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Goldsmiths College, University of London**

Taking Part Case Study: Stream Arts

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About The Taking Part Research Cluster

Taking Part is the new ESRC research cluster for developing high quality research and a critical mass around active citizenship and community empowerment with the Third Sector. The cluster has a particular emphasis upon enabling the voices of the most disadvantaged groups to be heard effectively, as part of wider agendas for social change, social solidarity and social justice (See appendix 1 for more detail).

About CUCR

The case study was conducted by Dr Alison Rooke and Cristina Garrido Sanchez from the Centre for Urban and Community Research (CUCR). CUCR is an academic research centre within the sociology department at Goldsmiths, University of London. The Centre's research work includes long-term research contracts for research councils and major charities and shorter-term pieces of work for local government, central government and regeneration agencies. (See Appendix 1 for more detail).

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1 Introduction

The Stream Arts case study was chosen as it offers an interesting example of an arts organisation which has a long-term engagement with local communities, in a borough which has undergone large-scale urban development and regeneration. Stream's work in commissioning participative and collaborative art is particularly interesting to the research questions. This is a field where debates about the relationship between art and community empowerment, and the terms of through which art practice should be evaluated is the focus of considerable debate. This case study focuses on Stream Arts as an organisation and two Stream Arts commissions: *Now Hear This* by The Holy Mountain, and *A-X* by the artists *gethan&myles*. Both projects belong to Stream Arts' *Peninsula* programme, of artist's commissions that aim to engage local communities in creative responses to the political, economical and physical changes of the Peninsula Ward in the London Borough of Greenwich and two of their commissions: *Now Hear This* and *A to X*. These commissions were examples of art which brought together research-led arts practice, local opinion and the politics of regeneration in particularly interesting ways.

Our research methods were qualitative and included;

- A kick off meeting with Stream Arts' Director to agree the research questions and methodology
- Attending events from the two case studies (installation days, launch events, community events).
- Interviews with the Critical Friends
- Interviews with artists *gethan&myles* and Bob Temple Morris
- Interviews with Stream Arts staff: Isabel Lilly (Director), and Rohini Malik Okon (projects manager)
- And a review of relevant literature (Internal reports from Stream Arts, and policy and academic literature on art and citizenship).

1.1 Aims of the research

The project research aims are;

- To provide a subtle and relevant analysis of how active citizenship and community empowerment could be understood in relation to Stream Arts' creative projects
- To assist Stream Arts in developing more robust methodologies for collecting data/evidence in relation to the above
- To provide evidence from case studies of active citizenship and community empowerment
- To improve Stream Art's performance in relation to promoting active citizenship and community empowerment
- To develop Stream Arts' research capacity

2 Socially engaged art practice and citizenship

There is a long history of arts practice which has worked with communities. The origin of this community arts tradition whose origin can be located in the late-1960s. This kind of work has been prolific in the United States, Canada, the UK, Ireland and Australia. Historically community art projects have often been based in deprived areas, with a community oriented, grassroots approach. The broad aims of community arts, has been one of opening up the

means of cultural production to all, rather than a more distanced experience of spectatorship and contemplation, in the recognition that art can provide a mode of expression and a space of critical pedagogy. The community arts movement has undergone considerable criticism within art theory, being considered socially worthy but aesthetically inferior to art produced by the artist and displayed in spaces of high culture¹. This understanding of community art is also reflected in the ways that art is evaluated, as having social and educational instrumental value, but little inherent artistic merit.

Elements of the community arts tradition have been revitalised and reimagined in recent years as socially-engaged art reflecting a considerable shift in the ways that art is defined in society and by artists themselves. Rather than being confined to the studio or the gallery much of contemporary art is *concerned with and located in social contexts* and working with social actors. This kind of art is characterised by a commitment to participation and collaboration, i.e. doing something together. A lot of this kind artwork produces moments or objects which create sociability (gardens, feasts, meals, market stalls, and shops) but crucially it puts social and cultural theory to work in curating exhibitions and events within and outside the gallery in a social and aesthetic form. It rethinks art in relation to society, linking intersubjective experience with social or political activism. A central concern is the *kind of knowledge aesthetic experience is capable of producing* (Kester 2004). In other words, in *taking part* in the art a new kind of knowledge is produced. Here, in Nicholas Bourriard's terms (drawing on Marx), art is a *social interstice*, it opens up a space in human relations which fits more or less harmoniously and openly in the overall system, but suggests other possibilities of exchange other than those in effect within this system (Bourriard 2002). Much of this socially engaged or relational art turns the nature of relations within late capitalism into an issue and often suggesting other ways of being. The most successful examples of this work have affective power bringing together aesthetic experience, critical commentary and social context.

The 'social' in socially engaged practice is not merely a matter of involving members of society or specific communities in art production making. It also refer to art which takes the social world as its topic for reflection and as resource for the collaborative production of artworks. Nicolas Bourriard's concept of Relational Aesthetics², Grant H Kester's Dialogical Aesthetics³, and Claire Bishop's⁴ interest in their efforts as part of her critique of socially engaged art practice are all significant contributors to these discussions.

For the purposes of this research we are concerned with the above issues as part of a consideration of the ways that art organisation might address and engage with matters of citizenship. We are interested in what is distinct about the work of arts organisations engaging with local communities and the extent to which it differs from, or complements, community development work and other initiatives that have community engagement as a central logic. We are also concerned with understanding what socially engaged art practice can do that other forms of engagement practice cannot. A consideration of these questions needs to be fore grounded if we are to begin to evaluate socially engaged arts practice, and the ways that it is conceived, delivered in terms that acknowledge the significance and merit of the art work itself as well as the ways that it engages with matters of citizenship and education.

¹ Grant Kester (2004). *Conversation Pieces*. University of California Press, Berkley.

² Nicolas Bourriard (1998) *Relational Aesthetics*. Les Presse Du Reel.

³ Grant Kester (1998). *Dialogical Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Art*. Retrieved [12/03/11] from: <http://www.variant.ndtilda.co.uk/9texts/KesterSupplement.html>

⁴ Claire Bishop (2004). *Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics*. In *October*. 110, no. 1: 51-80. Claire Bishop (2006). *The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents*. In *Artforum*, Vol.44 Issue 6.

2.1 What do we mean by citizenship?

Before discussing the case study, it is worth setting out the various models used in current thinking about citizenship and its relation to the individual, state and society. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) identify three separate models of citizenship and citizenship education:

- the 'personally responsible citizen', for whom citizenship education increases their awareness of individual rights and responsibilities;
- the 'participatory citizen', for whom citizenship education also enhances their knowledge of participatory structures and rights; and
- the 'justice-orientated citizen' for whom citizenship education also adds a high level of awareness of collective rights, more widely, and a high level of collective political and social responsibility, including responsibilities to engage with issues of social justice and equality (Westheimer and Kahne 2004)⁵.

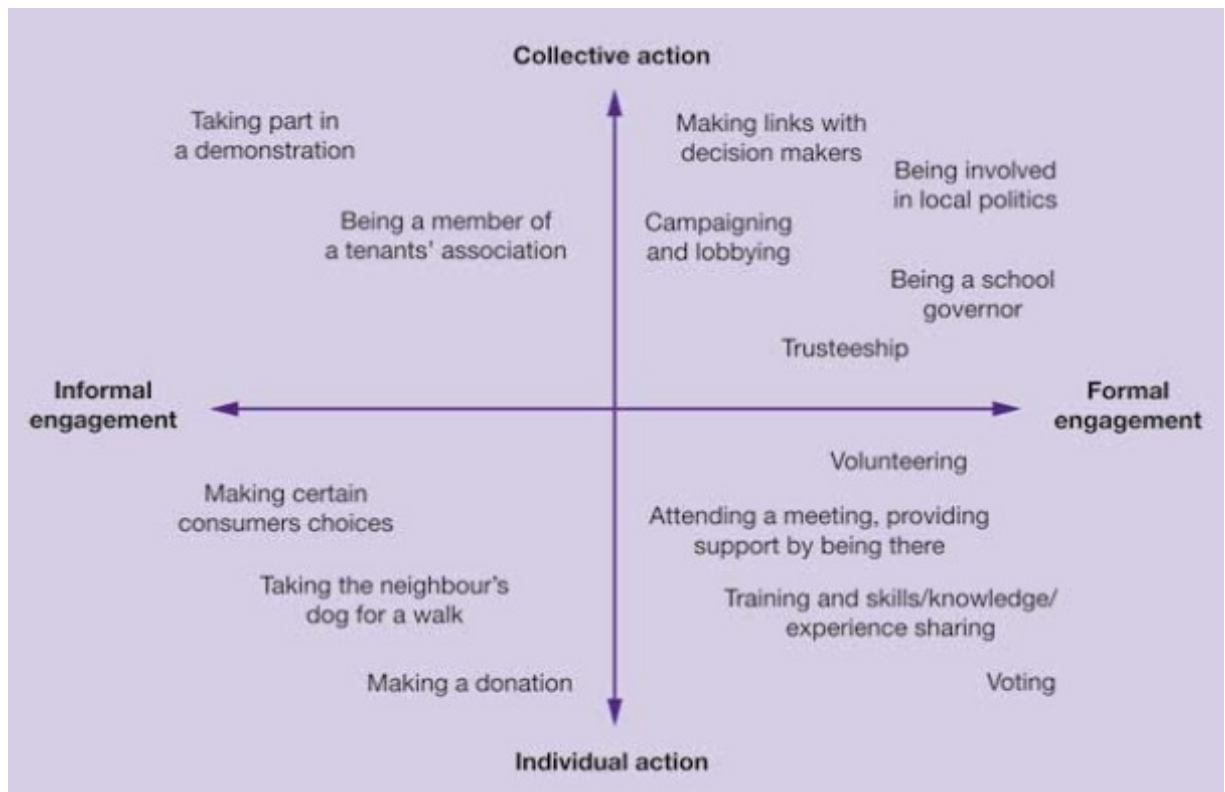
While this approach is useful there is some merit in the notion of a typology consisting of three differing definitions of 'citizenship' and 'active citizenship':

- the citizen as a 'voter' and 'volunteer';
- the citizen as an individual within a group or groups, actively participating in existing structures, taking up opportunities for participation, including participation in the planning and delivery of services; and
- the citizen as an individual who also participates within group(s), actively challenging unequal relations of power, promoting social solidarity and social justice, both locally and beyond, taking account of the global context.

