

Visual Arts Panel Meeting Minutes

19 November 2020 / 2-3.30pm / Zoom

Attending: Rebecca Maddox(SCC), David McLeavy (Bloc Projects), Yuen Fong Ling (Artist), Tyler Mellins (Yorkshire Artspace), Kirstie Hamilton (Museums Sheffield), James Green (Artist), Angelica Sule (Site Gallery), Anna Santomauro (Art Catalyst), Georgina Kettlewell (YAS), Sara Unwin (University of Sheffield), Karen Sherwood (Cupola Gallery), Cat Powell (Artfelt), Penny McCarthy (SHU), Janet Jennings (Museums Sheffield).

Apologies: Emma Harnett (Artworks)

1. **Minutes**

Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.

2. **Updates from the last meeting**

Studio Groupings –

Tyler, Georgina and David met and discussed plans for the next 12 months. They are planning to grow the group, hoping to involve studios across the city and hope to develop studio exchanges with other cities, matching artists/venues.

Replicast is closing due to the company being sold. All artists given notice. Any spaces available? Dina has also moved – although are hoping to relocate to Leah's Yard.

Its important to keep communication open with different groups to help understanding what's out there, if there is enough provision and how we respond to changes.

Action: Janet to research current position of Kiac.

Access space report -

Access Space have moved out of their building now, as this is being redeveloped, and are looking for new space. They are still delivering an online programme and hope to negotiate new space should the High street fund application be successful, or other space alternatively.

The High Street Fund announcement was delayed as it was to be announced in the cancelled autumn statement. Note: The 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review has now been set for 23 Nov and so it may be announced then?

Unconscious Bias Training

Angelica reported back that Site have identified three organisations offering online training. See details below. Site are likely to take this forward with RR. The fee is approx. £3000 for 25 people (approx. £120 pp). They are requesting funding from Freelands and looking to offer to Freelands artists. Alternatively, if this funding doesn't come about – they will have approx. 13 places to offer places to other organisations.

Links

Race Reflections - <https://racereflections.co.uk/>

The Other Box - <https://www.theotherbox.org/>

MA Education Consultancy - http://ma-consultancy.co.uk/booking-training-workshops/?fbclid=IwAR36ECQNx_IBrLXrLq9EK32WW62Y2ci1C2glsoLHeM7sILpXidaa_TFiWM0

Artists database –

Following recent discussions around an online artists database, the panel agreed the best way forward was to build on what is already existing in the city, and work with Creative Guild to extend

their database, but also ask if this can signpost to other resources. This should come online Nov/Dec and will be promoted to visual artist via the Making Our Way Newsletter.

University collaboration

Action – Janet to set up a meeting with Sara and Penny.

Festivals sub group

Penny reported back from the meeting in October, also attended by David, Yuen, James and Janet. This was an extensive and rich meeting, unpacking of festivals we've known and considering how we can develop a unique event for Sheffield.

It was acknowledged that times have changed since Art Sheffield – and equally what representation means has been altered. Not just BLM, but also what inclusivity might mean. The group considered how hierarchies are enacted in the art world – and the risk of inventing new hierarchies. They discussed ideas of how something inclusive and non-hierarchical might be shaped – if for example, an event accepted any submission from practising artist and then the community curated exhibitions.

This is the early manifestation of an idea and concerns to consider included:

- whether this might be part of a wider festival, but not the whole event – would the process naturally exclude some people?
- How other forms of practice such as live art, socially engaged might come in
- the need to explore multiple different models, to gain more perspectives
- the need to map out priorities, how to use success of MW but in a festival model –
- how directly involving Sheffield communities not just presenting our selection goes beyond hierarchies.
- It feels relevant, new and exciting – and like 'Sheffield' – rejecting familiar models.
- should be of interest to funders (Let Create ACE Strategy) and marketing narrative is there.
- the need to consider community engagement carefully – go to where people were are and start the conversation – this takes long and sustained involvement, trust and listening. But should have more impact than a festival which is more transient.

Kirstie reported that MS is developing a programme at the Graves Gallery looking at working with schools to curate aspects of the collection exhibition in schools. This might act as a good test bed and opportunity to broaden the conversation.

Other members of the panel expressed an interest in being involved in this group and additionally there were suggestions of other members of the artistic community who could be also invited to attend, if they were interested in doing so.

Note: Paradise is Here book – Guild of St George / Ruth Nutter

<https://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/projects-places/ruskin-in-sheffield/paradise-is-here>

Next meeting 4 December

Action: send meeting details to panel members and invite others.

