Intra-vulnerabilities:
An artistic strategy for co-creating culture and policy with communities, funders and artists

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Abstract

Funding arts and cultural activity for socially and economically vulnerable communities in the UK carries a deeply embedded practice of culture as compensation. With a tendency to measure the success of these activities through models of impact constructed by funders, such cultural programmes can omit community knowledge and subsequently further their marginalisation.

This thesis investigates whether and how funders, artists, and communities can disrupt these one-sided instrumental approaches, by working together towards co-creating culture and policy. It does so specifically through artistic practice as research (PaR)- interrogating a participatory, transdisciplinary installation practice as a productive site for embodying new relationships between those giving and those receiving. As funders, artists and communities performatively shift between expertise and learning, the thesis proposes that the interdependence of their respective sets of knowledge enacts a more equitable policy process for cultural programming in service of a spectrum of socio-economic, creative and aesthetic needs.

Underpinned by Karen Barad's 'intra-active agential realism,' the thesis develops a concept of 'intra-vulnerabilities', whereby vulnerability is a positive term, extending beyond its usual placement within marginalised communities to include a range of differentiated, circumstantial vulnerabilities amongst funders and artists. As all three parties participate in five iterative PaR projects, vulnerabilities manifest in personal reflection, listening, dialogue, acts of art-making and recognition of a 'mutual entailment' in social inequities. Integrating Rosalyn Diprose's reframing of generosity as a multi-directional landscape of giving, the concept of intra-vulnerabilities (as generated specifically within artistic practice) manifests a valuable interdependence between nuanced and changing vulnerabilities across the provision spectrum that can not only inform but enact policy.

Developed in collaboration with Hammersmith United Charities, a 400 year-old housing and community grants giving organisation, the PaR projects ultimately inform and produce an artistic strategy for co-creating culture and policy.

An online portfolio of the practice manifests in tandem with the writing, supporting the thesis' contribution to new knowledge in asserting artistic practice as a key component for artistic policy: https://www.carolyndefrin.com/onlineportfolio . This online portfolio is additionally submitted on a DVD to accompany the written thesis.

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Abbreviations

HUC- Hammersmith United Charities
AOB- Area of Benefit
RTF- Remembering the Future
PaR- Practice as Research
PRH- Project Row Houses
AiR- Artist in Residence

Key terms

Intra-activity
Relational aesthetics
Dialogic aesthetics
Transdisciplinary aesthetics
Cultural democracy
Democratised culture
Co-creation
    Co-presence
    Co-production
    Co-ownership

List of research collaborators[1]

Hammersmith United Charities
Melanie, former Director of Community Partnerships and Grants Manager
Tim, former Chief Executive and Clerk to the trustees
Nora, Administrator
Cathy, former housing scheme manager
Jill, former housing scheme manager
Eniyal, finance manager
John, former trustee
Mike, former chair of the trustees
Julian, former trustee
Sian, trustee
Sam, trustee
Ben, trustee
Adam, trustee
Bryan, resident
Dinesh, resident
Elsie, resident
Kate, resident
Clodagh, resident
Bob, resident
Peggy, resident
Colin, resident
Del, resident
Agnes, resident

Wider area beneficiaries and participants in PaR projects
Liban, Director of LIDO foundation
Sagal, local resident
Emma, local resident
James, local resident
Rayan, local student
Howard, local artist
Mariana, local artist
Revell, local artist
Kate, local artist
Daniela, local artist
Ryszard, local artist
Shirley, Head of development, Shepherds Bush Housing Group
Miku, local student
Nick, local resident

[1] Collaborators are listed by first name only to protect a level of identity, to reiterate the value of the personal and to respect how the research must be credited by name and not only position in an effort to resist presumptions of where knowledge lies.

Asia, local student
Ron, local business director, Stanhope
Azelle, local resident
Clea, local resident
Daisy, local resident
Toni, local resident
Lucy, local resident
Elizabeth, local resident
Mila, local resident
Kune, local resident
Labake, local resident
Darren, local resident
Sara, local student
Dylan, local student
Abrahim, local student

Artistic Collaborators
Winstan, filmmaker and editor
Paul, scenic and video designer
Matshidiso, composer
Yohei, sound engineer
Elisicia, Director of Petit Miracles
Iyoub, Artistic associate, Petit Miracles
Irene, Levitt Bernstein Architects
Tom, Levitt Bernstein Architects

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Vulnerability is not a weakness,
a passing indisposition,
or something we can arrange to do without,
vulnerability is not a choice,
vulnerability is the underlying, ever present and abiding undercurrent of our natural state.

To run from vulnerability is to run from the essence of our nature,
the attempt to be invulnerable is the vain attempt to become something we are not
and most especially, to close off our understanding of the grief of others…

-David Whyte

Introductions

This thesis challenges arts and cultural funding policies for vulnerable communities that have been based on a fixed model of class and race in society. It does so specifically through artistic Practice as Research (PaR), interrogating the ways in which the arts can bring funders, trustees and local communities together to differently understand who holds knowledge about who, how and what to fund. Through artistic activities, events and processes that invite a range of engagement and participation, the thesis reflexively argues art practice as a space for emotional affect, listening and dialogue. Within these actual and metaphoric spaces, communities can be repositioned as central experts of their own experiences, and service providers (inclusive of funders and artists) can be repositioned with recognition for the ways in which they may not have all the answers. This is a vulnerable approach to service provision. An approach that unfolds how organisational, expressive and playful aspects of artistic practice can open up new understandings of beneficiaries who face socio-economic vulnerabilities as well as new understandings of funders (and artists) who face vulnerabilities tied to leadership and power dilemmas. Within this examination, a concept of intra-vulnerabilities develops as a way to view the inter-connectedness between art, communities and funders. Ultimately, the thesis asks how this methodology holds potential for achieving more equitable relationships between those funding and those being funded in order to provide the most relevant services to meet peoples' needs.

This research was commissioned by 400-year-old housing and community grants giving body, Hammersmith United Charities (HUC). The funders and trustees wanted to know if and how they should support arts activities for vulnerable communities. As such, the research quickly encountered problems that have manifested in wider UK arts funding policies, particularly in relation to community contexts. With a mission to provide 'relief to need,' the charity funds activities in response to local communities facing socio-economic distress. Framing need in relation to what is lacking –be it tangible bricks and mortar housing, or intangible critical life qualities such as a sense of belonging or confidence– the charity then measures the success of funding with quantitative and qualitative data around how and when that lack is filled (HUC). This deficit model approach is problematic as ideas about remedy can be limited to funders' perspectives. Applying such thinking to arts funding, with the

parameters of cultural value and its measure determined by those in the position of giving, can dismiss pre-existing culture in socio-economically excluded communities contributing to what Boaventura de Sousa Santos names 'epistemicide' – the killing of others' knowledge (2007). As such, a double helix transpires where notions of 'giving' complicate with 'taking.' Giving culture, as determined by the giver, can simultaneously take away culture, as defined by the recipient, which then perpetuates the unequal power relations between officers and trustees of the charity and the beneficiaries.

The terms art and culture are used fluidly throughout this thesis, aligning with the way these terms have opened up to each other in Britain's funding landscape, particularly with the contributions of the Heritage Lottery Fund who are committed to 'explore, save and celebrate the traditions, customs, skills and knowledge of different communities' (Heritage Fund). This is also exemplified by Arts Council England (ACE), having evolved definitions of their support of 'music and the arts' in 1945 to 'culture and creativity' in 2020. Expanding understandings of what comprises art, along with who, and how people engage, points to an awareness for how funders aim to serve, support and better reflect the diversity of arts and cultural interests and histories that comprise the UK (Crossick & Kaszynska, 2015).

This expanded definition of art in relation to culture connects to the research context in terms of how a diversity of needs can be understood. Within policy for charitable contexts and HUC in particular, identifying how and what needs are funded often comes predominantly, if not exclusively, from funders' perspectives and as such may omit critical beneficiary knowledge. This is not to discount the experience and awareness that funders hold about how to identify and serve communities in socio-economic distress, but to point out what may be missing in these methods. The thesis will examine funder preconceptions of beneficiary needs specifically in relation to beneficiaries' perspectives (through artistic practice) and subsequently open up understandings of a spectrum of needs in relation to making meaningful impact that is social, creative and aesthetic.

Arts funding often gets cut in crises of needs. Completing this research at the height of the CoVid 19 pandemic lends a specific example. Art, of course, does not tend to need in the same way as medicine. But,

> After taking stock of whether we have enough toilet paper, groceries and medical supplies, our next instinct is to seek comfort –And we always find that comfort in the arts. In our most dire hours, art keeps us sane, lights the dark and ensures we stay human (Law, 2020).

As the charity commissioned this research with both a curiosity and scepticism for funding art, they held a related complexity as a funding body that provides 'high quality sheltered accommodation for low-income older people' (HUC). This affordable housing scheme which serves a basic need of shelter, includes and prides itself on how this basic need is 'high quality' by design, including lush gardens at the heart of each of its two housing developments that are tended by a full-time gardener. The charity and wider arts funding field at times play into Maslow's hierarchy of needs,[2] that, as Law points out above, prioritises medicine and toilet paper before comfort. But, at times these moments are far more intertwined, as the charity demonstrates in providing a basic need that is simultaneously aesthetic.

The thesis embraces this complex entangling of socio-economic-aesthetic needs. As such, it aims to transcend binary debates over art as utility *or* art for art's sake. In the research, art becomes a strategy for understanding what is needed to live *and* what is needed to live for. For example artistic activities illuminate a need for local, affordable grocery stores that are being torn down in order to build expensive flats, and two of the five PaR projects focus on how artistic expression gives insight into affordable housing design. At other times, artistic practice reveals how art provides us with what we need to live for. One PaR project examines personal aesthetics important to everyday living and another looks at how new artistic commissions could contribute in a range of ways to the well-being of people and their local area.

As the thesis explores the value of art in relation to a spectrum of interacting needs, the artistic practice demonstrates a hybrid that engages a range of contexts, recognising the ways in which art can illuminate how to feed the body as much as the soul and where these may at times be one and the same.

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[2] 'Maslow's well-known hierarchy of needs, which places self-actualisation at the summit of a pyramid that begins with physiological needs, has misled many into believing that people turn to art only once other, apparently more important, needs are satisfied. The care people put into their clothes is a simple illustration of the false-ness of this idea of an orderly progression. Culture is created in the ways we meet our needs, not as a leisure activity on the day of rest' (Matarasso, 2019, p. 83).

This hybrid is supported by my position as both artist and researcher, straddling and facilitating different kinds of knowledge between the university, the charity, the local communities they serve and the arts industry. Combining my experiences as an artist, researcher and facilitator, the practice, theory and communications with different beneficiaries work on one another to produce a range of insights into differentiated needs. Held in productive tension, these different streams of knowledge push and pull at one another, at times compromising agendas to serve a common denominator, and at times catalysing the visibility of problems that must be addressed. Ultimately, these tensions are argued for their strength and productivity in highlighting a way to more experientially understand outcomes of artistic practice which are often deemed problematic for being elusive. In other words, the complex and at times messy intertwining of different sets of knowledge, leaves a more visible mark because it has more places to be seen and more people who can see it from different angles.

As the thesis is ultimately concerned with relationships between funders, communities and artists, it emphasises and argues the value of the personal. Practitioner and academic James Thompson supports this value especially in contexts of caring for communities. He takes forward Bourriard's 'angelic programme' (2002, p. 36) 'where the intimate and interpersonal, rather than be ignored, are acknowledged as an important source of our politics' (2015, p. 432). This connects specifically with an artistic PaR methodology. As a performance and visual artist, my approach to the research begins with the same approach I take when starting new artistic work. Trained initially as a performer, my first questions are about a way in: how can I relate to the subject matter? If I am going to create a theatre production, a poem or a video installation, what is my connection to the content?

With the charity's initial questions about if and how they should fund arts activities, I extended my approach, asking staff and trustees questions about their respective views on art for the charity and for themselves. What kinds of art and culture held meaning in their own lives? When had art offered relief to their needs?

Their answers revealed a discrepancy between what they viewed as meaningful artistic activity for themselves, and what kinds of artistic activity they thought should be funded for their beneficiaries. The former was accompanied by an opening up to meaning-making between self and art; the latter came with queries attached to value, impact and measurement

that evidenced a conundrum of speaking to art's value within an institutional structure. As the former secretary of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport recognized at the height of the UK's instrumentalist arts funding policies:

> The arts 'require no justification other than their innate ability to move us, to excite us, and to enhance our lives'. But, he went on, 'I have to confess that it is easier to say that outside government than it is inside'(Smith, 2003 cited in Hewison, 2013, 49%).

This thesis comprises five works of art I developed in response to this conundrum. Five works of art that invited the charity's staff, trustees and beneficiaries to participate in artistic practice as a way to disrupt the usual ways of thinking about value. Rather than seek out traditional inquiries by way of questionnaires and surveys, these five works examine the possibilities of how to think about value differently through artistic experience– and through experience that is specifically in relationship with its intended recipients. If the staff and trustees understood art for themselves because of their own lived experiences, perhaps they would have a better understanding of what art to fund for their beneficiaries if they experienced art *with* their beneficiaries, rather than learning from a distance, filtered only through a written report.

What develops in the practice is an interconnected set of knowledge between the charity's staff, trustees, beneficiaries and collaborating artists (including myself). To emphasise the value of these relationships and their importance in the developing concept of intra-vulnerabilities, the thesis deliberately employs first names. Calling all participants in the research by their first name aims to dimensionalise people over position and challenge hierarchies that can diminish, or presume where knowledge sits. Melanie Nock, the charity's Director of Community Partnerships, grants manager and my supervisor at the charity, and Tim Hughes, the former chief executive, are both formative collaborators in the research and have agreed to their full names being used. There are other collaborating artists who have also agreed to their full names being used. Most participants in the practice have agreed to their first names being used. Taking into account the ethical necessity to protect identities, surnames are not disclosed. For those who did not wish their names to be used at all, I refer to them more discreetly by their position and aim to stay mindful of these limitations. All participants in the research are introduced first by their position on the provision spectrum,

but then referred to primarily by their first name where appropriate[3]. There are times where understanding position is important to the learning of the research, and other times where moving beyond it becomes more important.

Additionally, as I move between my artist and researcher selves, I will move between the first and third person as a way to signify engagement and reflexivity with the personal. This will become productively blurry at times.

0.1 How to read the thesis with the PaR

Addressing the limitations of qualitative and quantitative reporting that dominates the cultural policy landscape, this thesis makes the argument that artistic practice offers a capacity for new relationships between communities and policy makers. Rendering these relationships in artistic processes (be it through processes of making, the artworks themselves, or reflections provoked in response) illuminates how the PaR can not only inform but also enact policy. Whether this is through a carefully constructed audio-visual installation featuring beneficiary interviews expressively video-mapped to architectural models as a method for imagining affordable housing design, or a series of video portraits of beneficiaries and benefactors sharing their ideas for local art commissions, the PaR illustrates how the charity can iterate its policies not only in terms for what kind of art it decides to fund, but also for how it engages in such decision-making processes. Elucidating different ways the charity comes into knowledge with its beneficiaries, each PaR project concretises where and with whom knowledge lies. As such, the following written document is submitted with a portfolio of practice that can be experienced online at: https://www.carolyndefrin.com/onlineportfolio or in the accompanying DVD.

Hyperlinks to the online portfolio are integrated throughout the thesis, along with documented images embedded with the written text. As video installation is the primary medium, the online portfolio is both the practice and the documentation of it.

This portfolio was initially intended as a live exhibition that would remount elements of the practice, but due to CoVid 19, has been moved online. As such, where the online portfolio

[3] A list of all participant names and positions is also available on pp. 8-9 for reference throughout the thesis

functions as documentation, it delineates what may be missing and/or how the ephemerality of its original live contexts carries different meaning online. However, the online portfolio now facilitates the practice to be experienced beyond the research context and intends that its contributions online and in DVD format hold space to exemplify how practice and theory are intrinsic to policy. In both the PaR and its theoretical analysis, the portfolio contributes new knowledge for the ways in which arts funding policy can expand its understandings of language to include artistic practice. Noting how processes for making art, the artworks themselves and reflections about the artworks articulates co-created knowledge between funder, community and artists, the thesis concludes with a recommendation for a national archive of such practices that have informed and continue to inform and enact policy.

0.2 Reframing Vulnerability; Disrupting Deficit Models

The thesis begins with an acknowledgement of the problematic inequities embedded within philanthropic philosophies at the heart of institutions such as HUC. Guided by charitable law to provide services for those who are socially and economically marginalised, there is a one-directional relationship from trustee to beneficiary that is inscribed in the charity's actions. This trajectory is complicated by long-standing ideas of what relief looks like. When interviewed for her position as the inaugural community grants manager in 2012, Melanie shared that she was asked whether she believed in a 'leg up' or a 'hand out' model. Such residual notions of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor evidenced trustee preconceptions of self-sufficiency (2015).

Rosalyn Diprose (2002) and Elodie Boublil (2018) connect this one-directional philanthropy to a problematic asymmetry in Emannuel Levinas' philosophy of the 'face-to-face encounter.' Within the call to help others with less means, there is an asymmetry that can manifest as problematic when ideas of self-mastery or sufficiency are imposed by one over the other (Boublil, 2018). When there is a lack of consideration for others' knowledge in this set-up, this asymmetry perpetuates marginalisation and exclusion– the very thing the charity aims to address.

Diprose proposes a 'radical reversal of this asymmetry.' A giving that *gives way* for knowledge to be co-created through an informing by the beneficiary, rather than a reforming by the giver (2002). Such movement from reform to inform suggests a multi-directional landscape of giving – one that can facilitate a return of knowledge that has long been dismissed (Dussel, 1998 cited in Mignolo, 2002). This return, as Dussel suggests, does not omit or attempt to replace top-down knowledge systems, but rather suggests working *with* as a way to open space for what is and has been missing (ibid).

With regards to cultural knowledge, Boaventura de Sousa Santos offers a relevant concept of 'diatopical hermeneutics' which recognises that no one culture can offer a complete view of culture for all (2002). Because there is a plurality of cultures, there has to be a recognition that there are many differentiated practices and that these cultural practices can open up to each other, rather than dismiss one another.

> The objective of diatopical hermeneutics is, therefore, not to achieve completeness—that being an unachievable goal—but, on the contrary, to raise the consciousness of reciprocal incompleteness to its possible maximum by engaging in the dialogue, as it were, with one foot in one culture and the other in another (2002, p. 48).

de Sousa Santos also raises the point that while cultures work together towards incompleteness, this could be easier for a dominant culture. Thus, there must be a respect by the dominant culture (in this case the charity) to see marginalised cultures as 'pronounceable' before they enter a relationship of mutual striving for 'incompleteness.'

> Cultural imperialism and epistemicide are part of the historical trajectory of Western modernity. After centuries of unequal cultural exchanges, is equal treatment of cultures fair? Is it necessary to render some aspirations of Western culture unpronounceable in order to make room for the pronounceability of other aspirations of other cultures? (ibid., p. 54).

I draw on de Sousa Santos' focus on equity for marginalised cultures as it relates to the charity's area of benefit (AOB). Hammersmith, a borough in West London, is what performance ethnographer Dwight Conquergood names a 'globablised local context': '…a postcolonial world crisscrossed by transnational narratives, diaspora affiliations, and, especially, the movement and multiple migrations of people, sometimes voluntary, but often economically propelled and politically coerced' (2002, p. 151). There are many cultures that

have rich, but circumstantially vulnerable histories. As such, how does the charity open up space for their pronounceability before, or as it explores integration?

Diprose highlights that opening up to such pronounceability disturbs a cultural constitution and requires an admittance that what was thought to be whole, no longer is. She offers that processes for understanding other cultures are not just about distilling each one down to what they have in common, but rather opening up, widening out and viewing the differences as equitable (2002, pp. 168-9).

This opening up to marginalised cultural knowledge is not a quick or easy process. It requires vulnerability on the part of the giver: a giving in to not knowing, a giving in to listening and potentially enduring discomfort and failure as processes shift and change (ibid). Gemma Corradi Fiumara notes the act of listening as a particularly critical vulnerable act: the 'long-suppressed role of listening as a creative practice' is difficult for Western cultures who are more used to 'speaking, moulding, informing'" (1990, cited in Kester, 2004, p. 107). Diprose likens such processes for unmoulding and remoulding to a feeling of being out at sea- where one might either ride the waves of change, or be blown apart by the winds and revert to a more stable, familiar shore (2002, p. 166).

These complexities around giving and taking culture are evidenced in the wider arts funding policy landscape in the UK. Since the inauguration of nationally funded schemes following the second world war, funders, artists and communities have grappled with similar movements between one-way reform and attempts towards multi-directional informing. This is encapsulated in the nuanced evolutions and revolutions between democratised culture and cultural democracy. Within the former, the few decide on the standards of art for the many, the latter, however aims to co-create wider and more representative notions of culture as they exist and want to exist in Britain's diverse demographic makeup (64 Million Artists, ACE 2018; Wilson, Gross & Bull, 2017).

Democratised culture carries the same deficit model thinking that the charity has exhibited: a view that giving culture is about filling a void and doing so according to those who most likely do not represent or do not completely know the cultural needs of those on the receiving end. It runs into de Sousa Santos' problematics in imposing a view of complete culture; whereas cultural democracy aligns more with his aspirational working towards incomplete

culture. Cultural democracy works from a philosophy of 'capacity' and 'exchange'- that every individual already has artistic, creative or cultural capacity and once realised/supported[4], contributes to a more diverse cultural makeup (Wilson, Gross & Bull, 2017, p. 5). Within this new approach, attention moves from widening access to predetermined notions of culture, towards a widening of who and how culture is made; thus introducing the notion that culture can be co-created by constituents.

But the capacity for cultural democracy to embed itself deeply enough in funding policies is continuously wrought with the comforts and familiarities that come in holding the reign of a complete, democratised culture. It requires vulnerability to let go.

As this thesis examines a reframing of giving culture, it simultaneously explores a reframing of vulnerability (specifically through artistic practice.) Like the one-directional nature of philanthropy, the concept of vulnerability within the charity context functions in a one-way progression from vulnerability to invulnerability. The charity ultimately aims to relieve the vulnerabilities their beneficiaries face in relation to economic and social hardships. In this light, vulnerability is perceived as an experience to eliminate.

Erinn Gilson proposes reframing vulnerability from a negative state of 'weakness, dependency, powerlessness, deficiency and passivity' to a positively productive state for fostering interdependencies between giver and receiver. Distinguishing between 'ontological vulnerability,' as 'an unavoidable receptivity, openness, and the ability to affect and be affected,' and 'situational vulnerabilities,' which 'are the specific forms that vulnerability takes in the social world of which we have a differential experience because we are differently situated' (Gilson, 2014 cited in Boublil, 2016, p. 184), she offers an understanding that these differentiated vulnerabilities are interconnected. And Boublil queries how we can think about 'vulnerability and interdependence' at once (ibid).

The potential for this vulnerable interdependency first manifests in the charity's trustees' expressions of their own relationships to art. Here, they exposed an affected personal connection to the research. But without naively proclaiming the trustee's vulnerabilities as

[4] Though this concept is not without its faults in considering how this process of realization unfolds. As such it will be interrogated throughout the thesis.

similar to the beneficiaries, or as ones the charity should service, the trustees' demonstration of vulnerability here is noted for the way it marks an entrée into what other vulnerabilities might become valuable for them in processes towards better understanding how to fund arts and culture for the beneficiaries. Opening up to self invites an opening up to other. As researcher Brené Brown proposes, vulnerability can offer a benign and productive relationship to 'risk, uncertainty and emotional exposure' (cited in Schawbel, 2013). As those in the positions of decision-making open up to knowledge from the beneficiaries, a range of vulnerabilities become possible– from acknowledgements by funders that they don't have all the answers, to understandings for how past presumptions of having those answers makes them complicit in furthering social inequities. As such, the thesis expands vulnerability beyond its usual view in charitable contexts as a circumstantial weakness to be eradicated and instead frames it as a space where differentiated states of vulnerability can open up to better service of a range of beneficiary needs.

0.3 Locating vulnerability in Practice as Research

How arts and cultural practices and policies can open up to such productive vulnerabilities is the critical starting point for the thesis and underpins the choice for a practice as research (PaR) methodology. Taking the cue from the charity's responses to my initial questions about personal experiences with art, the thesis embraces a methodology that reframes and integrates vulnerability as a method for opening up to new and different relationships between service providers and beneficiaries.

Inviting the trustees into artistic practice one casual, light-touch artistic activity at a time, intuitively connects to a vulnerability I am familiar with as an artist. As theatre director Peter Sellars notes: 'artists are the communicators of difficult subject matter. They thrive in offering a different imagination for ways of being than business or politics' (HowlRound tv, 2020). I argue my choices to engage the charity in certain artistic activity drawn from a twenty-year career as a theatre and installation artist, eased a journey into the discomforts of moving from complete to incomplete ideas of culture. But I can only recognise this reflexively. I didn't set out to do this. My intuitions guided me in this direction from the outset and it was only through the practice that we (myself and those working collaboratively with me at the charity) could recognise this value. This is Robin Nelson's Practice as Research model at work. A 'know-how' (my experiential-based training in arts contexts which has guided my intuition) works in tandem with a 'know what,' which is formed

through reflexivity with myself and others (others at the charity who also experienced the practice as well as other theorists) (Nelson, 2013, p. 37). The practice, the reflexivity with the practice, and relevant theories work on each other ultimately to develop the thesis' main contribution of a concept of 'intra-vulnerabilities.'

Artistic practice becomes the apparatus for facilitating vulnerable acts of listening and unmoulding and for embodying ways to be with beneficiaries in new ways that can speak differently than capacities available in certain kinds of language that has dominated policy. This embodied 'doing-knowing' (ibid, p. 67) is also a strategy to create a shared language between the academy, artists, the charity and its beneficiary communities, since each comes with their own distinctive lexicon full of barrier potential. Drawing on a 'knowing that is grounded in active, intimate, hands-on participation and personal connection' as a specific move to balance the ways of producing knowledge that has been 'anchored in paradigm and secured in print' addresses the 'epistemic violence' in the limitations of the word, [and specifically to this thesis, the policy word] to not only miss, but actively 'squeeze out…the whole realm of complex, finely nuanced meaning that is embodied, tacit, intoned, gestured, improvised, co-experienced, covert and all the more deeply meaningful because of its refusal to be spelled out' (Conquergood, 2002, p. 146). This is particularly important in creating equitable communication where institutional language can perpetuate exclusivity. Nelson offers:

> A powerful strategy is afforded by the idea of doing- knowing in applied performance practices through the insight that interventions might be made in actual behaviour by changing the performance of the participants (2013, p. 67).

In opening up this performance based way of knowing with the charity's staff, trustees and beneficiary communities together in shared artistic experiences, I aim to investigate whether new understandings of art and culture could be addressed in what Baseman calls the 'performative paradigm' (2006) where doing-knowing becomes a method for moving in a different direction than the kind of representation and elucidation qualitative and quantitative reporting offers. 'The performative act doesn't describe something but rather it does something in the world…[it] brings into being what it names' (Haseman, 2007 cited in Bolt, 2009). One can argue that language is able to do this as well, but the thesis argues that artistic practice facilitates different (and potentially wider) access to understanding than is available only in bureaucratic language.

Rancière supports this notion of art as intervention: 'Artistic practices are 'ways of doing and making' that intervene in the general distribution of ways of doing and making as well as in the relationships they maintain to modes of being and forms of visibility' (2004, p. 13). Like democratised culture, Rancière's concept of the 'distribution of the sensible' illuminates political inequities when what he calls a 'sensible fabric' has been designed by the few for the many. How the beneficiaries take part in the charity is pre-determined by the trustees and the staff. Charitable law pre-determines that trustees and staff lead decision-making processes and residents housed by the charity and wider local community grant recipients benefit from those decisions. Art, however, holds the potential to disrupt these distributions– to intervene in the grants-making process by differently uncovering who knows what about who needs what.

The choice for a PaR methodology leans into Rancière's disruption of the sensible by choosing artistic practice as a mode to disrupt questions about funding art with art. As he recognises however, not all art can disrupt. Some artistic policy and practice keeps the sensible problematically intact. When policies have continuously prioritised the major cultural institutions, there is a significant gap between intended audience and reach. The 2015 Warwick report revealed that audiences of most publicly funded arts and culture still continue to be predominantly white and middle class. As such, the PaR methodology pays particular attention to how a process for deciding culture can engage with beneficiaries to determine service. The choice to undergo this process artistically attempts a further disruption of usual ways of such decision-making processes.

0.4 Establishing a dialogic aesthetic of joy and metaphor

The specific mode of my PaR is a participatory video installation practice that invites all aspects of the charity into casual conversation in playful environments. This practice is chosen in part because of my own 20-year working history and experiences with theatre, installation, and applied arts practices in non-arts settings. But the qualities of a dialogic and transdisciplinary aesthetic that collaborates not only with different people, but different media to create new depictions of ideas, offers a way to embody and visualise how disparate elements can come together.

The choice to invite meaning-making with the work joyfully is also deliberate and reflexively understood as a positive disruption of business as usual. An aesthetic of joy is embraced in all aspects of the practice, taking forward James Thompson's view that pleasure and play in artistic projects for communities who face socio-economic or political hardship are all the more critical because of this context. In fact there can be dangerous re-traumatising when projects seek to address such hardship with direct expressions about these dilemmas (2009). Engagement in activity that is purely joyful can offer a more necessary relief. Elina Penttinen's methodology of joy in the context of international relations adds:

> If we refuse to see the joy and intense aliveness experienced by people in times described as difficult and inhuman, we are missing out on the fullness of life experience and indeed denying them the humanity and subjectivity that we take for granted ourselves (Penttinen, 2013, pp. 17).

This thinking holds an alignment with Brown's view of vulnerability as productively encompassing both discomfort and joy: 'vulnerability is the core of shame and fear and our struggle for worthiness, but it appears that it's also the birthplace of joy, of creativity, of belonging, of love' (2010).

To Thompson, Penttinen and Brown's points, Melanie and I spoke early on in the research about the necessity of joy. I shared with her a philosophy of 'casual joy' that youth club director, Ralph Campagna had coined and shared with me when we worked together in Chicago. Ralph runs an organisation called Off the Street Club that is devoted to keeping children who are susceptible to violence, safe:

> With some kids, regardless of their situation or what they've been through or how they live every day, the Casual Joy just bursts out of them. But it's the others who need the Club more than anyone, I think. Because like too many things like love and trust, Casual Joy can be killed. It can be buried. It can be lost if you've never had it (Campagna, 2018).

His observation of joy as both present and absent offers a double view for its necessity. To ensure its sustainability, joy requires emboldening. Melanie and I proposed, as the charity planned its 400th anniversary celebrations during the research period, to name the entire year's programme of events 'A festival of joy.' This was contested by some trustees, concerned it would detract from the seriousness of the charity's role to provide relief to needs. But, as Penttinen elaborates, joy becomes a radical viewpoint because 'we have been

trained to be sceptical and critical about well-being and have accepted the idea that positive emotions are a form of denial or ignorance of the hard reality' (2013, pp. 24). She proposes 'heartfelt positivity' to enact a 'call for serious self-awareness of how our beliefs about the human beings in the world matter to how we create the world through academic scholarship' (ibid). The charity's banner for its entire 400th anniversary year of events was billed under a concept of joy, and the PaR projects made for the celebrations alongside other commissioned and funded activities serve as case studies to bolster its value.

Joy weaves its way through all elements of the practice– from early dialogues and craft activities with trustees and community groups to each of the video installation PaR projects created with a range of stakeholders. Throughout the practice joy is identified as an unconditional element common to the human experience across service provision . This manifests regularly in humorous storytelling with staff, trustees and beneficiaries as the art practice comes into being. This conditional joy then informs and is further informed by an aesthetic joy as the practice develops. Design choices in bright and colourful paint and quirky installation composition, including a play with scale, elucidate how aesthetics can be joyful as a tactic to invite participation. Taking Thompson, Brown and Penttinen forward, this aesthetic of joy is argued as a further disruption of the sensible, having invited sceptical trustees to participate joyfully as a means to understand its possibilities as a productive companion for the tackling of serious social issues. This aesthetic of joy is reflexively understood as a method which could then entice the charity further in possibilities of seeing differently.

Metaphor underpins much of the artistic practice. How materials compositionally come together and how collaborations between different artists, participants and the charity unfold, are interconnected and offer what Donald Schon (1979) calls a 'generative metaphor' which 'facilitates learning and overcomes resistance to otherwise difficult subjects…[enabling] the group to construct its own social reality' (Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential). These metaphors can 'increase the rigour and precision of our analysis of social policy problems by examining the analogies and 'disanalogies' between the familiar descriptions...and the actual problematic situations that confront us' (Schon, 1979 in ibid.) But as practitioner and academic Sophie Hope points out: 'It is not just a case of assuming that the metaphor works to create new understandings; rather an analysis of the power of metaphor to shape understanding is needed' (2011, p. 70). The thesis takes forward Hope's

application of Schon's 'generative metaphor' in an arts context- working specifically to elucidate how material and human collaborations in artistic practice construct a demonstration of interdependent knowledge between the charity and its beneficiaries in a social policy context, and thus offer a view for how culture is co-created.

Drawing on aspects of dialogic and relational aesthetics[5] (Kester, 2004; Bourriaud, 1998), the PaR emphasises communication between different aspects of the charity and facilitates differentiated skill sets between artists, artistic materials, participants and viewers. The ways in which these collaborations interact and create new knowledge draws on feminist scientist Karen Barad's abstract theory of 'intra-active agential realism' (2003). This theory is particularly relevant for the ways in which it proposes a mutual entailment between 'observer and observed' -disrupting historically patriarchal scientific models of objectivity that viewed the observer as neutral and distant from the observed. For the thesis, Barad offers a construct in which to understand how, not only myself as researcher and artist must challenge ideas of neutrality, but how the charity's staff and trustees must also do so. Barad's view of an 'inseparable' and 'uncuttable' knowledge between observer and observed recognises:

> The relationship between the material and the discursive is one of mutual entailment. Neither is articulated/articulable in the absence of the other…neither can be explained in terms of the other. Neither has privileged status in determining the other (Barad, 2003, p. 822).

As such, she proposes that humans and matter work on each other in what she terms 'agential intra-activity.' Each element, be it observer or observed, has agency– bringing their own sets of knowledge which have the capacity to equitably impact the whole experiment. This offers a way to challenge problematic hierarchies around culture that have been perpetuated in deficit models and models of democratised culture.

In a dialogic aesthetic (which I will also further explicate throughout the thesis as 'transdisciplinary') each collaborating artist and artistic material similarly has agency, and how they come together and work on one another influences and informs the outcome of the artwork. These agencies move through different equitable relationships, at times more equal than others and, as such, the PaR artworks and collaborations strive to make visible Barad's

[5] Both of these terms will be further explained throughout the thesis

abstract theories in an effort to understand how the charity comes into more equitable relationships with its beneficiaries to better service their needs.

This idea of 'intra-activity' differs from 'interactivity.' The charity has always interacted with its beneficiaries. But this is distinctly independent as opposed to interdependent (Stark, 2016). The charity relates to its beneficiaries in a one-way doing of service. Barad's intra-activity can be interpreted as a proposal for a deeper interdependency between the charity and its beneficiaries—particularly where the beneficiaries might flip the direction of service by giving the charity a wider perspective on how to service their needs. Barad proposes, as does Boublil with vulnerability, that complicating the directions of giving and vulnerability by understanding them as moveable, temporary and context-dependent, offers a more suitable theory for understanding how relationships can work.

> The world is a dynamic process of intra-activity in the ongoing reconfiguring of locally determinate causal structures with determinate boundaries, properties, meanings, and patterns of marks on bodies. This ongoing flow of agency through which 'part' of the world makes itself differentially intelligible to another 'part' of the world and through which local causal structures, boundaries, and properties are stabilized and destabilized does not take place in space and time but in the making of spacetime itself (Barad, 2003, p. 817).

Kester's idea of a 'dialogic aesthetic' picks up on this:

> a dialogic aesthetic, for its part, does not claim to provide, or require, this kind of universal or objective foundation. Rather, it is based on the generation of a local consensual knowledge that is only provisionally binding and that is grounded instead at the level of collective interaction (Kester, 2004, p. 112).

Barad and Kester's proclivities for understanding the temporary binding of meaning-making between different parts connects to Diprose's notion of widening out, not distilling down to the singular. Different cultural ways of being and making can intra-act, and impact one another at different times. But critically in this coming together, each part must hold its own agency.

> This generosity is born not so much with the combining of bodies whose capacities and powers agree but with the possibility of those dominant bodies remaining open to and transformed by alterity without effacing that indeterminate difference (Diprose, 2002, p. 172).