The diagram below illustrates a different type of citizenship framework, showing the connections between individual and collective actions, and formal and informal engagement (NCVO 2005)⁶.

⁵ Westheimer, J and Kahne, J. (2004) What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy. *American Educational Research Journal*. 41(2). Summer.

⁶ Ochum, V., Pratten, B. and Wilding, K. (2005) *Civil renewal and active citizenship: a guide to the debate*. London: NCVO



2.1.1 About Take Part

Take Part (the national active learning for active citizenship network) recognises that, while an individual may be active through formal engagement methods such as volunteering, they may still require support in participating on the collective level, for instance by taking part in a community group (formal engagement) or getting involved with organisations campaigning on human rights (informal engagement). People are likely to be engaged in different levels at the same time. Active learning for active citizenship is a process. So, for example, individuals may become active as volunteers, but this in no way suggests that individuals may not be supported to engage as members of community groups, actively participating in governance structures (such as school governing bodies or local strategic partnerships, for example), or as active members of organisations campaigning on human rights, the environment and social justice issues.

2.2 Arts policy and evaluation.

Working socially with art and culture has clear economic and social benefits. Since the 1990s, the argument in UK for the economic value of the cultural and creative sector in regenerating regions and neighborhoods has been substantially won. National and local policy makers and funders recognize the work of the arts sector. The New Labour government's Cultural Industry Task Force and PAT 10 investigation, as well as the work of Comedia (and especially Landry and Matarasso) were key landmarks in this argument. Cultural policy has recognised the significance of the arts as a *sector* (see for example the Policy Study Institute's study, *The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain* (Myersclough 1988), which established the arts sector as a significant, growing and value-added sector in its own right, with a turnover of £10 billion and employing some 500,000 people. The cultural industries has since been established as a significant sector of the global economy (Casey et al 1996, Pratt 1997) and central to economic development strategies (e.g. in the 'cultural quarter' or 'creative hub'). Significantly the Labour government took the notion of a cultural economy seriously, developing a Cultural

Industries Task Force on election in 1997, to establish a range of strategies to maximise the advantage of the cultural industries, while 1998 saw the publication of the cultural industries mapping document, *Setting A Blueprint For Action For Government And Industry* (DCMS 1998). The 2001 *Creative Industries Mapping Document* (DCMS 2001) also found continued growth in the creative industries with revenues generated estimated at £112.5 billion⁷

2.2.1 The social Impact of the arts

Within this policy landscape the arts are seen as instrumental in creating a knowledge economy and a skilled workforce. Arts organisations and artists have been seen as important players in the revitalisation of communities and a project of social inclusion. However, while the value of the cultural and creative sector to physical and economic regeneration has been extremely widely recognised (in part due to high profile physical projects like the Baltic Exchange in Newcastle, the new Laban building in Deptford or the Tate Modern at Bankside) the value of the sector to *social* regeneration and social inclusion has been less widely recognised. Simultaneously arts practice has become increasingly professionalized and subject to modes of evaluation which employ quantitative matrix's and systematic toolkits⁸.

While the creative and cultural industries have been celebrated and promoted, the socio-economic value of smaller scale arts projects has been less widely recognised. However, there has been a substantial body of work which has made a strong case for the social impact of the arts. Research by Landry et al (1996), Comedia (1997), Galloway (1995) and Matarasso (1997) established a case and for the social impact of the arts. Matarasso's (1997) *Use or Ornament? The Social Impact of Participation in Arts Programmes* produced a step change in recognition of the sector's contribution to social development. This seminal study provided a clearer definition of the potential social benefits of the arts, and for the first time brought the issues fully to the attention of policymakers and the arts funding agencies. It was also timely as it coincided with the election of the New Labour government along with their modernising agenda. Matarasso's study provided the earliest authoritative evidence of the impact of socially-relevant arts practice. The research was also important for establishing a workable methodological framework for social impact assessment, and providing practical evaluation instruments to guide public policy planning and development. The study showed that the arts make a valuable contribution to social policy objectives. This fitted in with a wider call for more rigorous measurement of the value of the arts in the mid-1990s body of literature (cited above). This call resonated with the measurement needs of new funding streams opening up for the arts at the time (such as the Lottery and SRB) and with the 'audit culture' (Michael Power 2000, Strathern 2000) that characterised social policy from the 1990s, and especially New Labour's project of modernising the public sector with an emphasis on performance measurement.

As discussed in sections 4 and 5 of this document, the coalitions government's Big Society agenda represents yet another policy framework for arts organisations to respond to. Cameron's Big Society involves – as the Prime Minister has implied – the strands of 'social

⁷ Pratt, Andy C. (2004) Mapping the cultural industries: Regionalisation; the example of South East England, in *Cultural industries and the production of culture*. D.Power & AJ Scott. Routledge.

⁸ Andrew Ross (2009) *Nice Work if you can get it. Life and Labour in Precarious Times*. NYU Series in Social & Cultural Analysis).

Belfiore, E. & Bennett O. (2010) '[Beyond the 'toolkit approach': Arts impact evaluation research and the realities of cultural policy-making](#)', *Journal for Cultural Research*, 14.2.

action, public service reform and community empowerment' with an emphasis on volunteering and philanthrocapitalism⁹ with an emphasis on philanthropic giving and corporate funding replacing public investment. Simultaneously public funding is likely to come with an increased emphasis on business planning and demonstrating cost benefit analysis with an associated set of measurements, matrix's and systematic toolkits that arts organisations may be expected to respond to .

This case study demonstrates that artists and arts organisations are well placed to explore the themes of social action and community empowerment in their participative and socially engaged practice through highly relevant and aesthetically sophisticated local projects which can stimulate people to take an active and critical role in civic society.

2.2.2 Arts, citizenship and empowerment

In thinking about the relationship between arts and citizenship, it is worth considering what participative art *does* in relationship to civic and civil participation. Art may provide a space to come together with others, whether informally or informally, to take part in the production of an art work, leading to the question of the impact of this participation on communities and individuals. However, art may also provide a space for gaining skills, expressing opinions, challenging power structures. This raises the question of the extent to which participation and collaboration be empowering? And the ways that arts practice can allow the voices of the most disadvantaged or silenced groups to be heard effectively, as part of wider agendas for social change, social solidarity and social justice. Although some of the previous research into the social impact of the arts identified outcomes in participation in the arts such as raised levels of self-esteem and confidence, an enhanced a feeling of self-determination and sense of control and skills development none of this work has looked specifically at the citizenship dimensions of participation (although prior to the impact agenda, there has been a strong tradition of activist art and art as a form of critical pedagogy).

Participatory and collaborative art can be understood as a space of critical pedagogy which addresses community empowerment and citizenship¹⁰. Participation in arts praxis can be a liberating experience. It offers an alternative to arts spectatorship. Instead citizens may deciding for themselves what is to count as culture and how the kind of citizens they are to be. It is also a pedagogical space which can make apparent the constraints of social relations thereby opening up a space of critique and produces critical knowledge..

These issues are central to the ways in which socially engaged arts practice is conceived, delivered, evaluated and theorised. In artist-led participatory practice artists assume a variety of roles: as educators, activists, researchers, educator's role models and collaborators. Dialogue and negotiation is integral to this process, and as Kester would argue, part of the aesthetic of the art itself. Such practice offers a spectrum of opportunities for engagement and participation. Central to these is a Beuysian spirit in which the non-artist becomes essential in the completion of the art work and the negotiation of meaning in the art process At one end of this spectrum participation may simply be attending an artistic or cultural event, while at the other end participation could include participants initiating a project, sharing in decision making such as the focus of a project, and commissioning an artist. Clearly the degree to which project is participative or collaborative is contingent on factors such as; the extent to which a

⁹ Rutherford, J (2010) Labour's Good Society. *Soundings* (46) 6-17.

¹⁰ Paulo Freire (2000). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum; 30 Anv Sub edition.

project was commissioned in a way which encourages or allows participation, the resources available, the artists skills and expertise and intention.

In this model the artist acts as a cultural intermediary who comes to a social and cultural situation and sees it with fresh eyes and then works with participants, offering his or her skills through and relations of dialogue and critical enquiry¹¹. There are clear parallels here with community engagement and community development practice. However, the crucial difference is that while the processes may be similar, outreach, engagement, working to identify common priorities, overcoming differences, the arts engagement generally results in the production of art (whether this is an encounter, event, situation, performance, or object).

Considering this political landscape, within art theory there has been considerable debate regarding socially engaged practice: what kind of work artwork should do? How might it be theorised and evaluated? Should it be assessed according to an aesthetic criteria of what makes 'good' art? How political should art be? What is the purpose of socially engaged practice? Should it improve the social situations it intervenes in? Should it increase 'social cohesion' and conviviality? Should it 'manufacture consent'? Should it help people to feel better about the places they live and the people they live side-by-side with?

Crucially, there is a danger that the use of the social and the rhetorical appealing to art and culture come together in a potential negation of the political dimension of this type of projects. So for example, as we have argued elsewhere¹² when commissioned to deliver art on estates in the borough which are 'difficult' places in terms of 'social cohesion' or 'social inclusion', participative and collaborative art can easily fall into this logic of neutralising contradiction and dissatisfaction.

Although art is increasingly recognised as a valuable tool for local authorities and other commissioning agencies when dealing with problems of urban development, social integration, health and education, rather than providing a service to these agencies art can make apparent and offer a space to develop a critical perspective on social issues and cultural politics. One of the strengths of socially engaged practice is that it can shift our attention from art (and associated theories of what makes 'good' art) to address questions of what makes the 'good society' in ways that other forms of socially engaged practice: such as community work or social work cannot?

