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Participatory Arts and Political Engagement

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Executive Summary (max 300 words)

'We need citizens who take an active role in the community and political discourse; citizens who are difficult, demanding and idealistic.' (Knell and Taylor, 2011: 37) Instead we have a steady decline in civic engagement and political participation in Britain, and have done for many years. (Hall 2002; Hay 2007; Judt 2010; Pharr and Putnam 2000). Worryingly, in recent years there has been increasing evidence to show that this trend is actually speeding up and that disengagement and distrust of formal politics is particularly prevalent amongst young people. A recent IPPR report (2013) showed 'just 44% of 18-24 year olds voted in the 2010 general election, compared with 76% of over 65s.'

Research has been done which suggests the arts could help to (re)engage young people into politics: eg. Matarasso 1997, Catteral et al. 2012, Lawy et al 2010, Bowler et al 2003. Much of this research takes a broad view of the arts and/or a broad view of civic engagement. In our research we wished to look more specifically into *if* and *how* participatory arts contributes to a propensity to political engagement on three levels: reconnection with the formal political level, reconnection through informal forms of political engagement and then personal reconnection in terms of knowledge and confidence. These levels are not entirely distinct and many interactions exist between them.

Our research coupled empirical and desk research to explore the relationship between participatory arts and political engagement. Although undertaken within the confines of a relatively small Development Project, both empirical and desk research showed a positive correlation, particularly in relation to informal forms of participation and personal political engagement. Further research is required to test the validity and limits of these findings with a larger data set but the initial findings – especially in the context of the rise of 'disaffected democrats' – are hugely encouraging.

Researchers and Project Partners

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Alongside her academic work, Malaika is Artistic Director of The Bare Project theatre company, which specializes in immersive theatre and new writing.

Ignite Imaginations, formerly *Art in the Park*, is a leading creative arts provider currently celebrating its 10th year of delivery high quality visual arts and creative writing to over 5,000 people annually, where there is little opportunity to engage. They aim to create a bespoke, long lasting and inspiring experience; working in partnership with the community they increase confidence and skill, reduce isolation, promote usage of local spaces and increase pride and ownership over public space.

Key words

Political participation; participatory arts; everyday politics; political literacy; civic engagement; co-production

Appendix 1: Images of artwork from Our Corner

Appendix 2: Delegates list and images from Breathing New Life Into Politics

The Art of Politics and Art for Politics

1. Overview and Introduction

'Democracy is perhaps the most promiscuous word in the world of public affairs' Bernard Crick suggested in his *Defence of Politics* (1962) 'She is everybody's mistress and yet somehow retains her magic even when a lover sees that her favors are being, in his light, illicitly shared by many another… Indeed, even amid our pain at being denied her exclusive fidelity, we are proud of her adaptability to all sorts of circumstances, to all sorts of company.' Fifty years later it is possible to question whether democracy 'retains her magic' and to suggest that the concept's malleability – its 'adaptability to all sorts of circumstances' – may have been exhausted. Indeed, if the twentieth century witnessed 'the triumph of democracy' then the twenty-first century appears wedded to 'the failure of democracy' as citizens around the world (setting recent developments in North Africa and the Middle East aside for the moment) appear to have become distrustful of politicians, skeptical about democratic institutions, and disillusioned about the capacity of democratic politics to resolve pressing social concerns. Even the most cursory glance along the spines of the books on the library shelves reveal a set of post-millennium titles that hardly engender confidence that all is well (*'Disaffected Democracies', 'Democratic Challenges', 'Democratic Choices', 'Political Disaffection in Contemporary Democracies', 'Hatred of Democracy', 'Why We Hate Politics', 'Democratic Deficit', 'Vanishing Voters', 'Democracy in Retreat', 'Uncontrollable Societies and Disaffected Individuals, etc.*).

If a significant 'gap' has emerged between the governed and those that govern in large parts of the developed world then the aim of this research is to assess the utility and potential of participatory arts to close that gap. The relationship between arts and culture, on the one hand, and active citizenship and civic/political dialogue, on the other, have been explored in many studies but *without ever* demonstrating a clear and direct causal impact that might underpin broader claims about the cultural value of the arts in a political context.[1] As the Arts Council's *The Wider Benefits of Art and Culture to Society* report of March 2014 acknowledged despite a general acceptance of the humanising, educational and creative role of the arts significant 'evidence gaps' exist in relation to demonstrating the social value of the arts across a range of dimensions (economic, political, cultural, etc.). Demonstrating the social value or 'impact' of the arts is clearly difficult due to the inherently more qualitative and less tangible creative or inspirational outputs and outcomes of initiatives.

This project is therefore focused on the nexus or interface between two quite different and yet at the same time curiously inter-related debates that are captured in the contrast between '*the art of politics'* and '*art for politics'*. The former relates to the debate about 'how we do' politics in terms of the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which we cultivate political literacy, mediate competing demands and nurture engaged citizenship. We will be exploring the rising disengagement with 'big 'P'' politics

[1] Dewey 1980; Broadwood 2012; Matarasso 1997; Cunningham 2013; Hawk 2001; Kasser 2013; Kester 2011; Taylor and Knell 2011; Belfiore 2009, 2013

and the 'disaffected democrat', as well as the concept of 'everyday politics' and what it offers this debate.

'*Art for politics'*, focuses on the capacity of participatory arts to contribute new tools or opportunities for cultivating political literacy and nurturing engaged citizenship. *'Art for politics'* can be widely perceived to include a range of approaches to the relationship between art and politics. It is important to note that art as a politicised medium of expression (i.e. art *as* politics), from music to graffiti and from monumentalism to creative writing goes back a long way. Both are as old as our capacity for reason and in many ways they epitomize it. However, *'art for politics'* in this research becomes a useful phrase for a far narrower focus on:

> (1) what participatory art can contribute in terms of re-engagement into politics and
>
> (2) how this contribution can be demonstrated in a way that reveals the social value of the arts.

It is also important to note that the relationship has not always been positive. Belfiore and Bennet (2007) outline a number of ways in which art has been used as a tool for oppression, partisan politics or to propagate certain ideologies, notably the role of art and propaganda in the rise of the Nazi party. Furthermore, it is important to note the debate surrounding the cultural value debate regarding the dangers of instrumentalising the arts and culture (Bishop, 2012). To articulate the value of culture solely in terms of its societial or economic benefits can undermine and disregard the instrinsic qualities of the arts and culture. It is important to remember the importance of artistic quality and the importance of the immeasurable effects of artistic practice when setting out to articulate their societal value[2]. Therefore, in this project, within exploring the potentials of '*art for politics',* our research does not claim to state the value of arts and culture in relation to politics, but rather more specifically seeks to articulate the potential interplay between participatory arts and political engagement and how this may offer one element to the complex concept of cultural value.

