

WORKING IN PUBLIC

Evaluative report on the collaboration of the higher education and the funding sectors in researching, developing and promoting art in the public realm as exemplified in the project 'Working in Public'

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Commissioned by
Scottish Arts Council

Final Draft for consideration by interviewees and other participants
in 'Working in Public'
6 August 2009

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Summary

Strong arguments can be made, in theory, for multi-disciplinary and collaborative projects that develop, promote and critique art in the public realm. The practices in that field of art and social engagement are themselves composite; the art works and projects involve multiple variations of practices, processes and publics. The talents involved extend beyond those of conventional arts education, into areas like conflict resolution, mediation, ethics, cultural power and ecological understanding. Many projects themselves sweep across sectoral divides. To engage with this field, and to develop it, requires similarly diverse, and continually inventive approaches.

Working in Public, a collaborative, cross-sectoral project between On the Edge/ Gray's School of Art and the Scottish Arts Council, was an ambitious, novel and comprehensive engagement with the field. It exemplified those theoretical arguments, and, as ground-level experience, provided evidence from which assess what higher education can offer as a method and structure for progressing art in the public realm. It provides, too, a basis for consideration of how the funding and higher education sectors can work together on research into and development of this field.

The body of this report is based on interviews with 12 participants in Working in Public, conducted by Wallace Heim. The interviews ranged over many facets of the project and produced highly varied responses. Consistent among them, and mentioned most often without prompting, was the positive value of the academic contributions, the speakers' presentations, the case study and the readings, about which there was near-full agreement. The acclimatisation to an academic structure and method was both difficult and stimulating; the difficulties most often outweighed by the excitement and provocation of access to the ideas framing the sessions, to the speakers, to the case study, to other members of the Core Group. This is extensively detailed in the report.

The interviews, too, brought out sensitive critiques of the methods and organisation of the project. Most pertinent here is the expression from many for more time with the academic material; more depth in the investigation of the theories and interrogation of the readings; for parts of the project to allow for different forms of learning, possibly more akin to research. These comments indicate, I think, a desire for more projects in an academic-like structure, for more experimentation with the form of subsequent projects, adapted from the experiences of Working in Public.

Working in Public did, in one respondent's comment, 'map a territory', set out areas for further study. I think it did more than that; for many respondents, the material continues to influence some aspect of their practice. But, also, it could have done more to rigorously challenge practices and assumptions in the field of work, which is one of the irreplaceable contributions higher education can make.

From this evidence, the report strongly supports the continuance of co-sponsored, cross-sectoral projects between public arts funding bodies and higher education. The remits and demands from each sector will differ, but the notion that they should fund wholly separate activities does not hold.

The field of work has an unique relation to policy and funding policy; the methods of practice can blur the boundaries between academics – artists – publics – civic organisers. Too, the ethos of the practice is for collaboration, and, more widely, the relation of engaged practitioners to funding bodies is changing, for some, to one of more open dialogue. The practice itself may be modifying the conventional separation.

This applies, as well, to the collaboration at an institutional level, between higher education and the funding sector. How that happens will be negotiated each time; but the process of those negotiations and frictions can be of benefit to both sectors. It is important for the funding sector not to be outside the process itself, but involved, as is fitting for each project. Those negotiations are crucial, too, for establishing a level of trust which allows for an academic rigour to be applied to the assumptions of the funding and public sectors, and allows for those sectors in turn to critique the methods and assumptions of academia. This is not just an obvious suggestion for good practice, but a suggestion for incorporating some of the ethos of high quality, challenging art in the public realm into the institutional structures which support it.

The benefits from collaborative projects for participants has been shown, not least, the ability of higher education and state funding sectors to together draw in academics and practitioners of exceptional capability, and to open doors to areas of public life which might otherwise be closed. At an institutional level, another benefit is that in the wider view of the creation of knowledge, these projects are especially important in their capacity not just to represent knowledge, but to generate it, and disseminate it in ways which do not entirely belong to either sector or the participants; it's collaborative.

Evaluation brief

The evaluation is to focus on the value of the collaboration between the sectors involved in Working in Public: the higher education sector, the policy sector and artist practitioners. The evaluation is to consider what Working in Public, as a project based in higher education, offered as a method and structure for progressing public art practice. This is in the context of investigating and proposing, as possible, how the funding and higher education sectors could work together on research into and development of art in the public realm, based on the experience of Working in Public.

The value of the project for individual participants is not the focus of the evaluation, but it will be based on the responses from participants for whom the project was intended. Nor is the evaluation proposing to assess fully whether and how Working in Progress met its stated aims and objectives as a project. Although those assessments are relevant, the evaluation is directed towards recommendations on cross-sectoral collaboration and the relation between funding bodies and higher education in developing public art practices.

Evaluation methodology

This report is based on interviews with 12 people involved in Working in Public undertaken between 24 June and 13 July 2009. Eleven of the respondents were in the Core Group. It was decided that interviews with Core Group participants would be most valuable as these were the practitioners who may have been benefited. Although this report may contribute to discussions between the Scottish Arts Council, Gray's School of Art / On the Edge and representatives from other policy spheres, representatives from those organisations were not interviewed.

Seven interviews were conducted by telephone or skype, with written notes taken; five interviews were conducted face-to-face, with audio recordings taken. One brief session was possible with two interviewees in conversation. Interviews were between 30 and 50 minutes long. It was agreed with all respondents that the interviews would be made anonymous in this report. All respondents agreed to be listed as having been interviewed. I agree to hold securely all documentation of those interviews.

The interviews were highly qualitative and conversational; there was no formal questionnaire or attempt to procure measurable data. Coming almost two years after the close of Working in Public, it was anticipated that the interviews would be reflective and that memories of the project would be uneven.

There was a set of four general questions guiding each interview, but each conversation was adapted to the responses of the interviewee. The questions were intentionally open-ended as to the value of any particular element with Working in Public, in order to give me an understanding of how each participant viewed the project in as much context as possible. There were adjoining questions on the role and effect of the more academic elements, should those come up, or not, in the respondents' replies. Those four questions were:

1. Is there any aspect of your experience of Working in Public that has influenced, or is influencing your work or how you are thinking about your work?
2. Working in Public involved the combination of elements, processes and participants from differing spheres. How well did that combination work?
3. Working in Public dealt with major issues and ideas about working in the public realm. Did any of these ideas have importance for you?
4. What recommendations would you have for a future cross-sectoral project about art in the public realm?

The people interviewed were chosen to represent most professional spheres involved in Working in Public. I chose not to speak with people I know professionally or personally. The people interviewed were:

Jean Cameron, producer, artist
Ruth Barker, artist, writer (now editor, PAR+RS)
Keith Donnelly, Arts Development Officer Visual Arts, South Lanarkshire Council
Kate Foster, artist
Kate Gray, artist, curator
Suzanne Lacy, artist
Roxanna Meechan, artist, Visual Arts Officer (at time of project for the Highland Council)
Kerstin Mey, academic
Janice Parker, dancer, choreographer

Adele Patrick, director, Glasgow Women's Library
Venda Pollock, academic
Monika Vykoukal, curator

A further understanding of Working in Public has been provided by my attendance at the first public lecture, 27 March 2007, 'Aesthetic and Ethics of Working in Public', and attendance at the final seminar 'Working in Public. A Public Conversation' at the Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, 25 September 2007. Attendance at these events was not as part of evaluative research, but out of personal interest and by invitation.

This report is not based on observation of or involvement in any other parts of Working in Public. As well, this report does not include any related literature review, or secondary research.

Appendix A is a sampling of responses from the interviews.

Findings from the interviews

The interviews provided highly varied responses. In all the interviews, though, there were three aspects of Working in Public consistently mentioned, most often without prompting: 1) the positive value of the academic contributions - the speakers and the readings - about which there was near-full agreement, if from divergent perspectives; 2) the case study and contributions by Suzanne Lacy, about which views differed but with general agreement on its educational, for some inspirational, value; and 3) the final session at the Scottish Parliament, about which views differed substantially. The contributions by Suzanne Lacy, and the session at the Scottish Parliament are crucial to understanding the effect of the Project, but rather than focus on them directly, they will be mentioned in the context of the report's brief.

