

NOTES OF 'WHAT NEXT' DISCUSSIONS - ODYSSEY EVENT

29 January 2019 at Gloucester Cathedral

Four groups rotated around facilitated tables addressing each of the following questions as devised by the Arts Inc partners. The questions were formulated in response to a review of what we have to build on, what is blocking progress and what priority aims are to enable a wider diversity of people to access and progress through the County's arts sector.

Common threads emerging from each of the discussions are summarised under each of the questions below. The top priorities agreed by each group are highlighted in yellow.

1. How can we work together to build more programming, production & curation of work by &/or featuring diverse/disabled artists?

Action to build confidence:

- Create opportunities for people to meet and talk to each other
- Mentoring / peer support
- Showcasing of work – online and physical which is running permanently but moving around the county
- Connect with, enhance knowledge and build confidence in spaces that don't currently showcase this work
- Support ACE National Portfolio funded orgs in the county with Equality Action Plans
- Treat it like a political campaign with the big players in the county
- Use storytelling - can be very powerful
- Link to initiatives can build on (e.g. The Workshop, Cheltenham)

Action to constructively support development and visibility of work by diverse artists:

- Enable people to reach their 100%; provide progression opportunities
- Increase diverse artists' showcase opportunities
- Get famous people to endorse
- Actively look internationally
- Positive discrimination
- Build awareness raising into existing events, e.g. Create Gloucestershire gatherings
- Stage an exhibition without labels so it's focused on the quality of the work (as per AS project On The Next Level from 15 years ago)

Commissioning work:

- Consider approaching patrons (individual and corporate) to support a commissioning fund specifically for those facing barriers (needed until mainstream commissioners able to integrate a wider diversity of artists)
- Dialogue with art dealers regarding the artists they support
- Dialogue with commissioners around access considerations, e.g:
 - allowing a longer period to complete a commission
 - accepting alternative ways of applying, e.g. through film
 - building an access budget into the project
 - ensure visibility of artists facing barriers in imagery used to promote the commissioning opportunity
 - making a stronger organisational message about actively seeking diverse artists
- Speak to commissioners re. setting targets around diverse artist representation in existing (mainstream) galleries and events, e.g. Tall Ships, The Wilson, Gloucester Culture Trust commissioning
- Create a space for artists to show work-in-progress for commissioners to see – bit like a dating agency site (the work will speak for itself)
- Support for artists to broker relationships / support them with applications

Work cross-organisationally:

- Collaboration between organisations, e.g. AS recommend artists to Chelt Festivals
- Curated shows, e.g. mental illness related, to get good press/publicity
- Make funded galleries (who're able to take more risk) aware of what is out there to be able to commission

Set up initiatives through which to raise awareness of existing / emerging talent and work in developing artworks:

- Build a network, break down isolation, give chances for artists to explain / present their work at different stages on their journey
- As a practitioner challenge yourself – there is some responsibility
- Tell artists' stories well but can we tell a curatorial story? Case studies from the curation perspective?

Consider joined up audience development:

- Diversification of artists will, by default, diversify audiences
- Cross organisational planning
- Stage / exhibit work in accessible places (e.g. pop up)
- Publicity and promotion over a prolonged period with specific target market segments

2. How can we work together to support navigation into / through the sector for artists facing disabling barriers?

Improving cross-sector communication:

- Improve communication lines between organisations
- Shared online resource with opportunities and information
- Nurturing new artist collaborations + links with other creative / small businesses
- Peer support – sharing resource

- Make use of existing platforms to market and communicate, e.g. Disability Arts Online

Build on, and integrate into, what is already there:

- Build into / around networks and partnerships that already exist (e.g. Arts Inc partnership)
- Work with partners to set up hubs (opportunities, spaces to advertise, pop ups, accessible spaces)
- Find ways of making cross-organisational working sustainable
- Organisational brokers creating accessible pathways
- Support artists to navigate into / through 'the mainstream'
- Raise awareness of diversity across a broader range of organisations

Aim for continuity of provision and support navigation through it:

- A sustained place / accessible free/affordable space in which to collaborate (ideally, Art Shape space in centre) *this was agreed as priority by all groups*
- Rolling programmes – modular system, breaks, different levels, flexible
- Establish training pathways / personalized development programmes within a set, year-round framework
- End of programme signposting and sharing of learning
- Create work for artists, e.g. commission artists to create work around all these questions
- Create maps and visual aids – commission as art projects

Work alongside disabled artists to address real-terms barriers:

- Advisory board / collective in county
- Collectively address Issues with the DWP
- Set up an Art Bank – quality (discounted) affordable materials
- Remove / reduce fees for those who can't afford to pay: entry fees, high space fees
- Build up cross-sector access support (e.g. for Personal Assistant related costs)
- Support artists / participants with fundraising

Engage the younger generation:

- Developing grass roots – including in schools

3. How can we put in place a sustainable infrastructure that supports ongoing peer support around inclusive practice and sustainability of inclusive organisations?

Centralised systems:

- Central forum with database of practitioners and of sources of information, where there's conversation (use existing organisations' databases?)
- Centralised prospect database (of funders, etc)
- Centralised online place where can see good practice case studies, relevant evaluation reports, etc.

