

25 Years of
Contemporary Art
in Scotland

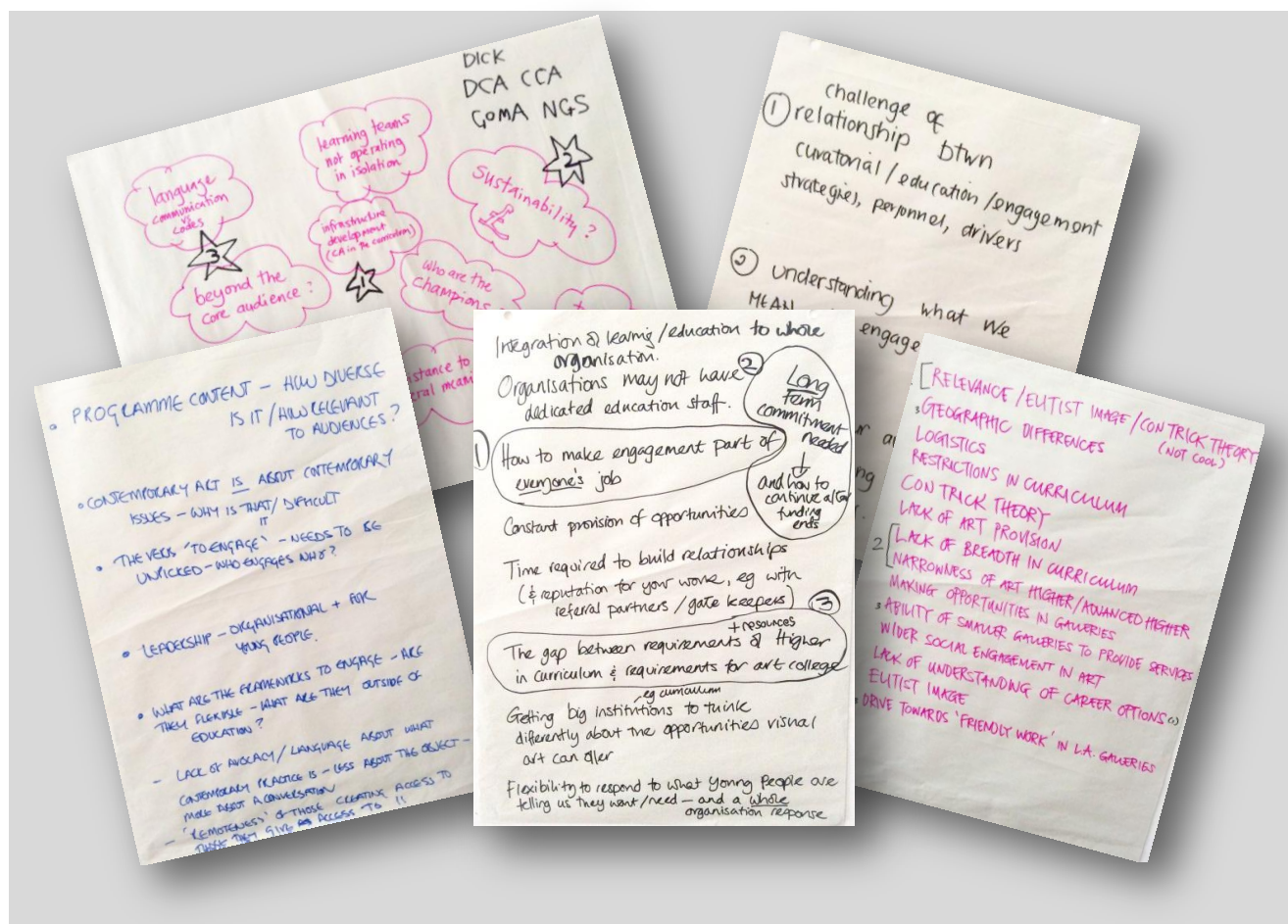
GENERATION

GENERATION and its impact on audiences

The Art School, Glasgow

Friday 15th May 2015

Morning Discussion Notes



Engaging audiences with contemporary art: What are the challenges?

