

ArtWorks: Arts Practice in Participatory Settings

Working Paper 2

ArtWorks: Arts Practice in Participatory Settings (Working Paper 2)

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Preface

ArtWorks: Developing Practice in Participatory Settings is a Special Initiative of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation established in 2011 and continuing to the end of 2014. It is a workforce development scheme that seeks to meet the needs of artists at different stages in their careers – from the aspiring young artist embarking on training, to experienced practitioners who wish to progress their output. It is seeking to build on good practice to enhance the existing development infrastructure.

The overall aim of ArtWorks is:

To support the initial training and continuous professional development of artists working in participatory settings. This will enhance the quality of people's engagement in arts-led activity and the arts, and create a more professional and confident sector whose work is valued and seen as important.

Key Objectives:

- To support partnership working and pathfinder projects to develop, pilot and embed training and continuous professional development opportunities for artists working in participatory settings at all stages in their careers and develop the support infrastructure.
- To develop a better understanding of what constitutes quality in the work through sharing good practice across art forms and demonstrating positive outcomes for participants engaged in arts-led activity and the arts.

- To gather, document and disseminate compelling evidence of positive impact as part of a wider strategy to achieve significant shifts, nationwide, through the facilitation of shared thinking across agencies and settings about workforce development issues for artists working in participatory settings.

Within the programmes of work undertaken by the five pathfinder partnerships, a large body of learning has accrued over the first 18 months of activity and we have commissioned six Working Papers that seek to crystallise this learning in clusters:

- Arts Practice in Participatory Settings
- Artists - Testing Professional Development Methodologies
- Artist Consultations
- Training and Development Providers and Opportunities
- Understanding Participant's Views
- Qualifications, Codes of Practice and Standards

This learning has been gained and reported in different ways that can be defined as follows:

- Those that have involved the pathfinders partnerships reflecting upon what they know.
- Those that have combined models (like peer mentoring, Action Learning sets) which are meant to have an outcome in their own right, and tweaked the design and used the output from those models to elucidate research questions.
- Those that have undertaken (with a range of approaches) straightforward research, expressed as such to those subjects who are contributing to it, framed formally by research questions, with data collection, analysis and synthesis in a typical format.

The ArtWorks website contains links to all of the material published to date.

The purpose of this suite of Working Papers is to assimilate and summarise this learning and extrapolate key messages so that the learning can inform not only the ArtWorks programme, but also the wider community of practice with an interest in this work. The papers were all commissioned at the mid-point in the ArtWorks programme and therefore provide a snapshot of the work and the learning at that stage.

Further reports supplement these papers and elucidate our work in different ways. These include the *ArtWorks Interim Evaluation Report* (dha & the Institute for Cultural Practices, 2012a) and the first Working Paper which provided an overview, *ArtWorks: learning from the research* (Kay, 2012).

This Working Paper is the second in the series. It focuses on ArtWorks research and activity taking place across the programme which explores the actual practice taking place in participatory settings.

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1 Introduction

There is a range of ArtWorks research and activity which contributes to the exploration of arts practice in participatory settings, some of which directly interrogates the practice and some which has a different focus (e.g. artists' consultations on different topics) and nevertheless reveals accounts of – and reflections on – the practice, which add to our collective knowledge. It includes work undertaken to scope the wider bodies of knowledge and practice represented in academic research and grey literature (in respect of policy and practice) that provide

a context for the programme. The *ArtWorks Evaluation Interim Report* notes that this work is supporting the sharing of 'good, interesting and new practice' and also developing as a permanent resource of assets (dha & the Institute for Cultural Practices, 2012a: 57).

The relevant documentation can be grouped into three areas:

- audit and review work (Lowe, 2011; Mitchell et al., 2012; Sellers, 2011 and Tiller, 2012)
- bibliographies and literature reviews (ArtWorks London, 2012, ArtWorks Navigator, 2012; and dha & the Institute for Cultural Practices, 2012b)
- other related research (ArtWorks Navigator, 2012; ArtWorks North East, 2012; Dean, 2012; Deane, 2013; Leatherdale, 2012; Mitchell et al., 2012; and Sellers, 2012)

This paper has particular connections with two of the other Working Papers – *Artist Consultations (Working Paper 4)* (Taylor, 2013) and *Understanding Participant's Views (Working Paper 6)* (Salamon, 2013b) – in that these papers also evidence overall learning about the characteristics of arts practice in participatory settings.

