



# From Small Shifts to Profound Changes

CREATIVE  
AND PEOPLE  
PLACES

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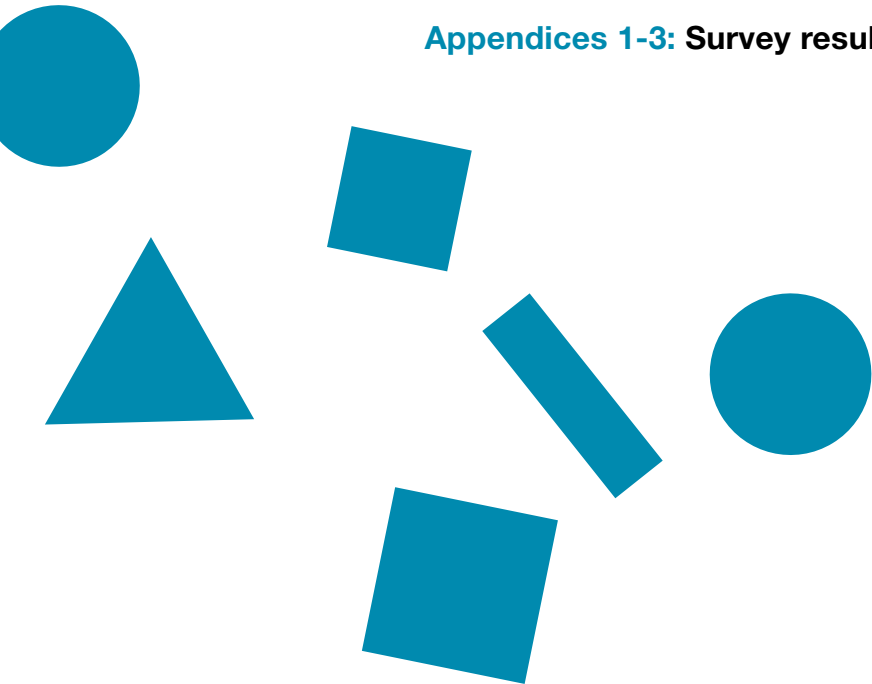
Creative People and Places and  
its impact on artistic practice

Elizabeth Lynch and Miriam Nelken

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# Executive summary

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Portrait – people and places of the First Art area by David Severn and Kajal Nisha Patel. Commissioned by First Art. Photo: Ralph Barklam

## Creative People and Places

One of Arts Council England's goals is that everyone has the opportunity to experience and be inspired by the arts, museums, and libraries. Creative People and Places (CPP) is a national action research programme funded by Arts Council England that aims to support this ambition by providing investment in parts of the country where engagement with the arts is lower than the national average with the aim of increasing the likelihood of participation.

The vision for Creative People and Places is to support the public in shaping local arts and cultural provision and, in so doing, to increase attendance and participation in excellent art and culture. It aims to support new and different approaches to developing cultural programmes that genuinely engage people in shaping provision and involve a variety of partners and long term collaborations between local communities, arts organisations, museums, libraries, amateur groups, the voluntary sector and others.

The Arts Council observes that CPP is driven: 'by empowerment...the public as artists and as producers. Not just as participants in artistic projects, but also participants in decision making processes.'

The programme comprises a network of 21 independent projects across England. They each deliver a bespoke programme of work locally, and collectively represent the national voice of Creative People and Places Network. Reflection, evaluation and sharing learning are integral to the CPP Programme and this report is part of a series of reports, visuals, toolkits, case studies and think pieces, which can be found on the CPP website.

## Background to this research

The rationale for this thematic research originated from the CPP Network, where there is a strong commitment to creating the right conditions for artists to create exceptional work, as well as ensuring that the process of creating work is robust, within the context of socially engaged practice.

The CPP Network is aware of a range of approaches to working with artists across all of the 21 Places and commissioned this research in order to understand the wider impact that CPP is having on artistic practice and the cultural sector as a whole.

This research captures the perspectives of artists who have been commissioned to create new work with one or more CPP Places and of the CPP team members who are responsible for programming and working with artists and communities.

During June-August 2018 we interviewed individual members of 15 CPP teams and 11 artists who represent a range of art form practice and levels of experience. Through online surveys, we also captured quantitative data from 14 CPP Places and 18 local participants' perspectives on working with artists. Key findings were shared and discussed at a CPP Peer Learning event in September 2018.

## Which artists is Creative People and Places working with?

We asked CPP teams to tell us about which artists they have commissioned and why; about the artist's level of experience, location, protected characteristics and art-form specialisms. The 14 CPP Places who responded to the survey had commissioned 530 artists to make new work in the period January 2013 to July 2018.<sup>1</sup> 75% of the commissioned artists (400) were already experienced at working collaboratively in community contexts and 53% (282) had previously lived or worked in the CPP place they were commissioned by. CPP places have been commissioning artists fairly evenly across a wide range of art forms.

The quality of the artistic idea and the artist's level of ambition were cited as the key factors influencing commissioning panel decisions. Most CPP teams reflected that, in their experience, artists who are open and flexible are most likely to deliver successful commissions. This was especially linked to longer-term commissions where artists might have to change track with their approach or plans. The willingness of artists to exchange skills with participants as part of commissions was seen as a vital part of the legacy of projects by local people, CPP teams and artists themselves. CPP teams and participants place a high value on the artists' curiosity and interest in learning from the place and its people.

The complexities around commissioning local or non-local artists, and supporting the professional development of local artists were raised by all CPP teams we spoke to. They see investing in artists who live locally as a key component of the sustainability and legacy of their CPP projects. This is being addressed through a focus on workforce and talent development, as well as awarding commissions to local artists.

In our survey of local people who had been involved in commissioning artists and participating in their projects we asked 'What makes a

commission successful?' 72% gave most weight to 'the way the artist interacted with them and listened to them', 67% valued the fact that the artist's work 'responded thoughtfully to the location and the community' and 50% indicated that 'the artists' outside eye was useful for the project'. Only 27% gave most weight to "the artist was local and/or knew the people and the place well". The way in which artists work with local people was seen as more important than where the artist was from.

Being local doesn't necessarily mean that an artist is right for the commission. A requirement to be a local artist can be also be in tension with the aspiration to recruit an artist with diverse perspectives. Several interviewees described the advantages of bringing with them an 'outsider eye'.

Interviewees were asked about their approach to diversity and equity and how it affected the commissioning process and the artists' projects. Four of the eleven artists talked explicitly about how racism and divisions along ethnic and religious lines in communities affected the work they made, and about the impact of their own cultural backgrounds on the process. Most of the CPP teams interviewed were frank in their admission that diversity and equalities were given either not enough, or in some cases, any consideration when commissioning artists.

This question is relevant to the way CPP Places have been thinking about people, place and power. It is part of the question about who has the privilege of defining culture. To research the impact of CPPs on artist practice it was important to ask whether the leadership signalled<sup>2</sup> by commissioning artists who are from Black and Asian backgrounds and Deaf and disabled artists was being considered and if not, why it should be. CPP teams identified several strategies they could implement to address equity in commissioning artists and these are detailed in the report.

<sup>1</sup> These figures indicate unique artists' commissions rather than the number of individual artists employed. Some artists will have been commissioned more than once by a CPP and by more than one project. 'Artist' has been used to refer to either an individual practitioner or an arts company.

<sup>2</sup> Leadership not just in terms of leaders of organisations but also in terms of artists as leaders.

CPP Places can, and should be, part of wider action and activism to address the systemic inequalities in the arts and in society. Creative People and Places will represent £90 million of public investment by Arts Council England (including the new 2019 round), so they are an important and powerful part of the arts funding system, and one that is accountable to citizens.

CPP teams' commitment to supporting and commissioning more artists who live in or near to CPP places comes through loud and clear in this research. Also evident is CPP's strategic commitment to developing artists who are interested in socially engaged and participatory practice. However these commitments could be more clearly aligned with strategies for diversity, representation and equalities. This would have a significant impact on artistic practice. As an action research programme, CPP projects are able to take risks, encouraged to be innovative and are in essence challenging mainstream perceptions and definitions of what art is and who the artists are.

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### **Recommendation 1**

CPP Places increase the number of commissions from Black, Asian, Deaf and disabled artists and ensure their visibility as artist leaders across CPP Places. CPP Places should capture monitoring data for artists, as they do for participants, employees etc.

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### **Recommendation 2**

CPP works with Arts Council England to identify resources to deliver diverse artist workforce development as part of its wider strategy to develop new audiences.

## **How is Creative People and Places working with artists?**

We asked CPP teams to tell us about how they are working with artists - what are the core components and contexts to being commissioned by CPP. We also asked artists what they thought the key characteristics of working with CPPs were and if any of these were different compared with their experience of other organisations or agencies who are dedicated to the field of socially engaged/participatory arts.

Artists identified that a distinctive feature of being commissioned by CPP was working with local people at all stages, from the commissioning to the creation and presentation of the artistic work. This is not necessarily unique in the artists' experience but several commented on the priority CPP places give to community participation and in particular the use of community panels. This often charges the artist with a greater sense of responsibility to their CPP commissioners.

Some artists and CPP teams are aware that they need to pay more attention to clarifying the roles of 'commissioner' and 'artist', and the relationships and responsibilities of each when drawing up contracts. They talked about how this affects the quality of the hosting experience for both CPP teams and artists.

The lack of suitable and affordable workspaces to make and rehearse was a common challenge for over half the CPP Places participating in this research and for the artists working with them. We heard from many CPP teams about how public spaces are increasingly privatised and how their use then becomes subject to restrictions. However CPP teams are addressing the lack of suitable spaces for making artistic work in a range of pragmatic, imaginative and entrepreneurial ways.

Many examples were given of CPP teams working with local authorities and local businesses to access public spaces, retail units and

underused facilities. Libraries and museums are utilised widely by CPP, where they exist. Pubs, social clubs, sports venues, factories, shopping malls and supermarkets were all cited as venues for activity, bringing both opportunities and limitations. Reclaiming under-used buildings, claiming public spaces in town centres and high streets – the desire to influence regeneration and resist gentrification – these have been spurs for commissions that connect people across sectors - the arts, local government, voluntary, health, sport and business sectors.

Artists and CPP teams are responding critically and creatively to the challenges posed by conventional narratives around heritage. CPP teams, local participants and artists all talked powerfully about place, people and heritage and about how an explicit aim of many commissions has been to shift some frozen narratives about what heritage can mean and to tell new stories which offer new perspectives, opportunities and platforms.

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### Recommendation 3

CPP teams ensure that roles, responsibilities and resources are clearly outlined in artists' contracts and that realistic time-frames are allocated for relationship building.

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### Recommendation 4

CPP Places are more vocal about offering their guidance and expertise to local authorities to support authentic and refreshed visitor/tourism strategies that reflect and include local arts and creativity.

## How is Creative People and Places supporting artistic practice?

We asked the CPP teams and commissioned artists about what specific support was being offered to artists to help them develop their practice. A range of professional development and fundraising support

emerged as key findings, with the personal and social value of good hosting by CPP teams and communities also cited by most of the artists. This was described as making introductions, arranging work space, tours of the locality, social events and, for artists outside the area, accommodation.

Professional development for artists is valued by both CPP teams and the artists themselves. CPP teams are finding that developing artists is integral to their mission to attract new audiences and engage more people in creative activity. Talent development for local artists and local people is seen as important for sustainability, diversity and legacy reasons. In addition, professional development for artists at all levels of experience, some of whom are new to participatory practice, is seen as important to nurture, grow and diversify the artists working in this particular sector.

A national strategy for developing socially engaged artistic practice involving partnerships with arts, academia and health sectors could support this work effectively.

Some artists have experienced a financial step change as a result of working with a CPP Place. However shrinking budgets are compromising several CPP Places' ambitions for realising large scale projects.

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### Recommendation 5

Arts Council England works with CPP to bring together potential partners from academia, health and arts sectors to explore a national strategy for developing artists' socially engaged practice.

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### Recommendation 6

Arts Council England reviews future CPP budgets and provides advice to CPP Places to ensure that the social and artistic benefits of commissioning art of larger scale and ambition can be developed and sustained beyond the first three year cycle of funding.



## What is the impact of Creative People and Places on artistic practice?

CPP teams and artists observed and reflected on a range of impacts in their practice - some small shifts and some more profound changes - as a result of the CPP commissions.

Artists and CPP teams reported a clear shift in the power dynamic between themselves and local participants, to a more equal footing, which they found motivating and refreshing in terms of their social and ethical values. CPP teams and artists sense that their commissions are influencing the wider status and value of social engaged artistic practice. Many commented on the level of investment in socially engaged practice that has been made by Arts Council England and the wish to see the practice 'mainstreamed' rather than part of what are perceived by them as 'peripheral' funding streams.

Several artists described how CPP commissions had made direct impacts on their artistic practice, e.g. experimenting with new art forms, working on a larger scale, relocation and artistic growth. Placing a high value on socially engaged practice, giving confidence to artists who co-create with communities, validating and supporting the artists development - these are all perceived by CPPs and artists as the positive impacts of their approach to commissioning artists to make new socially engaged, participatory work.

This research has highlighted the importance of asking artists about the influence on their practice through working with CPP Places and what they think of the work they make. An ideal next step to this research would be to interview a larger sample of artists across the wide range of art forms and scales of work commissioned, including a control group who have been commissioned by other agencies - for

example by organisations funded by Arts Council England as part of its National Portfolio (NPOs).

Several artists talked about the significance of this considerable body of work commissioned by CPP Places, supported by Arts Council England, and asked 'What happens to the art afterwards?' They expressed strong views about how little critical attention was given to the art itself, as compared to the process of creating the art, thereby losing the potential both to impact artistic practice and to give more credibility to the field of socially engaged art.

Artists spoke about how the work they are making with communities in CPP Places is part of social history— created during a time when communities are experiencing the most acute social, political and cultural impacts of economic austerity. They talked about the importance of documenting this work and asked whether there should be a central archive of CPP art and a major curated CPP retrospective. CPP teams raised questions around how the work could be curated and shown effectively and authentically. The work commissioned by CPP Places is about time-based and interactive processes as well as ephemeral and tangible outcomes. Is there a different way of curating that kind of work?

40% of CPP Places surveyed have toured their new commissions nationally and two places internationally. This is impressive and suggests a demand for the kind of work Creative People and Places is creating. The use of digital platforms by some CPP Places has also served to expand the national and global reach of artists' work. There is much potential scope to develop strategic partnerships and extend the artistic scope and audience reach of CPP projects.



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**Recommendation 7**

The CPP Network conducts further research on the impact of Creative People and Places on artist practice. This should be with a representative sample of artists commissioned by CPP Places plus a control group who have been commissioned by NPOs to deliver socially engaged, participatory practice.

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**Recommendation 8**

CPP Network works with Arts Council England to identify partners e.g. an academic institution, existing archive projects, Heritage Lottery Fund, who could help them take forward archiving the art commissioned by Creative People and Places projects 2013-2023.

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**Recommendation 9**

CPP Network works with Arts Council England and a leading gallery/museum to curate and present a retrospective of Creative People and Places artist commissions 2013-2018.

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**Recommendation 10**

CPP Network puts forward the suggestion to Arts Council that CPP artworks be purchased for the Arts Council England collection.

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**Recommendation 11**

Further research is conducted by CPP Network, with partners, into the characteristics of CPP commissions that have toured nationally and internationally. What is it that made them suitable for taking up by other locations and how could this influence future CPP commissions?

