galleries of Scotland, 'Regular Free Activities', at www.nationalgalleries.org).

The "magical" sculpture trail is an educational device intended to help young visitors and their families to engage (emotionally) with the various sculptures dotted around the grounds of the gallery. Characterized by the use of questions, the trail invites users primarily to examine their own fascinations and illusions and inner

responses as they are presented with a series of sculptures to look at. Leading the visitor along the trail from object to object, the gallery presents an assortment of contrasting items for contemplation. The educational trail seems intended to introduce children and accompanying adults to the array of artistic possibility, and initiate them to a difficult intellectual game.

Indeed, the trail seems to lead the visitor towards a confrontation with difficult objects; objects that have no easy reading and may create crises of meaning that seemingly test the mental adaptability of the individual. The trail asked for instance the following question: "Is this sculpture a woman lying down, or a landscape? Or maybe both? What do you think?" (*Sculpture Trail*, 2012, on 'Reclining figure Henry Moore'). Requiring from its participants some ability to mentally adjust to whatever the institution throws up for contemplation, the trail continuously tests the participant with questions that have no objective answer. "Walk around the sculpture," the trail states, "Which angle do you see it best from? What does a bird make you think of or feel?" (*Sculpture Trail*, 2012, on 'Roman Standard Tracey Emin'). Seeming to thrill in the unlimited variety and freedom of materials available for artistic experiment, the trail urges the visitor to investigate the properties of the various materials and discover the impact of each on the emotional landscape of the mind. The document continues: "Get your friend to stand on one side of the glass while you stand on the other. What can you see? How does it make you feel? (*Sculpture Trail*, 2012, on 'Two-Way Mirror Dan Graham'). Free of all and any reference to an outside political world, the trail questions its young participants continuously about their *feelings*. For example: "When Creed says 'Everything is going to be alright', how does this make you feel?" (*Sculpture Trail*, 2012, on 'Work nº975 Martin Creed'). Or again: "On sunny days you are allowed to walk on the landform – how do you feel when you're standing at the top?" (*Sculpture Trail*, 2012, on 'Landform Charles Jencks'). The educational 'test' presented here offers little insight into the workings of the outside world, but rather offers ample opportunity to examine the steadiness of the inner self. Success, it would appear, lies in the ability to come to terms with and enjoy whatever

‘challenge’ may disturb one’s preconceptions. It is a test of imperturbation and equanimity, but it is also a test of versatility, flexibility and resourcefulness.

Two of the most prominent of the sculptures presented to visitors on the trail were *Landform* and *Work nº975*. Designed by the American architect and sculptor Charles Jencks, *Landform* (2002) was constructed over two years by a team of engineers following the artist’s plans and blueprints. On the front lawn of the gallery, the ground has been fashioned into a terraced, spiral-shaped grassy mound, surrounding three shallow ponds. The precise and ordered shapes, though clearly man-made, nevertheless seem to recall organic patterns and natural forms. Set discreetly into the steps leading down to Charles Jencks’s *Landform*, the Latin inscription *Festina Lente* greets the perceptive visitor. The adage, translating as ‘make haste slowly’, dates back to Antiquity; it was an adage that appealed to the ancient stoic who strived to restrain his passions through wisdom. Winking to the educated mind, the maxim extols the virtues of steadiness and self-control. In contrast to the solid earthiness of *Landform*, an altogether more luminous work occupies the façade of the Gallery. Commissioned as part of the celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the modern art collection, *Work nº975 - Everything is going to be alright* by Turner Prize winner Martin Creed is a very large and prominent neon sign fixed onto the architrave above the gallery entrance. Installed in November 2009, the work appears singularly privileged, mounted as it is onto the very face of the institution. Highly visible from the road to both visitors and non-visitors alike, aglow at night, the work apparently exclaims an upbeat message, assuaging a contemporary fear of the future. This rather comforting, perhaps playful, glowing sentence is undoubtedly one of the first features to strike the visiting public as they approach the main gallery. It is a radiant projection of the new spirit of reassurance that has come to characterise much of the modern museum’s societal role. Taken together, these two works illustrate well the institution’s celebration of artistic ‘freedom’. The gallery presents its encompassing field of interest, ranging from the materiality of the earth to the abstraction of language. In this liberal field, all materials, all forms of expression are legitimate – anything from mounds of organic soil, to works of radiant light. Along with the

other outdoor sculptures, these two works contribute to the gallery's collection of objects charting the variety and divergence of human artistic expression.

4.1.4 Response and Counter-Response

Walking up the stone steps, under the classical portico and through the double, closed doors of Gallery One, the visitor is drawn into a quirky if tightly ordered space. Here, under the careful lighting, most of the interior has been cleansed of distraction and clutter. White walls and bare (stone or wooden) floors dominate, while many windows are covered over, and simple frames and furnishings lend support to the general atmosphere of neutrality. Yet the neoclassical architecture, and school building layout, as well as the odd eccentricity (such as obsolete fireplaces or the colourful décor of toilets) never allow for the severe austerity and geometric purity familiar to other galleries of modern art (and described in detail by Brian O'Doherty in his influential book *Inside the White Cube – the ideology of the gallery space*, 1976).

Despite the idiosyncratic nature of the collection and the Antique atmosphere of the building (that seems at times to lend a sense of Victorian distinction to the gallery visit), it is clear that the institution mainly recounts conventional and internationally validated narratives of modern and contemporary art. These are narratives that chart and celebrate, amongst other things, the rise of abstract work and the dissolution of convention. Carol Duncan argued that the museum of modern art fashioned a particularly potent narrative of "renunciation", founded on the central notion of a progression towards artistic purity. Filled with the works of artists seeking "transcendent realms of mind and spirit" (Duncan, 1995: 114), the gallery space of the modern art museum invited the visitor to spiritually re-enact the glorious repudiation and rejection of a constraining world. Parallel to this, Duncan argued, the female body, symbol of biological necessity and animal desire, appeared inside the museum of modern art as a monstrous temptress, vile and ensnaring (Duncan, 1995).

A striking illustration of Duncan's ideas might be offered by the prominent exhibition of sculpture entitled *Sculpture Show: 1900 to 2012* held at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, from December 2011 to June 2012. The entire gallery space of Modern One was devoted to the exhibition, which charted the development of British and Western sculpture, from the turn of the twentieth century up to the present. Marketed as "a celebration of sculpture in all its many wonderful and extraordinary forms", the exhibition led visitors through various modern artistic movements, beginning loosely with impressionist sculpture and ending with minimalist and conceptual works on the top floor. Using, as it were, a wide-lens perspective founded in art history, the exhibition seemed, unavoidably, structured around a narrative of abstraction. With its myriad representations of the human body in various states of abstraction – almost a full spectrum from the hyper-real to the purely evocative – the show led its audiences on a tour of artistic evolution characterized by artistic "reaction" and counter-reaction. By the end of the visitor's tour through the gallery space, sculpture had given way to three-dimensional objects and designs that transcended the very notion and language of sculpture. The entire top floor of the gallery seemed devoted to highly conceptual works that entirely rejected the traditional materials, skills and themes of sculpture. As the wall panel explained:

> In the mid-1960s artists in New York such as Donald Judd and Sol LeWitt began to make three-dimensional works of art – they rejected the word sculpture as too traditional – that were totally abstract, of extreme formal geometrical simplicity and constructed by fabricators according to the artists plans (Exhibition wall panel).

Yet of course, the gallery's narrative did not strictly end here, but rather looped round and back to the hyperrealism of the show's "centrepiece" – Ron Mueck's *A Girl* (2006) – underlining the continuing narrative of response and counter-response of modern artistic endeavour.

Ron Mueck's *A Girl* (sitting alone in room 8) cast an enormously oversized, newborn, female child, with umbilical cord and bloody skin, as an object of concentrated gaze. The child's body, magnified and hyper-realistically rendered, frozen at or near the moment of birth, seemed to invite a particularly focused examination of corporeal being. "Part of the drama," declared the NGS website, "…is that the viewer is put into the unusual and slightly unsettling position of being able to study figures at length and at close quarters" (National Galleries of Scotland, 'The Sculpture Show, The Real Body', at www.nationalgalleries.org). Every blemish is thus revealed. Overblown and naked, this monstrous and "disgusting" (to quote one participant of a tour) representation of the body certainly offered little to either idealize or flatter the physical body. This was no idealized representation of the miracle of birth, but rather a depiction of a universally shared trauma. As the NGS website describes:

> Her squashed and battered body, smeared with traces of blood, reveals the reality of the ordeal which we have all experienced but do not recall (National Galleries of Scotland, 'The Sculpture Show, Highlights', at www.nationalgalleries.org).

In deep contrast to this bodily representation then, an entirely different kind of work took centre stage on the second floor. Indeed, room 14 was dedicated to a single artwork – Sol LeWitt's Wall Drawing #1136. This fully abstract piece seemed to celebrate its pure 'transcendence' with a rainbow of colour. Here, artwork and exhibition space became physically one. Realized by a team of assistants from the designs of the *now-deceased* artist, the artwork seemed to proclaim the immortality of creative 'genius'.

These two pieces [Mueck's *A Girl* and LeWitt's Wall Drawing] both centrally positioned, both presented in their own private gallery space, appeared to constitute the exhibition's linchpins, around which the other works orbited and referred back to. Taken together, these two works seemed to ideally illustrate Carol Duncan's dichotomous narrative of modern art, characterized, on the one hand, by an apparent

masculine pursuit of 'pure mind', and on the other hand, by the monstrosity of the body, symbolically represented by the female.

It is difficult, however, to unravel in a gallery space that promotes a culture of response and counter response, what is irony and what is endorsement, what is exposure and what is affirmation. Ambiguity and indeterminateness blur the certitude of even the strongest of themes.

4.1.5 Free and Individual Interpretation

On the 27th of February 2012, a small group of local students were conducted round the Sculpture Show by a freelance tour guide hired by NGS. The tour leader stood with her small group of students looking at the oversized representation of the female newborn, lying at the centre of room 8. The leader had just finished delivering a short lecture on the art object, discussing such matters as the materials and processes used, the historical background, and the themes of interest to the artist. She turned then to her small audience and concluded, "The artist wants us to have a reaction, I think."
A few audience members stared at the artwork, some at the walls, most glanced back at the leader.
"What do you think? Do you have any reactions?" asked the leader at last. The audience remained silent.
"Disgusting," mumbled one student eventually.
The tour leader nodded her head slowly, noncommittally, and explained, "Different people have different reactions; there is no right or wrong answer."

The tour educator had just disclosed and repeated an important institutional adage to her audience, namely, that there are no correct or incorrect answers. Indeed, it is clear that the exhibited art of the SNGMA offers no pursuit of philosophical absolutes, but an opportunity for self-reflective participation. Yet, though there may

be no correct or incorrect absolutes, it does not follow that there are no 'preferred' responses.

Liberal philosopher William Galston made an important distinction between two kinds of education. On the one hand, Galston identified what he termed 'philosophical education', built around rational enquiry and the pursuit of truth. This is the domain of the sciences and technical subjects whose practices and solutions are thought to be universal. On the other hand, Galston also identified what he termed 'civic education'. This is education aimed at the construction of citizens, understood in the broadest of terms. "Its purpose," he wrote, "is not the pursuit and acquisition of truth but, rather, the formation of individuals who can effectively conduct their lives within, and support, their political community" (Galston, 1991: 242).

While some aspects of the education associated with the art museum may be thought of in terms of Galston's 'philosophical education' (those aspects related to the teaching of history and technical competences for instance), there are many others (including the promotion of values, behaviours, and particular perspectives of the world) that fall rather more within the realm of the 'civic'. This civic education promoted within the SNGMA is a process that favours free and individual interpretation and is highly liberal in nature. NGS invites its audiences to individual 'engagement'. This is the preferred 'civic' response. It is a commitment to friendly participation, to an open and welcoming relationship with the institution and its collection. The invitation is offered to all and founded on the proposition that all human creation and culture, however seemingly bizarre, has something positive to add and tell us about ourselves and the human condition. The visitor is encouraged thus not to rebuke the expressive and creative choices of others, not to condemn and dismiss just because something does not appeal personally; on the contrary, the visitor is encouraged to enjoy the variety and intellectual enigmas of the collection.

Liberal doctrine strives to moderate oppositions and inequalities through legislation, but more significantly through the development of cultural and professional opportunities. Indeed, 'opportunity', the chance to compete or to give voice to one's identity, is a favoured tool of liberal emancipation. Inside the liberal institution, alternative identities are given the chance to lead, to give voice to individuals who subvert the tribal majority view. In the liberal gallery, the familiar and the exotic threaten to flip or merge into one; at any point, the self may become the exotic and the other the familiar and the normative. Indeed, at NGS, exhibitions such as *Hiroshi Sugimoto* (4th of August – 25th of September 2011, displayed inside Modern Two) or *Artist Rooms Louise Bourgeois, A Woman Without Secrets* (26th of October 2013 – 18th of May 2014, displayed inside Modern One) undermine traditional expectations of the Western, male genius. In the context of a purportedly impartial authority, personal analysis and individual judgement informed by a regime of liberal media are the encouraged tools of meaning-making.

All 'civic education' seeks to instil loyalty and commitment to the governing order, and is at root moral, rhetorical and one might also add *aesthetic*. In the case of liberal teaching, the aesthetic is one undoubtedly of eclecticism, diversity and personal perspective.

4.1.6 A Liberal Framing of the Human Body

The 'body' holds an ambiguous status inside the contemporary NGS. While a modernist (or bourgeois) revulsion of the imperfect body undoubtedly continues to hold some currency within a purified space, a commercially driven tolerance of the expressive body, reflected by the influx of *professional performers* into the halls of the institution, has become apparent.

Exhibitions such as *From Death to Death and Other Small Tales – Masterpieces from the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and the D. Daskalopoulos Collection* (15th of December 2012- 8th of September 2013), inviting "in-gallery"

performances after hours, illustrate the recurrent use of the human body as an instrumental bridging theme, tailored for trans-national and trans-community contemplation.

> The exhibition highlights the significance of the body as a theme in 20th and 21st century art practice and enables audiences to view many world-class artworks that have never before been seen in Scotland ('From Death to Death and Other Small Tales' at www.nationalgalleries.org).

The body is the emblem of a global society. Naked and cleansed of tribal differences, it fuels the possibility of cross-cultural communion. It is the universal physical unifier, transcending the parochial difficulties and barriers to communication imposed by language and custom. Whatever the fears surrounding its decay and vulnerability, the human body remains an obsessive icon for those who dream global dreams.

There is little doubt that a pervasive internationalism suffuses the halls of the modern galleries. Works and exhibitions strive for international recognition and are set always against the backdrop of nebulous 'world-class' standards. The exhibition *From Death to Death and Other Small Tales* illustrated well the language of 'world' significance:

> The opportunity to showcase the national collection alongside this world-class collection is a major coup for the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. It allows us to show the very best of international contemporary art to the Scottish public whilst continuing our innovative use of the collection to produce a show that is daring, surprising and of international significance ('From Death to Death and Other Small Tales' at www.nationalgalleries.org).

While the institution holds a purposeful collection of modern Scottish art, this is complemented by a large holding of international works. The institutional ambition is that national art should be displayed within a wider international context[34]. For

[34] Indeed, the Gallery of Modern Art from its inception has sought, either through loan or acquisition, to exhibit the 'very best' (defined through international discourses of art history) of modern and contemporary art *from around the world*. "…in line with the National Gallery's policy

NGS, the modern stage is a *global stage*, and both local and international audiences are introduced to NGS's cosmopolitan ambition, founded on such ideas as diversity, equal access, free expression and of course individual preference and choice.

At the same time, the 'control of body' (see Bourdieu 1984) is no longer the preserve of the educated few, it is an expectation projected to all liberal society. Educational projects endeavour to bring more people into the gallery space to democratise the ritual. For Helene Illeris (2006), 'ritual' seemed to involve or entail submission and obedience, ideas out of place inside the modern (liberal) museum, and suggested instead the idea of 'performance' and 'game' to capture the full complexity of the museum visit and the educational activity of the museum[35]. Certainly, a museum visit, whatever the similarities, is not an *explicit* ritual; certainly it is not portrayed in these terms by participating parties. Nevertheless, bodily movements inside the museum space are controlled; the acts of walking, breathing, gazing and speech are calmed and domesticated. The 'game', if it can be described as such, is thus the self-mastery of body and ultimately the elimination of physical violence. This is a place for self-disciplined human beings alone (no dogs allowed, as the sign at the front gate makes clear). Even so, the ordinary visitor's body is not fully trusted within the gallery space; for the 'extraordinary' expression of the body, the task must be handled by professional, trustworthy specialists: the artists. Through these 'proxy' bodies, the public may satiate a human need for a more liberated expression, within this most tightly controlled of environments.

Although it is the recognised and remunerated specialist that is given to participating in the display of such freedom within the higher temple space, a second class of actor may also be given licence to present their liberated individuality: the 'community member' or school child. Supervised by educators

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of collecting work by important artists from a global perspective, it was intended that the new Gallery of Modern Art should acquire international works of similar stature, and not simply represent Scottish art. This is a policy that the Gallery continues with to this day." ('Gallery of Modern Art at 50' at www.nationalgalleries.org)

[35] Illeris wrote: "To think of museum and gallery education as a game where every position is a role to be played – even the exposed objects or the building – opens the way to much freer and less ritualized ideas of how an educational setting should be" (Illeris, 2006: 23).

and ‘community leaders’, these learners are often encouraged to become agents of stimulation for a wider audience, through the exhibition of their work and public performance. In 2012, the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art hosted *an educational dance event* entitled ‘Desire’, set inside the rooms of the *Sculpture Show: 1900 to 2012* and outside on the grassy grounds. The project was organised by the education departments of the National Galleries of Scotland and Scottish Ballet and brought together young choreographers from Telford College and dance students from Broughton High School. Using modern dance themes, students attempted to design a dynamic and varied series of performances responding to the gallery environment and the exhibited artworks. Within the bounds of non-violence, the body was given free range to exhibit any movement or position in space. The public show, invited into the heart of the gallery space, was an obvious if silent refutation of institutional restriction, a projection of self-assertion and sanctioned liberty. Beyond this, the event was intrinsically mysterious and without final interpretation, designed to spark, more than anything, an exploration of internal feeling. Channelling reflection on and through the human body, its movement and its relationship to mind, the dancers raised more questions than answers.

> What do you desire from dance? Something innovative, exciting and inspirational? What do you think of when you look at art? How does it make you feel? (National Galleries of Art, ‘Desire: Dance Inspired by Art’, at www.nationalgalleries.org).

In truth, whether ‘community performance’ or exhibited masterpiece, the art of the art gallery is cryptic, communicating enigmatic personal philosophies and esotericisms. Self-referential, lost in ambiguity, lost in aesthetics, the art of the art museum offers glimpses of many things: the radical and the conservative, the fierce and the gentle, the dignified and the crude. Contradiction, disparity, contrast these are the adjectives that rebound within the liberal museum; it proffers little coherence or answer, rather it stages puzzle and challenge: a challenge to the individual to continually adjust.

The rational and the irrational jostle within the liberal gallery space; the focus and ambition of the gallery of art is above all the illumination of both rational and irrational possibility. To seek solely rational order is to miss the underlying exhortation to creative freedom. The gallery of art appears as a particularly potent symbol of the liberty of individual expression, and the celebration of many and vastly different visions and perspectives.

What is given for aesthetic consumption, the public is neither obliged to like nor remember in full. The gallery of modern art espouses an ethos of playful experimentation. The many and contrasting objects of modern art presented to the public express the variety of human design, and testify to the legitimacy of diversity; difference it seems should not be feared and can be institutionally managed and exploited for the good of all. In these halls of conflicting visions and divergent ideas, art is presented as a mediator and a connector to the 'other', and the visitor is asked to engage fully with all. However irrational and different the 'other' may appear through his activity and work, he or she shares with the viewer a common essence.

Indeed, the liberal gallery raises the human being to something more than an animal or mere machine. Here, the human being alone emerges from the background of nature as an entity worthy of sanctity; he/she achieves this promotion through the quasi-mystical device that is the creative mind. However, it is through the body that he or she is connected to others and it is through the body that a shared humanity is exposed.

4.2 Conclusion

Purposefully troubling, contrasting, playful, abstruse, the gallery space is replete with extravagant expressions of individuality. Enigmas are constantly raised by

artworks and exhibitions, ambiguities reinforced and restrictions challenged. The lack of immediate clarity in much of the displayed work raises innumerable questions as to artistic motive and personal feeling, questions that test one's equanimity and flexibility of thought. Contemporary liberal society demands of its citizens tolerance and acceptance of diversity, and to participate responsibly one is urged to engage with an open mind. One must learn to navigate a world of multiplicity and self-asserting others, to find interest rather than fear, insight rather than hostility in the projected difference of others. The gallery offers thus no single-stranded aesthetic order. The gallery presents rather a world compatible with a full expression of the human spirit – a material world that can be controlled and shaped; indeed, it offers a universe that is fully plastic and malleable to the human touch. The institution seems to delight in the display of abundant variety, and is particularly fond of presenting the numerous variations in pattern of otherwise very similar objects. In this context, an artwork or artefact is not just a frozen object it is one of many configurations of a pliable nature. The gallery space, in this sense, seems to set about reassuring the public about the eternal freedom of human action and choice. The institution may be understood as promoting something of a 'faith in creative freedom'– an idea that the world can forever be rearranged or that the seeming chaos that may overtake individuals or society can always be overcome.

5 Regeneration at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery

Image 5: Reopening of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery
1st of December 2011

Museums and galleries in Scotland have invested significant resources into new physical developments and renovation works in recent years[36]. Major projects included the Museum of Scotland (1998), The National Galleries of Scotland Playfair project (2004), the Kelvingrove refurbishment (reopened 2006), the Shetland museum and Archives (2007), the redevelopment of the McManus Galleries in Dundee (reopened 2010), the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum (2010), the Riverside Museum in Glasgow (2011), The Royal Museum refurbishment (reopened 2011) and the Scottish National Portrait Gallery renovation (reopened 2011). Many of these projects were supported by government and public money. For policy-makers, these initiatives helped (and continue to help) raise the profile of both the nation and its cultural offering:

[36] This expansion of museums in Scotland is part of a wider and longer trend, dating back to at least the 1980s. Andrew Wilton wrote in 1990: "Museums, far from being rejected as irrelevant, are increasingly turned to for stimulus and inspiration, and new ones open with extraordinary frequency" (Wilton, 1990: 191).

> All of these developments further contribute to increasing the international reputation and status of Scotland and of the museums sector (*Going Further: The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, 2012: 51).

The National Galleries of Scotland, as an institution, does not stand still, but continually strives to adapt and adjust to a changing society and conversely to project itself as an adapting and adjusting institution. To keep up with its own ideological ideals of dynamism, vitality, innovation and inspiration, the NGS is pushed to sporadically renovate its exhibitions and occasionally its very physical space.

This Chapter explores an important theme of regeneration at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. It begins by looking back at the founding of the gallery and at the threat of closure facing the institution in the 1990s. It goes on to study the refurbishment and reinvention of the gallery for the twenty-first century. It finishes with an investigation of the modern, ephemeral activity and short-lived performances encouraged and developed by the institution's educational staff.

5.1 A Brief History

The Scottish National Portrait Gallery was founded over 120 years ago in the late nineteenth century, opening its doors to the public in 1889. The gallery owes its existence in large measure to the vision and enthusiasm of John Ritchie Findlay, owner of the Scotsman newspaper and a wealthy philanthropist (Thomson 2011). Funded largely by Findlay, the gallery sits at the heart of Scotland's capital, at 1 Queen Street, Edinburgh. The structure was designed in neo-gothic style by the architect Robert Rowand Anderson, and was intended to be "a shrine for Scotland's heroes" (Scottish National Portrait Gallery, history & Architecture, at www.nationalgalleries.org). The first *purpose-built* national portrait gallery in the world, the gallery shared its premises, contrary to original intention, with the

Society of Antiquaries of Scotland along with the Society's library and museum for most of its history[37]. This dual occupancy entailed a division of the building's space, and, despite the overarching symmetry of the building, a structural split was designed into the very architecture of the edifice. The east side was given over to the Society and their museum, while the west side was given over to the Portrait Gallery. This shared tenancy led eventually to room and storage problems for both institutions, as collections grew.

Over the course of the twentieth century many small changes and adaptations were made to Findlay's building. Various fireproofing works in the early twentieth century (see Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland) altered roofs and ceilings. New basements were constructed to help with storage problems and an elevator was installed in the 1930s. New partitioning, doorways, light shades, air-conditioning and hanging screens were installed over the years, to cope with the building's perceived problems. From insufficient hanging space and storage room to difficult lighting conditions and visitor access, the building presented successive curators and keepers with many challenges (see Thomson, 2011). The exterior of the building was a source of worry too, from the beginning. The original red sandstone used in construction (quarried from Dumfriesshire) was particularly prone to erosion, and over the long years, major frost and weather damage had occurred to the sculptures and decorative elements of the exterior façade. In 1981, work began to restore the broken stonework, but progress was slow and costly. Indeed, work took over ten years to complete.

Despite the cost and care taken to renew the Portrait Gallery's exterior, serious doubts over the long-term viability and life of the gallery began to mount as the twentieth century drew to an end. As the former Director of the Portrait Gallery observed:

[37] John Findlay was, indeed, secretary to the Society of Antiquaries and sympathetic to their needs. The shared occupancy of the Queen Street building was brought about by a common desire by government and others to relocate the Society of Antiquaries from the overcrowded premises of the Royal Institution. This proposed relocation was decided upon before the Portrait Gallery was ever erected. Pressure from the government Treasury, the Board of Trustees, and the Society itself, persuaded Findlay to agree to a new, shared space (see Thomson, 2011).

> When I arrived, the building was treated like a complete joke. It had very little money spent on it, but it struggled through. In the 20th century, especially after the war, it was deeply unfashionable. The whole concept of a portrait gallery went completely out of fashion. Figurative painting was incredibly unfashionable and Victorian architecture was a joke. What it meant was that nothing really got thrown out or done here (James Holloway, Director of Scottish National Portrait Gallery from 1997 to 2011, in Mansfield, The Scotsman Special Report, 19th of November 2011).

Certainly, by the early 1990s, the Portrait Gallery faced an altogether uncertain future. Visitor numbers were relatively low and the very idea of a portrait gallery no longer seemed to agree with the sensibilities of some within the institution. An idea to replace and subsume the gallery and its collection within an entirely new institutional concept took root. Indeed, there were serious plans put forward by NGS directors and the Board of Trustees to close down the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and transfer its collection to a new *National Gallery of Scottish Art*. These plans were well-developed and suitable locations for the new gallery found in Glasgow. This, however, was a highly controversial plan that aroused considerable discussion and protest, both in the press and wider civic society. A public campaign to save the gallery was launched and, in an exceptional development, the debate over the future of the Portrait Gallery reached the House of Lords (on the 26th of January 1994). Here too, opposition to the closure of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery was made clear. In the end, the Secretary of State for Scotland ultimately refused to endorse the Board of Trustees' particular vision of a Gallery of Scottish Art, and the original plans were ultimately shelved.

Yet the desire to transform the Portrait Gallery persisted within the institution. The problems of storage and display had mounted over the years and had never been properly resolved. With the planned relocation of the *Society of Antiquarie*s to the National Museum of Scotland on Chambers Street (a drawn-out process not completed until 2009), an opportunity arose to invest the entire building and to 'relaunch' the Portrait Gallery. These plans however were delayed by the NGS's new priority and focus on the Royal Academy building on Princes Street. The

refurbishment of the Royal Academy and the construction of the Weston underground Link concentrated the funds and energies of the institution at the turn of the twenty-first century (indeed, the entire Playfair project cost some £32 million and took some five years to complete[38]). Nevertheless, the Portrait Gallery was finally closed down for renovation in 2007 when new funds were found and made available by government and private backers.

5.2 Rethinking the Portrait Gallery

5.2.1 A New Space

The refurbished Portrait Gallery opened on the morning of the 1st of December 2011. Originally planned to open the day before, on the more "propitious" St Andrew's Day (Scotland's patron saint's day), the institution was compelled to alter its plans due to planned industrial action by public sector workers, and the supposed disruption this might cause. Ceremonially opened by the Scottish artist and playwright John Byrne, the new visitors were led into the renovated interior with a short fanfare in the Great Hall.

The momentous day was marked by the unveiling of a new plaque inside the Great Hall by the First Minister Alex Salmond of the Scottish National Party. The First Minister's speech praised the hard work and dedication of all the people, from contractors to gallery staff, who had made the new Portrait Gallery a reality. Declaring the Portrait Gallery one of the "great cultural jewels in the crown of Scotland", the minister commended the finished result and proclaimed it as an "offering to the world". The SNP leader was keen to promote a fresh, new symbol for a vibrant cultural sector.

[38] See www.nationalgalleries.org

The project was billed at £17.6 million and the renovation work took some two years to complete. With the building entirely closed down to the public, architects and contractors could overhaul the existing space and effect a number of significant architectural alterations. “Their brief was to maximise display space while introducing those modern services that had hitherto been lacking”, explained James Holloway, the former Director of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (in Thomson, 2011: 145). With walls revealing bare brickwork or painted an immaculate white, steel girders exposed on ceilings, and new stone flagging on the ground, much of the ground floor space now exhibits a clean functionalist aesthetic. The space also radiates a new sense of unity, reflecting the departure of the Society of Antiquaries and the investment of the entire space by the refurbished Portrait Gallery. This sense of unity has been achieved most dramatically by opening up the vestibule area and allowing direct access to both the east and west wings of the building. The automatic glass doors, inserted into the new gaps, now allow a largely unhindered view across almost the full length of the building.

While the gallery’s second and first floor have been reserved largely for exhibition space, much of the ground floor has been given over to the gallery’s more ‘profane’ functions. Here can be found the gallery’s service areas, including café, shop, reception desk, lockers, toilets, education suite and lecture room. Taken together, these spaces, largely open to each other or linked via full-length glass doors, present an airy and accessible ‘boundary zone’, receiving and welcoming the visitor before entry into the exhibition space above. Although this ground floor boundary zone contains a small exhibitionary space, this is reserved for short-term contemporary shows, and educational displays.

Just above the ground floor and quite visible, lies a new glass and steel mezzanine level. This new feature in fact extends a smaller, existing middle floor area, and provides new office space for the gallery’s educators and curators. Although closed off to the public, part of the eastern mezzanine level has been furnished with functional tables and benches, designed to accommodate large groups and parties for lunch or breaks. A recurrent complaint raised by educators in respect to other

venues of NGS is the lack of adequate lunch space; this is particularly important for school parties that often wish to bring their own food and packed lunches into the gallery. From the education department's point of view, the new facility greatly improves the gallery's welcome and sense of care.

As well as the extended mezzanine, the refurbished ground floor displays one other elaborate new feature. Indeed, the foundations were excavated and all the floors opened up to accommodate the insertion of a new *lift* shaft. Sheathed in glass, this large, modern, custom-built construction links all three floors, providing a new vertical connection between the galleries. With a transparent roof and clear sides, the modern lift allows visitors to gaze out as it moves quietly and smoothly to its given destination. The lift provides ample room for people and objects, and replaces the small gloomy lift constructed for visitors in the early 1930s. The new lift is designed to carry just under fifty people and is particularly useful in relieving congestion in the stairwells by moving large groups, such as school parties, around the building quickly and efficiently. The apparatus, of course, also greatly improves access for disabled visitors, and with its size and transparency, might greatly reduce any tension or claustrophobia generated by enclosed spaces. The new lift seems particularly appreciated by staff educators who greatly value the new capacity for accommodating the large parties their work often brings in.

The lift, however, represents more than a physical 'improvement' of the building, standing also as a symbol of the Portrait Gallery's twenty-first century values. The lift's convenience, its spacious interior and its ease of use promote the picture of an accessible institution, welcoming to the many and mindful of the needs of a modern public. Its transparency and exposed workings serve also to project the image of a transparent and open organisation. Together with the glass-fronted mezzanine, the lift apparatus works to reveal, at least symbolically, the gallery's internal mechanisms and operation (recalling one of the institution's five core values: "NGS is open, transparent and dedicated to public service"). The striking feature, unflinchingly inserted into its historical setting, emphasizes the gallery's apparent vigour and innovation and serves as a physical rebuttal to any suggestion or

suspicion of ossification and decline. With its boldly modern design, modern materials and smooth mechanism, the glass lift projects an image of a modern and 'living' institution, up-to-date with the contemporary world and working effectively.

Similarly, a clutch of new touch-screen consoles on every floor and a purpose designed gallery on the ambulatory overlooking the Great Hall insert a panoply of modern technology into the Victorian space. Offering an array of additional facts and stories to visitors, including information on the history of the gallery, the refurbishment and the collection, as well as games and feedback opportunities, the consoles provide a new interactive and dynamic dimension to the gallery experience. Interactivity as an idea has long been championed in educational circles. As Nick Winterbotham wrote:

> There is no doubt that interactive exhibits enhance the visitor experience. Even the flip up lid and the push-button can do more to elicit a favourable response than passive exhibits, by involving visitors and giving them added value (Winterbotham, 1994: 175).

On either side of the main hall, staircases lead the visitor up to the gallery's main exhibitionary spaces. The gothic windows and exposed brickwork continue the aesthetic design displayed throughout much of the Portrait Gallery, yet the stairwell's soft green carpeting differentiates the space from the highly functional rooms of the ground floor, and echoes the classical aesthetic of the National Gallery on the mound. Indeed, the stair area, in contrast to the lift room, is not a simple transitional space, but an exhibitionary space in its own right, displaying various sculptures and busts. The stair space is in fact the only architectural space to hold a new, permanent, artistic embellishment. Indeed, at the top of the eastern staircase, there is a twenty-first century stained glass window, commemorating the most generous donors to the new renovation.

The refurbishment opened up previously restricted sections of the building, and increased the overall space accessible to the public "by more than 60 percent" (The Scotsman Special Report, 19th of November 2011). The main exhibitionary space lies now on the upper floors of the rejuvenated Portrait Gallery and the offices and storerooms that once took up large sections of space have been removed and relocated elsewhere. The building's original library was also relocated to make room for gallery space. Indeed, the old library of the Society of Antiquaries was dismantled from its original position on the top floor and "painstakingly" rebuilt on the first floor. The refurbished library lies now on the west side of the building and holds the Portrait Gallery's book collection and reference section.

With the removal of the library, the top floor now holds significant extra display space. This is where pre-twentieth century portraits and figures are exhibited. With walls painted in various colours, and works hanging inside elaborate gold frames, the space resembles much more closely that of the Scottish National Gallery on the Mound. This is the "classical" floor of the building to quote Duncan Thomson, former Keeper of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. Indeed, in contrast to the first floor, the space presents large wall space ideal for hanging pictures and contains no vertical windows, as ceilings are open to the sunlight. The various exhibitions, although loosely chronological, do not follow on sequentially from one to another. There is no attempt to narrate a full, linear history of Scotland; rather each exhibition operates individually as a sort of snapshot of history, exploring particular figures and topics. It was decided that labels and texts in the new gallery should hold a substantial amount of historical information and detail. Curators looked at texts elsewhere, in other museums and galleries, and decided that the relaunched SNPG would benefit from relatively lengthy labels and panels. This decision was made largely to support the historical and educational emphasis of the gallery.

In contrast to the top floor galleries with their warm tones and ornate golden frames are the halls of the 'modern' section, on the east side of the first floor. This is where twenty and twenty-first century portraits and stories are exhibited and narrated.

Here, in harmony with the Scottish Gallery of Modern Art and international tendencies, the permanent wall space has been bleached of colour and painted a purifying white. Indeed, the modern section has opted for an exposed functionalist aesthetic, with exposed girders, exposed lift shaft and movable wall panels framing much of the gallery space. With its large windows left clear or masked by thin blinds, the space is undoubtedly airy and light. Exhibiting photographs and video installations and housing an electronic 'periscope' in one corner, the space also radiates a modern technological feel. Objects are displayed inside plain frames, with minimal ornamentation displayed within the space.

The reopened Portrait Gallery is an intriguing combination of twenty-first century modernity and Victorian gothic. Stripped of most, if not all, of its twentieth century architectural interventions, the gallery stands today carefully balanced between a contemporary 'freshness' and a very specific past. Indeed the only significant past that remains on public display is that of its foundational years. As Robert Galbraith, project manager of the refurbishment, explained:

> It's been a process of getting rid of the clogging that built up, and bringing back the bracing building it was to start with (Robert Galbraith, Project Manager, in Mansfield, The Scotsman Special Report, 19th of November 2011).

In truth, the institution has sought to cleanse its congested innards, to cast off the 'decay' built up over time and to purify itself. The commemorative plaque unveiled by Mr Salmond on the 1st of December reveals the underlying intent of the institution to return, at least in spirit, to a foundational birth. As it states: "It commemorates the completion of the restoration and the realisation of the original intentions of the founders of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery" (plaque in the Great Hall). The original nineteenth century intentions have been realised here in the twenty-first. With the Portrait Gallery facing only relatively recently, in the early 1990s, a very uncertain future, the plaque makes clear the importance not simply of continuity – but of restoration and rejuvenation.

On the ground floor of the Portrait Gallery, visitors may step into a space that is clearly not of the same profane nature as the rest of the floor's 'service areas'. This "glorious" space, immediately in front of the vestibule, welcomes the visiting public into an older, almost otherworldly, Victorian realm. "This is Scotland's Valhalla," declared John Leighton and James Holloway, Director-General and Director of the Portrait Gallery, "Here are commemorated the greatest men and women of our country's story – recorded in marble, bronze and paint" (Leighton & Holloway, in *Rough Cut Nation – Remixed Scottish History, Street Art and Graffiti Culture*, 2011: 3).

The double-height Great Hall was left intact and unscathed by the great overhaul that swept through the building during its two-year closure. Meticulously cleaned and renewed and exhibited with augmented lighting, the Great Hall was cast, once more, as the building's centrepiece and distinguishing feature.

The Great Hall of the Portrait Gallery is a very interesting and peculiar space, quite unlike any other within the National Galleries of Scotland. In contrast to other exhibitionary space, the Hall is highly ornate and decorated with a processional frieze, murals and stained glass windows. These nineteenth century embellishments have remained virtually unchanged since their creation over one hundred years ago. In contrast to the light and functional spaces of the ground floor, the darker and somewhat gloomy Hall exudes a rather solemn atmosphere. At the same time, the painted stars, brightly coloured figures and golden backdrop of the frieze radiate a rich and rather mysterious light that readily persuades visitors to cast their gaze upward.

Difficult to characterize as a service area, a transitional zone or a conventional exhibition space, the Great Hall seems dedicated rather more to a unique honouring function and commemorative role within the Portrait Gallery. It is here, appropriately enough, that the portrait of John Ritchie Findlay, set within a great golden memorial, sits proudly under the painted stars. The presence of this prominent memorial inside the gallery is an interesting reminder of Findlay's

continued standing within the institutional 'hall of heroes', a reminder too of the close relationship between arts institutions and philanthropists, between the National Galleries of Scotland and wealthy patrons. The institution has always sought and found the support and financial backing of wealthy donors, and when the Scottish National Portrait Gallery was once again in need of financial support, there was an "overwhelming" response from private donors and foundations (who offered up £6.3 million to the project) (from National Galleries of Scotland, Touch-Screen Gallery, Scottish National Portrait Gallery, accessed December 2011)

The commemorative role of the Hall has been augmented in the refurbished gallery by electronic displays, set into two small glowing alcoves that reveal the names of the many benefactors and donors to the renovated gallery. Indeed, the refurbishment offered a number of opportunities to relatively wealthy individuals to be remembered and honoured inside the gallery. For a sufficient fee, donors could 'sponsor' a heroic figure from the Hall's frieze and, in a sense, elevate their own name to a 'higher' realm. In fact, this idea is perhaps most eloquently expressed in the sponsored stars that decorate the Great Hall's zodiac ceiling. Indeed, the gallery also offered up its zodiac ceiling to the fundraising effort and successfully attracted many individuals and groups to purchase a place among the painted heavens. The names of the benefactors are now commemorated in the *Gallery of Stars*, stored within the great hall's immaterial touch screen gallery.

The Great Hall serves a natural role as a celebratory venue, and it is within this colourful space that the institution chooses to host many of its musical performances. With large standing (or seating) space, resilient floors and favourable acoustics the space is functionally suited to hosting large events. The Great Hall sits at the heart of the Portrait Gallery serving as a natural gathering space, on the occasions when the institution feels the need to commune en masse with its visiting congregation. Indeed, this space more than anywhere else in the Portrait Gallery recalls the interior of a church, an impression reinforced by the gothic arches, pillars, stained glass, lanterns and mosaic floor. For all its supposed secular intent, the ecclesiastic architecture and the solemn atmosphere within, differentiates the

space from the profanity of the street. Though the Great Hall may not be dedicated to the glory of God, it is undoubtedly dedicated (historically at least) to another form of worship – the contemplation of heroes (see subsection 5.2.3 below). Through a presentation of these figures, the SNPG aims to narrate something of Scotland's past and present.

It might be pointed out that a similar task is performed by another national museum. Indeed, the National Museum of Scotland is another institution which aims to recount the story of Scotland. Of course, the Portrait Gallery shares a connection with the National Museum of Scotland through the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. In fact, the gallery was largely founded by members of the Society and, as noted previously, the library and museum of the Society of Antiquaries long shared its premises with the Portrait Gallery. This museum however was integrated into the collections of a new body (National Museums Scotland) in 1985 and moved to the new Museum of Scotland on Edinburgh's Chambers Street in the late 1990s. The National Museum of Scotland is a repository of archeologically and ethnologically significant artefacts. Much more extensive and encyclopaedic than the SNPG, the museum attempts a holistic presentation of Scottish history. The Portrait Gallery is, in comparison, more 'personal' in its recounting of history. While some overlap exists in the narratives told, overall the Portrait Gallery highlights the stories and contributions of individual human beings. The Portrait Gallery reveals something of the lives of 'sitters' or indeed, to a lesser extent, the image-makers (the artists or photographers). In truth, the SNPG blurs the boundaries between historical museum and art gallery.

5.2.2 A New Definition of Portrait

The Portrait Gallery is unusual in its remit. On the one hand, it is undoubtedly a gallery of *art*, and in this sense it is preoccupied to some degree with issues of *aesthetics*. On the other hand, and perhaps more evidently, it attempts to narrate a

history of the nation, using its collection as an instrument of education. Indeed, both educators and curators point out that the exhibitions at the Portrait Gallery do not perform the same function as in other sister galleries. Here, the 'sitter', the represented figure, is often more important than the artist who created the image. Indeed, artworks are not always chosen for their artistic competence or aesthetic 'beauty', but on occasion simply for their illustrative capacity within a historical narrative. The objects and labels of the gallery thus highlight the distinctive character of the Portrait Gallery and its unique emphasis, combining an interest in art, history, people and the nation.

Regardless of whatever else one might claim of the space, the Portrait Gallery is beyond doubt a gallery of *portraits*. At the heart of any reflection on the gallery rests the question of exactly "what is a portrait?" The answer to this question feeds into the societal role and worth of the gallery and is explicitly and implicitly tackled by the institution. Indeed, the touch-screen gallery, on the ambulatory overlooking the Great Hall, offers up some information on the institutional view of portraiture. Here, the institution explains:

> There are numerous reasons for creating portraits and many ways to capture a likeness. A portrait can be many things and perhaps its inability to be defined is what makes it such an exciting and engaging genre (National Galleries of Scotland, Touch-Screen Gallery, viewed December 2011).

Indeed, the Portrait Gallery is very keen to highlight the difficulties of defining the idea of portraiture and is thus more than a little reluctant to pin down the parameters of this, its most defining interest:

> Any attempt at a simple definition of portrait belies its inherent complexity and ignores the range of external factors, such as social conventions, fashions and politics, which vary with time (Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Touch-Screen Gallery, viewed December 2011).

The little film that accompanies the text seems to stress the *uncertainty* of the specialists and gallery staff who attempt to answer the question in their own words.

Emphasizing the *hesitation* of the speakers, the film portrays the very act of defining as a humorous and near hopeless task. In truth, the institution is keen to broaden the concept of portraiture as far as possible, and to empty it of any restrictive specificity. The resultant ambiguity is wholeheartedly welcomed.

On the top floor of the Portrait Gallery, gallery 10 is given over to the exhibition entitled *Playing for Scotland – The Making of Modern Sport*. As part of the opening weekend events, the exhibition's curator led a 15-minute tour of the gallery room, presenting the narrative of sporting development that runs through and binds the images on display. In essence the exhibition charts or illustrates the transformation and professionalisation of sport in Scotland, largely during the nineteenth century, and celebrates the Scottish contribution to the popularisation and codification of modern sport. Yet, at the end of the little tour, one visitor raised the interesting question of the relative lack of obvious 'traditional' portraits in the *Playing for Scotland* gallery. The curator acknowledged the pertinence of this question, explaining that the new Portrait Gallery was committed to a broader, more "elastic" definition of portrait. Indeed, Playing for Scotland was not the only exhibition to 'stretch' the idea of portraiture – a number of other exhibitions attempted this, perhaps most notably John Slezer's Survey of Scotland exhibition that was exclusively made up of landscapes.

This theme of landscape flows through the Portrait Gallery, and reveals itself also in the temporary space of the contemporary gallery. On the 31st of March 2012, a new exhibition, entitled *Farmscapes* was opened on the bottom floor of the Portrait Gallery. Commissioned by the gallery to "capture the diversity of agricultural production in Scotland" photographer Stuart Franklin recorded a miscellaneous collection of rural scenes and activities (including farming, forestry, fisheries, and crofting). In the touch-screen gallery, the interactive displays gave a little more insight into the rationale behind the institution's inclusion of landscape. The intention was to "form a multifaceted portrait of Scotland." Taken together, the works displayed throughout the gallery were designed to contribute to an overall "Portrait of the Nation". No longer exclusively linked to a person or even a physical

being, the remit of the portrait has been extended to include the entirely abstract. Now, the intangible nation, as a whole, is to be represented by portrait.

NGS stated soon after its reopening: "Our recent renovation provided the opportunity for a new approach to how we show our collection and what we include in our displays" (www.nationalgalleries.org). This new approach has been adopted in part to reinvigorate the exhibitionary remit of the gallery, to allow scope for new expression and allow the display of a wider variety of works and stories. It has also been chosen to democratise the museum space. Indeed, it has been chosen to temper or dampen the traditional connotations of a portrait gallery. After all, a traditional portrait gallery supports, indeed consolidates, a view of history as a history of the few. The exploration of history through and around portraits of individuals favours inevitably the idea that events are driven or influenced by especially famous, powerful, gifted or creative individuals. While such a view might have been acceptable to an earlier institution, the twenty-first century gallery is keen to move away from this overtly elitist perspective.

5.2.3 Old Heritage

Undoubtedly, the Scottish National Portrait Gallery stands out as being the most overtly 'national' of the National Galleries of Scotland, a character made visible by the very style of the building. Indeed, the Scottish National Portrait Gallery differs interestingly from its sister galleries in being housed uniquely inside a neo-gothic building on Edinburgh's Queen's street. The building contrasts distinctly with the classical temples of the National Gallery of Scotland and with the neo-classical buildings of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. Inspired by many sources, including European designs of the thirteenth and fourteenth century, the Portrait Gallery recalls a medieval ecclesiastical architecture, and this stylistic choice stands out rather more as an expression of spiritual and romantic feeling than as an embodiment of rational order like that suggested by the surrounding architecture of the Edinburgh New Town. In truth, the gothic revival, popular across

Northern Europe, was closely associated with ideas of romantic nationalism. Moreover, as an overt celebration of 'Scottishness' and Scottish achievement, the Portrait Gallery's gothic design was undoubtedly calculated to tap into the traditional power and enduring autonomy of the Scottish church. Also, both the exterior and the interior of the building feature elaborate decorations, themed on Scottish history and prominent Scottish characters – including William Wallace and Robert the Bruce. At a time when the Union was arguably at its politically strongest, the establishment of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, separate from the already existing 'British' Portrait Gallery in London, is an interesting reminder of the maintenance of widespread feelings of Scottish 'distinctiveness' within the social elite, even during the nineteenth century.

However, despite the national focus and remit of the Portrait Gallery, the institution was never intended to be a radical nationalist statement. It might be pointed out that the political instincts of the gallery's founder, John Ritchie Findlay, were unionist. His newspaper, for which he controlled general policy, consistently backed a pro-union position in the controversial debates over 'home rule', in the late nineteenth century (see Dictionary of National Biography. Sup. Vol II (1901) p211, en.wikisource.org/)

In truth, the Portrait Gallery is a rather odd entity, with few existing parallels elsewhere in the world. Its creation reflected, in many ways, the romanticism and private enthusiasms of John Ritchie Findlay and a small circle of fellow devotees associated with the Board of Manufacturers and the Society of Antiquaries in the nineteenth century. The Scottish National Portrait Gallery was designed to celebrate the achievements of Scotland's 'great' historical sons (and a scattering of daughters), and seemed to appeal to Findlay on a very personal level, combining as it did his twin passions for art and history. Nevertheless, Findlay undoubtedly saw in his new institution, the power to instruct and educate others.

In many respects, the founding ideals of the SNPG can be traced back to the figure of Thomas Carlyle[39]. Commemorated on the Portrait Gallery's processional frieze (the first or final figure, depending on one's point of view), Carlyle was an influential historian and commentator and a leading proponent of a Scottish portrait gallery in the mid-nineteenth century. Carlyle is perhaps best remembered today for his writings on 'heroes'. Indeed, many of his writings and public lectures championed the idea of Great Men and their powerful influence upon history. For Carlyle, history was driven forward by the actions of distinguished leaders (Carlyle, published 1840: 1). It was only natural for other men to worship such heroes, he argued, and, indeed, such reverence was both noble and right (Carlyle, published 1840: 11). It might also be pointed out that Carlyle's notion of the hero was of a rather spiritual sort. The perfect hero was conceived as a deeply spiritual being, motivated by a divine force. Indeed, although Carlyle renounced his Christian faith, he retained a strong notion of the spiritual throughout his writings.

Carlyle's ideas were a tremendous influence on the founders and builders of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, a fact acknowledged and often reiterated by the contemporary NGS. As one leaflet stated:

> [The SNPG's processional frieze] depicts many famous Scots, led by Thomas Carlyle who, as an outspoken supporter of portrait galleries as 'pantheons for heroes', inspired the creation of this Gallery (National Galleries of Scotland, *An Invitation to Take Your Place in History*, NGS leaflet).

The Victorian frieze in the Portrait Gallery's great hall ("designed as a portrait gallery in miniature" according to the touch-screen gallery), in many respects illustrates well the values of its nineteenth-century creators. The individuals painted on the frieze represent mostly men of power and influence. These were the hypothetical leaders of history – men of supposed will and talent and such force of character, capable not only of influencing Scottish history but also of conquering it. Interestingly, contrary to the usual explanatory discourse (see for instance *Rough*

[39] Carlyle was also influential in the foundation of the Portrait Gallery in London, where his bust sits above the entrance.

Cut Nation booklet page 6), these characters are *not all* Scottish heroes, for the frieze also represents a number of would-be conquerors: several Roman commanders, "Vikings" and indeed Edward 1st of England.

The contemporary institution is, of course, very well aware of the ideological problems associated with its Victorian past. As a modern liberal institution, it can no longer fully endorse the beliefs and perspective it once espoused. In the touch-screen gallery the institution proclaimed thus:

> However, completed in 1898 this 'portrait gallery in miniature' is of its time, with little ethnic or gender diversity and of course excludes Scots whose important contributions came later (Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Touch-Screen Gallery, Viewed December 2011).

However, despite communicating a Victorian hierarchy the institution can no longer quite approve, the frieze and the building's other Victorian emblems remain objects of institutional identity, used over and again to promote the beauty and interest of the gallery. Indeed, the contemporary NGS presents its painted nineteenth century figures in the following terms: "from explorers to engineers, from soldiers to statesman"; "from monarchs to missionaries, from patriots to patron saints"; "from emperors to economists, from physicians to philosophers"; "from royals to reformers, from martyrs to mathematicians" (*An Invitation to Take Your Place in History*, NGS leaflet). The alliteration used here emphasizes the celebratory tone adopted by the author. Of course, the ordinary men and women of society had no place to stand inside this miniature gallery. Indeed a list of the *absent* could be drafted in similar fashion: from farmers to fishermen, from servants to slaves; from peasants to privates; from woodsmen to welders; from bakers to butchers, from teachers to tailors; from homemakers to hairdressers, from nurses to nuns. Indeed, there is no shortage of men and women left un-represented in the Victorian frieze. The populace was given little visibility and significance in the great events of history, save perhaps as subjects or hierarchical subordinates to be ruled.

There exists a tension between the institution's desire for symbolic continuity and the modern liberal values that now inform much of its existence. The preserved Victorian building (replete with sculptures, murals and frieze) holds considerable value in terms of its historical *authenticity*. Yet, the symbolic value of this authenticity and heritage is offset by the partial incompatibility of past ideology with contemporary liberal doctrine.

5.2.4 New tensions

Planning for the new exhibitions and displays began some three years before the reopening. It was decided early on that the education department should work closely alongside the curatorial team to help develop and oversee the installation of each new exhibition. As the gallery embarked upon a new strategy of close teamwork, each curator was paired with an educator, to encourage greater collaboration.

The heightened educational atmosphere at the gallery has been accompanied by a new ethos of liberal democratic representation. With the reopening, the SNPG has striven to move beyond a traditional narrative of 'great men' and embrace a fuller celebration of the population as a whole. Indeed, the *Portrait of a Nation* project has clearly attempted to re-script the gallery as a more inclusive space with exhibitions attempting to redress some of the inherent representational imbalance of the gallery's collection. This inherent imbalance is recognised by the institution but attributed to the 'limitations' of the historical collection. "To a certain extent," declared Nicola Kalinsky, interim Director of the SNPG, "we are constrained by our collection. Quite often there aren't portraits of people you would like there to be portraits of" (Nicola Kalinsky, Interim Director, Portrait Gallery, Interview 13/ 06/ 2012).

Despite this constraint, the Portrait Gallery's new displays strive to highlight the lives and presence of people long ignored. The exhibition *Out of the Shadow:*

Women of Nineteenth Century Scotland brought many more images of women into the gallery space, highlighting the contributions of females, as well as their general exclusion from the public realm, in the nineteenth century. Detailing the 'accomplishments' of individuals, the exhibition focused also on broader themes of women's rights and female emancipation. **"**A consideration of these individuals," explained the NGS website, "allows us to explore some of the important advances in women's rights made during the nineteenth century" (National Galleries of Scotland, 'Out of the Shadow: Women of Nineteenth Century Scotland', at www.nationalgalleries.org).

The new Portrait Gallery, while still fixated with 'achievement', has moved to paint a fuller social picture inside its halls. In Gallery 8, *Close Encounters, Thomas Annan's Glasgow* (December 2011 to September 2012) a series of thirty-one photographs depicted scenes of nineteenth-century Glasgow. The photographs exposed the dark, "dank" and overcrowded streets of Glasgow's urban slums, in the mid-nineteenth century, before their demolition on sanitary/improvement grounds. The exhibition presented the urban environment and the living conditions of the Victorian poor, and in an important sense, attempted to commemorate the lives of a forgotten class of people.

Elsewhere, the gallery moved to embrace post-colonial themes, highlighting the contributions of 'minorities' to Scottish culture (and economy: see *A Scottish Family Portrait* exhibition, below). Undoubtedly, the institution has attempted to become more self-aware, and more critical of nineteenth century exhibitionary practices. The exhibition *Lucknow to Lahore: Fred Bremner's vision of India* (opened the 6th of October 2012) drew attention to Scotland's imperial past. Displaying a number of Bremner's photographs of colonial India, the exhibition made clear the 'arrogance' of the Victorian era. Exploring themes of the exotic and the colonial subject, the exhibition offered a sort of 'introspection' of Scottish history, encouraging the viewer to adopt, at least on one level, a critical gaze towards the presented images.

Yet, in truth, the institutional impulse to stay true to founding ideals remains strong. The enduring pursuit of continuity and stability continues to inform institutional practices, limiting the extent of possible change. *Migration Stories: Pakistan*, for instance, despite its post-colonial ethos, reaffirmed an old portrait gallery bias, incorporating subjects into a rather traditional narrative of great men. Indeed, the main exhibit *A Scottish Family Portrait* featured "prominent Scots of Pakistani heritage", i.e. economically successful individuals (usually men), within their family setting. While the individual achievement expressed through these images may, in some sense, have been tempered by the inclusion of 'ordinary' family members alongside the focal subject, still there remained the underlying narrative of 'distinction'. As the institution made clear:

> This exhibition continues the gallery's commitment to commissioning portraits of individuals who have played a distinctive role in Scottish Society (National Galleries of Scotland, Exhibition Wall Panel, viewed December 2011).

Although the directors assert that "nowadays we have a rather different view of what constitutes greatness" (in *Rough Cut Nation – Remixed Scottish History, Street Art and Graffiti Culture*, 2011: 3), it is clear that traditional figures of history (from Bonnie Prince Charlie to Mary Queen of Scots) continue to crowd the gallery space and continue to be chosen as educational and marketing entities. Nevertheless, the gallery undoubtedly strives to embrace some new standards of 'greatness'. The new director of the Portrait Gallery, Christopher Baker, made it clear he was interested in boosting representation from the world of arts and culture. He declared:

> We should be looking at high achieving Scots who have a reputation not only across the country but beyond, in the realms of fashion, perhaps food, areas such as classical music, opera, ballet (Christopher Baker, Director of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, in 'Scottish Portrait Gallery's New Director Vows to Focus on Top Scots', at www.scotsman.com)

There is thus an evident and continuing emphasis on economic 'success' or cultural 'accomplishment' within institutional displays. While it is clear that the contemporary institution has attempted to 'democratise' the gallery space, its

exhibitions still often drift towards some conception of (often financial or cultural) elitism. This unresolved tension between a new democratising impulse and an older heritage of honouring the few is reflective of a general ambiguity that is not only present inside the gallery but actively fostered by institutional strategy.

5.2.5 The Endorsement of Ambiguity

At the opening of the refurbished Portrait Gallery a newly commissioned stained glass window, celebrating a number of donors to the gallery, was revealed, topped by the portrait of the British monarch, Queen Elizabeth II. The design echoed that of an adjacent Victorian window. In 2012, the traditional adherence to a 'royal order' (which would have been familiar to Victorian mores) was reaffirmed with the celebration of the Queen's diamond jubilee. That year, Elizabeth II celebrated her 50th year on the throne and the public display of institutional allegiance was particularly evident at the Portrait Gallery. As the 'Jubilee weekend' began, the Great hall hosted a musical performance to celebrate the occasion of the Queen's long reign. The invited brass band opened the performance with the British national anthem: *God Save the Queen*. With Union Jack bunting decorating the shops and cafés of the institution, special merchandise on sale (including prints, postcards and books relating to the monarch and her family), and Jubilee-inspired menus, the functional service space of the institution had been given over to an overt endorsement of the British monarchy.

Yet, the figure of the monarch has shifted inside the institutional space from a symbol of state authority to an object of ceremony and romantic festivity. While the institution is keen to reaffirm foundational values where possible, this desire is balanced by a need to appear fresh, dynamic and relevant to the society it serves. Despite the reaffirmation of a traditional order on the one hand, NGS strives hard on the other to project itself as a modern, evolving institution. In 2011, as part of the SNPG renovation programme, NGS decided to adopt a new logo for the

organisation. Originally, only the Scottish National Portrait Gallery was to receive a new insignia, but following advice from a hired consultancy firm, the exercise became more comprehensive. As well as creating new symbols for each of the three main galleries, a new logo was developed for the entire institution. Before 2011, the National Galleries of Scotland used a version of the *Royal coat of arms of the United Kingdom for use in Scotland* as the institution's emblem. Featuring a Scottish Unicorn and English lion, the old intricate emblem publicly reinforced the institution's allegiance to the Monarchy, and to a lesser extent the British state. From an institutional perspective, however, the old coat of arms no longer fits with the institution's twenty-first century self-image. Indeed, the new emblem is dramatically different. Dropping the reference to monarchic authority, the new logo has an altogether simpler design, more akin to the bold, minimalist logos of the corporate world. According to *Design Week*, the new emblem uses "a frame device, referencing the framed artworks and the Scottish flag" (www.designweek.co.uk). Rather than affirm royal sovereignty, the new emblem projects a new sense of national, popular ownership of the collection. The choice of an abstracted Scottish flag echoes the decision made by National Museums Scotland for their institutional emblem. Indeed the NGS logo reflects something of the twenty-first century political landscape of Scotland and the establishment of a Scottish Parliament and government. It is ultimately the Scottish Government which sets cultural policy and funds the national museum institutions in Scotland. Besides this, the new frame symbol reflects the core business of the organisation (the collection) and gives the galleries a distinctive and individual 'brand identity' helping to market the institution and project a sense of renewed modern vitality.

