



Scottish **Arts** Council

## **Entitled to Culture?**

Scottish Arts Marketers' Forum 2004  
(3 November 2004)  
RSE Scotland Foundation, Edinburgh  
(AD6)

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**January 2005**

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# Report

## **Welcome and Chair's Introduction**

**Maddy Morton, marketing consultant and author of 'Not for the Likes of You'**

Welcome, everyone, to the 2004 Scottish Arts Marketers' Forum. The whole notion of cultural entitlements has raised lots of debate: what is entitlement? what is culture? Whose culture? and so on. Perhaps it's just in the Scottish character - as Jack McConnell said a few weeks ago at the opening of the new parliament building (quoting the late Willie Ross): "*the Scots are a disputatious people*" And debate is, of course, both useful and necessary. What bugs me about the debate on cultural entitlements, though, is that people seem very keen to find all the *problems* with it, which is pretty depressing. More importantly, it's also missing the point a bit. Just for today, I invite you to set aside any problems you may have with the idea of cultural entitlements and focus instead on the massive *opportunity* there can be within it.

To get you in the mood to do this I'd like to tell you a story – and it's a true story. One day not long ago when I was getting geared up for this event, I typed 'cultural entitlement' into my computer. And I must have typed it very badly because spell check didn't recognise what I'd written and offered me an alternative. Instead of cultural entitlement, it offered me cultural EXCITEMENT and I thought - that's more like it. That's what we really want. We want a people who not only feel that culture is available to them but also feel really excited about it. And I also thought that in the end, what is our job as arts marketers, if it isn't to create cultural excitement? To create and convey an *enthusiasm* for the arts that is heartfelt, joyful and utterly infectious? THAT is the spirit in which I invite you to approach today. Let's go for it, and let's *enjoy* it while we're at it too. Today is a chance to learn new things, to be inspired by other people and their ideas and also to make your own voice heard. So please don't just sit back and absorb - get stuck in to the discussion and add *your* ideas and perspectives too.

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## **Cultural Commission Update**

**Bryan Beattie, Expert Adviser to the Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport, and senior partner of the cultural consultancy, Creative Services**

'We should make the development of our creative drive the next major enterprise for our society. Arts for all can be a reality, a democratic right and an achievement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century'

What a fantastic ambition, what a great statement. Our First Minister promised it last year. Jude Kelly had written it a couple of years previously. We are indebted to them both. That statement is the cornerstone of the Scottish Executive's thinking on cultural policy. For all the hype and misinformation in the media, for all the cynical talk round the cultural water-cooler – at the end of the day we should, I believe, have hope if that statement is our country's vision, its clear aspiration.

However, there is clear – and usually deep – water between aspiration and delivery, but the latter can't happen without the former. And the First Minister made it clear in that same speech that he expects us – the cultural sector – to put the practical flesh on the bones of policy – to make it real, and he initiated the Cultural Commission as the conduit through which we can make it happen. We don't have equity of opportunity in Scotland to participate in, or witness, cultural activity. We should have. 'Arts for all can be a reality, a democratic right'. How?

The starting premise is that each person in this country should have rights of access to cultural activity, regardless of age, geography, or ability. Again the First Minister invited us – the cultural sector – to define what these rights might be and how they might be implemented in a meaningful and fair way. The Executive's intention is clear – it is to raise the level of opportunity, not to standardise an experience or to homogenise art forms. It is to create a fairer, more equitable society – a society that acknowledges and embraces cultural activity as an integral and integrated part of how it operates. These are maybe not poetic ways of expressing an ambition to see more people enjoy themselves through dance, learn through drama, express themselves through writing, or emote through music – but let's not confuse the genuineness of motivation behind the government vocabulary. That flowering of activity is what the Executive is aiming for – and it has given the Cultural Commission the remit to recommend how it happens.

The Commission's remit is extensive and genuinely challenging in the most euphemistic sense – it is looking across the arts, heritage, archives, libraries, screen and creative industries, and architecture. It has been asked to acknowledge the full and diverse matrix of culture in Scotland – the voluntary, the commercial, the academic, and the public sector-led – at local, regional, national and international levels. It's been asked to consider many aspects of current provision, amongst them a re-definition of the notion of 'national', the role of emerging technologies, the built infrastructure and the need for a cultural think tank.

However, the two key specific elements of the remit are:

'to explore the notion of cultural rights for the Scottish citizen and those of its creative community and define how these might be translated into a scheme of entitlements' and

'to redefine the institutional infrastructure and governance of the Scottish cultural sector to enable it to deliver the entitlements that spring from rights.'

So, it shouldn't take too long then! Where do arts providers – organisations, companies and local authorities – fit into the process? Firstly, you're being challenged to think of your organisations second and your audience or customers first - which I'm sure is what all good marketing folk do anyway. Actually, it's an argument that the role of marketing, or audience development, more broadly should come centre stage. Jude will, I'm sure, look at that relationship in some detail later.

In the chain of events that leads from the punter-citizen finding out about an event to actually attending, the hardest hurdle to cross is the first one – and that is, is the person inclined to look in the direction of arts activity in the first place? If they don't consider it an option, an acceptable part of their everyday life in the first place, then all the beautifully-contrived and executed marketing techniques count for nothing. And that first leap – having the inclination – is a much broader societal, cultural (with a small c) issue. It's as much about changing attitudes through education, through family and peer-group learning, as it is about effective marketing solutions. That's why the Executive and Commission's focus is on establishing clear cultural rights and entitlements as a means of addressing these issues long-term.

So, in this respect, where does the audience development remit begin and end? Perhaps in a much broader advocacy and illustrative role than at present, perhaps with greater emphasis on the participative project than the poster? Perhaps with a focus shifting onto the non-attender rather than the attender? The principle of rights and entitlements is one that has been determined by the Executive. The hard part is turning it into something that helps us achieve what we want to. It's up to all of us to make it a reality.

A couple of weeks ago, the Saltire Society invited Wolfgang Scheider of Hildesheim University to Edinburgh. He described how the German political institutions at constitutional, legislative and administrative levels were accepting and defining responsibilities for cultural and educational provision, but the vital *quid pro quo* was the commitment of cultural organisations to work together to extend meaningful participation and access. In all these regards Scotland's Cultural Commission, far from being some eccentric aberration as depicted by some of our parochial broadsheets, is in the mainstream of the European debate.

Scheider's contribution reminded us that you can have all the rights, entitlements and policies you want, but they don't mean anything if artists and arts organisations are not involved in the process – not just of delivering but in deciding what is delivered and how. Scheider elaborated the German situation where national government takes broad brush policy statements of intent, regional government develops these into more specific instruments of policy and, locally, these are turned into solutions that can be implemented in a way that is appropriate for the area and community. That, for me, summarises very well how the Scottish equivalent of rights and entitlements was initially envisaged and intended.

I'll give a brief illustration using one of the recent Commission discussions. The Executive would introduce some broad rights as a national aspiration – let's say 'Each citizen should have the right to fulfil their creative potential'. This would then be translated by the arts sector, libraries sector and so on at national level into guidelines of good practice – standards, let's say, 'Every child should have the chance to see live performance once a year'. The implementation of this at local level would then be for arts organisations and local authorities and other providers to make real and would, by necessity, forge stronger partnerships between them. Perhaps, through the creation of a Cultural Pledge or Backpack, as they have in mind in Highland and East Ayrshire – literally a menu of commitments these then become the practical, locally-oriented entitlements.

I'm aware that taking such a brief illustration can raise as many questions as it might try to answer – but that's good, that's what this stage of the Cultural Commission is about. It's about you saying 'look, that won't work, this is the way to do it', and shaping these rights, standards and entitlements into something useful and valid. Remember the two purposes are to increase the opportunities for people to get involved, and to make the provision of activity more equitable - that has got to create opportunities for your organisations, companies and authorities. You want more bums on seats, the Executive wants more bums on seats. You want more folk attending workshops and classes – so does the Executive. We are singing from the same hymn sheet – so hopefully we might get a bit of divine intervention.

I want to finish as I started, with the same quote, as I think we should keep reminding ourselves of what the big picture is, what we're all working towards:

'We should make the development of our creative drive the next major enterprise for our society. Arts for all can be a reality, a democratic right and an achievement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century'.

Bryan's presentation gave rise to a question about the interim report that the Commission is about to release and how it's available. Bryan explained that it was going to the Minister today and would then be delivered to the Executive tomorrow. It would be primarily concerned with the process but it would include some of the initial findings from the consultation to date – there have been several hundred contributions on top of the hundred or so meetings that have been held around the country. There will then be a further two rounds of consultation.

Debate then focused on what Bryan suggested was the core issue – that of 'inclination'. Is the person inclined to look in the direction of arts activity in the first place? Once this first, and hardest hurdle, is crossed, then the rest is really all about mechanisms. The intention that decisions about delivery should be made at a local level and be sensitive to local needs was welcomed, given Scotland's diversity. Finally, Bryan urged everyone to take advantage of the hugely significant opportunity presented by the Cultural Commission to change things and not be sidetracked by those who wilfully misinterpret its intention.

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### ***Please Don't Brand Me***

***Jude Kelly OBE, award-winning director and producer and Chair of Arts, Education and Culture of London's 2012 Olympics bid***

*If Cultural Entitlement means enabling you to take your imagination as far as it can stretch, how far will it go? What are the impediments to this journey? Usually, it is other people's imagination of what you are capable of doing. So, how do we move the cultural agenda forward without leaving anyone behind? Jude's keynote investigates this theme and asks us, the participants, to look at ourselves and our personal journey to find ways to shift our thinking and re-imagine the possibilities, first for ourselves and then for others around us.*

*(edited transcript of presentation)*

I was thinking about the notion of permission to be a human being among strangers and how this shifts when I was at the airport this morning. You know how sometimes you're standing in a public place watching a television monitor and then someone comes and stands near you and you move away slightly because an encounter with a stranger isn't always something you welcome? This morning, watching the US election results, we were all crowding around the television together and there was a sense that we were all engaged in a drama and that the more people that gathered around the screen, and the more varied, the better.

You said we shouldn't get depressed, Maddy, but I think that sometimes there's some worth in detailed depression (I'm not talking about involuntary depression) because it can take you to somewhere essential. We need to really examine at root some of the reasons why we have genuine impediments to human rights. I think it's an essential that we should be claiming culture as an entitlement and a right. Obviously, we're not the first to do it - there's the United Nations Charter - but the interpretation of the right is so variable.

My depression at the moment would be about Guantanamo Bay because I *know* that those people have human rights and I'm doing nothing about it. I feel ashamed and depressed because it's made me consider why, with all my vocal enthusiasm about everything to do with entitlement, I haven't covered Westminster tube station with one-day installations? What has stopped me?

