

# THE EXCHANGE: REVEALING COLLABORATIVE VALUES

Edited by Suzie Leighton and Peter Mitchell

*The*  
**Culture  
Capital**  
*exchange*

Inspiring Collaboration



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# FOREWORD

The National Network for Academic and Creative Exchange ('The Exchange') was a pilot developed by The Culture Capital Exchange (TCCE) to explore and exchange best practice in effective research collaboration. The Exchange was intended to bring together the agendas of creative SMEs, artists and HEIs for mutual benefit across a number of areas. In this short publication, TCCE directors and key members of the project team reflect on the practise and policy background of TCCE's wider work, as well as the project outputs, outcomes and impacts. We also present a range of case studies developed as part of the project evaluation.

## **Dr Steven Hill** **Director of Research at** **Research England**

Collaboration is at the heart of good research. And if research is to continue and to enhance its contribution to society and the economy, then that collaboration needs to extend well beyond the boundaries of academia.

While in some domains – technology transfer, for example – there are well-developed paradigms of collaborative working; in others there is still a need for experimentation and exploration. With its focus on building new ways for early career researchers from

universities to collaborate with creative SMEs and artists, The Exchange met that need.

We were delighted to be able to support The Exchange from the former HEFCE's Catalyst fund, and it is fantastic to see the diverse array of 'mini-projects' reported in its evaluation. Across a range of creative sectors and geographies, the projects funded through the programme demonstrate the vibrancy and impact, of all sorts, that arises from these collaborations. They demonstrate that mutually beneficial partnerships between researchers and creatives are not just possible, but clearly deliver 'more than the sum of their parts'.

Many of the projects are continuing, and the programme itself – including this evaluation report – provide useful learning for those developing creative collaborations in the future.

## **Darren Henley OBE** **Chief Executive at Arts** **Council England**

With collaboration comes innovation and creativity. If we look beyond our sector, and share best practice with others, we can influence new ways of working that deliver profound benefit across our society. Here Arts Council England investment is working in tandem with funding from The Higher Education Funding Council for England to contribute to The Exchange.

The Culture Capital Exchange (TCCE) has a 14-year record in developing collaboration and exchange between the university sector and the cultural and creative industries in London and beyond. The value of the two sectors coming together is well-established and demonstrated through the range of projects The Exchange has supported. The Arts Council's Research programme provides further illustration of the benefits such as the Royal College of Music's 'Singing the Blues', a collaboration with Imperial College London and the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital on the impact of group singing amongst mothers experiencing post-natal depression.

Or Ignite Imaginations and University of Sheffield's collaboration investigating how people's everyday encounters with artistic imagination affects their psychological well-being.

It is very positive to see the high volume and diversity of beneficiaries The Exchange has directly impacted, and I hope this report will inspire many more collaborations.

# CREATING COLLABORATIVE ECOLOGIES

Writing this short paper, I have been reflecting on TCCE's work and that of our first iteration, LCACE. In the process, I have been reviewing the ever-increasing and complex archive of the work we have done in the liminal zone between higher education and the arts, cultural and creative sector.

In 2015, to mark our 10th anniversary, we published *Then:Now: Reflections* on a decade of collaborations between academia and the creative and cultural sectors in London – a series of short essays from some of those we had worked with during our first decade. Re-reading it, I've been struck in particular by the words of one of our associates, Pete Mitchell, who we first worked with when he applied to become a Creativeworks London Researcher-in-Residence. As a historian well-versed in power relations and networks, he quickly and intuitively seemed to get to the heart of TCCE. In his contribution to *Then:Now*, Pete wrote that “organisations that effect structural change often create the conditions of their own obsolescence”. Perhaps optimistically, or, more likely, out of a sense of care for us, he went on to say that “as long as London has

its rich creative ecology, TCCE and organisations like it will be pioneering new ways of working, new connections and new engagements”.

Whilst we continue to push towards the latter scenario, in increasingly unpredictable times it feels almost rash to attempt to say with any surety what the longer-term prognosis for small organisations like ours will be. As the policy landscape changes, and as the values and practices of the culture and creative industries, not to mention higher education, change in response to it, arguably we are living in a harsher place than where we started. How will TCCE be viewed through the long lens of history? As an agent for change, a blip in the pattern or simply as the product of our times, displaying promiscuous tendencies to shape-shift, blur boundaries, and recalibrate according to the whims of

the moment?

Historically, it's fair to say that ours had been an organisation that 'did'; conceiving and delivering hundreds of events and initiatives to bring people together over the years. However, one thing that Pete encouraged us to do was to write a little more. And that's a distinction I don't make lightly. Celebrating the end of another successful creative collaborations project, the National Academics and Creatives Exchange, led by my colleague and co-director Suzie Leighton, feels like a great excuse to do just that. It is a good moment to reflect and take stock of our thirteen years worth of work and the contexts in which it has taken place.

## Setting the scene

TCCE, formerly known as London Centre for Arts and Cultural Exchange (LCACE), was established in late Autumn 2004 as the result of Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) 2. Back then, it was a consortium of partners led by King's College London, with Queen Mary, University of London; City, University of London; Birkbeck, University of London; Royal Holloway, University of London; Goldsmiths, University of London; and The Courtauld Institute of Art. LCACE's remit was to promote links between its higher education partners and the arts and culture sectors by fostering dialogue and debate; by showcasing

excellence in academic research; through teaching and consultancy; by nurturing and rewarding enterprise in academic staff and students; and by advocating the role of HE in the arts and cultural sector. Suzie Leighton and myself were part of the LCACE team from the very start.

On a balmy June evening in 2005, LCACE was officially launched in the Great Hall at King's with a panel discussion on Higher Education and the Creative and Cultural Industries in the 21st Century. Professor Rick Traynor, then Principal of King's College London, and Rosy Greenlees, then Director of LCACE and later to become CEO of the Crafts Council, introduced the evening. Speakers included Dame Jude Kelly and the Rt Hon Chris Smith, who many will remember as the architect of the first Creative Industries Mapping Document back in 1998. Celebrations continued, post discussion, in the Courtauld Gallery, where people from across academia, the arts and the policy-making world met and mingled. If the exact role of this new entity still seemed somewhat hazy, any uncertainty was mitigated by goodwill and enthusiasm.

Over the next couple of years we developed many projects and partnerships, working with a number of the city's major cultural institutions. Building Cultures, which I initiated as a one-off *dérive* event between Queen Mary and Goldsmiths, was developed by the artist, writer and teacher Cameron Cartiere (then at Birkbeck)

into a multi-year programme. It included a series of sell-out events on public arts and regeneration at the Greater London Authority, Tate Modern and the Whitechapel Gallery. Our Educating the Next Generation strand saw us working with professionals across the creative and cultural industries spectrum, from architecture to publishing. We also worked closely with Arts Council England, London, who commissioned us to work with our university partners to deliver, amongst other things, research on the arts and health; a toolkit for managing work placements in the arts; and a curated six-week course to support their Inspire initiative for curators from diverse backgrounds.

In March 2007 we held our first major conference, *The Art of Partnership*, at the Unicorn Theatre in London. Our main aim was to provide a space in which people from across the country could come together and talk about the potential, practice and impact of knowledge exchange and collaborative projects between higher education and the arts and cultural sectors. At the time, such a platform – where interested parties could discuss how such partnerships were working, and tease out what both sectors might want and need most from each other – was pretty rare, and the conference generated a great deal of interest and attention.

LCACE's partners decided to continue supporting the consortium with their own institutional funds after its initial

HEFCE funding period had come to an end. As we went forward into what we were tentatively calling 'LCACE Phase Two', our original partners were joined by Guildhall School of Music and Drama and University of the Arts London. More activities followed, and the LCACE brand appeared to be becoming quite well established. At that time, few people within or outside the academy seemed particularly familiar with the notion of knowledge transfer, or indeed knowledge exchange – as we had started to call it.

Partnerships and collaborative projects were instead beginning to evolve quite organically through the annual seed fund competition we ran at the time. To celebrate these projects, we ran showcasing events and published a couple of simple-but-eye-catching publications called *Partnerships in Practice*. Collaborations between universities and the arts are, of course, no new thing. We can see it in the well-established physical infrastructure alone: galleries, theatres, concert halls, museums and media centres form part of universities right across the UK. Those relationships are so deep-rooted that they are now almost taken for granted. As I write this in May 2018, the long-established John Hansard Gallery has just launched its new space in central Southampton. What was less usual then, however, and is still in a sense emergent, is the trend for smaller, curiosity-driven, short-term partnerships, often between a single researcher and an artist or cultural organisation.



LCACE was going strong after its first four years. It was suggested by Professor Barry Ife, then Principal of GSMD and also our Chair, that we ought to showcase our work more overtly. We responded by setting up the Inside Out Festival in 2009. It would be the first festival in the country, as far as we are aware, to explicitly celebrate the connections between higher education and the arts, cultural and creative sectors. I knew from previous experience running festivals that a radically open curatorial approach could unlock a real diversity of work, while also nurturing a diversity of people along the way. Over the years the festival has maintained a ‘no themes’ approach. Although we did once have the mini-theme of ‘failure’ – ironically, with mixed success! As is often the case when new things happen, others start to imitate and, indeed, iterate. In the case of Inside Out Festival, it wasn’t long before the launch of the (now very well established) Being Human festival – and it was to us that the Being Human team came for initial ideas and inputs.