Barad, Kester and Diprose offer a way to understand how different agencies of the beneficiaries, as much as the usual decision-makers at the charity might work together to think and act differently as a result. Visual metaphors enacted within the artistic compositions in the practice then offer a method for concretising these theories. For example, the ways in which cardboard architectural models, solid vintage furniture and projection light come together in the first PaR installation, *Remembering the Future,* demonstrates a new way to view the residents' lived experience of housing in relation to the charity and its partnering architects' plans for future affordable housing design. This imagination is carried by metaphors available not only in the material composition, but in the processual making of the project between the collaborators. The residents' knowledge as the storytellers ultimately guides the artists, architects and the charity in creating the work of art and exhibiting it. Similarly in another installation, *Moving Between,* a life-size house frame holds multiple screens for exhibiting local peoples' views on community cohesion. But there are also deliberately designed gaps in the frame for audience members to fill and see each other. Here the metaphor of the medium and the collaborative processes for making the artwork point again to the ways in which different perspectives hold valuable information about the local area and its cultural make-up. Such a visual manifestation of holding multiple views offers an imagination for how the charity builds its house and leaves its doors open for others to not only shape, but epistemologically co-build.

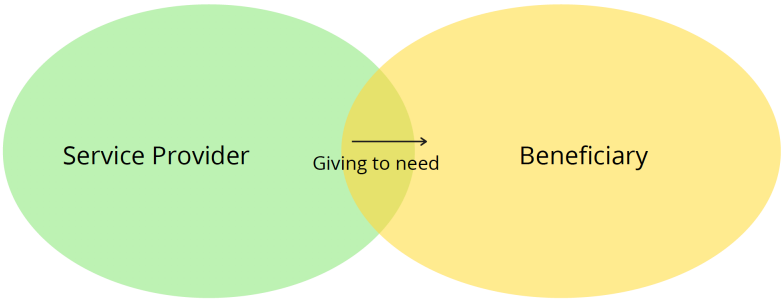
Finally a metaphoric vulnerability available in artistic practice itself is useful. Seasoned by its experience with destabilising, the arts thrive in being with the unknown and the uncomfortable. As discussed, it is often, only reflexively that I can make sense of what has been made in the artwork. Intentions are set, concepts developed, but these change in the experiment as problems arise and methods of making do not go as planned. Chapter 5 elucidates a series of three PaR projects in one. But this was initially intended to be one project that then changed because an artistic idea in theory was not successful in practice. As such, three different projects emerge, each with their own sets of problems, some of which include fragile collaborations. The vulnerability of materials and collaborations offer a way to experientially understand the intra-activity of elements and the capacity for them to change and influence the evolution of outcomes. The thesis argues that especially when these experiments become vulnerable in such complications, they facilitate a reframing of vulnerability as positive and productive. This can offer a contrast to much grant-making, where anxieties over things going wrong or not to plan along with a sense duty and

requirement to use funds 'responsibly,' strongly discourages deviating from stated aims. Articulating the ways in which art holds useful metaphors for more vulnerable processes in grant-making, both in its visible practice and its less visible relationships for making art, underpins one of the main objectives for the written thesis.

0.5 Developing Intra-vulnerabilities

A theory of intra-vulnerabilities develops reflexively within the practice. Beginning with an intuition to listen to trustees in more personal ways, asking them about their own experiences and value-making with art, I then engaged them in artistic methods that expanded upon this first encounter. Facilitating activities which opened up to relationship and connection, I first designed casual artistic interruptions in the charity's business-as-usual meetings, which playfully invited personal reflection with the research questions. I then gradually opened up artistic methods for staff, trustees and beneficiaries to participate in the research together. This inductive strategy continued to develop in the creation of five participatory video installations with and for all aspects of the charity. With dialogue at the core, each art work built upon the previous one. There was always an initial plan and structure at the beginning of each new activity within a long-term framework agreed with Melanie and Tim at the charity, but nuanced discoveries within each stage impacted and evolved subsequent methods to examine how art could probe for more equitable relationships between the charity and its beneficiaries.

Moving between audience member and participant, trustees were invited into a repositioning from their usual status as distant decision-maker and beneficiaries were invited into a repositioning from more passive recipient status. As a result, different vulnerabilities pronounced and entangled in an expression of Barad's mutual entailment. The beneficiaries 'situated vulnerabilities' reframe with expertise, and in response, the charity opens up to ontological vulnerabilities available in listening and unmoulding views of complete culture. The mutual entailment of these vulnerabilities are held within a vulnerable apparatus of artistic practice, which, by way of different media opening up expressions to see, hear and listen differently, develops a third prong in the concept of intra-vulnerabilities.



Usual one directional service from vulnerability to invulnerability

Figure 1[6]

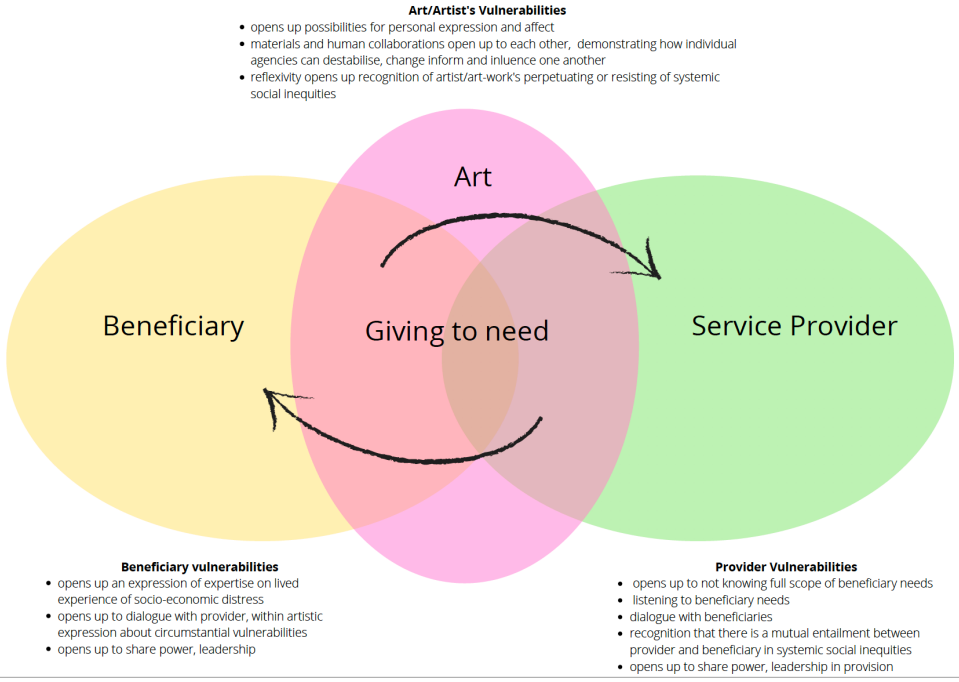


Figure 2 Artistic practice expands the possibilities of relationships between beneficiaries and service providers, provoking 'intra-vulnerabilities' a multi-directional opening up to differentiated vulnerabilities than can contribute to more co-created understandings of a range of socio-aesthetic-economic needs.

Formative in this process and developing concept is the value of the 'co.' In proposing ways to co-create culture and policy, the thesis clarifies three stages that both carry a linear trajectory as well as overlap. They are: co-presence, co-producing and co-owning.

[6] Asset based Community Development (ABCD) models which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 1 offer a two-way street of giving knowledge around need between beneficiary and funder, but the 400 year-old model at HUC has been based predominantly on a one-directional mode of giving.

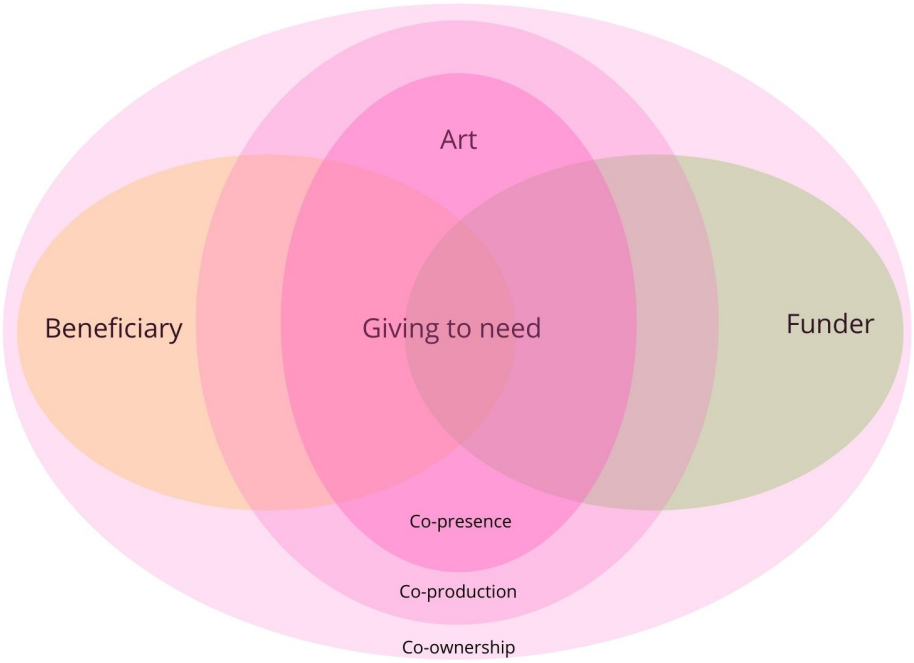


Figure 3

The PaR unfolds different equitable relations in each stage, distinguishing between different levels of participation. The different PaR projects will elucidate nuances within these stages, but will specifically chart how co-presence can facilitate co-production and point towards possibilities for the charity and its beneficiaries to co-own cultural policy making. While there are benefits within each phase, the possibilities for new and fuller relationships to form between beneficiary and funder increase as agencies increase for both in the practice. This can take shape in many ways of course, that will be expounded upon in the thesis.

Co-presence offers a chance for the charity to encounter their beneficiaries beyond the page. This is the face-to-face encounter that Conquergood offers as a site for building more complex understandings of the other (1985) and which Diprose names an 'intercorporeal affect'- where being in the presence of another body enables feeling to guide thinking differently (2002, pp.125-6). Diprose and Thompson however, discuss problems with a 'diminishing' that can occur in the face-to-face encounter. Consequently, the PaR iterates different modes for the charity to be with beneficiaries. At times the co-presence is accomplished in a shared physical space, as the charity's staff, trustees and beneficiaries are participants in a curated lunch or arts activity, or as audience at an event. At times the co-presence takes shape virtually, as beneficiaries and trustees appear together in the same film. And at times co-presence manifests in a mixed physical and virtual space as audience and participant come together in the same installation environment. These differentiated modes of

co-presence offer a way of coming into being together that can facilitate not only interactivity, but intra-activity. The interactivities evolve with deeper agencies when the beneficiary participation increases from a shaping or a consulting to a co-design or co-producing role on projects. Ultimately, an understanding of co-ownership emerges after considerable iterations in co-presence. This journey is tracked in the narrative of the PaR projects.

The first PaR project, *Remembering the Future* (RTF) investigates this co-presence both in person and virtually with residents at the centre of a video and architecture installation exploring their memories of the local area and their different homes. The beneficiaries become experts of their own lived experience and both artists and architects learn, listen and create in service to them. The project is participatory for residents, for the architects and the charity who, through processes of making with and listening with the residents (respectively) glean new ways in which their memories of home might inform a future intergenerational affordable housing development planned by the charity. Reframing vulnerable older people housed by the charity in tandem with their own expertise questions how the charity sees these beneficiaries with and beyond vulnerability. Additionally, the PaR investigates how reframing architects, artists and the charity's expertise with vulnerabilities available in processes of listening begins to formulate the possibilities of intra-acting vulnerabilities and mutual entailment. An additional vulnerability of working within the uncertainties inherent to artistic practice also intra-acts here as all parties work with new and unfamiliar artistic media. In acknowledging a division that sustains between beneficiary and the charity in the set-up of looking 'at' resident stories in the installation, the next PaR series addresses this with new methods for looking 'with.'

Moving: Time Between Portraits, three PaR projects in one, iterates the potential for co-presence by inviting the whole provision spectrum into the practice, inclusive of residents, wider community beneficiaries, trustees, staff and local area service providers. Evolving the partnership with the architects from *Remembering the Future, Moving Time* adds a beneficiary partner and reflexively analyses how the difficulties in this collaboration elucidate the productivity of different vulnerabilities working on one another. Here the PaR moves from co-presence into a deeper examination of equity in co-production.

Moving Between, in returning to an examination of how a mix of both virtual and in-person co-presence can address multiple perspectives on need and culture in the local area, elucidates a vulnerability in understanding how the charity's wider area is not neutral in dilemmas of social exclusion. Finally, *Moving Portraits* explores co-presence through co-producing a view of local people's imagination for new artworks. Reframing the problems of a diminishing face-to-face encounter with a dialogue about what artworks people would create or commission for the area, this PaR marks a significant shift towards funding ambition, breaking with the charity's previous deficit-model thinking.

Alongside these four PaR projects, an unexpected PaR experiment called '*The Enigma Lunches*' develops from an early arts and cultural food exchange between beneficiaries, staff and trustees. Demonstrating the possibilities for how relationships between the charity and its beneficiaries can move from co-producing to co-owning, this series crystallises the way in which art becomes a strategy for facilitating a more equitable demonstration of co-created cultural policy.

The findings from the five PaR projects ultimately inform an artistic strategy for HUC for co-creating culture with their beneficiaries and artists in the future. The strategy named 'Make More Art' proposes five activities to maintain and evolve intra-activity across the provision spectrum manifesting the ways in which artistic activity becomes a strategy for better understanding culture and the charity's service to a range of beneficiaries' social, creative and aesthetic needs. Underpinned by the concept of intra-vulnerabilities developed throughout the thesis, the strategy aims to embed the positive relationship between vulnerability and expertise and, as such, to offer a reframing of need and relief according to beneficiaries, artists and funders.

This arts strategy does not come into being nor does it continue without complexities. The thesis examines how the findings that culminated from this practice based research, subtle and/or radical as they may be, are vulnerable as well, as they must still navigate a deeply embedded 400 year-old charitable structure.

0.6 Thesis Structure

The thesis is divided into three parts. Part one investigates how deficit models in philanthropy and cultural policy are being disrupted. Chapter one focuses on the collaborative research

partner, HUC, analysing how their long-standing practices of deficit-model thinking are disrupted with their long-standing aesthetic values, their recent shift in policy towards community grants and their investment in this research commission with an artist. Chapter 2 then examines the ways in which the charity's narrative is informed by and informs the wider UK arts funding policies, and how current work in cultural democracy specifically offers relevant methodologies for the research context. The chapter looks specifically at artistic practice as an influence and informant on cultural policy. While acknowledging the complex role of the artist between funder and community agendas and the difficulties of embedding practice in the archive, the chapter recognises the value of participant communities in these artistic settings and thus concludes with PaR as a suitable apparatus for pronouncing beneficiary knowledge in co-creation processes with funders. Chapter 3 names the PaR methodology in detail and analyses its coming into being through a series of performative dialogues carried out in the early phases of the research with the charity's trustees, staff and beneficiaries.

Part two of the thesis examines the potential for co-creating culture within artistic PaR. Chapter 4 interrogates the first PaR project, *Remembering the Future*, analysing how artistic collaborations and participant engagement with the charity's residents creates new relationships of co-presence between service providers and their beneficiaries and how differentiated vulnerabilities begin to emerge within the materials and collaborative relationships. Chapter 5 analyses *Moving: Time Between Portraits,* the series of three PaR projects that engaged the entire provision spectrum as participants and more deeply navigated movements between co-presence and co-production through an artistic collaboration with a beneficiary partner. Chapter 6 concludes the second part of the thesis, elucidating the ways in which an unexpected PaR of co-curated lunches with community partners (*The Enigma Lunch series)* manifests a distinct narrative trajectory from co-presence to co-ownership in processes of co-creation. As such it facilitates a clear view for understanding artistic activity as strategy for moving towards ideas of incomplete culture.

Part three of the thesis analyses the way in which the findings from all five PaR projects inform a consideration of artistic activity as artistic strategy for co-creating understandings of culture. The sole and final chapter, chapter 7, culminates the findings from all the PaR projects into the artistic strategy made with the charity and examines the strategy in the context of the wider UK arts funding movements in cultural democracy in 2020.

Part I
Disrupting cultural policy with practice

Chapter 1
Disrupting the research question with Hammersmith United Charities

Mike:	"Has art ever provided relief to your needs?
John:	Perhaps for me…the thing that provided relief was Beethoven's 5th Piano Concerto- which restored my belief in the nobility of man and of hope for the future.
Carolyn::	How?
John:	Oh, you've just got to listen to it– the certainty and the harmonies…that man is more than just flesh and blood, that he has a spiritual side, and that there is hope for him- there is hope for us all."

-Conversation between trustees and myself, facilitated through an interactive card game at Hammersmith United Charities' annual trustee dinner, May 2017[7]

The thesis begins in this first and complicated opening up to self and other. It begins with a disruption of deficit model thinking. Hammersmith United Charities (HUC) has a 400 year-old history of relieving need in one direction: from trustee to beneficiary. Within the first year of the research I was asking trustees about their own needs. This is not how charitable law works. The trustees are not beneficiaries.

But this dialogue between myself and the trustees, spoken aloud in the company of the entire board of trustees and staff at their annual dinner, provokes a dichotomy between how to measure the meaning of art and culture for those in the position of giving versus those in the position of receiving. Listening to Beethoven was enough proof of value for John. Why couldn't it be enough for the beneficiaries?

This first chapter gives an overview of the collaborative research partner, HUC, analysing the giver/receiver relationships inscribed within their 400-year-old history that are both carried forward and disrupted by the research commission. Tracing a lack of co-presence and intra-activity between the charity and its beneficiaries, that ultimately omits beneficiary definitions

[7] This card game will be further explained in Chapter 3

of 'betterment,' this chapter establishes the problems of continuing a deficit-model for funding housing into decisions for funding culture.

The chapter then analyses the ways in which the charity's current position with its newer community grants programme, its proclivities for innovation and new partnerships (inclusive of this research,) and its preparations for celebrating a 400th anniversary, opens up possibilities for new approaches to beneficiary needs.

1.1 From housing to art: Tracing a deficit model

Begun in 1618 with a £100 donation from philanthropist Doctor Thomas Edwards, HUC's founding intentions were allocated toward land for the poor. As a local Bishop and other philanthropists joined throughout the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries 'the general thrust of each was either for the relief of poverty or the care and well-being of the elderly poor of Hammersmith' (HUC).

Until 2012, the charity functioned primarily as an almshouse, providing sheltered accommodation to low-income older people.[8] Currently this manifests in 91 flats at two separate housing schemes in the charity's local area of benefit (AOB)[9]. Replete with award-winning gardens and social activities curated by the staff and the residents themselves, the charity describes its housing as 'quality' 'independent' 'supportive' and 'friendly' (HUC).

In line with the tenets of the almshouse tradition HUC gives to 'those in need within a defined beneficiary group which is derived from the wishes of the benefactor' (Almshouse Association). The benefactors here are a set of twelve trustees, recruited volunteers who live locally and maintain affiliations tied to the original philanthropists, the local council, area businesses or community organisations. They oversee decisions to do with finance, governance, housing and now community grants (HUC).

[8] Specifically: over the age of 60, having lived locally for at least 5 years at some point in their lives, and with assets below £25,000 for single residents and £45,000 for couples (HUC).

[9] The two housing schemes are located at opposite ends of Goldhawk Road, one of the central arteries in the AOB. The AOB comprises the eight Northern wards in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (https://hamunitedcharities.org.uk/about-us/area-of-benefit/)

In 2012, Stuart Sessions, the Chief Executive and Clerk to the trustees of HUC at the time, extended the charity's remit beyond housing by initiating a community grants giving programme that would service wider area communities. This was incited by his discovery of the West London Philanthropic Society's 17th century minutes detailing weekly distribution of tickets for coal, meat and clothing to the widowed and parish poor. While seven of the charity's original nineteen benefactors had historically designated their funds for almshouses, the remaining twelve, like the West London Philanthropic Society, held broader aims to provide relief beyond housing (Sessions, 2017). Stuart brought these papers to the attention of the trustees, not only to serve the neglected remits of the founding philanthropists, but to consider how the interpretation of basic needs for 21st century living (already in place in the housing schemes with the gardens and social activities) might begin translating to other services in the wider communities. In other words, he provoked the charity to consider the modern day equivalents of coal, meat and clothing.

Stuart introduced a tension for the charity with this newer remit to serve intergenerational and international local communities. Beyond the comfortability of 400 years' experience pursuing the same mission, housing has offered the charity a tangible understanding of servicing need. Almshouses are a direct response to providing where there is a lack of homes, and specifically, a lack of quality homes. Thirty percent of almshouses were constructed during the Victorian era in direct response to unhealthy conditions of housing for the poor and it continues today as a viable high quality alternative in the housing crises (Almshouse Association).

A deficit model of philanthropy in the context of housing (while not without its problems that will be further analysed in subsequent chapters) has allowed the charity to see clear outcomes for their beneficiaries, that their beneficiaries also speak to with pride and gratitude. But in servicing a wider area with far more nuanced and elusive needs, some trustees were uncomfortable partly because they felt the institution lacked comparative experience, and partly because the outcomes were less clear. The grants were funding debt advice, food banks, domestic and language services for women and migrants, entrepreneurial skill building, and visual and performing arts activities for all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. All of these grant funded activities had to meet the following criteria: 'meet basic needs (food, shelter, advice etc), work with families and children, counter isolation (in any group and for any reason), or build confident individuals and communities' (HUC, 2016).

The arts and culture funded by the charity in 2016, at the start of this research period, included a range of activities from painting and dance classes for older residents to theatre and photography workshops for young people, to music education for children and families. These programmes were all participatory and funded to meet aims such as countering isolation, raising awareness of prejudices and addressing mental health issues.

While some trustees felt the programming was too scattered, others were concerned the charity would be distracted from its main aims in housing. Still others worried about the decision specifically to fund arts. Why should this be funded more than debt advice or domestic services? How would it evidence social inclusion?

These concerns were further compounded by austerity (leading several organisations who previously received public funding to look to HUC[10]) and impending growth in Hammersmith with new housing and business developments planned for one ward and the cross-rail construction in another—both of which, as Melanie discussed with me, will lead to significant population increase in the next thirty years and demand its own set of funding (2015).

In communications with Stuart early in the research, he wrote:

> Although some trustees proved somewhat resistant to funding of arts related grants, the majority agreed that arts and performance in schools, for example, was of demonstrable benefit to pupils' confidence and breadth of aspiration. In the same way, attracting older people to arts activities remains a powerful medium through which to counter isolation and exclusion (2017).

One trustee in conversation with me evidenced this instrumentalist view. He thought if the charity were to invest in arts then it should continue in the vein of a current programme the charity supported at the Lyric Theatre where unemployed youth gained confidence through theatre activities as a means towards gaining employment (2016). Positioning art as a tool to fulfil a lack (in this case a lack of employment) sustains the charity's deficit model of funding. While this type of programming at the Lyric is not without value, it becomes problematic when it is the only perspective on the value of the arts. Here, a beneficiary

[10] HUC is a charitable trust and as such is independent of government in its capacity to manage funds.

becomes fixed to a definition of 'lacking' only deemed 'better' according to the funder's vision of self-sufficiency. This attitude manifests Levinas' asymmetrical 'I' over 'you' in the landscape of generosity (Diprose, 2002).

Additionally, this view of arts and culture provokes the evaluation problems of social targeting that incurred during the 'golden age' of funding remedial art programmes that will be expounded upon in the next chapter. If the Lyric can't prove the theatre programme led to employment, will it get cut? Does it not have any other value?

When another trustee was asked about his own artistic activities, he shared a love of classical music and Shakespeare and paused to consider that this could have benefits for the beneficiaries too. He was clear, however, that the type of art that should be funded should be distinctly British (as opposed to culturally affiliated with other countries.)

This trustee's views on art, specifically the swift dismissal of other forms of (non-western) art speaks to what Diprose discusses in the coloniality of philanthropy where others' ideas are 'closed off.' It is the epistemicide that de Sousa Santos (2007) speaks to as well in hegemonic cultures deciding the rules of the culture game. And even as the trustee looks beyond instrumentalism in consideration of his own cultural tastes for beneficiaries as a potential disruption of his own sensible fabric, he still holds a sensible distribution tightly by excluding beneficiary cultures. While Warde *et al* (2007) outline how the idea of there being a single, unified, 'legitimate' culture is no longer an acceptable element of the way contemporary British society perceives itself (cited in O'Brien and Oakley, 2015, p. 10), the 2015 Warwick report noted 'that the wealthiest, best educated and least ethnically diverse 8% of society' comprise nearly half the population who regularly attend publicly funded visual and performing arts programmes (p. 33). So while the trustee's problematically complete view of British culture might seem old fashioned, and of course, does not represent all twelve trustees' views, it does reflect the persistent gap between what gets funded and who attends. Meaning, while the trustee might consider Shakespeare a wonderful experience for himself, it might not be the best form of arts and culture for all beneficiaries.

This complete view of culture is further perpetuated in the charity's branding:

Figure 4: HUC branding on literature ©HUC

While aiming for altruism, this kind of language sustains the problematic one-directional philanthropy. Edgar Villanueva, who writes about processes for decolonising philanthropy, attributes part of this problem to board culture and proposes a reckoning with representation:

> Almost without exception, funders reinforce the colonial division of Us vs. Them, Haves vs. Have Nots, and mostly white saviours and white experts vs. *poor, needy urban, disadvantaged, marginalized, at-risk people* (take your pick of euphemisms for people of color) (2018, p. 4).

Villanueva cites the statistics of predominantly white boards and white foundation CEOs not to discount skill and service, but to point to what gets missed. Without including communities in decision-making processes, the knowledge around how best to serve said communities is unrealised. The dismissal can derive from a notion that the communities 'in need' are so positioned as lacking, that their own sets of knowledge are lacking too (ibid).

At the start of this research in 2016, nine of HUC's board of twelve trustees were white, middle class men, over the age of sixty. Apart from class, these demographics hold parallels with the housed residents. But with the community grants programme reaching a much wider demographic across class, race, culture, age – a lack of representation presents a lack of knowledge of a wider scope of needs.

The charity's AOB includes the eight northern wards of the West London borough, Hammersmith & Fulham. This area has "the highest percentage of £1million plus houses in the country shoulder to shoulder with some of the highest levels of social deprivation" (Younis, 2019, p. 28). With 43% of the population born outside of England, compared to

37% in London as a whole (LBHF, 2018, p. 12), the local area 'expands to encompass the historical, dynamic, often traumatic, movements of people, ideas, images, commodities, and capital' (Conquergood, 2002: 151). As Villanueva notes, if addressed exclusively from the vantage point of those who have not lived these experiences, then Mignolo's colonial 'give' and 'take' (2002) re-enacts as the trustees' vision of culture takes away a priori culture from the beneficiary. As the Warwick report indicates, this democratised culture doesn't work; there is an out of touch-ness manifesting in a severe lack of engagement.

So, with an eye to redress the composition of HUC's board, which does transpire over the course of this research and will be discussed in more detail at the end of the thesis, the charity has to ask itself how to best know the needs of those whose lived experience and lived cultural experience they do not yet know.

To this point, another interviewed trustee asked how the charity might decide on what the right kind of art for the beneficiaries could be. He gave the example that if a Spanish guitarist applies for grant money to teach local children and is funded because this is who happens to apply, he wondered whether the charity would truly know if this was the 'right' kind of art? Is Spanish guitar what that group really needs? How could the charity assess this?

This question points to a contradiction in the charity's crossroads between its past and its future.

1.2 Keeping the 'sensible' intact with garden culture

The trustees commissioned this research to better understand if and what art should be funded for their beneficiaries. But at no point in their history have they questioned the value of the gardens that are an aesthetic focal point of both housing schemes. Award-winning for multiple years, the gardens are tended by a full-time gardener and have never been considered a luxury to be cut in a time of austerity (Nock, 2015). They are the pride of not only the benefactors but the beneficiaries as well. In focus groups carried out early in the research in the PaR projects, residents spoke unanimously to the gratitude they feel for living with the beauty and peaceful oasis of the gardens. Many of the residents co-tend the gardens, help to harvest its fruit, and prepare meals together from the harvest. These efforts are led by the gardener.

Figure 5 ©HUC

Figure 6 ©HUC

Central gardens are a traditional feature of almshouses that complement high quality aesthetics of housing. So, while one of the trustee's scepticism about funding art held a concern with the charity focusing on arts activities over housing, his argument becomes complicated here. As the charity's housing schemes are foremost in service to 'basic needs' they evidence a vision that beauty is a significant part of this basic need.

But does this view of beauty end at housing? The trustee who questioned the Spanish guitar over any type of art, does not question which flower will best serve the beneficiaries. While the garden aesthetics do intervene on concepts of basic need, here Rancière's distribution of the sensible ultimately remains intact. Like another trustee's vision of Shakespeare as a more 'British' artform to fund over say sub-Saharan craft, the undeniable investment in gardens as

compared to a questionable one in Spanish guitar evidences a limited view of how the charity sees, thinks and decides culture.

In speaking with residents early in the research period, many expressed a longing for a return to regular relationships with trustees that used to occur. Almshouses carry a tradition of trustees knocking on residents' doors for amiable chats; but, with trustee turnover, the residents noted how this inter-personal relationship had dwindled. Perhaps these missed encounters contribute to an omitted consideration for beneficiaries' a priori culture. How many trustees know the artistic interests of their beneficiaries? One resident, Bryan, is a professional dancer, who has performed on stages all over the world. A precarious financial life as an artist and an illness led him to seek housing at the charity; but his cultural life has and continues to be full as he regularly attends local theatre performances and takes painting classes through a programme funded by the charity. The point here is co-presence in interaction, and face-to-face encounters can offer casual ways of knowing. I only know this information about Bryan because I met him face-to-face and was directed to do so because the charity's two housing scheme managers, Cathy and Jill, who see residents daily and consequently know their cultural interests, led me to him. These networks of knowing speak to a closer, more intimate interpersonal interaction held in the charity's history. The community grants programme provokes a return to these relationships.

1.3 Opening up to new cultural relationships

1.3.1 Community grants

The charity's history of deficit model thinking was disrupted with the initiation of the community grants programme and Melanie's approaches to the role as the inaugural director. Citing her influence with 'asset based community development' (ABCD) strategies (Kretzmann, McKnight, 1993) where service providers work to support and enhance the strengths already in place in communities, she modelled a new set of methods for getting to know beneficiaries that repositioned them not as lacking, or deficient, but as in need of support and skill-building for strengths and qualities already in place.

> When I first arrived, I went round and saw a lot of people… and tried to find out what they were doing, with whom and why. Then we encouraged grant applications and responded to those. In the early days, there were relatively few so we could take risks because we had enough budget to do so. Those risks paid off, trustee confidence in

> me and the grants programme grew and we built on that. An awful lot was instinctive really; and I tended to identify individuals I thought had vision, energy and some level of competence and investment in their organisations and projects. That was how the relationship with Liban Muse started. I could see that the Somali community had a big presence in the area and that they tended not to access grants from the big funders so I also knew I had to find entry points to the community. I hit lucky with Liban. At the end of the day, grant making is an art not a science though – it's about relationships and intuition – whatever you tell the trustees! (2019).

This ABCD approach, as Sophie Macken, of community business grant-making organisation, Power to Change notes, is often discussed by funders but rarely seen in practice (2020). Melanie's actions demonstrate Diprose's proposal to decolonise philanthropy through an opening up to others rather than a closing down (2002: 145-146). Her moves to engage and interact directly with communities subsequently inspired Tim, the charity's chief executive and clerk to the trustees, to develop the 'Big Conversation' which led the charity to meet a range of community leaders in person, through casual conversation as a method for discovering local needs. These conversations were artistically rendered with graphics that continue to cover the charity's walls. Concretising these new relational understandings between the charity and its local communities through artistic graphics will be further discussed in the next two chapters for the way in which it manifests what housing and arts researcher Danya Sherman notes as art's capacity to 'articulate key issues' (2016). Such demonstrations begin to elucidate a capacity for art not only as activity for beneficiaries, but as strategy for the whole organisation.

Figure 7 Graphic rendering of 'The Big Conversation' ©HUC

Melanie and Tim's methods for interacting with communities translated into early funding practices. Within the first two years of the community grants programme, HUC partnered

with The Big Local scheme– a local trust and National Lottery initiative designed to commit long-term funding for community led support. Since 2014, the charity has committed to delivering £100,000 annually for 10 years. 'The aim of this funding is to improve the quality of life in a sustainable way for all residents in White City' (HUC). While an inevitable trial that will be discussed more thoroughly in chapter 2, it has been an important level of support that demonstrates the charity's belief in the value of community knowledge.

The community grants programme has also experimented with other devolved methods for giving, including running a grants initiative with beneficiaries to decide who else in the borough should receive funds, and an experiment with the older residents who, rather than receive £10/each at Christmas, were invited to pool the collective resident funds together to decide who in the area they thought might benefit from a larger sum of money. Melanie presented them with a few local beneficiaries and each house chose a different organisation to fund. An interesting conundrum arises here in considering how the residents knew the beneficiary communities they would be giving to. There is a potential to inherit a patriarchal deficit mode of giving as residents question who needs their funding most. Of course, Melanie brings her expertise and ABCD approach, but how the beneficiaries become more deeply aware of other beneficiaries will be addressed in subsequent chapters that bring residents and wider area communities into co-presence through artistic activities.

1.3.2 A 400th anniversary

The charity's 400th anniversary year in 2018 also functioned as a significant marker of the charity's positioning between its past methods of giving relief and its present and future desires to consider new ways of giving that could be more reflective of 21st century needs. The planning, enacting of a programme of events, and reflecting and evaluating of this programme took place throughout the research period form 2016-2019 and consequently informs a significant part of the research, offering opportunities for testing new ideas for art and culture with communities supported by increased budgets. In preparation for the 400th anniversary year, HUC outlined a set of aims for the milestone, which included 'embedding the charity's reputation as THE leader in relief in need and housing for older people across the borough' with an emphasis on 'high quality' and ensuring 'the forthcoming 400th celebrations provide a platform generating new partnerships, new projects, new resources and a new profile' (HUC, 2016). The continued focus on high quality housing, inclusive of

architectural and horticultural aesthetics, and an outward facing look for innovative partnering, set the charity up well for movement towards co-creating understandings of arts and culture with beneficiaries.

Eight of the ten activities programmed throughout the year were arts-based and significantly point to the ways in which art took a turn away from the previous considerations as exclusively remedial towards celebratory. This is analysed throughout the thesis through a developing aesthetic of joy, but especially in the final chapter's analysis of art as strategy.[11]

1.3.3 Research commission

Finally, the investment in this research, both in financial support of the tuition fees at London South Bank University, and in the time taken by Melanie, Tim and the trustees to engage this outside researcher, demonstrates a desire on the part of the charity to learn in new ways and be exposed to new methods for knowledge production.

1.4 A call for co-presence

There is a complexity to be mindful of however between the charity, the researcher and the beneficiary communities. In opening up to new ways of learning and being with the research, it is important to stay mindful of the potential to re-enact problematic ideas of complete culture and a sustenance of the sensible that can endure when researchers become the transmitters of information. This manifested early in the research. Melanie asked me to find out about the local Somali communities' relationships to arts and culture. Trustees had voiced a concern of whether or not to fund artistic activity for a community known for religious restrictions around music and dance. Leading a focus group with ten men and women affiliated with two Somali service organisations funded by the charity revealed a wide-range of relationships to art. Some of the older men longed for the now war-torn theatres they had attended while growing up in Mogadishu before the war. One young women was navigating her love of Beyoncé and the Koran. And there was a unanimous intergenerational appreciation for the highly regarded Somali form of oral history that transpires in poetry.

In filtering this information only through me, however, there is a danger of speaking on behalf of others (whose voices are already marginalised) and of distilling down rich

[11] Additionally, these activities are presented fully in Appendix A, in the arts strategy *Make More Art*

knowledge into written or anecdotal reports. Language, as both Conquergood (2002) and Barad (2003) assess, is not only limited in its capacity for transmitting knowledge, but can be detrimental in omitting the power of knowledge available in co-presence and interaction. Without co-presence, without interaction between those giving and those in receipt of funding and support, there is a problematic risk in fixing communities to these examples permanently (Kester, 2004, p.154). Even as the writing above gives three different examples of Somali cultural engagement in an effort to signify a spectrum of cultural tastes, its descriptions limit as soon as they hit the page or transmit through me alone. I run into problems of speaking for communities, or potentially contributing to the problematic narrative of 'giving voice.' Such types of consultation can also exhaust communities, leading to more extractive rather than reciprocal relationships, especially if communities don't see their perspectives implemented in change (Macken, 2020). Co-presence in an artistic face-to-face encounter aims to address this call for reciprocity by testing numerous arrangements and re-arrangements of cultural relationships between communities, the charity, and this researcher.

The next chapter looks to the wider arts funding landscape and the ways in which artistic practice can illuminate such possibilities.

Chapter 2

Disrupting UK arts funding policies with practice

In 1994, artist Tom Hunter made a model of his residential street in East London, filling it with colour photographs he had taken of his neighbours in their daily routines inside their homes. At the time, the homes on this street were at risk of being torn down and rebuilt without consideration for the current tenants. Hunter made this artwork, called *The Ghetto,* in response to reports of his neighbourhood as a 'crime-ridden, derelict ghetto, a cancer – a blot on the landscape' (Kemal cited in Smith, 1993).

