



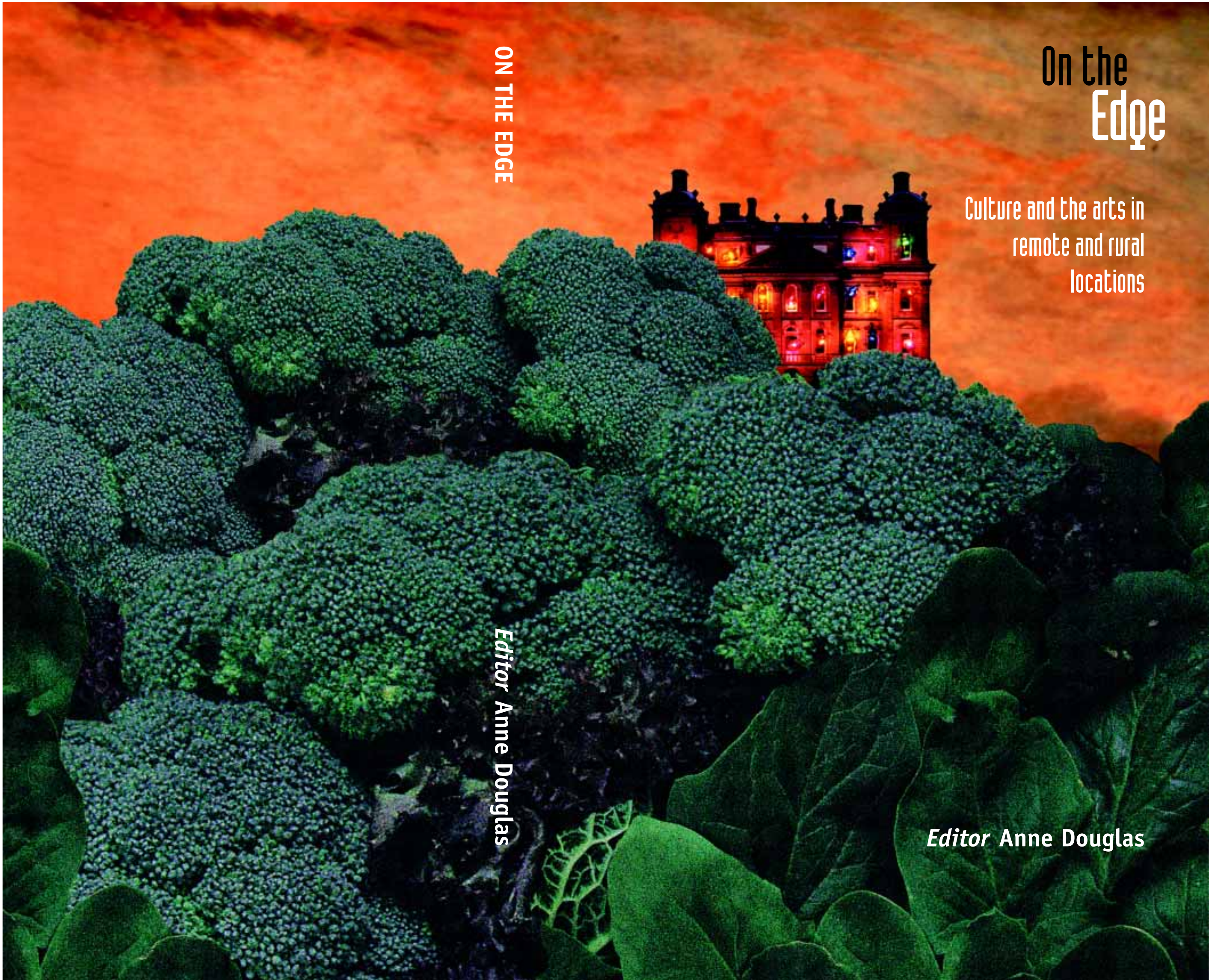
ON THE EDGE

# On the Edge

Culture and the arts in remote and rural locations

Editor Anne Douglas

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# On the Edge

## Culture and the arts in remote and rural locations

Papers from  
the international conference  
promoting Arts and Heritage development  
in remote areas, with models from across Europe,  
held at Duff House, Banffshire, Scotland,  
31st May to 2nd June 2001

Editor

DR ANNE DOUGLAS

*Senior Research Fellow*

*Gray's School of Art*

*The most crucial role for contemporary rural culture is  
perhaps to engage critically with urban cultural values.*

François Matarasso



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## *Statement* ON THE EDGE CONFERENCE

COUNCILLOR RAYMOND G. BISSET  
Convener of Aberdeenshire Council

AS CONVENER of Aberdeenshire Council I had the privilege of attending and speaking at the *On the Edge* Conference, which was held at Duff House in May 2001. An international audience attended the conference, which covered the Arts and Cultural issues, many of the participants paying a first visit to and enjoying the delights of the North East of Scotland.

The event could not have happened without the support of the North Sea Commission and other sponsors, including my own Council, and I wish to take the opportunity to thank all the organisers and participants for contributing to an exchange of views that will have lasting value for those involved in the production of cultural events for scattered rural communities throughout the European Union and beyond.

Can I also express my thanks to Charles Burnett and staff of Duff House whose attention to detail and considerable preparatory work ensured a smooth running programme providing maximum value to conference delegates.

Finally to those who attended from 'aa the airts' can I thank you for coming and 'hist ye back'.



RAYMOND BISSET

15th February 2001



## Foreword DUFF HOUSE

CHARLES J. BURNETT · [www.duffhouse.com](http://www.duffhouse.com)  
Chamberlain of Duff House

WHEN DUFF HOUSE opened as a Country House Gallery in 1995 a modest programme of events was arranged. A temporary exhibition, lectures and musical recitals took place during the first year.

The potential of Duff House as a cultural and social centre was further exploited after 1997. In that year the Friends of Duff House organisation was established and it plays an increasing part in supporting the House and assisting with events. Summer and Winter Programmes of activities were arranged to give a varied selection of temporary exhibitions, lectures, author readings, musical performances and outdoor events in the grounds of Duff House. Marriage ceremonies in the Great Drawing Room were celebrated from 1998 and a further step forward in the provision of services for visitors and school pupils occurred in 2000 when an Education and Interpretation Officer was appointed.

The Millennium Year saw an emphasis in the exploitation of the House and its collections with the purchase of period objects that had once been used by the owners of Duff House. A performance of contemporary dance and music was commissioned, entitled *The Secret House*, along with a book of stories relating to people who lived and worked in Duff House.

Two fire drill exercises and a conference were held in the House on the subject of Fire Prevention in historic properties. It was felt that Duff House could provide a suitable setting for a larger conference with wider appeal. My colleague, Claudia Zeiske, along with other members of the Management Team had been involved in the creation of our programmes of events and had experienced the problems of providing cultural activities in a part of Scotland that is comparatively remote from the capital city of Edinburgh.

A working relationship had also been forged with Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen. As a result discussions were held between Duff House and Gray's to decide on a conference that encompassed others who were also attempting to bring cultural and other events to remote regions of Scotland and Europe.

Thus the idea of the On the Edge Conference took place. The North Sea Commission were fully prepared to support such a pan European gathering and we at Duff House were delighted and grateful when so many of our fellow Europeans welcomed the opportunity to meet in Banffshire to discuss common problems.

I am indebted to Claudia and Dr Anne Douglas of Gray's School of Art, and all who organised, supported and took part in the conference. It was a success; new friends were made, information was exchanged, and Duff House once again played its part in enlivening the cultural and social life of this special part of the ancient realm of Scotland.



# ART, CULTURE AND GOVERNMENT POLICY

LOUS COPPOOLSE · [www.northsea.com](http://www.northsea.com)  
Chair of the Culture and Tourism Group and  
Member of the Executive Committee of the  
North Sea Commission

**N**OT EVERYONE is convinced that culture is an item that should be left to the remit of government but everyone agrees that art and culture are essential to society. The Flemish historian, Josef Delen, said that ‘Culture is a value in itself. It is the most essential element in the identity of a nation (or a region).’

At the same time art and culture are vulnerable because as concepts these do not represent an economic or a financial interest. Nevertheless the business world is becoming more and more aware of the fact that a good cultural climate in a region (provision, festivals and so on) is one of the main factors besides good infrastructure, the labour market, energy supplies and education. Culture, like these more known factors attracts new enterprises and as a consequence, new jobs.

So culture is a force of development. For example culture and interesting cultural heritage make a region more attractive to tourists. They are part of our productivity in the tourism sector, which can involve for example, organizing festivals in the late summer in order to lengthen the existing tourist season or to create a new one.

We also notice two other trends in our society that are relevant to the involvement of regional cultural policy.

## **Globalisation of society is developing rapidly**

The world is within arm’s reach. This creates more and more uniformity in cultural taste e.g. the soap operas on television. As a counter reaction we see a growing interest in the unique character of culture of regions and also of local communities. This interest exposes an opportunity for cultural institutions: instead of a threat, a clash between innovation and tradition, culture can be viewed as a challenge that gives rise to new concepts, for festivals for example.

## **The population in peripheral areas is ‘ageing’**

One of the reasons for this demographic development is the migration of young people to more central areas both to study and in pursuit of attractive jobs. Our youth also think that ‘it all happens’ in Antwerp, Brussels and Amsterdam and they want to be part of ‘the scene’. To resist this trend we have to invest in good education and in forms of culture that appeal to youth.

Ageing also creates opportunities. Participation in culture by older people is growing. We have observed this especially in older women, who are participating more and also in a broader variety of cultural activities.

All the above mentioned developments provide even us 'on the edge' with a lot of challenges and opportunities now and in the future. On the other hand the effort in the more remote areas to bring into existence a healthy cultural climate, cultural facilities and cultural festivals of quality is a difficult and heavy burden, politically as well as financially. It is therefore very important that there is good co-operation between authorities, between regions and co-operation between local and regional authorities within regions. Next to co-operation, support of the national government is of great importance.

The working group, Culture and Tourism of the North Sea Commission, would like to stimulate co-operation between regions. Together we can achieve more. Working together creates opportunities. We can exchange experiences. We can learn from the successes and failures of others. It is important that there is common identity. This exchange functions as an important incentive to organizing projects and other activities between member regions.

#### **Action Plan 2001-2002**

Therefore it is of great importance that we encourage ideas, workshops and partnerships for the Interreg IIIB North Sea programme. Good management and the development of cultural heritage and historic landscapes make people more aware of common culture and increase appreciation of heritage.

I am convinced that if ideas and disciplines are combined and promoted together, they will create even more awareness of one's own heritage as well as the heritage of other regions. In my opinion it is also important that more than one discipline is involved. If, for example, archaeology, landscape and spatial planning are combined in projects, each of them will benefit more. Modern culture in old landscapes or old buildings is often very fascinating. Last year for example, the modern opera, *Curlew River* by Benjamin Britten, was performed in my home town in the inner court of the abbey. Modern theatre, contemporary dance, visual and applied arts and even literary creation gain an extra dimension if they are performed in other places than where we usually expect them to take place. In our Interreg III-B programme these disciplines can be related to water: the North Sea itself, and all rivers and other waterways. Our countries can exchange performances in North Sea Summer festivals.

As our countries are divided by sea, a very important part of our history is shown in our maritime heritage. Maritime heritage appeals to a great number of people. It is also a very vulnerable part of our heritage, not only because ships are affected by time. There are very few people who are capable of restoring old ships.

This knowledge is vanishing because, like other cultural elements, these ships and their shipyards are no longer of specific economic interest. Therefore it is of great importance to exchange knowledge and stimulate the building of new yards where ships can be repaired the way our ancestors used to do it.

Culture is a product of partnerships; the creators, the performers, the organisers, the museums, the authorities etc. all contribute to the total cultural product. The North Sea Commission, as an organisation of regional authorities around the North Sea, clearly sees its responsibility as a partner in this process. Our involvement in this conference is one demonstration of this. Our action plan for the next year's endeavours is to follow up this commitment. Regional authorities on their own and in co-operation with other regions have important, even crucial tasks to perform in promoting the arts, cultural heritage, youth activities, sports or the development of cultural tourism.

I will commit my group to further cross North Sea co-operation on these issues.



# NORTH SEA COMMISSION

## The Culture and Tourism Group

BARONESS ROS SCOTT · [www.northsea.org](http://www.northsea.org)  
Vice Chair of the Culture and Tourism Group of the  
North Sea Commission

**T**HE NORTH SEA COMMISSION brings together some sixty local and regional authorities in eight countries, with the aim of recognising and strengthening the common North Sea identity and developing its potential as a significant European region. One only has to consider the challenges faced by our fishing industry, or the threats to the marine and coastal environments to see how such a unified cross border approach can reap dividends.

The Culture and Tourism Group of the Commission works to promote those ideals, in particular through identifying and creating opportunities for joint projects, especially those bringing E.U. funding such as Interreg and Culture 2000.

The North Sea played a major role in creating the communities that we know today around its perimeter. In the days when travel by land was difficult and dangerous, the sea was a highway permitting those living near it to explore, to trade and to migrate—not always peacefully!

As a result much of our heritage is shared—language and dialect, buildings and boats, folklore and music—as well as the natural heritage which has many common features. It was the sea that created North Sea communities, not capital cities or nation states. Life around the sea, remote from large towns was often harsh and difficult—life ‘on the edge’ indeed.

We must always remind ourselves of this common heritage and regard the sea as something that unifies us and not as a barrier. The experience of cultural life in rural areas need not be second best to metropolitan areas—it is simply different.

# GRAY'S SCHOOL OF ART

## The Robert Gordon University

PROFESSOR CAROLE GRAY · [www.rgu.ac.uk/criad/](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/criad/)  
Research Professor

GRAY'S SCHOOL OF ART is of a very different character from the large urban-based institutions of the Central belt. We are situated in a predominantly rural and relatively remote location, which is economically underpinned by agriculture, fishing, the oil and gas industry and heritage. This location prompts questions about specific aspects of professional and cultural sustainability, which in more urban and metropolitan contexts might not arise. For example, how can artists and designers develop more culturally responsive practices to encourage access and participation in the arts so generating new relationships between the artist and society? How can artists and designers use new technologies for creative networked communication and invention to explore issues of the 'global/local' relationship? These questions colour our approach to the education of our students and challenge those of us teaching in higher education to respond creatively through research<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> For further information on current and completed research projects and M.Phil/Ph.D research please visit: [www.rgu.ac.uk/criad](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/criad)

We have just embarked on an important collaborative research project funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Board. The project in fact is called 'On the Edge: A New Articulation of the Sustainability of Contemporary Visual Arts'<sup>2</sup> and has been developed in parallel with this conference. Through collaborative workshops and experimental visual arts projects this research will extend our understanding and knowledge of sustainable creative practice in the visual arts through collaboration with key cultural 'shapers' in our specific geographic location and similar European contexts.

<sup>2</sup> see Appendix 1

Gray's School of Art is pleased to be actively involved in a series of initiatives exploring the issues of cultural development and sustainability in remote and rural contexts—this important international conference and the related exhibition 'Living the Land'<sup>3</sup> being amongst them. This conference enriches our understanding of the research issues and context, and most importantly identifies real projects, putting faces to names and ideas into action.

<sup>3</sup> 'Living the Land', curated by Anne Douglas and Flick Hawkins, featured the work of 11 contemporary artists living in rural areas of Northern Scotland whose practices are based in remote locations

DAVE PATRICK · WWW.Q-SCAPE.COM

Founder and Director of innovation consultancy Q-SCAPE

*Dave Patrick is the Founder and Director of innovation consultancy Q-SCAPE, a company that facilitates strategic and creative dialogue within and between organisations and stakeholders involved in the management of cultural change and the adoption of new working practices (e.g. using e-business applications). He is currently undertaking doctoral research at Gray's School of Art into the design and application of interactive visual creative thinking tools. As a resident of remote rural Aberdeenshire he gives an overview of the impact of the conference as a vehicle of discussion and future action in the development of culture 'on the edge'.*

<sup>1</sup> Himmelman, Arthur Turov (1996) *On the theory and practice of transformational collaboration: from social services to social justice* in Huxham, Chris (Ed.) (1996) *Creating Collaborative Advantage*. London: Sage Publications, p34.

'It is difficult to imagine the transformation of a community or society without the significant participation of artists, the sharing of cultural traditions and experiments, and the celebration that can be drawn from these central qualities of the human condition. Unfortunately, many community change collaboratives do not substantially integrate arts, culture and celebration into their efforts.'<sup>1</sup>

HIMMELMAN highlights the potential importance of artists in cultural change through their active involvement in processes that straddle tradition and experimentation. In thinking about this potential in relation to remote rural locations, one is faced with a challenge. On the one hand there is something profoundly liberating about the notion of being 'on the edge'—a freedom to question, to experiment, to breathe. In essence, this freedom represents the central core of the human creative condition. Yet being 'on the edge' also implies being on a cultural periphery, away from a centre of activity, both in terms of the quality and quantity of available cultural or artistic resources. The *On the Edge* conference addressed the double edge inherent in this challenge.

The role of the arts in cultural development is explored in this conference in terms of arts practice and the values that underpin practice. The impact of the arts is investigated from three different perspectives: economic, social and cultural. Although economic and social impacts have been extensively investigated in the past, the third strand, culture, takes the debate to much greater depths of exploration than before.

Arts practice is discussed through 'real life' project experience, the diversity of which relates initially to the projects' unique geographical locations 'on the edge'. Spanning Northern Europe, the spotlight moves east to west from Northern Finland (Kuhmo Chamber Orchestra) to the Western Isles (Taigh Chearsabhagh), and north to south from Norway (Hå Gamle Prestegard) to Austria (SPUR/IG-Tirol).



Diversity is also manifested in individual projects, from emergent opportunities (the evolution and growth of the Fèis movement) to the planned regional strategy approach of the Kulturhøst festival in Denmark. The variety of art forms highlights the richness of experience within communities, ranging from traditional music (Fèisean in Scotland), the visual arts (Nordiska Akvarel Museum in Sweden), classical music (Schloss Elmau in Germany), pop art and poetry (SPUR/IG-Tirol in the Tyrol in Austria), to the philosophy, architecture and history of the built environment such as Le Corbusier's convent of La Tourette in France. Another dimension of diversity relates to individual project 'models'. These include festival-based events (Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival in Finland), institutions (Tate St. Ives in England), organisations (Hi-Arts in Inverness, Scotland) and partnerships (Duff House, funded by the National Galleries of Scotland, Historic Scotland and Aberdeenshire Council).

Pivotal to the conference's success was François Matarasso's dual role as Chairman and Facilitator. A key outcome was his distillation of 9 principles of successful rural development, all informed by experience. The principles include, for example, *Dig Where You Stand*, the harnessing of the trust of local judgement and experience. *Valuing Culture* recognises the influence of culture on people's aspirations and goals. These principles are flexible rather than prescriptive, adaptable to suit local conditions, taking into account context and relativity of what is felt to be important.

A particular challenge in developing the arts in remote, rural settings is often the lack of an effective support infrastructure. Shortcomings include the built environment of galleries, concert halls and transport, needed to stimulate the generation of activity and 'the art habit'. This leads to problems of access, methods of engagement and the safeguarding of the quality of arts delivery.

Access to the arts should not be restricted to popularity, although perceived desirability and consumer choice must be considered. Contemporary art must retain its ability to challenge, to be an instrument of change and uphold a commitment to quality. Schloss Elmau, whose quality of space and silence creates opportunities for experimentation in spectacular surroundings, exemplifies what can be accomplished with vision, as does the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival, where leading international practitioners are attracted to a quality of 'spirit'.

Matarasso pushed the boundaries of our understanding of the challenge facing the development of arts in remote rural locations by suggesting that a crucial role for contemporary arts was to engage critically with urban cultural values, by taking rural values to the city and by being prepared to challenge and be challenged.

From my own research perspective<sup>2</sup>, the *On The Edge*

<sup>2</sup> As a researcher into the design and application of interactive, visual creative thinking tools and new thinking frameworks (see introduction)

conference raises many critical issues. A key question is how the conference discussion might assist the process of converting planning to action. Although the impact of conferences in the longer term is often unclear, the distillation of 9 principles drawn from real world project experience will be this event's major legacy. A potential for tools to be developed from these principles now exists. They may be applied at three distinct levels of cultural project development. Firstly, as a *diagnostic* tool for ongoing *project review* (e.g. *Working Flexibly* raises questions of projects' responsiveness to circumstances and opportunities). Secondly, as a *planning* tool for start-up *experimental projects* (e.g. by identifying and developing different ways to contribute under the *Nurturing Participation* principle). Finally, as an ongoing *performance monitoring* tool (e.g. by measuring project success in connecting with young people in the *Demonstrating Local Benefit* context).

The tools would allow deeper questions to be asked than might otherwise be possible. Implicit in the tools' use is the transferability of practice and experience. It acts as a catalyst for raising questions across all aspects of cultural development.

It was fitting that this conference venue was Duff House in Banff, itself situated *on the edge* of Aberdeenshire's Northern coastal boundary. By necessity the venue was not the historic building itself, but a magnificent wedding marquee tent on the lawn opposite its main entrance. This was an inspired location. The relaxed and informal layout of round tables helped to create the right environment, a festive space in which delegates could converse, listen, share experiences and raise questions. The participants were there to interact with each other and to work, by considering serious issues and moving forward to agree practical frameworks for action. This serious element was balanced by an Arts programme featuring artists of different media, such as the accomplished local Aberdeenshire fiddler, Paul Anderson, all of whom animated and embodied the issues in different ways.

<sup>3</sup> Himmelman, Arthur Turov (1996)

'The music, the poem, the story, the painting, the photograph and the play are among the many ways that human beings find connections and integration within themselves and with each other. All such human expression is essential for transforming ourselves, our communities and the world in which all of us share an increasingly common destiny.'<sup>3</sup>

In the continuation to this essay's opening quote, Himmelman indicates the need for a 'ripple-out' process—starting with self, through community and finally encompassing the global dimension. Aberdeenshire Council, the Scottish Executive and the North Sea Commission and others, have a unique opportunity to

create positive waves to assist the process of sustainable cultural development into the future. Remote, rural areas, using the same principles and tools, have a similar opportunity to position themselves at the centre of future cultural initiatives, whilst also continuing to enjoy the relative freedom of being *on the edge*.



SIR TIMOTHY CLIFFORD · [www.natgalscot.ac.uk](http://www.natgalscot.ac.uk)  
Director-General of the National Galleries of Scotland

*Dr Timothy Clifford is the Director-General of the National Galleries of Scotland. He is one of the 'architects' of Duff House as it exists in its current form as the outstation of the National Galleries for Scotland. He articulates the vision that underpinned Duff House's development. A partnership of three that enabled the vision to be realised included Historic Scotland, National Galleries of Scotland and Aberdeenshire Council. The creativity and the research of individuals such as himself and Ian Gow, Senior Curator at the National Trust for Scotland, interpreted the relationship between the House, its history and its current collection in a meaningful and exciting way.*

IT WOULD have been a great pleasure if I could have had the opportunity today to show you all around Duff House—but, sadly, it would have been impossible to squeeze you all in. So, a talk in this marquee, with a selection of slides, will have to suffice to provide me with the chance, albeit inadequate, to explain to you something about the background of the Duff House venture—what Duff House is, and why and how it has developed in the way that it has.

*It started as a vision and, through a fruitful and enthusiastic partnership, that vision became a reality*

It started as a vision and, through a fruitful and enthusiastic partnership, that vision became a reality. Some of the people in this audience today were the dreamers or believers, and still others the executants—they comprise archival researchers, art historians, conservators, architects, engineers, electricians, plumbers, scaffolders, decorators, gilders, and picture-hangers, as well as councillors, civil servants, and local government officers—and this team combined to transform an empty shell into a distinguished and most memorable, fully-furnished, country house. I am bad about remembering when it all started to happen, but there was a conference held here in, I believe, 1988. At that conference, called by Historic Scotland (the landlords on behalf of the Secretary of State for Scotland) to debate the future of Duff House, it was felt by all present that this abandoned and forlorn house—a sort of Ariadne on Naxos—had to be imbued with a real purpose. Duff House had nothing in it bar a few wraith-like white paper cutout mannequins in 18th Century costume. There were no carpets or curtains, and there remained only four lacklustre Duff family portraits, one of which had been painted less than a decade previously.

The debate was fascinating, but frustrating. Some on the Banff and Buchan Council thought it was a good idea that the local museum be transferred to Duff House; other locals suggested the space should be turned over to ping-pong and pool tables. Some looked to the National Trust for Scotland, suggesting they might run it in tandem with their other Aberdeenshire properties. Others, from the floor, suggested that the National Museums of Scotland, should have a central pastoral rôle. It was one of those debates where it was pretty apparent that there was no agreement and that nothing was going to be achieved!

*. . . committees will never make a success of this idea, so leave it to us at the National Galleries of Scotland and we, with you at Historic Scotland, will do it together*

A year (or maybe more than a year) after this historic debate, when we were all getting nowhere, I wrote to Historic Scotland (in their capacity as landlords), and the gist of the letter was this: committees will never make a success of this idea, so leave it to us at the National Galleries of Scotland and we, with you at Historic Scotland, will do it together. The precedents for this were south of the border, in the various thriving branch museums created by the National Portrait Gallery of London; Bodelwyddan in North Wales was our nearest prototype. We clearly needed plenty of local support, and a deal of local funding. Under the aegis of Historic Scotland, Banff and Buchan District Council, Grampian Regional Council, a loose consortium was formed and called on Grampian Enterprise to push forward the project and guarantee its future with a long-term funding package. Additional sponsorship came initially from the great oil giant, Mobil.

The local funding bodies met with Historic Scotland and ourselves, to develop a concordat satisfactory to all parties. The rôles separated as follows. Historic Scotland, the landlords (on behalf of the Secretary of State for Scotland) agreed to provide £2 million (EURO 3,280,840) to put the building into an excellent state of repair, and to refurbish the interior along with detailed conservation work and decoration of the interiors.

*All these bodies then came together and in solemn accord agreed to work with each other to foster this bold and exciting concept. It was to provide local employment, and to be a focus for tourism, a centre for artistic and historic education, a venue for temporary exhibitions, and a beacon of excellence*

The National Galleries of Scotland agreed to find pictures for Duff House, preferably with a North East connection and, above all,

appropriate to the building; we were also to find furniture and fittings. The local authorities were to pay for heating, lighting, and clerical and warding costs.

All these bodies then came together and in solemn accord agreed to work with each other to foster this bold and exciting concept. It was to provide local employment, and to be a focus for tourism, a centre for artistic and historic education, a venue for temporary exhibitions, and a beacon of excellence. The original partnership changed later, when Aberdeenshire Council subsumed Grampian Regional Council and Banff and Buchan District Council, but this had all been anticipated in the legally-binding agreement signed at the outset. These arrangements—with the local authorities paying running costs, Historic Scotland maintaining the property, and the National Galleries of Scotland displaying, conserving, interpreting, and indemnifying the very valuable collections—have been in operation, more or less unchanged, since Duff House opened to the public in 1995—opened formally by HRH The Duke of Rothesay, it has received much acclaim from the public and scholars alike.

*Duff House, one of William Adam's masterpieces . . . it is one of the most sophisticated classical buildings in northern Europe*

Duff House, one of William Adam's masterpieces, as a building is amongst the grandest classical buildings in northern Scotland—in fact, it is one of the most sophisticated classical buildings in northern Europe. When designed it was intended to have two low segmental wings, linking two fine pavilions; these were never built but, who knows, one day those two pavilions might be erected, using Scottish know-how, Scottish masons, Scottish stone, to the unused but existing designs of William Adam. The pavilions might provide space for a lecture theatre, that could double as a concert hall and/or film theatre; space would also be available for catering and entertaining, so transforming an architectural masterpiece into the potential hub of a major annual regional festival. The idea has been mooted, and funding bodies have indicated a cautious but enthusiastic response.

So, we had the agreement, and we had the building—and Historic Scotland spent a great deal of money providing new roofs, state-of-the-art lifts, disabled access, new washrooms, kitchens, a system of air filtering, and a complex system of alarms and smoke detectors, transforming Duff House into probably the finest-equipped country house in Scotland; for example, the plant in the basement is astonishing, just like the engine-room of a nuclear-powered submarine!

The next problem was, what were the National Galleries of

Scotland going to put into this building? We did not wish to use it as an out-station for contemporary art, or indeed as a gallery for the display of only Scottish Art. It was agreed, therefore, that the picture-hang should approximate what it must have been like in the House's heyday. There would, however, also have to be temporary exhibition space for touring shows. By good chance, Duff House had formed one of the—if not *the*—earliest portrait galleries, put together on an entirely historical basis, within the United Kingdom. Its creator was James, 2nd Earl of Fife, (1729-1809), who started the collection in 1758 and compiled a published catalogue of it in 1798. It was appropriate for us to hang many portraits and topographical pictures in the House, especially those with Duff and North Eastern connections.

Ian Gow, now Senior Curator at the National Trust for Scotland, but then Head of Architecture at the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, undertook considerable research to provide us with a solid basis for furnishing the interiors. His research also guided the conservation work of Historic Scotland.

*. . . it is very difficult to freeze a building like this because at any particular period in its development rooms change—one moment a room was a dining room, the next it was a drawing room, and later perhaps it might have been a state bedroom*

It was necessary to decide at what historical time we should 'freeze' the Duff House interiors. Now, as you can imagine, it is very difficult to freeze a building like this because at any particular period in its development rooms change—one moment a room was a dining room, the next it was a drawing room, and later perhaps it might have been a state bedroom. We had to make a decision and to freeze it at certain points so that the whole thing made some sort of logical statement. With many of the rooms, the way they function at the moment is not the way they were originally intended to function. Indeed, one of the interesting things about the early history of the building is that there was such a tremendous disagreement between the architect responsible and the patron, the first owner never actually lived here. Therefore, the only sort of kitting-out and finishing-off really was at attic-storey level, and then later the other levels of the building were completed. We then had an idea—there was an immensely-neglected house in Fife, called Dunimarle. I remember when I went there for the first time, when it was looked after only by a caretaker, there were two very fluffy Alsatians who obviously at some stage or other had had indigestion; the result was an awful low of blowflies and a terrible smell. But in the house there were,

lying all over the floors, piles of furniture and pictures. Rain was not coming in at that particular moment, but clearly had done so in the past.

*It was rather like Caernarvon and Carter opening Tutankhamun's Tomb—you saw this 'explosion' of works of art lying everywhere, and the glitter of the gold leaf was amazing*

It was fascinating when you opened the shutters in these rooms at Dunimarle, and you saw the contents. It was rather like Caernarvon and Carter opening Tutankhamun's Tomb—you saw this 'explosion' of works of art lying everywhere, and the glitter of the gold leaf was amazing. What was there was, in fact, to a very great extent the Erskines of Torrie's collection, put together largely in the early years of the 19th Century just after the Battle of Waterloo, when the Erskine of Torrie of the day had been part of the military occupation of Paris. Erskine had many of the finest pieces in 1816 from the sale of items belonging to Cardinal Fesch (1763-1839), Archbishop of Paris and Lyon and step-uncle of Napoleon.

*Duff House contains some of the great secrets of Scotland*

Duff House contains some of the great secrets of Scotland. There is the glorious furniture made for Fesch; here, for instance, is the throne made for Napoleon's stepson, Eugène de Beauharnais, when Prince de Venise and Viceroy of Italy, 1808-14. There is a picture by El Greco, three pictures by Boucher, four by Allan Ramsay, and seven by Sir Henry Raeburn. We have been lent a great Etty, two of David Allan's finest pictures, and a magnificent portrait by Sir Francis Grant of Sir Walter Scott. The list is most impressive, as can be seen from our published catalogue, Duff House—Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture. The furniture is also spectacular, with as its crowning glory a set of seat furniture made by Chippendale, to the design of Robert Adam, for Sir Lawrence Dundas in July 1765.

*. . . all works of art have been scrupulously selected to be appropriate to the building*

Duff House was certainly not to be fobbed off with second-rate objects, and all works of art have been scrupulously selected to be appropriate to the building, as is discussed in the comprehensive guidebook to the House, written by me and Ian Gow in 1995.

You have now heard briefly about the structure of the building, and you have heard briefly about the historical research that went into recreating Duff House. You also know a little of its contents—

we ‘decanted’ many objects from Dunimarle in Fife, but certain essential items of furniture were not in that collection so, with very modest funds, we bought to fill the gaps. These acquisitions were often made in Scotland, and much of the furniture was Scottish. If items that have an historic Duff House provenance come up on the market nowadays, we do our level best to acquire them, and the Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Art Collections Fund (The Art Fund) have both been wonderfully generous in supporting this endeavour.

Finally, I would like to extend special thanks to the admirable staff at Duff House, knowing that it cannot be easy curating a great house like this so far from the major centres of population in Scotland. Charles Burnett, Chamberlain of Duff House (and Ross Herald) should be marked out for particular praise; John Mair (Head Warder), Jo Edwards (Administrative Officer)—both of whom have been here since the beginning—and now Jo Anthony (Education Officer), all work single-mindedly in curating, preserving, and interpreting this glorious House. The organiser of this conference, and the regular fund-raiser through sponsorship is Claudia Zeiske, who is an indefatigable and enthusiastic worker.

*Let us fervently hope that the Duff House Partnership (Historic Scotland, the National Galleries of Scotland, and Aberdeenshire Council) flourishes, and that Duff House increasingly attracts visitors for many years to come*

Let us fervently hope that the Duff House Partnership (Historic Scotland, the National Galleries of Scotland, and Aberdeenshire Council) flourishes, and that Duff House increasingly attracts visitors for many years to come.



## ON THE EDGE: art, culture and rural communities

FRANÇOIS MATARASSO · [www.comedia.org.uk](http://www.comedia.org.uk)  
Conference Facilitator, writer and  
associate researcher with Comedia

*François Matarasso is a writer and an associate researcher with Comedia, an independent research and consultancy organisation specialising in urban strategy and cultural policy. After a number of years of working in community arts and more latterly in cultural policy at an international level, Matarasso has published a number of texts on impact analysis, including Use or Ornament: The social impact of participation in the arts (1997) Comedia. He is the facilitator of the On the Edge conference and a key researcher on the On the Edge research project.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1.

**T**HE TENSION between town and country is a cornerstone of European culture and probably of every society that has established towns.

*The tension between town and country is a cornerstone of European culture*

The symbiotic needs of rural and urban communities—rooted in the desire on the one hand to be fed and on the other to earn a better living—locks both into a relationship of exchange, where buyer and seller are forever trying to get a little advantage over one another, as much, perhaps, for the joy of victory as for material gain.

*The symbiotic needs of rural and urban communities . . . locks both into a relationship of exchange*

It's the story of the country tortoise and the city hare and there are endless variations of it, usually involving one moving into the other's territory only to discover that the survival skills which served them so well in their usual habitat have no value in these new surroundings.

It may be the country boy or girl arriving on streets supposedly paved with gold, only to be befriended, duped, fleeced and dumped, getting older and wiser in the process: French novelists made a positive industry of this story in the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> But it can just as well be the other way around, the city sophisticate who sets up in the country only to find themselves befriended, duped, fleeced and dumped: if they're really unlucky, they'll be butchered too because, as that poet of the city Tom Waits knows, 'There's always some killin' you got to do around the farm.'<sup>3</sup> The degree of bitterness expressed by these morality tales depends

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Stendhal *Le Rouge et le Noir*, Dumas *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, Balzac *Illusions Perdues*, Flaubert *L'Education sentimentale*, Maupassant *Bel-Ami* etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Murder in the Red Barn*, Tom Waits, Warner Chappell Music Ltd. 1992; films like *Psycho*, *Straw Dogs* and *The Wicker Man* among many exploit the town-dweller's fear of the countryside's primeval forces.

largely on the perspective and affiliation of their creators.

We have constructed an archetype of opposites: town/country; radical/conservative; lively/dull; sophisticated/conventional; tense/peaceful; frivolous/rooted; industry/agriculture; man-made/natural etc.

*Town and country is one of the basic expressions of interdependent contrasts, of yin and yang, through which humanity interprets its experience*

Town and country is one of the basic expressions of interdependent contrasts, of yin and yang, through which humanity interprets its experience. How we respond to these polarities says more about us than about either town or country. But in truth, almost everything that can be said about one has its counterpart in the other: greed is supposed to typify city slickers and big farmers equally; the city is notorious for individual loneliness—think of the sad typist in Eliot’s *Waste Land* or Paul McCartney’s Eleanor Rigby—yet it is always the country which is described as isolated.

