Creative collaboration between museums and contemporary artists:

Digest of external professional resources

In addition to our own short films, case studies and practical resources – all available at www.newexpressions.org - New Expressions has brought together this digest of case studies, publications and other materials produced by other organisations. All will aid the thinking of museums and artists considering working collaboratively.

Arts and Heritage [http://www.artsandheritage.org.uk](http://www.artsandheritage.org.uk)

Arts and Heritage initiates and develops creative collaborations between artists and heritage settings. Its website offers case studies and toolkits.

Case studies


A diverse set of nine case studies brought together by Arts and Heritage. Each study describes a project involving contemporary art with a museum, historic building or location. The studies set out the projects’ objectives and how they were realised and draw(s) out key evaluative points.

'Versions' Oliver Laric at the Usher Gallery, Lincoln. Visual arts and new technology. New 3D-printed collections. *Budget: £75k*. June 2012-ongoing. *Project objectives:* To broaden access to the collection through digital technology, to bring new contemporary work into the collection and to reference the philanthropic, audience-focused aims of the collection.

'A Matter of Life and Death’ Julian Stair, ceramic artist. York Museums Trust / York St Mary’s de-consecrated church.

Contemporary ceramics displayed alongside archaeological specimens displayed at St Mary’s. *Budget: £18k*. 2011-2013. *Project objectives:* To present a new interpretation of site and collection, to trial a new way of
displaying historic collections, to encourage audience engagement with the theme and to enable the artist to pursue his research.

‘Lux’ at Cragside (National Trust). Six lead artists. Light and illumination inspired by the invention of the incandescent lightbulb. Budget: £50k. 2013-14. This project invited artists in Northern England to work up proposals for selection. Project objectives: To increase visitor numbers to Cragside and encourage local audiences to visit or re-visit; to tell the story of Cragside in a new and unusual way.

‘House of Beasts’ at Attingham House (National Trust), Shropshire. A group exhibition of six new commissions in various artforms, in response to a curatorial brief and existing work. Project inspired by humans’ connection with animals. Budget: £77k. 2011-2012. Project objectives: To attract 250,000 visitors, to transform visitor experience, interpret the property and make contemporary art more accessible.


‘Teacups, Zebras and Dancing Kaisers’ November Club and Associate Performers. Wallington (National Trust), Northumberland. Site specific performances and installations bringing the property to life and telling the story of its owner. Budget: £75k. 2012. Project objectives: To bring Wallington to life and support its key story. To appeal to identified National Trust audience segments and attract new audiences.

‘Contemporary Heritage’ Mid-Pennine Arts. Six lead artists selected by a variety of methods including open invitation and direct targeting. A series of site-responsive commissions in historic sites across Lancashire. Budget: £127k. 2009-2015. Project objectives: To commission work that is challenging and capable of speaking to a non-arts, non-urban audience, to build a local
audience for contemporary art, encourage repeat visits and attract younger age groups.

*Project objective:* To provide a different visitor experience and challenge the norms of the historic house.

*Project objectives:* To animate Campfield Market Hall and its surroundings, to connect families to the canal basin area in the city and to create opportunities for the art-going audience to experience the National Trust in the city.

**Toolkits:**

This section of the Arts & Heritage website gives links to useful websites and publications for all artforms, covering arts marketing, audience data collection and advocacy. Documents include Arts & Heritage’s ‘Principles of Engagement’ – a thorough consideration of the issues that artists and heritage organisations need to think about when considering a collaboration. It includes a practical, point-by-point breakdown of project team responsibilities (more details below).

**CultureHive** – An arts marketing site for all artforms.

[http://culturehive.co.uk](http://culturehive.co.uk)

Arts Council England’s arts and cultural advocacy pages #CultureMatters. For all artforms.