It comes down to two things – either I'm going to say that I'm so busily engaged with getting cultural entitlement that I can't take on Guantanamo Bay at the same time or that I'm scared of looking foolish and about the possible loss to my reputation. Maybe I can't take on both but it's an interesting question.

When you start saying, let's go for cultural entitlement, it's very important to consider how many blind spots you have about other issues to do with human rights. If we talk about a ladder of entitlement that goes from when I was a serf to me now, Jude Kelly with a house, all the way along the line, people have fought tooth and nail for human rights, for me to be Jude Kelly and get a mortgage and have a vote. So, at the same time as you're fighting for cultural entitlement, don't forget to head down sometimes into detailed depression to consider why we don't want people to have entitlements and rights. There are lots of different reasons but it usually comes down to fear – fear of what people will think about us and fear about whether we have permission to be the kind of person who actually does stand up and discuss things as big as human rights.

It's nearing Christmas, and I was also thinking this morning about celebration and parties, partly because this weekend the National Lottery is celebrating its tenth anniversary with a party down at the Eden Project. The Eden Project is the 'heartchild' of Tim Smit who was a rock producer and then got involved in reclaiming gardens in Cornwall. He was horrified by the idea of the planet slipping into a state of degradation and imagined that if you reclaimed the dreadful empty clay pits that have been left like running sores on the landscape of Cornwall, you could build an entirely new vision based on a commitment to ecology and human entitlement to the future. The Eden Project is almost a direct path between conviction and action. Today, of course, they have the challenge of keeping that idealism going in the context of the everyday humdrum of selling tickets, coping with the litter etc. Nevertheless, the essential ideology – let's do something for the betterment of the future of the human – is still writ large.

It made me think that what the National Lottery has chosen for the party was the gift of time. They've taken the idea of celebration, the time of gifts, and turned it around to the gift of time. It's about saying to someone, I'll be here, you be here, and let's share something together and take time together. Actually being there in person makes someone want to turn up.

Don't overlook the significance of the one-to-one encounter. We are so professionalised artistically - most of the things that we do can be put in place beforehand and then we can almost absent ourselves from the party. We can forget that in the long run, the one-on-one can be our most effective tool – the personalised viral marketing campaign! Although we probably do know in our hearts that bringing ourselves to the party, being there on the night, exchanging something human with a stranger, that's where the energy is.

Imagine you're at a Christmas party. Who would you like to be there? At my party, I would like to think that there would be different generations of my family, someone old, someone very young, a spread of people, acceptance. Then I started thinking about who wouldn't be there. In my case, there wouldn't be any strangers and I began to wonder whether it would be uncomfortable for me if I added strangers to the room and how would I invite them? I'm not talking about the Samaritan role here – I'm just talking about the interest that one has in saying, in my comfort zone, I like to be with people I know, lots of different ages and backgrounds maybe but, essentially, people I know. I wonder how much I carry that into my professional encounters? Do I give off the signal that, professionally, I'm glad they're there but personally, when I go somewhere else, I'll be glad they're not there? When I think about all the hours I've put into the arts so far, I think, actually, I really do want lots of different strangers in my room. That's where I want my comfort zone to be. That's where I've located it in my professional life and I'm interested in closing the gap between my feelings as a professional and my personal journey.

I remember when I went to Nigeria. A Nigerian playwright had written a fantastic play about corruption but because he was on a death sentence, it couldn't be staged in Nigeria so he asked me to go to Nigeria, audition Nigerians in secret and bring them back to Britain to perform this play, which I did. Nigeria was pretty frightening at that time for lots of reasons. I went to a wedding where I was amongst all these strangers but they were so pleased I was there and it was such a relief because otherwise I'd have felt so lonely.

I remember that sense of loneliness when you're not wanted, like when you're left on your own in the school playground. Or when I was going to ballet classes in the West India Centre. As second-generation Irish, we came after the Chinese and West Indian and, not being a Catholic, I didn't really belong to the hard-core Irish Catholics. At the West Indian Centre, I would sit in the doorway waiting to go up to the class so I wouldn't be bullied and I would watch all these people smiling at me, just allowing me to be there, around people for whom I was a stranger. No words were spoken but I sort of knew that I had permission to be there. I've often compared those feelings – when you know you're allowed in – with when you know you're not. This is an entitlement and a lot of it comes from self-permission to be entitled, about whether you feel that the person on the inside is really giving you permission or just ticking boxes.

I have rarely met people in arts marketing who are just ticking boxes. I think most of you are deeply engaged in how we build involvement but I can't deny that in some of the dealings I've had with colleagues over marketing, I've become frustrated at times by a sense that the professionalisation of the language of arts marketing can actually be a barrier to the notion of entitlement. I've sometimes felt that the person sitting beside me talking about targets or audience profile doesn't actually care about it *in person*. They were distinguishing between something they care about personally and something professionally. I'd lose patience because I'd realise that I couldn't make that distinction. It's as if, fifty years after people chained themselves to railings to get the right for women to vote, some women don't really want to vote. Some people are going to believe in cultural entitlement because they know what it feels like to be excluded. Some are going to say, I've said the right words, I've done everything I should do, I'm going home. I'm not standing on any kind of moral high ground here about which of these you should or shouldn't be.

One of the things that is so potent about art is when it's really located in the 'youness' of you - when you experience it as something personal, even though you can be sharing it with strangers. I'm not saying that this is what people have got to experience but I think it's worth working out for yourself whether you're someone who is committed to the fearlessness of arts marketing – doing it bravely and therefore foolishly. If you know that you are prepared to go to the wire for it, then I think that there are several things to think about. Don't avoid considering what the impediments really are. Don't avoid scrutinising the reasons why people put up objections. Don't avoid getting angry. And don't avoid looking inside yourself and saying, I know I want to do this, so what is stopping me? Is it fear of looking an idiot because I don't quite know how to do it? Is it fear like me and Guantanamo Bay, thinking, haven't I got enough to do, championing cultural entitlement?

Are you afraid that it will take you to a level of involvement that you just can't cope with? That would be perfectly alright. The worst possible thing is empty rhetoric - where people say that they're totally committed to this, that and the other. How many governments have you heard use those words? You mustn't be political with a small p. Or carry words around that you've only half investigated. Or do it because you're a professional and are going to soar up the career ladder. Don't kid yourself that you're committed because that is so unfair to the people listening to your words who may be thinking, perhaps I will come, perhaps I do have permission and then they come in to the venue and they meet you, or see a piece of publicity you've produced, and they realise that you don't really want them there. They're not stupid - they'll know. You must ask yourself, what is the real level of commitment in my heart? If it's not there, don't blame yourself but admit it and then you can separate out the reasons.

On the other hand, there's the business of imagination – and I'm going to introduce a brief change of topic here. Every so often, in the journey of trying to make the world better, you get tired and you should take a holiday from caring. Go somewhere nice! I don't know what you do for your holidays but I go windsurfing. I also go and read Shakespeare. When I was working at places like Battersea Arts Centre, I noticed in terms of *my* entitlement to culture that I felt thirsty and empty and I needed some poetry, some art that was difficult and reflective and for me. In all our work for cultural entitlement, there is a need to argue as fiercely for the cultural entitlement of the artist, so that they can be an artist without constantly requiring them to justify their existence in terms of how much they give to the community, how understandable their work is. Defend the artist because if you do, you will be defending the right of the imagination to take a journey that we cannot predict or mainstream.

You will all know the terrible stories about the education system and how you couldn't pass the eleven-plus because there were only so many who could pass it. They needed everybody else to go into the factories. How could they go into the factories if they'd passed the eleven plus? What would their brain do with all the information? People still talk in that way and even in the arts, we tend to have a bar system – some people can get this far, and some this far. How happy would you be, if someone told you what your imaginative potential was? And when you encounter strangers, is your impulse to think, that person has magnificence in them and can go to the end of the universe and back? And does it matter to you? A lot of these questions come down to the notion of honesty. I honestly believe that in 50 years' time, people will know that their imagination is as valid as anyone else's. In the same way that I honestly believe now that people know that they can all read and write. It's just that we don't necessarily have the circumstances available yet for everyone.

If you're going to set out on this long march for cultural entitlement, don't use language you don't believe in. If you do believe in it, it is hard work and it will take a long time. And don't forget to have a nice holiday every so often. If depression takes you to somewhere essential, you will come back up again and keep going. How you do it is a whole other world but start off from being at a party in your home where you invite many many strangers and you're glad to see them.

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Jude's thought-provoking presentation was followed by a Q and A session.

Q When you encounter non-believers, what do you think are the most persuasive arguments for cultural entitlement, especially when they want to prioritise between supporting the arts and, say, the health service?

A (Jude Kelly) I think the simple ones are the best such as, wouldn't you want your children, and grand-children, to have cultural entitlement although I wouldn't use this term! If they persist with the arts versus health argument, then why don't you say, okay, I'll do my bit for the arts and let you do yours for the NHS. A lot of people who are sceptics don't actually do anything for what they believe in.

Q I run a digital development agency for the arts. I love the idea of us all being a personal viral marketing campaign. Should we also be thinking about how we can use all the new communication technologies that we've got as a way of developing personal viral marketing?

A (Jude Kelly) Yes, I think that's a good idea but I still think what counts is the intention behind pressing that send button. (Maddy Morton) Has anyone read *The Cluetrain Manifesto*, a book about the impact of the internet on corporate marketing? It looks at how the internet has created virtual communities where people can talk to each other about what companies are offering and whether what they are being told is true and this is fuelling interest in companies that really mean what they do. You can download the Manifesto for free at <http://www.cluetrain.com/#manifesto>

Q Is there anybody in this room who doesn't think everyone should have a right to the arts? If that's the case, then isn't the real question, not how do we give people access to the arts but how do we also give them the opportunity not to have access to the arts if they don't want it? In the early sixties, I was involved in Centre 42, an initiative by Arnold Wesker designed to give everyone access to the arts. Wesker's heart was in the right place but I think it was patronising to suggest that if you don't go to the arts, you're not a whole person. I really want people to come to the concerts I put on – we use various marketing methods and sometimes they work, sometimes they don't. If you're an artist, of course you want people to come. As an ex-artist myself, I'd like to see marketers working really professionally – they don't have to like the artform (or pretend that they do). I just want them to do their job well.

A (Jude Kelly) Yes, I think you're right – a great professional is always preferable to someone who's a bleeding heart of commitment but doesn't know what to do. On the subject of when is one being patronising, I don't think it is patronising to talk about arts for everyone. (Maddy Morton) Perhaps what is patronising is wanting everyone to have the arts that we have rather than the arts that they're interested in or that they create.

Q Does the problem come from using the words 'culture' and 'arts' interchangeably and, in doing so, assuming that lots of people out there don't have any culture? There are lots of people out there who don't know any of the art we produce but I challenge the assertion that there are many people who don't have access to some form of culture. That's when we start being patronising.