Beyond these similarities, each respondent had unique perceptions and accounts, some overlapping, most very specific to each person's practice and position, all of which contribute to a textural understanding of Working in Public. This report does not attempt to collate those responses, or weigh them; rather to give an account of them as the major part in an evaluative judgment.

I want to begin with the findings from the interviews, with my commentary, beginning with responses to the composite structure of Working in Public. Then to present the responses more specifically to the academic dimensions of the project before considering the policy sector dimensions and responses regarding the funding sector. Following is participants' responses to the value of the Working in Public on their practice, and their recommendations. I also want to consider whether Working in Public was sufficiently challenging.

This section presents the interview material which informs the conclusions of the next section.

The composite structure of Working in Public

There was broad agreement, and an acceptance without surprise, as to the necessity of having multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral approaches to art in the public realm. It reflects the practice itself, which is composite. Further, it was already accepted by many arts practitioners, and not only the academics interviewed, that artists and academics co-exist; with acknowledgement that the academic dimensions provided a novel structure at the time. Most thought that the relevant parts of the field were represented in the Core Group. Others thought that there could have been more arts practitioners, arts critics, or people working in the policy sector at a high level.

Analyses of how well the different formats and methods of meeting together worked run throughout this report. In general, in theory, there was wide acceptance of it being necessary, a strength, inventive; the diversity of formats allowed people to come into the project from different levels and areas of experience, at different stages in their careers. There was criticism, though, that there wasn't sufficient collaboration, or connection between the elements. There could have been mechanisms, devices, strategies which would have better enabled this.

- 'Bring together different perspectives – activists, artists, academics – all bringing detailed knowledge – isn't always easy. It provided productive friction and conflict.'
- 'The collaborative development, between academics or the academic arenas and between practice, theory and policy, didn't happen. We saw people, we met people, but collaboration didn't happen.'

In my view, one of the strengths of the structure of Working in Public, is that it attempted, within an academic context, to keep to some of the ethos of the field of socially engaged art, some of the processes of dialogue,

participation, group and public involvement. It did not always succeed in this, and respondents brought this out, as shown below. Expectations may have been that all aspects of the project would have been more group-directed, participatory, reflecting ideals from within the practices themselves, and these expectations were not met, particularly around the event at the Scottish Parliament, and the speakers and Suzanne Lacy's involvement with the Core Group. Although this can be a valid comment, I would also argue for some elements of a composite project need include those which are more challenging, provocative, which bring out the incisive questioning associated with good academic practice. Whether the project did this is commented on below.

Please see Appendix A for a sample of the responses.

Academic methods and processes

Although the speaker's presentations, the case study and the readings are the most obvious 'academic' source of content, these are also processes inherent to Working in Public which were like those in academia, and contributed to its qualities, to its assumptions and expectations and its organisation. The responses that came forward related to how it felt to be doing something 'academic'.

- 'It was an open exploration of the learning process on multiple levels – which was unique. I was able to learn from the presenters at different stages of my work.'
- 'For me, it brought it all to a different level. I don't really engage with academia to any extent ... It's that level of engagement expected from a university, a higher education establishment, that maybe allows me to translate (these ideas) to others more eloquently.'
- '...I think if you are in an academic world, you switch into that world. It's an extra thing to learn if you're not. It needed that other mechanism of how to move into that and get into that practice and make a connection with your work. For some artists, who were already writers or thinkers, they may have been able to do this. I would have loved to have connected and found that interface – that's what I'd want to do now – not to get more information, but to look at those interfaces.'
- 'It was weighted in terms of an academic language, and academic structure: 'let's have an essay with a proposition and a case study to apply it to, and then we have that analysis'. That's an academic limitation in terms of looking at what we already have been presented – not something which is more speculative or generative of ideas. It's an academic structure in terms of setting something up, setting up the methodology and then applying it. It's really interesting, but it doesn't generate new knowledge, I think.'
- 'The academic and theory was out of reach for me, but I liked it. I like to be listening, to be part of something. I didn't fully understand or feel competent with it. It stretches me to try and understand and grasp new stuff. But I thrive, I like being thrown in at the deep end.'
- 'I'm philosophically lazy, and this was fairly familiar territory.'

Although there is criticism, I read the comments as a willingness to engage with an academic-like model, and a sense of value and benefit to doing so, even if on terms other than those of an academic. They indicate that, if it didn't work entirely as planned, there can be productive and generative combinations of academic and practice-based projects, outwith the formal academic curriculum.

I think what is also significant because it was *not* mentioned, was any sense of a presumption that the academic was the predominant, or overarching, expertise. There was a respect for it, and a fascination and frustration with it; a value placed on having the opportunity to enter into that world if as a non-academic. There may have been tacit assumptions about academic expertise, or been a deferral to it. But no one mentioned any view that even though the project was hosted within an academic context, that the 'academic' was construed as other than one part of the composition, among many kinds of expertise, although one usually not publicly available and one with particular constructs and values. If this is correct, I think it reflects well on the ethos of the project.

The academic presentations: the speakers and what was remembered

After nearly two years, what was remembered was significant, and it was surprising to have the speakers' presentations and the reading list so readily mentioned, most often before I asked a question. For most, the presentations were remembered as being stimulating, 'light-bulbs', as providing access into a kind of knowledge not generally open to artists, or a special access to speakers for those already familiar with their work. It was seen as a chance to engage with ideas and theories, whether familiar or new, whether this was discomforting or a confirmation of an existing interest.

Respondents tended to find one speaker or another more stimulating or appropriate to their practice. But most respondents found the presentations by Grant Kester to have set the level of intellectual engagement, and provided the theoretical and practice-based grounding for many of the other aspects of the academic content.

- 'Gaining exposure to Grant Kester was good. I regained a trust in art criticism. It can assist with a thoroughness in one's practice. (His presentation on SuperFlex) showed me that art criticism needs to be exposed to larger critiques of community development. There needs to be different criteria of evaluative criticism for this work.'
- 'Grant brought a high-end consideration. He didn't speak a language I could fully engage with myself, but I found the theory interesting. You could explore it further. It was just in that bubble. I would have liked to get into that bubble and just theorise.'
- 'Kester's talk related to the role of the artist and the prevailing value systems. The lecture format – taken out of context – could not fulfil its purpose. But it served for critical thinking. It was necessary for the public reach of the project – leading to the Scottish Parliament.'

Most respondents reported a frustration with not being able to have more sessions questioning the speakers, more involvement from the speakers in the Seminar sessions.

Ethics, 'publics', dialogic practice and cultural power relations were most often mentioned as stimulating ideas. But when pressed, very few respondents who are not working with art and public art theory could talk in detail about the ideas that they named and mentioned. Rather the interest had most often dissolved, perhaps into a tacit influence on their work and thinking, or stayed on as a lingering question.

- 'The programme has hibernated in my mind, but it's still there.'
- 'I was interested in the 'public' and what it meant. Working in Public didn't change what I thought, but it allowed me time to think in more detail, about where that work happens and what that means. I already had a plural idea of 'publics' before.'
- 'With you saying that – 'ethics and aesthetics' – that was really good, but it's gone out of my mind completely ... I was challenged about my perceptions of art and the public. I find the term 'public' still a challenge.'
- 'Ethics was very interesting. Janey Hunt's ethical statement about her practice made me interrogate my own practices.'
- '(Ethics) There are pre-conceptions that are hard to get past. There are assumptions that there is something about public practice that is necessarily beneficent. I find that problematic. I don't think any art practice has a moral obligation or responses. Of course, all public work has to be socially engaged and ethically responsible, but why does it? Does it have to be, to be art? Or does it have to be, to be a nice person?'

The academic presentations: the readings

There was that sense that important ideas were being explored and had influence, but two years on, little further 'academic' thinking or reading has been done. This relates, too, I think, to how the readings were perceived and integrated into the project. Having access to the readings, and been given a reading list, was seen as very valuable, something to return to, knowledge many would not have had access to otherwise, but for many, the readings were not well enough discussed in the course of the project.