Framing arts practice in terms of active citizenship, and beginning to evaluate it in these terms may be yet another policy agenda which arts organisations must be seen to respond to and evidence which could, ironically, ameliorate the critical possibilities of socially engaged practice to engender active learning for active citizenship.

3 The Taking Part Case Study: Stream Arts¹³

Stream Arts are a creative production agency that brings together innovative art practice and local people through playful experiences. Stream Arts are a Company limited by guarantee with

¹¹ Grant Kester (2004). *Conversation Pieces*. University of California Press, Berkley. Grant Kester (2006). *Another turn*. *Artforum International* 44 (9), 22–3.

¹³ See Stream Arts website: <http://www.Streamarts.org.uk/>

charitable status. Stream Arts have been based in North Greenwich since 1983, being previously called Independent Photography. Independent Photography were a local community arts resource, carrying out audio and visual work in partnership with various arms of the local authority such as Greenwich Youth and Play Services, Children's Services, NEET teams (young people not in education, training, employment), Connexions, Youth Offending Teams, Safer Neighbourhood Teams, and the Looked After Children Team. Stream Arts were rebranded in 2008 marking a shift in Stream Arts mission, from being a community resource whose focus was working with young people and local people, addressing social inequality, to a being an arts agency commissioning location-specific, artist-led participatory public and collaborative art projects¹⁴ (i.e. beyond the limits of photographic and audio-visual). Stream sees itself as a production agency, and that production makes people getting together. Stream commission artists and collaborate with them.

Their projects continue to address social inequality and local change, but is a less a direct or instrumental way. The aim of Stream's current work is "to offer unusual and stimulating opportunities for creativity and collaboration to artists and local people". As Isabel Lily, Stream Arts' Director explains here;

We've talked a lot recently in redefining what our mission is about, and not wanting to do it in a very socially limiting ways. Empowering people to do extraordinary things is one of the things we talked about. And I like that idea about the extraordinary because it could be anything. And I think what we've always wanted to say is that idea that what makes change in people's life could be a thought they have, or it could be meeting somebody in a particular project, it could be actually learning a new skill or whatever happens with the project. It could be a wide range of things. (...) We've always felt that a lot of the instrumentalism that you have heard about over the last 10 years (around art) has been slightly worrying, really. And I wanted to have a slightly more sophisticated and settled view of what it means to participate and to get involved in art projects (for the individual).

Interview with Isabel Lilly

Stream have five permanent workers. Stream Arts commission artist to deliver arts projects which usually last around nine months. These commissions are advertised through Stream Arts' website and via the arts listing both on and off-line. Artist's proposals are assessed by the Director in discussion with staff. Stream Arts currently have a service level agreement with the local authority along with several other arts agencies in the borough¹⁵ and this is supplemented by funding from other charitable funding such as The National Lottery and The Arts Council.

3.1 Stream's methodology

Stream's shift from being a community resource to an arts commissioning agency is significant as it offers residents an opportunity to become engaged in *contemporary* art projects which are conceived, curated and produced by contemporary artists. These projects do not come under a 'service delivery' model of participatory arts, which is led by the impetus to participate. Instead local people are invited to participate in contemporary art. This is more in keeping with the arts education work of much larger arts institutions (which are notable in their absence in and around the Peninsula area where Stream work.)

¹⁴ Stream continue to work with young people through the Fresh FM radio station.

¹⁵ Age Exchange, Emergency Exit Arts, Greenwich Dance Agency, Greenwich Theatre, and Blackheath Halls.

In order to maximise the potential for participation, when commissioning artists, Stream look for practitioners who combine a conceptual sophistication with a lightness of touch, and who use imaginative approaches to foster meaningful participation. They are also keen to support the professional development of the artists they commission. These projects are site-specific, free neighbourhood-based projects, offering opportunities for participation that happen beyond Stream's building in public spaces. They arouse people's curiosity and invite participation on a variety of levels. Stream use a range of different methodologies to engage local communities, offering various 'ways in' to contemporary art, which can often be perceived of as inaccessible and 'high-brow' through projects which are taking place on people's doorstep. Meaningful participation is a central aim, and this can take a variety of forms from a brief encounter which shifts someone's perspective, to the voicing and sharing of thoughts and experiences, to the learning of new creative skills.

Collaboration with artists, project participants and local partners is at the core of this working process. In curating their commissions, Stream build on the interests of local people as they develop sustained programmes of work in different parts of the borough of Greenwich.

3.2 The Critical Friends – participation in Stream

Stream Arts currently have a 'participants group' named Critical Friends. This is made up of local residents and is facilitated by Sophie Hope, an artist and academic. The Critical Friends group was established by Sophie and Rebecca Maguire¹⁶ in response to an invitation from Stream Arts to evaluate the 'Peninsula' programme from 2008 to 2011. Following Hope's evaluation of the first part of the programme (2005-2007), Stream wanted to use participatory methodology which deepened participant involvement. The Critical Friends group was brought together as part of Hope's doctoral research into socially engaged art and commissioning. As Hope and Maguire explain here,

Critical deliberations are often confined to discussions among artists and commissioners. The Critical Friends would be an opportunity for other participants to think about how the specific 'Peninsula' projects relate to wider issues of community cohesion and the role of art in areas of regeneration. By going on this journey with a core group of people who are experiencing socially engaged art, this could provide a unique model of evaluation as it encourages participants to develop their own considered insights and evaluations of the projects

Hope and Maguire, 2008

The Critical Friends run regular workshops, and edit a blog and compile research materials into a Critical Friends magazine¹⁷ produced every four months through regular workshops which provide sites for the writings, documentation, performances and presentations created by Critical Friends.

This group came together, with the support of Hope and Maguire developing creative ways of investigating, critiquing and feeding into the commissioning of public and collaborative art, specifically in relation to Stream Arts' Peninsula art programme. The group have also been trying out different ways of evaluating public and collaborative commissioning process from the perspective of the participants.

¹⁶ See B+B's website: <http://www.welcomebb.org.uk/blog/index.html>

¹⁷ Kester 2004 Ibid.

In an interview with the Critical Friends it was clear that they valued the opportunities to come together and discuss the commissions, interview artists and feel part of an arts organisation which works with a diverse group of residents which cross barriers of class, age and ethnicity.

If I walked into here, and it was full of teenagers, there would be a feeling of fear. Why am I not accepted? That's what I felt first when I went to the Fresh FM, but it was great! Some of the girls came up and talked to me, and said: "you're not like my gran". Then I said to treat your gran like you're treating me! (laughs).

Ann (Critical Friend)

3.3 The Local Context

Streams work takes place in an area that has undergone significant regeneration, impacting on local infrastructure and population change following the development of the Millennium Dome (rebranded the O2 arena) and the, now closed, Beckham Football Academy. The areas regeneration continues (albeit at a slower pace during the current recession) and is set to undergo another renaissance, as North Greenwich is transformed into 'a new 1.4 million square metre master planned community' (*Our Vision Greenwich Peninsula*, Meridian Delta Limited). By 2020 approximately 20,000 new residents and 24,000 workers will be accommodated in an area that spans from the Millennium Dome to Greenwich Millennium Village (approximately 190 acres). The urban regeneration of the area is generating important local effects: from the landscape to Greenwich's inhabitants' everyday lives. The architectural changes such as the O2, retail parks, the new Ravensbourne College and the new residency areas) are generating a new face of the East Greenwich Peninsula. In addition to these from physical changes, the regeneration process is generating a social, political and economic change in the area, bringing new residents and new businesses which are developing side-by-side with the established communities, and the older industries.

There is a sharp contrast between the shiny, high profile developments of the Peninsula ward and adjacent east Greenwich. Most of the large-scale regeneration is happening on the Peninsula side of the ward. In contrast, in East Greenwich, an old hospital site, which was due to be developed by First Base as 'the new heart of East Greenwich', has now lain vacant for many years. The contrast between these two sides of the ward, physically divided by the busy A102, is something that is addressed in the commissions which are the focus of this case study.

3.3.1 Art on the Peninsula

Public art work and arts based participation has developed alongside the physical changes to the local area as part of a project of developing a sense of place and managing change¹⁸. As a long standing locally based arts organisation which has a strong track record of working in the area with the local communities it collaborates with. This is a strong pull for people to get involved. As this Critical Friend states

We're very interested in Stream Arts because it used to be our church. And the room they use was the room we converted to a chapel. So we've always been interested in what's going. Any open days we've gone in to see what the artist is doing...

¹⁸ The area has permanent art installed by a programme called 'Art in Greenwich Peninsula' produced by the studio MUF Architecture and Art in 2005. The programme was established with the aim of 'contributing to the development of the social and physical identity of the Greenwich Peninsula, animating the public realm and creating a sense of place'. Its sponsors were Homes and Communities Agency, Greenwich Peninsula Regeneration limited and Greenwich Millenium Village Ltd. See more information at: <http://www.artongreenwichpeninsula.com/index2.php>

Ann (Critical Friend)

These art projects offer participants a valuable opportunity chance to share their knowledge and experience of an area that is undergoing major change. Participation is also an opportunity to re-imagine the area, to create something new. People get involved for different reasons; for some this is the chance to do something out of the ordinary, for others it offers time out from their everyday lives, an opportunity to take an interest in the local area, a chance to meeting new people or a chance to learn new creative skills.

One of Stream's strengths is they are a long-standing organisation who work locally. This local focus provides an engaging platform for participation as people can meet over common ground and common concerns in a field where they can share considerable local knowledge to offer. In this sense their socially-engaged practice interacts with local people on accessible terms. Their projects are an opportunity to take time out to do something enjoyable which makes them forget about their everyday problems. At the same time, this leisure activity is engaged with the world of contemporary art in a highly accessible and meaningful way, as one Critical Friend states here;

I flatter myself that I can see at least part of the other side, or one of the facets. And I ask about the others. That's what you have to foster, curiosity, interest. (...) People have got to be interested, you can't impose and you can't make a community. It has to grow, it's organic.

