

UK Residency Study Trip Report 1-3 December 2014

Stoke-on-Trent



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Introduction

The UK Residency Study Trip took place 1-3 December 2014 in Stoke on Trent. The event was hosted by Staffordshire University but included visits to community and participatory arts projects in the region. The advert and programme for the event can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

Aims

- To learn more about how, where and what skills Artists need to acquire to deliver participatory work with civic engagement objectives.
- To critically reflect upon how these study trip experiences relate to your own practice
- To learn more about the UK Residency

In this draft report, you will find the initial reflections from each of the 3 study groups. The groups were formed of Residency Project staff, staff from community settings, future community participants and students from The Universities of Barcelona, Staffordshire and Warsaw.

UK Reporter Janet Hetherington

Polish Reporter Joanna Kocemba

Spanish Reporter Ruben Fernandez



Findings: Reflections on Artist skills in the context of delivering civic engagement related work

Polish Findings

About Sarah Nadin's project *Chumbrella*

“As Sarah Nadin, the author of the *Chumbrella* project said, people are afraid of coming face to face with other people. Today, under the rule of technology, a real meeting and conversation have become a rarity. The *Chumbrella* may break away from this trend. In this project, the umbrella serves both as a tool and pretext for conversation and a meeting.”

Zofia Wronka

“On the first day, the participants of the study visit from Spain and England were offered an opportunity to put the *Chumbrella*, or an umbrella for chums (friends), to a test. We split into pairs with a person who we were not acquainted with. The open umbrella created a specific space which seems to be the essence of the project. The intimate space triggers conversation, offers a sense of safety and shelter and it brings people closer to one another – they practically have to come into physical contact. Being together under one umbrella, we do not feel cut off from the environment. Our need for intimacy is fulfilled at the same time we are in contact with others and the reality.”

Wiktoria Rutkowska

“The author of the *Chumbrella* project Sarah Nadin decided to respond to the disappearing verbal communication skills in a world inundated by technology. Standing in a busy part of town, she encouraged passers-by to take a walk together under one umbrella and talk. (...)

This is a crucial problem and the *Chumbrella* project is much needed. It makes me wonder, though, whether we can actually deal with the problem via

the chumbrella. (...) Is the *Chumbrella* project capable of causing long-term changes? Will it teach people to talk without the use of highly developed technology?

Chumbrella is undoubtedly a great starting point to spark up a debate about interpersonal relations and it allows us to realise the importance of contemporary problems. I do not think, however, that with its use we can solve the global, since the problem is not only local any more, problem of disappearing interpersonal relations.”

Anna Małachowska

“The author of the *Chumbrella*, project, or the ‘umbrella for friends’ – Sarah Nadin reaches out to the recipient without requesting anything in return. The artists is giving the society a tool and a choice whether to use the tool or not. (...)

Sarah created a Twitter account to publicize her project. When you visit the website you can find locations of people with Chumbrellas. In my opinion, this is contradictory to what the artist is protesting against. (...)”

Katarzyna Pawłowska

About the B-Arts organisation.

“Artists working as part of the B-Arts organisation aim at instilling art into public space. The project that I found particularly interesting from their projects is *Hush Hush Cinema*. The project aimed at promoting reading books was also very interesting. An object resembling a spaceship was installed at the local library. It was fitted with video screens which allowed to create a personal story. (...) Did the video installation help trigger reading? This is debatable. However, the idea of enriching existing spaces with new, attractive elements is right and beneficial to the users.”

Monika Martynik

“The building which the B-Arts have been based since recently used to house a mobile phone repair company. (...) The activities of B-Arts encompassed the adaptation of various spaces and abandoned industrial

building – former pottery factories. (...) In the spaces adapted by B-Arts everyone who creates becomes an artist and everyone who wants to experience things can do so, everyone who wants to belong, belongs. All it takes is entering the space. This is a huge leap, though.”

Wiktorja Rutkowska

About Anna Francis' *Air Space Gallery* project

“Anna Francis of the small *Air Space Gallery* offers yet another meeting space. *Artists Soup Kitchen* is a series of events accompanying exhibitions. The idea behind them is simple – the artists and his or her guests meet around a communal table for dinner. For thirty minutes, the artists talk about his or her work and puts up topics for a discussion that follows. The main objective of the meeting is conversation. Food provides an excellent background for this.

It seems that despite its beneficial purpose the *Artist Soup Kitchen* has a closed structure. I would personally modify the project a little. (...) To encourage the guests to get involved, we could invite people to cook together or offer different participants (not only the artist) an opportunity to chair the meeting.”

Zofia Wronka

“Right next to the huge main building of the museum in Stoke-on-Trent is a tenement house which houses the *Air Space Gallery*. White walls, exhibits, films documenting the actions held in public spaces. In another room, most of the space is filled by a table. On it are white sheets of paper resembling a tablecloth. There is wine, candles and colour felt tip pens on the table. No part of the table is honoured in any way. People are sitting one next to another, they can hear one another very well. (...) During a communal meal at *Airspace Soup Kitchen*, artists, activists and students talk and present their work. The white sheets of paper are used to jot down thoughts which come up during the conversations. People automatically reach for felt tip pens.”