- 'The academic side was part of my expectations for the project. I had read things, I had questions, but there was no room to talk about the readings. It was a good package of readings. I can go back and use it.'
- 'I expected discussions on the reading list and literature, but this did not happen. There were a lot of issues and they weren't addressed.'
- 'There could have been more sessions on texts and works – to tear them apart, have a dialogue with them.'
- 'Academia is not my language. I'm not comfortable with it, I'm not quick or ready enough to answer it. The reading was very important ... (The readings) should have been more important in the project. The papers could have been sent ahead. Reading on a train is not the same as concentrated attention.'

These responses, for more and more time exploring the ideas, recur in relation to the speakers themselves, the seminars and case study, and will be mentioned again below. It may have been the intention with Working in Public to provide access to ideas and readings, but not to develop them in detail with the Core Group. But, for many of the respondents, being able to 'name' an idea, and having a general association with it was considerably less satisfying than if they had worked at depth on ideas in ways which mattered to their practice.

The case study: Suzanne Lacy's work

The case study itself is not the subject of this report. Respondents' views about Suzanne Lacy's work are in Appendix A. Having the opportunity to engage with her work was a major part of the project for most people. The responses have more to do with the organisation of this; the time allocated to this; Suzanne Lacy's participation in the seminars; the gender bias in choice of speakers; and the mutual contextualisation of work in Scotland with her work in Oakland.

- 'With the Core Group, we were always brought back to the starting point of Suzanne Lacy's work. when you are promoting one project, it's difficult to shift that project, or bring in another. It might have worked to engage with one aspect of the project and engage with several projects at a time.'

It did seem as if the presentation of the case study fit an academic method more closely than a workshop method; it may have been too similar to a lecture presentation to have full value in terms of people's own practices and work. It did appear from comments, too, although Lacy's projects were central to Working in Public, there were questions as to whether basing a project around a single case study / PhD was a sufficiently robust idea.

The Core Group seminars

Apart from the value of meeting others working in the field of art in the public realm, there was a hesitancy about talking about the Core Group seminars themselves. It may be that the structure of the project was not clearly enough understood. Many were anticipating more time with speakers and Suzanne Lacy in the seminars, and criticisms were directed towards this. For others, though, that structure was clear, and there was no expectation of further involvement by the speakers and Suzanne Lacy in the seminars.

More pertinent, I think, is the criticism that something didn't happen in the seminars. They were rushed, not focussed, not open to discussions in depth.

- 'The discussions were more productive for me. Things came up in the discussions (from other participants) that I am still thinking about. I'm not solving them or doing work on them. They are unresolved things, disagreement and challenges.'
- 'There was not enough depth. It was always circling on the edge, and never got to the centre. We needed more time. With that set-up, maybe in the seminars, there should have been more action taken.'
- 'Each gathering was an exciting process. Great. But the interface with the core group didn't happen, they weren't folded in with each other.'
- 'It needed more discussion that might have been structured or guided, and more space to discuss. Then it would have been more rewarding.'
- 'There were people I never met, never spoke to in the Core Group.'

There may have been organisational decisions that could have been taken differently, or the focus of the seminars been defined differently, or the facilitation done differently. Because the project is about dialogic practice, the conduct of the seminars, as an element which did not work as well as others, would be an area to further investigate, more particularly, to investigate other methods and structures for seminars involving academic content and practice-based work.

But as the criticisms were directed towards not having enough time, and a desire for 'academic-like' depth, they are, I think, an indication of strong interest for more of this experience, for more development and interrogation of theory and practice in a dialogic context.

Policy, policy-makers and the Scottish Parliament

Questions about how policy was approached in Working in Practice generated divergent responses, agreeing mostly that policy-makers at a high level were not included in the group, which was a limitation; and that the relation of art in the public realm to public policies is a crucial aspect of the field of work, and was not sufficiently explored in the project. These views seem to be both from a theoretical perspective, and a practical one, that is, how practitioners and people working in the arts can engage with policy-making at a high level, with integrity.

- 'Art practice and policy – the discussions did include ethics and representation, and was critical of public art policy. But people didn't speak outside their roles as policy-makers. It didn't come out that someone is doing something wrong at the level of policy-making. Academics may have something to offer towards that.'
- '(We) wanted to take it apart, to do a policy disabling, to give a critical comment on practice, but we were constrained. I wanted to stand up for agitational art, but there was a feeling that an artist can't do that and make money. The critical engagement was missing.'
- 'Part of my hope with the project was learning how do I influence decision-makers who aren't arts people. With all of Suzanne's case studies, she had to influence decision-makers and policy-makers across a city successfully. How did she loosen them up? How do we have a dialogue in meaningful terms? What is it that policy-makers value about the work we do – so we can push the right buttons with them. I thought this was something we'd get into, but it didn't happen.'
- 'There is a certain type of practitioner held up to policy-makers to be used in serving some agenda. There was an appeal to a policy agenda, to justify public art in a policy agenda. Public practice can be seen as an instrumental tool for policy, but it's not active in policy-making. This is very problematic. The engagement with policy was not critical. Policy was brought in in a problematic way. I wanted to let policy-makers overhear the discussions, to hear what academics and practitioners actually think.'
- 'The chasm between the types of discussions we were having and the powers that be, the SP, SNP-led Parliament and the Councils is so deep. Suzanne may have recognised that kind of confusing landscape when she started working in Oakland. But, I don't feel I was equipped with more tools for dealing with that chasm.'

Without having observed the discussion sessions, I cannot comment on the extent to which responses about policy were generally associated with funding, rather than ideas on policy and politics more widely. Taking these comments, with those on policy in general, they do indicate, though, that policy as a crucial area of the project was not as developed or nuanced as it might have been. It might have been an exceptional link between the disciplinary perspectives.

Please refer to Appendix A for a further sample of the comments.

One comment opened up the problematic Fourth Session at the Scottish Parliament:

- 'Policy was a crucial part of Working in Public. (It mapped a field of engagement). It was manifested by the involvement of the Scottish Arts Council, and representatives from local authorities. The level of government policy was absent in the core group – which was why the Scottish Parliament event was a necessary and crucial one.'

I was not asked to comment on the session at the Scottish Parliament directly, but as it overshadowed every conversation, some mention needs to be made. Please see Appendix A for a sample of the comments, which divide into two views. There are those for whom the event was disabling, disruptive, and it fundamentally contradicted views about appropriate methods of participation and the collective determination of a project. Also, that the purposes of the session were not fully disclosed. These critiques seemed more on the basis of an integrity of process, and for some, the recollection of the seminar is disturbing and unresolved.

There are those for whom the event was a successful representation of art in the public realm, particularly at the Scottish Parliament. It was an appropriate challenge to the presenters, taking them outside their 'comfort zone'. It was a signal, an event that can be recounted to others as influential. The fact *that* it happened, more than what did happen, is the source of its credibility.

The fractious aspects of this seminar may be attributed to many causes. It does open the structure of the project to questions over what model of process it was using, and to what effect. But I would also argue, that however flawed that event might have been for some, and I think their criticisms are valid, there are advantages that higher education institutions can bring, one of which is access to forums that might not be accessible by other projects, or other arts projects. For Working in Public, that may also have been facilitated by the conjoining of the Scottish Arts Council and Gray's School of Art. How it is done is another question, and I think the positive expectations of that event may be overstated. But I think it difficult to make an argument that those levels of governance be excluded from art in the public realm. If academia / higher education, and the public arts funders can make a bridge, it is worth pursuing.

Funding

Apart from comments that too much time was spent complaining about a lack of funding, it was not an area respondents addressed directly, subsuming many ideas about funding into those about policy. Too, there was some comments as to the instrumentality of projects to meet funding and policy directives, and a sense that funders – and academics – did not, could not, see the field as widely as it is being practiced.

Some comments, though, were made about the inclusion of people from the Scottish Arts Council in the project. One person found this limiting, but several welcomed it, describing the situation in Scotland as unique, in that relations between the SAC and artists, practitioners, curators, organisers, local arts officers were informal, supportive; they are people in the same world. This may be common knowledge, but was new for me, and indicates that further collaborative projects could engage more directly with the SAC itself, and possibly other funding bodies, depending on those relations. A more porous relationship, particularly in areas of ethics and policy, may be mutually beneficial.

