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‘WORKING IN PUBLIC SEMINARS’ PROJECT

SEMINAR FOUR

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A Public Conversation

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Proceedings extracted from the project website – https://www.workinginpublicseminars.org

Introduction

Moira Jeffrey: To start the evening, I would like to introduce Nicol Stephen, MSP, who is the Parliamentary sponsor of this event. Nicol Stephen is the Member for Aberdeen South. He is leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats. He was a minister from 1999 to 2007 and served as Deputy First Minster.

Nicol Stephen: Welcome. Welcome, everybody, to the Scottish Parliament. It is a very great pleasure to welcome you all this evening and to welcome so many people who are deeply interested in this issue. I hope that some of you have been to the Scottish Parliament before, but for those of you have not, and who are here for the first time – a particular welcome, and a special welcome – the biggest welcome of all, to people from outside Scotland who are here.

We are here to speak about and discuss art and I hope that you enjoy the art that is this building, that is all around you in this building. There are some people who have different views about the outside of the building, I think many aspects of the building from the outside are fantastic too, but I do not know anybody who is other than enthusiastic about the building inside. Practically speaking, it takes a bit of getting used to. There are many twists and turns before you can work it out in three dimensions. Often, I feel, it is a bit of a Harry Potter kind of building. Maybe in Scotland that is appropriate too: there are twists and turns and idiosyncrasies to it. I hope you enjoy the building this evening, but I hope you enjoy the discussion even more. I hope it is productive, useful and worthwhile.

I'd also like to introduce you to some of my MSP colleagues who have joined us. So, we have got Nanette Milne, Richard Baker and Margaret Smith. So we have a good cross-party representation here this evening, and I am sure we would all want to make you feel very welcome.

I notice that there are artists in the room by the fact that, of the gentlemen here, only three of us have ties – so, that knocks me out as an artist. I hope the other two have got solid credentials to fight back with – but it is great to see the mix of people and the vibrancy of interest in this issue.

The event is being attended by artists (I won't ask you all to put your hands up in the air – you can think about how many of these categories you fulfil): artists, arts administrators and academics – all involved in public art developments as well as other sectors: education, community development, local government who initiate and develop projects with artists.

This public conversation is the culmination of four seminars, Working in Public, funded by the Scottish Arts Council through a new initiative, Public Art Resources and Research, Scotland. This initiative is to promote excellence and innovation within public art and Public Art Resource and Research, Scotland (PAR+RS) and On the Edge Research at Gray's School of Art have formed a partnership to develop a new dynamic learning space in which mature artists (actually, I should ask you to put your hands in the air for that one!) – mature artists, theorists, curators and arts administrators have worked together to explore the changing nature of the public sphere and practice – art, social, political and academic – within it.

At the heart of the seminars has been the work of Suzanne Lacy. I think we should all give Suzanne a very warm welcome this evening.

We are about to hear from Suzanne, currently. Suzanne, as you know, is involved in a formal process of reflection into the Oakland Projects in California. In this period from roundabout 1990 to the millennium Suzanne worked with young people in policy sectors including health, education, justice and community relations – so all very relevant to us here in Scotland.

Over the past six months Working in Public has travelled to four different sites in Scotland. The best and most important part of Scotland it went to first: Aberdeen. You would agree with that, wouldn't you? Other small cities in

Scotland included Glasgow, Inverness (now a city) and here, last – but not least – the capital city, Edinburgh. The final seminar has taken place today at the Scottish Story Telling Centre.

The purpose of this evening is two-fold: to present some of the work and the thinking and learning of the core group to a wider group of individuals and constituencies (not in the political sense) and to open up the space to a larger group of contributors to further explore the changing nature of the public sphere: how our various practices are adapting to that change and, specifically, the role of art in prompting new ways of thinking about Public.

I think the most important thing is to have an exciting and enjoyable evening. You won't achieve that if politicians continue to talk at you, so let's get on with the presentation, with the panel discussion, with the break-out groups. I hope you have a great time. It now gives me great pleasure to hand over to an individual who has been key to all of this, to Professor Stuart MacDonald from Gray's School of Art. Stuart.

Professor Stuart MacDonald: Thanks very much, Nicol [Stephen], for your very warm welcome and, indeed, your support for this evening's event.

So, what is the big idea - you may be asking - behind the event tonight. Why should the Robert Gordon University and Gray's School of Art wish that the culmination of an academic research project take the form of this very public outing?

One of the reasons, in our digitised and globalised world (and we like to think globally in Aberdeen), is that the relationship between culture and creativity has become much more complex and in many ways more fruitful economically, as well as culturally. Greater numbers of people are engaging with the content and with the spaces of publicly funded culture while the working lives of greater numbers of people are taking on characteristics and processes of cultural practitioners. Many people are now working in ways that have been long common in the arts, encompassing not just flexible, freelance and part-time work, but also working as part of ad hoc teams and temporary collaborations to achieve particular aims or projects.

It is very important that we understand that new dynamic, and also that we understand what the notion of 'public' has come to mean, especially given the currency of ideas such as 'public value' and 'cultural value' and all the “think-tankery” that goes with them. Put quite simply, 'public' is where politics and arts practice intersect. It is where the interests of artists and those involved in the arts, and the interests of politicians and policy-makers come together. For Gray's School of Art, interrogating the link between arts practice and policy seems to be right at the heart of what a professional twenty first century art school and its research programme should be engaged in.

Hence the need for a public conversation that is not so much the climax of a research project, but the opening up of a debate. This evening, as you have heard Nicol [Stephen] say, you will have the chance to meet the Core Group participating in the Working in Public Seminars. You will hear them present their own work and the issues that participating in Working in Public has raised for them. Then will also be able to take part in the debate chaired by Moira Jeffrey.

Of course, first of all, you will hear from Suzanne Lacy, renowned artist and art educator, who is a Visiting Professor at Gray's School of Art, and around whose work in Oakland in the States much of the inspiration and activity of Working in Public has been based.

Before I hand over to Suzanne, can I add the thanks from the University and Gray's in advance, in case I do not have the chance to do this, to a few people for making this evening possible: Nicol [Stephen], for his support; the Scottish Arts Council and Public Art Research and Resource, Scotland; the Core Group who are here (or not, as the case may be) this evening; and especially, thanks to Anne Douglas who developed the programme and leads the Working in Public team.

So, without further ado, I am going to hand over to Suzanne and who needs absolutely no introduction, and who is going to tell us about an aspect of her work in Oakland.

Lecture – How does a voice emerge?

Suzanne Lacy

Suzanne Lacy: Thank you, Moira [Jeffrey], for those introductions. I particularly appreciate the opportunity to be here tonight and thank you very much for making that possible, Nicol [Stephen].

It is not an accident that we are here in this, rather than another, venue at the closing of the Working in Public Seminar series. You may wonder why would we be doing a seminar on public art and closing it at the Scottish Parliament. Hopefully, by the end of the evening, you will know. We have been through a long process. We have gone to many venues in Scotland; and across these venues we have gone from the private to, now, the very public. Here we focus on the implications of the public in terms of policy.

Our task here tonight is to question the nature of public life at this moment in Scotland and, of course, while I have some reflections on that, I will offer those at the end of the conversation. You all know much more about that than I do.

The thing that, I think, has been very exciting for me about the seminar series leading up to this event is, how artists and art organisations might play a significant role in shaping the direction of the development of policy. I know we pay a lot of lip service to that, but I think, tonight, what we want to do is open you up to a consideration of the nitty-gritty of how that might take place, as well as what kinds of dangers might be encountered in our respective encounters in that process?

I was asked to show you (and, with reluctance, I will) yet again a piece of work that I did in Oakland. I worked in Oakland – let me tell you briefly something about that. It is a small town on the west coast of California, on the coast in the San Francisco Bay area and it is a town of around 350,000 people. It is a city that one quarter of the people are under the age of 18 and, if you look at the public schools – the schools paid by the state – they are 95% minority students. If you look at the schools paid by private individuals, they are 95% white. So, in this incredibly diverse community, schooling alone tells you that there are inequities going on. Within a state-wide media environment that vilified youth (I think, to a much greater degree than in Scotland, but I have seen some things about the Aberdeen Cruisers) which actually has created, or supported, the creation of public policies that are quite onerous (having to do with where kids can gather on the street corners, for example), we began ten years of projects in 1990. They involved literally hundreds of people in planning and thousands of people in the direct audience and tens of thousands of people in the media over this period of time.

What they were, the Oakland Projects, is a series of performances and installations all done outside the art museum, outside the gallery, in the streets, on the rooftops, in the schools – done, basically, all over the city, on the subject of youth well-being, in its broadest sense. We covered health, teen pregnancy. We covered conflicts between youth and adult authority and, in particular police (but not exclusively); between youth and their teachers as well. The young people would come to us and say, 'We're having a real trouble over here at Freemont High, can we do a performance around this issue to talk to our teachers and tell them how we feel about it?'

We did some direct service to youth, but mainly these art projects were positioned to allow a youth voice to emerge in mass media and to allow it to emerge before, and in front of, the communities that they lived in so that the kind of dialogue that I think ought to be part of the civic sector, could indeed happen. (Later I will tell you a few things about the quality of public debate in the United States and how, in particular, this type of art project was intent on creating, over ten years of time, all these layers of conversations – in the class room, on the media, in City Council, in workshops for youth.) The projects involved – and I think critical to our being here tonight – they involved a large and informal group of planners. I wanted to map that territory for you – this set of alliances. There were politicians involved, elected officials from the state level to the city level and the county level. They were involved – some very deeply –

in planning processes. There were non-elected officials such as the Director of Public Health, the Police Chief, the Head of the Probation Department, leaders of non-profit organisations – people like mentorship organisations, church organisations, religious affiliated groups, there were artists (kind of an ad hoc group of fifteen or twenty artists over time) and there were educators – high school teachers and college teachers. There were media, and we took the media as partners. We found reporters who could work with us over time to deliver, what we thought was an appropriate advocacy message on behalf of youth, and then, of course, there were the young people themselves. All of these people operated in this town 350,000 folks over time came together, separated, came together, separated, to produce this series of projects.

Now, you might wonder, in particular, what they did. What did Mayor Jerry Brown do; what did Councillor Sheila Jordan do? They did a variety of kinds of things. They helped us define the topic. I would meet with a Councillor who had a big problem with youth crime in East Oakland and we would talk about youth crime and how the neighbourhood felt about it, and how that might help us with the agenda of the project, and who we might want to be communicating with in that area. They operated as collaborators. So they defined the topics; they collaborated on the planning processes. In one instance this involved all the City Council showing up at a "basket-ball as performance" art project the night before they would vote on the new Youth Policy. So they showed up and all the TV cameras in town showed up and we all talked: youth, police officer and city council people, about these issues together in front of media. They brought visibility and credibility.

The clip I am going to show you, has two people. On the talent level is Arnold Perkins. He is the Director of Public Health for the County of Alameda. He is, what I call, our talent pool. We got some politicians and officials who were very good facilitators to facilitate some of the work of our projects. Then you will hear Police Chief Richard Word. He is standing in front of the television cameras and he is making a public statement about the way the Police Department positions itself with respect to youth – or should be positioning itself, so it is a very political moment. He is representing and defining these issues.