Wiktorja Rutkowska

“*The Artist Soup Kitchen* takes place in a friendly atmosphere. (...) The project is addressed to a narrow group – artists and persons responsible for shaping the cultural life of the city. The invitees talk with one another around a communal table during a meal. The goal of the meeting is to create a network of contacts and trigger reflections about certain social problems. (...) In the course of our meeting with Anna Francis, she presented the activities undertaken by the gallery employees. Then we moved on to a discussion about the methods of work as an animator of culture. (...) It was the first time I took part in *The Artist Soup Kitchen* and it made quite an impression on me. (...) The space of the gallery which houses *The Artist Soup Kitchen* obliges and inspires debates about art. The idea of talking over a delicious meal makes the situation less formal and more relaxing.”

Monika Martyniuk

About the *Appetite* project and a meeting with Nicolą Gratton

“The main goal of the *Appetite* programme is to identify the cultural needs of the citizens and to convince them that art does not have to be boring or incomprehensible. As part of the *Appetite* project various cultural events are held, these are often large-scale events (by professional artists) called the *Taster Menu*. As for *Community Hubs*, these are local activities which engage the inhabitants and non-professional artists. (...) The *Get talking* part, or the evaluation process, can take various creative forms. (...) All this to identify the needs of the citizens so that they can influence the way art is ‘served’ in their immediate environment, to find out what obstacles they encounter when experiencing art and what would help them. (...) Chances are that the appetite for culture can be increased.”

Monika Martyniuk

“The *Appetite* has been running for three years now. It is addressed directly to the inhabitants of Stoke-On-Trent. (...) Its authors want to facilitate access to art. At a meeting with Nicola Gratton, we were told about the *Get*

Talking project which encompassed asking Stoke citizens about what they wanted to change in their cities. The organisers emphasised that the local community should have a say in matters related to the city.”

Katarzyna Pawłowska

Personal reflections

“The study trip left me with a lot of unexpected conclusions and it offered perspectives for further development. (...) I learned about initiatives, different ways of working and various paths available within community arts. (...) I received information about tools and the possible tracks to follow and it is up to me which is the right for me”.

Katarzyna Pawłowska

“For me, the visit to Stoke-On-Trent was a very valuable experience – not only was it an excellent opportunity to take a closer look at the community arts movement at its roots, but it also let me exchange views on an international level. (...) The English cultural offer is diverse and rich in excellent ideas. (...) The offer of Stoke-On-Trent will cater to everyone’s needs, be it a viewer of art, artist or animator, they will all find something important and inspiring.”

Monika Martyniuk

II: Meeting summing up the study trip to Stoke-On-Trent

The meeting summing up the study trip was held on 22 December 2014. It was attended by the participants of the trip, Zofia Dworakowska PhD.

The first part of the meeting was dominated by the need to relate the events and a discussion of the trip’s agenda. The interlocutors agreed that the work of Almudena Caso and Cathie Powell-Davis, which the artists did during the *Residency* project, is very important and much needed. In the second part of the meeting the participants discussed the status of persons working within the field of community arts (it does not have to be an accomplished artist or an art school graduate). The participants discussed the differences between what we call ‘culture animation’ and that which is referred to as ‘community arts’. The objectives of community arts were analysed, questions about the impact it can have on individuals and communities were asked. It is worth

noting that the debate on the latter issue was initiated in Stoke-On-Trent and was taken up by all of the participants of the study trip.

In the final stage of the meeting, a consensus summing up the topic was reached. Firstly, it was agreed that it is very hard to measure the impact of community arts on various persons and entire communities. Secondly, it was found that working with people cannot be compared to simple activities such as saving someone's life in an accident, or applying an efficient technical approach i.e. "I identify a problem, I find the tools and I solve the problem". This is so primarily because human matter is much more complex. Thirdly, it was found that most projects which the participants of the study trip to Stoke-On-Trent had an opportunity to watch was created in response to actual social problems. Through their activities the artists tried to get to know the problems better and deal with them, and in consequence, they contributed to improving the quality of life of the citizens.

The meeting lead to the conclusion that there is a need to discuss issues that come up as the community arts movement progresses. Along with the increase of the volume of knowledge, not only the number of question and doubts is growing but also the degree of fascination and inspiration intensifies. The participants of the meeting agreed that the study trip was a source of motivation for them to work in the field of culture animation.

Joanna Kocemba

Spanish Findings

Personal reflections to the study trip

The Study Visit gave us innovative experiences, such as personal and social fields. We have realised that art, in communities, can be a good tool for social changes. We saw new artistic projects, a professional way to work and motivation for social improvement through new artistic tools.

UK Findings

Chumberella, demonstrated a simple and fun way to get actively involved and a very good concept to encourage conversation and break down barriers. I found this to be so effective and a very good method of overcoming hurdles..

Immediately, there was a sense of being part of a team and promoting an identity of being us.

The visit to B-Arts proved a platform for our visitors to understand the variety of community artists and some of the projects, which encourage participation. There were also opportunities for all delegates of the residency to ask questions of artists and support workers. B-Arts were very informative about their work and ideas to encourage community involvement. They described what was involved in their project work and how they went about promoting events.

Funding is always an issue and B-Arts promote an awareness of what they are doing and demonstrate this to prospective funders. They do have the advantage of being an established community arts organisation but never gave the impression that this status is taken for granted. Some of their work has been very successful and all delegates could take away the ideas of how they raise the awareness of projects to appeal to sponsors and seek out new funders.