Ann (Critical Friend)

3.4 Stream Arts' Peninsula Programme

Stream Arts' Peninsula programme took place between 2005 and 2011. The project has been developed in 2 phases. The first phase took place between 2005 and 2008, and it investigated the early changes to the Peninsula. The aims of the programme were agreed between the Stakeholder's Steering group and Independent Photography (Hope/B+B, 2007). These were;

- To forge links between old and young people, new residents and long term communities in the area and to ensure the sustainability of the interconnectedness between communities.
- To enable participants to understand their area on wider political environmental, historical, social and economic scale, and to engage residents on the Peninsula in exploring new territories.
- To encourage participants to take part in a wider set of activities and educational opportunities than the area currently provides.
- To highlight and create a positive effect on neglected areas and forgotten histories in the area.
- To activate discussions on the future changes in the area.

The commissioned projects were mainly artist-led; they all involved an engagement with local people, and were undertaken through a process of participation (Hope/B+B, 2007). As end results, the commission produced a large amount of research and artistic materials such as maps, films, performances or temporary installations. The first phase of the programme was evaluated by Sophie Hope/B+B in 2007. In her report, she considered that, even though the projects did not produce big changes, they were important in raising awareness in local communities about the changes in the area. Hope also found that the process of participation was very positive for local residents, enabling them to look at and

think differently about the area. The second part of Peninsula started in 2008 and will continue until 2011. This series of commissions seeks projects that fulfill the following aims¹⁹:

- To investigate the Greenwich Peninsula, through local collaboration and participation
- To stimulate debate to generate action and change
- To develop connections and relationships between people across the Peninsula
- To experiment with different models of creative practice.

Since the programme started in 2005, Stream Arts have commissioned 18 projects, all of which have involved engagement with the local communities of the Peninsula in thinking about their area differently. They have been developed through varying degrees of participation. Most of these have been research-led and have used qualitative methods such as ethnography, participatory and action research and psychogeography as well as qualitative technology-based research methods, such as GPS mapping. All the projects have resulted in a materialised final art work such as maps, video, audio, film or photography, and they always have had a public display (mostly online) (see Appendix 2 for examples of Stream's Peninsula commissions).

3.5 The Taking Part Case Studies: *Now Hear This*

3.5.1 *The Artists*

Now Hear This is a project by *Holy Mountain*, a production company initiated by Boz Temple-Morris and by Alisdair McGregor. Temple-Morris was Joint Artistic Director of the award winning theatre company *Primitive Science* and also co-founders of *Enlightened Tobacco Company* (who created the popular brand *DEATH Cigarettes*)²⁰. Alisdair is a sound engineer specialising in radio drama. He's also a DJ and creator of *The Sunday Play* for *Resonance FM*²¹. *Holy Mountain* work with radio, film, theatre and visual arts, and specialise in audio drama. The company develops their work through exploration and collaboration and aim to make work that encourages discussions rather than being merely entertaining.²²

Holy Mountain was born from a desire to create a production company where work is made in a spirit of exploration, collaboration and mirth. Most practitioners working with Holy Mountain are well established in radio, theatre, film or visual art and are often found bridging the gaps between them. We like to make work that is fresh thinking, entertaining and which tickles the imagination [] We love audio drama. Our approach is not traditional, being very much sound-led and location based. We also work with organisations, making film, creating events and advising on brand experience.

From Holy Mountain website, 2010.

¹⁹ From 'Retelling the Peninsula' commission bases, October 2010.

²⁰ See Boz-Temple Morris' website: <http://www.boztemplemorris.com/>

²¹ Resonance FM is an art radio station with base in the U.K. See <http://resonancefm.com/listen>

²² See Holy Mountain's website: <http://www.holymountain.co.uk/>

3.5.2 The Now Hear This Project

Now Hear This was the first commission in the *Voices* strand of Stream's Peninsula programme. This strand of projects is focused on giving voice to people living and working in the area through a variety of media and stimulating debate around issues of local concern.

For their commission with Stream Arts, Holy Mountain created a phone line whereby residents of the Peninsula could call in with dispatches about issues related to the area of Greenwich. They also ran parallel activities, like walks around the local area, or meetings, like the event 'A Local Conversation', when local residents were invited to have a discussion about some of the issues raised in the phone calls.



The event was hosted in a marquee, in the East Greenwich Pleasance and employed a café format. Topics from the dispatches were put on a menu for people to talk about and discuss. In their own words, the artists aimed to "gather, amplify and debate the issues of importance to people who live or work in East Greenwich, Greenwich Peninsula and Charlton' (Holy Mountain 2009). As Isabel Lilly, Stream Arts' Director explains here;

It was like asking local people to become like a correspondent in their own land. And send back reports, something that they felt needed to be said and something that would actually encourage them. They have to pick up the phone, so they had to feel it was important for them to want let people know these things.

3.5.3 Process and methodology

In March 2009 the artists initiated the project by distributing flyers around the area. The flyers were inviting people to phone in dispatches on issues relating the local area, and the changes affecting local residents. They invited people to call to this phone line, and captured shared soundscapes from the local area.

Once the artists had collected a significant amount of dispatches, they created an event in the Greenwich Pleasaunce. Under the name of 'A Local Conversation', the artists invited people to a coffee meeting. For this event, the artists created a restaurant menu out of the key subjects mentioned in the telephonic dispatches, and encouraged people to discuss each 'course' on the menu. These conversations were also recorded. A considerable amount of participants got involved in the project (both, calling the dispatches phone line and in the event in Greenwich Pleasaunce). Feedback about this event was very positive

I thought it was very enlightening and interesting meeting local people who can make a difference

The approach of being paired with a stranger resulted in freedom to say what you really thought. This is essential in order to produce useful data

An excellent way of interchanging information and ideas about East Greenwich and the Peninsula

Some participants were regular participants in Stream Arts commissions (such as members of the Critical Friends). Others were local residents, local activists and included a local councilor and local MP.

3.5.4 Final results and display

Boz and Alisdair recorded the phone calls and documented the project with sound recordings. This culminated in two edited audio files which mix together interview recordings, telephone dispatches and, conversations the participants had in the café event. This was then presented in an informal launch in the Greenwich Communications Centre. (The shop was kindly offered for use by Stream Arts by a Critical Friend who runs the shop). At this event refreshments were served and the final audio files played on the shop computers. The local people and a local councilor who attended were invited to listen to the files, and to discuss them.

In addition the sound recordings were also broadcasted on the independent radio station *Resonance FM*. They have also been uploaded on Stream Arts Art's website and are available to listen to (<http://www.StreamArtsarts.org.uk/projects/now-hear-this>)

3.6 Case Study 2: A to X

3.6.1 The Artists

A-X was conceived by gethan&myles, two London based artists who work on collaborative art projects and arts education with communities²³. Gethan&myles work uses performativity and collaboration to explore and change public space. Their work engages with everyday spaces like parks, schools and swimming pools, as well as cultural institutions. The work is often research-

²³ See gethan&myles' blog: <http://gethanandmyles.blogspot.com/>

led, and starts with qualitative research methodologies, such as interviews and conversations with local residents. As Stream Art's website explains,

gethan&myles make works in a variety of public spaces, including parks, bars and swimming pools, which encourage people to reassess both their environment and themselves. As an artistic double-act, collaboration lies at the heart of their practice, not only with each other but also with the people who occupy and 'control' the spaces in which they work. Their work is often performative, with theatrical elements that encourage participation through making and play. The subverting of rules and expectations is central to their practice, which often results in surprise interventions in otherwise familiar settings.

As with the *Now Hear This* project, there are clear resonances with Stream's approach to art.

A sense of humour and a sense of wonder underpin everything we do. We share an old fashioned belief that through art we can trick people into being better.

From Stream Arts website, 2010.

Recent projects by the artists include: *The Hunt*, a re-examination of Herne Hill and its local dimension; *Passages*, which transformed the tunnel under Herne Hill Station with the help of 274 tunnel users; or *Water Marks*, which gathered the memories of hundreds of South Londoners and painted them on the walls of the Brockwell Lido swimming pool for the swimming season, encouraging bathers to read whilst swimming in the pool.

3.6.2 The A to X Project:

A-X was conceived by gethan&myles in response to Stream's brief, 'Performing Social Space'. Stream were looking for a project which was innovative in its approach to working with local residents to elicit perceptions of the local area, and which would explore the potential of the varied physical environment of the Peninsula as a site for staging performative events and interventions.

For this commission the artists visited locations around the Peninsula (parks, schools, the street, or libraries among others), and invited local residents of all ages and backgrounds to playfully reflect and muse upon Greenwich Peninsula and surrounding East Greenwich area.



They also collected statements from documents regarding the local area produced by official entities, such as the local authority, developers, or housing agencies. The statements were edited and displayed them on two solar powered Dot-Matrix LED signs (Usually found on highways announcing traffic disruptions). The intention was to place these in four different locations of Greenwich over four weeks.

The motif of conversation found in the first case study, is also apparent in the A to X project. A-X can be understood as a conversation between the two signs. Sign 'A' represented the 'official voice' of the Greenwich Peninsula, displaying statements taken from road signs, documents produced by the Local Authority, developers promotional material, and so on, whereas sign 'X' represented the 'local voice' of people, displaying the words of local residents that the artists gathered during their research.

(A sign) It's like a unified voice. It's the general establishment recording. So it's the voice from official documents, or brochures. (...) In the A sign, it all sounds the same. Whether it is a developer, or (the council they have a very shared style of language. And representing the community, they cannot say "it's everything", they simplify it, and so they make this unified voice. Whether X is the voice of hundreds of local people we talked to a very small cross section of people.

Interview with gethan&myles, 2010.



The media chosen by the artist, LCD signs, directly referenced the physical changes to the local infrastructure and the disruption this causes local people.

