How might the experiences and perspectives of community participants collaborating in socially engaged art practices be heard, considered and equally valued alongside those of the artist and gallery? What ethical implications for the artist and the gallery arise when community participants' experiences are considered in this way?

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Abstract

How might the experiences and perspectives of community participants collaborating in socially engaged art practices be heard, considered and equally valued alongside those of the artist and gallery? What ethical implications for the artist and the gallery arise when community participants' experiences are considered in this way?

Sarah Jane Plumb

Through this research I set out to highlight and address the absence of community participant voice in the analysis and critique of socially engaged art, mediated through the gallery. I bring into question bold assertions of positive and beneficial individual and communal experiences resulting from engagement in such practice when, without hearing from all involved, we are unable to fully comprehend its potential. It seems inexplicable that a practice based on the premise of dialogue, which claims to be striving for equitable relations and talks of collaboration, does not give equal weighting to participants' points of view. This deficiency perpetuates unbalanced power relations between gallery, artist, and community, and may also lead to disingenuous collaborative experiences and unethical practice.

Amplifying the voices of individual community members involved in *Open House*, a three-year community engagement programme initiated by Kettle's Yard working in collaboration with artist Emma Smith, and considering these perspectives through a critical research lens, I set out to develop and present a more nuanced understanding of the value of socially engaged art practices to community participants. Furthermore, through genuinely listening to concerns voiced by individual community members, I consider the ethical implications for the gallery and artist.

My analysis and critique of *Open House*, alongside the responses and reflections of community participants, are used as a springboard from which to consider broader issues affecting the fields of socially engaged art and galleries. Through this research I hope to inform and enrich the work of galleries mediating socially engaged art.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Context for the research: A personal and professional motivation

Figure 1.1 *Lost in Time and Space* exhibition opening, Modern Art Oxford, 2012, photograph by Emma Titcombe

June picks up a 1980s beige telephone perched on top of a circular table hanging from the ceiling. She looks up to find a film projected on the white wall of a typical contemporary art gallery space and sees her image staring back at her (Figure 1.1). On the other end of the telephone line she can hear herself speak, recounting stories of living in Oxford, the moment in time when she learnt to drive and how she now feels finding out that her driving licence will be revoked due to her worsening dementia. She later says that she is not going to let it get her down and instead jokes that she is going to become one of those 'irritating people' who drive mobility scooters.

June's encounter with herself unfolds on a Thursday evening in late April, 2012. She is surrounded by people who chat and laugh, drink wine and orange juice, clink glasses

and listen to speeches – all enacting the performative rituals of visiting a gallery during an exhibition preview. But the people attending the opening night of this exhibition are not your typical 'contemporary art crowd'. The space is filled with young people and older people with their families and carers celebrating the achievements of a group of local people who have collaboratively made an artwork that explores people's perspectives and lived experience of memory loss – a dual-screen film and installation.

The above vignette describes one of June's experiences of participating in *Lost in Time and Space*, a socially engaged art project that brought together older people with dementia and young people deemed 'at risk' to collaborate with an artist, a film-maker, a writer, health and well-being specialists, and gallery practitioners to make an artwork and mount an exhibition. Running over two years, I initiated and managed the project whilst working at Modern Art Oxford as Project Manager: Learning and Partnerships. The project offered a space where young people and older people could reflect on and express their shared experiences, who, although from different generations, both faced forms of marginalisation (Plumb 2012: 21). For June, who lived on her own in one of the suburbs of Oxford, the project enhanced her self-reported sense of well-being; it increased her opportunities to socialise; she learnt and practised new skills, and was mentally stimulated; her sense of agency was developed; and the project significantly increased her confidence in accessing the cultural offer of the city. She stated that: '[I]t's 20 years since I came to Oxford and I am so proud that I came somewhere strange' (cited in Plumb 2012: 26).

What became apparent during the *Lost in Time and Space* project was that the gallery acted as a 'neutral territory' (Plumb 2012: 22), not in the sense that the gallery was 'neutral', as of course no gallery can be, but rather it presented a neutral site in relation to its role as a meeting ground in which artists, young people and older people collaborated and shared their experiences and viewpoints. The gallery was an alternative space, not designated for a specific group, and outside their usual, 'labelled' sites of use – day-care centres, youth centres, schools, or memory cafes, which meant that the group opened up in ways that they would perhaps not have elsewhere (Ibid.).

In 2012 I already had over seven years' experience working in galleries as an educator, but it was during this project (with an ongoing and sustained relationship with project participants and a group of artists) that I truly began to see the vast potential of working in socially engaged and collaborative ways, and that these experiences could make meaningful differences to participants' lives. Yet, at the same time, I also became acutely aware of several ethical concerns arising from art practices such as these, which led me to want to further interrogate the practice, address my complicity in these issues as a gallery educator, and to ask the following questions:

1. What experiences do community participants have when collaborating in the making of socially engaged art mediated through the gallery?

A. What types of meaningful difference or beneficial change to participants do these experiences bring about?

B. What is the perceived value of this type of artistic practice to participants?

C. Can collaborative practices be more effective in engendering equitable relations between community participants, gallery and artist?

2. What are the ethical issues in socially engaged artistic practice?

A. Who initiates and makes decisions in collaborative practice? Who is benefitting from collaboration and to what degree? Is it of greater value to the gallery and artist to 'give voice' to participants?

B. How is participatory labour recognised, valued and can it ever be deemed to have equal status? To what extent can community participants be considered co-authors and co-owners in socially engaged practice?

C. How do we recognise artistic labour as distinct from participatory labour? How can we ensure that the artist is not demoted, that not all power is devolved and that the unique role that the artist brings is not devalued in collaborative works?

3. What is the role of the gallery as mediator in socially engaged arts practice?

A. 'Is it possible that a good artwork amounts to a bad education' (Reed 2014)? Where do the roles of the 'traditional' educator and curator sit within socially

engaged arts practice? How do the roles of curator and educator intersect in these practices and do these create more democratic environments?

B. What are the participants' motivations in taking part in socially engaged practice in relation to the gallery's and artist's intentions and agendas? How can we balance the needs of all stakeholders in collaborative practices, whilst upholding our own (gallery) principles and values?

C. How can galleries move from *serving* a community to working *with* a community? How can communities move towards becoming more equal partners in a process rather than 'products' of, or 'workers' for the artist and gallery? And how can galleries ensure that this type of practice does not become patronising or exploitative?

D. How does the greater agency of community participants, promoted through socially engaged arts practice, affect the gallery? And how is the expertise of the gallery troubled as well as valued in such practices?

Although these questions have been refined over the course of the study, they do give a sense of where my thinking began and what drove me to undertake the research. Growing out of my practice, with an understanding of the complexities of practice unfolding in real-life contexts, and a set of established values and skillset (which include: openness and flexibility; a care for others; a desire to facilitate learning, support meaning making and unlock the creative potential in people; alongside a deep respect for and genuine interest in the experiences of individuals and groups engaging with galleries), these concerns, in many respects, are where my research journey commenced. They triggered a curiosity and urge to further interrogate the possibilities of socially engaged art practices, the role of galleries in these experiences and emerging relationships, and highlight and attend to the often latent and messy ethical issues surrounding collaboration.

Research rationale

Whilst many recent texts, exhibitions and research projects acknowledge the importance of, and increasing interest in, socially engaged art and the practice has become an established area of study for researchers and art critics since the 1990s, its

relationship to actual social and political change remains largely unmapped. There is a dearth of in-depth understanding around the potential of the practice in offering both intrinsic and extrinsic value to participants. Numerous forms of socially engaged arts practice claim to be motivated by a commitment to addressing social issues, to be deeply rooted in community relations (Thompson 2012), and to strive to make a difference to individuals' lives (Helguera 2011); yet the literature surrounding the practice continues, in the main, to focus on polarised debates around the intrinsic versus instrumental value (Bishop 2012b), as well as aesthetic and ethical value judgements pitted against each other (Bishop 2012a).

In many cases socially engaged practice is still predominately judged or valued in relation to its artistic 'quality', and as art historian, critic and curator Christian Kravagna suggests, in practice: 'political analysis is largely missing, even though there is much talk of social change' (2012: 244). The paucity of critical analysis and lack of appropriate methodological approaches for capturing actual change will be challenged in this research. The research chooses to focus on the individual community members that collaborate in a process of making socially engaged artwork and explore what is of value to them. Kravagna suggests difficulties arise when attempts are made to judge these practices in terms of their usefulness, problem-solving ability or capacity to bring about actual change; instead he asserts that change in many participatory practices can only be 'measured symbolically' (Ibid.: 254). However, it is perhaps attempts to pre-define outcomes and tools of measurement that cause the most issues in exploring people's experiences or gauging value. Although within the scope of this research tangible or 'concrete' social change will not be measured, change beyond merely the 'symbolic' will be explored. The research will present alternative qualitative methodological approaches that do not rely on setting required outcomes or measuring change against pre-determined scales, but instead create a space where all voices can be heard, listened to and valued.

The absence of individual and community voice in the critique and analysis of collaborative and socially engaged arts practice is profoundly noticeable. Little research has been undertaken that focuses on the experiences of participants through

privileging their voice, and in practice these perspectives are mainly heard through evaluation after the fact. As American art historian Grant Kester suggests:

> In many community-based public art projects it is precisely the community whose voice is never heard. The institutional authority of the artist, and their privileged relationship to channels of "legitimate" discourse about the project (through media coverage, their alliance with sponsoring and funding agencies, etc.), conspire to create the appearance of a harmony of interests even where none may actually exist (1995: 8).

This paucity of attention to the participants' voice means we lack a nuanced understanding of what participants gain from socially engaged art and what actually matters to them. Whether this be the intrinsic value, the inherent worth gained through engagement with art, that McCarthy et al. describe as – captivation or a state of absorption; pleasure or emotional stimulation; expanded capacity for empathy; cognitive growth; the creation of social bonds; and the expression of communal meanings (2004: xv-xvi); or the interrelated instrumental or broader additional value stemming from engagement in the arts, such as – cognitive developments in learning new skills; attitudinal or behavioural benefits; improved mental or physical health; social benefits, including community cohesion, developing a community's sense of identity, and building social capital; as well as economic advantages (Ibid.: xii-xiv). Not hearing and considering these viewpoints and experiences literally and symbolically devalues them and presents the artist's and gallery's as more important, more legitimate.

Building on current and emerging literature in the fields of contemporary art theory and participatory practice in museums and galleries, together with developing new phenomenological explorations of the subject through a single case study, the research will add a new perspective grounded in a 'real-life' context from the points of view of individual community members participating in a socially engaged arts project mediated through the gallery, made generalisable to theory, rather than population.

In this research, I set out to redress this imbalance by amplifying the voices of a number of community participants, by respecting and showing a genuine interest in their different experiences and endorsing and validating these points of view in ways

that lead everyone to feel valued. In art practices that claim to be based on the premise of dialogue and reciprocity, and make assertions of individual and community benefit, should we not be hearing from everyone involved? Is it not morally and ethically questionable if we do not? And with whom does this responsibility lie?

Unpacking the terms – ethics, community, 'Othering'

What are gallery ethics?

It will be argued in this thesis that galleries working with artists have a moral and ethical responsibility towards the individuals and community groups they engage and therefore should hear, consider and value the perspectives and experiences of all involved, taking into account who is getting what from whom, alongside attending to arising issues voiced by community participants in order to work towards more ethically-sound practice.

Ethics are a set of moral principles or values held or presented by an individual; or codes of conduct recognised in a particular profession, sphere of activity, relationship, or other context or aspect of human life (Oxford English Dictionary 2017). In the context of the gallery or museum, ethics guide and shape professional practice and appear in a number of ways, including case studies that present applied ethical thinking to addressing specific issues; sharing a set of organisational values and principles; and professional ethical codes or standards (Marstine et al. 2015), such as the Museum Association's 'Code of Ethics' (2016) in the UK and the International Council of Museums' 'Code of Ethics for Museums' (2013). However, codes of practice have also been described as prescriptive, inflexible, alienating and, consequently, unjustified (Marstine et al. 2015).

Academic Janet Marstine offers an alternative to the usual discourses around museum ethics, instead comparing ethics to a social practice and describing it as the museum's 'moral agency'. She states:

> It is common practice for ethics centers, institutes and think tanks to use symbols of measure, enlightenment and strength to represent the concept of ethics; images of scales, compasses, torches and pillars predominate. But these

> icons connote moral certainty, a characteristic that does not define twenty-first-century museum ethics. I have found institutional critique—artists' systematic inquiry of the policies, practices and values of museums—a useful touchstone by which to grapple with the multi-faceted and contingent nature of museum ethics today ... It refutes the rigidity of museum power with the realities of corporeal presence to model a process that admits complexity, contradiction and flux (2011: 4).

As Marstine stresses, ethics should be an ongoing discourse, a fluid and adaptive approach, not one fixed in stone. Similarly, academic Anwar Tlili, in chairing a session at the 2015 Museum Association Conference, suggests that ethics could be approached in a number of ways, but that three major schools stand out – (1) following rules or maxims to fulfil duties and obligations, which are rooted in principles; (2) efforts could be made to think about how ethics can be applied in the messy reality of practice in connection with concrete situations that are both sensitive and unique; or (3) cultivating the necessary virtues in the social agent (such as considerateness, flexibility, open-mindedness), to ensure that the consequences are an alternative course of action, devised creatively in response to unique situations and individual and group needs.

Socially engaged art is a broad and diverse field of practices that involve participants in forms of exchange and collaborative processes, often employing dialogue and interaction as methodologies that attempt to challenge power, generate more democratic and equitable relations, and elicit social change. When working with individuals and communities in collaborative ways, what virtues might the gallery, as mediating agent, need? What intrinsic qualities might an ethically-driven gallery hold? And what is essential for galleries engaged in working collaboratively with individuals and community groups? Tlili (2015) suggests that considerateness, flexibility and open-mindedness are necessary traits; Marstine (2011: 5) indicates that museums can assert their moral agency through the practices of social inclusion, radical transparency and shared guardianship of heritage. Both imply that museums and galleries have public value and the capacity to enact a social purpose.

As previously alluded to, the principle of *care* may not only help to develop a fuller understanding around the potential of socially engaged art through appreciating what is of value to everyone involved, but may also support galleries in cultivating an ethically-turned practice. Emily Pringle, Head of Learning Practice and Research at Tate, describes this more explicitly as 'love'. 'Love' was identified as a core value within the Learning department at Tate in 2010. Part of 'Transforming Tate Learning', a Paul Hamlyn Foundation funded opportunity, the team interrogated, and reconsidered the rationale for, their practice, as Pringle explains:

> Initial conversations unearthed some key concepts; collaboration, working with artists, empowering youth voice, seeing young children as active agents, all of which are vital and important and central to programme. But certainly for particular members of the Learning Senior Management team, a breakthrough moment came when we acknowledged that for us, the fundamental value underpinning what we do is 'love' (2014).

This notion of 'love' as a fundamental conceptual value driving the working practices of Tate Learning also means that a deep emotional and intellectual commitment is required – love is understood not only in terms of a care for or responsibility towards the people they work with, but to the processes of engagement – with the further key concepts of 'trust', 'passion', 'risk', 'desire' and 'thoughtfulness' bolstering this central value (Ibid.).

As the thesis unfolds many parallels will be drawn between socially engaged art practices and the practices of education and learning within the gallery. However, not all find it helpful to discuss these practices in tandem nor do they perceive the value in considering art practices through the prism of ethics. Art historian and critic Claire Bishop is particularly critical of artists and art projects that value and mirror the principles of reciprocity and compassion in their engagement with individuals and community groups, over and above the aesthetic value of the resulting artwork. In her discussion of artist collective Oda Projesi's work, she states that:

> Because much of Oda Projesi's work exists on the level of art education and neighbourhood events, immediate reaction to it tends to include praise for their being dynamic members of the community bringing art to a wider

> audience. It is important that they are opening up the space for non-object-based practice in Turkey, a country whose art academies and art market are still largely oriented towards painting and sculpture. The fact that it is three women who have undertaken this task in a still patriarchal culture is not insignificant. But their conceptual gesture of reducing authorship to the role of facilitation ultimately leaves little to separate their work from arts and museum educators worldwide, or indeed the community arts tradition … Even when transposed to Sweden, Germany, South Korea and the other countries where Oda Projesi have exhibited, it is difficult to distinguish their approach from a slew of community-based practices that revolve around the predictable formula of children's workshops, discussions, meals, film screenings, walks (2012a: 21).

Although Bishop acknowledges the significance of their practice in terms of challenging the status quo, she unfavourably likens the artwork to educational work. This suggests a hierarchical – potentially disdainful – view of art practices that set out to establish a relationship of care with individuals and community groups and that use facilitation as a skill with which to support people engaged in collaborative processes of making art.

I am not suggesting that socially engaged art practices that do not establish relationships based on the premise of care or choose not to strive for equitable relations are inherently unethical; what is important is that there is a transparency around the intentions and approach of the work. However, as this thesis chooses to focus on the experiences and perspectives of community participants collaborating in socially engaged art, it is necessary to employ ethics as a criterion of judgement. The thesis, therefore, will interrogate practices that do set out to generate equitable working relations, that strive to share decision-making and authority, that endeavour to play a role as agents for social change, and that are intentionally grounded in acts of reciprocity.

In this thesis, I will also argue that artists and galleries need to be mindful of the claims they make, particularly in relation to declarations of individual and community benefit generated through seemingly democratic and collaborative processes. Are galleries truly able to elicit social change or make meaningful differences to people's lives? With

bold claims such as these, galleries need to ensure that they understand experience from a range of perspectives and not simply make assumptions, in an effort to follow through on the promises they make.

Enabling all voices to be heard, considered and equally valued are in themselves ethically-minded acts. How might galleries go about achieving this and, when they do, what further ethical implications arise for them and the artist when community participants' experiences are considered in this way? What roles can galleries play in developing more ethically-sound working practices in socially engaged art and what can we learn from the values present in gallery education? This thesis aims to explore these key concerns in considerable depth.

Returning to a point made previously many of the debates in the field of socially engaged art often revisit the polarisation of issues, including how people value the practice – those that consider the 'success' of a work in terms of the resulting artwork and its aesthetic merit, and those that take into account the value of such work to the individuals or community groups engaged in a creative and collaborative process who, often, have little prior engagement with arts and culture. Academic of theatre, dance and performance studies, Shannon Jackson describes this as:

> … those who measure a work's success on its degree of community "self-definition", its efficacy is measured in its outreach strategies, its means for providing access, the representational demographics of its participants, and its identifiable social outcomes. Such critical barometers also worry about the mediating role of the artist, about whether an artistic vision enables or neutralizes community voices. But other critical frameworks question the concept of artist-as-community-helpmate on different terms; indeed, for some, a critical barometer starts by questioning the concept of community on which such work relies (2011: 44).

As Jackson's discussion puts forward, regardless of binary debates, it is helpful to consider what we understand by the concept of community.

What is community?

Within the thesis I aim to draw attention to the perspectives and lived experiences of community participants engaged in socially engaged art mediated through the gallery. Through this focus I hope to develop and present a more nuanced understanding of the value of socially engaged and collaborative arts practice to individuals from one community. A key finding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council report 'Understanding the value of arts and culture: The AHRC Cultural Value Project' (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016) was the need to ensure that first-hand, individual experience of arts and culture is at the heart of attempts to understand cultural value and, in particular, how engagement with the arts can make a difference to people's lives. Crossick and Kaszynska (2016) suggest that individual experience has often been overshadowed by efforts to comprehend the impact on communities or societies more broadly, but they assert that some of the most important contributions that the arts can make have individual experience as their starting point, for example through helping to shape reflective individuals.

That being said, although the thesis will explore individual experience, the individuals involved in the research come from a particular community that is involved in a socially engaged art project, consequently can be considered part of a collective of people and can be described as community participants. It is therefore useful to unpack the term community to understand what is meant when we use the phrase community participants in the research study.

The term *community* is problematic on a number of levels, both in itself and in relation to socially engaged practice and the gallery. Community is defined as (1) a body of people or things viewed collectively; (2) a commonwealth, a nation or state, or a body of people who live in the same place, usually sharing a common cultural or ethnic identity; (3) a body of persons leading a common life, or under socialistic or similar organisation; (4) a group of people distinguished by shared circumstances of nationality, race, religion, sexuality; or (5) a community of interest, a group of people who share the same interests, pursuits, or occupation, especially when distinct from those of the society in which they live (Oxford English Dictionary 2017). However, for the purposes of this research these restrictive definitions do little to express the

complex, transient and sometimes intangible nature of community. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall perceptively observed that individual identity can be understood: 'as a "production" which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation' (1989: 68), and in a similar way the identity of a community can also be considered multifaceted and in a state of flux.

Academic of museum studies Sheila Watson's characterisation of community in terms of its relationship with museums, serves as a valuable starting point to further our understanding of the complexities surrounding the term:

> … the essential defining factor of a community is the sense of belonging that comes to those who are part of it and that, through association with communities, individuals conceptualise identity. Such identities are relational and depend on a sense not only of self but also others. Thus a community is essentially self-determined (2007: 3).

The community and the people within that community can therefore be understood both in terms of their individual identity and their identity as part of a larger whole. This sense of identity proves useful in moving us away from the concept of a physical homogenised 'body' – or 'the public' – towards a more nuanced understanding of community being made up of many differentiated tangible and intangible elements.

Community can also be understood as dynamic – with individuals belonging to more than one community and membership changing with time and circumstance, as Watson asserts: '[S]ome communities are ours by choice, some are ours because of the way others see us' (Ibid.: 4). This raises an interesting point: membership within a community might not always be self-determined, as expressed above, rather can be cast, and whilst 'community is most often used to describe positive aspects of a group, a community can also be exclusive, serving to divide and marginalise' (Golding 2013: 20).

Nevertheless, it is also useful to consider community in relation to geographical location or a collective of people who live in the same place. This definition of community is particularly pertinent when considering the relationship between a group of people in close physical proximity to a museum or gallery. The place where a

gallery is sited partly determines its audience; place thus implies both physical and political geography (Nairne 1996: 399). And as academic and museum practitioner Peter Davis suggests: '[A]lthough physical surroundings are important (landscape, habitats, buildings), place is much more: it is a web of understanding between people and the environment, between people and their neighbours, between people and their history' (2007: 70).

Within the thesis I use the term community participant to denote an individual who is part of a collective of people who live in the same geographical place, and who take part in a socially engaged art project that is initiated and mediated by a gallery located in the neighbourhood. Through considering the term *community* in this level of detail I have demonstrated that although an individual might 'belong' in the sense that they can call the physical location their place of residence, that does not necessarily mean that they feel emotionally and psychologically connected to the place, have a relationship or affinity with other individuals in the community, or share common interests; the community participant's identity can be understood as complex, multifaceted and fluid, alongside a broader understanding of the community's identity as dynamic and relational.

Socially engaged artist Emma Smith further reframes our thinking around community in relation to socially engaged practices mediated through the gallery, suggesting that community can be considered as a form of practice. She states that:

> It seems to me that quite often community is discussed as something "Other" or outside of the gallery …
>
> I think the idea of community as act or practice is interesting. When I was looking at the linguistic origins of the word I found that community came from *communitas* in Latin. In Latin, *cum* means together or with and *munus* means gift. That is a really beautiful idea and combination.
>
> There's something in that which I'm incredibly comfortable with. Actually it's much more interesting to me because the idea of being together is very different to the notion of commonality. I can be together with you and have nothing in common with you. It is also free from temporal restriction. We're

> here together now, how can I engender the elements of what we might consider a community to be in terms of reciprocity, tolerance, respect, trust and love?
>
> Then we think about what we might do and how we might create a practice of community, i.e. something we do rather than something which just exists. When it gets really exciting is to also consider how this notion of community might be practiced without the boundary of geography (2012: 26-27).

Although Smith proposes that community is considered beyond the boundary of geography and is seen rather as a *practice*, working towards coming together through gifting or reciprocity, in this thesis I will instead argue that community can be understood as both located within a place, where people who might not have anything in common come together, and as a practice that shares and centralises the values of reciprocity and a care for all.

As Smith indicates at the start of her musing on the relationship of community and gallery, and academic Viv Golding puts forward earlier in the discussion, communities are often not just defined by what they include but also what, and whom, they exclude, or even 'Other'.

'Othering' the community

The phenomenological terms of the 'Self' and the 'Other' imply a divided and unequal relationship, with 'Othering' describing the reductive and oppressive labelling of an individual or group as inferior; the 'Other' is differentiated from the social norm (which is a version of the 'Self'), and is excluded (Husserl cited in Schutz 1967). In many cases the community in relation to the museum or gallery is presented as 'Other' or positioned as separate. The gallery assumes a position of superiority in an attempt to 'save the community', which has meant that: 'this kind of attitude has all too frequently resulted in a top-down approach, with museums or galleries determining what communities need, how programmes should develop and what should be accomplished' (Black 2012: 212). Davis further reinforces this view; he states that:

> … it is clear that the traditional museum's relationship to its community demands that it is perceived as a separate entity. There is a building, called a

> museum, housing experts, collections, knowledge and exhibitions that is both physically and philosophically a discrete entity; it allows the public – its community – access on a limited basis, but essentially it is separated from that community. Terms used by museums such as 'outreach' or 'outstation' (with etymological links to 'outcast') reinforce this separation (2007: 61-62).

Although, here, Davis refers to the traditional museum, this hierarchical positioning is often enacted, whether intentionally or unintentionally, in contemporary art and gallery practices and is a common criticism of socially engaged art, as Kravagna puts forward:

> … connective aesthetics are intended to be a bridge between art and 'real people'. In order to build this bridge by means of a 'dialogical structure', the two sides that are to be linked must first of all be separated: on the one hand artists, whose engagement is motivated by a 'longing for Other' or 'desire for connection', and on the other, the 'real people' in the 'real neighborhoods', which tends to refer to (generally non-white) working class or generally poorer sections of the population (2012: 244 - 245).

The habitual tendency to classify the community as different and separate from the dominant culture – or in this case the gallery as 'cultural authority' – in terms of class, socio-economic status and ethnicity is intensely problematic and at worst degrading (Kester 1995; Kwon 2004; Kravagna 2012). Divorcing the community and positioning it as 'Other', in order to reconnect or create a bridge, asserts a hierarchical relationship (with the balance of power weighted in favour of the artist and gallery), one that may lead to aspirations of assimilating the community or 'Other' into the gallery or 'Self' in order to generate a homogenised social wholeness.

Instead, how might galleries celebrate and assert individual and communal differences and identity? There is a fine balance between acknowledging and valuing the differences of community, artist and gallery, and in ensuring that the artist and/or gallery do not cast the community as 'Other'. Academic Richard Sandell pertinently asks:

> How might cultural representations of those perceived as 'other' be received and decoded by visitors when difference is no longer exoticised, but rather integrated within and alongside the familiar? Does the cultural authority of the museum play a part in challenging visitors' belief and values about, for example, a specific community or group (2002: 10)?

Sandell goes on to describe the 'naturalising effect of the museum's cultural authority' (Ibid.: 14), as one museum approach that might support identity construction and validation through representing diverse identities, whilst generating a sense of belonging and inclusion. How might socially engaged art practices mediated through the gallery learn from established museum practices? How might they recognise 'Otherness' and avoid assimilation, whilst attempting to tackle oppression and break down unequal power relations? How can galleries, working with socially engaged artists, support community participants to reclaim their representation, and present a more nuanced account of complex identities where they are not seen only or primarily as oppressed 'Others'? As the thesis unfolds I will further reflect on and consider these concerns.

Through unpacking these terms, I have introduced and attempted to outline some of the key concerns that the thesis will now go on to uncover and interrogate in more depth in the following six chapters.

Structure of the thesis

This introductory chapter has presented my research questions and, has attempted to provide a rationale for the research study through highlighting the marked absence of community participant voice in the explanation, critique and analysis of socially engaged arts practice. Underlining the paucity of research that draws on the nuanced and complex perspectives and experiences of *all* collaborating in socially engaged art as a way of understanding the practice's potential in offering both intrinsic and extrinsic value to participants and in eliciting actual change, also offers further justification for the study. The chapter has also revealed and unpacked the key terms – ethics, community and 'Othering' – that will be used throughout the thesis to explore my research questions.

Chapter two will further introduce key terms and concepts in relation to our understanding of socially engaged art and participatory and collaborative practice in museums and galleries, problematising definitions of, and historicising, an arts practice that has emerged from a number of experimental and dematerialised art movements. Then turning its attention to the intertwined, yet sometimes unsteady, relationship between art and its institutions, the chapter will consider shifts in gallery practice that move from a singular voice to plural voices, and that reposition passive audiences as participative, leading to co-production and reflecting a turn towards education. Finally, the chapter will establish a conceptual framework with which to investigate ethical concerns paramount in socially engaged art and to draw attention to the numerous lines of tension that are inherent in a process-based and collaborative arts practice that seeks to share authority and, in many cases, set outs to engender concrete outcomes in the form of community cohesion or social change.

Chapter three considers in greater detail the issues of methodology and research design, presenting the appropriateness of a qualitative research approach in capturing and revealing the perspectives and experiences of a number of community participants from a single case study. Challenging many assumptions that research that explores individual experiences cannot be rigorous and that actual change cannot be mapped, the chapter will introduce a new approach of fusing conventional research methods with innovative and creative methods that seek to create a space where all voices can be heard. Moving away from methods that seek to 'measure impact', instead I present a methodology that draws on phenomenology and is underpinned by theories of contemporary art theory, post-colonialism and critical pedagogy, that will be used to generate and analyse data holistically.

The single case study *Open House*, a community engagement and socially engaged arts programme initiated by Kettle's Yard, the University of Cambridge's modern and contemporary art gallery, working in collaboration with artist in residence Emma Smith, is presented in chapter four. Setting out the context within which the field work was conducted over one year, the chapter describes the background and establishment of *Open House*, presents the formation of a community panel made up of local residents from North Cambridge, and introduces the *Open House* artist in

residence and range of creative activities taking place in the first stage of a three-year programme.

Chapter five is dedicated to the community participants' voices through creating a space for their experiences and perspectives to be heard. Reporting on my empirical findings from the field work at *Open House*, the chapter presents and analyses the rich data gathered over the year, exploring the intrinsic and extrinsic value of socially engaged and collaborative arts practice, mediated through Kettle's Yard, to members of the community of North Cambridge. The findings are presented under the broad, but interrelated, themes of: well-being; expanded horizons; new skills, knowledge and understanding; and empowerment. Introducing each theme with a vignette of one community panel member's experience of *Open House*, I consider the community participants as expert narrators of their own lived experience and attempt to begin to redress the historic imbalance of voice in socially engaged arts practice.

Chapter six further explores the perspectives of the community participants engaged in *Open House*, and asks when we do consider and equally value the community participants' concerns what issues emerge that warrant further investigation and require more ethical thinking from galleries and artists? Utilising *Open House* as a springboard from which to interrogate the issues affecting socially engaged art and galleries more broadly, the chapter problematises understandings of the term 'collaboration', reflects on issues of power-sharing and decision-making, considers concerns surrounding authorship and ownership of collaboratively-made works, and troubles and questions notions of expertise, advocating a revaluing of curatorial and educational expertise. The chapter ends by presenting a series of recommendations for the field to work towards ethically-sound practice.

The thesis concludes by drawing together the threads of the research argument and by defending the role of the gallery in socially engaged art practices. Chapter seven presents a potential area of further research by proposing the creation of an 'in-between' space that allows for an ongoing dialogue and negotiation of power relations between gallery and community to take place. Punctuated by agitations from socially engaged artists, and shaped by politically coherent members of the community, this space offers opportunities for the community to be active voices in the shaping of their

own culture and creativity and to work towards articulating and disarticulating their self-representation.

Conclusion

Through privileging the voices of the community participants, because of a deep respect for and genuine interest in their perspectives and experiences, alongside an underlying ethical concern over the silencing of community voice, the research sets out to generate a more nuanced and complex understanding of the intrinsic and extrinsic value of socially engaged art, as well as gain a greater sense of what matters to the community. Through presenting the community participants' voices as central, a more holistic view of socially engaged art practices can be uncovered. In this investigation, I set out to highlight and address the absence of community participant voice in collaborative and socially engaged practice mediated through the gallery, and consider whether these practices are justified in their claims of bringing about actual change and in making a difference to individual's lives, whilst arguing for more ethically-considered practice.

The following chapter begins by presenting an example of socially engaged art—Anthony Luvera's photographic practice, whose work presents the viewpoints of collaborators alongside his own and is firmly grounded in an ethical regard for the individuals that he works with. This is an appropriate way in which to introduce one of the key conceptual stands of the thesis – that the experiences and perspectives of the participants collaborating in socially engaged art projects *should* be heard, considered and equally valued alongside all involved.

Chapter Two

Who’s getting what from whom?

Blurring distinctions

Figure 2.1 *Assisted Self-Portrait of Sean McAuley, Residency*, 2006–2008, by Anthony Luvera

Sean McAuley stands in sharp focus in the centre foreground of the photograph, staring out with a resilient gaze. Situated in an ordinary-looking street, he is framed by the pitched roof of a red-brick building and is surrounded by further, seemingly unremarkable, houses and structures blurring into the distance. On closer inspection we notice that Sean is holding a cable shutter release. He has taken this photograph, he is in control of this image, and of his self-representation. This street, next to a peace line in Belfast, Ireland, holds particular meaning for Sean. It had been razed and rebuilt after a Troubles-related arson attack, and it was an area where he had lived his whole life before experiencing homelessness (Luvera 2011).

This image (Figure 2.1) is one of many co-created by people experiencing homelessness and artist Anthony Luvera during the project *Residency* in Belfast (2006-

2011). Described as an *Assisted Self-Portrait* the photograph was created through a sustained relationship between Sean and Anthony from 2006 to 2008, with the aim: 'to invest in the participant a more active role in the creation of their portrait representation than is usually offered in the transaction between photographer and subject' (Luvera: 2010a). Luvera saw himself in the process as: 'an assistant to their image making … acting as a facilitator and technical advisor' (Downey and Luvera 2007). This act of co-creation blurred the distinctions between 'subject' and 'photographer', as well as 'participant' and 'artist', and it is noteworthy that both Sean and Anthony's names appear in the image credit.

In November 2006, Luvera (an Australian UK-based artist, whose participatory and socially engaged practice explores some of the problems of representations of societal issues) travelled to Belfast to investigate what to do with a collection of around 10,000 negatives, photographs and related materials he had amassed from working collaboratively with more than 250 homeless people living in London over a five-year period, and whether a transition to a public archive might be an option. Luvera states:

> I didn't embark on this work with a fixed idea of assembling a collection or an archive. As the work has developed over the years, a sense of guardianship for the safekeeping of the photographs, negatives, and other pieces of ephemera related to the participants and our working together has grown stronger. At the same time, it became ever more apparent to me that the collection in parts and as a whole might be able to usefully contribute to discussions about issues related to homelessness. That's really how I started to think of it as a collection. These are some of the ethical concerns that come with doing this kind of work, and I think they need to be taken up by artists as much as anthropologists (2013: 51).

He was drawn to Belfast Exposed, a grassroots organisation that was established in 1983 by photographers wishing to counter mainstream representations of Belfast during the Troubles. Continuing as a socially and politically engaged gallery today, Belfast Exposed exhibits, publishes and commissions contemporary photographic works; runs photography courses; and houses a collection of negatives and slides in trust for the community, compiled over the last 30 years. In 2006 Belfast Exposed

commissioned *Residency* as an opportunity for Luvera to develop a new body of work in Belfast and to research an established photography archive, reflecting on some of the practical, theoretical and ethical issues arising from collaborative practice and in setting up an archive in relation to representational responsibility (Luvera 2010a).

Luvera began *Residency* by making contact with The Welcome Organisation and The Simon Community, homeless support services, who provided him with a space to meet people who for various reasons did not have permanent accommodation. At The Welcome Organisation he helped staff prepare and serve lunch and dinner and when the opportunity arose he told people about his practice and invited them to take a camera and go and take photographs, being mindful not to tell the participants how or what to photograph. He met with them regularly offering technical advice and encouraging participants to select and discuss their favourite images. Luvera found that 'some people made photographs of their friends, family, special places and significant times, while others had more idiosyncratic uses for the camera in documenting their point of view, experience or memories of living in Belfast' (2011).

After several weeks of meeting with the participants he invited them to create an *Assisted Self-Portrait* and through that process learn how to use a large-format camera. He met each participant (including Sean McAuley), over a number of occasions to teach them how to use the camera equipment, which included a 5x4 field camera, tripod, handheld flashgun, Polaroid and Quickload film, and a cable shutter release. He also asked them to take him to a site that held meaningful associations for them in order to enable a reclamation of place by the participants and help him to understand the outlook and experiences of the individuals he was working with (Luvera 2010a).

Through including images that mapped the making process of the *Assisted Self-Portraits* as part of the larger body of work, as illustrated in Figures 2.2 and 2.3, Luvera also revealed the methods of engagement and relationship between himself, the participant and the medium of photography.

Figure 2.2 Documentation of the making of *Assisted Self-Portrait of Sean McAuley* from *Residency*, 2006–2008, by Anthony Luvera

Showered throughout Luvera's writings on the project *Residency* are phrases such as: 'the images that *they created*', 'compiling photographs *made by* people experiencing homelessness', 'occupying a *position of a guardian*' (2010a) [Emphasis added]. This subtle, but sensitive use of language reveals Luvera's perception of his and the participants' roles in the project and their interrelated relationship, exposing a respectful and ethical regard for the people that he works with. A shift from documentary photography practice to collaborative making came in 2002 when he turned down an opportunity to photograph homeless people, preferring to see what *they* would photograph. Preceding the project *Residency*, his series *Photographs and Assisted Self-Portraits* (2002-2005) explored the tension between authorship (and artistic control), and the ethics involved in making photographs about other people's lives (Turnbull 2014). Luvera's compassion for and genuine interest in the participants' experience is expressed further in his nuanced reflection on the impact of socially engaged practices:

> I believe socially engaged practices can have very powerful impacts on people. I know they have on me. However, I do not undertake the work I do in order to enrich or provide a therapeutic framework for those taking part, even if some of the organizations I've worked with have framed my practice in ways that suggest this for the satisfaction of their own particular agendas. It might be said that a community practice can have social benefits, but my primary interest in working in the way I do is more about exploring the potential in presenting the viewpoints of the people I work with alongside my own (2015: 400).

Luvera is careful in articulating his role and the intentions of his practice, recognising the potential for social benefit, but wary of his practice being misrepresented or hijacked as an instrument to fulfil external agendas. He does, however, wish to give status to the participants' perspectives alongside his own. He expands on this further by stating:

> While a socially engaged practice can have powerful impacts on people, the whole idea of benefits, values or outcomes inferred onto the subjects would really be best answered by the subject/participants themselves. And I don't mean through the forum of an evaluation exercise, which seems to me, and

most often by design, to serve an instrumental purpose of affirming the agenda of the facilitating individuals or organizations paying for the activity (Ibid.: 400-401).

Figure 2.3 Polaroid from the making of *Assisted Self-Portrait of Sean McAuley, Residency*, 2006–2008, by Anthony Luvera

Luvera's musings on the potential benefits to individuals from participating in a socially engaged art project on the surface appear an obvious response – ask the participants themselves. However, surprisingly there is little written or observed from the point of view of the participants in the literatures on socially engaged and collaborative practice. Rarely do we see or hear from the participants beyond responses collected after the fact and through a form of evaluation (which has its own particular purpose and agenda), as Luvera astutely observes. Where Luvera's approach to working with people is distinctive is the inclusion of the participants' viewpoint, (in later work including the participants' voice through recorded sound interviews), as counterpart to his own and fundamental in the process and subsequent body of photographic work (see Figure 2.4 for an example of a photograph taken by participant Sean McAuley). We perhaps see this most persuasively through returning to the series co-created with

Sean McAuley, and through considering Sean's reflections on his experiences of being photographed before working with Anthony, his self-representation, and his impression of their experience of working together during *Residency*:

> The first time I was a bit apprehensive about it. Thinking like I haven't took photos of myself before. I don't really like getting photographed. But then having to do it myself, to me, was … I don't know. I was just thinking what am I taking a photograph of me for? It's a bit big-headed but I enjoyed it. After the first time it was pretty good. It started getting easier. I felt part of it, so I did. At the start I did really think, this isn't for me, it's a bit boring. But the second time I really enjoyed it, like setting up the camera and stuff, it was brilliant. But my first initial reaction was like, what is the point like? Who wants to know anyway? It's just these homeless persons. So?… I actually thought it came out pretty good in the end. Aye I thought it was more than okay (McAuley cited in Luvera 2011).

Figure 2.4 Photograph by Sean McAuley, *Residency*, 2006–2008, by Anthony Luvera

Luvera's ethical regard for the participants in the project *Residency* encapsulates the primary conceptual strand of this thesis – the experiences and viewpoints of the participants collaborating in socially engaged art projects *should* be heard, considered

and equally valued alongside all involved (such as the artist, gallery practitioner, funder, art historian or critic etc.), and when they are considered in this way, what ethical implications arise for the artist and, in the case of this research, the gallery?

This chapter highlights some of the key debates, numerous lines of tension, and challenges that are inherent in socially engaged art and participatory practice in museums and galleries. Drawing from these two bodies of literature that collide around the ethics of working with people, and yet, employ different modes of language, I will build a conceptual framework through which my research questions are addressed. The concerns and themes highlighted within this chapter are threaded throughout the thesis and drawn upon in more detail in subsequent chapters. They are, however, introduced here to establish a rationale and context for the approach I have taken.

Problematising definitions of socially engaged arts practice

Anthony Luvera's *Residency* may function as a critique of the common tropes – the individual genius artist and the representation of 'truth' in documentary photographic practice, but, at the same time, it is unmistakably situated within the field of socially engaged arts practice. In the past twenty years, a new form of artistic practice known as socially engaged or social practice has emerged, whose principal characteristics include dialogue, reciprocity, exchange, and an understanding of the artist as co-creator or co-producer in a process that acknowledges participants as collaborators. The focus of socially engaged art is process, rather than final product. And in some instances, there might not be an 'art object' produced at all.

With connections to community art (Kester 1995); new genre public art (Lacy 1991); dialogic art (Kester 2004); littoral art (Ibid. 1999); relational art (Bourriaud 1998); participatory or collaborative art (Bishop 2006); gallery education (Allen 2008; Millar Fisher 2011; Reed 2014); and social aesthetics (Bang Larsen 2006), practices located within the arena of socially engaged art are both wide-ranging and difficult to define. Artists whose practice is socially engaged can be described as operating within an expanded role that is interdisciplinary in nature. Boundaries are often blurred across visual arts, experimental theatre, urban planning, community work, environmentalism,

education, and politics. Nato Thompson, Artistic Director of New York's Creative Time and author of *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art From 1991-2011* notes that socially engaged arts practice is not an art movement: 'rather, these cultural practices indicate a new social order – ways of life that emphasize participation, challenge power' (2012: 19). This shift away from movement signifies a redefinition of what art can be and suggests a collapse of distinctions between art and life. As a practice that is simultaneously a medium, a method, and a genre (Lind 2012), socially engaged art is an essentially contested field.

However, there are areas of consensus, namely that actively engaging people through exchange is a prerequisite, as British writer and curator Morgan Quaintance; Mexican artist and educator Pablo Helguera; and American academic Jen Harvie, all suggest:

> Socially engaged art, in which the dematerialised art object is replaced by dialogue, speech and other forms of social exchange (Quaintance 2012: 7).
>
> … what characterizes socially engaged art is its dependence on social intercourse as a factor of its existence (Helguera 2011: 2).
>
> Broadly speaking, socially turned art and performance practices work, first, actively to engage others who are not the artists (so principally, but not always, audiences), and in so doing, second, to enhance their social engagement … They engage audiences in active participation with an environment and/or process that compels those audiences to interact socially with each other (Harvie 2013: 5).

Many forms of socially engaged practice surpass merely involving people in forms of exchange. Societal issues are foregrounded and dialogue and interaction are employed as methodologies to elicit social change. As Thompson asserts socially engaged arts practice is: 'deeply rooted in community relations and motivated by a commitment to political change' (2012: 32).

One example of a socially engaged art project that utilises exchange for social goals and ventures into the realms of community organisation and urban renewal is Rick Lowe's *Project Row Houses* (Figures 2.5 and 2.6). Lowe introduces his motivations for

establishing a project that tackled social issues directly within a community and brought about tangible change:

> I knew I was interested in work that pushed beyond the boundaries in terms of social engagement, beyond what we call "political art." Early on I was doing art that was political—billboard-size work used as a backdrop for political rallies. It was socially engaged on one level, but there was a leap that I felt like I needed to take to figure out how to make art that wasn't created in a way where the audience stood back, but where they were actually engaged … I was interested in issues of low-income African American communities—how to contribute, using creativity, to help transform some of the conditions of the environment (2013: 134).

Figure 2.5 *The Passion Party* on view at *Project Row Houses,* 2014, photograph by Eric Hester, courtesy Project Row Houses

In 1993, artist Rick Lowe with six other artists founded *Project Row Houses*, a non-profit organisation that renovated and transformed twenty-two derelict shotgun houses in Houston's Third Ward into thriving African-American cultural hubs with artist studios, galleries and spaces for residencies. More than twenty years later the grassroots project continues and has expanded through working with the Row House

Community Development Corporation to include forty houses over six blocks. The project now commissions new works and projects, and supports single mothers by providing affordable housing. Lowe recognises the importance of investing significant time in a project such as *Row Houses*: '[Y]ou have to spend years developing relationships to be able to do something like this… It'd be an arrogant disregard of a community to come in and think you can grasp all the complexities of a place in a short time' (Lowe cited in Miranda 2014: 58).

Figure 2.6 Sam Durant's installation, *We Are the People*, on view at *Project Row Houses* in 2003, photograph by Rick Lowe, courtesy Project Row Houses

Taking place outside the art institution *Project Row Houses* aimed and still aims today to make a difference for and with the community in Third Ward and those coming in from outside (such as artists, community organisations or other communities visiting the project). The website describes the project's founding principles and role within the community:

> … a result of the vision of local African-American artists wanting a positive creative presence in their own community, PRH shifts the view of art from traditional studio practice to a more conceptual base of transforming the social

> environment. Central to the vision of PRH is the social role of art as seen in neighborhood revitalization, historic preservation, community service, and youth education (Project Row Houses).

Project Row Houses has taken on the role of service provider attempting to address social issues directly affecting the community. One particular concern was the level of support provided for young single mothers. Half of the babies born in the area are born to single mothers, who lack the time and resource to complete their education and develop professionally (Finkelpearl 2001: 259). *Project Row Houses'* Young Mothers Program was established by Deborah Grotfeldt in 1993, the programme provided residential space for the women and their children, and offered counselling sessions and twice-weekly workshops on planning and parenting skills, on the proviso that the women were enrolled in educational institutions. Assata Shakur, who was one of the first group of mothers to move in to the *Project Row Houses* with her son, reflects on the effects of the programme during a telephone interview with Tom Finkelpearl, commissioner of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs for his book *Dialogues in Public Art*. She states:

> And in fact, before I moved into *Project Row Houses*, I was living in a … I don't know how to describe it … well, a not-nice apartment. It was really very, very difficult, and I was having a lot of problems, just meeting my financial responsibilities, and owing money …
>
> But when I went back to school, school was my thing, 24/7. I did school as a full-time occupation, and I really had the support that I needed. People at *Project Row Houses* were really interested. They'd say "How's school going?" If I had a paper, I would tell Rick my ideas and he would help me. I really had someone. My family had moved out of Houston. I grew up with my grandparents, so I don't have a strong nuclear family base in Houston. So, it was really very hard for me to go to school the first go-around. But the second go-around, it was like starting all over again. And everybody was so concerned, and I could study all the time while the other young mothers were watching my son. You know, it was just a total support system available to me …

> … I told Rick this. One day we were talking about school, and when I said "I'm your art." I am really here in a graduate school at Penn State because Rick created *Project Row Houses*. It is not that I wouldn't be successful otherwise, but it was something that was necessary for me to move myself further in my life. And without them at that time, the journey could not have been possible. Almost definitely. You know, he invested; he saw; he created; he put these ideas into being, and this is the result of his ideas and creativity. We are his living art forms, which function throughout life (2001: 261-268).

Hearing directly from Assata, we begin to develop a more nuanced understanding of how and why *Project Row Houses* and the Young Mothers Program has had a life-changing effect on her and, no doubt, countless others. These reflections are more powerfully understood when heard directly from her, rather than a second-hand account presented by the artist or an art critic.

As *Project Row Houses* and its various programmes demonstrate, socially engaged practice is diverse in its methods, forms, and aspirations for community engagement and social change. It is perhaps worth concluding this section by accepting that socially engaged art resists categorisation and that in many instances the very act of defining or 'pinning down' may not necessarily help advance our understanding of the practice. However, in this case, it is useful to define what I understand socially engaged art to be in order to establish a foundation for the thesis and the arguments that will be presented in the following chapters. I characterise socially engaged art as a practice that goes beyond simply involving people in forms of exchange, rather that individuals or groups, working with an artist or artists, are engaged in collaborative processes that – share responsibilities for developing and creating artwork; challenge power and strive for equitable relations; and are motivated by, and set out to elicit, actual social change.

Historicising socially engaged arts practice

The burgeoning practice of socially engaged art has emerged from a number of experimental and dematerialised art movements of the late 1960s and 1970s; the community-based and politically motivated practices of the 1970s and 1980s; the

increasing professionalisation of gallery and art museum education from the 1970s and 1980s; a shift in public art in the early 1990s; Nicolas Bourriaud's 'Relational Aesthetics' of the late 1990s; and numerous activist and social movements.

Art movements of the 1960s and 1970s attempted to democratise the reception and experience of art. New forms of artistic practice evolved that encouraged audiences to 'interact' with or 'participate' in work, in some cases becoming fundamental in the 'completion' of artwork in an effort to share authorship. And as Kravagna suggests: 'the form of participation and the participants themselves become constitutive factors of content, method and aesthetic aspects' (2012: 254). Artworks were produced and displayed outside the gallery as a: 'critique of the socially exclusionary character of art as an institution' (Ibid.), endeavouring to reconnect with the 'everyday', whether through placement within a commonplace context or through emancipating the spectator and re-awakening a sense of the body.

American art critic, activist and curator Lucy Lippard's influential essay 'Dematerialization of Art' from 1968, (later published in her 1973 book *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object*), examined artwork produced in the period of 1966 to 1972, acknowledging that moment as signifying a major art historical shift – art moved from tangible *object* or *product* to art as *idea* or *action*. The dematerialisation of the art object would later become known as 'post-aesthetic' or 'anti-aesthetic', with artworks such as Yoko Ono's 'do-it-yourself' participatory works; Allan Kaprow's 'Happenings'; and Joseph Beuys' 'social sculptures' reflecting this turn. This shift was brought about, in part, by institutional critique and a reaction to the commodification and commercialisation of the art object, as Miwon Kwon, Korean-American curator and art history educator, asserts in relation to the exchange-based characteristic of socially engaged practice:

> I would argue the greater significance is the fact that many works from the 1960s-1970s and later – art as idea, art as action, conceptual art, performance art, happenings, and so on – attempt to install alternative models of exchange that counter, complicate, or parody the dominant art market – and profit-based system of exchange (2012: 231).

Community Arts of the 1970s and 1980s developed both in the UK and US from the socially and politically motivated experimentation of the late 1960s. The work promoted diversity and difference and: 'included a very wide range of artistic action that was mostly ignored by established arts institutions and by the funding system: outdoor festivals, creative play, inflatables, murals, community printing, radical writing and new media work' (Matarasso 2011: 219). Many artist collectives and radical community art centres were formed, such as Hackney Flashers and Brixton Artists Collective, with strong left-wing political ideologies and activist approaches. Community Arts of the late 1980s and 1990s, as Pringle goes on to describe, involved grassroots initiatives that enabled communities to articulate their own cultural agency:

> But this period of Community Arts predated that instrumentalising agenda that came with New Labour: it wasn't fine art in the service of making people 'better'. It was about how to support a community to get in touch with creativity and allow that creativity to take form in ways that are authentic to the community. It was also about building long-term relationships with other partners in the borough, against the parachuting model (2016).

However, as Pringle begins to indicate, the movement fell out of favour and was later disesteemed. Art historian and critic Claire Bishop puts forward reasons for its apparent demise during this period: '[E]mphasizing process rather than end result, and basing their judgments on ethical criteria (about how and whom they work with) rather than on the character of their artistic outcomes, the community arts movement found itself subject to manipulation—and eventually instrumentalization—by the state' (2012b: 38).

At the same time in the 1970s and 1980s in the UK and US, gallery and art museum education was emerging as a recognised field of practice in its own right. In the UK informal networks and gallery learning practices were being developed, building on a commitment to access and engagement; the National Association for Gallery Education (NAGE), now known as Engage, was established in 1989 to support this growing profession (Engage 2015). However, although recognition began in the 1970s and as a practice it was professionalised from the 1980s onwards, there continues to be a paucity of research and critical investigations into the history and status of gallery

education practice (Allen 2008; Morsch 2011). Pringle (2006) argues that this is, in part, due to ideas and innovation within the practice being mainly disseminated through professional networks and conferences rather than through academic publications or channels, which consequently has led to gallery education remaining an under-researched area. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is even less literature that acknowledges the influence gallery and art museum education practice has had on the emergence of socially engaged art.

American art historian, educator and curator Michelle Millar Fisher (2011) is one of the few to write on how artist-educators working in art museums have shaped contemporary arts practice, namely socially engaged art. In her essay 'Museum Education and the Pedagogic Turn' (2011), she presents two examples of radical museum education practice taking place in 1970s America – the Metropolitan Museum's 'Arts Awareness' programme (1972 – 1974), and the 'Artist Teaching Inc.' (founded in 1975), both exclusively employing artists as art museum educators. Millar Fisher explores a history of radical artist-educators using inquiry-based techniques and open-ended questioning in art museums, and interrogates the reasons why this significant influence has been overlooked, recognising this as detrimental to: 'the critical context of socially engaged art today and those of us who have vested interest in reflecting on what "pedagogy" or "discursive practice" really means' (2011). Interestingly, she also questions whether the increasing professionalisation of gallery and art museum education has led to it being largely excised from institutional and scholarly histories of contemporary art, suggesting that:

> Put simply, "education" doesn't have the same institutional and contemporary kudos that the notion of the discursive turn has mined. Radical practice in museum education since the early 1970s is an ignored yet vitally important precursor to the way terms such as "discursivity" and "pedagogy" are used in the museum setting today (Millar Fisher 2011).

Correspondingly in the UK, Felicity Allen posits that the liberation movements and radical art practices of the 1970s emerged in tandem with gallery education practice that sought to be self-reflexive and dialogic; to be collective, egalitarian and to create alternative networks; to challenge the technical and aesthetic conventions of fine art;

to cross boundaries and bring together different disciplines; to create open-ended artworks and develop dialogue with audiences; to agitate with and advocate on behalf of others; to present multiple and alternate voices; to represent hidden histories; and to critique and demand change of mainstream institutions by both interventionist and separatist strategies (2008: 4). It could be argued that it is no coincidence that many of the principles of gallery education are in common with those of socially engaged art. Allen goes on to assert that the increasing interest in the emergence of socially engaged art (documented in recent books, articles, and essays), gives an ahistorical reading that excludes an examination of the role and development of gallery education, one that she observes maintains the anonymity of gallery education (Allen 2008: 10). The influence of gallery education on recent shifts in gallery practice more broadly will be explored further later in the chapter.

At the beginning of the 1990s arts practice moved to re-imagining public art for social and political purposes. American artist Suzanne Lacy coined the term 'New Genre Public Art' at the 'Mapping the Terrain' symposium in 1991. As an art form it gained recognition in 1993 with the ground-breaking exhibition 'Culture in Action', curated by Mary Jane Jacob. Artworks were distributed throughout public spaces in Chicago: 'demystifying the creative process and taking art to the "man on the street"' (Kwon 2004: 102). Lacy expands by further describing this shift in public art form:

> We might describe this as a "new genre public art," to distinguish it from both form and intention from what has been called "public art" – a term used for the past twenty-five years to describe sculpture and installations sited in public places. Unlike much of what has heretofore been called public art, new genre public art – visual art that uses both traditional and non-traditional media to communicate and interact with a broad and diversified audience about issues directly relevant to their lives – is based on engagement (1991: 19).

This sense of engagement and active connections between people, and people and artworks, can be further explored in relation to French curator Nicolas Bourriaud's theory of *Relational Aesthetics*, first published in 1998. He defines relational aesthetics as an: 'aesthetic theory consisting in judging artworks on the basis of the inter-human relations which they represent, produce or prompt' (2002: 112). Relational art relies

on the audience to connect with the work through relating 'to' and 'with' each other. However, a sense of connection is not enough – the audience must 'activate' the work in order for it to exist in its full form. As Bishop suggests: 'rather than forming a coherent and distinctive transformation of space (such as installation work), relational artworks insist upon use rather than contemplation … and privilege inter-subjective relations over detached opticality' (2012a: 258-261).

There are rich connections between these multiple art forms, practices and movements and their influence on the development of socially engaged practice is significant. However, although these practices share many similar concerns they remain distinct. Relational aesthetics is still very much situated within the artworld and within the context of an exhibition event. With this in mind, 'New Genre Public Art' perhaps has the strongest correlation with socially engaged arts practice, in that it is often located outside the art institution both physically and ideologically. Thompson further asserts this by stating that: 'art is no longer the primary influence for culture' (2012: 21); instead a history of community activism and social movements in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have likewise influenced these shifts in artistic practice. Socially engaged art projects often appropriate and locate themselves within a 'real environment', where the practice is dependent on a community for its existence, and the works also serve as community-building mechanisms (Helguera 2011: 9), or as Kwon asserts:

> Rather than an object for individual contemplation, produced by a distant art specialist for an exclusive art-educated audience equipped to understand its complex visual language … artists seek to engage (nonart) issues in the hearts and minds of the "average man on the street" or "real people" outside of the art world. In doing so, they seek to empower the audience by directly involving them in the making of the art work, either as subjects or, better, as producers themselves (2004: 107).