The research 'gap' in the existing knowledge base regarding the relationship between art and politics, which this project seeks to fill, is therefore an evidence-based account of the 'political/civic value' of participatory arts in terms of reconnecting 'disaffected democrats' into the traditional democratic process, or provide a different medium for political participation and democratic engagement (see Box 1). Participatory arts involves a necessarily a 'bottom up' and democratic approach to the creation of art and invites participation in the creation of the message, rather than imposing and delivering an elite message to a 'passive' audience. Its origins lie within the community development movement of the 1960s and it is this nature and history of participatory arts which we believe may foster democratic or political engagement. In this project participatory arts are not concerned with promoting any specific political party, politician or policy but with promoting that form of political literacy and engaged citizenship that

[2] For more on the instrumentalisation/intrinsic debate see Bishop 2012, Belfiore 2012 and Taylor and Knell 2011.

Box 1. Core and Secondary Research Questions

Core
Can participatory arts nurture political literacy and political engagement?

Secondary
** Can arts practice provide a medium for civic expression and democratic involvement?*
** How can the arts, rather than other potential mediums, widen civic and political participation?*
** How can this relationship be assessed and demonstrated?*
** What is the theoretical process connecting participation in the arts to civic and/or political participation?*

Bernard Crick sought to promote in his seminal *Defence of Politics* (1962). That is to say, the potential effects of participatory arts in fostering political understanding or interest.

Answering the questions in Box 1 requires not only a broader definition of how we, as a society, 'do' politics but also a broader conception of 'the political' in the sense of one that captures the reality of 'everyday politics' for individuals and communities as a opposed to the possibly distant and rarefied world of traditional politics, irrespective of whether those arenas are in London, Washington, Canberra or New Delhi. Political engagement exists on a number of levels:

(1) connection with the formal political level,

(2) connection through less formal/traditional forms of political engagement and

(3) personal connection in terms of knowledge, confidence, belief, aspiration, empathy, etc.

These levels are not entirely distinct and many interactions exist between them. By offering a multileveled understanding of political engagement allows us to broaden our understanding. Limiting or defining what can be considered valid political engagement can be a political statement in itself. To only focus on a limited or 'mainstream' notion of political engagement may actually fail to appreciate the lived experience[3] of citizens (Bang, 2009). Therefore, a multileveled understanding of political engagement allows us to accept the multiplicity of the modes in which individuals engage with politics, whilst not losing the conceptual clarity which give the term political engagement any meaning at all.

Table 1: Multileveled understanding of political engagement

Level	Description

[3] The 'lived experience' in political analysis describes the first-hand accounts and self-reported impressions of living as a specific group.

Formal political level	This may be represented through actions such as voting, attending public meetings and engaging with political institutions in recognised political forums.
Informal engagement level	Political actions intended towards social change, yet which take place outside traditional political channels. This is a more 'everyday maker' (Bang 2009) approach to politics; often focussed on a single issue. This engagement may take place solitarily or collectively.
Personal connection and confidence	This level is based around the idea of 'political literacy': not only in terms of knowledge of *how* to engage, but the confidence and interest to engage with politics. It relates to one's personal values that underpin the degree to which you have the capacity or willingness to engage in any form of political activity, either traditional or less traditional.

Clarity on the multileveled nature of political engagement will allow us to go beyond the current research in order to explore the nexus between the '*art of politics'* and '*art for politics'* with precision and may reveal new approaches and relational nuances.

The first section examines the evidence for political disaffection. The aim is not to provide an exhaustive account of this field of research but simply to highlight key trends and reference points in the literature. Indeed, one of the core arguments of this section relates to the emergence of 'divided democracies', notably amongst the young and the poor, whereby specific sections of the public increasingly feel that '*the art of politics'* as it is currently conceived and enacted within advanced liberal democracies offers little to them in terms of both 'demand-side' and 'supply-side' variables (i.e. there are few opportunities to participate in meaningful ways and as a result what politics delivers in terms of services and benefits is eroding). The result is a 'spiral of cynicism' that urgently needs to be reversed through the design of new and creative forms of engagement. (Norris, 2011)

The second section reviews the existing evidence base in terms of the capacity of participatory arts to encourage political inclusion and voice. It finds that whilst research has been conducted on the relationship between arts and politics, there is a limited

research base on the specifics of this relationship with reference to the potential role of participatory arts within political engagement.

We will then explore the theoretical connection between participatory arts and political participation using a theoretical framework borrowed from Hendrik Bang, which reviews and rethinks the ways in which citizens relate to political institutions and political actions. This connection will be empirically examined in strands two and three of this research project.

2.1 Context and background: The Art of Politics

'We need citizens who take an active role in the community and political discourse; citizens who are difficult, demanding and idealistic.' (Knell and Taylor, 2011: 37) Instead we have a steady decline in civic engagement and political participation in Britain, and have done for many years. (Hall 2002; Judt 2010; Pharr and Putnam 2000). Worryingly, in recent years there has been increasing evidence to show that this trend is actually gaining speed and that disengagement and distrust of formal politics is particularly prevalent amongst young people (Henn et al. 2005; Chicksand and Carrigan, 2006). Arguably, in any era, young people are less likely than their elders to engage with formal political institutions and this is just part of a generational trend. However, young people today are also less likely than earlier generations of youth to get engaged in these ways (Flanagan, 2008: 293), which ought to give us cause for concern.

A recent IPPR report (2013) showed 'just 44% of 18-24 year olds voted in the 2010 general election, compared with 76% of over 65s.' Social class is another big indicator according to same report and in 2010 'individuals in the highest income group were 43% more likely to vote than those from the lowest.' Whilst this discrepancy between the old and young, rich and poor, is not unique to the UK, the UK's unequal voting demographics are some of the widest in Europe.

This disengaged generation make up the civic society of tomorrow, and 'democratic polities draw legitimacy from political participation' (Hay, 2007). Therefore, this increased disengagement could undermine our democratic structures as a whole. Furthermore, when demographics like 'young people' show less propensity for voting political institutions are insentivised to give these demographics less attention and have been shown to develop policies to suit the needs of those more likely to vote (IPPR 2013). Indeed, the recent cuts have disproportionately affected the poor and the young and this tilt towards older and wealthier voters may serve to disengage young people even further, creating a cycle of disengagement.