The ambiguity of the modern NGS symbolic culture is reflected in its exhibitionary story-telling. From individual lives to historical events, many stories are told within the halls of the SNPG. The assortment of biographies, facts and accounts are brought together under a single institutional roof, yet there is little evidence of an explicit overarching chronicle binding all the displays together. Rather each exhibition operates as an independent feature of interest, sometimes overlapping with other displays, sometimes not. Whole facets of history are left unspoken and

unrevealed; others are treated with substantial detail. Exhibitions change, and works of art move around. John Leighton, Director-General, had this to say: "The image that we had in our minds was something of a Rubik's Cube that never quite resolves itself but keeps on changing and turning" (NGS Director-General on 'BBC Radio 3 Night Waves', 7th of May 2012). In an important sense, a new ethos of indefinite conclusion has been promoted inside the museum space. As the Director-General made plain:

> We don't, for example, in the stories that we provide or the narratives that we're providing at the Portrait Gallery, we don't seek to give definitive answers, and very often as you will see if you go round, the narratives are filled with paradox and contradiction […] and ambiguity (Director-General, Interview, 15/ 02/ 2012).

With no overt irony, the institution presents urban slums in one gallery and lords and aristocrats, in all their finery (2011 exhibition *Blazing with Crimson, Tartan Portraits*), in another. There are few obvious value judgements offered. Both exhibitions are put forward for positive consumption, one as a celebration of pioneering documentary photography, the other as a celebration of what has come to be regarded as national dress.

Whatever the celebrated exhibition, the gallery offers little final confirmation or lasting clarity. This is particularly true in relation to issues of identity. While a wide variety of secondary themes and narratives are recounted inside the gallery space (minor references to a Gaelic antiquity, some acknowledgement of ethnic minority influences) there are two contrasting identity themes that compete for dominance. The first of these is the Scottish romantic, characterised primarily by the Highland landscape

In her text *The Art of the Stateless Nation* (in 'The Culture of Property'2004), Jordanna Bailkin drew attention to the competing visions of Scottishness and national identity that have long informed cultural debates and museum remits in Scotland. In particular, much disagreement, she contended, has revolved around so-

called "Highlandism", with its evocative tartan imagery and Jacobite 'kitsch'. According to Professor John Morrison, this Highland identity was largely founded on Victorian myth and fancy. Influenced by the writings of Walter Scott, a romanticised vision of Highland Scotland became popular from the mid-nineteenth century, contrasting a supposedly wild and unruly spirit with the civilised order of English cities (Morrison 2003, 2012). Although failing to represent the identities of many within Scotland, this fictionalised highland character has long captivated the imagination of both Scots and visitors alike (perhaps beginning with Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in the mid-1800s, see Morrison 2003) and continues to carry undoubted tourist appeal in the twenty-first century. More than any other vision of Scottish identity, the romantic Highland character has travelled the globe and drawn many sightseers to Scotland's shores. Highland culture, Jacobite history and tartan imagery certainly feature heavily in NGS depictions of Scottish identity today. Regardless of the institution's obvious self-awareness, exhibitions continue to feature the romanticised imagery familiar to the Scottish tourist industry[40]. The refurbished Portrait Gallery certainly indulges the Scottish romantic, perhaps most forcefully with the long-term exhibition *Blazing with Crimson, Tartan Portraits,* displaying images of upper class individuals dressed in Highland finery (painted between 1680 and 1780), and celebrating that enduring and internationally recognised Scottish emblem – tartan. As the exhibition declared: "Highland dress and tartan fabric are universally recognised signs of Scotland and Scottish identity" (Exhibition wall panel). This potent emblem is one unashamedly appropriated by the institution and flaunted to the public through the tartan-trousered or skirted assistants who patrol the gallery's halls, welcoming each and every visitor through its front door.

[40] The fascination with Highland romance is by no means an exclusive disposition of the NGS. It is an important theme upheld by all the major national cultural institutions of Scotland. One popular exhibition *Fonn's Duthchas* (2007), focusing on all aspects of the culture of the Highlands and Islands, was the result of a collaboration between NGS, the National Library of Scotland and National Museums Scotland. "The exhibition explored the relationship between land and people and the romanticized view of Highland culture" (National Museums Scotland, 'Fonn's Duthchas: Land and Legacy', at www.nms.ac.uk).

In contrast to this, and potent too, is the vision of the 'Scottish Enlightenment', and of Scotland as a land of rational thought. Following a period of turmoil in the late 1600s, Scottish society, over the course of the 18th century, consolidated a reputation for itself as one of Europe's leading centres of science and philosophy (Allan 2001), producing such luminaries as Adam Smith and David Hume. New economic dynamism, wealth and prosperity post 1707 (year of the Act of Union) nurtured an unparalleled growth of new philosophical and scientific ideas. Inspiring a mythologised culture of rational investigation and invention, this period of Scottish history has long been cherished and celebrated by Scottish society and continues in the twenty-first century to inform debate over Scottish identity. Certainly, the vision of a scientific and innovating nation continues to nourish cultural display, and exhibitions at the Portrait Gallery regularly play with this idea of cultural and scientific inventiveness. The exhibition *Pioneers of Science* is perhaps the most overt example, but others, such as *Playing for Scotland* also celebrate a culture of reasoned 'creativity', (in this case revealing the Scottish contribution to the development and codification of modern sport).

A strong dichotomy is evident inside the gallery space, bringing together and into close contact the conflicting, or at least contrasting, dynamics of romanticism and Enlightenment rationalism. It might be argued superficially that each strand is loaded with some opposing political baggage. With romanticism reaffirming national distinctiveness and a will to freedom, on the one hand, and a heritage of 18th century rationalism subtly reaffirming nascent imperial and universalist unity, on the other, it is possible to interpret this divide as a reflection of long-standing political ambiguity in Scotland. Yet, in truth, the attempt to map a definite political agenda onto either identity theme seems flawed. It has been argued for instance that the iconography of the Highlander, contrary to popular belief, predominantly consolidated the unity of the British state (Craig, 1996). Whatever the truth, this cultural duality is never entirely resolved inside the gallery space. Nor is it intended to be resolved. As the Director-General put it:

> I think a portrait of a nation such as Scotland, in many ways, is a kaleidoscope of ambiguities and tensions, and we don't seek in an institution like this to impose any single monolithic idea of identity or indeed to tell any single stories (NGS Director-General on 'BBC Radio 3 Night Waves', 7th of May 2012).

In pursuit of a commercially attractive synthesis, however, the gallery does offer the occasional glimpse of a pragmatic merging. This synthesis is perhaps best embodied by the symbol of Robert Burns, a figure that straddles Scotland's Romantic and Enlightenment heritage. Heralded as the 'national bard', Burns is a popularly recognised national symbol and there is little doubt that Burns holds an important symbolic presence within the gallery space (his statue stands at the centre of the Great Hall). Celebrated as an early humanist poet, Burns projects strong trans-national ideals of human equality; he is also portrayed as an idiosyncratic Scottish icon and creative genius as relevant today as he was when alive.

In fact, on the 26th of January 2012, the education department organised the first "Portrait Gallery Salon" – the *Alternative Burns Night*. This was an evening dedicated to Burns, designed to celebrate 'the national poet', and offer an *alternative* perspective on his life and work. Hosted by the man himself – or at least an impersonator dressed in 18th century costume – the audience was introduced to a varied programme of reflection and performance. A number of Burns inspired songs "adapted by the poet and author *Rabindranath Tagore* (1861 –1941)" (quoted from event programme) were performed by a singer of "traditional and contemporary Indian and Bengali folk music". Presenting to the public an unusual rendition of the poet's work, the performance seemed to offer up an image of Burns as a shared and sharable symbol, able to transcend the peculiarities of disparate cultures. It also offered a picture of an inclusive institution, one seeking to promote a post-colonial ethos within its halls. The night ended with an "electro-acoustic soundscape and video" accompanied by contemporary musicians and created in response to Burns' work. The soundscape and video piece projected the evening entertainment firmly into a contemporary mental space. It also demonstrated the

important theme of creative response and innovative contribution, central to the contemporary educational narrative.

While a Romantic/Enlightenment 'duality' is not difficult to uncover inside the Portrait Gallery, much more difficult to detect is the display of any kind of overt political antagonism. In truth, a Unionist/ Radical (Nationalist) divide has been largely concealed and obscured from 'Brand Scotland'. There is little evidence anywhere within the institution of active enmity, of open hostility within competing notions of Scottish identity and culture (Some evidence does crop up in the context of so-called 'sectarianism' but this is again obscured by the context of a 'foreign', Irish conflict and by a discourse of 'communities').

The playful ambiguity sought instead by NGS allows the institution to avoid a potential alienation of audiences. The museum strives to project itself as an impartial voice, avoiding controversy and rallying audiences, ultimately, under a liberal regime. Of course liberal doctrine is itself riven by tension, split between an impulse to cohesive order and an impulse to private freedom. Favouring process rather than radical transformation it promotes dialogue, negotiation and proposition. It also promotes a culture of experimentation. The new educational agenda of the SNPG is less about discussing conflict and much more about fostering a culture of ephemeral play.

5.3 An Ethos of Transience

5.3.1 New Educational Activity

Education has been given a new, more prominent role in attracting and entertaining audiences in the new Portrait Gallery. Following the perceived success of the *Playfair Learning coordinator* position created for the new Weston Link in 2004, the new Portrait Gallery project made funding available for a new fixed term post,

that of *SNPG Learning Coordinator*. Together with the rest of the education department, the new team member would help inculcate a new ethos of learning and entertainment within the institution.

To celebrate the reopening of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, and to attract audiences, the education department organised a series of events for children and adults. This period was very busy for educators who were keen to make a positive impact, and show off the new space and exhibitions to the public. The varied events included a storytelling session, a film screening, drop-in workshops, gallery talks, musical concerts, and several special events including a 'festive pageant' celebrating William Hole's processional frieze. Hosted at weekends, these opening events welcomed a diverse audience but were aimed especially at attracting *families*. Certainly about half the activities, including all the practical workshops, were designed to entertain children and parents. Indeed, a couple of the musical events were even performed by children's groups: the Craigentinny Primary School Choir, and with a nod to multiculturalism, the Sikh Sanjog Girls with the Sikh Dholki Players.

In the first few days after reopening, the gallery was welcoming well over 2,000 visitors a day and by 2pm on the 5th of December, the gallery had already received some 11,186 visits (see *Record Number of Visitors to Scottish National Portrait Gallery,* at www.stv.tv). The Director-General was delighted with the turnout. "There has been a fantastic response to the opening," he declared, "with great feedback from the many thousands of visitors who have also enjoyed the many special events and activities…" (Director-General, in *Record Number of Visitors to Scottish National Portrait Gallery,* at www.stv.tv). These special events were to be a foretaste of the new culture of ephemeral intervention promulgated by educators within the gallery.

5.3.2 Ephemeral Intervention

Ephemeral interventions inside the museum space, including anything from musical concerts to dance performances, have become an increasingly popular strategy adopted by educators to inject intangible 'magic' into the halls of all the institution's galleries. As one educator recalled of a particular experience:

> The whole gallery was filled with this wonderful, wonderful singing, and everybody just stopped what they were doing and came to see. Things like that, I think, are magical. They're what to me gives like an energy and a life to a gallery as well. (Linda McClelland, NGS Educator, Interview, 20/ 03/ 2012).

The ephemeral "energy", 'magically' materialising an emotional experience, bolsters an important narrative of 'vitality' pursued by educators and others inside the gallery space. This is a narrative that aims to counter (or deny) the possibility of boredom within the museum space (a boredom suffered routinely, for instance, by gallery attendants). In these instances of ephemeral intervention, educators and performers delineate a temporary space of action that seeks to stimulate attention, curiosity and interest.

In the essay *Of Other Spaces*, Michel Foucault described the museum as a 'heterotopia'. Foucault defined heterotopia as "a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted." (Foucault 1967, in Preziosi & Farago, 1997: 377) Heterotopia is a space of otherness, that exists somewhere between mind and reality. Spaces of this kind, he wrote, "are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality." The Museum then is, in these terms, a particular kind of heterotopia, peculiar to Western modernity, that exists in time but also outside of time, designed, as it were, to resist the ravages of the world. The museum is, like the library, a great archive of "indefinitely accumulating time", a heterotopia "in which time never stops building up and topping its own summit." In contrast to these spaces, Foucault positioned an alternative heterotopia, turned not to eternity, but rather to the ephemeral. He wrote:

> Opposite these heterotopias that are linked to the accumulation of time, there are those linked, on the contrary, to time in its most flowing, transitory, precarious aspect, to time in the mode of the festival (Foucault 1984, in Preziosi & Farago, 2004: 377).

For Foucault, the fairground represented the quintessential heterotopia of fleeting time. As Tony Bennett pointed out, the tightly structured and rational order of the nineteenth century museum was certainly contrasted, consciously, with the activities of the fairground. Indeed, these temporary festive spaces, exhibiting traits of irrationality and chaos, allowed the normal rules of 'civilised' behaviour and discipline to be relaxed. Here, inside these exceptional spaces, the self-applied, everyday restraint on body and emotion demanded by polite society could be *temporarily* loosened.

Yet, the terms of this duality are perhaps not as sharply divergent or as unbridgeable as Foucault might have intimated. As Tony Bennett put it:

> Yet, however much the museum and the fair were thought of and functioned as contraries to one another, the opposition Foucault posits between the two is, perhaps, too starkly stated (Bennett, 1995: 3).

As Bennett points out, historical processes have conspired to undermine this opposition. In particular, Bennett points to the emergence of the "fixed-site amusement park" as a midway point between the museum and the fairground. Developing from the mid-1890s, these new spaces not only began to bridge the divide, but also to cause both the museum and the fairground to erode their peculiar orderings of time.

The rigid stasis that encloses the collected works of the NGS institution does not extend tightly to the surrounding *gallery space* that regulates itself to a controlled yet evolving rhythm that is increasingly open to ephemeral 'interventions'. When the Portrait Gallery closed down for refurbishment in 2009, the institutional space became suddenly, and quite exceptionally, available for a fleeting transformation of its traditional regulation. Indeed, educators seized this unique opportunity to host a

much more playful and undomesticated artistic event. This 'carnival' incursion – the 2009 *Rough Cut Nation* project – involved outreach officers and young contemporary artists working together inside the deserted Portrait Gallery. Invited to respond to William Hole's murals that adorn the gallery's Great Hall, the artists were given space to work within six large bays and charged with "updating" the Victorian imagery. Inspired by the aesthetics of "street art and graffiti culture", the three-week event "represented a dramatic intervention by a group of young Scottish artists into a hallowed realm."(*Rough Cut Nation – Remixed Scottish History, Street Art and Graffiti Culture*, 2011: 5) With the gallery closed for renovation, with its murals covered up and protected and all its treasures removed to storage, the usual rules of restraint and control governing the inside of the gallery space were temporarily suspended. The tight discipline, guarding the space from harm, had thus been partially dissolved, producing a concomitant and predictable release of passion and violence:

> The first 'artistic' act of the installation was made by taking an axe and knocking a hole straight through one of the gallery walls dividing the space into six distinct bays. This set the tone for an all-out attack with Pete Martin instilling everyone working on the project with the confidence they required to tackle such vast blank walls by tottering on top of a ladder, writing "Do Not Be Afraid" …in big, sloppy, cartoon, letters (National Galleries of Scotland, *Rough Cut Nation – Remixed Scottish History, Street Art and Graffiti Culture*, 2011: 9).

The 'violence' was of course more symbolic than physical but nevertheless introduced an uncommon dimension of 'unruliness' into the heart of the Portrait Gallery. The resultant collage of disparate ideas and images gave expression to the exhibition's general atmosphere of irreverence, and undercut established notions of national identity. "This exploded sketchbook of ideas set out to challenge not only the artists' own notions of national identity but also those of the public" (2011: 6). Offering up alternative, often dystopian, conceptions of identity, while rejecting traditional norms, the project undermined the propensity of the museum heterotopia to elevate and enshrine its chosen exemplars.

> ...Martin McGuinness, in an aggressive riposte to the perceived dominance of aristocratic and royal representation within the gallery's collection, splashed 'Reign" down the walls of the next bay. The letters dripped down the length of the wall and paint pooled on the carpet (National Galleries of Scotland, *Rough Cut Nation – Remixed Scottish History, Street Art and Graffiti Culture*, 2011: 10).

The work of these heterodox 'barbarians' clearly challenged notions of 'the great and the good' and challenged those traditional ideas of commemoration and celebration led by polite society. Of course, with the show timed to coincide with the Edinburgh Festival and accompanied by a programme of live music this sanctioned rebellion had first and foremost boosted attendance figures and helped market the organisation to a new audience. From this perspective, and from the education team's point of view, the event had been a tremendous success. Indeed, more than 13,500 people visited the show and passed through the halls of the 'abandoned' Portrait Gallery.

On the 9th of December 2011, just over a week after the reopening of the refurbished Portrait Gallery, the institution organised the "book launch" of *Rough Cut Nation – Remixed Scottish History, Street art and Graffiti Culture*. The booklet (priced at £9.95 on the online gallery shop, in 2012), from which the quotes above are taken, was published to commemorate the *Rough Cut Nation* exhibition. Hosting a live band on the Ambulatory above, the evening event was aimed primarily at attracting a young, alternative audience and designed to impress the flexibility of the institution upon a wider consciousness. The after-hours scheduling with drinks served at a small bar, combined with the loud, contemporary music reverberating round the Great Hall, projected an image of a slightly rebellious or undomesticated event, echoing the atmosphere of the original project.

In truth the book launch was just one of an increasing number of after-hours concerts and attractions held by educators at NGS venues. In 2013, following a number of successful 'prototype' evenings, the institution decided to launch a new programme entitled *Galleries: By Night*. This was "a series of bespoke, evening events incorporating music, live art, performance, talks, comedy and much more"

(National Galleries of Scotland, *What's On* July-August 2013: 5). It was certainly an eclectic programme, hosting everything from comedy tours to fashion catwalks.

Whatever the show, all performers share the common task of 'responding' musically or artistically to the collection. This task may be overtly pursued or indirectly expressed by the simple presence and activity of the performers within the gallery space. These 'alternative' interpretations of the collection serve on the one hand to transcend the textual interpretations one might usually encounter in a museum, bringing to the public opportunities for a more emotional connection with the institution and its collected works, and on the other to demonstrate the institution's own endorsement of the 'untraditional'. The healthy numbers that routinely attend these evening attractions, despite the limited marketing, demonstrate the appeal of later opening hours, to at least a section of the public[41]. Certainly, such events appear to be an increasingly popular fixture at the galleries, and in this respect the NGS is not exceptional. Indeed, many heritage institutions organize evening functions – such as the *Museum Lates* at the National Museums of Scotland (offering live music, drinks, film screenings and comedy), to name just one local example.

Using performance as an energizing and enlivening connector, the institution attempts to bring strangers together, at least fleetingly, into a shared 'communion' with the space, the collection, the audience and the performers.

Existing somewhere between the everyday bustle and routine of the home, the school or the workplace and the untouchable, eternal stasis of the collected artworks, artistic performance provides, from the perspective of the educators in charge, something of a bridge between the two time-spaces, giving the visitor a more relevant, more immediate, more 'magical' experience than might usually be

[41] Educators speculate the institution could attract more people, given more resources to promote the events.

the case, and at the same time allowing the museum institution to break out of its own stagnant stillness. This bridging can often resemble a rather ritualistic experience designed to re-sanctify or re-consecrate the objects and rooms of the gallery space to the 'vibrant' realm of living art and culture. Indeed, a particularly fine example of this sort of sanctifying ritual was held the day after the reopening of the Portrait Gallery. On the 2nd of December 2011, the Portrait Gallery hosted its first public 'event'. This was a vocal performance entitled *Your Leaning Neck – Song as Portrait*, and took place in the evening, after closure time, inside gallery 5 – a space dedicated to figures of the Scottish Enlightenment, particularly the philosopher David Hume and the artist Allan Ramsay. Formulated by contemporary artist Steven Anderson, the event was devised as "a response to portraits from the Scottish contribution to the Enlightenment." Five performances, all made by unaccompanied vocalists (contemporary artists and oral tradition singers) brought tradition, myth and ritual into what could be described as the rational heart of the Portrait Gallery. From the poetic monologue of artist Ruth Barker, giving body to a lost 'Mother Goddess', to the melodious, wordless voices of three young women recalling the Gaelic oral tradition (inspired by sea bird colonies of the Western Isles), the vocal performances attempted to bring to life and bring to consciousness a half-forgotten oral culture and heritage reaching back into pre-modernity. The spontaneous and enthusiastic repetition of refrains by the audience at times contributed to the congregational atmosphere of the evening and testified to the emotional strength of the performance within the gallery space. Performed amongst figures of the Enlightenment, the performances made an interesting and purposeful contrast with the celebration of rationalism radiated by the exhibition space. By inviting this performance, the institution seemed to put forward the possibility that older rituals and older mythologies, divorced from the imperatives of reason, may still contribute something worthwhile to the institution, the individual and society. The overall impression of the event was one of 'sacred' ceremony and served to consecrate the new building as a legitimate centre of the arts, one claiming to be neither frozen nor moribund, but actively engaged with the living arts, with all the emotional and intellectual contrasts this might entail.

In her book *Civilizing Rituals* (1995) Carol Duncan argued that the aesthetic experience fostered by the museum of art transferred "spiritual values from the sacred realm into secular time and space" (Duncan, 1995: 14). According to Duncan, the gallery space favoured many features of traditional ritual forms. Duncan argued that galleries of art demarcated a 'liminal' space, removed from everyday life. Inside this liminal space the visitor was positioned outside of the quotidian world, at the threshold of spiritual or revelatory experience. Furthermore, the gallery encouraged the public to act out a "kind of script or scenario"; visitors were led to experience a ceremonial journey, re-enacting or reliving the progressive achievements of the canonized champions. Indeed Duncan highlighted the ritualistic aspects of the museum visit, exposing the act of visiting as a civilizing performance designed to reaffirm the natural legitimacy of the dominant order.
In the twenty-first century NGS, the sacred is signalled by the discourse of 'creativity' and marked by the performance of liberal autonomy. This performance is most starkly exhibited by professional artists, whose fleeting idiosyncratic actions (regulated by the rules of the institution and the framework of freelance competition) reaffirm the spititual power of individual fulfilment.

5.3.3 Joining up with Wider Festivals

It is not always 'professionals' who lead the artistic interventions inside the gallery space. In line with a wider festive spirit, NGS has sought to involve the public more directly in the ephemeral activities and events organised within the galleries. On occasion, it is local 'communities' or school groups who lead the rituals of revitalising performance. As the Head of Education wrote of one of her favourite 'festive' moments at the Portrait Gallery:

> [I] loved the Craigentinny Primary School Christmas concert, which was part of the Festive opening programme. Their professionalism was breath-taking and they managed to get all the people in the Great Hall joining in (Head of Education, at portraitnation.wordpress.com).

‘Action’ is a defining feature of educational activity at the new Portrait Gallery. Presenting the collection and the act of exhibiting as a stimulus for further creative exercise, the institution seeks to portray the gallery as a place of vital ‘energy’ and ongoing inspiration. In fact, the exhibitionary space now fuels a growing number of ephemeral interventions, a new array of artistic deed and performance. To complement and bolster this new ‘space of action’, NGS curators and educators are keen to join or tie their activity to wider local, national and international festivals of all kinds. A large-scale and prominent example of this occurred in the summer of 2012 when NGS enthusiastically embraced the Olympic Games, organizing a ‘families’ programme to celebrate the occasion. This was an “art-meets-sport extravaganza” (NGS Press release, 26th of July 2012) aimed primarily at children. Throughout the summer Games, the Portrait Gallery offered sports-inspired art workshops and activities, “including photography, print-making, clay-modelling, puppet-making and animation” (National Galleries of Scotland, Portrait Gallery Olympics, at www.nationalgalleries.org), for children and their families to sample.

Despite these festivals and activities being planned events, they are occurrences that seek out elements of the spontaneous and the unprompted. It is a difficult balance that looks to enliven the static and predictable halls of the gallery without undermining the (ontologically necessary) character of timelessness and endurance given to the museum space. This difficult balance is usually entrusted to professional performers, hired for their unique creative talents and for their ability to help manifest that nebulous vitality (often described as ‘magic’) within the museum space. In October 2012, the Portrait Gallery took part in the *Scottish International Storytelling Festival*, an annual event organised by the *Scottish Storytelling Centre* (and supported by, amongst others, the Scottish Government, Creative Scotland and the City of Edinburgh Council) that aims to celebrate Scottish and international storytelling, both traditional and modern. Participating institutions included the National Library of Scotland, the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, and the National Museum of Scotland. As organisers made clear, storytelling is a particularly powerful strategy for bringing art to ‘life’: “[Storytelling] brings words and the world to life together, stimulates the

imagination, and builds a sense of community between tellers and listeners" ('Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland, Storytelling Introduction', at www.scottishstorytellingcentre.co.uk). On the 20th of October 2012, the Portrait Gallery hosted, in the Great Hall, the storytelling performance *Thomas the Rhymer and the Fairy Queen*. Arranged around a comfortable rug and colourful cushions set out on the floor for children to sit on, the event was aimed primarily at children and families, and attracted good numbers, with people filling up about half of the Great Hall. The educator in charge attempted to fashion a warm, cosy and "intimate" space in defiance of the cool largeness of the room. The emotional 'magic' of the event was anticipated and advertised to the public:

> Performed by storyteller Linda Williamson and Celtic harpist Heather Yule in the Portrait Gallery Great Hall, this is sure to be a magical experience for all ages (National Galleries of Scotland, Thomas the Rhymer and the Fairy Queen, at www.nationalgalleries.org).

In this 'magical' setting, the professional storyteller recounted two fairy tales to the sound of harp music; the first, a modern creation (*Nobody Rides the Unicorn*), the second, an old story recounting the mysterious adventures of *Thomas the Rhymer* – a figure depicted in the Great Hall's processional frieze. The educator in charge seemed pleased with the event as the storytelling seemed to trigger laughter and an emotional response from the audience.

The Portrait Gallery has embraced a new spirit of festival, and this has brought the institution ever closer to the heterotopia of the carnival. This was evident from the beginning at the reopening of the refurbished gallery in December 2011. As part of the opening weekend events, educators organised a *festive pageant*, in which historical characters playfully 'came to life' and interacted with the public. With its cast of colourful kings, queens, nobles, warriors and other traditional persons of influence, the event moved around the gallery, with professional actors intermingling with visitors and drawing them into conversation and play. The event was designed to appeal to children and families and finished with a parade,

encouraging children and families to follow the procession out of the gallery and onto the street.

This coming together of the museum space and the carnival was made particularly evident in 2013 when, to complement its *Tickling Jock* exhibition, the Portrait Gallery was launched as a venue for the *Edinburgh Festival Fringe*. Featuring 'pop-up performances', 'comedy tours' and discussions with "some of Scotland's best-known comedians" (National Galleries of Scotland, *What's On* June-August 2013: 26), a number of after-hours entertainment events were organised by NGS staff to cater to the influx of visitors attracted to Edinburgh by the Fringe festival. The Fringe, which includes a popular street fair, is one of the world's largest arts festivals, celebrating a host of alternative entertainment, including stand-up comedy and theatre production.

No longer wishing to appear introverted and turned inward upon the glorious objects of collection, the modern museum is, more than ever, open to the world and a plural public. The new festival spirit embraced by NGS fits into a wider culture of festivity, endorsed by government and designed to galvanise the optimism and confidence of local and tourist audiences. Proclaiming a new vitality and vibrancy, exemplified by its physical renovation and its new festival spirit, the museum projects itself as a centre of inspiration and creative dynamism in the twenty-first century.

5.4 Political Neutrality

The contemporary institution declares a 'pride' in its Scottish heritage' (see NGS Mission and Aims at www.nationalgalleries.org). Undoubtedly influenced in part by SNP government, this new NGS 'value' ties into the atmosphere of festival and celebration the institution seeks to portray within its halls. Yet, there exists an unavoidable tension within this official claim. Beyond a relationship to an administrative and geographical area, the very notion of 'Scottish' remains an

object of political dispute in the twenty-first century. In truth, NGS is very sensitive to controversy. Thus, a binding thread around all the NGS's proclaimed priorities is the institution's unspoken commitment to strong political impartiality. Indeed, despite minor forays into a political present, NGS is apt to express mostly silence on the increasingly politically polarised nature of Scottish society.

On the 7th of May 2012, the Portrait Gallery hosted a special edition of the arts programme *Night Waves*. An audience of about one hundred gathered around a panel of speakers, which included John Leighton, the Director-General. As the presenter of the show, Philip Dodd, pointed out, there was little allusion to the Act of Union inside the new Portrait Gallery. Equally, the reopened gallery made little or no reference to the momentous political changes that have reshaped the twenty-first century Scottish nation; neither devolution nor nationalist government nor an impeding referendum on independence marked the shiny new halls of the institution. In truth, NGS felt inclined to present, in many ways, a domesticated, non-threatening and consumable notion of 'Scottishness' to the public (see subsection 5.2.5). Rather than espousing any great nationalistic sentiment (whether Scottish or British), the institution chose to promote its Scottish culture as a contribution and local offering to a wider world. As the Director-General explained:

> This is not a gallery which is about Scotland versus England, versus Ireland or indeed about Britishness, if it's anything it's about Scotland and its relationship to the world. It's no coincidence that we're sitting in a gallery which bears the title for the moment of 'Citizens of the World' (NGS Director-General on 'BBC Radio 3 Night Waves', 7th of May 2012).

This is a cosmopolitan perspective that is designed to undermine the very idea of conflict. Certainly, national identity is a contentious issue, one fraught with political and ideological difference. In the run-up to the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence, directors steered the institution away from any strong involvement in political debate or discussion. Despite managers expressing their desire to see the refurbished Scottish National Portrait Gallery as a venue for cultural debates in the twenty-first century, the gallery offered in truth only small, fleeting concessions to

the momentous political and constitutional crisis thrown up by the independence referendum of 2014. Of course, the institution was not completely indifferent to outside events. On the 9th October 2013, the Portrait Gallery hosted a 'historians' debate' that invited selected guests to explore the ways in which history and cultural heritage may shape current society and contemporary feelings of identity. The outreach programme Nation//Live was another example of such intervention, framed around a number of broad societal themes, including the potentially controversial topic of 'union'. The outreach team chose these themes as part of their continual pursuit of 'relevance' (a theme discussed in chapter 6, section 6.2).

Certainly, the institution is able to point to a small peppering of projects and events that engage with big, active issues. These events are uncommon, however, and strictly limited in scope, so do not significantly pull the institution from its dominant political reserve. It is clear that NGS is loath to offer its halls to any large-scale exhibition of political struggle.

In any case, NGS espouses a highly individualistic experience. Preferring to remain aloof of controversial dispute, managers, instead, cast the exhibitionary space as a general resource for the individual, universally welcoming, and encouraging the citizen to gently transcend the volatility of the present. As the Director-General explained to his Night Waves audience:

> There are so many other things going on in the world. The twenty-first century doesn't look to be as if it's going to be any more stable than the last, and one of the functions of a place like this, as I said earlier, is to help people plot their own way, to make up their own minds about what moves them, what interests them and who they are (NGS Director-General on 'BBC Radio 3 Night Waves', 7th of May 2012).

Whatever the sense of 'national pride' nurtured by the institution, it is clearly heavily parameterised by liberal doctrine. While some risks may occasionally be taken to discuss conflicts of nationalism or identity, parameters of discussion are usually framed within the realm of personal perspective and interpretation. NGS leads its visitors into an individual process of reflection and soothing meditation,

guides them to transcend political schism and to reach for the tranquillity of private liberal autonomy, a pursuit that, from the institution's point of view, will always hold value, "irrespective of any referendum or any result" (John Leighton, Director-General, on 'BBC Radio 3 Night Waves', 7th of May 2012).

5.5 Conclusion

While a certain sense of continuity is valued by NGS, stagnation is not. The institution embraces rather a form of permanent renewal, whereby foundations are continually reaffirmed even as change and reform are embraced. New spaces, new approaches, new intentions, shifting identities, symbols and perspectives, never fully transform the original institution; it hovers in ambiguous flux, striving to remain paradoxically both venerable and fresh. The new Portrait Gallery has become, above all, a symbol of regeneration. The architectural rejuvenation of the building and the redevelopment of the gallery's remit and educational activity have helped to project the NGS as an invigorated and invigorating cultural entity, boosting its image and self-image as a dynamic, welcoming and tourist-friendly institution.

6 Education at the National Galleries of Scotland

This chapter investigates the contemporary educational mission of NGS, in particular the incorporation of all learning groups into a discourse of 'communities'. It looks in detail at the institution's ideology of 'outreach' and its targeting of 'marginalised' individuals. It moves on to explore the underlying junctures that waymark the progression of the learner through the NGS narrative of education, beginning with 'community dependency' and ending with autonomous cultural consumption.

6.1 'Community' in the Discourse of NGS

The education department of NGS has differentiated the galleries' potential audiences into various categories. These are loose categories which include 'communities', 'community outreach' audiences, 'schools', 'families', 'teachers', 'young people', 'students', and 'adults'. These categories typically entail the responsibility of a specific team member. This categorisation, it is thought, helps to sharpen the effectiveness and the efficiency of the process of engagement. However, one category – 'community' (and to a lesser extent 'the school') – seems to represent not so much an audience as a societal context. This category, more than any other, seems to carry the transformative ambition of educators.

'Communities' is certainly a popular and recurrent term in the educational discourse of NGS. Acknowledging the inherent nebulosity of the word, educators approach its usage in the most pragmatic of terms, applying it to ready-made audiences and pre-existing groups. NGS identifies three types of group under its 'communities' category. These are 'arts and special interest groups', 'lifelong learning groups' and 'access groups'. Although any visiting 'group' may be loosely categorised as a 'community' by NGS, educators apply the term primarily in relation to access policies; it is the word of choice for the practical categorizing of "hard to reach"

groups and is often used as a sort of honorific for the 'different'. Staff members readily use the word to designate groups of individuals sharing common difficulties, and in practice this means any group that may need or benefit from extra support to view, enjoy or make sense of the collections. Prime targets for this labelling and self-labelling include (amongst others) the young, the old, the sick, the disabled, the blind, the deaf, the poor, the homeless, the foreign, the imprisoned, and the rural. Many of these 'access groups' hold a charitable status and relate to people frequently disconnected, marginalised or simply "forgotten" by mainstream society. NGS describes them as follows:

> They often include people who are hard to reach, people who are isolated in society, people who feel excluded and people who cannot visit on their own for a variety of reasons (National Galleries of Scotland, 'Who Do We Work With', at www.nationalgalleries.org).

These isolated people and groups are brought into the galleries to reconnect with wider society and to improve the general life experience of their members. Indeed, according to NGS, "these groups visit for learning, therapeutic and social reasons" (National Galleries of Scotland, 'Who Do We Work With', at www.nationalgalleries.org).

Not all audiences are equally connected to a concept of 'community'. There are many visiting adults whose connection to a concept of 'community' is tenuous. This is because their link to a primary narrative of education is also tenuous. Consuming silent exhibitions and academic lectures, musical concerts and special performances, these independent adult visitors are at the top end of the educational narrative; they already possess cultural knowledge and an ability to enjoy it. Theirs is a journey of reaffirmation of known and acquired values. If they are learners at all, it is in the sense that their visit may deepen or renew their spiritual connection to the institution and its values.

The 'communities' member holds no such cultural acquisition in the educational narrative. He/she is the blank slate whose potential stands lost or still unfulfilled.

The educational engagement with communities used to be labelled under the rubric of 'social inclusion'; with the demise of a Labour-led administration, this however has changed. As Patricia Allerston, head of education at NGS, explained: "We don't probably overtly talk about that's what we're doing in the way we used to" (Patricia Allerston, Interview 20/ 01/ 2012). The discourse has changed and a refreshed terminology has been adopted. Nevertheless, many of the underlying ideas remain valid, if anything, becoming further instilled across the organisation. As the head of education put it: "it's still very much what we are about" (Patricia Allerston, Interview 20/ 01/ 2012).

6.2 Outreach

6.2.1 Dialogical Encounter

Image 6: NGS Outreach Project, Wild Rovers, Crieff

12th of December 2009

Many of the most significant and prolonged interactions between NGS educators and so-called 'communities' take place in the context of the institution's outreach programme. Despite its prevalent use, 'community' is a term outreach staff may not be completely comfortable with. As one member of staff wrote:

> The term 'community' is over-used in the arts. The participants we have engaged thus far primarily represent themselves as individuals, and only become a community of interest when combined in workshops, or at events or exhibitions (Robin Baillie, NGS Senior Outreach Officer, in *Making History: Beyond Re-enactment*, 2012).

In truth, however, the term stretches far beyond art or culture, and permeates much political discourse, particularly in the realm of pedagogic and social policy (see Chapter 8, section 8.5). As educators acknowledge, 'community' is not primarily an indigenous claim, but is rather a particular label assigned to people by a variety of institutional authorities. As discussed in chapter 8 (section 8.5), what attracts this labelling is primarily the dependent nature of particular groups of people and their perceived separation from the culture of individuality and 'success' promoted by ruling society. The term often signals the extension of education (or educational opportunity) into the lives of adults, particularly marginalised adults or people living in rural locations. The initial subject matter of this education is social; it begins with an engagement with the collective lives of participants.

One of the most important features of outreach activity is the central pursuit of 'relevance'. As NGS makes clear: "Focusing on our collection, our projects explore issues of relevance to people's lives" (National Galleries of Scotland, *Annual Review 2007-2008*: 5). Indeed, when addressing new and hard-to-reach audiences, educators endeavour to relate the collection to the experiences and contemporary existence of participant's social lives. Activities may lead on eventually to introspection or abstraction, but the idea of social pertinence seems particularly important to 'communities' as a starting point for engagement. By framing contact initially within a familiar intellectual frame of reference, NGS staff strive to attract

and reassure their target groups. By starting in a world of the familiar, the participants are able to bring some knowledge or some experience to the proposed project and begin a more comfortable discussion with educators. Indeed, an important goal for outreach staff is to successfully initiate a process of dialogue.

The issue of dialogue is of central significance to outreach staff. Centred on an object chosen from the collection for its supposed themes of relevance to a particular target' community', the dialogical process attempts to strengthen links of affection between people and institution, to draw potential participants out of disinterest, hostility or passivity, and encourage active engagement with and commitment to the educational programmes of activity. Robin Baillie, NGS senior outreach officer, wrote:

> The dialogic interpretation of works of art we attempt to initiate in this way is informed by Grant Kester's definition of such an approach in *Conversation Pieces* (2004) (Robin Baillie, NGS Senior Outreach Officer, in *Making History: Beyond Re-enactment*, 2012).

Indeed, in *Conversation Pieces*, Grant Kester explored an emergent form of contemporary art practice that was participatory and collaborative. Dumping the concept of traditional 'object making' undertaken by the individual artist, this alternative approach sought rather to bring diverse people and groups together into an artistic 'process', and strove to open up cross-cultural dialogue and exchange. Kester referred to this emergent art practice as 'dialogical'. The resultant artwork could be "viewed as a kind of conversation; a locus of differing meanings, interpretations and points of view" (Kester, 2004). Kester contrasted this dialogical art practice with an "antithetical" modernism[42]. Indeed, rather than shocking the viewer, the dialogical artwork allowed, he argued, a more communicative and participative response from the audience. Kester spoke of a paradigm shift:

[42] According to Kester, modernist art did not offer up the potential for true dialogue, but, on the contrary, challenged and questioned the "discursive systems" upon which society founded a common understanding of the world. The avant-garde thus attempted to jolt the viewer out of the comfortable belief in rational dialogue.

> These projects require a paradigm shift in our understanding of the work of art; a definition of aesthetic experience that is durational rather than immediate (Kester, 2004).

The outreach team proposes then to take something of this dialogical and durational approach, and feed it into the process of 'community art-making' and interpretation. Outreach officers begin then a "questioning process"[43], involving an exploration and mutual sharing of ideas with participants, and helping to structure the project. Like Kester's dialogical works, there is no single perspective, no right or wrong answer; rather it is the process of participation and engagement that is most central. Dialogue itself, and the shared experience, becomes, in essence, the path to achievement.

In late 2011, the outreach team began a new project (entitled 'Work') that attempted such a dialogical process with participants from the Clydebank area near Glasgow. Part of the larger Nation//Live outreach programme, the project coincided with the 40th anniversary of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilder's 'work-in' of 1971-72. The project encouraged participants to revisit a particular historical moment and to consider anew the meaning and relevance of this event to contemporary society and, in particular, to their own current lives. The outreach team presented the bust of Jimmy Reid (a leading trade unionist at the time of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilder's 'work-in' of 1971-72) to participants, as stimulus and provocation to thought. Starting questions which revolved around the artwork and the personage of Reid were:

> Do we know this man? Why is he represented in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery? And what relevance has he to Scots today? (Robin Baillie, NGS Senior Outreach Officer, in *Making History: Beyond Re-enactment*, 2012).

Through various organised events, workshops and encounters with artists and collaborators, educators attempted to bring individuals to consider these questions

[43] "The Nation//Live seeks to export this questioning process out from the institution and to involve communities across the country, asking them to shape their own stories from our works of art" (Robin Baillie, NGS Senior Outreach Officer, in *Making History: Beyond Re-enactment*, 2012).

in depth, and to formulate new questions and new connections to local history. Rather than wishing to give solutions or particular readings, outreach officers encouraged participants to find their own voices and opinions and their own enjoyment in the very act of personal interpretation and meaning-making.

6.2.2 Inspiration and Creativity

The outreach team interacts with many and diverse groups from around the country, with people brought together by geography, choice, circumstance, or disadvantage. Undoubtedly, it is disadvantage (what used to be labelled social exclusion under Labour[44]) that is the most recurring theme in outreach and NGS educational targeting. Outreach educators seem to position themselves, consciously or not, at least within their institutional context, as the natural defenders of the geographically remote and the culturally 'removed', as champions of their right to individual participation and expression. For instance, *Street + Gallery* was a two-year outreach project that brought together artists, educators and homeless people and people at risk of homelessness in the Edinburgh area. Working in partnership with local charity the *Ark Trust*, the project was designed to bring disadvantaged individuals into contact with the National Galleries of Scotland and stimulate interest in the collection. The project aimed to forge a new "creative relationship" (see National Galleries of Scotland, Street + Gallery, at www.nationalgalleries.org) between individuals 'on the street' and staff working at the gallery. As the outreach team wrote:

> We are proud to present the results of this project serving the homeless community, who are often excluded from their cultural heritage and denied the means to express their ideas and creativity (National Galleries of Scotland, 'Street + Gallery', at www.nationalgalleries.org).

[44] "[Special educational projects] can allow in-depth engagement with selected audiences, as in the outreach programmes directed at socially excluded groups" (National Galleries of Scotland, *Annual Review*, 2005-2006: 12).

The stimulation of 'creativity' has become a primary end of outreach staff and a recurring theme injected into educational discourse at NGS. In *Street + Gallery*, staff endeavoured to bring the power of 'creativity' into the lives of the homeless and help tackle such issues as lack of confidence and lack of skills. "The project provided excellent access to the NGS collection for a disadvantaged community," declared NGS, "enabling participants to explore their creativity and helping them to develop a wide range of skills and self-confidence" (National Galleries of Scotland, *Annual Review 2007-2008*: 5).

From 'community', the participant moves to self-confidence. From an 'uncreative' beginning, the participant is guided towards a creative end. The switch to individual creative expression is signalled by a moment of 'inspiration', an ill-defined turning point that centrally structures the educational narrative.

This mystery of inspiration is carried, in the educational narrative woven by NGS, by the enigmatic art object. Art and its objects are, in the narrative of the institution, difficult and demanding. The issues they embody or the conversations they stimulate may raise themes and ideas relevant to the lives of its viewers, yet they are scripted also to raise challenge and intellectual obstacle. They are to throw up uncertainties and ambiguities. Yet, through discussion and exploration with educators and artists, they are to help precipitate a sense of enjoyment in the subjective and the relative, to precipitate a new confidence in one's own personal perspective. For instance, the inspirational importance of artworks was made clear for the outreach project Parallel Lives 2:

> Inspired by…challenging works of art, *Parallel Lives 2* offered its participants the opportunity to express their views on contemporary life (National Galleries of Scotland, 'Parallel Lives 2', at www.nationalgalleries.org)

This moment of 'inspiration' is the point of opportunity, where self-expression is found. It is also the point where reflection is pushed increasingly inward, moving away from 'community relevance' to an emphasis on personal self-development

and internal discovery. The voice of the 'community participant', once marginalised and disadvantaged, may now be considered for public notice; indeed the participant's work may now be exhibited (see subsection 6.3.4). From this point onward, the learner is supposed to require increasingly less assistance, and be willing to motivate him or herself in furthering an acquisition of knowledge and skills. This switch to 'creative expression' indicates a transition to a more confident individual able to express opinions and rouse official respect.

The educational narrative is thus scripted to flow, in a clear and simple manner, from group disadvantage to individual 'creativity', from 'community dependency' to self-confidence. This ties in closely to the Scottish Government's 'empowerment' agenda for 'communities' (see chapter 8, subsection 8.5.3), a discourse taken up by educators within NGS[45]. The challenges and the obstacles of the 'community art project' ultimately form the intellectual training ground for a greater realisation of individual autonomy and private transformation.

6.2.3 Transforming the Individual

Beyond introducing art objects, the outreach team invites participants into a wide range of creative fields designed to help individuals and groups open up and respond positively to the organisation and the cultural arena generally. These might include costume making, performance, photography or other artistic fields. Whatever the field, the subject of focus turns invariably to the personal lives and 'being' of participants. For example, one of the most popular of creative subjects used by staff is the self-portrait:

[45] In a paper entitled *Making History* submitted to the *Engage Journal* in late 2012, Senior Outreach Officer Robin Baillie wrote of his desire to 'empower': "The Nation//Live is a test of how historical awareness can inform and empower communities when addressing their own futures in Scotland today" (Robin Baillie, NGS Senior Outreach Officer, in *Making History: Beyond Re-enactment*, 2012).

> The self-portrait is a powerful mechanism for exploring one's personal life and is a powerful means of self-understanding. It has been used for centuries by artists and others to explore their innermost feelings and motivations (National Galleries of Scotland, 'Mirrors: Prison Portraits', at www.nationalgalleries.org).

For the outreach team, self-portraiture seems to offer perhaps the most powerful instrument of engagement with 'community groups'. It is the format of choice for many workshops and practical activities as it projects, in the first instance, a concern and solidarity of purpose from NGS and its emissaries towards the 'community' in question. Combined with friendly dialogue and questioning, the request for a portrait seems to demonstrate the institution's interest and care in the lives of the forgotten or side-lined. Secondly, the strong tendency of the educational self-portrait is to shift the focus of attention inward upon the inner health and adjustment of the participant - its usage easily tying into a wider remedial narrative, in which participants are brought to consider personal conflicts and difficulties. As an instrument of education, the self-portrait may prompt a range of self and self-critical evaluations. The aspiration is to lead participants, through such activity, to a moment of revelation, of connection and stimulation with the project and its aims.

In 2010, the outreach team, in collaboration with the *Scottish Prison Service* (and other partners), visited five Scottish prisons to work on a project entitled *Mirrors – Prison Portraits.* Working with perhaps the most closed and disconnected 'communities' of all, gallery staff attempted to engage inmates with the creative arts. Indeed, participants were encouraged to make art – in this case self-portraits – using works from the collection as 'inspiration'. The aim of the project was to help inmates to reflect upon their lives, including aspirations for the future, present conditions and past deeds. This was made clear by NGS:

> Artists appointed by NGS worked with the offenders, to help them understand the impact of offending on themselves, their victims and their own families and communities (National Galleries of Scotland, *Annual Accounts 2010-2011*: 14).

Educators and artists attempted to bring a creative energy into the lives of participating inmates, at HMP Open Estate Castle Huntly, HMP Greenock (women inmates), HMP Polmont Young Offenders, HMP Shotts and at HMP Barlinnie. The project aimed to deliver a variety of benefits to both participants and the wider 'community', such as: "improved physical and mental well-being"; "improved literacy, communication and social skills"; "improved relationships with families, peers and communities"; and "increased understanding of the impact of offending on victims and on the prisoners' own families". Beyond the physical manipulation of artistic materials, participants were also encouraged to *talk*:

> Issues concerning crime, violence, life-chances and potential pathways away from offending were discussed by the group, and their work reflects the realities of life in communities blighted by these problems (National Galleries of Scotland, 'Mirrors: Prison Portraits', at www.nationalgalleries.org).

In this project, as in many others, outreach staff attempted to use art as an instrument of social healing. Here a therapeutic discourse was vigorously embraced with art serving to *rehabilitate* the (once) destructive mind.

Like many 'community projects', the culminating event was an exhibition in the IT gallery at the Scottish National Gallery. Here a number of the artworks were displayed and a short documentary film projected in the Lecture Room.
NGS estimated around 86,000 people visited the exhibition, from November 2010 to March 2011. For the outreach team, this project was considered one of the most powerful and socially beneficial yet undertaken by the galleries. It was felt that the project had made a difference to individuals' lives, helping to develop salutary capacities of self-examination, self-assertion and self-responsibility – ultimately helping individuals, at least in small measure, to readjust and take important steps back into mainstream, law-abiding society. As NGS claimed: "This was a hard-hitting community engagement arts project undertaken by NGS during 2010, designed to aid the process of rehabilitation" (National Galleries of Scotland, *Annual Accounts 2010-2011*: 14).

The prisons project constitutes, in many respects, an ideal illustration of the NGS educational narrative, one focused on the internal transformation of the individual. Leading the participant from a position of burden and a history of destruction (or self-destruction) to a new vision of creative contribution, the institution offers its collection as a stimulus to autonomy.

6.3 Towards Self-Driven Participation and Autonomous Consumption

6.3.1 Universal Welcome

Over the last two decades, museums in Britain have come to hold something of a renewed sense of social purpose[46]. The NGS's educational role is complex. While it is apparent that educators teach about art and about artists, it is less clear what purpose such knowledge is supposed to serve; 'art' is, by its own standards, a difficult pursuit to pin down, and, whatever its worth to society, holds much inherent, human arbitrariness. It is often claimed to be 'challenging', and said to require active intellectual engagement on the part of participants. The subjective arrangements of historical occurrences that bedeck the walls of the institution offer little universal or natural knowledge. On the other hand, what the art museum does offer is a series of human encounters.

In recent years, NGS has invested great energy in marketing the institution as a place for all. Without overstating the point, one of the most important offerings to the public made by the museum of art is a warm and friendly environment. As one educator put it:

[46] Victor Middleton put it this way: "It follows logically from the trends in post-industrial society that museums have a vital functional role to play in their local communities as well as in capital cities which goes far beyond the obvious task of preserving and displaying collections…" (Middleton, 1998: 29).

> The hope is that [a mental health group for example] comes in once or twice or a few times and then knows that it's a safe place, it's a good space where people know they are welcome. They get to know the building a little bit, […] just basic things like that. They know the staff are welcoming; they know that when they walk through the front door it's not going to be an embarrassing thing (Meg Faragher, NGS Educator, Interview 15/ 05/ 2012)

Certainly, NGS increasingly seeks to present itself as an open, hospitable and caring institution. While a rather arbitrary celebration of names plucked from history continues to structure the exhibition programmes of curators, for the modern gallery educator, art and its objects function in many ways as a simple pretext, a ploy as it were, to attract people inside the institution and encourage 'positive' human interaction. In particular, educators insist on the worth of art objects as precipitators of conversation, expression and the concomitant development of self-confidence. Rather than simply copy or admire from afar the achievements of others, visitors are encouraged to discover something about their own personal, creative 'potential' and their own expressive capacities. Tackling issues of disconnection and inner isolation, this concern with helping people to affirm themselves points to the institution's 'therapeutic' aspirations. Education officer Linda McClelland explained:

> No matter what walk of life you come from, your focus is on this work of art. You're not really talking about yourselves or getting into awkward situations. You're using that as the focus and lots of things come out through that. And you can reveal as much about yourself as you want to but that's a focus. It's like something that everyone […] is drawn towards. And particularly for writing groups as well, you get all kinds of things that come out. People reveal a lot about themselves […] when they start talking as well. And that is fascinating, and I think it's good, it's very, very good for people (Linda McClelland, NGS Educator, Interview 20/ 03/ 2012).

Whatever else it might aspire to, NGS strives in the first place to deliver an impression of social warmth, in which people leave feeling good about their encounters in the galleries and about themselves. This social outcome is perhaps best summed up by the term 'experience'. "To me that's what the job's about," explained Linda McClelland, "It's about a person coming in, having a really good experience and wanting to come back again (Linda McClelland, NGS Educator,

Interview 20/ 03/ 2012). This welcoming experience functions as the inciting incident that disrupts the isolation of the 'community visitor', and begins the educational narrative of individual change. It is aimed at building internal confidence, at encouraging self-assertion and self-motivation. It is ultimately designed to transform the citizen rather than transform the world.

6.3.2 Engaging with Issues of the Individual not Issues of the World

In truth (as discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.4), managers at the National Galleries of Scotland display some reticence to the idea of direct engagement with big topical issues that may be deemed contentious or controversial. Although educators are perhaps more likely to take risks in this area than others, there remains a strong reluctance to step overtly into the "political". As one educator explained:

> The gallery is not allowed to be politically involved, so that always makes it difficult. I think there is perhaps a hesitancy about and a fear about being too political" (Meg Faragher, NGS Educator, Interview 15/ 05/ 2012).

This is not to suggest that contemporary political conflict is completely ignored by the NGS, but that such occasions are relatively rare and carefully parameterised. One example of such an occasion, inside the institution, was the *Legacy* exhibition by the Scottish artist Roderick Buchanan, exhibited within the context of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and the photographic collection. Originally commissioned by the Imperial War Museum, and first exhibited in London, the work was put on display in Edinburgh on the 4th of July 2012. The work was a personal response by the artist to "the legacy of the Troubles in Northern Ireland", and explored the involvement and participation of two opposing Scottish flute bands in the political conflict/manifestations of Northern Ireland. The core of the exhibition consisted of two films shown together simultaneously; one following the republican flute band at the annual Easter Rising commemoration in Derry (2010), the other following the unionist flute band at the 320th anniversary of the lifting of

the siege of Londonderry. The institution was careful to give all appearances of impartiality. It stated:

> Buchanan's unique level of access to the bands has generated a work that gives equal and honest representation to both Loyalist and Republican communities (National Galleries of Scotland, *What's On*, Summer 2012).

On one level, the simultaneity of the video displays ("with a pendulum edit giving one side sound while the other is silent" (National Galleries of Scotland, Legacy, Exhibition Flyer, 2012) reinforced the purported neutrality of the artist's stance as well as that of the institution, yet on another level, the displays emphasised the similarities between the opposing sides and did little to engage with the substantive political disagreements that underlie the conflict. Of course, the terming of these groups as 'communities' revealed the protagonists and the locale of their 'conflict' as lying outside of the functional (educated) mainstream, and hinted at an implicit disapproval of both sides' political manifestations, that were easily read as 'sectarian' and 'bigoted'. The work was thus suitable for display inside the Portrait Gallery for its political focus was precisely on deviant, 'tribal' behaviour.

The museum works hard to forge an image of 'neutrality'. While this apparent impartiality may not be altogether false as far as some individual choices and conflicts of private identities are concerned, it is little more than an illusion in regards to its own liberal worldview and values. The organisation is thus always sensitive to and critical of what it perceives to be illiberal. Yet, NGS, as an entity, is not set up to be an institution of critique, on the contrary it is much more a celebratory organ, and criticism is always very lightly treated inside the halls of the galleries. Colonialism or violence may be rebuked, for instance, but the institution will prefer to adopt a celebratory strategy such as a public display of ethnic minority contributions to society or an exhibition of the creative expression of rehabilitated offenders.

The neutrality portrayed by the museum (however partial and illusory) is important, of course, in bringing people into a relationship of 'trust' with the institution.

Certainly, the language of 'trust' has been taken up enthusiastically by the modern museum sector. "Museums and archives," declared the National Museum Director's Council," are viewed as neutral, non-religious public spaces which people trust and where they feel safe" (National Museum Director's Council, 'Identity, Diversity and Citizenship: Lessons for our National Museums', at www.nationalmuseums.org.uk). Museums Galleries Scotland stated: "The 'trusted spaces' they [museums] provide are seen as a non-threatening environment in which to get involved" (*How museums can help you – MGS Government summary* 2010, at www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk). 'Trust' is thus a central topic in the continuing endeavour to widen the socio-economic spectrum of the visiting public and to encourage greater, long-lasting participation. It is something the museum institution works hard to nurture and project to society, and which it uses to engage some of the more excluded or marginalised groups in society in the consolidation of its own narratives of societal engagement. Museums Galleries Scotland writes thus:

> The 'trusted space' of the museum is an ideal way to engage [excluded] groups, and the collections that museums hold can offer common reference points which transcend cultures, religions, traditions and even beliefs (Museums Galleries Scotland, *How museums can help you – MGS Government summary*, 2010)

The idea that it is possible to *transcend* culture, religion, tradition and belief is of course an important modern 'liberal' aspiration. The desire to reach an underlying individual humanity is a recurrent and important theme of liberal educational narratives, one taken up by museums and galleries as they seek to engage with ever more diverse audiences. Cosmopolitan in aspiration, transnational in ambition, the twenty-first century museum, backed by government, seeks to attract always greater numbers of people. One of the official objectives of NGS, put forward in its Corporate Plan for 2014-2018, is to achieve an average of two million visitors per year by 2018. In other words, the institution seeks to almost double the number of visitors to its galleries compared to the number visiting at the start of the decade (In 2010-11, the galleries attracted some 1,275,428 visitors, see Annual Review 2010-2011)

The language of 'trust' is also, undoubtedly, a vehicle for reassurance in a doubting, sceptical age and a further means of focusing attention onto internal human relationships. In truth, managers do not conceive of the NGS as the appropriate realm for contemporary 'political' reflections and debates. The institution, like other galleries and museums, does not wish to undermine its status as a pillar of enduring peace and order:

> I don't think we should become a forum for debates, on issues which […] could really be said to be better debated elsewhere, because I think that could actually hamper us as a body. Yes, you could argue we're just a venue for discussion, but I think as the hosting institution we would inevitably get associated with particular developments, particular points of view and I think we have to maintain a fairly neutral stance (Director, Scottish National Gallery, Interview 14/ 03/ 2012).

Undoubtedly, to re-emphasise the point, the institution's educational arm is more comfortably geared towards an exploration or engagement with an internally focused and self-referential view of art. Despite the occasional foray into a political present, it is clear that the institution is much more inclined to position its societal engagement in the realm of strongly personal development: enhancing the private pleasure, entertainment, understanding, knowledge, skills, confidence, and autonomy of its visitors.