Attendees were asked to consider the challenges in engaging audiences with contemporary art. **Top 3 challenges identified by each group are in pink.**

- Different institutional structure agendas
- Not allowed to communicate with young people using the social networking sites they use – opening up restrictions
- Pressure of the development of ‘new audiences, new partners, new relationships’ through project by project funding
- Time taken to agree nature of partnerships can lose momentum with kids that you want to work with
- Council IT departments
- Value of the art institution
- Access to budget, resources – art and artists, places to visit
- Relational – how young people work vs professional - how we are required to work
- Young people seeing the relevance of the work done to pull together and evidence what they need
- How do we learn from each other in the field; arts and health, arts and education
- Strength in building key relationships over time

- Relevance / elitist image / con trick theory (not cool)
- Geographical differences
- Ability of smaller galleries to provide services
- Logistics
- Restrictions in curriculum
- Lack of art provision
- Lack of breadth of curriculum – narrowness of art higher / advanced higher
- Making opportunities in galleries
- Wider social engagement in art
- Lack of understanding of career options
- Drive towards ‘friendly work’ in local authority galleries

- Infrastructure development (contemporary art and the curriculum)
- Sustainability £
- Language – communication vs codes
- Beyond the core audience?
- Learning teams not operating in isolation

- Who are the champions?
- To many special needs to manage
- Co-ordination – marketing, curatorial, education, press
- Resistance to literal meaning

- Challenge of relationship between curatorial / education / engagement strategies, personnel, drivers
- Understanding what we MEAN by engagement
- Knowing your audiences (or not knowing them) assumptions
- Should there be legacy grants / second time around for participants
- What's the future focus? How ambitious?
- Permanent / ring fenced person – (Whitworth has 12 staff in engagement)
- TIMING
- Curriculum is a barrier
- Shifting priority of funders / govt.
- Understanding more about what we mean about engagement - peer reflection / statement
- Relationship between curatorial / education / engagement
- Knowing your audience / not knowing assumptions
- Sustainability – self – sustaining groups, dissipation - is that realistic?
- Tensions
- Distinction between sustainability of provision / participation
- Creation of framework – how you create conditions that allow self-creation or self-sustaining
- Critical aspects – additional funding or platforms often project-based

- Programme content – how diverse is it / how relevant to audiences?
- Contemporary art IS about contemporary issues – why is that / it difficult?
- The verb 'to engage' – needs to be unpicked – who engages who?
- Leadership – organisations and for young people
- What are the frameworks to engage – are they flexible – what are they outside of education?
- Lack of advocacy / language about what contemporary practice is – less about the object – more about the conversations
- 'Remoteness' of those creating access to those they give access to

- Un-education / unlearning
- Systems, structures and assumed behaviours, narratives
- Rigid / fixed methods of 'measuring' / fluid 'tracking'

- How do you measure engagement?
- Multi-level issues
- Autonomy to do what they (YP) they wanted
- How education fits in?
- Problems vs solutions
- Less tables - meetings

