

Cultural Value

Understanding Cultural Value: The Amateur and Voluntary Arts

Jane Milling and Angus McCabe,

with Robin Simpson and Hamish Fyfe



Understanding Cultural Value: The Amateur and Voluntary Arts Expert Panel: 21st March 2014

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Executive Summary

- Within the amateur and voluntary sector there are diverse modes and forms of participation in making and creating across a wide range of arts, crafts and cultural practices. This means that generalisations about benefits, impacts, outcomes and valuations of amateur artistic creation should be made advisedly.
- Amateur creative cultural activity is vital to the subsidised and commercial sectors through reciprocal sustainable relationships.
- Sharing common goods in terms of resources, assets and expertise, the amateur sector sustains a wide range of creative practices and builds the cultural infrastructure on the local and national scale. There is a particular need to recognize amateur arts' contribution to local cultural ecologies.
- The expression of cultural value by participants as a *creative process* and *experience* in itself requires new ways of configuring the debate about intrinsic values, beyond the assumptions currently made within cultural economics or cultural policy.
- Evaluation activity with amateur arts practices should reflect the scale and capacity of the groups involved and be a reflective process that adds to the practice, rather than being an externally imposed 'tick box'. By 'starting where people and organisations are at' Social Audit and Accounting may offer a way forward.
- There is a strong need to relate the value of cultural experience to the specific art form and to the participants who create, through arts and humanities based methodologies. Such methodologies need to be based on dialogue between all involved and embedded into everyday planning, activity, and thinking.
- "Let's not get defensive about the world class voluntary and amateur arts in the UK."



Participants, Researchers and Project Partners

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Dr Jerri Daboo, University of Exeter
Dr Claire Donovan, Brunel University
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Andrew Mowlah, Senior Manager, Policy & Research at Arts Council England
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Key words

Participation; Amateur Arts; Grassroots; Third Sector arts; vernacular creativity;



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About This Event

This event was a part of the larger Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Cultural Value project that seeks to rethink the framework around discourses of “the value of cultural engagement and the methods by which we evaluate that value.” The overarching project looks to examine “cultural experience itself and its impact on individuals and its benefit to society” across a wide range of art practices including informal and improvisatory arts experience. The particular focus of this expert panel was on the amateur and voluntary arts field, that is, self-organised, volunteer-led activities, rather than professionally-led community arts or participatory arts.

The programme for the day was a key-note presentation by François Matarasso (Independent writer/ consultant, Visiting Fellow Robert Gordon University) with responses from Andrew Mowlah, (Senior Manager, Policy & Research at Arts Council England) and Katherine Hudson (Head of Policy and Strategy, The Art Fund). Formal presentations were followed by an open forum debate around three key questions on cultural value and the amateur and voluntary arts, namely:

- **Does artistic activity in this field differ from other kinds of cultural experience and cultural value?**
- **What range of evaluative methodologies is appropriate for artistic and cultural engagement in amateur and voluntary arts?**
- **What types of evidence emerge from this field of artistic and cultural engagement?**

Amateur Arts and Cultural Policy

Over 10 million people in the UK regularly actively participate in amateur artistic creation across a wide range of art forms and cultural activities. There are over 60,000 participant-driven, self-governed amateur arts groups in the UK. As *Our Creative Talent* noted, there is a paucity of empirical evidence for the number of individuals who participate in amateur music, art, performance, craft or other cultural activity without affiliation to recognised organisations. (DCMS, 2008) Yet amateur arts are frequently neglected or denigrated by the value structures of formal cultural provision.

The voluntary and amateur arts sector is vital part of understanding the diverse ways in which arts and culture are organised and experienced. Amateur and grassroots arts practices, where participants are actively engaged in the processes of making, offer a challenge to conventional concepts of participation, passive consumption, and cultural value. Moreover, as most amateur arts practice is not directly seeking public subsidy, this sector provides a strategic position from which to assess the rise and meanings of the term cultural value in cultural policy discourse.