Richard Kimberly (2002) echoes this concern in his outline of potential causes for youth disengagement. He outlines the argument that the political system itself fails to provide sufficient encouragement for young people. As research has consistently shown young people to be less likely to vote, Kimberly argues that political parties will naturally put less effort into campaigning for age group. These trends mean that politicians tend to address themselves to the older and richer sections of society – the people, in other words, that are most likely to vote. This, in turn, reinforces the views of the young and the poor that

politicians don't care about them. And that, naturally, leads to even greater political estrangement.

Another popular explanation is that young people have a far more complex relationship to politics than simple indifference. 'Young people are disenchanted with political structures that are unresponsive to their needs and interests, but that they remain interested in social and political issues and continue to see recognition from the political system.' (Harris et al. 2010) The low engagement levels of young people is a consequence of the gap between formal politics and its official language and young people's 'everyday' concerns. Arguably, young people are still very politically engaged, but towards single-issue campaigns rather than party politics (Henn et al. 2005). For example, the recent Long Live the South Bank campaign was begun and sustained by a group of young people. (Horwood, 2014) Feel there is a lack of relevance in traditional political sphere and lack the political understanding to engage with this world.

A similar thesis is developed by Pippa Norris (2002), who argues that the current disengagement is a result of increasingly 'critical citizens'. The younger generation is increasingly harder to please than their parents or grandparents as they are more educated and better politically informed due to increased access to information and news. Norris argues that due to this shift, formal political participation (i.e. voting and party membership) no longer appeals in the same way. However, rather than disengage, young people are choosing more informal methods for political expression. (Norris, 2002)

These claims are supported by research which directly engages with young people and various stakeholders in youth participation from government and community groups (Vromen and Collin, 2010). The research shows that many youth oriented initiatives which aim to politically engage young people remain too formal and traditional. Furthermore, many of the interactions that young people are invited to are seen by participants as 'token', about 'control rather than empowerment' (*Ibid*.).

Hendrik Bang's thesis on 'everyday makers' and 'expert citizens' also echoes this argument: these political identities represent 'a new form of political engagement, which attempts to combine individuality and commonality in new relations of self- and co-governance.' (Bang and Sorensen, 1999) 'Everyday makers' political engagement is aimed at problem solving in everyday life, rather than traditional political institutions. 'Expert citizens' have a more specialised understanding of formal political processes and attempt to affect change through more traditional channels. His theory rejects the popular Putnam thesis on declining social capital, and instead focusses on 'political capital': the building of networks and reflexive political communities that respond to issues, rather than structures. Vromen and Collin (2010) have developed Bang's thesis to relate directly to youth participation in Australia. In their research they found both 'everyday makers' and 'expert citizens' amongst their young participants. They found that political outreach programmes rarely reached beyond youth 'expert citizens', and that these programmes were rarely meaningful. (This also apparent in UK research: Marsh 2008) They conclude that to reach a wider range of young people and 'everyday makers' governments and

authorities need to respond to how young people already participate, rather than prescribing how they 'should' participate.

This relates to our multi-levelled approach to politics outlined in Table 1 above. 'Expert citizens' can be said to understand and engage on formal political level. 'Everyday makers' engage on an informal level and within the more personal level: they often engage with self- and co-governance, and have political confidence and literacy, even if they do not identify themselves as 'political'. In relation to this research we explore the potential role of participatory arts in supporting young people in each of these levels of participation.

Co-production

It is important to address one increasingly influential theory within this debate. Many believe that in certain circumstances the process of co-production may help to narrow the gap between the government and the governed. Increasingly, local authorities and governmental organisations are waking up the need for meaningful citizen input in social policy: research has shown that this not only makes better policy, but can also politically (re)engage those who take part. (Boyle and Harris, 2009, Baiocchi 2010, Leadbeater 2004, Needham 2008) "*With* should be the guiding principle of politics in liberal communities: politicians *working with* people to find solutions to shared problems." (Leadbeater, 2010: 6) However, it also clear that more research needs to be done in this area, as methods of evaluation have varied greatly between disciplines.

The concept of co-production is particularly significant within this project as participatory arts itself requires a co-productive approach. Co-production within policy-making, academia or decision making within the public sector requires equal weight and consideration to both service providers and users, academics and subjects. This is reflected in the structure of participatory art: '[Participatory art] involves people on a collective basis, encourages the use of a collective statement but does not neglect individual development or the need for individual expression.' (Kelly 1984: 2) This is an interesting overlap, as co-production is often put forward as a method by which to foster increased and more meaningful political engagement. Therefore, if participatory art also embodies some of these key democratic features, there is potential for participatory arts to have similar political outcomes.

2.2 Context and Background: Art *for* Politics

Research has been done which suggests the arts *could* help to (re)engage young people into politics. An overview of the relevant research is provided in Table 2. Much of this research takes a broad view of the arts. In our research we wish to look more specifically into *if* and *how* participatory arts contributes to a propensity to political engagement on three levels: reconnection with the formal political level, reconnection through less formal/traditional forms of political engagement and then personal reconnection in terms of knowledge, confidence, belief, aspiration, empathy, etc. These levels are not entirely distinct and many interactions exist between them.

Table 2: Key literature on arts and political engagement

Author/Date	Title	Findings
Francois Matarasso, 1997	*Use or Ornament: The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts*	This is an extensive study with a great number of findings. Relevant to our research, Matarasso finds that: *"62% of adults said that the opportunity to express their ideas through an arts project was important to them."* *"63% said they had become keen to help in local projects."* *"80% of respondents felt more confident as a result of their involvement in the arts."*
Bowler et al. 2003	*Art for Democracy's Sake? Group Membership and Political Engagement in Europe*	Membership in arts organisations/clubs had strong correlation with political participation: *"charities and arts groups have much stronger associations with political engagement than church or sports groups."* Evidence to suggest that the process of creating art can be especially important in creating the social cohesion and confidence needed for political engagement. Also: specific to arts: same engagement cannot be replicated by sports groups. Process of working with, rather than competitive.
Lawy et al. 2010	*The art of democracy': young people's democratic learning in gallery contexts*	*"*"Although there was a strong focus on providing opportunities for democratic action and learning within the projects, this was always and necessarily balanced against aesthetic and creative concerns"* Artist led work outside school in which young people have meaningful say in decision-making process improves young people's confidence, democratic understanding and responsibility.
Catterall et al. 2012	*The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from*	*"Teenagers and young adults of low socioeconomic status (SES) who have a history of in-depth arts involvement show better academic*