A (Jude Kelly) Yes, I do think that the word 'culture' is tricky. It would be a lot less problematic if we took culture to mean something much more inclusive. But I still say that I think that people are entitled to access things that are publicly funded. (Maddy Morton) When I was working on the *Not For The Likes of You* project, somebody I met said that he thought that one of the problems was that we talk about people who don't go to the arts as 'non-attenders' when actually, they're not non-attenders – they just don't happen to come to our stuff yet. This really woke me up. Talking about non-attenders puts us in a negative mindset and suggests that our stuff matters and theirs doesn't. In fact, we're a very little cog in a very big cultural wheel.

### **Jim Tough, Head of Arts, Scottish Arts Council**

*Jim Tough, Head of Arts at the Scottish Arts Council, has been leading on the consultation process with CFOs and other partners, looking at ideas of a 'National Network' of arts provision and planning. This work has influenced the Scottish Arts Council's first submission to the Cultural Commission. In his presentation, Jim takes us through emerging key issues with particular emphasis on those that may impact on the roles of Marketing and Audience Development.*

It is a glamorous life, working for the Scottish Arts Council! Swanning about to openings, living on a diet of vol au vents and warm white wine, jetting first class between Edinburgh and Muckle Flugga, it is hard to beat - although there is the drawback of being a target for the media. In fact only this week I have been asked by Paul Merton to appear on Room 101, where I have the opportunity of disposing of the things that get right up my beak. So I thought I'd test my gripes, and have you, the audience, test the validity of my choices.

First I'd like to dispose of The Lexicon of the Arts Bureaucrat. This is, of course, not an original publication, having been largely adopted from another planet known as the 'business world'. Product delivery, supply and demand, added value, and options appraisals. Whatever happened to truth, beauty and enlightenment? It seems to me that a clear trend in public life that influences our cultural landscape in the widest sense has been the adoption of a business model.

A current favourite in marketing terms is the need to come to terms with demographic trends. Here are my demographic trends. When I was sixteen I thought 30 was ancient. When I was 30 I thought 50 was antediluvian. Now that I am 49, 50 sounds pretty sprightly to me. I'm just getting into my stride - just beginning to get a handle on my true potential as I carefully navigate my forties with only one divorce, and no mid-life crisis. I get by with a little help from my life coach, my tai chi instructor and my local off sales. Just as I begin to arrive at a true sense of myself, to be at one with my oneness, I realise that I'm actually not a unique individual but a point on the marketers' sales projections. A target for Scottish Executive strategies. A mere cipher in the free market economy. And if you are over 55, you are the marketers' demographic wet dream! All that disposable income, and all that time on your hands.

And that generation has been there before. They were part of that great social invention 'the teenager' one of the most clever marketing ploys of the century. And of course as teenagers, the idea of old was alien, if not a condition to be actively avoided. For example, this young whippersnapper, Pete Townsend of The Who, famously spoke for his generation, saying, 'Fly in – Hope I die before I get old!' Pete is now in his late fifties. Maybe his mantra should be, 'Fly in – Hope I die before I start wearing beige'.

Of course, Pete and his contemporaries were in the vanguard of the marketing revolution as teenagers. The people that sold them hipsters in the Sixties will soon be trying to sell them elasticated-waist trousers. Yes, the lexicon of the business world has been adopted hook, line and performance indicator by the public sector. Whether teaching a five year old or tackling youth crime if you don't know your outcomes from your outputs you are in big trouble:

'The last word on how we may live or die  
Rests today with such quiet men,  
Working too hard, in rooms that are too big,  
Reducing to figures,  
What is the matter, what must be done.'  
(from *The Managers* by W H Auden)

My second contender for the bucket is a strange phenomenon in public service and business – the acronym. WYSIWIG – now unless you know you could think it was something to do with an eye test. VOCAL, COSLA, SURF are organisational versions, and even more confusing for normal people are the ones used in your own trade. SWOT, PEST, and STEEP all sound like something to do with STDs – and talking of STDs we have KPIs, FOI, DDA and it's all enough to give you the DTs. It is all enough to make you cynical.

And here is my third contender for the bucket – cynicism. A national blight in public life. Because I think it is possible to change things! The Scottish Arts Council has changed. What we describe and support as the 'arts' has moved beyond the 'elitist' associations that sometimes linger unhelpfully in association with our work. A glance at the range of musical styles that we support now, compared to even 15 years ago, confirms a far broader spectrum of support. Jazz, traditional music, and popular contemporary styles were not on the radar. What we support looks much more like what the people of Scotland choose in their cultural lives. Our work in terms of cultural diversity, arts and disability, Gaelic arts has seen a much broader church being valued and supported. And in working out our current Corporate Plan there was a clear and conscious shift not away from a focus on the artist but certainly towards an increased sensitivity towards the audience.

The appointment of our Audience Development Manager several years ago, along with lottery funding in support of this work, has been the backdrop to this. Our new hot-off-the-press Audience Development Strategy is in your packs. Ten or even five years ago this would have been perhaps been but a gleam in some eyes, and is now with us in glorious aubergine!

Key aspects of the actions are already well underway. Notably, we have seen the launch of Glasgow Grows Audiences, a new audience development agency in Scotland that will add to the others in Edinburgh and HI-Arts. The other main area is the Audiences Scotland research project which we will soon be taking into a second phase, and which we hope will both serve and involve your own interests across the country. And as a bonus we have committed to a Scottish version of the *Not For the Likes of You* programme which is being progressed in partnership with TAB and GGA.

Returning to the theme of cynicism, inevitably in some quarters the work of the Commission has generated that kind of response but that seems to me to be profoundly mistaken and maybe even irresponsible for those of us working in the sector. The Commission is a chance for further change.

Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport Frank McAveety announced in Parliament that:

'Today is the start of a new era for Scotland's culture. The review of the cultural sector will take as its starting point the premise that each person has cultural rights – rights of access to cultural activity. The Commission will be able to look beyond, and confront, stereotypical notions of culture – and employ innovative and radical thinking – particularly in developing new ways of getting people involved.'

The phrase that has been used in relation to their brief is that it must be citizen-facing. Surely this must imply a step shift in opportunity for artists and audiences? There are still big questions to be answered. The idea of cultural rights is attractive in a manifesto, sound kind of way. In the brief for the Cultural Review, it is referred to in terms of entitlements but we really need to take care to tease this idea out in some detail. Entitlements to what? Is there a danger that the focus will be on activity that is accessible to a lot of people, but that is bereft of innovation and challenge? That the political imperative would be inclined to support arts that serve other social or economic agendas?

The imperative to evidence the value and impact of the public penny has been particularly traumatic for the arts community. The Scottish Arts Council is occasionally vilified by artists and arts organisations who feel inhibited and confused by what they might describe as a politically correct tick box culture within the funding system. Meanwhile in the world of community arts, where new funding opportunities through the National Lottery have been pursued with vigour and skill, there has been similar degree of consternation about the requirement for 'exit strategies' and 'evaluation'. This may not be a bad thing per se, but has to be treated with the appropriate degree of caution.

To the artist I'd say, of course, we must subscribe to the intrinsic value of the arts, to the artistic integrity of the artist in their pursuit of truth, beauty and the Turner Prize. But it seems reasonable, fair and just, to direct some public investment in the pursuit of public good, at the very least in consideration of the demand side i.e. the audience, and to consider the impact of that investment. And of course we may intuitively subscribe to the instrumental value of the arts in overcoming the evident social and economic inequalities that still plague many. But it seems reasonable to ask for the evidence of this to be sought and articulated, not just to make the case for further investment, but to justify these claims to the very people who are the intended beneficiaries.

Primo Levi suggested that the unexamined life is not worth living. Perhaps the un-interrogated audience development project is not worth funding! So, in considering the means of implementing a rights and entitlements agenda, there may be a danger in formulaic responses that inhibit or even stultify a dynamic creative environment.

It is interesting to note that in England the political pendulum has swung from the utilitarian towards the intrinsic. In a recent paper by Tessa Jowell on *Government and the Value of Culture*:

'Too often politicians have been forced to debate culture in terms only of its instrumental benefits to other agendas... offering improved access to culture for **what it does in itself** is a key weapon in fighting the poverty of aspiration. But for it to be effective in this way we have to understand it and speak up for it in its own terms – not a dumbed-down culture, but a culture that is of the highest standards it can possibly be, at the heart of government's core agenda, not as a piece of top down social engineering, but a bottom up approach of possibility and potential.'

This seems to be the same territory that is being tackled by the Cultural Commission, and faces the same challenges, but I don't think it is simply about a poverty of aspiration. It is about a lack of personal, and cultural confidence. Remember what Ascherson said about longing to hear Scottish students ask a question? I recognised this immediately. I was that silent student as an undergraduate at Edinburgh University. I was the first of my extended family to go to University. It seemed to me to be an accident that happened to me as opposed to an expectation and aspiration fulfilled, and as such there was no route map. I spent at least two years in tutorials muted, debilitated by a lack of confidence in my right to be there, lack of confidence in my own language, a lack of understanding of how things worked. As is often the case it took the encouragement and interest of an individual to give me the confidence to believe I had a right to be there. And I think my personal anecdote can be transposed to the wider context.

Some of the implementation of a rights agenda has to concern itself with education and learning, as a means of cultural emancipation, and I am reassured to know that the Commission itself, and its Chair James Boyle, clearly recognise that education is key to the success of their venture. We need to nurture a population not of cultural fearties, made to feel excluded from, or even worse made to feel stupid, or even resentful, in relation to the wide and wonderful scope of the arts and culture that still is seen sometimes as the preserve of social elite. Another poem fronts our submission to the Cultural Commission:

'What is it we want really?  
For what end and how?  
If it is something feasible, obtainable,  
Let us dream it now,  
And pray for a possible land  
Not of sleep-walkers, not of angry puppets,  
But where both heart and brain can understand  
The movements of our fellows;  
Where life is a choice of instruments and none  
Is debarred his natural music...'  
(Louis MacNeice, *Autumn Journal*)

The Scottish Arts Council submission echoes this sentiment.

We want a country where the people of Scotland enjoy the benefits of arts and culture as a matter of course, where citizens are not debarred from their natural music. We want a country where the richness and vitality of its cultural life and languages draws its people to contribute to it, and draws visitors from around the world to experience it. We want a country where artists are valued, and encouraged to work internationally and whet the appetite of an international audience. The arts, as an integral part of a wider cultural landscape, must be seen as broader and far more inclusive than the term currently allows. We want a country at the forefront of using new technology to give its citizens access to cultural opportunity.

Audience development and arts promotion which identifies - and disseminates awareness of - what the arts have to offer everyone in Scotland is needed at national and regional level. Such work might be carried out by an agency, working to a National Cultural Partnership and ensuring that body has the skills and capacity to act as advocates. Rapid advances in communication technology offer great opportunities for dynamic innovation in both the promotion of the arts and in new wave marketing. We propose that only a national approach to arts and cultural marketing can assimilate these advances and this should be a key driver of a national agency, building on existing skill and expertise. We believe that nothing less than a fundamental shift in our national mindset - which moves cultural concerns from the margins to the mainstream of civic life - is required. And of course the Scottish Arts Council and the other cultural agencies have to look to their own views and practices and be open to change.