Within cultural policy the attribution of cultural value has become a key component in the argument for sustaining public funding for the arts, configured along two axes: social indicators of value and economic indicators of value. Cultural policy in Britain has sought to attribute social value to artistic activity, and has been interested in social outcomes from such activity, since the formation of the Arts Council; a process given new impetus in 1997 with the creation of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), as Selwood and Hewison have outlined. (Selwood 2003; Hewison 1995, 2003, 2006) The social values and outcomes associated with amateur arts have been articulated predominantly against measures drawn from the funded sector, for example, measures of social inclusion and community-cohesion through benefit and well-being models, that draw on qualitative evidence from participants. (Bendle & Patterson, 2009; Burt & Atkinson, 2012) A recent scoping study of the literature on [The Role of Grassroots Arts Activities in Communities](#) found multiple social indicators and outcomes claimed for the amateur arts at the level of society, community, group and individual. (Ramsden *et al*, 2011) The scoping study also noted that the *experience* of participation in the amateur sector tended to be articulated in similar ways to the subsidised and funded sectors, social impacts and benefits were identified in terms of health (physical and mental), economy/micro-economy, social (e.g. combating isolation), skills development and employability.

It is essential that the lively debate about the economic indicators of cultural value takes into account the plural and diverse understandings of cultural engagement in the amateur and voluntary arts sector. In particular, the amateur sector has much to offer an analysis of the experiential value of cultural participation. Talking of publicly funded culture, Throsby was circumspect that the experiential value of “these cultural goods cannot, even in principle, be sensibly aggregated from the WTP[willingness to pay] judgements of individuals, and indeed they cannot be plausibly represented in monetary terms, no matter how they might be assessed.” (2003, p.279) Taking up the challenge to establish economic proxies or indicators, O’Brien suggested a language of cultural impacts might assist us in diversifying the assessment of experienced value (2010, p.7). Hewison’s triptych of creativity, continuity, and care (2006, p.45) and Holden’s tri-pronged analysis of cultural value (2004; 2006) attempt to capture more fully the valued elements of cultural experience. Based on consumption models of participation in formal culture, do these modes of valuation capture the essential spirit of amateur and voluntary artistic activity, in particular its processual focus and its complexity?

This expert panel was designed to bring together policy makers, funders, practitioners and academics to explore the ways in which we might define the cultural value and significance of amateur and voluntary arts participation. As noted, discussion was initiated with inputs from François Matarasso, Andrew Mowlah, Policy and Research Arts Council England (ACE), and Katherine Hudson, The Art Fund.

Matarasso challenged the panel to distinguish between cultural value and cultural values. *“Value is a benefit or a good; values are the expression of ideology. ... Culture is intrinsically ideological. Its creators, managers and advocates believe in the values that they argue it encapsulates and expresses. In merging those specific values with a generic, universal idea of value as good, advocates*

of the existing public culture settlement contribute to normalising it.” Matarasso cautioned that this can lead towards a confusion between capacity value and effect value. “The first is the capacity or power to do something that cannot otherwise be done. For example, education is a powerful resource that enables people better to fulfil their human development potential. The second is the use to which that capacity is put. A child can be educated in ways that produce very different results, according the values (ideology) of the society controlling the educational system.”

Recalibrating intrinsic valuations

A core issue that recurred during this discussion was the multiple and competing conceptions of intrinsic value. Hasan Bakhshi and David Throsby have recently reconsidered contingent valuation that produces economic proxies such as existence or option valuation, as ways to capture what for them is intrinsic value expressed in economic terms. (Bakhshi and Throsby, 2010) Contingent valuation tends to imagine cultural markets and cultural consumers, but amateur arts participants frame their engagement differently, as makers, and might want to express the intrinsic value of their activity in quite different terms.