[we're] taking something out from its context. People around here, they're used to see these signs in the context of giving bad news, saying this road is blocked, or there's gonna be delays... So taking them from the road and putting them here in this park with all the trees around, in this big avenue, with the graves of sailors from the Spital. So it's like this amazing kind of historic place, and then you have this weird kind of robotic thing...

Myles, from interview with gethan&myles

As described by Stream Arts in their project publicity this is a project which “gives voice to the residents of East Greenwich and the Peninsula through a poetic and witty intervention in the local landscape”.

Over the past three months gethan&myles have talked to hundreds of people of all ages in East Greenwich and the Peninsula. Their words - beautiful, sad, uplifting and funny – will be displayed on flashing signs in three different locations, as these commonplace pieces of road-furniture are transformed into performative, sculptural objects.

A-X Press Release, Stream Arts 2010

By juxtaposing these two sets of voices in public space in the area, the artists aimed to show Greenwich Peninsula has a wide diversity of opinions and a plurality of identities, and in this way aimed to create space for debate.

Once the signs, A (the official voice) and X (the voice of the people), are in place they'll become talking points in themselves. They not only debate, they create debate.

gethan&myles Proposal

3.6.3 Methodology and process

The methodology gethan&myles used for data collecting was creative and participatory. They visited very different locations in the Peninsula (schools, libraries, local shops, streets, or parks among others) with the aim of having conversations about the area with local residents that went beyond a litany of complaints. As they describe here,

G: The works were gathered from participatory activities. Sometimes we were going to places to run like little workshops, where people ended up doing writing, and we also did do a lot of work that was one to one interviews. Just stopped people on the street, on the park, wherever. And talked to them and engaged with them.

M: The workshops we made people make the little booklets. Because a lot of the time, if you go to someone and you say, tell me something interesting about your community they will be probably: "the bins are a problem or whatever".

G: You have to get people past that.

M: So the work was a sheet of A3, and it's one of those where you fold and it becomes a book. And then we designed loads of things that lead them to questions. They were made a bit differently. One of them was "the first 5 words that you think about this community. So then, after that they have to sit down, and they have to write a sentence about the community not using any of those 5 words. So it's like, O.K. that's your set answer, and now think further about it.

To illustrate, gethan&miles ran a 'word game' workshop with East Greenwich Traders, East Greenwich Management Agency, Ecology Park volunteers and St Joseph's Primary School. In these sessions they asked participants to describe Greenwich Peninsula as different things: objects, kinds of food or animals. That allowed the participants to more creative and more metaphorical at the same time, which had very good results. Some examples of the answers were:

It's like porridge. Ok, but not brilliant.

It's like a chair on castors. You can whiz about, but also stop and look at your leisure.

It's like classic pie and mash, but with fancy new liquor.

It's like a wooden bed – not strong enough if everyone steps on it.

Simultaneously the artists researched documents about Greenwich Peninsula produced by the Local Authority, developers, and other -public and private- official bodies. This official promotional material presented a positive perspective on the area's regeneration. Sentences collected from those documents included:

Welcoming new public realm

A bright future

Jobs for 24,000 and homes for 25,000 people

Socially inclusive regeneration

*The borough is proving attractive to the cultural sector
Parks and elegant squares*

3.6.4 Final result and display

The statements were edited and programmed to be displayed on the two signs. Resident's statements were juxtaposed with official statements. The LCD signs were installed consecutively in three public locations of the Peninsula and surrounding area which were chosen by the artists, following on from their research:

- East Greenwich Pleasaunce.
- East Greenwich Jetty on the peninsula (just east of the O2).
- Central Park on the Peninsula (by a local pub).

The locations of the project were chosen due to a combination of aesthetic criteria (where the signs would look good) and gethan&myles research findings on the spatial and social divisions in the area which were symptomatic and in part a result of the regeneration. As the artists discussed in an interview,

G: Originally we had wanted 4 locations. And because we felt this divide within the community, that we wanted to have 2 locations that were in East Greenwich, and 2 locations on the Peninsula. So, because we wanted to encourage a flow of people from one side to the other.

M: Because there's this big thing about the new community on the Peninsula, loads of people we talked to here say, they never come down here. And even up there they say a lot of people go to work in Canary Wharf, and they just go from the Millennium Village, choose a tube, and they're out. And there is all this stuff going on here. This beautiful park, also loads of shops... Which are really suffering. And they're not getting any of the new people. If you lived 10 minutes down the road, loads and loads of people don't know about this park. The best thing you can do is making people discovering new places.

G: Yes, so that was a concern in picking them. We also wanted to have locations ultimately as a piece of art; it should have a certain beauty to it. So we wanted to pick locations where we felt the signs could be beautiful. Because they are beautiful sculptural objects, and we wanted locations where they would look lovely and cinematic, and where it'd be a pleasurable thing for people to spend time watching them as well.

While Stream were very interested in gethan&myles' proposal, particularly its performative nature, they did have some reservations. Stream felt that there were elements of the proposal that were quite underdeveloped, particularly with regards to participation. In their original proposal the artists had suggested producing a small publication as the culmination of the project; however Stream felt that something more participatory, playful and interactive would be more appropriate.

Even before inviting gethan&myles to interview, we engaged in an extended dialogue with them about developing a methodology for the process for participation. We asked them to consider how they would engage a wide range of potential participants in the project - how they would communicate the project to e.g. a class of primary school children, elderly residents of a sheltered housing scheme, as well as adults who might be more familiar with contemporary art projects. They came up with the idea of a word game, which could be tailored to different groups of participants.

Interview with Rohini Okon Malik, Stream projects manager

In response to this the artists developed the idea for the game and celebratory event 'Dot-to-Dot', where the two road signs would emit a series of clues and instructions to players, who would also use a specially created art-map, to explore different sites of the Peninsula. Consequently, the artists also ran parallel activities to engage people in conversations some locations. On Sunday 6th of June, (the day they installed the signs for the first time), A-X was part of an 'Arty Picnic' held at the East Greenwich Pleasaunce, an event which was organised by the Friends of East Greenwich Pleasaunce.

3.6.5 Challenges

The project was intended as both an investigation and an illustration of the contrasting visions of the area: that of the developers and that of local residents. As their original proposal stated:

It will illustrate and instigate debate by contrasting the official vision of the future with the multitude of the present's voices. In doing this it will function as a democratic catalyst, championing the voice of the individual and elevating it to the same level as the "official line".

gethan&myles proposal.

However, the commission encountered a series of challenges, which are significant to the research questions. Due to the content of the text, the medium of the artwork and the site-specific nature of the art the project require a great deal of negotiation between the artists, Stream Arts representatives, and several local agencies.

3.6.6 Location

In their original proposal the artists gave just an idea of the locations they would have liked to work in. In producing their proposal the artists had researched the area, they decided the points where they wanted to install the LED signs. However, some of the local sites they wanted to use were owned by private companies who would not let the artists install the work. (The semi-private nature of the land upsets preconceived ideas of public space and public art. It also points to the changing nature of cities). Furthermore another location, in an area most affected areas by regeneration, which has become a traffic corridor to and from the Peninsula was turned down by the Highways Agency. This was a source of disappointment, frustration and learning for the artists.

G: we had a location where we could have put the two of them on a pedestrian walkway, right in the heart of that area, where we talked to a lot of people and they felt very emphatic that something needed to happen in that area, because they feel neglected, it's one of the key areas affected by the regeneration. And they feel the

money goes elsewhere, they tourists go elsewhere, []... No, they didn't let us put it. And it defeats so much its own purpose. It's very frustrating.

M: We talked to all the shop owners, and the people down the pub, and they all felt excluded from the process, and they all felt like the general processes of regeneration. And then we went, we're gonna do something; you're gonna get heard, and it's gonna be for you, in the area. [] It would have been more relevant in that specific space.

A project involving the proposed citing of public art work at various locations in the public realm was always going to involve a considerable amount of negotiation around issues of who owns the land, health and safety concerns, and so on. Stream were aware of this and even before offering the artists the commission had entered into dialogue with the planning and highways departments at the local authority as well as the agencies responsible for the privately owned sites to ensure that the project would indeed be feasible. (Stream Arts have a long established working relationship with local agencies through their Peninsula programme).

Here, Rohini Malik Okon (Project Manager of Stream Arts) describes, the problem of the locations and the complex negotiations Stream Arts had to enter into in order for the project to go ahead.

After talking to local people, the artists were very keen to have a location in the heart of East Greenwich, and selected a site on a pedestrian walkway off the busy Trafalgar Road. We also felt that to have the work sited in this area would be meaningful to local residents, but were aware that securing this location might prove difficult. After numerous negotiations with the Highways Department at the local authority, the site was refused on safety grounds.

3.6.7 The Text

Another of the challenges project encountered was an official objection to the textual content displayed. As described above, getting permission to situate the signs had already taken a great deal of negotiation. Shortly after the signs were displayed at the Peninsula the land owners requested that the signs be temporarily turned off until their communications department had seen and approved the textual content. The artists, at Streams request then sent a document with all the displayed texts to Stream Arts and these were forwarded to the developers. After a week, the agency got back to the artists, and gave them an approved list of statements. Their choice of removals was a surprise for the artists.

At five o'clock on Friday evening they and sent back a censored version of the quotes that removed about a fifth of the quotes overall. There was very little logic or consistency to their choice of removals. Some were quotes expressing people's frustration with money not going to all areas of the peninsula ward (e.g. "East Greenwich used to be a great place, but now it feels very neglected") Some were worries about the new developments (e.g. "It's about money and greed.") Some were motivational messages from the people to the people (e.g. "You're lucky", "you're the future", "Enjoy being here") Some were clearly said by children (e.g. "it's a massive and new kind of animal - a dinosaur monster") Some were simply beautiful and poetic (e.g. "Greenwich is a concrete jungle, thriving and growing endlessly into a beautiful serenade") Some of them were actually from their own brochures (e.g. "An area blighted by ad-hoc development"). The seeming

randomness of their deletions made us feel even more frustrated about the length of time it had taken them to get back to us, and made it impossible for us to replace quotes with others as we had no idea what was acceptable.