These are some of the ways. City Council gave us a place where we held our workshops. Students came and went and met the Mayor as he was walking in and out. So, in this town of 350,000 people, we had a fairly decent piece of office space. We went around saying, 'Can't we just have a workshop here?'; 'Could we have it over here?'; 'Can we get the Chief to drop by?', and basically helping the young people develop their voice as civic actors.

What you are going to see tonight is just about three to four minutes of the students getting rehearsed, going into the performance, and sitting down. I will show you just a clip. The second part of the performance (which we will not be able to see tonight) is when the community gets involved. We leave the first act and go into a place where all the community is talking with each other about what they have just heard.

[video clip]

The second part (which we won't see tonight) does go into where 80 people from eight different communities sat in groups of ten. There was a big mentorship sign-up table; there was Video Youth doing video programming and running around interviewing the police officers – so the tables were turned. The community was involved. This entire project was a two/two-and-a-half-year project which ended with this event which was a way to create a very fulsome participatory civic discourse.

Tonight you are going to hear a lot of different ideas about what art is and about who makes an artist – I mean, who makes art; what art does – that is really part of what we are exploring here in relation to the public sector. In my experience in Scotland, I have seen these kinds of definitions: 'art as expression' – and, in particular, it is used in terms of an expression of a national heritage in a unique identity when it is used publicly. 'Art as beautification of the commons.' In particular, you have got some pretty incredible public art – not to mention this building itself and its siting in Edinburgh. Art is also considered partner in various regeneration and social inclusion schemes; as well as art being something collectable, as in any place else. And then there is this current buzz: 'art as an engine in the creative economy.

Tonight I invite you to explore, with these practitioners, something maybe different. Maybe, take a look at art as conflict resolution; art as a process of civic negotiation; art as citizenship training. From a default position of no engagement, to multiple way of bringing people into the citizenship commons: art as a stimulant for discourse of collective meaning-making. And, finally – what I shall return to later tonight – art as a form of research.

I am inviting you now (if the Core Group could stand up) to go into three different break-out rooms and, in these break-out rooms you are going to have about 30 minutes for an intimate conversation with these artists in these rooms.

Core group presentations:

Group One

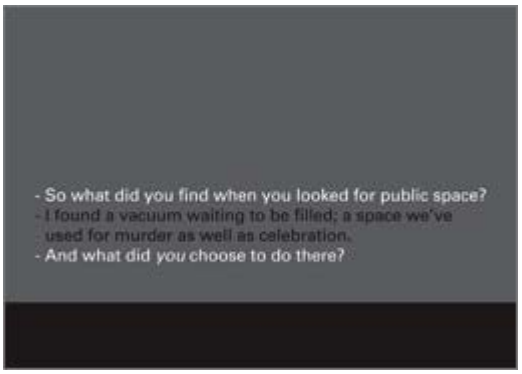
Ruth Barker: I'm Ruth Barker and I'm an artist and writer based in Glasgow. I make work in a variety of different contexts, some of them which are more public than others. I don't really think of myself as a public artist, but my work sometimes comes into a public sphere.

Throughout the Working in Public seminars I have been thinking about a piece of work I made in 2006, which was called Placed upon the Horizon. It was a book that was printed and published by South Lanarkshire Council.

The book is a series of 28 interviews that Niall Macdonald and I conducted with people who were involved in public art in some way or another – so there were a lot of different kinds of people, from artists to project managers to people that commission work. The intention of the piece was always to present a number of different voices on a single, equal, platform. I guess the intention was always to listen to what people actually had to say and to hear how, and why, and when, they disagreed from each other. I set out somehow not to assimilate those differences, but to find space for them. I wanted to explore how they might co-exist, and why they might need to co-exist in the context of such a multifarious kind of practice as public art.

As an artwork, I think what Placed upon the Horizon does is to become a snapshot. It distils a particular moment of thought that was happening with many different people across the field at a particular time. Lots of people were thinking about very similar issues, but they were coming at them from very different directions. A kind of moment of cultural thinking is represented in the spaces in between what different people say.

I guess as an artist I became very interested in the moment of metamorphosis that occurs when spoken testimony is represented as a written transcript and in the shift of authority that happens when that occurs; when the immediacy, and sometimes the guilelessness of speech is transferred into something that is a lot more concrete and a lot more culpable in the written word.



When we speak and someone listens to us, our words can stay very, very intangible, but when we speak and someone writes it down, a very different relationship happens between our words and the world that surrounds them.

Throughout the Working in Public seminars, I was able to put that piece of work; put that book that we wrote, in much broader context and see it as part of a much bigger conversation about the state of public art as a practice and as an industry today - I suppose both in Scotland and more internationally.

I think some really difficult questions have come out of Working in Public and I think that's really important. There have been a lot of questions about who decides the quality of art – of any art – whether in a gallery or in public spaces. There have been questions about how close a relationship art should have with the systems and the symbols of authority. What does it mean for us to be here today, to have this quite close conversation between art practices and a governmental system? I think we have also had to ask questions about how we can protect art's responsibility to be dangerous, to be offensive, or to be ugly, as well as to be attractive, and beneficent, and useful. I don't really know how to answer those questions, but maybe part of the way we can identify a really healthy and really exciting and really thriving field is to ask questions that we cannot answer yet.

I guess if I could close by suggesting one thing that I have come to really hold onto as an idea – something really important that has come out of the last couple of months – I guess it would be just that: That maybe we should carry on asking ourselves the toughest questions possible. So long as we don't believe that we know all the answers, then I think we're doing alright.

Artists are just like any other group of people because artists are part of the wider public: artists are part of the texture that makes up the fabric of this country. The relationships between individuals and other people are part of what makes us human, and art is one of the ways that that relationship manifests itself. So maybe art itself is one of the things that makes us human and, if that's true, then maybe public art makes us the most human of all.

Monika Vykoukal: Yes, and I have brought Eva Merz with me.

My name is Monika and I am the curator of Peacock Visual Arts in Aberdeen. I have been initiating, supporting and documenting for Peacock a series of three six-month artists residencies in the former social inclusion partnership areas of Aberdeen, which we are now focusing in the area of Tillydrone.

This photo was taken in Tillydrone. I will explain what it is about. The project was funded by the Scottish Arts Council and Aberdeen City Council. The partnership part of the residency consists in us working together with Station House Media Unit which is a community media organisation in the former social inclusion partnership areas.

Eva Merz's residency went on from November 2006 to June 2007. The idea behind the residency series is to investigate common issues in the area together with local people. So the public is first of all defined geographically by the funding criteria. The artist lives and works in the area in a social housing flat and becomes a resident for the period of the residency.

Eva's work was very much about developing a personal relationship with her neighbours and people she met in the street as she went to the hairdresser and to the local shops and so on, and inviting people back home for coffee and for a chat, and to gradually gain an awareness of the area at the beginning of our project and getting to know people.

The first public work in this was – this is one photo of many. Eva was walking about the area and noticed 72 signs in this very small part of town. All the signs were put up by the City Council in the last 20 years. They say things like, 'No Ball Games' 'No Exercising Pets', 'No Golf Practice'. The amount of them was quite staggering. On Valentine's Day last year she covered them with red vinyl hearts which was countering the type of public space that was created by the City Council which was all about really disciplining people basically. Eva was putting other alternative messages which were quite provocative. So it was also getting a reaction from the people in the area and making them aware that the signs have been there in the first place.

The second manifestation of the project was, she had been meeting people all along and decided to make a book with interviews of eight women in the area – people from very different perspectives. There was a woman who was doing an MA in Design at Gray's School of Art who lived in the area; there was a person who was a drug dealer, so it was touching on other aspects of life. They were all asked how they felt about the area. Eva's work was a lot about getting people's opinions across and helping them to speak for themselves as visibly as possible.

She had also met a little girl while doing those love hearts, Bobby. Bobby wanted to paint all of the signs pink, and they did that as well.

The last activity that happened in the residency was that there was a Book Launch Barbecue Party in the area, with the books being free to all the residents, and local people making music and so on.

From our perspective, we have got two more residencies in this scheme and I hope that we can go on to work on this one area and focus on it. We are getting already a lot of feedback from people who were involved about what they would like to see happening next – so, ideally, they would be able to have a say in what kind of art they would want to see.

Eva is going to read from the book.

Eva Merz: Very short – just to sum this up, by Pamela. It is from the book from an interview. Pamela should have been here today. She is a community rep and also one of the very few residents on the local regeneration networking group. But her wee baby ran into the stove yesterday, so she could not come today. She should have been here with us. I am just going to read the last bit of her interview. She says:

Getting people involved is the hard part. It is really hard. I think people need to have a bit more belief, and the need to strive for it, because we are nae gonna get it without a fight. Councillors don't live here. If we want change, it needs to come fae us. We need to say, 'Okay, you have promised us this. We want it!' Ken? It's different than saying, 'Okay, you've promised us this, but we are nae gonna get it.' No, we want this! We want a better place to live. It takes a united and stronger voice. We need mair folk. Get involved! Come to the meetings! It will be worth it in the end. And we will have a community we can be proud of. In the future, when people ask where you stay you can say, TILLYDRONE – the best community in Aberdeen!

Oh – can I just say one thing. If anybody is really interested in copies of Tillydrone – feel free.

Keith Donnelly: I am based as East Kilbride Art Centre. What I am going to talk to you about is Visual Arts residencies, but in this case a sequence of residencies that we have run over the past two years from 2005 to 2006. The context of these; the first in 2005 - RESONATE followed by a SAC Partners funded programme in 2006 - 'RESUME'. In each we gave the artists an outline brief to explore visual arts research through community and educational engagement and concluding with exhibition.

In the first year we had eight participating artists who linked with project partners such as the National Health Service, The David Livingstone Centre through the National Trust for Scotland and the Museums Councils; each contributing to the funding of their own project artist.

Each artist had one month to look at these variables, as it were. The concept of 'RESUME' was to look beyond the period of one month and to look at the seeds that the artist had sown to see if we could develop that in different ways. That is what we did with a number of artists.

I have chosen as a case study this evening, Sylvia Grace Borda. Sylvia, would you mind standing up? Sylvia has kindly come all the way form Canada but currently works at Queens University in Belfast as a visiting lecturer.

The context of Sylvia's residency: she was actually based at East Kilbride Arts Centre and initially she looked at the towns 'roundabouts' as a focus. She had previously worked in Surrey, a city outside of Vancouver, Canada, looking at ‘every bus stop in Surrey’. She started by looking at the concept of every roundabout in East Kilbride as the town is known as Polomint City.

After initial research she started to look at Modernist architecture in East Kilbride – this came about through a conversation that we had about education and the plight of the Modernist building. I think, through the programme of school modernisation in East Kilbride, we are now looking at the redevelopment of every single high school in the

town including Sir Basil Spence's Duncanrig High School. Sylvia made extensive use of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments Scotland and contacted libraries and archives.

Sylvia did a snapshot for a month, and on the basis of this we were able to extend the project through the Urban Cultural Programme which was funded through the Millennium Commission. In the second phase she had a slightly different brief. She had to look at the town centre park in East Kilbride and used that as a footprint to extend her research. She was able to uncover that, not only were very significant sums of money spent on schools by the Civic Corporation (that is East Kilbride Development Corporation), but also that the school facilities for young people equalled almost the size of a park – so you had the size of a park, as it were, in a leisure and sports context within the schools.

From this investigation of the schools she gravitated into looking more directly at the loss of the Modernist architectural structures. She researched the archives (the photographic records that Sylvia has amass amount to about 8,000 photographic images; an archive in itself) and her photographs are probably now the only official record of those schools. I think, through an arts process, we have been able to register the unique Modernist architectural heritage of East Kilbride.

