

NATURAL ALLIES OR UNEASY BEDFELLOWS?

INVESTIGATING THE GEOGRAPHIES OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN GALLERIES AND YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

This paper combines summary findings from two pieces of research exploring partnership working in *Circuit* – a four-year, Tate-led programme that sought to build sustainable relationships between galleries and youth organisations across England and Wales. As part of the programme’s research activity, I was recruited to work on an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership, jointly hosted by Tate and The University of Nottingham, which would use *Circuit* as a context for critical enquiry. The purpose of this research was to provide insights into the challenges of generating embedded, meaningful relationships between visual art and youth organisations, and to develop learning and recommendations that might inform both practice and research. Towards the conclusion of the programme, I was also commissioned to produce an internal report for *Circuit*, which would capture the perspectives of practitioners and young people who had led or participated in partnership initiatives. This piece of research focused on *Circuit* sites and voices that had not been so heavily represented in the PhD, so as to generate a rounded picture of experiences. It also helped to corroborate and expand upon some of the findings of the doctoral fieldwork.

Broadly speaking, this paper seeks to present responses to the questions below, based upon key arguments developed through the two pieces of research:

- What is the character of the relationship between the gallery education and youth sectors?
- What are the barriers to, and facilitators of, effective and democratic partnership working between galleries and youth organisations?
- What were the experiences of practitioners and young people involved in partnerships through *Circuit*?
- What forms of practice connect young people from youth sector organisations to gallery programmes, and what are the obstacles to sustaining these relationships?
- What could change to improve future partnerships between youth and visual art organisations?

The rationale for conducting this research and devising these questions was to shed light on a specific area of partnership practice that has until recently received less attention in literature (when compared with gallery-school relationships or collaboration between galleries and wider communities). *Circuit* also offered a timely opportunity to develop empirical study around relationships between galleries and youth organisations at a moment of increasing pressure for youth services in the UK.

METHODOLOGY



METHODOLOGY

Circuit's programme was based around four main delivery strands, i.e.: producing high profile opportunities for engagement through festivals and similar events; embedding work with young people through peer-led groups at each gallery; building sustainable networks with youth organisations through partnerships, and reaching wider audiences via digital activity (*Circuit*, 2013a). While the focus of my PhD fieldwork was partnership, it was necessary to observe elements of all of these strands, as so-called 'harder to reach' young people engaged through partnerships would be encouraged to participate in all of *Circuit's* various projects (*Circuit*, 2013b). As the questions above indicate, I was also interested in the human, organisational and programmatic dimensions of partnership, as well as the influence of wider relations between the youth and visual art sectors.

The PhD fieldwork took place between September 2013 and December 2015 and was carried out as a 'multi-sited ethnography', in recognition of the dispersed nature of the research context (Marcus, 1995; Hannerz, 2003). By adopting an ethnographic approach, I committed to spending time as a participant/observer in different areas of the programme, including meetings, events and workshops within organisations. I also attended and took part in a range of youth sector and art sector events, to gather an understanding of the issues and concerns affecting these distinct fields of practice. As part of the multi-sited ethnography, I developed more intensive relationships with four of *Circuit's* eight sites, and conducted in-depth site studies in three regions. Semi-structured interviews also took place with 63 youth workers, gallery staff, young people, artists and others who had been involved in the research.

As a qualitative research method, ethnographies can bring about rich, multi-dimensional data about a setting and its communities. Ethnographies also typically demand that researchers acknowledge and check their own position, privileges and biases – particularly when carrying out work with communities facing social disadvantage (Madison, 2012). This process allowed for reflection on the power dynamics and inequalities that are often inherent in partnership work.

The findings of the PhD fieldwork were analysed using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of 'fields', and the connected concepts of 'capitals' and 'habitus'. Bourdieu's methodological toolkit provided a means to talk about the different physical and symbolic geographies underpinning partnership work between galleries and youth organisations. Bourdieu contends that society is made up of social spaces, or 'fields', which are populated by agents with particular capitals that are deemed valuable within those fields. Fields are not equal or fixed spaces, and their conditions are often determined by a number of external factors (such as government policy), and expressed in the assets that these fields possess (Bourdieu, 1999). So Bourdieu's notion of fields offered a useful framework for conceptualising the different professional territories of gallery education and youth work, and the different accumulations of resources and power at their disposal. Further, Bourdieu's theoretical toolkit helped in identifying and mapping out the distinctive logic, pedagogies and value systems of the two sectors and associated organisations, which would support understanding of the tensions prevalent in partnership working between the fields. Linked to this, Bourdieu's writing suggests that agents of any given field are endowed with a 'habitus' – in other words a set of common dispositions and tastes that shape their behaviour, and that incline them to belong within that field (Bourdieu, 1984). The habitus is said to be influenced by a person's educational background and social origin, and by recognising these factors, it is possible to conceive why practitioners and young people hold certain views or feel excluded or included in certain environments. The framework therefore encourages the researcher to contextualise individual behaviour in relation to much broader structural forces and to understand why interactions between agents from different fields might be fraught with challenges (Thomson, 2017).

The commissioned research was conducted between June 2016 and March 2017 and focused solely on 24 interviews with practitioners and young people, reflecting back on their experiences of the programme. The *Circuit National* team were particularly keen to interrogate one of the programme's key aspirations: that young people from youth organisations might join the galleries' peer-led groups on a long-term basis, and therefore contribute to the institutions as cultural producers. The objectives and findings of this research overlapped considerably with those of the doctoral research, which is why it is possible to utilise data from both projects and to bring their conclusions together in this single summary paper.

In this document organisations and people are not named in order to protect identities and afford a greater degree of honesty without risking reputations and relationships. Many of the participants were happy to be named, but the interconnected nature of partnership working means it was necessary to anonymise the names of people and institutions discussed.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE YOUTH AND GALLERY EDUCATION SECTORS



RELATIONS BETWEEN THE YOUTH AND GALLERY EDUCATION SECTORS

In line with a Bourdieusian approach to field analysis, the initial move made in the thesis was to break down the histories of the two sectors, in order to better comprehend the position of these fields in relation to wider fields of power (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). This process revealed information about the 'relative autonomy' and agency of the fields and their agents, which was important for understanding the power dynamics in cross-sector partnership work (Hilgers and Manez, 2015, p.19). Analysing the fields also provides evidence about the types of cultural, social and educational capital that are legitimated within them, and the 'game' that workers have to learn to play if they are to comply with the dominant belief system, or 'doxa' of their professional world (Bourdieu, 1997; Bourdieu, 1985; Bennett, 2010, p.xxi). The 'doxa' refers to the accepted way of doing things in a particular field, however Bourdieu also urges the researcher to unpick the doxic contests that take place within fields, as different factions and agendas compete for legitimacy (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). In doing so, it is possible to gather a more nuanced picture of the internal conflicts of each field, which might have a bearing on how agents work collaboratively with external fields.

Using a combination of literature analysis and data from event-based ethnography I compiled a narrative of the social and policy changes that have affected the advancement of the youth and gallery education sectors. This research showed that the sectors share common origins since their formation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where broader concerns about the social, moral and cultural development of young people motivated philanthropic efforts to 'civilise' impoverished communities through institutions and programmes (Smith, 2013; Mörsch, 2016). Similarly, in the 1960s both youth work and arts education received greater levels of policy attention and state investment as the sectors became more formalised (Bradford, 2015; Doeser, 2015). The community development movement and community arts movement of the 1970s saw youth and arts provision coalesce around shared spaces (such as radical community centres) and

concepts of grassroots-led cultural democracy (Willis, 1990; Worpole, 2013; Matarasso, 2013a). So there were considerable overlaps in the inception and early development of gallery education and youth work, and in their radical heyday collaboration was arguably a normalised condition of these practices.

Importantly however, the historical research also revealed the unequal distribution of economic and symbolic power held between the sectors. While the gallery sector has been somewhat protected from government directives due the arms-length principle of public arts funding and its mixed funding model, the youth sector has been especially vulnerable to shifting policy priorities over recent decades. Both sectors were impacted by the neoliberal policy agendas of the 1980s and 1990s, where new cultures of managerialism and professionalisation changed the dynamic of public organisations. But while the gallery education sector benefited from increased status and investment linked to regeneration initiatives, over time the spaces that hosted open access youth provision became progressively underused and underfunded, and there was a political loss of confidence in the practices of informal youth work (Allen, 2008; Doerer, 2015; Smith, 2013; Brent, 2013; Jeffs, 2014). This policy phase heralded an era where notions of community and collaboration essentially fell out of fashion, and where the advancement of the youth and gallery education fields took quite different paths (Matarasso, 2013a). The advent of the New Labour government from 1997 brought about enhanced funding for youth and arts programmes, but also a further entrenchment of New Public Management approaches across organisations (Davies, 2010; Sercombe, 2015).

This system hastened a reframing of public services, where the government would act as the 'purchaser' rather than 'provider' of provision and youth organisations would need to compete to become 'partners' of the state, where they would be tasked with delivering set outcomes (Sercombe, 2015). It is arguable that from this moment on, the concepts of 'partnership' or 'joined-up working' took on new politicised meanings, and have since been associated with accountability, performativity and a loss of autonomy from the perspective of more critical factions of youth workers (de St Croix, 2016).

For the purposes of this study it was important to acknowledge that the youth sector field is made up of populations of workers with a diverse spectrum of attitudes about the core principles and values of youth work.

However, in witnessing sector events and observing social media activity it was apparent that there are two major schools of opinion prevailing across the sector: one that accepts or subscribes to the dominant managerial doxa of contemporary youth services, and one that critiques the encroachment of bureaucracy and favours the voluntary, person-centred traditions of open-access youth work (Jeffs and Smith, 2010). Those at the more critical end of the spectrum believe that waves of restructuring at local authority level and the amalgamation of practitioners into non-youth work settings have resulted in the gradual erosion of the identity of youth work as a distinct occupation (Taylor, 2016).