All this matters because these ideas are rooted in values and expressed through culture, including its particularly self-conscious and focused articulation, art. It is these values, often congealed into assumptions, that make the idea that adventurous, challenging even difficult art might be nurtured or even indigenous to remote rural areas difficult for some people—wherever they live—to accept. But the very notion of remoteness, which underpins the thinking behind this conference, is itself a polarity, inseparable from its counterpart, because it is defined by its relationship to something characterised as the centre. I am reminded of the notorious 1930s English newspaper headline: ‘Fog in Channel: continent isolated’. A friend visiting the Faroe Islands was once gently put right by a resident who explained that, far from being isolated, they lived on a maritime crossroads with a constant flow of arrivals and departures. So we should be careful with this interesting concept of the edge, and keep in mind that one person’s margin may be another’s heartland.

All of these ideas about the difference between town and country, centre and edge, are given an increased importance by the historic shifts in balance between the poles which are now taking place. At the end of the Second World War, human experience was still predominantly rural: less than a third of the world’s population lived in urban areas, though industrialised countries had much larger urban populations. By 1994, the proportion of us living in cities had risen to almost 45%, and current forecasts put this figure at 61% by 2025—a complete reversal of the situation in

<sup>4</sup> Jelin, Elizabeth (1998), 'Cities, culture and globalisation' in *World Culture Report*, Paris: UNESCO

1950.<sup>4</sup> In effect, in the space of two or three generations, a relationship between urban and rural life, which has been broadly constant throughout human history, will have been reversed.

This has all sorts of practical implications that will be familiar to anyone who knows rural areas. Depopulation begins a vicious spiral of decline. There are not enough people to keep collective services viable, so shops, schools, public transport, health services and so on are gradually closed or withdrawn, each loss making life more difficult for those who remain. The privatisation of our lives that has been characteristic of current economic liberalism is, if anything, more marked in rural areas because it is now so difficult to live there without being able to provide individually for your needs. It is not only services that cease to be viable: the whole economy may be destabilised, with major consequences for the environment that had formerly supported it. Activities that once provided an adequate if not rich living, particularly in agriculture and conservation, simply cease to be worth doing, at least in financial terms. In areas close enough to town to allow commuting, wealthy town-dwellers buy houses, though less often land, pushing up prices and pushing out young locals: further afield, especially in the absence of ideal scenic beauty, the result is simply dereliction. In such circumstances it is little wonder if rural communities seize the opportunities provided by external investment in new industries or mineral extraction: after all, as George W. Bush knows, a wilderness is only as good as its oil reserves.

But it is the cultural implications of the shifting balance between town and country which are of more immediate concern to us here—though, as we shall find, the cultural and practical aspects of this change are not easy to disentangle. So what are the cultural implications?

*. . . the steady rise of the town means that urban experience, values and culture will come to dominate our sense of what it is to be human*

<sup>5</sup> Although media images of urban life are dominated by fiction such as *Friends*, the reality of millions of urban lives is better expressed by groups like Niños Fotografos de Guatemala; the photography work of children who live on refuse tips in Guatemala City provides a route to education and presents alternative images to challenge those of multinational media corporations. <http://www.oneworld.org/media/gallery/guatemala/1.html>

To judge by industrialised European precedents, the steady rise of the town means that urban experience, values and culture will come to dominate our sense of what it is to be human. Since this urban perspective is broadly shared by the major commercial media industries, it is being promoted very fast and very powerfully. Yet, even within its own terms, what dominates is a minority view: there is little room for the poor, the non-white or the marginalised who actually make up the majority of city dwellers.<sup>5</sup>

Where does this leave those who live in the country, by accident, necessity or choice and face the challenge of building viable

communities? Where does it leave the balance between urban and rural cultures, urban and rural values? This conference, among other things, is intended to help us answer such questions by shining light on some of the responses that have been found in different parts of Europe.

One natural place to start looking for a future for rural culture—according to some—is the past. After all, that is where rural culture has so often seemed to be located, in contrast to the exploratory mission of urban modernism. Rural culture is easily characterised as heritage, and it is true that much of its assets and activity has deep roots. Traditional music and dance, as well as age-old rituals like Derbyshire’s springtime well dressings, do represent much of what is culturally distinctive about rural areas. Museums of rural life abound, filled with the discarded implements of another age, pictures of smocked labourers peering through the fog of nineteenth century photography and examples of rural crafts like the emblematic corn dolly. Even the animals are preserved in ‘working farm museums’ as rare breeds.

*It is significant how easily the word ‘craft’ . . . is associated with the countryside—as if anything that might be termed art could not possibly occur in such a backward and unsophisticated society*

It is significant how easily the word ‘craft’, so long abused by metropolitan aesthetes to damn artefacts which they do not cherish, is associated with the countryside—as if anything that might be termed art could not possibly occur in such a backward and unsophisticated society. Where fine art does appear in the country, it is usually trapped like a fly within the amber glow of the country house. Few things more easily confirm urban disdain for rural culture than these dinosaurs, the former homes of aristocrats and plutocrats whose bones still litter the European landscape—though many have been stripped and others returned to the ground from which they grew. After all, they not only evoke the past, and the loss of power which the country has experienced since the industrial revolution, they conclusively demonstrate—at least to the urban mind—that the countryside’s treasures have always been the gifts of the city. To misquote Wycherley, ‘A little country retreat near the town should be like a mistress, not to dwell in constantly, but only for a night and away’<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> William Wycherley, *The Country Wife*, Act I, Scene I; the actual line reads ‘A mistress should be like a little country retreat near the town, not to dwell in constantly, but only for a night and away’.

*The country can claim a central part in the shaping of our collective culture not least because so many of our greatest artists, writers, musicians and other visionaries were born and raised there*

Of course, this picture of the arts in rural areas is, at best, a half-truth—an urban myth if you like. The country can claim a central part in the shaping of our collective culture not least because so many of our greatest artists, writers, musicians and other visionaries were born and raised there. For every Dickens or Blake, there is a Hardy, Clare or Brontë. Although the city has always had the power to draw the talented, if only to test themselves against others, many of the country's children who end up there use it as a vantage point from which to survey their rural heartland: Maupassant, Turgenev and Lewis Grassic Gibbon illustrate the point. Others, particularly those like writers and painters whose art is essentially individual, have remained in the country, using their distance from dominant cultural debates to nurture radical innovations: one might think of Laurence Sterne, reinventing the novel in his Yorkshire vicarage, or Paul Cézanne, laying the foundations of modern art on the landscape of his native Provence.

*. . . always been the subject of art, literature and, if such a thing can really be, of music*

The country, its values and the life which is lived there have themselves always been the subject of art, literature and, if such a thing can really be, of music.

*There is, in truth, nothing essentially backward-looking, conservative or traditional in rural culture*

There is, in truth, nothing essentially backward-looking, conservative or traditional in rural culture. There are too many innovators, in too many fields, who have belonged to the country or used it as source material for that to be a defensible proposition. Rural culture is different from urban culture—quieter perhaps, more reflective and closer to its own past and the elemental forces which we shelter from in cities; other interpretations will certainly be articulated. But, however we characterise it, we cannot deny that it has been as creative, as adventurous and as influential as any culture forged in the diversity of the city.

However, if the balance between town and country is shifting in the ways I have suggested, then all of us who care about the future of culture—and of people and their values since this comes to much the same thing—must have some concern for the potential consequences on rural culture.

*. . . cultural diversity is, in its own way, as important to the future of humanity as biological diversity*

Is it inevitable that this alternative way of imagining and expressing experience should be marginalised by louder, urban voices? That would be lamentable, both because it would effectively disenfranchise many people from being cultural actors, with all the dangers that ensue, and because cultural diversity is, in its own way, as important to the future of humanity as biological diversity.

I believe that marginalisation can be prevented and that doing so would offer cultural and other advantages to rural communities—and to their urban counterparts. I suggest three avenues which contemporary rural arts practice might fruitfully explore: **conservation, rural development** and **cultural challenge**.

Conservation is the obvious course—after all, balancing preservation with development has always been a preoccupation of rural communities. If rural culture and values are under threat, it is natural to wish to protect them. The recent emergence in Britain of the Countryside Alliance to champion a wide range of rural concerns is an understandable if not always coherent symptom of just such a reaction.

But it is possible to imagine a less defensive approach to conservation, one based more in principle than self-preservation, an approach which values diversity in itself—including, of course, that of opposing cultures—and sees traditional rural cultures as a crucial part of our rich personal and shared identities. It would argue that these cultures should be protected and nurtured because they are part of our selves, whether we live in towns or in the country, and that their future accessibility is essential if we are to be able to understand who we are and where we have come from.

*A belief in true cultural diversity, like democracy, implies an understanding that our cultures are as interdependent as we are ourselves*

A belief in true cultural diversity, like democracy, implies an understanding that our cultures are as interdependent as we are ourselves: if one should die, we are all impoverished—the bell tolls for us all, for humanity. That said, we are a long way from developing a coherent philosophy of multiculturalism or cultural diversity in a world where few, if any, of us accepts all behaviours, all values and consequently all cultures as moral equivalents: but that is a discussion for another day.

The approach to cultural conservation I envisage would also recognise the value of rural cultural perspectives precisely because they are a minority alternative to the mainstream, an essential contrast and a renewable resource on which dominant cultures can draw. Finally, it would value rural cultures as the unique expressions of human experience and a source of great pleasure



and deep satisfaction. In case all this seems somewhat abstract, let me draw your attention to the experience of the fèisean movement, which has spread across the highlands and islands of Scotland and even into its cities, over the past fifteen years. Rita Hunter will speak about this revival of Gaelic culture later, but I would like to say one thing about them in this context.

The fèisean depend on characteristics which are particularly undervalued, not to say despised, by contemporary urban cultural perspectives: they are rural, they focus on children, they explore traditional arts, they are mostly run by volunteers and by women. They break other rules: they value oral tradition, form, technical achievement and are not overly preoccupied with self-expression and yet, to the dismay of some traditionalists, many are unafraid to link traditional music and dance with contemporary sensibilities. Good: not only do they conserve a centuries-old body of work and cultural sensibility, they do so in a way that keeps alive an important alternative to the easy assumptions of modern cultural norms. What a valuable role they play.

The second area where the future of rural culture might be explored is in the context of rural development itself, and that is something of which we shall hear a good deal here. The arts have, of course, always been tied to other human objectives, whether we think of their ritual and religious importance, their association with princes, states and corporations or their commercial value. In recent years, to these more established uses of culture have been added other aspirations reflecting current policy concerns—regeneration, tourism development, educational and health improvements, crime reduction and so on.

*By forging connections with the wider social and economic objectives of their own communities . . . artists and other cultural professionals can build successful symbiotic relationships with a diverse range of partners*

By forging connections with the wider social and economic objectives of their own communities—always bearing in mind that it is culture itself which shapes those objectives—artists and other cultural professionals can build successful symbiotic relationships with a diverse range of partners.

The range of possibilities is almost endless, from natural and human heritage resources to the contemporary arts. Festivals have become important to many rural communities, while ideas like the Book Town movement have pointed the way to more permanent niche markets: Scotland has its own in Wigtown.<sup>7</sup> And the benefits are real, even in tiny places. Not so far from here, in the parish of Arbuthnott, some enterprising local people have established the

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.booktown.com/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.grassicgibbon.com/Default.htm>

Grassic Gibbon Centre to celebrate one of Scotland's best loved twentieth century writers in his birthplace.<sup>8</sup> A small museum and study centre was opened in 1992 next to the Parish Hall and now attracts about 7,000 visitors a year. Not a huge number, but enough to secure one full-time and six part-time jobs. The Centre's economic viability—achieved without public funding—brings social and cultural benefits. It has become an important focus and meeting place for this dispersed community of 200 people; its café caters for a regular social services lunch group while the hall acts as a base for the post office. In this centenary year of Lewis Grassie Gibbon's birth a range of special events have been planned: it will certainly be worth visiting.

*One crucial role for rural cultures in the new century must be to question increasingly dominant urban cultural norms*

The final area I want to consider I hinted at in my earlier comments about the fèisean movement. One crucial role for rural cultures in the new century must be to question increasingly dominant urban cultural norms. The arts are, as they have always been, a vital means of understanding and shaping our experience: but that experience is much more diverse, much richer than you would guess from most of the voices which are raised in the national conversation. It is essential that rural experiences, insights and values are brought to the heart of these debates.

Let me illustrate what I mean through the example of one artwork created last year by Andy Goldsworthy. Goldsworthy is an interesting instance of an artist who has succeeded in reaching a huge international public from a base in rural Scotland and through work which always uses natural materials and is often impermanent—all characteristics which, I suspect, contribute to the slightly patronising way in which his work is regarded by some critics. In the early morning of 21 June 2000 Goldsworthy deposited thirteen huge snowballs in various locations around the city of London<sup>9</sup>. Each weighed about a ton and had been kept in cold storage since the previous winter. During the course of the day, to the delight and wonder of many passers-by, the mysterious snowballs melted, revealing small natural treasures—wool, crow feathers, chestnut seeds, pine cones, elderberries, barley, barbed wire, chalk, highland cow hair and so on—which had been trapped inside.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.eyestorm.com/events/goldsworthy/>

The work was extraordinary for a number of reasons. It brought icy winter to midsummer, connecting solstices across the year. It brought the natural world into the man-made environment of the city of London. It brought a sense of the reality of global warming to the financial heart of capitalist enterprise. It valued the moment,

the fleeting now, in a place dedicated to futures and permanence. And it did all that elliptically, through a simple, powerful symbolism open to many interpretations and responses, producing curiosity and smiles rather than alienation: it was deeply thought-provoking, but achieved that through unfashionable means like beauty, mystery, stillness. It was particularly exceptional in the context of much contemporary urban visual arts practice in being more interested in the world independent of humans than in the personality or experience of the artist. Far from being a statement, it asked questions in the murmur of an artist thinking aloud; as such it invited participation rather than a reaction and in that sense it was an essentially democratic approach to art.

*. . . this is perhaps the most crucial role for contemporary rural culture: to engage critically with urban cultural values.*

In the end, I believe that this is perhaps the most crucial role for contemporary rural culture: to engage critically with urban cultural values. Yes, there is a vital need for conservation of rural traditions, and there is a crucial role to play in securing the future sustainability of rural communities. But unless artists rooted in rural communities are prepared to take their values into the city, their work in the other two areas will always remain marginal in every sense of the word. Instead, I believe, they should be using their position on the edge to test and challenge the town, its ways of doing things and its values—as the country has always done.

## Rural communities and cultural values

## INTO THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD OR: THE POETRY OF THE LOCAL

GÜNTHER MOSCHIG · [www.tirolkultur.at/tki/](http://www.tirolkultur.at/tki/)  
SPUR/IG · Tyrol, Austria

*Günther Moschig is an art historian and curator of exhibitions in the Tyrol region of Austria. He discusses the Tiroler KulturInitiative (TKI), a movement of independent cultural groups situated within the small towns, villages and valleys of the Tyrol. Started in the 1970s, these groups aim to develop culture on a regional basis. They are currently undergoing a process of self renewal that is expressed in forms of contemporary arts that acknowledge both the local, vernacular culture as well as global influences. The TKI project SPUR, to which Moschig is most closely allied, focuses the specific 'poetry of the local' by establishing connections between every day cultural life, pop culture and contemporary visual art as a key to developing cultural value within rural communities.*

**T**YROL is a pretty country in the midst of the mountains and is, therefore, rather well known as a tourist spot; in terms of cultural life, however, our reputation is not very high, to put it mildly. To some extent, this is certainly our own fault; but part of the blame must also be on the German Romantic poet Heinrich Heine, who unblushingly noted down the following observations during his journey from Munich to Genoa: *'The Tyroleans are handsome, cheerful, honest, good and of an unfathomable mental denseness. They are a healthy people, perhaps because they are too stupid to be ill.'*

*Heinrich Heine: . . . 'The Tyroleans are handsome, cheerful, honest, good and of an unfathomable mental denseness. They are a healthy people, perhaps because they are too stupid to be ill'*



<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Heine, *Reisebilder*, Frankfurt a. Main, 1980, p 260 - 264

And he continued: *'They will cheerfully betray their personality. These jolly Tyrolean chaps we see roaming about in their national costumes do not mind being made fun of, as long as they can sell you something at the same time. The Rainer singers, who have also been to England, were even better at that. Last summer, when I saw these Tyrolean singers dressed in their native costumes enter the stages of the splendid concert halls of fashionable London, and then heard them perform the songs that, back in Tyrol, are yodelled in such a naive and pious manner, my entire soul became convulsed in bitterness and vexation. It seemed to me as though the chastity of the German language had been grossly dishonoured . . . !'*<sup>1</sup>

That was back in 1828; but some things at least have improved since Heine's discouraging experiences. To give an example, I would like to tell you about a CD released by a Tyrolean cultural

<sup>2</sup> Blattl-Lieder, Max Nagl & Friends with the Seinehinsingers, Idyllic Noise, 1999

association, Musikkultur St. Johann, three years ago. This CD contains a compilation of songs by Christian Blattl, a farmer and musician from St. Johann, close to Kitzbühel.<sup>2</sup> Christian Blattl died in 1865, and the songs he left convey to us a unique picture of the social background of the area at the time. In the course of a cultural project, Musikkultur St. Johann asked the Austrian jazz and avant-garde musician Max Nagl to prepare new arrangements of Blattl's songs.

Max Nagl, whose own work is set on the threshold between traditional art and the avant-garde, has found an intense and sensitive approach to the music of Christian Blattl; a jazz quartet and a mixed choir from St. Johann helped him to put it on CD, which in my view is a successful example of how traditional and contemporary art may be combined, and also of how culture can be 'lived' in a rural area. The Rainer singers from the Zillertal, who left such a deep impression on Heine, were indeed the first protagonists of Tyrolean folklore to appear abroad. Even before the era of tourism really began - which was around 1860 in Kitzbühel, and even later for winter tourism, as only in 1893 the first skier, namely Franz Reisch, raced down the Kitzbühler Horn—these Tyrolean singers shaped the image of Tyrolean culture, and this image has survived until the present day.

*. . . these Tyrolean singers shaped the image of Tyrolean culture, and this image has survived until the present day*

Nevertheless, since the end of the 1970s opposition has begun to build up against this form of retro-oriented folklore culture, demanding an expansion beyond its boundaries and towards modern forms of cultural and artistic expression. In small towns, villages and valleys all over Tyrol, numerous cultural groups and associations were founded with the aim of offering autonomous cultural work in rural areas.

I would now like to give a brief description of this work, of the joys and problems it involves, and of the conditions for artists working in Tyrol. First I will give a brief outline of the historic and political conditions that triggered this movement of independent cultural groups, a movement which is remarkably present in all regions of Austria.

*. . . people began to form groups and associations with the aim of propagating the right of individual self-determination*

Of course, it all started with the ideas of the 1968 students' movements; one of their later consequences was that by the end of the 1970s, people began to form groups and associations with the

aim of propagating the right of individual self-determination. This ideal was defended quite vehemently at that time. These alternative cultural movements in Austria were closely related to the peace movement, the environmentalists and the movement against nuclear power.

An expression created by Hilmar Hoffmann, who at the time was head of the Frankfurt Department of Culture, became the credo for the cultural work of this generation: His book 'Kultur für Alle'<sup>3</sup> (*Culture for everyone*), which was published in 1979, provided the theoretical basis for cultural groups and associations that emerged all over the country. These groups did not aim to convey a body of professional art, separated from the public or from reality. It aimed to trigger communicative processes in the individual towns and regions and to create communities, so to speak. Cultural developments were understood to be a democratic process.

<sup>3</sup> Hilmar Hoffmann, *Kultur für Alle, Perspektiven und Modelle*, Frankfurt a. Main, 1979.

*In larger cities and municipal districts, this interpretation meant opposition to the cultural establishment of national theatres, operas and galleries, whereas in provincial regions, and even in smaller valleys, it meant opposition to the type of folklore culture that had become common there, mainly involving the consumption of enormous amounts of beer accompanied by the sound of the local brass band.*

In larger cities and municipal districts, this interpretation meant opposition to the cultural establishment of national theatres, operas and galleries, whereas in provincial regions, and even in smaller valleys, it meant opposition to the type of folklore culture that had become common there, mainly involving the consumption of enormous amounts of beer accompanied by the sound of the local brass band.

Particularly in Tyrol, an increasing discontent with this type of culture, which in many cases was kept alive solely for the sake of the tourist industry, became the main motivation for committed individuals who were trying to change the conditions within their region, within their direct environment. They began by organising readings, blues concerts and theatre performances in their villages or towns. From a large number of groups and associations that had emerged at the beginning of the 1980s, a platform of autonomous cultural groups was formed, which later on became the 'Tiroler Kulturinitiative' (TKI). It was established in 1989 as a union of cultural groups from all parts of Tyrol, and was formally transformed into an association in 1994. Upon mutual determination by the member groups, the TKI supports the realisation of exemplary cultural projects all over Tyrol; the



proposed projects are judged mainly on the basis of thematic focus and reference to the relevant region or village, and as a mechanism for avoiding commercialisation and arbitrariness.

*. . . the proposed projects are judged mainly on the basis of thematic focus and reference to the relevant region or village, and as a mechanism for avoiding commercialisation and arbitrariness*

The forum for the selection of the projects is the 'Projektwerkstatt'; the selection usually takes place during a three-day workshop, organised as a closed meeting in a hut in the mountains.

Furthermore, the TKI is also the representative body of all Tyrolean cultural groups and centres. Its Innsbruck office is available for consultancy services and practical communication; it enhances the public presence of the groups and provides for the co-ordination and realisation of cultural concepts all over Tyrol. The TKI in its function as the IG Kultur Tirol, the body representing cultural interests of Tyrol, is also a member of the IG Kultur Österreich, thereby covering also the interests of groups that do not actively participate in the TKI.

The TKI is managed by a committee of four members, a chairperson appointed for a term of two years, and two executive directors.

It is financed almost exclusively by the cultural department of the Province of Tyrol. An annual budget of EURO 43,608 (£26,600) for current business and office infrastructure has been guaranteed until 2002. That is not enough, of course, and we are continuously negotiating with the department on an increase of the budget. In addition, the individual groups have to obtain municipal and state subsidies. To compensate for the lack of subsidy most of the people involved work for free. Sponsorship is unfortunately only of marginal importance for autonomous cultural groups, and this situation is not likely to improve without a tax incentive for corporate and private sponsors. This issue is currently being discussed by the Austrian government.

*Sponsorship is unfortunately only of marginal importance for autonomous cultural groups, and this situation is not likely to improve without a tax incentive for corporate and private sponsors*

The Projektwerkstatt is granted separate subsidies, again mainly by the Province of Tyrol. It has been allocated a budget of EURO 123,544 (£75,361), which is distributed among the

selected projects.

At present, however, the implementation of major structural changes has become inevitable for the TKI – which takes us to the current problems of the TKI. These are principally due to a generation gap. Over the years, the cultural scene, which in the beginning was so alive and diverse, has grown immobile and encrusted. The Projektwerkstatt has supported the same groups year after year, and these groups have merely repeated the same programmes year after year.

*Over the years, the cultural scene, which in the beginning was so alive and diverse, has grown immobile and encrusted*

The TKI has more or less become an exclusive club of cultural groups. Currently, intensive discussions are going on regarding the re-positioning of these autonomous forms of cultural work. These have become necessary in view of a number of changes; changes in the socio-political background, in the development of new media that have brought about new forms of cultural work and new forms of communication, and also because even the ‘enemy’ has changed. Blues concerts are now more or less commonplace even in small villages, local brass bands have long ago taken up musical medleys as part of their programme. The main issue now is to create and provide for alternatives to the major festivals and tourist events that are organised on a large scale and are quite expensive for consumers.

On this basis, the activities of the TKI take place within a clearly defined cultural sector. In this context it must be taken into account that autonomous—or alternative—cultural work as well as all relevant cultural sectors all have their own myths. For these cultural groups, the most important myths are dissidence and progress, which are myths similar to those in pop music. From their very beginning, the cultural groups have been organised by young people who wanted to counterbalance the mainstream, whether the mainstream of brass band parades or the conservative political mainstream firmly established in the villages.

*For these cultural groups, the most important myths are dissidence and progress, which are myths similar to those in pop music*

The problems of a generation gap that the TKI has been experiencing must of course be seen in conjunction with this topic. The original participants have become older and are still sworn to their old ideals, whereas the young people of today do not have the same missionary zeal in connection with socio-political issues. That at least is the current situation in Tyrol.

*. . . it is very hard work to be a rebel day after day for twenty years.*

<sup>4</sup> A cult 'grunge' underground band.

In the same way as Nirvana<sup>4</sup> were absorbed by the pop mainstream, the alternative cultural scene is faced with the problem of adjusting to a culture based purely on consumerism. This is in a way very understandable as, after all, we are only human, and it is very hard work to be a rebel day after day for twenty years.

*Authenticity is another myth. The question, 'What is authentic?' must be asked anew*

Authenticity is another myth. The question, 'What is authentic?' must be asked anew. The development from analogue reproduction of images to digital production of images, for instance, has fundamentally altered our approach to reality. Cultural work must face these changes as well. What must not be given up is our commitment to content.

*What must not be given up is our commitment to content*

Within this framework, the major selection criteria of the TKI will not change. These include reference to local background, discursive elements, involvement of local artists, building of meaning. Additionally, it will be important that the TKI opens up and grows into a body representing the interests of all Tyrolean cultural groups and associations; therefore more emphasis should be put on the following issues:<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> TKI/ Tiroler Kulturinitiative, Konzept 2002.

- lobbying and public relations: the interests of independent cultural groups must be represented to political decision makers, the media and the public
- public comments on current topics relating to cultural work, in particular in relation to cultural and media policies
- member services, in particular consultancy and information
- networking, encouraging the building of networks and extending partnerships
- support of innovative project work

*The annual Projektwerkstatt is to be transformed into an 'innovation pool'*

The annual Projektwerkstatt is to be transformed into an 'innovation pool'. The major differences compared to the present structure will be the following:

1. a public tender for all of Tyrol
2. the institution of an expert jury with members both from the region and from outside the region, which will be in charge of

selecting the projects; in the past, the jury only had the function of an advisory committee, whereas the ΤΚΙ was in charge of the actual selection, which of course caused nepotism to a certain degree.

The following criteria should apply:

1. The projects in Tyrol should be realised within one calendar year.
2. The projects must have a specific local reference and must be rooted within the region.
3. No projects should have an exclusively commercial focus;
4. No projects should be directly allied to political, tourist and public institutions.

These issues are currently being discussed by the ΤΚΙ.

To give an example of a ΤΚΙ project, I would like to present the current project of SPUR. SPUR was founded in 1999 as an association with the aim of supporting contemporary art and pop culture. In concerts and exhibitions we try to establish links between the culture of everyday life, pop music and contemporary visual art. Besides pop concerts of artists of the independent sector—or what used to be called the independent sector—SPUR, for instance, organised an exhibition with international artists on the topic ‘humour and irony in contemporary art’, which took place in Innsbruck in 1999. In view of our commitment to support young artists, we have furthermore produced a CD featuring the painter, object artist and musician Wolfgang Capellari, which was released last year.

This year’s project, which is due to start next week, is called *Greetings from Wörgl* and is focused on the 50th anniversary of the year Wörgl was granted the status of a town. As Wörgl is therefore one of the youngest towns of Austria, it has not much of a history to offer - no impressive fortresses, no important ecclesiastical buildings, no events of a global or lasting impact. SPUR is now trying to reveal cultural-historical particularities of the past 50 years of the town’s history.

*SPUR is now trying to reveal cultural-historical particularities of the past 50 years of the town’s history*

The project *Greetings from Wörgl* puts its main emphases on characteristic features of Wörgl, on the economic situation during the 1930s, the development of the townscape, Wörgl’s cultural life during the 1950s and 1960s, and on the ‘potential of longing’ inherent in pop music, featuring Jeremy Faith as its local

protagonist. The project is a means of allowing us to experience our own small-town history and establish a relation to global events. It consists of a series of four individual exhibitions and events over four weeks.

*The project is a means of allowing us to experience our own small-town history and establish a relation to global events*



The exhibition *Wörgl Stories* features inhabitants of Wörgl of between 70 and 85 years of age and their memories of the economic and social life in Wörgl during the 1930s, of the 'Wörgler Freigeld Experiment', (which is still regarded as an outstanding example of an alternative monetary system by economists all over the world), and of the situation in Wörgl until the beginning of the second world war. The interviews have been taped and will be presented together with a slide installation.

The second project, which is called *:here . everywhere*, features art in public space. The Tyrolean media artist Christine Prantauer has designed a large-scale poster for this project, it deals with linking the architectural, social and political situation of Wörgl with current socio-political issues and the way these are represented by the media.

*A large-scale poster attached to a space that is usually reserved for commercial promotion establishes references between Wörgl as a real place, the way it is represented, and current media images*

A large-scale poster attached to a space that is usually reserved for commercial promotion establishes references between Wörgl as a real place, the way it is represented, and current media images. Its topic is the relationship between the real space and its representation, between images appearing in reality and those shown by the media, between local and international, between distance and closeness. The project also includes an exclusive edition of 250 posters issued as a gift to the town.

An evening dedicated to the culinary and literary aspects of life will revive memories of Hans Hömberg, a poet and friend of worldly pleasures who spent a great part of his life in Wörgl. He was a journalist reporting on cultural events, a scenario editor for films and a director, an author of radio and theatre plays and a gastronome. Born in Berlin in 1903, he came to Wörgl after the second World War, as a stranger in a small Tyrolean town. In a couple of scenes involving an actor, a string trio and a cook, his humorous literary pieces will be merged with culinary and musical pleasures. A five-course dinner will be served, which has been

adapted to the texts presented. The whole event is designed to work as a theatre performance, with the cook, the waiters, the actor and the musicians all playing equal parts.

*The whole event is designed to work as a theatre performance, with the cook, the waiters, the actor and the musicians all playing equal parts*

The last event of the project deals with regional pop music history. THE FURY RESEARCH, a Vienna-based institute dedicated to research into longing, will transfer its research focus to Wörgl for 14 days. The current topic of research is the story of Jeremy Faith, or Helmuth Grabher, a pop singer from Wörgl who was born in 1946 and died in 1990. Jeremy Faith is actually Wörgl's contribution to international pop history. In the early 1970s, in the course of the Jesus craze—so hip at the time, his single *Jesus*, first released in France, met with great success particularly in the Netherlands and in the USA. We have done some field research on Jeremy Faith and discovered old singles, photographs and other souvenirs, which will be presented in an exhibition together with the audio material.

I hope I have succeeded in underlining the main concepts and objectives of this project: to establish local reference, to discuss and analyse our own history and to trigger a process of communication. In addition, of course, everyone should enjoy themselves.

*. . . to establish local reference, to discuss and analyse our own history and to trigger a process of communication. In addition, of course, everyone should enjoy themselves*

During the preparation of the project, the reactions on the interview series on the 1930s and on the Jeremy Faith project have been very encouraging. People are starting to look at their own history and, which is even more important, to communicate their own history.

*People are starting to look at their own history and, which is even more important, to communicate their own history*

If we are able to make this process continue, we shall have realised our target. Projects of this kind are meant to create identity, and I believe that this is certainly no anachronism in these times of neo-liberalism.

In an era of concentration of political, economic and military power and of transnational capital, individual self-determination is

becoming increasingly difficult. We need to discover what is specific to the periphery, beyond that which is generally known. A regionalism that is familiar with what is foreign and permits it to happen, and that is therefore clearly set apart from right-wing nationalism, is becoming ever more important at a time when right-wing populists shape political life.

*A solution may be offered not by a regionalism regarded as a cosy corner where we may doze off self-contentedly beside the oven, but by a regionalism open to receive from all directions*

A solution may be offered not by a regionalism regarded as a cosy corner where we may doze off self-contentedly beside the oven, but by a regionalism open to receive from all directions. To achieve this aim, networks are an absolute necessity; by networking regions, an exciting discourse will be triggered which, I believe, is also one of the main targets of this conference.

*. . . 'poetry of the local'*

What it should finally become is an exchange of stories that are connected with the people inhabiting the relevant region or place. In this context, the concept of a 'poetry of the local' appeals to me very much. In his book 'Über die Dörfer', Peter Handke wrote: Why fuss over a house? Looking up into the sky, I think: cloud-home.<sup>6</sup> That is the concept of 'home' we should try to realise - but that would of course itself be an issue for a separate discussion.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Handke, *Über die Dörfer*, Frankfurt am Main, 1984, p. 91. Author's own translation.

*The TKI and the autonomous cultural groups are particularly interested in this relationship between cultural life and the place where it happens—the poetry of the place, which is very specific*

The TKI and the autonomous cultural groups are particularly interested in this relationship between cultural life and the place where it happens—the poetry of the place, which is very specific. It is not true that everything is possible everywhere or that, for instance, every kind of music can be created within the globalised pop music industry. In fact, pop music particularly emphasises the differences between the various places, showing us the range of different types of music created by different people in different ways in different places. Jazz from New Orleans or Samba from Sao Paulo are played all over the world, but the specific character due to their respective origin is nevertheless still audible. And, of course, the Beach Boys could only have come from the beaches of Los Angeles.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Menasse, Plädoyer für Zentren an der Peripherie, in: Gerald Raunig, Klimawechsel, Wien 1998, p. 21-28.

All of it is great music; but to me, it means more than that: The image of each city is shaped by what is created in each place.

Some years ago, I believe in 1997, an opinion poll was carried out on behalf of the EU Commissioner in charge of cultural issues, addressing artists, art critics and people involved in cultural work in all EU member states on the topic: 'Which European city do you regard as Europe's cultural capital?'<sup>7</sup> The cities named most frequently were Paris, Berlin, London, and, so to speak as a non-official competitor, New York. The official European cultural capitals of the past decade, such as Glasgow, Dublin, Madrid, Antwerp, Lisbon, Copenhagen, etc. were out of the running. Now, what does that mean?

*Culture is simply not a question of building an image, but of building the relevant conditions for cultural work and the presence of culture within a place*

It can only mean that a costly image campaign is not enough to create culture. Culture is simply not a question of building an image, but of building the relevant conditions for cultural work and the presence of culture within a place. This concept also governs the work of the TKI. It is becoming increasingly difficult, as also in the Tyrol funds are mainly made available for a few large-scale festivals and events.

*. . . only if you provide the opportunity for creating and communicating art, will artists feel at home*

But only if you provide the opportunity for creating and communicating art, will artists feel at home. If you create a productive cultural venue, it does not matter whether it is located in a European capital or in a provincial region.

*To artists, the centre is where they are. A cultural centre does not exist merely because we call it so*

Each work of art is directly connected with the place where it was created. To artists, the centre is where they are. A cultural centre does not exist merely because we call it so. In this context I would like to quote the Austrian writer Robert Menasse and what he said in his appeal for centres at the periphery during his speech at the opening of the cultural centre of Bludenz: 'Any place where we live remains at the periphery, if it is called a centre in image-building campaigns only. We need the opportunity to produce art, to present it, to perceive it, a place where experience can be obtained, communicated and exchanged.' That is also what the TKI regards as



its main objective.

Finally, in my function as an art historian and curator of exhibitions, I would now like to introduce a number of artists living and working in Tyrol or the neighbouring province Vorarlberg; artists who see the centre of the world at the place where they are. The existing conditions in the country make this target not an easy one.

Most Tyrolean artists study in Vienna, a few of them in Munich or Venice. Most of them stay in Vienna after the completion of their studies, or else move to other capitals. The reason is clear: The conditions of the market and of the perception of art are simply more favourable in a city than in the country.

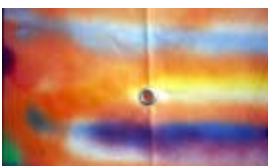
*The conditions of the market and of the perception of art are simply more favourable in a city than in the country*

Even though there have been some improvements in the Tyrolean art sector - the Galerie im Taxispalais in Innsbruck for instance shows excellent exhibitions - it is still very difficult for artists both to make a living from their work, and to achieve international recognition. One single gallery working on an international level is not enough to provide for a vivid and quality-oriented gallery scene. The work of other groups, such as the Kitzbüheler Kunstverein chaired by Yvonne Esther Weis, which are trying to compensate for this lack on the basis of small budgets, is therefore even more important. Also for these cultural groups, the opportunity for an international exchange is essential, and it is also necessary for the artists. The Kitzbüheler Kunstverein has already collaborated with Duff House in the past; last year Wilhelm Scherübl was sent to Scotland as their representative, and this year Stefanie Bourne has been invited to Kitzbühel to present her project Vernacular.

An additional opportunity is provided by the 'Büchsenhausen' showroom and its studios for guest artists in Innsbruck.



