

create

A journal of perspectives on
the value of art and culture



Howard Davies
A guide to 'the heart
of a Treasury official'

Zombies are good for us!
Naomi Alderman on the
rewards of video gaming

John Major
Tells us why the arts
are not an add-on

**We can't
afford not
to fund
the arts**

Foreword, Peter Bazalgette

Chair, Arts Council England

Why should there be public funding for arts and culture? This is a question perhaps only asked by those wild-eyed folk who don't like taxes in any form. A more common question in today's climate is, can we afford such support?

And the simple answer is, we can't afford not to. When has there ever not been public funding of the arts in some form? Moreover, why would a government – whether a Renaissance principality or a modern democracy – fund the arts unless it understood the clear benefits of doing so?

Renaissance princes were aware of the 'soft power' art gave them. Grand Duke Francesco I lacked much of an army, so when he needed to impress the Court of Dresden, he sent over a collection of bronzes by Giambologna instead. Lorenzo the Magnificent supported Botticelli, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, and 'lent out' Florentine artists as part of his diplomatic strategies (much as the British Council does today, by the way). Renaissance patrons liked to get full value for their funding, and Leonardo was used by the Sforza of Milan to sculpt marzipan figures for banquets in a sort of Renaissance 'bake-off'.

The English court was also a centre of artistic patronage. Henry VIII cultivated musicians, much as Frederick the Great of Prussia did later, to promote a favourable public image. Charles I championed Inigo Jones and Van Dyke and amassed one of the great art collections, which, in an early nod to regional rebalancing, was sold by Parliament at a knock-down price 'for the benefit of Ireland and the North'. Charles II poured money into the theatre, with a glad eye, of course. Even William III, with his military mind, rewarded Swift's satire with a captaincy of horse.

‘The arts define our culture, our identity and our national conversation’

By the Victorian era, artistic patronage was no longer the taste of the aristocrat or the monarch. Its strategic significance was recognised after the Great Exhibition of 1851, when the poor quality of British contributions led to the creation of the Department of Science and Art. More than a million pounds was invested in the South Kensington Museum, later the V&A, as part of a national programme to develop the skills of design and drawing necessary to Britain’s industrial future – an early example of how arts and culture lie at the heart of commercial creative endeavour.

There are countless other examples. In one form or another, there has always been state or public funding for the arts. Some of it may have been quixotic or whimsical, but in the main it derived from a calculation of the potential benefits.

Since the Second World War, Britain has had a mixed funding model for the arts, in which government money works alongside private contributions and earned income. It has been a success; it preserves a balance between creative ambition and economic viability. It encourages talent; it promotes resilience.

By and large, this model has been supported by all political parties. In the 1960s Jennie Lee, during her term as Minister for the Arts, defined how local authorities should support local arts. In 1990, under the hard-nosed administration of Margaret Thatcher, public arts funding began to increase significantly once more. Within a few years, John Major would launch the National Lottery, leading to a remarkable revival of the arts infrastructure. Under the subsequent Labour administration, arts funding peaked after the Millennium.

Since I became chair of the Arts Council in 2013, I have been describing how public investment brings public benefit and arguing that it is critical the balance of that mixed funding model is maintained. There is a powerful holistic case for public investment in arts and culture – holistic in the sense that all the benefits are interrelated and need to be considered together.

This publication argues that case. In it, we've brought together some distinguished commentators, including educationalist Anthony Seldon, economist Howard Davies and public health expert John Ashton. We've sought perspectives from America, telling the inspiring story of Turnaround Arts. We've asked poets to respond to the holistic theme, and given a free hand to leading graphic artist Karrie Fransman. We've talked to bestselling author Neil Gaiman about the social contribution of libraries and to champion slam poet Hollie McNish about science.

There's so much more between these pages; and, in their own ways, all the contributors show how the arts are integral to our communities, our education, our health and wellbeing, and our national standing – and how public investment in the arts is returned many times over.

The arts define our culture, our identity and our national conversation. And now there is a growing understanding that the arts and culture sector fuels tourism, urban regeneration and our rapidly growing creative economy.

The holistic case is an argument for public funding. But our mixed funding model also depends on the farsighted generosity of individuals, businesses, charities and trusts. In an era of austerity, with its particular impact on local authority funding, we have had to look increasingly to these contributions. This publication is also a tribute to these patrons.

There will be new ways of public funding through social investment. There will be new ways of sharing great art and culture via digital distribution. But the fundamental truth will endure: something that is of the public and for the public should always merit public support.



*Left: Peter Bazalgette, Chair, Arts Council England.
Photograph: Philippa Gedge*

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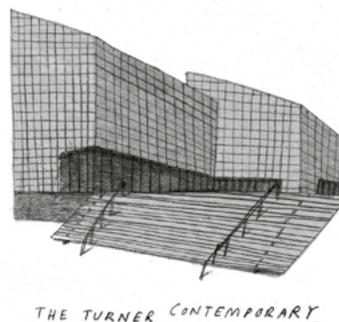


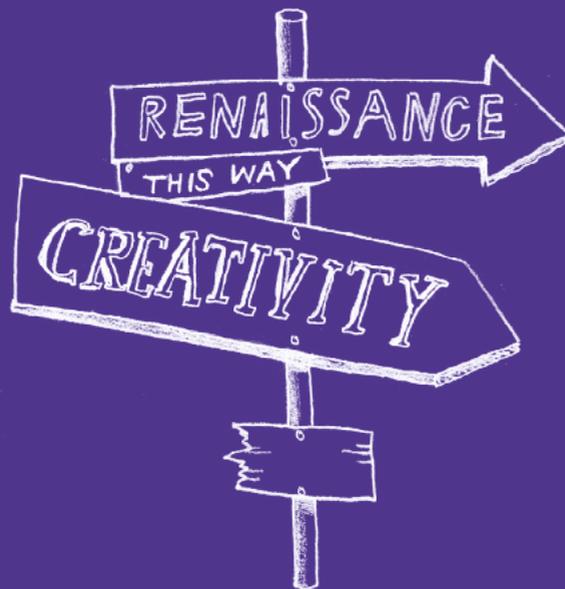
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Culture is one of our national strengths. It runs in our blood

Create is a new Arts Council publication, a part of our conversation about the State of the Arts. We hope you enjoy the contents.

Our contributors come from different areas and different eras. But economist or poet, they have expressed some common themes.

One of these is that there is a schism in our thinking about the role that creativity has in our society. In particular, we think art and culture are an addition, when they are integral. Because we don't recognise this, we don't see what more the arts could do.

Why do we have such a blind spot about the arts and culture? Partly there is an assumption that 'art' takes care of itself. If it is needed, it emerges. Perhaps – but that's evidence of necessity, and no reason not to nurture art and culture intelligently as we would any important resource.

Moreover, there is a persistent misunderstanding about what the arts do. They are not seen as prime contributors but as luxuries, or elitist. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Health expert John Ashton points out that creativity is an essential human asset; educationalist Anthony Seldon argues that we won't have real social mobility without promoting every child's creative talent; novelist and tech designer Naomi Alderman shows us how art is intrinsic to the evolution of our digital world; economist Howard Davies reasons that the arts mean better business; and former prime minister John Major emphasises the international status our culture gives us.

Culture is one of our national strengths. It runs in our blood.

Paradoxically, one of the reasons we have to make the argument for public investment is conspicuous success – busier theatres, concerts, galleries and museums. This leads to a narrow focus on venues and contributes to the impression that art and culture inhabit places outside the daily round, places that we can't afford in times of austerity. But theatres and museums are where art and culture show their fruits and possibilities; they are laboratories for experimentation; and they are an essential part of a many-layered cultural ecology.

All parts of this ecology are vital; it extends from the classroom, through the venue, to the state. As Anthony Seldon shows, there is a vital relationship between theatre in schools, and public debate in our democracy. Touch one part of this arts ecology, and the effect is felt in all parts.

Another strong idea shared by our contributors is that we are living in changing times and need to equip ourselves for an uncertain journey into the future.

What will that future look like? Our society contains contradictory energies; it is built around youthful values but has an ageing population; it is conscious of environmental obligations but requires economic growth; it is part of a universal, digital world but has a hunger for communal values and a local identity.

We urgently need new ideas and new talent; as Alan Davey, Nii Sackey and John Ashton argue, it is through the arts that we can bring everyone into the conversation. We must mobilise the diversity of our society to meet the diverse challenges we face.

If this is to be the digital century, it's also got to be the century of the creative thinker; if we want to change public attitudes to health, we will need to use the resources of culture. To compete globally, we need our creative industries to be kept supplied with ideas and talent from our artists.

We may argue about what art and culture is but we can all see what it does. Through art and culture we come to articulate ourselves. Through art and culture we have a dialogue with our past and imagine the future. Without art and culture, we can't evolve.

As Peter Bazalgette describes in his foreword, there have always been good reasons for state investment in art and culture. Since the Second World War, all political parties have supported the mixed funding model.

CULTURE IS ONE OF
OUR NATIONAL STRENGTHS.

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BLOOD.

The Arts Council's role is to distribute this public funding – and to advocate for the importance of arts and culture across public life.

We share the sentiments of these contributors. We believe that art and culture are integral to our health, wealth, and education. We believe, as Peter Bazalgette puts it, that there is a powerful holistic case for public investment in the arts. This publication makes that case.

No one is saying that the arts provide a quick fix or can substitute for frontline services – rather that they need to be part of our national thinking if we are to make full use of our national talent.

With a general election in 2015, it's important that we assess what the future role of the arts could be. We will soon know the political direction of this country. Before then we will know policies on most areas of public life. What could the arts and culture offer?

We hope that we hear from politicians about the inherent value of culture; and we hope in particular that we hear how the arts can contribute to health and wellbeing, to education and social mobility, to industry and to urban regeneration.

The continued support and growth of the national arts ecology will be crucial, as will an increasingly equitable distribution of resources across the country. All political parties have an interest in this. It will require far-sighted investment decisions – especially given the loss of much local authority funding.

This is likely to become more urgent in the light of the devolution debate, which has fuelled discussion about ways to drive national growth by investment in the priorities of cities and regions. It is now widely accepted in the business world that sustainable economic growth depends on the multiple successes of cities of different scales – it's not all down to centralised policy. Art and culture clearly has an important part to play in this.

The Arts Council has a 10-year strategy, built around five objectives – excellence, access, diversity, resilience, and children and young people. All these are essential to a holistic view of the arts and society. These goals are universal; a society in which these objectives are met culturally will be a healthier and a wealthier one.

With its arm's-length status, the Arts Council offers a bipartisan approach to long-term investment. We also have the specific experience that enables us to implement national policy on

‘The arts need to be part of our national thinking if we are to make use of our national talent’

a local level. As our recent investment process demonstrated, we are committed to a sustainable increase in investment outside London.

We see also see a wider opportunity in promoting thinking and partnerships that will unite the arts and cultural sector with education, health and our economic efforts locally and nationally.

The agencies of delivery can be multiple. We are already working in many partnerships. But we need to make the conversation more explicit and emphasise its urgency.

We believe that any government should consider the impact the arts could have right across the country in education, health and the economy.

We need a holistic national approach to art and culture that makes the most of its potential; that complements our existing strategy and builds on the work that we already do, and is funded and delivered in ways relevant to local communities.

This activity needs to be supported by public investment; not a cascade of cash that generates a spike in activity, but a consistent approach.

In recent years, arts funding has been pared back. In some ways, this has compelled more careful consideration about the use of public money. Many arts organisations have become leaner and more efficient.

But reduced funding ultimately limits our ability to make use of many unique resources. It multiplies the effects of substantial local authority cuts. It diminishes not only our potential, but the potential of every citizen.

As this publication shows, the arts are a critical national resource; they cost us relatively little and they make a substantial return – as Howard Davies reminds us – in ‘outstanding’ ways.

With the nation’s economy recovering and the creative industries playing their part, we believe it is the right time to go further, and to explore how the arts could be at the heart of a creatively fuelled renaissance of all our communities.

01 Culture



If we want to tell the story of how arts and culture enrich our world, we have to start with describing how they touch and change all our individual lives. How they inspire us, give us the means to articulate ourselves, how art and culture are there at the beginning of things, and at the end. How they beget, sustain – and console.

Here, Alan Davey revisits his childhood home on Teesside to explore how culture gives meaning to people and places; Tony Butler considers how museums can equip society for the future; and John Major celebrates the ‘soft power’ of the arts. Poet Karen McCarthy Woolf makes sense of life’s joys and trials through writing; and journalist Tanya Gold visits Meet Me at the Albany, where art confers dignity on those who are so often ignored.

Tanya Gold

Meet Me at the Albany

Journalist Tanya Gold finds a tiny
fragment of paradise in a daily
arts club for the over-60s.



What price art? What is its value in human love and consolation and expression? I ask this question in the Albany, Deptford, a famous and beloved arts centre in south London.

Outside all is concrete and heat and shuttered shops and wilting dogs; late summer London gasps for breath. Inside it is cool. I am in a large room with windows to a garden. There is a pianist and a double bassist playing jazz; a café; an artist making paintings on the floor; a platoon of dedicated knitters making their distinctive clattering song; shelves of lovely, pulpy paperbacks. The atmosphere is calm concentration and faintly muted joy.

Perhaps 40 of what I would euphemistically called the over-60s of both sexes – that is, the ageing – are sitting at tables and chairs, ministered to by young, and curiously attractive, volunteers who work in fashion or music or drama. They are, to a large extent, the forgotten and the condescended to – who can forget, for instance, the ghastly spectacle of the television news coverage of the D-Day commemorations in June, when young, pretty women bent over veterans and heroes and spoke to them like children? (My anger at this calumny is possibly for another piece of writing for another season. I will only say this. Why do they speak like this to the elderly, who know everything? My answer is that they must be afraid of death but they do not know it.)

This is where the ageing come each Tuesday, and pay £6, and make art. Art of any kind. Art conventional. Art subversive. Art personal, or universal. Art for the first time, or art at the end of a lifetime of art. Art which is only felt dimly, as if through a cloud or fug, for some of the ageing here have dementia, or are recovering from strokes and other illnesses. This is either a unique experiment in provision for the elderly – if you write like a bureaucrat – or something as lovely and as hopeful as a poem. This is Meet Me at the Albany.

‘This is what society would look like, if only we scrubbed out our ignorance and fear’

I will not bother with listing the benefits of art here – for what is the point? They are obvious and they define us. Without art, what are we? What will we leave behind? Nothing, of course; just junk. Art and love are the only consolations. Instead I will introduce you to Ted Dalby. Ted is 89, gentle and courteous in the way that only the ancient ever really are; a lifetime of listening changes you, I think.

Ted has a broken heart. I think he will not mind me saying it like this, because he told me. He was born in Camberwell ‘a long time ago’. He worked for a brewery and then in a pub. His wife Doris died seven years ago. Meet Me at the Albany, he says, ‘takes the sorrowful part of my life away. I loved her so much I can’t forget her. In my heart. She fills my heart absolutely. I loved her more than anything in this world. I would give everything up today if I could only have her back. Unfortunately...’ He sighs, sucks down air, and is quiet for a bit, in the shade. ‘It’s hard. I find life without her terrible.’

Here, he sings and writes songs. He has always loved music: Frank Sinatra, Matt Monro, songs for romantics. He was persuaded to sing for a crowd on a cruise ship, and he shook with fright and tried to flee; but the band leader brought him back to sing ‘I Just Can’t Stop Loving You’, for a standing ovation. (Any professional artist will tell you, you can’t beat authenticity.) And, here, he wrote a love song for Doris, because he needed to. Because – and I paraphrase Joan Didion – we make music in order to live. ‘I thought “I can’t do this”,’ he says. ‘But we sat down and chatted and chatted and before I knew it I had a song.’ And he sang in an opera too, which was written by the members of Meet Me at the Albany. What kind, you ask? A romance? A romp? Do you think the ageing think in clichés, synthetic gags and dowdy politesse, like the children they are mistaken for? Hah! It was dystopic and broken and furious – ‘a devastated world’, Ted said. He loved it.