2 Context

ArtWorks is a workforce development scheme established after initial research by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation into the 'arts in participatory settings' that examined the characteristics of, and challenges faced by, the sector (Burns, 2010). This research evidenced that work growing out of community arts practice in the 60s and now more commonly described as *participatory* has evolved over time and has had a:

...profound effect on the arts establishment through the development of infrastructure and the growing professionalism of the field ... forty years on artists across all art forms are now engaging in a diverse range of practices and we can see an emerging body of practice in individual art forms that has

now created a burgeoning sector of work for artists who wish to engage with people (ibid: 7).

The report goes on to estimate that between '200,000 and 250,000 might be a realistic estimate for the number of artists regularly engaging in work that requires them to facilitate the learning and creativity of others' (ibid: 8).

It concludes that:

... context is creating greater demand for artists to work in participatory settings... and it is arguable that artists are in greater demand than ever before to make interventions in both formal and informal settings... Artists are being asked to work in a hugely diverse range of participatory settings...and are now playing an integral role in the learning experiences of people across the whole age spectrum (ibid: 7).

However, the sector is fragmented and there is a lack of both a robust evidence base and recognised training routes for artists: factors which have contributed to variable experiences for participants.

To meet the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's ambition to enhance the quality of people's engagement in arts-led activity by creating a more professional and confident sector whose work is valued and seen as important, it is therefore key to be able to articulate and advocate arts practice in participatory settings, with a well grounded understanding and appreciation of its diversity.

3 Learning to date

In reviewing the ArtWorks documentation to date that interrogates and reflects on arts practice in participatory settings, it is useful to use the lens of the questioning technique '5WH', which stands for: 'What? Why? When? Where? Who? How?'. This helps us to explore what can be seen as a *range* of practices, rather than *one* practice: what one might call the 'mixed fibres' – which are important to acknowledge if we are to implement the 'textured and nuanced approach' to understanding (and

developing) arts in participatory settings that Kay (2012: 22) identifies pathfinder research and activity as advocating.

3.1 What?

This question prompts a key challenge in defining and describing arts in participatory settings in order to articulate *what it is* – as a full appreciation of the practices goes beyond a literal or straightforward understanding, such as ‘people taking part in arts, in places’, that the phrase might imply. It is therefore helpful to look at the related issues of names and understandings, which can be both diverse and contradictory.

Lowe points out that while none of the representatives from the organisations he interviewed used the phrase ‘arts in participatory settings’, they did use 23 other different terms (2012: 54). He explains the phrase was developed through a workshop process and chosen for the ArtWorks initiative as ‘the fewest people objected to’ (ibid: 54). For Lowe, this:

...suggests that we face a challenge with language. If we do not have a common language to describe the work, then we cannot advocate for it effectively to raise the value and perception of the practice (we cannot sell what hasn’t got a name) and it also suggests that there is confusion or disagreement within the sector about what the practice is (ibid: 54).

Other ArtWorks reports evidence this lack of a common understanding of, and language for, the practice. For instance, in research with academics, Mitchell et al. found ‘There was a wide variety of explanations of the term [‘participatory practice’] but not all the participants were familiar with or even liked the term’ (2012: 3) and Tiller notes ‘the spectrum of what is...termed “participatory” arts practice is wide-ranging’ (2012: 5). She argues in *Next Practice Review International* that critical analysis of the work can be influenced by vocabulary, asking:

Do we call it socially engaged art, art for social change, social art, community arts, dialogical art, inclusive art, relational art or arts in educational contexts?

The term participatory art is not widely used outside the UK and many of the case studies refer to community arts practice (ibid: 6).

Deane explains 'community music' is:

...a very broad practice, impossible to define, and nearly as impossible to describe, in any universally agreed way. There have been a number of attempts at definitions over the years – which won't be repeated here, if only because they are largely ignored in practice (2013: 2).

While 'community music' is still accepted current terminology, in a wider context the *ArtWorks Evaluation Literature Review* notes:

Community arts is in many ways the unspoken shibboleth – although the words 'community' and 'arts' appear in the vast majority of literature identified here, it is rare that the phrase is actively interpolated. It seems that its redundancy as an historic term aligned with particular practices and politics of local arts development is permanent and unlikely to be rescinded (dha & the Institute of Cultural Practices, 2012b: 6).

This reference to an 'historic term' also reminds us that, as noted elsewhere (Schwarz, 2013: 23), with no 'history' category in the bibliographies and literature reviews produced within the ArtWorks programme, the commissioning of a history of arts practice in participatory settings would assist in evidencing the work in its developments – and divergences – over time.