## Becoming independent

Change was in the air. By the turn of the decade, a palpable appetite for deeper engagement was beginning to emerge. More and more people wanted to find ways to develop joint projects, research, and other creative collaborations, and questions around how to support that were beginning to

be mooted as well. Then, in 2010, our line manager at King’s suggested that it was time for LCACE to ‘spin out’ as a company. The recent change in Government had shaken the academic sector’s customary confidence, leaving it feeling less certain and robust as the policy landscape began to shift and the effects of global recession began to bite. The notion of what we now recognise as a ‘VUCA world’ (one where the principles of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity are the order of the day) was ramping up, and it wasn’t nice. After significant hesitancy and uncertainty, in 2011, we did indeed become an independent company. We gave ourselves a new identity too, with yet another memorable acronym – The Culture Capital Exchange (TCCE) was born.

In the lead-up to going independent, we were also starting to work with Professor Evelyn Welch (then at Queen Mary) on the development of a large partnership proposal for what would become one of four winning bids to run the AHRC’s Knowledge Exchange hubs. Creativeworks London was launched at the GLA in October 2012. Its formal remit was to develop strategic partnerships with creative businesses and cultural organisations, to strengthen their collaborative research activities, and to increase the number of arts and humanities researchers activity engaged in research-based knowledge exchange. The news that we’d won the bid, at that time, was like manna from heaven for us.

The programme ran from 2012 to 2016, with TCCE leading on the Knowledge Exchange Programme. For this we had proposed to design and deliver a suite of collaborative research opportunities, including: a Creative Entrepreneur-in-Residence scheme, a Researcher-in-Residence scheme, and, at the suggestion of Professor Welch, a Creative Vouchers scheme similar to an initiative that had previously run elsewhere. We also launched a competitive follow-on fund called BOOST. Between 2012-16 we funded 109 projects. In the process we learned more about developing, supporting and, indeed, designing and curating collaboration than we had ever anticipated. Of course, as is invariably the case with big projects like Creativeworks London, a few collaborations along the way didn't work out. But what was really remarkable was just how many were incredibly successful – how valued and diverse the outputs from those collaborations were and continue to be, some two years after the formal end of the project.

What was also really interesting to us was just how rich the Researcher-in-Residence scheme was in particular. This scheme supported early career researchers (ECRs) to work with creative or cultural organisations on a research need identified by the organisation. During a round table event at the St Bride Foundation off Fleet Street, on our second round of funding that particular scheme, the conversations about the work that was taking place were remarkable.

Organisations reported that research outputs from residencies were feeding directly into wider policy work and funding bids; dormant archival material was being re-interpreted and made public through exhibitions and publications; and new methods for engaging with diverse audiences were being generated. The shift from analogue to digital was writ large in much of this work, as projects engaging in innovative research and dissemination techniques made full use of emergent technologies. Indeed, the list of impacts was hugely impressive and fantastically diverse.

After the round table, later that afternoon, the germ of what would become the National Academics and Creatives Exchange (NACE) – or as we more frequently call it, 'The Exchange' – was conceived. This time with universities outside of London in mind. Yet again, it was to HEFCE and ACE, with whom we had worked so many times in the last decade, that we turned for support.

The rest, as Pete would absolutely never say, is 'just' history. And he'd be very right. The Exchange was so much more than 'just' a continuation of funding creative collaborations, and more than 'just' another list of exciting blue-sky thinking and endeavours. What emerges from the rest of this short publication is a narrative of the 'what', of the 'who', of the 'how'. And, most compellingly, the values that drove The Exchange, in all their diversity and complexity. It makes for thought-provoking and at times deeply inspiring and surprising

reading. In producing this publication, we hope not only to make a kind of history, as it were, but to create the space for new imaginaries around how such work can be conceived, supported and championed, in policy and in practice.

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Evelyn Wilson  
Director,  
The Culture Capital Exchange

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“ The exchange element of this project has been a wonderful opportunity for discussion and reflection. This is not always possible at [our institute] as we take on a lot of commercial work which is conducted at speed and with a rigid framework. This grant has enabled a process where you can truly understand the baseline of a research project and understand how research can have public impact which is now an essential element of research council funding, which is where I would like to take this project in the future. ”

## ABOUT THE EXCHANGE

The Exchange was jointly funded by Arts Council England (ACE) and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) with the longer-term aim of building a network in England, and possibly beyond, to broker relationships between ECRs and creative small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and to facilitate collaborative research between academics and creative SMEs.

The project facilitated ECR-SME collaboration by providing seed funding to twenty-six projects (up to £5,000 each) over three different funding rounds, as well as providing a programme of networking and development events. The aims of The Exchange included:

- Extending access to a wide range of knowledge;
- Broadening and deepening connections between the creative industries and higher education, and identifying areas where partnerships can inspire new thinking;
- Strengthening research impact, including practice-based and action research;
- Supporting the development of early career researchers, especially in respect of the acquisition of collaborative research skills;
- Supporting the artistic and business development of creative and cultural SMEs.

These broad aims were associated with the following specific objectives:

- To develop a national network of HEIs and creatives to share best practice, lessons learned from individual initiatives, and avoid duplication in this developing area;
- To build long-term partnerships between individual ECRs and specific SMEs;
- To enhance development opportunities for ECRs and creative and cultural SMEs alike. In particular around research collaboration and partnership building, in order to build excellent and sustainable capacity to tackle new fields of enquiry, which require a cross disciplinary and collaborative approach;
- To promote the importance of academic research in building business resilience and growth within creative and cultural SMEs, as this is not yet adopted as standard business practice;
- To help creative and cultural SMEs

access rigorous research data, the professional credibility associated with working with universities, and the project design and partnership building skills developed and honed in these small-scale collaborations.

## Key achievements

The Exchange achieved a number of outputs that exceeded our initial expectations. The twenty-six mini-projects undertaken have given rise to a broad range of legacies: from concrete outputs at the most tangible end of the legacy spectrum, such as books, films, artworks, conference papers and draft journal articles; through works-in-progress, skills development and the evolution of professional relationships and networks on various scales; to new understandings and insights, plus affective outcomes such as increased self-esteem and confidence.

- The project established a Collaborative Research Awards funding scheme to support twenty-six small-scale research projects (mini-projects): each a collaboration between at least one ECR and at least one partner from a creative and/or cultural SME, and each structured around a budget of £5,000 and a timeline of approximately three months. At the time of completing their self-evaluation forms, over a third of the mini-projects supported had either already obtained a grant for an expanded project or submitted an

application for one, and several others were either preparing or considering an application to a specific, named funder. TCCE regularly receives updates chronicling further developments outwith the scope of the funded project.

- The pilot developed new skills, for both academics and creatives, in understanding the academic and professional operating environment, and in devising and managing effective collaborations.

- Figures submitted by participants suggest that the mini-projects supported by The Exchange's grants had around 1,700 direct beneficiaries.

- Approximately half of the funded mini-projects reported that they had delivered benefit to people who could be described as 'disadvantaged' according to one or more relevant Arts Council England categories: women and girls, people at risk of social exclusion, and ethnic minorities.

- One of the distinctive features of The Exchange was its ability and willingness to fund work that was not necessarily directed towards 'outputs', or even 'impact'. This opened a space for risk-taking and experimentation, leading to new collaborations, products and services, and access to external sources of funding.

- The project's learning outcomes with reference to good collaboration practice have important implications for a variety of stakeholders within higher education and the creative and cultural industries, including funders and policy-makers, as well as ECRs and artists.

## Why was The Exchange conceived?

The concept design for The Exchange arose from the convergence of a number of questions thrown up by TCCE's decade of working at the cutting edge of collaboration between higher education and the arts; a challenging funding and policy environment for higher education and the creative industries; and a desire expressed by the then Chair of Arts Council England, Sir Peter Bazalgette, that higher education and the arts should build a new 'grand partnership'.

At the time, TCCE directors had developed the successful bid for Creativeworks London, the Arts and Humanities Research Council-supported knowledge exchange hub, in collaboration with Professor Evelyn Welch (then at Queen Mary University of London). And over the four years of the project had been a key delivery partner, designing, implementing and delivering the knowledge exchange programme for the hub. Through the three funding vehicles TCCE designed for the Creativeworks London project (Creative Vouchers, Creative Entrepreneurs-in-Residence and Researchers-in-Residence, further details of which are available on the archived Creativeworks London website), we had seen that profound benefits could be arrived at through quite small and focused projects. However, in addition to all the obvious barriers to creative collaboration between SMEs and universities (differing scales, languages, time

scales, priorities, and so on), there was a lack of understanding regarding the mechanics and methods of meaningful collaboration, and a lack of investment and opportunities to help researchers develop increasingly important skills in this area.

Simultaneously, through TCCE's wider work, we were hearing from ECRs that they felt that they needed different kinds of development and support. Traditional academic career paths were (and still are) shifting and shrinking; academics increasingly reported that they needed to develop a suite of skills and competencies alongside their primary research, to help prepare them for a more portfolio-based and less rigidly-structured career. In the arts and creative industries, portfolio careers, personal diversification and fluid and collaborative ways of working are of course ubiquitous; here, it seemed, was an opportunity for a valuable exchange of experience and methodologies. We were also hearing that those ECRs and doctoral students whose interest was in practice-based research felt that they needed a suite of support that they were not able to access 'in-house' from their institutions.