**‘Without art, what are we?
What will we leave behind?’**

**‘Meet Me at the Albany
“takes the sorrowful
part of my life away”’**





Now meet Paul Jay. Paul is fascinating – for 25 years he ran the Chuckle Club, which is still the second longest-running comedy club in Britain, after the Comedy Store. His father was a mime – Larry Jay of Dr Crock and his Crackpots – and his son travelled with him on the road until he started school. He loved it but he says it damaged him, because he never met another child. ‘I paint, I draw, I write poetry, I write songs, I write plays. I sing. I don’t dance but I used to,’ he says. (Now he has a horror of anything he describes as ‘strenuous’. He initially came to the Albany – with his wife Margaret, from Canning Town – because it didn’t sound strenuous.)

‘This is either a unique experiment in provision for the elderly - if you write like a bureaucrat - or something as lovely and as hopeful as a poem’

Paul is writing a musical at Meet Me at the Albany. ‘It’s about an old people’s home,’ he says, ‘a bad old people’s home, not a typical one, I must stress. One of the really bad ones. It’s showing it from the old people’s point of view. Their side of it. They are all treated as if they are the same. They are all different colours and different religions. There is nothing the same about them all except they are old.’

In the musical, a pair of ‘middle-class idiots’, as Paul calls them, perform First World War songs for the residents. This is of course ridiculous because, as Paul points out, ‘these old people are like me. They were brought up on rock and roll. People are completely out of touch with what they want and what they need.’ He indicates the pianist, still jamming: ‘Arthur is sorting out the tunes and writing out the notes and making suggestions. He is [to me] what George Martin was to The Beatles.’ Once finished, his musical may be performed in a local theatre, with a company partially chosen from the members of Meet Me at the Albany. ‘There is a happy ending,’ he says. ‘I don’t want to give the ending away. But they end up in a good old people’s home.’ Rather like Meet Me at the Albany, I hope.

This warm, bright room at the Albany seems like a tiny fragment of paradise. This is what society would look like, if only we scrubbed out our ignorance and fear. I hate the cult of youth, and its terrible side effect, which is a tendency to patronise old age. It is so self-hating. The old know everything, as I said; or at least as much as humans will ever know. If they can’t have the consolations of art, what are we?

Tony Butler

Knowing your place

Tony Butler of the Happy Museums
project on how museums can equip
society for the future.



I love looking at Joseph Wright’s painting *A Philosopher giving a Lecture on the Orrery in which a lamp is put in place of the Sun* in Derby Museum. In it, a group of children and adults listen attentively to a learned man explaining the wonders of the planet and the universe.

Our museums, inspired by the human instinct to acquire, categorise and show off objects, help us to make sense of our place in the world. Four years ago, the British Museum’s *A History of the World in 100 Objects* wove together the story of humanity with a thoughtful selection of its treasures. Similarly, in communities across the country, museums of all shapes and sizes – some public, some private, some professional, some run by volunteers – tell stories about their place.

Some of these stories reflect the desire not to forget. The excellent Timespan in Helmsdale, Sutherland, recounts the pitiless Highland Clearances of the early 19th century, as told by descendants of those who were kicked out of their homes.

Sometimes museums nurture recent stories. In Barnsley’s new museum, the town’s story is told entirely through objects donated or selected by local people. Memories are shaped by objects relating to national events like the miners’ strike, or more intimate experiences at work, home or at play. The result is funny, moving and poignant. One journalist wrote: ‘I felt a sense of belonging that I can’t ever recall feeling in a museum or gallery.’

But there’s a fine line between evoking memories and longing for a past that might appear comforting and certain but is practically redundant.

‘Museums are places where people learn to see the world differently.’



‘Museums enable individuals and communities to learn together and solve problems’

Climate change, depleted resources and growing inequality are unprecedented challenges for humanity. Will a concern to secure the memories of past mistakes or triumphs consign museums to play an anachronistic role? Understanding the past is not in itself sufficient.

Alongside collective memory we require a collective determination to find sustainable ways to live together on our crowded planet.

To be relevant, museums should expand their role as treasure houses and palaces of memory. They are public spaces where people can come and learn to see the world differently. The function of museums as social spaces is significant. Given the way in which urban spaces are increasingly being transferred to private ownership, museums have become an important bulwark against the erosion of the public realm. A museum is first and foremost a place for encounters.

Museums enable individuals and communities to learn together and solve problems. Museum learning is unorthodox and creative; it is curiosity driven, non-judgmental, non-compulsory, engaging and informal – and fun. In the future we will have to be resilient, resourceful and empathetic. These are the kinds of qualities that museum learning already supports.

We also need museums to loosen their institutional chains and play an active role in civil society. The work of museums should reflect trends and issues that affect people’s daily lives. Museums can encourage citizens to be more active in their communities by raising awareness and understanding of global connectivity, and through building international relationships that put local issues in a global context.

Think what museums might become if they don’t take a stake in the future. Visitors a century hence, living in a harsher, less kind world, will visit a museum that commemorates a beautiful and diverse planet, long gone; we knew the problems but could not bring ourselves to solve them.

It’s important to know your place. But it’s probably better to know your place in the world.

Karen McCarthy Woolf
I write this

*because
a string of unilluminated dragonflies dangles
from the ceiling*

*our screens glow
like fireflies
at opposite ends of the flat, one of us
facing south, the other
north,*

*the anglepoise reflected
like a moon in the cracked glass – yes,
it's cracked but it endures,
the empty spaces I crave are filled
with dust
dating back to the 19th century*

*I write this
 because I can't forget
 the relentless torrent
 of the M6 as we switched
 lanes on the way back from the retrospective
 where we took
 photos of you standing by a painting
 of your mother in 1975,
 how she stared
 out of a window, determined
 not to smile
 and of course your hair is the colour of her hair,
 and the gallery walls are white*

*I write this
 because roses aren't what they used to be, so few
 are fragrant and only a fraction
 of those that survive
 the shivery hold unfurl into fullness,
 their thorns
 bred out like pips from a watermelon*

*I write this
 because water is no longer sacred, our rivers
 run like sores
 and mountain streams are bottled, sold,
 binned then spun
 into the gyres of the Pacific*

*because writing
 my stillborn son into existence
 was the only way I knew how
 not to die—*

*I write this
 for the pale hollyhock that trembles
 in midsummer rain,
 for the beginning of something new*

John Major

The arts are not an 'add-on'

**Former chancellor and prime minister
John Major talks to us about his love
of literature, the success of the
National Lottery and how the
arts are integral to all our lives.**

You've spoken eloquently about your own family's experiences in the performing arts. What effect did that have on your upbringing? And what's your earliest cultural memory?

My experience was twofold and very domestic. My parents talked of the performing arts and instilled in me an admiration for those who use their talent to stimulate the imagination and enliven the senses. It has made me a lifelong devotee of the theatre.

I also learned that many entertainers earn very little – but still give their life to performing. Even today, a recent industry survey tells us that three-quarters of actors earn less than £5,000 a year.

Earliest cultural memory? I remember my sister – 13 years my senior – who loved to paint, and did so to a high standard. I watched her bring a blank canvas to life, which seemed a miracle to me as a small boy.

Did public libraries play an important role in your upbringing?

I've always loved libraries and even now I am a member of the British Library. As a boy, I used public libraries all the time. My family could neither afford many books, nor had much space for them. I have particularly fond memories of the tiny Minet Library in Brixton. There I discovered authors from Charles Dickens to Dennis Wheatley, and devoured books by Thomas Costain, Thomas Armstrong and AJ Cronin. To me, the written word was and always will be magical.



The National Lottery has proved a fantastic way of finding more money for culture and sport. When you had the idea for the Lottery, did you think, that 20 years later, it would have funded such a wealth of new arts institutions, and changed the cultural landscape of the nation?

No, it has well exceeded my expectations. When I was Chief Secretary to the Treasury in the 1980s, I saw at first hand that no government would ever have sufficient funds for the arts, sport and good causes. This is not because politicians are philistines. There are simply so many competing demands – health, education, social welfare, defence and many others – which, obviously, must take precedence. So, as Prime Minister, I set up the Lottery to provide additional money, and took steps to ensure it would remain free of government interference.

I certainly expected the Lottery to make a difference, but completely underestimated the scale of it. I had hoped that up to a billion pounds a year would be raised for good causes. In fact, the Lottery has already distributed over £30 billion. I still get a huge thrill when I see a sign saying ‘funded by the National Lottery’.

Do you think Government could go further with arts funding and examine how it could help with other priorities, in education or public health, for example? Or should arts funding be kept separate?

I would keep the arts distinct, and any government at bay. Lottery money is not, and never was, intended for government schemes. If the government has priorities over and above what the Exchequer can provide, it should tax for them. If a government fox got into the arts hencoop, there’d be very few hens left.

As a former Chancellor and Chief Secretary to the Treasury, how do you think the arts and cultural sector could make a better case to those who hold the purse strings?

It should tell the Treasury that the arts are not an add-on to people’s lives; not an optional extra. Art is integral to life. It enhances it. It civilises and helps build a rounded personality. It encourages people from other countries to visit us and promotes cultural understanding, which in today’s world is needed more than ever. That is the case that should be made, because it is undeniable.

"I STILL GET A
HUGE THRILL WHEN I
SEE A SIGN SAYING
'FUNDED BY THE
NATIONAL LOTTERY.'"



**Many MPs seem reticent about culture.
How might the arts move up the political agenda?**

In my own experience, most MPs have an abiding interest in the arts. It's simply not the case that MPs, as a class, are disinterested; they are merely overwhelmed by other duties. This was certainly so in my time, and still is now. As for the future, I believe the arts are growing in the public consciousness. Future MPs – today's young consumers of the arts – will, I hope, be better inclined to help them than, perhaps, their elders were.

Does a healthy cultural environment encourage the community to engage in the democratic process?

Sadly, the whole of our community does not engage in the democratic process: only two-thirds of those entitled to vote do so, and every serious political party has seen its membership decline. Some alternative theatre contributes to this disillusion and always has done. It is healthy that the theatre does not slavishly support the system, but sometimes I worry that it undermines it unfairly. In my experience, few MPs are the self-serving, self-interested individuals they are sometimes portrayed as being. Overall, however, the arts promote a healthy attitude to life and thus to democracy.

Should state schools aim to expand the cultural horizons of pupils in the same way many private ones already do?

Yes, I wish they would. We need them to expand their sports horizon too. A rounded education of mind and body is broader than maths, science and history. We need our culture and our democratic system to be taught.

Did you feel the UK's cultural profile made a difference to how other nations did business or engaged with us diplomatically?

The arts are part of our soft power, and an important part. Whether Shakespeare or Dylan Thomas, Constable or Gainsborough, Sean Connery or Judi Dench, they convey an impression of the UK, and a beneficial one. It may be subliminal but it is invaluable. Every branch of the arts throws up talent that gives an impression of our country.

Do you have a favourite book, piece of music or work of art that you return to for consolation or inspiration?

Yes, but too many to list! Among books, *Fame is the Spur* (Howard Spring) or *The Way to the Lantern* (Audrey Erskine Lindop) are old favourites. Alternatively, Kipling, Trollope or Wisden usually work. For music, I turn to Joan Sutherland's *Romantic French Arias* which could lift the spirits of Eeyore.

As for art, any of the Impressionists, including some modern British impressionists like Sherree Valentine Daines, whose work I have only recently discovered. But, as I say, these are only dipstick examples: there is so much to admire and enjoy.

What do you think is the single most compelling reason for public funding of the arts?

They enhance the life and wellbeing of the nation.



Alan Davey

The beginning of a journey

**Alan Davey, BBC Radio 3's new
controller and departing Arts Council
Chief Executive, explores how culture
can give meaning to people and places.**

Middlesbrough's Central Square is a bold, grassy public space bounded on one side by the Victorian Town Hall and on the other by the striking modernist glass of Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. Both buildings are significant to me. As a kid, I came from nearby Stockton to see Elvis Costello play at the Town Hall; as a young civil servant, I oversaw a public inquiry into child abuse there. The story of mima has played counterpoint to my years at the Arts Council.

Together, the venues now offer a range of events spanning Ross Noble and Louise Bourgeois. The Town Hall runs acting classes, and presents symphony orchestras; mima hosts local collections and has an international reputation. mima's progress hasn't always been smooth, but its potential is such that even in difficult times, Middlesbrough Council continues to support it, transferring administration to Teesside University – an increasingly important part of the city's economy – and paying £500,000 a year to keep public admission free. That's proper commitment.

So here are two fine buildings offering complementary cultural menus for those who venture inside. That's enough, isn't it? Job done for the arts.

Inevitably, there is another story – of the work still to be done. In a visit to Middlesbrough, I saw that while the gallery in mima may be staffed by enthusiastic young people who have formed a connection with the arts, but on the grass outside are a bunch who have not yet connected with anything much. The council is launching a youth employment strategy. These young people are looking for a way in to the world.

'The gallery in mima may be staffed by enthusiastic young people who have formed a connection with the arts, but on the grass outside are a bunch who have not yet connected with anything'

‘There’s nothing to do and nowhere we can go,’ they say. ‘Not for our age. This is all we do. Sit here. There’s actually nothing to do...’

‘There’s nothing we can do that won’t cost us like twenty quid...’

‘Well, there’s one thing we can do that won’t cost us...’

‘No one cares about Teesside. They can’t even find us on a map...’

‘These are the most important years,’ one girl says, ‘the years where it can all go wrong. When you can fall into a hole. And then you can’t change your life.’

So there they sit, on the grass, between the Victorian town hall and the modern art gallery, between past and future. And as yet they feel no affinity with either building.

In post-industrial environments like Teesside, the question of culture – what it is, and what it can do? – comes sharply into focus. The Arts Council wants to take art and culture to everyone; we believe it is important. So what do we offer the kids of Teesside?

We could bring jobs. There is an increasing recognition of the economic as well as social benefits of cultural investment. When I was growing up in Stockton, back in the 1970s, it felt that the town was ageing rapidly, exemplified by the way that the old Globe venue, a beacon for young people, became a bingo hall. These days Stockton Borough Council has put its weight behind a cultural agenda. After the corrupt practices of the past, when architect John Poulson was licensed to destroy much that was lovely, there was an understandable caution about change. Now redevelopment of the wide streets of the old centre is creating attractive performance and exhibition spaces that on a sunny afternoon have a continental feel. You can read Stockton’s story in its Georgian houses, Victorian civic buildings, and, oh yes, Poulson’s Castlegate Centre. You can see evolution. A Victorian police station has become a bar; the Quaker meeting house on Dovecote Street is home to small-scale start-ups. The busy Central Library is also an access point for council services. Upstairs, where I used to do my homework, is Starbooks cafe. The local authority supports several venues, including the ARC centre – in partnership with the Arts Council – while the old Globe is set to re-open as a commercial 2,000-seat theatre.

This marks a beginning of a journey, not the end. And when it comes to art as regeneration, one size does not fit all. Middlesbrough, for example, is quite different to Stockton. The latter has Anglo Saxon



Above: Black Path, David Watson

roots and a market that dates back to the 14th century. By contrast, Middlesbrough was founded by Victorian Quaker entrepreneurs who nurtured the industrial city into being. It has a different demographic make-up, a narrowly industrial history and lacks an easily definable, varied and visitor-friendly centre like Stockton's High Street. mima can't singlehandedly bring in enough tourists to rejuvenate the city. Jewels need a setting. Art needs supporting infrastructure. So Middlesbrough's cultural evolution will have to be different.

Art can help change things, in time; but for the young people on the grass, the problem is not limited to employment – it's engagement generally. We need to give them a sense of culture they can engage with, that raises their self-esteem and awareness of their potential.

An essential part of this involves learning how to engage with your community. The ARC in Stockton is now in a flourishing relationship with its public, but took a few years of trial and error to get there. Revisiting Stockton, I met director Annabelle Turpin. Under her, ARC runs a range of programmes that focus on empathising with its community, addressing that local sense of 'not being cared about'. Talking to people across Stockton, there is now a discernible affection for the ARC.