6.3.3 Promoting Independence and Competitive Creativity

Michel Foucault defined a *heterotopia* as an 'other place', simultaneously imagined and real, that juxtaposes many spaces within one real site. This is a site where normal rules, standards, expectations or behaviours of society either do not apply or are altered, providing a release or relief for the individual and/or the surrounding society. Foucault identified in his 'first principle' of heterotopia, two main categories of 'other space': that of crisis and that of deviation. Associated with more 'primitive' societies (so-called), the heterotopia of 'crisis' was a space where

individuals undergoing some process of natural change are hidden from the society, usually for the short-term, such as "adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women, the elderly" (Foucault 1967). However, Foucault was of the opinion that:

> …heterotopias of crisis are disappearing today and are being replaced… by what we might call heterotopias of deviation: those in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed (Foucault, 1967).

Such heterotopias isolate and place into care for the longer term. They regroup classes of individuals who have lost or do not yet possess some aspect of bodily or psychological autonomy.

School too might be considered a "heterotopia of deviation", or like Foucault's 'retirement homes', something of a borderline case between crisis and deviation. Inside school, children – varyingly unruly, uninitiated and untested – are encouraged, over many years, to adapt (successfully or not) their minds and transform their behaviour, to internalise the norms and regulations of adult society. This is always, as far as the school is concerned, a work in progress. School is thus a 'community' where adult (mainstream) codes are only ever partially operational. Risks of transgression (either through ignorance or active rebellion) are therefore always high.

Already suspicious of adult behaviour (guards in every room), museum institutions, including NGS, are fully cognizant of the risks associated with children. While rules of behaviour inside institutions are often suggested implicitly to adults, they are clearly communicated to children. Hence the Artist Rooms resource *Finding Francesca*, for instance, sponsored by the Tate and the National Galleries of Scotland, clearly explained these rules and expectations for the benefit of young visitors:

> To help protect their collections and ensure all visitors have a good experience, most galleries do not allow you to touch the artwork or frames and food and drink is not allowed. They also appreciate your respect for

> other visitors in your behaviour and use of language (*Finding Francesca – A guide to supporting young people to explore Artist Rooms*, n.d: 12, at www.nationalgalleries.org).

As hospitals require nurses and prisons require guards, so school requires teachers; these are the indispensable interface between the deviant (in normative terms) 'community' and adult society. Their presence is demanded by NGS. As it makes clear: "Teachers are responsible for pupils' behaviour at all times during a visit, both in the Galleries and in their grounds. We insist that adults accompany school children at all times throughout their visit" (National Galleries of Scotland, *Programme for Schools 2011-2012*: 19). The adult supervisor serves as an establisher of trust and reassurance for both the institution and the 'community' group.

Like other institutions incorporating the idea of community, there is a general tendency for schools (notwithstanding their symbiotic relationship with 'the family') generally to keep themselves to themselves. This introverted disposition is however being challenged with the implementation of the new Curriculum for Excellence which encourages teachers to be more proactive in seeking out outdoor opportunities and contexts for learning for their pupils. Indeed, this change has already been felt by educators within NGS. As the schools programme leader explained:

> …it's often been very difficult for cultural institutions to get schools to come out and do site visits and the great thing about the Curriculum for Excellence is that that has become much more central (NGS Educator for Schools, Interview 23/ 02/ 2012).

Nevertheless, considerable difficulties remain in attracting schools, and educators continually strive to challenge institutional introversion. Educators may contact individual schools or offer free events to entice participation. It is, however, predominantly Edinburgh-based schools that send groups to NGS; they are also frequently the same schools, often from more privileged districts, and very often from private schools with greater resources. The cost of workshops and transport,

the cost in time and planning and human energy, all contribute to keeping the more distant schools absent from the Edinburgh galleries. As the NGS schools leader explained:

> I'm afraid it's a lot of the same schools who come all the time. And […] a lot of these schools outwith Edinburgh, it is the cost of transport that keeps them away (NGS Educator for Schools, Interview 23/ 02/ 2012).

NGS Educators thus strive to support school visits, frequently helping with costs and planning. The aspiration is to attract schools from across Scotland to visit regularly and often. To this end, NGS sends out, once a year, a 'Programme for Schools' to all local authorities in Scotland. The programme offers many opportunities for interaction and involvement, including free, one-hour guided tours to any visiting school group. Beyond the guided tours, NGS also offers practical workshops for pupils. Here, pupils may learn anything from painting technique to musical composition. Workshops are typically led by a practising artist and may last anything up to two and a half hours. These are fee-paying events, though costs to schools are kept to a minimum and are often subsidised in part by NGS.

In February 2010, NGS received the Sandford Award for Excellence in Heritage Education, for their Schools Programme. The award panel declared: "Central to their schools programme is a commitment to helping children explore the collections themselves…" (National Galleries of Scotland, Press Release, 24th of February 2010, at www.nationalgalleries.org). Indeed, the self-guided nature of many activities and the encouragement of 'creativity' were recognised by the award panel as distinguishing features of good practice.

Of course, such features (self-guided activity, promotion of lateral thinking) underline the broad nature of much museum or gallery education. NGS itself is wary of defining the exact nature of its educational offering, and benefits are usually characterised in the very widest of terms, such as improving 'communication skills' and furthering 'knowledge' and 'participation'. Indeed, 'art' itself is notoriously nebulous, a fact readily reiterated by NGS. "Art," it stated, "can

be about anything and everything" (National Galleries of Scotland, *A Lifetime in Art*, wall panel in IT Gallery, November 2012).

In truth, children follow the same underlying educational narrative (nurturing self-reflection, independence and an appreciation of a cosmopolitan culture) as that given for 'community' participants. As well as fostering some practical skills relating to the study of art and design, NGS educators also attempt to instil more general, transferable skills applicable to a variety of twenty-first century life situations and employments[47]. In particular, children are encouraged to develop their private interests, their self-confidence, their ability to participate in society, their global outlook, and their creative thinking. For instance, on the 4th of November 2011, the NGS education department organised a *Senior Study Day*, at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, designed to prepare senior school students for Art College. The Senior Study Day offered a prolonged session of debate and "stimulating and inspiring discussion" on modern art. Rather than rely on the input of teachers, students were encouraged to participate as independently as possible and take charge of their own learning. The aims of the day were to:

> -Extend their own interests and abilities
> -Improve their confidence in talking about art
> -Prepare them for adult life and participation in the wider society
> -Encourage an appreciation of the world and Scotland's place in it
> -Encourage creative and analytical thinking (National Galleries of Scotland, *Programme for Schools 2011-2012*: 18)

The session was thus something more than simply a preparation for Art College; it was also a contribution to a broader civic education.

Indeed, many workshops and events organised by NGS artists and educators introduce the quirky world of art to the public, but they also sketch out the broad outline of an ideal participation within society. In particular, the schools

[47]NGS claims for instance that: "The national art collection can offer powerful opportunities for pupils to develop their creativity, work cooperatively and communicate with others, and show initiative, dependability, leadership and enterprise" (National Galleries of Scotland, *Schools Programme 2009*).

programme, like the communities programme, strives to encourage the education of 'lateral' or 'creative thinking'; indeed the pursuit of individual creative ability structures much of the 'falling action' of the NGS educational narrative. It has become the preferred label for approved thought and sanctioned behaviour in Scottish twenty-first century society (see chapter 8, subsection 8.5.4 for further discussion).

As well as promoting independence and creativity, educational initiatives attempt to gear children towards the exigencies of a highly competitive world. Indeed, beyond the workshops, tours and visits, the institution, in recent years, has begun engaging with schools via the medium of *competition*.

One of the first initiatives launched by the new Playfair Learning Coordinator in 2004, was a schools competition. The 'Art Competition for Schools' has been organised every year since. To begin with, the competition was quite small, with relatively few entries, but over the years, with the help of private sponsorship, the event has grown in size and scope. The competition is now open to different 'categories', including 'nursery schools', 'special education schools' and 'group entries'. Each category is given a theme, supported by three images from the national collection; the idea is that pupils will look at those images with their teacher, discuss the theme, develop ideas, and produce a creative response. Crucially, children are not supposed to copy the pictures but only use them as potential sources of inspiration. The competition aims to foster personal and original expression. Winners are chosen by a panel of judges, and to emphasize the significance of 'success', a special award ceremony is organised (inside the Scottish National Gallery, in the Hawthornden lecture room) to celebrate the children's creativity, their particular achievement and the competition itself. Competition organizers pay for school transport, so that school groups from further afield can attend. Winning contestants receive a bag of prizes, usually art materials (and a prize for their entire school class). The winning works are also displayed at a

special exhibition inside the institution, usually in the IT Gallery at the Scottish National Gallery[48].

Regulated competition open to all is, of course, the endorsed and pervasive format of liberal economic and political systems. It is a format firmly embraced by NGS. Indeed, as well as the *Art Competition for Schools*, NGS also organizes the *I Compose Music Competition* and the *Inspired? Get Writing – Creative Writing Competition*. Just like the Art Competition for Schools, winning entries are either exhibited or performed for visitors. In truth, many 'schools and community projects' culminate in some public display or performance. This final show (ending the temporary partnership between community and NGS) seems to function as a statement of achievement and further 'progress' in the individual's pursuit of greater autonomy and participation in mainstream society.

6.3.4 Displaying Gained Competencies

In 2011, a "collaborative learning project", entitled *Portrait Triptychs*, brought together NGS and the Edinburgh-based charity Ecas – a voluntary organisation dedicated to helping people with physical disabilities. The project was organised by the Portrait Gallery Learning Coordinator responsible for 'community groups' and involved disabled participants working with a contemporary artist to explore and engage practically with the national collection. Responding in particular to the Portrait of the Nation exhibition, participants created mixed-media portraits and self-portraits (National Galleries of Scotland, Portrait of the Nation Invitation Flyer, 2011). The artistic objective of the project was "to explore ideas of what a portrait can be" (National Galleries of Scotland, Portrait of the Nation Invitation Flyer, 2011) and encouraged participants to produce three-part artworks ('triptychs') that

[48] In 2011-12, the competition was funded by a new sponsor from the banking sector, and the exhibition of winning entries was held at the refurbished Portrait Gallery. The new sponsor wanted a clean break from the old sponsor and apparently wished to take advantage of the PG's increased profile. This new sponsorship enabled, amongst other things, the works to be better framed, and also enabled organizers to visit various schools in different council areas to promote the competition.

explored individual identities. The Triptych project was shortlisted for a *Scottish Charity Award*, under a category of 'partnership'[49]. Encouraging "playful" and "highly personal" responses to the collection (see National Galleries of Scotland, Portrait of the Nation Invitation Flyer, 2011), the project was designed to raise the self-confidence, self-esteem and sense of 'well-being' of participants. The project culminated in an exhibition inside the IT Gallery, at the Scottish National Gallery, opened on the 8th of November 2011.

Indeed many 'community projects' and workshops produce work in the form of photographs, video, text or objects that is readily available for short-term exhibition. This work can be exposed locally, within the relevant 'community', or more vitally within the institution itself. Educators are keenly aware of the educational value of such displays. Educators argue that exposition within the NGS is not 'essential', but nevertheless it is greatly valuable and powerful to the participants who perceive the event as a recognition of worth. As one educator at NGS put it: "When it comes back in, I think it rightfully impresses the people who have taken part, on their own terms I would hope" (Robin Baillie, NGS Outreach Officer, Interview 30/ 10/ 2012). The general aim and aspiration is to generate a sense of worth and pride within the participating 'community'. Educators, using the institutional gallery as an authenticating space, attempt, on the one hand, to validate the 'creative response' of the 'community', on the other, to nurture a greater sense of connection to the gallery and its objects. In fact, the Director-General is keen to acknowledge personally this work and local participation, making a point of attending many of the 'community exhibition' openings, lending by his presence a greater sense of recognition and importance to the events.

It is hoped also that these exhibitions reveal to a broader public an institution open to a more inclusive understanding of artistic worth, able to celebrate art in the widest sense, not only the recognised art of international professionals, but also the creative actions of local people. Educators are, in this sense, keen to demonstrate

[49] Organised by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, the Scottish Charity Awards are held every year to celebrate the good deeds of voluntary groups across Scotland.

the institution's democratic credentials. For outreach staff, in particular, the desire to exhibit the expressive work of a marginalised and forgotten demographic is strong. Yet, as senior outreach officer Robin Baillie acknowledged, the exhibition of work is as much symbolic as it is substantive:

> It's not that many people, it's not everybody but then the exhibition, maybe, can make it feel like it is everybody getting a chance (Robin Baillie, NGS Outreach Officer, Interview 30/ 10/ 2012)

The public display of this 'community work' takes place, however, most usually within a special educational space[50]. In the case of the Scottish National Gallery, the educational space lies tucked away in the functional underground, isolated from the rest of the gallery. This basement area is a space given over to public lockers, toilets, shop, café, reception area, education suite, and lecture theatre. It is something of a boundary space, physically separated from both the exterior world and the temple space above. Indeed, the status of the 'community work' displayed on its walls does not match that of the 'great art', exhibited on the floors above.

'Communities', in fact, perform an important symbolic function; put on display in an educational context, they expose, on the one hand, society's burden and fears, and, on the other, serve as exemplars of difficulties being overcome, fears extinguished and competencies gained. Competencies may include a host of artistic skills, imaginative thinking, and an ability for productive participation. However much people in communities may gain from contact with the institution, it is clear also that the presence of 'community visitors' also helps to validate and give vital strength or purpose back to the institution.

> I'd like to continue to expand and develop the visual impairment programme because that's a great strength for the galleries. It's been going for seven

[50] Certainly there is evidence of sporadic intervention inside the more formal gallery spaces. For the 2008 project *Parallel Lives 2*, for instance, the outreach team was able to display, with the blessing of the gallery director, a documentary video of the Parallel Lives project inside the post-impressionist room of the National Gallery of Scotland. The display was set next to a landscape by George Seurat (*La Luzerne, Saint-Denis 1885*), which was used as the starting point for the inspiration and creative views of local participants from the Wester Hailes area of Edinburgh. Nevertheless, on the whole, community display is largely confined to specific, 'reserved' areas.

> years and we have got a huge amount of expertise now, which we've been able to share with other institutions. I think we could do more with that in the future - be a centre of excellence in a way - and do more training for other institutions (Meg Faragher, NGS Educator, Interview 15/ 05/ 2012).

The engagement with 'community' allows the institution to pursue a new route to 'excellence', one untarnished by the criticism of 'elitism'. Communities are therefore often put on show inside the gallery space, or at least the creative contributions of these communities are. This sort of display serves as a presentation of the behind-the-scenes work of the organisation – an exposition of evidence demonstrating the wide and varied 'good deeds' of NGS. By allowing 'community work' to be displayed within the halls of the gallery, the institution attempts to demonstrate its own social connection and relevance to wider society.

6.3.5 An Inspirational and Creative Narrative

The Artist Rooms programme is a relatively recent project to bring modern art to a wider audience (see chapter 2, subsection 2.4.1). Much of the educational activity and materials associated with the Artist Rooms project is aimed, primarily, at young people. Artist Rooms has several stated learning aims, the final aim summarizing the rest: "To explore ways of developing and maintaining communities of young learners engaged in ARTIST ROOMS and contemporary art" (*Artist Rooms: Young People and Learning 2009-10* at www.tate.org.uk). The language reveals the easy insertion of 'young people' (like other audiences) into the encompassing discourse of 'communities'. Indeed, from this language of communities springs a recognition of marginalisation, and a concurrent move to *transform* individual lives:

> Artist rooms is premised upon the idea that art can transform lives, and the core aim is to use the collection in ways that will engage new audiences of young people, including marginalised groups (Ganley, Learning Coordinator for Artist Rooms at National Galleries of Scotland and Tate, *Artist Rooms: Young People and Learning 2009-10*).

The NGS website (2012) offers a number of "learning resources" connected with the Artist Rooms collection. Designed to help and support the work of teachers and educators, these resources provide information and strategies to help engage young people with the works of the collection and (modern) art in general.

The process of engagement is presented primarily as a form of 'dialogue'. Works from Artist Rooms are staged as facilitators of this 'dialogue', bringing different people together who would not normally converse together, to discuss ideas or topics they would not independently raise. From this educational perspective, there is no absolute truth to be found from works of art; instead, artworks offer opportunities for people to voice their interpretations and feelings:

> When exploring art with young people it is important that they feel comfortable in expressing their opinions. There are no right or wrong answers. Their opinions may differ from established views of art but this is just as valid (*Finding Francesca*, Learning Resource, at www.nationalgalleries.org).

The meaning of objects, as they relate to the present, and how they inform social knowledge and the social world, is open to conversation and negotiation, and furthermore is liable to change[51]. The didactic and prescriptive approaches of the past, where learners were told what objects meant, no longer fit well with the creative ethos of a modern liberal society.

Wider societal aims clearly inform the educational concern over dialogue. Indeed, it is often accorded primary significance, with a view to strengthening bonds within and across society. Philosopher of education Mark Smith contends that the role of informal education is particularly powerful in this respect. According to Smith, the dialogue and conversation facilitated by informal educators helps to strengthen and develop 'civic society' (Smith, 2001). For professor Nicholas Burbules also, dialogue fosters a number of desirable social values, including tolerance, equality

[51] As Hooper-Greenhill wrote: "The process of constructing meaning is like holding a conversation. No interpretation is ever fully completed. There is always more to say, and what is said may always be changed. The hermeneutic circle remains open to these possibilities and, in this sense, meaning is never static" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2004: 566).

and esteem of the other. He states that it involves "a willing partnership and cooperation in the fact of likely disagreements, confusions, failures and misunderstandings" (Burbules, 1993: 19). For Burbules dialogical interchange ultimately promotes mutual respect, trust and concern between people.

The informal emphasis on dialogue and debate has fully entered modern museum discourse and theory. Indeed, in seeking to move beyond the perceived patriarchal model of the traditional (nineteenth century/ twentieth century) museum, the situating of public discussion within the halls of the museum emerges for many thinkers and professionals as a contrasting moral ideal (see Pollock and Zemans 2007). After all, dialogue seems to represent something of an antidote to the passive acceptance of authority[52].

Certainly dialogue and "lively discussion" (see National Galleries of Scotland, 'Guided Tours', at www.nationalgalleries.org) have been fully embraced by the NGS education team. With dialogue set as a primary educational process, it is important then to find *something* to talk about. While individual artworks may provide stimulus and motivation, they do not always provide ample subject matter for sustained conversation, lost as they may be in enigma and inscrutability. Subjects of conversation – 'themes' – must be drawn from objects. As already noted (in subsection 6.3.2), the political is largely off-bounds; the themes offered up then are focused primarily (if not exclusively) on private experience. Themes connected to the inner world, such as body image, are favoured for exploration and discussion. The Artist Rooms learning resources offer a panoply of such themes:

> Her photographs explore many themes that affect young people who are in transition from adolescence to adulthood, such as relationships, sexuality, questions of self, body image, alienation, isolation and confusion or ambiguity about personal identity (*Finding Francesca*, Learning Resource, at www.nationalgalleries.org).

[52] Pollock and Zemans ask thus: "Can we recast the museum as critical site of public debate distinct from the museum as privileged manager or professionalized administrator of cultural heritage, authorizing selective stories and formalized pasts?" (Pollock and Zemans 2007, pxx).

‘Alienation’ and ‘isolation’ are recurring, underlying ideas that evidence the preoccupation of the educational endeavour with issues of societal cohesion. For modern educationalists, the alienated community member is to be encouraged and nurtured, by challenging and engaging activity, to reconnect with mainstream, cosmopolitan society. This connection is to be sparked not by compulsion or menace, but by ‘inspiration’:

> Some young people may never have visited an art gallery before, whilst others may be regulars at local cultural events and exhibitions. We hope this resource will help you support, challenge and inspire them all (*Finding Francesca*, Learning Resource, at www.nationalgalleries.org).

To enable this process of inspiration and connection, educators are encouraged to complement the programme of discussion with practical activity. Indeed, promoting interdisciplinary activity, educational projects often combine various art practices, including painting, sculpture, dance and drama. Using the collection as a starting point, students are encouraged to express their responses in a variety of artistic formats. The important point is for students to react personally to the chosen works.

The ‘portrait’ is a particularly favoured theme in modern liberal arts education for its direct connection to individuality and the idea of the ‘private’. The format and ‘theme’ of portraiture, and especially self-portraiture, emerges strongly from the *Finding Francesca* and the *Robert Mapplethorpe* learning resources:

> While images of the body are associated with ideas of beauty, the portrait is often associated with identity and individuality. The self-portrait is perhaps the most complex aspect of the genre because it brings the artist and the sitter into one with the allure of a private diary (*Robert Mapplethorpe resource pack for teachers and educators*, Learning Resource, at www.nationalgalleries.org).

The idea of revealing the ‘private’, of exposing the self, underlies and suffuses the substance of liberal education. Indeed, Artist Rooms projects encourage young people to exhibit something about their individuality, to disclose with confidence and pride their authentic ‘self’. Indeed workshops and class-work might often

culminate in a public 'sharing' of personal creation and 'achievement'. The idea is to get away from any intellectual dependency on the accomplishment of others, and encourage a form of self-sufficiency, whereby the celebrated object serves merely as a starting point for one's own imaginative explorations and development.

On the NGS website, a short film entitled *Making it* (2008) documents an educational project involving the Edinburgh-based charity *Streetwork*, which works to help homeless people and others living on the streets. The film follows the project participants as they tour the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, and engage with the art on show. As the film makes clear, this was a new experience for most of the participants:

> In the past they [the participants] would never have dreamed of going into a gallery. I'm sure they would have thought it was really, really scary, this huge big open space and maybe thought they weren't good enough somehow to be in a gallery (*Making it*, 2008, at www.nationalgalleries.org).

The participants of the project were a diverse group of women, facing various issues and difficulties in their lives. Invited to the *Tracey Emin - 20 years* exhibition, these participants were shown round the halls and artworks by a professional art educator, and brought to participate in several workshops and discussions. Working closely with professional educators, 'learners' were encouraged to connect and relate, to question and to express opinion. For many, this was apparently a positive experience, precipitating emotional responses and personal connections with some of the ideas and aesthetics of the show.

Towards the end of the short film, one participant expresses her opinion thus:
"Nae wonder loads of people are coming to see her work, eh?, she's very inspiring, and she's really out there."
A gallery attendant responds:
"It provokes ex…"

("Disnae gie a shit, eh?") interjects the participant.
"Well, it provokes extreme reactions, and gets people talking about what, what the hell is art, in a way…" continues the attendant.

The participant has been brought, it seems, to a juncture of 'inspiration' and has understood, apparently, something of the freedom inherent within contemporary artistic expression. Indeed, as the film documented, the participant was, herself, encouraged later to apply her own free and creative energies to a small personal, expressive project. With the guidance of professional educators and artists, she and her fellow participants were invited to 'respond' in a variety of ways and contexts to the works of the museum. The journey to this point of inspiration (and beyond) was a journey replete in a sense with obstacle and trial – in simple terms it was a struggle to communicate, relate and tolerate. One participant remarked of her fellow 'learners' as she tried to find meaning from one of the artist's more difficult pieces: "These girls obviously know her background; I think it means more when you know her background" (*Making it*, 2008, at www.nationalgalleries.org). The participant is communicating here not only an educational truism (knowledge gains greater insight), she is also revealing her own struggle to relate and connect, and her acceptance of the need to tolerate and accept the differing view of her more interested or 'knowledgeable' peers.

The film is interesting as it reveals the principal junctures of the NGS educational drama. This narrative is scripted, in the abstract, in a manner not dissimilar to the following: welcomed into the exhibitionary space by friendly and hospitable professionals, the 'community participant' is brought into contact (perhaps for the very first time) with the collection and its objects. This is the inciting incident. As the participant travels through the environment, moving from object to object, questions are introduced, trials are raised, responses are requested. The failure to understand the meaning of artworks, the fear of inadequacy vis-à-vis others, the sense of intimidation caused by buildings and institution, preconceptions and prejudices, are all obstacles to overcome (with the help of trained staff). These are obstacles designed to test the 'feelings' and inner stability of the learner-visitor and

to reward the gaining of confidence. The conflicts of the celebrated artists, inner and outer, are given over for personal reflection; and the learner is asked to participate in the turmoil of sensation. As the visitor is led to confront more and more feeling and obstacle, he/she is brought eventually to a physical climax (perhaps in front of a key exhibitionary work), and from the maelstrom of variety and diversity, of opposition and contradiction, the visitor is guided, by artists and other helpers, to a point of inner revelation. This is the flash of inspiration; this is the moment of realisation or acceptance of the category of 'art', when an object is no longer an obstacle in the mind, but something more, something 'magical' stimulating and free. The turning point or peripeteia of the narrative is this moment of connection to artists, artworks, institution and the artistic endeavour. Beyond this moment, there begins an unfolding journey of self-discovery. This is the exploration of creative potential within, including the pursuit of personal improvisation, divergent thinking and individual contribution. Thinking experimentally, searching out alternative information, discussing with unfamiliar and helpful people, questioning preconceptions, enjoying difference, the falling action leads the learner towards the elusive denouement: a motivation to participate and consume, to contribute productively and individually to the social order. It is scripted as a potentially life-changing process:

> By means of our learning activities, interpretation and resources, we aim to entice, inspire and enable our visitors and other users to connect physically, intellectually and creatively with the national art collection and the public programme in a meaningful, enjoyable and potentially life-changing way (National Galleries of Scotland, *Annual Review 2010 –2011*: 7).

Creative connection represents the 'falling action' of the educational journey. Yet in the context of an unreachable excellence, of an elusive 'potential', it is also the practical denouement of the narrative. It is the de-facto end that characterises the *lifelong* educational pursuit of autonomy.

6.3.6 Reaffirming Autonomy

‘Community projects’ are usually provided free of charge for selected participants, yet, staff time and materials, hired artists and freelance educators all bear a cost; there are also technical and framing costs, if the work is exhibited. Therefore, community events are often subsidised by ‘clients’ of NGS’s fee-paying educational activities.

Indeed, beyond its work with ‘communities’, the education department organizes many ticketed classes designed to introduce more ‘independent’ adults to various arts activities or techniques. These workshops provide funds for the NGS education department. NGS offers a diverse programme of activities, from practical workshops (anything from lino-cutting to camera-less photography) to more intellectual pursuits such as “looking” and “discussing”. Led by a professional artist or other trained expert, these activities are generally designed to be as inclusive as possible and aimed at all levels of ability, from the beginner to the improver. These popular activities often attract retired or semi-retired individuals with some time and money to spare, and who generally consider ‘culture’ or the ‘arts’ already as a personal interest, pastime or hobby. These are opportunities to, meet people and socialise.

In fact, NGS fosters an educational narrative that might best be described in terms of two strands, with each strand being applied to a relatively different abstract public. There is an educational agenda aimed at so-called ‘communities’ (and school groups; these holding a very similar status to community), and there is a reaffirming programme of workshops aimed at a more autonomous and integrated adult society. This ‘reaffirming strand’, assigned to the non-community visitor, operates with the same strategic junctures, but in which these (engagement, inspiration, creative discovery) are assumed to be, on one level, already familiar and, on another level, suitably accepted by the participant. Whereas the ‘community member’ is brought into an educational process through proactive efforts initiated by the institution, a school or a charity, the more confident, non-community visitor is likely to seek out opportunities for education and learning autonomously.

Beyond the narrow field of artistic appreciation, NGS inculcates a vision of the good life centred on individual expression, consumption and creation that favours a particular form of social interaction and relationship founded on personal interest and transitory association. Of course, as a number of museum scholars have argued (Witcomb 2003 or Trodd 2003), the naïve acceptance of control, the tractability and malleability of the visiting public should not be assumed in regard to educational programmes. Most programmes of social patterning are inevitably difficult `implement and perhaps quite impracticable in reality. However, what is of concern here is not the state of mind of actual visitors, but rather the self-image of the institution and its construction of narrative. At any moment in time the institution works to display a fairly lucid and discernible picture of itself and its service to society. This is a picture held together by collaborating staff members who seek to instil coherence across the varied activities of the organisation. This is a coherence that is not absolute but one that does override the vast majority of personal disagreements among the personnel of the institution. This institutional self-image is one framed in relation to a particular educational offering, one constructed within the terms of liberal ideology.

Since the mid-twentieth century, and increasingly so today, liberal values have come to dominate the ideological landscape of the most important cultural institutions in Britain (Jordan & Weedon, 1995). Liberal ideology transcends simple concerns over issues of governmentality. The exercise of control is but one aspect of a doctrine that aspires to universality. A way of living and perceiving, of relating to the world, it is analogous in some respects to a religious worldview. Its civic education, therefore, concerns more than a simple instrumental teaching and encompasses a more complete system of moral and aesthetic belief. This is a system also marked by its self-reflexivity. In other words, liberal doctrine may, through any number of mechanisms (including possibly museum culture) challenge its own governmental structures. The museum need thus not be directly concerned with relations of power, but rather with a broader moral climate, with upholding a broader liberal being. It is clear that the institution, in the twenty-first century, casts itself as a dependable symbol of liberal stability. It is clear also that it manufactures

a simple narrative consolidating liberal autonomy as the ideal civic pursuit. It is an educational response to a political, economic and social world increasingly suffused with a perception of volatility and uncertainty.

6.4 Conclusion

Despite the warmth levelled at it, 'community' is conceived in the NGS educational narrative (and, as discussed in chapter 8, in a wider state educational narrative) as an imperfection to be transcended. It is the imaginary idea that lies at the beginning and not the end of endorsed educational activity. It is the oppressive or unfortunate regime from which the member must be given opportunities to attain freedom. From this perspective, the 'community member' is the bottom level novice, the dislocated marginal, the societal child, brought into the gallery space to begin or continue a labour of self-transformation. From a state of non-participation and dependency, the learner is to discover a new confidence in 'self'. A single project cannot deliver an idealised autonomy of self-motivated participation, but may provide an introduction or encouragement towards this end, by supporting a sense of inner worth and assurance, and, above all, promoting (self) determination, cultural participation and 'creativity' as distinguishing features of the modern functional citizen.

7 Societal Context and Modern Policy History in the Museum and Gallery Sector in Scotland

This chapter explores some political and cultural contexts. It begins with a brief exploration of the economic and social changes that have impacted modern Scottish society, and the emergence of a growing nationalist sentiment in Scotland. It goes on to examine how Labour and SNP political agendas have manifested in particular ways inside the twenty-first century museum sector in Scotland, with a detailed look at Scottish cultural policy, since devolution.

7.1 Twenty-first Century Scottish Society

7.1.1 Economic and Social Shifts

Scottish society has had to adjust, since the apogee of Empire, to the seeping away of command and influence, to a loss of economic and 'civilisational' leadership. Indeed from being a central contributor to a global British Empire in the late nineteenth century, Scottish society has shifted over the course of a century to become (despite holding on to some important assets such as Edinburgh's financial centre) a minor participant within a new twenty-first century world order. This follows firstly the collapse of the British colonial empire, and secondly changing global economic patterns (see MacInnes, 1991). The steady loss of old industries, including textile manufacture, steel works, rail and locomotive construction, and ship building, has been accompanied by a decline of British military power. Moreover, the economic elites that once directed society have changed. As sociologist David Miller put it: "Scotland is ruled by a ruling class, but not necessarily by the '*Scottish* ruling class'" (2010: 93). National economic power has been interpenetrated by transnational organisations of capital (Miller, 2010).

Twenty-first century Scotland, like the rest of the UK, exists in an era of 'liquid modernity' (Bauman 2000, see chapter 8, subsection 8.3) and urban globalisation. This appears to be an increasingly polycentric epoch riven by competing forces of homogenisation and differentiation (Soja & Kanai, 2008). The expansion of capitalist modes of thought, massive technological advance, global competition between businesses and societies, and a host of other economic factors have precipitated a complex rearrangement of the global industrial geography.

Today, Scottish society is largely *post-industrial* in the narrow sense that service businesses, producing intangible goods, are by far the largest employers of the population. In 2007, 81 percent of people employed in Scotland were employed in the tertiary sector (see Scottish Government, Rural Scotland Key Facts 2007)[53]. In England and Wales, in 2011, 81 percent of the working population was also employed in the tertiary sector (see Office for National Statistics, 170 Years of Industrial Change across England and Wales, at www.ons.gov.uk). In the twenty-first century manufacturing and industrial assembly provide relatively modest numbers of jobs in the UK. This is in contrast to the mid-nineteenth century when the industrial sector employed the majority of the workforce. Indeed, in 1841, some 35.5 percent of the UK working population was employed in manufacturing, compared to only 33. 4 percent in services (see Office for National Statistics, Percentage of Working People employed in each Industry Group, 1841 to 2011, at www.ons.gov.uk). Over the course of a century and a half, employment patterns have shifted greatly in the UK. Of course, despite this dramatic change, one should not underestimate the significance of continuing industrial activity nor the influence of an external globalised industry on British and Scottish society.

Changes such as international technological advance and a more educated population have contributed to the steady rise of living standards in Scotland, as well as increasing material consumption and choice, through the twentieth century and beyond. In fact, over the last century, but especially since the end of the Second World War, Scottish society has witnessed great economic and social alteration.

[53] The tertiary sector refers to all service-based businesses and operations in the economy.

Paterson, Bechhofer & McCrone (2004) identified a number of significant (cultural, social, economic) changes that have impacted Scottish society during the last half-century, including, amongst others, demographic changes (declining birth and death rates, and an aging population), changes to family structure (including more single parents), changes in work and employment patterns, changes in gender roles (including more women in the workforce), changes to class configurations (shrinking working class, growth of professional class), and changes in education. While the authors acknowledged the many positive aspects of this change, they noted, too, the increased uncertainty across society, especially for those at the bottom of the social ladder:

> The poor may dip in and out of work, not out of choice, but because the jobs they end up doing are precisely those expendable and badly-paid ones which are swept away by technological change or exported overseas (Paterson, Bechhofer & McCrone, 2004: 152).

Indeed, across the Western world, much heavy industry and other manufacturing has been either relocated to foreign shores, in particular to the Far East, or simply dismantled[54]. Over the last half-century, international trends have seen the transfer of low-wage manual production and global industrial production from the developed world to developing countries (Van Liemt, 1992). In response to this international reconfiguration of the global economy, Western nations have had to adapt their own economies to maintain their global pre-eminence and sustain their modern mass consumer societies. Indeed, a significant aspect of post-industrial society has been the switch to a so-called *information* or *knowledge economy* (Powell & Snellman, 2004; Cohen, 2009) sustained by an educated professional class working within an ever-innovative service sector, including the so-called 'creative industries'[55], and focused heavily on design, research, technology and

[54] Businesses working out of the developing world enjoy significantly lower wage costs and less stringent regulation, and are beginning to radically alter the balance of economic power in the twenty-first century. Some developing countries (notably China) led by their manufacturing sector are now becoming formidable competitors, threatening not only to disrupt the hegemony of the West, but to actively replace it (see Martin Jacques, 2009).

[55] Popularized under New Labour, the expression 'creative industries' regroups a range of activities associated with the arts, media, architecture and heritage.

savoir-faire[56]. However, with success in the knowledge economy dependent on a constant stream of new ideas and products, many governments, businesses and individuals have struggled to stay one step ahead in an increasingly international and competitive economic environment. In the twenty-first century, Western standards of living have been increasingly sustained not only by 'savoir-faire', but by high levels of private and public debt (see Hartwich, 2013).

In 2007 and 2008, a major global financial crisis struck the economies of the West. While the reverberations were felt around the world, this was principally an American and European calamity, centred on the high-stakes gambling and bad debt of Western financial institutions (see Lanchester, 2010). In the United Kingdom, the impact of the crisis was particularly strong given the hugely bloated financial services industry, precipitating unprecedented government intervention, most notably with the nationalisation and part-nationalisation of several large, British-based banks. As the Labour government wrestled with the enormous challenges imposed by a receding economy, the issue of public and private debt and concerns over levels of government spending rose to the fore, becoming topics of fierce political argument (see Lanchester, 2010). While the government of Gordon Brown began to revert to Keynesian philosophy (the dominant economic philosophy of the mid twentieth century, advocating strong economic stimulus from government in time of crisis and recession), the Conservatives championed, in contrast, more drastic cuts and an intensification of neoliberal doctrine – a politico-economic philosophy founded on ideas of deregulation, privatisation and the unfettered pursuit of economic growth (See discussion of liberal doctrine in subsection 7.1.3 and in chapter 8, section 8.3).

In 2010, following the UK general election, Labour lost its overall majority in parliament and a new government was formed. However, despite winning the largest share of Westminster seats, the Conservative Party failed to achieve an overall majority, and formed then, in association with the Liberal Democratic Party,

[56] In the words of Powell & Snellman: "the production of novel ideas that subsequently lead to new or improved goods and services and organizational practices" (Powell & Snellman, 2004: 201).

the first formal coalition since the Second World War. The new coalition government quickly affirmed the need to rein in government spending and reduce the British state's debt burden. The new 'deficit reduction plan' promised fiscal consolidation and a wave of budgetary cuts[57]. The ongoing consequences and difficulties of the crisis have left few sectors of society untroubled, and have threatened to plunge post-industrial Britain into an 'era of austerity'. In this context, the globalised economy has increasingly come to be viewed and publicly portrayed as an unforgiving, competitive arena that favours the survival of the leanest and the fittest. This is what Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron has called the 'global race':

> My message is simple, people should make no mistake, in this battle for the future of Britain and our competitiveness, I'm prepared to roll-up my sleeves and have a fight, if that's what it takes. So that is our plan: fiscal responsibility, monetary activism and restoring our competitiveness to succeed in the global race (David Cameron, *Achieving Strong and Sustainable Economic Growth*, speech delivered on the 7th of March 2013, at www.gov.uk).

From this (Conservative, neoliberal) perspective, contemporary post-industrial society must face the exigencies of globalised and individual economic struggle; the future is an object of constant "battle", whose outcomes remain forever uncertain and precarious.

Neoliberal economic thinking first manifested itself in Britain, in the 1980s. The reforms and restructuring of the economy engineered by the Thatcher government were hailed by many on the political right and tacitly accepted by the new left as it came to power in the form of New Labour in the late 1990s. Yet, the unfettered economic liberalism propounded by Margaret Thatcher undoubtedly had unforeseen political consequences in Scotland, in the decades following her departure from power. Inadvertently fuelling various anti-establishment and nationalist narratives, the economic doctrine first implemented in the 1980s helped in no small measure to

[57] In Scotland too (despite devolved government) the squeeze on public spending has been significant with an imposed reduction to the Scottish Budget of some £1.3 billion in 2011 by Westminster government (see *Scotland's Spending Plans and Draft Budget 2011-12*).

precipitate Scottish society first towards devolution in 1999 and, in 2014, to the brink of full separation from the rest of the United Kingdom.

7.1.2 Home Rule and Political Divide in Scotland

The issue of 'constitution' has long troubled the social and political landscape of Scotland. For most of the twentieth century Home Rule drifted in and out of the political priorities of both the political elite and the wider population. It must be understood that Scotland, during much of its history within the Union, enjoyed a certain independence of its civil society, chiefly in the domains of law, religion and education (McCrone 1992). As early as the 1920's, devolution was being touted as a possible constitutional option for Scotland. Supported by many liberals and socialists after the Great War, plans to deliver some form of devolution to Scotland failed to garner enough support or momentum at Westminster. Various promises, pledges and initiatives over the following decades (including the Scottish Covenant in the 1940s) also came to nothing and commitments to Home Rule by the major political parties amounted to little more than rhetoric. For a number of years, the issue faded largely from mainstream discussion. The minor political success of the SNP post Second World War, put the issue back on the political agenda and eventually galvanised a renewing of pledges by the main political parties, including the declaration of Perth in 1968 by the Conservative leader Edward Heath. In the 1970's, the Labour government eventually committed itself to a referendum on devolution, but in 1979 these plans failed to garner enough support from the Scottish electorate. Despite a majority of votes cast in favour, insufficient numbers backed the proposal in an era of economic downturn. Nevertheless, a new impetus towards devolution was born in the aftermath of the referendum. The Constitutional Convention was brought into being uniting a new coalition of various interested groups, including the Labour Party, church groups and civic organisations, committed to securing some form of political autonomy for Scotland in the future. The entire project was vigorously opposed, however, by the Conservative Party of the 1980s and 1990s which feared an eventual dissolution of the United Kingdom.

Not until the election of New Labour, in the late 1990s, would the Scottish electorate be given a second opportunity to decide on the issue of Home Rule.

In the mid-twentieth century, the Conservative Party had enjoyed widespread approval in Scotland, winning a majority of Scottish seats at Westminster in 1955. Since then, over the course of half a century, the fortunes of the party, the most staunchly unionist party in Scotland and once the dominant force in Scottish politics, have dwindled (Torrance, 2012). Indeed, support for the party has collapsed since its dominance in the 1950's, reaching an all-time low in 1997 when the party lost all its seats in Scotland. It is widely recognised that the decline of the Conservative party in Scotland was compounded by the policy programme implemented by the Thatcher government in the 1980s which precipitated large scale industrial closures and saw the introduction of the poll tax (Devine, 1999; Torrance, 2012). For many voters the party had ceased to represent the interests of people outside of the Home Counties (Finlay, 1997). Whatever else this precipitated, trust in the London-centred politics the Conservatives had long been seen to champion crumbled in Scotland with the fortunes of the party.

Unionism is, of course, a contested and nebulous term. Originally referring predominantly to a defence of the Anglo-Irish Union of 1800-01 (Macdonald, 1998), it has been drawn, over the course of time, into the very heart of political and rhetorical dispute in Scotland. The nature of unionism and the terms of its support for whatever form of British identity are all up for individual negotiation and interpretation. It is clear, however, that a different vision of British unionism garnered interest in the 1980's, backed by the Scottish Labour Party. In contrast to the centralised unionism propounded by the Conservative Party of the late twentieth century, a different kind of political unity, one in which the component nations of the British state would be given a stronger voice and hand in the running of their local affairs began to receive much wider support. A new, more modern spirit of 'home rule' championing a rebirth of a Scottish Parliament rather than a mere 'assembly' galvanised the Scottish electorate, and by the time New Labour was

elected to power in 1997, the Scottish populace was ready for a new form of devolved government.

At the same time, a growing nationalist movement in Scotland, dedicated to establishing an independent Scottish state, began to challenge Labour's dominance of the Scottish political scene towards the end of century. This movement has expanded its influence greatly since the election of Margaret Ewing in 1967 (the party's first significant electoral success) and has alternately shunned and engaged with the political vision of devolution.

Competing notions of Scottish national identity have long informed political debate in Scotland. Varying conceptions of Scottish distinctiveness have jostled for support in a dynamic and evolving political, economic and social landscape since at least the nineteenth century (see Bailkin 2004). Not until the late twentieth century, however, could nationalists claim to have gained significant influence and opened up a potent fault line in the Scottish political landscape. While a strong sense of distinctiveness has endured in Scottish society throughout the twentieth century, for the majority this was grounded firmly within a unionist world-view. Not until the backlash against Thatcherism and later the widely felt disappointment with New Labour in Scotland, did nationalist ideology, founded on stronger notions of a cohesive national identity, begin to attract widespread support (see Hassan & Shaw 2012).

While a number of reasons may be offered for the faltering of Scottish Labour's electoral success in the early twenty-first century, it is clear that a failure of Labour government to address a perceived underperformance of the Scottish economy and the perception of societal decline taking place outside of the London metropolis combined with a general distrust of London-based politics to precipitate some disillusionment within the Scottish electorate (Hassan & Shaw 2012).

7.1.3 Liberal Nationalism in Scotland

It is undoubtedly within the context of UK wide, post-industrial and neoliberal precariousness that modern Scottish nationalism has risen to the fore of mainstream political thinking in Scotland. While competing notions of identity bear strongly on the issue of nationalism in Scotland, the independence movement in Scotland is also both a product of and a reaction to evolving liberal doctrine; indeed it is founded, I argue, as much on economic dispute as on any patriotic sentiment or cultural and ethnic chauvinism[58].

Sociologist Jonathan Hearn argued that 'nationalism' in Scotland has long existed in a strong liberal or civic form. He argued that nationalism and liberalism evolved together following the Protestant Reformation and the rise of political philosophy in the 17th century, and that "the histories of nationalism and liberalism are deeply entwined in Scotland" (Hearn, 2000: x). Hearn highlighted too the shift in the liberal order in Scotland following the waning of classical liberalism and the decline of the Liberal Party in the early twentieth century. In Scotland, as elsewhere in Britain, liberal ideas shifted towards so-called social (or modern) liberalism, with emphasis on increased state intervention in welfare and life opportunities. Hearn called this a 'collectivist liberalism' which attempted to augment the responsibility of the state to mitigate the excesses of the capitalist economy (Hearn, 2000: 196).

For proponents of this socially oriented modern liberalism (see for instance T. H. Marshall, 1949), capitalism left unchecked produces unfair outcomes. This unfairness must thus be corrected continuously and at all levels by social organisations. Schools, libraries, voluntary groups, welfare providers and other state-backed institutions are of paramount importance in ensuring a level playing field for all citizens. Corporate power, monopoly and even competition must be restrained (for instance by setting a minimum wage) when it endangers the welfare of the weak. It is clear that this collectivist-flavoured liberalism has a strong

[58] It is significant to note that Scottish nationalism, since its rise from the mid-twentieth century, has proven largely devoid of violent or exclusionary intent.

tradition in Scottish society (see Paterson, Bechhofer & McCrone, 2004). In more recent years however, in wider Britain, beginning with so-called Thatcherism in the 1980s, neoliberal advocates have tried to encourage a return to more classical parameters of state intervention. For these advocates, a much more frugal government should reduce welfare provision[59] and promote the self-responsibility of the individual[60].

Indeed, for historian Tom Devine, the leading Westminster parties have steadily abandoned the ideas of collectivist liberalism dominant in the mid-twentieth century and characterised most popularly by the political values of the welfare state. "In fact," he wrote, "you could argue that it is the Scots who have tried to preserve the idea of Britishness in terms of state support and intervention, and that it is England that has chosen to go on a separate journey since the 1980s" (Devine, in Bella Caledonia, 22/ 08/ 2014). The growth of national sentiment in Scotland is undoubtedly reflective in part of this underlying liberal schism in the United Kingdom. Indeed, despite deep neoliberal influence on Scottish politics, the two dominant political parties north of the border – Scottish Labour and the Scottish National Party – retain strong rhetorical claims to notions of social liberalism (or 'social democracy' which differentiates itself from social liberalism mainly in its origin and class support base, but holds today, I would argue, little substantive philosophical difference[61]). The centre left politics of Labour and the SNP (however illusory, superficial or compromised in practice) have been consistently backed by the Scottish electorate and remain the dominant national preference to which governmental power in (or dealing with) Scotland is given to respond. Certainly, neoliberal doctrine as implemented by Margaret Thatcher won little support in Scotland and did much to erode and undermine public faith and support in Westminster government; indeed Thatcherism seemed to directly contribute to the

[59] Basic welfare provision remains, as Friedrich Hayek explained, to protect society from "acts of desperation on the part of the needy" (Hayek, 1960).
[60] As Beck & Beck-Gernsheim put it: "Neoliberal economics rests upon an image of the autarkic human self. It assumes that individuals alone can master the whole of their lives, that they derive and renew their capacity for action from within themselves" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002: xxi).
[61] Indeed, it is worth noting for instance that the UK 'Liberal Democrats' party was birthed in 1988 following the merger of the 'Liberal Party' and the 'Social Democratic Party'.

idea of a ‘democratic deficit’ in Scotland. Married to long-established sentiments of national and cultural distinctiveness, this loss of faith fed and continues to feed political aspirations for a return to a more socially minded liberalism, directed by a more *locally accountable* form of government (see Hearn, 2000: 1).

7.2 Culture, Museums and Policy Concerns

Image 7: The Scottish Parliament at Holyrood, Edinburgh

7.2.1 National Cultural Strategy

Following political developments in Scotland over the course of the twentieth century, in September 1997, the Labour government held a promised referendum on Scottish devolution. Subsequent to the large ‘Yes’ victory, the Scotland Act (1998) was drafted, and a new Scottish Parliament established in 1999, led by a new Scottish Executive (later renamed ‘Scottish Government’ under the SNP). The

Scotland Act (1998) did not describe the particular responsibilities of the new devolved government, but rather set out a list of *reserved matters* – those matters remaining under the legislative power of Westminster. Political subjects not listed and lying outside of these reserved matters were transferred, by default as it were, to the authority of the new parliament in Edinburgh (see 'Scottish Responsibilities' at www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Factfile/18060/11552, Accessed on the 30th of March 2014). Following devolution, therefore, the Scottish Executive became, de facto, responsible for setting cultural policy in Scotland. The first Scottish Executive (a Labour-led coalition with the Liberal Democrats) was quick to begin shaping new policies. A new *National Cultural Strategy* was published in August 2000, only thirteen months after the founding of the new Scottish Parliament (Hamilton& Scullion, 2002).

The National Cultural Strategy set out four key strategic objectives. These were to "assure an effective national support framework for culture"; "promote creativity, the arts and other cultural activity"; "celebrate Scotland's cultural heritage in its full diversity; and "realise culture's potential contribution to education, promoting inclusion and enhancing people's quality of life" (see *National Cultural Strategy*, 2000). One of the most important practical and ideological changes that occurred with respect to cultural policy in Scotland, under Labour-led administration, was the explicit introduction of a new 'social inclusion' agenda. While Conservative government had supported the autonomy of museums and left the vision of the sector in the hands of managers, Labour-led government (at Westminster and Holyrood), exerting its influence largely through the setting of funding conditions (Black 2005), pushed cultural institutions to become more relevant, more socially engaged and more educational. Cultural providers under Labour were encouraged to develop an array of new educational programmes and learning opportunities designed to increase the civic and economic participation of the marginalised or disadvantaged 'communities' of twenty-first century Britain. Working with a variety of new partners, the cultural sector was to help transform society. This galvanised sector promised new ways of tackling a wide range of social issues, from crime and drug misuse to long-term unemployment and health problems

(Sandell 2003; Black 2005; Tlili et al 2007). The new agenda was to deliver a more responsible and caring cultural sector, able to augment and complement state welfare[62].

New Labour's social policies in Scotland and Britain more widely are to be understood within the context of broader ideological trends. In step with an international waning of Keynesian economics at the end of the twentieth century and a decline in interventionist economic policy across much of the Western world, New Labour shifted its political ground away from the traditional left towards the 'centre' ground, and adopted a so-called 'Third Way' strategy as it strived to reach out to a traditionally conservative 'Middle England' (Levitas, 2005). It has been widely recognised that New Labour consolidated many of the economic reforms developed under Thatcher (Jessop, 2003; Levitas, 2005; Little, 2002). New Labour moved away from traditional socialist thinking founded upon a strong welfare state and steered government towards a much more *targeted* approach to social provision (Jessop, 2003; Little, 2002). New Labour ultimately combined a neoliberal inspired agenda, built up in Britain during the 1980s, with an aspiration to embed market ideology into a more cohesive social order. As sociologist Ruth Levitas stated:

> Far from being a centre-left project, New Labour could more accurately be characterised as centre-right, combining a neo-liberal commitment to the market with notions of 'community' replacing the role of the state in Thatcherism. (Levitas, 2005: x)

Rationalizing government intervention, New Labour, nevertheless, attempted to temper the consequences of neoliberal economics by targeting its intervention and bringing new untapped resources to bear on the problem of social exclusion (Jessop, 2003)[63]. More generally, Labour attempted to revitalize a conception of citizenship that reasserted the obligations and responsibilities of the citizen and the values of

[62] As social scientist Vikki McCall wrote: "Since 1999, increasing attention to the arts and cultural institutions has helped create a new role for culture, linking it to aspects of social inclusion and challenging the boundaries of traditional welfare provision." (Vikki McCall, 2010: 170)
[63] The object of this targeting was 'social exclusion', the inverse of 'social inclusion'. "The effort [of New Labour] to eradicate social exclusion is based on a wide range of experimental poverty programmes that typically involve tightly focused partnerships and area based initiatives" (Jessop, 2003: 17).

self-driven participation and enterprise. Citizenship became "the framing discourse for many of their social and educational policies" (Coare, 2003: 41). While the earlier Thatcherite conception of citizenship emphasised individual responsibility, the New Labour conception differed in as much as it acknowledged the need for government to educate and ease the transition of the 'excluded' into a post-industrial economy. Under New Labour, a revived and heavy prioritisation of education (both formal and informal) became apparent. In light of the great post-industrial changes that had happened to and were envisioned for Western economies, both children and adults (with the development of so-called lifelong learning programmes) were encouraged to adapt their future skills to line up with those of an emerging (or envisioned), versatile, ideas-focused, creative citizenry able to cope with a flexible economy and changing social conditions (For more discussion on the 'creative citizen' see chapter 8, section 8.1.3).

7.2.2 Cultural Commission Report

In recent years, the concept of individual and societal 'creativity' has become hugely important in cultural and educational policy and political discourse. The concept of 'creativity' has become increasingly integrated into school curricula and held up as a source of economic power, capable of salvaging the fortunes of post-industrial societies. The Labour-led Executive was of the opinion that the widespread development of 'creativity' was paramount to securing the competitiveness of the nation, and therefore the concept formed an integral component of Labour's educational and cultural policies. As First Minister Jack McConnell asserted:

> The creativity of Scots – from the classroom to the boardroom – is the edge we need in a competitive world. Our duty as an executive is to create the conditions that allow that creativity to flourish – whether in arts, sciences, commerce or industry (McConnell, *Cultural Policy Statement*, 2004).

This statement was quoted again in the *Cultural Commission's Final Report*, published in June 2005. The Cultural Commission was set up by Labour's Scottish Executive in April 2004 to undertake an independent appraisal of the nation's cultural provision (see www.culturalcommission.org.uk). The Commission's final report constituted an important review of current thinking, strategy and service within the cultural sector, and informed the sense of direction of subsequent policy-makers in Scotland. Like government, the Commission was clear about the significance of 'creativity' to the wider economy and believed that the concept should be of primary substance in the development of educational and cultural policy in Scotland. Relating 'creativity' to the generation of new ideas, the Commission defined the term essentially as an ability to think outside of established (business, consumer, marketing) norms:

> Creativity is essentially about generating alternatives. These may be ideas or solutions but equally they may not conform to a 'solution'; creative thinking often requires breaking the patterns which limit traditional thinking (*Our Next Major Enterprise: Final Report of the Cultural Commission*, 2005: 6).

The Commission argued that the arts, and cultural activities generally, thrived on and fostered key mental 'competencies', associated amongst other things with lateral thinking. The commission argued that such multi-dimensional competencies, including "ability to make decisions in the absence of rule; perception of relationships; attention to nuance; awareness that problems have multiple solutions", held significant value to a post-industrial society.

> These competencies indicate an agile mind and a competitive individual, the prerequisite of enterprise in a changing economy. These are also the base descriptors of creativity and that is what will underpin the economy of the future. Scotland's economic success in the long term will rest on the creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial spirit of its workers (*Our Next Major Enterprise: Final Report of the Cultural Commission*, 2005: 68).

Pointing to the decline of traditional manufacturing and industry in Britain, the Commission stressed the importance of supporting the 'creative industries' and argued that the present and future prosperity of the nation rested increasingly upon

the abilities of a new generation of creative individuals. Highlighting the work of Richard Florida (*The Rise of the Creative Class* 2002), the Commission established 'creativity' as a primary driver of economic dynamism and security in the twenty-first century. The Commission declared thus: "As manufacturing shifts to the Far East, the competitive economy in the West has become reliant on ideas and creativity" (*Our Next Major Enterprise: Final Report of the Cultural Commission*, 2005: 71).

The cultural sector was thus envisioned as an economic asset, scripted to support the transition of the nation to a new ideas-based economy. In this new, highly competitive model, everyone, from the mainstream to the marginalised, would be encouraged to develop 'creative' skills, founded on versatility and flexibility of thought. This was not simply a desirable aim, but rather a necessary end in the face of an unstoppable extinction of a traditional manufacturing-based and fixed-skill economy.

7.2.3 Learning and Access Strategy

In response to the Cultural Commission's findings, the Scottish Museums Council (later to become Museums Galleries Scotland) published in 2005 *A National Learning and Access Strategy for Museums and Galleries in Scotland.* The strategy proposed to revitalise the educational role of the sector and "make learning and access integral to the management of museums" (*A National Learning and Access Strategy for Museums and Galleries in Scotland*, 2005: 1). The document highlighted education as a primary strength of the sector, framing museum learning as a cultural and economic asset of national importance.

> [The new strategy must] ensure museum learning is recognised and supported as an essential educational, cultural and economic asset for the Scottish nation (*A National Learning and Access Strategy for Museums and Galleries in Scotland*, 2005: 4).

The Strategy highlighted the close association between schools, colleges and museums and the potential for greater collaboration and partnership amongst them, and encouraged the sector to embrace wider educational objectives. The document underlined three main educational priorities (see chapter 8, section 8.1 below), championed by government educational policy, and that museums were officially supporting: "Recent educational policy developments emphasise creativity, enterprise and citizenship. Museum learning is helping to meet these priorities" (*A National Learning and Access Strategy for Museums and Galleries in Scotland*, 2005: 10).

The strategy was in truth an important element in the museum sector's ongoing and continual campaign for recognition. In particular, the document sought to draw attention to the museum sector's natural ability to bring people together: "all ages, all people, all together" (*A National Learning and Access Strategy for Museums and Galleries in Scotland*, 2005: 18). Endorsed by Government, the strategy set out a new agenda for museums, founded on the liberal idea of 'cultural entitlement' for all. Placed on the front line of the inclusion struggle, museums were scripted to play their part, through cultural engagement, in fostering a more cohesive and 'vibrant' society, more civic-minded and tolerant of cultural diversity.

> The Scottish Executive's recognition of museums as key contributors to Scotland's development as a 'vibrant, cosmopolitan country and an internationally recognised creative hub' is a matter of record (*A National Learning and Access Strategy for Museums and Galleries in Scotland*, 2005: 15).

The strategy aimed to make museums more people-friendly, more relevant and more open to local input. Both government and the sector were convinced of the social power of the museum. For what the museum offered perhaps above all was a form of hope. Indeed, the museum seemed well positioned to help tackle and confront an implicit fear of the future. The words of Mark O'Neil, head of Museums and Galleries, Glasgow City Council, were prominently quoted in the strategy:

> Through the fascinating and beautiful objects in museums people can draw on their past to help make sense of the present and find the inspiration and spiritual renewal which will enable them to face the future with confidence (O'Neil, in *A National Learning and Access Strategy for Museums and Galleries in Scotland*, 2005: 16).

These words manifested an ongoing preoccupation with the idea and terminology of 'confidence'. This 'conquering of fear' was (and continues to be) promoted as a key redemptive skill or attribute, helping to return individuals to health, work, and civic participation. Affirming this and other skills, the Strategy embraced the idea of 'lifelong learning', in effect a never-ending process undertaken by the individual to overcome the uncertainty of the future – a programme designed to help the citizen to adapt to the ever-shifting requirements and pressures of a twenty-first century global market.

7.2.4 SNP Framework

In 2007, the SNP was elected to government in Holyrood, and took over responsibility for cultural policy in Scotland. Since then, SNP policies, across various sectors, have been characterised by initiatives to align (and often merge[64]) public bodies in pursuit of economic efficiency and savings and to help position the Scottish Government firmly at the centre of Scotland's administrative management. From the beginning, the SNP government put forward a strong discourse of 'unity'; for the SNP, it was essential to galvanize all public sectors around a single cohesive strategy. Building for a long-campaigned-for referendum on independence (delivered in September 2014), the SNP administration sought to establish its strong business credentials and managerial competence. Seeking to harmonize and focus the vision and purpose of all public actors in Scotland, government encouraged all sectors (including culture) to align themselves with a new *National Performance*

[64] Such as the merger of Scotland's eight police forces into one (the Police Service of Scotland), in April 2013, or the creation of Education Scotland in July 2011, merging Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education with Learning and Teaching Scotland.

Framework. 'Alignment' became a crucial concept of the SNP vision, defined as: "All public services pulling in the same direction to achieve the Scottish Government's Purpose and National Outcomes" (Scottish Government, *An Introduction to Scotland's National Performance Framework 2011*).