The arts and cultural sectors have always been at the heart of the TCCE network, and we have advocated very hard in the course of our work for the voice of the artist or creative partner to be equally heard and valued. It is our firmly held and often articulated belief that both partners in a knowledge exchange or collaborative

research relationship come with important skills and experience, and that an understanding of how to unlock and facilitate the flow of information and practice between them is essential to making any project successful. We also believe that it is important to acknowledge the role of art and the artist in the creation of new knowledge. The Exchange provided the funding for the mini-projects it supported to the creative rather than the academic partner, prompting a subtle yet important shift in the collaborative dynamic.

We were very aware, of course, that many universities have very long-standing and productive relationships within their local areas – with cultural and creative organisations, amongst others – and that many of these relationships made for excellent models of good practice. However, the organisations involved tended to be larger ones, often those with their own premises, and we were becoming aware (not only from this, but also from our own experience as a micro-business) of the significant barriers to participation in collaborative projects faced by very small organisations, those without permanent premises, and individual artists or entrepreneurs.

Many of these barriers are now widely recognised: differences in institutional scale and rhythms of work; the demands on very small organisations of negotiating university systems and protocols; differences in language (even the term ‘research’, for example,

can mean very different things across different sectors); and differences in motivation, engagement and projected outputs. As institutions, universities can be somewhat acquisitive with regard to collaborators’ ideas and intellectual property, and this is a significant disincentive to many artists and creative organisations without in-house IP support or expertise. However, there are many other more subtle barriers to collaboration that are perhaps not so well recognised or understood. Many practitioners who are not engaged with the academy are simply unable to see what the benefits that working with academic researchers, particularly from an unfamiliar disciplinary area, might be for them. Negotiating disciplinary and departmental silos, and translating academic language and terminology to find the right collaborator, can seem overwhelming – as can, for some people, just finding a simple ‘way in’ to the institution. Who should your first conversation be with if you are coming ‘cold’ to an HEI? Other barriers are more intangible still: for instance, the fact that it is usually the university partner that holds the greater power in the relationship, in terms of funding and other resources, can make equitable, mutually respectful and ultimately beneficial collaborations hard to establish. And underpinning all of this, we often see a genuine lack of mutual understanding between collaborators that come from the alien worlds of different sectors. All too often, potential collaborators lack knowledge of each other’s policy, funding and assessment environment

at both institutional and sectoral levels; and without enough time, or access to suitable resources and methodological tools, they are all too unlikely to be able to understand each others' professional motivations, values and requirements.

Although knowledge exchange between HE and the creative industries is now ubiquitous, and in some ways ever-better funded (albeit to an ever-narrower definition of 'creative' in the language of the industrial strategy), there are still limited networking and peer learning opportunities for knowledge exchange professionals, particularly in disciplines where resources are harder to access and locate. We were keen to start networking regional centers of excellence and to start learning from each other and raising the profile of knowledge exchange professionals, particularly those engaging with the arts and cultural industries. This proved the hardest part of the project to achieve. Partly as a result of the amount of time and resources needed to build institutional rather than individual relationships, and partly due to the fact that The Exchange was carried out against a backdrop of rapid and quite extreme political, policy and funding change. Indeed, it is precisely 'the VUCA' (volatile, uncertain, changeable and ambiguous) backdrop to this project, and the wider environment that we are all currently negotiating, that makes the outputs from this project so relevant to the current policy environment.

“ I have a much better understanding of what academic research actually entails and how this can complement, challenge and develop artistically or socially driven creative practices. Discussion with [the academic partner] has brought to light various other shared areas of concern or interest that are highly relevant to the city in which we both live and work and we think there is scope for some future collaboration exploring these themes. ”

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Suzie Leighton  
Director,  
The Culture Capital Exchange

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# RESEARCH COLLABORATION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: NAVIGATING THE NEW POLICY LANDSCAPE

The impacts of TCCE's 'The Exchange' should be viewed within the context of two major developments: the most fundamental restructuring of creative higher education for 50 years, and the Government's recently announced Industrial Strategy and Creative Industries Sector Deal. Universities are being opened up not only to global competition, but also to the more local needs of industry and the public.

It is becoming ever more important that collaborative research is able to demonstrate real and lasting legacies outside of academia, and to become more innovative in the wider world while continuing to add new knowledge to traditional academic disciplines. This poses many challenges for researchers, especially early career researchers (ECRs) and research managers. ECRs now face a challenging learning curve in mastering not only the established methodologies of their academic disciplines, but also the entirely new set of skills needed for organizing successful knowledge exchange activities. The Exchange was designed to explore how the diverse partners who become involved in collaborative

research can become more productive in creating lasting research-related, creative, social and economic impacts.

Broadly speaking, knowledge exchange (KE) is about the economic or public good created by research. The Knowledge Exchange Framework data collected in the past, however, is strongly focused on the commercialisation of R&D in products, services and regeneration. In the HEFCE Research Excellence Framework, research impact is defined as "the demonstrable contribution of research to changes that bring benefits to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life". Arts and humanities research has tended

to focus on culture, health and quality of life, in line with the specialist knowledge and methodologies of its various disciplines. The Government's recently launched Industrial Strategy and Creative Industries Sector Deal are, however, likely to exert significant influence on the way that arts and humanities research is funded as well as measured.

The Creative Industries Sector Deal will invest £33m from the Challenge Fund into the Audiences of the Future Challenge, and another £39m to bring together top universities and businesses into industry-led research clusters. Investment coming from the Challenge Fund will have industry match of at least £25m; the government will work with the creative industries to shape the programme and has committed to exploring the long-standing barriers to investment take-up and public support for creative industries. Some of these programmes have roots in previous AHRC programmes, but have now been folded into the Creative Industries Sector Deal. While, again, much arts and humanities research will continue to focus on what it knows best – culture, health and wellbeing – it would seem likely that an emphasis on more innovative and tangible outcomes may increase even in these sectors, and the motivation to engage with industry may become stronger.

As part of the restructuring of HE, the Research, Knowledge Exchange and Teaching Excellence Frameworks (respectively REF, KEF, and TEF)

are beginning to shift the emphasis in assessment of quality in research, impact and teaching from peer review to metric assessment. Altmetrics is likely to play a more significant role in assessing the quality of original publications, and these three new frameworks will also gradually become more reliant on automated data collection and algorithmic analysis as the technology needed to effect this shift is developed and rolled out. This means that even the measurement of original publication quality will depend more and more on effective dissemination, while impact will be weighted at 25% in REF 2021. The new Creative Industries Sector Deal will also invest in a Policy and Evidence Centre for the Creative Industries.

Before knowledge exchange gained theoretical traction (an event that can be dated to Geoffrey Crossick's seminal article *Knowledge Transfer Without Widgets*), the dominant paradigm was that of the kinds of knowledge transfer (KT) long-established in STEM disciplines and defence research. It was only in 2014 that impact became a significant element of the Research Excellence Framework; it is, therefore, a relatively new area of practice for arts and humanities researchers. The AHRC offers an extensive programme of training for ECRs in the Research Training Framework, and ECRs are encouraged to seek out opportunities to widen their research skills by participating in collaborative projects. There has not until now, however, been a programme of seed-funding research

collaborations supported by an ECR skills development platform that allows ECRs an opportunity to explore the challenges and benefits of working collaboratively with the public sector, industry and communities, and to build a deeper understanding of how research can effect real change.

What made The Exchange so unique was the opportunity it offered for ECRs and their partners to – to quote the report from one project – “explore in a brave way, engaging in new material and methods, and allowing time for the unexpected”. This is reminiscent of practice-based research in arts and crafts that explores the properties of materials. For example, sound artists may dismantle and re-assemble sound equipment to coax unexpected properties from it, contributing in turn to advances in music technology itself. Or ceramics researchers may interrogate materials in a structured yet non-linear way, finding new applications, such as a lightweight replacement for kevlar. This kind of spirit of limitless enquiry has until now been less recognised in wider arts and humanities research practices overall, perhaps because the object of inquiry is often human processes – and we can hardly take people apart and reassemble them to see what else we might get out of them! What we can do, however, is provide a space for the structured exploration of the unexpected potentialities and processes that emerge in the encounter between academic researchers, artists and communities. This was previously

found to be a particularly powerful property of the Starting from Values methodology, which Fossbox built on for use in this pilot as a collaborative as well as evaluative approach.

The various projects that The Exchange enabled achieved an extraordinary impact, especially given the minimal funding offered. This was partly a result of their success in mobilising wider communities and connections. For example, Artists Rethinking the Blockchain brought together industry leaders with artists and academics to explore innovative cultural applications for blockchain technology. Artists in Tech Cities explored how, through hosting resident artists, tech cities could become better engaged with the issues affecting Londoners more widely.

Developing Sensography or Triple Choreography began as an investigation of democratic choreography in practice, and underwent a significant change when the project’s use of Skype – originally a tool of convenience for participants dispersed through distant sites and cities – became central to its investigation of digital media in a devolved performance practice. This constituted an interactive virtual performance space. Anticipating the DCMS report *Culture is Digital*, the work opens out new possibilities for digital audience development. The Lost Book Club explored ways of bringing traditional values associated with literature – which many participants felt had been lost in the

digital age – into new writing, blending digital and print, and branding for new audiences.