A turn in gallery practice

If, as Thompson suggests, art is no longer the main influence for culture (2012: 21), and socially engaged practice has moved away from the art institution, where does

that leave the gallery? In the case of the socially engaged artwork *Project Row Houses*, there was no gallery involvement; the practice was artist-led with grassroots support from the community. How would this practice differ if a gallery were involved, acting as partner in a process of collaboration? What role would the gallery have played? And what might have been gained or lost by the presence of a gallery in this relationship?

Nevertheless, we must recognise that the relationship and practices of art and gallery are closely intertwined, even if they are not always stable, as curator Nina Möntmann suggests: 'the relationship between art and its institutions is an unsteady one … These relationships sometimes generate arguments and critique and sometimes form an alliance against the expectations brought to an art institution from outside' (2006: 8). A shift made by either contingent, whether subtle or revolutionary, ignites a change in the other, and as a result the practices either align with or counter each other.

The gallery (as it always has and will) responds to and adapts its forms of mediation to reflect societal, political, economic and technological changes as well as modes of artistic practice. As society demands a more active and user-defined experience, the power relations shift from gallery, artist and 'art objects' to audience. Parallels can be drawn in the description by Anna Cutler, Director of Learning, Tate, of the impact of societal changes on both artistic practice and models of learning:

> Over the last ten years a perceptible shift has taken place in education and arts practice at a national and international level. The development of technology and user-generated materials, the emergence of the knowledge economy, and the need for creativity have meant that models of learning that sought to impart information are no longer sufficient for our societal needs. These shifts in practice are described as follows:
>
> - from the passive to participative: learning that involves participation and hands on activity rather than being a receiver of knowledge…
> - from the didactic to co-learning: a shift from the transmission model of learning with a single expert/tutor, to shared learning that is guided in response to the needs of the users and shaped in collaboration with them…

- from a single authorial voice to plural voices: the development of collaborative practice and production, giving rise to a wider range of perspective (2010: 3).

As a result, there have been developments within the art institution towards collaboration and a focus on co-production through a series of interdependent relationships between artist, curator/educator and community. These approaches challenge traditional modes of authorship and re-examine the relationship of art and gallery with everyday life. In recent years, this has led to a new trend in galleries, a shift towards pedagogical curating:

> Contemporary curating is marked by a turn to education. Educational formats, methods, programmes, models, terms, processes and procedures have become pervasive in the praxis of both curating and the production of contemporary art and in their attendant critical frameworks… curating and art production more broadly, have produced, undergone or otherwise manifested an educational turn (O'Neill and Wilson 2010: 12).

Although the 'educational turn' implies a return to valuing the educational role of the gallery, this turn is somewhat different from the traditional function of learning in the gallery. Academic and curator Irit Rogoff, who first used the term 'the educational turn' in 2008, questions whether it is a reading strategy or a new interpretative model, where a pedagogical system is read across another system, namely that of exhibition display. However, as with socially engaged art, it could be argued that the educational turn in curating is simultaneously a method and a form. Education becomes a mode of production where curators and artists collaborate to: 'adopt processes and methodologies that pedagogical frameworks offer, such as collaborative dialogues, action research, and experiential learning' (Reed 2014).

The revision of gallery practice in the early to mid-2000s was termed New Institutionalism. New Institutionalism, influenced by contemporary art practices, attempted to establish new ways of sharing knowledge with audiences through dialogue and participation and encouraged a reflexive curatorial practice or self-critique of the institution, as Claire Doherty (2007: 2), founder and director of Bristol-based arts organisation Situations, asserts:

> New institutionalism responds to (some might even say assimilates) the working methods of artistic practice and furthermore, artist-run initiatives, whilst maintaining a belief in the gallery, museum or arts centre (and by association their buildings) as a necessary locus of (or platform for) art.

New Institutionalism also affected change on a structural level institutionally, where educational and curatorial roles sat side-by-side in an integrated programming team, breaking traditional hierarchical models. Sally Tallant, director of Liverpool Biennial, advocates this transformation of the art institution from within:

> Traditionally, the work of museums and galleries is departmentalized into institutional functions, creating divisions of labour and expertise. Education, learning and public programmes are often seen as secondary to, or servicing, exhibitions, and this hierarchy has created disparities in the way that curators work together with artists across programme strands. The 'new institution' places equal emphasis on all programmes … The implications for the gallery, as a platform for experimentation and a laboratory for learning, have been embraced by curators and artists alike, with education and learning at the heart of this process of reinvention (2010: 187 - 188).

In principle, New Institutionalism, and later the educational turn, repositioned the audience and prioritised the educational process (imbuing warranted value), in opposition to a reactionary or 'add-on' model of education. However, the practical application of these approaches raises some concerns. These apprehensions relate to the educational role of the gallery, the relationship with the audience and the function of 'traditional' gallery roles. Where does the educational turn leave the 'traditional' curator and educator? Gallery educators and academics Veronica Sekules and Kaija Kaitavuori raise related concerns. Sekules is critical of gallery practices that subsume education, where education is practiced, but not theorised, and made implicit rather than explicit. Instead, she advocates the need to define differing roles, responsibilities and contributions (2015: 120-124). Kaitavuori (2013: x-xxi) also asserts that the educational turn in curating has, oddly, very little to do with gallery education, with educators, largely, being excluded from debates and discussions. The educational turn suggests that the artist and/or curator may well take on the responsibilities and tasks

associated with education within the gallery context. Do they have the skills and attributes needed to work with a diverse set of audiences or community groups? Do their principles align with educational values, and more importantly, is this at the forefront of their minds when producing 'educational' artworks and exhibitions? As artist Helen Reed asks: 'Is it possible that a good artwork amounts to a bad education' (2014)? When working with or collaborating with audiences and communities, what ethical implications do practitioners need to consider? Carmen Morsch, art education practitioner and researcher, also critiques the recent trend in educationally turned curating, by reflecting on the lack of interest in and acknowledgement of gallery education as a critical practice with its own historical discourse from curators and artists alike. Morsch (2011) states that:

> Due to the presumption that their position is insufficiently radical, they are frequently subjected to disregard or contempt from critically positioned actors in the art field, from whom they would prefer to receive interest and support. In reflections on pedagogy currently undertaken by curators and artists, gallery education does not appear as an independent practice with its own history and controversial discourses, but is treated instead - if at all - in casual asides.

Morsch's assertion echoes arguments made previously in the chapter; that the field of gallery education and its influence on art and gallery practices more broadly is often under-recognised and under-valued.

One early example of an artwork that could be described as having borrowed educational methodologies, worked across both curatorial and educational formats, as well as being socially or politically motivated or engaged, is Danish artist Palle Nielsen's *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society,* 1968 (Figures 2.7 and 2.8).

In the spring of 1968, Nielsen built a playground, with the help of students, in a housing estate of a slum in Copenhagen. The group visited all of the residents of the estate and encouraged them to participate in an action that demanded better play facilities for children.

Figure 2.7 Palle Nielsen, *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society,* 1968, Moderna Museet, Stockholm

In October of that year, Nielsen returned to these concerns, and what he had previously been practising as 'actionism', by building *The Model* at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm in Sweden, which took the form of both a free adventure playground for children and an exhibition (Bang Larsen 2006). To create the work, Nielsen worked with Action Dialogue, a left-wing collective who were building illegal playgrounds as an alternative form of protest critiquing city planning and advocating better conditions for children. Conceived as a social experiment, *The Model* attempted to build a better society through forming new social interactions between children or, as Bang Larsen asserts: '[C]reativity and experimental contact were thus incited as ways of assigning new priorities to human needs and acknowledging the 'qualitative human being' as an individual in society' (2006: 174).

Figure 2.8 Palle Nielsen, *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society,* 1968 at Moderna Museet, Stockholm

Nielsen's project allowed children to take over the museum space in its entirety and play and create freely without restriction. The space included jungle gyms, climbing ropes, water chute, foam rubber 'diving pool', theatrical costumes, carnival masks, swings, and records and turntables with loudspeaker towers positioned in each corner of the exhibition space. Although adults were allowed in (they were charged 5 crowns for the privilege), the activities were child-centred. There was surveillance and a

number of TV monitors in the restaurant with live transmission to allow uneasy parents to watch and child psychology students from the Institute in Stockholm to see whether a new social order would develop. During the three weeks it was open, 33,000 people visited of which 20,000 were children who played, made and explored.

With its focus on social interaction we could describe *The Model* as a precursor to socially engaged arts practice and the educational turn in curating. Today Nielsen (2015) describes the work as 'social aesthetics' and recognises that it was ahead of its time. This perhaps suggests why, though radical, it was quickly forgotten. However, in the last decade, *The Model* has been re-considered and understood as significant in marking an important turn in artistic practice towards activism and socially and politically motivated work. It has also prompted a re-examination of the relationship between museums and children, introducing the idea that a child might be considered as important a visitor as an adult. In part, the aspiration of *The Model* as Stine Høholt, Chief Curator of ARKEN asserts:

> … is to build a better society, step by step. Palle Nielsen's response to alienation was *The Model*. Its goals were to help children to thrive, to generate self-worth, to emancipate children, and to create communities through experiments and play (2015: 54).

This renewed interest is reflected in new presentations of the work, including an exhibition of documentation of *The Model* shown at Tate Liverpool in 2013 and in 2014, forty-six years after the show at Moderna Museet, *The Model* was reincarnated in an adapted form at ARKEN Museum of Modern Art, Denmark, as Figure 2.9 illustrates.

In the case of *The Model* it is interesting to note the central role of the museum, not only as host, but as a vehicle for reflexivity and a channel for spreading Nielsen's message further into society. As art historian and independent curator Lars Bang Larsen explores in his re-evaluation of the work in the late 1990s:

> The *Model* accepted the white cube as a 'free' topological premise: free in the sense of public access, accentuated by the anti-elitist stance of the *Model*; free in the sense that what is inserted into art institutions automatically legitimises

its existence (or that is what they tell us, anyhow). Hence the *Model* embraced the art institution as a vehicle positioned in such a way in culture that the statements it conveys are catapulted into society (2006: 175).

Figure 2.9 Palle Nielsen, *The Model*, 2014, ARKEN, near Copenhagen, photograph by Sofie Amalie Klougart

Nielsen also explains his reasons for working with the museum as an attempt to deconstruct the notion of the white cube as a place for quiet, visual contemplation through creating a space for participation that engaged all bodily senses. *The Model* also acted as a form of critical practice challenging the privilege of the institutionalised space. Nielsen states that he:

> … realised that two completely different worlds existed in the same society. A cultural elite with the art scene as a platform that continually created 'civilisation norms' for a ruling economic elite – a closed, symbiotic system. And beyond it: 75% of the population, that had very little knowledge of this closed symbiosis, but were entertained by theatrical displays of silly hats and medals from the age of Hans Christian Andersen and Kierkegaard. I also knew that beyond it another cultural force existed: community. I knew this because this is where I spent my childhood and youth. I wanted to open a crack between these two, locked worlds. To make it natural to visit a Museum of Modern Art

> because it was exciting and fun. And to get other artists to seek out normal, social life and relate to community as an important, cultural factor (2015: 69).

Although *The Model* aimed to bring about social change through utilising the museum as a vehicle for the critique of social inequalities reflected in and through the artworld (in a sense institutional critique from within), it must also be acknowledged that there is much opposition to the 'institutionalisation' of socially engaged art practices today. As a practice part grounded in institutional critique and working against the commodification of art, socially engaged art does not always sit comfortably within the gallery realm.

Stephen Pritchard, writer and executive director of 'Dot to Dot Active Arts' playfully claims that socially engaged art is dead, a death resulting from the appropriation and repurposing of the term by the artworld establishment (2016). Carrington expands on these concerns, suggesting a depoliticising and sanitisation of practice enforced by those in power, in this case the art institution:

> This process of de-activating or pacifying potentially radical or critical activity is most evident in the relationship of arts institutions to socially-engaged artists. As a result of the 'arts equals social change' drive from policy, artists that engage themselves in public space or work with people are officially labelled 'socially-engaged'. The diverse strategies and practices that fall under this umbrella are rendered soft, enabling institutions to direct projects to suit their own social agenda. Rather than being politically motivated, projects become sociable, user-friendly and watered-down. In this context, behaviour deemed to be radical or politically inappropriate has to be quashed or hindered by the commissioning institution (2004: 27).

Kwon is also uneasy with the mediating roles that institutions may play, suggesting that galleries can oversimplify complex identities and over-determine the terms of engagement, seriously limiting the practice's potential. She states:

> … the matchmaking mediation of the sponsoring institution, inevitably motivated by the presumption of an artist's interests and the anticipation of a

> particular kind of collaborative project, often reduces, sometimes stereotypes, the identities of the artist and the community group (2004: 141).

On the other hand, socially engaged artist Anthony Schrag suggests that it is more an issue of translation, artworks that can never be fixed and are always about a process of exchange, do not translate well in the static, idealised space of the 'white cube' gallery (2017). These positions reflect a passionate concern for socially engaged art and offer a warning against the potential sterilisation, coercion and manipulation of artists and their practice by individuals or organisations in a position of influence. It is perhaps worth revisiting here Anthony Luvera's reflections. Luvera states 'some of the organizations I've worked with have framed my practice in ways that suggest [an enriching or therapeutic benefit for participants] for the satisfaction of their own particular agendas' (2015: 400). It could therefore be suggested that, in some cases, the agendas of the art institution and the artist are at odds or in tension. In socially engaged and collaborative practice, I suggest, we must also ask what are the agendas of the participants? What motivates them to collaborate in such practices and do these aspirations align with those of the artist and the institution?

Luvera is unswervingly attentive towards the participants' views, further considering how the ideology of the art institution affects how the artwork is shaped, presented and viewed. After completing the project *Photographs and Assisted Self-Portraits* Luvera was approached by Whitechapel gallery with an opportunity to exhibit the photographs. He declined, stating he did not feel comfortable presenting these images at the gallery (Luvera 2016). In a discussion with 'Source' magazine, Luvera offers a possible explanation for declining this opportunity and, instead, deciding to show the images as part of the 'Art on the London Underground' programme:

> By the end of 2003 the archive had grown substantially and it was clear that there was an interesting body of photographs that should somehow be exhibited publicly. After much discussion with the participants, I wanted to find a way to present the photographs that was as highly public as possible and not restrictively limited to an educated, middle-class gallery audience (2006: 15).

The decision not to exhibit the work at the Whitechapel could have jeopardised a major opportunity for Luvera in terms of building his profile. Luvera recognised the

potential the images held in changing people's perceptions of issues related to homelessness and through exhibiting them publicly the reach would be broadened and opportunities for discussion opened-up, but he was careful in choosing the 'right' space. The selection was based on consulting the participants and co-creators of the photographs, and an ethical regard around representational issues of showing other people. Luvera explains further:

> The reality of the prospect of publicly exhibiting photographs from the archive necessitated that I give careful consideration about the importance of recognizing the individual creators of the images. I did not want to simply put out an unconnected presentation of images attributed to 'homelessness'. I began to think about how to create representations of the contributors to the archive, in a way that would react against the process of a traditional portrait making exercise (2006: 16).

Who is getting what from whom? A conceptual framework

Issues surrounding the ethics of involving people in a creative and artistic process and the representation of their contribution within the field of the socially engaged arts are not new concerns. Despite this considerable history tensions remain. This section will now explore some of the key debates and challenges that are inherent in socially engaged art and participatory practice in museums, and begin to build a conceptual framework through which the research questions will be addressed.

Little research has been undertaken that focuses on the experiences of participants through privileging their voice, and in practice the perspectives of the participants are mainly heard through evaluation. This paucity of attention to the participants' voice means we lack a nuanced understanding of their motivations and agendas for, and expectations of, getting involved in a socially engaged project; their experiences and what they value in the collaborative process; and their reflections and judgement of the project once finished. Not hearing, considering, and valuing these experiences might inadvertently (and in some cases intentionally), lead to unethical practice.

Bishop (2012a) is critical of what she describes as the 'ethical turn' in contemporary art practices, where art is judged in relation to its social efficacy over and above artistic

merit. She criticises the tendency to compare art projects that involve working with people through social interaction, pitting them against each other and moralising against how 'good' or 'bad' the collaborative model is, rather than judging the projects in artistic terms or against other social practices outside the realm of art (2012a: 18-20). However, in practices that involve people in collaborative processes art becomes increasingly implicated in questions of ethics. And in this research, with a focus on the community participants' experiences, it is vital to consider the social efficacy and what the participants get out of the project, and therefore employ ethics as a criterion of judgement. This is not to argue that the quality of the collaborative experience is more important than aesthetic or artistic concerns rather, that as a process-focused practice the experience should be valued as well.

Inspired by literatures situated within both the visual arts and museum studies (two fields that haven't always talked to each other as much as they might), I shall build a conceptual framework that highlights, unpacks and problematises some of the key positions within research and practice, setting up a case for a greater interest in the concerns of the community participants. To support the argument for a continued interest in the ethics of collaborative and socially engaged practice I shall now draw attention to a number of recent texts that call for a critical and questioning approach in art and museums and for ethics to be embedded in cultural practice (some of these texts will be explored in further detail in subsequent chapters of the thesis).

In 1997 Lucy Lippard (1997) proposed an eight-point set of criteria for artists working in social practice within communities described as 'place ethics' in her book *The Lure of the Local: senses of place in a multicentered society*. Karen Atkinson, president and founder of Getting Your Sh*t Together, an artist-run company working to make life better for artists, also wrote the guidance piece 'Ethics for Artists' (2011), for the Huffington Post. Philosopher Simon Critchley called for an ethics of commitment, expanding on the concept of 'interstitial distance' or a gap for radical political resistance and action, in his 2012 book *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance*. Curator Nina Möntmann's (2013) reader *Scandalous* introduced current notions of ethics in relation to art and the cultural field. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation established through ArtWorks its 'Alliance Code of Practice for

Participatory Artists' (2014) which, in part, asks artists to take responsibility for their actions and evaluate and reflect on their practice. And, in 2015 the Whitechapel gallery added to its book series *Documents of Contemporary Art* with the publication *Ethics* edited by Walead Beshty that surveys artists' practice and draws from writers to evaluate the relation of ethics to aesthetics.

In parallel to these ethical considerations in visual arts practice, the field of museums has also advanced their thinking and practice around ethics. In 2011, commissioned by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, writer and researcher Bernadette Lynch published her critical report 'Whose Cake is it Anyway?: A collaborative investigation into engagement and participation in 12 museums and galleries in the UK' which helped instigate the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's 'Our Museum: Communities and Museums as Active Partners' programme, following up in 2014 with the report 'Our Museum: A five-year perspective from a critical friend'. Revisiting their 'Code of Ethics for Museums' in 2016, the Museum Association revised the code to focus on three essential principles – public engagement and public benefit; stewardship of collections; and individual and institutional integrity. And, in 2011 and 2013 academic Janet Marstine added to the museum field with the edited publications the *Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics: Redefining Ethics for the Twenty-First Century Museum* and *New Directions in Museum Ethics* (co-edited with Alexander Bauer and Chelsea Haines), respectively.

Marstine, a key player in the field of museum ethics, most recently has brought the fields of visual arts and museums together in her monograph *Critical Practice: Artists, Museums, Ethics* (2017). Here she builds on her previous work and calls on contemporary arts practices, including relational art, institutional critique, and social practice, as a way of questioning museum practice and as a means to support a process of change and growth; through adopting critical and creative approaches the museum is able to share authority with its communities and move towards more ethically-defensible processes. Marstine also draws on feminist and post-colonial theories as frameworks in which to explore museum ethics. She proposes an embrace of care or caretaking in the museum, presenting a care for and conservation of objects and collections as well as a relationship of respect and care for communities, which

contributes to a re-evaluation of the role of museums. The idea of 'shared guardianship' presents one potential approach that supports museums in moving towards more egalitarian relationships with communities, which will be explored in greater depth later in the thesis.

Who benefits from collaboration?

Firstly, it is worth exploring the definition of the word *collaboration*. As described by the Oxford English Dictionary (2017) collaboration is: '(1) United labour, co-operation; esp. in literary, artistic, or scientific work; and (2) Traitorous cooperation with the enemy', meaning both to work together or in conjunction with and as betrayal through collusion with the enemy. Kester highlights the word's ambiguity and suggests the positive and negative connotations are fitting in expressing the continuum of practice framed as collaborative and socially engaged art (2011: 1-3).

Kester's thought-provoking comment shows a value in further exploring what is understood by the term collaboration specifically in relation to socially engaged art. Helguera describes a taxonomy of participation in socially engaged art (2011:14-15), including – 'nominal participation', 'directed participation', 'creative participation', and 'collaborative participation', where: '[T]he visitor shares responsibility for developing the structure and content of the work in collaboration and direct dialogue with the artist' (Ibid.: 15). Artist and writer Dave Beech articulates his understanding of the term collaborator in the article 'Include Me Out!', in which he states:

> Collaborators are distinct from participants insofar as they share authorial rights over the artwork that permit them, among other things, to make fundamental decisions about the key structural features of the work. That is, collaborators have rights that are withheld from participants (2008: 3).

An observation made by Finkelpearl further helps us to frame our thoughts around collaboration. He describes a spectrum of differing participatory art practices – which have often been polarised and generalised – as 'projects that are designed by artists and projects that are created through dialogue and collaboration with participants' (2013: 4). Finkelpearl goes further by suggesting that we should be mindful of employing the term collaboration as it: 'implies a shared initiation of the art, and start-

to-finish coauthorship … For many projects … collaboration is simply too far-reaching a claim to make; not all of the participants are equally authors of these projects, especially in the initiation and conceptualisation' (Ibid.: 6). Both Beech and Finkelpearl claim that collaboration in the context of socially engaged arts practice is more than just working together. They imply a level of co-authorship, a theme that will be explored in more depth later in the chapter and thesis. And both Kester and Finkelpearl describe a continuum or spectrum of activity with differing degrees of collaboration and a range of inputs and contributions from the participants. As a term used broadly to describe an array of activity it is understandable that confusion and misunderstandings arise.

Beryl Graham and Sarah Cook also critique the use of the terms 'interaction', 'participation' and 'collaboration' in relation to new media art in their book *Rethinking Curating: Art after New Media*. They state that these terms are often misunderstood and used incorrectly, over-stating the degree of audience involvement and engagement:

> Politicians, contemporary art curators, for example, are prone to using the words interaction, participation, and collaboration with the vague sense that they are "good things", but without having any clear idea of the levels of engagement involved in each or the practicalities of making it happen (2010: 112).

But, as Beech (2008) previously notes collaborators have different relationships with the artist, ones that are distinct from participants. As different practices, collaboration and participation should not be conflated.

Although with a focus on performance, Chrissie Tiller's 'spectrum of participatory performing arts practice' (2014: 11-13) helpfully furthers our thinking around distinctions between participatory and collaborative visual arts practice. Tiller draws on Sherry Arnstein's 'Ladder of Participation' (1969) (which will be considered in chapter six of the thesis), alongside the work of Helguera (2011), and Brown and Novak-Leonard (2011). Tiller describes four types of participation that fall along a spectrum or continuum: 'active engagement', 'collaborative making', 'co-creation', and 'participants' initiative' (2014: 11). Furthering arguments put forward by Beech and

Finkelpearl, she differentiates between participation and collaboration. She describes 'active engagement', or what I would call participation, as where the artwork: '[M]ay be [a] single-authored piece with participants helping realise artist's response to their issues', whereas 'collaborative making' affords 'shared authorship', but with the artist 'often taking final directive or artistic decisions' (Tiller 2014: 11).

Helguera also suggests that in socially engaged practice, even though decision-making processes are shared and a community might invite an artist to work with them, the tone of collaboration is generally set by the artist and the role that they assume; the artist is expected to be the conceptual director (2011: 51). Even in socially engaged practices that strive for more democratic processes, unequal power relations appear to remain between artist and community.

Issues surrounding collaboration and who benefits appear to run in parallel within the field of museums. Since the 1990s there has been an emergence of collaborative exhibition practice that attempts to engender more egalitarian processes and cultural polyvocality, changing the relationship between museums and society. Academic Ruth Phillips identifies two models of collaborative practice – 'community-based exhibits' and 'multivocal exhibits' (2003: 163-167). In multivocal exhibits 'museum staff and community consultants work to find a space of coexistence for multiple perspectives' (Phillips 2003: 164) that often involves presenting knowledge and interpretation from a number of diverse viewpoints on a subject or collection. The 'community-based model' involves working in close partnership with a community, in many cases a source community[1] as the cultural source of objects found in the museum's collection. In this collaborative exhibition practice the role of the curator is expanded as a facilitator, employing their expertise in service of the community who decides on content, text and other key components of the exhibition (Ibid.: 163). This model, perhaps, has the strongest connections with socially engaged arts practice. Parallels can be drawn with the expanded role of the socially engaged artist as facilitator and

[1] Source community: 'a group which identifies themselves as a community and would normally be expected to have a shared geographical location, shared cultural or spiritual and religious beliefs and shared language; or to share some of these facets; and which is recognised as the cultural source of items held in a museum collection' (Museum Association *Code of Ethics* 2016).

the community's role in sharing decision-making processes in making a final product, in the case of socially engaged art an artwork, and in the museum an exhibition.

The Horniman museum's youth engagement programme for the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad is an example of a community-based model of collaborative exhibition practice. Working with children and communities and employing collaborative practice was an established way of working in the museum however, collaboration with young people (teenagers and young adults) was a new approach for the Horniman. The museum wished to develop a sustainable co-curation programme that engaged with the concerns and interests of young people and shared their perspectives as part of the practice of the museum. Wayne Modest, then curator, was taken aback by a question asked by one of the participating young people: '"You're all just using us right, to do your work for you"' (2013: 106). Modest had not questioned the reasons for undertaking such a project before this point; collaborative practice had become commonplace in the museum and was seen as an inherently 'good' thing. Modest expands by asking:

> But why was this desirable and who made this decision? Were young people consulted about whether they were interested? As government policies are implemented to encourage museums to play a social role in society, to what extent are these programs geared more at achieving targets than fulfilling the desires of our target audiences? Of course many minority groups, in the United Kingdom and United States, for example, have lobbied for greater inclusion in the decision-making practice of museums. Yet, at the moment the question was raised, I was led to ask who is benefitting from these programs of engagement—the museums or the communities (2013: 107)?

Artist Anthony Luvera asks further pertinent questions in relation to collaborative art practice:

> But who is being empowered? Whose voice is amplified? Who is being made visible? What can the participating individual or community group gain by taking part? How does the artist profit? How can the outcome or products of the collaboration be measured, described or otherwise effectively relayed to those not involved in the processes of the making the work (2015: 400)?

Placing artist Anthony Luvera's questions side by side with those made by curator Wayne Modest we start to see a number of shared concerns emerge – who is benefitting from collaborative practice and to what degree? Who initiates and makes decisions in collaboration? Who puts what in and what do they get out of collaborating? What is the perceived value of collaboration to community participants? What types of social change do collaborative experiences bring about? Are collaborative practices more effective in engendering social change through empowering and validating communities? Or is it of greater value to the gallery and artist to collaborate with communities? And can collaborative practice ever truly generate equitable relations between gallery, artist and community?

Tensions between process and product

Socially engaged art, as previously described, is a dematerialised and process-based practice that is 'less concerned with producing objects or outputs per se than with a process of collaboration that is understood to produce certain pedagogical effects in and on the community' (Kester 1995: 5). However, tensions arise in the critique of such practices. How do we value these practices and make judgements on the quality and success of socially engaged art? These judgements could be considered against the resulting artwork as well as the participatory arts experience of the community. Although these are interrelated concerns they fall within two different spheres – the artistic and the social. As a process-focused practice, it could be argued that the value primarily lies within the quality of the journey and experience of those involved in the collaborative acts of making, dialogue and exchange.

A number of pragmatic toolkits and reports have been published in recent years, offering frameworks and guidance on generating and assessing the quality of participatory, collaborative and socially engaged art. These include ArtWorks' (2014) 'Continuous quality improvement framework'; Creative People and Places' toolkit 'Taking Bearings' (2015); and François Matarasso's (2013) paper 'Creative Progression: Reflections of quality in participatory arts'. They offer some support in developing appropriate methodological approaches to evaluating quality, exploring both artistic processes and experience.

Matarasso's paper explores some of the issues surrounding the assessment of quality in these practices and how practice can be improved by focusing on what he describes as the five processes of a participatory arts project – conception, contracting, working, creation and completion (2013). He also challenges the critique of these practices, usually made by the artist and critic, and asks who defines what quality is and whose judgements count, asserting that: '[U]nless the people who are supposed to benefit from an activity can participate in defining the criteria of its success, then control remains firmly with the professional organisations and any claim of empowerment must be open to question' (2013: 5).

Conversely, Bishop highlights the difficulties and tensions in making both artistic and social judgements of socially engaged art, suggesting that they do not easily merge and demand different sets of criteria (2012a: 275). As previously stated, Bishop is critical of practices that value social efficacy over artistic merit; she asserts that: '[T]he visual, conceptual and experiential accomplishments of the respective projects are sidelined in favour of a judgement on the artists' relationship with their collaborators' (Ibid.: 22). She even goes as far as describing some artworks resulting from socially engaged projects as: 'formless-looking photo-documents of participatory art' (2012b: 38). This concern also raises the question – who is the audience for these practices? Those involved in the collaborative process of the socially engaged project, or those experiencing the 'final' artwork in a gallery space or through documentation in a publication or online, or the secondary audience? And how is socially engaged art experienced by this secondary audience?

Instead, Bishop proposes a shift in critiquing these practices, returning to a focus on the aesthetics of the work with a renewed interest in the resulting product or artwork. However, in my view, arguments that polarise the social and aesthetic qualities of art are unhelpful and reductive exercises, that, particularly in the case of Bishop, privilege an art historical lens through which to make judgements. Marstine helps us to reconsider this, drawing from a museological perspective:

> I see Bishop's perspective as an artificial dialectic that exceptionalises the history of art as a discipline and denies its museological and moral agency … The ethical work of socially engaged practice does not preclude aesthetic and

> philosophical substance; multi-layered, politically nuanced projects in socially engaged practice draw strength from both ethics and aesthetics to produce possibilities for new understandings among the parties involved (2017: 17).

Thompson further contributes to the debate through discussing the tensions surrounding 'process versus product' in socially engaged art:

> Focusing on methodologies is also an attempt to shift the conversation away from the arts' typical lens of analysis: aesthetics … This is not to say the visual holds no place in this work, but instead this approach emphasizes the designated forms produced for impact. By focusing on how a work approaches the social, as opposed to simply what it looks like, we can better calibrate a language to unpack its numerous engagements (2012: 22-23).

Thompson neither places primary value on the visual components of socially engaged art nor disregards them; rather his nuanced position recognises the potential both the process and the product hold in engendering impact. It could also be said that the co-created photographs made in collaboration with Anthony Luvera are not primarily focused on the visual, yet they do have a visual quality reminiscent of documentary photography and there is an aesthetic value to the images. Academic and photographer Gemma-Rose Turnbull expands further on this thought in her reflections on the images produced as part of the collaborative process:

> The images produced by participants are themselves relatively bland, Djikstra-esque; solemn, still and simply framed. But the process is clearly exposed in the 'process shots'—snapshots, on what appears to be a disposable camera, which infer the participants were responsible for the documentation of this more formal process… This work doesn't scream dramatic. It is, across the board, simple, clear and straightforward. The images don't 'other' the people in them, nor do they buy in to the audience's desire for a fly-on-the-wall account of homelessness or queerness. They simply present people as people, and lay bare the process of the projects. The impact here is not overwhelming, like the way that some photojournalism (of the same topics) can be—nothing punches you in the face. But the impression is a lasting one (2014).

Turnbull's final thought, 'the impression is a lasting one', reflects the subtle power of Luvera's work. In this case the visual and the social are not more important than each other; it is the collective agency of process and product that generates an effect. To return to a previous point, although I will go on to argue that it is fundamental that the social value of the work and ethics are taken into account in socially engaged practices, and as Matarasso (2013) asserts the experiences of the community participants are esteemed in the assessment of the work, that does not mean that the aesthetic qualities of the work should not be valued. Rather, it can be concluded, both the social and artistic components have worth.

The rigour of Luvera's practice lies in the whole body of work to effect change. The collaborative processes generate positive experiences as previously described by participant Sean McAuley; there is a purely aesthetic value to the photographic work; and the images offer a humanised and personal perspective on experiences of homelessness enabling the secondary audience to re-evaluate stereotypes of homelessness and form new meaning and understanding. So, the product of Luvera's work can be understood as both the resulting artwork or output and the social outcomes for the participants and secondary audience.

Symbolic versus actual change

The relationship between socially engaged arts practice and actual social and political change remains largely unmapped, yet numerous forms of socially engaged art and institutional practice claim to be deeply rooted in societal relations with intentions of transforming communities. As Kravagna has previously stated and further describes here, the agency of social practices in eliciting change might only be able to be considered in symbolic terms:

> In the end, it seems that it is possible to assess the value or success of participatory practices neither by evaluating the scope for action that they offer the participants, nor by trying to measure any 'concrete change'. Scepticism seems advisable in particular with regards to the recurrent issues of usefulness… it seems justified to ask whether changes that 'only' take place at the symbolic, rather than the 'concrete', level—as proposed by certain models

> of participatory practice—must be re-evaluated. In many cases, these are the practices that retain at least the ideal of potential political action. This is not least because they dwell, first, on the political consciousness and foundations of participation, without immediately committing themselves to the pragmatism of problem solving (2012: 254).

Socially engaged art and contemporary gallery practices have much that they can learn from the broader field of museology. Through research and practice, museums have developed a sophisticated case for their social role as agents of change and have advanced methodologies that capture the effects on museum audiences and participants in a nuanced manner. The 'change agenda', although not without its critics, has gained traction and in recent years: 'there has been a growing interest in the potential for museums to function as agents of social change, deploying their collections and other resources to contribute, in varied ways, towards a more just and equitable society' (Sandell 2007: 5). And, in 2013, the Museum Association launched its manifesto 'Museums Change Lives', with the aim of embedding purposeful 'change' within the practice and mission of museums, and advocating the value of museums in enhancing well-being; creating better places; and inspiring people and ideas (2013). Further recent research reports and texts that have explored and advocated the value and impact of the arts and culture, encompassing museums and galleries, include: a broad understanding of the value of arts and culture (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016); a holistic view of the value of the arts (Donovan 2013); the social value (Matarasso 1997; RCMG 2000; Dodd and Sandell 2001; Dodd et al. 2002; ACE 2014); the therapeutic value (Silverman 2010); the public value (Scott 2010) and more recently the value of arts in terms of bringing about and increasing well-being (NEF 2009; Fujiwara 2013; Happy Museum 2013; Chatterjee and Noble 2013).

One influential piece of research that investigated the potential social impact of participating in the arts is François Matarsso's 'Use or Ornament? The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts' from 1997. It was the UK's first significant study that sought to identify evidence of the social impact of participation in the arts and to add a new dimension to existing economic and aesthetic rationales for the arts by looking at their role in social development and cohesion. The report aimed to relate to public policy

objectives, including the social inclusion agenda, and establish mechanisms for assessing social impact, offering simple evaluation models for professionals working in participatory community art practices (Matarasso 1997). Matarasso identified fifty potential social impacts that fell within six broad themes used as a framework through which to organise and then analyse the material, which included: personal development; social cohesion; community empowerment and self-determination; local image and identity; imagination and vision; and health and well-being (Ibid.: 12-13). Through this study, Matarasso was able to share a number of wide ranging benefits for participating in the arts, demonstrating the potential of arts in bringing about concrete change at an individual, community and societal level.

However, the statement 'art for art's sake', and its implied position, regularly prevails within the artworld and field of museums and galleries and is often used to obstruct discussions around the value or benefit of art beyond its intrinsic worth. The instrumentalisation of the arts is critiqued as a threat towards, a devaluation of, and a diversion from art's inherent aesthetic worth, as well as a form of artistic manipulation underpinning neoliberal agendas. It has been suggested that arts practice, including socially engaged projects, can be: 'relied upon to mop up wherever the government wishes to absolve itself of responsibility' (Bishop 2012b: 38) and this: 'well-meaning stance plugs the gap in providing social services – risking endorsing the logic of austerity' (Gogarty 2014: 9). Academic Eleonora Belfiore furthers the argument against instrumentalism in her paper 'The social impacts of the arts – myth or reality?', by stating that: 'the concern for addressing social cohesion and inclusion through a 'soft' approach such as the use of cultural projects, might be seen as a convenient means to divert attention from the real causes of today's social problems and the tough solutions that might be needed to solve them' (2006: 33).

Bishop, Gogarty and Belfiore make compelling cases in the critique of the use of the arts and culture (and their effectiveness) as tools in social engineering and fulfilling state-led political and economic agendas. Yet, as Richard Sandell suggests:

> … social responsibility does not require museums to become government tools for social engineering and control. The reality, much less threatening and radical than many traditionalists assume, is based on the idea that museums,

> alongside many other institutional and individual agents, must consider their impact on society and seek to shape that impact through practice that is based on contemporary values and a commitment to social equality (2002: 21).

With a genuine interest in the points of view and experiences of the community participants collaborating in socially engaged art and a concern around the potential exploitation of collaborators, it is necessary to explore and value the extrinsic benefits to collaborators, alongside intrinsic worth. The intrinsic and instrumental value of the arts are often presented as two opposing positions, pitted against each other. However, this need not be the case, a point well made by Crossick and Kaszynska (2016) in their recent report exploring cultural value. Art's intrinsic aesthetic and creative value and role as a powerful vehicle for communication and expression of human perception and experience is not negated through a desire to become more socially relevant and effective. And immersion in the intrinsic aspects of an artistic activity through participation and collaboration might lead to extrinsic gains and non-artistic outcomes, such as social, educational, health or economic benefits; what is perhaps required are better ways of recognising, understanding and assessing art's intrinsic and extrinsic values and their interrelationship (Matarasso 2003, and Clark 2014).

Helguera (2011) powerfully argues the case that socially engaged art is an 'actual' rather than 'symbolic' practice, which implies that by its very nature it is instrumental. He suggests that symbolic art practices, although they can be politically or socially motivated, act through the *representation* of ideas of issues, as opposed to actual art practices that aim to achieve a specific outcome through controlling a social situation in an instrumental and strategic way (Ibid.: 5-8). He states that: '[M]ost artists who produce socially engaged works are interested in creating a kind of collective art that affects the public sphere in a deep and meaningful way, not in creating a representation—like a theatrical play—of a social issue' (Ibid.: 7). As an art form that: 'depends on actual—not imagined or hypothetical—social action' (Ibid.: 8), socially engaged practice has the potential to elicit actual as well as symbolic change. Where is the equivalent 'Use or Ornament?' study for socially engaged art, we could ask? What are the benefits of engaging in a collaborative process through socially engaged art?

And how can we effectively capture the experiences of the community participants that demonstrate actual change, while respecting the process-focused characteristics of the practice?

However, for Bishop, artworks that use *representation*, or are symbolic, have more potency to attract dissensus and can be harnessed to disruptive ends (2012b: 44). Socially engaged practice that Bishop describes as 'antagonism' (2004), or artworks that generate hostile relationships between the artist, artwork and audience, might do more to engender a democratic society through provocation. The more adversarial the work, the more likely it will generate discussion and debate, and draw attention to inequalities and issues within society. And as Thompson suggests: 'symbolic gestures can be powerful and effective methods for change' (2012: 18).

The work of Spanish artist Santiago Sierra can be described as antagonistic practice as it explicitly mirrors acts of exclusion, re-enacts the mistreatment of vulnerable and marginalised groups of people and highlights social issues, such as unfair labour practices. In the artwork *160cm line tattooed on 4 people*, he hired four prostitutes addicted to heroin for the price of a shot of heroin to give their consent to be tattooed with a line across their backs. He paid them four times the rate they would have normally been paid to perform a sexual act. Sierra places himself in an ethically ambiguous position by turning this process of exploitation into an artwork; the artwork acts as a metaphor for the abuse of these women and the exploitation of human labour in a globalised economic system (Tate 2017a).

Challenging power

Reflecting on Grant Kester's thought-provoking observation that the meaning of the term collaboration has both positive and negative connotations, Sierra's practice could be seen as an example of collaboration that implies cooperating with the enemy. In Sierra's practice the exploited participant becomes the artistic 'medium' in expressing unequal power relations found in today's society. By creating an artwork that graphically draws attention to inequality Sierra's work, like many forms of socially engaged art, challenges power. His practice is unapologetically unethical, and although deemed questionable by many critics, perhaps of more concern is when practice

inadvertently becomes ethically questionable through not observing and considering the power relations at play.

The aims and intentions of many socially engaged practices is to not only highlight social issues and inequalities, but also to tackle them through generating positive experiences and relationships with and within communities. Kester compares the role of the community or socially engaged artist to that of social worker using organisational and problem-solving skills to bring together a range of agencies that tackle interconnected issues and transform the conditions of individuals believed to be in need (1995: 12). However, community-based and socially engaged practices have the potential to lead to further segregation of marginalised people if not carried out in a critical and self-aware manner.

Kester discusses this in relation to the concept of artist as 'delegate', who speaks for or on behalf of a community, therefore negating any potential for community empowerment. The notion of delegation can also be applied to the gallery. Where galleries target 'socially isolated' communities or communities with little 'citizen power' to work with collaboratively, even if benevolent and well-intentioned gestures of democratisation are at the heart of their motives, they risk taking a dominant position and claim the authority to speak for the community (Kester 1995: 7). Both artist and gallery, in this case, are placed within a 'catch-22' situation, where the very acts of defining a need for social change and positioning themselves in the role of agent of change, delineate a difference and therefore a separation between the artist/gallery and community. This denotes a top-down approach where 'invisible power' relations (Lynch 2011a: 15) remain and where the artist and gallery situate themselves as separate from the community, encouraging the community to 'raise' themselves up to an equal level. Although with well-meaning ideals, socially engaged and community-based practices like these have the potential to: 'reinforce the very political ideologies that communities have struggled to define themselves against' (Kester 1995: 9). Artists and galleries might inadvertently perpetuate social issues and reaffirm negative and stereotypical characteristics, or even worse, mirror actions of exclusion through 'Othering'.

Hal Foster (1996) critiques the community artist's self-fashioning as ethnographer through adopting ethnographic methodologies, where he suggests that community-based artists involuntarily emulate coloniser, leading to marginalised communities: 'becoming both subject and coproducer of their own self-appropriation in the name of self-affirmation' (Kwon on Foster 2004: 139). Academic and museum professional Bernadette Lynch further reinforces these concerns in relation to collaborative practice in museums and galleries by stating that: '[T]he aftermath of such 'co-productions' frequently left community partners with the unhappy feeling of having colluded in their own marginalisation, disempowerment and even exclusion – an experience they rarely chose to repeat' (2011a: 12).

Another concern within socially engaged practices is the 'use' of the community group as subject, or medium to express a certain idea or ideal, as demonstrated within Sierra's practice. As Kester suggests: '[T]he effect, then, is to negate the specific identity of those objects around you (and people can easily function as objects), and instead to treat them as instrumentalized material' (1999: 6). Artist Sierra purposefully works with marginalised and potentially vulnerable groups, like many socially engaged practices do, though with different methodologies and aspirations. Yet, working with excluded people raises a number of additional ethical questions. If a community group is deemed 'oppressed' and 'powerless', how can artists and galleries 'serve' them in a way that they want to be 'served'? How can artists and galleries move from 'serving' a community to working 'with' a community? How can communities become equal partners in a process rather than 'products' of, or 'workers' for, the artist and gallery? And how can artists and galleries ensure that this type of practice does not become patronising and exploitative?

There are several approaches that go some way towards combating these potential risks, which will be discussed in more depth later in the thesis. But, appropriating Kester's theories on community arts might offer galleries one way of thinking about and approaching collaborative practices. Kester proposes that artists work with communities that are self-determined or 'politically coherent'; in this case the artist acts: 'primarily as a collaborator in dialogue rather than an expressive agent' (1999:7).

Although I agree with Kester's logic, I will also go on to argue that artists and galleries should not shy away from groups who have not defined their own 'identity' or are within a state of flux. Instead, through processes of exchange and a move towards more equitable relations, the community's identity might potentially be cemented or even defined. Kwon's model of 'invented communities' (2004: 126-135) is interesting in relation to this argument. She proposes two models – 'temporary' and an 'ongoing' – where the community's identity is invented and evolved through the community-based practice with the support of the artist and institution. Through the 'ongoing' model the community that has been brought into existence is empowered and sustained beyond the exhibition concept and its institutional support (Ibid.: 130). The 'invented community', once empowered, can then go on to define its own characteristics and identity, and propose new collaborative practices with the artist and gallery.

Interestingly, socially engaged artist Anthony Luvera (whose practice supports the articulation of self-representation and reclamation of identity), acknowledges that in collaborative art projects such as his, where individual empowerment (rather than community invention in Kwon's case) might well take place, unequal power relationships between artist, gallery and participants will always remain. He states:

> However, although handing over the camera to a subject / participant may offer the individual an opportunity to express their point of view it won't necessarily bring the artist or organization any closer to "reality". Self-representations will always be framed, directly or indirectly, by the artist or organization facilitating the process. Issues of control, context, reception, authorship, ownership and agency are always in play in any participatory practices (Luvera 2011).

Even in socially engaged art practices that attempt to move towards more egalitarian relations between artist, gallery and community it is questionable whether power will ever be shared equally and if, in fact, this is even desired. Perhaps what is more important is revealing the power dynamics at play and working to ensure that, despite unequal power relations, ethical practice still takes place.

Who gets to author?

As discussed throughout this chapter, when working with participants there are ethical implications. Where participants are collaborators and co-producers of an artwork, considerations need to be made in terms of recognising their contributions, potentially even as co-authors. But the unique and distinct role that the artist plays in the collaborative process also needs to be valued and care needs to be taken to ensure that the artist doesn't just become a service agent for the community.

The role of the artist is paramount in socially engaged art practices in thinking in new ways, commanding a fresh perspective, bringing together a range of agents, initiating and facilitating creative activity, and representing the project, in the aim of eliciting social change. Claire Doherty, founder and director of Situations, a UK-based public art commissioning agency, uses the term 'charismatic agent' (2011) to frame the influential position an artist plays in the creation of socially engaged and public art. A charismatic agent can refer to either the artist or cultural producer/curator. Doherty further describes the artist's role and recognises the unique value they bring:

> Public art is of the people and made with the people, but not always by the people. Artists are skilled creative thinkers as well as makers. They are the charismatic agents who arrive with curious ideas – a black pavilion could be barnraised in a Bristol park, a graveyard could be built to commemorate the Enrons and West India Companies of our fallen economy, the sounds of a church organ might bleed out across the city through a mobile app. Trust the artist's judgment, follow their lead and invest in their process (2013).

Doherty advocates the 'uniqueness' of the artist and their vision in shaping socially engaged projects. Artist Rick Lowe expands on this position by suggesting that the artwork often mirrors the person who instigates it, in the case of *Project Row Houses* the art project he initiated in Houston's Third Ward; if he were to drop out a very different kind of diversity would be expressed (2013: 147). This could be described as a reflection of the charisma of the artist, and as such the artist's name is often ascribed to a project as an 'artist signature,' signifying a specific type of practice, and endorsing and raising the profile of the collaboratively-made work. This often means that in

socially engaged practice the artist remains the 'author' of the work, as Bishop expands:

> For a start, we could observe that even the most collaborative types of contemporary art still circulate as authored products (albeit ones with less market success than individual efforts). This is not a moralistic point about who earns money and how, but a theoretical issue: each work of art or project is a sovereign domain established by the artist. Even the most open-ended projects are still circumscribed by an artistic identity, and inscribed within a chain of previous or similar co-authored projects. Even when artists make a point of including participants' names as co-authors, it is still the singular artist as motivator and facilitator that provides the work's identity (2006: 3).

Artist Helguera mirrors this point. He recognises the fundamental and multifaceted role a socially engaged artist plays and how that position needs to shift depending on the power dynamics within that collaboration:

> A false assumption that I have often encountered in discussions about SEA is that the artist can act as a neutral entity, an invisible catalyst of experiences. When a professional artist or arts educator interacts or collaborates with community with little previous involvement with art, the community has an undeniable disadvantage in experience and knowledge, as long as the relationship unfolds primarily in the art terrain. In this case, the artist is a teacher, leader, artistic director, boss, instigator, and benefactor, and these roles must be assumed fully. There are artists who try to be merely facilitators, to the point of denying that they are using any individual initiative at all… But the artist cannot disappear… while authorship in SEA may be different than in other forms of art, it cannot be altogether eliminated (2011: 53-54).

Both Bishop and Helguera suggest that even in collaboratively-made artworks where participants might be considered co-authors the artwork's identity remains a reflection of the artist. However, as these practices stem from a lineage of de-authored art movements and practices that aimed to embrace collective creativity, it warrants further exploration. Renouncing authorial control and facilitating the creativity of others is typically regarded and presented as more egalitarian and democratic than the

creation of a work by a single artist (Bishop 2006 and 2012a). However, it is argued that even within de-authored practice the author or artist must still be present. This is critiqued by Groys who relates participatory art practice to the French poststructuralist theory of the 'Death of the Author' as put forward by Roland Barthes:

> Were the author truly dead, it would be impossible to differentiate between participatory and nonparticipatory art, because this can only occur through the celebrated surrender of authorship by the artist. The general delight surrounding the idea of the death of the author should not belie the fact that the author must always preordain this demise. One might also claim that the enactment of this self-abdication, this dissolution of the self into the masses, grants the author the possibility of controlling the audience – whereby the viewer forfeits his secure external position, his aesthetic distance from the artwork. In this way participatory art can be understood not only as a reduction, but also an extension, of authorial power (Groys 2008: 23).

The idea that the birth of the reader (or in the case of socially engaged art, the birth of the participant) must be at the cost of the death of the author remains a myth (Barthes 1977: 148). The artist will always maintain a degree of authorship in participatory and collaborative practice, which could, if not challenged, be used to further assert his/her position and control the position of the community participants. It has been established that de-authorship or the 'death of the author' in practice cannot exist. However, the notion of 'shared' or 'co'-authorship is still possible, yet 'sharing' also produces its own set of issues.

Artist Palle Nielsen has raised concerns around the collaboratively-made artwork *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society,* by stating that: '[I]n retrospect, it was probably the collective authorship of the work that contributed to its erasure from history. Because an artwork needs an artist's signature to be recognised in the art world' (2015: 59). Resolutely ethical artist Anthony Luvera, does not believe that collaborative art projects automatically lead to co-authorship, and is mindful of exaggerating the level of co-production, by elegantly observing that:

> In relation to *Photographs and Assisted Self-Portraits* in London and *Residency* in Belfast my activity as the author of these projects may be seen to encompass

> such roles as curator, collaborator, facilitator or educator. I feel it is important to acknowledge the participants as the creators of their photographs and the other materials they have allowed me to use, however I think it would be erroneous to overstate the co-productive methodology of the projects as being co-authored. Ultimately the participants' photographs are framed by my practice and the contexts that I seek out to present the work (2010b: 179).

Following on from this, academic Jen Harvie puts forward an issue that relates to the community's authority in deciding authorship: '[N]ot only can delegated art and performance practice conscript audiences and other makers to produce work for which they are not properly attributed authorship, it can conscript them as authors of work they do not effectively author or do not actually want to author' (2013: 42). Reflecting on these concerns we could ask how are multiple contributors recognised and valued, and by whom? To what extent can community participants be considered co-authors in socially engaged practice? And do they want to be authors? How can we ensure that the artist is not demoted, that not all power is devolved and that the unique role that the artist brings is not devalued in collaborative works? How do we recognise artistic labour as distinct from participatory labour? How is participatory labour recognised, valued and can it ever be deemed to have equal status? What is the gallery's role in collaborative practice? How is the work valued in the community and in the artworld? And how is this work 'marketed' and who owns the rights?

Doherty suggests in her 'New Rules of Public Art', that artists involved in a collaborative making process should: '[S]hare ownership freely, but authorship wisely' (2013), stating that: '[I]n this way, while authorship of specific facets of the project—such as particular architectural interventions, residencies or texts—might be clearly attributed, ownership of the project as a whole invariably becomes shared' (O'Neill and Doherty 2011: 7). Yet, if community participants are ignored as authors how can they lay claim to ownership of a project or artwork?

In collaborative and socially engaged practice the relationship between artist and participants is symbiotic and as a consequence the contributions made by the community participants are a key concern. Matarasso recognises this in his piece 'Who is the artist here?' (2015a). He muses on the question 'but whose art work is it?' when

considering the photographic work *What Ali Wore* produced by Australian artist Zoe Spawton. Zoe photographed Ali and his outlandish attire since 2012 each time he walked past her place of work, and as Matarasso suggests:

> She saw in Ali something that countless other passers-by didn't, because she looks at things as an artist. And yet, without him, *What Ali Wore* could not exist… It seems to me that, as in all good participatory art, both enact the artist's role, albeit in different ways. Indeed it is the difference that makes the creation of new work possible, because each person brings something the other cannot contribute. Neither Zoe nor Ali could make alone what they have made together (Ibid.).

In recognising Ali's contribution to Zoe's work can we consider Ali a co-author? Not all contributions are equal, but nevertheless the collective input and influence of the individuals and community that make up the collaborators are fundamental in the making and realisation of an artwork. The notion that collaboration implies an equal level of involvement from the gallery, artist and participants is neither helpful nor accurate in many cases of socially engaged practice. Instead, we need to consider going beyond this when we discuss collaborative practices that wish to respect all exchanges of expertise, skills and knowledge. So, instead of debating degrees of contribution or a parity of input, we might do better to consider a greater level of respect for all contributions.

To end this section, it is worth revisiting the observation made by Finkelpearl who believes that many socially engaged projects cannot truly be called collaborative and community participants cannot be considered co-authors as they are not involved in the instigation or conceptualisation of an artwork (2013: 6). We could perhaps task artists and galleries with a mission that allows for opportunities where community participants initiate art projects (as do the empowered 'invented communities' in Kwon's theorisation (2004: 130-135)), so that they become co-authors of an artwork and that the artwork's identity reflects not only the artist, but the community as well.

Conclusion

To conclude chapter two, it is worth returning, once more, to the practice of artist Anthony Luvera. In responding to his own question: '[I]s it possible to have a truly reciprocal partnership with a community?', Luvera offers up further points of enquiry: '[W]here do the boundaries lie between a community practice and an artist using, or seducing, a group of people for the production of their artwork? Or to put it another way: Who is getting what from whom?' (2015: 399) and '[W]ho is answering this question? And, on whose behalf do they speak?' (Ibid.: 401). These questions reflect the main concerns of my thesis: what ethical issues arise for socially engaged artists and galleries when the individual experiences of community collaborators *are* heard, considered and valued alongside their own. Through this investigation I set out to highlight and address the absence of community participant voice in collaborative and socially engaged practice, consider whether socially engaged practice can make claims of bringing about actual change, and argue for more ethically considered practice.

In Matarasso's 'Use or Ornament' study, the social impact of participation in the arts was explored through a focus on participants' experiences, captured in questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and observation, but what are the individual, community and societal effects of *collaborating* in the arts? In Finkelpearl's *Dialogues in Public Art* and *What We Made: Conversations on Art and Social Cooperation* we hear from a range of voices – artists, architects, bureaucrats, participants and collaborators through interviews. Although the experiences of participants and collaborators involved in socially engaged projects are considered in some depth, the ethical implications arising from taking these points of view into account are not explicitly explored. Yet, in both Marstine's and Lynch's work museum ethics are central concerns. Marstine puts forward a number of critical approaches that can aid the development of more ethical museum practices; she also proposes that museums can learn from working with artists and through appropriating methodologies from artistic practice. In Lynch's report 'Whose Cake is it Anyway?' a range of issues and ethical concerns are raised when community partners are given the opportunity to share and reflect on their experiences of co-production alongside museum practitioners.

It seems inexplicable that socially engaged arts practice that claims to be striving for equitable relations and talks of collaboration doesn't give equal weighting to participants' points of view. These perspectives – I shall argue – should be treated and respected as valid alongside the artist's, gallery practitioner's, and critic's. So, in the name of reciprocity, both the fields of visual arts and museums can learn from each other and galleries and artists as 'charismatic agents' (Doherty: 2013) can learn from community participants as well.

Inspired by research and practice undertaken in the fields of visual arts and museology examined in this chapter and through listening to community participants' words, thoughts, opinions, and reflections, I aim to offer a more nuanced understanding of the intrinsic and extrinsic value of socially engaged practice and build an ethical framework and approach to support galleries and artists in following through on their claims of social value and community benefit, alongside taking responsibility for ensuring ethical practices in socially engaged art. In the next chapters, we explore the methodological approach taken in capturing the experiences and perceptions of a community participating in the collaborative making processes of a socially engaged project initiated by a contemporary and modern art gallery and directed by an artist who describes her work as social practice.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Research rationale

In this chapter, I explain the rationale for using a qualitative methodology in answering my 'research puzzle' (Mason 2002). I also present the reasons for exploiting a range of qualitative research methods in capturing the experiences and perceptions of individual community members involved in socially engaged practice and the value of this work to them. The previous chapters outlined the context for this investigation; that is to say, the bold claims that socially engaged art elicits individual, communal and societal change, made by both academics and practitioners alike, must be drawn into question when there is a marked absence of community participant voice in the critique and analysis of this practice. Without hearing from everyone involved we are unable to fully comprehend its potential effects. This deficiency further reinforces the unbalanced power relations between gallery, artist, and community. And does not fully take into account the possible benefits to community participants which may lead to disingenuous collaborative experiences and unethical practice.

As previously suggested difficulties arise when attempts are made to 'measure' socially engaged art practices in terms of their usefulness, problem-solving ability or capacity to bring about 'concrete' or actual rather than symbolic social change (Kravagna 2012, Bishop 2012a). However, it is perhaps a paucity of appropriate methodological approaches that cause the most issues in gauging value, as Hooper-Greenhill discusses in relation to assessing learning experiences in cultural institutions through the use of tools of measurement and attempts to pre-define outcomes:

> In open, informal and flexible learning environments, approaches to learning are very variable and diverse, and are dependent on the intentions and agendas of users. The outcomes of learning may be 'anticipated' and possibly 'expected', but cannot be 'required'… In cultural organizations learning may encompass a wide range of forms, styles and approaches and it is this breadth that represents the unique value of learning through culture. It is therefore

> impossible to define in advance specific learning outcomes for each individual (2007: 26-27).