Current contradictions in perspectives are also apparent between those who see the practice encompassing experience as an audience member – for example, creative writing lecturers who refer to 'attending an event' (Mitchell et al., op.cit: 62) as part of the field – and those who do not:

According to Arts Council Wales participants should not be a 'viewer' or part of an audience; they should be involved in the creative process (Sellers, 2011: 4).

Focusing on distinctions between the practice and other practices is one way of trying to define and describe it and in this respect as well, people's perspectives reveal further contradictions. For instance, with academics interviewed:

There was a distinction drawn between collaborative practice – working with other professionals – and participatory practice – joint work between professionals and community members (Mitchell et al., op.cit: 3).

Whereas others see 'collaborative' ways of working with communities as key to the practice, for example as reported by Tiller (op.cit: 18) and Lowe (op. cit: 23, 33).

ArtWorks Navigator's investigations into the professional development needs of artists working in participatory settings have also uncovered some contradictions. A+ (a-n The Artists Information Company and ArtQuest) and engage (the National Association for Gallery Education) devised a proposition from which to explore artists' professional development needs, as follows:

Visual artists working in socially engaged practices are often invited to work in participatory settings. Socially engaged practice – with a focus on longer-term collaborative community engagement, building sustained relationships and working with participants for *artistic* ends – is often erroneously conflated with work in participatory settings, where an *educational* or *social* improvement of some kind is expected (Salamon, 2013a: 1).

This almost seems to imply that there are *no* artistic ends expected for work in participatory settings – whereas for ArtWorks North East, there is live debate about participatory practice being 'considered as an Artistic practice in and of itself' (2012: 17). Sound Sense found in their consultations that 'for almost all organisations answering, the music is important – but equally, so are the person, social, or community developments in the participants' (Deane, op.cit: 3) despite there being three different types of intent and purpose in organisations' work, as follows:

...where the focus was on the music itself...; where the music was important, but [they] recognised how it would lead to personal, social, or community development...; where the focus was on personal, social, or community development, with the music as a vehicle to deliver this (ibid: 3).

The *ArtWorks Evaluation Interim Report* notes that 'community music' has been subject to a comprehensive literature review that:

...examines the ways in which community music has been conceptualised, defined and in some ways constructed through the politics, practices and institutions concerned with its continuation (dha & the Institute of Cultural Practices, 2012a: 6).

Tiller also notes 'the very notion of participation might be said to be a Western construct' (2012: 2) and points out that:

In many contexts the nature of what is considered participatory practice is often dependent on whether the artist is engaged within accepted conceptual policy frameworks...or working within a much more responsive and ad hoc practice reacting to...immediate needs...or development contexts...it is also dependent on the cultural, social and political contexts in which the artist finds her/himself (ibid: 6).

Responses to the existence of many perspectives on the work vary, for example as shown from the Peer Artist Learning Project:

...some artists responded to the process by developing conceptual frameworks and draft taxonomical models to conceptualise the work. Other artists reacted strongly against such conceptualisation, and felt that any move to reduce the work to more convenient 'labels' fundamentally challenged its rich and evolving nature (ArtWorks North East, op.cit: 23).

Lowe argues that without 'greater precision and consensus' there is a danger of 'talking past one another' (Lowe, op.cit: 55), which will not be helpful in discussing –

and indeed developing – practice in a meaningful way. To deal with the diversity and contradictions and to mitigate the practice being seen unhelpfully as some sort of amorphous mess, it is important to value the context of change, collaboration and dialogue which characterises it and recognise that ‘destabilisation of identities... [is] a productive, rather than negative state’ (dha and the Institute of Cultural Practices, op. cit: 6). In this respect, ArtWorks research and activity seems to suggest two approaches.

The first is to ‘hold’ confidently a community of practices that has a ‘temporal, emergent and evolutionary nature’ (ArtWorks North East, op.cit: 9) and is ‘dynamic, highly personalised and often contradictory’ (ibid: 23) in the positive recognition that:

Conflicting perspectives, disagreements or differences of opinion should not be seen as a fundamental weakness of the sector’s workforce as a disparate set of practices and values, but rather as celebrated as representing the diversity of the sector and its capacity to reconcile those differences through dialogue, listening to each other, and becoming involved in each other’s artistic processes in a true spirit of collaboration (ibid: 23).

As Kay notes, ‘navigating a “both/and” way through differences of motivation, opinion and belief is far from unusual when *making* artwork in participatory settings’ and holding ambiguity is a component of adaptive resilience (op.cit: 22) – showing this approach is both true to, and reflective of, the practice and also in line with broader current thinking about ‘21st century competencies’, as cited from Graham Leicester’s work.