One well-established issue in collaborative research has been a tendency for the objectives and values of the researchers, as the ones who ‘know’, to drive the project. Research on diversity in industry, on the other hand, indicates that diversity itself is an important driver of innovation. Overall, a recurring theme in The Exchange’s work was to emphasize the intrinsic value that adventurous and experimental spaces, relatively free from bias towards one or other class of participants, brought to the innovation process. The Exchange’s methodology, by offering an opportunity to define the values of the projects collaboratively, effectively forced all participants to question their established practices and values in the light of those of their various partners, often in quite fundamental ways. The importance of innovation in the development and delivery of research impact is becoming ever more widely acknowledged. We believe that the approaches developed through The Exchange offer an unprecedented opportunity for nurturing cohorts of researchers with not only the skills to transform diversity into new learning and innovative solutions, but the invaluable experience of having successfully done so.

“ We gained a better understanding of each other’s disciplines / field of work both conceptually but perhaps less expectedly – practically too. For example, visiting London Book Fair with [the creative partner] provided a vehicle for [the academic] to understand the publishing industry through the eyes of a practitioner. ”

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Paula Graham-Gazzard  
Director,  
Contemporary Visual Arts Network;  
Fossbox

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# VALUES-FOCUSED EVALUATION: MEASURING WHAT MATTERS MOST

Evaluation is all about making value judgements – but people don’t often question whose values are used as the basis for making those judgements. Values-focused evaluation is a new approach that starts by examining different stakeholders’ ideas about what matters to them personally, and which outcomes and impacts they see as the most important. This evaluation strategy can be particularly useful for collaborative and creative projects, and, in the case of The Exchange, the opportunity to embed this evaluation strategy from the project design stage was an exciting opportunity.

The word ‘values’ can be confusing, as it is not always used in the same way. We often hear politicians and the media talking about values in the sense of moral principles such as justice, respect, democracy or liberty – in discussions of ‘fundamental British values’ in education, for example. However, another way of thinking about values is to view them as people’s ideas or beliefs about what’s most important to them in life. In this sense, our values reflect the things that we – as individuals or groups – find valuable, meaningful or worthwhile.

One of the biggest challenges of working with values is that they

usually operate at a subconscious level, rather than being something that we’re consciously aware of. Our values evolve throughout our lives, influenced by where we grow up (and with whom); the type of education that we have; who our friends are; which religions or political parties we belong to; what jobs we end up doing; and who’s in charge at the places where we work. Yet until someone asks the question, ‘What matters most to you?’, we don’t tend to think about them much. We make decisions through ‘gut instinct’, or by weighing up the pros and cons of different courses of action, without asking ourselves why we view one outcome as negative and another as positive.

Another difficulty is that questions about values rarely have simple, straightforward answers. Something that's critically important to someone in one situation might be completely irrelevant or even inappropriate to the same person in another setting. A person might, for example, find it valuable to invest time in telling their loved ones how they feel about them – but they probably wouldn't want to do that with the CEO of their company.

Within a project evaluation context, people's values are rarely questioned or discussed openly. Most evaluations are designed around the unspoken belief that what matters most to everyone involved, at least initially, is to create an output or deliverable: a 'thing' that someone can hold in their hands, read on their computer or mobile, or watch on YouTube. The expectation is that if it's used in the right way, this output will generate outcomes – making a specific, measurable and positive difference to people's lives. In the longer term, this might lead to a lasting impact, such as income generation, the formation of new networks or partnerships, or a change in an organisation's policies or practices. But what if the real key to the success of a given project doesn't lie in its outputs at all, but in the skills that people acquire, or the ways they learn to work together? What if, in the words of jazz musicians Melvin Oliver and James Young, in the song made famous by Ella Fitzgerald in 1939, "Tain't what you do, it's the way that you do it" that matters most?

In designing the evaluation for The Exchange, a project that set out to build effective research collaborations between academics and creatives, we started from the understanding that the question of 'how people did it' (the ways in which the research partners worked together on their mini-projects) would be at least as important as the 'what they did' (the actual research questions that they addressed, and the creative outputs that they produced). We also recognised that, for people from such different backgrounds to be able to collaborate effectively, it was important for partners to be transparent about their values from the start. They needed a clear understanding of what mattered to them as individuals, in relation to their specific mini-project idea, before they could identify shared (or at least complementary) goals for the project. Given the limited budget of £5000 and timescale of three months, these conversations were essential for helping the teams make decisions about how to collaborate and what to prioritise.

To frame these discussions, we created a training package entitled *Designing Collaborative Research: A Values-Based Approach*, consisting of a PowerPoint presentation (deliverable either as a webinar or in a live workshop) and a downloadable worksheet. This was inspired by the 'values-focused evaluation' approach (sometimes called 'values-centred evaluation') pioneered originally by Professor Marie Harder and her

team at the University of Brighton, and set out most forcefully in the report *Starting from Values: Evaluating Intangible Legacies of Connected Communities Projects*. The presentation focused on asking people to reflect on positive past experiences and/or desired future experiences that they find particularly meaningful, worthwhile or valuable within a specific project, and to turn these reflections into short statements (e.g. ‘we ensure that everyone’s voice is heard’). Example statements, derived from a workshop exercise held with artists and academics at The Exchange’s initial networking meetings, were also included – to inspire the participants, give them new ideas, or challenge them to think differently.

Following the presentation, the participants were asked to complete the worksheet with their ‘principles of collaboration’ – including statements about how they intended to work together – and the benefits they expected to gain from working in those ways. As a precondition for receiving the grant, each partnership was asked to provide three of these principles of collaboration, with two expected benefits for each one. The principles submitted by several mini-project teams highlighted actions such as allowing enough time and space for activities that are not directly output-driven; understanding each other’s worlds; articulating and negotiating individual and shared goals; sharing knowledge, skills, experience and expertise; designing

the mini-project around each other’s strengths and limitations from the outset; and questioning or challenging each other regularly. Some teams also identified characteristics of successful collaborative researchers: for example, *flexible, informal, brave, open, playful, respectful, encouraging*. It was these principles of collaboration statements that later formed part of the mid-term review, which was due for completion after six weeks, and of the final self-evaluation submitted at the end of the three months. In the review and self-evaluation, participants reflected on whether there was anything they could change (or could have changed) to strengthen the collaboration.

For the full project evaluation, however, it wasn’t enough just to investigate whether the mini-project teams had been successful on their own terms – i.e., the extent to which they had met the collaboration goals that they had set for themselves. There was also a need to evaluate The Exchange in relation to the outcomes that the funders (Arts Council England and the Higher Education Funding Council for England) were hoping to see, such as network-building and skills development for early career researchers, and from the point of view of what mattered most to the front-line team coordinating the overall project. We can explain this multi-level evaluation design by looking at the project through lenses tinged with different values frameworks. Just as wearing glasses with red or blue lenses can make some things less visible and others more so –

depending which colour you're wearing – in the same way, so thinking about a project from different stakeholders' perspectives can bring some outcomes into clearer focus while making others appear less important.

Taking a values-focused approach to evaluation has brought many benefits, both for The Exchange itself and for its grantees. At the level of the individual mini-projects, several grantees reported that they enjoyed the workshops and webinars and found them useful for focusing their thoughts about how to design, implement, improve and evaluate their projects. Furthermore, analysing different principles of collaboration and their benefits across all twenty-six mini-projects has provided TCCE and funders with a wealth of information about how to build strong and effective research collaborations. This could lead to the creation of guidelines, not only about *what to do* to facilitate better collaborations (processes of research design), but also about *how to be* (attributes of successful collaborators), which could be developed into educational resources for early career researchers and creative SMEs. There may also be potential for applying this learning more widely in other fields of project co-design and partnership-building work, beyond the narrow context of research collaborations between academics and artists.

“ We are developing a better understanding of our respective practice/skillsets and how we can apply these most effectively in face to face sessions and workshops. This in turn is giving us a clearer understanding of how we best meet the needs and interests of different groups of young people, so that we can plan our aims and activities accordingly. ”

Ashley Jay Brockwell  
Founder and CEO,  
Green Spiral Consulting



## CASE STUDIES

For some of the mini-projects funded by The Exchange, the legacies were so diverse and extensive that a thematic analysis cannot do them justice and they deserve separate case studies of their own. We have aimed to include those projects that stood out from the others because of the breadth and/or depth of their impact – creating new art forms; new ways to collaborate and co-create; new fields of transdisciplinary research; or new techniques that push the boundaries of what is possible in creative practice – while also showcasing the diversity of people and projects supported by The Exchange. However, the choice of these specific projects as case studies should not be taken as implying that other projects were ‘less successful’, or had no transformative impact. It is also important to remember that project impact is a dynamic, ever-evolving landscape, and that the ‘ripple effects’ of collaborative research often continue to be felt long after the projects themselves have ended.

## Developing Sensography – The Open Online Theatre

This project was created by IJAD Dance Company in partnership with Dr Pauline Brooks, Reader in Dance Performance and Pedagogy, and Professor Andrew Newsam, Professor of Astrophysics, both at Liverpool John Moores University.

IJAD Dance Company is a fluid collective of people who collaborate to take the latest technology and find ways of integrating it into performance work. It was founded in 1999 by Joumana Mourad, a choreographer of Lebanese heritage who is committed to changing people's perceptions of the Middle East – drawing attention to its vibrant culture and creativity – and working towards gender equality in the profession of choreography. The word 'IJAD' is Sufi and means 'meant to be', referring to the inevitability of technology integrating with art. Joumana defines 'Sensography' as "the ability not just to form a connection with the live audience, but to have a relationship with a viewer through a camera". The goal of Developing Sensography or Triple Choreography was to explore how to build a choreographic architecture strong enough to translate across digital media and which responds to audience input and co-creation, by creating a democratic dance practice that blends emotion and technique. The phrase 'triple choreography' refers to the simultaneous use of three platforms: (a) physical platforms (theatre, site-specific works); (b) social media (Twitter, Vine, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram); and (c) live online streaming of the performance in 360 degrees from a minimum of four different angles.