Working in Public's influence on participant's own work / practices

For many, the Scottish Parliament event still colours the experience, as does a sense of not going deep enough, not having enough time, of the collaborative quality of multi-disciplinary projects not working as well as it might have worked. But most respondents reported the project having a high level of personal value, and for many, the contacts with others in the field was most important, followed by a valuable re-contextualisation of their practice. For some Working in Public was credited with leading to, or leading to the possibility for, new employment, new projects, new residencies and commissions.

- 'It didn't change my work in a direct way, because I need more of the tools and time spent with the thinking on it, for it to go back into my material. But it definitely changed how I present my work and talk about work.'
- 'I didn't see how political my work was, but I've now become conscious of the political edge in it, and really want to work with that and talk about it. I want to work that more into the structure of what I do. It's about democracy.'
- 'It added to the network of like-minded people. You can see some ripples of it in political actions. The most visible things – the exchange of art projects, and participatory projects involving conversation and reflection.'
- '(In subsequent projects), I've been better able to bring together different constituencies and collectives, to be a catalyst for developing new strategies.'
- 'I am still thinking about what are the expectations from the art engendered by the policy rhetoric. The framework of art and regeneration has not changed – what is the role of art in a situation of regeneration.'
- 'Good to have done it. It shows a high level interest in an ongoing engagement with public art, and funders like to see that. It's good to be sited in that way.'
- 'It's not a small thing, but the conversations and connection with other people were important to me. Being amongst those conversations was very, very good for me. I can't leave those conversations to other people. Somehow, I have to be in there.'
- 'It was a good demonstration of the level of debate that I want to be in.'
- 'Working in Public covered a lot in a little time.... and provided a foundation to the subject to be developed further.'

More telling were the accounts of projects planned and undertaken since Working in Public. Many respondents had experiences with similar projects involving higher education / academia and practitioners / organisers / curators. They found it valuable to be able to compare these experiences, and many were continuing to adapt and experiment with associated combinations of 'academic' or theoretical work, or with multi-disciplinary groupings, or with similar structures of sessions in events, meetings, research, residencies, and projects they are working on and planning. The experience with Working in Public has informed those decisions, and increased their scope and capabilities.

Was Working in Public sufficiently challenging?

I attended the event at the Scottish Parliament and among the questions I came away with was whether Working in Public had been sufficiently challenging for the Core Group. There seemed to be a cautiousness, whether imposed or self-imposed, against presenting work which might be provocative or raise issues that that political forum would not want to see. I appreciated that most of the work represented was past work, not influenced by the project, but, in general, I found many of the works as presented were not as provocative, not as directly engaged with or challenging to social, political or environmental conditions as I anticipated. And I wondered whether Working in Public had faced-up to a more provocative form of art in the public realm.

From the responses, for some, the academic dimension was difficult. But for most, there was the sense that not only were the speakers treated too politely, but that there was a 'niceness' to the project overall.

- 'In the discussions, sometimes the connections to Working in Public were tangential. The discussions were limited by people trying to be nice to each other. It was all very polite. It raised for me whether artists really wanted participation. The agitational voice was missing. It had been there, it could have led to something more challenging.'
- 'It needed much more critical practice. It was not about looking nice in order to be supported by policy-makers.'
- 'In some way, it didn't get to the nitty gritty of things.'
- 'There is a trick to integrating the discussion, if it revolves around texts and academia. Academics are careful about commenting too critically on artists' work. Artists find it difficult to step outside their own work.'
- 'I wanted to become more critical of people and myself, and to have more tools to look at that with. I'm not sure that happened.'

I do see the value of affirming good practices, and would not want confrontation for its own sake in an educational project. But I think if there was a 'kid-gloves' assumption, I would want that critically questioned, not only because it does not represent good academic rigour, and the willingness to be tested, but it also sets a style for practices and professional negotiations themselves.

Recommendations from the interviews

To have consistent complaints that there was not enough time is, in many ways, an encouraging indication of the level of interest and desire for involvement and continuation. But I think the comments about a lack of depth, and the differing expectations about the different parts of the project, indicate areas that could be considered in a more direct evaluation of the project itself.

- 'In another project I've been involved in, with academics and practitioners, were always debating a question which was always clear, no matter where we went, there was always a vision. It meant different things to people, but it was still the same question we were addressing. It had an anchor.'

Consistently mentioned by many respondents, not all, was a sense that project was unfinished. I think this may have contributed to the number of respondents willing to talk further about the project with me.

- 'A final assessment would have been good, to re-cap.'
- 'With a practice where dialogue is part of delivery, for that to suddenly stop is abrupt. There was never a line dawn, never a conclusion... It might emerge into other things, change your own delivery. That might be a positive learning outcome.'

There was mention of dissemination and online-dialogues through PAR+RS, which would have been valuable throughout the project, but for many, there was a sense that it was too late to initiate a dialogue. Contacts with other participants had been made where needed, and were highly valued, and participants and projects were moving on.

Conclusions and recommendations

The findings from the interviews with participants reflect the project in general, but do set a context and provide a grounding for conclusions in line with the evaluation brief. It is hoped that the findings and conclusions could inform further discussions between the higher education (Gray's School of Art) and the funding (Scottish Arts Council) sectors.

The value of collaboration – multi-disciplinarity and the value of the academic contribution

On two broad counts, the argument is made by these responses for the value of collaborations between these sectors on projects to develop, promote, investigate, and possibly provoke art in the public realm.

Firstly, art in the public realm is already a multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral endeavour. Many arts practices are so, in some way. But what is significant about the practices coming under the rubric of 'art in the public realm', is that there is the potential, and in some the realisation, of works / practices that intentionally and inherently sweep across sectoral borders, including the academic, and funding or civic policy at some level. Roles, too, are multiple:

the academic may work alongside the practitioner; in some cases *be* the practitioner; the curator / organiser may be independent, but may also be responsible for the implementation of civic plans.

Further, political and policy critiques can be embedded within a work / practice. Questions about the instrumentality of works in this field, the field's relations to wider public policy and environmental directives, and funding are particularly sharp. These questions can be at the forefront of a work's / practice's purposes. Works may be not only agitational from the outside, but working in association with the civic governance sector.

I think it significant that several respondents reported a sense that there were good relations with people from the Scottish Arts Council; and, with people at that level of authority in the SAC, there was a familiarity, a commonality of sorts. These relations are to be appreciated, and can keep dialogues moving, while practitioners and academics may hold a sceptical view about the roles of funding.

What may be gained by developing art in the public realm will differ between the sectors, and objectives may often be in conflict; but the overlaps are too significant to sequester projects to develop art in the public realm, like 'Working in Public', into one sector or another. Those differences may be too productive to gloss over.

Secondly, the findings from the respondents clearly demonstrate the value of academic processes, theory and criticism. The context provided time for reflection and interrogation, while offering access to accredited speakers, readings and a seminal case study. It presented ideas and perspectives that were unique, informative, stimulating; and that could not have been as comprehensively presented outside an academic context.

Access to that material and the chance to have dialogues with practitioners in that context of inquiry is beneficial, too, for those from the funding and civic sectors. Within that structure, there could be a rigour not found in other seminar or dialogic settings.

The respondents' assessments of the different forms of presentation and engagement are positive and are justly critical. But a good indication of the effect of the project is in how many respondents have been involved in similar events with practitioners and academics and others, and are able to critique these in depth. More, some are organising events, projects themselves, continuing to experiment with and include more academic perspectives, and these projects will circle into the funding realm.

Thinking about how higher education benefits from these projects, art in the public realm is requiring new forms of pedagogy, not only for the practitioners, but for those working on criticism and theory. It cannot be confined to a singular discipline, but needs to incorporate many skills, talents and perspectives from other dimensions of study and practice, such as conflict resolution, negotiation, mediation, as well as new perspectives on ethics and methods of change in the public or civic realm. As the art practices change, new forms of critical theory are developing. Further, the range of academic disciplines contributing could be widened. There are academic practitioners in geography, philosophy, politics, cultural studies, performance studies who could add to the discussion. As to the formats and methods of presentation, more performative models, participatory and relational, that are developing in practices could inform those of academia.