The second approach, already referred to above, is to develop some sort of typology or framework for the practice, despite an acknowledgement that for some, there is:

... inherent resistance to developing a single typology or framework which defines...distinctions resulting from the lack of consistent and coherent language and terminology, the multifarious practices across art forms, and the changing and developing nature of participatory arts practice (dha & the Institute for Cultural Practices, 2012b: 6).

Mitchell et al. suggest from interviews with academics working in media, film and graphic design that:

The nature and extent of...collaboration [in the practice] could be seen at different points along a continuum ranging from projects where participation was about activities to aid public engagement with design and to complement exhibitions to activities which enabled 'non artists' to have total control over making some kind of media definition (2012: 31).

Although Lowe decided to devise a typology from interviews with 23 arts organisations as part of an ArtWorks North East commissioned audit of practice, he is also aware that as 'abstractions', typologies may mean some loss of the richness and detail of activities (op.cit: 9) and explains:

The nature of the research questions, and the lack of a prior conceptual framework in this field, meant that the process of creating typologies has been an emergent one, in that the typologies emerge from an analysis of the interviews, rather than being pre-defined categories which were part of the interviews themselves (ibid: 9).

However, although not referenced as such, this approach has validity in terms of a Grounded Theory methodology i.e. generating theory from empirical data.

Lowe's typology (ibid: 19) comprises:

Art Making

Activity whose primary purpose is to enable artists and participants to work together to produce new artwork, or for artists to work with other people to develop their skills and talent so that they can make their own art

Engagement and outreach

Activity whose primary purpose is to stimulate people's interest in the arts, and their desire to make art

Providing space and creating communities of practice

The provision of space for people to undertake creative activity, and the possibility of meeting like-minded people

Training Artists and Other Professionals to do Participatory Work

Influencing the practice of artists and other professionals to deliver arts in participatory settings

Progression opportunities

These are activities which are focused on enabling participants to pursue further creative activity after their involvement with a particular project or programme

The **Art Making** category is further defined by three different types of activity that projects may draw on in a 'blended' way (ibid: 26-27):

Co-produced participatory art

...involves an artist working with participants to undertake a shared creative journey, for which the artist provides initial inspiration, and acts as a facilitator to enable participants to explore their own creative ideas and life experiences. The artist works with participants to develop a shared creative vision and outcomes, which is co-authored by artists and participants together.

Artist-authored participatory art

Activity in which an artist works with participants to realise a vision which the artist 'owns'. In this activity the 'participants' are engaged as material in order to help the artist realise their vision, contributing experiences and performances to shape the content of the piece.

Talent/Skills development

These are educational activities undertaken by artists, designed to teach participants specific artform skills and improve their artform practice.

Lowe also references (ibid: 9 and 18) a typology called the '*Audience Involvement Spectrum*' from the publication *Getting In On The Act: How arts groups are creating opportunities for active participation* (WolfBrown) commissioned by the James Irvine Foundation, as does Tiller (op.cit: 7-8). This typology 'starts' with 'spectating' (i.e. being an audience member) and 'enhanced engagement' (e.g. taking part in educational programmes), which are both seen as *receptive* modes. Then *participatory* modes include 'crowd sourcing', where people choose or contribute to an artistic product and the level of creative control is *curatorial*; 'co-creation', making a contribution to an artistic experience curated by a professional artist, where creative control is *interpretive*; and then 'audience-as-artist', where focus shifts to the process of creation and creative control is *inventive*. WolfBrown's Alan Brown further develops these levels (as quoted in <http://artsfwd.org/5-levels-of-arts-engagement/>) as:

1. **Inventive Arts Participation** engages the mind, body and spirit in an act of artistic creation that is unique and idiosyncratic, regardless of skill level.
2. **Interpretive Arts Participation** is a creative act of self-expression that brings alive and adds value to pre-existing works of art, either individually or collaboratively.
3. **Curatorial Arts Participation** is the creative act of purposefully selecting, organizing and collecting art to the satisfaction of one's own artistic sensibility.
4. **Observational Arts Participation** encompasses arts experiences that you select or consent to, motivated by some expectation of value.
5. **Ambient Arts Participation** involves experiencing art, consciously or unconsciously, that you did not select.

A key antecedent of these typologies (and indeed many others) can be found in Arnstein's '*A Ladder of Citizen Participation*' (1969), referenced by Mitchell et al., (2012: 34, 58 and 65) in the context of interviews with academics from across art forms. The ladder shows eight stages relating to participation comprising

‘manipulation’, ‘therapy’, ‘informing’ (non-participation), ‘consultation’, ‘placation’ (degrees of tokenism) and ‘partnership’, ‘delegated power’, ‘citizen control’ (degrees of citizen power). Applying this ladder to participatory arts shows:

... [it] is not as simple as there being participatory or non-participatory acts, there are many gradations, and the ladder shows the different steps (Mitchell, *ibid*: 34).