This ambitious project was structured in three phases:

**Phase 1:** Building an online platform with creative design studio Citrus Suite to revolutionize communication between artist and audience, whilst also testing the digital space and evaluating the quality of audience engagement through an outreach programme developed with FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology), Liverpool.

**Phase 2:** Developing sensography (choreography tailored specifically for online streaming in 360 degrees) with Dr Pauline Brooks and other international partners in the field of digital and collaborative dance practice.

**Phase 3:** Creating a performance-based installation exploring microgravity to bring together the learning and development from the first two phases. The performance Walk Into Space was set against a backdrop of real-time views of space via satellite telescope, turning the performance space, the dancers and the audience into stars, planets and satellites.



Images from the performance of Walk Into Space at FACT Liverpool, January 2017. Photos by Caprice Burcher. Performers: (a) Chiara Corbetta, (b) Neus Gill Cortes and Andre Rebello.

Within Phase 2, one of the key challenges was how to deal with the sensography of the choreography and the sensography of the subject and technique. This effectively meant working on two projects at the same time – one to develop material in a creative environment that used live performers working in different performance platforms, and the other to consider the technical skills that dancers need to be familiar with in order to perform in these different platforms – and constantly switching between them.

The online platform developed for Walk Into Space has since evolved into the world's first Open Online Theatre (OOT: [www.openonlinetheatre.org](http://www.openonlinetheatre.org)). The impact of this project has been far-reaching, effectively inventing a new global art form based on collective creativity. As the project website explains it:

“Our creation, Open Online Theatre, is a new way of creating performance art. It’s a space where audiences can interact with artists to create performances together, no matter where they are in the world. It’s connected to existing social media platforms (such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest), meaning you can interact with art through the online platforms you’re already using. You can also watch social streams, comment and co-create within the platform itself.”

Described in a short video (not yet publicly available) as a ‘live art revolution’, OOT offers artists and choreographers an unparalleled opportunity to work from anywhere and reach everywhere. It also brings professional dance and theatre within the reach of people who may never be able to attend a live performance, such as those who have a severe disability or live in remote rural areas.

Yet it goes deeper than merely sharing completed work: through open rehearsals, OOT invites people to feed into the creative process by responding to tasks through social media, thus shaping the final performance.

In November 2017, ten national and international artists were invited to participate in the first Open Online Theatre training programme. One of them commented that OOT gives choreographers the ability to conduct real rehearsals from their own home, while inviting input from a wider audience at the same time – thus reducing the cost of making high-quality art.

“We are the bridge between the choreographers and any population anywhere in the world. Tonight we have Malaysia with us, Argentina, Lebanon, Qatar, France, Canada, Japan, Brazil, Cyprus – and Cornwall! And all of this has become possible through the Open Online Theatre, a new platform to be used...”

The training package included three days of structured training in how to use sensography (choreography tailored specifically for online streaming) across multiple platforms; work with cameras and film editing in live performance; and use social media for co-creativity. It offered one-to-one choreographic support from IJAD Director Joumana Mourad, and bespoke social media support to help the trainees to maximise their social network reach, increasing audiences and co-creation opportunities.

Participants in the training created a total of five public performances using the Open Online Theatre platform.

**#STARe:Selfboundversion** by Rebecca Marta D’Andrea (three performances): This “solo-non solo” explored the concept of the body as a live archive embedded in a constant flux of transformation: “Can dance have more dimensional layers contained within the present moment? How can this process shift our paradigm of time and space?”

**Marie Yagami** (one performance): Marie’s creative process with OOT began from reconstructing an original 40-minute piece for 8 dancers into a 15-minute solo performance on the theme of natural disaster, in collaboration with @davidfromSaintMartinisland, who had recently experienced hurricane Irma. It explored feelings, emotions, textures, memories and sounds, and an imagined seeing of the past self.

**BLINK open rehearsal** (two performances): By GRIT Dance Company and led by Rob Mennear, it was based on research into male isolation. The audience was invited to answer the question: “Physically, what must an environment have to make it one of isolation?” The dance was created through engagement with the replies.

**CAGE**, Eleni Mylona’s first solo performance, explored the close relationship between sadness and happiness – “one cannot exist without the other” – and how it translates into movement. The piece also explored the theme of contradiction in music and lyrics, and how to express it in movement.

**#OOTmakers**, an invitation-only celebration of new work created using the Open Online Theatre, took place at Rich Mix, London, on 21 November 2017.

Following the success of Walk Into Space, the project team invested a significant amount of time and energy into a Wellcome Trust funding bid. To their disappointment, the bid was rejected with no feedback. The team is currently seeking funding for three new streams of work, building on the research into science and movement that underpinned Walk Into Space:

- a) A pop-up Gravity Motion Playground to help young people and families understand how the physics of gravity can be applied to their health and wellbeing. This would be a sustainable project, using reclaimed or public space in the community to create a playground built from recycled materials.
- b) A series of science-based movement workshops for school-age children and older people to build body confidence, encourage regular movement and demonstrate the accessibility of dance.
- c) An outdoor workshop for primary-age children to help them understand the basics of neural networks, using the ingestion of plants to explore affect.

## Artists Rethinking the Blockchain

This expanded project by Furtherfield and Manchester Metropolitan University focused on the social, ethical and artistic implications of emerging blockchain technologies (digital exchanges of assets), and explored the potential for the blockchain to transform the arts sector and vice versa. The initial Exchange grant supported a one-day workshop for ten artists that explored blockchain in broad terms (resulting in an increase in shared interdisciplinary knowledge about blockchain-related concepts, latest developments in applications and markets, and possible societal impacts). Plus two subsequent workshops focusing on context and literature review, which provided an understanding of new opportunities for publishing processes attached to the blockchain.

An early output from these workshops was *Bad Shibe*, an illustrated cryptofutures novella written by Rob Myers, illustrated by Lina Theodorou and published by Furtherfield (<https://robmyers.org/bad-shibe/>).

As part of this workshop process, the team issued an open call for contributions to a book, and launched a successful crowdfunder to raise £560 in match funding for a Grants for the Arts (GftA) application to Arts Council England. A further £650 contribution was received from FACT Liverpool and the GftA bid for £6,000 was successful. The book, *Artists Re:Thinking the Blockchain*, edited by Ruth Catlow, Marc Garrett, Nathan Jones and Sam Skinner, is now available for purchase, with the UK paperback edition published by Liverpool University Press in September 2017 and a US edition to be published in 2018.

The book includes documentation of artistic projects, theoretical interventions and new poetry, illustration and speculative fiction. There is a proto-blockchain artwork by Prof Chris Speed and the Design Informatics Department at Edinburgh University embedded throughout the book (using machine/app-readable matrix barcode for the print version), that enables readers to ‘like’ different parts of the book – sub-linked to a financial trading algorithm – and build their own financial portfolio. There is also a ‘Finbook’ interface where readers and bots can trade on the value of chapters included in the book. Launch events were held in London, Liverpool and Edinburgh, and the book was mentioned in an op-ed in *Art Review*. The first print run sold out and 750 additional copies were printed.

In collaboration with the Digital Catapult Centre, the team also created a seven-minute film, *Blockchain: Change Everything Forever*, about the social implications of Blockchain. It is available on YouTube and has been viewed almost 14,000 times at the date of writing this report. A member of the project team was told by a South American arts and technology activist that the film



Furtherfield's Live Action Role Play event at the Moneylab Conference and Symposium.

was “circulating the web as THE film to watch about the future impact of Blockchain”.

The film was discussed by Dr Catherine Mulligan, Research Fellow and Co-Director of the Imperial College Centre for Cryptocurrency Research and Engineering, as “a deeper dive into the real implications of blockchain on the economy, society and life” and “an excellent and much needed exploration of the technology – one that did not take a technological, deterministic perspective.”

Another activity that took place as part of the expanded project, which would not have been possible without the initial seed funding from The Exchange, was a Live Action Role Play event entitled The Road to Budgetary Blockchain Bliss. This was run by Ruth Catlow (Furtherfield) and Ben Vickers (Serpentine Galleries) for 35+ participants in the Moneylab Conference and Symposium at the Institute of Network Cultures.

The Exchange also fed into the thinking for the DAOWO Blockchain Laboratory and Debate Series for Reinventing the Arts, which “brings together artists, musicians, technologists, engineers and theorists to join forces in the interrogation and production of new blockchain technologies... to understand how blockchain might be used to enable a critical, sustainable and empowered culture, that transcends the emerging hazards and limitations of pure market speculation of cryptoeconomics” (<http://www.daowo.org>). Two events have taken place and four more are scheduled for 2018.

Project partner Nathan Jones, based in Liverpool, submitted a funding application to ACE for a Grants for the Arts award for £14,000. This was unfortunately rejected (with feedback that the application was of a good standard, but on this occasion other applications were preferred).

Another partner, Sam Skinner, is currently writing a new application to ACE for a Grants for the Arts to be submitted to the London office for a substantially revised project. This focuses more on delivering a successful publication and series of launch events, and the amount requested has been reduced to £8,000.