Conversation with Gethan and Myles by e-mail

Even though the signs were eventually turned back on with some of the text omitted, gethan&myles were, by now, unwilling to run the Dot-to-Dot game, which had been planned as a celebratory culmination of the project. This meant the cancellation of an event to which all project participants had been invited and which had been widely publicised to encourage people further afield to explore the area by playing an alternative interactive quiz.

Clearly This series of incidents left the artists feeling disappointed and frustrated, especially regarding the research engagement period of the project and the relations of trust that had been built up in that process.

For the artists, the final decision as to which textual content could be displayed didn't seem to have a clear logic. They did not understand how these statements were offensive, and this resulted in a sense of frustration.. Some examples of the removed sentences were:

*East Greenwich used to be a great place, but now it feels very neglected
It's about money and greed
'You're lucky', 'you're the future', 'enjoy being here'.
It's a massive and new kind of animal - a dinosaur monster
Greenwich is a concrete jungle, thriving and growing endlessly into a beautiful serenade
An area blighted by ad-hoc development*

3.6.8 Different perspectives: censorship or naivety

Having seen the textual content, Stream felt that the artists had been somewhat naive in their understanding of the area, the land ownership and the constraints facing them and consequently some of the juxtapositions between the words on both signs were quite unsophisticated.

While we thought that on the whole gethan&myles had done a good job in terms of editing the materials and putting things together, we did feel that some of the juxtapositions between the two signs were quite crude and not quite as subtle as they could have been. So we weren't completely shocked by the request for the signs to be turned off. We had gained access to these sites free of charge and through a considerable amount of negotiation and good will, and the artists were being quite naive really in thinking that the landowners would be willing to display work on their land which was critical of what they're doing in the area. Rohini Mailq Okon - Stream

However, the artists were unwilling to editing the material. They had only shown the finalised text to Stream at a very late stage and were not particularly amenable when suggestions were made about making a few minor changes. This *may* be due to their intentions of the artwork or it may indicative of their relative inexperience in working in collaboration with commissioners/curators and the complexity of the nature of public and private space on the peninsula. Simultaneously Stream Arts felt that gethan&myles were somewhat naïve regarding the political relations that shape the Peninsula and, to some extent, form the relations and

negotiations which shape the potential commissions. (This stands in contrast to the success of the collaborative working process on *Now Hear This*, where the artists and Stream had worked together to edit the material and agree on the content of the final piece).

In contrast Gethan&miles felt that Stream had bowed to censorship and that their reputation locally was somewhat tarnished.

We had a lot of problems on what you can put on, what you can't put on... Because the arts organisation is funded by the council, they don't want to annoy them. They didn't show the Council what was going on the signs, but at the same time they had an anxiety that provokes their self censorship because they're funded by the council. So that for us was quite a difficult thing, because we understand that in 6 months time we're going to be gone, and the arts organisation is going to stay there, still's going to need their funding, still is going to need get on with the same people... But it seems to us that whatever situation there is with the Council it has engendered a climate of anxiousness. [] The whole thing left us feeling horrible. We were made powerless. Having promised things to hundreds of members of the public we were made to look like liars or incompetents. We saw five months work simply destroyed

Gethan

4 Discussion

The case study took place within a context of rapid urban and social change and the related rapidly shifting boundaries between the public and the private sector and public and private space. A consideration of this context makes evident the opportunities, possibilities and tensions associated with the arts engagement work of small third sector arts organisations and those involved in commissioning socially engaged art practice. The case study is also instructive in understanding role of arts organisations that seek to promote citizenship and community development these in today's arts funding landscape and associated evaluation agendas. The case study is are particularly instructive when thinking about the tensions between

- the arts, community engagement and community activism.
- different perspectives on active citizenship and,
- different perspectives on learning for active citizenship.

We will consider these in turn here.

4.1 Socially-engaged arts practice and community engagement: *playful democracy*

Engaging the local community in art that was concerned with local issues was a central logic of both *Now Hear This* and *A to X*, reflecting Stream commissioning intentions. Engagement with and the participation of local residents was integral to the project's success. Both projects had inherent aesthetic value and succeeded as art works in themselves: as a sound piece and a site specific public art installation. The artists realised their intentions in their commissions. While *Now Here This* was a subtle sound piece, *A to X* was far more forceful in its execution. Both commissions were playful and witty and simultaneously provocative. The art works also varied in ways they could be received: *A to X* was realised in a temporary intervention in space and time, whereas *Now Here This* can be understood as an audio archive. Both commissions were both explicitly concerned with local voices and local concerns.

Both projects drew on methods which mirror processes of participatory democracy in the production of a participatory artwork.²⁴ While *Now Hear This* use the motif of the everyday space of the café as a space of conversation to facilitate discussion and reflection, the *A to X* project cleverly juxtaposed official narratives of the development of the Peninsula with residents voices and used a LCD media to disrupt the everyday way of reading public information, as the following quotes illustrate,

I thought it was great. I have lived here for 10 years and seen the changes that have never really been spoken about in this way – it's refreshing! (Viewer of the installation in Central Park)

I was particularly struck by the contrast between 'formal civic language' and more genuine colloquialisms. Made me think about the gaps between 'policy' and how life is lived in Greenwich (Feedback from A to X in East Greenwich Pleasance)

The processes of participation in the research which led to the final artwork mirrored elements of participatory research and consultation. Through the intervention of artists, the community could get together and share their everyday life issues and concerns.

However, the process also differed from participatory research in the ways that the research was not only about community concerns about local issues but was also a prosaic space where participants were encouraged to speak of their dreams, memories and everyday experiences and think in an oblique way about local area. As a result both projects included voices that critical about the regeneration of the area and evocations of everyday life. Some of these were nostalgic.

As a kid we walked all along the tow path and my dad used to say "Close your eyes and guess where you are". Because of the different smells of the manufacturing you could tell where you were. There was a lino factory and a soap factory across the river.

Others were critical of the present realities of the area as a result of planning and development decisions

*It's an area where people who live here have no say about what's happening.
The developers need to look into developing a better estate with children in mind,
where parents can know their children are safe
The council don't think about the children much
(Background sound of children playing)
All they do is build new stuff, but nothing for the children
There's nothing to do. Children have resorted to going into car parks to look at fancy cars. It's not very exciting.
(Background sound of fast moving traffic).
It is amazing to see the traffic actually flowing on this road. Everyday there is an accident, it is just like a car park
There was going to be a secondary school right on the main road and the playground was going to be on the roof. Nice. They have got great respect for the kids round here.*

²⁴ This overlap between art and participatory democracy and its structures of representation. Was remarked upon at the launch of *Now Hear This* when an audience member asked the artist Boz 'How representative do you think you are of the community? '.

For some participants this was this was a refreshing change to usual ways of working on local matters.

The word game went down very well - I can assure you that it was the most fun EGMA members have had in years

(East Greenwich Management Agency Officer)

4.2 Developing Spaces of Active Citizenship in Stream: Critical Friends

This case study make apparent the complex negotiations and collaborations an arts agency, such as Stream, have to negotiate in order to realize the full creative potential of projects. This includes negotiations with local agencies, and negotiations with commissioned artists. Prior to this, the development of detailed projects briefs, which are circulated for each commission, also come out of a collaborative process and incorporates the feedback of previous project participants, as Stream's Director makes clear here,

The Critical Friends are involved in the selection process; we work collaboratively with artists through all stages of a project – initial research and engagement with local people and place, publicity and communications, developing participatory methodology, realising final creative outcome and opportunities for audiences to engage with the work.

So, for example, the Critical Friends are involved in some evaluation of projects, interviewing artist afterwards on the intention and success of project. While this commitment to collaboration and participation is clear throughout this case study, it is also instructive in thinking about some of the limits of collaboration in participative and collaborative art. On the one hand, we could argue that participation here is realised in a limited way: as an opportunity to take part in the process of commissioning and producing art, but this process ends at the point at which the artist takes what has been found and transforms it into an art object. On the other hand, one could argue that these were short-term commissions that produced art work that engaged with local issues, and as such engendering community engagement in political processes is not within the remit or the capacity of a small commissioning agency such as Stream. Although Stream is not a community development organization they do a lot of the work that a community development organisations do, in that they invite local people to come together, to take part in local research and debate, invite them to reflect on local processes, and so on. In this context, the Critical Friends group is an important space of participation within Stream, although this is somewhat limited due to resources and the scale of participation it allows. Given Stream's size, some of the wider possibilities of the development of an active and engaged community through the participatory artwork is curtailed due to the loss of community development organisations in the area²⁵.

In the Peninsula we have really been able to build up a programme of kind of interconnected projects over the 5 or 6 last years. Things have hugely changed on

²⁵ The Critical Friends model of participation is highlighted in the Paul Hamlyn foundation Report 'Whose Cake is it Anyway' as a model of "embedding local collaboration and developing individual capability for participation rather than 'empowerment-lite', the work becomes firmly situated in the organisation's locality and developed with the help of new, long-term community partnerships as 'critical friends'." (2011: 8)

the Peninsula, obviously. There was a lot of more community infrastructure when we started off. A lot of that has disappeared now through the folding of the programmes and through the economic crisis, which has seen a lot of the community workers in the area disappear. So it has not been a kind of neat progressive line of us being able to work in a consistent fashion, because the support has disappeared in lots of areas.

Interview with Isabel Lilly

The Critical Friends group is an important space of active citizenship both within stream, as a space of participation, and within the local area more generally as it provides a space to reflect on arts commissions, artists' intentions and the role of art in urban change. At present their capacity limited due to resources. This group has, to some extent, grown out of Stream's Peninsula programme in the recognition of the short term nature of arts commissioning practice whereby artists 'parachute' into an area and then leave swiftly at the end of a commission. As Isabel Lilly discusses here;

[T]he artists don't stick around for the long term, and that's always been one of the things we have tried to work against. Given the constraint that we are a very small organisation and considering the funding you need to actually build long term programmes. [W]hat you can achieve is obviously far greater over a long period of time than over a smaller period of time. You build up knowledge of the community, and you can involve the community over a longer period of time.