However, I want to turn to the board here because, again, through Sylvia's work, she was able to extend her research into an exhibition and also a website (www.eknewtown.com). The website was reviewed internationally: by rhizome.org in New York; Canadian Architecture, Toronto and by British Computer Art, London.

I want to quickly skip onto our current endeavour which is a development of the project. We are working with Enver Creek, a senior school in Surrey, Canada, and schools in East Kilbride. We actually have an exhibition currently in Surrey which started two weeks ago and we have a photo drawing exhibition ourselves in November.

That is really looking at a mirror image – it is extending the work of the photographer; allowing both adults and young people to look through the eyes of the artist. The initial artist's research is opened out to the community through the exhibition, web site and even the local newspaper, the East Kilbride News.

Venda Pollock: My name is Vee Pollock. I am a lecturer in the Fine Art Department, Newcastle University, working on the historical and critical studies side. Before that, I was a Research Fellow at Glasgow University looking at urban cultural regeneration, and it was there that my research into public art and the urban environment developed.

I am interested in the relationship between policy, processes, and artworks – and the amorphous word 'public' that we tend to associate with all of these things. Over the past year or so this has taken a focus in the Raploch, a deprived area in Stirling, Central Scotland, which is currently undergoing regeneration led by a Pathfinder Urban Generation Company.

The artist, Peter McCaughey, was brought on board by the Urban Regeneration Company, working in collaboration with Gingko projects/Stirling Council, on a Scottish Arts Council funded project to develop a series of creative spaces along a riverwalk, which was basically a very under-used part of urban green space.

Peter came in and worked closely with a group of participants who had some connection with the area and also with the wider community. Part of the Urban Regeneration Company's objective is capacity building and increasing skills and employability for people in the area. This filtered through to the art process where the participants were taken to metal fabricators, to stone-masons in Aberdeen where they were hammering out stone for elements of the project

(referring to images - this is a map and a chess board) and one of the participants has since gone on to become a stone-mason. Part of the aim of my research is to look at how, or whether, public art fits with wider policy objectives and often to look at things from a community perspective and partly to re-assert the voice of the public which is so often missing from these debates.

What interests me is that there is a lot of rhetoric about public art – if you read a lots of policy documents, there is lots about what it can achieve; and then there is the reality on the ground. I sit in that space in-between and look both ways. I think that the Working in Public Seminars have made me question our expectations, or the policy expectations, of public art, and the restrictions we place on art and artists in terms of time-frames, budgets, and 'place' – how those things come together and whether we can, realistically, realise the expectations that a lot of what policy is demanding from public art and if they are, indeed, the right expectations.

I am examining how the experience on the ground can be fed back into policy and, perhaps, invite us to rethink and reconsider some of those questions. A key part of the research is breaking down the language we use as academics, as artists, to talk to the public because a reaction you quite often get is, 'Well, I suppose it is alright if you know anything about art' and yet, the people in the place are the most qualified to talk about their experiences and their opinions. So we use innovative methodologies like video and photo diaries. What I did here was follow the process through from the beginning right to the end. In a sense what I have to do is mirror the artist's capacity for navigation, negotiation, talking – but also to stand outwith the process and see, perhaps, the people who were not included; opportunities that were missed or not developed; and look at the criticism.

Through this we built up networks with people from the Urban Regeneration Company (and I am delighted that Judy who is the Enhanced Community Support Officer for the Raploch Project is here) and beyond. Judy and I have interesting conversations that would not have happened otherwise and I think both of our knowledges have been expanded because of that. I have also been able to develop working relationships with landscape architects and people from a wide range of departments in the Council.

My practice at the moment is very much aligned with what has gone on during the Working in Public series. It is a reconsideration of the rhetoric/reality relationship from a position, perhaps, in-between. This process is helping me to develop some critical questions and to determine how we can feed the results from research back to the policy-makers to then change practice.

Chris Fremantle: Reiko Goto is a researcher with On The Edge and was until recently Research Fellow at The Center for Creative Inquiry, Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, USA.

Reiko Goto: I am Reiko Goto. I am an ecological and environmental artist. I seek a new relationship between people and nature.

I am thinking about nature in Aberdeen. I have developed a poster with naturalist, [Jeff Banks], who sought nature in the middle of Aberdeen City. As I was thinking about his image, and how to use it best, I came across a poem, 'The Wounded Hare', by a Scottish poet, Robert Burns. The poem breathes life into the image; the image sheds light on the poem.

The Wounded Hare, Robert Burns:

Inhuman man! curse on thy barb'rous art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye;
May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart!
Go live, poor wand'rer of the wood and field!

The bitter little of life that remains:
No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains
To thee a home, or food, or pastime yield.
Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted rest,
No more of rest, but now thy dying bed!
The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.
Oft as by winding Nith I, musing, wait
The sober eve, or hail the cheerful dawn,
I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn thy hapless fate.

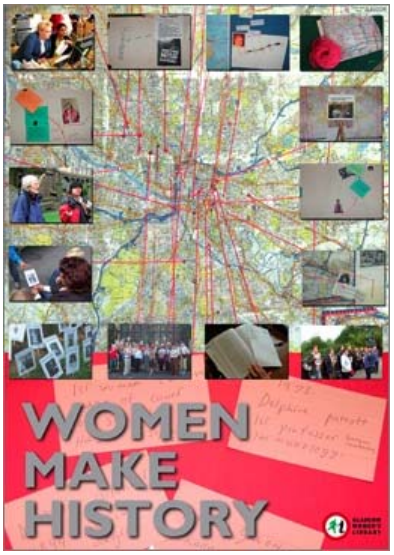
This poem reminded me of my experience about living things. When I hold a dead animal, I feel deep regret. I cannot do anything about the dead, but as long as they are alive, I could do many simple things: giving water and food; cleaning their cages; keeping them warm; releasing them to the natural environment; and trying to protect their home. My relationship with nature is based on these actions.

I was a research fellow at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I worked on two projects, Nine Mile Run, Greenway Project: Conversations in the Rust Belt and 3 Rivers 2nd Nature. For eight years, I focused on the post-industrial public realm. I worked with scientists to reveal the valley of nature as it recovers from industry. The aquatic and territory conditions of the river, streams, and catchment basins became the primary area of the research.

During my research in Aberdeen, I found there are not many trees. Some people try to plant trees; protect trees. But the change is not happening yet. I read Eva and Monica's project about Tillydrone. In it there are two people who are talking about the green space. They said they would love to go to the rivers and to see the greens and the nature. Asking about nature in Aberdeen, I have found that there are many people who care about this place, people, and living things.

Group Two

Adele Patrick: Hello. Thanks. Nice to see everybody. Can I just preface this little presentation with an apology for its banality. I had a little note through from Reiko saying, 'assume that people know nothing, at all about the territory of issues that we are going to cover'. So – I look around the room, and I see people who know so much about this territory – so, my apologies.



My name is Adele Patrick. I am a co-founder and currently Creative Development in Lifelong Learning Manager at Glasgow Women's Library. The library evolved from the grass roots. It grew from a group that galvanised around the announcement that Glasgow was going to be European City of Culture in 1990 and, after programming a really quite ambitious series of events that showcased women's creative work during this year-long festival, a momentum was created that culminated in the milestone launch of the Women's Library in 1991.

From an entirely voluntary project, the library now has many facets. It has become an information hub for, and about, women in Scotland. It has a collection of over 20,000 volumes of material. We have got art works and ephemera – masses and masses of stuff. Significantly, all the material is donated. We have now got project workers and staff including a Black and Minority Ethnic Development Worker, Adult Literacy and Numeracy Project Workers and other staff.

Although a unique resource in Scotland, the Glasgow Women's Library's evolutionary process of growth, specialisation and yet, at the same time, diversification reflects that of some of Scotland's most well-loved arts institutions and, indeed, some of the cultural quarters that have become regeneration hotspots. (I can explain more about that if people are interested since I have recently linked gender issues in Glasgow to the field of Cultural Planning.)

This is a problematic area that the Core Group have been looking at: the notion of the apparent, inevitable, ossification that takes place when a project becomes an institution or a component of a cultural quarter.

The project I have chosen to speak a little about this evening to illustrate the work of Glasgow Women's Library, and our work in public in particular, is the 'Women Make History' Project. This project that has been developing over the last year and reflects the cultural, ethical and artistic set of aims of the organisation as a whole. It has been developed by an engagement of genuinely diverse group of women. I think over seventy have been involved so far and, unusually, includes academics, women who had experience of poverty and homelessness, women who are adult-learners, women artists and writers – so there is a genuine hybridity of ownership and participation.

The aims of the Women Make History Project, and of the Women's Library more broadly, is to unearth, celebrate and promote through accessible, visual and creative methods women's diverse histories, cultures and achievements.

In Year1 of Women Make History – this past year – women were involved in the group's development in planning research, workshops, skill-sharing and participated in activities including a programme of activities entitled 'Making and Doing Women's History' that connected women who were beginners to research and to 'history' itself with resources and skills including archives, object-handling, looking at existing history tours and tour-guiding skills who were introduced to museums and curators and to an array of research methods.

One really successful outcome has been the development of a Women's Heritage Walking Tour in the West End of the City and this has been delivered several times during the summer and now the tour guides who developed this programme are paid . The next tour is going to be in the East End.

One artistic goal is to commission work in public that makes tangible records of women's issues in Glasgow. There is currently, as many people are aware, only three public sculptures of women in the City. Only one Glaswegian. I think there is scope for artists to work with women in creating a piece outside the physical site of the future Women's Library in, and outside, the Mitchell Library, our new home from next year.

The work of Women Make History is to help augment and mobilise a broader critical mass and support required for the Women's Library's bid for national status. This is a significant construction of a diverse new public that owns the vision of, and desires to have, a new institution in Scotland which, as I say, is both exciting and problematic. We are currently funded by the Scottish Government to scope this and we are also looking to gain Museum Status to become a Collection of National Significance.

The Working in Public Seminars have provided a unique and meaningful opportunity at this critical stage in our own organisation's development to examine the spectrum of making work with and constructing publics. From the inspiring model of the Oaklands Projects that, in itself, forged connections between art, media, literacy, strategies of advocacy, mentoring, to enable social change through to the quite cautionary models that we heard about of from Francis McKee and Tom Trevor of the entropy (that I mentioned earlier on), where institutions might become disengaged, where they fail to reflect their publics.

Women Make History at Glasgow Women's Library (and the future Women's Library of Scotland) is constructing a much-needed vision to illuminate territories of history, of Scottishness and gender and is using the power of the arts to involve and articulate a specific spectrum of voices and histories and so on in, what is arguably, still quite a hidden aspect of our national culture.

I will just leave it there.

Damian Killeen: Good evening, everybody. My name is Damian Killeen. I am Chair of something called 'Big Things on the Beach'. I am here as a local resident of Portobello which, as some of you might know, is a community on the fringes of Edinburgh, down by the sea. As a local resident, over the years I have joined in lots of conversations with people – friends and neighbours – about what Portobello needs. Portobello needs a bistro; Portobello needs a bit more vitality; it needs a bit more recognition as part of Edinburgh – those are the kind of conversations that have gone on in our community.