Issues of measurement and difficulties in quantifying people's experiences are highly applicable in the context of socially engaged art, a practice that is process-focused, context-bound and unique in each realisation. Taking an explorative, qualitative approach, is therefore the most appropriate in the context of a still-emerging area of interest in the field of socially engaged art, a practice that, as we have seen, is also difficult to pin down. This research approaches capturing and uncovering community participants' experiences and perceptions through methods that do not rely on setting required outcomes or measuring change against pre-determined scales. Although, within the scope of this research I have decided not to 'measure' social change, through an exploration of individual experience grounded in a 'real-life' context, change beyond merely the symbolic will be exposed.

The chapter will set out my methodology and research design, how I came to realise and refine the research question, introduce a theoretical framework through which I will analyse my research findings and set out a collection of qualitative research methods used to elicit and facilitate the sharing of participants' thoughts, feelings and experiences of collaborating in a socially engaged art project.

Research design – qualitative methodology

The research is grounded in an interpretivist philosophical paradigm: 'in the sense that it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted' (Mason 2002: 3). This philosophical position has been selected over a positivist approach, which would be inappropriate in terms of the research question, my understanding of how knowledge is formed and my personal ontological position of constructivism, where I conceive social phenomena and meanings as constructed by human beings and continuously negotiated through social interactions (Creswell 2008).

Exploring experiences of collaboration in an arts practice at a profound level therefore requires a qualitative methodology: 'that celebrate[s] richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity' (Mason 2002: 1), in order to explore: 'a

wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate' (Ibid.).

Although, embarking on the research project I had an understanding of the potential effects collaboration in such artistic practices may bring about (such as improved health and well-being, acquisition of new skills and knowledge, self-confidence in individuals and, more broadly, community cohesion), it was decided that the 'types' of outcomes would not be pre-defined or pinned down. Instead the research project was approached in an open and exploratory manner in order to explore the experiences, feelings, thoughts, attitudes and resulting behaviours of individuals. This also combated the tendency to assume that all participatory and collaborative experiences are positive. As Creswell suggests, a flexible and emergent design was most appropriate:

> The research process for qualitative researchers is emergent. This means that the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and that all phases of the process may change or shift after the researchers enter the field and begin to collect data (2013: 47).

A qualitative methodology enabled a more nuanced exploration without taking a reductionist approach of measuring outcomes and evaluating impact. As Carol Scott discusses in her paper 'Measuring Social Value', museums are increasingly required to demonstrate their benefits to communities and as a result have adopted a performance evaluation model to measure impact, continuing to limit it to quantifiable, tangible and numerical data (2002: 43-44). In the case of socially engaged arts measurement is wholly inappropriate. Scott suggests a need for an alternative:

> If museums are increasingly required to demonstrate that they provide long-term benefits to the community, how are they going to do this? The limitations of evaluation methods based on numerical measurement of short-term, demonstrable outcomes have been discussed. What then are the alternatives? If we move into assessing long-term social value, we are in the realm of the qualitative. What models exist that assess qualitative outcomes? (Ibid.: 44).

Although this research has not set out to establish a 'model' for assessing qualitative outcomes, it does intend to showcase a qualitative methodological approach that explores value in relation to processes as well as outcomes, considers a programme holistically and in its entirety over the duration of a one-year period, and involves participants as experts in interpreting their own experiences.

Research question

The research stemmed from my experience as a gallery educator working with diverse groups of people over a period of twelve years and through a number of emerging questions and concerns surrounding socially engaged art mediated through galleries, articulated in a series of research questions introduced in chapter one. The research reflects my passionate belief that working in participatory and collaborative ways can make meaningful and beneficial differences to people's lives. The original aim of this research study was to explore the impact of collaborating in socially engaged art practices on community participants. This set out to counteract the primary focus of gauging the 'success' of socially engaged projects through artworld judgments on the 'quality' of the resulting artwork, and instead emphasise the social impact, or assess the 'success' in terms of community engagement and actual social change, as exemplified in the initial overarching research question:

> *How are community participants engaged in the collaborative process of socially engaged arts practice changed by their experiences?*

However, with a qualitative research approach that was emergent in design, and having a background in gallery education, I understood the vital need to be reflexive in my research practice and critique my own thinking in order to confront and challenge my own assumptions, and recognise the extent to which my thoughts, actions and decisions shaped my research and what I saw (Mason 2002: 5). This led to a shift in my thinking during the initial research stages, where I began to reconsider and acknowledge that the value of socially engaged arts practice lies in both the artistic merit of the work and the quality of the experience; one was not necessarily more important than the other and both emerged from a collaborative process. I did, however, want to highlight and address the historical and current imbalance that

means that not all viewpoints are equally heard, considered or valued. Therefore, the community participants' experience remained a central concern and the research continued its ambition to amplify and attend to these voices.

In the processes of collecting data and as a result of reading further literature, a more nuanced understanding of the words 'impact' and 'change' and the implications of employing such terms, also ensued. The term 'impact' implies an unbalanced relationship, where a person or an activity impacts upon another, suggesting one has power over the other. Matarasso articulates some of the issues in using this word:

> The problem is that impact suggests something forcefully striking an object, like a die impressing itself on a blank. It implies an active agent and a passive recipient, a subject and an object (2015b).

Furthermore, this is particularly problematic in relation to socially engaged practice that aims to generate more equitable relations and claims to be based on the premise of mutual exchange. Socially engaged artist, researcher and evaluator of Tate's youth peer programme 'Circuit', Ros Hall, also raises concerns over the growing use of the term in the gallery sector. Hall suggests that the term 'impact' reveals a set of problematic assumptions, which underpin a way of thinking that suggests that some people are in need of improvement. Hall (2015) states:

> I would argue that the emphasis on the transformative potential of engagement in the arts has led to an unhelpful set of assumptions about who it is that is in need of transformation. This has become most apparent when engagement is talked about in terms of the 'impact' it has. For a few years now the increasing use of the term 'impact' has troubled me and I have asked people I work with if we can, instead, talk about the difference being made through working together, rather than assuming one set of people might 'have impact on' another set of people. I have also requested this in order to ensure we are not complacent about the use of such violent terminology, or ignorant of the power relation inherent in the use of the term.

Through positioning 'change' in the community participants (as a result of collaborating in socially engaged arts practice and working with an artist and a gallery),

as a central component of my research question I ran the risk of implying that the community were in need of changing, as Matarasso (2015b) also goes on to point out:

> In this thinking, the social art project is conceived as an experience whose 'impact' changes those who take part. And in this context, 'change' means 'improve', in terms of the problem-solving mission identified, more or less cooperatively, by the artist and the commissioner.

This patronising and disrespectful stance, described by Kester as the 'salvage' paradigm, in which the artist and the gallery take on the task of 'improving' the implicitly flawed subject (1999: 7), was the very opposite of what the research set out to achieve – privileging the community's voices because of a respect for and genuine interest in their experiences and an underlying ethical concern over the silencing of community voice. Although still interested in actual change (over and beyond symbolic), as one way to explore value to community participants, in order to shine a light on and ensure that the practice lives up to its claims, and as a way of exploring transformation more holistically (in that the artist and the gallery might also change or adapt), the research question moved from using the term 'change' and instead used terminology garnered from theories more in keeping with my values and what led me to undertake the study in the first place. In this respect, the overarching research question was revised to:

> *How might the experiences and perspectives of community participants collaborating in socially engaged art practices be heard, considered and equally valued alongside those of the artist and gallery? What ethical implications for the artist and the gallery arise when community participants' experiences are considered in this way?*

Theoretical framework

Many forms of socially engaged practice aim to challenge power and claim to be grounded in dialogue and mutual exchange. It therefore felt appropriate to utilise theories which reflected these values and principles. As chapter two has already laid out, much of the thesis is built around and draws on contemporary art theory as a scaffolding from which to explore concerns present in socially engaged art practices.

However, this research project can also be considered interdisciplinary, borrowing from and taking on board the principles of a diverse range of disciplines including phenomenology, critical pedagogy and post-colonial theory, to underlie its theoretical framing and methodological approach.

Expert narrators of lived experience

Whilst not identifying itself as intrinsically a phenomenological study, the research recognises those contributing to the study are experts in their own right, experts in relation to their individual and lived phenomena in the world (Moustakas 1994). As my research, in part, sets out to *hear, consider, and equally value* the experiences and perspectives of the community participants the ideals of phenomenology seemed most apt. Thomas explains further:

> Phenomenology is concerned with the human encounter, experience and understanding of worldly things, and with how these happenings come to be possible. While empiricism and positivism take the givenness of material objects as an unquestioned first principle, phenomenologists from Edmund Husserl onwards have argued that if science is to concern itself with the acquisition of information through the physical senses (in laboratory experiments or field observations) then the character of experience needs to be problematized. Rationalists like Descartes had sought to overcome scepticism about our knowledge of the phenomenal world by starting from the reality of the human subject's thought processes (2006: 43).

Austrian philosopher and social phenomenologist Alfred Schutz bridged sociological and phenomenological traditions and expanded on and refined Husserl's theory of phenomenology. He explored the living experience of the 'Self' or 'Ego' and the retrospective construction of meaning, and the interpretation of and understanding of 'Thou' or another person's experience (1967). Schutz suggested that the researcher could not observe the subjective experience of another person precisely, for it presupposes that the researcher has lived through all the conscious states and intentional 'Acts' that constitute an experience: '"intended meaning" is therefore

essentially subjective and is in principle confined to the self-interpretation of the person who lives through the experience to be interpreted' (Ibid.: 99).

As Schutz asserts, it is impossible for the researcher to fully grasp the subjective lived experience of research participants. Therefore a methodology that enables participants to interpret and represent their own experiences and 'intended meaning', recognising them as expert narrators, was considered one of the most useful approaches in this study. In this research that seeks to amplify the voices of those previously unheard, it could be argued that myself as researcher, and in considering the broader context of the research, galleries and artists have a responsibility to 'give voice' to community participants.

What does it mean to 'give voice'?

To 'give voice to' literally means to express thoughts or feelings in words, but it can also be understood as: 'empowering people to be heard who might otherwise remain silent' (Bogdan and Biklen 1998: 204) or who have been silenced. Britzman goes further by stating that: '[A] commitment to voice attests to the right of speaking and being represented' (1989). In other words, voice is an individual's ability and right to make themselves heard and to present their experiences and perspectives to others or the opportunity to participate in the construction of self and to decide how to represent that self to others (Ashby 2011).

However, 'to give voice' or 'giving voice' are loaded terms. Within socially engaged art and participatory practices, 'giving voice' is often used to describe a methodological shift from singularly authored work to work that is co-produced or authored by multiple people. This process also implies an emancipation of participants whereby they begin to express their thoughts and feelings and take ownership of their self-representation. In the context of the museum or gallery, 'giving voice' is often employed by artists, curators and educators as a means of articulating a desire to help or enable audiences or participants to share their perspectives as a process of empowerment; yet as art museum educator, artist and writer Felicity Allen acknowledges the term is problematic (2013). This leads us to ask who is 'giving voice' and is it theirs to give? What is to gain from 'giving voice' and who benefits the most?

‘Giving’ implies that voices can be owned, possessed or colonised by another. And the act of ‘giving’, or even ‘gifting’, is not necessarily reciprocal. Academic, educator and author of the blog ‘Black(ness) in Bold: Black Professors, Black Experiences and Black Magic’ Jamila Lyiscott expands on these concerns in relation to the education of incarcerated young men. She asserts that:

> The idea of “giving” students voice, especially when it refers to students of color, only serves to reify the dynamic of paternalism that renders Black and Brown students voiceless until some salvific external force gifts them with the privilege to speak. Rather than acknowledge the systemic violences that attempt to silence the rich voices, cultures, and histories that students bring into classrooms, this orientation positions students, and by extension, the communities of students, as eternally in need of institutional sanctioning (cited in Turnbull 2016).

Lyiscott recognises that her students already have voice: voice is not given to them by educators or others in positions of authority. Rather in their educational setting a space to be heard is created, an ear is leant to be listened to, where students can be authorities of their own voice and narrative, and where their realities, perspectives, and identities can be shared and heard (Ibid.). bell hooks, American author, feminist and social activist powerfully highlights further issues surrounding the notion of ‘voice’ through her poetic provocation:

> No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still colonizer the speaking subject and you are now at the center of my talk (1990: 343).

hooks, who writes on the inter-connectivity of race, capitalism and gender and their capacity to produce systems of oppression, problematises the interpretation of the ‘Othered’ voice and reflects on the use of language as a form of oppression. Here we can make connections with Kester’s concerns surrounding the community artist as

delegate (1995), speaking on behalf of or for the socially-isolated or 'Othered' community in an assumed position of power.

Both Lyiscott and hooks draw on post-colonial theory. hooks, like Lyiscott, offers an alternative to the demeaning notion of 'giving voice' through advocating a 'politics of location' (2004: 153), in this case a space for action as well as listening, a: 'marginal space that is not a site of dominance but a place of resistance' (1990: 343). Lyiscott and hooks conceptualise the notion of space (physical and symbolic) as a site for critical reflection (for both the students and educator or the oppressed and oppressor), an opportunity for expressing diverse identities, and as a form of resistance where dominant cultures can be challenged, where transformation is possible and a process of re-vision can begin. hooks suggests that the margins offer a space for radical openness where the colonised and coloniser can meet, be liberated and move in solidarity, and where the categories of colonised and coloniser can be erased (2004: 156-159). Parallels can be drawn with influential Brazilian theorist of dialogue, Paulo Freire and his work on critical pedagogy found in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, first published in 1968.

Freire is critical of authoritarian and didactic education models or, as he describes, 'banking concepts', that have a dehumanising power (1970). He instead promotes a renegotiation of pedagogical power relations in the case where the teacher is traditionally posed as oppressor and the students oppressed. Freire proposes a 'problem-posing' pedagogy, one that is based on dialogue in which the teacher and the students undergo a process of humanisation and are liberated together. He expands:

> Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerged: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. In this process, arguments based on "authority" are no longer valid; in order to function authority must be *on the side of* freedom, not *against* it. Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. People teach each other, mediated

> by the world, by the cognizable objects which in banking education are "owned" by the teacher' (Ibid.: 61).

The process by which education takes place is paramount to Freire. He makes the case for: 'a pedagogy which must be forged *with*, not, *for*, the oppressed' (Ibid.: 30). To enable liberation or emancipation (from both the oppressive teacher and themselves as internalised oppressor), whereby the student moves from spectator to actor and from passive to active, the exploitative relationship between oppressed and oppressor must be acknowledged in this process and come into consciousness. In critical pedagogy the teacher-student or:

> … the actors who come from "another world" to the world of the people do so not as invaders. They do not come to teach or transmit or *to give* anything, but rather to learn, with the people, about the people's world … the actors become integrated with the people, who are co-authors of the action that both perform upon the world (Ibid.: 161) [Emphasis added].

In Freire's critical pedagogy, mutual learning takes place through dialogue and co-authored action; the act of 'giving' is a form of false generosity, which only serves to perpetuate oppression (Ibid.: 26-27). Finkelpearl, in his introduction to the edited texts in *What We Made: Conversations on Social Cooperation*, observes how Freire's interest in the oppressed subject becoming an actor and co-author has shaped contemporary concerns of socially engaged practitioners, who have an interest in activism, dialogue and cooperation (2013: 30-48). The influence that critical pedagogy has had on contemporary learning practice in galleries, including co-construction, is also apparent, as Pringle indicates in her proposal for a contemporary gallery education (CGE) model where the educator and students become co-learners in an experimental, dialogical, collaborative and open-ended process (2006: 38-40).

Considering the community participants in this way, expert narrators of their own lived experience and co-authors and co-learners in creative process, chapter five of the thesis will set out to offer and dedicate a space for the community participants' voices (of one specific case study), to be heard in an attempt to begin to redress the historic imbalance of voice in socially engaged arts practice. At this juncture, it must also be acknowledged that as a researcher I must be careful not to colonise community

participants' voice through my own interpretation and fuel paternalistic and patronising tendencies. While the community participants' experiences are central to the research, I recognise that as a qualitative researcher I bring my own experiences, prior knowledge and viewpoint to bear on the data. I must therefore accept that not only are the participants' experiences exposed; but my own interpretation of those experiences is also revealed.

The concept of voice as data closest to the truth or most authentic in speaking of participants' thought processes and experiences also requires further questioning. Mazzei and Jackson (2009) recommend a more critical approach concerning voice, one that refuses the simplistic conflation of 'voice as evidence'. They state:

> … voice has frequently been privileged because it has been assumed that voice can speak the truth of consciousness and experience. In these paradigms, voice lingers close to the truth and the real, and because of this proximity, has become seen almost as a mirror to the soul, the essence of the self. Qualitative researchers have been trained to privilege this voice, to 'free' the authentic voice from whatever restrains it from coming into being, from relating the truth about the self. This drives to make voices heard and understood, bringing meaning and self to consciousness and creating transcendental, universal truths, gestures toward the primacy of voice in conventional qualitative research (2009: 1).

Whilst respecting the community participants as expert narrators of their own lived experience, further interrogation of their experiences is required in order to move away from the idea that one person's interpretation of reality is 'truth'. In recognising the role that I play as a qualitative researcher threading together the larger concerns of the research study I will have to deal with questions about what status to give to participant voice. As Mason asks: 'are narrators witnesses who can embellish other forms of knowledge of a set of events, or do their narrations represent in themselves the changes [researchers] seek to understand' (2002: 32)?

Although a concern, the research design enables me to avoid these potential pitfalls through employing theoretical frameworks to help me interpret and analyse the meaning behind what people say and through utilising a number of research methods

that generate further data that underpin and expand on the research participants' voiced perceptions and experiences, which the chapter now turns its attention to.

Research methods

Case study

Qualitative research allows for an interest: 'in the ways in which these social phenomena occur or are performed in the context of a 'setting' (Ibid: 85). A key part of my research strategy is the use of a case study approach, which Yin asserts arises out of the desire to understand complex contemporary social phenomena in a real-life context (2003: 1-2).

Through my knowledge of the sector and contacts made whilst working as a gallery educator and area representative for engage (the National Association for Gallery Education), I had a good sense of socially engaged practice taking place in the UK. I initially planned to approach three galleries undertaking such work and invite them to participate in the research study. After considering the scope of the research and reflecting on my own resource (time and capacity), I decided it would be more beneficial to undertake a pilot project and an in-depth study of one socially engaged art project. While attending the engage Conference in 2013, I had a conversation with Karen Thomas, who had recently been appointed in a new role as Community Officer at Kettle's Yard in Cambridge. She informed me that the gallery was about to embark on a long-term community engagement programme, working collaboratively with socially engaged artists and their local community. Although I was familiar with Kettle's Yard, I had not worked previously with the gallery, which meant I could approach the case study in a more critical and detached manner. Once I had received ethics approval and found out that Kettle's Yard had been successful in their funding application to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to realise their ambitions for a collaborative and socially engaged art programme – *Open House*, I formally approached the gallery and invited them to participate in the research study. Having met with Karen on several occasions following the engage Conference, and through reading their explicit aims and ambitions for *Open House* I observed that the case study reflected ethically-sound principles and was grounded in a value system that genuinely sought to engage and

collaborate with communities, in many respects typifying the phenomena I was interested in investigating. Although this particular case study has distinguishing features, through an in-depth analysis of this one example the research has the capacity to illuminate my research 'puzzle' through theoretical generalisability. As Mason asserts: '[T]his form of generalization is based on the idea that you can use your detailed and holistic explanation of one setting or set of processes to 'frame' relevant questions about others' (2002: 196). The following chapter will give a further overview of Kettle's Yard and outline the *Open House* programme, my primary case study.

Pilot study

A pilot study was also carried out at the beginning of 2015 to refine my research questions and determine how best to answer my research puzzle. The study was undertaken at the John Taylor Hospice in Erdington, Birmingham and explored the socially engaged *Life: Echo* project, a collaboration between Ikon Gallery, the hospice and a number of its adult residents (five participants took part in the pilot study), alongside sound artist Justin Wiggan (also a qualified counsellor).

The gallery had a strong reputation for long-term engagement with their local communities, and this project was of particular interest as it was sited outside the gallery, directly in a community setting – the hospice. I approached the then head of learning at Ikon Gallery Simon Taylor and invited the gallery to participate in the research project as a pilot study. When the study began artist Justin Wiggan had been working at the hospice as an artist in residence one day per week for coming up to one year. His innovative practice included collecting reminiscence through one-to-one interviews and recording soundscapes that related to the residents' positive memories in order to more effectively trigger and strengthen this particular memory and evoke positive feelings within the participant, as well as create sound files or 'life echoes' that acted as a legacy for the resident's family once they passed away. Erin Libetta, a member of Ikon's learning team was also based at the hospice one day per week. This considerable investment in resource, a complex and sympathetic approach to working with vulnerable people, and the long-term nature of the project was particularly noteworthy; hence, why, *Life: Echo* was chosen as a pilot study.

I interviewed five participants and the artist, each on one occasion, and observed several sessions over a three-month period. However, not as much data was gathered as I had hoped. Analysis of the data that I did have revealed a number of emerging themes relating to participant experience; these included: a high level of engagement, where the participants were visibly animated, curious, more sociable and content; participants appreciated and began to recognise a value in their memories through sharing and the legacy of the *Life: Echo*; participants had a purposeful and meaningful role within the project, which placed them in a different position, not just receiving care, but also giving back. This in turn increased the participants' confidence and resilience in returning to activities they would have previously done (and potentially could have still done), but had avoided since becoming ill.

The pilot study was instrumental in revealing the strengths and weaknesses of my initial research idea and, as discussed previously in the chapter, helped me to realise some of the inherent issues in my research question and interview questions, namely focusing on participant 'change'. By making 'change' the central area of interest in the research, I also ran the risk of ignoring other valuable experiences articulated by the participants. Through re-considering my approach and shifting away from exploring experiences that solely conveyed 'change', I uncovered many more interesting and noteworthy findings. Thinking through these pilot research findings also gave me an opportunity to consider what future themes might be uncovered in the primary case study *Open House*.

Beyond this, the main advantages of the pilot study were in – highlighting the specific and important role that gatekeepers play in supporting the development of strong relationships and a sense of trust (particularly when working with vulnerable people); in refining my interview questions to generate the types of data needed to respond to my research puzzle and ultimately change my overarching research question; and in exploring different methods of gathering data, in particular participant observation and the value of interpreting all forms of language, not just verbal expression. I shall now discuss the qualitative research methods applied in the primary case study – *Open House* at Kettle's Yard.

Qualitative and semi-structured interviews

Interviewing the community participants was a fundamental method applied in the research project. As a qualitative research study I decided not to purposefully sample, rather I invited a wide range of individuals to participate, being mindful to include participants of different ages, experience and background. I also interviewed a range of stakeholders involved in the *Open House* case study at different points in the process including interviews with staff from Kettle's Yard, the artist in residence and members of the *Open House* community panel twice, once at the start of the programme and again at the end of the first year (see Appendix 1 for summary of interviews conducted). In total I conducted twenty-five interviews with twenty-two people. Each interview was conducted individually and face-to-face, which allowed for, in most cases, an open and honest dialogue. Being situated at many of the events and activities throughout the case study meant that I had many informal conversations with participants, which also developed relationships based on trust. Alongside this I also interviewed a number of community participants who collaborated in creative activities as part of the programme, and in some cases these interviews were conducted as group conversations.

As a result of conducting the pilot study I had a greater understanding of the value of open-ended and semi-structured interview questions in eliciting answers most useful in this research. A conversational approach and phrasing the questions in an open manner allowed the research participants to tell me about their experiences and perceptions in their own way. Despite a flexibility around the direction the interviews took (responding and adapting to issues raised by the interviewees), a series of established questions provided a framework and directed the process (see Appendix 2 for sample interview questions). All interviews were transcribed and coded by hand thematically which helped to build a picture and interpret recurring experiences and commonalities of values expressed; it also drew attention to arising areas of interest and concern, as well as the unexpected and unforeseen. This helped to enrich, refine and reshape the analysis and to make my data meaningful.

Observation

I was mindful not to treat understandings generated from the interviews as though they were a direct reflection of the experience or as if the interviews were simply excavating facts (Mason 2002: 64). To counter this, I conducted participant observation to support and expand on data generated through the interview process. This also allowed for non-verbal expressions of experience to be captured and interpreted, as: 'meaningful knowledge cannot be generated without observation, because not all knowledge is for example articulable, recountable or constructable in an interview' (Ibid.: 85). Unlike in the pilot study, (where I observed as an outsider not participating in the activity itself), I undertook participatory observation at thirty events, workshops and meetings in *Open House* where I was directly engaged as an observer, researcher and a participant. This provided an opportunity for in-depth explorations of the process, to get a sense of what was taking place, rather than an exclusive focus on the outcomes that were generated. It also offered an opportunity to consider the immediate experience of others through watching the participants' facial expressions and physical reactions, or what phenomenologist Schutz describes as the 'bodily presence' or 'corporeal givenness' (Walsh on Schutz 1967: xxv – xxvi).

Observation of participants in the moment went some way in achieving, as Schutz (1967) describes, 'simultaneity', where: 'we sense that the other person's stream of consciousness is flowing along a track that is temporally parallel with our own' (Ibid.: xxv) or when the observer and observed are in unison and where: 'the observer keeps pace, as it were, with each step of the observed person's action, identifying himself with the latter's experiences within a common "we-relationship"' (Schutz 1967: 115).

With each observation, I kept field notes recording information as wide-ranging as – the session dates, times and locations; session leaders and participants; activities that took place; any incident, stories or things that were said; results from observation; and personal impressions about the atmosphere (Matarasso 2012: 13). These notes were kept in a research diary where I further reflected a few days after each activity to let my thoughts distil. Reflections were also added to the journal after casual encounters with the participants, directly after interviews and whilst listening to and watching back the recorded data. Through reading my data reflexively I was able to locate

myself in the data, explore my role and perspective in the process of interpreting the data in order to understand the shaping role of my own gaze (Mason 2002). This research design also allowed for analysis to begin in the field and to take place simultaneously with data generation.

Participant journals

Open House Journal

Use this Journal throughout the Open House project and respond to the following questions through any approach you would like to use, for example: writing, drawing, mind-mapping, collaging, adding photos etc.:

What are your experiences and perceptions of taking part in the Open House project?

What do you value most about taking part in the Open House project?

How do you think you have changed as a result of collaborating in the Open House project?

What new skills and knowledge have you gained as a result of making an artwork in the Open House project?

Day 1

Figure 3.1 Scan of the introductory page and instructions for keeping an *Open House* participant journal

Hearing from the participants in their own words is ideologically important in a research project that, in part, seeks to understand the experiences and perceptions of individuals. Each participant was asked whether they would like to keep a journal reflecting on their thought processes during the *Open House* programme. Those that accepted were offered a journal in a size and style of their choice and were asked to consider and respond to questions through their preferred medium (Figure 3.1). Similar to the field diary that I kept as researcher, the journals offered an opportunity for the participants to immediately capture their reactions and responses whilst participating in an activity, as well as reflect on their experiences after the fact, supporting them in ascribing meaning to that experience. Schutz (1967) suggests that meaning is not formed during the lived experience, but rather attributed to an experience retrospectively through acts of reflection, recognition and identification.

Scans of each participant journal were captured at the end of the research project and informed some of the conversations in the concluding one-to-one interviews. I also gathered other documentation data throughout the study (mainly from Kettle's Yard). These included reports, papers, responses cards with participant feedback, funding applications and other materials, such as promotional and marketing print. These data sources enriched the analysis, adding deeper and further layers for interpretation in a holistically designed and approached research project.

Focus groups

I facilitated a number of focus groups during the research to generate communal accounts (including consensus and disagreement) of experience. This also revealed the dynamics of the group and collaboration in action. The focus groups provided new data and expanded on the data generated through individual interviews: 'by stimulating interaction of particular kinds through group or focus group interviews, where you guide group discussions through a particular set of topics so that you can observe how situational interactions take place, and how issues are conceptualized, worked out and negotiated in those contexts' (Mason 2002: 64).

This approach was helpful in enabling the community panel and Kettle's Yard staff to share thoughts and reflections on *Open House* at key points. Panel members felt more

comfortable critiquing in a group environment; as others raised concerns this elicited further reflections from the group, not previously raised in formal meetings or one-to-one interviews, only in passing informal conversations.

Visual methods

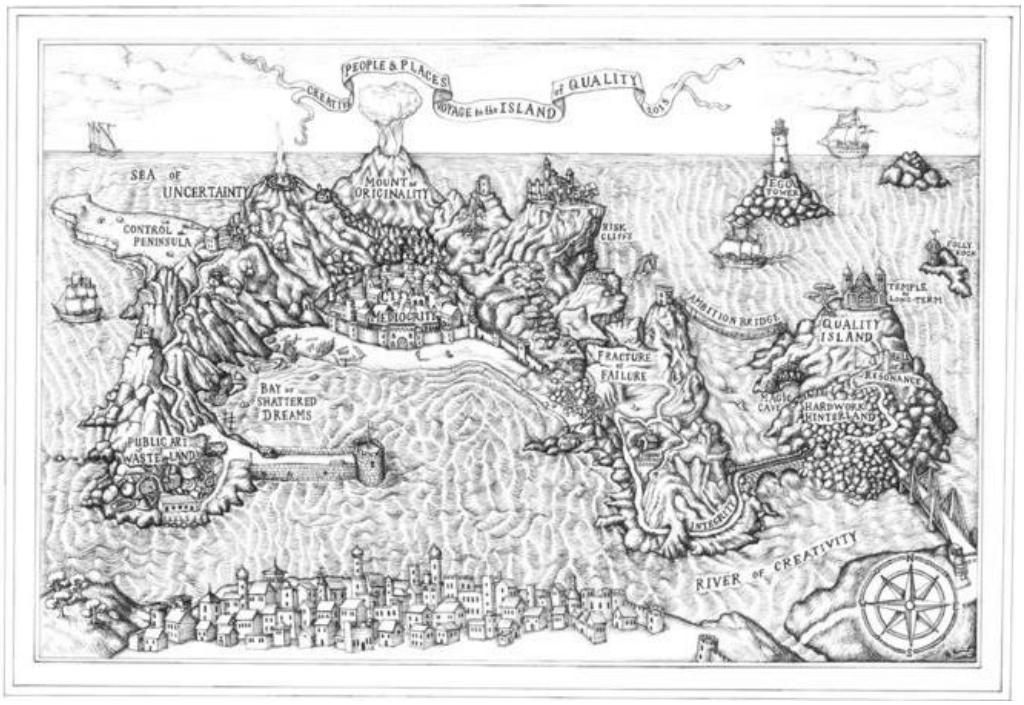


Figure 3.2 Creative People and Places 'Taking Bearings' Toolkit

To facilitate the focus groups with the community panel and Kettle's Yard staff I also employed visual mapping as an approach. Utilising and adapting the Creative People and Places (2015) 'Taking Bearings' toolkit (which helps stakeholders meet and reflect on a collaborative process using the analogy of going on a journey, see Figure 3.2), I created a wall map and compass; under each bearing I posed a question for, firstly, individuals to consider, reflect on and write their responses on post-it notes, and then come together as a group where I facilitated discussions around their responses (Figure 3.3). The questions were open and abstract and based on arriving at a destination at the end of a journey. They included:

North: *Is this where you expected to be?*

West: *What will you leave behind?*

East: *What got lost on the way?*

South: *What will you take away?*

Figure 3.3 *Open House* Community Panel Visual Map, February 2016, photograph by Sarah Plumb

These were recorded on film, with the dialogue later transcribed, coded and analysed in a similar way to the interviews. But in contrast to the one-to-one interview, using this method enabled group conversations to take place that physically activated the research participants through visually mapping their responses, as Figure 3.4 illustrates, and supported them in expressing their experiences and perceptions on a number of levels.

It also focused the group's attention on the map, rather than each other, which again might have meant that people felt more confident in airing challenging views. Parallels can be drawn with techniques adapted from Augusto Boal's (1979) *Theatre of the Oppressed* (which itself was inspired by Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*), used by Lynch in the 'Whose Cake is it Anyway' study and described here in her essay 'Collaboration, contestation, and creative conflict'. She states:

> The technique I am working with is based on the notion that participants need to develop alternative communication skills in order to gain sufficient confidence to challenge the museum's 'knowledge-based' power in the interpretation and contextualisation of collections. It means that people can

begin to clearly and confidently express their views without being dependent upon Eurocentric academic language or forms of communication (2011b: 156).

Figure 3.4 *Open House* Community Panel Meeting with facilitated focus group using the 'Taking Bearings' Toolkit as a Visual Mapping Exercise, February 2016, photograph by Sarah Plumb

The type of language used, alongside offering other creative mediums in which to communicate, is key in research projects that seek to hear from all stakeholders, as Lynch suggests above. Through avoiding academic or 'art-centric' language and instead using wording associated with journeying everyone was able to respond and all were placed on a level playing field.

Another approach that also utilised accessible language, focusing on 'stories of change', and used a visual diagram to express experiences of change, was employed when conducting a focus group with secondary school students participating in *Open House* (Figures 3.5 and 3.6). In this case I utilised the 'Most Significant Change Technique' (Davies and Dart 2005).

Most Significant Change (MSC) is a participatory form of monitoring and evaluating social change programmes and projects. It is an inclusive approach as many stakeholders are involved both in deciding the sorts of change to be recorded and in

analysing the data (Ibid.). It also focuses on qualitative outcomes and it does not make use of pre-defined indicators, especially ones that have to be counted and measured (Ibid.).

Figure 3.5 Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy reflecting on their 'most significant change' resulting from working with Emma Smith during *Open House*, November 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

In the case of *Open House* it was an appropriate tool in generating data that included the words of non-professionals in exploring the effects of collaborating in an arts practice on people's lives. I again took the principles of this technique and adapted it to form a visual diagram that mapped out experiences of change.

The young people were asked to individually respond to the following question writing on post-it notes:

> *In your opinion, what is the most significant change that has taken place for you during Open House?*

And then further reflect on this question adding their response to the post-it note:

> *Why do you consider this particular change to be the most significant one?*

Figure 3.6 Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy reflecting on their 'most significant change' resulting from working with Emma Smith during *Open House*, November 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

Each student was then asked to share their 'story of change' with the rest of the Art Ambassadors. Following this, I led a facilitated discussion in order to help the students

think about the range of 'change stories' emerging and how they interrelated and could be clustered into different themes. Finally, the students were invited to vote on what they considered to be 'the most significant change of *all*', through placing a sticker on the corresponding post-it note reflection. This approach catered for a range of learning styles and needs and, as ethnographer Sarah Pink asserts, visual methods enable groups of people, who might not ordinarily be heard, to express their experiences. She describes: 'visual methods as routes through which other people's understandings, experiences and ways of doing things can become "visible" and therefore comprehended, explained to others, and can inform social interventions' (2011: 446). This visual method, alongside interviews with a group of Art Ambassadors (one conducted at the start of the *Open House* workshops at North Cambridge Academy and one at the end) as well as participating in and observing the workshops, offered a richer understanding of the students' experiences.

As alluded to so far, visual methods offer alternative ways of expressing and capturing thoughts and opinions. Throughout the research project visual documentary footage was collected by both the research participants and myself through photography and film footage, as well as documentation of visual responses and scans of participants' artworks and journals. This again placed the emphasis on research participants as experts of their own experience, and as Pink suggests challenged conventional notions of expertise and power imbalances:

> … using the camera in self-conscious ways both research participants and researchers explore particular, and often affective, dimensions of experience in ways often not approached using conventional methods … they offer researchers and participants routes through which to go beyond the conventional notion of ''expert'' through a focus on embodied sensory and affective or emotional knowing and knowledge (Ibid.: 450 – 451).

The film and photography footage was later analysed in order to reveal how participants expressed their experiences both verbally and non-verbally. It captured social interactions, body language, how people engaged in the activities, and facial expressions that might not have been observed during the session itself.

It was important to use wide-ranging qualitative research methods in the research project in order to capture the complexity of human experience in a holistic way and explore the research question multi-dimensionally, as Mason asserts: '[T]he focus on "what the eye can see" is partly a movement against what some might see as the extraordinary dominance of talk and text in our research imaginations and methods, extraordinary because of the one-dimensional nature of this foray into, or construction of, what most would agree is a multi-dimensional, multi-sensory "reality"' (2002: 104).

Ethics

The research project was carried out in accordance with the University of Leicester's Research Ethics Code of Practice and online forms were submitted for approval before any field work proceeded. The research participants were given an information sheet (Appendix 3) and made aware of the aims and objectives of the study and how the data generated would be used. Participants also had the right to withdraw consent within the year-long timeframe offered. As my research project involved working with children, young people and potentially vulnerable adults, I applied for an enhanced DBS check, safeguarding protocols were followed and further ethical considerations were made. These included ensuring that informed consent (Appendix 4) was received at each stage of the research project, and consent was requested from the research participants and in the case of children, young people and vulnerable adults further consent was sought from the participants' family member, parent or guardian; on the consent forms anonymity and confidentiality where possible was offered, but all of the research participants were pleased to be named (especially after explaining the rationale of the research project and its aim of amplifying community participants' voices); and I also ensured that another responsible adult was in the room when conducting interviews with vulnerable adults, children and young people (with many of these interviews conducted in groups).

Having critically considered and presented the research design and methods, and its appropriateness in tackling the research question in hand, the next chapter highlights the context in which the research is situated – the *Open House* programme at Kettle's Yard, Cambridge.

Chapter Four

Case study

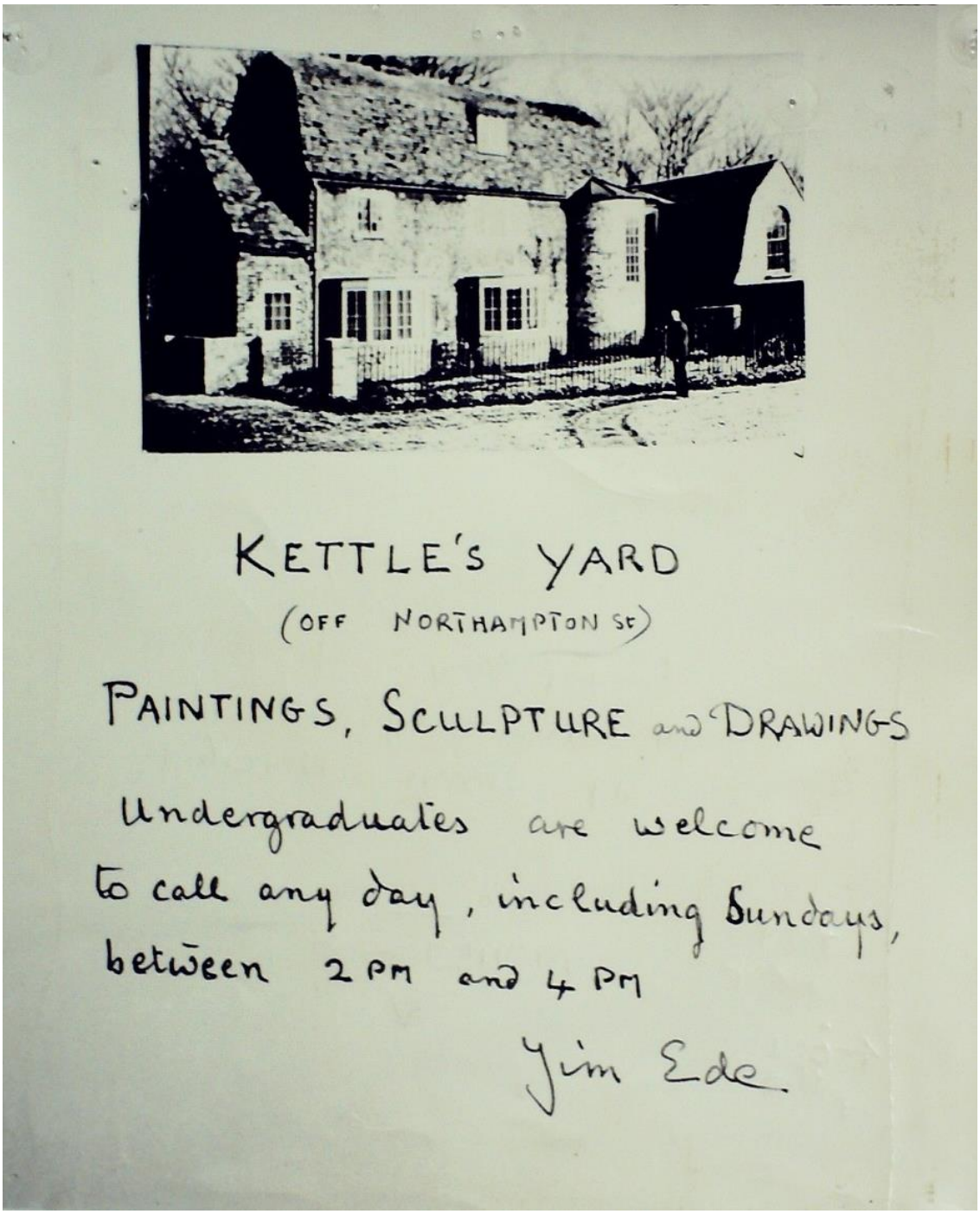


Figure 4.1 Scan of Jim Ede's *Open House* invitation from the archive, paper deposited by Jacob Simon (first undergraduate representative on Kettle's Yard Committee) covering the period 1968-1970 © Kettle's Yard

This chapter describes the case study *Open House* at Kettle's Yard, which was selected as a focused site as, in many respects, it typified the phenomena I was interested in investigating and exposed the roles that contemporary art galleries can play as mediators (one of many roles that will be explored in greater depth later in the thesis).

Utilising this case study in future chapters I will focus on the experiences of, and value to, community participants collaborating in socially engaged arts practice, and the arising ethical implications for the gallery and artist of such works.

Here, I describe the background and establishment of an offsite, place-based community engagement programme initiated by a modern and contemporary university museum and gallery; present the formation of a politically coherent community panel; and introduce the first *Open House* artist in residence's practice, and the suite of creative activities programmed during the first stage of a three-year programme.

Kettle's Yard and Open House

Open House aims to establish long-term arts and cultural partnerships between Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge Museums, and neighbouring communities. Administered by Kettle's Yard and funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Cambridge City Council and Artisa Foundation, *Open House* celebrates local creativity and collaborates with, and is situated within, four political wards of North Cambridge.

Kettle's Yard was the home of former Tate curator of contemporary arts Jim Ede and his wife Helen, who lived there from 1958 to 1973. It houses their collection of early twentieth-century British and European art displayed alongside ceramics, glass, textiles and furniture, and found natural objects including pebbles, shells, plants, flowers, and fruit. During the fifteen years they lived there they hosted music concerts and opened their home between two and four each afternoon inviting University students to ponder both the artworks and everyday objects on display, as Figure 4.1 illustrates. This reflected Ede's philosophy to fuse art with daily life and help change the way we see the world and our place within it. In 1970, in an introduction to the handlist, Ede described Kettle's Yard as neither:

> … an art gallery or museum, nor is it simply a collection of works of art reflecting my taste or the taste of a given period. It is, rather, a continuing way of life from these last fifty years, in which stray objects, stones, glass, pictures, sculpture, in light and in space, have been used to make manifest the underlying stability which more and more we need to recognise if we are not to

> be swamped by all that is so rapidly opening up before us (cited in Kettle's Yard 2012).

The Edes left the house and its contents to the University of Cambridge. Since the 1970s it has had three extensions, adding a gallery space for temporary exhibitions and space for a programme of education, events and concerts. Now funded by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation the gallery, museum and home closed in June 2015 for two years for major building work and a redevelopment. During this closed period Kettle's Yard are working with a number of partner galleries to host offsite exhibitions of the collection, the chamber music series is being hosted by the Old Divinity School, St John's College, and the *Open House* programme sets out to offer community engagement with a series of free events, workshops and exhibitions.

Open House: Art and engagement in North Cambridge

In 2011 Andrew Nairne became director of Kettle's Yard, at a time when funding had been secured to develop a new wing to expand the galleries and add two new educational spaces. At this time, Nairne also began to reimagine how Kettle's Yard could engage with its audiences and local community, stating that:

> I'm passionate about artists but only to the extent that they connect with audiences. It is a lovely thing to go and visit an artist in their studio but it is even more lovely to see people streaming into your gallery or see an artist doing something in a community that alters how people see the world … The crucial point is that it's not about money, it's about relationships and there are relationships for Kettle's Yard to build that perhaps we have not put enough emphasis on in the past. It is about people's experiences and how art, culture and museums and galleries and what happens in them can connect with people and what happens in their lives (cited in Stephens 2012).

He embarked on securing further funding for an aspirational and long-term community engagement programme that would help Kettle's Yard become a more open and outward-looking organisation. He also created new roles that would form part of an integrated programming team, including community officer, a position filled by Karen Thomas and, after funding was received from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, a part-time

assistant curator: community programme, taken up by Liz Ballard. Karen started in April 2013 and manages the *Open House* programme with a remit to develop and deliver community engagement activity with a particular focus on working with communities in North Cambridge. Liz, with skills in both community engagement and curatorial practice, started in October 2014 and supports the delivery of *Open House*. Once both Karen and Liz were in post Kettle's Yard received further funding from the Artisa Foundation to support a nine-month curatorial fellowship. Hannah Kershaw was appointed in April 2015, offering her the opportunity to gain experience in both curating and community engagement work. These new roles indicate an increasing trend within UK museums and galleries that reflects a shift away from practices such as 'outreach' being seen as on the periphery, or the 'welfare model' (O'Neill 2002) where education and outreach activities are 'bolted on', and towards 'community engagement' as embedded in the core functions and mission of the museum or gallery. This is reflected in the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's 'Our Museum: Communities and Museums as Active Partners' programme, an initiative that facilitates organisational change and encourages museums to be rooted in local need; to generate community agency and capability-building; and to develop reflective practice (2016).

A key concern of Kettle's Yard is the low cultural engagement of the neighbouring wards of Arbury and Kings Hedges in North Cambridge. After significant audience research in 2010 Kettle's Yard found that only 0.5% of their UK visitors came from postcodes found in Arbury and Kings Hedges. Their research indicated that Kettle's Yard was 'not a place for them', that prior knowledge was needed, and their association with the University with its implied intellectual, physical and social barriers was frequently cited as an obstacle to accessing the offer (Kettle's Yard 2014). North Cambridge also features significantly in the English Indices of Deprivation (2015). Kings Hedges has the highest teenage conception rate and the lowest life expectancy in the city, and with a population of 17,000 (Kings Hedges and Arbury has a diverse community and a significant Asian population), the Arbury Community Centre regularly hosts activities from over twenty culturally diverse groups, while 90% of the 2013-14 intake at Kings Hedges Nursery has English as a second language (Kettle's Yard 2014).

The diverse cultural make-up of North Cambridge and a number of significant social issues have, in part, contributed to these communities lacking confidence in engaging with the city's cultural offer. Kettle's Yard (2014) states that:

> *Open House: Art and Engagement in North Cambridge* seeks to address these problems and needs through creating an innovative and long-term arts and cultural partnership that has significant impact. There is a unique opportunity to enrich the lives of those living in North Cambridge, for Kettle's Yard to diversify its audiences and grow through dialogue with local communities.

Despite these social issues, North Cambridge is an active community with many social groups, neighbourhood centres, festivals and social events; all the primary schools have been rated good or outstanding by Ofsted; and there is a proud tradition of community activism and campaigning in the area. The first estates of Arbury were built in the late 1950s and had been planned on paper with open spaces for recreation and cul-de-sacs to discourage cut-through traffic, but with no public consultation in planning at the time it quickly became apparent that there was a lack of community facilities (Kettle's Yard 2015a). As a result, in the 1960s and 1970s the community came together and made the case for more amenities to be built:

> … many young mothers that had moved to the area and needed play facilities for their children, sought each other out, set up groups like the Grovebury Ladies and formed campaigns to provide a playground; the desire for more trees to be planted was pursued relentlessly by members of the community; an annual carnival was developed; the church has played a central role in the development of the area; the need for community meeting places was identified very early on and a campaign was mounted to build a community centre. These factors were not planned for, they have been developed from a need and a desire for people to come together, to meet, to socialise and to live in a pleasant environment (Ibid.).

Although the community has a history of activism, there is a lack of cohesion (Kettle's Yard 2014). In 2013 and 2014 Karen worked in consultation with local leaders who expressed a desire for closer and genuine relationships between arts organisations, museums and galleries, and local residents. Collectively they produced a shared set of

long-term desired social aims of *Open House*, including fulfilling the community's ambitions for cohesion. Previous community engagement projects initiated by cultural institutions in the city were perceived by the community as 'parachuted in' with little long-term community benefit. *Open House* explores how sustained partnerships with arts and cultural organisations can support communities in becoming a more active voice in shaping the cultural offer of their city. The aims and objectives for the programme are:

> *Developing skills and realising potential*:
> -Increasing the skills of creative and cultural organisations, including Kettle's Yard, to build relationships with disengaged communities
> -Enabling the residents of Arbury and Kings Hedges to increase their impact upon and access to culture and creativity
>
> *An attitudinal shift*:
> -Cultural organisations co-curating programmes in genuine, reflective dialogue with audiences
> -Communities achieving a sense of ownership of culture in their city
>
> *Sharing knowledge*:
> -Cultural organisations sharing knowledge and expertise of contemporary arts practice and museum collections
> -Communities sharing knowledge, stories, voice and creativity (Kettle's Yard 2014).

Karen further explains the thinking behind *Open House* and expands on the reasons for developing a shared set of aims with the community:

> Part of the reason for working in this community in particular, it's one of the closest areas to Kettle's Yard but it's also our lowest attendees. So at the time of putting in the application [to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation] one percent of our annual visitors were from North Cambridge and it's literally across the road, that statistic was echoed around other cultural organisations in the city. There's also lots of social and economic deprivation in North Cambridge and there are a lot of other competing factors for people's time and energy and resources…

> arts and culture wasn't really a high priority, so working with the community seemed to be the best way to make sure that the offer that we created or established through *Open House* was appropriate for the people who lived locally (2015a).

Open House is funded over a three-year period, and during that time the intended outcomes of the programme are, that:

> -Residents of Arbury and Kings Hedges will increase in confidence in accessing cultural provision
> -Residents of Arbury and Kings Hedges will feel empowered and be able to influence change at Kettle's Yard
> -Museums with historic collections will become informed and confident to work with contemporary artists with socially engaged practice to engage communities (Kettle's Yard 2014).

Community panel

Open House is shaped in consultation with a community panel of five North Cambridge residents and an independent chair, who volunteer their time and meet approximately once every one to two months at a range of venues across North Cambridge, including a number of community centres (Figure 4.2). The community panel includes Christine Cowling Jones, parent governor at Grove Primary School and trustee of Red Hen, a local charity supporting children and families to overcome barriers to learning; Mohammed Djazmi, local artist (who, very sadly, passed away in the first year of *Open House*); Jim Lees, volunteer at Care Network that provides help for older isolated and vulnerable people living in Cambridgeshire; Alan Soer, manager of Arbury Community Centre, a very active, well-used and vibrant centre in North Cambridge; and Jonathan Stanley, head of art at local secondary school North Cambridge Academy. Joel Chalfen, director of studies at Homerton College, Cambridge University was invited to take up the position of independent chair as he has significant experience in and an understanding of community arts, but is not directly involved in the *Open House* programme. Kettle's Yard approached and invited these people to act as ambassadors of the programme and speak on behalf of the community, as Karen discusses:

> We wanted to have a panel that reflected the diverse population of North Cambridge and we also wanted people who were committed to the project. We've done shorter-term projects in the lead-up to this just to get to know people and find out what the appetite was for this sort of programme and through that we met a few key people who we felt would act as ambassadors, but also not be afraid about being the voice of others in the community. So I suppose initially the community panel is embedded … politicised people who are already doing stuff in the community (2015a).

Figure 4.2 *Open House* Community Panel debrief after the first year's programme, 2016, photograph by Liz Ballard

Karen and Liz attend every community panel meeting and in the main set the agenda. There is also an open invitation to students from North Cambridge Academy and other Kettle's Yard staff to attend meetings. The first community panel meeting took place in November 2014 and was held at Kettle's Yard (before it closed for renovation); it included a tour of the house with the director, an opportunity for everyone to introduce themselves, and an introduction to the programme and community panel terms of reference (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3 First *Open House* Community Panel meeting and tour of Kettle's Yard with Director Andrew Nairne, 2014, photograph by Liz Ballard

Kettle's Yard, with help from the Kings Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership, brought together these key active gatekeepers to share local knowledge, act as delegates of the community and advocates for the programme. It is important to note that although the panel had not worked together previously, all are active and politicised members of the community. While not a requirement of being on the panel all have an interest in the arts whether that be a professional engagement or as a hobby, but not all are confident in accessing culture in the city and none have a specialist knowledge of contemporary art and gallery practice. Within *Open House* the panel represents the wider community, which can be considered 'socially isolated' and in an area with multiple issues of deprivation. However, it is imperative to understand that although their role within the *Open House* programme is to *represent* the community of North Cambridge it would be naïve to think that they embody all parts of the community; rather, as Karen states earlier, they are committed, politicised and active members who bring a range of perspectives characteristic of the diversity found in the area. And although, as we have previously heard, acts of delegation are problematic, the community panel are better positioned than the artist and the gallery to speak on behalf of the community. The panel are confident in engaging in a dialogue:

challenging and questioning the processes of *Open House*, they act as politically coherent spokespeople, with the interests of the community as their main concern. At this stage, it is helpful to recognise and be clear about the parameters within which *Open House* operates, understanding that this is new practice for Kettle's Yard, and the first stage of a process of collaboration that cannot be rushed.

Artist selection evening

Figure 4.4 *Open House* Artist Selection Public Meeting, February 2015, photograph by Liz Ballard

Open House is inspired by the philosophy of Ede who believed art was integral to life and that Kettle's Yard should provide a home, a welcome, a refuge of peace and order for the visual arts and music (Kettle's Yard 2012). Reflecting this vision and central to *Open House* is working with art and artists as a method of engagement. This includes creating events and activities in North Cambridge in partnership with existing community groups to work towards realising their ambitions through art and creativity; displaying objects from the collection in locations across the community, relating them to contemporary life and experiences in new contexts; as well as working with community members and the panel to select contemporary artists 'in

residence' and commission them to collaboratively make artwork, develop projects and plan exhibitions.

In February 2015, the first of three *Open House* artists in residence was selected and commissioned to work over nine months. Alongside this, Kettle's Yard instigated an open call for regionally-based artist educators, to support the programme as 'artist facilitators' and maximise participation and deepen the range and effects of the artist's residency. They looked for artists working in a broad range of media and whose practice incorporated elements of collaboration, as well as having experience of working with audiences who, for multiple reasons, might not engage in the arts. The artist facilitators that were appointed were – Hilary Cox, Kaitlin Ferguson, Elizabeth Hobbs, David Kefford, Georgie Manly, Rosanna Martin, Ella McCartney, Joanne Miller, Hilary Moreton, Filipa Perriera-Stubbs, Celia Pym, Rich Tea Projects (Elaine Tribley and Amanda Westbury), Jane Waterhouse, and Caroline Wendling. Through *Open House* Kettle's Yard wished to reach a number of audiences in North Cambridge, including those not currently engaged with cultural organisations, these included – vulnerable children, young people and their families; isolated older people; people who are new to English or have English as an additional language; and the long-term unemployed (Kettle's Yard 2014). However, by categorising and labelling these individuals and groups (as expressed within their funding application to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation), Kettle's Yard ran the risk of unwittingly 'Othering' the community of North Cambridge, an issue symptomatic of many community engagement programmes (Peaty 2016) and often reflective of conditions attached to grants by major funders (Peaty 2017).

The artist selection meeting was the first example of *Open House* collaborating with members from the broader community, bringing together a range of expertise, including local knowledge and artistic specialism. It was open to all, as requested by the community panel, in an attempt to ensure that the opinions and choices of the community were properly represented (though, of course those who attended the artist selection evening were self-selecting, and therefore likely to be more confident members with an interest in the arts; consequently it is difficult to make claims that these individuals fully represented the whole community of North Cambridge). The meeting was advertised through posters, a community newsletter, email and word of

mouth. Local residents were invited to meet two shortlisted artists, who presented their work (Figure 4.4), and then select the first artist in residence through a secret ballot. This was followed by a group discussion facilitated by the independent chair Joel Chalfen. Emma Smith was appointed and her residency ran from April to the end of November 2015. The community voiced their reasons for selecting Smith, which were in part due to, what they described and perceived as, her open, inclusive and communal methodology.

Through this process a level of decision-making power was shared. It was agreed that Kettle's Yard would shortlist the artists for the community to select from (all with a strong track record of working collaboratively to create high quality artworks), as the community panel recognised and valued the gallery's knowledge and expertise in contemporary arts practice. During the evening Kettle's Yard also provided background information on the shortlisted artists and shared possible points for the community to consider. These included: if they felt a connection to the artist's work; if the subject matter was of interest; if they thought they could work with that person; and how they might work in North Cambridge.

The meeting stimulated discussions around what the community viewed as a priority, and questions were raised as to whether the community wanted to select a practice that was 'familiar' or more 'challenging', as community panel member Alan Soer suggests:

> One of the reasons I was keen to have that person was because I thought she came over as more rounded, more sort of gentle and I think for a first year's attempt anything too on the edge might have been… I didn't want the negative effect… for some people it was a bit too in your face, a bit too raw. I think year two or maybe year three—if one of those other two came back in year two or year three with something, then I think some of the things that we were not sure about we would be happier with because we've got more experience and we've got more confidence (2015a).

From this moment, the ambitions of the programme were more explicitly shared with the community representatives of North Cambridge – *Open House* set out to be a space for negotiation, for respecting individual differences in experience and opinion,

and where mutual exchanges of skills, knowledge and expertise could take place. Within this space there was an aim to develop a high-quality artwork that was embedded within the community and socially relevant and engaged (Plumb 2016).