Hunter's use of colour and light concretised him and his neighbours in a specific move past what he calls the 'grainy black and white vision of destitute victim' that can perpetuate the narrative of dehumanisation (Hunter, 2018). Inspired by renaissance master painters like Rembrandt and Vermeer, who had put into motion new visions of communities by painting the middle class in an aesthetic light reserved for the elite, Hunter held a similar aim to 'disrupt the sensible'- 'except that now it's the artistic, creative class that is pushed to the fore and gives its say' (Hunter, in Mosby, 1994).

Hunter and *The Ghetto* directly impacted policy. Receiving attention from *The Guardian* and *TimeOut,* the Hackney Council took notice of a new view of the people living in these homes, and opened up a conversation with Hunter about housing (Parton, 2016). Acting on behalf of the London Fields Partnership (where Hunter was an active member), he addressed the Hackney council, proposing that he and his artist neighbours had a cultural capital worthy of developer's consideration. Rather than destroy an existing neighbourhood and design a new culture, Hunter's artwork gave developers insight into the value of long-standing cultural heritage in the area which could be built upon, rather than erased (Mosby, 1994). The demolition plans were reversed, Hunter and his neighbours were allowed to stay in their homes, and the Museum of London bought *The Ghetto* for £10,000 where it remains on view to this day.

Figure 8 Tom Hunter with his street model of 'The Ghetto' ©Tom Hunter

This artwork evidences the ways in which communities, area stakeholders, artists and an artwork can work with each other to shift a one-way cultural knowledge system by policy makers over communities. It demonstrates the possibilities available when multiple cultures strive together towards an idea of 'incomplete culture' while prioritising making the invisible visible first. The colourful, humanising photographs that illuminated Hunter's street cut across the media's portrait of an anti-social stain to be removed. Hunter, as artist and active resident speaking to the council with a proposal about artists' contribution to the area, cut across the Hackney Council developers' initial plans to demolish and rebuild. The emotions and immediacy available in the artwork became arguably less easy to dismiss than a written report. Diprose's point about the power of affect to impact thinking manifests here: 'the other affects me, gets under my skin, and that is why I am made to think' (2002, p. 126). In this way, the artist with communities and policy makers work on each other within an artwork and within shared policy language, to open up new understandings of needs. It is within this opening up to different, exclusively designed parts of Rancière's sensible fabric, that Barad's concept of an intra-active agential cut applies with one set of cultural knowledge coming into being with another set. The artist, his local community, the developers' and the housing

policies specific to 1994 East London became interdependent and changed in relationship to one another.

This chapter examines the wider landscape of arts funding policy in relationship to community needs. It specifically charts the ways in which artistic practice moves with policy and how both can work on each other to disrupt the problematic one-directional nature embedded in UK arts funding policies that has continuously defaulted to a 'complete' democratised culture narrative.

Illuminating the ways in which cultural democracy opens up new possibilities to work towards de Sousa Santos' notion of incomplete culture, the chapter then focuses on how artistic practices, like Hunter's, can demonstrate the potential for communities to not only inform funders and area stakeholders of local needs but to also work with them in practice to do so.

The chapter includes an examination of artists' roles in these projects who must carefully navigate community and policy agendas. It also includes an investigation into participants' roles, exploring the ways in which artistic practice can be framed to pronounce their social, creative and aesthetic needs. As such, the chapter concludes with a substantiated call for a practice as research methodology to investigate the inter-personal nature of the research questions with Hammersmith United Charities.

2.1 Tracing cultural democracy

While the concept of cultural democracy has resurged recently, it is not a new idea in the scope of arts funding policies in Britain (Wilson, Gross and Bull, 2017; Jeffers and Moriarty, 2017; 64 Million Artists, 2018; Matarasso, 2019). From the inauguration of government funded arts programmes following World War II, to current practices across a range of local and national funding bodies in 2020, this first section charts the history of the movement, looking particularly through the lens of the Arts Council as one way to view the progress of post-war arts[12]. It looks at the ways in which cultural democracy has consistently developed

[12] While government funding contrasts with charitable trusts like Hammersmith United Charities for the ways in which they are able to distribute, manage and decide the aims of their funds, there are several valuable overlaps as well as distinctions that offer a relevant contextual backdrop for this research.

in response and reaction to the problems of democratised culture and the ways in which its current use still grapples with equity.

Aims to 'democratise culture' have often provoked two sets of problems: what kind of art is funded and the way that funded art is used as a strategy for including those who are socio-economically on the margins of society. Set up with similar aims as many welfare programmes established after the second world war, Arts Council England (originally called CEMA- Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts) initially aimed to boost morale and recover the nation with accessible and affordable programming. CEMA's choices to fund certain types of art to boost morale, to recover or return a nation, omitted a scope of cultural tastes and heritages connected to those who might be doing the 'recovering.' When Caribbean immigrants, for example, were offered British citizenship in exchange for working to rebuild the nation, they were not called upon to epistemologically co-create Britain, let alone co-create its culture. So while the aim of 'social inclusion' underpins a theory of democratised culture, it also connects with a reality of 'social exclusion' by leaving out financial support of an *a priori* set of cultures attached to myriad socio-economic communities.

The veneer of democratised culture will only go so far: 'Other cultural configurations will not only be subordinate to this dominant order: they will enter into struggle with it, seek to modify, negotiate, resist, or even overthrow its reign--it's hegemony' (Clarke et al, 1981 cited in Hewison, 1997).

2.1.1 Community arts legacy

The Community Arts movement that emerges in Britain in the late 1960s evidences this resistance within the landscape of national funding. Led by an ideology to focus the arts towards the 'marginalised, whom [artists] sought to empower through participatory creative practice' (Bishop, 2012, p. 177), professional artists moved from the aristocratic structures of theatres and galleries into the streets, working alongside community members to create works in a variety of non-traditional venues. Their ideas were accompanied by a 'passionate interest in creating new and liberal forms of expression' and a political activism that believed 'creativity was an essential tool in any kind of radical struggle' (Kelly, 1984, p. 11).

Rather than passively receive a kind of culture decided by the few, this movement clarified the tenets of cultural democracy: to produce and consume art by and for all constituents, including those living on the socio-economic margins.

Influenced by artists like Joan Littlewood, and the Adventure Playgrounds, both emerging during the end of World War II, community arts practices shifted narratives away from hierarchy with direct address, agit-prop theatre and working class language. Littlewood's 'Fun Palaces' project with architect Cedric Price in 1964 epitomised participant-led activity, with their designs providing flexible structures wherein any person could decide their own rules for engagement to interact or observe (Mathews, 2005). Similarly, the Adventure Playground movement was built on the philosophy of 'places where children could express themselves in a free and unrestricted manner in response to their instinctive urge to explore, experiment, invent and extend their various and multi-faceted patterns of play behaviour' (Chilton, 2013, p. 2). The recognition that audiences could participate in the determination of what they wanted, rather than be spoon fed a singular idea, emphasised an ethics of cultural democracy that anyone from any background had agency to create.

The greatest boon to the community arts movement however, was also its greatest challenge: national government funding. As community arts groups sought financial support to professionalise their work, the Arts Council, overwhelmed by the abundance of applications for this new approach to making art, established a definition by which to decide whether or not to fund. The aims to empower marginalised communities through process driven work prompted the Arts Council to create a different set of criteria against which to measure its value.

With a shared resistance to subscribe to the Arts Council's elitist systems for articulating value (Kelly, 1984) and a differentiated set of political agendas within practices (Jeffers and Moriarty, 2017), artists were not yet certain of a singular definition of what cultural democracy looked like and accomplished. While a case can be made for the ways in which separatist evaluation strategies by the Arts Council played a hand in further marginalising the marginalised, artists refusing to articulate their practices were also critiqued for their complicity. Community artists shared processes and outcomes with other fields like education and sports, but lacked the strategy to formalise a language around it (Bishop, 2012, p. 179).

Critical to note as well, that nowhere in this evaluation conundrum was an effort made to consult with the communities with whom the artists were engaging. As Jeffers discusses in her recent publication about the community arts movement, she cites Bill McDonnell's critique:

> When we create taxonomies and classes of practice with no reference to the understandings, views, or desires of the communities whose work and experiences we describe, we are denying them the right to name themselves (McDonnell 2005, cited in Jeffers and Moriarty, 2017, p.19).

Such side-lining has shifted over the course of 70 years of policy. Now several funded programmes value communities as central and key to determining arts programmes and recognise the effort it takes to engage them in these settings. This will be discussed in later sections of this chapter, but at the time, the lack of articulation around artist and community impact impeded the community arts agenda and led to a re-orientation. The Arts Council returned to the familiarity of democratised culture– using major cultural works (determined by their standards) as an educational and civilising strategy. Community artists became conduits for outreach, rather than drivers of a shift in understanding culture as a multi-faceted, multi-pronged process and set of outputs (Bishop, 2012, p. 189).

The Community Arts Movement set up an origin story for the complex relationships between funders, artists and communities. Community artist and writer Francois Matarasso calls this the 'double legacy' of the movement, whereby top-down and bottom-up strategies move in regular response and reaction to each other (2019, p. 138). The lack of a shared language between funders, artists and communities has enacted a relentless search for understanding and articulating value.

When the default value measurement is economic, the capacity to open up to other cultural ways of making, beyond mainstream ones that are dependably good value for money, tends to dissolve. Following the community arts movement, the Greater London Council (GLC) sustained support for grassroots arts and cultural activities beyond mainstream institutions with a range of events, workshops, community arts centres, festivals and exhibitions created by and for minority cultural groups (Atashroo, 2015). But in 1986, the GLC was abolished and the social intentions of wider participation in cultural production reverted back to the tenets of democratised culture as Margaret Thatcher's policies of deregulation refocused arts funding towards the mainstream. With an exclusive prioritising of the economic value of the

arts, tourist culture like the West End thrived; million pound cuts from arts funding meant the small community efforts couldn't sustain themselves (Hewison, 2013).

2.1.2 The social value problem

When the value systems turn towards the social, cultural democracy thrives again and Matarasso's double legacy resurges. Artists seeking to redirect the commodification of the object from Thatcher's economic driven arts policies, turned their attention to how artworks could become a space to practice new relationships of power between those who tend to have it and those who don't. Artists like Hunter and others who will be discussed in the next section, worked on opening up community cultures to each other both in and through artworks. But these artworks often categorised in principle with Bourriaud's relational aesthetics[13] (1998), were misconstrued in the New Labour government's regeneration policies. While recognising the arts as an instrument for social change, it was a kind of social change that was constructed by the funder, rather than by communities, returning policy to the problematic relationship Diprose discusses in Levinas' 'I over you' (2002).

Under Blair a 'social exclusion unit' was set up with 17 policy action teams (PAT) designed to tackle different issues affecting those on the margins. PAT 10 focused on the strategic benefits of the arts, sports and leisure. With artistic processes and outputs positioned solely as a prescribed remedy for social exclusions, rather than as a method for understanding numerous cultural ways of making and engaging, the success of these programmes was measured in reaching targets such as crime going down or employment going up. But these targets often weren't met and policy makers, like Estelle Morris, who worked as both secretary of state for education and then minister for the arts, recognised the problems in such expectations.

> I know that Arts and Culture make a contribution to health, to education, to crime reduction, to strong communities, to the economy and to the nation's well-being, but I don't always know how to evaluate or describe it (Morris 2003, in Hewison, 2013, 49%).

[13] This term and its critique will be further discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

While this golden age of funding and reporting attempted to provide new and better language to articulate value, it still missed an essential connection with the communities it was serving. The hyper-instrumentalist view of art continued to see art only as a tool for betterment according to the policy makers' views, which returns the problems discovered in early discussions with HUC's trustees. Understanding the value of art for oneself takes on a different set of criteria than understanding the value of art when it is being funded for socio-economically marginalised communities. Just listening to Beethoven isn't enough when the arts are positioned as a tool to fix systemic inequities. But, the problem lies in this positioning of art, which not only leaves out a thinking of how those systemic inequities came to be in the first place, let alone a thinking with cultures that are already in place who may not require that aspect of life to be 'regenerated.' The fallout comes in these programmes ultimately not reaching or impacting the intended communities; instead they detrimentally reinforce divisions of culture and class.

> After 70 years of the Arts Council, and many years of outreach initiatives, the inherent limitations of this approach have now been demonstrated. Not only does it remain stubbornly the case that only a small proportion of the UK population makes regular use of publicly supported culture, but recent research shows that people participate in places and in ways that, on the surface at least, have little or nothing to do with publicly funded cultural organisations (Wilson, Gross and Bull, 2017, p. 18).

The legacy of the community arts movement lies in its original intentions to demonstrate alternative ways to make and consume culture. Artists and communities have relentlessly tried to get policy makers to understand there are other ways of making beyond the major institutions; but, value for money, ideas of what constitutes culture, and ideas of how that culture should be used to make its poorer or socially excluded constituents 'better' has kept policy makers and cultural institutions from embedding those intentions.

It is important to note that artists and communities have suffered issues of articulation as well. And as much as the bottom-up strategies can be credited for the current resurgence of cultural democracy, the value reports do deserve credit for their relentless search for articulation. The coining of 'public' and 'cultural' values emerged in the final pushes of New Labour's golden age of arts funding and reporting. Public value introduced the idea that value could be created by citizens, not just funders and cultural institutions, and cultural value introduced a wholistic approach to understanding value as an interconnected system of intrinsic and instrumental impacts (Holden in Hewison, 2013, 51%). While these terms

couldn't be grasped or enacted at the time[14] and the financial crash in 2008 landed value supremely back in terms of economics, they have begun to manifest in funding policy efforts in the last decade.

2.1.3 Current cultural democracy policy

A range of national and local funding has opened up to deeper partnerships between artists, policy makers and underserved communities. Since 2013, Arts Council's 'Creative People and Places' programme has given £54 million to 30 different programmes across identified areas in the UK where there is less engagement with the arts. In 2017, The London Borough of Culture began offering an annual award of £1.35 million in funding and partnership to support arts and cultural activities driven by residents of the winning borough. And 'Creative Civic Change', a partnership between 'Local Trust, the National Lottery Community Fund, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation supports fourteen communities across England to use the power of the arts and creativity to create meaningful civic change in their areas' (Local Trust, 2019).

These initiatives focus on how communities participate in the decision-making process for projects– from being ambassadors on panels that commission artists, to maintaining consistent participation in the co-creation of a project through its completion and evaluation.

> We are interested in the dynamic between artists and arts organisations and communities when communities take the lead. We hope this programme will challenge top-down modes of engagement and push artists and arts organisations to work in a new way with communities in which power is shared and respective expertise is highly valued… resident-led creativity should be at the heart of any strategy to make communities thrive (ibid).

This commitment to shared power is key in the journey that I will trace in my own practice in subsequent chapters that moves from co-presence to co-production to co-ownership of projects. And it is particularly important to note how this transition of power is often an uncomfortable process. As Grace Bremner, who currently oversees the fourteen different projects for Creative Civic Change noted in conversation with me, authentically letting go of power in order to create space for community knowledge to enter in is hard for the larger arts

[14] This was due to a resurgence in debates about excellence v. social instrumentalism as evidenced with the the McMaster report and its fall-out (Hewison, 2013).

and cultural institutions–who may preach community engagement– but do not sit so comfortably with a true letting go of the reins in the decision making process (Bremner, 2019). Inevitably, opening up and uncovering arts and cultural engagement that is truly driven by the communities can be messy and full of failure. As Melanie noted in the complexities that have unfolded with the Big Local partnership that HUC supports, the failure is valuable and not a signal to ignore, or worse use as a reason to revert to the more familiar methods of one-directional democratised culture. These co-created programmes necessitate a deeper investment in time and funding to understand what skills communities need (2018). And as Macken of Power to Change notes, the practice of co-creation and end user-driven work often expects community members to contribute for free what would usually be paid work. Funding scopes must therefore budget payment for all parties to engage in extra time for learning and development (2020).

Within these evolving practices, not only funders are opening their processes to communities; but, artists and cultural institutions are also acknowledging the importance of finding and articulating a shared language with funders and communities. The precedent set in the community arts movement where artists resisted articulating their work, for fear of succumbing to elitist tick boxes, is currently countered by initiatives like 'Co-creating Change' set up by the Battersea Arts Centre's (BAC) former artistic director, David Jubbs, who said:

> The shift is from us going to the Council's arts team and saying, "can we have some money?" to seeing ourselves as a civic realm organisation in the Borough of Wandsworth who are providing support to the people and institutions in the borough to achieve their potential (2019, p. 36).

Jubbs evidences a necessity for artists and arts organisations to not only articulate their work, but to also become more aware of the politics of their work, which addresses critiques for artists who sometimes give culture in the same problematic 'I over you' methods as policy makers. Co-creating Change is currently a network of over fifty arts organisations supported by ACE, Gulbenkian and Paul Hamlynn, who are working specifically on elucidating the power dynamics and shared agency between communities, funders and artists (BAC, 2019).

These artists and policy makers who are opening up to new ways of being with communities expose a useful ontological vulnerability that will be interrogated throughout the thesis. As government officials attached to DCMS acknowledged during the height of failed targets, and

as Jubbs states above, there has to be an admission in the narrative that elements of past policies have not worked. These admittances to failures are critical for evolving policy and for opening up space for communities to be part of the decision-making process for how and what culture gets funded. It is within this opening up to getting to know the cultural needs of communities who are situationally vulnerable, that a concept for intra-vulnerabilities begins to take shape.

While these efforts are emblematic of a progression from the 1960s-70s and the 90s and early 2000s, they are still deeply ensconced in policy vernacular. This point returns me to the success of Tom Hunter's *The Ghetto* and the possibilities of a third strand in the thesis' concept of 'intra-vulnerabilities' – that of an exposure or expression available within artistic practice. The endless struggle by policy makers to seek better and better articulations of value continuously runs into the problems that Barad notes when 'Language has been granted too much power' (2003, p. 801). When art is often described best as indescribable, a conundrum arises for policy makers seeking measurable impact through policy definitions and numbers alone. Ranciere proposes a generative contradiction with an idea of 'readability' in the 'uncanny.' This is his 'dream of an artwork:'

> The dream of a suitable political work of art is in fact the dream of disrupting the relationship between the visible, the sayable, and the thinkable without having to use the terms of a message as a vehicle.
>
> It is the dream of an art that would transmit meanings in the form of a rupture with the very logic of meaningful situations. As a matter of fact, political art cannot work in the simple form of a meaningful spectacle that would lead to an 'awareness' of the state of the world.
>
> Suitable political art would ensure, at one and the same time, the production of a double effect: the readability of a political signification and a sensible or perceptual shock caused, conversely by the uncanny, by that which resists signification. In fact, this ideal effect is always the object of a negotiation between opposites, between the readability of the message that threatens to destroy the sensible form of art and the radical uncanniness that threatens to destroy all political meaning (Rancière, 2004, p. 63).

The dreamwork of articulating value to support communities on the margins of society with art and culture has arguably been misplaced on written reports that prioritise the mechanism of governance. This thesis argues for value to be found in the artwork and between the

artwork and more expansive language that tunes into description and analysis of the artwork itself.

Hunter's *The Ghetto* works in this way. Between photography, sculpture and storytelling, he is able to transmit an expansive view of his community that catches the attention of those who might impact their fate. In this way the artwork is readable through its uncanniness; but, as Rancière discusses, it cannot be *the* awareness raising tool, or it distils the artwork down. I take Rancière's point to value Hunter's artwork with his activism and the discussions that ensued with the Hackney council. It is within this network of artistic practice and words (be that through discussion, theory, written report, etc.) that a potential to hold the uncanny with a complementary readability can lie.

But it must do so in an equation that does not portend to simply translate one to the other, but to respect their different languages. As James Thompson suggests, such a seeking for readability does 'not denigrate performance as preparation for the real work of political change, but values it as a purposeful part of an intervention into our sensible world' (2009, p. 177).

The performance way of knowing is different to the academy and is different to the written reports of cultural policy making. As Conquergood notes: 'We challenge the hegemony of the text best by reconfiguring texts and performances in horizontal, metonymic tension, not by replacing one hierarchy with another, the romance of performance for the authority of the text' (2002, p. 151). How these different performance, academic and institutional languages can cut across each other is supported by Barad's theory of intra-activities where each language holds different sets of knowledge that together can span greater transmission, and greater access to understanding.

The next section examines the ways in which artistic practice has demonstrated a performative methodology for shifting cultural policy and the ways in which inviting funding stakeholders into artistic practice might contribute to a deeper embedding of the tenets of cultural democracy.

2.2 Practice as co-presence, co-production and co-ownership

The following artistic practices demonstrate the ways in which dialogic and relational aesthetics help clarify and elucidate a spectrum of cultural needs. From new and expanded narratives of communities within artworks, to new and expanded relationships between artists, communities and policy makers that intra-act while making such artworks, the practices emphasise the value of community cultural knowledge in co-creation processes.

Due to the research context and its collaborative nature with housing and community grants partner, HUC, this artistic practice review focuses on participatory artistic work that has taken shape at the intersection of housing and community development and informed policies in these areas. I follow Bishop's use of the word 'participatory' over 'socially engaged practices,' to attend to the specificity of a direct 'involvement of many people' (2012, pp.1-2).

2.2.1 Expanding a narrative of need

I continuously draw attention to Hunter's *The Ghetto* as it will connect to ways in which I employ ideas of generative metaphor[15] in my own artistic PaR. Having depicted a squatter community of artists and working class families as creative and productive, rather than destitute and in need of moral correction, Hunter's use of light and scale offers a new view of crumbling homes and the people who occupy them.

Used both as places of residence and artist studios, Hunter's neighbours were building community gardens and cafes and contributing cultural capital to the area, rather than evaporating it (Payton, 2016). Hunter's photographic portraits of his community within a sculptural model of his street led the Hackney council to invite Hunter to discuss housing. In this opening to consultation, culture and policy-making had a chance to flip its usual problematic 'I over you' vision of betterment. It was the communities that gave their voice and informed policy rather than the other way around. An existing set of cultures were in turn heard and given value as a staying force that would not only continue to thrive in their homes, but also contribute their own social and aesthetic cultures to a developing and changing neighbourhood. The partnership between the artwork and the activism is also key

[15] Donald Schon's concept of generative metaphor is set out in the introduction

here– again, illuminating that the metaphor does not do all the work in the art alone, but offers a method for theoretical understandings to emerge from and with the work.

UK artist Stephen Willats has similarly challenged views of socio-economically excluded communities with his participatory arts practice. With a commitment to long-term work with residents in social housing who are often reduced by the system, he focuses his work on building complex and rich visions of their lives (Kester, 2004, p. 91). In *Brentford Towers* (1985), Willats established a framework where willing residents were invited to collaborate on photographic collages that juxtaposed meaningful objects in their homes with the views out of their estate housing windows. Text from conversations he had with the residents also formed part of the collage composition. His process for making collages with residents, conversing with them about their possessions, then conversing again after the portraits were made and placing the artworks within the tower (only if all residents obliged), spoke to a desire to create alternative, more active and autonomous narratives than the ones of 'passivity, segmentation, [and] isolation' created by developers, planners and architects (Willats, 1990).

Figure 9 'Brentford Towers', (1986) ©Stephen Willats

The effect of this sequencing of the presentation on different floors was to change residents' behaviour, so that they would travel to those on different floors and in so doing meet other residents. The work could thus affect life in the tower block, not only conceptually, but also actually to stimulate new relationships countering the isolating physicality of the block (ibid).

While Willats' work was not a direct performance for policy makers as Hunter's turned out to be, his invitation into artistic practice was designed to change relationships within communities that are marginalised—to counter isolation policy and build a narrative of

solidarity and communication. My practice will similarly draw on aspects of collage as a way to make visible the depth of beneficiary experiences, and I also look to windows and domestic objects as aesthetic touch points for examining how people's approaches to looking out and looking in contributes to this depth.

US artist Suzanne Lacy builds on the use of artistic frameworks to invite participation and subsequent articulation of needs by underrepresented voices. She extends this framework to include service providers' perspectives. *The Oakland Projects* was a series of performance artworks that focused on different ways to address tensions felt by youth in society. Beginning with *The Roof is On Fire* (1993-94), where audience members were invited to sit in the back of cars on the roof of a car park and listen to teens discussing the prejudices they experienced, *Code 33* then developed out of specific tensions identified with police. This latter project brought the police and the youth together in conversations that communities were invited to witness and then respond to.

Figure 10 'The Roof is on Fire' (1993) ©Suzanne Lacy

Figure 11 'Code 33' (1995) ©Suzanne Lacy

> While *The Oakland Projects* contained highly visible performances, screenings and installations, it was constituted as a weave of programs and relationships that took place throughout ten years, including projects with education, health, probation and truancy departments of the city and county, presentations at police conferences and youth career programs, curriculum design, mentorships, and on-going partnerships with significant institutions. Projects were continuously responsive to the learning in the previous ones (Lacy).

I draw on Lacy's playful and rigorous structures that intrigue and invite dialogue (and performance) about difficult subject matter. She draws on the casual and the playful as substantial tools for engagement. This returns an acknowledgement for how an aesthetic of joy can accompany and facilitate dialogue about serious social dilemmas (Pentinnen, 2013; Thompson, 2009).

Willats and Lacy's work connect with Bourriaud's relational aesthetics, which employ art as a space to enact and examine human relationships (Bourriaud, 2002). However, Kester's dialogic aesthetics offer a more apt specificity for the ways in which 'interactions with others and otherness' 'can challenge dominant representations of a given community and create a more complex understanding of, and empathy for, that community among a broader public' (Kester, 2004, pp. 115-118). Relational aesthetics is often critiqued for portending a social change within artistic practice that can be out of touch with policy makers, mostly when the set-up for participation is already predetermined (Miller, 2016). Kester's dialogic aesthetic, which calls for communication across a 'broader public,' is taken forward into the research to mean policy makers must be a part of these practices with beneficiaries in order to drive policy change.

The next section reviews practices that specifically focus on how this can take shape when art processes are co-designed and co-led by communities, artists and in some cases policy makers.

2.2.2 From co-presence to co-ownership

The artworks discussed thus far engage in different modes of co-presence between artists, communities and service providers, but it is valuable to identify that they are all artist-led endeavours. Hunter, Willats and Lacy invite participants into their chosen media, be it photography, collage or performative installations. All three artists are clear in asking permission and respecting the agency of participants. Lacy in particular works deeply in

partnership with policy makers, youth and school programmers to develop her work. But there are models of artistic practice that open up more equitable agency in the project design from the outset[16]. These are practices which have been led by communities and then supported by artists and service providers. *Granby 4 Streets* (2013) is one such project. A group of residents in Liverpool who spent two decades revitalizing a set of homes that were slated for demolition eventually garnered the support of Assemble architects to 'present a sustainable and incremental vision for the area that builds on the hard work already done by local residents and translates it to the refurbishment of housing, public space and the provision of new work and enterprise opportunities' (Assemble studio). de Sousa Santos' and Dussel's return of knowledge is carried out here in 'celebrating the value of the area's architectural and cultural heritage' as it integrates the 'resourcefulness and DIY spirit that defines the four streets' (ibid).

Similarly, in the US, Project Row Houses, a 25 year-long initiative that began when seven African American artists saw potential to reinvigorate a historically black neighbourhood in Texas by repurposing a set of row houses set for demolition, has now evolved into a network of public art, community entrepreneurship and affordable housing that also manifests an epistemological return:

> the rich history and symbolism of the shotgun houses that dot the physical landscape of [the] Third Ward informed and shaped the ideals of Project Row Houses. It was a style that originated in West Africa and was brought to the US via the slave trade – first through the Caribbean up to New Orleans and then across the country. Mindful of the history and depth of symbolism in these houses, the founders began to brainstorm what a project would look like if it encompassed 22 houses (Project Row Houses).

[16] This can be clarified either by a project's name and/or description of it.

Figure 12 'Project Row Houses' courtesy of GHCVB

At risk of disappearing in new build developments, the rejuvenation of these homes signifies a dialogue with diaspora that sustains, rather than erases cultural histories reflective of the living communities. As such, in the 25 years since Project Row Houses began, a substantial new partnership has manifested in housing aesthetics and functionality inspired by these cultural roots (ibid).

Both Assemble and Project Row Houses demonstrate regular and long-term commitment to working relationships between communities, artists and service providers. These practices are related to regeneration, but not exclusive to remedy according to policy makers' definitions. The practices are about opening up to pre-existing culture, and ensuring their pronounceability as integration strategies unfold more equitable working relationships between communities, artists (who are often part of these communities) and housing policy makers. This is the difference between the reformer strategies of correction culture that heavily dominated instrumentalist policies under Blair, and the progressive return of cultural knowledge that de Sousa Santos and Dussel discern as more ethical and equitable practices.

Assemble and Project Row Houses develop co-presence (also available in Hunter, Willats and Lacy's aesthetics) into co-production and co-ownership of not only one-off events, but of entire community development strategies. Hunter, Willats and Lacy engage in a range of gradations of shaping by communities. Lacy's weave of programmes are co-developed, but mostly derive from her initiatives. Assemble and Project Row Houses are co-designed and co-led with communities, artists and service providers on the initiative of the community. These distinctions of co-presence and co-production help clarify the aims and accountabilities

of different projects, helping to decipher where in the artwork or process of making relationships change to become more equitable in terms of communities building development projects as much as the service providers. These distinctions also help identify where in the art work, in tandem with analysis and policy language, movements towards equity can be elucidated further.

2.3 Naming artists and participants in community and policy relationships

In identifying these elements within artistic practice that communicate understandings of communities and their service providers more fully, it is useful to name the artists in these triangulations and examine the slippery role they play as additional agents in the evolution of cultural democracy. It is also critical to name the participants in the making of artworks. This can both illuminate their contributions, and to Kester's point of not fixing communities to singular definitions, ensure not all participants, just like not all artists or funders, are presumed to hold knowledge in the same way by virtue of their position on the 'giving' spectrum.

Artists are often caught between a funder's agenda, communities' interests, and their own perspective and potential to do what they might do best: make art. There are artists who, like funders, have been complicit in perpetuating a model of cultural deficiency. Kester names this a problematic 'orthopedics,' whereby an artist is brought in to fix and give culture that the beneficiary couldn't have realized without their provocation. '[T]his orthopedic orientation preserves the idea that the artist is a superior being, able to penetrate the veils of mystification that otherwise confuse and disorient the hapless modern subject' (2004, p. 88). An artist like Willats can fall into this category because while his intentions of empowerment guide his collaborative practice with estate residents, he can still be viewed as the artist who came to give voice. And who, specifically, within his unique artist position is 'suited to both recognize this defect and remedy it' (ibid). This social doctoring is what Munira Mirza critiqued at the height of Blair's instrumentalist policies. She questioned whether such socially engaged practices risked 'distracting the artist from the tricky job of producing inspiring art' (2006, p. 17). While Mirza draws more upon a bourgeoise notion of the artist as individual genius, as opposed to Rancière's more revolutionary surrealist view, she does provoke the dilemma of the artist as facilitator in community contexts.

In naming the differentiations between cultural democracy and democratised culture, cultural democracy proposes the artist prioritise facilitation. Rather than as a professional 'who comes up with ideas for community programmes', the artist is employed as a professional artist 'to co-create ideas with communities' (64 million artists, 2019, p. 4). While some artists excel in this position, not all do, and even for those who do, questions arise as to whether this positioning can compromise the artist's capacity to make art, which could prove a more effective or affective outcome. It is relevant to note that there is a difference between artists making work about their own marginalized experiences versus artists coming in from the outside, coming into partnership with the communities to make work (as was the case for me.) More often than not, it is this position of the 'outside' artist that is critiqued and where facilitation becomes key for honouring the existing communities in order to resist the problems of democratised culture. But, within this landscape, it is also necessary to consider where facilitation gets in the way of making an artwork (a point that arises for me in the following chapters analysing my practice). As Chrissie Tiller writes, there is

> a growing recognition that what artists can do best is create those spaces where people are able to come together to look at the fierce and urgent questions that face our society. Spaces that enable communities to unleash their 'radical imaginations', shift their 'sense of what is possible', and 'model and experiment with new ways of being in the world' (British Council, 2020).

To Tiller's point, the artist doesn't have to compromise artistic capacities which may overlap with facilitation. Articulating these nuances helps clarify skill sets (especially when artists are working in non-arts contexts). Leading from both an aesthetic and an activist practice, Tom Hunter straddles the artist/facilitator dilemma in a way that draws on the strengths of each set of specialist skills, provoking a methodology for problem-solving social issues aesthetically. This hybrid model enables a push and pull of practice and the articulation of the practice, which then leads to multiple impacts. Leading with his skills as a professional photographer and as a community activist, he works across aesthetic, social and political agendas enabling different outcomes. On a policy level the work informs housing and community culture in other contexts, on an inter-personal level it enables his community neighbours and himself to keep their homes, and on an arts level as *The Ghetto* enters the Museum of London's permanent collection, it opens up the chance for a wider audience to learn about an aspect of the city's cultural fabric. As the thesis charts my own artistic practice, it aims to name and clarify where new understandings and resulting policy changes stem from the practice.

Different artist skill sets (both my own and that of my collaborators) are specifically identified in order to do this.

And, to this point, the participants are also specifically named and analysed for the ways in which their social, creative and aesthetic knowledge carries change forward in practice and policy. Participants can often remain unnamed. This is usually an ethical choice, to protect identities. But, this can also be detrimental, in omitting and mis-crediting where specific ideas have come from that may drive policy forward. The collaboration between Assemble architects and Granby 4 Streets CLT offers a positive example that disrupts this. As community volunteer Ronnie Hughes notes: 'it is the community that invited people in' (Power to Change, 2020). From Assemble to even the local council who had abandoned them in the first place, the community coalition determined who would be part of rebuilding and regenerating the area. Ronnie's leadership (he also serves on the board) and the naming of him in a report by grant-making body Power to Change, who contributed funding to their initiative, is crucial for the trajectory of understanding community-led housing policy. Of course arts activities have varying degrees of participation, from those like Ronnie who take on more leadership, to other volunteers, who may have painted the fronts of the houses on this project. With the permission of participants within my practice, beneficiaries are named (by their first name) to give proper credit to ideas that develop the charity's and my own understanding (as artist and researcher) of a wider range of needs. This takes shape expansively from community leaders who partner on some of the PaR projects to local residents who, while giving less time to the projects, and less input into creative production, are still significant holders of knowledge about how best to serve beneficiaries.

2.4 A call for Practice as Research

This chapter has outlined evolutions in cultural policy and artistic practices that have informed developments from democratised culture to cultural democracy. It has taken into account the limitations of policy language driven reports on value and impact, the persistent call for new methodologies to continue evolving understandings of cultural value, and the capacity for the arts practices reviewed above to not only inform policy but evidence methods for embedding practice in a living, breathing archive of community development. As such, this chapter concludes with a call for a practice as research (PaR) methodology for the research context.

A constant lament amongst advocates who experienced the cultural democracy origin story in the community arts movement is that these practices have been lost in insufficient documentation. Consequently, there is a frustration that the wheel must be constantly reinvented. The Artists Placement Group (APG), an initiative developed alongside the Community Arts movement in the 1960s, placed artists in non-arts industries to reflect, disrupt and offer new ways of working through artworks and artistic processes. There are links here with a housing charity commissioning an artist in 2016 to help contribute new understandings of service provision. But as the APG dissolved ultimately because of a scarce capacity to prove its value deeply enough (Bishop, 2012, pp. 163-176), one has to ask if this research will go the same path into a mere trace, only to be written about reflexively in another 60 years?

This is an issue discussed by those writing to preserve the legacy of the community arts movement. Jeffers, Moriarty, et al (2017) are attempting to include the archive as part of the writing with deeper descriptions of process and better documentation of projects happening now that are connected to those initial methods.

Assemble's work with Granby 4 Streets CLT garnered the Turner Prize in 2015, which (while controversially asking "is this art?") demonstrates, as Hunter's *The Ghetto* does in continuing to be on display at the Museum of London in 2020, that these practices are penetrating the major cultural institutions that have often sustained democratised culture over cultural democracy. Assemble and Granby 4 Streets' collaboration in particular contributed a new vision of community collaboration as 'the Turner prize has been won not for a specific work of art but for a way of creating art, with and as part of the community' (Power to Change).

Such visibility in museum culture amplifies the value of interdependent knowledge across communities, artists and policy makers. The intra-acting agencies that Barad speaks to manifests in long-term, regular and evolving practices by artists like Lacy, Willats, Assemble and PRH. And, while there is still no central archive for community arts, a problem which I will address later in the thesis, the visibility of such artistic practices that demonstrate interdependent and intra-active knowledge is increasing. Between the time I initially researched Lacy's work in 2018 and the time I went back to check my references in 2020, she

had updated the *Oakland Projects* significantly. There is now not only ample information on her artist website, but a dedicated website to the project that traces the work across numerous conversations, artworks and policy changes that occurred throughout the ten years. Videos, films, text, press articles and photos add experiential depth to her previous archive demonstrating several access points for artists, communities and policy makers.