- The video and media artist Thomas Feuerstein works as a theoretician and artist in Tyrol and in Switzerland. His work often directly intervenes in social and media spheres. Examples of his work deal with the perception of the world changed by media such as television and the internet.
- Wolfgang Capellari is a painter, photographer, object maker and musician. What is inherent in all these aspects of his work is a strategy of permanent change, a concept introduced into art by Oswald Oberhuber in the 1950s. Capellari's perception of the world is universal, his approach to art is playful. His work defies any form of artistic paralysis, with a refreshing tendency





towards disorderliness.

- Michaela Niederkircher studied painting and graphic art at the Hochschule für Angewandte Kunst in Vienna; lately, she has been increasingly working with photography. Her images are taken in a playful situation such as the artist's daughter playing with a mask she had made herself at the kindergarten, while the artist was taking photographs. Niederkircher converted the cheerfulness of a game into a gloomy series of pictures reminiscent of Hitchcock.
- David Murray was born in Glasgow and came to Dornbirn in Vorarlberg via London and New York. His photographs, which are staged with toys and everyday consumer goods, play on the traditional images used in visual art and link them to the aesthetics of advertisements. Murray's topic is the consumer society. He works mainly in the form of series. Examples include *Love Story* and *God lives only in America*.
- Miriam Prantl, born in Bregenz, initially studied dance; in the mid-eighties she moved to New York, currently she is living in Vorarlberg. Her art continues the tradition of concrete art; her main topics are the concepts of time and space, which she tries to redefine in her pictures and light objects.
- Erich Rupprechter is a sculptor whose medium is wood. He works with pieces of wood he has found that used to be part of historical alpine buildings. As he is also a farmer, he has a direct relation to the environment of the Tyrol landscape. By careful and economical manipulation, the objects found are transformed into autonomous works of art. His topics therefore are history and local reference.

This was only a quick look into current trends in the Tyrolean art scene; but these examples also prove that a global history of art does not exist. The concept of a global overview was a 19th century ideal; but once everything seems to have been discovered, or once you believe that basically everything can be discovered, the desire to put everything into a certain order becomes inevitable. But nevertheless, it is essential to recognise that our knowledge can never be sufficient.

*Cultural work in provincial regions means to do what we wish to do, at the very place where we are at the time*

So what is there to do? Cultural work in provincial regions means to do what we wish to do, at the very place where we are at the time. And therefore, 'as not all people want the same, there is no centre of the world'.

# THE KUHMO CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL: The Benefits and Challenges

TUULIKKI KARJALAINEN · [www.kuhmofestival.fi/](http://www.kuhmofestival.fi/)  
Administrator, The Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival

*Tuulikki Karjalainen is the chief administrator of the Chamber Music Festival, held annually in the northern most part of Finland. She describes the development of the festival from 1970 until the present as a powerful vision of one man, its founder, the cellist Seppo Kimanen. This vision has been carried forward and sustained by a team of administrators who remain enthusiastic about the fundamental concept of the festival—to act as a vehicle for the enjoyment of chamber music of all kinds, both contemporary and historical. Tuulikki Karjalainen demonstrates forcibly the positive impact of this music festival not only through convincing economic statistics but through the warmth and humanity with which the Festival has been embraced at local as well as international levels, by amateur and professional participants as well as the lay public.*

## History and local circumstances



view from the concert hall

**K**UHMO CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL was founded by a young Finnish cellist, Seppo Kimanen, in 1970. He also founded the Kuhmo Music Association. The aim was to create a chamber music festival of high artistic quality in a remote place in North-Eastern Finland, far away from large cultural centres.

Kuhmo is a town of approximately eleven thousand inhabitants and it is situated in a region on the periphery of Finland. This region has attempted to overcome a difficult structural crisis by moving directly from a society almost entirely dependent upon agriculture, to an information and service society. People, especially the young are moving to South Finland. During the last decade Kuhmo lost fifteen per cent of the population and this trend shows no signs of weakening.

There is no railway or connection by air to Kuhmo. The artists who participate in the festival live mainly in school dormitories, the visitors in private rented rooms and houses. Hotel accommodation is very limited. For twenty two years the festival concerts were played in school halls and in the local churches before an appropriate cultural venue, Kuhmo Arts Centre, was built in 1993.

Under these conditions it has been possible to make the Kuhmo Festival an international artistic success in spite of the very modest financial and other material circumstances.



village concert in a farm house

## Background organisation

The Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival has been organised since 1970 by the Kuhmo Music Association, which itself was founded in

1966. In addition to the Festival, its main event, the Association also holds the Kuhmo Music Camp (since 1970) and winter concerts (since 1966).

*For twenty two years the festival concerts were played in school halls and in the local churches before an appropriate cultural venue, Kuhmo Arts Centre, was built 1993. Under these conditions it has been possible to make the Kuhmo Festival an international artistic success in spite of the very modest financial and other material circumstances*

Each of these events has its own budget and its own sources of funding. The Association has a total budget of just over EURO 820,210 (approximately £500,000).

The Patrons' Association of the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival was founded in 1976 to support the festival. This Association collects money through a variety of activities mainly different sales activities during the festival through the cafeteria, restaurant, festival shop etc.

### **Basic facts about the Festival**

The Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival is held every year during the last two weeks of July. It covers over one hundred concerts and other events, which are held at the Kuhmo Arts Centre, Kontio School, and in Kuhmo and Lentiira churches. The Festival annually attracts audiences totalling over forty thousand to events for which some thirty thousand tickets are sold.

The Artistic Director of the Festival since 1970 has been, with the exception of a few years, the cellist Seppo Kimanen, who alone is responsible for the planning of the programme and the selection of the artists. Each summer the Festival concentrates on one or more themes, on composers and commissioned works. Around two hundred artists are annually engaged for the Festival.

The key benefits of the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival, now preparing to celebrate its 32nd season, are:

- a high artistic standard maintained ever since 1970
- the unusual approach to compiling the programme
- careful selection of the artists who are sociable, have the art of captivating their audiences and have a humble attitude to the performance of music
- the excellent reputation of the festival. For example it has had no solvency problems at any time during its history
- a network of artists that is comprehensive
- good facilities (concert halls and instruments)
- its unique library of chamber music



*Seppo Kimaen with his wife,  
violinist Yoshiko Arai*

- the professionalism of its organisation and competent administration
- an excellent spirit in the community, with the whole town rallying round to help
- its active staple audience consisting of members of the Music Association and the Patrons' Association
- tickets that are reasonably priced
- an easy-going atmosphere
- a lack of dependence on megastars
- the nature and wilds of Kuhmo.
- continuity through key persons: the artistic director and the executive director are founders of the festival.

*The Spirit of Kuhmo has become a famous brand mark loaded with positive associations of beautiful natural surroundings that are also peaceful, friendly people and the absolutely highest quality of musical experience that is also joyful.*



*Joyful musicians in Kuhmo*

The *Spirit of Kuhmo* has become a famous brand mark loaded with positive associations of beautiful natural surroundings that are also peaceful, friendly people and the absolutely highest quality of musical experience that is also joyful.

### **Funding**

The Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival operates on a budget of EURO 688,976 (approximately £420,000). The final budget for 1997 totalled EURO 754,593 (approximately £460,000), of which 40% was accrued from ticket sales, 19% from grants from the Ministry of Education, 9% from the town of Kuhmo and 20% from other sources.

Other sources include sponsorship and revenue from advertising. The budget for the year 2000 was EURO 787,402 (approximately £480,000), for 2001 it is EURO 820,210 (approximately £500,000).

### **Personnel**

The Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival employs a full-time staff of six at two offices: the Artistic Director, the Festival Office Manager and a clerical assistant in Helsinki, and the Executive Director, the Financial Manager and a clerical assistant in Kuhmo. During the season the Festival employs a further temporary staff of two hundred and forty, the majority of whom offer their services free of charge within a tradition established during the first summer.





*Festival Concert in the  
Kuhmo Arts Centre*

### **Publicity and internationalism**

Every year the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival is the subject of press coverage by over one hundred Finnish and foreign journalists covering over four hundred thousand millimetres of column space. During the season the facilities of the Festival's own press office are used by about one hundred international press, radio and TV reporters.

*Every year the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival is the subject of press coverage by over one hundred Finnish and foreign journalists covering over four hundred thousand millimetres of column space*

A number of radio and TV programmes and films have been made of the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival. The latest film is a documentary of the 1994 Festival directed by Virke Lehtinen. During the coming festival Filmikonntori Ltd is going to film material for a series of ten programmes on the history of European chamber music for the Finnish digital television company, YLE. The project is being carried out in co-operation with The Centre of Expertise for Chamber Music *Virtuosi* (see below). An anthology of Finnish chamber music is also being completed during the next festival in co-operation with a recording company of classical music, Ondine Ltd and Virtuosi-Centre. Along with the television documentary, the music records are distributed to an international market.

Proof of the international reputation of the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival is the sister event founded ten years ago in the Russian Karelian town of Kostamus and in the Japanese town of Kitakyushu. Numerous other festivals have been established along similar lines in many parts of the world (such as the Lockenhaus Festival in Austria, the Arjeplog Festival in Sweden and the Portogruaro Festival in Italy). In spring 1994 a Kuhmo 'mini-festival' was held in Moscow in collaboration with Goskoncert. In the autumn of 1995 the Kuhmo Festival was invited to the Wigmore Hall in London for five days; and in November 1997 a Kuhmo concert was held in Tokyo. The activities of the *Kuhmo Chamber Soloists* have continued in an even more lively manner. In the year 2000 mini-festivals were held in Paris, Japan, Brussels, Berlin, and again in 2001 Paris and Japan.

*In 1989 the prestigious New York magazine Connoisseur wrote that the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival was 'possibly the best music festival in the world'. 'Everything after Kuhmo is a let-down' wrote the English Financial Times in 1997*

The Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival has often exchanged musicians with the Kostamus Chamber Arts Festival. Music students from Kostamus have participated in the Music Camp in Kuhmo and vice versa. During festivals 1999 and 2000 students were invited also from Archangelsk and Petrozavodsk.

In 1989 the prestigious New York magazine *Connoisseur* wrote that the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival was 'possibly the best music festival in the world'. 'Everything after Kuhmo is a let-down' wrote the English *Financial Times* in 1997.

### **Audiences and marketing philosophy**

Two surveys have been carried out\* in order to find out the composition of the audiences and to estimate the economic effect of the festival on the income from local tourism. Both surveys gave parallel results. The typical festival visitor comes from South-Finland, is in late middle age, is female (2/3 of the audience), has university level education, is from a stable economic background and was active in amateur music activities in his/her youth. The average stay is five days, and the festival audiences contribute EURO 2,624,672 (approximately £1.6 million) to the income from tourism in Kuhmo.

\* Suunnittelukeskus Oy 1987 and Timo Cantell 1992

*The music loving audience is an essential part of the festival spirit*

The music loving audience is an essential part of the festival spirit. The organisation does not try to get everyone to Kuhmo by marketing the festival in the mass media. Only sector marketing is used and the concerts are not sold to business companies or similar organisations other than cultural societies.

### **Benefits: economic**

The income from tourism produced by the festival in Kuhmo is articulated above (EURO 4,593,176 per year—approximately £2.8 million). Other economic benefits for Kuhmo are, for example:

*Shopkeepers in Kuhmo say that the festival time is 'the second Christmas time' for their business*

- positive promotion through four hundred thousand mm. coverage in newspapers and magazines (contributing EURO 1,009,128—approximately £630,000)
- promotion through television programs, the news and documentary films
- marketing for tourism via the Festival organisation in Finland and abroad

- a tax income from the salaries of the festival employees
- Kuhmo Arts Centre 1993: total budget EURO 7,800,000 (approximately £4.8 million), EURO 4,200,000 state grant (approximately £2.6 million), EURO 170,000 collected by the Patrons' Society (approximately £105,000)
- rents and payments of the festival to the Arts Centre of EURO 34,000 per year (approximately £21,000)
- Shop keepers in Kuhmo say that the festival time is 'the second Christmas time' for their business

*Culture has become a strategic tool in the municipal planning of the development of Kuhmo*

#### **Benefits: cultural**

- Several other musical and cultural initiatives have been organised, promoted or inspired by the festival.
- Music education has developed slowly but steadily in Kuhmo. During the 1990s many new initiatives have appeared in the school system.
- Culture has become a strategic tool in the municipal planning of the development of Kuhmo

*The festival has created social cohesion: it is easy even after twenty years to get people to do voluntary work for the festival. People are proud of the festival and the Arts Centre*

#### **Benefits: social**

- The festival has created social cohesion: it is easy even after twenty years to get people to do voluntary work for the festival. People are proud of the festival and the Arts Centre.
- The people in Kuhmo have had a rare opportunity for international communication for 30 years during the period of the festival.

#### **Virtuosi—Centre of Expertise for Chamber Music**

In December 1998 the Kuhmo Chamber Music Patrons' Association was identified as one of the fourteen national Centres of Expertise which aim to combine know-how and international know-how in new technology and modern media.

The Centre of Expertise introduces a new line of services in the creation of audio-visual content and in virtual space. Alongside traditional concert visitors, new audiences will appear, to whom new services and products identified within the Kuhmo Chamber Music brand can be offered. At the end of the chain of added value brought about through the creation of new chamber music, the customer may obtain, for example, an introduction to a rare piece



of music with a sample played through the Internet.

The main products and services can be divided into three categories:

1. building up an information database of the field of expertise
2. new products with chamber music content and
3. music networking services.

The Centres of Expertise program is a regional development programme. The Virtuosi centre in Kuhmo has on the one hand to create new employment opportunities in the region and, on the other hand, to find out ways to combine chamber music and modern technical equipment and media—to stimulate innovation.

### Conclusions

Some of the reasons for the success of the festival could be the following:

- the overall power of the artistic perspective
- the non-bureaucratic style of organisation (this is a non-profit making organisation)
- The fundamental idea has not lost its charm; good music surrounded by peaceful nature is becoming even more fascinating day by day
- friendly people seem to be more attractive than luxury hotels
- the basic values have been cherished by the persistent and 'old' festival personnel



*The Kuhmo Arts Centre*

There was quite a lot of criticism levelled at the festival for almost fifteen years in Kuhmo. The Municipal Council did give a yearly grant but it was not large and there was always political debate about it. Since the results of the first survey came out exposing the income from tourism, the criticism has stopped. Another battle had to be fought because of the Arts Centre—but after it was built, everybody fell in love with it. Both music societies are small shareholders of the Arts Centre. Company (The majority share is owned by the municipality).

The question is, whether the festival in reality does not have much more to give to the region that the region is able to accept and to use.

*One festival alone cannot save a town or a region—but it can be a wonderful basis and a wonderful tool for strategic development, if the surrounding actors are capable of co-operation.*

The private sector in Kuhmo is small and the population is used to leaning on the municipal services. The level of the education of the Municipal Council and Board Members is, on average, not very high. Changes in attitudes take a lot of time everywhere—and especially in the periphery.

Summa summarum: every cultural and educational effort shows its effects after decades. You have to be persistent. You have to be patient. One festival alone cannot save a town or a region—but it can be a wonderful basis and a wonderful tool for strategic development, if the surrounding actors are capable of co-operation.

## NORWAY GALLERY PROJECT Hå Gamle Prestegard

EVA WATNE  
Director

*Eva Watne is the Director of the Hå Gamle Prestegard (Hå Presbytery Gallery) in the 'Jaeren' region of Norway, a term that itself denotes 'the Edge'. She articulates the social benefits of the project as a balancing act between different sets of interest; the history of the site and its specific sense of place, exposure to contemporary art and the challenge of new ideas that this might bring, alongside concerns for local history and the preservation of culture of the past. The project is sited within a region of dispersed population mainly employed in agriculture. The forging of clear and meaningful links with this community are a major concern for the gallery, which itself runs successfully on a modest budget.*

### Introduction



**A**N OLD VICARAGE, dating back to at least the 16th century was once the sought after and attractive living quarters for the vicar of two churches in the municipality of Hå. A meeting place for Danish-Norwegian civil servants travelling the country, it later housed the first school and library in the area, and from the 1930s onwards, a local farmer.



This old vicarage is situated on the 'edge' of Norway, in the southwestern part of the country, a hundred meters from the North Sea. From the 1920s onwards it was forgotten by most people and at a 'dead end'. It was due for demolition in 1977.

It was rescued at the eleventh hour, following lively discussions as to whether it was to be a museum, a local meeting house, a cultural centre in the style of the 'seventies' i.e. dedicated to the development of cultural activities that would stimulate an interest in culture in the population at a broad level—or was the whole idea a mistake altogether?

Today the vicarage is a gallery and a cultural centre that is well known in Norway. It is also renowned for both contemporary art and cultural history. It is owned by the municipality of Hå and visited by approximately 60,000 visitors a year. It is literally situated 'on the edge' not only of Europe, but also of our own country, Norway, in the region to the south of the 'oil city' of Stavanger, which is called 'Jæren', a word that actually means 'the Edge'.



### Outline

Hå Gamle Prestegard was built as a farm for a vicar or minister. Today it consists of four different buildings; a main building, two barns and a tenant's house. They have gradually been restored with



care by a local architect, Per Line, who won a national award for his work. The existing houses are buildings that are typical only of this region. Every room on the estate has a new function and a new set of activities.

The main building constructed in 1789 holds exhibitions (both permanent and temporary), a café and a playroom for children. The two barns constructed in 1890 and 1927 form our main exhibition areas and rooms for concerts. The tenant's house constructed in 1860 is now a 'house of literature' with a collection of local books, where authors lecture, and where activities for children are also undertaken. In 1985 archeologists discovered a prehistoric site in the basement, dating from the early Stone Age (approximately 8,200 years old). Today this is a permanent exhibition of the Stone Age period in the region.

*The main outline of our activities is to organise and make accessible the following:*



### **Contemporary art**

Fifteen art exhibitions a year cover areas such as painting, installation art, sculpture, photography, textiles and ceramics (applied art). These are the work of professional artists, both local and foreign.



### **Local and general cultural history**

These include exhibitions and papers on local architecture, historical topics such as the emigration to America of Norwegians from the west coast of Norway, children's toys, fashion and local folk costume.

### **Disseminating information on landscape, cultivation methods, local heritage to include prehistoric and more recent history**

This is achieved through themed exhibitions on topics such as turf, the harvesting and extraction of seaweed, traces of Stone Age sites, local botany and a published guide to natural and cultural phenomena along our coast.



### **Activities in literature and music**

The Municipality has for example two literature awards, one known as *Forgotten Treasure* selected from the year's total of published books, one of which is for books for young people. During the winter period we host five 'authors of the month' who visit local schools, the library and Hå.

### **A local meeting place in the evenings**

The gallery is a place for celebrating weddings, birthdays or other



events for people both in the municipality and in the county, as well as acting as a venue for other types of meetings, lectures and concerts.

The gallery is open all year at weekends and daily from May to September. Seventeen people are employed, four of which are full-time.

*The annual budget is broken down as follows:*

30% of the funding from the municipality of NOK 920,000  
(EURO 119,629—approximately £75,000)

70% earned income mostly acquired from ticket sales, from exhibitions, art commissions and the bookstore and also from the hire of the main building for lectures and private events.

### Local Circumstances



The municipality of Hå is predominantly agricultural. The population, approximately 13,000, is scattered throughout the region. The nearest towns, however, can be reached within 30 to 45 minutes from each other by car. Close to the gallery is the local lighthouse and harbour (both part of the National Heritage), a magnificent area for country walks close to the sea, including sandy beaches.



The story of this region of Norway—Jæren—is as old as the first inhabitants of Norway—10,000 years. Traces of its history are all around. On the premises of Hå and the surrounding area are traces of—as mentioned earlier—the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age, the period of Migration (a larger burial site with over 60 stone built graves) and the Viking period. The neighbouring farm (bearing the name of 'Njord', the Viking seagod) has an old cemetery dating from the medieval period. Only last month an old stone with runes was discovered here, dating to approximately 975-1025 AD, bearing the inscription: 'Gaute erected this stone in memory of Steinar. His brother, Ulfrek, made the stone.'



The local attitude towards these prehistoric sites and the cultural historical landscape is however somewhat problematic. With such a high level of preservation of prehistory in this area, there is bound to be a conflict of interest both in relation to modern agricultural development and to commercial interests. We will return to these problems later in the text.

*The cultural expression of nature and the cultivated landscape, ethnology and local cultural history runs as a continuous thread through our activity and is expressed within contemporary art*

## Philosophy of the Cultural Centre

The philosophy of 'Hå Gamle Prestegard' is grounded in five main elements:

- The belief that a gallery/cultural centre in the district can reach the same level of quality and presence as similar institutions in central Norway.
- The focusing of our identity and activities as a 'cultural meeting place' based both on past and existing impressions of the place. (It was previously a centre for religion and cultural education. Today it is a place for cultural history and contemporary art.)
- The cultural expression of nature and the cultivated landscape, ethnology and local cultural history runs as a continuous thread through our activity and is expressed within contemporary art.
- The use of local contractors as much as possible, but we are also interested in attracting external experts and participants to bring in new influences.
- The development of the identity of the institution, by grasping the 'personality' of the place and letting the visitors feel that both the management and the exhibition guides are developing an understanding of what this personality is.

*Hå is also a type of institution where contemporary art is a form of self-expression, a place to engage people, to encourage their own opinions, to be free to dislike or appreciate the program at whatever level. This will always be controversial.*

## Explanation of benefits: cultural benefits

We represent a local meeting place during opening hours to a general public and we also cater for more private occasions.

Hå is also a type of institution where contemporary art is a form of self-expression, a place to engage people, to encourage their own opinions, to be free to dislike or appreciate the program at whatever level. This will always be controversial.

We have been developing and broadening our own cultural network over the years with art institutions and professional colleagues in relevant areas as friends and contributors within the region and on a national basis. We co-operate locally with most sectors of the cultural department in our own municipality to include youth, the library services, the environment and with museums and galleries within the region and throughout the country.

Through the work in local history we meet and engage with a variety of groups, clubs, and societies e.g. local history, farmers' wives, young agricultural workers, and craft associations. They





help us to collect local clothes, equipment, or whatever is needed for a project. (For our exhibition of children's toys, one hundred and fifty volunteers participated).

We sincerely hope that we play our part in developing an interest in both art and local heritage in our community.

### **Social effects**

Owned by the municipality, Hå Gamle Prestegard is part of the Department of Culture and the sector for Municipal Heritage. As head of this section my job is to co-ordinate the local museum, the art gallery at Hå, the local lighthouse 'Obrestad' and to make these accessible to the public through involvement in local heritage.

*We interact with local people in a variety of ways:*

- The employees are all local people. Both academic and non-academic staff are recruited from within this region. (The two youngest include new graduates in History and Ethnology.)
- The café is run by local youths as members of a rural youth organisation. (Their mothers bake the cakes.)
- Hå is also a place for public and private functions.
- Both local people and visitors use the **Obrestad Lighthouse** for short vacations. At the same time artists visiting Hå and writers visiting the municipality stay there. The actual lighthouse is a museum with all its equipment intact. A local marine club uses the shed.

### **Reasons For The Project's Success**

So far, both the art gallery/cultural centre at Hå and our new way of keeping the lighthouse open for the public have been a success—but what about the future?

### **Critical factors**

- The local community is simultaneously a strong, positive factor and a 'threat'. There is a difficult balancing act between activities that are ongoing and familiar and others that embrace challenges and new ideas, some of which are highly controversial. Not everyone in a small community is fond of modern art. Not everyone is happy with engaging with the preservation of the region and local heritage.
- We are, at the same time, living on a very strict budget of NOK 900,000 (EURO 114,829—approximately £70,000) a year for fifteen different exhibitions. This also maintains four valuable listed buildings, seventeen employees and a variety of other activities. This requires 'ice in your stomach' as we say in Norway, or 'guts' and a lot of stubborn joy and belief in what one is doing.

- Self funding is a constant risk, making one vulnerable to upward and downward trends in economic cycles. The question is how to show new unexpected art such as installation work as a challenging experience by giving the visitors new thoughts, at the same time as maintaining a level of self funding that constitutes seventy per cent of our overall budget.

*We are not a museum, or an art museum or purely a gallery.  
We are something in between—or something of the future?*

We are an untraditional institution in that:

- we are in a ‘remote place’.
  - we are not a museum, or an art museum or purely a gallery.
- We are something in-between—or something of the future?

### Reasons for success

- **Closeness** to the local community is one of our strongest assets.
- The combination of self-expression and public experience is refreshing and inspiring. This forms the framework of our identity as we are well known, have a function within the community and are constantly evolving.
- The landscape, the premises, the buildings and its history, the art, the lighthouse, the museum are all **part of a whole**.
- **We are unfinished**. We go one step at a time, developing experience and at the same time functioning with a small budget. Part of the buildings are not even insulated (and that means quite a lot where I come from).
- **Everything we do is based on the philosophy that variation and tradition are closely interrelated**. When we are really lucky the two can challenge each other, as occurred for example in the *Turf* exhibition and in *Treasures of Memory* by the English artist Michael Petry among others.



*We focus on telling stories including stories of our childhood and children’s toys (30,000 visitors), stories of how the natural resources like seaweed are harvested and what we need the seaweed for, stories of fashion through history up to the 1990s and stories of the religious pictures on our grandmothers’ walls*

- **We focus on telling stories** including stories of our childhood and children’s toys (30,000 visitors), stories of how the natural resources like seaweed are harvested and what we need the seaweed for, stories of fashion through history up to the 1990s and stories of the religious pictures on our grandmothers’ walls.
- Most of all be aware of **who we are**, trying not to be too pretentious, self-congratulatory or old-fashioned.



### **What about the future?**

To be honest, it is somewhat uncertain and unforeseen. This part of Norway, the southwest coast, is undergoing profound and rapid change. Possible changes in organising local municipalities are up for discussion. The national government is initiating changes in the organisation of cultural institutions e.g. into bigger consolidated museum units. What part we are to play in all this is yet to be seen.

Our hope is to form a solid strategy of local contributors, both from the public and private sectors, where each part has a role and will be able to emphasize their own identity and purpose.

We also look to other countries like yourselves and feel Norway in many ways has something to learn in letting culture develop and prosper and irrigate or fertilise other sectors and parts of a local and regional community.

*To work at the Art Centre Hå Gamle Prestegard is for me a combination of two things:*

***A constant pleasure in both creating and being in a story.***

***A constant 'struggle' to be able to, and be allowed to, develop further.***

### **Conclusion**



*To work at the Art Centre Hå Gamle Prestegard is for me a combination of two things:*

***A constant pleasure in both creating and being in a story.***

***A constant 'struggle' to be able to, and be allowed to, develop further.***



## THE SOCIAL BENEFITS OF THE FÈISEAN MOVEMENT

RITA HUNTER · [www.musicscotland.com/feisrois](http://www.musicscotland.com/feisrois)  
Manager of Fèis Rois

*Rita Hunter is Manager of Fèis Rois, one of the projects within the Fèisean movement. The Fèisean movement is a series of community festivals focused by Gaelic culture. It is an opportunity for young people to receive tuition in Gaelic arts within a shared experience across age groups, across cultures and across regions of Scotland. Rita Hunter describes the development of the movement and evaluates its impact on participants, in particular the social benefits of participation.*

**W**HAT IS A FÈIS?—well, a Fèis is a life changing experience, giving you a vital connection to your own culture and offering a cultural experience that then belongs to you for you to explore as deeply as you wish.

*What is a Fèis?—well, a Fèis is a life changing experience*

It is a weeklong summer, Easter or autumn holiday happily spent with friends, old and new, learning to sing, dance and play music together in an informal setting.

The Gaelic word Fèis means a feast or a festival; however, the word has become associated with the Fèis movement, a highly important cultural development offering Gaelic arts tuition to young people in a secure and happy atmosphere in their own community.

The first Fèis took place on the Isle of Barra in 1981, in response to concern that the children of the island were not being taught enough of their native Gaelic language and culture. A 2-week event was organised, with classes in singing, language, drama, art, sports and many instruments. The whole community was involved, through a programme of daily classes, evening ceilidhs, dances, visits to outlying communities and sporting events.

*There are currently 28 Fèisean taking place in mostly rural communities in the Highlands and Islands although the movement is now spreading to urban areas*

This example inspired many communities—a Fèis is quite contagious! There are currently 28 Fèisean taking place in mostly rural communities in the Highlands and Islands although the movement is now spreading to urban areas. Very importantly, each community owns its own event and each Fèis is designed, planned and managed by a local volunteer committee. Each Fèis is community-led and tailored to suit its own young people. Each Fèis was set up by somebody spreading the word, so it is a very organic movement.



My own area Fèis, Fèis Rois, was set up in 1986. Fèis Rois began as a 5-day community based tuition festival in the North West Highland village of Ullapool, open to pupils aged 9-17, with Gaelic language and Highland culture at the heart of the event. An enthusiastic group formed to create a residential event, with classes in many instruments and arts activities. This group was made up of parents, teachers, the local community education worker and a local hotelier. The local playgroup also became involved, to create a special complementary event for younger children.

*Every available space in Ullapool was used for classes and beds were stuffed full of children*

High quality tuition was offered, led by a combination of Highland based and visiting tutors, many of them high profile performers. Every available space in Ullapool was used for classes and beds were stuffed full of children—the tin whistle class sneaked into the late Robert Urquhart's office every time he left the building! People were very much learning on the hoof—and still are!

*Open to all is a very important part of the philosophy*

**Open to all** is a very important part of the philosophy—the event is open to the complete beginner as well as the experienced player, and is open to all members of the community. Subsidies have been in place to keep the event as affordable as possible, and additional funding is sought for families on low income. We cover an enormous geographical area, so information about each event is sent to each and every school, library, District Office and local newspaper on the same day to give equal and fair distribution to east and west.

*In many cases, we are providing the **only music tuition** in an area.*

In many cases, we are providing the **only music tuition** in an area.

There are two Fèisean taught through the medium of Gaelic, one on South Uist and one in Inverness. At all the other Fèisean, participants do not need to have Gaelic language to attend, and it is sincerely hoped that an introduction to the language at an enjoyable cultural event will stimulate a desire to learn the language. There is now clear evidence that the Fèis movement has done much to attract participants towards learning to fluency. It is certainly true that all participants learn some Gaelic.

Fifty children attended this first event; by word of mouth the popularity grew and numbers quickly increased to 80, 110, 150, 200 in the following years. During year two, Ross and Cromarty District Council appointed an Arts Development Officer, who took

over responsibility for the administration and management of the Fèis. The Council took great pride in the Fèis, and responded to clear demand for investment. The Fèis is an excellent example of community and Local Authority working together towards improving the quality of life in the community, revitalising the culture and reinvesting in the achievements.

Fèis Rois became a limited company with charitable status in 1991, with a full-time administrator and support from Ross and Cromarty District Council and, since local government re-organisation, the Highland Council. Fèis Rois to this day continues to respond to the ever-increasing demand and has grown organically, to now see an extremely full and lively year-round programme, shown here.

#### FÈIS ROIS YEAR ROUND PROGRAMME

<b>Event</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Age group</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Tutors</b>
• Fèis Rois Oigridh	one week	9 to 11	175	40
• Fèis Rois nan Deugairean	one week	12 to 17	100	24
• Fèis Rois Inbhich	3 days	adults	200	30
• Fèis an t'Samhraidh	2+2 days	all ages	50	4
• Weekly classes	26-30 weeks	9 to adult	200	15
• Monthly master classes	11 months	9 to adult	40	2
• Piping school	7 months	9 to adult	40	2
• Ceilidh Trail	4 weeks	16 to 22	10	5
• Education programme	year round	5 to adult	500	10
• Special performances	year round	9 to 22	100	5
• Instrument bank hire	year round			
• Traditional music agency and advice service	year round			

#### The role of Fèisean nan Gàidheal

The umbrella organisation to the Fèis movement was set up in 1990, to seek funding and offer administrative support, training and advice to the member Fèisean. This organisation has grown apace with its members and is a nationally recognised Youth Arts Organisation. FnG's role has greatly matured. It now disburses grants on behalf of Scottish Arts Council and Highland Council to all member Fèisean, offers a wide range of support such as insurance cover and training and organizes an annual AGM and conference. It also manages an impressive bank of instruments.

To give you an idea of the scale of the movement, last year FnG funded 1,700 year round workshops, involving 145 tutors and 3,600 participants, as well as the 29 Fèis events.

The organisation has recently appointed 4 Regional Development Workers, to give administrative support to the many volunteers running the community Fèisean and to assist with developments.

The Director, Arthur Cormack also plays a strong lobbying and advocacy role to raise the profile and status of the Fèisean movement, especially following the opening of the Scottish Parliament.

### **Cultural, social and economic benefits**

The figures in 1999 told that Fèisean cost a total of £250,000 (EURO 410,015) of which the communities themselves raised £150,000 (EURO 246,063). This in itself speaks volumes for the tremendous community effort. The Fèisean employed the equivalent of 15 full-time posts.

In our own Junior Fèis alone, our direct spend in Ullapool that week was £15,000 (EURO 24,606).

Add to this 175 children with pocket money and 35 adult's needs for petrol, music books, newspapers, snacks and refreshments and you would find another surprising figure.

So the local and wider community benefits economically from this burgeoning movement.

The cultural and social benefits are many and are also contributing to what one observer described as 'the spiritual regeneration of Scotland'.

### *Awakening of a new, possibly lifelong interest in traditional culture and language*

For the individual, there is the building of skills. Firstly in the youngsters:



- Musical skills, perhaps that all important first ever introduction
- Awakening of a new, possibly lifelong interest in traditional culture and language
- Social and interpersonal skills through meeting new friends and working together informally
- Coping with being away from home for the first time. It is a brave step at 9 years old and the scale and intensity of the event can be daunting
- Integrating into larger groups—often coming from a small rural community
- Rehearsing together towards a large performance at the end of a week also raises tremendous group spirits and shared pride

- New found confidence from all of these has been widely noticed
- Becoming part of a community, whether that is your home area, your local Fèis or the wider cultural community

*I believe that this teenage age group is the vital link in the chain of the future of traditional culture*

If continued into teenage years:

- These skills are all developed further
- Groups meet out with Fèis to pursue social and musical friendships
- Bands are formed for community performance
- The teenagers immerse themselves deeper in the music  
—I believe that this teenage age group is the vital link in the chain of the future of traditional culture

*Several people have moved to live in the Highlands after experiencing a Fèis*

Long-term developments are evident among adult individuals:

- The rediscovery of a long lost love of culture, perhaps a parent or grandparent spoke Gaelic
- The new discovery and accessibility of traditional culture
- Career developments, whether as Fèis organiser, tutor, supervisor, team member
- I have to mention our 3 weddings!
- Stimulating a sense of community involvement
- Several people have moved to live in the Highlands after experiencing a Fèis
- Incomers to an area have found that involvement in a Fèis integrates the whole family into the community

Some developments in adult's have been quite remarkable; Alpha Munro tentatively sat her Grade 8 violin exam and offered to set up our first ever weekly fiddle class. Ten years later, her fiddle school is renowned in having 50 members with many community, festival, radio and television performances under their belts and now their own CD recording. Alpha herself has written a book of tunes and produced a solo CD.

*A Fèis offers a tremendous surge of **cultural** activity to a community in an intensive period*

A Fèis offers a tremendous surge of **cultural** activity to a community in an intensive period. It gives the children an immersion in many skills to be drawn together for the good of the young people in the community. A showcase concert at the end of

the week draws the community together to celebrate their culture. Through the children, many adults have re-discovered their culture.

*. . . many social and cultural benefits at community level*



This surge of culture and the will to pass on the culture to the next generation is the inspiration for the many **social and cultural benefits** at **community level**.

Setting up a committee can identify many hidden strengths. Many highly skilled organizers first cut their teeth at a local Fèis committee. There are endless tasks to be shared to ensure the health and safety of the children and the smooth running success of the Fèis. The intensity of the event calls for great commitment of time and personal and family expense.

There is a great movement of people created by the Fèisean movement. This produces enormous benefits, enlivening communities and stimulating further social and inter-community activities. It is quite notable how even one new musician's activity can stimulate social activity in a village or community. It gives Fèis friends a new 'place to go' and can soon draw social activity around that one person's development. Many families arrange holidays around the Fèis timetable. This brings even greater social stimulation to a community.

*Multi tasking was invented at the Fèis!*

A Fèis can involve a great number of people in the community and offers an excellent opportunity for many different talents to be identified and employed. You won't be surprised to know that most Fèisean and their committees are run by women. Multi tasking was invented at the Fèis!