Year one artist in residence: Emma Smith

Emma Smith's social practice responds to site-specific issues, and explores relationships between people and place through performance, participation, sound and text. 'Smith's working process is research and production based and often involves the bringing together of multidisciplinary teams including academics, professionals and hobbyists, using the gallery space as an active laboratory for experimentation and collective action' (Smith 2016a).

Figure 4.5 Emma Smith, *Playback*. Installation view, The Showroom, London, 2011

Between 2011 and 2012 Emma was Artist Fellow at the Showroom Gallery, London, within the context of the gallery's Communal Knowledge programme: 'a programme of collaborative projects with local and international artists and designers that employs different forms of action and critical reflection towards building an accumulative shared body of knowledge' (Showroom 2013a). During her Fellowship Emma

programmed a series of public discussions called *Public Relations*, and developed the project *Playback*.

Playback was co-created with different groups of people who lived in the neighbouring area, including older people and young people, described as project researchers who had recently immigrated and settled in the area (Showroom 2013b). The research team, which also included translators enabling the young people to communicate in their first language, gathered stories from local groups and through street interviews with members of the public (Showroom 2013b). Twenty fictitious monologues based on responsive actions from the collected stories were then exhibited in the gallery in 2011, which was set up as a performance space and reading room (Figure 4.5). During the opening a group of young performers called DreamArts were invited to perform the scripts unrehearsed to explore and present, as Emma states, '"tacit knowledge" – knowledge that individuals already have but are not fully aware they possess – which during the process of the creation and enactment of the "game" might be drawn to the fore' (Smith cited in Perry 2011: 21). During the exhibition run the public were then invited to participate in *Playback*, as a participatory game, constructing their own short plays and playing out chosen roles from the available narratives (Showroom 2013b).

Collaborative processes are central to Emma's practice, as she: 'is deeply concerned with the generative importance of bringing different voices together … her work draws on the mutual reciprocity of communication in order to emphasise the way that the social place for art … should be found within social exchanges between people' (Perry 2011: 21). Smith claims that *Playback* did not divide the artist and gallery, and community into 'us' and 'them' or situate the gallery and artist in a role of serving the community, whereby they assume 'a position of superiority and trying in some way to "rescue the community"' (2012: 26); instead, through the project, a network of individuals (including members of the community, the artist and gallery staff) emerged leading to exchanges of skills and knowledge (Showroom 2013b). In her recent book *Practice of Place*, which resulted from discourse stimulated by *Public Relations* at the Showroom Gallery, Emma further describes her role in the collaborative process:

> Collaboration for me as a 'teacher' has meant fear… the unknown… letting go of the role of a facilitator to really be collaborative with my students – to give away the space and then find we were sharing the space.
>
> Collaboration is a process of working together with a sense of equality, which is not that everyone is equal.
>
> Co-labour-ation.
>
> Collaboration is a process of mutually beneficial sharing (2015a: 99).

In the first residency of *Open House*, collaboration remained a key concern for Emma. She set out to work collaboratively with communities local to Kettle's Yard to develop a performative artwork, exploring people's restorative pastimes. She explored this process through public workshops and events supporting people to share their activities for relaxation and renewal and offer invitations to others to try something new. This was, in part, inspired by Jim and Helen Ede welcoming servicemen from Gibraltar on weekend leave to their home in Tangiers and Jim's extensive notes on their activities found in the Kettle's Yard archive. Emma also worked with a number of the artist facilitators during a half-day discursive session at the beginning of the residency that set out to collaboratively explore and develop ideas for the first year of *Open House*. As a result of working with a range of stakeholders over a nine-month period she created a contemporary repository of restorative activities and home remedies.

Open House year one activities

Over three thousand participants engaged in the first year of *Open House* working with both Emma and the artist facilitators through drop-in activities and more sustained workshops; there were fifty-nine artist-run workshops in total (see Appendix 5 for workshops and activities observed). And of those asked seventy percent were from the postcode area of CB4 (Arbury and Kings Hedges). Seven hundred and eighteen children and families participated in public workshops at their local community centres, church (Figure 4.6) or community house during weekends, summer holidays or half terms (some of the *Open House* activities were an additional extra to community activity already taking place, such as free lunches provided to families in school holidays,

therefore reaching a more representative part of the community); three hundred and fifty-two young people worked with artists and Karen and Liz through their youth clubs, with five achieving a bronze arts award (a nationally recognised qualification); two hundred and fifty-six adults participated in weekly social clubs; a further one hundred and forty-five older people participated, including residents of a local care home who took part in artist-led sessions and apple pressing with Kettle's Yard staff; two hundred and forty-one people new to English or with English as an additional language engaged in creative activities during ESOL cafes; and Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy participated in a performative exchange with year six students from The Grove, a feeder primary school, contributing to the total of one hundred and twenty-three school students involved from North Cambridge (Kettle's Yard 2015b).

Figure 4.6 Artist Facilitator Hilary Cox, with Artist Emma Smith, runs drop-in activities to gather 'Remedies for Life' at the Good Shepherd Church, October 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

It must be acknowledged here that the artist facilitators played a significant and wide-reaching role in *Open House* and were critical to the realisation of the programme and creation of the resulting artwork (reflecting discussions presented in chapter two, which considered the influential role artist-educators have played in the field of socially engaged art). Without their expertise and substantial contribution *Open House*

would have been a very different programme. Many parallels can be drawn between how the community participants' and artist facilitators' practices were considered, valued and recognised, particularly in relation to issues surrounding artistic and participatory labour within a spectrum of socially engaged practice, alongside the hierarchical status given to the artist in residence. Further investigation and research is, therefore, warranted to explore the ways in which contributions made by artist facilitators, and artist educators more broadly, are valued and recognised in socially engaged art and by whom. That said, although understanding the significant input and complex and interdependent relationships between the many agents involved in creating a socially engaged and collaborative artwork and in working together to programme a series of community engagement activities, the thesis chooses to hone its spotlight on the experiences and perspectives of the community participants. This specific focus has been chosen to redress the historic imbalance and an underlying concern over the silencing of community voice, alongside generating a more nuanced understanding of the intrinsic and extrinsic value of collaborative art practices to community participants.

There were several participants who not only worked with the artist facilitators, but also worked directly with Emma, engaging in the process over a longer period of time and at a deeper and more intimate level, to share their activities for renewal through offering invitations to others to join them and try something new. These participants included members of the community panel as well as individuals recruited through local clubs and groups who embarked on a reciprocal exchange of restorative actions. One example included panel member Jim Lees being invited by community member Carlos Ortiz Martinez to meet at his allotment to share their interest in gardening and to harvest food. The participants' contributions were, in part, made manifest through the process of exchange as well as in the final artwork, a collection of performative instructions compiled into a book of advice also inspired by The Casebooks. These are a collection of astrological-based diagnoses from the seventeenth-century, currently the focus of research by the Department of the History of Science at the University of Cambridge. Emma redistributed the collected advice during the three-day exhibition *Variations on a Weekend Theme* (Figure 4.7), that included a series of performances at

a former bakery on Akeman Street in North Cambridge, which was transformed into an art apothecary, as Emma Smith (2016b) states:

> Collected from local residents, the apothecary stocks over the counter quick fix solutions to everyday concerns including stress, fatigue, heart ache and melancholy. Visitors may also book a consultation with the artist who can prescribe instructions for a personalised relaxation activity, divined through the use of charts and remedy book developed by the artist through research with the Department of History and Philosophy of Science's Casebooks Project, Cambridge University. Prescriptions are written up by the artist as performance instructions and gifted to participants by post following the consultation.

Figure 4.7 *Variations on a Weekend Theme* with *Open House* Artist in Residence Emma Smith, 2015, photograph by Josh Murfitt

Over three hundred people attended the exhibition, which also featured a number of artworks with connections to the exhibition theme selected by Emma from Kettle's Yard's collection, including works by Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Ben Nicholson, Naum Gabo, Ovidiu Maitec, Gregorio Vardanega, Richard Pousette-Dart and Kenneth Martin. Assistant Apothecarists—Hannah Kershaw, Joseph Lyward, and Lou Greenwall—recruited from young people working with Kettle's Yard on their Circuit programme,

offered three forms of ‘dispensed advise’ over the counter; these included: ‘Pick me Up’; ‘Rest and Recuperation’; and ‘Healing the Heart’ (Figure 4.8), in addition to Emma’s one-to-one consultations. Refreshments were offered and further creative activities were programmed by Karen and led by artist facilitators in the Akeman Street Community Room a few doors down from the art apothecary.

Figure 4.8 Community Panel Member Christine Cowling Jones receives ‘dispensed advice’ from Assistant Apothecarists (Hannah Kershaw far right) at *Variations on a Weekend Theme*, 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

As previously noted Kettle’s Yard has been influenced by the increasing trend in UK museums towards embedding community engagement in their core working practices, institutional structures and mission. In the last decade, art galleries have also changed their staffing structures in favour of integrated programming to reflect a socially engaged and educational turn in artistic practice. Kettle’s Yard is uniquely positioned as it is a museum, a gallery for contemporary art exhibitions *and* a house. Whilst museums are increasingly commissioning contemporary artists within their galleries, they tend to approach community engagement offsite more traditionally. There are few examples of collections commissioning contemporary artists with socially engaged practices to engage culturally isolated audiences, and even less where participants are consulted in the formation of a project or programme. *Open House* is interesting as a new programme that sets out to establish a different model of working for Kettle’s

Yard through a partnership between the gallery, contemporary artists and community members. *Open House* seeks a three-way dialogue between gallery (curatorial and learning), artistic and local community expertise, and aims to enable local audiences to develop a sense of ownership of Kettle's Yard, and build capacity to engage with the arts and the city's broader cultural offer (Kettles' Yard 2014).

The following two chapters address the absence of community participant voice in socially engaged art practices by turning our attention to the experiences of the community participants involved in the collaborative processes of *Open House* framed through the theoretical lenses of contemporary art, post-colonialism and critical pedagogy. With a renewed focus on the perceptions, understandings, and experiences of both the community panel members and individual members of the broader community in North Cambridge and the perceived intrinsic and extrinsic values to them, I will highlight and reveal a number of ethical concerns for artists and galleries to consider.

Chapter Five

Giving space to be heard

Moving away from the notion of 'giving voice'

Socially engaged arts practice derives from a process of dialogue and pedagogically-based collaboration that may involve multiple 'authors'. Through appropriating post-colonial theories and approaches employed in critical pedagogy the artist and gallery (who would traditionally sit in an assumed position of power), can move away from the paternalistic notion of 'giving voice' and instead create a space where dialogue and reciprocal relationships with 'Othered' communities can take place, with all undertaking a process of learning and where hierarchical structures are contested.

Within the case study, *Open House*, the community can be understood as the oppressed 'Other', a claim which might seem to overstate or exaggerate the position or lack of 'citizen power' of individuals in North Cambridge, yet within the context of the programme the community is at an undeniable disadvantage in terms of prevalent social issues, and their little previous experience and knowledge of art.

The research sets out to hear from previously under-represented voices and present first-hand accounts of community participants' experiences of collaborating in a creative process with an artist and gallery in order to develop and uncover more nuanced and holistic understandings of the benefits to individuals. Within the thesis it is argued that artists and galleries have a responsibility to deeply listen to the voices of the community to better appreciate concerns paramount in socially engaged practice and adopt more ethical working practices.

In this chapter I will now *give a space to be heard* in an attempt to re-position the balance of power and present experiences of collaboration by amplifying the voices, feelings and perspectives of community participants. If socially engaged art practices, including *Open House*, aim to elicit social change and generate relations based on reciprocity and mutual learning, we can return to the overarching question posed in chapter two *who's getting what from whom?* and more specifically ask – exactly what do community participants get out of collaborating with artists and galleries?

What do community participants get out of collaborating with artists and galleries?

Drawing on multiple sources of empirical data that were collected over a one-year period at different points throughout the collaborative process (including at the initial stages of the programme, during, and at the end of the first-year artist residency), the chapter sets out to provide a rich picture of the experiences of individual community members involved in Kettle's Yard's *Open House* programme. The data comes from a number of participant interviews, focus groups, visual methods (documentary photography and film footage, and reflective visual mapping exercises), participants' journals (first-hand personal reflections captured using a method of their choice), as well as interviews with artist Emma Smith, artist facilitator Kaitlin Ferguson, and Karen Thomas, Liz Ballard and Hannah Kershaw from Kettle's Yard, to provide a more holistic view of the programme, alongside my own observations and reflections of *Open House* encapsulated in my field notes.

The discussion is built thematically around a range of data which offer insights into the intrinsic and extrinsic value of socially engaged art practices, specifically in relation to what is gained by the community participants, through engaging in a collaborative process with artists and a gallery. It seeks to offer a more nuanced and accurate understanding of the potential of socially engaged art practices, alongside a better comprehension of how and why collaborative practices may also generate difficult and problematic encounters, in order to establish a framework in which to explore ethical considerations in the following chapter.

Analysis of the data collected from the community participants revealed recurrent topics, many of which can be correlated into the following four broad themes of: *well-being; expanded horizons; new skills, knowledge and understanding;* and *empowerment*. Within these themes a range of perspectives and experiences are presented. Rather than choose to separate out what could be described as 'positive' or 'negative' experiences, I instead opt to weave these together to show a more complex picture, one in which experiences are neither just 'good' or 'bad', but rather fall on a continuum.

Each thematic section will be introduced and explored through a vignette pin-pointing one specific experience of each community panel member. The sections will also draw more broadly from the responses, reflections and feedback of community participants who have been involved in *Open House* with varying levels of commitment and contribution. This approach has been chosen to reflect the ethos of the thesis – to make central the experiences of the community participants and to explore how they value socially engaged art.

Well-being

Figure 5.1 Film Still of Community Panel Member Jim Lees (right) meeting with Carlos Ortiz Martinez (left) at his allotment as part of the *Open House* exchange process, November 2015, footage by Sarah Plumb

On a breezy Sunday afternoon in November, Jim Lees and Carlos Ortiz Martinez chat convivially as the wind gusts around them blowing all the trees and plants in sight. You can see from the expression on their faces that they get on well; there is a spark of humour, yet this is the first time that the two have met. Jim, an *Open House* community panel member and volunteer for the Care Network, received a letter on blue paper inviting him to take part in an exchange activity that shared ideas for relaxation. His was an invitation to meet Carlos, a Spanish teacher, at the Nuffield allotments at 3pm on Sunday 8 November. Figure 5.1 shows a film still of when Jim met Carlos at his allotment in North Cambridge as part of an *Open House* exchange.

They were paired and invited to meet by Emma Smith and Kettle's Yard as they both have an interest in gardening.

During the hour-long meeting, conversation between Jim and Carlos flowed easily and revealed that although they were strangers, and from different backgrounds and generations, they had much in common. The physical and sensory act of visiting the allotment sparked dialogue and revealed shared values and concerns, ranging from gardening, growing food, and nature (perhaps obvious points of discussion being sited in an allotment), to health, locality, nationality, family, aspirations and the principles of open-mindedness and tolerance. For Jim, being on the allotment also evoked positive memories of his childhood growing up on a farm. Much laughter was shared and the meeting ended with a physical exchange where Carlos gifted Jim with some freshly harvested raspberries and onions dug up from his allotment, as Figure 5.2 illustrates.

Figure 5.2 Film Still of Community Panel Member Jim Lees (left) meeting with Carlos Ortiz Martinez (right) at his allotment and being offered home-grown onions as part of *Open House*, November 2015, footage by Sarah Plumb

Jim then offered to return the 'favour' and invited Carlos to come to his home and see his garden. After this activity, and each activity related to *Open House*, Jim would reflect on his experiences and type up short narratives to share with the rest of the community panel, Emma, Kettle's Yard and me as researcher. He would often describe these as 'minutes' and a scan of Jim's 'minutes' from after his exchange with Carlos can be found in Figure 5.3.

Open House Allotments

Thanks to Liz, Karen and Sarah for keeping me in touch with what is going on. I was pleased to see Sarah again and to meet Carlos outside the main locked gates to the Nuffield allotments in Chesterton. I was surprized to find us walking on a large concrete path which was wide enough for a car to travel up and down, to your own garden patch. That's one good thing, it saves struggling with all your gardening equipment and plants from the main gate. We had to walk a long way to where Carlos' allotment was. Just as well that we parked your cars outside the main gates as we would have missed looking closely at all the gardens as we drove by. It was an eye opener to walk by so many different allotments, laid out with such a large variety of flowers and veg. Many had seats and benches outside where you could sit. The colourful design and sizes of all the sheds showed the gardens off to their full potential. It was lovely to meet Carlos. He was from Spain and his wife came from Peru, and could speak fluent Spanish. He came to this country three years ago because he was fed up with living in his own country, as he was not able to do the things he wanted to do. He took up a job in a training college in Cambridge as a Spanish teacher.

He never had the chance to have an allotment in Spain which was the one thing in life he wanted. Now he has got the chance after hearing from a friend that someone was giving his allotment up. He was very lucky to get one so quick, because some people have to wait for years to get one.

He told us in his own words that he wanted to have an allotment all his life and now he got the chance to use one and grow his own fruit and vegetables, and this is the happiest he has ever felt. One day he hope to be self-sufficient. I thought to myself that this was a really

Jim Lees.

good outlook on life and it is a pity a few more people don't think like that. He spends one whole day a week in his garden. He said it's peaceful relaxing a place to chill out as well by making him feel alive. As we were walking back to your cars met some interesting people to speak to. Carlos showed me the new **raised beds** for planting, which were cater for disabled people situated right next to the centre building. As we were saying our goodbyes Carlos gave me a punnet of raspberries and a bunch of onion shallots fresh from his allotment. I had them for my tea when I got home later. The shallots were really spicy and the fruit was sweet and I was pleasantly surprized with the lovely earthly taste. I do hope to meet Carlos in the near future when we can get together and chat about plants and flowers.

Is it possible for him to come to my house and see my quaint English garden?

James Lees

Figure 5.3 Community Panel Member Jim Lees' writing on his experience of the exchange with Carlos Ortiz Martinez

Through analysing Jim's written reflections, we are able to see in his own words what was memorable and important to him about the experience, writing that: '[I]t was lovely to meet Carlos' and 'I do hope to meet Carlos in the near future when we can get together and chat about plants and flowers. Is it possible for him to come to my house and see my quaint English garden'? In a one-to-one interview conducted at a later stage, Jim repeated his admiration for Carlos, stating:

> I was taken aback by what Carlos said and how he felt—how modest the guy was and he really made me feel very humble because he was very—he was a lovely guy and he really appreciated everything and I thought that was great because—and there's not many people now—everybody's very—all self-centred and very this, this, this and mine, mine, mine and all this, that and the other but it was really good, you know. It was very emotional. (laughs) Yeah, it was really nice (2015b).

Even a month after the exchange Jim still thought about the discussions he had with Carlos and his caring temperament, describing the experience in very positive terms and as being 'nice' and 'very emotional'. It is worth highlighting here that Jim himself is a very kind person and during community panel meetings he stated that it is not in his nature to be negative, finding it difficult to criticise (2016). With this in mind we could ask – how far was Jim being positive about the experience to be supportive of *Open House*? Analysing the data surrounding this exchange in greater depth, including taking 'literal readings' (Mason 2002: 149) of the types of phrases used in interviews and in his written reflections, alongside his body language in the film footage, we nevertheless find that for Jim this was a genuinely enriching and enjoyable experience. At no other points in the collective data did Jim use the phrase 'very emotional' and the repetitive use of terms such as 'really nice' and 'lovely' emphasise his thoughts and feelings on the exchange, as demonstrated here in an interview conducted at the end of the first year of *Open House*: '[S]o it was really nice. It was really nice. You know, it was really sort of going back to the old days when you'd sort of grow your own stuff so that was lovely. That was nice, you know' (2015b). For Jim, who lives on his own with a role in the Care Network supporting isolated and potentially vulnerable older people, it is clear that meeting people (both friends and strangers), socialisation, and participating in enjoyable experiences are important elements of maintaining and enhancing his personal sense of well-being.

The exchange between Jim and Carlos was one of many pairings that formed part of the larger multifaceted art project devised by artist in residence Emma Smith. Emma took inspiration from a series of letter exchanges between Jim Ede and various artists, found in Kettle's Yard's archive. She was fascinated by the letters, scribbles and notes made by Ede, finding an intimacy in the handwritten that is missing in email exchanges or typed letters. She felt that you could gain a sense of someone's personality from their handwriting before having even read the content of the letter. Further inspired by Ede's ethos of connecting art with everyday life Emma initially focused her attention on the types of activities that people do at home to make them feel good or restored, which was later expanded to include groups of people and activities taking place in community or public settings.

Figure 5.4 Film Still of Community Panel Member Jim Lees at Carlos Ortiz Martinez's allotment as part of the *Open House* exchange process, November 2015, footage by Sarah Plumb

As established in the section so far both Jim and Carlos experienced enjoyment and pleasure during their involvement with *Open House* (Figure 5.4), an effect that several of the community participants also expressed. Although the finding of pleasure or enjoyment may not appear to be a particularly thought-provoking or revelatory one, it was ubiquitous and therefore should not be underestimated. As McCarthy et al. argue, pleasure is the primary intrinsic value of arts experiences (2004: 46) and, as the Happy Museum Project and their commissioned report by economist Daniel Fujiwara on the value of participating in museums and the arts also suggest, there is a strong correlation between happiness and well-being (Happy Museum 2013 and 2014, Fujiwara 2013). As the New Economics Foundation suggest, 'well-being' can be: 'most usefully thought of as the dynamic process that gives people a sense of how their lives are going, through the interaction between their circumstances, activities and psychological resources or ''mental capital''' (2009: 3).

Avril Hinton and Anne Hall, two students and Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy, expressed their enjoyment in participating in creative workshops with Emma and artist facilitator David Kefford as part of *Open House*:

> No, I've never done anything like that before and it was quite fun and it might help me in the summer holidays how to relax (Hall 2015).

> I think it's really important that we try to have fun most of all because it means that you get to have a good time and it means lots of nice memories (Hinton 2015).

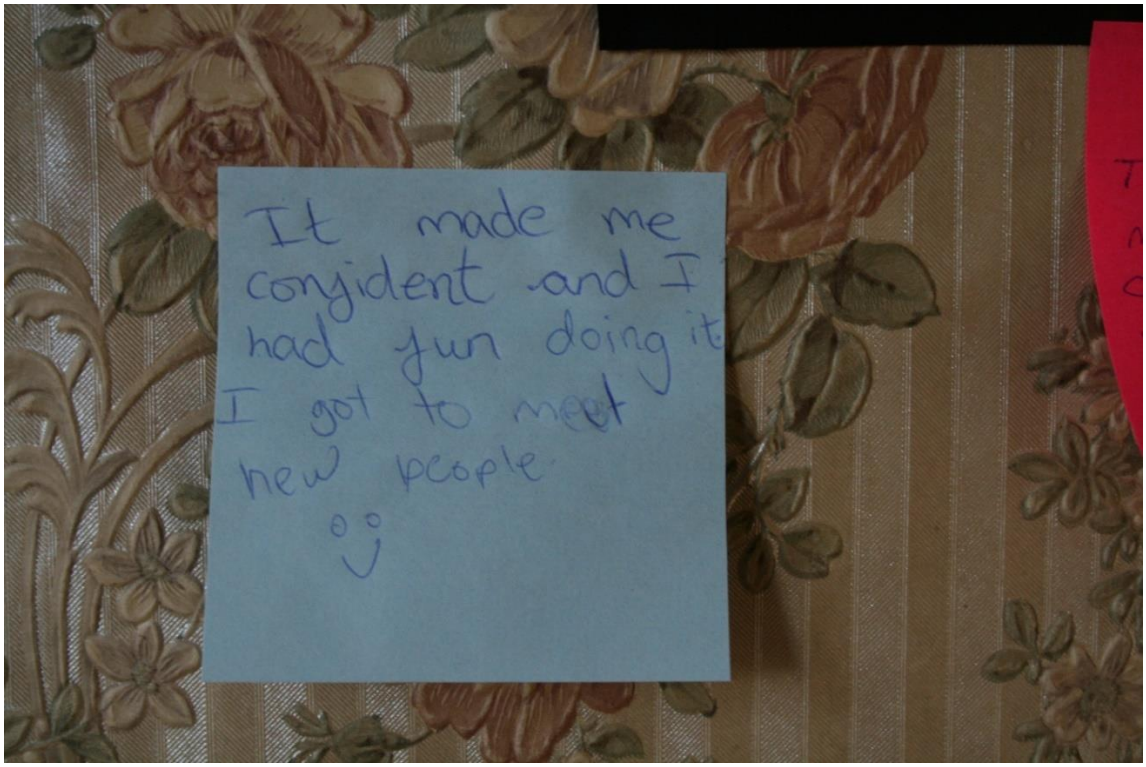


Figure 5.5 Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy reflecting on their 'most significant change' during *Open House*, November 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

Figure 5.5 shows a photograph taken at the end of the first year, during *Variations on a Weekend Theme*, the final exhibition and event that included over-the-counter remedies—'Pick me Up', 'Rest and Recuperation', and 'Healing the Heart'—and a series of one-to-one consultations performed by artist Emma Smith at a former bakery in North Cambridge, which was transformed into an art apothecary, where she gifted participants an instruction for relaxation. This response was captured during a visual mapping exercise with the Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy. After visiting the exhibition and participating in a performative consultation with Emma, they were asked to reflect on their experiences of the whole project and consider what for them was the 'most significant change', as a result of participating in *Open House*, writing their response on a post-it note. Once all of the students had responded, each was asked to share their 'change story' with the rest of the group. I then led a facilitated discussion to help the students think further about the range of 'change stories' and how they might be interrelated or clustered into emerging themes. Finally,

I invited the students to vote for what they each considered the 'most significant change of *all*' by placing a sticker on a corresponding post-it note. This image shows one of the responses and echoes many of the students' comments that it was 'fun' and made them feel more 'confident'.

As both Anne and Figure 5.6, a photograph of an Art Ambassador's reflection, imply, (with six stickers reaffirming this position), participating in *Open House* has enabled people to experience new things. However, in analysing the student responses captured on the post-it notes I was mindful of taking into account the power of peer influence. In order to bear out these responses I returned to the Art Ambassadors' reflections captured in interviews and observed during the workshops to ensure validity.

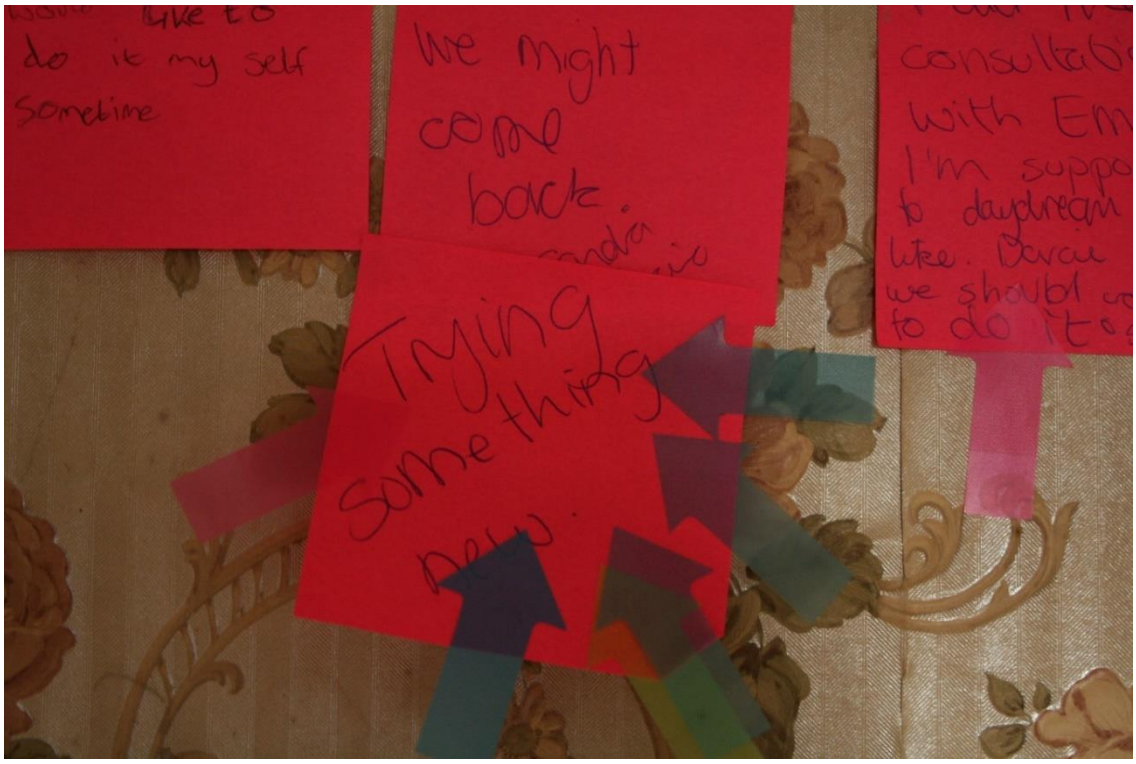


Figure 5.6 Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy reflecting on their 'most significant change' during *Open House*, November 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

And, as community panel member Alan Soer, goes on to report, these experiences were also special and memorable, or in his words produce a 'suck your shirt up moment':

> You know, it was really good, for me it was a really, really good thing and the highlight was that consultation and I think the real bit that really sort of—the

> wow factor if you like, the, you know, "suck your shirt up" moment, was that actually, it did do something for me. It did work. If it hadn't have worked for—in fact, I thought it was quite a nice experience. It was good fun but the fact that having done it and it actually—then that says to me that art in all its forms has good—does good things for people but in different ways because everybody's different (2015b).

Although the overwhelming majority of community participants reported having a positive experience as part of *Open House* it would be naïve to think that all experiences were constructive and enjoyable. A few individuals, particularly younger participants, did not engage with the interactive nature of the project. Perhaps they felt less confident or shy in participating in an artwork with a performative aspect or one that required quite an intimate level of interaction. Whilst two of the Art Ambassadors expressed that they enjoyed watching one of the students (Figures 5.7 and 5.8), Sandra, receive a consultation, they state that they would not like to have had one themselves.

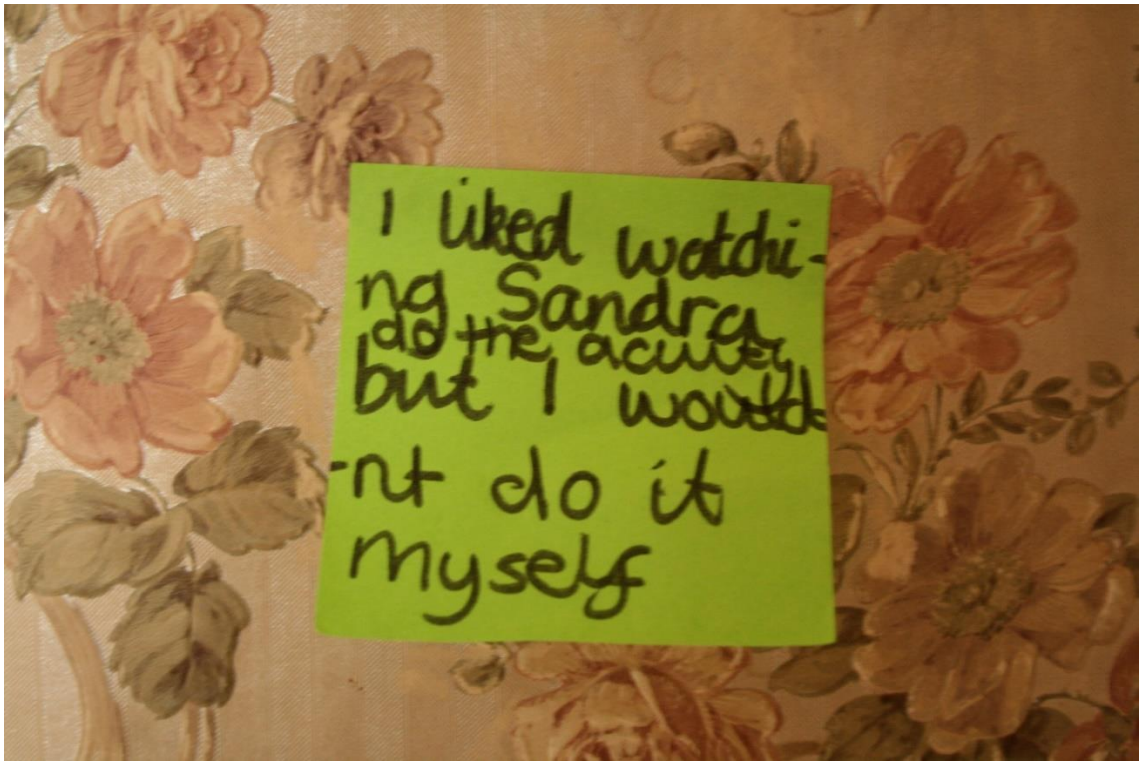


Figure 5.7 Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy reflecting on their 'most significant change' during *Open House*, photograph by Sarah Plumb

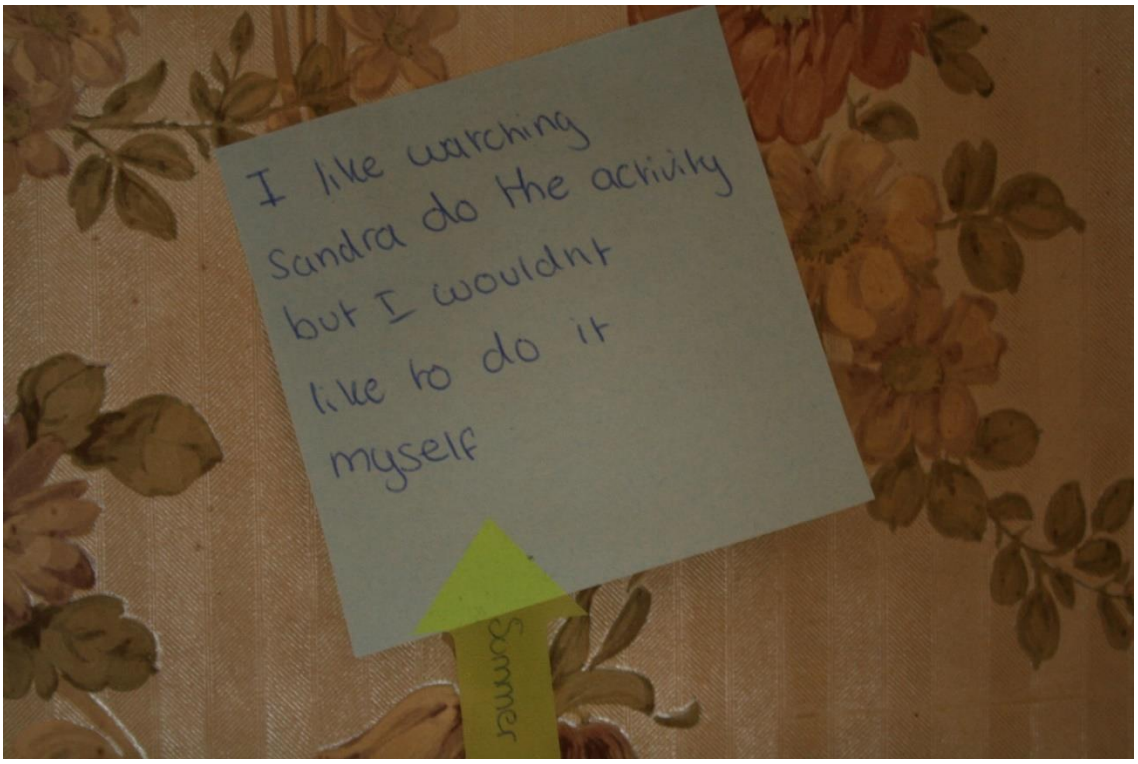


Figure 5.8 Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy reflecting on their 'most significant change' during *Open House*, photograph by Sarah Plumb

Although they clearly enjoyed watching the experience unfold from the 'side lines', I wonder how they would have engaged in the artwork if they hadn't participated as a group as the relational nature of the work meant that there would have been very little to get involved in without some form of interaction.

Art Ambassador Augustin Belliard revealed, during a group interview conducted during the first workshop with Emma, that he also did not like the physical or performative part of the project, nor the writing activity, stating:

> Sarah: And was there anything that you didn't like or what did you find the least interesting and why?
>
> Augustin: I guess I would say writing all those things on the Post-it notes because, I don't know, it's just like—(laughs) I don't know how to describe it but don't enjoy it that much. It's just—not much happened in the—
>
> Sarah: Is it the writing itself, the writing activity?
>
> Augustin: No, the writing's alright but it's just—I think the activity in itself is not that interesting.

> Sarah: Is it just less interesting than the rest of it?
>
> Augustin: As I said before, all these workshop things are—more focused on physical art and I don't enjoy it that much. As Alison was saying, that reading in-between the lines for example a painting, I like art that is straightforward. It's just not—you don't have to, like, do five GCSE studies to understand the painting. It's just—I don't like anything that's too complicated in art.

Augustin, an obviously intelligent young man who enjoyed art, found that the complexity of the project meant it became less interesting; jokingly, he said that he did not want to have to do five GCSEs to understand an artwork. The concerned raised by Augustin and explored in relation to the two Art Ambassadors' reflections found in Figures 5.7 and 5.8, suggest that a fuller range of activities could have been offered to cater for diverse learning styles and interests, and the varying levels of confidence in participating.

Yet, a considerable number of participants reflected on the fact that participating in an artwork, both in terms of those who collaborated in the making of the work and those visiting *Variations on a Weekend Theme*, was something that they had not done before. Some found the work unusual and challenging, and it was an experience that they did not expect. Jonathan Stanley, head of art at North Cambridge Academy and community panel member, praised the challenging nature of the work and reflected on the students' feedback and comments after visiting the exhibition:

> Yeah, I think they conducted themselves really well with that because it was quite strange wasn't it? I mean, particularly, you know, it's not sitting in the classroom and it's not conventional art and design and the whole process but they engaged really well with that. They were quite excited about it actually … on the way back [to school] on the minibus talking about it (2015b).

Hannah Kershaw, curatorial fellow at Kettle's Yard and assistant apothecarist during *Variations on a Weekend Theme*, was in a unique position to capture the participants' thoughts on the show, keeping a note of many. She stated that:

> I think people found the private consultations with Emma very special … The apothecary looked fantastic. I played one of the apothecarists and found it

> really interesting hearing visitors' responses. Some came in to revisit the bakery, others to see what Kettle's Yard had been up to (some friends of KY) and others out of general curiosity / out of involvement with the project. I feel the Kettle's Yard works helped to create a certain atmosphere – slight mystical quality. The finish to the apothecary exceeded expectations (2016).

Similarly, Lauren Van Zwanenberg and Gill Orake also found the experience a special one. Lauren and Gill are both from Cambridge Community Arts, a group that uses the creative process as a tool to empower individuals by tapping into their own creative resources and improving their mental well-being. The group worked with Emma in the lead up to the exhibition, participating in typography workshops and supporting the production of over-the-counter remedies in elaborately designed lettering. Below is an extract from a conversation I had with Lauren and Gill after their consultations:

> Sarah: What interested you the most or what did you enjoy the most? You could think about today's consultation with Emma or some of those earlier workshopping sessions.
>
> Lauren: I think I liked, I found it really interesting to find out what she was doing. I don't know (laughs)—and be involved in it.
>
> Gill: Yeah, it's just like a new thing isn't it. It's like, fresh.
>
> Lauren: Because I suppose when you go and see something you don't necessarily have that much involvement and you don't necessarily need that much explanation but you get a bit more explanation...
>
> Sarah: Would you mind just describing the experience for me of the actual consultation?
>
> Gill: Yeah, I enjoyed it. I thought it was fun, a bit of a laugh and also had a serious side. It was interesting.
>
> Lauren: I was quite surprised when we actually did the consultation because I felt quite touched by what she had given me… I didn't expect to feel like that at all. I just thought oh, you know, it's quite light and it's—not trivial but kind of not—I don't know. I didn't think I'd connect with it that much but I did. That really surprised me—and I don't know whether because when she was doing it

> I was thinking she's got this whole system with the symbols and everything and it looks really complicated and then afterwards I was thinking was it what she's telling me or is it just the fact that you've had the consultation so you've had this interaction with someone? And it's not really to do with what they've said at all, or that's only a very small part of it. I don't know but it really did surprise me that I felt like that. I wasn't even really going to sit down to have the consultation, so yeah, it was quite strange really but I'm glad that I did it now.
>
> Gill: I forced—I didn't force her to, but I said, "Go on, you know, you'd really enjoy it," didn't I? I said, "Go on, you have a go."
>
> Lauren: Did you feel like that though or was it—?
>
> Gill: No, I thought I wanted to do it because I'm open to anything like that, you know. I just find it fascinating and I don't think it's too harmful if you take it as it is, you know.
>
> Lauren: No, it's nothing harmful.
>
> Gill: It's like homespun advice isn't it really? It's about advice, yeah. I didn't find it particularly enshrouding or unpleasant. Sometimes you go to the doctor's and you think, God, I can't change all these things about my life, you know.

Capturing their immediate reactions, this conversation took place directly after Lauren's consultation; by stating that she: 'felt touched by what she had given me … I didn't expect to feel like that at all', we can understand her experience to be unique and special, or as suggested by McCarthy et al. the experience was captivating, and offered something unusual and rare in everyday life (2004: 45). It is also interesting to note that Lauren questioned whether it was the consultative act and gifted restorative action that was meaningful to her or the social engagement with Emma at an intimate one-to-one level. Gill's sensitive reflections also reveal the experience to be a positive one, and her comparison with previous experiences of visiting the doctor's is particularly noteworthy, suggesting that her interactions with medical professionals have not always been pleasant. Lauren goes further to suggest that every community could have an artist in residence:

> … this is quite different because you've got the artist on hand, or maybe it's just an artist being in a different role; in a more communal role but I think that's quite interesting … it would be nice if that could happen everywhere, like every community could have its own artist and they had a little shop like that. It would be brilliant I think.

Through her suggestion parallels can be made with proposals in the museum sector advocating social prescribing, which Mark O'Neill, Director of Research and Policy at Glasgow Life argues for in his article 'Cultural attendance and public mental health: from research to practice' from 2010. The Research Centre for Museums and Galleries' (2014) report 'Mind, Body, Spirit: How museums impact health and wellbeing' and Helen Chatterjee's and Guy Noble's (2013) recent book *Museums, Health and Well-being* echo this, presenting the role museums can play in enhancing well-being, acknowledging that: 'the museum sector has become increasingly aware of the value that their collections and resources can bring to individual and community health and well-being … some of which broadly fit under the therapeutic arts umbrella, whilst other work can be considered part of the sector's wider contribution to social engagement and cohesion' (2013: 31).

Figure 5.9 Workshop with *Open House* Artist Emma Smith and Artist Facilitator David Kefford at North Cambridge Academy with the Art Ambassadors mapping out ideas for relaxation, July 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

The therapeutic effects of participating in *Open House* was another significant self-reported finding of the community participants, with phrases such as 'relaxing', 'calming' and 'handle things better' often cited. After participating in a two-hour workshop with artists Emma and David exploring activities to help you 'chill-out' (Figure 5.9), Art Ambassador Alison Bell-Gannon stated that:

> It probably impacts the way you react to people's things because if you think about it, when you get into arguments in school with other people, you kind of react differently. You know when people kind of come forcefully to you, you kind of snap inside and you just react really badly back, it doesn't help anything. I reckon this makes us realise that—why do we react this way? Because why can't we just all just, like, relax, and know that there's other ways, different ways to react (2015a).

Similarly, Lauren commented that she found making art during *Open House*: 'really relaxing … It's like pretty much one of the only things that kind of clears my mind … So that is really helpful to me and if I do it enough it helps concentration as well'. But, it is useful to remind ourselves at this point that the first artist residency explored people's restorative pastimes and the final exhibition included an art apothecary, so by the artwork's very nature it is unsurprising that comments on the therapeutic role of art and galleries were made. This is not to say that art projects and galleries that do not directly engage with or offer 'intentionally' therapeutic activities cannot also enhance well-being, only that this needs to be acknowledged in the analysis of this finding.

In answer to the question 'what role does art play in your life', asked at the start of *Open House*, Alan responds with:

> I think it's a bit like a comfort blanket. You know, we all have good days and bad days—either a really tiring day or you've been really uptight about something or you're under pressure and at the end of the day sometimes just sitting there and really just watching the flowers float in the wind or butterflies, that's nature, but in a way it is art… looking at a piece of art and the mind is just taking that in and that takes away that pressure so it can be therapeutic in lots of ways and it's free… You need this sort of sense of enjoyment, if you like, the icing on the cake. What could—for some people be really a very dull existence

> living on the bread line, never experiencing some of the pleasures—like music, going to a concert, going to an art gallery, going to a museum, visiting a marvellous garden, those sorts of things, that if you can somehow introduce some of those aspects into the community, then that raises sort of self-esteem (2015a).

Alan already appreciated the value of *viewing* artworks in terms of the therapeutic effects on him, a finding that has been written about on many occasions (Kant 1987; Binnie 2010; Silverman 2010). But as the research seeks to explore the effects of *collaborating* in art, it is worth considering Alan's responses after the first year of *Open House*. Like student Alison, Alan's approach to handling difficult or stressful situations has been influenced by the process, and as a result he is able to 'declutter his thoughts in an artistic way', which has led to a change in his working practices. He states that:

> So as a result of this, I'm now more able—I used to get very, I suppose, uptight's probably not the right word but, you know, all this stuff going on in your head and you're trying to do this and that and then periodically you get to a point where somebody asks you a perfectly—and you give them a really sharp answer—and you say to yourself I should never have said that. Now, I've been able to actually—and I do it now on a regular basis—and I'm sure it will get better as I go along, that I now find myself able to declutter in an artistic way … think about the same thing but in a different way and I think that's a better solution than thinking about something different because you've still got to come back and think about that later. You haven't solved it. You've just, if you like, given yourself a breathing space whereas if you think about something in a different way, then you actually sometimes find a better solution. So for me the process has been the ability of viewing art and all that sort of stuff in a different way but also using some of those tools in my day-to-day work and life, which I think has benefited me but also in some ways, therefore it must hopefully benefit other people and places because I'm being more positive and constructive about other things than I would normally have been (2015b).

This is a significant finding, one which will be explored further later in the chapter. At this point it is perhaps worth returning to Lauren's question asking whether it was the

consultative action or the social engagement with Emma that was most meaningful. There is much evidence indicating a relationship between social interaction and health and well-being (Chatterjee and Noble 2013; Anders et al. 2011; Silverman 2010). As NEF show: '[I]t is also crucial that people feel a sense of relatedness to other people, so that in addition to the personal, internally focused elements, people's social experiences - the degree to which they have supportive relationships and a sense of connection with others - form a vital aspect of well-being' (2009).

Figure 5.10 Hannah Willers-Betson and Niamh Dunderdale exploring the Whipple Museum of the History of Science's handling collection as part of *Open House* led by Artist Facilitator Kaitlin Ferguson, October 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

An example that perhaps shows the power of supportive relationships in enriching well-being most effectively is the art project led by artist facilitator Kaitlin Ferguson with support from the council-led Children and Young People's Participation Service (CHYPPS) for young women from Jack Warren Green. This is one of the most deprived streets in Cambridge, falling within the twenty percent most deprived areas in England, and in relation to education the most deprived (ten percent) (English Indices of Deprivation 2015). Over a two-month period five young women (aged between eleven and thirteen) met with Karen and Kaitlin on a Tuesday evening and participated in a

range of creative activities, including visiting the Whipple Museum of the History of Science (Figure 5.10), and working towards a Bronze Arts Award.

Figure 5.11 Film Still of Hannah Willers-Betson explaining how *Open House* has helped to develop friendships, using the image of their feet as a metaphor, December 2015, footage by Sarah Plumb

I filmed Hannah Willers-Betson on the last day of the art project and asked what her thoughts and feelings were on participating in art activities and the culmination of their artwork being shown in a public exhibition at Brownsfield Youth Centre (Figure 5.11). Hannah stated of most value was the friendships she developed with the other young women who lived on her street. Although they knew each other previously they didn't get on, as Hannah reflected whilst pointing to a photograph of them all:

> This is friendship… at the start all of us didn't like each other… we didn't really talk to each other… and now that's how we've all come together… our hero Kaitlin over there, she actually inspired us to work together… bringing us all together.

Hannah fed this back to the whole group who decided to re-create the photograph signifying friendship once more (Figure 5.12).

At the beginning of the project Kaitlin worked with the group to establish a set of ground rules where they 'pledged' to be respectful to each other, which the whole group (including the adults), agreed to sign. Kaitlin utilised the pledge and returned each week to the expected 'codes of conduct', she observed and interpreted that

regular contact and activity through *Open House* contributed to a change in the participants. Kaitlin stated that:

> There were quite subtle changes and shifts in their personality that we might not see the full extent of right now but in the future, could really go on to really benefit them. So, I hope that the stability and the structure has gone on to benefit them and knowing that they had that slot every week to do that, there's going to be the same people and they knew the routine, I hope benefits them because it's so important at that age, it's really important.

Figure 5.12 Film Still of group with Artist Facilitator Kaitlin Ferguson taking a photograph of the group's feet in a circle, December 2015, footage by Sarah Plumb

Some community participants also found the programme helped them put across their thoughts and feelings, and develop new forms of expression. For example, Lauren suggested that participating in artistic activities and working with artists could be a way of supporting emotional well-being, helping people to communicate and express themselves in different ways:

> But sometimes because things are quite hard to express or people don't always have the mechanism to process things, I suppose art can be used in a transformative way. So it's made me think a bit. Like instead of taking your problems to a doctor or a therapist or a sort of prescribed official medical person, you could take them to an artist and the artist could do something

different with them… or just express them or help you to express them in a different way, because sometimes that's really difficult for people isn't it, especially if they don't have access to art or they're not familiar with the process of it… You could just take sort of emotional problems or problems with things. They're quite difficult for people to handle sometimes aren't they and I think art can help with that because art can be sort of transformative, so… It's very conforming out there so I think art can be a less sort of conforming space as well can't it'?

Lauren believes that artists can provide an alternative space to support people to express themselves and articulate emotional issues, and potentially bring about transformation. These terms are interesting when compared with hooks' theories on 'marginal space' and Lyiscott's proposal for a space to be heard.

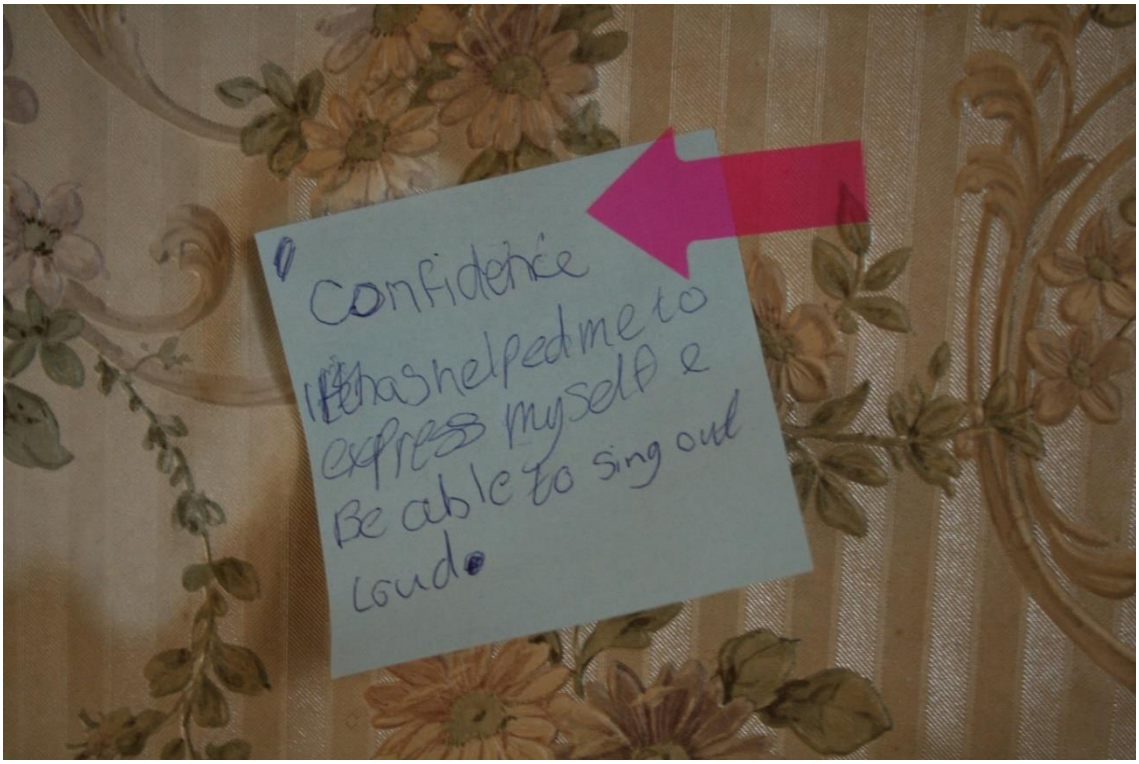


Figure 5.13 Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy reflecting on their 'most significant change' during *Open House*, November 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

Open House has offered a space for one student 'to sing out loud' (Figure 5.13), through improving their confidence their ability to express themselves with self-assurance has increased. Through being able to express ourselves we can articulate our identities, as Silverman suggests:

> Every individual seeks identity: the defining of self that tells us and others who and where we are in the social world. In social work, identity consists of three related needs: to find belonging and affiliation with other people, or social identity; to experience uniqueness and autonomy from others, or personal identity; and to evaluate and view oneself positively, self-esteem (2010: 54).

Developing the self, viewing the self in a positive way, and the ability to communicate and express oneself, understood as both social and personal identity, can be considered a central component effecting well-being. Museums and galleries are in a unique position in that they can support, enhance and promote well-being through therapeutic approaches and through an inclusive representation of diverse identities, including 'Othered' individuals and communities (Sandell 2002), and by creating a space where individuals can construct and articulate self-representation. The chapter now moves from the reported finding of the internalised benefit of well-being to explore the value of a broadened outlook.

Expanded horizons

Figure 5.14 Film Still from Community Panel Member Alan Soer's Consultation with *Open House* Artist Emma Smith during *Variations on a Weekend Theme*, November 2015, footage by Sarah Plumb

In a blue room Alan Soer and Emma Smith sit across from each, whilst Emma asks Alan a series of questions including: 'what is your full name?'; 'what time is it?'; 'how much time do you have to spend to do an activity?'; 'where in the body do you feel you

might need some relaxation?' (Figure 5.14). It is a Saturday morning in November and Emma is dressed in a white lab coat, whilst she makes notes of Alan's responses. They have met in the back room of a former bakery on Akeman Street, the room has been newly refurbished with ornate wall paper, and black and white chequered flooring. Inside the room is a plant, bookcase, shelves, a sleek glass-topped white table and two metal chairs, all of which echo 1970s design (Figure 5.15). On closer inspection, the room also has artworks hung on the walls, from the ceiling, and mounted on shelves, these aren't just any artworks; these are from Kettle's Yard's collection. On top of the glass-topped table lie a number of objects, a lamp, a glass dome, a tan leather-bound book and an unusual looking circular chart (Figure 5.16), as well as another intriguing square chart fixed underneath the glass. The space has been transformed into a consultation room in an art apothecary where visitors to the exhibition and event *Variations of a Weekend Theme* can interact with artist Emma Smith and participate in performative actions.