**'We need to give them a sense
of culture they can engage with'**

THE MISTAKE IS TO
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THEY SMELL A RAT.



Middlesbrough will find a new way. We all understand that we have to reach out to these young people. It will be fascinating to see how the teaching partnership mima has embarked on paves a route to wider access, in a community where, as one of the kids on the grass puts it 'going to the panto can be a big step up'.

The mistake is to give the kids – and the people – an inauthentic culture that we think they deserve. They don't like it. They smell a rat. As Jennie Lee said, we should give them the best.

Not far from the ARC is Sound It Out, a gloriously eclectic music shop that is a gathering point for the area's musical underground. There, rootling through the vinyl, I bumped into Jessie Jacobs, who has moved from social activist to arts activist. Why would you do that, if you want to change the world?

'I realised that to change people's lives, you had to change their environment,' she says. To her mind, culture is essential to that ambition. She says that Teesside's real culture is off the main radar: 'There's a massive music scene. When we put on an event last year, we got 120 bands, all desperate for a platform. And there's a huge comedy scene.' She acknowledges there are economic benefits to promoting this underground – 'Everyone knows that businesses prefer to go somewhere there's a cultural life' – but thinks that long term, the real issue is about increasing social engagement. It's about giving Teesside self-esteem, through unlocking talent, and understanding its history.

There is a silence about that past. Jessie points to the lack of a school of Teesside painting evoking its industrial era, such as Manchester or Ashington produced; 'But you know that there must have been people painting in Teesside.' One exception is David Watson, whose dramatically beautiful work documenting industrial life has just started to emerge publicly.

The past Jessie is talking about is not sentimental; it includes the pollution, the physical rigours, the politics and the passion. Where, for example, is the history of ICI? Now, there's a story of ambition, triumph and betrayal. My father worked for ICI on Teesside in the days when the company was a crucible of economic creativity, producing a stream of synthetic products – Perspex, Terylene, Crimplene, paints, pesticides, fertilisers and beta-blockers – that shaped the modern world.

That instructive, creative past has become a pile of rubble and a name on an old paint tin in the corner of a garden shed. Teesside is full of undiscovered narratives. Its culture has always been functional. Its creative legacy is found in brands and balance sheets, its art in industrial buildings and mechanical structures, and its beauty has always had an awesome sublimity – to do with vast numbers and volumes, physical endeavour, and setting suns stained orange by the smoke of chimneys.

Other cities have sculpture parks; Middlesbrough has bridges. Two great works of art – the Transporter Bridge and the Newport Bridge – straddle the Tees, both of them built to allow vast ships to pass during the industrial heyday. The former is still operating, a 225-foot-high gondola bridge that can carry nine cars across in 90 seconds. It has represented the area in films and television programmes. (Famously, in *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*, it was dismantled and sold to America.) The Newport Bridge – on which my grandfather worked – is a different machine, a vertical lift bridge with huge towers mounting the counterbalancing gear, last raised in 1990.

But what has art and culture to do with chemicals, ships and steel? Shouldn't history fall under education or heritage and engineering under economy? At the Arts Council, the mission is to bring 'great art and culture to everyone'. By the arts, we mean theatre, music, dance, painting; culture refers to the wider environment of museums, galleries and libraries.

But as part of this, we invest in the creative industries; we support industrial museums. We promote creativity in science and engineering, and celebrate these processes, because the arts are crucial to all areas of our individual and communal lives.

'Culture' should not be a predetermined norm, a monthly dose of theatre and access to a gallery twice a week. Culture should be a community's expression of itself and its hunger to connect to the wider world; it's our job to help communities articulate their culture, and to put that knowledge to transformative use.

In *Culture and Society*, the historian Raymond Williams argued that the Industrial Revolution had brought about crucial changes in the use of the words 'art' and 'culture'; formerly descriptive of processes, they became instead aesthetic and intellectual activities antithetical

'AS SAMUEL BECKETT
URGED, WE TRY;
WE FAIL; WE TRY AGAIN
AND FAIL BETTER'



to the industrial institutions that dominated life. ‘Culture’, as William noted, came to be a word that ‘often provoked either hostility or embarrassment’.

In this post-industrial world, that definition needs to be questioned. We need to think what culture means in a place like Teesside – and the many communities within it. Ask those kids sitting outside mima what their idea of culture is and some will say that it’s a freerunning track; others a music venue or a cinema. In the end, it’s always a place they can go. A safe space in which they can feel good about themselves.

This isn’t about crude instrumentalism or forgetting the role of art to console, to make people happy, and to believe in the marvellous and the beautiful. It’s about recognising art’s intrinsic value in all our lives. We’ve made a start. Through programmes like Creative people and places, the Arts Council is giving communities the chance to explore their ideas of culture, so we can help them build on it. A relevant culture can give us a context, a voice, and a story.

As Samuel Beckett urged, we try; we fail; we try again, and fail better. Sometimes it may seem we are scratching the surface of engagement, but given time we can erode a good deal of the problem. The kids outside mima need many things; not least amongst these is a narrative. A sense of where they come from, that will help them see where they can go. A culture that will help create a bridge between the past and the future.



ARTS ENGAGEMENT IN ENGLAND
HAS INCREASED BY

10% ↑

BETWEEN 2006 AND 2013

58% OF ADULTS IN
ENGLAND AGREE
WITH THE STATEMENT
'THERE ARE LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES TO
GET INVOLVED WITH THE ARTS IF
I WANT'



ARTS & CULTURE



PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ARTS
ACTIVITIES CAN IMPROVE COMMUNITY
IMAGE AND IDENTITY, WITH INCREASED
VISIBILITY WITHIN A TOWN OR COUNTRY.
EVEN THIS IN TURN CAN CONTRIBUTE
TO A SENSE OF PRIDE FOR RESIDENTS



64% OF ADULTS IN
ENGLAND ENGAGED
WITH THE ARTS
THREE OR MORE
TIMES WITHIN THE
PAST 2 MONTHS
IN 2012/13.

10m

VISITS TO THE UK IN
2011 INVOLVED ENGAGEMENT
IN ARTS AND CULTURE,
REPRESENTING ALMOST
HALF OF ALL TOURISTS

02

Education



To flourish in the future, our society will need to make use of all its talent. This begins with education; it's only through education that we can build an inclusive society that makes the best of everyone's potential. We take the role the arts play in education for granted – how can we communicate without words or pictures? But we've only just begun to think about what an arts-rich education could really do to change our schools and our society for the better.

Educationalist Anthony Seldon argues that getting the arts into all schools is vital if we're serious about improving social mobility. We read about the success of the Turnaround Arts project in the United States, in which immersive arts projects have transformed failing urban schools, giving pupils a fresh chance in life. International 'slam' champion, YouTube phenomenon (and science graduate) Hollie McNish discusses using rap to teach maths; and poet Raymond Antrobus sums up the feeling that art should help everyone reach their potential.

Anthony Seldon

What do we mean by 'a good education'?

**Shouldn't we be giving pupils at
state schools the same kind of creative
opportunities as those enjoyed
by those in the independent
sector, asks Anthony Seldon,
headmaster of Wellington College.**



Do we truly understand the purpose of education? Do we really think that going to school is only about achieving good exam results? Ministers – and the education establishment – can give the impression that exam results are the Holy Grail, the only way to judge the accomplishment of schools and students.

Of course, we recognise the vital role exam results play in evaluating the effectiveness of funds and policy. There should be measures of accountability and goals to aspire to. But in pushing education to new heights we must not lose its breadth.

For years, many thoughtful and brave voices have been saying that a focus on exam passes misunderstands the mission of education. Perhaps this is because those who decide education policy have rarely worked in schools, and lack first-hand understanding of the extraordinary complexity of education.

In point of fact, I would contend that if you really want to improve exam results, you should focus less on the outcome and more on the process and environment in which children learn. This is not softness, not excessive liberality; it is common sense.

The public education sector has often looked enviously at the results achieved by independent schools, without considering the role that a rounded education plays in this success – and particularly the role of the arts. It is also this unequal provision of culture that gives the alumni of independent schools a substantial advantage throughout life.

Similarly, the commentariat talk about stagnant social mobility but rarely look at why it is occurring – and I would contend that unequal access to an education in the arts is one important reason. In England, this is mostly limited to those already economically privileged. This is an unjust waste of national talent.

Other nations are aware of the difference the arts can make in education. Take the case of the Turnaround Arts project in the United States – described in this issue of *Create* – in which failing public-sector

schools, with huge social disadvantages, are being dramatically improved through an immersive arts programme.

Recently we have heard much about the extraordinary improvements in London secondary schools over the last 10 years, as gauged by GCSE results and Ofsted ratings. These are important, but surely they don't go far enough as measures of success; they indicate the necessary, not the sufficient, conditions for a good education.

You can teach students to do well in exams without teaching them in any depth. Students can achieve top grades but know little and understand less about the world and their role in it, or how to be happy.

A good education should be a preparation for life. It requires the development of the whole child, not merely their intellect. It necessitates students becoming intrinsic learners with self-discipline and a genuine thirst for knowledge, rather than being goaded or corralled, which is what students may become with a single-minded focus on exam results.

Research shows that self-discipline can be a better predictor of success in life than IQ tests – and it has further shown that good character and resilience can be taught at schools, with lifelong benefits. Work at the University of Birmingham Jubilee Centre for Character and Values shows that an undue emphasis on exam passes robs young people of the broad education that schools should be providing.

The argument has been put succinctly by the distinguished educationalist Howard Gardner, Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education at Harvard. He says the question that schools should ask is 'not, how intelligent is this child, but rather, how is this child intelligent?'

I drew inspiration from Gardner's writing on multiple forms of intelligence – including cultural intelligence – when I became head of Wellington College in 2006. We redesigned the entire curriculum and co-curricular life of the school around eight separate 'aptitudes': artistic, physical, logical, linguistic, personal, social, moral and spiritual. I believe all schools should nurture these different facets, which otherwise might remain dormant within each child. The arts are an intrinsic part of this approach.





‘Learning how to express ourselves, whether in poetry, prose or drama, provides a crucial psychological outlet, and an invaluable professional skill’

Wellington College is not unusual among independent schools. Two thirds of pupils learn a musical instrument (I would like that figure to be 100 per cent); all take part in singing competitions and are given opportunities to act and present on stage. All are offered the chance to draw and paint, are encouraged to write creatively and have the opportunity to dance. The school is alive with performances, the corridors and walls are a permanent art gallery, and music is heard everywhere.

Why should students at independent schools enjoy such a rich education in the arts, whereas in most state schools – where it could be so effective and is most needed – it is a hit-and-miss business?

Some of those who show an early gift at state schools might receive encouragement, but the mass is often ignored, as if their creative potential is of little value. True, state schools have fewer resources in general than independent schools but some manage to offer music, drama, dance and creative writing, as well as wonderful opportunities through their art departments. This should be normal for all schools, for denying an arts education to the young will limit their chances of learning self-expression and of achieving profound personal fulfilment. It’s about their potential – and their lifelong happiness.

I would argue that every single child in a state school should have access to the five forms of the arts to the same degree as pupils at independent schools.

Melody and rhythm lie deep in the soul of every human being. Every pupil should be taught a classical instrument. What other lesson can we draw from the wonderful El Sistema story than the powerful cultural and social impact on all young people of music?

The state should fund universal musical education. There are encouraging signs that the government is beginning to recognise this, and I welcome the additional money that has recently been made available to music hubs. But we need more – both financially and in terms of leadership, to get music and the arts up the educational agenda.

Every child should experience the thrill of playing in a musical ensemble. It will be one of the most profound experiences in their lives; they will learn about self-discipline, teamwork and trust. All young people should be taught to sing and have the chance to perform in concert. Schools should reverberate with music in their corridors and lunch halls.

Drama is equally vital to emotional and intellectual development. Before self-consciousness sets in, children naturally want to act and perform. Acting gives young people confidence and augments their ability to express themselves in public – a vital career skill.

Visual art generally fares the best of the five artforms in schools. But even visual art's importance is not properly understood, and not every child learns to draw and paint from an early age. Art is the most universal language of all and the earlier it is taught, the better. Throughout their years of formal education, students should come to understand the history of art over the last 2,000 years, from the classical world to Tracey Emin. Doing so will give them the means to enjoy and understand art and architecture – the environment they live in – throughout their lives.

Creative writing plays second fiddle to literary appreciation in most schools. Yet learning how we express ourselves, whether in poetry, prose or drama, provides a crucial psychological outlet, and an invaluable professional skill. Learning how to write enhances the value and pleasure to be derived from reading.

Dance, the fifth art form, has fared least well in schools, despite its growing popularity amongst the young. The rhythms of dance lie deep in the human psyche and learning to understand dance should be important for boys as well as girls. Again, it is an artform that achieves personal expression and liberty through great discipline – and it's healthy exercise.



‘In England, this vital education in the arts is mostly limited to the economically privileged. This is an unjust waste of national talent; a true arts-based education for all will make our society more genuinely democratic’

MELODY AND
RHYTHM LIE
DEEP IN THE
SOUL OF EVERY
HUMAN BEING.

Offering these opportunities to the young represents a long-term investment in their talent and happiness. They will develop interests that blossom, giving them skills of self-confidence, presentation and articulation. These will improve their professional progress, and will enrich their personal lives immeasurably.

A true arts-based education for all should not be a dream. It should be a priority. It will make schools more civilized, children wiser and more reflective, academic learning more productive and harmonious, and it will turn out young men and women who will be better citizens and happier humans. It will break down the barriers of chance and privilege and make our society more genuinely democratic.

Last month, I walked past the Grey Coat Hospital Church of England Comprehensive School for Girls in Westminster and saw girls streaming out of the front door carrying violin and cello cases. When all state schools are like this, we will be achieving real equality of opportunity.



Hollie McNish

Not just for 'Arts Week'

**Performance poet Hollie tells us
how spoken word could
be integrated into every subject,
and why arts in schools shouldn't
be restricted to 'Arts Week'.**

I had to be kicked up the bum to start actually performing my poetry, but I always wrote. I was never into poetry at school, but all my diaries were in poetry from the age of about seven.

A lot of the time when I write a poem, it's in order to try and get my head around something I've been thinking about or studying. This is really geeky, but I used to write little poems about physics during my GCSEs. It's always been about clarifying ideas and getting them into a simpler form.

'Mathematics' – my first poem to go viral – that was written sitting in a lecture about the jobs market. That one prompted a lot of discussions about economics from people on Mumsnet!

Anyway, when I met my partner, who's a drum and bass MC, he started reading me his raps. So I said, 'Oh, I write a bit of poetry', and started reading them to him. When he refused to hear any more, I used to read them down the phone to my mum. She'd be like, 'Is it another moany one?'

I wrote a lot of moany poetry at Cambridge when I was at university. Seeing all these people who are obviously really privileged, with no idea how privileged they are. And then graduating, and seeing all those people going into government...! So I kept writing moany poetry, and even my mum got sick of listening to it.

Eventually, I started going to the Poetry Café in London, while I did my Masters in Development and Economics. It took me about a year before I got up the courage to read anything. I went in to ask about the open mic night, but I was too scared, so I just walked straight out again.

Lots of arts venues I've spoken to ask: 'Why don't the public just come in?' And I think the answer is that you need to put a sign on the door that literally says: 'Everybody is welcome to come in and sit down here.' Some spaces – from the outside – if you haven't been before, there's a barrier. When you're a teenager, for example, most of the time when you wander into places, you're told to get out. So why would you bother?

So, anyway, I finally read my first poems at the Poetry Café and someone from Farrago Poetry was there. They asked me to do one of their nights – it was a slam, and I didn't know what that was. And then they asked me to do the next one, which turned out to be the UK Slam and I won that, and started being asked to do more gigs.

I still had my job as an education officer in an architecture charity at that point. I loved it. I like the practical stuff. Now I work in schools and I do more and more conferences.