Arts Council England (ACE) is developing a quality measures framework “*to capture the quality and reach of arts and cultural productions*” that centres on experience. It is an ends-based evaluation that sets out to gather “*statements that the public and peers would use to describe a series of outcomes that articulate excellence and quality: quality of product, quality of experience, depth of engagement, creative process.*” Can these quality metrics, initially designed to capture elements of the experience as audience, viewers or attendees, also articulate the range of intrinsic cultural experience among amateur arts practitioners?

Katherine Hudson reflected that The Art Fund had recently changed its criteria for awarding grants from “*aesthetic value to artistic value*”, as aesthetic value was too closely linked to ideas of expert valuation residing in the experience of the panel, whereas artistic value was closer to articulating qualities of the art work itself.¹ By contrast she noted the slipperiness of the term intrinsic, when applied to experience. For example, in recent work with The Art Fund, the DCMS had defined intrinsic value as “*the effect it has on the person’s self-expression as well as how it’s received by others. This value exists in its own right because of how it makes an individual remember, an individual feel.*” Hudson noted that in setting out to articulate the intrinsic nature of cultural experience this evaluation contained a kind of inevitable instrumentalism. Other contributors noted that there are complex links between aspects of cultural experience that are labelled intrinsic, and those that are labelled instrumental, or co-experiential. For Matarasso “*culture’s intrinsic effects – i.e.those that can be ascribed only to culture, rather than to culture in relation to anything else, such as participation – are unavoidably cultural. They relate to values underpinned by ideological beliefs.*”

¹ This debate on aesthetic and artistic echoes Jerrold Levinson’s discussion of music’s artistic value as distinct from its aesthetic experiential value, in Victor Ginsburg and David Throsby’s *Handbook of the Economics of Arts and Culture* where Levinson argues *artistic* value lies in engagement with music *qua* music, “engagement in which the music is understood, its distinctive forms, qualities and meanings acknowledged and appreciated for what they are.” (p.108-9)

Aesthetic judgements from the subsidised or commercial sector on the intrinsic value of the artistic *outputs* created by amateur makers vary widely from art form to art form, but the valuation of the intrinsic *experience* of the processes of amateur creativity exceeds the articulation of value as currently discussed in cultural economics or in cultural policy terms.

What is observable and what is controllable

“It should not be assumed that the observable goods and values associated with participation in culture can be controlled, whether by policymakers, cultural managers or artists. For example, Fèisean, a Scottish movement of youth traditional arts festivals is very much part of the voluntary sector in the Highlands and Islands. 150 primary school age kids get dropped off on a misty Monday morning and they will be timorous and not quite wanting to let go of Mum’s hand. By Friday they are at least two inches taller. If you’d taken them up a mountain high road camping a lot of that same result would have been seen. What I mean by intrinsic are the things that were to do with their sense of Scottish identity, their interest in their grandparents language, their sense of development in music, those things that are properly to do with what they have learnt though involvement in a traditional music performance.”



(Alt text: picture of five panel members at circular table in discussion)

Does artistic activity in this field differ from other kinds of cultural experience and cultural value?

The term “cultural value” has a happy synchronicity of resonances, encompassing both monetary worth and fine measurements of esteem, that has been useful in lobbying and policy-formation circles as part of an argument for arts and culture funding. This expert panel suggested that we might complicate contemporary uses of the term, and our frameworks for the valuation of cultural activity, when we turn our attention from the professional, commercial or subsidised sectors to amateur arts practices undertaken by non-professionals.