In 2003 I took an initiative to bring together a group of people and said, 'Shall we try and turn some of these conversations into something?' and after a few discussions we decided that we would form a public art trust, the purpose of which would be to commission artists to come and work in our area. Since 2003 we have made three commissions.

What you are looking at here, is the launch of the most recent of those commissions, a work called Wonder by Hill Jephson Robb who constructed three substantial pyramids out of sandbags. He invited the community to fill the bags. Some of the community misunderstood the invitation and thought they had been invited to empty them – so there was a kind of creative tension during the whole process of the construction!

What you are looking at is the evening of the launch event which brought out one of the largest collections of people that anybody could remember on Portobello beach. Many of these people felt that they had a real connection with the work of art, because of having helped to make it. That sums up the idea that was at the heart of the vision of the artist who wanted to bring people together around an aspirational project. The idea that we can aspire, that we can realise our aspirations and that we can change our environment in creative ways is also at the heart of what we are trying to achieve with Big Things on the Beach.

When we say we are commissioning works of art, we are not talking about 'community art' in terms of employing artists to help the community express their own ideas. We invite artists to engage with our community and our brief is always to invite artists to come forward with ideas that will excite us and challenge us in relationship to the social, economic and environmental dimensions of our community. We invite artists to take risks with us and we share those risks with them

It is very important to us that we are people from the community who are taking the lead in this. We are not looking to other agencies to tell us what to do or how to do it. We do look to other agencies to help us with the resources – and since Amanda Catto is sitting here, I will say, that we are very grateful for the support of the Scottish Arts Council for providing the funding to enable us to do this.

In the course of the conversations that have gone on at events related to the works we have commissioned, we have had other members of the community saying, 'We would really love to get involved in this, but we do not feel that we know enough to do it.' The outcome of that is that we have developed, and are now running the second year of a course for members of our community in commissioning works of public art – a second group of about 15 people started last week. They will attend sixteen evening sessions and they will visit communities elsewhere; look at other works of public art in Europe, Scotland and the UK. About March/April next year, this group will select the next artist to deliver the next art work. When I told them this the other day, they looked very frightened. I said, 'Well, that is where we all started.'

So, the public are our neighbours. That is a very important dynamic for us because, having taken an initiative within our community, we are in a relationship with the wider community and we feel very, very, accountable for what happens. Our public is very diverse, they are totally unmanageable and uncontrollable. We cannot predict their responses to the artworks we commission. You can see from the poster that many of the public are not looking at the

work of art but are talking to each other and some of them are using the artwork for purposes other than we initially intended – but that is how it is in our community..

Later this year we will hold our second Imagine Portobello event where we will invite members of the public to come and talk with us about public art in our area, and that discussion will lead us forward to whatever will be the next stage of our development.

Thank you very much.

Janey Hunt: Hi. My name is Janey Hunt. I studied at Glasgow School of Art recently, so I have some connection to Scotland. I am now based in Totnes in Devon – which is a long way to come, but very well worth it because I have thoroughly enjoyed the whole seminar series.

I am undertaking a PhD which is based on socially engaged practice and I am seeking to encourage pro-environmental behaviour. Another of my roles is as the Arts Facilitator for something called 'Transition Town Totnes'. Transition Town Totnes is a local initiative to develop a community response to peak oil developing a responsive plan for the community based on oil reduction that encompasses the society, the environment, and the economy.

What I have chosen to share with you tonight is actually one of my own art projects which examines environmental behaviour and, actually, my failure to adopt environmental behaviour – something shared by us all, I am sure, called Eco-Renovation: House Receipts That is certainly the reaction that I have had from many people that have seen this work.

My work takes place outside of the gallery (which characterises socially-engaged practice) and often on the street. I engage people in conversations provoked by an initial art work on the theme of encouraging pro-environmental behaviour. These conversations are recorded in some way through my recollection, written comments from participants, recorded sound and image.

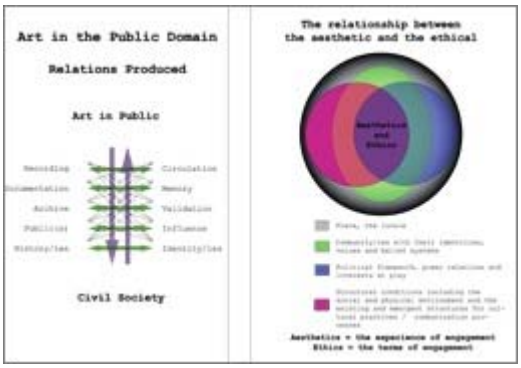
Focusing the work, which encourages participation, on my own failure to adopt pro-environmental behaviour, my way of working reveals intimacy at extraordinary levels in regard to myself, and as an artist, by sharing the analysis (if you like) in my failure to adopt that behaviour. This intimacy disarms and encourages a sharing of information by people that participate and come to see the work about their own lives, revealing more than sociological data-gathering processes. It also, encourages and empowers and revalues a recognition of our individual knowledge that is too often ignored in our society of experts.

As a result of gathering this data, I am also investigating within my PhD the ethical responsibilities of the artist to the participants, particularly when the work engages people in real world issues and is recorded for re-use in succeeding art works.

Environmental behaviour and life style is an area that is really not yet defined or codified and by encouraging intimacy, my conversations often reveal the unexpected which can challenge both participants and myself. So my work is a shared learning process. By representing the unexpected, it allows the knowledge that we (myself and the participants) have reached to invigorate others. So, for me, 'public' is a pooled knowledge; it is learnt by hard experience which, unless it is revealed, could die with the individual. It is an individual experience of living environmentally that can provide models for others' lives. Individual experience and pooled learning contributing to an expression of ‘public’ knowledge, for me, is where the real wisdom lies.

Kerstin Mey: My name is Kerstin Mey. I am the Research Area Leader, 'Art in its Location' at Interface, University of Ulster in Belfast. Interface is a practice-led and interdisciplinary research centre established in 2004, headed up by Declan McGonagle. Our main focus is to look at the role of art, technologies and design in the society.

Interface has two strands. One of them is 'Art and its Locations'. It is concerned with two research foci: art in contested spaces – resulting from the context in which Interface was established. The second focus is 'Art and Documentation' which looks at ways in which the documentation of practices have contributed and played a crucial role in establishing memories of social and cultural practices. This therefore underpins the writing and rewriting of histories.



The other major research strand at the University of Ulster is 'Fabric Forward' looking at the unifying of traditional technologies with digital progresses in the textile area.

I would like to talk about one particular project in the strand 'Art and its Location'. It has developed over the past half a year. We have been commissioned by the Department of Social Development in Northern Ireland to develop a Public Art Strategy for West Belfast and the Shankill area. For those of you who are not so familiar with the geography of Belfast, West Belfast and the greater Shankill area is one of the most contested interfaces in the city, where the nationalist and the loyalist communities come together, and are separated by a so-called Peace Wall.

The terms of reference for this commission stated that we were to develop a strategy that contributes, through art, towards the social and economic regeneration of the area particularly through an increase in tourism. We were also charged to develop connections with existing public art displays and resources of creativity and art in the area, as well as in the city.

We used the development of the Strategy as an opportunity to develop alternative models of engaging, through art, in the public domain. We called our strategy 'Growing public art' because the main aim of it can be framed by the need to 'connect the figure of the artist with the ground of community', to quote Declan McGonagle. Damian Killean talked about this need in his project very eloquently. The aim is to establish models where the communities in that area are empowered to take a lead in developing creativity in the public domain.

This can happen through a number of different models that work in parallel: artists engaging with communities and facilitating exchange besides traditional signature art processes. The Strategy proposes a decentralised approach that engenders community-driven further learning, skills exchange, and dialogue.

It is of paramount importance that communities, rather than local or regional authorities, become the main driver of developing creative strategies that are connected to the place and that can from there reach out to further afield.

We developed the Strategy by going out into the communities and engaging in participatory exchange with the different stakeholders in the area. We used a number of different modes including round-table discussions; trust building by being in situ; and exploring the area through mapping. We have fed everything that we actually discovered and learnt back to the communities and invited responses. The communities have played an essential part in informing our Strategy which we have now handed over to the Department for Social Development. We hope that it is being taken as a template to develop further consultations in West Belfast and the Greater Shankhill area and that it will result in different ways of making and understanding art in the public domain.

Thank you.

Sally Thomson: Hello. I am Sally Thomson. I am an Arts Development Officer for Aberdeenshire Council, and I am also the Arts Co-ordinator for Aberdeen Children's Hospital. Tonight I am going to talk about my role as the Arts Co-ordinator for the Children's Hospital, but both posts involve me in working in the public sphere.

The Arts Project in Aberdeen Children's Hospital has had two distinct phases. The first phase was definitely an architectural collaboration between artists and architects and this is one of the resulting pieces. This is The Ontological Garden, by Dalziel + Scullion.

Though I was not involved in the first phase, the Hospital Managers had a vision of a building which all would appreciate as well-designed, and be perceived as a cherished environment, resulting in a place of comfort and well-being, ideal for a hospital – in effect it should not feel like a hospital. To us, that is its greatest accolade.

The first phase of the Art Project built on research by the Kings Fund and the NHS Estates into how people using hospitals could see their environmental design needs in clinical spaces. Right at the beginning of the Art Project there was also consultation with the public. The team spoke to children in and out of school; they had some talk with patients – less so with the staff, at the time. The finding were written up in an Arts Strategy for the Hospital. The arts consultant and the artists used this strategy to inform their work when curating the Art Project and developing individual pieces of work. They had the overarching aim of creating a unique child and family-friendly environment. That has actually worked. The environment of the hospital is clean, it is cherished, it is beautiful, it is a place to feel welcome.

In phase 2, the main architectural spaces are now populated, so it is about the internal departmental spaces. One of the things I found – I have spent a year just going around talking to people within the Hospital about how they perceive their spaces. This has been quite enlightening because I got the feeling there was a sort of 'them' and 'us'. 'Them' being the likes of us within the arts world, within the Hospital Arts Project group, who had decided what we are going to do; and 'us' being (the users of the spaces), 'well, we do not really understand what is goes on and we do not understand about the arts, so …'. I have been trying to find a way through that; find a way of creating projects which the staff and the patients and the families can be involved in.

There are also sensitivities around hospital spaces, and the territorial ownership of departments by the staff – 'this is my department'; 'this is my space'. So, the idea of who has access to, and who is the space for, can be quite different.

So those are the sort of things that I have been picking up on as we started to look at the art we want to put on – not 'we want to put on' - but what can be put in the spaces. It is interesting, because everyone wants the art. Having created this wonderful building, the staff within the building and the families and the patients who were in the building – predominantly it is adults in the building – that is the other anomaly with a Children's Hospital - it is predominantly adults! So it also raises the question, 'who is the art for, adults children or both

My job has been to include all these stakeholders, at all levels, in the project development. I am also responsible for maintaining the artistic quality of the resultant work – and in most cases it will be a physical piece.

The commission in the second phase had been designed for the type of artist who works collaboratively with their audience and includes them in the final authorship. The artists will need to respect the public of a particular space as co-authors of pieces; not just the audience and recipients – and that is a special type of relationship that some artists can create.

As with all arts projects, there are other agendas that can be included such as departmental cooperation, positive messages about the NHS, and any negative perceptions about certain conditions – specifically mental health. Where these formed part of the identity and shape public perception within the commission, I have included them, but generally we tried to steer away from that type of messaging within the arts projects. We have got an arts project which is included within the mental health unit. So that has to take account of its impact on users of the space, but in most other areas it is actually more about general well-being.