Put in place in 2007 by the SNP Scottish Government, the framework set out 15 National Outcomes which described the key aspirations and intended achievements of government over a period of ten years. These were designed to focus the efforts of public bodies and other partners in the delivery of an improved society. The governing "Purpose" of this framework was "to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing economic sustainable growth" (Scottish Government, *An Introduction to Scotland's National Performance Framework 2011*). To reinforce this economic purpose, National outcome 1 stated: "We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe" (Scottish Government, National Outcomes, at www.scotland.gov.uk).

7.2.5 A Creative Scotland

One of the most significant changes made by the SNP administration, in regard to culture, was to shift the agenda away from a specific focus on 'social inclusion'. While aspirations to be 'inclusive' remained, the key concept of 'social inclusion' (and its sister concept 'social exclusion') was largely dropped from discourse. The suggestion of a dualistic society, of a civic fault-line separating citizen from citizen, excluded from included, was undoubtedly at connotative odds with the SNP's preoccupation with national unity. In any event, the disturbing rift denoted between the included and the excluded was sidestepped by the SNP administration by promoting a more diffuse, universal and reassuring concept of 'well-being' (see Vikki McCall, 2010).

Packaging a number of ideas, including self-respect, respect for others and good physical and mental health, within one wholesome sounding term, 'well-being' has become a central buzzword in SNP policy discourse. It is also perhaps one of the most nebulous of SNP buzzwords. Whereas social inclusion refers to the difficult process of integrating the disenfranchised (whether groups or individuals) into a productive social mainstream, 'well-being' refers to an abstract, almost utopian aspiration, an ideal end to which all are given to strive. After all, who does not wish to 'be well'? Everyone is equal and united in the pursuit of 'well-being'. It is, however, an intrinsically unstable state, requiring constant self-monitoring and adjustment. 'Well-being' also indicates a fundamentally more individualist approach to societal cohesion than 'social inclusion'. It invokes an underlying singular 'being', the human, the autonomous healthy citizen who must define alone his or her understanding of 'wellness'. In fact SNP policy discourse undoubtedly scripts a stronger sense of liberal autonomy than that of New Labour. The discourse of 'well-being' does not easily support an interventionist state programme. While the development of 'well-being' may be assisted and bolstered by the state, it is not enabled by the state; it is a private pursuit whose ultimate realisation rests in the hands of the individual. The term is thus a better fit for the modern educational narrative in Scotland that seeks to galvanise the entire citizenry in a process of constant self-adaptation (see chapter 8 for an in-depth look at the modern educational narrative in Scotland).

This promotion of an individual pursuit of happiness and autonomy has become increasingly tied up with the central and positive-sounding concept of 'creativity'. As the funding body Creative Scotland sets out, Scotland is to become "a nation where the arts and creativity play a central part in the lives, education and well-being of our population" (Creative Scotland, *Investing in Scotland's Creative Future: Corporate Plan 2011-2014*: 5). Already popular under Labour, the language of 'creativity' has been emphasised and enthusiastically promoted by SNP policy makers. More than ever, it has become a transcending concept, linking and connecting diverse aspirations of government. As the SNP Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture made clear: "My vision is for a Scotland that nurtures

its creative talent and where 'creativity' infuses all aspects of our life and work" (Fiona Hyslop, 'A Creative Scotland', at www.snp.org). Under the SNP, cultural institutions have been encouraged to take a leading role in the promotion of this all-encompassing agenda. Indeed, to help cultivate 'creativity' within the nation, the Scottish Government established *Creative Scotland* in 2010, merging the functions and services of *Scottish Screen* and *The Scottish Arts Council* and setting up a new provision for the wider 'creative sector' (see Creative Scotland, *Corporate Plan 2011-2014*). In fact, significant resources have been allocated to Creative Scotland (some one thousand million pounds allocated over a twelve-year period according to Sir Sandy Crombie, chairman of Creative Scotland - see open letter, 9th of October 2012).

The terminology of 'creativity' has certainly been thoroughly appropriated and invested with the ambitions of government. As the new funding body made clear: "Creative Scotland's ambition is to see Scotland as one of the world's most creative nations by 2020 (www.creativescotland.com). For the SNP administration, 'creativity' has come to encapsulate the adaptive requirements and capacities of leadership and success in the twenty-first century. The concept of 'creativity' referred to in government discourse is largely the same as that put forward by the Cultural Commission. Characterised by business flair, innovative outlook and competitive ambition, this conception of individual 'creativity' is ultimately economically relevant, either directly or indirectly, and civically inspirational. It has become a central ideal and recurrent label of educationally favoured behaviours and outlooks for the population as a whole.

The integration of the arts and the cultural sector into this creative agenda has not always been fully appreciated or accepted by those working within. Indeed, despite the greater funding available, Creative Scotland has attracted criticism. The increasingly corporate-sounding language and emphasis on competition has seemingly alienated many artists and arts organisations. In an open letter to Sandy Crombie, chairman of Creative Scotland, one hundred artists expressed their critical view of the organisation:

> We observe an organization with a confused and intrusive management style married to a corporate ethos that seems designed to set artist against artist and company against company in the search of resources (Open letter to Sir Sandy Crombie, chairman of Creative Scotland, signed by 100 Scottish artists, 9th of October 2012 at www.bbc.co.uk).

The SNP administration (like its Labour – Lib-Dem predecessor) has sought to maximize the utility and 'gain' of culture to society. More than ever, Government investment requires a tangible return. As Sandy Crombie made plain:

> They who provide the money have a right to ask what will result from that investment. The return does not rest solely in economic or commercial benefits, important though those are. It can come through social, cultural and reputational gains and of course through artistic excellence (Sir Sandy Crombie, chairman of Creative Scotland, response to open letter, 9th of October 2012).

In pursuit of economic benefit and civic inspiration, the Scottish Government has charged its sponsored institutions with adopting and promoting an ever more cosmopolitan outlook. 'Culture' has become a reputational asset and stake on the world stage.

Matching up 'culture' with 'external affairs', with the creation of the post of *Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture* (established by SNP in 2007 and replaced by the more recent Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, created in 2011), the SNP government has striven to encourage and emphasize a much stronger international perspective in the cultural domain. Significantly, Scottish artists, museums, heritage organisations and others are seen as important contributors to the task of attracting visitors and investment from abroad. Culture has thus been tasked, in the most general of terms, to enhance the international 'profile' of Scotland and its people - in marketing terms, to help develop a positive national 'brand', or 'competitive identity' (to use policy jargon)[65]. To this end, embracing both traditional and contemporary cultural activity, government has

[65] See *The Anholt GFK-Roper's Nation Brands Index: Summary Report for Scotland 2009.*

sought to initiate and promote year-long cultural celebrations and festivals, projected on a national scale. For instance, in 2012, the Scottish Government launched *Year of Creative Scotland 2012*. Led by government agencies *Creative Scotland* and *VisitScotland*, this was an initiative aimed at showcasing the international attractiveness and ongoing vibrancy of the Scottish nation:

> Scotland is a dynamic and creative nation, rich in heritage with a wealth of world-class cultural events. The year of Creative Scotland 2012 will be a spectacular celebration of our nation's culture and creativity on both the international stage and across our communities. (Fiona Hyslop, Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture, in 'Year of Creative Scotland 2012', at www.creativescotland.co.uk).

The SNP's liberal internationalism connects with an aspiration to reorient the national psyche away from a British 'dependency' towards a vision of self-sufficiency on the European and world stage.

7.2.6 Think Tank Report

Already strong, the SNP's economic imperative was reinforced by the onset of the global financial crisis in the early twenty-first century. In September 2008, the Western world was hit by a global crisis that saw the collapse of major financial institutions and the government bail-out of big banks. In Scotland, the devolved government, working within the reduced spending limits imposed by the UK government, was forced to reduce its public expenditure, despite concerns over the consequences of cutting "too far and too fast"[66].

The on-going consequences of the crisis have left few public institutions untroubled by economic worries, and the museum and gallery sector has proved no less vulnerable to cutbacks and austerity measures than any other sector funded (or part-funded) by government. In response to funding challenges and the perceived lack of unity in the sector, in June 2009, the SNP culture minister organised a 'museums

[66] See *Scottish spending review 2011 and draft budget 2012-13* www.scotland.gov.uk.

summit' that brought together museum and gallery representatives from across Scotland, to discuss the major issues and uncertainties facing the sector. The financial crisis was the major underlying concern, but clear direction and common strategy were also important preoccupations (see Museums Summit – Full Summary, at: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/arts/Archive/CulturalPolicy/museums-policy/museums-summit/full-summary).

The *Museums Think Tank* was established by the SNP culture minister in 2009, following the 'museums summit'. Its final report was published in December 2010. Prepared by leading figures in the sector, including the Director-General of the National Galleries of Scotland and the Director of National Museums Scotland, the report paved the way for a new, shared *National Strategy* for museums and galleries right across Scotland. Recommending the establishment of a National Development Body, and a Museums and Galleries Forum, the report aimed to direct professional and political thinking towards improving the "efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the many bodies in the sector" (*Report by the Museums Think Tank*, 2010: 10). The key theme that emerged from this report was one of economic adaptation. Given the impact of the global financial crisis and the UK recession on public service spending, the report set out to address the serious concerns felt by many in the sector concerning future resourcing. Forecasting a gloomy funding environment in the not too distant future, the report emphasised the importance of strategic adjustment, in particular the value of encouraging and supporting much greater collaboration and cooperation between national and local institutions. The Think Tank was also tasked with re-communicating to government the societal value of the sector. Indeed, with the pursuit and obtainment of public resources becoming ever more competitive, the need to package the benefits and justify the worth of museums was, and remains, very high. Painting a picture of a dynamic sector with a large and positive impact on individuals and society at large, the report stressed the 'transformational' potential of the museum[67]. Using the findings of recent social

[67] "Our museums and galleries are at the very heart of the development and transformation of society" (*Think Tank Report*, 2010).

research, the picture painted by the report was, in truth, one very similar to that developed under New Labour. It stated:

> A recent report highlighted the potential for museums to help tackle numerous social issues from crime prevention through to migration, offering "central spaces of mutual understanding…where cultural identity can be developed." Museums and galleries in Scotland generate community-focused projects contributing to local pride, a sense of empowerment and greater commitment to the local area. Outreach projects often engage with prisons, hospitals and ethnic minorities, helping to promote social engagement and confidence (*Report by the Museums Think Tank,* 2010: 8).

Although in recent years, under SNP administration, the terminology of 'social inclusion' has lost a great deal of its political currency, many of the underlying themes and ideas continue to hold sway. Working alongside marginalised groups, such as those from "prisons, hospitals and ethnic minorities", the government-backed museum sector continues to endorse a social mission promoting access, participation and social cohesion, and the sector continues to develop initiatives and programmes designed to help tackle such issues as isolation, alienation and disaffection. Moreover, the sector maintains a strong fixation with the idea of raising 'confidence'. Today, the sector envisions itself as a morale-boosting organisation, promoting not only 'well-being' for the participant, but also promoting confidence and goodwill between individuals, and between individuals and institutions. Certainly, the sector is keen to project itself as a "trusted space" within society, helping to build connections and bring people together.

At the heart of this image are the large national cultural institutions offering free access to all. The economic crisis has, however, brought the issue of admission fees into focus (see 'SNP Rules out Entry Fees for National Treasures', The Scotsman 11/11/2010). In 1998, the Royal Museum of Scotland and the new National Museum of Scotland began to levy an entry charge due to funding pressures. This brought the institutions in line with a number of other UK national museums (such as the V&A) who had started charging a decade earlier. Ideed, in the 1980s, at a UK level, national museums faced the challenge of a virtual freeze on the amount of

cash they received from government as well as new responsibilities for their building repairs (Kendall, 2013). Many of these institutions in England chose to introduce an admission charge to fill their funding gap. However, this charging policy had a dramatic consequence, with many charging institutions reporting a significant drop in visitor numbers (Kendall, 2013). While Conservative policy encouraged self-sufficiency and stimulated an entrepreneurial spirit within institutions, it also precipitated a significant fall in public participation within the charging sector. New Labour reversed this policy in the early twenty-first century, pushing UK national museums to reinstated free admission for all. This was delivered in 2001 across the UK, with government pledging extra support and funding for institutions. Whatever the neoliberal influence over New Labour, it is clear the party also believed in the tempering hand of the state. This tempering agenda was characterised, in the cultural field, by new emphases on access and education. It was an agenda gladly embraced by the museum sector and one that continues today in Scotland under SNP leadership.

With pressure once more being felt by national institutions, the possibility of charging has once again been put forward by some within the sector, especially by those who feel the nationals draw visitors away from smaller fee-paying establishments. However, admission fees at the nationals is not something supported by SNP policy makers. The culture minister Fiona Hyslop declared in 2010: "Free admission to the national collections is an important part of the Scottish Government's cultural policy. I want to see that continue" (Hyslop, in 'SNP Rules out Entry Fees for National Treasures', The Scotsman). On the one hand, in the twenty-first century, forces of economic liberalism push the museum to support itself independently from government. On the other, social liberalism steers the museum to encourage wide-spectrum participation. This is a clear tension in the sector, and one that continues to impact the contemporary institution.

7.2.7 National Strategy

The financial crisis of 2007-08 highlighted the vulnerability of many modern Western economies in the twenty-first century. Whatever the medium term prospect of economic recovery, the crisis has emphasised the exposure of Western societies to global economic risk and turmoil. It has also played into and consolidated more diffuse mistrust and fears in society, which include a loss of faith in the moral integrity of government, financial institutions and other public pillars of society. In the twenty-first century, it is clear that an endless stream of scandal is perpetuating the erosion of trust in institutions of authority in the UK. Today, the military, parliament, the police, the press, banks, corporations, all struggle to maintain their public image[68]. At the same time, events such as the 2011 'England Riots' affirm the possibility of a future fragmentation of society along lines of group, tribal or gang conflict. Combined with anxieties over energy, climate change, international competition, terrorism, environmental degradation and other global concerns, such scandals and crises have helped consolidate a climate of doubt and uncertainty over the long-term sustainability of current Western society. Arguably, they have reinforced a pervasive uncertainty inherent to late Western modernity. In the words of Anthony Giddens: "Doubt, a pervasive feature of modern critical reason, permeates into everyday life as well as philosophical consciousness, and forms a general existential dimension of the contemporary social world" (Giddens, 1991: 3).

The museum of the twenty-first century attempts to step into the gap, to claim a role of cohesive connector. As the *National Museum Director's Conference* [69] explains on its website: "Museums and archives provide an invaluable educational tool in understanding identities, and unique opportunities to bring different people together" (National Museum Director's Council, 'Identity, Diversity and Citizenship: Lessons for our National Museums', at www.nationalmuseums.org.uk).

[68] These have all suffered scandal in recent years, including, for instance, the death of Baha Mousa (public enquiry published in 2011), the 2009 UK Parliament expenses scandal, the death of Ian Tomlinson (2009), the 2010-11 press phone-hacking scandal, the 2012 Libor scandal, and the 2013 corporate tax avoidance scandal.

[69] (of which the National Galleries of Scotland is a leading Scottish member)

In March 2012, Museums Galleries Scotland published *Going Further – The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*. This was a central new document in the landscape of museums and galleries policy in Scotland, and it made clear the cohesive role of the sector. It declared: "Museums and galleries serve as focal points for communities and as inclusive spaces where people from different backgrounds can come together" (*Going Further – The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, 2012: 22). In fact, the National Strategy proposed a new ten-year 'vision' for the museum sector as a whole to follow, based around ideas of empowerment and strengthening connections between society and museums. In the document's own words: "Scotland's museums and galleries will be ambitious, dynamic and sustainable enterprises: connecting people, places and collections; inspiring, delighting and creating public value" (: 14).

The sector, in an important sense, was encouraged to consolidate its symbolic status within the nation. This status might be termed simply as a champion of *objects*, *people* and *society*. First, the museum was to consolidate its traditional function as a repository for treasured objects and culture. Indeed, it was to strengthen its image as a primary custodian of 'heritage'. As the Strategy made clear:

> The sector is responsible for the care and management of the collections of Scotland as an important part of our heritage. As such the sector is collectively responsible to current and future generations for safeguarding Scotland's tangible and intangible cultural heritage (*Going Further – The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, 2012: 10).

The long-term outlook of the museum sets the institution apart from many others in society, and it is this image of custodianship over extended time that is increasingly seized upon by managers of the sector as a major asset of considerable symbolic importance in the twenty-first century.

Second, the museum was to reinforce its function as a public space open to all, a meeting ground for citizens of all backgrounds and visitors from abroad. It was to strengthen its role as an attractor of people, promoting participation and

encouraging friendly human encounter. The strategy declared: "[Museums and galleries should] increase cultural participation, maximising the number and range of people who see collections and visit and enjoy museums" (*Going Further – The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, 2012: 22).

Third, the museum was to consolidate its role as educator and stimulator of society. Indeed the Strategy embraced a concept of "urban regeneration through culture" (*Going Further – The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, 2012: 22), in which the museum was to help galvanise social renewal through increased interaction and involvement with local 'communities' and a transformation of its own space.

For the first time in Scotland, a single strategy, aimed at establishing a united purpose and vision, was put forward for the museum and gallery sector as a whole. Directed by government and developed by MGS (which was to become the new National Development Body for Scotland's museums and galleries), in consultation with museums and galleries across the country, the National Strategy was designed to forge a more 'sustainable' future for the sector within society.

In response to the diffuse anxieties of modern society, a panoply of words associated with ideas of fortitude and endurance has penetrated deep into educational and cultural discourse. Chief among these today is the term 'sustainable'. Drawn from the environmentalist movement, 'sustainability' has entered mainstream discourse and gained wide currency in recent years. Helping in many ways to cover the continuation of orthodox ideologies (most notably the pursuit of economic growth and mass consumption) under a warm glow of supposed environmental and societal responsibility, its usage attempts to reassure the public that economic success can be maintained and stabilised in the twenty-first century. It is, of course, also an implicit acknowledgement of bad practice (in the past) and fear (of the future). It ties into a projection of stable development that the museum sector is keen to endorse. Indeed, supporting terms such as 'strength'

and ‘resilience’ have also become keywords for a sector seeking to consolidate its activities in the new age of globalisation.

> In these changing times with economic recession and greater competition felt across every sector, [the National Strategy] offers museums and galleries a chance to galvanize their activities. Working together towards a shared purpose will help give our sector strength and help museums and galleries become viable, resilient businesses (*National Strategy Consultation*, September 2011).

It is clear that the museum of the twenty-first century is to perform its societal function ever more in conjunction with a promotion of its own good ‘business’ practice. This has both economic and educational value to government and the sector.

In fact, this is made clear by the National Strategy’s six new aims that intertwine business and educational discourse[70]. With pressure on public resources becoming ever more acute, the SNP government has made clear its demands for all sectors to adopt a strong business ethic in pursuit of greater self-reliance (see Scottish Government’s *National Performance Framework* at www.scotland.gov.uk).

Supported and steered by the *Museum Strategy Group* (which once more included the Director-General of the National Galleries of Scotland and the Director of National Museums Scotland), the National Strategy emphasised the necessity for museums and galleries to work more closely together than ever before. Sharing resources, support and best practices, museums were encouraged to build a new programme and ethos of collaboration and cooperation at all levels. With money running scarce, the sector was urged to increase efficiency and to seek alternative sources of support. The Strategy document declared: “Investment is more than

[70] These were: Maximise the potential of our collections and culture -Strengthen connections between museums, people and places to inspire greater public participation, learning and well-being -Empower a diverse workforce to increase their potential for the benefit of the sector and beyond -Forge a sustainable future for sector organisations and encourage a culture of enterprise -Foster a culture of collaboration, innovation and ambition -Develop a global perspective using Scotland’s collections and culture (*Going Further – The National Strategy for Scotland’s Museums and Galleries*, 2012: 17).

simply money. It is also about people's time, skills and expertise…Partnerships are key to unlocking this vital resource" (*Going Further – The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, 2012: 8). In addition to fostering partnerships, museums were scripted to become vastly more 'creative' in the pursuit of financial income and economic security. As the document stated: "All organisations must therefore think increasingly creatively about how to be more efficient and effective with the resources they have" (*Going Further – The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, 2012: 10). Again, the terminology of 'creativity' appeared prominently endorsed in the cultural field. It has become a central term in twenty-first century cultural, business and educational discourses, consistently promoting the vitality of the individual and the businesses of liberal society.

7.3 Conclusion

The Scottish National Party seems to share much ideological ground with New Labour. The socially engaged museum model, promulgated under Labour, remains, today, largely unaltered despite the change of Holyrood administration. No revolution or radical transformation is evident. Much socially conscious activity continues under new government stewardship and the general ethos of educational engagement remains constant. Much of the language remains intact too, with a terminology bridging economic ambition and cultural activity happily appropriated by the SNP government.

Nevertheless, some change, in terms of focus and stress, is manifest. The concept of 'social inclusion' has been downplayed and replaced by a stronger emphasis on individual 'well-being'. The idea of alignment, and of unity of purpose at governmental level, has become an important theme of SNP policy; strategic frameworks, such as the National Performance Framework and the National Strategy for Scotland's museums and galleries, have emphasised the importance

SNP ideologues attach to the notion of an undivided national (Scottish) polity. The SNP Government has also emphasised (an already strong) commitment to economic growth and stressed the importance of economic contribution for all sectors, particularly following the recent financial crisis. More than ever, the museum sector and cultural institutions generally are called upon to justify their existence in terms of business merit and economic benefit to wider society. Concomitantly, SNP policy has underlined the international perspective of cultural institutions in Scotland. Indeed, the culture and heritage of Scotland are increasingly viewed as primary selling points for its 'competitive identity'. Perhaps most significant however has been the exuberant accentuation of the discourse of 'creativity', which now seems to permeate all policy on 'culture'.

8 Modern Education in Scotland

This Chapter explores state educational policy in Scotland in the twenty-first century –specifically the emergence of the Curriculum for Excellence, developed soon after devolution – and pays careful attention to the close alignment (in terms of discourse and ideological aspiration) between cultural policy and educational policy. It goes on to explore an important discourse of 'communities', used by Labour and SNP governments, in relation to state educational targeting.

8.1 Priorities of the Curriculum for Excellence

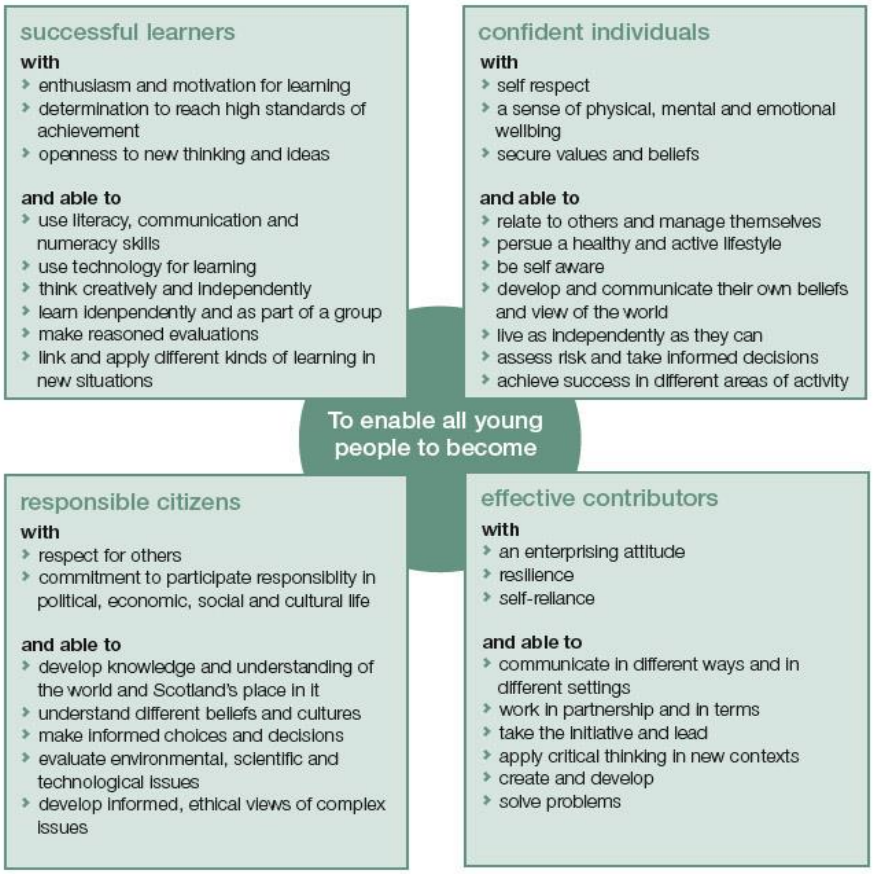

Image 8: Curriculum for Excellence: 'The Four Capacities' Poster Available: www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/06/06104407/5 [4th of February 2014]

In 1999, with the establishment of devolution, the large-scale planning and oversight of education in Scotland became the ultimate responsibility of the Scottish Parliament. From an early stage it became clear that a broad consensus existed within Parliament to reshape the broad programme of education in Scotland. For educational theorist Gari Donn the agenda was clear: "[Scottish] Parliament requires education to become a force for the provision of human capital into organisations, the companies of the knowledge economy" (Donn, 2003: 124). Thus, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Labour-led Scottish Executive set about modernizing the Scottish school curriculum. In light of the large number of interested parties and the sensitivities of such an undertaking, the process began with a national consultation exercise entitled the National Debate on education that ran from March to June 2002. The National Debate was an opportunity for parents and teachers and all who wished to, to put their views across, thus helping to publicize the planning as an inclusive process. In 2004, *A Curriculum for Excellence* was published by the 'curriculum review group' (a body composed mainly of senior professionals in the education sector). This report effectively launched the new curriculum, setting out the core changes that would transform both the primary and secondary education system in Scotland. The report acknowledged the National Debate, using it to establish the legitimacy of the proposed changes to the education system. It also explained the supposed motivation for change; this was primarily, to quote the authors, to 'fully prepare today's children for adult life in the twenty-first century' (*A Curriculum for Excellence: The Curriculum Review Group*, 2004: 3). For policy makers, the twenty-first century seemed to present itself as a brave new world, requiring novel approaches and a break with the past. Education could no longer afford to be nostalgic or encumbered by outdated practices; it had to be "forward looking"[71]. The aspiration was to create a framework for more collaborative, more joined-up, cross-disciplinary learning. Education would be led by teachers and be more relevant to students' lives (Patterson 2012).

[71] Indeed, Education Scotland, the public agency responsible for overseeing the implementation of the new curriculum, wrote: "If Scotland's children and young people are to gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the twenty-first century, we need a forward-looking, coherent curriculum…" (Education Scotland, The Case for Change, at www.educationscotland.gov.uk).

At the core of the new curriculum was the appearance of four new "capacities" aimed at empowering learners in the twenty-first century. The curriculum was founded on the core task of developing "*successful learners*", "*confident individuals*", "*responsible citizens*" and "*effective contributors*" to society (see image 2)**.** These four capacities were conceived to encapsulate the aspired outcome of the educational endeavour, setting new parameters of civic 'excellence'. In addition, the curriculum championed three main priority themes in the pursuit of its new excellence; these were: *business enterprise*, *creativity* and *citizenship* [72].

Although the foundations were laid under New Labour, the development and implementation of the new curriculum were taken over by the SNP government in 2007. In April 2009, after a long consultation period, educational authorities published the final 'formal guidance' for teachers concerning the new curriculum. The document (entitled simply *Curriculum for Excellence*) was concerned with establishing formal 'experiences and outcomes' and sought to clarify the objectives of the new curriculum. While the early (2004) outline of the curriculum had been light on detail and appeared to encourage a new spirit of teacher-led education, the new guidance favoured a more prescriptive approach, promoting a 'systematic specification' (Humes 2013: 85) of learning ends. While accusations of vagueness could be levelled at the initial curricular framework, the new guidelines seemed to undermine the principles of greater teacher autonomy central to the original vision (Paterson 2012). The 'prescriptive turn' has disappointed many who cherished the vision of open-ended outcomes, unfettered by top-down governmental interference.

Despite this divergence, the new document formally reasserted the curriculum's original four 'capacities' and reaffirmed the values on which these were founded. However, while there was little in the domain of values that contradicted the original curricular outline, different emphases were manifest. In particular the new

[72] As the Curriculum for Excellence progress report (2006) put forward clearly: "[The curriculum] should enable every child to develop his or her full potential through a broad range of challenging, well planned experiences which help them develop qualities of citizenship, enterprise and creativity" (*A Curriculum for Excellence: Progress and Proposals*, 2006: 9).

document clearly underlined a central proposition of 'well-being', a term popular with SNP policy makers (see chapter 7, subsection 7.2.5). Together with literacy and numeracy skills, the pursuit of learner well-being was to become part of a new set of shared responsibilities relevant to all teaching practice in Scotland.

Aggregating a panoply of different ideas under one label, the term was and remains particularly vague in meaning while retaining much positive connotation. Happy, safe, respected, included and healthy, the learner was to be guided to a new state of prosperity and opportunity. Covering mental, emotional, social and physical dimensions, the term was largely a vehicle for liberal and constructivist (see section 8.2 below) educational thought. Indeed the document endorsed a particular vision of education that was strictly anti-disciplinarian and founded on ideals of dialogue and self-development. In particular, the document underscored the educational objectives of independent thinking and independent living. Similarly it promoted a number of private attributes including 'personal resilience' and 'personal coping skills', while also emphasising the importance of individual contribution to supportive networks. Indeed learners were to be encouraged to forge a wide range of relationships and seek assistance in their ongoing pursuit of autonomy, especially in difficult times. The document framed one key learning intention in the following terms: "I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss" (*Curriculum for Excellence*, 2009: 13). It is clear that for educational policy-makers, future citizens must be physically and mentally prepared for the challenges of change, whether in their personal lives or more broadly within society.

It is difficult to define a civic ideal in the context of a liberal education. Certainly, the desirable end has no unique or single exemplar from which to draw inspiration. Neither is there a set of perfect archetypes. Rather, at best, there exist an assortment of flawed role models, each holding various lessons and teachings on a variety of established, 'worthy' ways of living. Ultimately, the abstract ideal - ambiguous, running, ungraspable - has no face, has no history, has no end. Nevertheless, certain qualities present themselves readily for liberal celebration. The successful liberal

citizen is adaptable, flexible and culturally open, able to resolve problems individually through lateral thinking and collaboration when necessary, able to respond successfully to changing circumstances, able to create opportunities for social and economic development.

8.1.1 A Business-Friendly Curriculum

Despite the SNP government being accused by political opponents of injecting "political bias" into the new curriculum, particularly in regard to the teaching of history (see for example "New Scottish school curriculum teaches students Britain is an arch-imperialist villain" 19th of May 2012, at www.dailymail.co.uk), the implementation of the curriculum remained, under SNP administration, closely aligned to founding intentions. Rather than emphasizing nationalist or parochial ideology, the curriculum, as a whole, remains, today, highly cosmopolitan in outlook, heavily focused on twenty-first century employability and skills acquisition for economic and civic participation in a 'global society'.

Education Scotland[73] made clear that the new curriculum was designed, above all, to equip children with the necessary skills to succeed in a globalised society and cope with an increasingly fast-paced world. More than ever, education was (and remains) geared to readying students for the difficulties and challenges of an internationally competitive and uncertain future. Education Scotland wrote thus:

> The world has changed considerably in recent times, and it is essential that education not only keeps up with change but anticipates the future as far as possible (Education Scotland, 'The Case for Change', at www.educationscotland.gov.uk).

[73] Education Scotland was established on the 1st of July 2011 by SNP ministers and is the new public body responsible for overseeing educational matters in Scotland. Its role includes supporting the Curriculum for Excellence, inspecting schools and encouraging adult learning in Scotland.

Change, in the discourse of policy-makers, is not only rapid but inevitable and unstoppable, the product of wider world forces beyond the direct control of nations or governments.

With the global financial crisis of 2007/08 that followed the collapse of Lehman Brothers, fears over a volatile and dangerous future have been heightened further. Economic threats and constraints form a pervasive backdrop that frames the concerns of policy makers at all levels. In *Building Security and Creating Opportunity: Economic Policy Choices in an Independent Scotland* (2013), these concerns were put forward clearly by the Scottish Government. Indeed, SNP policy makers identified three significant long-term trends in global society; these were "a shift in global power", "increased economic and political turbulence" and "a changing multilateral system" (Scottish Government, *Building Security and Creating Opportunity*, 2013: 187). The document hinted not only at rapid change and turbulence, but also at an amplified danger of "shock":

> As the financial crisis highlighted, the increasingly networked and linked global economy brings – along with the potential for growth – an increased risk of shocks in one part of the global economic system spreading across national boundaries (Scottish Government, *Building Security and Creating Opportunity*, 2013: 187)

To cope with this exterior instability, society and the individual are increasingly encouraged to welcome change and tolerate the unexpected. This flexible attitude requires, concomitantly, new forms of *internal stability*. 'Personal confidence', 'secure beliefs', 'emotional well-being', 'self-reliance', 'resilience', 'self-respect', and other terms of internal stability are amongst the key aspirations sold to citizens[74]. This internal stability does not imply stagnation or stasis but rather a dynamic ability to weather market forces through personal skills acquisition,

[74] See the *Four Capacities of 'Curriculum for Excellence'*.

adaptation and reinvention; it is understood in liberal terms as pursuant of self-responsibility[75].

The Curriculum for Excellence was conceived, from the beginning, to help students prepare for twenty-first century economic life, and explicitly fosters many business-friendly values (it is perhaps worth noting that the original Curriculum Review Group included the Director of the business lobby group *CBI Scotland*). Educational authorities declare for instance that "the aim of Curriculum for Excellence is to help prepare all young people in Scotland to take their place in a modern society and economy" (Scottish Government, *Curriculum for Excellence – Building the Curriculum 3 – a Framework for Learning and Teaching*, 2008: 3). At a strategic level, the new curriculum is replete with business-oriented language. One of the core 'capacities' of the curriculum, in particular, seems to stand out for its modern business orientation: the capacity for learners to become "effective contributors" (see image 2). Indeed, learners are supposed to develop an "*enterprising attitude*" and be able to "*create and develop*" – useful attributes for the striving entrepreneur. They must also be able to "*communicate in different ways and in different settings*", "*take the initiative and lead*", "*apply critical thinking in new contexts*", and "*solve problems*" – admirable qualities, no doubt, for the successful manager. Like good colleagues, they should also be able to "*work in partnership and in teams*", and in view of the competitiveness of the business world, they should develop "*resilience*" and "*self-reliance*".

Over the last half-century, manufacturing has declined in Scotland and elsewhere in the developed world, and (with the exception of a few sectors such as North Sea oil extraction) heavy industry has been largely exported overseas. The economy today is greatly supported by service-based businesses and whereas a manufacturing and industrial society might require a large population of manual workers with particular 'hard' skills and physical aptitude, a post-industrial society seems to

[75] "Our young people will need to be creative, resourceful, flexible, confident and responsible to succeed in the global economy" (SNP Cabinet Secretary for Education, News 16/08/2010, at www.scotland.gov.uk).

require much more flexibility and adaptability from its workers and managers. The Scottish Government has taken a keen interest in the needs and expectations of the contemporary business world with respect to education. In 2007, the Scottish Government published a report entitled *Skills for Scotland: a Lifelong Skills Strategy*. In this document government explained that: "…employers want people with the 'softer', less definable, skills that are vital for the success of their organisation" (*Skills for Scotland: a Lifelong Skills Strategy*, 2007: 8). These included:

> Effective time management, planning and organizing, effective oral and written communication skills, the ability to solve problems, being able to understand tasks or make submissions at short notice, the ability to work with others to achieve common goals, the ability to think critically and creatively, the ability to learn and continue learning, the ability to take responsibility for professional development, having the skills needed to manage, or be managed by, others (which draws on many of the other skills in this list) (Scottish Government, *Skills for Scotland: a Lifelong Skills Strategy*, 2007: 8).[76]

Most, if not all, of these listed 'skills' find themselves expressed and reflected within the Curriculum for Excellence's four key 'capacities' (see image 2). Others, such as 'effective time-management' are expressed implicitly within the school environment. The last 'skill', however, is perhaps the most significant, as the parentheses make clear; indeed, this leadership and versatility, this ability to manage and be managed, extended across society, seems a potent expression of a post-industrial society fixated on competitive success. The need to tighten the effectiveness and performance of Western businesses, at all levels, has become ever more apparent as relentless international competition continues to compel adaptation and efficiency savings. Today's businesses desire leaders with novel ideas for securing growth as well as a competitive international outlook. Certainly, business and economic concerns strongly influence current educational aspirations.

[76] The report also went on to list some key skills linked to self-employment. It declared: "some types of employment (and self-employment in particular) place a high value on enterprise skills – the skills to create ideas and make them work – including creating, networking, initiative, leadership and risk taking" (Scottish Government, *Skills for Scotland: a Lifelong Skills Strategy*, 2007: 9).

8.1.2 Emphasizing Creativity

All this desired flexibility and adaptability, all this business imagination and competitive inventiveness is neatly summed up and encapsulated in the key term of 'creativity'. Beyond its apparent cultural or social significance it is clear that the term is increasingly linked to the production of economic value. It is a prominent term in educational circles, where the link between 'creativity' and the wider economy is widely understood (or believed) and made explicit. Indeed, the link between 'creativity' and the generation of economic activity is a recurrent idea within such circles. As Education Scotland made clear: "Creativity is clearly important on a national and global level for economic growth and development" (Education Scotland, 'About Creativity', at www.educationscotland.gov.uk).

Certainly 'creativity' is a central concept of the new curriculum. More than simply referring to artistic ability, it seems that 'creativity' is now of vital importance to a new breed of entrepreneur. In *Fostering Creativity* (c2006), published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (now Education Scotland), this idea was made plain:

> Creativity is about generating ideas or producing things and transforming them into something of value. It involves being inventive, ingenious, innovative and entrepreneurial (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, *Fostering Creativity*, at www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk).

Given the decline in Western manufacturing output and industrial strength, citizens have been encouraged to integrate a new 'knowledge economy' (see chapter 7, section 7.1.1). Certainly, the ability to access, make sense of, interpret and utilize information in new, unusual and surprising ways has become a central requisite of (Western, post-industrial) economic success in the twenty-first century. Flexibility of thought and the endless pursuit of original ideas appear as cornerstones of the envisioned contemporary (and future) socio-economic order. 'Creativity' in all its broadness and nebulosity, encapsulating notions as diverse as 'novelty',

'originality', 'authenticity' and 'exceptionality', has in no small measure been put forward as a primary and salutary end of the state educational narrative, essential for the continuation of a successful, mass consumer society.

For educationalists the term has a broad meaning, referring to a general expression of imaginative thinking. In addition, it is also given increasingly to connote a rather quotidian form of practical contribution. This idea was expressed clearly by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (now Education Scotland):

> We all have creative capacities… This reflects a growing acceptance that creativity is not simply about coming up with big ideas, but coming up with practical solutions to everyday problems and then applying them to real world situations (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, *Fostering Creativity*, at www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk).

Today 'creativity' seems to refer to a favoured form of intellectual and practical participation. It is envisioned as an essential skill to be inculcated in all citizens; it is to be harnessed for the success of society and the maintenance of twenty-first century standards of living:

> Everything around us – our homes, cities, medical services, transport and communication systems – are conceived and developed by practical people who know how to implement creative ideas (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, *Fostering Creativity*, at www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk).

'Creativity', then, in educational discourse, is associated amongst other things with contemporary, multi-dimensional 'functionality'. Everything from our homes to our communication systems, it seems, is reliant on the 'creativity' of professional people to function smoothly. 'Creative' has become the idealised attribute and descriptor of the perfect post-industrial citizen. This is a dynamic, resourceful and optimistic citizen who ultimately stands against decline and destruction (See further discussion in section 8.5.4).

8.1.3 Teaching Global Citizenship

Education is a preparation for the future (a training for adult life in the twenty-first century); it is intimately tuned to the dominant fears, assumptions and aspirations of society and the state (percolating through the mass media). The educational programming of the modern educational system (including the museum) follows implicitly the leading ideological forecasts of the age. Influenced by academics, think tanks, corporations, and international bodies (see for instance *Outlook on the Global Agenda 2014 – Top Ten Trends Facing The World* published by the World Economic Forum), state-backed forecasts are perhaps most clearly sketched out (and presented at their 'gloomiest') within so-called 'Defence' projections regarding geopolitical trends (see for instance *Global Strategic Trends – Out to 2040* published January 2010 by the UK Ministry of Defence, and *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds* published December 2012 by the US National Intelligence Council). Such projections consistently emphasize the 'insecurity' of the twenty-first century due to rapid, uncontainable change, including expanding urbanisation, environmental degradation, rising inequality, growing societal instability, the increasing influence and misuse of technology, dwindling resources and, in particular, the declining power and leadership of Western states. The shifting balance of power from Europe and America to China and South East Asia is now the most recurring theme and concern in Western political and corporate forecasts:

> The world is likely to face the reality of a changing climate, rapid population growth, resource scarcity, resurgence in ideology, and shifts in global power from West to East (*Global Strategic Trends – Out to 2040*, Fourth edition, Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, Ministry of Defence, January 2010: 10).

The instability of the world and its future is increasingly depicted as an inevitable and natural facet of human existence. Against this 'truth', I argue that the museum

projects itself as a bulwark of constancy and resilience. Concomitantly, state education seeks to fashion a new resilient, liberal citizenry.

In fact, an important concept of 'citizenship' runs through the new curriculum; it is a unifying thread that connects the various strands of the curriculum. Indeed, education for citizenship is an integral and central component of the new system, and all teaching professionals in schools must contribute to its delivery. As Education Scotland states: "Education for citizenship permeates many of the experiences and outcomes within Curriculum for Excellence, and is therefore the shared responsibility of all (Education Scotland, 'Education for Citizenship', at www.educationscotland.gov.uk). Citizenship education as currently constituted is concerned with, and characterised above all by, the inculcation of *rights and responsibilities*. This is a contractual conception of citizenship that dates back to the 17th century; it is founded on the idea of a 'civic exchange' and is closely associated with the rise of modern political thought[77]. Significantly, however, the contemporary embodiment of modern citizenship is no longer strictly bounded by state or national borders; on the contrary it now possesses an explicitly *global* dimension and focus. Education Scotland stresses that "Education for citizenship addresses the exercising of rights and responsibilities within communities at local, national and global levels" (Education Scotland, 'Education for Citizenship', at www.educationscotland.gov.uk). Children are taught to envision themselves not simply as national citizens but rather as "global citizens". This model is to frame the

[77] Modern conceptions of citizenship in Britain, building upon a classical heritage, were born largely in the seventeenth century (Russell 1946). Reflecting upon the contemporary issues of instability, tyranny and war, English political philosophers began to question the political order of the day. John Locke wrote: "He who attempts to get another man into his absolute power, does thereby put himself into a state of war with him; it being to be understood as a declaration of a design upon his life" (Locke, 1690, Chapter 3, section 17). 17th century thinkers began to consider the possibility of establishing new forms of government, built on 'better' (more reasonable) moral foundations. By repudiating the idea of government founded on God and instead establishing legitimacy on a more 'worldly' social contract, these thinkers helped undermine the long established power structures of society. Instead of unconditional loyalty to a (divinely-chosen) monarch, it was argued that loyalty should be given to common laws that bind society together. Many believed that the purpose of the state was to protect the fundamental needs of its citizens; so long as these rights were respected, the state could expect loyalty and obedience from its citizens. For Locke, these fundamentals, which included the preservation of property, liberty and life, constituted "natural rights".

way children think about all aspects of life – from politics to economics, from nature to culture. Education Scotland continues:

> Global citizenship is a key context for learning across the curriculum and ensures that our children and young people can play a full and active part in society – politically, socially, economically, environmentally and culturally (Education Scotland, 'Themes across Learning', at www.educationscotland.gov.uk).

It is clear that at the heart of the new curriculum there stands a new model of citizen. This is a citizen who carries the hopes and aspirations of a society faced with challenges of a global scale, with challenges created by modernity itself, and in particular, with challenges precipitated by that most emblematic of modern fears: rapid, volatile change:

> In our fast-changing world, it is necessary for children and young people to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to adapt and to thrive. Their education should prepare them for living and working in a global society. The big issues affecting our planet, such as climate change and global poverty, require an innovative generation that knows how to find solutions (*Developing Global Citizens Within Curriculum for Excellence* 2011: 8).

This citizenship education aims then to develop a generation with an unbounded vision of the world, empowered by its intellectual resourcefulness and adaptability, a generation invited to forge a 'contract' not simply with the nation but with the wider globe. This planetary stage has become the appropriate arena for the *ambition* of the individual. It is here, pitched in competition against every other, that one is to find a true sense of self. As Education Scotland explains:

> The Scottish Government's international perspective indicates that the focus should be on Scotland and Scotland's place in the world – challenging our ambitions against the achievement of other countries and aiming to have a confident sense of self (Education Scotland, 'International Education', at www.educationscotland.gov.uk).

The civic values promoted by this cosmopolitan education cannot, however, be disassociated from an underlying liberal morality. Indeed, issues addressed through education for citizenship include "human rights, sustainable development, peace and conflict resolution, social equality and appreciation of diversity" (Education Scotland, 'Education for Citizenship', at www.educationscotland.gov.uk). From the recognition of individual freedoms to human equality and a plural society, the model citizen upholds the classic values of Western liberalism. Moreover, with its promotion of human rights, social equality, diversity and conflict resolution it is clear that this citizenship agenda contains a 'philanthropic' dimension, humanist in scope, but equally individual in essence. Indeed, the educational narrative scripts a contributing individual, called upon to help himself and to help those in need, to care personally about the development, and in particular the self-sufficiency, of others. Today, these others are no longer necessarily the others of one's own 'tribe', but include all mankind.

8.2 Fostering Autonomy

Realizing 'potential' has emerged as a significant expression in the liberal educational discourse of the twenty-first century[78], and is particularly popular in the context of the new curriculum:

> In 2004, the Scottish Executive developed an agenda for action built on the belief in the potential of all young people and the commitment to help each of them realise that potential (Scottish Executive, *Happy, Safe and Achieving their Potential*, 2005: 12).

Today, all individuals are given to possess an inherent 'potential', and education exists to unlock this mysterious promise. On one level, such language sweeps away

[78] The word 'potential' is also popular in the discourse of museums; see National Strategy 'aims' in subsection 2.3.7

unpleasant notions of natural inequality, with the spectrum of abilities and intelligences brought under a universal and egalitarian label. On another level, the terminology cleverly denies the 'shaping' of the individual; indeed it denies any 'violence' inherent in the educational process. Education becomes not an exterior and alien imposition, but an innate prospective. Educators, then, enable something that, in an intangible sense, already exists. As the word 'potential' implies, the concrete realisation of this abstract may never be fully actualised. As 'potential' is undefined, it is suited to a life-long course of education, adult training and professional development, to a never-ending pursuit of personal improvement. Significantly, 'potential' is not burdened with outside obligations or debts to society; it is rather a duty to self. Though learners are to be emotionally and materially supported, in the end, 'realizing potential' puts the onus of responsibility firmly upon the individual.

Philosopher of education Paul Theobald wrote:

> As we have embraced liberal tenets more tightly than ever in this society, that is, as we have more steadfastly clung to an individual orientation to life, as we have defined life plans as synonymous with competition in the race for material accumulation, and as we have elevated the status of risk takers among us, the accolade "successful" has come to be a much better cultural "fit" than the accolade "virtuous". Virtue speaks of attention to shouldering one's obligations to others and is therefore more at home in a community-oriented worldview. Success, by contrast, confines itself to the level of the individual (Theobald, in Parker 1997: 7).

The Curriculum's core 'Capacities' make no reference to virtue, but they do make overt reference to success, risk-taking and the individual. The modern curriculum is set up to enable all young people to become, amongst other things, "confident individuals" (see image 2). These confident individuals are to be able to "*live as independently as they can*", "*assess risk and make informed decisions*" and "*achieve success in different areas of activity*". There is little doubt that the modern educational narrative in Scotland positions a strong independent 'individual' at its denouement. As educational theorist Jenny Reeves argued, the Curriculum for Excellence promotes the terminology of a self-driven 'learner' as opposed to a more

dependent ‘pupil’. This idealised person is scripted to be “someone with an agentive and autonomous orientation to the world”, “someone committed to self-improvement” and “someone who has mastered the skills of personal learning so that they can respond flexibly to a changing environment” (Reeves, 2013: 51).

This flexible individualism also entails cooperation with others. Successful autonomy is reinforced in educational circles by an ethos of *short-term* collaboration and *adaptable* partnership. Successful autonomy now entails an ability to work productively, often briefly and flexibly, with others, but still in pursuit of private aims and individual identities. This temporary cooperation has become the new individual norm for a society increasingly geared towards corporate ambition and personal competitive success.

In light of this increasing emphasis on autonomy coupled with flexible teamwork, the status and role of the teacher has altered correspondingly. A fundamental change is now explicitly made clear within the Scottish educational narrative; the traditional position of the teacher as knowledge expert has shifted to that of supportive collaborator. The Scottish Government writes thus:

> …schools and centres should also think about how they model and support active learning and enquiry. This can involve less directive approaches and encourage teachers to make clear they are also learners, working together with pupils to find answers and solutions (Scottish Government, *Curriculum for Excellence – Building the Curriculum 2 Active Learning - a Guide to Developing Professional Practice*, 2010: 5).

As well as emphasizing the ‘learner’ status of the teacher, there is also a will to raise the learner to the status of teacher. This process is called ‘peer education’; it is a process whereby learners take on responsibility for helping other learners.

> Using a peer education model to deliver information and education to young people can ensure that the adult partner (for example, a teacher or school nurse), peer educator and peer educatee take an equal role in informing, shaping and passing on information (Education Scotland, ‘Peer Education’, at www.educationscotland.gov.uk).

This represents a significant shift in the relationship between teacher and learner. The adult is now a "partner"; hierarchy is not quite dismantled, but it is significantly reconfigured. Deference to authority is abandoned in favour of personal research and responsibility. Since learning is scripted to be largely a self-driven enterprise, learners must be supported indirectly by attendant adults who inspire, motivate and stimulate the interest of their young charges. Indeed the terminology of 'inspiration' permeates educational discourse today. It is a highly enigmatic word enlisted into liberal education for its obvious rejection of immediate threat and punishment and as a trigger to transformative processes in the individual.

Perhaps the most central pedagogical strategy favoured by the new curriculum is that of so-called 'active learning'. This strategy, which offers increased opportunities for practical and outdoor learning, discussion and problem solving, is to be encouraged in all aspects of the curriculum. In 2010, The Scottish Government published a booklet entitled: *Curriculum for Excellence – Building the Curriculum 2 Active Learning - a Guide to Developing Professional Practice*. The booklet makes plain the underlying 'constructivist' influence on the new curriculum:

> The activity in active learning is cognitive even when, as in the case of very young children, physical action may also be involved. In other words, active learning always involves a conscious act of thinking. This is a constructivist form of pedagogy (Scottish Government, *Curriculum for Excellence – Building the Curriculum 2 Active Learning - a Guide to Developing Professional Practice*, Scottish Government 2010: 2).

Constructivists view 'learning' as an inherently subjective and personal enterprise, dependent on an individual's particular life-story and prior knowledge. Constructivism holds that knowledge is 'constructed' as opposed to 'absorbed' and stresses the importance of admitting the learner's active involvement in his or her own learning. By nature, constructivism is very critical of didactic methods that

seek to impart knowledge to ‘passive’ recipients. Learning is best achieved, it is suggested, by stimulating the learner’s independent cognitive abilities. From this perspective, the learner is an active protagonist, with a strong innate will to freedom and a will to autonomous action. Children are thus ultimately encouraged to ‘take responsibility’ for their own learning.

8.3 About Liberal Doctrine

Undoubtedly, liberalism seeks to establish the underlying ‘essential’ equality of people and integrate difference into an encompassing ‘functionality’. This is an overriding functionality that strips individuals of their natural and cultural peculiarities to expose their underlying human ‘core’. This shared essence exists under and beyond what is deemed to be the superficial difference of belief and body. Liberalism reaches for a human standard that can be applied universally, that transcends all possible scripts of human dissimilarity; it attempts to establish or ‘unveil’ this standard of common humanity, internationally, through its efforts to install and consolidate a legal framework of universal human rights. This is a task firmly embraced by the Scottish Government[79].

Liberalism tolerates many identities. Because of its ultimate focus on the human symbol, the doctrine displays a high acceptance of cultural and life-choice differences. Indeed, ‘diversity’ is a key feature of the liberal landscape, and the visible accommodation of difference is a fundamental preoccupation of liberal institutions and liberal education (and indeed legislators). Unlike various nationalisms and religious doctrines that smother dissimilarity and oppose or de-legitimise deviation from a traditional (often hierarchical) order, the liberal impulse seems to thrive in the display of variety.

[79] As the Scottish Government makes clear: “You have rights because you are entitled to them as a human being, regardless of your personal circumstances, beliefs, religion or culture. Human rights are therefore something on which we can all find common ground” (Scottish Government, Human Rights, at www.scotland.gov.uk).

Connected to this endorsement of variety, the concept of 'identity' (understood in liberal terms as a superficial cloak over the human being) has been opened up in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to huge commercial exploitation and development within Western societies. Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman wrote:

> Given the intrinsic volatility and unfixity of all or most identities, it is the ability to shop around in the supermarket of identities, the degree of genuine or putative consumer freedom to select one's identity and to hold to it as long as desired, that becomes the royal road to the fulfilment of identity fantasies (Bauman, 2000: 83).

Today, identity is no longer easily defined or moulded by state, religious or class traditions and origins. As Bauman argued (in *Liquid Modernity*, 2000), identity has been opened up to corporate interest and market competition. No longer are the citizens of Western democracies described in terms of a united national ethnicity and monoculture; increasingly (though, of course, not without dispute) the contemporary nation-state has been depicted in terms of a multicultural and plural society. This shift reflects an increased 'visibility' of many once minor or marginalised segments of society, and the erosion of an overtly paternalistic order. It also reflects the transfer of 'identity' from the domain of the 'given' to that of free choice and market selection. Indeed, European societies, generally, have entered something of a new or heightened phase of modernity; Bauman (2000) proposed the terminology of 'liquid modernity' to describe this state. Marked by the privatisation of life-planning, individual political ambivalence and perpetual anxiety, this emergent modernity has lost much in the way of communitarian loyalty or sense of duty to the existing traditional state. Indeed, with the discrediting and erosion of large-scale central planning, it has become ever more the responsibility of the individual to define his or her own life course[80].

[80] In the words of Bauman: "With the Supreme offices seeing to the regularity of the world and guarding the boundary between right and wrong no longer in sight, the world becomes an infinite collection of possibilities: a container filled to the brim with a countless multitude of opportunities yet to be chased or already missed"(Bauman, 2000: 61).

Successful liberal autonomy entails a world of independent and differently motivated citizens all competing within an open system, governed (at least in theory) by democratic rules and market laws. Political scientist Tom Young described liberalism as "the armed wing of Enlightenment" (Young, 2002: 173). In its ultimate reduction to the individual, liberalism follows more closely than any other modern ideology the reductionist logic of Enlightenment thought; liberalism deconstructs existing cultures to reveal the atomised individual hidden beneath. Here at the 'atomic level' universal forces can be studied and decrypted, and the mechanics of a more rational order can be (hypothetically) deciphered. Although there exist many strands of liberalism, and many internal debates and zones of conflict, it is clear that these strands share common core concepts and principles. Liberalism remains a recognizable and coherent political doctrine that has kept close faith with its Enlightenment origins (Young 2002). Foucault described liberalism as "a form of critical reflection on government practice" (Foucault in Rabinow 1997: 77). He wrote:

> Liberalism resonates with the principle: "One always governs too much" – or at least, at any rate, one always must suspect that one governs too much (Foucault, in Rabinow, 1997: 74).

In this abstract guise, liberalism's principle reflection revolves around the *rationalisation* (minimisation) of government – around a quest for order in a context of minimum state intervention. However, liberal doctrine cannot be entirely reduced to issues of government control. There is no single 'recipe' for liberal government and widely differing conceptions of 'minimum government' can equally claim a liberal heritage. Liberal governmentality rests then upon the interpretation of an underlying liberal morality. For liberal theory, human beings are essentially private individuals motivated largely by their own private interests and view of the world. Concomitantly, one set of private interests and view of the world is as legitimate as another, and there need be no necessary rational concurrence. The (claimed) rational order is derived from allowing individuals to choose and organize their own lives according to their own criteria and assessment of the 'good life'. Under this proposition, the role of the state is only to uphold some minimal

requirements or principles for the functioning of an orderly (fair) society. The key feature of the liberal state is thus its limited (though still crucial), parameterised rule. Although liberal thought is disapproving of anarchism, it is also suspicious of excessive state intervention and therefore reluctant to extend huge powers to state institutions. No matter the ideals or good intentions that may fuel calls for an expanded state, the danger for liberal thinkers is always the possibility of a descent into tyranny. There should be no grand design or centralised plan for society; in liberal thought, the improvement of society must proceed incrementally through the natural and rational functioning of a free society of individuals. Liberal political theory then does not promote a particular vision or conception of the good life; instead it promotes basic principles of order deemed best able to safeguard the survival, flourishing and multiplication of the autonomous[81] individual[82].

Liberalism is not neutral (in any ultimate sense) nor does it allow a total unfettered expression of difference (Galston1991). Nevertheless a certain state 'impartiality' remains a central scheme in the order of any liberal system. Whatever the irrationality, foolishness, imprudence of the many groups and individuals that together form the object of governance, whatever the tensions and oppositions between them, whatever the power differences, the liberal state must be seen to withhold judgment. So long as one group or individual is not undermining the autonomy of another, then the governing body must remain impartial to the rights and wrongs of any particular conception of the good life. Liberal thinking is thus extremely and particularly reserved about giving final answers on issues of identity (in opposition to other forms of political or religious thought)[83].

[81] This recalls the words of John Kekes: "however important [the] basic values [of liberalism] are, something needs to be added to them to explain why they are so highly valued. This something is the true core of liberalism, the inner citadel for whose protection all the liberal battles are waged: autonomy." (Kekes 1997: 15)

[82] In the words of Charvet and Kaczynska-Nay: "Liberalism is the idea that people should be free to choose what values to pursue in their lives provided that they pursue them within the limits of an equal liberty. On this view, there will always be a bedrock of liberal values in a liberal community that underlies and constrains the choices that its individual members make. These are liberty and equality and the fundamental respect for human beings as autonomous choosers that grounds their entitlement to an equal freedom" (Charvet & Kaczynska-Nay, 2008: 9).

[83] In the words of the philosopher of education Eamonn Callan: "The liberal state takes no stand on opposing convictions about the virtuous life, allowing its citizens to make of themselves whatever

In Britain, today, liberal doctrine is being pulled in two directions. The growth of *neoliberal* politics in Britain, from the 1980s onward, has taken place against a backdrop of *social liberalism*, ingrained since the mid-twentieth century and reinforced, post-war, by such institutions as the National Health Service. These competing forms of liberal doctrine promulgate different levels of government support or intrusion and thus different societal perspectives and different responses to crisis and decline; in particular, while the former will confidently propound austerity, the latter will favour increased state support and stimulus. In real world politics, however, both strands of liberal doctrine remain ambiguously intertwined. It is clear that educational ideals in Scotland, far from validating one particular vision of liberal doctrine, remain in truth largely ambiguous. On the one hand, it appears the Scottish educational narrative scripts something of a neoliberal 'model being'; this is an agent that always seeks to maximise its appeal to markets, very much as a business operates. In the words of anthropologist Ilana Gershon:

> By seeing people as businesses, a neoliberal perspective presumes that people own their skills and traits, that they are a collection of assets that must be continually invested in, nurtured, managed, and developed (Gershon, 2011: 539).

