

PLUS TATE LEARNING PROGRAMME

SUPPORTED BY J.P. MORGAN

Pier Arts Centre

BALTIC

Grizedale Arts

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The Hepworth Wakefield

Tate Liverpool

Cornerhouse
Whitworth Art Gallery

MOSTYN

Nottingham Contemporary

IKON

Kettles Yard
Wysing Arts Centre

firstsite

Glynn Vivian Art Gallery

Turner Contemporary

Arnolfini

Tate St Ives

Towner

Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange

PLUS **TATE**

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Tate Collective member, Tate St Ives

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SUPPORTER'S FOREWORD

Carol Lake, Head of Philanthropy, Europe, Middle East and Africa, J.P. Morgan

J.P. Morgan is very pleased to have supported the Plus Tate Learning Programme which puts the voices of young people at the centre of the Plus Tate partners' efforts to create sustainable visual arts learning and development programmes.

The network of outstanding arts organisations that Plus Tate has brought together offers significant potential to both connect and scale their work across the UK. As a result of the Plus Tate Learning Programme we believe that these organisations offer the possibility to deliver both considerable opportunities for young people to be inspired by visual arts, while at the same time encouraging other organisations to explore the possibilities of innovative models of collaborative working to create greater, long-lasting impact.



DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

Caroline Collier, Director, Tate National

Plus Tate is a network of nineteen visual arts organisations facilitated by Tate. All its members share a vision to inspire people through art, with a particular focus on contemporary art. They exchange programmes and ideas and support each other to develop their organisations and participate in collective projects.

The Plus Tate Learning Programme provided a rare opportunity for visual arts learning teams to collaborate across the UK. This programme confirmed our belief that great ideas are not confined to those who work in large organisations and that an eclectic mix of organisations can spark new thinking. Without the generous support of J.P. Morgan the cross-fertilisation of ideas and connections between learning practitioners would not have happened. We would like to thank J.P. Morgan for trusting the Plus Tate network to develop an embryonic idea and realise it collaboratively. We thank all the young people who brought this project vividly to life through their imaginative, reflective and fun programmes and evaluations. We especially thank all the Plus Tate learning teams for stimulating debate and generously sharing their practice, and Dr Bernadette Lynch for her critical and friendly overview. The collaboration has helped all of us become more reflective learners.



INTRODUCTION

PLUS TATE LEARNING PROGRAMME SUPPORTED BY J.P. MORGAN

Marie Bak Mortensen, Manager, National Initiatives, Tate

From Orkney to Penzance and from Llandudno to Margate, young people are helping to develop their local art galleries. Over the past year and a half, twenty visual arts organisations, forty learning professionals and 581 young people have worked together to conceive a diverse range of thoughtful and engaging learning programmes created for and by young people, reaching more than 8,000 participants across the UK. Supported by J.P. Morgan, the Plus Tate Learning Programme has been a rewarding experience for all those taking part, regardless of age, profession or location.

The ethos behind the programme is simple: it supports the sharing of ideas, skills and resources within a creative and open-ended framework. It is founded on a belief that great ideas arise when you bring colleagues from arts organisations together, and new relationships and practices emerge. The programme also builds on the firm belief that young people should be responsible for shaping their own learning – helping to devise and carry out activities, and setting the criteria for assessment.

Across all the partner organisations, the young people's creativity and enthusiasm has brought about new activities and ways of working. They act as 'critical friends' to the organisation and create the vital link between individual organisations and groups within the local community.

Although the ethos and principles behind the Plus Tate Learning Programme are straightforward and in keeping with the values of the wider Plus Tate network, the programme itself has many layers, with three key strands. First, to co-create informal learning programmes with and for young people in each partner venue or locality. Second, to provide a platform for research into self-led evaluation for young people's programmes and to establish a set of best practice principles and tools to be shared with the wider sector. And third, to support continuing professional development of learning professionals through seminars and networks.

The depth of the programme and the diversity of the participating organisations have made this whole experience highly enriching. This depth and diversity have allowed everyone to pause, reflect on and improve current practice. The outcomes are as wide-ranging as the organisations themselves and they have learnt much from one another. Some partners are based in isolated or rural areas with low populations of young people in their catchment areas while others are in large cities with diverse demographics. Some partners have collections of artworks, others have temporary exhibition spaces. Some partners have impressive experience of peer-led young

people's programmes and used this project to refine their practice. Others are new to this type of informal learning and took the opportunity to experiment and initiate a long-term strategy for working with young people.

This publication brings together the experiences, the programmes, the process and the outcomes of the eighteen-month-long programme. Analysing research and evaluation material gathered from twenty different organisations has been an overwhelmingly affirmative experience. This is not only because of all the imaginative and positive work that is being undertaken with young people in visual arts organisations but also because of the rich learning that has been drawn from the documentation. It has been important for everyone involved to share their experiences and learning in an open and honest way. Setbacks, disappointments and unforeseen challenges have been embraced as a measure of success of equal importance to the outcomes of those projects that were completed effortlessly and to plan. Without these difficult experiences we would never learn or react against conventional ways of working in order to improve practice. All the Plus Tate partners have been bold. They have challenged themselves and the young people by setting individual targets to push their creative learning and have then shared these experiences during four one-day seminars facilitated by the programme's critical friend, Dr Bernadette Lynch. It has been our ambition that the honesty and openness of these conversations should translate into this publication so that colleagues beyond the Plus Tate network may learn from them.

The wealth of research, sheer number of projects and even larger number of project beneficiaries make it impossible to capture all the detailed outcomes from the programme in one publication. Instead, the most significant information and learning are summarised in four sections, with a particular emphasis on evaluation.

Co-written by Emily Pringle, Head of Learning Practice, Research and Policy at Tate, and Dr Bernadette Lynch, the first essay looks at the principles of monitoring and evaluating young people's participatory programmes. Inspired and informed by written reports, film and audio recordings, imagery, collages, Post-it notes, drawings, mind maps and artworks made by the young people, it examines how the integrated evaluation principles were applied across the partnership, encouraging a shift from the practical to the reflective. A key programme ambition was for the young people to conceive their own projects and set their own key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the achievements of these projects. Despite the multiplicity of learning goals and project outputs, the Plus Tate organisations and the young participants have collectively been able to identify seven guiding principles for an evaluation framework led by young people.

Through an artistic road trip from Orkney to Penzance the twenty Plus Tate partners will give insight to their projects in their own words. These summaries, including four longer case studies written by Pier Arts Centre, Cornerhouse, Nottingham Contemporary and Wysing Arts Centre, reveal the diverse age range of participants and creative activities that have included public events, exhibitions, honest shops, interactive interpretation resources, cultural enterprises and artist-in-residence programmes. To follow this, Dr Bernadette Lynch offers an account of her personal visits to all the

Plus Tate partner venues and her experience of the programme from an independent position.

The Plus Tate Learning Programme has come to an end but the impact continues to be felt. Grizedale Arts, Kettle's Yard and MOSTYN, which used the programme funding to set up their first young people's schemes, are all committed to carrying on working in this way. An iBook resource created by the young people at Cornerhouse, which accompanied the exhibition *Stanya Kahn: It's Cool, I'm Good*, has resulted in a new model that will be used across the organisation and that will form an important part of the gallery's future programme and engagement strategy. Tate Liverpool's youth group, Tate Collective, has begun a fruitful dialogue with the senior management team that includes an action plan for young people's integration into the life of the gallery. And at Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange the programme experience has fed into the gallery's own considerations of an integrated approach to education projects. In the future, contributions from young people will form part of the main gallery programme, rather than, as is more traditional, being an add-on to other exhibition activity. The concluding chapter in this publication is also intended to be of long-lasting relevance to the learning sector. It provides an overview of evaluation methodologies and tools that were trialled by the young people during the programme. We hope that, even if not directly emulated, they will be an inspiration to any organisation that wishes to entrust and empower young people with ownership of their own learning and evaluation within a creative and open-ended framework.



