

The Network Newsletter: tackling social exclusion in libraries, museums, archives and galleries

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The Network's Website is at www.seapn.org.uk and includes information on courses, good practice, specific socially excluded groups, as well as the newsletter archive.

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Did you see ...?

Information Professional

The March issue¹ includes:

- “Nominations for Libraries Change Lives near deadline” [p4]
- “Making magic happen for dementia patients”, a news-story about Hillingdon’s Tovertafel² [p10]
- “Literacy link sees children’s life chances diminished from birth”, brief article about the NLT report, *Literacy and life expectancy*³ [p13]
- “Literacy at primary school: a social justice issue”, interview by Rob Green with Louise Johns-Shepherd, CE of the CLPE [pp36-38].

Museums Journal

The April issue⁴ includes a focus on socially engaged practice:

- Simon Stephens “Socially engaged practice is way ahead” [Editorial]
- Rob Sharp “Investing in social impact”, an outline of pieces of work that have been funded via the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund [pp20-25] – and more about these pieces of work below
- Patrick Kelly “Common ground”, which looks at how “[M]useums and libraries are using their collections to mark the 50th anniversary of the start of the Troubles and to highlight the shared heritage of unionist and nationalist communities in Northern Ireland” [pp26-31]
- “Founding principles” an interview with Caro Howell, Director of the Foundling Museum, by Eleanor Mills, which looks at “[...] social impact and saving lives with art” [pp32-35]

¹ *Information Professional*, March 2018. Further info at: <https://www.cilip.org.uk/?page=magazine>.

² See also: <https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/magictables>.

³ Lisa Gilbert, Anne Teravainen, Christina Clark and Sophia Shaw. *Literacy and life expectancy: an evidence review exploring the link between literacy and life expectancy in England through health and socioeconomic factors*. National Literacy Trust, 2018. Available to download as a pdf (1270 kb) from: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/literacy-and-life-expectancy/>. This report was assessed in *The Network Newsletter*, 203, Jan 2018, pp6-9, <http://www.seapn.org.uk/uploads/files/Newsletter-NS-203.pdf>.

⁴ For further info about *Museums Journal*, see: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal>.

The article (mentioned above) about the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund includes brief information about:

- “Encountering the Unexpected”, led by the University of Leicester/RCMG: “[...] a two-year project that will initiate a series of bold museum experiments to develop a framework, or set of principles, that will activate and interrogate the potential of natural heritage collections to support successful ageing and achieve social change.”⁵
- “The Cardiff Story”: “In our fun, free and interactive galleries, discover the history of Cardiff through the eyes of those who created the city – its people.”⁶
- Cornwall Museums Partnership’s project that will involve a training programme for community volunteers to form a Cornish National Collection.⁷
- Pontypridd Museum with their project, “Whose History is it Anyway”, which they used to train the community to assess and co-create new interpretation for its social history collections.⁸
- Derby Museum’s work with black, Asian and minority ethnic communities to explore how to create a more inclusive museum relevant to peoples’ lives.⁹
- Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums’ project to create a women’s collection and festival exploring issues such as gender inequality.
- Gawthorpe Textiles Collection: “A chance to dig deeper into the history of Miss Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth and her amazing textile collection. With generous funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation we are now working to capture all Miss Rachel’s research about her collections. This will be made available over the next three years in exhibitions, events and on our collections database but as we go along we will share with you fascinating snippets of information we find on our journey through Miss Rachel’s archives.”¹⁰
- Museums Sheffield: “Sheffield: Protest and Activism”, “[...] a two-year research and exhibition project funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation Collection Fund. Sheffield has a rich story of protest and

⁵ See: <https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/rcmg/projects/seeing-the-museum-through-the-visitors2019-eyes/departments/museumstudies/rcmg/projects/encounteringtheunexpected/encountering-the-unexpected>.

⁶ See: <http://www.cardiffmuseum.com/>.

⁷ See: <https://www.cornwallmuseumspartnership.org.uk/>.

⁸ See: <https://pontypriddmuseum.cymru/> and <https://www.museumsassociation.org/news/05072016-efcf-awards-476000-latest-round>.

⁹ See: <https://www.derbymuseums.org/locations/museum-art-gallery/world-cultures>.