Projects like Working in Public contribute to developing those pedagogies and theories, which in turn is changing the art practices, and, in turn, the funding sector's horizons. Too, it provided supportive evidence of the necessity of multi-disciplinary methods for developing art in the public realm, and the value of the higher education sector in hosting and contributing to these projects. Part of this, too, is the continual development of ways to collaborate with the funding sector.

Recommendations

Working in Public was innovative and ambitious, and for all respondents, valuable and flawed. Recommendations for how the higher education and funding sectors could work together are based on both kinds of findings. First are recommendations relating specifically to future projects based on the findings, and are predominantly about the contribution by higher education. Finally, are recommendations at a more general level.

I offer two areas for recommendations for future projects, firstly to do with organisation and methodologies, and secondly, the extent to which participants were challenged.

The higher academic model in the project was biased towards a 'teaching' model - the presentation of content and material by various methods - speakers, case study, seminars, final presentation - rather than a research or

exploration model. I think the comments by respondents that something didn't happen in the seminars, a depth wasn't found, connections with the academic material were not made indicate there is room for more experimentation with the structure and process. Several wanted 'devices', or means of translating, moving between the elements and getting the most out of each. It could be that dialogic models from art practices themselves could lead into new forms of engagement and research for similar projects. It could be that other models, more focussed and less overtly ambitious in academic scope, and making possible other forms of dialogue than its own, such as Artist as Leader, work more effectively.

As a member of the public attending two sessions, I was perplexed as to the focus of the project, as to the questions that were driving it; as to the constituencies for it, while very supportive of the project, and finding the sessions and the subject areas individually very interesting. I was an outsider. But there were levels of expectation expressed among the respondents which were not founded. These give an impression of some confusion over the project direction, which may contribute to how the event at the Scottish Parliament and Suzanne Lacy's contributions are perceived, and to the relation with PAR+RS, which similarly seems to be an area where participants were unsure of what was intended. Comments about communication and organisation indicate areas that can always be improved. But I think what is relevant here may have something to do with assumptions or habits about academic ways of working. This then connects with how further, similar projects may inform new structures of academic presentation.

I think there is a necessity for and more scope for challenging the practice of art in the public realm, for interrogating all aspects of it as part of developing and supporting it. Affirmation of practitioners is valuable, but it is not sufficient to develop the field of work. And I read the desire for more 'depth' to be associated with that for meaningful challenge. These investigations are integral to the aesthetic, ethical, political, methodological and ecological dimensions of the practices. And I think this is one of the irreplaceable contributions higher education can make. It does relate back to how a project or event is organised, the means by which that challenge is made and understood, and to the groups of people brought together. I think this area of methods of engagement is one in which academia and practitioners can collaboratively learn.

General recommendations on sectoral collaboration

Finally, as to recommendations on a more general level, certainly the co-sponsorship of projects and events between the higher education sector and funding sectors is one that can be made on the basis of the evidence of Working in Public. The remits and demands from each sector will differ, but the notion that they are doing wholly separate things, and should fund wholly separate activities, does not hold.

More pragmatically, at the institutional level, the negotiations on projects are crucial, for clarity of intent, for understanding the constructive frictions that are inevitable, but also for establishing a level of trust which allows for an academic rigour to be applied to the assumptions of the funding and public sectors, and allows for those sectors in turn to critique the methods and assumptions of academia. This is not just an obvious suggestion for good practice, but a suggestion for incorporating some of the ethos of high quality, challenging art in the public realm into the institutional structures which support it.

It may seem that a division of roles is a good way to organise, with the funding body / SAC taking on dissemination and documentation and the academic body / On the Edge taking on the organisation and content. If so, it could be productive to question that, to look further at other ways of allocating roles which might generate new experience, new ways of looking at the field of work. Each project will be special, but I think it important that the funding sector is not outside looking in, but as involved as is right for each project.

The benefits from collaborative projects for participants has been shown, not least, the ability of higher education and state funding sectors to together draw in academics and practitioners of exceptional capability, and to open doors to areas of public life which might otherwise be closed. At an institutional level, another benefit is, that in the wider view of the creation of knowledge, these projects are especially important in their capacity not just to represent knowledge, but to generate it, and disseminate it in ways which do not entirely belong to either sector or the participants; it's collaborative.

To close, I want to refer to a comment from a respondent, which I will paraphrase: 'If your knowledge is only comprised of subjective opinions about a process, you are vulnerable to the imbalances of power in which you practice.' The comment was made while discussing the need for practitioners to have a wider, more nuanced and rigorous view of their work, and the political and critical realms in which it is made. I think, too, it applies to the

higher education and to public funding sectors, to endeavour to see beyond their own sector's demands, as neither of which are immune from the imbalance of power in the realms in which they operate.

For these and the above reasons, I think Working in Public exemplified an innovative model of practice, and showed the benefit and necessity of cross-sectoral collaboration.

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Appendix A: Responses

Below is a selection of responses from the interviews including those appearing in the text of the report. This sampling represents the variations of responses. It does not represent the fullness of information gathered from the interviews, which includes conversational exchanges that cannot be edited as succinctly as the passages below.

The multi-disciplinary composition of Working in Public

- Interdisciplinarity is part of the process. I can only work as an artist ‘interdisciplinarily’.
- This was a reflection of real life. Artists and academics can’t exist without the other.
- All the parts were there – artists, activist, academics, local policy-makers. It produced very important new frictions and new thinking.
- What was missing were art critics, a critical voice coming in together with the others. The critical voices were missing.
- A lot of people weren’t practitioners. That’s what was lacking. People weren’t aware of the nuts and bolts, what it means to make work.

The composite structure of Working in Public

- Having different formats is essential. It cannot be done from the top down, lecturing. It (art in the public realm) needs exchange and a different skills set.
- It was an unusual and inventive structure. It raised different expectations from the group, not all of which were going to be fulfilled, or were appropriate to that structure.
- The structure of the project was its strength. Different people came to it at different stages in their careers, and the practice itself has an academic nature, which can get undermined. It was good to have theory.
- The structure was theoretically valid, but in reality, there were ironies about Suzanne Lacy’s practice and the way Working in Public was structured. There wasn’t much of a cross-over, a learning from Suzanne’s work.
- It was an interesting process to go through. I’ve never been through a structure like that. For a practicing artist, there’s an isolation that goes with that if you’re not attached to an institution or academic structure. It’s hard, because of time pressures and the kind of involvement commitment required for people not attached to an organisation to be able to do that.

Collaboration within Working in Public

- Bring together different perspectives – activists, artists, academics – all bringing detailed knowledge – isn’t always easy. It provided productive friction and conflict.
- There were people I never met, never spoke to in the Core group.
- The collaborative development, between academics or the academic arenas and between practice, theory and policy, didn’t happen. We saw people, we met people, but collaboration didn’t happen.
- The model of Working in Public was a great model in structure, in theory, but I’m not sure how well it worked in practice. I can understand why the event was structured that way for public talks by the speakers and for Suzanne Lacy’s presentations. But as for the closed sessions, we didn’t have enough time, enough time with Suzanne. She didn’t engage with us and there was a lot of curiosity in the group. It always feels like there is not enough time, but I don’t think it worked that well for the Core group in the seminars. I can see why it was done like that, with those access points.

Academic methods and processes

- Coming back after the lectures – people were just talking from their perspectives on the paper. There was no mechanism for (a more critical) discussion. It needed another kind of mechanism. I think if you are in an academic world, you switch into that world. It’s an extra thing to learn if you’re not. It needed that other mechanism of how to move into that and get into that practice and make a connection with your work. For some artists, who were already writers or thinkers, they may have been able to do this. I would have loved to have connected and found that interface – that’s what I’d want to do now – not to get more information, but to look at those interfaces.
- It was weighted in terms of an academic language, and academic structure: ‘let’s have an essay with a proposition and a case study to apply it to, and then we have that analysis’. That’s an academic limitation in

terms of looking at what we already have been presented – not something which is more speculative or generative of ideas. It's an academic structure in terms of setting something up, setting up the methodology and then applying it. It's really interesting, but it doesn't generate new knowledge, I think.