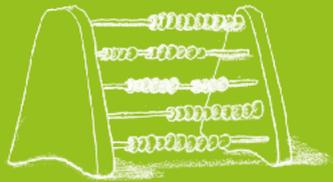
For me, poetry has always been practical. For example, take my poem 'Cupcakes or Scones'. I listened to a programme on *Woman's Hour* about the infantilisation of women, so I wrote some things down to clear my head. I always thought I'd have a job writing educational materials or something, writing the abridged version of things. And that's sort of what I've ended up doing.

And YouTube is great. It means that poetry's different now, because so many people can see it. Most of the 'unreachable' kids I work with – they're unreachable because they don't have lifts, they can't get anywhere. So YouTube and social media – it's like magic, to be able to bring those people in.

I think the way we split up things like art and science schools is not realistic. As if someone who is good at maths would be rubbish at art. There's no reason why you can't combine the two. The arts could be there in every subject. I got an A* in GCSE science and it was blatantly because I'd written poems about equations.

It's hard in schools, because of funding, and because teachers in England already work 60 hours a week. But having the arts in history – like having theatre companies going in and acting things out – makes a difference. Like the guy that raps Chaucer: Baba Brinkman. And like the *Romeo + Juliet* film – that was shown in every classroom when I was studying Shakespeare.

And there's loads of art in science anyway, isn't there? I don't think I did any drawing in science, but I looked at lots of pictures of stuff. And for revision I'd do it – 'cos I knew it would remind me. Like drawings of the human body – what about the idea of having that as an exhibition? How funny would that be? Kids would remember it if they had to draw a clitoris. Although, the clitoris isn't even on the biology curriculum, I found out the other day. How ridiculous. People are having it cut out, it's so important.



COS SOME WHO COME HERE ALSO SPEND
AND SOME WHO COME HERE ALSO LEND
AND SOME WHO COME HERE ALSO TEND
TO SET UP WORK WHICH EMPLOYS THEM
AND ALL THOSE BALANCE SHEETS AND TRENDS
THEY WORK WITH NUMBERS. NOT WITH MEN.

FROM 'MATHEMATICS'

And artists don't want to just be in a theatre or a poetry bubble. Because that's like the politicians' bubble, where you're just agreeing with each other. When you work in the arts, you can have all these ideas and assume that everybody else does as well. They don't.

If I was in charge of education in this country, I'd bring outside people in to do creative stuff in all subjects, and not just for 'Arts Week'. And I'd cut down teachers' hours. People complain about teachers getting paid too much. I think: 'Why are you complaining about teachers? Why aren't you complaining about people getting £5 million a year?' It's hard to walk into a classroom in front of thirty kids. I do it for a day at a time, and it's brilliant, because I can go in and go out again, and it's like a breath of fresh air. I think there should be more of that.

Loads of kids that we've worked with for a day then go home and start writing. One kid was writing about her mum getting beaten up, and them trying to leave the house and their dad beating them both up, and she did it in this amazing poem about a dragon living in their house. If you've got the skills to go and write about it, it won't stop stuff from happening, but it can help to get things off your chest.

When I go into schools, teachers say: 'Oh, I didn't expect him to do well today.' But those kids often work really hard – because they're finally given something different to do. And the kids who they point out as being 'difficult' – they've always got something to say, because no one usually asks them.

I don't think I've met a kid who's doing badly at school who hasn't gone on to write a poem about something that's difficult at home – even if it's just about sharing their bedroom, or looking after their mum.

And also – it's funny – seeing a kid in pre-school, and comparing it to later on. Why do we think we've got to be really entertaining and exciting and creative for kids that age, and then drop it when they're 12, cos they're alright sitting in a classroom?

Imagine if we put a pack of adults back into a school! Even at gigs, sometimes, or conferences, they're the ones who don't listen. They don't concentrate for a whole day, they sit there texting – they do exactly the same as kids do! Why do we seem to think it's that easy for every single person to sit in a classroom?

Turning the tide:
**changing
schools,**

changing lives

**Kathy Fletcher
& Katy Mayo-Hudson**

**The Turnaround Arts team on
how failing American schools are
being transformed by the arts.**

Three years ago, Lionel was considered a troublemaker by his teachers. He was frequently disruptive, rarely focused in class and was sent out of the classroom at least once a day. Often he just didn't bother to come to school. What was the point? Instead, he would hang out with his brothers on the streets or watch television.

Then, something changed. His school hired a band teacher, Mr Baptiste. One day, Lionel ran into him in the hallway. 'Are you a trombone player?' asked Mr Baptiste. Lionel said he wasn't. 'Are you sure? Because you sure look like a trombone player to me.' Mr Baptiste was right. Lionel loved the trombone's deep voice, and its smooth sliding motion; through music he found a reason to come to school.

His school was changing in other ways too – the halls became colourful with artwork and his class painted a mural with a local artist. His teacher led them in drama exercises to deepen their comprehension, and they even wrote raps using a maths-based vocabulary. Lionel stopped hanging out on street corners. He practised his trombone, did his homework and began showing up to school every morning. He even started to like school.

This is the story of just one child in New Orleans. You could find similar stories throughout all our Turnaround Arts schools. Students are finding joy and meaning through the arts, and are being helped on the path to success. This progress is desperately needed – all our project schools have long histories of chronic failure. But through a renewed vision that makes strategic use of the arts in tandem with other interventions, these schools are being transformed into purposeful, engaging places with students who exude the self-confidence that comes with a high-quality, integrated arts programme.

Turnaround Arts was launched in 2012 by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, which consists of prominent artists, writers and scholars. Michelle Obama serves as honorary chair. It is the first arts education initiative to be endorsed by the White House, and the first to receive financial support from the US Department of Education.

I WILL NOT STOP SINGING SHAKESPEARE
I WILL NOT STOP SINGING SHAKESPEARE
I WILL NOT STOP SINGING SHAKESPEARE

I WILL NOT STOP DANCING IN SCIENCE
I WILL NOT STOP DANCING IN SCIENCE
I WILL NOT STOP DANCING IN SCIENCE

I WILL NOT STOP DRAWING IN MATHS
I WILL NOT STOP DRAWING IN MATHS
I WILL NOT STOP DRAWING IN MATHS

‘These schools are being transformed into purposeful, engaging places with students who exude the self-confidence that comes with a high-quality, integrated arts programme’

In its pilot phase, from 2012-14, schools receiving a federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) were encouraged to apply. As SIG schools, they fell into the bottom five per cent of achievement in their states and were poised for drastic reform. Eight schools were selected as Turnaround Arts schools, receiving three years of advice, teacher training, art supplies, instruments and inroads to local arts organisations. In addition, each school was adopted for two years by a celebrity ‘Turnaround Artist’, who visited the school to work directly with students and give a much-needed boost to their morale and image.

The results were stunning. In just two years, all these schools showed visible improvements in culture and climate. Two schools exited ‘turnaround’ status, due to their exceptional progress. All schools saw falls in discipline related incidents and a rise in attendance. Collaboration between teachers – a strong early indicator of successful reform – rose appreciably. The early results from our evaluation were very encouraging. These results put Turnaround Arts at the forefront of a revitalised conversation about arts education in the United States, inspired in part by the widely adopted Common Core Standards. These new national standards place a strong emphasis on critical thinking and interpretation, skills that are integral to arts instruction.

With this momentum and the support of public and private funding, we launched a second phase of Turnaround Arts last spring. To create strong local support, we developed a regional model. We selected three states and three school districts, each of which fosters its own batch of Turnaround Arts schools. These 27 new schools have a similarly urgent need for reform, but many do not receive SIG funds, which provides the opportunity to show that these educational gains can be achieved in leaner circumstances.

In our experience, mobilising the arts as transformational tools has two main aspects: developing a school's arts assets, and then leveraging them to address particular challenges. We help schools to make the most of eight key arts assets, which we call 'the pillars of Turnaround Arts'. These are Principal leadership, art specialists, non-arts classroom teachers, teaching artists, community support, strategic planning, professional development and school environment. In addition to developing these assets in specific, interconnected ways, schools also rely on an arts leadership team to oversee planning and implementation.

Turning a school around requires changes to the whole school. Often the deepest challenge to the staff is integration of the arts into 'core' instruction – reading, maths and other academic subjects. But this can give rise to wonderful collaborations: a maths teacher might work with the visual arts teacher to intertwine instruction on fractions with a study of cubism, or students might transform a favourite story into monologues with the help of a local actor. Our schools also import and develop arts-rich professional development for their staff. These arts experiences break down barriers and build a community for the staff in the same ways they do for students – through collective problem solving, risk taking and sheer fun.

Of course, the arts are not a silver bullet. A school requires a full toolbox of measures to address the diverse and formidable challenges of struggling environments. But we believe, and are proving, that the arts have an important role to play in school reform. Additionally, we are inspired by the well-documented inequity of arts instruction across socioeconomic groups in our country. All children, rich or poor, deserve to be empowered through arts experiences. In the years ahead, Turnaround Arts will continue to add schools to our network and demonstrate that the trajectories of schools – and of individual students like Lionel – can be changed through the arts.

A final note on Lionel. Life is still a challenge but his entire orientation towards learning has shifted. He has improved his reading and maths, raised his grades and developed a great rapport with his teachers. He is now captain of the jazz band and last spring proudly led his bandmates in the Mardi Gras parade. His family boasts about his progress. What began as a simple opportunity to play the trombone has changed Lionel in ways that go far beyond music – he has come to believe in himself and to feel certain that he has a place, and a voice, in this world.

Raymond Antrobus
Sound Air

*Classroom chairs know Melisa's weight.
Twelve years old, holding
space
at the back of the class, pinned
by her own gravity, a gravity her voice
fails to escape, even when reaching
for answers.*

*Hearing her find a way to hold
her quiver, silencing
a hundred students in an assembly hall,
knowing my words have lured her eyes outside windows
where a featherweight voice is still hard to throw—*

*Melisa's nerve to read her first poem
in her second language
taught me the raising of back-row voices
lifts something closer to the front for us all.*

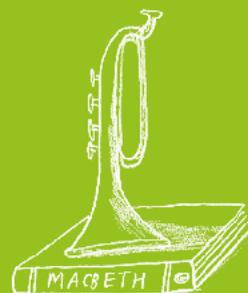
PARTICIPATION IN STRUCTURED ARTS ACTIVITIES LED TO INCREASES IN TRANSFERABLE SKILLS (INCLUDING CONFIDENCE AND COMMUNICATION) OF BETWEEN

10-17%

CHILDREN FROM LOW INCOME FAMILIES WHO TAKE PART IN ARTS AT SCHOOL ARE THREE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO GET A DEGREE



ARTS & EDUCATION



78% OF CHILDREN WHO TOOK PART IN THE FIRST YEAR OF IN HARMONY, A PROGRAMME OF DAILY MUSIC ACTIVITY, DEMONSTRATED IMPROVED PERFORMANCE ACROSS CORE SUBJECTS

AT RISK TEENAGERS OR YOUNG ADULTS WITH A HISTORY OF INTENSIVE ARTS EXPERIENCES SHOW ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS CLOSER TO, AND IN SOME CASES EXCEEDING, THE LEVELS SHOWN THE GENERAL POPULATION STUDIED.

THE ARTS COUNCIL INVESTED

£5,349,998

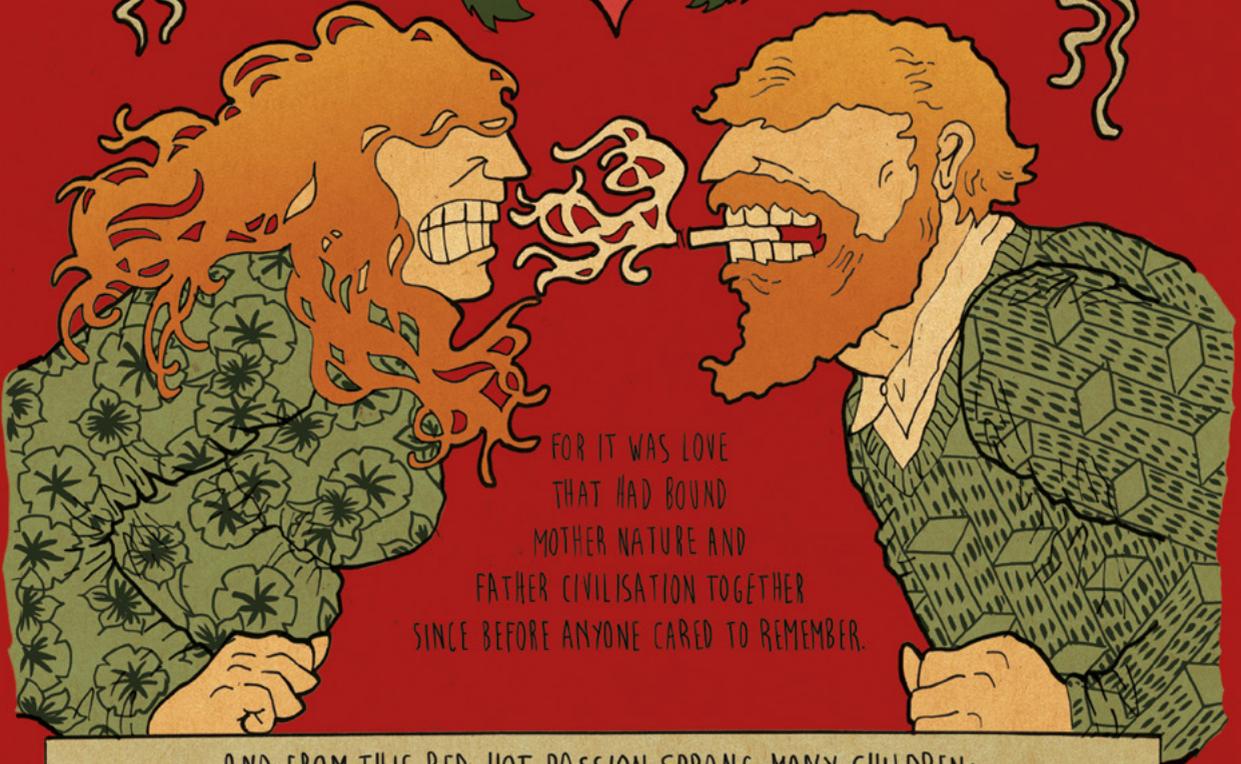
IN CULTURAL EDUCATION IN 2013-14

A CREATION COMIC BY KARRIE FRANSMAN

IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS

Love

(ALBEIT A STRANGE KIND)



FOR IT WAS LOVE
THAT HAD BOUND
MOTHER NATURE AND
FATHER CIVILISATION TOGETHER
SINCE BEFORE ANYONE CARED TO REMEMBER.

AND FROM THIS RED-HOT PASSION SPRANG MANY CHILDREN:



MOTHER NATURE AND FATHER CIVILISATION LOVED THEIR DAUGHTER ART. SURE, SHE WAS SOMETIMES NAUGHTY, BUT HER HEART WAS AS BIG AS THEIR OTHER CHILDREN'S BRAIN.



BUT AS THE CHILDREN GREW THEIR DIFFERENCES BECAME APPARENT. WHILE THE OTHERS WORKED HARD AND PLACED VALUE IN THEIR FUTURE, ART SEEMED TO FAFF ABOUT AND PLAY. SOMETIMES WORKING HARD ON GREAT GENIUS... BUT AT OTHER TIMES JUST CREATING A MESS.