Figure 5.15 Installation of Consultation Room with 'Props' from *Variation of a Weekend Theme*, Emma Smith, November 2015, photograph courtesy of Emma Smith

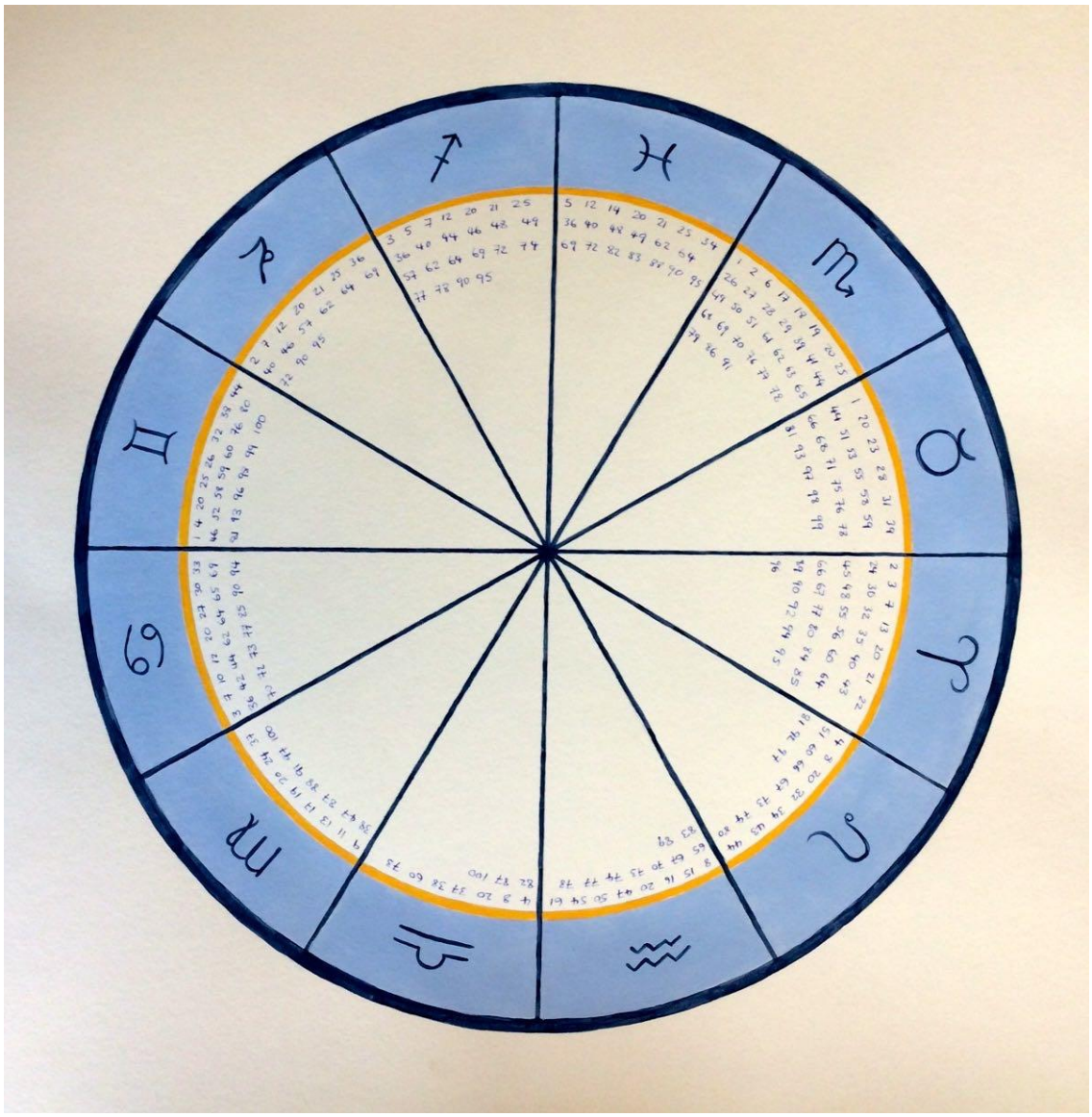
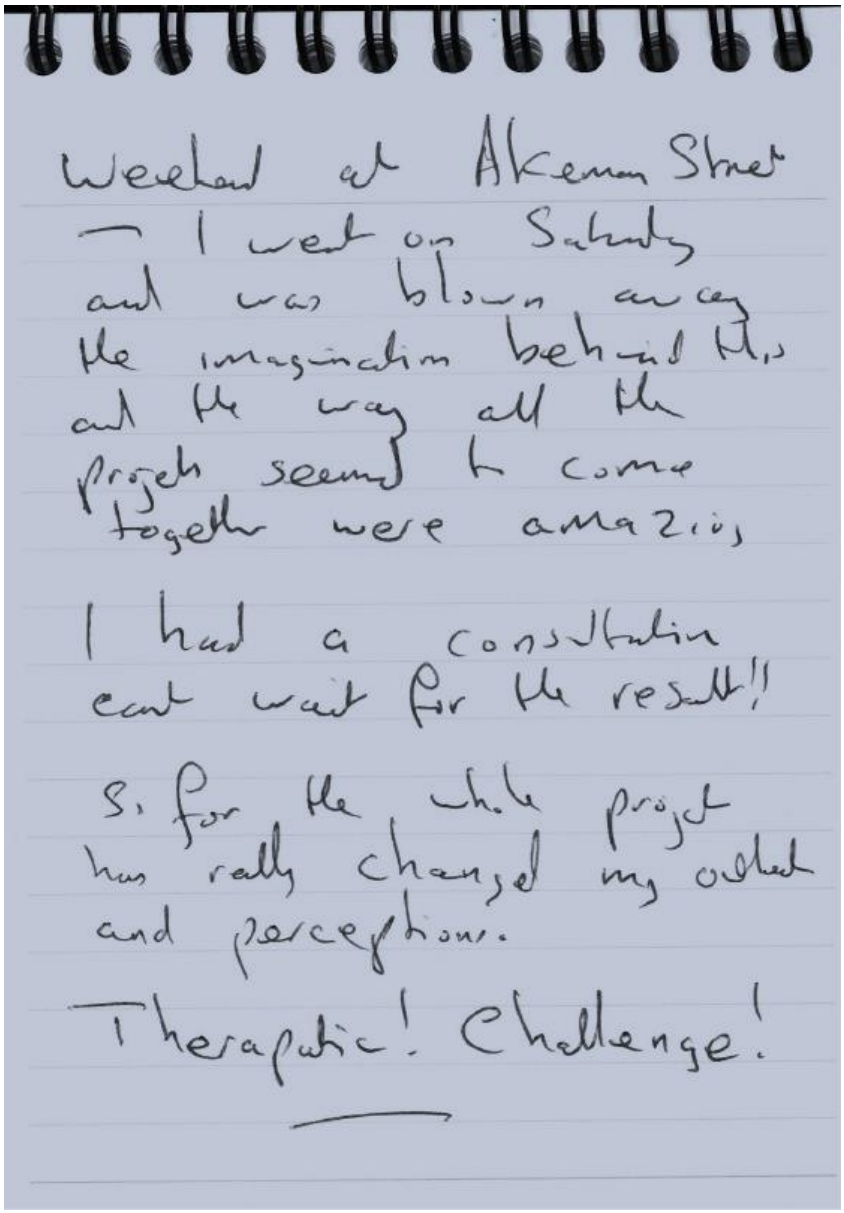


Figure 5.16 Circular Chart, Emulsion and ink on paper, 51.5 x 51.3cm, 'Prop' from *Variation of a Weekend Theme*, Emma Smith, 2015, photograph courtesy of Emma Smith

Alan Soer is the manager of Arbury Community Centre and a member of *Open House's* community panel. He has made an appointment for a consultation with Emma so that she can prescribe him an instruction for a personalised relaxation activity. During the consultation she uses Alan's responses to cross reference the charts, that function both as tools for figuring out the most appropriate relaxation activity and as arts objects that she describes as 'props' utilised during her performance. She then narrows down a number of choices for Alan from one hundred instructional activities kept in the leather-bound book, which have been sourced from the home cures of almost 2000 residents in North Cambridge. Emma tells Alan that his chosen instruction will be posted out to him at a later date. The book and charts were created by Emma

following research into the astrological practices and diagnoses of Simon Napier and Richard Forman (1596-1634) through The Casebooks Project, with the Department of the History of Science at the University of Cambridge.

Film footage and photographs (Figures 5.18 and 5.19), alongside data generated afterwards, revealed that the experience had a profound effect on Alan. As the fifteen-minute consultation unfolded he became quieter and quieter, for a self-confessed 'chatterbox'; this was significant and exposed how deeply moved he was. Alan kept a participant journal writing down reflections of his experiences of working with Emma and Kettle's Yard. Figure 5.17 shows a scanned excerpt written after the consultation.


Weekend at Akeman Street
— I went on Saturday
and was blown away
the imagination behind this
and the way all the
projects seemed to come
together were amazing

I had a consultation
can't wait for the result!!

So for the whole project
has really changed my outlook
and perceptions.

Therapeutic! Challenge!

Figure 5.17 Extract from Community Panel Member Alan Soer's Participant Journal

> Weekend at Akeman Street – I went on Saturday and was blown away the imagination behind this and the way all the projects seemed to come together were amazing. I had a consultation can't wait for the result!! So for the whole project has really changed my outlook and perceptions. Therapeutic! Challenge!

Alan was staggered by the experience and impressed with how Emma managed to bring together all the different facets of the project into a cohesive and imaginative whole.

Figure 5.18 Film Still from Community Panel Member Alan Soer's Consultation with *Open House* Artist Emma Smith during *Variations on a Weekend Theme*, November 2015, footage by Sarah Plumb

In December, during our last one-to-one interview together I asked Alan if he wouldn't mind telling me more about his experience of the consultation with Emma; he replied with:

> So I thought it was quite profound … it was like you haven't got a care in the world, you sit there and it's like a massage type effect. So you had that sort of calm—so when she started talking and going through this thing, I felt quite relaxed about it and I was fascinated because she was asking me certain questions and then looking at these things and then she was writing down numbers and putting down circles and I expect like a process of elimination type thing. Then you end up narrowing down all the—I suppose the symptom

to the cure or the options. So in some ways it wasn't you know, you think oh, astronomy, you know. The stars say that tomorrow you're going to win the lottery. Yeah, alright, okay, blah, blah, blah, like mumbo jumbo but actually, the way it came together was very clever but it wasn't done to be clever, it just was natural and I wasn't expecting to get the result of the consultation sent to me, so that was another plus. And she said, "Where would you like me to send it to?" And I just went, "Well, send it to my house because that's not where I work." When I thought about it afterwards, I thought actually that was quite a clever thing. I didn't think of it clever at the time but actually—and also at the time I thought I'll email it at admin, Arbury Community Centre or I'll post it to the Community Centre but because it was sort of personal, it seemed to me right that I'd have it sent to my house and not to my place of work (2015b).

Figure 5.19 Community Panel Member Alan Soer at the Apothecary Counter with *Open House* Artist Emma Smith during *Variations on a Weekend Theme*, November 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

The therapeutic benefit to Alan is clear from both his journal entry and his last interview (as discussed in the previous section of the chapter in more detail), but what is also noteworthy both to Alan and myself as researcher, is that Alan decided to have his restorative instruction sent to his home, rather than his work address. Although his role on the community panel and involvement in *Open House* is connected to his

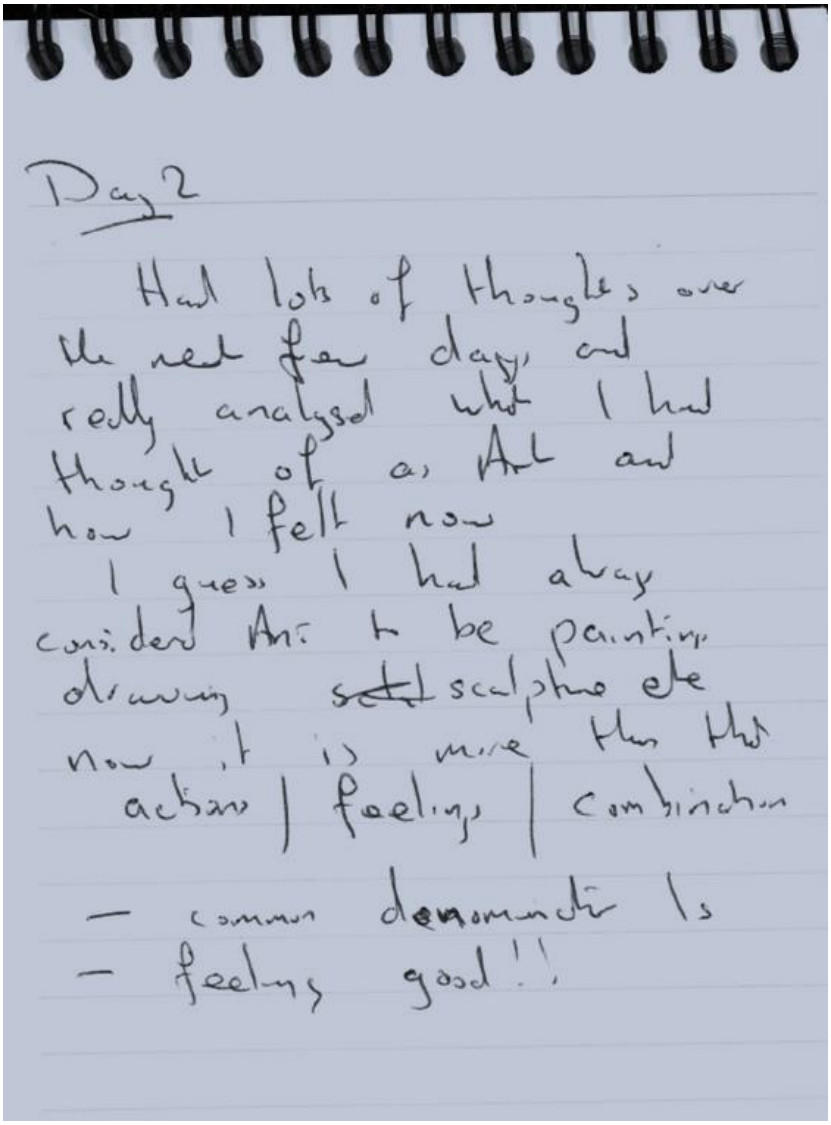
professional role as manager of Arbury Community Centre, this suggests that the project has been meaningful and affective, permeating his personal life as well. This was also reflected in Alan's choice to keep his over-the-counter remedy (Figure 5.20 shows Alan reading out his over-the-counter remedy in the apothecary), in what he describes as his 'little treasure box of things' where he keeps things that are important to him and evoke special memories, such as photographs, his Boy Scout badge and a threepenny bit (2015b).

Figure 5.20 Community Panel Members Alan Soer and Jim Lees looking at an over-the-counter remedy with Kettle's Yard's Rosie O'Donovan during *Variations on a Weekend Theme*, November 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

Through looking at Alan's responses and reflections at the start of the programme we are able track a change in him, one that happened in quick succession and shows the development of a broader position and understanding of the role of art. In Figure 5.21, that shows one of his diary entries (with Emma having recently been appointed as the first artist in resident), Alan reflects on his first meeting with Emma, with Karen Thomas also in attendance. He stated:

> Day Two: Had lots of thoughts over the next few days and really analysed what I had thought of as Art, and how I felt now. I guess I had always considered Art

to be painting, drawing, sculpture etc. Now it is more than this actions / feelings / combination… Common denominator is feeling good!!


Day 2

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I guess I had alway consider Art to be painting drawing ~~sett~~ sculpture etc

now it is more than that actions | feelings | combination

— common denominator is
— feeling good!!

Figure 5.21 Extract from Community Panel Member Alan Soer's Participant Journal

Here we begin to see Alan's thought processes and shift in attitude. Even in the first few months of *Open House* Alan's horizons and understanding around the potential of art and the forms it can take were challenged and expanded, and by the end of the first residency he articulates with clarity an enriched understanding of art and what it can be:

> I suppose the most unexpected thing is I've actually embraced art in a way I never thought I would because I always thought art was a bit pompous… that concept has always been in that box if you like and that's the way it's always been for me but the idea of art being a living sort of everyday thing that you

> can do everyday things… For instance, collecting fruit is not art is it? I don't know. I wouldn't have thought collecting—but collecting fruit and then making jam, it's an art form isn't it? You're making something out of something… So art—I suppose you could actually say that art covers nearly everything because it's a taking of component parts and putting them together using some thought process to produce a finished item which people then enjoy visually, you know, or whatever, by listening to or seeing or touching (2015b).

This expanded understanding and perception of art and its many forms was fed back by numerous community participants. And for many this was the first time they had worked with an artist or a gallery. Alison's perceptions of what art can be has moved beyond the act of looking to being actively involved in making, stating that:

> [*Open House* has] changed the way I feel about art because I used to think that art was just a thing to look at but no, there's much more that you can do with art. There's different types of art though because some people… know how to put all of their feelings into work and stuff. So if you're reading between it you can see—you can like—sometimes if you feel in that mood and you listen or look at something, you can almost hear what you feel in some things or you can see what you feel. You know, it's much more than what you thought it was (2015a).

This is repeated by the Art Ambassador at the end of the first year of *Open House*, who reflects on their changed thinking of art, as seen in Figure 5.22. These are just a few examples of how community members' attitudes towards arts and culture have started to shift, but what was also noticeable was how this led to a more general change in their perception and outlook. For several participants *Open House* changed the way they perceived and thought about their community. Specifically, for two Art Ambassadors it changed the way they saw their school (which can be considered a community), as well as how they felt engaging with Kettle's Yard, as demonstrated in Figure 5.23.

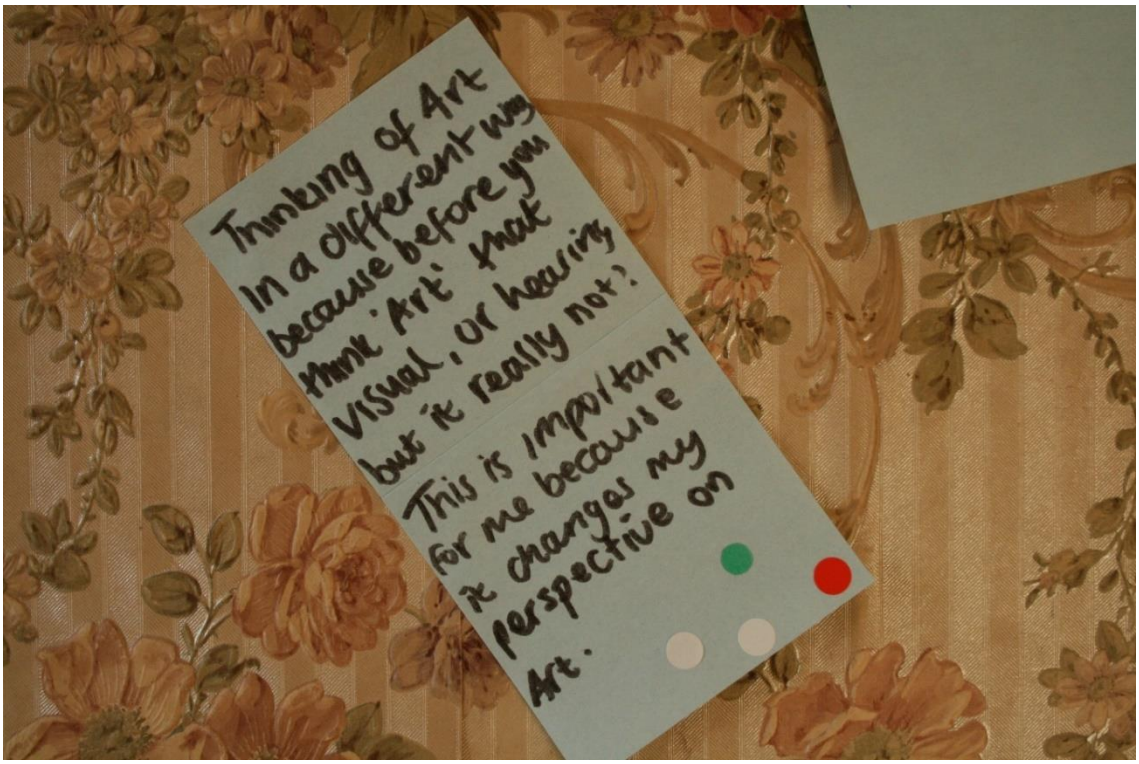


Figure 5.22 Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy reflecting on their 'most significant change' during *Open House*, November 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

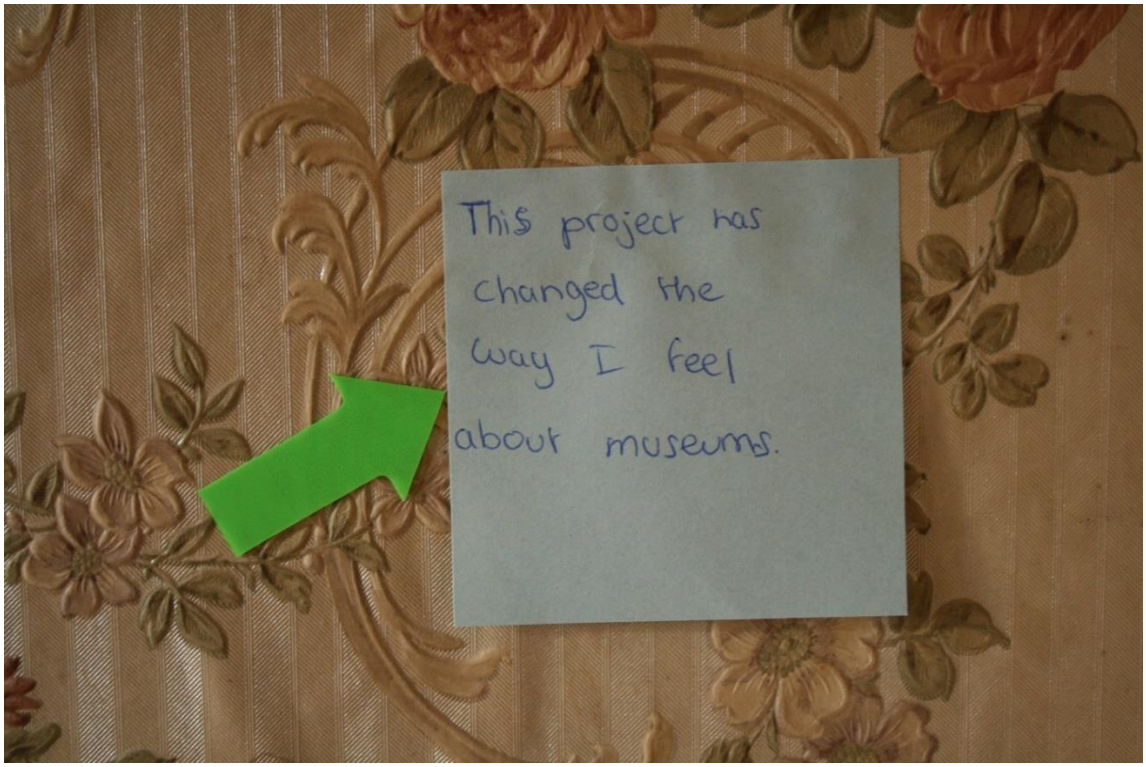


Figure 5.23 Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy reflecting on their 'most significant change' during *Open House*, November 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

For Jordan Walker, a twelve-year-old boy, working with Kettle's Yard over a number of years, including drop-in summer holiday workshops as part of *Open House*,

considerably altered the way he looked at the world, which in turn altered his outlook on his community. In response to the question 'Since taking part in art workshops with Kettle's Yard and working round here, has it changed the way you feel about your community?', he said:

> Yes, quite a bit actually because I thought Arbury was sort of boring and bland but now I think it's full of rainbows… Sort of all cheery and happy.

When asked why he feels that way, Jordan goes on to say:

> … because I imagine everything is a piece of artwork. Even a football pitch now seems more like a piece of art than a plain bit of grass with markings on… Well, I've realised over time that art can be absolutely anything at all. You just have to look at it in a certain way.

Returning to Alan's thoughts on *Open House*, the effect most cited and therefore reasonable to assume the most significant for him was the change in his outlook and perception. This was raised again in February 2016 during the community panel first year debrief meeting. Figure 5.24, taken from a facilitated visual mapping exercise, was Alan's (2016) response to the question *What will you take away?*:

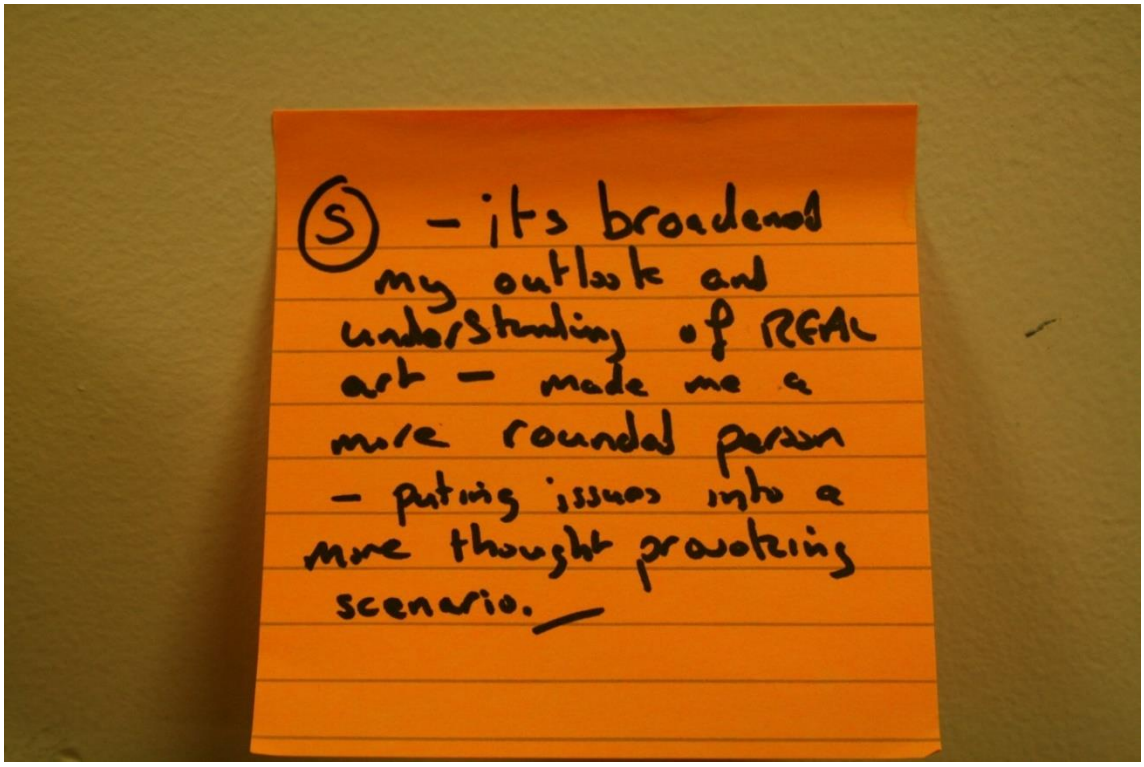


Figure 5.24 Community Panel Reflection at the end of Year One of *Open House*, responding to the question *What will you take away?*, February 2016, photograph by Sarah Plumb

- its [*sic*] broadened my outlook and understanding of REAL art – made me a more rounded person – putting issues into a more thought provoking scenario.

As explored throughout this section, Alan's reflections (alongside many of the community participants'), suggest that his involvement in *Open House* has not only changed his outlook on art, but his outlook more broadly. This was echoed by community panel member Jim Lees, who said:

> I wouldn't say it's changed me but it's probably changed my outlook… Well it's made my outlook on life look a bit more vast than mine because I wasn't—as I said many times before, you get tunnel vision when you're doing your own stuff but then when you're viewing other people's—looking at other people's work and—because I'm looking at other people's work quite often now rather than before, I'm getting a bigger insight of how other people are thinking and what other works are being done... I think the biggest thing is you're learning all the time. You're not sort of stuck on that one route all the time; you're expanding your mind and you're widening your grasp on art and music and everything else which is going on and you're getting a wider version just rather than—I actually had a limited version when I came in but I've got a much wider margin now of things that I've learnt for the painting and the arts and all the different stuff and from the people and all this, that and the other, so I think I could say that I've—you know, my mind's expanded, so that's good (2015b).

Although Jim does not think that *Open House* has changed him as a person, he does believe the programme has modified and widened his outlook. But, for Alan his altered stance has also gone on to shape his working practices (as alluded to in the previous section) and has influenced him at a personal level, making him a 'more rounded person'. This finding can be understood broadly as an expansion of horizons, a prominent theme that has emerged from the observations and interviews with community participants, alongside analysis of the visual data.

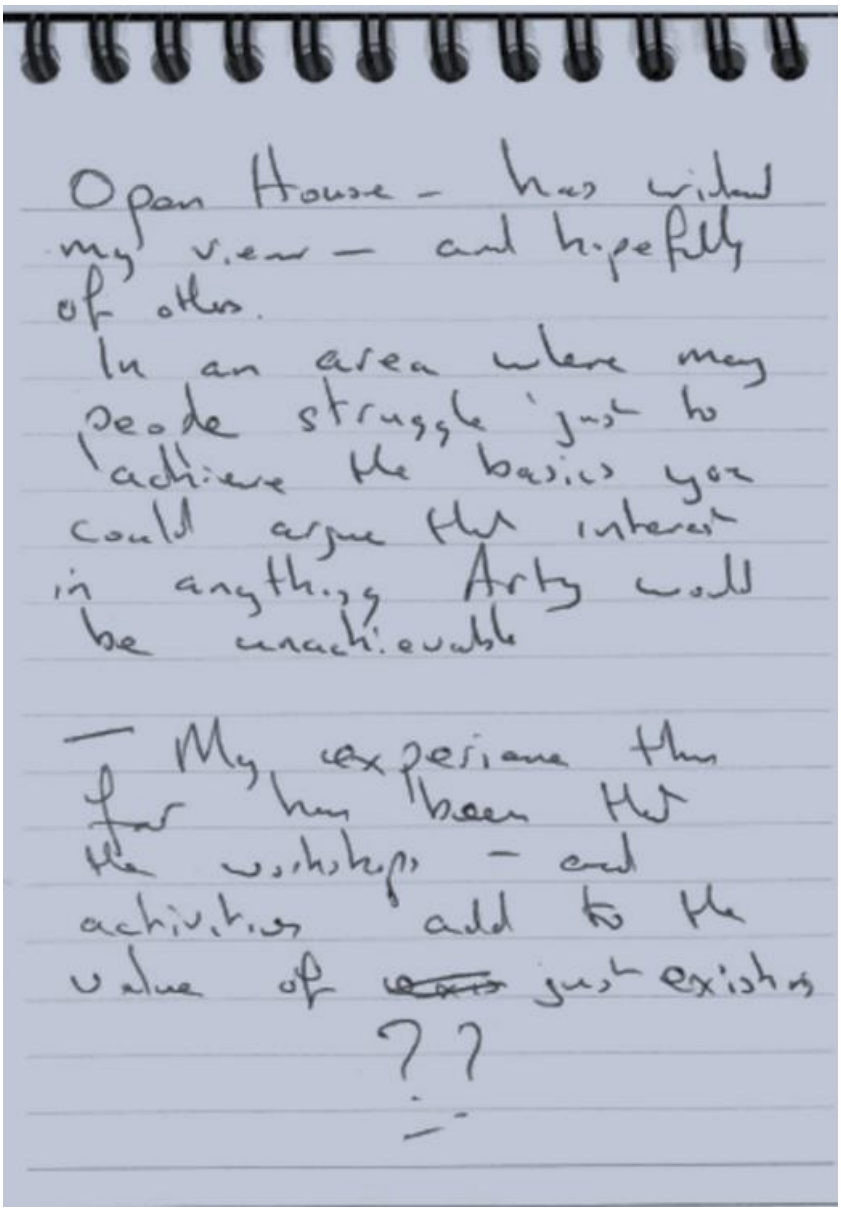
In the American study 'Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts' by McCarthy et al. (2004), the instrumental and, notably, the intrinsic benefits of involvement in the arts both for the individual (private) and wider society (public) are explored in considerable depth. An 'expansion of individual capacities' is presented

as an attitudinal or behavioural change and one of the intrinsic individual-level benefits of participating in the arts (Ibid.). They suggest that:

> The "distinctive fruits" of interactions with art are the development of the individual's capacity to perceive, feel, and interpret the world of everyday experience. The benefits we just described—captivation and pleasure—are the immediate and direct effects of aesthetic experiences. The next set of benefits describes the effects of recurrent experiences on the sensibility and understanding of the individual. These effects are private benefits that spill over into the public realm by developing citizens who are more empathetic and more discriminating in their perceptions and judgments about the world around them … As we have seen, one of the benefits of the aesthetic experience is that we are carried away from the familiar and drawn toward the unknown … Art allows us to acquire experiences that our own lives could never provide … These experiences give us new references that enable us to become more receptive to unfamiliar people, attitudes, and cultures … This receptivity can be unsettling and provocative, and can lead us to question our routine and conventional perceptions of the world, forcing us to look with fresh eyes on private and public questions involving sexuality, love, marriage, family, spirituality, slavery, segregation, gender, ethnicity, colonialism, and war, just to name a few of the more obvious (Ibid.: 48-49).

As put forward by 'Gifts of the Muse', long-term and sustained involvement in the arts has the potential to bring about a primal change in individuals, one which alters their perceptions of the wider world around them. This, in turn, might enable individuals to question the status quo and generate more empathetic and receptive attitudes towards the unfamiliar, be that people, experiences or attitudes. For Alan, the opportunity to participate in art offers something even more fundamental, as noted in his journal (Figure 5.25) and below:

> *Open House* has widened my view – and hopefully of others. In an area where many people struggle just to achieve the basics you could argue that interest in anything Arty would be unachievable - My experience thus far has been that the workshops and activities add to the value of just existing ??



Open House – has widened my view – and hopefully of others.
In an area where many people struggle just to achieve the basics you could argue that interest in anything Arty would be unachievable

– My experience thus far has been that the workshops – and activities add to the value of ~~[illegible]~~ just existing
??

Figure 5.25 Extract from Community Panel Member Alan Soer's Participant Journal

Community panel member Christine Cowling Jones echoes Alan's sentiments by suggesting that participating in art and specifically *Open House* is vital in enhancing people's lives, especially for children and young people, stating that:

> I just think it's really important for people's lives. I know the government don't think the same way but to get people thinking a different way, to think about creating something and especially children, getting them to think, oh actually, that was an interesting idea. Why don't I go home and make a pop-up shop in the spare room or something? I think that's just really important (2015b).

A change in perception may not only lead to looking at and understanding the wider world with fresh eyes, but set in motion an altered awareness of what can be achieved. In Matarasso's study, one of the six broad findings was that participation in the arts has the capacity to impact upon *imagination and vision* which 'concerns creativity, professional practice, positive risk taking and touches on expectations and symbols' (1997: 13). This can help people raise their vision beyond the immediate and raise their expectations of what is possible and desirable (Ibid.: 58). As Alan, with a sound knowledge and sense of North Cambridge community, suggests: 'one of the big problems in this area is under-achieving' (2015a), a bold statement that reflects an opinion held by many. Alan continues:

> … when I talk about the people that live in this community, they are very good people. There are people out there that you wouldn't want to know but that's the whole world, you know. Most people who live in this area, they get on but if it was a commonality in areas like this – and I'm sure that replicates itself in similar communities – is a sort of more or less a lack of self-belief that they can actually achieve something higher than they've sort of expected to. You know, I'll always be a checkout chick or I'm on my own and I'll always sit and watch the telly. And the idea that you can then say to people, actually you can do more and you can rise above that. There's things out there that are free that you can… in areas where people haven't got a lot of money there are ways you can still get excited and enjoy things and be part of something without paying money and those are the things that I'm sort of bouncing around my head still, how I could take some of those things now and how I could interpret them alongside what I do and how we can bring things together (2015b).

Through *Open House* Alan has gained ideas about how he, as manager of Arbury Community Centre, can work towards tackling the community's lack of esteem and ambition. For some of the participants, *Open House* has already begun to raise their expectations and aspirations through offering something different, beyond the familiar with opportunities to accomplish and achieve. In turn, it has led to an increase in self-esteem and confidence, and a widening expectation of how things could be. In an

interview after *Variations on a Weekend Theme*, Karen Thomas shared her thoughts on the experiences of Jenna and Katelan, two girls who visited the exhibition:

> Katelan and Jenna and the girls who were hanging around the shop, they loved it so much and I think the impact for them having their community at the heart of something exciting and vibrant gave them a real pride and the fact that I contacted the schools afterwards and said thank you and what amazing girls they were and they were really supportive and helpful and the teachers fed back to me that they'd been talking about it at school and really excited about it I think shows that pride and that, I suppose, excitement and buzz around it (2015b).

Jenna and Katelan reflect a renewed vision of what their community has to offer and an increased sense of local pride. Renovating and reimagining a well-loved former bakery also sparked the imagination of other community members, with one resident asking whether she could host a weekly reading group in the space after the exhibition came down. Even in the early stages of *Open House* we can begin to see at an individual level a re-imagination of local image and identity.

New skills, knowledge, understanding

Figure 5.26 Jonathan Stanley, *Open House* Community Panel member and head of art at North Cambridge Academy, at *Variations on a Weekend Theme* with the Art Ambassadors, November 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb.

In a residential area of North Cambridge Jonathan Stanley and Karen Thomas cheerfully natter. It is a Friday afternoon in late November as they watch Liz Ballard enter what looks like an ordinary shop on Akeman Street, yet, it is unusually named 'Variations on a Weekend Theme' (Figure 5.26). Looking past the autumnal trees, cars and houses reflected in the glass frontage we can just make out two people dressed in white coats standing behind a counter and a group of school students huddled inside. The students are from the local secondary school North Cambridge Academy and have self-selected to take part in additional art activities by becoming Art Ambassadors.

Jonathan Stanley is an *Open House* community panel member and has been head of art at North Cambridge Academy for just over two years. He established the Art Ambassadors scheme as a way of creating extra curricula arts opportunities. Jonathan and Karen then squeeze in to the shop behind Liz and the group of students. Upon entering an assault of custard-yellow paint saturates Jonathan's vision, and he realises that this shop is like no other. It has been transformed into an exhibition, performative space, and art apothecary. He notices a counter to the left offering cures for lethargy, stress and a broken heart and a large white vinyl with the Art Ambassadors and school's names listed amongst others, as a credit for their involvement in *Open House* (Figure 5.27). Jonathan and the students are about to meet with artist Emma Smith for the final time having worked with her and artist facilitator David Kefford for six months. One Art Ambassador, Sandra, has a consultation with Emma in the blue room at the back of the shop, while the others watch on (Figure 5.27 also). Sandra's recommendation for relaxation is to daydream by a lake.

Jonathan's engagement in *Open House* is directly connected to his role as head of art and lead of the Art Ambassadors, supporting both the students and the school to realise their ambitions. His motivations and aims for being involved are explicit and two-fold – through working with artists and Kettle's Yard the students will develop new skills, knowledge and understanding of art, bringing artistic practice 'to life', and the wider goal that *Open House* will bridge a gap between the school and the broader community of North Cambridge (2015a).

Figure 5.27 North Cambridge Academy's Art Ambassadors visit *Open House* Artist Emma Smith during *Variations on a Weekend Theme*, November 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

Figure 5.28 *Open House* Community Panel Member and Head of Art at North Cambridge Academy Jonathan Stanley attending a panel meeting with Art Ambassador Avril Hinton, Alan Soer, and Mohammed Djazmi, April 2015, photograph by Liz Ballard

As a result of being on the *Open House* panel (Figure 5.28), Jonathan has also extended his knowledge of the area, developing a greater understanding of the students' background and interests outside school. He said:

> I've definitely gained knowledge, yes, of the community itself. I don't feel so detached in a sense as a teacher coming in, working here, driving off, going home, although I do have connections with North Cambridge anyway from my own youth but I've been away for a long time. I've been in London so it's rebuilding some of those connections. I think it is learning a bit more about the community and beginning to understand the background of our students within the various aspects of Arbury, from their housing to what they do with their time and things like that. That's the growth knowledge I'm getting as a teacher but the partnership work with Kettle's Yard is strong and getting ever stronger and this is just yet another thing that's another stepping stone I think, which is really good (2015a).

Although not an explicit aspiration for Jonathan, like his students, he has also learnt new skills, and developed new knowledge and understanding. His approach to working with artists has been opened up, as he articulates in an early interview:

> I've never actually been where an artist has had to pitch for the role. That was really interesting and that's made me think differently how I engage with artists within school because we work with three or four artists at least. We try and do that through various schemes, various funding and things that link with our students but I think the fact that they've [the artists presenting at the selection evening] had to put together what they do and why they do it is a different way of working. I didn't know how I'd really be able to bring that into school because what I end up doing really is I meet people or they come to me via another agency or another network of some sort and I don't necessarily find the artist in that way, but I think this has changed the way I think, it's going to inform what I am doing with one aspect of the new build that we're doing here. Because we want—I do want to end up – and I know the students do – with one aspect of it as a tangible sculptural piece. We do want that and I know that's not the only way to think about, you know, what we're going to be doing

> with public art. But I think I will use this format that I've learnt through *Open House* to make sure we get the artists—and I mean the students and myself and we'll set up a panel that will work best for what we see as an outcome but we will let that be shaped as well by a chosen artist, but I will follow this format as a result, and I wouldn't have done that in the past but I think that is a really useful way of going forward now from it. And hopefully that still might be steered as well with a bit of help from Kettle's Yard because they've got the contacts (2015a).

Through participating in *Open House*, and specifically attending the artist selection evening, Jonathan plans to change the way he recruits and works with artists - allowing artists to present their work and ideas to a panel, rather than automatically working with a particular artist because they've been advised by a given scheme or network, and sharing the responsibility of choosing the artist with the students, giving them more agency and influence in the process. The benefit to the teacher, beyond the intended beneficiaries, the school students, can also be seen in Matarasso's study:

> The involvement in arts activities of professionals in other fields (health, education, environment etc.) often had a marked impact on them. In every case study, we encountered people whose ideas about their own professional practice had been fundamentally changed as they had seen the contribution the arts could make. For example, several youth workers had decided to make much more use of the arts in future, as have all the teachers interviewed … there is no doubt that arts projects contribute to understanding of and support for creative, holistic approaches to problem-solving. The co-operation and professional generosity of many artists was an important factor in this. Although there were instances of artistic arrogance towards other professional cultures, much more common was the pleasure and surprise expressed at artists' open way of working (1997: 58).

In his interview Jonathan also refers to a significant expansion at the school. At the time of the first residency of *Open House*, like Kettle's Yard, North Cambridge Academy was undertaking a large redevelopment, where new buildings with state of the art facilities were being erected on the site next door. The student body, including the Art

Ambassadors, had a say in the new school environment, both in a physical and psychological sense (an aspect that we will return to later in the chapter). As part of the plans to have a stronger connection with the community, the school will remain open in the evenings and at weekends offering adult education sessions and the site will also feature a new artwork made publicly available to the community. In his first interview Jonathan is adamant that the public artwork needs to take a tangible form, such as a sculptural piece. However, by the end of the year his thinking has greatly shifted, as seen in the conversation below:

> Sarah: On a personal level do you feel that you've learnt or gained anything from year one of *Open House*, and if so what?
>
> Jonathan: I think I've gained in the ways of working with an artist and not expecting there to be a definite pre-prescribed outcome, trusting it in that and allowing it to evolve and not being so paranoid as a teacher about ooh, what are we doing; the accountability and things like that because it's actually grown and been more valuable because of that I think. It's standing back a bit and allowing it to develop and the students to develop and the relationship between Emma and the students to develop. I think that I've got to trust in that more but it's built the confidence in the students so I think the next time we engage with an artist they're going to be clued up on that and they're going to be looking for different ways of progressing. I do still have the teacher side to me though. I do look at it and we do have to evaluate and we do have to bring in where and how that will fit in—for instance, if they're moderated on it. So we've got that evidence and we've got those graphics, I documented photographically all the process so that they can reflect from those photographs of the process. So I had to keep that side but it's just being open and being allowed to be more open and allow things to evolve and that's what I'd like to happen over the next year and the year after as well… We're discussing at the moment but we are looking at a similar sort of format in the sense that there's several artists, about ten artists at the moment, that have been put forward that we're looking at and then we'll narrow that down to about three or four and we will do that as a panel; myself, the head and

Kettle's Yard staff but then we're going to put that, similar style, to the students and they're going to choose. So it's following the format of the artist selection evening and then that will be happening the same time as *Open House* is happening as well so, you know, that will be brilliant.

Sarah: So there'll be much more going on.

Jonathan: Yes, and because it's 106 funding[2], part of the remit for that is that something tangible will come from there that's going to have a five-year life. What that is I don't know but I know personally I'm going to be more open about that now rather than, no, it's got to be this sculpture or something like that. I know that I will be more open and I think the students will be as well, working with whoever we choose that's come through us.

Sarah: That's really interesting and actually, Jonathan, I don't know if you remember but the first time I interviewed you, I think you even mentioned that you had a vision in your mind for a sculpture so in just a few months that's quite a change for you on a personal level.

Jonathan: Oh right. (laughs) Yeah, and trusting in that process I think and the voice of the community, the voice of the students and the artist working. Yeah, I do feel that journey's been really good for me actually, as a practitioner as well, because you know, you can't help it. Your role is quite influential for a lot of people isn't it? So yeah, yeah (2015b).

As an arts professional and practitioner himself, with considerable expertise and experience of working with the arts, other artists, and galleries, whilst recognising other art forms and approaches Jonathan still wanted a 'tangible sculptural piece' (a more conventional art form associated with public art) for the School at the start of *Open House.* After working with Emma over the year, whose practice is performative, participatory and collaborative, Jonathan has become much more receptive to taking risks, more trusting and open to the artist's ideas, and has developed, or perhaps even

[2] 106 funding is a developer's contribution, collected by Cambridge City Council, that funds improvements to community meeting rooms, play areas, open spaces, sports centres, and public art etc. (Cambridge City Council).

renewed, his confidence in more experimental and process-based art practices that challenge notions of art as object.

Figure 5.29 Workshop with *Open House* Artist Emma Smith and Artist Facilitator David Kefford at North Cambridge Academy with the Art Ambassadors mapping out ideas for relaxation, July 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

Highlighting Jonathan's last thought, we can also see that he recognises his learning and resulting shift in approach has a significant effect upon the development and outlook of the students. This section will now explore this further by turning attention to the value of *Open House* to the Art Ambassadors, particularly in relation to their skills, understanding and knowledge.

There is considerable evidence to support the finding that working with artists (Downing and Watson 2004; Atkinson and Dash 2005; Allen 2011;); museums (Hooper-Greenhill 1994; Ibid. 2007; Hein 1998; Falk and Dierking 2000; Wilkinson and Clive 2001; RCMG 2001-2004 and 2004); and galleries (Pringle 2006; Taylor 2006; Jones and Daly 2008; Adams et al. 2008;), supports lifelong learning as well as the learning and development of children and young people, including the provision of different learning experiences to the ones they would normally have in school. Working with Emma and David Kefford, who have significant experience as artists and educators,

and with Liz Ballard from Kettle's Yard, the students were challenged, pushed out of the comfort zone, which supported their intellectual growth.

Figure 5.30 Art Ambassadors' ideas for relaxation, July 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

During the six months the students participated in several workshops exploring the overarching *Open House* residency theme of exchanging restorative pastimes. The first workshop, at the end of the summer term (Figures 5.29 and 5.30), gave the Art Ambassadors an overview of *Open House* and invited them to plan for an exchange with year six students from local feeder school The Grove, which would also support the primary students' transition to North Cambridge Academy by means of an introduction to the school and by getting to know some of their future peers. As part of the workshop the Art Ambassadors mind-mapped ideas for 'chilling out', writing on post-it notes and categorising the types of activities they did to relax.

This workshop was followed by a letter-writing activity in October, with each Art Ambassador individually inviting a named primary school student to North Cambridge Academy in November to take part in 'chill-out' activities (Figures 5.31 and 5.32).

Figure 5.31 Letter-writing workshop with North Cambridge Academy Art Ambassadors, October 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

Figure 5.32 Individual letters for Grove Primary School students from North Cambridge Academy Art Ambassadors, October 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

This concluded with a day-long workshop where in the morning the students mapped out sites of relaxation and areas of stress in the school (Figure 5.33) and planned a

range of appropriate activities for the Grove students to participate in. When the Grove students arrived in the afternoon the Art Ambassadors greeted them, shared a lunch of take-away pizza, sat them down on soft blankets and bean bags and watched the film *Toy Story* on a large projection in the school gym (Figure 5.34), all of which came from their own suggestions made in the first workshop. The Art Ambassadors then toured the school in small groups leading their planned recreational workshops with the primary school children.

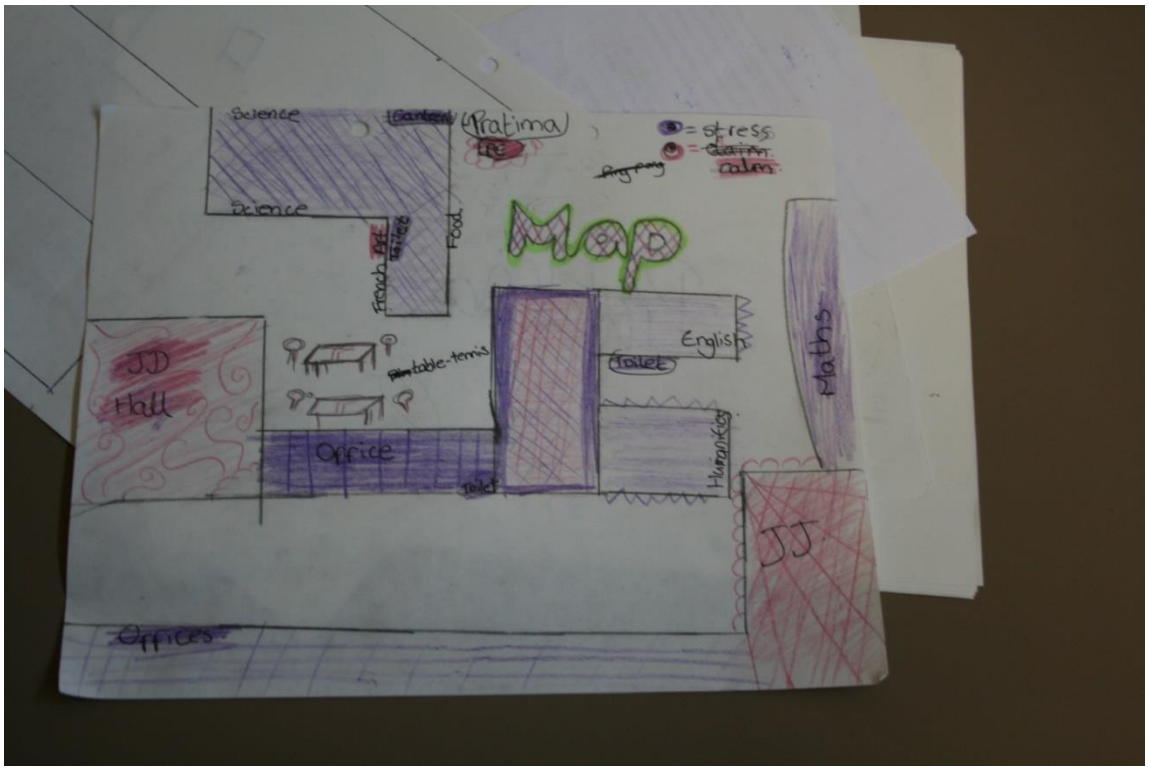


Figure 5.33 Art Ambassadors' map of North Cambridge Academy with a colour code for zones of calm and stress, November 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

For the Art Ambassadors this approach was different from anything they had experienced before in school. It developed many skills, including teamwork, challenged their perception of the school and increased their independence and confidence (the latter two findings will be investigated in further detail later in the chapter). In the following conversation with Alison Bell-Gannon and Charlotte Jones, conducted shortly after the exchange, they discuss why a collaborative approach to art making was not something they would usually do and was therefore of distinct value:

> Sarah: And how was working with Emma, an artist, different to what you'd normally do in art in school?

Alison: There were a few differences. For me there were things like—so for instance in normal classes they would just say what we would have to do and they would come over and help us but, you wouldn't have experience from a proper artist and when you have people like Emma come in and help you, you realise that this is like a living for them. You start to wonder, is this how they do everything every day or do they have different times or you just start to wonder and—what was different about this and—was the fact that Emma showed us that there's a lot more to just art. There's other things as well.

Charlotte: And well, we worked more as a group than individuals because normally in art you'd get a piece off the computer and then you'd do it on your own and maybe ask if you needed help but with Emma we could, like, just do anything. Like, we could go up there and do it and then she'd say, oh yeah, and she'd talk to us and stuff like that.

Sarah: So it gave you more freedom and I'm really pleased you brought up about working in a group because that was one of my questions actually. What did you value the most about working collaboratively or in a group or in a team? So that could be both working with Emma and also with your friends.

Charlotte: Like, if you were stuck, ran out of ideas, then your friend would probably have one or you could just ask somebody else because you're in a group and you got to know more people. So you would be more open and you could just talk to them. So you could say do you have any more ideas and then they'd start talking to you, so…

Sarah: So it helps to generate new thoughts and ideas. And what about you, Alison? Did you value working in a group, and if so why?

Alison: I did because I value the fact that you're not just on your own and you feel like you can have other people's opinions and ideas and sometimes you can take them ideas and mash it up into one thing and that's what we technically did. We had Charlotte's and Adam's idea of the tree and you had my idea of the drama and you had mine and Sandra's idea of just being themselves and that's what made us work together. When you're not on your own you

> have other people and you realise that it's not just something you have to do alone. You have other people who might feel that they're on their own on this one and it's not really. You're all together and you're working hard and you're sharing ideas (2015b).

These comments appear, to me, to suggest that Alison and Charlotte both developed a broader understanding of different forms of art; they considered the career of an artist, and reflected on the value of collaborative working, both in terms of working with their peers stimulating ideas and approaches, and with Emma who offered opportunities for the students to shape their own artistic methodologies and resulting performative and relational artworks.

Figure 5.34 North Cambridge Academy Art Ambassadors eating lunch with year six students from Grove Primary School as part of the *Open House*, November 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

However, at points in the day-long workshop Charlotte felt frustrated. She recognised that many of the activities were 'staged', we could perhaps even suggest unauthentic, as in reality the students were not allowed to relax by the trees outside, where they had based one of their activities. Charlotte raised this as an issue, stating that it would be setting up false expectations, but, in part, due to the rushed nature of the day, there was little opportunity to discuss these concerns in more depth, and explore and

to select an alternative, more 'genuine' site. This raises questions in relation to the space created in *Open House* to hear and listen to community participants' points of view and whether all felt able to confidently articulate their thoughts and ideas, including when they disagreed or challenged the artistic concept, a theme that will be explored in more depth in chapter six.

During our discussion, it also became clear that Charlotte did not fully understand one of the purposes of these activities, a way of consulting the Art Ambassadors to gauge their thoughts on the current school as a way of informing new site developments, which suggests more could have been done to effectively communicate this objective. However, for two students the *Open House* workshops affected their feelings and perception of their school, something they reported as their most significant change, as can be seen in Figures 5.35 and 5.36.

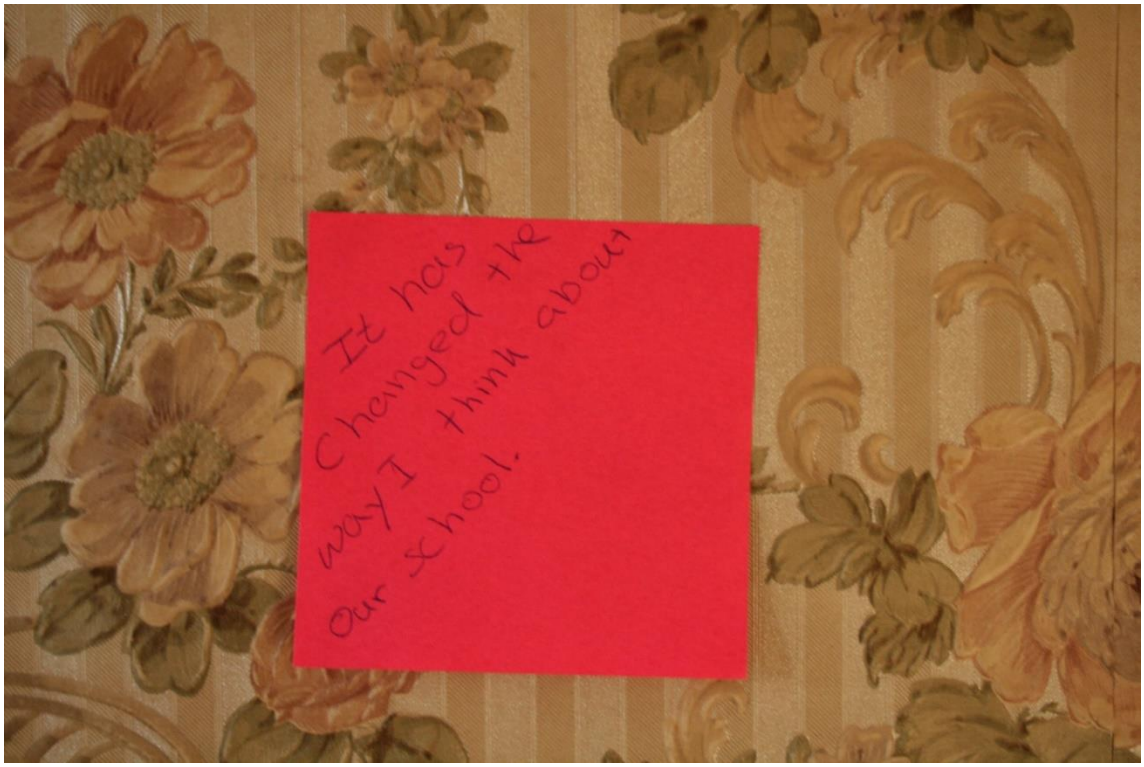


Figure 5.35 Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy reflecting on their 'most significant change' during *Open House*, November 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

This could be understood as a refreshed view of the physical building as the workshops focused on mapping out spaces or as an emotional reaction to the school offering more opportunities for them to have their say. Jonathan also understood this effect as important to the school, stating that:

> It needs to develop for our own sake for the new build and their ownership of here [the School] because that just brings them in far more and then that will have a knock-on effect with the rest of their academic engagement and who knows where after that as well (2015b)?

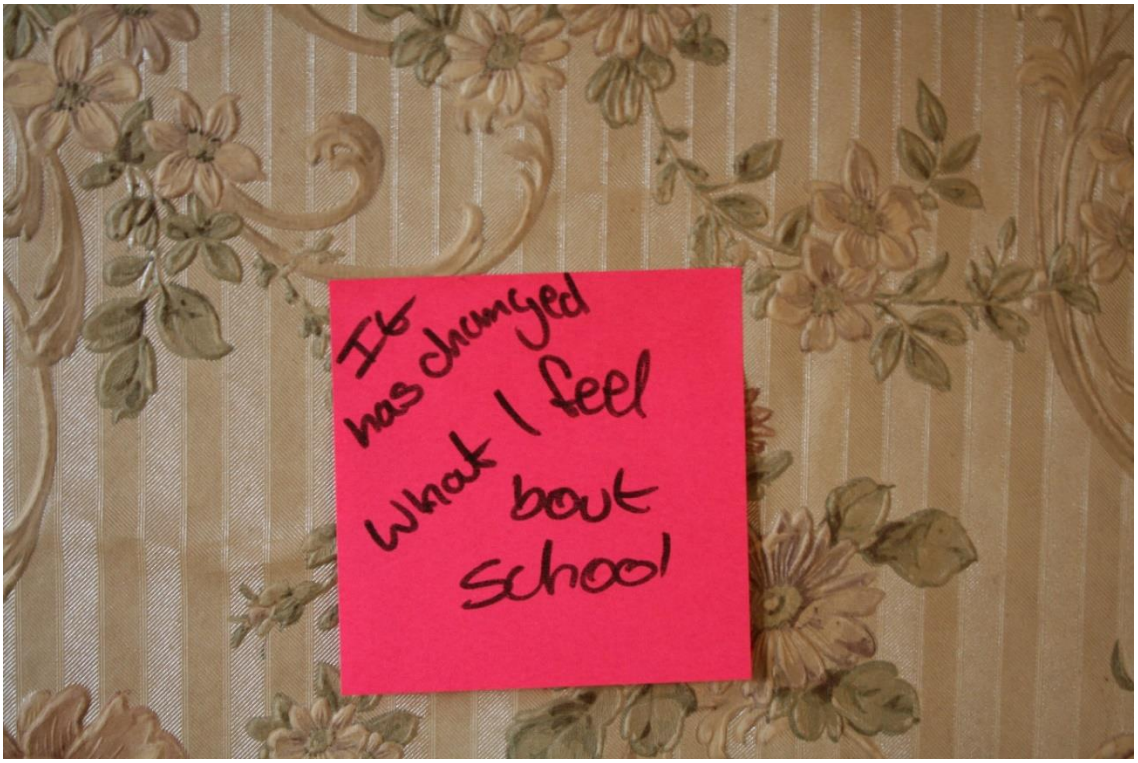


Figure 5.36 Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy reflecting on their 'most significant change' during *Open House*, November 2015, photograph by Sarah Plumb

By having their say in the environmental factors of the new school site, voicing their issues with the current site and their aspiration to have more areas for socialising and relaxation, Jonathan hopes that the students will develop a sense of ownership of the school, and consequentially their attendance will improve, and their engagement in other subjects will also increase.