YOUNG PEOPLE-LED EVALUATION

RESEARCH FINDINGS & SEVEN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Emily Pringle, Head of Learning Practice, Research and Policy, Tate
and Dr Bernadette Lynch, Critical Friend to the programme

The immediate aim of the Plus Tate Learning Programme (PTLP) was to enable young people to plan and take part in a programme of learning activities centred on visual art in a creative, stimulating and self-directed process, and to evaluate it for themselves. The rationale for this came from existing evidence that shows that the positive impacts on young people of engaging with art and galleries are enhanced if participants have direct input into the shaping of their experience; in particular their confidence grows, their engagement is richer and the quality of their learning is greater. Best practice in this field involves young people working closely with gallery professionals planning and directing activity. Most commonly, however, this degree of involvement tends to stop at the point of evaluation – at which point the young people typically become the objects to be evaluated rather than having the opportunity to articulate their own assessments of value. The Plus Tate Learning Project set out to challenge that model by embedding participant reflection and evaluation throughout each project.

The young people who took part in the PTLP met with challenges, setbacks and successes and found that they could do things that they had never expected to be able to do. They learnt more about themselves in the process and were able to describe this learning to others. Participant reflection was a common feature across the constituent components of the programme and was intended to support the young people to take control and to develop their powers of critical thinking as well as their project management skills.

'I find it difficult speaking on the phone but the experience with the advertisers made it easier to call bands again.' Crash Team participant, Glynn Vivian Art Gallery

'I think the part of evaluating which was great was finding out after each session what the group thought went well because that helped us shape the project. Evaluate as we went along.' Get Involved 17 participant, Nottingham Contemporary

'It made me more open-minded. I would never have considered being involved in performance art. I found I was good at it and I enjoyed it. Having the public view the art in the exhibition was really good. We had around 300 visitors and I was there every day. I had amazing feedback from members of the public, which was a boost to my confidence.' Young artist, Wysing Arts Centre

The projects themselves took as many forms as there were participating organisations. In each case, the young people involved – themselves very diverse groups – led on what they wanted to do and how they wanted to do it with support from gallery staff and artists-in-residence at the various sites.

The same principles applied to the evaluation. The young people were encouraged to develop their own evaluation methodologies and decide how their learning and their project's progress should be assessed. From the outset the ambition was for evaluation to be an integral part of the process, not a bolt-on exercise at the end of the project. A key longer-term aim of the programme has been to identify principles of good practice for 'self-led evaluation'. This essay will focus on the lessons learnt and research gathered during the life of the programme across all partner organisations, and formulates general principles for future participant-led evaluation. It is our hope that these guidelines will become of use and inspiration to other organisations developing informal learning programmes for young people.

INNOVATIVE INVOLVEMENT AND RISK

The twenty projects that made up the PTLP each trialled a wide variety of innovative approaches to evaluation. During the practice-sharing seminars for learning professionals the opportunities and challenges around these evaluation methods were highlighted and discussed openly. Some organisations that had worked with the same group of young people over a sustained period of time and were familiar with the practice, developed sophisticated models of enquiry to test new forms of evaluation. Other organisations were tasked with setting up evaluation strategies in consultation with young people from scratch. Unsurprisingly, this was at times challenging, particularly when working with the 'younger bracket' of young people (early teens), who can be more interested in doing and making than talking about their activities.

'From the outset, their [young people's] KPIs for the project were to make artwork and to have fun. They were not so interested in interrogating the art and discussion around it. There was an initial disjuncture between their desire to spend time solely making and the artists' and staff's desire to glean ideas and critique from them.' Gallery educator, Kettle's Yard

'We took a scattergun approach to evaluation using multiple methods with young people to try and engage them and find out what worked. Young people were (rightly) more interested in participating in the programme than discussing general formal evaluation methods, developing their own group evaluation structure, KPIs, etc and preferred a more tailored, individual focus.' Gallery educator, Wysing Arts Centre

Despite the different starting points for each organisation, some identifiable evaluation findings emerged. In particular it became clear that involving young people directly

in the assessment of their own work can give robust and authentic insights into their experience of working with visual arts organisations and into what and how they learn. It also encourages a stronger sense of ownership, deeper thinking, more immediate feedback and improved dialogue. In general, it enriches the learning experience for all who take part and has a positive impact on the practice of the arts organisation.

'Experiencing the actual process, from beginning to end, of organising an exhibition has been fantastic – I feel as though I have learned so much. The project has given me a new understanding of the way galleries organise their collections, and an awareness of how works can be displayed to complement the space or suggest connections with other works.' Piergroup participant, Pier Arts Centre

'A new experience as we've never had the chance to interpret contemporary art in our studies. We've been able to interpret things differently to in school and college and in a group instead of individually.' Participant, Cornerhouse

'I also feel on a more personal level that I understand people better and how easy it now is to be heard and be honest and up front with young people and mima staff, it's like magic and I only wish we had done this all sooner!' Gallery assistant, mima

But the approach is not always easy; for example, in developing a shared understanding of the meaning of 'evaluation'. This is a term that young people associate with exams and assessments and it often has negative connotations.

'The focus on young people actively evaluating the programme was unpopular. We discovered that two members of the group are familiar with evaluation through school – they are required to self-assess their learning at the end of every lesson. They appeared to view evaluation in school as a chore which they had to comply with. All agreed that evaluation should be brief, done as a 'list' or vox pops and recorded through audio or video means, avoiding writing by them at all costs.' Gallery educator, MOSTYN

Yet assessment may also be a priority for arts organisations that need clear and measurable outcomes and 'objective' evidence of the impact of this work on young people. Negotiating ever-changing or pressured environments, with tight production deadlines, while ensuring effective reflection, can also prove difficult. It is, however, far from impossible to change perceptions of evaluation among young people. In our experience it requires time for young people to take ownership of the concept, and organisations need to be willing to adopt creative tools that may be new to staff, trusting the young people with their own choices.

'Our idea of evaluation has definitely changed, and it's more developed. I did not really have much of an idea of how to evaluate a project before we actually carried out this one. The importance of finding out if a project was successful and how we find out if everything went to plan and stuff like that. There are a lot of things to find out in an evaluation, more than you first think. So, yeah, this project will change the way I think about evaluation.' Get Involved 17 participant, Nottingham Contemporary

THE EVALUATIVE PROCESS

Evaluation is not an event: it is a process and it requires monitoring. The results of the PTLP demonstrate that monitored evaluation works best when internal (self-evaluation) and external evaluation, involving evaluation by others, are combined. Arriving at the optimum balance requires creative thinking on the part of the managing learning professional to keep the young people engaged throughout the life of the project. Our experience of the PTLP suggests that the process of creative reflection is best set in motion and overseen by the young people themselves, who should ideally collaborate in identifying, from the outset, the expected outcomes of the collective programme of work, and who reassess these outcomes periodically. One such example of this kind of collective initiation was the work undertaken at Tate Liverpool, where, as one participant states:

'The development and delivery of the Future Tate workshop (for eleven to fourteen year olds) was led entirely by Tate Collective with the occasional mentoring from art educators and community workers. A past member of Young Tate who delivered workshops when she was an active member also helped to mentor the current members who worked on the project... The learning curators, Eileen Carnell, and the art educators guided us to begin with, but Tate Collective took over both projects completely for the majority of the projects. The research was then led entirely by ourselves once we gained confidence of what our aims are.'

Tate Collective participant, Tate Liverpool

Equally, it is important to highlight that not all projects will benefit from, or may fit, the same model of evaluative engagement. The ethos of the organisation, the age group, and the level of experience from both young people and learning professionals are factors in determining how the young people best assess and monitor their own learning. The majority of organisations felt that evaluation or reflective practice should be, if possible, seamlessly integrated into the collaborative experience between young people and learning staff. And for some organisations it was felt that talking explicitly about 'evaluation' created a barrier to their engagement with the evaluative process. Instead those organisations opted for a more 'neutral' way of bringing in self-reflective practice.

'We used informal communal lunches to bring staff, artists and young artists together and held group meetings weekly to get young people's feedback. This format worked alongside a programme specifically designed to treat young people the same as we do our residency artists. We felt that the conversations we had with young people outside of more structured evaluation was the most valuable way of gaining their input.'