	Four Longitudinal Studies	*outcomes than do low-SES youth who have less arts involvement."* And even more significantly for our research: "*Young adults who had intensive arts experiences…have comparatively high levels of volunteering, voting and engagement with local or school politics. In many cases this difference appears in both high and low SES groups."*
Nef 2013	*Diversity and Integration: How young people at the Roundhouse shape each other's experience*	Engagement with arts programmes at the Roundhouse led to increased confidence and self-belief. Eg. *"Young people felt more strongly that they could influence a group of people to get things done."*

Significantly, the Arts Council England recently published a report (2014) which called for further research into the potential societal benefits of the arts as they claim the current research is either too old or lacks validity due to weak research methods. However, the suggestion is there, and the current research shows that there is potential for the arts and culture to provide a much needed alternative to the failing drives for (re)engaging young people into politics. Despite the Arts Council's claims, the studies above each show rigorous research from a variety of perspectives and disciplines, and themselves build upon a rich history of arts and community or political engagement. However, none analyse specifically or deeply into the potential of participatory arts to engage youth in various forms of political participation. This is a much needed and valuable addition considering current divisions and disengagement with politics.

The link between politics and participatory art is strong. For example, participatory art has been associated a variety of protest and political movements: the Occupy Movement, Burning Man Festival or the work of Suzanne Lacy (Flinders and Cunningham, *forthcoming*). This relation is perhaps due to the essentially democratic and egalitarian structures of participatory art, which can reinforce the aims or political motivations of the movements.

Francois Matarasso (2013) argues that the term 'participatory art' is in fact a kind of replacement term for 'community arts', which although still occasionally used, has widely fallen out of usage amongst practitioners. In regard to this history, participatory art is incredibly wrapped up in grassroots community activism since the 1960s. "Although connected with older traditions of cultural emancipation, community art's immediate roots lie in the artistic, social and political experimentation of the 1960s." (Ibid.: 217) and was inextricably linked with the broader community development movement. The movement was defined by the United Nations as:

"…a movement to promote better living for the whole community with active participation and if possible on the initiative of the community[4]." (as quoted by Ibid.: 218)

Part of the dismissal of 'community arts' is tied up with neo-liberalism and the wish to disassociate with the term 'community', which was used by Thatcher government in widely unpopular social policy decisions such as the 'Community Charge' (also known as the Poll Tax). The dismissal of the term can also be associated with its overtly instrumentalist aims. It has often been associated (both justly and unjustly) with patronising initiatives aimed at 'social minorities' or 'the socially disadvantaged' with an entire lack of focus on artistic excellence. (Matarasso, 2013)

Although participatory art may have its origins within the concept of community arts, participatory art differs in that it has an increased focus on the two-way relationship between participant and practitioner; echoing the structure of co-production. The examination and explanation of this relationship comes up in much of the literature on participatory arts (Pahl and Pool, 2013, Matarasso, 2013, Kester, 2004, 2011).

3. Theory and Framework

How may, in theory, participatory arts nuture political literacy and political engagement? In this section we outline our theorectical approach to this question before moving on to outline and disseminate the results gained from empirical research of the same question. There are at least two ways in which participatory arts may contribute to the encouragement of political participation:

a) By encouraging participation in a more 'traditionally' understood idea of political activity and/or political confidence. This has been seen to occur in studies such as Catterall *et al*., or Bowler *et al.* both of which show a correlation between arts activity and political engagement. Explaining this correlation is more complex, but is touched upon in studies such as Lawy *et al.* which suggests arts activity of a certain nature can increase political literacy and ability for democratic decision-making.

b) By creating a new medium and space for political expression through the arts themselves. Wittgenstein's limitations of language framework can be borrowed here to suggest that participatory arts can liberate us from limits of formal political engagement. Art can 'show' rather than 'say': it can break down the barriers created by formal political language and express political sentiment directly through art. Wittgenstein may roll over in his grave, but may we suggest that 'Whereof one cannot speak, one must… sing, or perform, or paint.'[5] This is apparent in participatory art projects such as Youth Voice for Change in West

[4] The community development movement is also linked with the development of the concept of 'co-production' within urban development (Hamdi, 2004).

[5] This is a theory which is also used by music theorists: see Stige 2003

Sacramento. It is a more directly a political act: art itself becomes political expression, rather than a means to increased political activity.

In this research we will be focussing on (a), although (b) does require special mention as it frequently comes up in the literature and we would wish to pay it more attention in further research. Our focus is due to the nature of the Our Corner project we will be using for the case study: it is a project geared towards fostering civic skills and political interest through creative and co-productive processes rather than itself providing a meaningful platform for political expression.

Multi-levelled Engagement Framework:

In order to best explore the correlation between participatory arts and political engagement we will use a multi-levelled analysis of political engagement (see Table 1). Here we develop this approach by exploring the suggestions within the literature of the role of participatory arts according to each level of political engagement.

1. *Formal Political Engagement*

The contribution of participation in the arts to formal political engagement has been studied reliably a small number of times. However, an important study in regard to this is Catteral et al.'s longitudinal study (2012) on the effects of arts engagement on 'at risk' young people. Their results show that in the 2004 USA Election £1% of young people with low socio economic status (SES) and low artistic engagement (ArtsE) voted, compared with 45% of young people from the same socio economic status but high artistic engagement. Their results also show these young people to participate in a political campaign (2.8% of the low SES/low ArtsE, compared with 4.1% of low SES/high ArtsE).

Bowler et al.'s research offers similar results, portraying responses which show 'that charity and arts groups have much stronger association with political engagement.' (2003:1124) Bowler et al. seem to have a loose definition of political engagement: whilst it evidently contains formal political acts, they also make mention of 'learning democratic norms', a 'sense of efficacy and trust' or 'public-spiritedness'. These interpretations of political engagement may fit better into the other two levels outlined in Table 1 (above).

2. *Informal Political Engagement*

The relationship between participatory arts and alternative modes of political engagement is an interesting one. On the one hand you have instances in which participatory arts projects themselves have become mediums of political expression. This is apparent in numerous examples such as Burning Man festival[6] (itself an artistic and entirely participatory installation on an egalitarian, post-economic model for society), legislative theatre (Baiocchi 2006), or the work of Suzanne Lacy or Allan Kaprow. As explored above, participatory arts has a rich and political history and there are many

[6] For more information visit: http://participedia.net/cases/burning-man-festival-art-participation-and-collective-organization

instances in which art itself has become a medium of political engagement. This is an entirely alternate way in which participatory arts may contribute to the encouragement of political participation and is touched upon briefly above in reference to Wittgenstein.