This increased sense of ownership and input in the school may also lead to feelings of empowerment, a benefit that some of the Art Ambassadors have started to allude to, and where the chapter will now turn its focus.

Empowerment

Figure 5.37 *Open House* Artist Selection Public Meeting. North Cambridge community members appoint Emma Smith as *Open House* first Artist in Residence, 2015, photograph by Liz Ballard

On a dark Wednesday evening in February, Christine Cowling Jones sits in the large hall at Arbury Community Centre with a cup of tea and a biscuit in hand while listening intently to artist Emma Smith speak about her practice and ideas for working with North Cambridge community (Figure 5.37). Christine is a trustee of Red Hen, a local charity supporting children and families and parent governor at Grove Primary School, as well as a community panel member for *Open House* (Figures 5.38 and 5.39). She has been invited by Kettle's Yard along with the other community panel members and members of the wider community to come together and select *Open House's* first artist in residence. After hearing from two shortlisted artists and listening to their responses to questions from the group Christine places her anonymous vote in a black box at the back of the hall.

Both artists thank the attendees for listening to their presentations and leave the Centre for the evening. *Open House* independent chair Joel Chalfen then invites the remaining group to move their chairs to form a circle while he counts the votes from the secret ballot. He reveals that there is an even split between the two artists and

begins to facilitate a group discussion to decide, then and there, who will be selected. Conversations move between views on the artists' work and their proposed ideas, and questions surrounding the most suitable type of practice for the community at this time. This leads to a discussion around the concerns of the community, recognising a lack of community cohesion as a key priority. By the end of the evening the group agree to appoint Emma Smith, citing her open, inclusive and communal methodology as a reason for selection and choosing a practice that is more 'familiar', aspiring to build their capacity to undertake a more challenging residency in the future.

Below is an excerpt from an interview with Christine at the end of the first residency reflecting on what she thought some of the challenges were of collaboration and where she revealed how she had originally voted:

> Sarah: I thought artist selection evening was interesting because there were some differences of opinion but we seemed to work through that.
>
> Christine: Yeah, because I'd actually chosen the other artist but then by the end of it I was… by the end of the evening I'd changed my mind.
>
> Sarah: Why was that? What was it?
>
> Christine: I think with the other artist it seemed—some of the people on the panel thought working with Emma was something that would suit the community and by the end of night I thought actually I agree. I think this is a better fit with Emma, with what her ideas were. That's been positive I think, although I did like the other artist as well (2015b).

Christine's feedback shows her openness and willingness to listen and take on board the views of others, but during the process of being on the community panel she also felt able to share her opinions. She states:

> I'm normally very—I find it very difficult to get my point across in a group of people, like with the governors' meetings. I always feel quite shy at speaking up but actually with the *Open House* I felt a lot more comfortable with the people there and being able to speak up, so it's sort of—I've gained confidence from that… I think—I mean, we did have influence in the initial stages there was some tweaking that needed to be done, so we did meet and do the tweaking

that was needed. So I think everybody's points of view have been taken into consideration and we've got a good Chair (2015a).

Figure 5.38 First *Open House* Community Panel Meeting and tour of Kettle's Yard with Director Andrew Nairne, 2014, photograph by Liz Ballard

Figure 5.39 Community Panel Member Christine Cowling Jones talks with Researcher Sarah Plumb at Akeman Street Community Room at the celebratory event for community members directly involved in *Open House* at *Variations on a Weekend Theme*, November 2015, photograph by Josh Murfitt

Christine points out how important the relationships have been in *Open House*. Her connection with Kettle's Yard's Karen Thomas has been key in developing both her confidence and opportunity to exert agency. Christine worked with Karen in her capacity as trustee of the Ren Hen project before *Open House* and she and her two sons, Donny and Dylan, are regular participants in Kettle's Yard's families programme (Figure 5.40). Through this established relationship, Christine has trust in Karen and felt able to raise concerns, which she did not always feel comfortable doing in a larger group or when she believed her reservations were not considered adequately. For example, during one early community panel meeting in June, where Emma presented her ideas for the restorative and collaborative art project, Christine voiced some uncertainties relating to how members of the community with little English or English as a second language would engage with the letter-writing aspect of the project, as well as potential safety issues in meeting strangers, apprehensions seconded by artist and panel member Mohammed Djazmi. A discussion ensued with Emma, Karen, Liz and Joel offering a number of solutions to these concerns, including ensuring that a representative from Kettle's Yard or the *Open House* team would be present at each of the exchanges. However, after the meeting Christine still felt uneasy and spoke to Karen individually (a point which will be further discussed in chapter six), as Karen explains:

> I was aware that some people in the panel meetings either didn't feel confident or didn't feel that they could criticise or critique certain aspects of the project but they would feel confident to say it to me in an aside or in another event or something. So perhaps we just need to build that into the process too. One of the things I'd like to change about the way we work with the community panel is that actually we've had these very formal meetings and then sometimes at events people have said things but because my head's in an event, I can't take it further. So perhaps I just need to have slightly informal conversations with people throughout the process just to make sure people are happy and that the process is the right one or how we can change it (2015b).

Figure 5.40 Community Panel Member Christine Cowling Jones with her sons Donny and Dylan collecting their over-the-counter remedy from Artist Emma Smith during *Variations on a Weekend Theme*, November 2015, photograph by Josh Murfitt

After speaking with Karen and with Karen's reassurances and willingness to adapt aspects of the project (including working with the artist facilitators to deliver adapted sessions at ESOL cafes), Christine's qualms were alleviated and by the end of the first year her position had shifted, feeling positive about her and the community's experience of working with Emma, as she expressed in her last interview with me:

> Christine: You know, I had some reservations at the beginning of the idea.
>
> Sarah: What were those? Do you mind sharing what they were?
>
> Christine: I just wasn't sure whether the letter-writing thing would be something the community would like but it seems that they really got on board and I thought the children might not be so interested but they obviously are, so—
>
> Sarah: Were there any other reservations you had?
>
> Christine: Only at the very beginning with the health and safety issue with people going round each other's houses, but that was it and I think Emma's

> done a marvellous—absolutely marvellous job. I'm really, really excited for her. She's brilliant (2015b).

Christine's concern was, however, not unwarranted, as a group of adult participants found the writing aspect of the project dull, stating that it reminded them of a task they would have had to have done as part of a job. Karen emailed me to inform me of their negative reaction to the project, with one participant walking out part way through. Below is our email correspondence (2015c):

> Karen: Also, we had a letter-writing session at Try Your Hand on Monday and it was the first time I actually had people walk out of a workshop which I thought would be of interest to you. Really happy to chat to you further about it... obviously wasn't a great outcome for me but might be interesting for your research.
>
> Sarah: Thanks so much for the update. And I'm really sorry to hear about the workshop on Monday, such a shame for you and all your hard work, but yes you're right interesting and useful to know what doesn't work at this first stage to learn for years 2 and 3. Why do you think it was that they walked out, was it the act of writing and confidence levels in terms of literacy?
>
> Karen: I think they walked out because they didn't see letter writing as an art form and they wanted to "make" in a more traditional way. They didn't see the point in what Emma's project would do and didn't see it as art that they recognised. They were older ladies and were clear they liked traditional and practical. I think that one was quite aggressive but this was perhaps a bit out of being embarrassed and uncomfortable that she didn't engage with it whilst others in the group did. They were both retired teachers so def [*sic*] not a literacy thing and stated that they felt they were in a boring meeting which they used to have to attend at work rather than an art workshop.

This is a concern that will be explored in further depth in the following chapter. Christine's role on the panel and involvement in the arts has been a ratifying experience, one that can be compared to Lois Silverman's 'social role valorisation' (2010). Christine studied at art college, but since working and having children art has

been put on the backburner (2015a); *Open House* has offered her the opportunity to return to art in a meaningful and purposeful role. When asked whether she felt this process had been an empowering one, she stated that:

> It could be. Not at the moment but in a general sense the things that I do, this and the Kettle's Yard and everything, has sort of like… holistically is empowering as a working mum. It's something that I'd give my time for free to do which makes me feel good, so yeah (2015a).

Whilst Christine acknowledges that *Open House* has played a part in making her feel good, it would be naïve to suggest that her involvement in *Open House* is solely responsible for her empowerment. Instead we could argue that being a panel member has supported Christine's sense of agency and developed her confidence in speaking up, asking questions, critiquing and having influence over the collaborative process, and in taking risks. However, others, as we shall see shortly, did comment on feeling empowered through embarking on collaborative processes in *Open House*.

Alan also recognises *Open House's* potential for empowerment, but likewise accepts that it is dependent on a number of factors, as he states:

> … yes, it is an empowering experience but that term 'empowering' is by degrees. So if you've never been involved with anything before, I think that would be. But if it's too empowering for some people it becomes overwhelming and they think, oh no, you know, I'm out of my depth here. I don't think I want to come any more or whatever but it won't be anybody's fault at the meetings because it's always been welcoming, friendly, open (2015a).

Alan raises an important consideration, acknowledging the complexities surrounding the notion of empowerment and understanding that it is very much dependent on previous experience. It could also be argued that circumstance, participant motivation, as well as levels of involvement are contributing factors to feelings of empowerment. The extent to which participants have been involved in and had influence over the processes are crucially important in deliberating whether *Open House* has directly brought about empowerment and can therefore be deemed empowering. It is also helpful to recognise that for each individual participating in *Open House* there will be

differing degrees of empowerment (if empowerment takes place at all). For example, it would be unwise to make absolute claims of empowerment for the thousands of community members participating in one-off activities or who have had little say in the realisation of the programme. But for several, their involvement has been at a deeper and more meaningful level – participating in many meetings, workshops and activities over the year; sharing decision-making with Kettle's Yard and Emma; and investing time and energy in influencing the programme and shaping the resulting artwork. For these community members—the community panel and a number of young people, namely the Art Ambassadors at North Cambridge Academy and young women working with CHYPPS—we can go some way in asserting that *Open House* has supported their agency and, for some of them, promoted feelings of empowerment.

All of the community panel brought up that during *Open House* they have had the opportunity to share their views, be heard, and beyond that, be listened to, particularly by Karen and Liz of Kettle's Yard and the rest of the community panel. Jonathan explains that:

> You're on the committee, you're sharing your ideas and you help with the agenda of that as well. So it's very much a group process. Yeah, yeah, I think that is empowering and I felt very much—like I said, I felt listened to as to why I felt they would be useful within the community and this project and I think really we did come to an agreement collectively. Yeah, so that's empowering. Because it gives you the opportunity to see the various other people's slant on what we're doing. The open agenda is the strong way forward I think with that. And I do feel that we are clearly given the opportunity to talk and work out things and you do it as you go along. You know, you come into things with certain ideas that you want from it and you start to think actually no, there's other things that can come out of this as well. So yes, you're listened to and you're given that opportunity to share your ideas (2015a).

The members of the panel see a value in having multiple viewpoints and differences of opinion discussed openly; this broadens their own perspectives and adds to the wealth of local knowledge and expertise in the programme. They also reported that through working on the panel and having the opportunity to voice their opinions their positions

and expertise have been valued and validated. As Matarasso suggests participation in the arts can provide an opportunity for voices to be heard, an experience of inherent value and one that should not be underrated:

> For many adults we spoke to, one of the most important outcomes of their involvement in the arts was finding their own voice or, perhaps, the courage to use it … This kind of empowerment is often claimed by community arts projects: it is, in part at least, an outcome of cultural democracy. The study consistently found adults who felt that they had benefited from being taken seriously and having their ideas recognised (1997: 17).

Through the various collaborative processes of *Open House*, including being on the panel and their involvement in the artist selection, a level of decision-making power has been shared. The acts of discussion, negotiation and compromise, made by all agents, has led to more democratic participation where the community panel have moved from *beneficiaries* towards more *active partners*; these processes have offered a way forward in challenging community engagement practices that so often fall short and result in *empowerment-lite* opportunities (Lynch 2011a). *Open House* is by no means a 'perfect model' of community engagement (if there is such a thing), but presents one approach in engendering empowerment through collaborative and socially engaged arts practice. If we now go on to compare Alan's feelings from the first artist selection evening with his thoughts of working collaboratively and with artists after the first residency we notice a marked difference in his mind set:

> I thought the idea of being in a position where the local community would get the chance to select a resident artist was quite profound. I've never done that before and it was a little bit—I don't think I was scared but it's a bit, you know, out of my comfort zone (2015a).

A shift in attitude, reflecting a willingness to take risks and an increased confidence in critiquing the processes of *Open House*, is powerfully presented in a conversation between Alan and Jonathan, recorded in the debrief meeting (Figure 5.41) and in response to the question *What got lost on the way?*, posed as part of a visual mapping exercise in February 2016:

Alan: I don't think we made bad decisions in the first place… but I don't think our choices are informed as they would have been if we'd have done this process before.

Jonathan: It's a learning curve… it's an understanding of that process and I want this from it and until you've worked with an artist…

Jonathan asks Alan: Now that we've met the artists for the new round that you're sitting at it in, sort of, a different position?

Alan: Yeah, that's what's changed from the first round we just met the artist on the night… up you come, do your bit… whereas this time we've had time to look at something you've sent us and that's given us an opportunity and then we've actually met them and then they do a presentation… that'll be a much more fluid decision, you probably feel you've made a more informed decision. It's become more like a two-way street… I think it might be more challenging for the artist this time.

Figure 5.41 *Open House* Community Panel Meeting and Debrief using a visual mapping exercise, February 2016, photograph by Liz Ballard

Alan clearly feels more comfortable with the process of selecting an artist in residence this time around, in part due to a change in approach by Kettle's Yard, but also his experience gained over the year, stating that he feels more informed. He articulates an assured position, even going as far as saying (in a jovial tone), that: 'it might be more challenging for the artist this time'. Alan later goes on to say in the meeting:

> I'm going to say this carefully I'm not sure we're maintaining a parity between Kettle's Yard and the community… what I'm talking about is what's in it for us… is it in three years Kettle's Yard has done this, this, and this… it is a Kettle's Yard publicity, look what we've done, aren't we great, give us some more money for three years so this time dah, dah, da dah… Or the people that have worked around this, almost like the subtitles, and I was quite defensive at first, but then I became reflective, actually this person has a point. Sometimes the people that are involved in it are left behind, if you like, and the person or the organisation that's done it uses that like a reference … this community thing, therefore you should give us more money. The people will be beneficiaries in a way, but in the long-term are the community coming together? If you want to be quite blunt about it at the end of the three years are they [the funders] going to go to the community and say you've done so well we're going to give you some money, or go to Kettle's Yard and give you the money and I'm not saying that that is wrong, I'm just saying is there that parity? … It's a consolation that we can have this frank and open conversation with people and the way they've bonded together, if the links had been really weak and fragilely formed then you…

Alan raises significant concerns surrounding the sustainability and legacy of *Open House*, as well as the position of the community in the programme. He identifies that at this stage there is a lack of parity between the community and Kettle's Yard and that additional work needs to be done to generate a more equitable relationship. This is an interesting point when connected with his previous comment that the forthcoming year's residency will be more like a 'two-way' street with the artist, yet he feels that the relationship with the gallery is not, and that the power remains unbalanced on the side of Kettle's Yard (this raised issued will be further unpacked in the following

chapter). However, it is worth considering Alan's final point that *Open House* has brought the panel together in such a way that they now feel confident in critiquing the programme, recognising that if the relationships were fragile they would not be having these types of conversations in the debrief – something that up until that point had not happened in a group situation. This, it could be argued, reflects an increase in Alan's personal power, as well as the panel's. It is also worthwhile reminding ourselves at this stage that this is the first year of a three-year programme, and as such all involved are in a process of learning and development.

Returning to a point previously made by Alan, feelings of empowerment very much depend on your previous experience and levels of engagement with art, artists, and galleries. Although I agree with this statement – that little prior involvement in the arts may factor in the effect of empowerment, I go on to suggest that socially engaged arts practice, and its underlying principles of reciprocity and collaboration, have the potential to be more effective in engendering empowerment regardless of amounts of former experience. By now turning our attention to the experiences of a few young participants that, in part, fed into the shaping of the programme and realisation of the resulting artwork, we are able to make a stronger claim that *Open House* offers the individual benefit of empowerment.

The young women participating in *Open House*, with artist facilitator Kaitlin Ferguson and the council provision CHYPPS, had little or no experience of working with artists, galleries or museums, although they were all actively engaged in, and excited by, art, with a good knowledge of historical movements and artists learnt through school. Over the course of the eight weeks their confidence developed, in the main revealed during the final week where they curated an exhibition of their artwork and led tours for support staff and other young people. As part of the programme they successfully achieved a Bronze Arts Award, where they also demonstrated their leadership skills by teaching and sharing an artistic skill. When asked which artist was their 'arts hero', a consideration required for their award, participant Niamh Dunderdale responds with (Figure 5.42):

> I think Kaitlin has quite inspired me because I never thought I'd accomplish what I've accomplished… and I never knew I was going to do spray paint or all

these different activities that I've been able to do in this… I was… we was just going to do painting and like drawing.

Figure 5.42 Film Still of Niamh Dunderdale feeding back to *Open House* Artist Facilitator Kaitlin Ferguson, December 2015, footage by Sarah Plumb

Niamh's powerful words express self-achievement and pride in accomplishing and learning new skills. By surpassing her expectations of the project and of herself it could be argued that Niamh's self-esteem during and after the project has been enhanced.

Through drawing comparisons with Glasgow Museum Service's *Open Museum* project, that offered museum outreach experiences for Glasgow's varied communities, including lending objects, paintings and small exhibitions, and advising through providing expertise to enable people to develop collections and exhibitions of their own (Dodd et al. 2002: 10), we can support this claim. As Dodd et al. in their study of the social impact of the *Open Museum* put forward:

> During and after their involvement with the *Open Museum*, all the participants exceeded their own expectations of themselves. The most significant impact is enhanced self-confidence. Confidence for the four people presented in the case studies is very precious - not tied to specific actions, place or time but spilling over into all aspects of their lives. They feel less marginalised, less insignificant, less unheard. These increased feelings of self-worth will affect whatever else they choose to do (Ibid.: 26).

Artist facilitator Kaitlin further reinforces this view – that self-confidence developed through collaboration in art has the potential to amass and spread in to other areas of participants' lives. Kaitlin developed a close relationship with the young women and noticed a discernible change in their attitudes and behaviour, reflecting an increase in sureness and ability to articulate thoughts and feelings:

> … it was really important for me that these group of girls felt empowered and that they were from a community, as I mentioned earlier, that wouldn't normally have access to the arts, to museums, to these exciting projects that are going on in a place that's quite near them. You know, they are North Cambridge. That is quite close to Kettle's Yard but they don't have those connections and it was really important for me to come in there and give them the knowledge, give them those experiences they wouldn't normally have and I mean that in relation to the materials, whether it was something that they would never get a chance to try, whether it was air-drying clay or spray paint or whatever that medium was, giving them something that they wouldn't normally do so that they felt that they had ownership—talking of ownership, that was important as part of the project when we all sat down on the same table and wanted them to feel that they were collaborators almost, that they were working towards a shared goal that we all have … So we wrote a pledge of behaviour, of what we wanted to get out of the project and a brainstorm of what we thought art was and as the weeks went on I wanted the girls to feel that they'd learnt something, they felt empowered and most importantly that they saw value in everything that they did. That to me is really core and important, that they could feel proud of everything that they've made and I can really say hand on heart that I feel that we've—hopefully have achieved that and now, the day of their final exhibition, I think we've got an exciting few hours ahead to see what they've made and to see how that's affected them and I really hope for positive things from it.

As suggested by Kaitlin offering opportunities for engagement in art and in activities that they would not normally have the chance to participate in has helped them to learn a broad set of new skills, enabled them to see value in their work and in

themselves, and assisted them in developing a sense of ownership of their work and of the project as a whole.

Yet, for Alison, being an Art Ambassador at North Cambridge Academy indicates previous experience of working with artists, galleries and museums. It is therefore curious to note that *Open House* and working with Emma was also an experience like no other for Alison:

> I mean like it's different because when we had our old art teacher we worked with a French artist before and she was kind of nice but what we didn't really exactly realise with Emma is that she's a bit more open than our French artist was. She was more close, more homely, if you know what I mean. She's more welcoming and she's a lot more nicer and more calmer and I like the way Emma kind of—not just gave us—just said, oh look, here's something, you've got to do it. She kind of went into a bit more detail and she made us feel more comfortable with the situation (2015b).

Beyond Emma's personable approach and reading between the lines of Alison's comments we can surmise that Emma offered opportunities for the students to develop their own practice and make decisions for themselves, offering guidance rather than dictating a particular outcome, which for Alison led to a far more enjoyable experience. The process of being actively involved in devising, shaping and leading activities, culminating in a series of relaxation workshops for year six primary students, also led to other forms of personal development including empathy and responsibility. Alison states:

> At the beginning I felt scared and a bit worried about how it would go, because it's our responsibility to look after the kids and this is all up to us about what goes on during that day… afterwards I felt good about myself realising that I've learned some social skills and I've learned ways of showing people that there are different ways of doing stuff… When we first started out we were all quiet with each other and we didn't really talk that much and then when it came to having to do this project, we opened up a bit more. We started talking, we started having more fun and we had more confidence with each other (2015b).

Similarly, Charlotte also valued leading an actual or 'real-life' activity with increased levels of responsibility:

> I thought it was going to be really fun because I was with my friends and then we got to help other people. I think it was more of an independent thing where you had to go off and in your own groups and then do more on your own than asking the teachers all the time. So I thought that was really nice because we got a bit of responsibility and it was actually like a real thing and not just like a task.

In considering Charlotte's and Alison's words we can see that through taking on a new role of responsibility, chosen by themselves, they have influence over how they are seen by others and in their self-representation, in turn enhancing their confidence. By further analysing the data from the workshop observations, focus groups and visual mapping exercises we can also reason that *Open House* has developed the confidence of some of the students. Figure 5.43 shows one of several responses citing confidence as the most significant change for them resulting from participating in the programme.

Jonathan Stanley also perceived an increase in the students' confidence believing this to be one of the most meaningful outcomes, as he contemplates the future involvement of the Art Ambassadors over the next two years of the programme:

> … our Art Ambassadors and their confidence growing, leading workshops and things, I think they're the key things and there's still two more years to go. I mean what I would like is that hopefully our Art Ambassadors will be more confident in being involved in the selection process for the next two years… If that does happen then I know that we've started to achieve something because the Ambassadors is working really well and we have got lots of students keen, coming to me wanting to do extra things. That's growing wonderfully but that confidence side, I saw it develop with the primary school children and the fact that they were leading workshops in that whole day as well but we've yet to bridge that gap I think with the community itself. So, if we do and that starts to happen on the second year then I know already we're making big inroads (2015b).

Jonathan hopes that the students will move towards taking ownership of the programme through being involved in the selection of the next artist in residence, offering opportunities to initiate ideas and drive content, and in connecting with the community beyond the school. By challenging or taking them out of their comfort zone, giving them a space to voice their ideas, be listened to and taken seriously, it is hoped that the young people involved in *Open House* will continue to develop confidence and a sense of self-worth.

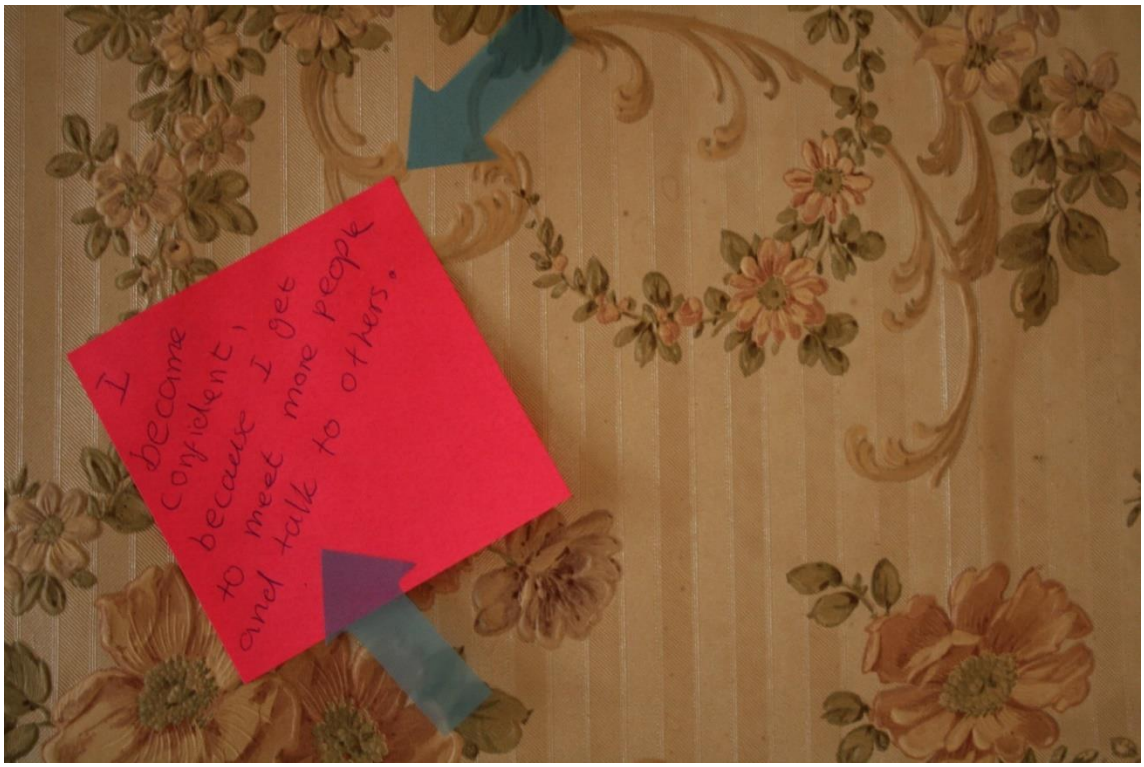


Figure 5.43 Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy reflecting on their 'most significant change' during *Open House*, photograph by Sarah Plumb

Regardless of levels of prior engagement with art, artists and galleries, empowerment remains a persuasive finding in *Open House*. We could argue that socially engaged practice, as a different form of art (one that is collaborative and often taking place over a sustained period of time; offers opportunities for social interaction, where participants meet and engage with new people; and poses possibilities for engendering change), is more effective at enabling participants to shape and define their own experiences and exert control over their own lives, which in turn legitimises their experiences and validates their contribution.

Conclusion

Although a small number of people felt confident in voicing their concerns and in articulating their less positive experiences of the programme, including describing the first artist in residence project difficult to understand, lacking in traditional art-making activities and, in one instance 'tedious', it is worth asking – were there other members of the community who were less confident or unsure of how to communicate their experiences, which might have been challenging, even negative? Although this is difficult to judge, and we can never fully grasp another person's experience, how might future realisations of *Open House* ensure that a space is created where all types of experiences can be expressed? And beyond that, a space that enables all involved to critique and challenge collaborative processes? These questions will be considered in more depth in the following two chapters.

That being said, it is difficult to ignore the mass of data showing that many community participants found the project to be an engaging and affirmative experience that enhanced their well-being; challenged their preconceived ideas of art and, as a result, expanded their horizons; developed new skills, knowledge and understanding; and engendered feelings of empowerment. As this chapter has shown, these four broad themes are interrelated and many of the benefits of collaborating in an artistic process with an artist and gallery lead on from each other and are bound up together.

Now that we have heard from a number of individual community participants collaborating in the *Open House* programme, and considered what they value intrinsically and extrinsically in socially engaged practice, what next? What does this mean for our understanding of socially engaged practice and for the wider field?

The next chapter will continue to draw on findings from *Open House* and the responses, reflections and feedback of community participants, but as a springboard to move from a specific example of socially engaged practice to a wider consideration of the field. Returning to the established ethical framework and extracting further from the literature grounded in chapter two, we will now consider what ethical implications arise for the artist and the gallery when community participants' experiences are *listened to* and *equally valued*.

Chapter Six

An ethically-turned practice

Now that we have heard directly from individuals from a particular community engaged in a socially engaged art programme—*Open House* with gallery Kettle's Yard and artist Emma Smith—and I have interpreted and considered these points of view through a critical research lens, we have begun to develop a more nuanced and accurate understanding of how and why this collaboration has affected them. We have seen that in many respects the aims of *Open House* have started to be fulfilled and that claims of positive and beneficial individual experiences resulting from collaboration are well founded, but we have also heard concerns voiced by community members and can see a number of emergent issues that warrant further investigation and require more ethical thinking from galleries and artists.

In this chapter I build on the established ethical framework and extract further from the literature grounded in chapter two, alongside utilisation of my empirical data from *Open House* as a springboard from which to make wider generalisations. The chapter will unpack and critically consider these arising issues in more depth, and ask – what are the implications for the gallery and artist when we genuinely listen to the community's reflections on, and critique of, collaboration?

The chapter is divided into three broad sections – *Listen up!* that sets out to further problematise the matter of collaboration, as well as interrogate sharing of decision-making power; *Whose artwork is it anyway?* will unpack notions of authorship and ownership and draw on debates within the field of indigenised practice in museums to enrich and inform socially engaged art, working towards an ethically-turned practice; and *The death of the expert*, which concludes by seeking to ask, in a practice where expertise has been troubled or called in question, is there a case for selective power sharing and a 'revaluing' of curatorial and educational expertise in the gallery?

Listen up!

As expressed throughout the thesis, historically there has been an absence of community voice in the critique of socially engaged arts practice, particularly within

academic literatures surrounding the practice and, to an extent, within the sector which has focused on capturing participants' viewpoints through evaluation, most often with its own agenda. Through hearing from and including community participants' voices in all processes and by genuinely listening to and acting on what they have to say, a more ethical practice may ensue. As socially engaged artist Fiona Whelan (2014) goes on to suggest in a discussion of her dialogical artwork *The Day in Question*, voice, although important, is immobilised if not accompanied by acts of listening, which can reveal and challenge power dynamics at play:

> In moving from the dominant focus on 'voice', onto its partner 'listening', we moved beyond a process of validation experienced through sharing a story into a space of agency built though the opportunity to speak to power where power was faced temporarily with the responsibility of listening.

Voicing, hearing and listening all function as part of a process of communication. Issues arising in collaborative practice in many respects come down to issues of communication. Whether it is that people have different understandings and interpretations of the term 'collaboration'; how people decide to convey their message, put their point across, or start a dialogue; how individuals hear and listen to these messages, as these are not unbiased acts (Mazzei and Jackson 2009: 4); and whether these points of view are valued in the same way. These concerns are often bound up in language, which this part of the chapter will now explore.

Problematising collaboration

> The meaning behind words can be very subtle. In the language of the policy document … the museum reveals a centre/periphery view of its communities, in which the organisation is firmly placed in the centre. Despite its undoubted wish to be of service, it displays an almost nineteenth-century view of a passive subject, outside the institution, awaiting improvement. The rhetoric of service within the policy documents of the organisations in the study too often places the subject (community member) in the role of 'supplicant' or 'beneficiary' and the museum and its staff in the role of 'carer'.

> Words matter – this was made abundantly clear once people involved in the study were given the chance to examine them. It was necessary to re-examine the assumptions within the wording of the policy statements, to see how the museums and galleries in the study explained the work to themselves. It is important to make such policies, and the processes by which they are arrived at, transparent, so that others can help museums interrogate them and, ideally, reconstruct them collaboratively. In this way, the implications of such wording may be more clearly understood and match the intended purpose of participation. Such an interrogation inevitably leads to the question: what is the purpose of this work, and how central is it to the museum's goals?
>
> As one museum staff member noted: "People confuse consultation and collaboration...It's a different power relationship." The point demonstrated within the discussions is that the 12 museums and galleries needed to mind their language, or at least understand the terms they used, and consequently the promises and claims made, and make sure that they are appropriate to what the organisation is truly prepared or able to offer (Lynch 2011a: 16-17).

The above text, drawn from Lynch's influential report, highlights the power of words, showing how language can either reveal or distort the museum or gallery's intentions and purpose, as well as their genuine views of the community (in these cases communities were often typified as passive beneficiaries of the museum or gallery).

This examination of language used in policy documents of museums and galleries is useful in considering and uncovering the different understandings of the words used in *Open House's* artist brief, a document that set out the artist's role and reflected the goals of the programme. As the member of museum staff helpfully highlights in Lynch's report, consultation and collaboration mean two different things and articulate and produce different power relations in respect to community engagement work in museums and galleries. An uncertainty around the intended meaning of 'collaboration' and the aspirational goals of working collaboratively with a community took place in *Open House*; however, unlike Lynch's report, this confusion was between the gallery and the artist. The extract below has been taken from the first *Open House* artist brief:

> Working collaboratively with community members, Kettle's Yard is looking to commission an exciting and quality programme conceived by an artist, who will be in residence over a nine-month period in North Cambridge.
>
> This is the first of three *Open House* residencies, to commence April 2015.
>
> The artist will be selected by a Community Panel, consisting of around six invited members to reflect the spectrum of residents of North Cambridge, as well as to ensure that the residency programme is socially relevant and embedded within the community (Kettle's Yard 2015c).

As Lynch's report recommends, Kettle's Yard went on to consult the community panel in the drafting of a new version for the second year of *Open House*. Below we can see the changes made and the addition of an extra paragraph to clarify their understanding of the term 'collaboration' and the expectations of how the artist might work with the panel and the community:

> Working collaboratively with community members, Kettle's Yard is looking to commission an exciting and quality programme conceived by an artist, who will be in residence over a nine-month period in North Cambridge.
>
> This is the second of three *Open House* residencies, to commence February 2016.
>
> *The artist in residence will work collaboratively with communities of Arbury, King's Hedges, East Chesterton and Orchard Park to co-produce new art work(s) which are engaging, relevant and responsive to the local area as well as Kettle's Yard collections and archives.*
>
> The selection of the artist in residence will be by the *Open House* Community Panel, consisting of around six invited members to reflect the spectrum of residents of North Cambridge, staff from Kettle's Yard and feedback from local residents including students at North Cambridge Academy. The Community Panel will also monitor the development of the residency to ensure that the programme is socially relevant and embedded within the community. *The artist is therefore required to attend regular meetings with the panel, to discuss and consult with them on project ideas and final artwork(s), and respond*

> *accordingly to their advice and concerns throughout the duration of the residency* (Kettle's Yard 2016a) (Emphasis added).

Firstly, we can see the addition of the term 'co-produce', implying that the second artist in residence is expected to *produce* or *make* an artwork in collaboration with community members of North Cambridge, which shows that the emphasis has shifted from primarily considering the process to a concern around the resulting product as well. It is interesting to note the use of this phrase, 'co-produce', also by artist Emma Smith, where she distinguishes 'co-production' from 'collaboration':

> … when the term collaboration is used, I think somehow this quite often connotes equality and I think it's about equal respect but not necessarily contribution. You know, I might have somebody who wants to work with me every day that I'm working on a project and be very, very heavily invested in a project and then that might be something more kind of co-produced, but I might say I'm collaborating with them and then I might have somebody who wants to contribute for half an hour and then that's fine and that's all they want to do and I'll still include them as a collaborator on the project but, you know—so it's a funny word because it can mean very different things (2015b).

For Emma, collaboration does not necessarily mean that everyone is equal, rather that collaboration is a process of working together with a sense of equality (2015a: 99). As she points out, collaboration means very different things to different people; a collaborator in a project devised by her can be someone who contributes for thirty minutes or a person investing over a significant period, though she does differentiate this person as potentially a co-producer as well as a collaborator.

Returning to Kettle's Yard's adapted artist brief and exploring the second change in wording—the artist is required to *discuss*, *consult* and *respond* to the community panel's *advice* and *concerns*—we get a stronger sense of the gallery's interpretation of collaboration, which denotes an increased level of responsibility for the community panel and a move towards more shared decision-making. Liz Ballard expands on the reasons for this change in wording, stating:

> [What] we're already trying to do is to be extremely clear in our artist brief that it is a collaborative process, that consultations and decisions need to be made by the community panel and discussed openly … so making sure that the community panel are—when the artist has come up with a proposal—that there is a discussion (2015b).

This change is perhaps, in part, in response to a discussion that took place at a panel meeting during the first residency, where community panel members Christine and Mohammed (both with in depth understanding of particular issues the community of North Cambridge face) raised concerns in relation to the exchange and letter-writing aspects of the project. Their unease related to how members of the community with low literacy levels and those with little English or English as a second language would engage in writing letters, as well as apprehensions surrounding inviting strangers in to your home. As previously discussed in chapter five, although these concerns were raised Emma still went ahead with the proposed activity. Christine felt strongly about this matter, later speaking to Karen on her own, who acted as a mediator by intervening and asking the artist facilitators to run adapted activities in the ESOL cafes. This reveals that the space created in the first *Open House* residency (in this case the space of the community panel meetings), did not enable all community members to feel confident in articulating their opinions, including when they disagreed. And more than that, the space created did not allow for all voices to be heard and to be listened to. Considering the changes in wording in the artist brief it is clear that Kettle's Yard hope to, in future residencies, create a space for dialogue where all members of the community panel feel able to voice their concerns, feel listened to and feel confident in having an open discussion and debate.

For Emma this meeting also raised concerns, however, in relation to notions of expertise and whether there was parity in working with the panel, as she discusses:

> I think partly—it's so difficult because again this could come down to individuals rather than the model—but I think when I first presented the proposal for the project, how I anticipated that session might go was more that I'd sort of say this is what I'm thinking about and then we'd chat it through and everyone would feed in and we'd kind of push it forward and take it forward a

> step. Whereas it felt more like I've presented this idea and rather than think it through together, it was more questioning it—that's a really subtle difference—it felt like I'm going to say this and then you can say whether you like it or not rather than this being a space where we can all—and in a way that's because we're coming—everyone's coming into that with completely different fields of background, expertise, ways of working, you know, and if I'm in a gallery context then it's very fine for me to sit down and say this is what I'm thinking, let's talk it through, because everyone is more familiar with what I'm talking about. If I'm going to somebody who's never been involved in a contemporary art process before and suddenly saying this is this thing and they're thinking—I don't know what they're thinking but they're—you know, they're not coming from that level of expertise, but they obviously have a huge amount of expertise and that's why they're there and they're also invested. So they're giving a lot but there's somehow—it's how do you value what they are bringing rather than putting them in a position where they're not—; that somehow we're having a conversation slightly at odds with each other? … maybe it's more like—on the one hand everybody should—it should be fine to ask questions because everybody's opinion is completely valid but on the other hand it's also useful to recognise what expertise you have in a collaborative process and maybe what wasn't explored or could be explored more is what other skillset is sitting round that table… I know certain things about all of the members and what they do but I just wonder whether it could be something to further explore. What does this person know a lot about? What are they interested in? What are their motivations for sitting round that table? (2015b).

In this long extract, we see Emma grappling with the ethics of collaborative practice, thinking about how she describes her own expertise and the expertise of the panel, whilst recognising that each person brings with them specialist knowledge and skills, but from differing fields. She also observes that these fields do not necessarily overlap, which can lead to 'having conversations slightly at odds with each other'. Emma is aware that as an artist she brings with her expertise in art making and utilises a specialist language to communicate her ideas, a form of communication familiar to

those working in an arts context, and a specialism that the panel do not and are not expected to have. This meant the conversation took place in two different arenas, one grounded in the arts and one in a non-arts field, and in this regard the community panel were at a disadvantage. Emma considers how the panel must have felt during this meeting, and was acutely aware that conversations like this can lead to confusion, and, in the worst case, place people in a position where they feel deficient.

As explored so far in this section and highlighted by Lynch 'words matter' (2011a: 16), the types of language employed to communicate ideas and to start a dialogue have the capacity to influence the effectiveness of a partnership as well as expose the underlying power relations at play. Revealed above through Emma's thoughts and in her previous writing on artists and galleries working with communities, she reflects on how uncomfortable she is with adopted hierarchical relations where artists and galleries separate themselves from the community in a service-providing role and where they assume a position of superiority in some way trying to rescue the community (2012: 26). Although aware of this dichotomy, Emma inadvertently separated herself from the panel, running the risk of enacting a position of dominance through her use of arts-based and academic language employed during the meeting. This may have constrained possibilities for generating a two-way dialogue. Perhaps recognising this as a fundamental issue at a later date, Emma explores how this could be avoided in future realisations of *Open House*, suggesting that all involved could share their interests, expertise, and motivations, thereby positioning everyone on a level playing field. This, as Marstine asserts, would have achieved: '[T]he relational sensibility of radical transparency … in which equity is achieved as both parties see (and recognize) the expertise and experience of one another is founded on the ethics of reciprocity' (2013: 37). By levelling the field a more open dialogue could have taken place, where the panel could have also fed in to the shaping of the project.

One model of collaborative working and exchange that presents an interesting way of thinking about dialogue in a space where historically unequal power relations exist is Dodd, Jones and Sandell's (forthcoming) 'Trading Zones'. Dodd et al. explore issues of translation when bringing together people from diverse specialisms, yet do not prioritise one agent's position or standing over another's. Borrowed from science and

technology, 'Trading Zones' describes: 'the creation of a space in which individuals—from different backgrounds, with different expertise, specialism, or lived experience—can come together to discuss a problem or resolve an issue in a collaborative and, importantly, an equitable way' (Ibid.).

Re-evaluating and acknowledging the benefits of difference, Dodd et al. brought together a group of disabled activists, artists and cultural practitioners in the action research project 'Rethinking Disability Representation'. Through adopting the 'Trading Zones' model, with the museum acting as the site of exchange, all parties fully immersed themselves in a process of coming together and negotiation, recognising that one way of working was not more important than the other, instead choosing to work towards developing new languages and cultures that cross boundaries, which they describe as 'interlanguage' (Ibid.). This respectful approach to creating new forms of dialogue and communication across expertise allows all involved to mutually learn from each other.

Artist and educator Pablo Helguera further asserts the benefits of creating a space for exchange and dialogue. He states:

> Opening a discursive space gives others the opportunity to insert their contents into the structure we have built. As this structure becomes more open, more freedom is given to the group to shape the exchange. The main challenge is to find a balance between the investment of the participants and the freedom provided. This means that when we open a structure of conversation, we should be prepared to accept participant input (2011: 48).

Creating a conversational framework in which enough freedom is offered so that the participants have the chance to input, yet the artist remains the conceptual director of the work is challenging and a fine balance, as Helguera has suggested. Being prepared to accept the input of participants is absolutely key in collaborative practice that seeks to challenge the relationship of traditional power. However, it is also important to be realistic about what is achievable within the framework set out by a project. In the case of *Open House*, Emma was commissioned to work twenty days over nine months. Emma has a wealth of experience in this area and was careful in managing the expectations of the gallery, community panel and larger community, understanding

that for a commission as ambitious as this, twenty days was a relatively short amount of time to work with a group of people. She was conscious of not wanting to set people up to fail. Ensuring an integrity of practice, Emma used her expertise to devise and direct a project that could be realised within the timeframe offered and would work towards achieving the overarching aims of *Open House*. With this in mind, she decided to direct the project in a way that meant she took responsibility, as she asserts:

> … it is important that there's accountability and responsibility within a project and I think particularly when you're working with lots of people and particularly where you might be working with people who are maybe in a slightly more vulnerable situation, then there needs to be quite a strong code of ethics around that practice. So, it's also important to me as an artist to be clearly identified as the person who is conceptually driving something and therefore responsible for it and so if there are ethical questions round the practice I'm keeping an overall eye on whether things are being done in a way that I think is ethically sound. And so that's where I would both posit myself as working as an artist in a conceptual sense and contributing ideas for what the artwork would be and how I can develop it, being responsible for that, but also that being a point of responsibility for the ethics and practice of how that's then done (2015b).

This offers a strong argument for the socially engaged artist to take a leading position where they conceptually and practically direct a project. As explored in chapter two, Helguera makes the case for socially engaged artists to retain a level of artistic control in situations where they interact or collaborate with communities with little previous experience or knowledge of the arts, and where relationships unfold first and foremost in an arts terrain (2011: 51-54). Community panel member Alan Soer raises a related concern, stating that: 'if it's too empowering for some people it becomes overwhelming and they think, "oh no, you know, I'm out of my depth here"' (2015a), particularly in relation to community members who have never been involved in collaborative art projects before. This might suggest that too much freedom, too much input into the conceptualisation and creative process may have, in fact, been stifling

rather than empowering for some of the community panel, who, at this point, only had a limited amount of experience of working with artists and Kettle's Yard.

Therefore, in the first year of a three-year programme and the first of a series of artistic collaborations perhaps it was wise that Emma's unique role and expertise as an artist was fully utilised and that she directed and drove the project forward under her artistic signature, seeing this year as a stepping stone in which to build the community panel's knowledge of the arts terrain, confidence and capacity for decision-making and shaping of future collaborations.

However, it can also be argued that what was needed in year one of *Open House* was an honest and frank discussion between the gallery, the artist and the panel, or what Marstine would term 'radical transparency' (2013), to acknowledge the realities of the situation that for such an ambitious programme twenty days was not an adequate period of time to achieve all of the desired outcomes, and that at this stage the community panel were not experienced enough (within an arts context) to appreciate the conceptual, practical, and ethical ramifications in shaping an artistic programme.

But as the community panel becomes more empowered through the process of working with Kettle's Yard and Emma, alongside developing their expertise within an arts terrain and asserting their own specialist skills and knowledge, they can take on more responsibility in shaping the programme and sharing decision-making with the artist and gallery.

In considering this, can we truly say that the first year of *Open House* was a *collaboration*? And does this matter? Perhaps then, it is worth returning to the understanding of the term collaboration, not only as a way to clarify what the word means, but what that word actually stands for.

As raised throughout the thesis collaboration is a contested term in the field of socially engaged arts practice. When those immersed in a collaborative process have different understandings of the term and therefore differing expectations of their role, their level of involvement and contribution, as well as what they get out of the process, issues may arise. As expressed by Beech (2008), Helguera (2011) and Finkelpearl (2013) collaboration means more than participating; collaborators have a different

relationship with the artist, one based on reciprocity and sharing. Decision-making processes in the conceptualisation and development of content of the artwork are shared, together with authorial rights. Yet, the word collaboration is used as a way of describing a broad array of socially engaged activity, as Emma recognised and highlighted and Kettle's Yard came to find out.

Conflict in collaboration – Collaboration in conflict

In order to unpack the meaning of collaboration further, explore what collaborative practice might be, and highlight the underlying issues associated with this disputed term, it might be worth drawing on approaches from outside the fields of art and museology, in a similar way to Dodd et al. (2017) who have borrowed from science and technology in their work on 'Trading Zones'. Although not a seemingly natural place to turn, an approach borne out of organisational psychology and management might offer a useful visual tool for the thesis and help to build a clearer picture of how collaborative working relations can be negotiated and reached. Surprisingly, this approach also echoes dialogical methods seen in many of the artistic practices presented throughout the thesis.

Since the mid-1960s approaches to managing and classifying interpersonal behaviours in work-based situations of conflict have been developed within the disciplines of organisational research and psychology. The Thomas-Kilmann 'Conflict Mode Instrument' (1976) assesses behaviour in moments of conflict, or when the concerns of two people appear to be incompatible. Thomas and Kilmann describe an individual's behaviour in these situations as sitting along two independent dimensions:

> … **cooperation**, or attempting to satisfy the other party's concerns, and **assertiveness**, or attempting to satisfy one's own concerns. Five conflict-handling modes are plotted along these two dimensions: *competition* is assertive and uncooperative, *collaboration* is assertive and cooperative, *avoiding* is unassertive and uncooperative, *accommodation* is unassertive and cooperative, and *compromise* is intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness (Ibid.).

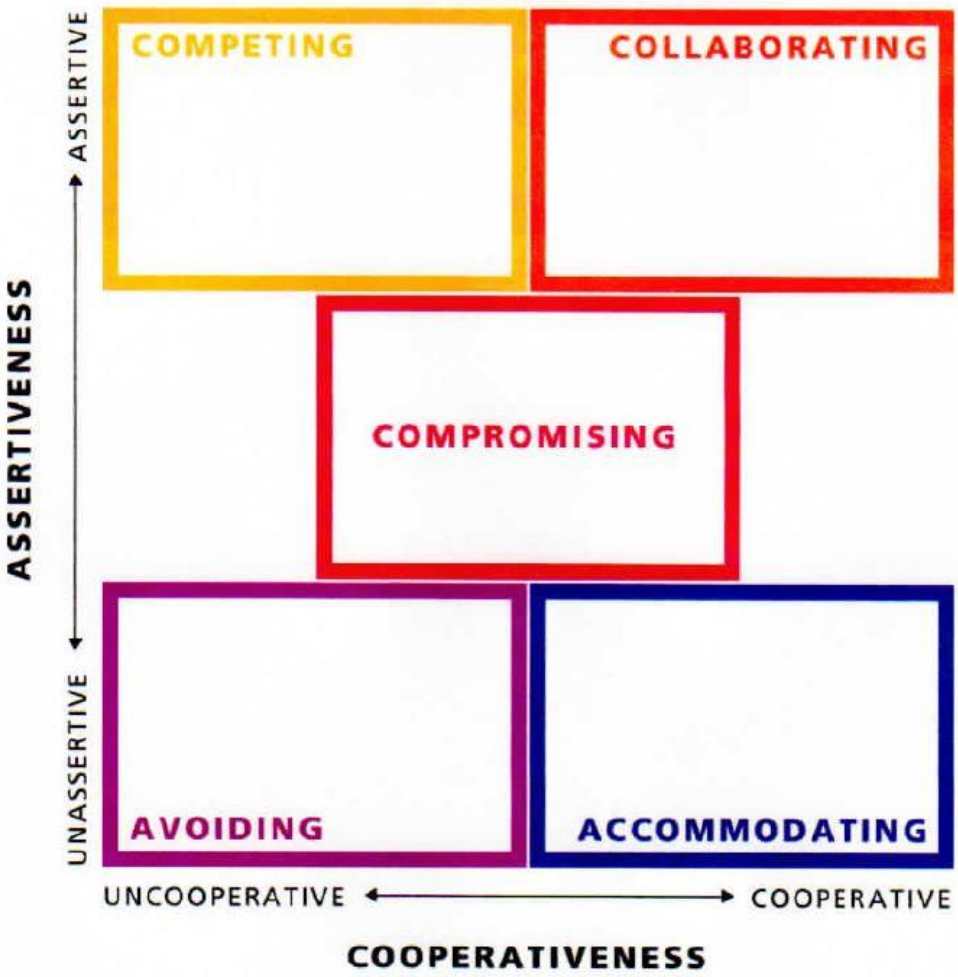


Figure 6.1 Two-dimensional model of conflict-handling behaviour, adapted from 'Conflict and Conflict Management', Ken Thomas, 1976, *The Handbook of Industrial and Organisational Psychology*

These five conflict-handling modes are expressed in Figure 6.1. They suggest that in order to achieve collaborative practice, an individual needs to be both assertive and cooperative in their behaviour and how they communicate in moments of conflict, and all parties are required to consider and satisfy the concerns of each other (Ibid.). This might be achieved by digging into an issue to identify the underlying concerns of the two individuals and to find an alternative that meets both sets of concerns (Ibid.).

Collaboration necessitates that individuals work *with* each other rather than *for* or *against*, implying that in this working relationship power and responsibility are shared, not necessarily equally, but nonetheless shared. This is not always easy when numerous people are involved, with varied concerns, motivations and agendas, as we often find in socially engaged arts practice.

Helguera recognises this by suggesting that a lack of interest in the concerns of the community (or where artists are uncooperative) can lead to socially engaged projects not meeting their objectives, whilst he acknowledges that projects that go too far the other way (where artists are unassertive) also do little to enable reciprocity. He states:

> When SEA projects do not meet their objectives, it is often because the artist has not been attentive to the interests of the community and thus is unable to see the ways in which its members can contribute to an exchange… This detachment of the artist may make the participants feel as if they are being used instead of like true partners in a dialogue or collaboration. In other words, the openness of the format and content of the project must be directly proportional to the level of genuine interest that the artist shows towards the experiences of the community and his or her desire to learn from these experiences… If, however, the artist acts solely as agent and completely obeys the decisions and follows the interests of the community, he or she not only gives up responsibility of creating a critical dialogue, but also proposes a dependent situation, in which the artist's job is only to solve a problem, as a professional technician—a common issue in social work as well. Ironically, although such gestures of service are usually well intentioned, they are in essence paternalistic and reflect the same lack of interest in open exchange as an artist who imposes his or her vision on a community. Artist and community must find the right balance of openness and mutual interest through direct communication (2011: 48-49).

This relationship would be characterised as 'avoiding', falling diagonally opposite collaboration on the 'Conflict Mode Instrument' (1976). Drawing on this model is not to suggest that all working relationships in socially engaged art involve conflict and that the fixed modes articulated above can be easily applied to an arts practice that is complex, context-specific and generates unique sets of behaviours in each realisation. Rather, I use it here to help to think about what is required from all parties in order to generate a truly collaborative relationship.

Correspondingly, Lynch actively promotes what she describes as 'creative conflict' (2011b), recognising this as fundamental in egalitarian partnerships, rather than

something that should be dampened. She states: '[M]ost importantly, conflict must be allowed to be central to democratic participation if museums are to view participants as *actors* rather than *beneficiaries*' (Ibid.: 160). Parallels can be drawn with Bishop's call for relational antagonism in arts practice, where she states: '[W]ithout antagonism there is only the imposed consensus of authoritarian order—a total suppression of debate and discussion, which is inimical to democracy' (2004: 66). Both Lynch and Bishop draw on Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) concept of radical democracy, which stresses the need for dissensus in democracy, rejecting the idea that democracy should strive for consensus, which only serves to further oppress difference.

That being said, I am not sure how beneficial a debate would have been at such an early stage in the collaboration of *Open House*; this might have backfired and caused unnecessary discord in the group, as Harvie asserts: 'I am wary of prioritizing dissenting art practices as Bishop does, because we need some agreement, but also because pleasurable fun can constructively engage audiences while dissent's bad feeling can risk alienating them' (2013: 10).

Lynch recognises that key to this process is a radical trust, in which the museum cannot control the outcome (2011b: 160). With *Open House* only a few months underway at this point of disagreement I observed that Emma and, in particular Kettle's Yard, worked hard to find a balance, where the views of the panel were taken on board, while the artist's expertise was fully utilised to work towards producing a high-quality artwork that involved the community's contributions. On reflection, more could have been done to share power and responsibility (where both the gallery and artist lost some control), and to have fully exploited this moment of conflict to influence the shaping of the artwork, advance the *Open House* programme, develop more effective working relations, and make decisions with the community panel. More could also have been done to have come together at the beginning of the project to reach a mutual understanding of collaboration, not so that a strict definition was imposed, rather that all stakeholders came to an agreement that was underpinned by shared values. All of these suggestions, however, would have required a carefully managed and facilitated discussion and debate where all stakeholders felt comfortable enough to be 'radically transparent' (Marstine 2013).

Sharing decisions, sharing power

Marstine's concept of 'radical transparency' (2013), which mirrors openness, might also aid collaborative relationships that seek to engender shared authority. Marstine identifies five distinct, but overlapping tenets that characterise radical transparency; and she explains that:

> Radical transparency is shaped by a critique of dashboard transparency; it is committed to working towards reciprocity in relations between museums and communities; it shares the processes of value-based decision-making; it empowers participants to make informed choices in their engagement with museums; and it is dependent on internal and external alignments (2013: 37).

As we have seen the community panel during the debrief began to feel more comfortable and confident in critiquing the processes, including the level of shared decision-making and whether there was a parity between Kettle's Yard and the community. Alan Soer raised concerns around the legacy and sustainability of the programme, alongside the ways in which communities can be positioned in community engagement work, which he describes as at risk of being perceived as mere 'subtitles' (2016), a point that will be explored later in the chapter. Karen and Liz, of Kettle's Yard were also more open and honest in their reflections of the first year presenting their future aspirations alongside revealing frustrations, which up until that point they had sheltered from the community. This is demonstrated in the conversation below between Liz and Alan:

> Liz: It's about not getting caught up in the commercial artworld and looking to that, when actually it's just about us.
>
> Alan: Has this project changed your view of art?
>
> Liz: No, it's changed the emphasis of where I'd like production of the artwork to be and I'd like it to be less with the artist and more collaborative… so it's still got the quality, it's still a really good, well-done product… the challenge is for the artist to let go of some of the control and open it out for all aspects (2016).

Through shielding the panel from concerns that they also held, Liz and Karen left the panel uninformed and unable to make decisions based on a broader understanding, which ran the risk of positioning the panel as 'supplicants' (Lynch 2011a: 16), ultimately disempowering them without their knowledge. As Karen and Liz, and the community panel became more honest about their feelings, attitudes, and concerns, a relationship based on equal respect and trust began to develop. As Marstine suggests: 'the situated revelations of radical transparency deconstruct power inequalities to create trust and agency which engender shared authority' (2013: 28). This raises vital points for further interrogation in not only *Open House*, but socially engaged arts more generally – the position, roles and negotiation of power between community, artist and gallery.