Gallery educator, Wysing Arts Centre

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

The principle of seeking a deeper level of reflection, through which the young people are involved in all elements of creative decision-making and project management, can be described as a kind of transformative learning. It has less to do simply with content – what we did – and more to do with how we learnt to learn and adjusted our actions accordingly. This is why there were efforts made by the team running the PTLP to create opportunities to evaluate the evaluation with the young people who were engaged in the project, in order to identify anything that might impede full commitment to participation for young people, and, most of all, the modes of reflection and evaluation necessary for effective and sustainable change.

'Evaluation is not a full stop, it's a semicolon – it leads on to improving things. If you don't look back and really think about it, you can't go on.'

Tate Collective participant, Tate St Ives

'Working in a group has been a lot of fun, and it has been very rewarding discussing different ideas and making decisions together.'

Piergroup participant, Pier Arts Centre

'I got the skills to think about the artwork more deeply whereas before I just read the info on it and moved on. So I definitely think about it a lot more now.'

Participant, Cornerhouse

In order to foster transformative learning, the organisation's role is to assist the young people in becoming aware and critical of assumptions. This includes their own assumptions that lead to their interpretations, beliefs, habits of mind or points of view as well as the assumptions of others. By giving this assistance, the organisation encourages practice in redefining problems from different perspectives. The goal is to create a community of young learners who are united in a shared experience of trying to make meaning of their joint and individual experience. It means providing young people with opportunities to participate effectively in dialogue: assessing beliefs, feelings and values.

The Pier Arts Centre in Orkney adopted a process of deep reflection, as a result of which their young people's group, the Piergroup, established three goals – Reflect, Participate, Influence – as their guiding principles for future work.

'As our ideas have formed and grown so has the life and vitality of the group, nurtured, of course, by the Pier Arts Centre, as well as a few cups of tea and a biscuit or two.' Piergroup participant, Pier Arts Centre

In cases such as this, evaluation can become an intrinsic part of learning, supporting the development of all those taking part.

SEVEN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Plus Tate Learning Programme does not provide a fixed and final evaluation model that organisations can implement. Instead, the Plus Tate organisations and the young participants have collectively identified a set of principles for a young-people-led evaluation framework that can be used across the sector in the future. Above all, the recommendation is that visual arts organisations should foster a culture of reflection to bring about a shift of emphasis from the practical to the critical.

- **CREATIVITY** Wherever possible, art practice itself should directly support the reflective process in a seamless manner.
- **TIME** Young people should be allowed ample time to engage with evaluation, to see its relevance and take ownership of it. Adopting a gentle pace at the outset ensures that the evaluation process is a positive, productive and authentic experience for all.
- **TRUST** Enabling young people to take the lead in evaluating a programme requires genuine trust to be established between the participants, the gallery staff directly involved in the programme and across the organisation more widely. Without this trust an honest appraisal of a project cannot take place.
- **FLEXIBILITY** A 'one-size fits all' model is unrealistic. Evaluation led by young people relies on understanding the needs, interests, ambitions and capabilities of all the individuals involved. Evaluation should be set in motion and overseen by and for the young people themselves. The group should identify the expected outcomes from the outset.

- **RETHINKING LANGUAGE** Given the potentially negative associations the term 'evaluation' can have for young people and others, it can be more useful to frame this activity as reflective practice (with its focus on creative and critical thinking skills), while not forgetting that the overall process of assessing a project can also involve monitoring (i.e. continuous data collection and examination) and evaluation by participants and others.
- **CO-CONSTRUCTED KNOWLEDGE** Although the young people should take the lead, gallery professionals must not put aside responsibility for guiding, supporting and challenging them, when appropriate. Best practice involves professional development, mutual respect, sharing skills, recognising expertise, and dialogue between gallery professionals and young people. Evaluation then becomes less to do with assessing content – what we did – and more about how we can learn to learn and adjust actions accordingly.
- **CONNECTIVITY** A creative, enjoyable and productive methodology should enable critical reflection and analysis by all participants. This should be embedded in the process from the start, not 'bolted-on' at the end of the project in the form of collected data. The process should be integrated, with reflective practice complementing other quantitative and qualitative forms of evaluation.

PLUS TATE ACROSS THE UK



PIER ARTS CENTRE

Stromness, Orkney



Piergroup installing *We Love Real Life*, personally selected works from the PAC collection including works by Martin Boyce, John Wells, Peter Lanyon and Anish Kapoor. © Pier Arts Centre

Piergroup consists of senior school pupils, students studying art and art history and recent art graduates. They worked together to put on *We Love Real Live*, a display of personally selected works from the Pier Arts Centre's permanent collection.

'It has given me the chance to talk freely with peers about artwork and express my views on a piece, without feeling intimidated or that my opinion has any less value.'

Early in 2012, through a series of consultation sessions involving new and current members of Piergroup, as well as artists and representatives from the Pier Arts Centre staff, Board and volunteers, Piergroup identified participants' expectations and aspirations for the PTLP project and defined a key set of objectives for the longer-term strategic engagement of young people with the Pier Arts Centre.

'Working in a group has been a lot of fun, and it has been very rewarding discussing different ideas and making decisions together.'

Further consultation, research and collaboration established the key areas of interest of this particular group of young people as curating, mentoring and peer critique. The consultation also identified the principles of Collection, Place and Community as overarching thematic strands and provided the wider context that allowed the PTLP and Piergroup itself to be 'benchmarked'.

Using work from the Pier Arts Centre's permanent collection as inspiration and conversation starters revealed the group to be diverse in its views but robust and welcoming of ideas and conflicting opinions.

The exhibition and an accompanying programme of talks, workshops and training sessions with invited artists and curators, provided a visible and practical platform from which the group could meet the participants' ambitions. The whole programme allowed both the young people themselves and the PTLP to explore their more complex intentions and expectations.

'The project has given me a new understanding of the way galleries organise their collections, and an awareness of how works can be displayed to complement the space or suggest connections with other works.'

The project has been an exciting and stimulating opportunity for the gallery staff and Board to work with Piergroup and to develop a deeper understanding and awareness of the impact that the group's contribution can have on wider aspects of the gallery's programme.

The J.P. Morgan funding supported a sustained period of involvement from invited artists – Christine Borland, Sarah Forrest, Diana Leslie, Mark Jenkins and Rik Hammond – as well as the presentation of the exhibition itself.

'The best part for me has been connecting with other people who are also interested in art, and hearing their ideas and opinions.'

The opportunity for staff to meet colleagues from across the Plus Tate network has been immensely important, especially in building closer links for future partnerships and collaborations. Equally, being able to experience first hand the various approaches to education and learning in each of the seminar host venues was stimulating and inspiring.



Piergroup: Preview of *We Love Real Life*, personally selected works from PAC Collection, including Martin Boyce's *untitled* 2009

Naturally there were problems along the way. The two main challenges at the onset of the project – scheduling regular sessions that suited the majority of the group and disseminating information – were resolved by offering weekly ‘Drop-in’ sessions and creating a Facebook page for information updates. This flexible approach allowed the group members to involve themselves as their time and commitments allowed.

Building a strong relationship with the group was critical to the project, especially mutual trust and confidence, in order for Piergroup to have the freedom to make choices and decisions. This was achieved by adopting a ‘spiralling out’ approach, with the group members participating initially as active learners, working closely with gallery staff to gain skills and experience that then enabled them to become self-motivated and self-directed.

An interesting aspect of the project was the group’s resistance to organisational control and yet its willingness to let staff set certain parameters. Ultimately, this allowed the group far greater artistic and creative freedom.

‘Observing how the exhibition space can set restraints and challenges as well as inviting new ideas in the selection of works has affected my thoughts on the orchestration of a room, as I move on to begin my first year studying Interior Design at Glasgow School of Art.’

An essential part of the exhibition was the individual text panels prepared by each member of the group, articulating their personal experience of participating in the project. A panel accompanied each of the selected artworks, placing the voices of the young people themselves at the heart of the exhibition.

‘It’s been important to me to be involved in a project like this, as it can be hard to find opportunities like this and to keep some focus on art after graduating.’

It was important to create a means of evaluation that was essentially visual. Therefore a ‘route map’ was devised that was based on the aims and objectives of Piergroup. It illustrates the various opportunities available and the channels through which these might be achieved, along with the goals of this project. Each participant is able to chart his or her own personal ‘journey’ through the project.