Yet, designating the amateur arts as a separate sector is potentially misleading. The amateur and voluntary arts are rarely direct recipients of government subsidy but benefit indirectly from government support for arts venues, training of professional artists etc. and are interdependent with publicly subsidised and commercial cultural activity. At core, amateur participation in creative cultural and artistic activity is the facilitating precursor to the acquisition of aesthetic knowledge, skills and activity out of which all professional practice emerges and to which it must relate. The complexity of cultural experience for amateur participants is not easily captured by simple metrics, as participants might differentially participate at different stages of life with differing level of interest and ability across art forms. The complexity of the role of amateur **participation over a life course** is likely to reveal differing levels of artistic achievement, attributed personal benefits, and advocacy. Questions ACE have posed themselves include the possibility of *“largescale longitudinal studies which follow the same populations over time, tracking the outcomes of those individuals exposed to arts and culture interventions compared to those that aren’t.”* Although we note here that they are referring to cultural *intervention*, rather than self-determining cultural activity.

Different modes of engagement over a life course

“I had to present prizes as the biennial exhibition of the Lace Guild at Dudley Art Gallery. The Chair of the Lace Guild showed me around. As I was talking to her she was explaining different kinds of lacemaking. Like anything, the more you learn the more fascinating it becomes. I asked ‘Well, how did you get into this? Is it something your mother did and passed down to you?’ She replied ‘No, I was a bit bored, I was looking for something to do. I was stood near the checkout in the supermarket. I saw this magazine about lace making. Years later I’m the chair of the Lace Guild’.”

Findings from *Studying Craft: Trends in Craft Education and Training* (2013) have suggested that “community learning is often a key starting point for those looking to start a second career in craft.” (p.52) This is what Bakhshi, Freeman and Hitchen (2009) and Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR 2013) might term a spillover impact in preparing people for professional practice. Conversely, professional education can lead to expert amateur participation: *“people who went to a music conservatoire and made a lifestyle decision not to be a professional musician on the road, but to become a software engineer - but in terms of quality they’re professionally trained and play to an extremely high standard.”*

Discussions from the day sought to avoid false dichotomies between kinds of artistic practice and of attributions of cultural value. It was noted that there were shared areas of cultural experience across the amateur and professional or subsidised sector, or between the practices of making art and of consuming art. **Expert knowledge** can be equally spread across the realms we designate amateur or professional.

Likewise the “Pitman Painter effect” was noted by several discussants, that once someone has attempted to make art, sing or play a complex piece, they have a **heightened understanding** and appreciation of the technical and aesthetic qualities of that work.

There is a strong need to relate the value of cultural experience to the specific art form and to the community participants who create.

Cultural value is community value

“We need an holistic approach. Who is to decide about value for the community and community of interest? Cultural value is community value, for me, it has got to be driven by those who organise it, not by others who tell us how it should be, because that is a different process.”

Arts Council England approach sees amateur arts participation as part of community engagement that *“reflects that diversity of contemporary England”*. ACE is increasingly acknowledging that there is a need to sustain amateur arts as part of the fuller experience of **local cultural ecologies**. *“In an area where there is lots of professional provision, in the middle of Birmingham, the main audiences you might find for a amateur concert are going to be predominantly family or the immediate circle connect ed to that group. In a rural area, somewhere remote from other arts provision probably attracts a wider general audience.”* Village halls, whether served by professional rural touring or amateur provision, have distinct audiences. *“A third of the audience across all village halls I looked at never saw the arts anywhere else except that hall. They didn’t like opera or jazz, but they were going to support the hall, the idea of community, and were more open minded.”*

It was noted that beyond the constraints of the subsidised or professional context, amateur arts practice might permit a **broader repertoire**. For amateur orchestras or choirs *“you can tackle bigger or unusual challenges beyond what a commercial or professional orchestra can do. An amateur group with subscription income, with friends and family to support the hire of a local hall, can break even on a piece that hasn’t been done for 300 years or that requires 120 players. In terms of artistic repertoire, amateurs can explore elements that professional can’t for economic reasons.”* In different sections of the amateur sector, and within different art form practices there are *“distinctive differences in terms of repertoire and histories to particular artistic forms,”* and thus very different spectrums of cultural experience.