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**Recommendation 12**

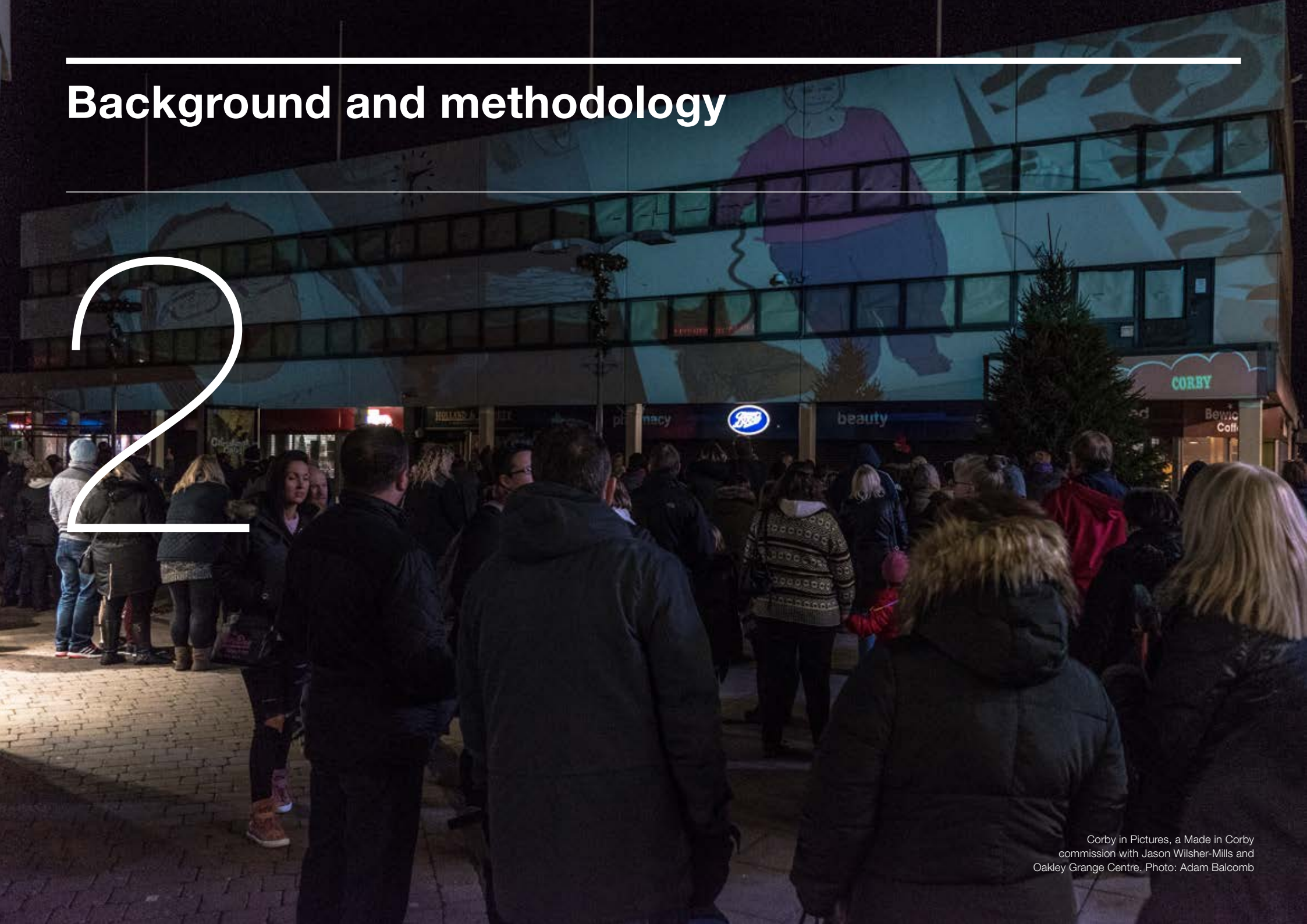
CPP Network explores how a strategic relationship between CPP Places and digital partners such as The Space and NESTA can develop and expand opportunities to create and share content nationally and globally.



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# Background and methodology

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## 2.1 Creative People and Places

One of Arts Council England's goals is that everyone has the opportunity to experience and be inspired by the arts, museums, and libraries. Creative People and Places (CPP) is a national action research programme funded by Arts Council England that aims to support this ambition by providing investment in parts of the country where engagement with the arts is lower than the national average with the aim of increasing the likelihood of participation.

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## 2.2 Background to this research

The rationale for this thematic research originated from the CPP Network, where there is a strong commitment to creating the right conditions for artists to create exceptional work, as well as ensuring that the process of creating work is robust, within the context of socially engaged practice.

The CPP Network is aware of a range of approaches to working with artists across all of the 21 Places and commissioned this research in order to understand the wider impact that CPP is having on artistic practice and the cultural sector as a whole.

This research captures the perspectives of artists who have been commissioned to create new work with one or more CPP Places and of the CPP team members who are responsible for programming and working with artists and communities.

## 2.3 Acknowledgements

We would like to offer our thanks and appreciation to all the Creative People and Places (CPP) teams, local participants and artists who took part in the interviews, surveys and workshop. Thanks also to those members of the network, Arts Council England and others who responded to early drafts.

## 2.4 Methodology

- Desk research/ literature review to establish critical framework and context (see Appendix 3, Bibliography)
- Online survey to capture quantitative data on artistic commissions by CPP Places. 14/21 CPP Places completed survey and the findings are summarised in Appendix 1
- Interviews with 15 CPP directors/creative leads
- Interviews with 11 artists
- Online survey to capture feedback from community participants, nominated by CPP Places, on their perceptions of their influence on artistic practice. (18/25 participants suggested by 12 CPP Places completed the survey)
- Workshop with 30 people from CPP teams attending a Peer Learning Gathering in Blackpool on 20 September 2018 to discuss initial research findings.

Interviews were conducted via phone, video or face to face, audio-recorded and transcribed with permission. Questions were sent in advance to interviewees.

The research focused on new artistic commissions over a 5-year period from 2013–2018.

All 21 CPP Places were invited to take part in this research and 15 responded to requests for interviews.

Of the 15 CPP Places who are represented in this report,

- Five are nearing the end of their Phase 2 funding round
- Nine are mid- Phase 2
- One is nearing the end of their Phase 1 funding round

We asked each CPP Place we spoke to suggest up to three artists they had commissioned to produce new work. There is no central register of artists who have been commissioned by CPP Places so we were dependent on the CPP teams themselves to suggest artists for us to interview.



Punchdrunk's St Ethelburga's Hallowtide Fair at Eastbury Manor, a Creative Barking and Dagenham commission. Photo: Paul Cochrane



Close and Remote's future heritage museum Castle of Trades, part of a commission for Creative Barking and Dagenham. Photo: Close and Remote

From a total list of 23 artists we shortlisted 12 interviewees who represented a mix of:

- experienced and early career/less experienced artists
- those who were local and non-local to the Places where they worked
- diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity and disability
- a range of project scale and artform practice
- artists who had worked in more than one CPP Place

Eleven out of 12 artists approached took part in the research, one was unable to respond within our time-frame.

### Notes for the reader

1. When quoting CPP teams, participants' and artists' responses we have not used footnotes or ascribed them to individuals or always explained the specific context in which they were shared. Instead we have highlighted the role of the person speaking.
2. Verbatim quotes are highlighted in **blue**.
3. Quotes from any texts referenced are in *blue italics*.
4. Quotes have been attributed to five of the artists, with their permission, where the interviewee can be easily identifiable through the content or context.
5. We have shortened Creative People and Places to CPP when referring to individual or groups of project places.
6. We interviewed people within CPP teams either individually or in pairs. The individuals are responsible for commissioning artists and share a range of different roles and titles, therefore in this report, quotes are attributed to 'CPP Teams'.



Lincolnshire farm workers celebrated on the side of Freshline lorries in 'Lincolnshire Loveliness' by Alisha Miller. A Transported commission. Photo: Electric Egg

### Socially engaged artistic practice and participatory art

CPP Network recognises the context within which it operates, the heritage of community arts practice and the many artists and arts organisations that have been driven by and helped to develop community-based practice. During the interviews several CPP teams referred to 'socially engaged artistic practice' and 'participatory art' when talking about their commissions. In the CPP Peer Learning workshop in Blackpool, several CPP teams described a lack of

understanding of what constitutes 'socially engaged practice' by community panels, local partners and some artists. They were not necessarily using formal definitions with panels or artists, but they were required to unpack the approaches, roles and values that underpin this type of artistic practice. Therefore we think it helpful to offer readers a couple of useful definitions. One is by CPP Place Super Slow Way and the other is by artist and academic Pablo Helguera.

"Social arts practice is an art medium that focuses on social engagement, inviting collaboration with individuals, communities, and institutions in the creation of participatory art. It aims to benefit a local area or society as a main outcome of the work over and above the artistic product and the artworks can take any form that involves people as collaborators, co-producers, co-creators."

**Super Slow Way<sup>3</sup>**

"While there is no complete agreement as to what constitutes a meaningful interaction or social engagement, what characterises socially engaged art is its dependence on social intercourse as a factor of its existence."

**Pablo Helguera<sup>4</sup>**

Helguera also raises an important question about the artist's intention:

How can we determine the point at which a socially engaged work becomes subservient to a particular cause to the point of being purely entertaining? What is our goal when we engage playfully with an audience? Is it enough to create ephemeral, entertaining or confrontational gesture, regardless of whether or to what degree they reach the consciousness of individuals or communities?<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Talent development for socially engaged practice [www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/sites/default/files/EcorysCaseStudyCPP\\_SlowSuperSlow.pdf](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/sites/default/files/EcorysCaseStudyCPP_SlowSuperSlow.pdf)

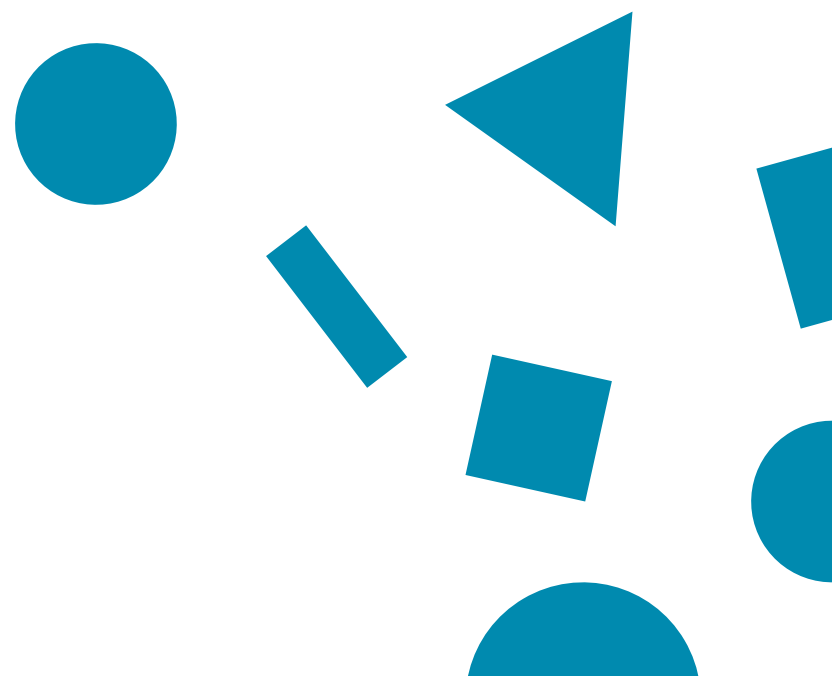
<sup>4</sup> Introduction, Education for Socially Engaged Art by Pablo Helguera 2011

<sup>5</sup> Chapter 6, Education for Socially Engaged Art by Pablo Helguera 2011

## Researchers

**Elizabeth Lynch** is an arts producer and researcher who works with artists and communities. Her experience lies in collaborating with and commissioning artists, especially in community contexts, and producing interdisciplinary projects across art, science, health and education. She established the flagship Roundhouse Studios as Director 2001-8 and now works for the Wellcome Trust and arts organisations, including several CPP programmes. She is an Associate Research Fellow in Contemporary Theatre at Birkbeck University, Chair of Board for Arts Catalyst, Theatre-Rites, What Next Wandsworth and a member of Spitalfields Music Advisory Panel. In 2002, London Borough of Tower Hamlets awarded her the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award for an "exceptional contribution to youth and culture in the borough."

**Miriam Nelken** works in collaboration with artists, communities and institutions to research, develop, produce and evaluate ambitious, cross-disciplinary arts and cultural programmes. She's interested in providing a platform for new perspectives and narratives on culture, heritage and place and in supporting grassroots-led arts interventions that shift power and lead to social change. She was Head of Arts for Croydon Council and the Royal Borough Kensington and Chelsea and Director of the Creative People and Places programme in Barking and Dagenham. Since 2016 she has been a consultant for clients including Alexandra Palace, Artichoke Trust, Architecture Social Club, A New Direction, Brent Council (London Borough of Culture 2020 programme), Croydon Council, Geraldine Pilgrim Company and RISEgallery. Visiting Lecturer Birkbeck University.



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# Which artists are Creative People and Places working with?

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Bliss Park. A project commissioned by Heart of Glass with local skaters and Heather Peak of Studio Morison to create a new skate park for St Helens. Photo: Stephen King



The 14 CPP Places surveyed have between them commissioned 530 artists to make new work in the time period January 2013 to July 2018.<sup>6</sup>

CPP Places are commissioning artists fairly evenly across a wide range of art forms. Visual arts commissions are the most frequent, followed in order by theatre, dance and outdoor work, music, film, public art, interdisciplinary and cross-artform work and live art.<sup>7</sup> Literature is less well represented in terms of new CPP commissions - only one CPP Place mentioned commissioning poetry.

### 3.1 Local/Non-local, Experienced/Inexperienced

Of the 530 artists commissioned by our sample of CPPs, 282 (53%) had previously lived or worked in the CPP Place they were commissioned by. 400 (75%) were experienced at working collaboratively in community contexts when they were commissioned.

The complexities around commissioning local or non-local artists, and supporting the professional development of local artists were raised by all CPP teams we spoke to. CPP Places are in areas of low arts engagement and poor arts infrastructure and this can often mean that a critical mass of artists doesn't emerge and individuals leave to find opportunities and gain experience elsewhere.

All CPP teams interviewed saw investing in artists who live locally as a key component of the sustainability and legacy of their CPP projects. This is being addressed through a focus on workforce and talent development, rather than solely through awarding commissions to local artists.

It's about trying to retain and develop talent and you need examples of people going through [professional development] processes and getting larger pots of money to encourage people to do the same.

#### CPP Team

Several CPP teams described a lack of confidence amongst their less experienced local artists and hence their hesitation to embrace larger scale work and bigger budgets.

I think there is a generational psyche based on the idea of not being good enough. They see this whole thing as being for other people.

#### CPP Team

Many CPP Places also mentioned bringing in more experienced artists to inspire, support and share participatory practice with less experienced local artists.

In the first phase we had creative connectors who were new to art. In our second phase we have moved to having these new artists being mentored by more experienced artists. The drive and the fit are more important than experience.

As [local] artists they feel someone else needs to come in and do the work because they lack experience. With production values we have brought people in to support them. It is mainly about confidence.

#### CPP Team

<sup>6</sup> These figures indicate unique artists' commissions rather than the number of individual artists employed. Some artists will have been commissioned more than once by a CPP and by more than one project. 'Artist' has been used to refer to either an individual practitioner or an arts company.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 1, 2. Art forms

However, one local artist reported jumping in beyond their comfort zone.

At the time it was the biggest project I had worked on. The things that I did, I hadn't necessarily done before. Initially I wasn't expecting to have as much responsibility as I was given. When I realised that was what was happening, it was terrifying. I am normally shy and I am not great in crowds and things. I wouldn't normally think I could do it...It was outside my natural comfort zone but that didn't mean I couldn't do it.

#### Artist

Almost all CPP teams talked about tensions with local artists and sometimes a sense of entitlement.

Some [local artists] are very resistant to CPP and see it as something that's encroached on upon the area and ask why haven't they been given the money?

Others talked about pressure from their community panels to select local artists for commissions:

Sometimes some of our commissioning panels have preferred artists from the local area. That is partly from a sustainability point of view as they can see the long-term investment and the potential of that artist continuing to work in the city. It is also partly down to the artist knowing the area.

#### CPP Team

The community always wants someone who is locally based but what we have found is that when people talk about their artistic idea, that's the thing the communities are inspired by and want to know. If the idea is exciting then they are happy to host them.

#### CPP Team

Being local doesn't necessarily mean that an artist is right for the commission. A requirement to be a local artist can also be in tension with the aspiration to recruit an artist with more diverse perspectives. Local artists in CPP areas may also not be familiar with or interested in socially engaged, participatory approaches.

In our survey of local participants who had been involved in commissioning artists for their CPP Places, we asked 'What makes a commission successful?' 72% gave most weight to 'the way the artist interacted with them and listened to them', 67% valued the fact that the artist's work 'responded thoughtfully to the location and the community' and 50% indicated that 'the artists' outside eye was useful for the project'. Only 27% gave most weight to "the artist was local and/or knew the people and the place well". The way in which artists work with local people was seen as more important than where the artist was from.

The best projects are the ones curated, designed and involving local people rather than things imported here that then disappear and leave no impact.

#### Community participant

Three artists and a CPP director described the usefulness of occupying 'the space of outsider' and knowing how to flex this status and how it can enable some broader conversations. The artist can feedback what they observe and ask questions that open up critical and creative thinking:

I think veering more towards the outsider status was really useful because I wasn't coming in as an expert. I was coming in saying I'm not from here, I don't know the area, I'm going to need you guys to help me, saying to the local community, you guys are the experts. That also gave me the freedom to make artistic comments by saying 'as an outsider, this is what this looks like' which...really helps some conversations.

**Artist**

The local people are the experts on their area so [the artist's level of local knowledge] doesn't colour the brief.

**CPP Team**

Three CPP teams said that they felt significant pressure from Arts Council England in Phase 1 to ensure that they were bringing in to the area well established artists, who had a reputation, rather than valuing local artists with engagement experience.

Now that we have reached the demographic they wanted, the Arts Council feels they can let the CPPs do what they want. So an ability to work in the area in a place-based way is (for us) the most important thing.

Another CPP Place talked about how the short-term nature of CPP funding and the aim to be genuinely responsive to the community impacts on attracting experienced artists in high demand:

We aren't in a good position to talk to an artist about a commission that is happening in two to three years' time. Partly because we don't know if we will be here and partly because what the community wants to talk about might be different by that time. That presents another challenge in terms of short turn-arounds, which limits your artist pool.