The two approaches – ‘holding the practice’ and ‘developing a typology’ – to articulating arts in participatory settings both offer an enabling, rather than reductive, framework for the practice. They both provide a context for exploring different work and ideas in relation to each other, and for evaluating impact against intention. This is particularly helpful when looking at the next key question.

3.2 Why?

Here we can consider what the ArtWorks research and activity has revealed about the motivations and values of individuals and organisations working in this field – the drivers of practice. These include personal, social, political, policy and financial factors, as well as creative ones, as exemplified below:

Personal:

‘People centred work feels really important to me’ (Sellers, *op.cit*: 3).

‘...the opportunity to meet all sorts of different people...hear their stories’ (*ibid*: 11).

Social:

‘...seeing what it does for young people, and how it can change their lives’ (*ibid*: 14).

‘...**helping people** to bring about change in their lives, and take more control over their lives’ (ibid: 18).

...there were academics whose backgrounds were influenced by social activism... (Mitchell et al., op cit: 65).

Political:

The organisation has a strong ‘political awareness’ which is ‘grounded in this city and this region’, ensuring that the ‘voices of local people’ are heard. [It is] a political animal (Lowe, op.cit: 31).

They seek ‘to empower young people to make decisions about what they want to say’ (ibid: 32).

...motivation came...from a political commitment to enabling self-expression, or a commitment to facilitating change for local or other communities (Mitchell et al., op.cit: 63).

Policy:

....[the organisation’s] programmes work with people of all ages, but... priorities [include] ‘current trends in public policy – e.g. ‘employment for young people, Looked After Children and young people with barriers to learning’ (Lowe, op.cit: 15).

Several people mentioned that government and regional priorities seemed to favour this area: “at the moment the big government buzz word is community cohesion, participatory practice has never been so on the agenda” (Mitchell et al., op.cit: 37).

The policy orientation of the research literature is...identifiable by the thematic areas it speaks to, which reproduce the ‘target groups’ of instrumental cultural policy... [such as] increasing participation to combat social exclusion for

vulnerable groups...arts and health...broader social and community impacts identified as part of the process of regeneration and community development (dha & the Institute of Cultural Practices, 2012b: 7).

Financial:

...many people said that they had come to this way of working because they needed to earn money, shortly after graduating (Mitchell et al., op.cit: 4).

...participatory practice...offered a steady and adequately paid source of employment (Leatherdale, 2012: 6).

As we are talking about *arts* participation not, for example, sports or other cultural sector participation, the creative driver is seen as the most important, and manifests itself in three broad ways. First, there is an 'engagement' or 'audience development' motivation for participation, in terms of appreciating 'artists' art':

'I go to open their eyes to the art form' (Sellers, op.cit: 14).

'[our desire is to] increase people's engagement with contemporary art' (Lowe, op.cit: 29).

Second, there is an inclusive motivation, in terms of realising the 'creativity within':

'...creativity is a basic human need...the **belief that everybody can do it**, that it isn't limited to a few people' (Sellers, op.cit: 18).

'the importance of enabling access for older people to be creative' (Lowe, op.cit: 29).

... [our work is to] enable them to have 'self expression' and 'make great pieces of art' (ibid: 31).

...motivation came from a passion for involving people in the community in creative work (Mitchell et al., op cit: 63).

Thirdly, the creative driver can apply to the artist's practice as well as their motivations in respect of others' experiences as described above:

'...sometimes community dance can be over here, and more 'professional' performance work can be over here...as a dance artist I feel that, it's really important that I visit all those different places within my arts practice so it's not separate. My performance work is not separate in one way from my work with a group. They inform each other' (Sellers, op.cit: 4).

'...it's also really lovely to get a fresh perspective, fresh energy from different groups' (ibid: 9).

'...it feeds my contemporary fine art practice' (ibid: 11).

'... you as an artist have to draw all your skills together to create something that's going to engage them. And the planning...it's a much more creative process...than perhaps some of the performing side of things' (ibid, 16).

These comments resonate with the perspectives of some of the artists taking part in the ArtWorks North East Peer Artist Learning Project, who:

...felt strongly that Participatory practice should be recognised as Artistic practice in its own right, that the separation of Participatory practice from one's own Artistic practice was artificial (ArtWorks North East, op.cit: 12).

So in this context, the 'why' of undertaking participatory practice is the same as the 'why' of being an artist.