Build on and around knowledge and infrastructure that already exists:

- Aiming High events (next one 23 March)
- County Council - Due Regard – Impact Statement – Policy
- Map what's already in existence, who staff / artists can talk to, etc.
- Cascade info down/across when people leave post
- See where there are overlaps, what is easy to join / build on
- Tap into communities that gather around geographical locations, e.g. Culture Matson 6-week meetings
- Support self-organising so less need for finding excluded participants
- Don't wait for funding
- Support constitution of existing groups, e.g. Odyssey artists

Broker / help nurture relationships:

- Speed-dating style events
- Advisory group with reps from different groups (champions)
- Buddy systems (Art Bridge peer support)
- Identify critical friends
- Use time bank model
- Sponsorship and patronage

Training & sharing of practice & guidance:

- Awareness & inclusion training
- More shared training – invite people from other organisations
- Support effective leadership
- Guidance documents, e.g. language guide
- Organisations combine forces to help lobby for access considerations (e.g. accessible, flexible application procedures, parking, etc.)
- Use Self-Assessment toolkit to challenge thinking and ethos
- Universal Design – very effective (explore more)
- Supervision - training to support staff wellbeing
- Mentoring
- Regular meetings every quarter

Make work / learn through joint projects:

- Make inclusive work
- Collaboration / sharing / learning
- Cause a stir, lots of work, street level
- Contribute time once a month to form small collectives – empty shop collectives

Invest in sustainability of existing diversity focused organisations:

- Enable to build a stable supportive environment with the capacity to deal with issues – doing less well - enough time to reflect, not project to project
- Funnel people up, from grass roots
- Resilience model for organisations
- Skills exchanges
- Use enthusiasts
- Lobby nationally for changes that will support maintaining a diverse workforce, e.g. addressing benefits issues

4. How can we raise the profile of inclusive organisations, disabled artists, integrated work and/or the issues that need addressing?**More joined up planning and marketing plans / tools:**

- Find means of making each other aware of plans so can identify joint PR / coms opportunities and avoid overlapping as lots of people are doing the same things (*chosen by 2 groups as top priority*)
- Trial year-round shared calendar (even if can only pencil things in pending funding)
- Develop two-way relationships with organisations that share same aims, priorities values & synergies. Work together to raise the profile of both orgs.
- Interconnecting – louder voices together – SOLIDARITY
- Consider setting up a platform (such as [Ravelry](#), a knit & crochet community) where can find out about opportunities, who is working on what

Raise visibility through events / getting work into public arena:

- More events like this
- Merchandising & commissioning – considering public / visible platforms
- Place diverse work in larger events and community events
- Programming high quality work – inclusive events showing new work (need to embed in a year-round programme, not just as one-off events. So raises profile and inspires other makers & audiences
- Set up disabled people-led space (like café run by autistic people), so highly visible leadership
- Establish magazine specifically to showcase diverse artists' work

Using existing communications tools:

- Active Impact – raising profile of inclusive practice, monthly newsletter with opportunities for families with disabled children
- Communicate about learning, challenges and enrichment for people involved through aligned networks, e.g. Going the Extra Mile

Use the most impactful marketing and distribution tools:

- Telling stories - human interest, case studies, artist talks, networking, inspiration
- Ensure the participants' / artists' voices are heard; that under-represented groups feel part of it
- Quality, innovation of the artwork is great! Need to shout about it e.g. on social media.

- Merchandising artistic products – people like to buy things
- Videos at event were powerful - need to signpost to each other's websites and share
- Need for high profile ambassadors – identify them
- Agree #hashtags – shared and used by all orgs. in county
- Engage dealers and agents who can promote the work

Use accessible, straight-forward language

- Don't use jargon at events
- Ensure don't alienate people with 'arts speak'

Engage with other sectors, inc. the education and business sectors:

- Connecting with colleges / students, where there are existing connections that can be developed through collaborations, e.g. Star College
- Embed learning like Inclusive Leadership Course into statutory education sector programmes
- Need to embed understanding of diversity and access in schools from a young age (not happening at the moment)
- Support for young/emerging artists – can reconnect later, find out how to make a living
- Raise visibility in schools, colleges, businesses and other sectors
- Develop business offer, using Tea Service model for example. Invite colleagues to have conversations
- Skills sharing between arts and business orgs.
- Do Glos Business Show as a group; collaborate rather than having a single stand for each org.

More targeted engagement with the media:

- Radio/TV - invite organisations to share what working on

Support high-profile organisations to have visible diversity at the top:

- Management of organisations needs to reflect diversity: lived experience, diverse communities part of management / decision making.

Develop sustainable programmes to publicise:

- Where possible, avoid losing visibility due to short-lived projects
- Develop meaningful relationships that are robust – connecting artists and orgs to ensure a genuine mutual experience that is manageable and sustainable

Develop a kitemark:

- Kitemark for disability awareness (similar to Family Arts Standards kitemark or 'Your Circle' County Council brand). People can recognize it as a safe space, that it is for them.