**CPP Team**



Olivia Furber's Dough! A sensory theatre production for young people commissioned by Creative Scene and responding to the North Kirklees area. Photo: Richard Davenport, The Other Richard

### 3.2 Artists' qualities, values and skills

When asking about the qualities, skills and values CPP teams and local people were looking for in artists they commission, the importance of artistic skills and a willingness to share these came through strongly. This was especially the case for local people who are looking to work in the creative industries, or who want to continue with creative activity in their community groups.

Reflection Connection at the Northumberland Miners Picnic 2016. A bait commission with composer Lucy Pankhurst. Photo: Richard Kenworthy



I think they also have to come with a certain level of skill that the community doesn't have. The artistic ability of the person is important.

**CPP Team**

We constantly talk to artists about sustainability and legacy. It's great that the artists are developing but what are the community gaining and can take away from this?

**CPP Team**

This reflection by an artist captures this well:

It was about listening and understanding. Whatever the project forms into, it was always the project that I was trying to make for them. It might not be the most involved or clever piece of music I have written but I wrote it for them. I listened to what they wanted and I played in rehearsals with them and I got to know the bands and the people in them, their senses of humour, what they liked playing.

**Artist**

The artist's interest in local people and motivation for working in the types of areas where CPP programmes are located was also cited as a key factor in successful commissions by CPP teams and local residents working with them:

Artists who have an interest in people and their lives. That helps make work that resonates and is relevant.

**CPP Team**

We talked about our locality while we worked and we felt that [the artist] understood our needs and was interested in what we are doing.

**Community participant**

The artist fully understood where we were coming from. Their thinking was in line with ours, their attitude and approach was specific to the venue and location.

**Community participant**

The word 'curiosity' came up again and again, relating to the importance of working with artists who want to learn from the place and its people as much as to share their methodologies and artistic skills.

Artists who understand the value system that we are trying to create, and a deep commitment to working in an authentic way - the words I would use are about being curious, and playful in their practice.

**CPP Team**

The word respect comes up a lot and the idea of equal exchange. Getting away from hierarchies of expert and non-expert.

**CPP Team**

The qualities of curiosity and openness were also attributed to the community panel members:

What struck me was that the panels were into risk and trying new things. I think I take that as the norm now, they always want to do something challenging and allow themselves to be challenged.

**CPP Team**

11 out of 15 CPP teams reported that in their experience, artists who are open and flexible are most likely to deliver successful commissions. Whether local or from outside the area, not having a fixed vision of what they want to see from the commission was seen by several CPP teams as essential. This was especially linked to longer-term commissions where artists might have to change track with their approach or plans.

To not come with a particular plan, or to come with an ability to let that go. A lack of ego really. That is when people truly respond and something actually quite magical happens.

**CPP Team**

Not going in with a set idea but listening and picking up the nuances. Listening to local people when they tell them the idea won't work in the area.

**CPP Team**

Artistic quality and the level of ambition of the artist were cited as key factors when commissioning artists by 9 of 15 CPP teams interviewed. This is explored in depth in the report 'What it does to you: excellence in CPP'<sup>8</sup>

It comes down to the essence; the heart beat of the artistic idea and how does that work contextually and operationally.

**CPP Team**



<sup>8</sup> What it Does to You: Excellence in CPP [www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/what-it-does-you-excellence-cpp](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/what-it-does-you-excellence-cpp)

### 3.3 Artists and their awareness of social and cultural diversity

Very few CPP teams or local people talked specifically about the importance of commissioning artists who are socially and culturally aware, and how this affects the artist's ability to explore and understand tension and divisions in communities they are working in, and their own role and responsibility within this.

However, four of the 11 artists we interviewed talked explicitly about how racism and divisions along ethnic and religious lines in communities affected the work they made, and about the impact of their own cultural backgrounds on the process. One artist talked about encountering deep cultural suspicions within communities that were divided along economic and racial lines. This was not fully apparent to them until they spent time there. They addressed the issue directly through their artistic process.

When it became apparent how tense it was actually, I felt that had to become part of the central narrative of the story, of two characters bridging that gap and overcoming it. That was something I couldn't stop thinking about in the area and was most shocked about.

#### Artist

In one area an ambitious strategic objective around brokering better community relationships was tested at the heart of a new artist's commission. The artist aimed to engage with and bring together a significant number of people from white communities and South-Asian, mainly Muslim communities, in a region deeply divided in terms of its social networks.

I am committed to diversity in my work, and rigorously try to avoid tokenism. In this case, the decision to focus on the growing divide between South Asian and white communities in the region meant that simply having a few representatives of the former would not be appropriate. We were committed to an equal representation of each group, and in numbers that were significant. We were quite successful at the final dinner with almost 500 people proportionally represented... We were fortunate to find key groups who took an interest and co-designed the work with us and they have carried on their cross-cultural work together since then.

#### Artist

The responsibility of the artist to be aware of their own cultural privilege, and their responsibility to challenge prejudice through dialogue was articulated robustly by one artist:

Our cultural background shaped people's reactions to us and shaped the films. ... A good example was the occasion where I went to a football match in [...] and it was almost exclusively an enclave of white British people who were extremely racist. We are two white artists so the white people who had borderline racist views spoke to us in a different way than if we had been black ... There is a responsibility there to make sure that it's balanced and you can't not bring your own politics in... It goes beyond the safe network (of participants) that have signed up to this and going further out and speaking to people who do have racist viewpoints and the rest of it because that is engagement.

#### Artist

Another artist talked about how through being culturally aware, authentic and brave, preconceptions of differences in cultural identity that may be held both by the artist and by local people, can quickly crumble:



Dawinder Bansal's The Making of a South Asian Wedding. Art in Manufacturing commission with Super Slow Way at the National Festival of Making 2018 in Blackburn. Photo: Robin Zahler

I went in not knowing anybody. I've very clearly not got a Blackburn accent. I'm from a different place, faith and background, but yet I was welcomed by most people I met. It is not essential for artists to be from the same background as the people they wish to engage with.

I must emphasise this. It's more about applying an attitude of learning, understanding their customs and traditions, communicating your intention about what you are doing and why you are doing it..

This experience gave me the confidence to realise that I could do much more work like this work in other locations and be similarly bold. I've always limited myself to the Black Country and now I feel I can go anywhere and make it work.....

South Asian traditions and faiths are vast and I wanted this to be a cultural celebration, veering away from faith. So the project evolved into South Asian Wedding traditions from the 1980s. It attracted diverse audiences who experienced art, craft and cultural exchanges through a universal subject of weddings. The commissioners of this work gave me the autonomy and support to lead this work and trusted me. This was another essential ingredient to success of such work.

#### **Dawinder Bansal, Artist**

Consciously acknowledging and representing cultural diversity was integral to the making of one artist's work, including both cultural content and the recruitment of their artistic team:

Having parts of the script in Urdu and Punjabi and traditional music and songs and various cultural references, these touch points I felt were appreciated. It meant that this community that previously weren't engaging with CPP as much now feel like their stories are considered and reflected and therefore that's a reason to come. Rather than (the mainstream offer) which is un-relatable and not for them. I hope we went a little bit in the way of countering that feeling.

#### **Artist**



Where Things are Different created by Stephen King and St Helens communities, commissioned by Heart of Glass. Photo: Stephen King

<sup>9</sup> It was acknowledged by researchers and interviewees that experiences of diversity intersect. The term ‘equalities’ was used in relation to equal opportunities policies that are a requirement for ACE funded projects.

<sup>10</sup> For full list see: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics>

<sup>11</sup> Leadership not just in terms of leaders of organisations but also in terms of artists as leaders.

Another artist acknowledged their failure to connect with a diverse range of participants in their CPP commission:

I think that's one thing I would have liked to have done more of, to have been able to commission a Muslim artist or poet. So there wasn't any white Eastern European in there, or any other communities. I think that was the one thing that if I had more time and money, that takes more time and engagement. You need to be finding those people and handholding them and inviting them in. I just don't think I had time within that commission to do that... I would need more time to be able to represent that... I went for the easy thing.

**Artist**

One CPP team described how a very experienced and well-known artist they had commissioned was able to gain greater cultural awareness through working in their CPP context:

Suzanne has worked in the States on race relations and the difference in race relations in the UK and the USA was a real eye opener. This moment in time, with the presence of Islamophobia and working in a predominately Muslim area, widened her perspective on the forms and outcomes of racism. She was constantly challenged in that, even at this stage in her career in her mid-70s, she didn't think she had anything else to learn.

**CPP Team**

### 3.4 Diversity of artists

You often don't realise you have an unconscious bias. I think we need to develop a more direct approach.

**CPP Team**

We asked CPP teams “How does consideration of diversity and equalities<sup>9</sup> influence the selection of artists across CPP?” CPP teams responded to this question in the main to describe or discuss the extent to which they were working with Black, Asian, Deaf and disabled artists. The key findings of our research reflect the emphasis given by interviewees to these three protected characteristics.<sup>10</sup> Gender diversity and class were also discussed but to a much lesser extent.

The overwhelming and frank response by CPP teams was that diversity and equalities were given either not enough, or in some cases, any consideration when commissioning artists.

This question is relevant to the way CPP Places have been thinking about people, place and power. It is part of the question about who has the privilege of defining culture. To research the impact of CPP Places on artist practice it was important to ask whether the leadership signalled<sup>11</sup> by commissioning artists who are from Black and Asian backgrounds and Deaf and disabled artists was being considered and if not, why it should be.

Whilst CPP Places do monitor ethnic diversity and other protected characteristics of their participants and audiences, only 3 out of 15 CPP teams interviewed capture this type of data for the artists they commission. This could be attributed to the fact that the statutory monitoring of the whole CPP programme has been focused on participants and audiences, not artists. Arts Council England set up CPP as primarily an audience and not an artist development programme.



The real question is not about monitoring per se but 'counting what counts', whether there is a problem here that needs addressing and how monitoring could support this:

What difference does collecting data make if we don't use it to change what we do?

**CPP Team**

We might not officially collect monitoring data on artists but we definitely consider diversity in our choices.

**CPP Team**

People tend to assume that South East Asian art is just for that community.

**Artist**

We are working on our accessibility statement at the moment and we have failed at that. We haven't made it explicit.

**CPP Team**

I don't think it's perfect. Having been a funder before and there being all sorts of criteria, we don't have anything explicit [about diversity] in our literature around applications [for commissions].

**CPP Team**

## Reasons and explanations

The reasons and explanations for not having given enough consideration to diversity fell into six main areas.

- **Time:** Some CPP teams reported that they couldn't give enough time to the matter in Phase 1 because it required implementing a strategic approach and their capacity had been stretched with complexity of setting up their programmes.
- **Demographics:** Several CPP teams cited their predominantly white demographic as either an explanation or a challenge for addressing diversity and equality issues. Several directors said it was important to select artists 'to reflect the areas they work in'.

It's phenomenally Caucasian here, that's just the way that it is.

There is very little economic diversity... There's very little social mobility... That leads to very interesting questions around diversity and the artists that you approach... how they might or might not be received? We also occupy a really strongly Brexit position here and I think the Brexit conversation is the most difficult conversations to have here, as it may be across other parts of the country.

**CPP Team**

Do we recruit artists to meet the character and needs of the group or to challenge and test them?

**CPP Team**

It's difficult; we do need to think about it. Our artists should maybe reflect the local demographic not the national.

**CPP Team**

One team expressed concern about how a Black/Asian artist might be received in areas where they might experience racism and how this could be managed.

- **Community panels:** Some CPP Places have faced challenges in recruiting community panels that are diverse. Several directors commented on the difficulty of raising and discussing the diversity agenda with community panels responsible for commissioning artists, whilst one commented that their panel 'almost expect the artists to be white and middle class'. Another director said that their policy for having more diverse panels was abandoned because it had been a struggle to recruit any people at all for roles on panels.
- **Commissioning briefs:** Explicit criteria around diversity and equalities is not being included in commissioning briefs put out by CPP teams:

Sometimes I think we could be more explicit about the type of support we can provide and be accessible to people who might be put off.

#### CPP Director

- **Relevance:** Some CPP teams expressed concerns about tick-boxes and being 'driven by targets rather than by the communities we work with'. They mentioned 'focusing more on what participants need', and not having had 'a project around these themes', Others asked if the diversity of the artists was important to audiences and 'does it make a difference in terms of who you can relate to?'
- **Recruitment:** The lack of applications from ethnically diverse, Deaf and disabled artists and the challenge of identifying diverse artists was expressed by more than half the teams.

Several CPP teams said Jess Thom's presentation at the People, Place Power conference<sup>12</sup> had been 'a wake-up call' and most teams expressed the need to change their way of working. They shared several approaches and strategies to address commissioning more work by diverse artists.

One CPP team gave an example of being pro-active and taking community panels out of their programming comfort zone when it comes to diversity and inter-sectionality. A trip with local residents to the Edinburgh Fringe to see shows by BAME artists resulted in the CPP programming a play by an Iraqi-British artist, telling the story of his family's migration to the UK alongside his coming out as homosexual.

There is an extreme difference to what (our CPP area's) communities are used to, but they are fascinated by the story and respectful. It touched them and they are inviting their friends and family along and are excited to show this story. We do have a challenge with a lack of diversity but when it's introduced it is warmly received. For us to work with the community and bring it in is really important.

#### CPP Team

One team is using data analytics to track and identify the diversity of the artists that their commission call-outs are reaching. Another is addressing how to better communicate accessibility.

We have a phenomenal database here and its inclusive...When we did the data analytics, it was quite heartening about where it had gone to and who it had been downloaded by and who had read it.

#### CPP Team

<sup>12</sup> At the CPP People Place Power Conference, Wolverhampton June 2018 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHpNi5288kY&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHpNi5288kY&feature=youtu.be)



We are always having to be creative about how we make (disability) access in our spaces. We are now thinking about how to foreground that and communicate we are aware of these issues and want to solve them.

**CPP Team**

Of the 21 CPP places, two are led by directors from Black and Asian backgrounds. One talked about how even though they use open calls and headhunting to proactively identify and attract diverse artists, yet still:

The majority of artists who apply are white men. We are starting to get diversity in terms of disability or cultural background but we have to work really hard at this... That's where the head hunting comes in, we try to encourage more women in the area to apply. We have a way to go and we aren't there yet. We do think about it and we have to put things in place with every commission.

**CPP Team**

The other director expressed some optimism and challenge on the issue:

I don't want to have to teach companies about diversity, they should be coming to the community with cultural understanding. One of the things I'm interested in is the notion of 'taste' and how we can continually take folks on a journey... I feel that (my area) is the blueprint of the UK in the next 50 years. All of the old rules I have about diversity practice are thrown out the window, using the word 'diversity' for one, it's ridiculous to point out the everyday.

**CPP Team**

Dawinder Bansal's The Making of a South Asian Wedding. Art in Manufacturing commission with Super Slow Way at the National Festival of Making 2018 in Blackburn. Photo: Robin Zahler

## Artists and visible leadership

My expertise of engaging South Asian audiences ... I asked ‘what do you think would make you come?’ - I wasn’t asked to do this I am just a curious person and I do this wherever I go. I just said what would you like to see and they said we would like to see a bit of ourselves

### Artist

The role of the artist as a visible leader cannot be under-estimated. Suzanne Gorman in her paper ‘Where Am I?’<sup>13</sup> has researched the impact and influence of BAME role models in the creative and cultural industries:

*Role models impact on individuals both long and short term. A short-term role model, a BRIGHT LIGHT, can incite an immediate aspiration or insight. Visual reflection in terms of ethnicity is of particular importance for a BAME individual’s relationship with BRIGHT LIGHTS. Long-term role models can be seen to display three typical functions, that of GUIDES, FORGERS and ENABLERS.*

*A detailed mapping exercise to discover more details about where BAME artists/practitioners are working would increase visibility of and improve access to BAME role models. Raising the profile of these BAME role models through inviting them to industry wide conferences, symposiums, round table discussions and other events has the potential to inspire both BAME workers and enable a wider sector recognition of the contribution of these role models.*

**Suzanne Gorman, Director, Dramaturg and Producer**

All artists who are commissioned by CPP Places are in a position of creative leadership. Their roles as thinkers, instigators, provokers, makers and teachers, collaborators and co-creators are influential. Commissioning diverse artists is important for CPP Places as an integral part of their core aim to develop audiences and participation in the arts. It is relevant to the wider debates about whose art and culture? and how gender, sexuality and class intersect with race and disability.

The inter-disciplinary processes of socially engaged practice lend themselves well to embracing cultural diversity. Making diversity consciousness integral to commissioning briefs would be a good way forward. This would establish clarity of vision in order to effect shift and change to widen perspectives and artistic practice.

I’m not an expert, it’s a funny thing everybody thinks that because you’re a disabled artist you understand disability in all its forms. I did not understand learning disability. I just went in there treating them as people and listening to them really. Funnily enough they thought it was really interesting that a disabled person was successful in working with them as well. It worked both ways and we weighed each other up and decided we liked each other.