¹⁰ See: <http://www.gawthorpetextiles.org.uk/post/138210683858/collection-stories-a-chance-to-dig-deeper-into/embed>.

activism that stretches far back into the city's history, from the radical press in 1790s to Samuel Holberry and Chartism in the 1830s, Suffragism and Adela Pankhurst in the early twentieth century through to the Miners' Strike and the 'Battle of Orgreave' in the 1980s."¹¹

- Heritage Doncaster: "[...] work with younger and older residents across the borough to explore the area's mining heritage. The two-year intergenerational project will work with participants in three ex-mining communities: Denaby Main, Hatfield and Stainforth and Woodlands. Together these areas tell the story of the area's mining history, from the sinking of the deep pits in the area in the early 20th century to the present day."¹²

ARC Magazine

The latest issue¹³ has several interesting articles:

- Jenny Marsden "Archiving abroad: the Kewpie photographic collection", which looks at the work to promote the collection at Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action in Johannesburg [pp10-13]
- Jayne Pucknell and Nicky Sugar "Delving into the British Empire and Commonwealth Collection", in which the authors "describe the challenges which come with cataloguing and providing access to this large and fascinating collection." [pp27-29]
- Stephanie Nield "Rewind: 7 decades of stories from Leonard Cheshire Disability", which describes the HLF-funded project to digitise and make accessible some of their archives [pp35-38]

National Trust Magazine

The Summer 2018 issue¹⁴ includes an article on the developments at Croome, Worcestershire, to make the property more accessible to disabled people:

- Gail Dixon "Potter and ponder" [pp35-39].

The NT website¹⁵ also includes information about the creation of their "Potter and Ponder" sensory map, co-created with local special schools for children with wide-ranging special needs and learning disabilities, working with Pallant House Gallery¹⁶ and their "Outside In" project:

¹¹ See: <http://www.museums-sheffield.org.uk/blog/2017/2/sheffield-protest-and-activism>.

¹² See: <https://www.heritagedoncaster.org.uk/projects/esmee-fairbairn/>.

¹³ *ARC Magazine*, 344, Apr 2018. Further info at: <http://www.archives.org.uk/publications/arc-magazine.html>.

¹⁴ *National Trust Magazine*, Summer 2018. Further information at: www.nationaltrust.org.uk.

¹⁵ See: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/croome/features/potter-and-ponder-a-sensory-experience>.

¹⁶ See, for example: <http://www.pallant.org.uk/about1/press-office/press-releases/2012/outside-in-national>.

“Outside In is an award winning charity working to create a fairer and more inclusive art world.

Through our exhibitions, active online community and professional training programmes, we provide a platform for artists who find it difficult to access the art world for reasons including health, disability, isolation or social circumstance. Outside In was founded in 2006 at Pallant House Gallery in West Sussex. In 2016, following celebrations to mark the project’s highly successful first decade, Outside In became an independent charity. In 2017 Outside In joined Arts Council England’s National Portfolio.”¹⁷

Museum Practice

The MA has published a round-up of good practice and case studies (available to MA members)¹⁸.

It includes information about:

- The Happy Museum Project and its case studies¹⁹
- Staff and volunteer wellbeing, including a link to @museum5aday²⁰, set up by Kate Topping, the education officer at Haslemere Museum, to suggest via social media ways heritage workers can look after themselves so they can better support their colleagues.
- The Mindful Museum²¹
- Dulwich Picture Gallery’s work on wellbeing in youth projects²²
- Horniman Museum and Gardens’ work with partner organisations to promote good mental health²³
- Mansfield Museum’s aim to put health and wellbeing at the centre of the museum’s work²⁴
- National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens – working with group art psychotherapy in the museum²⁵
- The Whitworth, Manchester’s work to improve the quality of life for those living with dementia²⁶
- Yorkshire Sculpture Park’s work to connect art, wellbeing and nature²⁷

¹⁷ Taken from: http://www.outsidein.org.uk/About_2014.

¹⁸ See: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museum-practice>.

¹⁹ See: <http://happymuseumproject.org/resources/case-studies/>.

²⁰ See: <https://twitter.com/Muse5aday>.

²¹ See, for example: <http://manchesterartgallery.org/learn/mindful-museum/>.