In contrast, it could be said that the status of gallery education as a profession has been elevated since the New Labour era, when peer-led youth programmes multiplied in galleries and the visual art world turned its attention towards the 'language of experience' (Sinker, 2008; Dewdney, Dibosa and Walsh, 2013, p.41). The increasing profile of spaces and roles associated with learning further established the prominence of gallery education in public institutions, which were themselves receiving generous levels of public funding (Charman, 2005; Howell, 2009). While the sector raised concerns about the dangers of instrumentalising the arts, the idea that museums and galleries could contribute to social change helped to reinforce the position of gallery educators and generate resources for programmes. So these accounts provide a picture of two professional fields with differing degrees of power and agency, which is a relevant consideration for an enquiry into democratic partnership working.

The political emphasis on building more inclusive and diverse pathways for accessing the arts created an obvious incentive for galleries to work together with youth organisations and services from the 2000s onwards (Edmonds, 2008). Before this period, youth agencies were 'a comparatively under-used support system in terms of widening young people's attendance at cultural venues' (Harland and Kinder, 1999, p.32). But although the rationale for connecting with captive groups of diverse participants was evident from the perspective of cultural workers, the benefits for youth workers and organisations was less apparent as galleries had not traditionally been recognised as natural spaces for engaging marginalised young people. Research shows that partnerships are often initiated by arts organisations rather than youth organisations, and there is a more embedded tradition

of youth work engaging with performance, music and street based arts as opposed to visual art institutions (Jermyn, 2004; Morford, 2009). The rise in work between galleries and youth and community organisations also led arts researchers and practitioners to scrutinise the problematic inequalities and stigmatising language linked with working alongside marginalised communities (Lynch, 2001; Hall, 2001; Holden, 2004; Kester, 2013). Many critically minded gallery practitioners looked for ways to develop more 'equitable relations' through innovative (often off-site) projects (South London Gallery, 2011; Graham, 2012a; Graham, 2012b; Steedman, 2012). The sectors therefore share some common critical ground in their pursuit of democratic practice, however it is clear that the gallery sector has been afforded greater freedoms than the youth sector to creatively experiment with different participatory models.

The 2008 financial crisis and ensuing austerity programme of the 2010-2015 Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition government precipitated widespread club closures and cuts in the youth sector which placed an already-vulnerable field under significant threat (Unison, 2014). The government's 'Big Society' agenda sought to shift responsibility for running non-statutory services away from central government and towards the voluntary and private sectors (de St Croix, 2015a). These were the conditions that helped to motivate programmes such as *Circuit*, and it was under these circumstances that *Circuit's* partnership work unfolded. In the arts sector (which also experienced cuts) organisations were being encouraged to work strategically in collaborative or commissioning relationships with youth and community services, and to help 'fill in the gaps' left open by budget reductions and restructuring (Osborne, 2016).

These various movements show that the youth and visual art sectors have intersected and interacted across decades, but the balance of power has typically been weighted in favour of the art sector, which has at its disposal comparatively rich cultural resources. The youth sector represents a field in flux, so as a partner it is a complex space of changing delivery models, strained capacity and insecure, conflicting agendas. Youth sector events I witnessed during my fieldwork also confirmed that the sector struggles to advocate and influence on a national level, that morale is frequently low and that many practitioners feel politically marginalised and disempowered. Dialogue during events also revealed that this climate of

instability and competition has made open, risky and honest partnership working additionally challenging. The loss of local networks and brokerage has also played a role in reducing the sector's capacity to collaborate. The museum and gallery sector is to some extent self-aware of its own privileges and hierarchies, and over the last decade in particular numerous texts, conferences and action research projects have been dedicated to examining and problematising the ethics of collaboration in the field (Lynch, 2011; Steedman, 2012; Graham, 2014; Bienkowski, 2015; 2016). The disparities highlighted here indicate why galleries and youth organisations have made uneasy bedfellows, despite having a number of shared objectives and values.

The research also demonstrated that the professional habitus of the youth worker is distinct from that of the gallery educator. So too are the capitals required to operate effectively in youth organisations or visual art institutions. In youth work for example, lived experience of disadvantage and vocational training are considered valuable embodied and educational capital, which has helped to encourage working class practitioners into the field (Batsleer, 2014; Bradford, 2015). In gallery education a degree or postgraduate degree in the arts is considered standard institutional capital, and the demographic profile of the sector's workforce is predominantly white, female and middle class (Needlands et al., 2015; Panic, 2015). These discrepancies signal the potential difficulties of finding a shared language when working together or when recruiting a practitioner from one field to work in another. Bourdieu says it is not possible in social space to 'group *anyone* with just *anyone* while ignoring the fundamental differences, particularly economic and cultural ones' (Bourdieu, 1985, p.726).

Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' also helps to explain why practitioners and young people build particular attitudes towards arts and culture, and how these judgments can vary according to class origins and the nature of a person's educational capital (Bourdieu, 1984). In the case of this research context, there were clear divergences in approaches to art and creativity. Some groups of youth workers I observed highlighted perceptions that galleries are "posh and not relevant", and that the "intellectualising of art works alienates people". Other practitioners stressed the seemingly troubling tendency for the arts to be instrumentalised through youth work (Brocken, 2015; Howard, 2017) or conveyed predominantly as a practical tool (Belton, 2015). It was evident in my fieldwork that differing attitudes towards art and institutions would have a bearing on tensions in partnership.

Most crucially then, the *Circuit* organisers and the associated gallery partners sought to draw upon knowledge of the various factors that have made partnership between youth organisations and galleries challenging in the past. Galleries held discussion events bringing together workers from across local youth provision to debate best and worst practice in the hope that *Circuit* might be able to break some of the habits that have historically limited these types of relationships. In these events youth practitioners spoke about the problem of short term offers being made at short notice, and the tendency for youth organisations to be treated as suppliers of young people by galleries, rather than as equal partners. Concerns were also raised about the lack of dialogue around youth partners' needs, and a lack of recognition for the circumstances facing vulnerable or marginalised young people. The following sections of this paper detail *Circuit*'s efforts to create a space for working equitably and sensitively with young people and youth partners, as well as the learning that emerged from this process.

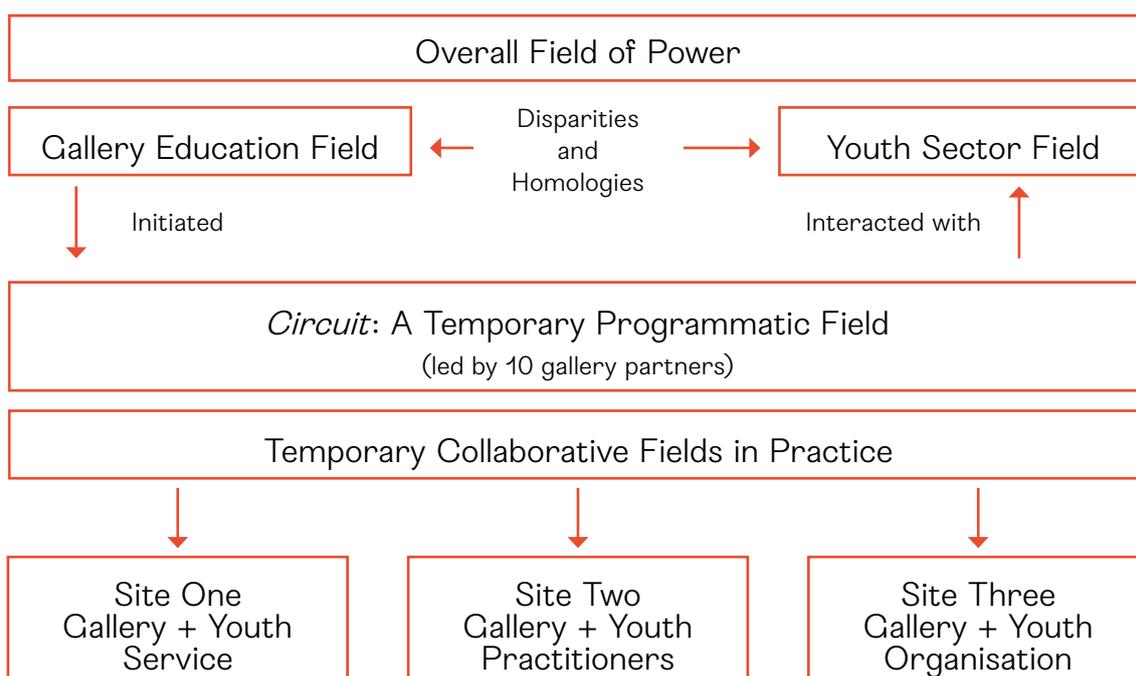
CIRCUIT'S
TEMPORARY FIELDS



CIRCUIT'S TEMPORARY FIELDS

While Bourdieu's theory of fields provides a useful scaffold for examining the composition and logic of established, individual fields, his ideas can also be applied to an analysis of less permanent spaces, such as programmes. In my PhD thesis I adapted Rawolle's (2005) concept of the 'temporary social field', which refers to the space created by a congregation of multiple separate fields that 'share common stakes' (Rawolle, 2005, p.712). In *Circuit* I saw the emergence of two types of temporary fields. The programme itself and its management structure did not comprise a merging of youth and gallery sector fields – instead it represented the coming together of ten gallery partners (and the funder Paul Hamlyn Foundation) to build a temporary programmatic field, which would provide a platform for engaging with the youth sector. Within this programme, various different organisational partnerships developed, some of which did result in the materialisation of temporary *collaborative* fields (i.e. spaces that brought the youth and visual art fields together). The following diagram attempts to illustrate the configuration of *Circuit*'s key field geographies:

GEOGRAPHIES OF PARTNERSHIP



In my fieldwork I was particularly interested in the organisation of capitals and the prevailing 'doxa' of the temporary programmatic field, and how these would affect partnership working. I wanted to examine the influence and position of youth sector and gallery sector approaches in the programme, to determine whether *Circuit's* national design supported the ambition to create embedded, sustainable cross-sector relationships. I was also interested in observing the activity of the localised temporary collaborative fields, where agents from different social and professional worlds would have to negotiate a shared physical and pedagogical space.