Several discussants identified that there were distinctive aspects to cultural experience specific to art forms that were more possible in the amateur sector. For refugee or diaspora communities, self-generated amateur artistic practice, although not identified by participants as within the amateur and voluntary sector, was a key way that communities articulated their identity. For these groups, amateur artistic practice *“is about responding to a need within a community, because these artistic activities are not here: there is a gap.”* Forms of artistic practice from these contexts can be about **creating new forms**, because they are not currently found in the mainstream, and possibly can be much more daring.

Discussants noted that technologies have challenged the *“magisterium of cultural production”* and facilitated the networking of craft and arts participants across the world. However it was significant

that the mechanisms for this connection were still largely controlled by a handful of technology companies, and thus debates about power and economics were still germane.

What range of evaluative methodologies is appropriate for artistic and cultural engagement in amateur and voluntary arts?

The debate so far highlighted the complexity of understanding and attempting to quantify the cultural value, or values, of the voluntary and amateur arts. It has also drawn attention to potentially false dichotomies between the amateur and the professional in the arts. However, there is increasing pressure to evaluate arts-based activities as part of the debate on the economic and related value of cultural industries. This is the case, whether in the large cultural institutions or in community arts interventions with particular neighbourhoods or groups, where funding is involved. What impact or outcomes has this activity generated, who has benefited and how? Much of the emphasis, certainly in recent years, has been on monetising impact: from Social Return on Investment through to cost benefit analysis: how much did an intervention cost and what savings has it brought, or how has it financially benefited the Exchequer or the economy more widely?

It is interesting to note that this approach, based on HM Treasury's Green Book has been adopted by every Government Department except, so far, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Indeed, in thinking about the voluntary arts, is economic evaluation really appropriate? As has already been noted, amateur groups can generate substantial economic and social benefits – through venue hire, employing professionals and supporting supply chains. Yet this is not necessarily how such groups, even larger voluntary societies such as West Bromwich Operatic Society (highlighted by François Matarraso) would reflect on their value. If activity is entirely, or largely, voluntary – and public funding is not involved, this raises the question of *why* evaluate – and what might be appropriate methodologies for evaluation?

Here the concept of social audit and accounting may be a useful starting point

<http://www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk/getting-started/new-guide-to-social-accounting-and-audit/>

It is important to start where participants in the voluntary arts are. What are the questions they want to ask and what do they want to find out?

- Who are the various stakeholders in the voluntary arts and what can they bring to evaluation?
- Evaluation activity should reflect the scale and capacity of the groups involved
- Evaluation should be a reflective process that adds to the practice – rather than being an imposed 'tick box'.

Evaluation as reflection

"A lot of people tend to think that you have to have a researcher, you have to have a proper

academic project in order to evaluate. I was talking to a young woman who works on this brilliant youth arts project and every morning on the bus there's a group of them who work on the project, they come in, they talk about the day before, what they learnt from it, but she didn't think about that as evaluation in any way. She just saw that as them having a chat... So I think it's about how can we encourage people to see dialogue as really positive communication, because we'll not even use the word evaluation, with users and participants before you even get onto methodology."

A key challenge for participants was building evaluations and developing methodologies that were not simply anecdotal, but that could develop a collective narrative. Asking the hard questions and looking at *"what has not worked that well"* is crucial, to avoid *"simply citing the stories that evaluators or participants want to believe in and ignore the stories that they don't want to believe in...or that they never collect in the first place."*

It was important to identify who might set the success criteria for the evaluation of the amateur or voluntary arts. Participants cited various examples of evaluations which had shown positive health impacts from participation in the voluntary arts, but if the criteria for success were centred on economic impact, the very same projects could be deemed to have 'failed'. One example was the use of visual arts in the prisons, where amateur arts activity had reduced levels of aggression, built self-confidence and esteem, but was deemed not to have *"worked" because it did not get anyone into work on leaving prison.* An important issue – both in terms of evaluation and the methods adopted – was that, where the focus was on health, social or economic benefits of participation, the intrinsic value of the voluntary arts discussed earlier was lost: *"This is why the arts are different to, for example, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy."*