²² See a film about the project at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKMBGMHbhCw>.

²³ See, for example: <https://www.horniman.ac.uk/collections/stories/health-and-healing-through-plants/story-chapter/health-and-healing-through-plants-in-the-horniman-gardens-with-roy-vickery>.

²⁴ See: <http://www.mansfield.gov.uk/museum/Health%20and%20Wellbeing/index.htm>.

²⁵ See, for example: <http://www.emst.gr/en/events-en/past-events-en/collaboration-emst-nkua-for-group-art-psychotherapy-program>.

²⁶ See: <http://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/whats-on/exhibitions/upcomingexhibitions/beyond-dementia/>.

²⁷ See: <https://yvsp.org.uk/>.

Professional Manager

The Spring issue²⁸ includes some interesting articles:

- Joe Wiggins “Pale, stale male = fail”, a brief look at the impact that diversity – or lack of it – has across an organisation [p20]
- Petra Wilton “Genderquake”, which looks at the growing momentum to create inclusive workplaces [p23]
- “Dame changers”, an interview with Dame Stephanie Shirley and Dame Fiona Kendrick by *PM*s Ann Francke, which looks at being women pioneers; women’s progress; STEM skills; the next generation; leadership; and migration (Stephanie Shirley arrived in the UK as part of the Kindertransport scheme) [pp26-29, 31]
- Emma De Vita “You and #MeToo”, outlining how workplace culture is under close scrutiny²⁹ [pp38-41]

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Growing up north ...

This new report³⁰ from Anne Longfield, the Children’s Commissioner, has had considerable media coverage.

“While many children in the north are thriving, there are huge gaps between the poorest northern kids and those in the south,’ said Longfield.

Too many children in the north are facing the double whammy of entrenched deprivation and poor schools. We need to ask why a child from a low-income family in London is three times more likely to go to university than a child who grows up in Hartlepool.”³¹

Its conclusions include:

“This report is not seeking to reinforce old narratives of wholesale northern decline. Quite the contrary, throughout we highlight much of the

²⁸ For more information, see: <http://www.managers.org.uk/individuals/become-a-member/professional-manager-magazine>.

²⁹ This article links to the CMI’s “Broken windows” campaign and report – see: <http://www.managers.org.uk/cmi-women/broken-windows>.

³⁰ *Growing up north – Look North: a generation of children await the powerhouse promise*. Children’s Commissioner for England, 2018. Available to download as a pdf (1770 kb) from: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Growing-Up-North-March-2018-1.pdf>.

³¹ Taken from: https://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/2005090/children-in-north-being-left-behind-childrens-commissioner-warns?utm_content=&utm_campaign=260318_DailyNews&utm_source=Children%20%26%20Young%20People%20Now&utm_medium=adestra_email&utm_term=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cypnow.co.uk%2Fcyp%2Fnews%2F2005090%2Fchildren-in-north-being-left-behind-childrens-commissioner-warns.

innovative work we have encountered across the North, and emphasise the real impact this is having on children's lives.

However, it is also important to understand that a disproportionate number of children in the North are growing up in communities of entrenched disadvantage which have not enjoyed the financial growth or government energy and spotlight that have so boosted opportunities in other areas of the country – London and the South East in particular.

As a result, too many disadvantaged children in the North are being left behind.

This report sets out starkly what this means:

- Too many children starting school far behind where they should be. Often with special educational needs no one has picked up.
- Children from disadvantaged backgrounds facing an education gap that starts before schools and widens throughout education
- More than half of the secondary schools serving the North's most deprived communities are judged to be less than good.
- Large numbers of children dropping out of education before they reach 18.
- Lack of confidence amongst children that economic regeneration will mean more jobs or opportunities." [p4]

The report's recommendations are:

1. Children's prospects should be placed at the heart of the Northern Powerhouse and given the same attention as economic regeneration
2. Government should provide additional investment in the most disadvantaged areas to support local councils and partners to improve children's outcomes and life chances – this should start in the North
3. Extra support for families to give their children the best start in life (including "a renewed focus on early-intervention with families across a range of agencies" [p6])
4. Earlier identification of special educational needs should be a public health priority
5. A new northern schools programme should be established to improve leadership and governance, boost recruitment and dramatically improve children's attainment in the most disadvantaged areas
6. Reform the role of Regional Schools Commissioner
7. Northern areas need to stop children dropping out of education early
8. Local Enterprise Partnerships need to expand their programmes to bring employers and schools together to widen children's horizons and open up job prospects