‘Learning about how the staff at the Pier curate an exhibition from beginning to end has affected the way I will experience exhibitions I visit in the future.’

The overarching themes of Collection, Place, Community were established as a ‘header’ at the start of the project. With the completion of the project the more dynamic concepts of Reflect, Participate, Influence have emerged as a ‘footer’ for Piergroup, highlighting the potential for young people to inform, challenge and encourage change.

Selected quotes from Piergroup participants

BALTIC Gateshead



ART MIX, BALTIC's new youth programme. Photo: Dan Brady

BALTIC's teen panel, Blah Blah Blah, has been running successfully for five years. As part of the Plus Tate programme we hoped for Blah Blah Blah to become a key driver in shaping a new youth programme that could engage more fully with young people, as well as leading on the already existing programme. As a result of this process, Blah Blah Blah created ART MIX, a new programme specifically designed for and with young people. As the group wanted to continue to be involved with BALTIC we also created a new initiative called Blah Blah Blah Ambassadors, which will give the young people the opportunity to come back for a further year after their original time with Blah Blah Blah, to help determine the direction of the new group and the youth programme, including ART MIX.

mima Middlesbrough

mima enlisted its previous group of young people, The Modern Times, as creative agents of change – 'critical friends' – using their previous experience to evaluate mima's core values and explore institutional obstacles and new ways of working with young people, shifting our practice from delivery to enquiry. They used neuro-linguistic theories as a model for developing awareness of other people's needs and how we respond to them for a positive outcome.

We used this evidence to recruit mima's Creative Apprentices and mima Dreamers, an evolving new group of young people who have been given greater empowerment through leading on a number of their own projects, such as 'Heritage Hunters', a project about the work of Jannis Kounellis, part of the ARTIST ROOMS programme.



mima Heritage Hunters: speedboat, historypin and time capsule. Courtesy of mima



Building the shed. Courtesy of Grizedale Arts

GRIZEDALE ARTS

Coniston, Cumbria

Grizedale Arts Coniston Youth Club's members are Joe, Jack, Robbie, Matthew, Greg, Rhys, Charlie, Ben and a few others. We are all from the village, apart from Robbie, who lives near Nibthwaite. We have pursued three projects through the Tate Plus programme.

The HONEST SHOP is a place where people can come in and buy stuff – except there is nobody to serve you. You put your money in a box and write it in the book. We have been making flapjacks, cakes and juice. The shop has made over £1,000 in two months.

We have built a shed – it's made out of wood that Adam got and polystyrene (like insulation). It's a box shape and built over a river. An artist is using it for an office.

We have done film screenings for local people and to raise funds for the youth club. *Village of the Damned* was about evil kids – blond and powerful kids...

So what's next? The group has lots of activities lined up for the future – fishing, shooting, den building and camping!

THE HEPWORTH WAKEFIELD

Wakefield

The Hepworth Wakefield worked with two groups during this project: a group of young people recruited through local youth and NHS services and the gallery's Youth Panel.

Programmed as 'A September to Remember', this project involved seven young people who worked with artists and learning staff to explore their responses to the *ARTIST ROOMS: Richard Long* exhibition. For three weeks the group embarked on walks in the Peak District, orienteering, mud painting, photography and filmmaking, achieving a bronze Arts Award. The project culminated in an exhibition and a celebratory event.

The Youth Panel engaged with audiences through their own art work made for their summer exhibition. The young people developed work around the theme of 'My Wakefield', interpreting works from the collection and the Richard Long exhibition. They also worked with gallery staff to develop ideas, install and promote the exhibition and to coordinate an opening event for friends, family and young people.



Mud painting ARTIST ROOMS: Richard Long Summer School Project



Cornerhouse group at Manchester Art Gallery. Photo: Cornerhouse

CORNERHOUSE Manchester

At Manchester's Cornerhouse a group of young creatives aged fourteen to nineteen worked over a three-month period to develop innovative new ways of interpreting exhibitions for diverse audiences. Our group took part in an extended evaluation of existing methods of interpretation and engagement with young people, all captured via digital technology.

The young people visited selected contemporary art galleries around the country to research interpretation and meet staff who specialise in creating online and gallery resources. The group collected ideas, documented their travels and gathered their thoughts ready for a day of intensive discussions. The gallery staff in particular came in for challenging questioning ('Why do galleries insist on doing all these strange things?'), and the group began to creatively solve the issues they had come across. They decided to pool various forms of interpretation and create an interactive iBook focusing on the Cornerhouse exhibition by LA-based artist, *Stanya Kahn: It's Cool, I'm Good*. They wanted to use text and audio-visual resources together, creating their own forms of interpretation with few restrictions.

'I liked working in our group as it was a really diverse group so you heard almost any opinion you could think of. So that was really good when it came to interpreting art as you had all the different opinions.'

To help the group produce high-quality and informative content and evaluation, Cornerhouse arranged a series of exhibition tours and workshops focusing on interpreting artwork, interviewing people, recording interviews, animating and writing, including, of course, writing the iBook. The young people took the lead in creating all content for the iBook, which also doubled up as evidence for the project. The iBook included photographic documentation, comic book reviews, blog posts, audio recorded interviews, video interviews, creative animation responses to artworks and Prezi sessions (cloud-based software that enables multiple users to 'mind map' as a collective). The final product was a comprehensive and accessible collection of diverse interpretation and evaluation, which covered every piece in the exhibition and gave a real sense of the journey the young people had taken.

'I really like our iBook. It looks really professional. I wasn't really expecting that as we compiled it so quickly. It was amazing looking at how much work we did in such a short amount of time.'

Creating the iBook was a highly effective way of making interpretation itself a creative act, and Cornerhouse aims to use iBooks in the future to engage diverse audiences who may not all have access to online information. Being able to incorporate the young people's evaluation into a publicly available resource was particularly valuable. Seeing all the high-quality work they had created throughout the project gave the group a real sense of achievement.

The Plus Tate Learning Programme has enabled us to research and develop our interpretation methods, especially in relation to exhibition interpretation, looking at how this can be improved, using digital technology, to engage various audiences. The project gave Cornerhouse staff the opportunity to visit other galleries in the Plus Tate network and research what other organisations are doing and how they are working with young people in this context. As the gallery looks towards moving into a new purpose-built venue in 2014, this project has been vital in helping to shape our future strategies and networks.

[Selected quotes from Cornerhouse project participants](#)



Stencil printing. Photo: Joel Chester Fildes

WHITWORTH ART GALLERY Manchester

Whitworth Art Gallery worked alongside an enterprise group of thirteen young people from a neighbouring Academy to develop exhibition-related products to sell across the city. We selected the young people, aged twelve to thirteen years, through an open invitation process that included an initial expression of interest and an interview.

Young people were placed at the heart of the evaluation process, they were encouraged to lead, shaping their own personal targets. Gallery staff took the role of facilitators and stepped back from the notion that evaluation is usually one-sided.

Through Plus Tate we encouraged the young people to take ownership and lead on cultural enterprises in a way that looked different to adult-led decision making. We created a model of integrated working practice with young people which connects more widely through different levels of social engagement. We wanted 'light bulb' moments to become real, acting on group suggestions to develop a future youth-led programme, Whitworth Young Contemporaries.

Tate Liverpool took the opportunity of the Plus Tate programme to work with young people to reflect on our long-term peer-led practice, and how we can evaluate and feed our reflections into future practice. Together with them we devised a new learning programme for eleven to fourteen year olds, embedding evaluation in the process.

The young people evaluated their own experience through discussion, meeting with their peers from other organisations and former members of Tate Liverpool young people's forums, and creating a short film about their understanding of their role in the gallery. They devised, piloted and evaluated a programme of workshops for eleven to fourteen year olds in August 2012. The young people then presented their findings to the senior management team at Tate Liverpool. Their learning has made them feel more empowered and now informs their planning for next year's programme.

TATE LIVERPOOL Liverpool



Tate Collective, Tate Liverpool visiting Grizedale Arts

MOSTYN Llandudno

The Mostyn Ninjas are a group of eleven to thirteen year olds who are enthusiastic about art. We meet every fortnight on a Saturday and do activities that look at artists and how things work in a gallery. We plan and organise events like our film night, when we screened our animation featuring our painted dolls visiting the gallery. We all get on well and I think we are very involved because we get to choose what we do. In classes I've done before everything was planned for us and we didn't get much of a say – Mostyn Ninjas is great because we are encouraged to think of art projects for ourselves and aren't just told what to do.