And Project Row Houses, now in practice for 25 years, along with *Granby 4 Streets* since 2015, continue to evolve several more arts and community development initiatives which are also on view through their websites.

As Conquergood notes, these practices must work in metonymic tandem with policy (2002). As such, policy and reporting attentions to language should not be demoted. The Arts Council's semantic changes from supporting 'Fine and Performing Arts' in 1945 to 'The Arts' in 1967 to its most recent decision to change to 'Culture and Creativity' in 2020, evidence an evolving ear for how policy language can complement and co-guide best services for the UK's diverse demographic makeup. The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) has called for deeper co-presence between different communities, funders and artist agencies and is consequently establishing the Collaborative Centre for Cultural Value (Kaszynska, 2018).

While recognising this type of work is alive and sprawling across several venues and sectors, such policy venues still have a way to go to not only 'identify a shared evidence base and building [of] institutional memory' (ibid, p. 35) but also to truly integrate academic, institutional and community driven work. As academic Caroline Lenette discussed with me, community cultures are often invited to participate in conferences as the entertainment, not at the policy-making tables (2019), so the call to embed co-created practice as co-created policy is still loud.

Returning to the research context, the charity offers a possible space to develop such integrations between policy and practice as I, as the researcher and artist, was invited and took the opportunity to work in close proximity with the charity's community grants manager and chief executive, as well as the board of trustees, additional staff, and a range of beneficiary communities.

Chapter 3

Disrupting questions about art with art; Establishing a PaR methodology

This chapter establishes a PaR methodology to test if and how artworks and the processes for making them, can facilitate new understandings of a spectrum of beneficiary needs. Taking the evidence of artistic practice as a site for moving away from cultural deficit models towards an understanding of cultural democracy in the UK's wider arts funding policy landscape, the chapter specifically elucidates how artistic interventions in business-as-usual meetings begin to challenge trustee and staff preconceptions through both a self-reflexivity with the research question and a co-presence with beneficiaries.

The first section charts how early research conducted with the charity through a series of performative dialogues demonstrated a capacity for the charity, in particular trustees who commissioned the research out of a scepticism for funding art, to think differently about and critically *with* their beneficiaries through artistic activities. Taking both the willingness to engage and the outcome of the charity to further invest in this way of being with beneficiaries, the second section then establishes the PaR in a participatory, transdisciplinary installation practice. Collaborative ethics and a transdisciplinary aesthetic of joy and metaphor are established as a fitting apparatus to test how the charity might come into a more integrated understanding of culture with beneficiaries and artists.

Within this chapter, the concept of intra-vulnerabilities begins to develop as light touch activities open trustees up to their own relationships to art and problematic ideas about art for the beneficiaries. Additionally, vulnerable acts of listening as a method towards unmoulding complete views of culture begins to manifest as the trustees, staff and beneficiaries come together in a shared activity.

3.1 Performative Dialogues

> Of course puzzles and riddles can be 'solved' by analysis, but equally- like paradoxes- they can require intuition, insight and maybe even instinct to determine their potential as creative springboards for performance research (Kershaw, 2009, p. 113).

The three performative dialogues analysed in this section developed in response to my early intuitions to engage the charity from the personal. Iterating questions about individual needs and subsequent relationships with art and relief, I set out to investigate the research with each aspect of the charity separately first and then together. Drawing on a range of performance and visual arts methods connected to my own practices in theatre and installation, each dialogue employs a different artistic set-up to provoke a relationship with the research, and reflexively becomes a method to discover intra-action between the charity's staff, trustees and beneficiaries. With an aim to be playful, and thoughtful, each dialogue was also designed deliberately in close proximity to the charity's contexts, intervening subtly on usual ways of working as a way to ease a non-arts based institution into an arts-way of knowing. Using aspects of social games to bring people together in new ways, I draw on Bill Harpe's use of the term, not as a method for pitting players against one another, but instead as a means to consider and discover common goals through delight and surprise (Harpe, 2001). In this way, game is used as a playful strategy to engender participation of funding members beyond their comfort zone. Corroborating with Melanie on each dialogue, she helped organise meetings and my interventions in those meetings. Co-analysing each activity then informed the next one.

I first intervened with a book-making activity in a grants committee meeting that invited the staff and trustees into their own questions about the value of art with art. Noting the success of this playful strategy with a group that had already been supporting the funding of arts grants, the next intervention focused on the ways in which the wider board of trustees (who held more scepticism around the research) could be invited into this participatory format. Designed as an interactive card-game at a trustee dinner, the aim was to provoke dialogue amongst trustees, rather than have me report about my findings thus far in a one-way direction to them. Here the research took a turn as one trustee's understanding of the value of art in relation to need not only opened up a recognition for empathy, but for the value of such experiences to be measured by art itself. These discoveries then informed the third intervention, a cross-communal lunch and art exchange, aimed to disrupt the sensible distribution of the charity by bringing benefactor into a different kind of co-presence with beneficiary than typically experienced within the charity setting. With the objective to test what new understandings might come about in such co-presence between decision-maker and

beneficiary—an outcome by the charity to further invest in such interactions opened up the potential for a deeper practice as research methodology.

So as not to perpetuate marginalisation and inequitable agencies in presuming what beneficiaries need and want without them sitting at the tables where decisions about and for them are taking place, the interventions deliberately begin with Maria Puig de la Bellacasa's view to speak from who is present rather than who is absent.

> Creating situated knowledge might therefore, sometimes mean that thinking *from* and *for* particular struggles require from *us* to work for change *from where we are,* rather than drawing upon others' situations for building a theory, and continue our conversations (2017, p. 86-87).

I take her thinking forward here as a means to gradually invite these two sets of voices into co-presence.

3.1.1 Dialogue 1: Book-making with the Grants Committee

Quarterly Grants Committee Meeting
October, 2016
1st sharing of the research ten months into the collaboration with the charity

Take a sheet of paper. Draw a garden. Feel free to take inspiration from the one outside.

Figure 13

Write answers to the following questions anywhere you like within your drawing:

- *Which art form do you think reaches the widest range of people?*
- *When was the last time you listened to music?*
- *Name an art work that has been memorable or inspiring in your life.*
- *What do you need most?*
- *What do you need that others might not consider a basic need?*[17]

Fold your garden into a book

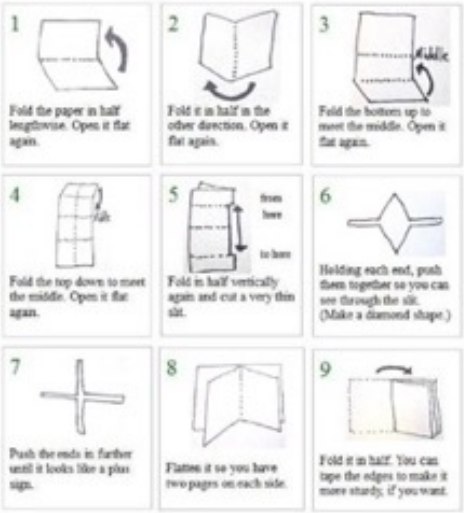


Figure 14

Figure 15

[17] These questions were devised by me as a means to both directly and indirectly address the charity's initial questions about the role of art in servicing needs.

Read and select quotations about HUC's arts programmes, the UK's wider arts policies and beneficiary needs and glue them into pages in your book.

Show and tell: Read aloud the story you've created, reading the quotations you've glued to your pages and showing us the drawings in your new arrangements (informed by the folding)

Since the inauguration of the grants programme in 2012, the grants committee, comprised of the grants manager, the chief executive and four elected trustees, meet quarterly around a table (usually in a room that doubles as the residents' library) to decide and evaluate funding activities. Sheets of paper are only stapled into an agenda. Verbal and written communication dominate. The window to the gardens is a passive backdrop.

The book-making intervened into these usual ways of knowledge production. Taking the library site into consideration, our new books considered the knowledge being made in this room with this research. Folding, cutting, turning upside down, collaging and unfolding themselves in with the research, the trustees revealed a new story expressive of Barad's mutual entailment- where both trustee and beneficiary are not only part of the same story, but part of making that story.[18]

The act of drawing the gardens first enabled an expressive and contemplative space. As Rogers, who engages in drawing as a means to 'draw out' dialogue notes:

> drawing activity can facilitate social encounter either as an initial meeting with strangers…or as a way of colleagues connecting with each other differently…drawing can bring people into an especially open, spontaneous and playful relationship and simultaneously produce an artefact that materialises the exchange between them (Rogers, 2007, p. 9)

While meeting me for the first time, the grants committee members knew each other in the context of these formal quarterly meetings. So, while the activity drew out a more playful interaction with me, it also offered a way for them to perform themselves differently for each other. Within the drawn gardens, grants committee members wrote down needs for more togetherness with their neighbours, more time with family, more time alone –intangibles not far in content from the needs professed by residents and the wider beneficiary communities in

[18] The beneficiaries become part of the making in subsequent activities.

focus groups I had held prior to this meeting[19]. Equally, important to note, not entirely the same either for reasons to do with socio-economic exclusion. None of the committee's drawings expressed a need for playgrounds to replace rusty swings and anti-social behaviour, nor the return of a local supermarket that had been knocked down in favour of upscale flats.

Would the committee members have shared their perspectives in the same way had I directly asked these questions through word alone? Perhaps. But the tangible book and process of making it offered a chance to embody and concretise the ways in which the committee members' lived experience connected and was differently connected to the beneficiaries'. Collaging their own engagements with artistic activity and their own needs with quotes from beneficiaries I had spoken with as well as with snippets from arts funding policy history, offered a visual understanding of the connections between past and present, between the personal and the public, and ultimately, put forward the widening out and opening up to multiple ideas of culture, rather than the distilling down to any sense of 'completeness.'

Inviting trustees into an experience of understanding some of the values of art through the act of making art began to 'bring into being what it names' (Baseman, 2007). This held a kinship with the way the gardens outside the meeting room window and the graphic design of the 'Big Conversation' hanging on the meeting room wall similarly perform their value. As the collage books concretised the committee's part in the research, they became both an artefact for understanding how artistic activity plays many roles in their own lives and the lives of their beneficiaries, as well as a material production evidencing a new view of relief co-created between the entire committee, in relation to the charity's history of funded activities, as well as the wider UK's funding policies shown as part of the same narrative. Artistic activity thus becomes a method, a tool or even an early strategy for making visible Barad's idea for how many knowledge sets can come into being together, while maintaining their own agencies (2003).

Additionally, this activity continued to unfold new relationships with vulnerability. In the early individual conversations with trustees when I asked them to discuss their own meaningful experiences with art, Gilson's ontological vulnerabilities (as distinct from

[19] In the first phase of the research I conducted one-to-one interviews with the charity's staff, trustees and residents whom housing scheme managers informed me had relationships to the arts (either professionally or in a capacity of regular hobby.) I also held focus groups with residents at both of the charity's housing schemes, as well as with residents at two local housing estates and two other beneficiary groups- all of whom had received grant funding support from the charity. In these focus groups I asked about relationships to the arts and to needs.

beneficiaries' circumstantial vulnerabilities) manifested in opening up and sharing their own tastes, passions and, for some, longings to be more engaged with art. In this committee meeting, opening up to affect and exposing one's personal relationships with arts and culture developed further within the group context as they shared their aesthetic interests with each other, not just with me (the outsider). Additionally, this opening to self through artistic media, offered a performative switch into learning and locating expertise differently, in different source material. Drawing and book-making is likely not a method most of them regularly use for communication, and certainly wasn't the usual form in the context of grant committee meetings. Called upon to be experts as trustees at the charity,[20] they exposed and expressed themselves differently in a mutual entailment with their beneficiaries.

An additional outcome in this opening up to artistic practice included an outcome of joy. 'This meeting was more fun than our usual meetings.' Getting 'back to business' as we cleared away the coloured pencils and the scissors, some trustees implied 'fun' would also be cleared away. This thesis argues for the value of such playfulness in the business of serving distress. Beyond being a method for meeting people more personally and approaching decision-making processes about how and what to fund differently, the ingredient of joy becomes productive as a companion for the seriousness of the charity's work. As Thompson discusses, this sense of joy is of value not only in relation to relief for communities facing distress, but also for those working for the benefit of these communities (2009). The unconditional quality of joy that underpinned these early activities with the charity's trustees and staff iterates into an aesthetic of joyful design in the subsequent PaR projects. Identified by myself and other collaborators (including the charity's staff), this joy factor is measured qualitatively through anecdotal evidence by participants (inclusive of beneficiaries and trustees).

3.1.2 Dialogue 2: Card game with trustees

> Artistic activity is a game, whose forms, patterns and functions develop and evolve according to periods and social contexts; it is not an immutable essence (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 11).

[20] Trustees serve to offer expertise in a particular area (HUC)

As Melanie and I debriefed following the meeting, she concurred that while the book-making activity offered a very new way of working for the committee, this group of trustees (by virtue of serving on the grants committee) were more amenable and already 'convinced' of art's purpose. Reaching the more sceptical trustees was our next step.

In this next intervention, I would continue to invite the trustees playfully into the research. First introducing them to the arts programmes the charity was already supporting[21], I would continue to appeal to their own personal relationships with art as a method for locating connection to the research. While a range of cultural interests and tastes were revealed, the most informative outcome was one trustee's acknowledgement that art could be valued most clearly in the artwork itself.

Figure 16

Trustee Dinner
May 9, 2017
St. Paul's Center, Hammersmith

As the book-making activity considered its site-specific relationship to the context of the library/meeting space, this second intervention manifested as an interactive conversation using designed cards that played on the context of a formal dinner with place-card settings. A sealed and numbered envelope resided at each dinner guest's place setting with the clear directive: 'Do not open until it's time.'

I introduced the card game with a brief summary of my research to the staff and trustees in attendance. Each guest was invited to open their envelope in order, read its contents aloud, and then carry out any instructions.

[21] In early casual interviews with trustees, most expressed having little to no knowledge of what programmes the charity was funding beyond the youth programme at the Lyric theatre discussed in Chapter 1.

Half of the cards contained brief descriptions of the different funded arts activities supported by the charity at that time. The other half of the cards contained questions akin to the ones I had been asking in focus groups for the beneficiaries, and in the book-making activity with the grants committee. Each cardholder was instructed to ask someone else the question and then answer it for themselves. Again, a dialogic move to expand outwards rather than distil down ideas of what culture looks and sounds like.
The questions:

- *What art is hanging on your walls?*
- *What was the last live performance you attended?*
- *What is one of your favourite songs?*
- *Who is your favourite visual artist?*
- *What do your communities need?*
- *What do you need most right now that you don't have?*
- *Has art ever provided relief to your needs?*

Like the outcomes of the book-making activity, this performative dialogue facilitated an embodiment of understanding a range of cultural tastes and engagements. From Elvis to Beethoven, from painting one's own pictures to admiring those by Barbara Rae in a museum, and from everyday listening to the radio, to an admission of little to no engagement with the arts due to a lack of time or interest, the twelve trustees and five staff members shared a range of cultural consumption and engagement.

Through this dialogic game, the trustees, staff and I had a chance to deepen an understanding of what 'the arts' can comprise. But the dialogue became key in this elucidation. As Rogers cites physicist David Bohm's model of group dialogue in her practices with drawing, she notes:

> The significant point about Bohm's model of group dialogue is that it has no purpose other than dialogue; it is without goals or agendas apart for a commitment from participants to examine assumptions and their effects on our thinking with the aim of arriving not at agreement but some kind of shared understanding (Rogers, 2007, p. 3)
>
> ...it may turn out that such a form of free exchange of ideas and information is of fundamental relevance for transforming culture and freeing it of destructive misinformation, so that creativity can be liberated (Bohm, as cited in Rogers 2007, p.3).

To Bohm's point, the value of dialogue offers a shift from the one-directional knowledge intake entrenched in both the charity's ethos and the wider arts funding landscape's history with democratised culture. Facilitating this dialogic game with the trustees, sitting with them around the dinner table and talking with them, offered a chance to listen to a range of cultural interests and a range of levels of engagement. And one trustee's contributions did become of 'fundamental relevance for transforming [the] culture' of the charity's original research commission:

In response to the last of the game's questions asked about an artwork that had provided relief to need, one trustee, John, spoke of his passion for Beethoven's 5th piano concerto and how it had restored his hope at a time of great difficulty. When I asked him how, he remarked: 'Oh, you've just got to listen to it.' While I have analysed this exchange in the first chapter to delineate the trustee contradiction in a view of art for the beneficiaries versus a view of art for himself, the point I wish to make here is for the embodiment of art as a means of impact and evaluation.

'Oh, you've just got to listen to it.'

In the listening, in the artwork, lies the evidence. It follows Baseman's performative paradigm to name by doing. Within John's directive: 'just listen to it,' he confidently proclaims the proof of value lies in the performance. This point provides a key catalyst for a Practice as Research methodology. Could the value of funding artistic activity for beneficiaries evidence itself in an artwork in such a way that John elucidates?

John's view of Beethoven is Rancière's political aesthetic at work: it is both uncanny and readable at once (2004, p.63). And as Thompson argues, this can be both entrée into a deeper political understanding- as noted in Hunter's *The Ghetto* for the ways in which led on to discussions and changes in housing policy, or it can be enough on its own, as John experiences in the pure moment of listening to the music (Thompson, 2009, p. 177). I will argue throughout the thesis that this is not be a formula, but a context-dependent navigation.

Finally, the invitation to vulnerability for the trustees to continue opening up to their own personal relationships with art as a mode of empathic understanding of the beneficiary experience continued here. Sharing their own needs and relationships to art in front of each other at a formal setting that does not normally provoke such intimacies was new, but not unwelcome. The former chair of the trustees, Mike Smith, wrote to me the next day: 'Thank

you so much for your presentation last night which everyone found really stimulating. It was a great idea to get us talking with the mystery envelopes' (2017). Again, the outcome of pleasure and fun, I argue, played a significant role here. In listening back to the conversation, there is a lot of laughter shared between the trustees. They are enjoying each other's company and the discovery of each other's artistic tastes, or lack thereof. They are enjoying each other not to spite the more serious problems that unite their commitments at the charity, but I argue, in relief to such world-problem solving. In response to the question: 'What do you need most right now?' which played out between a staff member and a trustee, the whole table erupts with laughter as the balding trustee says: 'hair.' But this laughter is part of what Puig de la Bellacasa notes as a 'dissenting within:'

> this laughter came from the inside, from an involved commitment to problems of community…Laugh with, not laughing at, comes with thinking embedded in communities one cares for (2017, p. 80).

This trustee follows up his joke answer with a brief, but deep longing for hope in the troubled world he sees locally and globally. Puig de la Bellacasa cites Donna Haraway in arguing this kind of juxtaposition can contribute to our 'complex layers of one's personal and collective historical situatedness in the apparatuses of the production of knowledge' (Haraway 1997a: 277 in ibid).

One must stay mindful of the potential trap of such personal introspection in relationship to the problems of democratised culture, however. As discussed with John and his love of Beethoven in chapter one, the consideration for the trustees' tastes in art to be applied to the beneficiaries sets up a potential re-enactment of a limited view of cultural activity and potential perpetuation of the problems that plague democratised culture.

Hence, the next dialogue specifically sets up a co-presence between trustees and beneficiaries.

3.1.3 Dialogue 3: Cross-communal art lunch

As the invitation to co-perform and co-produce the research with the charity's staff and trustees began to disrupt fixed one-directional relations within the charity, disrupting the separated meeting places became the next step in testing how artistic methods could open up

space to consider funding art differently with the voices that were usually absent at the decision-making tables. Melanie and I organised a 'cross-communal' lunch to bring the charity and its beneficiaries together over food and discussions of art.[22] The main outcome was Melanie's consideration for how these kinds of interactions could become more regular in the charity setting. Shifting her understanding of culture towards a constant striving for incompleteness, Melanie carries forward the possibilities for dialogue as a means to demonstrate how intra-activity can come from interactivity. The relationships embodied in co-presence between different parts of the charity (that do not usually interact in these ways) ultimately provoked a new way to commit to more equitable cultural knowledge production.

Cross-communal Lunch
May, 2017
Community Lounge space, Hammersmith United Charities

Hosted in the charity's residents' lounge, the lunch invited staff, trustees, residents, wider area community leaders and beneficiaries to bring a favourite work of art –a tangible work, or a reference or a story they could share about a meaningful arts experience. Twenty people came representing an even mix across the provision spectrum. We ate (a meal provided by the charity,) we shared favourite artworks and arts experiences, and then I facilitated smaller group discussions around community needs.

Figure 17

[22] Knowing food's capacity for bringing disparate groups together, I also had experience with how food could facilitate artistic discussions and help open up to the performative.

As with the book-making and the card game, this exchange now gave staff and trustees a chance to expand notions of cultural democracy by learning from the range of artistic interests with their beneficiaries. Additionally, such co-presence facilitated a listening to varied situational vulnerabilities across the borough, not just within the context of the residents and housing. Many of the same needs were discussed as in the smaller focus groups I had led with beneficiaries and benefactors; but, they now had a chance to be heard together (rather than only being transmitted through me.) Common needs and different needs had the chance to cut across the time and spaces they had been previously allotted. I.e.: trustees don't usually attend community coffee mornings, and so wouldn't have a chance to hear what is spoken in these settings. Equally, beneficiaries never attend trustee meetings.

While my intended aim for this lunch was to open up a wider view of interacting needs in relation to culture between the charity's staff, trustees and beneficiaries, an additional and critical outcome was the recognition that the beneficiaries yearned for more co-presence with other beneficiaries.

At the end of the lunch, after most had left and I was cleaning up, Bill, one of the older residents housed by the charity lingered in a conversation with two men who had only come by chance. They were friends of Liban, the director of one of the Somali service organisations funded by the charity. They had only come to drive Liban to and from the lunch because he had recently broken his foot. Bill invited Melanie and me into their conversation and said how much he enjoyed this. How he has lived in Hammersmith for most of his life, but rarely interacts with people outside of 'his world,' and that it would be great to continue these kinds of events.

As discussed previously, the community grants programme introduced a tension with long-standing housing. Early focus groups with residents and interviews with staff and trustees evidenced this concern about whether the community grants programme would shift focus away, or split attention detrimentally from the residents.

At the start of the research, Melanie drew attention to this in the context of artistic activity. Having placed photographs from a community grant funded arts activity in the residents' lounge, she noted that a week later, the residents had taken the photographs down. The lounge is a mixed-use space used by both the charity's staff and the residents; but, as

expressed in the removal of the photographs, it was clear the residents wanted a say in what type of art occupied their lounge space.

This cross-communal lunch poked at Melanie's own enactment of democratised culture. Albeit, a more nuanced enactment, as her intentions were about sharing community artworks with each other, not about imposing her own views of mainstream art on marginalised people. But through participation in this interactive lunch with staff, trustees and necessarily, beneficiaries and the wider communities, there was a chance for residents' personal artistic tastes to be heard with other beneficiary communities and Melanie.

This interaction between Bill and Liban's two friends, combined with a repeatedly voiced need amongst beneficiaries and trustees for more community cohesion, prompted Melanie and I to curate a series of 'enigma lunches' throughout the 400th anniversary year. Melanie was particularly drawn to see what could come of inviting different people in the borough (who might not normally interact) to eat and share artistic experiences together. The concept of enigma was born from her intrigue with the uncertainty at play in this lunch. Taking Alan Turing's 'enigma code' as additional inspiration, with his chance and casual encounter with a secretary leading to the code-cracking during WWII, Melanie was curious by what might happen if we brought people together over food and art regularly (2017). A commitment to providing a budget for food and a willingness to reach out to different community centres for potential partnership in the co-production of the lunches were the only plan. Everything else would be deliberately unknown.

Melanie's move from hanging photos in the lounge to recognising the problems with that and then deciding to curate a series of co-created lunches with beneficiary partners manifests an acknowledgement of her own ideas of complete and incomplete culture. In deciding to fund and organise a regular lunch series with beneficiaries, she prioritised the pronounceability of the communities' cultural needs over the charity's preconceptions. Not dissimilar from the recognitions from DCMS around the failure of target-driven outcomes, here Melanie, as the funder, opened up an ontological vulnerability to other ways of decision-making that could be informed by those she serves. While DCMS still spun relentlessly in the commissioning of think tanks to uncover new words for capturing value, Melanie sought the interpersonal intra-action with local knowledge in the charity's area of benefit as a better method. And she saw value for how this could happen with art as a method for such exchange.

This move from co-presence to co-production signals a shift in equitable agency between the charity and the beneficiaries, and will be discussed thoroughly in chapter 6. It demonstrates a quality of listening that leadership consultant Otto Sharmer calls 'generative listening' which underpins all of the PaR projects. Sharmer clarifies different types of listening that move from hearing what we want to hear, in ways that support what we already thought, to empathic listening where we can relate and open up understanding to someone else. Generative listening offers the pinnacle listening format for change, whereby 'we enter almost a meditative flow state, which enables us to connect to the highest future possibility that can emerge' (Sharmer, 2013 in Villanueva, 2018, p. 131). Through a generative listening to the beneficiaries' call for more community interactions, Melanie planned to do so in a wide-range of ways.

Additionally, Melanie's reframing of uncertainty as curiosity or intrigue, rather than fear and discomfort in such power shifts, becomes a critical quality to accompany vulnerabilities involved with letting go of the reins. This will be further analysed for the ways in which such qualities can accompany more equitable cultural policy in the arts strategy discussed in the final section of the thesis.

3.2 From dialogue to practice

The book-making activity with the grants committee, the card game with the trustees at their dinner, and the cross-communal 'enigma lunch' evidenced shifts in thinking and doing that opened up nuances across the charity. Widening understandings of what can comprise culture, these methods opened up opportunities for trustee to become participant and for beneficiary to become expert.

The ontological vulnerabilities identified in the early interviews with trustees continued to evolve as trustees opened up not only to me, but to each other in the book-making and the dinner card game. A view from the personal opened up the potential of empathy with beneficiaries; but, critically, as discussed in the cross communal lunch, a new vulnerability emerged with Melanie's recognition of cultural incompleteness. This opens up possibility for future decision processes to come into being with beneficiaries.

These performative dialogues, however, while playful and different in tactic to the ways the charity has functioned, or not functioned with the beneficiaries, have limits. Just as word-driven policy and value reports adhere closely to written terms, these conversations stuck closely to the word. Aspects of culture were expressed in these conversations, but what else might be discovered through methods that were more 'embodied, tacit, intoned, gestured, improvised, co-experienced, covert and all the more deeply meaningful because of its refusal to be spelled out (Conquergood, 2002, p. 146)?

In theatre practices 'ice-breaker' games are often used as a gateway to the main work– a warm-up that prepares for deeper working. As such, I took evidence from the charity's willingness to 'play' and participate, and consequently evolve thinking practices, as a cue to investigate what knowledge could be further co-created in a deeper artistic practice. How might a deeper engagement with practice, both in the making of and experiencing of artworks, continue the trustee's proposal to 'just listen to [the music]' as a method of relief, as a method of measurement, as a method of co-creating understandings of a spectrum of social, aesthetic and creative needs? And how might engagement in such artistic spaces open up more opportunities for vulnerabilities –including the kind of acknowledgement for changing power dynamics in deciding culture?

3.2 Establishing a PaR methodology

Dialogic aesthetic practices, as discussed in chapter 2 regarding policy and artistic practice, address Diprose's proposal to radically transform generosity from a space of imposing ideas of self-mastery to a space of giving way for the other to inform. What Conquergood cites as an ethical value in community/artist relationships 'to bring self and other together so that they can question, debate, and challenge one another (2003, p. 9), Kester poses as an aesthetic of interactions where listening and speaking drives new outcomes in the work that hold rather than reduce difference (2004, p. 115). As Conquergood continues in line with Sharmer's 'generative listening,' dialogic performance 'is a kind of performance that resists conclusions…dialogical understanding does not end with empathy' (1985, p. 9).

The PaR looks for an expansion of these possibilities in a participatory and transdisciplinary installation practice. Drawing on my own career experience working with a range of participants and artistic collaborators, the practice invites the charity's entire spectrum of

provision into artistic activities with professional artists as a way to examine how human and material collaborations can manifest actual and metaphoric intra-activities between the charity and the beneficiaries.

3.3.1 Collaborative Ethics

Each PaR comprises different sets of collaborations between artists, the charity's constituents (inclusive of the beneficiaries, staff and trustees) and unexpected partners in additional service providers including architects and local social enterprises. To provoke interaction, these collaborations follow Hunter and Willats in their modes of building frameworks for participants to take part in; but, also as Assemble and Project Row Houses demonstrated, the collaborations also build frameworks with participants in more community-led relationships. Distinguishing between artist-led and community-led, there are different modes of collaboration that practitioners like Matarasso and US community arts leader, Michael Rohd distinguish. Artist-led projects involve 'the creation of art by professional artists and non-professional artists' (Matarasso, 2019, pp. 48-51) where 'artists work with neighbours and residents on an artist-led vision in ways that may include research, process, and/or content creation with an intention of social impact outside traditional audience experience (Rohd, 2017). Community-led projects prioritise a 'co-operating as equals, for the purposes and to standards they set together, and whose processes, products and outcomes cannot be known in advance' (Matarasso, 2019: 48-51). 'Co-designed with residents and/or community/municipal agencies [they] involve artists aiming their creative practice/assets at resident self-defined needs' (Rohd, 2017). I want to add an additional clarification around the role of the funder or policy maker in these projects, in this case, the charity. I will call this 'institution/policy-led' to distinguish when a project can be guided by the funders' intentions, or how their participation in a work aligns or differentiates with communities' and artists' intentions. Including the policy maker/funder in this artistic collaboration aims to address the gap between policy and practice with a more expansive language of doing-making-thinking-writing.

The co-presence within and co-production of different artworks in my practice moves between different collaborators at different times, changing in both planned and unplanned ways. Some PaR projects are more artist-led, community-led or policy-led than others, and even moments within one project slip between the three. There are problematic reproductions of inequity that arise and I will note these throughout. There are also untapped

potentials for more equity that I will point to in the conclusion of this chapter. I take Matarasso's suggestion to view this slipperiness not as a 'weakness' but rather a 'productive and fertile tension' for catalysing deeper recognitions and identifications for the intricate processes involved in co-creating culture and policy (Matarasso, 2019, p. 26).

3.3.2 Transdisciplinary aesthetics in playful, metaphoric installation

The dialogic potential in these collaborations is furthered in an expression of aesthetic materials. With a range of materials that productively stabilise and destabilise the practice, the choice of media and the media themselves enable a range of ways to hold multiple perspectives and facilitate generative listening. These aesthetics are particularly adept at employing metaphors which can then be taken forward with analysis and theory to exemplify more integrated and intra-vulnerable relationships between beneficiaries and funders.

Video is used as a medium to concretise the anecdotal conversations carried out in the early research's performative dialogues. As a means to share them more widely beyond only myself and the charity's constituents, I deliberately wanted to ensure the charity could return to these dialogues once the research was done. Video also offered a method for facilitating a virtual shared and interactive co-presence between service providers and beneficiaries, who would not have come together otherwise due to time constraints and busy schedules.

But video is also employed for its impermanence, as much as its permanence. Used as projection in a live installation space, it demonstrates a capacity to show a coming and going, an un-fixability. The fragile nature of light flickering on and dissolving away offers a way to understand Schon's generative metaphor in the medium for the ways that vulnerabilities move and shift, come and go, and are not necessarily ever permanent. This is a quality of the medium that evidences best in a live installation- that may not have quite the same impact as watching a film in the context of a screen only. A co-presence with the fragility of light moving across materials offers additional insight into a co-presence with encountering vulnerability. While this will be experienced differently in the online portfolio, there is video documentation of this particular aspect to illustrate the point.

This address of 'liveness' connects as well to the use of scenic design in the installations. Theatrical sets comprised of architectural models of flats, life-size domestic furniture, life-

size frames of homes in a process of being built, and outdoor playful furniture, give a tangible space for co-presence between the charity and its beneficiaries. These designed spaces invite the audience to enter *in,* which continues a consideration for being *with,* rather than looking *at.* As prominent installation artist Kaprow established with his redesign of the viewer as participant in the installation, this set-up invites a journey through the work (Reiss, 1999). Again, the documented online portfolio attempts an immersion into these worlds as a way to demonstrate how they were experienced live, facilitating co-presence between audience members with the artworks and with each other. The analysis of these metaphors thus becomes particularly important in this online transmission that lacks live interaction.

Layering images and materials is used as a method for developing multiple, concrete and full portraits of beneficiaries as well as service providers when they join the latter PaR projects as participants. Enabling simultaneous views contributes an expression of pronounceability and widening out of culture, rather than distilling down to one complete view. Following Hunter in his aim to create more complex images of people that push past singular framings of destitution, the PaR projects layer images as a means to concretise more dimensional views not only within communities, but within individuals.

Additionally, a technique of fragmenting images is a method for holding value for wide-ranging cultural processes and tastes. Even as one image writ-large might speak to a collective need, it is often fractured across multiple surfaces, or into separated spaces as a method for examining individual agencies within the spectrum of service provision.

Finally, scale plays a significant role in each project in both the materials and performance sites. From architectural models to life-size house frames and swings, and from tiny screens in local community centres to large video screens in Westfield shopping centre, this movement between size offers a further investigation into Kaprow's immersion. What does the small scale model offer in terms of a view of the whole picture that cannot be witnessed by walking into one of the residents' flats? As Hunter's model gave a view of his whole street, it simultaneously invited a big picture view in conjunction with fine detail as viewers could peer into each home. Equally, my practice asks, what changes can be identified between viewing three architectural models at once in *Remembering the Future* versus standing with a life-size house frame in the projections of *Moving Between*? What performatively shifts between the viewer, the object and the subject when the artistic

rendering is scaled down or up? When the viewer becomes part of the installation, what perspective changes can be expressed? Or when beneficiaries' ideas for artistic commissions are placed on eight, 4256mm x 1710mm LED screens at Westfield shopping centre, how can size demonstrate new imaginations about who knows what about who needs what?

As developed in the early performative dialogues, the PaR projects all work with a continued aesthetic of joy, facilitating more human relationships between service providers and beneficiaries and expansive understandings for what qualifies as relief. From humorous storytelling to playful installation design, the projects invite and cultivate joy as a necessary strategic element.

Mixing these material aesthetics both inform and are informed by the collaborative relationships in the making and experiencing of each of these works. The thesis argues that it is through these boundary crossings available in artistic practice that different relationships between the charity and beneficiaries come into being and become more vulnerable with each other. As these vulnerabilities move and shift, informing one another, there are actual and metaphoric ways to visualise and enact more equity in cultural policy making.

The next section of the thesis charts this development.

Part II

Moving towards co-creating culture in practice

The next three chapters delve into the ways in which artistic practice as research can open up possibilities for equitable agency in cultural policy making between the charity and its beneficiaries. As the cross-communal arts and lunch exchange offered a foray into co-presence, the five PaR projects iterate and build a trajectory from being together to leading together. Differentiated processes in co-presence, co-production and co-ownership ultimately point to possibilities for co-creating culture and policy.

Chapter 4

Testing co-presence in *Remembering the Future*

Figure 18

Continuing my methodology to interrupt the charity where it is most familiar, the first PaR is made in relation to the charity's housing context. *Remembering the Future* was a video and architectural installation that featured seven of the charity's housed residents: Kate, Dinesh, Bob, Clodagh, Elsie, Bryan and Peggy. They share their memories of the local area and their perspectives on housing which guided the collaboration between myself, Irene and Tom of Levitt Bernstein architects, who were planning a new intergenerational housing development with the charity, and Paul, a video/scenic designer. The installation was first mounted in the West London Architecture Society's two-week public exhibition, 'Where do you think you are?' at St. Paul's Centre in Hammersmith as part of the June 2017 memory-themed London Festival of Architecture. It was then remounted as part of London South Bank University's Digital Storytelling symposium: "Critical Care," on 31st March, 2018.

Figure 19 St. Paul's Centre Hammersmith, 2017

Figure 20 Borough Road Gallery, 2018

Audience members were invited to walk through an expression of the charity's almshouses, picking up headphones to listen and visually experience different resident stories from within the architectural models.

View the practice and its documentation here: https://www.carolyndefrin.com/remembering

Remembering the Future, first and foremost picks up on the limits of language with Kate, Dinesh, Bob, Clodagh, Elsie, Bryan and Peggy centre stage as humans with rich and full lives. Their circumstantially vulnerable positions are framed in expertise, guiding Paul, Irene, Tom, myself and ultimately the charity in an ontologically vulnerable capacity for listening and understanding a range of social and aesthetic needs. Filmed conversations with the residents reveal a range of vulnerabilities related to age, income, and loneliness; but, the residents are not exclusively bound to these stories and conditions. Stories about watching the

Queen's coronation on a first television set, of meeting a true love in a local dance hall, of a chance encounter with Bob Marley when he turned up to one of the residents' music shops, are humorous and adventurous as well as tragic when attached to war, economic crises, losing loved ones and facing personal illnesses. These more dimensional views of residents are noted by staff and trustees and the residents themselves, and evidence a shift in thinking about lived experience in relation to informing service.