Success in this venture requires a fundamental change in the political perspective that re-thinks where culture sits in society and one means to achieving this would be a Minister for Culture in the Cabinet.

We think the Commission should consider the establishment of an Artist's Charter. This would set out the principles by which the nation will deal with those who come forward as artists and cultural workers, so creating the circumstances for citizens to benefit from their work.

The national companies should be a resource for the country and its people as a whole, and offer models of accountability and responsible governance. Being a recognised national company should not be a matter of scale or funding commitment; it should be possible for appropriate smaller companies to be recognised as 'national' because of the nature and scope of their work.

We think that there is a requirement for more effective strategic planning that recognises the need for national standards but accommodates the interests of cultural partners and reflects the cultural nuances of different parts of Scotland. We would propose the idea of Regional Planning Forums as a possible means to this end.

The arts have a vital role to play in promoting a positive image of Scotland internationally. An international arts and cultural policy should support Scotland's artists and organisers of cultural activities to develop their work and profile on the international scene.

A lot to ask? I don't think so, but we may need some ammunition to make the case. I may have to retrieve my lexicon, my acronyms, some business speak, because that is often what we need to articulate the need, the impact, the power of the arts - not cynically, but with the end game in sight. When the evaluation form, the target setting, the data collection seems mundane and intellectually stultifying, it might be worth reflecting on Louis MacNeice's words:

'Let us dream it now,  
And pray for a possible land'.

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## ***Inspiration versus Outputs***

### ***Angus Farquhar, Creative Director of the nva organisation***

*Angus Farquhar explores the importance of cultural life in post devolution Scotland. There is a debate in Scotland currently as to the strategic direction of longterm funding initiatives and how we should form new cross-sectoral partnerships. Using the Hidden Gardens, Scotland's first active peace garden as a case study, Angus argues that a respect for unfettered creativity must lie at the heart of all political decisions related to the cultural industries.*

*(edited transcript of presentation)*

I'm going to lay out my polemic on behalf of the artist and then I'm going to talk about the Hidden Gardens because that has been an attempt to positively address some of the issues affecting how people make work in Scotland today. I hope that this will lead on to some discussion at the end.

When arts funding follows a political agenda rather than leading it, you get a neutering effect – less risk-taking and more attempts to please and to justify work. I'm very keen that whoever is leading the agenda here leads it and isn't just saying what needs to be said. Words cost nothing and if the Scottish Executive has proved anything in the last five years, it's that they can talk, but talk is cheap and doesn't necessarily change anything. If we're going to talk, let's say something.

Looking at the arts, and how it's been for the last few years since we've had a more politically affected agenda - I've been able to grow an audience, involve more young people, invite communities to participate, encourage more schools to work with me, but have I made better art as a result of this? Maybe yes, maybe no. Social outputs do not make great art – they make good social outcomes. I would argue that all of those outputs are worthwhile but at the end of the day, great art must be championed too and some time in the last five years those two things have been confused. I'd argue very strongly that we have to redress the balance. What happens when politicians are seen to lead the process? This is one of the issues with the Commission – it's come out of a political process and that's always difficult, especially if there's a sense of biting the hand that feeds it. Scotland is a very small country and sometimes it's very hard for people to say what they really think without feeling that it's going to disenfranchise them somehow in the future.

I want to take a moment to tell a personal story about when I was a boy of 16 in Edinburgh in the late Seventies. It was the punk movement and I was nicking my mum's hairspray, cutting my hair with her scissors and generally being a bad lad around the Edinburgh streets. One day, my mum said to me, let me dress you how I want to see you. She got out my dad's anorak, put my schools trousers on, brushed my hair and gave me a central parting. It was her image of the perfect son. We stood and looked in the mirror together and she had to admit - she'd made a monster!

The point I want to make is that if political hands are seen to be heavy on an agenda, then the same effect can result. I know that there's a lot of good meaning within the process, but is it a help or meddling? Why do people in power think that they know what they're talking about when it comes to the arts and that they can do the jobs of those who've spent years becoming good at what they do? This tendency to meddle becomes difficult because politicians move on and you get new agendas. There's no continuity. All this meddling has to be resisted and it'll only be resisted if artists themselves wake up. I thoroughly back up Jim's comments today about culture. When we heard that there was to be a minister for 'tourism, culture and sport', how did we feel? Great that there's an arts minister?

Or here's three departments rolled into one - what an insult? How is one person meant to focus on all those very different agendas?

The problem when you move too close to the political process is that it's ultimately about changing the law and the language can become reductive legalese in its description of the outputs that we're talking about. If nothing else, it's really important that bright minds within the Executive fight for a more emotive visionary language. Without this, the end result will be dull mantras such as 'the arts are great for everybody' and 'all children should have access to the arts'.

Let's go to the nub of the problem which is how to make great art and how to help artists in all artforms make great art. You need great art because without it, you don't get that moment of inspiration that changes lives. The process of getting to that moment of inspiration is often messy and bloody. The process we're all involved in today is about creating clarity – clear outputs for cultural agendas – but the process of making art itself is the absolute reverse of that. Everyone who has ever entered into the process of creating something from nothing knows that it's a frightening, wonderful, awful process.

There are two worlds: the internal world of the artist and the external world that they have to engage with – funders, promoters, curators, venue managers, public bodies, cross-sectoral partners. It's where those two worlds don't fit that I think some of the problems are occurring. Both worlds have to learn about each other – I don't think that it's enough for artists to resort to that self-pitying 'they just don't understand my work' that you sometimes get in the arts sector. Equally, there's no place for that hard-nosed, neo-Thatcherite reaction you get from many public partners who automatically assume the worst of artists.

Did any of you see the film *My Architect* about the American architect Louis Khan? He was one of the greatest architects of the 21<sup>st</sup> century but he wasn't able to communicate articulately with the agencies necessary to make his work. As a result, he only created four great buildings in his life instead of the 20 or 30 that he should have made. Was it inevitable that his lack of capacity to engage with the external world meant that his work wasn't made? Or could there have been a better process between him and the partners? Unless we can find a way to champion the artist within that process, we won't have that release of imagination, spirit and energy that everyone wants to take place in a devolved Scotland.

Again and again in public art, when you come to the moment when the different teams of people come together, I've seen and felt a lack of respect for the artist within that equation. It always seems that the artist is being done a favour. Unless they have a big institution behind them, artists can feel that they're the weakest link in a partnership. They don't speak the language, yet it's they who create the end product that creates the moment of inspiration that everybody, including the politicians, wants.

I feel that there are two things that have to happen – one, that as creative people we have to learn and understand the fact that the external world doesn't necessarily value us or our work. We expect that in Scotland – that's the norm. Secondly, the public agencies that we work with have to be encouraged to understand that they may need to be a bit more trusting and patient but they'll get the end result if they go along with that process. What can be done to help this to happen?

At the start of the Hidden Gardens project, our first funding was the Scottish Arts Council lottery funding, and there was immediately a problem because we were the arts company self-commissioning so we were both client and producer. Could we be trusted to run a capital project? Not even the Scottish Arts Council could trust us at the beginning because there is an expectation of a certain kind of process when it comes to capital builds and so we had a monitoring officer allotted us. I really resented this but then I saw that you can choose the person.

We actually had two officers – Ben Spencer and Fiona Dean – and through having an objective eye, looking in on this very complex process and reporting back to both us and to the Lottery, a fantastic thing happened. We were able to see what we were doing for the first time and actually learn from it. Instead of us feeling monitored, we felt we were being nurtured. They were able to become an interface for us with some of the public partners who in the beginning wouldn't necessarily respect or trust us. We won that respect in good time by dint of good practice and professionalism but in the beginning, that trust was not there. Having an external person who everyone feels comfortable with was very useful in building that trust.

This takes me back to what I was saying – about how you put people together with very different languages and visions and in the end make great work. That's all we should be concerned with when we're marketing or creating it – getting work out there that deepens our understanding of life, increases our humanity, helps us understand who we are here in Scotland and our place in the world.

I'm going to give you now a bit of background about the Hidden Gardens as an interesting model that worked. It's based at the back of Tramway. Tramway is an interesting building – it's found its heart as an amazing, inspiring, international arts venue but has never found its heart in East Pollokshields because it doesn't have a way to interact with that community. I don't believe that every artist should have to engage with the cultural enterprise agenda – some artists should just be left alone to make great work. There should be an opt-out in the funding of the future so that people are not strait-jacketed into following an agenda that they aren't capable of delivering.

The Hidden Gardens was something that *chose* to engage with the community. It was right for the project. If it's right, then that agenda is brilliant but it shouldn't be for everyone. There must be flexibility. This happened to fit. Some of my projects don't. We really wanted to engage with what East Pollokshields was – one of the greatest multi-cultural areas of Scotland. I can say unashamedly, having been out to the Himalayas, India and Nepal, researching for the work that we did in Glen Lyon, I knew more about India than I did about Scottish Asians. The process of engagement with what it is to be Scottish Asian was a complete revelation for me and for the artists who worked on the project.

We took on a big brownfield site for the project which was very polluted. I wanted to be quite personal about the artists and their journey. nva was in an interesting position because we're a creative company led by a creative vision but we were managing the artists commissioned to make the artworks within the garden so we were able to see what it's like from the other side – to understand how obstinate, annoying, confusing and difficult artists are to work with. It's very strange to watch people evolve their work and realise that they're lost inside their own world and processes and you just have to be patient and feed those processes and respect what it takes for people to make work.

We went about the project in a number of ways. We had an amazing woman called Clare Hunter who over two years did a profound piece of community liaison in that area. We said to people that we're building a garden that we hope you'll take on – it's for you and also for Scotland as a whole. It will represent a certain philosophy - that nature underpins our lives, religious and secular, and that there should be absolute respect for all the diverse ways that humanity manifests itself. We asked people to tell us *their* philosophy of what a great garden should be. We got people to engage profoundly with their ideas and then we said, help the artists to make the best garden they can. We didn't ask the community to make the garden. We said, let people who are good at it do the making but inform, inspire them so that their work genuinely reflects the conversations you've had. These discussions lasted over two years before anything was put down on paper.

We brought in Divya Bhatia from Mumbai to take the role of guru or teacher to work with each of the artists to help them develop their practice and to understand that they shouldn't see their work in isolation within the garden – that every part is part of a bigger part, in the Hindu way of thinking. This became a metaphor for the whole way we approached the process – nothing is in isolation. The formal part of the garden followed the basic garden design principles seen in Muslim, monastic Christian and Hindu traditions. At the back there was a wilder part in the romantic tradition of landscaped gardens. The artworks were manifest within this as a whole.