Different disciplines ask different questions and draw on different sets of assumptions. Much of the debate on methods focused on a perceived tension between arts and humanities, and social sciences methods. The former tended to focus in the intrinsic – on the value of an individual performance or art work which was not replicable – whilst the latter sought lessons that were generalizable rather than unique or one-off experiences. Yet for all these tensions there was a value in using a mix of methodologies in evaluating or researching the voluntary arts, and *"the danger of creating a hierarchy of methodologies"* should be avoided.

Innovation in evaluation methods

"One project we're funding is using arts-based methods to evaluate..... It's a piece of work that's with disadvantaged young people, teenagers.....in which they come for several weekends and create a play and perform it. And the question that the researcher asked is, how do we know what the benefit or the value to those young people was, as opposed to a value that was imputed to it by those who carried the whole project out. And the technique they are using I think is really exciting. The whole of what these young people are doing is being filmed, but the last stage of the project is that the young people themselves go off and edit it into a 30 minute film about what they did. They choose what they value of it, what they think are the important

bits. I think that's an inspired piece of arts-based evaluation. It's totally non-scalable, but I think the outcome would be to say, hey look, from this rigorously done piece of work, there are certain conclusions coming that we ought to think about when we're trying to evaluate these kinds of projects."

And finally: *"Arts based research and evaluation methods may be under-valued... but what we need is the ability to articulate the outcomes of participation in amateur arts in their own right and not against imposed agendas.....Methodologies for evaluating the amateur arts need to be based on dialogue between all involved and embedded into everyday planning, activity, and thinking."*

What types of evidence emerge from this field of artistic and cultural engagement?

Amateur and voluntary arts could draw on modes of cultural valuation from the debates on publicly funded art. In everyday terms, amateur arts are most frequently assessed in relation to frameworks of "artistic quality" drawn from the professional, publicly-subsidised cultural sector. While this comparison fails to capture the most significant elements of amateur practice, amateur arts do share territory with professional arts in their celebration of aesthetic values. The ways to articulate this aesthetic value are still underdeveloped across both subsidised and amateur sectors. Social outcomes have been more readily articulated, whereas artistic outcomes, the development of an artistic practice or the exploration of artistic language remain underdeveloped in this literature.

A distinctive element of the amateur sector is its preservation of specific kinds of cultural practice. An example is Morris dancing where there is no professional equivalent to the Morris sides who are consciously conserving a heritage. In cultural policy terms, the question that emerges is how the kinds of embodied knowledge held by the amateur sector might be recognised and valued. *"The distinctive cultural value of parts of the amateur sector is that the people who do it are world experts in what they do."*

Assessing the value of the artistic practice for amateur participants cannot be effectively drawn from ends-based evaluation, and yet in-process self-reflection runs the risk of altering the very process of amateur activity itself. Both auditors and participant groups were interested in capturing a diversity of evidence, beyond end-based assessment, that could draw attention to moments of developmental experience, and critical reflection on that experience. The challenge came in critically representing diverse evidence from, say, creative engagement in workshops or with material objects. While most amateur activity is not subjected to evaluation processes or configured as 'evidence', as with other sectors of participatory and community arts interventions, the quality of the narratives, counter-narratives and stories developed around the experiential evidence of participants was crucial.

Cultural policy is growing more open to diverse types of evidence, such as those that might emerge from the amateur sector, as Claire Donovan suggests in *A Holistic Approach to Valuing Our Culture*

(2013), robust economic valuations are disproportionate for small-scale artistic activities, which describes much of amateur creativity.