9. Arts, culture and sports bodies should prioritise funding for children with disadvantaged backgrounds. [Taken from pp5-7]

This last recommendation is interesting – and potentially helpful to us. The recommendation says:

“We saw some excellent examples of how arts, culture and sport can transform children’s outlook, instill [sic] confidence and raise aspiration. Many children wanted to get involved and stay involved but found that opportunities are limited, expensive or not open to them. The bodies funding these activities should prioritise the North, and particularly its disadvantaged areas.” [p7]

In the report, the section on arts, culture and sports includes:

“It is not just exposure to careers experiences that can benefit young people. Our research, and the young people we spoke to, really emphasised the importance of a wide range of experiences involving sport, arts and travel.” [p16]

It then goes on to give some examples of good practice:

- Hull and East Yorkshire Children’s University³²:

“Hull and East Yorkshire Children’s University (HEY CU) is a charity that works with schools regionally in areas of disadvantage. Children are provided with opportunities outside the classroom that make the learning that goes on at school real and relevant to their futures. HEY CU inspires children to go on to careers and educational pathways they never knew existed, and we instil the confidence to do so in them. Giving children aspiration, confidence, curiosity about the world around them and resilience is the corner stone of the charity’s work.” [p17]
- Everton Free School in Liverpool³³: children who had started coaching roles at 14, and had been able to develop these skills and travel to China and South Africa to deliver coaching courses
- Liverpool: children putting on concerts for the Liverpool Philharmonic ‘In Harmony’ project³⁴
- Northern Ballet: work with communities in and around Leeds.

This is an important piece of work which argues the case for a re-balancing of funding and focus.³⁵

³² See: <http://www.hullchildrensuniversity.com/>.

³³ See: <http://www.evertonfreeschool.com/>.

³⁴ See: <http://www.liverpoolphil.com/in-harmony-liverpool>.

³⁵ Source: Children & Young People Now *Daily Bulletin*, 26 Mar 2018.

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

Britain divided?

This major report³⁶ has just been published by HOPE not hate.

Key findings (the result of a YouGov poll of over 5000 people) include:

- “41% believe that Britain’s multicultural society isn’t working and different communities generally live separate lives. While 43% of our poll feel that Britain is a successful multicultural society where people from different backgrounds generally get along well together, this group is heavily concentrated among highly educated people, Remain voters and Liberal Democrat supporters. Multiculturalism is a polarising issue.
- 43% of respondents think that relationships between different communities within the UK will get worse over the next few years, with just 14% believing things will get better. Worryingly, this crosses many of the demographic and voting pattern divides.
- Even more worryingly, many feel that these tensions will lead to violence. 40% of people felt that Enoch Powell’s dire predictions of social breakdown and violence in his Rivers of Blood speech proved accurate, while only 41% believe he was wrong.
- Anxieties towards British Muslims, and Islam generally, has replaced immigration as the key issue of concern for many Britons [...]
- A link between Islamic extremism and the failure of integration in Britain is drawn by a high proportion of the British public.” [p4]

At the same time:

“[...] there appears to be a gulf between perception and reality. The reality is that multiculturalism has been an uneven success, leaving some areas of Britain more integrated than others.

- Community relations are not without issues, but on the whole people feel happy in their communities, well integrated, and mix well with people of different ethnic backgrounds to themselves.
- Data from the community life survey shows that 81% of people feel well integrated into their community [...]
- Our poll shows more people have than do not have close friends from different ethnic backgrounds to themselves and almost a third of people say that they or a family member has been in a relationship with someone of a different ethnicity to themselves in the last few years. 25% of Londoners have been in a relationship with someone of a different ethnicity to themselves.
- Young people are a lot more positive about multiculturalism and integration and a lot less anxious about Muslims than older people.

³⁶ Rosie Carter and Nick Lowles. *Britain divided? Rivers of blood 50 years on*. HOPE not hate Charitable Trust, 2018. Available to download (1139 kb) from: <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Britain-Divided-50-years-on.pdf>.