Likewise many tensions arise—so the community learns to deal with these. Difficult decisions have to be made, artistic temperaments are encountered, financial management skills are called for and inevitable mistakes are made in the endless learning process. This is where the calm, wise support of the Fèisean nan Gàidheal Director has played a vital role in keeping harmony and passing tips and ideas from Fèis to Fèis.

*Universally in the Fèisean movement, peoples' capacity to give is being constantly strengthened*

Universally in the Fèisean movement, peoples' capacity to give is being constantly strengthened; this in itself is a wonderful social development as it creates a very strong social fabric for young people to grow and develop from. Great social, cultural and educational bridges are built through the Fèis. Many barriers are



removed. Traditional music meets classical, formal teachers meet professional musicians, community meets school and all learn and grow together. All age groups are drawn together through Fèis activities. Many Fèisean give entertainment at their local Residential and care homes. These give great mutual pleasure and benefits. Through the many Fèis activities, all ages are drawn together to inform and support the events in many ways.

*Many young people, who grew up attending a local Fèis, have now gone on to develop their language and culture through study and/or career opportunities*

### **Individual cultural career development**

Many young people, who grew up attending a local Fèis, have now gone on to develop their language and culture through study and/or career opportunities. When the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD) set up a BA (Scottish Music) course, 7 out of 10 of the 1st intake of students were Fèis participants. They have now graduated and are making a notable impact in teaching and playing traditional music in Scotland and abroad. They are recording CDs and performing on radio and television, performing at Festivals; they have made the culture their own and return to re-invest in the community movement.

The Fèis creates a new extended family and each Fèis follows their students' progress keenly as they grow up and leave the area. In Fèis Rois, 60% of this year's Junior Fèis team are past participants. This re-investment is a tremendously significant part of individual development.

*Local and visiting tutors learn an enormous amount from working together in the non-competitive setting of a Fèis*

The tutors play a great part in the social and cultural benefits. Local and visiting tutors learn an enormous amount from working together in the non-competitive setting of a Fèis. They carry helpful ideas from Fèis to Fèis.

Visiting tutors are generous with their assistance to the community, offering advice and follow-on tuition, music material, helpful information and encouragement.

### **The Future**

Recent developments such as the appointment of Regional Development Workers have done much to alleviate the administrative burden on the shoulders of the local volunteer committees. We have seen several international exchanges, such as Barra and Tonga, supported by the Commonwealth Youth



Exchange and featured in a BBC documentary. Tutor training is being developed in partnership with other national agencies. Child Protection training has been given to all organisers and tutors.

Sell-out showcase concerts have taken place, one broadcast on BBC television along with a Fèis documentary. This brought the movement much more widespread recognition both with the general public and funding bodies and politicians.

*Many dormant skills have been awakened by musical skills.*



There is now growing evidence of the educational impact of the Fèis movement.

- Many dormant skills have been awakened by musical skills.
- A Fèis is not easy—4 hours is the daily minimum of concentration on new skills. This builds the individual's skills.
- Some Fèis participants now sit SCE music exams in traditional instruments.
- Some areas have begun to develop traditional music classes within formal education, delivered by the Fèis tutors

### **Reasons for the project's success**

The success is due to a number of factors:

- It provides a social focus, a new and special event in the community
- It provides a fulfilling and very enjoyable holiday activity for the children
- It makes an all-important connection with Highland culture and Gaelic language
- It gives the individual a very 'found' feeling to be part of a culture
- It gives the Fèis community a strong identity
- It offers high quality tuition
- The whole community gets behind it, for the sake of the children
- It is a success in itself—it produces visible results and has made terrific progress
- It is bigger than the individuals involved, so it draws the best out of people
- It creates a high profile in the community, so gives a bonding, strengthening experience
- It has proven to be of great significance in the resurgence of awareness and interest in traditional culture
- It makes an economic impact in the community, often at a very lean time of year
- It has offered a career path to many of the participants
- It has been noted as a very beneficial experience for young people

- The residential element has greatly boosted social skills, confidence and formed lasting friendships
- Professional musicians have made a dedicated commitment to supporting the Fèisean
- It gives tremendous hope for the future

## Economic benefits of cultural developments

## SCHLOSS ELMAU

DR MARION THIEM · [www.schloss-elmau.de](http://www.schloss-elmau.de)  
Artistic Director of Schloss Elmau



The Hotel Schloss Elmau

*Dr Marion Thiem is the Artistic Director of Schloss Elmau, a castle hotel situated in the Bavarian Alps that also specialises in music as a cultural resource. Dr Thiem discusses the economic benefits of Elmau in qualitative terms, tracing its success to the particular quality of silence that attracts musicians and their audiences alike. The sense of experimentation and adventure that is an essential part of the music making, currently extends into the development of a seminar programme focused by philosophy that is in empathy with the way Elmau's founder first established it in the early twentieth century, as a way of experiencing culture and nature together.*



The alpine valley of Elmau

**E**LMAU is a remote area indeed—it is not even a village. It is just the castle, today run as a hotel. The next village is a 10 minutes drive by car.

It is of course not an easy task to try and describe this very special place and its cultural programme—but then all speakers of this conference will have had this problem in common. I will spend a substantial amount of my time discussing the overarching idea of Elmau. I will then discuss Elmau's benefits, mainly the economic benefits. I will conclude with a presentation of the factors that in my view are the reasons for Elmau's success.

*'Schloss Elmau nestles in a magical alpine valley of breathtaking beauty, at the foot of an impressive mountain range'*

### The Place

'Schloss Elmau nestles in a magical alpine valley of breathtaking beauty, at the foot of an impressive mountain range'—This is, of course, brochure language but in seeing images of it or even better, the place itself, you will certainly agree that this is no exaggeration. Schloss Elmau is situated in Southern Germany close to the Austrian border, 100km south of Munich near Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Garmisch-Partenkirchen is one of the most well known ski resorts in Germany and was incidentally also the home of Richard Strauss. In the neighbourhood are the famous castles of King Ludwig II of Bavaria, famous for his obsession with building<sup>1</sup> and for Richard Wagner. Both these past-times nearly ruined the then state of Bavaria financially and led to the king's assignment to an asylum and sudden (and to this day mysterious) death in a lake.

Today Elmau Castle is a national monument and a hotel with one hundred and eighty guest rooms, three concert halls, two annexes and all kinds of facilities that a modern hotel of standing requires: outdoor and indoor swimming-pool, various saunas, tennis courts, conference centre, children's programmes and so on.

View of the Hotel Schloss Elmau



<sup>1</sup> One of the castles was meant to be a replica on a smaller scale of Versailles.



View of the Hotel Schloss Elmau

*Müller believed in the experience of nature, landscape and quietness rather than in elaborate theories. His idea was to set up a place where people could find quietness and recreation. These to him formed the basis for all human capacity for creativity*



*The landscape*



*The concert and dance hall*

### **Background History**

It is important to understand the place and most of all, the success of its cultural programme through the history of Schloss Elmau. The theologian and philosopher Johannes Müller founded Schloss Elmau in 1916. Müller believed in the experience of nature, landscape and quietness rather than in elaborate theories. His idea was to set up a place where people could find quietness and recreation. These to him formed the basis for all human capacity for creativity. A life of first-hand ‘unmittelbare’ creativity was his central idea, and Elmau provided four factors that, according to him, were crucial: situation, nature, landscape and music.

Around 1900 he had become famous in Germany and its neighbouring countries for his lectures on philosophical and theological subjects but he explicitly avoided to follow or create any ‘school’. Freedom was one of the basic ideas of all Johannes Müller’s thinking and lecturing. His friends urged him to create a place where more people could have the opportunity to listen to his lectures, meet him and live the experience of nature and music that was so central to him. A valley was recommended to him, and on his very first visit he was struck with the beauty and quietness of the landscape. Friends provided him with the funding and in 1913 construction began. The house was opened at Whitsun 1916.

From the outset one of the main parts of the house was a big concert and dance hall. Dancing was an important factor from the beginning and it is to this day one of the main activities that Elmau is famous for. The dancing was actually not one of Johannes Müller’s ideas. The staff of the place were not professionals but young people who were recommended by friends and wanted to work in this specific place. (It is, by the way, one of the fascinating things about the hotel today that the majority of the staff are not professionals. They are young people from all over the world who come for a year or two in order to learn German and get some first hand professional training and experience after school.)

*. . . when Johannes Müller watched them he was fascinated by the joy the dance created and he subsequently made it a regular part of Elmau*

These young people wanted to dance and when Johannes Müller watched them he was fascinated by the joy the dance created and he subsequently made it a regular part of Elmau.



Concerts at Elmau

The first concert took place on Christmas Eve 1918 but a proper regular concert life began when the renowned pianist, Elly Ney came for a long vacation in 1920. She told other musicians about her experience there so that more and more musicians came. They stayed in Elmau as guests among other guests i.e. they came for a holiday in the course of which they performed for their fellow-guests rather than flying in just for a concert and performing to an anonymous audience.

*In Elmau they were performing to an audience they knew from meals, walks, conversations they had had together. The quietness, which has been described by many as being of an extraordinary kind, has been a crucial factor*

In Elmau they were performing to an audience they knew from meals, walks, conversations they had had together. The quietness, which has been described by many as being of an extraordinary kind, has been a crucial factor for many musicians so that they saw and see Elmau as their musical home. To this day musicians usually come for a longer stay than just the night of the concert and either stay on for a vacation or come earlier in order to have time and space for extensive practising in combination with walks, recreation and the landscape.

After Johannes Müller's death in 1949 one of his daughters and sons-in-law took over, and today one of his grandsons is the owner, so that it is still a family-run hotel. This does not only create a more personal atmosphere in the hotel than the usually more anonymous big hotels provide, it also passes on the huge importance of philosophical questions and of questions of a culture that are part of its tradition.

Since 1951 regular concert series and festivals have been established. The first one was the Chamber Music Week in January that exists to this day. The founder's daughter was responsible for the cultural programme over 40 years and she used to travel to Munich regularly to attend concerts and meet the artists she wanted to invite to Elmau. One of them was Peter Pears who was very interested in coming. Once when she was talking to Pears after a concert Benjamin Britten stood by and said 'Why don't you invite me too?' She said she would love to, of course, but that she was afraid Elmau would not be able to pay his fee. He said he would come without any fee, provided she would teach him cross-country skiing. It had long been a dream of his to learn to ski.

*Benjamin Britten had his first lesson of cross-country skiing in Elmau's dining hall*

So the Chamber Music Week was turned into a British-German Music Week and Benjamin Britten had his first lesson of cross-country skiing in Elmau's dining hall.

(This is not just an anecdote for anecdote's sake but shows a very common reason why artists come to this remote place for hardly any fees. I will come back to this topic when discussing the reasons for Elmau's success.)

*Very often I receive calls from world-famous musicians or their agents asking whether they could come to Elmau—mostly when they are preparing a new programme and want an opportunity to practise and to try the programme out for the first time with an audience. From the outset some of the best musicians in the world have guaranteed a chamber music programme at the highest level. At the same time Elmau has always made a point of inviting young musicians very early in their career and has given them an opportunity to perform to an audience*



*Elmau's Zauberberg atmosphere*

To this day musicians tell each other about the place and its opportunities and, again, the extraordinary quietness that provides great inspiration for any creative process. This is how the Amadeus Quartet, Yehudi Menuhin, Wilhelm Kempff, Hermann Prey, Gidon Kremer and Barbara Hendricks, to name just a few, have come to perform there and not just once, but on a regular basis. Very often I receive calls from world-famous musicians or their agents asking whether they could come to Elmau—mostly when they are preparing a new programme and want an opportunity to practise and to try the programme out for the first time with an audience. From the outset some of the best musicians in the world have guaranteed a chamber music programme at the highest level. At the same time Elmau has always made a point of inviting young musicians very early in their career and has given them an opportunity to perform to an audience. (This is how, for example, Gidon Kremer and Barbara Hendricks first came to Elmau.)

Today's owner, who took over in 1993, introduced new aspects to the cultural life of Schloss Elmau. Starting with research into Elmau's history during the Nazi regime (a part of Elmau's history which to that day had been entirely neglected), he decided to break Elmau's seclusion, Elmau's 'Zauberberg' or Magic Mountain atmosphere and to create a more open-minded atmosphere by introducing symposia on philosophical and political topics. Alongside that jazz music was being introduced. Today, jazz is a matter of course in the cultural programme throughout the year, and one of the festivals is entirely dedicated to European jazz in late autumn. There is also one festival explicitly dedicated to jazz in



combination with the classical piano that lasts for two weeks in the summer.

*In all, approximately 150 concerts are being organized per year. This does not include the festivals*

In all, approximately 150 concerts are being organized per year. This does not include the festivals. You can get an idea from what is going on during the rest of this year from the house magazine Kulturzeit, which is published twice a year. The festivals take place during the main holiday seasons as well as shortly before or after that (i.e. during off-peak seasons) as an incentive for potential guests to time their stay at that point in the calendar:

- Christmas/New Year 2 weeks
- Carnival and literature festival 1 week
- Sunday before Easter 3 days
  - Easter 1 week
  - Whitsun 10 days (3 festivals in a row: quartet, literature, ARD)
  - JazzClassica 2 weeks
- Summer festival all August: concerts and dance daily
- European Jazztival 4 days

<sup>2</sup> Tango weeks with daily dance lessons, concerts and balls.

<sup>3</sup> This year members of the former Amadeus Quartet taught four young quartet groups who gave three concerts at the end of the week.

<sup>4</sup> Weddings, birthday parties.

Over and above that, there are symposia, dance weeks<sup>2</sup>, master classes<sup>3</sup> exhibitions, theatre performances, children's concerts, as well as regular lectures in contemporary history, political philosophy and literature.

Next to the concert office there is a very active conference office that organizes conferences for companies as well as official institutions and private festivities<sup>4</sup>. For these conferences, the cultural programme very often represents an additional value; sometimes they explicitly ask the concert office to set up a special concert during their stay.

Let me finally mention some smaller points that are no big 'deal' but might be helpful to grasp the entire picture and the atmosphere of the place.

*There are five grand pianos in five different halls/rooms. Whilst the ones in the three regular concert halls are strictly reserved for artists, the other two can be used by guests, who do make frequent use of them . . . To my knowledge there are not very many hotels, at least in Germany, who can offer this service nor would their guests ask for it*

There are five grand pianos in five different halls/rooms. Whilst the ones in the three regular concert halls are strictly reserved for artists, the other two can be used by guests, who do make frequent use of them. Some even call in advance to make sure there will be a piano available for them so that they can practice during their stay. To my knowledge there are not very many hotels, at least in Germany, who can offer this service nor would their guests ask for it.

There is a bookstore in the house that not only sells Johannes Müller's books and essays, but also contemporary literature and books on philosophical and political questions as well. Their stock is responsive to the cultural programme. Last February a four-day André Gide festival was on the programme with lectures, readings and concerts connected to Gide; three weeks before that festival the bookstore could offer all his works that were available in Germany. At the end of the festival they were completely sold out.

Every now and then recordings are made in Elmau. Sometimes it is Bavarian Radio, one of Germany's major official radio stations, who either make a live recording of a concert or record the programme in the hall the following day with retakes. Sometimes regular record companies set up their studios in Elmau. The latter is not an easy undertaking since the recordings require absolute quiet in the neighbouring rooms which a hotel can of course not guarantee. Nevertheless, various artists and producers are happy to live with the drawbacks since in their view the facilities and the landscape make a perfect set-up for the concentration that a recording needs.

*Although it is true that there are many dangers involved with tourism that is brought into a region . . . at the same time tourism has great potential for cultural and economic benefits*

### **The benefits**

My Ph.D. thesis, which I wrote several years ago, was on the subject Tourism and Cultural Identity. Culture was defined not just as 'the arts' but carried a broader definition. My main reason for writing it was that then, in German speaking research, it seemed clear to everyone that tourism was destroying local culture and had no benefits. Although it is true that there are many dangers involved with tourism that is brought into a region (price rises, the loss of a sense of community, only seasonal jobs etc.), at the same time tourism has great potential for cultural and economic benefits. As Elmau is a hotel and therefore a tourist resort, Elmau's effects are pretty much in line with those of tourism on the local culture in other contexts.



*I found within my research that the main benefits of tourism on local culture and identity are to be found in three main fields: a feeling of security, activity, cultural pluralism*

I found within my research that the main benefits of tourism on local culture and identity are to be found in three main fields: a feeling of security, activity, cultural pluralism.

A FEELING OF SECURITY: Tourism brings jobs, income and sometimes even a growing sense of community. Although tourists usually represent a higher standard of living than the local people have, it is obvious that they are looking for 'something else' otherwise they would not travel. Local people realise through tourism that they and their place, which usually is a remote area, have got something to offer and to compete with the lifestyle and standard of living of urban metropolitan centres.

*Cultural identity is not a status but a work in progress*

<sup>5</sup> The impressive number of music festivals established in recent years in tourist resorts can only be interpreted as due to tourism but at the same time the inhabitants benefit from it as well.

ACTIVITY: Cultural identity is not a status but a work in progress.

Tourism brings forces to a local culture that in turn can lead to new developments.<sup>5</sup>

CULTURAL PLURALISM: With tourism, cultures other than the local ones are present in a region in two ways: through the tourists themselves and through seasonal employees from other countries.

This is just a very brief summary in order to give you an idea of which directions the cultural discussions in tourism research have taken. Our topic here is after all very much related to it as, as far as I can see, most if not all projects are successful (and very often may even have been set up) in response to tourism. I do not intend to follow this line further when now presenting the benefits of Elmau but will pick out those issues which seem the most important to me.

I will first mention some of the cultural benefits and will then focus on the economic benefits.

## **Cultural benefits**

### FOR THE REGION

It would be preposterous to claim that without Elmau this region in Bavaria would be without culture and music. Garmisch-Partenkirchen was the home of Richard Strauss and today hosts the Richard Strauss Institute that presents a festival every summer, albeit not a big one. Mittenwald is very close and is, next to Cremona, probably the most renowned site of violin makers in the world. Many violin makers live there still today. There is a violin makers' school and, of course, a violin museum including some concerts. The castles of King Ludwig II are very close and organize concerts every now and then in their spectacular rooms.

Like any tourist area in middle Europe today some concerts take place during the high season for tourism and on a more irregular basis than normal with local artists.

Still, the quantity, the quality and the variety of Schloss Elmau's year-round cultural programme is unique and therefore represents an additional cultural aspect for the region. We know from phone calls and ticket sales that local people do participate in Elmau's programme very frequently.

*It seems to be the ideal set-up for creative work—  
which is . . . exactly what the founder had in mind when  
creating this place . . . artists come there . . . to try out new  
programmes which they would not dare try out anywhere else*



*The extraordinary silence and quiet*

#### FOR THE ARTISTS

At the risk of being a bore, I have to emphasise that a crucial factor of Elmau is the extraordinary silence and quietness there. One pianist who himself lives in a very small village said to me recently that this was the kind of quietness he had never ever experienced before and it gives you a very special sense of freedom. This quietness together with the beauty of the landscape and the atmosphere of the place have frequently been mentioned by artists when asked why they come to Elmau. It seems to be the ideal set-up for creative work—which is by the way exactly what the founder had in mind when creating this place. This is why artists come there to practice, to try out new programmes which they would not dare try out anywhere else, to try out new ensembles even. It helps of course that Elmau does not have to ask for special and/or commercial programmes in order to attract an audience. An audience (and even better, a very appreciative one) is always there as guests stay in the house all year round and do expect a cultural programme and even an inventive one.

*It is exactly the combination of nature, landscape, quietness,  
all hotel facilities **and** the cultural programme that attracts so  
many people*

#### **Economic benefits**

The economic benefit for the hotel is not easily measurable since the cultural programme is one reason among many others for why people come for a holiday. It is exactly the combination of nature, landscape, quietness, all hotel facilities *and* the cultural programme that attracts so many people. On the other hand, without the cultural programme Elmau would be comparable to any other high standard hotel in the region and it is this programme, and this programme alone, that makes Elmau such a unique place.

Everyone who knows about marketing (and who doesn't these days) knows that the crucial thing any company or institution is aiming for is the 'usp', the Unique Selling Point or Proposition.

This said, I would like to outline in words if not in figures the economic benefits which are after all substantial:

#### FOR THE PLACE

Though not measurable in precise figures the cultural programme is clearly one of the main attractions of Schloss Elmau and a reason for many guests to choose the hotel for a holiday. Guest questionnaires, letters from guests, reports from welcoming parties for the guests and numerous calls from potential guests demonstrate the importance of the cultural programme for their choice of where to stay. That means that the cultural programme creates overnight stays and expenditure in the restaurants, bookshop, sports facilities etc., all income for Schloss Elmau.

*Festivals are often deliberately timed for low season periods in order to attract more guests*

Festivals are often deliberately timed for low season periods in order to attract more guests. It does work, albeit not always; seasons have indeed been prolonged by festivals. A very good example is the Chamber Music Week in January which was introduced 50 years ago and is therefore the best established festival in Elmau. It is no coincidence that it takes place in the second week of January, that is immediately after the end of the Christmas/New Year holidays. This is traditionally a very low season period, to my knowledge in any holiday hotel around the world. Elmau is booked out during that week! When I started my work as Artistic Director in Elmau last September I was amazed at how many phone calls I got from people who usually come especially for this week but explicitly make their decision dependent on the specific programme. That means that they are by no means content to hear that famous musicians like Steven Isserlis and Yuri Bashmet are coming—they want to know the exact programme before making their decision. These are people who have the time and the money to take a holiday whenever and wherever they choose; and they choose Elmau because of its cultural programme.

*By introducing jazz music, political and philosophical symposia and conferences Elmau succeeds in attracting people from completely different backgrounds*

My last sentence clearly implies that we are talking mainly of retired people for the Chamber Music Week in January or of those who have enough freedom in their jobs and family situation to take a holiday whenever they want. It goes without saying that

hardly any hotel could survive with such a clientele. Nor would it be desirable. By introducing jazz music, political and philosophical symposia and conferences Elmau succeeds in attracting people from completely different backgrounds. These include young couples, especially those with young children, 'intellectuals', researchers, company executives etc. A diversification in the guest structure is vital for any hotel's success in the present and future.

Ticket sales demonstrate the attraction the programme has for people from the area. Local people as well as tourists staying in the many nearby tourist resorts attend the concerts without staying in the house. They very often frequent one of the restaurants too. Some of them travel as far as from Munich (an hour to an hour and a half's car drive away). We do sometimes make an extra effort to attract them, for example, by presenting artists who hardly ever perform in Munich but are well-known enough for people to be willing to make this trip. Elmau has therefore revenue (and sometimes substantial revenue) from ticket sales, restaurant sales etc.

People who come and visit Elmau for a concert and like the place sometimes come back for a longer stay and/or recommend the place to relatives and friends.

*Many of the political and philosophical symposia and some of the concerts and festivals are interesting enough for journalists to come and write about them. These journalists come from all over Germany and sometimes other countries*

Many of the political and philosophical symposia and some of the concerts and festivals are interesting enough for journalists to come and write about them. These journalists come from all over Germany and sometimes other countries. As an illustration I would just like to mention one very famous example: Two years ago there was a symposium on the philosopher Heidegger and the consequences of his theories for philosophy today. Researchers from Israel, Europe, Latin America and the US participated. The German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk gave a lecture on what Heidegger's theories meant for Genforschung (genetics) today, and this speech was so provocative that it started a huge discussion in all the major papers in Germany. Elmau was mentioned in probably every single article. Whenever I talk to people in Germany who haven't been to Elmau, you can bet they say, 'Oh, isn't that the place where Sloterdijk gave his famous speech?' That means that the cultural programme serves as the best Public Relations imaginable for the hotel.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> One should maybe make a calculation of what advertisements in all major German papers would have cost—and even repeat advertisements, as this was an ongoing discussion over many, many months in the German media.

#### FOR THE REGION

Although Elmau does not get any subsidies at all from the government there is an economic benefit for the region.

The cultural programme generates jobs and with that, income in two ways.

1. **DIRECTLY:** The concert office employs three persons all year round and from time to time gives students an opportunity for a stage in their development. As the hotel depends very much on the cultural programme it is probably no exaggeration to say that in the end all the hotel's jobs are at least to some extent generated by this cultural programme.

Musicians from the area are employed explicitly because they are from the area (and of musical quality) in order to give them a chance, too. We try and collaborate with local institutions <sup>7</sup> whenever possible.

2. **INDIRECTLY:** Piano tuners, page turners, interpreters, publishers, technicians etc. are regularly being employed by the concert office.

<sup>7</sup> e.g. the schools and violin makers in Mittenwald.

Taxi drivers, employees of restaurants in the area etc. certainly do not depend entirely on Elmau but Elmau does help to secure their jobs. (The transfer of musicians to and from Munich airport is a constant strain on my budget so I know what taxi drivers do earn just from this!)

Taxes are being paid on this income, which is direct income for the local and regional governments. The famous 'Umwegrentabilität' has been calculated by the Salzburg Festival among others as a result of the fact that festival managers who were tired of being reproached for spending too much state money on culture. They looked further into this matter. Research came up with a calculation based on how many tourists came to Salzburg because of the festival, how many nights they stayed, what they usually spent on tickets, restaurants, taxis, hair dressers and so on. It turned out that the 'very large' amount of money that the town and region of Salzburg and the state of Austria spend on this Festival was by no means lost. On the contrary, by calculating all the taxes paid it was shown that the festival generated income.

In the case of Elmau the amount of revenue from taxes from the government is by no means comparable to that of Salzburg but one has to keep in mind that we don't get a penny from the government.

There is a further point about economic benefit that I can only speculate on: Elmau is mentioned in nearly every tourist brochure or travel guide of the region. So it does seem to be a tourist attraction for the entire region. I would not go so far as to say that such and such number of jobs in Bavarian tourism are directly or indirectly dependent on Elmau but I think it is a (minor) issue that should be mentioned in this context, too.

## SUMMARY

### Critical factors for Elmau's success

To summarise, in my view it is by no means a matter of course that a cultural programme of a hotel becomes such a success with guests as well as with artists, in the way that Elmau has. Let me therefore try and find out what the reasons for this success could be:

#### Situation/Quietness

The combination of the extraordinary quietness of the place and music is indeed a very special one. Although many festivals take place in remote areas these days it seems that the quietness of the Elmau valley is very particular. Hardly any artist or guest who comes for the first time fails to remark on it.

*'It is a place of purification and at the same time concentration. Not only concentration of oneself, but a concentration of very many different ideas, life concepts, visions'*

This unique quietness brings music alive in a very special way. It is one of the main reasons for their coming and for their returning, sometimes over and over again. Some artists even say they regard Elmau as their 'musical home'—praise indeed! It was Yehudi Menuhin who said about Elmau in his late years 'It is a place of purification and at the same time concentration. Not only concentration of oneself, but a concentration of very many different ideas, life concepts, visions.'<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ein Ort der Reinigung und gleichzeitig des Sammelns. Nicht nur des Sich-Sammelns, sondern auch des Sammelns sehr vieler verschiedener Ideen, Lebenskonzepte, Visionen.

#### Authenticity

These days more and more tourist resorts, hotels, cruise ships etc. create a special cultural programme or festival in order to become more attractive to tourists—research and experience having shown that tourists are by no means satisfied with a good quality beach, weather, room and food. These programmes are mostly successful, confirming research and experience that tourists do expect and appreciate culture

*. . . the cultural programme is a very traditional and even natural part of the hotel and not something which has been invented quite recently as a marketing tool*

In Elmau the cultural programme has not been designed as an 'attractor' of tourists. It has developed naturally from the philosophy of the founder and the house. Therefore the cultural programme is a very traditional and even natural part of the hotel

and not something which has been invented quite recently as a marketing tool. Many guests of today have been coming to Elmau since their childhood, sometimes even their parents before them, and they know the concerts from then and expect a varied programme as part of their Elmau experience.

### **Commitment**

Although the logistics of concerts are not always easy to combine with the needs of a hotel, the entire staff supports the idea of the cultural programme. This cannot be appreciated too highly since the budget for culture, though in one sense as tight as everywhere else, is quite substantial for a privately owned house. The staff might well regard culture as a 'luxury' but since the house is still in the possession of the family, the importance of culture is expressed at the highest level, by the top management.

### **Mixture of world-class and young artists**

From the outset world-famous musicians have been performing in Elmau. Other musicians of their level are attracted by word of mouth to this day. They secure Elmau as an important place on the touring maps of musicians. This in turn makes it a very interesting place for young musicians who have been another focus in Elmau's concert series from the very beginning.

### **Change**

Not in contradiction, but in addition to tradition, many changes in the cultural programme have been introduced by the current owner, a grandson of the founder. Jazz music and political symposia seemed a revolution to some guests when introduced a few years ago but have now become an assumed part of the programme. As explained above, they help to attract different groups of guests and they keep the programme as well as the house lively and active.

*the idea persists of presenting culture for culture's sake in the first place. That means that there are no limits when it comes to experiments, for artists as well as for the concert office*

### **Non-profit orientation**

Although the cultural programme does have economic benefits today the idea persists of presenting culture for culture's sake in the first place. That means that there are no limits when it comes to experiments, for artists as well as for the concert office. An audience is there anyway, and people who come to stay as guests in Elmau are used to making discoveries—they even expect it. This applies to programmes as well as to artists. Artists who come to

Elmau do not have to give all details of their programme a year or so in advance, it is quite enough if we get the information the day before the concert (in order to announce the programme correctly!). To musicians who are used to many discussions and a lot of time-pressure regarding programmes, this is a big advantage.

*Musicians have always been coming as friends rather than as performers*

### **Family Feeling**

Musicians have always been coming as friends rather than as performers—and if they aren't friends yet on their arrival (because they have come for the first time) they usually leave as such. There is a very personal atmosphere between artists and the owner's family, artists and the concert office as well as artist and guests.

Another aspect is the fact that many artists perform not for a fee but for a holiday instead.<sup>9</sup> This is quite an important factor for many artists. Musicians like Clemens Hagen, Sabine Meyer, Roger Vignoles, Thomas Quasthoff or Sharon Kam spend their summer or Christmas holidays in Elmau and perform there, too.

<sup>9</sup> This is especially interesting for artists with young children because children can run around in the house without ever getting lost. There is always someone from the staff or from guests to take care of them if ever they lose their way or their parents. There is also a special and intensive children's programme during all holiday seasons.

*. . . dedication, authenticity and a sense of experimentation still work today in a world that is so frequently described as market orientated*

### **Conclusion**

Elmau is a special place in many respects but I feel certain that many of the above mentioned factors could apply to other places as well. If I may add a personal remark, it is a daily satisfaction for me to see how dedication, authenticity and a sense of experimentation still work today in a world that is so frequently described as market orientated. In my view Elmau proves that at the end of the day, the strong belief of a group of people in culture and its importance and the courage to have vision are the best marketing concept.



# HISTORIC SCOTLAND

GRAEME MUNRO · [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)  
Director and Chief Executive, Historic Scotland

*Graeme Munro is Director and Chief Executive of Historic Scotland, the organisation responsible for taking care of the built heritage of Scotland and for accessing its sites to local people and visitors alike. He traces the history of the organisation to medieval times and maps the remote areas and extraordinary monuments that fall within its care. A crucial part of the success of the organisation is in enabling the public to experience a sense of ownership of Scotland's built heritage and a fascination for its past, at the same time as contributing to quality of life and economic wealth at a local level. The sense of a clear identity that is evoked through historical buildings and fragments of buildings many of which are ancient, is intrinsic to Scotland's distinctiveness, a factor that Historic Scotland acknowledges and develops through its work and partnerships.*

## Introduction

**T**HIS PAPER will consider the role of Historic Scotland in conserving and presenting the built heritage in the remoter parts of Scotland and describe the cultural, social and economic benefits which flow from that involvement. This is not the description of a single project but an overview, drawing on relevant examples, of how one national institution plays an important part in the cultural, social and economic life of some of the further flung parts of the country. It follows the format suggested by the conference organisers, describing the background on Historic Scotland; the benefits of the 'project' and the factors which have led to its success.

*It can be argued that the history of central government activity in this field can be dated back to the King's masons of the Middle Ages who were responsible for the building and maintenance of the Royal castles and palaces such as those in Edinburgh, Stirling and Linlithgow*

## Historic Scotland

Historic Scotland is an Agency of the Scottish Executive and thus an integral part of central government in Scotland. It reports directly to the Deputy Minister for Sport, the Arts and Culture and through him to the First Minister. The Scottish Ministers are in turn answerable to the Scottish Parliament.

Historic Scotland has existed in its present form since 1991 when it was established as an Agency. It can be argued that the history of central government activity in this field can be dated back to the

King's masons of the Middle Ages who were responsible for the building and maintenance of the Royal castles and palaces such as those in Edinburgh, Stirling and Linlithgow. The State took over responsibility for the maintenance of Glasgow, Dunkeld and Dunblane Cathedrals after the Reformation in exchange for the revenue of their lands. In the late 18th century the Barons of Exchequer made funds available for the repair of the ruin of St Rule's Tower at St Andrews in Fife for its historical and architectural significance rather than for utilitarian purposes.

The late 19th century saw the passing of legislation to provide protection for ancient monuments and the second half of the 20th century saw broadly similar powers to protect buildings of special architectural or historic importance still in use and the introduction of a system of government funded grants for the repair of outstanding examples of such buildings. Since the late 19th century the State has taken into care many outstanding monuments and buildings deemed to be of national importance. Some of these functions were administered by UK-wide departments up until 1979, others were administered by the former Scottish Office from the outset.

In the mid-1980's the various central government powers in relation to Scotland's built heritage were grouped together for the first time in the Historic Buildings and Monuments Directorate. The Directorate was embedded in the Scottish Development Department of the Scottish Office and was run very much on traditional Civil Service lines. In 1990 it was nominated as a candidate for Agency status and this came about in 1991. In 1999 the built heritage was devolved under the Scotland Act and Historic Scotland became a part of the Scottish Executive Education Department, grouped with galleries, museums, the performing arts, architecture and sport.

*The mission statement of Historic Scotland is to 'safeguard the nation's built heritage and to promote its understanding and enjoyment'.*



*Historic Scotland's Mission Statement*

The mission statement of Historic Scotland is to 'safeguard the nation's built heritage and to promote its understanding and enjoyment'.

*Its main objectives are:*

#### **A. To protect Scotland's built heritage**

1. To give statutory protection to monuments of national importance (by scheduling) and to historic buildings of special architectural or historic interest (by listing), and to protect them through the statutory consent systems.



*Traditional thatcher at work*

2. To give financial support and advice to others to repair, manage, protect and conserve important parts of the built heritage.
3. To protect the monuments in Historic Scotland's care, together with the Palace of Holyrood House and the Royal Parks, and ensure their sound conservation and maintenance.
4. To ensure that archaeological surveys and excavations are carried out at sites threatened by natural forces or development.
5. To research issues and develop skills relating to the built heritage, and to raise the standards of conservation practice among owners, trade and professional groups.

### **B. To Present Scotland's Built Heritage to the Public**

1. To encourage visitors to properties in Historic Scotland's care and ensure that they enjoy and benefit from their visits.
2. To encourage knowledge about Scotland's built heritage.

### **C. To Manage Historic Scotland**

1. To maintain an effective and efficient organisation.
2. To continue to increase income.

Although the Agency remains within the ambit of central government it now enjoys a much greater degree of operational autonomy working within a framework document and a corporate plan agreed annually with Ministers. This has led to a decade during which the Agency has adapted a more integrated approach to built heritage issues; become more open to working in partnership with others; more involved in the community; more innovative; more focused in pursuing projects and more aware of its wider role in the cultural, social and economic life of the country.

*It is arguable that all of Scotland is a remote area. It certainly lies well outside the 'golden triangle' of London, Paris and Brussels. At the northern end of an offshore island of Europe it is far from the major European centres of population. Within the UK it has around one tenth of the population in 40% of the land mass and within Scotland itself some 80% of the population is in the central lowland belt*

It is arguable that all of Scotland is a remote area. It certainly lies well outside the 'golden triangle' of London, Paris and Brussels. At the northern end of an offshore island of Europe it is far from the major European centres of population. Within the UK it has around one tenth of the population in 40% of the land mass and within Scotland itself some 80% of the population is in the central lowland belt. For the purposes of this presentation I shall

concentrate on those parts of Scotland which lie beyond the main centres of population.