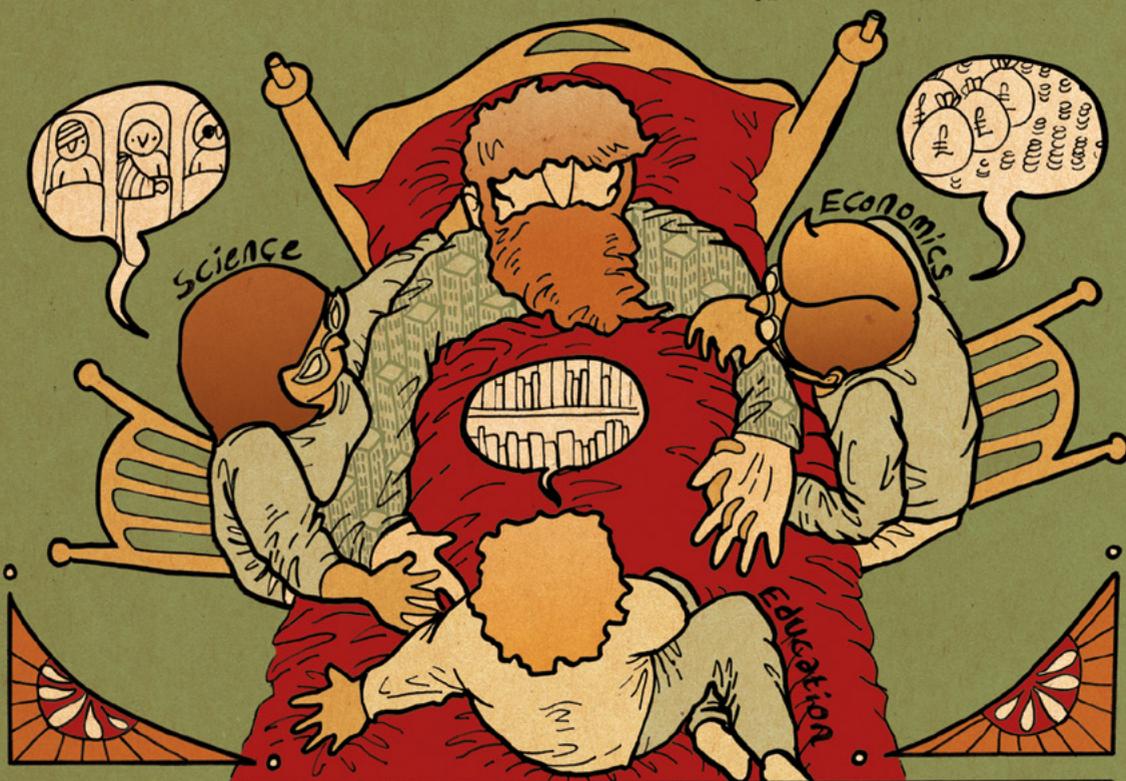


FATHER CIVILISATION BEGAN TO GROW CONCERNED ABOUT ART'S ROLE IN THE WORLD. HE STROKED HIS BEARD AND BROODED 'WHAT AN INDULGENCE TO LIVE ONE'S LIFE WITH NO DIRECTION!' IN THESE DIFFICULT TIMES HOW WAS ART GOING TO SUSTAIN THEM ALL?

THESE CONCERNS PLAYED ON FATHER CIVILISATION'S MIND. HE BEGAN TO SINK INTO A BLACK DEPRESSION. FOR SIX LONG NIGHTS HE STAYED AWAKE TOSING THIS WAY AND THAT, ANXIOUS ABOUT THE FUTURE.



THEN ON THE 7TH NIGHT, AS HE LAY, RIDDLED WITH ANXIETY AND INSOMNIA, HE CALLED FOR HIS CHILDREN TO GATHER NEARER AND REASSURE HIM OF THEIR FUTURE.



FATHER CIVILISATION LISTENED AND HIS WORRY GREW ABOUT HIS DAUGHTER, ART. SURE, LIKE EDUCATION SHE HELPED PEOPLE TO LEARN AND THINK; LIKE SCIENCE SHE EVEN HELPED PEOPLE WHO WERE SICK AND SAD GET BETTER; AND LIKE ECONOMICS SHE SOMETIMES CREATED THINGS OF GREAT VALUE. BUT HE WAS NO LONGER SURE WHAT HER WORTH WAS IN HER OWN RIGHT.

SO ART CAME AND HELD HER FATHER'S LEFT HAND AND SHOWED HIM SIGHTS AND SANG SOUNDS AND WHISPERED WORDS THAT FED HIS SOUL AND FILLED HIS HEART WITH MEANING. AND SLOWLY HIS PANIC BEGAN TO LESSEN AND HIS FEAR OF LIFE AND DEATH BEGAN TO DIMINISH.



FATHER CIVILISATION REALISED THAT HE HAD FORGOTTEN ART'S VALUE, A VALUE THAT COULD NOT BE MEASURED SIMPLY BY ITS CONTRIBUTION TO SCIENCE, ECONOMICS OR EDUCATION - EVEN TO PROGRESS. BUT HELD ALL THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY, EXPERIMENTATION, REBELLION, COLLABORATION, ISOLATION AND ULTIMATELY...

THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING OUR HUMAN EXISTENCE IN ALL ITS MESSY GLORY.

AND WITH THAT FATHER CIVILISATION CLOSED HIS WEARY EYES AND AT LONG LAST FELL INTO THE MOST PEACEFUL SLUMBER.

03 Society



Our society's great strength is its democratic tolerance. We endeavour to understand and respect each other – and we have been fortunate to enjoy an age of relative peace and great prosperity. But we will not be immune to the challenges facing the world, in terms of the environment, public health and our diminishing resources. These changes require bold new ideas and a commitment to bring all the voices of society into the debate. The arts are an agency of positive change, an intellectual arena and the practical means for developing partnerships that can revolutionise our approach to problems.

John Ashton, President of the Faculty of Public Health, writes about a historic schism in our thinking about wellbeing and health, and how the arts can heal it. Nii Sackey gives us a dynamic view of how we can change the world by embracing diversity; bestselling authors Neil Gaiman and Toby Litt discuss the power of libraries and literature to imagine our future; and poet Francesca Beard looks forward to a society in which art unites personal and public dreams, and there is a fairer world.

Nii Sackey

**We need
to get
uncomfortable
about
diversity**

**Bigga Fish's Nii Sackey tells
us to strap ourselves in
for a rough but necessary ride.**

**All around us the world is changing.
This change is being driven by a young
and technologically adept population that
embraces new ways of thinking and new
ways of viewing our present and future.**

In this time of transformation, we will have to be at our bravest. Though the end result might bring generous benefits, the process of change is most uncomfortable at the point of realisation that things need to change because something is not right. We must find the courage to be honest, to accept, and to evolve.

Revolutions bring opportunities. Amid discord, the influence of the arts can be at its greatest. The arts are unique in consolidating conflicting thoughts and expressions into powerful images of reconciliation, through creativity. The arts can challenge social inequality. They can help break cycles of disengagement and violence.

Making art is the way we can make sense of painful changes; it may not always seem it, but the creative process is the healing process.

But to take opportunities, we need to stop saying everything is fine. When it comes to diversity, it no longer works to say 'there is no problem' or 'what we are doing is going to work, eventually'. Long-running issues that have been pushed into the background return to haunt us, ever bigger and more costly. Look at the United States, where strong feelings about institutionalised economic and racial bias have recently sparked more public protests.

**‘When it comes to diversity,
it no longer works to say
“there is no problem”’**

It may come as a shock, but there are similarities between what happens in the US and the UK. In some ways, problems seem more accentuated. A 2010 report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission pointed out that in the UK the proportion of black people in jail represents almost seven times their share of the overall population; in the US the proportion of black prisoners is four times their population share. And every few years, the UK has its own cycle of racially complex social unrest.

Why do these disparities persist? At the heart of this problem is a disconnection between the people and the bodies tasked with serving them. There is still little real movement to reflect the diversity of modern society in any of our institutions. This lack of opportunity becomes glaring in the arts – because this is where we expect the community to be most in tune with a diverse society. The arts are a mirror to our world.

We have to change our thinking about diversity; and the arts must lead. If the arts can't be open and think about new solutions, the arts will slip from not-in-touch, to out-of-touch to being wholly irrelevant. The arts sector will lose its value and, just as social media bypassed the mainstream news, the public will bypass the arts sector. They will get their art elsewhere.

So how can we truly embrace diversity?

We do not necessarily need more physical resources, more bricks and mortar; we do need more equality in the distribution of resources. Most importantly, we need to change how we think. We need to think about diversity as a necessity. It must be part of the process, not an add-on.

‘We can move from the need to justify and evidence the value of the arts, to the arts being the evidence of a just society’

TO PUSH THIS FORWARD,
WE NEED UNCOMFORTABLE
PEOPLE. WE WILL NEED RISK-
TAKING INVESTMENT AND
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REMEMBER THAT THE SOLUTIONS
ARE SIMPLER THAN THE PROBLEM.

‘We need strategic thinking that will recognise that through art and culture we are making a long-term investment in public wellbeing’

Young people, diversity and inclusion across gender, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic boundaries should be central to the philosophy of the creative arts – this is the only way forward.

There are things the arts establishment could do. We could create more apprenticeships within organisations and seed diversity throughout core operations. We could think how we can help young people from all backgrounds access more funding.

And we could learn from collaboration.

We need to engage more with the creative arts at a grassroots level, where diversity is most expressed. We need to think about the energising influence that smaller organisations can have. Investment in innovation through smaller, more nimble vehicles generates material benefits and crucial knowledge for larger institutions. Diverse practitioners, smaller organisations and start-ups are environmentally shaped to be in touch with their communities and can generate wide social benefits and economic value more efficiently, at a faster pace.

The current climate is tough for small organisations. They want to be supported and connected to achieve their potential. We should get out there and create sustainable partnerships between small and large organisations.

In the end, diversity is about opportunity of every sort – social and economic. It means better art; it means a fairer society; it means more money. But the right approach to diversity requires partnerships between organisations of differing scales. Individually, both the very large and the very small are unsustainable in the long term.

The arts can be leaders in communicating the benefits of diversity. The arts work across many sectors – and the process of collaboration and transformation through diverse thinking can be applied by the arts to education, to healthcare and to the creative industries.

But this won't be a comfortable process. To push this forward, we need uncomfortable people. We will need risk-taking investment and innovation. But we must remember that the solutions are simpler than the problem.

The greatest time for the arts is ahead of us. We can move from the need to justify and evidence the value of the arts, to the arts being the evidence of a just society. But only when diversity is integral to the process will the arts become this powerful; then we won't need to make any case for the arts, because the case will be self-evident. The arts will be the case.

Neil Gaiman & Toby Litt

The Keys to the Kingdom

Author Neil Gaiman talks to Toby Litt
about libraries and librarians,
the magic of the safe space and
the 'empathy machine' of literature.



Toby Litt: Neil, you've described yourself as a 'feral child who was raised in libraries'. What age were you when you were first drawn into a library, and why do you think they hooked you?

Neil Gaiman: I was probably three or four when I first started going to libraries. We moved up to Sussex when I was five, and I discovered the local library very, very quickly. But it wasn't really until I got to the point where I was old enough to persuade my parents to just take me to the library and leave me there, which would have probably been about seven or eight. And at that point it was like being given the keys to the kingdom.

TL: Was it, was it a brand-new, 1960s, idealistic, 'we'll educate the masses' library, or a slightly down-at-the-heel one?

NG: It was a very large, respectable Victorian house, of the kind that looked like it might have once been an upmarket doctor's practice. It didn't look as if it had started life as a library. The whole of the ground floor was books. In the back was the children's library. You had a lovely, ancient wooden librarian nest in the middle, where the librarians would huddle. Originally I was terrified of the librarians. I thought their job was to enforce fines – the equivalent of the Stephen King library police, you know? But there was a point, I was probably about eight years old, and I discovered this series of books: the 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents...' Alfred Hitchcock's Three Investigators...

TL: Yes, I know...

NG: ... and I couldn't work out how to find more of them. They didn't quite seem to have Alfred Hitchcock as an author. They were Alfred Hitchcock's Three Investigators, but he didn't appear to be writing them. And I had to man up and talk to the librarian.

TL: Approach the nest...

NG: I did. The librarian – he was a very tall gentleman with a pretty dark beard – went off and figured it out. They managed to order more of these Three Investigators books for me, which made me ridiculously happy. I discovered that librarians were not scary people, which got incredibly important, because as a kid, I was obsessed with Gilbert and Sullivan. I'd won the local paper's Gilbert and Sullivan competition when I was nine. And being a curmudgeonly little nine year old, the prize was free tickets to go and see a performance of *Patience* at a local

school, and I thought it was dreadful. I was sitting there, writing bad reviews in my head. There were Gilbert and Sullivan plays that I had never read, and that you couldn't find, and I discovered the interlibrary loan, which means that if your library doesn't have the book, they will find it for you. And that was power!

TL: Isn't the future of libraries dependent on not having gatekeepers who are scary, on libraries not looking ancient, and not being about distant, old knowledge?

NG: I've probably been in about six or seven hundred libraries over the years, some of them that I researched in, some of them I took my children to; a lot of them I've visited for events, for launches, for opening graphic novel sections. I've seen so many wonderful libraries. One of my favourites is in Salt Lake City, in Utah, where they had giant, six-foot-high beanbag things on the kids' floor, where you could collapse and disappear with your book and not come out for the day. And although those places would have been my idea of the Elysian Fields, had someone described them to me as a child, really all I needed at that point in time was a shelf with books on it that I hadn't read. And a relatively comfy chair. Actually, I didn't care about the comfy chair. I look around at some of the wonderful libraries I've been to, and, you know, they're all glorious. And they have internet, and they have librarians who are delights, and they have 'no-shushing' signs. You know, the signs showing somebody making a 'shush' with their finger, with a red line through it. But I think that what is most interesting to remember, always, is the platonic concept of a library. And the platonic concept of a library can be a caravan with some books in it.

'There's nothing quite like the glorious serendipity of finding a book you didn't know you wanted to read'



TL: Or library vans, you know, which still go around in Lambeth where I live, or did until a couple of years ago. But if you were a child now, what do you think would draw you in? A lot of the attraction of a library when I was growing up was based on lack. The library had stuff that wasn't elsewhere. In your case, Gilbert and Sullivan; in my case, science fiction. If you imagine yourself as a kid now, why not get that stuff on your phone? Why do you need the building?

NG: I think, firstly, nobody is curating the information for you. Nobody is giving you a safe space. I used to love libraries at school. Because school libraries had an enforced quiet policy, which meant they tended to be bully-free zones. They were places where you could do your homework, you could do stuff, whether it was reading books, or getting on with things that you wanted to get on with, and know that you were safe there. And people responded to your enthusiasms. If you like a certain writer, or a certain genre, librarians love that. They love pointing you at things that you'll also like. And that gets magical. If you like RA Lafferty, you'll like Ursula Le Guin, you'll like Tolkien. And there's web access. I've talked to a lot of librarians, and one of the things that they do is help people who do not have web access. Most job applications, and a lot of information on benefits and things like that, are out on the web. That's where you apply for your benefits; that's how you apply for jobs. We act as if a smartphone and internet access are now handed out at birth. But it's simply not true. A lot of people don't have web access.

TL: So the question is: if libraries are so great, why aren't they a roaring success like the Tate Galleries, with hundreds of people through the door? Surely they must be doing something wrong?

NG: Which libraries are we talking about? The new Birmingham library has been getting numbers through its doors that are very similar to the Tate Gallery. They invested in a huge, glorious library. It's a beautiful, beautiful space. And they did it just before the cuts came in. It's been a Tate Gallery-level success. On the other hand, your question is a bit like asking: 'Why is it that a local art museum, where they've cut the opening hours to three on a Monday afternoon and three on a Thursday, and half of the paintings are now stored around the back, isn't a success on Tate Gallery levels?' Maybe people need a little bit more. And I think that's one reason why libraries just need support. Look at Australia, where libraries are an enormous

success, because nobody seems to have thought it necessary to cut the budgets. One of my favourite libraries in the world is in Melbourne, which has a grand piano! And when I went and did this fantastic reading, and my wife made music, and people were hanging around, there were about 1,500 people there. Wonderful people, wonderful space. The kind of space that makes you feel welcome.



**‘A book is a little empathy machine.
It puts you inside somebody else’s head.
You see out of the world through somebody
else’s eyes. It’s very hard to hate people of
a certain kind when you’ve just read a
book by one of those people’**

TL: But do you think that if a library is going to be around in 20 years' time, there are things that need to be changed? Is there a point at which a library stops being a library and becomes a sort of civic centre, or something like that?