'Our parents say we have grown in confidence and that "Mostyn staff have a real interest in the group, encouraging independent thought, confidence and creativity through a spectrum of linked activities and tasks".'

Text by Mostyn Ninjas



Mostyn Ninjas. Courtesy of Mostyn



Photo: Jo Wheeler

NOTTINGHAM CONTEMPORARY Nottingham

Nottingham Contemporary's peer-led group, Get Involved 17 (thirteen to seventeen year olds) created a mobile chat show entitled Quality Moments as a way of evaluating what is important to young people. Part of the aim was to decide what constitutes 'quality' of experience and how this can be measured, especially the emotional response to 'quality' – how it makes one feel to have a quality experience. Our group collaborated with artist-in-residence Sian Watson Taylor.

'We decided that our project would be about quality moments to help us evaluate the events we have run at the Nottingham Contemporary and whether the gallery offers quality to young people.'

The group devised twenty questions, such as 'What makes an event memorable?' 'What is the best exhibition/event that you have ever seen?', to ask young people and gallery staff, and this led to a filmed chat show called Quality Moments. Movie cameras were taken into Nottingham town centre and people were questioned on the street, with some being asked back to the gallery for a proper 'studio' interview.

The group had worked on previous projects but had never had this level of funding. The filming and the chat show would not have been possible without the J.P. Morgan funding and they allowed the group to interact with a much wider range of people than they could otherwise have reached.

'I think that we could look at the project and think about how we could use it to make a really good impact. We had money to create a film and involve the public.'

'Having outside help does allow you to open the project up.'

Although the group members did not themselves attend the Plus Tate seminars, they were briefed on them by Sian Watson Taylor and found this very helpful.

'I know that the seminars were important. Sian always came back and explained what had gone on.'

'We could hold our own seminars and invite all the galleries and youth groups!'

The group wanted to evaluate people's emotional responses, which are integral to the idea of a 'quality moment', but emotions are far more difficult to quantify than, say, visits to a gallery. At first, they made drawings illustrating people's answers to the questions but struggled to find a way to record emotion. Eventually, they produced a series of graphic symbols relating to various emotions, and used these as a tool to record the emotional responses reported by the people they interviewed.

'We could not rely on evaluation methods that had come before, so we had to create one. It worked really well. It was a really big challenge.'

A key idea was that the evaluation would not be an add-on activity at the end of the project but something that continued throughout all the activities. A public celebration/ evaluation event was held to see how the tool worked in practice. At a live chat show members of the public were invited to eat little cakes, each with a small flag stuck in it.

'People ate and drew a symbol on the flags to show how they felt the project and the evaluation method had worked [to capture the experience of quality]. All the flags had positive symbols drawn on them. We had lots of insightful comments.'

The project presented a number of challenges to our group, which made the successful outcome all the more rewarding. They found out how difficult it can be to have to work with people – the general public – who have no stake in the project and do not have to cooperate.

'Working with the public and getting people to come to the chat show [were the main challenges]. We could not plan what was going to be said or if the answers would reveal enough to [allow us to] use the evaluation tool.'

'We were dependent on other people giving us answers that we could use. Without the answers from gallery staff and the public input we would not have had a project.'

'But we had a really good variety of questions that were a mixture of light hearted, funny and deep. So hopefully it allowed a good range of quality answers to work with.'

Being able to work on a more ambitious scale than had been possible for previous projects had a transformative effect on the group. Those involved are keen to maintain this ambition and to develop their own potential.

'It's given us the confidence to form new ideas for projects and think big.'

'We want to look at trying to find outside funding so that we can take the idea of quality and expand it. We feel that we have opened the door to a really interesting idea.'

'We worked with the staff to help us gather examples of personal quality moments, so we want to keep those links strong.'

'Can't wait till the next project. Let's start now, Plus Tate Learning: the sequel!'

Selected quotes from Get Involved 17 participants



IKON youth programme members at Grizedale Arts. Image courtesy of IKON

IKON Birmingham

The Plus Tate Learning Programme provided Ikon with significant support to realise a specific piece of work where young people worked as experts, consultants and critical friends to their peers, to our organisation and to other young people.

We worked locally with a young people's temporary accommodation service in Birmingham. A number of small groups made a series of visits to Ikon to explore exhibitions and Ikon Youth Programme's (IYP) converted canal boat, 'Slow Boat'. Our long-term aim is to integrate Ikon's programme into the young people's regular activity.

This opportunity saw us working collaboratively with Grizedale Arts, with IYP taking part in a four-day youth-in-residency programme with members of Coniston Youth Club (CYC). Together the young people explored Coniston, sharing their individual skills and knowledge, producing artworks in response and reciprocally hosting CYC aboard 'Slow Boat'.

By targeting hard-to-reach and non-engaged young people, we were able to evaluate our core values critically and explore new ways of working to build on our existing youth programme, IYP.

The Glynn Vivian Art Gallery's Young People Programme works with fourteen to nineteen year olds, engaging them in the gallery's programme and the local community. Importantly, it aims to empower them and integrate them into the gallery's activities.

Over the summer the Crash team, a small group of young people in Swansea, completed their first project – a 'Battle of the Bands' competition at the YMCA. In just over two weeks the group organised and staged the event and managed every part of the process.

The group have continued to meet most Wednesday evenings and have been tasked with putting on events in Swansea for young people and with encouraging more young people to take part in arts activities through the gallery's programme.

The Crash team recently screened Tim Burton's *Dark Shadows*. They have since begun selecting films that will be screened monthly as part of their '12 Films to see before you get old' series.

GLYNN VIVIAN ART GALLERY

Swansea



Battle of the Bands. Photo: Paulo Madeira 2012 © Glynn Vivian Art Gallery

ARNOLFINI Bristol

At Arnolfini we've been ambitious, we've been diverse and so far we've given around 350 young people a place, a platform and a voice, and they have taken full advantage of the opportunity. We have staged careers and professional development events, offered training, organised workshops and learnt a lot about ourselves in the process. We have tried new things and not been afraid of failing. We have begun to take ownership of the building and use it in ways that excite us, programming music, film, visual arts and performance work created by other young people. The whole group has managed to achieve a great deal in a very short space of time and we are now looking at how we operate across the whole organisation, developing our presence on Arnolfini's website to showcase our work, thoughts and opinions, and sharing our thinking around the arts with more young people. We are going from strength to strength. We are Young Arnolfini.



OUTV workshop, Arnolfini. Photo: Kamina Walton

KETTLE'S YARD Cambridge

Over the summer eight young people took part in a new, experimental programme of workshops at Kettle's Yard. Working with artist Lyndall Phelps, the group spent time in the gallery responding to the exhibition of contemporary commissioned artworks by our Associate Artists, Matei Bejenaru, Matthew Darbyshire, Lorna Macintyre and Jeremy Millar, alongside other artworks and archive materials from the Kettle's Yard collection. They made art collectively as well as working on their own pieces and developing ideas independently. In exploring how a visual arts organisation operates, the group interviewed directorate and staff and participated in a 'crit' with exhibiting artist Matthew Darbyshire.

Engaging young people in this collaborative way required the learning team and the wider organisation to respond with flexibility, adapting to the young people's interests to shape the workshop programme. We found that promoting continual evaluation and responsive programming championed the very creative process of risk-taking: trying new things, focusing on the process and learning from the outcomes.



Participants at a Kettle's Yard workshop. Photo: Rosie O'Donovan

WYSING ARTS CENTRE

Bourn, Cambridgeshire



Photo: Wysing Arts Centre

'I have loved this programme. I really loved the studio-based workshops. I also think it gave me a broader insight into what I can achieve through my art.'

Experimental artists' residencies are central to Wysing's activity and attract both emerging and high profile artists who want to extend their practices and make new work. Over the summer of 2012 Wysing hosted a six-week residency under the theme 'The Mirror', which included artists Ed Atkins, Nicolas Deshayes, Philomene Pirecki and Elizabeth Price. Residencies sit within a wider context of artists' support at Wysing, including short retreats and artists' studios.