*. . . as a society we care for our ancient monuments because we value them for a variety of reasons including their aesthetic appeal; they are often beautiful and sit in a stunning landscape*



Dun Beg Broch, Isle of Skye



Rodel Church, Harris, Western Isles



Torminston Water Mill, Orkney



Clava Cairns, Inverness

### **Benefits—intrinsic and social**

Before considering some of the highly desirable but incidental, spin-off benefits of what Historic Scotland does in the remoter parts of the country, it is worth recording that there is an intrinsic case for safeguarding the built heritage and that these are paramount in terms of Historic Scotland's mission. These intrinsic arguments are closely bound up with the social benefits. In common with most other countries, as a society we care for our ancient monuments because we value them for a variety of reasons including their aesthetic appeal; they are often beautiful and sit in a stunning landscape. They also provide a connection to our distant ancestors of prehistory, to different periods in early, mediaeval or later history, to significant events in our country's history or to relatively recent times.

*In town and country alike a sense of historical continuity can strengthen the sense of social inclusion and belonging*



Corgarff Castle, Donside



Maes Howe prehistoric tomb, Orkney.  
Also contains Norse runes

Two of Scotland's leading writers of the 20th century, Lewis Grassie Gibbon and Neil Gunn (in *A Scots Quair* and *Highland River* respectively) wrote movingly of how the principal characters in these books visited archaeological sites in Scotland's remoter countryside to savour the sense of history there. This sense of place is still a draw and appeals to the imagination of many people, locals and visitors alike. In town and country alike a sense of historical continuity can strengthen the sense of social inclusion and belonging. This is healthy so long as it does not in itself become exclusive of newcomers. The historical evidence is, of course, not of static and isolated communities but of change, travel and the interchange of ideas.

*Among other events this year are performances of traditional Scottish fiddle music at Balvenie Castle, Renaissance music at Dryburgh Abbey, liturgical music at Elgin Cathedral, a barbershop quartet in Edzell Castle, Aberdeen City Brass Band at Fort George and a jazz picnic at Rothesay Castle as part of the Isle of Bute Jazz Festival*

### **Benefits—cultural**

Ancient monuments and historic buildings can provide marvellous



Event at Historic Scotland property



Balvenie Castle



Dryburgh Abbey



Elgin Cathedral



Edzell Castle



Fort George 18th C., Inverness



Rothesay Castle



Chapel, Fort George



Balnain House, Inverness



St. Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall, Orkney

settings for cultural events. Historic Scotland now runs an extensive programme of events at its properties in care, including, in 2001, a touring production of Macbeth. Among other events this year are performances of traditional Scottish fiddle music at Balvenie Castle, Renaissance music at Dryburgh Abbey, liturgical music at Elgin Cathedral, a barbershop quartet in Edzell Castle, Aberdeen City Brass Band at Fort George and a jazz picnic at Rothesay Castle as part of the Isle of Bute Jazz Festival. In addition there are many historical playlets and re-enactments at properties throughout the country. In previous years there have been concerts in the chapel at Fort George as part of the Highland Festival. Historic Scotland is also very receptive to requests from groups who wish to perform impromptu at properties in care and it is not unusual for visiting groups of students to sing or play music or stage some piece of drama. Historic Scotland properties often serve as locations for filming and we work closely with Scottish Screen, the organisation which encourages film making in Scotland.

Historic buildings not in the direct care of Historic Scotland also serve as venues for cultural events. These include many properties in the care of the National Trust for Scotland which is a major recipient of a Historic Scotland grant for the repair of its major 'great houses' under an agreement between the two organisations. St Magnus Cathedral in Orkney, owned by the local authority and maintained by them with very substantial grant assistance from Historic Scotland over many years, is the focal point of the St Magnus Festival.

*There has been a very welcome move in recent years by both the National Galleries of Scotland and the National Museums of Scotland to show some of the extensive collections outside the capital city and Historic Scotland has been an enthusiastic partner in some of the projects*



Duff House interior



Kinnaird Head Lighthouse, Fraserburgh

There has been a very welcome move in recent years by both the National Galleries of Scotland and the National Museums of Scotland to show some of the extensive collections outside the capital city and Historic Scotland has been an enthusiastic partner in some of the projects. Duff House itself is a prime example of joint working with the National Galleries, the local authority and Historic Scotland combining in a formal partnership to provide a country house gallery and cultural venue in a property in the direct care of Historic Scotland, which had hitherto been a well conserved, but empty, shell. At the other end of the country the National Galleries has established an outstation in Paxton House on the River Tweed. Historic Scotland was not an immediate partner in this scheme but we did grant aid the repair of the house.



Artefacts on display, Skara Brae Visitor Centre



Replica house, Skara Brae



Urquhart Castle



Local crafts on sale, Skara Brae Visitor Centre



Historic Scotland stone conservator at work

Just along the coast from here we took into care a few years ago Kinnaird Head lighthouse which we now maintain. It is operated as part of the Museum of National Lighthouses by a local trust and houses an important loan collection of lighthouse artefacts and memorabilia from the National Museums of Scotland.

The National Museums have lent important prehistoric artefacts for display in the Skara Brae visitor centre in Orkney, which Historic Scotland opened in 1999, and have promised to lend other items to display at the new Urquhart Castle visitor centre, which is due to open in autumn 2001. Thus we are, together, able to bring back for display at the sites where they were originally excavated, archaeological finds which up till then were only to be viewed in Edinburgh. This enriches the visitor's experience and gives an extra dimension both to the site and to the artefact.

Over the last decade, Historic Scotland has expanded its retail activity at sites in its direct care. In recent developments in Orkney and on Iona we have made strenuous efforts to source suitable local craft products for sale in our shops. These include pottery, jewellery, silver, paintings and cards. This buying policy, which we hope to roll out to other sites, helps to sustain local creative industries and has a beneficial effect, direct and indirect, on the local economy in many parts of the country.

Directly, we employ some 700 staff in all—skilled stonemasons and labourers to work on the conservation of the properties; trained stewards to welcome the public to these properties; professional art historians, archaeologists, conservators, architects and engineers; as well as managers and experts in finance, personnel, marketing and media. We employ many others indirectly through contracts, many of them placed locally for grounds maintenance and the more routine conservation tasks. We buy a whole range of other services from accommodation for travelling staff to vehicles, petrol, and consultancies. We franchise out catering at our sites where it is practical to provide it and in the rural areas this usually means a local supplier, as at Skara Brae.

*The importance of the built heritage to Scotland should not be underestimated. A British Tourist Authority survey in 1996 found that over 83% of all overseas visitors to Scotland indicated that they had visited a historic property in the course of their holiday, by far the most common of all activities*

The importance of the built heritage to Scotland should not be underestimated. A British Tourist Authority survey in 1996 found that over 83% of all overseas visitors to Scotland indicated that they had visited a historic property in the course of their holiday, by far the most common of all activities. Visiting a museum or



gallery was more than 25% behind. For all the importance attributed to them and their significance in niche markets, golf and fishing scarcely registered in this survey at 2% and 1% respectively. Within the overall tourism picture, the Scottish Tourist Board estimated in 1998 that 23% of all tourist activity took place in rural Scotland with 2.3 million visitors who spent an estimated £369 million (EURO 605,314,961).

*This would imply that around a third to a half of the tourists who come to rural Scotland visit a Historic Scotland property in the course of their holiday*

Against that background Historic Scotland can be seen to be a major player with the 70 properties which we staff and for which admission is charged accounting for around 2.8-2.9 million visitors in recent years. Of this total 1.6 million visitors are to our two biggest sites, Edinburgh and Stirling Castles. If that sub-total is deducted we have around 1.2-1.3 million visitors to sites in the rest of the country, away from the big cities. This would imply that around a third to a half of the tourists who come to rural Scotland visit a Historic Scotland property in the course of their holiday.

The spin off benefits for the rest of the rural tourist economy (hotels, restaurants, petrol stations, shops, transport etc) from the existence of Historic Scotland's widely dispersed network of sites is highly significant. Historic Scotland's comprehensive marketing and its range of season tickets encourages multiple visitors to a number of properties, helping to spread the tourist pound around the country. Most Historic Scotland sites, unlike those of other operators, are open into October and November and many are open throughout the year, helping to generate tourist interest outwith the main season, again to the benefit of the local economy in which the monuments sit. We also directly care for another 260 or so properties which are unstaffed and to which there is free access.

Historic Scotland also brings economic benefits through its activities other than operating properties in care. By providing statutory protection for the built heritage through scheduled monument procedures, Historic Scotland works to preserve the most important archaeological sites, ruined castles, churches, viaducts, bridges, Pictish and Celtic carved stones etc in the ownership of others. These in turn enhance the landscape and give it historic depth. Similarly, the listing process and our grants scheme preserve the fabric of our most historic towns and villages and important buildings in the countryside from the grand designs of William Adam and his sons through unusual buildings like the former spa at Strathpeffer to the characterful vernacular cottages and farmsteads whose regional variations give such interest and



*Mousa Broch, Shetland. Iron Age*



*Rodel Church, Harris, Western Isles*



*Pictish symbol stone, Angus*



*William Adam drawing*



*Arnol, Lewis. Traditional black house*

charm to our countryside. All this makes rural Scotland distinctive and, in the words of Michelin, worth the detour.

*A great many of the properties which we care for are in our hands precisely because they were beyond the means of private owners or even local trusts to maintain*

### Success factors

The most important factor has been that Historic Scotland, as part of central government, is a 'blue chip' organisation. A great many of the properties which we care for are in our hands precisely because they were beyond the means of private owners or even local trusts to maintain. They are deemed to be of sufficient national importance to be cared for by the State in the absence of any other solution. While overall income has grown threefold in real terms over the decade since we became an agency (and now accounts for well over a third of the Agency's total budget) virtually none of our properties makes a profit. By a combination of central government funding and self-help through income generation we have been able to maintain the portfolio of properties in care, improve the interpretation of them and the facilities for visitors, and to continue to influence the state of the rest of the built heritage through controls and grants.

Our commitment is also for the long-term. It is almost unprecedented for a property in our care to be passed to anyone else for the single reason that the cost would be prohibitive. We are therefore able to take a long-term view of the conservation and management needs of our properties. We are currently in the midst of a seven-year programme to draw up comprehensive, integrated plans for all our properties.

We have had sufficient confidence in recent years to take on new properties—Iona Abbey in the Inner Hebrides which is of European significance in terms of its role in the early Christian church; mediaeval Kisimul Castle in the Outer Hebrides and the early 19th century Dredge Suspension Bridge being three examples in the Highlands and Islands.

### *Partnership working has also been a key to success*

Partnership working has also been a key to success and I have already mentioned Duff House and Kinnaird Head. There are many other examples including the new visitor centre at Calanais on Lewis developed by a local trust with funding from the local authority, local enterprise company and the European Union with Historic Scotland continuing to maintain the standing stones, making a modest contribution to the cost of interpretation and providing authorship of a new guide book. At Kilmartin Glen in



*Iona Abbey, Inner Hebrides*



*Kisimul Castle, Barra, Western isles*



*Dredge Suspension Bridge, Great Glen*



*Calanais Visitor Centre*



*Calanais Standing Stones, Lewis*





Car Park in Kilmartin Glen, Argyll

Argyll a multi-agency initiative has led to an integrated approach to the interpretation of the remarkable neolithic and later landscape of the area, including improved access, interpretation boards and a locally based museum.

*Our role in all these, and other, partnership schemes has varied in terms of depth of involvement and financial contribution. The key is to be flexible at the planning stage but to be clear about the goals and the respective partners roles thereafter. Building and maintaining links with local communities is important in encouraging a sense of local pride and involvement in sites and buildings*



Educational visit to Historic Scotland property



Caerlaverock Castle siege re-enactment

Our role in all these, and other, partnership schemes has varied in terms of depth of involvement and financial contribution. The key is to be flexible at the planning stage but to be clear about the goals and the respective partners roles thereafter.

Building and maintaining links with local communities is important in encouraging a sense of local pride and involvement in sites and buildings. Historic Scotland operates a free weekend each year when all sites can be visited without charge. There is a direct benefit to local communities and the Agency in turn benefits from repeat visits at other times of the year, increased local knowledge and word of mouth recommendations as well as helping to fulfil the wider educational aims of its mission. Contacts with local schools through Historic Scotland's education officers and the programme of free school visits also help promote local interest and support. Historic Scotland staff often speak to local history and civic societies, Community Councils, Rotary Groups etc. The recreation of the well-documented 13th century siege of Caerlaverock Castle last year drew in participants from many local schools.

A commitment to quality is also a key success factor—in conservation; in maintenance of grounds and visitor facilities; in the way in which staff greet visitors and help them to enjoy their visit and in the standard of interpretation (which should be scholarly but accessible). A key factor in Historic Scotland's success in the built heritage 'project', in the remote areas as elsewhere, has been the energy and innovation released by the change in status in 1991 which enabled the Agency to raise extra income and respond to public expectations without dropping its standards.

A recent report *Calling the Tune* by an independent think-tank, the Policy Institute, commented: 'In any consideration of the arts and heritage in Scotland, the work of Historic Scotland deserves special mention . . . for the lessons that other organisations might

usefully learn on the question of admission charges . . . No-one could level the accusation that admission charges paid by almost three million visitors have rendered its properties elitist attractions, or that the work of Historic Scotland has in some way been vulgarised. On the contrary, it enables the Agency to undertake an increasing amount of conservation and refurbishment work which is fast gaining an international reputation for its quality and value’.

## The Problems of Rural Cultural Development



Duff House in 1993



Duff House present

<sup>1</sup> see Appendix I

## SHARED EXPERIENCES OF THE EDGE

ANNE DOUGLAS · [www.rgu.ac.uk/criad](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/criad)  
Senior Research Fellow at Gray's School of Art

CLAUDIA ZEISKE · [www.duffhouse.com](http://www.duffhouse.com) / [deveron\\_arts.com](http://deveron_arts.com)  
Development Manager of Duff House

*Claudia Zeiske is the Development Manager of Duff House and conference organiser for the On the Edge conference. She is also the co-ordinator of the Deveron Arts project, a community arts project based in Huntly, Aberdeenshire. Dr Anne Douglas is the Senior Research Fellow at Gray's School of Art and a co-organiser of the On the Edge conference. Since 1998 Zeiske and Douglas have collaborated on a number of visual arts projects that have raised questions about the development of the arts in remote rural locations, questions that led to the conference and its related research project, also entitled On the Edge<sup>1</sup>. These questions are articulated within a joint presentation that takes the form of a dialogue.*

CLAUDIA ZEISKE Seven years ago, before I moved to Scotland, Duff House was in a state of disrepair. It has since been set up to provide a major tourist attraction for this area. Our first aim and one that is really crucial for us is to increase visitor numbers. Our second aim is to provide a variety of cultural experiences. This should contain what I call, *for the moment*, artistic quality, a sort of cultural asset for the area. We try to achieve these aims by arranging a variety of programmes, in particular exhibitions. Every year we have about twelve exhibitions. These are both of a period and contemporary nature. We also arrange local exhibitions with local artists. We have a very lively lecture programme on historical issues. We also do other things. Recently for example we had a panel discussion entitled *Rural idyll or economic crisis?* that took place in April 2001 within the 'foot and mouth' crisis and coincided with the visual art exhibition project *Living the Land*. We also have concerts of various kinds to include classical concerts, jazz concerts and folk concerts. We provide opportunities for artists and crafts people and we have a very prestigious arts fellowship here at Duff House. We have provision for education, for both children and adults. We make use of our grounds through a ranger service and we have a very lively Friends of Duff House organisation which is represented here today.

We try to co-operate a great deal with other agencies in the area, for example, the Macduff Arts Centre, the Scottish Sculpture Workshop, Peacock Visual Arts, Aberdeen Art Gallery, Deveron Arts, the Museum of Scottish Lighthouses and of course with our partners the National Galleries of Scotland and Historic Scotland as well as Gray's School of Art. These are the main organisations we collaborate with and each of them has provided some of the cultural programme attached to this conference today. Our

dilemma, really is between two things, between bringing ‘bums on seats’ here, bringing people into the house on the one hand and on the other, the development of a cultural asset, providing ‘high’ culture that is ‘cutting edge’. How can we bring these together? This is a major issue that led us to the organisation of this conference.

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<sup>2</sup> This notion was first articulated by Sandy Dunbar, farmer and arts administrator, within the *Living the Land* interview series with Mary Bourne. See *Living the Land* catalogue, editors Douglas and Hawkins Gray’s School of Art, 2001.

ANNE DOUGLAS At Gray’s School of Art we have a Research Centre which focuses on the development of practice of Fine Art and Design for contemporary contexts. Within our research we have identified dilemmas that mirror those that Claudia has discussed. The pivot of these is the role of the arts within the community. In many ways the visual arts is an urban sport<sup>2</sup>, dependent upon bringing people to specific events held within a specific space, usually large and impressive architectural sites. The content of contemporary artwork is also highly experimental, resulting in some dislocation between artist and audience.

*The pivot of these is the role of the arts within the community. In many ways the visual arts is an urban sport, dependent upon bringing people to specific events held within a specific space . . .*



Gray’s School of Art, The Robert Gordon University

This urban model is challenged at Gray’s School of Art because of its location in the north east of Scotland, where there is a balance of urban and rural contexts for working in the arts. This mirrors the technological /industrial picture in which traditional industries such as agriculture and fisheries are as strong as newer urban industries such as the oil and related industries. For some time within research we have been thinking about these issues. In particular we have been rethinking the role of the artist within the community.

The role of the artist touches on a very important question that François Matarraso raised yesterday. Should we be concerned that a large sector of the population has great difficulty in accessing contemporary visual arts? That question has informed a lot of our experimentation. This is the point at which Claudia at Duff House and ourselves come together. We have evolved projects in which particular questions are framed as a partnership. The projects model within one measurable process, all the different dimensions



*The Way Stations Duff House, 1997. Matthew Dalziel and Louise Scullion commissioned by Duff House*

of that process; the fund-raising, the project co-ordination, the creativity, the making, dissemination and the experience of art as well as its evaluation. This has actually led us into further questions, more than we can possibly answer.

*The projects model within one measurable process, all the different dimensions of that process; the fund-raising, the project co-ordination, the creativity, the making, dissemination and the experience of art as well as its evaluation. This has actually led us into further questions, more than we can possibly answer*

ZEISKE I would like to show you some examples of projects that received a lot of recognition in artistic circles. One of them was a touring exhibition we commissioned with Dalziel and Scullion, two highly acclaimed international artists. It was a show called the *Way Stations* and it reflected modern architecture in a rural landscape and how this challenges our idea of rural landscape and its values. The *Way Station* had fantastic publicity. It was shown at 8 o'clock in the evening on BBC competing with *'The Bill'* and *'Eastenders'*<sup>3</sup>. It was also shown in Lille, a town of one and a half million people in France, where it attracted a large number of visitors. It was well attended in Melbourne in Australia, but had hardly any impact on visitors here.

<sup>3</sup> British Soap operas broadcast on television.



*Duff House tea room*

This state of affairs is not only true of contemporary art. We recently had a wonderful exhibition of Stuart prints from the British Museum called *Vanities and Virtues*. It is a highly acclaimed exhibition in curatorial circles, but again unfortunately our visitor numbers were down from last year where we had had another exhibition on Scottish Art.

Both of these examples, *Vanities and Virtues* and the *Way Station*, are so called 'highbrow' professional art events, but what we really need to be is *busy*. Our tearoom is busy after a popular event. This is what the whole house needs to be all the time. We know that it is possible. For example we have an annual vintage car rally that can bring up to three thousand people through the door here. We also hold a Highland Games here, that is usually very busy. So the fact that we are living in a rural location is not a good enough argument to explain away the lack of audiences for visual art exhibitions.

*. . . the dilemma is between 'lowbrow' local events, attractive at a local level, that gain very little critical acclaim, and 'highbrow' cultural events which tend to be low in visitor numbers, but attract critical attention and may in certain cases only exist as a concept*

To summarise, the dilemma is between ‘lowbrow’ local events, attractive at a local level, that gain very little critical acclaim, and ‘highbrow’ cultural events which tend to be low in visitor numbers, but attract critical attention and may in certain cases only exist as a concept.

With the *Way Station* the catalogue was completely sold out but the exhibition under attended in Scotland. So for me the question is, is this an inevitable situation or are there ways to bring the two together?

DOUGLAS With this question in mind, we collaborated on a project in 1998 called *Room with a View Duff House* (Duff House March-April 1998)<sup>4</sup>. This project was relatively small scale, and functioned as a pilot for a much larger, more ambitious visual art project called the Invisible House (Duff House 2000)<sup>5</sup>. We tried to take the three aspects of the dilemma; the aspect of contemporary arts, the aspect of heritage and the aspect of audience. We drew these into the same project concept and asked *If the Duffs lived now what kind of work would they commission?* We opened this brief to a group of artists and designers from Gray’s School, both staff and a postgraduate student, and, as a group, responded with new pieces of work. The outcomes were then placed within the historical collection of the North Drawing Room at Duff House as a kind of provocative intervention\*.

<sup>4</sup> See catalogue *Room with a View* editor A. Douglas, Artesign, Gray’s School of Art, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> See catalogue *Blue Chamber*, editor I. Irving, 2000.

\*<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/artesign>

*... a kind of provocative intervention*



*Fruit Tree, Bruce Morgan 1998*

An example of the approach is the piece *Fruit Tree* by Bruce Morgan, a postgraduate design student at Gray’s at the time. He takes the idea of the fruit bowl and overlays the notion of fruit tree, thereby developing a witty and entirely new object made with contemporary materials and craft processes, but also made with replication in mind.

What came out of this experiment was very interesting to us. It was the experience of taking a part of our own way of life, the everyday, into a heritage context and allowing that context to inform us about quite contemporary issues; issues of replication, issues of form, issues of function.

*It was the experience of taking a part of our own way of life, the everyday, into a heritage context and allowing that context to inform us about quite contemporary issues; issues of replication, issues of form, issues of function.*

The theme of ‘interiors’ and their articulation also has a currency. It is very popular, certainly in British culture. This can be seen in the plethora of programmes on television concerning home decoration and garden development. This theme provided us with



a link with the audience, who could relate to the idea through their own experience of exercising choice in their own interiors often stimulated through the programmes.  
We had a very good response locally.

*We had a very exciting opening with new sectors of the population taking an interest, the academic alongside those interested in historic properties, with local people*



Zero Willi Scherübl, May 2000



Zero Willi Scherübl, August 2000

<sup>6</sup> B&Q is an established British company who supply building materials to lay trade and professional markets.

We had a very exciting opening with new sectors of the population taking an interest, the academic alongside those interested in historic properties, with local people. We had less response nationally, a loss in as far as critical response is actually an important quality indicator for the visual arts. However, in terms of our collaboration, we had established a theme -the relationship between heritage and contemporary visual arts that acted as a catalyst to a number of new and very varied projects.

ZEISKE On this theme of heritage and contemporary arts, we were lucky enough last year to be awarded a heritage lottery fund programme. This allowed us to mount a few pilot projects. We have been able to commission two books, a writer of children's stories and a woman writer, to provide an alternative form of a guidebook for our heritage property. We have also engaged an Austrian artist, Willi Scherübl, who works normally with sunflowers. We told him that sunflowers would not work in Scotland as it is too cold here, so he investigated the Scottish Thistle. We asked him to provide us with a millennium project, reflecting the heritage of our fantastic mansion. He came up with 280 buckets from B&Q<sup>6</sup>. The configuration of the buckets reflected our horseshoe staircase and were set up in a big ZERO. The beauty of this project was, that Scherübl put a little seed of a Scottish thistle in each of the buckets and they grew over the summer. The piece changed every day. It was low cost. People liked it. Everybody could see it. They did not have to pay an entry price and it reflected on heritage and was contemporary at the same time. Most people thought that it was a fun thing to do. This, we thought, was a success.

*The piece changed every day. It was low cost. People liked it. Everybody could see it. They did not have to pay an entry price and it reflected on heritage and was contemporary at the same time*

We had also a series of other projects, for example, our then arts fellow developed a project on 'house at work' where we brought, for four days in a row, contemporary craftsmen into the house. In each room we had today's equivalent craft. One was a hairdresser,

cutting hair. The next one was a website designer. The next was a dressmaker. So people could walk around and see contemporary crafts or living crafts in this large house, itself a crafted work.

*So people could walk around and see contemporary crafts or living crafts in this large house, itself a crafted work*

I came to Scotland six years ago and I've always lived, most of my adult life anyway, in big cities, London, Berlin, Munich, a bit in Paris. Just before I came here, I lived in a very busy university town in the Netherlands. There were five cinemas less than ten minutes walk away and some twenty restaurants less than five minutes walk away. Then I came here, more by coincidence than design. I was horrified because I thought that there was no culture here! But I must admit that now I am horrified that I could ever have thought like that at the time. Being here gave me so many opportunities. I was made very welcome in this community and needed culture and realized what culture actually means. I have had to thoroughly rethink about this and I have not come to a conclusion.

One day I sat together with a few friends, and we set up a small group in Huntly, a small town some twenty miles south of Banff and the next settlement. Huntly has four thousand inhabitants, and I live there. We called the project Deveron Arts. Deveron Arts is a very small voluntary based group. We have no budget. We have no arts centre. We have no gallery, and in fact we don't want one. We realised that with it there is just more work, you have to man it and all that and you need lots of money.

*We decided **the town is the venue** itself. The way we do it is to try to match artists and performances with certain venues in the town and with certain parts of the community*

We decided the *town is the venue* itself. The way we do it is to try to match artists and performances with certain venues in the town and with certain parts of the community. We engage artists for a short period for a residency. Their brief is to structure an interaction between their skills and the Huntly community. One of them, for example, was an artist David Blyth, who was interested in taxidermy and got in touch with the local veterinary practice and with pet owners. Another one, Paul Carter, was very interested in robots and we brought him together with teenagers, who were interested in robots. He set up an installation in an old wartime pillbox just a few miles outside the town where he put a light and sound installation with stained glass entitled *Chapel Barbarossa*. One could drive past there at night. He took people out on a bus. It was beautiful and intriguing how this wartime pillbox looked with stained glass and modern technology.





Huntly Artist in residence Jonathon Claxton

We have very recently hosted an artist, Jonathon Claxton who is interested in landscape and in skylines. He asked the community, through the local press, to write their feelings about the town. People wrote letters, notes and poetry. The artist asked every shop on the square to put them in the windows. He printed the text on the skylines around the town so every window had text. When one was waiting for the bus or waiting for one's children to come out of school, there was the opportunity to read all these things about what people felt about their own town. This was really low cost. It was completely voluntary and it involved people who normally would not be so interested in contemporary visual arts.

What sort of benefits do we derive from this involvement with Deveron Arts? I am not really sure yet. In a way it is the development of a programme in which the arts become part of a way of life within the community. Hopefully people get used to seeing art around and do not find it so odd anymore. It is not arts provision in a traditional sense, but rather a responsive way of working with the artist that connects the artist with people and with those things that are important to their life, like pets, horticulture, technology or craft.

*In a way it is the development of a programme in which the arts become part of a way of life within the community*



Room with a View, Naples 1999

DOUGLAS I am going to pick up on the issue that Claudia touched on and has been touched on a number of times during the conference, the issue of interchange with partners outside Scotland. We continued the *Room with a View* theme by taking it outside the area and into Europe. We developed a responsive body of work in the inverse context from the 'Grand House' that Duff House represents. Our next *Room with a View* was sited within the practice of an architect and engineer in the middle of an area of regeneration in Naples, Italy. Our architect wanted to re-establish his practice within the original site of his family metal working business in a spectacular but relatively rundown part of Naples. In some ways our role there took the form of brainstorming, a *What happens if we...?* In line with the 'client's' ambition for the space, we proposed a new function as both office and visual art gallery for the area. This dual function has continued on successfully.



*The Annunciation of Mary Jones* Olle Anderson 1999

We then picked up again on the brief *If the Duff's lived now what kind of work would they commission?* and we revisited the theme, this time with two European collaborators. A good example of the outcome is the work of the Swedish designer, Ollie Anderson. He responded to the speculative brief by creating a narrative. He wanted to focus on the people whose story is never told in the Grand House. He created Mary Jones, the young woman who cleaned the house. Olle articulated, through objects, the kind of

tasks that Mary Jones would have done in the House, the washing up and the ironing. His response culminated in a light that doubles as an ironing board and a sink light with the crystal and porcelain, the plates and glasses acting as reflectors.

What this established for us was a clue to the way forward for the visual arts and international collaboration. Instead of exchanging artefacts from centre to centre in a predetermined exhibition, it seemed much more imaginative, more playful and actually more interesting to undertake the idea of a living project.

*Instead of exchanging artefacts from centre to centre in a predetermined exhibition, it seemed much more imaginative, more playful and actually more interesting to undertake the idea of a living project*

This would involve a group of collaborators across a European network sharing a theme or sharing a set of issues and together coming up with different kinds of output. This approach proved to be a very exciting and interesting experience and one that we would like to build on.

ZEISKE So for us the question is what have we learned from these different projects and what are the major issues.

DOUGLAS Certainly within the visual arts world there is the really difficult question of whether there really are two kinds of cultures. One is the culture of the professionalised art world and the other is the local culture that is very often unable to access and interact with that professionalised sector in any meaningful way. This may be particularly true of the visual arts, above other art forms.

ZEISKE The other questions are:

- What do we mean by artistic quality?
- How might the economic value of the arts be defined and determined in relation to a rural context?
- Is it useful/feasible to work internationally? Normally we always try to look up to our centres, we to Edinburgh, Kuhmo to Helsinki, Edinburgh to London. Maybe it would be more useful to actually collaborate much more with the other 'Banffs' around the world.
- What kind of infrastructure can best support local cultural industries? We are very interested in promoting artists and crafts people in this region and the kind of projects that could be done through networks.
- Should tourism include culture or the arts as a distilled form of culture?

I think we have carried out a few successful projects so far. The first

one, my favourite, was curated by Charles Burnett, the Chamberlain of Duff House on *golf art*. Golf is a theme that lots of people are interested in here, not only local people. It is a major theme for tourism in this area, every village has a golf course. It provided a theme that most tourists and local people are interested in. The exhibition itself combined things like memorabilia, old postcards and comic strips, salt and pepper cruets, but it also contained 18th century paintings from the National Portrait Gallery and even a little intervention by John Hunter who was our artist in residence at that time. There was something for everybody.

<sup>7</sup> See catalogue A. Douglas and Flick Hawkins, 2001.

DOUGLAS A second more recent project is the exhibition *Living the Land*, hosted by Duff House (Duff House April-June 2001<sup>7</sup>). The curators were Flick Hawkins, an independent arts administrator from Ullapool and myself. We worked with Claudia to select visual artists who choose to live and work in remote locations. Initially this started out as a very simple idea of showcasing the best of artists in the North East as part of this conference. We really wanted to go deeper than that and to try to understand again where the visual artist is placed culturally within remote rural locations. We set up a series of interviews. We asked the artists to identify somebody from within their community through whom we could explore their perceptions of the particular artist and their work. Initially we identified this person as an *audience member*. We struggled with this term and replaced it with *viewer*. Gradually we also came to use the term *collaborator* and then realised that for different artists different terms were appropriate.

The transcripts of these interviews are available within the exhibition and very small bite sized selections are incorporated in the catalogue. They have given us an enormous amount of interesting material that does start to articulate very clearly the variety of roles in which a visual artist might work in relationship to a local rural community. We still have to make sense of these interviews and hopefully we are going to put them together within a CD-ROM aimed at young people as a means of interesting them in the visual arts, particularly when the exhibition tours the so called remote areas in which many of the exhibiting artists live and create centres of activity.

ZEISKE Another project that for us was a real highlight was called *The Secret House* (Duff House November 2000). That again came out of the programme last year on arts and heritage interpretation. *The Secret House* was a piece of musical theatre, in which the audience would not sit down but would also walk around the whole house. In the middle the focal point was the Carnix, a pictish war instrument. The piece, specially created for Duff House, brought together an international group including ballet dancers, video artists, musicians and visual artists. In every room



*The Secret House, 2000*

something different happened; puppeteers, ballet dancing and different forms of video and music. Now why was it for us a success? First of all it was a complete sell-out on a November evening for four days in a row. Secondly we got people from all audiences; school children, local people, but also music cognoscenti who came up from Edinburgh. It was an international team of artists. It heavily involved Scottish heritage through the Carnix, which was found in Deskford, not far away from here. It allowed people to do something different, to experience a house through music, through walking around the house rather than sitting and watching passively.

*It allowed people to do something different, to experience a house through music, through walking around the house rather than sitting and watching passively*

It was reflective of our region and it was accessible and highly innovative at the same time. It was also well funded and there was a lot of interest from various bodies. So it basically hit all the key points that we are striving towards; audience development, accessibility, economic viability, international working, the traditional versus contemporary, cross artistic media and fostering creative industry in our area and something that could be developed from it into, hopefully cultural tourism too.

DOUGLAS In some ways we have moved from a series of frustrations and dilemmas of different kinds to a situation where these frustrations have been embraced as shared creative problems.

*As collaborating institutions we address different agendas, but this difference can be extremely useful in determining an approach*

As collaborating institutions we address different agendas, but this difference can be extremely useful in determining an approach. We have gradually informed our thinking and creativity by relating it to other projects elsewhere. The methods of evaluating what we do have also become more formal to the point that about six months ago we packed our questions into a funding bid to the Arts and Humanities Board. This is a national research funding body for the performing and visual arts and for the humanities. We heard about a week ago our bid had been successful. This funding provides us with financial support for three years, approximately £304,000 (EURO 498,688), to continue to develop the network that we have established not just with Claudia, but with other organisations within the region. These include the Scottish Sculpture Workshop, Duff House, Deveron Arts, the Museum of Scottish Lighthouses at Fraserburgh and a partnership with Shetland College and Shetland

Library. The network also includes individuals, such as Gokay Deveci, who is an architect specialising in affordable rural housing and the house as product.

We have set up a strategy by which we can start to develop new projects, as a community with different roles within the process—as both makers and administrators, in collaboration with the local authority and the community.

*All these roles come round the same table and are instrumental in initiating new projects that we then evaluate as a community of shapers*

All these roles come round the same table and are instrumental in initiating new projects that we then evaluate *as a community of shapers*. We also hope that our activity will embrace a European network. It is an important development for the region and for the development of thinking in and around the issues of the arts in remote and rural areas.

## *Solutions in current practice*

## LA TOURETTE, a National Heritage Priory built by Le Corbusier

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Director of the Cultural Centre in Couvent La Tourette

*Olivier Noël Du Payrat is the Director of the Cultural Centre in Couvent La Tourette, a priory at Eveux near Lyon, France designed by Le Corbusier. La Tourette is a member of the European network of Cultural Encounter Centres and Historical Monuments.<sup>1</sup> Du Payrat discusses La Tourette as an example of the philosophy and practice of this network, highlighting the value of such centres in cultural terms as a mechanism for bringing together the arts with other disciplines, including philosophy, architecture, history and contemporary culture. The notion of 'encountering' culture as an experience is developed in a number of ways at La Tourette ranging from guided tours to residential seminars.*

<sup>1</sup> Réseau Européen des Centres Culturels/ Monuments Historiques or Cultural Encounter Centres are a European network of cultural centres sited within historical monuments of architectural interest that develop cultural projects of a contemporary nature on a permanent basis and through a professional team. (see also Charter and map at end of paper)

### Background



External view of Couvent La Tourette

AS AN URBAN RELIGIOUS ORDER, the Dominicans have tried from the beginning to align themselves to cities and modern life. Before the Second World War in the South-East of France, their main study priory was however in the countryside, in the Alps, near the remote town of Chambéry. The students did not necessarily require to be in towns to focus on theology, but proximity to universities and large libraries became an increasing need as the years passed.

In 1943 when the Dominicans had the opportunity to buy an estate comprising a castle and a farm that was closer to Lyon, they decided to settle near L'Arbresle, 25 km NW from France's third largest city. La Tourette is thus in a remote area, on a hill above the small village of Eveux, but also quite close to Lyon, a town of one-million inhabitants.

*Reflecting close connections between Dominicans and the arts, they asked the well-known architect of the time to design their priory at La Tourette. Le Corbusier was to work on the project from 1953 to 1960 at the same time as planning and building Chandigarh in India*

The estate of La Tourette was selected in the 1950's with a view to building a brand-new Dominican priory for study, away from the badly damaged castle of the estate. Reflecting close connections between Dominicans and the arts, they asked the well-known architect of the time to design their priory at La Tourette. Le Corbusier was to work on the project from 1953 to 1960 at the same time as planning and building Chandigarh in India.