### Artist

There is a division and you can see it by the way the communities live. There is a physical divide but that physical divide does exist in other parts of the UK...Because of me having this in the back of my mind about divisions, I did talk to a few white people in Blackburn and they said they thought the Asian community was quite secretive and closed. So I purposefully wanted to go into a space that was very public.

### Artist

The testimony from artists who can make a strong community connection because they are themselves from under-represented communities is highly charged. This isn't a given but when personal qualities and socially engaged artistic practice are also in the mix, it's a powerful combination.

(The artist) speaks the same way as local people. He has a history with the place and grew up there. He is sensitive to the issues of the area and he is like the people he was talking to. People are often skeptical of these sorts of programmes. This area has had so much money pumped into it that has then gone...He went into local cafes and pubs and put people at ease to talk.

#### CPP Team

I was a stranger in (the area) but when I explained my project and my reasons for doing this work – every single person I met welcomed me with open arms. That is not even an exaggeration. Over the past three weeks, I have met at least 200 new people (here) and many of these people invited me into their homes, invited me to their family weddings and special occasions in preparation for my new art installation and film. They shared part of their lives with me and I appreciate every single person I met and conversations I've had since working there.

#### Artist

In the Creative Case for Diversity<sup>14</sup> it is acknowledged by Arts Council England that artist/workforce development and audience development are intrinsically linked to modelling leadership. The Arts Council has recognised the need to increase workforce diversity in the arts, e.g. through supporting initiatives such as the Clore Leadership Programme and Changemakers.<sup>15</sup> Therefore it is reasonable to suggest that diverse artistic commissioning makes a vital contribution to audience development.

*Artists should be at the forefront of critical reflection on our society and not reduced to producing 'culture-tainment' for the white middle classes. And that requires diverse artists with diverse life experiences and diverse views.*

#### Pulse Report participant<sup>16</sup>

This CPP research has raised many of the more complex questions that were also raised by the findings of Arts Professional's Pulse report,<sup>17</sup> summarised by Frances Hitchens:

*The majority – 57% – of the 509 UK-based respondents...said that diversity in relation to artistic work was a top strategic priority for their organisation. A further 28% said it was 'important but there are more pressing issues to address'. Many commented that funding and fundraising issues were more pressing, while some respondents indicated that creating "quality" art took precedence over all other concerns.*

There was concern expressed in the discussions in Blackpool,<sup>18</sup> in the light of the Pulse and Panic! reports, that there was risk that Creative People and Places is being expected to solve every problem in the arts. Some CPP teams asked, "is it Creative People and Places' job to diversify the pool of artists in the UK?" Others responded that, of course, it is everybody's job. If we want to inspire, support, develop, present, share and nurture the best artistic talent and ideas, we need all the voices to enrich our communities and address equality of access and expression.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/how-we-make-impact/diversity> : "The Creative Case for Diversity is a way of exploring how arts and cultural organisations and artists can enrich the work they do by embracing a wide range of influences and practices. We believe that embracing the Creative Case helps arts and cultural organisations not only enrich their work, but also address other challenges and opportunities in audience development, public engagement, workforce and leadership, and collections development in museums. Our funded organisations are expected to show how they contribute to the Creative Case for Diversity through the work they produce, present and collect."

<sup>15</sup> [www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/change-makers](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/change-makers)

<sup>16</sup> [www.artspromotional.co.uk/pulse/survey-report/pulse-report-part-2-diversity-artistic-work-what-needs-change](http://www.artspromotional.co.uk/pulse/survey-report/pulse-report-part-2-diversity-artistic-work-what-needs-change)

<sup>17</sup> [www.artspromotional.co.uk/pulse/survey-report/pulse-report-part-2-diversity-artistic-work-what-needs-change](http://www.artspromotional.co.uk/pulse/survey-report/pulse-report-part-2-diversity-artistic-work-what-needs-change)

<sup>18</sup> Peer learning event, Blackpool, September 2018

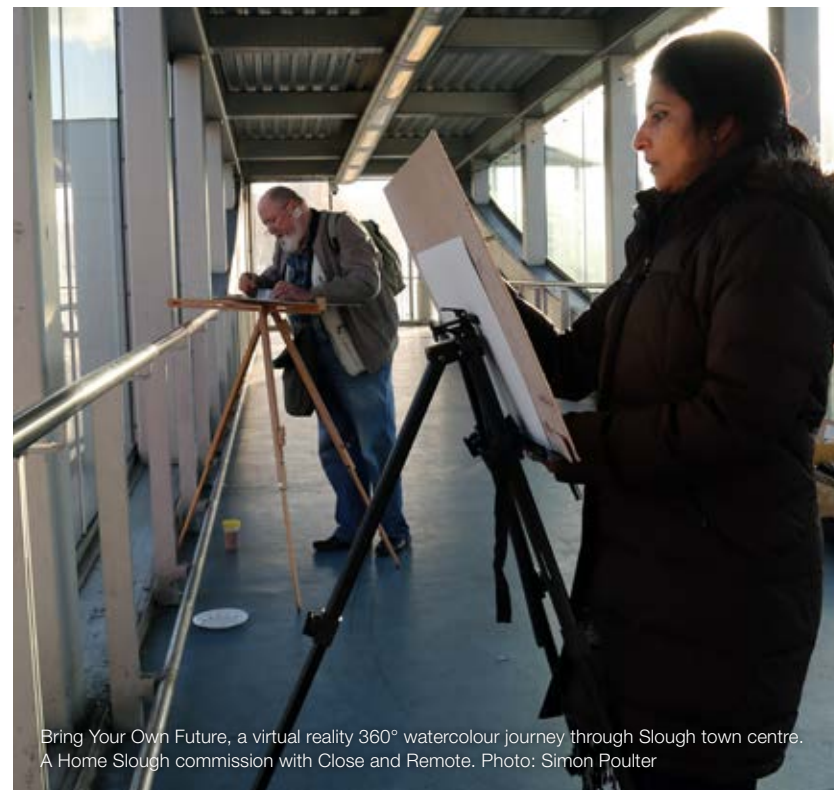
## Conclusion

CPP Places can, and should be, part of wider action and activism to address the systemic inequalities in the arts and in society. Creative People and Places will represent £90 million of public investment by Arts Council England (including the 2019 round currently being advertised), so they are an important and powerful part of the arts funding system, and one that is accountable to citizens. As Nasheed Qamar Faruqi argues well in her report *On Diversity*,<sup>19</sup> quoting John Holden:

Diversity in the subsidised arts and cultural sectors matters precisely because art and culture inhabit a space where the private meets the political. As John Holden writes in *Cultural Value and the Crisis of Legitimacy*:

*“Professionals have a role as educators and arbiters, but also as guardians. It is their job to ensure intergenerational equity and maintenance of the cultural ecology – a job that on the surface can conflict with the short-term public will as expressed by the media. Professionals also have a legitimate role in shaping public opinion and encouraging and validating public debate.”*

CPP teams’ commitment to supporting and commissioning more artists who live in or near to CPP Places comes though loud and clear in this research. However, this raises the question; if one of the criteria for commissioned artists is that they have to be local, could this mean that CPP Places could create more cultural silos than we already have? There can be a tension in many CPP areas between reflecting local communities and representing England’s cultural diversity. CPP’s strategic commitment to artist development is evident from this research but could be more clearly aligned with strategies for diversity and equalities. This would have a significant impact on artistic practice.



Bring Your Own Future, a virtual reality 360° watercolour journey through Slough town centre. A Home Slough commission with Close and Remote. Photo: Simon Poulter

As an action research programme, CPP projects are able to take risks, encouraged to be innovative and are in essence challenging mainstream perceptions and definitions of what art is and who the artists are. It requires commitment and constant vigilance but the work doesn’t have to be done in isolation. There are allies everywhere.<sup>20</sup> For example where CPP Places do have diverse commissioning panels with experiences and insights to share, could peer to peer

<sup>19</sup> Page 10 *Diversity: A Critical Engagement* by Nasheed Qamar Faruqi <https://nasheedqamarfaruqi.com/on-diversity/>

conversations be facilitated between CPP Places? The new Arts Council England Culture Change Toolkit<sup>21</sup> contains guidance on how to recruit and support diverse talent and how to capture and use diversity data. ‘All Change Please’<sup>22</sup> offers practical approaches to achieving gender equality in theatre, which are transferrable for diversity equality.

*If change is to happen it is down to each and every one of us to get stuck in and to revel in the challenge of making it happen.*

**Lucy Kerbel, All Change Please**

## Action

Creative People and Places is well placed to make a significant contribution to realising one of Arts Council England’s core goals: “Goal 4: The leadership and workforce in the arts, museums and libraries are diverse and appropriately skilled.” This goal is inextricably bound up with the CPP Places requirement, currently, to deliver Goal 2: “Everyone has the opportunity to experience and be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries.”

During this research, CPP teams and artists identified several strategies they could implement to address equity in commissioning artists:

- Use more targeted approaches to identify and attract diverse artists
- Offer more accessible application processes
- Build diversity criteria into commissioning call-outs
- Review partnerships and networks
- Discuss the meaning and importance of diversity with community panels

- Take community decision makers to see work by diverse artists
- Create mentoring and work-shadowing opportunities for young and emerging Black, Asian and disabled artists
- Develop new policies within their business plans around diversity and artists

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### Recommendation 1:

CPP Places increase the number of commissions from Black, Asian, Deaf and disabled artists and ensure their visibility as artist leaders across CPP Places.

CPP Places should capture monitoring data for artists, as they do for participants, employees etc.

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### Recommendation 2:

CPP should work with Arts Council England to support and resource diverse artist workforce development as part of its wider strategy to develop new audiences.

<sup>20</sup> Also see Chapter 3, Culture Capital in Power Up by Chrissie Tiller, 2017 <http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/power>

<sup>21</sup> [www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/culture-change-toolkit](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/culture-change-toolkit)

<sup>22</sup> [www.nickhernbooks.co.uk/all-change-please](http://www.nickhernbooks.co.uk/all-change-please)

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# The context: How are Creative People and Places working with artists?

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Photo from Girl Gaze, a photography project commissioned by Creative Black Country that explores the unique connection between women from the Punjab and the Black Country. Photo: Uzma Mohsin



We asked CPP teams to tell us about how they are working with artists - what are the core components and contexts to being commissioned by CPP Places. We also asked artists what they thought the key characteristics of working with CPP Places were and if any of these were different compared with their experience of other organisations or agencies who are dedicated to the field of socially engaged/participatory arts. The key findings are captured under five headings.

## 4.1 Participation as core purpose

Often when I am doing site-specific projects, I hear 'Yes we would like you to work with local people but it's not a high priority'. With CPP it was a high priority and that really focused me as an artist.

### Artist

Several artists observed that working with a CPP Place wasn't the same as being commissioned by a festival or a theatre. The main difference attributed was that participatory work itself was CPP's overarching purpose. Artists appreciated the CPP investment in process as well as the final outcome, unlike their experience with some other commissioners. The CPP Places are described as 'fuller partners' in terms of their commitment to engaging new audiences.

For venues we often do stuff that ticks boxes for them but it's almost like, they have their participation programme and we have ours and they don't see how the two can meet.

### Artist

When we have been commissioned for socially engaged work it is more about getting the numbers through whereas CPP focuses on the artistic quality of what they are seeing.

### Artist

What also came through strongly from artists was a sense of freedom in working for and with a CPP Place, because there was no imperative to make work to deliver on a particular instrumental agenda. This was echoed by three CPP teams, who said they wanted artists they commission to have a strong sense of independence and artistic freedom.

With CPP you can approach them with really whatever idea you think you want to do. The only thing is that you must be getting that work out there and you must be engaging with people. I am an artist that likes that but if you're not an artist that likes that then CPP isn't for you.

### Artist

Artists also mentioned the benefits of the action research approach CPP takes:

They have an eye on research and continually reflecting on how it can impact their future work, that openness to learning.

### Artist



## 4.2. Commissioning through local community panels

Another distinguishing factor for artists about being commissioned by a CPP Place was working with community panels. 12 out of 14 CPP Places surveyed used community panels to commission artists where the majority of the decision-makers were local people.

Artists described how being commissioned directly by a panel of local people increased their sense of responsibility to the community they were working with. This prompted them to have greater focus on how the work would be received locally and on legacy.

You make sure you have the DNA of that community and form a covenant, you saying this is what we are going to do and then you do it. I've had sleepless nights ...[worrying about letting them down]'

I felt a real responsibility to the cultural connectors and all the local people who were part of it. I felt very much I had to prove myself to them which is a very different situation to usual. Normally as an artist you have to do a good show but you don't have that emotional social engagement where I felt quite rightly I had to prove myself.

Artists and CPP teams also described the difference between being interviewed by potential audiences and participants rather than by 'arts professionals'. As one artist put it:

The questions that they (community panels) ask are from a different perspective and often revealing of what the community values.

### Artist

Local people are more concerned about the artists having a respect for the area and a desire to find out about the area.

### CPP Team

CPP teams reported that generic proposals that could be produced with any community are quickly dismissed by community panels:

(Our panels take place in) areas that have had a lot of regeneration so it feels like things are being done to people rather than working with them. There can be a lot of distrust in these kinds of programmes so we had to make sure we commissioned artists that worked in communities and were willing to do the legwork.

### CPP Team

CPP teams mentioned a variety of ways they supported community panels to commission and work with socially engaged artists. Recognising that a lack of understanding of what socially engaged or participatory practice is can affect a panel's commissioning decisions, two CPP teams have introduced taster workshop sessions as part of the decision-making process<sup>23</sup>:

The taster sessions can be so important for the panels to meet these artists and explore what their perception of what an artist is. We got applications from people who have socially engaged practice and the panels didn't know what they were going to do. We had to explain that they're going to come and respond to them and that we can't say exactly how, but the work they have done in the past is good. They tend to like projects where it is clear what the artist will do, so it is hard to get socially engaged practice.

### CPP Team

This approach has raised the ambition of the panel members and helped them understand what the CPP teams mean by participatory practice.

<sup>23</sup> Also see Methodology: Socially engaged practice and participatory art

### 4.3 Collaboration and contracts

Many CPP teams talked about how their desire for close collaboration was a key factor in the way they worked with artists, and occasionally this was something artists struggled to understand. Mismatches between the expectations of artists and CPP teams came up in several interviews. Differences in understanding around roles, relationships and responsibilities impacted on the quality of the artist's collaboration with the CPP team and local people:

We have only terminated one contract and that was because the artist had such a specific vision and wasn't spending any time consulting or sharing ideas. There was no dialogue and (in our experience) the work is only successful when the process involves participants.

#### CPP Team

CPP teams talked about how artists were sometimes unclear on what the relationship with CPP as commissioner should be.

There's a challenge in CPP not being traditional commissioners. It's about true collaboration all the way through the project and often artists don't think to ask for help. The artists find it hard to get their head around the idea that we want to help them at every step. When artists understand that relationship, the projects work really well.

#### CPP Team

One artist wouldn't turn up to review sessions in case we thought he was failing and it made it more difficult. We have now put the need to check in in the contracts. It was about the expertise and being willing to show that they're not getting it right.

#### CPP Director

Lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities came up in several interviews, indicating a gap between the criteria in the artist brief and the delivery of the contract.<sup>24</sup>

(What we would like to see) is depth and clarity around contracts and what each side wants, then building in legacies to think about what happens next - both for the artwork and the continuing engagement. And when drafting the commission, thinking properly about how long it should be, thinking more realistically about how long it takes to build up relationships.

#### Artist

Changes in staffing between the commissioning and delivery stages were also reported as having had a significant impact on what the artist had to do in terms of introductions and making connections, reducing the time they were able to allocate for developing and making the art work.

The CPP team due to staff changes didn't have the existing relationships and local trust which was needed to make participation easier.

#### Artist

Clarity around roles and brokering of relationships affects the quality of the hosting experience for both CPP teams and artists, which is described in Part 5.3

Examples of good practice from CPP teams include checking any differences between the criteria in the brief and the details of the contract, agreeing time-frames for each stage of the project and regular progress review.

<sup>24</sup> Artists Close and Remote have produced resources to address contracting: Playing Nicely and The Arts Partnership Guidance Notes: [www.visualartsplymouth.org/playing-nicely-partnership-working/](http://www.visualartsplymouth.org/playing-nicely-partnership-working/)

### Recommendation 3

CPP Teams ensure that roles, responsibilities and resources are clearly outlined in artists' contracts and that realistic time-frames are allocated for relationship building.

Rush by Southpaw Dance Co.  
Presented by LeftCoast, Blackpool,  
October 2018. Photo: Martin Bostock,  
Visit Blackpool



## 4.4 Time

Feedback from artists about the importance of contracts which value (and pay for) the time they spend in the CPP location visiting workplaces, pubs, cafes and other social and public spaces to talk to and get to know people has been documented in other CPP reports, but it is worth repeating. When a project is grown over time, the relationships developed can increase the space for honesty and flexibility. This can be the case even when an artist lives outside of the area if they are visiting regularly and, to give one example, talking to the CPP teams every two weeks over a three-year period.