My understanding of public in my post at the Children's Hospital is fairly traditionally ring-fenced as being those who use the building but, even so, we have begun to expand on that definition so it is not just people noticeably involved in this conceptual space. The public of a children's hospital, as perceived by the developers and creative practitioners in an arts project is, supposedly scarily artistically uninformed - children and young people. There is a tendency by adults to speak for young people, so art works reflect an adult perspective of the child in the first flush of youth, ie, nought to five: Bob the Builder, cartoons and such like. I have lost count of the number of times that people have asked me whether they can come to do a mural for the children, using Bob the Builder, et cetera.

My own views on 'public' have changed and developed by the Working in Public seminars, but I do question how we, as creative commissioners and critics – and I include myself in that group – discuss this idea of 'public and place' in a public art context, without actually asking the audience, and recipients of the public art, what their definition would be.

Group Three

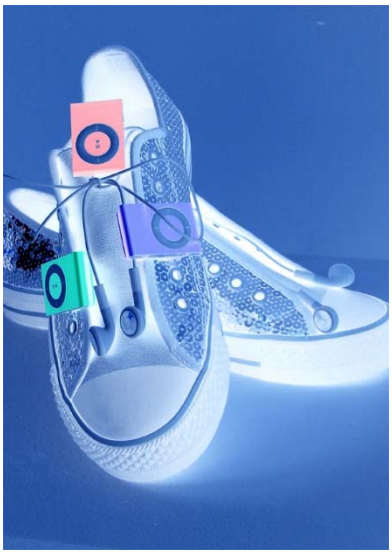
Jean Cameron: I was talking this morning with the Programme Director of Amnesty International and I will come back to that in a minute.

I am Jean Cameron and I am the producer for GI, the Glasgow International Festival of Visual Arts which takes place next April in Glasgow and I am also the producer for The Arts Practice which is an ad hoc project that I run without any institutional support. The concerns that I address are really grounded in social and political issues and work across live art, performance, discursive events, and dance.

Rather than specifically address one particular project, I just want to talk about the role of the producer a bit because that is what I do. I think it has a very specific relevance in terms of engaging both the policy makers and with the public sphere.

The producer is the person that is the bridge between the world and the work – the art work. The producer is always there when the artist and the audience meet. Basically, the producer's role is about cultivating temporary communities and by that I mean the groups of people that one needs to realise a project: the officials, the funders, the partner venues, the artists, the artistic directors, the publicity people – but also the constituencies that gather round an event and give it its sense of meaning, impact and purpose. So, a producer, if you like, is cultivating temporary constituent communities and, I like to think, produce events as a networker. As a networker, I am managing a series of relational threads. These threads run between people – the artist is one point in the network, and other people are other points. Each of these threads has characteristics. For instance there are threads between artists and other people that need to be trusting; have a sense of credibility about the project. There are threads that are critical connecting people who are going to enable the artists to make their projects happen. The producer directs these relational threads around knots and into vibrant clusters of activity. The producer is that person who has the big picture of where these relational threats are being directed and making sure the tension is right around the particular clusters of activity. Sometimes that tension can be ever so tight, and it is the producer's role to come in and convince people to stay on board; to love a project (that they did not necessarily think they had to fall in love with); and loosen tensions or create other relational threads around particular knots.

So, let's go back to Amnesty International and my Silver Shoes. This is my sales pitch: this is a project that has not happened yet. It is a project called 'Vote with your Feet' and it is happening in Dance Space, the National Centre for Dance. It is a choreographic residency looking at how we walk or talk, happening the week of the 8th to the 12th of October and Janice Parker, a colleague from this workshop series, is working with me as a mentor. We are offering a dance class to non-dancers, to activists, to policy thinkers, to people who want to vote with their feet and be experts



in their body beyond the privacy of their bedroom where they are dancing around and playing air guitar; to feel a sense of confidence in a public setting. I am looking at how people walk their talk.

I am really interested in two things: I am interested in the role of the body in terms of the 21st century, and voting with your feet in the context of e-petitions; ethically motivated consumerism; online text message, votes, etcetera. What is the role of the body in the 21st century creative, mass, civic, demonstrations?

I think it really relates to dance because I am also asking those question around the tensions between, how we behave in an individual sense – that dancing in the bedroom, and nobody seeing you, and then actually having the confidence to vote with your feet in a collective setting. I think there is, for me (I'm looking at Mr Ian Spink here, who also works in the area of dance). There is some sort of similarity here.

I want to leave you with the same questions that I am asking during my residency. Are our motivations and our attitudes different when we engage as individuals, or collectively? When do we feel more liberated to vote with our feet – is it as individuals or as collectives? At the beginning I referred to talking this morning with the Programme Director at Amnesty. He invited me to work with him on Edinburgh Festival's 'Feet of Expression' campaign that Amnesty runs every year in return for him helping me think about activism for this particular project. So, I just want to take the final thirty seconds in here to invite us all to take a moment to think about freedom of expression, about Amnesty's campaign, and about that very simple, but very effective, action in Burma that we are seeing – the monks lead in a very physical way a campaign of everyone joining hands and marching. I want us to think that we are in the seat of power in our country and we have got that freedom to express, and just to leave. That is my parting thought.

Kate Foster: The image here is called 'Deer of the World'. It arose from doing research about extinct Blue Antelopes. I learnt that new nations have developed military camouflage patterns in order to forge identity, apart from military purposes. They have also hunted deer and antelope for millennia. Today scientific illustrations of these animals habitually have them facing right. In this drawing, each sports its own camouflage.

I am going to describe briefly my project BioGeoGraphies, undertaken as an independent artist. This work looks at networks of relationships around specific animals' lives that have become, in some way, entwined in my own – animals that are good to think with. It is about entangled relationships between people and things; assemblages of things; technologies – not just looking at human activity in isolation.

This extends ideas of what should be included, I think. I am thinking about 'Working in Public' and its focus on the human. But I leave discussion about how ‘people are in the midst of things’ to theoreticians such as Bruno Latour and instead talk a little about BioGeoGraphies.

This project is a process of teasing out geographies of animal existences through time and over space. It involves selecting certain connections to draw to our attention. Interventions like transporting a museum specimen or building a website open up discussion about the ways that people and things are bound together. The projects have an eye towards environmental politics, for example, about how large parts of Scotland are managed as moorland that is used for hunting. The projects are arenas where questions of nature turn into political and aesthetic issues. It is about letting affairs become more complicated, not letting issues polarise. This can mean that it does not easily fit into organisational policies and strategies.

I set out to find people with shared interests and who are deliberately disrespectful of disciplinary boundaries. The main point is to make conversation. Material outcomes are relatively slight: small scale exhibitions, book works, the website – but there is a gradually extending network involving people with different kinds of experience and knowledge of topics and questions: a museum curator, archaeologists, a poet, taxidermists, the late Duchess of Westminster's salmon ghillie, biologists and, in particular, cultural geographers – notably Hayden Lorimer and Merle Patchett at the University of Glasgow.

Now for something about the Blue Antelope itself. Glasgow University has one of only two skulls in the world of this animal. The Blue Antelope was exterminated in the 1800s by European settlers in South Africa. The only other skull is in Amsterdam. I am going next month to South Africa near where it used to live. I will find scientists who study it, but I am unlikely to an African name for this animal because the culture of the people who knew it when it was alive, has also been exterminated. Perhaps I will find out more about why it was called 'blue'.

For good curatorial reasons, the museum curator cannot let me take the Blue Antelope's skull with me, but she is letting me travel with the skin of a Common Swallow. It took more than a few phone calls to clarify a dead Swallow's status regarding import licences. They migrate each year to and from South Africa and Britain. I want to know its name in the other South African languages. Again, there is a reference to environmental politics. Expansion of the Durban Airport for 2010 FIFA World Cup may possibly knock out reed-beds that the swallows use on migration. I am sure to find a whole range of sensibilities and priorities in South Africa.

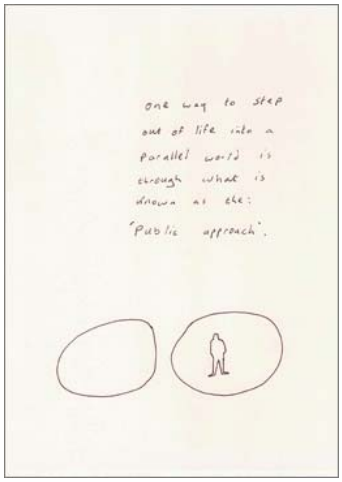
In summary, to return to the idea that 'matter matters', BioGeoGraphies works with the idea that people are bodies in the midst of things. Doing BioGeoGraphies is an oblique way of becoming sensitive to environmental justice. It is simply one way to work creatively within the disparate approaches and relationships people have with the non-human world. It is not exactly activist art, though working creatively with others helps to engage. In practising as an artist, I advocate a shift of aesthetics towards make-do, opportunistically using local resources and working on local connectedness. I pay attention to the technological apparatus of putting work out in public. I also have recently bought a long-haul plane ticket.

Kate Gray: I am here because I am working with the Collective Gallery for three years on a programme called 'The One Mile Programme'. It is a programme that I applied to work with because of a shared interest in what 'public space' might be and how artists might work in a public space.

My work has always been hand-in-hand making things myself and trying to work with other people to make spaces where people can come together and exchange and potentially make things together. That is why I was drawn to this project.

In the conception of this project, I made sure that there was a long research and development phase in order to work with groups and individuals. I should tell you a little about how the parameters for the One Mile Project came about. It was basically that the director of the Collective Gallery, Sarah Munro, using a map of Edinburgh, stuck a compass in the gallery and drew a radius of a mile around it and then said, 'Ok, this is our public for three years that we want to investigate'. So, on one level, it is a very physical, geographic space. But it was also opening out the Collective Gallery to people who were already part of existing groups working within that one mile area.

The first year was really a research and development phase to look at who was already identifying themselves as groups within that one mile. We asked them if they wanted to meet and work with us, making a space where things could develop. The idea was to try and make spaces where people could come together and work with artists to make work of mutual interest. It was to try and set up a process where there was a possibility that, because nothing was fixed from the outset, that people could develop from both sides an idea, developing something that was mutually interesting.



My involvement – I am called – a lead artist. I am making work myself within the project, but also facilitating, curating – I was described earlier as a curator - I have also been described as a producer of other people's projects or other group projects.

I am sitting in front of a poster which was a drawing made by one of the artists that is working on the project, Dave Sherry. I thought it exemplified what kinds of spaces we are looking at – it is how these two kinds of spaces (public space and artistic personal space) may, or may not, move together.

What we are hoping for is that the project is capable of reintroducing the notion that people can engage in the public sphere through culture. We hope that this may lead to a critically aware public that can produce itself through acts of cultural exchange.

Roxana Meechan: Hello. My name is Roxana Meechan. I have three hearts: I have the heart of a practising artist, but part time; and also as the Arts Development Officer for the Highland Council for the area of Sutherland – it is a very remote area of Scotland, as you know; and also as the Tribesnet Director – it is a voluntary organisation that I set up as a mechanism to facilitate young people's multi-cultural experiences through art projects involving other European young people.

It is very difficult for me, given five minutes to talk about my work, to decide in where I wanted to pitch it. So, when I was making the poster here – this is an outline of Sutherland – what I have done here is actually … Spain was obviously very important to me because I am Spanish, and I came here to Britain 30 years ago, Spain has resonated in my work this last 30 years.