It is often maintained that in arts, and museum and gallery practice, participation activates passive viewers (Hooper-Greenhill 1994; Hein 1998; Black 2005; Cutler 2010) and collaboration gives license to disempowered audiences and communities (Matarasso 1997; Vromen 2003; Crossick and Kaszynska 2016). Further to this many have argued that participation leads to democratic decision-making and political agency (Arnstein 1969; Connor 1988). Although, of course, participation and collaboration in some, even many, cases may be empowering experiences, it could also be argued that audiences can be actively engaged in looking or viewing (Ranciere 2009), and disengaged and passive participants do exist (Kester 1995; Bishop 2006; Doherty 2007; Beech 2008; Lynch 2011a; Ibid. 2011b; Harvie 2013). As Markus Miessen argues in his book *The Nightmare of Participation* the concept of participation is quasi-democratic and must be questioned:

> Both historically and in terms of political agency, participation is often read through romantic notions of negotiation, inclusion, and democratic decision-making. However, it is precisely this often unquestioned mode of inclusion … that does not produce significant results, as criticality is challenged by the concept of the majority (2010: 13).

This prompts us to consider and further interrogate the nuanced differences in experience and levels of engagement in participatory and collaborative practices and to problematise this concept further.

Sherry Arnstein's 'Ladder of Participation' (Figure 6.2), a model that dates from 1969 and was originally written with city planning processes and citizen involvement in mind (yet is still widely used in the context of participatory arts and museums and galleries today), is helpful in framing our thinking around democratic decision-making and political agency. The ladder presents a relational model between citizen participation and power, and asserts the degree to which communities participate enables differing levels of empowerment. As participation moves from no power and tokenism further up the ladder the 'have-not citizens' obtain decision-making clout and citizen power. The more involved in the process of decision-making the more power citizens gain, ultimately leading to the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power (Arnstein 1969).

How might this relate to *Open House* and the community of North Cambridge? The community feature highly in the 2015 English Indices of Deprivation, they can be considered socially isolated and there is little cultural participation. Some of the aims of *Open House* are to support the community in feeling empowered and able to influence change at Kettle's Yard, achieve a sense of ownership of culture in their city, and to that end, increase their impact upon and access to culture and creativity (Kettle's Yard 2014). By using the model as a starting point in considering *Open House's* aim of bolstering the communities of North Cambridge's access and influence on the city's culture through collaboration, we could assume that the more opportunities the community members had in participating in and influencing *Open House* the more citizen power they gained, which, in the process, could lead to political agency as an interrelated benefit. However, Arnstein recognises that not all forms of participation are the same:

> There is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process … the fundamental point that participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the powerholders to claim that all sides were considered, but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit. It maintains the status quo (1969: 216).

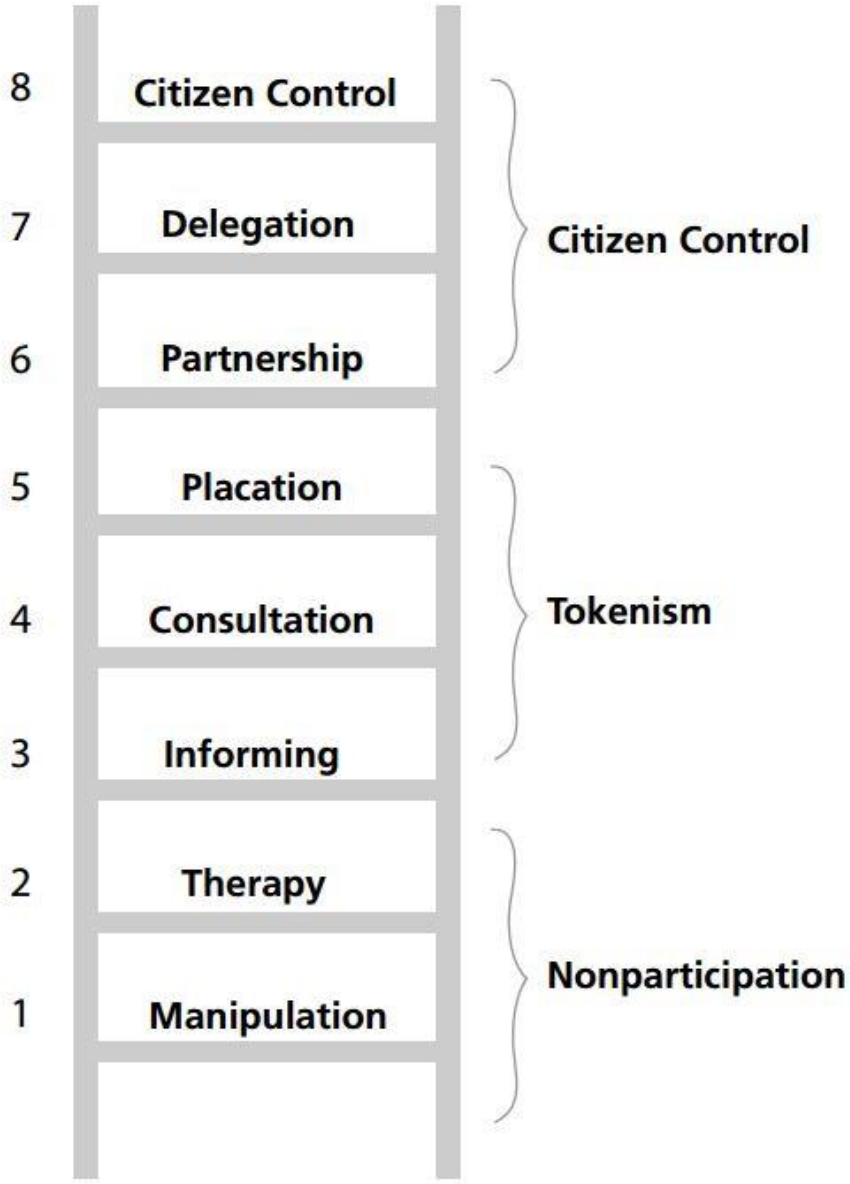


Figure 6.2 Diagram adapted from Sherry Arnstein, 1969, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation', *Journal of the American Planning Association*

Although this model is helpful in highlighting the relationship of civic participation and empowerment and shows that the process is graduated, it still suggests distinct levels of participation in an idealised model. Bishop is unsympathetic to simple conclusions that uncritically assume a causality between participation in the arts and civic engagement, suggesting that:

> It is tempting to make an equation (and many have done so) between the value of a work of art and the degree of participation it involves, turning the Ladder of Participation into a gauge for measuring the efficacy of artistic practice.
>
> But while the Ladder provides us with helpful and nuanced difference between forms of civic participation, it falls short of corresponding to the complexity of artistic gestures. The most challenging works of art do not follow this schema, because models of democracy in art do not have an intrinsic relationship to models of democracy in society (2012b: 41).

Worse still, it could be argued that participation and collaboration borne out of socially engaged practice and mediated through the gallery may be a form of false democratisation when the terms of engagement are dictated. As both Doherty and Beech, respectively, go on to describe:

> If the conventional gallery or museum is becoming a social space, rather than a showroom, do we run the risk of creating a new set of conventions – the convention of role-play or prescribed participation in a wider socio-political context of impotent democracy (2007).
>
> We can begin by noting that the participant typically is not cast as an agent of critique or subversion but rather as one who is invited to accept the parameters of the art project. To participate in an art event … is to enter into a pre-established social environment that casts the participant in a very specific role (2008: 3).

They suggest that in these scenarios the participant is forced into playing a pre-defined role, where they enact an expected behaviour, and where the power relation remains unbalanced. Lynch further reinforces these concerns, by stating that 'invited spaces' can further disempower community participants through positioning them as passive recipients, framing them as 'Other', and ultimately silencing their voices:

> 'Invited spaces' in museums, as elsewhere, are ostensibly devices for dialogue, but remain forever permeated with the power effects of difference … Welcomed into the 'invited spaces', participants are deftly encouraged to assume the position of 'beneficiaries' or 'clients'. This in turn influences what

they are perceived to be able to contribute or entitled to know or decide (2011b: 147).

Considering participation in performing arts, Chrissie Tiller's (2014: 11-13) 'spectrum of participatory performing arts practice' (that builds on Arnstein's (1969) and Helguera's (2011) work) helps to further nuance our thinking around understandings of collaboration and sharing power. Unlike Arnstein and Helguera, who include 'tokenism' (1969: 217) and 'nominal participation' (2011: 14) in their respective model and taxonomy where 'participants' are little more than spectators, Tiller (2014: 11) proposes a different model or continuum that goes beyond audience, spectator, or what Lynch describes as 'passive recipients', and starts at the point at which participants are *actively* engaged. Tiller describes four types of participation that fall along a spectrum: 'active engagement', 'collaborative making', 'co-creation', and 'participants' initiative' (Ibid.), as shown in Figure 6.3.

	Active Engagement	**Collaborative Making**	**Co-Creation**	**Participants' initiative**
	Participants are involved *with* or contribute to the making of the work through stories, ideas or performances.	Artist/s remain in the leading creative role but participants have a direct involvement in the creation of the final piece, working together with artist/s.	Ownership is delegated to the participants as they take growing control of the artistic creation throughout the creative process.	Participants instigate and realise their own creative idea. They are the directors/curators of the piece. Where professional artist/s are involved it is the participants' decision to do so.
WHO is involved?	Professional artists and non-professional participants. Other partners from social contexts.	Professional artists and non-professional participants. Other partners from social contexts.	Professional artists and non-professional participants. Other partners from social contexts.	Participants. Professional artists when requested. Other partners from social contexts.
HOW does the work take place?	'Inventive' (devised) or 'interpretive' (already existing) – i.e. working on participants' stories and concerns or on an existing piece. May be single-authored	'Inventive' (devised) or 'interpretive' (already existing) – i.e. working on participants' stories and concerns or on an existing piece.	More likely to be 'inventive' (devised) piece of work. Shared authorship – with equal value being given to participants' input. Shared decision-making.	Most likely to be 'inventive' (devised) piece of work created by the group. Often process driven as participants grapple creatively

	piece with participants helping realise artist's response to their issues.	Shared authorship. With artist/s often taking final directive/artistic decisions.		with issues. Authorship lies totally with the participants.
WHAT happens?	Workshops that may focus on collecting material. Performance. Artist/s share skills dependent, often, on whether participants are engaged in the final performance.	Skills workshops. Performance. Artist/s share skills towards participants making the performance.	Skills workshops. Performance. Artist/s share skills. Participants share skills/expertise.	Skills sharing. Performance.
WHY? Social	Building Community, Economic/Societal Impact, Social Justice, Political Activism, Celebration, Creative Placemaking, Improved Health and Wellbeing, Own or others' attitudes or behaviour changed, Transformation, Skills Development.	Building Community, Economic/Societal Impact, Social Justice, Political Activism, Celebration, Creative Placemaking, Improved Health and Wellbeing, Own or others' attitudes or behaviour changed, Transformation, Skills Development.	Building Community, Economic/Societal Impact, Social Justice, Political Activism, Celebration, Creative Placemaking, Improved Health and Wellbeing, Own or others' attitudes or behaviour changed, Transformation, Skills Development.	Building Community, Economic/Societal Impact, Social Justice, Political Activism, Celebration, Creative Placemaking, Improved Health and Wellbeing, Own or others' attitudes or behaviour changed, Transformation, Skills Development.
WHY? Artistic	Participants assist artist/s in realising a creative response to participants' issues or questions they have posed. Honours participants' input. Often a greater focus on professional artist/s sense of creative outcomes.	More inclusive artistic practice may still be nominally driven by artist/s but where participants' input is central and equally valued. Still a focus on professional artist/s' input into creative outcomes.	More inclusive artistic practice driven by participants. Equal focus on sharing of skills and artistic development. Shared artistic vision.	Participants as artists engaged in creative process. Participation is both the process and the product. Participant led artistic vision. May employ professional artist/s to help them realise final product.
WHERE?	Traditional/less traditional or site-specific spaces.	Traditional/less traditional or site-specific spaces.	Often less traditional or site-specific spaces.	Often less traditional or site-specific spaces.
WHEN?	Much more than a unique encounter.	Over a period of time.	Over a good period of time.	Over a substantial period of time – allowing for the artist to embed

				themselves with in the community.
EXAMPLES	Theatre/performance drawing on stories/lives of a particular group but performed by professionals. Opera where Participants become a trained chorus. Community choirs performing music selected for them.	Choirs drawing on participants' own musical cultures. Theatre /opera/dance working with themes identified by participants who may also perform. Drawing on culture of participants. Professionals and non-professionals working together as equals.	Theatre/opera/dance in which the issues/concerns of participants are what drives the work. Professionals and non-professionals working together but non-professionals will have increasing input as their skills developed over time.	Dance, bands, orchestras, choirs, theatre - performances driven by the needs/desires of a particular community to celebrate their own culture, express their political or social concerns and present their ideas for change in a creative format.

Figure 6.3 Model created by Chrissie Tiller, 2014, 'Beyond the audience: A spectrum of participatory performing arts practice', *Participatory Performing Arts: A Literature Review*

Exploring Tiller's spectrum in more depth, and as introduced in chapter two, we can see that when individuals participate or are *actively engaged* they contribute to the making of an artwork, help the artist to realise the work, and while the participants' input may be honoured, there is often a greater focus on the artist's sense of creative outcomes. Whereas *collaborative making* offers participants direct involvement in the creation of the final artwork, opportunities to work together with the artist, affords shared authorship, and although there is still a focus on the artist's sense of creative outcomes, this practice is more inclusive and the participants' input is central and equally valued (Ibid.). This final point is key, in a collaboration the participants' contributions should be *central* and *equally valued*, a point which will be further explored later in the chapter.

This part of the thesis does not set out to suggest that participation or collaboration, mediated through the gallery, cannot be empowering experiences but rather that we need to consider the audiences and communities that we work with (who is involved), and recognise the different experiences and levels of engagement (how the work takes place), not simply assume that participation and collaboration automatically lead to empowerment.

Appropriating Kester's theories on community arts might offer galleries a new way of thinking about and approaching collaborative practices. Kester proposes that artists

work with communities that are self-determined or 'politically coherent'. In this case the artist acts: 'primarily as a collaborator in dialogue rather than an expressive agent' (Kester 1999: 7). Through working with a politically coherent community, artists and galleries can also mutually benefit and learn through a reciprocal relationship, where:

> Collaboration would be characterized by a more equitable process of exchange and mutual education, with the artist learning from the community and having his or her own presuppositions (about the community and specific social, cultural, and political issues) challenged and expanded (Kester 1995: 9).

This theory is particularly interesting in relation to the *Open House* programme. The community panel are active and politicised members of the community. Rather than the artist or gallery performing as delegates speaking on behalf of the community, the panel act as spokespeople with the interests of the community as their main concern. As we have seen, the panel have become more confident in engaging in a dialogue, challenging and questioning the processes of *Open House*, which means that the collaboration is on more equal terms than if the artist and gallery were working only with the most disenfranchised and disaffected members of the community. Through *Open House*, is there a way that the politically coherent community panel, working in collaboration with a socially engaged artist and gallery Kettle's Yard, can galvanise and activate the community to become more politically engaged, building on their history of community activism, to work towards becoming self-defined and determined, or as Kester (1999) would describe 'politically coherent'? And once politically coherent the community can move along Tiller's spectrum of participation from 'collaborative making' and 'co-creation' to a 'participants' initiative', where they instigate and realise their own creative ideas (2014: 11-13)? This speculation will be further explored later in the thesis.

Following on from this provocation and in contrast to Bishop's earlier postulation and critique of Arnstein's 'Ladder of Participation' in respect to participation in the arts, Crossick and Kaszynska argue that: 'there is a crucial link between cultural engagement and an ability to act as a global citizen in a democratic system' (2016: 58), though they recognise that this is a hotly debated topic and a difficult area to evidence. They go on to suggest that there is: 'a growing body of evidence, mostly from the US, to support

the claim that arts and cultural participation is associated with civic engagement, even if the mechanism is not well understood' (Ibid.: 60-61).

As chapter five has suggested, through the *Open House* case study and the associated literature I have referenced, engagement and participation in culture *can* have a number of benefits for individuals, communities and society more broadly. Furthermore, there is potential for socially engaged practice to empower individuals to become more civically and politically engaged. Surely then, galleries should be concerned with opening their doors to everyone, including socially isolated individuals and those without citizen power? Yet, in considering the intricacies and potential jeopardy of participation and collaboration, how might galleries and artists—working through collaborative practice that seeks to share decision-making and power—support and animate individuals to gain citizen control, whilst recognising the complexities of social isolation and negotiating deeply-embedded power relations?

Whose artwork is it anyway?

Collaborators as co-authors

The thesis sets out to reflect upon the experiences of community participants and consider the ethical implications for artists and galleries when taking into account the value of socially engaged and collaborative practice to the community. When listening to the voices of the community participants what requires further attention?

Intriguingly, the community did not voice concerns over authorship of the artwork, which might lead us to assume that this was not of interest to them. Many did, however, raise issues of ownership, which is where the chapter will turn its attention in the next section. Yet, why might there be a need to focus on authorship if the community have not identified this as an issue? There are two reasons. Firstly, I have observed that this is a broader issue affecting the practices of socially engaged arts, and collaboration in museums and galleries and therefore merits further interrogation. Secondly, my own critical reflections of the first year of *Open House* have convinced me that although concerns around authorship were not explicitly voiced by the

community, how their contributions were recognised and whether their wishes were listened to did matter to them.

A breakthrough in my thinking came when I realised that several community participants were not aware that authorship of a collaboratively-made artwork might be a possibility or even an option for them. Many of the community in North Cambridge lack confidence, as Alan states: '[M]ost people who live in this area… sort of more or less a lack of self-belief that they can actually achieve something higher than they've sort of expected to' (2015b). With this is mind, we could say that the community lack, as French philosopher Pierre Bourdieu would call it, 'cultural capital'. Mark O'Neill describes this in more detail, by stating that Bourdieu et al.'s 'The Love of Art':

> … argues that inequality is passed on from generation to generation because, not only do people inherit their parents' wealth, but also their 'cultural capital'. This includes the education that enables them to progress through the system, the knowledge of how the system works. One of the key forms of cultural capital that children inherit is the 'love of art', which gives them the familiarity with the icons of European culture that are signs of belonging to the social elite, within which meritocracy applies (2002: 28).

O'Neill appreciates the layers of complexity surrounding individual and communal lack of self-belief and aspiration, and whether or not people feel able to participate in culture, further stating that:

> The analysis underlying social inclusion is that exclusion from the opportunities society has to offer is a deeply sustained culture reinforced by attitudes of excluded and included alike. For the excluded, whether they be so for reasons of poverty, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, or most often, some combination of these, their situation in society can generate a lack of confidence, a sense of not belonging, which make supposed opportunities seem unattainable (Ibid.: 34-35).

The artist and members of Kettle's Yard concluded that because the community did not ask to be considered as authors, they did not desire it, which is not at all an

unreasonable assumption to make, and of course in some or even many instances, this might be the case. But as O'Neill thoughtfully articulates, cultural participation, and by extension the community's sense of entitlement and desire to be attributed cultural authorship, is not always free choice; rather it is bound up in their cultural capital.

Let us imagine that the community do want to be recognised as authors of the resulting artwork. What then? This is not to say that it should be as simple or straightforward as the community have asked for it and therefore they should be authors; rather that we should have a conversation around whether community participants *can* be authors. The artist will always retain authorship of an artwork, the work reflects their artistic identity or signature (Bishop 2006; Doherty 2011; Helguera 2011; Lowe 2013; Nielsen 2015), and the death of the author is merely a myth (Barthes 1977). Yet, whether authorship can be *shared* remains open for discussion – in art and gallery practices, such as *Open House*, to what extent can community participants be considered *co*-authors?

In the case of the first residency, Emma Smith worked with the local community of North Cambridge to develop a performative artwork, exploring people's restorative pastimes. Throughout the residency there were differing degrees of engagement and participation in the process, which led to varying levels of input or contribution.

Over three thousand participants engaged in the project working with Emma and the artist facilitators through drop-in activities and more sustained workshops. In some cases, the participants' contributions were anonymous, but a small number of individuals engaged in the process over a longer period and at a deeper and more intimate level, working directly with Emma. These participants included members of the community panel, the Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy, as well as individuals recruited through local clubs and groups, who embarked on reciprocal exchanges of restorative actions.

The participants' contributions were made manifest through the process of exchange as well as in the final artwork, where Emma redistributed the collected advice at the art apothecary during the exhibition *Variations on a Weekend Theme*. The anonymous participants were credited, or as Tiller (2014: 12) would describe 'honoured', in the

exhibition through a vinyl text display listing all the groups that participated, alongside named individuals who were involved in the invited exchanges and the larger project.

As Liz Ballard, assistant curator for *Open House* suggests, the contributions made by the community participants are a key concern:

> You want to respect the artist and the integrity of their practice, their work and their input, but you also want recognition of the input of the participants because you can't have one without the other (2015a).

Liz raises an interesting point, not all contributions are equal, but nevertheless the collective input and influence of the community are a fundamental part in the making and realisation of a collaborative artwork. Without the community's contribution, the work would certainly not exist in the form it does today. Therefore, at this stage in *Open House*, in order to understand who was recognised, how they were valued, and whether they could be considered co-authors it might be helpful to identify the degree to which the community participants contributed, which was bound up in the design of the project and the role of the artist. Firstly, we should consider whether the community members collaborated or just participated.

Collaborators can be considered co-authors (Beech 2008: 3), but can we in fact call the community participants of *Open House* collaborators? As explored earlier in the chapter collaboration is understood in multiple ways. Finkelpearl asserts that we should be mindful of employing the term collaboration as it: 'implies a shared initiation of the art, and start-to-finish coauthorship … For many projects … collaboration is simply too far-reaching a claim to make; not all of the participants are equally authors of these projects, especially in the initiation and conceptualisation' (2013: 6). In regards to *Open House*, although there has been a dialogue with the community participants and a degree of shared decision-making with the community panel, the project was initiated by Kettle's Yard and ultimately directed by artist Emma Smith. Emma states:

> I suppose the artistic concept for a work can be co-authored but for that to happen usually would require a much longer-term form of collaboration. So I feel in the instance of this commission the concept for the work has been

> driven by myself and then people have fed into that as we go along. So there's a slightly clearer identification of where authorship for that lies which could get muddied if you're starting a collaboration with a longer lead-in to it than the making process together (2015b).

Emma suggests that for the community participants to be recognised as co-authors the collaboration would have required more time to allow for the community to work with her outside the making process and be involved in the instigation, conceptualisation and formulation of ideas.

At this juncture, it might be advantageous to explore authorship in relation to intellectual property[3], intellectual property rights[4], and copyright law[5] to help develop a clearer sense of when, or even whether, community participants can be deemed co-authors. The European Intellectual Property Rights offer advice on intellectual property and intellectual property rights matters, including providing a definition of the term authorship. They state that authorship is:

> The quality or state of being a creator (natural person) of a work. In order to be considered as an author, it is generally acknowledged that a certain level of creative contribution to a work must be met. Authorship entails certain moral rights, such as the right to attribution (i.e., to be named as the author), that cannot be transferred or licensed, and therefore will stay with the author even in a situation where he/she does not own the copyright.

They also provide the meaning of the term 'joint authorship', asserting that it is:

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[3] Intellectual Property: is a term referred to types of property that result from creations of the human mind (the intellect). In a broad sense, it comprises patents, copyright and related rights, trade marks, know how, trade secrets, industrial designs, designs, drawings, reports, methods of research and developments, documented data, and description of inventions and discoveries (European IPR).

[4] Intellectual Property Rights: are private legal rights that protect the creation of the human mind: inventions, literary and artistic works, and symbols, names, images, and designs used in commerce. They are commonly divided into two categories: Industrial Property Rights (e.g. patents, trade marks, industrial designs, geographical indications) and Copyright and Related rights (e.g. rights of the authors/creators and those of performing artists in their performances, producers of phonograms in their recordings, and those of broadcasters in their radio and television programmes) (Ibid.).

[5] Copyright: is the legal right granted to an author, composer, playwright, publisher or distributor to exclusive publication, production, sale, or distribution of literary -, musical -, dramatic -, or artistic work (Ibid.).

> When several individuals work together to create a single work, then all are co-authors of an undivided entire work and have joint ownership (Ibid.).

This might suggest that the community participants of *Open House* are co-authors as they have worked with Emma to create the resulting artwork. However, if we look in more depth at what determines authorship we find that, in a similar way to inventorship, there exist two main requirements to determine it. First, the conception of the idea, and second, the reduction of the idea into practice (Ibid.). In the case where two or more individuals 'actively' contribute in the devising of a piece of work (meaning that without those personal contributions the work would not have been devised) through the process of collaboration, then they can be considered co-authors (Ibid.). On the other hand, an individual cannot be deemed to be an author if they only carried out work under direction from others (Ibid.). Copyright gives the creator of the work the exclusive rights to copy, license, rent, lend, perform, show the work to the public, make an adaptation of the work or translate a work. However, copyright does not protect ideas; it protects expressions of ideas that are fixed in a permanent form, for example, written down or recorded (copyrightuser 2017). Furthermore, the copyright of the work, in general granted in the first instance to the author or authors, entails moral rights, which are personal rights, that can also be waived in whole or in part by written consent from the author or authors.

Consequently, in legal terms, it is clear-cut that at this stage of *Open House* it is not appropriate to consider the community participants co-authors, as they did not conceive the overarching concepts of the work; rather they were directed by Emma and Kettle's Yard. However, drawing on Kettle's Yard's catalytic intentions for future realisations of *Open House* further investigation concerning authorship, rights and ownership of collaboratively-made artworks is warranted, and more broadly to address concerns within the field. As *Open House* progresses into phases two and three there is a desire from Kettle's Yard and the community panel for further opportunities for the community to collaborate in the initiation, conceptualisation and shaping of new high-quality work and as co-authors.

Although breaking new ground in terms of community engagement and consultation, and in generating a three-way dialogue between gallery, artist and community, in

many respects the first year of *Open House* adhered to a more traditional Western art model of authorship, where all Intellectual Property Rights belong to the artist, and where Kettle's Yard has been granted permission by the artist to use the imagery associated with the project and resulting artwork (Kettle's Yard 2016b). Art historian Donald Preziosi further describes this:

> Modern art historical and museum practice have been grounded in attempts to maintain and consistently apply certain theories of authorship, consonant with particular Western philosophical and theological concepts of the individual subject and its ethical, legal, religious, and political responsibilities. Western art history was traditionally dominated by the promulgation of a paradigm of the normally singular, unique, inspired (and usually male) artist, and the uniquely original artefact of that inspiration, indissolubly linked as originating cause and effective product … What benefits accrue to different notions of authorship or artistic identity (2009: 317)?

As a practice that challenges the status quo, shouldn't socially engaged art also contest the traditions of authorship (and not just in a notional way where collaborators receive a 'named credit'), and dare to propose an alternative model of authorship that moves beyond legal definitions, and acknowledges more than the singular artist as author? What other fields of practice might we draw from to further interrogate sharing authorship? And what examples exist of collaboration that take place over the longer-term, where ideas are collaboratively generated and driven, and decision-making at the conceptualisation and making stages are shared?

The chapter will now explore alternative approaches that recognise and value the contributions of a range of stakeholders through more than a mere name check or credit. This is not to say that a named credit is insignificant, as it is often highly valued by the participants but rather that we need to consider going beyond this when we discuss collaborative practices that strive to respect all exchanges of expertise, skills and knowledge (Plumb 2016).

Academic, dancer, and choreographer Kate Lawrence (2011), discusses issues of authorship in site-specific dance, putting forward the case for recognising the contribution of several stakeholders as co-authors, acknowledging the complex and

significant input that those beyond the choreographer make. Many parallels can be made with socially engaged and collaborative visual arts vis-à-vis the complex and interdependent relationships between many agents when producing work with the public and situated within the public realm. Lawrence goes on to propose employing a metaphor of weaving which might allow for a non-hierarchical and decentralized approach to creation (and ultimately authorship), with curating understood as a process of creation where multiple bodies are engaged and emerge as a matrix of overlapping threads and where any one body or thread is crucial to the process of creation as any other (Ibid.: 172).

Although this non-hierarchical and devolved approach is certainly of interest in collaborative work that seeks to respect every contribution, can all stakeholders really be considered *equal* co-authors alongside the choreographer? They might have contributed to and in part influenced the final work, but was there start-to-finish co-authorship? Did they initiate and generate conceptual ideas of the work? If we apply the metaphor of the weaving, formed from overlapping threads, do we also run the risk of misattributing authorship? In Lawrence's assertion, all those involved can be considered authors regardless of their level of input or the efficacy of that contribution. Does this overlook and devalue the principal role that the choreographer, or in my case the artist, plays in collaboratively-made works?

During an interview, *Open House* artist Emma Smith also raises a pertinent point about her role in the making of the work, highlighting the fact that without her the work would not exist:

> … co-authoring work, it's a difficult process in finding people who actually you can work with at that level where something is properly co-authored, it requires a lot of time and true collaboration is very, very slow. The other thing I would say it's also important to recognise what contributions are being made. So quite often when people say it's a co-authored project and there's been lots of people involved, if you actually wrote down time commitments and who had generated ideas, organised it… most of the work that I work on would not happen if you took me out of the equation on any level… so it's also recognising what it is that an artist does when they come into one of these commissions

> and what they're actually generating and producing and I think it's fair to recognise that if you take away that accreditation of what the artist is bringing to the process, then you actually take away they're making work (2015b).

As Emma states, if you took her out of the equation the artwork would not have been made. This echoes the legal standing of an 'author,' that without those personal contributions the work would not have been devised (European IPR). Is there another way to explore co-authorship, one that acknowledges the range of contributions that stakeholders make, whilst recognising the degree and effectiveness of this input; one that ensures the unique role, expertise and contribution of the artist is not diminished, whilst still recognising participatory labour? One that does not flatten out involvement or group everyone together as *equal* co-authors?

Doherty suggests in her 'New Rules of Public Art', that in collaborative practices ownership can be shared freely, but authorship wisely (2013). Expanding on this further in her edited volume with Paul O'Neill, they state that authorship of specific facets, for example architectural interventions, residencies or texts, might be clearly attributed (2011: 7), suggesting that some contributions are harder to ascribe authorship to, hence the need for sharing *wisely*. How can *all* contributors be recognised and credited as authors, whilst allowing us to gauge the extent of the input, both in terms of amount and quality?

Being able to attribute authorship to specific facets of a collectively-made work presents an appealing solution. The open source movement might just offer this. Coined in 1998 in California, the term 'open source' represents a licensing model for computer software. With an open source code, 'open' in this case means made available to the general public, the software can be studied, changed and/or improved (European IPR). It is not only the product or the software that is freely shared: how the software has been created and the process of bringing it into being, is also revealed. 'Open source enables a development method for software that harnesses the power of distributed peer review and transparency of process … the promise of open source is higher quality, better reliability, greater flexibility, lower cost' (Open Source Initiative).

Many museums and galleries are already using open source in very practical ways, for example benefitting from software packages designed specifically for them. But in this research it is the principles and values of open source – openness, sharing, collaboration, transparency and peer review that are of interest.

Nina Simon, author of *The Participatory Museum* (2010) and blog 'Museum 2.0', focuses on participatory community engagement and has, for many years, adopted terminology and approaches from technology and the Web that encourage visitors to museums to actively participate, generate their own content and offer opportunities for visitors to improve content. Simon (2010) advocates opportunities where participants can discuss, share, and remix what they consume. This reflects an open source ethos, where visitors can co-create with the museum and other visitors, and contribute towards developing a more advanced version of the original concept, in this case by developing a 'museum 2.0'.

The Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA) in Glasgow also operates an open source programming policy, part of which includes offering organisations and individuals space in the building to programme their own events (CCA 2017). The artistic community of Glasgow can submit proposals to hold events, activities and workshops for the public, which the gallery selects from and hosts, forming part of their public programme. This approach not only strongly reflects the local artistic community; it reflects more cultural perspectives than the staff at CCA could achieve on their own and supports a sense of shared ownership.

In a similar way, Tate Exchange (which emerged from 'Transforming Tate Learning' and is situated on level five of the new Tate Switch House) is programmed by Tate's Learning team in partnership with artists, fifty-four international associate organisations (including from: arts, health, education and charitable sectors) and the public for one year where they programme activity responding to the theme of 'exchange', chosen by artist Tim Etchells. In this flexible space small discussions, seminars, lectures, workshops, performances and exhibitions, that are both open to the public and to invited guests, respond to the overarching research question – 'What difference can art make in society'? Although Tate do not explicitly label their approach as open source, they describe the space as: 'for everyone to collaborate, test

ideas and discover new perspectives on life, through art' (Tate 2017b), echoing many open source principles.

But how might we use open source to support shared authorship and attribute authorship to multiple contributors? Lev Manovich, new media and digital theorist, speculates that the: '[O]pen Source model is just one among a number of different models of authorship (and ownership) which emerged in software community and which can be applied (or are already being applied) to cultural authorship' (2002). Although there are many different uses of open source Manovich suggests that two aspects of the open source movement are particularly interesting in relation to cultural authorship. One is the license offered, which allows for the source code to be used, modified and/or shared, specifying the rights and responsibilities of a person modifying the code and the other is the idea of the 'kernel' (Ibid.). The kernel is the heart or essence of the code. Manovich believes that:

> … the ideas of license and of kernel can be directly applied to cultural authorship. Currently appropriation, sampling, remixing and quoting are controlled by a set of heterogeneous and often outdated legal rules. These rules tell people what they are not allowed to do with the creative works of others. Imagine now a situation where an author releases her/his work into the world accompanied by a license that will tell others both what they should not do with this work and also what they can do with it (i.e. the ways in which it can be modified and re-used). Similarly we may imagine a community formed around some creative work; this community would agree on what constitutes the kernel of this work … it would be assumed that while the work can be played with and endlessly modified, the users should not modify the kernel in dramatic ways (Ibid.).

This is noteworthy because it applies primary value on the original code and concept, the kernel. If we apply this logic to the first year of *Open House*, Emma's idea for the contemporary repository of restorative actions would be the kernel: the artist retains control and authorship over this fundamental element of the artwork. This recognises and places significant value on the unique perspective and contribution of the artist,

their vision and shaping of the work, which also protects against the artist being turned into a service agent for the community alone.

Manovich presents a further attractive benefit of open source and authorship in computer culture. Following on from the idea of the kernel, in his discussion on OPUS, a software package and site, Manovich recognises its potential in not only allowing for multi-user collaborations, but also tracking each user's use and adaptation of the code:

> In OPUS (which stands for "Open Platform for Unlimited Signification"), anybody can start a new project and invite other people to download and upload media objects to the project's area on OPUS site … When the author uploads a new media object (anything from a text to a piece of music), s/he can specify what modifications by others will be allowed. Subsequently, OPUS software keeps track of every new modification to this object.
>
> Each media objects archived, exhibited and made available for transformation within OPUS carries with it data that can identify all whose who worked on it. This means that while OPUS enables collaboration, it also preserves the identity of authors/creators (no matter how big or small their contribution may be) at each stage of a work's evolution (Ibid.).

If we compare the original creator/s of the source code to the socially engaged artist and the users modifying the code to the community collaborators, can we compare OPUS site to the gallery? Could the gallery act as a mediator keeping track of everyone's contribution or 'modification', as well as exhibiting and archiving the resulting work? Rather than presenting all stakeholders as *equal* co-authors, as posited by Lawrence, this approach distinguishes that without the originator of the source code, or in this case the artist, and without their kernel or originating idea, the work would not exist, whilst still recognising the contributions made by users or the community, whether small or large. This in my view presents a sophisticated compromise because it does not devalue the role of the artist; rather it more accurately attributes authorship to what people have contributed.

I admit that this approach would be incredibly difficult to put into practice. My intention is not to attempt to pin down socially engaged practice or apply fixed rules or

legal conditions on a work that is so context-bound, rather open up discussions around issues of authorship in collaboratively-made artworks, and offer some alternatives that could be adapted, perhaps provoking areas for further research and interrogation.

So, if it were the case that the community of North Cambridge became co-authors either through applying alternative authorship models or by being involved in a longer-term collaboration where they initiate, conceptualise and share decision-making processes, what would be the implications for the artist, gallery and the community? Acquiring authorship means gaining rights, but it also necessitates additional responsibilities. As the programme currently stands, primarily Kettle's Yard and then the artist take responsibility for the programme. Do the community want this extra responsibility? And do they want to be co-authors? Having the right to authorship is also the right to waive or decline authorship. But for the community to decide this, they first need free choice and be aware that this is an option open to them.

Ownership

Authorship and ownership, although linked, are different and should not be confused. Ownership recognises the right to possess work, namely a proprietary right; the proprietor also has the right to restrict others in their use of the intellectual property it owns (European IPR).

Although perhaps playing it safe in terms of authorship, *Open House* is beginning to disrupt established practice with respect to ownership of collaboratively-made artwork, though there is still progress to be made. Kettle's Yard and artist Emma Smith negotiated a contractual agreement that has taken some steps towards finding a more balanced way of representing all agents' interests. Emma has granted permission to Kettle's Yard and the University of Cambridge (who will retain the right to grant permission to the *Open House* Community Panel, working on behalf of the community) to use or display materials/artworks created as part of the project at any time within a two-year timeframe (Kettle's Yard 2016b). Although the artist still retains sole ownership of the work, Emma licensed the work to Kettle's Yard, enabling it to be shared, considering the interests of the community after the residency process and completion of the work.

The notion of ownership was raised on several occasions over the year by a range of community participants whether it was: a question asked about who owned the artwork at the very first community panel meeting with Emma; an artist facilitator talking about the importance of assisting young people in developing a sense of ownership in their work and the project as a whole; a head of art expressing the magnitude of his students taking ownership of and leading a day-long exchange with primary school students; or a member of the community panel seeing value in a disenfranchised community contributing to and owning an artwork. Each time this word was used in slightly different ways, but the very fact that it was voiced repeatedly suggests the extent to which this mattered to the community. Returning to a reflection expressed by Alan strengthens this assertion. He stated:

> I think if you make something as a team then you're all responsible and therefore that piece of work you have an ownership of it. That is not saying it's yours but you're a bit like a shareholder. So, if you'd say in years to come my great grandson could walk past here and say oh, that's the community centre that my grandad, my great grandad, used to run or help build or help do this. So, you still have ownership but not because you've got it in your pocket or you've paid money. You've got ownership because your name is attached to it and therefore the ownership for this has a name attached to it which is the community. I think that's the ownership. It shouldn't be this belongs to this group of people who happened to be on the panel and did this and did that, however valuable that is, and you know it goes without saying, that without the input of local people it wouldn't have been the art or the project it's been. It would have been an artist did that - well, great, super - as opposed to the community all had their input and they all gained from it in some way. So, the ownership of this is—we have retained ownership. It's ours, 'ours' being the community (2015b).

For Alan, the significance of ownership is less about the community's legal or economic standing, rather that they are credited with their involvement. But, in the future, what more might be done to build on the work of *Open House* and ensure the rights of the community endure or are even expanded?

In their edited book *Cultural Heritage and the Market: Ethical and Legal Issues* Vadi and Schneider reflect, in part, on debates surrounding ownership of cultural property, drawing on both culture-related and property-related issues, whilst raising several challenging questions for governments, courts and museums (2014: 10). They interrogate difficulties in applying property law to culture, by stating:

> However, recent shifts in international law highlight that the cultural property protection paradigm has increasingly been perceived as inadequate and that other approaches are gaining pre-eminence. Admittedly, cultural property embodies several layers of incompatibility from within. First, the cultural property paradigm is based upon two potentially conflicting elements: "culture" which encapsulates collective values; and "property" which is an individual right ... Second, the property model also presents a formalistic and rigid structure which may be inadequate to address incommensurable and inalienable aspects of culture ... Third, questions have arisen as to whether intangible forms of cultural heritage are adequately protected by intellectual property. The notion of cultural property is rooted in the Western intellectual tradition; and Western societies prize material possession over process. However other societies, for instance indigenous peoples, refuse a compartmentalised vision of culture; rather they adopt a holistic approach to nature and culture. Therefore, intellectual property is unable to capture the importance of cultural processes such as rituals and folklore and the anthropological meaning of culture as a way of life (Ibid.: 5-6).

In the same way that art historian Preziosi frames issues around authorship, Vadi and Schneider highlight problems of applying Western philosophies and legal frameworks to ownership of culture. They suggest that these 'formalistic' and 'rigid' structures are insufficient in attending to the complex, contingent, and sometimes intangible nature of culture. Anthropologist Haidy Geismar, who is also interested in intellectual and cultural property and has experience of working in museums and with communities from the South Pacific, further supports this argument, by stating:

> The term *cultural property* is commonly used to refer to certain "things", traditionally the kinds of objects housed in the antiquities galleries of the

> Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York or the British Museum: collections of national patrimony held in trust by these elite institutions for their citizens and for the ultimate benefit of all humankind. It is, in fact, a category defined by the intangibility of culture theory that holistically defines collective identity through a wide array of symbolic expression and which acknowledges the dynamic power relations that underscore the value that is culture. Intellectual property, or IP, is commonly understood to apply to the immaterial productions of minds but is practically used to define ownership for resources that are becoming daily more tangible and broadly circulating. It is the distinct genealogy of these concepts within institutions and as instituted practices that has kept them apart: cultural property as the preserve of museums, heritage organizations, and cultural institutions and policies; IP as the preserve of trade, commerce, financial regulation, and industry. However … there is a growing convergence of these two categories—it is increasingly difficult to tell the difference between intellectual and cultural property when copyright law is used to define ownership of the local carving traditions in Vanuatu, or when patents derived from indigenous flora in New Zealand are claimed as Māori cultural forms (2013: 2).

Although, as we can see from Geismar, legal categorisations of cultural property rights pervade, since the World Heritage Convention in 1972 there has been a marked shift away from using the label 'cultural property', to adopting 'cultural heritage' as an accepted term. In theory, this reflects a more holistic view of culture that takes into account the processes and products of culture in equal measure. This change determined a conceptual shift, meaning cultural heritage is not merely considered as property, but also expresses public interest to be protected irrespective of ownership (Vadi and Schneider 2014: 7). This conceptual and ideological unsettling echoes shifts in art practices, such as dematerialised, experimental work and socially engaged art; art practices that challenge the market and commodification of art, recognise there might not be a 'product' to possess in a literal or material sense, assert communal values over individualism, and acknowledge process as critical to the artwork's value.

Moving our thinking about 'ownership' of, and rights to, socially engaged and collaboratively-made artworks towards a holistic view of culture that draws on indigenous concepts with an ethical regard for all involved may be the most appropriate way forward. This allows for nuanced and context-specific ways of working that accept the complexities and uniqueness of each art project, and offers an approach where a set of principles can be established with the community, rather than a fixed model that is based on legal or economic practices.

Marstine's ideas around 'shared guardianship' (2011) in the twenty-first century museum offer a potential ethical approach that could be used to support and underpin future thinking around the sharing of rights and ownership of collaboratively-made artwork. Marstine et al. explain:

> Shared guardianship carries significant implications for understanding heritage as something animate, to be respected, and communal, to be shared. It signals a shift from the proprietary to the relational, specifically from a western legal understanding of ownership based on economic value to an ethics-rooted approach that prioritises the relationships among people that objects generate (2015: 81-84).

Inspired by the work of Haidy Geismar, Marstine builds on the theories of 'guardianship' through making connections with relational practices to help museums re-evaluate how they manage their collections and build trust with communities. Marstine clarifies: '[G]uardianship is a term that Haidy Geismar has adopted from Māori culture to critique as consumerist the notion of cultural 'property' and to promote instead a position of temporal caretaking, in partnership with source communities, which is appropriate to respecting the dynamic or experiential quality of heritage' (2011: 17). Rather than seeing culture as property of the museum, Marstine and Geismar put forward an alternative view where cultural heritage is acknowledged as a relationship of consultation and collaboration between source communities and the museum. Geismar expands on this notion further:

> The concept of guardianship, known in Māori as *kaitiakitanga*, acknowledges both the rights and responsibilities of the museum and other owners in the care of collections. Once it is understood that these are both acknowledged

> and respected, Māori groups are increasingly supportive of using the museum as a storehouse and exhibitionary context for their community treasures (provided there is an ongoing process of consultation) (2008: 114-115).

In relation to the concerns of this thesis, this is significant; guardianship, although not replacing ownership, offers a complementary working model that fuses two value systems. Cultural treasures may still officially *belong* to their source communities, but are permitted to remain in the museum for the public to experience, as Geismar further asserts: '[G]uardianship is no longer an alternative to ownership—it has become a kind of property relation (a cultural property relation), redefined in relation to responsibility as well as money, and gives greater flexibility and potential for democratic access (Ibid.: 116).

Marstine goes on to suggest that the concept of shared guardianship enables ongoing collaborative relationships with multiple stakeholders including source communities, it eschews entitlement, instead proposing a new way of *sharing* the rights and responsibilities to cultural heritage (Marstine 2011). Both Marstine and Geismar emphasise the *relational* as key. Cultural heritage rather than being owned in a Western intellectual sense, becomes a new form of cultural property *relation* which emerges from an ongoing dialogue between the museum and community.

Although there are clear and pragmatic differences—in Geismar's and Marstine's cases the cultural heritage has been historically created, in most cases it is a material object housed in a museum collection, and the relationship is between the museum and source community; whereas in socially engaged practice the culture is an artwork (that may well be not an object at all), that is co-produced by a living artist and community participants, and the relationship involves the gallery, community *and* artist—there may be advantages in drawing on indigenous values and appropriating this attitude towards culture produced as part of a collaborative experience. Even though guardianship and shared guardianship cannot be directly replicated in the context of art practices mediated through the gallery, aspects of it could inform and support the advancement of our ethical thinking around collaboratively-made artworks. Namely, the idea that both the gallery and artist can act as caretakers of the resulting artwork

(whatever form it may take) and continue the consultative and collaborative relationship with the community beyond the completion of the work (Plumb 2016).

To reiterate points made previously, this is not to suggest that we should demote the artist, devolve all power, devalue their unique role or change it so that they become service agents for the community, nor reimagine an artist's fundamental rights over the artwork. Instead we might imagine a state of shared responsibility, where the artist and gallery: 'transition from a stance of possession to one of guardianship' (Marstine 2011: 17), and through this caretaking role acknowledge and respect the rights and interests of the community participants alongside their own.

Although more work needs to be done to put this into practice more fully, and ensure that this remains context-specific, unfixed and flexible so that it could be adopted and adapted in other collaborations, not just *Open House*, an ongoing relationship of care, trust and negotiation that recognises and values the contributions of the community participants goes some way in sharing rights to, and responsibilities of, the artwork.

There are several lessons for the sector that we can take from the first year of *Open House* to help support the advancement of socially engaged art mediated through the gallery towards an ethically-turned practice. To conclude this chapter I will now reflect on the expertise that each person brings including members of the local community, the artist, *and* gallery practitioners.

The death of the expert

In titling the conclusion of the chapter *the death of the expert* I playfully appropriate Roland Barthes' concept 'the death of the author' (1977), to mirror its dichotomy. The death of the author (or gallery and artist as expert in this case), to bring forth the birth of the reader (or assertion of community expertise and agency), cannot exist and is merely a myth, as to perform the surrender of authorship or expertise and ultimately power, is, in itself, an enactment of control. Rather than wish for the death of the expert, I instead, propose a revaluing of expertise.

Troubling expertise

Socially engaged art practices seek to create dialogues of exchange where all can mutually learn, share a range of skills and specialist knowledge, and where all competencies are valid and valued, troubling traditional notions of expertise. As we have seen throughout the thesis the community have been positioned as experts in their own right and expert narrators of their lived experience. Since the 1960s and 1970s there has also been a marked change in how expertise is understood within galleries, with practitioners seeking to democratise and open up practice. Marstine conceptualises this in relation to contemporary art and gallery practice that builds on the work of New Institutionalism in the early 2000s to generate a space of hospitality, where she states that: '[C]entral to radical hospitality is the notion that all parties enter collaborations with expertise and that art historical expertise is no more valuable than other kinds of competencies' (2017: 165). Museums have also tested expertise through challenging traditional power dynamics and presenting multiple perspectives, informed by post-colonial theories and principles, as Kreps asserts:

> The post-colonial museum is fundamentally about inverting power relations and the voice of authority. In the post-colonial museum the voice of authority is no longer that of anthropologists, art historians and professional museum workers, but the voices of the people whose cultures are represented in museums (2011: 75).

Those traditionally in a position of power, or deemed 'expert'—the artist and the gallery or museum practitioner—have expanded their role as mediators to include *facilitation* as a key skill. However, it would be erroneous and insincere to suggest that the artist and gallery or museum practitioner can only ever be facilitators (Phillips 2003: 164; Helguera 2011: 53-54), which echoes points made by *Open House* artist Emma Smith in her musings on collaboration. She states that:

> Collaboration for me as a 'teacher' has meant fear… the unknown… letting go of the role of a facilitator to really be collaborative with my students – to give away the space and then find we were sharing the space (2015a: 99).

It is interesting to note that for Emma to become truly collaborative means 'letting go of the role of facilitator'. This suggests that in denying your role as artist, you deny yourself the opportunity to express and assert your own position, contribute to the collaboration, and be deemed an 'equal' partner in the process. This resembles Groys' (2008) critique of the 'death of the author' in relation to participatory art. If the artist or gallery practitioner were to surrender their expertise and become purely a facilitator, this self-abdication would essentially be a form of false renunciation, as the expert must always preordain this demise, further re-enacting control.

Perhaps, instead, we need to see *all* of the expertise at play in these relations. And furthermore, acknowledge that the expertise of the gallery is also required. The next section will now make the case for a re-evaluation of gallery expertise.

Revaluing expertise

Galleries that strive to be equal partners with communities through working in socially engaged and collaborative ways also need to recognise the value of the expertise they bring. Whether this means that individual members of staff are credited with their involvement or particular departments, the gallery should take ownership of and attach their names to the process and resulting work. By eradicating their name or involvement, this enacts a self-abdication. The gallery, therefore, not only silences its own voice and the plural authorities behind the narratives they present, but relinquishes responsibility for its actions, trading one set of exclusionary practices for another (Phillips 2003: 165-166).

In the case of *Open House*, Kettle's Yard brought specialist knowledge of visual arts, curatorial and educational expertise, alongside skills in community engagement and working with artists. Even when galleries fully assume their expert roles, it is not helpful to hide these from public view, particularly in programmes that seek to reach new audiences and showcase their efforts in striving for equality (Ibid.). In a similar vein to the discussions we have had around artistic authorship, authority and expertise, galleries should be proud of what they bring and understand the role they can play in negotiating the complex power-sharing relations in collaborative practice.

Drawing on one final example from *Open House*, as a catalyst from which to further unpack these concerns, I will now revisit one of the few accounts of a less than positive experience, recorded in chapter five. During an *Open House* letter-writing workshop for adults, two participants walked out, citing that they found the activity tedious and it reminded them of something they would have needed to have done for work. It would have been interesting to have found out what types of creative activity the participants would have enjoyed or engaged with, but, community officer Karen Thomas speculated that they: 'wanted to "make" in a more traditional way' (2015c).

Although we can only postulate that the participants would have been more engaged in a traditional, perhaps crafts-based opportunity, it does highlight a particular issue in socially engaged practice that aims to challenge the status quo. Emma's practice and processes are not what you would call traditional. They involved dialogue, exchange and text-based responses, resulting in a series of performative actions. Though she was selected by a representation of the community for her practice that they perceived as more 'familiar' and for her open, inclusive and communal methodology. Many forms of socially engaged practice seek to delightfully blur or ferociously break down the boundaries of art and everyday life, which may result in practice that feels incredibly familiar, sometimes even banal. Yet this discussion does not aim to explore whether Emma's work was 'successful', and for whom;[6] rather it aims to delve deeper into issues of expertise.

If Kettle's Yard and Emma Smith had changed the programme in response to the comments from the two participants, and perhaps what we could call a 'popularist' view of art and art activity, what would that have meant for *Open House*? There are a number of reasons as to why it might not be helpful to grasp for an idealised model, as proposed by Arnstein's 'Ladder of Participation' (1969), where full citizen control and decision-making is obtained through the institution and the artist relinquishing all power. Firstly, this risks de-professionalising and under valuing the skills, knowledge and understanding of the artist and gallery practitioners gained through years of

[6] See artist and researcher Abi Goodman (2016), who insightfully explores this concern in her article for *Engage Journal* 'Questioning the Ethics of Participatory Arts within An Area of "Regeneration": Was Ania Bas' residency a success and if so for whom?', where she considers whether Bas' residency can be viewed as a success by (a) the participant community and (b) the artworld.

training and education: their expertise. This is not about an artworld snobbery, but a respect for the expertise that Emma, and Karen and Liz brought.

We could ask if it is always helpful to ask participants what they want. Do they know the potential of a programme, such as *Open House*? Would it have been stifled by working within the realms of what participants believe is conceivable or desirable? Do more 'popularist' practices run the risk of diluting the efficacy of galleries as agents for social change? These questions highlight the second issue in the model of full citizen control, namely that participants might not know what they want until they have had it.

As we have seen, one of the most significant outcomes was *Open House's* capacity to expand the horizons of the community participants – in terms of how they thought about art, but as part of that process, how they thought about themselves, their agency and their community. At times when galleries are trying to be more consultative, participatory, and share power it is inevitable that tensions will arise[7] and different types of power struggles will surface. But it would have been a crying shame if this outcome had not happened for the sake of playing it safe and by offering creative activities that permitted people to stay in their comfort zones. We need practices that challenge and provoke, that agitate and that do not play it safe. Surely this is one of the reasons for socially engaged practice.

These participants were only engaged in a one-off, drop-in activity, so we can, perhaps, understand their point of view. What did they gain from writing a letter? Did they feel that they were contributing more than they were getting out of it? Again, we can only hazard a guess. Without any context or background to *Open House* and the residency, we can see why this would appear to be a pretty dull activity. So conceivably Emma could have thought of another way to spark the imagination and creativity of participants only engaged in one-off activities without negating the integrity of the work.

[7] See Sheila Watson's (2014) powerful examples of the complex balancing acts museums face in welcoming new visitors, whilst attempting to avoid alienation of existing stakeholders in her discussion of Great Yarmouth museums and galleries in her chapter 'Communities and Museums: Equal Partners?'.

Although the two participants described by Karen as 'retired teachers', were unlikely to have lacked 'citizen power' (Arnstein 1969), or 'cultural capital' (O'Neill 2002), many of the community of North Cambridge do. So, as previously discussed, if all decision-making and shaping of the programme had been left fully in the hands of members of the broader community, would a 'popularist' route have ensued, due to the 'louder', more confident voices of the community, those with more 'cultural capital' dominating the decision-making process? Which presents the third issue in this idealised model. Watson describes these situations as where some: 'community partners are more equal than others in the control they exercise in museums and galleries' (2014: 242), and in scenarios such as these: 'certain groups and individuals can maintain their position of power over the way material culture is displayed and their role in its production' (Ibid.), potentially leading to further cultural elitism and exclusion.

To expand on the second and third concerns of complete citizen power, if marginalised members of the community did have the opportunity to project their voices as loudly as the 'more equal community partners', have their say and contribute to the shaping of the programme, would the work produced be uncritical, due to the lack of awareness around its potential or the opportunities it could afford, particularly as many community members had never engaged with culture in this way before?

Could it, therefore, be argued that more power is not always radical and more power-sharing is not always empowering. If we radically share, and give over all control or 'citizen power' to communities where does that leave the gallery and artist? What is their role in this relationship? Can we instead make a case for galleries and artists to retain a certain degree of control? And over and above that can we defend selective power-sharing?

Kester's argument for working with politically coherent communities starts to gain agency if we fully consider the points made above. Kester expands on his reasons for advocating this, by stating that:

> As I've suggested, the antinomy between empathy and negation can be at least partially resolved by recourse to a discursive aesthetic which conceives of the artist primarily as a collaborator in dialogue rather than an expressive agent. Here the artist's identity is tested and transformed by intersubjective

> experience, rather than being fortified against it. The "artist" occupies a socially constructed position of privileged subjectivity, reinforced by both institutional sponsorship and deeply imbedded cultural connotations. It is the achievement of Littoral practitioners to work to mitigate the effects of these associations as much as possible, and to open up and equalize the process of dialogical exchange. This process is most easily facilitated in those cases in which the artist collaborates with a politically coherent community, that is, with a community or collectivity that has, through its own internal processes, achieved some degree of coherence, and a sense of its own political interests, and is able to enter into a discursive collaboration on more equal footing. This is perhaps the most effective way in which to avoid the problems posed by the "salvage" paradigm in which the artist takes on the task of "improving" the implicitly flawed subject (1999: 7).

If the working relationship and power dynamic is unbalanced, as discussed on numerous occasions in the thesis, there is a risk of exploitation (Kester 1999) as well as patronising and paternalistic practice (Kester 1995; Ibid. 1999; Hall 2015; Matarasso 2015b; Lyiscott 2016), no matter how well-meaning at the point of departure. In a relationship with a politically coherent community the collaboration is on more equal footing, as Kester asserts the artist, and in this case the gallery as well, is also tested and transformed and the dialogical exchange is equalized. Building on Pierre Bourdieu's (1994: 8) work on political semiotics, Kester asserts the politically coherent community exists prior to the creative act of delegation and has emerged after a process of internal debate and consensus formation challenging the dominant culture and reacting against collective experiences of oppression.

As previously discussed the community panel of *Open House* can be considered politically coherent. All of the community panel have an interest in art, whether that be a professional engagement or as a hobby, but not all of them feel confident in accessing the culture of the city, including the numerous museums and galleries. So, although the panel can be considered politically coherent and enjoy art, this does not necessarily mean that they all have lots of 'cultural capital'. This is an important distinction to make. Through working with a politically coherent panel, the gallery and

the artist are not attempting to reproduce an echo-chamber, or only hear the voices that resonate with their own, what Lynch would term 'false consensus' (2011a). Rather they are working with people who, with expert knowledge of their local community, will challenge, question ideas and approaches in order to push practice forward, in an attempt to generate an ongoing and more equitable relationship with the community.

Although not as seemingly straightforward as devolving all power to the community, and in this relationship the power dynamics may well remain unbalanced, through seeing and deconstructing the power at play, being sensitive and self-aware, and continuously critiquing who holds control and authority at any one given time, more effective working relationships may be generated. Or as Bryony Onciul advocates in her model 'Engagement Zone' (Figure 6.4), a physical and conceptual space in which participants and museums interact and where: 'power ebbs and flows, continually being claimed, negotiated, and exchanged' (2013: 84).