The aim was to give young artists access to this aspect of our programme; to give them equal status and the same experience as established artists, and to support them to make new work. Wysing had previously run a young artists' programme for fourteen to nineteen year olds, including half-term intensive workshops, monthly workshops, and

mentoring culminating in an exhibition, but a parallel residency was a more substantial commitment. The theme of the residency programme at the time, 'The Mirror', created the right conceptual starting point for a parallel residency for young artists, and the support of the Critical Friend of the Plus Tate Learning Programme, enabled staff to work with the young artists in developing content for the residency that would be useful to them.

Fifteen young people took part in the programme, eleven of whom were new to Wysing. They worked from a large, shared studio space and attended a series of workshops and activities, which included introducing 'The Mirror' as a theme, discussions with Wysing curators on visual arts practice more widely and studio visits with Wysing's studio-based artists.

'I felt very welcomed and a part of Wysing's site. It was a great place to spend the summer developing my work. Having our own studio space... made me feel involved with the site and community.'

A core group of studio artists supported the young artists throughout their residency, during which the young artists decided that they wanted to work towards a group exhibition of their work. With support, they sourced premises in Cambridge city centre and then converted an empty shop space into a temporary gallery, and worked with studio artists on curating an exhibition. An unexpected outcome of the residency was that the young artists brought Wysing into contact with Changing Spaces, the organisation that manages empty shops in the city, and a new partnership has emerged between the two organisations.

'The exhibition was really good. We had around 300 visitors and I was there every day. I had amazing feedback from members of the public, which was a boost to my confidence.'

Various methods of evaluation were piloted during the programme, including keeping a timeline with comments from the young artists, using Wysing's established residency evaluation framework and a mid-point evaluation workshop. The most effective method came from creating space for informal feedback through communal lunches, where young artists were joined by artists-in-residence, studio artists and Wysing staff. This led to various changes in the programme, including a blog, one-to-one mentoring sessions, a BBQ hosted by the young artists, and additional talks. The young artists also had a presence at Wysing's annual experimental music festival, alongside artist-led organisations that included Publish and Be Damned, X Marks the Bökship, Peles Empire and Banner Repeater.

The young artists used photography to consolidate their evaluation, including information from a final online survey. Their feedback was very positive: they valued

the space, support and freedom to create new work and an exhibition. We are currently seeking funding to provide another young artists' residency and are building relationships with Plus Tate partners to develop new ways of working together.

An additional outcome of the project was that two young people found employment, citing the programme as key to this. One of these jobs is a newly established creative apprenticeship at Wysing, which is now in a new partnership with the Fitzwilliam Museum and The Junction, Cambridge.

'I feel I have gained knowledge on how to pursue an artistic career, with a better understanding of ways to approach it.'

The overall lesson was that the conversations staff had with young people outside the more structured evaluation were the most valuable way of gaining their input. Future evaluation does not need to be conducted through a fixed quantitative method but can be a way of working on an equal footing with young people. Taking part in the Plus Tate programme gave Wysing support to develop this way of working and evaluating.

We hope that this will be just the start of a long-term relationship with these young artists and that they will play an active role in the Centre's work in the future, accessing its other programmes at various stages in their careers.

Selected quotes from Wysing young artists



Photo: Wysing Arts Centre



Photo: Mike Cameron



YAK make... Photo courtesy of firstsite

FIRSTSITE COLCHESTER

YAK (Young Art Kommunity) is a group of six to ten young people who create and run a peer programme at firstsite called Airlock. Airlock includes innovative events, weekly films and competitions.

The Plus Tate Learning Programme enabled firstsite to engage these young people in a process of consultation. Following this, the group advised firstsite on how to collaborate effectively with young people.

YAK had twelve sessions with artists and staff, learning about the business, operations, technical, artistic and learning programmes. The group also programmed two seasons of Free Friday Films and created and developed skills to curate one-off events: Magic: The Gathering, Big Gaming and Alternative Tours. YAK worked with a designer to create a brand logo.

YAK now plans to recruit new members to diversify the group and programme. Members are working on a public art project and have put out a call for short films made for young people for a film festival.

At Turner Contemporary we built on our successful young people's programmes 'Youth Navigators' and 'Art of Sound'. We recruited young people who were already participating in our programmes and built a dedicated group that would meet outside school hours. They worked with artist Lucy Steggals to explore their ideas about Turner Contemporary and how the young people's programme here could grow. The group members were the last ever to engage with White City's BBC 21CC – making a film about their aspirations for Turner Contemporary. We also took part in a knowledge exchange inviting Tate Collective, Tate St Ives to attend a sharing day held here at Turner Contemporary.

An average of eight young people attended each session over the summer – resulting in a film, a Facebook page, a screening event and continued future engagement with the gallery as part of the Kent Cultural Network.

TURNER CONTEMPORARY MARGATE



Workshop with young people from Turner Contemporary and Tate St Ives



Group in the Collection store at Towner. Photo: Rob Walker

TOWNER Eastbourne

'Evaluating is like fishing: you need the right bait, for the right place, you decide where you fish through experience, and through listening to other people's suggestions.' YOT participant

At Towner, we worked with young people from across a diverse range of outreach and education programmes, including youth offenders and other hard-to-reach groups. We recruited a facilitator, Rebecca Birch, to work with the young people taking part in our five programme strands:

- Generate (thirteen to nineteen year olds)
- Summer workshops (five to twelve year olds)
- School groups
- Pathways (fourteen to sixteen year olds excluded from mainstream education)
- YOT (under eighteens: youth offenders with the highest level of risks).

They explored what 'excellence' meant for them, developed a toolkit to help evaluate our work with young people and recommended some changes to improve our practice. These ideas included a 'Butterfly Tree' for thoughts, a video booth – a magic silver cylinder – and suggested venues for a meal out, or recipes for good food to eat while holding a discussion at Towner.

Tate St Ives's group, Tate Collective, took to the road in a quest to review and develop its 'peer leader' training, in order to make the latter more effective in reach and content. Artist Jonty Lees, a previous Tate St Ives artist-in-residence, worked with Tate Collective to develop activities for the toolkit, embedding evaluation approaches. Through visits to three Plus Tate partners – Turner Contemporary, The Hepworth Wakefield and Nottingham Contemporary – in August 2012 and meetings with their young people, Tate Collective developed their own skills in facilitating young people's conversations about art. Pilot activities created for the Alex Katz exhibition were used as a starting point for peer discussion, leading to the creation of a 'resource toolbox' that could be used for future young people's programmes.

The Tate Collective members were reflective throughout and thoughtfully evaluated their experiences afterwards.

'Evaluation is not a full stop, it's a semicolon; it leads on to improving things. If you don't look back and really think about it, you can't go on.'
Tate Collective member, Tate St Ives



Photo: Dave Davies

TATE ST IVES St Ives

NEWLYN ART GALLERY & THE EXCHANGE

Penzance



Students from Falmouth School installing a salt crystal chandelier for Salt Project at The Exchange, June 2012. Photo: Rowena Tarpley

At Newlyn Art Gallery, four groups of young people aged eleven to eighteen spent three months exploring the science, mythology and importance of salt, and its extraction from seawater in Cornwall, past and present.

The groups employed various experts to support their research, including a consultant for Bournemouth University's School of Applied Sciences and the Cornish Salt Company. They also commissioned four artists to assist them; each artist had either worked with or was researching salt.

Each group started from the same source, a wallet containing a selection of quotes from Mark Kurlanky's *Salt: A World History*, with a few historical facts from Cornwall mixed in.

The research nature of the project encouraged the young people to evaluate their progress within each session. Contact with artists and experts added to this critical approach as did working to a deadline. For the most part, evaluation was informal: at the beginning of each session the young people would consider where their research had led them during the previous session and decide the way forward.



ARTS ORGANISATIONS LEARNING FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

SOME REFLECTIONS FROM A 'CRITICAL FRIEND'

Dr Bernadette Lynch, Critical Friend to the programme

'A critical friend can be defined as a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critiques of a person's work as a friend. A critical friend takes the time to fully understand the context of the work presented and the outcomes that the person or group is working toward. The friend is an advocate for the success of that work.'