At a meta-level, the workshops, film, book and DAOWO programme represent the formation of an interdisciplinary and cross-sector hub of people and organisations dedicated to thinking through and implementing more critical approaches, drawing on artistic methods and processes, for considering the social impacts and implications of this new technology.

Furtherfield has drawn on the learning to devise workshops and labs as part of the Creative Europe network, and to install an exhibition at Furtherfield Gallery in May-June 2017, which will tour to Aksioma Institute of Contemporary Art in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and Drugo More in Rijeka, Croatia. The network is likely to expand further in the future, representing a significant contribution to discourse and practice at the interface of technology, economics, ethics and the arts.



## Harewood's Electricity Story

This project, co-designed by Ann Sumner of Harewood House Trust and Dr Michael Kay, a postdoctoral researcher in the Centre for History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Leeds, investigated stories and artefacts associated with the history of electricity at Harewood House, and developed workshops, resources and exhibitions. The project highlighted the important role of Princess Mary, 6th Countess of Harewood, in electrifying the house, and fed into discussions about the wider role of women in bringing electricity to English country houses in the early part of the twentieth century.

The Harewood mini-project team responded enthusiastically to The Exchange's distinctive brief of reflecting together on how to collaborate. In Dr Kay's research-based blog *Electrifying the Country House*, he writes as follows:

“In funding new collaborative projects, a key focus of the Exchange is not just on the project outcomes, but on the ways the partners think about collaborating in order to deliver these outcomes. The idea that effective collaborations can be designed from the beginning of a project is something which partners are encouraged to explore together, and so early on in our project I sat down with Ann Sumner, Historic Collections Advisor at Harewood, Zoe White, Education Manager and Rebecca Burton, Collections Assistant, to think about how best we could collaborate, and what the benefits for all of us would be.

a) The actors interacting with the visitors, b) Kids investigating the objects from Artemis. Photos by Michael Kay.



“For this the Exchange provided a framework to help us think about how to formulate three ‘principles of collaboration’ which would help us to plan how we would work together, and against which we would measure our success as we moved through the project. Each principle was to entail one or two expected benefits for one or both partners. The framework encouraged us to consider the values that we held in common and the ways in which we hoped to benefit from the collaboration – not just from the project itself – and to turn these into commitments to guide our work on the project.

“For our first principle of collaboration, we thought that it was important to be able to understand each other’s respective work environments, and in particular to understand each other’s heritage collections and what we do with them. As well as Harewood’s extensive collections of art, artefacts and archival resources, the University also has collections such as the Museum of the History of Science, Technology and Medicine, which include old electrical artefacts many of which were used in local Yorkshire schools to teach physics around the turn of the twentieth century...”

The mini-project team used the research findings to create various lighting displays and exhibitions of artefacts in different rooms; information sheets to accompany them; training notes for volunteers; and a ‘Below Stairs’ trail to reinterpret and enhance an existing display for visitors. A script was developed for a live drama performance and related Below Stairs activities at Harewood itself in August 2016, with three costumed actors – Mrs Merton the housekeeper, Mr Symes the electrician and Betty the maid – who also moved round the house and interacted with visitors. This proved very popular with visitors, giving the creative partner a greater appreciation of the role that such interpretive approaches could play in Harewood’s public-facing work and creating a potential programming focus for 2019.

In addition to the work at the house itself, workshops were also conducted with IntoUniversity (an organisation that works to inspire underprivileged children

and young people to aspire to higher education) and the University of Leeds Heritage Open Day. Feedback from IntoUniversity was very positive, and the organisation reported that the 25 participating young people (who were all Black and Minority Ethnic and came from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage) gained a lot from interacting with the performers and working with the museum objects. In the words of an IntoUniversity staff member:

“The students really enjoyed handling the old electrical items. It sparked some interesting thoughts as to what life would have been like in the past, which they might not have been aware of or appreciated before. The performance was an excellent way to engage the children and communicate the changes of the country house. [...] It was a really well planned event, delivered with great enthusiasm...”

In their self-evaluation, the mini-project team commented that they had learnt better ways of conducting the session for next time. Including things which worked well, such as the object handling, and points for improvement, such as the way in which they set out the objects beforehand and ran the Q&A session. It also gave both partners a confidence boost, particularly as this was new territory for the creative partner.

A workshop was also developed for the Heritage Open Day at the University of Leeds, but this was poorly attended. The research team reported on their learning in relation to the difficulties of running an event at the University on a weekend outside of term time, stating that in future they would try to avoid this, and either do more to promote the University event at Harewood House or focus solely on running an event for a specific booked group.

Reflecting on the project as a whole, the academic partner reported that they had increased their knowledge of the history of electricity at Harewood House and that it had been very beneficial to have the experience of collaborating with partners outside academia and invoicing as a freelancer. The creative partner felt that the project had strengthened their existing relationship with the University of Leeds, and that it had been useful for them to discover the Artemis object loans facility: what they have, procedures for borrowing objects, logistics and costings. Both partners stated that they had gained experience and confidence in working with performers. The research has been a springboard for a new £300,000 funding bid to the Arts and Humanities Research Council, co-designed by both partners.

## Who Takes The Rap?

This collaboration between artist Rehana Zaman and academic researcher Gill Park (University of Leeds) focused on how groups and individuals are affected by social dynamics. Throughout the project, this became an important focus for discussion – drawing on both partners’ previous experiences of working with community groups, working with institutions and collaborating with peers. Some of these conversations were framed within Gill’s PHD research exploring how feminist art organisations such as Pavilion or exhibitions centred around identity politics such as Testimony, a black women’s photography exhibition from 1986, negotiated social dynamics.

At the start of the project, the partners designed a three-day residency for themselves to address their first aim of getting to know each other’s work and research interests. They also invited two other curators/academics with an interest in questions of race, gender and collectivity. The residency involved participating in reading groups, watching films together, walking, talking and engaging in reflective activities. This helped them to identify a shared focus: how to facilitate positive group dynamics within an arts setting.

Through this public screening Gill contextualised Rehana’s film Sharla Shabarna Sojourner Selena (a series of narratives from the perspective of racially diverse women waiting for treatments in a beauty salon) by selecting other works to show alongside it, and presenting a short talk relating it to a history of art addressing labour, gender and technology.

The Exchange’s overarching theme of ‘how to collaborate’ carried particular resonance for the participants in this particular mini-project. Specifically, the question about challenges and barriers to collaboration stimulated an ongoing strand of conversation. One participant writes:

“The challenges or barriers to collaboration was a subject that we were interested in and recognised from the beginning. Therefore identifying and discussing these challenges became a focus point for the project and something that we will explore in our on-going work together.

“We were interested in what it means to work together as a group, workshop settings, particularly in the arts when ‘group participation’ is often part of the engagement strategies of galleries. We were also interested in collaboration as a feminist strategy that has a long and important history and the potential of, for example, consciousness-raising groups as ways of addressing the power relations implicit within groups.

“We talked a lot in our meetings about group dynamics – for example, the way in which leaders are sought and appointed within a group, often unconsciously – and the relationship of group dynamics to questions of race and gender. The theories of Wilfred Bion were of particular interest to us.

Installation view of *Bad Practice: A Centre for Collective Action* at Gallery II, 2017. Image courtesy of Rehana Zaman.



“We recognised, through having an opportunity to reflect on the politics of collaborative working, that while being honest about experiences of groups is difficult – requiring a certain amount of vulnerability – it leads to better working relations and for power dynamics to be acknowledged. We found such self-reflection challenging at times, but that ultimately it made for better working.”

The film screening with a group of women refugees living in Leeds proved particularly eye-opening for the research team, as they explained in their self-evaluation:

“It made us think about the high level of skills this group has and how often refugees are thought of as people who are service-users rather than people who have something very useful to contribute to a wider community. The idea of skills-exchange is forming the basis for an exhibition that we are planning as the result of this project... Through [conversations] we developed our knowledge of women’s and refugee groups working in Bradford. We have identified a number of groups to work with on an ongoing basis.”

The mini-project team was expanded into an artist collective called Bad Practice, involving two additional artists (Amy Charlesworth and Louise Shelley) alongside the original co-researchers. This collective was successful in securing a £4,000 Grants for the Arts award from Arts Council England via Bradford University Gallery II.

Their March 2017 installation Bad Practice: A Centre for Collective Action included Rehana’s film alongside two others that also relate to work, learning and knowledge, especially as experienced by women: *Cycles* by Zainabu Irene Davis (1989), focusing on a Caribbean woman’s domestic rituals and monologue reflections on menstruation, and *Women Work* by East Leeds Women’s Workshop (1984), using archival footage to illustrate the cultural biases experienced by women in and out of the workplace. The commission also included two murals, one on an exterior wall and the other in the entranceway, as well as colourful

icons adorning the gallery walls.

During the exhibition, the gallery was transformed into an Internet café that was used as a base for skills-sharing workshops with local groups addressing questions of technology and visibility in relation to race and gender. These included, among others, short courses on furniture making and a radical ESOL class, and work by City of Sancturay and BIASAN (Bradford Immigration & Asylum Support & Advice Network) shown during Refugee Week.