*Detail of Couvent La Tourette*

La Tourette Priory functioned as a place of study for around 80 young Dominicans and teachers for 10 years, from 1960 until 1970. Very quickly however the Priory revealed itself to be too large for two reasons. Firstly, the Vatican II Council in Rome in the mid-sixties that had gathered together all the Catholic Bishops with the Pope, had radically changed Catholic liturgy and its associated way of life. The need for such a large priory was no longer obvious. Secondly, the evolution in France of modern society, linked with the May '68 riots, provoked a crisis in the Catholic church, and the number of young people keen to become a priest decreased dramatically.

In 1970, the question was then raised in La Tourette as to whether only fifteen Dominicans should remain in the Priory or not. They decided to do so, as the building had been highly praised for its modern architecture. Its distinct place as an historic monument within French National Heritage from 1979 onwards, certainly confirmed the building's architectural interest and enabled it to be protected by the French State even though it remained, and still remains today, a private property owned by the Dominicans. With more than sixty individual cells at its disposal, it opened the doors to visitors, largely through the organization of seminars in the fields of the humanities and the social sciences, philosophy, theology etc.

This worked for thirty years, up until now. The visitor profile reflects the fact that La Tourette was leaning towards a focus in architecture through the interest of enthusiasts, students and a specialized audience from all over the world. Seminars and related activities were linked to the themes of architecture and heritage.

*. . . the priory received almost 15,000 visitors and overnight guests in the year 2000*

As an example, the priory received almost 15,000 visitors and overnight guests in the year 2000. The latter stayed at least 24 hours and were mostly students of architecture. We have organized up to 25 seminars at weekends on subjects dealing with the humanities, the arts and architecture.



*Interior view of Couvent La Tourette*

The Priory is lucky to have very easy access from Lyon by car (40 minutes) and a regional railway line with regular trains everyday. The only points of conflict from that point of view are the distance between the Priory and the station, some 2 km, and changes in the French national railway timetable, not to mention the strikes!

*La Tourette is a project with three dimensions to it, comprising*

1. Contemporary architecture and heritage
2. The Arts
3. The Humanities (social and human sciences, philosophy, etc.)

*Our goal is to revisit the 'genuine' study Priory of La Tourette from an architectural and no longer a theological point of view through, for instance, workshops*

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

Logically, architecture is the main basis of our project. Our goal is to revisit the 'genuine' study Priory of La Tourette from an architectural and no longer a theological point of view through, for instance, workshops. Our main concern currently is however to succeed in restoring the place, since we are newcomers in the network of Cultural Encounter Centres (CECs)<sup>2</sup>. That is to say the Priory is the first priority (6500 square meters), ideally followed by its relationship to the location (70 hectares), demonstrating the point that architecture cannot be thought about outwith its context.

*As regards contemporary architecture and heritage, La Tourette*

- organizes guided tours of the site.  
(These can even sometimes be conducted by a Dominican resident, showing the Priory's spiritual way of life alongside its architectural interest – possibly a priest that has been living in the Priory from the very beginning and attended meetings with Le Corbusier himself).
- Provides for guests at full board who are put up in individual cells designed by le Corbusier.  
(Meals take place with the Dominicans in the Priory's refectory, enabling visitors to experience the place by living there over and above visiting it).
- organizes seminars, meetings, exhibitions, and special events
- arranges architecture workshops with schools & universities

In the arts, our main activities are based on residencies. Residents are asked to communicate and meet with the audience e.g. students and scholars. We present to visitors the outcomes of the work of the artists through temporary exhibitions, performances etc.

*In the arts and humanities, our philosophy is to develop cross disciplinary approaches*

In the arts and humanities, our philosophy is to develop cross disciplinary approaches. Our artist in residence schemes combine an intellectual approach with practice.

*Our goal is to encourage visitors to discover and, even better, experience modern architecture through the Priory*

The artists participate, with researchers and University teachers in the humanities and social sciences, in our seminars thus





Interior view 2 of Couvent La Tourette

contributing to the multidisciplinary nature of the overall project of La Tourette. Of course, we also aim to develop the specific expertise of the Dominicans in the field of humanities, resulting in some 15 to 20 seminars on weekends every year.

Our goal is to encourage visitors to discover and, even better, experience modern architecture through the Priory. The work here, as in other CECS, is focused by the long term. The audience do not necessarily reach our places easily, nor should they leave easily! Our activities aim not only to promote discovery but also creativity and production through the residencies and the work that occurs during a stay.

A common interest to all CECS resides in the fact that they specialize in one particular aspect of the arts, connected to the place that is being revitalised. Over and above this, they usually open up other activities so that cross-cultural exchanges can occur. This explains the great variety of activity within our network in Europe and France, as far as the arts are concerned.

*The Cultural Encounter Centres . . . are independent 'modern monasteries', laboratories that take heritage, usually considered a liability, and transform it into an asset and a tool for the future*

### **The Cultural Encounter Centres : historical background & sites**

The Cultural Encounter Centres are places where people can meet together, visit, stay, be productive intellectually and artistically. They are independent 'modern monasteries', laboratories that take heritage, usually considered a liability, and transform it into an asset and a tool for the future.

CECS are 'different places' gathered around an 'unusual idea', far from traditional institutions. They are all located in historic monuments and sited outside cities, usually in remote areas.

CECS began joining forces in France in the 1970s. The concept then went European wide, and the banner is today being carried by some forty places across Europe, still with a strong position in France.<sup>3</sup>



Map of European network of Cultural Encounter Centres

<sup>3</sup> ibid

*A Cultural Encounter Centre is thus a contemporary, intellectual, artistic project for an historical monument*

A Cultural Encounter Centre is thus a contemporary, intellectual, artistic project for an historical monument. On the one hand, this project that is simultaneously an intellectual resource as well as an unconventional artistic resource, is required to be protected and housed by an historical monument. On the other, the historical monument is required to be restored, saved. What CECS are dealing with is therefore a living interaction between two orders of reality,

a complex, living relationship that comes into being. The final aim is to ensure the revival of the monuments through the network of Centres.

*The monument is not just a roof with four walls. It is a space that has a specific and elaborate meaning. It is an architectural site that is by no means neutral. It is also a place with a memory. This place has had an intellectual and social reason for existing, which can—and should—still tell stories for today's visitors and guests*

The monument is not just a roof with four walls. It is a space that has a specific and elaborate meaning. It is an architectural site that is by no means neutral. It is also a place with a memory. This place has had an intellectual and social reason for existing, which can—and should—still tell stories for today's visitors and guests.

All of these Centres have a common Charter, that expresses their philosophy of action. They are an empirical experiment, collectively built in Europe with a long-term focus.

### **The Philosophy of the Cultural Encounter Centres**

Cultural Encounter Centres develop contemporary projects that restore the monument, and restore it in all of its facets. A project restores the enclosed and covered areas, the walls and the roof. It restores the architecture, the quality and beauty of the spaces. It restores and rebuilds the meaning of the place, both its memory and the significance that it can have for us today.

The monument has of course considerable say in how the contemporary project develops. The monument should favour the contemporary project and allow it to grow and thrive. Our aim is to make something that we need today, away from an over institutionalised approach.

It is the project that carries out the restoration: it adapts the monument to its needs, incorporating the constraints applied to it by the monument. For this reason, the project must not develop too quickly: the restoration should take place at the same pace as the growth of the project so that they can adapt to each other and function symbiotically.

*In order to create a true laboratory for artistic creation and intellectual research, the laboratory must be able to generate a minimum volume of activity*

### **The scale and funding of Cultural Encounter Centres**

A Cultural Encounter Centre does not work if it is too small. In order to create a true laboratory for artistic creation and intellectual research, the laboratory must be able to generate a

minimum volume of activity, which in turn will enable it to gather sufficient intellectual potential.

To give an idea of the potential size of a CEC, in France the largest of our centres runs a budget of EURO 6,000,000 (approximately £3.7 million) with a permanent staff of fifty people. The smallest has a budget of EURO 800,000 (approximately £480,000) and a staff of ten people. The latter figure seems to be the minimum critical mass needed to carry out the numerous and varying tasks of the CEC efficiently and properly. La Tourette is at present among the smallest of the French centres—but some are still smaller in the European network.

Practices obviously differ a great deal from one Centre to the other, since both the areas of the arts we deal with and the monuments we take care of are very different from one centre to the other (e.g. from an abbey dating back to the Middle Ages that focuses on medieval music, poetry and dance, like Royaumont, to a modern priory whose project basis is contemporary architecture, like La Tourette).

As far as funding is concerned, in relationship to this common idea of reusing a historical monument for research and contemporary creativity, Europe offers an extraordinarily wide range of systems and states of financial stability, from totally private institutions (e.g. in Portugal) all the way up to public organizations (e.g. in Finland). Naturally, it is somewhere in between these two extremes that we find the most satisfactory states of financial stability.

*It must work with the local inhabitants while still bringing in people from far away so that the two origins intertwine*

The contemporary project, developed in relationship to a specific historical site, must dig its roots deep into the surrounding territory. It is not an extraterrestrial entity. It must work with the local inhabitants while still bringing in people from far away so that the two origins intertwine. In this manner, the projects become an important intellectual and economic centre for the region. It is a cultural undertaking that helps to promote regional development.

Simplifying things down to a single management team is the only possible guarantee of coherence for the various professions that carry out a variety of tasks within a CEC. For each of these professions we strive to bring in adequate professional expertise. All are placed under the authority of the same general management and form the building blocks of an overall economic, intellectual and artistic project. Setting up a professional team therefore takes into account the common spirit that brings all of these different specialities together.

### **The benefits**

*The main cultural benefits of CECs are as follows :*

- the variety of monuments and artistic fields they gather together
- the thoughtful strategy that revitalizes not only Heritage sites but also their 'spirit', their genius loci i.e. far from opening a museum site and waiting for the visitors to come, the Centres create a dynamic that gets people to come, discover and, better, have an experience by living in the sites and participating in cultural, artistic, intellectual and research activities

*the ability to restore National Heritage sites in such a way that they are not only saved under a preservation and conservation order, but they also undergo a 'revival'*

- the 'encounter' concept, of getting people to debate on the spot with visitors i.e. a consequence of bringing closer (if not together) specialized audiences (artists, researchers, teachers, etc.) and newcomers (the ordinary visitors, tourists, foreigners, etc.)
- the ability to restore National Heritage sites in such a way that they are not only saved under a preservation and conservation order, but they also undergo a 'revival'

*Among the social and economic benefits, one can say that CECs:*

- bring a dynamic to remote areas through sites that attract a large number of visitors and by doing their best to encourage them to stay for more than a few hours through participation in cultural activities
- develop cultural tourism i.e. high added-value potential in the areas
- favour employment, directly through CECs' professional teams, and indirectly through the activity they enhance in the region
- bring management values to the running of local cultural affairs —CECs function as cultural 'firms' or 'companies'
- help to network the CECs at national, European and even better, global scale, enhancing the knowledge of the site far away from its roots

### **Some reasons for success**

*Let me here just raise a few points that undoubtedly condition the success of CECs:*

- Cultural 'faith': we have to believe firmly in what we do and almost identify this with the monument and its project

*Time is also an important issue for the project to develop at an adequate pace, bearing in mind that Heritage timescales are normally counted in centuries*

- The site's power and spirit (in which conviviality usually plays a part) are obviously prerequisites for successful projects
- Time is also an important issue for the project to develop at an adequate pace, bearing in mind that Heritage timescales are normally counted in centuries
- The duration of the work and activities carried out is the other side of the time issue. This means working with quality not quantity
- The 'incarnation' of the project through a single management that almost 'embodies' at least the project, if not also the monument
- The network of qualifications and resource-personnel motivated by the project and the site
- Cultural management run on a programme that is efficient and sustainable. (Commercial activities are not an end in themselves but do contribute to a success that is of public interest. They are carried out as a complement to the project, improving its influence in the surrounding region as well as providing greater financial stability and additional autonomy)
- The diversity and the openness of the overall scheme of CECS (see Charter)
- The clarity and simplicity of the criteria
- Mixed sources of funding combining private initiatives, project autonomy and public funding
- An appropriate mix between culture and nature, taking into account the asset of the countryside and the landscape around sites in remote areas

RESEAU EUROPEEN des CENTRES CULTURELS / MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES  
EUROPEAN NETWORK of CULTURAL CENTRES / HISTORIC MONUMENTS

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## **EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL\* CHARTER**

\* All modifications made at the Grand-Hornu are in italics.

Charter for a European Network (Dublin, 1991)

*modified at the Grand-Hornu (2000)*

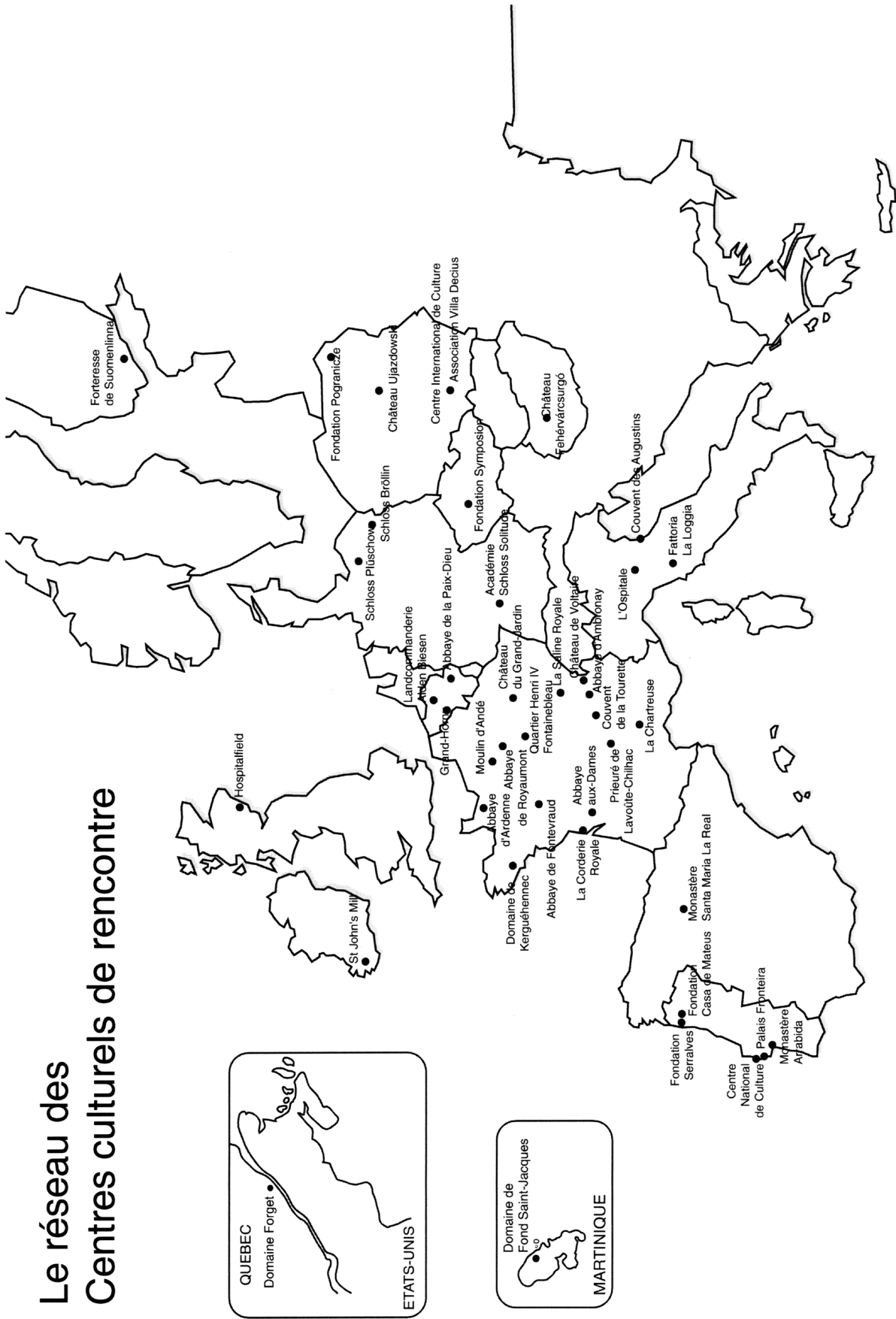
The network members must occupy a historic site (monument, building, quarter, garden, site,...), thus contributing to the protection of its identity.

This historic site must serve as the base for a contemporary cultural project conducted by a professional team on a permanent basis. This contemporary cultural project helps to define, today, the identity of the site.

This contemporary cultural project, different from the initial function of the site, must take into account the historical nature of the site.

The activities carried out by network members must have a European or even an international scope.

# Le réseau des Centres culturels de rencontre



# TAIGH CHEARSABHAGH

## Museum and Arts Centre

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Director of The Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum And Arts Centre

*Fiona Pearson is one of the directors of the Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum and Arts Centre sited in North Uist in the Western Isles. Its remoteness defines a role for Taigh Chearsabhagh that is multifunctional, a rich resource with which to structure the experience of art for both professional artists and community. It has a particular focus on education through and in the arts with involvement from both the professional and voluntary sectors. The story of its success is revealed as much through people and their participation in the process as through the Centre's strategic location and thoughtful organisation.*

### Background History



**T**AIGH CHEARSABHAGH Museum and Art Centre is very literally on the edge. It stands very close to the water's edge of the small bay, in the township of Lochmaddy, on the island of North Uist in the Western Isles. The dramatic twelve foot tidal surge and the forceful sea conditions are a constant reminder of the sense of place, which has always underpinned the philosophy of the building. However its role in the development of arts and heritage within the Uists has been central.



In 1993, there was no provision for arts activities on the Uists. There was also no permanent centre for the North Uist Historical Society to house and display their impressive collection of archival photographs. The Uist Art Association had been growing in strength, and agreed to join forces with the Historical Society to create a Museum and Art Centre. This initial agreement to embark on a joint venture was a brave one, as the two groups are quite distinct and there is still very little overlap in membership. The two groups have been able to retain their autonomy under the umbrella of Taigh Chearsabhagh.

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A derelict building in Lochmaddy was identified as an ideal location due to its proximity to the main ferry terminal. A 'listed' three-storey building, it belongs to the North Uist Estate. In 1993 it was leased by the newly formed Taigh Chearsabhagh Trust (Company Limited by guarantee with Charitable Status) on a 75 year lease at a rental of £500 (EURO 820) a year. The building was restored and extended during 1994 and opened to the public in March 1995. The initial project cost £27,000 (EURO 44,291) and was funded through LEADER 1 Western Isles Enterprise, The Foundation for the Sports and Arts and the Western Isles Island Council (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar). Private fundraising included a *Sponser a Tile* scheme, whereby the walls of the café were decorated with hand painted tiles each bearing the name or message chosen by the sponsor. This was a popular and attractive feature.

Over the last few years since the opening of Taigh Chearsabhagh and the Uist Outdoor Centre, Lochmaddy has been transformed from a quiet backwater to a busy social and cultural centre. The Uist Boat Club uses the adjoining foreshore close to Taigh Chearsabhagh for dinghy sailing and racing and an annual *Boat Fest* event. Loch nam Madadh has been designated a Marine Special Area of Conservation and there are plans for a new marine centre. The Loch nam Madadh Marine Project has won a national award for excellence in planning.

In 1997 it was agreed that an extension was required to develop the studio and research spaces. The high visitor numbers, which by 1997 were 23,000, and an expanding range of activities including poetry and music, called for more space. The very popular café, run by a Lochmaddy family, was overflowing. In January 2001, Tessa Jackson, Director of the Scottish Arts Council, opened the extension and it is now an airy inviting interior offering wonderful open views of the bay beside it.

### Location

The immediate catchment area is the islands of North Uist, Benbecula and South Uist, which are joined together by causeways and have a population of about 6,000 people. The maximum drive time from the furthest point of South Uist is about 1 hour 20 minutes. There is now a regular bus service within the islands. The wider catchment area is the whole of the Western Isles. The islands of Lewis and Harris are now linked to North Uist by Caledonian MacBrayne's vehicular ferry service (journey time 40 minutes). Lochmaddy is the ferry terminal for the Caledonian MacBrayne service to Skye. Since the construction of the Skye Bridge this has become a direct link from Uist to the mainland. People travel through Lochmaddy, not only to board the ferry, but also to drop off or collect friends and relatives. Visitor numbers to the islands

are about 30,000 per year (Macpherson Research, Western Isles Visitor Survey 1999). Most are here to enjoy the special environment and culture of the islands.

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### Philosophy

#### MISSION STATEMENT:

- To generate enjoyment, interest and activity in the arts and heritage.
- To strive for quality and innovation
- To provide a meeting place for people and ideas.



Taigh Chearsabhagh was planned to answer specific needs in the community. The collaboration between the Uist Art Association and the North Uist Historical Society is an important element of our outlook, arts and heritage combine to celebrate the distinctive environment of the islands. Taigh Chearsabhagh provides a focus, a meeting place; it is very much rooted in the community. Through all the planning there is an aim to offer an exciting, challenging programme, but one that will remain relevant to the people of Uist. Making the arts accessible has underpinned all the planning. Creative projects, which stimulate involvement in and interpretation of the arts at all levels, are vital. Education in the arts and education through the arts are both important.

*Taigh Chearsabhagh has moved into the combined arts field quite naturally, through the enthusiasm of local practitioners*

### Practice



The Uist Art Association plans and funds the programme of arts activities. The large committee is divided into small working parties, each responsible for an element of the programme. Parallel to the programme of exhibitions, talks, events and workshops, there is a well planned education programme for young people implemented by the Education Officer. She works very closely with other Community groups such as the Youth Clubs and Fèisean. Taigh Chearsabhagh has moved into the combined arts field quite naturally, through the enthusiasm of local practitioners. There is currently a poet in residence for three months and plans are being made to encourage a young person's music club. Due to the geography of the islands we pay particular attention to providing outreach activities. Art classes are run in South Uist and Eriskay, as

*A thematic approach is used in planning, giving the projects a structure*



*Reflections, Colin Mackenzie (2000)*



*Sanctuary, Roddy Mathieson (2000)*



*The Mosaic Mackerel, Rosalind Wates (1994)*



*Taigh Chearsabgh has always worked in partnership with other organizations, both statutory and voluntary*

well as the offshore island of Berneray, North Uist.

A thematic approach is used in planning, giving the projects a structure. In 2001 it is 'Once Upon a Time', considering the impact of stories and legends and the myths on the island. It opened with a celebration of St Kilda through the work of Elizabeth Ogilvie and Will Maclean, complemented by the poetry of Douglas Dunn and music by the Scottish Flute Trio. The project examines the powerful presence of those islands in Uist mythology.

We are exploring new approaches and introducing new art forms through ambitious community projects. The *Road Ends* project invited small, scattered townships to work with an artist to place an environmental sculpture in their area to celebrate their history and culture. There are now four completed pieces, as well as two commissioned works by Chris Drury and Rosalind Wates. Another example of the process of involving people is the Millennium film project *Passing Places* celebrating life in the Western Isles. Over 100 people took part in the filming, with music workshops creating the sound track. It will be screened island-wide through the Screen Machine (the Highlands and Islands mobile cinema) and promises to give a new and fresh interpretation of island life as seen through the eyes of its inhabitants. All these projects offer innovation and excellence, while at the same time really involving people.

The North Uist Historical Society researches and mounts an annual exhibition in the museum area. This is thematic, ranging from displays on archeology to the history of transport. They continue to add to the astounding collection of almost 3,000 archival photographs. These together with the 200 taped recordings can be used in the audiovisual research room. The Legend Trail is a combined project that uses the knowledge of the Historical Society members and the skills of a multimedia artist.

## Education

Taigh Chearsabgh has always worked in partnership with other organizations, both statutory and voluntary.

It is currently engaged in an innovative and successful partnership with Lewis Castle College. Through the recently established Colaisde Bheinn na Faoghla—Lewis Castle College Benbecula Centre, a one year full time Further Education Diploma in Art and Design is offered at Taigh Chearsabgh.



A new studio space has added to the excellent facilities and 10 students per year have a varied and challenging programme of arts. It is open access, allowing students to use it as a stepping stone to Higher Education. However for those who cannot or do not wish to leave the islands, it offers opportunities to gain skills and work with others in a lively environment. The Diploma won a national award for curriculum development from the Scottish Further Education Unit in recognition of its strong community links. A Higher National Certificate is now being planned for September 2001. It is planned to market this nationally to encourage students to come to the Uists to take advantage of the particularly stimulating physical environment. The success of the Diploma has led to a Diploma in Language and Music also being offered in the Uists by Lewis Castle College, attracting students interested in other aspects of the island culture.

*Taigh Chearsabhair has an active role to play in promoting Gaelic, and all interpretative materials are bilingual*

The Gaelic language links the islands' past with the present and holds a prominent place in everyday life on the Uists. A recent story telling event held entirely in Gaelic successfully encouraged people to take part. Live interpretation in Gaelic by the Historical Society is being planned. The archival resource of photographs will stimulate memories and discussion. Taigh Chearsabhair has an active role to play in promoting Gaelic, and all interpretative materials are bilingual.

*The Further and Higher Education courses are unusual in their close links within a community arts centre. They too are enabling, allowing many people to 'do something for myself'*



Young people have so many chances now to enjoy arts activities. They range from photography to dance, from poetry to multi-media and this means that many young people can participate. The Further and Higher Education courses are unusual in their close links within a community arts centre. They too are enabling, allowing many people to 'do something for myself'.

### **Benefits**

Taigh Chearsabhair provides a place to meet. It is the focus through which the arts and heritage can celebrate the distinctive culture of the islands. There is a definite pride in place and it remains very popular with local residents. A social audit conducted in 1999 recorded that 96% of people from North Uist had visited Taigh Chearsabhair. The café provides an opportunity for meeting and relaxing with friends—very important for a community of

small pockets of widely scattered townships. For visitors the gallery and museum offer opportunities to see work by both local and visiting artists. The shop displays local crafts and the print bin allows for sales of resident artists' work

*Involving people in creative work, whether looking at it or making it, brings people together and increases confidence*

The practical arts workshops provide an introduction to a wide range of media and skills. They are inexpensive and in most cases need no prior experience. Skills are acquired and shared. As well as looking at what the island has, Taigh Chearsabhagh reaches out to new artists to work and exhibit. This benefits the residents in introducing challenging art forms. It also allows national and international artists to come and work here through residencies and exchanges.

Involving people in creative work, whether looking at it or making it, brings people together and increases confidence. Practical outcomes such as craft work and print sales are worthwhile.

### **Economic**

There are currently four full time jobs at Taigh Chearsabhagh with a number of artists employed on a part time basis. The centre has a busy retail area particularly strong in local history books and Scottish traditional music. It also provides marketing opportunities. The café is leased to a local family, creating another two jobs.

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The spin-offs within Lochmaddy have been the creation of a vibrant local development group (Ceum air Adhart). They have achieved much; a children's play area, a brand new Village Hall and improvements to the fishing pier.

North Uist is a remote rural area with a fragile economy combined with a landscape, wildlife and marine environment of international importance. The unique crofting agriculture, the way of life and the Gaelic language are inextricably linked to the

sustainability of the environment. By creating employment and educational opportunities Taigh Chearsabhagh has been a key factor in improving the quality of life in North Uist.

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### **Reasons for success**

It was clear from the first days of planning that there was a need for 'place' to be a home for the arts and the heritage. Taigh Chearsabhagh met that need and it has remained 'in touch' with the people of Uist. The joint membership of the two associations is about 450, representing all sectors of the community. It is crucially important to deliver a balanced programme, offering innovation while still making activities accessible. This is achieved by very thorough forward planning. We plan programmes where projects, exhibitions, workshops and events enrich each other and offer a wide range of activities. An exhibition of the work of Jacki Parry's beautiful minimal 3D paper works will be complemented by adult papermaking workshops and a talk by the artist. The exhibition will inspire schools' visits through a paper maché workshop.

The importance of interpretation is recognized and for 1997-9 was implemented by our *Arts for All* post holder. This post, funded by the Scottish Arts Council through the Access and Participation Lottery fund, proved very successful in extending the range of work we did both at Taigh Chearsabhagh and throughout the islands. There was so much to do that two posts have now replaced it. The Education Officer implements the ambitious education programme, which includes a residential summer school with a rich mix of music, dance and performance. The Arts Officer will organise exhibitions, workshops and talks.

*simply to host exhibitions and offer workshops is not enough*

The Uist Art Association Committee has grown to 15 members and new working parties have been set up to support our aims. Currently we are examining new ways by which we can ensure the greatest possible benefit for both artists and audiences, simply to host exhibitions and offer workshops is not enough. Every attempt is made to reach people who may not have enjoyed the art previously. This is a challenge both by the geography —Who wants to turn out on a wild winter's night of gales to make a long dark drive?—and historically arts activities do not feature in a crofter's life! However we have met that challenge many times. By gradually extending our programme to include story telling, poetry and

music we attract more people to the building. We offer workshops in other venues, to avoid long travel times. The Arts Officer goes out to groups, over 60's, Women's Day, and the Grimsay Boat Day where people paint, try out stained glass and make paper from seaweed.

Taigh Chearsabhair has always worked in collaboration with other groups. This means we can offer a service within the community and can be valued for that contribution, while enriching our own programme. The lantern parade to mark the opening of the new Lochmaddy hall was part of a successful *Festival of Light* delivered in partnership with Ceum air Adhart.

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The involvement and dedication of the staff and volunteers plays a huge part in the success of the service we can offer. We are learning how to use people's skills and enthusiasm. The forming of small working parties within the committee has meant that people know they are making a real contribution, yet the work is divided and shared. The organization within the building is good and the spacious office and excellent IT provision make it a pleasant and welcoming place to work.

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The location in Lochmaddy is ideal and the islands themselves attract artists and crafts people. I think it very important in our development that we have been supported by leading artists, their work is inspirational and continues to contribute to our success. Chris Drury's *Hut of Shadows* is an example of how an artist's work can become a source of pride and inspiration. As well as winning the Scottish Environmental award *Nature's Prize* in 1997, it is a much loved and much visited local attraction.

*Marketing what we do is a priority*

As a tourist attraction, the building itself is a real asset. The renovations have made a really inviting and comfortable place to be in. There is always plenty to do and see and we realize the importance of clear signage. Menu sheets on the café table will tell the visitor what is currently showing in the building and we monitor the visitor experience through a comment book.

Marketing what we do is a priority and we are pleased that the yearly newsletter has been successful.

*The potent mix of arts, heritage, language and education will open up new possibilities.*

### **Conclusion**

Taigh Chearsabhair thrives because it is needed and welcomed by the people of the Uists. It is admired and used by visitors. It continues to aim for excellence, while providing a real service to the local community. It will grow and develop, seeking out new collaborations. In 2002 we are hoping to host residencies from Scandinavia and India. The potent mix of arts, heritage, language and education will open up new possibilities.



# KULTURHØST / CULTURAL HARVEST

a partnership between culture and tourism  
aiming at profiling the region of  
Storstrøm, Denmark

KARIN MELBYE · [www.turismesydd.dk](http://www.turismesydd.dk)  
Project Leader for Kulturhøst or Cultural Harvest

*Karin Melbye is the project leader for Kulturhøst or Cultural Harvest, an annual cultural festival in the county of Storstrøm, in the southern region of Denmark. She traces the founding of this successful event based venture, framed as a collaboration between the tourism and local government sectors as a cultural tourism initiative. The harvest is drawn in from all art forms and involves the whole community in its organisation—from artists' self-organising exhibitions to landowners lending their property to an event such as a concert. The use and importance of evaluating this activity in both quantitative and qualitative terms is stressed within this paper. The riches of the metaphor of 'harvest' to describe the festival evokes the shared sense of pleasure and co-operation involved in making such an event 'productive' for all its participants.*

OUT OF A WISH to strengthen the profile and identity of our region, the cultural department at the County of Storstrøm and the regional tourism development company initiated a collaborative project on cultural tourism. By the end of 1997 a secretariat for cultural tourism was established by the two partners with support from the EU regional fund. By the end of the project period success was inevitable and the secretariat was made permanent.

By 1997 the cultural and historical assets of the region were obviously underexposed and regarded by both partners in the collaboration as important resources that could be used in developing and promoting the region.

*Culture and tourism had definitely something to give each other*

The tourism sector had both an interest in and the know-how to develop this field. Both were needed in order to proceed in a professional way. Culture and tourism had definitely something to give each other, and I was employed as project leader with a foot in both camps in order to develop the interaction between the two sectors by focusing on action and by producing measurable results.

The festival *Kulturhøst*—or *Cultural Harvest* in English—that has taken place annually since 1998 at a number of castles and manor houses in the region, is one of several important outcomes of the secretariat of cultural tourism during its first few years of

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existence. The programme of Cultural Harvest features a broad variety of activities: concerts, theatre performances, exhibitions, guided tours, talks and dinners. The region is rich in castles and manor houses, roughly eighty, but only three of them were promoted as tourist attractions before this initiative. Castles and manor houses in general had had little impact on the profile of the region. However, by creating a concentrated and coordinated sequence of events at castles and manor houses, a network and collaboration developed, and today, less than four years later, they are a visible part of the region's profile.

What is remarkable about the cooperation between the cultural department of the county and the tourism development agencies is, that it demonstrated that culture and tourism can benefit from each other, even though the two sectors have different interests. At the outset of the collaboration the aims of the county and the organisation known as Turisme region syd were not the same, but the means by which the aims would be reached were shared. The county wished to develop more cultural activities at a high artistic level, to improve the identity of the region and make it a more attractive place to live. Turisme region syd wished to increase tourism especially in the low seasons by addressing the ageing target group with new cultural tourism products. Apart from the different background for entering the project the two parts shared a wish to develop, co-ordinate and market activities and to strengthen the cultural and historical profile of the region. The first strategy that was formed was, in short, to focus on the region's many castles and manor houses and promote them outside the summer season by initiating and promoting cultural events in their parks and main buildings.

The region of Storstrøm consists mainly of the southern part of Zealand and the islands of Møn, Lolland and Falster—all connected by bridges and tunnels. The population is approximately 250,000 and the largest town has 50,000 inhabitants. Even though the distance to Copenhagen is only between one hour to two hours by car, and even though there are two ferry connections to Germany, from a national perspective the region is 'on the edge' in the minds of many Danes. One reason is that the region has a poor image in Denmark. Unemployment, closed down factories, below average levels of educational, no cultural centres are typical assumptions—but many Danes don't know anything at all about the region and its geography, which is

quite remarkable considering how small Denmark is.

Only about half of the tourists going to the region are Danish. More than 50% of our tourists are from abroad. The 45% of German tourists, 10% of Swedish tourists and Norwegian tourists think of the region as having beaches that are ‘family friendly’ among other great attractions. However, with most tourists visiting the region during the short summer season, the aim of the cultural tourism development project has been to develop tourist products and attract tourists outside the summer season. Although most tourists at some point during their vacation engage in a cultural or historical activity, the development of cultural tourism and promotion of cultural and historical resources more specifically, has aimed at targeting the growing, attractive group of seniors, defined by their wealth, their willingness to travel all year and their interest in culture and history.

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It has been important for the secretariat of cultural tourism to develop the region’s characteristics and to focus on assets that are authentic and have a sustainable long-term perspective. As the region is predominantly rural, the initial focus was to develop access to and promote castles and manor houses, rather than for instance working with town museums and town festivals. What must be noted is that the majority of the castles and manor houses are privately owned mostly by the same families that have owned them for centuries. Therefore they are not primarily tourist attractions. However, many places have public access to parks and gardens or public museums and galleries in the main building or connecting buildings and do already have activities to offer visitors. They do, therefore, have great potential for developing cultural tourism.

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When we decided to start up Cultural Harvest it was out of a wish to strengthen the region’s identity and profile. The concept was to initiate, co-ordinate and market high quality cultural events at as many castles and manor houses as possible every year within the

last two weeks of August. To support the development of the idea, a network was formed around this concept including cultural institutions, cultural entrepreneurs, castle and manor house owners, tourist organisations and tourist businesses. Funding was generated from the county, Turisme region syd and the EU's regional fund.

Cultural harvest was held for the first time in 1998. The programme featured only sixteen activities at nine castles and manor houses and a total of 4,000 visitors took part, but the concept proved to be attractive and the festival grew rapidly. In 1999 *Cultural Harvest* took place at sixteen different castles and manor houses presenting all together twenty four different cultural activities for approximately 30,000 visitors. In 2000 the number of activities has risen to 37 at 16 castles and manor houses and the number of visitors have exceeded 44,000. This year, in 2001, *Cultural Harvest* is accessing 40 activities at 19 castles and manor houses.



The medieval Gjorslev castle



Castles as venues

For a period of four years we have thus succeeded in engaging in total 28 different castles and manor houses in the collaboration – some of them participating only once, others participating several times or every year. Out of these, 19 are privately inhabited, but have opened up main buildings, grounds, gardens or connecting buildings during the festival.