- Just as positively, our poll finds 60% of people think that immigration has been good for Britain, up from 40% when people were asked the same question in 2011 and 50% when people were asked in January 2016.” [p5]

The report acknowledges that there have been “huge advances in race relations, from governmental and non-governmental action through to closer connections between different communities.” [p5]

However, there are still many challenges remaining, including:

- “Some of the negative attitudes towards migrants and Muslims are clearly shaped by the wider media and social media narrative, which is often negative and carries a dominant narrative that conflates a failure of integration with violent extremism. Social contact between people of different backgrounds is key to ensuring good community relations. The more people meet and interact in their daily lives, the less likely they are to hold negative views about people.
- While Britain is a more integrated society than many of us initially think, there is no disguising the fact that significant problems exist and must be tackled, especially those rooted in economic problems and cultural anxieties.
- With the Government’s own Race Disparity Audit report highlighting great societal inequalities for people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, the ongoing threat of Islamist and far-right terrorism and provocation, and rapidly changing demographics (with predictions that Britain’s BAME communities will make up 36% of the population by 2050), building stronger and more integrated communities must be a priority for us all.
- Integration is as much about reversing economic inequalities and providing people and communities with the opportunities to progress as it does challenging racism and prejudice.
- With HOPE not hate’s research showing a clear link between economic pessimism and negative attitudes towards immigrants and multiculturalism, we cannot address the latter without improving the life chances for those who currently see no hope.” [p5]

The report concludes with some hope, but also a call for more to be done:

“At face value our poll paints a bleak picture of how many people in the UK feel about modern Britain, but there is hope in these findings.

Understandings of identity have become more open, and concerns about immigration are in decline. On the whole people are mixing well, and generally feel positively about their community. Nonetheless, with so much public anxiety about future relations between ethnic groups in the context of a rapidly changing population, there is much to be done to improve both perceptions and realities of multi-ethnic Britain.” [p26]

Recommended.

Health & Wellbeing issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

Museums as spaces for wellbeing ...

This is the second report³⁷ from the National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing.

It extends the learning from the 2016 report, *Museums for health and wellbeing*³⁸, and “[...] is intended to explore in greater depth the development of the museums, health and wellbeing sector.” [p5]

“Part 1 of this report illustrates a wide range of creative and innovative programme- and project-based work through a variety of examples and case studies. It is organised in six sections in order to show how the heritage sector is responding creatively to a cultural and policy-making landscape undergoing rapid transformation [...]” [p5]

The six sections include:

- Creative responses to an ageing population
- Creative responses to health inequalities
- Creative approaches to delivering health through culture
- Co-creative approaches to programming and curation
- Creative approaches to green wellbeing
- Creative attitudes to wellbeing across the board.

These are liberally illustrated with case studies from a wide range of organisations.

Part 2 looks at how museums and galleries are dealing with the opportunities and challenges in five areas:

1. new audiences
2. partnership
3. evaluation
4. organisational change
5. funding.

³⁷ Sarah Desmarais, Laura Bedford and Helen Chatterjee. *Museums as spaces for wellbeing: a second report from the National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing*. National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing, 2018. Available to download as a pdf (9500 kb) from:

<https://museumsandwellbeingalliance.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/museums-as-spaces-for-wellbeing-a-second-report.pdf>.

³⁸ *Museums for health and wellbeing: a preliminary report from the National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing*. National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing, 2016. Available to download as a pdf (5220 kb) from:

<https://museumsandwellbeingalliance.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/museums-for-health-and-wellbeing.pdf>.

These include good practice tips, drawing on advice and views of Alliance members.

Finally, there is a conclusions section: this suggests that, whilst there are some very positive signs:

“[...] an emergent culture of organisational support and excellent practice in museums; the new visibility of culture and health on the policy-making stage; and a health service committed to redressing health inequalities and urgently in need of new approaches to psychosocial problems.” [p54]

there are also:

“[...] obstacles that stand in the way of growth. These include:

- ethically important issues of legacy and sustainability
- the lack of established models through which social prescribing might be rolled out
- the challenges of project evaluation
- the slow rate of organisational change on which progress depends
- the low visibility of health and wellbeing in museums, even where embedded organisationally” [p54]

Finally, the report draws together top tips:

- Work in partnership
- Embed health and wellbeing organisationally
- Consider sustainability carefully
- Respond to local needs
- Take an asset-based approach: “The multiple assets of museums include staff, partners, visitors, expertise, location and indoor and outdoor spaces as well as collections.” [p59]
- Document your work
- Give yourself time
- Shout about it!