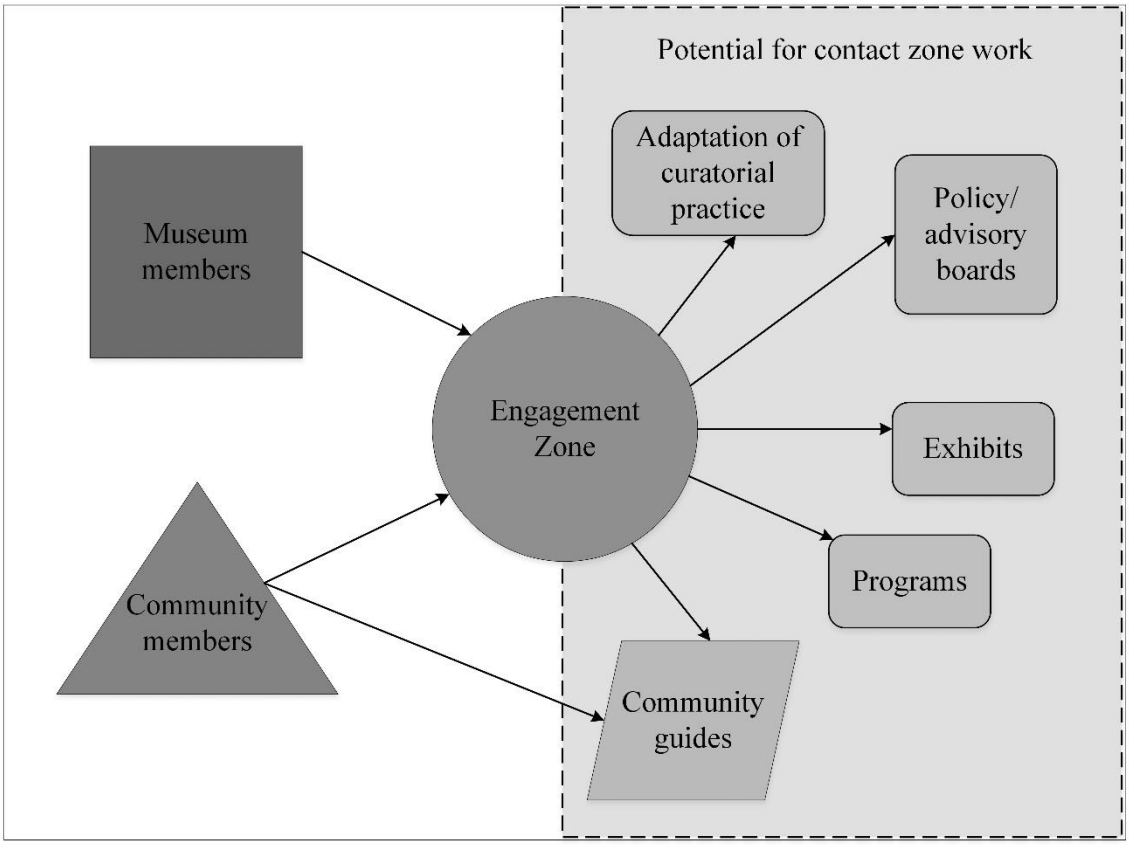

Figure 6.4 Engagement Zone Diagram, model created by Bryony Onciul, 2015, *Museums, Heritage and Indigenous Voice: Decolonising Engagement*

Building on James Clifford's 'contact zones' (1997), Onciul focuses on the agency of participants, particularly those that lack cultural capital or face barriers to accessing

culture, in her specific example – Indigenous communities. In an 'Engagement Zone' the community participants can step out of their established roles, cross borders and negotiate status and hierarchy, ultimately offering new potential for collaborative museum practice. In this complex, flexible and unpredictable space, the knowledge of communities is repositioned, whilst, at the same time, the structural inequalities at play when interacting with the museum are recognised and acknowledged (Onciul 2013).

Ensuring collaborative working at all stages of engagement will assist in revealing the processes and practices that shape power relationships. These revelations, be they artistic or museological power or authority, are a crucial part of a process that strives to eradicate inequality. A fluid approach in which the gallery, artist and community recognise and critique the power relations at play, offers an alternative strategy for empowerment creating a flexible space for negotiation, alongside valuing and respecting the differing expertise, knowledge and skills that each agent brings despite inequalities in power relations. This is not to suggest that galleries and artists should give up their aspirations of equitable working relations, rather they should *strive* for equality, whilst recognising that it may never actually be achieved.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have begun to see the role that galleries can play in – working towards a state where the experiences and perspectives of community participants are valued alongside their own and the artist through listening to the concerns of the community and by acting on them; enacting a reflexive practice that acknowledges and respects the expertise that all agents bring, including their own; and seeing and continuously critiquing the power relations at play.

However, to conclude this section we should ask ourselves whether it is enough to listen to and act on the concerns of the community. Surely galleries can do more than that? Furthermore, we need to question whether working with only politically coherent members, in initiating, conceptualising and shaping a collaborative programme, is sufficient. Can we justify excluding large parts of the population (Merriman 2017)? Should we not be asking whether it is conceivable that galleries and

artists could work in truly collaborative ways with communities that are not politically coherent, rather than stating that the power relations are just too unbalanced. Instead, how could working with a politically coherent community panel support galleries to galvanise the wider community, who might not be so politically and actively engaged? To not only listen to and act on the concerns of the community, but to support them in such a way that they become self-initiating, driving forward their own agendas.

I argue here that galleries have a moral and ethical responsibility to reassert their curatorial and educational expertise, and not only that, become experts in facilitation and mediation, to endeavour to enable *all* members of society to be culturally engaged, socially aware and politically active. Article 27 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares:

> (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
>
> (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author (UN General Assembly 1948).

This reflects a clear position that participation in culture and protection of authors' moral and material interests resulting from production (artworks in these cases), are human rights. Therefore, are museums and galleries as public institutions, with the capacity to enact a social purpose, not duty-bound to aid and protect these human rights? Marstine in her discussion of artist interventions and socially engaged art projects in museums and galleries recognises their power in mirroring issues of democracy, and at the same time acknowledges the roles that cultural institutions could and should play owing to their inherent constitution in society. She states:

> Instead they question the assumptions implicit in the ideal of participation by shining a light on issues of equality and inequality inherent in democratic systems. In the process they underscore the ethical complexities and contradictions with which institutions must grapple to open up substantive

> pathways for reconciliation. At the heart of these projects is an understanding that the gallery is an inherent component of civil society and cannot ethically exist in isolation from difficult political conversations and activity. The gallery has roles and responsibilities in critiquing and transforming the state (2017: 125).

The charge I present to galleries, clearly, is not an easy task, as problematised throughout this chapter. Through creating a 'marginal' (hooks 1990) or 'in-between' space this might be achieved. In this space power relations can be challenged and the statuses of gallery and community can be brought into question, with hierarchical positions erased. Galleries working with artists and politically coherent members of a community can support the wider community in a process of transformation and ultimately reinvention, towards political coherency, who in turn enable a process of transformation in the artist and gallery.

The concluding chapter will now consider how the gallery might be able to create a space where this can happen, defending their involvement in socially engaged art practices as crucial, whilst drawing together the key concerns and main arguments threaded throughout the thesis, presenting my original contribution to knowledge, and offering suggestions and recommendations for the fields of socially engaged art and galleries.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

As demonstrated throughout the thesis when artists and galleries hear and listen to the voices of community participants a more nuanced understanding of the potential of arts practice mediated through galleries is presented, one that takes into account and highlights the intrinsic and extrinsic value to community participants. Furthermore, through meaningfully reflecting on and attending to concerns raised by the community, artists and galleries can work towards more ethically-sound practices that strive to consider and equally value the experiences and perspectives of all involved. Through the analysis, explanation and critique presented in the thesis and by drawing on *Open House* as a springboard from which to consider broader issues affecting collaborative art and gallery practice I hope to inform and enrich the work of galleries mediating socially engaged art.

This concluding chapter in is three parts. I firstly summarise and draw together the key arguments presented in the thesis, laying out my recommendations for the field; then move to defend the role of the gallery in socially engaged arts practice, whilst introducing potential areas for further research, namely that of the creation of an 'in-between' space; and finally, in the third section, I reflect on the limitations of the research and put forward my original contribution to knowledge.

Drawing the threads together

As a gallery educator, with experience of working with a wide range of individuals and diverse community groups often acting as a mediator and facilitator in opening up gallery spaces and contemporary art practice, I understand the inherent value of amplifying historically under-represented and absent voices in socially engaged practice, alongside how this research might be applied in practice.

There are several recommendations for the field as highlighted throughout the thesis. Academics and practitioners alike may wish to draw on and adapt a new approach in fusing conventional research methods (interviews, focus groups, and observation) with inventive visual and participatory methods (documentary photography and film, visual

mapping exercises, and participant journals), as a way of generating data and capturing a more well-rounded view of the experiences of a range of research participants. This qualitative research design, that honed its focus on a single case study to consider a research puzzle in considerable depth and capture the richness and complexity of human experience in a respectful and holistic way, enabled participants to express themselves on their terms as expert narrators of their lived experience through a range of communication approaches offered.

Grounding my thesis in wider arguments present in the fields of socially engaged art and collaborative practice in museums and galleries, I highlighted the numerous lines of tension, key debates and challenges inherent in two practices, that haven't always talked to each other as much as they might, yet, collide around the ethics of working with people. Through drawing attention to the central concerns of socially engaged art practices—uncritical assumptions made around who benefits from collaborative practices and to what degree; tensions in the critique of a process-focused artistic practice, with value judgements of artistic merit versus social worth located as polarised positions; questions surrounding the efficacy of the practice in engendering actual change over change that might be considered symbolic or representational; challenging and revealing power dynamics at play in an attempt to address social issues and inequalities and to move towards more equitable working practices; and issues of authorship, ownership and rights to a collaboratively-made artwork—I established a conceptual framework in which to address a number of specific ethical concerns.

I strongly situated the research within the case study *Open House*, a new socially engaged approach to community engagement initiated by Kettle's Yard, working in collaboration with artist Emma Smith. I observed the programme's progress in the first year of three, generating context specific and in-depth understandings of the value of socially engaged practice to a number of individual community members from North Cambridge. Through listening to and amplifying community participants' voices, considering their thoughts, opinions and reflections through a critical research lens, I built a fuller picture of individual experience that goes some way in contributing to and supporting claims made by academics and practitioners that socially engaged art

practices mediated by the gallery can make a difference to individuals' lives and can support *actual* change. In the case of *Open House* a series of interrelated and broad benefits were revealed, namely those of – enhanced well-being; preconceived ideas of art being challenged and, as a result, horizons expanded; new skills, knowledge and understanding were developed; and in some participants, feelings of empowerment were engendered.

Through arguing that the community participants' perspectives should be treated and respected as valid alongside the artist's and gallery's, I also drew attention to a number of concerns voiced, highlighting the ethical implications of socially engaged and collaborative practice when we do consider community participants' points of view in this way. Building on and adding a new perspective to existing literatures, and using *Open House* as a springboard from which to explore arising ethical issues, I attended to key concerns that mattered to the community of North Cambridge. It is argued here, that although voiced by only a relatively small number of individuals engaged in a particular socially engaged art project, these concerns cross the border of specificity and can be considered representative of broader issues of collaborative practice in the fields of visual arts, galleries and museums, as we have seen through interrogations of associated literature.

The first *Open House* artist residency revealed that a mutual understanding of the term 'collaboration' is required. Galleries can play a part in helping all involved better understand this term through facilitating dialogue, not so that a strict definition is set, rather that stakeholders come to a shared understanding and agreement that is underpinned by values. A relationship of trust built through 'radical transparency' (Marstine 2011), can support open and honest conversations, where galleries can mediate a space that allows for conflict and for critical reflection. An honest discussion around the power dynamics at play, and what is desired from all agents in terms of sharing decision-making, power, and responsibility, is necessary, rather than an uncritical practice that leads to lazy assumptions of collaboration always leading to empowerment and that all involved aspire for relations based on all-encompassing equality. In an ethically-turned practice it is vital the gallery ensures that, if the community desire it, their voice remains present at all stages of a collaborative

process. The community are, therefore, able to be involved in not only initiating and conceptualising, but in generating a shared vision and aspiration for the programme. This could be through establishing a shared set of criteria for judging 'success', and through an ongoing dialogue and relationship of trust and negotiation in the making process and beyond the completion of the artwork. An ethically-turned practice considers whether all involved have free choice, recognising that although individuals may lack a sense of entitlement, they might desire shared cultural authorship and ownership. Galleries can mediate these matters of shared responsibility and rights to a collaboratively-made artwork. Whilst at the same time, an ethically-turned practice values and respects the expertise that each person brings to the collaboration including members of the local community, the artist *and* the gallery practitioners.

My research findings have challenged the notion that the resulting artwork or product and the processes of socially engaged art should be valued on equal terms. Rather, that as a process-focused practice, I have argued that the value primarily lies within the process, the quality of the journey and experience of all involved in collaborative acts. In order to strive for a more ethically-sound practice it is these processes that need to be revealed, considered and unpacked. As Pringle (2014) suggests in relation to learning, galleries should not only 'love' or act responsibly towards participants, but also care for the processes involved in these relationships:

> For, without this love of the process itself, what do we have? If all we are interested in is the output or outcome – or the 'impact' on the learner, what does that suggest? Does a love of others alone bring about a different set of practices, or do we need to commit as much, if not more love to our processes? In thinking about these questions we recognise how, as learning professionals, we need to engage ethically with processes of production, bringing to them the values we have identified. 'Love' has to be the driver informing not only what we do, but also how we set about doing it.

Like Pringle, I argued that there is a need for greater attention to the processes of socially engaged art mediated through the gallery. Given the aims of the research to amplify the experiences and perspectives of community participants it is vital to consider the social efficacy of gallery and artistic practice, and what the participants

get out of the project; however, the resulting outcomes for participants and, as discussed above, the final artwork and its aesthetic value, are simply aspects of a complex and interrelated set of processes.

These recommendations will help support the advancement of socially engaged art mediated through the gallery towards an ethically-turned practice. To conclude – whilst appreciating that collaborations are rarely straightforward, in essence, the gallery could refine its mediating role to create space where all voices can be heard and listened to, where dialogue and mediated conflict can take place, where power dynamics are revealed, and where all perspectives, experiences and expertise are respected and valued. These new theories and practical suggestions presented throughout the thesis, and summarised here, are ripe for further development and critique.

Defending the role of the gallery

Given this context, there needs to be further interrogation, which presents possibilities for carrying out further research. In this final chapter I refocus my attention on the gallery and explore potential new ways of thinking about the critical role that galleries can play in making a difference to individuals' lives through engagement in ongoing collaborative processes and relationships emerging from socially engaged practices, and through creating a space where a range of stakeholders' voices can be heard, listened to, considered and equally valued.

As *Open House*, in its current form, draws to a close at the end of 2017 and the physical site of Kettle's Yard is set to reopen to the public in early 2018, what does this mean for the relationships built between the gallery, community, the three artists in residence and many artist facilitators? How can *Open House* endure in a new reincarnation once the gallery reopens and continues to build on the legacy of the programme and its overarching aims of supporting the community of North Cambridge to feel empowered and able to influence change at Kettle's Yard, achieve a sense of ownership of culture in its city, and to that end, increase its impact upon and access to culture and creativity (Kettle's Yard 2014)?

In this concluding chapter I will propose the creation of an 'in-between' space in the gallery, where collaboration with artists as agitators (Doherty 2015), and politically coherent members of the community takes place. This space is a space for grappling with the ethical complexities and contradictions of relationships emerging from socially engaged practice. It is a space for hearing all voices; for genuinely listening; for opening up conversation and dialogue; for conflict, critique, challenge, and disturbing the status quo; and a space for reinvention of identities. Richard Sandell offers further points for consideration in relation to the potential role of museums and galleries as agents for social change. He states:

> Although little formal evaluation of the museum's role in community empowerment and capacity building has been undertaken, those project experiences that have been documented point to the potential for museums to engage and enable groups that have previously been deprived of decision-making opportunities. Museums have provided an enabling, creative, perhaps less threatening forum through which community members can gain the skills and confidence required to take control and play an active, self-determining role in their community's future (2002: 7).

While, as we have seen, many are critical of institutional involvement in socially engaged art—raising issues of translation, where practice is limited by the parameters of the white cube (Schrag 2017), suggestions of galleries acting as pacifiers (Carrington 2004) or regulating practice through stereotyping artists and communities (Kwon 2004), one even going as far as to suggest that institutionalisation has killed the practice (Pritchard 2016)—instead, I argue here that the gallery does have a critical part to play.

As discussed throughout the thesis galleries can acts as initiators, directors, mediators, and agents – generating connections, partnerships and dialogues. They can also support socially engaged arts practice in many very practical ways through actively commissioning new works, supporting emerging artists, increasing interest in and widening reach, and through historicising, re-presenting, reinterpreting and reconsidering artworks, as previously seen in the case of Palle Nielsen's *The Model*.

And perhaps more than that, as reflected in Sandell's on the mark citation above, while museums and galleries cannot 'build' or 'create' a community, galleries can play a part in building a community's capacity for self-expression and self-organisation, and as I go on to argue in this chapter galleries *can*, and therefore have an ethical responsibility *to*, support a community's reinvention, alongside critiquing the very concept of what a community is.

Acknowledging difference

It is necessary to recognise the differences of community, gallery and artist and, further to that, voice these differences out loud. Through an acknowledgement of difference, identities can be formed and challenged, and liberation can ensue. As Kwon recognises:

> … the issue of difference is key to any understanding of identity formation, collective and otherwise. It is also an important key to understanding the possibilities and limitations of community-based art (2044: 148).

How might these differences be utilised to further the practices of socially engaged art in galleries, alongside supporting communities in their self-realisation and reinvention? Whilst understanding the limitations of difference in such practices, a 'politics of difference' (Lagerkvist 2005: 55-56) recognises the unique identity of a community, their distinctness from others, and ensures that difference is not suppressed. Rather an 'unassimilated Otherness' (Young cited in Kwon 2004: 150) is required, where difference and individual and communal identity is recognised and celebrated, generating community *cohesion* rather than *integration*.

In the case where galleries and artists are working with politically coherent community members, Kester, although critical of what he describes as an 'instrumentalizing aestheticization' brought about through a misguided empathy towards the community on the part of the uncritical artist who denies their own privilege, recommends an approach where a common ground is found. He states:

> Politically resistant communities are typically formed by people who share lived experience and interests in ways that a Littoral practitioner may not. Yet, the problems of universality notwithstanding, we must retain some concept of an

> intersubjective common ground that would allow for the possibility of shared discourse, and that would allow the practitioner to bridge the gap of difference between themselves and their co-participants (1999: 6).

However, as highlighted within the introduction to the thesis, there are as many differences as there are shared concerns within any given community and just as our individual identities are always in a state of flux (Hall 1989), so too are communal identities. Therefore, might we also understand our differences as multifaceted, fluid, and ever-changing? This is not to suggest that differences should be quashed, rather that we need to acknowledge difference as something that is not fixed. So, instead of looking for an 'intersubjective common ground', could we not look for an 'in-between' space, a space that allows for both a *shared discourse* and a *politics of difference*? A space where differences are brought to bear, acknowledged and used to provoke, challenge, further conversations and ultimately give rise to action? Only then through difference are we able to gain agency and effect change. How can we exploit these differences or even what we might call 'expertise' to build an 'in-between' space?

An 'in-between' space

Returning to the theories of bell hooks helps us to conceptualise what form this space might take. hooks posits that a space on the 'margins' could act as a 'site of resistance' (1990) and a 'space of radical openness' (2004). The marginal space is a space for expressing diverse identities, for listening as well as action where dominant cultures can be challenged and resisted, where the colonised and coloniser can meet, be liberated and move in solidarity, and where the categories or labels of colonised and coloniser can be erased (2004: 156-159). The term 'margin' means on the periphery or fringe; a marginal space is a space with borders. The practice of gallery education has historically been situated on the edge, which although, in part, might have contributed to the practice being overlooked and under-recognised, it has also allowed for experimentation and for autonomy (Sekules 2010: 253), and in operating at the edges generated a special potential for critical practice and active reflection (Morsch 2011). Academic and museum practitioner Viv Golding's work on the spatial politics of frontiers further describes the opportunities afforded in the 'margins'; she suggests

critical practice can happen 'between locations', across traditional disciplinary boundaries, where the border can become a creative space of respectful dialogue and a bridge for movement, reinvention and re-articulation (2009: 47). But, rather than seeing the practice as being on the periphery (as suggested by the 'welfare model' (O'Neill 2002)), we imagine a conceptual space on the fringes of the gallery that allows for challenge, critique, experimentation, provocation, and risk.

This conceptual space is at some distance from the gallery, but is still within what we might call its territory, or as Critchley describes: '[I]t is, we might say, an interstitial distance, an internal distance that has to be opened from the inside' (2007: 113). Contemporary British philosopher Simon Critchley's left-wing political philosophies and theories of 'interstitial distances', furthers our imagined space initiated and fired-up by hooks. More than the self-critical and reflexive space of the New Institution (Doherty 2007), although with similarities, Critchley's 'interstitial distances' are gaps, but rather than being spaces, he instead hypothesises them as moments or events. Critchley expands:

> My claim is that there are no interstices, that it's the societies that we live in, more or less globally, that are increasingly defined by an apparatus of security. That apparatus of security is the control of visibility, which is based in the United States on the fear of terrorist attacks and all the rest. Far from the state being a less important actor politically, it seems that the state is an apparatus that is there to control security at all costs. Within the state there are no interstices; there can be no interstices. And if there are interstices, they have to be controlled and policed—that's why, in the major cities of Europe, we have to know where the immigrants are, the police have to be put there, and there cannot be interstices created through an articulation. This is something that people often get wrong. And it's not that we can retreat to the interstices, because there are no interstices. The activity or action is what creates a momentary interstice, a momentary gap. To that extent, a show could do that: an instance of curating could create such an interstice, such a gap (2013: 37-38).

In his critique of the contemporary state, Critchley suggests those in power leave no room for interstices through their imposed security and control. Yet, he argues that an exhibition could create this gap, this interstice, through action and allow for a moment where challenge and critique can take place. Emma Mahoney, lecturer at the National College of Art and Design, Dublin, has helpfully applied Critchley's radical politics to the field of arts and the critical institution. Mahony recognises the potential of 'interstitial distances' as a third path for critical institutionalism, one that does not reduce: 'the strategies these critical institutions employ to a dichotomy between attempting to reform public art institutions from within, or abandoning them completely in order to set up alternatives that exist outside the state system and its market logic' (2014: 9). What Mahony describes as a 'semi-retreat', a practice of 'interstitial distancing', aims to also advance the institution through using its own machinations against itself to bring about change (Ibid.: 10). She states:

> Unlike institutions that follow a strategy of exodus, 'institutions of interstitial distance' do not cut themselves off from the art institutional establishment, its ratification processes and its potential funding avenues. Furthermore, by virtue of operating from the ground up rather than the top down, they are better able to evade the instrumentalization and rationalization procedures to which many institutions that follow a strategy of 'engagement' have capitulated (Ibid.).

But, for this distance or gap to be unlocked, it has to be opened by the institution, the body in power. If we compare the gallery to the state in this analogy, then if the state is capable of opening an interstice, so too can the gallery. Building on Mahony's work, where she suggests that the practices of art collectives Liberate Tate and Freee operate at an interstitial distance, consciously situating their work within the gallery, but at arm's length from it, I argue that an interstice can be more than a moment, artwork, exhibition or event; it can be both a conceptual and actual space brought into being through continued and ongoing critical relations between gallery, community and artist. This strongly draws from Marstine's concept of 'critical practice', which encapsulates the convergences between institutional critique and socially engaged art, which she further describes as:

> In the cultural sphere an artist might stage an intervention to interrogate the systems and underlying values of an institution, whether a museum, political organisation, educational concern or some other entity, to transform existing conditions … From a museological perspective the intervention is an artistic strategy that encourages self-reflective museum practice (2017: 4).

Unfolding dialogues in the 'in-between' space

In the 'in-between' space dialogue is key. As suggested above, the door for dialogue must be opened by those in power, the gallery. In this space the focus is not just on voice, it pays equal attention to hearing and listening, and to exchange.

Appropriating the artistic dialogical methods we have seen explored throughout the thesis, galleries can facilitate and set in motion a dialogue with both individuals and communities within which forms of self-representation can be effected and articulated. Galleries can provide a space where more nuanced accounts of complex identities can be seen (where collaborators are not seen only or primarily as oppressed 'Others'), and offer a platform for the construction and reclamation of identity. But in a space that sets out to hear and listen to all voices, including marginalised and socially isolated, we might ask: '[H]ow can the oppressed as divided unauthentic beings, participate in the pedagogy of their liberation?' (Freire 1970: 30). How can members of the community who are not politically coherent, and have been 'Othered', bring about their own coherence, or their liberation from oppression? Freire expands on this complex issue:

> But if the implementation of a liberating education requires political power and the oppressed have none, how then is it possible to carry out the pedagogy of the oppressed prior to revolution? … One aspect of the reply is to be found in the distinction between systematic education, which can only be changed by political power, and educational projects, which should be carried out with the oppressed in the process of organizing them (Ibid.: 36).

Interesting parallels can be made with Critchley's 'interstitial distances' here. Freire suggests that 'educational projects' carried out *with* the oppressed offer one approach in contrast to a 'systematic education' that requires those in charge to make changes.

But ‘projects’ suggest something short-term, perhaps even one-off, maybe even momentary. Are ‘projects’ effective in challenging entrenched and unequal power relations? Are they capable of bringing about long-term change? Projects may well be a starting point, as we can see in the case of *Open House*, but are they enough on their own? Freire, Critchley and hooks all suggest that for liberation to happen both those in power and those without need to invest in the process. For Freire, the exploitative relationship between oppressed students and the teacher as oppressor must be acknowledged and in this process come into consciousness. Though a dialogical action these labels and hierarchical positions cease to exist and the new roles of teacher-student and students-teachers emerge. For Critchley, the state needs to open an ‘interstitial distance’ to allow for critique from the outside, and in the case of hooks, both coloniser and colonised need to meet in the margins in order to challenge and resist dominant cultures, where positions of power and powerlessness can be broken down and labels erased. In all cases differences are acknowledged and celebrated, identities are not merged or erased, rather, in this space unbalanced power relations are contested.

Remarkably O’Neill in his reference to Bourdieu’s theories of distinction and cultural capital, also notes that both excluded and included need to be invested in a process of change to open up opportunities for social inclusion through cultural participation. He states that:

> The analysis underlying social inclusion is that exclusion from the opportunities society has to offer is a deeply sustained culture reinforced by attitudes of excluded and included alike. For the excluded, whether they be so for reasons of poverty, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, or most often, some combination of these, their situation in society can generate a lack of confidence, a sense of not belonging, which make supposed opportunities seem unattainable. In Bourdieu’s terms they lack the cultural capital to access society’s benefits (Bourdieu et al. 1991) … For the better off, social exclusion reflects itself in the usually unconscious communication that those who are not already ‘in’, are really not welcome. The analysis suggests that unless attitudes on both sides change, unless confidence is built up among the excluded and the

> included are genuinely welcoming, no amount of equal opportunities or welfare will break down the barriers (2002: 34-35).

O'Neill adds to the mix presenting a growing wealth of theory that supports the proposed need for an 'in-between' space where both those in power and those without need to be invested in the process of change – a dual process of building confidence in the oppressed and in ensuring that the oppressors open up their spaces and are genuinely welcoming.

As presented so far two agents or bodies are portrayed, one in a position of power, the other powerless. We can relate these agents to the gallery and the socially isolated community group. But rarely are power dynamics and relationships so simple, so binary. Individual, communal and organisational identities and statuses are fluid, as are relationships and we struggle to categorise individuals or groups of people in such definitive ways. We could also ask, where do artists sit in this so-called binary relationship. What roles might they play in this dynamic, and where would we position a politically coherent group of community members? These are key players in the proposed relationship unfolding in the 'in-between' space.

The above hypotheses suggest the need for a dialogue that includes negotiation, challenge, provocation and critique in order to generate mutual benefits. But what if there was a designated or specific role for that, the role of the *agitator*? Doherty suggests that artists can play this role and as agitators 'create the capacity for creative illusion – that is, the ability to think and act as if things were different' (2015: 15). Further describing this potential, in her discussion of public art now, she states:

> They are agitations, dislocations and interventions, which remake our sense of place. Some of course may be overtly confrontational; others quietly shift the ground under our feet, but each one is dedicated to a process of seeing anew, of raising questions about the world in which we live (Ibid.: 14).

The artists may well be 'outsiders' (Foster 1996), even 'invaders' (Freire 1970), but in this scenario, this is beneficial in supporting the relationship between gallery and community, through enacting the role of critical observer, in provoking those involved to see their reality with fresh eyes, and by drawing attention to the power relations at

play. In the 'in-between' space, artists as agitators are transparent in their role and in their relationship with the gallery and community, and through utilising a dialogical aesthetic: '[T]hey define themselves … through their ability to catalyse understanding, to mediate exchange, and to sustain an ongoing process of empathetic identification and critical analysis' (Kester 2004: 118).

The politically coherent community member's role is somewhat different in the 'in-between' space. As we have seen in *Open House* the politically coherent community panel actively question and challenge the processes, and work with the gallery and artist in shaping the programme, working towards being involved in the conceptualisation, initiation and realisation of an artwork. They also act as spokespeople on behalf of the wider community, with the community's interests as their main concern. How might their role be expanded in the 'in-between' space? How might they further assert their agency and support the wider community in articulating its self-representation and in becoming politically coherent? And how might they lead the community in shaping its own culture and creativity in ways that authentically reflect its interests, needs and desires? This expanded role will be explored further shortly.

Aspirations of the 'in-between' space

As Freire suggests: '[I]t is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors' (1970: 38), therefore *liberation* of both the community and the gallery, situated along a negotiated power continuum, can take place through a process of dialogical action. Galleries working with politically coherent community members and artists as agitators can support marginalised and socially isolated individuals of a community in articulating their self-expression and realisation as politically coherent. We could describe this 'liberation' from oppression as a form of 'reinvention'.

Kwon puts forward an appealing concept in the form of 'invented communities' (2004: 126-135) in her discussion of community interaction in community-based arts. Invented communities (temporary) describes where a community is newly constituted and brought into being through the artwork itself, in this interaction a community group emerges through a set of collective activities and/or communal events defined

by the artist (Ibid.: 126). Invented communities (ongoing) builds and expands on the temporal nature of the former interaction, with 'the difference being the community's sustainability beyond the exhibition context and its institutional support' (Ibid.: 130). And in outliving the art project they exceed their given status as community-based public art projects; in turn their meaning and value defies the specific art-orientated contextualisation of the exhibition (Ibid.: 132). In many respects the politically coherent community panel could enact the conceptualised 'ongoing invented community', but more than this, I argue that the wider community could also be invented through a collaborative process with artist and gallery. However, I prefer the term 'reinvention' in order to emphasise the fact that in this research the community already exists (though not as a fixed entity), and therefore cannot be 'made' or 'created'.

Although Kwon is critical of Kester's postulations around politically coherent communities, I find merit in interweaving Kester's theories with Kwon's 'invented communities' concept. Although, as made clear throughout the thesis, I value Kester's work, Kwon does raise some astute points for consideration in her critique of Kester's proposition. She states:

> There are several problems with this formulation. First, its identification of communities in terms of *prior* "coherence" discounts the way in which artists can help engender different types of community. As I tried to show … an art project can be an important catalyst for the development of new alliances and coalitions, however temporary (Ibid.: 146).

Kwon instead finds value in art projects that act as catalysts in the 'invention' of a community, engendering communal identity and self-articulation. Although Kester presents a strong argument, the research builds a case for artists and galleries to work with groups who have not defined their own 'identity' or are within a state of flux. This is not to say that a community can be built through working with socially engaged artists; instead through processes of exchange and attempts in working towards more equitable relations, a community's identity can be articulated, even temporarily defined. But, even more interesting, and perhaps more helpful than definition, Kwon further stresses: 'the important ways an artistic intervention can productively reinvent

or critique the very concept of a community' (Ibid.: 147), and produce a disarticulation of the notion of community (Ibid.). In the 'in-between' space not only is the community reinvented and its identity critiqued and challenged in the process, so too is the gallery's.

The 'in-between' space in practice

Returning for one final time to *Open House* we can begin to shape a picture of how an 'in-between' space could be realised. Situating this in a real-life context, I will now put forward the ways in which an 'in-between' space could be put into practice at Kettle's Yard, building on their programme that has worked towards developing the confidence of the community through a number of artistic residencies and projects. As the gallery expands its site physically to accommodate more space for both exhibitions and educational programmes, the gallery is also in a position to expand its scope for working with the community of North Cambridge.

In a similar vein to Tate Exchange and CCA in Glasgow, with their integrated and shared programming with cultural communities, Kettle's Yard could dedicate one of its spaces to working with and consulting the community of North Cambridge to identify needs, support local agendas, instigate change and respond to ideas, co-commissioning, co-creating and co-curating artworks that deal directly with local concerns, whilst continuing to reflect broader societal and global concerns. Operating as a democratic working group and working through an integrated programming approach, curators, educators and politically coherent community members could collaboratively devise programmes, alongside opening up the space to the broader community welcoming proposals for new activity. Drawing on Critchley's 'interstitial distances' it is important that the 'in-between' space is situated within the territory of the gallery, it is not cut off from the institutional establishment and: 'its ratification processes and its potential funding avenues' (Mahony 2014: 10), rather it is sited in the fringes. Kettle's Yard can open this 'gap' at a symbolic border to create a welcoming space, alongside a space that enables a critique of the institution.

Requiring the local knowledge and expertise of the politically coherent community members, the 'in-between' space builds on the approaches of Community Arts of the

late 1980s and 1990s to support the community in articulating their own cultural agency and allows for forms of creativity that are authentic to the community (Pringle 2016). And, finally *Open House* could become a break-away collective, led by the politically coherent members of the community and staff from Kettle's Yard with artists in residence invited as agitators. Self-initiating, self-organising and self-managing from the ground up rather than top down, and after a period of testing and piloting, self-funded. Echoing Tiller's 'participants' initiative' on the participatory spectrum, where participants instigate and realise their own creative ideas, and where they are directors and the artistic vision is led by them (2014: 11-13), could *Open House* become a community-led organisation in its own right, working with communities, for communities, focused on community need, but still situated within the territory of the gallery? Could *Open House* become an 'in-between' space?

Of course, there is no blueprint or one-size-fits-all model of an 'in-between' space, only a few suggestions of how it might be realised in a specific context – that of North Cambridge and Kettle's Yard. As a critical and reflexive space, where hearing, listening and dialogue take place, where negotiations, resistance, challenging the status quo and possibly even transformation and reinvention take place. Punctuated by agitations from socially engaged artists, and ultimately led and driven by politically coherent members of the community, the 'in-between' space situated within the territory of the gallery, but at some distance, can act as a catalyst in supporting the community and the gallery articulate, disarticulate and rearticulate their self-representation, with constant renegotiations of identity, power and relationships taking place.

Reflections

Limitations

While I have argued that utilising a range of research methods, both conventional and less traditional, was particularly well suited to this research, it must be acknowledged that it is impossible to capture and convey the richness and complexity of individual experience in its entirety. As phenomenologist Schutz (1969: 99) asserts, a researcher cannot fully grasp the subjective lived experience of another person. It is also not lost on the researcher that it is somewhat ironic that a study that sets out to create a space

where research participants can express their experiences on their terms and in their own voice (voice in this research is understood as more than just words, it represents all forms of communication and expression, including non-verbal, such as body language and visual articulation through drawing and mapping), and aims to offer alternative ways of communicating without being dependent on academic or art-centric language, the predominant form of communication in presenting the research findings – the thesis – is in written form, employing academic conventions. However, I have punctuated these conventions by giving over significant space to the research participants' points of view—through presenting lengthy written passages in their own words; with vignettes pinpointing specific experiences of community panel members; and with visual documentation, in the form of photographs, film stills and scans from participants' journals—in an attempt to give a more holistic sense and understanding of the community participants' experiences.

Although I have argued for an in-depth focus of one primary case study, *Open House*, there are some limitations to this approach. In focusing in considerable depth on one example the research is bound by its context. Concentrating on a niche area of work – socially engaged practice mediated through the gallery, although with similarities to collaborative and participatory practice in museums, the research and recommendations presented are specific to the fields of visual arts and galleries. It is, therefore, not possible to make grand generalisations to population. Yet, as argued throughout the thesis, this narrow focus is also the research's strength, enabling an in-depth and nuanced consideration of a particular case. The richness of concerns revealed through utilising *Open House* as a springboard from which to consider broader issues affecting the fields of socially engaged art and the gallery means that, whilst not generalisable to population, the research can be generalised to theory.

Contribution

I am intrigued to see how the sector might utilise the research and how the arguments and recommendations presented here potentially play out in other contexts. The research could be re-presented as a toolkit for galleries engaging communities and artists in socially engaged practice, or as a call to arms or series of provocations igniting the sector to rethink its approach and to take action in adopting more

purposeful ways of working, with ethics underpinning their practice. Whichever the case, the outcomes of the research I hope will support, inform and enrich the work of galleries mediating socially engaged art.

Whilst there is an increasing interest in socially engaged art practices mediated through and presented by the gallery and the practice has become an established area of interest for researchers and art critics, there remains a paucity of in-depth understanding around the potential for socially engaged practice to benefit community participants, as well as bring about actual change. I have argued, through this research, the importance of valuing the experiences and perspectives of community participants engaged in socially engaged art practices, alongside those of the artist and gallery. By focusing attention on the lived experience and perspectives of individuals whose voices have been absent, and concerns neglected, in the analysis and critique of such practices I have attempted to reveal and redress the historic power imbalances in socially engaged art. Significantly, the research has demonstrated that when these experiences are amplified a more nuanced account and accurate understanding of such practices is presented, highlighting many interrelated benefits to individuals garnered through collaborative practice. Not only that, these experiences reveal numerous lines of tension and arising ethical implications which require further attention from the gallery and artist, presenting scope for future research.

Using a qualitative research design and employing a range of conventional research methods, alongside participatory and visual approaches, I elicited rich and fine-grained data from the case study *Open House* adding research grounded in a real-life context to the extant literatures of socially engaged practice. Through an inter-disciplinary approach of combining materials from the fields of contemporary art theory and participatory practice in museums, theories of post-colonialism and critical pedagogy, I interpreted these perspectives and experiences through a critical research lens, and shed new light on issues paramount in socially engaged practice – issues of what is of value and to whom; issues of sharing, in regard to power, authorship and ownership; issues surrounding notions of expertise; and issues encircling the role of the gallery in practices such as these – making an original contribution to knowledge and to addressing these very large concerns.

Galleries, I have argued, can play a significant role in the practices of socially engaged art, in creating a space where all voices can be heard, listened to and equally valued alongside their own and that of the artist. Galleries can mediate dialogue and facilitate opportunities in which all points of view are respected, generating a considerate, compassionate and ethically-turned practice. Although, as we have seen in many of the literatures, both in socially engaged art and museums, there is an aversion to the singular role of facilitator, I, instead, argue that facilitation is a form of expertise in its own right. For decades, gallery educators have honed their skills in mediation, developing their practice as critical and reflexive, and employing facilitation as a method in which to open up galleries to enable individuals and diverse community groups to experience and engage with contemporary art practices, as well as stimulate people to explore their own creativity and build a sense of agency.

Could artists and gallery practitioners (including curators) not only adopt educational formats and methodologies (as we have seen in the educational turn in curating and in educationally turned artistic practices, such as socially engaged art), but also assume the skills and attributes, and embrace the values and principles, associated with education and inherent in many gallery educators in order to cultivate more ethical ways of working? For example – ensuring a mindful approach and a sense of care when working with people; an emotional and intellectual investment in the process of social engagement (Pringle 2014); and a deep respect for and genuine interest in the experiences and perspectives of community participants. Whilst undoubtedly many artists and curators subscribe to these values and hold these skills and attributes, I argue that those involved in socially engaged practice should pay more attention towards the voices of community participants.

To conclude the thesis, I wish to pay thanks and echo the values of the research project once more through amplifying the voice of one community participant engaged in the socially engaged arts programme *Open House*, mediated by the gallery Kettle's Yard. As community panel member and Arbury Community Centre Manager Alan Soer states: 'it goes without saying, that without the input of local people it wouldn't have been the art or the project it's been' (2015b). Nor would it have been the research project it's been without the contribution of the community participants.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of interviews carried out

Date	Interviewee/s
2 July 2015	Christine Cowling Jones, Community Panel Member
2 July 2015	Jim Lees, Community Panel Member
2 July 2015	Jonathan Stanley, Community Panel Member
3 July 2015	Alan Soer, Community Panel Member
22 July 2015	Alison Bell-Gannon, Anne Hall, Avril Hinton and Augustin Belliard, Art Ambassadors at North Cambridge Academy
12 August 2015	Jordan Walker, Community Participant
13 August 2015	Liz Ballard, Assistant Curator, Open House, Kettle's Yard
14 August 2015	Karen Thomas, Community Officer, Kettle's Yard
10 October 2015	Emma Smith, Open House Artist in Residence
8 November 2015	Jim Lees, Community Panel Member and Carlos Ortis Martinez, Community Participant
9 November 2015	David Kefford, Open House Artist Facilitator
13 November 2015	Charlotte Jones and Alison Bell-Gannon, Art Ambassadors at North Cambridge Academy
28 November 2015	Lauren Van Zwanenberg and Gill Orake, Cambridge Community Arts
28 November 2015	Jenna Bestwick and Katelan Holland, Community Participants
29 November 2015	Christine Cowling Jones, Community Panel Member
3 December 2015	Jim Lees, Community Panel Member
3 December 2015	Alan Soer, Community Panel Member
8 December 2015	Jonathan Stanley, Community Panel Member
8 December 2015	Liz Ballard, Assistant Curator, Open House, Kettle's Yard

8 December 2015	Emma Smith, Open House Artist in Residence
15 December 2015	Kaitlin Ferguson, Open House Artist Facilitator
15 December 2015	Hannah Willers-Betson, CHYPPS Participant
15 December 2015	Niamh Dunderdale, CHYPPS Participant
16 December 2015	Karen Thomas, Community Officer, Kettle's Yard
2 February 2016	Liz Ballard, Jim Lees, Alan Soer, Jonathan Stanley and Karen Thomas, Community Panel Members and Kettle's Yard Staff

Appendix 2: Sample interview questions

Interview Questions – Artist (early stage)

1. Could you describe your artistic practice for me?
2. How would you describe socially engaged and collaborative art practices?
3. Why is this type of work important to you? And what are your perceived values of this type of artistic practice?

4. Have you worked with Kettle's Yard before?
5. How would you describe your role in the Open House programme?
6. And how would you describe the gallery's role?
7. What was your motivation to work with Kettle's Yard and the Open House programme?

8. What is your experience and perception of how the community panel meetings and artist selection evening have gone so far?

9. It's still early stages, but has this project brought about change in you? If yes, how and what types of change do you think have taken place?

10. How do you think working outside the gallery differs from onsite practices?
11. How do you think this has affected the project and how the participants perceive the project?
12. Do you think that working outside the gallery generates different experiences and provides different sets of attitudes and understanding in the participants? If so, what?

13. How would you describe the different types of working practices in the Open House project (prompts – such as artistic labour and participatory labour)? How are these practices distinct? Are there any similarities or overlaps?
14. What do you feel the community participants bring to the project? And how does the project recognise the community participants' contributions?
15. What unique role do you and Kettle's Yard bring to Open House?

16. Do you think through the Open House project and the collaborative processes undertaken the relationship between Kettle's Yard, the artist and the community can become more equitable? If, yes, can you elaborate?

Interview Questions – Community Panel (early stage)

These are a series of questions which explore your experiences of the Open House project so far and your role on the Community Panel.

1. Have you taken part in an art project before?
   If yes. Can you describe it for me?
2. Have you worked with an artist before?
   If yes. When, what did you do and what was your experience like?
3. Have you worked with Kettle's Yard before?
   If yes. When, what did you do and what was your experience like?
4. Have you visited or worked with any of the University of Cambridge Museums before?
   If yes. When, what did you do and what was your experience like?

5. What prompted you to take part in the Open House project?
6. What are your expectations of the Open House project?

7. Have you had the opportunity to get your viewpoint across in the Community Panel? Was your voice heard / did you feel you were listened to?
8. Have you gained new skills or knowledge as a result of taking part in Open House so far?
9. How do the processes of Open House make you feel?

10. Do you have a better understanding of the process of working with artists?
11. What are your expectations of working with Emma Smith the artist?

12. What role does art play in your life? And what role do you think art plays in your community/society more broadly?

13. What effect do you think the Open House project will have on you?
14. Do you think the project will change you in any way?
    If yes. How might the project change you?
    If no. Why do you think it won't change you?
15. Do you anticipate that as a result of the Open House project you will have gained confidence in approaching cultural organisations for a new project or partnership?
16. How do you think the Community Panel might impact or influence Open House and Kettle's Yard in the future?

Interview Questions – Young Community Participants

1. Have you taken part in an art project before?
   If yes. Can you describe it for me?
2. Have you worked with an artist before?
   If yes. When, what did you do and what was your experience like?
3. Have you worked with Kettle's Yard before?
   If yes. When, what did you do and what was your experience like?
4. Have you visited or worked with any of the University of Cambridge Museums before?
   If yes. When, what did you do and what was your experience like?

5. What prompted you to take part in the workshop today?
6. What did you do in the workshop today and what was your experience like?
7. Have you taken part before?
   If yes. When did you last take part?
   If no. How does your experience today compare with what you expected?

8. What part of the workshop did you like most or find most interesting? Why?
9. Were there any parts of the workshop you didn't like or found less interesting? Why?

10. What part do you think Kettle's Yard plays within the project? And Emma Smith, the artist?
11. How would you describe your role in the project?
12. What do you feel you contribute or bring to the project?
13. What is the most important thing about taking part in the workshops for you?
14. What do you feel you have learnt or gained from taking part in the workshops?
15. Has taking part in the workshops changed the way you feel about art and the gallery?
16. Has it changed the way you feel about the place that you live? If yes, how?

17. What do you value the most about making art?
18. How do you think looking at artworks in a gallery is different to being involved in making an artwork collaboratively?
19. What do you value the most about working collaboratively or in a team? (For example working with the artist and the other participants?)
20. Do you think that working on the project has changed you? If yes, how?
21. What has been the most significant change in you as a result of taking part in the workshop today? How might it change you in the future?

Interview Questions – Gallery Staff (post first residency)

1. Could you describe the first residency of the Open House programme?
2. What was the gallery's motivation in collaborating in/initiating this art project?
3. Why is collaborative and socially engaged work important to you? And what are the perceived values of this type of artistic practice to you and Kettle's Yard more broadly?
4. What do you think is the perceived value of this type of artistic practice to the participants?
5. What are the opportunities or benefits of working collaboratively? And what are the challenges or pitfalls? (both internally and with the community).
6. How has this type of work brought about change in Kettle's Yard? And what types of change do you think have taken place and might take place in the future?
7. What were your aspirations for phase one of Open House? Were they met? What were the intended community/social benefits of the project?
8. Did anything unexpected arise? If yes, what?
9. What do you feel you have gained or learnt from the first residency? What have you learnt from the community specifically?
10. Have you gained new skills or knowledge as a result of taking part in Open House?
11. How did the exchanges compare with what you expected? What was the feedback from these exchanges?
12. If you don't mind could you describe your consultation with Emma for me?
13. How did your consultation and the experience of the exhibition and apothecary compare with what you expected?
14. What are your thoughts and feelings on the final exhibition and event?
15. How do you think working outside the gallery differs from onsite practices?
16. How do you think this has affected the project and how the participants perceive the project?
17. Do you think that working outside the gallery generates different experiences and provides different sets of attitudes and understanding in the participants? If so, what?
18. What unique role do you believe the artist plays?
19. What unique role does Kettle's Yard play?
20. In what ways did members of the community panel and community participants more broadly contribute to Open House?
21. In what other ways could the community participants be recognised or valued in future phases of Open House?
22. Do you think through the Open House programme and the collaborative processes undertaken the relationship between Kettle's Yard, the artist and the community can become more equitable? If, yes, can you elaborate?
23. What could be improved for next time or done differently? If you could do it again what would you change?
24. Is there anything that you think should stay the same or has been particularly successful?
25. Would you consider phase one of the residency a success? How would you define this success?

Appendix 3: Sample information sheets

School of Museum Studies
University of Leicester
19 University Road
Leicester
LE1 7RF

How are community participants engaged in the collaborative process of socially engaged arts practice changed by their experiences?

Information sheet for adults

I am very grateful that you are willing to take the time to participate in my research project exploring how people working with artists and art galleries are changed by their experiences. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you more about the nature of the project, who I am and why I am undertaking this research, and how you were selected for the project. I would also like to inform you about how the data you supply to me will be used and the protections of your privacy and confidentiality that are in place.

Who is doing the research project

My name is Sarah Plumb and I am a PhD Student and Researcher at the University of Leicester in the School of Museum Studies.

What is the project for

To develop a better understanding of participants' experiences of making artwork and collaborating with artists and art galleries.

How you were selected

You have shown an interest in taking part in the art project Open House with Kettle's Yard and I am interested in hearing your experiences of the project and what you think about the activities you have been involved in.

Your role in completing the project

I hope to attend all of the workshop sessions of the art project Open House and observe activities. If you are happy to speak to me I will ask you some questions about the sessions and your opinions about it. This will be before the art project starts, during the art project and afterwards. Each meeting will take no more than 1 hour. There are no right or wrong answers and you do not have to answer any questions that you are not happy with. I might also want to record using a video camera and take photographs of you taking part in activities.

Your rights

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the project up until 31st December 2015. If you are uncertain or uncomfortable

about any aspect of your participation please contact me to discuss your concerns or request clarification on any aspect of the study.

Protecting your confidentiality
If you would like the information you supply to me to be kept confidential I will be happy to do so. If you give me permission I would like to use your words, any photographs/filmed footage I take and documentation of your artwork to show what people can get from their experiences of making artwork and working with artists and art galleries. This will be in the form of a written publication which will be made public and also on the Internet. Your name and other details you give me will not be linked to your name or photograph, unless you give me consent to do so. Any details you give to me will be kept confidential as requested and securely stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that any photographs/filmed footage will be stored on my laptop and memory stick with a security code encryption. All data will then be stored securely at the University of Leicester for up to 7 years and after this point securely disposed of.

If you have any questions about the ethical conduct of the research please contact the School Research Ethics Officer, Dr Giasemi Vavoula, on gv18@le.ac.uk.

Thank you very much for participating,

With best wishes,

MS SARAH PLUMB
sp227@le.ac.uk

School of Museum Studies
University of Leicester
19 University Road
Leicester
LE1 7RF

How are community participants engaged in the collaborative process of socially engaged arts practice changed by their experiences?

Information sheet for young people and their parents/guardians

You have been given this information to explain why a PhD researcher from the School of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester came to talk to your child about their school's involvement in a research project.

From the researcher

I am very grateful that your child is willing to take the time to participate in my research project exploring how people working with artists and art galleries are changed by their experiences. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you more about the nature of the project, who I am and why I am undertaking this research, and how your child was selected for the project. I would also like to inform you about how the data you and your child supplies to me will be used and the protections of your privacy and confidentiality that are in place.

Who is doing the research project

My name is Sarah Plumb and I am a PhD Student and Researcher at the University of Leicester in the School of Museum Studies.

What is the project for

To develop a better understanding of participants' experiences of making artwork and collaborating with artists and art galleries.

How your child was selected

Your child has shown an interest in taking part in the art project Open House and I am interested in hearing your child's experiences of the project and what they think about the activities they have been involved in.

Their role in completing the project

I hope to attend all of the workshop sessions of the art project Open House and observe activities. If you are happy for your child to speak to me I will ask them some questions about the sessions and their opinions about it. This will be before the art project starts, during the art project and afterwards. Each meeting will take no more than 1 hour. There are no right or wrong answers and they do not have to answer any questions that they are not happy with. I might also want to make recordings using a video camera and take photographs of them taking part in activities. I have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check and will never interview your child alone

Their/Your rights
Your child's participation in this research is entirely voluntary and your child is free to withdraw from the project up until 31st December 2015. If you/your child decides to withdraw consent from the project I will securely dispose of all or part of the data they have contributed. If you/they are uncertain or uncomfortable about any aspect of your participation please contact me to discuss your concerns or request clarification on any aspect of the study.

Protecting your confidentiality
If you/your child would like the information you supply to me to be kept confidential I will be happy to do so. If you and your child give me permission I would like to use their words, any photographs/filmed footage I take and documentation of their artwork to show what people can get from their experiences of making artwork and working with artists and art galleries. This will be in the form of a written publication which will be made public and also on the Internet. Their name and other details you give me will not be linked to your name or photograph, unless you give me consent to do so. Any details you/your child give/s to me will be kept confidential as requested and securely stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that any photographs/filmed footage will be stored on my laptop and memory stick with a security code encryption. All data will then be stored securely at the University of Leicester for up to 7 years and after this point securely disposed of.

If you have any questions about the ethical conduct of the research please contact the School Research Ethics Officer, Dr Giasemi Vavoula, on gv18@le.ac.uk.

Thank you very much for participating,

With best wishes,

MS SARAH PLUMB
sp227@le.ac.uk

Appendix 4: Sample consent forms

Research Consent Form – Adults

I agree to take part in the 'How are community participants engaged in the collaborative process of socially engaged arts practice changed by their experiences?' project which is research towards a PhD in Museum Studies at the University of Leicester.

I have had the project explained to me and I have read the Information sheet about the project which I may keep for my records.

I understand that this project will be carried out in accordance with the University of Leicester's Code of Research Ethics which can be viewed at http://www2.le.ac.uk/institution/committees/research-ethics/code-of-practice

Material I provide as part of this study will be securely stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and disposed of 7 years after the project.

I have had the project explained to me, given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and I have read the Information statement about the project which I may keep for my records. I understand that by agreeing to take part I am willing to:

	Yes	No
Be interviewed by the researcher	☐	☐
Allow the interview to be taped / recorded	☐	☐
Allow the interview to be transcribed by an external company	☐	☐
Allow my real name to be used in connection with any words I have said or information I have passed on	☐	☐
Be photographed/filmed by the researcher	☐	☐
Allow the researcher to use documentation of their artwork	☐	☐
I understand that I can withdraw from the study up until 31st December 2015	☐	☐

Name [PRINT] …….

Signature …….

Date …….

Research Consent Form – Children and Young People

University of Leicester

I agree to my child taking part in the 'How are community participants engaged in the collaborative process of socially engaged arts practice changed by their experiences?' project which is research towards a PhD in Museum Studies at the University of Leicester.

My child has had the project explained to them and has read the Information sheet about the project which I may keep for my records. I understand that this project will be carried out in accordance with the University of Leicester's Code of Research Ethics which can be viewed at http://www2.le.ac.uk/institution/committees/research-ethics/code-of-practice. Material my child provides as part of this study will be securely stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and disposed of 7 years after the project.

My child has had the project explained to them, has been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and has read the Information statement about the project which I may keep for my records. I understand that by agreeing to my child taking part they are willing to:

	Yes	No
Be interviewed by the researcher	☐	☐
Allow the interview to be taped / recorded	☐	☐
Allow the interview to be transcribed by an external company	☐	☐
Allow for their real name to be used in connection with any words they have said or information they have passed on	☐	☐
Be photographed/filmed by the researcher	☐	☐
Allow the researcher to use documentation of their artwork	☐	☐
Understand that they can withdraw from the study up until 31st December 2015	☐	☐
Understand that they do not have to take part if they don't want to and they can leave at any time	☐	☐

Child's Name [PRINT] …….

Your Name [PRINT] …….

Signature …….

Date …….

Appendix 5: Summary of observed activity

Activity/Workshop	Date
Open House Launch	20 October 2014
First Community Panel Meeting	10 November 2014
Community Panel Meeting	7 January 2015
Artist Selection Evening	11 February 2015
Community Panel Meeting	15 April 2015
Community Panel Meeting	1 June 2015
Workshop with Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy	22 July 2015
Community Panel Meeting	22 July 2015
Drop-in Workshop for Families, Children and Young People at Nuns Way	3 August 2015
Drop-in Workshops for Families, Children and Young People at Meadows Community Centre	10 – 14 August 2015
On Your Doorstep Exhibition and Activities at 37 Lawrence Way Community House	27 September 2015
Community Panel Meeting	20 October 2015
Activity at the Crochet Club at 37 Lawrence Way Community House	22 October 2015
Drop-in Workshop for Families, Children and Young People at Meadows Community Centre	26 October 2015
Workshop with girls from Jack Warren Green with CHYPPS	27 October 2015
Community Panel Meeting and First Sharing Event	27 October 2015

Drop-in Workshop for Families, Children and Young People at Good Shepherd Church	28 October 2015
Workshop with girls from Jack Warren Green with CHYPPS	3 November 2015
Exchange between Jim Lees and Carlos Ortiz Martinez at Nuffield Allotment	8 November 2015
Exchange between David Kefford and the Punjabi Cultural Society	8 November 2015
Workshop with Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy	9 November 2015
Typology Workshop with Cambridge Community Arts	9 November 2015
Exchange between Ina Morse and Emma Smith at Ina's home	10 November 2015
Workshop with girls from Jack Warren Green with CHYPPS	10 November 2015
Community Panel Meeting and Second Sharing Event	10 November 2015
Workshop with girls from Jack Warren Green with CHYPPS	24 November 2015
Art Ambassadors from North Cambridge Academy visit Variations on a Weekend Theme Exhibition	27 November 2015
Variations on a Weekend Theme Exhibition	28 and 29 November 2015
Exhibition of artwork produced by girls from Jack Warren Green with CHYPPS	15 December 2015
Community Panel Meeting and first year debrief	2 February 2016

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