One of the projects I have been working is called 'The Virtual and the Real Story Teller'. It is a very interesting metaphorical expression to describe, I think, the role of an artist. I consider myself a virtual and a real storyteller because my background started in experimental drama and, because I was brought up in a dictatorship, art is very important to me – it is the freedom of expression. One of the great things when I came to Britain was Speakers' Corner in London and I was really very drawn to that. Since then, for me, working in the arts is to give people, who have something in common that they want to share the opportunity to come together and to meet – to me that is a very, very, very important part of the work that I do.

As a project designer and developer, I am going into communities and interacting with people, first building up their trust, perhaps instilling in them some energy because it might be slightly different to the energy that already exists in that particular space; in that particular land. Ttogether, we can make things happen because I think there is always a magic in both involvement and in the particular project. It is very difficult to explain, even though we are here to do that. It is actually quite difficult to explain and you just have to feel it. You have to actually be there.

'The Virtual and the Real Story Project' is a real project that is taking place over two years and it was about local people deciding on five local legends in history. It is about bringing the past and the future together, through the present, of course. This project is an inter-generational project. Three-year olds and eighty-year olds have been involved in this project. They have chosen five histories, deconstructed them, and then constructed, through story-boards, making them into animations. There have been a lot of story-telling projects, meetings, and final events because we are working with partners in the Hebrides and Shetland and Ireland. It is also the opportunity to share methods of working. This is very important.

Within my work in the EC Project – the EC Scotland Video – there is a dialogue, and a distance. I am working with Sutherland youth (this is in my voluntary work, by the way). I am working with young people in the area who are actually starting a conversation via video with young people from the slums in Brazil. They are actually talking about what is life in their local communities – what is life like in Sutherland. They sent a video to Brazil and they responded with what is life like in the slums of Rio. Now the young people in Sutherland have to respond after they have seen what life in Rio is about. They actually started to realise that life in Sutherland is not that bad, after all, in that they started to reflect in, why are people so happy in their video in Rio de Janeiro. They are talking about having to live with shootings going on in the streets and poverty, and lack of opportunities – but, why are they so happy? Where did they get that inspiration to be happy? They are actually are able to observe how important it is that people are coming together and enjoy being together.

Anyway, in my work, I think that the most important element is that I bring people together to do what they want to do – and then I just help them to make it happen and I do that in many different ways. These two projects are only just two examples of the way that I do it.

Thank you very much.

Janice Parker: I am a freelance choreographer and dance artist and I work in, and with, the community in socially engaged arts practice. This means that I work with a diversity of people in a diversity of contexts.

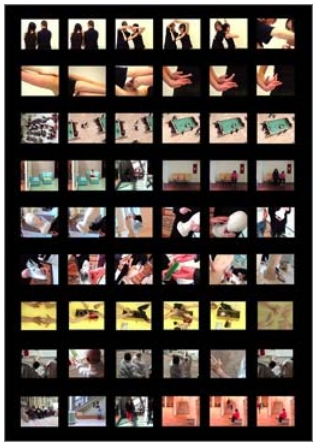
The piece of work represented here – this one – is a series of seven site-specific films that are titled 'Amplification and Restriction'. They are located in the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh [www.nms.ac.uk]. The performers are from Traveller Dance Company. In the project my role was to initiate the idea; co-ordinate and administrate the project; develop and guide the process both artistically and politically; and bring the work to a conclusive final performance.

The work was funded through Artlink (that is Artlink, Edinburgh and The Lothian's [www.artlinkedinburgh.co.uk], Mid-Lothian Council and the National Museums of Scotland.

The work had a number of artistic goals. The first was to create a performance based on each dancer's responses to, and interests in, the museum environment and, in so doing, to reflect the individuality of each person. Equally the idea was to create performance that engaged and contributed to the life, character and culture of the museum. These were my two starting points. Alongside and layered into this were political and personal goals - to challenge the perspective held on individuals with learning disability, to create more and different visibility of individuals with learning disability and to work in a way that essentially fulfilled something personal for each performer from Traveller Dance.

The process spanned a period of over two years from the beginning negotiations and discussions to the screening of the completed work. 'Public', for me, included everyone who directly or indirectly encountered or contributed to the process. As in the Oxford English Dictionary the definition of 'public' is "of, for, or known, to people in general". I like this definition.

I work collaboratively and, for me, people – the public – are inherent to collaborative arts practice. My ultimate aim is to make performance and I do this by working in partnership with other people. Each of the partners in this process has a different role and contribution to make to the whole. I think, generally, in our minds 'public' often means the receiver of art, but to me 'public' also means the contributor.



In this project, for example, the museum is a public space and a public facility that offers a public service. I approached the museum with my idea that we, Traveller Dance, a company that focuses on the movement qualities of people with learning disability, meet in the museum on a weekly basis with the eventual aim of creating a performance in response to the experience of being there regularly. The museum liked the idea and invited us in. At this point they perceived us, and we were members of the public and, as such, receivers of what the museum had to offer. However by the end of our time there, the museum was challenged to consider itself a receiver of new perspectives – and that was the perspective of people with learning disabilities and their art.

This brought up a number of questions. For example, what exactly does 'being accessible' mean? And on whose terms is it constructed? What is the place and potential of people with learning disabilities in a museum? Existing preconceptions and expectations were challenged and debated. Just exactly who is the giver and who is the receiver? And on what experience and knowledge base was the museum basing its understanding of the involvement of people with learning disability within its environment, culture and service provision. And there were also questions about the place, the position, and the value of performance art within a museum environment.

For me, the tables were turned. The seven films that comprised 'Amplification and Restriction' are just that: a distillation of seven particular and, I believe, valuable perspectives on the Museum. They have the potential to contribute to the life of the Museum, to its culture, to its character and to its purpose. They work by just being there within that environment and also by being discussed and debated pro-actively at other times within other contexts.

The role of who was public was essentially reversed. And within that, of course, is the fact that both, the museum service and staff and the participants from traveller dance were publics of sorts within the same process. The main ingredient of that process is exchange.

As a performance artist, my starting point is people as performers. Often people who have had no previous performance experience. At this point, they are the public. Each contributes their distinctive aesthetic as we work together to create a finished performance. Then, at this point, the public become the general audience who witness and receive the work.

In the case of the museum, this public were the general public as they watched us create and devise our work out in the public arena of the museum: they sometimes stumbled upon us; they sometimes participated and joined in. Sometimes they completely scurried away; other times they were furious that we were there at all; at times they were really moved; sometimes they did not notice at all; and sometimes they asked questions or they were just silent witnesses.

So, for me, 'public' and 'art-making' is all of this and, at its best, it is an active, dynamic, ever-changing and fluctuating exchange.

Thank you.

Panel session and discussion

Moira Jeffrey, Chair: I think the thing that really struck me about both Suzanne's presentation and the break out groups was the very different types of conversations that we might be having, and the very different voices that we have got here, in the room, tonight. This next stage of the evening, I think, is the chance to open up to some of these different experiences and some of these different voices.

There will be questions that you have regarding the practice that you have seen and the thoughts that that raised. The Working in Public leaflets should help you find those people and address those questions. This session will be about these panellists, but if you have things you want to find out about the Core Group, please do speak to them when you can later on this evening, or please do look at their work, and follow the kind of inspiration or the spark that they may have set off.

The group that we have round the table now, I think, represent a very interesting and diverse set of experiences and will bring to this notion of the artist and public very different perspectives.

First of all, on the extreme left here, we have Professor John Caughie. He is Professor of Film and Television Studies at the University of Glasgow [www.tfts.arts.gla.ac.uk]. His books include the 'Companion to British and Irish Cinema' and 'Television Drama: Realism, Modernism and British Culture'. He is chair of the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Research Committee [www.ahrc.ac.uk].

Next to John is Dr Emily Brady. She is a lecturer in Human Geography at The Institute of Geography at the University of Edinburgh [www.geos.ed.ac.uk/homes/ebrady/]. Her research interests brings together the disciplines of philosophy and cultural geography. These include environmental ethics and aesthetics.

Here on my right is Jay Koh. He is an artist whose art practice includes creating art works; curating exhibitions; writing and publishing: organising seminars, workshops and community capacity building. He is currently working with the City Arts Centre in Dublin [www.cityarts.ie] curating a three-year inter-cultural project, and in the Winter he is going to be working in both Burma and Vietnam.

Nicol Stephen [www.scottish.parliament.uk/msp/membersPages/nicol_stephen/index.htm] we have already met.

I would like to open up a question which is one I think applies to everybody in the room, but I am going to ruthlessly address that question to the panel. I suppose it is really about the impacts of what we have seen and heard tonight. I am interested in the panel's responses or reflections to what has been raised so far. We have all had very different experiences, been in very different break-out groups. We have all had the experience of hearing Suzanne's presentation. I am wondering what these has raised in your minds. In particular, responses around the relationship between the artist and the public.

So I wonder if I might just start by asking John to kick off.

John Caughie: Some of the questions I have come out of that teaching experience. With characteristic frankness, my colleagues in the department, who saw my name on the programme for this event, asked rather bluntly, 'What are you doing there?'. And I have to say that I was not quite sure what I was doing there. But I think my brief, actually, is probably the last element on it, which is Chair of the AHRC Research Committee. Before I was Chair of the AHRC Research Committee, I was Chair of the Visual Arts and Media Panel and I have just worked out with Anne that I think I chaired the Committee at a time that we funded the initial On The Edge project at Gray's School of Art.

I suppose, one of the questions that we are constantly facing in the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the UK is that we cover practice-based art research as well as general humanities research. Most of the European Research Councils are not interested in practice-based creative and performing arts. The Arts and Humanities Research Council is. And it is a major funder. It is maybe very small in the UK in comparison with the Medical Research Council or the other Science Research Councils. But compared with Federal funding in the US, we are really quite big. So, the AHRC is a big funder and it is important in that respect.

The AHRC is constantly wrestling with the boundary between what we should be funding and what the Arts Councils should be funding. Where is the boundary between art as a research activity and art as an expressive activity.

We are spending public funding on research. As well as looking for excellent research, we are also looking for dissemination. The key term at the moment is knowledge transfer, or, as it is coming to be known, knowledge exchange. We are looking for public impact. This project, in so far as it began life as a research project, is hitting a lot of these buttons.

I suppose the question I have (and it is one that I throw into the arena, as it were) is, how does funding change art; how does the source of the funding impact on art – so that you have not just got different publics, you also have different art activities, and each applies to different funders. That notion of who funds the art very often makes a difference to what the art actually is.

The other area I want to draw attention to relates to the course I teach at Glasgow in Film and Television Studies. It is a course on the historic avant garde. I have not actually taught it for about eight years, but I am teaching it next semester. I was beginning to think about what has changed, and Anne Douglas, in discussion we had before this event, recommended Grant Kester's work.

The notion of the dialogic, in art, seems to be a concept that has been in art for a long time – since Bakhtin we have had dialogic art. But I think it has taken on a new resonance now and it is taking on the resonance not just of the dialogic as a property of art works, but the dialogic as a quite specific relationship with the public - or with quite discrete publics.