What do you think are the most effective ways to prepare people for working with community arts?

Understand the issues that area concerning the community you are working with

Recognize strengths and weaknesses

Understand the power and effect of being creative

Believe in what you are doing

Encourage participation

Have enthusiasm

Be an effective communicator

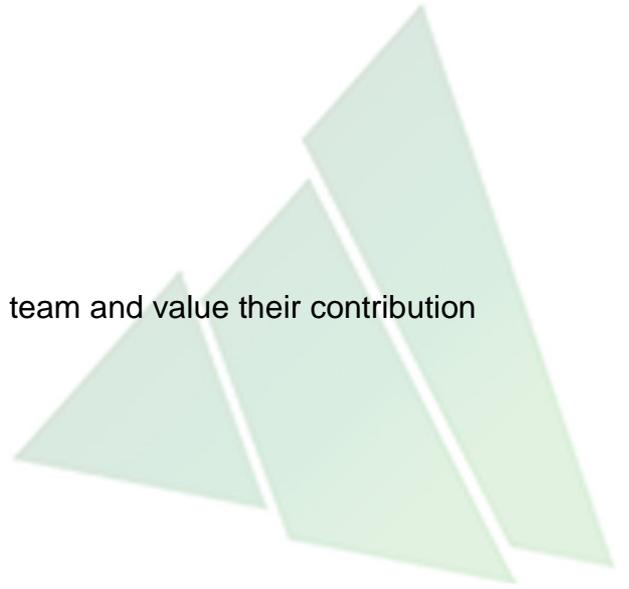
Inspire others

Be assertive but support and understand shortcomings in others

Be sympathetic

Reassert others

Stress how important each member is to the team and value their contribution



How has the study trip impacted your work?

Polish Reflections

1. Reflections about community arts

“During the final meeting of the stay in Stoke-On-Trent, we talked about what community arts actually is and the role of the artist. (...) We talked about whether short-lived, one-off activities are not pointless. In my opinion, all activities are needed. The artist shows the group with which he or she is working various possibilities. It is up to the group whether or not its participants will take advantage of these opportunities.

We discussed whether the artist should be open to the suggestions of the group and adjust his or her activities to the group, or whether he or she run the project as per the initial assumptions. Is everyone entitled to create community arts? (...)

Depending on the activity, community arts can take numerous forms. In some cases the project must be run by a person involved in art and animation projects. The objective of community arts is to introduce the local community to new artistic endeavours. The artist should give people tools for further development and show the paths to follow”.

Katarzyna Pawłowska

“The debate which was held at the end of our stay in Stoke-On-Trent demonstrated that community arts is an activity which is constantly evolving and redefining itself. The questions raised during the debate included: Can social change be effected only through art? What about other forms of activity (e.g. dance, sports, gardening)? What is the role of the artist in community arts? To what extent can the artist interfere in the project and to what extent can he or she let the participants do what they wish? Is the person working in the field of community arts more of an artist or an activist? Is there a point in carrying out one-off projects? What can be done to introduce permanent changes? What can be done to give the community tools during the project

which they will be able to apply after it ends? Voicing doubts can broaden horizons and makes us more sensitive. This kind of discussions is much needed and important, especially for beginner animators of culture. (...)

Although all pressing problems cannot be solved with art, it is worth trying to bring about change using the small steps method. Even if the change is not spectacular, if as part of a given project we only get to the next layer of an issue, it will still be a success of a certain kind.”

Monika Martyniuk

“Community arts is defined by the academics of the Staffordshire University as engaging groups of people in common creative activities. (...) Having seen a number of social and cultural projects carried out in Stoke-On-Trent, it seems that I have finally discovered the reason why the role of culture animation is commonly discredited, not treated seriously and even condescendingly at times. (...)

Although many projects are aimed at filling in gaps and satisfying the needs of a group or community, what it offers participants is in fact only the fish and not the fishing rod. When defining the objectives, the project authors are not trying to identify the sources of problems, and when looking back at the activities, it seems that the project did not bring about any changes or that the changes are minor. (...) If one wants to generate long-term effects and see the changes implemented, it is crucial to identify the sources of problems. It should be considered whether community arts is to be the remedy used to solve problems right from the roots. The answer to this question can be found in the very definition. (...) We are often unable to evaluate the force of a given activity. Community arts work is based on working with people and the changes effected are very specific.”

Anna Małachowska

“In community arts art becomes a space for cooperation between people. One activity brings together an artist or animator and people – the community, a group of people or individuals. (...) Everyone is there on equal terms, connected via art or a creative project. The artist can be called the initiator of the activity since it is him or her who gives the group the tools and the impulse

to act, he or she leads the group through the subsequent stages of the activity. The distinguishing feature of community arts is a certain kind of openness which eliminates skill gaps where each participant becomes an artist. Community arts is based on art and people, on a meeting and conversation. (...)

At one of the first meetings I took part in during the study trip, Mark Webster asked why it was so hard to get Polish artists involved in working with communities. "Because they are asking difficult questions", he quickly provided the answer to his own question. It seems that the power of community arts lies in the very fact of asking questions and searching for the answers. (...)Community arts initiates conversation, it offers a meeting place to speak and be heard."