Tackling scale and complexity

“The economic methodologies that are being championed are really expensive. They take a lot of expertise and they’re out of proportion to what it is that is being evaluated. The more it is possible to open up the space with a broad range of methodologies, the more relevance they will have. There needs to be a framework to put it all together, a structured narrative. There is a secret weapon called multi-criteria analysis, that can include all sort of viewpoints instead of simpler social cost/ benefit analyses.”

The question of scale and purpose of evidence collection was a matter of considerable debate among panel members. *“One of the things that seems to me to be interesting is that people who are arts based researchers recognise that actually the arts isn’t iterative in that sense, it can’t be scalable.”* This draws on Matarasso’s earlier observation that observable goods and values cannot be *“made to occur on demand”*. All participants agreed that context, the motivation of participants, and the distribution of power was vital to the process of experience and the interpretation of the evidence for outcomes and benefits.

Some Final Thoughts

“Remember that some art forms, such as folk dance, have only survived because of the enthusiasm of amateurs.”

“Take quilting for example....its often the amateurs that are the world experts.”

“Let’s not get defensive about the wold class voluntary and amateur arts in the UK.”

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Appendix: Presenter and Facilitator Biographies

Professor Geoffrey Crossick is Distinguished Professor of the Humanities in the School of Advanced Study, University of London and Director of the AHRC Cultural Value Project. His previous roles include Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, Warden of Goldsmiths, Chief Executive of the former Arts & Humanities Research Board, and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development) and Professor of History at the University of Essex. He is a social historian of 19th- and 20th-century Britain and continental Europe, including the world of small enterprise, which adds a historical dimension to his interest in contemporary crafts. He speaks nationally and internationally on the importance of the arts and humanities and on the creative economy. He is Chair of the Crafts Council, sits on the governing boards of the Courtauld Institute, the Horniman Museum and the National Maritime Museum, is a member of the British Library Advisory Council and Chair of the Board of the Arts & Humanities Research Institute at Trinity College Dublin.

Hamish Fyfe has worked as actor, teacher and researcher in Northern Ireland, England and Wales. He is currently Professor of the Arts and Society, Director of the Research Institute for Computing and the Digital Economy, Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries, University of South Wales. He is Director of the George Ewart Evans Centre for Storytelling, University of South Wales. Recent AHRC Connected Communities Research Projects include “Localism, Myth and Story” 2012-13, “Nigerian Trickster Tales in Translation” 2011-12, “Arts and Wellbeing”, 2010-11, “Grassroots Arts”, 2011-12 “Genealogies of Place”, 2010-11, “Transition Networks”, 2012-14, and “Healthy Play” 2011-12.

Katherine Hudson is Head of Policy and Strategy at The Art Fund, the UK's foremost fundraising charity for art. Currently she is also acting as Interim Director of Finance and Resources. The Art Fund's policy work focuses on increasing public access to great works of art. Current campaigns include work to prevent the loss of the Wedgwood collection as well as other individual artworks from public ownership. Katherine has spent her career in the arts and social sectors, most recently as Head of Membership at the British Museum where she oversaw The British Museum Friends, a charity and company limited by guarantee with a turnover of £4m. Prior to this, she was the Director of Membership and Marketing at ACEVO where she also oversaw the Arts, Heritage and Culture Special Interest Group, having previously worked for a variety of charities including the RSA and Met Opera on supporter engagement and development.

François Matarasso is a freelance writer, researcher and consultant with a thirty year career in socially engaged arts practice. Between 1979 and 1994, he worked in visual arts, theatre and as a producer, with people in housing estates, hospitals, care centres and prisons. From 1994 to 2004 he undertook a series of studies of arts and culture, often with Comedia including *Use or Ornament?* and ending with *Only Connect*. He has worked with public bodies, foundations and universities, including King Baudouin Foundation and heritage programme in SE Europe the Council of Europe, but above all with arts organisations whose values he shares in countries from Poland to Japan, Colombia, Australia and Burkina Faso. In 2011, he began working on a series of creative projects that explore new ways of understanding people's culture. *Regular Marvels* celebrates the richness and

diversity of people's everyday art practice, especially when it is disregarded by power. Three books have been published in the series so far: on amateur theatre *Where We Dream*, artists in old age *Winter Fires*, and artists' experiences of migration *Bread and Salt*.