This chapter analyses how both human and material agencies concretise and express the possibility for new relationships between the charity and its beneficiaries to impact future service provision. The tactic to make this first PaR in close proximity to the charity's long-standing housing remit continues an effort to challenge the trustees' scepticism about the value of art and where that value might be found. With the installation presenting new views of their residents through the charity's aesthetic proclivities for high quality housing, I aimed to elucidate the ways in which the beneficiaries' relationships with aesthetic needs might be connected to the charity's. Simultaneously, I aimed to use this connection as a gateway for understanding how the beneficiaries' were also different. Levinas' asymmetrical 'I over you' did persist, however, in the charity's sustained understanding that this PaR 'gave voice' to their beneficiaries. The chapter addresses this reflexively, charting how this outcome drives iterative adjustments for the next PaR.

4.1 Collaborative intra-activities

The collaborations within the artistic practice between the residents, the architects, myself and another artist, slipped between Matarasso and Rohd's identifications of community-led, and artist-led projects, and what I have clarified as a third negotiation with institution/policy-led agendas. In such productive slippages between these three models, a concept of intra-vulnerabilities develops as the charity, the architects[23] and the artists open up to the beneficiaries' lived experiences.

[23] The architects slip between service provider and artist vulnerabilities here

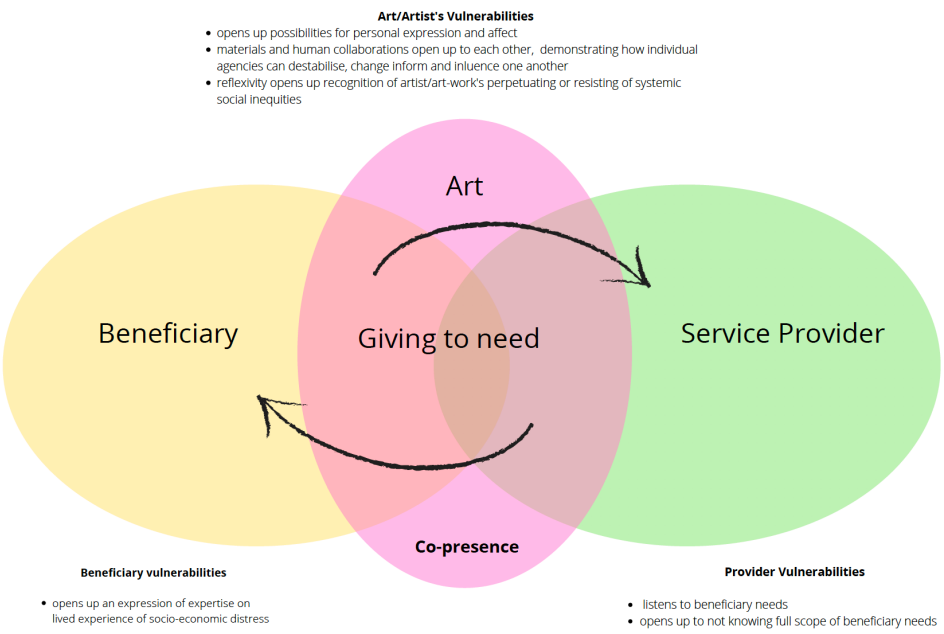


Figure 21 Intra-vulnerabilities in artistic co-presence[24]

Remembering the Future was made in response to a brief from the West London Architecture Society, who curated the exhibition as part of the 2017 London Festival of Architecture.[25] They were seeking older peoples' personal histories with the area to be part of the year's memory-themed festival. Having recently led consultations with the charity's beneficiaries about how they might want to participate and engage in activities to commemorate the charity's upcoming 400th anniversary year, Tim, HUC's chief executive, and I knew that residents had voiced their desires for an oral history project about the history of Hammersmith. Tim decided this opportunity would offer a good baseline for gauging residents' participation, while also testing the charity's aims to raise their profile through new partnerships and platforms and my aims to create a first test in artistic practice between and across different parts of the charity. As such, there was buy-in from the community (in this case, the residents), the artist (me) and the funder (HUC).

Leading from an artistic intuition, I shared an idea with Tim that would involve projecting filmed interviews with residents into model boxes of their homes. Having worked recently in this way with the theme of memory in my personal artistic practice, I was intrigued with the

[24] The placement of beneficiaries on the left is deliberate as an indicator of how artistic practice offers a way to pronounce beneficiaries' first in a relationship of giving to their needs. *Remembering the Future* prioritises listening for the service provider.
[25] The London Festival of Architecture is an annual festival taking place across the city in a variety of exhibitions organized through local and national stakeholders.

ways in which miniature scale offers a chance to see a wider scope of content in light of theme, and video projection light can give poetic expression for content that navigates fragility and care (as content tied to memory does for me.) I shared this idea with Tim who then put me in touch with Levitt Bernstein Architects[26], who were partnering with the charity on a new intergenerational housing plan. Tim thought there might be an intriguing connection between my artistic approach to engaging residents and an early consultation process with residents about housing. Meeting with Tim and Melanie and Irene Craik, a Director at Levitt Bernstein, we embarked on a collaboration to consider how the residents' memories of the local area might reveal insight into their home life in a way that might directly, or indirectly impact future housing design.

Irene offered to build architectural models of the charity's flats with senior architect, Tom Randle at Levitt Bernstein. I set out to film interviews with the residents. With the help of the charity's two housing scheme managers (Cathy and Jill) to identify willing residents across a range of ages, longevity in the housing, and life experiences, I then filmed Kate, Dinesh, Bob, Clodagh, Elsie, Bryan and Peggy in their homes with Paul, the video and scenic designer (with whom I had collaborated on other artistic projects). The charity supported me with a budget of £2,000 to support artistic materials and hire Paul. Irene and Tom would cover the cost of their time and the model materials and build.

It is critical to mention at this point the value of equity in these relationships. Irene and her team, Paul and I, and Cathy and Jill with Kate, Dinesh, Bob, Clodagh, Elsie, Bryan and Peggy all had established relationships of trust and skill. Irene and Tom knew how to build architectural models and lead consultation processes. Paul and I had made a video installation project before and worked in applied arts contexts, understanding not only how to meet deadlines and align an aesthetic process, but care and respect the participants we were inviting into this process. And Jill and Cathy knew the residents best and were able to inform me about who would be willing and wanting to participate. While not everyone would participate in exactly the same way, I argue that this clarity around specialised skills and trust in the different sets of relationships, facilitated a common curiosity for each of us to come

[26] Levitt Bernstein creates award winning buildings, living landscapes and thriving urban spaces using inventive design to solve real life challenges. They work on places and spaces of all shapes and sizes, but have particular expertise in housing for older and vulnerable people - advocating the principles of inclusive design in both their projects and research.

together and work differently. I will return to this point at the end of the chapter, for the way in which this eased our capacity to work with uncertainty.

In many ways this project was artist and institution-led as the brief initiated from the West London architects and the project ultimately was organised by the charity, the architects and myself. But, each of us was instigated by and responding to community agendas: to recognise and celebrate the memories of older people in the local area, to offer an experience for the residents to engage with an oral history project that they had voiced wanting to do, and to learn how this artistic rendering of memory of the local area could expand to include ideas of home that would inform affordable housing for older people and younger families in the future. Several sets of knowledge moved and shifted between resident, architect, artist and the charity's staff. To be clear about specific agencies: the residents weren't at the initial design table meetings, nor did they participate in composing their images or the overall installation design. But, their voices, in the form of the stories they shared with me and Paul guided the entire project. The filmed interviews functioned as a continuous kind of dialogue– a conversation to return to again and again for information, expertise and inspiration. In a view of a trajectory towards equitable co-creating culture, 64 Million artists would clarify the residents' involvement as a 'shaping' with their ideas and views forming the beginning of a project (2018, p. 8).

Sitting with Kate, Dinesh, Bob, Clodagh, Elsie, Bryan and Peggy in their homes, asking them questions about their relationships to the local area and memories of other homes they had lived in, revealed stories about World War II, the Queen's coronation, meeting husbands and wives, travelling to other countries and a range of reasons (from illnesses and mobility issues, to the loss of loved ones and loneliness and isolation,) that had to led them to find housing with the charity. We discussed favourite aspects of their current homes, including the overall community and architectural structure of the charity's housing design which they valued for accessibility, tranquillity and interpersonal relationships.

4.2 From collaborative to material intra-activity

The residents' voices and stories then became the critical point from which to design the installation. Here, the collaborative intra-activities of the project entangle in an expression with intra-activities in aesthetic materials. Moved by the affective quality and content of the residents' stories, Paul and I considered how the installation could express the relationship

we felt in listening and being with Kate, Dinesh, Bob, Clodagh, Elsie, Bryan and Peggy while experiencing their memories. We decided to divide the seven residents' stories across three architectural models so that we could construct the installation as a three-sided almshouse. Rather than place the models on typical architectural or gallery white plinths, Paul suggested we mount the homes on vintage furniture, as a way to transmit the hominess we had experienced sitting with residents in their flats. In the remount of the installation at Borough Road Gallery, we added knitted tea towels, plates of biscuits and tea to the listening station to build this cozy relational atmosphere with audiences.

Figure 22

In an effort to capture the fullness of residents' lives as communicated to us through their storytelling, Paul and I designed a three-screen video-mapping palette inside the architectural models. The filmed footage of the resident sharing their stories with us would always be projected front and centre. This footage was mapped to a model of a couch in the foreground. Meanwhile, two other screens (one in the window of the house, and the other across the entire back wall- that could spill across the whole flat) would offer additional screens for memories to take shape. Images connected to the residents' stories (from the 88 bus Peggy rode to cricket matches at the Oval every Sunday, to the big bands playing at Acton town hall where Bob had met his wife) would appear and dissolve as the memories came and went in the residents' stories.

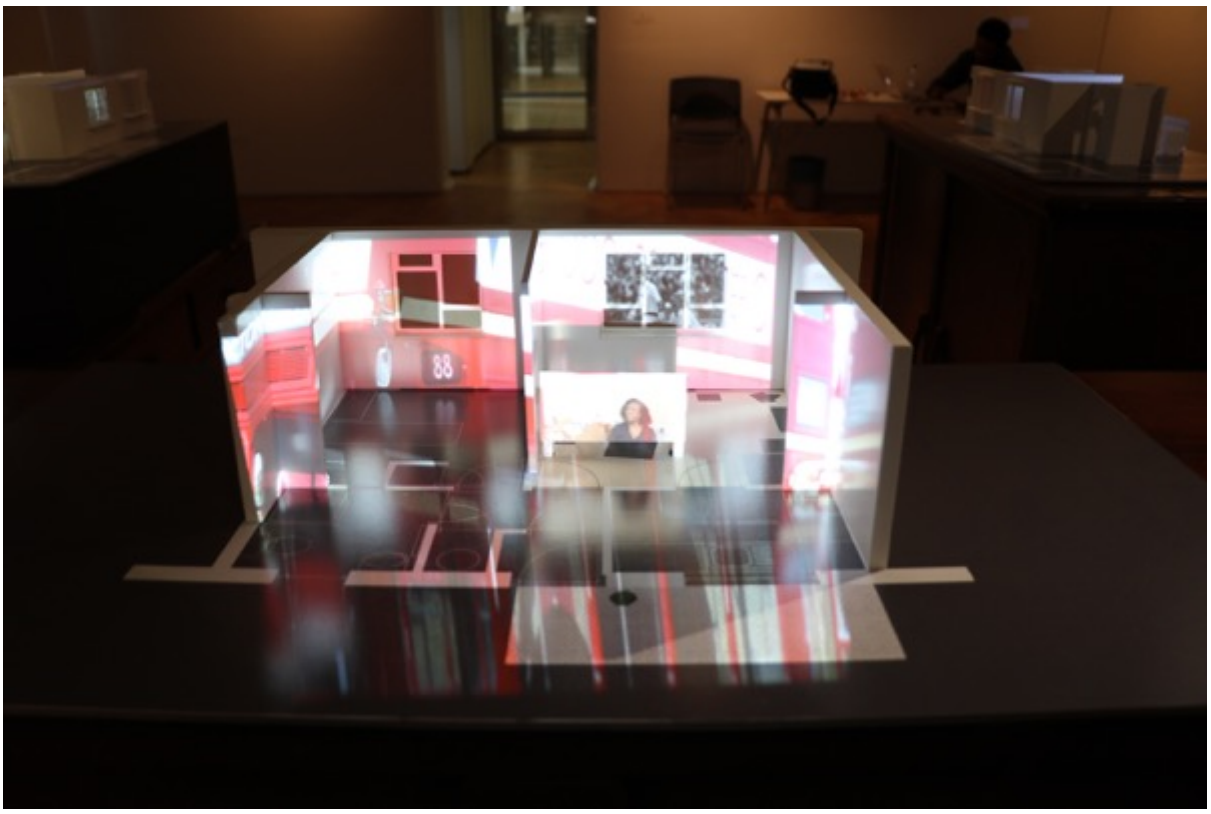


Figure 23 Peggy and the 88 Bus to the Oval

Figure 24 Bob and the big bands of Acton town hall

This design offered multiple visual images as the residents shared stories in five-minute edited sequences. The simultaneity of viewing up to three images in any one moment allowed

a full and complex picture of resident life. Images of Bob's 50th wedding anniversary photographs, second-hand pawn shops, an empty reading chair where his wife once sat, and watering plants, accompanied stories of marriage engagements, losing life-long partners and tending to everyday actions in a more solitary life at the charity. Films of Peggy walking the gardens, cutting tomatoes and showing off her teddy bear collection moved in and out of stories about neighbourly connections, grandchildren and aspirations for healthier living.

These little model boxes full of places and people and emotions distinctly aim to express a vision that moves past problematic images of powerless vulnerability that is often perpetuated, as artist Tom Hunter discussed, in the 'destitute grainy black and white photograph'(2018). Our multi-faceted moving images of colour and black and white, of images past and present in residents' lives, and of a personal history with the local area offer an expression of Barad's intra-active cut that intercepts the charity's past perceptions of residents in a broad definition of vulnerability related to income and age, but also in a view of each resident as unique. While each architectural model is white, neutral and similar in design, the coming and goings of the projection light transforms each box into collections of stories and images of lived lives, each distinct from another.

These comings and goings of the projection light also give an expression to the ways in which Barad envisions 'The world [as] an ongoing open process of mattering through which 'mattering' itself acquires meaning and form in the realization of different agential possibilities' (2003, p. 817). The medium expresses such a move-ability of vulnerabilities. As the projections flicker on, light catching and moving across the model, Clodagh shares her stories of being mugged in a previous home. The lights flicker out and on again as she recounts the tranquillity she finds in a pair of hedgehogs who have come to visit the charity's gardens, and again, a flickering dissolves to colourful fish and a clothing market she enjoys walking to in her day-to-day life. The images move, coming in and out of focus; a metaphoric reminder that vulnerability does not stick us to permanent powerlessness, nor should it be erased in a narrative of invulnerability.

Attending the installation, seeing herself, Clodagh noted it was 'a clever and creative representation of the lives of people living in a small community –all beautifully recreated with humour, compassion and empathy' (2017). Tim said 'the label of age was stripped away, and we saw and heard the fun loving and gregarious youthful selves; people shaped by

the locality, work and family life, and by war' (2017). And Melanie noted that the expanded view of resident, beyond vulnerability, or rather 'with' vulnerability as well as with many other aspects of living 'lifted the two-dimensional view usually associated with the paper definition of the charity's beneficiaries into fully three-dimensional humans' (2017).

These attentions to humour and joy in the residents' storytelling (by the residents and the staff at the charity) contribute a critical humanising that helps disrupt perceptions of beneficiaries as lacking.

Bob and Peggy's stories can be viewed in full and Clodagh's as part of the sampler of stories: www.carolyndefrin.com/remembering.

4.3 Mutual entailment

While storytelling and video mapping techniques contribute to a more complex understanding of residents' lived experiences in an effort to open up, rather than close down a plurality of cultural experiences (Diprose, 2002), the design of the installation also expresses a view of Barad's notion of mutual entailment (2003) between the beneficiaries and the charity. When the installation was remounted at London South Bank University, discussant, Dr. Joann Scott (2018), noted:

> An intersection of that flimsy construction, the ephemeral projection light and the solid dark furniture seems to activate something of this housing scheme - something of the fragility and solidity of that existence.

As discussed, the white architectural models were deliberately placed atop vintage furniture- a design choice informed by our visits with residents in their homes. Paul and I desired an aesthetic antidote to the clinical white plinth that, if used in combination with the white architectural model, might have missed the warmth and unique essence of each resident's flat. But as Scott points out, the 'solidity' of the wood in contrast to the 'flimsy construction' of the models additionally offers an aspirational vision of where to locate expertise. The models depicting the charity's processual stages with a new intergenerational housing scheme, and the vintage furniture portraying the residents' lived experiences invokes Boublil's proposal 'to think vulnerability and interdependence at once' (2018, p. 184).

The metaphor available in the composition of a sturdy and solid vintage piece of domestic furniture supporting a white cardboard model of a house offers a chance to imagine how the residents hold more expertise of their lived experience that can then inform the charity around how best to design housing for residents in the future. Easily knocked about, the model material is deliberately vulnerable as a material architects use to facilitate a changeable process for coming into being. The furniture, however, while worn and holding some scratches, is solid and formed. These vulnerabilities are circumstantially different– but, reflexively, the installation offers a metaphor in the medium to express Barad's mutual entailment between the charity and beneficiary. To reverse the problematic asymmetry in Levinas' pre-conceived giving to other, and recognise instead how the resident could give insight of their lived experience to HUC as HUC gives housing for them. The giving is differentiated, but multi-directional nonetheless.

4.4 Aesthetic cut into housing consultation

While the filmed interviews included direct questions with the residents about what they liked and what could be improved about their homes, the spark and intrigue of *Remembering the Future,* for both the architects and then the charity, was the way in which more indirect questions, storytelling and our artistic rendering provoked a new way to consider housing design differently than usual consultation processes.

The installation gives a different picture of the value of domestic spaces as a close-up of Peggy's hands cutting tomatoes fills the entire back wall of the flat, and a story of the importance of baking cakes for friends overlaps. Bryan performs his early morning ballet routine at his dining table as he tells of his world travels in a professional dance company and the value he holds for the way the garden gives an oasis from the outside bustle of Hammersmith. He takes circular walks around the central gardens each morning with his neighbour in preparation for solo walks to run errands on Hammersmith's busier streets. Dinesh shares his memories as a child back home in India and Kenya: the colours and space that made it hard for him to adjust to London's grey compactness. Inside the model box, he tells this story from his couch as the back wall and the window move between bright colours, children playing and black and white maps of London.

Peggy, Bryan and Dinesh's stories can be viewed here:
www.carolyndefrin.com/remembering

The architects were intrigued by these views:

Irene said:

> being able to be less direct in the questions we asked and in how we gathered people's thoughts and feedback was refreshing and could inform how we engage with people in the future (2019).

And Tom noted:

> if we could expand into the realm of 'ideas' for [the residents'] perfect future home, and what could make things really special, even if this was not completely fixed in reality. … exploring possibilities of what residents really valued the most (even when presented in an abstract way) could [be] useful to draw out common themes. This [would be] quite an interesting blend of art and architecture while still sitting in the overarching realm of resident consultation (2019).

Irene and Tom's responses demonstrate the possibilities for a disruption of Rancière's sensible. Here, the pronounce-ability of what matters to the resident is what drives the service provider, not the other way around. How space is used, the value of the oasis, of colour and interaction between neighbours as well as the proclivities for privacy, comes alive in these stories and in our method for storytelling. Considering design processes as a more artistic experiment guided predominantly by the values of residents, offers a new vision of consultation processes that while Irene and Tom noted, have been considerate of resident views and needs in the past, have tended to be brief conversations, survey tick boxes and one-off interactions.

4.5 Arts practice as a productive vulnerable venue

In addition to framing beneficiaries' circumstantial vulnerabilities with expertise and the service providers' consequential opening up to an ontological vulnerability in listening first, there is one more vulnerability that entangles in *Remembering the Future,* and contributes new knowledge: the vulnerability that accompanies the process of exposing or expressing ideas through artistic media.

The architects, myself and the charity were all working in new ways. While an artist for twenty years, I had never collaborated with architects or made a piece specific to housing. Nor had I made work from verbatim interviews. The architects, while adept at consultation, had never worked with an artist before.

> It was interesting how [the project] was inherently architectural and not a large step from our usual work – with us helping to present a series of scale plans and models of resident's current homes. The interesting layer that then brought everything together was the films and 'memories' of the residents themselves, which was a much more from the realm of theatre and cinematography. An architect (who I can't remember the name of!) once said about his/her generally monochrome buildings that – 'people provided the colour.' Hearing such interesting stories about resident's homes and colourful conversations… has helped to reinforce this idea, which is very much linked to one of our practice's key philosophies that buildings should always be designed with people at their heart (Tom, 2019).
>
> The process in which we worked with you was also quite different to the normal more linear nature of our projects here (although we try not to be too linear!). It felt like we had a bit of a role to harness some of the myriad of ideas you generated, to give the projects the focus they required in order to be delivered. So I suppose the impact on us was to see and understand better how your creative process worked and how more generally the dynamics of a collaboration with an artist works (although I know you are all individuals with different ways of working), and how we can help to manage outcomes and the practical stuff at the end (Irene, 2019).

And the charity had never embarked on any kind of project like this.

> The project as a whole saw the charity 'punching above its weight.' What started off as a Big Conversation with Hammersmith Society in March 2017, serendipitously turned, only 3 months later, into a key exhibit in a much larger Festival. We never imagined any of this happening, it wasn't part of the charity's plans, and we didn't know what the end product would be until we saw it. It was a demonstration of the key values of person centeredness, and of trust (Tim, 2017).

Not knowing how this would go and how each of us would contribute or learn from the process of making or experiencing the artwork placed all parties in an ontological vulnerability in exposing ourselves to new methods. For the architects, the outcome was one of buy-in and wanting to pursue this expressive route further. For Hughes, he was thrilled by the outcome of a gamble and enticed by the vulnerable space of not knowing that ultimately gave beneficiaries a platform to share stories, and the charity a platform to be seen by the wider local communities. For me, I was relieved that the charity, the architects and the residents were happy with the outcome, that I was trusted and would be supported to make more work.

While this value of the unknown was embraced, this PaR began with a set of 'knowns.' What the residents knew as storytellers of their own lived experiences, what the charity knew as

service providers, what the architects knew as designers and Paul and I knew about art and facilitation processes played into our capacity to let go and discover new knowledge when we intra-acted. de Sousa Santos' notion of moving from complete cultures towards incomplete manifests here. The value of each of us being expert at different moments meant we could be both expert and novice. I argue, however, that this carries an ethical demand that each player is valued for their expertise first as a method for authentically co-creating culture. Each agent must be pronounceable as de Sousa Santos notes, which means the dominant culture steps back and gives way. How pronounced the residents are is not without its complications, however. The installation was a raised platform for the pronounceability of their stories. The charity, the architects and the artists were working in their service. But transmitting those ideas into language for the charity to manifest such understanding wasn't established fully.

Figure 25 Trustees, staff and residents mingle at the installation

4.6 A call for deeper co-presence

> 'The exhibit served as a vehicle to give voice to, and revealed the rich and diverse lives and memories of older Hammersmith residents. People not always heard.'
> –Tim Hughes, 2017

Remembering the Future offered a way to follow and evolve the trustee's directive to just listen to Beethoven. Here we 'just listen to the beneficiaries.' But, within this prioritising of listening, a problematic giving voice sustains. While the resident's knowledge and expertise

were placed front and centre in the installation offering a chance for their 'part' of the world [to] make itself differentially intelligible to another 'part' of the world" (Barad, 2003, p. 817), the persistent notion that the charity, by way of funding and supporting the installation, had given voice to the beneficiaries remained intact. As such, the residents' agencies I argue were limited in some ways to the model box. Semantics are at play here; but, how does the charity embed a shift in thinking that the residents give their own voices and the charity gives support or amplification for these voices?

Throughout the process of making, the installation may have been in service to the residents, but the experiencing of the installation may have missed this in translation. Looking *at*, or even *down* on the residents, as audience members peer into the architectural models, may have contributed to a problematic 'us v. them' dynamic. The process for making and experiencing the installation demonstrated a co-presence with beneficiaries that reflexively leads to a question about how a more integrated co-presence in process as well as outcome might embed equity more deeply. As such, the next set of PaR projects considers how to engage with the whole provision spectrum in the practice.

Chapter 5

From co-presence to co-production in *Moving: Time Between Portraits*

> There is saying the same thing again in a different form,
> There is saying something new in the same form,
> There is saying the same thing again in the same form,
> There is not much saying something new in a new form.
>
> –Hannah Sullivan, *Three Poems*, 2018

Extracting the findings from the last PaR where artistic practice becomes a space to listen to beneficiaries differently and understand the potential of a mutual entailment of giving cultures between beneficiary and charity, the next series of PaR projects aims to open up these ways of working further by inviting staff, trustees and wider local communities to participate in the practice. Additionally, the PaR tests how to move from co-presence in participatory methods towards co-production in more collaborative design partnerships as a means to understand and demonstrate more equitable cultural decision-making processes.

The tactics to work in close proximity to the charity's remit continue as the PaR moves from a focus on housing into wider community issues, mirroring the charity's recent addition of the community grants programme. The challenge to continue a widening out to culture, rather than a distilling down to a singular vision of culture underpins all three projects.

Based on filmed interviews with thirty three participants across the charity's provision spectrum, the PaR begins in a similar community conversation as *Remembering the Future*, but now deliberately asks questions about peoples' relationships to art in their homes, the local area and beyond. All trustees, staff, residents and beneficiaries I had met in Hammersmith were invited to participate, including some additional stakeholders in housing and community development. The participants who responded were interviewed at the charity by myself and filmmaker, Winstan Whitter for up to an hour. Half of the interviews were carried out in pairs, the other half were one-to-one.

The participants are:

Sagal, Emma, Ben, James, Colin, Rayan, Howard, Mariana, Revell, Kate, Daniela, Ryszard, Shirley, Miku, Nick, Asia, Ron, Azelle, Clea, Daisy, Toni, Lucy, Agnes, Del, Elizabeth, Mila, Kune, Labake, Darren, Sara, Dylan, Abrahim and Melanie.

Initially intended as one PaR, *Moving: Time Between Portraits* became a series of interconnected PaR projects examining different ways that artistic practice can elucidate different ways to co-create culture.

Moving Time continues the collaboration with Levitt Bernstein Architects, taking their desire for a more expressive artistic process forward to include residents and wider area beneficiaries across generations. A colourful swing and set of multi-directional benches comprise an outdoor installation at the charity's 400th anniversary party. Playfully inviting party guests of all ages to discuss aging and the potential use of communal spaces, this project also tests a different equitable relationship in the design process with beneficiary communities. Engaging in a partnership with social enterprise, Petit Miracles, a local upcycling furniture business that trains unemployed people in DIY skills, reveals a set of complexities that comes with sharing more equitable design power. As such, this PaR reflexively examines how the move from co-presence to co-production can be navigated with an identification and awareness of differentiated vulnerabilities at play between partners.

Moving Between then continues a widening out from housing to address additional community needs. An eight-minute film, originally displayed across an installation of a house frame containing eleven screens, expresses multiple community views on the local area's complex relationship to social cohesion. Enabling multiple views at once and playing with techniques of fragmenting images, this PaR examines how to hold plurality while recognising the gaps and vulnerabilities that come for some in exclusion and for others in not knowing how to address such exclusivity. As new considerations are drawn here in acknowledging mutual entailment in the problems of social exclusion, and in admitting a lack of knowledge for how to address it, the concept of intra-vulnerabilities develops.

Moving Portraits arrives at the research's initial questions about what kind of art should or could be funded by the charity. Having examined the relationships artistic practice can have to the charity's housing remit, and its wider understanding of local community needs, this final piece in the series investigates how artistic practice can inform processes for funding art.

The thirty three participants, framed by their own artworks, or artworks they have chosen to place in their own homes, share an idea for a new artwork they would make or commission someone to make. Additionally, each portrait turns the question back on the viewer and asks: 'What would you create?' Participants' circumstantial vulnerabilities intra-act with ontological vulnerabilities within the vulnerable apparatus of artistic expression here, delivering nuanced additions to the concept of intra-vulnerabilities.

Iterating from the problematic 'looking at' beneficiaries in *Remembering the* Future that may have sustained notions of the asymmetrical face-to-face encounter (Diprose, 2002), the three PaR collectively experiment with ways in which Levinas' face-to-face encounter can be rearranged to address the problematic asymmetry of giving voice, or culture. *Moving Time* explores a side-by-side looking in the same direction, *Moving Between* explores how the back of participants' heads offers a way to look with, to see how and what one sees. And *Moving Portraits* returns a face-to-face encounter, but reframed with the participants' artworks and a question for the viewer. These approaches query different ways in which multi-directional generosity might be made more visible within artistic practice and are underpinned by different collaborative and aesthetic intra-activities in the making and experiencing of the works.

The proposition of intra-vulnerabilities continues to develop as a methodology in the working relationships between the charity, the beneficiaries and the artist. Each of the three PaR charts how the charity's entrance into the ontological vulnerability of listening begins to open up further in unmoulding. The nuances of where the practice enables a letting go of the reins, and a potential reckoning with previous ideas of 'giving voice' is then examined. Additionally, a reflexive artist vulnerability is analysed for its acknowledgement of the limits of the practice.

This series of works is scaled up in collaboration and budget from the last PaR. New artist collaborations are sought with filmmaker Winstan Whitter who carried out all filming of the interviews and then co-edited the footage with me for the three different works. Composer Matsidisho Mohojane wrote original music for *Moving Between*. Video and scenic designer Paul Burgess continued a collaboration from *Remembering the Future*, designing the installation for *Moving Between*, and additional production crew in sound engineers and set

builders was also made possible due to a budget supported by the charity, London South Bank University and Arts Council England.[27]

All three projects converged at the charity's 400th anniversary party on July 6th, 2018, at St. Paul's in Hammersmith (the same location where *Remembering the Future* was first installed.) *Moving Portraits* was also exhibited at local festivals and in Westfield Shopping centre from July-September, 2018.

5.1 Moving Time

Figure 26

Moving Time was an outdoor installation of colourful, multidirectional benches and a swing that was designed and made in collaboration with Levitt Bernstein architects and local furniture upcycling enterprise, Petit Miracles[28]. Premiering at the charity's 400th anniversary party on 6 July, 2018, the installation was set up on the lawn in front of St. Paul's inviting

[27] The total budget was £17,000 and accounted for artist fees and materials
[28] Petit Miracles reduce unemployment through training and work experience in traditional craft, restoration, basic DIY, retail, entrepreneurship and business skills. They create opportunities for beneficiaries to create their own jobs.

guests entering and exiting the party to sit with a friend or a stranger, and ask and answer curated questions about aging and home design.
https://www.carolyndefrin.com/moving-time

Continuing a collaboration with the architects, the project set out to evolve the consultation methods developed with older residents in *Remembering the Future* (RTF) by designing an experience across age to help inform the charity's new plans for an intergenerational housing scheme. Taking Irene and Tom's interest in the 'indirect question' approach we had developed in RTF further, *Moving Time* aimed to uncover what could be revealed about housing design through a more playful, expressive approach.

Party guests were handed conversation cards (by myself and the architects) or found them tied to balloons on the chairs and were invited to sit, swing and chat.

Figure 27 images courtesy of Cinzia D'Ambrosi

The questions and prompts included:

What has been your favourite age and why?

What is something you would like to learn from someone younger, or older?
What is your favourite room in your home?
If you had an extra room in your home, what would you do with it?[29]

After writing down responses, guests were invited to hang up their cards on laundry lines attached between trees on the front lawn.

Figure 28 Image courtesy of Cinzia D'Ambrosi

This project iterates the findings from RTF with an aim for deeper co-presence. As participation extends from beneficiaries to the entire provision spectrum, the installation invites a looking 'side-by-side,' as an address of the past problematics of 'looking at.' The design process integrates and navigates this ideology as well in a new artistic collaboration with beneficiary partner, Petit Miracles. As such new strands of vulnerabilities crystallise in the complex dynamic of sharing creative vision and direction. An aesthetic of play and joy continues to develop in this project, developing the argument that pleasure and fun in both a design process and an artwork to celebrate a charity's milestone event contribute critically to serving and providing relief to a range of needs.

5.1.1 The side-by-side

'Besides provides an ethics of the position of the inquiry' (Thompson, 2009: 133).

[29] The direction of these questions was developed with Levitt Bernstein architects collaborating on the project.

Swinging side by side, or sitting together in uniquely designed benches offered a chance for guests to look in the same direction together, or in different directions. The point in both experiences was that there was a looking *with* and that this was a deliberate design alternative to a looking *at*. Irene and I had discussed at one point in our collaboration how conversation had a tendency to flow better in this way; driving with our partners often enabled us to work out our arguments better. Facing the same direction, rather than looking at each other eased the tensions. In a desire to seek creative ways to engage people in conversation around housing and intergenerational needs, this line of thinking offered a distinct cut across the ways in which RTF had retained a looking *at* beneficiaries.

This thinking aligns with what James Thompson notes as a beneficial 'beside' quality for participatory performance practices that can address Levinas' face-to-face problematics.

> In a project we do not say 'look into the face of the other', but sit beside people who are both similar and different from you and feel them as real people who have needs that act affectively upon you (2009, p. 168).

While this 'beside' quality is taken literally in *Moving Time*, it leans into a metaphoric way of thinking and being with another that can inform generosity. The beside offers an equity that is different from a potential diminishing quality in Levinas' 'looking at' (ibid).

This 'beside' ultimately stemmed from one of the filmed interviews with participants, Toni and Colin.

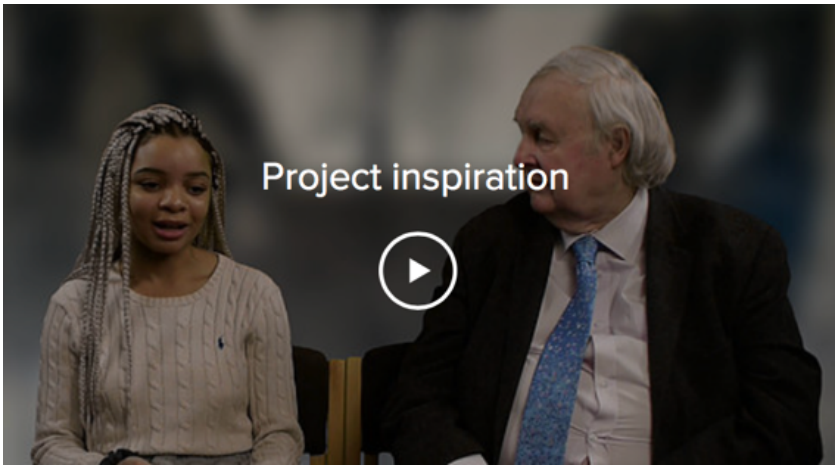


Figure 29 Toni and Colin

View and listen to Toni and Colin's conversation here:
https://www.carolyndefrin.com/moving-time

While I had a set of questions I asked each of the thirty three participants, I began to experiment with those who were interviewed in pairs, asking them at the end of the interview if there was a question they would like to ask each other.

Irene was particularly intrigued by Toni and Colin's conversation. She was curious how more casual encounters between older and younger residents might inform the design of a shared lounge space planned for the new build. The new housing design would hold a distinct separation between young families and older residents. This architectural divide was designed because of the different management schemes. The charity would manage the older peoples' housing, while Shepherds Bush Housing Association would manage the other half with young families. The lounge and the gardens would be the only shared space. Irene and Tom were inspired by Toni and Colin's honesty and openness to discussing topics relevant to their ages and life situations and wondered how we might work together to create an installation that invited more conversations like this as a continued method for consultation.

The process for how we arrived at the swing and bench design is explained in the next section, as it entangles with the collaborative process that occurred in partnership with Petit Miracles. But, the design ultimately achieved its goal to facilitate interactions between different party guests. Young and old sat together. Trustees and beneficiaries looked in the same direction and in different directions. The mayor of Hammersmith and a PhD student swung together for thirty minutes discussing the rewarding satisfactions that had come in growing older and letting go of younger worries.

These ways of interacting with each other through the personal prompts returned to the casual and intimate quality of my initial questions in the early research period with trustees about their personal relationships to art. How could conversations about aging and valued domestic spaces inform universal and differentiated experiences? How could addressing these questions give insight into the mutual entailment between service provider and recipient? Additionally, how could a range of answers open up to (rather than close down) a variety of cultural needs related to housing?

> Those discussions about when people open up and feel more relaxed in an encounter or a conversation were really interesting. The swing and seats I think were more successful in achieving tangible conversations as an outcome [than RTF] and could be used again either as an idea to use the same principles of eliciting feedback, or actually using the swing again… If Underwood [the housing plan] had been moving more quickly, I think we could have incorporated some of the learning from the first project and ideas from the second into the consultation with existing residents (use the swing as a real tool for example). This would have been an ideal extension of your research work into something with more easily measurable results for HUC and local older people (Irene, 2019).