Zofia Wronka

Spanish Reflections

New ways of work and another point of view of the social changes, originally meetings, providing spaces for discussion among the members, we want to emphasise the dinner where you could write on the table. (Really creative way to discuss, when everyone can participate)

One of the main points that we realised in UK, was the socio-cultural differences between Spain and UK, highlighting the need to potentiate the creativity and the art on the Community level, taking care about the creativity and the need for expression, in our society.

Furthermore, we have discovered the possibilities through art that can influence our community, including boundless creativity, and realising the lack of awareness and motivation that exists here about the art community

A negative point was the lack of self-criticism with the results; it would be better if you have promoted more community activities at the exhibition; to get closer the rest of the community.

In addition, final reflections from the Study Visit helped us to include all the experiences and knowledge that we have learned from you, and relate them to our Community.

Anyway, from our experience in Stoke on Trent, we had new questions:

- *Can the Residency further into the community with which it Works? The most important thing is the time to share, and we wish if this time (3 months) is sufficient to make social changes? Or there are only superficially changes?*
- It is absolutely necessary the rol from the artist? It can be community art from the Community, by themselves?
- How can we separate the community work from group or individual work?
- What should we do to extend the results to these people who are not in the community? But they are also in the context?

Relation Study Visit Stoke-on-Trent - Germanetes

After the Study Visit we can focus more on our project, through the different projects and discussions we had. Helping us in order to get some new ideas for Germanete's project.

Now, we can compare and choose which things we want and those things that we prefer not to do in Germanetes.

However, we have to consider the differences between these two contexts, and we have to adapt the things we had learned on Stoke to Germanetes.

The artist's contextualization it's so important on the Residency, so we have to strengthen it in our Residency. Because we realised that it's the best way to succeed.

Now, we can think about our weaknesses and strengths, and we can work on them to improve the results for Germanetes.

Maybe we will prepare the Study Visit more experiential than theoretical; focusing on the different impact levels; individual, community and organizational.

The Study Visit gave us innovative experiences, such as personal and social fields. We have realised that art, in communities, can be a good tool for social changes. We saw new artistic projects, a professionally way to work and motivation for social improvement trough new artistic tools.

- *Can the Residency further into the community with which it Works? The most important thing is the time to share, and we wish if this time (3 months) is sufficient to make social changes? Or there are only superficial changes?*

- It is absolutely necessary the rol from the artist? It can be community art from the Community, by themselves?

- How can we separate the community work from group or individual work?

- What should we do to extend the results to these people who are not in the community? But they are also in the context?

UK Reflections

My perception of community arts in Europe have been formulated over a period of time and, as a result of previous visits to Poland and Lithuania.

I think our approaches to community arts participation are the same – to encourage involvement in projects – to seek identity as a group – to work together and develop a sense of bonding.

There appears to be a commonality with these principles. There is a feeling of togetherness about promoting arts participation.

The European approach shares the same desires as we do in England and, I think the goals are the same. To overcome barriers, encourage self-confidence and encourage the feeling of being wanted.

The views of the residency delegation and my experience of working in foreign communities as made it easier to explain how we envisage community arts in the UK.

Reason – because my understanding is that the problems are the same. We may have different interpretations in translation but we are all pulling in the same direction. The problems we perceive in communities have a commonality wherever they are and are approach seems to be shared. Of course the cultures are different but the way we use the arts shares the same approach.

My belief is that everyone has the ability to be creative but the secret is how to unlock the door of imagination. All our collective approaches are aimed at doing just that.

What did you learn about other countries and how has that influenced you?

For me, this is probably the most important question. It is so important to listen and learn from others. We cannot assume that we know all about the issues that surround the inclusion of community arts as an agenda for contributing to resolving community issues. However, my conclusions are that community arts appear to have more respectful position on some of the European agendas.

Lobbying the Establishment to ensure that serious consideration should be given to the benefits of health issues surrounding the positives of creativity and help and not hinder the NHS.

While, the UK seems to have lead the way in community arts it is interesting to understand how are residency partners have adopted the arts for their projects. I am sure all agendas are affected and influenced by funding but how important is it to listen to other experiences and views beyond what the funders want?

Evaluating is a necessary and relevant element of a participatory project, throughout its whole process. Community projects prove to be participatory for all age groups giving a foreign artist an opportunity to demonstrate talents and exhibit finished their pieces at university/local gallery. Furthermore overseas pupils, tutors and project leaders rubbed shoulders with the photographed and conversed in the principles of the participatory projects and later attended local cultural activities.

My reflection will be given from my first-hand experience of attending, as a community artist and a post graduate student, the Residency project. From my point of view, Community arts in Europe is untitled, organic and a cultural manifestation of community or individual life. It seems to be artist led more so than establishment led as it is in the UK. European countries don't get access to funding as easily. Community participatory arts in Europe is almost non-existent. Therefore the field is unclear to me in terms of how it is portrayed and perceived in Europe.

We ended up spending time translating a topic which is evolving and merges into other fields which in effect was time consuming which again highlights that there is a difference in how the topic is delivered, if at all.