What was really interesting was that everyone who had been consulted over the two years and who came to the opening felt that part of themselves was in the garden. It was very contemporary, modernist but somehow people felt that their consultation had made this great art work because their ideas were taken seriously and they were given respect. It was the same for everyone – the artists were taken seriously and given respect, so were the funders. It's a process of mutuality that must be at the heart of all these things - respect for difference, respect for others.

What I'm trying to say is really quite simple. We have to champion artists' rights and encourage and help them to make great work. Nothing matters as much as that.

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A lively Q & A session ensued:

Q Angus, you seem to have resolved your relationship with the Scottish Arts Council. Has the Scottish Arts Council resolved its relationship with artists?

A (Jim Tough) We are here to support artists – that's one of the central reasons why we exist. Over the summer, we've been talking to most of the funded organisations we support on a regular basis and the rights of the artist became very central to some of those discussions. I think that rights is a difficult word because it can mean different things but what it says to me – and this was reflected in our submission to the Cultural Commission – is that if the Scottish Arts Council can't stand up for the artist, who can?

Q How do you define great art? Isn't it subjective?

A (Angus Farquhar) Yes, each one of us will have our own moments through our lives when something really shifted for us – when we knew the world or ourselves a bit better and became more human in the process.

Q What part do you think the audience plays in feeding the artist's moment of inspiration?

A (Angus Farquhar) I can only speak personally. My work sits somewhere between contemporary art and performance. I go through a two or three year process where I follow a particular idea or vision or a reaction to a particular landscape which can lead to very complex thoughts. Then I start thinking about the audience and what it will be like for them when they step on to that path for the first time and I have to let go of all that complexity. If you don't get this moment right, you get too knotted up in your own internal thought processes and the end result doesn't communicate what you set out to communicate. My relationship with audiences is one of respect. I try and create a type of work that is very democratic. I want people to take it and make it their own story, adventure, journey. That, to me, is a different type of entitlement and that's what drives me.

Q Thank you for telling the story of The Hidden Gardens because it's only by telling such stories that we can understand how difficult it is to explain what goes on when artists engage in a creative, respectful way in a community and what comes out of it. Artists working with a community can do so much more than social work. They can really make expression for, and with, people, transforming a situation to allow growth. Funders find this very difficult to understand because it's not about things that they normally measure.

A (Angus Farquhar) I appreciate that comment. It was a long journey, involving a lot of dealing with the complexity, giving things time and sometimes making hard decisions, but we got respect in the end. We were working with a housing association, for instance, and after a couple of years, they turned round and said, this is really something rather special, isn't it? People have to find it out for themselves.

## **Seminars and Discussion Sessions**

### ***The role of marketers in supporting cultural democracy in action***

***Liz Gardiner, Chief Executive, Fablevision and Russell McLarty, Chair, Royston Road Project***

*Fablevision and the Royston Road project have been working in partnership since 1996. How has their grassroots, bottom up approach enabled them to create a sustainable cultural development within some of the most marginalised and disadvantaged communities of Glasgow north? What role could marketers play in this type of approach? Liz Gardiner and Russell McLarty examined the democratic process to providing rights of access to quality cultural provision for Scotland's citizens.*

Russell McLarty and Liz Gardiner began the session by describing their work in the east end of Glasgow. Here, the Royston Road Project, in partnership with Fablevision, is engaged in a long-term 'arts-led' community development programme where local people are involved in the creative process of transforming both a negative attitude and poor physical environment. Liz spoke about Fablevision's commitment to cultural planning, a process which puts culture, artists and creative processes at the core, and involves the co-operation of artist and community to produce culturally representative and relevant projects. It is a process that goes far beyond simply creating art for the community.

Central to this process is the involvement of the community at every level of planning and execution of the project. In the 1998-2001 Parks project, costing £1.7 million, local people were involved in the design process of two 'pocket parks', with thirty trainees involved in the physical construction of the parks. A board was set up to act as a vehicle for communication between the community and the artists. Two 'rival' communities learned to work together. They were able to develop initiatives that were of relevance to their community while at the same time developing personal skills which they could then take on to other projects.

The board, in consultation with the local community and the artists, developed proposals that resulted in seven arts residencies that brought top artists to work with local groups in ways that were never imagined. These included a new local radio station, a writers' project that reinvigorated the dwindling community council, a tree planting, and projects focusing on local history and graffiti writing. Throughout this process, postcards detailing the progress of the various initiatives were printed and circulated to local people. Local people came together in huge numbers to celebrate the opening of the parks.

Liz described how the community was encouraged to participate in the project and her commitment to using a rigorous cultural process to help create communities. The Parks project received a SURF award in recognition of its participative process and a design award for quality.

Russell then outlined the ongoing work of the Royston Road Project. They have maintained local community engagement with arts and artists through the 2004 storytelling project and festival, and through three further arts residencies, as well as the ongoing radio project.

They have also been asked to provide the lead in a number of initiatives to develop critical open spaces, one in partnership with the City Council that involves landscaping around the new community centre and the other with a housing association in an arts-led landscape project. This latter project was particularly noteworthy, Russell felt, as it acted as a validation of the work of the Royston Road Project and demonstrated the status that they have achieved at the local level.

Further afield, they have been invited to contribute to international conferences and learning about the wider implications of arts in community development.

Looking to the future, Russell and Liz highlighted the importance of additional funding to allow further initiatives to be developed, and some kind of support mechanism for the Royston Road Project. A network of organisations has evolved from the Project's work but this is still not creating a truly cross-sectoral approach.

Royston has a reputation for being quite a rough part of Glasgow and Russell talked about how the area's image has made it difficult to gain good publicity for the Parks project. How best to highlight the success of the Royston Road Project in the local and national media, when they only seem interested in reporting items that confirm Royston's popular reputation, is an ongoing concern. Similarly, Liz emphasised the importance of marketing the benefits of their work to funders – without an understanding of what they do, it's difficult to achieve funding.

The open discussions that followed the presentation, and showing of a BBC documentary about the Parks project, centred on this question of how to gain positive publicity for the Royston Road Project. Suggestions included:

- Emphasise the 'work in progress' element of the project - highlight the ongoing benefits of the project for the local communities involved
- Develop close working relations with the press - give them as much positive information as possible and exploit any personal contacts
- Target arts correspondents on individual newspapers to try and get them interested

The group agreed that ultimately it was impossible to second-guess the editor and therefore ensure a specific outcome.

There was also discussion around the question whether this is art or social work. Liz and Russell felt that their work, involving as it does intervention and community development, takes a social work approach but that art and artists is at its core.

*Postscript* After the Forum, Liz Gardiner reported that Fablevision has been contacted by a local housing association asking if the company could work with them. They had heard of the Royston Road Project and wanted 'some of the same'. Liz reflected on the importance of having the Royston Road Project on the ground as a model so that they could be sure that any relationship that they entered into with a housing association was truly a partnership. For Liz, the approach had demonstrated precisely why Fablevision is moving towards a more practice-based research model.

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## **Pricing for revenue growth and audience development?**

**Tim Baker, Baker Richards Consulting**

*Pricing is one of the most sophisticated tools available to performing arts venues and companies. There are literally hundreds of variables that can be ‘tweaked’ to achieve considerable increases in revenue through ticket sales while retaining and developing audiences. Baker Richards Consulting has worked with arts organisations throughout the UK to help them build audiences and maximise income through more effective pricing strategies. Here, Tim Baker gave an introduction to the key variables that make a pricing strategy more effective and used previous research as a basis to examine why cheap tickets don’t necessarily lead to increased audiences.*

‘A cynic is a man who understands the price of everything and the value of nothing’  
Oscar Wilde

Tim began his session by talking about some of the coverage in the press there has been about price – including what was dubbed the ‘Lister experiment’.

‘My belief is that there is a simpler answer. High ticket prices, I am convinced, are the biggest obstacles to young people going to the theatre.’ David Lister,  
Independent (7/12/02)

He then described a real experiment – the How Much? Project run by Sheffield Theatres in 2000 – that had explored the relationship between price and value. This had found that price was not the only barrier, and certainly not the key one preventing young people from attending the theatre. The majority of non-attenders questioned had said that it was the uncertainty of what they would get in return for their money, as much as the price, that was stopping them from going. For attenders, price was even less important, with over half (58%) of the attenders stating retrospectively that they would have been prepared to pay more for their ticket.

### *The purchase decision process*

He then looked at the process that people go through when deciding on a purchase:

- 1 Am I interested in this sort of event?
- 2 Do I want to attend this specific event?
- 3 Am I free that day? Does my partner want to go? Can we get a babysitter? etc
- 4 How much does it cost? Is the value equal to/greater than the cost?
- 5 How do I book?

### *Understanding price and value*

*Relative utility:* It is important to understand that customers undertake a complex – and probably unconscious – ‘weighing up’ of value relative to other things they could do with their money. Willingness to pay a particular price does not therefore depend on absolute cost, but on the value each customer places on the product or experience they are offered.

*Creating value:* Value is what you offer your customers in terms of meeting their needs over all the other options. You need to consider two key questions – What needs are you meeting? What is your competitive set? Participants suggested that the needs that their organisations were satisfying included: fun, nostalgia, a social night out, safety/permission, aspiration, live connection, shared experience, intellectual/emotional stimulation, inspirational, unique, belonging, emotional enrichment, sense of self.

*Communicating value:* The key thing to remember when communicating value is that you focus on the benefits rather than the features. The following example was given:

A Christmas Carol (features)

‘Celebrate the Festive Season with the characters from Dickens’ classic Christmas ghost story – Jacob Marley, Mr & Mrs Fezziwig, Bob Cratchit, Tiny Tim and the old humbug himself, Ebenezer Scrooge. This enormously popular musical adaptation features carolsinging actor musicians and local schoolchildren.’

Or (some benefits):

‘Unless you’re Ebenezer Scrooge, Christmas just isn’t Christmas without a festive treat or two! So, we would like to offer you the ideal way to celebrate with family or friends. Enter the Mirror Tent for a captivating production of Dickens’ A Christmas Carol. Heartfelt and funny, this show is full of surprises, songs and seasonal spirit. Plus, French chef Michel Sadones will serve crepes, mince pies, mulled wine and more.’

*Positioning*

‘If the targeting and positioning decisions are made correctly, the other things will follow. If they’re made incorrectly, nothing good will follow” Philip Kotler

Key to getting the positioning right is to understand your customer’s perceptions of value. You need to think about what they earn, their disposable income; occupation; life stage and lifestyle. They’ll be weighing up the cost of attending, the nature of the event and how it’s positioned, whether their motivation is social or for the art, the value for time it offers and what the competition for their time and money is. When pricing your product, if you pitch it too low, this can lower its worth in the customer’s mind.