There is not room within this paper to enter into the detail of my ethnographic observations, but there are a number of findings from my experiences of researching the programme and the three sites highlighted in the diagram above that are worth summarising.

CIRCUIT'S TEMPORARY PROGRAMMATIC FIELD

As a generously funded, large-scale four-year programme, *Circuit* afforded its organisers the resources to shape a temporary field with the optimal conditions for effective partnership working with youth partners and diverse groups of young people. As part of these efforts, the Learning team at Tate (with the agreement of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation) decided to allocate up to two years for relationship building with the local youth sector in every *Circuit* site. Gallery teams were expected to use this time to access and build networks, learn about partners' needs and practices and to run pilot activity. Expectations for project 'delivery' were limited to the latter two years of *Circuit*, in the anticipation that this way of working would alleviate the tendency to rush into short term, one-sided relationships and encourage partners to co-design projects. The funder Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) also sought to place emphasis on "self-reflection"; "analysis" and "transparency" in order to support grant recipients to avoid performing to number targets and to generate a culture of honesty and learning in the programme.

As *Circuit* was devised by Tate staff, inevitably the design of the programmatic strands reflected the model of practice favoured by Tate's Young People's Programmes. This meant that the programme largely adopted Tate's institutional 'doxa', or accepted way of working with young people through peer-led programmes, high profile events and partnerships. This model is oriented around the idea of young people acting as long-term cultural producers within institutions, and of those young people bringing their cultural tastes and values to these spaces.

It attempts to contrast with 'outreach' models of working, which sometimes position young people as culturally deficient beneficiaries of programmes. The cross-disciplinary focus of *Circuit* aimed to reinforce the programme's efforts to legitimate young people's diverse cultural capitals, and to promote an accommodating social space for youth partners to engage with.

A final key attribute of *Circuit's* design that is relevant to this study was the incorporation of youth sector expertise into the programme. Current or former youth practitioners were recruited as board members, and as gallery programmers, critical friends and facilitators in some of the regional *Circuit* sites. In doing so it was hoped that the galleries could acquire knowledge about ways of working with marginalised and disadvantaged young people, and about connecting effectively with the youth sector. However, it is important to acknowledge that youth organisations were not enlisted to co-develop *Circuit's* programmatic field, so the programme remained a visual arts-led initiative, with galleries occupying the most powerful position. One argument for organising the programme in this way was to allow relationships to be nurtured with youth partners at a localised level, in ways that were specific to their contexts. Tate staff also wanted to begin the work within an existing network of relatively homologous institutions where they had influence, and could make progress.

The rest of this paper reflects on how these attempts at creating an optimal programmatic space for partnership worked in practice, and what learning can be taken away as a consequence.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING



RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

The *Circuit* galleries approached the task of relationship building with the youth sector in a range of different ways. Some conducted multiple face-to-face meetings with individual contacts in their locality, while other galleries organised workshops or sharing days for large groups of professionals working in youth services. One gallery team chose to employ a researcher to conduct a scoping exercise to map provision in the area. In a few cases during *Circuit*, youth organisations made the initial approach to work in partnership with their local *Circuit* gallery. However, these instances were few, and partnerships were largely brokered by staff from the associated galleries. Youth sector partners engaged through *Circuit* ranged from informal, open access, drop-in youth clubs to structured alternative education providers. *Circuit* gallery practitioners expressed a number of varying motivations for approaching certain youth partners. Some galleries strove to work with targeted groups of young people who were underrepresented in their organisation (e.g. disabled young people). Other galleries identified a social issue (such as mental health) that served as a barrier to young people's engagement, and that warranted the fostering of a relationship with a particular service.

There was an awareness that the programme had intended for the first one to two years of *Circuit* to be used as a relationship-building phase, but on reflection some gallery staff believed they could have utilised this to greater effect. Many sites entered into partnership projects or workshop 'delivery mode' quickly. For some galleries this was because they had no pre-existing peer-led group, and they needed to populate this with young people. For others it was due to the fact that youth organisations were overstretched and unable to dedicate time to building more exploratory relations, especially if this did not involve contact with young people. One Learning Manager interviewed felt that the process was also hindered by the youth and gallery sectors not being used to this way of working.

He commented that, in hindsight, they could have had more conversations simply to “learn about others” and “just spent time with people”. He noted that the public demands of working in a gallery context are often at odds with open-ended exploratory practice:

I think we've always got pressure to think we've got to do something, there's got to be an outcome, we've got to get a result, the partnership has got to go somewhere, we've got to have an end outcome, we've got to impact on the young people, we've got to impact on us or the sector. So you've always got this pressure somewhere to think that you've got to put it into some kind of project or package or something - an outcome. When actually I think I would have spent the first year having conversations with people. Having cups of tea with people. Going spending time within their organisation, spending a week just saying hi, no pressure.

– Gallery Learning Manager

This practitioner (and others) acknowledged that there had not been enough emphasis placed on forging space to share expertise and practices. But his statement also reveals the challenges of shifting habits associated with one's home field, as certain ways of doing things become engrained and practitioners become conditioned to respond to the normal rhythms and expectations of their organisation.

Many gallery practitioners also reported that the turbulence of the youth sector and the precariousness of youth worker jobs made building firm foundations for a partnership particularly testing:

I think it was very difficult given the timing of Circuit and cuts in youth sector provision [...] because there is so much staff change as well - we definitely found a big challenge was that you build a partner, you build up a relationship with someone and then they leave. And being able to continue to carry out that work when you might have somebody else who comes in who was less interested - that was tough.

– Gallery Programmer

Youth workers not only lost their jobs during the period of time that *Circuit* was running, but some saw their job roles and remits change, as some local authority youth services became commissioners rather than deliverers of youth provision. In this difficult environment, some youth partners appeared to be especially protective of their cohorts of young people, and a few gallery programmers found that it was hard to win the trust of youth practitioners who had been burnt by problematic, “piecemeal” relationships with cultural partners in the past. One youth practitioner explained his initial concerns about engaging his group of young people with *Circuit*:

I've actually worked with these guys for six years. I've known them since they were kids, I don't have a family myself, I actually do feel really paternal towards a lot of these lads. That's the level of investment I've put in. So actually when I first heard about Circuit I was worried, because if these guys just decide they don't want to engage, then that hasn't just screwed the project up, that's really put a dampener on the relationship.

– Youth Project Manager

The experience of working on *Circuit* also led some gallery practitioners and artists to question assumptions that youth centres could provide direct access to cohorts of young people. They recognised that the youth sector was dealing with its own reach and retention issues and that if a young person was engaged with a youth organisation, they were already hooked into available provision to some degree:

Working with the youth sector is absolutely key, it's absolutely right. But in a way we know those young people are there and they're in very small numbers - even youth centres [...] are struggling to hold the same young people every week. So the projects we've developed with them, sometimes out of the 10 people that might be going on the journey, they're a different 10 people every week. And that is youth clubs really, they're a choice - people dip in, they dip out.

– Gallery Learning Manager

These findings expose some of the challenges involved in adhering to the logic of a temporary programmatic field. Some of the issues experienced here were circumstantial (i.e. to do with pressures and instability in external fields of power). But the findings also demonstrated how the creation of a temporary programmatic field is heavily inflected and influenced by the doxic conventions of the instigating field and the dispositions of the lead practitioners. While *Circuit* was conceived with the goal of improving partnership conduct and evening out the balance of power between organisations, aspects of its design inadvertently seemed to replicate typical hierarchies, or uphold habitual ways of working. For instance, the programme itself set up multiple requirements of the galleries (such as forming a peer-led group and programming events) that appeared to conflict with the initial aims of the partnership strand. And as galleries held control of the programme budgets, they inevitably wielded the largest share of power when embarking upon relationships with partner organisations. What became clear was that to shift patterns of behaviour practitioners would need to be taken through a scaffolded, guided process of recommended activity, and they would need a thorough understanding of the current status of the youth sector to identify what types of partnership might be most compatible with local need.

NEGOTIATING A TEMPORARY COLLABORATIVE FIELD



NEGOTIATING A TEMPORARY COLLABORATIVE FIELD

When partnership projects got underway in *Circuit*, these took different forms in different regions. In many cases collaborative activity took place predominantly on the site of the youth partner. In a few cases youth and gallery practitioners worked together in alternative sites such as former cafes and bus stations where they collectively strove to co-create new types of youth provision as a response to the loss or decline of open access youth provision in their areas. Data from observations and interviews linked to these projects can tell us various things about the challenges involved when practitioners work beyond their primary field alongside agents from an external sector.

In partnerships where activity was mainly located in the youth setting, arts practitioners discovered that they would need to be ready to adapt their plans and remain flexible, especially when participants attended voluntarily, or where their attention was split and the mood was typically boisterous:

You might only have 5 minutes with somebody, 10 minutes if you're lucky. Not particularly concentrated time. You have to make a connection. [...] I think I went in with a proper arts facilitator hat on, and a workshop. And I had to change all that, and that was good, I learned a lot from changing my expectations because it was such a drop-in centre.

– Artist

Some artists reported feeling disempowered in youth settings, and unable to draw upon their strengths as creative practitioners due to a lack of support:

I did adapt but [the youth workers] didn't adapt at all. And I don't think they realised that. There was a very passive thing about it all. [...] I think there should have been a defined space for any artist or practitioner walking in there. And that could have been a defined space in a corner - I don't mean it had to be a highfalutin space - but a kind of respect for the practice.