One of the ways that Stream could improve their capacity and performance in relation to promoting active citizenship and community empowerment is by increasing the role of the critical friends in the organisation, for example having a greater role in writing briefs for commissions, commissioning artists, sitting on Stream's Board and critically evaluating projects. This would be a considerable opportunity for the development of active citizenship and learning within Stream.

4.3 Collaboration, constraint and authorship

This case study is instructive when thinking about the role of the artist in today's creative economy and the limits of collaborative practice. An artist who collaborates with an organisations or commissioning agency and receives funding is entering into a set of relations which may impose limitations on an art work and artist freedom of speech. This requires that the artist, like the commissioning agency enters into a process of dialogue and negotiation with both the commissioning agency. This case study demonstrates how this can either be trouble free or be fraught.

Collaborating with local resident also brings both constraints and opportunities²⁶. In particular, the socially engaged artist is also often struggling with his or her relationship to authorship. The artist's creative authorship gives the artwork *symbolic capital* and status in the arts world, and/or in the art market. Without this authorship there is always the risk that collaborative art will be interpreted as community arts thereby losing the status that authorship gives as an

26 There are some parallels here between practices of the artist and community development worker or social researcher. The sociologist and ethnographer often overlap. Each of these faces the challenge of access, establishing rapport, gathering the raw materials or 'data' for subsequent analysis and representation and informing future social policy and practice. Furthermore, artists and theoreticians alike face ethical dilemmas questions of confidentiality, anonymity, trust especially when working with more vulnerable or marginal sections of the population.

artwork. Simultaneously, doing participatory art can be understood as a way of keeping authorship alive, and therefore maintaining the status of the art work (The artist is still the author, and the institution still commissions the project). This is illustrated here by Myles, Myles is clearly aware of the importance of authorship in the production of an art work in a discussion of the delicate balance between curation, participation and empowerment.

M: We're just curating it. It's an editing role as well. You create the possibility for them to say something good, and then you edit up the stuff. It's about empowering. One of the things that we have to say about public art is like if we give people a paint brush and we paint a mural that looks shit, what's the point? []: You take an element. You kind of creatively control. Because otherwise they're going to feel stupid. It's about trying to lift up and pick out the most interesting things, and the most meaningful.

These tensions between authorship and collaboration underline the importance of Stream's role in this partnership. When collaboration ends at the point of authorship, Stream (as a long term presence in the area) are well positioned to catch and hold the participative impulse and the civic space that the project has engendered, thereby maximizing the citizenship impact of the project.

4.4 The limits and possibilities of arts and active citizenship.

It is worth considering the potential of Stream Art's work in relation to active citizenship. Clearly Stream Arts' occupy a difficult position in collaborating with both local regeneration agencies who are invested in promoting the positive aspects of urban change *and* artists who seek to give voice to local resident who may seek to critique these processes, however obliquely. This difficult position has relevance beyond the limits of this case study, having implications for arts organisations that are in contractual relations with local agencies and a range of private and public funding bodies. It also points to the tension in an evaluation criteria led by notions of citizenship.

This complex position is instructive when thinking about the kinds of active citizenship that can be engendered through these projects. To recap, we can understand citizenship within a spectrum of participation and voice. A citizen may be relatively co-operative and compliant, for example acting as an individual 'voter' and 'volunteer' or passive consumer. Alternatively they may actively take up opportunities for participation groups and existing structures. Finally we can think of the citizen as an individual who also participates within group(s) who is actively questioning and challenging unequal relations of power, concerned with social solidarity and social justice, (this may be both locally, or making links between the local and the wider national or even global context).

Clearly *Now Hear This* and *A-X* provided a space where residents of Greenwich Peninsula and other participants could speak up and have their say about the issues of their everyday life in their local area. By collecting these experiences through participative workshops and sharing and displaying them creatively in the public realm, the artists of both projects opened up a collective space of critique and reflection for residents. This has value in itself, as an opportunity to think, reflect and enjoy oneself in the process. Both projects were an opportunity for participants to voice their opinions about the regeneration of the area and the changes it has brought to the physical infrastructure and social fabric of the Peninsula. Participants in both projects expressed nostalgia, or discontent with the development process: the privatisation of local space, the ways in which the population of the area is imagined without consideration of the needs of families with children or older people.

Developers have got to look into developing a better estates, with children in mind, something where parents can be happy and knowing that they are safe.

There is nothing to do, 'cause the council don't think about the children too much. (...)They gotta pay attention to the children. Nowadays is all new built stuff, they don't build anything for the children. Just to get on the streets, you know, they are just bored, there's nothing to do. Kids have resorted into just walking into car parks and looking at fancy cars all the time. It's not very exciting.

I used the libraries in Greenwich for years. And East Greenwich library now, which has always been slightly run down, for all the length of time I've known it it's virtually falling apart. It's a beautiful building -Victorian- and people care desperately about it. And however much is said, nothing is ever done.

Now Hear This Transcripts

Both projects offer examples about the way in which socially engaged art, active citizenship and community empowerment issues dovetail. Clearly, these projects, by using playful and interactive methodologies offer enjoyable ways of involving local people in arts practice and democratic processes. This is in keeping with the aims of the Peninsula programme and can be seen in earlier Peninsula projects. (So for example Christian Nold's *Greenwich emotion map* used mapping and biotechnologies to creatively show the emotional responses to changes in the local environment such as increased traffic). They creatively and temporarily disrupt the dominant spatial meanings, controlled spaces and language of the Peninsula.



In this way Stream's projects seek to approach political and social issues from an oblique angle, with lightness of touch rather than through didactic messages. The cultural value of the art

work is not found merely found in the spaces of participation it offers, but also in the ways that they intelligently mirror spaces of democratic participation provided by the local authority and regeneration agencies (such as processes of consultation) and share these place these in on line and off line public space. In this way they aestheticise citizenship processes and the contradictions and failures of participatory democracy.

4.4.1 Governmentality and the perils of participation

A critical consideration of the case studies relationship to active citizenship requires that we consider the wider policy agenda concerning active citizenship and the arts. The constraints facing Stream Arts are indicative of the relations of governmentality that third sector organizations and arts organisations in general are facing in a period of 'austerity' and the evaluation systems. Contemporary cultural theorists have critically considered the ways in which social and cultural policy instrumentalises culture and participation in cultural activities as a medium through which appropriate behaviours can be encouraged. As discussed in section 2.3, in the UK this process of governmentality has been instrumentalised through a funding and evaluation regime that demands that those in receipt of arts funding demonstrate the social impact of their work in addressing social issues²⁷. In this way the artist risks becoming an agent in the manipulation of the social (Yúdice, 2002: 25-26).

Theorists of governmentality consider the ways the strategic deployment of art and culture facilitate the workings of power, suggesting that participation in cultural citizenship activities, for those we might describe as marginalized, offer spaces of cultural and symbolic citizenship which may be substitutes for political and economic citizenship.

In this spirit, as well as seeking examples of citizenship participation and community empowerment in this case study, it is worth also considering the a micro-governmentality surrounding the project: the network of relations that shape the projects, such as boundaries of the commission, the funding landscape it fits within, and the strategic uses of culture (as a category and domain of practice) which the project exemplifies. These projects are concerned with the changes that have come to the area through urban regeneration and the concomitant privatisation of the land in the area. However, they also take place within a cultural setting whereby arts and culture have been utilised as a strategic resource by local agencies as part of a process of managing change urban development, social integration and education, etc.

Participatory and collaborative art does hold the possibility of being a space for opening up a space of debate around citizenship matters, potentially leading to empowerment. In the spirit of examining the politics of governmentality, one of the more critical opportunities for active learning for active citizenship can be found in the opportunities for participants to reflect on the limited terms through which they may be invited to participate in participative art work generally.

Framing this project in terms of the research question as potential spaces of citizenship and citizenship learning can risk overlooking the power and the potential of the art and aesthetics to confront social contradiction, as well as to make political and social matters apparent in interesting and provocative ways. The case study projects are good examples here. The *Now Hear This* sound archive and the *A to X* project were both successful as art works. The events

²⁷ Oliver Marchart (1998). Art, Space and the Public Sphere(s). Some basic Observations on the Difficult Relation of Public Art, Urbanism and Political Theory. In European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies (eipcp). Retrieved (15-03-11) from: <<http://eipcp.net/transversal/0102/marchart/en>>. Bishop 2004, 2006 *ibid*).

surrounding the *A to X* project are evidence of this success. It is worth noting that the opinions of local change found in *Now Hear This* are just as critical as those in *A to X* however, being less visible, they did not attract the same degree of agency scrutiny. However, once an artwork is politically effective (in this instance making the relations of spatial control in the area apparent) the extent to which it is an art work, rather than a political intervention, becomes questionable. This is a longstanding and productive tension, as Sophie Hope, artist and academic explains here

Because they are framed, funded and presented as art there is an assumption that they are not political,[], that there is a contradiction between art and politics, but then we place a demand on the project to have some kind of political impact. But then as soon as it becomes too useful politically it is no longer art. So you also have a contradiction between the politically useful and the playful. And that tension, that contradiction is what makes it interesting.

(Sophie Hope at Critical Friends interview)

4.5 Learning for active citizenship

Given the network of relations of governmentality surrounding the spaces of participation exemplified in the case studies, it is worth considering the extent to which these participative projects are spaces of *active learning* for active citizenship. It is clear that these projects were places where people could speak about the social issues that concerned them, however, in many ways the opportunities for learning and critical reflection were not capitalised on (especially in regard to the *A to X* project which was particularly instructive in making apparent local politics of the Peninsula, albeit temporarily, through both the subject of the art work and the process of its realization).