*Value for Time*

Time is as important a constraint as money:

- In 1998, 63% of adults agreed that they never seem to have enough time to get things done (up from 52% in 1991)
- On average, people have about 60 hours of ‘free time’ per week. (The retired have 89 hours, those working full-time pre-family have 47 hours, and those working full-time, female with children have all of 13 hours.)
- High income groups are particularly affected by lack of time.

Henley Centre: Towards 2010 (ACE, 2000)

### *The Five Cs of Value*

- 1 Comprehend what drives values
- 2 Create value
- 3 Communicate value
- 4 Convince customers to pay for value received
- 5 Capture value with appropriate pricing – be flexible and have a range of prices for different markets

Price is not the main barrier, he concluded. For most people, perception of value is the deciding factor. You must create and communicate value. You need to understand the value, then put a price on it. It is the uncertainty of what you get in return for the ticket money that is holding people back. They must value the product you are offering.

For lots of useful and free! information about pricing, plus details of Tim's Perceptions of Value model, visit [www.baker-richards.com](http://www.baker-richards.com)

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### ***Many stories, diverse lives***

#### ***Erica Davies, Head of Service, Hackney Museum***

*Based on her experiences of working with the local community in planning and programming exhibitions at the Hackney Museum, Erica Davies worked with delegates to devise an exhibition that addresses the needs and interests of an ethnically diverse community. Delegates looked at the planning, consultation and marketing of such an exhibition, and considered outreach and future developments.*

The delegates were introduced to Hackney Museum which aims to celebrate the history and people of the area that is now the London Borough of Hackney. It has a rich and fascinating history reaching back to Saxon times, and one of the Museum's prize exhibits is a Saxon boat, a rare and precious survival. During the Tudor period the marshy land of Hackney became a favoured spot for the grand country houses of prosperous London gentry and those who enjoyed the precarious favour of the Tudor court. By the seventeenth century Hackney had become a magnet to dissenters and nonconformists. It enjoyed proximity to the City of London, but was beyond the jurisdiction of City authorities and so dissenters could practice their religion freely. Daniel Defoe was amongst the first of these nonconformists to make his home in north Hackney, but through the centuries other famous radicals and reformers settled there, Mary Wolstoncraft, Elizabeth Fry and Charles Bradlaugh were amongst them.

In the eighteenth century more grand mansions were constructed, one of the most famous being Balmes House in the area now known as De Beauvoir. As the City of London spread, and these grand houses became less fashionable, they were converted into asylums or schools. Amongst these Hackney Schools one was even said to rival Eton, and in the nineteenth century Edgar Allan Poe was enrolled at one of these schools. Conrad Loddiges, a migrant from Germany, developed a splendid market garden providing trees for ornamental gardens all over London. Increasingly Hackney was becoming a manufactory servicing the needs of the ever-expanding city and the nineteenth century saw the greatest expansion of Hackney till it became a centre, amongst others for the furniture and hat trades.

These centuries of progress and development were brought to an abrupt halt with the onset of World War II during which many thousands of people died and thousands of buildings were destroyed in every part of the area. The post war era saw many people moving eastwards to Essex, often encouraged by government policies. Hackney then became an area of high immigration with many people arriving from the Caribbean to work in the NHS and in London Transport. They have been joined by migrants from all over the world, often arriving as refugees fleeing war and persecution. The Borough was often perceived from outside as suffering from all the ills of the decay of inner cities, from racial tensions and crime. Hackney Museum, founded in 1986, provides a museum service that celebrates the dynamic history and the extraordinary rich diversity of the area. Fitted out by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Museum aims to represent all the communities in the borough, and consulted widely in developing its new displays.

Delegates were asked to think of how they might plan an exhibition for the London Borough of Mokeney (similar in many respects to Hackney) which has a population of 202,819 of which almost a quarter is under 16 years of age. The percentage of the population aged under 44 years is 74% compared to just over 60% for England and Wales. The population of Mokeney is constantly changing. In a recent MORI survey 19% had lived in Mokeney for less than 5 years.

According to the Government Index of Deprivation 2000, Mokeney's average ward ranks make it the second most deprived area in the country. All 23 old wards (out of 8,414 in the whole country) are in the worst 10% nationally and seven wards are in the worst 3%. Mokeney's teenage pregnancy rate is the fourth highest in the country. Almost 40% of households have an income below £15,000. During the same period the average across Inner London increased from £2,260 to £2,950.

Historically, Mokeney has attracted a diverse range of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers from all over the world, which continues to this date. A recent survey found people from 22 countries in one hostel alone. According to recent Office of National Statistics mid-year estimates, almost 40% of the population are from ethnic minority groups, of which the largest group is Black (25%). Stanley Hill is home to the largest Hasidic Jewish community in Europe, while the Vietnamese and Turkish speaking communities are also strongly established in the borough. All ethnic minority groups in the borough have a younger age structure than the white population, 50% of children under four years of age come from ethnic communities other than white. A recent survey amongst 12 year olds in Mokeney schools indicated that nearly 80% of these pupils were from nationalities other than English, Scottish or Welsh.

Another survey in Mokeney schools showed that the total number of languages spoken other than English is 88: these include Turkish, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati, Urdu, Somali, Chinese, Vietnamese and French. Council housing is no longer the dominant tenure (33% compared with nearly 60% in 1981). This change is as a result of regeneration programmes that have seen housing transferred to Housing Associations and refurbished – or demolished and rebuilt. Mokeney has demolished 15 tower blocks since 1986.

Mokeney's largest religious group are Christians (46.56%), with the Muslim (13.76%) and Jewish (5.29%\*) faiths comprising of the top three largest groups within the borough. Mokeney's Jewish population was measured for the first time for Census 2001. It is one of the six largest religious groups in England, and the fifth largest within London. However, 19.03% of Mokeney's population stated that they did not have a religion and 11.99% did not state their religion. It should be noted that some ethnic and religious groups are reluctant to specify their religious and ethnic groups based on various ethical, moral and safety grounds.

Despite extensive bombing in WWII Mockney has many fine historic buildings, including a Tudor manor house. Compared to other London boroughs Mockney has more than average hectares of parks and open spaces. Proximity to the City of London has meant that southern parts of the borough are now highly prized as destinations for gentrification. Mockney Museum is a local authority run, community-based museum. It intends to plan an exhibition which will appeal to the widest possible audience among the many communities of Mockney.

Working in groups, workshop members were asked to consider all the issues they would need to take account of in planning, developing and marketing an exhibition to this diverse community: subject matter; barriers, physical and intellectual; access; education programme and outreach, and further developments.

One group suggested an exhibition on the changing role of the family within different ethnic groups within the last hundred years. This could use census data eg size of families, changing employment patterns etc. Consultation would be at the heart of the process. Local groups and individuals should be consulted about current as well as historic issues. Each group could have an ambassador who would then work together to put on the exhibition. The importance of sensitivity – what was pleasing to some communities could be extremely offensive to others – was recognised. And it would be important to involve children as they often translate for their parents – and to use images as well as text as language can be a barrier.

Other suggestions centred on exhibitions around food or clothing. Both are of central concern to our lives and both provide opportunities to explore areas of cultural uniqueness and creative expression. In addition, there is a language of food and clothing that can be understood without spoken language and which can therefore enable cultural understanding.

The seminars ended with lively Q & A sessions:

Q How do you address language difficulties?

A The current exhibition at Hackney explores the difference and similarities in language through an exploration of common sayings eg in Poland, one would say 'a drowning man clutches at razors' rather than 'at straws'.

Q When a large proportion of the population has English as a second language, how does this impact on interpretation material?

A Within Hackney museum, first contact information is presented in a simple language and colour coding is used to identify groups of exhibits. Additional interpretative material is produced in different languages. One delegate reported that recent research in this area has indicated that producing material in other languages is really not necessary as more informal methods of passing on information are used within ethnic groups.

Q Is the diversity of the audience and local community reflected in staff recruitment?

A If the staff are doing their job properly, then it shouldn't be necessary to achieve ethnic diversity in the staff but a traineeship, or similar initiative, could be used to encourage diversity.

Q How do you respond to the local demographics?

A In Hackney, we've pursued projects using new technology in order to engage with the young people of the burgh who are inspired and motivated by computer-based projects. One project involving ESOL resulted in lessons on language being accessible in the classroom and proved very successful.

Q Working with such a diverse population, do you ever encounter problems with exhibitions causing offence?

A In the Suitcase project, one child included a Turkish Galataceri (football team) shirt which subsequently caused offence to Kurdish visitors and participants, for whom Galataceri represented racism. Such instances are quite rare but can be very difficult to deal with.

Q What is the Museum's pricing policy?

A The Museum is free which is absolutely vital. In addition, the doors are always kept open to encourage a welcoming feeling. However, this has had an impact on humidity levels within the Museum and has had to be re-considered.

Q How can you enable a sharing of experience between the indigenous population and the diversity of the incoming populations? Is it difficult to bring communities together at an adult level?

A Monthly workshops encourage skill-sharing, while children's workshops can often provide an environment for adult work too. Several other agencies in Hackney such as Freeform and Opera Co. are also working effectively with adult audiences.

Q Given Hackney's reputation as a centre for artists, is it possible for the Museum to tap into this resource?

A We are working on a number of initiatives to encourage the participation of local artists. There are also several local organisations which specifically encourage artists to work with the local community.

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### ***Family Friendly Initiative - Marketing to families affected with Disability***

***Chair: Rosie Lewis, Development Projects Co-ordinator, Imagine***

***Facilitator: Phyllis Steele***

***Panel: Rosie Smith, Terry Campbell (Rosie's mum), and Ian Hamilton***

Rosie introduced the Family Friendly Initiative, facilitator and panel members. All the participants then introduced themselves and said what they wanted to get from the seminar.

#### ***Exercise 1 – A good night out***

As a whole group we answered the question, what makes a good night out? Answers included: feeling comfortable; being with friends; feeling welcome; being stimulated; meeting new people; taking a risk; value for money; good atmosphere; to have space. We agreed that everyone deserves this and participants were asked to bear this in mind for the rest of the seminar.

#### ***Exercise 2 – Welcome Arts Centre Marketing Team***

The group divided into small groups of three or four plus a panel member. Each group was put into role as the marketing team for the Welcome Arts Centre. They were given the programme for a family day that was due to run in January 2005. The day included activities such as belly dancing, a screening of star wars, puppet making, making a book, learning instruments from around the world, a performance of Tam O'Shanter.

Each group was also given a profile of a family; each family included one member who had a disability of one kind. The disabilities included; hearing impairment, visual impairment, aspergers and being a wheelchair user. The families also came from different social, economic and ethnic backgrounds.