On the other hand you have studies like Matarasso's (1997) which show engagement with the arts can make us more likely and inclined to participate with non-artistic modes of engagement such as local projects (including local campaigns or protest groups). Furthermore, the encouragement of political interest (as outlined in Bowler et al.'s study) and democratic literacy (as shown by Lawy et al.'s study) can encourage informal political engagement. 'Everyday makers' represent a new form of political engagement: rather than focus on traditional political institutions, the focus is more issues based. 'Political action as political action is needed.' (Bang 1999)

3. *Political literacy, confidence and personal political values*

There have been numerous studies which show that arts engagement increases participant confidence. Significantly, Matarasso's study (1997) shows that '80% of respondents felt more confident as a result of their involvement in the arts.' nef's report also shows increased confidence in participants as a result of the Roundhouse arts programmes. This is a well reported and recognised externality of engagement with arts projects. This is also an important personal attribute in terms of political engagement: one needs confidence in order to believe one can affect change. Participatory arts projects like the one described in Lawy *et al*.'s study gave weight and value to the decisions made by the young people involved, which in turn builds politics confidence by reinforcing the idea that their views and knowledge are important.

A less studied, but equally important capacity is that of kindness and empathy. People United (2012) argue that there are a number of factors specific to the arts which can contribute to more socially aware behaviour in participants. For example, "the arts can engage people's emotions directly and powerfully and in doing so can spark feelings, such as empathy, that are key for influencing kindness." (*Ibid.:* 14) The process of creating art often quite a personal experience: sharing this process and your work with others demands building a capacity for trust and empathy.

Engagement with the arts is also valuable in terms of encouraging one's imaginative capacity. As Matthew Taylor (2011) has stated:

'a healthy society requires citizens to have strong critical faculties and a capacity for empathic imagination…and the arts does, can and could play in helping us imagine and create more fulfilling lives in a better society.'

Various studies have demonstrated the links between the arts and the development of an imaginative capacity. For example, Matarasso's (1997) interview transcripts shows quotes such as: *'It's encouraged me to use my imagination; it makes me feel I can use my own ideas.'* It is not controversial to claim that imagination is needed for artistic creation, and it is clear that imagination is needed for political engagement as well: we cannot affect or create change without imagining how things should and could be different.

Therefore, from past studies and theorectical research it is clear that a connection between participatory arts and increased political literacy and engagement has been suggested on each level of our multileveled approach to political engagement.

4. Results

In many ways our empiricial data supports our theories drawn from our desk research. However, some findings subverted our expectations and led us to new ways of seeing the relationship between participatory arts and political engagement. Our empirical data took two strands, Strand 1 was the Our Corner project itself and Strand 2 was a learning workshop held at the Palace of Westminster to enable various view points on the topics explored in this project.

1. Our Corner

Ignite Imaginations [formally 'Art in the Park'], our project partners, led a series of workshops with three very different groups of young people around Sheffield. Each group yielded divergent results, although there was certainly overlap in comments and attitudes toward politics within interview responses. We collected primarily qualitative data within this study, through a variety of means including semi-structured interviews, practicioner's diaries and a learning workshop held at the Palace of Westminster. These and the other methods used are explained in greater detail in the methodolgy section below.

Group Profiles

Group A was made up from a LGBT club which took place in the centre of Sheffield and attracted young people from across the city. There were 6 participants in this group. The workshops took place over three days, with five hour workshops each day. This group worked with a photographer/visual artist. The participants created a number of images, however, mainly spent their time working together on a collage piece which artistically represented their past, present and future. This group demonstrated a high level of interest in politics from the beginning and 100% had signed a petition and taken part in a public demonstration or protest within the last two years. Most of these demonstrations and petitions were related to LGBT issues.

Group B was based in a youth club in Shiregreen which met every Wednesday afternoon. The workshops took place over a two month period of two hour sessions running alongside the standard youth club provisions.The ward of Shiregreen has some of the lowest voter turnouts and is amongst the highest rates of deprivation in the city, falling with the 20% most deprived areas in the UK. (Dorling *et al.*, 2009). The numbers of this group fluctuated dramatically. Overall about 20 different young people took part, however, none of the young people attended regularly enough to gague if political views had changed as a result of the workshops. The participants worked with a visual artist to create a number of different pieces mostly based around the concept of 'sense of place'. Collecting interviews and observations of this group proved very difficult as attendance was sporadic. Furthermore, many members of the group were unwilling to be interviewed.

Group C was comprised of art and/or politics AS level students at Tapton Secondary School. There were eight participants in this group. These workshops took place over 3 days, with five hour workshops each day. The school has been ranked 'Outstanding' by Ofsted and is located in the Broomhill ward, which is one of the most affluent wards not only in Sheffield, but in the whole of the UK (Dorling *et al.* 2009). The participants worked with a installation artist/ set designer to create a tipi comprised of maps and models which demonstrated inequalities of income, education and power within Sheffield and the UK as a whole.

General Insights

- The majority of participants had moderate to high levels of political interest and understanding before the workshops began. 87% of all participants interviewed had signed a petition in the past two years and 84% stated it was likely or very likely that they would be voting in the next elections they would be eligble for. Some claimed to have only 'Some Interest' in politics, yet then showed a developed understanding and interest in a specific issue. Eg. a participant in Group B stated he '*had a bit of interest in politics'* but went on to speak passionately about the campaign against the war in Iraq and the closures of local youth centres due to recent austerity measures.
- General levels of formal political interest did not change much, however, there was increased interest in specific issues mentioned by participants or artists during workshop. Eg. *'It's made me much more aware of the inequality facing Sheffield…'*
- Majoritatively in Groups A and C there was some sense that the workshops had increased participant's understanding or confidence in how to access politics. Generally, this was in terms of protest or even the use of art as a political means, rather than an increased understanding of formal political processes. Eg. *'The whole thing about the art, like bringing things to light, making people aware of them [issues]…'* and *'Using the skills I have to affect things… like rather than petitions and stuff, do a project like this'*
- Increased understanding or interest in politics was often sparked by comments and views of fellow participants. The artistic endevours served as a subject matter for political conversations. Eg. *'Politics in general is not something that we normally talk about so [doing the collage] it has helped bring it up.'* The artist working with Group C commented that she '*felt there was a real exchange of ideas, thoughts, and views during the workshops.'* However, some participants also felt that the focus had primarily been on the art itself and that political topics had taken a back seat: *'The discussions have been around the art rather than what the art is based on.'*
- Poor political education in schools was also a common complaint throughout all the workshops. We did not ask questions related to their previous political education, however, this topic was brought up by participants on a number of occasions. Eg. *'You're not really taught about it in schools.'* And *'Don't get taught politics in school much… like citizenship and stuff, but not about actual politics. So we don't know much about the political parties…'* Within Group A, this topic

became a subject of their art and one participant created an image framed around the importance of political education in schools.