The fact that the *A to X* project was subject to censorship can be read as an indication of its success. Rather than being just an interesting imaginative visual installation about the political and social relations of consultation and urban change, the *A to X* project was a *performative*. It performed the processes of consultation and democracy. The project gave voice to local residents and the fact that their statements were censored and made evident the power relations at work in the area and the conditions of cultural production this network of relations allows. As part of this case study the research team met with Sophie Hope and some of the Critical Friends to reflect on the two projects and events surrounding them. This was an opportunity to discuss the citizenship dimensions of Stream's work in light of the research question. The conversation addressed the participation in the research aspect of these projects, participation in events associated with the artwork. This led to discussions about who gets to have a say through participation in art, and an appreciation of Streams work and the chance to engage with contemporary art it creates. This performative element of *A to X* in particular prompted some reflection at an interview with the Critical Friends undertaken in the course of this project

I have this image of a commissar standing by and inspecting your art. It's very Soviet Union.

George, Critical Friend

If Stream were to maximise the opportunities for active learning through active citizenship the projects process and the tensions and possibilities it gave rise to would be the starting point for another set of engagements. However, this was not possible due to several factors discussed

throughout this report. Firstly, Stream Arts are a small organisation with limited capacity working in a context of very limited community development infrastructure or educational support. Secondly, Stream do not have links with larger arts institutions (who often have educational departments who carry out arts educational work associated with participatory and socially engaged practice). Finally the short- term nature of the commissions, and the framing of the artist within these means that the possibility of building on the opportunities for reflection and action here were limited. This was a small commission limited in terms of budget and time.

4.5.1 Artists as active citizens

In this case study it is the artists who have spoken about the active citizenship learning dimensions of the project. In an interview it became clear that Gethan sees herself as an active citizen who is both artist and educator (reflecting an intellectual tradition whereby the artist is an agent of imagination, outside of society, who has the ability to place ideas in the public realm).

It is so important with public art; these are debates, and arguments and opinions, and ideas that should be in the public realm. And if nobody else is going to put them there, then an independent arts organisation has to put them there.

Gethan.

Gethan and Myles see the role of the Stream as commissioning public art that has citizenship dimensions and recognises that within this commissioning the processes of participation and consultation should have a purpose, if people are to become actively involved.

G: feeling that you have an input and feeling that there's a point to what you say, is the only thing that makes you want to be actively involved in your community.

M: Unless you create a public forum for debate, people don't feel active, they don't feel like contribute, they don't feel they have a voice. And it can be very difficult to get permissions to make a piece of public art that will stimulate that debate. That ultimately, the result of that debate is very beneficial for the public body.

The artists themselves also went through a process of participation, learning and reflection as they became aware of the constraints imposed on the project and the delicate position occupied by Stream in negotiating local inter-agency relations and sensitivities around the areas regeneration and the communication of its successes.

M: [I]t was a big lesson for us [] I don't think we realised how much {the} Council had control over the work. And so, basically it's come out on several things that we can't put up stuff. There's an element of not wanting to annoy them about something. So it's pretty much about giving a voice to the people, as long as it's not a voice that annoys us too much. And for Stream Arts is a delicate thing, because they're being employed by the person they're trying to critique. That is such a difficult....

G: Ideologically almost an impossible situation.

M: I don't think we realised when we started how complicated that relation is.

Clearly, had there been a community development organisation in place, the participation and engagement that the projects brought about could have worked with the participants

experience as part of a process of reflective learning through a cycle of participation, reflection, action. (Freire 1998)²⁸

5 Conclusion

This case study demonstrates both the tensions and possibilities of framing the work of smaller arts organisations in terms of active citizenship. Today's arts and citizenship agenda²⁹ framed by the current governments commitment to the Big Society encourages participation in the arts as a mode of citizenship and places an emphasis on arts organisations to evidence their impact in these terms. There is a risk that this approach to understanding arts participation can become a new mode of instrumentalism. There is also a risk here that governmental agendas which see art as a contribution to the Big Society may employ a version of citizen participation in community activity which promotes artwork that risks being insipid and innocuous and compliant well-behaved citizens.

Implicit in this model of the role of arts in the Big Society is a model of arts participation and pedagogy which is delivered to deprived communities and citizens who need to learn how to become more active. The Stream Case Study demonstrates that in many cases residents *are* empowered³⁰ and do have a critical perspective on local concerns. However, it also shows that some local agencies, and associated systems of local governance are unwilling to listen and respond to them. This places smaller arts organisations such as Stream in an ideologically impossible position; promoting participation and collaboration in art which responds to local changes and regeneration while negotiating structures of governance and spatial relations that both residents and artists alike seek to critique.

Today's arts and citizenship agenda³¹ framed by the current governments commitment to the Big Society encourages participation in the arts as a mode of citizenship. However, while this represents a new way to frame and attempt to evidence the social impact of the arts it may also be yet another manifestation of instrumentalisation (and some would argue, another framework of governmentality) through evaluation for arts organisations and arts focused third sector organisations, to jump through in an already difficult funding landscape.

The case study demonstrates the power and potential of socially engaged art to create a space for participation, engagement and active citizenship within a wider project of cultural democracy. Here contemporary art is not something that is only available to and understood by for knowing elite with the requisite cultural capital required to be able to engage with art. Similarly community or participative art is not socially worthy but aesthetically inferior. To

²⁸ Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of Freedom: ethics, democracy, and civic courage*. Critical perspectives series. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers,

²⁹ See . Knell, J and Taylor, M, (2011). *Arts Funding, Austerity and the Big Society – Remaking the case for the arts*. RSA Essay 4

³⁰ Although this case study demonstrates that challenges facing Stream it should be noted that larger organisations in the UK's museums and galleries arts sector who have benefitted substantially from external funding invested in public engagement and participation have varied substantially in their public engagement work. the arts sectors performance on Research by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation finds that despite the, there has not been a significant shift in public engagement moving from the margins to the core of many of these organisations. This can lead to larger museums and galleries doing 'engagement –lite' work, relegating publics to passive consumers of their products and treating community partners as beneficiaries rather than active partners. (see Lynch, B. 2011. *Whose Cake is it Anyway?* Paul Hamlyn Foundation)

³¹.Knell, J and Taylor, M. 2011 Ibid

evaluate such practice as having significant instrumental value risks overlooking the intrinsic value of the art work and the process that engender it.

6 Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1

The Take Part Research Cluster

The Take Part research cluster is a partnership between researchers from The University of Lincoln, Goldsmiths University of London and Manchester Metropolitan University. It is funded by the Economic & Social Research Centre (ESRC) in partnership with The Office for the Third Sector and the Barrow Cadbury Trust.

The Taking Part research cluster is part of a larger national programme developing Third Sector research. The cluster is one of the national clusters linked with the new National Centre for Third Sector Research. The cluster builds upon the research expertise of the three universities and the track record of the national Take Part Network promoting its approach to bring together local, regional and national third sector organisations and higher education institutions, concerned with strengthening civil society: promoting active citizenship, equalities and community empowerment. The cluster is developing innovative approaches to community engagement and empowerment, issues of central importance to the Third Sector, as well as to the public and private sectors.

The Centre for Urban and Community Research

The Centre has existed since 1994 and as part of its parent Department of Sociology was rated as 5* (the highest category) within the most recent HEFCE Research Assessment Exercise rating of research institutions in British universities which indicates international excellence.

The Centre carries out teaching and research of the highest academic standards at the interface of the visual arts, humanities and social sciences. CUCR has a long track record of experience in the fields of active citizenship, community development and third sector capacity building. CUCR have extensive experience of work that draws on models of participatory democracy, evaluations of experimental social policy interventions. This includes work with a range of groups such as young people, older people, refugees and asylum seekers, Roma Gypsy and Traveller groups and fathers. A significant strand of work involves examining the social impact of the arts and cultural activity. We have been responsible for:

- KnowledgeEast Creative Impact project: development of indicator matrix and Evaluation Toolkit and arts practitioner/regenerator 'translation guide' for assessing impact of creative (and especially performing arts) and social regeneration projects. An on-line version of this work is now in development. Project funded by HEFCE Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF).
- Beyond the Numbers Game: An evaluation project within national ESF Equal-funded Hi8us/NESTA youth media programme Inclusion Through Media, to develop Toolkit for evaluating youth media interventions, including development of on-line version with Hi8us Midlands.
- Signs of the City project: An evaluation of an European Culture programme project which worked with EU cultural institutions, artists and young people using participatory photography to examine young people's contemporary urbanism in four European cities.
- Evaluation of the Serpentine *Skills Exchange* project where artists and architects are collaborating with older people in Westminster, Hackney and Camden in London to create new work and propose new models for housing. Skills exchange was developed by the Serpentine Gallery in partnership with Age Concern and Westminster Housing with Care Services.

- Dancing the Gateway 2008 – 2010, Evaluation of the London Thames Gateway Dance Partnership, to test the effectiveness of dance as a strategic intervention and effective tool for engaging communities in major urban regeneration projects.

6.2 Appendix 2

Some examples are:

- Greenwich Emotion Map (2005-2007), where artist Christian Nold created a GPS device for designing a map which charted the emotional responses of the local community to the local environment. (<http://www.emotionmap.net/>)
- Peninsula Voices (2006-2007) by Daniel Belasco Rogers. A GPS audio map that brings stories of Greenwich Peninsula. (<http://www.planbperformance.net/dan/locative.htm>)
- Talkaoke (2007-2008) by The People Speak. In this project, the artists organised a round table inviting teenagers to discuss about issues they were concerned about. At the same time, they also invited professionals from different areas related to the subjects of the discussions, generating an inter-generational conversation. (<http://thepeps.net/#talkaoke>)
- Fresh FM by APE Media (2007-2009), an Internet and FM radio station run by young people (13 to 19 years old) from the area of Greenwich. (<http://www.freshfm.org.uk/>)
- 100 Cauliflowers (2008), by Kerry Morrison. The artist worked with locals to create a public allotment in the shadow of the O2 and to grow 100 cauliflowers. (<http://www.100cauliflowers.com/>)
- In a League of Our Own (2009), where artist Jayne Murray organised a Pub Quiz where local teams had to compete to show their knowledge of Greenwich. (<http://www.jaynemurray.co.uk/publications.html>)