This is an important and really useful piece of work – highly recommended.

LGBTQ issues – Other Agencies

Trans Britain: our journey from the shadows

This is an excellent collection of essays³⁹ about the history and development of the trans ‘community’ in Britain, charting its history particularly in the last 50 years or so, but also highlighting that being trans is not some new fad.

³⁹ Christine Burns (ed). *Trans Britain: our journey from the shadows*. Unbound, 2018. Further info at: <https://unbound.com/books/trans-britain/>.

It begins with definitions and an introduction by Christine Burns, and then has three sections: Survival; Activism; and Growth.

“Survival” includes, for example, an essay on the Charing Cross Gender Identity Clinic (and some of the controversies surrounding some of its former medical staff); stories of positive personal experiences; and a piece on the development of Mermaids over the last 20 years or so⁴⁰.

“Activism” includes an essay on “Taking to the law” by Mark Rees⁴¹ (and Katherine O’Donnell); a piece by former MP Lynne Jones⁴², about her gradual involvement in supporting Press for Change⁴³ and other trans issues; essays on the press, film and television; an essay by Sue Sanders on Section 28; and an essay on the history of Scottish trans activism (which led the way in many areas).

“Growth” includes essays on the trades unions; Gendered Intelligence⁴⁴; non-binary identity⁴⁵; better press and TV; and two pieces on “modern transitions” by Fox Fisher⁴⁶, and Stephanie Hirst⁴⁷. Highly recommended.

Broader issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

Experimental culture ...

The Arts Council:

“[...] commissioned Nesta [48] to produce a future-focused report, identifying key trends, impacts, challenges and opportunities for the period 2020-30. This work will support and inform the development of our next 10 year strategy.”

The report⁴⁹ was published in March, following a rapid horizon-scan by Nesta between Dec 2017-Feb 2018.

⁴⁰ “Mermaids provides a helpline aimed at supporting transgender youth up to and including the age of 19, their families and professionals working with them.” See: <http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk/helpline-support.html>.

⁴¹ See, for example: <http://www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk/history/markrees.htm>.

⁴² See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lynne_Jones.

⁴³ “The UK’s leading experts in transgender law”, see: <http://www.pfc.org.uk/>.

⁴⁴ See: <http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/>.

⁴⁵ See, for example: <http://beyondthebinary.co.uk/>.

⁴⁶ See: <http://www.foxfisher.com/>.

⁴⁷ See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephanie_Hirst.

⁴⁸ See: <https://www.nesta.org.uk/>.

⁴⁹ *Experimental culture: a horizon scan commissioned by Arts Council England*. ACE/Nesta, 2018. Available to download as a pdf – full report (5510 kb) from: https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Experimental_Culture_report_190318.pdf; summary report and provocations (5190 kb) from: http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Experimental_Culture_summary_150318.pdf.

“The aim was to produce a primer on existing knowledge of key trends, not to conduct a comprehensive review. Within the timeframe available for this exercise, we primarily focused on domain areas in which Nesta has previously conducted research or run grant programmes. Consequently, this paper emphasises the impact of technology and opportunities for experimentation and innovation in the coming decade.” [Full report, p6]

This brief assessment of the report draws primarily from the key findings listed in the executive summary. There are four main sections:

- Audiences and participation
- Workforce and skills
- The changing funding environment and business models
- New technologies.