Costa, A. L. ,and B. Kallick (1993), 'Through the Lens of a Critical Friend' in *Educational Leadership*, 51 (2): 49–51, p.50

Being asked to visit twenty arts organisations across the UK in the role of 'critical friend' on behalf of the Plus Tate Learning Programme (PTLP), felt a little like being Dr Johnson, travelling the land, provoking discussion and diarising my experiences. Yet, even more interesting, was the chance to view the twenty organisations from the perspective of their collaboration with young people – in fact, through the eyes of the young people themselves. My role was to facilitate constructive dialogue between the organisations and the young people, and among the organisations themselves, and to help them distil essential principles from their discussions and interactions.

A key aim was to help ignite a collaboration to identify key principles for effective working partnerships between arts organisations and young people. More important still was the chance for the young people to be empowered to act as advisers and reflective evaluators, not only in judging the effectiveness of their collaborations with the organisations for their current projects, but also in suggesting how evaluation should be tackled by young people in the future.

As I found in my journey around the country, the twenty organisations involved in the Plus Tate Learning Programme are all very different from each other, with different resources and priorities. Although all were committed to and/or had some significant track record in working with young people, they were at different levels of experience in such work. Nonetheless, they formed strong interrelationships, learned from each other and were mostly keen to continue collaborative engagement for future projects.

The sheer enthusiasm and creativity invested by the young people, given the chance to think and talk openly in this way, underlined the absolute importance of creating opportunities for this type of critical thinking and dialogue, as expressed by one young person:

'Confidence and the pride element, especially in the group – that we pulled off what I think is a really good project. We did lots of work and it made this project worth doing. We created a great evaluation tool and everyone has enjoyed the project. So it was awesome.' Get Involved 17 participant, Nottingham Contemporary

The young people learned to question basic assumptions. They themselves challenged the term 'young people', given that the organisations were working with every age from eight to twenty-eight.

The project powerfully demonstrated the necessity of providing opportunities to think and talk about what one has planned and implemented. A central theme of the project that emerged was that there is no separation between doing and evaluating, and both are central to young people's capability development.

The importance of letting young people take the lead in reflecting on their own experiences with our organisations is paramount, and it requires trust. As one young person put it:

'...what young people need [is] the support of an organisation, the trust of others, the opportunity to grow and develop.' YAK member, firstsite

In intensely engaging meetings with young people in the twenty partner organisations from Orkney to St Ives, it was clear that tapping into young people's views was far more than just 'evaluation' – this form of dynamic reflection was the 'missing link' in truly engaging young people, a critical part of their creative development, and central, not only to their learning, but also that of the organisation.

With such a wide range of organisations in the Plus Tate network, one method would never be appropriate for all, but the PTLP allowed for an expanded critical approach, in particular through the five buddy groups (each involving four Tate Plus partners) that were set up. These groups developed everybody's role and capacity as a critical friend, while sharing practice across the organisations, so that staff and young people from organisations in very different parts of the country could both challenge and inspire each other's progress in their collaborations.

As one young person from Tate Liverpool noted:

'I think we really benefited from visiting and talking to young people from other arts organisations...[it] helped us to self-reflect on what we are about, what we would like to do and what we would like to become.'

All the PTLP partners came together for five seminars held at some of the partner organisations around the country. As a further element of the expanded critical approach, through lively discussion, the seminars' purpose was to continue to stimulate participants' critical feedback on each other's co-produced programmes and evaluation methodologies with young people and, finally, to identify key principles and methodologies for future practice.

There were challenges, successes and potential demonstrated throughout this project: challenges for those organisations still nervous about sharing this type of authority with young people, and challenges too, for young people, who can find it hard to take this level of responsibility. Thus it may take longer for some organisations to carefully and mindfully help build the necessary trust and confidence on all sides.

In retrospect, it was the young people whose voices and presence were key in developing the learning of the staff and organisations, who were looking to support and develop better ways of working with them. This was clearly a first step in beginning to implement new principles of working that we had collectively identified.

The successes of the project came from the innovative responses of some of the organisations and their young people, working closely together, who seized this unique opportunity to develop new ways of working beyond the simple completion of a specific project, and thus helped contribute to the beginnings of a set of guiding principles for future work with young people. The potential, in my view, lies in collaborating, as 'buddies' and critical friends – in particular, in finding opportunities for young people working with arts organisations to meet each other, to carry on a dialogue and build a potentially creative sense of solidarity, which will allow them to work together in widely varying circumstances to achieve concrete objectives.

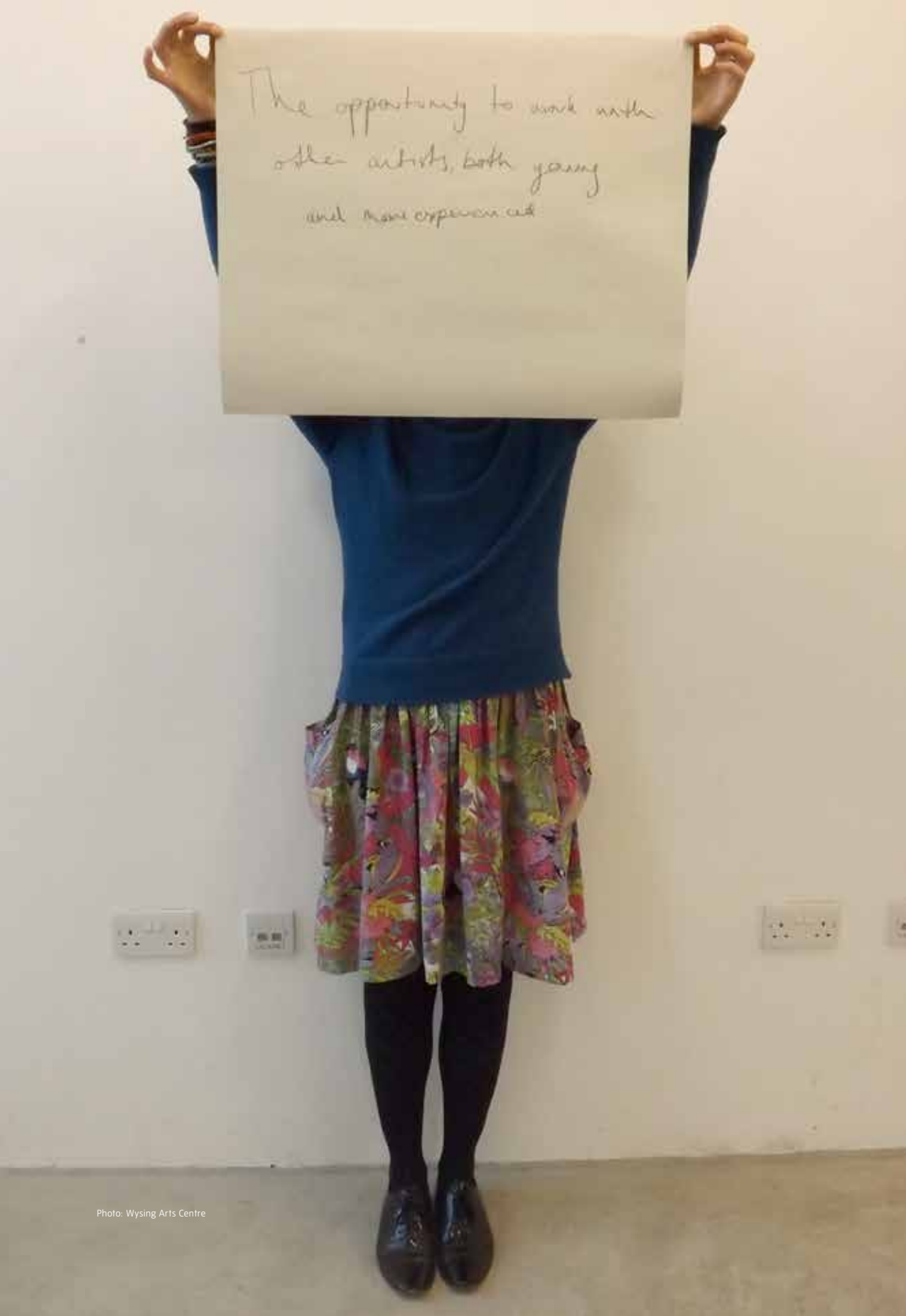


Photo: Wysing Arts Centre

APPROACHES TO EVALUATION

EVALUATION METHODS TRIALLED DURING THE PLUS TATE LEARNING PROGRAMME

Gracie Divall, Coordinator, National Initiatives, Tate

During the course of the Plus Tate Learning Programme young people began to view evaluation not merely as an end, but as an integral and continuous process: something that could be shared, creatively engaged in, and that was perhaps an art form in itself. They were introduced to different evaluation tools by the learning staff and, perhaps more importantly, they also began to create their own methods of evaluation and considered when and how different models were best applied.