Certainly, the life-long adaptation to markets and the continual development of skills for work and enterprise are clear pursuits fostered by the Curriculum for Excellence. On the other hand, however, there remains, alongside this conception of (economics-based) excellence, another perspective that somehow views the human being as something eternally above and beyond the normal, mundane matrix of everyday reality, that views the protection and welfare of the human being as the moral and collective responsibility of all. The insistence on human rights and an ethical responsibility to environment and others, outside of direct business and market interest, remain steadfast aspects of the liberalism of the education system.

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they choose within the very loose boundaries fixed by law, whereas the religious state moulds and disciplines character according to a fixed model of well-being" (Callan, 1997: 4).

This perspective is alluded to in the Curriculum for Excellence's 'Citizens' capacity: (set out in the bottom left quadrant of image 2).

8.4 Educational Contribution of Museums

If an acceptance or pursuit of various forms of violence, either individual or state sanctioned, was evident within the industrial societies of the past, today such behaviour has become increasingly difficult to legitimize publicly. The institutional racism, sexism, and prejudice that might have flourished unchecked under industrial -imperial regimes has been challenged step by step by liberal society and increasingly dismantled. In particular, violence has been chased from an ever more central educational endeavour. From corporeal chastisement to enforced silence, punishment strategies founded on 'aggressive' energy have been gradually purged from state educational policy. Today, many institutions of the past stand accused of harbouring ingrained, destructive prejudices. Certainly, the museums and galleries of the past have been accused in recent decades, by post-colonial and feminist theorists, of naturalizing and legitimating structures of domination and subjugation (see Duncan and Wallach 1980, Mitchell 1989, Kreamer 1992, Porter 1996, Marstine 2005, Edwards & Mead 2013). They have been charged with raising a male-dominated Western bourgeois culture and civilization to the summit of human achievement while reducing others to a status of primitivism and inferiority. The discipline and authoritarian hierarchies familiar to industrialized imperial society have corroded under increasingly liberal regimes, to be replaced by new forms of reward-based control, including the seduction strategies familiar to the advertising and corporate world. Today, 'offence' threatens to disrupt these seduction strategies, to undermine the precarious associations of independently networked individuals. The exemplary business, public institution or citizen strives to become a universal friend, amenable and tolerant of all. Discourtesy, incivility, disrespect and other forms of intellectual violence (whatever their hidden, private prevalence) must now be publicly disowned.

Moreover, in a perceived age of volatility, the museum has become ever more reassuring, ever more integrated and collaborative with mainstream education. Adopting an ever more seductive voice and image, the museum presents itself, today, as an exemplar of business sense, civic participation and creative thinking in an ever more challenging and competitive global world.

Indeed, modern state education in Scotland champions three main priority themes that revolve around ideas of 'business enterprise', 'citizenship' and 'creativity'. These are ideas not only supported but also actively pursued by the modern museum sector. The 2012 National Strategy for museums and galleries in Scotland made this plain. The document abounded with business-friendly language, exhorting the sector to foster "a more enterprising spirit" (*Going Further – The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, 2012: 12), to adopt "an enterprising edge in the way challenges are approached" (: 10), and to embrace "a culture of enterprise" (: 17). The document was also replete with reference to a cosmopolitan outlook, echoing the global citizenship familiar to the Curriculum for Excellence. In this way, the sector was to "develop a global perspective" (: 38), become "ambassadors on a global scale" (: 38), enhance "competitiveness in the global tourism market" (: 38), while promoting "greater understanding of other cultures" (: 38). Finally, the document was rich with the language of 'creativity', 'dynamism' and 'innovation'. The sector was thus to "encourage innovative and creative ways of developing collections" (: 34), think "increasingly creatively about how to be more efficient and effective" (: 10), and pursue "creative approaches to income generation" (: 30). The museum was exhorted to increase its revenue streams, expand its audience/consumer base, and step up the generation of market-friendly ideas. To put it simply, the museum was to pursue new money, new people and new designs.

However, the sector is not only to embrace these ideas for its own self-development, it is also to help and contribute to the self-development of visitors. While endorsing businesses values and developing a global perspective, the main

educational contribution of the modern museum in Scotland is connected to the promotion of 'creativity' (and associated ideas of authenticity and innovation). This theme brings together various facets of a preferred civic and economic imagination. Arguably, in linking market-friendly innovation, multi-dimensional thinking, individualist philosophy and non-violent administration (of society and self), 'creativity' has become the label for sanctioned thought in twenty-first century liberal Scotland. It also largely parameterises the 'falling action' of the contemporary educational drama, leading from 'community dependency' to the elusive aspiration of 'excellent autonomy'.

The growing need to 'mine' every possible economic seam demands a new gregarious population able to seize emerging or as yet unimagined business opportunities. 'Culture', in particular, is increasingly viewed as an important source of opportunity:

> Culture is an integral part of Scotland's economy and it runs like a golden thread through so much of what is good in our society. That is why we want to see more active participation in the arts – because it is good for our well-being. It is why creativity is central to our new Curriculum and why we are establishing new connections between our schools and cultural organisations (Fiona Hyslop, Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture, 'A Creative Scotland', at www.snp.org).

A 'culture' of 'creativity', open to the constant generation of novelty and the participation of all, promises economic benefits to a post-industrial age in which the concept of 'identity' has been subjected to an unprecedented level of commercialisation. Government is eager for this creative culture to be fostered by all its educational institutions.

Beyond this strong focus on creative thinking, the museum, in connection with its economic and educational agenda, stands to project long-term stability, liberal values, and ongoing societal renewal. Firstly, against a volatile (political and economic) universe, the museum stands as a bulwark of long-term continuity:

> The sector must ensure that collections can be maintained and cared for appropriately so that they are useful and usable for the benefit of society today and for future generations (*Going Further – The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, 2012: 18).

Reaffirming the longevity and cultural guardianship of the institution, the museum strives to maintain links with its historical foundations and a claimed responsibility to posterity. Secondly, the contemporary museum stands against a past and imagined future illiberal society, promoting values of free access, equal opportunity, tolerance of diversity and social justice:

> The sector also contributes to a variety of wider social agendas – from social inclusion of hard-to-reach groups to health, well-being and social justice (*Going Further – The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, 2012: 22).

Thirdly, the museum seeks to project itself as economically, scientifically and culturally vibrant, supportive of the latest intellectual developments and innovations, and sympathetic to 'risk taking':

> In order to retain an inventive attitude, a culture of permissible risk-taking needs to be embedded throughout the sector, encouraging museums to 'think outside the box' (*Going Further – The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, 2012: 34).

This discourse recalls that found in Curriculum for Excellence. The connection between museums and the wider education sector, between museums and the new curriculum, is not only implicit in terms of a correlation of language, it is explicit in terms of strategy and policy:

> As places of learning, museums should link with the Curriculum for excellence and develop further strategic partnerships with key education providers (*Going Further – The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, 2012: 22).

The curriculum manifests in an explicit fashion broad state educational priorities. It has become increasingly important, strategically, for museums to understand and stay abreast of any changes or new ideas in school education, and the modern museum and gallery sector in Scotland is well aware of the recent reinvention of the

Scottish curriculum. The curriculum has a direct impact today on the initiatives of educators working inside museums and galleries who strive to render their own work compatible and complementary.

An important aspect of the new curriculum in Scotland is that it actively encourages schools to seek learning opportunities outside of the school environment and promotes the value of partnership with cultural organisations. This has been widely welcomed by museum professionals. Across the heritage sector, the underlying principles of the new curriculum have been wholeheartedly embraced. The voices that speak on behalf of the sector have welcomed the development of the new curriculum, accepting the opportunities it offers and, crucially, accepting the fundamental values it expounds. Indeed, as the Heritage Education Forum (a body made up of representatives from the national cultural and heritage organisations in Scotland) makes clear: "HEF welcomes the Curriculum for Excellence and fully endorses the values and principles upon which it is founded" (*Heritage learning and the curriculum for excellence*, 2008: 3).

This alignment of values is of course essential for deep and meaningful co-operation. Indeed HEF (whose members include, amongst others, Museums Galleries Scotland, National Museums Scotland, and National Galleries of Scotland) readily advocates a 'partnership' model, and asks the question: "How can we work together to provide a more integrated and fluid learning infrastructure which involves the full range of learning providers?" (*Heritage learning and the curriculum for excellence*, 2008: 5). Certainly, a powerful narrative of collaboration has come to flourish in political and professional discourse, and the new *National Development Body* (for Scotland's museums) has been tasked with developing and reinforcing the museum's status as an officially endorsed 'partner institution'[84].

[84] "The National Development Body will offer the strategic lead through working with education partners (e.g. Education Scotland) to embed in the Curriculum for Excellence the learning opportunities offered by museums and galleries" (*Going Further – The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, 2012: 25).

It must be pointed out that school audiences are an important contributor to visitor numbers (an important concern for the modern museum) and museums are, no doubt, more likely to attract these audiences if they can demonstrate a clear relevance to school programmes. It is much easier for teachers to contemplate and justify a museum visit if the benefits, services and links to the curriculum are evident. More importantly however, the presence of school children, and learners generally, within the museum space, helps validate the educational aspiration of the sector. Today, successful alignment helps museums to project their own educational credentials to government and wider society.

8.5 The Discourse of Communities

8.5.1 Official Museum Sector Discourse

While the educational function of the modern Scottish museum is strongly connected to the broader pedagogic activity of schools, it is also associated, in parallel and perhaps more significantly, with the so-called 'empowerment' of 'communities'[85] (see discussion on 'empowerment' in subsection 8.5.3 below). In 2009 Museums Galleries Scotland commissioned a report entitled *Cornerstones of Communities: Museums transforming Society*. In order to assist their aims and objectives, MGS regularly conducts and commissions research into museums and galleries, to gather evidence that may be used to support and further the interests of the sector. In line with MGS requirements, the report matched up its findings to National Outcomes[86]. The document was particularly interesting as it set out many

[85] The modern school environment is itself now often labelled as 'community', as in the latest *School Handbook Guidance*, written up by Scottish Government in 2012: "Schools and local authorities are best placed to develop a School Handbook, in partnership with their own local parents, which reflects their own circumstances and the needs of their school community" (*School Handbook Guidance*, Introduction, 9th of October 2012, at www.scotland.gov.uk).

[86] "Any research will be aligned to the National Performance Framework. In order to advocate on behalf of the sector it is vital that MGS demonstrates the contribution that museums and galleries make to the achievement of National Outcomes" (Museums Galleries Scotland Research and Evidence Framework, revised November 2010, at www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk).

of the key contemporary ideas and arguments put forward by advocates in support of the museum sector. The findings, as put forward by the report, came together to describe a socially active and responsive institution, attractive to visitors, and able to garner local participation and voluntary support. The museum was presented as a contributing stimulus to economic activity in the local area and beyond. The document stated:

> Museums play an impressive range of roles, beyond that of simply being an archive of the past. These roles cut across several fields of human endeavour, and include economic regeneration, social inclusion, employment, leisure provision, social welfare, community hub, and business start-up (*Cornerstones of Communities: Museums transforming Society*, 2009: 38).

The report was clear that the museum sector was directly helping, contributing to and encouraging economic activity and business endeavour in the twenty-first century. Concomitantly, as the title of the report suggested, the document positioned 'communities' as the principal societal context to which museums and galleries in Scotland are now given to respond.

Certainly the 2012 National Strategy agreed that museums were important contributors to the contemporary Scottish economy. As the document stated: "[Museums and galleries] help retain economic activity within Scotland, encouraging spend in the local economy with positive effects on employment" (*Going Further – The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, 2012: 38). The document was also replete with reference to 'communities'. In fact, Museums Galleries Scotland and the wider sector have come to adopt the language of 'community', using the term primarily and preferentially in the *plural*, to refer to a diverse range of groups[87]. In fact, 'communities', always nebulously defined, have become the appealing and preferred societal and educational framework within

[87] As the Strategy made clear: "Communities is used throughout the document to include people that are bound together by geography or shared interests" (*Going Further – The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, 2012: 10).

which to situate the role and function of the contemporary ‘altruistic’ and societally contributing museum.

8.5.2 Community in Sociology

Before investigating the political usage of ‘community’ by contemporary SNP policy makers, it is perhaps valuable to explore some scholarly definitions? and ideas about the word. In fact, ‘community’ is a contested word. There exists little agreement on what constitutes a ‘community’, and even less agreement on the conditions upon which such a collectivity might be founded, either in the past, now, or in the future. Nebulous in its detail yet highly suggestive in its abstraction, the word holds an inherent fluidity that seemingly eschews a fixed definition. From a modern sociological perspective, the word holds little substantive value as a descriptor of actual reality, yet continues to stimulate debate and policy-making. ‘Community’ is certainly a familiar word, regularly used in all sorts of political and professional discourse. There may exist little agreement on its actual meaning (used to denote anything from a social group to a geographical area, anything from an educational category to a set of moral values), but all seem to agree ‘community’ is an attractive word; as the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman put it: “Words have meanings: some words, however, also have a feel. The word ‘community’ is one of them. It feels good” (Bauman, 2001: 1). Whatever else one might claim about the word, there can be little doubt that it radiates warm connotations. In the midst of a ‘ruthless’ age (to paraphrase Bauman), community remains charged with ‘sweetness’. Bauman called it a “paradise”, lost or hoped for, but either way forever elusive. ‘Community’, he maintained, is an invocation born of fear, a response to the insecurity on the streets; utopian in scope and feel, ‘community’ promises safety in an unsafe world. In the words of Bauman: “What that word evokes is everything we miss and what we lack to be secure, confident and trusting” (Bauman, 2001: 3). Not that ‘community’ should ever be achieved, he argued, for gaining ‘community’, were it ever possible, would result in a concomitant loss of freedom and autonomy. Freedom and security presented themselves to Bauman as the conflicting terms of a

universal and eternal balancing act, forever negotiated and re-negotiated by the human collective. 'Community', he warned, may not be all that appealing when made real.

Nineteenth century sociologists, such as Ferdinand Tönnies, used the concept of 'community' to distinguish pre-industrial rural settlements from large-scale industrialised, urban societies. Early sociologists were concerned with a perceived loss of kinship and sense of belonging, taking place in relation to rapid industrialisation, and believed the industrialised urban world had and was undermining and destroying older relationships, values and social ties. In essence, they believed 'community' was something that was disappearing (see *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, 1994: 72-73). However, the nineteenth century sociological conception of 'community' as a real-world antithesis of modernity has been undermined, as already mentioned, by the difficulty in defining the unique characteristics of 'community'; furthermore, it has proved very difficult to distinguish sharply between the rural and the urban, between 'community' and 'non-community'. Yet, as Sociologist Gerard Delanty wrote:

> Far from disappearing as the classical sociologists believed, community has a contemporary resonance in the current social and political situation, which appears to have produced a worldwide search for roots, identity and aspirations for belonging (Delanty, 2003: 1).

Like Bauman, Delanty explained the fascination with 'community' in terms of modern 'insecurity'. Indeed, according to Delanty, the search for 'community' was a "response to the crisis in solidarity and belonging that has been exacerbated and at the same time induced by globalisation" (2003: 1). As global competitive pressures and anxieties continue to mount on the modern citizen, individuals, theorists and policy-makers of all colours continually seek to tap into the reassuring power of a nostalgic 'community' to counterbalance the fear of an encompassing anonymity and decline of security. Of course, as Bauman hints, 'community ideals' seem contrary to the liberal impulse that underpins much of the modern political and economic order. Indeed, liberal philosophy is not inclined to manufacture a social

'community' in any concrete sense, for this would undermine the freedom of the individual to act autonomously. As Delanty wrote:

> Of the major political ideologies of modernity, liberalism is the only one that is not constructed around the communitarian ideal. Because of its belief in individualism, liberalism has been sceptical of the promises of community (Delanty, 2003: 20).

Given the liberal impulse to favour the self-determination of individuals, it is interesting to note the widespread and arguably obsessive usage of 'community' terminology in much official discourse.

In fact, as I discuss in the next subsection (8.5.3), 'community', in the context of Scottish governmental discourse, is often a label given to those who cannot, cannot yet, or will not assimilate and integrate into the officially encouraged order (a mainstream society founded on work, independent living, and healthy consumption). Members of 'communities' constitute society's dependents and represent legitimate targets of charitable, 'philanthropic' activity. 'Community' with all its suggestion of limits, constraints and dependencies has become the preferred contextual starting point of modern education in Scotland.

8.5.3 Government Discourse

The museum sector is by no means alone in wielding a 'communities' discourse. On the contrary, the word has a wide circulation, particularly in political circles (Both Labour and SNP). It features as an important idea within the National Performance Framework: "We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others" (Scottish Government, National Outcomes, at www.scotland.gov.uk). To brandish 'community' seems easy enough; to define 'community', however, seems somewhat more difficult. In 2009, the SNP Scottish Government, in partnership with COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities), published a document

entitled *Community: Scottish Community Empowerment Action Plan – Celebrating Success: Inspiring Change* (www.scotland.gov.uk). The document gives a tentative definition of what the SNP government understands as 'communities'. The document states:

> Communities are often defined by the place they live, often single or small sets of neighbourhoods. However many people feel part of communities around common issues or circumstances, such as disability, age, or ethnic minority and may want to join together and organize over larger geographical areas, such as a town or local authority area (*Community: Scottish Community Empowerment Action Plan – Celebrating Success: Inspiring Change*, 2009: 8).

This is hardly a sociologically or anthropologically satisfying definition; nevertheless it offers a useful insight into the practical usage of the word. What immediately stands out is that the term is being applied to a very large variety of groups. From people living together in single neighbourhoods to groups spanning an entire local authority, from people sharing a common home to people sharing a common identity, from coincidental grouping to organised association, the term seems to be applicable to any and all.

Of course, the word is undoubtedly used in large part for its connotative potency rather than for any descriptive power. Indeed the term is suffused with positive suggestion and is used, very often, to convey nebulous accolades and compliments to groupings of people, whether local or national[88]. To be sure, there are few more flattering titles given to a collection of people than that of 'community'. Yet, this praise masks other usage. Particularly interesting is its marriage to a standard categorisation of difference that one finds expressed in anti-discrimination laws or policies. Indeed the term's ready association with 'dependency' or 'disadvantage' is made clear by policy. The SNP '*Community Empowerment Action Plan*' states:

[88] For instance, according to the Scottish Government: "Scotland's communities are a rich source of energy, creativity and talent. They are made up of people with rich and diverse backgrounds who each have something to contribute to making Scotland flourish" (Scottish Government, 'Community Engagement and Empowerment', at www.scotland.gov.uk).

> In prioritising and resourcing communities of identity and interest, we should focus on those communities experiencing disadvantage or inequalities, for example in relation to race, disability, and those most in need of greater capacity (*Community: Scottish Community Empowerment Action Plan – Celebrating Success: Inspiring Change*, 2009: 8).

It is clear that the 'communities' that preoccupy the policies of the political class are largely those experiencing some sort of discrimination or difficulty, whether economic, social or physical. In other words, to identify a 'community' is largely to identify some need for intervention or 'support'. The action plan states:

> Many of our communities, particularly those facing high levels of disadvantage in both urban and rural areas, will need support to help them build the skills, confidence, networks and resources they require on their journey towards becoming more empowered (*Community: Scottish Community Empowerment Action Plan – Celebrating Success: Inspiring Change* 2009: 11).

This support, in the terminology of government policy, is called 'community capacity building'. 'Capacity' is a word often associated with educational strategy; the new Curriculum for Excellence, for instance, currently being rolled out in schools across Scotland, holds four key 'capacities' at its core, reflecting strong values of independence and individual flexibility (see section 8.1 above). Indeed, the relationship between developing 'community capacity' and education is openly understood: "In Scotland, work to build community capacity building is often developed under the umbrella of community learning and development" (*Community: Scottish Community Empowerment Action Plan – Celebrating Success: Inspiring Change* 2009: 11). This 'community learning and development' is led by *Learning and Teaching Scotland* (now Education Scotland), the same government organisation largely responsible for the implementation of the new Curriculum for Excellence.

To be identified as a 'community' is to be identified as a potential target of education, and in line with formal education priorities, the primary capacity that

these communities and the individuals who compose them are to learn and develop is greater self-reliance. As the Scottish Government makes clear:

> The Scottish Government is committed to our communities being supported to do things for themselves – [this is] community empowerment (Scottish Government, 'Community Engagement and Empowerment', at www.scotland.gov.uk).

Increasingly this language of 'community' is being applied across society – a reflection of a growing fear that the population as a whole is in need of developing greater skills of autonomy[89].

Dwindling economic stability and a rapidly changing world, outside of national governmental control, apparently requires the modern citizen to bear a larger responsibility for his or her own security and sufficiency. Indeed, educational discourse now increasingly emphasizes the need for continual proactive adaptation and lifelong training. Education Scotland made this clear:

> Young people need to be prepared for a world which is changing rapidly. Many of the jobs they will do when they leave school do not yet exist and they will probably have several jobs during their lifetime. They need to have the skills and attitudes to cope with an unpredictable future, to be able to deal with setbacks and disappointments in a positive way, and to continue to learn for the rest of their lives (Education Scotland, 'About Enterprise in Education', at www.educationscotland.gov.uk).

To help in this programme of long-term learning, the SNP government is eager to involve a wide range of partners, including those from the so-called 'third sector'. Charities and voluntary organisations, including museums and galleries, are often acknowledged as the principal supporters and representatives of local

[89] "The Scottish Government wants Scotland to be successful. It wants businesses to grow and for everyone to be able to do well. To do this, the government wants local communities to get the chance to do more for themselves. It wants people to take part and help decide what happens where they live" (Scottish Government, *Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill – Have Your Say*, 2012).

'communities', and the SNP government (like its New Labour-Lib Dem predecessor) is keen for these to play an increased role in society[90], helping to tackle a wide range of social issues (anything from poverty alleviation to crime reduction) as well as contributing to economic activity:

> The Scottish Government recognizes the important contribution that third sector bodies make to our economy. They create employment opportunities, improve our public services and at the same time reach out to some of the most vulnerable people in our communities (John Swinney, SNP Finance Secretary, 'Enterprise Growth Fund Recipients', news 01/02/2012, at www.scotland.gov.uk).

Since the advent of devolution in Scotland, both the Labour and SNP-led administrations have sought to support more private enterprise in the field of voluntary and 'community work'. The idea is to increase the efficiency and reliability of third sector organisations in an effort to reduce direct government (financial) intervention, often accused of inefficacy or waste. Charities on the other hand allow (supposedly) for a much more targeted, self-supporting and locally relevant approach. Encouraging the dissemination of business skills within the third sector and supporting so-called 'social enterprises' (businesses founded specifically to tackle social issues), the SNP Government (like its Labour/Lib Dem predecessor) seeks to develop a new enterprising ethos for 'community representatives' and their charges.

Scottish liberalism in the twenty-first century has run with and emphasised the scattered, if reassuring, notion of 'communities' (plural) – in contrast to an English Conservative notion of a unified Big Society (singular). This choice of the term 'communities' reveals a recognition (on the part of its users, including the Scottish Government) of the increasingly 'fragmentary' nature of post-industrial society. In contrast to neoliberal conservatism, social liberalism tends more readily to acknowledge the disenfranchisement of individuals in the face of globalisation, and

[90] "By investing in the third sector now and enhancing self-sufficiency we can look forward to a future where these organizations play a full role in public sector reform" (John Swinney, SNP Finance Secretary, £7 million for Third Sector, news 18/07/2011, at www.scotland.gov.uk).

a declining ability to compete (at least for a portion of the population). This perception of 'fragmentation' justifies in part the arguably reactionary 'big state' approach of the SNP. Certainly, under SNP stewardship, Holyrood government has followed a strong centralising agenda. From the council tax freeze since 2007 (see BBC news, SNP Urged to Drop Five Year Council Tax Freeze Plan, 21st of September 2011, at www.bbc.co.uk) to the amalgamation of Scottish police services into a single national force, government policy has consolidated the 'top down' control of resources and decision-making opportunities in Scotland.

This centralising impulse is linked also, of course, to an underlying nationalist (separatist) agenda. Helping to unify the proto-state and build the idea of 'nation' around a single power, SNP policy is directed inevitably towards the strengthening and authentication of a viable, independent polity. Nevertheless, the steady rise of Scottish nationalism must be recognised as both a product and a response to the perceived fragmentation of British, post-industrial society.

8.5.4 Social Creativity

Twenty-first century educational anxiety is ultimately linked to the post-industrial status of society. Given the growing weakness of Western industrial power, much educational activity today is directly aimed at retaining jobs and opportunities in the face of indomitable international competition. All this 'empowerment' is necessary because the 'communities' of political discourse are filled with what are deemed to be uncompetitive individuals. From this political perspective, those assigned to the ranks of 'communities' represent groups of people removed or self-removed from the productive economy, that include, amongst others, the violent, the undisciplined, the sick, and the unpalatable – an un-integrated, unproductive and fear-sowing population, potentially burdensome, destabilizing and dangerous.

The sponsorship of 'creativity', as already discussed, is a primary cause championed within educational programming in Scotland. It is closely associated

with the development of market-friendly thinking. Yet its dominance in discourse over its close synonyms 'inventive' or 'imaginative' seems to betray a conscious selectivity on the part of educationalists. The institutional attachment to the word would seem strange if one were to simply analyse it outside of any larger political discourse. Indeed, it is only when viewed in the context of larger scale narratives that incorporate the domains of education, culture, business and *law and order*, that the word's real worth begins to emerge. For it seems the word is chosen, at least in part, not so much for what it describes, but rather for what it silently opposes. As policy makes clear, government is at least as concerned about the *destructive* habits of communities as they are about any creative potential these may hold. Indeed, for Labour, 'destructive' habits were understood to be widespread and chronic. The Labour-led Scottish Executive was of the opinion that:

> Too many of Scotland's villages, towns and communities are scarred by the visible evidence of anti-social behaviour. Parks, playgrounds, back-greens, shopping centres and residential areas are too often ruined by rubbish, graffiti, vandalism and other destructive behaviour (Scottish Executive, *Putting Our Communities First: A Strategy for Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour*, 2003: 43).

In many areas then, the public space was perceived to be under threat from violent and anti-social activity. Marginalisation, disadvantage and lack of opportunity were perceived to be corroding the values of some groups and undermining families. Children in particular were at risk, and this destruction was spilling out onto the streets, exposing the very fabric of post-industrial society to disorder and ruin. Amongst the most concerning of destructive behaviours of twenty-first century Scotland was, and continues to be, prevalent drug misuse and dependency, described as "devastating". The Scottish Executive detailed this in its Criminal Justice Plan:

> Many communities in Scotland are ravaged by the effects of drugs. The effects of drug misuse can be devastating for individuals, families, particularly children within those families, and the communities in which they live. Drugs-related offending ranges from the actions of an individual user, driven to commit crime to feed their habit, to the destructive impact of

> highly organised gangs (Scottish Executive, *Supporting Safer, Stronger Communities - Scotland's Criminal Justice Plan*, 2004: 9).

The SNP Scottish Government has not significantly altered this discourse of 'destruction'. Certainly, for policy makers, twenty-first century Scottish society continues to be burdened by a host of chronic and highly damaging problems that threaten the safety and well-being of all. As the Scottish Government insisted:

> We will only build a safer and stronger Scotland by tackling the root causes [of crime]. Deep-seated issues such as Scotland's relationship with drink, drugs, violence and deprivation are likely to be symptoms of more fundamental problems. Why do so many of those in prison come from our most deprived communities? And why do so many offenders find it difficult to break the cycle of behaviour that is destructive to themselves, their families and their communities? (Scottish Government, 'We Live Our Lives Safe from Crime, Disorder and Danger', at www.scotland.gov.uk).

Destructive behaviour is explicitly associated with criminal conduct; and the criminal justice system firmly places the 'locale' of crime within the 'community'. The strategy of 'community service' makes this explicit by bringing the criminal back to the scene of his (her) crime, i.e. the 'community', that he (she) may make amends. SNP Justice Secretary Kenny Macaskill hoped: "Increased use of community service will help break the destructive cycle of reoffending and make our communities safer and stronger" (Kenny Macaskill, 'Scottish Community Service Awards 2010', at www.scotland.gov.uk). Destructive acts ultimately threaten all of society through the *spread of fear*. The criminal justice system, as well as fighting crime in the 'community', is thus tasked with contributing to a reassurance agenda. As the SNP Scottish Government makes clear: "Visible policing plays a vital role in reducing our fear of crime, which can be as destructive as the level of crime" (Scottish Government, *Towards a More Successful Scotland*, 2009: 38/39).

The decay at the heart of society is deemed to be linked to disadvantage, deprivation and other underlying 'community-wide' issues including lack of economic opportunity and the means to participate effectively in mainstream

society. In fact, an opposition or duality exists at the heart of twenty-first century liberal policy perspectives. On one side a destructive resident of communities threatens to burden society with violence and decay, on the other a creative private citizen promises to renew the economic vitality of modern Scotland. If the criminal justice system is set up to mitigate the destructive behaviour and symptoms of un-civil society, then the wider education system, including the museum and gallery sector, is firmly charged with setting society's good example, instilling preferred values and inculcating the key skills for success in a twenty-first century knowledge economy. In fact, modern education in Scotland appears engaged in the elimination of destructive behaviours through the development and encouragement of 'creative' alternatives. This envisioned dichotomy helps to script a simple narrative choice facing society and the individual – destruction or creation – and reaffirms what is deemed to be the rectitude and continuing strength of prevailing liberal thought: namely that only the autonomous individual (supported by liberal institutions) can offer the hope of societal regeneration and prosperity.

Pierre Bourdieu argued in the mid-twentieth century that a marker of elitist distinction was the apparent control of natural bodily impulses and the concomitant rejection of all things 'vulgar'(Bourdieu, 1969, 1984). Indeed, the 'cultured' supposedly distinguished themselves by their 'disinterested' (Kantian) gaze, free from the enslaving passions of nature. This control of the passions ultimately demonstrated (in the eyes of the bourgeoisie at least) the greater 'humanity' of the bourgeoisie, and their differentiation from the animalistic masses unable to effectively rule their own bodies. This control was a crucial symbolic affirmation of power, demonstrating through self-discipline and rational detachment the greater 'worthiness' and 'legitimacy' of the bourgeoisie to rule.

In the twenty-first century, it is not the bourgeois but the autonomous individual transcending class and gender that is raised to the summit of educational ideals in Scotland. He or she is distinguished not by his/her rejection of vulgarity but by his/her rejection of destructive behaviour. He or she is not a disinterested rational being but a curious and inventive one stimulated by a range of human emotions.

Not rigid and controlled but adaptive and self-reflexive, this is the citizen held up by cultural and educational institutions as the engine of societal renewal.

8.6 Conclusion

Government initiatives, including those operating within the museum sector, have become fixated on notions of 'community empowerment'. These notions, vague in detail but strong in hope and aspiration, have become entwined with business values and ambitions for an entrepreneurial society. Promoting a message of positive contribution, the museum, like the school, has been guided by Labour and the SNP government into a public space at the heart of a landscape of 'communities'. From this central position, it is to stand as an exemplar of civic and creative excellence, and as a bulwark against forces of social destruction and decline.

Fears over diminishing Western competitiveness are framed, in the educational narrative, against the backdrop of a menacing future perceived as increasingly uncertain, dangerous and constraining. Educational policy makers today strive to encourage a more economically gregarious, participative and dynamic citizenry. Indeed, over the last decade, post-industrial anxiety has precipitated major curricular change within schools. New capacities and priority themes now structure the education system, gearing schools to the cultivation of a new generation imbued with flexibility, self-reliance and self-confidence, whose increased autonomy, it is hoped, will boost the fortunes of twenty-first century Scottish society.

Participants of education are to be transformed over time into (life-long) 'learners', 'individuals', 'citizens' and 'contributors'. The transformation is supported by 'inspirational' teachers and exemplars, but ultimately driven by the individual learner, in pursuit of personal excellence, which includes an international outlook, an ambition for success and an individual economic independence.

9 Final Conclusion

Concerns over global competition and financial crises have encouraged modern policy-makers in Scotland to promote ever-stronger links between culture and the global economy, between the museum sector and the business world. Rather than intimate overly nationalistic or patriotic agendas, modern cultural policy aspirations in Scotland reveal a strong international outlook, reflecting ingrained liberal and market-oriented narratives. Similar and aligned narratives operate within the wider educational field. Three main priorities emerge from modern educational programming; to transcribe these priorities into modern political parlance, these are: *business enterprise*, liberal *citizenship* and *creativity*. Indeed, government discourse reveals strong aspirations for an entrepreneurial, contributing and inventive society, in which active citizens collaborate to maximize local business power, the economic participation of the local population and the usefulness and benefits of new ideas. These aspirations are fuelled by underlying anxieties over future prosperity, and the possibility of economic decline. For policy makers across the political divide, the population is too dependent, too accustomed to state authority and intercession, and critically not business-savvy enough. In this view, lack of autonomy coupled to increasing insecurity across all sectors, threatens to ossify a debilitated, disconnected society unable to compete in a global market place (an idea epitomised by the pervasive discourse of 'communities').

In recent decades, and certainly since the advent of devolved government, education has found a new (renewed) and central role in the vision and practice of many museums and galleries in Scotland, including NGS. Pushed along by state concerns, the museum has sought to stage itself as a place of welcome, encounter and stimulation for all. When there is little industrial product left to sell and trade, intangible 'culture' holds out the possibility of fuelling a different kind of economy, one founded upon the large-scale consumption of new and expanded lines of artistic, architectural, festive, digital and design goods or ephemera. This possibility is, however, largely dependent upon the existence of a viable consumer base, able

and keen to participate in this new economy. Much educational activity in museums and galleries is aimed at opening up and democratising cultural consumption in Scotland, designed to instil an appreciation or interest in culture and the arts. The aspiration is to encourage as many people as possible to engage with, produce and especially consume, the artistic experiences and intangible cultural products of post-industrial Scotland.

Along with the rest of the sector, NGS has formulated a new conception of the outside world – not so much that of a homogenous, unitary society as a loose network of individuals and groups marked by diversity and difference. Certainly, wider society is expressed, in contemporary discourse, increasingly in terms of *communities* (plural). This 'communities' discourse has become a favoured vehicle for depicting the dependencies and un-productivity of an outside public, and for revealing, therefore, the large educational scope of the museum. Like the child, the 'community member' is a key modern educational protagonist and a focus of special attention and support. Marginalised, disconnected and potentially destabilising to the liberal order, this abstract learner holds few links to the museum institution and its upheld culture. In the beginning then, the primary aim of the institution is to forge an environment of trust and establish simple and low-level connections between human beings – perhaps most crucially, between the 'community learner' and the gallery educator. In this respect, while bringing and attracting people into contact with the institution, much educational work is devoted to, and characterised by, the development of friendly relations and welcoming attitudes, with the promise of 'fun' and dialogue held out as enticement to participate. Educators thus encourage a communicative human encounter – the first step along an educational journey. Eventually, protagonists are introduced to 'challenging' artefacts and works of art, ancient or curious objects that hold the power to spark and expand the citizen's imagination through sudden confrontation and subsequent self-reflection. Indeed, 'inspiration' looms large in the educational discourse of NGS. It is an important juncture in the narrative of education applied to the visitor-learner. The stimulation of mind, engendered by an encounter or confrontation with the collection, begins a purported transformational process

within the individual. Indeed, inspiration signals a turning point, a change of state from the disconnected to the connected (connecting) learner. Inspiration, in the NGS narrative, is a mysterious and undefined occurrence, connected to the 'quality' of the collection – a manifestation and intellectual realisation of the inherent 'specialness' or individuality of the objects of the gallery. It is a crucial occasion that educators attempt to conscript into the development of a larger emotional connection to the collection – a "sense of ownership" in the parlance of the institution. This emotional connection is to provoke or stimulate the learner's own self-assertion, expressive abilities and individuality. 'Creativity' is scripted then as the inner power unleashed by the inspirational spark. Weak and undeveloped in the 'community learner', this inborn power is cultivated through conversation and practical activity, and repeated contact with 'inspirational' material. This creative force lies at the heart of the educational narrative; once awakened, it is to transform the deviant, recall the forgotten back to benign participation, or re-galvanize the uncompetitive.

Like its own educational narrative promoting a trajectory of increasing individual autonomy, the institution seems to be pursuing a similar trajectory, seeking to become less dependent on government, more open to people and the world, and more dynamic and adaptive. In a significant sense, the modern museum is itself an exemplar of endorsed functioning, becoming more self-sufficient, more globally minded and more inventive as it strives to contribute to the societal order. As this order becomes ever more 'liquid' (to use Bauman's term), the museum's traditional position of authority is being exchanged for a position of symbolic exemplarity and reassurance. The institution works to reaffirm institutional longevity and cultural guardianship, to uphold liberal conceptions of individual freedom and civil tolerance through both educational and exhibitionary means, and to pursue rejuvenating strategies aimed at continuously adapting and revitalizing the museum experience. Despite the claimed 'engagement' with society, this work requires little acknowledgment of any major political issues of our time.

The Scottish museum marks itself as an exemplar of endorsed conduct and 'good' functioning within an increasingly precarious, post-industrial order. Indeed, the Scottish museum has embraced a number of developmental actions designed to bring the institution closer to realizing its contemporary 'potential': something of a stable, popular and versatile institution, with business acumen at its heart. Developmental priorities relate thus to economic efficiency, open access and creative ambition. In simple terms, then, this means a pursuit of money, people and market ideas. Indeed, the Scottish museum and gallery is to adopt three main approaches; it is to become (using the terminology of the new National Strategy) a *sustainable enterprise*, an *ambitious public provider* and a *dynamic institution*. As a sustainable enterprise (able to generate new money) the museum is to become increasingly self-sufficient and entrepreneurial. It is to adopt business values and pursue multiple funding streams to secure its long-term stability. As an ambitious public provider (able to generate new visitors) the museum is to become more open, more welcoming, and more accessible. The museum is to pursue more avenues to attract new audiences, and raise its profile with local, national and international audiences. As a dynamic institution (able to generate new ideas) the museum is to become increasingly creative, able to devise and sustain a vibrant programme of events and activities to complement and expand its existing provision. It is to become more responsive, more educational and more entertaining to attract new audiences into the consumption of 'culture'.

Educators and curators at NGS are in an important sense employed to inject 'energy' and 'animation' into the halls of the institution, to revitalize the 'sacred' space of the museum. Certainly, the institution increasingly hosts live events and performance-based interventions to dynamise the museum offering. Yet, of course, these acts bring the institution into ever-greater contact with "time in its most flowing, transitory, precarious aspect" (Foucault, see discussion on 'heterotopia' in chapter 5, subsection 5.3.2). With storytellers, actors, musicians, catwalk models and dancers invited to perform inside the halls of the gallery, the institution increasingly connects to the time-space of the 'festival'.

The ‘festival turn’ of the museum is an interesting phenomenon and one worth studying in greater detail. The institution appears restless in the twenty-first century. Everything from exhibitions and events to menus, web pages, staff and merchandise, all seem to change rapidly and incessantly. Certainly, the museum’s interface with the public presents an ever more ephemeral character. As the museum becomes less of a monument to greatness and more of a participatory spectacle, so its symbolism becomes more organic, more people-centred. There is undoubtedly scope for further research into the sanctification of performance, which relates to a time-space of the here and now. Any future study along these lines should, I believe, also take account of a de-consecration of ‘fixity’ (the de-consecration of fixed ends and satisfied needs) inside the museum realm. Today, the institution seems to reject the idea of final fulfilment for that of ungraspable ‘potential’; all things must, in the symbolism of liberal post-industrial modernity, be actively and continuously performed anew, pursued yet never finalised.

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11 Appendix

Conversations are recorded verbatim.

Interview at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery with Patricia Allerston, Head of Education at the National Galleries of Scotland, on Friday the 20th of January 2012

XC: Xavier Contier, interviewer; PA: Patricia Allerston, interviewee.

XC -Could you speak a little about your work and your role and responsibilities? Just a kind of general sense.

PA -Um, well, I'm head of the learning department or the education department at the National Galleries. My role is essentially to, I suppose, manage the strategic aspects at the National Galleries. So, I manage the budget and I lead on the development of the sort of department plan we have for the various aims and objectives. I'm usually the direct interface with our management group. There's a… As part of their regular senior management team meetings, there are usually three or four a year that focus on access. So, I'm the person that goes along to that. So, I represent learning at that level. I also attend all of the programming meetings…where the future exhibition programme is discussed. Um, I directly manage, um, four members of staff within the department. We're a department of ten people at the moment, including myself. Um, so, that's in a sense what I overall manage, and think about the directions that we're going in…future, where we're going. But I also directly manage four people and they are Sarah, who is my deputy. Her responsibilities, she has specific responsibilities but, particularly, a lot more of the hands on, everyday management within the gallery. Um, and she has specific specializations as well which she works with. I directly manage the outreach section - so, Robin is… I'm his line manager - um, and also the adults, talks and events programming. I manage Helen who does that side of it… That's not so much the practical side, workshop side, it's more the lectures, events, the concerts, music side the things that Helen does. Um, so, and on the other side, Sarah directly manages the education officers who run workshops, schools side, the adult practical, which is run by Linda mostly, the families and communities and also the administrator. Um, so, we sort of divide that. Um, I also manage Chris Ganley who's our Artist Rooms learning coordinator who… unusual within our department because his job is split between Tate and National Galleries of Scotland, um, but he is directly line managed by me for two reasons. He's part of the Artist Rooms team and they have a managing curator and programme manager and there was a conservator and administrator. But it was felt that it was better that he was managed by one of the heads of learning because he was a learning specialist, and also he is the only member of that team who is permanently based in Scotland, here. He prefers to be part of a learning team, rather than being the learning person within another team. So, it means he has rootedness, a sense of rootedness within learning activity.

So,…I manage Lynn, um, Helen, talks and events, Sarah, who is my deputy and manages specific area, and also she's a lot to do with exhibitions and evaluation of practical sides, implementation in a sense of strategy, and the outreach section, um,…what else do I do?

XC -Yes, so, quite a diverse…

PA -It's quite diverse. It's a very odd mixture and I think you would find this right the way across the National Galleries, is that usually, as a manager of department, you're very much on the strategic side. You're dealing with the overall budget, um, and you're the liaison with the senior management team… Um, but because we're not massive, I do a lot of hands on activity as well. So, for example, like today I was covering a lunch time lecture. Helen's my line-managee, if that's the right way. I come from a background of higher education. So…if she's away or if she's very busy, I'll help out with that, and help to advise in that area as well… So, it's a real mixture of office work and practical, on the floor, hands-on activity…and…I don't do programming, for the most part. There's one set of tours a year that I programme for, um, for particular reasons. It's to do with a particular sensitive part of our activities, the galleries as a whole, but other than that my job isn't arranging learning activity, it's more the management of activity…

XC -Is that left to your team?

PA -Yeah, that's what they do. And for the most part we've got, um,... The team is quite high. It's difficult to say but they, everybody is a particular grade… We were essentially civil service but then we sort of devolved. Nevertheless, there's a grading system that corresponds more or less with a civil service grading system. Um, and the learning team as a whole are really quite high up the grading system, and that's because, principally, a lot of them have budget responsibilities. So, I have a budget which I then allocate to them, and they're responsible for allocating it… They have budget responsibilities… A couple of them have line management responsibilities, which is an important thing. And they do… Because they deal a lot with the public, and they're in a position of responsibility, they're all responsible for their own programmes, um, and they have to deal with partners off-site and represent the National Galleries off-site… So, as a team, we've got quite, um,… It's difficult without sounding hierarchical. It's not really hierarchical, but in comparison maybe to some of the other departments, even some of the curatorial departments which are perhaps more layered, we tend to be quite, mostly, everybody is more or less a manager. The only one that isn't is the administrator and she's… Her grade is a little bit lower, although she herself has a lot of responsibilities because we are quite busy.

XC -So, each member of staff is quite autonomous, to an extent…

PA -Yes, yes, and that was… When we were set up, this was, um, we were a very small department, initially split up across the collection. So, there was a learning officer at the Gallery of Modern Art, a learning officer here at the Portrait Gallery, a

learning officer at the National Gallery and then the head that worked between them, and each learning officer was responsible for that gallery and that gallery's collection. And then there was a move away from that - this was just before I started - to have more of an audience-based department. So, you have someone who's a schools officer who, um, works across the galleries but is an expert on all issues to do with schools, same with the adults programmer, the same with the communities, and families person, which is essentially one person really… Because there are so many areas of specialization in each area. So, we need, the person, the schools officer needs to know about the changing curriculum, needs to have very good contacts within the government agencies responsible for that. The outreach team are the same. They have to, they really need to know how local authorities work, possible sources of funding, and they need to know about so many sort of community driven issues, diversity issues. So, um, there are bodies of knowledge associated with each programme, which, it only works if each officer knows their area…

XC -That's quite interesting, that you are audience-based rather than say gallery, individual gallery-based…

PA -It's something that, in a sense, we for a long time have been the audience sort of arbiters within the organization. You see it in particular ways. For example, our previous communities officer was very… She established our visually impaired programme and was very up to date with, um, legislation and rights to do with disability. So, quite often the health and safety officer would come to us, or people in the organization would come to us to be involved if there was some sort of galleries initiative linking into that, of a new building being developed and they needed to have specialist advice. That's changing a little bit, I think, because the whole audience access side of the galleries is developing. It's not really just us, but it is still there. Quite a lot of…particularly the curators didn't really understand that our expertise was the audiences. We have colleagues who have got practical art backgrounds, art history backgrounds, and are quite knowledgeable in areas, but that's not what we're supposed to be. We're supposed to work with them. They're supposed to bring the collections knowledge, and we bring the knowledge of the people we work with.

XC -Each gallery has a different remit. So, does this present different challenges? You were telling me that you have more of an audience-based approach… Do you have to kind of adapt to each gallery?

PA -You do. That's a really interesting area, because when John Leighton started, I think he felt that the galleries were very separate, and he wanted us to see the organization as one organization that had separate branches…but…,um, we were a central department. Um, more recently there's been…and you can see it with our new branding. I can give you more information on that if you want. We have documents on that…but a decision has been much more to, in a sense, accept the fact that the galleries have very different personalities and different collections and different groups and different locations, um, and that that's something to be

celebrated rather than something to be… I think we had quite a lot of market research done, a few years ago. One of the things that came out of it was very much that some people don't realize that we're all part of the same organization. So, there would be a lot of people who would go to the Gallery of Modern Art would have no idea that the National Gallery, we're all part of the same… Central departments always have to work across, and in a way you have to work with differences, but we have our sort of objectives, um,…We didn't have a separate set of objectives for each gallery…one set of objectives which perhaps some of the galleries lend themselves more to than others. So, um, for example, I mean if there's a really funky exhibition on at the Gallery of Modern Art, and we're doing things with young people, that would be the obvious place to go to for that. Um, and so,… and we're doing that I think more, rather than trying to do everything for everyone at every site, because we have to be sustainable. We're sort of thinking about the strength of each site. So, with the galleries being…established here and us being involved, we do see the Portrait Gallery as being a good place for families… The Gallery of Modern Art always has been because of parking. So, in a sense those are our two more family friendly centres, rather than the National, although initially the National had better facilities for doing families. So, we do try to work across. We have our own objectives… We get a certain amount of autonomy that we can… You know, as long as we state our objectives and we are seen to be delivering them... But, you know, it only really works if we work with the gallery teams. So, um, I think most of us have been here a while and we do get to know how each place works and, um,… I don't know if that answers your…

XC -Moving on to a kind of schools audience. Um, the curriculum for excellence…does it have any relevance beyond the schools programme?

PA -Um, it's been quite useful. I don't know if we initially envisaged it in that way… Um, I mean the great thing… It's often been very difficult for cultural institutions to get schools to come out and do site visits, and the great thing about the Curriculum for Excellence is that that has become much more central and in a sense an obligation for schools to do off-site learning as well as on-site learning. It's also very interesting in its inter-disciplinarity…so, cross-discipline. I think, very often, teachers who did come to us tended to be the arts and design teachers. Whereas we could see there's huge potential, particularly in the Portrait Gallery, for science, for all sorts of things, chemistry, maybe, for photography, there's lots of different ways, and literature, and we've been doing things with writing for quite some time. We've got music, and we're probably developing our theatrical side…So, we could see the richness of it, but it's often quite difficult to get the schools in. So…the curriculum benefits, um, the Curriculum for Excellence has been good from that point of view. I think just it's been interesting seeing the way that, particularly our outreach team, who in a way don't work to a set agenda, um, and often have to create their own, they look at theoretical approaches to learning but they found the, um, the sort of ideas behind the curriculum, at least the way it's presented and because it is something a lot of people do…are beginning to know about… because of parents with children and all sorts of things… I think they've found it a very useful structure for them to think about what they're doing. They've

always talked about, you know, why…what's the benefit of linking with art, what can you get out of it, and how can you explain that easily to people. And the idea of people developing their confidence, by …in a sense…the fact that it's art is sometimes incidental, it's what's in the art, and getting people to talk…that it can help people to build up their confidence about speaking, and they've always said that, but in a way the Curriculum for Excellence frames that and discusses that in a very clear way. So, um, it has proved useful, um, and I think we're all aware of that more. So, it's the same, I suppose, with our own on-site community work. It just gives us perhaps a framework of reference that helps us to articulate what we're doing in a clear way. So, it's a useful thing. We've been aware of it for a long time. When the curriculum was being developed, we were one of the first organizations to… Administrators from the Scottish Executive came along to us to talk about the art side of it quite early on so we'd known about it. And it's been interesting seeing the way that it's had quite a turbulent introduction, um, but it's something that we have been thinking about and working with for a long time. We've had lots of training sessions… with people on it… So, I think we are really comfortable with it. It's just…maybe for that reason, it's been around for a long time, the ideas are becoming more diffuse within this department.

XC -Um, social exclusion used to be quite an important term. Is it still relevant, this whole idea?

PA -Um, we don't probably overtly, um, talk about that's what we're doing in the way we used to. It used to be one of our key objectives and certainly with the outreach team, the money to set up the outreach team came from special funding from what was probably then the Scottish Office, rather than Scottish Executive, um…and that was specifically with that very much…of demonstrably making the collections more accessible to all sorts of groups who would never come in. Um, that's… It's still very much what we are about. It's one of the things that we are about, and not just in the sense of… The idea of developing new audiences has been around for a long time, but these are specific audiences… Um, we do, particularly through our communities programme, some of our schools programme, we try, it's often, if we have... money to do a project, we are targeting specific schools, I mean we will try to target schools that are in areas perhaps we feel that will get the most benefit out of it…but I don't think it is as overtly, um, declared.

XC -Have you any thoughts on why?

PA -Um, I don't know…we just…I suppose…we have broad audiences that we work with and, that's one particular type of audience, and we want to… Um, there are many, many different reasons why people learn with art. I think we want to cater to quite a few of them rather than a specific one… And the galleries as a whole, because they themselves are putting much more emphasis on accessibility, um, that in a way we want to go with that and help with that. Whereas before perhaps…ten years ago or so, the learning team were very much left to their own devices because it wasn't as much part of the mainstream of the gallery…then perhaps more resources could go into that. Now we are much more integrated. So

we have to…follow the aims of the galleries as a whole and be seen to use our resources…we are much more part of the bigger picture, and we have to do that.

XC -Which kind of ties into the next question. Is there a close alignment between your department and others? More so than, say, five, ten years ago?

PA -I think so. I mean I can be quite frank in this respect. I think I was probably employed…there are different models of learning teams. Tate had a particular model where the learning team was very much autonomous and worked by itself and I think…there was…because we're not a big organization…I think there was some desire in a way to have the learning team here not follow that model and to be much more integrated… Um, we've always worked, particularly on the exhibitions programme, closely with the curators. In a sense, that learning, in order to have a good learning programme you need to know about exhibitions. So, in a sense really, I suppose, um, until relatively recently…it's difficult to say exactly because… We've got about thirty curators across the institution. It's quite a lot, and they're all different. It's like academics at universities and I'm sure it's like that at the art college, where people have different personalities. And because we're relatively small…you'll work in different ways with individuals, and because of the way that exhibitions programmes are developed at the National, we don't have an exhibitions team. Each curator when they do an exhibition is the project manager. So, there are some exhibitions on which we work really closely and always have to. Um, an example might be… We worked on Basil Spence exhibition a few years ago with, um, Philip Long and it was part of a bigger project. He was really keen that we were involved right from the beginning and, um, that's something that… A number of curators have been like that… Others have tended… They work away - it's probably the way they do their own research - they work away on a project and then bring in people like us, and press and marketing much later… I think there is an aim… We've done research with Artist Rooms which show that projects that work best are the ones where learning teams are involved right from the beginning. Um, and that's something with the Portrait Gallery project was formally instituted that each display upstairs had a curator and an educator working on it, and that they worked right from the beginning. And the eventual display reflected that relationship. But again, as with anywhere, each of the curators are different personalities. So, some, as you go round, you can see some displays where there's obviously much more… The learning benefit is very obvious, and other ones where it's less so. So, it does often come down to personalities. Um, I think, in comparison to when I started in 2005, I think we do work much more closely, and I think the galleries as a whole is involving, and seeing the benefits of a project involving people from the earliest stages. That doesn't mean to say that every exhibition will demonstrate it, um, but… And some exhibitions are coming from outside with an external curator. So, in a sense, the thing is already, is a package before it even arrives. But I think the relationship is changing. Um, here it, it took a while because we'd not worked with the Portrait Gallery curators in that way, it tended to be at the Gallery of Modern Art or part of the National perhaps, again depending on which curator, and here not so much. But this was the gallery that this new system was instigated and, um, the Deputy Director - going to be the acting Director six months

- has been phoning up this morning wanting to continue that model. Now the interesting thing is that was a very labour-intensive model because everybody worked on two or three galleries at the same time as doing their cross institution programming. And, um, we'll have to manage it very carefully because people don't have the time, because we do have to, we put a lot of resources here… If you're working very closely on the actual, if it be an exhibition or a display, um, that's only one part of our work really. So, we have to be careful that people can manage it because, if it's done properly it's very labour intensive. So, it has to be…I think swings and roundabouts. There are certain projects that were Linda who's worked at the National has worked traditionally very closely with Val who ran with the print-room, and you can see that works really well. A number of us have got close relationships. Francis Val, who's one of the curators we've worked, Sarah has worked very well with her. So, it does, it does work quite well but I suppose there are very few exhibitions where all displays of the permanent collection, um, which have a learning objective other than an academic one. So, in a sense, we're not…it depends on how you want to talk about learning involvement. We don't instigate very many exhibitions and very few exhibitions are instigated with a different type of perspective.

XC -Yes, so, would you say this perspective is predominantly one of art history? Still?

PA -Yes, still. I think it's changing. And it's changing for different reasons, um, but National Galleries has got a good reputation of doing some chunky exhibitions which have an academic remit, and they would always want to keep that up I think, but… I keep saying we're not a bigger gallery, we're not a rich gallery, galleries, and for big exhibitions, um, which involve loans from abroad, they're very expensive. So, um, the summer exhibitions don't, I mean they don't always have, it has to be a sort of trade off, of something that… It could be audience development is our main objective for an exhibition, summer exhibition, for example not necessarily academic excellence. It could be that this is… Since we need to have an exhibition we need to diversify our income stream. So, we have to have an exhibition that we know people will pay to come and see. And that, when it works well, is when you get the sort of layering where it works academically, it is a big enough name… So, there can be other reasons why, it's not always academic excellence that drives everything, money is very important and breaking even. And big exhibitions are very expensive and we don't have the sponsorship very often because we are based in Scotland in comparison to London… Um…but…I think…if the curators were asked…from their point of view, it has to be the best that they can do… There might be other reasons. We might have an exhibition because it's celebrating Elisabeth Blackadder; it's her eightieth birthday or something like that, that's not particularly an academic exhibition.

XC -So…yeah…You don't instigate, um, exhibitions, but, um, you still have a kind of influence on the finished product…

PA -Yes, sometimes.

XC -Sometimes…Um, what would you say that influence is? Are you about generating debate and discussion and reflection beyond a narrow art history perspective?

PA -There are some subjects which can work in lots of different ways for example. And, um, it's interesting because an exhibition is not a book. This is sometimes… It's very interesting when we work with external curators that are, say, straight art historians. You can't just put a book on a wall. So, when you're an exhibition, it's a visual thing anyway. It's a thing that you pass through. It's a spatial thing. Um, so, quite often the ways that we can influence it is perhaps to maximize certain aspects of it. It's difficult to generalize because each exhibition can be different and… there can be many voices. So, you could have a sponsor for example who has a big say. It could be you're working with the estate of an artist…

XC -Um, on a slightly different note…Do you think the National Galleries of Scotland encourages ideas about citizenship? Civic values?

PA -Um, well we're a national organization, rather than...civic tends to be…It's difficult because the National Galleries seems to fall between different stalls. We're based in a city, based in the capital city. We often get criticized for that, but a lot of our audiences are local. So, in a way, you have to tailor for that, but we also have to tailor beyond the city. A lot of our visitors, if they do come, our groups of visitors come within an hour and a half's traveling distance. But then we also have a high proportion of tourists, British tourists I think. When some research was done here, I think there were more British tourists that came than international tourists. So, I think the perception within the organization is very often that we have international tourists, particularly at the National Gallery on the mound…um… So, the galleries have to be aware that they're aiming at lots of different audiences…um… It's a very interesting question. It's one that we think about, the way that we work, because that comes out of the Curriculum for Excellence as well. Um, I think maybe you would probably use different types of ways of phrasing it. Values like pride, pride maybe in… Something that we do put forward is that this is the national collection, art collection, that that's something that, um, we look after, we don't own. I think the way that that's been put across has changed. I think in recent years… We work with it every day, we want people to be, in a sense, take ownership, be proud of it, in a sense that this is their collection. That sort of message, I think, of message is being much more overt, particularly again, with this gallery.

XC -What about rights and responsibilities? Is this something you think about in your education programme?

PA -We do, for practical reasons. In a way, it's both that you want to promote the idea these… It's a collection people have a right to have access to, but also that brings responsibilities. So, looking after them. So, we always… We have to do it for lots of different reasons, but when you bring a group in, you quite often have to,

sometimes you remind, sometimes for the first time, these are quite… Often you've got works here that haven't got glass on them, and you have to be careful, not go too close to them, um, and how we do that is…very often groups have come in for the first time, you don't want to sort of say don't do this and don't do that, but actually to make people aware of the nature of what they're looking at…a lot of people don't have real paintings in their homes or their environment, they might have prints but, um, it's interesting how people relate to paintings.

Interview at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery with Sarah Saunders, Deputy Head of Education at the National Galleries of Scotland, on Wednesday the 8th of February 2012

XC: Xavier Contier, interviewer; SS: Sarah Saunders, interviewee.

XC -Could you talk a little about your responsibilities?