– Artist

In some projects I witnessed, youth practitioners would use the time an artist was present to get on with other work, rather than engage directly in the activity. This led to gallery practitioners and artists feeling like service providers as opposed to collaborators, and it limited the opportunity for peer-to-peer exchange. As one gallery programmer noted:

With all of [the youth worker's] enthusiasm, there were points in the project where I felt it was less of a partnership and it felt like we were there delivering something. And I spoke to [the youth worker] about it, and I think that came from his confidence in [the artist] and I to deliver, without him appreciating the support that we needed for us to feel like it was a partnership.

– Gallery Programmer

Interviewees implied that partnerships felt more collaborative when youth workers were proactive and present. Often their encouragement was quite crucial to unlocking the young people's enthusiasm or sense of safety, and young people spoke very highly of their youth workers, who had earned their respect. The lack of youth practitioner engagement in some sites was the result of a number of factors including workload pressures or stretched staff teams. The issues experienced also had to do with practitioners feeling out of their professional comfort zone and underprepared in unfamiliar situations. Artists often reported feeling much more comfortable and confident when taking young people into gallery settings, and they often felt that young people also benefited from a change in their environment:

I could see a huge change in them [at the gallery] and I felt that if I could work between the two [settings] rather than just in that drop-in centre, if we could take them out in a different environment then I felt that they would be very different people.

– Artist

While artists often played a crucial role in the success of a partnership, some youth practitioners cited artists' approaches as reasons for problems in partnerships. In one site, the youth partner described how an artist misread signals or recognition of their own privilege for instance:

It felt like the artist had zero understanding basically of the kind of challenges that we were facing. [...] He tried to get the young people on side and show them that they can all be artists one day too and talked about how he had once had a crappy job in a burger bar. And some of our young people aren't able to get the crappy job in a burger bar and are really aspiring towards that. And not everyone is going to go off and be an artist, that's just not the reality. And he talked about how he did it by hard work alone, but his story actually revealed there was privilege that he wasn't aware of and networks and people helping him along the way, and our young people don't have that.

– Youth Practitioner

In this case the gallery staff were able to talk to the artist and encourage him to modify his behaviour, but this is a useful illustration of the challenges involved in bringing in practitioners who are unused to working in targeted youth organisation contexts and are unfamiliar with the codes of best practice in those settings.

In the interviews, a couple of youth practitioners also commented on the uneasiness created by the inequity of resources between youth and gallery partners. The galleries' ability to spend large amounts of money on equipment for exhibitions, new technology or pizza etc. was generally welcomed by partners, but in some cases it created some feelings of jealousy, or it inflated expectations about what was possible. These different budgetary scales seemed to illuminate the material inequalities between the art and youth sectors. Related to this, the different organisational and staffing scales of youth and gallery partners sometimes made it difficult to build democratic relationships.

Aside from the differences in organisational cultures, practitioners also acknowledged class/social differences between youth workers and gallery workers. Several gallery practitioners commented on their self-consciousness around their white middle class identity when building relationships with young people. In my PhD research I often found that youth workers would self-identify as working class. Several gallery practitioners also admitted that they had a fairly "surface level" understanding of the youth sector – or of what constitutes a youth worker's role.

Some gallery practitioners also felt that the youth workers generally had a very “surface level” understanding of gallery education. One practitioner commented that a youth partner was noticeably “uncomfortable” in gallery spaces.

However, issues of class identity and youth/arts experience were not clearly divided across sector lines. For instance, many of the youth practitioners I interviewed for the commissioned research had engaged with the arts in a professional capacity prior to *Circuit*. At the same time, several gallery practitioners involved in *Circuit* had previously worked in the youth sector. And some of the gallery practitioners I spoke to did not have the middle class, advantaged backgrounds that are typically associated with cultural sector workers. At least three practitioners interviewed said that they were the first in their family to attend university, and that they encountered social barriers or a lack of access to the arts as teenagers. However, it was the case that the majority of gallery practitioners I interviewed had a background in visual art, having studied some form of practice-based arts degree or art history. Only a minority of gallery practitioners I spoke to had direct experience of growing up participating in youth services as young people themselves. So there was clear evidence across my research that the social/class distance between the gallery sector world and the youth sector world was a real and consistent factor in partnership working.

For some young people, this sense of distance was projected in the experience of visiting a visual art institution:

I always thought galleries weren't the place for me because you know, any kind of media will tell you, galleries are for middle-aged, generally white people, they're not really for everybody to go and enjoy, it's sort of a middle class thing. That's what I thought of it before.

– Young Person

The stuff that I've seen in galleries, I don't want to sound horrible but sometimes it seems boring. [...] Paintings and people that get paid loads of money for it and it looks like it's been done by a 5-year-old. Sometimes that gets on my nerves.

– Young Person

One youth practitioner spoke about her group's preconceived ideas about the exclusivity of gallery spaces:

Speaking to them, even to get them into art galleries or the museum [...] - all the stuff that they know is free - that they can go to but they choose not to go [...] one of the young people did comment to me that "it's not for us". [I said] "What do you mean it's not for you?" "Well it's for like yummy mummies, it's for latte mummies". I said - "they're for everybody! These galleries and museums are yours, they're free". But I think depending on where they come from - a lot of the young people that we work with - we work with demographics right across [the city] in all the places that aren't necessarily the most affluent. And they see themselves within their own little area. [...] Whereas if they go to the [gallery] they see it as a white middle class thing to go to, even though it's not. And we know it's not, and they've been told it's not and they've been there and seen for themselves it's not. But I think because in their eyes it's got a posh cafe, it is young people friendly but it's not the kind of place that I suppose they feel comfortable if that makes sense.

– Youth Engagement Practitioner

For many young people engaged through partnerships then, galleries were initially perceived as spaces where they would have very little relevant capital or agency (Bourdieu, 1999). In some projects I observed, participants who occupied very dominant positions in their youth setting would often not turn up to the days that involved trips to gallery sites. Several youth practitioners involved in both pieces of research also expressed strong feelings about the elitism and wealth of the gallery sector and the esoteric nature of "high art" forms.

Interviews with young people revealed however that it was not always helpful to assume that the "high end" character of galleries was an automatic barrier to their involvement in programmes. For one young person interviewed (who came via a partnership project), the kudos of the gallery was part of the draw:

I did think it sounded exciting – to me it was like another world but it sounded like a sophisticated place, a gallery is like sophistication so I thought, yeah this is something I'd be interested in going to – to just experience it – and maybe some of it will rub off on me. Some of these sophisticated places or things involved in it will rub off on me. So I thought it was an interesting, attractive opportunity.

– Young Person

This type of attitude was rarely expressed though, and in doing partner scoping work, gallery staff realised that many communities not only perceive galleries and museums as middle class spaces, but they do not conceive of their centralised locations as areas that are accessible or relevant to their lives.

One of the ways that some partners sought to address this was by developing collaborative initiatives in non-institutional spaces that engaged and overlapped with young people's own 'social fields' as opposed to just 'adult constructed 'fields of practice' (France, et al., 2013, p.601). In disused venues on high streets and hang-out sites, these collaborations combined a studio-style pedagogy with open access and detached youth work methods and enlisted the support of young people who understood what types of cultural capital were considered important for groups of young people in that locality. These projects were not without their challenges. For example, negotiations around boundary setting and safeguarding proved to ignite heated debate in one site. And being apart from their institutions meant practitioners could not easily enable learning from the work to motivate organisational change. However, these initiatives showed how youth and gallery partners could work together offsite to circumvent some of the bureaucracy, barriers and constraints of the respective partners' organisational fields and to co-conceive an inter-disciplinary, non-coercive space for creative and democratic participation.

The following section goes further to explain why privileging marginalised young people's own cultural and social fields was so crucial in *Circuit's* partnership work.

AGENCY AND AUTHORITY IN THE TEMPORARY COLLABORATIVE FIELD



AGENCY AND AUTHORITY IN THE TEMPORARY COLLABORATIVE FIELD

A major factor that influenced the success of partnerships was the extent to which each partner group was able to exert their agency within the relationship. As previously mentioned, many of the youth organisations involved in *Circuit* had some form of existing creative provision, or a member of staff with a background in the arts. So the scope of their creative agency within the partnership was especially significant to the development of meaningful, democratic collaborations in some sites.

In observations and interviews I noted several key characteristics of youth workers' typical approaches to creative practice. It became apparent that youth practitioners were often keen to adhere to the youth work principle of 'starting where young people are at' - i.e. supporting and facilitating their individual passions and ideas and helping them to realise these (Davies, 2005, p.7). This type of approach did not always marry with the approach of artist-led workshops organised by the gallery partner.

Debates about what constitutes quality practice also took place across *Circuit's* partnership work. In the open access youth settings I encountered, graffiti was the most commonly referenced art form. Young people often cited spray-painting and mural making when asked what they were interested in doing. Youth practitioners also often understood street art as an important way in to creative engagement, although there was an awareness that this approach might not correlate with the aesthetic values and creative tastes of contemporary art institutions and gallery workers. Some young people involved in alternative education settings also found the experimental creative pedagogy of some artists to be at odds with their expectations of art practice (which were usually informed by school based teaching). For most of the youth workers I met, the young people's experiences, interests and personal development took precedence above concerns about artistic merit, but this did not mean they were uninterested in the quality of young people's work. Maintaining high quality practice was seen as essential to raising young people's expectations and instilling self-pride.

Equally, gallery practitioners tended to be willing to challenge some of their own conceptions and incorporate the existing cultural tastes of young people and partners in projects. There were however concerns on both sides of some partnerships about having to conform or compromise in order to fit the creative agenda of one partner. Episodes of clear success occurred when artists displayed enough creative agility to both support young people's tastes and (sub) cultural productions, and encourage them into new territories of practice. In one site this led to a large-scale festival and exhibition exploring skate culture; in another site the visual culture surrounding music provided a focus for events and displays.