The approach to evaluation varied widely across the country, with some partners focusing on quantitative results while others considered how to approach the complex issue of evaluating 'success' or 'enjoyment' and other non-quantifiable terms.

'We challenged the group to gauge the success of their activities through involvement and responsibility in actual projects and 'real world' situations and to then look at the results together to see how effective these have been. For example: "What are their sales from the Honesty Shop? How much money have their products generated and what feedback have they had from customers?"' Artist educator, Grizedale Arts

'Some things are difficult to evaluate: how relationships develop, for instance. Those things are meaningful and significant but difficult to quantify.' Artist, Tate St Ives



Evaluation butterflies at Towner

At Towner, four different methods of evaluation were trialled with the public in and around Eastbourne. These were: a simple clipboard with questions asked by a member of the youth group; a box for sharing one's thoughts anonymously; paper-made butterflies that were hung on a bush after people had recorded their thoughts on them by drawing; and a video booth (a 'magic silver cylinder') for talking to a video camera through a hole.

The young people analysed each method individually, in a very simple survey of popularity, to quantify the performance of the evaluation methods. Younger children engaged best with the ‘butterflies’ and the ‘magic silver cylinder’, which intrigued them. The one-to-one relationship formed through the ‘clipboard interviews’ allowed for a more in-depth evaluation as questions could be tailored around initial responses. The clipboard interview generally worked better for adults or individuals who were verbally confident about expressing their opinions face to face. The video booth proved to be an excellent tool for making children talk and so could be used to interview younger children after sessions. It emerged that talking ‘one to one’ or in groups is the best way to share in-depth reflection when planning for the future.



The magic silver cylinder at Towner

Similarly, at The Hepworth Wakefield a number of evaluation methods were devised and evaluated by the young people. One of these was the so-called ‘String Discussion’. This was a quick and effective evaluation tool that encouraged participants to communicate feedback visually to staff and to each other. At the end of each day, the young people were asked three questions based on the day’s session and participants then positioned themselves on the relevant markers on a long line of string. If detailed feedback was required, individuals could be asked for the reasons behind their positioning. The positive aspects of this model were its visual and tactile qualities, simplicity and interactive way of expressing one’s opinion. It was particularly good for participants who were not comfortable speaking aloud. On the negative side, the method could be tiring at the end of the day or difficult for anyone with physical disabilities, with the risk that people were not being honest when answering questions in a crowd, or were too easily influenced by others.

Another method trialled, and another favourite among other Plus Tate partners, was the use of ‘Sketchbooks’. Each young person was assigned a camera and made responsible for photographically recording each day’s events. The photos were printed and a collaborative sketchbook produced with the images stuck in and comments added. This method both produced a visual record and could be used as a prompt for later evaluation discussions. In particular, this informal evaluation process encouraged participants to speak about their images and talk about the things they had liked or not liked about the session.



ARTIST ROOMS: Richard Long Summer School – String Evaluation

The evaluation methods used at The Hepworth Wakefield were themselves evaluated through the use of positive and negative post-it note comments that could be placed on the walls in designated areas. This method was employed successfully by a number of the partners, and was particularly useful as it allowed for analysis on two levels. First, the number of positive to negative comments could be assessed, and second, more insightful feedback was given by the specific comments made.

A very popular tool for evaluation, which captured the imagination of learning staff and young people alike, was Prezi. Prezi is a free online cloud-based presentation tool that allows multiple users to work together (from different locations and at different times if wanted) to produce an on-screen mind-map of text, image, video and sound. This can be viewed as a whole, or the creator can lead the viewer on a journey. Prezi was used at Cornerhouse and Whitworth with overwhelmingly positive results:

‘[When] given a task such as interviewing, filming, editing, writing, creating animation or even collaborating on a Prezi piece, the group thrived.’
Gallery educator, Cornerhouse

Often, where there is difficulty in engaging the young people in an evaluation process, this stems from its separation from the project concerned. In choosing to become involved in a visual arts project, young people expect their input to remain creative. Hence they prefer to respond through creative forms of expression and to avoid traditional methods such as written or verbal communication.

At Nottingham Contemporary a visual evaluation process was devised and implemented. The young people developed a series of symbols used for recording the emotions and responses reported by the interviewees: visual equivalents for states of mind.

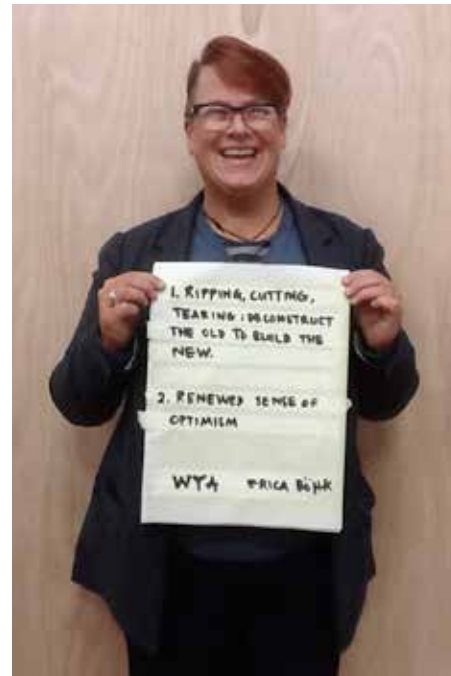
‘I never really thought of evaluation as in the form of art I always thought of it in terms of essays. The emotion evaluation and drawing evaluation when the interviews were actually going on. That it was combined with the project. That was interesting.’ Get Involved 17 participant, Nottingham Contemporary

The use of visual representation allowed the evaluation to be adapted for, and appreciated by, a varied audience. The young people felt that they had found a way to make evaluation fun, and the benefits of continued evaluation became evident throughout the course of the project:

‘[The use of continued evaluation] helped] us shape the project. Evaluate as we went along.’ Get Involved 17 participant, Nottingham Contemporary

'Evaluation is important in all walks of life, whatever you are doing you need to evaluate stuff to know it is going right. That it is really important. I grasped that and understood a bit more what evaluation actually means and why it is important.' Get Involved 17 participant, Nottingham Contemporary

The programme at Wysing Arts Centre ran concurrently with the Centre's professional residency scheme and made use of the formal residency evaluation forms. These were used alongside a number of other techniques, including informal discussions, photography, evaluation workshops, blogs and a final online survey. A number of changes were made to the programme in response to feedback from the young people, and the final evaluation format (a series of photographs featuring written statements) was created in response to the 'Evaluation of Evaluations'. The young people's continued desire for informal evaluation, both of the programme, and of the artwork being produced, was reiterated in a number of the final evaluation comments. These responses indicate a shift in the perception of evaluation from an afterthought to an essential part of creative practice:



Erica evaluating the Wysing Young Artists programme
Photo: Wysing Arts Centre

'When we spoke to the young people about this, it was having the space for ongoing discussion with staff throughout the project that they felt was the most vital part to include.' Outcome from the Evaluation of Evaluations, Wysing Arts Centre

'The inclusion of regular group 'crits' and some mentoring from artists for those who want it could be a valuable addition.' Young artist, Wysing Arts Centre

A number of the Plus Tate partners have successfully integrated evaluation processes into their current programmes. The sharing of resources and toolkits among professionals in the sector has opened a dialogue on the continued use, refinement of, and best practice.

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WYSING ARTS CENTRE

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'CAN'T WAIT TILL THE NEXT
PROJECT. LET'S START NOW,
PLUS TATE LEARNING:
THE SEQUEL!'

Get Involved 17 participant, Nottingham Contemporary