NG: I think the most important thing is a space that's safe, and safe in all sorts of ways. Safe to work, safe to think. And [a space that has] librarians, because the librarians are the people who are curating the thing. I would obviously always put a vote up for books around, because there's nothing quite like the glorious serendipity of finding a book you didn't know you wanted to read. Anybody online can find a book they know they want to read, but it's so much harder to find a book you didn't know you want to read. To just pick it up because the cover looks interesting. Pick it up because it's sitting next to the book that you meant to pick up. Pick it up because it's sitting there on the returned book stack, above, below the book that you were putting down. I would always have books around. Because there are studies now that seem to indicate that we absorb information differently if we're taking it from a static page than if we're taking it from a screen, which is fascinating. But if you told me that all you'd have is a comfortable room that was a safe space, with a person in it maintaining it, I could believe in that. You'd go over and you'd say, 'I've heard of a film that was made back in the 20th century, and it's something to do with a falcon, a black falcon, I think it was Maltese or something.' And they'd go, 'Oh yes! Well, there's a book, there's a film, what would you like?' And you'd say, 'Well, I'd like both.' And they'd press a little button, or wave their hands around, and hand you a unit, on which you would be experiencing both the classic film and the book. I can imagine that happening. But I think, I think the important thing is the sense of community and of safe space. And that is something that is impossible to downplay.

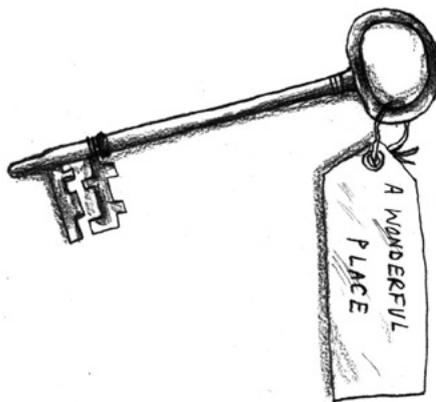
'I think the important thing is the sense of community and of safe space. And that is something that is impossible to downplay'

TL: What do you think about library closures?
Some will plead financial prerogatives?

NG: I think it's short sighted. For me, closing libraries is the equivalent of eating your seed corn to save a little money. There was a recent report published by Save the Children that showed that among low-income white boys in England, 45 per cent were not reading well – meaning they should understand the meaning of what they read – by the age of 11. Which is a monstrous statistic, especially when you start thinking about it as a statistic that measures not just literacy but also as a measure of imagination and empathy, because a book is a little empathy machine. It puts you inside somebody else's head. You see out of the world through somebody else's eyes. It's very hard to hate people of a certain kind when you've just read a book by one of those people. So in that context, as far as I'm concerned, closing libraries is endangering the future. You know, at least with the libraries there, you're in with a chance.

TL: Thank you very much for talking to us, Neil.

NG: Thank you Toby – that was great.



Francesca Beard

(To be read aloud.)

Dear Aldous and George,

*It's 2014 and 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' and 'Brave New World', so concept-rich,
Have been strip-mined for practical tips such as
Newspeak, Doublethink, Soma and of course, 'Big Brother' (hashtagfun!)
Your dystopic fictions inspire our Big Society,
With all attendant ironies, so post-modern as to be
Depthlessly, seamlessly virtual.*

*Your texts read like instructional manuals,
'The Dummies' Guide To State' and 'Society 101',
We add new chapters, to reflect
What, through hindsight, you might have said.
'The Arts Are Our Life Blood – Death by a Thousand Cuts',
'A Society is only as Strong as Its Most Vulnerable Gated Community',
And 'Drone Warfare, Literally Like a Game!'*

*Winston Smith can now hook up with partners
On dates set up via apps, facilitating romance
Between algorithmically probable soul mates™.
In the event of a face-to-face,
He's prophylactically protected from heartbreak
By mood stabilizers
And a text alert to his service provider, should he move out of range.*

*Satire isn't what it once was and, what once was, isn't what we knew.
 One thing remains true,
 Your words have power.
 So here is my request for a different predictive future.*

*In 2054, we all live in two worlds.
 A visible world of consensus reality,
 Of numbers and technology,
 Of money and football and hospitals,
 Of how light is both a wave and a particle.
 We also occupy, simultaneously,
 A world inside, that only we know,
 The world of our senses and memories,
 Of a soft throat, singing rhythmically,
 Of gold wine through trees, the spice ship of a shell,
 The metallic stain of blood, of strawberries, magnetic snow.
 The world of how it feels to fall through space, upwards to sleep,
 The world of a fierce joy, a blade gripped between the teeth,
 That weighs our tongue, at our child's first word.*

*In 2054, we hold sacred, these myriad private worlds,
 We share them, through language, to know that we are not alone,
 To make the visible world more real.
 We know that we must tell our stories and our history,
 Even if the line we draw is jagged and ugly.
 We know that memory is fiction and that stories are who we are.
 We know that metaphors are essential, as are all acts of translation.
 We know that the optimum metaphor for our population
 Is not the iceberg, but the rainforest.
 We do the best we can.
 We fail well and bravely.
 And in this world, we call out that huge lie, that insults those it injures,
 That everyone is the heroic individual, central to their own story,
 That the poor could be rich if they were not lazy,
 That Capitalism is a fair system.
 In this future, we know it is in the spaces between us that we are who we are.
 And in this future, Dear Aldous, Dear Eric,
 Your stories are satire.*

John Ashton

Let's invest in real health

**The arts must be an explicit part
of a healthy society, says John Ashton,
President of the Faculty of Public Health.**



Back in the 1920s, Charles Winslow, Founder of the School of Public Health at Yale, defined public health as ‘the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organised efforts of society’.

Winslow proposed this holistic and comprehensive definition at a time when science was beginning to offer the prospect of therapeutic interventions – such as antibiotics and insulin – that would change medicine’s traditional relationship with the humanities.

Until then, the humanistic vision of health had been best evoked by William Morris. ‘At least I know this,’ he wrote in 1884, ‘that if a person is overworked in any degree they cannot enjoy the sort of health I am speaking of; nor if they are continually chained to one dull round of mechanical work with no hope at the end of it; nor if they live in continual sordid anxiety for their livelihood; nor if they are ill-housed; nor if they are deprived of all the enjoyment of the natural beauty of the world, nor if they have no amusement to quicken the flow of their spirits from time to time; all these things which touch more or less directly on their bodily condition are born of the claim I make to live in good health.’

The therapeutic age evolved different schools of public health and clinical practice, bringing into focus tensions in our thinking that reach back to ancient Greece. In Greek mythology, Aesculapius had two daughters, Hygieia and Panacea. For the former and her followers the secret to health lay in following the rules of clean living, while those who followed Panacea took the more cynical view that human beings are intrinsically weak and will abuse their bodies – so therapies will always be necessary.

‘To make the best of our health and wellbeing, we need to make it intrinsic to the way we think and live’



William Morris

Reinforcing these ancient perspectives is the modern influence of Cartesian dualism, which makes a distinction between the workings of mind and body, between physical and mental processes. Mental and physical health have been seen as separate issues, and justice has been done to neither. It is only now that we are making tentative steps towards treating mind and body as one. In this we are being compelled by necessity, for the health issues we face as a society are too great for Panacea alone to deal with.

In the 1970s, Thomas McKeown, professor of social medicine at Birmingham, drew our attention to the essentially ecological nature of public health. In the wild, he argued, animals are generally well adapted to their environment in specific habitats. It is when the dynamic of the relationship to habitats is changed through, for example, famine and migration – or, in the case of humans, through rapid urbanisation and slum dwelling – that disease patterns change.

McKeown's work was controversial, but it still underpins the debate about public health – whether our resources are best spent on therapeutic interventions, or on improving our environment and the way we live. Should we focus on treating illness, or on making healthy humans? We cannot deny the stresses that are being applied to human biology by sedentary living and by changes in our dietary and sexual habits. We cannot afford to cure all the consequences of these changes.

To make the best of our health and wellbeing, we need to make it intrinsic to the way we think and live. Our understanding of what good health means should run through our lives like the writing on a stick of Blackpool rock.

Art and culture must play a vital role. In past ages, religious faith claimed to offer guidance as to how to live well – in fact, why we should live at all. Despite our nominal beliefs, we now inhabit a largely post-Christian society. But art and culture, so instinctive to us, and so taken for granted, can help us find the route to the existential meaning that is fundamentally necessary to our wellbeing.

It would help if we all had a wider and deeper understanding of the scientific possibilities at our disposal. What medicine can achieve is presented through the distorting lens of modern journalism, and despite the ubiquity of popular science, there is in practice large-scale scientific illiteracy. A division has been made between the humanities and sciences – a division forced upon children from an early age. It shouldn't be this way. Science needs artists to articulate it.

**‘We need strategic thinking
that will recognise that through art
and culture we are making a long-
term investment in public wellbeing’**

In the past 30 years, pioneers like Peter Senior in Manchester have led a revival in arts and health practice. This began with thinking about ways in which they could humanise foreboding hospital environments. This wasn't motivated by instinct, but by evidence that environmental factors can influence the outcome for patients – even the colour of the walls around them.

The movement has grown to encompass musicians in residence, clown therapists in children's hospitals and hospices, and invaluable work in the community, building on the tradition of occupational and art therapy for patients with specific conditions.

More recently, Mersey Care NHS Trust has pioneered a 'Reader' programme using reading as therapy, and has worked with the National Museums Liverpool on its acclaimed House of Memories, which uses objects, archives and stories to provide therapeutic stimulation for dementia sufferers and support for carers.

Placing cultural activity within a public health prism means not only understanding what utility there is for those suffering from sickness, but helping the population to make sense of their mortality. For the young, fit and healthy, such concerns seem a long way off. But understanding the frailty of human flesh is the first step towards facing its challenges. An optimist is somebody who hasn't heard the bad news yet.

We must accept that we are living in an age of senescence. Coping with the chronic conditions that ageing brings is as much a cultural and spiritual matter as a medical one. Art challenges this conundrum; it confers that existential meaning. We recognise the assets of youth but not of older people; they need to be given a role in our society, ways in which they can communicate their knowledge and experience and enjoy their lives. It is impossible to imagine this without art and culture.

The current revival in arts and health practice is encouraging, but our efforts are still uncoordinated. We need our strategic thinking to recognise that through art and culture we are making a long-term investment in public wellbeing. From time to time, plans are formulated, but governments and budgets change and the arts are seen as a conspicuous luxury, ignoring the huge savings that could be achieved. Unhealthy people cost the taxpayer much more than investing in the kinds of activities, facilities and public environments that help prevent or ameliorate illness.

This includes civic design. The long-standing relationship between public health, civic design and architecture, which was so strong in the Victorian era but has withered since the Second World War, must be reconsidered as we think how our towns and cities can work for ageing populations.

My own journey with the arts and health movement began 30 years ago at the International Garden Festival in Liverpool, where we weaved health-related themes and activities throughout the festival site, engaging with millions of visitors through drama and music – and the nation’s first large-scale health fair. We wanted to use the entire site on the banks of the Mersey to reconnect urban populations to the ecology of health against the tapestry of a garden festival.

I was very influenced by the publication *Environments and Happenings* by Liverpool poet and painter Adrian Henri, in which he described a range of situational events connecting people to their environments – including, memorably, a funeral cortège to mark the demise of a much-loved chip shop. Adrian’s eclectic interest in health and the

‘It is only now that we are seeing tentative steps towards treating mind and body as being one ... in this we are being compelled by necessity’

human condition led to him becoming a regular contributor to the Masters in Public Health course at Liverpool Medical School. He welcomed the World Health Organisation's Healthy City Project with a poem and mural of a healthy Liverpool, at a time when a vision of Liverpool resurgent was urgently needed.

City 2000, Adrian Henri¹

*This city
No longer an embarrassment
The too-much-loved-mother
At the school speech day
Lipstick blurred
Smelling of gin-and-lime
As the sun rises over this city
Your morning face on the pillow
Through strands of dark brown hair*

My collaboration with Adrian and other generous spirits from the humanities has informed some immensely rewarding projects with architects and town planners, working with neighbourhood cooperatives, on regeneration and community and mental health facilities.

If the arts are to play their full part in health, we must make their contribution explicit throughout the human life cycle, from birth and health through adolescence and adult life to decline, death and mourning.

Art and culture are a part of every human's makeup and potential, assets that should be explored and developed – not commodities that can be separated from the essence of the person and exploited. They should be regarded as essential to the functions of life in the same way as food and water, and like health and wellbeing, they should not be seen as a cost but as an investment in a thriving society and economy.

¹Extract from *City 2000* reproduced with kind permission of Catherine Marcangeli

ALMOST 60% OF PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO REPORT GOOD HEALTH IF THEY'VE ATTENDED A CULTURAL PLACE OR EVENT IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS.

STUDENTS WHO STUDY

ARTS

SUBJECTS ARE MORE EMPLOYABLE AND MORE LIKELY TO STAY IN EMPLOYMENT THAN GRADUATES FROM OTHER DISCIPLINES.



ARTS & SOCIETY



LEVELS OF WELLBEING ARE GENERALLY REPORTED TO BE HIGHER AMONGST THOSE WITH HIGHER ARTS AND CULTURE ENGAGEMENT.

ARTS AND CULTURAL INTERVENTION CAN HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON SPECIFIC HEALTH CONDITIONS SUCH AS DEMENTIA, PARKINSON'S AND DEPRESSION.



PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY COHESION, REDUCE SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION, AND MAKE COMMUNITIES FEEL SAFER AND STRONGER.



04

Economics



One way or another, the arts have always been a business, and any discomfort about talking about art and economics in the same sentence has been a loss to both artist and entrepreneur. It is not all about the money – before anything else, it is about ambition and excellence, because without that, there is no art of enduring merit. But we are a creative nation, and the arts are a precious national resource, essential to our economic prosperity at home and our reputation abroad. This is more apparent than ever; we're living in a time when the creative industries are growing faster than any other sector of the economy.

In this section, economist Howard Davies discusses why the arts sector has a great story to tell, and why it needs to tell it loudly. Novelist Naomi Alderman talks about writing, video games and why a zombie apocalypse is good for us; John Kampfner describes the role art galleries can play in local regeneration and a poem by Nii Ayikwei Parkes captures the edgy energy that exists between art and commerce.

Naomi Alderman

Zombies are good for us

Prize-winning novelist Naomi Alderman
talks about zombies, writing for games,
and how it's all about telling stories
that make us feel like heroes.



We have a curiously rarefied notion of what art is, and of what it can do. It's as if we still think that 'art' is made by troubled geniuses starving in garrets, or by people who can afford to dedicate weeks to the study of obscure 17th-century tracts. It's as if we think that art is, frankly, damaged by contact with the outside world and its harsh realities.

What, we might ask ourselves, could the arts have to do with fitness or with technology? Could they have any place in finance or business? Surely not! Novels and painting and music are meditations on the human spirit and on the meaning and value of life: we must keep these separate from sordid material realities.

Well, I'm an author. I write novels, the sort of literary fiction that makes prize shortlists. And I also create video games. And these things are not in opposition. The skills of the serious literary novel are valuable when it comes to writing video games. In fact, without my novels, my games would not exist.

What unites these disparate strands of work is storytelling. We absorb stories every day; books and films, but also yarns told in the pub, soap operas and 10-second tales in advertisements. A love of storytelling is shared by all humanity. Stories keep our emotions alive; they make us laugh, or cry. They make us think about human nature and behaviour. Through stories, we learn more about who we are and who we want to be.

There is an art to storytelling, and what looks simple is complex to create. It requires skills that are applicable across aesthetic boundaries: art and commerce, high and low culture.

Let me tell about a game I've made which has enjoyed great commercial success. It's called *Zombies, Run!* It's OK to laugh, both at the title and the idea – it's supposed to be funny. *Zombies, Run!* – co-created with London-based games company Six to Start – is a smartphone fitness game which you play by going for a run or a walk, or when using a treadmill. So, it's a video game, but have to get off your bum to play it.