As Irene mentions, the housing planning was placed on hold and as such curtailed our analysis of the event. But as she said, the outcome of the casual, personal encounters offers an intriguing and useful apparatus to be tested again—to see where and how such relating between older and younger residents might inform the ways in which communal living spaces could be designed to serve their expressed values. Favourite and proposed spaces including a library, an art room, a shed for building things, were all considerations the architects were keen to explore further. This information was drawn from encounters related to the playful seating, the thoughtful questions and the sitting beside quality.

5.1.2 Unmoulding I: Discomfort from co-presence to co-production

The potential equity in this 'beside' quality complicates in this PaR's collaborative artistic process between service provider, artist and beneficiary. While continuing an established, trusting and aesthetically aligned partnership with the architects, *Moving Time* introduced a beneficiary partner, Petit Miracles, a local social enterprise funded by the charity who train unemployed people in upcycling furniture. Early on in this project's development, I reached out to Petit Miracles to see if they might be interested in a commission to build seating for what I imagined would be one video installation. This collaboration would then test intra-activities between a range of stakeholders and communities on the charity's provision spectrum, not just as participants but as co-designers. I had preliminary conversations with Petit Miracles founder and director, Elisicia Moore, about the project and together we brainstormed some potential seating options based on bench and rocking chair designs I had seen on their website. I was particularly inspired by a design where they had put two different chairs together.

Figure 30 Elicisia and Iyoub of Petit Miracles with their chair design

Connecting to the issues raised around community cohesion (which is discussed in more detail in the next PaR, *Moving Between)* and with Irene's curiosity to continue bringing different people together through conversation, this design held an opportunity for form to inspire function. What might bringing two different people together, like two different chairs, do to create new meaning beyond the sum of their parts? How might the chair design evidence a metaphoric intra-active cut? With two views retaining agency, how might their coming together produce a new outcome, a new coming into being of understanding culture in relation to need?

Upon receipt of a successful Arts Council grant, the commissioning costs for Petit Miracles to create the seating were covered. With a short leadup time (it was April, the party was in early July) and Petit Miracles' busy schedule, Elisicia suggested the architects and I take the lead on the design of the whole installation, so that they could create a prototype for seating inspired by the architects' knowledge. But this request was complicated by a first meeting between myself, Georgina, a new architect from Levitt Bernstein who was brought on to help design the project, and the team at Petit Miracles. In-process designs from the architecture team conflicted with the bench ideas I had originally discussed with Elicisia and as a result, there was significant tension.

Elisicia called me after the meeting to express her discomfort around the change in plans. While I explained that the plans were processual, I learned that they had been misconstrued as taking over previous ideas she and I had discussed with the seating.

This was a very difficult moment as the ethics of collaboration manifested some of the problematics that underpin de Sousa Santos' notion of recognising complete and incomplete cultures and directly point to what Matarasso calls the 'destabilising' ground formed between professional and non-professional artists (2019). In opening up knowledge between the architects and Petit Miracles, there was an implied professionalism in the architects' methods for design that, while Petit Miracles had asked to learn from, became complicated when a processual moment manifested as an infringement on Petit Miracles' methods for making. Ultimately, I realized that I could have led that first meeting utilising clearer communication methods to lay the foundation for a collaborative process between all of us. I carry this forward for myself and others in similar collaborations to allow more time for an equitable co-design process whereby each collaborator has enough time to get to know how each other works, research together, and decide common goals.

Applied performance practitioner and academic Sally Mackey discusses a relevant 'polyphonic conversation:'

> Polyphony suggests a number of different voices participating in the overall project, frequently following their own routes and independent needs, sometimes harmonious and occasionally not. Within this polyphony are moments of homophony, where all voices join together into one clear and combined melodic line. There are also moments of monophony, where singular voices can be heard quite distinctly…Monophonic single voices will lead at different points in the 'conversation'…At other times, all the people involved in the practical research will coalesce into homophony, as the project demands (2016, p. 487).

Our collaboration required more time for such 'coalescence into homophony.' While I had separate developed conversations with each partner, as a full team we would have benefited from a longer and more communicative design process.

Through this complex moment however, *Moving* became three separate projects: *Moving: Portraits/Between/Time*. This realisation (prompted by conversations with Melanie at the

charity about the possibility of having more than one project address the numerous findings from the thirty three conversations) opened up the potential for different agendas and investigations to be in dialogue with one another. *Moving Time* could just focus on the curation of more conversations like Toni and Colin's through creative seating designed by both the architects and Petit Miracles. Each partner could then design in the way they wanted to, given the pressures of time.

Carrying this information into the next set of design meetings with both Petit Miracles and Levitt Bernstein architects enabled a freedom in the collaboration. No longer attempting to create seating for a video installation, we focused simply on how to invite guests to come together to converse in fun and casual ways. The architects came up with an idea for a swing as a joyful and freeing way to have conversations. While this idea developed out of earlier conversations that Irene and I had had about looking in the same direction, the proposal of such a joyful seat reinvigorated the collaboration. Petit Miracles loved the swing, which reignited the bench idea we had initially discussed, evolving it to include an experiment with multi-directional seating. This metaphoric design would illustrate that while we might look in different directions, we are connected. Or, because we look in different directions, all the more reason we should stay connected.

This was a valuable metaphor not only for the research, but for our collaboration. In one final complicated turn in this co-production, there was confusion about Petit Miracles' final design of the benches in terms of paint colour. The architects and I had imagined the benches would be fully painted in one colour, while Petit Miracles showed us a prototype with the seat left unpainted, in a distinct natural wood colour. When asked if they would consider our option, they advocated for their design.

This brings up subtleties of aesthetic taste, but it also tips into dilemmas of power and agency. I was technically the project lead, which in other professional arts contexts would have meant that the ultimate art direction of the whole installation would be signed off by me and my aesthetic preferences. But, because the aim of this PaR was to test co-production between service providers and beneficiaries, and I was both artist and facilitator, in the end, I signed off on Petit Miracles' design, rather than the one the architects and I would have preferred. Because Petit Miracles had expressed a concern early on that their original ideas

might get overshadowed (Moore, 2018), it was critical in the end (especially as the beneficiary partner) that they have agency over their own designs.

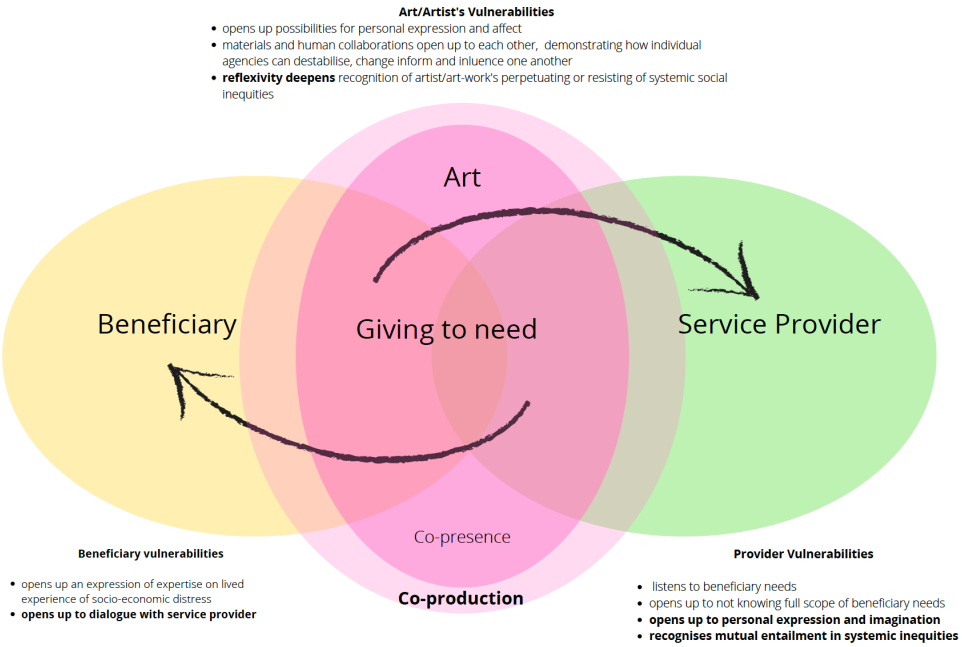


Figure 31 Intra-vulnerabilities in artistic co-production

One of the key vulnerabilities for the architects and myself was recognising the discomforting destabilisation that can come with opening up to other ways of making with new partners who might not share aesthetic tastes or understandings of collaborative processes. This is the argument that many arts institutions make for maintaining control: 'concerns about loss of rigour, quality or control may challenge an organisation's cultural norms or strategic direction- many worry that hard-fought-for brand currency could be diminished' (64 Million Artists, 2018). Imposing ideas of aesthetic quality (which also begs the question of quality according to whom) is the challenge Bremmer speaks to in activating the Creating Civic Change programme with larger institutions who claim community engagement, but struggle to truly let go of the reins when it comes down to it (Bremner, 2019). Understanding that even though things didn't go as the architects and myself may have aesthetically intended, stepping in and taking over would have been detrimental to our process of co-creation, diminishing agency and potentially perpetuating marginalisation.

This is a highly nuanced and subjective moment however which returns me to Mackey's polyphonic by way of Barad's intra-activities. This project went the way it did because of the

intra-activities of specific constraints of time, personalities, and project aims. It was ultimately an artist-led project led by the aims of my PhD, shaped significantly by Toni and Colin, two of the filmed participants– both of whom could be potential residents in this new intergenerational housing scheme. It then slipped into a service-provider, community and artist-led design co-production with the architects and Petit Miracles. Finally, it opened up to a wider participation, inviting all aspects of the charity to engage and 'finish' the work with side-by-side dialogue in the swing and benches on the day of the party. The significant move from *shaping* by Toni and Colin to *co-producing* with Irene and the team at Levitt Bernstein architects, Elicisia and her team at Petit Miracles offer a key development in concretising equities between service provider and beneficiary. For us, in this particular collaboration, that transition from co-presence to co-production was messy and uncomfortable at times. It demonstrated an entangling of circumstantial vulnerabilities, with the beneficiary partner advocating that their design ideas not be side-lined, and ontological vulnerabilities with the architects and the artist letting go of aesthetic reins as well as acknowledging the perception of a 'give and take' culture. In the end, these differentiated vulnerabilities worked on each other to impact and produce a more equitable outcome.

This isn't to say it would go the same way again. If I was orchestrating the same partnership, I would ensure more time to develop a co-design process. I would also ensure the unemployed volunteers that Petit Miracles trains are at the design table as well, to continue opening up a more equitable design process across service providers and beneficiaries. And we could plan much more time to explore the agency of participants like Toni and Colin. How could their shaping of the project become more of a co-production and in so doing, draw out a deeper understanding around housing and aesthetic needs in such equitable making processes between service provider and beneficiary? This could more deeply address the consultation fatigue that often manifests, especially in housing and urban planning (Macken, 2020). Involving community members in art and design projects as part of a consultation process can offer not only just more engagement beyond the word, but more reciprocity over extraction. I.e.: Had the housing plans gone ahead, Irene and her team, with myself and potential residents, could have analysed the conversations on the swings and benches together, co-designed a few options for shared communal spaces and further reflected. In this way, beneficiaries would be able to view the ways in which their creative ideas could be put into practice and impact could be co-named by the charity, the architects, artists and the beneficiary communities.

Iterating a next project in these ways may or may not achieve Mackey's 'homophony.' It is an ideal to strive for, but I don't think it marks the limit of success of a co-production process. The commitment to continued working in this way is the main aim this thesis attempts to elucidate. How in a co-production process between service provider and beneficiary partner can equity not only be practiced, but transmit into actions of better service? The complexities of equity in this artistic design process depict an applicable set of complexities for transitioning from consultation or shaping to a co-producing of policy. How can a policy or decision-making process hold the differential if it can't achieve homophony? When does the charity sacrifice its own ideas of how cultural policy might go in favour of pronouncing beneficiaries' voices?

5.1.3 Relief in joyful design

Figure 32

Figure 33

> I never see like this before, I live here 28 years – first time today. Yeah- yeah, today I feel happy. When I see different people, different culture, different religion, we feel happy you know.
>
> –Party guest in conversation with Winstan, filmmaker, 2018.

Whether the swing and the benches merely provided a bright and playful atmosphere for young and old to lift their feet off the ground for a few moments, or an artistic setting to ponder more deeply how individual lived experiences might inform the design of communal spaces shared by all ages, *Moving Time* led with an aesthetics of joy and celebration.

> The pain beyond the immediate vicinity of the performance project might already make huge, perhaps debilitating demands on the participants. In this situation, a project that focuses on pleasure or celebration might be protective. Attention to beauty might distract or provide respite, but here it is conceived as providing the means for infinite responsibility to be borne in such a way that a struggle for an end to suffering can continue (Thompson, 2009, p. 171).

Thompson's point of the multiple outcomes of a participatory project that concerns itself with joy is taken particularly in an application towards the relationship between the charity and its beneficiaries. His discussion of 'infinite responsibility' refers to the relationship between giver and recipient in Levinas' call to help others. Participating in planning meetings in the lead up to the party, I observed conversations amongst the charity's staff about how much

money should be spent on food for guests and whether champagne was appropriate for a charity that serves people in need. (i.e. should the charity be spending money towards such 'extravagances?') Similarly, the art sceptics on the board of trustees could have asked, should we be setting up a swing and funky benches on the lawn as we recognise our service to relieving economic and social distress? The answer, I argue, is yes.

As discussed at the outset of the thesis, the charity's entire 400th anniversary year of events was billed under a concept of joy. Critiqued by some trustees concerned it would dilute the seriousness of the charity's centuries of service alleviating poverty, Melanie ultimately disrupted the sensible by putting it on paper and getting it passed. Following Thompson's lead on joy as critical relief, especially for vulnerable communities who could most benefit from a 'break' from hardships (2009), the 400th celebrations were a case study in a significant move for the charity to enact the philosophy performed by their gardens: that beauty and joy *are* basic needs.

At the charity's staff and trustee retreat nine months later many of the reflections of the 400th celebrations included a view to continue bringing communities together as they had throughout the year of programming, and some wondered if they had to wait until the 500th anniversary to do it in such a pleasurable and celebratory manner.

As introduced in Chapter 3, Thompson's proposal for joy as an organisational ingredient manifests again here. Celebratory joy and beauty are necessary as much for the beneficiary as for the service provider. Not that the charity's trustees and staff require joy in the same relief to circumstantial vulnerabilities as the beneficiaries, but the accompaniment of joy in this relationship between provider and recipient offers a methodology to care and thrive in their mutual entailment.

The benches are still infusing the charity's office and residence spaces with colour and an invitation to sit differently:

Figure 34

5.2 Moving Between

> '…blanks, holes and gaps could be manifestations of confusion but they also open up to new possibilities if we don't try to fill them with the pre-known and the familiar.'
>
> –Trinh Minh-ha, 2018

Following the expansion in the charity's narrative from primarily housing older people to then reaching the wider local communities through their grants programme, this next PaR moves with and beyond housing to investigate how artistic practice can elucidate other social, creative and aesthetic needs for local communities in Hammersmith. While filming conversations with the thirty three participants, social cohesion was discussed again and again. With so many different cultures and classes of people living so closely together in the borough, there was both recognition for how the demographics made the area special, but equally, there was acknowledgement of the gaps in equity and inclusivity that often accompany diverse populations living side by side.

In a continued address of the problems within Levinas' diminishing face-to-face encounter, the film experiments with the backs of participants' heads. Inviting a view beyond the limits of the face, this idea, proposed by Winstan Whitter, the collaborating filmmaker, provoked another way to look with, to see what and how the participant sees.

Figure 35

Moving Between investigates how to hold these multiple views, continuing Diprose and de Sousa Santos' suggestions to widen outwards in an effort to resist the problematic distilling down to singular culture. With thirty three perspectives across the charity's provision spectrum, the installation aims to not only bring different aspects of the charity together in a virtual connection, but additionally to depict a mutual entailment between giver and receiver in the problems of exclusion. For example, one community member's love of café culture, is another's chagrin for feeling pushed out of the area she grew up in. Analysing the installation's designs as an aspirational method for concretising who knows what about who needs what, the gaps in knowledge and understanding ultimately open up an invitation for missing voices and a consideration for understanding culture as incomplete.

Watch the 8 minute film here and view additional documentary photos and video from the 400th event: https://www.carolyndefrin.com/moving-between

The film available online contains deliberate gaps to speak to the gaps of the installation. As the online documentation cannot transmit the live relationship between viewer, scenic design and the film, it attempts to do so differently with the following written analysis.

5.2.1 Aesthetic designs towards incompleteness

Made collaboratively with filmmaker Winstan Whitter, scenic and video designer, Paul Burgess and composer Matshidiso Mohajane *Moving Between* was the most artist-led of the three PaR; but, as with *RTF,* it was consistently made in response to the conversations we filmed with Sagal, Emma, Ben, James, Colin, Rayan, Howard, Mariana, Revell, Kate, Daniela,

Ryszard, Shirley, Miku, Nick, Asia, Ron, Azelle, Clea, Daisy, Toni, Lucy, Agnes, Del, Elizabeth, Mila, Kune, Labake, Darren, Sara, Dylan, Abrahim and Melanie. Additionally, local artists' works were featured in the film and participant, Howard, who is also an artist was specifically commissioned by us to make a work for the film. This will be discussed at the end of this section.

As Winstan and I co-edited the film, Paul and I scaled up the installation design from *RTF*, to connect the different ways the charity was coming into knowledge around housing and the wider area of benefit. Taking the vulnerability of cardboard model material into a sturdier structure of a wooden house frame, the gaps were a deliberately different nod to the charity's vulnerable position in knowing less about the wider area than they know about housing. The house structure made of wood expressed the charity's sturdy foundation in housing, but the holes acknowledged a process for coming into being with materials (or metaphorically, with other ideas of culture) that are distinctly missing and not yet known by the charity.

Figure 36

Paul and I didn't want this house frame to appear as a new build however. As Hunter communicated to housing developers with *The Ghetto,* it is important to evade a narrative of destroying pre-existing culture. The charity comes with its 400 years of expertise as do the

local communities with a range of differentiated lived experiences. As such, the treatment of wall paper and peeling paint alluding to a palimpsest of lived and living experiences, offered an expression of the charity and the areas' mutual expertise.

Figure 37

With this design, Paul, Winstan, and I aimed to invite audiences in to such processual change, to become part of it as their bodies filled in the gaps and they could see other audiences in the gaps as well. But this co-presence with the artwork would be deliberately temporary to evoke de Sousa Santos' proposal that culture forever strives towards incompleteness. The walls won't ever be built to enclose a finite arrival of culture. The holes offer a way to envision a commitment to staying open.

With wireless headphones enabling audiences to move freely, facilitating this temporariness, the occasional silhouette caught in the screens facilitates a visible co-presence between live human and filmed human.

Figure 38

Paul and I continued our methods for video mapping across multiple screens as a method for concretising and transmitting the complexity of the local area that Winstan and I had filmed. As with *RTF*, this approach allowed a way to hold several pictures of the local area together and simultaneously (in an attempted grasp at more than one cultural view) and to split one image across several screens.

Figure 39

This latter fracture was two-fold: speaking to the threat social tensions posed to the local area, but additionally to the agencies different people held, even in common ground. The beauty of the fresh fruit and vegetable markets is held with the hands behind the scenes struggling to make every last ten pence. Each image framed on its own, or fractured into its own framing is distinctly held, rather than attempted to dilute into a one-size-fits-all solution.

Figure 40

Eleven simultaneous images often portray a precarious beauty that returns Mackey's notion of a 'polyphonic conversation.' In an expression of part-to-part, rather than part-to-whole, 'Such polyphony is not intended to lead to a reductive mélange' (2016, p.488). Rather these perspectives work on each other, with the frames in the installation and the gaps in the online film speaking to the varied vulnerabilities ensconced in these fragile relationships between people and the structures of the local area.

Figure 41

5.2.2 Unmoulding II: The mutual entailment of exclusion

Included in the multiple views held within the installation is an acknowledgement that continues Barad's notion of mutual entailment. The question about how to address social inequities cannot be addressed exclusively through the charity's 'leg up' model. As Fiurama proposes in her philosophy of listening as a creative act, unmoulding these complete views becomes a necessary subsequent step (1990 in Kester, 2004: 107). Emma, one of the filmed participants who is not a beneficiary of the charity, but a local resident offers an understanding of her own part in the problematic exclusions of the area. She discusses her young cousin, who lives in Egypt, imagining her many friendships with the local Muslim communities in Hammersmith. She responds:

> Well actually–
> I don't and that's really sad.
> Because that just shows how they may be our next door neighbours or live on the next street-
> But actually that easy kind of communication…no, it doesn't really happen (Emma, 2018, 4:33-5:10).

Emma's recognition of her own relationship to the complexities of communication between different people opens up a way of thinking about social exclusion more inclusively with and beyond those who are marginalised. What part do other local residents, and to the point of this thesis, service providers, like the charity, play in further marginalising the marginalised? While of course, recognising this exclusivity is not intentional, how could they take part in disrupting usual visions of themselves as the included ones and instead consider how they contribute to exclusive environments?

These questions aren't intended to blame Emma or the charity, but to Emma's point, query how we are all a part of the complexities of such communications between people. By virtue of participating in society, we are constantly moving in different relationship to inclusion and exclusion.

Emma's point unfolds a vulnerability in opening up an understanding of a mutual entailment in the problems of exclusions. Admitting these inter-community tensions are not exclusive to those who are marginalised and equally admitting to not having the answers or knowing how to address processes for inclusivity, offers up a chance to think equitably with beneficiaries in

more metonymic (reasoning part to part) rather than synechdotal (reasoning part to whole) ways.

How can this take shape? While this artist and her artistic collaborators resist a remedial approach (for the reasons which have been cited previously,) the audience reception of the installation points to a consideration for more dialogue. The headteacher of the school that had helped organise six of her students be part of the participants, was at the 400th party where the film installation premiered. Emotional about community fractures discussed in the film, she spoke to me afterwards hoping the film could be used as an entrée into deeper discussions with local communities around how to address these distinct issues. A year later, showing the film to the board of trustees at their annual retreat, they shared a similar sentiment: 'Where else can we share this film?' I acknowledged that while the film captures thirty three views and perspectives of the area, there are many voices missing. How to invite those missing voices into a discussion is a legacy question proposed for the charity. The film available in the online portfolio offers a continuous method to invite those questions.

5.2.3 Art's vulnerable capacity with discomfort

This analysis of *Moving Between* concludes with a discussion of artworks in the film that hold metaphors of community cohesion and fracture. Featuring well-known local Hammersmith artists like William Hogarth and William Morris together with living local artists who are discussed below, the film points to ways in which artworks can express different local complexities.

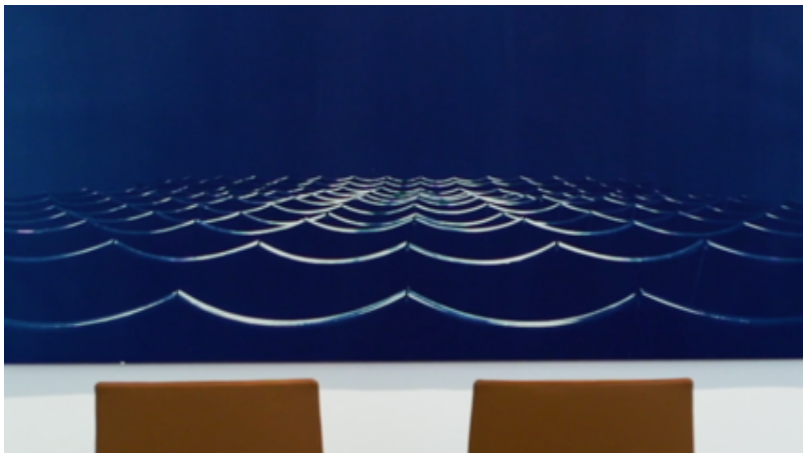


Figure 42 Bridget Smith's 'Blueprint for a Sea (Infinity)' 2015

Bridget Smith's *Blueprint for a Sea*[30], which Winstan and I found while filming in different buildings throughout Hammersmith, accompanies Emma's conversation with us about not easily communicating with her neighbours. Smith's large-scale cyanotype of cinema seats blurs into an image of a sea (through her photographic process). With her work often speaking to gaps between reality and imagination (Contemporary Art Society, 2020), this piece felt apt as an accompanying image for Emma's point about the complexities of knowing one's neighbour. Winstan and I were told by the security guard in the building that the two chairs in front may or may not be part of the installation. We felt these empty chairs sitting by side watching the sea offered a metaphoric expression for neighbours, originating from different countries, not yet knowing how to understand or interact with one another.

Figure 43 Mariana Gordan's 'Portrait of a Street' (2012)

Local artist Mariana Gordan, whom I met through a community coffee morning in my early research phase, let us use documented images of a sculpture series she made called *Portrait of a Street* (2012). These figures were used instead of actual images of people to depict a section in the film that talks about the diversity of the area not necessarily being 'out of choice' (3:57-4:15). Rather than potentially perpetuate marginalisation by fixing certain

[30] *Blueprint for a Sea* was commissioned by CAS Consultancy to create a new installation for the reception of MediaWorks at White City Place.

people to the vulnerable positions being discussed at this point, Winstan and I wanted to expand a depiction of humanity beyond such literal representation to continue the move--ability of vulnerabilities proposed in *Remembering the Future.*

The film draws to a close with a work of art being made by local artist Howard Hutchinson whom I also met at a coffee morning at the White City estate early on in the research. I asked if he would want to create a work of art about his perspective on the local area[31]. When we filmed with him, he was in early stages of a new work called *'silhouettes'* that felt like the right expression for two different sentiments spoken by fellow participants Ben and Liban.

> 'I'm well aware of divisions and disintegrations where…where things don't work in society. People are at each other's throats' (Ben, 2018, 6:44-6:56).

> 'We need a different approach to our problems. We don't always have to go by the textbook. Textbooks say something, but our problems are slightly different. Addressing our needs is more important–you talking to us– than addressing what's in the textbook' (Liban, 2018, 6:58-7:10)

Drawing around these silhouettes as these two voices are heard, Howard eventually takes the silhouettes away, leaving only their colourful tracings.

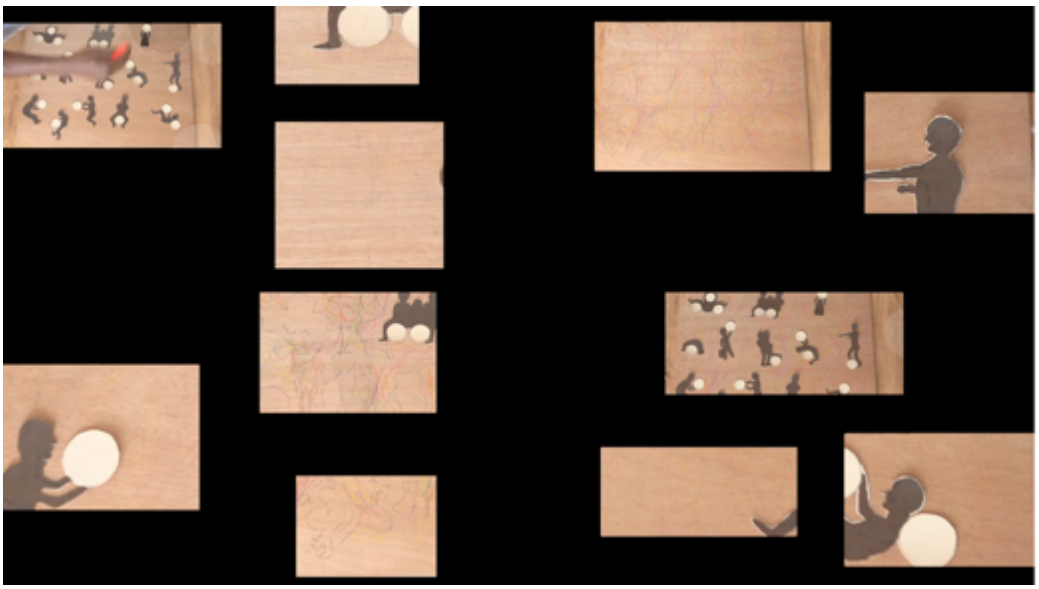


Figure 44 Howard Hutchinson's 'Silhouettes' (2018)

[31] He was paid to do this out of the budget from the *Moving* series

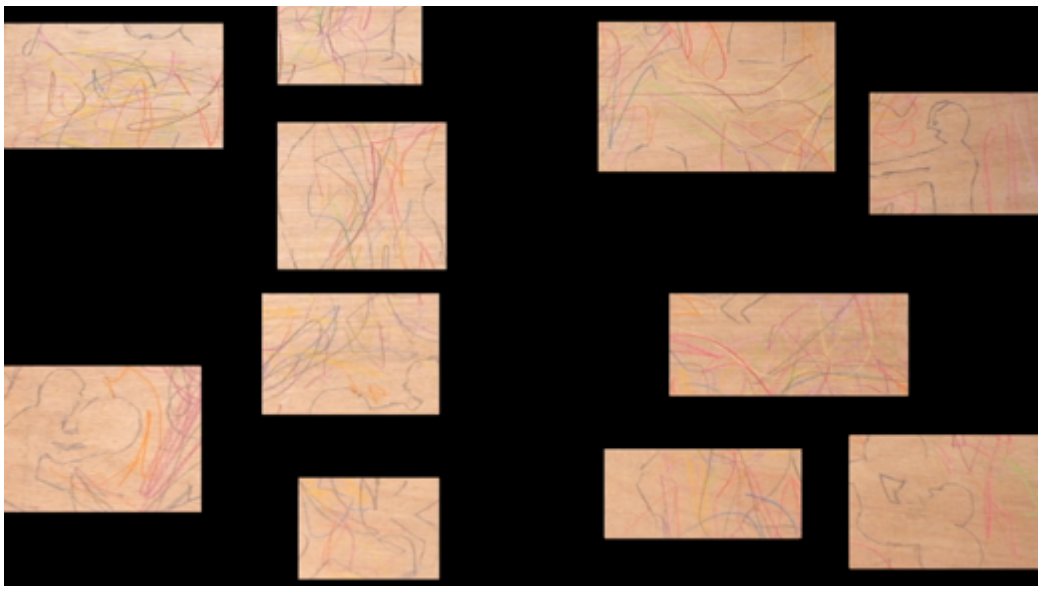


Figure 45

Here circumstantial vulnerabilities of socio-economic hardship and exclusions entangle with an ontological vulnerability on Ben's part (who is a trustee at HUC) to open up and share his awareness of how everyone is part of the problem. As these differentiated views are held within the act of making a new artwork, (which is itself, a vulnerable act of opening up new expression,) these different intra-actions between vulnerabilities (intra-vulnerabilities) put into motion an aspiration that perhaps a textbook that can speak best to local needs is one that might be newly written with local voices and art.

5.3 Moving Portraits

Leading from this proposal that art could offer a new or different language (beyond or in better tandem with the 'text book') to address community needs, the final PaR in the *Moving* series both arrives and returns to an examination of the original research questions about how and what art and culture the charity should fund. Having interrogated the ways in which artistic practice has informed the charity's role in housing and community cohesion, *Moving Portraits* now examines their processes for funding art. The thirty three filmed participants, framed with their own artistic tastes and artworks, offer imagination for thirty three potential new art commissions. Flipping the one-directional 'giving culture,' these artworks inform the charity about what a range of local people (both beneficiaries and service providers) might like to see rendered artistically. The layering of images in each artwork develops a further exploration for how metaphoric compositions might resist pinning individuals and communities to a limited view of culture. And the participation in this project and response

to it by Melanie, the charity's grants manager, marks a significant shift in understanding Dussel's return of community knowledge. She clarifies that funding art can be a way to fund cultural ambition rather than cultural deficiency. Sharing this understanding with the trustees as they consider which of the thirty three ideas to fund develops this break with deficit-model thinking further.

Figure 46

Watch all the moving portraits here: https://www.carolyndefrin.com/moving-portraits

5.3.1 Unmoulding III: Funding ambition over deficiency

The idea for the portraits developed out of three questions that were asked in the initial interviews with Sagal, Emma, Ben, James, Colin, Rayan, Howard, Mariana, Revell, Kate, Daniela, Ryszard, Shirley, Miku, Nick, Asia, Ron, Azelle, Clea, Daisy, Toni, Lucy, Agnes, Del, Elizabeth, Mila, Kune, Labake, Darren, Sara, Dylan, Abrahim and Melanie:

What are some of your favourite pieces of art in your home?
What is your favourite view out of your window?
If you could create any artwork, or commission someone else to, what would it be?

Communicating with the participants over email after their interviews, Winstan and I asked them to take and send us photographs based on their answers to the first two questions. I then worked with Winstan to edit and layer the images.[32] As we developed the layering techniques from *Remembering the Future* differently here (all within one image, as opposed to being separated across different video mapped locations in the architectural models,) the

[32] All participants approved their portraits before they were shown and were asked a second time when we learned they would be shown on such a large scale at Westfield shopping centre. All but two participants approved of this additional context and we omitted those who didn't want to participate.

aim was similar as a means to show several images gradually coming into being together that moved past not only bleak visions of socio-economic distress but singular notions of what community created culture looks like. For example, not every trustee would commission Beethoven, and not every Somali would commission a new piece of poetry. The choice for a 'moving' portrait as opposed to a static one supported this resistance to fixing communities to singularity. As the images faded in and out, starting and ending with a blank sheet of paper, each participant moved with their ideas, demonstrating that creative ideas come and go, and different artworks can be considered for different moments in time.

Figure 47 'Moving Portraits' in different locations

The portraits were shown in different contexts. At the 400th anniversary party, in a bus window at the Ravenscourt Park 'Unity Day' as part of the Hammersmith and Fulham annual arts fest, and in Westfield Shopping Centre– where they played on eight large screens from June through September 2018. Appearing in a range of scales from normal sized television screens at the party (seen by 200 guests) to the large screens at Westfield where over one million shoppers would have encountered them[33], the participants reported back to me that they were seen by friends and family throughout the borough. Colin, one of the charity's

[33] This number refers to footfall that my contacts at Westfield reported to me

housed residents, mentioned his friends were playfully scheming to make his commission idea come true:

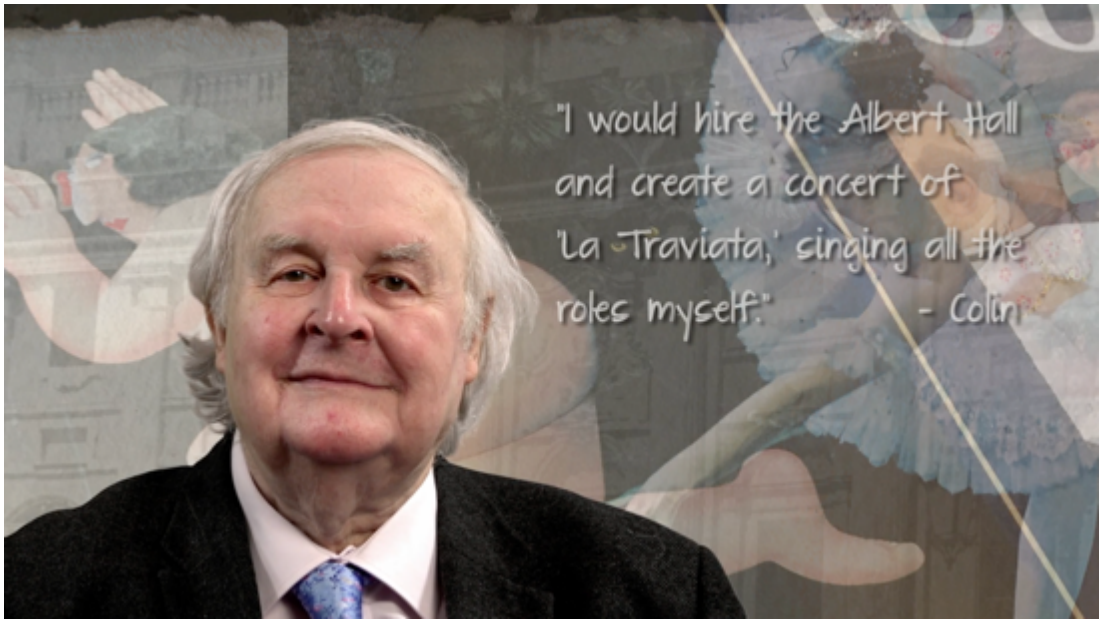


Figure 48 'Moving Portrait: Colin'

In both these layering techniques and the contexts for sharing the portraits, participants (inclusive of several of the charity's beneficiaries) were seen in a new light. A wide range of ideas for new artworks included a desire to build an underwater city, create a ballet, build a music and cultural centre for people with disabilities, and sculpt a public work of art that would bring the local area together after the nearby tragedy at Grenfell tower. Ideas engaging with many media, ways of making and contexts for experiencing these works concretise a vision of cultural democracy by thirty three individuals across socio-economic boundaries.

While some of the works speak directly to socio-economic vulnerabilities in the area, attached to dilemmas raised in *Moving Between*, they equally evidence socio-aesthetic and creative ideas that speak to a need to be seen beyond socio-economic needs. As such, I asked Melanie if in viewing the portraits she distinguished patterns tied to socio-economic vulnerability.