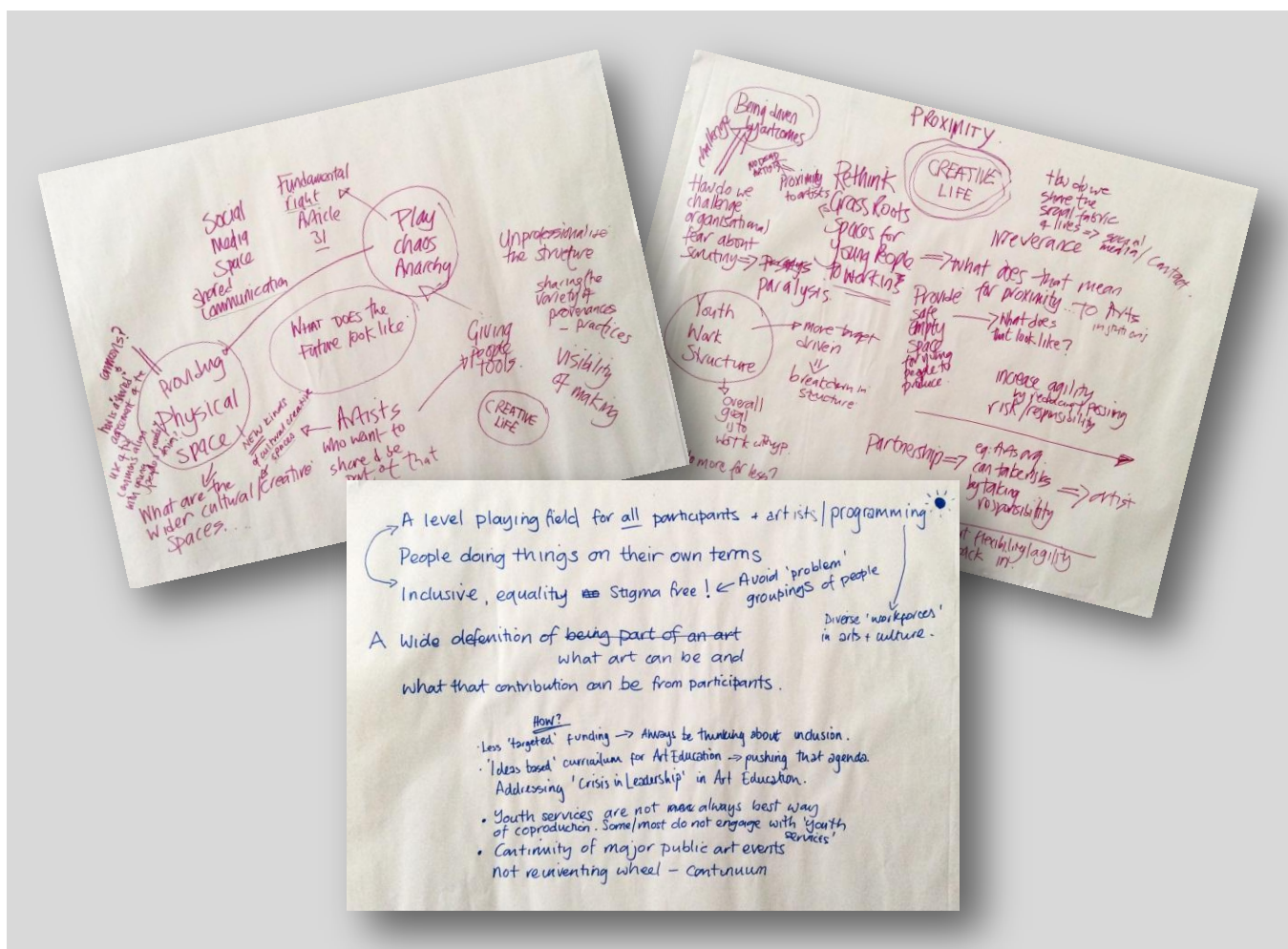
- How to make engagement part of everyone's job
- Long-term commitment needed – and how to continue after funding ends
- The gap between requirements and resources of Higher in curriculum and requirements for art college
- Integration between learning / education to whole organisation
- Organisations may not have dedicated education staff
- Constant provision of opportunities
- Time required to build relationships (and reputation for your work, e.g. with referral partners / gate keepers)
- Getting big institutions to think differently about the opportunities visual art can offer
- Flexibility to respond to what young people are telling us they want / need – and a whole organisation response