I would say it's a lot more established here than it is in other European countries. I think the art form in European countries is different, in a better way, than it is here which makes you feel a sense of pity because it's not being recognised and celebrated as it could be amongst the countries' communities. I say this in response to hearing the Spanish artist's comments about how projects work. In her experience, in Spain an artist approaches a community and introduces them to an art form. I wonder if this is because

community/participatory arts is so bendable and elastic you can't really neatly place it anywhere so it becomes a tool to use with other tools like a hammer and a nail. You can't get the nail through the material without using another tool so in this instant community arts becomes the other tool to support the process of the finished product. It becomes an additional support rather than a standalone product.

We may have moved on in terms of working with the establishment contrary to historical events but it seems that our fellow EU partners are yet to catch up to the extent of the field even being recognised.

They do things differently – “just go out and do the art”. There is no existing policy/procedure around funding – who funds community arts in these countries? There isn't a structure as there is here therefore it makes you think it's not a recognised separate field.

Wouldn't they need some idea of what community arts is first? - how can you expect people to go into a field without knowing what it is? - By organising forums that focus on finding out what their interruption is provides a starting point.

The question regarding what we found interesting was, in my opinion, getting misunderstood. I interpreted that question as asking what we found interesting about/within the three days of coming together as champions of social activism and using the arts as a tool to engage indigenous or non-indigenous

communities. Not as a time to go back to basics and get a common understanding of describing the topic. It could be argued that at this stage of a unique opportunity participants would already share the same basic understanding of what community arts is and that we could have focused on new art forms and share some current or similar political issues the three countries are or have experienced(ing) and discuss solutions to approaching communities in the future. Furthermore the section illustrating Webster and Buglass's diagram of what a participatory project consists of was also another simple explanation of describing an element of community arts in terms of project planning. This highlighted the three countries were not on the same page of understanding what community arts is which in effect future residencies can become repetitive and exhausting in terms of time.

Perceptions of the UK Residency

Characteristics of Stoke-On-Trent

“It used to be an imaginative city, many people worked in pottery plants. Today, most of the inhabitants are retired workers and the unemployed. Empty post-industrial spaces are made available to organisations working in the field of culture (e.g. B-Arts). Through collaboration with the university and other organisations thy city is acquiring a new identity.”

Katarzyna Pawłowska

“Stoke at night. Narrow streets, low-rise buildings, flickering lights. “For rent” signs mounted on many windowsills. There is complete silence on the streets. In between the new, high-density housing, stand older red brick houses, the tall church tower and a musty cemetery. Inside is a small we come across a relevant discovery – a ceramic bench covered with a mosaic depicting the story and current status of the town. (...) Nearby stands a tall monument commemorating the fallen soldiers of the I World War. Its bottom part is covered with tiny wooden crosses and wreaths made from red paper flowers. (...) On a wall there is an interesting stencilled artwork with a clear signature underneath reading “Professor Pigment”. On a deserted entrance to the factory, next to an old, cast-iron door, I spot eyes carved on a tile. Could this be an appeal to us to notice this site?

Stoke seems to remember the past, it does not deny it, although it keeps evolving. New houses are built with red bricks. (...)

Wiktoria Rutkowska

“Stoke-On-Trent is not a popular town. It is generally associated with unemployment, derelict factories and pottery plants. A medium-sized town, located between two large municipalities (Birmingham and Manchester), it has few tourist and cultural attractions and it is not easy to promote. (...)The organisations we met with during the study visit, are attracting artists and city activists who are attempting to protect the city against extinction.”

Monika Martyniuk

About the British part of the *Residency* project; about the work of Almudena Caso and Cathie Powell-Davis and the opening night of the *Me. Us. Community* exhibition.

“The first day we met with Almudena and Cathie who revealed that in the course of their work they are guided by the motto ‘Everyone is important’. The goal of their work as part of the *Residency* project was to empower the elderly and reenact the historical memory of the city hidden in the reminiscences of its oldest citizens. The artists began their work with frequent visits to and conversations with the residents of nursing homes as well as art classes. (...)

Almudena and Cathie were open to the needs of the community. Thanks to the applied methodology stimulating creativity, the seniors were given an opportunity to go back in time and reminisce about their youth. To me, meeting the residents of nursing homes was a very important part of the stay. Happy communal signing and Kenny’s dancing convinced me to take up work with the elderly people. In my opinion, Almudena and Cathie transformed the everyday reality of the residents of nursing homes for a while into something special.”

Katarzyna Pawłowska

“One of the most emotional moments of our stay was the opening night of the *Me. Us. Community* exhibition which concluded the British part of the *Residency* project. (...) Four residents of a nursing home with their caretakers came to the event. They were seated around a round table, one person next to another, in the hall adjacent to the exhibition room. They were present at the meeting but at the same time eliminated from it. It was hard to gain access to them. Only by taking a seat very close to them could you make contact with them. We were told whom we had to speak to into which ear and who wanted to take part in the opening night. Of course, coming into such close contact with people can at first be embarrassing and calls for caution. However, it was

thanks to being so close to them that I heard Ken, a nursing home resident, ask me the question which has stayed with me since: “All those people came specially for us?”. I suppose success was eventually achieved, since three persons agreed to see the exhibition accompanied by the group of Poles.”