The groups were given the task of devising a marketing strategy that would reach all members of their family and that would encourage all of them to want to come to the family day together and take part in as many of the activities as possible. The groups approached this in terms of:

- 1 research they would undertake,
- 2 information they would put out
- 3 where they would put the information
- 4 the work they would do within the venue to ensure that the day was a success
- 5 ways they would follow up the visit
- 6 additional ideas

### *1 Research*

- Talk to community and support groups
- Research specialised press
- Talk to SEN schools
- Find out disability support newsletters they could get info into
- Find out the support and access needs for as broad a range of disabilities as possible

### *2 Nature of information to put out*

- Posters
- Material to include images of the venue so people can picture where they are coming to
- Material to contain quotes from families who have been before and had a great time
- Copy to encourage families to spend time together, to come and try new activities, to come and have fun, to come and meet other families, to make new friends
- Copy to include information on access, that signers will be there, that there is an induction loop, that things will be in Braille, that there will be talking computers, about where parking is etc
- Language to be clear
- Info to promote the variety that is on offer that suits all ages
- Material to contain very strong images showing people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities – to be very welcoming
- Available in all formats
- More than a flier – activity book, toy etc so it won't be chucked out

### *3 Where information would be put out*

- TV and local radio and listings
- Personal visits to community and support groups by marketing officers
- SEN schools
- Visits to after school clubs
- In schoolbags
- Libraries
- Day centres
- Local shops
- Local council – social work
- Local religious groups
- Arts Ambassadors networks
- Disability resource centres
- Carers groups/family support groups
- Via email groups
- Drama groups

- Bookings to be followed up by personal contact to reassure customers

#### 4 *Venue training*

- Staff training in disability issues to include language
- Staff to be very positive/upbeat on the day
- Staff to have tasters of all the activities so that they can talk knowledgeably about them to the families on the day

#### 5 *Follow up*

- Exit leafleting forthcoming events
- Maintain contact with new attenders
- Make marketing via all the disability channels a mainstream part of all future campaigns

#### 6 *Additional ideas*

- All families should be encouraged to bring along something that represents their culture to promote the multi-cultural aspect of the day – this could form an exhibition
- Offer a food voucher as part of the day
- Provide free transport
- Offer a picnic area so that families can bring packed lunches
- Run an open day so that families can come in for a tour around the centre. This would be particularly useful for someone with a visual impairment to become familiar with the layout.

Throughout the exercise the group were able to ask Rosie, who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair and sticks, Terry her mum and Ian who is blind, what their opinions were on a huge range of issues. Once the groups had completed the exercise, we came back together for a full group discussion on all the issues and ideas that had been raised.

#### *Conclusions*

The following messages came through clearly in the discussions:

- Disabled people are a wide and varied group and need to be understood and approached as such
- Marketers need to do lots of research into lots of disabilities to understand the needs
- Communication channels and information networks need to be developed to reach as many different groups as possible and these channels and networks should be mainstreamed into all future marketing campaigns
- Marketers should always say something and try and communicate with disabled people rather than say nothing at the risk of getting it wrong
- Disabled people are as much part of society as anyone else and deserve to have the same level of information as everyone else so that they can make up their minds what they want to attend

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## **Marketing and touring: companies/venues**

### **Heather Maitland, Arts Consultant**

*Heather has recently written a practical guide to marketing and touring which was commissioned jointly by the Arts Councils of Scotland, England and Wales. Using this very comprehensive new publication as a basis, the seminar looked at developing effective partnerships between venues and touring companies, campaign planning and successful communication with audiences with the aid of case studies and practical examples.*

The two workshops were based on the research into current touring marketing practice that Heather Maitland undertook while writing *Marketing and Touring: a practical guide to marketing an event on tour* published jointly by the Arts Councils of Scotland, England and Wales. An online version of the book, together with over 85 additional case studies and top tips from marketers, is at [www.artscouncil.org.uk/publications](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publications).

Neither venues nor touring companies can achieve their objectives on their own. The company is the expert on the product, but the venue is the expert on its audiences and the local marketing environment. They are a team even if their offices are at opposite ends of the country. Good teamwork brings bigger audiences.

But only a third of venues involved in the research said that most companies gave them the basic support they needed to market a show. Conversely the majority of companies said they found it difficult to deal with the surprisingly different standards of marketing support they got from their partner venues. Clearly something is not quite right.

So what do venues and companies expect from each other?

The **companies** consulted during the research for the book said that the Top Five characteristics of great venues and promoters are:

- 1 Being enthusiastic about the work *(seeing a show beforehand can be useful as can involving others in the venue who are particularly enthusiastic about specific types of programming – it's helpful to use them to talk face-to-face to the company.)*
- 2 Being efficient: doing what you said you would do and meeting deadlines
- 3 Good teamwork: understanding your partner's priorities and pooling resources *(always be clear about who is doing what – this can be as simple as taking notes at meetings. And it's important to find something that you can work on together.)*
- 4 Being flexible and responsive to new ideas. Thinking laterally *(companies come to the venue with lots of good ideas but they sometimes have to remember that their show has to fit into the whole programme. Audiences can compliment each other. There isn't always time to take every idea forward and the ideas won't always all work in all venues. If an idea won't work, let the company down gently by offering alternatives that will work. The role of the venue can be to help the company to focus on marketing the more specialist aspects of the production.)*
- 5 Knowing your audience well and passing on your knowledge *(information on specific audiences can be gained from organisations such as Surestart, a government-sponsored scheme where socially excluded families are given support by a mentor. The organisation Connections has databases of all the young people in an area and is keen to share this data.)*

*(Comments from seminar participants (venues) in italics)*

The five biggest challenges companies say they face are:

- 1 Poor communication from venues and promoters (*make sure that you always give a main point of contact and ensure that they're always reachable*)
- 2 Wildly differing standards of marketing expertise from venue to venue (*a lot of companies don't know what to expect so communication is critical. It can also be very useful to speak to the other venues on the tour.*)
- 3 Venues that aren't proactive because they see you as just another date
- 4 People who assume that the work will be difficult to sell (defeatism)
- 5 Not having enough information about local audiences

*(Again, comments from seminar participants (venues) are in italics)*

The absolute essentials companies say they need are:

- Local press contacts
- Segmented mailing list
- Effective print distribution system
- Venue brochure
- Knowledge of their audiences
- Enthusiastic staff

The **venues and promoters** consulted during the research for the book said that the Top Five characteristics of great companies are:

- 1 Giving practical help and support (*the company is the expert on the show and some venues may be concerned about what they'll be asked when promoting the show and can be relieved when the company contacts local press etc for them.*)
- 2 Meeting face to face to talk about the show and plan the campaign (*it makes a huge difference to visit venues beforehand. Some venues also want to meet with other venues on the tour.*)
- 3 Communication: keeping in touch, being easy to get hold of and returning calls promptly (*venues are usually harder to get hold of than companies and have lots of things going on whereas the company is focused on one thing.*)
- 4 Providing a comprehensive marketing toolkit
- 5 Providing marketing tools and information in good time (*there needs to be an agreed timescale. Providing information four to six months in advance is difficult for companies – in many cases, the work may not be created that early – but they should be able to provide a usable image and an indication of the artistic team's intentions.*)

*(Comments from seminar participants (companies) are in italics)*

The five biggest challenges venues and promoters say they face are:

- 1 Not enough accurate information about the show and its potential audiences
- 2 Rapid turnover of short runs – too many different shows to market as they would wish
- 3 Lack of communication from companies *(it's important to tell the venue if there are any major changes to the production as the target audience may be different.)*
- 4 Lack of time to devote to each visit *(companies should try to encourage venues to be realistic about what they can achieve.)*
- 5 Print, copy and images arriving too late *(it would be good to know when venues want this by).*

*(Again, comments from seminar participants (companies) are in italics)*

The absolute essentials venues say they need are:

- Sufficient quantities of high quality, effective print
- Effective brochure copy and images
- Accurate information about the production
- A range of images for the media
- A consistent point of contact
- Information for press releases
- Information about potential target audiences
- Meeting deadlines

So effective partnerships between venues, promoters and companies depend on:

- Sharing responsibilities and sharing the workload
- Sharing information to ensure that each understands the other's objectives and expectations
- Being honest with each other and not hiding the challenges they face in their own organisations

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## ***Evidence-based programming***

### ***Chaired by Roberta Doyle, Vice-Chair, Tron Theatre***

*How do we build into our organisational policies, formal collaboration between artistic/creative leaders and marketers over audience-facing issues? With the cultural rights of citizens as one of the cornerstones likely to emerge from the Cultural Commission, how do marketers ensure that programming and artistic planning reflect the needs of Scotland's citizens? Roberta Doyle, one of Scotland's leading arts marketers, chaired this lively discussion-based session, the key points from which will be fed back to the Commission.*

Key discussion points:

#### *Ensuring that arts programming reflects the needs of Scotland's citizens*

- There was general agreement that cultural entitlement doesn't mean that the citizens of Scotland have the right to tell arts organisations what to programme. The rights of the artist to programme work for which there appears to be little or no market demand must be respected.
- It's important to recognise that marketing the arts **can be** different to marketing other kinds of product. You can't put the customer at the heart of product development in the same way as you can in other sectors. The customer won't always know what they want. And it's important for artistic leaders to do just that – lead, not follow.
- Audience research in the arts suggests anyway that the product itself is often not the issue – it's about the whole experience of visiting the gallery, theatre etc.
- There was general agreement about the importance of knowing your customer and what enhances their experience and recognising that they may have different priorities to another organisation's customers.
- Although the group felt that the notion of customer care is widely understood within the arts sector, one delegate suggested that there is still a long way to go in terms of implementation.

#### *Evidence-based programming*

- Gathering evidence to inform programming – especially attitudinal information to identify which communities are most likely to be prepared to take risks – was generally felt to be useful. Concern however was voiced about the resistance of some artistic leaders to take such evidence seriously or to use it to inform their programming decisions.
- The need for mechanisms to encourage artistic leaders to recognise their role in relation to the cultural rights of citizens, and the role of arts marketers in this, was raised.
- One delegate (the Artistic Director of a local authority mixed-programme venue) argued for the importance of intuitive programming – of relying on your intuition about whether there is a market for a particular kind of work. She cited the example of an experimental music festival. This had arisen solely out of a desire to offer local audiences an opportunity to hear such music. It had led to a successful audience development collaboration with other venues in Scotland programming similar work. The importance of artistic leaders taking such risks was generally recognised.

#### *Changing perceptions of the arts*

- The role of the arts marketer in terms of changing perceptions to the arts was discussed. For some, this was an indistinguishable part of the arts marketing process – it wasn't just about marketing to those who already have an inclination to be engaged in the arts. A key part of the marketer's remit is to demystify the arts.
- The group as a whole felt strongly that in Britain, everyone is brought up to feel ashamed of anything that is seen to be cultural or elitist. From an early age, we are encouraged to reject the arts – they are 'arty farty', not for the likes of me.
- The tendency in Britain to always talk about access to the arts in terms of poor people (who always seem to live on housing estates!) was found to be patronising by a non-British delegate – and inaccurate. Lots of middle-class people don't access the arts either. He urged arts marketers to move on from this. It was suggested that this tendency may arise in part from the role that the arts play in urban regeneration.