In the game you are Runner Five, one of the shivering remnants of humanity to survive a zombie apocalypse. You have to leave your small village to collect supplies. As you run, a computerised voice tells you that

JUST BECAUSE
THE GAME IS
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IT'S UNTHINKING.



‘Understanding the importance of narrative is one of the most vital things the arts can teach’

you’ve picked up a bottle of water, or collected batteries. You return home after your run, allot those supplies to different areas of your village, and see it grow.

So far, so cute. But what makes the game exceptional, what keeps our players coming back, is that there’s a story. Each run is a ‘mission’ with a unique 10- to 15-minute audio drama. There are one-off stories – you might have to rescue some children who are trapped in a zombie-infested shopping mall, or brave a crumbling building to retrieve vital equipment – and there’s an overarching narrative, involving a rivalry with another village, and the search for the original cause of the zombie plague. We weave in music from your smartphone, so it’s like being a hero in an action movie scored with your favourite tracks. It’s as if – I often say – you couldn’t see a new episode of *The Walking Dead* unless you went for a walk. It’s like watching *Game of Thrones* while actually fighting for your life against the White Walkers.

The game now contains more than 160 missions. That’s more than a year of running even if you’re going out three times a week. We’ve had guest episodes by such writers as Joanne Harris, Elizabeth Bear and Margaret Atwood. Our users have written thousands of pieces of fan fiction. Most importantly, we get letters every day from people who say that they never enjoyed running before, that they couldn’t motivate themselves, that they were getting worried about their daughter or son who wouldn’t exercise, and that we’ve helped make a real difference. Oh, and we’ve sold more than a million copies of the game.

I’m talking about a financially and creatively successful product that improves public health and depends upon melding the skills of the writer with technology and game design.

There’s a lesson in this about the way we think about the arts, and what’s wrong with that thinking, both in the arts and in business.

Typically, neither video games nor fitness products are much interested in the values of storytelling and narrative. This is changing a bit in video games, but there are still too many made with an approach that boils down to ‘just bring in a writer at the end to wrap a story round it’.

Usually, fitness products focus on competition, on giving you ‘points’ for doing more movement, on encouraging you to examine your ‘data’ with ever more intense and obsessive scrutiny. What’s missing is a story, and the meaning a story can confer.

Let’s think about meaning. In simple terms, it’s to do with narrative context. The meaning of any physical action can be changed when you add it in a story. Moving boxes from a pile might seem tedious – unless you know that someone is trapped under the boxes. The significance of our actions is defined by our knowledge of the past and our hopes for the future: by our position in a narrative.

We need to think more in terms of context and narrative. From the banking crisis to intractable conflicts in troubled regions of the world, divorcing our actions from their causes and their consequences has got the human race into trouble. We need to ask ourselves: what am I doing here? Why am I doing these things? What effects will my actions have? Understanding the importance of narrative is one of the most vital things the arts can teach.

At this juncture you might be tempted to ask what flimsy level of meaning could be represented by a story in which you run away from zombies. The answer’s simple. Monster stories are some of the oldest tales known to us, from Beowulf to the Cyclops to kraken. They contain important values and ideas. The monsters represent our fears and desires, things about ourselves that we don’t want to confront. They’re stories about finding out what it means to be human, and how we can pull together to survive adversity.

Just because the game is about zombies, doesn’t mean it’s unthinking. And because it’s about exercise doesn’t mean it’s trivial. In *Zombies, Run!* every step a player takes counts in the story. And while they’re thinking about things on a mythic level, they’re overcoming some very physical challenges. So every player of *Zombies, Run!* can be a hero twice over – in the game, and on the track.

**‘There’s no good reason
for business to be ugly, for
fitness to be boring or for
technology to be forbidding’**





‘Through this game, we’ve stumbled into bringing meaning to a routine that can feel meaningless’

Through this game, we’re bringing meaning to a routine that can feel meaningless. This process of mapping meaning onto the mundane has made me think about other areas of life that could be enlivened with an injection of the arts.

Notoriously, we specialise in education very early in this country. From the age of 16, kids who are interested in technology and science are sitting in a different building to those who are interested in art, music, literature or drama. And they will be in a different building to those who are interested in economics. And the people who like sport aren’t in any building at all. It’s no wonder we’re not applying the creativity and meaning the arts bring to business, technology or health.

Think of how well it works when it does happen. Look at the importance of product design. The massive success of Apple isn’t just because their products work very well technologically, but also because Apple products are conceived as objects you will want to own, to handle, and to have in your home. It’s about aesthetic and sensory values.

Or we might ask ourselves what drama and performance skills could add to business. Until we’re stuck with giving a presentation, at which point we might long for a skilled rhetorician, or for the creative writing skills of someone who knows how to hold an audience. And think how much health and medicine need the designer and the artist to make comforting environments where you spend time when you’re unwell and afraid.

There’s no reason for business to be ugly, for fitness to be boring or for technology to be forbidding. We show our values as a society by how beautiful we make our most important institutions, objects and events.

In the end, we’re talking about what constitutes a good society and a good life: the value beyond money and the meaning beyond productivity. Understanding what we do, and thinking about why we’re doing it, is essential to our happiness. It’s what keeps my players running from zombies; in fact, it’s what keeps the whole of society running.

Nii Ayikwei Parkes
Statement

We make bold statements – and I don't mean just pop-art dots and lines fortunes are paid for, or livestock-in-formaldehyde bank-breaker stuff – we make bold statements like: “If you don't know your alcohol threshold you are not ready for great literature.” Shake your head type stuff that can make you laugh but take years to figure out – as long as a mortgage

takes to clear sometimes. And there is smoke outside the dives frequented to find escape in laughter, the air inside now clean as clear skies, but the jokes still heavy with mud. We tell the story of what it can cost folks in high-stress jobs to find oblivion, knowing bliss can be found between the pages of a book read while you are leaning on a pedestal on which we stand. We're real smug

we, yes, we're not always understood. Clarity comes easier with month-end bills, LCD-declared exchange rates. You think we are wacky, hard to pin down – but you keep coming to us for new lens, new clothes, the odd love letter, a gift for trading partners, cheap applause for your speeches – we don't begrudge you these myriad things; don't we all use some distractions to keep our kids, our spouses, from keeping us

from work? We're cool with all that – particularly the bedtime stories, told with a conical lamp turned towards the wall; a world of shadows brought to life by your voice: we come tumbling out, in all our colours, shapes, accents, the child's eyes bright as morning. And you are the sun; we are doo-wopping backing. You will never ask your girl, your boy, to pay you for these moments. They will never be able to say

what you're worth. They may never understand you, but they will probably want you around forever. This is not supply chain stuff; price tag, primary or processed, forex... are words with no place in this world of shadows – yet it counts, it keeps the wheels turning. We're the stealth to your overt, Q to your Bond. On a mission together. We get people flying in to see sculpted dreams, rush stages... you sell them air tickets, hotel rooms, clothes, sundaes. You make

bold statements like: "we will always be here for you"; we are not that different. We are just too cool for fancy calculators.

John Kampfner

Banning the 'X' word

Author and broadcaster John Kampfner
on 'the Margate model': how Turner
Contemporary won the sceptics over.



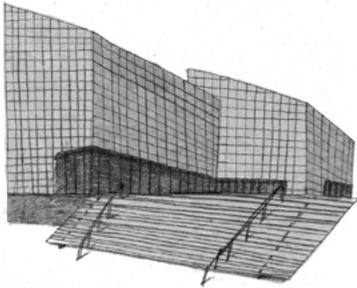
In Margate, I was constantly reminded of the complexity of the task we had taken on. At the front of the queue in Argos, I got into conversation with the shop assistant, a pleasant lady in her 50s. She said the new art gallery up the road looked lovely and was a great addition to the town. So she would be coming? ‘No,’ she said. ‘It’s not for the likes of me.’

There was no animosity, rather the reverse – an acceptance of there being parallel lives. But such conversations made me want to break down these barriers. Since then, for all the plaudits and visitor figures that Turner Contemporary has received, the statistic that matters most to me is that tens of thousands have visited who had never before been to a gallery or museum.

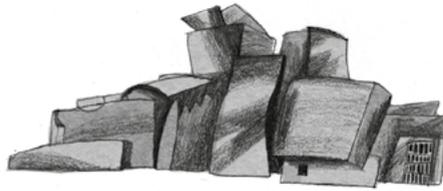
I was appointed chair of Turner Contemporary in May 2008. The vision was to create a centre of cultural excellence in one of the poorest towns in southern England. The public mood was sour. A previous plan to build a gallery out to sea had – perhaps not surprisingly – foundered, with bad consequences for those who had set up businesses on the promise of investment and tourism. Like so many coastal destinations, Margate had seen better days; it was neglected. But the key investors stood with us tenaciously – especially Kent County Council.

We used the ‘A’ word – ‘ambition’; we banned the ‘R’ word – regional. Turner Contemporary wouldn’t follow trends – it would set them, attracting international artists and visitors to the Isle of Thanet. We put the message over to restaurateurs, retailers and taxi drivers. The town needed to welcome visitors, whether from Japan, the United States or Spain, and make sure they came again. Such was the buzz when Turner Contemporary opened in April 2011 – on time and on budget – that we had not one launch celebration, but four, accompanied by outside broadcast trucks from the BBC and Sky.

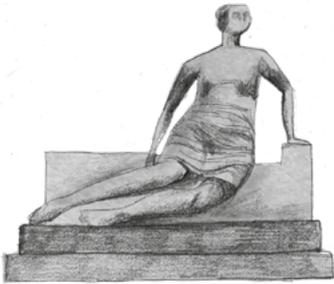
In Germany or the USA, for example, having an international arts destination based outside the capital or one of the biggest cities would not be noteworthy. In Britain, it marks a radical departure. Politicians piled in; the Prime Minister, the Chancellor, members of the coalition



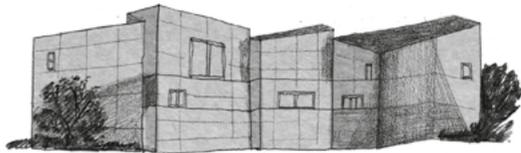
THE TURNER CONTEMPORARY



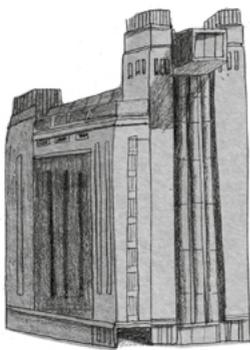
BILBAO GUGGENHEIM



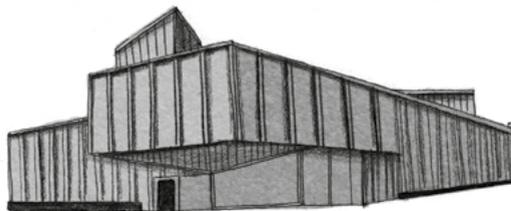
YORKSHIRE SCULPTURE PARK



THE HEPWORTH WAKEFIELD



BALTIC GATESHEAD



NOTTINGHAM CONTEMPORARY

cabinet – and senior Opposition figures too. A few months after opening, we welcomed the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. It was her first visit to a gallery outside London in a decade, and I was struck by her interest in our community engagement – from the children who, after a school visit, may drag their parents inside, to the men at the adjacent RNLI lifeboat station, whose enthusiasm is palpable.

This phenomenon is not unique to Margate. From Nottingham Contemporary to the Baltic in Gateshead, to our ‘sister’ gallery, the Hepworth in Wakefield, the UK has a cluster of independent galleries with international reputations. Each of these marries the global with the local. They are firmly rooted in their communities, while proving themselves among the best galleries in Europe.

In 2013, I was approached by a number of key figures in the UK arts world, who had been hatching plans to establish a single voice for the cultural and creative industries. Persuading commercial creative companies and publicly funded arts organisations to work closely together is a challenge. They may have different business models, but if they all aspire to excellence, they all contribute to the greater good of society. There is a burning need for them to come together – for the private sector to be more civic, for the public sector to be more entrepreneurial. We need to ensure that the next generation of creative talent has the best possible educational, skills and employment prospects, wherever it may emerge.

Which brings me back to Margate. More than three years on from opening, with nearly 1.5 million visits, and with the town slowly turning a corner, collective sights have been raised.

How could a gallery, relatively small in size, attract half a million people in its first year? How can it have sustained most of those numbers in its next two years? It’s down to the quality and ambition of the art – bold exhibitions that have spanned Turner (of course), Constable and Mondrian via Tracey Emin, Carl Andre and the Horniman Walrus.

There is still work to do to convince policymakers and funders that the very best in the land does not have to be located in the capital city. And success requires that arts organisations remain uncompromisingly ambitious. But if the Arts Council, and others, can continue to put their weight behind this culturally ambitious agenda, the arts will be able to make a real contribution to place-making and regional regeneration.

Howard Davies

● Playing the
100p

**Economist Howard Davies on why,
when it comes to public spending,
we all have to play the impact game.**

oact

game

The prime justification for public funding of the arts will always be cultural, but in a cold public spending climate, arts administrators around the country are worried about how to demonstrate the social and economic value of what they do. They are not alone. In senior common rooms on university campuses from Newcastle to Plymouth one word has dominated debate over the last two years: impact. The Research Excellence Framework imposed by the Higher Education Funding Council, which determines the pecking order of university departments and the research funding they receive, requires academics to show evidence of the impact their research has had in the real world.

Previous iterations of the process used publication records as a handy proxy. If you had articles accepted by the top journal in your field, it was assumed that your research was both of high quality and worthwhile. That comfortable equation has now been challenged. The five other economists on the planet who are also interested in the application of game theory to penalty-taking may be impressed by your latest ingenious theorising, but what of the penalty-takers themselves? Did they change their behaviour? If not, your impact was nil, and England again crashed out of a major tournament.

It would be good to think that somewhere a Malcolm Bradbury *de nos jours* is working on a sequel to *The History Man* which explores some of the more far-fetched impact claims made by elderly professors hitherto almost proud of the impenetrability and impracticality of their work. Indeed it is tempting to reject the premise of the whole exercise; many academics bridle at the notion that they should be judged by the short-term impact of their work on the economy, or even on society more generally. Knowledge is important for its own sake. Others, perhaps a little more aware of the disciplines imposed elsewhere in the public sector, have come reluctantly to the conclusion that it is a game they cannot afford not to play. The penalty kick game theorist (a real example) offered his services to the England squad at the World Cup.



Similar tensions are evident in the arts world when the Treasury, the Department for Culture, Media & Sport or the Arts Council ask for evidence of the economic contribution made by the arts, or the creative industries more broadly. Some react with hostility. They even resist the use of such a vulgar word as 'industry'. Others warn of the dangers of creeping instrumentalism. Art does not have to be 'for' anything, they cry, it should not have to justify itself by reference to its contribution to the bottom line of UK plc. 'Art for art's sake' sounds, oddly, a little more self-serving than *L'art pour l'art* though the meaning is the same, and the point is a powerful one.

But, as in academia, the argument is a little different when one accepts the Queen's shilling. 'L'art pour l'art' was a movement conceived before arts funding was part of the public expenditure round. So there is no alternative to playing a version of the impact game. The equipment is paintbrushes and greasepaint, not refereed papers, or indeed refereed penalties, but the rules are fundamentally similar, and the underlying question is essentially the same: what does the long-suffering taxpayer get for her money?

There are several, more or less plausible and persuasive ways of trying to answer the question. The taxpayer herself may show little direct interest in the arguments, but the Treasury is a powerful and sceptical advocate on her behalf.

The most direct and powerful way to the heart of a Treasury official (yes, he has one) is to prove that Airbus A380s full of high-rolling tourists have descended on Heathrow with the sole motive of seeing your exhibition, play or concert, and that while here they spent lavishly on Cornish pasties, Creme Eggs, London Pride and other domestically produced delicacies. If you can also prove that they all returned home when their tourist visas expired, and did not add to net migration, so much the better.