Audiences and participation

- “The UK faces a range of structural economic, social and geographic inequalities, and a persistent lack of social mobility. Mirroring this, audiences for arts and cultural activity are also polarised along socio-economic, demographic and geographic lines.” [p6]
- “To date, the promise of digital technology to democratise access and participation in the arts and cultural sector has not been fulfilled, although digital has driven greater disruption in adjacent creative industries. Meanwhile, universal access to cultural education, which could act as a leveller in terms of introducing young people to arts and culture – both as audiences and participants – has been affected in England by a decline of 15 per cent in teaching time between 2010-2015.” [p6]
- “There are also several demographic changes that will impact on arts and cultural organisations over the coming decade. For example, the growth of an ageing population with disposable income, leisure time and an appetite for culture could constitute an opportunity for the arts sector. Millennials will represent an increasingly important cohort of consumers within the UK. As a fully ‘digitally immersed’ generation they are arguably more likely to expect novelty, choice and personalisation from cultural experiences.
- The growth in ‘everyday creativity’, and in particular voluntary participatory arts, digital activity amongst the young and the rediscovery of craft and making may create opportunities for arts and cultural organisations to meet audiences and participants on their own terms.” [p7]

Workforce and skills

- “The UK’s arts and cultural sectors have experienced uneven employment growth over the period 2011-2016 with employment in music, visual and performing arts growing at 36.6 per cent, while employment in museums, galleries and libraries grew at the slower rate

of 1.8 per cent. Meanwhile, employment in the broader creative industries has grown at 25.4 per cent, over three times faster than the UK workforce.

- The arts and cultural sector is characterised by a high proportion of freelancers. The ethnic diversity of the workforce varies across museums and cultural institutions, but is not reflective of the wider population; the gender balance is on average healthier, but there are persistent challenges in relation to diversity more generally in leadership roles.
- Skills shortages exist in relation to creative sectors like animation, visual effects and video games. A range of specialist conservation skills are in short supply in museums, and there are shortages related to specialist technical roles in theatres. Digital skills remain a systemic problem throughout the sector.
- Brexit presents additional uncertainties with regard to the supply of skills and talent. While the evidence is that arts and cultural organisations employ proportionately fewer EU migrants than firms in the whole economy, in specific areas such as freelance performers, or those with certain design, craft or digital skills their role is particularly important. Accessing these workers at short notice in future when there are domestic shortages may be particularly problematic.
- Automation will impact the whole labour force over the next decade. However, creative roles are particularly resistant to automation, with Nesta's research suggesting 87 per cent of creative occupations are at low risk of this happening.
- Looking at a broader set of technological, social and economic changes, our analysis points to cultural and media occupations growing in importance in the workforce. The research suggests that, more generally, roles combining high-end cognitive skills, such as originality, active learning and systems thinking, with strong social and communication skills - the hallmarks of creative work - will experience a rise in demand.
- Over the long term, further reductions in access to cultural education in England and factors impacting funding for creative subjects in Higher Education, could adversely affect the UK's competitive advantage with regards to availability of creative talent and the health of the creative industries more broadly." [p7]

The changing funding environment and business models

- "The market for arts and culture content is likely to become ever more global, expanding the potential audience for UK arts and cultural organisations. At the same time, increasing adoption of digital technologies will be a way for more organisations to reach this larger audience.
- However, the UK's arts and cultural sector is also likely to face more competition, both from other domestic leisure activities and from

international organisations. There are also reasons to be cautious about the future public funding outlook at both central and local government levels, due to the UK's ongoing fiscal indebtedness, Brexit-related economic uncertainties and forecasts of only slight rises in National Lottery expenditure.

- Many arts and cultural organisations will need to look for more ways of shifting their balance of funding towards other sources, such as private sponsorship and philanthropic giving. New routes to finance, such as impact investment and crowdfunding, which have emerged in recent years will become a much more significant part of the funding mix for some types of organisation. Micropayments and donation based patronage enabled through online platforms are also likely to be of interest to some artists, performers and organisations.
- Digital distribution could also present commercial opportunities for arts and cultural organisations over the coming decade (for example licensing live-to-digital broadcasts, and the creation of virtual reality content).
- Data capture enabled by digital technologies could allow institutions to optimise their commercial model in other ways - for example, 'dynamic ticket pricing' where ticket prices can be varied over time according to the demand levels.
- However, there is a risk that some arts and cultural organisations (particularly smaller ones) may not have access to the technical, data and business skills that are needed to respond to the commercial opportunities of this environment." [p8]