CPP teams and artists gave several examples of time spent building relationships resulting in a further commissioned, enabling deeper connections and impacting on the stories told and a body of work particular to time and place.

Having a food based interaction (as the show was food based), felt really genuine. I really appreciated having time to think about what is meaningful R&D, what is a meaningful way of meeting people with genuine exchange rather than saying 'let's meet people and I'm going to vacuum up your stories and put them in my show', which people don't feel comfortable with. I don't feel like we did that.

**Artist**

## 4.5. Space

The lack of suitable and affordable workspaces to make and rehearse was a common challenge for over half the CPP Places participating in this research and therefore for the artists working with them. We heard from many CPP teams about how public spaces are increasingly privatised and how their use then becomes subject to restrictions.

However there were also examples of CPP Places working with local authorities and local businesses to access public spaces, retail units and underused facilities. Libraries and museums are utilised widely by CPP, where they exist. Pubs, social clubs, sports venues, factories, shopping malls and supermarkets were all cited as venues for activity, bringing both opportunities and limitations. Reclaiming under-used buildings, claiming public spaces in town centres and high streets – the desire to influence regeneration and resist gentrification – these have been spurs for commissions that connect people across sectors - the arts, local government, voluntary, health, sport and business sectors.

We had to design a show that could tour to traditional tour venues as well as a number of venues that aren't designed for performances so don't have things like lifts or have narrow corridors. We had to make a performance that could stand up to bright lights or fit into the bar of a rugby club. I didn't realise how hard it was going to be but what an amazing challenge.

#### Artist

I think most CPPs Places are in 'cold spots' for culture aren't they? Which is a rubbish term because you go to these places and of course there's loads of culture. With [CPP area] there was no infrastructure to display the culture that was there. There were no cultural buildings to access and show their projects. But there was loads going on. So we went to Tesco and did workshops in odd places. It goes both ways, you know there's no infrastructure, so you take that on board and the lack of infrastructure inspires you to think differently.

#### Artist

Three CPP Places in our sample are investing in workspaces and rented accommodation for artists who come for residencies, sometimes with live-work space. These are relatively new initiatives and their impact on commissioning will emerge in the coming years. One example is Left Coast's Art Bed & Breakfast which is being developed with a local housing association.<sup>25</sup>

## 4.6 Place

Directors, participants and artists all talked powerfully about place, people and heritage and about how an explicit aim of many CPP artist commissions has been around shifting some frozen narratives about what heritage can mean:

This region is really good at heritage and celebrating the craftsmanship that came with the industrial revolution. There are museums and galleries. The visual imagery of the area is white men and mines. When photographers come and photograph the area they often focus on that. We are trying to adjust that balance by showing off local expertise and emphasising the skilled women in the area. Those voices aren't seen and heard because the region is fixated on celebrating the past. There is little that reflects the current shape of (this region). We aren't moving on... We looked at what was valued in terms of expertise. It was all very nostalgic and male but the nostalgia came from a place of not knowing what to be proud of now.

#### CPP Team

The input we as a community had on the project was very important, we changed the original "heritage" focus to that of a forward facing project, I think this decision alone changed massively the whole shape and understanding the artist had of the original idea.

#### Community participant

It matters that the identity of the North East is expressed. We are conscious that the North East has a story that is told about it or that it tells itself. It's the story of our lost industrial heritage and that story has been told very well and in an alright way but there are so many other stories in the North East.

#### **Artist**

One artist described a commission that delivered on this kind of aspiration and left a legacy of music, new networks and alliances.

What they wanted out of the project was making sure that brass bands stayed alive. Brass bands are very competitive; it is just in their nature. Going back to the industrial revolution when they were formed and you had different work bands, they'd only be a few streets apart but there was a rivalry and it is still there. It is really hard to get rid of and I don't think it will ever go. So the bands needed a reason to work together to survive. That's what this project was.

#### **Lucy Pankhurst, Artist**



Reflection Connection at the Northumberland Miners Picnic 2016.  
A bait commission with composer Lucy Pankhurst. Photo: Richard Kenworthy

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## Conclusion

Artists identified that a distinctive feature of being commissioned by CPP was working with local people at all stages, from the commissioning to the creation and presentation of the artistic work. This is not necessarily unique in the artists' experience but several commented on the priority CPP Places give to community participation and in particular the use of community panels. This often charges the artist with a greater sense of responsibility to their CPP commissioners.

Several artists talked about the significance of this considerable body of work commissioned by CPP places, supported by Arts Council England, and asked 'What happens to the art afterwards?' They expressed strong views about how little critical attention was given to the art itself, as compared to the process of creating the art, thereby losing the potential both to impact artistic practice and to give more credibility to the field of socially engaged art.

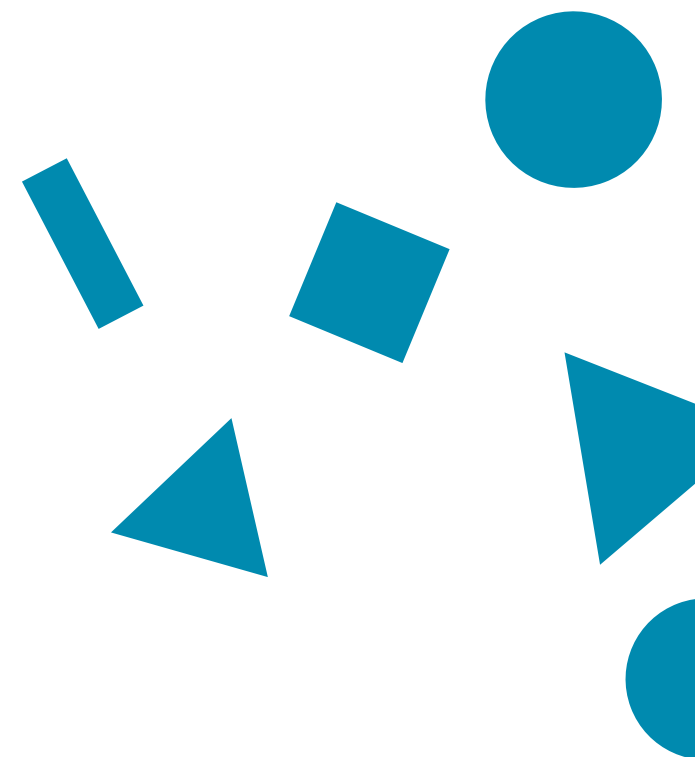
Some artists and CPP teams are aware that they need to pay more attention to clarifying the roles of 'commissioner' and 'artist', and the relationships and responsibilities of each when drawing up contracts. They talked about how this affects the quality of the hosting experience for both CPP teams and artists.

CPP teams are addressing the lack of suitable spaces for making artistic work in a range of pragmatic, imaginative and entrepreneurial ways. Artists and CPP teams are responding critically and creatively to the challenges posed by conventional narratives around heritage. They are working with communities to explore and shift heritage stories and open up new narratives that offer new perspectives, opportunities and platforms.

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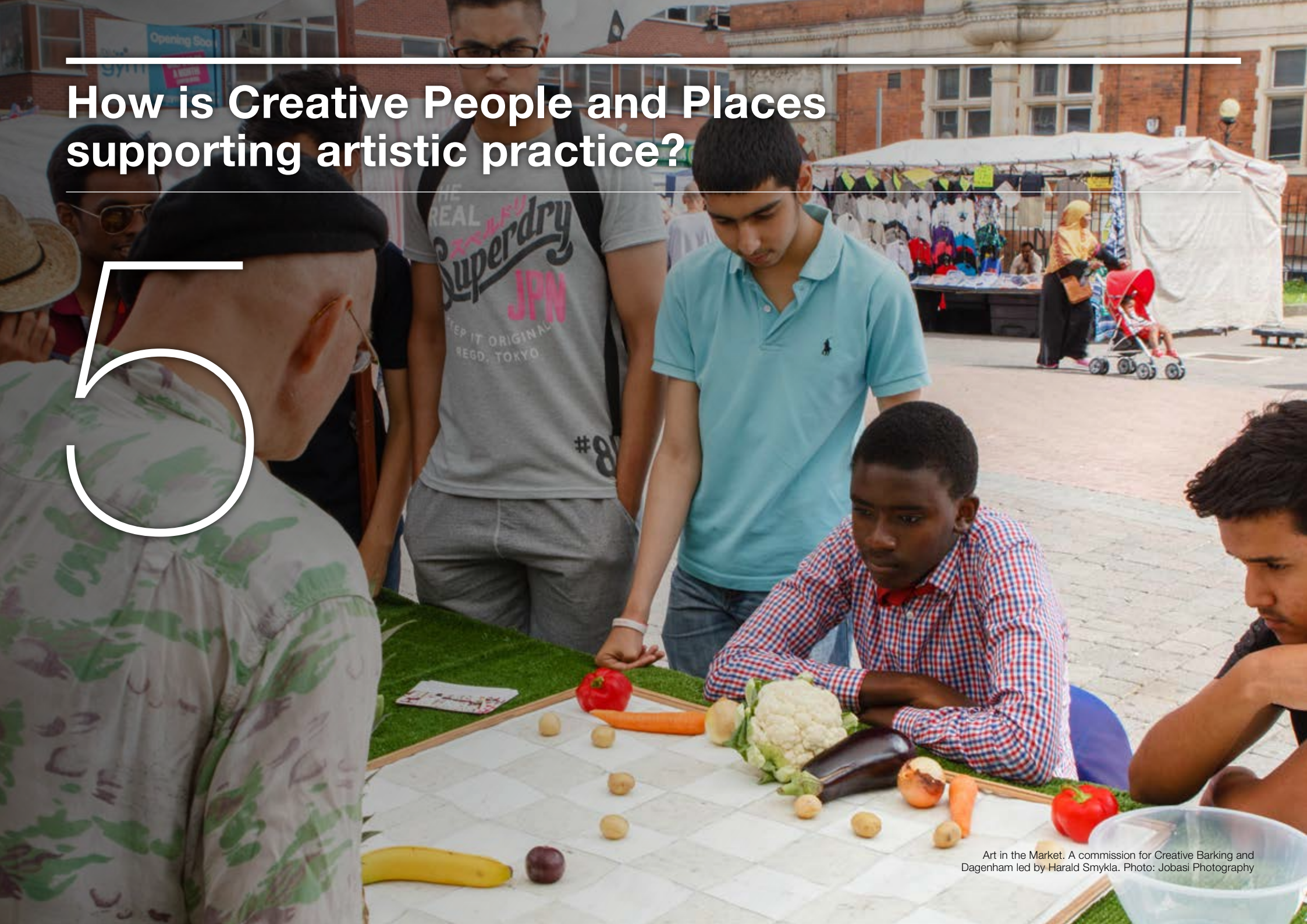
## Recommendation 4

CPP Places are more vocal about offering their guidance and expertise to local authorities to support authentic and refreshed visitor/tourism strategies that reflect and include local arts and creativity.



# How is Creative People and Places supporting artistic practice?

5



Art in the Market. A commission for Creative Barking and Dagenham led by Harald Smykla. Photo: Jobasi Photography



We asked the CPP teams and commissioned artists about any specific support they offered to artists to help them develop their practice. A range of professional development and fundraising support emerged as key findings, with the personal and social value of good hosting by CPP teams and communities also cited by most of the artists.

## 5.1 Artists' professional development

Artist professional development, and in particular the development of young and new artists – new to socially engaged practice - is a thread that ran through responses to several of the interview questions. 14 out of the 15 CPPs surveyed were providing some form of professional development for artists so is clearly seen by CPP Places as an integral part of their programmes.<sup>26</sup>

The artist development offer ranges from master-classes in marketing, fundraising and evaluation to skills training in production, health and safety and licensing legislation to mentoring, work-shadowing, networking events, artist peer learning and critical reflection.

CPP Places are also delivering a number of specific support programmes for emerging artists and much informal support around signposting and brokering partnerships between venues, artists, organisations and community groups to enable artists to gain new opportunities.

Artists come to the CPP to learn how to work with non-arts organisations. We often scaffold around artists. If we have community work we ask community groups to come in and support or scaffold around the artists.

**CPP Director**

The pairing of new artists with more experienced artists is happening organically in some CPPs and is observed being led by artists themselves:

Artists have talked about doing it of their own accord. As the concept of socially engaged work grows more people want to find ways into it. The more experienced people are keen to share their experiences and encourage the sector to grow.

**CPP director**

The support of CPP teams has given some artists a strong framework to stretch and expand their approaches:

We have been able to encourage artists to design projects that respond to our objectives, allowing them to develop their practice to include more community engagement, more accessible experiences, and more open door activity but that doesn't lose sight of the skills needed to be developed to create exquisite, quality art works.

**CPP Team**

Another artist described the value of being pushed out of their comfort zone; it was 'at the time quite terrifying but I am definitely better for it'. The artist benefited from the supportive and structured environment provided by the CPP.

I worked in a manner I would have never done or had the opportunity to do before. It (CPP) gives people the confidence and permission to do something they may have not otherwise had the inclination, drive or confidence to do.

**Artist**

<sup>26</sup> Two CPP Teams said that their Relationship Managers had told them that Arts Council England doesn't see artist development as a CPP role.

Artists also spoke of their appreciation for being given the opportunity for professional reflection and being supported by high quality methodologies around participation and evaluation, something that has been identified already as distinctive about CPP.<sup>27</sup>

At the Peer Learning event in Blackpool in September 2018, CPP teams discussed the potential benefits of a national strategic approach to the professional development of socially engaged artistic practice and how CPP Places could contribute to this. They suggested that a strategic approach could:

- Raise awareness and the status of socially engaged artistic practice
- Enhance reciprocal learning between CPP Places and National Portfolio Organisations to influence and change how socially engaged and participatory is commissioned and delivered
- Reduce the need for CPP by mainstreaming the practice
- Offer reciprocal benefits and opportunities to Higher Education and Further Education institutions – across a range of arts and humanities disciplines, including health and economic development
- Support mid-career artists to diversify, e.g. dancers
- Connect CPP Places with international practice development

Working in partnership with higher and further education institutions could bring expertise and resources to complement what CPP Places can offer. Other partners suggested were Arts Council England, the Clore Leadership Programme, and the Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance. Health and social work sector agencies could also offer a mutually beneficial exchange of skills, expertise and insights. Finding a new way to deliver and sustain artist development is an imperative for several CPP Places facing less funding during Phases 2 and 3.

Some CPP teams sounded a note of caution when discussing training involving social and health services: CPP's role is not to replace services that have been cut; is there a risk that support via these types of partnerships might be conditional on making issue-based work? Teams at the Blackpool workshop were unanimous that any national strategy could not be led by Creative People and Places. The Faculty Initiative<sup>28</sup> has already piloted a regional strategic approach to artist development, involving four CPP Places based in the north west of England.

*The model has emerged from a shared interrogation of the kind of learning that might best support the increasing number of artists, and others, wanting to engage in collaborative and social arts practice. The decision to set up this model outside the confines of academia was inevitably influenced by a shared concern for the growing lack of diversity and access within higher education, as fees and the imperative to earn money become the driving force of many institutions.*

#### **Talent development for socially engaged practice<sup>29</sup>**

In Situ and Heart of Glass are leading on the development of a second iteration of The Faculty, and are currently scoping partners and sponsors to leverage additional resource.<sup>30</sup> This work will support Recommendation 5.

#### **Recommendation 5:**

**Arts Council England works with CPP to bring together potential partners from academia, health and arts sectors to explore a national strategy for developing artists' socially engaged practice.**

<sup>27</sup> Evaluation in Participatory Arts Programmes <http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/evaluation-participatory-arts-programmes>

<sup>28</sup> The Faculty was born out of recognition of the limited professional development opportunities available to artists and creative practitioners within the identified geographic areas but also within the context of social arts practice more broadly.

<sup>29</sup> [www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/sites/default/files/EcorysCaseStudyCPP\\_SlowSuperSlow.pdf](http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/sites/default/files/EcorysCaseStudyCPP_SlowSuperSlow.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> In Situ and Heart of Glass hope to share an update on The Faculty early 2019. Heart of Glass is a CPP Place and became an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation in April 2018 and is committed to supporting this recommendation.

## 5.2 Fundraising and income generation

CPP Places are encouraging artists to apply for funding and to be more ambitious in terms of scale. A few examples were given of how CPP Places have supported artists to raise funds for further work in their CPP areas and beyond. One artist commissioned to set up a festival is now developing it as a business. For another theatre company, the CPP commission changed their approach to a greater emphasis on their collaborative creative process versus final artistic outcome. This change was attributed to a subsequent successful bid for NPO funding.