Wiktorja Rutkowska

“The work of Almudena Caso and Cathy Powell-Davies was based primarily on being with and talking to the elderly people who were residents of the local nursing home. At first the artists would establish ties and earn the trust of the residents. (...) Day by day the conversations became longer and more in-depth. The material used in art classes generated memories of ball gowns and bow ties that the residents used to wear when they were young. The artists would peruse personal photo albums of the residents, which brought back new memories. (...)

The opening night of the *Me, Us, Community* exhibition was a particularly important event, especially thanks to the presence of the residents taking part in the project. A new platform for meeting others, conversation and an exchange of experience was created. Through their work Almudena and Cathy gave the elderly a space to speak out and share their stories. They initiated a dialogue between persons who have no chance of meeting one another on a daily basis.”

Zofia Wronka

“The *Me. Us. Community.* exhibition was born out of a collaboration of a resident from Spain and the residents of nursing homes. The exhibits were images taken during meetings of the elderly people with the residents and recordings of conversations with them. The artist managed to draw nursing home residents into long and honest conversations. What I am interested in, however, is what will happen when the resident from Spain returns home. I wonder whether the project makes a long-term difference in their lives? What was the purpose of this project?”

Anna Małachowska

2. Reflections on the relations between the Polish, Spanish and British groups

“When the Spanish and Polish groups entered the room, the first thing they did was to combine all the tables into one big table. It was a small change but it eliminated the division by country of origin or entitlement to speak”.

Wiktoria Rutkowska

“There was a host of vivid discussions triggered by the cultural differences among the participants”.

Katarzyna Pawłowska

“Perhaps it was due to lack of time (we only spent there three days) or as a result of insufficient motivation, but the participants of the study visit from Poland, Spain and Great Britain did not integrate with one another as one may have expected. It is a shame that we ate meals separately; it is a shame that not all of us made it to the last meeting on the last night in Stoke. Wanting to work with communities, we should not forget ourselves what it takes to create a group”.

Joanna Kocemba

Spanish Reflections

Even, we are grateful for have shared this experience with a good team and have connected with all the members that formed part .

Organization from the Study Visit

We are so grateful and happy about the Stud Visit on Stoke;
Everything was so organized and we have a lot of facilities to get into all places we have to go (proximity, taxis, timetables,..)

We receive a really good treatment, in horizontal way, so we feel a part of the group; it creates a feeling of equality. You made a great atmosphere working together.

The visits we did on the Study visit were so different between them, and they were enriching for us, because we could see different ways to work with the community through the art. We enjoy them a lot!

However, we know the difficulties about the timetables, because we are from different cultures and we have different customs, but you give us some flexibility, and it was the point to find a common area with every body.

Furthermore, we think that it should be more facilities to share and meet each other in the free time, to join more he group.

A negative point from the Study Visit is about the language, because there are some people that don't understand English so well, because it is not their second language; so it's difficult for them to understand everything. Use easier and more understandable keywords to consider this group.

In short, we had had a really good experience, with a really good team, and we enjoyed and learned a lot.

New ways of work and another point of view of the social changes, originally meetings, providing spaces for discussion among the members, we want to emphasize the dinner where you could write on the table. (Really creative way to discuss, when everyone can participate)

One of the main points that we realised in UK, was the socio-cultural differences between Spain and UK, highlighting the need to potentiate the creativity and the art on the Community level, taking care about the creativity and the need for expression, in our society.

Furthermore, we have discovered the possibilities through art that can influence our community, including boundless creativity, and realising the lack of awareness and motivation that exists here about the art community

A negative point was the lack of self-criticism with the results; it would be better if you have promoted more community activities at the exhibition; to get closer the rest of the community.

UK Reflections

I think the structure and content of the itinerary offered variety and provided a good base to understand local practices and how community participatory arts work in Stoke-on-Trent.

'Me us Community Show and Tell', provided some context for the visitors to understand how we introduce concepts and ideas and encourage community involvement.

I think the residency might have been exhaustive and energy sapping. I think we can 'take heart' from the enthusiasm of delegates who shared their thoughts and experiences with us and bonded well as a group.

We can all be encouraged by the involvement and sustained interest of the group, which, reflects well on the programme of events.

I think we can be encouraged that the series of events were a good mix to provide our delegates with a foundation of how community projects run and promote themselves in Stoke and provide participants with the means to get involved in events and activities.

At this point I departed from the rest of the tour event due to prior commitments but appreciate from the feedback of the following day that the exhibition at the 'City Gallery' 'Airspace Soup Kitchen' were a success.

How has it impacted how you think about how residencies could be used in this context?

Residencies are a good forum for exchange of views – good conduit for collaboration – team building and resolving translation issues.

I think residencies are very good for developing mutual understanding and working together as a unit. Experiencing each other's culture is invaluable. Such close collaboration encourages bonds and promotes initiatives.

Closer collaboration provides opportunities and initiatives and reduces misunderstandings.





Appendix

Residency

UK Study trip pack

1-3 December 2014



INSTITUTE
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CULTURE

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Welcome

We are really pleased you have joined us for the first Residency Study Trip in Stoke on Trent, UK.

This pack provides some information about the study trip and some further details about information and further reading.