Overall in terms of individual artists getting involved in the practice, research into the ArtWorks Scotland Peer to Peer Networks shows that:

...motivations and ways in are diverse. For some, a desire to work in participatory settings was there early on; for others it wasn't there to begin with nor was it realized right away: it might happen as a consequence or after other kinds of training – sometimes people have a sense of motivation, others don't: it might be a chance encounter (Dean, 2012: 33).

While the *ArtWorks Evaluation Literature Review* lists a number of texts which tackle the 'tensions surrounding the prioritisation of social over aesthetic outcomes' (op. cit: 23) arising out of overarching differing 'instrumental' and 'intrinsic' approaches to the work, in terms of artists' personal drivers, 'identifiable research gaps include the lack of information and research on...motivations' (2012: 8). This 'Why?' question is therefore particularly open to further exploration, not least given a commonly shared perspective of the importance of an '**understanding of what and why you're doing something**' (Sellers, op. cit: 9) – as described by an artist – with commissioners also well aware of this:

... respondents...and participants [in the discussions]...believed that partners involved in participatory arts projects needed to agree several key issues...including:... [whether] the artist is interested in this area of work? An artist commissioner commented that 'It is important for the artist to examine their own values and motivation before embarking on a participatory project' (Salamon, 2013b: 6).

3.3 When?

This 'temporal' question relates to both the life stages during which participatory work takes place and also issues around timing and duration. In respect of the former, programmes and projects take place across the age continuum, from early years work to work with older people. While specific timings and duration of work are subject to the particular needs of particular projects, with Salamon (2013b: 6) noting appropriate scheduling is key to achieving successful participation, ArtWorks documentation highlights that quality practice requires a 'quantity of quality time' and

can have long lasting impact, as shown in the following project reflections on 'excellence' in practice:

It had a high quality process – it took 'a year to develop and a year to work with people'. The duration of the relationship is very important in this respect – 'it takes six months to a year to make an impact' (Lowe, op.cit: 40).

'Building a longer-term relationship' between the families and the theatre... having 'enough time to develop' the project (ibid: 45).

These comments above come from interviews held with representatives from arts organisations, which are echoed in Seller's consultation with individual artists:

...the process...involves a level of trust that's built up between you and them: which you can only get by working with people quite a bit and spending time with them (2012: 13).

...artists would like sufficient time to be built into projects to enable participants to explore and develop (ibid: 23).

In terms of participants' perspectives, Salamon notes that research uncovered a negative impact when there was 'a lack of time' (2013b: 7).

3.4 Where?

The one aspect of arts in participatory settings on which all the ArtWorks research and activity findings to date concur, is that the practice takes place in a myriad of sectors and settings. These can be grouped as follows:

Sectors: arts; community (which can be geographic i.e. relating to where people live; cultural i.e. relating to how to people identify themselves through gender, ethnicity, disability and so on; or interest focused); criminal justice; education (across the lifelong learning continuum); economic/employment; environment; health and

wellbeing; heritage; housing; libraries; media; museums; refugees and asylum seekers; regeneration; social care; sport; and youth.

In terms of overall types of settings, they can be: formal, non formal and informal; open to anyone, for target groups or for closed groups (both institutional and non-institutional); inside and outside; rural or urban; real or virtual.

Within sectors, specific settings can be multiple. For example, within the health sector, Taylor notes:

... the ArtWorks North East report on work with people with dementia alone lists day centres...care homes, hospitals, doctors' surgeries...(2013: 9).

These particularities of 'where' along with those of 'who' (as discussed in the section below) inform programme and project planning and delivery, for example as reported from one of the ArtWorks Navigator investigations:

It was...noted by respondents and participants in the round table discussions that each project was unique and, as such, needed to be developed individually/ bespoke, i.e. developed setting by setting, and should not be formulaic or seek to replicate processes from other contexts or settings (Salamon, 2013b: 7).

3.5 Who?

When we consider this question, we need to look at both the artists and the participants involved in the work.

In terms of participants, the review of sectors and settings above provides a clear indication of the range of people involved. Within this context, ArtWorks documentation evidences a common factor in terms of artists' and arts organisations' commitment to reach and work with people with little or no engagement in the arts; who are in challenging circumstances or in situations where change is wanted; and

who do not normally have the opportunity to put across, and have influence through, their lives and experiences. Lowe summarises this as 'A desire to enable people who are unheard to explore and share their stories and find their voice' (2012: 49) and includes the following examples of organisations' work:

... [they] work with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people...(ibid: 11).

... [they] give young people a distinctive voice (ibid: 33).