SS –I'm Deputy Head of education at National Galleries of Scotland and, um, I'm the deputy, obviously, to the head of education and part of my role is to deputize for her, and part of it is to work on several aspects of the galleries' business. Um, I line manage four members of the education team. So, between Tricia and myself we line manage the other members of the team. She line manages the other ones. So, I line manage the schools education officer and she also deals with students as well. I line manage Linda McClelland who's the, um, she's the Playfair learning coordinator. So, she's down at the Scottish National Gallery site, and she looks after the Clore education suite. I line manage Meg Faragher who's the learning coordinator for the Scottish National Portrait gallery, um, and I line manage the department administrator who's called Lucy Cardwell. Um, so, …obviously that's quite a role in itself, in actually, you know, planning with them what they're doing, and all of that aspect takes up quite a lot of my role, um, and thinking strategically about what they're doing in relation to our department plan and the corporate plan. So, it's always trying to make sure that what they're doing is achieving our departmental and our organizational needs… Um, so through that there's a lot of discussions as you can imagine. So, they're really the creative teams. They come up with ideas and, um, then they come, we discuss those ideas and how they're going to work, talk to them about scheduling, about budgets. I'm very much in charge of dividing up the budgets that we have between them, working with Tricia on that, but I have responsibility for the exhibition budgets. So, we have our core budgets. So, Tricia is in charge of that side of things and works with me so she'll say to me: 'Ok Sarah here's the budget overall for this year, how much is each of your staff going to have?' And she will look at her staff, and we'll come together, and we'll put the core budget together. Then, we've got the exhibition budgets that come from different gallery sites. So, I coordinate all of that. And this year, for instance, we've

got a pot of money, so it's all one code, but it's all related to different exhibitions. It's quite a complex…a lot of financial things that I have to work out. And we have to work out how, what percentage is being spent on families, what percentage is being spent on adults, what percentage is being spent on communities, and, um, really make sure the money is fairly spent according to those audience needs. And some of the audiences have more needs in terms of others for budget. For instance, adult courses pay for themselves because we charge. So, we have an element of charging programmes and we have free programmes, and the charging programmes offset the free programmes. So, that allows us to do more which is really, really good. So, there's that whole financial side and that also relates to the work I do with development. So, what I've been doing over the past couple of years is packaging what we do into, working with Tricia to do that, but packaging what we do into bundles that we can offer to sponsors. So, we've just done a massive list of all our department needs for this year. So, things like, um, we want to do a Portrait Gallery Olympics in the summer, in the month of August. We want free things every day for families related to the Olympics, in relation to our Playing for Scotland gallery and, um, we've got another exhibition coming up that is about sports people, a contemporary, a small contemporary display, um,…yeah that will be just where the Hot Scots is. But, um, obviously Playing for Scotland is staying up so that will be on in the summer. Um, so for that, for instance, we need 10 000 pounds that we don't have at the moment. So we've, I would write a kind of proposal for how we're going to…what we need the money for, who it's going to benefit, how it fits into the corporate objectives. So, quite a lot of what I do is fundraising as well. Even though I'm not in a fundraising department, each department needs to fundraise for their own department as well, working closely with Development. So, we'd give all those, we'd prepare all that stuff for Development, and then they try and get the money. And that's been working quite successfully, um, and, you know, things like that, that's likely to be funded by somebody, so it's… And the more you can make it more attractive for funders the better. So, I suppose a lot of copy editing, um, thinking about what something's about and making it sound really exciting for that audience and also, very much, I mean what I'm very good at is ideas. So, I'll be working with the teams to make the ideas better, to make the ideas sound better or, um, you know, be more attractive to sponsors. So, there's quite a lot of that… And then I work on all of the public programmes exhibitions with the curators. So, I'm like the education rep who works on each exhibition team. So, the galleries have, um, a procedure, an exhibition's process whereby a curator will propose an exhibition and there's two different levels of that. There's stage one proposal and a stage two proposal and they have to get passed through the senior management team in order to go ahead. So, the curator will come initially to me if they're working on an exhibition and they'll ask me for information about the education potential of that particular exhibition, and we'll have a discussion about it initially. So, that's for stage one. So, I usually do work on stage one proposals, then those stage one proposals, if they get through stage one they get back to me and I'll work on stage two. And stage two is a much more worked up proposal. So, for instance, this year I think we've got…we've got…I might have to check this but I think we've got about eight or nine exhibitions that I will be working on in relation to that. So, then, once I've fleshed out that, obviously, I have discussions with the

different members of the team about what they want to do. So, for something like, we've got a Picasso exhibition coming up in the summer, I'll be thinking okay, we'll discuss with the department who's that really for. Is that good for schools? Is it good for adults? Is it families? Who are the audiences? And we focus usually on sort of two key audiences, and two sort of secondary, or one secondary audience. So, um, for Picasso it's very much Adults, schools, families. That's what we're going to do for that one… Um, so then, then I know ok well if they're the three audiences, how are we going to, what's the percentage of money goes to that and that, and also then how, what is the focus going to be? So, I'll really look at each exhibition with the curator, then look at it myself, make as many connections as I can from that material. So, I'll be saying ok does it link to theatre? Does it link to literature? Does it link to music? Where does it link? Where else does it link? Does it link to science? Does it link to sport? So, try and get all the links we can, think about what the themes would be good for the public and then discuss those with the team. And then, together, we finalize what our kind of aims for that exhibition are, which audience we want to focus on, what are our key messages, what is the exhibition, what do we want the visitors to go away with after that exhibition, what do we want them to know, what are the key things we want them to know, what are the key skills they should have by the end of it, if they're going to do something more practical, what are, you know, what sort of enjoyment do they get from it. Is it sensory? Is it frightening? Is it this, you know, what are we trying to get across? And then, after that, I'd work with the curators to try and achieve those aims with them. So then I'd go back to them, discuss those key messages with them, see that they match with what they're thinking for the show. How can we achieve that, um, so it's a real sort of dialogue? And really…as you can imagine…it is quite a challenging role because with some curators that is exactly what they want you to do, um, like Francis Val at the national, working with her on Symbolist Landscape. And, it also depends whether they can see that you have got an interest in what they're working on, that you really get it yourself. That's so important for my job. I have to really, whatever it is, whatever subject it is, I have to get it. I have to get it, understand it, love it, see the potential of it and always - and I think I'm quite like that as a person anyway - I can, I've never worked on anything that I've thought I really hate this exhibition. I've never, I've never found an exhibition that I've worked on that's been like that. Always… And I think, if you're somebody who's got very extreme ideas or views about art and you hate particular things or you don't, then I don't think you could really do this role very effectively because you've got to see the potential in everything. And that sounds like I'm this person who's really, hasn't got any particular interest, but I have. But I try to keep my own interest sort of separate from the whole thing, and try and think about the audience and what they are going to be interested in. Who is going to be interested in paintings that are about, for instance, symbolist landscapes nightmares, dreams, you know? Try and get into people's headspaces and think about, you know, who is going to be attracted to that audience? Who is going to be attracted to that theme? Who is going to be… and try and match them up. But just see the potential. So, it means that, constantly, I am learning new things, and I think we all are, about these different exhibitions. Um, it's really great. It's a lot of research. You have to be doing a lot of research of your own, because you are not always given that

information by the curator. The curator is focusing on the works of art, they're not necessarily thinking about the literature that runs tangential to those works of art. Even though they know about that, they're not focusing on that. So, it means that you might have to do that. So, in my role that…research the music or research…, you know, research the symbolist music has been really good because, actually, the Van Gogh museum have saved us quite a lot of work on that because they've actually researched all the music, which is brilliant. So, we'll be able to use their research, but hopefully we'll give them something back as well, you know. There's exchanges. So, sometimes that does happen. It doesn't always happen like that. With an exhibition like the impressionist gardens, what I did with that is worked with marketing, press, development, um, the curators and the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, and decided and proposed we do this big thing whereby we work together, and we did. So, by doing that, by suggesting that, and suggesting that we do cross site interpretation, we did, I suggested we did the app, all of that. That is the sort of thing I do. I'll come in and say look there is a real potential to work with these people, to do something that expands our audience but also expands another organization's audience and so we can work together for the best and make something really special out of this. So, um, as you can see it's quite hard for me to explain what I do. In a way, it's quite subtle and it's not, it's quite difficult to define. But what it is, is interpretation that is my main role really, is interpreting exhibitions for, um, with our audiences in mind, our audiences… And also I do a lot of work on evaluation as well. So, I'm developing the evaluation strategy…of this department, yeah, but within that I'm working alongside the corporate evaluation strategy as well, so that I'm going to be one of the people that will be advising on that. So, you know, it's no good doing an evaluation strategy in isolation. So, recently I presented to SMT on our evaluation strategy, but what I was saying to them in that presentation, a lot of it was 'this is what we are thinking of doing', but it's got to fit with what the organization is doing. So, what is the organization doing?… It's a bit like that, trying from, you know, bottom up trying to get things shifting…because evaluation is so important to education. It's so important to the galleries going forward because if we don't scrutinize ourselves and allow the public to give us feedback, in more concrete ways than we're doing at the moment, um… At the moment we've got loads of comments books, we've got all of that stuff. It's what's happening to that information, at the moment. Not necessarily anything is happening to it. Some of it, it is being typed up, especially the Artist Rooms material. Um, so, that's a quite good model, but there's loads of ways of doing, there's loads of methodologies for evaluation and we need to be using a range of those. Um, we do lots of statistical evaluation, but not enough qualitative evaluation, um, at the moment, so that is something that I'm involved in, in my role at the moment. As the years go by, you know, my role changes slightly depending on what big projects are happening. So, Tricia will allocate more projects to me as I'm doing them. So, this year particularly, focusing on evaluation, digital is another thing that I'm focusing on as well, digital learning. So, trying to develop a digital learning strategy for us, for education as well…for a, well, not on-line because we've already got an on-line strategy and new media strategy. This is more about digital learning, the future of, you know, ways of learning. So, that is related to tablets, particularly, and mobile learning devices and, you know, obviously those

devices can be on-line. I'm, we're much more interested in what you can do in gallery spaces with technology, rather than sitting at home or… So the whole tablet thing is really, really interesting. And I was involved in a project with University of Edinburgh, um, which is called digital futures, which I was one of the partners on, where we were looking at digital technology, mobile technology, social networking, and all of that…

XC -Do you work with the artists that you bring in, or is that somebody else's role?

SS -I don't generally work with the artists but I have to oversee the freelancers and the volunteers. So, I don't work with them as in, physically, you know, work with them on creative stuff, but I am in charge of the freelancers and the volunteers as well. So, I keep forgetting these aspects of my role, as it grows larger and larger. So, I set up the volunteers in 2010, um, because I really - well after discussion with Tricia - because we really needed volunteers. We were getting to the stage where we couldn't afford to pay for all the help that we needed. We just couldn't afford it and also there were… A lot of the roles that was actually needed, they were not teaching roles, they were just support roles. So, they were… , you know, when we've got a visually impaired group we might need someone to meet people at the front door. That's not something we would normally pay a freelancer rate to do, because it's a teaching rate. So, there were, we realized, there were lots of opportunities. It was partly opportunity and it was partly support, supporting our department. Um, I was getting at least 5 or 6 CVs every week from people wanting to volunteer and I was always turning them down. I was always having to say 'I'm really sorry your CV looks amazing but I've got nothing for you'. And the only way… And as the kind of Big Society thing kicked in, it was thinking then ok, because I always felt we have to pay everybody. We need to pay everybody because it's important to value people by paying them, but then thinking about it, there were so many people banging on our door saying we want to work with you, we want to be interns, we want to volunteer that it seemed ridiculous not to be able to provide them with some way of doing that if they really wanted to. And also I looked at the fact that actually we could offer them quite a lot of benefits for doing that. And one of the volunteers for, um, instance, um, has just got a job as an education person working at a small gallery in the Borders. From being a volunteer, you know, did a reference for her… Obviously we can give lots of advice to people who work with us as volunteers. The volunteers are amazing, I have to say, and most of them are students and gallery attendants here and…the really interesting thing is we've had so many gallery attendants who want to volunteer with us as well as work in the galleries because often they've done an MA in fine art or whatever. And really they're trying to find a way in to working in this…this field. Um, so that's been, it's been really, really useful. The volunteers we value them, you know, enormously, and we try and give them as many benefits as we can.

XC -This is a very recent thing?

SS -It's very recent yeah, and it is a lot of work…because we've got about 30 freelancers and that's a lot of work, because there's a lot of paperwork. I have to

make sure they're all up to date with their training. Um, I keep all their records, um, you know, I have to communicate with them. It's not only me who communicates with them, but at the end of the day I'm responsible for whatever happens. So, if there is anything that comes up, any problems, anything like that I would be the person that would have to deal with those issues. Now luckily the freelancers are just… and the volunteers they're all absolutely brilliant. And we rarely have any problems, you know, that come up like the public complains or, you know, things that you might have to deal with, with staff. It's very rare that we get anything like that but if… It is quite a big responsibility to have that many freelance staff as well as the full-time staff that you're line managing as well, because I'm really their direct line manager for all the freelancers as well. Um, so, they do come to me with little problems sometimes and things like that, you know, but generally they're just really good and really sensible and…I think they really enjoy working here. So, that's a real bonus… So, there's that part of what I do. There's many other things that I do. I mean often it is working with Tricia on big major projects. Recently, I worked on two major funding projects that have not been announced yet but have been successful. So, um, these are millions of pounds we're talking about, really high level things. So, quite a lot of responsibility in that as well, but really exciting, yeah, it's a really exciting job and it changes all the time, never boring. You have to be, in this role, in the deputy role, I'm the person who's on the floor, in the office. They can all ask me questions and whatever, and I'm the person who has, always be upbeat and try and get everybody on board with stuff. Like, even if they're feeling 'oh god this', they come moan to me. I'm sort of a sounding board as well. That's slightly different from Tricia in that respect. So, they can tell me all their troubles and then I'll try and make it better somehow…

XC -Ok that's great. Um, I'll ask you the next question then. So, how do you, or the department, through your work, contribute to the galleries' aims to increase access and encourage participation?

SS –Yeah, well, I think this is really the main thing that we do, increase access and encourage participation. Um, we do it in several ways. Um, exhibitions can be very much, you know, you go to an exhibition, you wander round. But do you actually participate with that? And how do you participate? So, what we're doing is trying to provide opportunities that you can have a deeper level of engagement with a particular display, permanent collection, exhibition, whatever. So, we provide those opportunities for debate, discussion, inspiration, you know, creativity all those things. We try to encourage that and we try to do that by giving people a range of ways of doing that. So, they… can come to something really in-depth like a conference. So, it goes from the academic - we work with students quite a lot - right down to working with drop-in things for families. But the really important thing is everything we do relates to the collection. There's nothing, because I won't let it go past me, there's nothing that doesn't have a strong connection. We always start with the artworks. So, the artworks are really, really central, whether they're online with the competition's work where we're trying to encourage participation from people living in remote parts of the country. So, we're dealing a lot with that. Um, so, whereas the exhibitions deal and the artworks deal with people who are here and

who can see them, we do quite a lot of things that go out. The outreach team as, you know, goes out into the community and takes out artworks, not the real ones, but reproductions, and encourages people to participate that way. With the schools programme, we, um - and I don't know whether you'll be able to, you'll have to speak to Jo to see if you can come along to one of these - but we do Glow 'meets'. Do you know about those? So, Glow is the Scottish schools internet… So, we do Glow on Thursdays and Glow 'meets', which are basically video conferences with schools in Scotland. It's all safe environment. It's the only place in the whole world that has this, for a whole education country, to be able to have this safe way of social networking with each other in that way. So, Jo does CPD for teachers, professional development for teachers, and she does these Glow sessions with schools. So, she might get… She had an artist, for instance, who came a couple of years ago when he had a big piece in the gallery of modern art. He did a Glow where he met the pupils and talked to them over the internet and had a screen set up. And now with our interactive whiteboard that we've got downstairs in the Portrait Gallery, we can do that much more regularly. We've got, we've got all the kit now that we need to do it. It's not difficult to do. It's… But it is new and some schools are really good at it and some schools haven't quite got the bandwidth that's needed, and it very much relies on bandwidth as being one of the main things that… And, um, firewalls, making sure that there's no firewalls so that we're not getting blocked when we're broadcasting. Um, so we've had a few issues with that but it does mean that we have contributed towards increasing access to the galleries through means like that. So, essentially, on something like a Glow 'meet' you could get 500 school kids seeing that all in one go. Um, and we have had that amount, and we hope to get more in the future as Glow gets better, as Education Scotland improves their services, because it is such a fantastic way of reaching. I mean, essentially, you should be able to reach thousands of people all at once, if it's working properly, and if we organize ourselves properly. We can advertise them and their national meets and anybody can join up. You just get, oh it's just fabulous. When we had 500 people on it once, it was just really good, because you get loads of questions and it's brilliant, really, really good. And, you know, that in Scotland where there are a lot of remote communities, a lot of remote schools that these people they can't necessarily get to the galleries ever, then if we can get to them, then that's increasing participation in what we do in the galleries. So, I think, through our outreach, through our schools programmes, through our competitions, because the competitions are all online… competitions, we have people entering especially things like the writing competition, you're allowed to enter that anywhere in the world, so we get international people entering that. So, and I would like to see much more of that, you know, in terms of, with the, with our digital learning, you know. It's meaning that many more people can experience the virtual gallery on mobile devices anywhere in the world. And it's just such an exciting way of opening things up and having more and more sort of conversations across the world with people. Um, so those are a few ways… Increasing access, obviously we've got our access programmes that Meg Faragher organizes and that's really about access in terms of physical access to the building. Um, obviously the buildings have been improved over the years. So, the portrait gallery now far more accessible than it was to get into, which is great. And we are also providing

programmes for sectors of the society that have perhaps been marginalized and slightly forgotten about. We started a new programme for older people, particularly people with Alzheimer's and dementia. So, what we're looking at, as a department, is looking at opportunities where there are ready-made audiences like in care homes, care homes all around the country, as you know, um, whereby part of what care homes offer to older people, part of that what they're supposed to offer is culture. Um, and obviously trying to make those connections with those care homes is a way that we can make our galleries more accessible and feel that they are a place that you can bring people from care homes to, or we can go out to them, whichever, whichever works and whichever suits, um. And so, Meg's reminiscence programme, it's, the idea was for us to become a centre for reminiscence, with the Portrait Gallery. The concept of the Portrait Gallery…development was one of the audiences would be communities, because we felt that it was a building that was loved by the local communities. Um, it offers, in the subject matter, really fantastic ways into the people of Scotland, the Scottish story, as well as being an international thing. And we want international visitors to learn about Scotland. It's also about the people of Scotland. So, communities, we felt, were really important. We focused some of Meg's work on community groups here and making this a focus for community groups using the galleries. And this can mean a whole range of groups, charities, charitable trusts, organizations who work with a whole range of people from the elderly to… Obviously, we have a big visually impaired programme which we have built up and improved over the years and now it's like, you know, a flagship visually impaired programme in the UK. And people come to us for advice, which is great. And, um, also our disability access. The groups we work with in terms of disability access have grown and grown and we've made really good links with groups like that. The other side, you have other types of community group like the art groups and the life-long learning groups which we also work with. But we very much focus most of our money on access, accessibility, access events, um, because they tend to cost more money, because when you've got a large group of people who are all in wheel chairs, all with carers, you are going to have to have more staff to actually make that work for those, and make the experience… Because what we wanted to provide is equal opportunities, equal experiences for groups, but you have to balance that, because that's going to cost you more because you're going to need more staff. So, we've decided to focus more money on that. The groups like lifelong learning groups, art groups specialist interest groups we try to keep them very cheap to run, cheap to organize. We don't do any extras with them. We do, we give them tours, whatever they want, you know. Um, they have to pay for them quite often, so they'll be charged in order, just in order to cover our costs. That's what we're trying to just do with those programmes, but we actually use core money on the access programmes in order to make our services more accessible. And we've actually increased, we've introduced things like touch tours for visually impaired people which we didn't do before, which we've had to negotiate with the curators as you can imagine, an enormous amount, which is brilliant. So, they're handling objects as you would with an art handling team with the white gloves, um, the cotton gloves. They're thin, very thin gloves as well, so you can feel things quite well, and it works with certain types of works. It's not always appropriate to have touch tours for people who are visually

impaired. It's only if that adds something to their experience of that object. So, it's really important to get the right objects and the right works. And we consult, we do a lot of consultation with our groups to do that as well. Um, yeah, so, those are…some of the ways we increase access and encourage participation.

XC -Do you tend to build up, um, like long-term relationships? Or is it more like one-off…?

SS -Well, that's what the really important thing is. It's the legacy. So, if you do a project, like with Ecas, that we've just done - and they've got an exhibition at the National Gallery up there, you know, their work, they worked with Meg on that project - so, with a group like that, the idea would be that they've been coming to us for years for tours anyway, so we've been working with them for years but on, not in such an in-depth level, and then we did that big project with them, and we're going to continue working with them on tours and workshops. But the chances of us doing another project to that depth with them for the next few years is unlikely, because we want to do it with different groups each time. We also want to do it with different audiences each time because it's really important that we don't just focus on one audience, that we allow… Because the thing, when we do in-depth projects and exhibitions, is it really gives a big focus on that audience for the public coming in. And it's great. It's a really good opportunity, but we've got so many good things going on, we really want to show what students can do, because it's about inspiring the public. And I think that Ecas triptychs project has really inspired a lot of people in the public. Um, you can see by the comments that have been written, in the comments book, it's been a really refreshing exhibition. We haven't done one quite like that. We've not done a project in recent years with people with physical disabilities like that, and it was a really challenging project. So, we have to be careful. We obviously can't focus on one group, so when we're maintaining long relationships they tend to be with bigger organizations more than anything. So, an overarching organization like Artlink we have an ongoing relationship with them, because they work with all the other groups. So, rather than having one working relationship with one community group and just focusing on them - because that wouldn't be fair on everybody else - you're always balancing and juggling things. You've got to be fair and you've got to be seen to be fair and you can't be seen to be focusing on just one certain thing. But we certainly do keep relationships with the overarching organizations that are sort of in charge of all these other organizations or advisory organizations. So, we keep in touch with them, and so yes hopefully with each community group they get to know us and they keep coming back. They know that we are building relationships with them but it's quite rare for us to have enough money for us to do a big project with them unless, in the case of Ecas, they gave us some money towards it. And that's not always the best thing, because that's like they're buying in. It's quite difficult. It's quite challenging because then what do you say? They're offering you some money. You've got to work with them, but really we've got to make the decisions of who we're going to work with by looking at what our aims are, what we're trying to achieve. So, for instance, we're trying to build up… One of our aims is to become a centre for reminiscence. So, that's an aim. We're trying to build on our visually impaired

programme. We are trying to build our access programme, so the Ecas project was perfect. So, that's why we did it, though it came along at the right time. But if that had been something that was, you know, a local art group who said to us 'we're offering you £3000, we want to do an exhibition with you', you're in a really difficult position because the galleries can't really afford to turn money down. But you've got a very fine line between, you've got to make it work, you've got to make sure this is something that the galleries should be doing. So, you're always… The ethical side of it is really important, to get it right and I think with Ecas we got it absolutely right, and it was the right project to do. And it's been a good project, and it's taken a lot of discussion. But yes, we want to continue. We've certainly got really good relationships with a lot of the national organizations, obviously, like National Museums, National Libraries, ongoing relationships with them, places like University of Edinburgh, ECA, Galashiels, Heriot-Watt. So, we try to work… And it is a gradual thing, and you can't have relationships with everybody. Sometimes the relationship will continue for years, sometimes it will be a one big thing. And it also depends if people change jobs, or organizations, or in your organization, because when new staff come into an organization they bring new contacts. So, we're always, when we get a new member of staff like Meg, she's maybe working with different people that she's working with. So, there's a lot of that goes on as well, which is very interesting to see things change.

XC -Okay, thank you. I'll move on. Um, do you think education generally has become more important?

SS -At the National Galleries? Yeah, absolutely. Even since I started, it's grown in its presence definitely. I've only been here for three years, so I don't have a long-term view in that respect, but people who have been working here a lot longer tell me things have changed up to that point. And I think major projects like the Clore, before my time, the National Gallery, Weston Link project, things like that really started that off, in terms of having more, the organization seeing the need, recognizing the need for educational facilities on site, for spaces to allow more participation and that… Because if you don't have the room and the spaces to allow… Like we're in the lunch room. The lunch room at the National is tiny and it was never big enough, and it's just getting those things right. So, here we've got the space right. This is big enough for a whole class of 40, okay. And that's what you need. If a school's going to travel to you, you need to have facilities. So it's…the whole thing about education is you cannot expand it unless you have the visitor facilities to do that. It's the toilet. Have we got enough space for people to have lunch? Do we have workshop spaces? Where are people going to go? But it's also increasing little by little what we can do in the gallery spaces. So, you will have seen quite a few gallery events now held in the galleries. Now that is something that would have been far more difficult to do five years ago, ten years ago. Ten years ago it might not have been allowed at all, you know. I don't know because I wasn't working here, but in other organizations that I have worked in, that is probably the case. So, little by little, proving through good practice that it's important to do things in the environment with the paintings…it's important that people are not always pushed into a room that doesn't contain art. They could be anywhere. They

could be in a college. They could be at their local community centre. We're not about that; we're about art, therefore we shouldn't be getting everyone to hide away and do things, so that everyone else can just look at the art, you know. The events need to happen in the spaces as well, so that you're really engaging. Otherwise who are you engaging with the art if it's so divorced from the art? So I'm very much a believer of events being a really important way to interpret the artworks, and to get more out of the artworks, to actually physically engage with an activity, whether it's listening to somebody who's singing in response to the artworks, or listening to a talk in the gallery… That's probably the most standard thing, is a gallery talk. That has been going on in galleries for years and years and years… I think it's something that has always been done, isn't it? Tours has always been acceptable… And even families being accepted in galleries is something that's fairly recent, although when you look back to the original Victorian photographs of things like the V&A, National Museums of Scotland and this gallery, at that time you'll see there were lots of children that came to these galleries. They were brought as school children. They were in the galleries. The galleries were full of children… And often galleries opened late on several days of the week. Sometimes they had a free day for students. So, I think where we are now is, um, we're almost kind of going back to the original aims of what museums were about, that possibly might have been forgotten for a period of time in the middle, where it became less acceptable to do this, there were less late openings, there were less, there was less of a desire for that… But now the public really want that. They want spaces to open and be alive at night, you know. Maybe that will increase in the future as well. So, education definitely more important. One of the reasons is that - and this might sound like quite a negative reason, but it is positive for education and for the public - is that more and more now, when we're applying for funding, especially for things like the heritage lottery fund, the emphasis is on the education. What are people getting out of this? Why are we giving you nine million pounds? What are you going to use it for? And huge amounts of those application forms are about what are the benefits to the public. What is the education potential? What are the learning outcomes? How is learning going to be achieved? And you can't get any money without that anymore, at all. I do so many applications with development, and it's all about education, it's all about learning. But then, everything is about learning in galleries because…what the curators are doing is clearly about learning and what the public are doing just by looking is absorbing, and that comes into the framework of learning. I think it's always been important. It's been put more centrally in the aims of the organization. In the corporate plan, there's now two aspects of the corporate plan that are specifically about learning which is amazing … It makes it quite easy for our department. It makes it more difficult for other departments who are then asked 'how is this making it accessible?'… It's challenging for people, I think, in the galleries…and accepted more by the curators, understood more about what education's about… Because I think in the past there has been a little bit of a feeling that curators might be challenged by the education. Because why do you have education? Because the curators are doing education, because they are the ones doing the research and that is education. And what we're doing is also education, but it's with a different focus. It's looking from the other way round. So, instead of the education being focused around the art, we are looking at how the

public might engage with that in a different way, or in the same way… But how are they going to have the next level of engagement, after maybe read the text and looked at the works? What are they going to do next? And try and capture that learning…

XC -So you're kind of answering my fourth question. How would you characterize the nature of the education?

SS -The nature of it is that it's multidisciplinary. It's really quite sensory what we do, and so we try and provide… It's choice, it's characterized by its choice, I think… Now that can be a good or a bad thing. Sometimes you can spread yourself too thinly, but in recent years… Because we've tried to package things. So that we've got the family stuff. It's family drop-in, and we've got a whole range of family drop-in, and that is one stream of what we do. And then we've got the adult programme. The adult programme consists of three different elements. We've got the talks and lectures, including things like conferences and symposia. That's the core, and then we've got the 'after hours' programme. That's another section, which is much more about absorbing yourself in a far lighter experience really. So, you've got the kind of rigorous formal education aspects of our programme. So, you've got the schools programme where schools come in. It's formal education; it's linked to the curriculum. And then you've got things that you can do just for pleasure…and that could be easel sketching in the gallery… It's choice; it's about choice our programme. So, we give people different levels. You can start at beginners. So, if you look at Linda's programme, you've got art for absolute beginners, art for not quite beginners. So, it's about progression as well. We give people the opportunity to progress, and that's really good, that's been so popular because some people don't want to come to art courses because they think I can't do art… So, if you actually call something art for absolute beginners, they know what it is. It's what it says on the box. We're not expecting you to know anything, we just want people who want to come and have a go. And we've had people be really successful from that, because often people will put themselves down and think I can't do that, but I'd love to do that really, secretly… We've actually got people like that coming to those things… I think what else characterizes our programme, also, hopefully, is that it's really good fun, that it's slightly quirky and alternative, sometimes, as much as we can make it. And I think that has changed over the period that I've been here, that it's become a little bit more quirky, a little bit more dangerous, a little bit more experimental. So, we're starting life drawing in the National Gallery, in the evenings after hours, in the main space, when it's not open to the public, with two life models, and that's going to be extraordinary and different, and no-one else does it. So, we're trying to be a bit more daring and braver and that's because we're quite a mature department now. We can be braver. We can try new things out. We can push the boundaries. So, I think another thing that characterizes us is that we like to provide really good quality things. But we also like to provide surprises to people, and hopefully by having that choice we can do that.

XC -Okay, I'll move on. Do you think the education offered by NGS can benefit people in a potentially 'life-changing' way? I spotted this in your material.

SS -Yes, it's in our, um, manifesto, as it were. Um, yes, I think this is quite a difficult thing to prove, sometimes. And how we try to prove it is through projects that are a bit longer term, like the outreach projects. It's really hard to prove because anything can be life-changing… You could walk down the street, and suddenly see something, and it could be life-changing to you… We need to be a bit careful about what we're saying. Because what does it mean to be life-changing? And I can see that that is quite a nebulous concept… But where there are examples, we have got examples, and we have got evidence, which is why we put this in. Um, and they range. They are particularly with our outreach projects, whereby there has been really fantastic success stories where people have been followed up and they've come back to us. And this has happened to us also with the art competition and writing competition, where we've had people applying successive years and then they come back to us and suddenly they're this fully-grown person who was a child or whatever, and they're suddenly doing this and they come back to us and tell us 'I entered the competition, I won in blah, blah, whatever year, and that inspired me to go on and do this and this and this, and I wouldn't have done this unless'… So, we've got…Linda's got some concrete examples of this… Um, also with our writing competition, we provide opportunities for people to have a life-changing experience because we do publish the winning works, and to get your work published is life-changing. Because that is, we've got a publishing department, it's properly published with an ISB and everything, and you can then say you're a published writer, if you've been published. And we've done three publications of that book, and that has changed quite a few people's lives. So, it is a big statement to make, but we know there are people who have had their lives changed by their encounters with art, encounters with workshops that they've had, with winning a prize, doing this or doing that. So, there are concrete things. We put 'potentially' because potentially not everybody will have anything happen to them, dramatically.

XC -So do you think this is a direct result of this kind of educational expansion? Do you think this would not have been possible say, I don't know, ten years ago?

SS -I think that there has always been people who have walked into a gallery and that has changed their lives. I think just looking at an image and suddenly being faced with something that you just understand and it suddenly shines a light on something for you, I know that's happened to me with artworks in the past. Um, I think art can do that by itself, but, however, I would say that because of the deeper engagement we can have with people face to face, we can talk to them about it. If it wasn't for our freelancers, our, you know, Linda and the team and everybody who's actually working face to face with the public, and that includes gallery attendants, it's not…You know, when I talk about education it's not just our department that does education, not at all. Marketing are doing education, they're doing all the social media stuff. The gallery attendants are there. They're providing information. They're face to face with the public. They're like educators as well… Anybody who engages with people like that is passing information, and passing ideas and just getting people interested in things, and I think it's all part of it. And we're only a small part of it. So, I do think it's the one-to-one engagement that can ensure that

more people can have a potentially life-changing experience or have a better experience. It's really…we can just say benefit people to have a better experience in the galleries. That's what we're saying. We're saying we can enhance, when you come in. Okay, we can enhance your expectations and you can go out feeling 'oh yeah there's a trail, I can do that, I can do this, somebody can tell me that if I ask them a question'. So, it's about being informed, being aware of people's needs, and being there for people, and listening to people about what they say and what they think, and valuing their opinions. That's the really important thing, valuing what people think, no matter what it is and thinking about that in relation to what the galleries as a whole does. We're often writing to people, responding to people, and the curators are as well. And we do respond to everybody who, you know, writes to us or, you know, try and give them as full a picture as what they're asking for as possible… And all of our team are being asked by all sorts of people for all sorts of information. So, having that education team there, really helps us to answer those questions. Like someone wanted to know from me about the Lavery exhibition, this certain admiral was in one of the paintings and that might have been a curatorial thing to do, but as I worked on the exhibition I was answering that question. But he then wanted to ask an educational question, because he was going to do a resource based on this person who was in the painting. There's nice connections can be made, just by talking to people. I do think it is because of the rise of education in museums that you can do so much more. I think the public find there is more people for them to talk to about things. Whereas before with the curatorial team…wouldn't necessarily be out in the galleries. The only people who would be there would be the security. And it's really good that the security is now much more visitor-focused. So, they're not just about 'keep your hands of the artwork', they're more about 'hello, are you having a nice day', you know. Because galleries and museums could be intimidating places, to be honest. I always found private galleries much more intimidating than public galleries. I never really found that public galleries were that intimidating, but I know they are intimidating to families, when you ask families. There are lots of families come in here and it's the first time they've been in, and they didn't know it was free. They just assume you have to pay, and you would think that message has got through by now but it hasn't. There's still a lot more work to be done to get the potential people through the building. The numbers have been great here, but as you can see, you could still have loads more people in here…so there's plenty of room for expansion definitely.

XC -Which brings me to the last question. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the department?

SS -The strengths are, one of the things that's a real strength is the different specialisms that we've all got. So, just like the curators, it's really important for an education department to have people with different specialisms, because if you're all quite general then, you know, you need the variety. So, we've got Meg, trained as an actress, brilliant, she knows all about theatre, things that I know nothing about. I'm a designer. I come from a design background, trained as a jeweller and silversmith and then I was a teacher. So, you need a bit of everything. Helen, she's a language specialist, did Spanish and History I think. So, really different

interesting backgrounds of people. Lucy worked in a museum, did some museum studies, and Tricia, as you know, is Renaissance specialist. So, my interests are twentieth century, whereas Helen's might be this… Strengths in every department, it's the people, it's the people that make it work. The other strength is good teamwork, good leadership, I think, in terms of, as a department since I've been here, every year it's gotten better in terms of the department plan, of the focus, where we're going, what we're doing, what our aims are has gotten much better…much more focused, I think. I think that's again because of the maturity of the department. So, the maturity is one thing… I think a range of ages that's really important, but the other thing, a range of gender in the department that's really important. So, that's another thing. So, we've got a nice mix… Because a lot of education departments can be all women, and I actually think having a mix is really, really important to have that mix. And the same with our freelancers, although I desperately try to get more men to join up as freelancers. Um, but we just don't get nearly as many CVs from men as we do from women, so consequently when we're doing the sifting it always comes out as if we're interviewing more women than men… And, as you know, that's the same in teaching as well. And it's a real problem, and I don't understand why that is, because it's a really good job for men and women. It's really interesting, and I just don't get it… I don't know what it is, but they don't come through as wanting to go into education. I think possibly more men want to go into curatorial, but I don't know… So that's definitely a strength, the other thing is everybody is extremely hard working and extremely focused on their programmes and their output is enormous. And the reason we've got good people is because so many people want to be in this field of work, that we get so many applicants for each job that you really can then get the people who are the best people for the job because you get such a good field… So, it's always very competitive and I think, slightly, that goes into our work as well, because we all… because those people are so motivated and competitive to get the job in the first place, they're also motivated and competitive in their own work. I try to get them to go home at 5 o'clock and they don't… So, they're ultra-dedicated. They'll come in at weekends… That is a massive strength. Weaknesses… We're split across sites, and I think that's a weakness, because we don't have anybody based at the Gallery of Modern Art. So, it's really hard to support the work that goes on over there. We have no office over there. We have very little education spaces over there. We've got the studio which we share. We can't always use that and we don't have any facilities in that space, so anything we do in there we have to bring in all the materials. The education room in modern two only holds half a class, so it's not big enough. So, you can rarely do things in there either. That's a bit of a weakness. That's something we want to focus on in terms of fundraising, to get those things changed. Being split site with the department that means half of my team are at the National and the other half are here. But it's very hard to be in two places at once, and really you have to have one base, because I can't be carting all my files around every day… While the Portrait Gallery development has been going on, I've had to be here… People don't feel as supported if they haven't got their line manager on site. It's really good for people over here because they can ask me things in passing, but if they have to make an appointment it's more difficult… We can't fit everybody over here unfortunately. We lost…we had a post that looked after young

people, as part of their role, and unfortunately that post came to an end. And so, therefore, we can't do very much for young people and I'd like to do more for students. So, ideally, that's another thing that's an issue. I think we're missing out on quite a big audience. Jo does as much as she can with students, but there are so many schools programmes that it's very difficult for her to do anything that makes a real difference to students. But the Gallery of Modern Art are very keen on encouraging students, and so they're pushing for it, but we don't have anybody who can support it as much as we need to. So, that's a weakness… The other weakness is that because we've now got so many education rooms, one thing we've been wanting and needing for ages is a technician post, because rooms are being used all the time. If this was a college or a university, you'd have a kind of technician here. Keeps an eye on the stock. Are the rooms tidy? Things like that… It's very important that we take responsibility of the education spaces that we have, and make sure we have them kept looking very good for the public.

Interview at the Dean Gallery (Modern Two) with John Leighton, Director-General of the National Galleries of Scotland, on Monday the 20th of February 2012

XC: Xavier Contier, interviewer; JL: John Leighton, interviewee.

XC -Okay, so, has education become strategically more important to NGS since you took up your position?

JL -Okay, so I came here, what, 6 years ago, almost exactly. Um, and certainly education was already an important element in the work of the galleries, um, but yes, I would say that over the last 6 years we've moved to put the concept of education more at the heart of what we do. And I think that has to do with quite a broad definition of education in a museum gallery context, because I don't see education as being the bit that the education department does. Um, I think the whole business that we are in can very loosely be defined as education. So, whether it's curators or people working on the website, or whether it's any of our public-facing activities, all of that, to my mind, comes under the banner of education. However, um, the department itself and their work, I think, does occupy, I hope it occupies, a more central position in what we are doing as an organization.

XC -I see, um, you said before, this education…in what way… Why has it become more central do you think? What was the reasoning behind your decision to make it more so?

JL -Well, I think there are several things at play. Um, if you step back and look at the broader picture of how museums and galleries, let's say in Europe, but let's call

it the West, have developed in recent decades, I think there has been a general broad tendency to develop a new kind of relationship with their public, with their audiences. Um, perhaps it would be fair to say that in the twentieth century, the, there was a tendency for museums to become more inward-looking, to focus on their role as treasure houses, for the activity of collecting, of research, to become more focused on self-perpetuating in a way. This is a caricature. It is not, um, it's very general. In a sense, the audience and the public was almost a by-product of that activity. Um, well, in the 1980s, then in the 1990s, and increasingly I think, there was a reaction against that. Museums opened up more to their audiences, were looking for new ways to relate to their publics, and being from a more introverted position, they became more extroverted and looked for new contracts with the public that supported them. That's a very sweeping generalization, but to some extent it holds good for the National Galleries of Scotland, um, in that although the profile of the galleries, during the, for example, during the 1970s and 1980s, rotated around high profile acquisitions, um, building the collection, um,…I think increasingly in the 90s they started to look more to education and what we call education, developing new relationships with schools and different kinds of audiences, and possibly were in that tendency a little bit further behind some of the other bigger organizations in London, in New York, in other parts of the world. Um, and certainly, when I came here 6 years ago, I was very keen to encourage that direction. And you are never talking about extremes. You don't go from this one day, we do that the next. It's more about direction and tendency and influence. So, I was very keen to nurture that, and develop that, um, while not losing the traditional curator-based skills of research and collection building, to open up the programme more to the public and develop a different sense of a relationship with the audiences.

XC -Okay, thank you. I suppose you've kind of answered this. Do you see NGS's educational agenda as a shared responsibility?

JL -Yes, in a sense I have, and I think broadly the definition of museums and galleries… I think we are, in the most general sense, educational institutions. And so that anyone who is working here is involved in education. Um, and that term can mean many different things. It's not simply about learning. It's about offering different kinds of experience. It's enrichment, and it's inspiration as well. So, I'm talking about education there with a very broad definition.

XC -So, is art history still a dominant focus at the NGS?

JL –Well, I mean art history is bound to be a focus because everything that we do starts, takes its cue if you like, from the collections. So, you're starting with a very fine group of objects which has been put together over more than 150 years, um, and those collections tell many stories which have to do with the history of art. Um, but they tell other stories as well, and, um… So, of course you can't ring-fence it and say we are exclusively interested in telling stories of, that begin with early Renaissance and end up with contemporary art. We are also telling all kinds of, projecting all sorts of narratives, and I think increasingly, of course, people want to

use collections in different ways. People, our audiences, some of them are interested in getting a historical overview. Others have, and a large majority are looking for something which is less structured and more fluid than that and it may be more generalized aesthetic experiences, it may be that they're looking to get a better sense of their own place, their own identity and relationship to art. So, I think, I mean one could go on but I don't think art history in any way neatly defines what we do. Although, obviously, it will be a very central preoccupation for us.

XC -And do you think the individual galleries have a kind of…maybe a different focus? I'm thinking of the Portrait Gallery.

JL -Yeah, I think the Portrait Gallery is different. The National Gallery has the character of a highlights from art history collection, um, and will always have that character. So, it does take you from the Botticellis through the Raphaels, like stepping stones, through to the Gauguins and the Cezannes. That is an art history progression that only really makes sense through art history. Having said that, you can duck and dive into that collection in many different ways, whether it was history, sociology or contemporary, it doesn't matter. The contemporary collections are looser, and obviously the closer that you come to our own time the more difficult it is to define art history, um, but that's obvious. Then the Portrait Gallery has a different brief and is much more - the stories there are more layered - about history, contemporary life, about stories from Scotland's past and present. And the aesthetic art historical line to that is not unimportant but is not the dominant one necessarily.

XC -Sure. Okay, um, what scope do you think there is for encouraging public debate and discussion in the galleries? Um, do you believe it is the role for NGS, for a national cultural institution to engage with big events, major events of our time? Or does this lie beyond your remit?

JL -Um, yeah. It's a good question, because, um, I think people will have different views as to whether art sits in life or is something which has its own sphere or its own terms of reference. And different people will have their own views on that, um, and, um, I think as a national cultural organization we have to find a kind of a balance between seeing to be relevant and very relevant to people's needs and concerns and views and wishes - you have to be - um, while at the same time not getting enmeshed in the flotsam and jetsam of everyday life, because you're also trying to provide something which is different from the ordinary, which is special, which is somehow a different kind of experience from going to the supermarket say, or switching on a political programme on the television. Um, and so I think there's scope, particularly with the nature of the collections that we have, to, um, to take a distance and to offer the most serene and otherworldly aesthetic experience on the one hand, or, on the other, to have, um, whether its debates, readings, activities which draw very closely to the world around us, and this is particularly but not exclusively the case with contemporary art and with the material that we find in the Portrait Gallery. So, um, you will find that in the same breath we can have something like the Graham Fagen video of the Missing at the Portrait Gallery

which is obviously dealing with…contemporary sensitivities in a very, slightly poetic way but certainly dealing with them, that can be on show at the same time as an exhibition of Elisabeth Blackadder which, you know, nothing could be perhaps more removed and remote from the hardness of everyday experience. So, we can find that balance. Um, perhaps whether you think we should do more or less of one or the other will very much depend on your personal view, I think.

XC -Um, what values, if any, do you believe have remained intact at the heart of the institution since its early foundation?

JL -Okay, good question. I think the, if you simplify, the values that we have today are remarkably similar to those from the founding years of the 1850s and beyond. If you simplify it, if you go back to the motives for founding a public gallery here in Scotland you could probably come up with, broadly speaking, you could probably come up with three. First would be a general motive to give the public access to great works of art and by extension the benefits that come from that, that access. And so that would be the kind of founding motive of many public galleries in the nineteenth century. Works of art, seen to be a good thing, belonged to kings, queens, aristocrats, wealthy folk - let's find a way to allow a wider public to have that privilege. So that's one. A second would be broadly speaking an economic motive, particularly strong here in Scotland. In the years after the Union when craft, design, trade, industry were suffering. In the early nineteenth century there's a move to try and improve standards of craft and design by giving people access to great examples from art, something that you see very obviously in an institution like the Victoria and Albert museum, but still very present here and…the original founding of the National Galleries of Scotland was through something called the Board of Manufacturers, a board specifically set up to improve craft design in Scotland. And a third motive was, roughly speaking, to do with identity and engendering a sense of pride in things Scottish, and a sense of place. So, if you take those three motives, access, an economic one, a sense of identity and map that on to the kind of things we talk about today, I think the language would be different and you wouldn't for example now, we wouldn't use Victorian words like improvement which was very common in the nineteenth century; they talk about the beneficial or the power of collections to improve people, we wouldn't say that, but we wouldn't mind education and we would say that motive of allowing the widest possible public to have the benefits of access to the very greatest art treasures, that still maps on more or less completely to what we do today. I think the economic driver is still present although it would be expressed somewhat differently. Now we would tend to talk about tourist audiences, the creative economy, the benefits of having great cultural institutions within the country's economic fabric. Very important. And a third one about identity, I mean that's obviously another key factor. And you can define that narrowly or broadly but I think certainly I would subscribe to the view that access to the collections, it's not even so much about engendering a sense of pride as help people to navigate their way through their own personal debates about who they are - what interests me, what inspires me, what moves me? And people can project their own identities through access to collections, something of course particularly strongly at the Portrait Gallery but it works, I think, for other parts of

the collection as well. So the short answer is I think you can map them almost one on one, even if the context and the wording and the balances may shift, may have shifted.

XC -You mentioned identity, is this a particularly, um, difficult one, given the political climate of Scotland at the moment, is it a little controversial maybe…?

JL -No I don't think so, I mean, it depends how you articulate it. In the world of culture and heritage, we're used to quite fluid boundaries. We're used to sometimes contradictory definitions, and I think what we allow, what we work to do is to allow the public to decide for themselves. And whether they define their identity as Scottish and British and European, or make choices between those, that's up to them, but certainly we offer material which will provoke thought, will provoke people to ask the questions, and they will find their own answers. We don't, for example, in the stories that we provide or the narratives that we're providing at the Portrait Gallery, we don't seek to give definitive answers, and very often, as you will see if you go round, the narratives are filled with paradox and contradiction, so, um, and ambiguity.

XC -You mentioned there is a kind of strong similarity between the nineteenth century values and contemporary values, do you think in-between there was a little bit of something different? Was it more inward-looking?

JL -Yeah, I think in the nineteenth century we had, it's only natural when you have, when these institutions were new - and you're reading this of course through the lens of the twenty-first century - but when these institutions are new, they're going to have a clearer sense of purpose and function that…particularly when you're building and making your way, I think there was quite a clear contract with the public. And perhaps in the twentieth century that did become clouded to some extent. Again, I think that's quite a natural process because as institutions develop, they develop their own momentum and there's a natural tendency for them to become self-perpetuating so that: why do you exist? Because we exist. And, I think it's only in the late twentieth century that there was a kind of existential crisis for museums, and partly precipitated in a way through funding questions… Questions do arise: well what is it for? Why do you have all these collections? And it's probably not enough to say we have the collections because we have the collections; they are their own reason for existing. And you have the collections because they have a function, and that function is a social public one and so you have to then rethink what that relationship is. And I think…if I was going to put my finger on it in this country it would be in the 1980s and it would be the kind of crises engendered by, during the Thatcher years, where museums were forced to think: well, what are we for? Why do we have free admission? What are the core functions? What can we ask for from the public through government? And what do we have to do through private sponsorship? And so on and so forth. And that really comes to a head in the 80s and 90s and is still continuing. Those are obviously debates and discussions which are very much alive today.

XC -Sure, do you believe some measure of long-term stability is important for an institution like this?

JL -Yeah, of course it is. I think museums and galleries are, by their very nature, they are long-term bodies and institutions. Um, and when you acquire collections, when you add to collections, that's not, as you say, just for Christmas, that's forever. And everything is set up in such a way that, it's possible to add to the collections but very difficult to subtract from them so that it is a process of growth over a long period. Um, and I think increasingly that sense of permanence, however illusory it might be in our volatile universe, that sense of permanence, that sense of longevity, of things that have been acquired over time, which will remain with us over time, is a key part of our whole ethos, if you like. People, I think, like to imagine that the same picture that they are looking at will be available still in 500 years or a thousand years and so on. Um, I'm sure you like, when you look at, I don't know, a painting by Leonardo, you like the play between knowing that it's five, six hundred year old but at the same time it's speaking to you right now in a very vital and lively way. And that sense of time and long-time is very important. Stability I think, in the museum and gallery world, I can't think of any examples of museums that have thrived through volatility. Perhaps in the world of contemporary art, that's slightly different where there's lots of stirring and splashing. But can you think of any volatile museums that have thrived? There's certainly examples of institutions that have tried different strategies like the Guggenheim for example, um, but I'm not sure that volatility has been wholly beneficial to their profile, I'm not sure.

XC -Thank you. Um, it kind of ties into its educational function in a way, do you agree, this kind of transmission of order within wider society maybe?

JL -Yes, I mean I think it's difficult to imagine how you can develop relationships with your public, how you can develop understanding, knowledge, if people don't have a sense of stability. I mean, I think it relates to my mind quite closely with the development of a sense of ownership, which is part of what we were talking about when we were talking about the nineteenth century motives. Um, and a national collection, a public collection should - and it's harder to engender than I ever thought - but people should feel that these works of art belong to them, not to a government, not to a board of trustees, not to the institution itself, but that they belong to everyone. And so the stability and the ownership and the understanding and the relationship that stems from that, they're all, I think you're right, I mean, I think that is closely linked.

XC -Okay thank you, I want to ask a last question about…given the current economic climate, how important is it for NGS to pursue other sources of funding, non-governmental sources?

JL -Yeah, well it's become increasingly important obviously, and, at the moment, depending on how you define it, I suppose somewhere around about 75% of our operational funding comes from government, about 25% from other sources. It

depends on how you define it and how projects are built into it, but it's roughly that kind of… And as, generally, as public funding pressures increase and that level of funding either stays the same or shrinks, then if you're going to keep going and keep meeting the expectations of the public then you have to be ever more creative and inventive in finding new ways of funding it. I think what we call the plural funding mechanism is generally pretty good anyway, because it does help to encourage some of the things we've been talking about, so wider ownership for example, wider involvement. Um, but of course it is quite competitive, and it adds up, it stacks up the risk. So, I would say we've been pretty successful in raising funding for special projects, for our public programme for exhibitions and educational activity, and on a day-to-day basis the main sources are obviously the cafes and the shops, our friends and patrons organizations. Um, but yes, that is quite hard work.

XC -Do you think funders are increasingly expecting this educational aspect?

JL -I think there are certainly certain areas of fundraising where education is an important element and so yes, it's certainly easier to raise funds for an educational project than it would be to fix the roof, or put in a new floor. The… and obviously the tangible benefits and the outcomes probably would be a better way of putting it, I suppose, the results of the sponsorship are much easier to see. So, for example, if you take something like our schools art competition, um, you not only have the product which are the works of art but you have the very obvious benefits from the school kids. So, it's very visible where there are lots of other things that we do - it might be conservation, for example - that are less visible and, in that sense, harder to fund. It would be harder to get funding for a new machine to take x-rays of works of art, for example, than it would be for certain educational activities.

Interview at the Scottish National Gallery with the Education Officer for Schools at the National Galleries of Scotland, on Thursday the 23rd of February 2012

XC: Xavier Contier, interviewer; EOS: Education Officer for Schools, interviewee.

XC -So, if you could tell me a little bit about your responsibilities.

EOS -Yeah, um, my main responsibilities are programming across all sites for schools and teachers. So, I do this [NGS Programme for School] every year, which I'm sure you've got a copy of from Tricia. So, essentially that is sort of my main bible if you like for everything that we do for schools. However, as you can appreciate, lots of things come up throughout the year, um, that I just respond to. But my main responsibilities are sort of devising and creating the tours for schools

and the practical workshops for schools, and a lot of the CPD for teachers. And I do a lot of work now with Murray House, which is now the University, and also the art college. So, I've been doing lots of work with the PGDE students, team up with second year, I think, fine art students, and they get paired up and then, um, this was our pilot last year with the tutor. We brought them to the modern art gallery, and I talked to them about how we use that with schools and how we use that with teacher training and things like that. And then in their pairs they had to go away, and devise a series of lessons. And then they tried it out when they were teaching on their teacher practice, and some of the art students managed to go with them to see what it's like to be a teacher, using your art degree rather than being an artist. So, it's this kind of thing about, because there was a lot of talk a few years ago about, you know, secondary art & design teachers not being classed as artists anymore and the fact they lose that skill. Whereas a lot of them are still practising artists and they're also teachers. So, it's artist-teachers, teacher-artists type of thing. So, we're doing that again this year, the same PGDE and the art students, but we've kind of tweaked it a bit more. And, um, so that's quite interesting, that's quite an interesting area that I'm working on. And I also do a lot…I do a lot with the primary B.Ed. students, and they, at this time of the year, are now studying citizenship. So they come into the galleries, and we do like a whole morning about being Scottish, and using the collection to make you feel quite proud of the collection and the historical aspects, and all of that. So, um, yeah that's my sort of main responsibilities, I suppose. I think.

XC -The CPD is quite popular? Do teachers come up, phone up…?

EOS -It's a strange one CPD because the CPD I do, I suppose, with the student teachers is very popular, and we've programmed that in with the tutors of the university, but the CPD that I run in my programme here, there isn't that much take-up and sometimes I have to cancel them. And I don't quite know why, because when I see them - because I do the private views when there's an exhibition for the teachers - when I see them all, they say 'Oh, Jo, I wish you would do more life drawing for us' and I say 'I do actually'. I end up cancelling it, and then when I do do a course and it is booked up, they say it was so brilliant, it was so brilliant we'll come again and then I don't really know what happens. I think they just either haven't got the time and I don't know what the budget is like for CPD. I think it's really, really tight, but I think it's about to change… A colleague was telling me teachers who have been there over 5 years have now got to start doing different CPD or something. So, they're going to be looking for things to do. There is this kind of pot of money to do it. I don't know. This might have an effect on this because the CPD isn't very popular, if I'm honest. It isn't, and I just don't know why. And when it is popular, you know, when it is something that they do come along to, they all rave about it and tell everyone. And then there can be things that are not filled and I end up having to cancel them, like life drawing which you would think would be quite popular, and it's not, I don't know, it's really strange.

XC -And, when schools are coming, they phone you up?

EOS -They phone Lucy. Lucy is, um, she's like the first point of contact. She's the administrator for the whole department, but a big part of Lucy's job is the schools booking side of things. So, probably 50% of her time is school bookings and 50% of the time is general admin. So, I mean, I do take some school bookings but I wouldn't have time because I have lots of other things that I do, like lots of other projects and stuff.

XC -So, you are programming?

EOS -So, programme this, yeah. I do occasionally take tours and workshops. I try and do that as much as I can but sometimes I just can't. And it's a shame because I'm from a teaching background as well. So, I quite like to do it. Um, so, when the schools phone up, they phone Lucy or they e-mail Lucy at the education e-mail, and go through her. If it's a bit of an awkward one, when it's something that isn't in the programme, then we do try and do that, but then Lucy will speak to me and say 'can we do that?' and ask for advice. And I'll give her that. So, yeah.

XC -Is there a kind of predominance of Edinburgh Schools, you think?

EOS -Yeah, I'm afraid so. I'm afraid it's a lot of the same schools who come all the time. And I can see why that is. And even, I mean, a lot of these schools outwith Edinburgh, it is the cost of transport that keeps them away. And we are looking at some kind of funding opportunities, because if I could have a pot of money, I could target schools in hard-to-reach areas and say 'Look, I can pay for the bus if you can get everything else sorted'. And I'm really pushing for that to happen, because I'm getting really bored of the same schools coming in, and unfortunately it's a lot of the private schools, which kind of depresses me as well. Just get quite depressed, because I just think, it's brilliant that they come and use it as a resource but it's a shame that the state schools aren't… I mean we do get a lot of state schools in, obviously, but yeah. And when we do get a school in that hasn't visited, they'll say 'Oh, I didn't really know you did this, didn't know you could offer me this'. I think 'Gosh, what's happening there?' This goes to every single school and… But, I suppose, this can go to a head teacher and not move off that desk. So, it's just a constant sort of, you know, banging, banging about what we do, and then trying to do things to get schools that don't come in, you know. If there is something specific that I'm offering, like a new workshop, I'll try and look on the list of schools, and think 'Right, that school I know doesn't come in, I'm going to offer them this free and try and get them in to do it'. Sometimes they completely ignore the emails. Sometimes they will come in. Sometimes they'll say 'We can't do that, it's too complicated'. I think a lot of it comes from the head teacher. If a head teacher can make things happen then that's all good, but if the head teacher makes things difficult, the teachers just don't want to do it. I don't think it's too…there's too many forms to fill in, so it's a shame. Yes it is.

XC -So, do you see a greater potential for the galleries to engage with schools? Um, this is a very broad question…

EOS -Um, I think on paper it would be amazing if every school or even two thirds of the schools, even in Edinburgh, used us as a resource, but that doesn't happen. And, um, I suppose I've just said it. I don't really know why that is. I think it comes down to, actually, I think it does come down to people being a little bit daunted by galleries and a little bit… I get a lot when I'm doing the CPD with the student teachers and they say 'I would never have thought of that, I would never have thought of using a painting to think about history or something and I wouldn't know how to start talking about a painting', they say to me. So, in those sessions, I do try to say it's not rocket science what we do here, we're not saving lives, you know. We're not brain surgeons. It's just having a little bit of confidence. And maybe having some tools that teachers can say 'Ok, I know I can go into the gallery and maybe talk with my class about that painting'. Um, so, in my programme, I think it was last year, I put Benjamin West in the centre pages, centrefold, and, you know, just put lots of ideas for how they could just start using it, even on the whiteboard in the classroom. And that seemed to go down well, but I think a lot of people are intimidated, and they're intimidated by this building. I think the building itself is quite intimidating, you know, the Renaissance columns, you just think 'hum, I don't want to go in there; it looks far too scary'. And, you know, everybody in check trousers looking very formal, I do think it puts some people off. They just think that's not for me, and I think maybe they go to the museum instead… I think it is interesting because I think museums, historically, have been more open and less snobby, because it's about everything isn't it, you know. It's about the world. Whereas I think art galleries can get little bit sort of precious, and I think there's a bit of that here, preciousness about it.

XC -So, I presume then the uptake is mostly art teachers?

EOS -Yeah, I would say mostly art teachers and primary class teachers. We do get English teachers who have cottoned on to it all with Curriculum for Excellence, and we do sometimes get occasionally history, especially with the PG, you know, because that is historical references. But yeah, for secondary it's probably 90% art teachers. And then, and I think we get much more interest from primary than secondary, because it's easier to get them out, isn't it.

XC -So, it kind of brings me into this next question. Do you see the galleries primarily able to educate about art or do you see a broader potential?

EOS -I think there's definitely a broader potential and I think always in sort of art education, gallery education certainly, we kind of know that. It's not all about the artwork. It's about so many other things. Um, and I think Curriculum for Excellence…I think that has helped for, to give teachers a broader view of coming to a museum or a gallery, that you can tick lots of boxes, as teachers like to tick all the boxes and it can be done here. So, I think it's got a massive potential for the broader curriculum, yeah. And on the tours we do kind of hit on that quite a lot. So, you would talk about visual literacy and creative writing and all that sort of thing, just in a general tour anyway, you know. So, definitely.

XC -Do you think the curators are on board?

EOS -I think some curators are, yeah. Some curators see the potential in education and a potential for young people coming in and using the collection. I think other curators don't really know what we do and they have no idea why we do what we do.

XC -Still progress to be made?

EOS -Yeah, I think it's all kind of, gosh, I don't want to sound too negative but, I think there's a lot of lip service paid to it, as in education, from that side of the fence. Yeah.

XC -Well, this is an interesting question then. Do you think education, generally across NGS, has become more important? Is it more than just, um, lip service?

EOS -To whom though? To the organization? Um, I don't really know the answer to that question, I don't know. I don't know. I think it has become more important in a strategic way, because of the, there was the learning and access strategy a couple of years ago and then, in the corporate plan, you know, it's high up, it's up there, but, you know, that's just words. So, I don't know. Um, sometimes it can feel like we're a little bit of a thorn in the side of the institution rather than a kind of positive thing. Yeah.