Schedule

	Sun	Mon 1	Tues 2	Wed 3
Morning		Welcome meeting Me Us Community Show & Tell Introduction to Chumberella <small>Learning exchange 2nd Floor Flaxman Building</small>	Dr Jackie Reynolds Creativity and older people Nic Gratton, Appetite Evaluation <small>Learning exchange 2nd Floor Flaxman Building</small>	Discussion & Farewells <small>Mellor Building, S413</small>
		Chumberella Walk		
afternoon	Street theatre in Hanley	Visit to B-Arts The Artist and the City Exhibition	Me Us Community Private View <small>Unicube, Ground Floor Flaxman Building</small>	Free Time
evening	Informal meal	Airspace Soup Kitchen	6 Press Launch & Pantomime	

We have tried to incorporate a range of opportunities designed to give you an insight into community arts in the UK as well as learn more about how artists and communities develop their skills to undertake works associated with civic engagement.

There is an opportunity to meet artists, arts organisations as well as find out about our Residency, and in particular arts and health work in the UK. We want you to be involved in conversation and debate about community and participatory arts, and there will be time to explore themes, ideas and reactions to the people and the work that we see during the study trip.

As our Residency has taken place in care settings, we felt it was better to meet some of the participants at the university rather than attend as a large group at the care home. There will be a chance to see the work created during the project and talk to participants and staff.

Free time has been scheduled into the programme and we will happily provide you with any advice and ideas about where to visit, either in advance or during the study trip. For information about the region, take a look at <http://www.visitstoke.co.uk/>

On the Sunday there will be an informal meal on the evening, but anyone arrives earlier then there are street theatre activities taking place in Hanley from 12-3. Please see <http://www.appetitestoke.co.uk/whatson/sts> for more details.

What do you need to do

To ensure you get the most from your study trip we would be grateful if you could:

- Confirm your contact details and arrival times with the coordinator in your home country.
- Let us or the coordinator in your home country know if you have any specific dietary or access requirements.
- Look at the texts on the reading list and send us any comments or questions- we will discuss these during the visit.
- Let us know if you have any specific questions in regards to the proposed programme or additional travel plans which you would like to make.

- After the visit, meet in your home country to reflect upon the study trip and help compile a report to be shared with the project partners.

Practical Information

Mark Webster	Project Manager	m.webster@staffs.ac.uk Tel: 01782 294545	L521 Flaxman, College Road, Stoke- on-Trent, ST4 2DE, UK
Janet Hetherington	Senior Researcher UK	J.Hetherington@staffs.ac.uk Tel: 07718722400	L220 (Address same as above)
Susan Miller	Team Leader, Business Support Team	S.C.Miller@staffs.ac.uk Tel: 01782 294828	(Address same as above)
Shaun Kelly	Senior Administrator - electronic resources	S.M.Kelley@staffs.ac.uk	(Address same as above)

You will be staying at the North Staffs Hotel, which is adjacent to the university. The meetings at the university will take place on the second floor of the Flaxman Building in the Learning exchange (L220). A map of the university is available at

<http://www.staffs.ac.uk/about/campuses/stoke/index.jsp>

We will use taxis and public transport to visit the different venues. The hotel is opposite Stoke on Trent's main train station. The station has direct connections to Manchester, Birmingham and London. For more about train travel, look at <http://www.thetrainline.com/>.

Stoke on Trent is home to a range of creative practitioners and organisations. For more information look at

<http://www.creativestoke.org.uk/commart.html>

It is also the recipient of funding for two major arts programmes in the region.

- Appetite

<http://www.appetitestoke.co.uk/>

- Art City

<http://esmeefairbairn.org.uk/news-and-learning/news-and-events/artcity-five-years-of-arts-funding-for-stoke-on-trent>

Further information about the people and projects which we will be hearing about can be found at

Me Us Community

<http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/residency/>

Chumberella

<http://www.chumbrella.org/>

B Arts

<http://www.b-arts.org.uk/>

Airspace

<http://www.airspacegallery.org/index.php>

Dr Jackie Reynolds

<http://www.staffs.ac.uk/staff/profiles/jhr1.jsp>

Creative Communities Unit

<http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/ccu/>

Creative Health CIC/ West Midlands Arts and Health Network

<http://www.creativehealthcic.co.uk/>

<http://www.westmidlandsartshealthandwellbeing.org.uk/quality-framework-2.html>

Reading

We request that you look at 5 key documents before the study trip. These documents provide information about policy; practice and critical review of community, arts and cultural work in the UK, in particular in relation to Artist training in this field.

Arts Council of England (2013). *Great Arts and Culture for Everyone*.
http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/Great_art_and_culture_for_everyone.pdf

Burns, S. (2014) *What do you need? Learning Approaches to Artists working in participatory settings*. Artworks/Paul Hamlyn Foundation: London
<http://www.artworkspfh.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/What-do-you-need-learning-approaches-report.pdf>

Cutler, D. (2013) *Ageing Artfully*. Older People and Professional Participatory Arts in the UK. The Baring Foundation: London.
<http://www.baringfoundation.org.uk/AgeingArtfully.pdf>

White, K (2014) *Asking the Way – Directions and Mis-directions in Arts in Health*. Ixia
<http://www.publicartonline.org.uk/whatsnew/news/article.php/Asking+the+Way+%E2%80%93+Directions+and+Misdirections+in+Arts+in+Health%3A+Mike+White>

Texts about the history of Community arts in Britain
<http://parliamentofdreams.com/free-downloads/community-arts-history/>

About Residency

The purpose of Residency is to develop an EU-wide model of arts-based residency for the vocational training of participatory artists and community workers working directly with excluded communities.