The organisation emphasises the social impact of engaging people with the arts: confidence, mental health and combating social inclusion (ibid: 34).

Research commissioned by ArtWorks Scotland into their peer to peer networks shows artists naming a variety of roles in the work they undertake in participatory settings: facilitator; creative/ artist leader; co-collaborator; project manager; 'someone that plans, buys materials, manages finances, evaluates etc.'; and artist (Dean, 2012: 21). Interestingly, the reality of the roles undertaken does not match well with artists' 'preferred' roles, and the research notes there is potential to consider ways of supporting greater time in the creative/artist leader, co-collaborator and facilitator roles, which were the most preferred (in descending order).

Whatever role they play, artists need to be 'authentic' (Sellers, op. cit: 21) and the 'match' between artist and participants is seen as critical to achieving quality work, as in this example:

...it was the combination of the right artist with the right group that really made the project stand out (Lowe, op.cit: 40).

Salamon notes that research on project participants' views evidences that when artists join in themselves as 'participants' (for example taking part in exercises), this is much appreciated and mitigates a sense of 'us and them' (2013b: 10). Likewise, artists Sellers consulted wanted 'participants to feel ownership of, and empowerment through, projects' (op. cit: 2), for example having 'a say in the decisions that are being made in the group' (ibid: 21). Some arts organisations have a 'desire to make

“participants part of decision making” for the organisation’ more widely (Lowe, op. cit: 43).

In the context of a ‘spectrum of practice’, in an ‘artist authorship’ situation, participants are ‘required in order to realise the work’ but the artist is ‘working to their own ideas’ (ibid: 21). With ‘participant authorship’, artists facilitate participants to produce work that is ‘theirs’ – both in its ideas and its creative manifestation. Referring back to Lowe’s typology, we also need to remember an aspect of work in participatory settings that is about ‘progression opportunities’ (ibid: 19) in which participants can be supported to develop a possible professional arts life post project.

So we have notions of artist as participant, participant as artist and the question of ‘Who?’ is allied closely to the question ‘Whose art?’ are we talking about in participatory settings. Addressing the next question of ‘How?’ helps us ‘unpack’ this and further elucidate our initial question of ‘What?’ is the work.

3.6 How?

On the face of it, this question prompts an expectation of answers about the mechanics of undertaking arts practice in participatory settings – the ‘how to’ make the work happen (developing an idea, raising money, getting people involved etc.). The *ArtWorks Evaluation Literature Review* notes there are ‘numerous guides to good practice’ (op.cit 8) and nearly 50 texts are listed in the ‘Practical handbooks/ Articles’ sections within the ArtWorks Navigator bibliography (2012), covering both general and art form specific practices. However, it is rather the remit of this paper to look at the area of ‘How *does?*’ the work happen: what are the principles and starting points, the processes and the ‘product’ – in terms of both artwork and other outcomes?

Practice principles identified in the ArtWorks research and activity are based on the need both to provide creative ‘input’ and to be responsive, within the context of a mutually respectful relationship:

‘It’s not about coming to the work with an agenda’ (Sellers, op.cit: 3).

‘...informed choice. If you only give people what they choose, they will only choose from their life experience. So you almost have to give them lots of choices so they know what to choose’ (ibid: 7).

Excellent practice...‘achieves a delicate balance of having a powerful creative vision that inspires participants but having a genuine commitment to negotiate how that vision will translate into a vision for the project...they [the artists] need a practice which is genuinely excited by, and responsive to, people’s ideas’ (Lowe, op.cit: 42).

‘... inclusion, participation, empowerment, community, longevity – ... those principles at the core of participation...’ (Sellers, op.cit: 5).

A key defining characteristic of where particular work in participatory settings ‘sits’ on the practice spectrum is the starting point for the work, which in simple terms is either the art or the people involved, exemplified as below:

“offering people...the opportunity through contemporary art [to] transform their thinking and learning” (Lowe, op.cit: 29).

...enabling participants to...“create something new from their own experience” (ibid: 29).

Whatever the starting point for work, the ArtWorks research and activity evidences processes aligned with the principles noted above, with artists ‘ensuring that the journey that the participants are on has honesty and integrity’ (ibid: 41) and their facilitation is particular to, and empowering of, the participants:

‘...being able to tailor yourself, your skills, to meet the different needs of difference people’ (Sellers, op.cit: 3).

‘... **participants have to have complete ownership** over what they do’
(ibid: 14).

‘... one of the key elements of success is that the people in the **group feel like they own it**...that’s what makes participatory arts work different from say a class’ (ibid: 21).