Angus McCabe is a Senior Research Fellow at the Third Sector Research Centre, University of Birmingham. He leads TSRC's below the radar research, exploring the experiences of small community based organisations, BME and refugee/migrant groups. Angus has a background in community development work, both in inner city and settings on peripheral estates. His research interests include urban regeneration, health and crime as well as community based education. Angus was previously Knowledge Manager with the National Evaluation of the Children's Fund (NECF), worked with the Centre of Excellence in Interdisciplinary Mental Health at the University of Birmingham, and recently completed research into poverty, ethnicity and social networks for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Angus is a Board Member of the International Community Development Journal, an Associate of the Federation for Community Development Learning and has been involved in training and development work with non-governmental organisations in the UK, Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Dr Jane Milling is Senior Lecturer at the University of Exeter, where she works on a variety of AHRC-funded projects centrally concerned with participation in cultural and aesthetic activity by non-professional makers. She co-authored a scoping study on voluntary and grassroots arts participation, *The Role of Grassroots Arts Activity in Communities* with Hilary Ramsden et al (TSRC Working Paper 68, 2011). Currently, she is working on the large-scale *Understanding Everyday Participation* project that seeks a radical re-evaluation of the relationship between participation and cultural value, exploring the meanings and stakes people attach to their hobbies and pastimes, informal and amateur arts participation. For *Amateur Dramatics: Creating Communities in Time and Space*, (with Prof Helen Nicholson and Prof Nadine Holdsworth) she is examining the social and cultural significance of the craft, creative practice, and twentieth-century heritage of amateur theatre in England as part of the cultural ecology of many communities.

Andrew Mowlah started his career in the development, management and implementation of national and regional economic research in order to support and maintain the interests of privately owned businesses. After which he joined the North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA) where he was responsible for the professional supply, maintenance and improvement of economic information and intelligence provision to support the Regional Economic Strategy. He later moved from research to become Head of Policy at the NWDA where he helped shape their thinking on critical issues affecting both the Agency and the North West economy. Andrew joined the Arts Council in June 2013 as Senior Manager for Policy and Research and leads on generating robust knowledge and evidence to support delivery of the Arts Council plan and inform future research strategy and policy development.

Robin Simpson is Chief Executive of Voluntary Arts, which provides a universal voice for approximately 63,000 voluntary arts groups, across the UK and Ireland, involving more than 10 million participants in creative cultural activities. Voluntary Arts provides information and advice

services, undertakes lobbying and advocacy work and delivers, and supports the delivery of, projects to develop participation in creative cultural activities. Voluntary Arts' support is particularly focused on those creative citizens who - beyond their own participation and beyond any remuneration - give their time to make such activity more available within their communities (of locality and interest) and to improve the quality and range of those opportunities and activities. Before joining Voluntary Arts Robin was Deputy Chief Executive of Making Music – the national umbrella body for amateur music making, supporting over 2,000 amateur music groups throughout the UK, including choirs, orchestras, and music promoters. Previously Robin worked as General Manager of The British Federation of Festivals, supporting the volunteer organisers of more than 300 festivals of music, dance and speech & drama across the UK. He is a member of the AHRC's Connected Communities Advisory Group, the AHRC Cultural Value Project Advisory Group and the Arts Council England Cultural Commissioning Programme Advisory Group. Robin is a Trustee of the Luminare Festival (Scotland's Creative Ageing Festival), a member of the ACEVO Arts, Culture & Heritage Special Interest Group, an Observer-member of the Arts Development UK National Committee, and a member of the England Volunteering Development Council. A keen amateur French horn player, Robin is currently a member of the Northampton Symphony Orchestra.