- Interesting attitudes towards the importance of voting came up across all groups. Numerous particpants felt it was their duty to vote due to the historical struggle for the vote or the struggle for democracy elsewhere in the world. Eg. *'There are so many people in so many countries who are fighting for that right, but we've got it as a given and I think if we don't use it, its wrong because we've got this opportunity to at least make a bit of difference.'* Or *'I think for me also there's the whole thing about people dying to get the vote, women dying, like the suffragettes, so I feel like I should vote to honour that.'* Another view towards voting which came up frequently, was that if you chose not to vote, you cannot complain about anything the government did, as when you had a chance to voice your opinion, you did not. Eg. *'As long as you're voting you're working to make that difference. Like if you don't vote, its kind of like saying that you're prepared for nothing to change and if you want to make a positive difference then you should vote, cause that's what's gonna make where we live a better place.'* Or *'If you don't vote, then you just can't complain about anything…it's like, 'well, you didn't try to change it.''*

Overall, the Our Corner workshops certainly offers strong evidence for the claim that participatory arts can nuture political literacy and political engagement. There was an unexpectedly high proportion of participants who had a moderate to high level of political interest before the workshops began. However, this interest was often furthered, due to the opportunity and encouragement to discuss their political views and listen to the views of others. Participants often spoke about a new understanding of how to get involved in politics. Particularly Group C and A found the idea of art in itself as a form of political action a very interesting a engagement topic: *"I know about what art I like, and I know about politics that affects our world. I just didn't make the links between the two. I think I have a lot more to explore."*

In terms of our multi-levelled approach to political engagement, the results show the most activity within informal engagement and personal connections and confidence, as shown in the table below.

Table 3: Observed changes in attitudes in regard to a multi-leveled understanding of political engagement

Level	**Results**
Formal political	84% likely or very likely to vote when eligble/in the next election. Some participants showed an increased interest or understanding of governmental politics, voting and party policy. A number of participants from groups A and C joined us at the Palace of Westminister for the learning workshop. These participants also had the opportunity to sit in on both Chambers. The open and public

	nature of this formal institution came as a surprise to both the project coordinators and young people. Eg. *'I've learnt more about politics and what each person…what political parties do.'* *'I think now I'd go and look at the political parties and give a good hard look at the policies.'* A few participants said they were now more likely to vote, however, most participants were likely to vote from before the workshops: Eg. **'***I found out that I can help out by actually voting and trying to get what I want across.'*
Informal engagement	Many participants had engaged in informal political engagement in the past two years 87% had signed a petition, 55% had taken part in a public demonstration or protest. Therefore, the propensity for this kind of activity was high from the beginning. As a result of the workshops, many participants began to see art itself as a potential medium of political engagement and political expression. Eg. *'I just saw ads and billboards as ways of convincing people, I'd never thought of the image or photo as the powerful thing that's convincing people.'* *'Photography can be a good way on conveying things… like politics or emotions or feelings.'* *'Different art has expressed different viewpoints, so I've seen that people have very different viewpoints to my own'* Protest and specific political issues were very much at the heart of discussions eg. inequality in Sheffield. This may have been a result of artists focussing the artwork around issues, or inviting participants to chose topics to address within the artworks produced. Eg*. 'I have a better understanding of what the problems are and where they are and how much of a problem they are.'* *'It's made me much more aware of the inequality facing Sheffield…'*
Personal connection and confidence	There was certainly a positive shift in participants attitudes in regard to their personal connection with politics, their understandings of how they may engage and confidence to do so. Many commented that discussion and the act of creating political artwork had made them more aware of how political issues affect them on a more personal level. Eg. *'With like immigration and that sort of things… my views have changed cause of the things the others have said. Like, how it affects me.'*

	'I don't think I thought much about Sheffield politics much… whereas I more just looked at general elections, rather than what happens in Sheffield.' A number of participants commented on how using a creative medium by which to engage made politics more engaging for them. Eg. *'I've enjoyed having discussions about our views on things and using a creative way of getting that across.'* *'It's kinda nice to turn those issues into something. Like cause we're trying to represent them on the collage, with like pictures and words and designs… it kinda makes you think about it in a different way…like rather than in the box, outside… its interesting.'* A number of participants expressed that while their practical understanding of how to get involved had not changed, their propensity to find out more and knowledge of issues they would like to take forward had increased. Eg. *'…because you realise that theres more going on in your local area… more malleable and changeable than I originally thought, maybe through things like this, I can change things.'* *'I still think it's hard [to make a difference locally] but just cause it's hard to doesn't mean you shouldn't.'*

Overall, the results showed changes in attitudes within each level of political engagement as a result of the participatory arts workshops. However, many results came up which we did not anticipate – notably the level of political interest amongst young people at the beginning of the project. Although two groups were drawn from what would have been expected to be 'disconnected' sections of the community the research quickly revealed that members of these groups were interested in politics but often did not realise that the issues they were concerned about were 'political'.

One additional dimension that merits brief comment in the context of assessments of cultural value relates to the notion of cost-benefit analyses when dealing with politically under-represented social groups. This is really a sociological dimension but it became clear very quickly that research in this field demanded the existence of pre-established high-trust relationships. The subject groups were generally fluid in terms of attendance and cautious in terms of their inter-relationships with external researchers. This made some of the initial plans to undertake 'before and after' surveys via questionnaires and interviews highly problematic and a more qualitative and sophisticated methodology became necessary. Therefore one of the dominant features of the literature review (Table 2, above) is the use of longitudinal data based around the formation of high-trust low-cost relationships with participants. Such relationships were difficult to form within the boundaries of a short Development Grant.

Furthermore, the lack of reliability or attendance in group B makes it difficult to generalise any of our findings to this group. Although some of the comments listed above came from interviews with these participants, they were primarily in relation to their political views rather than any changes within their views as a result of the workshops.