ArtWorks documentation also tackles what can be seen as the age-old debate of ‘process versus product’ and, as we saw above when considering the ‘what’ of the work, rather than take a binary, or oppositional, approach to this, artists and others consulted viewed both process and product as important and intrinsically linked.

‘Why should they be two different things? Because a journey has a beginning, a middle, and an end, doesn’t it?’ (Sellers, op. cit: 5).

‘...**it’s both**...it **varies to the context that you work in**, it varies with the groups that you work in, where is the emphasis – is it on the product more, or on the process more – and **I think that shifts**, but both of course have importance and have meaning’ (ibid: 4).

‘...the product and participation values have **equal weight** because they teach people different things’ (ibid: 15).

‘...you can’t have a good product without a good process’ (ibid: 17).

Lastly, in considering ‘How *does?*’ the work happen, it is important to look broadly and briefly at outcomes and impacts – which range across the creative, aesthetic, social, community, cultural, health and economic – with examples of effects on participants’ involvement in projects as below:

... [it] highlighted talent that was going to waste (Lowe, op.cit: 40).

...great art outcomes and critical acclaim (ibid: 40).

...raised level of confidence (ibid: 39).

The families get a lot out of it...They get to meet each other and get to know each other (ibid: 45).

“A batik screen produced by young refugees in Newcastle ‘is still being toured now” (ibid: 46).

‘These are amazing, powerful pieces of theatre which are transformative not just for the young people themselves in having their stories witnessed, but for audiences as well. It’s an incredible powerful piece of theatre, which is what participation is about’ (ibid: 46).

This last quotation in particular highlights how in some ways the ‘ends’ of the spectrum of arts in participatory practice can meet, in that participants can become artists – who can in turn work with participants.

4. Considerations

This paper has used a set of questions to explore what ArtWorks research and activity has revealed about arts in participatory settings. Its purpose has been to contribute to the process of articulating and advocating the practice, with a well grounded understanding and appreciation of its diversity, to meet the Paul Hamlyn Foundation’s ambition to enhance the quality of people’s engagement in arts-led activity by creating a more professional and confident sector whose work is valued and seen as important.

Three key considerations arise from this exploration.

First, this review of ArtWorks documentation suggests that it is possible for there to be a confident, robust articulation of the work that satisfies a definitional need without ‘closing...down’ (Kay, op.cit: 21) the practice in any way. Two approaches to this are offered: holding a community of practices and developing a typology. These are not

necessarily 'either/or' solutions but point towards the benefits of developing some sort of overall framework for describing the work, giving it legitimacy in all its diversity and depth. Noting in particular academics' perceptions of the practice (see Mitchell et.al, op. cit.), it has been suggested elsewhere (Schwarz, 2013) that a 'practice statement', based on the subject statement framework used by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), would be a useful next step. This would be assisted by the commissioning of a history of the field as proposed earlier.

Second, this review has shown that a key determinant of the range of practices within arts in participatory settings is the range of intentions for, and from, the work. Bearing in mind how evaluation helps in articulating better what any practice is – and what it can achieve – as well as advocating it, consideration could helpfully be given to ensuring that the gathering and measurement of outcomes and impacts against clearly identified aims and intentions is always part of programme and project evaluation frameworks. As Lowe says:

...there cannot be a single understanding of 'good practice'...practice needs to be understood in relation to the purposes (etc) that underpin it (op. cit: 5).

Third and lastly, while quality has not been the prime focus of this paper, it has been discussed in many of the papers referenced and addressing excellence is key to advocating arts in participatory settings, not least in tackling perspectives that it is 'second class' (Mitchell et al., op.cit: 5). Lowe notes the potential of building a common framework for understanding excellence, covering: principles and values; elements of process in relation to developing, organising and managing work as well as artists' practice; the final product; and the impact of the work (op. cit: 6). Further work on issues of quality and excellence, pursued within the context of developing such a framework, would be most useful.

These three considerations fit within an overall approach to developing praxis: the process by which a theory is practised or ideas are enacted. The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire defines praxis in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as 'reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it'. For ArtWorks, relating programme learning about the practice back to the work of training and professional development

providers will be key to its success – with the potential to nurture a strong collective voice for what is a strong collective practice.

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Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Paul Hamlyn (1926–2001) was a publisher, businessman and philanthropist. In 1987 he set up the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for general charitable purposes, and on his death he bequeathed the majority of his estate to the Foundation, making it one of the UK's largest independent grant-making organisations.

The mission of the Foundation is to maximise opportunities for individuals to realise their potential and to experience and enjoy a better quality of life, now and in the future. In particular, the Foundation is concerned with children and young people and with disadvantaged people.

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