*Our creative process is quite engaged and attracts people who normally wouldn't come. We tour in social clubs and pubs alongside theatres...I think making larger scale work with CPPs has given me*

*the confidence to say actually, that's a better shape. It's given me confidence that our creative approach is something that should grow organically rather than shift to fit in with the pattern with what theatre tends to look like.*

### Artist

Another artist talked about how he was initially commissioned by CPP for a £10K project, which increased his confidence and experience of co-creation to the extent that he was then able to successfully fundraise for a £65K commission in the same CPP area. This increased his sense of connection to the place and deepened his commitment to local residents.

Being awarded money for small commissions has boosted local artists' confidence and developed their professional insight into budgeting and financial management.

*Well, a performance created by Geraldine Pilgrim at the ex-Sanofi factory in Dagenham. A commission for Creative Barking and Dagenham. Photo: Ant Smith*





Sculpture unveiling, as part of Arts Council England funded Corby Totems led by artist Jason Wisler-Mills. Photo courtesy of the artist.

People think you can do a huge amount with £5k and you can't. It's interesting to test people on what they think they can do and helping them realise how far it can go. It helps people understand scale and budgets.

#### CPP Team

Over half of the CPP teams interviewed expressed concern that current or expected budget cuts would compromise their ability to be ambitious in scale and impact. This raises the question about whether planned reduced funding from the Arts Council in further phases of CPP will, of necessity, result in a focus on smaller scale artistic work? Smaller scale work has an important place but CPP Places are currently characterised by the diversity of scale on offer. This has enabled multi-pronged approaches to audience reach and inclusion, light touch impact and depth of engagement. CPP teams fear that this range will disappear as budgets are reduced year on year.

In several CPP Places, the great expectations raised by the better-resourced Phase 1 of the programmes are proving difficult to manage going forward.

The challenges are enormous. My budget for phase 2 will be reduced by two thirds. With less money, you can still do some great creative engagement. It doesn't have to be expensive, even if you are working with the best artists. But I think the artist development will go. I am really worried. I am bidding for funds to try and supplement what we have lost. I feel like it is so timely what is going on, [(our place)] is starting to thrive and then suddenly, we are losing all that money.

#### CPP Team

Other CPP Teams said that they would not let smaller budgets in Phase 2 reduce their ability to commission new work – because they felt that new commissions were very important to communities in terms of reflecting their place - but that it would affect the scale of those commissions.

With less money for commissioning in Phase 2 and 3, CPP Places are looking at how they can reduce costs and still have a large-scale commission, e.g. through co-commissioning in partnership with other organisations, which many CPPs are already doing. However the availability of partners able to financially co-commission larger scale work varies widely from place to place.

Some CPP Places are having more in depth conversations in Phase 2 about project costs and what they value:

We are having kickback from the community at the moment about cost. We are having conversations about whether they want a larger commission again or a smaller one with more local skills training. There is a perception of money leaving the area.

**CPP Team**

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### Recommendation 6

Arts Council England reviews future CPP budgets and provides advice to CPPs to ensure that the social and artistic benefits of commissioning art of larger scale and ambition can be developed and sustained beyond the first three year cycle of funding.

## 5.3 Hosting

Several artists in our sample talked extensively about their experience of being hosted by the CPP teams and communities. On their list of what works well and what is valued are research and development periods, personal introductions, the brokering of relationships, signposting to individuals and locations, 'finding hubs of energy', helping the artist to be visible within the community, framing why they are there, sharing meals, providing spaces to make and rehearse and in some cases, accommodation while they are in residence.

There is something more about that hosting; it has been commented on a few times, both with commissions and touring work, about the presence of our extended community networks. Everyone comes here and they see they are engaging with people... that they can come in and hit the ground running and that those places might not be your regular groups.

**CPP Team**

A couple of the artists interviewed have had less satisfactory experiences of being hosted by CPP teams once their residency began and having to initiate all the community contacts as no brokering process was in place. This was attributed to staff changes in one place and an absence of practical support and understanding of what was needed in another place.

Engagement was really hard, harder than any other project done anywhere, people were interested and happy to talk and share stories but getting them to actually take part was very hard. The CPP team, due to staff changes, didn't have the existing relationships and local trust which was needed to make this easier.

**Artist**

Once the commission had been won, there was less support than expected, lines of communication were unclear, roles, responsibilities, what they'd do, what the artist would do, each side had assumptions.

**Artist**

If you don't have a brokering of relationships it doesn't matter how interesting the project is.

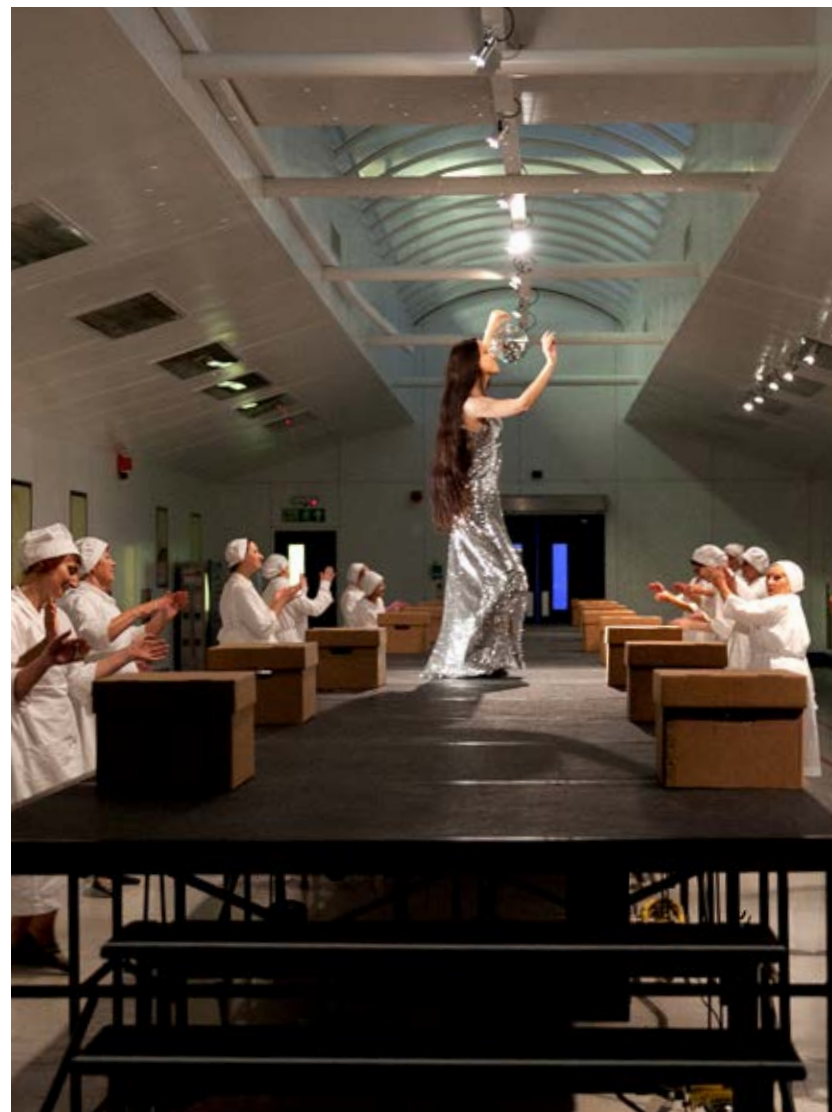
**Artist**

During the delivery of their commissions, one CPP team believes a more hands-off presence is productive and makes this clear in advance:

We are hands on in the early stages but then it moves to being a relationship between the artists and the participants. At that point we aren't hands on. We wouldn't be as involved at that point, we just check on the relationships and where they're going but we don't get involved. It changes the dynamic. The community can often be much more honest with the artist than with us. We are still a body with money and they don't want to upset us.

**CPP Team**

Well, a performance created by Geraldine Pilgrim at the ex-Sanofi factory in Dagenham. A commission for Creative Barking and Dagenham.  
Photo: Sheila Burnett



## Conclusion

Professional development for artists is valued by both CPP teams and the artists themselves. CPP teams are finding that developing artists is integral to their mission to attract new audiences and engage more people in creative activity. Talent development for local artists and local people is seen as important for sustainability, diversity and legacy reasons. In addition, professional development for artists at all levels of experience, some of whom are new to participatory practice, is seen as important to nurture, grow and diversify the artists working in this particular sector.

A national strategy for developing socially engaged artistic practice involving partnerships with arts, academia and health sectors could support this work effectively

Some artists have experienced a financial step change as a result of working with a CPP Place. However shrinking budgets are compromising several CPP Places' ambitions for realising large scale projects.

The way in which the CPP team hosts the artists has a significant impact on their sense of enjoyment and well-being during their residency.



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# What is the impact of CPP on artistic practice?

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Shapes of Water, Sounds of Hope in the disused Brierfield Mill.  
A collaboration between Suzanne Lacy and arts collective In Situ,  
commissioned by Super Slow Way. Photo: Chris Payne



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CPP teams and artists observed and reflected on a range of impacts in their practice - some small shifts and some more profound changes - as a result of the CPP commissions. Feedback on these questions has been gathered under the headings below.

## 6.1 Power dynamics

Power is really important. Everybody should know they have it and then everybody needs to be treated fairly. That's a balance I'm keen to see in all our projects.

### CPP Team

Shifting the expectations, attitudes and behaviours of artists, CPP teams and local participants came up several times in interviews and in the community survey data and comments. In the community participant survey, 55% (10/18) indicated that the artist had changed their ideas 'a very great deal' about what might be possible to create in their CPP area, whilst 39% (7/18) indicated that they and other local people 'influenced the artist's thinking about what might be possible in our area'. If this small sample highlights a trend, then there's a positive convergence in direction here.

Some initial ideas that (the artist) and the team had just wouldn't work in the village. We knew it was a bit too way-out for residents and also conflicted with businesses.

### Local participant

The input we as a community had on the project was very important, we changed the original "heritage" focus to that of a forward facing project, I think this decision alone changed massively the whole shape and understanding the artist had of the original idea.

### Local participant

Some artists have changed attitudes and values. Working with local people changes lots of things...It's about the resilience of the artist to change expectations. The artists we have had have been resilient and have adapted the idea or their expectations and we share the responsibility for that.

### CPP Team

As CPP projects develop and mature with active volunteer connectors and community panels, local people want greater focus on their ambitions for where they live and for this to shape the work commissioned. As one CPP Place describes it, there is a noticeable shift in the power dynamic:

That shift is not about the artist coming in and being a visible leader but much more of a dialogue between local people and artists... How we might work in an interesting interdisciplinary way and working with how an audience engages with a piece as well as really involving local people in the creation and skills training.

### CPP Team

## 6.2 Valuing, influencing and developing socially engaged practice

My wish for this research is that the artists are asked why the work is rewarding. Hopefully it will give it the value and worth and will attract other artists to it. I think it is really cool to collaborate and co-create. It is also less lonely for artists and it shares responsibility of the end work. So many artists don't realise they would enjoy this work if they got into it.

### CPP Director

Placing a high value on socially engaged practice, giving confidence to artists who co-create with communities, validating and supporting the artists development - these are all perceived by most of these CPP Places as the positive impact of their approach to commissioning artists to make new socially engaged, participatory work.

It has led to honest work, instead of creating work that people think the art world want to see. Artists had been making work they thought was expected. We have been really encouraging artists to create honest work.

### CPP Director

For one artist, the success of her commission has provoked a re-evaluation of how she financially values her socially engaged practice, to take into account her engagement expertise, the process, time-frame, production costs and audience reach.

I am going to place a greater value on my ideas. Somebody said to me 'that's a bit expensive.' I said it's not expensive that's what it's worth. If you can't see the worth of something then it's not for you. I've started to have more confidence in saying that now. Now I think 'this is a good idea, this is the people it will engage'. If you want to put your money where your mouth is for the case of creative diversity and all of those marking indicators.

### Artist



Part of Bring Your Own Future, a virtual reality 360° watercolour journey through Slough town centre. A Home Slough commission with Close and Remote. Photo: Simon Poulter

### 6.3 Influence on artists' practice

Artists spoke eloquently to us about what they'd gained through the process of being commissioned by CPP and how this had influenced their practice.

This project allowed me to explore a new range of work, proposing a cross-over from community-based aesthetics to museum-based aesthetics with a curator who understood and was passionately supportive to both types of art presentation. We embarked upon a learning process together, with all partners committed to capacity-building for the organisations and the region. I am deeply satisfied with this work, and consider it one of the best things I have been able to accomplish, along with the hard work of many other collaborators ..... The growth opportunity, both theoretically and practically, was tremendous. I feel like the project offered me a chance to explore a territory that led me in a new direction in my work, and for that I am tremendously grateful...It had almost everything to do with the amount of resources and with the professionalism of the commissioning group and its leader Laurie Peake. Basically what I did with this piece of work and one other piece I have been working on was to look at how a work could move from a real community, a real authentic engagement - into a museum. The language of community is very different to the language of museums. How could you make that shift and bring along the people in the community while you create a different set of aesthetics and appeal to different audiences? ...Frankly the two museums I have shown it in are not doing the level of technical production and aesthetic care and community engagement as we had in that tiny town of Brierfield.

**Suzanne Lacy, Artist**

One artist talked about changing his practice completely, going from being a painter to making large sculptures for the public realm. He attributed this to the influence of a CPP commission to work with a group of adults with learning disabilities.



Everything was in alignment. My work as an artist was at a point where things needed to change and expand and evolve and they were the meteorite hitting the earth that began that evolution. I'm not a sculptor. I trained as a painter and I consider myself as part of that tradition. Working in Corby has made me into a sculptor as I started thinking about how I could take those stories and make them accessible in a public arena i.e. town centres.

**Jason Wilsher-Mills, Artist**

Sculpture unveiling, as part of Arts Council England funded Corby Totems led by artist Jason Wilsher-Mills. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Everything I have done has taken my ideas forward. If I had not done the commission residency in (CPP area) I don't think I would be the artist I am today. It's really transformed me and I think that's why I kind of feel I owe them quite a lot. They enabled me as much as I have done things for them.

#### Artist

CPP teams also spoke about how artists had made major changes in their lives as a result of their work with CPP. Three artists subsequently moved to one CPP area after their successful commissions. One expanded their practice to think about wider society and not just the environment, and moved from the south west back to the north west. Two others from London, who delivered a residency in the north west, moved into the area after establishing deep relationships with community organisations.

They share an office with a refuge for BME women fleeing domestic violence and they crowd funded land to create a physic garden by the canal. They've been gifted a bowling green and we are trying to turn that into a safe performance space for women. They say it wouldn't have happened in London or Kent.

#### CPP Team

Artists also spoke about how their work with CPP Places had increased their confidence and understanding of their own practice:

I think what shifted after that for me was ... it gave me a huge sense of confidence that I could deliver something that ambitious. It was ambitious in the time that I had. Also it made me realise the huge lack of skilled people like me that are needed to do this kind of work. If I had three or four people like me, that I could train and say go away and sort this out, it would have made my life so much easier.

#### Artist

Me really finding out who I am during the project.... I think it's helped me develop my superhero persona, so I now call myself the Chubby Mermaid. I'm plus-sized or fun-sized depending on how you view it. I found that superhero through that process and I'm using it more and more within my artwork. I think that's also helped other people in their ideas around body acceptance and mental health and that kind of thing.

#### Keely Mills, Artist



Poetry by Keely Mills installed on the walls of the Lido. A Peterborough Presents commission. Artwork by Paper Rhino. Photo: Ryan Guinn

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## Conclusion

Artists and CPP teams reported on a clear shift in the power dynamic between themselves and local participants, to a more equal footing, which they found motivating and refreshing in terms of their social and ethical values. CPP teams and artists sense that their commissions are influencing the wider status and value of social engaged artistic practice. CPP teams and artists commented on the level of investment in socially engaged practice that has been made by Arts Council England and the wish to see the practice 'mainstreamed' rather than part of what are perceived by them as 'peripheral' funding streams.

Several artists described direct impacts on their artistic practice, e.g. experimenting with new art forms, working on a larger scale, relocation and artistic growth. Placing a high value on socially engaged practice, giving confidence to artists who co-create with communities, validating and supporting the artists development - these are all perceived by most of these CPP Places as the positive impact of their approach to commissioning artists to make new socially engaged, participatory work.

This research has highlighted the importance of asking artists about the influence on their practice through working with CPPs and what they think of the work they make.

An ideal next step to this research would be to interview a larger sample of artists across the wide range of art forms and scales of work commissioned, including a control group who have been commissioned by other agencies - for example by organisations that are part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio (NPOs).

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## Recommendation 7:

The CPP Network conducts further research on the impact of Creative People and Places on artist practice. This should be with a representative sample of artists commissioned by CPP Places plus a control group who have been commissioned by NPOs to deliver socially engaged, participatory practice.

## 6.6 What about the art?

We don't ask 'What art do you want to see?' The brief comes from how they want to see their neighbourhood transformed.

### CPP Team

That knot in someone's relationship to a place is at the core of what it is about.

### Artist

A common theme running through interviews with CPP teams was about not starting with the art but starting with the place. Starting with the art was understood as being off-putting for CPP target audiences who have little experience of the arts and face multiple barriers to participation but starting with the place has been proven to be an accessible and meaningful way in.