2. Breathing New Life into Politics

The learning workshop held in the Palace of Westminster, 10th July 2014 also yielded some very interesting perspectives and insight into the relationship between art and politics. The day was facilitated by Jocelyn Cunningham and entitled 'Breathing New Life into Politics: Participatory Arts'. In attendance was a mix of academics, arts practictioners and artists, participants and politicians[7]. The day was facilitated with our own research questions and the Our Corner project in mind, however, the purpose was to gain persectives on broader issues surrounding our topic from a variety of backgrounds and disciplins. The day began with group discussions and presentations from a number of participants. We then worked on tables creating artistic responses to key quotes and questions: these were then all invited to commented on each others work in written form (post-it notes) which were stuck on sculptures[8]. The insights below are gained from facilitators notes on discussions and direct quotes from the written comments.

General Insights

- Concerns were raised early in the day in regard to the potential instrumentalising effects of projects like Our Corner. There was a worry that art becomes a vechical or tool for political ends devalues the other, potentially less measurable, merits of art or its aesthetic quality.
- There was exploration into the two way nature of work of this kind. Not only does participatory arts practice have the potential to change the way people engage with politics, but this practice may also have an effect on artwork and ways of working. Eg. *'How does having different agendas affect your art in participatory arts? The interaction is two way: affects political engagement and the art practice.'*
- There were also some interesting examples of the use of art within everyday politics and more formal political examples, or expressions of the need for more creative ways to engage young people in politics. Eg. *"What people were good at was telling the story of the place."* (story of saving a canal boat community in the Docklands: politicians were brought to the place and told stories of the community in their own boats. The plans to evacuate the site were dropped.)
- Thoughts around the importance of imagination within politics and art were recurring throughout the day. Eg. *'Art allows for deep thinking and space for*

[7] For full guest list see Appendix 2

[8] For images of sculptures please see Appendix 2

reflection' 'Imagining and opening up thoughts on possibilities and what is possible' 'Imagining other worlds, not just choices'

- Discussion surrounding 'big P' and 'little p' politics and what the difference is, this also related to discussion regarding the need for grassroots projects and how participatory arts plays a role within it: which also led to discussion on what 'grassroots' actually meant. No conclusions were reached.
- There was also discussion regarding political voice and confidence and the ways in which art could support this. Those who were unable to speak the language of elites were enabled to do so through artistic means. Eg. '*Not everyone is good with words!' 'Art makes community more confident to get involved.'*

Overall, the information and insights gained from Breathing New Life into Politics has shaped the way in which we have approached disseminating our results from both the Our Corner project and our desk research. It enabled us to consider surrounding and alternative perspective and viewpoints on the value or drawbacks of participatory arts as a catalyst for democratic involvement.

5. So What?

Assessing and demonstrating the cultural value of any arts-based project is complex and multi-dimensional. It does not fit easily into simple cost-benefit approaches. And yet the findings of this Development Grant have started to substantiate a strong and positive link between participatory arts and civic/political engagement. It has therefore revealed the potential utility of 'art for politics'; that is, the use of participatory arts as a form of political expression and a medium through which sections of society can not only express themselves politically but also how they can nurture the skills of political literacy and the values of active citizenship. In the context of rising disengagement with politics, particularly amongst young people, this is an important and increasingly urgent area of research in terms of cultural value and a well balanced and equal democracy.

Research Methodology

We adopted a three-stage research design in order to explore whether participatory arts may have the potential to nuture political literacy and engagement. The first strand undertakes a critical review of the current research and literature surrounding this topic. The second is an in-depth case study of a local participatory arts project, conceived of and run by Art in the Park. The third is an evaluation and dissemination of the data-sets collected, informed by both former strands and a learning-workshop event with other AHRC researchers, relevant academics, politicians, participants and artists at the Houses of Parliament.

Full ethical approval was secured using the Research Council approved University of Sheffield Ethical Approval Process.

It was our hypothesis that engagement with participatory art projects can contribute to political participation by a) developing the civic skills/engagement of participants (eg. confidence, empathy, decision-making skills, and knowledge base) and b) providing an alternative route into political expression. In these ways we believe participatory arts projects may encourage a multileveled approach to political engagement. This hypothesis is based on the current research that argues for a positive correlation between arts activity and social capital, civic engagement and civic skills, as well as the material that argues for a strong positive correlation between civic skills/engagement and political participation.

The methodology of this project will be explained in terms of both a macro and micro approach and will be divided into two sections accordingly. The macro approach will explain the theoretical framework in which we will approach each strand of our project. The micro approach will explain our research methods in the collection of data and evaluation of each strand.

Macro Approach

The macro approach to this project is framed by a multilevel approach to political engagement. This approach is influenced by the theory of 'everyday politics' and Bang's work on 'everyday makers' and 'expert citizens' (1999, 2003, 2009). It is also influenced by recent literature arguing that falling levels of formal political participation amongst young people may actually be a result of the changing nature of political engagement, rather than outright disengagement (eg. Norris 2002).

Strand 1: Desk Research/Critical Review

In this strand we assessed the current research base in accordance with the various levels of political engagement. Past research into arts and civic engagement and research into methods to encourage political participation has been explored in terms of how it may feed into each level of political engagement. This has helped us to create a

theory and hypothesis for the social value of participatory arts in terms of encouraging political engagement.

Strand 2: Case Study of 'Our Corner', facilitated by Art in the Park

When creating the surveys and interview questions for evaluating this project we kept this theoretical framework in mind: so that it is clear to us what each question is attempting to assess. A well developed theorectical framework grounded the data collection within this strand meaning we could use diverse data collection methods and allow for fluid and informal semi-structured interviews.

Strand 3: Evaluation and Dissemination

Our theoretical framework was of particular importance in this strand of the project as we will be assessing both the 'impact' of the Our Corner project with regard to engagement on various levels, as well as exploring the 'evidence' for the potential of participatory art projects more broadly. This macro approach to our dissemination has the potential to be a very clear and transferable evaluative framework within the evaluation of participatory arts projects and their effects on political engagement for both practitioners and academics. A clear theorectical framework has allowed us to focus within each strand and stay focussed on our research questions.