In addition to providing the academic partner (Gill Park) with a better understanding of good practice when working with artists and community groups, this project also offered her an opportunity to make connections between the histories of feminist art practices from the 1980s (the subject of her research) and contemporary practices, which has directly informed her ongoing writing. For the creative partner, the project's main legacy was the development of a new film to be shown at the Tenderpixel Gallery in London. There was also an important element of socio-economic impact, in the form of a cinema club that has been established by Meeting Point Leeds as an ongoing part of their activity for refugees and asylum seekers – recognising art, and especially film, as an important tool for engagement and empowerment.

## Reveal: Coming Out Visually

The Reveal project used art to explore the sensitive topic of recovery from substance use among three doubly-marginalised and often ‘invisible’ groups: (a) people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT+); (b) members of the South Asian community; and (c) people who identify as dual diagnosis. It was rooted in the Recoverist Manifesto, a collective statement bringing together the voices of people in recovery from the UK, Italy and Turkey, which was facilitated and written by Clive Parkinson from the Manchester School of Art in collaboration with Portraits of Recovery, as born out of an EU Life Long Learning project led by PORE called I AM: Art as an Agent for Change. Its aim, through the direct voice of those in recovery, is the emancipatory re-framing of addiction and recovery identities, and it refers to people “not as passively ‘in recovery’, but as Recoverists”. Creative lead Mark Prest, the founder of Portraits of Recovery, described the underlying philosophy of the project as follows:

“In recovery they talk about a need to leave the past behind, because if you do what you’ve always done, things will always be the same – but I find that quite a troublesome concept. In terms of a person who might have an interest in creativity, what I believe [art] does is through harnessing those existing cultural assets as transferable from the old life to the new. It awakens a language that speaks to self, or makes sense... What’s been really important to me is the realisation that I’m making more sense of what happened to me, through the language of art – looking at art as a language of activism for cultural and social change, and that then feeds into Recoverism... The heart of what we do is that our work contributes to an emerging cultural identity for the UK’s recovery community.”

Funding from The Exchange served as a foundation stone for a larger project, by allowing Mark to build a working relationship with visual anthropologist and film-maker Professor Amanda Ravetz (Manchester School of Art), and to facilitate a series of workshops with artists and people in recovery from substance use. Within the LGBT+ commission led by avant-garde performance artist David Hoyle, they identified a “radical approach to mental health beyond the



traditional ‘therapist/client’ dynamic”: in this instance the wearing of fruit and vegetable costumes created caring spaces of mutuality and trust for self-disclosure, equalising the co-participants in dialogues around LGBT+ recovery from substance use. Greg, a participant in the workshops, was inspired to write an article for FEAST Journal in which he described the experience as follows:

“Supporting artist Jackie’s fruit and vegetable costumes make our meal into a banquet, as a costume does. We were brought to peals of laughter more than once, especially when the conversation turned serious, to anxiety, eating disorders, childhood violence, the arms trade, and the cognitive dissonance of hearing these sad and angry tales shared by a giant lemon reduced us to hysterics!”

While they were intended as a space for research and development, focusing on developing a concept and a proposal for a wider project, the Exchange-funded workshops also had important impacts of their own. As explained by Adele, one of the participants:

“I was massively inspired by the amazing lead LGBT artist David Hoyle. As the group Reveal, we were able to see David perform his autobiographical piece Diamond. To witness his vulnerability and historical pain portrayed so vividly and sensitively really helped me. Two weeks later and because of this I felt able to perform ‘A is for.’ at the Wonder Women festival at Manchester Art Gallery.”

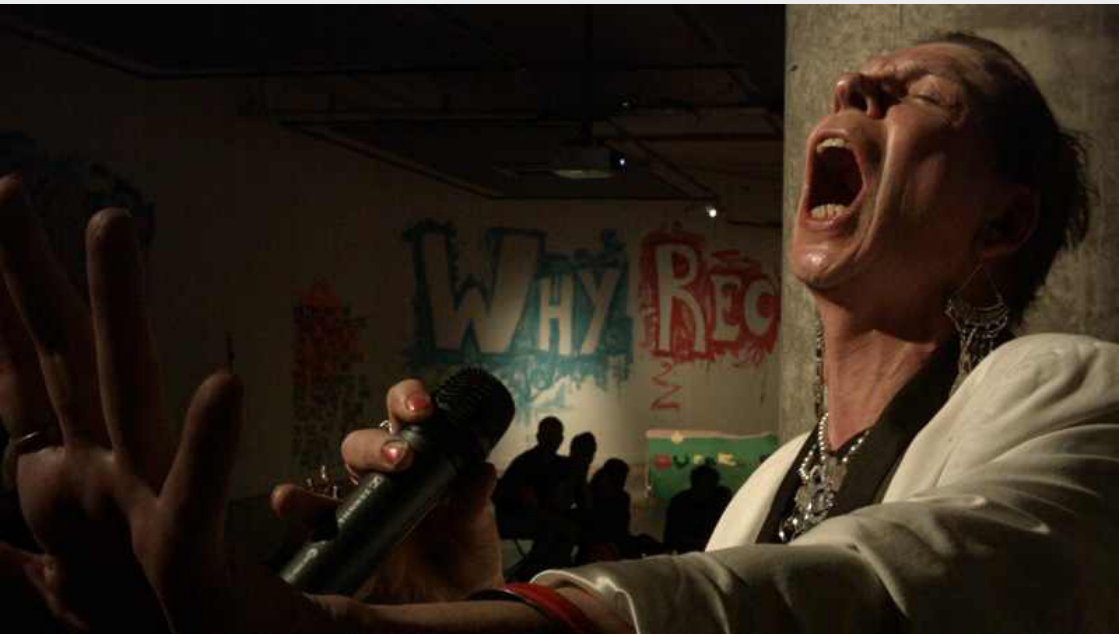
The second-phase project, entitled UNSEEN: Simultaneous Realities, was funded jointly by Superbia (the cultural arm of Manchester Pride), Arts Council England, and Awards for All through the Big Lottery. It focused on three separate commissions, one addressing each strand:

**LGBT+ strand:** A 40-minute film, *My Recoverist Family*, directed, filmed and edited by Amanda Ravetz and Huw Wahl. It followed the Reveal group as they worked with avant-garde performance artist David Hoyle, supporting artist

Jackie Haynes and director Nick Blackburn to co-create and author a live art performance event entitled *Apples and Other Fruit* as delivered within the main gallery space at HOME Manchester. A second, interventionist market stall, arts event called *Sustenance* was delivered at Manchester Pride 2017. Their involvement reframed them from being seen only as ‘recovering addicts’ to being acknowledged as equal participants, collaborators and artists in their own right. Arrived at through a process of ‘nomadic’ art making with supporting artist Jackie Haynes, and with ideas generated via trips to Southport, Platt Hall Gallery of Costume and Manchester’s Gay Village, a group of artists, Recoverists and makers came together to confront the existing narratives of recovery and ask “what lies beyond?”

**South Asian strand:** *Out of the Place and at the Margins: One Hundred Songs for Kneeze and Vijay* by Sutapa Biswas was a temporary neon public art installation at the Rochdale Bus Station Interchange, plus a sister piece accompanied by a poem and mixed media work shown at the Touchstone Gallery. It was inspired by Biswas’s work with a small group of South Asian men from the Rochdale area who are in recovery from substance use, and includes testimony of growing up in a culture steeped in a colonial past; the continuing perpetuation of racism in Britain; and conflicting concerns around the culture of masculinity. It also highlights the significance of a mother’s voice and the importance of their role in recovery. A mother-and-son interview was broadcast on Radio 4 Woman’s Hour.

David Hoyle performing at HOME Manchester. Film still from *My Recoverist Family*, directed by Amanda Ravetz and Huw Wahl, 2017.



**Dual Diagnosis strand:** This work, commissioned from the interactive and Leeds-based arts organisation Invisible Flock, is still in development at the time of writing, having received additional funding from Awards for All.

The match funding from Superbia allowed the team to develop Sustenance, an arts-based market stall intervention, as a side event to Manchester Pride. It opened a liminal space within that event for LGBT+ people in recovery. This was created in recognition that people in recovery often don't attend Pride events because they feel there is no offering for them. The stall followed the theme of finding alternative forms of sustenance beyond 'substance', which had been developed during the initial Exchange-funded workshops and the UNSEEN commissions. The arts stall offered free portraits by lead artist David Hoyle, hand and shoulder massages by participant artist Another Adele and engaging conversation led by poet Justin Freeman, and it gave away apples.

The collaboration between Portraits of Recovery and the Manchester School of Art is ongoing. Plus a new project is in development with the working title of 'Recoverist Incubator', unpacking Recoverism in terms of looking at Brexit as an isolationist stance, and connectedness as a gateway to the future. The ambition is for the project to be centred on Manchester (as the birthplace for a number of historic social movements, as well as for Recoverism as a new way of thinking, living and being) but national in scope, and focusing on concepts of community and social cohesion.

Talking specifically about the legacies of the initial Exchange project, Mark Prest revealed that it had allowed him the opportunity to step back into his artistic identity through performing in Apples and Other Fruit, and to explore his dual but not yet mutually balanced gay and recovery identities. A very personal outcome was that he had engaged in therapy-based personal development work around looking at bringing these two identities closer together.

Academic partner Amanda Ravetz reported that the project had allowed her to develop her research with people in recovery, giving her a broader perspective on the marginalisation of different groups who fall into this larger category, and a better understanding of the role of the arts in wellbeing. It generated new research questions around whether certain groups find visible recovery harder to be part of than others and why, and also provided new insights into the role played by the fellowship movement in recovery.