There are many reasons why the castles and manor houses have chosen to participate in *Cultural Harvest*. Most importantly they have facilities that they want to share with the public, and Cultural Harvest gives them a chance to do so within a limited timeframe. For places that already have public access to their parks, Cultural Harvest is an opportunity to extend their knowledge about access.

*Only rarely will the reason for participating be to make money on the event. In general the owners have a great awareness of the historical importance of their castle or manor, which implies a kind of obligation to share what is—accidentally—in their possession*

For places with no public access, *Cultural Harvest* is an opportunity for the owners to give the public an insight into their property that can contribute to a positive understanding of the castle or manor house in the local community and in general. Only rarely will the reason for participating be to make money on the event. In general the owners have a great awareness of the historical importance of their castle or manor, which implies a kind of obligation to share what is—accidentally—in their possession. Some of the owners has a personal passion for, typically, music and engage themselves personally in organising



Orchestras

concerts. Others allow for organisers to make use of their grounds. It is characteristic of *Cultural Harvest* that it offers both outdoor and indoor events as well as events that take place in, for instance, a wood, beach area or field that is part of an estate. Thus, the castles and manor houses contribute to the festival with both traditional and untraditional surroundings for cultural activities. The variation in the locations matches the variation in the cultural content, which covers both traditional culture and new cultural forms.

*Cultural Harvest* is, as described, based on the philosophy that culture and history are important for the future development of our region and a belief in the great potential of these resources in connection with the development of tourism and co-operation. We wish to strengthen the region's identity and profile by focusing on authentic and sustainable assets.

*We wish to strengthen the region's identity and profile by focusing on authentic and sustainable assets*

As *Cultural Harvest* is part of an aim to develop interaction between culture and tourism and is co-ordinated by a cultural tourism secretariat, all know-how, networks and work tools developed in relation to the festival are made accessible to, for instance, cultural entrepreneurs and tourist businesses in the region. A press database has been published and distributed free of charge, seminars have been held on topics such as how to do the marketing and public relations of cultural events.

*By sharing knowledge the network will grow and intensify and the co-operation can lead to development of Cultural Harvest in the future and to other existing and future cultural tourism initiatives*

By sharing knowledge the network will grow and intensify and the co-operation can lead to the development of *Cultural Harvest* in the future and to other existing and future cultural tourism initiatives.

Since initiating *Cultural Harvest* in 1998, the role of the cultural tourism secretariat has been to co-ordinate the annual event and continuously develop the network, marketing, PR, tourism perspective and, not least, develop the engagement of organizers of cultural events as well as castles and manor house owners. The secretariat is thus implementing new ideas for the content of the festival, but only to a small extent do they act as organizers. Instead the secretariat connects organizers with suitable locations and thus contributes to the constant development of the content of the programme.

The single cultural events during the festival are organized by

cultural entrepreneurs, cultural institutions or associations, or in some instances the artists themselves. The secretariat offers economic support, practical advice and, most importantly, a platform with extensive marketing and PR—with both a national and international dimension. The organizers are only responsible for the marketing of their own event locally.

The quantitative results of *Cultural Harvest* have been measured and speak for themselves. The increase in events, castles and manor houses and visitors tells the story of a success in building up the festival. But also it has been important to measure press coverage in order to document the value of profiling to the region. The economic value of the total coverage in the printed press alone is greater than the total investment in the festival. So the festival has proved to be a success also in this respect. In 2000 the press coverage in printed media was 100,000 millimetres of column space worth approximately 1 million Danish crowns or the equivalent of EURO 135,000 (£83,000). There were 138 articles in 33 different printed press outlets. 46% of the press was either national Danish coverage or foreign press. As for the perspective of tourism, approximately one fourth of the audiences in 2000—10,000 people—were tourists, mainly from the rest of Denmark. Calculations on the economic impact suggested a turnover of approximately 9.5 million Danish crowns or EURO 1,250,000 (£780,000).

Other results have been the development of more cultural events of high artistic quality in the region, a marketing platform for culture, skills development and an exchange of viewpoints between the cultural sector and the tourist industry.

*This trend can be seen in the tourist business today, which is selling dreams, stories and personal experiences, rather than a bed to sleep in and transport from A to B*

One reason for the success of the cultural tourism secretariat, and the co-operation between the two sectors, has probably been that they, during the last 5-10 years, have moved away from a one sided focus on either quality or quantity. This is due to general trends in society that has allowed for qualitative aspects of life, such as well-being and experience, to be equalled with quantitative aspects, such as levels of income and status symbols. This trend can be seen in the tourist business today, which is selling dreams, stories and personal experiences, rather than a bed to sleep in and transport from A to B. Communication with tourists has changed and is still changing. Therefore the tourist sector also needs to implement 'soft' values in their products and marketing – such as those that culture and history can provide.

Another trend is the increasing demand for a quantitative measuring of the results and impact on the cultural sector. This has partly to do with an attempt to find arguments that can attract sponsors, but also economic support to culture from the government, counties and municipalities does, to a still larger extent, need to be followed up by documentation and evaluation.

The strength of the cultural tourism secretariat has been and is that we use the skills of both sectors and respect both the demand for quality and commercial interests. This has been demonstrated in practice in relation to *Cultural Harvest*, which has set new standards for instance in impact measurement of cultural events in the region in relation to tourism. This has enabled us to document the economic and promotional value of the festival and to emphasise the importance of integrating our cultural and historical assets in general in the development of our region.

# THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TATE GALLERY ST IVES 1988-93

SIR RICHARD CAREW POLE · [www.tate.org.uk/stives/](http://www.tate.org.uk/stives/)  
Chairman of Tate St Ives in Cornwall

*Sir Richard Carew Pole was, until 2002, the Chairman of Tate St Ives in Cornwall, South West England. As an area that has been the home and inspiration for many of Britain's well known painters and sculptors such as Patrick Heron and Barbara Hepworth, Cornwall as a local authority had spent little on the development of cultural facilities. Sir Richard attributes the success of Tate St Ives to its contribution to the regeneration of an area of high unemployment, combined with a rigorous strategic programme to raise funding and gain the support of local people. The quality of the architecture, designed by Evans and Shalev, has proved to be of lasting significance within this process of regeneration.*



*Two Figures (menhirs), Barbara Hepworth (1964)*

**T**WO MAJOR SCHOOLS of painting have developed in Cornwall during the last century—at Newlyn and at St Ives. During the post-Second World War period there had been a number of suggestions that there should be a new gallery at St Ives to show the work of the St Ives School.

The Tate's first outpost at St Ives was opened in 1979, when the Barbara Hepworth Studio and Garden were opened. It showed her house, working studio and garden. Many visitors to the gallery commented 'Here are the sculptures, where can we see the pictures?' Due to lack of space not many of the works of art made by the artists associated with St Ives and West Penwith were being shown at the Tate in London.

In the mid-1980s a number of events occurred which gave an added impetus to the idea of a new gallery.

- A major exhibition at the Tate in London in 1985 showed the *St Ives School 1939-1964 Twenty-five years of Painting, Sculpture and Pottery*. The exhibition re-established this school of painting as being of national importance and also of international interest.
- Luke Rittner, the recently appointed Secretary-General of the Arts Council, published the Council's policy document entitled *The Glory of the Garden* which emphasised that there should be a fairer balance of funding of the arts between London and the regions.

*Cornwall had the lowest local authority spending on cultural facilities in the country, in spite of having two national schools of painting and already attracting many writers and craftworkers*



- A publication *The Survey of the Arts in the South West* was produced. It showed that Cornwall had the lowest local authority spending on cultural facilities in the country, in spite of having two national schools of painting and already attracting many writers and craftworkers. Most importantly it had a strong tourist industry, but this was in decline.

*Visitors to the gallery would have the unique experience of being able to see in the gallery works influenced and stimulated by the area surrounding it*

South West Arts were in continuous contact with Alan Bowness, the Director of the Tate Gallery and it was agreed that a suggestion should be put to Cornwall County Council on the lines that if the county council provided a gallery in St Ives, then the Tate would loan a selection of their pictures and sculpture to the gallery. Visitors to the gallery would have the unique experience of being able to see in the gallery works influenced and stimulated by the area surrounding it.

The County Council formed a steering group in the spring of 1988, which I was asked to chair. The steering group consisted of members of the public and private sector, together with officers from the County Council and most importantly a representative from the Town and District Councils, as well as the Editor of a local newspaper, *The St Ives Times & Echo*, who was to keep the community continually informed with a series of articles throughout the development of the project. Another important member of the group was Patrick Heron who as a leading artist and ex-trustee of the Tate provided an important artistic and aesthetic input. The group met every 6 to 8 weeks and had both executive and advisory powers and was responsible for reporting to the County Council's policy committee. The Committee was always attended by a senior staff member of the Tate, often the Director himself.

*The first priority was to obtain the support of local people*

The first priority was to obtain the support of local people. I visited the Town Council and described the project and they immediately gave their wholehearted support.

*Leaders of opinion, both political and non-political, were therefore firmly behind the project and an essential ingredient to its success*

This was quickly followed by a meeting with leading local businessmen who, seeing the potential economic benefits, at once agreed to form a committee. This was called STAG—the St Ives Tate Action Group—and raised money for the project.



*The site for the new Tate, beside Porthmeor Beach*



*Tate St Ives from the air*



*Gallery 2, Tate St Ives*

Leaders of opinion, both political and non-political, were therefore firmly behind the project and an essential ingredient to its success.

The Steering Group commissioned a feasibility study which had two objectives; firstly to seek out potential sites for the gallery, and secondly to estimate the final cost of the project and potential sources of funding. The study suggested four sites and estimated the cost of the project at £2 million (EURO 269,242), half of which would be raised from the public and half from the private sector.

South West Arts agreed to fund a full site feasibility study and the architects Julian Freary and Katharine Heron, daughter of the painter Patrick Heron, were commissioned to carry it out. At this stage the eventual site, the gasworks site, was not included, but was only discovered by the architects while exploring other sites. This site was without doubt the most exciting location in terms of its setting above Porthmeor Beach. Any building would not only be a prominent landmark, but would also command panoramic views. However, because of the sloping and confined nature of the site, and the land being heavily contaminated by the gasworks, it was the most expensive site to develop.

In December 1988 the new Director of the Tate, Nicholas Serota, made his first visit to the project. There was nervousness amongst the Cornish contingent as to whether he would be as supportive of the project as his predecessor, Alan Bowness. From the beginning he was right behind the project and all our potential fears were allayed. He inspected the sites and was in no doubt at all that the gasworks site with its superb position was the site to go for. This was agreed.

South West Gas, who owned the site, had recently had a planning application to erect luxury flats on the site turned down due to a sewage embargo. Eventually South West Gas agreed to sell the site to Cornwall County Council for the gallery use. The next step was to secure an architect, and an architectural competition was set up. A selection panel was formed comprising Nicholas Serota, Alan Bowness, Richard Rogers, Colin Amery, Alan Groves who was the County Architect and myself as Chairman of the Steering Committee. A long list of twelve potential architects was cut down to a final list of four. Each was given an hour for their presentations and questions. Members of the Steering Committee were present to listen, but not to become involved in the interviewing process. At the end of the interviews the selection panel were divided and each of the Steering committee was asked their opinion. They came down 13-2 in favour of the winners Evans & Shalev.

Evans & Shalev produced without doubt the most imaginative designs, but their proposal was complicated and therefore potentially expensive. They had in 1988 recently completed the law



Upper Level, Gallery 2, Tate St Ives

*Opposition is beneficial as it gives an added opportunity to describe to a wider public the project and its advantages*



The Café at Tate St Ives

courts in Truro for which they received *The Sunday Times* architectural award. The other architects produced much simpler designs, but they lacked the imagination, vitality and style of the winners. Eldred Evans also had the added advantage that she knew and understood the vagaries of the Cornish climate as a result of her family having owned a house in St Ives since 1963 where her father was an artist.

With any project there is bound to be opposition. Opposition is beneficial as it gives an added opportunity to describe to a wider public the project and its advantages. The Tate St Ives project had its critics and their thinking will probably be relevant to other proposed art projects.

- The monies could be better used elsewhere on projects perceived to have more immediate community benefit e.g. on a swimming pool or be spent on improving schools.
- A number of school teachers could not believe that the gallery could be of any benefit to them at all, the journey across this long county being too far and too expensive and their pupils would not like abstract art.
- The proposed admission charges were unfair and unnecessary, particularly as the Tate in London and in Liverpool did not charge.
- The proposed site could be better used for housing the elderly.
- There was no car-parking locally.
- The gallery would become 'a mausoleum to dead artists'.
- Why should 'a minority' in the area have yet another place to look at pictures.
- The artists and their families were particularly concerned that their work should be shown at the centre i.e. in London and not in a far-flung outpost. Were they doomed to be seen as a part of a provincial movement?
- The new gallery would take away much needed and limited resources from other galleries and institutions in Cornwall.

*. . . criticisms needed to be and were answered. They were essential to keep the debate alive and the performance of the project leaders sharp*



Tate St Ives in construction

All these criticisms needed to be and were answered. They were essential to keep the debate alive and the performance of the project leaders sharp.

The original cost of the project, purchase of the land and construction was estimated at £2 million (EURO 3,280,840).



*The Gallery in construction*

It actually cost £3.4 million (EURO 5,577,428). This was raised from the public and private sector. The public sector funding came from Europe, central government and the local authorities. As far as the private sector was concerned there was no Lottery in existence, no Development Office on which to call and Cornwall had no big firms, charitable trusts or wealthy patrons to call upon so most of the fundraising had to come from outside the county.

*Fundraising depends a lot on luck, good timing and personal contact and the important fact is that one can only make one approach to a potential donor*



*The Gallery in construction*

Fundraising depends a lot on luck, good timing and personal contact and the important fact is that one can only make one approach to a potential donor. The vital factor in any fundraising campaign is to obtain a substantial sum in the early stages from a donor, which will then give the appeal and the project credibility.

We were incredibly fortunate in the early stages to obtain £250,000 (EURO 433,655) from the Henry Moore Foundation and £100,000 (EURO 164,042) from the Sainsbury Trust. With this we had achieved a firm launching pad and from then on trusts and foundations were generous in their response. It is absolutely essential to have local support and the St Ives Tate Action Group set themselves a target of £100,000 (EURO 164,042) over three years. In fact so energetic were they and so successful that they achieved the sum in 18 months. In spite of all the difficulties described we managed to raise £1.4 million (EURO 2,296,588) of private sector funding towards the total costs of £3.4 million (EURO 5,577,428).

A very important aspect was to keep the local hotel and catering interests informed of the progress of the project. A year before the gallery was due to open a seminar was held to brief local hoteliers about the progress so they could include any necessary information in the following year's advertising. Although representatives from hotel and catering associations attended, disappointingly very few individual hoteliers and restaurateurs turned up. Many who would visit the new Tate would require higher standards of hotel comfort and catering than there was then available. It was therefore disappointing that the attendance was so meagre. In contrast in America every individual or organisation with a potential interest would have turned up hungry for knowledge.



*Lower Gallery 2, Tate St Ives*

*The critical reviews of the Gallery were positive and visitors poured in. In the first year the business plan had projected 70,000-75,000 visitors and the gallery had been designed on this basis. In practice in the first year we got 200,000*

The Gallery was opened by the Prince of Wales in 1993. The critical reviews of the Gallery were positive and visitors poured in. In the first year the business plan had projected 70,000-75,000 visitors and the gallery had been designed on this basis. In practice in the first year we got 200,000. This put tremendous pressures on the Gallery as the spaces were small and confined and the costs in maintenance, security and wear and tear rose substantially. The costs of running the Gallery rose considerably and in spite of the added income generated from the extra visitors this additional income failed to keep up with the additional costs.

Staffing, has therefore increased substantially. In the business plan we estimated a permanent staff of six plus a limited number of part-time staff and a strong body of volunteers. In 2001 we actually employ 30 full-time and 20 part-time staff, plus a considerable number of jobs generated outside the gallery involved in servicing the gallery itself.

Following the opening of the Gallery the Steering Committee was wound up, but was replaced immediately by an advisory committee whose role was to act as a sounding board between the gallery and the local community. It consists of 16 members comprised of representatives from the county, district and town councils, artists, museums—both at county and national level, and the Chairman of the St Ives Friends of the Tate. It has proved to be an extremely effective line of communication.

*The name of the gallery was crucial. Tate was a name of national and international importance and therefore was a natural draw to potential visitors*

*The main lessons learned from the Tate project were I believe as follows:*

**NAME** The name of the gallery was crucial. Tate was a name of national and international importance and therefore was a natural draw to potential visitors. A gallery called the West Cornwall Gallery would have had much less pulling power.

**FUNDING** Galleries cost money to run over and above the entrance charge. Tate St Ives costs £300,000-£400,000 (EURO 492,126 - EURO 656,168) per year to Tate Britain. It is essential at the outset to have a body or institution that will guarantee the bottom line for the foreseeable future.

**ARCHITECTURE** One of the main attractions of Tate St Ives to visitors is the site and quality of the architecture. To achieve quality and excellence was always the main aim of the project leaders. 90% of those questioned in post-opening interviews liked the architecture. The site has been described as ‘the best view in Europe’.



*Tate St Ives from the beach*



**COMMUNICATION** The importance of establishing firm local support from the outset and from those individuals who are influential in the wider community from the earliest stage. Local people, particularly those residents and businesses adjoining a site, should be continuously briefed and consulted where necessary. Opposition is a useful ingredient as it promotes discussion and debate and keeps the promoters sharp.



*Sea Form (Porthmeor), Barbara Hepworth (1958)*

**SUPPORT SERVICES** The Gallery had the back-up of a great wealth of knowledge and experience within the Tate in the form of conservation, curatorial and management expertise, as well as the knowledge of the artists and the Collection.

**ARTISTIC BASE** St Ives had a strong historical artistic base on which to build.

**TOURIST INDUSTRY** Cornwall's main industry is tourism and therefore provides again a firm base from which to attract visitors to the project.



*Local Standing Stones, West Penwith*

**LIAISON WITH LOCAL GALLERIES** It is vital to communicate and liaise with local galleries to ensure mutual benefit and support. The Tate St Ives is now liaising with the two other major projects in Cornwall – the recently opened Eden Project and the new Falmouth Maritime Museum due to open in 2002.

**EDUCATION** A very successful education programme is run for local schools and for lifelong learning; it attracts participants from across the whole county and beyond.

**CURATOR** The importance of appointing the new gallery's curator at the earliest possible stage so he or she can be consulted on gallery design and layout before implementation. This person is also crucial to ensure the liveliness of the programme of displays and exhibitions.

**INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL ARTISTS** The range of exhibitions includes giving some local artists an opportunity to show their work.

**FREE WEEK FOR LOCAL PEOPLE** Although for historical reasons admission charges continue, the gallery provides a 'free week for Cornish residents' in the 'off' season, which attracts over 3,000 visitors and creates a lot of goodwill. There are also free days for the residents of St Ives.

**SURVEY OF VISITORS**, which was done in 1994/5 following the Gallery's opening. *It showed the following statistics:*

- A. Visitors were on average aged over 46 and from mainly socioeconomic group B1.
- B. 27% of visitors go to other galleries in Cornwall.
- C. 57% indicated that the Gallery was the main reason for making a trip from home.



*St Ives from the air*

D. £16 (EURO 26,246,719) million was spent by visitors to Cornwall over the 12 month period by people whose primary reason for coming to Cornwall was to visit the Tate.

The Tate St Ives has been a resounding success. It has without doubt regenerated the economy of St Ives and the surrounding area. It has made the point that quality pays and set a good example for similar projects to follow—one only has to look at Walsall. For those critics who forecasted that the gallery will go into decline after 5 years, I would like to point out that in the year just completed, the gallery's 7th, a record attendance of 210,000 has been achieved.

## *A future for rural cultural development*

## HI ARTS: Rural Cultural Development in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland

Robert Livingston · [www.hi-arts.org.uk](http://www.hi-arts.org.uk)  
Director of HI Arts



\*see: [www.nva.org.uk](http://www.nva.org.uk)

NVA in Glasgow is an organisation that develops site specific art projects through an innovative approach to all media of the arts and culture and technology.

*Robert Livingston is the Director of HI Arts. This organisation is funded by the Scottish Arts Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Their remit is to nurture cultural activity within the Highlands and Islands of Scotland through the development of projects that interweave traditional and contemporary arts in all its forms. Livingston offers a set of basic principles developed out of grounded experience of developing the arts in the most remote rural areas of Scotland. These principles form the basis of critical thinking that will underpin the region's development of a Highland bid to be European Capital of Culture in 2008.*

CLASSICAL BALLET may seem an odd art form to start off a discussion of rural cultural development. Ballet West is a training school based near Taynuilt in the heart of rural north Argyll. Its students regularly win major awards in the Adeline Genée competition, the top international showcase for young classical dancers. Using its current students and past graduates as the company, Ballet West regularly tours such full-scale productions throughout the Highlands, to venues unreachable by the main Scottish Ballet Company. Ballet West performed a full-scale production of Prokofiev's ballet *Romeo and Juliet* at the Eden Court Theatre in Inverness. And yes, the dancers really were as young as they looked.

The Screen Machine is the United Kingdom's only self-contained mobile cinema, presenting the top British and Hollywood releases to the most remote communities in the Highlands: in the Western Isles, Sutherland, Argyll, the Inner Hebrides and Orkney. A product of Lottery funding, it seats 102 in multiplex-style comfort, and offers the highest quality of projection and sound.

A beneficiary of Millennium festival funding, the PATH was Glasgow-based NVA's\* unique experiment held last summer in Glen Lyon in rural Perthshire. A truly astonishing fusion of international and multi-arts skills, it was an unforgettable experience for all who saw it. The cost may seem terrifying, but some 5,000 people paid £35 (EURO 57.41) a time to see it, so perhaps the subsidy was not really any greater per person than that for Scottish Opera, or indeed Gaelic theatre.

*. . . they are all haunted by uneasy questions . . . how indigenous is classical ballet? What is the long term impact of increasing rural access to the global culture of Hollywood?*





All of these initiatives are successful and popular. Yet they are all haunted by uneasy questions, many of which already touched on in this conference: how indigenous is classical ballet? What is the long term impact of increasing rural access to the global culture of Hollywood? Is it justifiable to impose a concept like *The Path* on a community like Glen Lyon? But most of all they challenge our conceptions of what shapes rural cultural development might take. I could have cited many other examples I have experienced; hearing solo Bach played in an 18th century church a mile from the nuclear plant at Dounreay, as part of the Northlands festival; seeing in Kirkwall High Street in Orkney a finer and more extensive range of craft and design shops than you would find in Edinburgh or Glasgow or watching the premier of *Sgathach* in Portree in Skye, a full-length Gaelic opera in which all the performers, both singers and orchestra, were local amateurs.

*The lesson . . . is that you cannot, perhaps must not, attempt to plan for the forms that rural cultural development will take*

The lesson, I think, is that you cannot, perhaps *must not*, attempt to plan for the forms that rural cultural development will take. A strategy for such development, written ten years ago, would not have come up with any of the examples I have just cited, and if it had, they would probably have been dismissed as unacceptable, or even insane!

*A quick search of the Internet using that very term 'rural cultural development' quickly persuaded me that it is clearly a matter of truly global concern*



Photo credit: Alan Acteer



Photo credit: Alan Acteer

Nonetheless the issue of the 'future for rural cultural development' is too important to be left too itself. A quick search of the Internet using that very term 'rural cultural development' quickly persuaded me that it is clearly a matter of truly global concern: I found articles, conferences and projects using the term from Australia, France, India, Sweden, Belize, Kentucky. Many of those entries struck chords with what we have been discussing: a grant scheme for Rural Cultural Development in Nova Scotia cites as its final funding criterion *promote rural Canada as essential to the identity and well-being of the nation*. A policy document from the Latvian government stated, in rather quaint terms *a tidy well-organised living space and environment is an important long-term cultural task*. Perhaps they have seen what happens to old cars in the Hebrides. A New Mexico paper on Cultural Tourism stated *we do not have to reinvent ourselves by building theme parks. We have the real things*. In the Third World there are many reminders that



Photo credit: Murdoch Ferguson



Photo credit: Alan Acteer

cultural questions can be quite literally a matter of life and death. In many African states, changing fundamental rural cultural attitudes is the first crucial step to fighting AIDS. As the Asian Institute of Technology states so wisely *the degree of congruence and incongruence between people's expectations and the development agencies' thinking determines the fate of any developmental effort.*

In other words, as Rhona Brankin, Deputy Minister of Rural Development, has suggested, you cannot talk of 'rural development' per se without assuming the inclusion of that loaded word 'cultural' as well.

In today's focus on the *future* of rural cultural development, we cannot hope to predict what artists, communities, and social entrepreneurs will come up with in the coming years and decades. But nor can we adopt a laissez-faire attitude and wait to see what happens. That's a big problem, for example, for an area that is attempting to prepare a Highland bid to be European Capital of Culture in 2008, and has to plan a programme to be delivered seven years hence! But in the remainder of this presentation I can at least offer some basic principles, and propose some questions for further debate.

*Inhabitants of the smallest and most remote rural communities should be as entitled to the highest quality of cultural provision and participation as their urban counterparts*

#### PRINCIPLES FIRST

#### **'Distance is no Object'**

Inhabitants of the smallest and most remote rural communities should be as entitled to the highest quality of cultural provision and participation as their urban counterparts. That should be as axiomatic as the equivalent provision of power, communication, education and health resources. But it cannot be taken for granted in Scotland, as it can, say, in much of Scandinavia. The Scottish media can still question a major Lottery award to Stornoway on grounds of population size. The Scottish Executive can still plan for a National Theatre, which is unlikely to be seen in half the land mass of Scotland. The bottom line for such provision should be based on geography, not population size.

*. . . if we must play the numbers game, then we must also recognise that in rural areas the proportion of a given community participating in a cultural event is often immense by comparison with urban equivalents, and the lasting impact therefore so much the greater*

### **'Small is beautiful'**

You would be hard-pressed to find a better learning environment, or higher quality teaching, than at Ballet West. There is no more active or community-rooted arts centre in the UK than Taigh Chearsabhagh in Lochmaddy. Some of the best international performance work seen in Scotland is showcased in Wick and Thurso in the Northlands Festival. Two of the country's best jazz festivals are in Nairn and Rothesay. Moreover, if we must play the numbers game, then we must also recognise that in rural areas the *proportion* of a given community participating in a cultural event is often immense by comparison with urban equivalents, and the lasting impact therefore so much the greater.

*Defining the term 'culture' may be a good parlour game, but other terms can lead to blood on the floor:*  
voluntary, professional, community, traditional,  
indigenous . . .

### **'We Speak Your Language'**

Be very aware of the problems of definitions and loaded words. We saw many examples of confusion and misunderstanding yesterday, which were not due to actual different languages, but to different understandings of concepts. Defining the term 'culture' may be a good parlour game, but other terms can lead to blood on the floor: *voluntary, professional, community, traditional, indigenous*. My word for today is *autochthonous*, or 'sprung from the soil'. Remember, you heard it here first.

*Buildings are important, but it's too easy to get hung up on them*

### **'Why don't we do the show right here?'**

Buildings *are* important, but it's too easy to get hung up on them. The different examples of Deveron Arts and Culture Harvest have shown us that the activity can come first. As a contrast to the problems of community acceptance of modern art, which Claudia and Anne identified in Duff House's exhibitions, let me tell you about a project called *Another Space*. Two artists created a major installation, entitled *Gernika!* in a vast World War II hangar on an industrial estate in Easter Ross. Based around the theme of the Spanish Civil War, they commissioned huge installations from 6 Spanish and 3 Scottish artists. It was seen by 8,000 people in three weeks, many of whom had never encountered contemporary art before.

### **'Variety is the Spice of Life'**

In our cities we have become used to the concept of a multi-

cultural society and to the benefits that accrue from such a rich mix. But we often forget to apply the same principles to the rural context.

*Rural cultural expressions offer different perspectives, alternative options and surprising conjunctions*

The Gaelic and Norse heritages of the Highlands and Islands are a crucial element in defining Scottish identity and in any event that identity is neither singular nor static. Rural cultural expressions offer different perspectives, alternative options and surprising conjunctions. We must treasure these, and not pigeonhole or demean them by labelling them ‘parochial’, or those even more loaded words ‘traditional’ and ‘indigenous’. Scottish culture is not monolithic, nor is its rural culture. Oppositions between ‘local’ and ‘incomer’—and they do exist—are neither positive nor fruitful. You do not increase the value of your own indigenous culture by diminishing that of the incomer next door.

#### **‘Assess the value of things, not their cost’**

We cannot avoid discussing money, but we can change the basis on which we justify expenditure. NVA’s *The Path* has had a long term impact even on thousands of people who never saw it, but who have grasped, and been inspired by, its concepts.

*Many of us will pay more for the dinner before the event than for the event tickets themselves. But which will nourish us for longer?*

If you believe that access to cinema is as much a right for remote communities as access to books, then subsidising a mobile cinema should be no more of an issue than paying for a mobile library. That also means valuing those who work in the arts, and paying them proper remuneration for their work, and not relying on good will. For too long there has been a huge differential between arts salaries in rural areas, and those in urban centres.

But this is a message for audiences too. Don’t expect to get your culture buzz cheaply. Many of us will pay more for the dinner before the event than for the event tickets themselves. But which will nourish us for longer?

*‘Can rural communities achieve the critical mass to engender a truly creative milieu?’*

#### **Some questions for further debate:**

*‘Can rural communities achieve the critical mass to engender a truly creative milieu?’*

There have been many studies recently into the concept of ‘creative

cities', past, present and future. There is a growing consensus on the conditions that are necessary to bring about a truly creative milieu such as that in Paris before the First War or Berlin in the 1920s, and they are seen to be rooted in a critical mass of population size. (Although interestingly, the true innovators in such a milieu have often migrated to the city from a rural base!). So can the small and scattered communities of the Highlands and Islands replicate such conditions, when the only city, Inverness, has barely 50,000 inhabitants? That will be a fundamental question for the Highland bid for Capital of Culture in 2008.

*I suspect . . . that part of the answer will lie in Information Technology and in the growing ability to create virtual communities*

I suspect, as was suggested yesterday, that part of the answer will lie in Information Technology and in the growing ability to create virtual communities, a concept which lies at the heart of the development of the University of the Highlands and Islands.

There is the issue of islands as energy centres, as we saw in North Uist. It does not take much study of the recent cultural achievements in Shetland, Orkney, Skye, the Uists, Mull and other Scottish islands to realise that such physically defined communities—with populations between 4,000 and 20,000—can foster a creative ferment of sometimes breathtaking energy.

*'Can true cultural innovation be achieved in a rural setting?'*

*'Can true cultural innovation be achieved in a rural setting?'*

Those who study creative cities would answer 'no'. Rural culture is inherently conservative, retrospective and concerned with issues of community heritage and memory. I wonder. The substantial investment in the last decade in the Gaelic language and its related culture has produced significant social and economic returns, but has it led to anything definable as 'culturally innovative'? In infrastructure terms, certainly: the fèis movement, as we heard on Thursday, has created a model for involving the young in the arts which is replicable in many contexts, rural and urban. The arts centre in Stornoway in the Western Isles, An Lanntair, pioneered a highly influential approach to exhibition making by placing the work of contemporary artists in a historical and documentary context. Taigh Chearsabhair, similarly, demonstrates the synergy to be achieved by bringing the heritage and visual arts sectors and interests together under one roof.

*'Can horizontal linkages be achieved across the different cultural sectors?'*

For me, it was a major disappointment of the Scottish Executive's National Cultural Strategy that it has done so little to create such linkages. All the different cultural agencies, representing arts, museums, libraries, the built and natural environments, remain in their silos with no active mechanisms for bringing them together. The contrast with the English approach of creating Regional Cultural Forums and Strategies is striking. But this too, I think, is an area where the rural context is providing innovation. Long before the term 'culture' was common currency among national politicians and funding agencies, it was the preferred concept in many rural areas. Shetland, as in so many other respects, took the lead, where 10 years ago the then Director of Leisure and Recreation patiently explained to me, then a Scottish Arts Council officer, how much more comfortable he was with the term 'culture' than with 'arts', which he found limiting and exclusive. It has been fascinating how even the preliminary meetings for the Highland Capital of Culture bid have produced a remarkable energy simply from bringing round one table those concerned with arts, museums, archives, planning, language and sport.

*For both social and economic reasons, what might be termed 'cultural crofting' is prevalent throughout the Highlands. Few people anywhere can afford to be only a painter, an actor or a writer*

Such linkages are also made at the individual level. For both social and economic reasons, what might be termed 'cultural crofting' is prevalent throughout the Highlands. Few people anywhere can afford to be only a painter, an actor or a writer. But in a rural context their cultural role is not submerged in their other activities. An accountant, an architect and a farmer play together in one of Easter Ross' best groups. Another accountant runs Orkney's finest choir. Oban's librarian is well known as a star of local amateur dramatics. In a rural community there is more often a continuity of perception that breaks down in urban environments. Perhaps that's one response to the issue of 'respect for artists'.

*A rural artist's integration of contemporary work with an awareness of history and local culture can come across as unadventurous or lacking in innovation*

There is a down side to this. A rural artist's integration of contemporary work with an awareness of history and local culture can come across as unadventurous or lacking in innovation. That is because so much urban work, defined as 'mainstream', is cut off from any such sense of the past. We need to challenge these unconscious assumptions, when funding decisions rest on

definitions of 'quality' which are themselves based on these assumptions.

*'Who sets the agenda?'*

Political correctness says 'the community' does so but how often is that ideal achieved? Tourism policy has driven the creation of new 'visitor attractions' (horrid term!) like 'Highland Mysteryworld' and 'Clanland', neither of which ever met their original visitor projections. Remember New Mexico telling us to value *'the real thing'*? Development agencies are set targets by government, that make it easier to produce the right statistics by opening more call centres, than by supporting those working in the cultural sector. What room is there for *congruence with people's expectations*? As I have just noted, criteria for Scottish Arts Council funding are often based on definitions of quality that relate to urban forms of expression and can therefore exclude rurally-based artists and companies.

*. . . too many councillors in rural areas have yet to learn the lesson appreciated by their urban counterparts about the central role of culture in community regeneration*

On the other hand, too many councillors in rural areas have yet to learn the lesson appreciated by their urban counterparts about the central role of culture in community regeneration, and they therefore starve the arts and heritage sectors of funding and resources. Initiatives like the proposed 'National Theatre' for Scotland are driven by political will, not by popular demand, or by an honest assessment of nationwide needs.

*We would do well to invest more trust in the artists, the cultural entrepreneurs, the keepers of knowledge about local heritage and environment*

The examples with which I began demonstrated, I hope, that rural culture can take many surprising and unpredictable forms. We would do well to invest more trust in the artists, the cultural entrepreneurs, the keepers of knowledge about local heritage and environment. To be able to do that we need strategies that are sufficiently flexible and visionary to allow that trust to be expressed.

I want to end with a final principle, which I've taken from the title of a novel by John Buchan, whose intense awareness of Scotland's history and landscape infuses all his best books. He called one of his novels *Salute to Adventurers*.

I'm heartily sick of the term *innovation*. Every cultural experience is an 'innovation' for somebody. At any performance of Beethoven's 5th, someone is hearing it for the first time.

*Throughout this conference we have heard about adventurers who have dared to step into the unknown, as artists, entrepreneurs, developers, even funders*

Throughout this conference we have heard about *adventurers* who have dared to step into the unknown, as artists, entrepreneurs, developers, even funders. We need to create a sense of *adventure* too for those experiencing the arts. That's what the *fèis* movement has done for children, and it's what the *Secret House* event did for Duff House. A colleague suggested that we should take models from the concept of *discovery* that underpins the best current displays of science and technology.

Discovering our culture, and the culture of others, should be a life-long adventure. Lose that sense of adventure, and we lose the ghost from the machine, and then we're left not with a living culture, but only its dry husk



## NORDISKA AKVARELLMUSEET

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Chairperson of The Cultural Committee of the  
Island of Tjörn in Sweden



*The Nordiska Akvarell Museet*

*Benita Nilsson is chairperson of the cultural committee of the island of Tjörn in Sweden. This island is the site of the Nordiska Akvarell Museum, or Nordic Watercolour Museum, a project that she describes throughout its development from artist's idea to full-scale international gallery attracting artists and critics from the rest of Europe and the United States. She attributes the success of the venture to the support of the local authority and national government, as well as the collaboration between partners in the Nordic countries. She notes that working with universities in the region in an interdisciplinary way is crucial to the development and character of the organisation.*

**T**HE NORDISKA AKVARELL MUSEET, or Nordic Watercolour Museum opened in June last year and I thought then, and I perhaps still think, that it is 'on the edge'. It is seventy kilometres north of Gothenburg in the archipelago. It is sited on the waterfront.