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Afternoon Discussion Notes

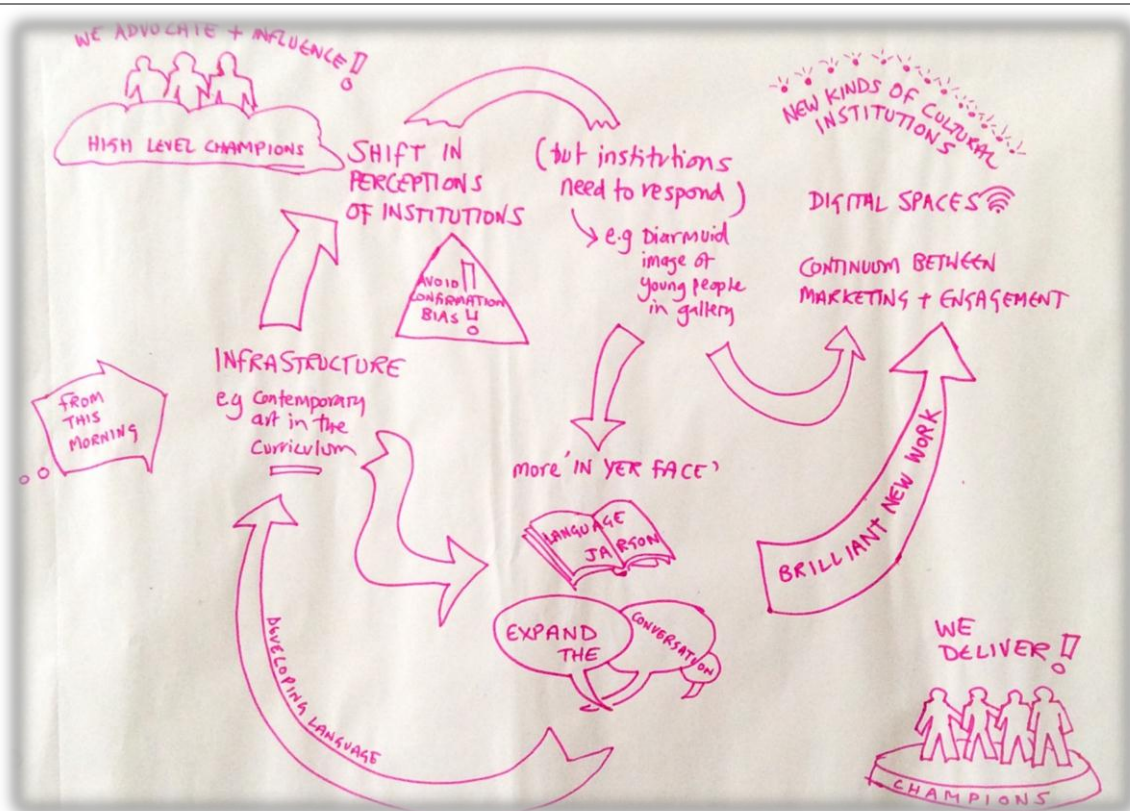


**Engaging audiences with contemporary art:
What should the future look like and how do we get there?**

Attendees were asked to think about an action plan; what the future should look like and how we get there...

- Social media space – shared communication
- **Providing physical space** – commons? How is a shared agreement of the use of the commons aligning with young people's moods / desires? What are the wider cultural / creative spaces
- **Play, chaos, anarchy** – fundamental right – Article 31...giving people tools
- Artists who want to share and be a part of that – new kinds of cultural creative spaces
- Creative Life
- Unprofessionalise the structure
- Sharing the variety of practices
- Visibility of making
- **Proximity**
- Challenge – being driven by outcomes – how do we challenge organisational fear about scrutiny – paralysis
- Rethink grass roots spaces for young people to work in– proximity to artists – No dead artists
- What does that mean for proximity to arts institutions
- Provide safe empty space for young people to produce – what does that look like?
- How do we share the social fabric of our lives – social media / contact...irreverence
- Increase agility by reducing and passing risk / responsibility
- **Youth work structure** – more target driven – breakdown in structure
- How do we do more for less?
- **Partnership** – e.g. arts org can take risks by taking responsibility – artist
- Put flexibility / agility back in

- Build a pathway to a national programme pays for officers who build on existing organisations expertise NOT buried in local authorities tapping expertise and resources
- Opportunities to work together
- Opportunities supported, SUSTAINED and resources
- Common purpose
- Integrated within and between organisations
- Bespoke
- 10 years' time contemporary art should be in and ACROSS curriculum
- An equivalent of Youth Music Initiative for contemporary art
- Move away from individual model of achievement
- A nationally funded model emphasising social and collaborative practice and creating audiences for it



- High level champions - we advocate and influence!
- Infrastructure e.g. contemporary art in the curriculum
- = shift in perceptions of institutions (avoid confirmation bias!)
- But institutions need to respond (e.g. Diarmuid image of young people in gallery)
- More 'in yer face' language / jargon = expand the conversation = developing language and brilliant new work
- New kinds of cultural institutions / digital spaces / continuum between marketing and engagement
- Champions deliver!

- Should future look different from present?
- Peer learning, school learning – more studios in schools
- Policies revised – advocators raise awareness of benefits
- Facts and figures – helps reduce mental illness
- More representatives of youth culture
- Recognition of creativity across the board
- Art incorporated into everyday life

How?

- Benefits of art – facts and figures
- Schools – taster sessions of different mediums
- Unlearning

- Bin elitism
- Youth empowerment
- Everyone's connection to art is different – an individual rather than industrial approach to education
- Geography – the digital landscape
- Cultural entitlement – artists delivering inspiration – leaves something behind – prolonged project

- A level playing field for all participants and artists / programming – diverse workforces in arts and culture
- Inclusive, equality and stigma free! – Avoid 'problem' groupings of people
- People doing things on their own terms
- A wide definition of what art can be and what that contribution can be from participants

How?

- Less 'targeted' funding – always be thinking about inclusion
- 'Ideas based' curriculum for Art Education – pushing that agenda
- Addressing 'crisis in leadership' in art education
- Youth services are not always best way of co-production. Some / most do not engage with 'youth services'
- Continuity of major public art events
- Not reinventing wheel – continuum

- Lack of consensus around contemporary art is its strength
- UN-LEARN
- Audience engagement concern of the whole
- Organise / take action
- Collectively – joint working, commons, co-production
- Move away from 'the project'
- Commitment to words with action – from top / take risk
- WITH schools, teachers, families from a young age