I was interested in Jean Cameron's talk in the break-out session that I was in. She talked about the artist as producer which, again, is a concept that is familiar from Walter Benjamin, but actually has taken on a very different resonance now – that the artist is actually a community liaison officer, a project fundraiser, a producer in the sense in which film producers 'produce' films, a person who does not just create a work of art but who 'produces' the context in which it will be received. The notion of the artist who is only concerned with creativity and self-expression --which obviously has been a very stable notion for a very long time – is one of the things that has changed.

I am really interested in that. I suppose one of the other questions that I would throw out is the question of evaluation. What would bad public art look like? The terms of reference of evaluation, I think are slipping.

Moira Jeffrey Chair: I would like to bring the artists into this conversation at this stage. I think that John has raised quite a lot about who an artist might be. I wonder about Jay Koh's response to what we have heard so far.

Jay Koh: I am not going to that directly. I think of something that is a very visibly present in this room: the poster. I am sure everyone of you have been looking at these posters. You are reading them in a way, and if you are conscious from your cultural background; your intellectual dissemination of the message that comes across. When you hear an artist speak about a project, I think, again, different meanings come into your consciousness. Perhaps, if you invest some more time in this poster and look at the background of the project, then more meaning comes in.

So, now I am actually referring to a kind of non-verbal dialogue that is generated by these posters which the previous speaker has brought up – the dialogical process of projection. For me, it is very interesting because we are actually speaking in a space that projects power. This projection of power is also visible and non-visible. So, again, how is this

meaning created? Now, to come back to the artist – what kind of position does an artist take when an artist has decided to go into the public space to interact? The intention, the message: is that sufficient in order to create a dialogue, or does an artist have to worry about the other kind of projection that comes out of the creation of meaning?

Maybe through all these different ways of balancing the projection and conscious and unconscious and site-specific receiving of the message, it is not easy for an artist to create meaning because the artist alone is not the main creator. It depends on the viewer.

Emily Brady: I suppose I am holding up the environmental end on the panel – in a way. I was interested in listening to Suzanne's talk, and then trying to think about some of the things that she said and how the environment fits into that, or how some of the things she said then fit into an environmental context.

I was struck, in particular, I think, by two points she made. First, that art makes things visible. I think that the artist – in particular an ecological artist or an environmental artist – is so well placed to negotiate that space around human/nature relations and in the green break-out group (aptly named) there was a little bit of that on the poster from Reiko Goto.

I think, ecological artists can make visible a number of kinds of issues, concepts, problems. We can talk on a global scale about climate change and we can talk on a much, much, smaller scale about the loss of the habitat of a particular species or the particular way in which certain human technology is affecting a bird – a raptor, for example. Lynne Hull [www.eco-art.org] has done some interesting work on this.

It is about the artist making these kinds of things visible and in an environmental context, making large political issues, particular kinds of human/nature relations visible.

Also, Suzanne [Lacy] mentioned art as a civic negotiation. I was thinking, 'well, what does that mean in the space of the environment – with the environment as a kind of public space - what is being negotiated there?' Again, it is thinking about nature/human relations and the way in which art can contribute, for instance through ecological restoration projects which involve artists in a deep way.

I also thought a little bit about the role of the audience. I am not trying to set up a polarity, but I am thinking about the audience for art works. I have worked on the idea of aesthetic communication; the idea that through an experience, an artwork – whether it be within a gallery, or outdoors in a public space, or into the natural environment – the kind of sharing that can go on in our judgements about works of art. There is a kind of aesthetic communication that takes place as much through disagreement and through agreement. So, the presentations have prompted me to think about the role of the artist, but also the way in which the audience (to come back to what Jay Koh was saying) is also creating meaning.

Finally, I just wanted to finish with one really interesting question – well, it was a statement that was made in Ruth Barker's presentation in the green break out group earlier. I was really struck by it and I just want to throw it out. She said, 'public art makes us the most human of all'. I wanted to ask, 'why?', and 'how?'. It was a really interesting point she made.

Moira Jeffrey, Chair: Nicol [Stephen], I am interested in your perspective here. What are artists and educators and arts administrators doing in this territory? Are they encroaching on your territory?

Nicol Stephen: Well, I guess I come at this from the viewpoint of the organisation, rather than the artist. I think there are interesting comparisons with some of the big organisations, the public services – whether it is health or education or criminal justice or any of these big areas of public policy, public delivery. Organisational behaviour is something that is really interesting for me. Big corporations often emphasise their environmental credentials or their ethical commitments. Health and safety issues and environmental issues can make or break their companies. Some will say

that these commitments go absolutely to the core of their company, but you sometimes wonder whether that is really the case.

I can remember – not so long ago, a few months ago – a gentleman called Mr Bill Gates visited this building. They had a Microsoft Global Leaders' Conference here. Can I just ask you to imagine looking around the room at the Microsoft delegates and those who were represented at the conference, and their style of dress; their approach; their attitude to life. There is an organisation where, if you compare it with Apple and Steve Jobs and the sort of culture they approach at Apple, you get a very different organisational behaviour.

Another good example of that is in the great world of cosmetics and perfume, and you think of the big organisations there. Think what Anita Roddick and The Body Shop did in terms of changing public attitude, changing the culture, changing the attitude of many young girls – particularly girls, particularly young people.

You know, I believe that if you start to get this right, if you start to get the posters right and the people right and the artistic involvement right, you can make a big difference – but it should not be a bolt-on. It should not be treated the way some of these big organisations some times treat the environment, sometimes treat health and safety, sometimes treat sponsorships and community arts projects. I think it has got to go to the core of the organisation. You can start to see from the video from what Suzanne has done; from what others have done – at its best, this can change the world and it can certainly change some organisations. And some of these organisations badly need changing. They need more of the spirit and the culture and the attitude that you can bring.

Moira Jeffrey, Chair: Nicol [Stephen] has raised a very interesting aspiration about core values. I would like to invite questions from the audience so that we can deal with it. Again, I think Suzanne [Lacy] used the words 'nitty gritty' as well. I kind of like these metaphors around – getting down to some kind of business.

There is a roving mike – two roving mikes.

I think the rules were stated wonderfully in the film that we saw – which was it? 'No name calling; no soap boxes.'

Moira Jeffrey, Chair: Question at the back. I wonder if people presenting questions could let us know their name and their context.

Judy Barrow: I am Judy Barrow, I am not an artist – I do apologise. I am a community liaison person.

My comment, really, more throwing this out to see what people think is, a lot of the work I have done with Venda Pollock – is bringing the local community – the public, if you like – into the thinking about public art – not just about statues where so often the response is, 'when are we going to get our new kitchens?'.

What I would like to know is, how have people dealt with that sort of response? You mentioned the word 'meaning'. For us it comes down to the relevance of the public art, and the budget. Explaining to local people that budget is there for art; please use it; please take advantage of the artists, as it were.

In Raploch we have turned the cultural identity into public art and improved the public, environmental space, if you like. We have ticked a lot of boxes, but it took a lot of work and we needed a lot of back-up – and I have to say, the budget was not always there.

So, I wanted to know how the artists felt because I know how the community and myself felt. Did you have any struggles getting your ideas across to the community?

David Haley: David Haley, ecological artist and Research Fellow at Manchester Metropolitan University.

I just wanted to touch on some of the points that the Panel have mentioned already, particularly the question of power; particularly the question of funding.

Two years ago I attended a conference at Lille about EU INTEREG funding – billions and billions of Euro spent on transnational projects. There were well over a thousand delegates. Two distinct areas – issues – that were not being tackled at all (this is two years ago), were climate change and cultural diversity.

Now, I do not see those billions of Euro, from those projects, actually being put into the cultural projects. I do not see them tackling, actually – even despite the views that we hear regularly these days about climate change – I do not see them being spent on these key issues. That funding, in Europe, has virtually no democratic voice. These are all done by governments, people do not know what they are voting for, in this sense.

One of the things that projects, I believe, that Suzanne [Lacy] and others here have created is that, first of all, it allows people, perhaps, to enter the dialogue – gain permission to enter the dialogue. Having entered the dialogue, perhaps those projects can shift the language; shift the metaphors by which we live and, perhaps, having shifted that language, it might actually change the stories by which we live.

But it is that power, and the funding, that is essential to see those through. It is not the funding leading the art, it is the funding leading our lives.

Thank you.

Sylvia Borda: This is a follow-up to the question about public art and its distribution within the community – and I can only speak in terms of being an artist.

I am Sylvia Borda and I am a Guest Lecturer at Queens University, Belfast, and am an Associate Researcher at Emily Carr in Vancouver, Canada.

So, I was privileged enough to work with Keith Donnelly in South Lanarkshire delivering a project called 'EK Modernism'. I have to give context, sadly, so bear with me. I will try and summarise it very quickly.

The first project was a one-month residence to photograph and record East Kilbride according to some sort of system. Every artist has to respond according to a system.

So it was actually a dialogue with Keith Donnelly, Arts Development Officer. You could say he is almost a conductor or maestro. Every arts development officer has to present information to artists that they are mentoring. Without his knowledge, I would not be able to respond to a project. So, right away, you have to have community liaison with somebody who understands their environment and from that I was able to work with a broader community: library, citizens, schools. So, there was a brokerage that opened up a lot of windows.

But with the project enabled, it was for me to record very succinctly something that gets overlooked in places like East Kilbride (which is Scotland's first new town). It is a Modernist area in which all of the current buildings are being demolished in favour of regeneration. Regeneration can actually displace communities because they have a certain nostalgia.

I took on the endeavour to assign value to that area by photographing all these places that had a certain memory and a certain social value. I created an index for people to respond to. I was fortunate enough that the project won a Millennium Commission Award and could continue and that led to a larger publication.

Every time you assign value to a community, you can re-legitimise itin a way that someone reconsiders what is in their own local back yard. Sometimes you have to be from elsewhere – so it helps not being a Scot because I could actually say, 'East Kilbride is interesting and I am proud to be a resident – even if it temporary'.

To bring the community further into the endeavour, I proposed to Keith [Donnelly], 'Could I possibly do an exchange with Canada?' and that starts to re-legitimise a community much further.

So, the second endeavour I came back to Keith [Donnelly] with was based on my own initiative. Knowing the area very well, having lived and worked in East Kilbride over a sixteen-month period. That was actually to take a place very similar in Canada called Surrey, British Columbia, which has a very large youth population – very similar to Oakland – where about 30% is under the age of 18 and do not know their environment very well.

For a community to be completely engaged, it has to have a strand that it recognises – and by me enabling citizens and youth to see their own community through my own work, they became the focus. My aim was to make a work in East Kilbride that the inhabitants took over as their own, the work became theirs..

Moira Jeffrey, Chair: I wonder if I can just throw that up then? I mean, that is a suggestion that, in the relationship between art and the public, the artist can assign a value? Do the panel have views on that? Do the audience have views on that?

Julie Fiala: Rather than tell you who I am, I am going to illustrate it and I am going to respond to what you are saying not by giving you my CV but by showing you, not how funding can influence art, but how art can influence funding.

I did a performance last week in Leeds, and I refused to perform in art spaces because they make me very nervous. And everyone always says to me, 'Why don't you perform in art spaces? You are an artist.' And I said to them, 'I am going to be doing a pro-peace performance.' Everyone in England said, 'What is that?' I said, 'Well, it is the other side of anti-war.'