By affording young people the ability to have input in the creative direction of projects, there was greater likelihood that their interest would be retained. However, the process of soliciting young people's input had to be handled sensitively. As one youth practitioner commented, the practice of giving young people autonomy can be problematic for young people who have had "all their agency taken away from them" in their personal lives. She contended that many young people need to be given options to be able to make decisions – it is not always appropriate to simply ask – what do you want to do? *Circuit* highlighted that youth organisations should not be regarded as the non-creative partner, and any potential relationship between arts and youth organisations and young people should ideally begin with open conversations about creativity and personal taste, with shared cultural experiences and with opportunities for all partners to have their voices heard.

The issue of agency also extended to internal staff relationships. In some of the galleries I researched, issues emerged as a result of communication problems and uneven distributions of agency within staff teams. Some of the members of staff at more junior levels felt that they did not have enough input into key decisions related to partnerships, (such as the recruitment of artists). This lack of ownership bred tense relations in some cases between practitioners working on the ground. It was suggested that *Circuit* inadvertently helped to perpetuate these divisions because of the hierarchical separation of working group staff and steering group staff. From the interviews it was clear that there were multiple power dynamics at play across organisational relationships, and that some degree of creative agency needed to be afforded to people at all levels of a partnership for individuals to feel fully invested and valued.

As mentioned earlier, one of the ways that *Circuit* strove to shift typical divisions and distributions of agency in the programme was to encourage the recruitment of youth practitioners (and therefore youth sector expertise) into the programmatic field. Their experiences offered some insight into the challenges and advantages of positioning agents from an external field into the gallery sector field. In two sites where former youth workers were recruited as gallery programmers there was evidence of tension that resulted from different approaches to working with young people through the arts. Both of these practitioners left their roles before the end of the programme. Reflecting on their time with *Circuit* and navigating the peer-led programme model, one practitioner spoke openly about this tension:

I've always used art as a practice in youth organisations and youth work as a distraction really, and a way to build relationships, have fun, it's therapeutic. But we've got to do very little of that here really. Because we're constantly being told that the programme is young people programming for young people. Well that's wrong - that's putting up a huge barrier to begin with, because hard to reach young people won't get involved with the gallery to programme for other young people, unless that's their specific motivator in life - to become a facilitator. [...] They come to get involved to take part in art, to do cool things you know, and just mess about. So that's a bit of an issue really.

– Gallery Programmer (and former Youth Worker)

For this practitioner, the peer-led model largely appealed to young people pursuing arts careers, and did not serve the interests and needs of all young people. In the practitioner's view, arts engagement was characterised as a vehicle for young people's personal development and they did not see this as being consistent with the goal of producing institutional programmes. *Circuit* brought about high profile, high stakes opportunities for young people – such as the chance to curate exhibitions and festivals in galleries' main spaces. While this practitioner recognised the significant value of these opportunities for young people interested in a future career in the art world, the perception that there was “no room for failure” in the gallery context meant that these projects had to be realised with major staff resources and input from the most engaged young people. The practitioner felt this led to inauthentic experiences for other young people, who were unlikely to be exposed to the full processes involved in staging these events.

These views correlated with concerns expressed in other concurrent youth arts programmes such as *Strong Voices* (2013-15), about the seemingly product-focused nature of arts organisations, and the extent to which this conflicts with the process-oriented character of youth work (Cochrane, 2015). *Circuit's* recruitment of youth sector professionals and young people without arts backgrounds into its programme further illuminated the challenges of sustaining the engagement of so-called 'harder to reach' young people whilst facilitating a peer-led curatorial model. Some *Circuit* practitioners expressed discomfort at the tacit pressure being placed on young people to produce programmes, and there was also evidence that some galleries lost members of their peer groups in the process of staging a large-scale event or exhibition as part of *Circuit*. Several members of staff found that the pressures of staging these events also impacted negatively on their capacity to nurture meaningful partnerships with youth organisations. However other gallery practitioners defended the peer-led mode of practice fostered in *Circuit's* programmatic field. One senior gallery programmer felt there were missed opportunities for practitioners with youth work backgrounds to fully engage with the logic of practice in gallery education and peer-led programming. The practitioner strongly believed that young people could gain enormous benefits from exposure to the "core business of galleries – exhibitions", and that gallery educators frequently demonstrate a deep commitment to ensuring that young people are "allowed into the citadel" in a democratic, imaginative way. The programmer implied that some youth practitioners' prejudices about galleries prevented them from utilising exhibitions and other public programmes as rich catalytic experiences.

Negotiating institutional, creative and social agendas is a core facet of any gallery educator's practice, but for former youth practitioners who were used to working on a regular basis with people facing major disadvantage, it appeared that this conflict was even greater. Nevertheless, some *Circuit* sites *did* manage to achieve models of peer-led programming that were also inclusive and supportive of individual development, and many young people interviewed spoke very positively about their experiences.

These sites seemed to accommodate a high degree of programmatic flexibility and personalised mentoring, and they were often the sites that had longer-term experience of running peer-led programmes. But even these galleries often found that the peer-led programme generally only attracted a limited demographic of young people from youth partner organisations. There was recognition that more could be done to address the reality that these opportunities were mainly taken up by those with an existing interest in the arts or who have been exposed to structural advantages.

Bourdieu writes about the potential for 'symbolic violence' to occur when people are placed in situations or fields where their particular forms of social and cultural capital are subtly undermined, and which reinforce their sense of inferiority (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu, 1999). The 'violence' exerted is not intentional or overt, rather the 'doxa' of a given field is systemically designed to privilege certain capitals over others, which makes it possible to misrecognise the exclusionary forces of that field or programme. Discourses around symbolic violence can be usefully applied in gallery youth programmes, which frequently facilitate encounters between culturally dominant institutions and young people and practitioners who tend to operate in spaces of marginality. Throughout my research I sought to shed light on possible misrecognitions by talking to youth practitioners, who often had an acute sense of awareness about young people's experiences.

SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE AND PEER-LED PROGRAMMES



SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE AND PEER-LED PROGRAMMES

The 'doxa' of peer-led programmes in galleries revolves around the formation of a core group of young producer/curators who work as a collective to plan and run high-visibility programmes for peers in their age group (in *Circuit's* case 15-25). At Tate and within *Circuit* the peer-led pedagogy incorporated a pattern of regular meetings (usually on weekday evenings) – most of which were facilitated by gallery programmers and sometimes artists. The logic behind the peer-led model is that it enables young people to form lasting relationships with cultural organisations and to gain professional experience through encounters with art, artists and exhibitions. Using this framework, galleries demystify their internal workings and support young people to have their voices heard and ideas realised in institutional programmes.

One of the major goals of *Circuit* was for young people from partnership programmes to sustain their engagement with the galleries, by joining or interacting with the peer group. This was identified by *Circuit* staff as one of the most challenging aspects of the programme, and in many sites there were only a few instances where young people engaged via targeted youth services and organisations ended up becoming a long-term member of the gallery's peer-led collective. Bourdieu's (1985) writing around the behaviour of social groups and the unspoken codes of cultural capital helps to unravel why these efforts to integrate or assimilate might be problematic.

In most *Circuit* sites the peer group and partnership programmes ran separately, but they had moments of interaction. Some young people from peer groups were recruited to work on partnership projects, while some partnership groups contributed to events and festivals. Staff encouraged partnership groups members to attend peer group meetings and in some cases they held informal taster sessions or training to welcome potential new members. This tended to result in two or three young people testing out or being part of gallery peer groups.

However these strands of activity (i.e. peer-led and partnership work) were typically largely distinct from one another:

One young person I spoke to said:

Say like here for example, the partnerships and the core group, we don't feel as one. It is like, that's going on, it's like a side thing. But I can't tell who's the side thing. It's either the partnerships are because they need to happen, or we are. It's kind of weird, there isn't like a main one so it's kind of confusing and we don't really interact with them or know what's going on.

– Young Person

The division of the peer-led and partnership strands in *Circuit* meant that in several cases a different member of staff was delegated responsibility for one or the other, with limited crossover. One gallery practitioner said:

We should tie the partnerships together more. But because one member of staff has been working on that, and one member has been working on something else, it's been like two completely separate projects. I've not really been involved in the partnerships.

– Gallery Programmer

This situation was not uncommon in *Circuit* and there were a range of reasons behind these divisions. Staff capacity meant that workload had to be distributed. In many sites, this lack of integration was also due to the fact that the partnership work largely took place in the youth setting, or on weekdays in the daytime. Without informal contact between the groups, the concept of a peer group was relatively abstract and alien to some partnership groups.

Nevertheless, the research showed that there were more intrinsic issues hindering integration between young people from partnership projects and those involved in peer-led groups.

Numerous youth practitioners spoke about the peer groups as appearing to be predominantly “middle class” and already educated in the arts. Some young people I interviewed commented that they didn’t like the discursive, more formalised demands of the peer-led meetings. One said for instance: *“I don’t really like sitting around talking, I like to be up doing stuff”*.

Attending a peer group meeting in a venue outside of your immediate locality on regular evenings also requires a degree of independence, parental encouragement and willingness to commit to projects. One youth practitioner pointed out that the young people he works with are less likely to have the inclination to engage with this type of provision:

The guys here don’t have the self-motivation to do it. It’s that lost boy mentality where they’re not able to motivate themselves - it’s an age thing, it’s a gender thing, it’s a psychological thing, I think it’s a cultural thing - so it’s broader than anything that’s very straightforward. [...] As a counsellor, I see it all the time. It’s holding on to anger - this inability to get passionate about anything. It’s seen as bad [...] I think also there’s a bit of a ‘what’s cool’.

– Youth Project Manager

In some youth settings, youth practitioners explained that their work had to be flexible and projects had to be short with a clear beginning and end as some of their young people suffered from attachment disorder and so did not easily “attach” to anything or anyone in the longer term. In many youth organisations staff were equipped with mental health first aid training, or specialist training in particular conditions that meant systems and procedures were in place to respond to various situations often on a one-to-one level. Several spoke about the need for their young people to receive constant “positive encouragement” in order to sustain their engagement.