- It was quite an academic structure. It was a structure of analysis rather than general information or generation. It took a while to figure out what was going on. It was more of a taught environment than a learning environment.
- It was academic through the people, those who presented, and not in the strict sense of academic.
- It was an open exploration of the learning process on multiple levels – which was unique. I was able to learn from the presenters at different stages of my work.
- It was a great thing to try, but practically, there wasn't enough time. You imagined that you would get Grant Kester presenting a set of ideas, and then you would unpick those in relation to a case study. There wasn't time to do that. It was a big ask for people who work in their job and then go into that situation. That structure has to be learned, and there wasn't enough time, but I could see the intention behind it.
- Sometimes it worked. Sometimes there was a disconnect with what was required and what was achieved.
- It was rare to go through a process that allows reflection and critical debate with some rigour attached to it.
- I might have gotten more out of it if it was more traditional – if I was forced to write responses and questions to the contributions. I can see why that would be difficult to implement. But it would make me do the reading and link up my brain.
- It was nice to be academically challenged in a structure like a university. It was refreshing, hearing the lectures and the seminars happening over time, forming relations with others. The context allowed for some reflection, but reflection was not prioritised. There was not enough time.
- Knowledge is a funny thing... I thought there were aspects of difficulty mentally, and in getting to grips with what the other participants were doing, what the Core group function was. The experience was almost a sort of mini-college experience. You go in and get the experience. You don't come out with a certificate. You come out with a certain interaction that you then can use, and maybe you don't recognise how things have changed for you.

The 'academic' challenges

- For me, it brought it all to a different level. I don't really engage with academia to any extent, except in some project development and in working with students. It's that level of engagement expected from a university, a higher education establishment, it maybe allows me to translate (these ideas) to others more eloquently.
- I was frustrated in not being able to articulate my responses. My ignorance was well-revealed to myself. I was asked to perform as an academic.
- The academic and theory was out of reach for me, but I liked it. I like to be listening, to be part of something. I didn't fully understand or feel competent with it. It stretches me to try and understand and grasp new stuff. But I thrive, I like being thrown in at the deep end.
- I'm philosophically lazy, and this was fairly familiar territory.

The academic presentations: the speakers

- It was familiar territory. I had heard Simon Sheikh at conferences and read Grant Kester. It was most useful to hear to the speakers and to reflect with the others. It was good to get up to date with practitioners.
- The speakers did have influence. I'm still thinking about their ideas, but I couldn't articulate my ideas at the time.
- I'd read Kester and Sheikh before, but it was different to meet and talk with them. Interesting to see what they accentuated when they spoke, what they chose to fit the context. I was confused as to how they fed into Suzanne Lacy's presentations, and how hers fed into theirs.
- Grant Kester and Frances McKee could have been more involved with teams afterwards. They could practice the issues they presented, talk about the role of rhetoric and speech in the practice of Suzanne Lacy.
- Grant Kester
- Gaining exposure to Grant Kester was good. I regained a trust in art criticism. It can assist with a thoroughness in one's practice. (His presentation on SuperFlex) showed me that art criticism needs to be exposed to larger critiques of community development. There needs to be different criteria of evaluative criticism for this work.

- Grant brought a high-end consideration. He didn't speak a language I could fully engage with myself, but I found the theory interesting. You could explore it further. It was just in that bubble. I would have liked to get into that bubble and just theorise.
- Kester's talk related to the role of the artist and the prevailing value systems. The lecture format – taken out of context – could not fulfil its purpose. But it served for critical thinking. It was necessary for the public reach of the project – leading to the Scottish Parliament.
- I had to think more about different models of the aesthetic. I was brought closer to the intersection of the ethical – and the political and aesthetic. But this area needs more development beyond Grant Kester and Simon Sheikh. They are too steeped in modernist, post-modernist thought. The artist as expert is still elevated. Participatory practice and relational aesthetics are more radical approaches. But it's good to question all values radically. It confirms that this is an area of work to be done.
- Simon Sheikh
- The big thing for me was hearing Simon Sheikh. The 'public' is different 'publics'. We need to imagine publics differently, and not make assumptions.
- It all sliced past me. I couldn't use it, didn't go into it. I did find some clear thinking from other discussions. The issues of power are important, but they are rehearsed more – and better – in other disciplines. Representation and power may not be best understood first through art and art criticism.
- I was very frustrated by this. I had heard the talk twice before. It was not new.
- Frances McKee
 - The public realm and the quality of experience is more relevant to me. There's an irony of the Scottish Arts Council investing capital in buildings, when people want to go into unusual places to make work.
 - His was a rehearsal of the argument, not really new thinking.
- Tom Trevor
 - Maybe the brief to him was wrong.
 - Didn't get beyond the obvious.
 - He raised the most debate, was the most provocative. The cloak of participatory practice was put over the Arnolfini, but he wasn't thinking through the implications. His exemplary projects provoked an angry debate

The readings

- I still have the papers that were sent. I don't have time to read them, and I may not go back. I didn't read them at the time. (It was based on the organisers' kind of work) and we were trying to join that, and not being given enough information, not enough years to do so. It was what academics do.
- It was great having homework.
- The academic side was part of my expectations for the project. I had read things, I had questions, but there was no room to talk about the readings. It was a good package of readings. I can go back and use it.
- I expected discussions on the reading list and literature, but this did not happen. There were a lot of issues and they weren't addressed.
- There could have been more sessions on texts and works – to tear them apart, have a dialogue with them.
- Academia is not my language. I'm not comfortable with it, I'm not quick or ready enough to answer it. The reading was very important. I was busy at the time. If I could have, I would have done more, and learned more about the projects and other people. (The readings) should have been more important in the project. The papers could have been sent ahead. Reading on a train is not the same as concentrated attention.

The ideas and theories remembered

- The programme has hibernated in my mind, but it's still there.
- In discussing public art, it rehearsed the arguments about public/publics, and how things are or are not democratic, but these could have been pushed further. The representation and power issues could have been pushed further, and issues of cultural rights.
- Two things for me switched the light on: the idea of 'public' art, and the concept of dialogic practice.
- I was interested in the 'public' and what it meant. Working in Public didn't change what I thought, but it allowed me time to think in more detail, about where that work happens and what that means. I already had a plural idea of 'publics' before.

- It was good to question your own ethics in this, and the baggage we carry, your own assumptions.
- Ethics was very interesting. Janey Hunt's ethical statement about her practice made me interrogate my own practices.
- (Ethics) There are pre-conceptions that are hard to get past. There are assumptions that there is something about public practice that is necessarily beneficent. I find that problematic. I don't think any art practice has a moral obligation or responses. Of course, all public work has to be socially engaged and ethically responsible, but why does it? Does it have to be, to be art? Or does it have to be, to be a nice person?
- With you saying that – 'ethics and aesthetics' – that was really good, but it's gone out of my mind completely. It was a challenge. Grant was speaking about the art of dialogue which fascinated me. He talked about much more aspirational projects in Africa, assisting the community directly with something that was genuinely going to affect their lives. It was a challenge, but I enjoyed that aspect. I was challenged about my perceptions of art and the public. I find the term 'public' still a challenge.
- (Ethics) If you work for an organisation with social responsibilities and aspirations for an ethical structure – you may not have that as an artist. You may have individual responsibilities, but not ones to a larger ethical organisational code.

The Core Group seminars

- There were really good moments where I thought I was learning something fundamental and exciting.
- Each gathering was an exciting process. Great. But the interface with the core group didn't happen, they weren't folded in with each other.
- There was a lot of information and little time to disseminate. I had to switch off.
- The big ideas came across reasonably well. It might have been better to focus on one, or rehearsed it better for a diverse audience.
- There was not enough depth. It was always circling on the edge, and never got to the centre. We needed more time. With that set-up, maybe in the seminars, there should have been more action taken.
- It needed more discussion that might have been structured or guided, and more space to discuss. Then it would have been more rewarding.
- The discussions were more productive for me. Things came up in the discussions that I am still thinking about. I'm not solving them or doing work on them. They are unresolved things, disagreement and challenges.
- There was a lot of chat about what art should be doing, as apart from what it is doing.
- In the public sessions, there were good questions from the wider audience.