### *Collaboration between artistic leaders and marketers over programming*

- There was general agreement that there are issues about scale and that marketers in bigger arts organisations tend not to have as much of an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to programming decisions as their colleagues in smaller organisations.
- Smaller arts organisations often have a much more integrated approach – some General Managers, for instance, are also responsible for marketing. The structure of bigger organisations tends to be more formal with a more top-down approach to decision-making.
- One delegate with many years' experience in theatre marketing reported that she had only ever been consulted at a very basic level. She admitted that it was sometimes easier just to agree with programming proposals – there was also the danger of being proved wrong if one did argue against something. It is worth however highlighting possible problems as this encourages greater thinking about the programming rationale and increased marketing efforts.
- Views differed as to the extent to which the marketer should represent the voice of the audience.
- The group was not looking for marketers to be in a situation where they dictated programming but it was suggested that they could usefully have a say as to timetable, allowing more work to be done in preparing the audience.

### *Redefining the functions of programming and marketing*

- The need to evolve a new organisational structure for arts organisations was strongly felt by the group.
- Some felt that there should be a move away from having separate departments for marketing, education etc.
- There was general agreement that the functions of programming and marketing needs to be redefined. The same person/team could possibly be responsible for both functions. Instances were cited of a gallery where this is already happening successfully and of a theatre where an artistic director has innate marketing understanding. We need to create an environment in which these kind of people can flourish.
- At the least there should be parity between artistic leaders and marketers in relation to programming decision-making.
- There also needs to be greater two-way dialogue between artistic leaders and marketers. Research might be usefully commissioned to look at the processes for developing this dialogue. Much can also be learned from those organisations where this is already happening organically.
- While it was recognised that this couldn't be enforced through funding agreements, the group felt that it was important to look at other ways of encouraging this way of working.
- The need to encourage closer working between arts organisations funded by the Scottish Arts Council and those managed by local authorities was also raised. It was felt that they often operate as two distinct groups.

### *Feeding into the Cultural Commission*

- It was recognised that the Cultural Commission provided the arts marketing community with a great opportunity to voice their views about audience focus.
- The group agreed that it was important for the artistic community to have an opportunity similar to the arts marketers' forum to get together to debate issues around cultural entitlement and feed their views to the Cultural Commission. There was a danger that they would find the resulting legislation very negative if they weren't involved in framing it.
- It was suggested that the Scottish Arts Council might take the lead in organising such a day.
- There was likely to be a role for arts marketers in convincing artistic leaders of the value of taking part in such a day. Some form of carrot or stick might be needed to encourage attendance.

## ***Entitled to Culture***

***Bryan Beattie, Expert Adviser to the Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport and Jim Tough, Head of Arts, Scottish Arts Council***

This discussion group provided delegates with an invaluable opportunity to ask their questions first hand and to feed their views into the consultation process which is being undertaken by the Cultural Commission. Bryan Beattie (Cultural Commission) and Jim Tough (Scottish Arts Council) hosted what proved to be a very lively and passionate discussion of the issues which had arisen during the course of the day and other key questions.

Discussion centred around the following issues:

### *What do we mean by cultural entitlement?*

- Concerns about the term 'cultural entitlement' – meaning can be interpreted in very different ways. Saying that people are 'entitled' to culture sends out negative messages and suggests exclusivity.
- There is a need for different sectors of the arts to share their understanding of what they mean by the term. Also perceived need for a shared understanding of 'culture'.
- Difficulty for some of seeing where cultural entitlement fits into what they do on an everyday basis
- Some felt that 'cultural entitlement' is a patronising term because it doesn't recognise that people already have access to their own culture, which may or may not include a particular artform. We should be encouraging people to extend *their* culture by embracing other forms of artistic expression within it.
- Cultural entitlement should be about finding ways to recognise and respect the cultural aspects of people's lives and to ensure that they have access to the best.

### *Creativity*

- Some felt that the fundamental right of cultural entitlement should be about developing the full creative potential of everyone. Artists and arts organisations should consider their role in this.
- The education curriculum should be driven by creativity, not literacy
- The Scottish Executive should be encouraged to see creativity as a key factor in making the Scottish workforce more competitive in the future. The arts have a fundamental role to play in this because the arts make you think creatively, question things etc.
- If we're campaigning for the arts and wanting to change attitudes, we should be promoting creativity rather than specific artforms. The notion of creativity is likely to be much more acceptable to people than the arts – less danger of people saying that it is not for them.

### *Communicating the value of the arts*

- Consensus that communicating the value of the arts is key. Delegates felt that the benefits of cultural activity are still not properly understood, even by the politicians. We live in a society that devalues and laughs at the arts, hence the use of terms such as 'arty farty' and referring to grants as 'handouts'. These attitudes are deeply embedded.
- Concern that the old debate around the worth of the arts versus health and housing etc is still very much alive in public life. This makes it hard to convince people of the intrinsic worth of the arts. We must win this debate once and for all. There is a need for big bold political statements promoting the arts as being as important as health and housing.
- It's important to value art for art's sake and artists in their own right and respect the fact that some artists may not want to go into schools etc.
- Arts marketers are looking for help in communicating the value of the arts. High profile advocates are needed.
- Arts marketers need to clarify their priority targets in terms of changing attitudes eg should it be movers and shakers (politicians, media etc) or non-attenders?

### *Changing perceptions of the arts*

- Entitlement to the arts is a given. The key issue is how to get people to come to the arts. Changing public attitudes to the arts is key to this. We need to change people's perceptions of the arts, before we can get them interested in them. Politicians can support arts organisations in this work.
- Using appropriate language is key.
- People need to feel that the arts are an acceptable part of their everyday life before they can feel entitled to the arts.
- There is a need for popular arts icons that people can relate to, drawn from the worlds of rock music, TV soaps, film etc.

### *Education*

- We need to ensure that people have the knowledge, and therefore feel that they have permission, to take up their right to cultural entitlement. If people don't have the necessary knowledge, there is a danger that they will feel stupid and that this will lead to them feeling that the arts are not for them and they don't have a right to them. Education has a key role to play in this.

### *Media*

- Widespread agreement that that there is a lot of work to be done to improve the relationship that arts organisations have with the media and to encourage more positive media coverage of the arts.
- General sense that the media is helping to perpetuate the public lack of understanding of the benefits of cultural activity.
- Some support for a national campaign for the arts along the lines of that for the health service.

### *Access to the arts*

- Access is a key issue in the rural areas of Scotland where there is very little arts activity. It is important that we don't only use benchmarks based in the Central Belt.

### *The Cultural Commission*

- Some concern expressed about the Commission's focus on the long-term – that you can't plan 20 years ahead because the landscape will have changed by then. Perception that the problems now facing arts funding stem from decisions made 20 years ago. There is a need for action for the arts now – not another talking shop.
- Importance of feeding the findings of the huge amount of audience research that has already been undertaken by Scottish Arts Council and others into the Commission. It's a great resource that mustn't be wasted. Also useful to look at similar research undertaken by other sectors eg libraries.
- Mixed feedback to the consultation process. Some felt that it has provided them with a useful focus for reflection and visioning, while one or two found it rather unstructured and intimidating and hard to engage with.

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### ***Creative Conclusions***

Chaired by Maddy Morton, the final plenary session provided an opportunity to catch up on the key issues that emerged from all the seminar and discussion groups and to draw together the main themes arising from the day. This will form the basis of the input by Scotland's arts marketers to the Cultural Commission.

Key points emerging from seminar and discussion groups:

*The role of arts marketers in supporting cultural democracy in action* (Fablevision/Royston Road project)

- To entitle people to culture it helps to empower people to take part in it.
- This art helps a community to know its story and to define itself.

*Pricing for revenue growth and audience development?*

- It's not about the price - it's about communicating value.
- A cynic is a man who understands the price of everything and the value of nothing.

*Many stories, diverse lives* (Hackney Museum case study)

- Organisations need to establish an ongoing process to incorporate respect, consultation and communication with their current and potential audiences and this process needs to be integrated within the thinking/planning of the organisation.
- Working with diverse audiences starts with a simple conversation.

*Marketing to families affected with disability*

- We are people and want to be included as part of society.

*Marketing and touring: venues*

- To build and improve relationships between companies and venues, we should define and manage realistic expectations through partnerships based on knowledge, communication, mutual respect and enthusiasm.

*Marketing and touring: companies*

- Develop a good working relationship and learn to love each other. Good communication is key.

### *Evidence-based programming*

- Evidence-based programming and therefore cultural entitlement is not about audiences or potential audiences dictating artistic choices. We as a group fundamentally believe in the right of the artistic programme for which there appears to be little or no market demand. However, there needs to be a reappraisal within the whole cultural sector about how programming decisions are arrived at in order to redefine the functions of programming and marketing.

### *A national campaign for arts and culture?*

- There needs to be better mechanisms for raising the profile of the arts, changing perceptions and capturing hearts and minds - perhaps a central approach.

### *Entitled to culture?*

- Entitlement to culture is a given but we still have to communicate the value of culture - that it provides imagination, inspiration, creativity. This understanding of the value of culture has to begin with education - it needs to be embedded at a very early age.

The key themes emerging from the day were identified as being:

- *Communication*: the importance of language - how it can hinder or help people to engage with culture
- *Value*: the value of culture and finding ways of communicating the value of engaging with culture
- *Relationships* within and between organisations and how they can be improved in order to help the agenda of cultural entitlement
- *Respect*: the importance of respect - for different kinds of people, for audiences and for artists and administrators

Maddy also identified two practical points:

- The need for a review within the whole cultural sector of how programming decisions are arrived at
- And the need to look at how decisions about language are made. How can this be improved on with the overall objective of developing respect for, and relationships between, audiences and artists?

Speaker Heather Maitland commented from the floor that she really enjoyed coming to Scotland because 'you ask the difficult questions and you all really engage in a serious discussion to try to find the difficult answers. I've been so impressed by today.'

Maddy then thanked the delegates for attending and engaging so fully in the debate, before handing over to Kate Craik, Forum Co-ordinator and freelance arts manager, to bring the Scottish Arts Council's 2004 Scottish Arts Marketers' Forum to a close. Kate thanked Maddy for doing such an excellent job as a chair. She also thanked all the speakers and seminar leaders who had travelled from all over Scotland and further afield to take part; Scottish Arts Council staff who had helped with the planning and running of the day; Morag and Philippa for helping with the planning of the event; the staff at RSE and finally the caterers for providing everyone with such good food. Maddy had the final word by thanking Kate for doing such a fantastic job in organising the event. Over the years, the Forum has been getting better and better and next year, we may even need to find a bigger venue!

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