There are three key objectives:

- act as a 'live-laboratory' enabling participating organisations and communities to experience the benefits of working with a visiting EU participatory artist.
- provide an action-learning environment whereby the artist works with a local community practitioner(s) and locally appointed person (a worker, volunteer, student), who act as a mentor, collaborator and co-learner.
- function as an action research project. Staffordshire University will be responsible for managing the overall project and coordinate the research. Each university will appoint a research team who will work with the artist, the community worker and local worker to apply their learning and apply it to the development of a 'toolkit' guide.

The intention is that the findings from the research conducted during each Residency will contribute towards the production of a toolkit guide published in each participating country's language and available online.

The project and toolkit will be launched through an international seminar at the end of the project involving all partner organisations and relevant sector institutions from partner countries.

The toolkit will impact on the participatory arts sector in each country helping to increase the numbers and quality of projects taking place. Over a longer term, the findings, networks and resources that emerge during the project will help develop vocational and educational training (VET) provision in each of the partner Universities.

The UK Residency: Me, Us, Community



The UK Residency has been taking place since October 2014 in care settings for vulnerable adults and focuses on promoting engagement for residents in the wider community.

Artist, Almudena Caso (from Madrid, Spain) in working with trainee artist, Cathy Powell-Davies (Staffordshire, UK) in two Stoke –on –Trent care Homes, The Cambrian Care – Hotel and St Quentin Residential and Nursing Home.



Almudena Caso



Cathie Powell-Davies

For more information about our artist and trainee artist, please look at their web pages.

<http://almudena-caso.com/>

<http://www.hullaballooarts.com/>

The project has been supported by a community practitioner, Rebecca Owen who works for Creative Health CIC (who run the regional network for arts and health).

<http://www.creativehealthcic.co.uk/>

<http://www.westmidlandsartshealthandwellbeing.org.uk/>



Rebecca Owen

For information about what has been happening during the residency, take a look at the blog

<http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/residency/>

Introducing the UK Residency Team

Mark Webster



Mark is the project co-ordinator both for the UK side and for the whole project. As well being the Head of School of Art and Design at Staffordshire University he has many years of involvement in the arts and in particular, Community Arts and Arts and Health. His current projects include "And The Doctor Said..." <http://www.andthedoctorsaid.org>. An AHRC funded project using creative writing to research local people's experiences of accessing health

services, and "Appetite" a three year project to bring new audiences to the arts in Stoke on Trent. Appetite is delivered by a consortium of organisations led by the New Vic Theatre and Mark is the University's representative on the project.

The University's Creative Communities Unit is delivering Get Talking as part of the programme, which builds participatory approaches into both the evaluation of the project and into programme development. Mark is passionate about developing greater participation in the arts and when he is not at work spends his time working in his local community and is involved in many projects including Caldmore Village Festival and Caldmore Community Garden. On Sundays he will often be found digging over the vegetable beds on his recently acquired allotment.

Janet Hetherington



Janet Hetherington is the UK Senior Researcher. Janet works as a Senior Lecturer in the Creative Communities Unit where she leads on the MA in Community and Participatory Arts. Having initially studied Theatre Production, Janet's professional work has mainly been in arts development work in community settings and she has worked using community arts for a wide range of organisations, including Save the Children UK and Audience Development Agencies. She established the arts programme at Birmingham Children's Hospital and is a Director of Creative Health CIC. Janet has recently been involved in work exploring the cultural value of the arts in relation to empathy (<http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/culturalvalue/>) and developing the use of e artefacts in the teaching of national literacy's (<http://www.amores-project.eu/>). She is also about to embark upon research concerning information guidance for family friendly arts activities, diversity training for

teachers in Europe and exploring the use of Big data in creating a business cases for arts organisations. Janet is currently completing a PhD, investigating the business case for arts and health work. Janet wishes her loves in life were a bit more sophisticated but she loves shopping (especially overseas thrift stores), hosts a cake club at her house and absolutely loves Eurovision (you have been warned!).

Susan Miller



Susan is the Project Administrator for the UK side of the 'Residency' project. Since starting at Staffordshire University in 2009, she has worked with a diverse range of UK and overseas partners of the Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies. These partnerships have increased over the last few years to include UK institutions such as National Design Academy, RAF and Centre for Youth Ministry. International partners now include Werbe Akademie (Austria), Raindance Film Festival (Ireland) and APIT (Malaysia).

Susan is the Team Leader for the Business Support Team, which provides administrative support for all partners and for all external project work.

Outside of work, Susan is kept busy with a very active 2-year-old daughter

Shaun Kelley



Shaun is the Senior Administrator for Electronic Resources in the Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies. He has been involved in web development for Staffs since 2001. A graduate of Design: Media Production, he built his first web pages in 1998 and has enjoyed being involved in the rapid growth in web technologies, since then. He is also involved in content management and social media for the annual Staffordshire Fringe festival as well as coordinating 'Welcome Week' for the 800+ undergraduates arriving each year.

Outside of work, he volunteers at the University's community garden, 'Growing Concern' which has recently received an 'Outstanding' award from the Royal Horticultural Society. He also relaxes through yoga and regularly attends meditation retreats.