## Resonant Spaces

The Resonant Spaces project was a collaboration between Shelley James, a self-employed glass artist, and Scott McLaughlin, a composer and a lecturer in Composition and Music Technology at the University of Leeds, in partnership with concert pianist Rex Lawson, photographer/ videographer Mark Caldwell and physicist Sir Michael Berry (a world expert on caustics, the optical phenomena created when light shines through transparent materials such as glass or water).

The project pioneered an innovative new way of engaging audiences in the appreciation and co-production of contemporary live music, based on the principle of shining light through glass to create a ‘transparent score’ that is projected on to the wall of the venue. This was inspired initially by the coded language of pianola rolls, and entailed the development of a new technique for casting glass from 3D printed moulds to create a collection of original glass artworks for use in musical performances. The interaction of light and sound generates a deeply immersive and interactive experience, and potentially transforms the performance into a collaboration with the audience. As Shelley explained:

“In most music notation, the composer writes something down using a traditional stave or some new kind of code and the performer more or less sticks to the code, and the audience has no idea what it is. The musician and the space are the interpreters for the composer’s vision, the composer is sort of hidden behind a screen... Scott was interested in creating a kind of notation in which the way that the musician was reading the notation was transparent. You would modify the cello so that you tie up some of the strings, and give the musician words or poetry to guide the way they interpret it, and then this light is shining all round the room and changes very slowly and the audience can see. They’re enjoying watching the patterns but they can also see a system in the way the musician is interpreting that set of codes. They can also make up their own, so they can combine their own ways of interpretation.”

In addition to the advances in the fields of music performance and glass casting, this project has also generated innovations in photography and film. The unique challenge of taking photographs and video footage of complex scenes (including projections and multi-layered glass objects) in low light has catalysed the development of new techniques, which have been taken forward by the artist Mark Caldwell in a new body of work for his own PhD research.

The creation of the glass artworks was followed by two improvisation sessions. The first of these explored different options for interpreting projected scores, introduced the experimental approach to two music students with very different backgrounds, and created a video of the collaboration. The second, an improvised performance in an ‘underground’ music venue, engaged young musicians and music students in a collaborative workshop that introduced a new audience to new approaches to composition and improvisation. Some of these participants have remained engaged with the research area, with new working relationships going forward.

This session also provided an opportunity for Shelley’s intern to develop video editing skills, and tested and refined the photographic techniques developed to date.

The mini-project team devised and hosted a Continuing Professional Development workshop for 12 staff at Hoot, a community arts centre – projecting light patterns on to the walls, inviting the participants to sing and draw the patterns, and then encouraging movement. The participating staff greatly enjoyed the activity, and saw the value in having a creative stimulus that was completely abstract so that there was no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ way to interpret it. They felt that this would be very useful for working with clients who had low self-esteem or struggled with feeling judged.

At the time of completing the self-evaluation, Shelley and Scott had also organised other community arts workshops in the Huddersfield/Leeds area using glass artworks and light, and two further performances, entitled *Reciprocal Structures: Conversations in Light and Sound*, in London and Guildford. In addition, the team members were invited to participate in a conference on collaborative performance in Leeds that resulted in a new relationship with the experimental theatre team at University College, London.

This involved using a haze machine to complement the visual effects produced by the light projections in a collaborative performance event at the Bloomsbury Theatre, which was attended by drawing students from the University of Westminster as well UCL theatre students and musicians.



'Underground' music using the visual score. Photograph supplied by Shelley James.

A six-minute film entitled *Touching Light-Tapestries* was created at the Bloomsbury Theatre event by film-maker and interdisciplinary researcher Teresa Stehlikova, and has been entered for a short film competition.

The academic partner reported that in addition to strengthening his existing friendship with the creative partner and leading to new working relationships with the musicians, the project had also given him new connections and experience with glass-making and the physics of optics. He has developed a more sophisticated understanding of practice-as-research (in music and other art forms) and collaborative partnerships – both of which have since become very important in his research – and presented a conference paper and performance at an AHRC Network conference on collaboration in music composition. The team commented that the project had given them confidence in the value of taking time for collaborative research; experience of working in new environments; inspiration for future projects; and widened horizons: “outside the glass bubble”, as they put it.

For the creative partner, the project served as a foundation for the creation of new glass artworks, supported by Arts Council England and the Crafts Council, which grew out of a residency in the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural

Sciences at King's College, London in 2016. It extends Shelley's fascination with five-fold symmetry and research into a new generation of molecular structures that respond to light. This project was supported by Arts Council England and the Crafts Council and was installed for the first time at Collect at the Saatchi Gallery in February 2017.

Another significant legacy was the evolution of Shelley's artistic career in a new direction. Having spent time experimenting with lighting effects through this project, she decided to learn more about lighting and electricity, took City and Guilds qualifications in Electrical Installations and In-Service Inspection of Electrical Equipment, and set up a new company called Doctor Shock. She is currently working with an immersive performance company to create a lighting installation for a touring show, collaborating with craftspeople on lighting for pop-up shows, and helping artists and collectors to create bespoke lighting installations that interact with their artworks. New performances and installations are currently being developed for the Royal Albert Hall, the Edinburgh Festival, and the Imperial Science Festival.

## Staying Vital

The Staying Vital mini-project had its roots in 50 Moves, a dance class for people over 50 that was first established by the Merseyside Dance Initiative in 2008 and now has 25 members. The project was led by MDI director Karen Gallagher and dance teacher Jennie Hale in partnership with Dr Pauline Brooks from Liverpool John Moores University. It set out to gain a better understanding of the impact of the class on group members' lives: whether they perceived it as 'just an exercise class' or were engaged with the creative aspect of dance, and whether their perceptions of the class and their reasons for coming had changed since they had begun working with a professional choreographer in 2016.

The Exchange funding enabled MDI to organise an event called Vital within the Leap Dance Festival, bringing dance groups from across the North of England to participate in a joint performance event and a discussion group (led by Chris Stenton, director of People Dancing) about why people dance and what the creative side of dance class brings.

From there, the participants in 50 Moves were encouraged to keep diaries about why they come to class and what they gain from the sessions. One of the key findings of this research was the importance of the social aspect, with friendships forged during the dance class often becoming an important source of support for the participants.

a) Some of the members of the 50 Moves dance group (photograph supplied by Jennie Hale, Merseyside Dance Initiative),  
b) Performance at the Sadler's Wells Elixir Festival 2017.





An exciting development arose for the mini-project when the 50 Moves dance group was selected to perform in the Elixir festival at Sadler's Wells. The combination of the diary-based research and the preparation of the performance for this festival contributed to a significant shift in the way the participants thought about themselves, their dancing, and the creative process. As Jennie Hale, the dance teacher, explained it:

“It made them open to the changes that we’ve been through as a group, and to recognise that, and it also opened up what they think about when they think about creating movement... When we started making work, we’d have a song, a track, and we’d have quite a set routine that everybody did to the dance. Whereas the piece we made for Sadler’s Wells through this process was really about women and their place in society and how women can sometimes be hidden in our society and the jobs they do. This was through discussions with the group themselves, so we really looked into the context of movement rather than it just being for movement’s sake. Movement had a meaning and a story to tell, that really opened up how they looked at the piece we were making, and they were willing to contribute a lot more to the process. They’d think about what we’d been doing in class and come back, so they’d offer a lot more to the process and to the class. So it provided space and time for them to think about it in a different way.”

In addition to continuing with their diaries for the research, participants were filmed throughout this process, and a short film was made (not yet publicly available) to showcase the work of MDI and the importance of creative activity for older people. There were some very moving stories. One woman, for example, had recovered from breast cancer and then lost her partner, but found the group a real support in her life. She had asked Jennie to create a solo dance for her and film it, so that she would have something to keep and look back on when she was no longer able to dance, and she was gaining a lot of confidence within the group.

Another important insight arising from the mini-project was that the 50 Moves group was all-female – although it hadn't originally been planned that way. It prompted the founders to establish a new dance group, specifically targeting men over the age of 50. Due to the impact on confidence, self-esteem and the reduction of social isolation that had been revealed in the research with the women, MDI was successful in securing a grant of £3000 to start the men's group, which they hope will become self-sustaining through contributions from its members. This new group now has nine members who attend regularly, and is working towards its first performance in April.

The film created through The Exchange will be used by MDI for further fundraising, with a view to expanding the 50 Moves class to new areas. The vision is to establish 'satellite' classes in other boroughs of Liverpool, including St Helens and Wirral, in which some of the members of the original group would take on a mentoring role – further boosting their confidence, and helping them to develop leadership skills.

The Exchange was a project that engaged the effort and goodwill of too many people to name individually, but special thanks must go to Pam Johnson at Arts Council England, David Sweeney and Steven Hill at UKRI, Matt Jennings at Office for Students, Ben Doyle at Palgrave McMillan, Joanna Dunster at AHRC, Tom Holley, Neha Maktar, Pete Mitchell and Georgina Potts for TCCE and of course all The Exchange Pilot Partner Organisations:

• Birmingham City University • Canterbury Christ Church University • De Montfort University • Falmouth University • Lancaster University • Liverpool John Moores University • Plymouth University • University of Surrey • University of East Anglia • University of Exeter • University of Kent • Northumbria University • University of Leeds • University of Oxford • People Dancing • Independent Theatre Council • Sound and Music • Axis Web

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