The contributions by Suzanne Lacy

- It was an opportunity for her to amplify and include us, generously. Confidence, modesty, conviction. I got a huge amount from her as a performance artist, the grandeur and scale of her productions, and how I need a grander ambition.
- There's no emulation possible. It's one person's way of working. It has wide policy links and outcomes, and she achieves things through her work – they aren't just artworks.
- The level of Suzanne's work remains aspirational. If I had taken a project that was going at the time, it might have had a better influence, but all I could do was make a comparison, and the comparison is minor.
- The set-up of the project hinged on Suzanne Lacy and work on her PhD, and work at Gray's. It was a fantastic opportunity for us to exchange insights on art in the public domain from different cultural and political generations. It was also a limitation. There was only one key player for the framework. Over the year and decades, many different practices have developed.
- It was provoking in a gender perspective. A feminist artist choosing male speakers and the core group was mostly women. These are pertinent issues. 'Public' art in the past has been the domain of men, and women have been in arts administration, or disadvantaged. The 'community art' umbrella is one in which women have had a prominent role. That landscape has changed. There are different participatory practices now.
- Great to have Suzanne Lacy, but there wasn't a strong enough emphasis on the differences between her model and the models that exist here. This is a very different social context, a different art history, and different social history. It would have been worthwhile to make that explicit.
- The discussions on her work could have been taken further. More opportunity could have been taken to engage specifically on her work in panel discussions. She spoke to the speakers, and not to the group.

- It was old work, not new work.
- Suzanne Lacy exemplified America, and a past time when that kind of work was associated with America. More people now are aware of different types of practices and artists are working in different ways.

Policy, policy-makers and influence

- Art practice and policy – the discussions did include ethics and representation, and was critical of public art policy. But people didn't speak outside their roles as policy-makers. It didn't come out that someone is doing something wrong at the level of policy-making. Academics may have something to offer towards that.
- (We) wanted to take it apart, to do a policy disabling, to give a critical comment on practice, but we were constrained. I wanted to stand up for agitational art, but there was a feeling that an artist can't do that and make money. The critical engagement was missing.
- The dialogues could have engaged with policy more, with more policy people. They are a strange breed, and a continuation of our work depends on a healthy relationship with these people.
- Part of my hope with the project was learning how do I influence decision-makers who aren't arts people. With all of Suzanne's case studies, she had to influence decision-makers and policy-makers across a city successfully. How did she loosen them up? How do we have a dialogue in meaningful terms? What is it that policy-makers value about the work we do – so we can push the right buttons with them. I thought this was something we'd get into, but it didn't happen.
- Public Art policy at city level is in its infancy; there isn't a strategy.
- The chasm between the types of discussions we were having and the powers that be, the SP, SNP-led Parliament and the Councils is so deep. Suzanne may have recognised that kind of confusing landscape when she started working in Oakland. But, I don't feel I was equipped with more tools for dealing with that chasm.
- Policy was a crucial part of Working in Public. (It mapped a field of engagement). It was manifested by the involvement of the Scottish Arts Council, and representatives from local authorities. The level of government policy was absent in the core group – which was why the Scottish Parliament event was a necessary and crucial one.
- There were public art officers in the Core Group, but I question whether they really influence policy-making. To bring in policy-makers, there would have had to have been a different environment. I wonder who it is that will feed back to policy-makers.
- People in roles in local government and authorities commission work because they think art can benefit the civic structure. That's laudable, but it's not the only way art practice exists.
- (Person) at the Scottish Parliament saying 'it's about culture and its instrumental use' – we could have ripped that apart ... The Declaration of Human Rights includes the right to culture and expression, but there's a much more critical note to investigate with that - how do you negotiate conflicts over expressions of culture, my cultural rights versus your cultural rights.
- I've become far more aware of people like commissioners – people that are not artists – who have the power to make things happen, but don't necessarily have an education that enables them to relate to the process they're involved in. They commission work, but there's nothing behind it. I hadn't thought about how that exists almost as a 'public'. I got more of an insight into that other point of view.
- You're aware, as an artist, of processes you go through to talk to a Second World War veteran or maybe with the city council or some local – the forestry commission. All these people can make stuff happen. There's different ways of expressing things. It's not a technique, but there's something about the nature of dialogue when you have an array of people to deal with. It's a generous thing, not a didactic thing. It's not necessarily instrumental. Sometimes, you just have a conversation. Most city planners and people are dealing with roads and sewers and things – you realise that those conversations can have really surprising, important things at a very human level. It's not something I would use in my practice. But am thinking about how and why art can function in a society – and am realising the new sector which misses out somehow. Maybe it's not just as important to educate underprivileged kids in Easterhouse. You need to do it with the guys in suits, too. Otherwise, you don't get very far.
- It may be oppositional to do something that is *not* ground-breaking. If there's a problem about public art in a public context, let's debate it. The practitioners could be used as puppets for policy-makers. Policy questions were not opened up. This is undermining public art.
- There is a certain type of practitioner held up to policy-makers to be used in serving some agenda. There was an appeal to a policy agenda, to justify public art in a policy agenda. Public practice can be seen as an instrumental tool for policy, but it's not active in policy-making. This is very problematic. The engagement with policy was not critical. Policy was brought in in a problematic way. I wanted to let policy-makers overhear the discussions, to hear what academics and practitioners actually think.

Funding

- We have good relations with individuals in the Scottish Arts Council. They're like colleagues. They are like policy-makers, battling for us. We could be open with them.
- Most of the people working for the Scottish Arts Council have been through art school and are genuinely interested people. They do other things, and would have gone anyway.
- I question whether the Scottish Arts Council is interested in this from the policy perspective – or are they responding to grass roots pressure. There's the social inclusion agenda now, which is supporting work, but if that drops, maybe funding for these projects will drop.
- With funders as part of the group, it was not possible to have an honest discussion about work. It would have had an impact for others, for the artists.
- I was always aware of funding people in the groups. But I didn't find this conflicting. I think it's important to hear them in a conversation.
- No art practice is led by anybody but the artist wanting to make art. Funders, and commissioning and legislation are a key part of what people are doing. But there's people doing things that funders have no idea about. It's nothing to do with them. Funded work is only a small part of what's being done and talked about. Part of the problem lies with the work in public model – it's very hung up on projects that are given money, commissioned by authorities, that exist for three years with partners and funders. That's great. But there are other things being done that they can't see, aren't interested in, don't fit those models.
- After looking back at the Working in Public website, I wondered whether the public would want to fund public art, and if so, what sort of art would it be. The discussions we were having were only held with the pre-suppositions of insiders.
- There was too much time spent talking about funding and the PARS forum.
- There was a lot of conversation about funding, which was very boring and irrelevant. Funding is nothing to do with the art that's made. Art is made in countries without the Scottish Arts Council. It's not that easy to stop people making art.
- I'm very critical of the position of Frances McKee and Tom Trevor took, complaining about funding from positions of power.

Was Working in Public sufficiently challenging?

- There is a trick to integrating the discussion, if it revolves around texts and academia. Academics are careful about commenting too critically on artists' work. Artists find it difficult to step outside their own work.
- I wanted to become more critical of people and myself, and to have more tools to look at that with. I'm not sure that happened.
- It was a very compressed way to engage. There are two sides to challenge, and people are either open or closed to it. It was too challenging for some. I'm not too sure whether it was challenging enough.
- The speakers weren't challenged enough. It was all a bit kid-gloved about the whole thing.
- It was a non-formal pedagogy, which was challenging, and it could have been more challenging.
- In the discussions, sometimes the connections to Working in Public were tangential. The discussions were limited by people trying to be nice to each other. It was all very polite. It raised for me whether artists really wanted participation. The agitational voice was missing. It had been there, it could have led to something more challenging.
- It needed much more critical practice. It was not about looking nice in order to be supported by policy-makers.
- We were doing too much in a short period of time. We're people who work at depth and we're hungry for depth. We were skimming the surface.
- In some way, it didn't get to the nitty gritty of things.
- It over-estimated the abilities of artists in this field.