However what has also emerged from this research – mainly from artists rather than CPP teams - are ideas and questions about the balance between the focus on how the art created by these 530 artists in these particular places has impacted on participants and the focus on the art itself. Several artists talked about the significance of this considerable body of work commissioned by CPP Places, supported by Arts Council England, and asked 'What happens to the art afterwards?'<sup>31</sup> They expressed strong views about how little critical attention was given to the art itself, as compared to the process of creating the art, thereby losing the potential both to impact artistic practice and to give more credibility to the field of socially engaged art.

Often the art is shown just once or a few times in the CPP area where it was created. Since 2013, this substantial body of work is represented over multiple art forms, inter-and multi-disciplinary work, ephemeral and site-specific work, physical and online artworks.

The questions raised by artists were:

- Should there be a central archive of all this work?
- Should there be a major curated retrospective featuring this art, created within this short and particularly intense time-frame across England, with communities experiencing the most acute social, political and cultural impacts of economic austerity?

If there isn't a place where you can get a sense of the actual artwork that's come out of it its hard to see what it is...Let's imagine there's a Hayward Gallery<sup>32</sup> show of CPP projects. It's about shifting the understanding that there are artists and participants (co-creating) - some of that artwork would be the participants'... It would allow for CPP artwork to go into the national collection as a part of social history and be archived. Our projects are archival and the artwork has a value beyond the end of the project.

### Artist

CPP is social history and artists making things in communities, they are making social history. The outcome of that is you are making records and documents of that process. The kind of thing that comes up, particularly about Arts Council programmes, is that there is no collective memory. It's usually to do with staff moving on and the Council changing. I had a conversation with a young curator last week about the mid to late 1970s. There was a movement then of artists working with technology and engagement. I was saying that work was really important in terms of art history and they said it sounded amazing and tell me more about it! Actually the CPP projects will be the same, this huge body of work that people will look back on in 20 years and think, blimey that's what that (CPP) area looked like. There is a point right now where you can help the archival process by pulling that all together.

### Artist

<sup>31</sup> Plus those artists commissions for the other seven CPPs

<sup>32</sup> Since 1986, the Arts Council Collection has been managed by the Southbank Centre, on behalf of Arts Council England. The National Partners Programme was launched in 2016 to mark the 70th anniversary of the Arts Council Collection by creating a network of regional galleries and museums to present and curate exhibitions drawn from the Arts Council Collection. The first four National Partner museums and galleries are: Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne; the Birmingham Museums Trust; the Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool; and the Collection's existing partner, Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

CPP teams in at the Peer Learning event in Blackpool discussed the tensions between the relationship between socially engaged arts/ participatory arts practice and 'the mainstream' and the implications this can have for status and value when it comes to funding. This was also echoed in conversations with artists:

How can we move thinking away from 'this is community art and this is gallery based art'... it's a common problem, socially engaged art is more trendy at the moment because it's got a new name. There are socially engaged exhibitions so why aren't CPP showing it off?

**Artist**

For Suzanne Lacy, the intention for her project, from the outset, was to make a quality installation that would operate in museums in a way that completely engages and follows on from the work done in the community.

There's different forms and languages understood in different settings. What happens in community based art often is that as it moves into different venues, on television or in news media, for instance, or in this case into a museum, it doesn't operate with the same power and authenticity that it did in the community. Museum displays of social practice - make it up as you go along displays - don't always reveal the authority and autonomy of the community. This is the first project that I feel really solidly operates in both spheres. Brierfield<sup>33</sup> set the stage for that, I'm working on another piece now...and I'm taking the same approach.

**Suzanne Lacy, Artist**



Sufi chanters, Shape Note singers and local residents come together to share in music and song in the disused Brierfield Mill for Shapes of Water, Sounds of Hope. A collaboration between Suzanne Lacy and arts collective In Situ commissioned by Super Slow Way. Photo: Graham Kay

**33** Shapes of Water, Sounds of Hope, with Super Slow Way, Brierfield [superslowway.org.uk/projects/shapes-of-water-sounds-of-hope/](https://superslowway.org.uk/projects/shapes-of-water-sounds-of-hope/)



Rush by Southpaw Dance Co.  
Presented by LeftCoast,  
Blackpool, October 2018.  
Photo courtesy of Paul Berry

The CPP teams raised the question of how the work can be curated and shown effectively and authentically. It is, for example, about time-based and interactive processes as well as ephemeral and tangible outcomes. Is there a different way of curating that kind of work? They also asked:

- Who would value and benefit from giving CPP commissions this kind of critical attention and status? Participants, audiences, artists, funders, politicians, stakeholders, the general public?
- One CPP team asked ‘Where’s the Gogglebox version of the Tate?’ Could some work have a life on TV channels or be developed into show formats? If this were to happen, who would ‘own’ the work?

The co-curators of the Suzanne Lacy retrospective at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, due to open in Spring 2019 offer useful insights and learning in their account of the challenges presented to curators by holding a retrospective of the work of a social artist: *Where Are We and What Time Is It? On Beginning to Curate Suzanne Lacy* by Dominic Willson.<sup>34</sup>

*“The project poses some rare challenges to museum protocols. We need to present Lacy’s collaborative, ephemeral, and context-specific practice (nearly five decades of it) responsibly and in full, in an environment for which it was not intended and which was not designed to support it. Although the exhibition has the standard goals of a solo retrospective to collate and historicize the artist’s works, provide an optimal experience of them, assess their abiding value, and make them public in new ways achieving them will require that we apply some non-standard methods. While this type of retrospective is a familiar format, Lacy’s art requires that some of its basic assumptions be rethought.”*

## Conclusion

The questions raised about the art made with CPP Places, what happens to it after its initial sharing, archiving and critical attention are also connected to questions raised about where socially engaged practice sits in relation to the ‘mainstream’. This issue is related to both artists training and professional development and to the status of the work and its funding.

If the Arts Council is making such a significant investment in the art commissioned by Creative People and Places how can they ensure that this area of artistic practice and the work created with communities continues to flourish through education, advocacy, critical review and stable funding?

Note: Since this research was completed, we have been made aware that Heart of Glass, a CPP Place and an NPO, is working on the first Triennial for Social and Collaborative Arts Practice, to take place in 2021. This will include the development of an archive of social and collaborative arts practice, and presentation of work created across

<sup>34</sup> *Where Are We and What Time Is It? On Beginning to Curate Suzanne Lacy*: <http://curatorsintl.org/posts/where-are-we>



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CPP Network. This initiative is in a research and development phase currently with national and international partners and could be a way of developing the Recommendations 8 and 9 below.

I don't think there is anything new under the sun. I think what's different is the depth and longevity of it. (The artist) has been doing this kind of thing for decades but it hasn't happened in this area before. The longevity of the relationship here meant it could go deeper and further and we are here to develop that legacy.

**CPP Team**

There is a sense of standing on the shoulders of giants. Community arts have a history tracing back to the 1970s but it now has funding. There is a genuine acknowledgment of co-creation and knowing that you can take that risk. It was really hard to get that funding seven/eight years ago.

**CPP Team**

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**Recommendation 8**

CPP Network works with Arts Council England to identify partners e.g. an academic institution, existing archive projects, Heritage Lottery Fund, who could help them take forward archiving the art commissioned by Creative People and Places projects 2013-2023

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**Recommendation 9**

CPP Network works with Arts Council England and a leading gallery/museum to curate and present a retrospective of Creative People and Places artist commissions 2013-2018

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**Recommendation 10**

CPP Network put forward the suggestion to Arts Council that CPP artworks be purchased for the Arts Council England collection

## 6.7 From local to international touring and platforms

Six out of 15 Places (40% of CPPs surveyed) have toured their new commissions nationally and two Places internationally. This is impressive and suggests a demand for the kind of work Creative People and Places is creating.

Five exciting examples were given in interviews with CPP teams and artists of commissions shaped by local demographics and heritage that subsequently reached wider national and international audiences in USA, Europe, Indonesia and India. These were facilitated either by the artist's or CPP team's contacts. One photographic installation for a Midlands town centre went on to be exhibited at UK regional festival and then was toured internationally. It featured in the Singapore photography festival and the artist's work was published in the New York Times.

We are piloting taking a project to Indonesia. We have had some British Council funding and we have been approached to replicate the work in other countries but we have to look at our capacity. It can be distracting from the local work. We brought in someone to take over that tour in India.

**CPP Team**

(The local artists we commissioned) are really excited, connecting with people they never could before. They're having conversations they never thought they could. Their links keep extending. With the media we got into Vogue India and made national headlines. People were really proud of that work and how their stories had been seen internationally. It wasn't about deprivation and murder, it was a different story.

**CPP Team**

Ironically, it has got (international) galleries excited [...] I think it's beautiful that their (communities in CPP area) stories are going to be heard by people all over the world and their experiences are going to be enriched by those stories.

### Artist

The use of digital platforms by CPP Places has also served to expand the national and global reach of artists' work. For example, one CPP has used their resources to invest in technology, partnerships and different platforms to bring new opportunities and profile to brass bands. There is a large local brass band competition there, involving 40 bands, but it was previously hardly known about beyond the area.

<sup>35</sup> [www.4barsrest.com](http://www.4barsrest.com)

<sup>36</sup> The Space [www.thespace.org](http://www.thespace.org)

<sup>37</sup> [www.nesta.org.uk/report/digital-rd-fund-for-the-arts-participants-two-years-on/](http://www.nesta.org.uk/report/digital-rd-fund-for-the-arts-participants-two-years-on/)



Putting the Band Back Together performing to a live audience at the Summer Streets Festival in Sunderland. A Cultural Spring commission with Unfolding Theatre. Photo: Robin Fearon

I thought it would be interesting to put it online and see if there was an audience. What we tried to do was develop a local fringe festival so we put up screens in pubs and care homes to tie it in local. We live-streamed that competition and rather than just filming it we worked with 4barsrest<sup>35</sup> to set up a panel with guests to discuss the competition during the 10 minute turnarounds in the competition. We concentrated on making the audio-visual quality as high as possible. We expected a few hundred viewers but we had 6000 viewers from over 33 countries. That came from 4barsrest who promoted that on their website. As a result of that two of the bands have gone to play in Europe. Last year at the festival we had a Norwegian band that came to play as a result of the live stream.

### CPP Team

Another approach to sharing and raising the profile and exposure of the art created was given by a CPP Director who talked about how when they commissioned new art they always thought through with each artist how they could use three platforms to share their work – live, print and online. This reflects the director's journalistic background and has ensured the work can have a wider reach, within and beyond the local place.

The Space<sup>36</sup> commissions and supports work that delivers greater access to the arts using digital platforms and content. It is interested in projects that capture great live performances or exhibitions, extend the online reach of existing arts content and work, or use technologies as an integrated way of developing great arts experiences. Nesta is also investing in research for digital development by arts organisations.<sup>37</sup>

This type of ambition requires allies, partners and funding. How can Creative People and Places Network work with others to build national and international relationships that could yield a range of social and artistic benefits?

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*Organisations operate at the local or hyperlocal level or have a national or even international remit. Notably, those most rooted in a particular area often have strong international connections. However, there did not appear to be strong networks of similar organisations within the UK.*

**Rethinking Relationships: Inquiry in to the Civic Role of Arts Organisations<sup>38</sup>**

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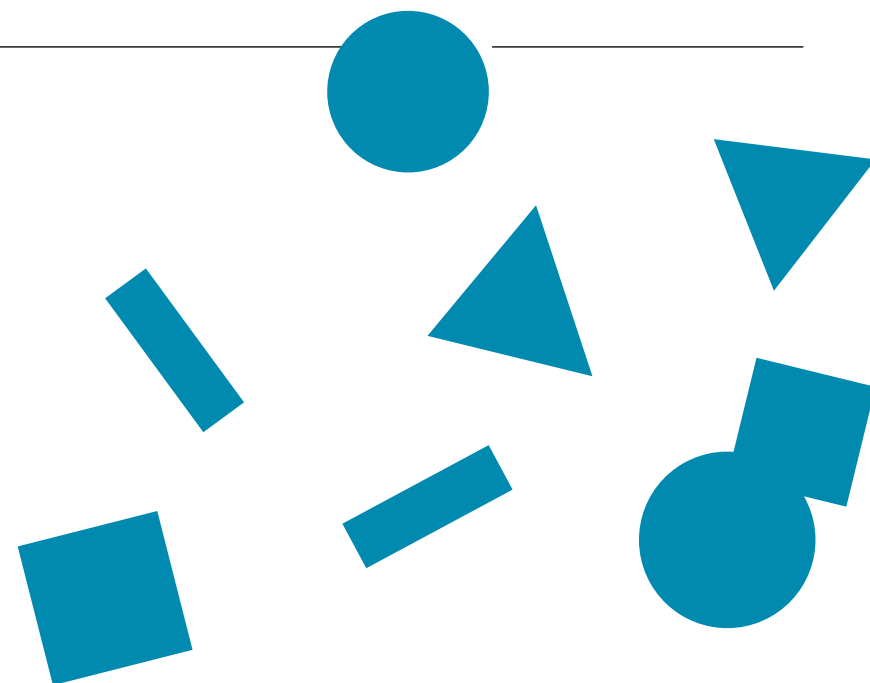
**Recommendation 11**

Further research is conducted by CPP Network, with partners, into the characteristics of CPP commissions that have toured nationally and internationally. What is it that made them suitable for taking up by other locations and how could this influence future CPP commissions?

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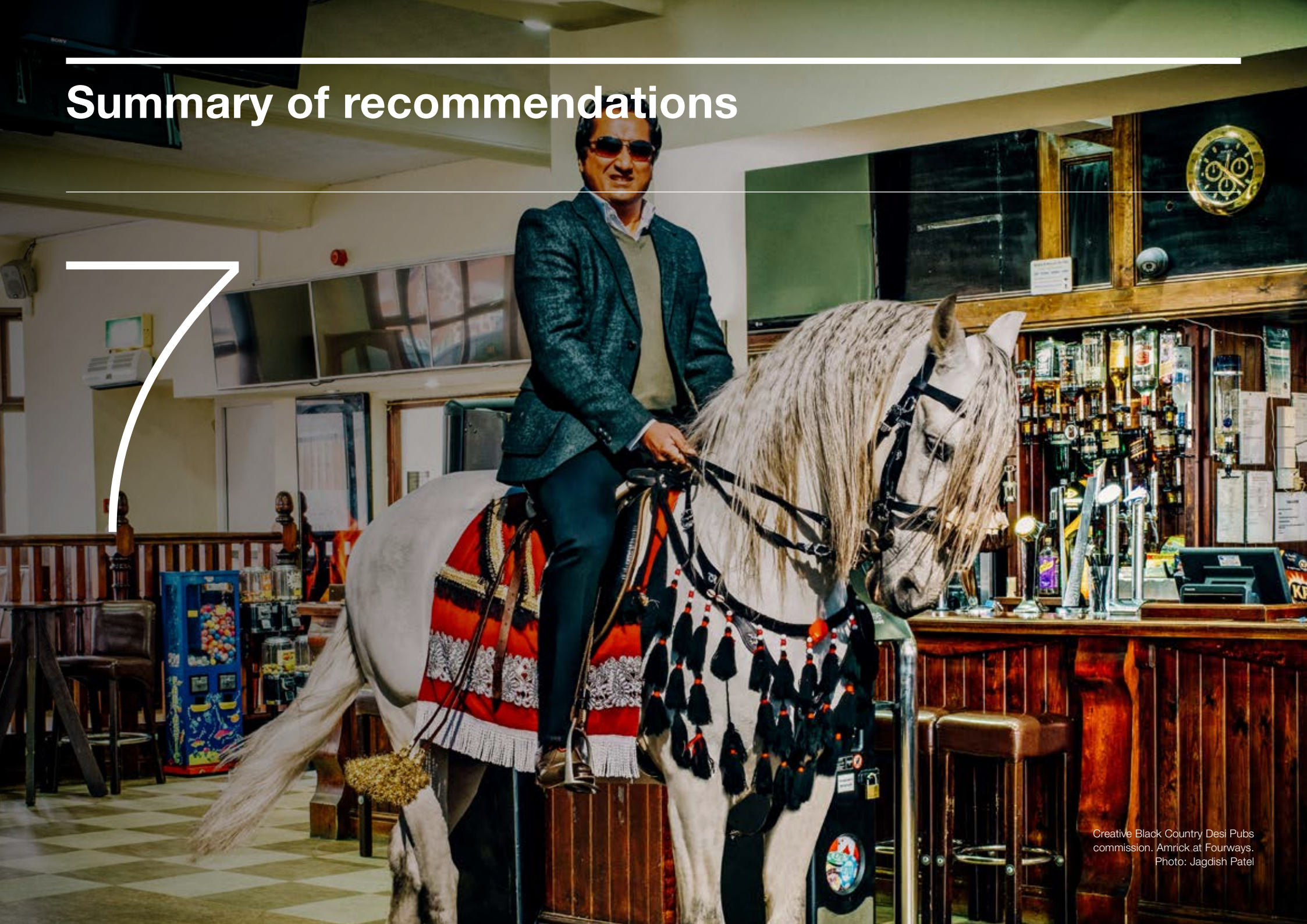
**Recommendation 12**

CPP Network explores how a strategic relationship between CPP Places and digital partners such as The Space and NESTA can develop and expand opportunities to create and share content nationally and globally.