Another youth practitioner who worked with young people leaving psychiatric wards was concerned that the “chaotic” lives and backgrounds of their young people would not match with the tacit behavioural expectations of the peer group:

How are our young people going to feel when some of them don’t have GCSEs, sitting around with young people who are speaking a totally different language to them, from a completely different experience?

– Youth Practitioner

This practitioner acknowledged that only those with lower levels of support needs could realistically be expected to make a 'transition'. The implication was therefore that the peer-led offer attracted a narrow demographic of young people from youth organisations, who were closest in social position to the existing group members. Sayers (2015) suggests that peer-led practice 'discourages some young people from taking part, because it creates a kind of social group, which by its sociable nature attracts similar types of people – people who are similar to each other'. From a Bourdieusian perspective, social groups are said to attract and reward people with homologous characteristics, to the extent that they unconsciously alienate those who are *dissimilar* (Bourdieu, 1985).

Gallery programmers were very conscious of the differences in social and cultural capital between young people who engaged with the peer group of their own volition, and young people who were engaged through partnership programmes. Some of the individuals who did join the peer groups from partnership groups could also be described as exceptions to the rule, or exceptional young people. This should not detract from the life challenges and barriers that many of these young people faced, but in some sites I observed these participants were the ones from the youth organisation who did have more familial support, or who were particularly mature and ambitious. These young people had different reasons for sustaining their contact with the peer group. One interviewee (who dealt with anxiety and autism) suggested he was drawn to the contemporary art world because it represented a space where "thinking differently" was celebrated. He also enjoyed the dynamic of working closely with adults and the opportunity to gain paid casual work. Another interviewee felt the peer group provided a "safe" environment where her "voice is valid" and where she could develop in confidence. These types of cases were rightly praised in the programme, but the presence of a few young people from partnership groups did not necessarily instigate a dramatic shifting of culture or diversity within a group. There were other instances where young people who had come from partnership groups displayed an enhanced sense of confidence about the arts to the extent that they were no longer able to identify with the lack of confidence of peers from the youth organisation. The desire to belong to a new group and to establish one's allegiance to institutions with great symbolic power can evidently lead individuals to misrecognise their own journey and the symbolic violence other young people face.

Bourdieu says: 'At the risk of feeling themselves out of place, individuals who move into a new space must fulfil the conditions that that space tacitly requires of its occupants' (1999, p.128). The institutional contemporary art world embeds in its workers the ability to recognise and select out so-called legitimate avant-garde culture, as well as the ability to play the game of at least appearing to understand these practices (Bourdieu, 1984).

Some youth partners suggested that by working in a sustained way and on a regular basis with the gallery partner there would be greater opportunity for a wider section of young people to eventually make transitions. Other youth partners recommended that gallery education practitioners learn from methods utilised in youth work when designing future programmes. This might mean loosening the expectation for young people to assimilate or transition into a gallery model, as one practitioner described:

I think yes, you need a group of young people who are going to programme work for other young people, but you have to start with where the young people are. And if you want a real diverse group of young people I think trying to bring them all together into a room and to fit into a sort of gallery way of doing things isn't necessarily going to work. You need to think of working with them in their style and then somehow introducing and teasing out some of the stuff you need to get out of it.

– Youth Organisation Practitioner

I discovered during the research that youth practitioners were often able to perceive subtle forms for symbolic violence in young people's interactions with galleries, and they also had clear insights into the "street"-based cultural capitals and literacies of their young people (France et al., 2013; Yosso, 2005). By listening to the 'street-smart' theorisations of youth practitioners and marginalised young people, the galleries arguably had a much better chance of connecting with a diverse range of participants and their cultural identities (McLaughlin, 1996, p.12). However, as some gallery practitioners and artists highlighted, it was also important not to obstruct discussion by dismissing the cultural agendas of institutions and contemporary art as being inherently elitist and non-diverse. Nor was it considered helpful to make assumptions about the diversity or limits of young people's creative interests.

COUNTERING SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE



COUNTERING SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE

While Bourdieu's theorisation appears to indicate the insurmountability of the dominant order of fields, his work does suggest that there are ways to instigate change in institutions and systems that seem to value and legitimate certain capitals over others (Thomson, 2017). The ability to be proactively reflexive and analytical about the engrained inequalities that are a present in a particular field is one way for agents to exercise change (Grenfell, 2012). As an action research learning programme, *Circuit* was highly reflective and interrogatory and practitioners were encouraged to initiate regular evaluative rituals across their programmes and to act on findings. The practitioners and evaluation team consistently tracked the demographic profile of participants and they debated and implemented ways to improve the diversity of their organisations and groups. Training on inclusion and diversity supported practitioners to critically assess the cultural, moral and business implications of institutional barriers, and to put in place new protocol to shift the conduct of public-facing staff where necessary. Some of this training was co-devised and co-led by young people from youth organisations, which helped to invert power structures and ensured young people felt listened to. Building a diversity strategy also became a clear condition of the game for *Circuit* galleries, and staff in various different positions (including directors and volunteers) were invited and willing to engage with these processes of institutional change.

Two *Circuit* galleries activated major restructures of their peer-group formats due to concern that the groups lacked diversity and that meetings were becoming too institutionalised. These restructures did not suit all peer group members and gallery practitioners found that they had to have frank and sometimes difficult conversations with young people as a result. Several *Circuit* sites also moved away from prioritising young people's transition from partnership groups to peer-led groups in favour of thinking about all of their activity as part of *Circuit* peer-led work, and inviting groups to run their own events whilst retaining their identity as members of the youth organisation. It was also important that there were other pathways

for young people to take that didn't necessarily result in them committing to be part of a group. These pathways encompassed inclusive recruitment processes for paid internships or placements elsewhere in the gallery. For many youth organisations, finding young people employment (or enhancing their employability) was a key priority. The precarious socioeconomic circumstances of young people involved in many partnership projects pushed this to the forefront of concerns in several sites. But for many of the young people who came through partnership groups, their interest in sustaining connections with the partner gallery was not out of a desire to get into a career in the art world (as is regularly the case for young people who join independently). Gallery youth programmes arguably often rely on the culture of volunteerism generated by the inaccessibility of gallery jobs and widespread aspirations of budding arts graduates seeking to access arts careers. *Circuit* showed that if these programmes are to accommodate diversity, they need to account for different motivations.

Some of the most successful examples of partnership occurred with youth organisations that were looking for progression opportunities for young people. Organisations working with young people with mental health issues or young refugees for instance had a high demand for their services, and they operated through direct referrals from hospitals or local authorities. The galleries' programme offer represented a next step in the socialisation of young people who were otherwise marginalised. In partnerships where this was not the case, there was less incentive for youth partners to support the movement of young people away from their provision and towards extended opportunities with the gallery partner. Practitioners' willingness to signpost young people towards opportunities that might aid their socialisation or employability depended however on the levels of confidence and trust that had been generated between partners. Having open conversations about meaningful outcomes for the youth organisation and young people meant an opportunity could be tailored to suit the partner and young person. This also helped to allay fears that a young person might not be adequately supported to feel comfortable and safe in a new environment.

By the conclusion of *Circuit* there were across the sites a number of examples of participants for whom the experience of engaging with the programme (via partnerships) was profoundly transformative.

Practitioners reported significant changes in the confidence, independence and sociability of individuals who had no prior history of visiting cultural institutions or who were regularly isolated:

The Circuit programme has taken two years but we never gave up. Particularly with someone like [X], because we wanted to develop her potential. And she would never fit into society, as we know it, if she hadn't been given this. It's the worth for the young people when they do something. And [X] in particular, she's got worth to what she does. It may be volunteering one day a week, but she feels part of society.

– Youth Practitioner

Some young people interviewed even spoke about connections with artists and institutions changing their lives and giving them purpose. And there were instances where gallery staff literally did provide a lifeline to young people dealing with major personal crises. So *Circuit* demonstrated the potential impact of associations with gallery youth programmes when institutions showed willingness to persevere with relationships and support young people whose engagement with the gallery was far from straightforward.

Youth/arts programmes such as *Strong Voices* have recommended that the sectors need to cultivate “a community of practice” around informal education where there is the potential to build a “shared language” and “shared understandings” (Cochrane, 2015). In my PhD research I argue that a community of practice would need to be generated at both regional and national levels for shared understandings to develop. In *Circuit*, relationships with the youth sector were contained locally so the partners had little visibility or voice in the strategic centre of the programme. Part of the reason that national youth sector bodies were not engaged in the national programme was because these links did not already exist and there was not a culture of awareness in galleries about who or what were the key figures and agencies to engage with in the national youth sector. I suggest that to extend this awareness it would be necessary to create a permanent collaborative or cooperative field between the youth and visual sectors, but caution that a range of systemic changes would need to be made for this to operate effectively.

FORGING A PERMANENT COLLABORATIVE FIELD

Creating a state of permanent alliance between the youth and visual art sectors could be achieved through a range of small and large-scale movements across practice, research, policy and the funding landscape. Below I outline concrete actions (some of which were tested in *Circuit*) that could be expanded beyond the boundaries of time-limited projects.

EXCHANGING KNOWLEDGE CAPITALS

The outcomes of the first two years of *Circuit* (which in the partnership strand were intended to be focused on relationship building) indicated that the idea of practice exchange between youth and visual art organisational fields outside of project delivery was challenging to enact for a variety of reasons. However, in observing cross-field tensions evolve in some sites it was increasingly apparent that “a mutual respect for practice” (as one gallery practitioner phrased it) was required for practitioners from different fields to work together productively. Engendering a mutual respect for practice would compel youth and cultural workers to actively build a ‘feel for the game’ in one another’s professional worlds (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004, p.366).