The Nordic countries have worked with us on the project. The Nordic countries include Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark. It was an idea that stemmed from artists and architects in these countries. We told them of the idea and enlisted their help to make this idea a reality. In 1994 they sent a letter to all the communities around the coast from Oslo to Copenhagen. I was the chairperson of the cultural committee in our island, Tjörn, a community of 14,000 inhabitants. We said, 'Very well. We will take it on.' There was a competition between twenty-five other communities. The finalists were Moss in Norway and us in Sweden. In 1995 the Nordic Watercolour Society told us that we had won.

*One day when I cycled down to buy fish I was stopped five times by people saying 'Excellent! When are you going to build?'*

I live in this small place where the Nordic Watercolour Museum is situated. It has 4,000 inhabitants. One day when I cycled down to buy fish I was stopped five times by people saying 'Excellent! When are you going to build?' However, we had no money.

It soon became a success story. We collected fifty five million Swedish Crowns (EURO 6 million). I think the achievement is interesting and that it is possible to achieve this in Scotland too. What I have learned is that you have to have a very good idea. The artists had the idea at the beginning. They got support from people like me that wanted to see the idea through.

It has been so interesting for our island and for our community to have the project, but you cannot move without the support of

local government and those who are politicians here. They say go home, sit down and think about it, because if you combine this with that, you can develop the idea.

What is this building called the Nordic Watercolour Museum? What does it house? It is a centre for contemporary art in watercolour pigment and air. We buy art from all over the Nordic countries. We have exhibitions from the Nordic countries and international exhibitions as well. We have small cottages where artists can live. We have already had one artist from Scotland called Emily Bates. She stayed for three months last autumn.

*We are the only museum in the Nordic countries with its own Professor of Art. He is from Iceland. I think that is significant too*

We have, I think, one thing that is very good and it can be adopted by other projects. We try to combine everything we do with the universities in the Nordic countries. So we have our own professor. We are the only museum in the Nordic countries with its own Professor of Art. He is from Iceland. I think that is significant too.

*But to make it a success story, we had to have local government support. With this support it was possible to work as if we were building a house. We started with a solid foundation on a good site.*

I am from Sweden. The director of the museum is from Finland and the Professor of Art is from Iceland. This cross-cultural approach underpins everything that we do. We collaborate with the universities. We are highly involved in education. We have workshops and we have a restaurant and auditorium. But to make it a success story, we had to have local government support. With this support it was possible to work as if we were building a house. We started with a solid foundation on a good site. We went to the regional council and to the state parliament as well as to the other Nordic Countries and Europe and whatever.

Are we 'on the edge?' Seventy kilometres in the archipelago north of Gothenburg, I thought was 'on the edge' until I came here because everybody kept saying, 'Why don't they place this building in Gothenburg or in Stockholm or in Copenhagen or in Oslo?' At first I thought that it might have been a mistake to place it where it is now. Now I know it was not because in June we will have been open for one year and have so far had 150,000 visitors. That is a very high number in relation to our expectations. We had thought that about half that number of visitors was realistic. However it has been a tremendous undertaking to make everything go the way we wanted it to.

Is our project 'on the edge'? One year ago there was no building, nothing to be seen in Skärhamn, the place where the museum is situated, except if you are bathing or sailing or such like. During the autumn we have Nordic exhibitions. Suddenly we are attracting critics from Oslo, from Helsinki and from Copenhagen. At first this was remarkable but now we are used to it. Among our exhibitions of last summer, we had the work of Salvador Dali made possible by a collaboration with the Dali Foundation in Figueras in Barcelona. After that we had nine young artists, the hottest in New York who were all at the museum last week. It was tremendous. They were completely crazy and it was wonderful. And the first thing two said was 'Well, when does the bus go to Gothenberg or to Malmö? We must study the art there'. They came back after half a day in Gothenberg and said 'Oh, we love this place'. They lived in the small houses adjacent to the museum and part of its complex and said, 'It is wonderful to be here instead of New York'. Through their presence suddenly the art critic of the Financial Times was there as well as other art magazines from America.

*Are we 'on the edge'? Is it geography or is it in our imagination. I mean we can make a centre wherever we happen to be. Just take the situation and make it global/local*

And now I want to ask you again. Are we 'on the edge'? Is it geography or is it in our imagination. I mean we can make a centre wherever we happen to be. Just take the situation and make it global/ local. It is impressive when Kim Leven comes to little Skärhamn and holds a special exhibition.

*They may not love the work. They may get angry and say to us 'What is this about?' but something happens*

She is the curator of this American exhibition and the chairman of art critics across the world. I think that is stimulating for local people. They may not love the work. They may get angry and say to us 'What is this about?' but something happens. Today there are parents painting together with their children and they are inspired by these American artists. Isn't that good? It is a way of taking care of people through education with added value because of what they experience.

I think that the politicians are the most important people in the process. When we started this project some people questioned the ten million Swedish Crowns (EURO 1.2 million) being spent on this place in the harbour, i.e. in the most central part of this community. They told us we were crazy and that the money should be spent on accommodation for the elderly and things like that.

Now they are very proud because this project has generated private investment of up to 500 million Swedish Crowns (EURO 55 million). These are not my figures. They are from the community. They have also calculated how much money tourists have brought to the shops over the six months that we have been open. It amounted to 25 million Swedish Crowns (EURO 2.75 million). On top of that the harbour is new. It got a gold star in Sweden for the best harbour in the country. There were four harbours in Sweden for sailing boats and such like. So now people are very proud of the development.

*So it is a bit Nordic, a bit global and a bit local, and it will be a real event, a 'happening'*

The people who are left to be convinced are the fisherman sitting on the benches in the harbour, so this winter we are going to have an exhibition of portraits of Nordic ships from Åland, from parts of Denmark and from Tjörn. I know that the fishermen will come. Everyone knows that it will happen and it will be a splendid thing. We will do it together with the shipping companies from all Nordic countries. So it is a bit Nordic, a bit global and a bit local, and it will be a real event, a 'happening'.

To summarise, local government is important in order to attract funding, for those who want to do something, who want to make their own centres. I think there must also be quite a significant number of people who really want the project. If you live in a place like this that you know well, you feel whether or not it is possible. The community will earn money for a project in many different ways; cultural, social and economic.

Finally I would like to say thank you to those who have organised this conference. François Matarasso has facilitated this event in a brilliant way. Our thanks to Claudia Zeiske and Louisa Janniche. I must say that I think in my heart that the best way to market a region or a place is this social interaction between people. I will come back to Duff House for several reasons, but perhaps I will come back because it is so genuine and you have ambition for it. It is not touristy. I will come back for The El Greco painting in the House, and show it to my husband, so that it is communicated from one heart to another. I think you have it all here, it is genuine, so go home and persuade your politicians.

## A FUTURE FOR RURAL CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

FRANÇOIS MATARASSO

WE HAVE CONSTRUCTED a conference where we were very consciously trying to bring together contrasting examples of successful rural cultural development. One of the things that I have been most impressed by over the last two and a half days has been how much common ground there is between all these projects, although they are so very different. We need to understand what works and why it works. We need to develop this understanding in a practical way, so that we can take it forward to people who are not active in the cultural sector, and who do not have the passion and understanding that is brought together here. We need to take an analytical approach to the issues we have been listening to if we are going to reconcile the similarities and the extraordinary diversity within these projects. So, I am going to focus on some of the principles that seem to me to be common to the projects that have been presented.

Here are some of the key issues. They are presented neither as problems nor solutions because it is striking how often the problems have their own solutions within them. I have left them within the four themes that we took yesterday: culture, inclusion, sustainability and infrastructure.

There is the issue of accessibility and at the same time of engaging people, and that touches fundamentally on the tensions about meanings and values, which Robert Livingston has just articulated so clearly—namely, that actually we do have different meanings and different values. If culture is anything it's about the expression of our values and the construction of meanings, so it is never going to be possible to resolve those tensions. We may be wiser to accept them and work with them.

There is the challenge of authenticity and integrity and what we mean by that. There are simplistic notions of authenticity; there are more complex ones. There is a tension in valuing the near and the familiar. Sometimes we may value it more; at others we may overvalue it. Sometimes we may undervalue it in contrast with the new, the distant and the imported.

There is the question of how we define and achieve quality. We all know it is what we want but, partly because we do have such different notions of meanings and values, we all have different ways of understanding what we mean by quality. Thus, it was forcefully pointed out that we have to see rural communities as being stuffed with culture already, full of things happening, full of relationships and meanings and values and quality.

Some of the questions around inclusion are, in their way, other ways of articulating what I have just said. Are we looking to challenge things or people? Are we looking to challenge ourselves or do we fall into simple populism? There are clearly financial and many other limitations to people's participation.

### Issues

#### CULTURE

- Accessibility and engaging people
- Tensions about meanings and values
- Authenticity and integrity
- Valuing the near and familiar or the new and distant
- Defining and achieving quality
- Connecting existing and external dynamics

#### INCLUSION

- Challenge or populism?
- Financial and other limitations to participation

- Top-down approaches
- Local, incoming and distant actors
- Attitudes on all sides
- Inclusion of the arts, artists and creativity

### *SUSTAINABILITY*

- Sustainability or viability?
- Political support, local ownership
- Education and work with children
- Securing the succession
- Appropriate administrative support
- A joined-up approach to rural problems
- Getting policy right
- Funding is crucial
- Buildings and resources

There are problems with top-down approaches, but at the same time some of the work that we have seen does come from outside. It does challenge and it does raise people's sights and horizons for that reason. The relationships between local, incoming and distant actors, by which I mean people who are born or long-established in communities, people who are recent arrivals and people who may only be visitors, are critical. They all interact, they all have an influence on each others' attitudes on all sides; attitudes to culture, attitudes to rural communities, attitudes to urban communities and so on. Inclusion of the arts is an important question, inclusion of artists and more broadly inclusion of creativity as a force within communities is another.

There are many issues in terms of sustainability. Are we really talking about sustainability or are we talking about viability? What do we mean by those terms? We need to think more deeply about sustainability. It is not just about money, as we heard very clearly from Günther Moschig's presentation on the dangers of sustainability. It can lead to stagnation simply because, it is a financially sustainable project, but it is not renewing itself.

There is the importance of political support and simultaneously of local ownership. Politics are not confined to what happens in the parliament or the council chamber. Politics happen at a very human level in every community. Education and work with children is seen, not only here but by cultural activists in almost every situation that I work with, as a future for their work. I agree with that although I sometimes think that it is viewed a bit like the Jesuits' maxim 'Give me a child till the age of seven and I've got him for life'. There has to be more to the issue than that.

Then there is the problem of securing the succession, how we ensure that projects, programmes, initiatives are handed on, so that they don't remain forever dependent on an individual or a small group of people. That is partly about appropriate administrative support, both within the projects and the communities. The organisations and structures trying to foster rural cultural development need such support. They also need, to use the jargon, an appropriate 'interface' that people in rural communities can link with, rather than expecting them to behave like cultural workers in urban communities.

This joined-up approach to rural problems is a question of who has responsibility, and how much can be done in the scale of the issues that we have. Clearly a joined-up approach depends on getting a policy right. It depends on funding and it depends on buildings and resources.

## *INFRASTRUCTURE*

- Inflexibility of product, resources and space
- Marketing
- Transport
- Rethinking relationships
- Remoteness can be an advantage
- Understanding what works

## **Understanding what works**

### *TYPES OF PROJECT*

- Site specific (Schloß Elmau) and transforming place (Kuhmo)
- Traditional (Fèis Rois) contemporary (SPUR/IG) and both (Duff House)
- National (Historic Scotland) regional (Kulturhøst) and local (Taigh Chearsabhagh)
- Cultural (Couvent de la Tourette) social and economic goals (Tate St Ives)
- All of the above (Hå gamle prestegard and many of the others)

I would like to make some comments about infrastructure and the inflexibility of products that are being offered to rural communities, about resources and spaces, about issues of marketing and transport and rethinking relationships. I was very struck by the comments that were made about networking across communities, not only between rural areas and urban areas, but between rural areas, and a final point that sometimes remoteness can be an advantage.

Maybe the people who have the biggest problems are the ones who are twenty five kilometres from a major city rather the ones who are two hundred and fifty kilometres away. One illustration of this are the communities in the Blue Mountains in Australia. One of their problems is that they are only an hour or two from Sydney, and they are a beautiful rural area. So visitors come from Sydney on day trips. They come in buses, they wander round and the people of the Blue Mountains have all the problems of tourism and visitors and the demands on their infrastructure, but very few of the benefits because people do not stay overnight or engage in any meaningful way with those communities. Sometimes the fact that to come to Banff, you have to invest a number of days to make it possible, may in its own way be an advantage.

So that is just a quick summary of some of the discussion that we finished yesterday.

I then thought about the types of projects that we have been looking at. This is just to remind ourselves of the variety. Some have been site specific, like Schloss Elmau, but others like Kuhmo have transformed the places where they happen. They are very dependent on the silence, the character and the landscape of the place but there was nothing in Kuhmo that said 'this has to happen here'. Some have been rooted in traditional activities like Fèis Rois or contemporary activities or in both. In fact probably the majority of what we have seen has been making a link between traditional and contemporary activities and culture. I could also have said traditional or classical activities.

Some of the projects have a national scope like Historic Scotland, others are regional like the Cultural Harvest in Denmark and others are intensely local. Some are, above all, cultural in their aspirations, the Couvent de la Tourette springs to mind. It is all about architecture and the experience of that building. Others, like Tate St Ives, whilst remaining very much cultural, have been built on clear social and economic goals.

Hå Gamle Prestegard, like many of the other projects, shows how you can do all of these things. So it becomes very difficult to say that there is a model, that there is one way of doing this, even that there is a particular kind of thing we can do. Trying to understand what might work becomes very difficult.

If you look at it by type of organisation or type of development, you are similarly confronted with contrasting models. If you look at the scale or the type of support or the cultural values or the cultural assets that are being developed, it is hard to reach any conclusions. If you look at the purpose of the activity or its eventual impact, it is equally difficult to try to draw lessons and say, ‘Well this is what works and this is what doesn’t.’ However, and I think this is where Robert Livingston has opened up a very helpful line for us in talking about principles, if we think about these projects analytically, then I think that we can start to say they do have a lot of things in common.

#### *TAXONOMY*

- By type of organisation or development
- By scale or type of support
- By cultural values or assets
- By purpose or impact

That common ground lies in how the projects have worked, though they may have interpreted that working in many different ways. I have tried to draw out some common threads from what I have been listening to over the last two days. These common threads seem to apply, if not to all of the projects, then to most of them. I propose to explain the nine principles that seem to me to characterise successful rural cultural development. I will then invite you to kick them around and pull them apart and change them, to add to them and improve them, in the hope that by the end of the morning we can arrive at some kind of understanding. We may then be able to take some concrete ideas to other people, like elected members, politicians, professionals in other sectors, who are not specialists and who do not have a clear understanding of cultural development.

### **Principles of success**

#### *VALUING CULTURE*

- Understanding culture and its potential
- Recognising the influence of culture on people’s aspirations and goals
- Recognising and valuing diversity
- Linking the past and the present
- Encouraging debate and coping with opposition

#### **1. Valuing Culture**

The first of the principles is to value culture—understanding culture and its potential. Again Robert has touched on the parlour game aspect of debating culture. The fact that we may never agree what culture is and how we define it does not mean that we should worry or give up on the idea of talking about it and trying to understand it and its potential in our communities. In relation to that, recognising the influence of culture on people’s aspirations and goals is crucial. So many of the projects seem to me to demonstrate this. The kinds of communities that we have been hearing about, that people want to build and to develop and to nurture in their places, are ultimately dependent on the culture of those people. That is what makes them want a certain kind of development, a certain kind of society, because of their cultural values.

Recognising and valuing diversity is again one of the points that Robert has mentioned. It sounds like political correctness but it is not meant to be. It is a reality. We live in a multi-cultural, multi-



ethnic and extraordinarily diverse world, a world where people have different meanings, different identities and different values and that is a source of enormous richness to us. We need to recognise and value that. The diversity of rural cultural responses and initiatives has been very evident in the course of the last two days. For me one of the most exciting things about the projects is how different they all are, and yet how valuable each is in its own place and in its own community.

We need to link the past and the present. It is one of the strengths and one of the particular characteristics of rural cultural development that it's very comfortable, like Taigh Chearsabhagh or Duff House with linking contemporary art and local history. I think that is one of the distinctive things about it.

We need to encourage debate and cope with opposition. Culture is about debate. The creation and development of meanings is all about debate. If we did not have culture, we would be at each others' throats. Culture is what allows us to talk to each other like civilised people. Again I was very struck by the point that Richard Carew Pole made about Tate St. Ives—how coping with opposition was actually good for the project because it forced them to sharpen up their thinking, to take on board other people's ideas and to explain themselves clearly.

### *DIG WHERE YOU STAND*

- Seeing the unique qualities of place, landscape, past, present and people
- Building for local people—and visitors
- Trusting local judgement and experience
- A rechargeable cultural battery

### **2. Dig where you stand**

I should credit the Living Archive Project in Milton Keynes because 'dig where you stand' is their motto. It is one of the things about the Living Archive Project that is wonderful. Milton Keynes did not exist thirty-five years ago. It is a new town that was constructed onto an existing skeleton of villages in Buckinghamshire. Most of the people who live in Milton Keynes were not from there, although obviously over time that is changing. So how is it that a new city has probably the most vibrant, oral history project in England today? It is because the people are not new, and people have stories. It is precisely because they are a new town that they need their stories so much. This notion of looking at where you are and discovering its richness is very important, seeing the unique qualities of the place, the landscape, the past, the present circumstances and the people. In all the presentations that we have heard, that is what people have been talking about; the silence, the landscape, the beauty of the place, the particular magic of it.

'Digging where you stand' is also about building for local people and for visitors certainly, but you build for visitors by building for local people. Again Robert has just given us examples of 'Clan Land', those kinds of visitor attractions where a marketing approach is taken to construct an artificial product that

it is thought might be attractive to people.

Most people can see through that as they can see through most marketing initiatives. What people want in cultural terms is 'reality' not 'spin'. They want, in the phrase that I used earlier, to participate in someone else's culture and that is where fruitful and sustainable and productive developments happen.

Trusting local judgement and experience is crucial. Everywhere is different and the experts in that difference are those who live there. They are the people who can tell you, if you build that wall in that way, in that place, it will fall down. So this idea of local judgement, of what people feel is right or wrong for their community, is fundamental.

I am interested in this idea that culture is like a battery. It has power. Great artists imbue objects with power that radiates long after they have gone, long after the cultures and values and meanings of their lives have gone. It is the way that Callanish radiates power for us now, when we don't have the first idea of what the people who built Callanish were like really. We can make it up, but we don't know. At the same time in places like the Couvent de La Tourette, Historic Scotland properties, Schloss Elmau, Duff House and many other places new layers of cultural meaning are being laid down, recharging the battery. What is happening now is adding to that value, to that cultural radiance by giving a new impetus and a new layer and a new set of meanings.

#### *RECOGNISING LEADERSHIP*

- Trusting individual vision
- Living with individual passion
- Artists often involved in other roles
- Working to ensure renewal

#### *WORKING FLEXIBLY*

- Inventing new models
- Working with what there is, re-using, recycling
- Turning weaknesses into strengths
- Responding to circumstances and opportunities

### **3. Recognising Leadership**

Leadership is clearly crucial. We have heard about it again and again. We have to trust individual visions or the visions of small groups of people. It also means that we have to live with individual passion and that can be very hard, particularly in small communities. It has been interesting to see how often artists act as leaders, although it is not always been evidently stated. Quite a number of projects presented have been artist-driven. There have been artists who have been involved and taken on other roles. Rita Hunter herself is a singer, Arthur Cormack is a singer: they have enabled artists to take their passion into development. I think that has been important.

### **4. Working Flexibly**

There is the question of ensuring renewal so that the succession is guaranteed. We have heard a great deal about working flexibly, inventing new models. Many of the models of projects we have seen are not the same as those that exist in urban areas. I would say that many of the cultural models that we see in urban areas are conventional. They are traditional; they are the ways in which things have always been done. Again the example we have just had

- Making unexpected connections
- An incremental approach to development

of a national theatre is significant. A national theatre is seen as something that should be a building in the capital. The challenges and the difficulties of working in rural areas, the lack of resources and infrastructure and critical mass, very often lead people into inventing new models and new ways of working. They are working with what is there. They are reusing. They are recycling. They are piggy-backing. I love the image from Kuhmo of the concert in the farmhouse. It reminded me of the Night of the Arts in Reykjavik. Once a year it seems that the whole of Iceland comes to Reykjavik: there are concerts in shops and in the streets because again Reykjavik is not a place hugely endowed with cultural infrastructure.

Turning weaknesses into strengths is very characteristic—turning that sense of remoteness into something that enables you to work differently, responding to the circumstances and the opportunities you have. We have often heard, going back to Rita Hunter’s presentation of *Fèis Rois*, the way in which an incremental, developmental approach was taken, in which they were able to respond to new opportunities, new circumstances and new demands when they came up.

That is not the same as losing your sense of vision. I think it was Graeme Munro who said, very clearly, that you need to build partnership but you have to know what your own values are. You can only respond to circumstances and opportunities, you can only make unexpected connections if at the heart of it you have got vision, the leadership that means you know where you are going.

#### *NURTURING PARTICIPATION*

- Securing involvement
- Developing different ways to contribute
- Valuing volunteering, paying professionalism
- Giving in fair exchange

#### **5. Nurturing Participation**

Nurturing participation, I think, touches on one of the most fundamental issues that we have heard about, the involvement and ownership of local people. It may take a long time to build, it may come very quickly; it may take many forms. It is interesting to see the ways in which successful projects have been able to involve people in lots of different capacities, not simply as audiences, but in developing projects, in partnering artists, in planning initiatives and so on. Although it is not been specifically talked about today, I know from my own experience how often people who become involved in cultural projects then go on to develop other sometimes non-cultural initiatives. It is a kind of infectious thing, succeeding in developing initiatives. So those different ways of contributing are clearly important.

Valuing volunteering—we probably did have some confusion about language when we were talking about voluntary arts and amateur arts and so on. Volunteering is crucial. It is a vital resource, and not only to rural communities. In the end I think that the successful projects work because people *want* to make

them happen. That is different from exploiting people's goodwill. Nobody wants that, and so the notion of paying professional work at a professional rate is a counterpart to valuing volunteering. Maybe those are summed up in the notion of a fair exchange.

### *BUILDING REAL PARTNERSHIPS*

- Culture is about relationship
- Openness and honesty to build trust
- Accessible management and supporters
- Developing networks and mutual support

## **6. Building Real Partnerships**

We should always remember that culture is ultimately about relationship. It is about an artist speaking to somebody else. It is about a writer communicating. It is about a community coming together. It is about a community speaking to another community, a nation speaking to other nations. Relationship is critical. We all know that openness and honesty is vital, essential to building trust.

Accessible management and accessible supporters is also clearly crucial. A characteristic of some of the projects is the sense that the people involved are very closely accessible and part of the community. I was struck by Fiona Pearson talking about the Road End projects of Taigh Chearsabhagh and being involved in one of these projects in her own community. She was there, able to answer questions, being able to advocate for the project in her own township.

Developing networks and mutual support—one of the important things about this conference is the opportunity to develop networks between like-minded people and people with similar experiences.

### *DEMONSTRATING LOCAL BENEFIT*

- Understanding other people's needs
- Connecting with young people
- Taking the time to talk and listen
- Looking for added value
- Realism about the potential
- Undertaking evaluation
- Understanding advocacy

## **7. Demonstrating Local Benefit**

Demonstrating local benefit is hugely important. I think the projects that have been most successful are those that have been able to communicate to other people why they are important. They are able to communicate that they are an arts project, or they are a heritage project, or they are a local history project, or even an environmental cultural project, but actually they are also about all sorts of other benefits at the same time. Listening to Olivier du Payrat's presentation of La Tourette I felt that perhaps the difficulties with the local community arose from their not being able to see anything of direct value to themselves: Like the people in the Blue Mountains, you get the visitors, but you do not get any of the benefit. So understanding other people's needs is clearly crucial—and those other people may be local people, or they may be politicians from further afield. I spoke to one of the elected members from Aberdeenshire last night, who was telling me that the money they put into Duff House is the equivalent of twelve teachers and that they need to be able to explain to their electorate why, when school budgets are being squeezed, it is worth putting that money into Duff House. Now he was not saying that he couldn't do that, nor that he wasn't willing to explain why it was

worthwhile, but he was expressing his need to be able to have explanations he could take to his community.

Taking the time to talk and listen is fairly self-evident. It is the kind of thing, like involving local people, that we all believe in and we all know but clearly some projects are better at it than others and they benefit as a result.

Looking for added value—what can the art project or the cultural project do for somebody else? This point of connecting with young people is clearly of great importance in all communities, and certainly in rural communities where there is a deep sense that the young people are the future of that community. It is important to ensure that they are able to grow, to blossom and to take forward some of the community's identity and sense of its past.

In demonstrating local benefit we always have to have realism about the potential of what we can do. The points that were made about Kuhmo were very eloquent. If you are looking at a 15% decline in population over the last few years, there is only going to be so much that a chamber music festival can do, however good it is. We have to be very careful to avoid the boosterism that we have sometimes encountered in the cultural field.

We need to undertake evaluation, both to understand the successes and failures of our work, but also to be able to communicate them. I have put in understanding and advocacy because evaluation and advocacy are different activities. Evaluation may provide you with some of the material to undertake advocacy, but advocacy is a different task, closely allied to demonstrating local benefit.

#### *PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY*

- Avoiding undue dependency
- Building skills and experience
- Balancing opportunity and need
- Ensuring adaptability, avoiding stagnation
- Taking a long-term view: programmes not projects

#### **8. Planning for Sustainability**

Dependency is always going to be a matter of balance. How much external support does the project need and how secure is that external support? Choices will vary from situation to situation, but I think that projects that are going to be sustainable over the long term, are going to do everything they can to minimise their dependency on external resources. Building skills and experience is clearly an important part of that and many of the projects have talked about their training work. For instance, the Cultural Harvest Project from Denmark is very impressive in the way it passes on information like the database of press contacts, giving people marketing support and so on.

We have to remain adaptable and at the same time to avoid stagnation, and we need to take a long-term view. People talked yesterday about ten years, twelve years: we have to look at programmes not projects. We live in a project culture where the funding system in Britain, at least, changes almost weekly (or so it

sometimes seems) in its priorities and its interests. We have to recognise the value of long-term programmes but, at the same time, we have to remember that you can do things incredibly quickly, incredibly successfully.

You can go from a standing start to a festival attracting forty thousand people in two or three years. We have heard that as well. So we should not only have our eyes on the long picture. We need to be pursuing quality, reaching for the best, but also re-thinking and re-defining the best. The best is going to mean different things for different people, in different communities and we have to live with that and accept that as a positive thing, not a problem.

### *PURSUING QUALITY*

- Reaching for the best
- Rethinking and redefining the best
- Seriousness, not professionalism

### **9. Pursuing Quality**

I have put seriousness not professionalism because it's seriousness that has struck me in most of the presentations that we have heard—this serious passion and commitment to what is being done. But not professionalism in the negative sense, the kind of professionalism that says, 'Oh well, we must all be very bureaucratic and professionalise everything'. I think that you can be just as serious in a voluntary amateur project as you can being a professionally funded one. Seriousness and your pursuit of quality is not dependent on the model that you have adopted.

**T**O CONCLUDE, these are nine principles that seem to me to characterise all of the projects we have looked at. What I am trying to say here is that the successful projects are the ones that tend to reflect these ideas. The unsuccessful projects will be ones that do not support these kinds of approaches. Now, it maybe that not every project will reflect all of those things because, as I have said, the diversity is enormous and every different community will come up with its own answers. But, broadly speaking, there are likely to be good reasons, clear reasons, understandable and explainable reasons why a project is successful without leadership or without building real partnerships or without planning for sustainability.

# Appendix 1 ON THE EDGE

## A New Articulation of the Sustainability of the Visual Arts

www.ontheedgeresearch.org

### Introduction

ON THE EDGE is a research led initiative co-ordinated by Gray's School of Art, the Robert Gordon University in collaboration with François Matarasso of Comedia, an international organisation in cultural policy research. The research articulates a new understanding of the value of creativity focusing on the visual arts. The situation in which we test this understanding is remote/rural. The nature of the challenge is to create new ways of working that are both responsive to the unique challenges and opportunities of remote contexts and that are sustainable within them. The method by which we test this is the practice of the visual arts. We believe that the emergent methodology, while in development in the visual arts, is fundamentally transferable to other forms of cultural activity.

We understand that the contributors to creative practice in the visual arts are artists, administrators and audience and we define these as 'shapers'. These shapers are simultaneously researchers, practitioners, managers and participants in creativity. Viewed this way they are all contributors and have responsibility for the sustainability of that creativity. We work through partnership addressing shared questions and challenges that are framed within five experimental visual arts projects. These projects are developed with the partner organisations in the North East of Scotland who themselves manifest different structures, dynamics and stakeholders.

*We articulate the value of creativity as being able to*

- delight, fascinate, question and entertain
- contribute to the development of social and economic well-being
- be sustained by a culture of networking and connectedness
- recognise that co-operation itself adds value

### Research Questions

- What constitutes sustainable visual art practice that is innovative and relevant within specific cultural contexts?
- How can the process of developing new practices be visualised and understood in remote rural contexts?
- What are appropriate methods of evaluating these practices in artistic as well as social, cultural and economic terms?
- In a specific remote and rural location such as North-East Scotland, what is the role of research and visual art practice to issues of developing and sustaining culture?

- In what ways can the outcomes of research and practice within a remote rural context inform the issues of value and modes of practice in the arts in other cultural contexts, including the urban/metropolitan?

### **Outcomes**

- Five experimental projects in NE Scotland in remote rural locations resulting in artworks as well as documentation of arriving at the artworks. The five projects are underpinned by the notion of 'home' as a mechanism for embedding the visual arts in everyday life. They are currently under construction
- A series of workshops running in parallel with the projects that develop the methodology of evaluation
- A series of publications/papers/seminar papers to key sectors of cultural development represented in the research; academic, arts administration, cultural policy, visual art practice and audiences
- A Makar's website as artwork—a digital representation of contemporary 'making' in remote rural areas
- A clearly articulated methodology for framing and evaluating questions of value of the visual arts from artistic as well as social and economic perspectives that is transferable to other cultural activities

### **Funding**

Arts and Humanities Board Research grant £304,000  
(EURO 498,688) for three years

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THE ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY

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## Appendix 3 'ON THE EDGE'

### List of the Artists and Performers

*You saw them, you enjoyed them, but who were they?*

Call Duff House on 01261 818181  
for details of how to contact any of the artists or  
performers featured in 'On the Edge'

#### Thursday

MALIMBO DRUMMERS

JUMPED UP, *performance group*

directed by Sue Mitchell and Leo Stridgen

LORNA MCLAREN, *melodian*

JOHN KENNY, 'Carnyx & Co'

JONATHAN CLAXTON, *artist*, 'Coffee Cup Conversations'

supported by Deveron Arts

REBECCA MILLING, *artist*, 'Ghost Nurse'

supported by Scottish Sculpture Workshop, [www.ssw.org.uk](http://www.ssw.org.uk)

GAYE ANTHONY and TRISH NORMAN, *singers*

ALEC GREEN, *penny whistle*

PAM STEWART, 'Victorian Ghost', costume from Haddo Arts Trust

#### Friday

PAUL ANDERSON, *fiddle*

REBECCA MILLING, *artist*, 'Victorian Ghost'

pinhole camera photograph

supported by Scottish Sculpture Workshop, [www.ssw.org.uk](http://www.ssw.org.uk)

PIPELINE, Visual Art Films by Anne Bevan

supported by Peacock Visual Arts

ENDLESSLY, Visual Arts Films by Dalziel & Scullion

ANOTHER LAND, Visual Arts Film by Dalziel & Scullion

supported by Aberdeen Art Gallery

MACDUFF PERFORMANCE GROUP

choreography by Sara Schena and Fran Stridgeon

AURORA, *ceilidh band and piper*

#### Saturday

GARETH JOHN, *cello*

supported by the Deveron Festival

BEGGAR'S FEAST, *folk band*

FRANK BRUCE, 'Colleopard Sculpture Garden'

SOUTH PARK SCHOOL, *performance*, 'Born of Fraserburgh'

created by Kim Ritchie and Fran Stridgen

project managed by Sara Schena

HEATHER DELDAY and GAWAIN DOUGLAS

'Baxter tins and Baxter airport shop'

supported by Gray's School of Art

*The artistic programme was organised in association with  
the Macduff Arts Centre*

## Appendix 4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS and thanks

Dear Colleagues,

### *Partnership*

I would like to wholeheartedly thank every organisation and every individual who has contributed to the success of On the Edge, both the conference event itself and also this report. In particular it was great working in partnership with the *North Sea Commission* and *Gray's School of Art, The Robert Gordon University*, and their representatives.

### *Financial Support*

*Duff House's* three partners, the *National Galleries of Scotland*, *Historic Scotland* and *Aberdeenshire Council* have contributed both financially and through advice and guidance.

Many different sponsors came on board and substantial financial contributions have been received from the *Scottish Arts Council* and *Scottish Enterprise Grampian*, as well as *Texaco-Aberdeen*, which attracted support from *Arts and Business*.

### *Support In Kind*

Many, many other smaller and bigger contributions have been received to make the conference such a warm and colourful event. *Baxter's of Speyside* provided us with a full Scottish buffet, *Dewar's Distillers* hosted the champagne reception, *Sangs of Banff* gave us soft drinks, *Gauld's Fruit & Veg* brought broccoli and other veg for the decorations and table pieces, *Grampian Country Food* and *Macduff Shellfish* gave us culinary products from land and sea respectively from this part of Scotland. *St Helen's Guesthouse* hosted many of our guests free of charge and the *Banff and Buchan Arts Forum* made sure that local arts groups got a reduced price through a generous grant.

### *International Partnership*

It was a great pleasure to work with so many cultural representatives of European countries for the first time, namely the *Austrian Cultural Institute*, the *Danish Cultural Institute*, the *Goethe Institute*, the *Finnish Institute* in London, the *Royal Swedish Embassy* and the *Institute Français d'Ecosse* who all helped in appointing the right speakers and then bringing them to Banff.

### *Artistic programme*

The conference was made a lively cultural event by a full artistic programme—and we are indebted to the artists, a full list of whom is to be found as an appendix to this report. Please do not hesitate to ring us if you want to get in touch with one or other of them.

Many arts organizations in this area, including *Aberdeen Art Gallery*, *Deveron Arts*, *Deveron Festival*, *Peacock Visual Arts*, *Museum of Scottish Lighthouses*, *Scottish Sculpture Workshop* and the *Aberdeenshire Arts* team, all have contributed to the fringe programme displaying the best of what we have on offer in our area from traditional music, to youth dance to contemporary film.

I would like to thank François Matarasso, the conference facilitator, who has drawn the individual experiences of being 'on the edge' into a coherent set of principles for evaluating success in future development of culture in remote rural locations.

I am in debt for the full support of all my colleagues at Duff House, in particular, Jo Anthony, Jo Edwards, Jenny Lodge, and John Mair, all of them have given their full support, despite unpaid overtime, - not least forgetting Charles Burnett, the Chamberlain of the House for his guidance and saintly patience. Lots of patience was also required from our first-class designer Mark Samouelle.

Particular thanks also to my friend Luise Janniche for her determined efforts to insure the smooth running of the event, and keeping an eye on the speaker's time in her disguise as 'hat lady'; her services are very much recommended.

This document would not have come about without the tireless efforts of my colleague and companion Anne Douglas in co-ordinating and editing it. Considerable input was also provided by Heather Delday, Gawain Douglas, Alison Young and Simmone Davidson of Gray's School of Art. Don Addison was responsible for putting our content and ideas into a clear and aesthetic design.

As to myself, I enjoyed every minute of it, the fascinating contributions from the edge, the artistic fringe programme and above all the international camaraderie. We received many, many postcards and notes from the participants, which were very encouraging to progress the artistic spirit in this part of the world. Let me take the opportunity to say that we thoroughly enjoyed having you all here and that we hope to stay in touch. Hope to see you soon.

With best Wishes



CLAUDIA ZEISKE  
Development Manager  
Duff House  
Banff  
January 2002