> Do I see vulnerability? No. I see confidence, assertion, ideas you might not have associated with those individuals, ambition... it gets away from 'need', makes it more personal, makes the ideas less boring but most of all gets away from an idea of 'deficit' and moves much more towards an asset based approach – so not 'we could

> make life less worse by e.g.: an advice service but could instead make life better by e.g.: a ballet for my mum' – that's quite a subtle but quite an important distinction. Its back to let's bring joy to peoples' lives rather than slightly ameliorate their misery (2019).

In a continued address of the problematic 'looking at' identified in *Remembering the Future*, *Moving Portraits* reframes the face-to-face encounter with dialogue. Each commission idea ultimately aims to be in conversation with the viewer as it asks: 'what would you create?' Again, this dialogic aesthetic aspires to depict a pronounceability first, with a follow-up move to continue the incomplete culture project. Melanie also noted:

> I know you didn't ask me this but what I really want is to click on a picture and a) learn a little more about the person and b) see a prototype of their idea… the individuals are very intriguing and I want to understand where the ideas might have come from (2019).

Melanie's intrigue stems from the visual presentation of these commissions. And here is where I argue a case for deepening understanding of a spectrum of needs in artistic practice. These complex and dimensional images offer a deeper view of people and of their ideas, than a sheet of paper with a written list might have done. 'I don't need converting to the idea of funding art per se but there's something here about being more proactive with it and using it as a tool for engagement.' Per Melanie's proposal here, we did use the portraits as a tool for engagement. In the board away day, nine months later, all of the portraits were on display. Trustees were asked to choose one work they would want to fund. They ended up choosing three: Mila's idea to create a theatrical production with all the cultures from her own heritage, Elizabeth's idea to create a peaceful place to listen to music, and Melanie's idea for a new piece of choral music. Here the artworks themselves flip the one directional 'I' over 'you.' The beneficiary gives the benefactor cultural ideas for consideration. Vulnerabilities exposed in expressing artistic ideas entangle with circumstantial vulnerabilities tied to socio-economic need, entangles with vulnerable acts of listening on the part of the service provider. Through these intra-vulnerabilities, there is the potential, if the works were funded, to co-create culture in a new way.

5.4 Reflexive artist vulnerability

> I am always, and always will be, vulnerable to my own work, because by making visible what is most intimate to me I endow it with the objectivity that forces me to see it with utter, distinct clarity. A strange fate. I make a home for myself in my work, yet when I enter that home I know how flimsy a shelter I have wrought for my spirit. My vulnerability to my own life is irrefutable. Nor do I wish it to be otherwise, as vulnerability is a guardian of integrity.
>
> –Anne Truitt, *Turn: The Journal of an Artist,* 1982

While the outcomes of each PaR access co-created understandings of a range of beneficiary needs in different and productive ways for the thesis' proposal of intra-vulnerabilities, this chapter concludes with an additional artist vulnerability available in a recognition of the limits of the practice.

As discussed in both *Remembering the Future* and *Moving Time,* I acknowledge reflexively that the practice could have experimented more deeply with equity in design processes and in analysis and evaluation processes afterwards with beneficiaries, staff and trustees. These levels of engagement are complex however in terms of who and how people want to be involved. In navigating participation and specialised skills, my collaborators and I challenged hierarchies in certain ways, and got stuck with them in other ways—but the reflexivity with the nuances are valuable. Taken forward into the final chapter about the arts strategy will be recommendations that speak to the limits of the practice– suggestions for how to navigate and facilitate deeper communication between different aspects of the charity and the ways in which artistic practice can continue to be a knowledge-producing mechanism for working on equitable relationships more deeply.

In many ways these four PaR projects were forays into a range of possible collaborations between service providers and beneficiaries that can and hopefully will continue.
As an artist, I am familiar with this feeling of wishing I could begin again with what I know now at the end. But this 'wish' speaks to Truitt's view of vulnerability as a 'guardian of integrity.' The artist's capacity to recognise the limits of her own work and call for evolved practice in the next piece of work, is a critical strand of vulnerability for the concept of intra-vulnerabilities. To acknowledge failures and reflexively cite the learnings for the next time around becomes a foundational tenet for the arts strategy that forms the final part of this thesis.

Chapter 6

Enigma Lunch Series: From co-producing to co-owning

In an address of the limits of the previous PaR, this chapter introduces a further development in the charity's move towards co-creating culture with its beneficiaries by identifying how co-presence can lead to co-producing and co-owning.

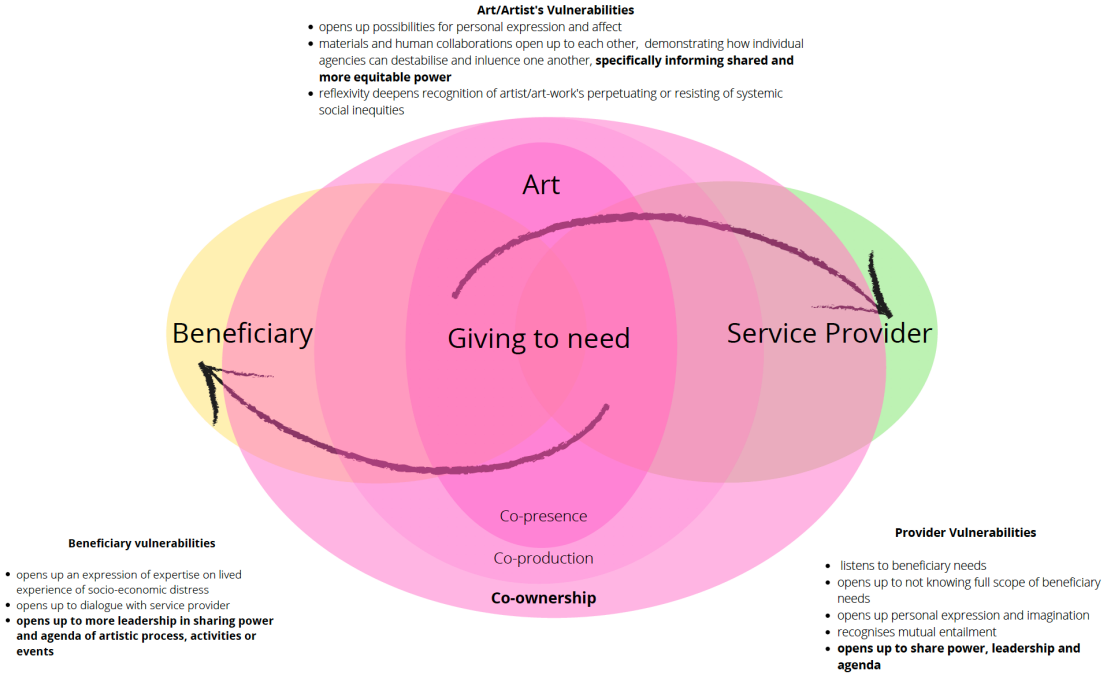


Figure 49 Intra-vulnerabilities in artistic co-ownership

The Enigma Lunch series, an unexpected PaR that grew out of the early cross-communal lunch dialogue between the charity and its beneficiaries, was a regular event throughout the 400th anniversary year. Designed to bring local communities (who might not interact otherwise) together through food and art, the lunches demonstrate a trajectory from co-presence to co-ownership through a commitment to equitable partnership with beneficiaries available in co-hosting. From the performative dialogues in the early research period, to *Remembering the Future* and the *Moving* series, artistic activity and its analysis in this thesis, demonstrate how co-presence illuminates new understandings of beneficiary socio-cultural and aesthetic needs and the ways in which the charity, artists and other partnering stakeholders (like the architects) can support them in response. This co-presence, which has mostly been characterised by a 'shaping' by beneficiaries has demonstrated how

beneficiaries' agencies have worked on service providers to consider culture and policy differently. *Moving Time,* which began to navigate co-producing in artistic practice, demonstrated the complexities of more equitable agencies between provider and beneficiaries. As such, it pointed to the ways in which power might be shared and how extra time and attention to facilitate this equity in decision-making processes would be required. With the least amount of pre-defining and the most amount of agency between the charity and its beneficiary communities, the Enigma Lunch series demonstrates a capacity for the charity to unmould its previous ways of policy making for the beneficiaries, by relating to them here as partners through the co-hosting of events. This level of agency is a critical value underpinning the strategy outlined in the next and final chapter and offers a final development in the thesis' concept of intra-vulnerabilities.

View documentation here: https://www.carolyndefrin.com/enigmalunches

6.1 The rigour of regularity: testing multiple partnerships

> As well as the 456,976 possible starting positions for any set of four wheels, this Enigma machine offers further variations in settings which means that there are 4,134 million possible ways in which it could be set up.
>
> -Alan Turing Institute, The British Library

The Enigma Lunch series took place throughout 2018 as part of the programme of events for the charity's 400th anniversary. Billed as a series to 'celebrate the culturally rich diversity of the area of benefit' (HUC), they were curated in conjunction with the republication of a memoir originally published during the 1980s and 90s from the Hammersmith and Fulham Ethnic Communities Oral History Project[34].

[34] More information about this programme of republications can be read about here: https://hamunitedcharities.org.uk/400th-anniversary/programme/oral-history-project/

Figure 50 Enigma Lunches

Incited by the cross-communal lunch I led early in the research that brought different beneficiary communities together with trustees and staff (discussed in Chapter 3), these lunches were an additional PaR, evolved and co-curated with Melanie, myself and the charity's administrative team, Nora Laraki and Gaia Bini. Melanie's only goals were to partner more deeply with organisations that were already grant funded, develop new partnerships and see what might come from bringing different communities together who wouldn't otherwise interact. My objective in co-curating the lunches was to learn how a looser agenda for community interaction could inform arts funding and the charity's process for learning about and with beneficiaries.

Inspired by Alan Turing's 'enigma code' that changed the course of the world due to a chance encounter with an unlikely informant, Melanie was curious to learn what new connections might be made if people across the diverse area of benefit had a chance to meet in casual and enjoyable settings. Our efforts continue the joyful cut across concepts of 'basic need' that has been discussed throughout the thesis. Applying Thompson's 'affective screen' (2009) for navigating complex social dilemmas in a regularly scheduled series of delicious and delightful events, the lunches crystallised one of the most visible intra-activities between

the charity's traditional methods for attending to need and its 21st century aspirations to evolve service for its globalised locale.

Five lunches, each hosted by a different community organisation in partnership with HUC, were attended by a mix of community members from the host organisation, the charity (including residents, staff and trustees) and additional local people.[35] The co-hosts were: LIDO foundation, Women Make Change, the Irish Cultural Centre, London Spark and Nubian Life Centre. Artistic activities that accompanied each lunch included storytellers, musicians, visual artists, dancing, and watching films.

For each enigma lunch, the charity provided a budget of between £250-300 to support lunch costs and any artistic activity. The partnering host was in charge of organising the food they wanted and the artistic activities were decided in varying levels of collaboration between the charity and the host. From light touch 'ice-breaker' conversations inviting guests to share music and poetry tastes at our first lunch with the LIDO foundation[36], to more formal performances by a storyteller and a folk music duet at the lunch held with the Irish Cultural Centre, to a local painter showing his works as part of the lunch held in partnership with London Spark to celebrate Polish Heritage Day, these choices were instigated by the partner, by the charity, by me, or in collaboration between all parties.

While HUC maintained leadership in setting up the initiative and allocating the funds, the criticality in partnerships lies in the decision-making processes around what activities took place, who was invited and who acted as host for the event. Battersea Arts Centre published an agency scale (2019) to help art institutions identify how relationships with communities can become more equitable. The scale is included below to identify the partnership levels with the five enigma lunch co-hosts.

[35] People who were intrigued by the project, from other community host organisations or local stakeholders we me throughout the year that we invited to come

[36] LIDO is a Somali services organization that is also one of HUC's consistently funded beneficiaries. They have received funding from the charity since the inauguration of the grants programme and are guaranteed support for the next three years through their 'anchor programme' (https://hamunitedcharities.org.uk/grants/grants/).

CO-CREATING CHANGE PROJECT COMMISSIONS: AGENCY SCALE				
Project Name:	Enigma Lunch Series	**Organisation or lead contact name:**		LIDO Foundation, Women Make Change, Irish Cultural Centre, London Spark, Nubian Life
Artist, producer or cultural organisation partner (A):	Hammersmith United Charities	**Individual, group, or community partner (B):**		Each partnering community group
Enter the percentage weighting for Groups A and B against each of the questions below. For example, if partners A and B have completely equal control over resources, enter 50% into both columns A and B against question 3. Make sure every cell contains a weighting, even if it's "0%".				
	Questions:	**A**	**B**	**Notes:**
Set-up	**1. Who sets up or leads the process?**	100%		
	2. Who selects who will be involved in the activity?	50%	50%	
	3. Who controls or manages resources?	100%	0%	
	4. Who defines the project's future?	100%		
	5. Who owns the project?			We haven't had a discussion about ownership
Activity	**1. Who sets or leads the process?**	50%	50%	
	2. Who selects who is involved?	25%	75%	
	3. Who controls or manages resources?	50%	50%	Partnering organisation always decided on food and artists. The charity funded these activities
	4. Who defines the activity's or outcome's future?	50%	50%	
	5. Who owns the activity or outcome?	50%	50%	
	OVERALL WEIGHTING %	**58%**	**42%**	
Describe what Set-up means to you:	The idea for the Enigma Lunch series was initiated by myself (artist) and Melanie Nock (Hammersmith United Charities). We then sought out partners to carry out each event.			
Describe what Activity means to you:	The activity is the lunch itself, which included a range of complementary activities that have included music, poetry, storytelling and painting. This varied depending on the partnerships. With the exception of the Polish Heritage day lunch with London Spark, all the other lunch actvities were decided by the			

Figure 51

For our lunch with LIDO, the event was the most shared between Liban's (the LIDO director) set of guests and the charity's. Equally he and Melanie shared the floor with welcoming guests and discussing the two organisations and their partnership. The lunch with Women Make Change, the Irish Cultural Centre and Nubian life were very much led by those organisations. HUC supplied funds for food and attended, along with trustees and between five to ten residents at each event, but they were dominated in activity and attendance by the host communities' networks. The lunch co-hosted with London Spark was dominantly led by HUC. While we set up an outdoor tent as part of several events happening for Polish heritage day, the space within the tent was curated by us- from the choice of food to the hiring of a Polish painter to actively paint during the lunch and share his works with people who popped into the tent.

Each of these different partnerships experimented with co-presence, and as such revealed varying degrees of collaboration, of artistic activity, of interaction between different communities. Some of the partnerships were easier than others– either because there was an established relationship (as was the case with Liban and LIDO foundation- a beneficiary of HUC funding for three years), or the organisation was accustomed to curating arts events (Irish Cultural Centre). Initially, Melanie and I planned twelve lunches, one for each month of the 400th anniversary year. Each lunch was aimed to match with each of the twelve communities affiliated with the Ethnic Oral History republications produced throughout the year. At month two, we came up against the complexities involved in creating new authentic

partnerships. In a desire to align with the publication 'Such a long road! Chinese voices in Britain,' Melanie and I reached out to several leaders within the Chinese community, both in Hammersmith and greater London. Here we learned that this partnership required more time to establish. With busy schedules around Chinese New Year, and a more interior social demeanour, the Chinese leaders we met taught us this relationship is best cultivated over a longer period of time, to get to know one another and discover together what a shared event could be.

Following this experience, we decided to only do as many lunches as developed partnerships would allow in 2018. But the beginning of partnership cultivation was a key learning point for long-term planning and relational commitment for the future of this series. As Doreen Foster, the director of the Warwick Arts Centre, recently said in a report for the Calouste Galbukenian foundation on the civic role of arts organisations:

> Part of what we are doing … is finding people who are much better connected in the community than we are, so we will be spending time working in local communities and familiarising ourselves with what is happening and not assuming that we know what drives people or the changes they want to see (2019, p.23).

This was our goal: to partner, and commit to finding new partners. As Melanie and I both encountered the ease of some partnerships over others, it was also critical not to dismiss potential knowledge in relationships that would require more time, more openness and more learning on our part to discover what could transpire.

6.2 Charting co-presence into co-ownership

As discussed, the criticality of these events lay in their regular commitment to co-producing these events with beneficiary partners. This effort to '*jointly develop and create*, as opposed to conventional participatory arts projects, in which people are invited to *join in* with the work of an artist or organisation" marks the way in which HUC aligns with the efforts towards equity in the wider community arts field (Battersea Arts Centre, 2018). But additionally, I argue that the regularity in this commitment to co-presence through co-hosting shifted the beneficiaries into more equitable agency with the charity. Or as the chart from 64 million artists depicts- a move from 'shaping' to 'co-producing' to 'co-owning.'

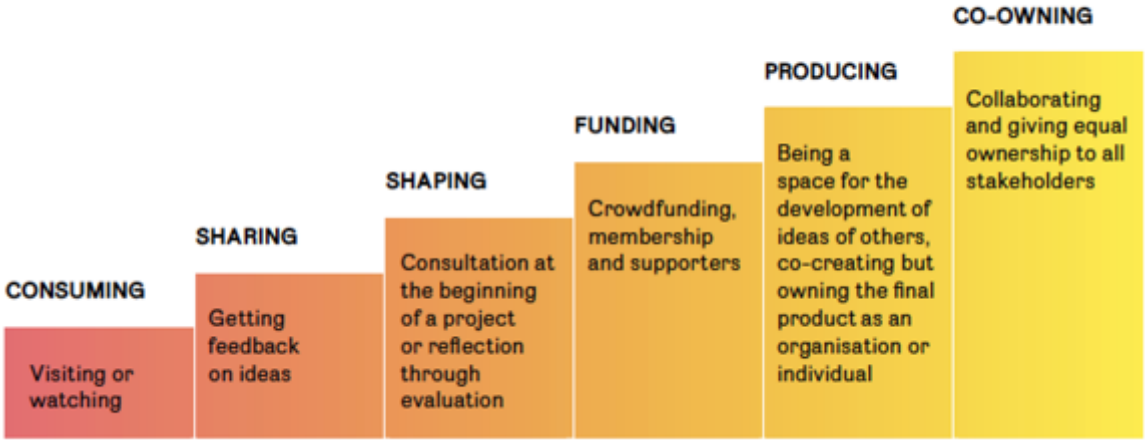


Figure 52 courtesy of 64 million artists, 2018

While there were different levels of co-production dependent on the different partnerships, with some feeling more co-owned than others, there was one partnership with the first Enigma lunch community leader that developed consistently throughout the year. This relationship points to possibilities for sustaining the Enigma Lunch series as a co-owned event between a long-standing beneficiary and the charity. Liban Muse, director of Somali services organisation, LIDO foundation, co-produced the first Enigma lunch of the 400th anniversary. As LIDO has been funded by the charity for three years, Liban and Melanie had a previous working relationship. As such, the organisation of this first lunch was easy and the most evenly attended between his networks and the charity's. Hosted at the LIDO foundation, the charity supported residents' transport to and from the lunch from the charity's housing. Liban and Melanie both spoke at the event, sharing what each of their organisations does. The food was organised by Liban, funded by the charity. And light touch artistic conversations were facilitated by me.

Enigma Lunch 1: https://hamunitedcharities.org.uk/2018/01/30/enigma-lunches-what-it-is/

Liban then attended nearly all the other lunches throughout the year and at the final one, he, Melanie and I discussed a shared desire to develop the relationships and activities carried out in these lunches further. Enjoying the potential for community integration, we all desired a deeper interaction beyond the small talk and sharing of food that dominated most of the

lunches. How might more participatory arts activities, or direct discussions of skill sharing deepen and develop these relationships within and beyond the 'enigma experience?' We decided we would co-develop the enigma series after the 400th year was complete.

The potential for this relationship develops over time, through a regular co-presence and through a co-leadership with Liban as the most knowledgeable in the partnership with Melanie and me, about what his communities need and want. With a three-year grantor/grantee relationship between them, Liban and Melanie transcend the boundaries of one-directional service. I asked Melanie what she has learned from Liban:

> I've learned a lot about a fundamentally oral culture where people don't do written communication; I've learned a lot about the issues for young people growing up in these communities and about the huge difficulties many women face trying to parent children growing up in a western environment. I've gained a lot of respect for them all – those struggles are not small; few have become affluent but they survive and many of the children thrive. Starting to discuss with Liban how we can support his home village has been one of the most exciting and stimulating project dreaming conversations I've had. (2019)

And I asked Liban the same:

> Melanie, on behalf of Hammersmith United Charities was the first local funder to visit our centre and see first-hand the work we carry out. They also became the first organisation to fund our supplementary school programme and a part-time administrator post. Melanie genuinely expressed an interest in working with disadvantaged BAME communities and the impact of her support has helped to improve hundreds if not thousands of our local community members.
>
> Over time, I was lucky enough to get to know Melanie on a personal level and I can attest that she is a sincere individual dedicated to making positive social change. Melanie went above and beyond in her role and made sure she was always available to offer us support and guidance in our early days as an organisation. Her support and belief in our work to better support marginalised BAME individuals in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham will always be celebrated (2020).

Their relationship pre-dates the Enigma Lunches, but as such, its strength is magnified in the lunch series, offering an opportunity to make multi-directional giving (and for this research, especially in terms of culture) visible to the rest of the charity. Due to its regularity, the Enigma Lunches achieved the greatest attendance by all aspects of the charity: its residents, staff, trustees and wider area beneficiaries. As the lunches continue to develop with Liban in a position of co-owning the series, not only as a key voice for the Somali communities, but as a critical thinker about the wider local area, such event planning and making marks a key

policy change in the way the charity understands cultural service to needs more expansively (as compared with the more finite ask by Melanie at the beginning of the research for me to go and find out about Somali relationships to art.)

6.3 Vulnerability in Letting go of the Plan

One of the key vulnerabilities embodied in *Moving Time* was recognising the pain of destabilisation that can come with opening up to other ways of making with new partners who might not share similar ways of working. Melanie described a similar growing pain with the charity's support of White City Estate in the Big Local. Understanding even when things fall apart, however, that to step in and take over completely is most detrimental as it extinguishes the aim of supporting agency.

Melanie's agenda for the lunches to be 'enigmatic' prioritised the value of letting go of the plan in an effort to support such agencies in the beneficiary communities. And, as such, there was a commitment from her, as the funder, as the Director of Community Partnerships, to let the programme find its way and come into being with Liban, with Women Make Change, the Irish Cultural Centre, London Spark and Nubian Life. These relationships marked a turn from the start of the research when she queried why residents would take down the photographs from a funded community arts project she had hung up in their lounge space.

In the end, of all our work together in all of the PaR projects, this lunch series had the most buy-in from the trustees with the least amount of predetermined outcomes. It manifested vulnerability in transitions from leading to facilitating that evidenced a giving that gives way as Diprose suggests in reversing Levinas' asymmetry. Melanie gave way, not voice, for the charity to work in partnership with its communities. And by inviting the trustees into this experience as co-participants regularly (not just in a one-off event) there was a vulnerable switch for them as distant supporters/supervisors of decision-making processes to embodied participants.

The agency of the beneficiary hosts and the participatory nature of the trustees evidenced the clearest reversal of the charity's usual one-directional trustee to beneficiary nature of programming. And this new relationship arguably began to embed itself because of its regularity. Nearly every trustee throughout the 400th year of celebration attended at least one of the lunches. And while I had engaged the trustees in my other PaR projects, those

encounters were mainly with me in the early interviews, or with each other in their usual meeting spaces. Even as the PaR engaged a few trustees and staff in the making process of the *Moving* series, and all in the experiencing at the exhibition and the party, the value of the lunch series was distinct for its more regular interaction and encounter with their beneficiaries.

When reflecting on these lunches at their board away day in February 2019, the trustees spoke to this value. There was unanimous support for their continuation with ideas for how to reach more people by expanding beyond lunch and deepening the ideas for interactions.

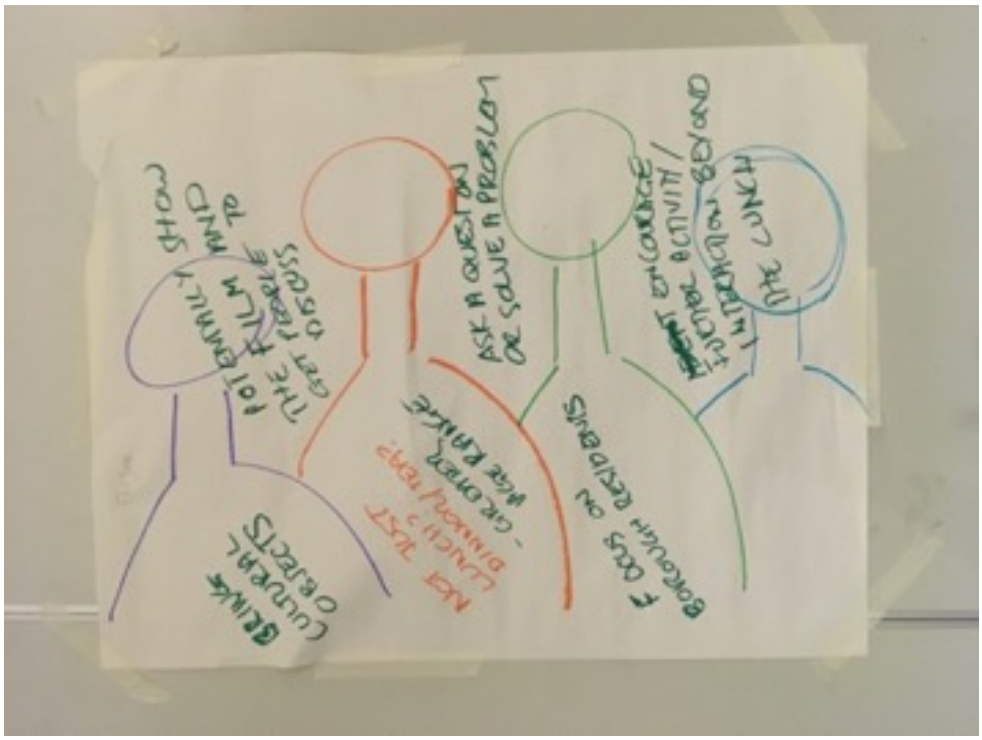


Figure 53 Trustee imaginations for future Enigma lunches

This engagement with the trustees in a regular co-presence with beneficiaries as co-producers gives way to the possibilities for embedding the arts as a co-owned strategy for better service to needs. It evidences a multitude of ways to envision culture, across different communities, and to understand the nuances of different equitable relationships.

Documentation and the charity's reflections on additional enigma lunches can be viewed here:

https://hamunitedcharities.org.uk/2018/03/13/aunt-esthers-story-enigma-event/
https://hamunitedcharities.org.uk/2018/05/23/irish-enigma-event/
https://hamunitedcharities.org.uk/2018/05/23/enigma-event-polish-heritage-day/

Part III
Practice as Policy

Chapter 7
Make More Art

'How will you make your listening visible to others?'

-Michael Rohd, the Center for Performance and Civic Practice, 2020

The thesis has demonstrated that within artistic practice the charity can get to know its beneficiaries' social, economic, aesthetic and cultural needs differently. Through co-presence, co-production and co-ownership of activities, events and processes for working, different situated and ontological vulnerabilities have entangled with artistic expression, unfolding understandings that the charity's relationship to the beneficiaries is one of mutual entailment. As the practice identified ways to open up to listening, unmoulding and the potential for co-creating culture and funding policy in more equitable relationships, this final chapter puts forward the thesis' main outcome of an artistic strategy that emphasises more practice in service of policy.

The five activities proposed below are drawn from the three year research period (from 2016-2019). Informed by the PaR, additional activities carried out during the charity's 400th anniversary[37], and a distinct call by beneficiaries to 'make more art,'[38] the activities examine how to take the findings forward in service to beneficiaries. These activities offer a specific address for the potential to default to a deficit model of thinking about arts funding. After the 400th year of celebrations demonstrated how practice can lead to new relationships with beneficiaries, the answer to the trustees' question of whether they must wait until the 500th anniversary to experience such activity again must be "no!" The practice must persist. Included in this proposal is an understanding that these activities can and must evolve to reflect those carrying out and reflexively developing them.

[37] A full list of these activities is included in the arts strategy in Appendix A

[38] At the anniversary party on 6, July 2018, guests were invited to write a 'postcard to the future' to help the charity recognise actions to take forward, or issues to pay more attention to, in looking ahead to a fifth century of service. Sixty five guests responded, and the charity analysed the comments into a set of ten themes that connected with the next year's business plan. While arts activities formed one of the ten categories, the other nine themes centred around social and community cohesion, promoting diversity, collaboration and a recognition for how the internal workings of the organisation can reflect the outward facing work of the charity—all areas where the arts had played a role in working towards the achievement of those aims. These postcards are also analysed in connection to the charity's business plans in the arts strategy in Appendix A.

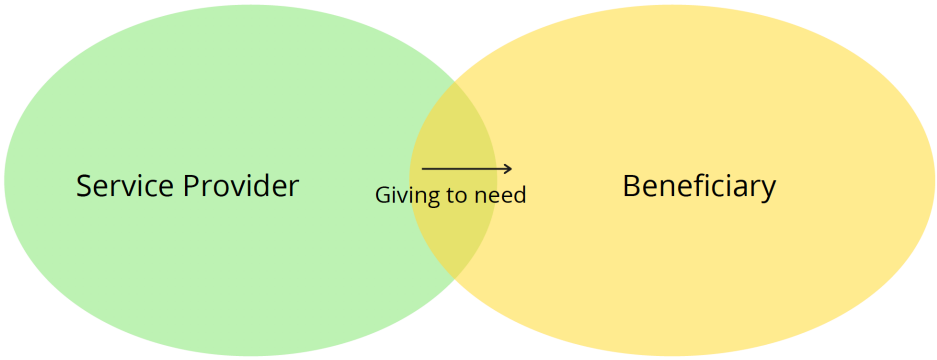
These activities are both an artistic strategy for better understanding how to fund art, and an artistic strategy for understanding how to better serve a spectrum of needs. These are not mutually exclusive, but the expanded notion of art as a strategy for the whole charity (not only for its choices around funding art) points to the ways in which art is not only a method for providing relief to need, but a methodology for coming into knowing need.

The chapter first discusses how a method of working with intra-vulnerabilities developed from the practice and came to inform the strategy's coming into being. It then analyses each aspect of the strategy as proposed methods for both embedding and evolving the learnings from the PaR. Finally, the chapter discusses the ways in which this strategy feeds back into a current call in wider arts funding policy for new methods of understanding cultural value with communities. Specifically addressing the dilemma of the archive as a necessary space to grow PaR methodologies, a final case is made for the value of the portfolio of practice.

7.1 Proposing Intra-vulnerabilities

From the start of the research, Melanie and I set out to develop a framework that would guide future arts funding policy for the charity. We didn't know then that ultimately we would seek to embed a cultural shift for the charity's organisation as a whole. The arts strategy outlined in this chapter developed from the PaR projects and was further informed by beneficiaries' responses to the programme of artistic activity for the 400th anniversary year as well as the retirement of former Chief Executive, Tim Hughes, who passed the strategy before leaving the organisation.

From the performative dialogues through the practices in *Remembering the Future*, *Moving Time Between Portraits,* and the *Enigma Lunch series,* a concept of intra-vulnerabilities develops that investigates how Gilson's (2014) proposal to flip vulnerability as a negative state of 'weakness, dependency, powerlessness, deficiency and passivity' to a positively productive state for fostering interdependencies between giver and receiver can contribute to new processes for understanding relationships between need and culture. The thesis argues that it is specifically in artistic research and a participatory, performative way of knowing, that an opening up to a range of ontological and situational vulnerabilities manifests. And that, when these differentiated vulnerabilities intra-act with one another, new knowledge can come into being to disrupt previous and problematic methods of deficit-model philanthropy.



Usual one directional service from vulnerability to invulnerability

Figure 54

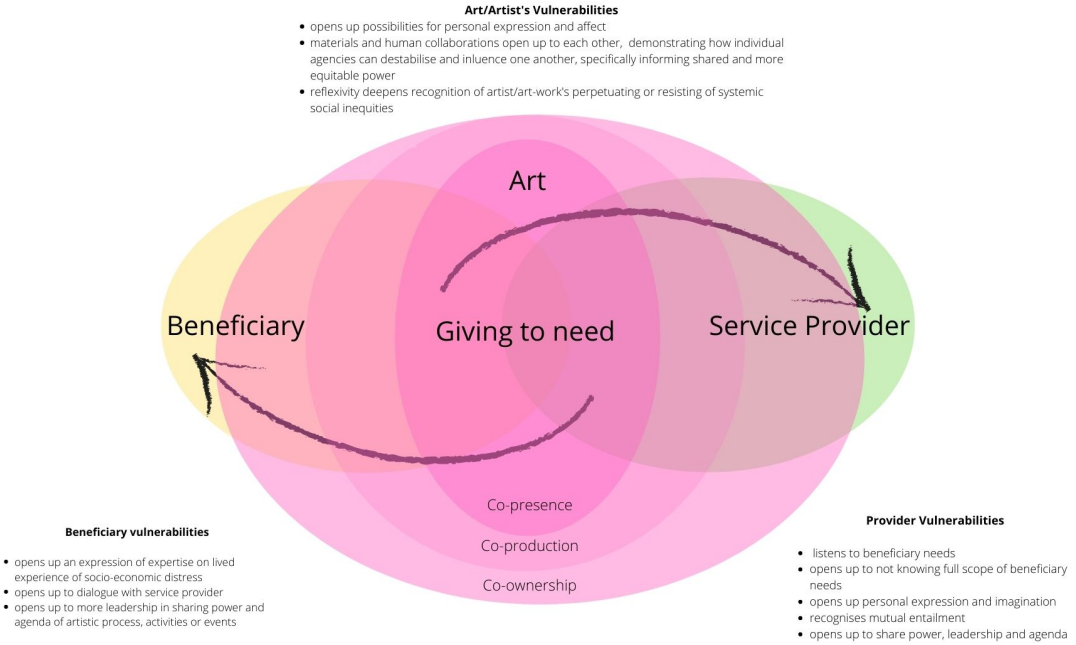


Figure 55 Multi-directional giving of knowledge when beneficiary, artist and provider vulnerabilities intra-act

In the story of this research, the concept of intra-vulnerabilities began unexpectedly, but intrinsically with the service provider. Responding to questions asked about their own relationships to art, trustees opened up to the personal, which gave way not only to empathic understandings for their beneficiaries' socio-aesthetic needs, but additionally to an elucidation of their own problematic differentiations between measuring values of their beneficiary's artistic engagement against their own. From here, artistic spaces in *Remembering the Future* and the *Moving* series generated actual and metaphoric places for beneficiary vulnerabilities to be reframed as expertise, with cultural imagination rather than

deprivation. It also became a place for service providers' expertise to be reframed with vulnerability, in acts of deep listening and acknowledgements that their own positions were not neutral, but part of deeper systemic inequities that problematise 'leg-up' approaches to betterment.

Melanie's recognition that her choice of art for the residents (the photographs she had placed in the residents' lounge) wasn't their choice, Emma's understanding of her part in the exclusion of others in *Moving Between*, and my own navigation of sharing power in the co-production process of *Moving Time* begin to identify a range of differentiated, ontological vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities facilitated an understanding of culture as an incomplete and on-going process of understanding. *The Enigma Lunches* were then able to address some of the recognised inequities through deeper partnership and co-producing and co-owning of events. Additionally, invitations to sit beside one another at these lunches or to swing in the same direction, or connect in multi-directional colourful benches in *Moving Time* further evidenced a way that aesthetic and affective interaction in these practices, not only reframes the beneficiary as part of the co-creative process, but enacts a direct and more in-depth relationship between beneficiary and benefactor. These affective interactions are as important for their discomfort as they are for their joy and consequently offer a way to experience how Brené Brown's view of vulnerability can productively entangle feelings of risk, fear and uncertainty, with feelings of joy, creativity and belonging (Brown, 2010).

Opening up to all sides of the emotional spectrum proved valuable for building relationships across service provision. Leading a large programme of joyful events throughout the 400th anniversary year showed how the charity is able to bring its diverse area of benefit together and how it can do so enjoyably.

In this journey from one-directional generosity in service provision to a more multi-directional landscape of giving cultural imagination and space to listen to that imagination, there are several other nuanced vulnerabilities involved– from the architects' engagement in new artistic processes, and my own recognitions in how to engage in more equitable processes for making work, to trustees' movements from scepticism about the purpose of art to a deeper questioning about how specific processes in art could impact particular community issues. The trajectory is significantly ensconced in artistic practices that have

marked understandings of a wider range of socio-aesthetic needs and co-imaginations for ways to address those needs.

In presenting all the practice back to the trustees at their board retreat in 2019, one of the most profound outcomes was a recognition by a trustee that their beneficiaries were missing from the room- to speak about their own experiences, to continue being the expert on their own needs. I also understand reflexively how helpful and key to the ethos of co-creation it would have been to transmit the arts strategy to the trustees with the beneficiaries. It is from this call to attention that the arts strategy evolves.