New technologies

- "The last decade might have seen a new dawn for the integration of digital technologies into the work of arts and cultural organisations. Yet, in the main, such a revolution has yet to materialise, as many organisations encounter barriers to experimentation (such as lack of access to funding and constraints on staff time).
- The digitisation of collections and artefacts has become standard practice for many cultural institutions, but the use cases for capitalising on these digital assets, has been limited to date.
- There have, however, been some significant technological developments in creative practice as interdisciplinary collaborations between musicians, artists, performers and technologists have generated artworks spanning multiple media and challenging conventional art form definitions.
- Looking ahead to the coming decade, there are set to be a number of technological advances with significant implications for the arts and cultural sector. In particular, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and so-called 'Mixed Reality' will see significant growth. Cultural and artistic content will be one of the drivers of these technologies becoming more widespread in society more generally. Virtual galleries and other

immersive performances could be another means of engaging audiences across dispersed geographies and could open up new sources of revenue for organisations.

- Arts and cultural organisations could also seek to capitalise on acceleration in the fields of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning in order to deliver efficiencies, innovate and extract value from the vast stores of data they hold. AI is also becoming part of the creative toolkit, with more artists and performers now ‘collaborating’ with AIs.
- However, exploiting these technologies often means entering into new partnerships, particularly with technology companies bringing specialist knowledge and tools. Arts and cultural organisations will need to understand how these relationships can be structured to serve their needs over the long term, and maximise the wider public value they create. All organisations stand to benefit from sector-wide learning on ‘what works’ from such partnerships and ongoing experimentation.” [pp8-9]

In terms of “Charting a course to 2030”, the report suggests that cultural organisations build their capacity in the following key areas:

- Greater experimentation
- “Leveraging data: “[...] More widespread data capabilities will help cultural institutions to optimise business processes, better understand their existing audience, reach new audiences and unlock the value of their cultural assets.” [p9]
- Shaping and sustaining partnerships: “Over the coming decade, arts and cultural organisations will be looking to grow partnerships which allow them to reach new audiences, access specialist skills, tap into new sources of revenue and experiment with technology. Partnerships that allow for more efficient operations through shared services, facilities and procurement are also likely to become more important.

The emphasis on local partnerships is set to become even more pronounced in funding and policy, building on a longer-term trend towards place-based strategies in both arts and cultural policy and the wider creative industries.” [p9]

- Reaching wider audiences.

The summary report also includes a series of “Provocations”:

“We asked a number of our expert interviewees to respond to the horizon scan report, and pose some pressing questions which they believe arts and cultural organisations will need to engage with over the coming decade.” [Summary report, p18]

Given the short timescale for producing this research and the fact that it “primarily focused on domain areas in which Nesta has previously conducted

research or run grant programmes” [p6], nevertheless this is an important report, and its findings include some major issues (eg the lack of social mobility; the unequal engagement with arts and culture; the impact of education policy on funding for creative subjects). Together with the online ‘conversation’ which ACE has been holding, this should give a good steer for some of the discussions about ACE’s future strategic direction.

However, apart from a Digital Curator from the British Library, a Digital Director from the National Gallery, and the Founder of Museum in a Box, none of the interviewees appears to be from museums or public libraries, and, again, our sector fares poorly.

There are passing references to museums and libraries, especially in relation to skills and to attendance/visits, but the only major inclusion of libraries is in relation to:

“[...] SPINE (Shared Partnership in the East) where the Cambridgeshire County Council’s library service, Suffolk Libraries IPS, Suffolk County Council and Norfolk County Council library service share the IT for the libraries’ management system, which has in turn led to wider collaboration.” [p36]

This is disappointing – it would have been a great opportunity to include museums and libraries within this horizon-scan. John Vincent was invited to take part in a sector ‘conversation’ with ACE on 19 April about their future strategy, and participants took the opportunity to comment on this lack of representation of libraries’ voices in this report.

Nevertheless, this is clearly going to form a major part of the planning for ACE’s future direction, so well worth reading to get a clearer grip on possible priorities.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ACE = Arts Council England
CLPE = Centre for Literacy in Primary Education
CMI = Chartered Management Institute
MA = Museums Association
NT = National Trust
RCMG = Research Centre for Museums and Galleries

This Newsletter was compiled by John Vincent, and all items are written by him, unless otherwise stated. Please send any comments or items for the next issue to:

John Vincent
Wisteria Cottage
Nadderwater
Exeter EX4 2JQ

Tel/fax: 01392 256045
E-mail: john@nadder.org.uk

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