Micro Approach

Strand 1: Desk Research/Critical Review

In this strand of our project we reviewed numerous past projects of a similar nature, theoretical literature surrounding our key concepts and developed the beginnings of the theory about why and how participatory arts can contribute to political (re)engagement. The reading material was collected through channels familiar to all researchers involved in this project due to each of our experience in these fields. Research material collection was also supported by arranging meetings with others with experience in participatory arts or political engagement who can suggest readings: for example, Dr Kate Pahl (who has worked extensively within participatory arts and cultural value debate), Dr Toby Lowe (a participatory arts practitioner) and Ms Naomi Alexander (a lobbyist and arts practitioner who has worked extensively within participatory budgeting and legislative theatre).

Our search has also been web-based: using the sites of relevant think tanks such as the RSA, nef, IPPR and CIVITAS to find case studies and resources. We have also used databases such as the Participedia webpage, as well as search engines such as JSTOR and Google Scholar.

We have also attended relevant conferences and talks such as the No Boundaries conference, the Warwick Commission Lectures and various talks at the University of Sheffield, Leeds Metropolitan University and the RSA.

Strand 2: Case Study of 'Our Corner', facilitated by Ignite Imaginations

"As the recent CASE review (2010a) has indicated, much of the research on the cultural sector is not of a standard useful for government decision-making." (O'Brien, 2010: 39) O'Brien argues that the case for the public funding of arts must be made according to the language and guidelines of the government as laid down in The Green Book, which advocates a cost/benefit analysis approach. This has been a contentious issue in the cultural sector as many have argued that essential value of culture by viewing it in terms of individual utility and that a CBA model could not properly articulate the social value of the cultural sector. Therefore, whilst it is imperative for the cultural sector to improve upon the validity of its research methods, using the methods laid down in The Green Book may not be the best approach in the valuation of cultural activity. In our research we will endeavour to use methods which are both appropriate to the subjective and complex nature of cultural value, as well as appropriate for use in government decision making according to research done on 'what policy makers want.' (Green, 2014)

There is no one agreed methodology for assessment within the cultural sector. A lack of consensus on methods and, as well as evident evaluator biases, means that there is little robust data in the cultural sector (ACE 2014). The distance between cause and effect are especially problematic in exploring societal effects. For example, it can never be proved that when a child reengaged with her peers and teachers after a theatre project, it then led her to get a grade A at GCSE. (Holden 2004: 18) However, it also important to note that this is not necessarily a problem specific to research into arts and culture: objectivity and causality are issues prevalent in all research (Matarasso 1997), and political scientists themselves often speak of the difficulty in establishing the 'direction of the causal arrow'. (Verba et al. 1995: 271)

In light of this we will be combining a number of data collection techniques (both quantitative and qualitative) to ensure our data is both robust and relevant to a number of different interest groups. Our chosen techniques are as follows:

1) Surveys are a popular method of data collection in political science. We created a 'before' and 'after' survey designed to record any changes in participant's attitudes to politics, improvements in political understanding and likeliness to engage various levels of political engagement. These surveys were orally collected at the first session and at the final days of the workshops. This approach is an example of an experience distant method.

The benefit of this research technique is that it provides numerical data to record changes in attitudes clearly and succinctly. The drawbacks of this approach are that the surveys may fail to pick up subtleties within potential changes of participants political outlook and confidence.

2) Open-ended interviews were conducted along side the oral surveys. This allowed us a structure to interviews around the responses offered in the surveys and to get a fuller picture of participants attitudes towards politics and political understanding.

3) A Documentary has been created during this project which critically and artistically responds to each strand of the research. The footage and audio collected during this process has also been useful in analysing strand two as it has provided insight into comments made by participants throughout the project.

Inevitably, the filmmaker had a different relationship to participants and perspective of the project as a whole, which allows for a different . The drawback is that this form of data collection is very informal and the results are difficult to generalise.

4) Workshop leaders observations were recorded throughout the process in the form of artist's journals and evaluation sheets. The artists who are leading the workshops were asked to record their own observed changes in participant's attitudes and any significant statements and events within the workshops. This approach is an example of an experience near method.

The benefit of this method is that it provides us with an extensive data set from another perspective. It is an in-depth form research method, which also touched upon some of the reasons for the possible changes in attitudes and potential development of civic skills.

The main drawback to this approach is its subjectivity: due to the practitioner's role in the project biases are likely to arise in measuring the positive correlation between political engagement and participatory arts.

Strand 3: Evaluation and Dissemination

Our dissemination process has been ongoing throughout the project, with reflection, conversation and with the production of numerous blogs, articles as well as this report. This has brought together the previous two strands to offer empiricial and theorectical repsonses to our research questions.

An innovative aspect of our dissemination process took the form of a learning workshop entitled 'Breathing New Life into Politics', held at the Palace of Westminster. This workshop was a chance to bring together participants, workshop leaders, artists, academics and politicians from across the country to discuss the issues and questions raised within this project. The converstaions and comments gained from this day have made up a significant part of our results and perspective on numberous elements of the project.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Artworks produced in Our Corner workshops

Appendix 2: Delegates List and Images from Breathing New Life into Politics

Alex North, Community First

Andrew Mowlah, Arts Council England

Eve Samson, Clerk for Parlimentary Committee on Privileges and Committee on Standards

Elizabeth Lynch, Independent

Scottee, Independent

Lucy Bradshaw, Bubble Theatre

Josh Solnick, Goldsmiths University

John H, Independent

Lucie Stephens, New Ecomonics Foundation

Patrycja Kaszynska, Arts and Humanities Research Council

Fabio Santos, Project Phakama

Abbi Hobbs, Parlimentary Outreach

Naomi Saint, Parlimentary Outreach

Henry Kippin, Collaborate

Keri Facer, The University of Bristol

Jonathan Barnes, Christchurch Cantebury University

Rajni Patel, Arts Council England

Jocelyn Cunningham, Royal Society of Arts

Matthew Flinders, The Crick Centre

Malaika Cunningham, The Crick Centre

Laura Page, Ignite Imaginations

Luisa Golob, Ignite Imaginations

Gemma Thorpe, Documentary Filmmaker

Eve McCallam, Tapton Secondary School

Ellie Firth, Tapton Secondary School

Marie Dalton, Fruitbowl Youth Group

Luke MacFarland, Fruitbowl Youth Group

The Cultural Value Project seeks to make a major contribution to how we think about the value of arts and culture to individuals and to society. The project will establish a framework that will advance the way in which we talk about the value of cultural engagement and the methods by which we evaluate it. The framework will, on the one hand, be an examination of the cultural experience itself, its impact on individuals and its benefit to society; and on the other, articulate a set of evaluative approaches and methodologies appropriate to the different ways in which cultural value is manifested. This means that qualitative methodologies and case studies will sit alongside qualitative approaches.