XC -Okay, let's move onto the Curriculum for Excellence. Has it proven useful?

EOS -I think so. I mean, I definitely think with the younger teachers, teachers who are just coming through training, um, I think they're completely fully entrenched in it. I think maybe for some of the older teachers it may be more challenging because they've got set ways to do things. And it's change isn't it, and teachers don't really like change. They like to do things like they like to do them. Um, I think the new curriculum for kind of arts organizations, creative organizations, is good. I think we can really complement it in a strong way, rather than just having this trip to the gallery once a year, I think we can actually say 'Look, we can really help you teach your whatever scheme of work, we can help you do that and this is how.' and it's quite innovative and quite exciting. So…but I suppose we've been doing that like for ever. As a kind of arts educator you sort of just do that. So, Curriculum for Excellence isn't like a big surprise. I don't think for people who have been in that kind of… I think even as an art teacher you would think, you know, you would think on a broader, you would have a broader outlook. I know I certainly did when I was teaching many years ago. I kind of never felt like I was just teaching art. I always thought I was teaching a little bit of the world. And I think artists and art teachers maybe do that easier than others, you know.

XC -Does it maybe just put it in words?

EOS -Yeah, I think so. I think it just puts it in words and puts it on paper. And I mean all these ridiculous EX023, I don't know how they cope. I really don't. It must just be a headache all of that, and I think a lot of those experiences and outcomes are just so kind of obvious. You feel like 'oh for goodness' sake', you know. Do you really have to write that down? But…

XC -So, citizenship. Is there potential for the galleries to explore that more?

EOS -Yeah, as I said before, we do that anyway. We do it, you know. It's about, when the pupils come in, it's about their culture. It's about their cultural heritage isn't it? We say to them 'who do you think owns all this artwork?', and they don't know. They say 'the queen'. They say 'Alex Salmond'. They say all kinds of funny people, then when you say 'you do', they go 'no'. You kind of explain to them: mums, dads, everybody we all pay tax and tax helps to keep this amazing collection and gives us all jobs and, you know, that's quite empowering and, um… But I don't want to sound like it's a really kind of touchy-feely feel-good hippy-dippy thing. It's just kind of a fact; this is your collection, and this is free, um, and you should come in. You should bring your mum and dad in if you haven't been before, you know. Don't be afraid. It's about how you're going to use this in the future for Scotland actually, you know. So, again, I think citizenship is just a new word, that's banded about I think. It's always been there, really.

XC -And identity?

EOS -Yeah, yeah, more so I suppose with the PG collection now, you know, having to look at that again… Obviously the kids learn about the Jacobites, and Mary Queen of Scots, Robert Burns, and John Knox, and all the people on the frieze. And it's fantastic when they come in and they see them. 'Oh my god they're here, they're all here under one roof'. And it's, that's great isn't it? How exciting is that? Brilliant.

XC -Do you think it's important for activities to take place inside the gallery space, rather than…?

EOS -Yeah, I think it's essential really, um, and we do do a lot of that actually. And the galleries are generally quite supportive of that kind of stuff, um, within reason. You have to think, primarily, we are a gallery space and you have to look after the art on the wall. So, um, but yeah, I think that's kind of very important to be seen, and to be, you know, for the general public to actually hear what's going on… And I'm sure you've seen this. When there are school tours, people tag on, and they go along with, sort of listen in, you know. So, yeah, I think it's fundamental. Obviously, practically sometimes, you can't. So, you have to go off into the studio or classroom, do stuff. But, um, we do do a lot of our work in the spaces. Yeah.

XC -Do you think there's more…it's becoming easier to do?

EOS -It depends really. It just depends on the exhibition and who the curator is. It just depends. And it depends what you want to do, obviously. I mean I'm doing a project with Scottish Ballet education at the moment, um…in the sculpture show, so basically it's some student dancers responding to some of the artworks, sort of using the themes of the production of a Streetcar Named Desire. So there's all this sort of strange stuff going on, and, um, the event's culminating with a performance of the student dancers in the gallery spaces, in response directly to the artworks. And I thought 'god, they're never going to let me do this', and it's fine. I mean, there's been a lot of work to do. And there's lots of kind of extra staff to get and things, but essentially they've said, yeah, that's good. This will happen during the day when the public are in. So, it will be interesting to see what the public's response is to that, because I know some of the public don't really like to see things going on in the gallery; they like it all to themselves. And that's fair enough. It's whatever you expect.

XC -Will there be a record kept of this?

EOS -Well, I'm hoping to film it, Scottish Ballet have got a film-maker, but I need to get copyright for every single artwork, and, as you can imagine, it's quite problematic. We'll definitely photograph it and then we are trying to film the rehearsal. So, there will be no public in the rehearsal; it will be a bit easier. That's sort of my headache at the moment, to get copyright for about 25 artworks.

Interview at the Scottish National Gallery with Michael Clarke, Director of the Scottish National Gallery, on Wednesday the 14th of March 2012

XC: Xavier Contier, interviewer; MC: Michael Clarke, interviewee.

XC -Has education become strategically more important to NGS in recent years?

MC -Yes, I mean I'm sure everyone's said that. But as you can see it's become much more structured. There is now a learning and outreach policy. Um, the education department has grown considerably over recent years. I think we're nine or ten when it's at full complement, and it plays a much fuller and integrated role within the whole galleries. The department, especially with the new Portrait Gallery on stream, it's now based much more across the estate and it plays a much more important role in our sort of corporate plan and thinking etcetera. And I think and hope it's functioning rather better now, in the last few years, than it did before.

XC -Um, do you put this down to John Leighton, his input?

MC -Partly yes, because John has wanted it to be more, everything to be more structured, and places a high priority on education. I think also, immodestly, it has helped a little bit with me being the reporting Director because I do take a proper interest in it. And I think also with Tricia heading it up, it's got more professional and more structured, I think. But obviously these things begin at the top and work their way through the organization.

XC -What reasons do you see for this kind of more professional approach?

MC -Well, one a genuine belief that education is more important and the fact that education must be an informing factor of everything we do. At the end of the day our customer is our audience, and of course education plays an important role in developing audiences, and, of course, it brings us new audiences as well. I think also, more generally, in any major museum in Britain, I think education across the board has got a higher profile now, and you've got more professional people involved. Plus, of course, it's fairly obvious its role in sort of government priorities has risen, and sponsoring departments in government are much keener to see more activity on the education side. So, it's a combination of all these things, and quite right too. I mean years ago, a long, long time ago, I used to work in the education department in the British Museum in the 1970s and it was great. We did a lot but it was slightly amateurish, I would say, in those days compared to how education is viewed now. Of course, one of the challenges with it is to integrate it more, and I don't think we've - and we may get on to this - I think there's still quite a way to go with more integration between education and curatorial departments. I think the Portrait Gallery project has helped a lot in that respect. Education has played a more leading role in terms of display and information, etcetera.

XC -This brings me on to my second question. Do you see NGS's educational enterprise as a shared responsibility?

MC -Yes, ultimately. I mean, I don't think we're there. It would be idle to pretend that we're there yet. I think we've still got quite a lot of work to do, on sort of getting it in the internal culture of the place. We have on some projects and with some curators, education and curatorial side work very well and very closely indeed. And on others it's not…quite as integrated as it might be, but we're getting there. And certainly, if I can look at it from the curatorial side, we're a lot further on with what I would call special projects, i.e. exhibitions and things like that. When an exhibition is now muted etcetera, if it's a reasonably ambitious one, there are much more meaningful and productive discussions between the curatorial organizers and the education department than there used to be. And we discuss the lecture series together, both sides - sides is the wrong word - both bodies feeding in ideas and discussing how educational programmes and activities programmes can be developed round the show. I think that's moved on a heck of a lot in recent years. The area that we still have to think about more, I suspect, is the permanent collection display, and things like that. But that's got to be across the board. Digressing, one of the interesting things about this organization, one of the challenges, is that you've got three in many ways fairly different collections under

one umbrella, all using the same central services working with the same central services, but to move those three galleries on at the same rate and in the same way is a challenge.

XC -Yes. Um, the education department kind of spans the three galleries but, um, I don't believe they have a base in the…in the…?

MC -The Modern. No and that is another thing that we need to, um… They've got, I think it's in the Dean, there is a sort of a token room upstairs, but it's not really very adequate for purpose, to put it mildly. Obviously we've got the Clore suite here, and now we've got the new… And this of course, in a way, reflects recent building campaigns and expansion or renovation here. We deliberately planned it, and there we deliberately planned it, but the Gallery of Modern Art we still have some work to do.

XC -Do you think part of the work is facilitating kind of physical access?

MC -Yes I'm sure, that must be the case. Takes us across to our estates strategy. Our next two priorities are, now that we've done the portrait gallery, we need further development work here. But that's not so much about… I mean the Clore suite would stay, but it's more to do with circulation and the Scottish collections. And then the Modern Campus needs a whole lot of things doing to it. We need to re-examine many aspects over there, one of which would be obviously education.

XC -Thank you. Um, is art history the dominant focus of the NGS educational function or is the focus widening?

MC -Well, I think, well, I mean, yes and no, I mean obviously we are about art and art history is the most obvious discipline that fits. But think with what we do, we are much more, especially educational. Yes that's the core, but I mean social history, cultural history, generally, learning programmes in schools, outreach activities, practical classes, community involvement, I mean, I think it goes way beyond what I would call traditional art history. And quite right too. So I think it expands into many areas.

XC -Yes…

MC -Well you can judge for yourself as you observe what they're doing really.

XC -Yes. You definitely see a kind of, a broader potential for…

MC -I don't really see…I mean art history is one end of the telescope, I think. There's all sorts of other things involved in gallery and museum education. I mean obviously art history, at a most basic level, we're dealing with works of art, artworks, artefacts. And art history is the discipline. And it's sort of related… sort of aspects… It's art history that tells you what the work is, what it shows, who it's by, what condition, you know. It's absolutely essential. But how you use that is not

really art history. It's many other activities as well. How you draw in the audiences, how you begin to get interest and involvement can come from many, many different directions. And I think, with a relatively small team, the education department, you know, does pretty well on that front I think. I think they're operating at what I would call fairly full capacity. Well, that's for you to think about.

XC -Okay. Well, related to this then. Um, what do you think…do you think there is scope for encouraging public debate and discussion in the galleries? Um, do you believe there exists a role for a national cultural institution to engage with major events of our time? Or does this lie beyond its immediate scope?

MC -Well, ah…

XC -A difficult question.

MC -It is a difficult question, because can you give me, I mean what sort of areas were you thinking of?

XC –Well, for instance, the economic crisis…

MC -Yes, I don't think we should become a forum for debates, on issues which I mean could really be said to be better debated elsewhere, because I think that could actually hamper us as a body. Yes, you could argue we're just a venue for discussion, but I think as the hosting institution we would inevitably get associated with particular developments, particular points of view, and I think we have to maintain a fairly neutral stance. I mean, for example, you could argue, Scottish National Gallery, all about Scottish identity - shouldn't we have a massive debate on independence, devo max, devo plus, staying within the Union? But I think for the safety and integrity of the Institution, I think that might be a dangerous path to go down. I think we could find ourselves being used by certain parties to promote things beyond what is a sensible boundary for us. And I think, although we are ultimately funded by government which is ultimately political, in a sense we have to try and stay a-political I think. I don't think we can get too closely involved. So, although it sounds jolly interesting and very exciting, I think there are inherent dangers for us, as an organization, which could actually have damaging effects and unintentionally. I think we probably - although it sounds a very boring answer - we probably have to be reasonably cautious about that. I mean, I think obviously with particular individual guest lecturers and things that may relate to very interesting external debates that's great, but I think we have to maintain an invisible and mobile boundary between us and some of these major external issues. Because I mean also we could end up being exploited rather ruthlessly by external bodies, which I don't think would be to anybody's benefit.

XC -Yes, and yet you have to kind of engage with the present…

MC -Of course we do, we can't be like a monastery, shut ourselves off and… yes.

XC -How do you balance this?

MC -Well, I think, as I say, you need to have this sort of invisible soft barrier round you which you can go through and pierce so you don't seem shut off. And, of course, you do bring the outside in, but I think each case has to be judged on its merits. And you have to think about the consequences. I mean, you're absolutely right; we can't sort of shut ourselves off from the outside world, of course not. It's difficult to give a blanket answer for that, except that I think we have to be careful, just to protect institutional integrity.

XC -Yes, okay, thank you.

MC -A bit of a cowardly answer but it's a pragmatic answer.

XC -Um, do you think the galleries are kind of, seek to kind of, create this kind of, I don't know, something different, a different experience, something perhaps outside of daily experience?

MC -Yes. I mean most of one's daily life is not the same as being inside a… But do you mean, are we talking about the actual, the average visitor coming to the gallery? Or are we talking about them looking at the collections? Or are we talking about an experience beyond that which takes in other things as well? I mean which, I'm not quite certain…

XC -I mean just the average visitor coming into the gallery. Do you think they're seeking a kind of…?

MC -Well, yeah, one's seeking to make it an informative and a nourishing, intellectually, artistically, experience for the visitor, sure, something that will stimulate people, something from which they can learn literally. And each of the three galleries is rather different, which I think is good. I mean you have to have an overall brand identity; things have to be in common, but I think… If you can think about it in gastronomic terms, we should be like different courses of a meal, different flavours or something like that, you know. Course it's interesting, I'm biased because I do what I do, but I'm sure a lot of people's visits to places now, across the world, are very much conditioned by coming to see places like… This is why you go to places. You go to see the museums, the collections. The idea, which is pretty old hat, that a lot of people go to cities, that culture and museums are just for the few, I think you've only got to read all the guidebooks that are published these days, the newspapers, to realise we are one of the main reasons why people go anywhere, quite honestly, and quite right too. We are very high up on the agenda of reasons for people to visit, to broaden their experiences, wherever they're travelling to. We are rewarding ways of filling in the day. We are a major part in somebody's planning… For some reason, if I was going to Dusseldorf or something I would definitely - and obviously I'm viewing it from a very particular perspective - but I think a lot of people now would view that as something… Obviously if you're going to Venice or Rome or say to Paris, but I think it's true increasingly of visits to

almost anywhere that people now look to see what sort of cultural facilities there are. Sorry, I've digressed a bit, but I think we play an increasingly important role in that respect.

XC -Yes, in kind of attracting… I suppose that's also one of the arguments for, put forward to government for funding…

MC -Yes, I mean we have all these complicated formulae, which I'm not sure I understand, but yes we all put it forward to government to justify our continued existence, that actually we bring in a hidden - how many tens of millions? - and I mean, it must be true because one of the reasons people come to Edinburgh, for example, is so that they can do the museums, the castle, Holyrood, etcetera. Whilst they're there, they will spend money blah, blah, blah, blah, blah and so on, and in a country like Scotland with an old and rather declining manufacturing, industrial base, tourism is an absolutely major economic factor.

XC -Okay, um, diverting just a little bit. What values do you believe have remained intact at the heart of the institution since its foundation? Do you think it's the same institution that was founded here in the nineteenth century?

MC -Um, in a number of ways yeah. I mean all these public…when you go back to the nineteenth… I mean this was partly founded in a sort of rivalry to London. London's got one, we must have one, but… And it was done in a sort of top down way. Ultimately, it was sort of the patrician and the upper professional classes wishing to make available to the public art and all the benefits that was seen to embody, that had hitherto been reserved only for those right at the top of the social scale. So, you get the founding of these institutions, like in London the British Institution and here, our predecessor, the Royal Institution for the Promotion of Fine Arts in Scotland, which started off next door. Basically, to put it terribly crudely, it was the toffs encouraging each other to place their treasures on public display. So, the mass of mankind could come in here and start to learn and appreciate. And in a way that function has transferred from the aristocracy to the government on a theoretically much more democratic basis. But the intention is still the same. It is to make available the best and most interesting art possible for genuine enjoyment, um, across the population. That fundamental principle, with those slight variations, has remained the same from our foundation to now. Um, if you want to move on to education, that's something that's really developed, in the way we understand it, in the last few decades. I mean there weren't…as you know… education…doubtless I suppose there would have been public lectures around town and everything, but they would have been fairly high-minded and pitched at a pretty high intellectual level. Though it's interesting, there was much more in the strict...if we can go almost into the art school art education side that was implicit from the start, because certainly in the nineteenth century one of the reasons for the establishment of institutions such as these, was that people should come in and study and copy. I mean it's interesting when you look at illustrations of here or the National Gallery in London or the Louvre or anywhere, there are easels all the way down, and there are people completing their art education by looking at

how the masters painted, doing their own copies or studies. And actually that used to go on until quite recently. I can remember the National Gallery London used to have a lot of this. And I mean, I've been here quite a time since the 80s, and I used to visit here in the 1970s and there used to be quite a few students used to come in here. That's all stopped now, which I think is rather a pity. It's nothing to do with us. It's to do with different priorities at the art colleges and etcetera. The idea of coming in and studying from the old masters doesn't seem to… But that was certainly one of the original principles in the nineteenth century which has now rather gone by the by. So, what one might call the practical appreciation seems to have slightly withered on the vine, and it's more the historical/ intellectual side that has received more emphasis, I suppose. Also, maybe not for here, it's worth remembering this sort of educating people, when the great exhibitions were on in the nineteenth century - and that's all tied in, Paris, the Exposition Universelle, and the world fair in America, and the great exhibitions, there was London, there was Manchester, here, in Glasgow, had them in the 80s - you would find that the more philanthropic factory owners or something, the great industrialists, which is sort of early outreach policy, only the enlightened ones, they used to pay for their workforce to come to these exhibitions, either laying on trains or whatever. It's a slightly patrician way of doing things but it's not as if people hadn't thought of it before. It was implicit in the nineteenth century this idea of improvement. So, in some ways, though in different forms, the founding principles of these institutions have continued to the present day, albeit that they have a little bit changed and transformed.

XC -Yes. In many ways then you kind of… Would you say there is a going back to the kind of original founding values in some ways? Do you think perhaps the mid-twentieth century there was a kind of focus on the institution, a kind of introverted…?

MC –Well, it's a good question. I think what may have happened, a lot of these institutions in the nineteenth century were run by former or active painters. And then - of course, I 'm doing a very broad brush here - and then from the 1930s onwards, you had this explosion in Britain - and I'm just restricting this to art museums really, I'm not touching on scientific museums about which I really know very little - you had this great Diaspora mainly from the Germanic speaking countries, mainly because of the Nazis, and all these Jewish art historians came over here and founded the Courtauld, the Warburg, blah, blah, blah. And the growth of art history as an academic discipline 'whoosh' went like that. And people were just very art history oriented. The curators, the directors became trained art historians, but it was really only the art history I suspect, and connoisseurship, and adding to the collections that they concentrated on. And they didn't think for a number of decades, round about mid-century, at what one might call the wider aspect of institutions such as this. And it's only really perhaps in the last sort of 30 or 40 years that institutions such as this one have begun to look more outward again, from the rather more narrow confines of…the art historical/ connoisseurship view of things. Not that there was anything wrong… Great collection building was done. And we still, as you know with the Titians, collection building is tremendously

important but we are about much more than that. We are about trying to provide a whole experience for the visitor and a whole range of facilities now… Which it was rather, sort of 'we've got all these lovely pictures, it's for the outside world to come in and approach us but we will stay here and address them on our own very narrow terms'. And now, of course, the place has become, quite rightly, much more outward looking.

XC –So, do you think it's about, um, kind of renewing the social contract?

MC -I think so, yes. Also, we are in a market place, competing for, you know… There's a certain amount of basic self-interest, apart from what one believes is the right and proper thing to do. If we don't do these sorts of things, we're going to wither on the vine anyway, because people will say 'they cannot be bothered to engage with the public and so we'll turn our limited attention and funding elsewhere'.

XC -Is that always a possibility at the back of your mind?

MC -Yes, I mean we're all competing for what seems to be a… John may have filled you in; our core funding is going down in real terms quite a lot over the next few years, due to the financial problems, and we're having to, in our own funding, having to become more plural, where we seek funding from… But also, just in our general, as you might call it, social contract or political contract, we have to present ourselves in the market place as the most attractive option we can, in order to continue to get support, you know, just in terms of general advocacy and financial support from the outside world. So, there's a belief in what we're doing, but also there is an element of self-interest in it as well. It would be idle to pretend otherwise.

XC -Um, how important is it for NGS to pursue other non-governmental sources of funding?

MC -It's essential in terms of sheer accounting and mathematics. We have to.

XC -Are there dangers, are there compromises associated with…?

MC -Yes, of course there are. Um, theoretically you could go to an unsuitable source. At a very base level - I'm talking about private funding - you might, you've got to be careful, you might end up with a source that proves to be linked to… you know. With commercial funding there can be these links. You might go to one firm or bank, and then find they have unsuitable links to somewhere else. You might not have known that but you've got to be as careful as you can on that, obviously. Um, you've also, I think you've got to be careful. Suppose you were looking for funding for a project with the Arts and Humanities Research Council, an AHRC grant, very attractive idea, but you might find that the conditions of the funding and the way it's channelled is you end up getting money, and the only way you can get money, is you end up agreeing to do something that actually you don't really want to do. It

just means that you're bringing money in, you know, and instead of… I mean, I'm inventing this: suppose you had, you wanted to do something for school children - no that's the wrong example…but you know what I mean - you may find out that you end up putting too much of your resources into a project which guarantees you funding, but doesn't actually benefit you particularly as an organisation, or takes away your own precious resources from something that you might reasonably view as a more core function. So, that's another danger, but everybody faces that danger, because so much funding these days is project-led. Outside funding, apart from what you receive from your sponsoring body, is absolutely not interested in paying the rates, or the lighting, or the heating, these very boring things that are absolutely essential for a place like this to continue. So, there are lots of dangers or challenges, shall I put it, in seeking this necessary outside funding, and, um, it's, you know, you have to evaluate carefully what you're doing in that respect. But you have to do it, because otherwise, you know, if we can't keep going then we would have to start closing a few days a week, or shutting down one of the branch galleries, you know, one of the galleries, etcetera.

Interview at the Scottish National Gallery with Linda McClelland, Education Officer at the National Galleries of Scotland, on Tuesday the 20th of March 2012

XC: Xavier Contier, interviewer; LM: Linda McClelland, interviewee.

XC -Could you talk a little about your responsibilities? And also I am particularly interested in the art competition.

LM -Okay my responsibilities…Well, when I came into this post, which was just over eight years ago, this was a new post. So, there wasn't, you know, a handover period. It was brand new because these spaces were brand new. So, really the first time was a bit of a testing time where I tried out lots of different things with lots of different audiences. And it's now settled into a certain thing at the minute, but it changes every year. Every year it changes slightly. I think my responsibility initially really was to highlight the fact we had these classrooms, and to try and bring as wide an audience as possible, right across from adults, community groups, children and families, everybody at the start, and that's what I did at the start. And because when I came into post in February we didn't open till August, I was thinking of a way of highlighting these facilities, and I had just come out of working as a teacher for 25 years… So, I thought why don't we have an art competition for schools? So, we started that in the March and it closed in the May. And we showed the work here, and that was the beginning of the art competition for schools. And when it began, we had no online collection and we had no specific funding for it, and I had no idea whether we would get any entries or not. And the

first year, I think, we had just over 400 entries. And then the second year we had a little bit of sponsorship. And then by the third year we had Scottish Widows sponsor it completely which meant we could grow much, much bigger, and it meant that we could have the work properly framed, and text panels and posters and banners, and we could tour the exhibition. We could produce, most importantly, a calendar which goes to every school in Scotland, flyers which go to all the nursery schools as well. So, that third year, I think, it had proved something worth investing in and Scottish Widows stayed with us for 6 years. And every year we tour it to other venues outside of Edinburgh, outside of the National Galleries. And this year, we didn't fall out or anything, Scottish Widows had been taken over by Lloyds Bank… But Tesco Bank has now come on board, and they've got a great big PR machine which is working very, very rapidly and quickly, and they've taken it to another level now, because they've funded for us to go out on the road, and doing road shows. And we spent three weeks, two days a week for three weeks, going to 6 different council areas across Scotland. And we've… The aim is, because this is a three-year sponsorship, the aim is that we will have covered every council, all 32 councils by the time we get to the end of the three-year sponsorship. That's my aim, if they'll contribute to help with that. And I think they're very pleased with how the road shows went. And the road shows, they got lots of press, local press which is really what Tesco are after as well. It's got bigger again and now it's going to be shown in the Portrait Gallery next year and another couple of venues. It's grown and grown and grown, and it's just been a very positive experience for everybody involved. And I can't think of any negative comments. Occasionally I hear a suggestion, and when I hear a suggestion we incorporate that into the competition, so we've changed it, it's evolved slightly. When we first began we didn't have a category for nursery schools and we didn't have a category for special education schools or for groups and now we have all three of those things, and really the idea is that each category has got a theme and the theme…I select three images from the national collection that support that theme, and the idea is that the children will look at those images with their teacher, talk about it, be inspired by it, but not copy it, they're not supposed to copy the pictures and they rarely do. They're then meant to be inspired to make their own piece of artwork. And there are hundreds of stories over the years of what impact this has made on a child who was a winner or special merit, hundreds of stories of the impact that's had on children and their schools.

XC -In terms of confidence?

LM -Confidence and things like, for example, a boy who had meningitis when he was little and he missed a lot of school, therefore he was always behind academically in his work, and always struggling and not achieving, and he came second I think in the primary 1 to 3 category, and his parents said that was a wonderful thing for him and a big boost to his confidence… Another boy, he was in the top ten in the primary 4 to 7 category, one year. In fact, his work is on one of the posters, and that boy he has Asperger's. It means he has communication problems which I didn't know. He just entered in the mainstream category but, interestingly, that boy later was in the top three. That same boy, more than 3000 entries, that boy has come back again. And I think that is a big thing as well for families. Or we have

things like Cumnock Academy outside Glasgow - because part of the prize for the top three, is that their whole class comes and has a workshop with us - and the teacher wrote a long thing to me explaining those girls had probably never been out of their local area, and the very fact of just coming down Princes Street into the big city is just an amazing thing that they wouldn't have experienced before. That on its own was big for them, never mind to work with us in the gallery. The other thing is we have - because, the prizes are not just for the child, they're for the school as well - when those schools come to visit us, we pay for transport. And that's a big thing, because we pay for transport, schools from far away can come. We've had a nursery school come from Inverness, would you believe, for the day, to spend time with us. But what happens is those children, very often, they have parent helpers come with the school, and the parents have never been to the gallery before, and the parents are always amazed at what they find here. It's not just the children that get the benefit, it's also a handful of parents who maybe don't have much involvement with it. They come along as well, and I think that's very exciting for us to know we're spreading that word out. It's very slowly seeping out beyond, you know, it's going beyond that one child. It's seeping out and it's having a much broader effect. Sorry, I could talk probably for twenty-four hours about it, so you need to just ask me the specific things, because it's like my baby and it's now a baby that's about, I would say, seven or eight years old, you know. But it's still got a way to go, but it's looking very healthy.

XC -Where would you like to see it, ideally?

LM -Well, I said when I first started it that I believe that when I am driving down a big main motorway and I see a huge billboard with one child's artwork on it, because they've entered this competition, I will feel as if it's got to where I want it to be. That's what I'd like to see. Mind you, with Tesco Bank and Tesco's, if they have vans with the children's artwork… I just want that art out. I want to see that artwork out in public spaces, not on the wall. I want to see it, advertising it in other ways. And I suppose I would just like it to continue indefinitely, maybe with some changes over the years. There's new children coming into school every year, and they all have to learn new things, and the gallery is going to be here for hundreds of years, so I don't see any reason why it shouldn't continue. There's a competition in Ireland, Texaco competition, and it's been going for over fifty years. So, this one is only nine years old. It's got lots more mileage.

XC -The ceremony is going to be at the Portrait Gallery?

LM -Yeah. Well, the ceremony is going to have to be here, because we haven't got a room big enough at the Portrait Gallery, but the display will be at the Portrait Gallery, for the first time.

XC -Is that on the ground floor?

LM –Yes, just outside where the classroom is. That's where it will go, which is great. It's nice to have it there.

XC -What was the thinking about moving it?

LM -I think the main thinking was the new sponsor wanted a clean break from the old sponsor, quite frankly. They wanted a clean break and they also… Obviously the Portrait Gallery has opened and it's big, so they wanted the launch to be there so it coincided, the two launches coincided. And I think they're right. I think they're absolutely right. It's good, it has bigger visibility at the minute, a high profile at the minute. So, it's nice to have it in that place that's got that high profile. But I think it will probably come back here after that because this is a nice space to have it. And, you know, the people out in the gardens that come in to look at it, etcetera. So, that really was the thinking. Which is causing some problems, of course, because, you know, here I know the size it takes. I know how to put it on the wall, you know. Now we've got this problem of 'okay the awards are here but the work's there, so where are we starting? Are we starting there and moving here or are we starting here and moving there?' So, that's a few things to be ironed out. But, you know, it will be fine. It's very, very exciting. It's very exciting because all the judges choose the work, but we've never met the children. Then, on that day, we get to meet the child that did the work and ask them lots of questions about it, and that's good. And when the parents come, the parents have never seen the work, because the children did the work in school. So, when they see it it's all beautifully framed up. Then, of course, in the lecture theatre…they go up to get their prizes, and the first, second and third prize they get lots of arts materials, so they can hardly carry the bags, which makes a whole thing, because parents have to come over and help. And then we have all the special school children come, and some of them their attention span isn't so good and shout out in the middle of it. So, it's all very…just a nice atmosphere. Everyone can speak if they want to, and it's a big celebration, and speeches are short. And the focus is each child goes away feeling, made to feel very special on that day. That's what that is about, and I think it works. It does work. I know it works, because I've been told it works all the time so, which makes me very happy.

XC -May I ask you about the judges? How does the judging process work?

LM -Well what I do is, um, I'm always there and Lindsay, who is one of our free-lancers who helps hang the work, she tours and hangs with me because she can do installation. She and I would be the constant every year, and then I would have at least maybe 5 other people. Now one of them would be usually at curatorial level within the gallery. Then I try and pick somebody different every year, usually it would be somebody not a curatorial level, somebody from retail or the information desk, one of the gallery attendants. Someone would be from outside the galleries who might have helped me to some degree, it might be the photographer or the designer of the posters… And then maybe we have someone from the field of education, someone who's doing teacher training at Murray House, someone who has knowledge of that age group. It's a different panel of judges, one for the nursery, primary one to three, four to seven, and then the other three categories we get smaller numbers for them, so we do them all in the one day with the same panel.

So, it's four mornings of judging with four different panels, and they don't… I probably know where the schools…sometimes I remember what school they're from, but the judges have no idea, and that's not taken into consideration at all. So you could have ten from the same school, and if that's what they pick, that's what they pick. And what we do…if we have a thousand, we just go through them very quickly, read out the criteria, show the paintings that inspired them, flick through them very quickly and get round a table and people say 'yes, yes, yes I want that one'. We pull out the ones people like and then spread those ones out…then we work our way down and down till we get to the final ten, then when we get to the final ten, we have to pick the first, second, third. Sometimes that takes longer than anything else. Sometimes it's easy and other times there is a lot of disagreement. It's easier if you have a panel of uneven numbers, say seven or nine. And sometimes I've brought somebody out from one of the offices to make a final decision, if we just can't make a decision. I think it's very democratic. Last year we had a teacher who came in…and she found that very fascinating to see the process, because she had sent work in every year and wondered how we did it. Up until last year or the year before the judges had seen every piece of work, but last year and the year before we had too many. We had over three thousand in one category, so Lindsay and I went through and ones that we definitely knew were not possible these we removed. Those if one or other of us felt 'well maybe' then we left those. We had to bring it down because it was too many… But I firmly believe that a large group of people make the decision… We don't do any of this 'send it in online and judge it'; we like to see the physical work. And also it gives people such an insight, such an insight into what's going on in schools, and the lack of art teaching in schools.

XC -You think that's an issue?

LM -Definitely, absolutely definitely, and I've said that before. When you see what comes in, you realize that there are very, very few specialist art teachers in schools. And they're cutting back, so there will be fewer and fewer, and you can massively see the difference where they've had a specialist art teacher and when they haven't. It's quite upsetting when you think of the different experience children are getting in different schools. And, um, it doesn't matter if they haven't got any money in their department… Teacher training, if you're going to be a primary teacher you get something like four or six hours of training in the whole year for art training… That's all you get, and if you're not very confident, you know, what do you do? You do your best. But that's it, that's your lot; you're trained now to teach children art… which is dreadful. And this year because we had our road shows that was very, very interesting, because we had… On each school we went to, we had a workshop in the morning for one class and a workshop in the afternoon for another class, and then, after school, we had a session with the teachers. I was able to ask them lots of questions and what came through very strongly was they need help, and they need support. And I talked to them about Glow…they either hardly use it at all, they said that it was very difficult to navigate, very difficult to get through. There was too much information, and it was very difficult to decide what it was you wanted to look at. So, the feeling I got was Glow is not that useful a tool for those

teachers, certainly for art. What came over the course of the six conversations with schools and what I would love to do… We did a lesson, which was based around one painting, a lesson I suppose that I devised, which was broken into four sections, which had taught them two or three skills but also a little bit of painting, and what came out was they found that very, very useful. They've used that again with their classes and what they would really love is if we could provide - and I don't see why we shouldn't except for time and money - if we could provide from primary one to primary seven. Right, primary one this is the painting you will look at. Primary two this is the sculpture. Here are questions to ask the children when they are looking at it. Here is a list of materials that you could have for them to touch and handle and think about. And here is a lesson, a practical art lesson showing you techniques. And it's not on DVD and it's not on CD and you don't have to watch a film. Here it is… And they said that would be very, very useful. And it would mean the child would come through at the end of primary seven knowing very intimately seven works of art from the Scottish national collection. They would be confident on how to look at a painting. The teachers would know the skills they learn on one work of art could be transferred as well. It means that as a child went through, there would be seven different techniques they would have by the end when they reach school… You would be confident these children would have learnt how to use chalk… I think it would be a great thing. I would love to be able to do it…because what I see coming in from the competitions… For years I have known something needs to be done about it. I've known that and there's nothing I can do about that. I can't revolutionize the whole of teaching in Scotland. Well, I thought I couldn't but after being in those road shows, I actually feel I could. And if I were not to do other things for a year, I have every confidence that I could put that in place, and that schools over Scotland would have that. Having said that, after five years, you would want to change the whole thing, do different works of art. You don't want everybody turning out the same thing every time. But I think, as a starting point, it would be very well received. So, that's what I learnt when I was out on the road. I learnt that the thing that I knew was a problem was a problem, and I got a clear vision of what you could do to make that happen and make a change. That would be a very exciting thing to do.

XC -So it's a very national competition. Has it taken off nationally?

LM -Totally, totally. All thirty-two, we've had entries from all thirty-two council areas. And I, because of our new sponsor, um, I did statistical analysis and I went back… I wouldn't rely on it a hundred percent but it's as good as I could get it and I now have a chart which has the percentage from each council area that have entered in the first eight years. So, I know for example that over forty percent in Midlothian or East Lothian or something enter but I also know that only eight percent in I've forgotten where it is, one of the islands I've forgotten, only eight percent of schools have ever entered since we started. Which was very interesting to see. And we had a day here and I invited representatives from each council area to come and find out about the education department. And we had twenty-two of the thirty-two councils represented, which I thought was very good... They helped me to choose the schools we should go to for the road shows. I also put the statistics up, which they were

very interested in, and I said I don't want to embarrass you if you…but there is some more work to be done on this. So that was very useful. And it means now we have a benchmark for this year's competition, with the new sponsor, where I can analyse the council areas they're coming from as well. And I think they're going to do a lot more press and marketing in local areas than we've had before.

XC -I see. So, apart from the school audiences what other…I suppose you're touching on all the audiences?

LM -Well, I also do…do you know about the writing competition as well? We do that. Well, I also do the writing competition which is for schools and adults, and that's been going now for seven years. In fact, we're about to judge that on Saturday, the final judging, and we've produced three publications from that as well, of books.

XC -Do you publish the winners?

LM -Yes, we publish… At the minute I have a regular writing group. I have a group who met years ago when I did certain classes and then they came back. And they've been meeting now for about four years. They meet every two weeks. They don't meet in August but they meet throughout the year every two weeks. One weak they look at something in the gallery; when they come back they read out what they've written. That's a set body of people, maybe eighteen, nineteen of them, and they don't all come, but they're all part of this group. I've also got every Saturday… Saturday could be creative writing day, and that's a three hour session. They look at something in the gallery for an hour and they write an hour, and read and share for an hour. And that's been going now for well over a year, I think, and that's full, nearly every month. And then I also have…We just finished a five-week creative writing course, where they came every Thursday morning, Thursday afternoon, for three hours; that was a longer course. And I've also got every two months a one-day whole-day writing course which is linked to specific exhibitions. So there would be one with the Munch exhibition. There would be one with the Symbolist landscapes…There's five of them anyway, and they are always popular and seem to fill up… And that links with the writing competition as well. Many of those people then have a focus, and the writing competition works the same as the art one, in we invite the winning schools to come and have a workshop with a professional writer. And they enjoy that very much. We have a day of readings… They're read out aloud in front of, you know, a projected image of the work that inspired them.

XC -Where is it?

LM -In the lecture theatre. It's in the 'What's On'. Sorry I've forgotten now what you asked me.

XC -Just your responsibilities, um, sort of the competitions.

LM -Well, they're a big part of it, and after that… When I started here, I did a lot more work with community groups as well. I worked with an Edinburgh Chinese elderly association. I worked with the Mexican community on something. I worked with a Dosti Muslim women's group. I did a lot more of that and now at the minute, for no particular good reason… I built up the adult practical classes. So, I've got a lot of focus on that, and I try to… Last year I had them all planned for a year ahead. That worked a lot better for me because the three-month What's On doesn't work for me at all, because people were hearing about classes too late. I wasn't getting classes booked because if you've a class on the 1st of March and the What's On comes out on the first of March, no point, you may as well not have it. So, I find being organized in advance, whilst it's hard work at the start… I think I cancelled one class last year. The artist taking the class, it works better for them because I can tell them early on we have enough people that class may go ahead. Whereas in the previous year I had to cancel a number of classes… People didn't know about them. So, I've got a lot of adult classes going on. Um, I've got photography, textiles, printmaking, painting and drawing and creative writing. I try and do a range of things.

XC -Is it done in this room here?

LM -It's done in these two rooms mostly. Now some of them are over at the Portrait Gallery… There's an embroidery class starting, three-day course, historical embroidery, because the piece of work being inspired by is over at the Portrait Gallery…and I did a portrait class over at the Portrait Gallery as well. But really…really my job initially was to manage these spaces… These spaces are very easy to work in, as well, because I know where everything is. Um, and it's easier for me to have them there. And, in fact, even before we had the thing at the Portrait Gallery, sometimes, I started a class there. They would go and look at the exhibition there, and then they would walk over here, and then the rest of the course would be here. So, yes, most of my classes are in this building.

XC -Are there, um… Do you see many people kind of making use of the gallery space? Just sketching…?

LM -Um, no, no, but we have easel sketching once a month, and that was just last week. Thursday and Friday. I'm trying to get somebody to get sponsorship for that because I'd like to do that more. That is very, very successful. People love it. Some people come because they know about it and some people just come across it. And what you get is… We've got six easels up, and six drawing boards. We either have a model up or they work from the sculptures. You get the people who want to draw, and then you get the people who want to watch, and sometimes you get a huge crowd of people standing round watching. And the artist does a little demonstration as well, and it's free. That live thing just livens up the whole space. So, I would love to be able to do that more often if someone could find the money for that. And I've done a whole report on that and it's sitting, um, but so far nothing. I haven't heard of anything coming. I think it's a gift for somebody to sponsor, you know, because it is that thing about health and well-being as well, you know. People come

in and wander about, and sometimes people come in not feeling in a very good mood and, you know, something like that can just lift your spirits. To draw something and take something away that's uniquely yours, that wasn't there before you did it, I think is very, very positive for people. And loads of times people up there, Damien who runs the class, he tells me he gets all the time 'I've never seen anything like this, they don't do this in any other gallery, you should have more of this'. Over and over again, we get told that. We had, the other day, a group of French students, teenagers, who didn't look very interested in the gallery at all, but some of them came and joined in and had something to take away with them. We had, one year for Christmas, a choir from new Zealand who were here to perform somewhere in Edinburgh and they had the red jackets on with choir of Auckland, and it was very funny to watch because Damien encouraged them to draw. And then they drew and at the end he said 'now you have your drawing, are you not going to sing us a song?' And do you know they just burst into song. The whole gallery was filled with this wonderful, wonderful singing, and everybody just stopped what they were doing and came to see. Things like that, I think, are magical. They're what to me gives like an energy and a life to a gallery as well. In a nice way, not in an intrusive way, not in a way, where there's an all singing, all dancing party going on in the gallery, where people can't see the work, but, you know, in a way that engages people. We've also had a couple of years ago, we had, um, painted postcards where we'd set out tables…and we've had tiny little postcards, and people could paint. They were encouraged to paint a postcard, either copying something from the paintings or we had lots of landscape things and they could paint what they wanted. And then they addressed them to a friend, and then they wrote them, and they could buy a stamp, and then we had a big post-box that they posted them in. And I photocopied - I have copies of them - I copied lots of them before I posted them off. That was very popular. But again that was free, so we had to have someone who was in charge of it. We had to pay someone to sit with people while they did it. But people loved doing that. It's like you don't have to book it; there's no pressure. You can stay for five minutes. You can stay for two hours, you know. It's that kind of…you're not being coerced into doing something. It was when the Turners were on here. But you see when the Turners were on here, because of various reasons, we couldn't have it in the Turner room. But we had it in, I've forgotten what the room was, but…where there was, actually it was a horrible Turner it was an oil painting which I don't like at all but Turner, which wasn't inspiring, but at least it was beside it. There were some others paintings that were nice, of landscape.

XC -Do you think students, local students from, say, the art college, do you think make use of this resource?

LM -This gallery? This one? As opposed to the Gallery of Modern Art?

XC -This one in particular…

LM -Well, personally I don't really know. I see them come into the print room, and I see them have talks and things in the print room. I don't see many. We had at

easel sketching one week, we did have a fellow who was a student and he said he'd had enough of Freshers' Week and going out, and he really just wanted to get on with some work, and he sat and he drew for the afternoon. Um.

XC -Do you think it's an underutilized resource?

LM -For students?

XC -Specifically for students.

LM -Yes, yes I'm sure it is. I'm sure it is. Yes, I'm sure it is an underutilized resource. We, I get some of them come to life drawing on Saturdays, get younger people coming on Saturdays. Students. Quite a few come, um, for that. Um, yes, I don't see many young people wandering round here during the day. Do you see many young people? No. And what is the reason for that? Um, it's quite funny because we had a day where we sort of had a school, a class in and they were children from different schools and it was a leadership course. And we were asking them about how to make this gallery more attractive to people their age, and one boy asked a very clever question which I thought 'good for you'. He said 'but why do you want people our age to come into the gallery?' And I thought 'smart boy, smart boy. You're right. Why do we want you to come in?' And I thought 'why do we want you to come in? I don't know, I don't know. You know, if I were your age I'd go to the Gallery of Modern Art. I'd go to the Portrait Gallery'. Before I came to work here, I would have gone to all the other ones and this would have been the last one I'd have come to. Before I worked here, and probably, well… I'll tell you what one of the things is, and I've said this many times. If you walk past the front of the gallery, what impression do you get? You look in the restaurant, and what do you see in the restaurant? You see people who have obviously got some money and you see middle aged and older people, and that's all you see. You don't see children with families. You don't see young people in there. And that's the message you get when you walk past there. And I think that's a missed opportunity. You see, I think if this classroom were where the café is and that café was in here, we could have this visible space where, with studio space, with things happening and going on, I think that would draw people in. But we're not. And I think that's typical of education departments that they're stuck somewhere, so that they're out of the way. I don't know how many I've visited in other galleries, and I don't know how many I've visited that have no windows in them, that are in rooms with pillars down them so you can't actually see things. And I think there's a lot of talk about education is at the heart of this and at the heart of that. Well, I'll tell you something else I notice and irritates me as well. When you come down the steps to the gallery it talks about the Hawthornden lecture theatre, and what do you think? Lecture theatre? Means academic! Right. Hawthorden lecture theatre. Doesn't say the Clore studios. Doesn't say art studios. That's not there. It might say it on the lift. There's some places that say it, but there's a few where it doesn't say it. So it's like where are we? There's no visibility. Now you couldn't argue with that at the Portrait Gallery. It's very visible. You've got glass and it's very visible. But then it's so visible, they're worried there's going to be one dirty mark on the table. So, it's almost like a

clean, tidy, neat, precious… It's a precious space, and I'm glad I'm not working there because I'm glad I'm here, where people complain about the tea towels sometimes in the sinks, and I go 'well this is a working space'. It feels like a studio where you do things. So, I do feel very strongly about that. I wish I could just lift this and put it there; we would draw in a completely different kind of audience. Completely. It's the same thing as… It's taken a long time for me to put up flyers even advertising the classes now. It's very frustrating because you go to the Portrait Gallery and what have you got. You've got the rolling screen telling you what's on, so you have to stand there and watch it. You cannot pick up. You pick up the 'What's On', where is the education? You've seen it, at the back of it, tiny, tiny writing. I have to put on my glasses to see it. Tiny writing I can't see one thing from the other. Is there a flyer or a leaflet you can pick up at the Portrait Gallery? No. Is there anywhere to put any? No. The classes over there, some of the artists I work with, one of them said 'oh, what about my class over there, is it filling up?' And I said 'no, but I can't leave anything there; I have to promote everything here, because here I have signs.' You've probably seen them on the back of toilet doors. Now I had to argue and fight to get those signs up. Those signs at the back of the toilet doors bring in more people than anything else. And the reason is because in the summer people who don't use the gallery come in to use the toilet. They don't go to the artwork, they're not interested in the artwork, but they go to the toilet and they see signs on the back of the door. So, we've got those, and you see on the information desk - and I know there are people who want those signs gone - if you go to the information desk, you'll see at the minute there's a row of four flyers, and you can pick up the little flyer and you can take it away with you, and I'm fighting all the time people saying 'oh you know the flyers need redesigned' or this and that. People want to lift something and take it away with them, take it home, pull it out of their handbag and think about it with their diary. And they do the job. They absolutely do the job to fill the classes. But there's nothing like that at the Gallery of Modern Art and there's nothing like that at the Portrait Gallery. And that is bad, it's really, really bad. It's like we can have classes as long as they're tucked away, tucked away not bothering the more important things, like the things that make money, like the shop. Um, it's fine if they're tucked away, and it's fine if they're not making a mark on the walls, ruining a space that has to visually look beautiful, but it doesn't matter that all those classes that you plan have got nobody in them, because somebody doesn't want a poster up in a place that's making it look untidy. Sorry that's a big rant, but I do feel very strongly about that.

XC -Still lots of work to be done then?

LM -There's a lot of work to be done. And it's all good work. It's all work that's for a good purpose. A woman said to me this morning, she said 'oh Linda, I see you every day here, how many days a week do you work?' And I said 'last week, I worked eight days a week, but then that's because I had things on at the weekend'. She said 'you do such a great job, you've such great classes here, so many classes and such a variety of things, it's so wonderful to be able to offer that.' And I get that a lot now, and I think well that gives me huge amount of pleasure, that people are enjoying them, that they feel there's something for everyone, that they want to

come back, that, you know, they bring their friends. That's very good and that makes… To me that's what the job's about. It's about a person coming in, having a really good experience and wanting to come back again. And she said, I mean, if you could have taped her, everything she said was perfect, she said 'I now feel I'm becoming really familiar with many of the artworks here and I'm very comfortable coming in'. And I said 'it should be like that, it should be like you going to visit a friend'. I said 'it's a national collection, it belongs to you, come in as if you are visiting a friend, you know, you're going into their living room, that's how it should be when you come in'. And I like that… I like when people say that. That's the aim of the whole thing. But I still feel there are huge quantities of people who still don't know anything about it. And, you know, I'm very up for changing things and offering new things and taking up suggestions but it is sad we don't have more people. I mean everyone should have… should know. People have said in here 'I didn't know any of this went on, how do you find out'. And I think 'that's absolutely dreadful, you're in this building and you're having to ask me in this space how do I find out about more things like this'. That's not good. Couple of years now, we've had easel sketching out in the gardens. We started it first because of the impressionist gardens, and we had six easels set out all day. I think it was four Fridays. And people just came and it was lovely because they just came in their suits, put their lunch down and did a bit of sketching, then sat and ate their lunch and went back to their offices. And that was good. It brought a few more people in. Then we were able to give out leaflets about other things that were on. So, that was good. But more of that, we should have more of that really. You could expand it, I tell you. You could expand it massively. If you had the funding to allow for the things to happen, you could have things regularly outside that would draw people in. I have all these ideas but I can never get at them because I'm bogged down with the day-to-day things that have to be done… Four years ago I thought 'okay, we all go over and we buy our sandwiches at M&S, and how many people who work in M&S come to the gallery? How many do that?' And I met with a manager there and I talked about doing something specifically for employees, and she said it would have to be in their own time; it couldn't be work time. And she said 'you're welcome to put a flyer in our staff room'… And I'd love to start with Princes Street, from one end to another, go into all the businesses, talk about all the things that we have, all the things we could do, and offer certain things, and say 'well, we could do a tailor-made tour, we could do a workshop, a taster sort of a thing', tease people in. I think you could have a wonderful time doing that, you know, just go right down from number one Princes Street to the end, to start with, and just go 'what kind of business, how many employees have you got?' You know.

XC -What do you think is stopping this?

LM -Well, I'll tell you all that is stopping me is I can't get at these ideas. This thing that's here, and I'm trying all the time to get at it, and I'm constantly weighed down with administrative work. Which is the thing that I don't enjoy, not especially good at, don't even want to do but… It's because of funding and it's not going to change. The climate we're in now, there isn't going to be support or assistance for that. That's what it is. It's being distracted by day-to-day dull things and it's trying to

keep sight of the exciting things that you want to do. It's very hard. They are still there but I mean that's an idea that's sat, and I will need to say 'right, for a month, I will do nothing else except this, I'm going to focus on this and I'm not going to look at a single email, I'm not going to take a single phone call, I'm going to focus on this'. And it would happen. It would happen like that. And I'm sure there's nowhere else in the whole of Britain, nowhere else in the rest of the world… You'd be doing something unique, something good, something you'd learn a lot by. You know, you'd be saying to those people 'well, why don't you come? What has stopped you coming? Would you come again now? What would you like us to do?'

XC -Do you see a greater potential for NGS to engage with under-represented audiences?

LM -I do, and I think that is a good start… I'll tell you when I first started here - I forget sometimes what my thoughts were - but when I first started, I went to different community groups and I met with them. And then I thought to myself 'well, that's all well and good…people who go to a group…for people who have depression or people with Alzheimer's they're already in a group, they've got somebody organizing this. What about the ordinary man in the street who's walking along feeling very depressed one day, nothing to do, nowhere to go, what about him? What are we doing for him?' And the answer is nothing really. Nothing. And that's the person I'm interested in, the person I'm really interested in. I suppose my interest isn't really in the academic thing because I feel people who are that way of thinking they know where to find the information. They don't need help. And Helen does an amazing job with all of the stuff that she does. My interest is in the ordinary person who doesn't realize what a lot of things it could be for them, who could have a life-changing experience in here and doesn't know it, because they don't know anything about us. What do I think we do for that now? I would say less than ten percent success in that area, I would say.

XC -At the moment you seem to focus as an institution on pre-arranged groups.

LM -You mean rather than finding, going out and getting people. Yes, it does seem to be.

XC -Do they approach you?

LM -Yes they do. And I always say yes. I have had groups come in, I've had groups over the years, I've had various groups. For example, one of our gallery attendants, he said he worked with a men's group, with men who have had problems with alcohol and various problems, and he said 'is there any way they could come in and have something?' So I organized that. They came in and had a tour and a workshop. So, yes, if anyone approaches me… Unless the way it was working that would be treading on someone else's toes. Yes, if it's here, I would do that for people. Yeah, the class the other day, there was a woman… it was a writing class and she said to me 'oh', she said she worked with hospitals, with people who have depression and other things, said that it just occurred to her the kind of class we were running might

be a lovely thing for them to be involved in, and 'was that something that we did?' And I said 'yes, it would be something we could do'. And she just took my details and she said she would email me. And yes I would do that. So, if someone has a good idea and they want to do something, I'm always up for that.

XC –So, these groups are using the collection in a kind of very instrumental manner?

LM -You mean as in that's the main focus?

XC -I mean the works of art are being used…

LM -They're like the catalyst for what happens, and they're very, very good. And the reason for that… I mean, sometimes, I join in a class and I find it very uplifting, not to have a lecture, I don't like to have a lecture in front of a picture, but a lot of the ones we have are where people will sit, and they will look at two or three works of art, and they will talk. There will be a dialogue about that, and that's the thing I enjoy the most. And people will say 'well, that reminds me of this' or the person doing the tour might ask 'well, what do you think about this? Do you like this? What is your eye drawn to first?' And that conversation is the most fascinating thing, and it is lovely because for people… No matter what walk of life you come from, your focus is on this work of art. You're not really talking about yourselves or getting into awkward situations. You're using that as the focus and lots of things come out through that. And you can reveal as much about yourself as you want to but that's a focus. It's like something that everyone, you know, is drawn towards. And particularly for writing groups as well, you get all kinds of things that come out. People reveal a lot about themselves, a lot about themselves when they start talking as well. And that is fascinating, and I think it's good, it's very, very good for people. And I think that they find it very stimulating. It's quite exciting. Even I find sometimes when I… I don't mean to stay and I'm maybe just getting the chairs ready for the group, and then I think 'well, I'll just sit for a minute'. And then I can feel myself getting quite excited just to hear the talk and then I have to stop because I want to join in and I'm thinking 'well, this isn't my class. I haven't paid to do this class and, you know, let other people speak'. But I have this great urge to be part of it. I think it's very, very good, very healthy for people. And it doesn't really matter what the work of art is. It's a starting point and it can go in all kinds of directions.

XC -Which brings me to this one…Do you see the galleries primarily able to educate about art, or do you see a broader potential?

Oh I do. I think it's a social thing as well. I think it should be a social thing. Many, many people who come to my classes form friendships and groups that last longer than the class. There's another group, there was a Thursday group that used to be the 'art for absolute beginners' and they now meet every Thursday, not through me because I couldn't manage any more classes, but they meet regularly, and they've continued to meet oh probably a year, a couple of years now. Um, others come, and they'll go and have lunch together. Groups of people who didn't know each other

will have lunch or, um, do social things together or you know… Yes there is… That social element is very important, very important. I have to be very aware of it because we've had in the past three-day courses and I remember, um, usually at a longer course at the start, we'd ask people to say, you know, their name and why they've come or what their experience is, and again that's very, very revealing. We had for example, I remember a young girl one day saying 'I hate my job, it's not something I ever wanted to do and this is me coming to this'. It was a writing class. 'I'm taking the first step towards doing something for myself and I'm hoping that this is something that's going to get me onto a different road'. So, that's the power of coming, you know, to classes.

Interview at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery with Meg Faragher, Education Officer at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, on Tuesday the 15th of May 2012

XC: Xavier Contier, interviewer; MF: Meg Faragher, interviewee.

XC - If you could you tell me a little about your responsibilities?

MF -My job title is SNPG learning coordinator. So, I'm focused on the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and my role was part of the fundraising for the Portrait Gallery project. So, my responsibilities - because each member of staff has an audience responsibility - so I work with community access audiences or community audiences, um, and families. Primarily, my role, as you can tell from my title, is to look after those audiences at the Portrait Gallery. But, um, there used to be another role, working with families and communities across all sites, but the person who held that role left and that role wasn't then replaced. So, then there was a gap, and as part of the Portrait Gallery, um, fundraising that was when I came. So, I do have responsibility for, um, programming at other sites as well. So, for example, I run the visual impairment programme which is across all of the galleries and the hearing impaired programme as well, while I organize guided tours and visits for the community access groups at the Portrait Gallery. Because I've got more funding for that, more budget, I also organize visits and tours for those groups at the other sites as well, um, using exhibition budgets and that kind of thing. And, similarly, I run a family programme which is essentially… mostly consists of regular Sunday afternoon activities, then special holiday programmes. Most of them take place at the Portrait Gallery but I do a couple of things that take place at the Scottish National Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art as well. So.

XC -Right. So, this is a new role to correspond with the opening of the Portrait Gallery.

MF -Yes and to replace I guess…Because without this role there is no representative of families and communities. So, yeah.

XC -I see, okay, thank you. Do you see a greater potential for the galleries to engage with under-represented audiences? And if so how?

MF -Yes very much so. It has a huge potential for under-represented audiences. I think…Yeah, I mean, I'd like to continue to expand and develop the visual impairment programme because that's a great strength for the galleries. It's been going for seven years and we have got a huge amount of expertise now, which we've been able to share with other institutions. I think we could do more with that in the future - be a centre of excellence in a way - and do more training for other institutions, and that kind of thing.

XC -Could you tell me a little bit more about this?

MF -Yeah it's a programme. It's been going for seven years and it has been built up considerably over that time. It's externally funded and we offer… The bread and butter of it is we offer - pretty much every month - we offer a full day of audio-described tour, and then a workshop with a 2D and 3D element to it. That's open to both visually impaired and blind audiences. But we've also started, experimented with various pilot activities. We ran a really successful poetry event at the beginning of the year. We widened it out to incorporate the drawing room, to try and see if we could actually incorporate some of what we did for that specialist audience into the general programme. And that worked quite well… We've done training for other institutions now because we've got now really very well-trained artists and experienced freelance artists who work on that programme. And, in fact, we're going to Mertoun House tomorrow to do an off-site visit, which they've not done before. So, that's quite good. So, I'd like to keep developing that. We run a hearing impaired programme as well, which is regular too, with hearing loops. One gap I think we have is the deaf audiences, and I've been speaking to Artlink recently, and the Talbot Rice gallery because they were involved with an Engage project to look at deaf audiences and provision in galleries and museums. So, we're at very early stages with that, to see what can be done there and how we can serve that audience, involve them and give them what they want and have them sort of lead it and have lots of consultation and discussion with representatives of that audience. I'm interested in doing that in the future. Um, yeah.

XC -Are there other community groups you work with?

MF -We do a disability access programme, which is essentially kind of, free guided tours with refreshments and a chance for discussion afterwards. And we run that for access groups. So, that could be mental health groups or it could be disability groups, or I guess any groups that need extra support to access the collections. At the moment that's what we offer. I think it's important to keep offering that, in a way, light touch, quite basic 'come in, have a guided tour and have some refreshments and feel comfortable and feel welcome'. I think that's really

important. Um, we've also worked on projects. So, I worked with a group called Ecas to… It was a longer term project, over some time. Groups of physically disabled people from Ecas worked with a professional artist and responded to works, particularly portraits from the Portrait of the Nation project before the Portrait Gallery had opened, to put on an exhibition. And that was very successful. We've been nominated for a Scottish charity partnership award. So, that's really good. I'd like to do more of that kind of thing, not necessarily ending with an exhibition, although we do have a slot now here in the Portrait Gallery. The education department do. So, I think it would be nice, another way of engaging, because portraiture is so rich, so much about your identity and your view of the world. And it's very reflective. So, it would be good to do more of that. I've been talking to two people from Disability History Month as well, or Disability History Scotland now - it's sort of a growing organization - perhaps working together on a trail. So, you know, we have sort of trails. So, sort of telling the story of people with disabilities who have made some kind of significant contribution, or people who may not be disabled themselves but who have made some contribution to disability history. There are various ways of collaborating, and, like I say, it's good to start off offering this very open doors policy so people can come in, and… It's really important to, you know, the cup of tea and the welcome, a space to come; it's really important, you know, they don't have to go to the café necessarily and spend too much money there, and it's a place people can come back to. What I would like to do more of in the future is then - once groups have started to visit again, to know the place, getting to know the collection - to then start to offer more practical ways of engaging, which is really budget dependent. Whether we can start to offer practical workshops and ways for people to respond, that would be another step.