7.2 Strategy[39]

The strategy below outlines and analyses five suggested actions. These five activities (culled from the PaR and the charity's learnings from the 400th year of activity) propose a practice-based blueprint for building and evolving continued interaction between benefactors and beneficiaries as a means towards intra-action.

The five activities are:

Artist in Residence
Art Collection
Enigma
Consultancy
Organisational Culture

Functioning as portals for being with beneficiaries, the activities seek to embed an intra-vulnerable methodology available in artistic practice as a means to maintain and develop more equitable relationships in service of need. While qualities and aspects within each activity overlap with others, each activity focuses on the ways in which it holds specific characteristics and attention towards co-presence, co-producing and co-owning in differentiated ways for coming into co-created culture. It is important to note that a trajectory from co-presence to co-ownership is not always linear. Additionally, the activities do not value one type of co-creation over another. Rather, the distinctions offer differentiated ways of being with beneficiaries, identifying what kinds of cultural knowledge may be produced within different equitable agencies. It is recommended that the charity strive for a balance of

[39] The full strategy can be found in the appendix

co-presence, co-production and co-ownership however, and not only view the beneficiaries in a position of light-touch shaping of programming and policy.

7.2.1 Artist in Residence (AiR)

> Having PhD student and artist Carolyn Defrin 'in residence' with the charity for the last three years has yielded several artistic projects that have engaged and employed local people, while growing the charity's profile in the area through new connections to people and places. Additionally, her artistic approach to the organisation and the local communities has provoked conversations and creative events that facilitated interaction in new and playful ways. By embedding new artists within the charity for a long period of time the charity would gain:
>
> - New perspectives in new and different formats
> - More exposure to and representation of diverse local people
> - New artworks that would lead to new and unexpected connections
> - This residency could be one or two years in length, allowing the artist time to get to know the charity and the local current needs (*Make More Art*, 2018, p. 12).

With a view to continue bringing different parts of the charity together through artistic activity in order to co-create understandings of how culture addresses needs, an artist-in-residence offers a chance for the charity to continuously open up to new methods for doing so and new collaborative partnerships. In the way that this PhD research brought the university and the charity together, AiRs can be an opportunity to tie different knowledge systems together, to productively disrupt usual ways of thinking and doing through interactions and intra-actions. There could be further PhDs, continuing relationships of knowledge exchange between the charity and universities which could offer additional partnerships across other fields. As my research brought additional partnerships with architects in affordable housing, other partnerships for example might collaborate across health, education, or the justice system. This is addressed further in the 'consultancy' section of the strategy. As with the Enigma Lunch commitment to 'rigorous regularity, ' an AiR holds multiple outcomes for making cross-sector knowledge more visible.

Embedding this position as a consistent presence, with new artists taking on the role, offers a partnership that can be the lynchpin for the other four elements of the strategy discussed below- either by helping to make them happen or being informed by them.

It is recommended that the artists are chosen by a committee made up of the charity's beneficiaries, staff and trustees. As newer community arts models funded for example by Gulbenkian, Paul Hamlynn, and Big Local attest, these co-created decisions help resist the potential to slip back into the problematic view of the artist as orthopaedic, or out-of-touch with actual communities. This committee, which will be further discussed at the end of the analysis of the five activities, will enable a deeper 'thinking, making, doing with' to keep the charity in regular touch with its beneficiaries.

With regards to the relationships between artists, beneficiary communities and the charity's staff and trustees, it is recommended that the charity stays open to the artist's skills as artist (not only as facilitator) and that as Thompson suggests there be a 'negotiation between affect and effect' (2009, p.175). These works and/or performative interventions may slip between a range of community and artist and institution-led moments, but it is recommended that a balance be struck in favour of the pronounceability of community cultures that are marginalised. It would be ideal to balance a mix of local artists (who may have a deeper connection to local situational vulnerabilities) as well as artists who live or work outside the area of benefit to bring different and comparative community perspectives.

It is the hope that partnerships with numerous artists will inform how this can be accomplished in many different forms. Demonstrating a visible relationship with the tenets of cultural democracy by engaging a wide range of artists can also offer a resistance for becoming static in methods for relief.

The current budget allocation for this position is £4,000. This amount should be considered with the artist for how it can be used. Supplemented with additional funding sought for projects[40], the fee can cover an artist's time to make a project, or to conduct workshops within and across the charity and its area of benefit.

While my position as artist-researcher is a precursor to this element of the strategy, it should be noted that my artistic approach was broad, examining how art could be better understood by the charity and the beneficiaries. Future AiRs should not be concerned with proving the

[40] The *Moving* series was funded with a budget of £4,000 from HUC, £4,000 from LSBU, £13,000 from Arts Council and in-kind support from Levitt Bernstein Architects

value of the arts, or deciding which type of art has more value. The field has moved on from these debates. Rather, future AiRs might examine relationships between specific artforms and identified beneficiary needs. This isn't dissimilar from how the charity currently funds arts activities[41]; but in cultivating relationships with AiRs over longer periods of time, it enables a deeper co-presence (as identified by the charity, beneficiaries and myself having been embedded in the organisation for three years.)

7.2.2 Art Collection

> The ideas underpinning an art collection are already in motion. There are three pieces of art invigorating the spaces in the charity's sheltered housing schemes- the framed commission that served as the 400th invitation, the benches, and the exhibition about the charity in the wooden frame which includes the commission of the portrait of Bishop John King. Two of these three were artworks bought by the charity and currently function as a kind of exhibition in their own right. They make you stop and wonder, they give insight into the charity through artistic expression, and they represent the support of local artists.
>
> Building on the success of last year's visual art commissions and the resident art exhibitions, the commitment to a growing collection of artworks offers an exciting way to enact the charity's mission to "invest in the people and communities" it serves. The charity is uniquely placed to develop an art collection which positively reflects the diversity of cultures in this community, helping local people to understand each other in a more profound and rounded way. Led by Nora Laraki's research on corporate art collections, a curated art collection with the charity would:
>
> • Provide a positive insight into the creativity of the diverse communities which make up our AOB
>
> • Facilitate an investment in young, local talent through the purchase of their work
>
> • Contribute to the health and well-being of the organisation and the local communities it serves by invigorating work and housing spaces with art (consider the benches at the charity now)
>
> • Provide opportunities for social and fun interaction between the staff, trustees, residents and local communities with curated exhibitions of the growing collection
>
> • Grow and diversify the charity through visual and aural representation
>
> Works of art could be focused on more inexpensive pieces (such as works on paper), but could also include performing arts commissions that could be remounted or experienced through documentation (*Make More Art,* 2018, p. 13).

[41] See chapter 1 for an understanding of what criteria guides grant-making

Embedding art as a collection demonstrates the capacity for art to contribute to the health and well-being of the charity, as the gardens do. The regular performance of the gardens as a central feature of the charity contributes significantly to quality of life, for both residents and for the staff who work at the charity. The gardens are both an inward and outward-facing distinctive element for proclaiming that beauty is a basic need. When the research began, this idea was starting to take shape with 'The Big Conversation' graphics lining the wall in the library/meeting space. By the end of the 400th anniversary year, three of the benches from *Moving Time* and other commissioned artworks including the anniversary party invitation and an installation of the charity's history were deliberately placed within the charity's residencies.

Like the book-making activity, these artworks offer a chance to concretise the intangible beyond the word, beyond reporting. In the way that walking through the gardens will always speak in greater volumes than a descriptive paragraph will, the collection of artworks aims to offer a similar methodology to hold and provoke affect, encounter, and vulnerability differently.

An artistic collection may be part of an AiR's work or not, but the attention to concretising expressions of cultural needs is what stands out in this element. That a piece of art has that power to speak volumes to the unspeakable, unword-able report—this is an exceptional and radical move for the charity to take a stand on in terms of where the knowledge of cultural value lies and supports its early claims by the trustee to just listen to the music.

The budget for the collection is £2,000. This may be spent on one or numerous commissions as the committee decides. It is recommended that works be curated by the same committee noted above, that comprises a mix of staff, beneficiaries and trustees.

7.2.3 Enigma

> In the last year Melanie worked with Carolyn, Nora and Gaia and several community partners to develop a series of community lunches. With the primary goal of bringing local people together across cultural communities – we discovered that good food and good art were successful ingredients. Going forward we propose this as a quarterly series (rather than monthly) to ensure enough planning time for the artistic component and partnership building with the community co-host. New component: each lunch will include a 'skill share' whereby participants will have a chance to identify skills they

have and skills they need. The lead on from this is that skills may be shared, or that the charity can facilitate training for skills needed.
These experiences offer:

- Creative opportunity for charity to understand local communities and identify needs
- Connect groups of people together for fun and for skill sharing/networking -thus, answering the postcard for the future about more opportunities for social cohesion (*Make More Art,* 2018, p. 14).

As analysed in the previous chapter, the Enigma series carries some of the most regularly visible and experiential discoveries towards co-creating understandings of need between communities and service providers because of its co-agency. These events are co-produced and co-owned by the charity and the beneficiary communities, and as such, demonstrate how more equitable opening up to each other can build nuance and complexity around understandings of culture.

Also, they offer regular opportunity for all parts of the provision spectrum to come together joyfully with food and art. This regular commitment gives the trustees, the staff and the beneficiaries ample and consistent opportunity to be in a mutual co-presence with one another and to test out different ways of doing this. For the charity, the continual commitment to chance encounters with beneficiaries gives this seeking a concretised venue and opens up the possibilities for where that kind of partnership might lead next.

The allocated budget is £1500 to support four lunches/year (inclusive of food and artist fees). It is suggested that the new partnership with Liban Muse be further cultivated as the series develops.

7.2.4 Consultancy

An unexpected outcome of the PhD research led by Carolyn Defrin has been a collaboration with Levitt Bernstein architects who are working with the charity on plans for a new intergenerational housing scheme. Carolyn and the architects collaborated on two projects which explored how artistic engagement with potential residents might inform designs for this new housing development.

Creative Consultation
Developing a programme of consultation founded in participative creativity and expression would put the charity at the forefront of innovation in resident engagement and consultation-particularly important with a potentially challenging

> project seeking to create an intergenerational community.
>
> The arts offer creative ways to express and address community issues—be it housing, education, healthcare, the justice system, etc. Continuing to look for opportunities where the charity can support artistic cross-collaborations sets an exciting and creative model for community development (*Make More Art*, 2018, p. 14).

The two collaborations with the architects demonstrated how aesthetic experiments in consultation can begin to address and improve design for affordable housing. This activity in the strategy proposes a transdisciplinary approach to additional community issues.

When presenting this artistic strategy to the board on their retreat day in 2019, the trustees and staff worked in small groups to enact each element of the strategy. The group working on 'artistic consultation' proposed other areas beyond housing where the arts could consult. Employing the arts to help improve relations between police and young men, or between migrant and long-standing communities were two such ideas.

Artistic methods are becoming more strategic across health and well-being, social justice, and housing (Sherman, 2016) and the outcomes of the PaR pointed to specific values available in aesthetic experimentation: in affect, in joy, in unexpected processes of making. The charity can continue to find ways for art to become part of processes for these areas in community development, but to resist the instrumentalising that regeneration projects like the Policy Action Team 10 committee enacted during the height of New Labour's arts funding policies.

The consultation process is about engaging communities from the beginning. This can manifest in a 'shaping' as in *Remembering the Future*, where the beneficiaries offered significant guidance in the making of the work. But, in a project like *Moving Time*, if we had engaged in a longer process between residents, the architects, Petit Miracles (including the unemployed volunteers) and the potential beneficiaries of the new housing, this could have more deeply informed a new working relationship across service providers and beneficiaries with a step-by-step elucidation for how community voices inform design. Artistic consultancy holds space for a spectrum of co-created processes for community development. Service providers (and artists) must stay mindful of how they engage beneficiaries– that they are not just 'used' for information– but rather, become a part of making and changing processes that serve them. Project Row Houses and Assemble continue as good examples of

this long term commitment to deeply entangling knowledge between communities, artists and policy makers. With significant support by service providers, communities lead and take ownership of many projects and artistic methods.

One of the flaws of this research, or where it stopped short, was in evaluation processes with beneficiaries. Analysing the outcomes of projects with beneficiaries (as demonstrated in the Enigma Lunches with Melanie and Liban) offers a chance to co-evolve these processes more authentically. For example, having a chance to engage all participants in both *Remembering the Future* and the *Moving* series in a setting such as the retreat that the board of trustees engages with, would have given us a chance to co-analyse generative metaphors in both the works created and relationships formed in the practice. Naming these elements together could contribute more significantly to a shared language between all aspects of the service provision. I recognise and acknowledge my own missed opportunity in not building this reflexive communication with all participants more immediately following each PAR. As such, it is recommended that the supervisory committee for this strategy address this by budgeting time and compensation to evaluate programmes with beneficiaries, staff and trustees in close to proximity to their happening. This type of evaluation is also recommended to the wider charitable sector below as a means to not only reflexively evolve programming, but recognise and value beneficiaries' time in doing so.

7.2.5 Organisational Culture

> Social cohesion has been identified again and again through Carolyn's research, through local voices in the borough and from the trustees. But it's not just about serving the communities outside the office. If the heart of the organisation beats joyfully and creatively together, then the organisation can lead by example (*Make More Art,* 2018, p. 15).

Throughout evaluation meetings with staff and trustees about the 400th year of celebration, there was considerable value placed on the ways in which celebratory activity brought the charity together and joyfully so. But the trustees and staff could speak to this because they experienced it themselves. This element of the strategy returns to the origin story of intra-vulnerability in the thesis. Inviting the service provider into embodied and personal engagements facilitates new and deeper views for engaging with the communities the charity serves. Being a trustee in 2018 entailed a level of engagement that when above and beyond attendance at board meetings. The research period leading up to and including the 400th year of celebratory activity invited the trustees and staff to not only attend, but participate in a

range of artistic events. From monthly lunches with five different cultural communities in the area, to the formation of and attendance at a new disability arts festival, to sharing drinks and conversation around residents' own artworks presented in a first exhibition as part of the Hammersmith and Fulham Arts festival, and finally, in attendance at a big summer party featuring installations, live performances, and awards given to local community beneficiaries, there were ample and wide-ranging opportunities to take part in and experience organisational culture.

As traced throughout the PaR projects, the role of unconditional and aesthetic joy and pleasure in arts activities is not only offered as a case for relieving beneficiary distress, but also for holding a thriving relationship between service provider and beneficiary. How can staff and trustees maintain a cultural existence both in the everyday running of the charity, as well as in these special interactive events with beneficiaries?

The early interventions with the book-making activity and the card game at the trustee dinner offered a performative way for staff and trustees to interact differently with one another- beyond the prescribed expertise of their job descriptions. In these activities, they had a chance to see and experience their mutual entailment with beneficiaries– opening up to one another, to their beneficiaries and to their part in the bigger picture of giving. Mike, the former chair of the trustees, who questioned early on in the research how best to serve the beneficiaries, offered support of the arts strategy. He advised that the charity work rigorously to embed an artistic way of being as a whole institution, not just an artistic way of thinking about funding art. This element of the strategy proposes a continued engagement with artistic practice in the business-as-usual operations as a method to stay open to the personal. From a trustee who instigated the disability arts fest (another element in the 400th anniversary year of events[42]), to another trustee who reflected upon the ways in which arts might improve relations between youth and police, both of these sets of knowledge came from intimate connections to their personal experiences with those communities.

To this point, it is worth noting the board constituents significantly changed over the course of the three-year research period. From a predominantly white, male, middle-class board over the age of sixty, the board is now evenly split across age and gender. There were three non-

[42] This festival is described in more detail in the arts strategy in Appendix A

white trustees at the time of completing the field work, including Adam Matan. His organisation, Anti-Tribalism Movement, is a beneficiary of HUC funding. He spoke at the board retreat to the need for better relations between young men and the police, having worked on these dilemmas with his communities. How the board works with this wider range of knowledge available in a more diverse set of trustees who are differently connected to the area of benefit, will be important. If the board sustains an exclusive adherence to 'leg-up' philanthropy and 'report-driven' communication, it risks the problems of tokenistic representation- whereby the optics don't actually shift how the charity could be in better service to beneficiaries that their trustees connect to. The point here is that artistic activity offers methods for opening up to trustee knowledge differently. It can reveal hidden perspectives (Daykin and Creative and Credible, 2015). This can facilitate a deeper awareness of and service to diverse socio-aesthetic needs of the charity's area of benefit.

The strategy proposes ways to consider how aesthetic interactions from the day-to-day of the charity's working (including board and staff meetings as much as events with beneficiaries) can open up to these newer trustees differently. In a creative evaluation session I led for trustees to reflect on the 400th with their newer board members[43], we discussed what brings each trustee to the charity. I asked them in pairs to discuss what they care about and share it back to the whole board. The answers spoke to a wide range of local area interests, work experience and duties of giving back. And then through a drawing exercise, they envisioned the future of the charity. Again, playful, but informed by their personal relationships to the area, this activity returned to the early research phases where the trustees opened up to their own experiences as a method of informing service.

An AiR could offer this kind of integrated artistic practice, and as this position changes frequently, it can introduce the charity to several artistic methods for opening up to the charity's own sets of knowledge differently.

7.2.6 Strategic Intra-activity

While each of these five elements that comprise the strategy overlap in their aims and intersect in potential activity (i.e.: an enigma lunch, an AiR, or a commissioned artwork can be an opportunity for organisational culture to develop) each element offers specific focus.

[43] This evaluation report is included in Appendix B

The AiR holds a clear space for risk, innovation and facilitation between the charity and its beneficiaries. The art collection concretises valuable relationality, vulnerability and affect in tangible ways that resist word-driven reporting. The enigma experiences draw a path for co-agency and the name 'enigma' provokes an approach of curiosity for the unknown (as opposed to fear or discomfort.) As the enigma experiences evolve (be it through specific types of events or meals)- the value is in the reframing of an approach to being with the unknown and specifically of being in that unknown with beneficiary communities in an ever-growing equitable partnership. While enigma lunches, art collection, and artist in residency may all be involved or connected to consultancy, the focus of this area deals directly with art in relation to community development. The other activities do not have to necessarily focus so deliberately around this. And finally, organisational culture, deeply informed and informing of the other four elements, offers a key focus for the ways in which an inward manifestation of the charity's outward workings can transpire. How any of these activities takes shape is up to the charity- critically including its staff, its beneficiaries and artists.

As such, it is critical to discuss a joint supervisory committee for overseeing the arts strategy that is comprised of the grants manager, a trustee, an artist, and at least two beneficiaries (one who is a resident of the charity's housing and one who is part of the wider beneficiary communities in the local area). This committee can change from year to year, or as the organisation sees fit. It is recommended that they meet quarterly to oversee and plan aspects of activities in motion and that there is a regular and evolving creative process for evaluation of the strategy. In this way, the committee will ensure that the evolving legacy of the artistic strategy is co-developed with and in service to beneficiaries.

7.3 Intra-acting with the wider field

The timeline for this research has paralleled a growth spurt towards cultural democracy in the wider UK arts funding landscape. Since the research began in 2016, collaborations continue to develop between national and local funders demonstrating support of programming across wide ranging definitions of arts and culture made in collaboration with funders and communities. Many recent reports on collaborative funding streams –in partnerships like Arts Council, AHRC and Paul Hamlynn with the Cultural Value Scoping Project (2018) and Gulbenkian, Big Local and Esmée Fairbairn with Creating Civic Change– recognize a need

for a deeper understanding and articulation of cultural value by and for producers, consumers, and funders.[44]

As one such funding body of cultural engagement, the charity forms a critical part of this dialogue and exchange. As much as they can give new information for how arts and culture are contributing to the local communities they serve and facilitating processes for co-creating new models of philanthropy, it is also important that their practices stay in touch with the wider output of knowledge being developed across the country on larger and smaller scales. This will help keep the charity moving forward and resist slipping back into default debates about whether to fund the arts at all.

In a presentation of the arts strategy to the board of trustees at their retreat in 2019, a newer trustee questioned whether this arts strategy was an appropriate use of the charity's time, and whether time would be better spent identifying need before engaging with art. While he had misconstrued the strategy as an artistic practice that the charity's staff and trustees would take on exclusively, rather than as an approach to working more deeply with artists and beneficiaries in order to better understand need, his scepticism returned a deficit model of cultural programming. And while his questions provoked every other staff and trustee to defend the arts strategy, citing a range of actual and metaphoric values gained over the three year period, his questions also served to remind that deficit model thinking is a shoreline that may always be within easy reach, even as the charity appears to move forward in a sea change.

> New ways of artistic working and forms of cultural engagement are being written into the DNA of how localities operate and how people living there think. In this context, the deficit model – the assumption that arts interventions of this kind happen in situations where there is something missing or something needs fixing – is to be resisted (Kaszynska, 2018, p. 21).

The call to resist points to a critical manifestation of intra-vulnerabilities at work in institutional and cultural policy for these larger funding bodies. In recognising the problematics of the past, there are openings up to new ways of co-creating value. Opening up to new ways of being with communities in processes of making, while not without

[44] These wider schemes are still quite focused on growing communities as audiences, not as co-creators, so all the more reason for HUC to demonstrate ways in which more co-agency can manifest.

discomforts, as Bremner attested with the fourteen variable collaborations between institutions and communities in 'Creating Civic Change,' (2019) is taking shape. And the AHRC's support of a new Collaborative Centre for Cultural Value proposes a physical space for different funding, cultural and community bodies to come together to make those shapes more visible.

While much of this proposed centre still outlines the usual suspects in reporting (research, analyses, synthesis, conferences with 'high-profile speakers' and a reporting back with more robust evidence) it leaves space for practice as a venue for creating shared languages across and between different sectors for 'new meeting formats that rely on practice-based thinking e.g., cultural value mashups and hackathons; and online events, e.g. webinars or discussion groups, to reach out to people who are less likely to participate in more traditional events' (Kaszynska, 2018, p. 29).

This is where HUC has an opportunity to offer a model of practice as policy. To demonstrate how artistic practice facilitates more equitable relationships with beneficiaries that lead to better understandings of servicing their needs. Particularly as a non-arts organisation that embraced an arts-way of knowing, the charity serves as a productive case study for the charitable sector.

In applying the findings from the PaR projects and the arts strategy developed with HUC, the thesis contributes the following recommendations to the wider field of community arts funding:

- Integrate artistic processes, activities and events as a methodology to develop different relationships between funders and beneficiaries. Within artistic practice, invitations into emotion and expression offer a chance for all sides of the provision spectrum to demonstrate expertise and vulnerability, which can lead to a deeper understanding of beneficiary needs and a developing awareness of when and how funders may be perpetuating social inequities.

- Rigorously analyse how generative metaphors available in both works of art and relationships within artistic practice can give new or different meaning to co-creating culture and policy with funders and beneficiaries. Doing this together with

beneficiaries and relevant stakeholders offers a chance to create a crucial shared language between different aspects of service provision. It also offers a useful reflexivity for understanding how to iterate practice and policy. Budget time and funding to support this creative analysis.

- Embrace the unconditional quality of joy and its aesthetic potential in both the internal workings of an organisation and its external relationships with beneficiaries. This is a vital quality for all aspects of service.

- Create a national archive for community arts so that the abundance of knowledge available in past and present practices can be tracked and held in a centralised and accessible space.

A proposal for a next PhD project: to track the arts strategy at HUC as it can contribute to the call for new methodologies of practice as policy by communities, funders and artists.

Conclusions

Beginning with a potential to redress questions long-asked about the value and impact of funding art, this thesis instead evolved into an investigation into the ways in which a funding body might get to know its beneficiaries differently through artistic practice in order to better serve them with artistic activity. The research has examined ways in which artistic activities, events and the processes for making them can open up spaces for affect, listening, unmoulding and ultimately a striving towards more equitable cultural relationships between the charity and the people it serves.

As such, my thesis is that arts practice is a definite form of arts policy. And this is its key contribution to new knowledge. Not only do artistic ways of thinking, making and doing inform policy, but they manifest policy in and of themselves. Taking forward the ways in which artworks have impacted more equitable housing policy (Hunter's *Ghetto Project)* and artistic ways of working between artists, policy makers and local communities have contributed more equity in community development (Assemble's *4 Granby Streets* and Project Row Houses), this thesis demonstrates that an engagement with funders in artistic practice is viable as a mode towards understanding more equitable decision-making processes for funding art with and on behalf of socially and economically vulnerable communities. Particularly within the context of a non-arts based organisation, the thesis contributes new understandings of how an arts way of working gives new and different knowledge than business-as-usual methods of distant observations, written reports or one-directional lectures. The practice-based research additionally sheds light on artistic processes already in practice, though unnoticed. That this is best explored through the expression of new artistic work itself, manifests nuanced opportunities to gain knowledge in myriad ways.

At times throughout the PhD, artistic settings simply invited different parts of the charity into a co-presence that facilitated them getting to know one another casually through a shared meal, an installation, or a performance at a 400th anniversary party. In these moments as beneficiary and trustee were both participants or fellow audience members, they might have encountered one another in ways that reached beyond the limits of paper definitions of one-way service. At other times, artistic activity invited beneficiaries and service providers into acts of art-making in order to articulate community dilemmas in new ways— exploring

beneficiary perspectives on housing and the best use of intergenerational communal spaces, or reflecting on community cohesion, recognising the ways in which all, regardless of position on the provision spectrum, are mutually entailed in notions of inclusion and exclusion. And, at times the whole charity examined new frameworks for funding art through a purely imaginative exercise, reframing themselves with art to consider more art.

Opening up to one another in these more expressive ways achieved different levels of equity through co-presence, co-production and co-ownership of artistic processes and events. The resulting methodology of 'intra-vulnerabilities' disrupted the charity's longstanding one-directional nature of service and put forward not only an interactive way for service providers to co-understand the needs of beneficiaries, but a more intra-active method for visibly and experientially understanding how different human and material agencies can inform, influence and change service provision to suit a range of needs. Crucially, I argue, these processes opened up the charity to a vulnerable recognition of the part they play in notions of inclusion and exclusion.

Understanding that knowledge for service provision lies not only with the provider, but critically with the recipient, evidenced how artistic practice is not only a policy informant, but a policy enactment.

Remembering the Future, for example, informed ways in which the charity could expand its arts funding for the 400th anniversary year to include a range of beneficiary-led[45] arts activities, as well as newly invest in projects related to the charity's housing remit. After viewing the installation which centred residents sharing their own stories within an expressive video landscape in architectural models, both Melanie and Tim, the charity's leading decision makers on spending, invested in a second project with myself and the architects to further explore creative ways to work across the provision spectrum to inform the new intergenerational housing development. The artistic practice enabled them to locate knowledge about housing differently: with the residents and with the architects, but critically within the context of artistic practice. While *Remembering the Future* informed *Moving Time*, I argue that this not only became a way to inform policy for how service providers

[45] The arts funded activities for the 400th were guided by beneficiary expressed ideas, with some activities being co-curated with residents and wider-area beneficiary community groups.

could work creatively with beneficiaries to understand needs differently, it also enacted policy. The charity decided to invest in a process that was not only informed by what they thought their residents needed, but by what the residents expressed needing themselves (which again was heard differently as expressed through artistic practice.) In this way *Remembering the Future* and *Moving Time* are policy informants (for creative consultancy in the wider field of affordable housing design) and markers of policy change for how the charity conceives of service, locating beneficiaries within the process of service provision- not only as recipients, but also as givers of knowledge.

Similarly the *Moving Portraits* enacted co-created knowledge between beneficiaries and benefactors, as the 33 portraits depicted 33 imaginations for local art commissions across the provision spectrum. In viewing the portraits, Melanie (who was one of the portrait participants) noted how they enacted a shift in thinking from 'funding the alleviation of deprivation' to the funding of 'ambition.' While subtle, Melanie called this is radical policy change for the way the charity chooses to fund and for how it reframes beneficiary knowledge as inspirational rather than lacking.

This thesis intervenes in the relentless and cyclical value conversation. It proposes that rather than continuously debate social, economic, intrinsic or instrumental values for arts programming, for which there is a library of literature, the canon calls for more practice-based research as a crucial tandem methodology to better understand the communities that make up the UK– the communities that don't attend the major cultural institutions, that could benefit from funding for other types of programmes, not instead, but in equitable conjunction with these more mainstream avenues that have always received the greater share of public funding.

While the door is currently opening to more community-led arts initiatives, with growing collaborations between funding bodies, arts and cultural institutions and communities, I argue that this is still predominantly led through conversational consultation, with a majority of arts practice carried out by the communities and/or arts institutions which is then co-evaluated with the funder and institutional partners. This thesis argues for the value of artistic practice as a key methodology for carrying out these kinds of funding initiatives from start to finish. It addresses the question: "How can all the partners within such programming (funders, artists/institutions and communities at the intersection of arts and community development)

make deeper use of the form they fund by embracing questions and processes for funding art *with* art?" Conversational consultation and dialogue contribute critical information, but the collaborative practice-based research with Hammersmith United Charities offered a way for trustees, funders, communities and artists to understand value experientially and emotionally as well as theoretically.

Ultimately the findings and learnings from each PaR project with the charity led to the creation of an arts strategy as a means to register and continue enacting practice as policy. But inevitable limitations must be acknowledged. As an artist-researcher who observed subtle, but radical changes in the charity over the research period, I witnessed and participated in the possibility of practice as policy; but, I temper this hopeful view with the reality that defaulting to deficit approaches to culture is never too far away:

> When I first joined, I made clear to the grants committee that we needed to give 'need' a wide definition which went way beyond 'poverty' – and I think there is no doubt that they bought into that (and your existence [in doing this research] is living proof of it). I'd be surprised if many of the current grants committee saw 'need' in narrow terms. That said, they are faced with the moral dilemmas which stem from actual rising poverty and which draws them back to funding food banks and the like – and where resources are limited, it is perhaps to be expected that this might come at the expense of the arts.
>
> Probably the simple answer is that each generation of trustees reinterprets 'in need' to reflect the most pressing social issues of the day; and then they fund interventions which seem most likely to address those issues. Sometimes those interventions will be arts based (Melanie in email conversation with me, 2019).

While Melanie gets to the heart of an evolving outlook on the relationships between need and culture in the funding landscape, she also speaks to the core problem with embedding the arts at a 400-year-old charity like HUC, given the structure of a charity that will always default to its trustees. This subjectivity ultimately returns the thesis to its beginning problematics in questioning the value of art. Forever longing to grasp its 'in-grasp-ability,' this quest for the ultimate articulation of art's value is both a blessing and a curse. It is a blessing in that it keeps the debate alive, it keeps aesthetic experimentation in many ways front and centre, in response to consistent calls for new methods of measurement. *The arts continue to be funded at the charity.* It is also a curse as it stunts progress with regurgitated debates around value for money, requests for evidencing social transformation and sustained penchants for the

word and number as crowning indicator of value. *Embracing the art strategy as a strategy is yet to be worn on the charity's sleeve.*[46]

As evidenced in the board retreat day in 2019, with a newer trustee professing his doubt that the charity should focus on arts, let alone preserve an annual budget of £10,000 to support an artistic strategy, transmitting inter and intra-personal experiential values in artistic practice (as demonstrated by this PhD) is further problematised by encounters with absence. While progress should not be stopped by sceptics, as there will always be sceptics, this trustee's doubt brings up significant questions about how to transmit knowledge beyond presence. At the board 'away day', nearly every trustee and staff member who had participated in the research could speak, in differentiated ways to the multitude of values they saw and felt as a result of taking part in this research. But, how does this articulation become embedded beyond the anecdotal? And beyond the people who embodied the research and created a strategy from that embodiment? Melanie and Tim and myself are no longer based at the charity. While there are still many trustees and some staff present, the charity is in a state of transition into new leadership.

What will happen to the arts strategy? Will it embed? Can it embed? Was it embedded deeply enough? [47]

This is not a new dilemma. The community arts movement is consistently lamented for its un-traceability. While one could argue the value of the community arts movement lay in its practice, it is problematised when the practice remains in memory alone –lacking not only in documentation, but in a shared articulation with policy that can sustain government leadership changes. Writers like Bishop (2012), Jeffers (2017), and Matarasso (2019) who outline and analyse elements of the movement and thread its tenets through to current cultural democracy efforts, recognise the value of such articulation. Battersea Arts Center's 'Co-creating change' network speaks specifically to the necessity for artists and arts institutions to take part in this articulation as well (2017).

[46] Some of the activities outlined in the strategy are still active under the charity's current leadership, but these activities are not identified as part of an organisational strategy. As such, one has to question whether the underlying tenets of pronouncing beneficiary cultural needs first will sustain.
[47] See post-script

This thesis' artist-led research supports and manifests such articulation, but it raises additional limitations and possibilities in relation to future policy formation, implementation and evaluation. As a practice-based researcher commissioned by the organisation I was researching, I was not only financially supported by the institution from which I needed to maintain some critical distance, but I necessarily developed and interacted at a level of personal and subjective relationships within the institution; such being the nature of the research, the practice and arts practice in general. Within these parameters, I address the question "how then does an artist-researcher ensure the research is also critical and can be received as such?" My disruptive artistic methods were arguably subtle and gentle throughout the three-year collaboration. They became more critical in reflexivity, particularly in the process of writing an analysis of the practice. This criticality can be easier to write alone in a room on paper. But as this thesis argues for the value of vulnerability in confronting discomfort, particularly for such value in face-to-face co-presence, the arts strategy recommends that more in-person reflexive time be built into such arts-driven research. While Melanie Nock, the former grants manager, and I did continuously evaluate and re-evaluate together, iterating each subsequent artistic experiment with the whole organisation, we both now understand that such reflexivity is critical with the whole organisation as a means towards sustainability.

To this point, the thesis also suggests that the knowledge created in practice also lies with the participants, those who were beneficiaries as well as those on staff and in trustee positions. If the arts strategy can pivot on the most critical reflection by trustees that the beneficiaries must be in the room with them more regularly, then such co-presence (as particularly demonstrated in artistic practice) can structurally disrupt problematic one-directional modes of giving and sustain long after individual supporters are gone.

The written thesis in tandem with the practice and its theoretical analysis, puts forward the research with HUC as a unique contribution to this landscape. As a community funder first, engaging with this research in an arts way of getting to know their communities' needs, the charity offers evidence for how such relational practice in art informs and is policy.

But this point must be reflected in the wider arts and cultural funding landscape. A national archive, or centralised living, breathing network for locating the history and current breadth of these practices which have led to and enacted policy change (in terms of the ways in which

service providers can co-create knowledge with beneficiaries in order to best serve their needs) is needed. The scales are still tipped in favour of reporting and number driven policies. There isn't enough practice, nor theory to support the practice and connect it to policy. This thesis emphasises the necessity of this relationship between philosophy and practice: the value of thinking and making, combined with critical action for locating how those two worlds can meet. In action. In artistic practice. In the consistent thinking-making-doing between practice, analysis and policy that must as Conquergood, Mackey and others have suggested, work on each other with equitable respect. A collated space, like a national archive, will clarify value and offer a shared vocabulary to a wider audience, propelling the iteration and evolution of policies and practices as relationships between funders, local communities and artists deepen.

My portfolio as both practice and documentation of the practice is an online experience that offers a tool for the charity to return to[48] as well as for the wider arts and cultural policy to reference with the thesis' theoretical analysis. While this work lives on my own personal website (and in DVD format as part of the submission) with aspects shared on London South Bank University and Hammersmith United Charities' websites, the thesis concludes with a call for a wider dissemination of this knowledge. Such registration (as suggested through a national archive) will address not only the slippage of individual or remote practices from a wider cultural policy view, but help prevent slippage from places (like the charity) where those individual findings first emerged.

As Mike, the outgoing chair of the charity's board, summarised at the trustee retreat in 2019, the value of the arts strategy lies in how it curates a new way of thinking for the whole organisation- not just as an extra appendage that gets tended to occasionally by one or two staff members. The thesis similarly provokes a sector wide participation in upholding the critical relationships that manifest between funders, artists and communities in artistic practice. As recommended for the charity, this will require a regular commitment to time and practice and a deeper embrace and opening up to vulnerable journeys into the soul of cultural policy-making alongside the mechanisms of its body.

[48] The choice to practice with video was a specifically chosen medium to address the problems of ephemerality in live performance, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Post-script

With regards to the question around how the arts strategy may or may not have embedded deeply enough before leadership changes, I have since been hired to carry out an arts commission to connect beneficiaries isolated during CoVid 19. I will be including staff and trustees in the arts activity and continuing conversations with the current leadership in relation to the strategy. I remain optimistic.

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Appendix A

Make More Art, an arts strategy for Hammersmith United Charities
Available to read online: https://9229738e-1bac-481c-8f5d-1526eec9e009.filesusr.com/ugd/83f7e7_01503941a9f44cd1a7fd8447825285ad.pdf

Appendix B

Creative Evaluation of the charity's 400th anniversary carried out with trustees[49]

Available to read online: https://9229738e-1bac-481c-8f5d-1526eec9e009.filesusr.com/ugd/83f7e7_4b339235e60e4a3d80de8db376ee3e40.pdf

[49] This report identifies itself as part 1 of an evaluation process of the 400th anniversary. The second part was carried out with trustees at their board away day in February 2019 where I presented the arts strategy.