What I mean by that is, I am someone who is very ambitious, but I believe that in naming something, you also make it real. So, if I say that my mission is to develop a community space I might have to call it an international residency programme to access arts funding. For the community artist to access funding it has to be a centre for well-being. Perhaps we could also be described as non-lawyers who have experience in intellectual property. As artists, we are concerned with speaking and listening because those are the main tenets of what we do. I have seen it in organisations like City Arts in Dublin; I have seen it in organisations like C-Space in London; I have seen it with people like Platform in London'

And I believe the difference with the way Suzanne Lacy presented this video – for me was very important because, although she spoke, it was not her voice that was representing the ideals which she was trying to move forward. There was a narrative in that video that was very impactful to me and very important. I believe the key difference in the way that today has evolved (and I am not saying this is good or bad) is that it has been very much a debate of experts. You can correct me if I am wrong, but this is what I feel.

Moira Jeffrey, Chair: Ok. That, to me, seemed that there was a suggestion there that artists can assign value or can assign a naming of a situation. The other thing that you raised was this dialogue between artists leading funding and funding leading artists. I think John [Caughie] was looking pensive.

John Caughie: It was kind the how-do-we-know question? I mean, how do we know that public art has the value that we think it has? How do we know that it is changing people's attitudes? How do we know that it is giving a legacy?

If the Scottish Parliament were funding, say, the shortening of waiting times in hospitals, they would want a measurement. They would want to be able to measure the success or failure of their investment. How do we measure the effect of the investment that public bodies are putting into public art?

I think do trade on the general belief that art is good for you. And to some extent, it is a non-examinable belief. As long as people do not examine the question of measuring the benefits of the investment – well, that is fine for us,

because the money seems to keep coming. But there must be a little insecurity about it? What happens when priorities change, and hard questions are asked? Do we have any answers other than that art is good for you?

Jay Koh: The answer – or, I hope to answer the question – I would like to point to the issue of ownership. Whether the artists name or determine a project, or the funders name or determine a project – if there is no ownership from the public, the project will not sustain itself, and it will fail.

How does the funder, the artist, negotiate with members of the public to take over ownership? We are treading on very dangerous ground to think that just one or two power structures – points in the structure – can determine the outcome of a whole project working with the public. There are a lot more other key players there.

Until now, we kind of have a universal understanding that the public, the audience, understand what it is all about: funding, artists, the art world – but how about when you work in a society where there are many layers; where there are layers and groups and sub-groups that do not understand art at all – or culture at all? Let alone when this message is translated into another belief system where they have a total understanding or translation of the concept of the dialogue which is different when you work in a different culture or belief system?

Then, how do the funders, the artists, create a consensus or common ground (which is also a very contested term – common ground – who sets the common ground, again?). So, here again, how does ownership of a sustainable project come into being?

Moira Jeffrey, Chair: Is there a specific response to that from the audience – or the panel?

Suzanne Lacy: I am not on the panel, but I would love to respond. I think that evaluation is a really key question, John [Caughie], and I think it is one I have struggled with for a very long time because it is hard to pin down the nature of art, particularly – I guess you mentioned the avant garde – I came out of the tradition of the avant garde. I came out of Kaprow and Beuys and a hard-core art school and yet a very populous working class background and trying to bring those things together is really part of what my research here is about.

I think that the win is in first defining the work – or defining the works – maybe it is plural – because, I do not think it is so hard to define it in terms of social outcomes – which Nicol [Stephen] would be interested in, you know. How many cops changed their opinion; how many kids did not get beaten up as a result, and those kinds of things. But I think, the harder question, for me, is aesthetics, and how do you make a determination; and based on what kinds of issues? I think that is what Grant [Kester] is addressing in terms of his theory. It is not just, how do we know that it is good social practice, but how do we know that it is good aesthetic practice?

Then the problem becomes for me – you know, sometimes it can be really good social practice (in the stuff I do) and then it miserably fails at art. I am not even sure under what conditions. I stand back and look at it and say, 'ugh'. And then, sometimes, I know – it is just this one little thing that happened. This reading between this cop and this kid on television and something magical happens and I say, 'Hmm. That is very interesting. That works.' But nobody else gets it because they do not quite see from a public vantage point what it is.

I think the question you are raising is the key question, and I think it is not one we know the answer to now, but one that we are for the first time ready to start debating on a very broad level. We are debating it theoretically, we are debating it in the art world, we are debating it at the Tate Modern, we are debating it here. I think if politicians can really grapple with something at that intellectual level – not just seeing art as decoration, but as all these other possibilities that the avant garde has always had. It is just unfortunately that not everybody is educated to understand it. But if they can, then I think we can really begin to have a fulsome discourse on those ongoing questions.

Moira Jeffrey, Chair: A final question?

Lindsay Perth: I wrote a question down. I wrote, 'how can funding adapt itself to more process-based art practice where the art is dialogical and is less product-based?' which is basically what you are saying.

But I wonder also if funding or the opportunity is there for artists so that it is understood that these things are not six months, or three months, or very often to take part in community in terms of conversations and process-based work. It takes time. I mean, the Oakland – how long were you in Oakland for?

Suzanne Lacy: Ten years.

Lindsay Perth: Ten years. You know. I think the funding has to reflect that. Which comes back to the first question – yes, what comes first, the chicken or the egg?

I am questioning also what the measurements are? How can there be evaluation? And I wonder if the partnerships in the community conversation can be more part of the evaluation, rather than the sound bites, and there can be something more to help measure the end.

Moira Jeffrey, Chair: I think what I am hearing there is something about sustained involvement, and I think in terms of Suzanne's work it is extremely interesting. Not just in terms of how it might be funded, but why you might need to or want to work in such a sustained way?

My understanding around the Working in Public programme is a sense of Suzanne reflecting on that sustained activity – that ten-year period. At the same time you have had a – what is shorter, but also sustained involvement – in Scotland through the Working in Public programme.

I think at this stage in the evening I would like to invite Suzanne to close this stage of proceedings – really to kind of remark upon why you are here; what has happened here; and that period that you have had of reflection.

Suzanne Lacy: Yes, I would love to, and I want to make sure you realise that – because this feels a little bit like a truncated conversation – that we are going to immediately go out there and begin having these conversations with each other and that tonight really is meant to launch this discourse.

I want to make just a couple of comments. First, there are many models here, in the UK, already existing. You have seen some of them tonight. You can go back in history – in particular, you have John Latham and Barbara Stevini with an organisation called APG – Artists Placement Group – in the 70s who tried to get artists as social planners in various corporations and governmental industries – not as decorators, but as planners.

I think what is critical that politicians and civic leaders realise, is that artists are basically (some artists – not all) a form of intellectual and it is a public intellectual. There are people that care about social problems and there are people that would like to contribute. The contributions may look a little different. They may have orange hair – we do not know.

Why I came to Scotland was to participate in a culture of research that goes beyond what I could find in the United States. In my own institution, The Otis College of Art and Design, I have just launched a Phd by practice but, frankly, the discourse around the Phd in practice or the Phd in the arts is just beginning. I have seen a lot of resistance to it. I think that this practice=led Phd programme is an example of a reframing of art as research. You see that going on in the museums, you see it going on around the world, and I think this is a physical evidence of that reframing.

So, for me, thinking about art as research is going to be particularly significant when it comes to public realm art because we have to look at how research and how public art, and public realm, and public policy issues might come together – which does touch on your comments about evaluation.

I came here at a very opportune moment. Artists are showing a lot more appetite (as Anne Douglas pointed out) for working in public. The major museums in the UK are actually looking at this practice and inviting artists in to teach the museums about this practice.

You are talking about, 'how does creativity feature in our economic and social and public life' in a very significant way. The Scottish Arts Council, the sponsor for this event, is considering exactly the issues you brought up. How do you know when it is good art? You fund it; you put public money in it; how are we accountable?

I think this is a great time. I have been very stimulated so far and this process is just beginning. For me, it has been very rewarding.

I want to leave you with just three thoughts that are important.

The first, about research. If we think about fine arts as a research practice (some fine arts – not all), then, what do we end up with? We end up with a kind of a public or, at least, open-ended experimentation. We end up with the ability to frame questions; less coming up with clichés and more coming up with questions. We end up with the paradigm of knowledge seeking. Potentially, if it is public art, knowledge transfer within the art practice, then we can end up with something I think very important - the idea of learning from failures, just as much as from our art. That is why the title of the book I am working on is 'Imperfect Art – Working In Public' because it is the least perfect of the studio possibilities.

Now, the other thing it does is, it positions Universities as significant partners in this discourse. I think Working in Public has been a very interesting brain child of Anne Douglas – my thesis advisor – who has gone way beyond that role in developing a very discursive, broad, enquiry with lots of participation, launching that as part of my research process. Well, that is a combination of the University and the art thinking coming together in the process, that has brought us here tonight. So, that is one thing.

The second thing I want to leave you with is 'Who is responsible for civic discourse?' As I said, public discourse is perhaps not quite as eroded in Scotland as it is in the United States. At least, in theory – you know, when I was growing up, public elected officials, organisational leaders, and civic non-elected officials – the kind of people I referred to in that 'Code 33' video, were responsible for the quality and the state of civic discourse. Well, look at the current presidency in my country and how he does not sponsor, support, civic discourse.

Here we have the highest elected (and I promise I am not just going to do a Bush bash) but the symbolism of this I think is key. We have the highest office – elected office – in our country, truncating at every possible moment civic discourse. Then where are the responsibilities? Has it suddenly shifted over on to the artists of the world that we are supposed to be responsible for public discourse (with very little funding)? I think the partnership between artists and the political sphere is critical. You invite your public intellectuals and your public officials to talk about how to enrich the state of discourse.

So, finally, what would this experiment look like; how would it be supported (that is the question you asked); what priorities would it have – would it have access to this kind of space; what negotiations and what compromises would be needed (I think one of the things people are always afraid about artists is that they are these wild cards – you never know quite what they are going to do when you put them in a public space); and then, what happens when things get dangerous?

My last point is, things will get dangerous. They always get dangerous in politics – we know that, right? You never know – at least in America – when a camera is waiting to catch you at something you should not be doing (according to the religious right). If we adopt the notion of artist research, then we must embrace the spirit that we have in Universities, which is academic freedom.

Here is a common misconception: good public art seeks a uniform instrumentality. What does it do? Another misconception, good art is never functional – you get that in any art magazine. So, the question is, where do we sit in this discourse? At what point in time do we sit there? Is it function; is it non-functional? So, if I am an artist and I go and I promise you I am going to arouse civic discourse and something goes very wrong and the Free Mumia protester come in – you know – is that an example of a non-delivery in the social or functional realm, or is it a non-delivery in the aesthetic realm, and how do we chew on that?

What art does, is it provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon the implications of our civic actions and the implications of the direction of our civic sphere, such as it is.

If artists research in the territory between the aesthetic, the political and the social, then it will not likely be either functional or non-functional at any given time. What it will be, in my book (if it is good), is experimental. It will take risks. It will raise discourse and it will raise discord – it will bring out the differences that exist.

I think such art values, above all, the rights of both artists and citizens to raise difficult questions, formulating legitimate debate about what is happening within us; to us; between us; and by us, to our various environments.

Art in public – I would close by saying – is a constantly re-inventive process that says, 'we are worthy and uncontrollable, as is civic debate'.

Thank you.

[applause]

Moira Jeffrey, Chair: On that note I would like to thank all the participants in this evening's event and all the participants in the Working in Public programme in its widest sense. At this stage, there is wine, there are canapes – I would invite everybody to begin these conversations and to get dangerous as quickly as possible.

Thank you very much.