This is of course, a high hurdle. Few tourists have one overwhelming reason for their choice of holiday destination, though VisitBritain maintains that 57 per cent of those surveyed by the Nation Brands index in 2009 agreed that 'history and culture' is a strong influence on their choice. That is a broad definition and probably includes the royal soap opera as well as Covent Garden, but a quarter of international visitors to London do in fact go to the theatre at least once during their stay.

‘From all these perspectives, therefore, the bang from the cultural buck looks at worst very respectable, and in some cases quite outstanding’

It is easily demonstrated, too, that foreign visitors pour into the Tates, The National Gallery and the British Museum, before and after their pints and pasties. The World Economic Forum produces a league table of tourism competitiveness, an important component of which is a factor known as ‘cultural resources’, which its analysis shows are an important influence on tourism revenues. The UK is in third position in the world on that measure, after Spain and – perhaps unexpectedly – Sweden.

Generating foreign exchange has a particular attraction for the Treasury at a time when we run a sizeable current account deficit, which could become a constraint on growth, as the economy recovers, but it is by no means the only economic contribution the arts can make. The gnomes of Great George Street are also interested in the broader contribution to gross domestic product (GDP), in gross value added (GVA), and in employment. Fortunately, there is a reasonable story to tell in each area.

The most authoritative recent review, carried out last year for the Arts Council by the London-based Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR), puts the aggregate turnover of the UK arts and culture ‘industry’ at £12.4 billion in 2011. That makes it about 20 per cent bigger than the latest figures the Office of National Statistics has issued for the combined turnover of drugs and prostitution, and the social and personal side effects of culture are almost certainly a little more positive.

Like many other parts of the economy, arts and culture have struggled to recover from the effects of the recession, and in 2011 turnover remained below its pre-crisis peak. It is almost certainly above that now and, interestingly, the GVA of arts and culture had risen even by 2011. In simple terms we can think of GVA as the output of the sector less the inputs. As the CEBR concludes, ‘businesses in the arts and culture industry have been successful in cutting costs and have thus, by increasing their GVA, increased their contribution to UK GDP even as the wider economy contracted’.

That is quite a remarkable achievement. It suggests, first, that people do not see culture as an optional extra in their lives, to be cut when times are hard. Also, we tend to think of the arts sector as one which employs relatively low paid people, whose productivity, while hard to measure, is probably also low in conventional terms. Over a very long period, the output per head in many artistic endeavours has not increased at all, and indeed we do not want it to. It might be possible to use technology to make two violins sound like two dozen fiddlers, but I doubt if a symphony orchestra with 10 members would draw the crowds. Yet other areas have achieved healthy productivity growth. GVA per full-time equivalent in book publishing has risen, and indeed in 2011 was 40 per cent higher than the national average. The GVA of artistic creation is high, too. A Damien Hirst sells for rather more than the cost of the dots.

And what about jobs, another Treasury concern, and always a strong focus of political attention? On conventional definitions the industry as a whole employs just over 110,000 people, about half a per cent of all employment in the UK, not a huge figure perhaps. But employment in the arts also supports many other jobs indirectly. The CEBR estimated that the total number of full-time equivalent workers, taking account of the indirect effects of the arts, is around 260,300, or 1.1 per cent of total employment. The defence sector estimates that, in aggregate, it employs only slightly more, at 300,000. The arts do not generate as many additional jobs per pound as, say, manufacturing with its long supply chains, but they are more job-rich than most of the public sector.

‘The most direct and powerful way to the heart of a Treasury official (yes, he has one) is to prove that Airbus A380s full of high-rolling tourists have descended on Heathrow with the sole motive of seeing your exhibition, play or concert’

‘However technical the Treasury likes to make them seem, spending reviews are examples of decibel planning; and vague and emotional pleas are lost in the rounding’

Interestingly, too, while the image we have in our minds may be of struggling artists freezing in garrets, or interns in galleries and publishers paid in luncheon vouchers, the average cultural wage in 2012 was slightly above the UK median, at just over £27,000 a year. So arts jobs are not McJobs. They are often skilled, and correspondingly quite well paid – and they nurture creativity, which is increasingly seen as an essential element in fitting our workforce for the future.

From all these perspectives, therefore, the bang from the cultural buck looks at worst very respectable, and in some cases quite outstanding. But are we describing the recreational activities of the metropolitan elite? This has become a more sensitive issue since the financial crisis. For many regional voters it seems that the recession was created by bankers in the City of London, who dragged the rest of the economy down with them. Yet, mysteriously, London has recovered more rapidly, with house prices back above their peak and unemployment low, while much of the rest of the country remains in the doldrums. In these circumstances, asking taxpayers to subsidise seats at Covent Garden for hedge fund derivatives traders looks like rubbing expensive salt in the wound.

It is a superficially appealing point, but on closer examination the argument is not well founded. We have to recognise that some elements of metropolitan bias are inevitable. Foreign visitors will only be attracted by a critical mass of cultural activities, so to starve our global icons of funds would be a costly own goal. They should be incentivised to do more with less, and to find new sources of private funds. New philanthropists must be and are found on City trading floors, and our arts organisations are much more successful than others in Europe in attracting private support. But some public investment in the major London-based companies and galleries is easy to justify in hard-edged economic terms.

And that London investment has not in practice starved other parts of the country. There is also a good story to tell about the regional consequences of public funding of the arts. Galleries and theatres can give a powerful stimulus to their local economies. We are all aware of the examples of the Guggenheim in Bilbao or Tate St Ives, which have been the catalyst for much private investment. And the overall data suggests that art investment in relatively deprived areas can have important halo effects, indeed the secondary impact of public investment may be larger than it is in London. The investment must be sustainable, and must be calibrated to the ability of the community to support and develop it. We certainly cannot say that putting a new gallery in a depressed location will have a predictable and certain impact, if it sits alone in an unwelcoming environment. But all the evidence suggests that greater investment in the arts would pay dividends in both economic and cultural terms.

The impact of any particular piece of academic research is hard to pin down, and so it is with the arts. Economic and financial analysis can, and should, take one only so far. The impact of the arts on communities, on social capital, on the enrichment of personal lives and on wellbeing are all of equal or greater importance, yet lend themselves less well to a profit and loss approach. The problem is that the voices arguing for arts funding must struggle to be heard in the cacophony which surrounds the debate on public spending priorities. However technical the Treasury likes to make them seem, spending reviews are examples of decibel planning; and vague and emotional pleas are lost in the rounding. So the hunt for the Snark of measurable impact will go on.



THE AGGREGATE
TURNOVER OF BUSINESS
IN THE UK ARTS
AND CULTURE INDUSTRY
IN 2011 WAS
£12.4 BILLION

THE GVA OF THE CREATIVE
INDUSTRIES WAS £71.4 BILLION
IN 2012 AND ACCOUNTED FOR

52%
OF THE UK ECONOMY



ARTS & ECONOMICS



THE TURNER CONTEMPORARY IN MARGATE
MADE A £13.9 MILLION IMPACT ON
KENT'S ECONOMY IN ITS FIRST YEAR.
500,000 VISITORS TO THE HEPWORTH
DURING ITS FIRST YEAR CONTRIBUTED AN
ESTIMATED £10 MILLION TO WAKEFIELD'S
LOCAL ECONOMY.

THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
WHICH DRAW ON THE TALENT
OF THE ARTS SECTOR, MAKE AN
INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ECONOMIC
CONTRIBUTION TO THE UK
ACCOUNTING FOR 5.6% OR

1 in 18 OF ALL JOBS.

THE ARTS AND
CULTURE INDUSTRY
EMPLOYED ON
AVERAGE 1,110,600
FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT
EMPLOYEES IN THE
UK OVER THE PERIOD
2008-11



Contributors



Sir Peter Bazalgette is Chair of Arts Council England and former Chair of English National Opera and Crossness Engines, an embryonic steam museum.

Sir Peter also has a number of media interests, serving on the Boards of market researcher YouGov, and digital advertiser MirriAd and is on the Advisory Board of advertiser, BBH. In TV he is the president of The Royal Television Society and a non-executive director of ITV.



Alan Davey joins the BBC as controller of Radio 3 in January 2015, having served as Chief Executive of the Arts Council since November 2007. He was Director for Culture at the Department for Culture, Media & Sport from 2003 until December 2006. In an earlier stint at the then Department of National Heritage, he was responsible for designing the National Lottery.

Alan has also worked at the Department of Health, where he was responsible for AIDS treatment and care, Secretary to the Cleveland Child Abuse Inquiry and Secretary to the Royal Commission on Long Term Care. He is Chair of the International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies and a member of the Cultural Industries Council.



Karrie Fransman is a graphic novelist and comic creator. Her comic strips have run in the *Guardian* and the *Times* and her graphic novel, *The House That Groaned*, is published by Random House imprint Square Peg and was chosen as Graphic Novel of the Month in the *Observer*. Her new graphic novel, *Death of the Artist*, will be published by Jonathan Cape in spring 2015.



Tanya Gold is a freelance journalist writing principally for the *Sunday Times*, where she is a columnist and feature writer, and *The Spectator* magazine, where she is the restaurant critic. She has also written for the *Guardian*, the *Independent*, the *Evening Standard* and the *Daily Mail*. She lives in London.



Sir Anthony Seldon is Master of Wellington College and Executive Principal of Wellington Academy. He is the author or editor of 30 books.



Karen McCarthy Woolf was born in London to English and Jamaican parents. She is the recipient of the Kate Betts Memorial Prize and an Arts and Humanities Research Council scholarship from Royal Holloway. She has taught creative writing widely and is the editor of three anthologies, most recently *Ten: The New Wave* (Bloodaxe, 2014). Her collection *An Aviary of Small Birds* is a PBS Recommendation and published by Oxford Carcanet.



Naomi Alderman is the author of four novels, including her multiaward-winning debut *Disobedience* and *The Liars' Gospel*. She also writes video games and is co-creator and lead writer of the worldwide bestselling smartphone app *Zombies, Run!*. In 2013 she was chosen by *Granta* for its once-a-decade list of 20 Best of Young British Writers. She is currently being mentored by Margaret Atwood under the Rolex Mentor/Protegee Arts Initiative.



John Kampfner is Director of the Creative Industries Federation, the new national representative body for UK arts, culture and the creative industries. He is also Chair of Turner Contemporary, one of the UK's most successful art galleries.

As a journalist, he was a foreign correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*, and, during spells at the *Financial Times* and BBC, he became a prominent voice covering UK politics. He is the author of a number of books, notably the best-selling *Blair's Wars*. His new book, *The Rich: From Slaves to Super Yachts, a 2,000 year history*, has just been published.



Nii Ayikwei Parkes is the author of the acclaimed hybrid novel *Tail of the Blue Bird*, which was shortlisted for the 2010 Commonwealth Prize. A recent French translation of the novel won the 2014 Prix Baudelaire, Prix Mahogany and Prix Laure Bataillon. His book of poetry, *The Makings of You* (Peepal Tree), includes the poem 'Barter', which was used in the 2013 Poems on the Underground London series.



Sir Howard Davies is a Professor of the Institute of Political Science in Paris, and Chairman of the Airports Commission and the Phoenix Group. He was previously Director of the London School of Economics and Political Science and Chairman of the UK Financial Services Authority. He is a Director of the National Theatre.

Contributors



Professor John Ashton was elected President of the Faculty of Public Health for a term of three years. He was North West Regional Director of Public Health and Regional Medical Officer from 1993–2006 and Director of Public Health and County Medical Officer for Cumbria from 2006–2013.

John Ashton is well known for his work on planned parenthood and healthy cities and for his personal advocacy for public health. He is the author of many scientific papers, articles and chapters in books and of several books, including *The New Public Health*.



Neil Gaiman is the bestselling author of books for adults and children. The recipient of numerous awards, his works have been adapted for film, television, stage and radio.

Some of his most notable titles include the novels *The Graveyard Book* (the first book to ever win both the Newbery and Carnegie medals), *American Gods* and the UK's National Book Award 2013 Book of the Year, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*.



Raymond Antrobus is a spoken word poet, photographer and educator. He is co-curator of popular London poetry events Chill Pill (Soho Theatre and The Albany) and Keats House Poets. Raymond's work has appeared on BBC Radio 4, in *The Big Issue* and recently in the *Guardian* and at TedxEastEnd.

His second collection, *Shapes and Disfigurements Of Raymond Antrobus*, is published by Burning Eye Books. He writes a blog dedicated to poetry films, social commentary, interviews and spoken word: www.raymondantrobus.com



Tony Butler is a social history curator at heart and has been Executive Director of Derby Museums Trust since January 2014. Derby Museums includes Derby Silk Mill, the site of the world's first factory and a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Derby Museum and Art Gallery which contains the world's finest collection of works by the 18th century artist Joseph Wright.

Prior to that, Tony was director of the Museum of East Anglian Life for nine years. In 2011 he founded the Happy Museum Project.



Francesca Beard is a poet whose shows have toured nationally with Apples and Snakes and internationally with the British Council. She's written for the Royal Court, Young Vic, BBC Radio 3 and 4, and has been writer in residence at the BBC, Barbican, Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, Natural History Museum, Metropolitan Police and Clissold Leisure Centre. She runs workshops abroad and at home for all ages. She is currently developing Storyverse, a participatory experience for live audiences and online communities, with B3 Media.



Nii Sackey is the Chief Executive of Bigga Fish, a not-for-profit social enterprise working with young people, which he founded in 1999 when he was only 21 years old.

Bigga Fish is a youth music social enterprise that engages young people through media, large-scale events and developing youth enterprise initially in London and now across the UK.



Hollie McNish is a UK poet who straddles the boundaries between the literary, poetry and pop scenes. She has garnered titles like 'chick of the week' (MTV), 'internet sensation' (Best Daily), 'really, really amazing' (Davina McCall), and poet Benjamin Zephaniah stated 'I can't take my ears off her'. Her latest poem 'Embarrassed' was tweeted to fans by renowned singer Pink. She runs a poetry in education organisation, Page to Performance.



Katy Mayo-Hudson has 20 years' experience as a teacher, curriculum writer, and teacher coach. A founding member of the Turnaround Arts team, she has served as Implementation Coordinator, Conference Director, and Project Specialist, working directly with teachers and staffs in Turnaround Art Schools. She lives in Portland, Oregon, with her husband and two daughters.



Kathy Fletcher has spent her career specialising in community organising, communications, fundraising and production. She has been the National Director of Turnaround Arts since its inception. Her passion for social justice led her first to found 11 fair housing centres around the United States, and then to work on environmental issues before coming to work for equitable arts education.



Toby Litt is best-known for writing his books – from *Adventures in Capitalism* to (so far) *Life-Like* – in alphabetical order; he is currently working on *M*. His story ‘John & John’ won the semi-widely-known Manchester Fiction Prize, and his story ‘Call it “The Bug” Because I Have No Time To Think of a Better Title’ was shortlisted for the notoriously lucrative Sunday Times EFG Private Bank Short Story Award. His blog is at www.tobylitt.com. His new book of short stories, *Life-Like*, is published by Seagull Press.



The RT Hon Sir John Major, KG, CH

Sir John entered Parliament in 1979 and government in 1983. He was successively Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, and Chancellor of the Exchequer. He served as Prime Minister from 1990 to 1997, and retired from the House of Commons in 2001. In 1999 he was appointed a Companion of Honour in recognition of his initiation of the Northern Ireland peace process. Since leaving Parliament, Sir John has chaired various international advisory boards, and serves as patron or president of a number of charitable organisations both in the UK and overseas.

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Create is a new journal that aims to stimulate discussion about the true value of art and culture to our society. We hope you enjoy the contents.

In this edition, health expert John Ashton points out that creativity is an essential human asset; educationalist Anthony Seldon argues that we won't have real social mobility without promoting every child's creative talent; novelist and tech designer Naomi Alderman shows us how art is intrinsic to the evolution of our digital world; economist Howard Davies reasons that the arts mean better business; and former prime minister John Major emphasises the international status our culture gives us.

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