Influence on and re-evaluation of one's own work / practice

- It really changed me, being amongst these people talking about public art, and how we engage with the public. I thought, 'That's what I do!' I started to think of my work as public art, not community art. It was about re-contextualising my work. It made me feel completely different about my work and the skill and

purpose and value of it. There was a big switch in how I understand and value my work, its place and position.

- It didn't change my work in a direct way, because I need more of the tools and time spent with the thinking on it, for it to go back into my material. But it definitely changed how I present my work and talk about work.
- I didn't see how political my work was, but I've now become conscious of the political edge in it, and really want to work with that and talk about it. I want to work that more into the structure of what I do. It's about democracy.
- Half-way through the process, I was thinking, I trained as a visual artist. (But this project) could be considered as my artwork, as a collaborative, collective artwork. I don't know where that takes you – further away from the realities, the things that dominate, like getting a wage next year. But it was an illuminating moment for me. I'd not thought of that before.
- Working in Public brought out other identities – academics, artists, performance artists, administrators – which was great, and it affirmed my identity as an artist.
- I'm using the experience in the financial planning I'm doing, making more collective dialogues, collective processes about fund-raising. We're trying to assist the community much more than previously – rather than coming up with a concept and trying to get a buy-in from the community.
- It added to the network of like-minded people. You can see some ripples of it in political actions. The most visible things – the exchange of art projects, and participatory projects involving conversation and reflection.
- (In subsequent projects), I've been better able to bring together different constituencies and collectives, to be a catalyst for developing new strategies.
- I am still thinking about what are the expectations from the art engendered by the policy rhetoric. The framework of art and regeneration has not changed – what is the role of art in a situation of regeneration.
- It was part of professional development for me. I felt part of an elitist group.
- Seeing Suzanne Lacy's work having a long-term impact on policy, I can now see potential for art in the public realm at that level.
- I was reassured I was doing things in the right way. It gave me confidence in working with local people and skills, facilitating projects.
- The main thing I got out of it was at a personal level – and that is the group of contacts. Knowing those people in the field who are interested in those questions. This was a lot more valuable than anything embedded in the process.
- It showed me to take nothing for granted, don't make assumptions. There's no trick to getting the public to participate. It was an eye-opener.
- It had no new influence on me. I was interested in the field before and am still interested, but I am moving (into other areas now).
- Good to have done it. It shows a high level interest in an ongoing engagement with public art, and funders like to see that. It's good to be sited in that way.
- I was exposed to a huge range of things. It provoked questions. I met people. But I still practice in my own way.

Other responses and observations on Working in Public

- It's not a small thing, but the conversations and connection with other people were important to me. Being amongst those conversations was very, very good for me. I can't leave those conversations to other people. Somehow, I have to be in there.
- It was a good demonstration of the level of debate that I want to be in.
- Working in Public covered a lot in a little time. It mapped a field of engagement, and provided a foundation to the subject to be developed further. Policy was a crucial part in all of that.
- A test, a prototype, a pilot
- It confirmed and expanded the impulse to develop the area of work – there's much more to be developed in terms of curriculum.
- Important by its absence was any ecological thinking or environmental awareness.
- I'm dealing with the grass roots, with individuals. This would be a million miles away from them in terms of 'art and the public', and their thoughts and experiences.

- Working in Public was not aware enough – didn't make the distinction between things they couldn't address through the structure and things they weren't interested in. This came about through not thinking about interesting ways of working.
- My ongoing problem with it was that it separated out environmental justice and social justice.
- Developing new pedagogies is essential, especially in art education at higher levels. They are still stuck in the studio model of education. To work in public needs a wholly different skill set. – different abilities like conflict resolution, negotiation, mediation. Different forms of public art pedagogies are needed.

The Fourth Seminar in the Scottish Parliament

- It stays with you. It sticks with you.
- Classic mistake in the period leading up to it, trying to organise something in a collective way, but not having the luxury of people being together for long enough to plan it. What lies behind Suzanne Lacy's work is a huge amount of work and planning and schmoozing. What we had was nothing. There wasn't the time, or energy or planning for it to be coherent. These are things to guard against.
- Confused, mortified and disappointed.
- Something unravelled for me at the end. I got very lost and didn't know what it was about any more. Why did we do what we did at the Scottish Parliament? What did it achieve? There was a lot of confusion and it did have an impact on the seminars that went before.
- It was frustrating and misplaced. There was some ulterior motive we weren't privy to. I didn't understand the desire for it – to speak to those people in that way. I can't imagine it had much impact.
- What was the intention – what was it trying to achieve?
- It was going in an uncomfortable directions. I didn't know what agenda was being played to by whom. It deconstructed the ownership of the previous events. It stopped the project. It needed an reflective event to enable further collaboration, an extra bit at the end.
- It was not a useful atmosphere. The Chair did spend time with us, did try to pull our questions together. But it was undermined. It was taken out of the Core Group's hands.
- Limiting social practice to one evening is superficial. What influence can that have?
- It occupied me. It was a new learning curve, not part of the project. It wasn't a punctuation or an end point. Standing there and talking for five minutes. What models did we have to follow? the political, the harangue, the vague artist, the academic. The idea was not worked through enough.
- Having the event in the Scottish Parliament was the highest level it could have gone, and the event brought that to a very high level of closure for the event itself. The preparation that had gone into the event itself was successful. You couldn't anticipate the whole thing.
- It felt great to be part of Suzanne's performance that night. She's amazing at influencing people.
- I wouldn't criticise the experience too much. It was a point of high representation from where we had come from.
- It may have taken visual arts into the Scottish Parliament. They are usually not there.
- It gave you the confidence to take this to a different level, beyond the one accustomed to in dialogue with city councils. It brought you up a level of expectation.
- The Scottish Parliament event was exemplary. This sector of art – art and the public – in design, in higher education – has suffered from a lack of public advocacy. The value of art in society is not seen. There is not effective format to engage with policy-makers, without some kind of filter. The Scottish Parliament event sent a signal after decades of neglect of the field. We were conscious of the building and the pragmatics for the event. Artists had to prepare a face to be shown to the public in that way. But artists cannot stay in their comfort zones. They need to engage with politics – and they may never achieve a greater moment than that one. It was never meant to be a participatory event – but a lobbying event, an advocacy event. The brevity of giving a short presentation to an audience - the format is a good practice. It was a signal event, and important. When I go and talk to others and say I presented at the Scottish Parliament – this is unheard of as an art project in the political arena.
- The event was a door-opener.

Recommendations from the respondents

- A more longitudinal process of reflection alongside Suzanne Lacy's work.

- With the core group, we were always brought back to the starting point of Suzanne Lacy's work. when you are promoting one project, it's difficult to shift that project, or bring in another. It might have worked to engage with one aspect of the project and engage with several projects at a time.
- In another project I've been involved in, with academics and practitioners, were always debating a question which was always clear, no matter where we went, there was always a vision. It meant different things to people, but it was still the same question we were addressing. It had an anchor.
- A final assessment would have been good, to re-cap.
- With a practice where dialogue is part of delivery, for that to suddenly stop is abrupt. There was never a line dawn, never a conclusion...It might emerge into other things, change your own delivery. That might be a positive learning outcome.

The importance of Working in Public to / in Scotland

- It was a national event, and great that Suzanne Lacy is studying at a Scottish institution. It would have been good to profile different types of work in Scotland, referencing good work in Scotland.
- Scotland is exemplary in its support to the arts in the UK framework. Now – it's interesting to compare differing traditions of artists in the field – it reaches back far enough. It's small enough for everyone to be known. You can see an overview of the processes.
- It brought together urban and rural.
- Scotland is prone to look back to an golden age of Artists Placement Group and David Harding, as if nothing will ever be that good again.