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Created by: Mark Miller on 8 May, 2017

### **Transparency, complexity and change**

We often hear about the need for transparency, especially as a condition for change. But how open are we prepared to be about the decision making processes, structures and challenges in our galleries? And what do we risk if we aren't more transparent with our audiences, workforce and partners?

The need for transparency with young people and partners has been integral to the *Circuit programme*. We have opened up galleries' structures, hierarchies, and procedures to young people as a means of empowering them. Because of this, young people have developed knowledge of, and contributed to, our galleries' governance, audience development, communication, and public programmes.

This demystification of the gallery has developed diverse young audiences across all *Circuit* partner galleries. This has also produced alternative interpretations of art, mediation between art and audience, and critical questioning of the role of galleries in society.



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*Circuit* exposes that 'the gallery', and the 'culture' within it, remain opaque for many. It almost becomes a parable that is difficult to understand. Many young audiences assume that you need knowledge and expertise to enter these space and engage with art. Young participants also question why it is important to them, if it does not represent them, or resonate with their culture, age and interests. They are also interested in how and why art is produced, selected and presented. As well as this,

understanding the principles of the capitalist economy of the art world, and how they relates to any social justice or civic responsibility cultural institutions might hold.[1]

*Circuit* has highlighted the incredibly complex challenges of the organisational change. These include enabling our galleries to be 'easier to reach' for ethnic minorities, and lower socio-economic groups. And additionally, to build long-term strategic non-cultural sector partnerships that provide real opportunities to share learning. It's also crucial that we strengthening the tacit and institutional memory of our sector through training related to the histories of policy and practice.

*Circuit* has taught us that demonstrating adaptability, being clear about our personal and organisational motivations, can help forge strong partnerships with youth sector organisations. The development of equitable and reciprocal partnerships, outside of the cultural sector, are crucial to establishing relationships that link galleries to the wider ecology of our society.

With this, we can provide authentic ways of working that embeds our audiences, partners and participants to the what is seen as the 'real work' of our organisations, such as collection displays, exhibitions and building the canon of art.



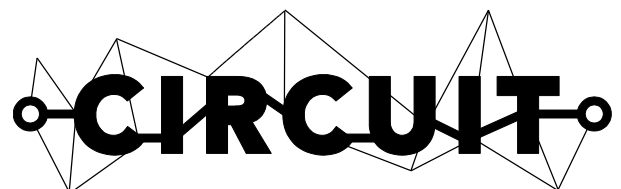
Crucially, *Circuit* has shown the potential for positioning interdisciplinary artistic programming with young people as part of an organisation's ecology to (re)connect to emerging artistic practice, current social and political contexts, and establish relevance for future audiences. With historic, modern and contemporary art at the core, new and emerging media, visual languages and culture are presented through forms such as, soundscapes, digital projections, poetry and dance performances, live music streaming, live art, hi and low tech games, glitch and chiptune, amongst a variety of participatory arts workshops. This could hold a possible vision for the museum of the future, directed at all audiences.

At the moment, it's essential to be honest with ourselves and our audiences, and ask ourselves, what are we willing to change? And perhaps more importantly, what is it that we do not want to change. These questions could provide some answers that enable us to understand the limitations and potential, that are specific to our organisations ability to manage attainable and realistic change.

The learning from *Circuit* points to, galleries shifting to a place where culture is outward facing, porous, responsive, and shared, then perhaps their connection to our current social and political experiences, our communities, and our relevance would become more transparent to everyone.

[1] Warwick Commission

(<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/finalreport/>), Panic Survey (<http://www.createlondon.org/panic/survey/>) Our Museums reports (<http://ourmuseum.org.uk/initiative-publications/>), Step By Step (<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/culturalenquiries/youngpeople/Step-by-step.pdf>), Envision action research ([http://www.engage.org/downloads/3503506\\_en-vision.pdf](http://www.engage.org/downloads/3503506_en-vision.pdf)) to name a few.



**phf** Paul Hamlyn  
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