<sup>38</sup> Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation 2017 <https://gulbenkian.pt/uk-branch/publication/rethinking-relationships/>

# Summary of recommendations



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**Recommendation 1**

CPP Places increase the number of commissions from Black, Asian, Deaf and disabled artists and ensure their visibility as artist leaders across CPP Places.

CPP Places should capture monitoring data for artists, as they do for participants, employees etc.

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**Recommendation 2**

CPP works with Arts Council England to identify resources to deliver diverse artist workforce development as part of its wider strategy to develop new audiences.

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**Recommendation 3**

CPP Teams ensure that roles, responsibilities and resources are clearly outlined in artists' contracts and that realistic time-frames are allocated for relationship building.

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**Recommendation 4**

CPP Places are more vocal about offering their guidance and expertise to local authorities to support authentic and refreshed visitor/tourism strategies that reflect and include local arts and creativity.

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**Recommendation 5**

CPP works with Arts Council England to bring together potential partners from academia, health and arts sectors to explore a national strategy for developing artists' socially engaged practice.

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**Recommendation 6**

Arts Council England reviews future CPP budgets and provides advice to CPP Places to ensure that the social and artistic benefits of commissioning art of larger scale and ambition can be developed and sustained beyond the first three year cycle of funding.

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**Recommendation 7**

CPP Network conducts further research on the impact of Creative People and Places on artist practice. This should be with a representative sample of artists commissioned by CPP Places plus a control group who have been commissioned by NPOs to deliver socially engaged, participatory practice.

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**Recommendation 8**

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**Recommendation 12**

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# Appendices

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Everything There Ever Was – a large-scale participatory performance at Crimdon Dene. An East Durham Creates commission. Photo: Richard Kenworthy

The data captured here has been collated through original research carried out for this report. Fourteen out of twenty-one CPP teams across England completed surveys and fifteen CPP teams took part in interviews. The research focused on new artistic commissions over a five-year period from 2013 – 2018.

## 1. Number of artists commissioned

The sample of 14 CPP Places responding to our survey have between them commissioned 530 artists to make new work in the time period 2013 to 2017. These figures indicate unique artist commissions rather than the number of individual artists employed. Some artists will have been commissioned more than once by a CPP and by more than one project. ‘Artist’ has been used to refer to an individual practitioner or an arts company.

The variations in the number of new commissions reflects:

- The length of time the CPP has been delivering projects
- The range of budgets offered for commissions (see Section 5.3)
- Changes or gaps in the leadership of the project
- A break in operation of the project due to gaps between one round of funding and the next

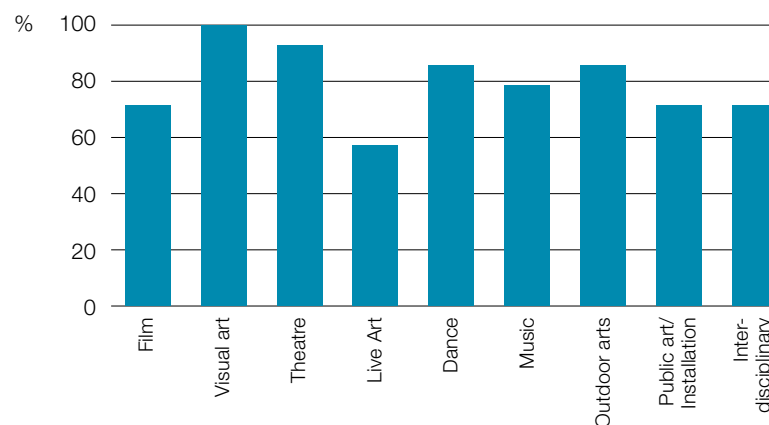
## 2. Artforms

CPP Places are commissioning work fairly evenly across a wide range of artforms – with visual arts being very slightly more popular, followed by theatre, then equally by dance and outdoor work, music next, then film, public art, interdisciplinary and cross-artform work all at the same level of popularity and then live art. Places also mentioned commissioning digital works, puppetry and poetry.

### Can you indicate which art forms you have commissioned new work in?

Impact on artist practice by CPPs

Please indicate all that apply



Answer Choices	Responses
Film	71.43% 10
Visual art	100.00% 14
Theatre	92.86% 13
Live Art	57.14% 8
Dance	85.71% 12
Music	78.57% 11
Outdoor arts	85.71% 12
Public art/Installation	71.43% 10
Inter-disciplinary (e.g. art and science/history/sport) or Cross-art form : please tell us more about this work in text box 'Other' below	71.43% 10
Other: please tell us more about: different categories, inter-disciplinary and/or cross-artform work	10
<b>Answered</b>	<b>14</b>

### 3. Scale of work

The CPP Places are commissioning work of all scales but mainly producing **smaller scale** commissions both in terms of budget, audience and participant numbers. 55% of the 530 commissions have been under £5000, **41% had audiences between 50-100 and 67% involved less than 30 participants**. However alongside a focus on smaller commissions, a substantial amount of larger scale work has also been created since 2012 with 36% of new commissions being seen by audiences of between 500-5000 people and 15% involving 100-500 participants. At the larger end of the scale, 3% of new commissions involved over 500 participants and 4% were seen by audiences of 5000+.

### 5. Commissioning models

A range of methods for commissioning were reported:

- Most common (13 out of 15) are Open Calls and Direct Commissions
- 12 out of 15 are using community panels
- 7 are commissioning in partnership with touring consortia eg Without Walls, Global Streets
- 2 reported commissioning via referrals from other CPPs and 1 via European partners on a Creative Europe project

### 4. Budgets

Budget for an artistic commission	Each column indicates number of commissions per budget range for CPP Projects x 14														total	%
up to £5k	3	5	12	17	1	17	7	17	33	11	57	12	61	40	<b>293</b>	<b>55%</b>
£5k- £10k	1			7		3	7	1	5		18	12	9	35	<b>98</b>	<b>18%</b>
£10k-£30k	5		4		2	2	26		8		2	9	8	25	<b>91</b>	<b>17%</b>
£30k-£50k				3		5	1		1	3	1	1		6	<b>21</b>	<b>4%</b>
£50k-£100k	7		2	7			3							4	<b>23</b>	<b>5%</b>
over £100k	3						1								<b>4</b>	<b>1%</b>
Commissions	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>530</b>	



## 6. Experience of artists and professional development

CPP Places are mainly working with experienced artists, reporting that 400 of the 530 artists (75%) were already experienced at working collaboratively in community contexts when they were commissioned.

The 14 Places surveyed are providing CPD for artists so it's seen by places as an integral part of their programmes. The offer ranges from skills training in marketing, fundraising, evaluation, production skills and understanding of health and safety and licensing legislation to mentoring, networking events, artist peer learning and reflection sessions.

There are also a number of specific support programmes for emerging artists and much informal support around signposting and brokering partnerships between venues, artists, organisations and community groups to enable artists to gain new opportunities.

## 7. Length of artist residencies

Most artists (65%) are spending between 3-12 months on their commissions, 26% spend under 3 months and 7% spend over a year. Artists are not usually working full-time on their projects over the longer periods and the time spent face-to-face with communities and working on planning/production varies.

## 8. Local and non-local artists

Of the 530 commissioned artists, 282 (53%) had previously lived or worked in the CPP place they were commissioned by. During the interviews three out of 15 CPP staff expressed the view that

local knowledge was an important factor when commissioning an artist. This was not as important as the artistic concept, but it was a consideration. Likewise for the local people who responded to the community survey.

However in the community survey, in terms of what makes a commission successful, most weight was given to the way the artist **interacted** with them and **listened** to them (each 72%) rather than being local or knowing the place well, which was less important to people (only 28%). Local people did value the fact that **the artist's work responded thoughtfully to the location and the community** (66.5%). Half of the respondents indicated that the **artists' outside eye was useful for the project.**

## 9. Diversity of artists

Whilst data is captured for audiences and participants, most Places are not monitoring the gender and ethnic diversity and other protected characteristics of artists they commission. Only three out of 15 Places are capturing this data. The real question is not about monitoring per se but 'counting what counts', whether there is a problem here that needs addressing and how monitoring could support this.

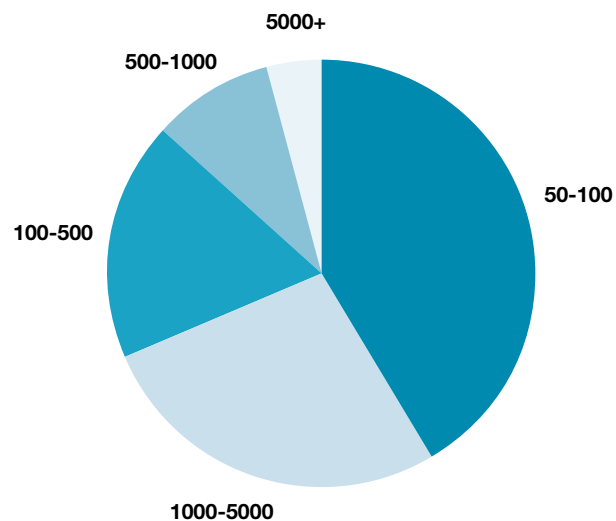
## 10. Touring

Six out of 15 Places (40% of CPPs surveyed) have toured their new commissions nationally and two Places internationally. This is impressive and suggests a demand for the kind of work CPP is creating.

## 11. Audience numbers for new commissions

- **41%** of 530 new commissions had audiences between 50-100.
- **27%** commissions attracted audiences between 1000-5000
- **18%** commissions had audiences between 100-500.
- **9%** commissions had audiences between 500-1000,
- **4%** commissions seen by 5000+ people

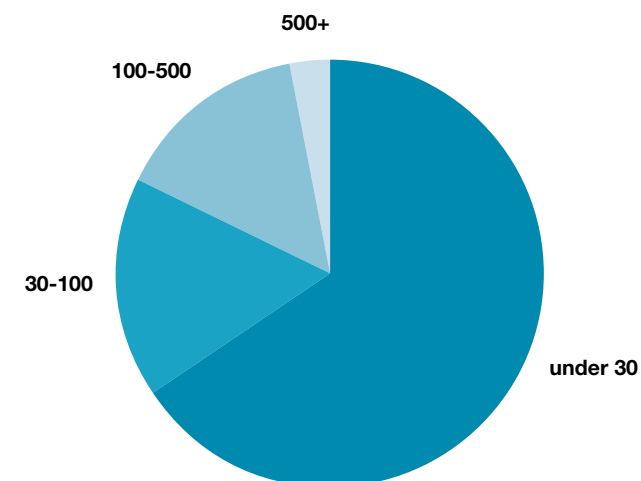
These commissions reflect ticketed and free events in a range of indoor and outdoor venues. Detailed commentary on audiences and participants is explored in other CPP Network and Arts Council England reports.



## 12. Participant numbers for new commissions

By participants we are referring to people who collaborated with the artist in some way to realise the project as makers, performers, commissioning panels, advisors etc.

- **67%** of 530 new commissions involved less than 30 participants
- **17%** involved 30-100 participants
- **15%** involved 100-500 participants
- **3%** involved 500+ participants



## Interview Questions for CPP Teams

### A. Artist selection

1. Thinking about artists you've commissioned to create new work, what were the key factors that influenced decision-making when selecting the artists? - e.g. engagement experience, local knowledge, artform expertise etc.
2. Can you tell us more about your approach to diversity and equalities when commissioning artists? How does this influence the selection of artists?
3. How are the types of commissions you've offered to artists shaped by your location/place/community

### B. Successes and challenges

1. Thinking about the artists you commissioned who you feel worked well in your place, what do you think were the key qualities, approaches, skills, etc. that the artists brought to the commission which led to this success? What made the most significant difference?
2. What are your main challenges when commissioning artists? What are the points of resistance/conflict, if any? Are there challenges around finding the 'right artists' in your area?

### C. Exploring impact

1. What impact do you think your CPP project has had on the practice of the artists you have commissioned?
2. What – if anything - do you think your CPP is doing that hasn't been done elsewhere in terms of socially engaged/participatory practice?
3. How do you think that what you bring personally to your CPP role has had an impact on the artists you've worked with?
4. What would you have liked to have been asked today that hasn't been covered?

## Interview questions for artists

1. Which CPP Places have you been commissioned by?
2. Please tell us some basic information about your commission(s): length, audience, budget
3. How were you commissioned? What was the process?
4. Do you live or have you lived in the CPP locality where you created the commission? How has your CPP project impacted on artists' practice, either positively/negatively? (we are seeking to draw out the following, so prompts may be useful)
5. Can you tell me about your approach to diversity and equalities when making work in community settings? How does this impact on your work?
6. How did the location and the input of local people have an impact on the project?
7. What worked well with your CPP commission(s)?
8. What were your main challenges/points of conflict/resistance/learning with your CPP commission(s)?
9. Can you tell me more about the support you received from the CPP? What would you have liked more of/less of/what was missing?
10. Do you think that CPP is doing anything that isn't been done elsewhere in terms of socially engaged/participatory practice? E.g. were there any factors about being commissioned by CPP that made a difference to your work - in comparison with your experience to other organisations/agencies who are dedicated to the field of socially engaged/participatory arts?
11. What would you have liked to have been asked that hasn't been covered by these questions?

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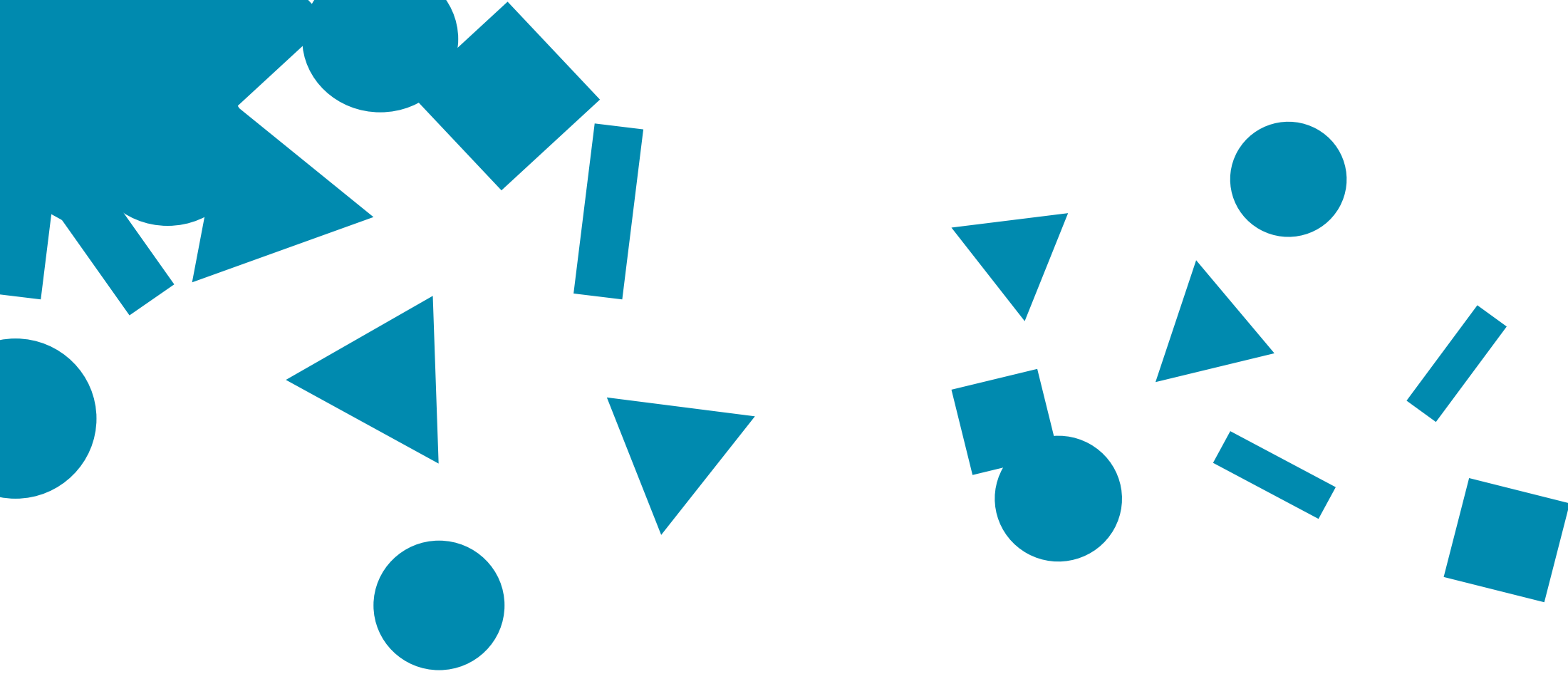
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