3. **Annual survey**

A survey would be in some senses be quite quick and easy to send out. Although we need to be aware of post-Covid survey fatigue, what information we can already gain from the existing surveys taking place and what questions would be most useful for us to ask. It would be focussed on visual art and short, explaining what it was for. It is hoped that a 'loyalty' to MW might encourage response.

As identified above – we should look to find out more about the impact on studios, studio holders. It is also important that we think about how we ensure we get to wider communities of visual artists

in the city, not just MW Newsletter database, and studio holders. How do we reach more diverse communities?

Actions: Janet to research existing survey data - YVAN, UKRI (ask Sara about this)
Start to draft questions for discussion in the next meeting

4. **Priorities**

Of the priorities identified by the Panel, the two deemed most important to consider in the next 12 months were:

- Support early mid-career artists and curators with a sustained focus on developing more ambitious opportunities and reasons to commit to the city.
- Working collaboratively to create a set of standards for the visual arts that provide an ethical position on pay, protect intellectual property and develop guidelines on internships and supporting the mental health of arts professionals.

These priorities identify two complementary activities – both artists support and infrastructure development. Other priorities identified for under these or are included in aspects already discussed – researching a visual arts festival and studio spaces, championing artists voice, developing a shared code of practice and undertaking the survey.

It was agreed that we need to broaden the picture of who is an artist? And ask how we support people right across the spectrum. Work doesn't always need to be public facing, but practice should be supported. Not all artists have a studios or make artefacts – but they're still engaged in important dialogues. How can we support this through broader memberships, information sharing, signposting, building communities..?

It was also agreed that we need to be clear on what Sheffield has and that facts are correct – for example the statement that there are 26 galleries in Sheffield mentioned recently and out of date. Note – see list of all non-commercial gallery spaces in Sheffield, and spaces that host exhibitions.

5. **Things you'd like to see in five years**

- Clearer routes of support for artists at the beginning of their career, especially from lower socioeconomic-economic or minority backgrounds.
- An annual art/craft fair of the scale of Manchester Art Fair - something that people would travel to the city for; a major event that is democratic and inclusive.
- More organisational stability through longer term funding (more Sheffield based organisations in ACE's NPO portfolio) which would allow for more long term planning and more consistent support for artists in the city.
- Increase the representation and capacity of skilled and professional artists, curators and arts workers from ethnically diverse communities, addressing structural inequality by offering 'positive action', representation, support and training where needed.
- For visual arts to be increasingly public-facing and for benefits (both for the city and well-being) to be better recognised and better understood by both the public and the city leadership, leading to increased funding for visual art and uptake of arts education at FE and HE level.
- Activities (including exhibitions, public programmes, residencies etc) that connect the hyperlocal with the global, and that nurture exchanges around the civic role of art through international collaboration and cooperation.

AOB

Race equality commission

This is looking at racial inequality across all aspects of civic life in Sheffield – one aspect is focussed on culture –

and wants to identify models of good practice, case studies as well as things that might have gone wrong or that could have been done better. Information is also being gathered around things Sheffield owns – for example libraries, archives etc. so these might be able to feed into one overall report.

Action: Talk to Yuen to share information.

Good News and things to look out for/share...

SHU Degree Shows go online this weekend

YAS Online Open Studios weekend 20-21

Mandy Payne has been shortlisted for the John Moores Painting Prize

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Next Meeting

Wednesday December 16 9-10.30am

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84609576129?pwd=M2JndzU0NXRVQWh1dFowSVk2WHA5Zz09>

Meeting ID: 846 0957 6129

Passcode: 642264

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Galleries or organisations who host exhibitions in Sheffield (not including commercial galleries) = 23-25 ... Again this might be slightly out of date... and I might have missed some

Abbeydale Picturehouse

[Academy of Makers](#) / Butcher Works

[Access Space](#) – although currently between spaces

[Artfelt](#)

[Artcade](#)

[Arts Catalyst](#) – hopefully soon 😊

[APG](#)

[Attercliffe TM](#)

[Bloc Projects](#)

Clocktower Gallery (Northern General Hospital)

[Cupola Gallery](#)

[Dina](#) – although currently between spaces

[Fronteer](#)

[Gage Gallery](#)

[Gloam](#)

[99 Mary Street](#) / The Viewing Room

[Museums Sheffield](#) (Millennium Gallery, Graves Gallery, Weston Park Museum)

[S1 Artspace](#)

[Sheffield Cathedral](#)

[Sheffield Institute of Arts Gallery](#)

[Sidney + Matilda](#)

[Site Gallery](#)

[The Art House](#)

[Trafalgar Warehouse](#)

[University of Sheffield – Library Gallery](#)

[Yorkshire Artspace](#) (Persistence Works + Exchange Place)