Allocating time for talking openly and observing one another’s practice is one of the ways agents from different fields can gain a deeper understanding of their partners’ logic of practice. A few galleries hosted away days with youth partners, which provided a space for wider teams to step outside of their organisational routines, to converse about personal passions and local politics and to develop a sense of professional friendship. In a small number of *Circuit* sites, gallery staff and artists also took time to hang out in youth settings before embarking on a creative intervention. One gallery programmer recalled the value of this approach:

I learnt more about how youth clubs in particular use their spaces available to them, and the positive social space they create for young people - because that is often lacking in a lot of those young people’s lives. So it may have looked like young people were acting up and having a food fight, but that may have been the only time they properly laughed that week. And [the youth worker] probably knew that and I didn’t.

– Gallery Programmer

It was not however always possible for gallery practitioners and artists to make space for this type of observation-led work, and it was rarely possible for youth workers to afford time to observe gallery programmes. The fact that these more practice-oriented processes were not always discussed at the beginning of projects is not unusual in partnerships between arts and youth organisations (Matarasso, 2013b). Contracts often focus on delivery structures, timelines, responsibilities, resources and objectives. Gallery staff expressed that it would have been beneficial to run more CPD-style skills exchange workshops throughout *Circuit* – led by local youth partners and national youth organisations as well as gallery programmers. A youth partner highlighted the importance of recognising and respecting the expertise of youth organisations when working in partnership:

It's not just about us saying 'yeah - the arts are a wonderful tool, a wonderful solution and we are the expert in the arts and you've got to let us come in and do our thing'. I think that's where a lot of projects fall down. If you work with an organisation that has built a 36-year reputation on engaging young people and has some of the best do-not-attend rates in the country, you have to respect that and say – 'we will work the way you work, we'll come to you'.

– Youth Organisation Practitioner

I contend that in future programmes like *Circuit*, structured residential trips, shadowing and away days might help to advance capacity for co-learning and sharing. Replicating the 'monastic tradition of spending time together' (Davies, 2017) could induce workers to explore one another's fields, capitals and habitus in a less didactic, more collegiate environment.

A former youth worker employed as a gallery programmer in *Circuit* suggested that galleries could learn from some of the managerial tendencies of the youth sector to build more structure and accountability into their programmes. Drafting service level agreements was cited as one such example of good partnership practice favoured by the youth sector. Another was the tendency to establish steering groups for partnership projects (made up of different stakeholders from all participating organisations) to oversee and sustain the legacy of these initiatives.

From a pedagogical perspective, many youth practitioners in *Circuit* appeared to be endowed with a heightened perception of the structural disadvantages facing young people, and they understood the emotional and physical labour associated with engaging marginalised young people. By appointing youth practitioners as critical friends and facilitators, some *Circuit* institutions were able to reap the benefits of these youth workers' experience. These appointments seemed to work best when youth practitioners worked within their remit as youth specialists. In instances where youth practitioners were recruited to act as gallery programmers, there appeared to be greater potential for dispute because the professional habitus of the practitioner was inevitably not completely compatible with the field or role in which they were positioned (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Grenfell and Hardy, 2003). These *Circuit* galleries had (to their credit) tried to adjust their conventional understanding of legitimate occupational capital in order to diversify the staff team and learn from youth sector expertise. However, in reality it became apparent that it was challenging to create a kind of hybrid practice that adopted both youth sector approaches and gallery sector approaches without internal clashes.

One of the major obstacles to embedding and sustaining relationships between organisations was the precarious conditions facing youth workers whose jobs were under threat. In some *Circuit* partnerships the lead partner contact changed up to three times. The central role of freelancers (such as artists) in *Circuit* partnerships also meant that the learning from projects had the potential to be lost once a freelancer's contract had ended. Distributing the responsibility and awareness of partnership relationships across staff in different positions appeared to be crucial to retaining the history of this work.

Throughout my fieldwork I also grew convinced that there needed to be a shared research and practice community around this type of cross-sector work. Both youth work and gallery education are types of practice with open, 'permeable' disciplinary boundaries, which resist imposing a technical orthodoxy and engage with critical, radical pedagogies and theory (Charman, 2005; Graham, 2012a; de St Croix, 2016). They are therefore in many respects suited to receiving outsider ideas and to building a collaborative intellectual space and language.

In an effort to contribute to this ambition I co-organised conferences and meetings bringing together figures from higher education and practice-based organisations, with a view to extending dialogue about a common research agenda. Conversations with youth and community work lecturers revealed that there was an appetite for the cultural sector to become much more involved in youth work education and training, so as to enable students to understand the discursive, critical and political properties of arts engagement beyond practical skills-based pursuits (Belton, 2015). Workers from strategic cultural agencies also advocated for there to be more opportunity for youth sector voices to be heard on arts platforms so the cultural sector could develop a more up-to-date conception of the current status of youth practice (and vice versa). The learning from these events fed into a successful bid for AHRC network funding, which will enable a network to form in 2017-18 (led by Manchester Metropolitan University).

LOCAL NETWORK GROUPS

Tapping into or building communities of practitioners from across the local youth and art sectors can also bring about unexpected alliances and improve communication and understanding across fields. In *Circuit* at least two galleries developed or co-developed local network groups that brought together youth and cultural practitioners from organisations across their regions for regular (or semi-regular) meetings. In one site this network was oriented around organisations and programmes focused on working with learning disabled young people. This was an example of a more targeted approach to practice exchange, where an institution decided to direct its energies towards building organisational expertise in a particular area, and making cross-field connections around this body of knowledge and experience. From a gallery perspective, developing an organisational specialism over several years can help institutions to establish legitimacy within the corresponding youth sector, and enable them to build credible capital within that field. In another site a youth strategy group formed, which was broader in focus and which acted as a space for information sharing and relationship building between the gallery and the faith-based and secular youth sectors in the area. These groups also enabled participants to gain a better understanding of how to utilise the resources and assets of one another's organisations (including spaces, minibuses and volunteers).

There were instances in *Circuit* where the gallery partner, youth partner and young people involved in a partnership were all experiencing some level of precarity to do with funding, restructuring or employment insecurity. Hilgers and Mangez (2015) argue that agents occupying homologous positions, or experiencing similar levels of insecurity in different fields can better identify with one another and foster a sense of solidarity. Local network meetings sometimes acted as places to discuss collective anxieties about the future of youth provision in the area, and there were occasions where local councillors were present to listen and respond to concerns. If this work were scaled up to a national level, there could be much more potential for the youth and visual art sectors to co-construct recommendations for policymakers and advocate for one another towards wider fields of power.

CO-DEVELOPING CREATIVE YOUTH PROVISION

Several youth practitioners interviewed expressed that they felt galleries needed to make long-term commitments to youth partners over multiple years, even decades, if possible. *Circuit*'s substantial funding meant that gallery partners generally didn't engage in commissioning relationships with youth services. However, if galleries and museums seek to work with local authority youth services in the longer term they may need to skill-up on bidding for commissions to support the delivery of certain authorities' agendas for young people. They may also need to consider how to do this in collaboration (rather than competition) with youth organisations bidding for similar pots of funding. This could enable practitioners from both fields to work together to develop and co-deliver creative youth provision, rather than one-off projects. In some of the examples cited earlier for instance, youth partners and gallery partners were able to experiment with co-designing environments where the core values of open access youth provision could be upheld. Maintaining creative spaces for youth work in a climate that appears relatively hostile to work that doesn't have explicit, pre-defined outcomes is of crucial importance for many youth practitioners. While organisations in the statutory youth sector are regulated and monitored according to government directives, galleries are by comparison 'permissive spaces', with critical, even radical potential (Ashman, 2015, p.94). This dimension of the visual arts field affords galleries a unique set of freedoms, and non-government funding (such as that granted by PHF) provides institutions with a high level of autonomy.

It is also possible to envisage that galleries could become more accustomed to employing youth work professionals on a regular basis, in various in-house roles that make best use of their particular skills and expertise. Equally this could also lead to more youth organisations supporting in-house creative producer roles, as one practitioner pointed out:

I strongly believe that if you want to really embed creative practice in the Third sector you have to have someone who understands that practice, not just someone who thinks they know a bit about it, for it to really work and for it to really take hold in an organisation. It's great and wonderful for a Third sector organisation to commission an arts organisation to work in partnership but if you want to make it really part of your offer consistently and you want to sustain it, you've got to have it inside your organisation.

– Youth Organisation Practitioner

However, acclimatising to a new field on different, collaborative terms evidently requires 'prolonged occupation' of the field site and 'sustained association' between members (Bourdieu, 1999, p.128). The legitimacy of these collaborative fields can therefore only be secured if there is willingness to meet these requirements. This calls into question the priority responsibilities of gallery education departments, which have to balance their obligations to democratising access to galleries with efforts to promote cultural democracy and contribute to wider social initiatives.

CROSS-FIELD AGENTS AND EFFECTS

Throughout *Circuit* there were a number of individuals who might be characterised as cross-field agents – i.e. people who could speak with credibility and who had symbolic capital that was deemed legitimate both in the fields of youth work and gallery education, and across young people’s own social fields (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004). In several cases these figures were themselves young people, and they held a number of different roles – as artists, peer group members, volunteers, gallery programmers and so on. Identifying and recruiting these types of individuals into projects can have a profound impact. For a participant interviewed from a further education college in one *Circuit* region, the fact that a young visiting artist had “been part of the same experiences” (as a former student of the college himself) added meaning to the encounter and motivated the student to join the gallery’s peer group.

In the thesis I also suggest that it is important to identify ‘cross-field effects’ – in other words current affairs or events that have some bearing across multiple fields (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004). During *Circuit* significant national and international events such as ‘Brexit’, the election of Jeremy Corbyn and Donald Trump and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement reflected or signalled some of the shared social urgencies facing young people. Building creative dialogue and action around these types of issues can arguably support agents from different fields to coalesce around a common agenda. Arts organisations in particular can offer a platform for ‘resistance’, debate and hope in a civic environment that is relatively unreceptive to open-ended, creatively risky or overtly political forms of engagement with young people (McQuay, 2012, p.208).