**ISAN Access Toolkit: making outdoor arts accessible for all** (2009). A practical toolkit to help organisers make their outdoor arts events more accessible to deaf and disabled audiences and artists. With contributions from Jenny Sealey of Graeae, Suzanne Bull of Attitude is Everything, VocalEyes,
www.newexpressions.org

Shape, Extant Theatre Company, Mencap and Creative Routes. Important for artists and organisations developing one-off public events.

http://www.isanuk.org/product/isan-access-toolkit-making-outdoor-arts-accessible-for-all-2010/

A Guide to Unlocking the Potential of Collections through Contemporary Craft (museumaker, 2011). This publication, which takes contemporary crafts as is springboard, provides a comprehensive toolkit for any contemporary artist or heritage organisation wanting to develop a collaboration. Includes extensive discussion of the issues that need to be considered when developing an artist’s contract. Although museumaker’s own website is no longer accessible, the guide is accessible on the New Expressions website.

http://www.newexpressions.org/includes/documents/Museummaker%20Guide%20To.pdf

Arts and Heritage: Principles of Engagement (Arts & Heritage, 2014). An accessibly written guide, which gives thorough consideration of the issues that artists and heritage organisations need to think about when developing a collaboration.


The National Trust / Trust New Art website: https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/trust-new-art-contemporary-arts-inspired-by-our-places

This website does not offer toolkits or professional resources. An email address is provided to which artists, curators and members of the public may submit proposals.

Reflecting its visitor focus, the National Trust regularly updates this site and posts projects that are currently live or forthcoming.
Ceramics in the Expanded Field (University of Westminster)

A research project from the Ceramics Research Group at the University of Westminster funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

The Ceramics in the Expanded Field website includes an anthology of contemporary essays on ceramics and museology.

http://www.ceramics-in-the-expanded-field.com/essays


Murch and Porter were commissioned by Arts Council England and the British Museum in 2012/13 to consult, research and then lead two symposia to debate how artists are working with museums.

This publication takes, as its starting point, eight reasons for, or benefits of, creative collaboration between museums and artists. Each is illustrated with a case study. The case studies take in performance, sound, play and poetry as well as contemporary visual arts.

These jargon-free case studies are presented simply, highlighting key learning points and sensitivities within the case studies.

The overall framework of the publication is written from the point of view of the museum rather than the artist. However, artists’ objectives and reflections are included in many of the case studies.

A summary of the case studies featured is given below. Animating Museums: Working with artists, engaging audiences is available on the New Expressions website.


An external voice – breaking the rules and challenging assumptions: British Museum – ‘Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman’. Curated by Grayson Perry. Key project sensitivities are discussed, including curatorial voice and some museum curators feeling ‘silenced’.
Opening up spaces – working with artists to move people in new ways to and through buildings and spaces that may be unexplored:

Enlivening the Darwin Centre. A pilot arts events programme at the National History Museum (NHM), curated by Sarah Punshon. Features various artists. Participation and engagement was a key driver, especially involving children and families. Key sensitivities discussed include branding and reputation.

Creating extraordinary effects to bring new life into a space, to transform a tired site or gallery and make people curious: ‘Enchanted Palace’ at Historic Royal Palaces. Features various artists. Key aspects covered include: Interpretation and how to balance original work with ensuring best visitor outcomes.

Creating a sense of event and excitement: Jason Singh (sound artist) and Supersonix at the V&A. Participation and engagement was a key driver, especially the involvement of young people.

Breathing new life into collections – bringing new perspectives, changing cultures and behaviours in relation to collections; creating research opportunities for artists: ‘Thresholds’ at the Cambridge University Museums, curated by Carol Ann Duffy. Participation and engagement was a key driver, especially involving young people.

Artists and communities as placemakers – new languages that enable people to connect at an emotional and personal level: Transform, Snibston Discovery Museum. Lead artist: Maurice Maguire. A helpful illustration of a project in a Local authority context.

Bringing familiar stories to life, artistic interludes that connect past and present; enabling artists to make imaginative leaps: ‘Exchange: 1,000 Good Deeds’ at the Foundling Museum, by Clare Twomey. A conceptual work with public participation.

was a key driver, especially involving young people and Luton’s diverse population. A local authority context.

**Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) website:**

**Museums and artists working together manifesto (2016)**

This one-page 10 point manifesto succinctly advocates the attitudes, mindsets and approaches crucial to successful collaboration.


The manifesto is also available under 'Documents and Downloads’ in the Professional Resources section of the New Expressions website.

**Commissioning contemporary art: A handbook for curators, collectors and artists** (Louisa Buck and Daniel McClean, 2015)

Published by Thames & Hudson.

ISBN: 978-0-500-23898-1

Practical guidance and preparation for commissioners and artists alongside discussion of the processes, debates, ethics and challenges of commissioning.

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May 2016

*All links correct at time of publication*