XC -Do you think this practical, um, engagement is important for, um, these community groups?

MF -Um, I think both are important. You want to be in the gallery to, um, have that discussion; to be able to come back again and again is very valuable. Um, and then I see it as a way of going deeper into some topics, to explore it, sort of physically looking at different techniques. I think, again, portraiture, particularly, is a really rich topic, identity and reminiscence and that kind of thing. The other audience I'm working with, particularly at the Portrait Gallery, is older audiences. So, Memories Are Made of This is the name of the programme for older audiences. So, it's for, primarily, for older people's networks, people in care homes, those with dementia, and that sort of thing. And we run a regular reminiscence programme. So, looking at how the collection can be used for reminiscence. And we do those quite regularly, and also we're starting to offer regular social events. So, for dementia awareness week, we've got a tea dance in the great hall, linked to the War at Sea display, offering more reminiscence sessions. And we are working with the sporting memories network which is related to Al Scotland and the football museum in Glasgow to offer some drop-in sporting memories sessions linked to Playing for Scotland, obviously, and some other works in our collection…portraits of footballers. So, that will be good. I think that also has a lot of potential as well, reminiscence for intergenerational work, for not only is it a fantastic thing for the

people, for people with dementia, it's…but it's also good for the gallery because we learn more about our collections by asking people about them. We can actually build up our knowledge of photographs and that kind of thing. So, for example, I'm working with… You know how there's always an education person who works with the curator on exhibitions at the Portrait Gallery? So, I'm working on an exhibition with Imogen Gibbon which will be called Tickling Jock, Comedy Greats from Sir Harry Lauder to Billy Connolly, and I'd like to invite groups of older people into the gallery to look at some of the images we're thinking of using in the exhibition, asking them about them, what their memories are of these figures, and what their reminiscences are, asking them to respond and then, hopefully, using what they say in the exhibition itself, in the interpretation perhaps. So, there's a kind of richness in that programme, I think.

XC -These groups. Do they make contact with you or do you seek them out? How does that process work?

MF -Um, well with the community access groups we have, there are some community groups who have visited the galleries over many years and would come back regularly. The Portrait Gallery refurbishment, and me starting a year ago, was a good opportunity to get in contact with a larger number of groups at that point, and invite them to the Portrait Gallery for a…kind of like a stakeholder day for communities. Quite a few community group leaders and some care home people and other organizations who haven't been to the galleries before, or not for a long time… So, they came to that and learned more about the programme. So, that was really helpful, and I think pretty much all of the people who came to that have booked or visited, or in some way come back, because it was representatives from those groups who brought their service-users back. And then recently for the social dementia awareness tea dance…because that's quite a new audience for us, not so much necessarily the older people's networks but care homes. So, that will be good. I've had some bookings from care homes and some really good conversations with people who now obviously realize that there are various things happening they can tap into, and they're free as well, which is very key. So, that's very good, kind of a mixture. Some - you forget, obviously, you are the centre of your own universe and you think everybody knows what you're doing - but somebody else, some people just wouldn't necessarily dream that you can visit the Portrait Gallery for free. They don't even know you can come through the front door… So, it's really important to let people know just the basics of that, you know. We had a visit from quite a large group from the council of racial equality a few months ago, and they were a mixed family group with children and adults from black and ethnic minority backgrounds many of whom had English as their second language, and really they were saying we've walked past but we didn't know it was free, you know, we wouldn't necessarily have known that children were welcome here, etcetera, etcetera. So, it's really important to do just very simple things with people, and let them know what's happening, it's a welcoming place.

XC -How important do you think it is that the permanent collection remains free?

MF -Um, very important…

XC -Would you be worried if NGS decided…?

MF -Yes, I would be very worried. It's the national collection, so it belongs to everybody. At the moment I want to let more and more people know it is free, and it does belong to them, they can come and see it. And that in itself can be quite difficult. There are groups who don't necessarily even come into the centre of town. So, yes if it was paid for, it would be a shame. I think with family groups as well, it's important that things are free, because again it's the national collection, it belongs to everybody. And once you start having a price structure, when some things are paid for, it's off-putting. It would be a shame. I think in the future, perhaps, the galleries might want to start making money from families, which of course many other institutions in fact do - sleepovers and that sort of thing - but my feeling is that there are groups who already have quite a lot of provision. It's fantastic to keep providing for them but there are also groups that we really could be working with more, and it would be hugely more beneficial to them. And, yeah, I think it's important.

XC -Which brings me to this next question. Do you think NGS is still perceived by some audiences as threatening or elitist?

MF -Yeah, definitely, and that's to do with a whole range of things, probably. Um, yeah. There are comments from groups that have come in for the first time who, lots of comments where they didn't know it was free. And, again, that's why doing something where you come in for a free tour, cup of tea, is really important, because for a mental health group, for example, the hope is that that group comes in once or twice or a few times and then knows that it's a safe place, it's a good space where people know they are welcome. They get to know the building a little bit; very, just basic things like that. They know the staff are welcoming; they know that when they walk through the front door it's not going to be an embarrassing thing where they are having to pay or they're not sure. So, I think there's still a perception that the galleries is elitist, definitely.

XC -Is there more you can do? Is it a case of marketing more? Or…

MF -Yeah, I think there's… My solutions are never very radical, really. Things like having a sign at the front door to show, make it more obvious that it's free. Having a poster to show what events are on, that there are things for children, things for communities, things for adults, lots of it is for free. I don't think that it is necessarily visible. It's on the website but you'd have to go on the website and then to look; …there's a certain level of engagement. Whereas, I think if it were just a bit more visual, with the outside of the building, for example, when buses went passed from the bus station, I think that would be a big thing. And I think the cafes, you know, here and at the National are lovely, I enjoy them, perhaps there could be more options for families and for, um… It's kind of very straightforward things like

that. And then I suppose the sort of activities that outreach do culminating in more community-focused exhibitions is important as well. So, yeah.

XC -Okay. Do you see the galleries primarily able to educate about art or do you see a broader potential?

MF -Probably a broader potential, definitely. My own background isn't in art at all so perhaps it's partially because of that. I think, obviously for its own sake and its own value, the collection is there; it stands alone. But besides that, the potential is kind of endless. Again, especially coming back to the Portrait Gallery collection, you know, the work that the outreach department have done on various themes, the trails, it's about identity and culture and all kinds of things. Reminiscence, memory…

XC -What about current affairs? Do you think the galleries are able to tackle issues of the here and now?

MF -Um, I think to some extent. There is the possibility with the contemporary gallery to be quite reflective and current. I think probably it's difficult for the gallery to be really involved. The gallery is not allowed to be politically involved, so that always makes it difficult. I think there is perhaps a hesitancy about and a fear about being too political. So, I think that does make it difficult. But, I mean, on the other hand, there is the forthcoming Buchanan exhibition which should be really interesting, That's a chance for the gallery to really engage with an important current issue and actually debate rather than, you know, educating in a sort of old-fashioned sense. So, um, I think it is probably the contemporary strand that probably is where those opportunities lie for the gallery to be more of a portrait of the nation and to kind of tackle certain issues…

XC -Is it a balance… about how much you can maybe engage?

MF -Yeah, I think you can engage, but you have to be, you're sort of tied up with giving the impression that you're being fair and giving a voice. So, for example, with this exhibition, it's about showing that you're engaging equally with all sides of the question, which is perfectly proper.

XC -How do you see your work in education more generally at NGS developing in the next few years?

MF -Um, my contract is fixed term, so I've done a year now, and I've got a year and a half left. So, very much it depends on funding really. So, obviously, I'm planning for still being here, that's what you have to do anyway. I guess those things I was talking about, developing a programme, engaging with the deaf community, more project work with groups, with something tangible at the end of an exhibition, developing those growing relationships with different groups, engaging with them in more sort of practical ways, definitely developing the

reminiscence and programmes for older people. There are so many different directions that could go into.

XC -You mentioned intergenerational work; have you begun thinking about that?

MF -Yeah, I've begun thinking about it, but that's probably about the sum of it at the moment. No, I haven't made any plans with that necessarily yet... I've spoken to the children's parliament - that's a fantastic organization - to do something with them. So, perhaps if there is a tie-in there. And also I'm wanting to do, have a strand of after-school activities for children. So, whether there is maybe a link there with doing something intergenerational, or perhaps it's starting with some pilot sessions around a theme, I don't know yet.

XC -There's one last question about communities, a difficult word. How would you see the word community? How do you understand it?

MF -It is quite…When I started I was in charge of developing two of the trails. One was families which was, you know, easy enough to see who that was. Um, and it was children up to 12. And then the other was for communities, um, and I kind of thought well that could be…that's just kind of everybody so, um, that was kind of quite funny. I suppose I do sort of narrow it down with my role, I talk about community access, um, because community is just everybody. But I talk about the community access audience, so people who may need, um, benefit from a bit of extra support to access the collections. So, like I say, whether that's a mental health group or, um, a group from a care home, then that's how I sort of define it.

Interview at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery with Nicola Kalinsky, Interim Director at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, on Wednesday the 13th of June 2012

XC: Xavier Contier, interviewer; NK: Nicola Kalinsky, interviewee.

XC -So, if you wouldn't mind starting with your responsibilities.

NK -Right, well at the moment, I'm the interim Director of the Portrait Gallery and I have been so since the beginning of February when James Holloway retired. So, I am the Director of the Portrait Gallery and part of the senior management team at the National Galleries of Scotland. I suppose my responsibility is the sort of overall running of the Portrait Gallery within the National Galleries of Scotland, the wider structure.

XC -So, what potential do you think exhibitions at the Portrait Gallery hold to educate people?

NK -I certainly hope so, we're wasting our time if they don't. In the wider sense of the word, education, that's actually surely what museums and galleries are about. That we use our collections to create situations and possibilities for engagement with varied visitors, including the formal education is just one side of it, but everyone who comes in is, I hope, getting something out of it. On a very wide sort of spectrum of what that might be, in a very broad sense.

XC -How would you characterize the dominant focus, the dominant sense…?

NK -It hasn't got a dominant sense. It's a wide spectrum. Some people come into the gallery for very specific reasons. People who come in as formal groups through the education department will have their learning objectives, if you like, laid out. So, you could ask them afterwards what they got out of it and you could check it against their list. That's not the case, if you like, for most independent visitors and they probably have a variety of motives that bring them into a museum or gallery. And there's been quite a lot of market research on this, and the galleries have done quite a lot of market research on this too, on what brings people into galleries. Some people have a kind of habit of visiting. Some people it's more a sort of tourist basis. Some people it's more they get a sort of spiritual satisfaction from it, and so on. But there has been a lot of work done on this, which I'm sure you could find out about if you wanted to get into that.

XC - Has the Portrait Gallery a slightly different remit to let's say the Modern and the gallery on the Mound, um, a strong historical…?

NK -Yes, we're a historical gallery in a way that the Gallery of Modern Art and the Scottish National Gallery… Their collections exist within a history, but it's presented primarily from an aesthetic, art historical viewpoint, by style…

XC -Is this also at play in the Portrait Gallery?

NK -Not so much, no. I think we are more concerned with history in the more general sense, and our collections sit within that. Certainly our exhibitions, it's always been the case, but the displays we have up at the moment, most of them are using the objects, while being very aware of their nature as physical things, to tell specific narratives. It's very different to the way the collections are treated at the National in particular. So.

XC -What different perspective does a Portrait Gallery offer?

NK -You would need to go back to Carlyle and the nineteenth century, or even before that. And, I suppose, it's a very specific idea of history in its origin, very nineteenth century idea that history is created by individuals, which not everyone would necessarily agree with, and that the portrait offers a conduit through to those

individuals and to the past, which has a certain amount of logic to it. There are only about six portrait galleries in the world. So, it is a sort of odd beast, and rather different to what you do find in other places where you get historical galleries telling the history of the nation or the state like the one in Stockholm. It's different to that. And I would say it's a rationale that goes back to at least the mid-nineteenth century but it's one we constantly reinvent. And what we've just been through with our project is a kind of major reinvention and restatement of what we think we're doing.

XC -Yes, especially with widening the sense of portrait?

NK -Yes, taking it away from just being an individual human being. Which of course not everyone agrees with.

XC -You mentioned Carlyle, um, he was very much a man who thought of heroes and, um, great men leading history… is this still at play?

NK -I think there is still a place for that, but I think we look at it more critically as well. So, a wider definition of who interesting people are. But, of course, to a certain extent, we are constrained by our collection. Quite often there aren't portraits of people you would like there to be portraits of, for a start, and then equally a lot of people for whom we have portraits are not particularly good or heroic in the traditional sense at all, which makes them interesting. You know, we have murderers and rapists, people like Bothwell. But they remain very interesting people.

XC -If I may ask you about the relationship between curators and educators. I know, um, others have mentioned this, how the Portrait Gallery tried to bring the two departments closer together? If you could tell me a little bit more.

NK -Um, yes I think the curators here during the project worked more closely with the education department than has previously been the case or is probably the case at the other galleries. So, from the earliest stages of an exhibition and a display the curator who was the lead curator had a pair in the education. And we're a very small group of people here anyway, not vast departments. So, that worked very well and it wasn't, in most cases, we were asking the education department to curate an exhibition - that's what curators do – but, if you like, the education person was there to bounce ideas off, to be a kind of critical friend, if you like, and to offer a particular perspective of how well or not those displays would work from their particular professional point of view. And that worked very well.

XC -Um, if you could give me a kind of concrete example, such as the texts? This is the curators' responsibility…?

NK -Each display had to, as it were, elect a lead writer and in each case for various reasons that was the curator because the people in the education department didn't feel they had the background, expertise to write those texts. They didn't have the

time or the expertise. However, the curators wrote it but your first reader was your education partner. On some teams the education partner made a lot of suggestions and contributed. It really depended on the individual. Some people are more comfortable writing than others… But all of the written texts then went through an editorial process which…but the editorial team consisted of two people from the education department and two curators, and we read through every single text, debated it. We also had external readers as well, which is kind of equally important. So, that was how we did it. I think it is important that labels are not written by a committee. So, you've still got the individual voice, but, if you like, that voice is being checked and questioned by a team of people, including the expertise from the education department.

XC -They're quite lengthy. That was a decision…?

NK -It was a decision, we looked at texts elsewhere in other galleries, and for instance in Kelvingrove the labels are much, much shorter, and we discussed it as a group and we decided to take the risk of having longer labels in that a short label often doesn't tell you pretty much, but you've still got to go through the process of reading it. So, if you're going to read something you might as well have something there, rather than a comment that goes nowhere. Of course, not everyone reads labels, and the exhibitions also have general panels which will be enough for a lot of people, and some people don't want to read anything at all, and that's fine.

XC -Um, one of the aims of the institution is this idea of access, encouraging access and participation. Um, the educational department seem, um, well, that's a big part of their role...does this extend to curatorial staff, is this something they think about?

NK -It depends what your meaning is of the word access. We actually have a lot of direct access to the public. More, it might actually surprise people how much we have to do with them. People come to the information desk every day, and they will ask to see a curator, and we will go down to see them. And we respond to their enquiries. We get hundreds and hundreds of enquiries from general visitors, telephone, email, people at the front desk which we deal with. So, we do. It's informal, it's unpredictable, it's happening all the time. And all of the curators also give talks. We're invited to give talks at various, at either parallel institutions or various societies in Edinburgh, art history societies, and so on. So, people are out and about. We do lectures and so forth. This is sometimes for our education department too. We're on hand for them as well. Curators did a lot of the pop-up talks when we first opened.

XC -It's important for curators to be seen, to be available?

NK -Yes, obviously you can't be available 24/7 or you would never get any other work done. And, in fact, that has been a little bit of an issue since we opened because we are actually so physically visible, and the curators here have got a reputation of being friendly and accessible. So, that does mean we, particularly one or two people, get called down too many times a day, but it's a fine balance and

almost better like that - even though it's quite irritating at times - than for the SVS staff and the front desk to think 'oh we dare not ask her, oh she doesn't like doing that'. So, yeah.

XC -Do you feel there are other roles for NGS?

NK -Education sounds very specific, you know. You will have a learning outcome. But a gallery is also a public space, a public space where people want to do all sorts of things - within reason of course - be there… just enjoy being in the space, you know, come in and use it for entertainment. And that's fine too. Use it as a place to come and meet people, use it as a space to socialize in, all of those are perfectly valid reasons for people to come into the gallery, certainly. They come in to use the toilets, which is fine.

XC -What about the galleries as a forum, as a place for debate or discussion?

NK -Well that was one of our five objectives in the Portrait of a Nation project. The other four objectives were all, if you like, fairly tangible things, and then the fifth objective was that the gallery should become a centre for debate and not necessarily debates, as it were, started or controlled by the galleries as well. And that will take time to happen. That's not something that happens instantly, um, and I think that can probably happen informally as well as formally. And having achieved, if you like, the first four tangible physical objectives that's probably where a lot of effort has to be directed, do the things that encourage that kind of thing to happen.

XC -Um, are there parameters to this idea of forum?

NK -I don't know. I don't know. I mean one would hope, um, not so much parameters but that the…it would make sense or there is a logic that the sorts of debates that could feed off here will relate to the sorts of issues that a portrait gallery is best placed to address. I mean we're probably not the world's best forum, I don't know, to talk about, I don't know, kind of new farming methods or something. So, we can't do everything.

XC -If I may ask you about collecting. Everything you do starts from the collection, so I gather. Um, how important is it for you as an institution to keep building and keep growing the collection?

NK -Um, it's important because there…we have gaps. Um, if you like, gaps keep growing because we keep finding out, particularly in the contemporary area, about things that weren't there before that we want. Specifically for the Portrait Gallery, we have gaps, sitters or areas that we would like to represent or artists we would feel it would be important to represent. Um, it also…it's one way - this isn't the most important reason - but it's also one way of keeping interest in a gallery. You know, it makes a good story when you get a, you know, new commission or a new acquisition. It sort of shows things are happening in the gallery. Um, and it also kind of, in the longer term, you know, if you go to look back from a hundred years'

time, um, you wouldn't want the gallery to have become sort of frozen in 2012. Um, but it's very difficult because of course we have very, very little money to do it. But we don't only buy things, we also get given things as well. Um, people gift us things; they die and they leave us things. So, there are other ways as well as, you know, actually writing a cheque.

Interview at the Scottish National Gallery with a Security and Visitor Services Manager, on Wednesday the 23rd of October 2012

XC: Xavier Contier, interviewer; SVSM: Security and Visitor Services Manager, interviewee.

XC -Could we start with your role?

SVSM -I am visitor and security services manager here at the galleries. Security and visitor services is the biggest department in the galleries and we have around about 150 staff that goes up to 210 for the summer period. Most of my time and my colleague Janet's time is taken with staff management, management issues, everything from recruitment, training, development, dealing with disciplinary problems, that kind of thing when you have a large staff, communication as well, you know, keeping everyone in the loop or trying to. Um, I myself also deal with, um, everything external that happens out on the Mound, and the sort of surrounding. So, for example, I was the person from the galleries that went to liaise on the tram works. I'm currently doing that for the tram-works on York place. I deal with things like the markets that come in on Christmas, the Fringe, any other events that go on. I'm the person from the galleries that deals with that.

XC -When you say deal with it? What…could you…?

SVSM -Well what that usually involves is, um, liaising with the event organizer, seeing what their plans are, making sure it doesn't interfere with our plans or operation and making sure our access is maintained at all times, um, basically that it doesn't affect the operation and also they can get what they need from us, as well. Because they also need info from us, as well, about what we're doing. So, I'll liaise with the council, um, as well, because the council take the lead on all the organization. I sit on a lot of cross-departmental teams as well, because we are the biggest department. We have input into everything I guess. We work with education; we work with marketing. I'm on everything to the tram-works committee to the committee that's dealing with all the apps and things like that. So, it's really varied.

XC -I guess the tram works have got a big impact on access.

SVSM -Um, they did have when they were here. Um, I mean since they've been away from here for a while now I can't tell you accurate numbers, but they did cause a bit of a drop off, but that was mitigated with marketing spend… at the end of it. I also deal with, we have two external bodies that exhibit in this building, and I basically relationship-manage them. One of the bodies stays in the building all year, the RSA. They've got office space and exhibiting rights, but there's another external organization. So, basically I make sure when their exhibitions come in, that they're adhering to all the rules, the health and safety, deal with artists as well, deal with all the timings, and make sure they get in and get access. So, that's kind of what I do.

XC -Um, could you tell me a little bit more about the SVS staff now? Their responsibilities?

SVSM -Yes, the SVS staff are here to, um, ensure the safety of… it's in this order: the public, the artworks and then the buildings. It's the safety and security. They also have what you might call a traditional front of house role, a more welcoming, greeting, information giving role, which is unusual, because a lot of galleries that security side front of house side are split up. You don't normally have them all in the same department. More galleries are moving towards this model, because it's not beyond the ken of the staff and it's not beyond their experience. And if you think about a retail function, where you are meeting, greeting, selling, but also keeping an eye on the shop floor, looking for shoplifters that sort of thing, you know, it's easily achievable.

XC -Is this about efficiency?

SVSM -It's not about efficiency so much as the staff used to have a strict security role and weren't really supposed to engage with the visitors. It's really a broadening of the role because visitor expectations are changed, you know. Visitors don't expect to come in and have their conversations kept to a polite minimum. They expect to engage with the staff; they expect to get knowledge from the staff and information. So, it's really to broaden the role out, make it a bit more varied and interesting for the staff as well, and just to clarify what they can and can't do, because when they were sat in a room, they would actually, under previous regimes, be told off for speaking to people. That's not acceptable, 'A' for the staff, and certainly not for visitors coming in. We started off from a security standpoint, and we're moving towards the front house.

XC -This brings me on to… Is there a changed role?

SVSM -Yeah, well, it has been changing. I suppose we started it about three and half years ago, changing the role and remit of the staff. We've changed the training, we've changed how we recruit, where we recruit, the skills we recruit for. So…

XC -Does this kind of correspond with the redevelopment of the whole…that was about…?

SVSM -The redevelopment here was in 2004. So, it was after that, a good bit after. Um, and the Portrait Gallery, again, in the opening of that, we've expanded the remit further. And also, the Gallery of Modern Art, now gallery attendants staff an information point, whereas they didn't do that at all before. There is a dedicated information desk team downstairs, but they have a slightly different remit. They've got the telephone switchboard. They also take all the bookings for the education department. So, they're a dedicated team because they've got a lot more to deal with and, obviously, the knowledge of the staff and the knowledge of the courses. So, with a smaller team that's easier. Gallery of Modern Art and the Portrait Gallery, it's staffed by gallery attendants. It's just a rota-ed duty point, much as they might be on the door, they might be in a room.

XC -Um, are staff numbers declining?

SVSM -Um, staff numbers aren't declining. We have got more staff but we've changed to a different working pattern. We've changed from a sort of 5 over 7 rota to a 3 day 4 day split, and that's been a cost efficiency because the staff who are on the 5 over 7 rota, it's in their pay agreement they would get premiums at weekends. And once they've worked over their hours they get overtime premiums. But we've got a bit more flexibility with staff, because they work less hours, they have to work more hours before they get up to the overtime pay-scale. And because they don't work 5 over 7, we don't have to pay them premiums at weekends. So, we actually do have more staff but we have more staff working less hours, for them not to be paid premium rates. Does that make sense? Say you want someone to do an extra day, when we had a 5 over 7 rota, no-one wants to work 6 days and only have one day off, but if you have only worked three days that week, you maybe happen to do another day or even another two days, then you get two days off still. So, it does work. It gives us a lot more flexibility in the team, as well as gives a cost saving.

XC -Um, you talked a little about visitors expecting a new…?

SVSM -Yes, I think the main things that visitors expect are be welcomed, have staff who are informative and, you know, to be treated with respect and courtesy and also a bit of empathy. The staff are in a position… We're here to enforce rules and regulations which no-one likes. No-one likes to be told what to do or what not to do. So, the way we've been training staff is to do… Based much more around behavioural model, based on things like transactional analysis, that kind of thing, we base it on that model. Instead of telling someone to do and they say why, you greet them first. You go up and you greet them, and then you would explain it, and then you would ask them to do or not to do something, which we find works better because you don't get the 'why, why not, where does it say that?' So, that's kind of how you do it. So, then you thank them for doing it, and then we follow it up with 'if you need any help, come and find me, come and let me know'. So, we try and finish it on a positive, if you like, so it's not like they feel like they've been ticked

off. And they know the staff are here to help. And it's working. Feedback we've had from staff is that it's definitely working. We've got sort of barred words. We don't let them say things like 'excuse me', because that could work either way; it's very polite, but someone says 'excuse me' to you…it's 'oh what have I done?' If staff come up to me and say 'excuse me' [weak voice] meek and mild that doesn't work for them either. Things like keep the language positive. So, we've gone through a whole load of behavioural things to work out how best the ways of doing it. Seems to be working.

XC -Is there, um, feedback opportunities for staff? How does this work? Is it quite regular?

SVSM -It's not as regular or as formalized as I would like it to be, and that is something I would like to work on. We do, even at managerial level, keep an open dialogue with staff, chat to them, find out how they're getting on. We get feedback from supervisors. An opportunity I have to get feedback is, we only ever recruit staff internally. So, we often use their job interviews to get a bit of feedback from them, find out how things are working, 'what do you think works well what doesn't work well'... Shows us they're thinking about the job, showing a bit of initiative as well, but also gives us an opportunity to get some feedback. And I've got a whole load of things here. These are all my interview scoring sheets and my comments on the back, and I've got, um, you know, feedback to take from that because we've said to them 'are there improvements we could make to the service from your point of view? Could we expand the role? What would you like to do?' We use that in interview questions, and it also shows us how motivated they are and how keen. That feedback I'll need to feed out to the wider teams at some point, but we don't have it as formalized as we would like or it could be. We do have regular staff meetings, but we don't find they're a good forum because, at the end, 'does anybody have any suggestions, anything to say?'… no-one really likes to pipe up, they're in a bigger group. So, we need to do it more one-to-one. And the supervisors do it with their own team groups and then feed back to us as well. They probably do it more regularly than the likes of ourselves at management level, but it is something we definitely need to work on.

XC -Um, there's a big sort of educational push at the galleries at the moment. Do you see SVS staff contributing to this wider educational role?

SVSM -I do and I'm just about to do a plan for the direction and vision of SVS. I'll start that in the next couple of weeks. I definitely see a role there. The staff, in terms of information giving, I'd like them to do introductory tours, talks. And I know that education are quite keen on this as well, but we haven't really formalized it up, just sort of talked about how we're going to take it forward. But it's definitely in the back of my mind, and the way we are recruiting now, I really think we have staff who are capable of doing that, motivated to do and quite engaged with the collection. So…

XC -It's quite a big development.

SVSM -Yeah, it's a huge development, huge development. Obviously, it will need to go through the unions and everything else, and just make sure everyone is happy with it. No one would be made to do anything they didn't want to do, or anything they weren't comfortable with, or was out of their comfort zone or skill set or whatever.

XC -Um, What kind of backgrounds do staff have generally? What are you looking for?

SVSM -There is a variety. We used to recruit heavily from a security sector. So, the staff would be ex-police, ex-prison officers, ex-forces. And for the way the role was, that was great. It did work well and those staff have got really good skills, but what we were finding was not all of them had the sort of softer skills for the direction we were wanting to take the department and the role. So, now we tend to take people - sounds a bit glib - but we actually really recruit on attitude. Because you can't really teach someone an attitude and personality, you can't change that, but we can teach them security stuff. So, it's easier to get the right people, the right attitude, personalities in. Really, we look for people who like working with people, who like working with the public. When we interview external, that's always the first question we ask. 'What do you like about working with the public?' Because if they don't, they're not going to get on very well in here. They're not going to enjoy it and they're not going to be the right fit. Um, increasingly we've tended to employ people are either been doing degrees or are practising artists and also people from the art historical side, like people like Emilia, because, you know, they can speak about the collection. They've got, you know, a bit of a starter for ten in terms of background knowledge. Um, you know, they're engaged with the collection. I also think that works well for security, because if you're engaged with the collection you are much more likely to be worried about protecting it. It works on two fronts. They know the value of the work, not just financial but in terms of where it is in the grand scheme of things in the art world, you know. Like our Vermeer, for example, is really unusual because it's like a really large Vermeer. They'll know things like that and be like 'oh, right, well, it's really rare', you know. So, things like that they'll get to know. And it helps us from a security point of view, as well as being able to speak to people about it.

XC -What about, um, career development? Is there opportunities?

SVSM -There is career development. We've recently recruited three people into promoted posts, supervisory posts. We have a kind of informal set of internal internships. For example, Janet and I have got a girl coming in doing work experience with us. We've got Emma doing work experience with conservation, three guys with the art handling team, also one from our team has been seconded into registrars. So, we do like to give people opportunities for development in professional departments… They have to do work experience, unpaid unfortunately, but we can liaise with departments to get that arranged for them… We like to get the staff in and working in other areas. If they do work experience, it doesn't lead to

anything, at least they can come back, they've got more of an idea of the bigger workings, and again it helps them in their own role. So, it works well on both counts, or, indeed, if they go on to work elsewhere. We're all sorry to lose people, but if we've helped them, you know, it's great, and we're really chuffed for them.

XC -Moving on to kind of issues. What are the major issues that SVS staff are faced with?

SVSM -It's everyday things. The main issue we have is not knowing what is round the corner, not being able to plan. We don't know who is going to walk through the door at any given day. So, it's that unpredictability really, that staff have to be ready for anything. And, you know, we don't have a lot of issues; we really don't when you consider we get almost a million visitors through the door here. Um, I think we've had maybe three people in the last year that have really caused us a big problem, basically asked to leave. One lady, she clearly had a mental health issue; hadn't been medicated… Some people are just really stubborn. They're just having a bad day, and we understand that. The staff don't take it personally. So, there are those kind of issues which are inevitable when you are dealing with the public and you are opening your doors, and you have no say about who comes at you. But, you know, I think the staff quite like the challenge, some of the time. A lot of them quite like to try win people round, you know, and do that - people, for instance, who haven't been happy with the exhibition. We just had Van Gogh to Kandinsky, and people came in, and that was all they were expecting to see, so not realizing that's the timeframe of the exhibition. So, staff quite enjoyed speaking to them about it, pointing out works they might like, telling them about Van Goghs they could see elsewhere. So, you know, I think they quite like to try and win people round and enthuse them in the same way they are. I think so anyway.

XC -Do the public ever have issues then with staff and is there a place they can complain?

SVSM -Um, we get complaints in a variety of formats, as you would probably imagine. We get people who will complain on the day, who will email in. And that will find its way to us, and we will always investigate it, and always take appropriate action, incentivise the visitor to come back. Sometimes complaints can be 'I didn't know it would take me so long to get round the exhibition, I had to leave'… So, they get a free ticket to come back or whatever. Or sometimes people aren't happy if there is, like, a school group in or something, and their visit wasn't as quiet as they would have liked. I like to incentivise people with good feedback as well; send them something. These days everyone is a critic. So, everybody can get on TripAdvisor, Twitter, all these kind of things. So, we have incorporated that into staff training, and we're making them aware of it and saying it might not be that it just comes to us, and we deal with it. It's out there for everyone to see. But we do respond to things on TripAdvisor as we see them, and also on Twitter as well… We've got a digital media team that monitor that sort of thing. We will still endeavour to get back to the visitor, try and get them back, make sure they do leave satisfied at the end.

Interview at the Scottish National Gallery with an NGS Gallery Attendant, on Tuesday the 30th of October 2012

XC: Xavier Contier, interviewer; GA: Gallery Attendant, interviewee.

XC -If you could tell me first of all about your role and responsibilities?

GA -My role in the gallery is just an SVS attendant, which is just to look after the collection whilst I'm working here, basically provide security and, you know, being vigilant towards the public, making sure everyone's, you know, doing what they should be doing or more importantly shouldn't be doing some things. Um, but recently we've certainly been trained and told to move towards customer services and visitor services rather than just being a security personnel. So, we are, you know, being told about sort of various… You have to improvise, amongst other things, you know, sort of try to promote different exhibitions and galleries and things like that.

XC -Okay, you mentioned training there. What kind of training did you…?

GA -Um, we did… it was maybe one or two weeks into the job, we had a training day which was everyone across all galleries, and it was a full day of customer service training. So, that was how to address people or how to, um, you know, try…potentially to tell them off if they were doing something wrong, and not to put them in too bad a mood. You have to say it in a way that will keep them happy and understanding you're only doing your role and not… You aren't targeting them or anything like that.

XC -Could you give me a sort of example of the kind of language maybe you would use?

GA -Um, just, we were told not to use negative language. So, for example, rather than say 'you can't carry your rucksack', you say 'can you please carry your rucksack by hand' instead. So, rather than offering a negative then turn that round and make it a positive, but a different instruction.

XC -I see. Um, how long have you been working here?

GA -Um, I think it's four or five months now. Four months, five months, yes.

XC -Okay. So you've come in right after the kind of big changes that have happened.

GA -I think so, yeah. I think, um, a few years ago there certainly was a tendency for it just to be security guards. And there was a stereotype that it was pensioners and, um, people who couldn't really offer any real security service, that were just there as a visible threat. But, um, since Iain Rankin published a novel which…what was it called 'Open Doors'…and that deals with a theft from an Edinburgh art gallery, national gallery, and I think, since then, they've tried to move towards younger people who might offer more sort of physical help in the event of a crisis.

XC -Um, may I ask what your background is?

GA -Um, yeah, I studied English literature, um, at university and then moved to do a post-grad, and moved to Edinburgh. Um, my post-grad was in history of arts, specialising in Renaissance to Enlightenment culture in paintings. Um, and I graduated last November and was looking for a job and managed to find a job early this summer.

XC -A lot of the new gallery attendants seem to have this art background.

GA -Um yeah, I think it's again part of the move towards customer services. Rather than just have people who could offer physical security, you're actually having people who like to engage with the arts and therefore can engage with the public in discussing the arts, but not in a way that seems rehearsed and sort of, you know, just memorised, but in a way, actually, you can actually have a discussion. So, I think it's quite good that we do that because, in the art gallery ourselves, we all discuss things between ourselves, and what are our favourites, and, you know, it's nice to be able to talk like that with the public.

XC -Yes. Um, are there opportunities to work with other departments?

GA -Um, there are opportunities in departments. You can move around and certainly I know there's a lot of people who volunteer in other departments. Um, I don't personally, but I'm looking to get into it. But from what I understand, it's quite… You have to really, really, you know, go for it. It's not a case of, um, they're very easily, um, what's the word… You can't find them very easily in the gallery. You really have to look for them and have to push for them. Um, that can be frustrating sometimes because, you know, there's a lot of us who know we'd work well in certain departments, but it's a case of which one to pick, and then you have to really go for it to get that.

XC -So it's very much self-motivated?

GA -That's, well, that's certainly the impression I feel. Yeah, I haven't been offered, um, any work in another department apart from… I mean that's despite, you know, positive feedback from supervisors and people in other departments who I've just spoken to briefly, um, but not professionally as it were, and, yeah, haven't found anyone offering me anything, as it were.

XC -Would you like to see more opportunity in the organisation for sort of cross-departmental…?

GA -Yeah, I think so. I think there's definitely the position for it. I mean mostly everyone, as you mentioned, has a good strong art history background or is very interested in art, and if we don't seem to capitalise… The education department could easily work with us and we could offer free tours and something, you know. It's a wealth of knowledge that a lot of people have, but aren't really using because no one's asking us to use it other than our own, you know, contacts.

XC -Um, I was going to ask you about, um, expanding the role. You sort of touch upon it there, beyond sort of just simple security.

GA -Well, that's the thing. We are simple security and part of our role is to engage in the art. Certainly, I feel that's the case. Um, I don't think professionally… There are people who don't have an art history background and don't enjoy or necessarily or really care about the art; they just do their job. So, that's fair enough. But there are those, this is the vast majority, who are interested in art and I think it's very important that we, we're all doing our part engaging with the art, engaging with the public to talk about it. Um, certainly there's the chance and the opportunity for us to be trained further or even use our own time to train further if we knew that it would offer more than, just as, you know, chatting with the public. Because that's at the moment all it is. And it doesn't look that official on a CV for future careers. But if there was the opportunity for us, maybe, to take one day a week or one day every two weeks or three weeks to just have a different one of us offering a free tour around the galleries that would be easy. And also it's not just that. We have a lot of people in the galleries speak many languages. So, English is my first language and, unfortunately, it's my only language, um, whereas there are people who have Spanish, and there are Chinese people, and everyone has this… You could easily offer different language tours because there are people with those native languages. It would be very, very useful with a lot of people coming to the gallery… Obviously it's art, so it's easy for them to just observe and look at it. But if it were to be discussed in detail by someone who has a history of art background and speaks the native language, it would be very useful.

XC -Um, is there anything you would change then, apart from this sort of expanding the role?

GA -Um, apart from the uniform I'm not sure.

XC -The uniform?

GA -Yeah, the uniform. It's okay but it's just a little… I don't know. It's okay, I don't mind it.

XC -Is it the uniform itself or is it the idea of the uniform…?

GA -I think it's the idea of the uniform. Um, it's obviously very useful in that it's an easy marker for the public to spot us and ask for help should they need it, um, but it's just I don't know, I don't mind the uniform really. I wouldn't mind wearing something different, but I think I'd prefer to have something a bit more, not anonymous but a bit less obvious.

XC -Um, is the job difficult?

GA -No. Not at all.

XC -Can it be quite boring?

GA -It can be quite boring yeah. It can be very tedious sometimes and it depends obviously. We move around quite a lot in the galleries so some days we're on the front doors. Yesterday I was on the front door, but today I've been in one of the rooms at the back. I know yesterday was quite busy for me because I was always speaking to people, answering questions. Whereas today I'll be in a much quieter room and I'll have to stay in that room without any, you know, sort of entertainment. I can't read, can't use my phone, can't do these things. Um, and yeah, it can drag on. You find yourself trying to talk to the public about the art. Sometimes people don't want to engage. Well, obviously that's fine but you've got to sort of sit around. So.

XC -How do you approach the public? Is it always the public come to you or sometimes do you…?

GA -More often than not, the public will come to me. But there are some times you can see people, you can see people looking at something and having a think and you're not sure, they may look confused or perhaps they will call over a friend of theirs and ask them a question about the art. So, if you're looking at, say, a Rembrandt and they'll say 'blah blah' ask questions about where he was from or something like that or what you think of it, and then obviously it's a very quiet gallery, and if two people are talking, it's almost impossible not to overhear, as it were. And, you know, it's not uncommon for people to say, um, 'I overheard you saying, asking questions about this and', you know,… If you know the answer of course then you can help, but sometimes you can't.

XC -One last question on sort of the relationship with management, is it good, are there opportunities for feedback?

GA -Yeah, I think it is quite good. There's obviously, um… Just general feedback is very informal, um, but it's always readily available. If someone's doing something wrong, it's not long before they find out about it. Um, if the managers aren't happy, um, from any level right from the head of security and visitor services right down to just our supervisors, um, if someone's, you know, arriving a bit too late or something, they're very quickly called up on it. Um, by the same token, if

someone's doing well then they'll just, um, if you pass them in a corridor or if they walk through your gallery, then they'll say 'oh I heard about whatever, it was a good job' or things like that. So it goes both ways, but I think it's good yeah.

Interview at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery with Robin Baillie, Senior Outreach Officer at the National Galleries of Scotland, on Tuesday the 30th of October 2012

XC: Xavier Contier, interviewer; RB: Robin Baillie, interviewee.

XC -Um, how are things getting on with… the Nation Live?

RB -Well we're about, let's say, about half way through. Um, there's five strands to it. Our culmination is next October with an exhibition in that space there. So that will be a film-theatre for us. So, the film that is going to encapsulate all five projects will be projected in there. We'll have some other objects up at this far end, some of the original works that are inspiring the…from the collections, inspiring the different parts of the project. And some of the new artwork that has been created in response. So, we've finished, to most purposes, in Clydebank with the Work section. You were there that night…although we've got a wee local exhibition coming up for that in December in a library in Clydebank; it's called Dalmuir Library. We wanted to be in the new… which has just been redeveloped…museum and town hall but they've been unable to find a space for us, sadly. So there will be a chance to present some of the…hopefully the drama, the film and some photographs and some of the objects. That one that was made by the apprentices, the metal ship section, the SS Jimmy Reid. So…and the Union project has been going on since June up in…mostly in Fort George, which is owned by Historic Scotland. It's also the base for the Black Watch. So, we, um, centred ourselves there in a partnership with Historic Scotland and we ran a set of workshops and that was the foundry, the mobile foundry led by Kevin Reid the artist, and we enlisted students from the University of the Highlands and Islands who were history students at College from the surrounding area, so from sort of Elgin, Inverness…, um, some soldiers, four soldiers and, um, some veterans, a couple of veterans, ex-army, one was ex-military police…and we've also worked with a school group. We've still got one session to go which is, next week in fact, and is at, two weeks' time sorry, the Scottish Sculpture Workshop in Lumsden, Aberdeenshire…The basic idea from Kevin was that in response to this idea of the…well the medals are on display upstairs, there's Jacobite and Hanovarian medals on display upstairs from an exhibition called Imagining Power, the Visual Culture of the Jacobite Cause… So, we took them as the inspirational object and… So, people have been making their own medals based on their own identities and their own sense of their own identities. So, some of them are quite personal. Some of them are more family

oriented. Some of them are about love and the bonds with people. And others are about previous occupations that people have had. So, we try to undercut the sort of, I suppose, idea of a defining yes or no to a union between two countries and to see how people actually felt that they would represent themselves given the choice in that kind of medal form. So, that's been quite interesting. And we had a big open day up there during the, um, a day called Celebrating the Centuries which is a big, supposedly six thousand people attend over a couple of days, where…there's lots of…re-enactors from all different periods. So, we were there that day doing a mobile foundry that the public could make little medals in…come up with designs. There's still two strands to complete. We're planning them now. We should be engaged in them in the spring. There's the one in Skye about faith, which is about St Columba converting on Skye…, um, and that should be next April. And, that's based on a mural we've got of St Columba preaching to the Picts. And then the final one is Civil War which is in the south west of Scotland about Covenanting…in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Museums Service…and the countryside ranger… Because there's all these monuments in the hills, graves to people who were caught worshiping in the hills illegally, and executed. And that leaves the fifth project which is an all-over Scotland project and it's led by this folk singer who's collecting songs based on the different themes we've been doing. So, we're going to take him round with us. But he's also going to…we're going to connect with people who have migrated to Scotland in each of these areas and get them to sing about their homeland and then add to that by coming up with a new song about how they see Scotland's future. So, that's kind of like the sort of forward looking bit, from a slightly different perspective, if you like.

XC -Can I pick up on the 'Union' bit? Is that potentially controversial?

RB -Yeah. We didn't intend it to be, to be honest. Because we chose it before the referendum was in play. So, we never intended it to be as controversial as it might now be. Yeah we've been aware of that and we have to steer a careful line. I mean our aim I suppose is to be able to discuss these issues, especially historically because that's… The theme of the project is to be able to probe and investigate historic, crucial events and processes in Scottish history, and to test them against the present day. So, in a way we were amazingly, you know, prescient with some of our choices, particularly that one. So we have been aware of that. But, I suppose we don't speak as the National Galleries on that, on these issues. We invite our participants to frame their own views which will be contrasting. And…But what we've found, I suppose, is that although they've had that debate, we've had a debate, we've also found that there is no sort of, um, simple…the divide that you may assume doesn't necessarily exist in a place like Inverness where a lot of the people, some of the people on our project were actually…are migrants from England who may have had Scottish roots family wise a couple of generations ago, a generation ago, but have moved back to Scotland. Or English people who have just moved to Scotland because they fancied living in that kind of community in the Highlands. So, they, you know… It's not as quite…and they love Scotland. In that way…So…That's what we've been trying to do. We're trying to find, I suppose, individual negotiations of identity that are not maybe easily defined as being 'pro'

or ‘anti’ union. Although, taking into account the fact that…and that’s the discussions we’ve had, especially historically, about how much an impact the union had on people’s identities and the course of their lives.

XC -Do you think the galleries could do more of this?

RB -I think we…The Portrait Gallery has set, and this project is based round the Portrait Gallery’s redevelopment and I think the Portrait Gallery has set itself the task of being relevant. And it has set itself the task of making its collections relevant. And these issues are…active and important to the people of Scotland. And hopefully what we can do is inform. I don’t think any of us would want to propose either yes or no solutions to any of those themes that we’ve got, because, I mean, we’ve got a theme like faith. I mean, is faith finished in Scotland you could say…or, you know, you might have the opposite. You might be looking for a Christian renewal in Scotland, or some other religious renewal in Scotland. And I suppose that’s what we want to test. We want to test how these things happened in the first place, in a Scottish context, and could they happen again. But I suppose the idea is to not be scared of these issues, but to probe them in a critical…and hopefully from both sides of the argument. Some are more difficult than others to do in that respect, and ‘Union’ is possibly quite difficult…This is the thing, we don’t try to promote the answer. We want to see other people struggling or…engaging, facing the difficulty in making these decisions and making it into art. And that’s the other thing, we do have a creative outcome, which is different to people just saying this is what I believe, because in the creative process, hopefully, always there is an element that…the making of an idea into a work of art produces something that plays differently anyway, especially to the audience.

XC -Um, is it fair to say maybe that your team, the outreach team, is leading the way on this?

RB -I wouldn’t want to claim that. I think lots of my colleagues are interested in this and I think the National Galleries itself, and I think the Portrait Gallery is a good example of that. I think we did get up to speed…I think it is a good example of renewing its…offer. And I think the whole tone of the Portrait Gallery has changed by the architecture and by the new interpretation and layout and the content. We, our aim was to get that new experience around Scotland. So, to use the methods that we think are successful that we’ve used in the past in terms of outreach projects, to sell that message and that content. We’ve happened to choose a very…we’ve chosen a time which all these issues have been thrown into quite stark focus because of the political scenario. As I say, I think in pursuit of relevance I think the outreach situation is slightly easier to deal with some of these subjects, although we’ve just had Legacy by Roderick Buchannan on display as well in the gallery, which you could say is even more controversial a theme and did more difficult a theme, you know. So that’s within the gallery, um, and there were events associated with that, public events, educational events. So, I’d like to think that we are always trying to be innovative and to take the… And I think as well, I suppose, the beauty we’ve got is we do try to hand the subjects and the process of our

projects over to the participants. That would, you would hope, always, you know, bring an element of imagination and unexpected, you know, response to whatever we have in the collections. Once again as I say I think we have created a space that we can preserve and manage, that is able to deal with those issues in that space.

XC -Okay. Um, is there maybe a disconnect or apparent disconnect between what you do and other aspects of the galleries, or the galleries generally?

RB -Working outside the actual institutional framework of a building does give us more freedom, in certain respects. We've been able to invent our methodology to some extent, i.e. it's not just based on one aspect…not just based on one exhibition and objects. It's based on a process and that we've…we're able to, I suppose, influence that process more as I say innovatively maybe sometimes than…and to give it a certain amount of autonomy. Now if you are putting things on the walls in a gallery in terms of exhibition practice, it's quite difficult to build that in. I mean, I know a lot of exhibition practices change. I think the National Galleries has changed as well. I think a lot of the new exhibitions are much more interactive. So, they're trying to bring that in. I suppose what you could say is that in terms of relevance, we're always directly looking to engage with a theme that is already relevant to people's lives. So, we're looking for that glue that sticks the gallery's collection to actual issues and communities out there. So,… And we've got such a varied collection, and that's possible. I think maybe it's just not so explicit in…the production of like exhibitions or displays or publications maybe within the gallery context itself. Um, but I think that kind of interpretation is there but it's maybe not leading, you know, the way these things are presented internally. Whereas we're lucky enough to be able to lead with those approaches…I suppose you could say the interrogative approach or a discursive approach, a conversational approach. But I think it is developing, you know. We are looking for feedback much more than ever…and the online resources are starting to develop these interactive, you know, opportunities.

XC -Can I ask you about methodology now? Um, you said you kind of…you are able to invent your own methodology. Could you tell me a little about how you approach new audiences? I imagine it is quite difficult.

RB -It is quite difficult, and you've seen the reality of it, in as much that we make a lot of something that is not…ready and waiting for us…whether that's a failing on our part or not I don't know, but it has to be worked at, all the time. I mean that night you turned up, we were quite pleased with how many people had turned up, but you'd also seen like four students in a room, you know, or what seven… You were lucky to see seven, we ended up with about four that were consistent, you know… The key thing was to get…partners for us, to extend the National Galleries' reach to regions. So we need partners in those regions and we do rely on them to help us produce participants, i.e. in terms of new audiences, that way. And to be honest it does work. They have no magic wand either, but they do have venues for us to operate in, they do have contexts for us to operate in, and they do have exhibitions, sort of like this exhibition in a library in Dalmuir. And, you know, and

they supported our public event you were at, and all the rest. They supported us all the way through. They've been good partners. And that's a local council West Dunbartonshire Council. So that's one way of approaching new audiences. We try to be imaginative in finding groups, like the BAE apprentices, which, you know, wouldn't necessarily fall off the shelf in terms of… You would usually go to a community group or a school or a… So, that was fortunate, you know, that we were able to… So, we try to be imaginative, in that way we will pick up on contacts that are maybe not through the usual channels. It may be word of mouth, it may be just… I mean that came through for us at the Scottish Parliament. You know, it was a special event for the UCS shipbuilders and that group of BAE apprentices were there and we just spoke to them at that point and enlisted them basically, through their manager. But that's the kind of thing that allows us, that's what I'm saying about the innovativeness, it's not rocket science…but it allows us to improvise and to find relevance… And then we found it on the streets of, in the film, you know, you'll see, it's like we just found it in the streets of Clydebank, we found it in the shopping centre. So, we try to be out as well as in workshops. So, we were in that shopping centre quite a lot. The school students were in there, running the stalls for us at certain points. The artist was there. So, we try to be imaginative and fluid and to pick up on interest and to add to interest. We tried a Facebook page there as well. It was called Jimmy Who. So, that… We got quite a lot of hits or likes from the shopping centre's Facebook page. So, there was crossover there. That added about another 150 contacts to the project. So, you know, not a huge amount, but just a spreading, a dissemination of the project and its ideas and the work of art, the Jimmy Reid sculpture, which I say, worked really well in that Clydebank context, I think, you know, the actual object itself and reproduction obviously. But it's a good object, you know. Choosing the object is important… I'll send you an article I wrote for Engage, you know the art gallerist's organ, and it actually was quite useful for me because it made a lot of these things make more sense because I had to prove what we'd done. It was almost like an ability to assess what we'd done…and… Well, the methodology is having an idea, but then hopefully handing that idea over to someone…on the ground, to a participant. Now it's easy to say and there's a lot of pressure on us to get outcomes, results and to make it successful basically on little budgets.

XC -How do you manage?

RB -You force the issue, I'd have to say. But, we… In best practice you would need a lot more time with the people that we work with. Having said that you've seen the problems of keeping people on board, even through like schools. There's drop-off, there's, you know, they've got other things going on. So, we don't…we wouldn't claim to… But, when we do get people to stick, they go through a range of experiences. And that's the learning, that's the development. I think the school children, if you read this thing that I've written and I'll show you our evaluation so far…although even then they're not good at writing down, you know,… but have got…we got them to do a sort of more…post it notes basically…but their thing…some of the experiences they really enjoyed, for example just going round and having to speak to people at the shopping centre. At first, we thought that's the

worst thing you could ask a teenager to do, and the feedback from them at the end was that that was the most powerful experience they had because they'd never, ever spoken to people like that before in their lives. So, this barrier of just like, you know, keeping yourself to yourself and not feeling connected and not feeling able to address anyone in the public. They were able to do that. So, things like that, that you couldn't… we wouldn't have written that down at the start as an outcome. Things like that are all part of it. You know, I suppose, it's an experience that is an attempt, I suppose, to… You're trying to make works of art a catalyst for social experience and social, I suppose, conversation, social, I suppose, collective, um, I wouldn't call it action but collective discussion about a certain theme. There's a theorist called Grant Kester and he's got this idea called dialogic art, and it's basically the kind of things you've been reading up yourself…over the last like twenty years, all the projects that have attempted to base their artistic result on a discursive dialogue that goes beyond like the 'objectness' of the work of art. So, the art is in the conversation around it, sparked by it, or on the way to becoming an artistic statement itself, i.e. the conversation is the art, in that sense. He draws a line between, you know, let's say, the self-defining work of art that is the modernist work on the wall that needs no explanation, and this kind of more critical, back and forward discussion that's collective. And that's the difference he would put. And that's what we try to do. That's what I tried to write about in that article. You're redefining as you go along. You're redefining terms, redefining what art is, you're redefining how art speaks in the gallery and the outside. And, you're asking people to speak, for maybe the first time, on issues that nobody might have asked them to before in a public sense. And you provide them a platform for them in the end to…amplify.

XC -Is there, um, a place for aesthetics in this?

RB -That's a good question, very good. Um, well that is the absolute question I think. Now… because there are different aesthetics obviously. You know, there is the, let's say, institutionally acceptable aesthetics of which one now is conceptual art, you know. So, that would be within the National Galleries' collection. We present material at the modern galleries which is difficult and probably not very popular and not very well understood and not very well enjoyed by quite a very large section of the public. On the other hand there's a lot of people who are really impressed by it and who are really into it. So, yeah, aesthetics is important but I suppose we…what we try to do is make that discussion accessible, straight away, that that is what's at stake, that aesthetics are at stake and they are at stake in terms of their definition. How much of aesthetics is social? Taste, and the reasons for that taste, the formulation of that taste, i.e. it's not innate to any object or it's in its reception. So, it's up to, and that's why we start with interpreting these works of art that we take out like the Jimmy Reid sculpture… The first line in the article is like, the man who was his mate, former shop steward, used to say it was shite, it doesn't look like him, it's not him, it's shite. So his aesthetic understanding of a portrait and, let's say, an identity and a person conveyed by a portrait was not satisfied by that original object. So, I think that's quite important that… And I think we're quite prepared to deal with that head on…that, you know, the work of art is not defining

of any of these issues. It points towards them, it's a sign but it won't define them. And it never defined Jimmy Reid, for that man. You know, so he could take it or leave it, in that sense. And every time we brought it out, he'd say not that again because it didn't do it for him, you know.

XC -How important is it for, um, this work that you do to sort of come back to the galleries.

RB -I'd say it's proved to be vital over the years. It's not essential, it's not absolutely necessary. Ultimately, we could do the work outside, have local exhibitions. That we do anyway, try to do both, always. But when it comes back in, it rightfully impresses the people who have taken part, on their own terms I would hope, in as much as they… Whether you agree with how national institutions are set up or whatever, they do feel that for once they are being represented in that institution… and I think that sense of ownership is vital to what we do, and rightly so. If we have a platform here to present not just the art of Scotland, but the art of Scotland that reflects the people of Scotland, we need to activate that power that this place has got for groups that may not feel they've ever been asked to use that before. So, it's to represent people in the sort of truest sense of a democracy… It's not that many people, it's not everybody but then the exhibition, maybe, can make it feel like it is everybody getting a chance, because we often get a really good reaction from the audience, because they see that it's people who are not professional artists, who are not…don't have any higher status than the next person.

XC -Um, this space is not the main gallery space. Can that been frustrating?

RB -Well, I'll take any space. I mean you can adapt, you can adapt. We've been lucky at times to be right in, for example, in one of the key rooms, post-impressionist room in the Scottish National Gallery, which the Director Michael Clarke was perfectly happy for us to be right next to one of the key works we had chosen which was the Seurat landscape. We did it in Wester Hailes, and we were able to have a video right next to the art in a room where it probably hadn't seen any intervention since it was created in eighteen fifty whatever. So, the National Galleries itself has realised the value of, at times, doing that. It's maybe not as often as it could be. It's maybe not as… There's still a lot more potential to do things like that in the National Galleries, cross, you know, cutting interventions in what are seen to be traditional gallery spaces, I think. There's been quite a lot of performance work and things like that. Dance, you know, recently, GMA particularly, but also in the National Gallery. A lot of my colleagues have done things that are much, you know… Musical performance, acting, you name it. So, you know, there is quite a lot that goes on but, I think, the National Galleries has recognised that, how powerful that can be…you know, to intersperse, let's say interactive pieces with, and pieces from its holdings.

XC -Do you feel it's changing, that there's a momentum…?

RB -Yeah. I think it has changed enormously since I first started, which was in 2001. So, I think we had a crest of a wave over the last…which was I suppose the whole idea of museums as learning institutions and museums as being more accessible. The whole, you know, desire to make museums as successful as possible. I think we've benefited from that… I think the Portrait Gallery is a great example of that… It's a perfect example of a central HLF sort of project that works, I think. So far the figures have gone up. I think we are moving in the right direction. I think we continue to probe new ways. New media is obviously becoming more important by the day. Um, so I think we're interested in that as well. I don't think any of these things are magic solutions for reaching a lot of people quickly or a lot of people consistently, because it's not easy. Young people are always difficult. It's difficult for us to have this national coverage, in relation to the funding, you know, the limited funding that we've got, etcetera. But, I think what we have proved, and that the National Galleries is very proud of and I know the Director-General I think is as well, that outreach, and the education, but outreach has been very consistent in achieving like high quality outcomes from the means it has at its disposal. And I think he's very proud of the stuff we do and he uses it, you know. He will promote that at the level, you know, governmentally and in terms of stakeholders, etcetera. I mean, the climate's obviously changed in terms of, financially, changed dramatically. So, even less for more, so to speak. Sorry, more for less. But…. It would be good to see long-term sustainable relationships continued if at all possible. That is difficult. Project work is the bane of all museum gallery education, I would say, i.e. long-term projects are rarer, much rarer, and the funding has not really favoured them over the years. That's maybe changing to some extent. Creative Scotland has obviously changed its role quite dramatically. So, things are changing but that is something, you know, still, we would like to achieve - a sort of long-term ongoing project that is not just inspired by one particular…

XC -Yes, I imagine it's difficult to revisit, um, previous things?

RB -Well. Yeah, I mean we're in an exhibitional institution and, in that sense, you do have to renew, and that's exciting as well. I suppose what we'd like to do… We've got an idea for the future that we're hopefully going to be able to try and revisit as many of our previous partners who want to be involved in this new idea as possible, and to have some kind of ongoing network if they can support it as well. We would need their confidence and their buy-in to such an idea that they would be prepared to support a regional, on an ongoing basis, a regional pod, so to speak.

XC -Um, can I ask how long you have been working here?

RB -That would be about 11 years.

XC -Okay, so you were working under New Labour. Have you spotted any kind of…is there any shift from....policy-wise?

RB -Well, I'd have to say no. Not dramatically. Not in Scotland, at least. There's not been a dramatic shift in policy. I think the same thrust of accessibility,

participation, the educational power of what we're tasked to do is right at the forefront still. There may be more stress on certain thematic aspects of that, obviously to do with Scottish culture and historical experience… Um, language is something that we're interested in for the future as well. Scottish language, Gaelic, obviously, in the future. So, I think there's certain, some policy emphases in relation to particular cultural aspects like I've just described, but I think the general idea that museums and galleries should be doing their utmost to, um, engage as wide a possible audience as they can with their collections is still what policy is, I think. The idea of making more sustainable, in terms of income, income generating, possibly, but that has not prevented anything happening so far. But that's obviously a desire. If services can be made to generate income that that isn't a bad thing. I mean some of our colleagues do. I mean, obviously they sell tickets for events, you know. There's free events and there's paying events. And our area, obviously, in outreach, has been seen to be maybe more of a service, in that sense, rather than an income generating…at the moment, but we may be able to add little aspects to it that are of some return. But…it wouldn't be at the forefront of our thoughts. And there's certain projects that have been promoted quite strongly by the government. I mean when we were doing the prisons work, that was seen to be very much, um,…Very positive response from the Scottish Government to that, with their policy of rehabilitation. Um, and this investigation into the history, I think, is something that they would be very supportive of, as well, I would hope.