REACHING A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF PARTNERSHIP PRACTICE

Aside from raising the specific challenges of exchange between the youth and gallery education sector fields, my research findings also highlighted the need to build consensus around the meaning and implications of partnership across programmes. With partnership rhetoric so ubiquitous across both sectors there is recognition that more needs to be done to conceptualise and deconstruct partnership models rigorously and critically (Ellison, 2015). Bringing clarity to categories of partnership ensures that partners can reinforce a mutual understanding of the terms of their relationship and avoid misinterpretations. There has been an abundance of research initiatives in recent years examining in more depth how the nuances associated with working together can be expressed (Davies, 2015; Ellison, 2015; Cunningham, 2016). Importantly, categories and tools for partnership working have to account for the fact that workers in these sectors are often reticent to fix down predetermined, bureaucratic relationship models. Rather partners need to have creative ownership and licence to co-design and adapt partnership frameworks so they are fit for purpose.

Tracking and evaluating the quality of partnership working was also revealed to be a sometimes-overlooked aspect of this practice. In *Circuit* there was a tendency to focus on the experience and journey of young people in youth engagement projects, while the journey of partnership and the experience of partners were less likely to be formally assessed. *Circuit's* commissioning of the interview-based research was a response to this gap, and my PhD also formed part of the programme's wider investigative work into partnership. But I have also argued that programmes can build in methods to reflect on partnership working without the intervention of an external researcher, and in the thesis I cite examples of this type of activity (Currie, 2014; Heritage Decisions, 2015). Evaluation and monitoring in general has grown exponentially in importance across the youth sector, so to build a more integrated collaborative field requires visual art organisations to involve themselves more actively in the youth sector's current impact and evidence debates.

By contributing to this wider dialogue around evaluation and evidence, the visual art sector also potentially builds its ability to define the legitimacy of the arts in fields connected with the youth sector (such as health, social care, crime etc.), which can support youth practitioners to justify their work with arts organisations. The combined challenge for the youth and visual art sectors is to convince external fields of power that their body of evidence should be valued. There are inherent and ongoing tensions involved in finding methods that are appropriate for the fields of youth work and gallery education, and that also suit the demands of authorities and funders.

Finally, for partnership working to be improved across the sectors, organisations have to establish ways to preserve the memory of good and bad partnership practice in order to break recurring habits and embed learning within organisations rather than just individuals. Interviews with gallery practitioners in *Circuit* highlighted that there was a lack of inherited practice across galleries, and a tendency for institutions to have a short-term memory if the staff turnover was high. The development of a localised collaborative field increases the possibility for learning to be shared, as does the creation of legacy and dissemination strategies for passing on experience to colleagues and peers. But for investment in an area of practice to be genuinely rooted in organisations, Bourdieu's theory of fields teaches that this needs to become a naturalised part of an organisation's 'doxa'. This type of change is inevitably the hardest to accomplish because it necessitates a rewiring of indoctrinated field habits and accepted norms.

- BARRIERS TO CHANGE



BARRIERS TO CHANGE

Bourdieu (1999, p.124) suggests that 'Part of the inertia of the structures of social space results from the fact that they are inscribed in physical space and cannot be modified except by a work of transplantation, a moving of things and an uprooting or deporting of people, which itself presupposes extremely difficult and costly social transformations'. This characterisation of the immovability of social fields is highly relevant in gallery practice, which is tethered to remarkable cultural venues and the publics these spaces predominantly attract. Recent research continues to show that a much higher proportion of those in upper socio-economic and white ethnic groups visit museums in England than those in lower socio-economic groups (Atkinson, 2017). Equally, while the cultural sector is aware of the poor diversity record in its workforce, there is evidence that most cultural workers do not fully acknowledge the role played by structural advantages in supporting their own progression through the field (Taylor and O'Brien, 2016). However, the persistent perception that gallery based youth programmes are "for the posh kids", as one youth practitioner commented, cannot be easily reversed without significant organisational investment in diversifying programmes, programme staff and audiences. Potential for change is therefore constrained by the dominant doxa of the field, the social games this produces and the dispositions of workers and other occupants. Perhaps if gallery sector professionals more openly utilise Bourdieu's language of 'violence' to describe these issues, it would be possible to reframe understandings of these conditions from being benign, standardised features of the arts sector, to understanding them as potentially damaging.

Another aspect of the museum and gallery field that inhibits change is its relatively traditional stance towards collaboration (Walsh, Dewdney and Pringle, 2014). Despite the ubiquitous discourse of coproduction in the museum and gallery sector, the funding system is still set up for the gallery to act as host, and therefore for the gallery to retain the largest share of power in partnership work (Fusi, 2012). The inclination to protect the cultural agency of the art institution and to control its aesthetic vision is in many ways at odds with the ideals of cultural democracy that are held dear within youth and community work settings. Cultural workers have to walk a thin line between committing to increase public access to art and artists, and

pledging to forefront young people's cultural productions. These objectives can appear difficult to unite, but they are not fundamentally incompatible or always divisible.

Circuit illuminated the (often overlooked) scope of young people's creative talents, critical faculties and diverse life experiences. Many of the young people I met were extremely knowing of the 'game' played by programmes like *Circuit* and they grew very conscious of the possibility for institutions to filter politicised issues or seemingly transgressive activity. While the gallery field can act as a permissive space of creative risk, it also has the propensity to engage with underrepresented communities and issues on a short-term basis, when they suit a particular institutional agenda (Grenfell and Hardy, 2003). Tokenism in programming and recruitment is another instrument of symbolic violence, and arguably programmes working with marginalised communities have to be given room to explore cultures and issues sensitively and in depth, outside of the rapid cycles of much institutional programming. Youth organisations too can be guilty of focusing mainly on 'positive messaging', in the pursuit of fulfilling dominant government agendas to mould participants into responsible citizens (Cooper, 2012; Baillie, 2015). I suggest therefore that youth and gallery organisations have to learn how to be radical and political together if their work is to have veracity for young people whose lived oppressions or social justice concerns may be pressing and urgent.

Cutler (2013) argues that all practitioners in an organisation must acknowledge their complicity in upholding power structures and oppressive practices, and that every individual should take responsibility to change the dominant 'refrain'. While staff in Learning teams across UK galleries might position themselves as the socially conscious, critical voice of their institutions, they too are culpable of preserving the status quo unless they work towards 'structural alternatives' as opposed to moments of subversion through one-off events and projects for instance (Cutler, 2013). The pervasiveness of neoliberal values and market forces across the public sector is such that it infiltrates these teams and affects programming to the extent that one's participation in perpetuating systems of inequality or symbolic violence can be easily misrecognised. Peer-led youth programmes are inevitably implicated in this process, and young participants are also just as likely to absorb and replicate institutionalised behaviour if this goes unchallenged.

The production of festivals and late night events as core parts of youth programming fit the entrepreneurial, commercialised character of so-called ‘second wave’ cultural activity, which echoes club culture and promotes the idea of the precarious freelance creative and a lifestyle of ‘middle class ‘ducking and diving’” as something to aspire towards (McRobbie, 2002, p.517, p.525). The conundrum for the gallery education worker is to reconcile the ‘Janus-faced’ nature of their occupation, which requires an investment in both institutional programming and social action (Charman, 2005). Both youth and gallery practitioners in *Circuit* highlighted the challenges of trying to achieve the dual aims of bringing a mass youth audience into the institution and developing inclusive programmes with young people who have least access to institutional arts. In trying to reconcile these objectives I have observed a tendency for cultural workers to attempt too much, for too wide an audience, which can result in the unintended marginalisation of certain (already excluded) populations.

As I have argued throughout this paper, sections of the youth and community work field can offer insight into more inclusive ways of working and can potentially support gallery practitioners to retune their understanding of their accountabilities (Graham, 2012b). Galleries need to cultivate space for these insights to be listened to and utilised in order to avoid the scenario where (in the language of a youth work practitioner) youth work expertise exists as a “sideshow” to gallery expertise. Youth workers frequently exercise knowledge of young people’s hyperlocal social fields, and cultivate an ability to connect with young people within these fields. These are traits that few art institutions naturally possess, but which are essential for developing meaningful relationships with young people. By working more consistently together, youth and visual art practitioners have the potential to reimagine the parameters of gallery-based informal youth provision and to reassert the position of creative, open-access and democratic youth work in civic space. But any localised, temporary examples of collaboration will only be able to gain traction as replicable and sustainable models of practice if they are supported by a much wider and more integrated collaborative field – at both regional and national levels.

CONCLUSION

I hope this research has shown that relationships between youth and visual art organisations are affected by a much broader and more complex combination of social, cultural and historical factors than is superficially apparent. By mapping the geographies of partnership as sectoral, programmatic and organisational fields, it is possible to expand interpretations of particular behaviour and to situate this in context.

Bourdieu's framework highlights constructions of practice that go unquestioned or unchanged because they have become a naturalised part of a field's culture. The creation of a temporary programmatic field offers the opportunity to reorganise accepted positions, capitals and logics of practice, but these movements are always working against the gravitational forces of practitioners' home fields.

Nevertheless, as the thesis tries to illustrate, fields are full of tensions, shifts and power contests, which have the effect of creating fissures where opportunities for allegiance with other fields open up. A major thread that runs through my thesis is the story of extreme instability and volatility in the field of youth work. These conditions produced urgent opportunities for experimental collaboration and magnified the need for evidence-based research into the possibilities and challenges of partnership in this area.

Conclusion

I know that having conducted this research I have pushed myself to examine more rigorously the origins and consequences of the assumptions, prejudices and habits that guide my own professional conduct. And I have learnt to recognise where and why my own attempts to be a good partner have sometimes fallen short. I hope that this research supports practitioners to make similar reflections, and to consider how to make change in the fields of practice where they have, or could have, influence.

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